

LOST HIGHWAY INTER Active

From Linear Analysis to Interactivity



By Patricia Bermúdez Arboleda



Thesis submitted for the Master in Screenwriting

Media Department - University of Bergen

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INTRODUCTION

All media as extensions of ourselves serve to provide
new transforming vision and awareness,
Marshall McLuhan¹

People watch films and television shows, read books or go to see plays to gain knowledge and to be emotionally moved by a story. In most of the traditional productions, these elements have a specific line of events and actions occurring in a certain environment with certain types of characters and a certain style. All these intrinsic components of a story are referred to as the narrative.

The narration, referring to the way the story is told or presented "is the process by which the plot presents story information to the perceiver"². This process involves several dynamic interactions that perceivers use to interpret aspects of the narrative, trying to find a meaning or an impact to the story.

On the other hand, narrative can also be understood as "a chain of events in cause-effect relationship occurring in time and space..."³ which joins interdependent elements like the design of the scenery and lighting, the camera shots, the editing, the style, the music, the sound track, among other things. All these elements set up the mood and atmosphere of the story, allowing the creator to emphasise or de-emphasise some things in order to maximise its impact.

The complex unity between the elements above creates the basis for the need to explore how films create a narrative form. At the same time, the new technologies of communication and representation have led to new narrative formats, creating new varieties of narrative entertainment like games, web pages or compact discs and new expressive forms in which stories are built or can be built.

¹ Janet Murray. Hamlet on the Holodeck. p: 1

² David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson. Film An Introduction Art. p: 75

³ ibid, p: 65

This new digital-virtual-interactive era allows new ways of perceiving and interacting with the narratives and the technology. Computers, CD-ROMs, DVD, the World Wide Web are new resources or mediums in which we can create narrative stories. These are new mediums in which the possibilities of exploration are determined, not only by the technology capacity, but by the different kinds of information that it offers, new ways of presentation and particularly by our desire to be involved in a creative process.

In this thesis however, I will argue that many of the forms of interaction that these new technologies allow have existed within certain types of non-linearity and traditional non-webbed narratives⁴ before new technologies became prevalent. It is the relation between these 'older' forms of interaction and 'new' forms of interaction that will form the basis of this thesis. To ground this relation further I offer both theoretical discussion and analysis as well as, in the final chapter, a reworking of a film into a non-linear webbed structure.

It is clear that the new interactive, webbed, narratives are going to break some of the 'rules' of traditional and linear forms and concepts, and offer new forms of representation and non-linear narration. For example, aspects of time, space and the relationship between cause and effect are changed in most webbed interactive structures. The effect on these aspects of narration is also a central concern in this thesis.

The thesis also focuses on the ways in which the user's perception of the narrative is effected. Users must enter into new relationships with this non-linear digital world and establish interactions where users are positioned such that they must participate in creating characters, scenes and plots. I will argue that no matter how many possible paths that are presented to the viewer, in both factual and fictional webbed structures, the perceiver creates a narrative within the material.

⁴ 1. non-webbed: traditional. Literature, books. As you would see in cinema.
2. webbed: new technology. CD-ROMs, games, world-wide web.
3. linear: can be found in both non-webbed and webbed. Causality, chronological structure.
non-linear: webbed or not. A film or text.
4. interactive: mental and physical activity.

INTERACTIVITY AND NON-LINEARITY

Before I lay out the structure of this thesis, and expand further on its central objects of study and theoretical framework, let me offer an initial explanation of some central terms amongst them interactivity and non-linearity. These broad and 'multidimensional' terms will also be given more depth through the analyses I offer in the thesis.

Interactivity is referred to within communication studies as "the relationship between the text and the reader, but also to reciprocal human actions and communication associated with the use of media as well as (para-social) interaction via a medium"⁵. Interactivity in other words relates to the relationship between text and reader.

Non-linearity is a text "that is not simply one fixed sequence of letters, words, and sentences but one in which the words or sequence of words may differ from reading to reading because of the shape, conventions, or mechanisms of the text (...) For a text to be non-linear it must have a positive distinction: the ability to vary, to produce different courses"⁶.

It is important to stress here that a film can be set in its structure i.e. seen in a cinema and exist physically in only one form, but be non-linear in that the story does not necessarily begin at the beginning and progress consequently to the middle before reaching the end, and that through multiple viewings are 'read' differently by the reader because of the readers increasing levels of knowledge.

Non-linear films often contain gaps, which require the viewer to engage with the films in order to make sense or a cause-effect narrative out of it. We can draw parallels to this both within reception theory and within literary studies: Wolfgang Iser⁷ and to

⁵ Jens Jensen. Computer Media and Communication. p: 169

⁶ Espen J. Aarseth. Cybertext. pp: 41-2

⁷ For Wolfgang Iser, "(T)he story of a narrative is produced by a 'convergence of text and reader', a process in which the reader enriches the 'literature work' by interaction with the plot. In the adventure game (...) far from moving toward a story by means of a plot with significant gaps, it is the plot that is narrowed down, by a designifying of the gaps".

Espen J. Aarseth. Cybertext. pp: 111-2

studies of montage such as those presented by Sergei Eisenstein⁸ and Lev Kuleshov. I will expand on this nature of these 'gaps' later in this thesis.

For works that can be read physically in a number of ways i.e. with multiple links such as are available on CD-Roms, DVD, computers etc. I will term throughout this thesis as webbed narratives. These obviously involve levels of interactivity and non-linearity, and at times scenes that are linear in structure.

OBJECT OF THE STUDY / CHAPTER OUTLINE

The film I have chosen to concentrate on within this thesis is David Lynch's film, *Lost Highway*, produced in 1997. I have chosen *Lost Highway* because in its original form it offers a complex narrative structure that joins several interactive and non-linear components. This offers me a rich background and allows me to explore the central issues described above.

After an initial analysis regarding the narrative structures and interactive components in the original film, I will create a webbed narrative out *Lost Highway*. The goal then becomes to understand how interactivity and audience perception changes in the move from the non-webbed to the webbed form.

The theoretical framework and methodologies to be used in this thesis are presented progressively in the first three chapters. To prepare for the first analysis of the original film, I explore in Chapter One, the relationship between perceivers and film narration. I argue that it is not possible to understand film narrative without perceivers. I present here also one of the three major theoretical frameworks I utilise in this thesis - Edward Branigan's concepts of narrative and perception. Drawing on Branigan, I focus in this chapter on cognitive processes, narrative comprehension and fiction; introducing elements regarding linear and non-linear formats.

⁸ "(T)he early films of S. M. Eisenstein have been taken up as innovations in a `cinema of montage`, a cinema in which particular meanings are produced through highly foregrounded , and often quite startling, juxtapositions of shots (...) the affective principle which underlines their editing is usually more important than any imperative to construct a coherent fictional space and time".
Pam Cook (Ed). The Cinema Book. p: 218

In Chapter Two, I will introduce the second of the major theoretical frameworks - David Bordwell's concepts of narrativity. Bordwell draws himself on many classical narrative analysts such as Tristan Todorov, and I place Bordwell briefly within this history of narrative analysis. After a presentation of Bordwell and his predecessors, I offer also here an analysis of *Lost Highway* in which I consider what elements of the film can be considered 'classical narrative' (i.e. linear or causal). This chapter also includes a synopsis of the film. An expanded breakdown of the film is available also in the Appendix.

Chapter Two considers also the original film in relation to Bordwell's concepts of anti-narrative or 'art films'. Here I will reintroduce the notion of gaps within non-conventional films and draw parallels to Lynch's use of the uncanny as a way of creating narrative breaks or changes to the flow of events and their perception.

In Chapter Three, I introduce the last of my three theoretical frameworks by drawing from theories of interactivity, new technology and webbed narratives. The theorists I use here include Janet Murray⁹, Jens Jensen¹⁰ and Paul A. Mayer¹¹. I will present some of the new concepts generated with the access to the new technology such as: 'computer media' and 'narrative in Cyberspace'. I return to the question of perception, which was presented in Chapter One, but here in relation to new narrative structures.

Finally, in Chapter Four, I present an alternative webbed structure of *Lost Highway*. I interpolate parameters and generate a version of the plot from one character's point of view. I also suggest a method of analysis that incorporates all the interactive and non-linear elements of *Lost Highway*. This webbed structure makes it possible for the viewer to interact with the story in a new way through inner conflicts, dream-parallel worlds, metaphorical meanings and dualities which allow the viewer to travel from the imagination of the character to other realities.

⁹ Janet Murray. *Hamlet on the Holodeck*. The MIT Press. USA. 1997.

¹⁰ Jens Jensen. *Computer Media and Communication: Interactivity-Tracking a New Concept in Media and Communication Studies*. Oxford University Press. UK. 1999.

¹¹ Paul Mayer (Ed). *Computer Media and Communication: Computer Media Studies, An Emerging Field*. Oxford University Press. UK. 1999.

I do not intend to change the actual narrative of *Lost Highway*, my main objective is to make clear some of the aspects of the film narration in order to create a different point of view of the same events. This activity is motivated by a desire to explore the transitional role of the perceiver from a 'passive' viewer to an active user.

With this brief introduction to the structure of the thesis, I will continue in the next chapter to lay out the first major theoretical framework, Edward Branigan and the concept of perception.

CHAPTER 1

PERCEIVER AND FILM

1.1 A CONSTRUCTIVIST VIEW

In December 28, 1895, a group of Parisians went to the Boulevard des Capucines to see the image of a locomotive moving towards them. The experience was new for them:

"There was a moment of paralysed horror, and then the audience ran screaming from the room, as if in fear of being crushed by an actual train"¹².

While contemporary cinema is not likely to cause this sort of extreme reaction, as audiences enter the cinema with expectations and 'cultural knowledge', we can still say that film has the power to create a world that is perceived as 'more real than reality'. We go into the cinema to view a story that can give us a kind of experience, a kind of mood that is related to the manner in which the film is presented to us. The intensity or emotional force of the film can then only be understood through the spectators who interpret, and elaborate meaning from the stories and texts presented to them.

According to Janet Murray this experience can be compared with an immersion. "This metaphorical term derived from the physical experience of being submerged in water"¹³ allows the perceivers to be surrounded by a completely different reality, where all their attention and perceptual senses are involved. Perception, intrinsic to all human beings, is an activity generated by sensorial stimulus, which creates an internal conscious process of deductions, assumptions, expectations and hypotheses.

¹² Janet Murray. Hamlet on the Holodeck, p: 65

¹³ *ibid*, p: 98

This process, according to Constructivist Theory¹⁴, is an act of identification and testing of hypotheses of the information around us. When we watch a film, our cognitive process 'reads' a narrative. We recognise actions and characters; we take fragmentary scenes and mentally supply the missing actions; we take the separate spaces of the various sets and merge them into a continuous space. This joining of all the narrative elements is given by the cognitive 'schema' that builds upon our own systems of knowledge and beliefs.

Both Bordwell/Thompson¹⁵ and Edward Branigan¹⁶, theoreticians I will be using for these initial chapters, have built upon Constructivist Theory for their own theories of the cognitive processes within film reception and interpretation. Bordwell offers one explanation of this process:

"To understand a film is to grasp what happens and where, when, and why it happens. Thus any schemata for events, locations, time and cause/effect may become pertinent to making sense of a narrative film"¹⁷

Branigan offers another:

"(W)e tend to understand it by constructing large-scale hierarchical patterns which represent a particular story"¹⁸.

In other words we bring our cognitive, cultural and psychological patterns to every story in a dynamic process. Branigan in particular argues that the perceiver uses different narrative schemas, which organise a special form of assembling and understanding information.

¹⁴ "Constructivist theory of psychological activity; descend from Helmholtz, it has been the dominant view in perceptual and cognitive psychology since 1960s. According to Constructivist theory, perceiving and thinking are active goal-oriented processes"

David Bordwell. Narration in the Fiction Film. pp: 30 - 1

¹⁵ David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson. Film and Introduction Art. McGraw-Hill, Inc. USA. 1993.

¹⁶ Edward Branigan. Narrative Comprehension and Film. Routledge. USA-UK. 1992.

¹⁷ *ibid*, p: 34

¹⁸ Edward Branigan. Narrative Comprehension and Film. p: 16

These schemas are 'networks' of interpretation created also from our previous knowledge, cultural assumptions and values. In this way, the main aim of the cognitive-perceptual processes will be to create a coherent story.

Considering these first points, it is understandable that the scene at the Paris café had a tremendous emotional force that was provoked by the representation of the locomotive of the Lumière brothers. The reaction was strong in part because the perceivers could interpret the image sufficiently to recognise the event presented to them - they took a 'constructivist view', of the film and its structure of information, narration and aesthetics. However they lacked the modern audience's cultural baggage in which they could have contextualised the viewing situation and been aware of its lack of real danger.

1.2 CANONIC PERCEPTION

Bordwell argues that the most common schemata structure for narratives, fictional or factual, is within a 'canonical' story format with an introduction, middle and end in that order. Bordwell refers himself to the studies of dramatic structuration of Aristoteles, Todorov, and Brecht, among others. In this thesis I will however be utilising primarily Bordwell's analyses of dramatic structure developed on the basis of these earlier theoreticians. Presented with this structure, Bordwell argues, the comprehension of the viewer does not decline, because the narrative has clear goals and follows defined cause-effect connections:

"The rough shape of syuzhet¹⁹ and fabula²⁰ is likely to conform to the canonic story of an individual's goal-oriented, causally determined activity. The spectator knows the most likely stylistic figures and functions. The spectator has internalised the scenic norms of exposition, development of old causal line, and so forth. The viewer also knows the pertinent ways to motivate what is presented"²¹.

Bordwell refers to many Hollywood films as having a 'canonical-classical' structure, built with a certain kind of narration procedures, where in addition to the clear cause-

¹⁹ Syuzhet translated as "plot". David Bordwell. *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology*. p: 18

²⁰ Fabula translated as "story". Ibid, p: 18.

²¹ *ibid*, pp: 28-9

effect structures and goal-orientations, the films often follow generic conventions which the viewer is likely to have knowledge of. I will expand on the elements of this format in chapter 2 but raise it here, as it is an important part of understanding how films are perceived and interpreted.

One example from classic Hollywood, which Bordwell doesn't refer to, but which I would argue clearly follows this classical-canonical structure is *Marnie* (USA, 1964; directed by **Alfred Hitchcock**). The story begins when a female character, an expert and compulsive thief, is confronted with a particular problem - an uncontrollable desire to steal money from her office. In the process, *Marnie* is faced by other circumstances such as the discovery of her ploy by her boss and her own childhood traumas. At the end of the story, her problems are solved: *Marnie* reveals a story which explains the causes of her compulsive desire. A goal or state of equilibrium is reached.

The narrative construction in this film rolls out the events chronologically and linearly. The viewer, therefore, does not need to work or 'manipulate' the events too much, because it is a 'simple' structure: exposition, confrontation and resolution (dialectic).

The viewers habitual 'classical' cognitive process is related to all the elements (editing, scenography, character-stereotyping etc.) inside the plot and not only the sequence of events. However, the perceiver has to fix the temporal progression of these elements to comprehend the structure and meaning of the narrative.

1.3 PERCEPTION AND NON-CLASSICAL STRUCTURES

Viewers, readers or perceivers (I will predominantly use the latter term) are also able to interpret material that does not follow this classical structure. They can re-arrange or re-interpret non-classical structures or non-linear stories through the same 'canonic schemata' i.e. they re-position the order of events. The way the events are presented does not matter, the perceivers always create a linear structure to understand the story.

This non-linear structure exists within numerous mainstream films (particularly within the crime or murder-mystery genres), but is perhaps more prevalent in non-mainstream filmmaking. One example of a non-mainstream film which 'begins' in the middle of the story is *Shine* (Australia, 1996; directed by **Scott Hicks**). In this film, David, the protagonist is middle-aged and mentally ill. At the start of the film he runs towards a restaurant trying to find a piano. (This scene is also returned to at the middle of the film where it is in its 'proper' place). After the initial scene, the story returns to David's childhood, which is dominated by an overbearing father who teaches him to play the piano.

The plot continues with flashforwards and flashbacks. In the past, we discover that his father has periodically tormented and rejected him which, combined with the pressures of mastering such concertos as Rachmaninoff's, has led to a downward spiral into mental illness. In the present, in other words the contemporary time of his search for the piano, the opening scene, David is lying down on the floor, out of his mind. The flashbacks stop and the story continues into the future from the middle scenes that we saw before. The story ends when Lynn Redgrave, a woman who truly understands him helps him to re-enter into the society. In other words, also here some form of equilibrium is reached though a more precarious one.

In spite of the fact that this film shows the events in different order, the viewer builds a linear and chronological story. Branigan also argues for this form of re-interpretation with non-consecutive narrative structures:

"(T)he spectator realises filmic elements as a series of causal evaluations: as consecutive (and); as chronological (then); as aligned to social or generic convention"²²

In understanding how this takes place, Branigan recognises the ability of the perceivers to utilise different kinds of functions to confirm or refute the temporal sequences:

²² Edward Branigan. Narrative Comprehension and Film. p: 26

"In film our schematic constructions are typically guided by eight functions: 1. Abstract (title) or prologue; 2. Orientation or exposition; 3. Initiating event; 4. Goal (statement of intent); 5. Complicating action; 6. Climax and resolution; 7. Epilogue; and 8. Narration"²³.

All the narrative functions that help us to understand the story are related not only with our cognitive process but also with our prior experience and our cultural values. The capacity to create a mechanism of information relates also to the fact that perception is an acquired skill, that can change or be modified for the new situations or multiple possibilities created in the narration. It is this lack of acquired skill that effected the Parisian audience.

1.4 NEW ACTIVE PERCEPTION

We have argued above that our perception has been conditioned by a classical-canonic structure, however we are able to re-order or re-interpret events that do not follow the classical structure. In this sense the perceiver takes on a more active role. This can be taken one step further with texts in which the perceiver is presented with a more 'open structure' in which cause and effect, and goals are not clearly stated.

"Eco develops a dichotomy between 'open' and 'closed' works: works with several plausible interpretations contra works with only one plausible interpretation (...) Umberto Eco declares that these contemporary pieces, in which the performer must choose a sequence from several alternatives, are 'open' in a far more tangible sense"²⁴

Taking one example from contemporary literature, Julio Cortazar's *Rayuela*²⁵ is a novel in which the reader has the possibility to create different connections within the story. If we read the book from the beginning and follow the chapters orderly, it is possible to establish the exact moment in which the story begins and ends (the beginning is in the beginning and the end at the end).

However Cortazar promotes different readings of the book and gives the reader a guide in which the reader is encouraged to begin the book at various places. The

²³ Edward Branigan. *Narrative Comprehension and Film*. p: 31

²⁴ Espen J. Aarseth. *Cybertext*. pp: 51-2

²⁵ Julio Cortázar. *Hopscotch (Rayuela)*. New York: Pantheon. 1966

book can then be reread numerous times with each reading providing a different yet comprehensible story.

Therefore the canonic structure will not be enough to build a comprehensible understanding of the story.

Janet Murray offers examples of other such narratives in her book *Hamlet on the Holodeck* and calls these 'immersive stories' and considers also these structures as appearing in stories told with new technology:

"Such immersive stories invite our participation by offering us many things to keep track of and by rewarding our attention with a consistency of imagination (...) in digital environments we have new opportunities to practice this active creation of belief"²⁶

In chapter 3 I will expand on the active perceiver in relation to digital environments and webbed narratives, at this stage however I will continue the exploration of non-linear structures within traditional, non-webbed literature and film.

In relation to non-linear stories, Branigan argues that the viewer-perceiver not only interprets a film as "regulation of conflicts among competing spatial, temporal, and causal hypotheses", but also creates a "new and imaginary temporal order in the story"²⁷ when the story offers alternative temporal relationships.

The spectator creates "temporal continuity, ellipsis, overlap, simultaneity, reversal and distortion"²⁸; and in this process the constructive role appears in different ways. At the same time, Branigan refers to spatial patterns such as chains, gaps, reversals, and distortions, which make sense in relation to filmic temporality.

I will expand upon the non-linear aspects of the film under study, *Lost Highway*, in the second half of chapter 2. I offer here however a first brief discussion of the necessity of why *Lost Highway* needs a broader approach including perception than a narrow narrative or dramatic structuration analysis of the film. In the last part of this

²⁶ Janet Murray. *Hamlet on the Holodeck*, p:111

²⁷ Edward Branigan. *Narrative Comprehension and Film*, p: 41

²⁸ *ibid*, p: 42

chapter I will continue to draw on Branigan's theory about fiction and narrative, which opens further ways to conceive of perception.

1.5 LYNCH'S LOST HIGHWAY FIRST REFLECTIONS ON THE NEED FOR A BROADER APPROACH

David Lynch, the independent American filmmaker, has created a number of controversial films in the last 20 years. According to Mike Hartmann when *Lost Highway* came out in 1997, it was received with both 'excited appraisal' and 'unsympathetic disbelief':

"European audiences were more enthusiastic in welcoming Lynch's visions. From *Eraserhead* onwards, through *The Elephant Man*, *Dune*, *Blue Velvet*, *Wild at Heart*, *Twin Peaks* and *Fire walk with me*, Lynch's film have been immensely popular overseas, especially in France and Japan"²⁹.

Lynch's visionary style has always been cautious not to cater to mass appeal. All his films - except the *Elephant Man* and *The Straight Story* - play with non-conventional film narrative, creating disturbing confusions, perceived by the audience as "the absence of those rules that afford comfort and orientation"³⁰.

As Chris Rodley says:

"(I)t is hard to define not only the experience of watching a Lynch film but also to pinpoint the very nature of what one has seen, it is because the uncanny - in all its nonspecificity - lies at the very core of Lynch's work"³¹.

Lynch has mobilised the enigmatic themes of the mind, dreams and nightmares through his films; difficult elements to describe in coherent-linear narratives and more often found in narrative structures of 'art film'. I will return to this point in chapter 2.

²⁹ Mike Hartmann wrote an essay titled: On the Lost Highway: Lynch and Lacan, Cinema and Cultural Pathology. 1997. www.geocities.com/mike_hartmann/papers/wallace_2.

³⁰ Barry Gifford. Co-writer of *Lost Highway*. Article: Lost Highway: The Solution. 1997. www.lynchnet.com

³¹ Chris Rodley (Ed). Lynch on Lynch. Introduction. p: ix

Lost Highway is a clear example of a complex and non-linear narrative. Considered an avant-garde /surrealist/ art film, it is part of contemporary narration where non-linearity and interactivity are also present and expected. This means that we will need another kind of approach than relatively passive perception of classical forms to understand and be involved with *Lost Highway*.

As David Foster Wallace says:

"You don't feel like you're entering into any of the standard unspoken and/or unconscious contracts you normally enter into with other kinds of movies. This is unsettling because in the absence of such an unconscious contract we lose some of the psychic protections we normally (and necessarily) bring to bear on a medium as powerful as film"³².

With these comments an analysis of *Lost Highway* must be understood in relation not only to the narrative structure within the film but also the interpretative process. The ramifications of this approach must include both the immediate act of interpreting and the contextualisation of the objects and images viewed within the film.

1.6 BRANIGAN'S FICTION, NARRATIVE AND PERCEPTION

Branigan offers two topics that can clarify the narrative process related with perceivers also in relation to a film, such as *Lost Highway*.

Branigan emphasises that "narrative is a particular way of organising information to form a 'scene of action', a 'temporal progression' and the dramatisation of 'an observer of events'". He differentiates between "non-narrative ways of assembling information, such as dictionaries, indexes, catalogues, legal contracts, and others" with fictional narratives³³. In relation to fiction Branigan says, "the description of fiction involves the quite different kind of question of how a given assembly of data relates to our ordinary understanding of the world"³⁴.

³² *Lost Highway* article. www.lychnet.com

³³ Edward Branigan. *Narrative Comprehension and Film*. p: 192

³⁴ *ibid*, p: 192

Branigan believes that fiction guides us to 'connect text and world in a special way': "(A) fiction does not determine exactly what object or objects it represents, and it is openness which distinguishes fictional reference from other sorts of reference"³⁵. In this sense, "fiction can not be understood with out our ability to interpret and our everyday abilities"³⁶ to join the fiction world.

He argues that the fictional aspect of the narrative is concerned with how we are able to learn from or through narrative, with how we come to believe in a narrative 'truth' and find a value in it.

"Fiction is much more sophisticated than lying. To someone who did not understand the separate conventions of fiction, it would seem that fiction is merely lying"³⁷.

Jumping out of tenth floor windows and still surviving is, as a rule, a fiction which cannot be consistently demonstrated, therefore fiction "does not determine exactly which object or objects it represents"³⁸. Branigan argues that "an element of choice is built into the text requiring the perceiver to search and exercise discrimination in assigning a reference to the fiction in applying it to a more familiar world"³⁹.

Therefore, the perceivers must find their own references, given by their prior experiences or their daily experience, to interpret the fictional world.

Branigan adds an important perspective that are related with the pro and post filmic events, "(W)hen a film is experienced fictionally, reference is not to the profilmic event in which a set is decorated and an actor given direction, but rather to a postfilmic event in which patterns are discovered through active perceiving that affects the overall structure of our knowledge"⁴⁰.

Then, fiction is considered a "complex way of comprehending the world in which one is first required to hold open sets of variables while searching for a reasonable fit

³⁵ Edward Branigan. Narrative Comprehension and Fiction Film. p: 194

³⁶ *ibid.* p: 198

³⁷ *ibid.* p: 193

³⁸ *ibid.* p:194

³⁹ *ibid.* p:194

⁴⁰ *ibid.* p: 200

between language and lived experience, between sets of symbols and acts of the body"⁴¹.

With this in mind, *Lost Highway's* narrative and fiction operate like other interpretations within "a broad spectrum of interpretative negotiations between referential certainty, semi-determinacy and uncertainty", a suspicion well supported by the effects of *Lost Highway*.

For example the 'unusual evocations of time'⁴² which disrupt the causality of a beginning, middle and end. What the viewer must 'work' for is in determining "acts to delay and expand the kinds of searching and restructuring of prior knowledge"⁴³.

Branigan argues that the traditional relations between fiction and narrative are problematic because fiction is indeterminate and non-specific, its challenge will be to discover what it is about, and of course the perceiver has to find his/her structure of knowledge or presuppositions. "In fiction our purpose is to discover how the text refers to what we already know"⁴⁴.

Film is experienced fictionally, its patterns have to be discovered through active perception, and the truth-values of it have to go through schemas and presuppositions. Tying filmic cognition to general perception once more, Branigan concludes by saying that "narrative comprehension is a way of recognising the causal efficacy of things and in understanding a story, we are imagining and tracing out several, or many, of the possibilities for the being of an object"⁴⁵.

I will utilise and expand on these concepts of perception and narrative in chapter 3 in relation to non-linear narratives and new technologies. They are, as I argued earlier, fundamental in any understanding of linear, non-webbed representations as well as non-linear webbed and non-webbed structures.

⁴¹ Edward Branigan. *Narrative Comprehension and Film*, p: 194

⁴² *ibid.* p: 195

⁴³ *ibid.* p: 195

⁴⁴ *ibid.* p:196

⁴⁵ *ibid.* p: 217

CHAPTER 2

NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

As a first step in chapter 1 we saw that the causal efficacy of the events in a film structure determines in part how it will be interpreted. A film can have several, or many, possibilities to be explained according to the profilmic and postfilmic references. Some of these can be understood easier, if they are constructed into a canonical format; while others will need more logical associations to be interpreted, owing to the construction of its narrative structure.

In this chapter I first present some of the concepts in classical narrative structure that focus on David Bordwell's theory. Second I make a classical-linear analysis of *Lost Highway* based on Bordwell's concepts. Third I introduce some of the principles of alternative narrative structures and concepts of 'art film' or 'art cinema' from Pam Cook, thereby defining new perspectives to analyse non-linearity in *Lost Highway*.

I open this chapter with a brief synopsis of *Lost Highway*. A full breakdown of the film is provided in the appendix.

2.1 SYNOPSIS: *LOST HIGHWAY* (1997)

Fred Madison, a jazz saxophone player, suspects that his wife, Renée, is being unfaithful. Mysterious video tapes of their house, shot from both outside and then inside (while they sleep), begin to arrive anonymously, and Fred meets a Mystery Man, who plays tricks on him. Later, on one of the videotapes, perceivers glimpse what looks like a butchered Renée. Arrested for murder, Fred experiences a series of blinding headaches.

The next day, garage mechanic Pete Dayton awakes in Fred's cell, unable to explain how he came to be there. Released, Pete suspects that things are not quite right. His girlfriend, Sheila, speaks enigmatically about how he seemed to change on a certain

night. Pete then meets Alice who looks similar to Renée (they are in fact played by the same actress) Renée is a girlfriend of the gangster Mr. Eddy. Pete and Alice begin a passionate affair.

Alice convinces Pete to rob Andy, a porn video maker, so they can get away from 'it all'. Andy is accidentally killed and they flee to the desert and the Lost Highway hotel. With the police now on Pete's trail, Alice suddenly rejects him. Fred replaces him. Armed with a video camera, the Mystery Man reappears, as does Mr. Eddy - who is killed by Fred -. Sirens blazing, police cars chase the screaming Fred along a dark desert highway.

2.2 FILM TEXT

Bordwell, like Branigan, argues that it is impossible to consider our world without stories. Narrative permits us to make a sense of the world. Films, television shows, books, paintings, dance and many other cultural expressions present us with stories. All the information around us finds a sense through narrative procedures. In this way, narrative cannot be a static form, it is mutating all the time in different aspects of form and meaning.

The evolution of film narrative has changed for different reasons and perspectives: technological, economic, aesthetic, sociological, industrial, authorial, genre; all of these aspects have influenced how and why stories are presented to us.

At the same time theories have based their approaches of cinema around these perspectives, creating different ways of understanding narratives. All of these theoretical approaches have taken different aspects to analyse film narrative.

I have chosen to use Bordwell's theory and its main arguments about classical narrative, because his approach reveals parameters exclusively about the process of film narrative. Bordwell builds his own theories on other approaches, such as: Claude Lévi-Strauss, who analyses the structure of myth in order to reveal representational

functions; Christian Metz and his 'grande syntagmatique'⁴⁶; and Vladimir Propp's analysis of the magical fairy tale about narrative as structure⁴⁷.

David Bordwell, who has designed a theory considering film narration and its own dynamic structure with goals and elements related to this media, argues that some of the narrative elements taken from some of these approaches do not explain exactly how the film's narrative functions because they are based on other approaches such as literature. Of course he is not refusing the contributions of these theories; but he explores the narrative structure through of the elements and dynamic of film itself.

I begin the analysis of the complex narrative structure of *Lost Highway* by taking some general parameters of Bordwell's theory of classical film to analyse *Lost Highway* in a 'traditional/linear' way. Later, I expand the analysis to include alternative narrative and concepts of 'art film'.

2.3 FILM FORM

At this point I wish to note some of the main points or 'paths' cited by David Bordwell about how narrative functions in film, in order to explain the differences between story, plot and style. These main 'paths' are related also to how the perceivers recreate a story. I apply these paths later in the analysis of *Lost Highway* in section 2.5.

⁴⁶ Metz's theory elaborates the notion of the *grande syntagmatique* that found a reply to his first question about the artifice which qualifies the cinema as a language. This was seen as residing in the organisation of images into a narrative structure. The *grande syntagmatique* aimed, then, to identify and classify the segments of narrative, the autonomous shot and seven kinds of longer sequences called *syntagmas*, which, articulated together, produce the temporal and spatial variations which tell the story of the film.

Metz broke these down according to a simple taxonomy of binary oppositions which, he hoped, would be exhaustive. He believed that by charting the frequency of the various *syntagmas* in different films, it would be possible to describe their style with greater precision than before and to pinpoint changes in film language over an historical period.

Pam Cook (Ed). *The Cinema book*. pp: 229-30

⁴⁷ *ibid*, pp: 234-36

2.3.1 Strategies

Bordwell makes some distinctions between the story that is represented in the film and the story that the perceiver creates of it; he considers causal, temporal and spatial joins. He recognises three main narrative paths which designate how narrative functions in film:

Fabula or Story: This is an imaginary construction with which we create progressively and retroactively. The action is chronological, in a chain of cause and effect and inside of a single pattern of time, space and causality. "The set of all the events in a narrative, both the ones explicitly presented and those the viewer infers, composes the story"⁴⁸.

Syuzhet usually translated as "plot" describes all the visual and audible elements inside the film. The plot includes, first, all the story events that are directly depicted. Secondly, the film's plot may contain material that is extraneous to the story world (It's 'non-diegetic elements'⁴⁹).

" (S)tory and plot overlap in one respect and diverge in others (...) The story goes beyond the plot in suggesting some events which we never witness. The plot goes beyond the story world by presenting non-diegetic images and sounds which may affect our understanding of the story"⁵⁰.

Style: is a system that uses film techniques characteristic of a single film or a group of films. "The syuzhet embodies the film as a 'dramaturgical' process; style embodies

⁴⁸ David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson. Film an introduction art. p: 66

⁴⁹ "The total world of the story action is sometimes called the film's *diegesis*. In the opening of *North by Northwest*, the traffic, streets, skyscrapers, and people we see, as well as the traffic, streets, skyscrapers, and people we assume to be offscreen, are all diegetic because they are assumed to exist in the world that the film depicts. The film's plot may contain material that is extraneous to the story world. For example, while the opening of *North by Northwest* is portraying rush hour in Manhattan, we also see the film's credits and hear orchestral music. Neither of these elements is diegetic, since they are brought in from outside the story world. (The characters cannot read the credits or hear the music). These elements are thus *non-diegetic elements*".

ibid, p: 67

⁵⁰ ibid, p: 67

it as a 'technical' one"⁵¹.

2.3.2 Principles

Bordwell argues that in the sense of comprehending narrative film, it is necessary to recognise some principles that, he assumes, are fundamental to the story constructions. I explain these principles briefly in order to use them in the analysis.

Narrative Logic: this refers to the causal construction of the fabula: an event is consequence of another event, of a character trait or other motive. The plot makes this process easier to create linear causal inferences. This narrative logic also includes principles of similarity and difference, Bordwell refers to it as 'parallelism'⁵².

Time: the plot (syuzhet) permits to construct stories in any way. However, it suggests that the events of the story occurs in a determinate time (duration); or that it take place any number of times (frequency). The temporal representation changes in every individual context of the film.

Space: the fabula occurs in a spatial frame of reference. The plot facilitates the construction of the space in the story through ambience, positions and paths assumed for the characters.

Syuzhet and Style: in a classical film the plot controls the style. According to the Formalists, the syuzhet is the "dominant", because it uses film techniques that contribute to create a film style; but only like elements of the syuzhet.

2.4 NARRATIVE

"Narration is the process whereby the film's syuzhet and style interact in the course of cueing and channelling the spectator's construction of the fabula. Thus it is not only when the syuzhet arranges fabula information that the film narrates. Narration also includes stylistic processes

⁵¹ David Bordwell. Narration in the Fiction Film. p: 50

⁵² David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson. Film an introduction art. p: 57

(...) Narration is the dynamic interaction between the syuzhet's transmission of story information"⁵³.

Narrative is a particular way of organising information to form a scene of action, a temporal progression and the dramatisation of an observer of events. In contrast to non-narrative ways of assembling information, such as dictionaries, indexes, catalogues, legal contracts, and others; narrative involves the question of how a given assembly of data relates to our ordinary understanding of the world. Here issues surface such as: truth, appropriateness, plausibility, rightness or realism is involved.

Considering these concepts, Bordwell says that narrative can be studied as:

Representation: how it refers to or signifies a world or body of ideas. This we might call the 'semantics' of narrative, and it is exemplified in most studies of realism.

Structure: the way its components create a distinctive whole. An example of this 'syntactic' approach would be Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale*⁵⁴.

Act: a dynamic process of presenting a story to a perceiver.

These ways to study narrative cited by Bordwell will guide the analysis in section 2.5.

2.4.1 Classical narrative

"In the classical narrative structure, events in the story are organised around a basic structure of enigma and resolution. At the beginning of the story, an event may take place which

⁵³ David Bordwell. *Narration in the Fiction Film*. p: 53

⁵⁴ As a result in 1958 the first English edition appeared, entitled "*Morphology of the Folktale*". The initial and principal aim of Propp's research was to find a reliable system of organising and categorising Russian fairy-tales. As a first step towards deciding how to classify them, he broke down the narrative of each one into its constituent parts which he called functions.

Each function represented a single action and, as the word implies, was defined in terms, not of the literal event taking place, but of the function it performed within the overall development of the story. As a result, identical acts can have different meanings and vice-versa. This view of narrative as an autonomous object, which obeys its own inner logic, was also to become extremely important within film criticism.

Pam Cook (Ed). *The cinema book*. pp: 234-36

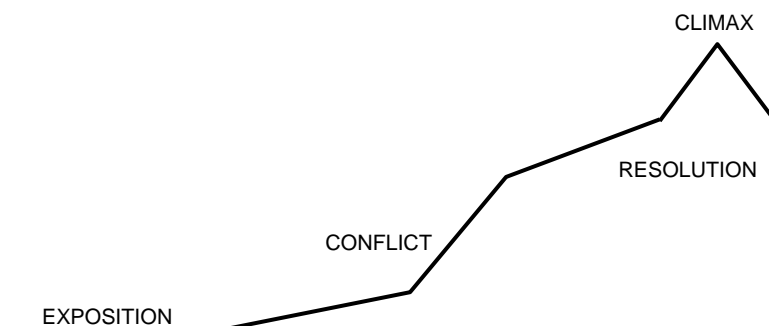
disrupts a pre-existing equilibrium in the fictional world. It is then the task of the narrative to resolve that disruption and set up a new equilibrium"⁵⁵.

The classical narrative is governed by the verisimilitude of the representation, which is given for the spatial location of events in the narrative and the temporal order in which they occur. Temporal and spatial coherence are preconditions of the cause-effect logic of events in the classical structure. Events are also propelled forward through fictional characters.

The ideal classical narrative is a story with a beginning, middle and end. The cinematic codes go from the beginning through to the resolution, keeping the story moving along. The causal links between events have to be clear; creating a credible fictional world.

According to Bordwell classical narration has a particular configuration of normalised options for representing the story (fabula) and for manipulating the possibilities of syuzhet (plot) and style.

The classical linear narrative structure "defined individuals who struggle to solve a clear-cut problem or to attain specific goals. In the course of this struggle, the characters enter into conflict with others or with external circumstances"⁵⁶.



A character's goal usually provides the action story: what she or he wants, this goal provides the motivation in the actions and the underlying emotional plot. "In the

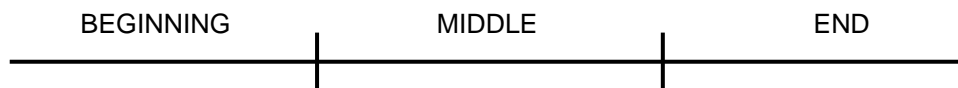
⁵⁵ Roland Barthes cited by David Bordwell. Narration in the Fiction Film. p: 50

⁵⁶ David Bordwell. Narrative in Fiction Film. p: 157

course of the struggle, the characters enter into conflict with others or with external circumstances. The story ends with a decisive victory or defeat, a resolution of the problem and a clear achievement or nonachievement of the goals”⁵⁷.

A classical narrative structure is also structured around scenes and sequences. A scene is an action that takes place in one location; a sequence is a series of scenes built around one concept or event. Each scene has a mini-goal or plot point that sets up and leads the audience into the next scene, eventually building the sequence.

Some scenes and many sequences have a:



“The classical segment is not a sealed entity. Spatially and temporally it is closed, but causally it is open. It works to advance the causal progression and open up new developments (...) The montage sequence tends to function as a transitional summary, condensing a single causal development, but the scene of character action (...) is more intricately constructed”⁵⁸.

2.5 ANALYSIS: CLASSICAL / LINEAR

Based in these first general considerations about classical narrative structure drawing on Bordwell’s theory I return to the analysis of *Lost Highway*. I will argue that *Lost Highway* has classical elements in its narrative. I refer in this analysis to the descriptive breakdown (B) of the film in the appendix.

2.5.1 The Structure

"I think that *Lost Highway* is really reflective of the time. There's a big revolution in terms of the demand on your brain; it looks like there'll be no end to it things are changing so fast it seems like you can't keep up with it. I think, for us, it exists as a metaphor”⁵⁹.

⁵⁷ *ibid*, p: 157

⁵⁸ David Bordwell. *Narrative in Fiction Film*. p: 158

⁵⁹ Barry Gifford. Co-writer of *Lost Highway*. www.lynchnet.com/lh/cinebg.html

Lost Highway's has a complex narrative structure, difficult to define only in classical terms. However, I initiate the analysis in the classical way. Let me reiterate classical structure. In general, the classical 'paradigm' is conformed by the first act, second act and third act; or the beginning, the middle and the end.

In classical fabula construction, "causality is the prime unifying principle. Analogies between characters, settings, and situations are certainly present, but at the denotative level any parallelism is subordinated to the movement of cause and effect"⁶⁰.

I have divided *Lost Highway* in three parts:

FIRST PART

Following these points, after the credit titles (see B: 1), *Lost Highway* begins when Fred Madison is smoking; the doorbell rings and a voice intone over the intercom: "Dick Laurent is dead". Fred does not yet know who is or was Dick Laurent. Therefore, this statement creates a 'classical enigma' in the plot.

At the end of the film, Fred goes to his house and delivers exactly the same message "Dick Laurent is dead", into his own intercom. This 'repetition' of the scene with a difference, Fred is outside of the house, can frustrate the cause-effect logic of events. However, if we see the development of the plot from the beginning until the end we can assume that it is possible to follow it in a linear way.

This part (see B: 1-10) is also the 'exposition' of the story, where we meet Fred Madison, a jazz saxophonist player, who suspects that his wife, Renée, is being unfaithful. We recognise that he suffers a kind of stress related with his dreams (see B: 6), and also we learn about his personality when he talks with the detectives about the video (see B: 8). From the description of Fred, the main character, it is clear that he is suffering a kind of mental enigma.

⁶⁰ David Bordwell. Narrative in the Fiction Film. p: 157

In this first part the initial dramatic evidences and enigmas appear which will be resolved later, in the second and third part. These are some of the clues: when the Mystery Man appears (who is he?), when they receive the videotapes (who is sending those?), when somebody says that Dick Laurent is dead (who said that? Who is Laurent?).

Some situations are not logical, one person in two places at the same time? (see B:9). Following the events as in cause-effect, it is possible to create a credible fictional situation. If we see the video where Fred is full of blood next to Renée, and after he is arrested for murder; we can assume that he is the killer. If Fred calls to his house and Renée is not there, saying before that she will stay there, Fred wonders where she is? The spectators wonder the same, but when he comes back home and she is sleeping, we can assume that she is lying. With these assumptions it is possible to find coherence in the story linearly. Little by little, we are building a chain of cause-effect.

In this classical first part, the plot has presented: the enigma, the main character - Fred Madison - and his mental problem, some first dramatic evidences, some secondary characters and at the end of the first part appears a plot point, Renée's murder.

SECOND PART

This part extends the conflict and introduces the confrontation. The first scenes (see B: 11-12) corroborate the plot point, Fred is in the jail for Renée's murder. Also, it shows new enigmas and evidences for this second part: an ecstatic vision of screaming strangers, a reverse explosion of a cabin, the Mystery Man (a secondary character) goes toward a cabin in slow motion and the mutation between Fred to Pete.

In this second part (see B: 11-20) there are some unexpected turns that can confuse the audience completely, such as the mutation between Fred to Pete. Can it be possible to see this second part like a first part of another story? I think that it is possible to understand that "Fred Madison and Pete Dayton are living the same

relationship but they are living it in two different ways"⁶¹. The whole structure of the film however: the dramatic action, some repetitive elements and characters - mostly in this second part - help to build Fred Madison's story, which is also Pete's story now. It is part of Madison's mind conflict⁶².

Besides this, I continue to consider some of the elements that join linearly both parts setting up new equilibrium to the plot in the film.

Music is one of the non-diegetic elements that create threads that join the story. David Lynch says "half of this film is picture, the other half is sound" (I return to this point when I analyse the sound of the film). Therefore, it is possible to follow the progression of the story through the music (see B: 15).

Also the same characters appear in this new Pete's story, and through them it is possible to follow Fred's conflict.

For example: the Mystery Man who had appeared in the first part, returns in this second part. He continues saying to Pete the same things that he told Fred. Also, Renée appears again, but now she is blonde and her name is Alice. She reveals - in this second part -, how she got the job that Renée could not tell Fred about in the first part (see B: 16).

These clues help us to understand the story, even though they are present in a different order in the whole structure. As Bordwell comments there are a lot of possibilities to change the plot and style, and of course, they can be interrupted at points by digressions that are not classical. However, one of the main reasons for

⁶¹ David Lynch. www.geocities.com/Hollywood/2093/losthighway.

⁶² I add some interesting explanations about Fred Madison's conflict in words of Barry Gifford (co-writer of the film) "Let's say you don't want to be yourself anymore. Something happens to you, and you just show up in Seattle, living under the name Joe Smith, with a whole different reality. It means that you're trying to escape something, and that's basically what Fred Madison does. He gets into a fugue state, which in this case means that he can't go anywhere, he's in a prison cell, so it's happening internally, within his own mind. But things don't work out any better in the Fugue State than they do in real life. He can't control the woman any more than he could in real life. You might say this is an explanation for what happens. However, this is not a complete explanation for the film. Things happen in this film that are not - and should not be - easily explained". www.geocities.com/Hollywood/2093/losthighway/lhabout.html

this analysis is to probe into whether some of the elements can be utilised in the new interactive fiction narrative. It is in fact these eruptions and digressions that make the film particularly useful for the new interactive narrative.

In this second part, the conflict has been revealing the dramatic necessities and obstacles of the characters; also it resolves some of the evidences showed in the first part; for example it reveals who is Dick Laurent; a gangster and dangerous man (see B: 13).

THIRD PART

Continuing with the classical structure in three parts, this one, partly, resolves the conflict of Fred Madison (see B: 21-24). Pete disappears in the story, he mutates into Fred again (plot point). Some clues of the first and second part find its resolution in this third part. For example: why does Fred kill his wife in the first part? Fred goes to a hotel called Lost Highway (see B: 22) and discovers that Renée has been unfaithful with Dick Laurent, therefore he kills Renée and in this part he also kills Laurent. And this of course, resolves also the enigma of the beginning, "Dick Laurent is dead".

Following the classical principle of cause-effect and resolution, we see that at the end of the plot the police is trying to catch Fred for both murders. Of course, in the classical structure the story has a complete resolution; and in this film the end (see B: 24) is completely unexpected. Fred goes to his own house to say: "Dick Laurent is dead". However, this action can be understood when Bordwell refers to the ambiguity of spatial and temporal logic in alternative narratives that I will explain later in section 2.5 of this chapter.

Also, the psychological elements of the characters appear contradictory in some parts of the plot. I will explain these other aspects of *Lost Highway* in the section describing 'Art Film'. At the same time, in chapter 4 I return to the elements that can fit in the interactive and non-linear narratives to complete the analysis of *Lost Highway*.

I continue with a descriptive-classical analysis about the characters of the film, some aspects of genre and style and a brief analysis of one of the non-diegetic elements: sound.

2.5.2 The Characters

“In classical narrative, moreover, events are propelled forward through the agency of fictional individuals or characters (...) The central agents of classical narrative are typically represented as fully rounded individuals with certain traits of personality, motivations, desires and so on. The chain of events constituting the story is then governed by the motivations and actions of these characters”⁶³.

One important aspect about the characters in classical narrative is the ‘central character’ as a ‘hero’ or ‘protagonist’, who realises some actions in terms of the kind of person that he or she is representing and the ‘hero’ or ‘protagonist’ who is guided the plot until the resolution.

In *Lost Highway*, the main character - Fred Madison - cannot be considered a protagonist, there is no character in the film acting like the protagonist because one of character’s features is the duality and the mutation between them; one aspect that changes the classical idea of the characters. However, in the first part of the film, the characters are revealing their personalities, conflicts and necessities. In the second part, the same characters and new characters in this part reveal some of their conflicts but in a particular way because they mutate into other characters, including at times other actors.

For example, in the first part Renée does not want to reveal her past to Fred. When she mutates to Alice in the second part, we discover that she was working doing porno videos. Alice - played in Patricia Arquette - reveals all the characteristics that Renée cannot show in the first part. Renée also is played by the same actress.

Apparently, it will be impossible a mutation from one actor to another, and act the same character. However, this unusual and ‘lynchian’ manner of presenting the

⁶³ Pam Cook (Ed). The Cinema Book. p: 212

characters, is building a kind of mystery that little by little reveals the story of Fred Madison.

I will explain with more detail in chapter 4 other features of the characters, which are related with the interactive narrative. In this first analysis, the point that concerns me is more descriptive and in relation with the classical more concern in their personalities, motivations and desires.

CHARACTERS

FRED MADISON (Bill Pullman) a saxophonist jazz player, is an obsessive character, consumed by feelings of jealousy and fear of infidelity". He's lost in confusion and darkness"⁶⁴ He plays the main character, a man who is trying to discover what is happening inside of his mind.

In the second part of the film, he mutates into Pete. Of course, Pete is another character, however he continues resolving Fred Madison's conflicts. This open-ending story reveals the duality of the character when he appears in the beginning and in the end of the story doing the same thing: he rings the intercom of his house and says, "Dick Laurent is dead".

MYSTERY MAN (Robert Blake) is the unsettling voice of another dimension, a principle of uncertainty. This kind of ghost imposes another temporal and spatial meaning in the film".

"He is who had alerted Fred to his Fred's metaphysical danger"⁶⁵. The duality is presented when the mystery man calls to Fred's house, and answers himself. He is in two places at the same time.

RENÉE MADISON / ALICE WAKEFIELD (Patricia Arquette) Renée the victim and Alice the vamp are perhaps not identical narratively, but they are occupying the same

⁶⁴ David Lynch. www.geocities.com/Hollywood/2093/losthighway/labout.html

⁶⁵ *ibid.*

sequential space. Patricia Arquette is playing both roles. In the first part of the film, the brunette Renée is Fred's wife. In the second part, the blonde Alice is the lover of Mr. Eddy/Dick Laurent.

Patricia Arquette thought she might be playing two different women, "but was then told by you that they were the same women. And on top of that the script suggests that one of them dies"⁶⁶.

PETE DAYTON (Balthazar Getty) When Fred finds himself on death row for murdering his wife and, in an ecstatic vision of screaming strangers and a reverse explosion, is inexplicably replaced in this cell by the bewildered young mechanic Pete Dayton. He gets into troubles with Alice, Renée's blonde double.

Pete can be considered Fred. In some way he represents the sides of Fred's that he can not recognise and resolve, for example, the bad relations with his wife Renée and his impotent love relation. Pete, a young man, cannot understand what happened with him, he feels that he is different but he does not know exactly why he is different. In the third part of the film he disappears completely, we realise that he was also Fred.

DICK LAURENT / MR. EDDY (Robert Loggia) "Dick Laurent is dead". This was the first 'enigma' that assaults on Fred's privacy. Robert Loggia is playing two characters, Laurent who we do not exactly who is; and Mr. Eddy a man who is involved with porno videos, sex and drugs.

The characters are played in the film like gaps that create a mystery during the story. They have desires and goals, but they resolve them - and that it is the most interesting part - through other characters. This parallelism and duality are common in the interactive narration, which I will return to in chapter 4.

I continue this first analysis of the film concentrating on genre, style, and other important non-diegetic elements shown in the film. These elements I consider are

⁶⁶ Patricia Arquette. http://bostonphoenix.com:80/alt1/archiv...vies/reviews/02-27-97/LOST_HIGHWAY.html

important to understand the form in the film, and also they will help me to return to these points in chapter 4 to build the interactive narrative of *Lost Highway*.

2.5.3 The Style and Genre: "A 21st CENTURY NOIR HORROR"

"It is a dangerous thing to say what a picture is. I don't like pictures that are one genre only, so this is a combination of things. It's a kind of horror film, a kind of thriller, but basically it's a mystery"⁶⁷

Lost Highway could fit in the classical structure narrative that David Bordwell refers to in his theory. However, when we refer to the genre of the film, it is difficult to define in which genre it can fit. I will explain some of the characteristics related with *Lost Highway* and its genre.

Lost Highway can be considered a 'film noir' in the visual sense. In the first part the film is characterised by a remarkable homogenous style, where the lighting style is related with 'noir'. The darkness and the shadows are permanently hiding faces, rooms and landscapes. This visual style in the first part creates a mysterious and anti-realist ambience throughout the first part. Sometimes the blackness disorients our vision, we are not sure what is happening, however this style can be seen to be related with the main character Fred, who is living in his interior in the same darkness.

Another characteristic of style is the use of space. In Madison's house the spaces are small, creating claustrophobic scenery; it is impossible to see the exteriors and at the same time the camera shots are extreme: high-angle or close-up.

In contrast with this first part, the second is totally different. The 'noir' style disappears in the visual sense rather, in the second part there are no more 'noir' scenarios. This part is more realistic, show exteriors and interiors full of light. Of course some characteristics related with the noir genre are present in the narrative structure, for example, and according to Pam Cook, the noir also is associated with an innocent woman who is sexually and fatally attracted. That is the case of the

⁶⁷ David Lynch. www.geocities.com/Hollywood/2093/losthighway/lhabout.html

character 'Alice' in the second part. Alice, a seducer woman, induces to Pete to commit a murder of Andy, his lover.

"Damico claims that the visual style of noir is actually an iconography. He suggests that the common denominator of noir films is their narrative structure and proposes a model by which film noirs may be isolated, objectified and their examination facilitated"⁶⁸.

At the same time, the noir genre is also related with 'dissonance': "the sense of disorientation and unease produced by that which is abnormal and dissonant"⁶⁹

Another interesting aspect regarding *Lost Highway's* genre is that it is not related with only one genre, it also can fit in the 'horror' genre. One characteristic of the 'horror' is given by Fred, who is living in a complete nightmare where he cannot discover easily his unconscious, and at the same time Pete cannot understand what it is happening inside him. All these psychological and disturbing elements of the characters make of them kinds of monsters that are struggling to recognise themselves.

These characteristics of horror also have relation with fantasy and an impossible world. "The distance from the reality evoked by fantasy makes radical criticism of that world possible"⁷⁰.

Therefore, *Lost Highway* has a disjunction between the real world and a supernatural world, and that it is one of the interesting things regarding this film. We can approach it in both ways as real and supernatural. With a supernatural approach we are no longer concerned in the real things that it presents, but also the possible circumstances that cause the characters to resolve their conflicts.

2.5.4 The Sound

"The music that was done is really pretty spectacular and not all of it is in the film. It has a modern noir kind of feel to it. And we had some very strange combos of instruments playing

⁶⁸ James Damico cited by Pam Cook (Ed). *The Cinema book*. p: 94

⁶⁹ Pam Cook (Ed). *ibid*, p: 94

⁷⁰ *ibid*, p: 101

strange ways”⁷¹.

Briefly, I refer to some characteristics of the sound as a part of this first analysis, considering that the sound helps to build the *Lost Highway*'s narrative, guiding the plot in the film. I explain some of the sound characteristics that I consider important in the film.

The creation of a motion picture soundtrack is a process that involves a tremendous amount of selection, gathering and orchestration of individual sound elements, which must then be mixed together carefully to create a coherent whole.

Ben Burt says, “you can do something in the soundtrack that on one hand may be sort of literal and has a meaning just within the naturalness of that scene, but on the other hand - if you've have chosen the right sound - has a whole other meaning that comments on the scene as well”⁷².

The sound track in *Lost Highway* has been created in a special form. According to Angelo Badalamenti⁷³ David Lynch describe his films, not only through the style of the picture, also with the sound track and music.

“ ‘Take me to the abstract world, it could be dark, eccentric, bitter, sweet or tragically beautiful’ (...) and I have to translate his words into music. I always tell him that it's simple as he uses the right adjectives. You know, to speak by musical language is very difficult. What should you say? Slowly, fast, high, deep (...) but it's different with David Lynch. I understand him and my music is the right for his world”⁷⁴

In *Lost Highway*, for example, Badalamenti had to fix an abstract, very dark, deep under the dialogue sound track. He selected sounds in relationship to picture and plot, because in this film the sound is building up under the dramatic requirements of each scene of the film.

⁷¹ Chris Rodley (Ed). *Lynch on Lynch*. p: 241

⁷² Ben Burt is one of the prominent professionals in sound design. (He made the soundtrack of Stars Wars, Raider of the Lost Ark, E.T.) John Michael Weaver. *Sound for Picture: The Art of Soundtrack Design*. p: 3.

⁷³ Angelo Badalamenti, an American music composer, has created the sound track for some of the David Lynch films.

⁷⁴ Angelo Badalamenti. An interview in *Czech KINOREVUE magazine*. October 1996.

The sound helps us to recognise characters and locations throughout the film, and through the music it guides our understanding. For example, in the second part, when Pete is working in the garage and he listens to the same jazz music that Fred plays in the first part, it is possible immediately to associate both characters. We can assume that they have some kind of relation between them.

Another example, is the music of Renée and Alice, when she is making love with Fred and later with Pete. Apparently, she is two different women, but the music tells in the film that -maybe- she is the same character. This way to use the sound can permit the viewer to recognise characters and at the same time anticipate what is going to happen later. Also it is creating an emotional force that permits an interpretation of the story.

The music also creates a rhythm and a dynamic in the film. A powerful and loud use of the songs: *The magic moment* (Lou Reed), *I'm Deranged* (David Bowie), among others appear in the film narration, also help us to follow the story, it is not only the dramatic structure of the plot, there is also the non-diegetic elements that joins all the elements of the film.

According to Doug Murray "one of the things David Lynch likes is to take sound effects of machines and slow them way down to make almost musical textures out of them and mix them together in abstract ways to create backgrounds that have emotional impact the way music often does"⁷⁵.

2.6 ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVE

In the next three sections, first I consider some of the alternative narrative elements, drawing on Bordwell's concepts of anti-narrative and 'art film'. Also I mention Pam Cook's concepts about alternative films. In the second and third parts, I introduce the notion of gaps and draw parallels to Lynch's use of the uncanny as a way of creating narrative breaks or changes to the flow of events.

⁷⁵ Doug Murray was the sound designer of *Twin Peaks*, a film of David Lynch in 1989. Blair Jackson. Sound for picture: The Art of Sound Track Design. p: 108

According to Pam Cook it is difficult to determine where classical narrative ends, considering that alternative narrative takes the same classical elements and transforms them through other cinematic codes.

Considering this point, non-classical narratives operate with a different logic, yet in some cases with the same dominant classical model. In these alternative narratives the narration of events is not organised with a linear logic of cause-effect, they can be interrupted at points by 'digressions' or for unexpected turns.

The narrative can be problematic or ambiguous because it is not built with a temporal and spatial logic of verisimilitude: "narrative action may seem to shift, without explanation or justification, between totally divergent places and/or times"⁷⁶.

The characters, also, can appear contradictory and unconvincing; sometimes they have psychological aspects, which are difficult to identify in the context of the whole story. The alternative approaches to film narrative can be compared with the classical system, but there is a tendency to define them in terms of what ways they are not classic.

David Bordwell has also developed concepts about 'art film' or 'art Cinema'.

2.6.1 Art Film/Cinema

David Bordwell has argued that art cinema differs to classical cinema primarily in terms of production and consumption⁷⁷. In terms of production, art cinema has generally been defined as a continental European, certainly a non-anglophone phenomenon. It can be considered the cinema of 'auteurs', where the directors have imprinted the mark of their personal style: Godard, Bergman, Fellini, Antonioni, among others.

According to Bordwell, European art cinema has its own 'institutional narrative' where events are not immediately apparent. There is a 'looseness of causality' that opens

⁷⁶ Pam Cook (Ed). The Cinema book, p: 216

⁷⁷ David Bordwell cited by: Pam Cook (Ed). *ibid*, p:216

spaces for 'digressions' and 'gaps' within the narrative. Art Cinema is characterised by breaking the classical approaches to the construction of fictional time and space.

"We have seen that the classical film focuses the spectator's expectations upon the ongoing causal chain by shaping the syuzhet's dramatic duration around explicit deadlines. But the art film typically lack such devices (...) By removing or minimising deadlines, not only does the art film create unfocused gaps and less stringent hypotheses about upcoming actions; it also facilitates an open-ended approach to causality in general. While motivated as 'objectively' realistic, this open-endedness is no less a formal effect than is the more tightly 'economical' Hollywood dramaturgy"⁷⁸.

The action may jump from one place to another without the conventional links of continuity, or time may appear to move backwards or even stand still. The organisation of temporal and spatial relations in art cinema is not in fact completely unmotivated; it is often motivated by a classical enigma-resolution trajectory that can be governed, especially by the characters. Then, instead of a verisimilitude of fictional time and space, a 'subjective verisimilitude' is constructed.

"The syuzhet of classical narration tends to move toward absolute certainty, but the art film, like early modernist fiction, holds a relativistic notion of truth (...) the art film is nonclassical in that it creates permanent narrational gaps and calls attention to processes of fabula construction"⁷⁹

Art cinema can be cinematically constructed in a variety of ways where the disparities, incompatibilities and lacks of synchronisation created by gaps point us forward and build up surprise. These gaps can be constructed in different ways, some of them invite the perceivers to participate in a 'scanning' strategy, sorting back through single episodes looking for information we might have missed; other gaps can omit completely the information of the fabula creating a scale of probabilities of interpretation or surprise.

"Gaps are created by choosing to present certain pieces of fabula information and to hold back others. The pieces of information selected can be combined in a great variety of ways (...) In

⁷⁸ David Bordwell. Narration in the Fiction Film. p: 207

⁷⁹ *ibid*, p: 212

each case, it must be remembered, the viewer will strive to justify the very presence of the gap by appeal to principles of compositional, realistic, transtextual, and artistic motivation”⁸⁰.

Therefore, the art-film narration not only solicits a denotative comprehension, but also a connotative comprehension where the perceivers need to interpret with a different form. Some of the classical norms are broken in the ‘art film’ such as: the causal chains, dramatic duration, the character’s action, among other things and these ones are presented now through gaps that create an open-ended approach.

“The loosening of causal relations is aided by a second sort of schema, that of a subjective or ‘expressive’ notion of realism. The art film aims to ‘exhibit character’ (...) But the prototypical characters of the art cinema tend to lack clear-cut traits, motives, and goals. Protagonists may act inconsistently or they may question themselves about their purposes”⁸¹.

The interesting thing in regards to this last point is that *Lost Highway* points towards being art film in the way of how the characters are presented in the film. The characters are evidently an effect of the narration, they keep silent about their motives, emphasise ‘insignificant’ actions and intervals, and never reveal effects of actions.

A brief example of this is when Renée - in the first part of the film - doesn’t want to reveal her past to Fred, she always keep something back. This situation, a gap, can arouse anticipation, curiosity, surprise and uncanny, and this is the way that *Lost Highway* maintains in all the film. The uncertainty, in the film is given by a ‘boundary-situation’, which I explain more fully in the next section which opens the analysis of *Lost Highway* as ‘art film’.

2.6.2 *Lost Highway* as ART FILM

Most of the ‘art films’ are guided by an interest in ‘characters’, as these create the causality and syuzhet construction. According to Horst Ruthrof “the causal chain

⁸⁰ David Bordwell. *Narration in the Fiction Film*. p: 55

⁸¹ *ibid*, p: 207

leads up to an episode of the private individual's awareness of fundamental human issues"⁸² is creating a 'boundary situation'.

"The boundary situation is common in art-cinema narration; the film's causal impetus often derives from the protagonist's recognition that she or he faces a crisis of existential significance (...) The boundary situation provides a formal center within conventions of psychological realism can take over. Focus on a situation's existential import motivates character's expressing and explaining their mental states"⁸³.

Therefore, this 'boundary-situation' motivates the characters to express and explain their mental states; such as in *Lost Highway*, where the characters in fact often express and explain their mental states.

"The dissection of feeling is often represented as therapy and cure (...) Characters retard the movement of the syuzhet by telling stories – autobiographical events, fantasies, and dreams"⁸⁴.

The art cinema employs many film techniques to dramatise these mental processes.

2.6.3 Boundary Situations in *Lost Highway*

As I explained before *Lost Highway* is one of the most abstract and ambiguous films of the 90's. Lynch's conceptions about noir, horror and art have created, not only a personal Lynch style, but also a set of controversial and psychological *Lost Highway* characters.

According to Chris Rodley, one of the relevant characteristics in this film is the 'psychogenic fugue' that the main character suffers, which basically means having origin in the mind. Fugue, "primarily a musical term, it completely describes the picture: one theme starts and is then taken up by a second theme in answer. But the first continues to supply an accompaniment or counter-theme. Doesn't this perfectly

⁸² Horst Ruthrof cited by David Bordwell. *ibid*, p: 208

⁸³ David Bordwell. *Narration in the Fiction Film*. p: 208

⁸⁴ *ibid*, p: 208

describe the complex relationship between Fred and Peter?”⁸⁵.

This idea of the ‘psychogenic fugue’ fits, not only with the loosening of clear-cut traits, motives and goals of the art film's characters that Bordwell refers as gaps; also this ‘psychological realism’ permits that the character reveals mental processes, which with the employ of film techniques, create ‘boundaries situation’ (Fred wife’s death, Fred’s mutation to Pete, etc). These situations participate in building an uncanny story where the perceivers are waiting for what is going to happen later, or how -through the plot- we discover the episodes.

“(A) fully expressive realism in that the syuzhet can employ film techniques to dramatise private mental processes. Art cinema narration employs all the sorts of subjectivity (...) Dreams, memories, hallucinations, daydreams, fantasies, and other mental activities can find embodiment in the image or on the sound track”⁸⁶.

Lost Highway has created its central source of uncanny also through film technique: point-of-view shots, flash frames, modulations of light and color and sound, which are motivated the psychology of the characters.

According to Bordwell causal connections in this kind of stories are weakened, and parallelisms come to the fore. The behaviours of the characters are more focused on the feelings, and the plot may use psychology to justify the manipulation of time and space. For this reason, the art film has been a principal source of experiments in the fiction film.

“Characters retard the movement of the syuzhet by telling stories –autobiographical events (especially from childhood), fantasies, and dreams. Even if a character remains unaware of or inarticulate about his or her mental state, the viewer must be prepared to notice how behaviour and setting can give the character away. The art cinema developed a range of mise-en-scène cues for expressing character mood: static postures, covert glances, smiles that fade, aimless walks, emotion-filled landscapes, and associated objects”⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Chris Rodley (Ed). *Lynch on Lynch*, p: 239

⁸⁶ David Bordwell. *Narration in the Fiction Film*. p: 208

⁸⁷ *ibid*, p: 208

According to David Foster the Art film is essentially 'teleological'; it tries in various ways to wake up the audience or render us more conscious.

"Commercial film's goal is to 'entertain', which usually means enabling various fantasies that allow the moviegoer to pretend he's somebody else and that life is somehow bigger and more coherent and more compelling and attractive and in general just way more entertaining than the moviegoer's life really is. You could say that a commercial movie doesn't try to wake people up but rather to make their sleep so comfortable and their dreams so pleasant (...) an art film's point is usually more intellectual or aesthetic, and you usually have to do some interpretative work to get it"⁸⁸.

These first approximations to the 'art film' help to understand how non-mainstream films use another elements in their narrative structure; they are not only defining another way to tell stories, but also with other non-linear aspects, such as: gaps and boundaries situations.

In chapter 4 I will return to some of these aspects related with web-narratives, new technology and interactivity that also have relation with 'art film'.

⁸⁸ David Foster Wallace. David Lynch: Keeps his head. 1996. On www.lynchnet.com

CHAPTER 3

NEW TECHNOLOGY, WEB NARRATIVES, ACTIVE USERS AND INTERACTIVITY

In this chapter, I introduce the last of my three theoretical frameworks by drawing on theories of interactivity, new technology and webbed narratives. The theorists I use here include Janet Murray, Jens Jensen and Paul A. Mayer, among others. I will present some of the new concepts generated by the new technologies.

I have divided the chapter into four sections: first, I offer an introduction to new technologies and I explain some terms like ‘computer media’ and ‘web-narratives’. Second, I consider some aspects of computer storytelling: particularly ‘web-narratives’ that differ from linear-classical narrative. Third, I return to the question of perception that was presented in the first chapter, but here in relation to new narrative structures. Fourth, I study ‘interactivity’ as an element that separates linear narrative to ‘interactive narrative’.

3.1 CONSIDERING NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND COMPUTER MEDIA

Since the digital age began in the 70’s, “computers have become cheaper, faster, more capacious, and more connected”⁸⁹. In the 90’s the technological development and the social adoption of new forms of computer media have had significant implications on communication, culture, expression forms and marketing.

According to Paul Mayer, computers offer us new ways to create meaning and knowledge: “Never before has it been possible to navigate and manipulate such vast quantities of diverse information”⁹⁰. Computers are extending new possibilities for communicative exchange and interaction, combining and manipulating symbolic representation:

⁸⁹ Janet Murray. *Hamlet on the Holodeck*, p: 27

⁹⁰ Paul Mayer (Ed). *Computer Media and Communication*. p: 321

“All the major representational formats of the previous five thousand years of human history have now been translated into digital form. There is nothing that human beings have created that cannot be represented in this protean environment”⁹¹.

This new and continuous technological era has established new correlated relations between users and computers⁹². According to Sherry Turkle, the social implications of ‘computer media’ signify more complexity, and elaborated systematic approaches to the new media forms.

Let me explain briefly, the term ‘computer media’ and ‘web-narratives’.

COMPUTER MEDIA:

Paul Mayer argues that computers have changed the way we work, access information and socialise. Computers as ‘media’ have replicate functions of previous media while extending new possibilities for communicative exchange and interaction. Mayer also refers to the fact that the most significant function of computers: “is the user’s interaction with the device itself. Never before has it been possible to engage in communication with a machine in the way we do with computers”⁹³.

He also argues that:

"Computer media sum up the role of modern media as means of discourse as well as objects constructed in discourse. Taken together, understanding the computer’s semantic flexibility, its capacities for simulation and interaction in communication, and its implications for culture and society are central objectives in the study of computer media”⁹⁴.

‘Computer media communication’ (CMC) permits an exchange in the user’s experience with computers. This CMC interaction “offer the potential reach of broadcast media, the archival aspect of the public record, and a degree of immediacy

⁹¹ Janet Murray. Hamlet on the Holodeck. p: 28

⁹² Inside of the computer media discourse, this relation calls *Interface*. This *Interface* also is related with the operating system and running programs (games, spreadsheets, CD’s, etc); and with the forms of representation. Paul Mayer (Ed). Computer Media and Communication. pp: 322-24

⁹³ *ibid*, p: 321

⁹⁴ *ibid*, p: 321

approaching that of telephony. Like other media they serve to alter the conditions of communication over space and time”⁹⁵.

According to Janet Murray “the combination of text, video, and navigable space suggested that a computer-based microworld need not be mathematical but could be shaped as a dynamic fictional universe with characters and events”⁹⁶. Therefore, new ways of narratives have been created through computers.

“These new storytelling formats vary from the shoot-`em-up videogame and the virtual dungeons of Internet roleplaying games to the postmodern literary hypertext. This wide range of narrative art holds the promise of a new medium of expression”⁹⁷

WEB-NARRATIVES:

The web-narratives include a multiple possibility of stories, Murray refers to them as ‘multiform stories’, which have their origins in novels, films and plays. “To understand the new genres and the narrative pleasures that will arise from this heady mixture, we must look beyond the formats imposed upon the computer by the older media”⁹⁸.

Bearing this in mind, I consider that the new ways of storytelling within computer media is creating multiple possibilities that have specific objectives. For example, if we consider computer games, some of them are more entertainment-orientated than educative, others are more technical than narratively elaborate. These new forms of writing stories are originating new ways of interaction.

Games, according to Maureen Thomas, in her article *The creative Media in the E-age*, refers to how the new game designers are concerned with how to add narrative, emotions and technique into games. “(I)n an interactive gaming environment we have the opportunity to build a different type of empathy with our characters. In many ways, we should be able to identify even more closely”⁹⁹.

⁹⁵ *ibid*, p: 326

⁹⁶ Janet Murray. *Hamlet on the Holodeck*. p: 6

⁹⁷ *ibid*, p: 28

⁹⁸ *ibid*, p: 64

⁹⁹ Maureen Thomas. *The Creative Media in the E-Age*. Norsk Dramatisk Årbok. April 8 2000

Therefore, inside 'computer media' is related not only with the 'newness' of the technological advances and the marketing of the products; also it is involved with the new forms that narrative portray, trying to generate creative interactions with the perceivers or users¹⁰⁰.

3.2 WEB-NARRATIVES

In chapter 2, I introduced classical linear narrative concepts and discussed how some classical principles fit in *Lost Highway*. Also, I introduced some non-linear and 'art film' parameters that begin to clarify the complex narrative structure of the film.

After these bases of classical linear narrative, I will continue to explain some of the web-narratives formats that are important in order to understand non-linear and interactive elements in the new computer narrative.

The point that concerns me most from here on is to define what are the elements that separate the linear narrative from the interactive narrative; one of them of course is the 'interactivity' itself that I will refer to in section 3.4. But, also in the web-narratives we can find non-linear parameters that differ to the linear parameters. Some of these are the same, such as: time and space. However they are functioning in a different manner in the case of interactive narratives.

"In making a story non-linear, the storyteller relinquishes the power to control the flow of information to the viewer (...) A balance must be struck between giving the viewer freedom and maintaining narrative coherence"¹⁰¹.

Therefore, I take some of the elements incorporated in web-narrativities, such as: games, movies 3D, web-stories, among others that I consider involve aspects that determinate non-linearity and interaction. First I make a brief explanation about multiform stories, also I consider some of the elements that differ from linear structures.

¹⁰⁰ *Interface* discourse includes the *User* as an active subject. The *User* plays both an interpretive and expressive part in discursive flow in communicative exchange with an application.

Paul Mayer (Ed). *Computer Media and Communication*. p: 324

¹⁰¹ Amy Bruckman of the MIT Lab cited by Timothy Garrand. *Scripting Narrative For Interactive Multimedia*. The Journal of Film and Video, vol. 49. 1997.

3.2.1 MULTIFORM STORIES: time, space and character perspectives

In this section regarding 'multiform stories' I consider three of the main elements that change the linear structure: space, time and point of view.

While the computer narratives, webbed narratives, utilise some linear stories, it is characterised by non-linearity and the multiple possibilities that are given to the user. A general example can be the Internet, where the user can explore different links, stories, information, and networks without classic structure.

These multiform stories, according to Murray, describe a written or dramatic narrative that presents a single situation or plot line in multiple versions. If we look, for example, at the multiform narrative in Jorge Luis Borges *The Garden of Forking Paths*¹⁰², it is really a labyrinth because it is based on a radical re-conception of time and space.

"In all fiction, when a man is faced with alternatives he chooses one at the expense of the others. In the almost unfathomable Ts'ui Pên, he chooses - simultaneously - all of them. He thus creates various futures, various times which start others that will in their turn branch out and bifurcate in other times"¹⁰³.

According to Albert, a character of the story, who is studying an incoherent novel, written by Ts'ui Pen, time and space in the novel's world are not an absolute and uniform line but an infinite 'web' that embraces every possibility.

He says: "we do not exist in most of them. In some you exist and I not, while in others I do, and you do not, and in yet others both of us exist. In this one, in which chance has favored me, you have come to my gate. In another, you, crossing the garden,

¹⁰² Jorge Luis Borges. *In Fictions*, "The Garden of Forking Paths" translated by Anthony Kerrigan. New York: Grove Press, 1962. pp: 89-115

¹⁰³ *The Garden of Forking Paths*. p: 98. Cited by: Janet Murray. *Hamlet on the Holodeck*. p: 31

have found me dead. In yet another, I say these very same words, but am an error, a phantom”¹⁰⁴.

These multiple alternatives are creating new ways to present stories, and one of the important characteristics is the re-conception of time and space; because the events of the stories are not taking place during an exact and continuous time, nor in the same space. The new temporality creates new associational constructions and activates an infinite range of interpretations.

Another example that I consider a multiform story is the film *Blind Chance* (Poland, 1981; directed by **Krzysztof Kieslowski**). It is one story with three variations. All three begin when Witek (the main character) runs after a train. In the first: he catches the train, meets an honest Communist and himself becomes a Party activist. In the second: while running for the train he bumps into a railway guard, is arrested, brought to trial and sent to unpaid labour in a park where he meets someone from the opposition. He, in turn, becomes a militant member of the opposition. In the third: he simply misses the train, meets a girl, marries her and leads a peaceful life as a doctor.

At the same time, Janet Murray refers to the character perspectives in multiform stories which “often reflect different points of view of the same event”¹⁰⁵. The same story, through different points of view of the characters, creates a fragmentation where all the time the characters have to reconstruct past episodes to understand the present and the future actions.

“Multiform narrative attempts to give a simultaneous form to these possibilities, to allow us to hold in our minds at the same time multiple contradictory alternatives”¹⁰⁶.

The multiform stories have been pushing the linear formats in every media, they are part of the effort to give expression to the new ways of narrativity through computers, CD-ROM’s, WWW, among others. These multiform stories have changed our way to

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, p.100. Ibid. p.31

¹⁰⁵ Janet Murray. *Hamlet on the Holodeck*. pp: 36-7

¹⁰⁶ *ibid*, p: 38

approach narrative, because they are building on other non-linear and non-conventional formulas.

3.2.2 ELECTRONIC GAMES: visual environments, sound and narrative

Electronic games have had the “largest commercial success and the greatest creative effort in digital narrative”¹⁰⁷. Nowadays, there are infinite quantities of games that have developed more “detailed visual environments and faster response time, improvements allowing players to enjoy more varied finger-twitching challenges against more persuasively rendered opponents”¹⁰⁸.

The narrative content of the games, often, is imported from other media with stereotypical and linear stories and characters. For example the fighting games such as: *Alien and Mortal Kombat*, among others, have subordinated the stories to game play, only with the objective to offer a richer level of play satisfaction.

However, many games are more involved with the dramatic power of the stories and how they can be represented in narrative structures. According to Janet Murray, some game designers are making use of film techniques to create a more dramatic and interactive story.

“(T)he CD-ROM game *Myst* (1993) achieves much of its immersive power through its sophisticated sound design. Each of the different areas of the game is characterised by distinctive ambient sounds, like the whistling of wind through the trees or the lapping of waves on the shore, that reinforce the reality of fantasy worlds, which are really just a succession of still images”¹⁰⁹

Games have developed techniques that provide clues to follow them. These techniques are really important inside the construction of the narrative forms. For example, the sound and the music track “provides a clue that I am mouse-clicking along in the right direction”¹¹⁰.

¹⁰⁷ Janet Murray. *Hamlet on the Holodeck*. p: 51

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.* p: 51

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.* p: 53

¹¹⁰ *ibid.* p: 53

“(T)he solemnity of the music reinforces my feeling of having come in immediate contact with a terrible act of depravity. The music shapes my experience into a dramatic scene, turning the act of discovery into a moment of dramatic revelation”¹¹¹.

Therefore, games have changed the form of narration; it is not only important to the story itself, but also to how it is presented. Then, the visual environments, the sound and the inherent technical software and computer skills are important in the construction of new web-narratives.

According to David Miles the new mediums such as computers have broken previous paradigms given by old mediums, because they can consider the same elements such as: light, camera shots, scenarios, among others, but use them with different technical conventions depending on the necessities of, in this case, the game. He refers, for example, to how the game *Myst* creates the visual atmosphere.

“This magical trance atmosphere of raw cinema is precisely what haunts the beautiful landscapes of *Myst*. Moreover, its eerie and contradictory combinations of elements from reality are painted with a surrealistic attention to photographic detail (...) *Myst*, with its moody soundtrack and stunning graphics, represents something new in the world of multimedia”¹¹²

The incorporation of new media arts skills and film techniques have helped to incorporate elements that reveal aspects of the stories that are changing the narrative form. For example in the game *Myst*, according to Miles, the magical atmosphere is given by the surrealistic attention to photographic detail, for the subjective camera, for the graphical art itself, for the shadows and lights, among other elements. Therefore, players read ‘games’ through more active and emotive participation because there are other dramatic elements building the story.

“In *Myst*, on virtually every island, the player is asked to manipulate a series of switches, gears, consoles, or sliders, in precise sequence, in order to gain access to the secret underground books with their vital information”¹¹³.

¹¹¹ Janet Murray. *Hamlet on the Holodeck*. p: 54

¹¹² David Miles. *The CD-ROM Novel *Myst* and McLuhan’s Fourth Law of Media: *Myst* and Its ‘Retrievals’*. pp: 312 and 317

¹¹³ *ibid*, p: 311

3.2.3 STORY WEBS: hypertext and lexias

Computer media has permitted that a lot of 'hypertext' fiction develops its own forms of narrative. "Hypertext is a set of documents of any kind (images, text, charts, tables, video clips) connected to one another by links"¹¹⁴.

"Stories written in hypertext can be divided into scrolling 'pages' (as they are on the World Wide Web) or screen-size 'cards' (as they are in a Hypercard stack), but they are best thought of as segmented into generic chunks of information called 'lexias' (or reading units)"¹¹⁵.

I will explain how the hypertext and lexias function inside of the computer, as they are creating new narrative forms. According to Roland Barthes, hypertext is text composed of blocks of words or images linked electronically by multiple paths, chains, or trails in an open-ended, perpetually unfinished textuality described by the terms link, node, network, web and path.

"(T)he networks are many and interact, without any one of them being able to surpass the rest; this text is a galaxy of signifiers, not a structure of signifieds; it has no beginning; it is reversible; we gain access to it by several entrances, none of which can be authoritatively declared to be the main one; the codes it mobilises extend as far as the eye can reach, they are indeterminable(...); the systems of meaning can take over this absolutely plural text, but their number is never closed"¹¹⁶

The stories inside of this non-sequentially are written generally with more than one entry point, many internal branches and non-clear endings. These stories permit to the 'users' to make interactive connections and to choose different pathways of blocks of text.

According to Janet Murray these hypertext formats are not new as structures; she takes an example from literature to explain it: James Joyce's *Ulysses*. *Ulysses*, she argues "is almost impossible to understand (...) with entries that point to one

¹¹⁴ Janet Murray. *Hamlet on the Holodeck*. p: 55

¹¹⁵ *ibid*, p: 55

¹¹⁶ Roland Barthes. *S/Z*. pp: 5-6

another”¹¹⁷.

One of the most interesting things is that the users or readers, through a complex web of ‘lexias’, have several possible links to follow. Some of the links force them to return to the same lexia again and again in order to be permitted to go to new places in the story. This circular way - that sometimes creates confusion - allows the users in an interactive manner to find a large range of possible interpretations and at the same time create their own series of links to build a story.

“As a reader, you must decide whether to return to my argument, pursue some of the connections I suggest by links, or, using other capacities of the system, search for connections I have not suggested. The multiplicity of hypertext, which appears in multiple links to individual blocks of text, calls for an active reader”¹¹⁸.

Hypertext is related with the non-linearity that appears frequently in computer media; it is organised into paths that make operational sense to author and reader. In this sense the readers/users have acquired a more active participatory role, because they are creating their own narrative paths.

3.3 NEW ACTIVE USERS / PERCEIVERS

In chapter 1 I began to discuss the active role of the perceivers through the incorporation of new open-closed narratives, considering that the canonic format was not enough to understand ways of interpretation in non-linear narrative forms. I return to this point in order to consider how the new technologies and computer media are changing the way to perceive, incorporating and forcing new active roles, which are not only related to how the story is created narratively, but also to how the technology is presented to them.

According to Paul Mayer the ‘user’¹¹⁹ “plays both an interpretive and expressive part

¹¹⁷ Janet Murray. Hamlet on the Holodeck. p: 56

¹¹⁸ Roland Barthes. S/Z. pp: 5-6

¹¹⁹ “In terms of user orientations much meaningful activity with computers can be seen as goal -and task-motivated even in the most casual of exchanges. This is one of the reason to speak of ‘users’ instead of audiences or readers with respect to these media forms”.
Paul Mayer (Ed). Computer Media and Communication. p: 324

in discursive flow in communicative exchange”¹²⁰. The user is considered active in terms of meaning and interpretation because they are also related with an interface¹²¹ discourse. This means that there exists not only the relation between the computer and the user; there is also the ‘feedback’ possibilities of choice and actions inside of the web-narratives that the users can have, where they can also build their own stories.

“(V)irtual reality is not for passive entertainment but for active free-form play and that adults are capable of such play if their imaginations have been ‘booted up’ by an environment with rich narrative possibilities”¹²².

This ‘mosaic’¹²³ structure, which presents many possibilities in web-narratives, has the ability to display simultaneous actions in multiple ways, offering the users an interactive navigation between them. The users-readers can find ways to ‘tag’ the fragments so they can find things that are related to one another. If we want to follow one story or create another we can retrace it. This continuous interaction makes the role as perceivers more active.

One example of an interactive story developed at MIT¹²⁴ explains this new active role:

“(T)he reader is on a bus that moves forward in screens of text that wipe from right to left across the screen. People get on and off the bus, and the reader can enter their thoughts (including their observations of one another), these thoughts and observations form the action of the story. The story offers readers a chance to do something that most bus riders fantasise about: find out who that odd person across the aisle actually is. It enhances its reader’s curiosity by not allowing any backward movement. They must follow the bus forward in time,

¹²⁰ Paul Mayer (Ed). Computer Media and Communication. p: 324

¹²¹ “In general, an interface is a structured boundary common to two poles of communication, in the present case, between user and computer (...) Interfaces are both the means by which we understand what we can do with computers and the means through which we act with respect to them”.

Paul Mayer (Ed). Computer Media and Communication. p: 324

¹²² Brenda Laurel. Cited by: Janet Murray. Hamlet on the Holodeck. p: 162

¹²³ “Mosaic”, term used by Marshal McLuhan, refers to all the informational formats that are creating patterns on the communication media. Janet Murray says: “We know how to construct continuous space in a film by matching an exterior shot with an interior shot, and we know that a change in lighting or focus signals a flashback or a subjective memory. Mosaic organisation is valuable because it gives us the overview of (...) the faster narrative pace of the movie. We also savor the juxtapositions that these mosaic forms make possible”

Janet Murray. Hamlet on the Holodeck. p: 156

¹²⁴ Massachusetts Institute of Technology

but at each stop they can change their point of view if they wish. In order to find out the whole story, they have to take the trip again, making different choices"¹²⁵.

The possibilities to choose between different points of view and the creation of juxtapositions¹²⁶ with images and characters have opened for the users new ways of interpretations, where the freedom and the multiplicity of meanings are infinite and in accordance to how the users combine and connect the elements between them. Therefore our perception involves a cognitive activity where we never know what is the end or the new beginning.

The canonic schemata that the user utilises in the cognitive process of interpreting linear narratives are insufficient when confronted with new web-interactive stories. Branigan refers to this in relation to non-linear stories; he argues that the viewer-perceiver not only interprets a film as "regulation of conflicts among competing spatial, temporal, and causal hypotheses", but also creates a "new and imaginary temporal order in the story"¹²⁷ in which the story offers other relationships:

"The connections of a hypertext are organised into paths that make operational sense to author and reader. Each topic may participate in several paths, and its significance will depend upon which paths the reader has travelled in order to arrive at that topic"¹²⁸.

Therefore, our perception has to be more active as the user searches for ways to join and create a coherent story or topic through hypertext and links.

"(T)he program allows the reader to make changes in the text or add his own connections"¹²⁹. The perception therefore becomes still more complex, because we, sometimes, become our own authors, determining the structure of the text.

¹²⁵ Janet Murray. Hamlet on the Holodeck. p: 159

¹²⁶ "In the 1920s the Russian film pioneer Lev Kuleshov demonstrated that audiences will take the same footage of an actor's face as signifying appetite, grief, or affection, depending on whether it is juxtaposed with images of a bowl of soup, a dead woman, or a little girl playing with a teddy bear. Using the computer, we can make use of the Kuleshov effect to create juxtapositions"

Janet Murray. Hamlet on the Holodeck. p: 160

¹²⁷ Edward Branigan. Narrative Comprehension and Film. p: 41

¹²⁸ Jay David Bolter. Topographic Writing: Hypertext and the Electronic Writing Space. p: 300

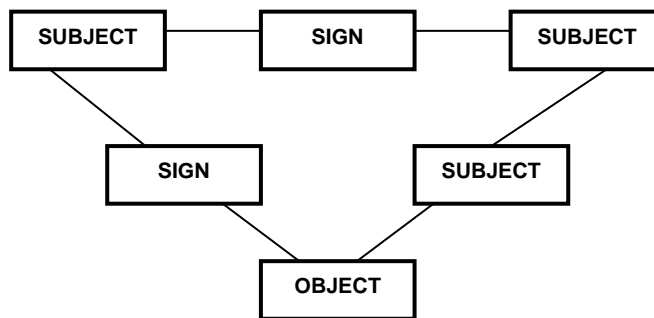
¹²⁹ *ibid*, p: 304

In the relation between users, interfaces and web-narratives, interaction becomes the aspect that joins them. Without interaction relationships of production and reception are not possible.

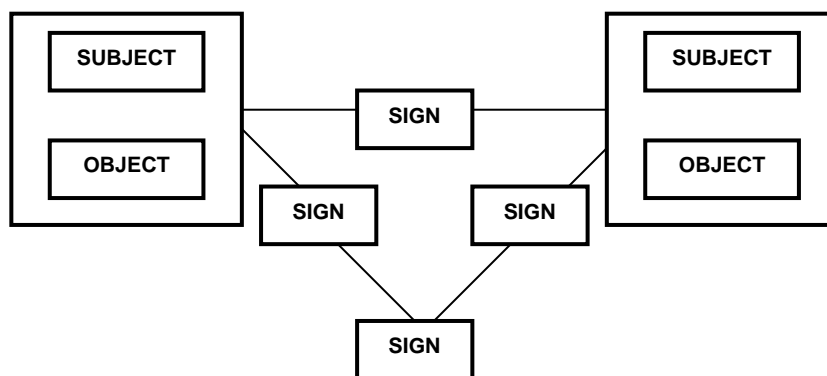
Paul Mayer argues that *communication* is the ground formation of interaction:

“The prototype of interaction is a form of communicative action in which the negotiation of the status of each subject, sometimes as an object of action, is an added element of the exchange”¹³⁰.

COMMUNICATION



INTERACTION



Diagrams ¹³¹

Jensen’s diagrams “illustrate prototypical relationships between poles of production and reception of meaning that relate, via signs, with reference to an object of

¹³⁰ Paul Mayer (Ed). *Computer Media and Communication*. p: 325

¹³¹ *ibid*, p: 325

common interest. These diagrams reinforce a conception of signs, as the basis of communication, as fulfilling a mediating role in the creation and exchange of meaning”¹³².

According to Jensen these relationships that are negotiating the status of different signs permit the user to arrive at a degree of interactivity with an object. Therefore, one of the central focuses in the new media form is interactivity, which permits the exchange between users, computers and web-narratives. Interactivity is also the key element that separates linear narrative and interactive narrative.

I will build on this concept by explaining what is interactivity and its methods, drawing on the theoretical framework of Jens Jensen and other theoreticians, such as: Durlak’s, Feldman, Laurel, among others¹³³. Also, I concentrate in this part on the explanation of ‘dimensions’ i.e. the grades of interactivity. Reflecting on the idea that the concept of interactivity is ‘multidimensional’, I consider only some of the elements and concepts that will can help me to build the interactive narrative of *Lost Highway* in chapter 4.

3.4 INTERACTIVITY

According to Jens Jensen the concept of interactivity can be understood in three academic fields: (a) in the *sociological* sense which “refers to a reciprocal relationship between two or more people who, in a given situation, mutually adapt their behaviour and actions to each other”¹³⁴; (b) in the *informatic* sense which “refers to the relationship between people and machines, the process that take place when a human user operates a machine”¹³⁵; and (c) in *communication studies* in which it refers, among other things, “to the relationship between the text and the reader, but also to reciprocal human actions and communication associated with the use of media as well as (para-social) interaction via a medium”¹³⁶.

¹³² Paul A. Mayer (Ed). Computer Media and Communication. p:325

¹³³ *ibid*, pp:160-187

¹³⁴ Jens Jensen. Computer Media and Communication: `Interactivity` - Tracking a New Concept in Media and Communication Studies. p: 165

¹³⁵ *ibid*, p: 168

¹³⁶ *ibid*, p: 169

Jens Jensen also understands 'interactivity' through three other parameters: (a) 'prototype', (b) 'criteria' and (c) 'continuum'. He studies these parameters drawing on other studies by: Everett Rogers, Jonathan Steuer, and Brenda Laurel¹³⁷, among others. I will draw on these three parameters briefly to understand more clearly the 'multidimensional' concept of interactivity and how these elements can be applied to interactivity in *Lost Highway*.

3.4.1 Interactivity as *Prototype*

Refers to the "interactive media systems including the telephone; 'two-way television'; audio conferencing systems; computers used for communication; electronic mail; video-text; and a variety of technologies that are used to exchange information in the form of still images, line drawing, and data"¹³⁸. Jensen argues that this concept is not enough to understand interactivity because it does not refer to the relation between these aspects.

Therefore, this definition raises another principle question about what type of 'interpersonal media' should be considered interactive. "Durlak and many others claim that interpersonal communication and especially face-to-face communication is held up as the model because the sender and receiver use all their senses, the reply is immediate, the communication is generally closed circuit, and the content is primordial informal"¹³⁹.

The concept of interactivity, understood in this way is related to the fact that the sociological concept on its own is insufficient to complete the whole concept of interactivity. Because of this insufficiency, Jensen draws on other concepts as well.

¹³⁷ All of them are cited by Jens Jensen. Computer Media and Communication: 'Interactivity' - Tracking a New Concept in Media and Communication Studies. pp: 160-187

¹³⁸ Jerome Durlak's (1987:743) cited by Jens Jensen. Computer Media and Communication: 'Interactivity' - Tracking a New Concept in Media and Communication Studies. p: 170

¹³⁹ Jens Jensen. *ibid*, p: 170

3.4.2 Interactivity as *Criteria*

“Interactivity is defined as `A reciprocal dialog between the user and the system`, where both sociology’s (mutual dialog) and informatic’s (user and system) conceptual constructions appear once again; the adjective interactive is understood as: `Involving the active participation of the user in directing the flow of the computer or video program; a system which exchanges information with the viewer, processing the viewer’s input in order to generate the appropriate response within the context of the program (...)`; and the compound term ‘interactive media’ is said to mean: ‘Media which involves the viewer as a source of input to determine the content and duration of a message’, which permits individualized program material”¹⁴⁰.

This concept according to Jensen has the tendency to exclude and include very different types of media and concentrate more on technological developments, but “it is impossible to differentiate between different forms or levels of interactivity”¹⁴¹. He continues finding more elements in interactivity as *continuum*.

3.4.3 Interactivity as *Continuum* and *Dimensions*

I consider that the interactivity as *continuum* is the most broad concept studied by Jensen, because it explains how interactivity can have several degrees and variations which giving a more complete idea of how to understand and relate interactivity with the new technology and users. He calls these degrees and variations ‘*dimensions*’.

I take some of these ‘*dimensions*’ to explain how *Lost Highway* can fit within on interactive processes, which is related also with its narrative structure. I will discuss some of these ‘*dimensions*’ in section 3.5 and in chapter 4 I will apply all the concepts to the creation of the interactive *Lost Highway*.

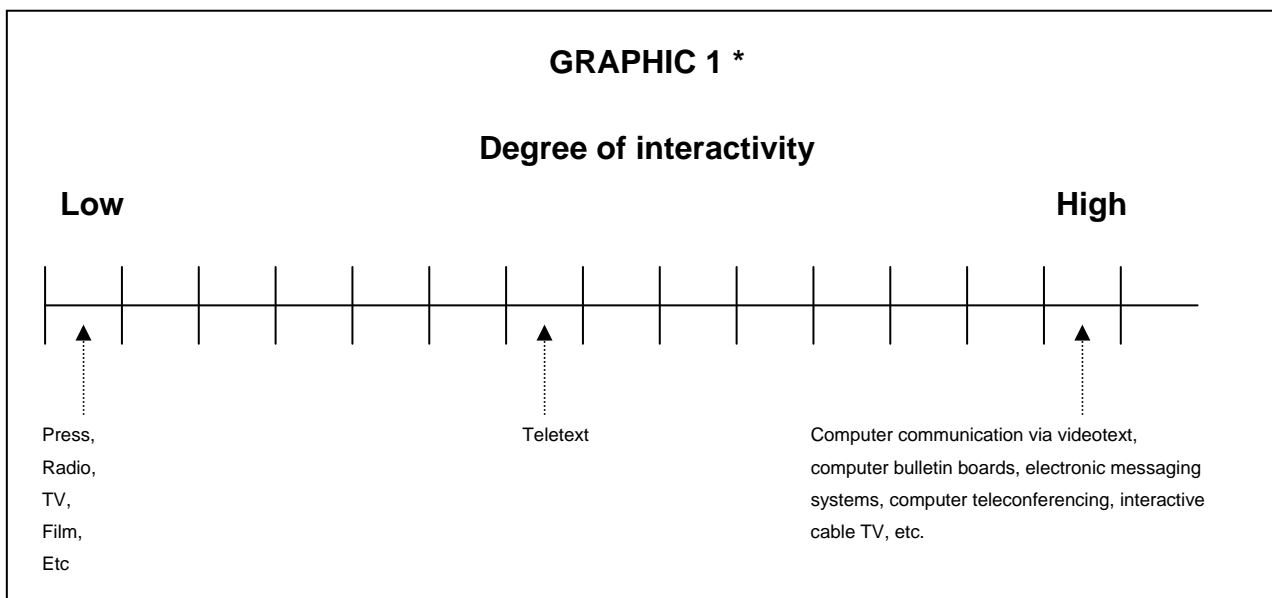
¹⁴⁰ Feldman T. (1987) Cited by: Jens Jensen. Computer Media and Communication: `Interactivity` - Tracking a New Concept in Media and Communication Studies. p: 170

¹⁴¹ *ibid*, p: 171

3.5 LOST HIGHWAY'S CONTINUUM AND DIMENSIONS: first considerations

3.5.1 Dimension One

Everett M. Rogers refers to interactivity as the capacity of the new communication systems to `talk back to the user` (unidimensional). The most interesting thing in this dimension is that he “has created a scale, ‘degrees of interactivity’ for a number of selected communication technologies on a continuum from ‘low to high’”¹⁴² (see graphic 1).



- E. M. Rogers` 1 dimensional scale of `selected communication technologies on an interactivity continuum` (1987:34)¹⁴³

This concept also refers, inside of the division of levels, to a transition from the passive to an active user, through two ways of communication and active user orientation (direct return channel) such as in a telephone conversation:

“(A) telephone conversation should be more interactive than searching an information database, since they involve very different types of communication traffic (conversation versus consultation with different user goals and functions (...)) it obviously makes different qualitative and not just quantitative demands on the `interactivity` than if the purpose is to negotiate a mutual agreement with a partner”¹⁴⁴.

¹⁴² Everett M. Rogers (1986) cited by: Jens Jensen. Computer Media and Communication: 'Interactivity' – Tracking a New Concept in Media and Communication Studies. p: 172

¹⁴³ *ibid*, p: 172

¹⁴⁴ Jens Jensen. *ibid*, p: 174

If I translate this concept to *Lost Highway*, it is possible to see that the film is situated in the low level according to the graphic. If I consider its narrative structure, however, and the levels of interactivity, we can see that the film has some lower and higher levels of interactivity.

More precisely if I take one example (see Breakdown - B - in the appendix scenes 9 and 17) when the Mystery Man appears in the party and talks with Fred in a telephonic conversation, the level of interaction grows more than other scenes in the film because this interaction between both characters has permitted, not only to them, but also to the perceiver, entry in `direct return channels` where the characters are negotiating something. I consider this part of the film as dimension one, and will return to this concept in chapter 4.

3.5.2 Dimension Two

This dimension refers - according to Jonathan Steuer - to a parameter of 'vividness' which means to the "ability of a technology to produce a sensorial rich mediated environment and interactivity, which refers to the degree to which users of a medium can influence the form or content of the mediated environment"¹⁴⁵.

Dimension Two involves the users as part of the interaction as well as to how the information flows. Bohdan O. Szuprowicz argues that "interactivity is best defined by the type of multimedia information flows"¹⁴⁶.

He creates a division of the information flows into three main categories: documents, users, and computers. The first one, 'user-to-document' refers to "traditional transactions between a user and specific documents and characterised by being quite restricted since it limits itself to the user's choice of information and selection of the time of access to the information. There is a little or no possibility of manipulating or changing existing content"¹⁴⁷.

¹⁴⁵ Jonathan Steuer (1995) cited by Jens Jensen. Computer Media and Communication: `Interactivity` - Tracking a New Concept in Media and Communication Studies. p: 175

¹⁴⁶ Bohdan O. Szuprowicz cited by Jens Jensen. *ibid*, p: 176

¹⁴⁷ *ibid*, p: 176

The second one, 'user-to-computer', is "characterised by more advanced forms of interactivity which give the user a broader range of active choices, including access to tools that can manipulate existing material"¹⁴⁸. In the third one, 'user-to-user', the "information flows (...) make direct communication between two or more users possible, whether it is point-to-point, person-to-person, multipoint, multiuser, etc"¹⁴⁹.

I have offered these explanations because I consider that within the second dimension, the user comes into play as an active element inside of the interactive process. Of course, that interactivity cannot be understood without users, this is the reason I expand - in the next dimension - on how users can interact and what ranges and variables they can use.

3.5.3 Dimension Three

Considering now that the users must act in an interactive way, Brenda Laurel argues:

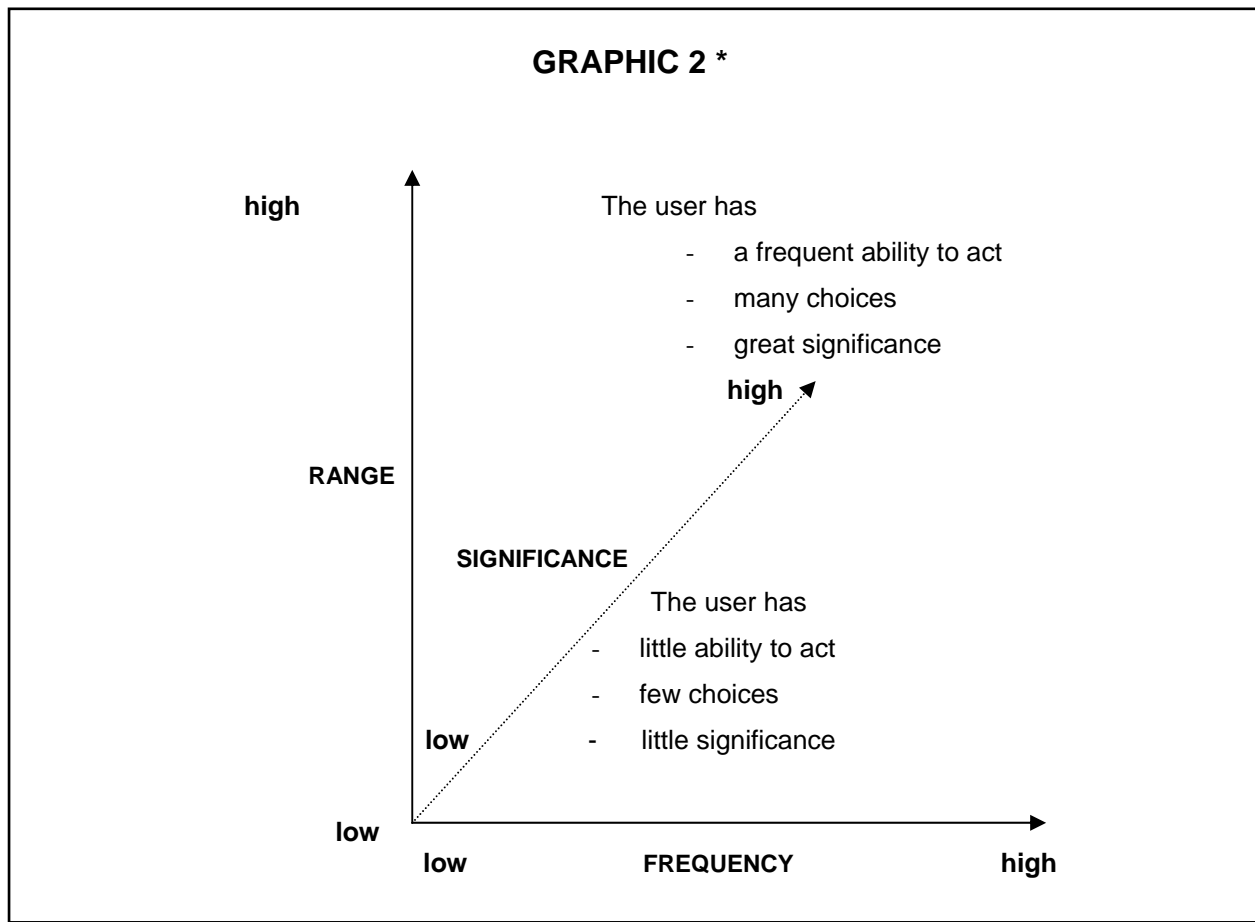
"(A) low degree of interactivity can be characterised by the fact that the user seldom can or must act, has only a few choices available, and choices that make only slight difference in the overall outcome of things. On the other hand, a high degree of interactivity is characterised by the user having the frequent ability to act, having many choices to choose from, choices that significantly influence the overall outcome - 'just like in real life' -, she adds"¹⁵⁰.

Laurel also refers to three variables in relation with the user: range, significance and frequency (see graphic 2).

¹⁴⁸ *ibid*, p: 176

¹⁴⁹ Bohdan O. Szuprowicz cited by Jens Jensen. Computer Media and Communication: 'Interactivity' - Tracking a New Concept in Media and Communication Studies. p: 176

¹⁵⁰ Brenda Laurel cited by Jens Jensen. *ibid*, p: 177



- An illustration of Brenda Laurel's 3-dimensional continuum, consisting of: `frequency`, `range` and `significance` ¹⁵¹

Within this framework of variables we can see that the user has the possibility to act more or less depending of the number of choices that he/she has in interactive communication. Jensen argues in respect to this dimension that it refers mostly to 'consultation communication'.

3.5.4 Dimension Four

Jensen based this dimension in Lutz Goertz's theory, who presents four degrees of interactivity: (a) `choices available`, (b) `modifiability`, (c) `the quantitative number of selections and modifications available`, and (d) `linearity and non-linearity`. I continue explaining briefly these four categories drawing on the theoretical framework of Goertz.

- (a) "The *'degree of choices available'* concerns the choices offered by the media being used. There is considerable difference between, say, TV media where the receiver only chooses between various programs and perhaps the quality (sound level, brightness, etc) of the program being received, and, on the other hand, a video game such as a flight simulator, where the user can select his position and speed in virtual space, various degrees of difficulty, opponents, points of view, perspective, etc.
- (b) The *'degree of modifiability'* refers to the user's own ability to modify existing messages or add new content where these modifications and additions, it should be noted, are saved and stored for others users. In this dimension, there would be a great difference between TV media on the one hand, which doesn't offer any possibility of user input, and Internet news groups, on the other hand, which open up the possibility of letting the user type and send any kind of written message which can then be read by all participants.
- (c) The *'quantitative number of the selections and modifications available'* refers to the quantitative number of selection possible within each of the available dimensions. In this dimension, for example, there will be a significant difference between the choices available by terrestrially distributed television and the many choices and modifications possible in a word processing program.
- (d) The *'degree of linearity or non-linearity'* functions as a measure of the user's influence on the time, tempo and progression of the reception or communication. This dimension is to capture the difference between, e.g., on the one hand a movie, where the moviegoer doesn't have any influence on when the movie starts, where, or in which order the scenes are shown; and on the other hand a hypertext where the reader is free to determine what, when and in which order something will be read"¹⁵².

¹⁵¹ Brenda Laurel cited by Jens Jensen. Computer Media and Communication: 'Interactivity' - Tracking a New Concept in Media and Communication Studies. p: 177

¹⁵² Lutz Goertz cited by Jens Jensen. *ibid*, pp: 178-80

The interesting thing in regards to these degrees is the different combination of possibilities that is possible to choose through interactivity. Also, the degree of linearity and non-linearity expresses an aspect of selection of how we are building our story, topic, etc. Goertz argues that there are media which give the user a high degree of 'modifiability' but a low degree of choice (such as e-mail) and, on the contrary, there are other media which give the user a very high degree of choice (such as WWW).

3.5.5 Dimension N

This dimension drawn by Carrie Heeter points at 'increased interactivity' as the 'primary distinction of new technologies', and proposes to understand interactivity in relation to communication technologies as a 'multidimensional concept'. She defines six dimensions of interactivity, which I will refer to briefly.

"The *1st dimension*, also called 'selectivity', concerns 'the extent to which the users are provided with a choice of available information'.

The *2nd dimension* concerns 'the amount of effort users must exert to access information'.

The *3rd dimension* concerns 'the degree to which a medium can react responsively to a user'.

The *4th dimension* concerns the 'potential to monitor system use', understood as a form of feedback that automatically and continuously registers all user behaviour while on the media systems.

The *5th dimension* concerns 'the degree to which users can add information to the system that a mass, undifferentiated audience can access' (many-to-many communication).

The *6th dimension* concerns 'the degree to which a media system facilitates interpersonal communication between specific users' (person-to-person communication)"¹⁵³.

¹⁵³ Carrie Heeter cited by Jens Jensen. Computer Media and Communication: 'Interactivity' - Tracking a New Concept in Media and Communication Studies, pp: 181-2

In this dimension the concept of 'interactivity', according to Jensen, is considered in the relation between communication and technology; also, it relates to 'interpersonal communication'. In this N-dimension it is possible to assume that the interactivity is a broad concept that join several elements, degrees and variations. Therefore, there is not only one element that creates interaction, but a relation between, basically, three parts: users, machines and information.

Based on these concepts and dimensions, I summarise this section of 'interactivity', in an attempt to focus the main arguments about this concept.

3.6 INTERACTIVITY SUMMARISED

Interactivity has been a complex and multidimensional concept with a long list of variations and elements around it. Therefore, I think that it is possible to consider some of the general aspects that make clear what exactly 'interactivity' is, how the elements and actions have appeared and how interactivity differs to the non-interactive.

It is clear that there are different forms of interactivity, which cannot be compared or covered by the same approaches. These can be the possibilities of choice in regards to the information content within a system; the capacity to produce and link information according to our necessities and desires; or the ability of a system to adapt and respond to a user.

Jens Jensen defines interactivity as:

"(A) measure of a media's potential ability to let the user exert an influence on the content and/or form of the mediated communication"¹⁵⁴.

Also, he refers to four characteristics of interactivity that summarise this broad concept. I explain these characteristics, as they are important in order to put together the main arguments about how to achieve interactivity and through what ways.

¹⁵⁴ Jens Jensen. Computer Media and Communication: 'Interactivity' - Tracking a New Concept in Media and Communication Studies. p: 183

- a) “*Transmissional interactivity* refers ‘to letting the user choose from a continuous stream of information in a one way media system without a return channel and therefore without a possibility for making requests (teletext, near-video-on-demand, be-your-own-editor, multi-channel systems)’.

- b) *Consultational interactivity* permits ‘the user to choose, by request, from an existing selection of pre-produced information in a two-way media system with a return channel (CD-ROM encyclopaedias, FTP, WWW, Gopher, etc)’.

- c) *Conversational interactivity* lets ‘the user produce and input his/her own information in a two-way media system, be it stored or in real time (video conferencing systems, e-mail, mailing lists)’.

- d) *Registrational interactivity* registers ‘information from and thereby also adapt and/or respond to a given user’s needs and actions, whether they be the user’s explicit choice of communication method or the system’s built-in ability to automatically sense and adapt (surveillance systems, intelligent agents, intelligent guides or intelligent interfaces, etc)’¹⁵⁵.

With this ‘compendium of ideas’, in chapter 4 I extract from the narrative of *Lost Highway* its interactive elements and generate webbed versions of the plot from one character’s point of view. This prototype does not exhaust the possible levels of interactivity within *Lost Highway* but offers a way of exemplifying forms of ‘interactivity’.

¹⁵⁵ Jens Jensen. Computer Media and Communication: ‘Interactivity’ - Tracking a New Concept in Media and Communication Studies. p: 183

CHAPTER 4

LOST HIGHWAY WEB-NARRATIVE and INTERACTIVITY

Finally, in chapter 4, I present an alternative webbed structure of *Lost Highway*. I interpolate parameters and generate versions of the plot and characters' points of view. I also suggest a new method of analysis that incorporates all the interactive and non-linear elements of *Lost Highway*. This webbed structure makes it possible for the viewer to interact with the story in a new way making use of: inner conflicts, dream-parallel worlds, metaphorical meanings and dualities.

In this chapter, I consider interactive narrative and structure. I take some parts of the film, and through the application of interactive models, I transform the narrative of *Lost Highway* such that the user can interact and determine what, when and in which order to 'read' the film. Again what I offer is a limited prototype of possible forms of interactivity within *Lost Highway* - it does however highlight the non-linear aspects inherent in the original film.

4.1 INTERACTIVE NARRATIVE AND STRUCTURE

In the construction of a non-linear story of *Lost Highway*, I consider a structure that branches and allows choices, in an interactive way. Inside this interactive construction the most important thing will be to find a balance between on one hand, the freedom of the viewer to choose, and on the other, the coherence that the narrative has to maintain.

In this chapter I want to focus on the relevant elements that are necessary in an interactive narrative, taking all the elements studied before, and also considering a new structure that can engage all the non-linear and all the inherently interactive aspects of *Lost Highway*.

4.1.1 Characters

The characters are important pieces in an interactive narrative due to the fact that the user/player/reader expects to be one of them in the story or at least to have control over them. If I return to some elements described in section 3.5 of chapter 3 about duality within interactivity - changes in space and time, it is possible to define the degrees of this control through three basic elements: scenes, actions and behaviour.

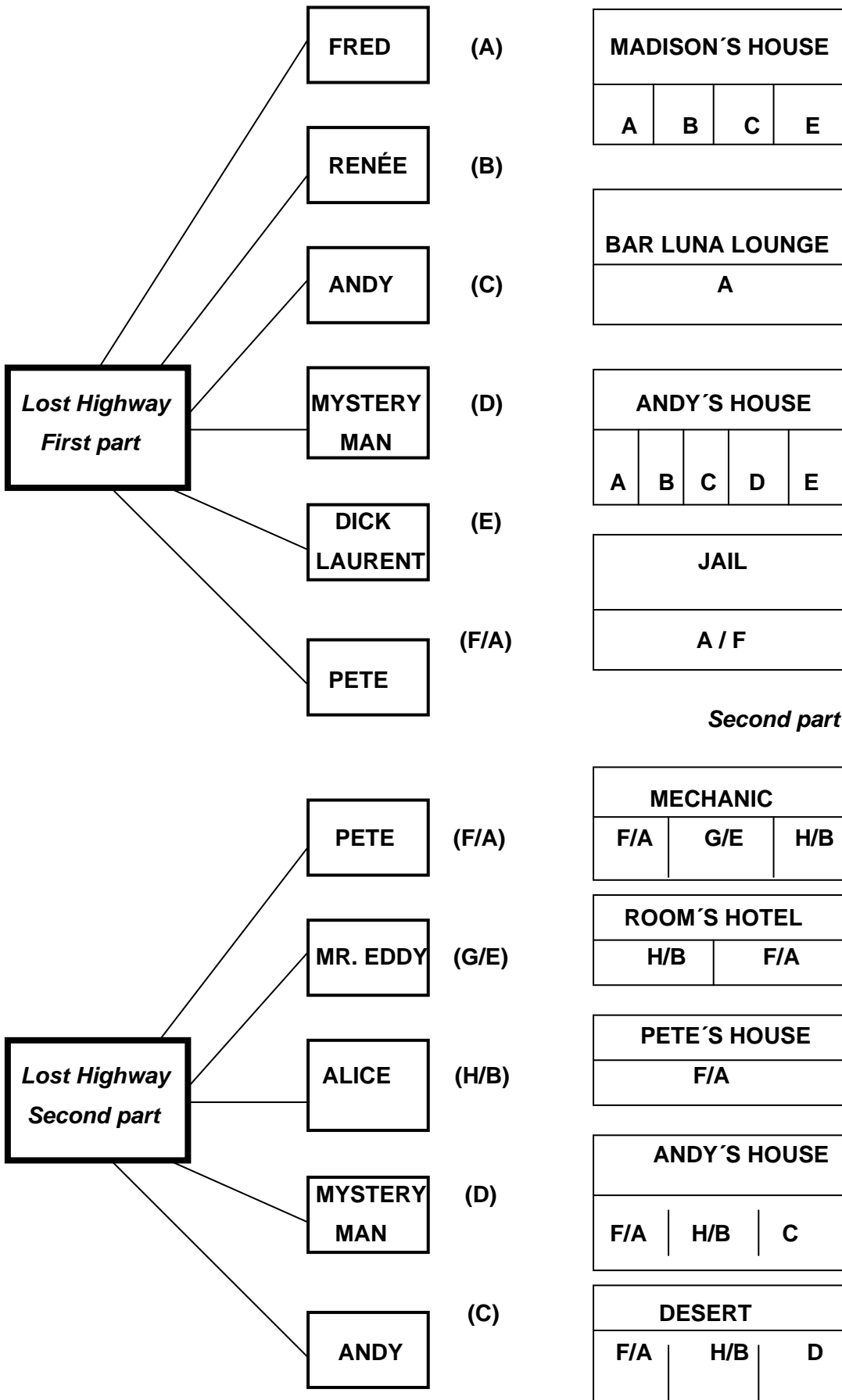
The possibilities of the user to act more or less depends of the number of choices that he/she has in respect to the path of the story through these three elements. Therefore, the characters define the way that the users can follow the story. The exciting part of this search is that in one point of the story exists a branching point that joins other part of the story. These branches (hypertext) permit the user to have different points of view as well as different pathways to follow.

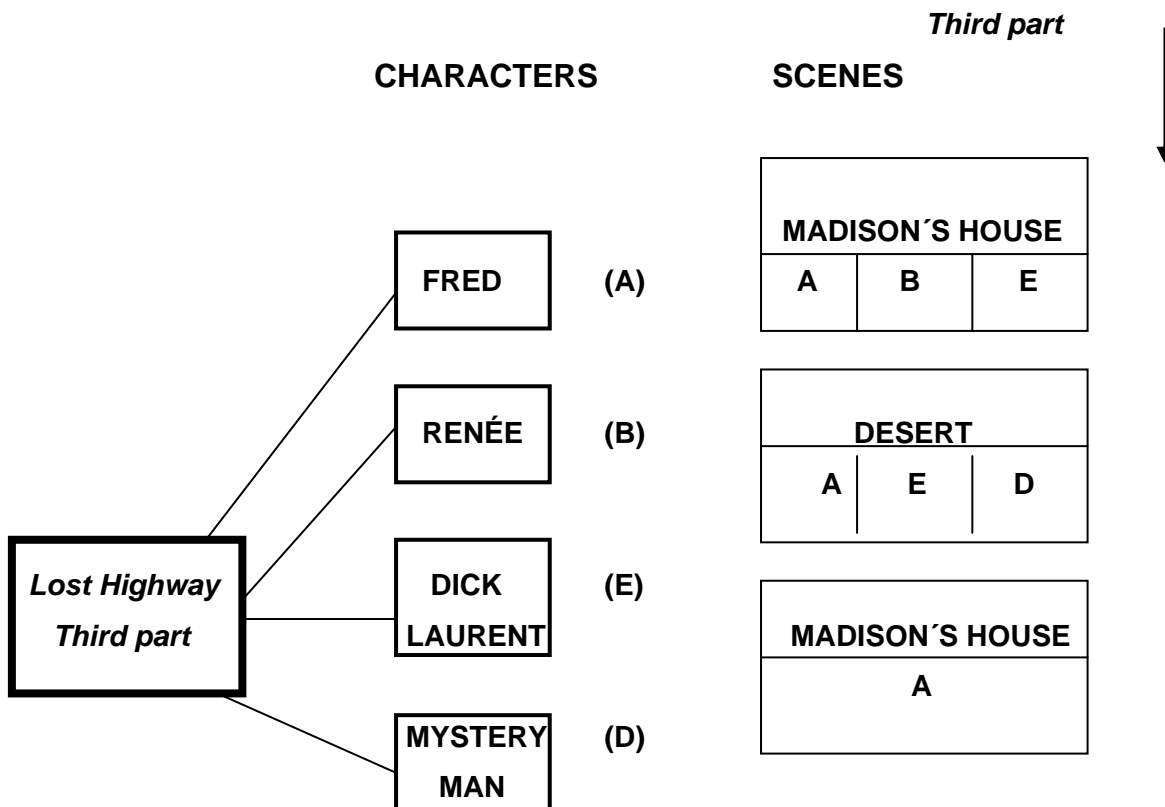
I begin to define and illustrate (see figure 1) in *Lost Highway*, what characters can have control of the story and also the scenes where they can play. In this model, I have divided the film in three parts; this type of interactivity permits the user to choose in which part of the story he/she wants to begin, and also to choose one point of view through one character.

FIGURE 1:

CHARACTERS (Who)

SCENES (Where)





This character map or path shows all the characters that will be involved in each scene. They have a letter assigned as reference. The scenes show where the character will appear and also in which of the scenes the character interacts with the other characters. This figure is based in one of the degrees - scenes - and they follow the same narrative structure as in the original film. The difference is that this map can show us how can we begin to build an interactive narrative choosing where we can begin and through what character.

If we follow Fred (character A), for example, we can see where he will appear and in relation with what other characters. I will illustrate later, in figure 2, the path that Fred (A) can follow in the interactive construction.

In the figure 1 (character map or path), the user can see the action from one-person's point of view and to link the story through that point of view; nevertheless in the story, the user has to combine her/his character with the action of the other characters, as it is shown in the model. Therefore a third person point of view appears that makes the role of the user more active due to the degree of interaction that they can combine.

The best option to create increased interactivity and 'immersion' is that the user can act through a single one-person point of view because it will permit him or her to be a protagonist in the story. Also - as I referred to in chapter 3 - the impact of the story will depend on how the user develops the story of the character through the linkage between the three parts referred in figure 1.

For example, I will take the point of view of Fred. Imagine that the user is Fred. Fred (the user) is *lost* in a *highway*, but he has the alternative to choose three ways (the three parts of the original film described above). In this case, to exemplify, I begin to follow the first part.

Fred arrives to his house, he meet his wife Renée. His first goal is to discover the state of his conjugal life in the interior of his house. The user can discover for example where he lives and who is his wife. Following the original story – each time that he receives a videotape, the user can also jump to other parts of the story or remain in the first part. He received, in the original story, three tapes, Fred can therefore follow one of them.

If the user does not want to take one, he or must choose to remain within the scene or move into another scene in the first part following, for example, the original story. The next scene in this same part will be when Fred is playing the saxophone in a bar. Here, the user also can choose several ways: a) to continue the story in the bar; b) to call to Renée and jump to other part of the story - through the telephone -; c) just take the door that says exit and escape from this interactive story; or d) to continue the movie story until the next scene.

If the user decides to call Renée, Fred will discover that she is not at home, but through the telephone he can come back to his house to discover where she is. Fred discovers that she is sleeping but before when he was calling she was not there. Then, Fred has to discover where was she. In this part Fred has move amongst the scenes to discover where she is (at the end of the second part or second branch) as it is in the original story.

With this brief example and taking the same film-characteristics of the characters in *Lost Highway*, the user can begin to define them and to build the interactive story.

4.1.2 Story Structure and Variables

In interactive narratives the linear-classical paradigm - from the beginning, middle and end that I mentioned in chapter 2 - is not sufficient to build an interactive structure, it has to be more complex to make the story develop in different directions depending on the user's choices.

The possibilities of structure in a new interactive model can differ depending on the multiple paths that we can create and what elements we need to emphasise in the interactive web-story. I referred in chapter three to 'multiform stories', how they permit us to describe a single situation in multiple versions, where the user/player can act in most of them - in first person - or simply to choose a logical construction based on the paths.

According to Timothy Garrand, the interactive structures combine linear structures, which can frequently appear, depending on how the scenes are assembled.

"Linear structure with scene branching is commonly used in training and educational narratives, *Boy Scout Patrol Theatre*, for example, is a linear story about trying to find a lost girl, but at various decision points, the player makes choices, such as whether to search a farm, a school, or the neighbourhood. If he or she chooses the farm, the action detours momentarily from the main story but eventually returns"¹⁵⁶.

There are other structures called '*hierarchical branching*' which make it possible for "the story to develop in totally different directions depending on the viewer's choice at a present decision point"¹⁵⁷. The number of choices in this structure can increase or decrease depending on how the story is presented.

¹⁵⁶ Timothy Garrand. Scripting Narrative for Interactive Multimedia. The Journal of Film and Video, vol. 49. 1997.

¹⁵⁷ *ibid.*

Another approach is to use '*parallel structure*', in which several versions of the same story are played out parallel to each other. If I return to the parallelism in *Lost Highway* it is possible to determine whether this film is a kind of 'parallel story', where one version (Pete's story) is played out of the main story (Fred's story). Therefore, it is an interactive element in the film pre-exists in the original film and that helps to build an interactive structure. This structure offers users the option of multiple paths and interactive scenes offers options that allow moving back and forth among paths.

Another approach is the '*string-of-pearls structure*' which is a linked series of world structures connected by plot points or by tasks the user must accomplish to move forward in the narrative. "A worlds structure lets the user explore a location. By itself, a worlds structure cannot form a coherent narrative, but it can do so when combined with other forms"¹⁵⁸.

The interactive narratives combine some of these structures. Garrand says that with the help of software and sophisticated design it is possible to create a 'variable-state environment' which permits the creation of different options where each interaction will produce different responses.

"One danger of creating too complex a structure is that the player can become lost in the story and be unsure how to interact. A good interactive design provides some overall conceptual structure to guide the player. This structure is often called a map"¹⁵⁹.

It is possible to create and combine some of the interactive structures with linear structures. Figure 2 of *Lost Highway*, is based on the Breakdown offered in the appendix. In this figure, I combine some linear structures from the original film, as described in chapter 2, with branch and parallel structures described in this section.

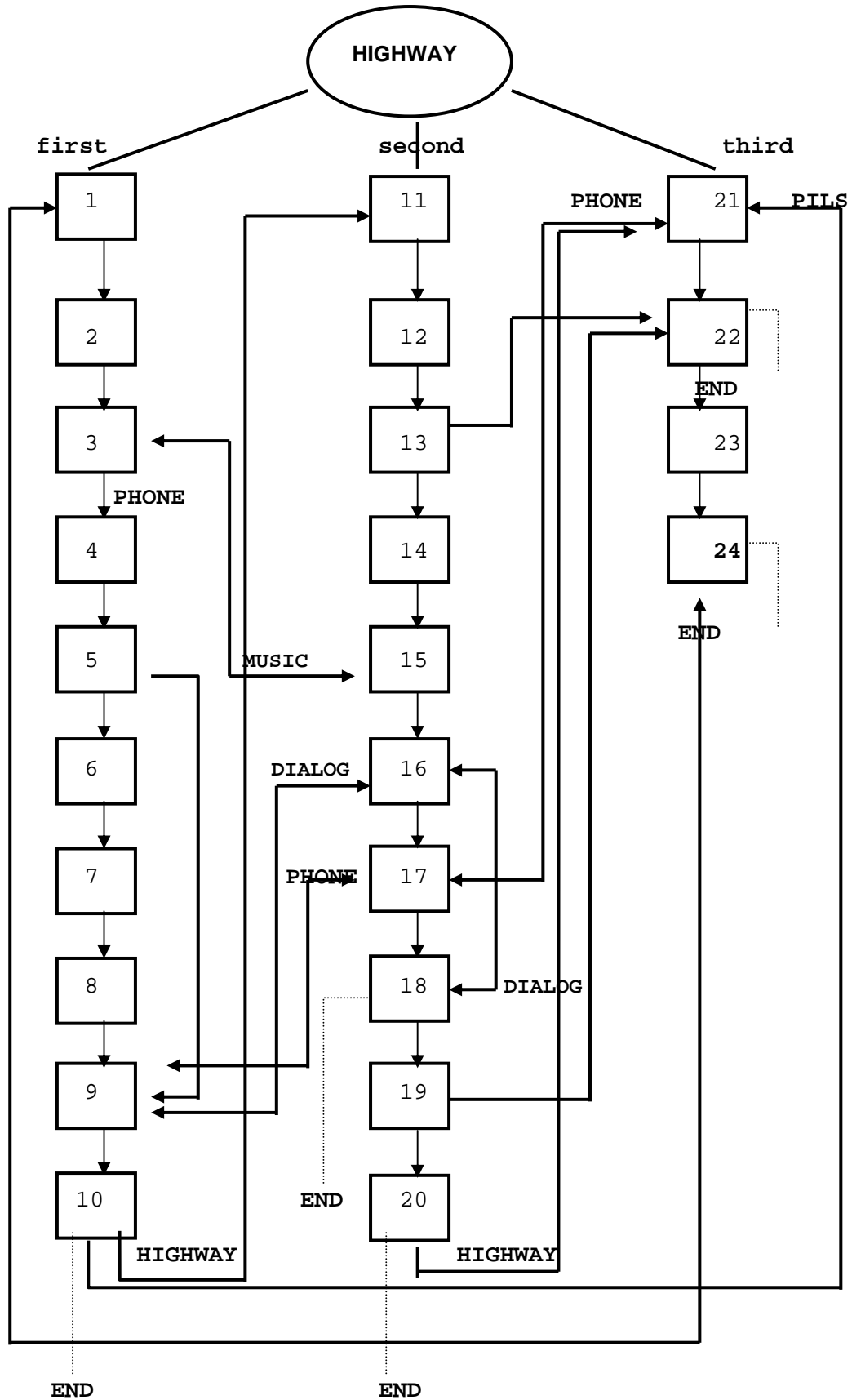
I have divided the structure in three parts, taken one character's point of view: Fred Madison again for simplicity and comparison (see figure 1). In this map we can see that each scene has a number based also in the Breakdown; it is possible to follow the story through the directions of the arrows. In Fred's map structure, the user can

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.
¹⁵⁹ *ibid.*

interact in the story linearly and interactively through plot points, objects, dialogues and sound. I will explain in the next section about plot points and props, taking also some elements referred in chapter 3 about web-narrativity and interactivity.

FIGURE 2: INTERACTIVE STRUCTURE FROM ONE CHARACTER POINT OF VIEW

FRED (A)



Let me exemplify how leitmotifs and recurring music themes can effect the story of one of the *Lost Highway*'s characters - taking Fred, the main character, again as example. The story begins with the song *I'm Deranged* (David Bowie). Fred appears in the first scene when he is driving by a highway. It finishes when he goes to the second scene, but if we want to jump through this song, it is possible to jump directly to the second part where this song continues.

But if Fred (the character that I choose) continues following the narrative of the original movie, he will arrive to the third scene, where Fred is playing the saxophone in a bar. This scene can connect us with another scene in the second part, where Fred has mutated to Pete. This new scene in the second part has permitted the viewer to discover that Pete is the same as Fred but now transformed in other character. If we want to discover who this new character (Pete) is that appears instead Fred, we have to follow some scenes through only the sound.

We have to choose between some songs to discover the relations between this new character (Pete) with Fred and the rest of the characters. We can choose between some songs: a) *The magic moment* (Lou Reed) to discover the relation with Alice; b) *Apple of Sodom* (Marylin Manson) to discover the relation with Mr. Eddy; c) *The perfect drug* (Trent Reznor) to discover the relation with Mystery Man; d) again *I'm Deranged* to join to Fred (all these songs are the original movie's songs).

If I choose *The magic moment*, Pete will meet Alice. If I continue with this song I will discover all the love scenes that Pete will have with her. But, if I can't discover more things, I will have to choose another song to discover more things. In this example music has been chosen as the point of transition, sounds such as the telephone ringing could also create intersections. Sound and music often mark plot points and therefore clear branch points as well.

some songs: a) *The magic moment* (Lou Reed), to discover the relation with Alice; b) *Apple of Sodom* (Marylin Manson) to discover the relation with Mr. Eddy; c) *The perfect drug* (Trent Reznor) to discover the relation with Mystery Man; d) again *I'm Deranged* to join to Fred (all these songs are original movie's songs)

4.1.3 Plot Points and Props

In an interactive narrative the plot points are essential because they permit the variations and modifications in the story. However, these plot points have to follow a story line that permits coherence in the linkage of the story. These plot points require, sometimes, that the same information appear in a number of different scenes to create coherence; of course that they cannot be presented exactly in the same way, they need to vary to give more suspense the story.

In the original *Lost Highway* the plot points are present through the music, the dialogue, the objects and the camera shots. These are repeated in some scenes that permit the user to follow the story easier. I have built the graphic of the 'interactive structure' considering some of these plot points in the film.

Another essential element in the interactive narrative is the use of the 'props' (objects). As I referred to in chapter 3 about 'electronic games' these narratives combine some of the sets and props to provide a complete environment in the story. "Props can be subtle, such as a gun in a suitcase, or more overt, such as a letter the player is allowed to read, or even active, such as a television set that presents background information on the characters"¹⁶⁰.

Through the props - such as the telephone in *Lost Highway* the telephone - it is possible to choose another part of the story that follows other parts of the story in a non-linear way (see figure 2). The objects provide new ways of interaction that progress the story or vice versa, including some props that can lead the users through the story, as follows:

Taking Fred as an example (see figure 2) I will follow his story through some plot points and props. The story begins in the original movie scenes. In the first part, Fred receives three videotapes (props). If Fred chooses one of these, he jumps directly to scene 9 (see appendix) when Fred goes to Andy's party, Renee's friend. As Fred, I meet Andy, some other friends and Mystery Man appears who is a phantom.

¹⁶⁰ Timothy Garrand. Scripting Narrative for Interactive Multimedia. The Journal of Film and Video, vol. 49. 1997.

Mystery Man has a mobile telephone at the party and he proposes Fred (user) to continue the story or to make a call and jump to another part of the story. If he decides to make a call, he will go again to his house to discover nothing. The purpose of this 'phantom' (Mystery Man) is to confuse Fred of what way he has to take to continue the story. When Fred (user) discovers, in his house, that the story is not going forward, he has to make another call to jump to another scene (17, see appendix) in the second part, where the Mystery Man appears again to continue the story.

If he makes the call, in this new scene, Fred will discover that the Mystery Man is Mr. Eddy's friend, and he will have to find another connection, through other props: a) telephone (another call); b) the music; c) continue with the next scene of the original film; ord.) escape (i.e.exit).

It is also possible to create other paths or forms of interaction through the use of non-diegetic elements such as music as mentioned or non-diegetic sound in addition to diegetic dialogue.

In the stories I have told so far, I have chosen the main character, but if I choose another character the possibilities to combine the scenes, the actions and the situations will be different according to the character's action, props, sounds and leitmotifs (musical themes) related with him or her.

However, and as I referred to in chapter 3 about interactivity and the way users can interact with the narratives, a complex interactive narrative has to accompany a cohesion vertically as well as horizontally (i.e. vertical as linear or main story lines, with the horizontal axis as links moving across the original story).

If the user is presented with too many links the story can lose any sense of narrative line or cohesion and not build an interactive story of any sense.

In other words, returning to the dimensions explained in chapter 3, the interactivity will have more 'continuum', if the 'hypertexts' or links have consistent variables between: range, significance and frequency i.e. appear at regular intervals

(frequency), within props that can effect the story (significance) and within a limited set of scenes that offer a logical connection (range).

4.1.4 Pace and Time

In chapter 2 I referred to how in classical narration, the events of the story occurs in a determined and continuous time following a logical, cause-effect progression of events and in accordance to the classical paradigm (i.e. including a beginning, middle and end).

In the same chapter, I brought up how the new 'art film/cinema' concepts broke some of the classical rules, such as the classical temporal logic through 'gaps' and the creation of non-conventional links of continuity. Applied to *Lost Highway* I mentioned that the loosening of clear-cut traits, motives and goals of the characters due to their 'psychological-mental processes' have created new temporal and spatial considerations, also referred to as 'gaps'.

Other features about time were mentioned in chapter 3 in the creation of 'multiform stories' and in the concepts about 'interactivity'.

All of these concepts and features are important when considering how the variability of time affects pacing in the new interactive narrative.

In interactive narratives it is not possible to determine - a priori - 'time'. The user determines how much time he or she will spend within one scene. They may choose to move around a room or scene following all the possible links within that space and time or they may choose to leave the room or scene immediately:

"That a person plays an interactive program multiple times also influences the pace. A two-hour feature film is meant to have the same running time and pacing every time it is viewed, but an interactive player might deal with much of the exposition the first time he or she plays (...) then dramatically increase the pace on later occasions"¹⁶¹.

Time will be totally relative in an interactive narrative because it will be subservient to the temporal manipulation that the users build through the creation of links during the story.

The most interesting thing in this new re-conception of time is the technical use that the designers and writers incorporate in interactive stories. For example in *Thunder in Paradise*, a game, the time spent in one scene effects what happens in later scenes i.e. the user has less time later to complete tasks - or, in other games such as *Maths Blaster*, the level of the user is registered by the time they spend on initial tasks and the level of difficulty is reduced or raised to suit that particular user.

Temporal relations in *Thunder in Paradise* are described as follows:

“(I)n one scene the heroes have to battle the villains to reach and save a girl. If the heroes take a lot of time to fight the villains, the other villains on the island have more time to prepare for them, and the heroes’ problems are increased when they finally land”¹⁶².

In spite of the fact that this technique permits the user to have more control over time, the pace in interactive stories is practically uncontrollable. Therefore, time incorporates different forms within interactivity, which create again several temporal possibilities. Also, and as I mentioned in section 3.3 in chapter 3 in regards to new active users, this ability gives a more active and creative role to the users who have to find things or scenes that are related to one another.

4.1.5 Sound

I alluded in chapter 2 to the importance of sound in *Lost Highway*, and how it was helping the perceivers to recognise characters and locations. Furthermore, the sound track creates a rhythm and a dynamic in the dramatic narrative line.

These elements help in the construction of an interactive narrative because the sound can be linked to various objects in a scene, for example the users can move

¹⁶¹ Timothy Garrand. Scripting Narrative for Interactive Multimedia. The Journal of Film and Video, vol. 49. 1997.

closer or farther away from the source and the sounds change in volume or disappear, to be replaced by new sounds.

In *Lost Highway* the sound links scenes creating a greater sense of realism in the story and - of course - subtle interactivity as described earlier. Other elements of interactivity through sound would be the possibility to choose the sound in the scenes and with, for example, music change the mood from a romantic scene to a suspense scene. This extreme mood-setting function follows also the way sound works in *Lost Highway*; with an extremely romantic mood, underscored and transformed with a song charged with mystery.

“Interactive programs offer much greater potential use of other sounds, (...) particularly non-synchronous sounds. One reason is that sound takes much less storage space on the disc than does video”¹⁶³.

Sound can make a sequence successful, it also creates the dramatic mood that the interactive stories need in response to the user.

4.1.6 Genre

According to Jane Jensen and Maria O’Meara it is difficult to determinate genres in an interactive narrative in relation to existing film genres. However some genre characteristics do exist within interactive narratives. They argue for example that “romance would be a possibility, if the writer could find something to drive the story forward”¹⁶⁴ for example romance could blossom if the hero finds certain hidden gifts for his beloved. If we take for example a game such as *Carmen San Diego*, the narrative is concentrated around aspects of mystery and adventure and is highly goal-oriented in a similar fashion to the original film genre.

However, Stephan Fitch argues that the “traditional story genres may not be the only ways to develop interactive narratives”. He agrees with Fitch in that games may not

¹⁶² Timothy Garrand. Scripting Narrative for Interactive Multimedia. The Journal of Film and Video, vol. 49. 1997.

¹⁶³ Timothy Garrand. Scripting Narrative for Interactive Multimedia. The Journal of Film and Video, vol. 49. 1997.

need to follow this goal-orientation and therefore open up to other genres by placing games online in which “anyone on the network could alter these programs by reediting, adding new sound tracks, and so forth”¹⁶⁵. The interaction then is add in twists, branching stories rather than finding some form of teleological ending.

If I take the *Lost Highways*' genres i.e. with characteristics of mystery, film-noir and horror (see chapter 2, section 2.4.3) into the construction of an interactive narrative, it is possible to utilise specific scenarios, homogenous style including for example, lighting style, that link scenes and plot through the characteristics given by the genre.

The interesting point is that the genre and its characteristics help to create a coherent sequence within the interactive narrative with the user concentrating on the suspense rather than abrupt changes in style and form. As I referred to in chapter 3 the ability to produce a sensorial rich environment and interactivity is given not only by how the user influences the form or content of this mediated environment, it is also given by the visual and sound characteristics.

Interactive narratives are not completely new i.e. non-webbed films, such as the original *Lost Highway* did have non-linear aspects in it's original form and a certain level of interactivity through primarily mental processes rather than involving physical as well as mental aspects.

Webbed narratives are not wholly non-linear either – they include scenes and sections that follow linear paths and their goal-orientation creates a classical structure – a beginning (f.ex. to find the hidden treasure, to kill the evil phantom, to put the dinosaur together, etc), a middle (the act of doing so), and an end (the evil phantom is dead, the treasure found, the dinosaur completed).

Levels of interactivity change as well as described in chapter 3, partly in relation to amounts of links and levels of user-activity. In my webbed narrative interactivity of

¹⁶⁴ Jane Jensen and Maria O'Meara (MIT) cited by Timothy Garrand. Ibid, 1997.

¹⁶⁵ Stephan Fitch cited by Timothy Garrand. Scripting Narrative for Interactive Multimedia. The Journal of Film and Video, vol. 49. 1997.

Lost Highway it has not been possible or necessary to create a lot of links, however it was possible to relate these linkages to high levels of interactivity through some elements given in the original film that I have considered such as props and non-diegetic sound.

Creating a new way or path through a webbed narrative, it is possible to say that creating time, pace and place in a 'new' narrative is not as important as constructing a possible logic for the events and motives that occur. Of course the user needs time and a place to situate the story in somewhere and in some time, however these are not necessarily pre-requirements to follow a coherent line through the events.

In this new construction of events, which we notice when we try to convert a film into a webbed narrative, lies the underlying belief that narrative is a way, like Branigan says, of recognising the 'efficacy' of an object and event. Therefore, connecting and constructing a linkage set of events also demonstrates that the new narrative line has cohesion. As such it is possible to say that the origin of the interactive narrative is in the cinema. Films have permitted to create new digital and interactive narratives based in the original linear and non-linear movie stories. The possibility to manipulate, create and choose simulated new environments based in films has changed the way in which the stories are told. Now, users can choose between a complex world of many characters, change their positions at any moment in order to see the same event from the viewpoint of another character, or simply follow a linear way with a low grade of interactivity in a webbed story.

The construction of utopian fantasy worlds that users can portray is expanded rapidly. Also the possibilities of future forms of computer media are quite open. It is possible to see a rapid proliferation of new forms of narrativity integrating technology and content. Theoretical studies of interactive narratives are also proliferating with this thesis offering one addition to the field of Computer Media Studies.

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APPENDIX

BREAKDOWN OF LOST HIGHWAY

OPENING

In the opening credit sequence, the broken yellow lines of a highway rush out of the night toward the camera like flames. David Bowie's song "*I am Deranged*" surges on the soundtrack.

FIRST PART

1. Fred Madison is smoking. The doorbell rings and a voice intone over the intercom: "Dick Laurent is dead". It will be the first of many assaults on Fred's privacy.
2. Fred is talking with Renée, his wife. She will not go to the concert that night. She prefers to stay in home reading.
3. In the bar *LUNA LOUNGE*, Fred plays the tenor saxophone. After the concert he called to Renée, nobody answers. Fred doubts about the fidelity of his wife. He comes back to the house. Renée is sleeping.
4. Renée finds a videotape in the stairs of the house, it does not have any remittent. Fred and Renée watch the video. It is a shot of the exterior of their house.
5. Fred, lying down on the bed, is waiting that Renée goes to rest. Several subjective flashes (jump cuts) appear; we can see Andy, a Renee's friend that appears after in his party. It is difficult that the perceiver can remember this image.

6. Fred tells Renée about a dream that he had where she was shouting to him: "...then, you were...lying in bed...but it wasn't you...It look like you...but it wasn't". The Renée face change for the mystery man's face. This character will appear later, it is only the first clue of who is he...a dream? A phantom?
7. Renée finds other video. It shows the same exterior of the house, cut, and it goes in travelling for the interior of the house where Fred and Renée are sleeping together. This eye-camera that controls the movements of the characters is a constant in some films of science fiction and terror. They call to the police.
8. Fred talks with two detectives, he reveals an important characteristic of his personality: "I like to remember things my own way...How I remember them. Not necessarily the way they happened..."
9. In this scene will appear Andy, Renée's friend and the Mystery Man. It is a night party in Andy's house. Renée and Fred are there. She asks for a glass of whisky to Fred. He goes to find the whisky. From the bar, a Mystery Man goes toward him. He looks like a ghost, with white face and make-up; he is dressing a black and elegant suit. He hands Fred a cellular phone and asks him to call home. This scene breaks with the temporal and spatial continuity of the film. This is one of the characteristics of the "art cinema".

MYSTERY MAN

We've met before, haven't we?

FRED

I don't think so. Where was it that you think we've met?

MYSTERY MAN

At your house. Don't you remember?

FRED

No, no I don't. Are you sure?

MYSTERY MAN

Of course. In fact, I'm there right now.

FRED

What do you mean? You're where right now?

MYSTERY MAN

At your house.

FRED

That's fucking crazy man.

The Mystery Man reaches into his coat pocket, takes out a cellular phone and holds it out to Fred.

MYSTERY MAN

Call me.

Fred snickers, like this is a bad joke. The Mystery Man puts the phone into Fred's hand.

MYSTERY MAN

Dial your number.

Fred hesitates, puzzled.

MYSTERY MAN

Go ahead.

Fred shrugs, laughs, dials his number. We hear a pick up as we stay on Fred's face.

PHONE VOICE OF MYSTERY MAN

I told you I was here.

FRED

How did you do that?

The mystery man points to the phone.

MYSTERY MAN

Ask me.

FRED

(angrily)

How did you get into my house?

PHONE VOICE OF MYSTERY MAN

You invited me. It's not my habit to go where I'm not wanted.

Fred looks at the man in front of him, but speaks again into the phone.

FRED
Who are you?

The man laughs -identical laughs- both over the phone and in person.

PHONE VOICE OF MYSTERY MAN
Give me my phone back.

MYSTERY MAN
It's been a pleasure talking to you.

The man walks away from Fred. Renée appears and comes up to Fred.

RENEE
I thought you were getting me a drink?

FRED
Just a minute.

He goes over to the host of the party, Andy. He grabs and point across the room toward the Mystery Man, who is engaged in conversation with other guests.

FRED
Andy, who's is that guy?

ANDY
(Looking at the Mystery Man)
I don't know his name. He's a friend of Dick Laurent's, I think.

FRED
Dick Laurent?

ANDY
Yes, I believe so.

FRED
(remembering something)
But Dick Laurent is dead, isn't he?

ANDY
He is? I didn't think you knew Dick.

How do you know he's dead?

Andy and Renée exchange a worried look, which Fred does not notice.

FRED

I don't. I don't know him.

ANDY

(angrily)

Dick can't be dead. Who told you he was dead?

RENEE

Honey, who?...Who's dead?

Fred takes Renee by the arm away from Andy.

10. Fred appears with a third video in the door's house. He sits to watch it. After of the travelling by the interior, we see Renée lying in the floor, death; and Fred full of blood. These images close some of the narrative clues of the first part and determinate the clues for the second part, with Renée's murder. At the end of this part we see Fred in front of the police, with a quarrel like transition, Fred is been interrogated for Renée's death.

SECOND PART

Following a linear explanation until this death irruption, the analysis results difficult, we can not differentiate between the real facts and the Fred's dreams or thoughts. However, it has been possible to go chronologically.

11. This jail's scenes closes the first part and give us some clues for the second part.

Fred is sitting inside of his cell. He sees himself on death row for murdering his wife, an ecstatic vision of screaming strangers, a reverse explosion of a cabin and the mystery man going inside to that cabin in slow motion. After of these images, we see Fred again, with a terrible headache.

12. This scene shows the mutation between Fred on Pete. With a special effect, the cell of Fred illuminates with blue light and goes fade to black. In a subjective travelling of the character, we see a highway. Little to little the travelling reduces

the speed, the car stops. We see Pete stands between the darkness. Behind him there are three people, we do not know who they are. In the mutation, Fred on Pete, appears a group of flashes and out of focus scenes. The perceiver does not know until that moment what's going on, until the jail's guard discovers that Fred Madison has disappeared, and inexplicably replaced in his cell by the young mechanic Pete Dayton. This sequence finishes when Pete Dayton's parents carry him to the house.

13. Pete Dayton appears instead Fred. He works in a mechanic. Mr. Eddy, an old and good dressed man, goes to see him with two bodyguards. He wants that Pete fixes his car. They go for a ride in the car to detect the problem. Mr. Eddy fights with a man that insults him, revealing his brutality. Pete fixes his car, they come back to the mechanic and Mr. Eddy offers him a porno video, Pete does not want it. The detectives follow Pete to discover something about Fred Madison; when they see Mr. Eddy, they recognise him like Dick Laurent. The duality in the character.
14. Mr. Eddy and Alice go to the mechanic, he wants that Pete fixes his other car. Pete sees, for first time, to Alice. She is the same Renée actress: Patricia Arquette: but blonde. Pete gets into a love relation with her, who is the lover of Mr. Eddy.
15. This surrealist and abstract scene shows Pete sits. Between some out of focus images appear flashes where he can see Alice, a spider walking by the wall, and flies in the lamp. Pete is so disturbed for the music, it joins him to the Fred's life. "A certain id-like logic is at work here, involving doubles, symmetries and the inevitable devastation of the universal quest. Interpretation fades into insignificance as Lynch –using ruthless and diabolical images, editing, music, and sound- re-creates the excruciating and irresistible nightmare of derangement and ineffable revelation"¹⁶⁶.

¹⁶⁶ Article: David Lynch finds himself in Lost Highway. Peter Keough. 1997. Boston Phoenix.

There are a lot of moments and elements that never resolve in the story. Pete's parents say him: "...we saw you that night, Pete" "You came home. Your friend Sheila brought you here". " There was a man with you...She brought you here...She didn't know what else to do". We never know who was the other man, maybe Fred, or who?

16. Pete goes to see Alice. She proposes him to kidnap Andy, a man who works with Mr. Eddy. Alice tells Pete how she meets Andy, with the same words that Renée tells Fred about Andy, in the first part: "It was a long time ago...I met someone at this place called Moke's...we became friends. He told me about a job..." Alice tell Pete all the story that Renée did not want to tell Fred.

17. Pete arrives to his house. Mr. Eddy, who knows that he is with Alice, calls to his house. Mr. Eddy is with the Mystery man, they talked with Pete:

VOICE MYSTERY MAN

We've met before, haven't we?

PETE

I don't think so. Where was it that you think we've met?

VOICE MYSTERY MAN

At your house. Don't you remember?

PETE

No. No, I don't.

Until here, the conversation is the same that Fred had with the Mystery Man in the first part, the rest of the conversation changes.

VOICE MYSTERY MAN

We just killed a couple of people...

PETE

What?

VOICE MYSTERY MAN

You heard me...We thought we'd come over and tell you about it.

PETE

What's goin' on?

VOICE MYSTERY MAN

Great question!! In the east...the far east...when a person is sentenced to death...they're sent to a place where they can't escape...never knowing when an executioner will step up behind them and fire a bullet into the back of their head...it could be days...weeks...or even years after the death sentence has been pronounced...This uncertainty adds an exquisite element of torture to the situation, don't you think?

It's been a pleasure talking to you.

The last phrase is the same that Fred had with him in the first part.

18. Pete carries out the Alice's plan to kidnap Andy. When he enters to Andy's house, he sees a porno video of Alice in a big screen. Andy appears and Pete hit and kills him. Pete discovers a photo where Renée, Alice, Mr. Eddy o Dick Laurent and Andy appear together. He asks Alice: " Are both of them you?" This part shows us the unfolded between Renée and Alice. In the last sequence of the film, when Alice disappears of the photo, reveals that the woman was only one.
19. Pete goes upstairs to the bathroom after committing a heinous deed for Alice, Pete walks up a flight of stairs that turns into a motel hallway ignited by red light and reverberating with the cerebrum-busting strains of Marilyn Manson's "Apple of Sodom". He opens door number 26 and beholds a sex scene.
20. Alice and Pete go to the desert. We can see a highway and the same reverse explosion of the cabin (#11). They arrive to the cabin. Pete asked Alice: "Why choose me?" , she never answer him. Pete and Alice, inside of a surreal desert night, make love under headlights beams and loud music. It sex scene contradict the first cold sex scene between Fred and Renée. At the end, Pete says: "I want you...I want you...". Alice: "You'll never have me". With this last phrase, she goes toward the cabin and disappears.

THIRD PART

21. We assume that Pete is in the floor, but Fred stands up. They mutated again. The mystery man appears like a ghost, first inside of the car and after he is standing next to the cabin's door.

MYSTERY MAN
Here I am.

Fred is dizzy with fear and confusion. He pulls on his trousers and shoes and walks up the steps to the cabin toward the Mystery Man, who goes inside. Fred stops in the doorway. He looks around.

FRED
Where's Alice?

MYSTERY MAN
Alice who?

Fred looks around again but there is no one there except the Mystery Man standing in the centre of the room. Fred stares at him.

MYSTERY MAN
Her name is Renée. If she's told you her name is Alice, she's lying.
(filled now with anger)
AND YOUR NAME, WHAT THE FUCK IS YOUR NAME?!

At the end of this scene, the mystery man follows him with a camera. Fred avoids in his car.

22. Fred arrives to Lost Highway's hotel. Renée is on the bed with Mr. Eddy o Dick Laurent, she goes out before Fred arrives. Fred goes with Dick Laurent to the desert. Fred killed him with a knife that the mystery man gives to him. While, Dick Laurent is dying, the mystery man shows Fred through of the viewfinder of a camera a sex scene between Dick Laurent and Renée. We see again the eye-camera that controls the movements of the characters (# 7). The mystery man shoots to Dick Laurent and disappears.

23. The police are in Andy's house. One of the detectives discovers the photo that we see before in the scene # 18. In the photo only appear Dick Laurent, Andy and Renée; Alice is not there anymore. The police: "It's her, all right. Fred's Madison wife...with Dick Laurent and Mr. Dent-head over there". Other detective says: "We've got Pete Dayton's prints all over this place...". With this two comments, we can deduce that Alice and Renée was only one woman; but the last comment about Pete's prints open a big interrogate about the mutation between Fred and Pete. He is only one person or two?
24. The symmetric and circular end finishes when Fred goes to his house and rings the doorbell. After, he says over the intercom: "Dick Laurent is dead". We assume that Fred is in the other side (# 1). The police arrive and Fred runs away. They go for a highway in a final persecution. We can see a CU of Fred driving, and after an out of focus image of him, maybe he is suffering other mutation...This circular construction is an important element of almost all the computers games and interactive narrative systems.