

## Endland Umpire

A placement of David Lynch's **Inland Empire**

*Ture Bural*



. After Lynch's declaration to work only in video with this movie, the title would seem to make conterminous the topography of that large territory in Southern California, home to the film trade, of that techo version of the Kantian sublime, and the mapping of that ontotopography onto the much more appropriate uncanny interior recesses of video and technical media.

Inland Empire is a conjuration by a congery of witches, broken out of Shakespeare and stiched into a party scene, doin' the Locomotion, line dance style, sorceresses wearing their Daisy Dukes; more like something delivered from out of time, or maybe, judging from the last song of the movie, not a 'movie' at all but more an event, a sign from the

End of Time, even, as in the Nina Simone song at the end, from Judgement Day: 'Sinner man, where you gonna run to/all on that Judgement Day?'

Wholly a thing of exits and entrances, an event of thresholds, of parallel realities which are constantly folding in (collapsing?) on themselves, of ghostly genealogies, of subjectivities which, ala Mobius Strip or Necker Cube, wind into and out of realities: Laura Dern's refrain throughout: "Where am I?" and just as well: who am I? and: when is this? And: Is this about to happen or has it already happened?

It felt like the first really significant movie/event of a new Quantum Age of uncertainty, or superposition, of the Multiple Worlds Hypothesis, of the Observer Effect. In a way, the return of Signs taken For Wonder, of miraculation without the transcendent, of a coming world, always coming but more rapidly with every tick, with every incomprehensible mark hacked into the world by our systems of representation, our machines which stand at the thresholds beckoning to us...but of course it is only the Miracle of Judge Paul Screiber's Improvised Men, Hollow Men even, coming from the slackitude of the apparatus, inside the machine where the video particles live, (the movie was made all in video remember and then projected--but it will then subside from that Light and go back into the recesses of the DVD and the monitor and the uncanny electronic screen, far from the sublime projections of the time which has past [but which never lets go: another of the parallel realities])....no gods here but still and awe-ll, the whole apparatus of the gods left over and bequeathed to us, but all flattened out into endless births, deaths, and uncanny (but immanent) intimations of Signs from the Other Side(s) even as we tell ourselves there are no other sides, there is only the monstrous madness of now forever folding into itself, out of itself, also like some bizarre sea creature intent only on its own transformation, floating in a medium it can little understand, and still less control. The gesture of a mechanical wave of the hand hypnotizing us, all of us, weaving each of us into and out of each other as well as into and out of our futures and our pasts.

Yes, a frightening 'event' for me, maybe borne out of a stiff neck from physically working all day, overdose of painkiller maybe but: an ominous threshold this Lynch thing is, even

(or especially?) with its pop cultural references, it's party scenes which seem more like waiting for Something (for nothing really, just for the screen to eviscerate itself, to climb out of itself and back into itself, formulating a new fold, Mystery as Topology...but frightening nonetheless, frightening because the ground gives way and yet ... we still move by the good graces of the nurturing apparatus, which is coming still, both from the future and the past, yes, a profane mystery but none the less no less ominous--maybe more because of the sureness of its coming hydraulic global footsteps.

It portrays --and embodies, that's what makes it an event -- what philosopher Giorgio Agamben writes about in the previous centuries search for the angel, the half-god, the marionette, and the animal (there are three references to animality in *Inland Empire*) where the modernist poet "finds that what is at issue is not a namable substance but, rather, a figure of annihilated human existence, its 'negative outline' and, at the same time, its self-transcendence not toward a beyond but in 'the intimacy of living here and now,' in a profane mystery whose sole object is existence itself."

No inside nor outside anymore, only those corridors which link realities and the thresholds which open but which we find it increasingly hard/easy to cross.

2006

Point Silo, Mississippi