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Nightmare and dream in David Lynch's *Blue Velvet*: horror, parody and nostalgia for the marvellous in the epilogue of the filmic text

Pesadilla y sueño en *Terciopelo azul*, de David Lynch: Horror, parodia y nostalgia de lo maravilloso en el epílogo del texto fílmico

ABSTRACT:
This article presents a textual analysis of Blue Velvet (David Lynch, 1986) focusing especially on the final sequence of this film, a neo-noir thriller that has become one of the most influential works of post-classical American cinema. In addition to reviewing part of its gruesome narrative plot, capable of inspiring fear and attraction at the same time, and reviewing some of the most relevant interpretations of the film, this analysis examines in detail the epilogue of the film, a passage of dreamlike and illusory reminiscences in which a happy ending that connects with the beginning of the film is shown. This reading allows us to find a surprising reference to a magical and fascinating element from the famous Disney musical film Mary Poppins (Robert Stevenson, 1964). This and other intertextual allusions linked to David Lynch's childhood and adolescence make it possible that in this postmodern film, along with the obvious presence of the horrific and the parodic, there is also nostalgia for the marvellous, the longing for a time and a perception of the world in which it seemed a less sordid and frightening place.

KEY WORDS:
Blue Velvet; David Lynch; horror; nostalgia; parody; textual analysis.

RESUMEN:
En este artículo, se realiza un análisis textual de Terciopelo azul (David Lynch, 1986), centrado especialmente en la secuencia final de esta película, un thriller neo-noir que se ha convertido en una de las obras más influyentes del cine postclásico americano. Además de recorrer parte de su truculenta trama narrativa, capaz de inspirar miedo y

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atracción a la vez, y de revisar algunas de las interpretaciones más relevantes del film, este análisis examina con detalle el epílogo de la película, un pasaje de reminiscencias oníricas e ilusorias en el que se representa un final feliz que conecta con el principio de la cinta. Dicha lectura permite localizar una sorprendente referencia a un elemento mágico y fascinante proveniente de la célebre película musical producida por Disney Mary Poppins (Robert Stevenson, 1964). Esta y otras intertextualidades vinculadas a la infancia y adolescencia de David Lynch provocan que, en este film posmoderno, junto con la obvia presencia de lo horroroso y de lo paródico, asome también la nostalgia de lo maravilloso, la añoranza de una época y una visión del mundo en el que este parecía un lugar menos sórdido y aterrador.

PALABRAS CLAVE:

Análisis textual; David Lynch; horror; nostalgia; parodia; *Terciopelo azul*.

1. Introduction

David Lynch was eighteen years old when *Mary Poppins* (Robert Stevenson, 1964) was released. Of course, he was no longer a child, but he was a teenager with a marked artistic inclination who would end up directing his first experimental short film a few years later, *Six Men Getting Sick* (*Six Times*) (David Lynch, 1967). That famous musical fantasy film had to produce a considerable impact on the future director, as can be seen from the reflection that said film will have at a given moment in his cinematographic work, as we will see in the textual analysis of *Blue Velvet* (David Lynch, 1986) that is presented in this article.

The film produced by Walt Disney, based on the series of novels of the same name by Pamela Lyndon Travers, with music by the Sherman brothers and starring Julie Andrews, enjoyed enormous success in its time. In addition to being the highest grossing film of the year, it was nominated for thirteen Oscars, collecting five statuettes, and has been considered by many the culmination of Walt Disney's career. Mary Poppins is, on the other hand, a magnificent example of the highly stylized –and some would say stagnant– film produced in the Hollywood of the era that preceded the so-called New Hollywood. The story of the magical nanny –kind and compassionate, just as her charges, Jane and Michael Banks, had wished– remits to a sweetened universe of childhood innocence that is wonderful, endearing, and somewhat artificial at the same time.

Obviously, the register of David Lynch's fourth feature film, a neo-noir thriller titled *Blue Velvet*, is quite different. Of the two generic labels used to define this film, the first refers to the English expression thrill, which could be translated as emotion, shudder or shock before an impressive stimulus. As Martin Rubin has explained, «the thriller seeks to arouse fear, suspense, excitement, vertigo and movement. In other words, it emphasizes the visceral, the primary, instead of more sensitive or cerebral aspects such as tragedy, grief, compassion, love or nostalgia» (2000, p. 14). This same author specifies that the thriller, more than a genre in itself, «can be conceptualized as a "metagenre" that encompasses other genres under its cloak and as a band in the spectrum that colors each of those particular genres» (2000, p. 12). For its part, the neo-noir label refers to an updated recreation of the universe of the classic genre known as film noir—or film noir—characterized, among other aspects, by narrating crime stories that take place in environments dominated by corruption, cynicism and violence. As Mark Conard has defined:

> The term neo-noir describes any film after the classic film noir period that contains film noir themes and sensibility. [...] It is very possible that these later films are not shot in black and white and that they do not contain the play of light and shadow that their classic precursors possessed. However, they contain the same alienation, pessimism, moral ambivalence and disorientation (2007, p. 2).

Blue Velvet is a film that has influenced the cinema of the post-classical period like few others. Among other things, this film redefined from already fully postmodern coordinates the mannerist-inspired thriller that Alfred Hitchcock had popularized at the end of the 50s and of which he had been the undisputed master. At the same time, this fiction written and directed by Lynch laid some of the aesthetic and thematic foundations of the cinema that was to be made in the following two decades at least. The mark left by *Blue Velvet* can be verified, for example, when observing that an institution such as the American Film Institute (AFI) considers it one of the ten best American films of all time in the mystery genre, a category that in this case includes the thriller (AFI, 2008). Or that the British Film Institute (BFI) and its prestigious magazine *Sight and Sound* –both in the survey carried out among critics, documentary filmmakers, and academics, as well as in the one carried out exclusively among film directors– place this film among the hundred best in history (BFI, 2022).

2. Methodology

Before delving into the textual analysis of *Blue Velvet*, it is necessary to briefly explain what the analytical method that we are going to apply to this work consists of as a cinematographic artistic text. For this we will resort, first of all, to what was exposed by Roland Barthes in line with his analysis of a suspense and horror story by Edgar Alan Poe entitled *The truth about the case of Mr. Valdemar* (*The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar*, 1845):

> We will take, then, a narrative text, a story, and we will read it, as slowly as necessary, stopping as often as necessary (relaxation is a capital dimension of our work), trying to discover and loosely classify not all the meanings of the text (this would be impossible, because the text is open to infinity: no reader, no subject, no science can stop the text), but rather the forms, the codes, according to which the meanings are possible. We will look for the avenues of the text (1990, p. 324).

Although Barthes refers here to a literary text, his approach can be transferred without too much difficulty to the cinematographic field. Following this author, the analytical reading of the filmic text will have to be attentive, stopped and vented in order to «discover and classify without rigor» –that is, without prejudice– its «forms» and its «codes». All this with a view to «searching» for what Barthes calls the «avenues of the text», which are at the same time its framework, its connections and its possible directions.

Starting from these postulates, as well as from other disciplines such as semiotics, cultural anthropology and psychoanalysis, Jesús González Requena (1995; 2006) has extensively developed the theoretical and methodological proposal for the analysis and reading of the film text to which we mean. The numerous specific applications of this methodology by various authors show its power, impact and versatility, as evidenced by the great variety

of cinematographic works from different eras and aesthetics addressed (see, for example: Hernández Toledano and Martín Arias, 2020; García Catalán and Rodríguez Serrano, 2021; Torres Hortelano, 2021).

In accordance with the aforementioned proposal, in the analytical journey of the film one should not rush to try to understand the text, much less try to assign a meaning capable of explaining it in its entirety. On the contrary, it is a question of spelling out the different materials that compose it, that is, of carrying out a literal reading that attends to what is really represented in the film. On the one hand, the dialogues, actions and narration, on the other, the multiple aspects of the staging (framing, photography, colors, objects, gestures, locations, etc.), as well as the sounds and music. This detailed reading makes it possible to detect the elements that polarize the film text, while at the same time making it possible to reveal the bundles of relationships established between said elements, whether they are reinforcement, contradiction or ambiguity. Such relationships are located for the most part within the text itself, although they can also frequently be of an intertextual nature and, therefore, refer to other works by the same author (intratextuality) or to texts of different origins (extratextuality).

With the analysis that we are going to carry out below, it is not intended, then, to offer a complete and conclusive interpretation of *Blue Velvet*, but simply to explore some of its possible meanings, which will always be linked to the subjective, that is, to the experience of the subject before the filmic text, as González Requena (1995, pp. 37-38) has proposed. Or to put it another way:

> It is not a question of assigning it some kind of final meaning. The meaning of the text must be understood literally in the double sense that this term has: meaning as the place to which it points, towards which the text points, and, at the same time, as what is felt by the subject who is confronted with it (García-Escrivá, 2017, p. 127).

3. Readings and interpretations of *Blue Velvet*

Blue Velvet is intentionally ambiguously set between the early 1960s and the time it was shot, in the mid-1980s. He returns to his provincial hometown of Lumberton, North Carolina, due to the serious health problem suffered by his father. Back from the hospital where his father is hospitalized, Jeffrey finds by chance in the weeds of an open field an amputated human ear with signs of decomposition and full of ants (Figure 1). When the protagonist goes to the police station with his discovery, he is received by detective John Williams (George Dickerson), who is precisely his neighbor. This situation will cause Jeffrey to meet again with Sandy (Laura Dern), the detective's daughter, a blonde and formal-looking girl who is in her last year of high school. But it will also cause them both to become involved –obsessively, in Jeffrey's case– in solving the morbid intrigue that revolves around the attractive and mysterious singer Dorothy Vallens (Isabella Rossellini), whose husband and son have been kidnapped by Frank Booth (Dennis Hopper), a dangerous and psychopathic gangster.

¡FALTA TRADUCIR PIE DE FOTO!

Figure 1. Jeffrey encuentra una oreja humana amputada entre la maleza. *Fuente:* Blue velvet (MGM, 1986).

A series of investigations carried out outside the law will lead Jeffrey to see first-hand a dark and terrifying universe of crime, perversion and sexual violence –up to that moment unknown to him– that will cause him intense fear and a strong attraction to parts of the world. the same (exactly the same emotions that will arouse in the viewers of the film). In this descent into hell, the protagonist will enter into a sadomasochistic relationship with Dorothy, at the same time that he will begin a more conventional love affair with Sandy. As Amaya Ortiz de Zárate has pointed out:

> Lynch's universe is already shown as a territory with an enigmatic and dreamlike atmosphere in which opposites actively coexist. Wildly sensual female characters alongside perverse and violent male characters capable, however, of inspiring tenderness. The wonderful tale —The Wizard of Oz— along with black or avant-garde cinema. The beauty of the cold, blonde woman – from the North —versus the disturbing sensuality of the brunette— Latin or from the South. The fairy and the witch. Melancholy and anger (2013, p. 166).

A contrast between the blonde woman and the brunette that, by the way, will be repeated in Mulholland Drive (David Lynch, 2001) with the characters of Betty (Naomi Watts) and Rita (Laura Harring). And as for what Ortiz de Zárate pointed out in relation to *The Wizard of Oz* (Victor Fleming, 1939) —another fantasy musical film, in this case based on the children's story written by L. Frank Baum— other authors such as Rob Latham (1988) have also influenced his role as a fundamental reference in Blue Velvet.

In this sense, there is no more to note in the name of Dorothy, the same as that of the young protagonist of *The Wizard of Oz* (Judy Garland). This wonderful tale will be present in an even more explicit and repeated way in Lynch's next feature film, *Corazón Salvaje* (Wild at Heart, 1990) (see, for example, García-Escrivá, 2012).

Both the markedly surreal and dreamlike atmosphere of the film and its double triangular structure of relationships (with Oedipal connotations) between the main characters —Sandy-Jeffrey-Dorothy, on the one hand, and Dorothy-Jeffrey-Frank, on the other— have led to a good number of psychoanalytic readings of this filmic text (Mulvery, 1996; Atkinson, 1997; McGowan, 2007). In all these interpretations, the incandescent core of the narrative is located in the scene of a perverse nature in which Jeffrey is a direct witness, hidden in a closet, of the fetishistic ritualization and sadistic rape of Dorothy at the hands of Frank (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Jeffrey views the scene of Frank's rape of Dorothy. Source: *Blue velvet* (MGM, 1986).

On the other hand, different commentators have pointed out, in one way or another, that the main theme of Blue Velvet is the contradictory duality that exists in the world between an apparently beautiful and friendly surface and the dark and tortuous background that is often hidden behind it. what is perceived at first sight (Kael, 1986; Berry, 1988; Preston, 1990). To put it another way, in this cinematographic work the reality constituted by social conventions and good intentions is contrasted with the sinister and cruel background of nature in general and of the human condition in particular.

This idea is revealed from the very beginning of the film, in a first sequence that starts with the famous song that gives the film its title, "Blue Velvet", written by Bernie Wayne and Lee Morris in 1950, although popularized by Bobby Vinton in 1963. Along with this musical theme, the image band begins with a low-angle shot of a flower bed with red roses that stand out against a perfectly white fence and a blue sky (Figure 3), the three colors of the United States flag. United States, as John Peter Mendoza (2019, p. 2) has suggested. Follow a slow-motion shot of a fire truck driving through a residential area as a firefighter waves politely to the camera. Next, another shot of a set of plants is presented, this time yellow tulips, flowers often considered a symbol of happiness, joy and hope (Carlson, 2022). A new slowed-down shot allows us to see a group of schoolchildren crossing a pedestrian crossing under the affable surveillance of a lady dedicated to this task. This series of images, at once charming and contrived, is followed by a disturbing scene in which Jeffrey's father (Jack Harvey) is peacefully watering the garden of his typical middle-class American house when he suddenly collapses, victim of a vascular accident. While the father remains on the ground, the camera zooms in on the lower area of the lawn to show us how beneath this perfectly trimmed, green and manicured vegetation cover, there is a dark and terrifying habitat in which a tangle of insects fight tirelessly for life.

But we are not going to insist more on this reading of Blue Velvet which, on the other hand, seems quite evident. Instead, we will pay attention to the last sequence of the film to carry out an analysis that, although it will not call into question the previous interpretation, somehow complements and qualifies it.

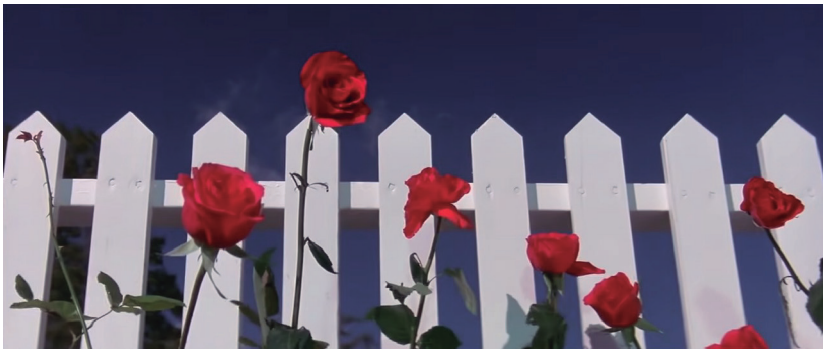

Figure 3. The roses, the fence and the sky at the beginning of *Blue Velvet*. Source: *Blue velvet* (MGM, 1986).

4. Analysis of the final sequence

Let's see in detail, then, the sequence that closes the film. After the terrifying scene in Dorothy's apartment in which the protagonist finally ends Frank, a kiss and a hug between Sandy and Jeffrey seal the narrative climax of the gruesome story that began with the discovery of the severed ear. At that moment, we heard the song «Mysteries of Love» composed for the film by Angelo Badalamenti, with lyrics by David Lynch and performed by Julee Cruise, whose enveloping voice will also appear on the soundtrack of the television series *Twin Peaks* (David Lynch, 1990-1991). This ethereal and angelic musical theme serves to link the scene of the embrace between the couple with the final sequence, in which it will sound for practically its entirety, except for the last moments.

The epilogue of the film begins with a detailed shot of an ear, this time belonging to Jeffrey, who is taking a nap in the garden (Figure 4). Along with the theme of Badalamenti, the peaceful song of the birds is heard. Waking up, Jeffrey sees a bird perched in a nearby tree. Specifically, it is a robin thrush, also known as an American blackbird, a fairly common species in North America. Sandy calls Jeffrey into the house to eat. He gets up from the deck chair and stops for a moment to say hello to his father, now recovered, and Sandy's, who are together doing some work in the adjoining garden. When Jeffrey walks into the

Figure 4. Detail shot of Jeffrey's ear, who is taking a nap in the garden. Source: *Blue Velvet* (MGM, 1986).

house, his mother (Priscilla Pointer) and Sandy's (Hope Lange) are chatting on the living room sofa. Both women are nearly identical in age, looks, and style. Everything seems to indicate that the future in-laws get along great. We are therefore witnessing a prototypical family scene in which everything fits harmoniously.

In the kitchen, Sandy and her Aunt Barbara (Frances Bay) excitedly observe that a bird —the same one that Jeffrey saw when he woke up— has perched in front of the window that overlooks the garden (Figure 5). In its beak it carries an insect that it has just caught. Jeffrey walks up to them, and still watching the bird, says, «Maybe the goldfinches have arrived.» Aunt Barbara expresses her revulsion at the idea of eating bugs, while she herself swallows a mouthful of the food they were preparing. Sandy laughs, and while staring at Jeffrey, comments, «It's a strange world, isn't it?»

The protagonist's face radiates happiness. His satisfaction responds, without a doubt, to that particular moment, but above all to the way in which things have finally been resolved.

The phrases of Jeffrey and Sandy that we have just transcribed refer directly to a dialogue between the two characters that had taken place towards the middle of the film. In this passage, the two young people find themselves inside a car parked next to a church from which organ music emanates. It is an instrumental version of the song «Mysteries of Love» that we were referring to a moment ago, so this scene is also connected through the music —in anticipation, actually— with the final sequence. Before recounting —in a very selective way, yes— what he has seen in Dorothy's apartment and what he has discovered in relation to the evil Frank, Jeffrey begins by warning: «It's a strange world.» In response to the sordid reality to which Jeffrey refers, Sandy evokes a dream that she had precisely the day they met again: «In the dream our world appeared. And the world was dark because there were no goldfinches, and goldfinches represented love. That darkness remained for a long time. And suddenly, thousands of goldfinches were free; they came flying and brought the glowing light of love. Apparently, I think that love was the only thing that could solve something. And he did.» Thus, faced with the nightmare narrated by Jeffrey, Sandy presents us with a beautiful dream in which the darkness of the world is transformed into light by the work of love.

At this point, a small nuance must be introduced about the Spanish dubbing of both the story of Sandy's dream and Jeffrey's phrase in the kitchen. In the original version, when talking about the birds, both characters use the term robin, which is the name by which the robin thrush

Figure 5. A robin thrush perches at the window overlooking the garden. Source: *Blue velvet* (MGM, 1986).

is known in the United States. However, in the Spanish version this term has been translated erroneously —perhaps to find a reference closer to the viewer— as «jilguero», a completely different bird. In any case, the original dialogues in North American English refer unequivocally to the same type of bird that is perched in front of the window.

The kitchen scene ends with a close-up of the bird that allows us to better see the insect —a beetle— that it holds in its beak, but also highlights something that was already noticeable in the previous shots of the little animal: both its appearance and its movements are strange and unnatural. Actually, we are not seeing a bird of flesh and blood, but a mechanical doll, that is, what is known in the field of film effects as an animatronic. One might think that this resource was the result of the difficulty of using a real bird when filming, although the truth is that it is somewhat out of place in a mid-80s film and, consequently, already far removed from the film conventions basically made in studio. In an interview that is part of the television documentary, *Jonathan Ross Presents for One Week Only: David Lynch* (Andy Harries, 1990), Lynch is asked about the robin thrush in the final sequence and in his answer he states that it is a real bird. When the interviewer claims that it looks contrived, the director replies, «Well, he's playing a role... and this is what came out,» and immediately flashes a big wry smile.

The fact is that the perception of this bird, together with the photography of saturated colors and a certain diffusion of the image that predominates in the sequence, produce a strangeness, a feeling of unreality that pervades the entire passage. This impression is accentuated when some of the shots that we saw in the sequence with which the film began are repeated: the yellow tulips, the fireman waving from his truck and the red roses in front of the white fence with the blue sky, all of them with a marked saturation of colors and a slight photographic overexposure.

The shot with which the sequence closes has the same effect of unreality, or even more so, since the action it contains is shown in slow motion. In this shot, we see a boy with a propeller hat playing in a very nice park. A smiling Dorothy waits for him sitting on a bench to hug him, crying with happiness. After all that she has suffered, Dorothy has finally managed to be reunited with her son in a safe environment. At that moment the theme «Mysteries of Love» ceases and in its place the final bars of the song «Blue Velvet» enter. But if at the beginning of the film it was the popular version of Bobby Vinton that was played, this time it is the most somber and hypnotic version performed by Dorothy herself at The Slow Club, the place where she performed at night. Right at the moment when this song begins to play, Dorothy's face changes from its initial expression of happiness to a disturbing look that seems to be located elsewhere, as if she were still fixed on the horror she experienced (Figure 6).

The last sentence of the song's lyrics goes like this: «And I still can see blue velvet through my tears.» The camera then pans up over the trees in the background —out of focus— until it is in a frame that shows only the blue sky. At this point the song ends and the movie concludes

5. Analysis results and findings

We could say that, as a whole, the sequence that closes *Blue Velvet* shows a happy ending: the Jeffrey-Sandy couple has consolidated an incipient courtship, while Dorothy has recovered her son and her safety. However, an air of unreality and imposture does

Figure 6. Dorothy's look is transformed as she hugs her son. Source: *Blue velvet* (MGM, 1986).

not cease to be perceived in this ending. On the one hand, the film could be interpreted as a horrifying nightmare that has taken place between the ear found in the wasteland —or, to be more precise, between that dark detail shot that is inserted in the middle of the brief nocturnal journey of the protagonist to the house of Sandy in which the camera delves into the severed ear— and the close-up shot of the ear of a Jeffrey sleeping in the garden. The awakening of the character in the lounger in front of the bird would mean, then, that the nightmare has ended and everything has returned to normal, to a peaceful and conventional reality. On the other hand, an alternative interpretation could be that the true dream universe is constituted by the initial shots of the film and by the happy ending that is represented in the last sequence. This would explain the unreal air that permeates both passages, while the reality would be much more sordid, violent and contradictory, as can be seen in most of the film. Although, all things considered, there is no need to opt for one interpretation or another, since perhaps it is precisely this ambiguity that characterizes *Blue Velvet*.

But this is where we have to notice *Mary Poppins*, or rather, the bird that appears in a famous scene from this film. It should be noted that in this scene there is a starting confusion (or gazapo), since the bird shown is an American robin or robin thrush (Turdus migratorius), when in a London garden only a European robin or robin could nest (Erithacus rubecula), something that, apparently, they did not notice when shooting the film at the Walt Disney Studios in Burbank, California. Be that as it may, the scene we are referring to takes place at a time when Jane (Karen Dotrice) and Michel (Matthew Garber —the brother and sister under the tutelage of Mary Poppins (Julie Andrews)— are forced to tidy their rooms and feel a bit sad and unmotivated by the amount of tasks ahead of them. It is then that Mary encourages them by interpreting the song «Spoonful of Sugar» («A spoonful of sugar», sweeter impossible) that speaks of finding fun in work and effort. As she sings, the nanny looks out the window and sees a pair of robin thrushes busy tending their nest in a tree in the garden. Mary opens the window and one of the birds lands on her hand (Figure 7). The bird is clearly an animatronic, although it doesn't look too out of place in the context of the special effects and animation used in the film, on the other hand, brilliant for its time and awarded with an Oscar.

After a few fascinating moments in which Mary sings in the middle of the room accompanied by the songs of the thrush, the little bird returns to its tree. At that moment, obeying the nanny's

Figure 7. A robin thrush perches on the hand of Mary Poppins. Sourcee: *Mary Poppins* (Disney, 1964).

magical commands, the messy items in the rooms begin to fix themselves. The children attend the scene delighted and soon join in on the marvelous task. Finally the rooms are impeccable almost effortlessly and in a fun way.

It is striking that the appearance of the bird that appears in *Blue Velvet* is so similar to that of *Mary Poppins*. Indeed, as they are the same species —in Lynch's film it is justified that it is an American robin, given the location of the story— they have the same size and the same colors. But what is most remarkable is that both birds make the same artificial robotic movements typical of an animatronics with certain technological limitations. The result is that Blue Velvet stages a reference or allusion, surprising at first, to the Disney film.

It does not seem that this is a complete coincidence, since in a work by Lynch made shortly after, the short film *The Cowboy and the Frenchman* (1987), a new allusion to *Mary Poppins* will appear. In this short, a Frenchman named Pierre (Frederic Golchan) practically rolls down the hill to the ranch run by foreman Slim (Harry Dean Stanton). The exotic visitor carries with him a small suitcase from which two surprised cowboys (Jack Nance and Tracey Walter) will extract multiple elements, all of them French clichés: bottles of wine, baguettes, cheeses, a statuette of the Eiffel Tower, a plate of snails, another of French fries, etc., objects that, logically, would not all fit at the same time in a bag like the one shown. In this way, the Frenchman's suitcase turns out to be a kind of bottomless magical bag from which anything can come out. Exactly the same thing that happens when Mary Poppins arrives at the Banks' house for the first time and, to the astonishment of the children, extracts from her small suitcase all kinds of elements that she needs to adapt the room to her tastes and needs: a hanger, a mirror, a plant, a lamp, some shoes, etc.

6. Conclusions

Both cases, that of the robin thrush and the magic bag, can be taken as parodic references to the famous Disney musical. After all, one of the most outstanding features of postmodern

texts —such as Lynch's cinema— is their intertextuality and the profusion of citations to other works and cultural references, frequently in a parodic key (Hutcheon, 1988, pp. 124-140). Authors like Paul Coughlin have emphasized this parodic and at the same time subversive vocation of the film:

> *Blue Velvet* tries to subvert conventional ideals and Lynch reinforces this fact with the final sequence of the film that reproduces, apparently, the naive dream of Sandy. But deep down lies a parody of postmodern design not only of conservative representations, but also of the values that these representations seek to consecrate (2003, p. 309).

However, and without neglecting this aspect pointed out by Coughlin, in the referential operation that we are dealing with, a certain tone of nostalgia is also detected. Thus, in *Blue Velvet*, along with the disturbing drive for the horrifying and the comforting presence of the parodic, there is also the longing for a time, a childhood and adolescence, where everything was more beautiful and harmonious, less cruel and terrifying. This tense intercalation between parody and nostalgia can also be found in other Lynch films, such as *Corazón Salvaje*, so it could be said that it is a characteristic feature of this author (García-Escrivá, 2012).

Actually, the nostalgia to which we refer is already detected around the song that gives its title to *Blue Velvet*. In an interview published in the alternative weekly The Village Voice shortly after the premiere —and the enormous impact— of *Blue Velvet*, Lynch himself said, referring to «Blue Velvet»: "The tone that that song generates: the tone, the time and the things of that time" (Borden, 1986, p. 62), an era to which another fundamental song in the film also belongs, which appears in two of its most remembered scenes: the theme composed and performed by Roy Orbison «In Dreams», released in 1963, precisely the same year that the version of Bobby Vinton from «Blue Velvet», when David Lynch was a young high school student.

Both *Mary Poppins* and *Blue Velvet* or *In Dreams*, not to mention *The Wizard of Oz*, refer to the same context of innocence where the marvelous still had a place, to a certain sense of things and of life that results as longed for as already completely impossible. In this regard, all we have to do is remember the final stanzas of the Roy Orbison song: «It's too bad that all these things / Can only happen in my dreams / Only in dreams / In beautiful dreams» («What a pity that all these things / They can only occur in my dreams / Only in dreams / In beautiful dreams». In short, in *Blue Velvet* the nightmare and the dream represent two sides of the same coin, as is reflected, among other cases, in the image of the beetle in the beak of the robin thrush that we mentioned earlier. However, if suspense, horror and fear are essential components of nightmares and thrillers in general, in Lynchian dreams, in addition to a clear parodic and subversive character, it is intuited also a strange and painful nostalgia for the marvelous.

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