

Esoteric Symbolism in Twin Peaks: a discussion

David Lynch's *Twin Peaks* is a multidimensional, metaphysical, neo-noir drama. It's a surrealist masterpiece, interwoven with darkly comedic moments of absurdity, juxtaposed against the deceptively serene sentimentality of mid-century Americana and infused with esoteric symbolism. *Twin Peaks* began as a serial drama created by Mark Frost and David Lynch which aired for two seasons during 1990 to 1991. This award winning series resulted in a cult following and film prequel titled *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me* (1992).

Lynch and Frost constructed a cinematic work with an exhaustive amount of arcane knowledge, obscure news stories and classic film references. The series is so informed esoterically, it is considered an initiatory process for mystery schools, of which Agent Cooper himself becomes an unknowing participant. The show's protagonist is FBI Special Agent Dale Cooper, who travels to Twin Peaks in the rural Pacific Northwest on special assignment when Laura Palmer is found murdered, similar to a previous murder in Washington. The show presents highly complex worlds within worlds, which overlap and collide, containing dichotomies both obvious and subtle, within a constant flux of dualistic themes.

Twin Peaks esoteric symbolism is derived from many sources but with a seemingly predominant message- the unification of dualities within, finding balance in nature and the constructs of alternate realities. The attainment of this non-duality can be achieved through Taoism and spiritual alchemy to which the film intentional or not makes many references. In Taoism and alchemy, our bodies are a microcosm of the cosmos, which contain the Ultimate Truth or Oneness, a truth that exists in its purest form within the elements and nature. The necessary process of integration and merging of dualities is personified within Agent Cooper and his investigation throughout the series. Agent Cooper's shaman-like journey to discover Laura Palmer's killer and the Lodges, initiates his own *dark night of the soul*, a ritualistic test on the threshold, a psychic and spiritual battle that culminates at the end within the Black Lodge.

"The language I speak must be ambiguous, must have two meanings, in order to do justice to the dual aspect of our psychic nature." – Carl Jung

Twin Peaks has an underlying message of how humanity's polarized thinking, detachment from nature and rigid social constructs results in destructive behavior. In the book *The Undiscovered Self*, Carl Jung argued that many problems of modern life are caused by "man's progressive alienation from his instinctual foundation." The dualistic theme of *Twin Peaks* is displayed via twinning, mirroring, doppelgangers, double lives, psychological splintering, mimicking and the constant theme of pairs. In Taoism, seemingly contrasting forces such as night and day, male and female, good and evil, are viewed as complimentary and interdependent of one another, exemplified in Yin/Yang principle.

Many of *Twin Peaks* paralleling esoteric themes are found in alchemy, Tibetan Buddhism, astrology, elementals, Jungian psychology, Hermeticism, theosophy, numerology and surrealist

methodology. Balance and unification are a core practice in these esoteric teachings. The worlds within worlds of *Twin Peaks* and archetypal dynamics of the characters is even mirrored in its own television series *Invitation to Love*. These concepts are presented visually through symbolism, anagrams, riddles, metaphors or euphemisms much like in alchemy. Paracelsus had a very Taoist view on alchemy, noting that by observing nature you could discover the secrets of the universe and immortality.

Balance is the key. Balance is the key to many things. Do we understand balance?" - The Log Lady

Taoism is a philosophy that nature and humanity are complimentary and inseparable: two but not two. That although we perceive everything around us as separate - humanity, nature and the cosmos are in essence a single living organism. In Taoism both organic and inorganic matter contains the life essence of Qi, the eternal fire, the quintessence, the alchemical purification and transformational element of fire. The two mountains in the *Twin Peaks* sign for example is an alchemical cypher for strong fire. Fire is a key element in alchemy, as its duality has both creative and destructive forces.

Inner alchemy attempts to unite us with our higher self through integration of the conscious and subconscious, male and female aspects of ourselves. This transcendence creates a primordial clarity in our perceptions of reality. It is body, mind, and spirit perfected and from which all revelation evolves. In a syndication of *Twin Peaks*, Lynch added introductions to the episodes by the Log Lady, each a parable of the alchemical process and essence of the Tao. In the final episode *Beyond Life and Death* she says, "And now, an ending. Where there was once one, there are now two. Or were there always two? What is a reflection? A chance to see two? When there are chances for reflections, there can always be two or more. Only when we are everywhere will there be just one." This narration alludes to a completed alchemical process, the ideal state of emptiness or the *mirror of heaven and earth*, the Tao itself.

"It's like I'm having most beautiful dream and the most horrible nightmare all at once." -Donna Hayward

Carl Jung's teachings are psychological principles of spiritual alchemy found in his dream analysis, theories on synchronicity, universal symbolism, archetypes, the union of the animus and anima and the integration of shadow self to achieve individuation. He based much of his work on Tibetan Buddhism, Taoism and alchemy. Jung is accredited to introducing Eastern philosophies and alchemy to the Western world through his work. The catalyst for Jung's research into Eastern philosophy and alchemy was a reoccurring dream about hidden rooms, a secret location of knowledge, reminiscent of the Lodges. Similarly, Agent Cooper's dream became the touchstone for his obsession with Tibet. Carl Jung's theories stated that the subconscious and dreams were the true source of self and nature of the cosmos, the wellspring of creativity, and psychic energies and like the Tao. He, like the surrealists believed by working with the subconscious and deconstruction of the illusory precepts of reality this was a form of liberation and personal autonomy.

The I Ching is a source of Taoist cosmology based on divination and its *meaningful coincidences* and synchronicities, which is referred to numerous times in *Twin Peaks*. Synchronicities are experienced when a person is intuitively or energetically aligned with nature, creating meaning and significance in phenomena that would otherwise seem random. Taoists believe this occurs when one is living in perfect accordance with the Tao and one is not limited to the boundaries of time-space realities or sequential constructs, where the past, present and future converging into the now. These experiences of the subconscious or alternate realities are those of the Lodges in *Twin Peaks*. Time does not exist in a linear concept within them, the inhabitants of the Lodges who exist in an abstract and boundless, yet cyclical realm. Agent Cooper takes note of this concept with the statement, "Gentlemen, when two separate events occur simultaneously pertaining to the same object in inquiry we must always pay strict attention."

Jung, alchemy and surrealists

"All that we see in this world is based on someone's ideas. Some ideas are destructive, some are constructive. Some ideas can arrive in the form of a dream." - The Log Lady

Jung theorized that basic universal truths could be understood in the collective unconscious through the language of symbolism. The use of hidden symbolism in *Twin Peaks* is reminiscent of the enigmatic, lavishly illustrated alchemical texts and surrealist art. In alchemy, as with surrealism, this metaphorical imagery full of secret, hidden knowledge contained particular elements of nature and the subconscious in dreamlike depictions. The Surrealists believed the conscious mind was limiting, restrictive with its rigid constructs and studied the techniques of psychoanalysts like Jung and spiritual alchemy. To reach this dream state and the symbiosis of the alchemists, they enacted exercises that triggered the twilight state. This existed between wakefulness and sleep called the hypnagogic or *threshold consciousness*.

A technique used by the Surrealists to induce lucid dreaming and access the subconscious was called hypnagogia or A Bridge to Other Realities. Giorgio de Chirico, a surrealist painter who founded the Metaphysical School of Art or Scuola Metafisica, created art that depicted dreamlike qualities which emphasized the stark dichotomy between shadow and light, much like the Black and White Lodges. His most relevant piece is *The Red Tower*, which correlates to The Red Room of the Lodges, the Red King of the divine marriage and Red Stage of alchemy. The Red Room, may also symbolize Potola Palace, the residence of the 14th Dalai Lama before fleeing Tibet. Potola Palace comprised of the White and Red Palace on the Red Mountain in Lhasa Valley. Emblematic to the Red King and White Queen of alchemy. The Tower, a symbol of illumination is the alchemist's laboratory or retort itself for transmutation, unification and rebirth, much like the womb.

The illusory perceptions of the mind awakening to alternate dimensions or multiverses is a subtext of the *Twin Peaks* narrative. It was through dreams that Agent Cooper communicated with entities of the Lodges. Cooper's first contact with the inhabitants of the Lodges was when The Giant appears to Agent Cooper after he's been shot and drifts between states of

consciousness. The Giant is a benevolent entity (who also inhabits the body of the elderly bellhop) who aids Agent Cooper's investigation by offering significant clues. In Taoist Mythology The Giant could be symbolic of the Chinese mythological god and hero Pangu, creator of the universe, who upon awakening, stood up and split heaven and earth in two, creating a bridge between the two. Another reference to Taoism, is the date of Laura's last diary entry is also significant, as February 23rd is the same day the 14th Dalai Lama was officially enthroned, in 1940.

"Sometimes nature plays tricks on us and we imagine we are something other than what we truly are. Is this a key to life in general? "In a dream, are all the characters really you? Different aspects of you?" The Log Lady Archetypes in Twin Peaks

For Jung, the Anima and Animus archetypes personify characteristics or personality attributes within an un-individuated person that manifests in dreams and translates through ego. The characters of *Twin Peaks* all display archetypal characteristics in their exaggerated personas. Archetypes are represented in the mythology of Greek gods with personal characteristics correlating to planets. For Empedocles, the dynamics of Love and Strife are personified in a romantic affair between Aphrodite or Venus (Love) and Aries (War). In the Hypnerotomachia Poliphili, Love and Strife are Poliphili's dream within a dream, during which he loses his love and regains her at the Fountain of Venus. In this sense Agent Cooper and the archetypes could be his dream within a dream of Twin Peaks and leads to the symbolism of the Venus statues in the Lodges. The two Venus represents the dichotomy between feminine virtue and condemnation, embodied in Annie Blackburn and Laura Palmer, the vulnerable and the virtuous.

Archetypes in *Twin Peaks*

"Sometimes nature plays tricks on us and we imagine we are something other than what we truly are. Is this a key to life in general? . . . In a dream, are all the characters really you? Different aspects of you?," - The Log Lady.

For Jung, the dual archetypes of Anima (female-soul) / Animus (male-spirit) personify feminine and masculine characteristics or personality attributes within an un-individuated person. They consist of personal and collective life experiences and unconscious mind that manifests in ego. In spiritual alchemy, the integration of the two create the syzygy or divine child. Unity of the two archetypes is the completion of individuation, bringing enlightenment and power.

The powers of all archetypes manifest in both positive and negative aspects, which are represented in the mythology of Greek Gods with characteristics or personalities correlating with planets. For Empedocles, the dynamics of Love and Strife define life itself, embodied in a romantic affair between Love goddess Aphrodite/Venus and War god Aries. Mars. In the Hypnerotomachia Poliphili we see Love and Strife as Poliphilio's 'dream within a dream', in which he loses his love and regains her at the Fountain of Venus. In this sense Agent Cooper and the archetypes could be his 'dream within a dream' of *Twin Peaks*.

In *Twin Peaks* the characters represent each personality archetype and embody situational archetypes. We find battles between good and evil, death and rebirth, innate wisdom vs. educated stupidity (i.e., Agent Cooper's intuitive investigative techniques and his agent status are revoked by his superiors). We find the Initiation and Journey, the Magic Weapon (i.e., Taoism and Agent Cooper's intuition), and Nature vs. Mechanical World (i.e., Packard Saw Mill and Ghostwood Estate plans). Setting archetypes include the following: the Garden (i.e., alchemists call their laboratory a rose garden site of the sacred chemical wedding of the Great Work), the Forest (i.e., Twin Peaks Ghostwood Forest), the River (i.e., Snoqualmie Falls), the Sea (i.e., the Tao), the Tower (i.e., the Black Lodge) and the Town (i.e., Twin Peaks itself).

Character archetypes are abundant: the Outcast, the Wanderer, the Loner (James Hurley); the Devil (Leland Palmer); Evil Genius, Trickster, Threshold Guardian (Windom Earle); Friendly Beast (the Giant); the Hero, Paladin and Magician (Agent Cooper); Star Crossed Lovers (Ed Hurley & Norma Jennings); Survivor (Ronette Pulaski); Temptress (Lana Milford), Tyrant (Benjamin Horne); Mentor, The Herald, Medicine Woman (Log Lady); Martyr (Maddy Fergusen); The Soldier (Major Briggs).

Additionally, the show incorporates the Fool (Deputy Brennan), the Wise Old Man, (Deputy Hawk), the Outlaw (Bobby Briggs), the Initiates (Bookhouse Boys), the Dreamer (Donna Hayward), the Fallen Mentor (MIKE), the Divine Couple and the Sacrificial Dance (Cooper and Annie Blackburn), the Femme Fatale (Jocelyn Packard), the Wounded Healer (Dr Jacoby), the Damsel in Distress and Ingenue (Annie Blackburn & Shelley Johnson), the Villain (Hank Jennings, Jean Renault), the Rake (Dick Tremayne), the Androgyne, Guardian (Agent Denise), the Reformed Villain (Benjamin Horne), the Bully (Leo Johnson), and the Authority Figure (Gordon Cole). The Creature of Nightmares is BOB. "These night creatures that hover on the edge of our nightmares are drawn to us when we radiate fear," says Windom Earle about the inhabitants of the Black Lodge, referring to BOB.

"Before the visible universe was formed its mold was cast. This mold was called the Archetype, and this Archetype was in the Supreme Mind long before the process of creation began."
Hermes Trismegistus

In *Twin Peaks* we see not only characters archetypes but also situational ones. These situational archetypes are generally struggles or conflicts: good and evil, death and rebirth, the initiation or journey. An example of situational archetype is Agent Cooper's intuitive investigative techniques, which resulted in his agent status being revoked; this is *innate wisdom versus educated stupidity*. Agent Cooper's intuition is the *Magic Weapon* archetype, and the Packard Saw Mill or Ghostwood Estate plan is *Nature vs Mechanical World*. Additionally, there are archetypal symbols in nature as well. Death and Rebirth archetypes are seen in border areas, intersections, and crossroads. The *Journey archetype* can be seen in paths, mountains, rivers, and wind. All of these are central symbols used in the show.

"Diane, I'm holding in my hand a small box of Chocolate Bunnies." Agent Cooper

Along with dreams, Agent Cooper utilizes methods of divination, meditation, and analysis to comprehend the metaphors, riddles, anagrams, and psychic phenomena in the series. Through recitation of his various streams of consciousness into his hand held recorder, which he addresses as Diane, Agent Cooper records these noted observations and deductions about the case. It is unclear whether his mysterious secretary Diane really exists. Diane becomes a symbolic form of communicating with his subconscious and as extension of himself. The name Diane is French for Diana, the mythological Greek goddess of wild animals and the hunt, the moon and forests. The fact she is known as the White Goddess is a clue as to Diane's significance. The moon is symbolic of the subconscious, intuition and his anima. This is an early manifestation of Cooper's White Queen of the Alchemical Wedding, preceding the arrival of Annie Blackburn, leading to his confrontation with the Dweller on the Threshold in the Black Lodge.

Agent Cooper, Adept

"Watch and see what life teaches. There are things in life that exist, and yet our eyes cannot see them. Have you ever seen something startling that others cannot see?"

"I am filled with questions. Sometimes my questions are answered. In my heart, I can tell if the answer is correct. I am my own judge. There's a whole world out there, hear the other side, see the other side" - The Log Lady

Another form of intuitive deduction Agent Cooper uses is the rock throwing *Tibetan Technique* and coin toss inspired by the I Ching and Jiaobei (moon blocks). While looking over photos of prospective residences with a real estate agent, Agent Cooper flips a coin that accidentally lands on Dead Dog Farm. This becomes a lead in the case. Coins resemble a full moon, so they symbolize the unconscious, intuition, and psychic awareness. As with the Mercury Dime's association with the coin toss, Agent Cooper embodies the archetypal planetary and alchemical properties of Mercury himself, as he is fluid in his deductive reasoning.

Cooper describes the *Tibetan Method* of divination as perfecting mind-body (Qigong) coordination with deduction based on intuition. After moving the Sheriff's offices outside among the Douglas Firs and Tao of nature, Cooper explains he received this divinatory knowledge from a dream about Tibet, its struggle from political oppression and the return of the Dalai Lama. Setting a bottle upon a tree stump, he throws a rock as each suspect's name related to J was read. If the rock missed, they were no longer considered but if he hit the bottle, it confirmed their possible guilt. The initial J was written in Laura's diary, as the last person she intended to meet before she was murdered. The J may reference the importance of planetary symbolism as Jupiter, which is embodied in Agent Cooper. It became known that the secret to opening the portal to the Black Lodge was during the Great Conjunction - when the opposing Saturn and Jupiter align.

BOB embodies Saturn, the Dweller on the Threshold as Saturn energy is teacher and disciplinarian. Cooper could be considered his student Jupiter, the planet considered the son of

Saturn. Also, the color of Jupiter is blue and associated with learning the unknowable and traversing the unknown, this is represented by the blue rose. Agent Cooper acts as a kind of mystery school initiate as his investigation becomes a catalyst for his own spiritual journey to enlightenment, to cross the threshold. It is inside the Black Lodge that Agent Cooper is tested at the Threshold, an important stage in the esoteric initiatory process. Facing the abyss, one must confront their shadow self to ultimately find spiritual rebirth and enlightenment. Agent Cooper is the adept or magician in the quote: "Through the Darkness of future past, the Magician longs to see. One chance out between Two Worlds, Fire Walk with Me." Within esoteric practices, it is said that what you seek, is seeking you. This was his duty to investigate the murders.

Revelations

"I play my part on my stage. I tell what I can to form the perfect answer. But that answer cannot come before all are ready to hear. So I tell what I can to form the perfect answer." - The Log Lady

It is revealed in the Sheriff's interrogation room, that BOB, a malevolent spirit of the Black Lodge, has possessed Leland since childhood. When the smoke alarm is set off flooding the room, Leland is trapped. BOB is driven out of Leland from a suicidal hysteria by smashing his head against the door. As Leland is dying, Agent Cooper becomes the shamanic psychopomp, entrusted to comfort and assist the dying character transition into the spirit realm. In Jungian psychology, the psychopomp mediates between the conscious and unconscious mind. During this ritualistic departure, Cooper imparts a prayer inspired by the Tibetan Book of the Dead (positioning Leland in Lying Posture of a Lion) which eloquently describes the essence of the Tao: "The time has come for you to seek the Path. Your soul has set you face to face before the clear light and now you are about to experience it in its reality, wherein all things are like the void and cloudless sky, and the naked, spotless intellect is like a transparent vacuum, without circumference or center. At this moment, know yourself and abide in that state."

At one point, Deputy Hawk talks to Agent Cooper about the dream soul, which can travel to realms of the dead. Travel to dimensions outside boundaries of space-time is the shamanic skill. After discovering that Maddy Ferguson, who is Laura's cousin and mirror image, has been murdered, Sheriff Harry Truman makes a Taoist reference telling Cooper, "You're on the path, you don't need to know where it leads, just follow." Shortly after, FBI Agent Albert Rosenfield says, "Go on whatever vision quest you require, stand on the rim of a volcano, stand alone and do your dance. Just find this beast before it takes another bite."

Both acknowledge Cooper's shamanic wisdom and capabilities. The beast he refers to is the Guardian on the Threshold of the Abyss. The cycle death and rebirth of samsara is a continual state of suffering, so BOB requires suffering to exist, since he is reborn in the living during possession states. He is a type of hungry ghost of the lower Bardo realms in Buddhism and clings to mortal states of carnal desires. This is the link between One Eyed Jacks and the Black Lodge, where the Red Room is mirrored in the decorative aesthetic of the brothel.

The Challenge

"Is life like a game of chess? Are our present moves important for future success? I think so. We paint our future with every present brush stroke. The Log Lady

When Agent Cooper is challenged to a deadly game of chess by Windom Earle, it is a microcosm of the Black Lodge, a preparatory stage for Cooper's final battle with BOB. Windom's logical mind at odds with Agent Cooper's intuition acts as both catalyst and deterrent for Cooper. The chessboard represents the struggle between the Lodges and the pawns are Twin Peaks residents. The game contains the Lunar Queen and the Solar King of the Splendor Solis. When Windom Earle says to Cooper, "The king must die," this is a warning of Cooper's fate if he interferes with Windom's plans.

As Cooper's nemesis and antagonist to the plot, Windom Earle physically becomes the Trickster or Devil archetype. The Devil, associated with Pan, is portrayed by Windom sitting on a rock playing a Japanese wind instrument before reading a list of Leo Johnson's transgressions, which leads to his enslavement and further torments by Windom. In his perversion of the Great Work, Windom longs for the power of the Red King, searching for his Queen, as he sends segments of a Percy Shelley poem to Audrey, Donna and Shelley. This is his Invitation to Love. This invitation is part of Love's Philosophy: "The fountains mingle with the river. And the rivers with the ocean, The winds of heaven mix forever with a sweet emotion; Nothing in the world is single, All things by a law divine, In one another's being mingle, Why not I with thine?" He is longing for his White Queen in this poem. He seeks but does not comprehend the true alchemical wedding.

The culmination of his search for the Lodge and his Queen, transpires during the Miss Twin Peaks beauty pageant. The stage is a reconstruction of Glastonbury Grove. The twelve contestants represent the twelve trees surrounding the entrance to the Black Lodge. Glastonbury Grove and the twelve trees symbolize the twelve knights of King Arthur, as this legend is an alchemical allegory. This is referenced when Sheriff Truman says, "Here's something Coop. Twelve trees in a perfect circle. There's a place like that up in Ghostwood, it's called Glastonbury Grove." Cooper says, "Glastonbury. That's the legendary burial place of King Arthur." Pete then asks, "King Arthur's buried near here?" Cooper responds, "No, in England. This feels right, Harry, let's get up there."

Earle's obsession to attain the glory of the Red King is evident when he says to Leo Johnson upon discovering the secret to entering the Black Lodge, "A perfect symbiosis. Oh, nature, perfect in design and aspects. You do not disappoint!" He then proceeds with, "The time has come to gather my beloved queen and embark upon our dark honeymoon." The dark honeymoon is his distortion of the alchemical wedding upon his kidnapping of Annie Blackburn. The lore of King Arthur has similarities to the Epic of Gilgamesh, about the oldest immortal in history. The cedar forest and its mountains of Mashu, (meaning twins) may be symbolic of the Twin Peaks sign and Cooper's journey.

Dweller on the Threshold

"So now the sadness comes - the revelation. There is a depression after an answer is given. It was almost fun not knowing. Yes, now we know. At least we know what we sought in the beginning. But there is still the question: why? And this question will go on and on until the final answer comes." The Log Lady-

If The Dweller on the Threshold is BOB in the Black Lodge, he acts as a malevolent entity who is a catalyst of transformation and manifestation of a person's shadow self, confronted at the threshold. The term Dweller on the Threshold was used in Edward Bulwer Lytton's *Zanoni*, which states: "Be behind what there may, I raise the veil." This lifting of the veil is part of many initiation rites. This the crossing over between two worlds, communication between the physical and spiritual, the higher and lower realities of existence. It is symbolized each time Agent Cooper lifts the red curtains to enter another room in the Black Lodge but finds himself back in the same location.

The Lodges become a ritual chamber. His stasis within the Lodge is a result of panic, his failure to confront the shadow self. Achieving the higher self can bring awareness to alternate realities, facilitating access to the astral plane. Aleister Crowley references this dark night of the soul; this confrontation on the threshold: "Now that there was no longer any 'I' to suffer, all these ideas which had inflicted suffering became innocent. I could praise the perfection of every part; I could wonder and worship the whole." This is spiritual/psychological integration, the essence of the Tao - nothingness and yet the all. It is mental clarity to a perception of how things really are. It is to see realities with new eyes, to be resurrected.

When Agent Cooper asks "Who is BOB?" MIKE replies with a lyrical acronym: "He is BOB, Eager for fun. When he wears a smile, everybody run!" of HeWe, indicating Agent Cooper's integration process. Dion Fortune mentions the Lodges in *Psychic Self Defense*, stating that the pure can see members (the Unseen) of the Black Lodge as they really are. The psychic or sensitive will be attracted to places (the Lodges) of concentrated energy where the Unseen dwell. These are the gifted and the damned of *Twin Peaks*. When BOB is near, his presence induces terror. Fortune states there are two ways an attacking entity can enter a person: through intense emotions of fear or sexuality. If a person remains unemotional they're safe from psychic invasion. Laura would not let BOB enter her, as her father Leland had.

In a comedic twist to the plot, BOB has his own doppelganger in that of the malevolent mystery child, little Nicky, from the Happy Helping Hand adoption agency. Lucy Moran is pregnant and uncertain who the father is, which could be Deputy Andy Brennan or Dick Tremayne. In what becomes the ultimate test in parenting skills, Dick brings in the orphaned little Nicky as a way to show he is the superior suitor for Lucy. This test of wills mirrors the test of the Dweller on the Threshold between Agent Cooper and Windam Earle, both challenged by BOB in the Black Lodge.

The pure hearted, slightly naive Deputy Andy takes on the role of Agent Cooper and the arrogant, petty con artist Dick Tremayne assumes the role of Windam Earle. As the microcosmic nature of their mirroring the larger plot in the series, their Dweller on the Threshold appears a

child, a tiny version of BOB. When they soon discover all of Nicky's parents have died in questionable fires or accidents, they both start to believe Nicky may be a demon or the devil himself.

The Lodges of Twin Peaks

"The shadow-self of the White Lodge. The legend says that every spirit must pass through there on the way to perfection. There, you will meet your own shadow self. My people call it 'The Dweller on the Threshold' ... But it is said, if you confront the Black Lodge with imperfect courage, it will utterly annihilate your soul." – Deputy Hawk

The White and Black Lodges are symbolic of the phases of alchemy: the Black Phase, the White, and final Red Phase. They are also alternate dimensional planes, interconnected through the Red Room, with its entrance located in Glastonbury Grove of Ghostwood Forest. They represent a unity of opposites, a conjunction, and why entrance to the Lodges occurs during The Great Conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter. Planets have great significance in alchemy, as they influence nature, the body and mind. Their relative positions affect every aspect of life on earth. An important process in alchemy is to understand the Ladder of the Planets.

The Lodges are also referenced in Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine*. In Blavatsky's Secret Doctrine as dimensional planes not visible to humans. The White Lodge was formed from highly evolved beings (the Secret Chiefs) who helped humans evolve as part of the plan of creation. Within the Black Lodge are those opposed to the plan of creation (Dugpas). This Lodge is the photonegative of the White (Bon sect), the eternal universal dynamic and oroborous of dualities.

The words Fire Walk With Me, written in blood found at the murder scene by Agent Cooper, is not meant as an evocation or incantation but rather an invitation to join BOB in the Black Lodge. This is the sophic fire of alchemy. Cooper's invitation is a confrontation with his shadow self and fears. The opposite of which is love and why the paralleling subplot of the TV soap opera within Twin Peaks was called Invitation to Love. The invitation by BOB is hinted at when Windom says, "For you see, the cave painting is not only an invitation, it is also a map, a map to the Black Lodge!"

While the Lodges are considered metaphysical, alternate realities and inter-dimensional locations of spirit energies, it could be postulated that the Lodges exist entirely within Agent Cooper's mind. The nature of the Lodges is the basis of many esoteric belief systems: the Native American Twin Hero Myth, the Pillars of Boaz and Jachin of Solomon's Temple, Maya and Brahman (Atman) in Hinduism, the marriage of Hieros Gamos, Yab -Yum of Tibetan Buddhism, the Pillar of Mercy or Severity of Kabbalism, the outer Channels of Nadis Yoga, the Androgyne of the Rosarium Philosophorum and the Pillars of Hermes. This is direct knowledge of creation, the art of nature, science of the stars. The entrance to the Black Lodge at Glastonbury Grove is emblematic of The Chalice Well, which in itself symbolizes the Great Work. The portal is also reminiscent of the Porta Alchemica legend and Native American Sipapu.

When Windom Earle speaks of the Black Lodge, he mentions the corrupted sect of left hand path Buddhist monks called Dugpas, who practiced evil magic and accumulated an extraordinary amount of psychic power. The left hand path is associated with dark magic. Philip Gerard (possessed by MIKE), explains he cut off his left arm to rid himself of this path and the Devilish One. The conflicting left hand path of The Black Lodge versus the right hand path of The White is evident in the last episode, when the Black Lodge is about to be opened. Various characters, including Agent Cooper, have sudden uncontrollable trembling in their right hands.

Alchemical Stages

"We live in a world where nothing is simple. Each day, just when we think we have a handle on things, suddenly some new element is introduced and everything is complicated once again. What is the secret?" - The Log Lady

Alchemy is a complex practice of chemical, psychological and spiritual transformational processes, meant to return matter or essence to its true, divine state through various refinements, whether in a laboratory or within oneself. Alchemists worked with nature in the laboratory but also emphasized the connection between body, mind, and spirit in their practice. The process intended to turn the lead of the soul to the gold of spirit, the Philosopher's Stone. It reflects the perennial philosophy of Absolute Truth, the Cosmos, the incorruptible spirit. This One Thing is the First Matter or Prima Materia, which alchemist Lao Tzu considered the Tao. It is black matter that is alive.

Alchemy is accredited to Egyptian god Thoth, scribe and god of science, astrology, religion, medicine and magic. He is the Revealer of the Hidden and Lord of Rebirth. He created the *Book of the Dead* and alchemical text *The Emerald Tablet*. The Greek name for Thoth is Hermes, so his teachings are known as Hermeticism. The remaining books of Thoth from the Alexandrian Library after it burned were guarded by The Sons of Horus, possibly inspiring the Bookhouse Boys.

The stages of alchemy are based on the colors seen during the stages of treated metals. There are three main Phases of alchemy with the first stage is called Nigredo or The Black Phase, known as mortification, which reduces matter to its basic essences. Internally, this entails facing Dweller of the Threshold. The symbolism for the Black Phase is decay, decapitation, or anything black. This putrefaction is Laura's death, the dirt mounds, Donna Hayward wearing Laura's sunglasses, the back oil pooled at the portal of the Black Lodge, Agent Cooper's enthusiasm for black coffee: *Black* as midnight on a moonless *night*. The Nigredo is sometimes called 'blacker than the blackest black' (the underworld).

Additionally, the Black Jack Gum, infamous for turning teeth black, was Leland's favorite. It's hinted at when The Man From Another Place says to Agent Cooper, "That gum you like is going to come back in style." The Black Jack Gum was remarketed to the public after a recall. The Nigredo is also embodied in the black birds Agent Cooper makes not of, as the Mina bird and

Crow. The Black Phase's calcination stage reduces elements to ashes to remove impurities, then cleansed during the dissolution stage. This is seen when The Log Lady's husband dies from a fire on their wedding night. This preceded her husband's discovery of a mysterious black oil that 'opens a gateway' after visiting Glastonbury Grove. Her husband's spirit now exists within a log and why she keeps her fireplace boarded up.

The Albedo or Whitening, is the second Phase, its stages are separation and conjunction. This process is symbolized when Leland's hair turns white when facing his molestation and murder of Laura, the white fox fur found on Maddy's dead body and Snoqualmie Falls. Its symbols are the lovers, pairings, white birds, or weddings. The wedding of Lana Budding Milford represented the failed process of alchemy's Divine Wedding. She personifies a false White Queen, symbolized by her dishonest attempts to be crowned Miss Twin Peaks. In alchemy, a crown is a symbolic of the Sacred Marriage. The Sacred Marriage manifests when The Solar Red King and Lunar White Queen unite within the alchemist, so it became associated with incest, as referenced by Leland's molestation of Laura. It is a corruption of The Great Work. Leland's serial rape of Laura is implied during the darkly comedic scene when he falls onto Laura's casket being lowered into the ground.

This stage is also known as The Green Lion, symbolized in the trees of Twin Peaks or the characters Emerald and Jade, who mirror Maddy and Laura on Invitation to Love. This phase creates iridescent colors known as the Peacock's Tail, represented by the unicorn, deer or rainbow. This array of colors is referenced when Pete Martell complains his truck was stolen saying, "There were twelve rainbow trout in the bed!" The retort of the alchemist was referred to as a bed, where the King and Queen unify. Pete's claim signifies Agent Cooper is near the final stage of the investigation and alchemical transformation.

Deputy Hawk says to Agent Cooper, "One woman can make you fly like an eagle, another can give you the strength of a *lion*, but only one in the Cycle Of Life (Tao) can fill your heart with wonder and the wisdom that you have known a singular joy (integration)." Here he means Agent Cooper's anima and union with his White Queen (female counterpart) Annie Blackburn.

The Red Phase or Rubedo starts with the yellowing stage *citrinitas*, which signified near completion of the process. The creamed corn as psychic sustenance or Garmonbozia of the Black Lodge symbolized a confusion of this phase. The womb and blood is associated with this phase, represented by The Red Room. This is the marriage of Hermes to Aphrodite (Venus). This birthing stage is alluded to in Lucy Moran's (fatherless) pregnancy and Agent Cooper sexual union with Annie Blackburn. The fermentation stage is similar to creating liquor. This is referenced during the humorous wine tasting benefit held at the Great Northern, hosted by Dick Tremayne. In the final episode, after the Giant warns Cooper at the Roadhouse by motioning no, scenes cut to a red light at the intersection, red neon signs, blocked hallways, and the entrance of the Black Lodge. The essence of the Androgyne is referenced with Agent Denise Bryson.

At the end of the series a mysterious black puzzle box left by Thomas Eckhardt is given to

Catherine Martell and is thought that the opening of the box will result in some form of treasure or fortune. The box is engraved with glyphs and astrological symbols which confuse the uninitiated, so they seek to open the box by force. Upon the frustration of boxes within boxes, which contain a metal cube that is impenetrable, Andrew Packard and Pete Martell again try and destroy it in a desperate attempt to find the treasure it may contain.

Andrew Packard says, "Maybe it's not a box at all, maybe it's just a block of stainless steel." What they find is a block of lead, this may symbolize a failed attempt when those take the process of alchemy literally to turn lead into the gold. Their base and crude understanding of spirituality through their greed and ignorance is represented in the lead. Once the lead block is destroyed by bullet, a key is found inside that leads to the bank vault, which is not a key to the treasure of enlightenment but their demise.

Audrey as Heroine

"Matter will be called the forest, so shall we know and understand things rightly. The Unicorn stands for Spirit. The Stag answers to no other name than Soul and none can deny it. Now it is true that he, who by Art, Knows how to tame them, leading them out of the forest, yet driving them close together, would be called a Master" - Book of Lambspring

When Audrey Horne investigates Laura's murder and applies to work at the perfume counter of her father's store, gaining access to One Eyed Jacks, she is given a crystal unicorn. This alchemical allegory is referenced in the tapestries of The Lady and The Unicorn, depicting indulgence of the senses, all of which are catered to at the brothel. In the medieval tapestry panel *À Mon Seul Désir*, the Lady paradoxes desire and purity yet chooses to remain chaste, as does Aubrey. The Lady in the panels is Audrey within the brothel. Audrey is forced to reveal her intentions after nearly being discovered by her father and rebels against the Madam, acting upon her sixth sense.

The mythical unicorn in alchemy symbolizes the elusiveness of hunting wild game (the Philosopher's Stone) and associated with purity and virginal women. In another panel the Lady holds a mirror to the unicorn creating a double image, symbolic of psychological/spiritual integration. The stag, symbolic for the feminine (mind) is a constant throughout Twin Peaks as a deer head. She risks her life to assist Cooper in the investigation, within a conflict of purity and unattainable desire, much like the eternal longing of the chaste Lady of the tapestry.

Taoist Spiritual Alchemy

"The beautiful thing about treasure is that it exists. It exists to be found. How beautiful it is to find treasure. Where is the treasure, that when found, leaves one eternally happy? I think we all know it exists. Some say it is inside us - inside us one and all. That would be strange. It would be so near. Then why is it so hard to find, and so difficult to attain?" - The Log Lady

In Chinese alchemy the Ladder of Planets is the Ladder of Lights, the seven stars in the Big Dipper constellation, representing the seven stages of alchemy. The Northern Dipper is the

location of the Garden of Immortals and the source of the elixir. It is meditated upon for its secrets of eternal life. Hsi Wang Mu, shamanic Goddess of Alchemy, is associated with the Big Dipper. The White Queen and Red King in Western alchemy is the Azure Dragon and White Tiger in the East. Agent Cooper's ring symbolizes the Chinese alchemical Circulation of Light (golden flower) for immortality. The Giant takes Cooper's ring from him until he learns the secrets of the Lodges. The ring symbolizes the eternal return, immortality, the gold of the Philosophers' Stone. The ring is returned upon Leland's detainment, when Cooper has learned what he needs to complete the cycle of his investigation before entering the Black Lodge.

In Chinese alchemy creating the elixir is symbolized by the White Hare alchemist or Moon Rabbit, assistant to the Goddess Chang'e, who drank the elixir and rose up to the moon, rather than give up its secrets. When Agent Cooper says he saw a Cottontail rabbit, Sheriff Truman tells him it's probably a Snowshoe instead. The Snowshoe changes colors from brown in summer to white in winter (White Hare), undergoing transformation each year, signifying harmonious duality.

The most notable spiritual transformation, is within Ben Horne. As the most powerful, wealthiest man in Twin Peaks, he planned the Ghostwood Estates, which would have destroyed the forests. After being accused of murdering Laura Palmer and losing his businesses, he faces his dark night of the soul, resulting in breakdown. He starts to intuitively engage in misguided Feng Shui in his office and acts out the surrender of the Union at Appomattox, representing his ego surrender. He begins to start anew by making amends and impeding Ghostwood Estates. He becomes an environmentalist, starts a campaign to save the Pine Weasel and repairs his relationship with Aubrey. He begins studying religious texts, particularly the Tao Te Ching.

Atmosphere

"Am I being too secretive? No. One can never answer questions at the wrong moment. Life, like music, has a rhythm." - The Log Lady

In Twin Peaks, the low resonating sounds of Dungchen trumpets can be heard during murder scenes or the appearance of BOB. These instruments are performed during prayer ceremonies by Tibetan monks to dispel negativity and malicious spirits. This effect is felt on a deep subconscious level, stirring intense emotions. Finger snapping in Twin Peaks is also a form of Tibetan Taoist ritual during meditation. The single snap functions to trigger a state of primordial clarity and focus, as Bobby during his interrogation, and Gordon Cole's Black Lodge doppelganger (his real life son) Pierre Chalfont when he says, "Sometimes things happen just like that." Laura snaps her fingers inside the Red Room before she signals to Agent Cooper the hand mudra of no fear.

Tantric Alchemy

"The heart - it is a physical organ, we all know. But how much more an emotional organ - this we also know. Love, like blood, flows from the heart. Are blood and love related? Does a heart pump blood as it pumps love? Is love the blood of the universe?" - The Log Lady

It is said that alchemy was a gift of communion with the gods made of fire and sexual union. This theory of ecstasy in divine manifestation is expressed most eloquently in Tantra. When Dr. Jacoby is being questioned about Laura's murder and Agent Cooper asks, "Were her problems of a sexual nature?" Dr. Jacoby replies, "The problems of our entire society are of a sexual nature." This is evident in Western culture. Dr. Jacoby's character was based on psychonaut, Taoist and shaman Terrence McKenna, who has written extensively on the subjects of Tantra, psychoactive drugs, alchemy, and alternative realities. When Dougie Milford is found dead after his honeymoon, the Mayor discovers tantric books around his body, including a fictional version of *My Secret Life* proclaiming, "This is what killed him!"

Tantra raises kundalini energies in the body during sexual union for spiritual transformation. It is a form of what Jung called Alchemical Eros. In the alchemical book *Aurora Consurgens*, two naked figures sit together, one giving their heart to the other. The heart appears as fruit, the sacred fruit of forbidden knowledge found in sexual energy. Yogic Tantrikas or Siddhis, said to possess godlike powers, were alchemists of the flesh, impenetrable to disease or age. The forbidden fruit is in many alchemical artworks. Audrey's tying of the cherry stem with her tongue at One Eyed Jack's alludes to this.

Erotic fruit as tantric sexuality is depicted in the alchemical tripartite the Garden of Earthly Delights. Each panel represents the three stages of alchemy, with the center being the Red Phase or divine union, ripe with fruit, retorts, sexual joyfulness, birds and creation symbolism. The Log Lady hints at this: "There are clues everywhere, all around us. But the puzzle maker is clever. The clues, although surrounding us, are somehow mistaken for something else. And the something else - the wrong interpretation of the clues - we call our world. Our world is a magical smoke screen. How should we interpret the happy song of the meadowlark, or the robust flavor of a wild strawberry?"

The Key

"Shining Venus trembles afar, Earth's Higher Self, and with but one finger touches us." Buddhist proverb

The Red curtains inside the Lodge are the color of Venus (Aphrodite), goddess of love, marriage, balance and sex. In the Black Lodge are two Venuses: the objectified Venus de Milo symbolized Laura and the modest Venus Pudica, symbolic for Annie Blackburn. As Agent Cooper confronts BOB, the statues start to fade, eventually disappearing upon his failure to overcome the shadow self. Saturn, the god of time, has won. Venus is known as both the evening and morning star, *the light bearer*, bringing knowledge and enlightenment. Venus is Earth's twin planet rotating backwards, reflected in the speech of the Lodge. In Chinese astrology she is associated with gold. In theosophy Venus is earth's spirit. In Wagner's *Tannhäuser* about the

struggle between sacred and profane love at the grotto of Venus is epitomized in the two Venus of the Black Lodge.

This is redemption through love of the higher self. Agent Cooper's love for Annie lead to his possession by BOB, sacrificing himself for romantic love, of which Aphrodite is archetype. Known in mythology for love affairs ending in disaster, she is a metaphor for leading one to the threshold. In the final episode, we see a reenactment of Lady Venus's tomb in the King's treasury from the Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz within the bank. Audrey is Lady Venus, chained to the vault's door in a mausoleum like tomb. The Rosicrucian ritual Vault of the Adepti, has a vault containing squares with drawers, as the bank has its safety deposit boxes. In the story, the Divine Wedding occurs through a death process. This scene ends after an explosion inside the bank vault.

The Language of the Birds and Trees

"Turn your minds to our words, our ethereal words, for the words of the birds last forever."
Aristophanes

Oracles are interpreters of the gods, as the will of heaven. Birds were oracular because they could fly between heaven and earth and carried messages from other worlds. It required the knowledge of an adept to decipher the coded language of the birds, in the same way. Agent Cooper uses intuition to understand the strange language of the Lodge spirits. Spirits cannot think in logical patterns with rational minds so their communication is abstract, spoken in riddle, non-sequiturs, metaphors, or backwards. When The Man from Another Place gives Agent Cooper a clue about Laura's murder, he says "Where we're from, the birds sing a pretty song and there's always music in the air." This referred to the room Laura was held but also how they communicate with each other. Shamans use a liminal state to communicate with spirits in the *twisted language*, as spirits don't exist in our limited space-time understanding. Tantric texts (Sandhyabhasa) are composed in a poetic, secret, inverted language written by Siddhas.

"I'll see you and you'll see me, in the branches that blow in the breeze, under the Sycamore Trees."- Jimmy Scott

Trees embody the connection between heaven and earth and creation knowledge. They symbolize strength and immortality. Trees are bridges between two worlds, the lower half rooted in earth, while the upper ascends to heaven. The rustling of leaves is said to contain ancient wisdom for those who listen. In Egyptian mythology, twin Sycamore Trees facing east formed the gateway to the afterlife, similar to the Sycamore trees surrounding the entrance to the Black Lodge. They are also grown on burial sites, on which Twin Peaks was built. Douglas trees symbolizes strength, past/future, and purification rites. Native Americans called trees The Standing People, as they contain the Great Spirit. The Cherokee myth Legend of the Cedar Tree, about balance between dualities and rebirth of spirits into trees, may explain The Log Lady's

husband inside the log and Josie Packard's spirit inhabiting the Great Northern's mantle and drawer handle.

The Fire

"As above, so below. The human being finds himself, or herself, in the middle. There is as much space outside the human, proportionately, as inside. Stars, moons, and planets remind us of protons, neutrons, and electrons. Is there a bigger being walking with all the stars within? Does our thinking affect what goes on outside us, and what goes on inside us? I think it does." – The Log Lady

Alchemical fire is the key to transformation on an elemental level. Spiritual fire is the essence of life, the divine spark, it is symbolized in blood. It has no physical form yet the power to both create and destroy in a masculine dynamic. Eastern deities of fire and death cycles include the Hindu deity Kala, god of time and death, the great black one. The sons of fire are solar deities, Minds formed from the Primordial Fire. Homa ritual uses fire for blessings and immortality, with sacrifices dependent on the prayer or mantra. The Achala, a Wisdom King in esoteric Buddhism, is a guardian demon that functions much like the Dweller on the Threshold in Western esoterica. In Buddhism the Mandala of the Two Realms, is the physical, active fiery manifestation of Buddha. In Theosophy, fire is the intelligence that moves the entire universe, it is electricity, magnetism, sensation. It is Chaos or the Dark Fire, the eternal flame.

This is the electrical interference in Twin Peaks that BOB triggers. Fire initiation is also called the Great Passing. It focuses on death and rebirth in the greater mysteries. It is then the adept meets with the spirits. The new identity aligns itself with the Great Work. Paracelsus said "Alchemy is only that which makes the impure pure by means of fire. Though not all fires do burn, it is however only Fire and continues to be Fire that interests us." Fire ascends in smoke and water descends in rain, symbolizing the duality of nature in harmonious cycles. "If we close our eyes to the truth, the fire inside us will consume us and destroy us through our own vices, close your eyes and burst into flames."

Alchemist St. Germain also mentions the Secret Fire in the initiatory text The Most Holy Trisophia (Three Fold Wisdom). He describes his initiation through the twelve degrees of Cosmic Consciousness. The fire of the psychic centers directs the restrictive and enlightening energy of Saturn, through the powers of the Mind, or Mercury. This liberating Secret Fire can activate psychic phenomena during intense experiences. In Kabbalah, 'The Triangle of Fire' represents self-realization in Tiphareth and union with god on the Tree of Life. Saturn is at the apex, while Mercury and Venus are at the base corners, with the Sun in the center. "The Sacred fire is like the Brahman, the Unknowable fire, like stars." It is the Spiritus Mundi (spirit of the world). In Blavatsky's Secret Doctrine this is called the three-fold-flame, the culmination of the two sexes as twin flames opening to immortality. Lumen Dei and lumen naturae is the light hidden in matter. Such forces of nature are released through alchemy and our dreams. Jung says, "Fire is aether in its purest form." "Fire or Knowledge burn up all action on the plane of illusion."

"The fire I speak of is not a kind fire." - Log Lady

Owls

The owl is the bird of Athena and Minerva, goddesses of wisdom, strategy and magic. As nocturnal birds with silent flight and heightened senses, they represent intuition, mysticism and keepers of secrets. In some cultures they are bad omens or harbingers of death. Choctaw lore thought of the horned owl (Ishkitini) as a threatening, foreboding bird with a terrifying shriek. Owls are guardians of the underworld and the dead and can see or communicate with spirits. It is because of this they have the power to travel between two worlds. Their association with magicians and witchcraft, especially in Native American lore and The Witchery Way, Owls are an ideal form of shape shifting.

The Pictograph of Owl Cave had a stone protrusion in the center, engraved with an owl symbol in flight. When Windham turns this sideways, the symbol becomes the rune Inguz, meaning isolation or separation. This symbol is found on the ring associated with the Lodges. Owl's abilities to regurgitate impurities from its digestive system is symbolic of the alchemical process itself. Their ability to see in darkness associates them with the shadows, dreams and subconscious.

As an internal struggle, the mirror cracking was symbolic of his fractured psyche. But in the eternal cycles of death and rebirth, he will have another chance to begin again.

"Man, know thyself. Thou art the Flame, and thy bodies are the living altar." Manly P Hall