

**Introduction: The Semiotics of Cobbler
Twin Peaks' Interpretive Community**

David Lavery

Never before, in the history of television, had a program inspired so many millions of people to debate and analyze it deeply and excitedly for so prolonged a period. . . . *Twin Peaks* generated the kinds of annotated scrutiny usually associated with scholarly journals and literary monographs. . . .

David Bianculli, *Teletiteracy*

"Wow, BOB, wow."

The Man from Another Place

I

The End

On February 15, 1991, the American Broadcasting Corporation announced that *Twin Peaks* would be placed on "indefinite hiatus," a move ordinarily resulting in eventual cancellation. That week's episode had ended with the soul of Josie Packard (Joan Chen) entrapped in the knob of a bedside table in the Great Northern Hotel room where she had just shot Thomas Eckhardt (David Warner), the mysterious Hong Kong businessman who had rescued her from a life of prostitution so she might become his love slave, and then died herself, of no apparent cause, while engaged in a gun-to-gun standoff with Sheriff Harry S. Truman (Michael Ontkean), her secret lover, and Special Agent Dale Cooper (Kyle MacLachlan), the FBI man she had tried to kill in the first season's cliff-hanger finale. The episode--recall, recall¹--that had seen the reappearance of both The Man from Another Place (Michael Anderson), a strange lounge-lizard-dwarf who in a memorable dream sequence in the third episode had, through dance, backward speech, and prediction of resurgent gum sales, invoked unknown powers to help Cooper's unorthodox sleuthing, and BOB

(Frank Silva), the mysterious psychopathic being who, while parasitizing since childhood a prominent local lawyer, Leland Palmer (Ray Wise), had raped and murdered Laura Palmer (Sheryl Lee), the beautiful coke-sniffing, high school homecoming queen whose "first note" dead body, "wrapped in plastic," had generated, in Shoenbergian atonal style, the whole seriatim music of this nighttime soap opera, murder mystery, comedy. . . .²)

The episode, recall, that got a 5.1 on the Nielsen and a 10 share.

Public response was strong. Many critics lamented the likely demise of a series that had been described as a watershed in the history of network television ("the show that will change television forever" [Rodman]; television's *Citizen Kane* [Welsh]), nominated for fourteen Emmys and in several categories in the 1990 Soap Opera Awards, and named the year's best show by the Television Critics Association. A group called C.O.O.P. (Coalition Opposed to Offing Peaks), aided by the show's co-creators, film director David Lynch (*Eraserhead*, *The Elephant Man*, *Dune*, *Blue Velvet*, *Wild at Heart*) and writer Mark Frost (*Hill Street Blues*), instituted a letter writing campaign to the network (over 10,000 were received). A few weeks later ABC announced that beginning on March 28 it would broadcast the six remaining in-the-can episodes on Thursday nights in the show's original time slot (it had been airing on Saturday nights): against NBC's *Cheers*, television's then number one show.

In the week prior to *Twin Peaks*' return, ABC ran a promo which not only informed audiences of the show's relocation but spoofed, in its own imaginative version of what Mark Crispin Miller has called TV's "deride and conquer" strategy, the network's mishandling of the series. In a scene intended to recall not only the ending of *The Wizard of Oz* but the importance of its setting in some of the series' key events, we see Agent Cooper in his bed at the Great Northern, surrounded by Deputy Andy Brennan (Harry Goaz), Catherine Martell (Piper Laurie), the Log Lady

(Catherine Coulson), and (at the foot of the bed) The Man from Another Place. Cult watchers of the spot immediately recognized the auteur signature of Lynch himself, whose *Wild at Heart* was a sendup of *The Wizard of Oz*.

Cooper, it seems, has just awakened from a nightmare, and his visitors (an odd selection from the cast, made up, no doubt, of the only actors that could be assembled for a quick shoot) have come to offer solace. He tells of dreaming he was in a horrible place, full of familiar characters (like Dorothy, he recognizes those around him with wide-eyed wonder as having played a part): a horrible place called "Saturday Night." Sympathetic, the bedside crew turns to look at the camera--to look, that is, at us--as Catherine Martell comments on Cooper's tale: "Saturday," she agrees, "that *is* a bad dream." From the outermost frame the network's "Supernarrator" interrupts with the show's trademark image (the "Welcome to Twin Peaks, population 51,201" sign on the road into town³) and the facts: "*Twin Peaks* is back on Thursday nights at 9:00 pm E.S.T."⁴ In close-up, Cooper then repeats the new night and informs his narratee-microcasstte Diane about the good news: "There's no place like home," he rejoices to his techno-ficelle.⁵

We were supposed to rejoice with him, of course--rejoice the network had finally seen the light and returned the show to the slot in which it had gained its original notoriety, becoming the proverbial "most talked about show on television," causing runs on the cherry pie inventory at local bakeries. Intertextual, self-referential, tongue-in-cheek, just like the show itself, the ad was certainly not intended to gain new viewers but only to bring back into the fold those members of the *Twin Peaks* cult who had strayed.

It did not. Even in its new (old) time slot, the audience continued to decline. In fact, *Twin Peaks* even adversely affected the show it followed, *Prime Time Live*, whose ratings dropped slightly during its brief stint as a lead-in. After four weeks, *Peaks* was again placed on hiatus, and the two remaining episodes were reluctantly

scheduled for a joint airing as an *ABC Monday Night at the Movies* on June 10. With no opportunity to film a final episode, the show was quietly cancelled by ABC during its nearly two month disappearance.

When, in the closureless final scene of the last episode (directed, appropriately, by Lynch himself), Agent Cooper himself became the new host for BOB, the only possible escape from interminable irresolution lay in the faint prospect of *Twin Peaks* becoming, like *Star Trek*, a film series. Indeed, a year and two months after its disappearance from television, *Twin Peaks* rematerialized in movie theatres,⁶ but *Fire Walk with Me*, a prequel concerned with the last seven days of Laura Palmer, turned out to be a commercial and critical dud, making the prospect of more *Twin Peaks* films highly unlikely.

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***Twin Peaks* as a (Cult)tural Phenomenon**

At 10:01 p.m. Thursday, April 19, the telephone started like a tribal drum. Everybody in the continental United States--including my children, my editors, my enemies--wanted to know about the dwarf. What did the dwarf mean? Why was he talking backwards?

In Cambridge, Massachusetts, in Madison, Wisconsin, and in Berkeley, California, there are *Twin Peaks*-watching parties every Thursday night, after which . . . Deconstruction. About the dwarf: Like, wow. Bunuel was mentioned, and Cocteau, and Fellini.

John Leonard, "The Quirky Allure of *Twin Peaks*"

"Thanks to *Twin Peaks*," *Newsweek* reported in May, 1990, "trendiness" had become "as simple as turning on the TV each Thursday evening--and then, at work the next day, pretending you understood what the hell was going on" (Leerhsen and Wright 58).

David Lynch had hoped that *Twin Peaks* would "cast a spell" over its audience (Zoglin, "Like Nothing" 97), would even make its members "sit in their seats differently" (Woodward, "A Dark Lens 52)--results he had already achieved with the movie audiences that had made *Eraserhead* a cult phenomenon.⁷ For some, such a goal was inherently pretentious. For the show's adepts, however, anxious to be part of a new "interpretive community," he succeeded, becoming perhaps the first director to create cult classics in two media.⁸

Twin Peaks was not, of course, the first television show to attain full-fledged cult status. Programs like *The Prisoner*, *Star Trek*, *Doctor Who*, and *Max Hedroom*

had, each in its own way, developed cult followings, but mainly via rebirth through syndication. Prior to *Twin Peaks*, however, no television series had become cultic so quickly, so early in its first incarnation, but then prior to *Twin Peaks* had any prime time network series been so explicitly formulated as cult TV?

The success of any series (perhaps of any TV show) has always been dependent on whether or not the viewer will "invite" its characters or personalities (Cliff Huxtable or J. R., Peter Jennings or Dan Rather, Bob and Vanna or Alex Trebek) back into their living rooms. For a show to be a hit, network programmers have long known, its night must "belong" to it--as Thursdays belonged for a time to *The Bill Cosby Show* (Gitlin, *Inside 65*). In the cult TV experience something more happens. The visitor (and the visitor's world) set up housekeeping, move in, altering the personal culture of those individual viewers, already members of a "culture of instinctive semioticians" (Eco 210), ready to seek, indeed anxious to seek, membership in a new *systeme*, ready to belong to it, to learn its language and customs, by committing their imaginaries to time-slotted new (or seemingly new) televisual experience. If one of the functions of a traditional genre is to build cultural consensus (Schatz 15-20), The Cult serves to build cult consensus in a singular interpretive community, a community committed to difference.

Theoretically, TV should lend itself to the cult media experience. Although, as Ellis has noted, the "cultural visibility of particular TV broadcasts" is ordinarily much briefer than that of the movies, for which the cultic has become a much more prominent postmodern experience,⁹ TV nevertheless possesses a unique "immediacy in the sense that its rhythm is that of everyday life." "TV programs," Ellis writes, thus become "the stuff of small-talk, of 'did you see that thing last night where . . . ?'" Such visibility, needless to say, should be instrumental to the development, dissemination, and perpetuation of a show's cult status, and in the case of *Twin Peaks* they clearly were. Militating against TV's huge cultural visibility, however, in

effect neutralizing it, is the fact that, as Ellis explains, "the centrality and familiarity of broadcast TV create definite ideological limitations to its work." Indeed, "TV is required to be predictable and timetabled; it is required to avoid offense and difficulty" (251-52).¹⁰

If we use the characteristics of a cult object delineated by Umberto Eco (198-99) as a checklist, we immediately recognize *Twin Peaks*' impeccable credentials. I will limit my discussion here to only three of Eco's criteria.

LIVING TEXTUALITY. The authentic cult work, Eco observes, must seem like "living textuality," as if it had no authors, as postmodernist proof that "as literature comes from literature, cinema comes from cinema" (199). Despite the strong authorial presence of Lynch, an identifiable, prominent contemporary auteur, working in a new medium, and Frost, a writer with an excellent track record, *Twin Peaks* nonetheless met this obligation. Lynch, after all, directed only five episodes and co-wrote four as well (all with Frost). In addition, Frost directed one episode and was sole author of three and co-author of six. Nevertheless, non-Lynch/Frost episodes, those directed by their stable¹¹ or by established filmmakers¹² and written by others,¹³ nevertheless perpetuated the show's basic look and feel.

Are not Lynch's already firmly established auteur signatures ("slow dissolves, spotlighting, extreme close-ups, figures who emerge out of darkness, shots held an extra beat to catch the sound and texture of a place or thing . . . an interest in facial deformities, exaggerated noise, sick puns and comically banal dialogue . . . ridiculously specific [characters] . . . [chronological confusion]--brand names from different eras--so that everything takes place in dream time" [Woodward 42]; "the sinister fluidity, . . . the shocking relief, the elegant gesture, the deadpan joke, the painterly pointillism . . . the erotic violence, the lingering close-up camera, the rampaging of non sequiturs, the underlining and italicizing of emotions, the warping of the light, the appetite for all that's grotesque and quirky, a sense of unconscious

dreaming . . . moon thoughts . . . sadness . . . demonic possession" [Leonard, "The Quirky Allure" 36]¹⁴) inscribed periodically throughout the thirty episodes?¹⁵

A case in point. A part of *Twin Peaks*' cultic appeal certainly lay in its visual inventiveness, its distinctive televisual look. The series frequently invited viewers to "desuture" themselves, through self-conscious awareness, from the ordinary seductions of TV, and in so doing to confirm cult membership. After the opening credits for Episode 12, for example, we find ourselves inside a tunnel, its walls made of what looks to be a kind of fiber. On the soundtrack we hear a low, at first unidentifiable sound, perhaps a human voice in an obscure register, which began even before the image of the tunnel. The camera then begins to pull back out of the tunnel, and as it finally exits, turning circles as it moves, we gradually realize that the tunnel is a hole among other holes: that it is an opening in a Swiss cheese-like surface of a hundred holes, and then that the square shape of this surface is part of a configuration of dozens of other squares each likewise covered with holes. As the camera continues to pull back (a quick cut edits out part of the withdrawal and takes us further away from the wall of holes, revealing many, many more and making us a little bit dizzy), we are still unable to identify the image. The mysterious sound, however, becomes gradually clearer, and we think we hear a girl's voice beseeching, "Daddy, Daddy." Then from the right side of the frame, Sheriff Truman's head enters the image and begins to read Miranda rights to Leland Palmer, who is himself disclosed in the next image.

The tunnel, we realize, is in fact a hole in a ceiling tile in the Sheriff's Office-- seen in subjective camera by a deranged Leland Palmer, who at the end of Episode 11 had been arrested (after being fingered by Doctor Jacoby) for the murder of Jacques Renault. Staring at the ceiling, indeed into the ceiling, hearing his dead daughter's anguished voice, he has been brought back to reality by the Sheriff's importuning; the pullback, we now realize was, in effect, his return to consciousness.

It is an astonishing fifty seven seconds of television, as stunning in its own way as the journey inside the radiator in Henry's room in *Eraserhead* or the descent into the grass at the beginning of *Blue Velvet*, made even more astonishing through retrospective slow motion examination with VCR and remote (has there ever been a television series that so required these tools--the armchair TV detective's Holmesian magnifying glass--for its comprehension?) and more understandable when we learn, three episodes later, that Leland's "inhabiting spirit" BOB has indeed killed Laura Palmer. Needless to say, this is not the customary rhetoric of television camerawork, nor is that of the much talked about dream sequence in Episode 3, with its strange visual and auditory rhythms, or the risky, interminable opening scene of the second season, with all its upward (from the point of view of a prostrate Agent Cooper) and downward (through the eyes of the Old Bellhop and The Giant) angles of vision and its excruciating real-time pacing, or the unsettling, intercut scenes of Cooper's vision of The Giant at the Roadhouse and Maddy's murder in Episode 15, or the convention-defying, one-hundred-eighty-degree-rule-violating, mega-confusing Black Lodge sequence of the final episode. But the directorial vision behind this "tunnel vision" was not, we must remind ourselves, Lynch, but Todd Holland.¹⁶

Though clearly more authored than most in the inherently anonymous "producer's" medium of television, taken as a whole *Twin Peaks* seems generated from, spun intertextually out of (cloned from?) precedent texts and thus cultic in origin, authority, and appeal. A large part of the series' appeal to aficionados--its invitation to feel, as a result of their recognitions, "as though they all belonged to the same little clique" (Eco 209)--was tracking its intertextual, allusionary quotations: the many actors and actresses reborn from the never-never land of old TV and movies¹⁷; the red herring evocations of old movies¹⁸; allusions to previous Lynch films¹⁹; numerous inside jokes²⁰; cameos by Lynch (as Gordon Cole), Frost (as a newscaster in the first episode of the second season), and even Lynch's son Austin

(as Mrs. Tremond's magical grandson, Pierre). These and many other facets of *Twin Peaks* invited fanatic, cultic participation, generating discourse about discourse.

A COMPLETELY FURNISHED WORLD. Another closely related prerequisite of The Cult, Eco observes, is its capacity to "provide a completely furnished world so that its fans can quote characters and episodes as if they were aspects of the fan's private sectarian world, a world about which one can make up quizzes and play trivia games so that the adepts of the secret recognize through each other a shared experience" (198). *Twin Peaks* talk such as that Leonard recorded (see the epigraph above), contributed mightily to the series' "tertiary text"²¹--speculations about Laura's killer, plot synopses, rumors, gossip, family trees, flow charts, "Peakspeak" (lexicons of the language spoken on the show, favorite quotations)--was heard daily at office and at school and disseminated on computer bulletin boards (as Henry Jenkins details in his essay in this volume). A *Twin Peaks* newsletter appeared. Two years after the series' demise, several Peaks fanzines were still being published in the United States and abroad.²²

During the summer re-runs of its first season, *Peaks* merchandise, its "commodity intertexts" (Collins 341-42), arrived: tie-in books (*The Secret Diary of Laura Palmer*, which eventually reached number five on The *New York Times* bestseller list, *The Autobiography of F.B.I. Special Agent Dale Cooper*, the official *Twin Peaks* access guide); a set of *Twin Peaks* collector cards; a recording of the series' music; and, of course, the complete Cooper-to-Diane audio tapes --further confirmation of Todd Gitlin's contention that "the genius of consumer society is its ability to convert the desire for change into a desire for novel goods" (*Inside* 77).²³ Still, these ancillary texts offer much of interest to serious students of the series. They "hail" those of us who could not get enough of *Twin Peaks*, inviting us not just to spend our money but to immerse ourselves, in the fullest possible way, in *Twin Peaks*, to become its "subjects."

Written by Lynch's daughter, Jennifer,²⁴ *The Secret Diary of Laura Palmer*, the first of the ancillary texts to hit the market, was, judged on its own merits, the most imaginative and interesting. Although Jennifer Lynch remains faithful to Laura Palmer's own point of view, never pretending to know more than Laura herself did, for those who read it prior to the final disclosure of her killer in the second season, little mystery remained about the culprit. The subject of *The Secret Diary* is the awakening of Laura Palmer's "secret sharer" in her frightening struggles with the sinister BOB, a being who has been visiting her at night, mysteriously able to enter her room at will, sexually abusing and terrorizing her as long as she can remember. Laura's good girl/bad girl split, we learn, is a survival strategy. Along with accounts of her promiscuous sexual adventures (with, among others, Bobby Briggs, Jacques Renault, Leo Johnson, Josie Packard, the patrons at One-Eyed Jack's), her cocaine use, her vivid, menacing dreams, her awareness of Benjamin Horne's sinister nature, her obsession with death, *The Diary* records her growing consciousness of BOB's role in her dual identity, as the repressed knowledge that he is, in fact, her own father surfaces--an equation she never completes in the book's pages. (Though in its last entry she announces that she knows at last "who and what BOB is," she is murdered before she can record her realization, and pages missing from the diary--torn out, as *Fire Walk with Me* confirms, by her father --prevent its reader from reaching a definitive conclusion.) The Diary remains "fantastic" in Todorov's sense (see Diane Stevenson's essay in this volume). As a fiction that offers an inside-out imaginal record of the nightmare of sexual abuse, it is worth reading in its own right, not just as a *Twin Peaks* commodity.

A much more commercial endeavor, *Welcome to TWIN PEAKS: Access Guide to the Town* nevertheless offers a variety of pleasures: maps of Twin Peaks (who knew that the Palmer house was so close to the high school or that Glastonbury Grove was so far from the Great Northern?); an incoherent letter from Mayor

Dwayne Milford ("My advice to those who visit is to get out"); an excerpt from Andrew Packard's will bequeathing money for the preparation of the access guide; brief biographies of each main character; a history of the town; guides to local flora and fauna; recipes (for cherry pie--depicted in a hyperreal photograph on the book's cover--and, of course, doughnuts); a photo of the undefeated 1968 Twin Peaks High School football team; a survey of local points of interest (White Tail Falls, Owl Cave, the Train Graveyard); accounts of the annual Twin Peaks Passion Play and the Packard Timber Games; a page from the phone directory; mileage charts showing the distance from Twin Peaks to the rest of the world (Hong Kong is 8004 miles away); "interesting" facts and figures about the town (e.g. that its per capita doughnut consumption is the highest in the world).

The limited edition set of "*Twin Peaks* Collectible CardArt" supplies seventy six cards representing individual characters ("Dewar's Profiles" of both major and minor players detailing "accomplishments," "strengths," "weaknesses," birthdates, nicknames, astrological signs, "likes," educational backgrounds), places (the Double R Diner, Big Ed's Gas Farm, One-Eyed Jack's, the Roadhouse, the Great Northern Hotel), "famous dialogue" from the series ("I'm going to have the world's first one hundred percent quiet drape runner"), trivia questions about the show ("What is the mascot for Twin Peaks High School?"), and various other "things" (the Berwick's Wren seen in the opening credits, Agent Cooper's tape recorder, the Palmers' ceiling fan, the owl). The cards provide a great deal of extra-diegetic information. We learn that Leo Johnson bought his eighteen wheeler with money he saved from his paper route; that Leland Palmer's greatest weakness is BOB and Dr. Jacoby's worst fault is his "inability to conform to any reality base"; that Bobby Briggs' greatest accomplishment is his record one hundred and fifty completions in a single football season; that Nadine Hurley is the only individual in the history of Twin Peaks High School to have been a cheerleader in two separate decades; that The Giant's whole

education took place in "the White Lodge"; that the "Early Bird Special" at the Double R costs \$7.34; that BOB's birth date is "the beginning of time."

In *The Autobiography of F.B.I. Special Agent Dale Cooper: My Life, My Tapes*, which purports to be a transcription of audiotape recordings dating back to December, 1967,²⁵ we receive a first person account of Cooper's teenage years, his calling as an FBI agent, his sexual adventures and misadventures, his partnership with and apprenticeship to Windom Earle, his love affair with Caroline Earle and her murder. The book takes us from Cooper at the age of twelve up to February 24, 1989 and his assignment to Twin Peaks to investigate the death of Laura Palmer. Like the access guide and the card collection, Cooper's autobiography offers us a great deal of backstory. We learn that in 1968 Cooper's Christmas gift to his mother was a nonstick spatula set; that his most treasured possession as a child was a poster of Jimmy Stewart in *The FBI Story* (as a young man he also corresponded with Efrem Zimbalist, Jr. and met J. Edgar Hoover); that he was plagued in his youth by asthma; that his powers of detection began at an early age (he recalls noticing the effect of asparagus consumption on his own urine); that when his Grandmother died from a stroke in the Cooper kitchen, the cherry pie she was baking splattered across her face; that he developed an early admiration for Sherlock Holmes; that he was an enthusiastic boy scout; that during one strong asthma attack he dreamed of a "man who I have never seen . . . trying to break into my room. He kept calling my name and said that he wanted me"; that he discovered he was capable of suppressing an erection by "thinking very intently about Disneyland"; that at one point in his teenage years he intended to be an anthropology major; that he conducted careful scientific experiments on "how long an individual can function normally without urinating" after drinking coffee; that he discovered intentionally delayed urination a worthy substitute for sex; that he was actually recruited for the FBI by Windom Earle (a fact he does not remember later); that prior to acceptance

into the FBI Academy, he disappeared for a full year (1976-77); that he was assigned (in 1977) a secretary named Diane; that he picked up the habit of dictating his tapes to her even when merely talking to himself, comforted by "the knowledge that someone of [Diane's] insight is standing behind [him]"; that Caroline Earle was kidnapped during a mysterious vacation Cooper spent on the island of La Casa del Corazon--the same island where Windom and Caroline had once honeymooned; that from 1980 to 1987 Cooper served in the FBI's "counterintelligence" division, finally leaving to work in a joint interdiction program with the DEA; that on January 17, he flew to Portland, Oregon to begin investigation of the murder of Teresa Banks; that during the night of February 2, 1988, he dreamed of "dancing with a tiny little man, and a very beautiful young woman."

In his autobiography, Dale Cooper reveals himself to be through and through an unreliable narrator, obsessive, anal-compulsive, deluded, immune to irony, not very perceptive about himself. Read after the series' final revelation--that BOB inhabits Cooper after his failed test in the Black Lodge--the book appears to be pointing, as did *The Secret Diary of Laura Palmer* (which contains all we need to know of the Palmer family's dark secrets and of Laura's murder), to not-yet-explored plot developments, to events in which we might have learned, if the series had continued, that BOB had "opened" Cooper in his youth and "come inside" just as he had done with Leland Palmer and that the "special agent" killed Caroline Earle and probably Annie Blackburne as well.

When it was released in August of 1992, *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* met with a derisive critical response from critics who often took pride in their near-complete ignorance of the television series (the film had already been booed at the Cannes Film Festival the previous spring),²⁶ and in large part it was ignored, at least in the United States. Devoid of the series' wacky humor, short on cherry pie and joe, missing (left on the cutting room floor²⁷) many of its favorite minor

characters, unrelentingly dark and sinister and obscure, *Fire Walk with Me* announced in its very first image a rejection of television (Miller and Thornre, "Laura Palmer Lives" 4). The film's credits are shown against a backdrop of blue static which we gradually realize to be the screen of an unreceptive television set. At credits' end, the glass is smashed by a lead pipe wielded by Leland Palmer (an act, as we learn later, that precedes his murder of Teresa Banks). Indeed, as the fanzine *Wrapped in Plastic* cogently points out in its review (Miller and Thorne, "Laura Palmer Lives, 4-6), the film presents itself from the outset, as Agents Desmond and Stanley investigate Teresa Banks' murder, as a kind of photographic negative of the series: instead of Agent Cooper and Sheriff Truman's immediate cooperation, we get the angry antagonism of the FBI agents and Sheriff Cable; instead of the pleasant atmosphere of the Double R, we have the wretched Hap's Diner; instead of the great coffee available everywhere in Twin Peaks, we have the wretched "Good Morning America" served by Carl Rodd at the Fat Trout Trailer Park.

When word got around that a *Twin Peaks* movie was in the works, the vast majority of fans hoped, of course, that it would provide some kind of closure for the series, that it would get Cooper/BOB out of the bathroom, but when it became clear it would in fact be a prequel detailing the story of the last seven days of Laura Palmer, disappointment was perhaps guaranteed.²⁸ Though it is no doubt true, as Tim Lucas has noted ("One Chance Out" 40), that *Fire Walk with Me* was not so much a prequel as a "time warped sequel" (events from the story's end intrude on its beginning; for example, Annie Blackburne appears to Laura from the future to inform her that "The good Dale is in the lodge, and he can't leave. Write it in your diary"), audiences--even cult followers--were left generally unsatisfied.²⁹

The rough cut of *Fire Walk with Me* was, according to reports, over five hours long. The question of when/where/how the unseen footage would be made available (Lucas suggests, plausibly, a reconstruction on cable television; ["One Chance Out"

32]), the faint but still alive prospect of yet another film, these puzzles keep cult followers continually teased by the prospect of a still open "Blue Rose" text, a mystery, like those designated by Gordon Cole's impossible flower, impossible to decipher.³⁰

Obviously, cult followers of *Twin Peaks* had (have) at their disposal a tremendous amount of text--televisual, cinematic, and literary--to read and re-read, and no two are likely to bring to their interpretation the same experience, the same sampling and cross-referencing of these supplemental intertexts.³¹

DETACHABILITY. The cult work, according to Eco, must also be susceptible to breaking, dislocation, unhinging, "so that one can remember only parts of it, irrespective of their original relationship with the whole." Again and again, through cult-building images, details, bits of dialogue, *Twin Peaks* solicited our engagement with the "wacko banality" (Kawin 19) of its text. Solicits--would it be too much to say?--our love: according to Eco, another cult prerequisite. The cult viewer watching these moments--indeed watching *for* such moments--may, and I speak from experience here, let out an audible "I love this." These would be the moments sought in fast-forward and rewind (the show was reportedly the most videotaped on all of television); these would be recalled the next day.

Ben and Jerry Horne, ecstatically praising their baguettes, mouths full of bread and Brie (one of several scenes in which characters talk with their mouths full); a fish in a percolator; Lucy's extremely convoluted phone transfers; Josie Packard's malapropisms; the malfunctioning fluorescent light in the morgue as Cooper examines Laura Palmer's body; Nadine's quest for completely noiseless drape runners; Cooper's announcement (not surprising, given his coffee consumption): "I really have to urinate"; the dental plugs stuck in Dr. Jacoby's ears; Deputy Andy covered with post-it notes; the small figurine wearing an eye patch in Nadine Hurley's mantelpiece collection;

Cooper's realization, immersed in a Double R dessert, that "This must be where pies go when they die"; Albert's insults ("Look! It's trying to think!"); Cooper's face-to-face with a llama in a veterinarian's office; Ben Horne's adjournment to the bathroom (during a tryst with Catherine Martell) to "wash little Elvis"; Cooper's self-reflexive finger-snapping to Angelo Badalamenti's non-diegetic theme music as he sits on his bed after awakening from his dream; Gordon Cole's deaf incoherence; party-animal Icelanders; the Log Lady's "sticky pitch gum"; doughnuts splattered with Waldo the Bird's blood; Audrey's abilities with a cherry; Dr. Jacoby's collection of cocktail umbrellas; the Log Lady's recognition that Major Briggs has "shiny objects on his chest"; Agent Cooper's inquiry (while lying on the floor of his hotel room after having been shot) whether the bill he is asked to sign by the "world's oldest bellhop" "includes a gratuity"; a wood tick impaled on a bullet; Leland Palmer's singing ("Mares Eat Oats," "Come On, Get Happy," "Surrey with the Fringe on Top," etc.); blows to Deputy Andy's head (from a ricocheting rock thrown by Cooper and from a loose floor board at Leo's); difficult readjustment of hospital stools; telekinetic removal of cream corn; seething, repulsive hospital food; Major Briggs's vision of Bobby's future; Ben and Jerry toasting marshmallows (instead of a smoked cheese pig); Albert and Sheriff Truman's collar-grabbing face off ("I love you Sheriff Truman"); Dr. Jacoby's golf-inspired mantra; Cooper's cowlicks; Andy's sperm count; Leo's birthday party; the horse in Sarah Palmer's vision; Leland's living room golf; Ben and Jerry's jailhouse bunk bed memories; a transvestite DEA agent who "puts his panties on one leg at a time"; the Pine Weasel's attack on Dick Tremayne; Ben Horne's rewriting of the Civil War; Nadine's destruction of Hank Jennings.

. . . .

Though this list is, of course, my own and partial (every avid *Twin Peaks* watcher could offer a different sampling), not to pick up on these short-hand allusions is proof positive that you must not have been truly part of the *Twin Peaks* cult, must not have been tuned into its "gratuitously bizarre and magnificently opaque" small pleasures (Howard Rosenberg, quoted in Knickelbine 9).

I certainly do not mean to suggest that even the series' cult viewers "understood" all these phenomena. Much of the show remained, even for them, inexplicable. ("We'll surely find out, in some later episode, who killed Laura Palmer," one critic observed cogently early in the first season, "but we may never learn what song the Oriental woman hummed, or what made the fisherman voice that ironic, self-conscious remark about a sound he must hear every morning--or why this idyllic setting fills us with such apprehension" [Rafferty 86].) But these viewers recognized them as a source of pleasure, foregrounding them in their televisual awareness, making them the very reason for watching, thereby offering "Lynch the luxury of strewing enigmas like pine needles, savoring pocket after pocket of peculiarity while deferring resolution indefinitely" (Jameson 75).

III

The Same Kind of Different

Genre films essentially ask the audience, "Do you still want to believe this?" Popularity is the audience answering, "Yes." Change in genre occurs when the audience says, "That's too infantile a form of what we believe. Show us something more complicated." And genres turn to self-parody to say, "Well, at least if we make fun of it for being infantile, it will show how far we've come." Films and television have in this way speeded up cultural history.

Leo Braudy, *The World in a Frame*

"When one moves into a new town," Ruth Rosen observes in an essay on the soap opera, "it takes time to ferret out relationships and events that older residents might prefer to forget. Fortunately, the structure and conventions of the soap opera make it relatively easy to pick up in the eternal middle" (54-55). In his own "narrative move" to *Twin Peaks*, Special Agent Dale Cooper takes viewers with him. A combination private-eye and (cultural) ethnographer, he learns about the community, learns more than it knows about itself, and we learn with him.

As a surrogate, Cooper's adaptation to *Twin Peaks* represents as well David Lynch and company's accommodation to *Twin Peaks*, to the equally odd goings-on, the textual geography, characteristics, conventions, taboos, unexplored possibilities, of network television itself. *Twin Peaks'* unsoaplike inability (much lamented by the network) to pick up new viewers in medias res was the result of the predominance of this second meta-surrogacy, appealing only to cult sensibilities convinced that such negotiation-in-progress is great TV, and not to normal viewership.³²

Those drawn to *Twin Peaks* in the first place, instinctive semioticians reluctant to believe but game for infinite semiosis, were, it would seem, more than ready to find virtually all genre infantile, to ask for endless complication, so that they might continue to practice the cultural bricolage of the cultist (Corrigan 28). They demanded cultural acceleration at warp speed, even if it warped all genre--even if it warped them.³³ On television, a medium inherently more conducive to "'controlled' transformation of genre" than the movies (White 46), cult burn-out is itself accelerated. With some prescience, Mark Frost admitted early-on his fear of such burnout: "The pace of the culture is accelerating all the time in this country. Trends and fads. Too much attention is dangerous. Maybe [the show's audience will] digest us too quickly, spit us out" (quoted by Leonard, "The Quirky Allure" 35). They did.

On two different occasions, Special Agent Cooper is accused--by Jean Renault and Josie Packard--of being the real cause of Twin Peaks' calamities. Since, prior to his appearance, none of the town's' evils had appeared, he must, by their post hoc ergo propter hoc reasoning, be its cause. Both characters die in Cooper's presence (Renault killed by a bullet from his gun, Josie from inexplicable causes), but they cannot be so easily silenced, since their complaint is essentially that of the cult audience as well.

Without his special agency, we too would be innocent of *Twin Peaks*, without his ethnographic snooping, we would not have formed our cult. But as he traded participant observer status for acculturation, we have grown increasingly bored and ready to move on. His adaptation diminished our amazement. Appropriately, we learn in the series' final scene that Cooper himself has been parasitized, usurped by *Twin Peaks*'/Twin Peaks' free-floating signifier.

The cult viewer, it is true, does enjoy repetition (reciting favorite lines from *Rocky Horror*, sharing a commemorative "cup of joe"), but there are limits, and television exhausts them. David Lynch may enjoy a ritual 2:30 P.M. milk shake at

Bob's Big Boy for seven years running, may always wear white socks and a shirt buttoned to the top, but we need a change.³⁴ *Twin Peaks* became even for today's Protean sensibilities "different, but the same kind of different" (Corliss 86). Audiences needed a new interpretive community.

IV

Preview

I have never been able to sit through a whole episode of *Twin Peaks*. It's a postmodern soap opera, which means that every time someone on screen eats a piece of apple pie, you can hear a thousand students start typing their doctoral dissertations on "*Twin Peaks: David Lynch and the Semiotics of Cobbler.*"

Libby Gelman-Waxner, *Premiere* magazine

Though to my knowledge no doctoral dissertations have yet been completed (I know of several in progress), *Twin Peaks* has indeed inspired--as this book attests--a great deal of passionate, imaginative, and ingenious critical speculation, not just semiotic, but generic, narratological, post-structuralist, feminist. The contributing members of *Full of Secrets'* specialized interpretive community no doubt responded to the series-in-progress in much the same way as all its anonymous contemporary reader/viewer-authors, but now, ready to become the community's ethnographers and historians, they have sought full citizenship by attempting to codify their meaning production, becoming on-the-record authors of *Twin Peaks'* continuing, literary metatext.³⁵

This book started during *Twin Peaks'* first hiatus. Assuming the series' demise, I concluded the time for postmortems was near-at-hand. Two dozen letters of inquiry soliciting essays on *Twin Peaks* disseminated the news that this book was in development. With the help of numerous individuals, word spread. By the beginning of May 1990, a month before *Twin Peaks'* last episode, I had received over seventy proposals from potential contributors (Gelman-Waxner exaggerated).³⁶ The essays finally included in this volume represent a selection from this rich harvest.³⁷

In "Bad Ideas: The Art and Politics of *Twin Peaks*," Jonathan Rosenbaum, film critic for the *Chicago Reader*, assesses David Lynch's progress as an artist in his first venture into network television and critiques his apparently subversive political stance. Marc Dolan brings into play an encyclopedic knowledge of television storytelling theory and practice in "The Peaks and Valleys of Serial Creativity: What Happened to/on *Twin Peaks*?"--a narratological reconstruction of industry and artistic factors that drove the series during its distinct first and second seasons. In "'Do You Enjoy Making Us Feel Stupid?'" alt.tv.twinpeaks, the Trickster Author, and Viewer Mastery," Henry Jenkins uses the discussion about *Twin Peaks* on a nationwide computer bulletin board--talk about the show's enigmas, alternative readings, responses to David Lynch as auteur, its extra- and intertextual connections--as the basis for understanding the production and circulation of interpretive strategies and meanings and the nature of television spectatorship. Drawing on Todorov's theory of the genesis and nature of the "fantastic," Diane Stevenson's "Family Romance, Family Violence, and the Fantastic in *Twin Peaks*" suggests that the series' seemingly atavistic reliance on the supernatural may originate in painful contemporary realizations about the meaning of child abuse and family violence. In "'Disturbing the Guests with This Racket': Music and *Twin Peaks*," Kathryn Kalinak reads the series' decidedly postmodernist score, placing it in the context of both movie and television music.

Three feminist interpretations of the series follow. As both murder mystery and "martyr mystery," Christy Desmet argues in "The Canonization of Laura Palmer," *Twin Peaks* "masks the sociological fact of father-daughter incest" by recreating a murdered girl as a "post-Freudian saint," and yet, she argues, the series succeeds as well in "revising the Freudian master plot . . . in directions suggested by feminist psychoanalytic theory." Seeking to break free from the "stupor of admiration for the wacko combination of irony, parody, and skillful manipulation" the series promoted,

Diana Hume George's "Lynching Women: A Feminist Reading of *Twin Peaks*" wonders aloud what exactly the show's aficionados (among whom she counts herself) were "getting off on" as they watched the series, given its "reptilian" sexual ethic, its seeming validation of a "pornographic and thanatopic" misogyny, its ability to "put its sickness in us." And in "Double Talk in *Twin Peaks*," an examination of *Twin Peaks*' "enunciation," Alice Kuzniar analyzes the role of doubling, both physical and metaphysical, in the series, detailing the division, disguise, isolation, and substitution of body parts by means of which it fetishizes women's bodies and, in particular, women's voices.

Angela Hague's "Infinite Games: The Derationalization of Detection in *Twin Peaks*" considers the series as a convention-defying detective story exemplifying the characteristics of what philosopher James P. Carse calls an "infinite game." In "Desire Under the Douglas Firs: Entering the Body of Reality in *Twin Peaks*," Martha Nochimson likewise examines the role of the detective in the series but from a psychosexual angle, contemplating, with particular attention to the final episode, Special Agent Dale Cooper's "new manhood." J. P. Telotte deconstructs the series in "The Dis-order of Things in *Twin Peaks*," charting the show's precarious path "between order and disorder, between our signs and what Foucault terms 'the blank spaces' that surround them," and finds in its suspension of ordinary discourse a probing alternative to the "terrorism of the code" (Baudrillard) in contemporary television practice. In "Postmodernism and Television: The Case of *Twin Peaks*," a wide ranging dialogue concerning genre, the nature of parody, tone, intertextuality, characterization, subversion, and popular culture (a partial list only), a discussion group at the University of Michigan led by Jimmie L. Reeves delineates the causes and effects of postmodernist television, inspecting *Twin Peaks* as their test case.

Five appendices complete the volume: A) A table of *Twin Peaks*' directors and writers; B) a cast list; C) a list of abbreviations; D) a *Twin Peaks*' calendar; E) A

Twin Peaks scene breakdown. A comprehensive bibliography, compiled by the editor and James M. Welsh, completes the volume. Needless to say, the order of selection here is hardly mandatory. A sound argument could be made, for example, that "Postmodernism and Television" should be read first, not last. Readers should feel free to cut and paste at will, grazing, zipping, and zapping as the spirit moves, channel surfing throughout these pages as interest and enthusiasm guide.

Notes

1. Every time I attempt a capsule summary of *Twin Peaks*' plot, I sound like spacy Lucy Moran (Kimmy Robertson) in the fifth episode as she tries to summarize recent occurrences on *Invitation to Love* for Sheriff Truman. The sheriff, of course, had meant his question of "What's happening?" to refer, as he soon corrects her, to "here"--to the events in *Twin Peaks* (on *Twin Peaks*), not on *Invitation to Love*. When, after the attempt on Cooper's life, Lucy brings the FBI agent up to date on the previous night's events--"Leo Johnson was shot, Jacques Renault was strangled, the mill burned, Shelley and Pete got smoke inhalation, Catherine and Josie are missing, Nadine is in a coma from taking sleeping pills"--she can do so concisely only because she leaves out all of the backstory and subplots necessary to verbally reconstitute a soap plot with any real accuracy.

2. Laura Palmer's body, which later appeared on the cover of *Esquire* when it named her "Woman of the Year," represented (for Terrence Rafferty) "the deadest looking thing you've ever seen on television--a medium that, over the years, has repeatedly demonstrated its expertise in making human beings look lifeless" (86). The image was, in fact, the seed crystal for the entire series, which had first taken form in Lynch's mind with a generic "image of a body washing up on a lake" (Woodward : "A Dark Lens" 42).

3. In the official Lynch/Frost "access guide" to the town of Twin Peaks, this sign was acknowledged as incorrect, finally answering a question the show's careful viewers had been asking for some time. There we are told (on page 2) that the 1990 census revealed the actual population to be "5,120.1," not 51,201!

4. As Kozloff points out (70), "Supernarrators" are "personified and individualized by various means: logos (the NBC peacock, the CBS eye); signature music; and most importantly, voice-over-narrators who speak for the station or network as a whole." Existing in a dimension she calls "the outermost frame," these beings possess "great knowledge and power": indeed, "it is through their sufferance that all the other texts are brought to us; they can interrupt, delay, or preempt the other texts at will" (70). In this context, ABC's supernarrator --a beneficent, gift-giving, Wizard of Oz to the *Twin Peaks* company--has decreed that the show can return, and in its old time slot.

5. ABC had of course prepared for the eventual failure of their programming gamble with what Mark Crispin Miller calls "preemptive irony" (*Boxed In* 14). In another spot, shown during the first episode of *Twin Peaks*' new season, a distraught network executive castigates a board meeting, demanding to know who could have been so stupid as to schedule the network's "best shows" (*Twin Peaks*, *Young Riders*, *China Beach*) on Saturday night, and warns that heads will roll if the risk does not pay off.

6. The movie's world premiere was in Japan, where the series had become a sensation. Tours to Snoqualmie, Washington--the "real" Twin Peaks--had become popular in Japan, and Japanese television re-ran the entire series nonstop prior to the film's release.

7. Hoberman and Rosenbaum's *Midnight Movies* (214-51) offers a detailed reconstruction of and commentary on *Eraserhead*'s cult status.

8. It is by no means clear, of course, that *The Cult*, any more than film noir, actually constitutes a genre, and *Twin Peaks*--a show which received nominations for the 1990 Soap Opera Awards--might readily be identified as a soap. It was, after all, within the exoteric paradigms of soap that it constructed its own esoteric allegiances. Various statements by its co-creators showed them to be quite conscious of the soapiness of *Twin Peaks*. Though both co-creators went out of their way to deny *Twin Peaks* was a soap-opera put-on (Pond 53; Carlson 22); they nevertheless invited speculation about *Twin Peaks* as a new kind of soap. Frost, for example, told *TV Guide* that "We're just trying to reimagine the genre of the nighttime soap, the way *Hill Street Blues* did the cop show a decade ago" (Carlson 21), and his recollection of the way the series was originally pitched to ABC--"We told them we were going to give them a two-hour, moody, dark soap-opera murder mystery, set in a fictional town in the Northwest, with an ensemble cast and an edge" (Pond 54)--likewise indicated Lynch/Frost's soapish intent.

The temptation to categorize *Twin Peaks* as a soap opera thus remains strong. After all, we have our motive in Lynch's recollection that he became hooked on daytime soaps while working in a print shop in Philadelphia in his early twenties and imagined himself one day making one of his own (Rochlin 64). And in the descriptions of *Twin Peaks* by popular commentators more than ready to label it as such--"a languorous, finely textured soap opera, injecting the form with hallucinatory power" (Woodward 21), "a soap opera with strychnine" (Corliss 88), "a mutant soap opera" (Zoglin 97)--we have a perhaps too neat and sometimes glib journalistic foundation for further examination.

Like content analysts anxious to prove that soap operas are "pseudo-realities" presenting "curiously distorted reflections of empirical social reality," that the typical "'world' of the soap opera is more violent than the real world, is more concerned with sex and parentage, suffers more from amnesia, mental illness, and coma-producing

maladies" (Allen, "Reading Soaps" 97), we could go on as well to enumerate other signs of soap the series exhibits emphatically: narrative redundancy within and between episodes, prolongation of events, use of commercials as structural breaks, "absolute resistance to narrative closure" (Allen, "Reading Soaps" 98), its paradigmatic significance even when syntagmatically redundant, its long-term, episode bridging memory, and its positioning of the inexperienced viewer as a newcomer to a community.

9. For a comprehensive examination of cult movies, see the collection of essays edited by J. P. Telotte, *The Cult Film Experience: Beyond All Reason*.

10. Tom Carson notes in *American Film* (with *Twin Peaks* in mind), that television "has always functioned as a sort of Ellis Island for cultural trends, lopping off whatever's too weird or unpronounceable before giving the OK" (16).

11. Duwayne Dunham, formerly Lynch's editor on *Blue Velvet*, and Lesli Linka Glatter and Todd Holland, both of whom had come out of the Spielberg-produced *Amazing Stories* series.

12. Tina Rathbone (*Zelly and Me*--a movie that stars David Lynch), Caleb Deschanel (*The Escape Artist*, *Crusoe*), Graehme Clifford (*Frances*), Tim Hunter (*The River's Edge*), Uli Edel (*Last Exit to Brooklyn*), Diane Keaton (*Heaven*), James Foley (*At Close Range*, *After Dark*, *My Sweet*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*). It would seem that a *Twin Peaks* assignment had become, by the Fall of 1990, a sought after plum in the directing profession--even among film directors.

13. Harley Peyton, Robert Engels, Jerry Stahl, Barry Pullman, Scott Frost, Tricia Brock.

14. Both of the very observant catalogues I have fused together here were formulated in response to Lynch's films, not specifically to *Twin Peaks*.

15. Obviously, substantial differences--in cinematography, dialogue, tone, atmosphere, chemistry, etc.--exist between episodes. Indeed, their quality differs

substantially, as cult watchers knew very well. But the series' basic qualities are perpetuated with some consistency throughout. Questions of authorship should keep future *Twin Peaks* scholars busy for the near future, but they are not my subject here.

16. The three other examples cited here are from episodes Lynch directed.

17. Peggy Lipton (Norma Jennings) and Clarence Williams III (Agent Hardy), both from *The Mod Squad*, Richard Beymer (Benjamin Horne) and Russ Tamblyn (Dr. Jacoby) from *West Side Story*, Hank Worden (the Old Bellhop) from *The Searchers*, Michael Parks (Jean Renault) from *Then Came Bronson*, etc.

18. The appearance of Laura's near-identical cousin Maddy Ferguson had many thinking Laura--as in Otto Preminger's *Laura*--was not really dead; Catherine Martell is visited by an insurance agent named Walter Neff, the name of Fred Macmurray's character in *Double Indemnity*; a lawyer is named Racine, as in Lawrence Kasdan's *Body Heat*).

19. Many in the cast serve as reminders of the Lynch corpus: Kyle MacLachlan from *Dune* and *Blue Velvet*, Jack Nance (Pete Martell) and Charlotte Stewart (Betty Briggs) from *Eraserhead*, Frances Bray (Mrs. Tremond) from *Blue Velvet*; Everett McGill (Big Ed Hurley) from *Dune*, and so forth. Lynch self-references include the reappearance of the robin from the end of *Blue Velvet* in the opening credits of the pilot of *Twin Peaks* and an about-to-be adopted son in *Twin Peaks* named "Donny"--the name of Dorothy Vallens' kidnapped son in *Blue Velvet*.

20. I will cite but three: the brothers Horne, Ben and Jerry, named after a famous brand of ice cream; Cooper and Big Ed taking the names of "Fred and Barney" (from *The Flintstones*) on their visit to One-Eyed Jack's; Windom Earle doing an imitation of Mister Ed ("Hello Wilbur").

21. Tertiary texts, according to Fiske, are those "viewers make themselves out of their responses, which circulate orally or in letters to the press, and which

work to form a collective rather than an individual response. This is then read back into the program as a textual activator" (124).

22. *Twin Peaks'* intertextuality even spilled over into other shows on other networks. *Sesame Street* offered toddlers an episode of "Twin Beaks," and as the long summer between the first and second seasons drew to a close, fans were heartened to learn that Kyle MacLachlan would host the season's opener of NBC's *Saturday Night Live*. Not surprisingly, the series became the stuff of parody even in the opening monologue, as Agent Cooper announced to the audience that the long wait (to learn Laura Palmer's killer) was over: Leo Johnson was the culprit, a disclosure which results in an immediate call from an irate David Lynch. Later, in a sendup of the series that included appearances by Sheriff Truman, the Log Lady, Leland Palmer, The Man from Another Place, and Audrey Horne (who swallows a long skein of ribbon and produces, in a spoof of Sherilyn Fenn's cherry-stem tying trick at One-Eyed Jack's, a Christmas ribbon), we learn that Agent Cooper has known all along that Leo was the murderer but has been ignoring the fact so that he (and the series) may stay in Twin Peaks.

23. Yet another intertext, not mentioned or discussed here was the European version of the pilot, released overseas on videotape as a separate, virtually independent commodity. For more on the European version, see the second note to Diane Stevenson's essay below.

24. Actually, as the title page indicates, we should not presume that the book to follow is a definitive, verbatim text, but rather the diary "as seen by" Jennifer Lynch. Perhaps this explains why, as Craig Miller has pointed out in a review of the book, its text is not quite consistent with the televisual and filmic *Twin Peaks* texts. (Diary entries continue on after the date of Laura's death on February 23; its final entry proclaims that she knows who BOB is, even though, as *Fire Walk with Me*

reveals, she gives the diary to Harold Smith for safekeeping before she makes this discovery, etc.)

25. As with *The Diary*, no claim is made to a perfect text, for Cooper's seeming autobiography represents only a version "as heard by Scott Frost" (Frost, of course, was one of *Twin Peaks'* many writers). Like Laura Palmer's diary, Cooper memories are likewise inconsistent with the series, as John Thorne observes in a review. (Almost all of the details of Teresa Banks' death differ from those presented in the film; the date of Caroline Earle's murder is not the same as mentioned in the series, etc.)

26. Vincent Canby in *The New York Times*: "It's not the worst movie ever made. It just seems to be." David Baron in *The New Orleans Times-Picayune*: "The latest lurid monstrosity of a movie . . . by the nation's most repellent director." Howard Hampton in *Film Comment*: "It's a slasher movie staged as an elaborate pseudo-religious allegory" (48). For a valuable summary of nationwide reviews of the film, see *Wrapped in Plastic* 1.1: 7-8.

27. In "One Chance Out Between Two Worlds: Notes on *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me*," Tim Lucas provides a comprehensive reconstruction, based on a careful reading of the scripts, of what the film might have been like in an uncut version.

28. Various explanations of the decision to make a prequel have made the rounds, in most of which production problems (e.g., Kyle MacLachlan's unavailability/unwillingness to play Agent Cooper) dictated the need for a prequel.

29. For one critic, Howard Hampton, there was no real need for a prequel, since a superior one already existed: "There is in fact an unmade, infinitely more potent version of Laura Palmer's last days: *The Secret Diary of Laura Palmer*. . . . In that quickie paperback . . . Jennifer Lynch found a hardboiled but utterly convincing voice for Laura. It was a voice of freedom under seige, unsparing, poignant,

ravaged, determined--a voice claiming negation as a birthright" ("David Lynch's Secret History" 49).

30. Due to the timing of the present book's production, *Fire Walk with Me* receives little attention in the following pages. For more on the film, see Lucas's "One Chance Out," as well as Greg Olson's "Heaven Knows, Mr. Lynch: Beatitudes from the Beacon of Distress" and Hampton's "David Lynch's Secret History of the United States," both in *Film Comment*.

31. See Fiske's concept of "horizontal intertextuality" in *Television Culture* (109).

32. Working in television for the first time, Lynch found the narrative problems posed by the medium, especially by commercial breaks, strange: "That's this form, and once you get the hang of it, it's kind of interesting. But if you think about it in another way, it's totally absurd. It would be so absurd to have a big symphony going, and after every little movement, four different people come in and play their own little jingle and sell something, and then you go back to the symphony. It's a very weird thing that we've cooked up for television. Of course, it's what makes the whole thing work, but it's pretty weird." All in all, he found the medium relatively conducive to his talents: "There is something that you can create that could only be done with paint. Then there's something that photography can do--really, it's made to do that, and that's a valid thing. And TV's a valid thing too. So you try to think of something that would go on a small picture tube. Not to say that *Twin Peaks* is the perfect thing for television, but I like this thing of a continuing story (Pond, "Naked Lynch" 54).

33. As Jim Collins has cogently observed in "Television and Postmodernism," the fact "that viewers [of *Twin Peaks*] would take a great deal of pleasure" in "tonal oscillation" and "generic amalgamation" is, in fact, "symptomatic of the 'suspended' nature of viewer involvement in television that developed well before the arrival of

Twin Peaks. The ongoing oscillation in discursive register and generic conventions describes not just *Twin Peaks* but the very act of moving up and down the televisual scale of the cable box" (347-48).

34. With Lynch's food obsessions in mind, Kyle MacLachlan has observed that "Once he decides he likes something, it goes beyond obsessiveness with him--and sort of like an artist, he just examines and reexamines it" (Pond, "Naked Lynch" 53). Indeed, art, as imaginal psychologist James Hillman observes, is obsessional, "a constant fussing with the same place" (22). But cult TV viewers are not themselves artists.

35. This is not to say that the book's ethnographers are "true believers." As the reader will quickly discern, several of the authors included here--perhaps most notably Jonathan Rosenbaum and Diana Hume George--are highly critical of the show.

36. I remember being surprised as I read the incoming proposals to find that one critic wished to look at the influence of *The Faerie Queene* on the series, while another was intrigued by Arthurian themes. Sceptical, I was not encouraging to these authors and their essays were never completed. By the time *Twin Peaks* came to an end in June 1991, literate viewers had duly noted that Spenser had indeed put in an appearance (does not Windom Earle speak mockingly of his time with Leo Johnson in their "verdant bower"?) and the Pacific Northwest had taken on a chivalric textual geography (was not the entrance to the Black Lodge to be found in Glastonbury Grove?).

Other, more literary *Twin Peaks* scholars, not included here, Americanist and current in their focus, proposed inquiry into a variety of topics: its strange similarity to Charles Brockden Brown's *Wieland*; echoes of James Fenimore Cooper and Walt Whitman in the story of FBI Special Agent Dale Cooper; its allegiance to and departure from the conventions of the gothic, literary detective fiction, the sensation

novel; its TV-narrative recreation of real-life stories of incest and family violence. These projects I did encourage, and the results can be found in the special *Twin Peaks* issue of *Literature/Film Quarterly*.

37. A good deal of interesting work on *Twin Peaks* has already appeared in other venues. See, for example, Mark J. Carney, "*Invitation to Love: The Influence of Soap Opera on David Lynch's Twin Peaks*"; Brad Chisholm, "Difficult Viewing: The Pleasures of Complex Narratives"; Jim Collins, "Television and Postmodernism"; Howard Hampton, "David Lynch's Secret History of the United States"; Richard Jameson, "Evergreen Velvet"; Frank McConnell, "Our Town: Lynch's *Twin Peaks*"; and David Bianculli, *Teleliteracy: Taking Television Seriously*.