Regular Article

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"I'll see you again in twenty five years": Life Course Fandom, Nostalgia and Cult Television Revivals

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Abstract: Since they first aired in the 1990s, *Twin Peaks* and *The X-Files* have been enduring hallmarks of cult television. This reputation only increased with the news that the shows were to be revived and, perhaps unsurprisingly, media discourse surrounding the revivals harkened back to the shows' peaks. Yet this discourse also drew heavily on concepts of generational fandom and nostalgia. This article is interested in how and why fans of *The X-Files* and *Twin Peaks* use nostalgia to discuss their relationship with the shows and their own fandom. Drawing on qualitative research conducted with fans, this article identifies three forms of nostalgia specifically related to reboots, remakes or revivals: spatiotemporal nostalgia, textual nostalgia and communal nostalgia.

Keywords: fandom, identity, nostalgia, *The X-Files*, *Twin Peaks*

Introduction

The quote that features in the title of this article comes from what Laura Palmer says to Agent Cooper in the Red Room in the final episode of *Twin Peaks* season 2, which aired in 1991. While it is doubtful that at the time David Lynch foresaw returning to the series, reboots, remakes and revivals have been big business in the film and TV industry over the last decade. From *Star Wars* and *Star Trek* to *Arrested Development* and *24*, media properties have been rebooted, revived and otherwise revisited, causing controversy, excitement and apathy on the way. As a result of these callings to the past, nostalgia has become the buzzword in popular media discussing these "new" texts, and in academic work examining reboots, revivals and remakes (see Lavigne; Perkins and Verevis; Rosewarne; Loock; Jones, "Reopening *The X-Files*"). Yet the way in which the term is used differs to its original use in medicine. Proposed by Hofer in 1688, from the Greek *nostos*, or homecoming, and *algos,* or pain, the disease afflicted those displaced from their native land and could be cured by the application of leeches, medication (at the time, opium) or a return to the homeland. Over the centuries, however, both the term and its expression have shifted in definition. No longer curable, modern nostalgia is a "mourning for the impossibility of mythical return, for the loss of an enchanted world with clear borders and values … a secular expression of a spiritual longing, a nostalgia for an absolute, a home that is both physical and spiritual" (Boym 8). Havlena and Holak, in their work on the use of nostalgia in marketing and advertising, note the shifting definitions of nostalgia and argue that "nostalgia allows human beings to maintain their identity in the face of major transitions which serve as discontinuities in the life cycle … In addition, this tendency to engage in nostalgic feelings varies over the course of the individual's lifetime" (324). Given the increased geographic mobility of the late twentieth and early twenty-

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first centuries, they suggest that nostalgia no longer refers to simply a longing for home in the sense of one's domicile, but can also relate to one's culture which could include, I would argue, one's fandom.

This article approaches work on nostalgia TV by examining the role and impact of nostalgia for and on fans by focusing on the revivals of *The X-Files* and *Twin Peaks,* both shows whose original runs ended some time ago. *Twin Peaks* premiered in 1990 and ran for two seasons before it was cancelled in 1991. A full-length film, *Fire Walk With Me*, which served as a prequel to the series was released in 1992 and tie-in books have also been released, including *The Secret History of Twin Peaks*, which was published before *Twin Peaks* season 3 (henceforth *The Return*). It was announced on October 6, 2014, that a limited series would air on Showtime, written by David Lynch and Mark Frost, with Lynch directing (Littleton). Frost emphasized that the new episodes were not a remake or a reboot but a continuation of the series. Most of the original cast returned, and the series – which was shot continuously from a single long-shooting script – consisted of 18 "parts." *The X-Files* premiered in 1993 and ended with season 9 in 2002 but following the release of the 2008 film *The X-Files: I Want to Believe* fans mobilized on social media in the hopes of persuading Fox to greenlight a third movie. This was not successful but during the summer of 2014, Vulture published an interview with Chris Carter in which he confirmed that conversations had been held about a reboot (Adalian). This was eventually confirmed in March 2015, with David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson reprising their roles as Fox Mulder and Dana Scully (Munn). The first episode of season 10 reached 20.3 million viewers, accounting for both live and video-on-demand viewing (Kissell, "Ratings: Fox's 'The X-Files' Return Tops 20 Million"), and the season finale averaged 7.6 million viewers as it aired (Kissell, "Ratings: 'The X-Files' Rises in Finale"). This success was enough for Fox to announce in April 2017 that the show would be returning for season 11 (Patten). This article, unlike other scholarship on nostalgia TV, is not interested in a textual analysis of these revived franchises and what that can tell us about nostalgia – although this is brought up in several fans' responses. Rather it is interested in how fans used nostalgia to reconcile the new series with their memories of the originals, how fans reacted to the revivals in relation to their fandom and their life course, and what this adds to work on revivals, reboots and remakes.

Fandom can be a way in which individuals develop and maintain a sense of identity and fans may perform identity work through their attachments to particular characters, their affinity for the text or their involvement in the larger fandom community (see Grossberg; Harding and Pribam; Williams, *Post-object Fandom*). Geraghty suggests that memory and nostalgia are two driving forces for fandom, particularly in relation to collecting, but argues a lack of research on this is due to the "negative critical attention nostalgia as an emotion has attracted, particularly when related to fandom" (2). Indeed, fans and audiences are often *assumed* to respond to a text in certain ways: as Leggatt says in his introduction to *Was It Yesterday*, "Older audiences can *perhaps* forget their own present reality of choices made and not made, and younger ones can find reassurance in the limitless universality of dreaming for the future" (25. Emphasis mine). Audiences are thought to long for, pine for or reflect on idealized images of the past served up to them in contemporary film and television yet little work has, to date, undertaken empirical research with audiences to establish what nostalgia TV means to them. Focusing on how and why nostalgia functions in relation to fans' identity construction and life course thus addresses a gap in the research and challenges some of the preconceived ideas about audiences. Lizardi argues that "contemporary media nostalgia engenders a perpetual melancholic form of narcissistic nostalgia … defined by idealized versions of beloved lost media texts pumped up with psychic investment to a level of unreality" (2). Certainly cynics might view the rebooting, remaking or reviving of previously popular television shows and films as a lazy way for networks to churn out content they know (or strongly suspect) will be successful because of its existing audience – as Gitlin points out, recombinants and imitation are low-risk ways of getting by, enabling media producers "to capitalize on and mobilize demonstrable tastes" (67) and both *The X-Files* and *Twin Peaks* have been heavily commodified. Yet unlike Lizardi, who sees nostalgia on an individualizing level, for Svetlana Boym, as demonstrated in this article, "nostalgia is about the relationship between individual biography and the biography of groups or nations, between personal and collective memory" (xvi). Fandom, by its very nature, involves a collective, and the revival or remaking of beloved texts invariably leads fans to consider the nature of their own fannish lives, their fandom and its collective memory.

Methodology

This article utilizes an audience studies methodology to examine fans' responses to the original series of *Twin Peaks* and *The X-Files* and the revivals (*The Return* and *The X-Files* seasons 10 and 11). I circulated six questionnaires on Twitter and Facebook, as well as in several forums and LiveJournal communities between April 2015 and May 2018. The first, asking fans about their responses to *The X-Files* season 10, was posted in April 2015 and was closed in December 2015, with the majority of responses being submitted in the first 4 weeks of the questionnaire being open; the second, post-season 10, was posted in March 2016 and was closed after 3 weeks in April 2016. The third, asking about the announcement that *Twin Peaks* was returning, was posted in March 2017 and closed in May 2017, followed by a post-*The Return* questionnaire which was posted in October 2017 and closed 3 weeks later in November 2017. The final set of questionnaires began with the announcement of *The X-Files* season 11, posted in December 2017 and closed in January 2018. The final questionnaire about fans' reactions to the series season was posted in May 2018 and ran until July 2018, with the majority of responses being submitted in the first 3 weeks.

In total the questionnaires resulted in 3,682 valid responses once cleansed, and data were explored for recurring patterns, rather than approaching it with pre-set codes (Bogdan and Biklen). Of the total respondents, 3,645 self-identified as fans of the texts. Questions asked for viewers to reflect on included how they felt when they first heard the news of the revivals, whether they thought bringing the series back was a good idea, how they felt after watching the revivals, what their feelings were towards Chris Carter and David Lynch, and how the new seasons had affected their relationship to the shows and their fandoms, if at all.

Nostalgia, Revivals and Returning to a Text

There are dangers in reviving a beloved text. Fans, who often build affective relationships with films and television shows, can be exceptionally critical when the original is revived, remade or rebooted. As Urbanski notes "With this added weight of anticipation and familiarity, such projects are high stakes … in large part because of cherished experiences with the original narratives" (7). As recent remakes demonstrate, changing aspects of a cherished text can lead to uproar. The 2016 iteration of *Ghostbusters*, for example, featuring an all-female team of ghost hunters, saw a concerted campaign from (predominantly male) audiences to make the trailer the most disliked video in YouTube's history and limited its box-office returns (Perkins, "Ghost Girls"). Similarly, 2015's *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* was seen as an unoriginal reboot of the 1977 *A New Hope* and its "greater inclusion of women and people of colour … the result of so-called political correctness run amok" (Johnson 127). Both of these reboots, building on films produced and released in eras which were less considerate of issues of diversity, had to contend with the audience's attachment to the original text and the "harms" done to them by the updating of depictions of gender, race and sexuality. As Herbert points out in discussing the reworking of the *Star Wars* franchise, it becomes one attuned to new values of diversity, taking into account the cultural politics of change (15–17), although this is not to minimize the real harms that fan responses to these texts incurred. Toxic fandom (Proctor and Kies; Jones ""#AskELJames") should not be considered an appropriate response to changes to a beloved text, but updating texts for a new time and culture comes with its own issues. These were also concerns for fans of *The X-Files* and *Twin Peaks*, not least because both texts had been lauded as "quality TV" (the latter) and for disrupting gender stereotypes (the former). As Garner highlights in his examination of *Twin Peaks*' twenty-fifth anniversary, comments made by actor Ray Wise "juxtapose *Twin Peaks* against prevailing industrial strategies of capitalising upon nostalgia for popular 80s and 90s television programmes by instead foregrounding discourses of seriality and authorship to position the show as antithetical to these trends" ("It Is Happening Again" 47), while fans of *The X-Files* "suggested concerns inextricably connected to Chris Carter's involvement in the series and decisions he had made previously about the characters and plots" (Jones "Are you ready for this?" 350). This raises other issues in the anticipation of the new series: how will

the texts – both very much of their time at their original airings – respond to changes in politics and technology; will the actors, some having aged substantially, be able to "authentically" return to their characters; and how do fans reconcile the new iterations with the old.

In the first questionnaire I circulated I asked how fans felt when they first heard the news of the revivals and if they thought reviving the shows was a good idea. A range of responses referring to discourses of nostalgia emerged. For example, respondent XF2015800 reflected on their own relationship with the show writing "I realize that a great deal of my fondness for the revival is nostalgia for the early seasons of the show, and the friends I shared the experience of the show with" while respondent TP2017A20 said "*Twin Peaks* holds a special place in my history and my heart. With something that influenced me so much, there is a nostalgia that will always make me giddy at the idea of returning to that world." Here nostalgia is perhaps more closely aligned with the notion of homecoming; both shows have a place in these fans' hearts and histories and are often linked to emotions or experiences felt when they were younger. Respondents highlighted both positive and negative examples, through which the series acted as "locating points" allowing them to recall shared moments of joy for the positive, or to find refuge against the negative. In other cases, fans focused on the shows themselves. When asked what they hoped to see in *The Return*, respondent TP2017A43 wrote "nostalgia for the first two series [of *Twin Peaks*]. Lots of references and nods and easter eggs. A similarity of tone and atmosphere. The great soundtrack. Most of the same actors as possible" which was echoed by several respondents discussing *The X-Files*' return. Yet TP2017A20 also highlighted the "dangers" of nostalgia, writing "But nostalgia is dangerous and it's easy to disappoint when the bar is set so high." Both *Twin Peaks* and *The X-Files* during their original run were shows that pushed the limits of television and the revivals subsequently had a lot to live up to (even taking into consideration the 'criticisms of The X-Files' seasons 8 and 9). This, coupled with their status as cult texts with a large and dedicated fanbase, meant that there were myriad ways that the revivals could fail. As XF2015800 said, "I'm worried it won't hold up to the fond memories I have."

Even before the revivals aired, then, there were worries that the nostalgia fans felt for the show would either be affected by, or would affect their reaction to, the revival series, or that the revival episodes would play too much on fans' nostalgia for the series' original run to the detriment of the new episodes. At the same time, however, fans and critics acknowledged that certain elements of nostalgia were required for the revivals to succeed. Grainge in analysing discourses around the *Top Gun* reboot highlights similar concerns: "Listing six things that 'need to happen' in a *Top Gun* reboot, the video blog site Hollywood News (2017) made a plea that the film 'must not be a parody of itself, it must not be intentionally comedic'" (214). These responses demonstrate just how complex nostalgia can be. Lyons notes that "nostalgia … is both a personal and shared phenomenon" and in analysing fans' responses to the revival and *The Return*, three different forms of nostalgia began to emerge which highlight those complexities: textual – nostalgia for the shows themselves; spatiotemporal – that is nostalgia for the ways in which the shows were consumed; and communal – nostalgia for the fandom experience as a whole. The following sections explore these in more detail.

Textual Nostalgia

Teasers for the return of *The X-Files* and *Twin Peaks* relied on images that reflected the shows' iconic status. The announcement of *The X-Files'* return included an image of Mulder and Scully in an office leaning over a computer screen (Figure 1) while David Lynch and Mark Frost tweeted an announcement video that featured a key scene from the original's ending and the "Welcome to *Twin Peaks*" sign (Figure 2).

Moulton suggests that "announcement trailers invite audiences to look forward (anticipate, speculate) while also calling on them, through the deployment of *iconic images*, to look back (nostalgia)" (436. Emphasis in the original). This use of images is not limited to trailers, being used in static images and in fan-created content, however, there is a danger in using these, tied explicitly to nostalgia. Hassler-Forest suggests that fan culture around *Twin Peaks* has always been nostalgic given the show's cancellation, and

Figure 1: Image used for the announcement of *The X-Files*' return.

Figure 2: Still from *Twin Peaks* | Coming to Showtime video tweeted by Lynch and Frost.

in his analysis of *The Return* he argues that despite the nostalgia-steeped teasers, which seemed to promise a literal return to *Twin Peaks*, many fans did not know what to expect from the series. This was underscored by some of the responses to my questionnaire. Respondent TP2017A19, for example, wrote

> I don't think a revival is a good idea if it's a nostalgia roadshow, which is what this seems to be … The appeal of Twin Peaks was that it was very, very different to anything else on TV … When the appeal of a thing is that it's new, bringing it back from the dead to do the same old shit goes against that.

While the announcement about *The Return* made specific calls to the original series, and trailers and promotional images used familiar locations, to discursively locate the new series in relation to the original, some fans felt that this approach failed to articulate what was new or original about *The Return*. Concerns abounded about whether the new series would be a "boring rehash" or worse – a cynical attempt for Showtime executives "trying to [make a] quick buck off nostalgia with 'hey you remember this quote from the original show' fanservice writing" (respondent TP2017A92).

The Return did feature scenes recalling the original series, but in a distorted fashion rather than a faithful replication. Rife and Wheeler (431) note that formerly adored characters or events were depicted in "intensified or darkly surreal forms," such as the scene in the Bang Bang Bar which references the iconic moment in the original series where Audrey performs a sensual dance at the Double R Diner. The scene becomes increasingly surreal until it cuts to a close-up of a confused Audrey looking into a mirror asking herself "what?! What". Hills highlights these moments of distortion, connecting them to Lynch's status as auteur and "trickster figure." He suggests that fans might "typically expect spatiotemporal continuity and brand consistency, in line with contemporary media/franchise discourses of world-building … But logical continuity is not what makes *Twin Peaks* work" ("Cult TV Revival" 313). Perhaps, in true Lynch fashion, *The Return* was "more notable for its steadfast refusal to give fans what they want" (Hassler-Forest 192) yet not all fans were surprised by that. Respondent TP2017B3, for example, said "I hoped that we were going to see all the old cast members, and I hoped for a good nostalgia kick. But I fully expected David Lynch to make the audience work for that!" Fans' knowledge of Lynch as auteur, then, meant that they were prepared for *The Return* to be edgy, innovative and challenging. In that respect, *The Return* offered fans an element of fan service, but not in a cynical, opportunistic way:

> I had high expectations knowing that both Frost and Lynch were masterminding every episode. It exceeded my wildest hopes. This is the first time I have ever seen a revival that was built for the most hard core original fans with almost zero sacrifice to appeal to an uninitiated audience. (TP2017B470)

In other words, *The Return* was nostalgic not because it displayed textual nostalgia in the way *The X-Files* did – as I will discuss shortly – but because it displayed the same characteristics that the original – and Lynch – was known for.

The X-Files revival was also set in the present day, 8 years after the 2008 feature film *I Want To Believe*. Both seasons contained mythology episodes, which continued some of the themes covered in the series' original run, and Monster of the Week episodes, in which Mulder and Scully investigate paranormal phenomenon which exist outside of the larger mythology. Similar concerns to *Twin Peaks* fans' were expressed about the revivals, including the idea that FOX was reviving the show "solely to increase the market value of the rights to re-air earlier episodes" (Respondent XF201518). Particularly interesting, however, were opinions towards Chris Carter – the show's creator and executive producer. Unlike Lynch, who fans felt had a unique vision and was trusted to bring back *Twin Peaks* appropriately, Carter was criticized for his handling of the earlier seasons. Some fans thus stated that season 10 was likely to be "terrible" television, drawing on nostalgia and "audience goodwill" but they would watch it anyway.

Brinker points out that thematically, the six episodes making up season 10 "cover precisely the kinds of topics that were a staple of the first nine seasons" (338) and several of the episodes also featured flashbacks, including footage from the season 2 episode "One Breath," where Scully is in a coma, and season 8's "Existence" which shows Scully, Mulder and their new-born son William together. For some fans, "Some of the callbacks were a little heavy-handed, but it's not like there was any realistic way of escaping that nostalgia" (respondent XF2016211), while for others, such as respondent XF2016113 "this element of nostalgia and the acknowledgement of the impact of the series were essential." The tension between the textual nostalgia of the original series and the need to keep up with modern forms of storytelling and access to media was highlighted by *The X-Files* fans far more than by *Twin Peaks* fans. Respondent XF2016436 placed the show in the context of today's media industry, with the proliferation of streaming platforms and quality TV, writing:

> I expected, hoped, and was concerned it would be the classic *X Files*. I worried if it would fit in today's television (it did), I was concerned with content (some episodes had such nostalgia that just really brought you back, other episodes felt like it never left the 90s – in a bad way).

These responses suggest that nostalgia can be both a good and a bad thing when it comes to reviving old shows. Too much, or the wrong kind, can turn what should be an enjoyable experience into something unpleasant or disappointing. As respondent XF20169 said "Carter and the rest of the team seemed to be ticking off boxes ("we need to get as many iterations of *X-Files* episodes in these 6 as we can!")." Brinker has noted that the revival replicated the generic conventions of the original, as I said earlier, but he argues that "the 2016 version of *The X-Files* revives the show's storytelling formula as part of a retrospective engagement with its own history" (329). Fans similarly undertook a retrospective engagement with their history of watching, describing the ways and times in which they would watch the show – in other words their spatiotemporal nostalgia.

Spatiotemporal Nostalgia

When *The X-Files* and *Twin Peaks* first aired the dates and times that episodes were shown depended on network programming. Before digital video recorders (DVR) and streaming, this meant that viewers had to make time in their schedules to watch the shows, creating an element of ritual that shaped the week: as respondent TXF2016497 said, watching *The X Files* with their family on the day it aired had been a ritual for them since the third season. Rife and Wheeler suggest that "television creates a homely sensation through the comforts that arrive with habitual viewing" (426–7). The viewing of television series creates rituals in everyday life, and choosing a particular series, for example, as a text to watch with family or friends is a "shared social ritual" (Hill 31). I asked viewers how they watched the revivals and why, and many of the responses reflected this. Respondent XF2016128 watched with "Friends [and] family, just to share in the nostalgia and have more fun" while respondent XF2016184, who watched with her best friend, her best friend's father and roommate, and her partner said that "they were my closest *X-Files* fans and it was sort of a family experience, even though we weren't family." Ritual viewing often begins in childhood: the Sunday-night-viewing practices of Dutch audiences (see Hill) or the annual viewing of *The Wizard of Oz* (see Rosenberg). Particularly interesting, therefore, were the fans who chose to recreate their old viewing practices when watching. Respondent XF2016267 watched as it aired because "I wanted the nostalgia of watching it like I did 20 years ago. The pacing of the original show relied heavily on commercial breaks and weeks in between episodes. I tried my best to stick to that format" while respondent TP2017B472 watched *The Return* as it aired not only because it was their first chance to watch the program as it aired but also because "Eight PM on Sundays was a sacred hour, and I rearranged my schedule all summer to set aside time for it."

Rothenbuhler asks "When one accepts the program schedule and arranges one's life (in whatever small ways) to view a certain thing at a certain time, is there something slightly ritualistic about that, that is absent with time-shifted videotaping or on-demand pay-per-view?" (16). Responses to my questionnaire suggest that there is, though these rituals were also updated to account for streaming (both legal and otherwise). Respondent TP2017B440 streamed *The Return* as soon as each episode became available "Partly out of nostalgia, because that's how [they] watched the original series, and partly because [they] couldn't wait and wanted to see it as soon as it was available." As they were based in Europe this meant a significant time difference, which was also the case for respondent TP2017B366 who wrote "I had a Monday ritual (I am Norwegian) that every Monday I would wake up early to watch the newest episode of *Twin Peaks*, it really made my week every time." This form of ritualized viewing also created a qualitatively different engagement with the show. As Rosenberg points out, "Ritualized viewing meant that [viewers'] attention was more focused, expectations of an emotional return was higher … and all other activities tended to decrease" (16). For the European fan who streamed *The Return* as episodes became available, this worked to reinforce the surreal aspects of the series: "there was something about watching it at a slightly mentally confused

state at 3AM that felt fitting with the atmosphere of the show and enhanced the feel of disorientation" (TP2017B440). For others, such as TP2017B752, who streamed each episode as it became available, "It became a fun Sunday ritual to just be home and watch together. Since the show is so open-ended, we had the week before to talk about it and read articles and then start again on Sunday."

Ritualistic viewing was thus important to fans regardless of whether the episodes were watched in real time or time shifted. It also helped reinforce viewers' sense of fandom. Respondent XF2018533 wrote:

> I've been a fan since first watching the pilot on TV in 1993. I adore the show and have fond memories of sitting down to watch an episode on Friday, then Sunday evenings (in the US). I wanted to experience that bit of nostalgia associated with watching the show live on my TV. DVR and streaming make it so convenient to watch shows when we want or have time. I'm a busy person, but *The X-Files* holds a special place in my heart, and so I made time in my schedule to watch the show live.

Making space for the revival episodes in their schedule in order to watch the show live not only enabled them to reconnect with their original viewing practices, but also to reaffirm the special place they have for the show. The notion of *The X-Files* as "appointment television" was also referred to by viewers. The sense of anticipation fans felt when having to wait for each new episode replicated the experience of watching the original series in real time. Fans thus saw watching new episodes as an experience or an event to be engaged with rather than passively watching. This, of course, is different to the experience fans would have had watching when the original series aired. Although *Twin Peaks* and *The X-Files* fans are credited as being early adopters of the internet (see Jenkins; McLean), far fewer people would have had access to online communities than they do today. Being able to watch with others, live-tweet or blog about the experience and engage with the fandom via other means were among the ways in which fans took pleasure from *The Return* and the revival seasons, and reflections on their individual and shared fandom were frequent in responses.

Communal Nostalgia

Watching the show with family, friends and fellow fans speaks to the communal nature of television viewing, but beyond the experience of watching *The Return* or the revival seasons with others the series also allowed fans to reflect on, and in some cases rediscover, their fandom. Lee Harrington and Bielby, in their work on life course and fandom, argue that paying "explicit attention to age, ageing, and human development can offer new insights into fans' identities, practices, and interpretive capacities" ("A Life Course Perspective" 124). I argue that the same applies when we pay explicit attention to how fans talk about nostalgia, particularly when a beloved text is revived or remade. Davies has presented a view of nostalgia as a mechanism that permits people to maintain their identity in the face of major transitions in their life cycle. Thus, the tendency to engage in nostalgic feelings varies over the course of the individual's lifetime. Lee Harrington and Bielby note that "Media texts and technologies help unite cohorts, define generations and cross-generational differences, and give structure and meaning to our lives as they unfold" ("A Life Course Perspective" 431) so the reintroduction of an object which had some importance at a specific point in a fan's life can reignite those feelings and encourage the fan to reflect upon the changes that they have gone through. Respondent XF20163 perhaps epitomizes this. They wrote:

> I was a huge *X-Files* fan when I was in high school, but after the original series ended, I moved on with my life – and while I never forgot about *The X-Files*, and have always had the complete series on DVD, I didn't think much about the series anymore, and had moved onto my other, more current fandoms. The revival just rekindled my love of the series & brought my teenage fangirl self back to the forefront. It reminded me how much I loved the show and why I loved the show, and made me feel so nostalgic for what was, really, my "first fandom."

"Becoming a fan" stories have become increasingly important to fan studies, enabling scholars "to consider how the process of first experiencing fandom, and initially embracing a fan identity, can be lived as self-

narrative, and how it might be discursively framed" (Hills "Returning to" 10). In the context of revivals, however, this idea of returning to fandom or "re-becoming a fan" seems to exist hand in hand with an element of nostalgia for the fandom or fan object that drew them in the first place. While becoming a fan may redirect the life course, so too may re-becoming a fan, as fans carve out space for something which they thought they had put to one side. For respondent XF2016105, season 10 brought them "back" into their *X-Files* fandom by inspiring them to rewatch the series both nostalgically and with a more critical eye, as well as introducing them to the fandom proper. They highlighted how they didn't have internet access when watching the original series and their fandom consisted of their two best friends and the mother. Having never experienced *The X-Files* online fandom they are now "enjoying [it] as a 40 year old instead of an 18–19 year old" by engaging with other fans on Tumblr, reading fanfiction and discussing episodes with other fans. Other fans also returned to the fandom as active participants, reviving their former engagement with not only the show but also other fans. Some fans began writing fanfiction again, others became moderators of online communities they had previously frequented, while others still embraced their "inner teenage fangirl" and discussed episodes with friends they had known for years. Revivals of texts thus enable fans to not only reflect on their life course but also offer opportunities for scholars to understand how these meanings provide structure to life narratives (Lee Harrington and Bielby "Aging, Fans, and Fandom") – how fans view their life experiences and the importance of fandom in structuring, or explaining, those.

Of course, fan objects age just as fans do and as I noted earlier, fans were worried about how that might affect their own feelings towards the text. Lee Harrington and Bielby point out that assessing "the interactions between self-unfolding-across-time and fan-object-unfolding-across-time" is a complicated task ("A Life Course Perspective" 443), but in relation to revivals, I would argue that we can see this duality of self-aging and text-aging by looking more carefully at viewers' responses. Describing how they felt about *The Return*, respondent TP2017B637 wrote:

> It made me think a lot about my own life, depression, philosophies, intents, and experiences in a deep way. I had two friends who had watched the original run, one of them with me. They're both dead now. It was hard knowing they'll never see the new episodes. I wanted to talk about it with them. It made me miss them and think about death and ghosts and if I think an afterworld exists and how important it is to be engaged in my life experiences and not walk through life waiting for something.

The revival of older texts inevitably means fans reflect on the person they were when they first began watching, the people they watched with and what it meant to them. Several fans spoke about friends or family members who had passed away before the revivals and what the texts meant in that context. These life transitions were imbued with more – or deeper – meaning given the revival of a shared fan text. As fans grow older their relationship with the fan object changes. Life events get in the way, other interests come to the fore, feelings change. But the revival of a show like *The X-Files* or *Twin Peaks*, which played a part in the formation of the fannish identity, offers fans the opportunity to revisit the people they were then and establish or cement the people they are now. Haslop and Batty describe meeting at a conference in Australia and realizing a shared passion for *Prisoner: Cell Block H* as two young, gay men coming out in heteronormative working-class communities in the 1980s and 1990s. Reflecting on their fandom they realized that "in exploring our nostalgia for the series through the reboot, we have been able to reconcile aspects of our teenage selves and better understand some of the emotions and experiences of our emerging queerness" (357). Importantly, however, revivals like *The X-Files* and *Twin Peaks* also offer fans the opportunity to create a *collective* nostalgic memory for the fandom. Lizardi argues that we are being "exploited by contemporary media to develop individualized pasts" (2), yet responses from fans of *The X-Files* and *Twin Peaks* challenge this assertion: even those fans who watched the original shows on their own referred to the fandom as a collective when responding, suggesting that contemporary media can encourage us to reflect on a communal past or take part in a communal present. Many of the fans who responded to my questionnaire actually reconnected with the fan community in a non-individualized way. Far from being predominantly melancholic then, nostalgia TV can be far more optimistic than what Lizardi suggests. Fans were aware of the fandoms surrounding the shows even if they had not engaged with them before the new episodes airing and this inclusion of fandom within discussions of nostalgia "defines the relationships

between the individual and society and enables the community to preserve its self-image and transfer it over time" (Zandberg et al. 111). Both *Twin Peaks* and *The X-Files* fans discussed the fandoms as intellectual, with theories abounding on social media following each episode airing, thus preserving the image of the shows as quality TV and the fans as intelligent and articulate.

Conclusion

Nostalgia is a buzzword commonly used to discuss remakes, reboots and revivals of films and television series, but it also affords fans and viewers ways to articulate their own identities, experiences and life course. Through an analysis of fans' responses to *Twin Peaks: The Return* and *The X-Files* seasons 10 and 11, this article has foregrounded fan voices as a means to examine what nostalgia means in the context of television revivals. I identified three types of nostalgia: textual nostalgia, spatiotemporal nostalgia and communal nostalgia, and argue that each of these offers insights into fans' experiences. Rather than nostalgia simply being used as a cynical marketing tool, attracting original viewers with the promise of a return to the beloved text, fans ascribe their own meanings to the word by drawing on their experiences. Furthermore, fans can be critical of the call to nostalgia, aware that there are dangers inherent in reviving a beloved text for a new age.

Reboots, remakes and revived texts can offer us the chance to revisit our younger selves and a different political or cultural time. These texts may be met derided and met with scorn, they may be accepted and celebrated, or they might be used as a point through which to look back on where we were and where we are now. As Lee Harrington and Bielby argue,

> Media fans' life narratives might thus be said to comprise complex interactions between their "real" life (biography), their autobiography (storying of their life), and the media texts which help construct, give meaning to, and guide the relationship between the two – and that age along with them. ("Aging, Fans, and Fandom" 413)

Examining nostalgia in relation to television revivals through empirical research with audiences allows scholars of fan studies to understand the life course both while the fans age and while the text ages. As Williams notes, there are "inherent tensions that fans must negotiate in their responses" to revived texts, and to understand how these "moments of resurrection are discussed" ("Fan Endings" 4) we must engage with those discussing them. Textual analysis of revived texts does not allow us to understand the way that revived series form part of an individual or shared mattering map (Garner "Affective Textualities"). Whether viewers move completely away from a text in the intervening years, or treat it like a warm blanket at the end of a hard day, the feelings that its revival ignites can be complex and the role that nostalgia plays in that cannot be understated.

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