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on
the poetry
of strikes

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and reviews by
Yaqing Xie,
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Foreword

**Melanie Fitton-Hayward, Katrina Wilkins, Nicola Thomas,
Samuel Cooper, Abdulmalik Ofemile**
University of Nottingham

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the *Journal of LTS*, a journal for the University of Nottingham's Research Priority Area (RPA), "Languages, Texts and Society". The RPA, founded in 2015 and now led by Professor Dirk Göttsche and Associate Professor Kathy Conklin, is dedicated to understanding how communication and language shape and are shaped by society in a range of ways, bringing together linguists, literary scholars, translators and practitioners. This tripartite structure of key concepts – Languages, Texts and Society – is always in flux, with each element defining and redefining the others: the aim of the *Journal of LTS* is to provide a space for research students to explore this triad of ideas and their interrelation, as well as to give junior researchers the opportunity to develop professional editorial skills in context.

The journal was born out of the inaugural postgraduate symposium, 'Making Interdisciplinarity Work', on 22nd April 2016. Scholars from across the UK considered the political potential of interdisciplinary and collaborative work that tackled this unstable nexus. Subjects were wide-ranging and inspiring, and included sociolinguistic analysis of educational textbooks, an exploration of writing through gendered roles

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in the memoir form, the performance of identity on BBC Radio Northern Ireland's *This is Northern Ireland* (1949), and Swedish composer Ture Rangström's *språkmelodi* (speech melody).

The discussions generated through the intersection of such varied research seemed to the editors to be a clarion call for a formal space to elaborate on this work. While interdisciplinarity, collaboration and innovation are often prized in the language of academia (and academic management), postgraduate researchers regularly contend with funding and institutional structures which are still rigorously divided along disciplinary boundaries. Interdisciplinary and collaborative work can seem a luxury; the preserve of those with secure funding arrangements, a wide network of contacts and the freedom to experiment. At the same time, it is very often junior scholars who have most to offer in terms of innovative approaches. Fresh eyes provide new insights, and reveal new aspects of the complex interactions between languages, methodologies, and traditional disciplines. Distilling these research practices and the multi-disciplinary subject focus of the LTS RPA into cohesive journal issues is no simple task, and we expect to experiment with a range of approaches. The journal's content and archive, as it expands, will exhibit and showcase interdisciplinary methodologies. We anticipate that each issue will contain material in a range of different formats, including traditional articles, book reviews, interviews and translations of postgraduate work published in other languages under Creative Commons license. This latter form will, we hope, serve to contribute to the development of multilingual research practices and provoke dialogue between scholars working in different languages.

Issue One looks at cultural responses to, and articulations of, late 20th century history, namely creative work that complicates our relationship to received historical narratives, and the nature of the historical narrative itself. Jessica Wax-Edwards, in *Caso Colosio: Re-examining Historical Narratives*, analyses the historiographic metafiction in Carlos Bolado's *Colosio: al asesinato* (2012) as a critique of the power dynamics at work in a post-revolutionary Mexican politics characterised by corruption. Michael James, in *Trading on Strikes: Trade Unions in Steve Ely's 'Ballad of the Scabs' and Helen Mort's 'Scab'*, considers political corruption of another kind in the United Kingdom, as

he draws on contemporary poetry that restages the miners' strikes of the 1970s and 1980s in order to explore the relationship between received strike and trade union narratives and the UK's normalisation of extraordinarily restrictive trade union legislation.

The translated text for this issue first appeared as a paper presented at XXXVIII Congresso Brasileiro de Ciências da Comunicação at Rio de Janeiro, 4–7 September 2015. The paper, authored by Emmanuelle Dias and Felipe Borges, of the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, has been translated from Portuguese by Anneliese Hatton, University of Nottingham. With the original title *Estudos Culturais e a televisão contemporânea em discussão*, translated as *A Discussion of Cultural Studies and Contemporary Television*, the article discusses present-day television-watching habits and how these reflect, and interact with, cultural perspectives.

Finally, this issue sees three recent and seminal works reviewed. Firstly, Yaqing Xie reviews *Beyond the Masks of Modernism: Global and Transnational Perspectives*, edited by Andrew Reynolds and Bonnie Roos. Secondly, *Linguistic Ethnography: Collecting, Analysing and Presenting Data*, by Fiona and Angela Creese, is reviewed by Katie Harrison. The final review is by Nayoung Jeon, on *British Spy Fiction and End of Empire*, by Sam Goodman. This range of reviews, traversing through several of the RPA's key themes, concludes the first issue by exploring the very pertinent topic of interdisciplinarity. The books reviewed combine and correlate various fields of study: modernism with art, music and literature; linguistics with ethnography; and literature with politics and history; and demonstrate the breadth of opportunities that an interdisciplinary approach offers.

We hope you enjoy this first issue of the *Journal of Languages, Texts, and Society*, a postgraduate peer-reviewed open-access journal. Our double-blind peer review process enlists an established academic alongside a postgraduate research student. The editors are passionate about this pedagogical aspect, as well as knowledge-sharing through open access – the *Journal of LTS* looks to train the next generation of researchers while publishing the next generation of research, free of access restrictions. Please contact pg-lts@nottingham.ac.uk to become involved in any aspect of future issues.

Caso Colosio: Re-examining Historical Narratives

Jessica Wax-Edwards
Royal Holloway University

Over twenty years have passed since the assassination of Luis Donaldo Colosio Murrieta, the Priísta¹ candidate for the 1994 Mexican presidential elections. The leading candidate in the presidential race, Colosio was killed on the 23rd March 1994 during a rally in Lomas Taurinas, in the city of Tijuana. The gunman, Mario Aburto Martínez, was arrested at the scene and confessed to the murder. Although the official investigation concluded that Aburto acted alone, public opinion has questioned this simplistic resolution. Such a high-profile and public assassination had not occurred in Mexico since the murder of President

¹ “Priísta” is the adjectival form for Mexico’s largest political party, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI). Of Mexico’s three main political parties, the centrist PRI ruled exclusively for 71 years until the presidential elections of the year 2000, when the centre-right Partido de Acción Nacional (PAN) came to power. The third main political party was formed originally by dissenting centre-leftist members of the PRI and is now known as the Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD).

Álvaro Obregón in 1928. The year 1994 was already a tumultuous time given the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional's (EZLN) declaration of war on the State, and the assassination of Colosio had thus left Mexico with an international reputation for instability and violence. The candidate's murder shook the nation and the motivation for the assassination has never been satisfactorily resolved, remaining a topic of contention in the collective public memory. This is evidenced by the plethora of literature and documentaries on the subject such as *El Caso Colosio* (2010), a documentary produced by the Discovery Channel, and Héctor Aguilar Camín's *La Tragedia de Colosio*.

Carlos Bolado's film *Colosio: el asesinato* (2012) returns to this turbulent period. The film re-explores the events at Tijuana under the banner of fiction based on true events, as explained in the title sequence, and casts its own aspersions on who was responsible for the murder of this prominent political figure. Adopting the police thriller genre, the narrative follows detective Andrés Vázquez, who is hired by members of the PRI party to perform a secondary parallel investigation into the Colosio case. As Vázquez's investigation begins to raise questions that contradict official conclusions, witnesses begin to be murdered one after another until Vázquez realises he and his family are also in danger. The film ends in a dramatic and violent climax where Vázquez uncovers a corrupt and intricate political plot to eliminate the candidate that implicates the highest echelons of power in Mexico. This essay will examine the paradox of historical fiction and the often unclear distinction between historical fact and artistic license, as a means of placing *Colosio* in the critical tradition of historiographic metafiction.

Upon its release, *Colosio* reached an audience of 228.5 million, making it the highest grossing Mexican film of 2012 (Ponce). Exhibited the same year as the 2012 presidential elections and exactly eighteen years since the killing, *Colosio* provides the audience with the opportunity to revisit the traumatic events of 1994 and to re-examine this historic moment of political uncertainty when institutional corruption was arguably at its nadir. The film's popularity testifies to the relevance of its subject matter in present-day society, remaining a polemical topic in Mexico. *Colosio* advances the tradition started by Jorge Fons' feature *Rojo amanecer* (1989), which revisited the Tlateloclo

Massacre of October 1968, where Mexican cinema is used as a tool for filling the historical voids of the past. As director Carlos Bolado states, “What is important is for people to know what happened eighteen years ago, to recover our memory” (qtd. in Rodriguez). However, *Colosio*’s innovative approach of portraying a contested and violent historical event using combinations of sundry archival materials, re-enactments, and creative explorations of conspiracy theories tests generic boundaries and provides a productive opportunity to explore the notion of historiographic metafiction.

Historical Narratives

The recounting of history is itself a narrative process. In 1967 Roland Barthes challenged the idea that history constituted a discourse *sui generis*, suggesting that there was no linguistic basis for distinguishing between “factual” and “imaginary” forms of narrative and equally calling into question the impartiality assumed by the historian (Lane 1940: 145). Barthes, examining this notion within the framework of semiology, thus intended to expose the belief that historical representations cannot simply be restricted to referential meanings and that writer and reader alike will also inevitably bestow that meaning. As Barthes, among other theorists, has demonstrated, the process of signification is essential to the practice of historical representation and, with this in mind, historical record cannot be viewed as a discourse based on transcendental or indexical facts. Similarly, in the essay ‘Interpretation in History,’ historian Hayden White defines an historical narrative as “necessarily a mixture of adequately and inadequately explained events, a congeries of established and inferred facts and at once a representation that is an interpretation and an interpretation that passes for an explanation of the whole process mirrored in narrative” (281). Thus White argues that history and fiction are epistemologically equivalent forms of storytelling. Thus much like the complex relationship between documentary film and its representation of the historical world, historical narratives found in and produced from historical record are equally a representation of reality offering their own interpretations and explanations for the events of the past.

Building on White's metahistorical approach to the process of historiography, Linda Hutcheon (1989) examines the potential of metahistory in fiction, what she terms "historiographic metafiction." For instance, a filmic text such as *Colosio*, which could be generically characterised as historical fiction but advances an alternative historical account alongside a fictionalised narrative, constitutes a historiographic metafiction. According to Hutcheon, historiographic metafiction differs from the traditional genre of historical fiction because the former "works to situate itself within historical discourse without surrendering its autonomy as fiction" (2002: 4). By subverting or denying official history, "Historiographic metafiction manages to satisfy such a desire for 'worldly' grounding while at the same time querying the very basis of the authority of that grounding" (2002: 5). Thus while theorists such as Barthes and White emphasise the constructed nature of both fiction and history, Hutcheon emphasises how the intertextuality and self-reflexivity of historiographic metafictional undermines claims of historical veracity in tandem with fictional narratives (2002: 3).

Although Barthes, White, and Hutcheon all refer specifically to written narratives, the conclusions of their arguments can be applied to the filmic medium and its narrative treatment of historical "facts". As Bill Nichols explains when trying to distinguish between documentary and fiction films anchored in a historical reality, "Although fiction films employ elements of realism in the service of their story, the overall relation of film to the world is metaphorical" (115). Nichols' statement infers that documentary film maintains a literal relationship with the world it represents, while fiction film is not constrained by such associations. By embracing White's assertion that history and fiction are analogous, overlapping modes of storytelling, *Colosio* provides an open space for the exploration and reconfiguration of the historical past. Fiction film is not moored in an imaginary universe, but instead remains in dialogue with the "real" world, whilst at the same time forming itself into a new representation of the same historical reality. As such, a historically centred fiction film is not simply a mimetic representation of the world but a supplementary interpretation of a time period or incident that can be viewed alongside all other accounts of events. It is a palimpsest, in that each representation adds a new layer of

interpretation that interacts with former and future versions of history. Equally, a film's reliance on narrative form as a means of proffering its own interpretation of historical events is a recourse that underpins, and, once again, parallels the role of narrative discourse in relation to historical representation. Thus it is important to examine a historically based and politically pertinent fiction film such as *Colosio*, which supplies an interpretation of the changing political contexts that framed the 2000s, Mexico's transition to institutional democracy, and the instances of violence and corruption of the past that continue to impact society's faith in the politics of the present.

Colosio: el asesinato (2012)

Colosio is a fictional story "based on real events" and thus, like a historical account, provides a narrative space where interpretation and representation coincide. Bolado's film seeks to represent the events of Colosio's assassination but equally the inadequate explanation of events, to use White's words, and a public distrust of official accounts allow for the film's own interpretation of the Colosio killing. Bolado uses the narrative element of a subsidiary investigation spearheaded by fictional detective character Andrés Vázquez, played by José María Yazpik, to broach the topic. This is coupled with the subsequent focus on his wife Verónica, played by Kate del Castillo. While Vázquez provides a privileged perspective into the results of both the official and subsidiary investigations, Verónica functions as a *vox populi* by providing the perspective of the public, the media, and the conspiracy theorists in her role as a radio presenter. These antagonistic roles are evidenced in a scene featuring Vázquez and Verónica on a stairwell after a doctor's appointment. The couple is trying to conceive but, consumed by the complexity of his investigation, Vázquez has missed the appointment. The couple is framed in close-up using shot/counter shot as they dispute Verónica's radio coverage of the *Colosio* case. Vázquez complains that Verónica has alleged, without proof, on her show that the Aburto held by the authorities is not the same Aburto who committed the murder. The detective's concern is that listeners will believe Verónica's interpretation of events as fact. As such, they may think she is privy to secret information, which might be linked back to his clandestine investigation.

However Verónica's response that, "todo el país piensa que no es el mismo tipo,"² highlights the public's own distrust towards the government and any official conclusions offered by those in power. A history of government cover-ups and misreporting, such as the patently fraudulent PRI victory in the 1988 presidential elections or even the government-instigated 1968 student massacre, have resulted in a public critical of official reports presented by the executive power. For instance, in October 1968, a student protest against the hegemonic PRI regime in Mexico was met with violent repression by the government, resulting in hundreds dead.² Despite its suppression, this event—known as the Tlatelolco Massacre—continues to influence political culture and directly affected the stability of the ruling government in part due to the emergence of discourses of scrutiny including Elena Poniatowska's *La Noche de Tlatelolco* (1971) that challenged the official representation of events. Similarly, after the Colosio assassination, general public opinion maintained that Aburto did not act alone, and many believed that Colosio's own political party, the PRI, had organised the murder (Orgambides "El asesinato"). Further confusion and suspicion had been aggregated by the presentation of Aburto to the press after his capture. Government officials had shaved and cut Aburto's hair, prompting allegations that he bore no resemblance to the gunman captured on camera after the murder (Oppenheimer 62; Orgambides "Condenado"; Icela Rodríguez and Urrutia; AFP-AP). The suggestion that the true explanation for Colosio's murder remains to be discovered is once again foregrounded in the film.

Apart from Vázquez and Verónica, the film consists predominantly of political figures and events from the year 1994, which form the central elements of the plot. These include characters based on politicians such as Secretary General of the PRI José Francisco Ruiz Massieu, and then-president Carlos Salinas de Gortari, to credible but unofficial explanations for the assassination as with the suggestion of an internal

² "The whole country thinks that it is not the same guy" (editor's translation).

plot to kill Colosio masterminded by members of his own political party, the PRI. Some journalists publicly argued that only members of the PRI would have had the means to effect such an assassination (Orgambides “Condonado”). It is these plausible explanations for events, which can be labelled neither entirely false nor true, that provide the intrigue of the narrative. Establishing what is “fact” and what is fiction can be problematic, as making this distinction implies that there is one true version of events. However, as previously discussed, to relate history is to relate an interpretation of history. Ergo, no one indexical version of events can exist. Nonetheless, it is these instances where fact and fiction elide that call into question the notion of the “real” and the validity of historical discourse.

The recounting of historical realities through fictional narratives is not uncommon in Mexican cinema, particularly in regards to traumatic or controversial events. Jorge Fons’ *Rojo amanecer* (1989), one of Mexico’s most influential and potent fiction films of the last 25 years, is a key example of this. *Rojo amanecer* tells the story of a middle-class Mexican family as they witness the day of the Tlatelolco Massacre on 2nd October 1968. The film is shot predominantly within the family apartment, one of many that surround the Plaza de Tlatelolco in Mexico City, and thus locates the family in a central position in order to witness the unravelling of these historical events. Much like *Rojo amanecer* provides a new representation of the events of 2nd October 1968, *Colosio* offers a novel interpretation of the events surrounding the Colosio case. Both films centre on a collectively significant and arguably unresolved event in contemporary Mexican history. While *Rojo amanecer* tackles the trauma of the government-incited attack on the Mexican populace, *Colosio* deals with the brutal assassination of a leading presidential candidate that promised to eradicate institutionalised corruption from within Mexican politics. The repercussions and effects of both these poignant events are never satisfactorily resolved, and thus persist in public memory. Hence, these representations are important because of what they add to the public understanding of the trauma. Both the slaying of Colosio and the massacre of citizens in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas are events characterised by their unexpected levels of violence and the suspicious circumstances that surround their effectuation. Both relate to the

untrustworthy and chary connection of political institutions and constitutionalised power linked to these events. Thus the reasons to broach the events of the 1994 assassination under the protective guise of fiction, much like the approach of *Rojo amanecer*, constitute a framework through which filmmakers and audiences alike can re-explore, discuss, and ideally contend with the issues that permeate the event, as a means of addressing the trauma that it caused and that persist in popular cultural memory.

The point, perhaps, where *Colosio*'s re-examination of the past differs from that of *Rojo amanecer* may be identified through the film's desire to solve the Colosio case. *Rojo amanecer* provides an insight into the way politics and society had polarised different Mexican generations and classes by imagining the effects of the Tlatelolco Massacre on one family. As such, the film supplies a microcosmic version of events. *Colosio*, however, explores an entirely alternative explanation for the historical events it depicts. The official report on the Colosio case, entitled *Informe de la Investigación del Homicidio del Licenciado Luis Donald Colosio Murrieta* and published by the Procuraduría General de la República (PGR) concludes that Colosio's murder was planned and completed by Mario Aburto. The report states, "a ninguno de los miembros de esta subprocuraduría nos queda duda de que Mario Aburto Martínez fue el autor material del homicidio del licenciado Luis Donald Colosio Murrieta."³ However, the supplementary investigation carried out in the film proposes a far more complex and layered conspiracy plot engineered by members of Colosio's own party, the PRI. Although not an implausible scenario, the film's version of events challenges the official historical version of events. Equally, though this explanation differs from that of the approved historical record, it is in keeping with the many conspiracy theories surrounding the assassination such as the alleged involvement of the PRI (Orgambides "El asesinato"). This reworking of history from

³ "None of the members of this Assistant Attorney General's Office has any doubt that Mario Aburto Martínez was the material author of the murder of Luis Donald Colosio Murrieta" (editor's translation).

within the spatiotemporal dimension inherent to fiction fits closely with Hutcheon's concept of historiographic metafiction as previously defined. Bolado's *Colosio* locates itself within the controversial period of the 1994 presidential electoral race but adds the entirely fictional device of the detective character, Andrés Vázquez, and his family. Vázquez's story allows the filmmakers to arrive at conclusions that oppose the official historical accounts without totally denying them due to the film's classification as fiction.

Also implicated in the notion of historiographic metafiction is the concept of parody. Hutcheon refers to parody not in its eighteenth-century definition of "wit and ridicule" but in its postmodern notion of "contesting revision or rereading of the past that both confirms and subverts the power of the representations of history" (2002: 91). In *Colosio*, the events of 1994 are reimaged in a way that differs from official accounts of the assassination, however the film questions these "facts" without resultantly rejecting them. Instead the issues of representation are foregrounded. For instance, in a scene featuring Police Commander Torres, head of the official investigation (played by José Sefami), and the character nicknamed El Doctor (played by Daniel Giménez Cacho), it is clear that Torres is not convinced by the simple resolution of the assassination that Aburto acted alone. However, blackmail and pressure from El Doctor result in a subsequent scene where Torres announces to the press that Aburto was the sole participant in this murder. This conclusion given by Torres to the media will thus become the official record of events, however the previous scenes in the film undermine the credibility of this conclusion. This overt suggestion that the official report is a constructed lie clearly suggests the existence of an unconstructed truth and thus further highlights the representational nature of alleged historical facts. As Hutcheon wrote, "The intertextual parody of historiographic metafiction [...] offers a sense of the presence of the past, but this is a past that can only be known from its texts, its traces—be they literary or historical" (1989: 4). In *Colosio* the audience is confronted with these traces, in the form of official documents, recordings, conspiracy theories, and more; however, the film also challenges the veracity of these materials. The film itself provides yet another interpretation of the events and its self-reflexivity and

intertextual parody work to situate its own historical value on par with the materials it consults and references.

In *Colosio* the examples of moments where fact and fiction are elided into one symbiotic entity are prolific, but the epitomic fusing of these is perhaps most illustrative of historiographic metafiction in the scene where the “true” events of the assassination are revealed. The classic detective story itself can be read as a metaphor for the process of reading or understanding an account of an event (Diemert 1996: 69). The detective character collates facts, re-interpreting them until the true unfolding of events reveals itself. Thus, detective fiction itself, which inherently thematises narrativity, provides a rich illustrative example of metafiction. Coupled with the historical nature of *Colosio*, the film’s classification as historiographic metafiction is further evidenced. The entire narrative structure of the film, as is typical of the police thriller genre, builds towards the climactic revelation of how the crime was committed and by whom, the proverbial showing of the cards, and *Colosio* is no different in this sense. Twenty-five minutes from the end of the film, Vázquez presents the conclusion of his investigation to El Licenciado, a character presumed to represent Secretary General José Ruiz Massieu (played by Odiseo Bichir). In this sequence the scene of the assassination is reconstructed in the present timeframe of the diegetic world using members of Vázquez’s team, and combined with historical re-enactments of the assassination filmed for the purpose of the narrative. Thus the filmic account is aligned with the original archival footage of the assassination. This palimpsest of narrative and truths merges the fictional and factual elements of the story and subsequently highlights the constructed and interpretive nature of historical discourse. The Greek word *historein*, which forms the etymological root of the word “history,” is a transitive verb meaning “to learn by inquiry” (Marincola 40). Thus “history” is defined as a type of investigation. Similarly, the word *historia* in Castellano signifies both history and story. This once again resuscitates the issues of interpretation and perspective that hamper the possibility of an indexical historical account. The recounting of history is a narrative process that contains elements of personal interpretation as a means of explanation. As such, writing history ineluctably implicates the formation of a story.

In the same vein, this sequence of re-enactment in *Colosio* foregrounds the notion of history as performance. The filmic text is both intertemporal and multi-layered. Not only are fiction/reality boundaries blurred but so too are time frames and representations. The revelatory sequence highlights the continued presence of representations within representations, while the use of the *mise-en-abyme* technique once again foregrounds the metafictional quality embodied by *Colosio*. This layering of perspectives and times highlights the many differing opinions and understandings of the crime and the impossibility of reaching one “true” conclusion. While Vázquez explains the events, using his team as the relevant pawns in the re-enactment of the attack, the spectator is privileged with the juxtaposition of visually demonstrative shots depicting the described events related by the detective. For instance, when Vázquez describes to El Licenciado the position of Javier Ortega, a security officer and representative of the Centro de Investigación y Seguridad Nacional (CISEN), the camera immediately cuts to a sepia-coloured close-up shot of Ortega looking through binoculars and features the subtitle “Javier Ortega, CISEN”. Thus the film is able to demarcate visually who Vázquez is referring to and this person’s specific role within the narrative. The film then returns to the cooler, white balance of the diegetic present, where Vázquez indicates to Massieu the member of his team representing Ortega in the re-enactment, shown holding a triangular paper flag with the name “Ortiga” written on it. The performance element of history is thus brought to the fore. Although no one present was in Lomas Taurinas to witness the assassination, the reproduction of events in the forest sequence provides the kind of subjectivity produced by self-witness. As an account of the events, and perhaps even an example of oral history, the re-enactment provided by Vázquez is first a representation of the assassination that in turn re-creates the event and finally allows the event to be seen in a different way; the re-enactment thus arguably mobilises new ways of seeing the assassination. It is thus clear that *Colosio*’s use of multi-layered and intertemporal representations can itself be read as a thematising of narrativity. The constructed nature of historical discourse is continually brought to the fore in the film and is itself a central theme within the narrative. Equally, the text’s classification as a historiographic

metafiction—and particularly the notion of parody—implicate the ongoing need for the nation to contend with the past in the present. Hence, it is through a parodic reworking of history that a fictional narrative can establish an informed dialogue with the past. *Colosio* blurs the boundaries of truth and fiction but in turn creates novel interpretations of the events of the Colosio assassination. The film re-creates these historical events in order for them to be re-seen from a different perspective, both within the diegetic world of the narrative and in the present day. In *Colosio* the key events of 1994 remain unchanged: Colosio is assassinated, the government concludes Aburto acted alone, and Ruiz Massieu is later murdered in his car. It is, however, the explanations for these events, which differ from formal historical record, that provide new and illuminating interpretations.

Colosio is a prominent example of the continuing presence of a Mexican visual culture that seeks to represent the corruption and violence that has characterised national politics since the Mexican revolution. The film provides compelling insights into the functioning of elite power under PRI governance and elucidates the similarities between the regimes of the past and present. Through its innovative approach to history, the text constitutes an interesting exemplar of Hutcheon's notion of historiographic metafiction. Historical research is often compared to detective work and the film's treatment of events uses the generic tropes of police procedural to explore such a sensitive and contested historical event. More than twenty years on from the violent and public killing of Colosio, the assassination still remains an important part of both Mexico's collective memory and, equally, a mirror to the nation's current crisis. Despite the re-election of the PRI to executive power in the year 2012, Bolado's film indicates the continued public disillusionment with complex and opaque systems of power that characterised 71 years of PRI rule. The allusions to the growing levels of violence in Mexico since Colosio's murder, as highlighted in Bolado's *Colosio*, implicate the ongoing failure of the government to abolish corruption and the haunting presence of the party politics of the past.

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Trading on Strikes: Trade Unions in Steve Ely's 'Ballad of the Scabs' and Helen Mort's 'Scab'

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In the past few years there have been a number of poetry collections which concern themselves with trade unions and strike action. This essay will focus on two of these collections, Steve Ely's *England* (2015) and Helen Mort's *Division Street* (2013), to examine the ways in which these poets not only contend with representing trade unions, but also how these poems seek to complicate our relationship with any easy comprehension of the miners' strikes of the 1970s and 1980s and the unions that were responsible for the commencement of these industrial disputes.

The publication of these two works—along with Paul Bentley's *Largo* (2011), Ely's debut collection, *Oswald's Book of Hours* (2013) and Paul Batchelor's selection in 2013's *Oxford New Poets*, all of which contend with trade union representations in some form, particularly in regards to the 1984–5 miners' strike—show a renewed interest in, and turning back to, a period in recent British history that has in many ways been

marginalised, no doubt partly due to the relative weakness of the trade union movement today.

Owen Jones writes in his 2011 book, *Chavs: The Demonization of the Working Class*, that “the unions, whatever their faults and limitations, had given the workers in these [old industrial] communities strength, solidarity and a sense of power. All of this had sustained a feeling of belonging, of pride in a shared working-class experience” (48–49). Jones’ statement is situated in his discussion of a Thatcherite legacy so damaging to trade unions that “when Labour came to power in 1997, Tony Blair could boast that even after his proposed reforms, trade union laws would remain ‘the most restrictive’ in the Western world” (49).

In a UK in which zero-hour contracts are rife and for many job security is near unattainable, trade unions provide an essential bulwark against exploitative labour practices. Yet, be it as a result of a disillusionment with unions and their ability to affect substantive change in the workplace, a lack of awareness surrounding the benefits that unionisation affords or an increasingly temporary and transient workforce that unions struggle to reach, union membership continues to fall year-on-year. At the heart of many of these issues is that of the individual and the collective. It is as an individual worker with individual concerns that one joins a union yet, in many ways, once you have joined a union, your voice becomes marginalised, you become part of a system which seeks to “benefit” the collective.

Turning to the poems, and the most recent of the two works, Steve Ely’s second collection, *Englaland*. *Englaland* is described in its blurb as “an unapologetic and paradoxical affirmation of a bloody, bloody-minded and bloody brilliant people. Danish huscarls, Falklands war heroes, pit-village bird-nesters, aging prize-fighters, flying pickets, jihadi suicide-bombers and singing yellowhammers”. In Ely’s book, trade unions, strike action and violence pervade poems which are littered with acronyms from industry and politics, most of which come in the book’s second movement ‘The Harrowing of the North’. ‘The Harrowing of the North’ refers to William I’s—alternatively known as William the Conqueror or William the Bastard—Harrying of the North (1069–70) where brutal attempts were made to quell uprisings in the north of England. Ely draws a not too subtle parallel between that event and the war against trade

unions—and more specifically the NUM (National Union of Mineworkers)—during the miners’ strikes of the 1970s and 1980s, while also tracing concerns, dating back for centuries, regarding stately oppression and workers’ resistance to the present day. The title also, of course, echoes Christ’s ‘Harrowing of Hell’.

‘Ballad of the Scabs’, the centerpiece and longest poem of ‘The Harrowing of the North’, works as a potted history of the NUM (National Union of Mineworkers), and more broadly the trade union movement, during the 1970s and 80s:

In ‘72 the NUM
shook the Tory State
closing down the cokeworks
there at Saltney Gate.

The miners’ flying pickets
and their comrades in the TUC
showed the power the workers have
when they act in unity.

(Ely 136)

Ely’s opening to the ballad situates power to destabilise the state with the NUM.³ However, through the first two stanzas there is a gradual shift as we see ‘the NUM’ become ‘miners’ and then ‘workers’. The shift from ‘NUM’ to ‘workers’ presents both a sense of the erosion of a sense of organisational belonging—in that the ‘protection’ afforded through being part of a union is removed—while simultaneously re-establishing the concerns and actions of those miners who were striking (and part of the

³ As the miners decided to strike in winter, in the 1972 strike it only took the miners a month to bring Britain to a halt: on the 9th February Prime Minister Edward Heath was forced to declare a ‘state of emergency’, with the 3-day working week following two days later. The strike was finally called off two weeks after on 25th February with the miners agreeing to a wage increase of between £5 to £6, plus other benefits (“BBC ON THIS DAY | 25 | 1972: Miners Call Off Crippling Coal Strike”). In the 1984–5 strike, the strike began at the beginning of March when the call for coal was much lower.

NUM) within the wider community of class—‘worker’—conflict and resistance. This holds true for how we conceive of our histories; in her book on collective memory, Astrid Erll states that “there is no collective memory without individual actualization” (107). It is the individual who must produce a ‘memory’ for the collective, which then feeds back to the individual in a constant cycle of change and augmentation. This is one of the common issues when talking about trade unions and strike action: how should we refer to union organisations and how or where do we attribute power? There is a constant tension between the view of unions as a homogenous organisation and unions as being comprised of workers who often share the same profession but not necessarily the same views on how their unions should operate.⁴ The 1972 miners’ strike predominantly centred around increasing wages for NUM members—albeit in an industry that had already seen hundreds of pit closures at the cost of approximately 430,000 jobs since the late 1950s (num.org.uk). Yet, Ely chooses to focus on the broader political impact that the 1972 strike had on the ‘Tory State’.⁵ This is an important distinction to make because it situates trade unions in direct opposition to the ‘state’. This is no doubt due, at least in part, to Ted Heath’s calling of a ‘state of emergency’ on 9th February 1972.⁶ Ely essentially elevates the 1972

⁴ In 1972 only 58.8% of miners voted to go on strike—just exceeding the 55% required (Beckett and Hencke 2009: 23).

⁵ It is perhaps surprising that Ely refers to the ‘Tory State’, as opposed to simply the ‘state’; from 1970–1974 Prime Minister (PM) Edward Heath led a Conservative government, however, from 1964–70 (PM Harold Wilson) and 1974–1979 (Wilson and then James Callaghan) the Labour party held office. By calling the state ‘Tory’, Ely does not just refer to the elected government at the time, but to an idea that the structure of the state itself is based on conservative principles and ideas.

⁶ Section 1(1) of the 1920 Emergency Powers Act reads that a state of emergency may be called ‘if at any time it appears to His Majesty that any action has been taken or is immediately threatened by any persons or body of persons of such a nature and on so extensive a scale as to be calculated, by interfering with the supply and distribution of food, water, fuel, or light, or with the means of locomotion, to deprive the community, or any substantial portion of the community, of the essentials of life, His Majesty may, by proclamation (hereinafter referred to as

miners' strike from an industrial dispute to a conflict between workers and 'the state'. The union here becomes situated as a political organisation, defined by its political, and not labour-based, impact. Still, it is through the suppression and withdrawal of their labour—'closing down the cokeworks'—that unions have political efficacy. Ely presents the union as 'proactive', even if it is the NUM's ability to organise an absence of 'work' through picketing and strike action that affords them the greatest political agency. By choosing not to contextualise the 1972 miners' strike, Ely appears to expect a readership already conversant with the strike of 1972. This is unusual given that *Englaland* was published in 2015 and the 1972 strike has largely been ignored in popular culture in favour of the 1984–5 miners' strike.⁷ Due to the fact, perhaps, that as trade union membership numbers have declined relatively steadily since 1985 (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills 22)⁸, the strike of 1984–5 is often seen as the beginning of trade unions' waning influence in the UK. Also, through positioning the NUM as the poem's subject, an NUM which destabilises the 'Tory State' without accounting for the reasons behind these actions, Ely presents a proactive, as opposed to reactionary, union. In the poem's opening, the NUM are not defending their members' jobs or working conditions against the state; in fact the job of mining is not mentioned. The NUM are the 'aggressors' whose main aim appears revolutionary.

a proclamation of emergency), declare that a state of emergency exists' (Emergency Powers Act 1920). The 1964 Emergency Powers Act broadened the scope so that "the words from "any action" to "so extensive a scale" there shall be substituted the words "there have occurred, or are about to occur, events of such a nature"". Section 2 of the 1964 Act also allowed the use of the armed forces to engage in any work of 'national importance' during an emergency period (Emergency Powers Act 1964).

⁷ The movies *Pride*, *Billy Elliot*, and, to a lesser extent, *Brassed Off* (which is set ten years after the strike) all have the 1984–5 strike as a backdrop.

⁸ The periods 1997-1999 and 2004-2007 saw slight increases in trade union membership but these were not sustained. (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills 22)

The NUM's proactivity is mirrored against the 'TUC' (Trades Union Congress)⁹, which becomes almost a subsidiary of the NUM in the poem through 'the miners' flying pickets/ and their comrades in the TUC' (Ely 136). As the 'comrades' are *in* the TUC and not simply 'the TUC' there is a tension between the organisation and the individuals within it. A possible implication is that the TUC is not supporting the NUM, but some of the 'workers' in the organisation are.¹⁰ The TUC was 'not directly involved in any way' in the 1984–5 strike. Scargill, rightly, believed "that if he allowed the TUC into the conflict he would lose control because the general council would have been far more amenable to seeking a compromise and an early settlement of the dispute" (Taylor 251). Jones describes miners, unsurprisingly, considering Britain's reliance on coal in the 20th century,¹¹ as "the vanguard of the union movement in Britain" (55). Yet, it is worth noting that in this verse the NUM is 'replaced' as we shift from political concerns to more explicitly strike-based actions. It is clear that while the unions call industrial action, it is the members of the unions that must 'enact' the strike through withholding their labour. However, it is still the NUM that close 'down the cokeworks', not the workers. Where the NUM 'shook' the state and are 'closing down' factories, the miners and 'their comrades' 'showed' their power and 'act' in unity. The 'workers' perform their actions, supporting the activity of the NUM in the opening stanza. As Ely terms

⁹ The Trades Union Congress is not technically a trade union itself but a federation representing a large majority of trade union organisations in the UK; their 'mission' being to "be a high profile organisation that campaigns successfully for trade union aims and values; assists trade unions to increase membership and effectiveness; cuts out wasteful rivalry; and promotes trade union solidarity" ("About The TUC").

¹⁰ In 1972, the TUC's 'greatest' achievement would probably have been the release of the 'Pentonville Five', jailed after the 1972 dock strike—"shop stewards of the Transport and General Workers' Union, [who] were arrested on the picket line, committed for contempt and put in Pentonville Prison" ("TUC | History Online").

¹¹ In 1920 coal accounted for 99% of Britain's fuel input for electricity generation and remained at over 50%—bar during the miners' strike of 1984–5 when it dropped to around 45%—until 1995 (Department of Energy and Climate Change 2013).

this demonstration of unity an ‘act’, we have the twin ideas of ‘performance’ and ‘action’ being presented. Yet, this ‘act’ is one that is required for the presentation of ‘power’ that industrial action requires. Having said that, the use of ‘when’ in ‘when they act in unity’ (136) could trouble this reading by suggesting, as it does in a conditional clause, that this power can only be shown ‘when’, in some hypothetical future, this ‘unity’ actually occurs. With this work being published in 2015, and with trade union membership having decreased consistently since 2007–8 (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills 22), there is a sense that Ely is commenting not just on workers’ unity in the early 1970s but also on the decreasing influence of unions and the lack of collective organisation today. He is, perhaps, bleakly suggesting that worker unity in 2015 is nothing more than a utopian ideal. On the other hand, this can be viewed to serve as a reminder of past union strength and to argue the need for the development of a new collective (rather than individualistic) culture.

Ely continues his separation of union and worker in the following verses, with the union responsible for political change but with workers forced to bear the brunt of the repercussions:

In ’74 they finished the job
and forced out Edward Heath
they chipped in from their pay rise
to buy capital a wreath.

The ruling class got nervous
and planned a counter-attack
to perpetate [sic] their power
and put the workers on the rack.

(Ely 136)

The ‘they’ at first appears to be a continuation of the ‘workers’ from the previous stanza, but as the line echoes the opening of the poem I would posit that ‘they’ is both the ‘workers’ and the ‘NUM’, positioning them as inseparable. As a result, what we get is a somewhat ambiguous ‘job’. There seem to be three possible readings of ‘the job’: the ‘job’ completed

is that of forcing Edward Heath from power;¹² that there are two ‘jobs’, presumably that of getting a ‘pay rise’, and of forcing out Heath, both of which are given equal weight; or there is the ‘primary’ job—‘pay rise’—and a resultant effect, the end of Edward Heath’s government. It could be argued that these distinctions are unimportant, particularly considering the difficulty in securing the ‘they’; however, what these distinctions do is go to the heart of what a union should be *doing*, what they should be *for*, and the interaction between ‘lay’ members and union officials. The simplest reading of the poem is that ‘the job’ unions do is all of these things, and that what is intentional, and what is not, is inconsequential. Yet, intention becomes necessary to determine when considering how unions are viewed by the general public. For example, according to an article in *The Telegraph*, it is estimated that nationally 55,000 jobs are reliant on the UK’s defence exports (Wilson). While many people are opposed to the UK producing and selling arms, as a trade union, is your immediate concern to secure existing jobs? Are unions bound to serve the economic improvement and/or security of their members, without consideration for the direct/indirect social impact of the jobs in which they are employed? Or are unions’ primary aim to affect public policy in regards to labour legislation? As Alison L. Booth points out in her book, *The Economics of the Trade Union*, “while we have considerable information about outcomes, and the issues that are bargained over, it is problematic to infer union preferences from this information, since the outcome reflects the preferences and constraints of *both* parties” (87). Ely seems to attempt an answer to this question when ‘they chipped in from their pay rise/to buy capital a wreath’. There is a certain sense of complacency and naivety to the lines, since the pay rise is both a victory over and a result of ‘capital’, which is far from dead. However, although a general first reaction to ‘wreath’ is that it is for a

¹² In the 1974 miners’ strike, 81% of miners voted for strike action, the ballot called by the NUM, and were widely credited with toppling the Heath government after he was forced to hold an election just three weeks after the vote to strike, an election he subsequently lost to Harold Wilson’s Labour party (Beckett and Hencke 2009, 26).

funeral, a ‘wreath’ can as easily be used to signify a wedding or simply a decorative adornment. In this more troubled reading, the workers and union (‘they’) become complicit with capital and the ‘chipping in’ becomes a way of giving thanks, rather than paying last respects. It is this tension between being separated from and yet a part of the state that plagues trade union organisations. As Stanley Aronowitz states in his book on American labour unions: “organized labor is integrated into the prevailing political and economic system; so much so that it not only complies with the law but also lacks an ideology opposed to the prevailing capitalist system”. Aronowitz’s judgement, of course, cannot be directly mapped onto British labour relations, since there have been innumerable examples of unions breaking the law.¹³ Yet, it is undeniable that the 1972 and 1974 miners’ strikes both complied with UK law and that the aim of these strikes was not for workers to remove themselves from a capitalist system, but to be able to function more effectively within it through increased spending power. It is ironical that, in Ely’s poem, the first thing the workers do after receiving their pay rise is to feed money back into the capitalist state.

In the poem, the state returns to attack the unions during the 1984–5 miners’ strike when attempting to sue Arthur Scargill and the NUM on ‘behalf of’ the Conservative government, and imprison him for contempt of court:¹⁴

¹³ There are still those who believe that the 1984–5 strike was illegal as the NUM never held a national ballot.

¹⁴ This will be covered in more detail in the section on the 1984–5 strike. However, the context is that, in a case brought by five miners from Yorkshire and Derbyshire, the High Court found the strike to be unlawful, as the strike had been undertaken without a ballot—a point that is still in dispute to this day. This was a ruling that Scargill had ignored, leading to the writ being served on him, NUM vice-president Mick McGahey, general secretary Peter Heathfield and NUM leaders in Yorkshire and Derbyshire (Rogers 1984, 1).

Sir Hector Laing¹⁵ stumped up some cash
 Lord Hanson¹⁶ stumped up more
 they served a writ on Scargill
 on the Labour Conference floor,

A firm of Tory lawyers
 deployed the state machine
 and outlawed Scargill and the NUM
 to the silence of the TUC.

See, all those bastards need to win
 is Brotherhood to fail
 in cringing fear of state assault
 of courts and fines and jail.

(Ely 139)

The TUC's 'silence' is the first concrete example of the factions within the trade union movement, as opposed to simply within a union itself. Not only are Scargill and the NUM 'outlawed' in the poem, but Ely 'outlaws' them by having the line where they are referenced have four iambic feet, rather than the three feet of the other lines in the stanza. Due to this, the TUC becomes more closely aligned, poetically, with the 'state machine' and the 'Tory lawyers', not the NUM. It is also noticeable that the end words of 'machine/TUC' do not rhyme. By withholding the expected end-rhyme, the TUC itself has effectively been 'silenced' by the 'state machine' or has chosen to remain silent. Yet, as three-letter acronyms, the 'TUC' and 'NUM' are linked visually and share a /ju:/ sound with one another. The TUC is presented as being suspended between the forces of the state and its obligations towards the NUM. Ely is warning us of conflating two things, the TUC and the NUM, which appear alike or are presumed to have the same objectives, but which in reality have a much more complex relationship and power dynamic. The

¹⁵ Director of the Bank of England in 1984.

¹⁶ Industrialist who was made a peer by Margaret Thatcher in 1983.

NUM is at the mercy of the ‘state’—the idea of ‘deploying’ the force of the state is indicative of the state as military aggressors that are controlled by the Conservative government—whereas the TUC has the *option* to remain silent. This ‘silence’ can be seen in light of the opening of the poem, where the NUM remove or withhold their labour—‘closing down the cokeworks’ (Ely 138)—to have an impact, the TUC remove or withhold their words. It is then unsurprising that through the final twenty-two stanzas of the poem the TUC are not mentioned again, their silence has effectively removed them, at least in the eyes of Ely, from

having a role to play in the history of the miners’ dispute.

*

Perhaps the better-known of these two poets is Sheffield’s Helen Mort. The cover art for her collective *Division Street* is a photograph by Don McPhee of a striker at the Battle of Orgreave,¹⁷ wearing a homemade ‘police’ helmet adorned with the badge of the NUM, face to face with a line of police officers (Fig. 1). Although the title of the collection and the cover art would leave even the most casual browser



Figure 1

¹⁷ ‘The Battle of Orgreave’, as it has come to be known, took place on the 18th June 1984 where miners were ‘secondary picketing’—picketing at a place, in this case a factory ran by British Steel, that is not directly linked to the protest (McSmith 2011, 163). Estimates posit the number of strikers in something of the region of 10,000 and roughly half the number of police officers (Tarver 2014). According to police reports, “93 pickets were arrested, with a further 51 injured along with 72 police officers” (“IPCC Sorry For Orgreave Probe Delay”) To this day, the Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign are still pressing the IPCC (Internal Police Complaints Commission) to investigate the South Yorkshire Police in regards to the events that took place on that day. In 2015, the IPCC said they would not be investigating the police officers in Orgreave that day, as too much time had passed (“‘Battle of Orgreave’: Probe Into 1984 Miners’ Clash Policing Ruled Out”).

aware of the nature of Mort's work, perhaps surprisingly, the NUM does not appear anywhere in the collection.

Helen Mort was born in 1985, after the Battle of Orgreave and the 1984–5 miners' strike, at a time when union influence was already on the wane, particularly after the 'defeat' in the 1984–5 miners' strike. In 2012, when the poem was published, the NUM, due to the decline of the mining industry in the UK, had, in reality, ceased to be a force in the British trade union movement.¹⁸ However, the NUM's involvement in the 1984–5 strike cannot be underplayed. The question then becomes, what occupies the space in Mort's work that we may have expected the NUM to inhabit?

The strike and its legacy is contended with in the collection's 'centrepiece' poem, 'Scab'— the only poem longer than two pages in the collection and a possible reference to Jack London's poem of the same name, where he imagines Judas as the ultimate 'scab'. As previously seen, 'scab' also appears in the title of Ely's 'Ballad of the Scabs'. Yet, unlike Ely's relatively atavistic ballad form and concerns with 'memorialising' the union movement, Mort's poem places herself and her questions regarding the direct social legacy of the strike at the poem's centre. One of the earliest examples of 'scab' being used to denote a strike-breaker in an industrial dispute can be found as far back as 1792:

“What is a scab? He is to his *trade* what a traitor is to his *country*... He first sells the journeymen, and is himself afterwards sold in his turn by the masters, till at last he is despised by both and deserted by all.” (Aspinall 84)

The quotation situates the act of 'scabbing' alongside the concept of nationalism or patriotism, and essentially equates 'scabbing' with treason—a crime that until 1998 could have led to execution. Although this points to the writer's belief in the severity of the 'crime' of undermining one's fellow worker by breaking a strike, the quotation also places striking, uncomfortably to my mind, in the same bracket as

¹⁸ The TUC website states that there are only 1,853 NUM members as of March 2016 ("NUM").

‘loyalty’ to the state or country. However, this is complicated somewhat by the statement that the ‘scab’, after selling out the ‘journeymen’, will in turn be ‘sold...by the masters’. Here there appears a separation between the ‘state’ as defined as the ‘country’ and those that own the means of production, the ‘masters’.

In the UK, trade unions were not legalised until 1871, with the publication of the Trade Union Act of the same year—although the TUC was founded a few years earlier, in 1868. It should be highlighted that it is not necessary for a ‘scab’ to be part of a union that is striking. There have been numerous incidents of companies employing outside labour to continue production while a strike is in effect. ‘Scabs’ can also be employed in a workplace that has a union which is calling for workers to strike, but where the ‘scab’ is not a member of that union, or any union at all. However, particularly in regards to miners’ disputes in the UK, a large majority of those who scabbed were members of a striking union who had chosen to contravene the orders of their union to strike.¹⁹

In the penultimate stanza of the poem, Mort writes. ‘*They scabbed in 1926. They scabbed / in 1974. They’d scab tomorrow / if they had the chance...*’ (22). Although italicised, I cannot determine whether this is a quotation Mort has used or her own words. Either way, what the statement suggests is that scabbing is entwined with industrial disputes, particular those like 1926, 1974 and 1984–5, in which tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of workers went on strike. We have no specific details about ‘who’ scabbed, but we have a ‘they’, the other. Through the use of ‘they’ what occurs is an act of ‘flattening’ or a homogenisation of strike history whereby individual choice and social context for the scabbing is removed or intentionally ignored. This is itself somewhat misleading. By the end of February 1985—the strike ended on the 3rd March 1985—the total number of miners who had abandoned the strike

¹⁹ The Union of Democratic Mineworkers (UDM), which was officially established in 1985 (mostly by Nottinghamshire miners who refused to strike, or wished to return to work during the 1984–5 miners’ strike) as a ‘breakaway’ union from the NUM, is a case in point, and can be considered a ‘scab’ union.

“exceeded 93,000” of the between 186,000 and 188,000 NUM members (Jones 184). ‘They’ made up almost a majority of the union membership. Yet, those who had scabbed—even as far back as 1926—continue to be ‘scabs’ from that point onwards in the reminiscences of those who did not. Having posited this, the tone of the final conditional phrase, *‘they’d scab tomorrow / if they had the chance...’*, seems to combine a lingering anger at those who crossed the picket line with a sorrow that there is no opportunity for anyone to do so, because of the destruction of the mining industry. You can only scab if you are supposed to be on strike, and in most instances strikes only occur with the presence of a (strong) trade union movement. A strike is useless without jobs to protect or working conditions to improve, as are trade unions. Those who ‘scabbed’ remain as a reminder that there was once a trade union and other striking colleagues for them to undermine.

Not only is a ‘scab’ a person who works during a strike and undermines it, but a wound which, while beginning to heal, still bears the visual mark of damage having been done. As the ‘scab’ in this second sense is still evident in Mort’s poem in 2013, the repercussions of the strike are yet to have disappeared. The poem itself positions us directly in the midst of the strike:

A stone is lobbed in ‘84,
hangs like a star over Orgreave.
Welcome to Sheffield. Border-land,
our town of miracles—

(Mort 16)

Mort is showing us the first ‘division,’ where the past and present are divided by time. Yet, the event still resonates now. Without explaining what happened in 1984, in terms of the strike, or what is or was ‘Orgreave’, the poet is presenting these events as indelibly linked to any discussion of Sheffield—enough to constitute a ‘Welcome’. This can also be read as setting up a division between the poet and reader or, more specifically, those who come from ex-mining communities and those who have not lived (directly) with the legacy of the strike of 1984–5. In the poem, 1984 is the strike and Battle of Orgreave; no more explanation is

needed apart from these two references. Opening the poem in the present passive voice—‘is lobbed’ rather than the more grammatically suitable ‘was lobbed’—a tense usually used for repeated actions, to describe an event which happened nearly 30 years previous—‘in ‘84’—, presents not just the violence of the event, but also the contemporary ramifications of the event itself. We are given no agent who ‘lobbed’ the stone, with the implication that it has become much larger than the individual lobbing or than the action itself. Using ‘lobbed’, as opposed to ‘threw’, suggests that there is no specific target, just a general direction, and that everyone is a potential victim. Mort removes all human figures in the first two lines. With no thrower or intended victim, Mort figuratively leaves the stone suspended in mid-air, never reaching the ground but shining down ‘over Orgreave’ until the poem’s close. This is a place where time has stood still, the action of the strike arresting any forward movement, yet at the same time ‘illuminating’ everything that has come since, and proving a fitting introduction to *Sheffield*. The single star over Orgreave brings to mind either the Pole (or North) star by which travellers would navigate their way or the star of Bethlehem from the Bible, signifying the birth of Christ. In the poem, the stone, which Mort likens to a star, and Orgreave which lies beneath it, becomes a focal point around which people can ‘rally’. Orgreave and the protest which happened there come to symbolise something infinitely bigger than the event itself. However, if we push the Bible story idea further it is the ‘wise men’ who, after seeing the star, report it to Herod who then calls for the execution of all the young males in Bethlehem, so as to prevent the loss of his throne. Transposing this reading to the poem the stone/star becomes not only a rallying point, but also that which causes untold suffering for years to come. This may appear hyperbolic; however, as the closure of the mines led to the destruction of many mining communities and lack of jobs for future generations—“at the onset of the strike, the NCB [National Coal Board] employed a workforce of 208,000 ... Within ten years, more than 90 per cent of the jobs were gone” (McSmith 169)—this analogy is in fact

depressingly apt.²⁰ And if you destroy an industry, you inevitably destroy the union that represents it. In light of this, *Welcome to Sheffield* takes on a far more demoralizing resonance as a place unable to forget or move on, as a city in a state of arrested development where the ‘miracles’ consist of the ‘wine turning to water in the pubs’ (Mort 16). In *Staging the UK*, Jen Harvie’s work on the relationship between performance and cultural identities, it is stated that “remembering can be a progressive or regressive political act” (41); here, remembering is being used to show how development has not simply been arrested but is actively regressing.²¹

‘Scab’ ends with the stone from the poem’s opening finally crashing through ‘your windowpane’, where the ‘you’ is ‘left/ to guess which picket line you crossed’ (Mort 22). The past comes crashing into the present of the poem, destroying the ‘view’ of the strike that had been created, challenged and undermined through various recollections and reconstructions of the strike, and through the refashioning of these events as a poem. Further, as Seumas Milne states, “far from being remote from our time, the miners’ opposition to Thatcher’s market and privatization juggernaut makes even clearer sense in the wake of the 2008 crash than it did at the time” (397). Both the reader and Mort become the ‘scab’ of the poem’s title. The ‘you’ is left to ‘guess’ which picket line was crossed, the arbitrary nature of the guess implying that all of us have in some fashion ‘crossed the picket line’, without being fully aware of it. Yet, these crossed borders—‘a gilded College gate/ a better supermarket, the entrance to your flat’ (Mort 23)—speak to the feeling in the 80s that “no longer was being working class something to be proud

²⁰ In his report on Ex-Mining communities Simon Parker quotes David Parry, spokesperson for the Coalfields Communities Campaign, as saying: “*You get 50 jobs created in a place where 2,000 men used to work and this means older men in particular are parked outside the labour market*” (2005, 5).

²¹ After the closure of the Kellingley pit in North Yorkshire in December 2015, there are now no deep coal mines operational in the UK.

of: it was something to escape from” (Jones 40). And, additionally, Mort’s own personally unresolved sense of class unease in regards to her time as an undergraduate at Cambridge, which is explored in the ‘other’ narrative strand of ‘Scab’. Mort is suggesting that we are now becoming, or have become, products of the legacy of the strike. The stone thrown from the miners’ strike 1984–5 becomes a symbol of what has been forgotten in terms of the ideals of social equality that underpinned the strike. In the same way that, in Harrison’s ‘V.’ (perhaps the most famous strike poem), he was concerned with leaving behind his ‘heritage’, Mort has brought the same concerns bursting into the 21st century and ends the poem with an allusion to Harrison: ‘someone/ has scrawled the worst insult they can—/a name. Look close. It’s yours’ (Mort 23). The ‘look close’ conjures the image of someone straining to read a name, that, while theirs, has become unfamiliar to them. And as earlier in the poem, where a re-enactor is kicked until ‘he doesn’t know his name’, here the name is never given to us and it shifts to become that of the reader. The poem breaks through the ‘glass’ which positions the reader as an observer, and repositions the reader as both the subject and the object of the poem. The reader becomes the ‘you’ who has crossed the picket line and the ‘scrawled’ name becomes the reader’s own. The act of reading the poem becomes an act of scabbing in itself. The reader becomes complicit in the continuation and dissemination of real/fictionalised events of the strike simply through the act of reading the poem and inferring conclusions from the material Mort has ‘repackaged’ for us. The legacy of the miners’ strike 1984–5 is conveyed as being so pervasive that there is no ‘you’ (reading the poem) that is exempt from its influence and legacy.

This concern with naming continues in the ‘third section’ of the poem, moving to 2001 and focusing on one of the most unusual works created in response to the miners’ strike 1984–5, artist Jeremy Deller’s re-enactment of the Battle of Orgreave. The re-enactment featured ‘eight hundred people, many of whom were ex-miners or police involved in the original encounter’ (Mort). Here it seems appropriate to quote the section in its entirety:

This is a reconstruction. Nobody
will get hurt. There are miners playing

coppers, ex-coppers shouting
Maggie, Out. There are battle specialists,
 The Vikings and the Sealed Knot.
 There will be opportunities to leave.
 a handshake at the end. Please note
 the language used for authenticity:
 example—scab, example—cunt.

*

This is a re-enactment.
 When I blow the whistle, charge
 but not before. On my instruction.
 throw your missiles in the air.
 On my instruction, tackle him,
 then kick him when he's down,
 kick him in the bollocks, boot him
 like a man in flames. Now harder,
 kick him till he doesn't know his name.

*

This is a reconstruction.
 It is important to film everything.
 Pickets chased on horseback into Asda,
 running shirtless through the aisles of tins.
 A lad who sprints through ginnels,
 gardens, up somebody's stairs,
 into a room where two more miners
 hide beneath the bed, or else
 are lost—or left for dead.

(Mort 21–22)

The opening line serves almost as a warning to the reader of what is to come and a reminder to those taking part that this is not a 'real' battle. There is an interesting shift in the opening lines of the verses from 'reconstruction' to 're-enactment' and back again. By reconstructing or re-enacting something you are, in essence, creating something 'new', for both actions can only ever be an approximation of the 'original', separated

as they are by time if nothing else. In her work on site-specific performance Harvie asserts that:

Site-specific performance can enact a spatial history, mediating between the past and the present most obviously, but also between the identities of the past and those of the present and future, as well as between a sense of nostalgia for the past and a sense of otherness possibly felt in the present and anticipated in the future. (42)

However, despite everything that Harvie contends, any reconstruction—particularly of an event such as the battle of Orgreave—will always be influenced by the evidence available that the reconstruction is based upon and the person organising the reconstruction. Therefore those ‘identities’ are still subject to the person creating the performance. In Mort’s poem the ‘reconstruction’ is immediately undermined by the assertion that ‘nobody will get hurt’ and the fact that in some cases the miners and ‘coppers’ who were involved will be playing the ‘parts’ of one another.²² It is also quite possible that many of these miners and police officers would have come from the same community and class as one another. Mort is highlighting the fallacy of the act, the process whereby ‘history’ is reduced to a staged presentation of reportedly ‘true’ events. As Richard Schechner, by way of Baudrillard, comments, if “the simulation can seem real, the opposite is also true—the real can appear to be simulated” (138). Not only does Schechner’s quotation speak to the event Mort is commenting upon, but also to the poem itself. The poem is a poetic ‘reconstruction’ of an event which was itself a reconstruction of a previous event. It could be argued that through each transformation of the initial event we are moving further away from the ‘truth’ of the event itself. Yet, as Mort repeatedly highlights, through the performative action of the ‘reconstruction’ and through her own work, we are constantly being made aware of the way that accounts of an event can change and be reconstructed—to build something again, but not

²² In the documentary surrounding the re-enactment, *The Battle of Orgreave*, it is said that at least some of the re-enactors were being paid to take part (Figgis 2001).

necessarily in the way that it once was. In the initial reconstruction parts are assigned depending on the needs of the performance; in Mort's work they are assigned according to the 'needs' of the poem. However, a reconstruction does not make something an inferior copy of the original; it is "neither a pretense nor an imitation. It is a replication of...itself as another" (Schechner 117). Both Mort's poem and Deller's reconstruction are original pieces of work, and original pieces which omit trade unions. As Mort's work draws on Deller's reenactment, as opposed to the 'real' Battle of Orgreave, for the poem it shows the way that myths can be started and disseminated and how they can be appropriated to fill a particular need or narrative. Mort has specifically chosen to use Deller's staged and documented event as her starting point, rather than the memories of miners involved in the original event, to show the arbitrary fashion by which history is constructed. One of the most telling lines is where Mort writes, 'This is a reconstruction. It is important to film everything.' The reconstruction of the event was a single, staged performance intended as a piece of performance/conceptual art, while the need to 'film everything' shifts the temporal into something more permanent. As the mainstream media at the time of the strike "mostly portrayed the strike as an anti-democratic insurrection that defied economic logic" (Milne 2014: xii), the desire to capture the reconstruction on film can be viewed as a way of redressing the anti-miner narrative of the media version of the strike.²³ Yet, as the line 'it is important to film everything' is preceded by another assertion of the reconstructive nature

²³ Famously the BBC news version edited the film from Orgreave so that it appeared that the miners had attacked the police, not vice versa as was the case. In their "eagerness to select and shape events to fit a pre-formulated interpretation" the BBC "missed by a mile what was to become the main story of Orgreave" (Masterman 1984: 105). In the BBC's news report, "the violence at Orgreave was presented unequivocally as picket violence...with picketing turning to rioting and destruction and the police compelled to act defensively to retain control under tremendous pressure" (Masterman 1984, 101-102). However, ITN's footage showed that "the decision to 'turn nasty' was one deliberately made by the police. The film showed the police lines opening up, the horses galloping into a group of pickets, who were simply standing around, and the riot police following up wielding their truncheons" (Masterman 1984, 102).

of the performance, and the poem is essentially informed by a documentary about the reconstruction, there is a sense that the doctored image that was presented by the media is being replaced by another stylised view of the struggle, if this time more transparent about the fact. As Alan Sinfield comments, it is “the contest between rival stories [that] produces our notions of reality” (26–7). As a great deal of the Battle of Orgreave was not filmed, the re-enactment, which by being filmed passes into something approaching permanence, becomes another ‘official’ version of events.

Astrid Erll contends that “it is only through media in the broadest sense that contents of cultural memory become accessible for the members of a mnemonic community” (104).²⁴ In this way Mort’s poem is accessing that media—or, at least, the documentation of the reconstruction—but seemingly questioning what it is that is being retained. What Mort has retained in the poem are the figures of the ‘battle specialists’, the new authority figures giving instructions—‘When I blow the whistle, charge / but not before’—during the re-enactment and the performative aspects of the ‘language used for authenticity’, while the original miners involved in the battle have been marginalised. Harvie states that site-specific performance “may validate identities that have been historically marginalised or oppressed, and they may revise potential imbalances in the power dynamics between communities” (41). However, in the poem the identities are in fact invalidated by the switching of ‘roles’. To swap roles suggests that there is no validity in your ‘original’ role, just in the role you are *assigned* for the performance; the fact that the people are ex-miners or ex-coppers becomes irrelevant. Conversely, if roles are assigned regardless of the participants’ original job, there is a suggestion that, as both miners and police officers would

²⁴ As well as Deller’s Orgreave re-enactment, Joshua Oppenheimer’s (truly harrowing) documentary, *The Act of Killing* (2013), foregrounds the notion of the ‘mnemonic community’. In the movie, members of Pancasila Youth, an Indonesian pro-regime paramilitary group, are encouraged by Oppenheimer to re-enact a number of the (between 500,000 and 1 million) murders carried out by their group during the 1965–66 Indonesian Genocide.

often have come from similar class (and community) backgrounds, they could easily have been on the other side during the miners' dispute. David Griffiths, a miner at the Taff Merthy Colliery in Wales, recalled that during the strike "more and more police were drafted in and even though the government strongly denied it, many miners believe the army were also on the picket line. I saw it with my own eyes, a miner on a picket line with me spotted his own son, who was supposedly in the army fighting for his country...this man would never speak to his son again" (Butts-Thompson 22). Although this is anecdotal, and in reference to the military and not the police, it illustrates the way in which members of these professions would often be recruited from the same class background, if not the same family. And, at one time, that these types of jobs would have offered security and a decent wage for many.

When one re-enactor is 'told' to 'kick him till he doesn't know his name', there is tension between the assertion that 'nobody will get hurt' in the re-enactment and the overt encouragement of violence. Although "each instance of remembering constitutes its subject differently and subjectively, eliminating some details and enhancing others as changing conditions demand" (Harvie 41), it is important to look at what details are being presented. If the re-enactor is instructed to kick the person until 'he doesn't know his name' there is the implicit suggestion that the name itself holds some value. Yet, we as a reading audience do not know the name of the re-enactor or the role they are supposed to be playing—it could be either picketer or police officer—and ironically we are being told to forget something that has apparently already been forgotten or is not presented to us. It is that which is forgotten that becomes our focus.

Taking the point further, Mort appears to be questioning the attention afforded the violence at Orgreave rather than those involved in the action, and highlighting the way in which the human aspect can be lost through the retelling and restaging of events. The section of the poem ends with two miners hiding 'beneath the bed', not sure if they are 'lost' or 'left for dead'. Here the image of the miners beneath the bed remains but the names of the two do not. The miners' names are erased by the re-enactment, by the poem and by the system that forced them out of work in the first place without adequate support.

*

Ely's and Mort's poems serve to highlight the inherent difficulties that come from trying to conceive of trade unions as a homogenised institution. Ely's work seems to clamour for a return to a time in which trade unions and the class struggle were at the centre of UK politics, Mort does not. 'Ballad of the Scabs' ends with the lines, 'stay true to your comrades and your class: / the war is won by unity.' (142) Although Ely's subject matter—the miners' strike—and the ballad form may be seen to constitute a form of 'nostalgia', the final lines position his concerns regarding class 'war' directly in the 21st century. The miners' strike is long past, but the issues that led to its commencement—security of jobs, fair pay, the need for collective action—still require attention today. Ely's is a political poem in its clearest sense, a poem about and for political action. Yet, Ely's is a politics that is deeply rooted in notions of the collective. Mort, conversely, ends her poem with a call to the 'you': 'It's yours' (23). Whereas Ely situates the 'burden' for change with the collective, Mort places the 'burden' on the individual, yet an individual who is unable to extricate themselves from the 'legacy' of the miners' strike 1984–5—'You're left / to guess which picket line / you crossed' (22–23). A 'guess' can only ever be an approximation, Mort is emphasising the near impossibility of 'securing' a singular historical narrative. Mort and her readers are both subject to *and* producer of the strike narratives in 'Scab'. In 'Scab' each individual reading of an event produces its own individual history. What both poems examined here do is complicate our strike and trade union narratives. A restaging of an event, or a poem reflecting on an event, while bringing to light issues surrounding the event itself, and perhaps revising "potential power imbalances in the power dynamics" (Erl 41) and narrative, is essential to 'revive' the voices and narratives of those who have been 'left for dead' by the state and prevailing, mainstream, media narratives. Yet, that is not to say that it

poetry’s job to revive these voices.²⁵ What Ely’s and Mort’s poems do, and show that poetry about political action can do, almost (and over) thirty years after these industrial disputes, is present us with a space in which alternative, marginalised *and* competing voices can be heard, while refusing to allow us as readers to draw overly concretising or reductive conclusions about how we *should* read our collective histories.

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²⁵ Katy Shaw’s *Mining the Meaning* excellently demonstrates the role that poetry written by miners played during the strike of 1984–5, both in terms of raising campaign funds for the continuation of the strike and empowering those involved in picketing to find a ‘voice’.

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FIGURES

Figure 1: Mcphee, Don. *Miners’ Strike, Orgreave*. 1984. *Division Street*. By Helen Mort, London: Chatto & Windus, 2013.

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A Discussion of Cultural Studies and Contemporary Television

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Introduction

Among the contributions that Cultural Studies brings to the field of communication is the examination of reception as an integral part in the process of negotiation and resistance. In the specific context of television this perspective becomes even more important so that the role of the

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audience in contemporary reconfiguration of the methods of the televisual experience can be understood.

Cultural Studies proposes textual analyses to understand to what extent, for example, television programmes can be understood and translated in different forms. Contemporary television has undergone profound transformations in terms of the apparatus on which they can be seen and in the very way that people relate to programmes. This has been happening in the midst of changes that involve questions of technology, economy and, the critical point here, of reception. Consequently, the televisual text itself has been reconfigured.

It is because of this that the contributions of authors such as Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall and Jesús Martín-Barbero, exponents of Cultural Studies, seem pertinent to considerations of contemporary television.² If culture is connected to a way of life and reception has an important role in the communication process, it seems opportune to observe how new methods of television consumption have brought changes in the television industry itself and in the ways televisual texts are produced and circulated.

This article will therefore discuss how phenomena like Netflix and on-demand services have been established as parts of a process of negotiation and dispute in the arena of televisual experience. Firstly, the article will outline the vision of culture and the way of watching television from the perspective of Cultural Studies. Next, a discussion of to what extent audience habits are related to a dynamic of reconfiguration in the television industry. Finally, an observation of how new television possibilities, linked to the internet, are relevant for reflection in this moment of disputes and negotiations and to understand culture as a whole.

² Although Williams and Hall belong to the British school of Cultural Studies, Martín-Barbero comes from Latin America. We know that these are different approaches, but we have an approximation between the studies of those authors that we considered pertinent.

The culture of Cultural Studies

Cultural Studies brings decisive contributions for thinking about the ways that culture, society and daily practices are intrinsically related and can be problematized by a means of communication – in this case, television. One of the most defining and forward thinking concepts in the field, and that is most of interest for this study, is from culture. According to Douglas Kellner:

The critical point (of cultural studies) is to subvert the distinction between higher and lower culture and this way, valorising cultural forms such as cinema, television and popular music, left behind by previous approaches, that tend to use literary theory to analyse cultural forms or to focalise, above all, or even at least, products of higher culture. (2001: 49)

The perspective that dominated until the advent of Cultural Studies was that culture had a “feeling that today we give to erudite culture and that refers to the quest and cultivation of moral, intellectual and spiritual perfection” (Gomes 2011, 31). Williams discusses the concept of culture that not only goes against the division between high and low culture, but also offers a new understanding of it (2011: 335).

Besides recognising the value of popular culture, created by the working classes and legitimate as an artistic manifestation, Williams understands that culture “(...) is not only a corpus of intellectual and imaginative work; it is also essentially a way of life”. Understood this way, culture is not only, for example, the films, discs, books and works of art produced by a society in a specific era. In the end, it is not a product, but a process. This means that daily practices and habits will shape this culture. In this way, more than thinking about clothing or manners of living as a way of life as Williams describes, it is important to understand that this concept is linked to alternative ideas of the nature of social relations (2011: 341). Itania Gomes explains:

Williams proceeds towards a radical transformation of the concept of culture and the possible ways to undertake cultural analysis; as a response to new political and social developments, culture articulates, at the same time, exterior elements, of structure, and elements of personal experience, private. (2011: 31)

Richard Hoggart proposes a similar concept in *The Uses of Culture* (1973), when he criticises how traditional cultural analysis erases the existence of simple man – which became central to his studies. By raising this for discussion, he could “see, beyond habits, what these habits represent, to see through declarations and and responses what these really mean (a meaning which could be the opposite of these very declarations)” (Hoggart 1973: 20).

From this concept of culture, Williams can escape from the dichotomy of base and superstructure, as dictated by Marxist tradition. His conception promotes a unification between the sphere of production (economy) and social relations (society and politics, for example). Not incidentally, “Williams is considered the founder of Cultural Studies for showing, in England in the 1950s, that material and cultural lives are profoundly interconnected and for showing the popular ballast of culture” (Gomes 2011: 31).

By examining culture through ordinary daily processes and paying attention to the forms of expression of popular culture, Cultural Studies provides a unique and valuable perspective on television. In the same way, by dedicating more attention to reception, it can bring to the surface uses and resignifications that come out of this process, and that become a rich source for analysis.

Ways of approaching television

For Williams, in *Television: technology and cultural form* (2003), television is the place where, at the same time, three important processes are interlinked: the technological, the institutional and the cultural. Specifically, the author deals with television as technology and cultural form from its socio-historical context; considering, in this way, television and the social sphere as inextricable agents.

From this perspective, Williams highlights that there are different ways of studying television. One of them is to study it through technology, from its historical development; or rather, as an invention, a technical apparatus that is associated to other technological innovations. The other way of studying television would be as a form of expression of culture (the study of the specificity of its discursive form in articulation with aspects of its materiality) (2003: 1-25).

According to Williams, society manifests determined impulses and practices that instigate the construction of changes (2003:12). Such impulses are named as ‘social needs’. For this discussion, Williams’ proposal that seeks to understand television as a technological means is fundamental, but also considering its history and socio-historical context. More than this, examining how social needs instigate the variety of uses that society makes of the television apparatus,³ and the new interactions that emerge from it, seem essential for the debate of televisual reconfigurations.

A long time ago, television ceased being a technological novelty. Familiarised with the presence of the electronic screen in our homes, we have learned, over the years, watching practices and we understand televisual language. According to Arlindo Machado (2000), there are various studies about television, and in many of them the notion of television remains that of a mere ‘service’, a system of diffusion or flow of programming. Such concepts are based, principally, in technological aspects, restricting studies to their means, thereby narrowing its reach.

According to Elton Antunes and Paulo Vaz (2006), “communication is not reduced to the means of communication or a transmitting function, but understands the constitution of discourses and the space of interlocution” (1-2). When the media is privileged as a ‘socio-technical apparatus’ it minimises the intervention of interlocutors, leaving aside the communicative process, just like the dynamic process of production itself and the construction of feelings. Therefore, the character of the insertion of the media in everyday experience is not taken into account, and neither the methods nor the means are reconfigured for social life.

³ When we speak of an apparatus we are not referring to a technological apparatus. We take as a basis the notion of media apparatus developed by authors such as Maurice Mouillaud (1997), Elton Antunes and Paulo Vaz (2006) and José Luiz Braga. This last author defines what he terms a “meeting of heterogeneous aspects that in some way articulate themselves in a determined social process [...] Some elements are technical, others cultural, others of the practical order, still others institutional; some will be essentially regarding communication” (2011:9).

Bringing such a reflection to light, it is possible to consider television as a place for the annotation of feelings, establishment of interactive and processual forms, and also as mediations, (re)interpretations of experiences. It is no accident that television plays an important role in the mediation of cultural and ideological values, through genres like soaps, series, films and news. Holder of its own identity, television is established as a 'personalised' look at the construction of mediated reality, regulating the visibility of the media and legitimising it as an instance of power. In a discourse on televisual practices and their mediations, Martín-Barbero (2006) characterises television as a cultural device that has its own forms, logic and connections, a place of visibility that ritualises manners of interpretation of the world, and socially accepted ways of 'watching'.

Once television is related to the manner of interpreting the world, it should not be seen or read from a single and definitive perspective. In this sense, multiple types of interpretation are involved, which raises questions about the viewers that act upon the content presented to them.

The televisual text: between readings and flows

By studying television, Stuart Hall proposes a model that embraces the idea of an active reception, re-signifying the codes in a process together with production. In the essay 'Encoding/Decoding' (2003), he analyses television programmes as open texts, which can be interpreted in various ways. In this schema, "coding is the definition of meaning inside a textual form, influenced by the practices of media professionals and decoding is the work done by the receptor to make sense of these texts" (Rocha 2011, 179). Simone Rocha adds:

Hall also suggested that there is a correlation between the social situations of people and the meanings they can interpret from a programme. He therefore postulated a possible tension between the structure of the text, which sustains the dominant ideology, and the social situations of the audience. Watching television becomes a process of negotiation between the spectator and the text. (2011: 179)

In this way, the feelings intended in the production are not necessarily those received by viewers,⁴ who will interpret the codes in their own way, based upon different factors.

This conception opens the prerogative that different readings of televisual texts are possible. In his theory of literature, Hall proposes that television programmes generally opt for an ensemble of feelings that work to maintain the dominant ideology, but that these feelings cannot be imposed, only preferred (Rocha 2011: 179). In the process of decodification, Hall defines three types of reading: that of the dominant, negotiated and opposition code (2003: 400-402). The first would be the reading in accordance with the hegemonic values presented by the text, or rather, when the viewer agrees with the views expressed there; the second would mix adaptation and opposition, once it recognises the legitimacy of the hegemonic definitions present in the text, but if negotiated these codes uphold the social group in which the subject inserts itself; and the third would be a case in which the reading goes against the feelings expressed in the text, in a way to deconstruct the hegemonic ideology. According to Hall:

“One of the most significant political moments (they also coincide with moments of crisis within television companies, for obvious reasons) is that in which the events that are normally signified and decodified in a negotiated way begin to have a non-conformist reading. Here is locked in the ‘the politics of meaning’; a fight in discourse.” (2003: 402)

It is important to note that Hall,⁵ by emphasising the different readings and a “fight” in the communication process, is also discussing resistance.

⁴ To refer to the televisual experience, we do not distinguish between the terms viewer(s), audience(s), and receptor(s). We know that the designations present important differences, but we do not propose to discuss these here.

⁵ In spite of being fundamental to advances in communication studies, the codification/decodification model presents some important problems, pointed out over time, such as: a structure that assimilates to linear models of communication; decodification as a unique act, that hides a set of deeper processes; the notion that preferential reading is necessarily in accordance with a dominant reading, as if media messages expressed a dominant ideology. This last problem was previously recognised by Hall himself (Porto, 2003).

If Critical Theory (Horkheimer 1980) indicates a relationship of absolute dominance regarding the media and the cultural industry, Cultural Studies makes use of the concept of hegemony (especially from a Gramscian perspective) to think about the relationships, in which there is a negotiation, and not a pure and simple submission. In the negotiation, a resistance often arises in front of the discourse presented in the text.

On the televisual text, Williams will observe how it will configure itself and in which way it offers modes of experience for the viewer. While discussing the act of watching television, he comments on the difficulty of describing it: “It would be like trying to describe the reading of two plays, three newspapers, three or four magazines, on the same day that you had been to a variety show, a lecture and a game of football” (2003: 96).

This experience lends itself to the heterogeneous and varied form that television configures itself, that Williams calls “flux”, an uninterrupted sequence of images from which television programmes are elaborated: “This phenomenon of programmed flux, is perhaps the definitive characteristic of broadcasting, simultaneously as a technology and as a cultural form” (Williams 2003: 86). In the middle of the flux, the viewer can access different types of “events” in their home and in a unique dimension and operation. These aspects reveal forms of the constitution of the televisual text and in what way the audience relates with them.

None of these dimensions, meanwhile, is stable in time. Currently, the number of new technologies is growing, and television lives in the moment of change in the growth of new protagonists in the media. A new behaviour in the public has been observed, with an ever increasing dispersal of audiences, who divide their time between the diverse possibilities of entertainment and information, like their own television, computers, video games, mobile phones, among others. As if this were not enough, the consumption of televisual content is no longer restricted only to the television set, but also through other means; principally, the internet.

Changes in the chain

Since the invention of the television, the diverse customs and habits of the viewer are remarkable regarding the interaction with the medium. At the beginning of the 20th century, the practice of watching television generally occurred in the living room with the relatives assembled. The television stations were just beginning to establish themselves, there were few programme options, and many of these were formerly from the radio. As part of the familiar quotidian, television was already appointed as a new technology of entertainment and leisure.

From the 1980s, the quantity of sets exploded on the market, and there has been a greater professionalization of televisual content and the offer of channels. The audience begins to fragment and the practice of watching television together became less common. Already by the 1990s, with the popularisation of mediums of entertainment like the VHS, games and the internet, the migration of viewers to more specialised content, oriented to specific niches, becomes frequent to the detriment of pre-determined and ample televisual programming. Material televisual support is no longer necessary, access to television content extends to other media like a computer, tablet and mobile phone.

In this way, the changes occurring in the customs of the viewer relate themselves in a dynamic way with technology; and with the television industry itself. Williams discusses how some words change in meaning throughout history, conforming to social changes. Among them is “industry”, which he points out has lost its pre-Industrial Revolution meaning, when it indicated a specific human attribute, to come to designate manufacturing and production industries and their activities (2011: 16). When it is used with a capital letter, “it is considered a proper thing, an institution, a body of activities, and not simply a human attribute” (16-17).

In daily life, we speak and hear about different “industries”: pharmaceutical, automobile, grocery, cosmetic, textile, among others. In fact, the notion we have approximates the writing by Williams. When we talk about the field of culture, we can say that industries position themselves, in the model proposed by Hall, in the spheres of production and the circulation of products – which does not mean to say that they are absolutely necessary in this sense, since, at the same time that

hegemony exists, there is also a process of negotiation. It is important to emphasise that, in this sense, that although “industry” delivers in the economic sense, it goes much further than this. The cultural industry itself, even in the conception of Critical Theory, treated art as a commodity, but as a means to impose values by means of a dominant discourse. Therefore, the symbolic dimension is essential.

It is interesting to reflect on the industry at the moment in which many are talking about a crisis in the cultural industry, represented, for example, by the phonographic, televisual and cinematographic industries. In a general way, all of them find themselves in a troubled period confronted by the options that the internet offers, by making available the products that sustain this industry in a free and unrestricted manner. The failure of the model of authorial rights has led to a collapse in the purchase of discs, DVDs and blu-rays, now that music, series and films are downloaded via the internet. Without doubt, it is a moment of transition, in which the industry is trying to find routes and solutions to be profitable.

In the specific case of the televisual industry, it is evident that these changes have been happening even in the core of what is understood as television. We can think about aspects like the programming and flux of Williams reconfiguring itself in contemporaneity. But why has this been happening?

Williams establishes that culture is an all-embracing term, capable of covering diverse relations, including with industry (2011, 19). At the same time, he presents culture as a way of life, which involves its own methods of leisure (apart from going much further than this, as we have already said). These methods of leisure have been changing according to the new televisual possibilities linked to the internet. In this way, not having access to a programme on an open or closed channel or even not being able to watch according to the schedule ceases to be a problem: having been solved by downloads, offering the same content on the internet, which has made a reconfiguration of the televisual industry necessary, because it has lost space to torrents and streamings on the internet.

It is in this context that platforms such as Netflix and even on demand services have come about, offered by channels like TV Globo and HBO.

Undoubtedly, they are configured as a response to advances on the internet, in an attempt to attract viewers back to where programmes are produced.

Aside from this, we can think about how the habits and preferences of a television audience helped to reconfigure the industry itself, in a dynamic process in which the reception is shown as active in another way, not only through multiple forms of interpretation of a televisual text. This way of living as a culture is linked to multiple factors, including the manner in which we deal with cultural products, the way we perceive them as easy to consume in the contemporary era, along with technological tools at our disposal.

New proposals

Over the years, it has become increasingly evident that the audience has migrated from the television screen to multiple digital platforms that offer television content at any time and place. Viewers have freed themselves from a fixed television platform and are able to consume their favourite programmes in the way best for them. Although a large part of the industry has tried (and is still trying) to fight against this process and paints the internet and viewers as villains, platforms like Netflix have resolved to embrace the cause and use the web not as an enemy, but an ally in an attempt to construct a new television proposal. This way, they have come to offer licensed content as well as their own in their streaming service, which can be accessed through the internet on any platform – Smart TV, tablet, mobile phone, notebook – attending to the demands of today’s television audience: personalised content, multiple and practical access, all at an affordable monthly rate. Apart from this, it was capable of attracting a part of the public that had not subscribed to downloads, either due to a lack of knowledge in how to download programmes, a lack of interest in engaging with the search for torrents or even opposition to a supposedly ‘illegal’ model. With Netflix, it is not necessary to search in order to download or to worry about piracy: it is enough to press play for the streaming of a programme to begin its legal reproduction.

Obviously, we cannot think about Netflix or even about similar proposals, like Amazon Prime Instant Video and Hulu, as distanced from

economic interests or even as proposals diametrically opposed to those of the old televisual industry. After all, its content is not free, profit is sought after incessantly and they are directly related to traditional television, seeing as they transmit its programmes that also make a profit in this process. However, proposals like Popcorn Time, despite being similar to the aforementioned examples, are negated and combatted against as illegal, seeing as they go almost completely against this model by offering all content in a free and unlicensed manner.

Nevertheless, what interests us is observing how social relations configure themselves in a much more dynamic way than a linear and absolute model can allow for. By observing media phenomena through the perspective of Cultural Studies, we can understand a dynamic process involving the industry and reception, in which there is, yes, hegemony, but a negotiated form that involves disputes of power and negotiation.

Television, in this way, has configured itself as an important agent in which the cultural practices of contemporary society are intertwined. If before habits consisted of watching televisual content offered by broadcasters in a familiar environment and joint reception, today we find individual and personalised consumption, at any time or place, that is not always associated with a broadcaster or channel. The practices constructed by audiences have obligated the televisual industry to reinvent itself, providing evidence of the resignification of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic notions of what can be considered 'television'.

Martín-Barbero (2006) in seeking to analyse communication from culture, values a fundamental notion for the study of reception: the concept of mediation. For the author, "the centre of the debate should be moved from the means to mediations; that is from articulations between communication practices and social movements, to different temporalities and the plurality of cultural matrices" (Martín-Barbero 2006, 258). Or rather, Martín-Barbero proposes a dislocation from an analysis of the means to the place where feelings emerge, to the scope of social uses, the "cultural mediations of communication" (2006:196).

You could think that different social groups possess different relations with television. All of these practices help in the very constitution of the way the televisual device is presented. After all, it is at the heart of the

everyday, from interactions between the audience, television and its content, that televisual reconfigurations are constructed.

Sharon Marie Ross (2008) (apud. Agostini 2010: 39) points out that the forms of participation of viewers in programme trends are confused with the very history of television, playing a part in the experience of watching television. Today, consumer habits have become visible not only in production, but also in the methods of circulation of televisual content. Aside from participation in the construction of programmes and the themes being explored, it seems to us that the audience has also influenced how it will consume televisual products. Televisual agency, in this way, has constituted itself in an immaterial way and with pulverisation of its content, without dependence on only one carrier. This has also influenced the very televisual flux that Williams (2003) discusses and how televisual products will be integrated.

However, just as Hall (2003) points out, it is worth remembering that the power is not totally on the side of receptive practices, given that the constructions and negotiations of feeling are also related to the processes of production, economy and the ways programmes are organised. In the same way, Martín-Barbero points out: “A large part of reception is in some way, not programmed, but conditioned, organised, touched, oriented through production, as much in economic terms as in aesthetic, narrative and semiotic terms” (1995: 56). In this way, social resignifications are in the modes of interaction with the means, between groups in society and the diverse agents that compose society.

Due to this, although it is remarkable that the practices of watching television have reconfigured the televisual format, we cannot fail to consider the manner in which the forms of production also contribute to the phenomenon. The availability of different episodes or contents at once, for example, have produced phenomena such as binge watching, catering for users who want to watch marathons of programmes. Taking into account this condition of reception, the production of some series, for example, has been based around more elaborate scripts, often without the use of cliffhangers. This aspect, as a sign, is one of the most interesting for understanding how the new forms of circulation and consumption of televisual texts leads to their own restructuring. Finally, previously series were shown with commercial intervals dividing

episodes into blocks. This led to the creation of narrative arcs that were conditioned by the minutes of each block, and that ended in a ‘miniclimax’ with the intention of retaining the audience until after the break. With the new method of circulation of programmes, streaming platforms and on demand services, this narrative strategy is no longer necessary, now that there are no commercial breaks; and because the viewer that chose to watch the determined series in this way did it in a decisive way, and not because they zapped through television channels.

This way, the process of negotiation involved in the consumption of television today influences a textual reconfiguration. This is one of the dimensions that operates in the establishment of the rules of:

“[...] a type of grammar of forms of expression of the televisual, that, although in permanent construction, structures the narratives, informs televisual texts, importing to them their own characteristics, that distinguish them from audio-visual texts aired through other mediums.”
(Duarte 2012: 325)

In this way, through multiple dimensions that operate together, what seems to be happening is yet another reorganisation of the very grammar of the televisual text.

Therefore, we observe not only an intense negotiation between the new practices utilised by the audience and the constitution of the televisual device, but also the insertion of new technologies and processes that influence the circulation and production of the content of television. All of these aspects together reconfigure the televisual experience as a whole.

Conclusion

Hall (2003) defends the notion that television programmes are relatively open texts, capable of being read in various ways by different people. Thus, the practice of watching television is seen as a process of negotiation between viewer and text; a type of discursive conflict.

It is reasonable to think that the reflections we have made throughout this article propose a negotiation that goes beyond the text, and are therefore also related to the televisual device. We have discussed not only negotiated readings of the televisual text, but also of practices related to

various ways of consuming television. If watching television is a process of negotiation between viewer and text, we would say that this relationship can be applied to the device as well. Perhaps it would be pertinent to discuss, faced with the current phenomenon, a conflict between the device and the various forms of circulation of this discourse. It becomes interesting to think about how the hegemonic codes remain, negotiated and in opposition in this context, that involves new proposals such as Netflix and Popcorn Time.

In this way, it is also interesting to understand how the forms of circulation and consumption influence their own configuration of televisual grammar. This shows to what extent these instances are related, and how form and content cannot be taken in a separate manner, seeing that they present a dynamic relationship. The forms of circulation and consumption end up influencing, in a decisive way, the televisual text; that does not lose its singularity when faced with other mediums in this process. Thus, it becomes necessary to reflect upon what becomes of the 'flux' discussed by Williams, when faced with the new television presented here.

In *Culture and Society*, Williams outlines how modifications in life and thought correspond to alterations in language through the analysis of literary productions from the end of the eighteenth century until the middle of the twentieth century. For the author, it was possible to observe how determined words acquired new meanings or to what extent new words emerged in English vocabulary as a way of giving account to the changes that were occurring in the life of that society. In synthesis, Williams discusses how language changes according to modifications in the social environment; the significance of words alters in this process. We can say, in light of these discussions that the understanding of the term 'television' has changed, over time, when examining the transformations that occur continuously. Television is, definitively, no longer the same.

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Book Reviews

***Behind the Masks of Modernism: Global and Transnational Perspectives.* Andrew Reynolds and Bonnie Roos, editors. Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2016. ISBN: 9780813061641, 289 pp.**

In *Behind the Masks of Modernism*, editors Andrew Reynolds and Bonnie Roos collect nine case studies on “negotiating and dwelling within modernity” (227), endeavouring to create a global map of modernism with a transnational and interdisciplinary approach. This work responds and contributes to the currently rigorous discussions on comparative and global modernisms: a field that transcends the Western modernist canon and considers modernism the outcome of cross-cultural encounters.

All the nine essays collected in this volume use masks—both literal and metaphorical—as their thematic concern and central trope, revealing the complicated process of making and unmaking identities for modern subjects in a number of national/cultural places: India, Brazil, Spanish America, New Zealand, Russia and China. According to the editors, the mask is a ubiquitous but relatively underexplored image in modernist artistic practices all over the world. The mask, sometimes as a strategy to hide the true self, and sometimes as a way of performance that constructs one’s identity, greatly facilitates the discussion of identity formation for modern subjects.

However, besides this thematic concern, the volume has a more ambitious aim, which is, according to the editors in the introduction, “to address what we see as a problem inherent in both Western modernist studies and global modernist studies, involving a suspect relationship with history” (9). This inherent problem lies in the relationship between

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modernity and history, and the debate “among the proponents of three competing paradigms of modernity, the ‘singular’, the ‘multiple/alternative’, and the ‘uneven’” (242). Fredric Jameson in *A Singular Modernity* argues that capitalism is the primary cause for all modernities and modernisms, and as a result, all cultures will look alike in the end. Jameson’s ‘singular modernity’ is criticised as a-cultural and a-historical, and it also conforms to the binary mode of centre/periphery as capitalism flows from the West to the East. In fact, the global modernist cultural field is much more nuanced and complicated. The principles of heteronomy (economic and political factors as the driving force for cultural formation) and autonomy (symbolic capital/prestige becomes more predominant than economic and political capital) interact with each other; the forces of making for sameness (globalisation and universalised cultural patterns due to the march of modernity) and difference (nationalist movement and struggle for cultural diversity) keep negotiating; the positions and position-takings of different participants in this field, which are both national and transnational, autonomous and heteronomous, will exert influence on their cultural norms and practices. With all these elements and backgrounds considered, this volume borrows ideas from ‘alternative modernities’: to hear an alternative voice and “to think with a difference—a difference that would destabilise the universalist idioms, historicise the contexts, and pluralise the experiences of modernity” (15). With a global and transnational vision, all the essays collected in this volume are historically contextualised, politically, economically and culturally grounded. The theme of the mask in turn masks this book’s real aim to reconsider the definition of global modernisms and modernities.

This collection starts with Aida Yuen Wong’s case study of Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore’s mask-like figure paintings on the one hand cater for the Westerners’ orientalisising strategy of the East, but on the other hand, as Tagore is “aware of his own constructedness” (34), the paintings in turn have gained international attention for India. This study points out that although Tagore is against British imperialism, he also casts doubt on nationalism. His borrowing of Japanese *Noh* mask traditions indicates his cosmopolitan stance in this colonial/national encounter. Modernism is always considered as a radical rupture in the

tradition. In response to this idea, essays in this collection relocate modernism's relation to tradition as transformation and rewriting instead of a total break from it. Sandro R. Barros's 'A Pedagogy for Modernity' explores the Brazilian composer Heitor Villa-Lobos's combination of Afro-Brazilian primitive music with Western classical music as a strategy which masks both his aim of marketing an 'exotica' to European audience and his collaboration with the nation-state to refashion Brazilian audience with modernist aesthetics. Similarly, in Sylvie Beaud's 'Roots Reconfigured: Contemporary Chinese Masks in the Flux of Modernity', the renewal of tradition in the present is also discussed. With the operation of the two important driving forces—mass media and nation-state, the traditional Chinese *Guan Suo Opera* gained its symbolic prestige in modern China. The appearance of *Guan Suo Opera* in Zhang Yimou's film *Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles*, and the state's institutionalisation of this opera as 'living fossils', epitomise how China rehabilitates tradition and makes it a way into modernity.

Apart from the tension between tradition and modernity, essays in this collection also focus on the relationships between high modernism and market, cultural identity and race or history. Andrew Reynolds's essay 'Unmasking the Journalistic Aesthetics of Spanish American *Modernismo*' focuses on a group of Spanish American poets who regularly wrote journalistic articles for newspapers and magazines. However, based on Andrew's study, journalism is just a mask for their real aim: to advocate their high aesthetics and poetics. Through taking advantage of journalism and market, they find a way to consecrate their poetry and endow it with symbolic prestige. In 'The "Colder Artifice": Paul Laurence Dunbar, Countee Cullen and the Masks of Blackness', Steven A. Nardi uses a deconstructive approach to analyse the mask metaphor in two modernist African American poets. For Paul Laurence Dunbar, black people wear a fake mask which hides and protects their real self, so the mask can be detached from the face. But for Countee Cullen, the mask and the face are fused together after the historical racial encounter, so there is no essential black subjectivity behind the mask that can be retrieved, and the self is already transfigured by the mask imposed on him; any attempt to detach the mask will cause mutilation. Moreover, in the case study of 'The Emotion as Such: Un/Masking the Poet in

Mayakovsky's work', Connor Doak considers the animal personas in the Russian poet Mayakovsky's poetry as a mask which reveals his break from realistic aesthetics and his emotions suppressed by urban modernity.

The nine essays collected in this volume, though covering a wide range of cultural spaces and artistic genres, all have a thematic concern with masks (both literal and figural), and explore modern subjects, dwelling, struggling and negotiating within particular historical contexts in a global modernist field. Through including a number of 'marginalised' places and writers who have received insufficient attention, the editors make great efforts to maintain a 'cultural diversity' in this volume. However, it would be more comprehensive and 'global' to also include one or two Anglo-American cases as representatives, since a number of modernists in the 'centre' also had a transnational vision through their 'voyage-out'.

Modernism is never a self-contained system which has definite boundaries; nor is it a binary system which only flows from the centre to the periphery. In the global modernist cultural field, the dialectical tensions between history and present, West and East, heteronomy and autonomy, sameness and differentiation, make modern subjects struggle and suffer. Facing the ever-changing and self-consuming modern world, everybody needs a mask to protect oneself, to answer all challenges, and to stabilise one's identity.

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Linguistic Ethnography: Collecting, Analysing and Presenting Data.

Fiona and Angela Creese. London: Sage, 2015. ISBN: 9781446257371, 240 pp.

Linguistic ethnography is a research approach in which two fields of study – linguistics and ethnography – are brought together, the

argument for this being that there is more to be gained in combining these disciplines than keeping them separate (Creese 139). It is a relatively recent, European phenomenon that is closely related to North American scholarship in linguistic anthropology. In a discussion paper published by the Linguistic Ethnography Forum in 2004, the general orientation of linguistic ethnography is described as follows:

“Linguistic ethnography generally holds that to a considerable degree, language and the social world are mutually shaping, and that close analysis of situated language use can provide both fundamental and distinctive insights into the mechanisms and dynamics of social and cultural production in everyday activity.” (Rampton et al.: 2).

Thus, by combining the two disciplines, research in linguistic ethnography seeks to examine language use in various social contexts, as the two are closely intertwined and influence one another.

This work provides a comprehensive guide to conducting linguistic ethnographic research, from the initial research design stage through to data analysis and writing up findings. It is—as set out in the introduction—aimed at students and researchers with various levels of experience in conducting linguistic ethnographic research. The book is well-organised and split into three parts, allowing the reader to locate and refer to a given section as and when it is necessary.

The first part, ‘Ethnography and Language’, comprises two chapters. Chapter 1, ‘Linguistic Ethnography’, begins by looking at why linguistics and ethnography should be combined, examines links between language and culture, and briefly charts the development of the study of language over the past century. The second part of this chapter focuses on the antecedents of linguistic ethnography and its current relevance. The reader is introduced to four of the major scholars whose shared interest in language, culture, society, and whose interaction has influenced linguistic ethnography: Hymes, Gumperz, Goffman, and Erickson. Following this, information is provided about the current relevance and status of linguistic ethnography.

Chapter 2, ‘Data in Linguistic Ethnography’ outlines four approaches to data collection and analysis that can be used in linguistic ethnography research: interviews, fieldwork, interactions, and text. In the description

of each approach, types of data, data collection, data analysis, and reflexivity are discussed.

The two chapters in this part of the book provide brief, but useful introductions to the development of linguistic ethnography and some of the common research approaches used by scholars in this field. Additional key readings are listed at the end of both chapters, which will especially be of benefit to readers who are new to linguistic ethnography, as the brevity of these chapters mean that they may need supplementing with some additional reading.

Part Two, 'Doing Research in Linguistic Ethnography: Building the Case', comprises four chapters, and is arguably the focal point of this work. The respective authors of each chapter present a case study on a research project of which they have been a part, and discuss some of the issues that they faced and problems they had to overcome during the research process. The case studies presented highlight the diverse range of research areas and topics for which a linguistic ethnographic approach can be employed. In Chapter 3, Angela Creese discusses her work as part of a research team examining multilingualism in community-led language schools. The case study discussed by Fiona Copland in Chapter 4 is based on research carried out in English language teacher training centres. The setting for the case study written by Frances Rock in Chapter 5 is police custody; and in Chapter 6 Sara Shaw discusses her work on language and healthcare planning.

The chapters in Part Two are structured similarly, and the same issues are discussed in all four. Each author sets the context of their respective case study by providing some background information and the research questions that were investigated, after this they proceed to discuss some of the issues that arose while conducting the research. Some of the headings under which the research projects are discussed include research design, collection of data, data storage, analysis of data, and representation and writing up.

These case studies provide rich, in-depth accounts of the research undertaken by each author. The close attention paid to practically every step of the research process really brings each study to life and allows the reader to fully engage with the various issues that arose whilst the author was working on the given project and how these were dealt with.

The third part of this work, 'Practical Issues in Linguistic Ethnographic Research' is made up of four chapters, each of which focuses on some of the different practical issues that arise when doing linguistic ethnographic research. Chapter 7 focuses on empiricism, ethics and impact – the latter of the two being issues that currently seem to be of particular importance in all fields of research. Chapter 8 provides guidance on transcription, translation and technology, such as advice on making decisions on how to transcribe data, how to present data from languages with different orthographies, and how to manage data. Chapter 9 provides invaluable advice on writing up the results of research for different outputs including doctoral theses, articles, posters, and policy briefing papers. Chapter 10, the book's final and concluding chapter, takes some of the main themes of the book and looks at how linguistic ethnography may move forward in the future.

Overall this work is an excellent contribution to a relatively new area of research on which there is still relatively little written. The emphasis on the importance of the need for reflexivity at all stages of the research process is something that is stressed throughout the work and is one of its particular strengths. As mentioned above, the different methods that can be used in linguistic ethnographic research are not discussed at great length, which could be a potential weakness of the work – especially for readers who are new to research – however, adequate further reading suggestions are provided.

This work is an essential read for graduate students and researchers in a wide range of disciplines who are conducting research using a linguistic ethnographic approach. It is not a prescriptive, 'how-to' guide to linguistic ethnography, but instead, makes the reader aware of the processes involved in doing linguistic ethnography, and should therefore enable them to make their own informed decisions throughout the research process. The layout is clear and it is written in a very accessible style. Moreover, the examples taken from the authors' research projects that are scattered liberally throughout this book provide the reader with further practical guidance on conducting linguistic ethnographic research. This is a work that all researchers in this area should have close to hand whilst conducting their research.

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***British Spy Fiction and End of Empire*. Sam Goodman. Abingdon: Routledge, 2015. ISBN: 9781138777460, 198 pp.**

This short criticism on spy novels interprets the figure of the spy where British national identity is concerned, linking it with space in both post-war Europe and colonial territories. With consecutive events such as the independence of colonized countries and the Suez Crisis in 1956, the location of the British Empire after the Second World War was thrown into flux, its former reputation and power lost. Recollection of the empire's glorious past was necessitated by the construction of nationhood so that the unflinching resistance of Britain against the Nazis was not rendered useless after the war; however, the new powers of the USA and the USSR were the obvious pivot of the Cold War period, and the British Empire was ousted on the world stage. Spy novels at this time thus played a critical role in making the British feel proud again and, more importantly, in retrieving 'British' as their national identity by sharing the emotional experience in these novels. Unlike in today's post-devolution era, the heroes in spy novels fight for the single entity of Britain, which makes them—as Sam Goodman points out—"ideas of patriotism and national security, with the spy himself indicative of the

defence of British interests and the preservation of British power around the globe” (2).

Based on these political contexts, Goodman argues that space in spy novels enacts the construction of British identity and its changes. To this end, Goodman analyses works by four different authors: Ian Fleming, Graham Greene, John le Carré, and Len Deighton. Goodman in the analysis does not take space as a still background against which characters act, but rather as a vibrant geography which “traces a narrative of decline mirroring the British position within post-war geopolitics over the course of the following two decades” (19). Following Henri Lefebvre’s theorisation in which space is the result of socio-political actions and power, Goodman claims that active espionage activities across all of Europe and European-colonised countries in their works need to be more closely explored. As he points out, “the spy becomes a composite signifier of power and identity, as well as a crucial link in the exchange of values between political power and spatial environment” (9). He connects spies’ activities with Britain’s situation in post-war Europe, the status of London, British technology, and colonisers in five chapters.

Throughout the book, Goodman compares and contrasts the selected spy novels with their historical backgrounds. Early spy characters, like Fleming’s James Bond, are quite different from the others in that Bond’s manliness and competence effectively attracted public attention. Unlike Bond, the characters of Greene, le Carré, and Deighton portray a much bleaker Britain with “resignation in the face of modern political power” and “economic stagnation and geographical decline” (11). The lively discussion on the correlation between space and British identity occurs in chapters one and two. By way of examining the state of the British Empire, Goodman first looks at the British espionage activities across post-war Europe, including Germany and Austria, which were still very much scarred by the Second World War. Through characters’ narratives in foreign lands, he maintains that British identity abroad at that time seems to be in quite “a state of flux” (24), as is the influence of Britain in the international arena.

Turning his gaze to the domestic sphere, Goodman discusses London as the centre of all operation and technological advances. Although each

writer's representation of London varies, Goodman is able to distill from them a clear image: a highly developed space, the vital centre of British power and national identity, which needs to be protected. As he argues that the figure of James Bond can be read as part of the construction of Englishness, he also treats London as 'central to projections of the British national character, geographically important as a centre of production and metaphorically vital to the construction of national identity' (49). What is implied in this statement, however, is that Britishness is interchangeable with Englishness. In terms of spies' use of state-of-the-art technology—including aeroplanes, cars and ships—he claims that the description of these technologies forms British national characters. For example, against the powerful U-boat of Germany, Fleming's emphasis on British maritime history and the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve (RNVR) captures British readers' pride and patriotism. However, despite detailed explanation and description of highly developed technology in the British Empire, the main thrust of his argument throughout chapter four is on the fading imperial power and changed perception about British power under international circumstances, which followed the two central powers of the USA and the USSR.

When it comes to the wane of British Empire, Goodman examines the British spies' activities in the previous colonies of Britain. Although 'spy' is still often depicted as a byword for a patriot who protects national interests abroad and at home in literary works, Goodman importantly asserts that these activities also play a role in undermining the British power and position, which is related to the territorial loss as well as "the decline of moral and political authority" (139). Goodman makes it clear that what intrigues him is not the decolonising process, but the protagonists' strife against the British identity in the novels themselves, which raises moral questions concerning what the spy as a coloniser perceives as colonial spaces. For example, Goodman asks whether the spies' selfish efforts to preserve their own national interests for the British Empire as well as to alienate the colonies only for their material benefits are acceptable. In the four authors' works, typical colonial spaces such as Africa, Indochina, and Hong Kong are largely ignored and used only as a means to an end, by which spies achieve their imperialist goals. Accordingly, as Goodman points out, colonial spaces allow the

protagonists of the novels to question their British identity as well as the crisis of the British Empire. In the case of Greene, Goodman believes his works to have concentrated on an inevitable devolution in which the British Empire is replaced by the USA in taking the leading role in the world. Fleming's description of Jamaica is much more pastoral, but in his narrative and characterisation he also shows concerns about the rapid rise of the USA in Jamaica. Finally, le Carré's Hong Kong is shown both as a mysterious colonial space and a place where the end of Empire is enacted.

Despite the wide range of spy novels covered in this study, Goodman's argument on spies mirroring the power and decline of the British Empire is consistent and well written. The connection he draws between the figures of spies, space, and British national identity with regard to each author is original and well-organized. However, this study does not make a clear distinction between Englishness and Britishness, and their interchangeable use can be potentially problematic and confusing. Nonetheless, the correlation he draws between space and identity in the context of British history is highly valuable, and his approach of reading British spy activities as being allegorical to the fate of Britain and the construction of British identity is inspiring for future studies.

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