

# "IT IS HAPPENING AGAIN": PARATEXTUALITY, 'QUALITY' AND NOSTALGIA IN TWIN PEAKS'S DISPERSED ANNIVERSARY

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## KEYWORDS

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## ABSTRACT

This article contributes to academic discussions regarding tele-anniversaries, 'quality' television, and nostalgia by examining an atypical example concerning how and why Twin Peaks (1990–91) underwent its 25th anniversary in 2014. Contrasting to previous studies, which have

discussed centrally-controlled and brand-managed occasions (Holdsworth, 2011; Gray and Bell, 2013; Hills, 2013, 2015a), this article considers Twin Peaks's silver jubilee as a dispersed anniversary which originated from a range of nebulously-connected statements originating in journalistic discourse before becoming appropriated by official marketing strategies. By examining the serialised development of paratextual statements concerning the dispersed anniversary, I demonstrate that this progressed through three phases (1. paratextual speculation; 2. confirmation and verification; and, 3. calendrical establishment) and centred around establishing 'meta-paratexts' (Hills, 2015a) and discursive wills to 'commemorate' and 'cohere' around which meanings concerning nostalgia, art and commerce became negotiated.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

*Twin Peaks* (1990-1) has a long-standing reputation as a 'quality' (Thompson 1996; Nelson, 2007) and 'cult' television programme (Bianculli, 2010) both in and outside of the academy. During, 2014, the series' enduring reputation resurfaced as it underwent a 25th anniversary of sorts. This celebration culminated with a "commemorative event" (Gray and Bell, 2013: 100) held at Los Angeles's Vista Theatre on July 16th 2014 which was attended by many members of *Twin Peaks*'s cast and crew to celebrate the release of *Twin Peaks: The Entire Mystery* later in the month. *The Entire Mystery* was a Blu-ray box-set which collated for the first time every episode of the television series alongside prequel movie *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* (1992; *FWWM* hereafter) and 90 minutes of previously-unreleased deleted scenes from *FWWM* named 'The Missing Pieces'. Also included amongst the set's special features was a new sequence entitled 'Between Two Worlds' which was written and directed by the show's *auteur* David Lynch and featured members of the Palmer family moving from diegetic- and present-focused discussions occurring in-character to extra-diegetic reflections on making the show. This summary may, from one perspective, seem normative: anniversaries of media content have now, as Matt Hills (2015a: 2) recognises, "become a standardised part of media culture" and, when pertaining to niche-cult properties like *Twin Peaks*, are typically marked by re-releases featuring additional bonus content to drive sales (Hills, 2013: 227-8). Yet, subscribing to this understanding positions tele-anniversaries as commonplace and formulaic and so risks overlooking atypical examples and analysing how the meanings constructed in relation to specific cases originate, develop and become negotiated across cultural sites pertaining to distinct televisual forms. This article argues these points, and so furthers debates within TV Studies regarding tele-anniversaries, 'quality' television and nostalgia, by "retell[ing] the story" (Atkinson and Kennedy, 2015: para. 4) of *Twin Peaks*'s 2014 commemoration. By examining paratextual framings in journalistic commentary and official marketing, I conceptualise its development as what I call a '*dispersed anniversary*' which progressed through three phrases (theorised below as 'paratextual speculation', 'confirmation and verification' and 'calendrical establishment').

The value in examining *Twin Peaks*'s dispersed anniversary is two-fold: firstly, this case study complicates previous analyses of tele-anniversaries (Holdsworth, 2011: 113-7; Gray and Bell, 2013: 100-29) as it originated outside of centralised PR

strategies, only becoming located within official marketing discourses during its final stage. In contrast, previous studies of tele-anniversaries have examined centrally-managed examples and so accounted for these in relation to dominant industrial practices concerning branding (Johnson, 2012). Consequently, tele-anniversaries have primarily been used to further explore television's commercial and promotional cultures (see Hills, 2013, 2015a, 2015b). This article doesn't dispute the importance of marketing and hype to contemporary anniversaries. However, it does argue that positioning centrally-controlled brand celebrations as the sole ideal-type that characterises the contemporary TV environment (Hills, 2013: 217) has consequences. These include backgrounding commemorations that originate outside of industry hype and overlooking the range of agencies, investments and discourses that become negotiated between cultural sites of unofficial commentary and public relations.

Secondly, as paratexts work to "set the frames through which audience members [...] make sense of" (Gray, 2010: 10) texts at specific historical moments, examining the discourses circulating around *Twin Peaks*'s 25th allows for considering how anniversaries are constructed in relation to a specific televisual form like the (now-aged) 'quality' drama. *Twin Peaks*'s status as 'quality' television derives from a variety of factors including its challenge to the aesthetic and thematic norms of early 1990s network drama and Lynch's reputation as a respected Hollywood *auteur* (Halskov, 2015). Thus, whilst definitions of 'quality' television have altered within both industrial and audience contexts in the quarter-century since *Twin Peaks*'s initial transmission (Nelson, 2007), the discourses surrounding the show have adapted to these changes and its radical and innovative status has endured (Garner, 2016). In contrast, tele-anniversaries have been defined as representing "a claim for cultural value" (Ibid.: 104) for the commemorated object by "articulat[ing] affective intensities with an objective interval of time". Yet, as Su Holmes (2011: 214-7) discussion of tenth anniversary celebrations for the UK's *Big Brother* (2000- ) indicates, the security and terms of these claims are genre-specific and open to negotiation between interpretive communities.

Regarding *Twin Peaks* in 2014, two discursive 'wills' clustered around the series. These were the 'will to commemorate', through which discourses of memory, nostalgia and, in some contexts, commerce became activated, and the 'will to cohere', which mobilised Romantic discourses of 'art' and authorship to support anniversary-based readings and make claims for the show's enduring value. Central to these discourses

sive wills were two framing meta-paratexts – defined as “key, privileged paratext[s] which ...underpin... a vast swathe of further content” (Hills, 2015a: 14) – concerning the ‘25 years’ temporal marker and Lynch’s authorial name. However, as detailed below, the interaction between these discourses and meta-paratexts was frequently reconfigured during different phases of the anniversary, and by different commentators, with ideas of nostalgia and commerce being invoked at some times, and distanced at others, in accordance with generating or sustaining specific ‘quality’ meanings. Recognising this point is significant as it complicates Hills’ (2015b: 202) argument that *Twin Peaks*’s 25th saw a “fus[ing of] art and commercial discourses more thoroughly than many of *Twin Peaks*’s earlier paratextual iterations”. Instead, outlining the anniversary’s paratextual (re-)framings demonstrates a more complex scenario as ongoing fusions and splits between discourses of commerce, ‘art’, and nostalgia were observable. Thus, by analysing paratextual commentary across journalistic and marketing contexts, the specificities of how practices of *remembrance* are constructed in relation to enduring ‘quality’ forms can be used to enhance contemporary understandings of ‘complex’ TV (Mittell, 2015).

Regarding methodology, this article builds upon the phenomenological approach to studying paratexts (Gray, 2010) and tele-anniversaries (Hills, 2015a) indicated in preceding studies by tracking the temporal development of the dispersed anniversary’s meanings from 1st January (when the ‘25 years’ meta-paratext emerged) to 1st August 2014 (i.e. after the Blu-ray set’s release). However, in contrast to Hills’s (2013, 2015a, 2015b) foregrounding of officially-located and/or licensed paratexts, the ensuing analysis largely prioritises sources originating from what Jonathan Hardy (2011: 8) names “the non-corporate controlled axis” of media publicity which includes “‘independent’ news, commentary, previews and reviews in public media ...[as well as] user-generated ... content”. Utilising a broader scope, which includes analysing newspaper reports and articles posted to niche-focused websites, provides opportunities for mapping the “textual field” (Couldry, 2000: 68) within which *Twin Peaks*’s silver jubilee was constructed. Such an approach permits exploring how specific meanings became forwarded and contested across cultural sites rather than subsuming these to a centrally-managed brand logic. Throughout the study online material is used but utilising the Internet generates large numbers of paratexts (Lindgren Leavenworth, 2016) and so requires reflexivity to be demonstrated towards the protocols employed for collating this study’s sample. The primary website for data collection

was *Welcome to Twin Peaks* (<http://welcometotwinpeaks.com/>; *WtTP* hereafter) because this is the most prominent *Twin Peaks* fan-site. *WtTP* attracted over 700,000 global visitors during this study’s duration (Quantcast n.d.) and this figure points towards its centrality within the “textual environments” (Couldry, 2000: 67) of *Twin Peaks* fandom. However, to supplement *WtTP*’s postings and ensure triangulation, additional paratexts were collected by performing web searches for articles related to *Twin Peaks* during a 10-day period around the significant dates mentioned below. Although not all of the paratextual sources collated are directly cited here, those which are demonstrate the dominant frames through which *Twin Peaks* was discussed during 2014.

Finally, some readers may question the accuracy of asserting that *Twin Peaks*’s 2014 commemoration constituted its silver jubilee. This criticism only holds, however, if it is assumed that the readings around *Twin Peaks* mirrored those of other media anniversaries which position extra-textual dates such as those concerning first dates of transmission as the locus for commemoration and affect (Hills, 2013: 223). Applying this to *Twin Peaks*, which debuted on US television on 8th April 1990, *does* suggest an inaccuracy as it was only 24 years since the programme’s introduction. Some may choose to interpret this discrepancy by recognising that “*Twin Peaks* has arguably enjoyed several doublings of its anniversaries. In the first instance, 2010 and 2011 have both been positioned as the show’s twentieth anniversary” (Hills, 2015b: 197). Yet, resting upon this interpretation reinstates the ‘quirkiness’ frequently associated with *Twin Peaks* (Hayes and Boulègue, 2013: 5-6) and overlooks that the show’s 25th anniversary in 2014 was largely due to the intratextual and authorially-based readings which were mobilised in unofficial paratexts and took precedence over extratextual production information.

## 2. ANNIVERSARIES, DISPERSALS AND BRANDS

Understood in the broadest sense, such as including commemorations of major historical events linked to significant temporal markers like the centenary of the start of the First World War, anniversaries are one component of public memory practices. Non-media anniversaries differ from their media-derived equivalents in many ways: historically-based commemorations typically generate monuments to the remembered occasion or figure and the forms that such memorials take demonstrate historical specificity (Machin and

Aboussnoug, 2011) and produce geographical locations (or *lieux d’memoire* – Nora, 1989) that encourage public remembrance. What’s more, these forms of anniversaries perform ideological functions by forwarding shared humanistic values and appealing to (national) unity whilst also gaining legitimacy through mobilising the cultural capital of state institutions (Blair and Michel, 2007). The latter characteristic alludes to a crucial difference between media-based and non-media anniversaries because the endorsing institution for celebrations of media content is frequently the property’s producer(s) who become aligned with commercialised discourses by being positioned as (re-)exploiting their ownership rights for profit (Murray, 2005: 417); the *Entire Mystery* Blu-ray set’s release in 2014 indicates how such readings can be aligned with *Twin Peaks*. These commercially-rooted interpretations have resulted in hostility being directed towards media anniversaries by positioning them as ‘pseudo-events’ (Boorstin, 1963) and dismissing them via negative perceptions of popular culture (Johnston, 1991).

Caution should be expressed, however, as writing off tele-anniversaries as wholly profitmaking exercises constructs a false binary between historical/non-commercialised and media-based/commercial occasions. Such thinking is problematic for a variety of reasons: firstly, as returned to shortly, media coverage of historically-derived anniversaries intermingle with ‘commercial’ associations as institutional brand values impact upon how, and what aspects of, the original event becomes celebrated. Secondly, commemorative practices developed around events like 9/11 have also been critiqued for their economic underpinnings (Simpson, 2006: 5). Nevertheless, despite ongoing attempts to re-evaluate television’s wider cultural reputation, the prevailing hostility towards tele-anniversaries indicates how the medium’s associations as an ephemeral and largely commercialised cultural form endure and produce insecure claims to status for the content that media institutions select for commemorative purposes.

One way that academics have re-evaluated tele-anniversaries is by examining “institutional practices of memory” (Holdsworth, 2011: 113) and analysing linkages between the remembered object and the organising TV institution. Ann Gray and Erin Bell (2013: 100) have explored this point in relation to media coverage of historically-based anniversaries, arguing that:

Anniversaries provide the opportunity for programme makers and national broadcasters to

create and air material which offers knowledge of nationally and internationally significant past events, and also attempts to cement the position and reputation of a particular broadcaster, as in so doing they also demonstrate their own role as part of national history. For public service broadcasters such as the BBC, commemorative programming emphasises their role in creating and maintaining a memory of the past, while it also satisfies audience expectations that such events should be marked nationally

By re-circulating archival footage of how the institution covered the event *then*, and including this alongside their coverage of the commemorated object *now*, appeals to both national unity and the broadcast institution’s ongoing importance to these constructions are communicated. Similarly Hills (2013: 230), writing in relation to the anniversary of a fictional series, has echoed Gray and Bell’s position by arguing that *Doctor Who*’s 50th “hing[ed] on the branding equation of ...consumer value with [the programme’s] public service value to British (TV) culture” (2013: 230). In other words, part of the appeal of the show’s golden jubilee for the BBC was “reinforce[ing the programme’s] ‘historical’ worth as a public good” (Ibid.) and, by association, reminding audiences of the continued ‘value’ (whether commercially or culturally) of the commissioning institution. Whilst insightful, the aforementioned studies have all focused on anniversaries produced by the BBC and, to a greater or lesser extent (e.g. *Doctor Who*’s status as a global brand for BBC Worldwide – see Porter, 2012), underpinned by public service responsibilities. The commemorations are thus institutionally-framed by such requirements as achieving widespread appeal and communicating national identity (Debrett, 2009: 31-52). *Twin Peaks*’s 25th therefore contrasts with the examples discussed in previous examinations of tele-anniversaries because, despite achieving mainstream popularity in the early 1990s (Garner and Shimabukuro, 2016: 118-9), the show’s appeal during 2014 was linked to niche-cult status rather than having to satisfy institutional requirements regarding cross-demographic cohesion. Moreover, anniversary discourse for *Twin Peaks*’s 25th originated outside of official institutional structures by instead arising through journalistic discourse, subsequently allowing it to be theorised as ‘dispersed’. However, the type of dispersal characterising *Twin Peaks*’s silver jubilee differs from previous overlaps between studies of tele-anniversaries and notions of dispersal connected to centrally-located

branding strategies. It is therefore necessary to differentiate between these prior engagements with the term and how this study understands the concept.

Hills (2015a: 28) has made these links explicit by referencing Thomas Austin's (2002: 29) concept of "the dispersible text". Developed in relation to Hollywood cinema, Austin posits that contemporary blockbusters are industrially-designed "to achieve commercial, cultural and social reach, by both facilitating and benefitting from promotional and conversational processes of fragmentation, elaboration and diffusion" (Ibid.). These films, and their promotional strategies, initiate "[m]ultiple bids to capture audiences" (Ibid.: 30) and become characterised as dispersed through being broken up into various components (e.g. stars, genres) and disseminated across media forms targeting individuated audience niches. Socio-cultural ubiquity is the goal underpinning these strategies as "multiple address[es] to a coalition of audience fractions" (Ibid.: 29) are developed. Such ideas are also applicable to television programmes presently because, echoing Austin, Catherine Johnson (2012: 143) has identified that "the extension of content across the widest range of platforms and products has become an increasingly important part of the contemporary US and UK television industries". When discussing programme brands, Johnson (Ibid.: 159) argues that these frequently demonstrate "three central characteristics: longevity; transferability; and multiplicity" and it is the latter that intersects with discourses of dispersal. Building upon Sharon Marie Ross's (2008: 255) arguments that many contemporary TV shows exhibit "an aesthetics of multiplicity" via encouraging audience "tele-participation [and] featur[ing] narratives with multiple points of view", Johnson (2012: 163) posits that "multiplicity [...] extends beyond just the characters and the structure to the tone and address found across the programme brand". Branded programmes thus build a diverse, coalition audience by providing multiple access points which assist engagement and consumption across divergent profiles.

Links between discourses of dispersal and industrially-focused analyses of tele-anniversaries are easily made: whilst Bell and Gray's (2013: 100) characterisation of commemorations occurring across multiple media platforms provides one example, Hills' (2015a: 107-8) conclusion that "Media/brand anniversaries ...succeed in being many things to many people" reaffirm these connections. Yet, each of these are examples of what Hills (2013: 229) names the "hyped, brand anniversary" where the celebrated object "accrues ...brand value via emphasising its longevity, at the same time as using this birthday

to anchor a transmedia array of planned, coordinated merchandise and events" (Ibid.). These strategies represent what I'd call *centralised dispersal* as the commemoration displays "a centrifugal dynamic of aperture and extension via satellite texts, mirrored by a centripetal force which refers consumers from these texts to" (Austin, 2002: 30) the anniversary object (in this instance). In contrast, *Twin Peaks*'s silver jubilee demonstrated what I would name *nebulous dispersal* because commemorative discourse emerged from a disconnected range of unofficial sources and saw anniversary and authorial meta-paratexts arise from the readings made of *Twin Peaks* across cultural sites. This nebulous dispersal can be seen by analysing the anniversary's different phases of development.

### 3.1 PHASE ONE. **PARATEXUAL SPECULATION: ESTABLISHING META-PARATEXTS**

The initial phase of paratextual speculation arose when multiple press sources reported on information posted to the Facebook page of Sande Alessi Casting ([https://www.facebook.com/sandealessicastinghawaii/?ref=br\\_rs](https://www.facebook.com/sandealessicastinghawaii/?ref=br_rs)) in early January 2014 concerning a highly specific and gendered call which explicitly named Lynch and *Twin Peaks* (see Figure 1). The combined presence of these names added legitimacy to the post and led to it being covered on a range of publications targeting different audience groups. Alongside featuring on *WtTP* (Twin Pie, 2014a), the website for the (primarily youth-orientated) music publication *NME Online* ran an article announcing that "David Lynch is returning to his cult TV show *Twin Peaks*" (Unaccredited, 2014: online). *MailOnline* (website of the British right-wing newspaper the *Daily Mail*) also reported that "[t]he cult-film director is gearing up to return to the mill town of Twin Peaks, as the 1990 TV series looks to be getting the conclusion it deserves after two and a half decades in limbo". (Maxwell, 2014: online). Picking up on the '25 years' angle, this article then made connections between diegetic information from *Twin Peaks* and the extra-diegetic present:

The series ...made mention of its possible return in an episode, when the spirit of murdered beauty queen Laura Palmer whispered to FBI Agent Dale Cooper that she would see him again in 25 years ...The primetime drama was set in 1989... so it looks like Laura might make good on that promise. (Ibid.)

Similarly, Alanna Bennett (2014: online) of online magazine *Bustle* speculated that:

In the finale episode of *Twin Peaks* Laura Palmer tells Kyle MacLachlan’s Special Agent Dale Cooper that she will see him again in 25 years. That series was set in 1989 (though it aired ‘90-‘91), so 25 five years from then is...well, right about now. 2014, to be exact, so in fact it’s *exactly now*. Oh god. What does it mean.



TWIN PEAKS PROMO. Directed by David Lynch. Shoots in Los Angeles on Tuesday, January 7, 2014. Prob a 6 hour or less day. Rate is 150/8. You must live in LA to submit. I don't think SAC has jurisdiction on this, so SAC and NON can submit. I have called SAC to double check this and I am awaiting a call back to confirm this though.

HOT Caucasian girl – BRUNETTE OR REDHEADS ONLY to play waitress. Age 18–27. MUST have an amazing body. Busty, very period looking face. Please submit two current color photos (one body shot, one face shot), your sizes, union status and contact info to: SandeAlessiCasting@gmail.com Subject line should read: TP Promo

FIGURE 1: CASTING CALL FROM JANUARY 2014 EXPLICITLY NAMING LYNCH AND *TWIN PEAKS*

As “press criticism will [...] set a yardstick for public opinion” (Todd, 2012: 87), the recurrent ideas which are mentioned across these articles are significant as they cumulatively established two discursive clusters (Mittell, 2004) which mobilised different claims to cultural value when discussing *Twin Peaks* at this historical moment. Firstly, a ‘will to commemorate’ is identifiable as intratextual readings focused around aspects of *Twin Peaks*’s narrative mythology (and typical of “forensic fandom”, see Mittell, 2015: 52) were aligned with extratextual happenings. Laura Palmer’s (Sheryl Lee) comment of “I’ll see you again in 25 years” from *Twin Peaks*’s final episode, “Beyond Life and Death” (2.22), became re-interpreted as meaningful by journalists via connecting the casting call, the series’ setting in 1989, and the current year of 2014 to establish the ‘25 years’ reading as a shared meta-paratext.

Regarding claims to status, this initial ‘will to commemorate’ was constructed through combining culturally-valued ideas concerning textual ‘depth’ with connotations of nostal-

gia. Writing in relation to contemporary “complex’ TV, Jason Mittell (2015: 288; original emphasis) argues for “thinking of such texts as *drillable*” as audiences are “encourage[d] ...to dig deeper, probing beneath the surface to understand the complexity of a story and its telling” (Ibid.). What’s more, texts that inspire these readings have typically accrued greater status than those presumed to offer more surface pleasures (Ibid.: 290). By connecting one of *Twin Peaks*’s unresolved diegetic enigmas to the extra-diegetic present, nebulously dispersed journalistic speculation identified a significant temporal marker and used this to (re-)imply the series’ ‘quality’ reputation by constructing it as one that continues to reward ‘deeper’ audience engagement despite it being almost a quarter-century after first being broadcast. Additionally, intermingling with these claims to status are associations of nostalgia regarding re-creating *Twin Peaks*’s initial viewing experience(s) for some generational audiences. Henry Jenkins’ (1995: 56-7) study of online *Twin Peaks* fandom during its first-run identified that audiences would produce in-depth readings of episodes in an attempt to crack the series’ enigmas. Thus, just as Andreas Halskov (2015: 182) has argued that fans listening to podcasts of first-time *Peaks* viewers attempting to decipher the show can stimulate their own nostalgic memories of first-watching, paratextual speculation connecting the possibility of new *Peaks* footage appearing in 2014 to unresolved mysteries represents an alternative, more first-hand, inflection of such nostalgia. This is because feelings of nostalgia would be stimulated amongst audiences by inviting them to recall their own initial viewing experiences of *Twin Peaks* rather than these memories being triggered vicariously through the reactions of others. Thus, since anniversaries “articulate [...] affective intensities with an objective interval of time” (Hills, 2015a: 4), recurrent mentions of the ‘25 years’ meta-paratext initiated a ‘will to commemorate’ *Twin Peaks* which layered reminders of the show’s ‘quality’ status with nostalgic invocations of experiencing the programme first time around.

Constructed alongside the ‘will to commemorate’ was a ‘will to cohere’ which mobilised alternative discourses of ‘quality’ and (re-)established a second, authorially-based meta-paratext as an overarching interpretive frame. One discourse underpinning this ‘will to cohere’ was Romantic conceptualizations of art linked to “aesthetic organicism” (Dolan 1995: 31). Organicism posits that “Art ...should arise from a unified conception on the part of the artist, with all elements contributing to the creation of an organic whole” (Ibid.). By treating an unresolved enigma as meaningful, and so positioning *Twin Peaks*’s narrative world as serialised, jour-

nalistic speculation demonstrated an investment in Romantic discourses which constructed *Twin Peaks* as 'unified' and 'coherent'. Moreover, the 'will to cohere' was complemented and strengthened by forwarding another (Romantic – see Caughie, 1981) discourse concerning authorship as journalistic commentary used what Mittell (2015: 107; original emphasis) names an "*inferred author function*" to position the show as "the creation of a single aesthetic consciousness" (Dolan, 1995: 31). David Lynch's construction as "master programmer" (Jenkins, 1995: 61), which also originated during *Twin Peaks*'s initial run, was observable across each of the above statements and so attests to how Lynch's authorial name continued to operate as a valued meta-paratext which guides contemporary (re-)interpretation of the show. Having originated nebulously within a range of 'non-official' sources, these discursive wills and meta-paratexts endured and mutated throughout subsequent phases of *Twin Peaks*'s dispersed anniversary.

### 3.2 PHASE TWO. **CONFIRMATION AND VERIFICATION: CAST RESPONSES AND NEGOTIATIONS OF NOSTALGIA**

Shortly after the paratextual speculation, actor Ray Wise (*Twin Peaks*'s Leland Palmer) conducted multiple interviews to promote his new movie, *Big Ass Spider!* (2014). During these discussions, Wise frequently responded to questions regarding *Twin Peaks* and it was at this point that journalistic speculation gained confirmation and verification. For example, an interview with *Fangoria* quoted Wise (in Hanley, 2014: online) as saying "Yeah, we [shot the promo for the Blu-ray] two days ago ...It's been done ...I'm not at liberty to say what was done. I can say that it's going to be a big surprise." Wise's comment was reported across multiple niche-orientated cult media websites (Diaz, 2014; Twin Pie, 2014b) and is significant because, as someone who talks of having a "lifetime contract" (Wise in *The Black Saint*, 2014: online) with Lynch, provided endorsement and legitimacy for the speculation concerning new *Twin Peaks* footage appearing in 2014. What's more, Wise's interview performance(s) further supported the nebulously-dispersed origins of *Twin Peaks*'s silver anniversary; after confirming the shoot, he backtracked by stating "I don't know if I was supposed to leak that to anybody" (in Hanley, 2014: online), positioning himself as autonomous from an official PR campaign.

Wise's confirmation also generated further journalistic discourse regarding the '25 years' meta-paratext; Ken W. Hanley (2014: online) of *Fangoria* observed that Wise's comment "was especially titillating as it would coincide with Laura Palmer's posthumous sentiments to Agent Cooper" whilst Brendon Connelly (2014a) of *Bleedingcool.com* also echoed these sentiments. Such statements imply the continuation of fusing the wills to 'commemorate' and 'cohere' amongst journalists as the blurring of diegetic and extra-diegetic time with a view to constructing an objective temporal marker for commemorative purposes remained. These alignments contrast with how Wise engaged with the '25 years' meta-paratext, though, as in another interview he separated aspects of the 'will to commemorate' from the 'will to cohere' by distancing *Twin Peaks* from associations of nostalgia which were coded in relation to contemporary industrial practices:

They wouldn't remake it. If anything was done, it would be 25 years later. It would never be a remake of anything we already did. Maybe you just didn't mean to use that word, I don't know. A remake, no, but it would be something new and fresh. David always said the town of "Twin Peaks" is still there; it's still going on whether we watch it or not. So, who knows what'll happen in the future? It would be 25 years later, not anything remade. (Wise in Wangberg, 2014: online)

Wise's response occurred within the context of being questioned about whether *Twin Peaks* could, or should, be rebooted in the style of other shows such as *Dallas* (2012-2014). Whilst reboots "have proven popular with producers and networks interested in building on the nostalgic capital of past hits" (Lavigne, 2014: 1), wider cultural perspectives towards this type of televisual nostalgia demonstrate hostility by reading such forms as "as a stagnating force" (Lizardi, 2014: 39) that blocks creative and critical understandings of both our 'past' and 'present'. What's more, industrially-focused perceptions of reboots account for these as attempts to "generate some buzz and bring in some ratings points" (Howard, 2015: para. 8) and so have primarily read such forms of tele-nostalgia through commercial discourses. Applying these perspectives to Wise's engagement with the '25 years' meta-paratext, his comments 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. Wise therefore prioritises the 'will to cohere' and, by doing so, draws upon a discourse of organicism to re-affirm *Twin Peaks*'s 'quality' status. The 'will to commemorate' is not wholly reject-

ed, however. Instead, his confirmation of the Blu-ray shoot, alongside explicitly mentioning the '25 years' meta-paratext, suggested links to discourses of commemoration and temporal significance. Nevertheless, Wise's endorsement of the 'will to commemorate' requires distancing nostalgic associations and, unlike journalistic speculation seeking to recapture 'past'-coded *Peaks* pleasures, stressing the show's status as a coherent and ongoing 'artwork' over its status as a commodity that responds to the demands of contemporary television production. Whilst his statements remain part of the matrix of "commercial intertextuality" (Hardy, 2011: 7) surrounding *Twin Peaks*, in terms of the discourses framing the show, nostalgia is something to be distanced from the series' meanings for Wise (and by association Lynch) because of its commercial associations.

Following Wise's interviews, journalists nevertheless continued to combine the 'will to commemorate' with the 'will to cohere' by turning to speculate on a preferred release date for the Blu-ray set. Such commentary was, in fact, observable prior to Wise's verifying statements as Connelly (2014b: online) wrote prior to this second phase that "if the set lands on March 25th in the US, as I'm expecting, that's exactly 25 years after Dale Cooper met Laura Palmer in the Black Lodge". However, in the days following Wise's interviews, *WtTP* (and others – see Diaz, 2014) also asked

If it's not a question about *if*, then *when* will the BD be released? 03/27/2014 would be a brilliant release date for the Twin Peaks Blu-ray since, at least according to my calculations, that's exactly 25 years after Laura Palmer tells Dale Cooper she'll see him again in 25 years. And what a great opportunity for a newly filmed epilogue starring Kyle MacLachlan and Sheryl Lee in The Black Lodge, right? Right?! (Twin Pie, 2014c: online; original emphasis)

The discursive differences that arise between the statements offered by nebulously-dispersed unofficial journalists and those made by Wise are noteworthy for many reasons. Firstly, journalistic discussion further supports academic arguments positing that anniversary dates become "learn[ed] and fix[ed]" (Hills, 2013: 223) as a result of "socially-organised fandom ...debating the show" (Ibid.) over an extended period of time. By demonstrating the type of forensic deep-readings associated with (fan) audiences of 'complex' television, and adhering to this in their reporting(s) of *Twin Peaks* in 2014, these writers further demonstrate the role that reception

contexts play in identifying the preferred dates for individual tele-anniversaries. Secondly, the wider discourses which underpin these comments indicate how multiple appeals to cultural value continued to endure in journalistic interpretations. A sustained investment in Romantic discourses is clearly identifiable by consistently circulating readings of *Twin Peaks* that are rooted in ideas of authorship and organicism and these combine with the series' serialised narrative form to construct a desire that unresolved narrative enigmas will now be resolved. However, for journalists, this 'will to cohere' is combined with discourses of commemoration via anticipating that a new, albeit pre-planned, "milestone moment" (Holdsworth, 2011: 36) will be provided and nostalgically harking back to pleasures (of authorially-focused deep-readings) associated with watching the show during its first-run. Thirdly, the different attitudes that journalists and Wise expressed towards ideas concerning nostalgia linked to the anniversary indicate how meanings concerning nostalgia can differ across cultural sites. Whereas unofficial writers freely included nostalgic connotations in their framings of *Twin Peaks*'s 25th, Wise's statements associated nostalgia with commercial discourses and so distanced these in favour of foregrounding Lynch's authorial meta-paratext whilst linking the '25 years' framing solely to the show's serialised narrative. Interestingly, similar separations were negotiated further during the third stage of development.

### 3.3 PHASE THREE. **CALENDRIAL ESTABLISHMENT: COMMERCIAL TENSIONS AND TRANSMEDIA AUTHORSHIP**

The dispersed anniversary's third stage concerned *calendrical establishment* and was the point when the Blu-ray set's release date was announced and centralised marketing strategies began. The release date of July 29th was confirmed on May 15th through CBS Home Entertainment's YouTube channel (2014) which released a teaser video featuring brief snippets from *The Missing Pieces* and ended by revealing the date (Figure 2). Obviously, the chosen date was far-removed from that which was identified in unofficial commentary and this decision complicates existing academic understandings of contemporary tele-anniversaries which have focused solely on centrally-initiated examples and accounted for their popularity in relation to branding (Hills, 2015a: 3-4). According to these arguments, industrially-controlled anniversaries are ex-

pected to exhibit “a commercial, brand logic” (Hills, 2013: 230) which includes demonstrating “paratextual precision” (Hills, 2015b: 200) by honouring a pre-identified date (see above) as the locus for commemoration. Despite generating additional promotional material such as trailers and “*paratext[s]* for ...*paratext[s]* – that is, ...*para-paratext[s]*” (Ibid.: 198-9; original emphasis) including teaser videos for the set’s special features, the chosen release date meant that *Twin Peaks* 25th diverged from the industrial strategies which have been examined in other examples of tele-anniversaries. Instead, to extend the metaphor used here for theorising *Twin Peaks*’s silver jubilee, its anniversary date suggests another form of dispersal occurring, this time at the calendrical level, as the commemoration was deferred until later in the year meaning that “a more vague or gestural commemoration of ‘around’ 25 years” (Ibid.: 200) became connoted (an approach that contrasts starkly with fan-produced commemorations such as *Twin Peaks*’s unofficial third series which was produced through Twitter and explicitly recognised the March 25th date – see Ibid: 203-4).

Given the prominence of the ‘25 years’ meta-paratext and the ‘will to cohere’ in the anniversary’s previous stag-

es, though, the chosen release date risked undermining *Twin Peaks*’s alignment with ‘art’ discourses that had occurred within unofficial and nebulously-dispersed paratexts. Instead, commercial priorities appear to have taken precedent with regard to how *Twin Peaks* was positioned in industrial contexts of marketing and distribution during this time period. Although DVD and Blu-ray sales have declined year-on-year since 2005 due to factors including the availability of content through streaming services (Ulin, 2013: 188-9), these sell-through distribution windows remain a lucrative revenue stream for rights holders (Acland, 2008: 86) – especially in the case of programmes with enduring reputations like *Twin Peaks* (cf. Murray, 2005: 417). As Blu-ray releases now adhere to frontloading practices to maximise sales (Ulin, 2013: 189), and *The Entire Mystery*’s only noteworthy competition in its US week of release was box office flop *Noah* (2014), the chosen release date is readable as having been primarily selected for financial reasons.

However, if CBS Home Entertainment’s chosen release date downplayed discourses of ‘quality’ linked to the ‘will to cohere’, an additional paratext was produced which explicit-

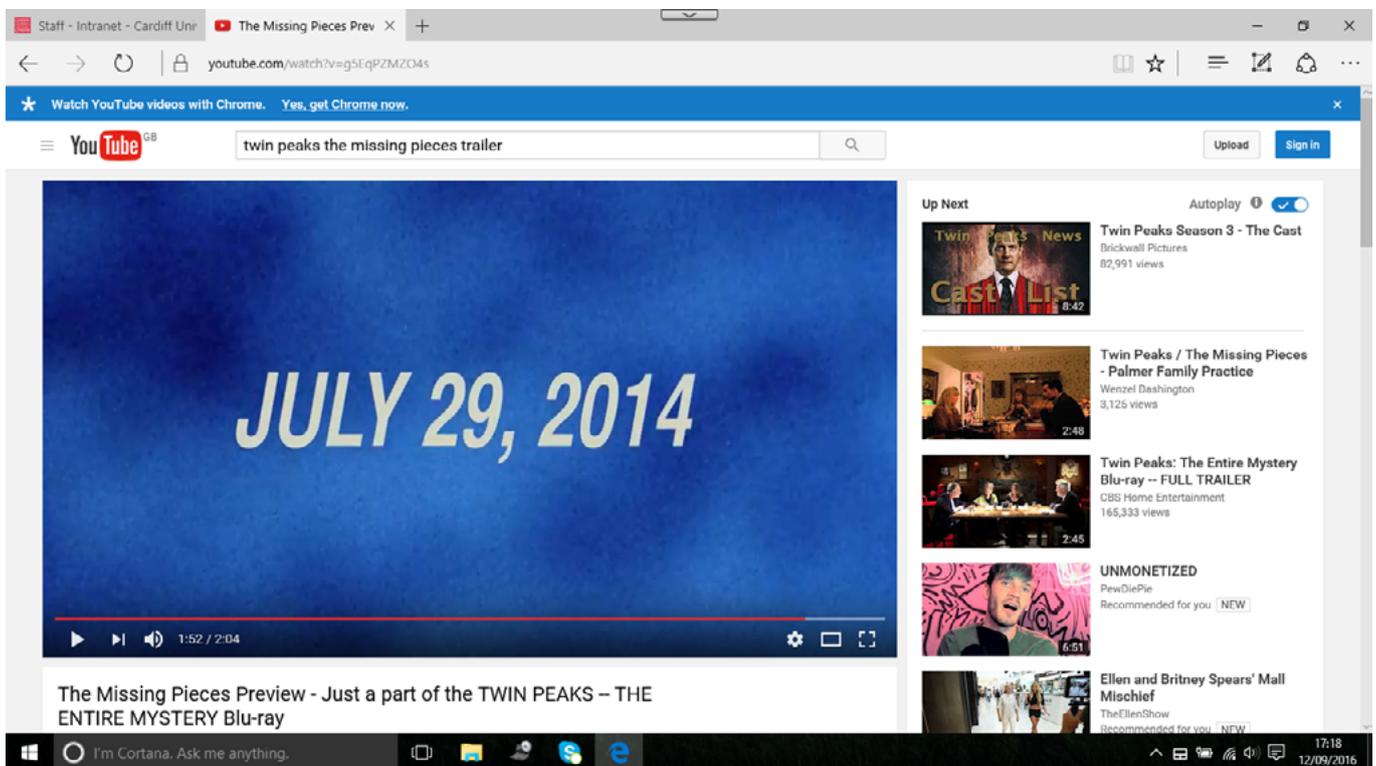


FIGURE 2: CBS HOME ENTERTAINMENT’S ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE *TWIN PEAKS*: THE ENTIRE MYSTERY’S RELEASE DATE VIA YOUTUBE.

ly engaged with these discursive clusters. This was because May 15th saw David Lynch's official Twitter account unexpectedly release a tweet which featured a specially-commissioned piece of artwork that was assigned to Lynch's name and invited fans to 'Save the Date' by marking July 29th a 'Blue Rose Day' (Figure 3). Read from one perspective, this promotional image foregrounded the 'will to cohere' observable within journalistic readings of *Twin Peaks* by (re-)asserting Romantic discourses of authorship and art regarding the series via inviting audiences to read the release date as part of Lynch's pre-conceived masterplan. Through doing this, *Twin Peaks*'s enduring alignment with 'quality' discourses became appealed to as commercial motivations were softened in favour of those concerning serialisation and authorial control. This approach is not uncommon in relation to *Twin Peaks* because, as Hills (2015b: 194) has argued, "art discourses have proliferated around David Lynch and *Twin Peaks*, meaning that this work takes on cultural value by virtue of being semiotically disarticulated from connotations of commerce". Lynch's Twitter invitation thus represents an instance where, at this stage in the dispersed anniversary, discourses of art and commerce became paratextually-fused (cf. *Ibid.*: 202) with the former taking precedent over the latter through appeals to pre-established meanings linked to the 'will to cohere'. What's more, whilst it would be naïve to assert "that Lynch (or, for that matter, any other post-classical auteur) might be considered a 'free agent', operating independently of the system" (Todd, 2012: 14), the promotional image added to the dispersed nature of *Twin Peaks*'s anniversary. By associating the image with Lynch's authorial name, and releasing it through his personal Twitter account rather than CBS Home Entertainment's, connotations of Lynch engaging with 'the system' of marketing and promotion are downplayed in favour of implying that Lynch was operating autonomously. This promotional item therefore reflexively recognised the anniversary's dispersed origins and suggested that Lynch was simply adding his contribution to the anniversary meta-paratext. Through doing this, Romantic associations of authorship and 'coherence' were re-affirmed.

Further alignments between *Twin Peaks* and discourses of 'quality' arose from this image due to the connections it made between the series and contemporary trends concerning transmedia storytelling. Jenkins (2006: 95-6) has argued that "a transmedia story unfolds across multiple media platforms, with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole" and, writing specifically in relation to television, Mittell (2015: 292-318) has further posited that



FIGURE 3: LYNCH'S OFFICIAL TWITTER ACCOUNT MARKS THE BLU-RAY RELEASE DATE AS A 'BLUE ROSE DAY'.

such strategies generate claims to cultural value via being a characteristic employed by complex narrative forms. Thus, when read in relation to transmedia storytelling's conventions, the 'Save the Date' image represented "a *diegetic extension*" (*Ibid.*: 298; original emphasis) of *Twin Peaks* in two ways. Firstly, drawing upon the series' serialised narrative, unresolved enigmas and fantastical mythology, the artwork suggested "new narrative events and broaden[ing] the story-world" (*Ibid.*: 311) as the July 29th date was diegetically-meaningful but Lynch could only now reveal that significance in 2014. This approach subsequently connoted the '25 years' meta-paratext that was crucial to this year becoming positioned as *Twin Peaks*'s silver jubilee.

Secondly, as "mixing ...th[e] fictional world with the real world of the viewer's lived experience" (Evans, 2011: 25) is another characteristic of transmedia storytelling, Lynch's tweet suggested that *Twin Peaks*'s (hyper)diegesis was bleeding in to 'real' online spaces. This meaning was further enhanced by the Blue Rose's presence: within *Twin Peaks*, the Blue Rose relates to highly classified information concerning events leading up to Laura Palmer's murder and is a code initiated by FBI controller Gordon Cole – the character Lynch plays – and recognised by only a few of his trusted agents. By demark-

ing July 29th as another Blue Rose Day, the promotional image invited Lynch's followers to question whether they were being addressed by Lynch or Cole and to prepare for narrative events to 'happen again' as a new instalment within the show's ongoing mythology would be provided. *Twin Peaks*'s engagement with transmedia storytelling in 2014 via Twitter therefore blurred boundaries between 'fiction' and 'reality' by positioning followers of Lynch's account as though they were now also Lynch/Cole's trusted confidants. Aspects of the 'will to cohere' such as *Twin Peaks* being an ongoing narrative which is controlled by a singular authorial vision instead took precedence and connected with contemporary practices for developing and maintaining interest in complex TV drama beyond the boundaries of the programme itself (Mittell, 2015: 295). Through doing this, *Twin Peaks*'s associations as an enduring 'quality' series were again asserted.

However, regarding the 'will to commemorate', the 'Save the Date' image communicated a more complex set of discursive negotiations. On the one hand, this will was easily identifiable as the Blue Rose demarcation suggests the construction of a new 'milestone moment' for *Twin Peaks* fans. On the other, positioning the release date as an original and unanticipated locus for remembrance again implies a distancing between *Twin Peaks* and discourses of nostalgia. Although a multi-faceted term (Boym, 2001), constructions of nostalgia are frequently understood as mobilising a backwards-facing attitude within the present (Davis, 1979: 12-14) and so are frequently chastised for being ideologically regressive. If read from an audience-orientated perspective, these associations potentially arise from the Blue Rose image as Lynch's established position as trickster *auteur* (Jenkins, 1995: 62-3) resurfaces – albeit this time within the context of official publicity. The promotional image's sudden and unexpected revelation of new narrative information concerning *Twin Peaks* "restores fans' 'vulnerability' to Lynch's trickster role" (Hills, 2015b: 201) and, through doing this, again suggests (re-)experiencing nostalgic pleasures linked to prior experiences of the series. However, if approached from a narrative viewpoint, the Blue Rose paratext arguably rejects associations of nostalgia and 'looking back' as audiences are instead invited to adopt a future-orientated perspective by looking towards a new date within the series' narrative. In terms of the storytelling device employed by the promotional image, then, it is possible to connect this with further ideas concerning complexity and cultural value as the mode of address relates to Mittell's (2015: 42) arguments concerning the "operational aesthetic". One aspect of this type of device can be invit-

ing audiences "to reconsider all that we have viewed before" (Ibid.: 45) as new revelations undermine established textual information. Lynch's Twitter announcement works as an extra-diegetic example of this as the sudden announcement of a new date of importance to *Twin Peaks* undermines what audiences have previously known about the programme's narrative (e.g. that it's serialised development ceased following cancellation in 1991; *FVWM* acting as a prequel) by revealing the continuation of its world off-screen. Rather than solely inviting audiences to nostalgically revisit the series and reconsider what they already know (see Mittell, 2009), the 'Save the Date' image instead encourages looking forward and anticipating further developments within *Twin Peaks*'s mythology (as was to be the case later in 2014 with the confirmation of a third series for Showtime). Thus, whilst commercial motivations undoubtedly underpin the image's promotional aims by "avoiding celebratory clichés, and ...[instead] offering something new to fan-consumers" (Hills, 2013: 226) via the promise of 'new' *Twin Peaks*, this branding-derived interpretation overlooks how individual discourses were negotiated by different groups engaging with the 'will to commemorate'. In the case of *Twin Peaks*'s 25th, associations between the series and nostalgia were incompatible within paratexts attributed to the show's creative personnel because these compromised the series' preferred readings as 'art' and a 'complex serial'.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Previous scholarly discussions concerning nostalgia in relation to 'quality' television drama have occurred in relation to British TV drama and suggested hostility towards the concept because of either its gendered associations (Caughie, 2000: 203-26) or its perceived challenge to the dominant (social) realist aesthetic that is regularly valued in relation to the form (see Cooke, 2003). This article has examined these ideas in a different set of circumstances by looking at globally-distributed paratexts linked to a U.S. 'quality' drama within an anniversary context and has further demonstrated the separation between discourses of 'quality' drama and nostalgia within specific cultural sites. The example of *Twin Peaks*'s 25th shows that, whilst journalists located along the unofficial axis of commentary surrounding the series regularly articulated positions that engaged with nostalgia and combined this with other discourses of cultural value, paratextual framings of the show made by its creative personnel instead distanced the series from these associations. This was because nostalgia

became associated with discourses of commercialism and/or 'looking back' which threatened *Twin Peaks*'s enduring reputation and location amongst valued discourses concerning the organic and authored artwork. The different meanings and forms of nostalgia demonstrated across *Twin Peaks*'s dispersed anniversary therefore suggest that future studies of tele-anniversaries and/or 'quality' television should compare different case studies to that outlined here with a view to better understanding how discourses of nostalgia become positioned in relation to 'quality' forms at specific temporal moments. What's more, attention should also be paid towards which interpretive communities either invoke or distance 'nostalgic' associations in relation to the commemorated object as reflecting on such issues will provide a fuller understanding of which groups, and in what forms, nostalgia becomes a significant component of remembering 'quality' forms. Through tackling these issues a more complete understanding of the role nostalgia plays in relation to the enduring reputation of complex serials can be formulated.

Secondly, by retelling the development of *Twin Peaks*'s dispersed anniversary, this article has demonstrated the value in considering individual examples on a case-by-case basis as doing so permits engaging with atypical examples such as this and enhances our understanding of where anniversary discourses become initiated beyond institutional practices of branding. Although commercial concerns undoubtedly underpin each phase of the anniversary (the casting call which encouraged anniversary discourse amongst journalists was, after all, linked to the show's re-release on Blu-ray), the 25 years meta-paratext emerged outside of an official marketing context and led to a range of agencies and discourses working to frame the series during the time period discussed. Recognising the origins of *Twin Peaks*'s anniversary meta-paratext has therefore permitted differentiating between centrally-dispersed examples (e.g. those initiated by publicity industries with a view to leading multiple audience niches towards the commemorated object) and processes of nebulous dispersal where commemorative discourse emerges from a disconnected range of sources that coalesce to produce shared meanings around a ('quality') series at a particular point in time. TV Studies should thus continue to study individual examples of tele-anniversaries as these reveal how serialised narratives become constructed at a meta-textual level where the meaning of any show becomes negotiated across cultural sites at specific points in time.

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