

SPECIAL ISSUE

Cultural Diversity in Popular Culture – Two Case Studies From a UK Based Television Drama

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(Received 5 June 2014; final version received 14 October 2014)

This study is placed in the context of the continuing debate in Scotland as well as Europe, Australia and North America concerning the increasing ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity amongst school pupils' population and the corresponding lack of diversity within the composition and supply of the teaching workforce which remains, in most 'developed' countries homogeneously female and from the majority ethnic and linguistic group of each society. The multilingual, multi-ethnic, and multicultural pupil population is frequently posed as a challenge to education systems that involves under achievement of students from culturally diverse backgrounds. The aim of this article is to add a further, distinctive dimension to this debate by providing critical analysis of the ways in which linguistic, ethnic and cultural diversity within a school environment are represented in popular culture.

Based on the textual analysis of two episodes of the TV *Drama Waterloo Rd* (BBC, 2006 - continuing) the article seeks to explore the ways in which the 'Other' is represented in a television drama targeted at a young audience. The authors use Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model to investigate the properties of visual signs and language representation of linguistic, cultural and ethnic diversity in a fictional secondary school. The article continues by exploring and discussing the circular way in which popular culture simultaneously expresses and reinforces the hegemonic understanding of linguistic, ethnic and cultural diversity in schools.

Keywords: ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity; popular culture; television representations; schools; television drama

Questo studio si colloca nel contesto del corrente dibattito in Scozia, ma anche nel resto dell'Europa, in Australia e in Nord America, concernente la crescente diversità etnica, linguistica e culturale tra gli alunni e la mancanza di una

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corrispondente diversità nella composizione del corpo insegnante che rimane, nella maggior parte dei paesi “sviluppati”, omogeneamente femminile ed appartenente alla maggioranza etnica e linguistica di ciascuna società. La popolazione multilingue, multi-etnica e multiculturale è frequentemente proposta come una sfida ai sistemi educativi in relazione all'insuccesso scolastico degli alunni che appartengono a gruppi di minoranza etnica. Scopo di questo articolo è aggiungere un'ulteriore, peculiare dimensione a questo dibattito attraverso l'analisi critica dei modi in cui le diversità linguistiche, etniche e culturali proprie di un ambiente scolastico sono rappresentate nella cultura popolare.

Basato sull'analisi testuale di due episodi della serie televisiva *Waterloo Rd* (BBC, 2006 – continua) l'articolo si propone di esplorare i modi in cui “l'Altro” è rappresentato in un programma destinato a una giovane udienza. Gli autori usano il modello di codifica/decodifica di Stewart Hall per investigare le caratteristiche di segni visivi e rappresentazioni verbali delle diversità linguistiche, culturali ed etniche presenti in una fittizia scuola secondaria. L'articolo procede attraverso l'indagine e la discussione del modo circolare in cui la cultura popolare al tempo stesso manifesta e rinforza il pensiero egemonico in relazione alla diversità linguistica, etnica e culturale nelle scuole.

Poniższy artykuł nawiązuje do dyskusji toczącej się w Szkocji, jak i również w Europie, Australii i Ameryce Północnej dotyczącej wzrastającego zróżnicowania etnicznego, kulturowego oraz językowego populacji uczniów przy jednoczesnym braku takowych zmian w populacji nauczycieli. Grupa nauczycieli w dużej mierze pozostaje jednorodna pod względem płci (przewaga kobiet), etniczności oraz języka (dominuje język grupy kraju przyjmującego). Wielojęzyczność, wieloetniczność oraz wielokulturowość populacji uczniów jest często przedstawiana jako problem systemu edukacji przejawiający się między innymi niskimi wynikami w nauce uczniów o innym pochodzeniu kulturowym i etnicznym. Celem tego artykułu jest włączenie do istniejącej debaty na temat wielokulturowości, wieloetniczności i wielojęzyczności istotnego podejścia do tematu opartego na analizie sposobów, w jakich różnorodność językowa, etniczna środowiska szkolnego jest prezentowana w kulturze masowej.

Bazując na analizie tekstów dwóch odcinków serialu telewizyjnego *'Waterloo Rd'* (BBC, od 2006) poniższy artykuł ma na celu eksplorację oraz analizę obrazu „Innego” kształtowanego w serialu telewizyjnym dedykowanym do młodych ludzi. Autorzy poniższego artykułu bazowali na modelu Stuart'a Hall'a do kodowania jak i rozszyfrowania właściwości i znaczenia wizualnych znaków oraz języka stosowanego w odniesieniu do wielojęzyczności, wieloetniczności i wielokulturowości w analizowanym serialu. Analiza i dyskusja w poniższym artykule przedstawia zatem współzależność między sposobem w jakim kultura masowa przedstawia, jak i wspiera oraz wzmacnia dominujące rozumienie problemu wielojęzyczności, wieloetniczności oraz wielokulturowości w środowiskach szkolnych.

This article reports on a small scale piece of research which considers how teachers, teacher-pupil relationships and inter-staff relationships are constructed in one British television drama set in a contemporary secondary school in Scotland. The study is placed in the context of the continuing debate in Scotland as well as the rest of the UK, Europe, Australia and North America on the increasing ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity amongst school pupils' population and the corresponding lack of diversity within the composition and supply of the teaching workforce which remains, in most 'developed' countries homogeneously female and from the majority group of each society (Villegas and Lucas, 2004; Menter *et al.* 2006; Santoro, 2007). The multilingual, multi-ethnic, and multicultural pupil population of schools is frequently posed as a challenge to education systems that are often characterised by under achievement of students from culturally diverse backgrounds. The aim of this article is to add a further, distinctive dimension to this debate by providing critical analysis of the ways in which linguistic, ethnic and cultural diversity within a school environment are represented in popular culture, specifically the TV *Drama Waterloo Rd* (BBC, 2006 - continuing). For the purposes of our research we watched to the end of Series 9 (March 2014).

Our analysis of two episodes of this television drama series is set within a societal and educational context of increasing ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity in countries across Europe due to a range of political and economic factors including the expansion of the European Union and the arrival of refugees from a wide range of Asian and African countries. This diversity is reflected in learner populations in schools across the continent. The EU (Commission of the European Communities, 2008) *Schools for the 21st Century* acknowledges this increasing diversity throughout its report and reminds us that *Every classroom is a place of diversity: of gender, socioeconomic groups, ability or disability, mother tongues and learning styles. Improving competences means teaching learners in a more personalised way. Better tailoring teaching to each child's needs can increase student interest and engagement in learning activities and improve their results, but its benefits should reach all students equitably* (2008:6). The report recognises that *Teachers require specific training to work effectively in diverse classrooms* (ibid).

The wide ethnic diversity of the pupil population across Europe is not mirrored in the teaching population. The teaching profession in Scotland for example is predominantly white, female and Anglophone. The Scottish Government publishes demographic statistics concerning the gender, age and ethnicity of teachers in Scotland by school sector (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0044/00443414.pdf>) which indicate that in 2013 only 2% of all teachers were from a minority ethnic group, with numbers in primary schools being even lower. It is also interesting to note that 91% of primary school teachers and 63% of secondary teachers in Scotland were female in 2013. Data from England shows a higher number of ethnic minority teachers but this is in a population with higher overall ethnic minority numbers. DCSF² data on teachers in state maintained schools in England shows that just 5.6% of the teaching population identified themselves as belonging to an ethnic minority group. In primary schools in England, 23.3% of the pupil population belong to an ethnic minority group, whilst in secondary schools the percentage is over 19.5% of the pupil population.

² DCSF: Department for Children, Schools and Families.

The increased ethnic diversity in the pupil population has in turn led to an increased diversity in the pupils' home languages. In 2010, there were 136 languages spoken by pupils in Scottish schools. The 5 most common languages after English which are spoken by pupils in Scottish Schools are Polish, Punjabi, Urdu, Arabic and Cantonese. None of these languages have any official recognition in the taught curriculum in Scotland.

There are no centrally gathered statistics regarding the languages spoken by teachers in Scotland or England but the ethnic makeup of the teaching profession as earlier described can lead to an assumption of overall monolingual use of English among the teaching workforce. The linguistic assumptions of teachers as to pupil use of language are based on children who use English in school, go home and use English with their parents, watch English language television and read English language texts (Smyth, 2003).

The reality of the British classroom is therefore one in which a vast majority of white, mostly female, largely English-speaking teachers interact with learners from increasingly diverse racial, ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Our interest in the popular TV series *Waterloo Rd*, stems from a wish to explore how diversity (of staff and pupils) is portrayed and how social tensions caused by diversity are shown to be experienced and confronted.

Hall (2006) has explored the ways in which popular culture in Britain conforms to the dominant culture. We wish to explore if this school based television drama conforms to the heterogenic norms of the teaching profession as discussed earlier and what values towards staff and pupil diversity are espoused in the series. Scanlon (2011) and others have written about the fictional representations of teachers which have influenced their decisions to join the profession and their ideas of what teaching is about. We are intrigued as to how television drama represents teachers and what messages it may give to people who are considering the profession about who can or should not have a place in school staff; how teachers respond to diversity and what issues around ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity are addressed in this popular television drama. We wonder how television drama represents the relationships between teachers and diverse pupils. We question who are the pupils who are listened to and who are not listened to in these fictional classrooms. For the purposes of this article however we are only considering two episodes of this TV drama and could not respond to all of our queries. As viewers of this fictional drama set in a secondary school our interpretations are informed by our positions as education researchers who are particularly interested in diversity in education. We are all members of the international Diverse Teachers for Diverse Learners (DTDLE) research network. The aims of the UK DTDLE group include Identifying and overcoming barriers to a demographically representative teaching profession and encouraging and enabling access to teaching from a diverse range of the population.

Our research questions for this particular analysis of two episodes were honed through discussion and became:

- How does this TV drama represent issues related to ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity in the school?

- How is the role of teachers portrayed in relation to issues raised by ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity and how do the teachers respond to these issues?
- How are teachers and pupils shown to interact around issues raised by ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity?

Methodology

This article considers the representation of ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity in the TV Drama Waterloo Road. This British TV Drama was first broadcast in 2006 and is set in a fictional comprehensive secondary school. The programme is, at the time of writing, in its tenth series, having broadcast over 170 episodes. Each episode of Waterloo Road is centred on a main story, while several other minor scenarios are interwoven and developed alongside the principal one. Setting the series in a 'challenging comprehensive school' has the benefit of allowing the writers to tackle various issues that are deemed of relevance to young people which, in many cases, appear to take inspiration from topics that have some prominence in the news. The issues confronted range from alcoholism and drug taking to bullying, immigration and gang-culture among others. The programme's official website <http://www.waterlooroad.co.uk/> offers a specific page of information and support on some of the issues tackled by the programme, such as alcoholism and drug abuse. Some of the information given is openly directed to young people, suggesting that the programme has awareness-raising intentions as well as entertainment purposes. Over the course of the first nine series, diversity amongst the pupil population has been quite noticeable, and several episodes address challenges that young people from diverse ethnic or religious backgrounds may experience, as well as topics of relevance to a general audience. So there have been topics in the programme around pupils' mixed race relationships (Series 7) and issues faced by asylum seekers (Series 8 and 9) However, racial or religious diversity among the school's staff is less evident and very rarely is it referred to directly. Throughout the first nine series the main discussion of staff ethnic or racial diversity is in fact in the episode from Series 6 analysed in this article.

The investigation of representations of diversity in the education setting presented in this article is based on textual analysis of two episodes from the series. The first of these (Episode 2: series 8) centres on the issues faced by an African migrant child in a Scottish classroom while the second (Episode 14: series 6) focuses on the racist attitudes of some pupils and teachers to a Polish migrant who comes to work in the school as a caretaker. These two separate episodes were selected for our analysis because the main story of the episode concerns migrants' experiences in the education setting, one focused on a pupil and one on a member of staff. This article does not attempt to generalise the representation of ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity at Waterloo Road, but rather presents two separate case studies which are then discussed together. The two case studies are presented separately as their action takes place in two different geographical locations (Episode 14: series 6 was filmed in England. Episode 2: series 8 was filmed in Scotland), involve different cast and were broadcast in different years (Episode 14: series 6 was broadcast in 2011. Episode 2: series 8 in 2012). In series 6 members of the staff at Waterloo Road are more ethnically diverse

than in other series and this enables greater discussion on the representation of diversity among staff members. Episode 2: series 8 concerns the experiences of an African migrant pupil and is well-suited for the analysis of the representation of diversity among the pupils and the role of educators in relation to pupils of migrant and refugee background.

Our approach to the textual analysis of two episodes utilises Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model (2006) to investigate the properties of visual signs and language representation of linguistic, cultural and ethnic diversity in this fictional secondary school. According to Hall, the meaning of the message is encoded by the producer using certain frameworks of knowledge, and is subsequently decoded by the audience using different frames of interpretation. Hall also indicates that the discourse form of the encoded message makes this message more meaningful to the audience: *"Before this message can have an 'effect' (however defined) satisfy a 'need' or be put to a 'use', it must first be appropriated as a meaningful discourse"* (Hall, 2006, p. 53). Accordingly, our analysis of the two episodes involved the content analysis of verbal and visual signs that appeared alongside ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity in the programmes to enable us to discuss and critically analyse the text as encountered.

VanderStoep and Johnston (2009, p. 210) describe textual analysis as 'the identification and interpretation of a set of verbal or non-verbal signs' and emphasise the researcher's role in textual analysis is to record their own interpretations of a text. For the purpose of the analysis, the scripts of the two episodes were fully transcribed, taking care to correctly ascribe who was speaking and whether the speaker was a member of the teaching staff, a pupil, a parent or another member of staff and to whom they were speaking. We could then identify both who was talking, to whom and what has been said. The main goal of this careful transcription was to identify the content and situated context of the message, but also to incorporate attributes of individuals communicating the message. The unit of analysis (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) that we used in this study included identifying chunks of transcript that we decoded as having a special message describing perceptions, attitudes and behaviours of pupils and teachers of ethnic minority background or towards others of ethnic minority background. In addition to verbal signs, the analysis focused on non-verbal elements such as physical appearance, body language (e.g. gaze, facial expressions), emotions, symbols, music as well as the physical settings that appear in relation to ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversities. The analysis of visual signs aimed to uncover the attributes that go along with objects that represent the properties of linguistic, cultural and ethnic diversity.

Hall (2006) indicates that understanding the communication exchange depends on the degree of similarity between the encoder's (i.e. the producer of the message) framework of knowledge and the decoder's (i.e. the receiver of the message). The decoding of the properties of visual signs and language concerning linguistic, cultural and ethnic diversity in this fictional secondary school has been described in this article from the perspectives of the three researchers, all of whom are academics in University Schools of Education who have a particular interest in these issues. As such, the process of decoding is subjective and is embedded in researcher values, perspectives and frameworks of knowledge. The analytical frameworks used in this article are developed from Saïd's (2003) concept of the Other and the model outlined by Adams et al. (1997) for analysing discrimination and equality in educational settings.

As advanced by Saïd in his seminal work *Orientalism* (1978/2003), the Other is a construction of Western societies which has its roots in colonial ideology. Through a process steeped in subtle prejudice, non-Western peoples have been invested with a series of attributes that legitimise their domination by the West. In his later book, *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Saïd argues that the echoes of colonial domination still live on in the portrayals of African societies, and notes how the concept of culture has been used as a justification for the exploitation and control of the Other, seen as backward, and in need to be saved from its own primitive nature. As Hall (2001) further observes, this construction of the Other is built on binary opposition between 'civilization' and 'savagery', a racialised discourse that justifies the authority of one group upon the other. The power imbalance is maintained through direct or indirect oppression and discriminatory practices, but also through the victims' internalisation of racist ideologies (Hall, 1986), so that the colonised comes to look "[...] at one's self through the eyes of others, [...] measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (Du Bois [1903] 2007 p. 8). The ways in which the resultant discrimination can affect life chances and opportunities particularly in educational settings was developed by Adams *et al.* (1997) from the work of Pincus (1994) who argued that it is necessary to recognise structural discrimination before institutional and individual discrimination can be challenged. Structural discrimination can operate when the structures such as the legal and political systems operate in ways which discriminate against minority groups or individuals who tend not to be represented by those structures.

We shall now present the two case studies for consideration to demonstrate how linguistic, ethnic and cultural diversity within a school environment are represented in our chosen episodes of *Waterloo Road*.

Case Study 1: 'Spirit Child'

The main theme of episode 2 of series 8 concerns a new pupil of Black African ethnicity, Lula Tsibi (LT). The key teacher characters in this episode are Tom Clarkson (Head of English), Michael Byrne (Head Teacher) and Sian Diamond (Deputy Head Teacher). Tom Clarkson (TC), the Head of English is a white male teacher in his late 30s, who has a friendly and informal relationship with the students. The Head Teacher, Michael Byrne (MB), is a key character in the organisational structure at *Waterloo Road*. He is a middle aged, white male, a former science teacher whose neat, business-like image conveys his role and status within the school. The Deputy Head, Sian Diamond (SD), is of indeterminate minority ethnic background. She is portrayed as professional and efficient, and as holding a crucial position in the school's organisation.

In our discussion of this episode we focus on the construction of the identities of Lula, her family and community, the relationship between the teaching staff and this family and on a discussion of the role of the teachers and their responses to challenges encountered in relation to a new pupil of refugee background.

In this episode we are introduced to Lula Tsibi, a young African pupil at *Waterloo Rd*. In the very first scene we see a semi-darkened house, shot in sepia tones. The camera follows a black girl moving through different rooms. She can be glimpsed through some objects in the foreground: candles, an open book on which a cross is

lying. In the background we hear the sound of a choir, singing a kind of lamentation. The girl, who we will later learn is Lula, is wearing a school uniform. We later discover that Lula has arrived with her family as a refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Backlighting is used in the first scene in which the character appears. As she moves, her shadow is projected, dark and sharp, against the walls. The dark shades used in the introductory sequences, together with the foregrounding of objects with religious connotations, set the episode's central theme, that of the superstitious religiosity of the 'dark continent'. Throughout the episode, the scenes depicting Lula's story are often shot in shadowy light. This emphasises a view of Africa and African culture as enigmatic and irrational, a view still widespread in Western depictions of the African 'Other' (Hall, 2001; Bassil, 2011). This appears to be the visual equivalent of what Wainaina (2005) suggests in his satirical article 'How to Write About Africa':

Always use the word 'Africa' or 'Darkness' or 'Safari' in your title. Subtitles may include the words 'Zanzibar', 'Masai', 'Zulu', 'Zambezi', 'Congo', 'Nile', 'Big', 'Sky', 'Shadow', 'Drum', 'Sun' or 'Bygone'. Also useful are words such as 'Guerrillas', 'Timeless', 'Primordial' and 'Tribal'. [...] Broad brushstrokes throughout are good. Avoid having the African characters laugh, or struggle to educate their kids, or just make do in mundane circumstances."

Following the first, stage-setting camera shots, we see Lula entering a room and we hear her call, in a whisper, *Mama!* A black woman is lying on the bed, awake but staring away from the door through which Lula enters; she does not move nor acknowledge the girl in any way. Lula gently shakes her, saying *I need to talk*. The girl then murmurs, *C'est important* (It's important). This too fails to elicit a response from her mother, who keeps staring silently.

The second person we meet is a man, as an out-of-field voice calling for Lula. We learn later, when he talks to one of the teachers, that he is Lula's paternal uncle and that his name is Lionel. When we first see him, Lionel is standing in the kitchen. He speaks to Lula in French, and accuses the girl of having poisoned his food. When Lula denies this, Lionel grabs her by the wrist, telling her she's a liar. He then adds, in English: *You can trick your mother, but not me*. A large gold cross hangs from a gold chain around the uncle's neck, emphasising his religiosity. He stares at the girl and then hisses: *I see what you are. The pastor knows what you are. He says you are an evil child!* Lula frees herself by biting the man's hand and runs away.

We next see Lula outside the school. She steps off the pavement and onto the street right in front of a car. She is staring ahead and appears not to take anything in. The person in the car is one of the teachers, Mr Clarkson. He shouts crossly at Lula, telling her to pay attention to the road. Lula stands motionless in front of the car and stares at him, without a word.

Upon meeting Ms Diamond (SD), the science teacher, in one of the school's corridors, Mr Clarkson (TC) enquires about Lula as shown in Extract 1:1. He is still concerned about the earlier incident, and wants to have more information about this new pupil. During the exchange, Mr Clarkson's wrongly remembers the girls' surname. This appears to signpost Lula's recent arrival at the school but may also exemplify a

perception of newly-arrived young refugees with non-English names as exotic and mystifying, and thus as the unknowable 'Other' (Saïd, 2003).

TC: *What do you know about the kid called Lula Tibby?*
 SD: *Tsibi, she is year 11*
 TC: *Yeah? Well someone needs to talk to her about road awareness*
 SD: *I'll add it to the list of other things I need to talk to her about*
 TC: *Is she a troublemaker?*
 SD: *Model pupil at her last school, apparently, but we'll be getting reports.*

Extract 1:1

The background for Lula's story is thus established: we are shown that Lula, a young immigrant from a Francophone African country, is in trouble, and understand that this trouble is recent, as Ms Diamond refers to her being a model pupil at her previous school, something Ms Diamond appears to question by her addition of the word 'apparently'. We know that something is wrong with Lula's mother, as she has been shown to be lying in bed awake but unresponsive. We are also made aware that the girl's uncle thinks that Lula is trying to poison him, and that he believes her to be 'evil'. Finally, we see that Lula is reacting to all this by becoming detached and angry. The episode presents numerous examples of Lula's behavioural issues. These include distraction in the classroom, incidences of aggressive responses to other pupils as well as teaching staff, and emotional distress. These incidents might suggest that pupils of migrant and refugee background are entering the UK education system with behavioural problems. The discipline issues appear as a dominant challenge that teachers of Waterloo Road encounter and little is known about Lula's educational achievements or hardships as demonstrated in Extract 1:1. Despite being introduced as a newly arrived pupil from the Francophone Democratic Republic of Congo she does not experience any apparent problems in speaking fluent English.

In addition to constructing Lula as a challenge to behaviour management, the dialogue in Extract 1:2 between Ms Diamond, Mr Clarkson and Mr Byrne (MB), the headteacher, indicates that her home setting is also presented as problematic and thus requiring school intervention and action. Lula's mother and uncle are presented as hard to reach with few opportunities for engagement and dialogue.

SD: *What was your impression of the home setup?*
 TC: *The mum looks out of it. Looks like she's disengaged*
 MB: *And the uncle?*
 TC: *Not sure, I'm not mad about him describing Lula as wicked*
 MB: *We need to be on the safe side, so Sian, go ahead and let social services know*

Extract 1:2

When Mr Clarkson calls Lula's mother to the school to discuss the girl's behaviour, Lionel arrives in her place, explaining that the girl's mother is too ill to move. He describes the woman's illness as a result of Lula's bad behaviour. He speaks to the teacher very slowly, stressing his point by tapping his index finger on the table, the mark

left by Lula's bite hidden by a plaster. When Mr Clarkson suggests that Lula may need to see a counsellor, the uncle replies that the pastor will take care of this. During a later conversation with Lula, to discuss her behaviour towards another pupil, a crying Lula tells Mr Clarkson *They are going to do it tonight!* To which Mr Clarkson enquires *Do what?* We do not hear Lula's answer, but the scene cuts to Mr Byrne saying to Mr Clarkson *An exorcism?* We are thus made aware of what Lula is scared about and that fear at the prospect of being exorcised may be the cause of her disruptive behaviour.

Through the setting and the topic of the episode, the African 'Other' is constructed at the same time as threatening and intriguing in its assumed primitiveness (Saïd, 1978/2003; 1993). Lionel's superstitious and menacing performance is juxtaposed, throughout the episode, to the rational and analytical behaviour of the Western teachers in general and, in particular to the unthreatening, caring masculinity of Mr Clarkson. As Hall (2001) notes, the [...] racialized discourse is structured by a set of binary oppositions [...] between 'civilization' (white) and 'savagery' (black)' (p. 334), a dichotomy embodied by Mr Clarkson and Lionel respectively. Lula does not escape this depiction either, as she is shown to react aggressively to other pupils' remarks or teasing; her raging, screaming face filmed in extreme close-ups. Her history teacher comments, after an angry retort by Lula, that *There's something wild about that girl.*

The explanation for the uncle's distrust of Lula, for her fearful and aggressive behaviour and for the mother's unresponsiveness comes during a conversation between Lionel and Mr Clarkson. During this conversation we learn that, according to Lula's uncle, the girl's mother is ill with grief because the Home Office returned her husband to Kinshasa as he was in the country illegally. It appears that Lula's father had been very ill, but had refused to go to hospital to avoid being found out. Worried about him, Lula had called an ambulance and, as a consequence, her father was returned to the country he had fled from because he had been in danger. The father's fate is unknown, but we later learn that Lula believes him to be dead. We are also made aware that Lionel holds Lula responsible for his brother's fate, and that he has managed to persuade even the girl's mother of Lula's bad faith.

When Lula's uncle arrives at the school and forcibly takes the girl from the playground, another pupil raises the alarm. Mr Clarkson calls on Lula's mother who, at first, pretends not to be home. When the teacher tells her that Lula is in danger, however, Lula's mother is shaken into asking, in English: *What do you mean, in danger?* For the first time we hear her voice, signaling that Lula's mother is breaking out of her inertness and finally responding to outside stimuli.

We see Lionel dragging Lula towards an altar where, next to a bible and a cross, some coiled ropes are waiting. Lula is told to pray and we hear footsteps advancing towards her. We then see that a well-dressed man has joined the ceremony at the altar, and understand this must be the pastor. The background music becomes louder. Just as the pastor reaches for the ropes, Mr Clarkson enters the room. Lionel tells the teacher to leave, and that he is taking care of his own niece. At this point Lula's mother enters the room and the girl runs into her arms. The mother tells Lionel, in fluent English, that the pastor just wants his money and adds: *He fills his pockets with your stupidity.* When the uncle retorts that he's taking care of Lula while the mother lies in bed, Lula's mother replies: *Well, I'm awake now! And I will take my daughter home!* She then tells Lionel: *Don't come to my house again!* and leaves with Lula. In the

background we hear the sound of sirens, suggesting that the police have been called and are coming to apprehend Lionel.

The grieving, silent and helpless mother personifies the image of refugee as passive victim and / or as a recipient of support (Horsti, 2013). This image may derive from a weight of research in the field of refugee studies, which focuses on refugees' experiences of trauma and suffering, and tends to stress their limited choices in relation to the migration process (Harrell-Bond and Voutira, 2007). The imposed category of victim is often challenged by refugees themselves and indeed Lula's mother ultimately rescues her daughter, and manages to resist and challenge Lionel's superstitious practices. However, the mother's 'awakening' only occurs thanks to the intervention of Mr Clarkson, who manages to bring her out of her lethargic sorrow. This is evocative of Spivak's sentence 'white men saving brown women from brown men' (1988, p. 296), as it is only through Mr Clarkson's Western reason that the African woman can find a symbolic and literal voice and thus can break free of superstition and backwardness embodied by the African male. Thus we see Hall's (1986) concept of internalised colonialism especially evident in this episode, in which the African asylum-seeking family can only be saved from its own self-destructive beliefs by acquiring Western rationality.

Positive examples of parents' involvement in school activities are missing in this episode. The home and school partnership which could enable identification of potential difficulties to be overcome is also lacking. Extract 1:3 below demonstrates how communication with guardians is limited to providing guidance on good parental skills rather than children's learning progress. The storyline allows teacher-parent relationships to be almost excluded from the school setting and thus not to be considered as part of the professional role. Mr Clarkson is shown as a caring and responsive teacher who expressed his concern to Lionel about the safety of his pupil, Lula, who may be at risk of serious abuse related to witchcraft rituals. Pupil learning needs are not discussed. While the script demonstrates the position of Mr Clarkson as caring and concerned, Lionel is shown as a person that puts Lula's safety and wellbeing at risk and who therefore should be educated and instructed by Mr Clarkson as demonstrated in extract 1:3. Lionel and his beliefs are othered in this conversation and no respect is shown by Mr Clarkson for Lula's uncle.

TC: *This kind of guidance? Beatings, abuse, some kid made to drink acid?*
 Lionel: *You think I would let something like this happen to Lula?*
 TC: *So you don't believe in this Kindoki³ thing?*
 Lionel: *Oh, Kindoki. Is this all you people know of the Congo? What do I believe? I believe that my niece is a very troubled child.*
 TC: *Well, maybe there's a good reason for that. I mean, she did just lose her dad.*
And maybe if you tried to show a little bit more understanding rather than calling her wicked, you might find her behaviour improves.

Extract 1:3

³ Kindoki is a term which refers to possession by evil spirits.

The importance of developing and maintaining personal relations between teachers and pupils is placed in the centre of the series. The teachers' behaviour and discourse in Extracts 1:3 and 1:4 suggests that teachers' primary role is to be a carer for pupils' wellbeing and safety rather than responsible for pupils' education. Teacher's role as a facilitator of students learning is rarely mentioned throughout the programme. Little is known about teachers' qualifications, their academic background or teacher education. In this episode, as indicated in Extract 1:4, pupil to teacher relationships often extend beyond the school grounds but also mediate the guardian to pupil relationship in order to prevent the child from suffering emotional or physical hardship.

Mr Clarkson runs into the local Community Hall -
 TC shouts to Lula's uncle: *Let her go! I said let her go!*
 Lionel: *This is not your concern*
I am her family, I am caring for her. You should go home

Extract 1:4

The confusion over the boundaries of teaching is directly affected by the nature of teachers' involvement in pupils' lives and is reflected in the manner in which they refer to pupils (*she is my pupil!*). In discharging their duty of care responsibilities, teachers of Waterloo Road go beyond formal teaching in the school. Indeed, teachers' work often goes beyond school hours and takes place outside of the school grounds. It appears that teachers of Waterloo Road are portrayed first and foremost as caring for pupils' wellbeing before being portrayed as subject teachers. Any work related to learning and teaching is peripheral to the individuals' difficulties. Teachers do not appear to have lessons to prepare, meetings to attend, administrative work to clear, nor to put much effort into teaching the pupils. Teachers' professional time is consumed with attending to the pupils' social and emotional needs as shown in Extract 1:5 where Mr Clarkson observes Lula's (LT) conversation with her mum, Mrs Tsibi.

Mrs Tsibi: *I'm here for you now. Tonight we will eat and talk of your father, yes? Thank you Mr Clarkson.*
 LT (to her mother): *I'll be up in a minute*
 Mrs Tsibi is entering her house and Lula approaches Mr Clarkson
 LT: *Sir, thank you*
 TC: *It was pretty scary.*
 LT: *Oh, the scary thing was thinking no-one was coming to help me*

Extract 1:5

Teachers of Waterloo Road are portrayed as mediators of pupil to parent relations (1:5). The storyline embodies the idea that the main role of educators is to maintain children's safety and emotional wellbeing. As shown throughout this discussion, parents and other members of Lula's family are helpless and difficult to reach. Our viewing of this suggests that the series considers the social and emotional challenges faced by pupils of migrant and refugee background should mainly be addressed and solved by education.

Some recurring themes are recognisable throughout the episode: the superstitious nature of African forms of religiosity; the black man's hyper-masculinity and his control over the women; the irrationality of African behaviours and reactions. When we first meet the uncle, he is wearing a white vest, his muscular body exposed to the viewers' gaze, despite the fact that, as appears from the other characters' clothing, the episode is set in cold weather. When we meet Lionel again, in the public space of the school, however, he is wearing a very formal suit. As Goffman (1959) observes, in everyday social interaction people present themselves in particular ways to form particular impressions in those they encounter. However, there is a difference between the selves we are back-stage, in the private sphere, and the self we perform front-stage, in the public sphere. Lionel's change in attire conveys a change in his persona and denotes his dual, and duplicitous, nature: the backward, and threatening self he is in the home, and the civilised, reasonable character he elects to present to the outside world in the school.

The central theme of the 'Spirit Child' episode is superstitious belief and exorcism within the African community in the UK. The way in which the characters are depicted and the way in which the scene for Lula's story is set, draw heavily from stereotypical portrayals of Africa and African culture. The dark shades, the extreme close-ups of screaming faces, the unsettling soundtrack all emphasise a depiction of African people as backward and irrational. While Lula and her mother embody a helpless representation of Africa, Lionel personifies the continent's imagined threatening primitiveness. This depiction is set in juxtaposition to the rational and caring attitudes of the teachers, which are destined to dispel superstitious attitudes and to restore law and order, as symbolised by the sound of police sirens which closes the exorcism scene. The ways in which ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity are represented in this episode reflect views of asylum seekers that align with public perception and replicate common stereotypes. The black African asylum seeking family is portrayed as exotic and threatening through the choice of colours and camera angles, as well as through Lionel's intimidating and deceitful attitude. Concurrently, Lula's mother, who endures life's blows passively and silently, personifies the needy, helpless side of the displaced African (Horsti, 2013). Caught between the two, Lula is portrayed at times as wild and impenetrable, and at others, as weak and vulnerable, but always as the Other. The role of the educators is to save Lula and her mother from darkness and superstition, and to empower them through Western rationality (Saïd, 1993).

Case Study 2

Series 6, Episode 14 opens with a full screen Polish flag then pans out to indicate a postcard of Lodz (a Polish city) and a photo of a man and boy being looked at by Chris Meade (CM), Deputy Head Teacher (DHT). An as yet unknown male enters behind Chris and says *Reminders of home* to which Chris turns and responds *Ah, you must be Mr Wisniewski then*. The episode thus puts the focus directly onto Poland and suggests that the unknown man is a new Polish migrant with a closely aligned national identity. A verbal exchange establishes that he is the new school caretaker.

The scene changes to a bedroom, where Martin, a pupil who lives with his single parent father, is packing his school bag. As he leaves his bedroom the camera focuses

on the large English flag displayed prominently on his door. This contrast with the caretaker's Polish flag sets the scene for potential racial conflict. A conversation between Martin, his friend Kyle and his father establishes that his father is unemployed and disgruntled at the requirements of the benefits system. Kyle comments to Martin's father *You should just dress up as an asylum seeker. They'd throw money at you.* Martin's father laughs and no further comment is made but attitudes are established. He is also shown not to value education which contrasts later in the episode with Mr Wisniewski's expressed pride at his son's school achievements in Poland. As the boys head off for school Martin asks his father if he wants him to speak to the DHT about 'the job' which at this stage is unspecified but his father says experience tells him he won't have got it. Martin does ask about 'the job' and is told the job of caretaker has been taken. In this way the predictor of possible racial tension indicated by the flag now has a possible focus in a dispute over who has been employed.

In the next scene Mr Wisniewski (LW) is in the Home Economics classroom fixing the oven. Ruby Fry (RF) the Home Economics teacher is not happy with the caretaker's diagnosis that there is a problem with her thermostat, saying that she calibrated it herself. This is followed by the exchange in Extract 2:1.

RF *I think you'll find my ovens are a bit more sophisticated than the ones you have in Poland.*
 LW *What make (sic) you think I'm Polish, huh?*
 RF *You have an Eastern European accent so I just assumed ---*
 LW *There are 20 countries in Eastern Europe, not just Polish.*
 RF looks down and LW laughs and says *I'm joking! Of course I'm Polish but you shouldn't jump to conclusions.*

Extract 2:1

The scene has been set for discomfort between RF and LW as the pupils come into the Home Economics class. Ruby has been shown to have stereotyped ideas about Poland and Eastern Europe. Kyle kicks LW's toolbox provoking a reaction from the caretaker as shown in Extract 2:2.

LW *Be careful with those (sic)*
 Kyle *Sorry mate I didn't understand a word of that --- Is it English?*
 Martin *You're stealing jobs from people who live here you know that?*
 LW *I didn't steal that job and I live 10 minutes from school.*
 Martin *Yeah but for how long? Cos as soon as you make enough you'll be off back home again won't you? --- You nicked (my Dad's) job.*
 Kyle *Give it back.*
 Martin *I'm sick of your mob coming round here and nicking all the work.*
 LW stands up and raises his voice *Listen I don't like being called thief right.*
 The teacher at last pays attention:
 RF *Excuse me. What is going on here?*
 Kyle *He stole his Dad's job.*
 LW (pointing his finger at Kyle): *I'm warning you, I'm not a thief.*
 RF *That's enough. I think you should leave Mr Wisniewski.*

LW *What? Why should I go?*
 RF *Because I'm telling you to. Thank you very much.*

Extract 2:2

Ruby, the teacher, is unable or unwilling to challenge and respond to Kyle's behaviour. Mr Wisniewski leaves the classroom and goes to the Deputy Head Teacher's office where he complains about discrimination. The two pupils have been the main protagonists in this discrimination but the teacher has been established as not challenging the pupils' behaviour and verbal insults. The scene moves back to the Home Economics classroom where Kyle says to Martin *We can't let the Pole get away with that. We need to do something.* Kyle actively encourages Martin to escalate the attack with more than *just words*.

The discrimination is shown as having a ripple effect as another group of pupils enter the Spanish class where one pupil raises the earlier conflict with the teacher, Francesca Montoya (FM), a teacher of visible ethnic minority origin. The term 'racist' is introduced for the first time in this scene (Extract 2:3) and subsequently becomes the term used. The script thus demonstrates the escalation of stereotyping and personal discrimination to overt racism.

Pupil 1 *Miss, did you know that Martin Dowling was a racist?*
 Pupil 2 *Yeah, he hates the Polish.*
 Pupil 3 *He told the new caretaker to go back to his own country.*
 FM *Martin had no right to say that.*
 Pupil 4 *He's got a right to free speech tho'.*
 FM *Not free speech if you're attacking a minority*
 Pupil 4 *Expressing an opinion isn't the same as attacking someone.*
 FM *Well in my experience it often is and I'd rather not be talking about this right now.*
 The pupils push for discussion of the incident and she agrees insisting the discussion will be in Spanish, introducing it: *El racismo es un tema muy delicado*

Extract 2:3

The Deputy Head Teacher follows up on Mr Wisniewski's complaint by going to speak to Ruby Fry in Mr Wisniewski's hearing. When Mr Wisniewski says that Martin insulted him Ruby responds in a very sarcastic tone *I hardly think so* and says to the Deputy Head Teacher *I agree with (Martin). --- I think that Mr Wisniewski is stealing Jobs from British workers.*

Although Francesca initially appears to avoid discussion and confrontation in the Spanish classroom, as the pupils are leaving she emphasises the potential escalation of racism to Pupil 4: *We can't let them (people with racist views) run around making hate speeches. --- You give these people a platform you give them a profile.*

Thus Ruby is shown as having minority polarised views in a school where racism will not be tolerated. However the stance of the Deputy Head Teacher (CM) is not a particularly strong one and he neither refers to school policy nor UK Race Relations legislation when he speaks to Ruby as shown in extract 2:4.

RF *Don't you think we're blowing this out of proportion?*
 CM *Which part? Martin making racist remarks or you condoning them? --- Can't you see that holding these kinds of views could be seen as racist?*
 RF *No! NO! That's slander. I resent being called a racist.*
 CM *Well you might want to drop the whole British Jobs for British workers then.*
 RF *I think that employing migrant workers over local people is unfair.*
 CM *Saying things like that, in school, can have serious consequences. You apologise to Mr Wisniewski.*

Extract 2:4

At this point the Deputy Head Teacher is called downstairs where he finds painted on the wall in large red letters: **IMMIGRANTS GO HOME**. Ruby has followed him and says *Don't look at me. I didn't do it*. The connection between her inaction and implicit condoning of Martin and Kyle's racist comments is made very clear by the looks of teachers and pupils. Martin's father is subsequently called in to the school and makes it clear that he shares Martin's opinions. The Deputy Head Teacher warns Martin that expression of similar views will not be tolerated and if restated the school will take action. Walking out of the school Martin's father encourages him to *up his game*. This parental encouragement leads to the two boys vandalising the storeroom, corridor, school hall and boy's toilets.

There is a clear escalation from thoughts to verbal abuse to premeditated acts intended to cause harm with Kyle saying *Maybe they'll sack him*, referring to the Polish caretaker. When the Deputy Head Teacher sees the damage he advises Mr Wisniewski to *Rise above this*, again demonstrating his, and thereby the institution's, weakness in responding to racism. Throughout the episode there is no direct response from teachers to the accusation that Mr Wisniewski stole the job from local people. Rather they comment '*you cannot say that*' (or variations on this) but do not explain why. The only explanation the audience gets for why it was ok for Mr Wisniewski to get the job is that Martin's father did not in fact apply for the job.

As Ruby walks along the corridor to the staff room a girl pupil comments *Shouldn't be allowed in this school* and another pupils responds *Yeah total fascist* and Ruby sees a bit of paper stuck to her classroom door with RACIST written on it. This further highlighting of Ruby's minority views in the school is developed in the following staff room exchange:

Grantly Budgeon (GB - English teacher) to Ruby: *Eventful morning?*
 R F: *It'll all blow over.*
 Adanna Lawal (AL, Head of Pastoral Care, of Black ethnicity): *Wouldn't bet on it, the entire school's talking about this.*
 R: *Yeah, well, they'll be talking about something else tomorrow.*
 AL (to FM): *Take it you heard about Ruby's performance this morning?*
 FM: *Yeah, spent all of second period discussing it. Nice work Ruby.*
 (Sarcastically)
 RF: *For goodness sake. You know all I did was deal with the situation in my class. It was a very volatile incident. ---*

AL: *You don't think Mr Wisniewski should work here because he's Polish.*
 R : *No not cos he's Polish; because he's not British --- excuse me for being patriotic.*
 AL: *There's a fine line Ruby and you should be careful what you say around these kids.*
 R : *You know as a teacher I would expect a little bit of support from my colleagues.*
 FM: *Sorry but I don't stand by any racists.*
 RF : *Don't be ridiculous Cesca!*
 FM: *Oh really? Well maybe I should go back to where I came from then.*

Extract 2:5

(Fran)Cesca (FM) both with the pupils (2:3) and the teachers (2:5) has drawn attention to her minority ethnic status, a theme not often overtly addressed in the drama across the nine series. In doing this the script demonstrate how racism against one individual can affect others of a minority ethnic background. Ruby's utterance *No not cos he's Polish; because he's not British* perhaps suggests that she does not view herself as racist but will accept diversity provided it is assimilated. The programme has clearly set up Mr Wisniewski in the opening scene as having strong identity allegiances to Poland. Cesca clarifies that this is racist but the actual racism is left to the audience to decide as no action is taken against Ruby.

Although some plotlines are continued for a number of episodes, the majority of issues are dealt with in one episode as here. The racism escalates further when Martin and Kyle destroy the Polish artefacts in the Caretaker's office and are found by Ruby. Martin says he thought she'd support their action and she responds *I don't know what you think I believe in Martin but it's not this*. Martin's dad turns up at the school, physically attacks Mr Wisniewski and is escorted off the premises by police, with his son given one week's suspension from school, his glum look indicating he is beginning to recognise his father's distorted values. Mr Wisniewski resigns and the issue is not pursued any further.

Conclusion

In attempting to draw some conclusions from our critical viewings of these two episodes we wish to reiterate that these are viewings from the perspectives of education academics interested in issues of linguistic and cultural diversity in school settings. Other viewers may decode the encoded messages differently depending on their own critical orientation. We are not attempting to generalise across the ten series of the drama *Waterloo Road* which has had many different writers and actors across the years. However we do wish to draw attention to some issues in these two episodes in relation to our original questions.

Stereotyping is obvious in the two episodes both explicitly in terms of the views of the school towards the refugee family from the Democratic Republic of Congo in Case Study 1 and implicitly as viewed by us in the anti-work and anti-education stance of Martin's unemployed father in Case Study 2. Neither episode demonstrates effective institutional guidelines or responses to issues of diversity and racial discrimination.

Responses are on a personal and unsupported level. In both episodes diversity is discussed exclusively in terms of the challenges and the difficulties it creates for the school's social environment with no benefits ascribed to linguistic, religious or ethnic diversity in the school setting. In both episodes recently-arrived others are the focus of discussion and it seems that diversity becomes invisible through assimilation. While there are visible minority pupils in addition to Lula, their ethnic or linguistic identity is not raised in the storyline. It is only with the arrival of Mr Wisniewski that Francesca overtly mentions that she is also 'not British'.

In relation to how teachers are portrayed it appears that the series shows teachers' role as focused predominantly on managing pupils' behaviour (for example, Lula's aggression and Martin and Kyle's racist behaviours) with little institutional guidance as to how this should be achieved. There is no mention of pupils' learning difficulties or teachers' pedagogical strategies. Teachers are not shown in the series to have any professional guidelines for their behaviour but to act via personal response and motivation.

We do believe that there is merit to critical analysis of television dramas about education as they are one route to public understanding of the profession. We recognise the limitations of this viewing as decoded by three education academics and we wish to explore teacher, parent and pupil viewings in future research.

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