

POLSKI UNIWERSYTET NA OBCZYŹNIE
W LONDYNIE

ZESZYTY NAUKOWE

SERIA TRZECIA, NR 8, 2020

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THE SEXUALITY OF CRIME
IN DAVID LYNCH'S „BLUE VELVET” (1986)
AND „LOST HIGHWAY” (1997)

A notorious shock artist¹, David Lynch is a versatile director and visual artist whose films and paintings are characterized by extensive brutality, disturbing content and surreal stylistics. Quite frequently, involved in writing the scripts of his films, Lynch considerably alters the texts he adapts onto the screen to make them more powerful and the imagery stronger. *Films should have power, he claims, the power of good and the power of darkness, so you can get some thrills and shake things up a bit*². The invariables of the director's unparalleled style, as defined by Paul A. Woods, form a curious amalgam: *a cliched stock in trade – compulsive obsession, eccentric characterization, bizarre murder, the contrasts of folksy Americanism and contemporary sleaze, innocent nostalgia and bizarre sexuality*³.

¹ E. Sheen, A. Davison, *The Cinema of David Lynch. American Dreams, Nightmare Visions*, London, 2011, s. 1.

² Ch. Rodley, *Lynch on Lynch*, New York, 2005, s. 150.

³ P. A. Woods, *Weirdsville USA. The Obsessive Universe of David Lynch*, London, 1997, s. 127.

The following paper will present the director's particular treatment of crime in his cinematic works, cases in point being 1980s Film Noir „Blue Velvet” and a psycho-thriller „Lost Highway”. In both films crime and sexuality are closely related and, thus, their mutual interaction will constitute a core of my discussion. I would also like to briefly portray the psychology of the killer (namely „Blue Velvet”'s Frank and „Lost Highway”'s Fred), defining the sources of their drive to kill and physically assault the women they loved and sexually desired. Finally, I will discuss their sexual complexes and their role in shaping the characters' psyche.

Lynch claims to have had an idyllic childhood spent in a loving family, which always seemed to be too good to be real for him. What introduced certain confusion and turbulence to his life was the fact of the family being forced to move from one place to another, which was connected with his father's occupation. Those changes induced a *sense of rootlessness* accompanied by an *unspoken sense of unease and 'wild pain'* in the adolescent Lynch⁴. Chris Rodley argues that *it's tempting to see this peripatetic lifestyle as having contributed much of what is both unique and disquieting in Lynch's cinema*⁵. Forced to adjust to the new environment young Lynch experienced a *classic minor alienation*, and was *never quite able to fit in*⁶. His characters reflect those problems and, moreover, they appear to have undergone certain traumatic occurrences in the past, which, more often than not, proved to have had disastrous effects on their lives. Some of them like „Lost Highway”'s Fred Madison suffered from nervous breakdowns, which led them to creating their alter-egos. The director exploits the motif of the „Doppelgänger” quite extensively in his works, for a majority of his protagonists have their, either physical or mental, doubles. According to Greg Olson,

*Freud believed that monsters and doppelgängers are projected embodiments of our subconscious fears and unacceptable desires: dark psychic material that Jung called the shadow, which we loath to call our own. Lynch will explore the horror of possession and depersonalization at length over the course of his career*⁷.

In his films, Lynch constantly attempts to prove that there are no one-dimensional people, and even the most righteous and noble-hearted ones have an

⁴ Ibidem, s. 9.

⁵ Ch. Rodley, *Lynch...*, s. 1.

⁶ P. A. Woods, *Weirdsville...*, s. 9.

⁷ G. Olson, *David Lynch: Beautiful Dark*, Lanham, 2011, s. 46.

inclination towards evil and possess a dark side. Chris Rodley states that *people are often disturbed by the darker side of their own psyches*, to which the director replies thus: *I've always liked both sides and believe that in order to appreciate one you have to know the other – the more darkness you can gather up, the more light you can see too*⁸.

Slavoj Žižek comments on this differentiation thus: *By using extreme oppositions Lynch shows that evil is mediated, that there is a specific identity of good and evil, that instead of being a substantial force, evil is reflexivised and composed of ludicrous clichés*⁹.

Kenneth Kaleta presents yet a different view. *In Lynch good and evil are not polar entities but rather a duality. They are both there to be observed. [...] Depicting two sides is irresistible to Lynch*¹⁰. The director creates complex characters who, despite their unassuming appearance, have strong inclinations towards criminal activity, villainy and physical and mental abuse. Love and violence usually coexist in a peculiar amalgam. Lynch's villains are two-dimensional and possess both positive and negative features. As a rule they are capable of higher feelings (e.g. Frank Booth's being moved to tears by music), yet their psyche is usually twisted. Their evilness appears to have been propelled by past traumas (sexual failures and murders being committed) or a mental sickness, and probably does not stem from their natural disposition. Only „Twin Peaks” Bob, similarly to the Mystery Man in „Lost Highway” whom Slavoj Žižek calls, *the ultimate embodiment of Evil, the darkest, most destructive, and 'toxic' aspect or strata of our unconscious*¹¹, seems to be evil incarnate whose sole motive is the sheer pleasure of killing.

What Lynch's villains all have in common is their obsession about something. Frank is a classic example of someone who suffers from an Oedipus complex, who, in addition, has a fetish about velvet; Juana from Santo's crew in „Wild at Heart” takes sexual pleasure in watching a murder being committed; „Twin Peaks” Hank and Fred Madison are obsessed with their wives' infidelity; and Leland Palmer is a paedophile and rapist with a fixation about his daughter. What they share is lack of compassion towards their victims; on the contra-

⁸ Ch. Rodley, *Lynch...*, s. 23.

⁹ S. Žižek, *The Art of the Ridiculous Sublime. On David Lynch's 'Lost Highway'*, Seattle, 2000, s. 4.

¹⁰ K. C. Kaleta, *David Lynch*, New York, 1995, s. 51.

¹¹ S. Žižek, *The Art of the Ridiculous Sublime...*, s. 23.

ry, causing both physical and emotional pain arouses them sexually. Nevertheless, each of them at a certain point indicates a predilection towards goodness which makes them even more uncanny, e.g. Frank who is particularly sensitive towards art and music, at the same time abuses Dorothy and tortures her husband, and Fred who is a musician, murders his wife and chops her into pieces in their own bedroom. Fred's evening performance at the „Luna Lounge” is furious, maniacal and accompanied by stroboscopic light, which gives it a hallucinatory quality. During and after the performance, Fred notices his wife in the club with another man, which is disquieting to him since she lied to him that she would stay at home. Allister Mactaggart wonders whether it was only Fred's hallucination which might *provide him with a 'motive' to concoct a reason for murdering Renee*¹².

Back at home Fred tells his wife about his dream: *I had a dream last night. You were inside the house, you were calling me. I couldn't find you. You were in bed but it wasn't you, though she looked like you*¹³. Mactaggart argues:

*The recounted dream, coming temporally prior to the actual murder, actually presents the murder, from which Fred tries to distance himself by firstly seeking to deny that it is/was Renee in bed, and later by 'becoming' Pete Dayton*¹⁴.

Unable to sustain the reality of his life, Fred creates an alternative self – the double, embodying features he is deficient in. Fred's double, Pete Dayton is a young, handsome, sexually active antagonist of an impotent, unhappy in his marriage, wife-murderer. Unable to live with the awareness of his crime, Fred creates a second reality in his mind, in which he possesses all assets he lacks in the real life, e.g. youth, sexual attractiveness and potency, a happy family, and a job that enables him to realize his fondness for cars. His *sense of reality becomes severely deranged [...] in a never-ending sequence of events*¹⁵, and the dream is a means of escape from the awareness of murdering his wife and the mind's *tricking itself in order to save itself from having to deal with the un-dealable*¹⁶. Lynch provides the following explanation:

¹² A. Mactaggart, *The Film Paintings of David Lynch. Challenging Film Theory*, Chicago, 2010, s. 100.

¹³ „Lost Highway”, dir. D. Lynch, perf. B. Pullman, P. Arquette, CIBY-2000/Asymmetrical Productions, 1997, film.

¹⁴ A. Mactaggart, *The Film Paintings...*, s. 101.

¹⁵ P. A. Woods, *Weirdsville...*, s. 178.

¹⁶ Ch. Rodley, *Lynch...*, s. 289.

*It's about a couple who feel that somewhere, just on the border of consciousness – or on the other side of that border – are bad, bad problems. But they can't bring them into the real world and deal with them. So this bad feeling is just hovering there, and the problems abstract themselves and become other things. It just becomes like a bad dream*¹⁷.

The term that may be used to describe Fred's mental state is called a *psychogenic fugue*¹⁸. When Barry [Gifford] and I were working we didn't know the term, but it's when a person suddenly takes on a completely different personality, different friends, everything, explains Lynch, it is a syndrome that fits Fred Madison perfectly¹⁹. He also adds that *that's why they called it a 'psychogenic fugue' because it goes from one thing, segues to another, and then I think it comes back again. And so it is in 'Lost Highway'*²⁰. In this alternative reality, Fred falls in love with a blonde twin-double of his wife, Alice, *a pained beauty with a 1940s Veronica Lake hairstyle* who reciprocates his feelings (unlike his wife)²¹.

With the development of their clandestine liaison, Pete becomes more and more nervous in his contacts with Mr Eddy, her sponsor, who begins to suspect that Alice has been unfaithful to him. When threatened with death, the young couple plan their escape. Pete learns that Alice has been a luxury prostitute, which becomes a source of a major disillusionment for him. *What's the matter, don't you trust me Pete?*, asks Alice pointing a gun at Pete, which might also have been said by Fred's wife who, however, never voiced her apprehensions²². As Pete and Alice are heading to the desert, there is an implosion of the cottage that Fred recalled earlier in the film. The culminating moment is when Pete and Alice are making love in the desert, illuminated by the car's headlights. After the girl responds to Pete's: *I want you* with the words: *You'll never have me*, Fred's illusion dismembers and the Mystery man informs Fred that Alice never existed and her name was Rene from the very beginning.

It was Rene who had an affair with Dick Laurent for which Fred slits Laurent's throat and murders his unfaithful wife. *I think there's no such thing as a bad coincidence*, say the detectives seeing the photo of Rene with Laurent and Andy,

¹⁷ Ibidem, s. 225.

¹⁸ P. A. Woods, *Weirdsville...*, s. 179.

¹⁹ Ibidem.

²⁰ Ch. Rodley, *Lynch...*, s. 239.

²¹ P. A. Woods, *Weirdsville...*, s. 180.

²² „Lost Highway”, dir. D. Lynch...

which gives them certainty that Fred was responsible for the murders. Forced to face the truth, he elopes along the „Lost Highway”. During the chase, Fred’s head disintegrates again and the illusion is over. Rodley calls the story *a complex cross-weave of parallel worlds and identities that refuse to yield its many secrets easily*, about which *any explanation is going to be inadequate*²³. In this case, as in Hoffman’s *Adventures on New Year’s Eve* (1815), *the catastrophe is brought about through the relationship to a woman*²⁴. Slavoj Žižek argues, that Fred

*shifts into psychotic hallucination in which the hero reconstructs the parameters of the Oedipal triangle that again make him potent. Pete turns back into Fred [...] precisely when, within the space of psychotic hallucination, the impossibility of the relationship reasserts itself*²⁵.

Dominic Wells proposes another interpretation of the relation between Fred and Pete. *Maybe the Bill Pullman character isn’t a different person from the Getty character; maybe he’s just a grown-up version? That’s why the second half seems so ‘50s, because it indicates a shift back in time*. He also suggests that analogically while Pete dreams of marrying Alice, Fred actually does so and the marriage *isn’t all it’s cracked up to be*²⁶. Thus, Fred’s story might be interpreted as the failure of juvenile dreams which seems to be the main reason for his murdering Rene.

The doppelganger motif was also applied to Jeffrey and Frank in „Blue Velvet”, the film which Jeffrey Ferry calls *a kind of journey inwards to the land of Original Sin*²⁷. Dorothy’s oppressor and the kidnapper of her child, Frank is a psychopath who takes exceptional pleasure in causing pain, and he is an embodiment of everything that Jeffrey secretly longs for. Frank seems not to have any moral restraints. With his bizarre gang he entertains himself during insane joyrides, treats violence as an amusement and does not hesitate to hurt others for sheer satisfaction, usually of sexual nature. *He’s like an archetype, an American heavy, professes Lynch*²⁸. Dennis Hopper seemed ideal for the role for he had a reputation of a drunkard and a drug addict with a problem. Michel Chion states:

²³ Ch. Rodley, *Lynch...*, s. 215.

²⁴ O. Rank, *The Double. A Psychoanalytic Study*, Chapel Hill, 1971, s. 10.

²⁵ S. Žižek, *The Art of the Ridiculous Sublime...*, s. 19.

²⁶ D. Wells, *The Road to Hell, 1997. David Lynch. Interviews*, Jackson, 2009, s. 196.

²⁷ J. Ferry, *Blue Movie 1987. David Lynch. Interviews*, Jackson, 2009, s. 42.

²⁸ P. A. Woods, *Weirdsville...*, s. 75.

*Though on paper the character of Frank is outrageous, thanks to Hopper he is totally alive on the screen. With his striking way of speaking in brutal bursts, matching his contorted snarling face, Hopper imbues Frank with a sense of anxiety and chaos even as he preserves the larger-than-life quality which Lynch desired*²⁹.

I've got to play this part, David, because I am Frank, Denis Hopper declared while applying for the role³⁰. According to Chris Rodley, Frank represents *masculinity at the extreme – twisted, violent and psychotic* and Lynch admits that Frank evokes apprehension in him. *The Frank in my mind scared me. Definitely, he confesses*³¹. His striking contrast to Jeffrey confirms „the double” theory. Frank embodies all that Jeffrey is not, and all, that he, consciously or not, desires to be. *Despite Freudian theorizing about Frank as a father figure, the obvious reference is that, to Jeffrey Frank is the dark side of himself he'd never normally wish to meet*, states Paul Woods³². *You're like me, you fucker!* Frank addresses Jeffrey at the door of Dorothy's apartment³³, which proves Woods' assumption right.

Also Kenneth Kaleta observes, that *in Lynch's world Jeffrey becomes a man, not because of his initiation into varied sexual experiences, but rather because he realizes the dark seed in himself and the ugliness and beauty in the world it reflects*³⁴. Jeffrey Ferry confirms that this dual nature of both Frank and Jeffrey is *a source of internal fear of the evil within our own minds and souls, as opposed to external fear of a monster or a murderer*³⁵. Despite his clearly negative features, Frank, according to Lynch, loves Dorothy. *Frank is totally in love. [...] He just doesn't know how to show it. He may have gotten into some strange things, but he's still motivated by positive things*³⁶. Lynch also comments on the famous sex scene between Dorothy and Frank:

It was hysterically funny to me. Frank was completely obsessed. He was like a dog in a chocolate store. He could not help himself. He was completely into it.

²⁹ M. Chion, *David Lynch*, London, 1995, s. 88.

³⁰ P. A. Woods, *Weirdsville...*, s. 75.

³¹ Ch. Rodley, *Lynch...*, s. 144.

³² P. A. Woods, *Weirdsville...*, s. 83.

³³ „Blue Velvet”, dir. D. Lynch, perf. I. Rosellini, K. MacLachlan, De Laurentiis Entertainment Group, 1986, film.

³⁴ K. C. Kaleta, *David Lynch...*, s. 121.

³⁵ J. Ferry, *Blue Movie...*, s. 42.

³⁶ P. A. Woods, *Weirdsville...*, s. 81.

[...] *It was so horrible and so frightening and so intense and violent, that there was also a layer of humour. It has to do with the degree of obsession*³⁷.

This assumption proves the relation between sexuality and crime and physical abuse is indeed very strong in the film. Because of his obsession with Dorothy, Frank first cuts her husband's ear off in order to blackmail her, and later on kills him to demonstrate his power over Dorothy and determination to get her.

The motif that binds crime and sexuality in Lynch's films is the application of the mother and the father archetype, both described by Carl Gustav Jung in his *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. Jung defines the notion of an archetype thus: *Archetype is an element of our psychic structure. [...] It represents or personifies certain instinctive data of the dark, primitive psyche, the real but invisible roots of consciousness*³⁸. He also notices that an archetype is never an individually conceived concept but rather a collective experience, hence *the archetype is always an image belonging to the whole human race and not merely to the individual*³⁹, which used to be synonymous with Platonic Ideas. Jung supplements this definition by noticing that *the archetype in itself is empty and purely formal nothing but a facultas praeformandi, a possibility of representation which is given a priori*⁴⁰, since *there is an a priori factor in all human activities, namely the inborn, preconscious and unconscious individual structure of the psyche*⁴¹.

Jung establishes the origins of the mother archetype in a universal concept of the *Great Mother* which *belongs to the field of comparative religion and embraces widely varying types of mother-goddess*⁴². Further, Jung traces back the source of infantile phobias and complexes to the parents, and the mother in particular. *In the great majority of cases definite causes of disturbances can be found in the parents, especially in the mother, yet the contents of the child's abnormal fantasies can be referred to the personal mother only in part*, he claims⁴³.

The father figure is given a less thorough consideration, yet its importance as the balancing force to the mother is established. *This is the mother, the matrix – the form into which all experience is poured. The father, on the other hand, repre-*

³⁷ Ibidem, s. 82.

³⁸ C. G. Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, Princeton, 1990, s. 160.

³⁹ Ibidem, s. 161.

⁴⁰ Ibidem, s. 79.

⁴¹ Ibidem, s. 77.

⁴² Ibidem, s. 75.

⁴³ Ibidem, s. 83.

sents the dynamism of the archetype, for the archetype consists of both – form and energy⁴⁴. The mother archetype is predominantly what gives rise to the mother complex. *Mother always plays an active part in the origin of the disturbance. [...] In any event, the child's instincts are disturbed and this constellates archetypes which, in their turn, produce fantasies that come between the child and its mother as an alien and often frightening element*⁴⁵.

Jung distinguishes between the types of the complexes, according to the child's gender. Boys are usually afflicted by homosexuality, Don Juanism and impotence, which may result in *self-castration, madness, and early death*; however, because of gender differences, *in a man, the mother-complex is never pure, it is always mixed with the anima archetype*⁴⁶. The impact is strong, since the mother *cannot help playing, overtly or covertly, consciously or unconsciously, upon the son's masculinity, just as the son in his turn grows increasingly aware of his mother's femininity, or unconsciously responds to it by instinct*⁴⁷. Hence, the relation is always determined by erotic tension between the two sexes. As far as mother – daughter relations are concerned, the complex causes *either an over-development of feminine instincts indirectly caused by the mother, or with a weakening of them to the point of complete extinction, and hence in the first case, the preponderance of instinct makes the daughter unconscious of her own personality; in the latter, the instincts are projected upon the mother*. The difference between the impact of the mother on the two sexes may be best summarized by the following statement:

*In the daughter a mother-complex either unduly stimulates or else inhibits the feminine instinct, and in the son it injures the masculine instinct through an unnatural sexualisation. [...] It is always associated with the idea of injury and illness*⁴⁸.

Those complexes later determine the person's attitude toward marriage, sex, children, and life in general.

The child-parent relations in Lynch's films are peculiar ones and constitute one of their most significant themes. Parents are hardly ever tender and caring, and children are either neglected or sexually abused. Michel Chion sees the

⁴⁴ Ibidem, s. 101.

⁴⁵ Ibidem, s. 85.

⁴⁶ Ibidem, s. 94.

⁴⁷ Ibidem, s. 86.

⁴⁸ Ibidem.

grounds of Lynch's incestuous allusions in proximity. *It is dramatic, troubling, theatrical and sexualized. Irrational phobias arise from it at will: contamination, oral rape, murder, vampirisation and, of course, the real or fantasised seduction of children by their parents*⁴⁹. Paul Woods, in turn, quotes one of the interviews with Lynch for „The Rolling Stone” magazine during which *the tenacious reporter wondered aloud whether incestuously Freudian themes could be traced through Lynch's work*, and provided the following examples:

*Mary's mother coming on like a lick-happy dog to Henry in Eraserhead; Jeffrey's supposed identification with Dorothy and Frank as Mom and Dad in 'Blue Velvet'; Frank's switching persona from Daddy to Baby [...] and the cliffhanger with Audrey about to service Ben in 'Twin Peaks', to which Lynch was politely evasive*⁵⁰.

Numerous references to the mother and the father motif constitute a pivotal part of „Blue Velvet”. Although Jeffrey has his biological parents, they are presented as passive characters having no influence on their son's life whatsoever. *It would be wrong to underestimate the way in which Lynch marginalises the parents*, argues Michel Chion, *Jeffrey's father suffers a heart attack which renders him mute. [...] As for his mother, there is no doubt that she is present, ever seated on her couch or at the kitchen table and she also remains silent*⁵¹. This might be the reason why, in his fantasies, Jeffrey creates both a mother and a father figure, Dorothy and Frank, to realize his fantasies connected with their potency and sexuality. *One readily understands that Jeffrey's father and mother are, so to speak, disconnected for the length of the film, to allow the fantasy parents Dorothy and Frank to emerge from the shadows and play out the primal scene before his eyes*⁵².

With both of them he is involved in a bizarre relation of sexual nature. *Jeffrey is fascinated by the power of his sexual espionage, [...] caught in sexual bondage where Dorothy is in power and Jeffrey is under her control*, argues Kenneth Kaleta⁵³. The employment of the mother-child motif with regard to Jeffrey and Dorothy may be confirmed by Mike's remark on seeing Dorothy naked in front of Jeffrey's house. *Who's that Jeffrey? That your mother?*⁵⁴. However, Dorothy's na-

⁴⁹ M. Chion, *David Lynch...*, s. 165.

⁵⁰ P. A. Woods, *Weirdsville...*, s. 109.

⁵¹ M. Chion, *David Lynch...*, s. 91.

⁵² *Ibidem*, s. 92.

⁵³ K. C. Kaleta, *David Lynch...*, s. 103.

⁵⁴ „Blue Velvet”, dir. D. Lynch...

kedness in this scene is *meticulously de-eroticized*, states David Chute⁵⁵. Michel Chion confirms that *her nudity is that of a mature woman marked by child-bearing, not that of a youthful 35-year-old*. He also observes that Dorothy's *Italian looks* make her foreign in the neat little world of Lumberton⁵⁶. In Dorothy's apartment, Frank enacts with her an incestuous game involving the mother, the father and the child:

*'Hello Frank', Dorothy flatly intones, 'It's Daddy, you shithead!' he immediately reprimands her. He soon changes roles, yelling 'Baby wants to fuck!' like some demonic, retarded brat. 'Don't you fuckin' look at me!' he warns Dorothy, then slaps her face. A small, pained smile comes upon her. [...] Frank throws himself into a brief, brutal fuck with Dorothy, shouting 'Daddy's coming home'*⁵⁷.

In this sequence Frank's exclamations allude to sexual penetration, argues Michel Chion. *The notion of 'coming home', associated with a return to the bosom, [...] reinforces the sense that we are witnessing a family triad including parents and a son*⁵⁸. While Jeffrey is watching the scene from the wardrobe, it signifies a child secretly watching its parents during the *primal scene*⁵⁹. In the sequence *Jeffrey Beaumont's voyeurism certainly recalls that of L. B. Jeffries in Hitchcock's film [„Rear Window“]*, notices Michel Chion⁶⁰. The similarity of names of these two characters also seems not to be accidental. Dorothy's relation to Jeffrey is a game, in which she initiates the boy into the world of sex, establishing herself as a dominant figure, in a *reversal of the male voyeur role*, who orders the boy to strip in front of her eyes⁶¹. In a velvet robe, she resembles a goddess who realizes Jeffrey's fantasies connected with the mother figure.

Lynch comments on the scene as follows: *Film is really voyeurism. You sit there in the safety of the theatre, and seeing is such a powerful thing. And we want to see secret things, we really wanna see them*⁶².

Michel Chion wonders whether the characters do not enter, speak, move, and behave solely to please the voyeur, knowing full well they are giving him a show⁶³.

⁵⁵ D. Chute, *Out to Lynch, David Lynch: Interviews*, Jackson, 2009, s. 35.

⁵⁶ M. Chion, *David Lynch...*, s. 87.

⁵⁷ P. A. Woods, *Weirdsville...*, s. 81.

⁵⁸ M. Chion, *David Lynch...*, s. 92.

⁵⁹ A. Mactaggart, *The Film Paintings...*, s. 11.

⁶⁰ M. Chion, *David Lynch...*, s. 28.

⁶¹ P. A. Woods, *Weirdsville...*, s. 80.

⁶² Ch. Rodley, *Lynch...*, s. 145.

⁶³ M. Chion, *David Lynch...*, s. 93.

The relation between Dorothy and Jeffrey is an unending game with sexual background. She takes control over him and attempts to make him involved in a masochistic relation with her, based on assuming roles by both of them. Later, when they are having an intercourse, she begs him to hit her, *Feel me. Hit me. Hurt me!*, to which he reluctantly consents, since *both of them are driven into erotic passion*⁶⁴. When Frank takes Jeffrey on a joyride and threatens him with death if he does not leave Dorothy, he recites the lyrics of the song to him: *In dreams I walk with you, in dreams I talk to you. In dreams you're mine*, which may be a hint of a homo-sexual feelings that Frank might hold for Jeffrey. This declaration of love is combined with the threat of *the love letter* sent between the eyes being the metaphor of a bullet.

Hence, sex is inseparably linked to pain and fear in the movie, which makes it a dark and repugnant experience. Intimacy and affection are replaced by wild passion, lust and horror. Kenneth Kaleta argues that *in fact, sex in 'Blue Velvet' has little to do with sex at all. The film is obviously a foray into the dark world of violence and abuse, a world not of sex, but of sexual violence*⁶⁵. Lynch's attitude towards sex is, nevertheless, a positive one. *Sex is so fascinating. It's like jazz: a pop song sounds the same every time you listen to it, whereas jazz has so many variations. It should be the same with sex*, he claims⁶⁶. Angela Carter criticized Lynch for being *a one-dimensional Freudian masturbator in 'Blue Velvet'. It's about fucking mummy (Dorothy) and marrying the girl next door (Sandy)*, argues Carter⁶⁷.

Lizzie Borden, in turn, defends Lynch claiming that Dorothy is *a fantasy, an image of desire with something nightmarish about her. [...] She's like a photo memory of our mothers when they were young. [...] For me she represents the whole perversion of normative teen sexuality that Jeffrey and Sandy stand for*⁶⁸. One might suspect that this complicated relation between Jeffrey and his imagined parents led him to murdering Frank – his father-rival, though his main motivation seems to be far from Frank's. He wants to save Dorothy from Frank's influence and uses Sandy to be his life partner.

Incestuous references can also be found in „Lost Highway”, as has been mentioned earlier. Slavoj Žižek argues:

⁶⁴ P. A. Woods, *Weirdsville...*, s. 82.

⁶⁵ K. C. Kaleta, *David Lynch...*, s. 130.

⁶⁶ Ch. Rodley, *Lynch...*, s. 201.

⁶⁷ P. A. Woods, *Weirdsville...*, s. 88.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*.

We are transposed into the noir universe with its Oedipal triangle: Fred's younger reincarnation is coupled with Alice, the sexually aggressive femme fatale reincarnation of Rene, with the additional figure of Pere jouissance (Eddy) intervening in-between the couple as the obstacle to their sexual commerce⁶⁹.

*This fucker gets more pussy than the toilet, the officers watching Pete comment on his conduct⁷⁰. He vents his arising frustrations through sex, yet, like Fred, he is not always successful in the matter. In one of the scenes, while having an intercourse with his girlfriend – Sheila, his face looks equally tormented to Fred's when he was performing his marital duties earlier in the film. Mactaggart notices that in the script Rene is *stroking him [Fred] maternally while he calms down* after an unsuccessful sexual act, which, again, brings incestuous connotations to sexual scenes in the film⁷¹. When Pete is watching Alice in a pornographic movie, his ideal image of her becomes stained and leaves him distressed. Later, he attempts to prove his masculinity by making passionate love to her in the desert but she renounces him saying *you will never have me*, which reaffirms Pete's/Fred's sexual failure once again⁷². Otto Rank notices that impotence and the double are often closely connected, for *in several developments of the double motif, a particular accent is placed upon the theme of impotence. As in Fred's case, frequently the impotence is adduced as a motivation for the physique-exchange and for the rejuvenation associated with it*⁷³.*

Slavoj Žižek defines Lynch's world as the

battlefield between two opposing hidden spiritual forces, the force of destructive darkness (embodied by evil figures like Bob in 'Twin Peaks') and the opposing force of spiritual calm and beatitude, and adds that Lynch takes the risk of penetrating the dark side of the soul, of confronting the destructive vortex of the irrational forces that dwell beneath the surface of our superficially regulated daily lives,

which also provides an uncanny dimension⁷⁴.

In his conversation with Chris Rodley, Lynch provides the following definition of cinema:

⁶⁹ S. Žižek, *The Art of the Ridiculous Sublime...*, s. 19.

⁷⁰ „Lost Highway”, dir. D. Lynch...

⁷¹ D. Lynch, B. Gifford, *Lost Highway*, London, 1997, s. 12.

⁷² „Lost Highway”, dir. D. Lynch...

⁷³ O. Rank, *The Double...*, s. 56.

⁷⁴ S. Žižek, *The Art of the Ridiculous Sublime...*, s. 25.

*That's what film-making, to me, is mostly about. There are words and there are stories, but there are things that can be said with film that you can't say with words. It's just the beautiful language of cinema*⁷⁵.

In this quotation he partly accounts for the disturbing content of his films. He constantly proves that *film is a work of art* and thus *the province of contemporary film is the creation of images and metaphor*⁷⁶. Frost defines the major sources of *the uncanny* in Lynch's films as follows: *David likes to get right under there, beneath the surface of things, and make people uncomfortable*⁷⁷. One of the means he uses is the combination of sexuality and violence. Lynch himself, thus, comments on this quality of his films:

*I understand when people say that things in the films are strange or grotesque but our world is strange and grotesque, right? They say that truth is stranger than fiction. All the strange things in the films are triggered by this world, so it can't be all that strange. I love things that are absurd. It's really real to me*⁷⁸.

He also notices that film is a specific medium which presents the reality in an amplified manner. *If things are normal, you might as well just stay at home – they're strange enough there. In film things get heightened. You see things a little bit more and feel things a little bit more*⁷⁹. Kenneth Kaleta contends that *Lynch's world is violent and hilarious, bizarre and banal. [...] Life is desperate, and life is desperately funny*⁸⁰.

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⁷⁵ Ch. Rodley, *Lynch...*, s. 27.

⁷⁶ K. C. Kaleta, *David Lynch...*, s. 30–31.

⁷⁷ R. Barney, *David Lynch. Interviews*, Jackson, 2009, s. 58.

⁷⁸ P. A. Woods, *Weirdsville...*, s. 80.

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MAGDALENA ZEGARLIŃSKA

SEKSUALNOŚĆ ZBRODNI W FILMACH DAVIDA LYNCHA
„BLUE VELVET” (1986) I „LOST HIGHWAY” (1997)

STRESZCZENIE

David Lynch to artysta wyjątkowy, który nie obawia się poruszania w swojej twórczości tematów trudnych i kontrowersyjnych. Jednym z nich jest seksualność zbrodni, a dokładniej związek między zbrodnią a popędami ludzkimi. Rozprawa omawia zastosowanie tych motywów w „Blue Velvet” (1986) i „Lost Highway” (1997, pol. „Zagubiona autostrada”). Podstawą analizy jest teoria archetypów Gustawa Karola Junga. Złoczyńcy w świecie Lyncha są postaciami borykającymi się z problemami emocjonalnymi, zaburzeniami osobowości i kompleksami na tle seksualnym. Popelniane przez nich przestępstwa są motywowane frustracjami seksualnymi i mają być sposobem na wyparcie emocjonalnej i fizycznej impotencji. Rozprawa szeroko cytuje uznanych badaczy twórczości Davida Lyncha.

Słowa kluczowe: David Lynch, seksualność, zbrodnia, archetypy, Carl Gustav Jung, niesamowitość, kompleks, zaburzenia osobowości