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## ***Uluslararası Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi***

**Semiotic Psychoanalysis of Mulholland Drive and Uncanny Movie Director David Lynch**

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### **Abstract**

This article aims to give information about director David Lynch and his psychoanalytic techniques, which are related to subconsciousness of audiences.

It can be observed that David Lynch, who uses metaphors, metonymies and symbols through moving to semiotics based on semiotic scientific analysis, is intertwined with psychoanalysis by revealing his uncanniness and therefore benefiting abundantly from Lacan and Freud. Since his world is quite dark and complex, observing his films and understanding the language of symbols in addition to analyzing his films are essential. David Lynch, who is an auteur, opens new windows to the visualization of aesthetic and visual codes in the minds of the audiences. Like “Mulholland Drive”, and “Lost Highway.”

**Keywords:** Psychoanalytic technics and semiotics, Freud, Lacan, David Lynch, Auteur

### **Mulholland Drive ve tekinsiz yönetmen David Lynch'in semiyotik psikanalizi**

#### **Özet**

Bu makale yönetmen David Lynch ve izleyicilerin bilinçaltı ile ilgili psikanalitik teknikleri hakkında bilgi vermeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Gösterge bilimsel analiz ortaya koymaktadır ki, metaforlar, metonimler ve semboller kullanan David Lynch tekinsizdir, Lynch için Lacan ve Freud'dan bolca faydalanarak psikanaliz ile iç içe olduğu gözlemlenebilir. Dünyası oldukça karanlık ve karmaşık olduğu için filmlerini gözlemek ve filmlerini analiz etmenin yanı sıra sembollerin dilini anlamak çok önemlidir. Auteur olan David Lynch, izleyicilerin zihninde estetik ve görsel kodların görselleştirilmesine yeni pencereler açar. “Mulholland Çıkmazı” ve “Kayıp Otoban” gibi.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Psikanalitik teknik ve göstergebilim, Freud, Lacan, David Lynch, Auteur

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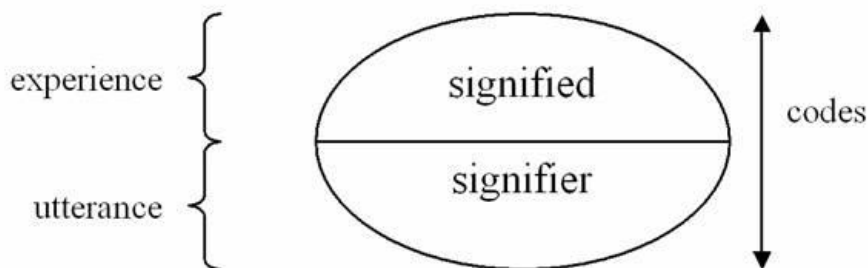
## 1. Introduction

In cinema, a semiotic theory is crucial, because many films use symbols and metaphors to make sense and connect the visual scenes and sequences with the signifier and the signified into a meaningful language of film.

The indicator usually refers to the movie story through format codes. It can be referred as phenomena. Image is the acquisition of the object by visual encoding. The phenomenon is the intuition of the object. Under each scene and in the subtexts of the dialogues, there are a lot of side meanings, which can be metaphorical. There is a difference between what is meant and what is indicated. Sometimes an image forms in the mind of the spectator, and the formed image is kind of a different element reflected from his world.

As indicated above, director David Lynch combines semiotics with psychoanalysis and adds depth to his films. The real purpose is opening the gates to the subconsciousness while analyzing, and semiotics work here as passwords. He tries to solve subconsciously subdued emotions like decoders.

David Lynch, who sometimes reinforces symbols and narratives without resorting to dialogues, gets his support from the theorist Roland Barthes, because the film is in his language, and the symbols, metaphors and metonymies in it are like words that form parts of a language. He emphasizes the film with symbols. Since semiotics is one of the most commonly used methods, reading films in this way might be effective. Every object has a task in the story, and they often replace symbols.



**Figure 1.1:** Ferdinand de Saussure's basic model of semiotics

From this point of view, my aim in choosing semiotics which makes mind games, is to understand why David Lynch chose this method of narration and to analyze and shape all the signs and indications, which are used by him.

In this article I am going to use the narrative analysis with semiology and psychoanalysis. “In narrative analysis, a representation of a series of unified events (occurrences and actions) is situated in one or more settings. A narrative may be fictional, factual or a blend of the two. These events may be arranged chronologically or nonchronologically” (Phillips, 2005: 637).

## **2. Semiotics in cinema**

It is necessary to know which passwords the cinema uses and how. Speech language is a communication system and is double jointed. When the words come together, the message is formed. Each communication system has a password. In order to understand a password, it is necessary to know the meaning of the signs, the rules of their combination and the key to the password.

Cinema semiotics can only be semiotics of the word (and not from a particular language), or semiotics of certain types of words, which means syntax units and the interconnection of these units result in the discourse of the film.

According to Barthes, when the audiences look at the photograph, they do not see what exists but see what happened before. According to him, there is no smoothness of photography. Because nothing enters between the indicator and the object, nor the human gets involved.

This view was subsequently applied to the cinema, as the photograph was an improper message.

## **3. David Lynch as a director and his methods**

David Lynch, one of the directors who pushes the boundaries of human memory with photographic images, uncovers the secrets in the locked areas of memory and blends these secrets with psychoanalytic methods. He reflects surrealism, which is one of the most disturbing movements of cinema, German Expressionism, the postmodern and the Victorian period to the screen. Lynch, who constantly works with the same team, emphasizes the concept of ‘auteur’,

because he influences his films so much that they rank as their author. According to Lynch, certain semiotic indicators (smoke, darkness, death etc....) and metonymies are in the foreground. These concepts can be listed as mysticism, satire, Freudian readings, obscurity, meaninglessness and chaos. They display the battle between pure good and sheer evil through dark-light games.

What Lynch really wants to emphasize is that the problems in the modern world cannot be solved. While desperately dealing with the problems of people, Lynch seeks for differences underneath what seems highly reasonable from the outside, and everything happens accordingly to this idea. In other words, the discourses of the impossibility of bourgeois happiness and the collapse of middle-class morality are displayed by using evil and division.

According to Chris Rodley, “no other director can evaluate all the elements of cinema that can be achieved to the extent that David Lynch uses them. The reason for this is that uncanny is not an easily obtainable quality.” (Rodley, 2010). Lynch describes the mood or emotion that he projects in his films as getting lost in the “darkness and confusion.” We face uncanny in here also. “It is uncanny because it is uncanny, secretly too familiar, and that is why it is under pressure.” is how Sigmund Freud describes uncanny.

By questioning the existence of desperate cases, Lynch draws attention on ‘psychological’ theories, which belong to Lacan and Freud, to convey every mystical and non-mystical belief or surreal idea which suppresses this belief in a complex language. “Not knowing what everything means or how to interpret it is better”, Lynch explains. “Because otherwise you are afraid to let things go. Psychology destroys the mystery and the quality of magic. It makes me very uncomfortable to talk about meanings. Because meaning is a very personal thing and varies according to everyone.”

Lynch uses brain improvisation in such an effective way that he incorporates postmodernism, Lacanianism, Freudianism and skepticism under the same roof, and transforms his films into a theatrical play. By placing the psychological techniques of Lacan and Freud in his films, Lynch uses mystery and obscurity as a puzzle. However, the events which take place in the final scenes of his films never coincide with the pieces of the puzzle. The last piece of the puzzle is always in the hands of the audience. By associating the semiotic indicators (such as dwarf) with super consciousness, Lynch explores the alliance of the subconsciousness and ego so deeply that he illuminates the audiences.

This happens as if Lynch takes a picture of the structure of the minds of the audiences (consciousness, subconsciousness, self) and analyzes the relationship between the conscious self, subconscious self, superego, and upper self.

Lynch often asks the audiences: “Is this real, or is this imaginary?”, stating that reality is merely a reflection of the inner world. Lynch elaborates scenes which use tricks in order to mislead the minds of the audiences. The mysterious director, who does not like exact judgments, tests the audiences with the images which he sends to the brains of the audiences and wants them to ask themselves: “What did I understand from the film?”.

Lynch, who is distracted by intelligence games, waits for the characters to return to the past and face the past. Through psychoanalytic methods, Lynch uncovers secrets in the locked areas of memory. Lynch, who does not seek perfection, symbolizes the troubles of the bourgeoisie and the collapse of middle-class morality through division. Lynch argues that the cause of the war between pure good and evil is alienation, and reflects the problems of the modern world to the screen without hesitation. One of the problems of the modern world is undoubtedly despair. With an unusually placed camera, he captures the underlying causes of emotional collapses in light play.

The mood or feeling that Lynch's films convey is strongly linked to a form of intellectual uncertainty: what he calls being “lost in darkness and confusion”. The uncanny clearly expresses itself in Lynch's films. “It doesn't reside in everything that is strange, weird or grotesque, but is the opposite of those things, which - by virtue of their exaggeration - refuse to provoke fear.” The uncanny attributes, as Freud calls as “the field of what is frightening”, are those of dread rather than actual terror, of the haunting rather than the apparition. They transform the “homely” into the “unhomely” while producing a disturbing unfamiliarity in the evidently familiar. In Freud's words “The uncanny is uncanny because it is secretly all too familiar, which is why it is repressed”. This is the essence of Lynch's cinema. **(Rodley, 2005: x).**

According to Lacan; a link exists between impossibility and what he calls the reality. Within every symbolic order, the reality occupies the place of what cannot be thought or imagined-the position of the impossible. The reality is the failure of the symbolic order in explaining everything. When approached accordingly, the impossible is not materially impossible but rather logically impossible as long as we remain within the current social structure. **(McGowan, 2007: 6).**

*“The symbolic order, for Lacan, is the order of language and society: it provides the structure that organizes our social reality and creates the identities that we inhabit. This order underlies the visible world and thus remains largely invisible, though its laws determine much of what happens in the visible world. It functions through absence, shaping our lives in ways that we remain unaware of. What we see, in contrast, is the imaginary, a world of images that appear to be immediately present. The imaginary deceives us in so far as it hides the underlying symbolic structure that upholds it. For instance the image of an authority figure as a genuinely caring person, even if it is true masks the domination that inheres in her/his is very symbolic position as an authority figure. She/he appears warm and accessible, but this obscures the symbolic, structural distance between the authority figure and us as ordinary subjects. Exposing the symbolic authority beneath the imaginary guise becomes a political project. Similarly, theorists like Mulvey and Metz want to lay bare the symbolic structure of the cinema by confronting the imaginary mode in which we experience it.” (McGowan, 2007: 6-7).*

Lynch's cinema is a “genre” cinema. Lynch positions his unique obsessions, aspirations and different expressions according to the difference between the viewer and the creator. Lynch tries to see the film he transferred to the screen as a structural whole by taking the contradictory. In other words, he reveals the implicit in internal relations.

Lynch, who is obsessed with intelligence games waits for the characters to return to the past and face the past. What needs to be resolved here is that the characters are removing negative effects on their lives and completely emptying their minds. Films are Lynch's interrogation center. All characters are interrogated for an internal reckoning.

With hypnotic games and music, Lynch loves to hypnotize the audiences and knows the psychology of the people so well that he takes the living dreamer characters to the center of his films. Some of these characters are obsessed and some are schizophrenics. Lynch conveys the world of the characters from the dream world to the audiences with all his bareness and zooms in towards his camera without disturbing the aesthetic measurements. Because the puzzles of the characters are reflections of the audiences' own selves. Sometimes acting as an anarchist hero, Lynch refers to disorder and perplexity. The fact that the characters in his films are extreme people who are affected by irregular living conditions should be kept in mind. Lynch tells the audiences what happens in their minds.

From that point, it can be said “Lynch’s films demand that the spectator reevaluate her/his relationship to the cinema. The cinema is no longer can escape without any connection to the outside world, nor is it a reality unto itself. instead, it is the reverse side of that outside world- the phantasmatic underside that holds to the truth of the latter. If we escape at all in Lynch/ cinema, we escape into the trauma that remains hidden but the nonetheless structures the outside world.” ( **McGowan, 2007: 24**).

Lynch does not just want the audiences to stay at the moment, but he argues that the problems, which people have not solved in the past, will be faced in the future. Since the characters in his films are unidentified, they seek for identity. Also, films of Lynch are dense with allusions and intertexts.

#### **4. Psychoanalytic Analysis of “Mulholland Drive” and semiotics**

With his films “*Lost Highway*” (1998) and “*Mulholland Drive*” (2001), American avant-garde and uncanny director David Lynch has made two significant contributions to the movements of amnesia and trauma-related movie making. In a doppelganger tale, which paralleled the lives of two couples, one fantasy and the other true, *Lost Highway* dealt with two people whose personalities were related to each other's alter egos.

One possible way of reading the film is by the psychoanalytical method. The characters of Lynch are sadistic maniacs, assassins and fatal women, as well as the harmless boys who fall for them. All of these fit well with the Oedipal triangle of mother, son and father. Psychoanalysis theories have been adapted to cinema studies since the 1970s. Among the first areas to be explored were women and media, reception, and cinematic image ontology. The use of written texts of Freud and Lacan provided film theorists fresh perspectives. (**Allen, 1999**).

The key emphasis of these ideas was former methods such as semiotics and feminist film theory to be integrated. However, psychoanalytic film theory has been confronted over time within film studies with criticism from other fields and other branches. The Slovenian thinker, Slavoj Zizek contributed to popular culture discourses through an approach, which combined psychoanalysis and film. (**Zizek, 1991; 1992; 2001**). Although Zizek's approach has been widely accepted, it should be remembered that in the 2000s, innovative ways emerged to perform film analysis. (**Akser, 2011**).

Instead of using Lacan to describe cinematic processes as suggested by proponents of apparatus theory, Zizek reads film texts based on the Lacanian principles of the abstract, imaginary and the real. (Zizek, 2002). Therefore, when he deals with the film as it is, he is not disturbed by debates in film studies on topics such as realism, linear narrative, representation and relationship to life, including involvement of the audience. Zizek gave a lecture on Lynch's *Lost Highway* at the University of Washington in Seattle in 2000. In this lecture, Zizek emphasized the need for a psychoanalytic analysis of Lynch. (Zizek, 2000). Inspired by Lynch's reading by Zizek, this essay takes up a psychoanalytic interpretation of "*Mulholland Drive*" (2001) by David Lynch and also uses several traditional Freudian concepts.

The topic of subject development is largely concerned with psychoanalysis. In other words, in subjectivity, what cultural studies refer to as personality is involved. "*Mulholland Drive*" is about subjectivity and the creation of subjects. Therefore, understanding the film is essential in order to take into account the repression of the unconsciousness.

Through art and the macabre, David Lynch has become a brand name. In the style of Lynch's previous TV series "*Twin Peaks*", "*Mulholland Drive*" was a pilot for a TV drama series for the ABC network. As the film is concerned, two directions are split by the term "run." It is the street title where the accident takes place as well as the symbolic "death drive" or "sex drive".

"*Mulholland Drive*" starts with a young woman (Laura) miraculously disappearing from a car crash while armed men in a car were trying to kill her. The surprised young woman goes down to Beverly Hills and spends the night on a bed. She wakes up at the dawn break and sees an old woman leaving her home and sneaks into the residential complex.

In other words, the woman, who does not know who she is and how she got there, somehow reaches Betty's apartment and decides to help Betty find her identity again (She is temporarily named Rita, inspired by Rita Hayworth). Starting from this point, the audiences begin to see two women from Lynch's twisted stature: Betty is actually an actress named Diane, who struggles to hold on and is the lover of a star named Camilla (very similar to Rita). Camilla gets prepared to leave Diane for a young director. Could the first part of the film be a dream of Diane? Which story is real and which is not? Identity switches of Diane/Betty and Camilla/Rita can be explained by the Freudian concepts of fixation, division, introjection and projection. Psychological reflection is a reflection of the undesirable aspects of the self to the other. Diane externalizes her own negative feelings by transferring them to someone else by creating a second layer illusion.



Lynch implies that some clues in the audiences' mansion will help them solve the puzzle: for example a red lampshade, a key (to whom and why), and an accident site. There are also two clues for sharp-eyed audiences, which will reveal the true meaning of the film, even before the opening credits.

Examining the story more deeply is needed. When two cars filled with young people, who were speeding on the road, hit our heroes who had stopped by the road, they cannot perform these actions. The woman escapes immediately after the accident and hides in the city in a house where the owner sees a trip. The owner of the house is an older actor and went to Canada to shoot his new film. Betty, an actress nominee who will stay at home in her absence, is a typical country girl from the Deep River, Ontario, and comes home the next morning.

Later, when the mysterious woman realized that she had taken refuge in the house and lost her memory, the film gained momentum. Those two women became friends and advanced the story to find the true identity of the mysterious brunette who calls herself because of being inspired by the poster of the unforgettable Rita Hayworth movie "Gilda" she sees on the wall. Rita opens her bag with the hope of finding something, and the bag contains a large amount of money and a strange blue key. At the same time, Adam, a young and successful film director, enters the meeting with Italian producers for his new film, but because the producers did not want the girl she chose to play the lead role, he had a lot of work going on. In the end, he was unable to withstand the threats of a "strange" cowboy, obviously a man of the Italians, and had to choose the girl, who the mafiotic producers wanted.

Shortly thereafter, Rita comes up with a name: Diane Selwyn. This name could be Rita's true identity, someone she knew before, the audiences do not know that yet. The only way to understand this is by finding the person bearing that name and seeing the truth with her own eyes. They go to the only address, which they find from the guide, but the only thing they find will be the rotten body of Diane Selwyn. This breaking moment in Diane's dream brings Betty to face her own death from what will happen in Hollywood. Diane produces an illusion, like a vision in a movie, to have her completely. In doing so, she represses her unconscious identity as Diane, leading to the dissolution of her illusion, because she was too much herself. Therefore, as her illusion (as if waking up from the dream-within-a-dream), the unresolved tension between her unconscious inclinations and authoritarian ego demands resurface.

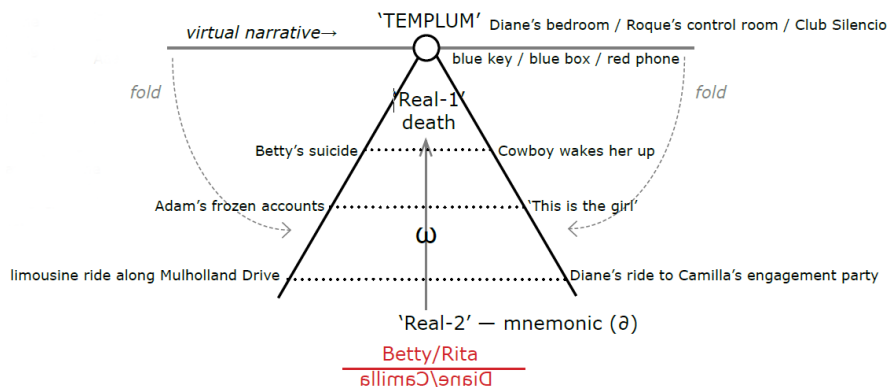
When the audiences see the images of two women side by side in the mirror, they notice how they resemble each other. Meanwhile, the relationship between those two women will begin beyond friendship, and Lynch will give the audiences one of the most erotic lovemaking scenes

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in film history. Meanwhile, director Adam learns that his wife is cheating on him and is beaten brutally by his wife's lover. Again, one day, two women enter a theater at night because of the delirious Spanish words Rita hears in her sleep and a place she remembers when she wakes up. This is a scene in which everything is performed by playback. Unable to understand how, Betty needs to look into her purse and finds a cubic blue box inside the purse. When they get home, Betty disappears and Rita opens the blue box alone with the blue key in her purse.

As Betty, it is Diane. The rotten woman lived in the house where her body was found. Laura as Rita is a film actress named Camilla. From what happened, we know that Camilla and Diane were together before, but Camilla left Diane for director Adam. Towards the end, they reunite at a party. During his arrival at the party, Watts as Diane sits in the back seat of the car, just like the opening sequence of the film, and the two men in front watch the road quietly. The car again looks like the beginning of the movie. This time, however, their aim is not to kill the woman in the back. Her ex-boyfriend Camilla has come to take her home from the car. In the evening, while Camilla is spending time with her husband, Adam, she kisses another blonde woman. Throughout the meal the audiences watched Diane suffer from her jealousy and broken heart. On the other hand, the audiences realize that everyone who is invited to dinner has different identities compared to the first part of the film. Diane has got enough money to give all her money to a hired killer to kill her ex-girlfriend Camilla. Diane's id and ego are guided by her superego in the second-level fantasy. Diane refuses the qualities she sees as making her submissive and incomplete. Betty fantasizes herself as a fresh and attractive person. She becomes a Canadian, a symbol of naivety, and follows high-class Anglo types.

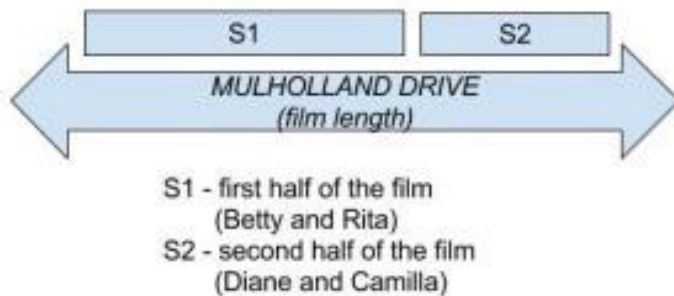
Diane wants to be like Camilla and to satisfy the needs of Rita both (just as the Lacanian child looking at the mirror and thinking her reflection is her mother). Because these are wonderful creations, Diane is unable to know the innermost desires of either Camille nor Rita, so she imposes on Rita her own desires, such as the need of security.



**Figure 2.2:** *Lacan's theory (énoncé) - this theory become cause with 'unconsciousness' of the partial objects which form the basis of Aristotle's 'two chance' causes, automaton and tuchē.*

When the old couple, who accompany Betty on her way from Canada to Hollywood, left her at the airport, they were hopeful and happy. They had expectations from her. At the end of the dream, a pathetic Diane is seen, who could not make those expectations come true. Everything is ruined and she cannot resist the weight of her feelings anymore. Her dreams do not leave her alone. Eventually, as a result of this disappointment, the guilt of having killed Camilla and the fear of getting caught because of the murder, she commits suicide. The blue box is seen in the drawer, where she opens to grab her gun. Towards the end, when the audiences see the blue key on the coffee table in the living room of her house, they realize where the murder took place. This remorse reaches as far as Diane is drawn into her thoughts and imagines another world in her subconscious self.

The blue color shown throughout the film and how it is used is very important, because the innocence and the sense of security after the '50s has been changed. In fact, Betty's dream world is a projection of the feeling of guilt and desires. Although the film refers to the 1950s, it is set in the 2000s. The state of timelessness is the reason for the existence of uniqueness.



**Figure 3.3:** *The separation of the narrative in the film "Mulholland Drive"*

"*Mulholland Drive*" is one of the most impressive films, which reveal what is happening in the background of Hollywood, recounts a period of reconstruction of the conventional movement and conveys the bareness of a young girl who came to Hollywood with the dream of becoming a movie star to the screen. In this context, Lynch's words should be considered: "It comes from

stylistic ideas. Sound, speed and spaces come out of ideas. This applies to characters and everything. Never disagree with ideas, be honest with them. Then they will guide you.”

In “*Mulholland Drive*”, the story line follows the turmoil of Betty/Diane, Rita and Camilla. In the dream of Betty, Betty is seen to be playing out a revenge plot on Rita for not being attracted to her in real life. The dream is set before Diane kills herself. It can be analyzed in a Freudian way, since Sigmund Freud has many ideas on what happens when people are dreaming. This includes the unconscious mind reflecting the real lives of the dreamers’. Freud’s interpretations on dream as an unconscious mind, venture into the idea that dreams are parts of a person’s life and that they represent the true feelings of the dreamers. In *Mulholland Drive*, Betty/Diane is forging the revenge she wants to place on Camilla for not noticing and loving her the way she wants.

In Freud's theory, dreams are distorted manifestations of unconscious desires, which can only be understood dialectically in relation with the real life of the dreamer. In other words, it can be said that “*Mulholland Drive*” does not include any ideal awake state, which means that the audiences do not see how the awakened life is. Yet, in the second half the audiences see the context behind the events during the dream. (Gregory, 2011). Lynch developed the concept of dream in the form of an unwarranted response to reality.

In Lacan’s theory, Betty's encounter with Rita at home happens after the mirror image that the audiences often touch on in other films. In the same way, Rita, who forgot her name due to the memory loss she experienced after the accident, decides her name in consequence of the mirror image, which Lacan refers to as the self-identification phase.

The director in the film is the same, and many names are changed simply in order to allow connections to the dreams and the real life, which is highly surreal. The director, who takes advantage of semiotic science and psychoanalysis as a principle, tries to see the film he has transferred to the screen as a structural whole. In other words, it reveals the implicit in internal relations, as in *Mulholland Drive*. The factors, which make this film interesting, are the confusion, surrealism, and the blurred line between dream and reality.

“*Mulholland Drive*” is nonchronological and constructs the fabula, but “constructs the fabula may be problematic because different attentive and thoughtful viewers will disagree about whether certain events are present, past or future events or only imagined.” (Phillips, 2005).

## 5. Symbols, Metaphors and Metonyms in “Mulholland Drive”

“Mulholland Drive has plenty of symbols throughout, which include the following:

- *Curtains.* Curtains pop up virtually in every single David Lynch film or TV program. They are fairly obvious symbols of concealment, and an open declaration that what the audiences are watching is only a small portion of the real story. There is much more going on beneath those curtains, therefore it is just a matter of opening them.
- *Boxes.* The box in *Mulholland Drive* carries a great significance. The moment in which Rita opens the box is the moment everything shifts – when Betty becomes Diane and so forth. Boxes once again represent the hidden truths. They are challenges. Do the audiences dare enough to take a peek at what lies inside, or are they content with the false, comfortable life around them?
- *The sinister ‘muddy’ man.* One of the most famous moments of the film, mainly because it is so terrifying and few people can ever really figure out why. My personal theory is that this man represents truth and death. He is a horrible smear of cold, filthy reality against the rose-tinted haze of Hollywood, and this is the reason why he is so repugnant.
- *The cowboy.* He is an interesting character. Menacing and controlling, he strolls in and out at various intervals, and seems to manipulate some of the action. Personally, I think he is there to highlight the powerlessness of the others. “He is directing the action, they are merely actors, playing their parts.” (Banks, 2007).

Some important metaphors, which include the following:

“Before examining how Diane’s situation is illuminated by what happens between Adam and the Cowboy, a comparison with K. is in order. One striking feature of his personality is that he is relentlessly “smart-alecky”: self-assertive, curt to the point of rudeness, and

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*dismissive of the concerns of the villagers. K. is driving his own buggy and his way leads nowhere good. That is a metaphor; it is impossible to get a buggy ride to the Castle. K. never has an encounter with Castle functionaries anything like the dream of Adam with the Cowboy. The messages K. receives are indirect and cryptic as opposed to the Cowboy's explicit instructions. It does appear, however, that he could have stayed in the attic of the Bridge Inn or have been the schoolhouse janitor indefinitely.” (Giannopoulou, 2013: 49).*

“As Mulholland Drive plays out, we will learn that the blue key unlocks a particular blue box. A key fitting into a lock is an overt sexual metaphor, but in old stories, the box is the hiding place of the feminine subconscious, especially in its unexpected, excessive, and destructive phases. It is an open question as to whether Lynch pored over moldering old texts of the world's myths and fables before designing his blue key, but it is certain that the time-honored denotation and connotations of the key, box, triangle, and moon crescent are germane to his Mulholland Drive tale.” (Olson, 2008: 533).



**Figure 4.4:** *The box is the hiding place of the feminine subconsciousness with a key fitting into a lock is an overt sexual metaphor.*

As an indicator of metonymy, we can give the following example: in some scenes of the film, we see the Lincoln road sign, which in fact evokes the president Abraham Lincoln, so it is an important metonymic example.

The other metonymy according to Zizek is; “in it Diane plays a double role: at the extradiegetic level, registered spatially as the bed with the rose-colored sheets, she is Lynch's proxy, the director who dreams up a fantasy of personal and professional success in a state of utter

*freedom from external constraints; at the diegetic level, marked by the immersion of the camera into the pillow (a metonymy for Diane's head), she bifurcates into (at least) two female personas, to each of whom she imparts her physical and/or mental attributes: the perky blonde Betty Elms (Naomi Watts), an ambitious and talented actress, and the amnesiac brunette Rita (Laura Elena Harring) with whom Betty falls in love. Although critics tend to identify Betty with Diane and Rita with Camilla, I see Diane primarily as a hybrid of Betty and Rita, and secondarily as a "composite structure" of all the female leads in her fantasy (which includes the blonde Camilla Rhodes.)" (Zizek, 2013: 59).*

## **6. Result and Evaluation**

This film reveals the darkness of the characters who are seeking new identities. Under the influence of conventional narrative patterns, the film conveys the passages on the timeline between dream and reality, revealing the problems arising from the transformation of the dream into the American Nightmare. As it is intended to hypnotize the audiences, it exposes the trauma of the subconsciousness of the audiences to the surface. Emphasizing the lack of a system, Lynch observes the variables between cause and effect. Lynch, who combines semiotics with psychoanalysis, leaves the audiences with the result. In fact, there is no definite conclusion, and the theories put forward have permanent effects on human character.

According to Lynch, there is no definite judgment, because each symbol is being reflected in a person's world in different ways. Just as Lynch's brain structure has not been solved to date, so does Lynch. In addition to the turbidity of the outside world and the confusion of the inner world, the emergence of unfulfilled and occasionally repressed desires creates danger, because as long as the pleasure is unreached, one enters into the dilemma. Barriers cause traumas while trying to reach human dreams. Lynch summarizes the feeling of being trapped between reality and imagination. The things which seem meaningless sometimes become meaningful and sometimes the opposite. Lynch, who gives the feeling of waking up from a dream, searches for the reactions of the audiences' actions until they wake up from the dream, and removes the boundaries of their own worlds.

In the film, which evokes the logical essence, the important thing is seeing and feeling the whole parts. The film, which opens the door to the subject of illusion, is actually a dream put forward with desires and intuitions. The use of spiritual and intuitive power is the main purpose of the

film. If this film is considered to be an unconscious meaning, it can be said that the ‘film watches us’. The audiences do not watch it in an usual sense. They are between the reality and illusion. The film has a magical structure because the audiences are under the spell, and therefore Lacanian reading should be remembered.

Also the film can be read in a manner of Kristeva’s concept of intertextuality, because this film has many references, citations, quotations and intertexts.

“As a work of cinema, “*Mulholland Drive*” takes on the pre-existent films, genres or traditions, and attempts to critically respond to notion of intertextuality in postmodern trend. Lynch viewers have to consider the network of textual relations besides their significance in order to grasp the depth of the meaning of the film; therefore, this section focuses on the network of intertexts from film noir genre particularly *Sunset Boulevard* (Billy Wilder, 1950), *The Wizard of Oz* (Victor Fleming, 1939), *Persona* (Ingmar Bergman, 1966), to Lynch’s earlier films.” (Barzegar, 2014).

This film is open to be read and analyzed, and different point of views and theories can be combined.

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