

Expanded Lynch: Synaesthetic Intermediality as Immersiveness in “Industrial Symphony No. 1”

2.6.2021

[David Lynch Industrial Symphony No. 1 expanded cinema immersion intermediality performance sensoriality synaesthetic](#)

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David Lynch’s cinematic work has always been intermedial, engaging other art forms. In this article I focus on a variety of performatic intermediality, which I deem responsible for Lynch’s atmospheres and his motto of entering into another world. I posit that Industrial Symphony No. 1: The Dream of the Brokenhearted is the key to Lynch’s artistic hybridity as well as the core of the immersiveness his films impart to the viewers. However, this is done differently in the eponymous stage performance (1989) and the deriving television film (directed and edited by Lynch himself, broadcasted in 1990). The theatrical performance is one big, long mood, as Lynch observed, whereas the film version expands upon the immersive experience of the stage and creates a novel approach to audiovisual works in the line of Gene Youngblood’s concept of expanded cinema, and more specifically the “synaesthetic mode”, highly dependent on a stylization achieved in the post-production stage. This spectatorial experience stimulates the sensorium in an almost erotic manner, as Laura U. Marks contends of “haptic eroticism”, and spreads the self-reflexive properties of the film to the entire cinematic medium, as Gilles Deleuze claims of his “crystal-image”. Thus, the more the film commingles (self-)reflexivity and sensoriality, the more it reinforces the viewers’ immersiveness and allows them to enter into another world.

Introduction: Intermediality as the expansion of an artistic practice

This article explores different meanings of the word “expansion” as it produces effect in David Lynch’s oeuvre and specifically *Industrial Symphony No. 1: The Dream of the*

Brokenhearted, a twofold artwork with crucial significance. First, Lynch's *oeuvre* should be considered full-fledged intermedial, and not just cinematic and/or painterly. Yet, its intrinsic performativity should be positioned as a specific type of intermedial relationship within media practice without exactly forming an intermedial aesthetics per se. Second, the film version of *Industrial Symphony No. 1* is an artistic expansion of the stage production and not an adaptation thereof. It paradoxically induces in the viewers both a media consciousness and what I consider to be a sensorial immersion in the artwork, corresponding to Gene Youngblood's concept of "synaesthetic cinema" and how it is perceived by the audience. Third, the opening up of the viewers' senses corresponds to the medium's flaunting of its properties in the form of a Deleuzian flux I call the "becoming-cinematic".

Artistically, besides filmmaking, David Lynch is mostly associated with painting. For example, Allister Mactaggart, in *The Film Paintings of David Lynch* (2010), aiming to guide the readers towards the visual content of Lynch's films and away from the story and overall narrative comprehension, misguidedly uses the expression "film paintings" in an analogy with Lynch's activity as a painter. In reality, none of the six chapters of Mactaggart's book, nor the introduction and conclusion, examines the art of painting per se, and the aforementioned expression is mostly a catchword.^[1] Lynch himself often admitted his inclination for artistic forms other than painting. He confessed that he wished to proceed towards cinema precisely because he felt that painting lacked some properties, notably movement. In an interview with *Starfix* he combines this with the entrance into another world: "What I missed when I looked at paintings was the sound. I waited for a sound to be heard: a wind blowing, perhaps. I also wanted the frame borders to disappear; I wanted to get into the painting. It was a spatial impetus." (1990, 87; quoted by Chion 2001, 19, my translation).

I argue that David Lynch's artistic output needs to be considered differently, especially the cinematic work around which everything else revolves. To begin with, Lynch's artistic versatility, which encompasses a broad spectrum of activities, needs to be taken into account. Indeed, his skills include painting, drawing (comic strips), photography (e.g., the old factories series), design (furniture construction), and music (he composes, writes lyrics and plays the guitar). I wish to address his work as being – and having always been – deliberately intermedial in a general but not universal sense. In this I follow Ginette Verstraete's idea that "[I]ntermediality refers to crossovers and interrelations taking place between the arts and the media" (2011, 7), which necessarily involve more than one medium (Rajewsky 2010, 51). In

other words, I contend that Lynch's cinematic work has always knowingly engaged other art forms. Nevertheless, the case has very seldom been made for the intermedial significance of his work. To my knowledge, only one book expresses this leaning in the title: *David Lynch: mondi intermediali* (edited by Cinzia Bianchi and Nicola Dusi 2019).

In approaching Lynch this way, though, I do not intend to develop an intermedial meta-theory, but only to focus on specific media aspects pertaining to the involvement of the senses and one intermedial property in particular, which I define as performativity. I align myself with Jens Schröter's "formal discourse" on intermediality (2011, 3) in which different media can be united by a common property, or media substratum. I contend that Lynch's intermediality is a result of the desire to combine movement (present in cinema), volume (the cornerstone of theatre), sound (the essence of music), and the obliteration of the screen as such. This combination opens up a field of what I term "performatic intermediality" which calls for further research, especially since it is largely responsible for Lynch's immersive atmospheres.

This concept of mine is applicable to all art works where performance takes place, whether it is theatrical or not, unlike Chapple and Kattenbelt's notion, which restricts intermediality in performance to theatre practices that become visible only through the process of (live) staging (2006, 12). Katti Röttger, who argues for a theatre performance as an event, that is, "an intermedial *process* that [...] makes the audible and the visual phenomenon appear and become accessible to the experience" (2013,7, emphasis mine) is closer to my meaning. She does not think in terms of a theatre performance as a pre-given whole (a hyper-medium that contains other media), but as an interaction between media which makes them occasionally, and separately, perceptible to the spectators. The main property of the performance is, therefore, its ability to change within a performatic context. As an art with actors and/or shapes in motion, film also *performs* but in different ways. Some of these are entirely technical and pre-recorded but made interchangeably visible and audible during the film works.^[2] Within the sphere of intermediality, Schröter too, considers that a medium – as technology or art form – is not a priori constituted but rather formed in action and that intermediality in a more restricted sense is the process of evincing a relationship between "observable media forms" (2011, 16). I am particularly interested in the self-reflexivity of this process (see Paech 2000, 13).

Lynch always claimed that films are “another world to go into”, and that they “are more like fairy tales or dreams” than anything else (Lynch in Breskin 1990, 66). *Industrial Symphony No. 1: The Dream of the Brokenhearted*, with music composed by Angelo Badalamenti, is the perfect example of performatic intermediality. In this article, I analyse its double existence: first as a 45-minute stage performance (1989) and then as a film made for television (1990). Although both products stemming from the same authorial vision are very different and therefore produce dissimilar experiences in their respective audiences, both of them are immersive and extremely appealing to the senses. Moreover, the film version can be considered an example of Gene Youngblood’s “synaesthetic cinema” (1970), a concept used to describe non-commercial films in which the most important is the “design” (plasticity, poetic form, sensual imagery) and not the narrative. For the most part, these are non-normative films, which act upon the viewers’ senses and subscribe to a novel and artistic cinematic language.

Before advancing any further, I must state that immersion is not to be understood here in the technological sense of virtual environments where the sensorial properties of the real world are substituted by digital properties (Mestre 2005, unpaginated), or as a simulated entrance into a three-dimensional environment (William Gibson in Packer and Jordan 2001, xxxi). Neither is it to be taken in the fictional sense of having the feeling of being mentally [or emotionally] absorbed by stories, diegetic worlds and characters (Gander 2005, 11). According to Jane H. Murray, “[I]mmersion is a *metaphorical term* derived from the physical experience of being submerged in water” (1997, 98, emphasis mine). It is precisely in its non-literal meaning that I use it in this article.^[3] As long as there is a “diminishing critical distance” and “an increasing involvement” on the part of the viewer, a plunge into another universe, an ensuing submersion takes place (Grau 2003, 13).

My method is entirely empirical, based on the viewing of all of Lynch’s films and the prior consideration of their characteristics. In my monograph (Chinita 2013) on *Inland Empire* (2006), I had the opportunity to analyse in detail how the director composes his atmospheres to generate immersion and thematically deploy his artistic motto: “We are like the dreamer who dreams and then lives in the dream” (quote from the *Upanishads*, Lynch 2006, 139). My argument here is personal and qualitative, therefore open to criticism. The research focuses less on Lynch’s own discourse in interviews than on the intermedial analysis of the selected study case. If anything, this article aims to be a twofold contribution: to intermediality studies and to David Lynch’s. The main argument I make is that *Industrial Symphony No. 1*, usually

considered a minor piece in Lynch's artistic career, might, actually, be the opposite: the very key to Lynch's artistic hybridity.

1. Performance as three-dimensional ambiance

Theatre is fundamental in Lynch's cinematic career. It has been a crucial leitmotif from *Eraserhead* (1977) to *Inland Empire* (2006) – by way of the Victorian theatre in *Elephant Man* (1980), the cabaret stage in *Blue Velvet* (1986), the Italian theatre-like curtains of the Red Room in *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* (1992), and the Club Silencio in *Mulholland Drive* (2001). Many of the most iconic and climactic scenes in Lynch's films are staged in such locations.



Image 1. *Eraserhead* (1977) (left). Image 2. *Inland Empire* (2006) (right).

In addition, Michel Chion observes that more than a stage, real or metaphorical, the theatre in Lynch's films is part of a compositional strategy wherein the sets are filmed in the manner of a physical proscenium arch. The furniture is positioned frontally in relation to the camera and the characters are centred in the frame. Within this spatial pattern, the geometrical positioning of sofas, curtains and spotlights adds to the overall theatrical effect. However, rather than keeping the audience at an emotional distance, by revealing the intradiegetic viewers' placement and the theatrical apparatus in a Brechtian manner, Lynch accomplishes the opposite. These theatrical scenarios add to the audience's sensorial engulfment in the world of the film, which presents viewers with an *over there* which is visually and aurally appealing. The large bright red curtains and the zig-zag-patterned floor in the Red Room of the Twin Peaks universe is just such an example, meant to corroborate the concept of entering another world, which the film addresses. Sound, being largely pervasive and indivisible, in these cases is made even more palpable due to the assumed three-dimensionality of space.

This is, probably, one of the reasons why sound helps “to propel us into a film, to make us feel inside it”, as Chion claims (2001, 54–55).



Image 3. The Red Room in *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* (1992).

By recurrently using theatre as a leitmotif and a compositional strategy in his films, David Lynch openly affirms his allegiance to performatic intermediality. However, at the end of the 1980’s a new opportunity arose to use it in a different way.

In 1989, the Brooklyn Academy of Music invited David Lynch and his long-time collaborator Angelo Badalamenti to produce a 45-minute stage performance for the New Wave Music Festival. Despite the notoriety generated by the event at the time, having to do with Lynch recently acquired indie-crossover status in the film industry,^[4] relatively few people could attend the presentation, which had only two sessions, both performed on November 10. The following year (1990) the stage performance was released on VHS and laserdisc, in a version edited by Lynch himself and intended for television only. Both versions of *Industrial Symphony No. 1: The Dream of the Brokenhearted* are extremely important for an analysis of intermediality in Lynch’s artistic work.

In order to unravel the connection between art and ambiance and their ability to transpose the spectators into another world filled with stimuli, which immerse their reason and senses, I need to consider each product (or version) separately, as well as some aspects of the medial transposition from one to the other.

The performance *Industrial Symphony No. 1* was presented on a large stage whose stage design remained unchanged from beginning to end. However, the manipulation of lights, sound and smoke completely transfigured the scenery from one moment to the next. The stage was generally very dark, crossed by searchlights and filled with vapour produced by

smoke machines; abrupt and loud noises, such as a siren or wind blowing, filled the space, enhancing visual and audio textures and producing an immersive feeling in the viewers. The only protagonist was the singer Julee Cruise, dressed as an ingénue in a white prom night attire and featuring a blonde wig. This was presumably a hinting at the character of Laura Palmer from *Twin Peaks*, whose television pilot Lynch had already shot. The stage was visited at times by a topless woman writhing herself in a seductive pose like Lula in *Wild at Heart* (played by Laura Dern), and a man suspended from cables emulating her paramour Sailor (played by Nicolas Cage) in the same film, which was under production at the time.

The spectacle contained other bizarre characters, such as a dwarf (played by Michael J. Anderson, a Lynch regular), a tall clarinet player, industrial workers, female dancers, naked toy dolls descending from above on cables like rappelling parachutists, and a gigantic deer-like figure. All of them evolved around and literally on an industrial landscape, featuring a high voltage tower, pipes, cables and a large derelict automobile. Leitmotifs from the *Twin Peaks* universe – both the television series and the cinematic prequel – were all around: a log of wood being sawed, evoking lumberjacks; a visceral deer seemingly skinned, calling to mind the woods and violence; the car, evoking joyrides; and so on. The whole experience was just overwhelming and all-encompassing, triggering the spectators' senses and enveloping them in a non-stop flux of images and sounds. This is important for two reasons: one of them intermedial, the other ontological.

Firstly, the performance was a musical event. It was composed of ten segments – they cannot really be considered musical numbers as the show flowed from one to the other in one big musical continuum. The great majority of them were sung in playback (only *Rockin' Back Inside My Heart* was sung live [Video 1.]); one of them was essentially spoken (with Michael J. Anderson verbalising two different roles) and three others were instrumental. The avant-garde Italian intellectual Ricciotto Canudo claimed that music and film evoked grandiose feelings, were magically suggestive, and conveyed the most profound sensuality (Morel 1995, 72).^[5] For Jacques Aumont, music is plastic (*"plastique"*), poetic and has emotional properties (2003). The performance *Industrial Symphony No. 1* tried to highlight these features, but combining them with eminently theatrical ones.

On the one hand, it seems to me that Lynch and Badalamenti chose to use the oxymoron *Industrial Symphony*, not to deprecate the nature of their work in an ironic fashion, but rather to enhance their very serious purpose of putting on an important musical work, which could

expand the audience's awareness of the musical theatre medium. *Industrial Symphony No. 1* was not a symphony by any account, as it was centred on a pop singer and contained electronic music. It was not a stage musical either since it had no story, only a state of mind and the feeling of sadness pertaining to a supposedly heartbroken girl who was left by her lover. This situation is actually seen in a filmed prologue shot by Lynch with the actors Laura Dern and Nicolas Cage, who were under contract to him at the time for *Wild at Heart*. Nor was *Industrial Symphony No. 1* an opera, notwithstanding its mixture of music and text, because these are both rather abstract, operating at a symbolic level. In sum, the whole show was about ambiance. Lynch himself states that *Industrial Symphony No. 1* is “one big, long mood” (quoted by Zyber 2012), following his recurrent statement about cinema: “A sense of space is so critical in cinema, because you want to go into another world. Every story has its own world, and its own feel, and its own mood” (Lynch 2006, 117).



Images 4–5. Two wide shot images from the stage, resembling the audience's experience.

On the other hand, *Industrial Symphony No. 1* was presented live to an audience. It was a hybrid performance operating in consonance with a Baconian raw logic of sensations. Its aim was “[N]ot to represent but to present... [a] genuine creation, which unfolds in a realm that can only be understood via sensation – viscerally” (Meier 2012, 126). Its sheer presence, its theatrical immediacy, was used for sensorial impact and perceived by the spectators in the auditorium, enveloped as they were by the smoke, the darkness, the filtered lights, the clangourous soundscapes, as well as struck by the performers' gestures and bodies (sometimes perceived floating in space). This was an experience, not an object – as Ivana Brozić claims of theatre in general (2012) – here further heightened by specific performative circumstances. Indeed, the spectators were not only co-present in the overall space of the performance (the auditorium, if not the stage), but they were made a more integral part of it than they would be in a film theatre in front of a finished, immutable product.

However, Brozić's insistence on corporeality as being eminently theatrical and her comment that "[T]he imaginary worlds, the sensations and the significations theatre is said to create, are ultimately located in the spectator. They are a result of perception" (2012, 144) are problematic when applied to Lynch's work *Industrial Symphony No. 1*, because the exact same conditions pertain to the film version. Ultimately, they are a result of the performative intermediality as I conceive of it.

Secondly, the aforementioned ontological problem is the performative nature of *Industrial Symphony No. 1* itself. Brozić's condition for theatrical intermediality resides in mediation (i.e., "the material process of media realization", Elleström 2014, 11). For her, this mediation occurs live on stage without any subsequent technology of communication, a specific technical apparatus for reception, which is the primary condition of existence for cinema. However, she does not consider one single modality of mediation, but several operating together: "[Theatre] is multimedial, an environment created by a multiplicity of mediations (of which the performer is only one) and full of internal allegiances and conflicts". Put this way, *both* artistic versions entitled *Industrial Symphony No. 1* are multimedial and both combine live action with technology, because they unite several media, which can always be told apart from each other, within one single art form (Clüver 2007, 25; Verstraete 2011, 9).



Video 1. Julee Cruise / *Rockin' Back Inside My Heart*. Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QmJzy0WrSXY>.

The theatrical performance contained one instance – the song *Rockin' Back Inside My Heart* – in which three TV sets were brought in and placed at the front of the stage in order to show a video live feed of Julee Cruise in the trunk of a car singing directly to a handheld onstage camera. Although the whole performance took place live on stage, this particular moment is occurring live on video as well with the help of technology, being, therefore, twice mediated.^[6] The film version, on the other hand, contains the audio-visual material recorded during the live performance in which the actors' bodies were serving as mediators, but mixes it with subsequent use of technology in the process of editing and requires yet further technology for reception. Nonetheless, since it is a film made for television, the reception also took place live in that medium. Brozić's idea, which is based on the *here and now* of theatre, does not take into account the hybridity factor to which both theatre and cinema are increasingly prone. Therefore, although her adjective "subsequent" is still central to her idea, I prefer to focus on the multimediality involved and pay equal attention to the production and the reception apparatuses.

According to this rationale, neither version of *Industrial Symphony No. 1* is entirely theatrical nor cinematic; rather both of them are performatic. Their intrinsic hybridity, as a combination of both art forms and inherent mediations, invalidate neat categorizations.^[7] Although I designate the two instances of the artwork as, respectively, theatre performance and film version, I do so for the sake of clarity, since neither of them corresponds to the traditional output of either artistic form.

For example, both instances of *Industrial Symphony No. 1* are self-reflexive and meta-medial in that they force the spectator to be aware of the conditions of technological reproduction, usually embedding other technical media in the overall performance. What is most particular about them, however, is that they reinvent the relationship between the body and the voice of the performer by resorting to the use of technology. The result is a type of "ventriloquism" which Jelena Novak calls "dissociated voice" (2012, 107). Since Julee Cruise sings in playback for most of both art works – although she has a microphone in her hand in the opening song *Up in Flames* – she is "problematizing and redefining" the musical genre conventions, as Jelena Novak claims that post-opera does for opera (Meurer 2014, 41). By separating the actual voice of the singer from the song that she seems to be vocalising, Lynch anticipates his discourse on illusion and unreality contained in the "No hay banda!" skit staged in the Club Silencio scene of *Mulholland Drive* (2001). Even in *Rockin' Back Inside My Heart*, the actual voice is physically disassociated from the (reproduced) body.



Image 6. Live video feed in *Rockin' Back Inside My Heart* (left). Image 7. The dissociated voice in *Club Silencio* (right).

Entering into another world is an overall concern of Lynch, and mediation as the realization of medial properties attracts the viewers' attention to the spatial meaning of medium as something which is in a middle position (therefore, possibly in transit to something else). The narrative immersion implied in the penetration of another spatial and/or cognitive reality by the characters (e.g. the Red Room in *Twin Peaks*) equates with the affective immersion experienced by the spectators upon coming into contact with a unique artistic reality (the famous "Lynch world") itself filled with specific atmospheres. In films, it is not the immediacy and the liveness of the performance that create and sustain this feeling, but rather a different use of the affects, as a mixture of emotions and senses. Thus, as I will argue next, the film version of *Industrial Symphony No. 1* artistically expands upon the stage performance.

2 Sensorial expansion and synaesthetic cinema

The video prologue, a telephone conversation between the character of the Heartbroken Woman (Laura Dern) and the Heartbreaker (Nicolas Cage), provides the contextual framework for understanding Julee Cruise's performance as someone else's dream, as suggested by the film's subtitle. She is referred to in the end credits of the film version as the Dreamself of the Heartbroken Woman; her universe, which is the filmic *Industrial Symphony No. 1*, is a world in its own right, cognitively entered into by a character. However, I am not particularly interested in this expansion, which is merely narrative. Lynch has always posited that his main interest in narrative resides in the possibility of building worlds filled with mystery and not in the transmission of a clear story. Lynch's acknowledgement that he wants to be engulfed in his own atmospheres is much broader than that and has transcendental overtones.

In the very beginning of the book *Catching the Big Fish*, which serves as an abridged version of his personal aesthetics, Lynch states: “The more your consciousness – your awareness – is expanded, the deeper you go towards this source [The Unified Field], and the bigger the fish you can catch” (2006, 1). This is his formula for obtaining inspiration and, consequently, for directing inventive films. In *Expanded Cinema*, Gene Youngblood declares: “Thus, by creating a new kind of vision, synaesthetic cinema creates a new kind of consciousness: oceanic consciousness” (1970, 92). The two statements seem to echo one another, although in interviews Lynch never once refers to Youngblood’s philosophy, nor do I claim that he had any knowledge of it. I only intend to stress the artistic and sensorial interconnection in terms of how films are perceived by both men.

Gene Youngblood advocated an “expanded cinema” predicated on a creative, artistic and innovative approach to art, perceived as a catalyst of change (in a social sense as well) (1970). As I already mentioned here, the real core of this expanded cinema was its “design”, that is, its plastic and poetic form and its sensual imagery. The then newly-available image-making technologies allowed for an expanded communication, where art became an “environment” (43). This was made possible by different venues for art consumption, including films and installations in museums and art galleries. In addition, the filmic experimental trend of the 1960’s benefited greatly from the existence of specialised arthouse movie theatres. This rather mild, because incipient, immersive conception of art coexisted with a self-reflexive quality.

Such seeming paradox was due to the “synaesthetic mode” (42), which together with “an expanded consciousness” on the part of the audience (41), unafraid of physical stimuli and conceptual work, formed a new type of vision. The film artists committed to the synaesthetic mode had the declared aim of rejecting linear plots (and traditional drama altogether) and professed a new synaesthetic reality instead of a merely representative realism. Form overpowered narrative content in a purposely chaotic fashion. In synaesthetic cinema, according to Youngblood, the “artist shoots and manipulates [the] unstylized reality in such a way that the result has style” (107). This process, achieved entirely in the post-production stage, is described by Youngblood as “post-stylization” (107) and often consists of a juxtaposition of incongruities, deliberate alterations or distortions, and a record of the process of its own making. All of this was integral to the result and the viewers’ experience of the films. According to Youngblood, the works made in compliance with the synaesthetic mode evince a “structural relation between the parts and the whole” (85). Thus, the films are

fusions of disparate and unusual materialities. For example, incongruous juxtapositions are obtained through overlapping superimposition, which is a form of syncretism, a combination of several forms into one *single unified form* in perpetual flux. Images fuse constantly with others to the point of indiscernibility. “In synaesthetic cinema they are one total image in metamorphosis” (87); “Synaesthetic cinema is a space-time continuum” (81).

In the film version of *Industrial Symphony No. 1*, the audio-visual shots are really indiscernible from one another, better falling under Gilles Deleuze’s general category of “images” (1985), as I have posited elsewhere concerning *Inland Empire* (Chinita 2013). Since for Deleuze the notion of “image” is abstract and not reducible to pictorial representation alone (e.g., it also includes sound), the term seems completely appropriate in this case. In *Industrial Symphony No. 1* images and sounds are in permanent mutation, metamorphosing into something else, usually via the technique of superimposition and/or long dissolves; they exemplify Youngblood’s synaesthetic film as “one continuous perceptual experience” (86), albeit composed of discrete elements. Shots are truly fused together.



Image 8. Deleuze’s “image”: discrete elements fusing into one another via superimposition.

Deliberate distortions occur whenever there is an interaction of proportions. Since, according to Youngblood, “[T]he fundamental subject of synaesthetic cinema – forces and energies – cannot be photographed” (1970, 87), the result is a seeming visual magma made to be *experienced* by the viewer rather than watched. Overexposures, flashes, conflicts of volume and scale, macro close-ups, and strobing lights, all mentioned by Youngblood as synaesthetic cinema resources, are featured throughout the film version of *Industrial Symphony No. 1*. The contrasts are nearly made palpable, generating an “almost visceral, tactile impact” (100).



Images 9–10. Visceral, tactile impact generated by the use of close-up.

In Image 10, a close-up of Julee Cruise's face, the viewer perceives something like an indented facies. Although Cruise's face is not physically carved, the projection of images *over* her figure generates that impression. This extremely visceral outcome is a direct result of the cinematic technique of superimposition and would not be perceivable as such from afar in the stage version of *Industrial Symphony No. 1*. In *CBF*, Lynch observes: "While many sets are good enough for a wide shot, in my mind they should be good enough for close scrutiny, for little details to show" (2006, 117). In the film version, the director has managed to blend together very dissimilar shot scales in one single Deleuzian image, thereby conjoining the wide shot of the stage with the detailed close scrutiny possible in film. In Image 11 the singer on stage seems to be replicated, not on a screen as is usual with live video feeds, but in the foreground of the self-same image. It is an illusion, a *faux raccord*, but one that plays with the simultaneity of different perspectives provided in different shot scales. "Synaesthesia is the harmony of different or opposing impulses produced by a work of art. It means the simultaneous perception of harmonic opposites" (Youngblood 1970, 81).



Image 11. Harmonic scale opposites in one single "image".

In *Touch*, Laura U. Marks writes about "haptic eroticism", a fluctuation between the proximal and the distant: "In the sliding relationship between haptic and optical, distant vision gives way to touch, and touch reconceives the object to be seen from a distance" (2002, xvi). It is

the dialectic between the surface (of the body) and the depth of field of the image (seen from afar) that is erotic. “Haptic images are erotic regardless of their content, because they construct a particular kind of intersubjective relationship between the beholder and image” (13), Marks claims. In extreme close-ups, which in many cases prevent the correct apprehension of the object/person being filmed, the viewer is so close to the image that, in a sense, there is no barrier between him/her and the film matter. Among the pro-haptic properties mentioned by Marks, one finds videos on film, over- or underexposure, blots of light, silhouettes of human bodies, layered images. [8] Texture is so enhanced that the viewers are immersed through their sensorium. Lynch’s technique in the film version of *Industrial Symphony No. 1* can be said to approximate Marks’s theory, accomplishing haptic eroticism and the consequent immersion. However, there is one significant difference between Marks’s theory and Lynch’s practice. Indeed, the film director does not accomplish this result through a dialectic in which one image substitutes another sequentially; rather he does it in the same image, at the same time, as is demonstrated by Image 11.

By using superimposition as an editing device (i.e., a form of post-stylization according to Youngblood) to simultaneously highlight detail and the general space in the film *Industrial Symphony No. 1*, Lynch does not envelop the viewers/auditors in an atmosphere in the same way that he does the performers of the eponymous stage production. In the film version, the audience is not engulfed by another world; their immersion works in a different way. The film viewers are literally drawn towards the Deleuzian image in its very flux. They appropriate the said image in its haptic eroticism, its intrinsic *movement* between distance and proximity. The superimpositions are conceived of as a velvety textural skin, that the viewers/auditors want to touch with their whole bodies as much as they want the film to touch their sensorium. For the duration of the film, the audience lives in a state of amazement, of cognitive suspension, which is why Brechtian effects are neutralised. Thus, the haptic eroticism experienced is twofold: two types of material are opposed inside one single image (which is never steady but prolongs itself into another one) and this dual effect is reproduced in the viewers in connection with the reception of the entire work as a whole (they feel very close to the work, while simultaneously perceiving it well). They do not identify with characters, they engage with forms and materials instead. Thus, Marks’s haptic eroticism becomes more than a modality of viewing; it is a mode of *experiencing*. As a synaesthetic film, *Industrial Symphony No. 1* is magnetically immersive and is reminiscent of

the lyrics of a song very dear to David Lynch: “Bluer than velvet was the night / Softer than satin was the light” (*Blue Velvet*, by Bobby Vinton, 1963).



Image 12. A feeling of blueness.

As explained by Youngblood (1970), some experimental films of the 1960s, such as Michael Snow's, overtly address the self-reflexive nature of cinema as a medium. They are formal experiences meant to break the illusion and reveal the cinematic technique to the viewers. The film version of *Industrial Symphony No. 1* achieves exactly the same without endangering the sensorial seductive power of Lynch's overall universe. This amounts to a perfect combination of immersive and self-reflexive properties. Examples of the latter are the disclosure of the apparatus during *Rockin' Back Inside my Heart* and the paraphernalia of cables for the suspension of characters in mid-air. Thus Lynch anticipates here what he will accomplish later in full fictional form in the metacinematic *Mulholland Drive* (2001), arguably the most seductive of Lynch's features to date.

This seeming paradox is once more easily resolved with the help of Gilles Deleuze. In his book *Cinema 2 – The Time-Image* (originally published in French in 1985), the philosopher distinguishes the style of modern cinema from that of its classic predecessor by claiming that it consists of “images” which are intrinsically double. This bifacial image is endowed with an internal reflection, made up of the constant permutation of its two opposing sides. While one side has actuality, the other remains virtual, and vice versa. An image is considered “actual” (or real) by Deleuze when it has screen presence, and “virtual” when it is relegated to the background (in other words, it is not the main focus of the film, but lingers somewhere else). In Lynch's film version of *Industrial Symphony No. 1* the same permutation takes place, but because the film evolves as a fast-paced flux in which superimpositions are always taking place, real and virtual coalesce to a larger extent than they do in other films. The blown-up

doubles of the singer Julee Cruise superimposed over her flesh-and-bone likeness may be considered the virtual part of the image, whereas the more clearly in focus and corporeal singer is the actual side.

Katerina Krtilova, in her philosophical approach of the concept of intermediality, considers that a medium is not a fixed ideal entity, but rather a “reflective structure” in permanent mutation (2012, 39). In Deleuzian terms, although he does not focus on intermediality, this corresponds to the notion of “circuit”. Bifacial images are constantly transitioning to something larger than themselves. Individually, they are an embryo (“*germe*”) that propagates the reflex to the whole environment (“*milieu*”), and thereby reveals the latter as an institutional construct. Therefore, by using superimpositions and all the other aforementioned cinematic (and synaesthetic) techniques in the film version of *Industrial Symphony No. 1*, Lynch manages to transform each and all of his “images” in this work in a spark that generates the crystallization of the whole film as such and of its medium as that of cinema. Therefore, I claim that this *becoming-cinematic* is the ultimate expansion of *Industrial Symphony No. 1*. This assertion obviously denies all claims that consider this film a mere remediation of the stage performance made for the secondary medium of television. Philosophically and artistically, this work is no mere recording. Rather, it prepares the viewers for the more complex practices evinced in later Lynch films, namely *Inland Empire*, which is the sum total of the director’s techniques and themes. Furthermore, by anchoring the entire crystallized universe on the senses, Lynch creates an ode to synaesthetic film and contributes in no small measure to the cinematic path of immersion.



Image 13. The Deleuzian crystal-image, or the synaesthetic film at its best.

To conclude: Immersion in the *other world* of art

My purpose in this article was not to analyse how the stage performance of *Industrial Symphony No. 1: The Dream of the Brokenhearted* is transposed to the screen, which would be a case of transmediation (“the translation of one medium into another”, according to Verstraete 2011, 9). Although, strictly speaking, the transposition of a number of core features (musical form, oneiric content, female protagonist, setting) from the stage to the screen makes the film a complex transmediation of media products (Elleström 2014, 24), my focus was not on the media products themselves but on the effects they generate on the viewers. Therefore, I disregard the fact that, in this case, the film (“the target medium”, according to Lars Elleström) “triggers representations of multifaceted media traits similar to those of a source medium” (2014, 22). For me, the two versions of *Industrial Symphony No. 1* are two completely different outputs, although they were made from the same original visual and sonic materials. What interests me is the transposition of an atmosphere from one medium to another, which takes place in the interactions between media but is not media-dependent. This means it is not dependent on the specificity of either qualified media or art form involved, but works around them to achieve a similar result through different processes.

According to Daniel Yacavone, each film is a singular holistic entity (a “film world”), possessing “pronounced sensory, symbolic, and affective dimensions. It provides ‘virtual’ and actual experiences that are at once cognitive and immersive and sensuous” (2015, xiv). Although he is thinking of fictional cinema endowed with a story (a diegetic world or “world-in”), he claims that what really characterises a film as a world, from a philosophical perspective, is the way the materials are used by the filmmakers (“world-of”). Rephrasing this closer to my purposes here, a film is a world whenever there is a medial presentation of the very possibilities of cinema. According to Yacavone, film worlds are immersive experiences for the viewers because, “unlike paintings, films as aesthetic objects have an actual temporal dimension and an event character” (2008, 93). Although *Industrial Symphony No. 1* is a string of performances more than anything else and has no story to which the viewers’ may adhere, like other films it too conveys “a unique world-feeling, recognized by the viewer as such” (98) pertaining to the single artistic style of its creator, David Lynch.

If this apparently unassuming work for television, unjustly discarded by many as of no real artistic import, is to be deemed the *key* to Lynch’s overall cinematic practice, that is due to its performatic intermediality, which also exists in other subsequent Lynch films, but in an

attenuated form. Ultimately, by expanding the viewers' consciousness through an artistic and specifically cinematic modality which Gene Youngblood calls "synaesthetic cinema", Lynch's film version of this work reaches the pinnacle of his intermedial art. The sensorial and artistic expansion produced by Lynch in the film version of *Industrial Symphony No. 1* itself equates the sensations and the resultant immersion generated in the film viewers, and their full adhesion to the auteur's universe. Lynch's peroration of entering another world is an invitation for immersion and expanded consciousness.

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All links verified 25.5.2021

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Notes

[1] Oddly, Lynch's unparalleled cinematic style, which is loosely considered surrealist, is very often compared with those of his favourite painters Francis Bacon and Edward Hopper, neither of whom is Surrealist in the strictest pictorial sense.

[2] I extend the concept of performance to a metaphorical agency and/or context that surpasses the field of Performance Studies, although institutional performances are, indeed, privileged by Lynch, as I will refer shortly.

[3] Cf. *Immersion and the Visual Arts and Media* (Fabienne Liptay and Burcu Dogramaci, eds. Brill/Rodopi, 2015), in which immersion is applied to painting and architecture, photography and cinema, as well as installation art.

[4] With *Blue Velvet*, released in 1986, Lynch had been nominated for an Academy Award for Best Director at the 1987 edition of the Oscars.

[5] Ricciotto Canudo, "Musique et cinéma, langages universels". Originally published in *Comoedia*, No. 3176 (August 1921) and reprinted in *L'usine aux images* (Morel 1995).

[6] I do not call this remediation because it is not an instance of a qualified media being re-inscribed in a different technical media (Elleström 2010, 31). This representation of the media of video and television occurs within the performance and as an integral part of it, and not as a conscious borrowing of media by an altogether different media (see Bolter and Grusin 1999, 44–50).

[7] In Intermedial Studies the word "hybridity", is usually taken as a synonym of intermediality. Paech mentions it, cursorily, as a form which is a mixture of media (2011, 2). Nagib and Jerslev (2014, xviii–xxiii), in following André Bazin's defence of impurity in cinema, try to override the limitations of media specificity, therefore calling attention to the ideological overtone contained in the term "hybridity", and which multimedia, that is also a mixture of media, does not possess. As a feature of intermediality at large, hybridity is employed here as a highly positive term. See also Müller 2010, 345–346.

[8] Richard B. Woodward, in an interview with Lynch in 1990 ("A Dark Lens on America"), mentions the components of David Lynch "consistent film style": slow dissolves, spotlighting, extreme close-ups, figures who emerge out of darkness, the enhancement of textures, (facial) deformities, exaggerated noise, banal dialogue, ridiculously specific and eccentric characters, among other aspects (Breskin, 1992, 57).