Chapter 6

A New Breed of Fan?:

Regimes of Truth, One Direction Fans and Representations of Enfreakment

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One hardly needs reminding that fan audiences have historically been viewed as 'obsessive, freakish, hysterical, infantile and regressive social subjects' (Hills 2007, 459). The body of scholarly work that we now describe as fan studies has sought to rescue the figure of the fan, so often a figure of fun, from discourses that have diagnosed fandom 'as a psychological symptom of a presumed social dysfunction' (Jensen 1992, 9). Such meanings are often given life through the oxygen of discourse, by 'the media, fans themselves and academics that have sought to study their practices' (Geraghty 2014, 5).

But there has been a significant turning point, we are told: 'none of the high-profile fan cultures in recent years – from X-Philes via Eminem fans to *Sex and the City* enthusiasts – had to endure the derogative treatment of *Star Trek* fans…Rather than ridiculed, fans are courted and wooed by cultural industries (Gray et al 2007, 4-5). Likewise, as McArthur claims, the pejorative term '"geek" has now become an endearing term of affection (and perhaps jealousy) and label for those who demonstrate expertise in a particular field […] what was once geek is now chic' (2009, 61).

Now that fans 'have moved from the margins to the mainstream within convergence culture (Scott 2013, xv)' and that 'the digital landscape makes fandom more visible and more approachable than at any other time in the past' (Bennett and Booth 2014, 1), is it time, then, that we move on, having redressed and resolved the aporia of representation? Unfortunately, I think not.

To be sure, there has been a marked shift but this so-called mainstreaming has also been paralleled by a continuation of traditional 'regimes of truth' (Foucault 1977), discourses within which female fans are denounced as 'fake geek girls' who dare to trespass on

masculine territories, such as the comic convention circuit. Sadly, this has led to a rallying cry from the fangirl community who report on the way in which they have been sexually harassed at such events which range from 'cat calling to groping to taking underskirt shots at the world's biggest convention,' Comic-Con (Dockterman 2014). That female fans are 'negatively feminized' (Busse 2013), both within and outside fandom, indicates that fan cultures remain heavily gendered. Such negative feminizations continue to construct female fans as part of 'the hysterical crowd' (Jensen 1992, 9) and 'predicated on unruly sexuality' (Busse 2013, 73).

Fans may actively partake in policing, but media reportage and representation also collaborate in the construction of a (gendered) regime of truth. Such a discursive politics splinters into a binary or, following Hills, a moral dualism which is 'created and sustained by systems of cultural value, of binary camps between "good" and "bad"' (2002, 21). In this case, the moral dualism dichotomises 'good,' masculine fandom – 'intellectual, aggressive and objective' (Busse 2013, 74) – as distinct from 'bad' feminine idolatry – 'passive, emotional, sensitive and subjective' (ibid). Thus, if fandom has traditionally been viewed as a psychological symptom, and that '[o]nline fandom has made fandom a whole more visible' (Booth 2013, 57), such exposure has become double-binding. This 'mainstreaming' opens up previously hidden ideologies for media outlets to mine as evidence of homogeneity and 'freakishness,' especially in relation to female fans of *Twilight* or *Fifty Shades of Grey*, for instance. In many accounts, these women and girls are often fans of popular music, boy bands such as Duran Duran, Take That, Back Street Boys, N*Sync, and One Direction, the latter of which is the focus of this chapter.

In the Channel Four documentary *Crazy About One Direction* (*CAOD*), a selection of teenage fangirls are represented in ways that converge with common-sense stereotypes of the kind traditionally associated with fan cultures historically. However, *CAOD* not only

negatively stereotypes Directioners as 'non-normative' fans but, also, functions as 'an entertainment spectacle' within which teenage girls are 'peered at by the predatory camera' (Richardson 2010, 1). In so doing, *CAOD* promotes an exploitative narrative of 'enfreakment' (ibid) wherein Directioners are embroiled within a representational display of otherness that rehabilitates the boundaries of 'normalcy.'

McArthurs' contention that the 'transition from geek-as-sideshow-freak to geek-as-intelligent-expert has moved the term from one of insult to one of endearment' (2009, 61) undervalues the way in which *CAOD* operates as a political/ ideological representational space, 'a space within which judgements are made, judgements of inclusion and exclusion (Silverstone 2007, 54)

In this chapter, I argue that representation constructs a negative feminization and, by extension, a narrative of enfreakment around female fans of One Direction. Despite Channel Four's contention that the One Direction community is 'a new breed of fan,' and the behaviours they enact to 'worship their idols' is a new phenomenon, I show that these behaviours are nothing of the sort.

Channel Four: Merchant of Enfreakment

In many ways, One Direction is the ultimate 'bad' fan-object; a band which began their career performing on the reality TV series, *X-Factor* and managed to launch a successful career after signing with Simon Cowell's Syco Records. In media discourse, One Direction fans are often reported as 'crazy,' 'obsessed,' 'delusional,' and, in many cases, with a propensity towards threatening, even violent behaviour. Spurred on by new media, especially Twitter, avid Directioners perform their fandom by tweeting Niall, Harry, Liam, and Louis directly, often begging the band to 'follow them' on social media.

In *Transgressive Bodies: Representations in Film and Popular Culture*, Richardson examines Channel Four's reputation as merchant of 'enfreakment' (2010) and argues that that many documentaries and/ or reality TV programmes 'demonstrate an explicit, and unashamed freakshow style,' especially in relation to 'the non-normative body' (2010: 1). These programmes -- for example, *The 15-Stone Babies* (2012) and *Embarrassing Bodies* (2007 -) -- are exploitative for sure, but other texts on the broadcaster's agenda are equally exploitative and promote an enfreakment of social subjects in series such as: *Benefit Street* (2014), *The Undateables* (2012 -), and *My Self-Harm Nightmare* (2015). Although theories of enfreakment have traditionally been adopted to examine regimes of truth about disability, non-normative physicality (Richardson, 2011) and the grotesque body (Garland-Thompson, 1996), this range of selective examples highlights that it is not only 'the body' which is 'othered' in these texts, but, also, lived experiences, the majority of which engage with the process of culturally constructing freakish behaviour for the purpose of exhibition.

Channel Four is readily exploiting such 'freakishness,' not as proclamations or celebrations, but by pointing 'an intrusive camera at the fringes of society, so that "us" normal people can have a quiet chuckle or an ill-informed rant at our TV screens' (Thomas 2014). As Richardson states, 'the archaic spectacle of the freakshow is gradually creeping back into popular culture, -- if, indeed, it ever left' (2011, 2). *CAOD* narrativises and represents Directioners as enfreaked examples of feminized, non-normative fandom.

Whether or not one considers *CAOD* as documentary, infotainment or reality TV, 'representations – especially popular culture representations which are widely consumed – should never be underestimated' (Richardson 2010, 1). In *CAOD*, 'only certain types of fan voices are heard' (Hills 2007, 462) and this judgement of inclusion/ exclusion functions to construct a representational space brimming with stereotypes and judgements. In so doing, *CAOD* 'cherry picks' a limited selection of fans and passes them off as homogenous,

something which fan studies has been challenging for over two decades. Yet what is remarkable about the programme is how *un*remarkable these fan behaviours and performances actually when contextualised.

Contexts of Performance

CAOD begins with narrator, Julia Davis, explaining that Directioners are 'simply crazy' about the band, and that the fan culture is nothing less than a 'new breed of fan' who use social media to 'worship their idols,' and 'go to extreme lengths to get noticed by the boys.' This narration is juxtaposed with images of screaming teenage girls waving concert tickets in front of the camera; shots of fan art that depict band members Harry Styles and Larry as homosexual; and interjections from the Directioners themselves edited in a montage. Comments include: 'I've met them sixty-four times'; 'they say I'm a stalker but I don't care'; 'I am part of a fandom that could literally kill you if they want'. Directioners, we are told, 'are fearlessly loyal and not to be crossed…what drives their obsession?'

Multiple stereotypes are distilled into this brief sequence without contextualising the way in which performativity operates in the community. Indeed, many of these exclamations are just that: performances (the camera certainly encourages such 'actings out'). The way that producers select, edit and arrange the discourse narrativises a fear of the fanatical fan insofar as performances are taken literally rather than as figurative displays of emotion and affect. As Nichols argues, a person

> does not present in exactly the same way to a companion on a date, a doctor
> in a hospital, his or her children at home, and a filmmaker in an interview.
> Nor do people continue to present the same way as an interaction develops;
> they modify their behaviour as the situation evolves (2010, 9).

So while screaming loudly in a doctor's surgery or using threatening behaviour towards other people is certainly unacceptable, screaming collectively outside of a hotel or at a press conference is a sine qua non for One Direction fans and, by extension, other 'teenyboppers' (Andrews and Whorlow 2009).

There are multiple ways in which performativity is enacted both within and across fan cultures, so much so, that there is no such singular thing as 'fan performance,' but a wide-range of pluralist performances which shift in relation to the fan-object, whatever that may be. Also, different modes of performativity may also exist within this-or-that fandom, so that it becomes impossible to align a particular fan culture with a general, overarching theory (with the proviso that patterns also emerge). So, if one identifies as a Trekker, then, this does not necessarily mean that s/he attends conventions sporting Spock ears nor does it mean that s/he writes fan fiction, slash or otherwise (even though this may be the norm for other fans).

Not wanting to condone threats of violence, some Directioners demonstrate the seriousness of their fandom by posting invective on the Internet, usually in response to negative criticism. In *CAOD*, one fan ostensibly loses control when she sees a blog post titled 'KILL HARRY STYLES.'

> What the fuck is this? I would like to see Harry Styles dead?! Oh my fucking god, is this a joke? Bitch, I will pour bleach down your fucking throat if you don't shut the fuck up! I'm cleaning your mouth out, bitch, so why don't you, you, go and get some help in a mental institution – SHUT UP!

At a basic level, this seems to be an affirmation of fan mania, and a sense of ownership/ possession about Harry Styles who should be protected from outside criticism. Such emotional intensity and cathected investment is a significant component of fan identity,

and outbursts such as this are used to safeguard that identity. Directioners often perform a kind of ownership by seeking to erect a paratextual force-field around the band by attacking such negativity via 'vocabularies of involvement and pleasure' (Barker and Petley 2001, 8). (The possibility exists that such overt emotionality is a tongue-in-cheek performance.)

Such overt displays of aggression are stereotypically associated with masculine fan cultures, such as football or other sports (Theodoropoulou, 2007). Football fans that perform 'emotionally charged behaviour,' often have 'intense reactions, shout obscenities, get extremely upset and passionate, and sometimes become aggressive. (324). Sports fans 'enjoy participating in a "game," as they call it, of exchanging witty lines with their "rivals" and take up a contest of *who will defend and prove that his/her fan object is better*' (323, my italics).

Whether or not Directioners' aggressive and threatening behaviour can be viewed as a 'game' given the general nastiness of the invective represented in *CAOD*, one could hypothesise that lambasting negative discourses about the band are cathartic and affective 'mechanisms to safeguard one's fan identity but also ways to gain a great deal of "identity boost" and self-esteem' (325). From this perspective, negative discourses 'act as a counterforce to an object of admiration,' an object that is to be fiercely protected and defended if one is to be viewed as a 'real' fan (316). Such a context is excluded from the Channel Four documentary. Football rivalry, even hooliganism and physical violence, are expected from masculine men; what one should be anxious about, and fearful of, is that these are *teenage girls*, not adult men, and that such behaviour ought to be corrected or censored. In other words, One Direction fandom is dangerous, even harmful, and the documentary illustrates just how lost, 'freakish' and misbehaved these poor girls are (which is discursively constructed). It is not the teenagers that are at fault, but One Direction themselves who, like other boy bands and teen idols, have the power to corrupt: 'there is a ready truism that enthusiasm for typically male fan objects, such as sports and [certain kinds of] music, are

generally accepted whereas female fan interests are much more readily mocked' (Busse 2013, 75).

Not only do some of the fans represented in *CAOD* perform their affective involvement through discourses of violence towards those who threaten the fan-object, but towards themselves, often using signifiers of suicide or self harm, even murder, to proclaim their dedication. 'What would you do if you get to meet them today,' asks the narrator. One girl states that 'she would die,' while another claims she would 'jump off that cliff over there.' Other proclamations include: 'I wouldn't kill a puppy but I'd probably kill a cat' which is challenged by a friend – 'Oh that's so horrible' – so she revises her statement to, 'Okay, I'd kill a goldfish.' Another believes that 'people would kill each other, I reckon. Definitely.'

There is a 'clear link between identity and object of fandom – one reflects the other' (Geraghty 2014, 4). A threat to the fan-object, then, becomes a threat to one's identity and narrative of the self (Williams 2014). Also, a fan's sense of ontological security can present itself when 'the idealized fan object is potentially threatened' (Hills 2012, 114). It is not that Directioners are

> somehow neurotic or pathological, but rather because these fans' sense of
> self-identity are so firmly enmeshed with narratives of [their favourite
> band]. Threats to [the fan-object] can thus be felt as threats to these fans'
> self narratives (ibid).

Thus, these performative behaviours 'can be read as a desire for ontological security' (116). One of the ways fans deal with this challenge to self-narrative is by turning to social media to 'sustain ontological security' (115).

Directioners in Cyberspace

The narrative about Directioners as 'a new breed of fan' is principally about computer-mediated communication -- in particular, the rise of social media and especially Twitter.[1] As one fan remarks, 'Twitter is obviously a big part of it…can't really be in a fandom if you don't have Twitter.' Other comments – 'I'm always on it,' I'm on it all-day,' 'you can't not check Twitter' --and one fan's claim that she tweeted the band 182 times in one day which strengthens the self narrative of the 'real' fan – demonstrate the importance of social media in affirming and maintaining the fan identity. Twitter is 'like a prayer place. When you go to a prayer place you feel like you're connected to God. When you're on Twitter, it's like you're connected to One Direction,' explains one fan.

To be sure, there has been a general and marked shift: the proliferation of new media technologies, especially the internet, has led to the so-called mainstreaming of fandom precisely because it renders previously marginalised voices visible and accessible. But this has also had a detrimental effect on the way fandom is represented in the media as commentators frequently mine available and accessible information -- which they see as extreme -- without acknowledging, or understanding, how such behaviours are not reflections of psychologically unhinged individuals, but cathected modes of communication and performance. Interactive modes certainly broaden and diversify opportunities for fan cultures (Scodari 2007), but also allows for moral judgement and scorn of such behaviours from those on the 'outside' peering in from different social and cultural contexts.

New media technologies do not necessarily replace old ways of being a fan, but enhance and accentuate offline performances, such as gatherings outside hotel rooms, concert

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[1] One Direction has over ten million followers on Twitter but this pales in comparison to other figures such as Katie Perry (66.85m), Justin Bieber (61.48) and Barack Obama (66.51). Statistics show that One Direction's Twitter fandom does not even warrant an appearance in the top ten.

attendance, and 'symbolic pilgrimages' (Brooker 2007), such as visiting Harry Styles' home-town and finding out where he lives. The fact that Directioner Sonja claims she found out Styles' address from Twitter and then visits his home symbolises how off- and online identities comingle in significant ways as a dialectical process rather than siphoned off into binary compartments. 'It has become clear that the separation between the online and the offline cannot be sustained, rather that online and offline contexts inform and enable each other' (Orgad 2009, 37 - 38). Hills argues that 'the mediation of "new media" must be addressed rather than treated as an invisible term within the romanticised "new"' (2002, 172), but at the same time, this is hardly an exclusive component of One Direction fandom. As Booth states, 'many aspects of fan identity have remained relatively unchanged, despite the rapid diffusion of new technology into fans' lives' (2013, 57).

In *CAOD*, Twitter is shown as a platform for affective proclamations. This may take the form of aggressively protecting and valorising the band, as discussed above, but also to appeal to, and even beg them to 'follow them' on Twitter. As one fan pleads in the documentary: 'please please follow me I love so much please please on my knees I'm going to die if you don't follow me. Arrrrr, please follow me, I love you.' A shot of a mobile phone is shown in close up displaying a fan's tweet: 'why wont u follow me?! Shall I kill myself?'

In these examples, these fans seek One Direction's attention by invoking narratives of self-harm as a bargaining chip, going so far as emotionally blackmailing the band ('Shall I kill myself?'). Online comments and blog posts can work as a quest for recognition – 'notice me!' (Hills 2012, 117) – but consideration should also be given to the exchange value offered when a member of One Direction chooses to follow a fan as a form of subcultural capital. 'I want to be more than a fan,' states one girl, 'I want to be noticed and remembered.'

In many ways, this shares an affinity with those fans represented in *CAOD* who congregate outside hotels and 'stalk' the band in the hope that they can get a photograph

taken with their idols. In a rather telling scene, one fan demonstrates the power of such capital when she displays photographs of herself with each band member which clearly has an effect on another girl as she is visibly pained by the images. 'How do these pictures make you feel?' asks the invisible narrator. 'Jealous,' she responds.

In an important scene, we are shown how one fan actually meets the band and adapts her behaviour -- her *performance* -- accordingly. No longer 'crazy,' 'neurotic,' or 'freakish,' she is restrained and calm. Here, we get an intimate glimpse into the way in which fans – or at least, this particular fan – are in control and less 'crazy' than the discourse permits.

Fans also use social media to 'act out,' and further deal with threats to self-narratives by lashing out against negative criticism. But in what ways do such aggressive performances shift when fan performance occurs online? Suler conceptualises such performances as part of an 'online disinhibition effect' (2004). Such disinhibition can be benign and commenters 'reveal secrets, emotions, wishes' and also 'show unusual acts of kindness and generosity' (321). But the disinhibition 'is not always so salutary … we witness rude language, harsh criticisms, anger, hatred, even threats.' Directioners may 'say and do things in cyberspace that they wouldn't ordinarily do in the face-to-face world. They loosen up, feel less restrained, and express themselves more openly' (ibid).

Online activity, then, supplements and accentuates fandom but does not replace traditional modes: 'with little exception, much of what was written about fans twenty-five years ago applies just as well today' (Booth 2013, 57). That the documentary states that 'the new breed of fan turns to Twitter where they can track their every move,' is hardly atypical – indeed, it is a cornerstone of contemporary convergence culture -- but is represented as a narrative of enfreakment in *CAOD*. Some fans may endorse multiple modes of communication to 'get the boy's attention,' but are these behaviours truly 'extraordinary'

when contexualised and compared with other fan cultures? Do Directioners really 'have some funny ways of showing their love'?

Fantasy Online and Offline: Libidinal Voltage?

Directioners, we are told, 'turn to a fantasy world online where they can share their wildest dreams about [the band].' Fans engage in the act of 'shipping,' that is, composing narratives about One Direction that articulates a homosexual relationship. Through fan art and fan fiction, Directioners are said to 'ship' Styles and Tomlinson as lovers (known as Larry Stylinson in the community) which is, according to *CAOD*, a 'funny way of showing their love.'

Other music fans also ship their favourite idols, and 'one such faction of Beatles fans tends to […] homoeroticize relationships among the Beatles, especially between songwriting partners, Lennon and McCartney [and] compose slash stories envisioning such dalliances' (Scodari 2007, 54). But what is potentially worrying for the *CAOD* filmmakers is that, once again, these social subjects are *teenagers*, and recognizing them as sexual beings is unacceptable. That fan fiction of this kind may 'offer insights into female sexual fantasy' (Jenkins 2013, 192) or proudly proclaimed as 'pornography by and for women' (Russ, 1985), such fantasies should certainly be *verboten* for teenage girls who require protection from the onset of potent, sexual awakenings which need to be curbed (Jensen, 1992).

Anxieties about teenage sexuality have a historical precedent, most notably in accounts of 'the hysterical crowd,' those who scream, weep and lose control of their bodily functions in the presence of their idols. During the twentieth century, fans of Elvis Presley screamed and swooned to his gyrating hips and trademark sneer; and Frank Sinatra was a source of female adulation during the 1940s (Duffett 2013). It was the arrival of The Beatles, however, that not only rivalled but also 'surpassed all previous outbreaks of star-centred

hysteria […] in its intensity as well as its scale' (Enrenhich et al 1992, 86). During a period marked by 'a genuinely political movement for women's liberation,' Enrenhich et al view Beatlemania as

> the first and most dramatic uprising of *women's* sexual revolution […] To abandon control – to scream, faint, dash about in mobs – was, in form if not conscious intent, to protest the sexual repressiveness, the rigid double standard of female teen culture […] Shy subdued girls could go berserk. "Perky" ponytailed girls…could dissolve in histrionics…Girls peed in their pants, fainted, or collapsed from the emotional strain (87 -- 89).

Although difficult for adults to acknowledge, 'at least part of the fans' energy was sexual' and a genuine mode of expression (89). To assert 'an active, powerful sexuality by the tens of thousands and to do so in a way calculated to attract maximum attention was more than rebellious. It was, in its own unformulated, dizzy way, revolutionary' (ibid). The regime of truth discursively circulating around the figure of the female teen, both historically and in *CAOD*, enforces the belief that girls are expected to be not only "good" and "pure" but to be the enforcers of purity within their teen society' (85). Indeed, 'most Americans did not like to believe that twelve-year old girls had any sexual feelings to repress,' nor have the 'libidinal voltage required for three hours of screaming, sobbing, incontinent, acute-phase Beatlemania' (90). Such unbridled energy – of feminine, *sexual* energy – is coded as unruly, promiscuous and unacceptable. As Anderson argues, 'this bias derives from a persistent denigration of women's media, which in itself originates from a deep-seated historical fear and pathologisation of anything associated with feminine sexuality' (2012, 241).

In *CAOD,* fans express emotions through phenomenological language, intense physical reactions that are automatic: 'I start shrieking,' 'I had a panic attack,' 'I had an asthma attack,' 'I burst into hysterical tears.' Is this, then, really about sexuality, and teenage libido? In what ways do fans 'express sexual yearnings that would normally be…simply repressed' (Enrenhich et al 1992, 97)? Or are these behaviours also performative? In the documentary, one fan comments on Harry's body – 'his sexy abs, oh my god!' – and we see disembodied text displayed -- '#they are so hot' – but another states:

> I could not believe they were in front of me. I had like a panic attack. I got carried out by a bouncer. Basically, we thought that if we did that, we'd have more of a chance to be getting put over the barriers and on the stage with them.

In this statement, we are told that this fan had a panic attack, but then this is explained as a method of persuasion to influence the bouncers to rescue her that would somehow culminate with a visit to the band's performance space. Rather than 'a panic attack,' then, this fan *performed having a panic attack* to get closer to the band.

I have no doubt that some fans are sexually attracted to teen idols and boy bands and engage in fantasies that may be sexual or romantic. As Anderson argues in her ethnography of adult Duran Duran fans, 'many of these women claim that their first teen idols stirred their first sexual desires' (2012, 24). Perhaps, however, sex is not the only marker of Directioner fandom. Indeed, in *CAOD,* some fans have not yet experienced a 'real' relationship. Vicky informs us that she does not have a boyfriend of her own to which Channel Four asks, 'what do you think of "real" boys?' Vicky responds: 'I don't really, like, speak to them. I like focusing on One Direction.' Interestingly, this marks out the figure of the fan through the

convergence of traditional stereotypes usually associated with the Trekker and used to explain the non-normative behaviours of fanboys -- that is, asexual and lonely, obsessed with the object of fandom that privileges a fantasy world over 'the real.'

Sue Wise's account of her Elvis fandom mandated, should the regime of truth be accepted, that 'the ideological impurity of Elvis' (1997, 394) was so manifest that this is certainly not the kind of thing a feminist be fascinated with, so much so that, being a fan" [of Elvis] was to collude in one's own oppression' (394). For Wise, Elvis' narrative as 'butch god,' equipped and endowed with phallic weaponry, and 'a masturbation fantasy-object for adolescent girls,' is endorsed and written by male archivists of popular culture. Linking Elvis with 'the moral panic surrounding the behaviour of women and girls constructs a regime of truth about 'negative femininity,' stricken by 'the force of an ungovernable, if somewhat, disembodied lust' (Enrenreich et al 1992, 90). 'What better way,' exclaims Wise, 'to explain the frightening spectacle of hordes of uncontrollable females than by "discovering" that they were being sexually stimulated and manipulated by a man – literally man-ipulated' (397).

That Elvis was primarily about 'rampant male sexuality' discredits those fans who, like Wise, 'did not experience him in this way,' and the ways in which such an account gained the currency as a regime of truth is a crucial question for fan and audience scholars (396). 'What women thought then and now is largely unknown because, quite simply, no one bothered to ask or even thought our views were worth anything' (397). As with One Direction fandom, the media might find it disturbing, and a cause for moral concern, but they also love it, fuel it and foster it (ibid). In so doing, various media cherry pick from the litany of materials circulating in cyberspace to simplify the complexity of fan cultures; to report in newspapers that something is rotten in the world; to continue discriminating through the pathologising lens of the 'predatory camera,' as Richardson describes it (2010, 1), and parading social subjects in a contemporary adaptation of the Victorian freakshow. As

scholars, we need to recognise that the movement from the margins to the mainstream has not yet redressed the gender politics at work in the representational spaces of the media, fan communities and academia.

Conclusion: This is NOT Us

Following the documentary's broadcast, many fans took to Twitter to express their rage. These were fans that had been featured in *CAOD* and, also, those who believed that Channel Four had misrepresented the community. One tweet, for example, reads: 'Dear Channel Four, the majority of us have – never sent death threats – never sent hate to their girlfriends – never mobbed them #ThisisNOTus' (Klompus 2013). The Twitter hashtag is an inversion of the One Direction film, *This is Us* (2013), and demonstrates that the fan community is anything but homogenous.

The final sequence of the documentary is arguably the most poignant as a selection of fans are angered as the band ignores them and drive away from the scene. What this shows is that fans are aware of their position as 'ideal consumers' (Hills 2002) and that this economic commitment should be rewarded: 'we're the ones that buy all their albums, we're the ones that voted for them on The X Factor, without us we wouldn't even be here…they could at least try and meet us…this is one of the worst things they could do.' This is given strength by showing us those fans who could not get tickets for the most recent tour, many of whom are visibly upset and emotional. One of the reasons they could not get tickets was due to the economic realities of being a teenager and positions of class. 'Everything's about money and fame,' states one fan, and the lowest ticket price of £42.50 (about $65) is simply too much for some families' income brackets. Concert attendance is a form of fan cultural capital, and one fan comments upon the way her peers ask, 'how can you not go if you're a big fan?' Her response crystallises the economic situation: 'couldn't afford that.'

CAOD endorses a regime of truth about teenage female fans, but representation constructs moral dualisms between 'good,' and 'bad' forms of fan performances. By using a fan studies perspective, I have been able to deconstruct the representation of the figure of the teenage One Direction fan as neither freakish nor outlandish. Yet we must take account of the fact that this exegesis is a scholarly one and that for people unfamiliar with the fan studies tradition, the Channel Four documentary's narrative of enfreakment is charged with ideological and political regimes of truth. Although this goes some way to conceptualise performance in the Directioner community, a more rigorous, ethnographic study is called for.

Acknowledgements

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