ABSTRACT

TRAVIS RICHARD MERCHANT. Bodies and Visuals Unbound to Time: Embracing Sensations of Spectacle and Narrative in *Mandy* and *Climax*. (Under the direction of Professor Andrew Johnston.)

*Mandy* (2018) and *Climax* (2018) follow the experiences of its main characters as they undergo the hallucinations and altered perceptions associated with LSD. The films embody the visuals and loss of time that implicates the viewer to visualize and feel a sense of movement and intoxication left behind from the screen. In this way, the bodily response of the viewer experiencing the images becomes one mirroring those of the characters on screen. *Mandy* utilizes abstract animation that echoes avant-garde visual music films, and *Climax* exploits the body as a site for expression and movement. As the viewer sees these mangled visuals and bodies, the narrative functions as a gateway within the diegesis and twists with the visuals and becomes an intoxicating, mystifying agent upon the viewer. Considering phenomenology and narrative theory, this exploration explores how the abstracted visuals and bodies affect the viewer’s perception and senses. By considering studies in perception and spectacle within the films to consider how these spectacular images affect the narrative, the study finds that the two films utilize an abstraction of space and figures to enact a stretching of time through the perception of the characters on screen. The narratives of the two films begin to reflect those experiences of the characters and the viewers to then create a sense of boundless time within the altered space created by LSD. *Mandy* and *Climax* consider how the incredibly strenuous yet enlightening experience of hallucinogens that the characters endure procure feelings in viewers through the use of bodies and abstract animations, and the narratives embody the senses procured by these experiences by remaining simple and asynchronous with time.