“Bringin’ the Dunkey Down from the Carn:” Cornu-English in Context 1549-2005 – A Provisional Analysis

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1. Introduction

> They do tell ’ow Jan ’ad a lil dunkey an kept’n spragged out up Carnmenellis; everybody knawed there was only furze an browse up there, so somebody said to Jan, “Ere. Jan. ’Ow ee come kaype yer dunkey up Carnmenellis? There edn much for’n aate up there, you.” “No,” said Jan. “Edn much for’n aate you – but ee got some ’ansome view!” (Tangye 1995: 19f.)

In the three previous volumes of *The Celtic Englishes*, there has been comparatively little discussion of Cornu-English. Aside from some perceptive remarks from Payton, in a chapter mainly devoted to the ideology of the Cornish Language Revival (1997: 100-122), no new significant scholarship has emerged. My purpose in this chapter is to offer provisional corrective – metaphorically, *bringing Jan’s dunkey down from the Carn* – and offer a reassessment of the state of Cornu-English speech and writing within a historical context from 1549 – roughly the period that the English language began to rapidly replace Cornish in the territory of Cornwall, through its subsequent development as the primary linguistic group, to an examination of its current status. I write as an observer and commentator, but also a practitioner of Cornu-English writing.

The section quoted at the start of this chapter is from a typical Cornu-English story titled “The Wrasslin’ Match” by Michael Tangye, a prize-winning story in the Dialect Prose competition from the 1994 Cornish Gorseth,[1] yet we note that narratives such as this, are for the most part, relatively unchanged from their nineteenth-century counterparts. We might ask why this is so? Partially, I hypothesize, this is because of the socio-economic status afforded Cornu-English and the Revivalists’s concern with the ‘nation-constructing’ language of Cornish. Yet incredibly, of late in Cornwall, and in Cornish communities across the

[1] The Cornish Gorseth is a College of bards founded in 1928 (see Miners 1978).

globe, there has been renewed interest in Cornu-English, not to mention something of a literary revival in the genre, which has specific aims to progress the literature in new directions. This phenomenon would also appear worthy of academic treatment.

These new directions in Cornu-English are despite the fact that for most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, linguistic and cultural energy has been devoted to the preservation, and the 'recovery' of the Cornish language. Cornu-English has not only then been vilified as agrarian, ignorant 'yokel-speak' by those outside of Cornwall, but also has been the poor relation internally as well, marginalised and misunderstood, what Payton describes as offering "an insight into a quaint but fast disappearing provincial way of life" (*ibid.*, 101). Much Cornu-English literature would reflect the low level status afforded it, with dialect practitioners, such as Tangye seeking to reflect a fossilized 'authentic' and unpolluted version of Cornu-English based on nineteenth and early twentieth-century lifestyles and professions, themselves ignoring the way Cornu-English has actually progressed in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The changing historical context for this socio-linguistic phenomenon, Cornu-English's continued cultural position, its interaction with Cornish, and its reawakening as a cultural force is what I aim to explore here.

2. Cornish and Cornu-English

Observers such as Ellis (1974) and Pool (1975) have presented the overall picture of linguistic and literary Cornwall from 1000 to 1900 as a debilitating decline, from a somehow once healthy, fully operational Cornish-Celtic culture to a corrupted English-speaking territory where the ethos of a 'cult of loss' (Kent 2000: 17) is central. That model fails because its mythic version of events in Cornish culture is too simple. If it were to be true, then the so-called 'revival' of Cornish culture in the twentieth century would not have happened. Instead, Cornwall would have already descended into English-speaking-and-writing oblivion. Conceived of in this way, Cornu-English would be a pariah of some magnitude. A more realistic and accurate model of Cornwall's linguistic continuum is to see the process within a paradigm of language shift and change over time, which has resulted in the continuum altering, sometimes gradually, sometimes rapidly, with a set of inherent declines, revivals and events paralleling these moves. Very often, moves in one cultural *milieu* – English or Cornish – have resulted in corresponding changes in the other linguistic culture. Nowhere is this more relevant than with revived Cornish itself.

Much has been written on the so-called three versions of 'revived' Cornish which now exist: Unified, Common (*Kemmyn*) or Late (Modern).[2] Outsiders of the Cornish Language Revival look at this phenomenon sceptically and with incredulity – that such a small linguistic community can subdivide; though the de-

[2] *Cornish Studies* (1993-2003) has covered the debate in considerable depth.

gree of difference is often accentuated and perhaps may be better defined as alternative ideologies, or even as different dialects – related not to regions, but groups of speakers and socio-economic classes. The debate of the 1990s, in particular, saw competing experts each with their own agendas of superiority and authenticity; each too, with their own bands of loyal followers. Deacon (1996) has argued that the debate is actually a response to post-modern uncertainty, while Kent (2002) posits that the process is part of an internal review of the language, which all Celtic, and most European languages, have gone through in their development.

Unified Cornish is presently that form of the Cornish language used normally by more elderly speakers, who learnt Robert Morton Nance's synthesis of the three main periods of Cornish: Old (800-1250), Middle (1250-1550) and Late (1550-1900), in the early or middle of the twentieth century. Such speakers were the initial founders of the Cornish Gorseth, or followed in the wake of the pioneers (Ellis 1974: 147-212) and viewed Cornu-English somewhat sceptically. Far from it being the language of the 'cock-of-the-walk' industrial Celt of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, where the Cornish were leading technological, engineering and mining developments the world over, these speakers tended to regard Cornu-English as redolent of tugging forelocks to English masters; and that the 'true' revivalist would concentrate on the revival of Cornish itself. Only Anglophiles would speak dialect. This was despite the fact that one of that groups' principal movers was Nance (1873-1959), who himself, unlike his supporters, retained an interest in Cornu-English, not least in his fascination with surviving maritime Cornish vocabulary in his posthumous *A Glossary of Cornish Sea-Words* (1963), and in his celebrated *Cledry Plays* (1956)[3] which were written in the Cornu-English he knew of in his youth and were based on nineteenth-century narratives collected by the folklorists Robert Hunt (1865) and William Bottrell (1870-80).[4]

That version of Cornish known as *Kemmyn* or Common Cornish takes for its agenda a re-engagement with Cornish, when it was more commonly spoken prior to 1549. This phonemic system was principally developed by Ken George in his 1986 work, *The Pronunciation and Spelling of Revived Cornish*. Its speakers's ideological agenda is therefore to be *fully* Cornish, and to promote more spoken and written Cornish with a clearer 'common' spelling and grammatical system which ironed out internal and regional differences. Therefore, *Kemmyn* avoids the inclusion of words which may have an English derivation in order to be more purely 'Celtic.' This has obvious flaws when one considers that actually, even 'Catholic' medieval Cornwall was in fact, multi-lingual. Although A.L. Rowse was to observe that, "Cornwall in the Middle Ages was a little land on its own, living its own inner life, wrapped up in its Celtic tongue, in its dream of the Celtic past, rather a backwater, a dead end" (Rowse 1949: 67), the reality was that medieval Cornwall was a complex multi-lingual territory, with resident

[3] The plays were initially performed in the 1920s by St Ives Old Cornwall Society.
[4] Cf. Kennedy 1891.

speakers of Latin, French, English, Breton and Cornish. Most groups would have been fluent in at least two tongues. Breton and Cornish would have been mutually intelligible, and there was much trade between the two territories.[5]

Late Cornish, meanwhile, assumes a position that both celebrates and integrates the inclusion of a limited range of English terms and concepts which had been 'cornicised' even by the early modern period. Its position regarding the recovery of Cornish is to pick up the language from the point at which it was last spoken, in 'Protestant' modern Cornwall (Gendall 1994). That way, the form of revived Cornish would be more authentic, because it was nearer our own time. It would also avoid the pitfalls of invention. The position regarding Cornish has been further complicated by the more recent discovery of further manuscripts, in which scholars have had to re-assess grammar and vocabulary, in particular in relation to the number of English loan words. A key prose text, *The Tregear Homilies* (Kent and Saunders 2000: 182-185) was discovered as late as 1949, and has been used by a group promoting Unified Cornish Revised to re-negotiate the synthesis constructed by Nance (Williams 1995). A further Middle Cornish text, *Beunans Ke / The Life of St Kea*,[6] was discovered as late as 2002, and is likely to re-shape thought once more. To summarise, scholarship upon the quantity of English words with spoken and written Cornish very much depends on the ideological position of the speaker and writer. Pol Hodge, a *Kemmyn* speaker, denies the significance of English at all in Cornish, and Cornish in English, arguing that later Cornish was in effect corrupt and impure, stating that, "this overlap is very slight indeed," supporting Wakelin's conclusions of the unlikelihood of a "Cornish substratum" underlying "Western Cornish dialect" (1975: 8), and that, "the bulk of vocabulary, grammar and idiom is borrowed from the Middle Cornish period. This is so because 84% of the literature written in *Kernewek* comes from this period" (Hodge 1997: 11-13). Meanwhile, Richard Gendall, one of the leading scholars of late Cornish, shows the considerable influence of Cornu-English, claiming that, "there are many more words that never found a use in historical literature, but have survived only in dialect, and this is enough to raise the status of Cornish Dialect to be an integral part of the language" (1997: iii). A recent consultative draft strategy on the future of Cornish again failed to highlight the importance of Cornu-English (Lobb and Ansell 2004).

3. Language in Cornwall 1549-2004: From Prayer Book to Eden Project

All of this has implications when we remember that Cornwall was, in effect, post 1549, the first Celtic territory to be incorporated into the English Nation State. Being smaller and geographically closer, its accommodation came earlier, and

[5] There were small Breton-speaking communities in Cornwall (see Smith 1947: 8).
[6] This text is one of only two extant Saint's plays in Britain; the other being *Beunans Meriasek*. *Beunans Ke* contains substantial Arthurian material.

so, while its linguistic experience was different, this does not mean it was any less Celtic. Up until 1549, Cornwall had been afforded special accommodation by the English monarchy, with many of its cultural and political institutions intact. These included the Jurisdiction of the Stannary Parliament – an independent system of government for the territory (Pennington 1973; Laity, Saunders and Kent 2001). Church services also continued to be conducted in Cornish. This was set to change, however, in January 1549, when the Tudor government enacted one of its most far-reaching centralist policies: the Act of Uniformity. This was intended to put an end to the diversity of religious worship over the islands of Britain. In Cornwall, the policy had huge implications, eventually resulting in the development of Cornu-English. Up until this point, Cornwall had used its 'special case' card in order to negotiate any centralist policy it did not like, but opportunities for such debate were not available this time. The so-called Prayer Book Rebellion against this policy soon gathered momentum. There were riots and disturbances, and the insurgents, led by a number of priests, drew up a petition to the King, commenting that …

> … we wil not receyue the new seruyce because it is but lyke a Christmas game, but we wull have oure olde service of Mattens, masse, Evensong and procession in Latten, as it was before. And so we the Cornyshe men (whereof certen of us understande no Englysh) utterly refuse thys newe Englysh. (Kent and Saunders 2000: 267)

The rebels's plea was ignored, however, and the King's forces – consisting of many foreign mercenaries – met the Cornish at Clyst St Mary in Devon. The Cornish suffered great losses, with the rebel leader Humphry Arundell hung, drawn and quartered at Tyburn. Other priests and insurgent leaders met the same fate. The subjugation that followed was harsh and in deep contrast to the peaceful re-negotiations following the 1497 rebellion.[7] Responsibility for Cornwall was given to the provost marshall Sir Anthony Kingston, with Ellis observing that "hangings, burnings and ruthless suppression followed, as harsh as anything under Cromwell in Ireland, or Cumberland in Scotland" (1985: 137). Sustained suppression of the Cornish language was a consequence of the Act of Uniformity. As Whetter (1988) demonstrates, the Collegiate College of St Thomas at Glasney, near Penryn had been a centre of scholarship for the Cornish language, but was repressed both prior to and during this period. Although one Nicholas Udall asked for the Book of Common Prayer to be translated into Cornish (as the 1563 legislation did for Welsh), the request was not heeded. English was in ascension in Cornwall and, as Payton states, "Cornish was now irrevocably tainted as a popish tongue" (1996: 141). An observer of the period, John Norden, wrote his *Topographical and Historical Description of Cornwall* in the year 1584, and makes some telling observations on language shift within Cornwall:

[7] This rebellion, protested against the levy of additional taxes upon Cornwall, was led by Michael Joseph *An Gof* ('The Smith') from St Keverne.

(Of) late the Cornishe men haue much conformed themselues to the vse of the Englishe tounge, and their Englishe is equall to the beste, espetially in the easterne parts; euen from Truro eastwarde it in manner wholly Englishe. In the weste party of the Countrye, as in the hundreds of Penwith and Kerrier, the Cornishe tounge is most vse amongste the inhabitants and yet (which is to be maruelyed) thowgh the husband and wife, parentes and children, Master and Seruvantes, doe mutually comunicate in their natiue language, yet ther is none of them in manner but is able to conuers with a Straunger in the English tounge, vnless it be some obscure people, that seldome confer with the better sorte: But it seems that in few yeares the Cornishe Langauge wilbe litle by litle abandoned. (Norden 1966 (1584): 21)

This is important, since in East Cornwall at least, Norden notes very little dialectical differentiation from elsewhere, indicating that Cornu-English as we come to understand it now, had not yet fully formed. Yet, this, as Crystal (1994: 110f.) notes, is comparable with other territories where English is first taken up. Initially, a standard form is spoken, before variation sets in. There would also appear to be a lack of confidence in speaking English, a continuum which has been retained in many Cornu-English speakers, who are not confident before 'strangers:' reticent to speak, lest they be thought of as ignorant, and also unable to modulate for different audiences and speakers. Norden also alludes to Cornish people's attitudes towards their more powerful neighbour, a fact reinforced by the urgent need to take up that neighbour's language:

(A)nd as they are amonge themselves litigious so seem they yet to retayne a kinde of concealed enuye against the Englishe, whome they set affecte with a desire of reuenge for their fathers sakes, by whome their fathers recuyued the repulse. (Norden 1966 (1584): 22)

Weatherhill (1995: 7-10) gives statistics which indicate that in 1400, the Cornish population was estimated as being 55,000 of which perhaps 34,000 were Cornish speakers,[8] but a century later, it had fallen back as far as a line stretching from Padstow to Fowey. About 69,000 people then lived in Cornwall, of whom about half spoke Cornish. The beginning of the seventeenth century saw the Cornish confined to the west of Truro with only a quarter of the 84,000 population speaking it.

While the east to west retreat is a useful model of the transferral of language usage in Cornwall, it is not the full picture. The 'isobar' model of retreat offered by scholars such as Holmes and George (1986)[9] is found to be flawed, since there were certainly enclaves of Cornish speakers in what appeared to be English-speaking areas, as well as English speakers in Cornish-dominated regions. Further complexity is offered by the fact that ports and urban centres often shifted their language use before other regions, since the principle language of communication there was English. Arguments have also been presented which show survivals of Cornish in the more isolated hinterlands of Cornwall – Bod-

[8] Ironically, in the early fourteenth century it was two Cornish-speaking scholars, John Cornwall and Richard Pencrych who helped to change the law in grammar schools, with a campaign to replace instruction in French with English.

[9] As part of an unpublished conference paper from 1986, but reproduced in Spriggs (2003: 234).

min Moor, Hensbarrow, Carnmenellis and Penwith – interestingly places which pattern now the survival and retention of Cornu-English. Logically, the east to west retreat might ensure that surviving Cornish speakers would be found in Penwith, but this has not always proved to be the case, since the southern Lizard peninsula also has considerable claim to show late usage.

Space precludes further discussion of the retreat of Cornish and its replacement by English, but the best current scholarship is offered by Spriggs (2003) who contends that a revised view of the state of language transferral is needed, and that the Cornish situation must be related to the wider context of language shift in Britain.[10] The work of Holmes (2003) also argues that the sub-region of East Cornwall deserves greater attention than it has been afforded hitherto, contending that Cornish-speaking communities persisted in East Cornwall in the 1400s, and that there were pockets of speakers east of Bodmin. Controversially, he also argues that the Roseland peninsula retained Cornish as long as much of West Penwith.

In contrast of course, the rise of Cornu-English has not been mapped very well at all compared to the retreat of Cornish, and little work has been completed on which Cornish words entered Cornu-English, or which constructions and patterns survived in Cornu-English during different periods.[11] Any work that has been done is usually completed in the context of Cornish language studies, so the emphasis is not helpful. However, there have been some studies of Cornu-English, conducted on the lines of Dialect Survivals, which I will allude to below. The current position with regard to Cornu-English is very much related to the economic climate in which Cornwall operates. House prices in Cornwall are the only ones in the United Kingdom to match those found in London. As M. Williams (1993) shows, this has produced an interesting socio-economic situation, whereby not only does the territory suffer from the lowest wages across the United Kingdom, but also from difficulties in finding local housing for local families on low wages. In the particular cases of towns such as Padstow, Fowey, Mousehole and St Ives, the older properties, which even ten years ago housed Cornu-English speakers are now considered prime 'character' waterfront dwellings, so that the socio-economic group who once lived there has been fractured and are forced to live further out towards the hinterlands of Cornwall; this is why the old mining regions (not regarded as picturesque by property developers) are now where the bulk of Cornu-English speakers are to be found. Likewise, most are of underclass or working-class origins. The Cornish language is spoken by a much more middle-class group, who have the time, finance and resources to learn it, often in later life.

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[10] There is also much debate on the survival of Cornish in West Devon and in particular the South Hams. Spriggs dismisses the claim.

[11] An oft-quoted example is the Cornu-English construction "I d'do that" – supposedly a direct transition from the Cornish *My a wra gul henna*. Cf. Tangye's "They do tell." Additionally, as in Cornish, in Cornu-English the emphasis is shifted to the start of the sentence: "Goin' 'ome are 'ee?" (*Mos dre wreta?*).

Padstow is an interesting case study of language shift. During the 1970s and 1980s its reputation as a town was based on bucket-and-spade tourism, with a quaint harbour available for day-trippers to stroll around. The Cornu-English speaking population lived in the cottages surrounding the harbour. During the 1990s, the celebrity chef Rick Stein opened a restaurant in the town, and based several BBC television series about seafood-cooking there. The cultural and linguistic ramifications of this have been enormous. Not only did Padstow offer its own 'pagan' Celtic festival in the form of 'Obby 'Oss[12] on May 1st (in itself attracting in-migrants), but now was viewed as a convenient but 'different' culinary centre of Britain. London property owners bought up many of the cottages once owned by the indigenous Cornu-English speakers and used them as second-homes. Local wags now called Padstow 'Padstein' or 'Kensington-by-Sea.' The linguistic result was that the town is now dominated by voices from London and the south-east of England, while the Cornu-English speakers live on the council estates on the area above the harbour, or have been completely decimated. Such speakers now find themselves culturally isolated, a not too dissimilar process to what the Cornish experienced in the aftermath of 1549.

St Ives has witnessed a somewhat earlier replacement process, when during the middle decades of the twentieth century, a number of artists and sculptors – among them Sven Berlin, Peter Lanyon (one of the few indigenous Cornish painters associated with the movement), Barbara Hepworth, Ben Nicholson and others sought properties in the Cornu-English stronghold that was St Ives. Back Road West, part of 'Downlong' – one area of St Ives particularly associated with the work of the primitive artist Alfred Wallis – became a particular draw. The establishment of the Tate Gallery St Ives in 1993 has furthered the displacement of 'Downlong' Cornu-English speakers, as the town has become more fashionable.

Although smaller, Mousehole too, has witnessed similar events following the success of Antonia Barber and Nicola Bayley's children's picture book *The Mousehole Cat*, which although having some nods to Cornu-English: Mousehole is to be pronounced 'Mowzel,' the cat's name is Mowzer, and typical Cornu-English expressions such as 'my handsome' (1990: 1 and 11), the overall effect of the work is strongly metropolitan in feel. Problematically, Cornwall is not given its own identity, but merely described as being "at the far end of England."[13] Despite these issues – or perhaps even because of them (Barber and Bayley present sanitised, friendly Cornu-English) – Mousehole has replaced the bulk of its Cornu-English speakers with in-migrants. Ironically, of course, Mousehole was also the home of Dolly Pentreath, a fish jowster,[14] supposedly one of the last monoglot speakers of Cornish.

[12] See Rawe 1982.
[13] Cf. Climo 1999, which does feature Cornu-English speech.
[14] Female sellers of fish. The fish were contained in baskets on the backs of the sellers.

The Eden Project (composed of three futuristic plant biomes housed in a worked-out china clay pit) in mid-Cornwall also seems set to alter the socio-linguistic space there. Traditionally, the area had been one of the last remaining pockets of Cornu-English, with, as Gillespie (1988: 77-86) records, many speakers working in the china clay extractive industry, though with that industry declining and more high-salaried positions at the Eden Project, Cornu-English may potentially suffer from the same effect as in other tourist centres. The Cornu-English speakers have been pushed away from the sea towards the centre.

4. Dialect and Dissent

Considering the significance of the Cornu-English dialect as a signifier of Cornish difference, largely since the decline of the Cornish language, there has, in fact been very little serious socio-linguistic study of this method of communication in Cornwall, and even less so in trans-national Cornish communities. An exception from the nineteenth century is the useful 1846 volume of Uncle Jan Trenoodle's *Specimens of Provincial Cornish Dialect*. Uncle Jan Trenoodle was the pseudonym of William Sandys (1792-1874). He offers many examples of dialect usage, and his observations on structure and lexical choices are still pertinent. Another important volume was Fred W.P. Jago's *The Ancient Language and Dialect of the Cornwall*, which was published in 1882. Jago completed much useful work on the survival of Cornish words used in English in Cornwall, many of which continue to be used today.

The single most important twentieth century contribution has been the work of Ken Phillipps (1929-1995) in his two studies, *Westcountry Words and Ways* (1976) and *A Glossary of the Cornish Dialect* (1993). Phillipps will be considered in detail below. More recently, however, important work has been completed by Andrew C. Symons in short studies in *An Baner Kernewek* (1998 a, b and c), which deserve wider recognition. Symons in particular, was interested in the process of language transfer in Cornwall, arguing that in many ways the forms of English to be found in Cornwall often had connections and similarities with the language of sixteenth-century English writers. These constructions and phrases have been transferred down through the generations and have been retained. He has completed work on the autobiography of the Cornish 'free-trader' Harry Carter,[15] arguing that Cornu-English does reflect the collapse of the mutation system of Cornish. Symons (1998 a) also asserts that the east-west axis should be questioned, and that locality was the key in language transfer.

These scholars being the exception, other studies in the twentieth century have tended to be focused on dialect survival words, effectively vestigial terms, and have, in general, been antiquarian in style and methodology. However, still the most commonly consulted work on dialect is Martyn Wakelin's 1975 *Language and History in Cornwall*, which in fact, drew heavily on the 1967 South-

[15] See Cornish 1971.

ern Counties *Leeds Dialect Survey*, and although this text has flaws, its breath of coverage has yet to be equalled; particularly in terms of the phonological, morphological and lexical features of Cornu-English. The interested reader will consult this volume for further linguistic enquiry, in particular over semantic differences in pronunciation, intonation and retention, and Wakelin offers some useful illustrative examples of Cornish words entering Cornu-English.[16] The analysis of dialect within the Academy in Cornwall has not been completely barren, however. Much useful work on dialect was completed by the Institute of Cornish Studies in the period 1973-1986, under the leadership of Prof. Charles Thomas, culminating in the breakthrough 1978/79 *Sociolinguistic Survey of English in Cornwall*, which was co-ordinated by Rolf Bremann. Bremann advanced two hypotheses:

1. Among the present population of Cornwall there is still a marked social stratification in the use of English.
2. There is less variation in pronunciation in West Cornwall than in East Cornwall.

His analysis of the tape-recorded interviews showed that:

1. In West Cornwall, as well as in East Cornwall, the pronunciation of upper social classes show less variation from the prestige variant RP ('Received Pronunciation') than the pronunciation of lower socio-economic groups.
2. In West Cornwall, all three social classes in the survey show less variation from RP than the corresponding groups in East Cornwall. (Bremann 1979: 2)

These were interesting finds for anyone concerned with Cornu-English speech patterns across the territory, not least because in identity terms the 'West' has often been regarded as more Cornish than the 'East.' The study upturned this misnomer. Considering this survey, it would be interesting to speculate on such a survey of global Cornu-English. Does, for example, the Cornu-English of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan have more variation from RP than say the Yorke Peninsula of Australia?

At home, the important arguments had actually been made prior to the Second World War, by Arthur Wilfred Rablen (1917-1973) in a 1937 essay titled "Cornish Dialect Words." In this essay, Rablen undertook for the period in which he was writing a progressive and wide-ranging study of dialect and in Thomas's words, "it marks a very notable contribution" (Thomas 1980). Curiously enough, much of Rablen's argument is applicable onto the Cornu-English features of Cousin Jack narratives; particularly in terms of the technical terms used in mining processes, which had emigrated across the Atlantic with the miners who spoke them. Rablen makes a pertinent observation about the use of dialect after travel:

[16] For example, *bannel* ('a broom'), *bucca* ('hobgoblin,' 'ghost' or 'scarecrow'), *bullhorn* ('snail'), *bussa* ('a coarse earthernware vessel'), *clunk* ('to swallow'), *fuggan* ('pastry dinner cake'), *gook* ('bonnet'), *griglans* ('heather'), *groushans* ('dregs'), *muryans* ('ants'), *piggy-whidden* ('weakling of a litter of pigs').

> By Travel I mean also that sons and daughters go away from home, and by being laughed at, learn which of their words and senses are dialectal. They return in pride of knowledge and annoy the people who have never been away by their comments on rural usage. Thus social snobbery awakes linguistic consciousness. … (cited in Thomas 1980: 37-47)

The Cousin Jack narratives work in complete antithesis of this, because in the case of the mining communities overseas, social snobbery did not awake linguistic consciousness, since they did not have to modulate their speech according to the other speakers and listeners.[17] In this sense, then, we can hypothesize that Cousin Jack narratives ought to be a cultural location where genuine dialect continued longer than in Cornwall itself, since there, linguistic consciousness has continually been raised by the post-Second World War in-migrants to the territory.

This process has led to the current position where Cornish children resist speaking naturally by their peer group and a mass media continually working against the survival of their grammar and lexicon. This is not just the case in Cornwall; it is happening to other dialects across the islands of Britain, Europe and the rest of the world. It is also happening to children and speakers in the Upper Peninsula, and it takes a good deal of linguistic dissent to retain the unmodulated voice, or modulate (as many Cornish do on a daily basis)[18] between non-dialect speakers (usually at work or in education) and dialect speakers whom they are comfortable with. We may contrast this twenty-first-century situation with Walter Gries's un-modulated phonetically spelt of two Cousin Jacks observing, for the first time, an American Football match:

> I took nawtice that the ground was a bit of a muck. Right opperzyte where us stood to, there was a paund o' water.
> I remarked to Percy, "Daun look very much a place for playin' vootball." I said, "Part o't look zif it had been ploughed up."
> "Aw, that's nort," he saith. "They weun matter that. I've seed it tain times wiss'n that."
> Wull, him-by everybody beginned to shout, an' us zeed a string o' chaps comin' out from the previllion an' runnin' on to the vield. Butifule an' clane they looked, with nice new jerseys ... Wull, an' there was wan chap dressed in black cloas. He wad'n much of a player; he wad'n. I never seed 'en titch the ball wance. All he de'd was to rin about blawin up a li'l tin trumpet like a cheel to a crissmas party. He aunly got in the way o' the rest, he did, an' 'winder they did'n putt'n off the vield. He putt me in mind o' thik stoobid valler into the circus, what rins about makin' up a terrible amount o' vuss but daun' do nort to assist. (Kinsey n.d.: 92f.)

Ken Phillipps would instantly recognise not only the lexical choices here, but also the grammar. Unlike most other observers of Cornu-English, Phillipps is not reticent to deal with grammar, and that is why his contribution had been so important in our understanding of Cornu-English at home *and* away. He also argues that there are grammatical rules to be followed to speak Cornu-English properly. In summary, his conclusions include Cornish dialect's propensity towards reversals, archaisms, the retention of *thou* and *ye* (*thee* and *ye* ('ee)), the

[17] In Butte, Montana, the Cornish were known as 'assassins of grammar.'
[18] Cornu-English speakers who use Standard English artificially are described as 'speakin' cut up.' Those who speak unmodulated Cornu-English are said to be 'broad.'

use of double plurals, irregular use of the definite article, use of the definite article with proper names, the omission of prepositions, the extra 'y' suffix on the infinitive of verbs, 'they' as a demonstrative adjective, frequent use of the word 'up' and the use of 'some' as an adverb of degree (Phillipps 1993: 9-13).

All of these survived the trans-Atlantic journey to the Upper Peninsula, and may be found in the above text from Gries. Gries also incorporated a limited quantity of poetry into his canon, and here, in "'Ansome 'Arry weth the H'Auburn 'Air," tricks of the narrative trade, not to mention core elements of Phillipps's observations, are developed in what we might describe as a 'poetic plod.' The poem works as a tribute to the Cornu-English's habit of dropping of appropriate 'h's and placing them where they are lacking, ahead of vowels. It seems this signifier of Cornish dialect was crucial to many of the Cornu-English speakers at home and Cousin Jack storytellers, but in contemporary dialect writings and the oral continuum it is now seen as less important; a good example of how Cornu-English does not stay fossilized:

> 'Ansome 'Arry's 'air was h'auburn,
> The color of red 'ematite.
> 'E comed 'ere from dear 'ol Camborne,
> Minen core was 'is delight. (Kinsey n.d.: 94f.)

There is not the space here to enter into a full discussion of the effect of such texts, nor all of their dialect origins. The significant point is that Cornu-English must not, cannot stay still. One further point is worth making, though. Compared to Cornwall, dialect studies of Cousin Jack narratives are embryonic to say the least, with one exception. This is Hadley Tremaine's 1980 study "Cornish Folk Speech in America." Tremaine examines survivals in Massachusetts, which "was settled c.1629 as a plantation of Salem by fishermen from the Channel Islands and Cornwall," but also considers the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. He makes the following observation, very applicable, onto Gries's collection:

> Most striking is the Cornish habit of mixing up pronouns, perhaps a compensation for the lack of the Celtic emphatics; obliquely, at least Celtic Cornish "survives" in this tendency. The effect is coupled with the h-dropping typically, but of course not uniquely.

Tremaine provides an illustrative, very common Cousin Jack story to demonstrate this:

> Harry Soady complains to an old Cornish friend about his use of language. "I dearly love to visit with the Cornish people. But there's one thing about them that has always bothered me."
> "What is it, 'Arry?"
> "It's the way you Cornish use your pronouns and verbs. You don't seem to have any rhyme or reasons, any rules or regulations for the way you use them."

> Jimmer said, "I tell 'ee 'Arry, 'ere's 'ow it is about they pronouns; we got a rule for they."
> "You have?"
> "Yes, we 'ave. We do call anything she excepting a tomcat, and we call 'er 'e." (Tremaine 1980: 17-25)

There is an inherently Cornish sense of logic within this narrative that is to be found in most Cousin Jack stories. Tremaine was aware of the corpus that existed in the Upper Peninsula, but while he was writing, he did not find Gries's collection, despite what he terms leaving "no menhir unturned." Paradoxically, and perhaps showing the illogical nature of Cornu-English, Gries's collection, often adds initial 'h's for effect, as can be seen below. Gries has this to say about Cornish dialect:

> There is a juggling in the use of pronouns, as well as a confusion and contradiction in words that often results in astonishing expressions. Yet, the listener knows what the speaker means in spite of the abuse of grammar … Cousin Jack and Jenny invented the art of positive contradiction in grammar: "H'I though t'were she, an' she thought t'were h'I," said Gracie Specott. "But w'en we got h'up to where we were, we found t'wudn' nayther of us." (Kinsey n.d.: 98-100)

Such grammar is dissenting because it requires the listener to be coded into the 'astonishing expressions.' In essence, modern political and cultural nationalism could learn much from the 'positive contradiction in grammar' since it was actually one of the mechanisms of Cornish independence, both at home and abroad. Hence the way the common story of when an employer asks a Cornishman if he knew of anybody else who could fill a vacancy, the Cornishman would always know of a Cousin Jack who could step into the position. This is symptomatic of something else: there was a linguistic and industrial unity demonstrating independence and difference. Dialect, therefore, could be used much more successfully as a political voice of dissent by a larger number of the population within contemporary Cornwall.

5. Cornu-English in the Cabinet: Some Preserved Specimens

One of the earliest literary renderings of Cornu-English comes from an English writer, Andrew Boorde, who lived between c. 1500 and c. 1560. He wrote a fascinating elementary tourist handbook of Britain, titled the *Fyrst Boke of the Introduction of Knowledge*, dedicated to Princess (later Queen) Mary, written in 1542 but published in 1547. Boorde writes this text just a few years before the Prayer Book Rebellion, so we have an idea of the context for this piece. He writes that, "In Cornwall is two speeches, the one is naughty Englysshe and the other is Cornysshe speech. And there be many men and women the which cannot speake one word of Englyssch, but all Cornysshe." It is of course Boorde's notion of "naughty English" that concerns us here, since he differentiates this from standard Englishes found elsewhere. The same observation, for example, is not made about Devon. In this case, he seems therefore to be arguing that, by

this time, Cornu-English had developed into a separate dialect. However, the number of people speaking it is still limited, due to the higher proportion of Cornish speakers. As we know, however, this was to change rapidly over the course of the next 100 years. Additionally, Boorde wrote several lines of his rendering of Cornu-English, which Wakelin (1974: 25) argues is of an East Cornwall variety; an example of which is given here:

> Iche cham a Cornyshe man, al[e] che can brew;
> It wyll make one to kacke, also to spew;
> It is dycke and smoky, and also it is dyn;
> It is lyke wash, as pygges had wrestled dryn...
> ...Now, gosse, farewell! yche can no lenger abyde;
> Iche must ouer to the ale howse at the yender syde;
> And now come myd me, gosse, I thee pray,
> And let vs make merry, as long as we may. (cited in Kent, ed., 2000: 26)

Boorde's text is significant because it is perhaps the earliest extant example of a Cornu-English dialect literature, and the fact that it is written in couplets, suggests a more satirical and witty edge. The categorical assertion of identity ("Iche cham a Cornyshe man") is important since it suggests that although the transition from Cornish has taken place in this imagined speaker, Cornish independence is retained. Wakelin notes that it has characteristics of "Mummerset stage dialect as conceived in the sixteenth century" (1975: 210), but this misses some of the meaning of the piece which was partly political, for it demonstrates the complexity of literary politics in early modern Cornwall. By 1542, the dissolution of the monasteries in Cornwall had just been ordered by Henry VIII and his government knew they would have to keep a careful eye on the Cornish. The delay of some five years from its composition to publication tells us something of how turbulent this period of history was. The piece does poke fun at the propensity of the Cornish to take each other to court, but also depicts the now stereotypical Cornishman of the age, rebelling against Centralist Law.

In terms of vocabulary, the piece is of note because it uses the term 'gos' or 'gosse,' an archaic form of cousin, a concept joked about by Richard Carew (1555-1620) in his *The Survey of Cornwall* (Halliday 1953), that all Cornishmen are cousins and therefore by implication inbred.[19] However as we shall see, the term has come to be standard equipment in the development of Cornu-English and, by the nineteenth century, was used in the context of Cousin Jack, denoting any Cornishman living and working away from Cornwall.

As linguistic change steadily occurred in Cornwall after the Act of Uniformity, we note an absence of published material in Cornu-English. This was perhaps to be expected, since there were few outlets for such writings. Any scholarship tended to be devoted to the retention of Cornish, rather than recording the

[19] Carew fully embraced the shift to English, and celebrated this in an essay titled *The Excellency of the English Tongue*, published c. 1600.

Cornu-English of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[20] For one thing, there was no obvious danger of that regressing. It is in the nineteenth century where we see Cornu-English reach its literary zenith in the writings of specific Cornu-English authors such as John Tabois Tregellas (1792-1863), William Sandys (1792-1874) and William Bentinck Forfar (1810-1895). Tregellas was born in St Agnes, where his family had lived for many generations, and much of his work captures the Methodist-mining culture of the north coast during the opening decades of the nineteenth century. His poem *St Agnes Bear Hunt* is perhaps one of the most absurd, but equally entertaining pieces of nineteenth-century Cornu-English literature, involving a frantic search for an escaped bear. The form and structure is typical of this phase:

> "We caan't stand this, ef we be men,
> To see our cheldurn deer
> Toar lemb from lemb, and their heart's blood
> Sucked by a furrin' Beer.
>
> We'll arm ourselves with ugly things,
> Stoanes, biddixes, and boords,
> And picks and gads,[21] and showls and dags,
> And bagonetts and swords. (cited in Kent, ed., 2000: 85f.)

In *Visit to Lunnon* meanwhile, Sandys takes typical subject-matter for the Cornu-English narrative, the trip by two Cornishmen to London. This narrative drew on many threads of Cornish experience, not least a hark back to the rebellious nature of old, but also the need for comic potential of encountering the middle class standard English of London. Sandys reinforces Celticity by incorporating a good peppering of Cornish language words which had survived into Cornu-English: *quilkin* is a toad, a *padgitepooe* is a newt or lizard, an *angletich* an earthworm. These are not archaisms, but were used commonly by Cornu-English speakers until relatively recently. Sandys was educated at Westminster School (1800-08) and became a solicitor, later becoming the Commissioner of Affidavits in the Stannary Court, and it was here that he very likely encountered speakers of Cornu-English.

> Dost thee knaw, Sos, I've ben up to Lunnon church-town?
> A fine passel of things I seed theere to put down.
> Were I sliced ento slivers so thin as a straw,
> I cud na tell thee haalf the braave things as I saw.
> Why, now, what do'ee thenk? they've got timberen roadds,
> Which es fitty at times, but for quilkins, and toaads;
> Pure sport for tom-toddies, or a padgitepooe:
> And when et do come, cheel, but a bit of a skew,

[20] See the observations of William Scawen (d. 1686), Thomas Browne (1605-1682), John Ray (1627-1705) and George Hickes (1642-1715).

[21] A pointed wedge used in mining.

> Why the rain et do make em so slippy, and slottery,
> 'Tes no wonder they hosses, do get stogged, or trot awry.
> Then the Cabs as they caalls 'em, keeps pooten about,
> Like an Angletich twisten etself en and out. (cited in Kent, ed., 2000: 90)

Although no doubt deliberately constructed for effect, and perhaps containing a few archaisms, Forfar's Cornu-English now seems remarkably fresh and authentic. The same might be said for another preserved example from the mid-Cornwall writer Jack Clemo (1916-1994).[22] Clemo's position regarding Cornu-English is remarkable, since after becoming both deaf in his youth and blind in his thirties, he spent the bulk of his later life writing in standard English, hardly daring to touch Cornu-English, for fear that he could not reproduce it accurately. This was after, however, he completed three novels *Wilding Graft* (1948), *The Shadowed Bed* (1986) and *The Clay Kiln* (2000),[23] all containing Cornu-English dialogue and set in the Cornu-English stronghold that is the china clay district of mid-Cornwall. Clemo also wrote a number of early Cornu-English stories published in the 1930s in *Saundry's Almanack* at Penzance, *Netherton's Almanack* at Truro and the *One and All Almanack* of Truro. Clemo completely eschewed the Cornish Revival, viewing it as irrelevant to the bulk of the Cornish people and viewing the supporters of it as "pathetic pretentiousness" (1949: 121). It is likely, therefore, that Clemo's literary version of Cornu-English will be more accurate, since it was not romanticised and because Cornu-English had been retained longer in the china clay district, as this section from "Maria and the Milkman" demonstrates:

> Sammy Chegwidden had traipsed around Polgooth village four times that evening afore he catched sight o' Maria Blake; and he wad'n much better off when he did see her. 'Twas out beginning the lane that they mit, where the village ended, and nobody could'n see 'em. Maria bin pickin' smitties[24] and was carrying a gurt pile in her arms, wearing a ole sack over her dress to catch the dirt. (Clemo 1983: 9)

The grim and realistic fatalism of dialect speakers in Clemo's narratives are never quite found in the work of Robert Morton Nance. Although he embraced Cornu-English, his agenda comes out in the preface for the *Cledry Plays* where the lament is foremost and where he is hopeful of "some ancientry that lingers" (Nance 1956: 8). There seems to be a lack of acceptance of linguistic change, as well as a re-assertion of a cult of loss. This is clear in the artificiality of the dialogue of Joan the housekeeper from the first play, *Duffy: A Tale of Trove*. Here the language is more pantomimic and extreme, Nance wanting it to match a Cornwall that was seemingly slipping away. In effect, this was a modernist project of recording in a dramatic forum, but it was one filled with ideological flaws

[22] See also the writing of Hocking 2003 (1903) for an accurate imagining of mid-Cornwall Cornu-English.
[23] These latter two novels were drafted in the 1940s, but published later.
[24] Burnt gorse used as a home fuel.

from the outset. Nance, like the synthesis he was trying to achieve with Cornish, was trying to emulate a period of Cornish history long since passed:

> Aw! 'Tis a wisht poor old piliack I've comed to bem sure 'nough – what weth the wan eye clin gone, and t'other jist upon, my woorkin' dyas es most awver! – Why, I caen't sa mooch as knitty like I da belong – this'll make the fower times, now, I've been an' took back the turnin' o' this wan heel, and nothen the better of et! (Nance 1956: 9)

Nonetheless, Nance's efforts at the time were highly praised, and the model offered by *The Cledry Plays* became the standard forum for Cornu-English writing until relatively recently. Kathleen Hawke is a regular Cornu-English writer who has achieved success in Cornish Gorseth competitions. Her "Aw Braa Pedickyment Sure Nuff," for example, had not progressed the form very much from Nance's efforts in the 1920s, despite the fact that it was composed in the early 1980s:

> Ta tell ee tha truth I dawn't knaw what things es comin' to thaise days what weth prices gwain up an' up an this, that an' t'other thing gittin' scare. Tak' toilet rolls fur enstance, vore we da knaw where we'm to we shall be cutting up tha noospaaper in neat lil' squares like we ews to an' 'anging em up back of W.C. doar. Then they'm squashin' up soya banes and puttin' they in weth tha dennar to make ee think 'tes mait. (Pearson 1982: 26)

Perhaps for writers such as Hawke and Tangye – alluded to at the start of this chapter – progression is actually not sought. Rather, it is retention that is wanted, to imitate earlier generations of speakers who were more genuinely Cornish, again unpolluted by the ravaging effects of mass media and in-migration. In effect, it was a view remarkably in tune with *Kemmyn* speakers of Cornish, who sought a "target bull's eye" of correct pronunciation and vocabulary (George 1986: 38). Any cursory study of the last twenty years of prize-winning entries to any of the Cornish Gorseth's Dialect competitions in either prose or verse (Pearson 1982) will show a picture of careful retention, rather than embracing new words and concepts. This therefore reinforces an agrarian, non-technological, provincial view of the Cornish, paradoxically in complete contrast to their actual identity, which was global and technological. In many ways, much of twentieth-century dialect literature has been limiting, fearful and residual.

N.R. Phillips (*b.*1930) has been one writer who has been willing to embrace Cornu-English within his fiction, but does not see the necessity of using archaisms or outmoded expressions. He feels that Cornish identity comes across strongly enough in smaller, more subtle alterations of English, which reflect contemporary speech patterns, as in this sequence from *Horn of Strangers*:

> 'Where's the boy?' Barny said.
> 'Gone to a meetin'. About fish quotas. He'll be here dreckly.'
> 'Still not married?'
> 'Don't seem to be interested. He ab'm settled down since he came home from abroad, not really. Anyway, he got too much on his mind, at the moment to worry about women.' (Phillips 1996: 16)

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, despite the assertion by some older speakers, that the young take up too easily the phrases of mass media and give up the old expressions, Cornu-English actually shows no real sign of dissipating. One of the best recorded phonetic preservations of the present language is to be found in an anonymous A4 sized poster, sold all over Cornwall, and specially created for the tourist market to make 'translation' easy. Here the standard English of the translation perhaps exaggerates the incomprehensibility of the dialect, not to mention internal differences in pronunciation between west, mid and east Cornwall, and yet the imitative accuracy of the original is at least partially valid, in that it recreates how Cornu-English is spoken in the early twenty-first century by a considerable size of the population:

Aveedunun?	Have you taken the necessary steps to complete your course of action?
Aveegotun?	Have you found what you are seeking?
Betturgogitten	I had better depart and fetch the article for which I was sent.
Bin-un-dunun	I have been and carried out my allowed task.
Costy much dida?	Are you prepared to tell me how much it cost you?
Caintelly	I cannot or will not give you the information you seek.
Diddynawn?	Did you known the person of whom we speak?
Ellydoinov	I don't agree with the way you are performing your task.
Evveeizza?	How much does the article you are holding weigh?[25]

It is, however, moving in new directions, as we shall see below with its interaction with surfing lingo, as well as other new technologies. The best example that this author has come across is the Cornu-English expression for an automatic teller or cash-point: 'bank hole.' This is somehow utterly Cornish.

6. The New Cornu-English

While some writers, mainly those treading the boards of the dialect-speaker circuit, perform at Old Cornwall Societies and Cornish Gatherings,[26] the 1990s witnessed a rise in both the quantity and quality of Cornu-English literature, patterning literary expression elsewhere in English and in Cornish. Several new writers wished to see Cornu-English removed from its position of marginalisation and started to express concepts beyond the provincial "Bringin' the dunkey down from the carn"-style narratives, yet in many cases wanted to retain the sharp and cutting wit that Cornu-English expressions could give.[27]

The context for this was threefold: as Angarrack (1999 and 2002) and Deacon, Cole and Tregidga (2003) have shown, the post-war period had witnessed a slow but steady rise in cultural and political nationalism, manifested in events

25 This poster is titled "Cornish Words and Phrases" and is commonly available.

26 Often these are female, giving a second level of marginalisation. The most famous are Brenda Wooton, Joy Stevenson and Marion Howard.

27 The magazines *Poetry Cornwall/Bardhonyeth Kernow* and *Scryfa* have been influential in this process.

during the decade such as the recreation in 1997 of the 1497 rebellion, the call for a Cornish Assembly, as well as the on-going recognition by the UK government and the European Union of the legal position of both the Cornish language and the Cornish themselves as an ethnic minority. Paradoxically, many of the writers, although wanting to express this nationalism and identity, also wanted to distance themselves from the Cornish Gorseth (Kent, ed., 2004: 15-18), since this was redolent of the limiting Cornu-English of the past and that cultural activity in Cornwall need not necessarily have to be attached to the revival of Cornish. Finally, there was a sense that elsewhere Cornwall was being put on the cultural map of these islands again. Projects such as the Eden Project, the development of a Combined University of Cornwall and European Union Objective One Funding made it clear that Cornu-English need not necessarily be conceived as symbolic of a linguistic backwater. It could be 'cool Kernow' once more.

The fact that elsewhere mainstream media started to use regional accents assisted this new confidence (Smyth 1997: 243-276), and yet, while Welsh, Scottish, Irish and English Liverpudlian and North-Eastern accents began to be heard more often, there was still a particular lack of Cornish and south-west English accents to be heard on television and radio (Kent 2003: 100-141). These writers looked back at the writers who they felt had most realistically captured Cornu-English expression at particular historical moments. They were not interested in the amalgam that had grown up with the dialecticians. They realised that the most extreme usage of dialect could be as effective a badge of difference (in particular from England) as the Cornish language itself.

One playwright in the midst of this range of new Cornu-English is the St Eval born Nick Darke. Among his Cornish themed plays are *The King of Prussia* (about the lives of famed smugglers Harry and John Carter of Prussia Cove) and *Ting Tang Mine* (Darke 1999 a). Darke's skills as a dramatist are manifested in both his dialogue, which is full of brusque and direct Cornish humour, integrated into realistic Cornu-English speech, and his ability to maintain the pace of often epic stories. Nowhere is this better seen than in his 1999 play *The Riot*, which dramatises the Newlyn fishermen's dispute over Sunday observance. Here the dialogue is stark and powerful:

> Billy: Make im swear an oath.
> Tack: Oo's e with now?
> Billy: Primitive Methodists.
> Tack: E left em after e broke a circuit preacher's back.
> (Darke 1999 b: 8)

Darke's ongoing association with the Kneehigh Theatre Company (a company who make continued use of actors with Cornish accents and who regularly act using Cornu-English) has proved particularly productive (Hosken 1996: 20f.). His subject matter is often maritime and mining culture in Cornwall, culled mainly from the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, perhaps principally because it is when he sees a fully operational Cornu-English culture operating not in isolation, but on European (with links to Brittany and Ireland)

and on global levels (mining in Australasia, North and South America and South Africa). Cornu-English writing has been able to progress via use of the monologue as short story, developed by Simon Parker in his ground-breaking *A Star on the Mizzen* (1997), which looked, like Darke, at the Newlyn fishermen who in 1896 refused to go to sea on Sundays. Their livelihoods were threatened by Sabbath-breaking English crews from the East Coast. In May of that year, more than 300 fully armed troops of the Royal Berkshire Regiment were stationed on the streets of Newlyn, whiles three navy gunboats patrolled Mount's Bay, culminating in pitched battles being fought on the promenade. It is this moment which Parker chooses to recreate. We notice a more political voice than the one offered by writers such as Tangye:

> We should ha' just stanked on over the top of 'en but instead we hesitated and squared up. Some of the boys started linging stones and ellins[28] and when one well aimed bully caught Nicholas on the chacks and scat 'en over, that was it … We soon scattered and retreated to the Esplanade. There were whacks injured. (Parker 1997: 21f.)

Kent, meanwhile took a different direction in his 1998 narrative *Dreaming in Cornish*, wishing to explore the interrelationship between Cornish and Cornu-English. In so doing, he chose the moment when in 1700, Edward Lhuyd came to Cornwall, keen to seek out what remained of the Cornish language,[29] and writes a monologue from the point of view of the native scholar John Keigwin of Mousehole. Keigwin understood and spoke Cornish, but Kent chooses his voice to be a Cornu-English one. Here, he describes the moment when Lhuyd arrives in Mousehole:

> Still, on his head he wore his periwig, even though it looked more like a geat gannet's nest than the attire of a gennelman. His face itself was prop'ly drawn, with his mouth screwed up like a duck's fert. ... So this was of 'un – Edward Lhuyd – a man who, despite being without drawing room and closet, looked like he had grabbed hold o'the world by the ass'ole. (Kent 1998: 5)

Parker and Kent's development in particular was to use Cornu-English metaphor and simile in new ways, giving Cornu-English literature a new agenda. Kent was further commissioned to complete an English language verse rendition of the Cornish trilogy of mystery plays known as *Ordinalia*. Symbolic of medieval Celto-Catholic Cornwall, the three plays of the cycle are certainly the most important texts within the canon of Cornish literature (Murdoch 1993: 41-74). The re-rendering of the text maintained the rhyme scheme of the Cornish, yet made ideological decisions about the level of Cornu-English the characters speak. Thus Caiaphas and Pilate tend to speak in Standard English, and thus allowed the Biblical landscape to be transformed onto Cornwall; in a way recreating the desired effect of the original. Below is a Unified Cornish version of

[28] Cornish: An *ellin* is a thin flat stone, usually used for roofing.
[29] See Williams, D.R., 1993.

the words of the Trader in Passio Christi ('The Passion'), followed by the English translation, followed by Kent's Cornu-English version:

Hayl! Syr Cayphas, Epscop stowt!
M'aides! Jhesu an gwas prowt
re wruk re maystry y'n dre;
hag ef dhyn re leverys,
kyn fe an Temple dyswrys,
yn treddeth y'n drehafsa.

[Hail! Sir Caiaphas haughty Bishop!
Help me! Jesus, the proud fellow,
has been blustering overmuch in the town;
and He has said to us
that though the Temple were demolished,
in three days He would raise it up.].
(Nance, Smith and Sandercock 1982: 26f.)

Yew! Caiaphas, haughty Bishop Sir!
Help me! Jesus, all puffed up and full of stir,
has been bedolin' and blustering in the stannon.[30]
and He has said to us straight
that if the Temple was in a demolished state,
in three days, He'd up and raise 'un. (Kent 2005: 120)

In such ways, a larger proportion of the population is able to engage with the cultural revival, since it does not require knowledge of Cornish to understand the text, and connect more immediately with their linguistic experience, a mistake which as the chapter shows, the early revivalists paid a price for in the slow take of Cornish language and the desire for political devolution. Kent, Darke and Parker have realised that often Cornu-English works culturally best, when it is juxtaposed with Standard English. These writers were also unafraid to notice emergent hybridisations, new words and grammars, which informed the experience of many Cornish people, and not just those from the Cornish Gorseth, who viewed dialect as a comedic side-show to the main event: the project of a fully Cornish-speaking Cornwall. That way the readers and audiences can see Cornish difference more clearly.

This was also the case with *Hell Fire Corner* (2004) by D.M. Thomas,[31] which deliberately sets English characters against Cornish ones, the climax of the drama being the moment when an illiterate Cornish miner and pigeon-breeder, Bert Solomon, is selected to play rugby for England against Wales in 1910. Yet following his moment of glory, he never turned out again for England. Thomas indicates that the reason he did not return was because he felt linguistically uncomfortable among the other top players of his days, mostly educated men from upper class backgrounds. Since the 1960s, however, Thomas had been incorpo-

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[30] Cornish: A stall at a market.

[31] This was first performed at the Hall for Cornwall, Truro on 29th April 2004. The play concludes with the Cornu-English expression "I dun 'un."

rating Cornu-English into his poetry (see Thomas 1983). This fear had also been expressed earlier in the poetry of A.L. Rowse, who though growing up in the china clay mining area of mid-Cornwall (still today a rich bed of Cornu-English), he recorded his difficulties dealing with his Cornish dialect and that he would have been prevented from progressing at Oxford if he did not alter his Cornu-English:

> It does arise directly from the consideration of the struggle to get away from speaking Cornish dialect and to speak correct English, a struggle which I began thus early and pursued constantly with no regret, for was it not the key which unlocked the door to all that lay beyond – Oxford, the world of letters, the community of all who speak the King's English, from which I should otherwise have been infallibly barred? But the struggle made me very sensitive about language; I hated to be corrected; nothing is more humiliating: and it left me with a complex about Cornish dialect. (Rowse 1982 (1942): 106)

As Ollard (1999 and 2003) has shown, Rowse is perhaps best known now for his acerbic and shrill misanthropy, yet as the above sequence demonstrates and as his own poetry shows, the issue of Cornu-English and Cornish identity within these islands was at the heart of his poetry and prose. Payton (2003) affirms this in his recent studies, arguing that Rowse was caught between periods of academic discourse.[32] He was a pioneer of the New British historiography and its Archipelagic debate, but the academic climate was not sufficiently developed, or 'devolved' for his identity and Cornu-English background to be accepted. The fear is of no consequence, however, to a writer such as Les Merton, who perhaps has managed to transcend the world of dialectician poetry with his new investigations of Cornish experience. For Merton, the trick would be to handle the delicate negotiation between the retention of comedy, but to match this with a subsequent progression of the form. This is best seen in his poem "Arfurr," where the reader encounters the self-confident identity of a very manly, and modern Cornish "King Arthur" in a non-compromising form of Cornu-English:

> Ee wuz fo-wur fut nothun,
> eed go to a do un sey,
> 'Who wuz tha tallust bloke
> furr I cum un.' (Merton 2000: 24)[33]

It is also to be found in work for children, such as the films for the production company "Three S Films." Their production *How Madge Figgey Got Her Pig* (1997), was an adaptation of a nineteenth-century folktale and told the narrative in an uncompromising Cornu-English voice.[34] Another new direction taken by Cornu-English in the 1990s was its meeting with the vocabulary of world-wide surf culture. Cornish surfing resorts such as Newquay and Perranporth had retained enough of a Cornu-English population, but had also received in-migrants

[32] See also Payton 2004.
[33] Cf. Herbert, 1994.
[34] This film won the Young People's Award Torc at the 1998 Celtic Film and Television Festival at Tralee in Ireland.

from California and Australia, who had brought with them the terminology of surfing.[35] A hybridisation is currently taking place where terms, such as *grommet* (for a young novice surfer), *muppet* (for an arrogant south-eastern English surfer) become politicised pieces of dialect, since they show new ownership of the sport and culture.[36] Cornu-English should not be viewed as provincial or narrow. When compared with Arthuriana, Tristan and Iseult, the medieval dramatic tradition, the folktales, not to mention the historical romantic continuum of Cornwall, the Cornu-English or Cousin Jack story might seem slight and unrefined. But as this chapter has shown, we should not be dismissive of them, for their popularity since 1549 demonstrates their centrality in the corpus of populist telling and writing emerging from Cornwall. We should revise our view of Cornu-English not just as a cultural space for simple yarns or jokes, but relocate them at the contemporary end of a dynamic continuum of oral culture. Likewise, it should also make 'us' reconsider our response to Cornu-English and its use as a dissenting voice. The dunkey then has well and truly been brought down off the Carn. Cornu-English is no better considered than in Ronald Davies's poem, *Yours: Ours*, which evokes displacement, memory, reclamation and in Kenneth MacKinnon's words, the "replenishment"[37] of Cornish culture, that is as apt in the twenty-first century as in 1965 when it appeared in the groundbreaking political magazine *New Cornwall*:

> We speak your language now
> The hammer words
> The gouging phrase
> But we sing it to our tune
> An ancient song
> Lilting before you came
> And the words in our way we say
> In the old accents
> Singing to a question
> And because we say it is so
> So chanting in our memories
> It is not your language
> It is ours. (Davies 1965: 49)

[35] There is some evidence of a cultural reversal here, since Cornu-English entered Australian English with terms such as 'beauty' and 'mate' (Cornu-English: *bewdy* and *maate*). Cf. the Cornish language word *moaz* ('to go') used in the western USA in the expression 'mozey on down.'

[36] This culture is considered in Prechezer, C., dir., 1995, *Blue Juice*, Channel Four Films and Pandora Cinema.

[37] A comment made to the author by Prof. Kenneth MacKinnon during Government Office South West's audit of Cornish Language in April 2000.

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