Analyse the film in terms of its most salient uses of film form (e.g. Mise-en-scène, cinematography, editing, sound, narrative time and space, or genre) and how these contribute in a significant way to what you discern to be the meaning of the film. Refer to specific shots or sequences from the film"

In the opening moments of Michael Tyburski's 'Palimpsest' (2013), before a single word of dialogue is spoken, we as an audience are made to listen. An ambient hum from the New York City apartment, alongside the mechanical beeping of appliances and the distant percussion of traffic, fills the soundtrack, when most films would treat this as silence. This amplification of mundane diegetic sound, from its first frames, shows that sound is not just a backdrop but also a substance. Not only does it train and test the ears of the audience but shows the limits of the characters. As a result of this, rather than relying on dramatic narrative events, the film communicates meaning primarily through its highly attentive use of sound, as well as the restrained cinematography and minimalist mise-en-scène. The fictional profession of "house tuning" functions as a metaphor for emotional isolation and desire to impose order and to have control on contemporary city living.

Peter is a professional "house tuner," who diagnoses emotional and psychological disturbances through domestic sound, listening to frequencies produced by appliances and architecture, as well as colour schemes, recalibrating what he identifies as disharmony. For example, he identifies that within Ellen's house, a toaster is vibrating at the wrong pitch, "hums at an F sharp" (06:56). The combination of frequencies in her apartment, produced what he describes as a "depression." The films tone is melancholic, with slight ominous and mysterious premise, created entirely throughout formal choices, rather than overt explicit statements. Nowhere in the film does it state Peter is lonely, however it shows us through sound, camera angles and distance, spatial organisation and mise-en-scène, the passionate need and drive for perfect balance and harmony.

The sound is the most salient formal feature of Palimpsest, and the feature which most directly serves the films thematic concerns. Tyburski establishes this immediately, introducing Peter as he strikes a tuning fork immediately, whose high-pitched ring bleeds seamlessly into the mechanic but melancholic non diegetic score, collapsing the boundary between the composed music and domestic frequencies. Throughout the film, the line between what is felt and what is simply heard is blurry. The musical score possesses a mechanical quality, echoing the architectural tones Peter diagnoses within his clients' homes. When Peter is shown within his own home (08:00-09:20), the score has this heavenly harmonic sound. Tyburski uses non diegetic sound to externalise Peter's inner world, showing he has achieved this perfect acoustic which he seeks to find in his client's home. The Non diegetic music does not illustrate his mental state but rather revealing his obsession with sonic control, rather than human connection.

The film also deploys silence with equal precision. In the bedroom scene (05:49-06:07), when Peter asks Ellen to lie down, the sound is stripped away, except for the repeating rhymthic ticking of the bird toy. Silence becomes expressive, denying the audience of any emotional guidance, reinforcing the tone of disconnection that runs throughout the film. Similarly, at (10:50-11:05) a shift occurs when in Peter's home, where non diegetic music disappears entirely, leaving only the sound of watering plants. The film refuses to tell us how to feel, leaving the interpretation to the audience. Another example of this is at (11:46) when one of Peter's clients paces behind him, discussing the problems within his home. While Peter clicks the record button, the mans voice fades out, focusing on the idea of emotional suppression, and how Peter believes that house tuning will solve all problems, by making the human voice inaudible against the mechanics of his work.

Throughout the film we hear ambient and mundane layers of urban noises: electrical hums, ventilation systems, buzzing appliances, ringing telephone systems, and underlying drones of traffic. These are sounds that in conventional filmmaking would be suppressed, however these sounds are amplified and isolated, transforming ordinary background texture, into intrusive presences, dominating the audience's attention. We become spatially and acoustically aligned with Peter's perception, as we can hear what he hears. For example, after attending both the sink and blender, he goes to the toaster (04:16) and us as the audience can hear what he can, a sharp buzz, allowing us to understand Peter's profession through trained listening. This effect is deeply unsettling; the acoustics of everyday life appear completely overcrowded and overstimulating, despite the visual minimalism of the environments. The film externalises Peter's obsessive desire for harmony and perfection, suggesting that modern urban existence is saturated with sensory and emotional noise which is unable to be controlled. As Alex Gingsen calls his phone, his answer machine replies "If I have given you my number you have dialled it correctly, but at the wrong time" emphasising his logical and detached personality. Overall, these formal choices construct the films meaning. The score mirrors the domestic frequencies, the silence withholds the

emotional guidance throughout the sequence and the simplified diegetic world which overwhelms and allows the audience to connect with Peter's understanding on house tuning.

The mise-en-scène of Palimpsest plays a significant role in portraying the domestic spaces as not just a setting, but as an extension of character, as well as implying the emotional suppression and alienation. Throughout the film, Tyburski repeatedly frames Peter within these tidy and obsessively clean spaces. Every object within the scenes, especially shown in (08:25) of his desk, (08:57) in his empty but practical bedroom and (09:14) showing a view out his window, his apartment is dominated by muted colours, sparse decoration, and empty space. This reflects on his obsessive need for control, and the absence of clutter and disorganisation, transforms his home into this clinical environment, highlighting his occupation. This strongly contrasts with apartments Peter visit, where kitchen appliances and other objects carry emotional residue. These domestic spaces become a visual and acoustic manifestation of emotional distress.

The film repeatedly isolates Peter, as he walks around the city, despite the close up shots. In many of these shots there is repeated negative space, which reinforces his emotional distance to others. An example of this is (10:04- 10:06) as he walks through this urban square, making him seem insignificant within the urban space. Although Peter is physically set in a busy populated space, he is emotionally isolated. Despite occupying many domestic interiors, he rarely appears comfortable within them, especially between (11:18- 12:00) he appears extremely uncomfortable, shown through the constant blinking and jitter he appears to have.

The lighting further intensifies the idea that the domestic environments act as extensions of inner emotional states. Peter's apartment is illuminated with a cold artificial light, creating this clinical and emotionally numb place. In contrast, Ellen's apartment has warmer tones and softer shadows, suggesting the trace of emotional intimacy and memory despite her loneliness. However, there is a stark contrast between her house when she was with Mark (14:39), compared to when she is alone. The room is much brighter and warmer when she had this emotional connection. The difference in the lighting positions Peter's environment as quite emotionally stagnant, whilst Ellen's holds this emotional possibility.

The cinematography is central to the film's construction of emotional distance and isolation. Tyburski repeatedly uses different shot types, framing and movement to position Peter as a figure to observe, rather than to emotionally understand. Peter is being portrayed as a spectacle, for example (10:24-10:32) it is if we were at the subway station with him, however this remains detached and observational rather than personal, keeping this personal and emotional distance that reflects on his own interactions with others. From (10:32-10:42) there is a series of shots displaying New York City. Despite being one of the worlds busiest urban spaces, the city seems strangely depopulated. Rather than using a collection of long shots, conveying the business of urban life, there is a mixture of medium and close shots, reinforcing the idea that Peter lives in a state of profound emotional isolation. Throughout the film, Tyburski shows this repeated shot of the rocking toy bird, functioning as a thematic rhyme between Ellen and Peter. The bird appears in her first apartment as a relic of her ex-boyfriend (14:59), which appears to move only in empty space. Peter comes across the bird when examining Ellen's bedroom, later on he buys an identical one for himself. Once hit, the bird has this continued ticking noise, creating a rhythm. Peter and Ellen are mirrors of one another shown through the continuous appearance of the bird, both being isolated people which have substituted the mechanical for the emotional. Peter through his house tuning and Ellen through her attachment to objects left behind by someone who is gone.

This detached visual style extends throughout the film's use of shot scale and compositions. The continued use of close-up shots shows the lack within Peter's life. The wide shots are saved for large cityscapes, illustrating the extensiveness of New York City. When examining domestic objects, the shallow close ups highlight Peter's obsessive behaviour to objects over people. The camera is often physically closest to Peter when he is the most emotionally detached. In scenes of dialogue, Tyburski separates the characters spatially within the frame or isolates them in individual shots, rather than allowing them to comfortably occupy one space. This is mostly seen when Peter visits Ellen's house in the beginning, where there is a repetition of over the shoulder shots, reducing them down to just disembodied voice. This reflects on Peter's inability to connect with others emotionally.

The films restricted camera movement further reinforces the atmosphere of emotional control. Many of the shots remain entirely static or move only through slow or deliberate pans. This creates this mechanical and clinical feeling of observation, turning Peter into a further spectacle mirroring his disconnected personality. As Peter sits at the table and receives a drink from his client, the camera slowly zooms out (11:25), showing him slowly disconnect from any human interaction, focusing on the atmosphere itself. As the camera zooms out, we watch him slowly begin to be more uncomfortable, until the camera begins to zoom back very slowly in, we see him focus on his job to correctly balance the frequencies in the house. This again emphasises his disability to connect with others, as well his obsession with his occupation.

Tyburski's use of editing reflects Peter's emotional condition. Most scenes begin mid action and end before resolution, making moments of potential emotional exchange cut away. For example, Ellen's vulnerable voicemail (13:39), in which she says "I don't want you to think I am crazy or lonely for calling" and "I was wondering if there is anything I can be doing in the meantime", is an opportunity for Peter to emotionally connect with Ellen, or offer advice, however we never see Peter's response. The audience is placed in the same position as Peter, we have to assemble meaning from these fragments of film, never receiving the full picture. The film ends with no resolution, suggesting that its incompleteness prevents human connection.

Overall, Palimpsest uses the formal qualities to construct this unsettling portrayal of emotional isolation within modern urban life. Through amplified diegetic sound, restrained cinematography and minimalist mise-en-scène and fragmented editing, Tyburski presents this world in which human connection has been replaced by systems of control and observation. Peter's ability to detect acoustic imbalance within domestic spaces, contrasts with his inability to recognise emotional disturbance within himself. The film suggests that modern existence is overpowered by sensory and psychological noise, and that the perfect harmony can produce emotional emptiness and disconnection.