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BETWEEN SPACES: SOUND AND MUSIC USE IN *TWIN PEAKS: THE RETURN*
Kingsley Marshall, Falmouth University

Speaking in the unsettling backwards dialect familiar to viewers of the series, The Fireman directs FBI Special Agent Dale Cooper to 'Listen to the sounds', indicting a repetitive, scratching phrase from a gramophone. The instruction is clear, and although Cooper can hear only noise - he appears to understand. These opening moments of the latest incarnation of director David Lynch and writer Mark Frost's groundbreaking television series demonstrates a playful approach to the relationship between what is said, what is shown and what is heard and understood by characters – and ultimately the audience - in the *Twin Peaks* universe.

In this scene, the extra-dimensional space of the Black Lodge is presented in a stark monochrome. Cooper is trapped within this space as his evil doppelgänger Mr C, who escaped the Lodge in the second season of Twin Peaks commits violence and crime in the real world. Following a short set of instructions, a low rumble provides room tone, before Cooper vanishes in a flicker of wind noise and the crackle of electricity.

Frances Morgan identifies that Lynch uses noise to augment reality in order to 'create atmospheres of disquiet and liminality' (2011: 189). In an interview, Lynch once rejected the term 'room tone' as a descripter of these sonic atmospheres in favour of his own characterisation of what he described as 'presences'. Lynch defined these as 'the sound you hear when there's silence, [the space] in between words or sentences' (in Rodley, 2005: 73).

As its creators, critics and fans discuss whether *Twin Peaks: The Return* is a television series or extended film, or speculate as to the purpose of Cooper's journey from the Black Lodge – this paper instead explores these Lynchian 'in between' spaces. I argue that it is not the spaces themselves that are important but how the interconnectivity between these liminal or threshold places – heard through the components of the soundtrack and shown through their visual representation define and dominate the complex narratives of *The Return*.

These opening minutes of the first Part of the reboot presents the audience with a number of spaces. As the narrative shifts from the extra-dimensional Black Lodge to the 'real world' of the Ghostwood National Forest that surrounds the titular town of Twin Peaks, so colour is reintroduced to the image and the sound design becomes more conventional. A non-descript truck reverses into a driveway, a character opens his trailer door and speaks with the delivery driver over the ambient sounds of the forest. In the following sequence, helicopter wide shots of New York City are accompanied by similarly sonic localisation – the soundtrack dominated by the tropes of this most familiar of cinematic cities, brought to bear through distant sirens and the honking horn of a yellow cab.

As this exterior wide shot cuts to the interior of a skyscraper however, the sound design returns to the Lynchian wind noise of the Black Lodge. The loft

space features a large glass box with a circular porthole situated high above Manhattan. This chamber, which provides a portal between the extra-dimensional and real worlds of the series, is identified sonically as a liminal space. As the camera tracks backwards and reveals the watcher of the box Sam Colby, sounds corresponding to the room rather than the box itself are foregrounded in the mix as the sound design returns to the conventional with the air conditioning, hum of fluorescent lights and the whirring servos of surveillance cameras trained upon the box.

Changes of camera position correspond with a subtle shift in room tone or 'presence', disquieting perhaps in Frances Morgan's vernacular, but this use of sound situates Colby within the real world, perhaps protected from the inhabitants of extra-dimensional spaces by the glass walls of the box itself. When an alarm prompts Colby to change a memory card in one of the cameras, his movements loudly reverberate in the loft. Within these first three sequences of *The Return* this distinction in the visual and sonic rendering of the real world and extra-dimensional spaces establishes for the audience the conventions for the whole series.

As these sonic 'presences' help distinguish different types of spaces for the audience, they also provide clues as to the different types of characters within the narrative. These sonic rules remain consistent throughout the series and are evident in the use of sound effects applied to dialogue and Foley, the deployment of both pre-existing source music, both non-diegetically and in the diegetic performances of acts within venues situated within the narrative, and in the musical score written specifically for the series by Lynch, and his collaborators composer Angelo Badalamenti and supervising sound editor Dean Hurley.

What's striking about Twin Peaks is how sound design is privileged throughout – dialogue is often secondary or entirely absent, there is barely any music in the first few Parts and it is the often expressionistic sound design that provides subtext, tone and narrative information. Sarah Nicole Prickett observes that even the close captioning of *Twin Peaks: The Return* shows the care taken in each spot effect, an unusually cinematic approach to sound, with 'incredible, specific descriptors of sound and score. A line dialed by the Log Lady […] isn't ringing but "trilling." Footsteps on tile in the Black Lodge are "odd reverberations." Skin "crinkles." In the anonymous woods are "whooshing sustains," followed by, naturally, an "ominous tone"' (2017).

In *Twin Peaks: The Return* - when there is Lynchian wind noise or the hum of electricity, something significant is occurring. '*Listen* to the sounds,' says The Fireman in that opening scene. '*Pay attention* to the sounds', says Lynch and his collaborators through their sound design.

Jonathan Goodwin observes that much of Lynch's work in film and television has been centered on the presentation of separate realities, and that these

multiple realities are more complex than conventional allegorical
representation (2014: 309). Len Gutkin describes the extra-dimensional
spaces of Twin Peaks as switching stations in which 'aspects of allegory […]
co-exist or are transmuted one into the other' (2017). Characters in *Twin
Peaks initially* present as binaries – dead or alive, original or doppelgänger,
good or evil – but the audience does not have to wait too long before other
meanings or interpretations emerge, other signified through sound.

Twin Peaks: The Return presents more real-world spaces than previous
iterations of the *Twin Peaks* universe, with characters travelling to and from
New York, South Dakota, Las Vegas, Philadelphia, Buenos Aires, New
Mexico and London. More significant to the narrative however are the many
portals or gateways that join these real world locations with the extra-
dimensional spaces of the season. These portals represent rips in space and
time, and lead characters to specifc locations the Black and White Lodges,
The Glass Box, Dutchman's Lodge, or the Fireman's residence – a fortress
situated over a purple ocean. Where characters move from these extra-
dimensional spaces to the real-world, it is sonic cues that indicate their arrival
or departure. This is best illustrated in the group of Woodsmen who are
brought into being by the Trinity atomic bomb test on 1945 and who appear
around a convenience store in a flurry of what the close captioning describes
as a 'warbling static stuttering' in Part Eight.

This same sound cue or motif announces their presence later around a zone
that surrounds a vortex in a trailer park, when they are revealed to be lurking
in the corridors of a Police Station and in a prison cell adjacent to that holding
a character who has been arrested for murder.

Sound also connects between the loose ends from earlier Parts or seasons –
encouraging the audience to consider how what first appear to be familiar
spaces also resonate with layers of meaning. An investigation into the
mysterious sounds emanating from a hotel room occupied by Agent Cooper in
season one, is one of a number of examples of where sound is used within
the narrative to bury the past actions of characters literally in the walls of
locations within Twin Peaks, waiting for the audience to discover them.

Julio d'Escriván describes Lynch as a filmmaker who privileges the
psychological dimension of sound rather than the representational, and
argues that it is sound design that can best serve to link abstraction with
representation (2009: 1). This primacy of spaces is a multi-dimensional
palimpsest where sound and image collude to determine and distinguish the
real, extra-dimensional and liminal spaces of *Twin Peaks* from one another,
and demonstrate the functioning of the portals that will allow for Agent
Cooper's eventual return to the real world from his Black Lodge purgatory.

Jeff Wilser observes that silence is also deployed in interesting ways. In the
opening titles of *Twin Peaks: The Return* Badalamenti's theme tune begins a

full 12 seconds after the opening shot - what Wilser describes as 'an uncomfortable stretch of stillness' (2017). This, coupled with the lack of cues from the original score in the first three Parts, caused some critics to speculate that Lynch was deliberately distancing *The Return* from previous iterations of *Twin Peaks*. Sarah Nicole Prickett notes that this lack of music, coupled with Lynch's predilection for abstraction, extended use of cinematic silence and elongated shot lengths, finds time move achingly slowly in those early Parts (2017).

The powerful use of silence that Wilser observes at the start of the title sequence is replicated throughout the season, most unusually in dialogue scenes – a rarely deployed device in television, which favours exposition. In an example from Part 17, Gordon Cole – played by Lynch - tells his fellow FBI Agents to 'listen to me,'. But then he pauses for ten very long seconds before explaining to them the intricacies of the negative forces at work in Twin Peaks. These periods of intensified silence, coupled with the use of barely audible or manipulated dialogue and the presence of a number of characters who are either mute, incomprehensible, or only able to repeat the dialogue delivered by others, furthers a sense of awkwardsness and disorientation. Where characters are unable to hear, listen or understand what is being said to them, the audiences attention is directed to pay attention to other sonic cues within the narrative for their information. With the reduction of music over the course of the season, and with little dialogue in many of the Parts, so sound design is required to do much of the narrative heavy lifting. Dean Hurley explains that Lynch's practice involves the introduction of 'music into sound and sound into music where everything blurs' what he calls an 'omni-lateral understanding of all aspects of film' (in Amorosi, 2017). This notion of omni-laterality, or the representation of all points of view, resonates with the larger meaning of *The Return* defined by its multiple dimensionality and coexisting timelines where anything can, and does occur.

This sparing use of score in the opening three Parts makes the use of diegetic source music in *The Return* all the more striking. Handpicked acts close the majority of the episodes by playing to the residents of *Twin Peaks* in The Bang Bang Bar, the Roadhouse venue familiar from earlier iterations of the series. The resultant performances provide the opportunity for the audience to decompress, escaping Cooper's existential stasis and return to the town to spend time with those still resident there. Andreas Halskov argues that these sequences are one of only a handful of markers of seriality, in a seasons which otherwise 'radically subverts our expectations of television storytelling and causality' (2017). By having the bands perform under their pro-filmic names each of these musical sequences has a disturbing secondary effect, situating the fantastical events of the season in the present day and, in doing so, bringing Cooper's murderous doppelganger and the mysterious Woodsmen into *our* world.

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The lack of conventional narrative hierarchies and playful misdirection – as evident in Lynch and Frost's description of the season as a film, or narrative born of literature, rather than TV practice – demonstrates a pattern of disruption throughout common to both its narrative and approaches to production practice. Deviating from the conventional is, in part, how Lynch moved from a noun to the Lynchian adjective and, as sound designer for *The Return*, he continues in a career-long avoidance of the familiar. This is made manifest with editing techniques such as jump cuts and glitching being as evident in the sound design as they are in the visuals. His divergence from familiar practices of continuity are evident in unusual spaces. In those opening scenes of Part One, sound bridges that traditionally serve to link a visual transition from exterior and interior spaces are missing. The first exterior wide shot of the Great Northern Hotel in Twin Peaks shows both the visual and sonic representation of a waterfall outside, but a visual cut to the interior of the hotel is accompanied by a similarly sonic cut – the abrupt silence of the hotel manager's office divorces it from the previous shot and its location. The result is a subtle sense of the uncanny, where even real and familiar spaces feel divorced from their surroundings.

Where sound does connect space it often takes an existential, rather than authentic, quality. Brooke McCorkle argues that sound in *Twin Peaks: The Return* marks a shift from previous seasons – in that it is often 'hyper-rendered not just for an ephemeral "jump scare" moment, but rather [is] in service of the story and/or the overarching aesthetic of the Twin Peaks world' (2017). A core part of this aesthetic rendering of the world is that it becomes 'real' only in certain spaces. McCorkle focuses on electricity as an example, something that has fascinated Lynch throughout his career, and which she connects to the manner with which the nature of evil is presented within the season – 'like electricity, the evil is transitory or, to put it better, transmigratory' (2017). Electricity is everywhere in our world but rarely physically manifest. It is an invisible power and binding force that links real-world locations with extra-dimensional spaces and timelines.

Michael Ewins describes these deviations from traditional continuity as a fantastic corruption that allows events to be 'rearranged, recontextualised or completely reversed', an observation of the unity of both production practices and narrative meaning (2018: 34). Instead of focusing on narrative cause and effect, *Twin Peaks The Return* is interested in articulating the fluidity of space, temporality and subjectivity. This emphasis on the *inbetweenness* of each of these states allows for a nuanced exploration of both the existential and physical explosions that can disrupt reality.

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