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COM 300 PM Section
Final Draft Paper Set B
Fall 2021

David Lynch, the Most Creative Mind of our Time

“Within your own self is a treasury, an ocean of pure bliss, consciousness, intelligence, creativity, love, happiness, energy, and peace... within every human being.” -David Lynch

Every human is capable of coming up with an idea that could change reality as we know it. Sometimes the most unorthodox ideas come from the mundane, other times they come from wild experimentation. If there was ever a man who has thrived within a happy balance between the mundane and the extraordinary, it would be David Lynch. Filmmaker, musician, and coffee enthusiast: David Lynch is considered to be one of the most fascinating and inspirational figures in all of cinema, despite not achieving mainstream critical success. His surreal approach to storytelling has captivated the hearts and minds of many and each one of his films stands on its own as its own unique piece of art.

What makes David Lynch special is his ability to be just as interesting outside of film as he is in the directors chair. Whether it be his daily weather report and random number of the day you can find on Youtube, to his views on transcendental meditation, it seems like this 75 year old man has everything figured out in life. The purpose of this paper is to deconstruct David Lynch's actions and analyze how they feed into his bodies of work. I believe he is the most underappreciated and creative mind of our time because he employs four essential tools to living a happier life: routine, introspection, embracing the unusual, and passion. I think that if more people used these tools, then the world would be more inspired to consume art that is outside their comfort zone, and begin to grow an appreciation for art as a whole. In writing this paper, I

will shed some light on what makes this artist so interesting and offer my appreciation to his lifestyle.

First things first, David Lynch self diagnoses himself as a creature of habit. When it comes to David Lynch's routine in life, you can see that there is a lot of normal human behavior, but his commitment to staying habitual is nothing short of genius. The man smokes cigarettes pretty regularly, he drinks enough black coffee to kill a horse, and he welcomes nature. As mentioned previously, his reports of the weather in Los Angeles, California on Youtube are updated daily. On Fridays, he even celebrates the weekend by starting each report with a signature "if youuuuuu can believe it, it's a Friday once again!" Lynch's routine of reporting on the LA weather is also humorous because there is barely any change within it! On Jay Leno, Lynch stated "having a known behavior allows your mind to think about other things." In an interview conducted by Daniel Wray, Lynch claims that he would go to the same Bob's Big Boy restaurant at 2:30 and order the same item (a milkshake) every day for seven years, being his longest habit. He has considered psychoanalysis, but after asking if it would disrupt creativity and being told there was a possibility it could, he walked out and never looked back, (Wray). His dedication to staying on schedule is to be admired, and it is all to aid the process of creativity. Lynch keeps his life simple so he can keep ideas flowing, which he incorporates into his art.

Transcendental meditation is a practice that Lynch also utilizes twice a day, and says helps feed into his more creative side. After hearing someone say "True happiness lies within, it's not out there," Lynch started his meditation practices (Bernstein). He started his own TM foundation called "The David Lynch Foundation for Consciousness-Based Education and World Peace," which aims to teach children, prison inmates, the homeless, veterans and war refugees among others about consciousness-based education and stress relief through meditation (Lynch,

1). The purpose of TM is to refresh the mind and allow thoughts and ideas to swim through one's self. Dreams permeate Lynch's work, and David Wallace, a Lynch enthusiast, would describe dream-like imagery within cinema as "Lynchian," (Wallace). Some of Lynch's pieces of art reflect TM and introspection, like the concept of his famous movie Mulholland Drive being within a dream. Special Agent Dale Cooper, a character on Lynch's show Twin Peaks, follows intuition set forth by his dreams, using them as clues to help him solve the mysteries in the town. It is because of Lynch, that I personally have taken up TM and started to analyze my dreams to look for deeper meanings within my subconscious. It has had nothing but a positive effect on my life and it has given me a newfound appreciation for my mind.

One thing I have admired about David Lynch is his ability to stay unapologetically himself. He embraces his weirder side, as we have already explored within this paper. "I don't know why people expect art to make sense. They accept the fact that life doesn't make sense," Lynch has famously stated. In this chaotic world where nothing makes sense that we call life, Lynch has this talent to stay grounded yet creative, something that we see in a lot of his films. When watching a David Lynch film, you are transported to his non-linear, carefully crafted worlds. His cult following will often say that his films are about as open-ended as you can get, and according to an interview conducted by Rory Carroll, Lynch himself considers explanations of his films to be a crime (Carroll). This may shock the average viewer and be nonsensical to analyze, but the beauty of Lynch's art is that there is no right or wrong interpretation for what he creates.

Even in his first movie ever, Eraserhead, you can already see surreal imagery that raises more questions than answers. Lynch has stated that Eraserhead is his most spiritual film but refuses to elaborate further. Whether it be the deformed and inhumane baby or the girl with

puffed-up cheeks singing within a radiator, the film has gripped audiences' minds for decades now. So much so that as documented by Sheryl Cannady, it has been preserved in the United States Library of Congress as being "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant," (Cannady). In a rare video, you can see Lynch thanking the audience for watching the film, and accompanying him are 5 Woody Woodpecker dolls which he rescued and named in a gas station in 1981 (Lynch, 2). Unfortunately, he got rid of them because apparently they began to exhibit behaviors that weren't nice. As it can be seen, Lynch does not believe in the tortured artist trope. Garmonbozia, a term Lynch coined meaning pain and sorrow, is not required to make good art. In fact, according to Rachel Gould, he believes suffering can obstruct artistic exploration, (Gould). Despite showing disturbed imagery in films like Eraserhead and Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me, Lynch also incorporates a lot of lighthearted humor within his projects. His sense of humor is more often than not extremely subtle, but recognizable. To put it bluntly, Lynch has always been an eccentric mind who can find humor in the darkest subjects.

One last point I'd like to make is just how passionate and involved David Lynch is when it comes to making films. Unlike many directors who treat their actors as lower than them, David Lynch is known for treating his actors with love and respect. He even went out of his way to use a live cow to get the attention of the Oscars to promote an actress, Laura Dern, that he worked with in Inland Empire. Lynch always gives praise to all his actors and actresses, even going as far as to call Laura Dern one of the all-time greatest actresses. When Lynch started working with Dern, after giving a performance Lynch said enthusiastically "You'll have them bolting for the fire exits!" Dern has given very high praise to Lynch, who calls her Tidbit, and has stated that she wanted to spend the rest of her life working with him, (Dern). He also calls Kyle

MacLachlan, who plays Dale Cooper in Twin Peaks, as well as other roles in Lynch's films Dune and Blue Velvet, by the name Kale as an endearing joke.

Lynch is a filmmaker who consistently takes risks and experiments with ideas. "Who gives a fucking shit how long a scene is," Lynch has asserted, (Lynch, 3). Many of Lynch's projects are slow burners, whether it be the 3 Hour Inland Empire or the return of Twin Peaks. In Twin Peaks, the character of Laura Palmer says to the audience "I'll see you again in 25 years." After not being on television for 25 years, the show returned for its third season which was intended to be watched like an 18 hour movie, Lynch's most ambitious project yet. With the passing of many actors from the show, rather than replace them, Lynch used techniques that were equal parts weird as they were brilliant. For example, one the character played by the late David Bowie was turned into a machine that releases steam. This wasn't the first instance a character in the show turned into an object, as in season 2, the character Josie Packard had turned into a doorknob. Lynch believes that ideas are seeds for something more, even calling them seeds filled with electricity. They pop, and you have to catch them while they are still in your mind. While some ideas are fleeting, he states that you should always write them down because the idea wants to be something more. He will write ideas on napkins and later incorporate them into projects, whether they be music, a painting, or film.

David Lynch is a talented individual whose projects have kept the world intrigued and inspired. His ability to stay on routine, reflect inward, embrace abnormality, and stay passionate has led him to be an extraordinary artist and an even better human. He is a legendary artist who does not get enough credit in the mainstream. However, in the film community, I think Lynch's methods have inspired countless young artists to view the world in a different light. I feel that more people should consume Lynchian media; watch his films, attempt Transcendental

Meditation, and take a cue from his life by welcoming creativity. He has laid the foundation for a new revolution of art that feels surreal and dreamlike, something that is universal across humanity, despite our lack of understanding of what it all means.

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