

Jon Mills

THE DEPICTION OF TYRANNY IN THE CORNISH MIRACLE PLAYS

Introduction

The Cornish miracle plays are written in the Cornish language. However they contain passages in which the characters code-switch briefly into English or code-mix English words into their Cornish dialogue. The characters in the Cornish plays choose between a range of language varieties according to the situation. In order to determine the function of code-switching and code-mixing in the Cornish miracle plays, it is necessary to understand this situational context.

The Cornish miracle plays were written in the Cornish language in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. On the surface, these plays might appear to merely relate stories from the Bible and the lives of certain Saints. Underneath, however, lies a smouldering resentment of the tyranny and genocide following brutal repression of two popular uprisings: the rebellion in 1497 against Henry VII's poll tax and the rebellion four months later in support of Perkin Warbeck's claim to the throne. As a result of these insurrections, a significant proportion of the Cornish speaking population were exterminated. In the miracle play, *Passio Domini*, written in the Cornish language shortly after 1497, Jesus is referred to as the Son of Joseph the Smith. This reference to 'the Smith', alludes to Michael Joseph a smith of St. Keverne who was one of the leaders of the first 1497 rebellion. Code-switching further reinforces the allusion; when Christ's torturers speak phrases of English. Two other Cornish plays, *Bewnans Ke*, the Life of St. Kea, and *Beunans Meriasek*, the Life of St. Meriasek, depict a pagan tyrant King Teudar, persecutor of Christians, and namesake of Henry Tudor. In *Beunans Meriasek*, St. Meriasek is driven out of Cornwall by King Teudar, a self-styled "reigning lord in Cornwall", "prince", "emperor", "governor" and "conqueror". As a result, Teudar is pursued by the Duke of Cornwall who calls Teudar a "tyrant of unbelief" and an

"alien", and challenges Teudar's right to be in Cornwall at all. In *Bewnans Ke Teudar* is also referred to as a pagan tyrant. In these plays, much use is made of code-switching, with sentences in English being spoken by torturers and by Teudar. Lexical choices between synonyms of differing etymologies subtly convey nuances of attitudinal meaning and power relations.

Dissolution of the monasteries in Cornwall, Wales, Ireland and England took place under Henry VIII between 1538 and 1541. This was to have profound consequences for the Cornish language. The monastic colleges of Glasney and Crantock were the main sources of Cornish literature until they were suppressed in 1535, the year Henry VIII was excommunicated and Thomas Cromwell became vicar-general. These seats of Cornish learning were then smashed and looted and their scriptoria destroyed. Thus the formal scholarship that had upheld the Cornish cultural identity was concluded (Peter 1906; Stoye 2002: 20).

These events no doubt played an important part in engendering resistance to the imminent reformation. On the one hand, Glasney and Crantock were centres of Cornish cultural excellence. On the other hand they formed a link to Cornwall's Celtic past, an era prior to the takeover by the current tyrant monarchy.

Following the death of Henry VIII in 1547, the young Edward VI ascended to the throne. Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer (author of the Book of Common Prayer) was committed to creating a Protestant state. The ban on religious processions and pilgrimages was accompanied by commissioners being dispatched to instigate an iconoclasm of Cornish Catholic imagery. In response, 1547 saw a turbulent demonstration in Penryn against religious innovations (Rose-Troupe 1913: 73-82).

Fresh from bloodily suppressing the Catholics of Ireland, Cranmer's henchman William Body relished his task in Cornwall. After desecrating religious shrines at Helston, Body was stabbed by William Kylter on April the 5th 1548 and finished off by Pascoe Trevian (Hayward 1630: 53).

Immediate retribution followed when 28 Cornishmen were rounded up and taken at gunpoint to Castle Terrible where many were hung, drawn and quartered. One execution of a 'traitor of Cornwall' was carried out on Plymouth Hoe. Town accounts give details of the cost of timber for the gallows and poles to put the head and quarters of the said traitor upon. A chunk of the Cornishman's torso was taken to Tavistock so that English people might partake of the festivities (Hayward 1630: 53-4).

Martin Geoffrey, the priest of nearby St. Keverne, was taken to London. After being hacked to pieces, his gored head was impaled on a staff erected upon London Bridge. Intended as a warning to those who might resist English cultural imperialism, such indiscriminate barbarity only served to ferment even greater resentment in Cornwall.

In 1549, the four old liturgical books in Latin were replaced by Cranmer's (1549) *Book of Common Prayer* which was published solely in English. The 1549 Act of Uniformity enforced its use not only in England but in Wales and Cornwall also. In Cornwall in particular, where most of the population at the time spoke only their native Cornish, this change was deeply resented. As a result, a Cornish army assembled in Bodmin on 6th June 1549. The articles issued by the Cornish army at Castle Cannyke, near Bodmin reveal the ethnic dimension of the conflict: "And so we the Cornyshe men (wherof certen of us under stande no Englysh) utterly refuse thys newe Englysh" (*A Copye of a Letter ... 1549*). It is clear from this article that the rebels were motivated by a resolve to withstand English cultural aggression (Berresford Ellis 1974: 60-2; Stoye 2002: 24).

From Bodmin they marched east to Crediton in Devon and then on to Exeter. The insurgents merely requested that they should not be compelled to worship in their conqueror's language. Nevertheless, the Cornish were dismissed as being of the Anti-Christ by Cranmer. King Edward VI and his Privy Council sent an army of mainly German and Italian mercenaries under the command of Lord John Russell to impose a military solution. No attempt to parley was made by Russell and some 3,500 Cornish insurgents were slaughtered by mercenary forces.

In one instance, 900 unarmed bound and gagged Cornish captives had their throats cut in just ten minutes by Russell's troops. In another instance the English surrounded and set fire to the village of Clyst St. Mary and approximately a thousand rebels were burned alive. Those who survived were driven back into Cornwall. There, they were pursued and the thousands captured were put to death. Thus half the Cornish speaking able bodied male population (11% of the Cornish population) were exterminated. Since families lost their men folk and livelihoods, the actual figure may be estimated at around 20%. As a reward for his loyalty and service, Miles Coverdale, the chaplain to the English forces, was made Bishop of Exeter. Those slaughtered in the uprising were mocked by Cranmer who never showed a twinge of remorse (Hayward 1630: 62–5; Berresford Ellis 1974: 60–2; Angarrack 2002: 174–5; Stoye 2002: 23–4).

In 1559, Elizabeth I introduced a new Act of Uniformity. The Preface to the 1559 Act of Uniformity states, "And moreover, wheras Saint Paule woulde have such language spoken to the people in the Church, as they might onderstande, and have profite by hearing the same ... and is ordeyned nothing to be readde but the very pure woord of God, the holye scriptures, or that which is evidently grounded upon the same, and that in such a language and ordre, as is most easy and playne for the understanding bothe of the readers and hearers" (An Acte for the Uniformitie of Common Praier 1559). The Book of Common Prayer (Cranmer 1549) was printed in French in 1553, in Welsh and in Scottish Gaelic in 1567, in Irish in 1608 and in Manx in 1610. However, a Cornish translation of the Book of Common Prayer was not forthcoming. In order to impose the English language *Book of Common Prayer* upon the Cornish, priests and populace were murdered, texts and traditions were destroyed, children were beaten, and use of the English language was enforced in church education. For nearly 150 years, this continued, sufficient to coerce tens of thousands of Cornish speakers into abandoning their native language.

The Plays

The Cornish Miracle Plays were written in the Cornish language and include *The Ordinalia*, *Beunans Meriasek* (Ton 1504), *Bewnans Ke* (Circa 1575) and *Gwreans an Bys* (Jordan 1611).

The earliest extant copy of *The Ordinalia* is in the Bodleian Library (Bodleian 791). It is described by Madan and Craster (1922: 405) as, "Bodl. 2639. In Cornish, on parchment: ... 11 × 7³/₄in., vii + 90 leaves Donum Jacobi Button armigeri ex comitatu Wigorniensis 28^o Mart. 1615." The Bodleian Library's acquisition of this manuscript in 1615 is confirmed by Lhuys (1707: 265) who also describes it as, "Ex dono Jacobi Button Armigeri, è Comitatu Wigoniensi. An. 1615."

Concerning the place and time that the *Ordinalia* was written, Madan and Craster (1922: 405) describe the manuscript (Bodleian MS. 791) as "written in the first half of the fifteenth century in Cornwall." Fowler (1961: 125) concludes that

A re-examination of the place-name evidence suggests a date somewhere between 1300 and 1375, or more narrowly, between 1350 and 1375. ... The evidence of Middle English lines and phrases, vocabulary, and, above all, pronunciation of the final -e, point strongly to a date no later than 1400. ... it is difficult to believe that the Middle English elements would allow a date earlier than the fourteenth century. ... It is possible to affirm, I believe, with some measure of confidence, that the evidence thus far considered points to the third quarter of the fourteenth century as the period in which to place the composition of the Cornish Ordinalia.

There is, however, good evidence for supposing that Bodleian 791 is of a much later date. Twice in *Passio Christi*, Jesus is referred to as the Son of Joseph the Smith. "Hemma yu an keth ihesu a lever y vos map deu map iosep an coth was gof" (*Passio Domini*: lines 1693–5), 'This is the same Jesus who says he is the Son of God, Son of Joseph the old smith fellow'. "Cryeugh fast gans mur a grys may fo an ihesu crousys map an guas gof" (*Passio Domini*: 2477–9), 'Cry aloud with much strength so that Jesus will be crucified, Son of the smith fellow'. These references to "an ... gof", 'the smith', allude to Michael Joseph An Gof of St.

Keverne, who was one of the leaders of the 1497 Cornish rebellion. When one considers that, following the rebellion, Michael Joseph An Gof was executed by the English, and that in *Passio Domini*, Christ's torturers speak phrases of English, the case for this being an allusion to Michael Joseph An Gof appears even stronger. If this is the case, then Bodleian 791 may be dated circa 1500. However the *Ordinalia* of Bodleian 791 incorporates and reworks earlier material, which accounts for the Middle English elements noted by Fowler.

The *Ordinalia* is a cycle of three dramas. The first, *Origo Mundi* illustrates a number of Old Testament stories from the Creation to the building of Solomon's Temple. The second, *Passio Domini* illustrates the story of Christ's Passion. The third play, *Resurrexio Domini*, deals with the story of the Resurrection. These three plays were designed for open-air performance on consecutive days at parish feasts. The stage was a circular amphitheatre called in Cornish 'plen an gwary' or in English 'playing place'.

The oldest extant version of the play *Gwreans an Bys* ('The Creation of the World') is in the Bodleian Library (Bodleian 219). It bears the colophon "Heare endeth the Creaco[n] of the worlde wth noyes flude wryten by William Jordan: the XIIth of August 1611". The manuscript consists of fifty four pages. Jordan's *Gwreans an Bys* also incorporates and reworks earlier material, including some passages from the *Ordinalia*. At the end of the play the audience are told, "dewh a vorowe a dermyn why a weall matters pur vras", 'Come tomorrow on-time; you will see very great matters'. This indicates that the play is only the first part of a mystery cycle of which the remainder is missing.

In the Saints' Plays, *Beunans Meriasek* and *Bewnans Ke*, a character appears named King Teudar. The Cornish spelling "Teudar" is a deliberate attempt to lampoon Henry Tudor (VII) since Teudar means 'fatness'. So King Teudar equates with 'King Fatty'. In *Beunans Meriasek* (Ton 1504), the Duke of Cornwall challenges Teudar thus,

"Pendryu the kerth in pouma? Tytel na chalyng dyblans, aberth mam na tas oma, pur guir nyth us" (<i>Beunans Meriasek</i> 2369-73)	'What is your right in this country? Obviously you have no clear title or claim here on either your mother's or your father's side'
---	--

The manuscript of *Beunans Meriasek* (National Library of Wales MS. Peniarth 105) bears the colophon, "Finitur per dominum Rad Ton anno domini 1504". "Rad" may be a shortened form of either 'Richard' or 'Radulphus', 'Radulphus' being the Latin form of 'Ralph'. The entire play appears to be in Ton's handwriting except for some corrections and stage directions made in another hand. The manuscript consists of 181 pages. The play is in verse throughout.

Three plots are interwoven. The first concerns the life and death of St. Meriasek, who is associated with Camborne in Cornwall. The second plot concerns St. Sylvester, the Pope and the Emperor Constantine. The third plot is that of a woman whose son is taken prisoner by a heathen tyrant and then miraculously released through the intercession of the Virgin Mary. It has been demonstrated how these three seemingly disparate plots are linked by the theme of "tyranny" (Payton 1993; Olson 1997). The subversive and political aspect of the play is noted by Jenner (1928: 33). Jenner suggests that King Teudar, an evil tyrant depicted in the play, alludes to Henry VII, who was hated by the Cornish following the rebellion of 1497.

Bewnans Ke (The Life of St. Kea) is thought to have been written in the middle or second half of the sixteenth century (Thomas & Williams 2007: xlv) and like the other plays incorporates and reworks earlier material. The play consists of two parts. The first concerns the deeds of St. Kea and his encounter with the tyrant Teudar. The second part concerns King Arthur's conflicts with the Romans and with his nephew Mordred. The second part is longer, and retells the account found in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* and Wace's *Roman de Brut*.

Code-switching

The speech community of the Cornish miracle plays was a social unit within which speakers shared a repertoire of 'ways of speaking'. This repertoire included several languages: Cornish, English, French and Latin. Members of this community engaged in verbal interaction that did not randomly alternate between distinct linguistic codes but chose systematically among them and put them to specialized uses.

Tenor, one of the parameters of context, is concerned with the role relationships between interactants in a given context. In the Cornish plays, the interlocutors use a particular language variety to allude to their relationship with the other person. Thus speakers change the way they speak according to who is speaking to whom. In other words, they accommodate to others by adjusting their communicative behaviour. This behaviour serves to establish and maintain social relations by making social roles explicit. Thus code selection delimits social groups and identifies the individual.

Code-switching into English is used in the plays to denote certain roles, such as demons, torturers and tyrants. For example, the first person to use English in the *Ordinalia* is Satan.

Satan to Eve,
"torre yn ow feryl vy | heb hokye 'Pick it at my risk, without hesitat-
fast have ydo" (*Origo Mundi* 197- ing, quickly have done'
8)

This is echoed in *Gwreans an Bys*, in which the first phrase of English is spoken by Lucifer to the other Angels.

"Pays I say oll elath nef | golsow 'Peace, I say, all angels of Heaven!
owthave lemy'n" (*Gwreans an Bys* Listen to me now!
114-5)

And later in *Gwreans an Bys*, Lucifer speaks a much longer stretch of English to the other Angels.

"I was made of a thought | ye 'I was made from a thought. You
may be glad of such a wight | and may be pleased with such a person,
in heaven so gay I wrought | so nobly formed in heaven. I am
semely am [] in every sight seemly in the sight of all. Come up
come up to me every chone | hag to me everyone, and then I will try
yn ur na gwraf assaya | zavos mu to be great on the throne'
war an trone"

(*Gwreans an Bys* 195-201)

When God banishes Lucifer from heaven, Lucifer replies,

"for well nor wo | I will not go | I 'For weal nor woe, I will not go.
say yowe so | this will not be | I say so to you. This will not be.
Thymove creis" Believe me'

(*Gwreans an Bys* 275-9)

Lucifer's Angel also code-switches with English:

"pyw henna a veth mar vold | 'Who is it that will be so bold as to
cowse gear warbyn lucyfer | heare speak a word against Lucifer? Here
he hath unto you told | that in he has told you that in heaven is not
heaven ys not his peare | ha me an his peer, and I believe it.'
creyse" (*Gwreans an Bys* 163-7)

In *Beunans Meriasek* (Ton 1504), demons also speak phrases of English:

"Peys y say both fur and ner | 'Peace, I say, both far and near.
golsowugh orth iubyter ..." Hearken to Jupiter'
(*Beunans Meriasek* 2326-7)

And later in the play, a demon named Moufras¹ addresses the audience with two sentences in English:

"Peys y hot both wylde and tame |
y say moufras vs my name |
benythe numbethe schame |
awoys gul drok."

(*Beunans Meriasek* 3369–71)

'Peace, I order, both wild and
tame. I say Moufras is my name.
I was never ashamed of doing
evil.'

A comparison may be drawn with English language films set during the 2nd World War, in which the Nazis use expressions such as *Sieg Heil!*, *Mach schnell!*, or *Raus!* In *Passio Domini (Ordinalia)*, use of code-switching with English is extended to Christ's persecutors: the Sanhedrin, Pilate, Herod and Christ's torturers.

Caiaphas in the New Testament, was the Roman Empire-appointed Jewish high priest who organised the plot to kill Jesus. By putting English phrases into the mouth of Caiaphas, the writer of *Passio Domini* equates Caiaphas with Thomas Cranmer, who forced the English language liturgy on the Cornish.

Caiaphas greets Pilate,
"wolcom pilat by thys day" (*Passio Domini*
379)

Caiaphas greets Prince Annas,
"wolcom by mahommys blout" (*Passio*
Domini 575)

Caiaphas greets Judas,
"wolcom judas par mon fay | wolcom by
maghommys lay | wolcom myl-wyth yn ow
hel" (*Passio Domini* 935–7)

'Welcome Judas, upon
my faith! Welcome by
Mahound's law.
'Welcome a thousand
times in my hall.'

Caiaphas to a messenger,
"wel thew fare messeger" (*Passio Domini* 1641)

Caiaphas code-switches with English when he addresses King Herod.

Heil syr lord and emperor | heil
now kyng of kynggys flour |
arluth dres ol an bys-ma | fayr an
suyt bryte of colour | pylat thy
why gans onour | reth an vonas
un adla

(*Passio Domini* 1681–6)

Hail, sir lord and emperor. Hail
now king, of kings the flower.
Lord above all this world. Fair and
sweet, bright of colour! Pilate to
you, with honour, has sent a
knave.

Herod similarly code-switches when he replies to Caiaphas.

"Wolcom cayphas re iouyn | And
yk annas me cosyng | hag ol agas
cowethe | levereugh a ver termyn
| py hanow yu an iaudyn |
thymmo a thanfonas e"

(*Passio Domini* 1687–92)

'Welcome, Caiaphas, by Jove, and
eke Annas, my cousin, and all your
companions. Say in a short time,
what is the name of the fellow he
has sent to me.'

Christ's torturers also code-switch with English.

"ty a vyth box trewysy | have that god
yve thy wo" (*Passio Domini* 1269–70)

'Thou shalt have a hard blow:
Have that, God give thee wo!'

"wel y met harlot ioudyn | ty a fyth
boxesow tyn | war an dywen" (*Passio*
Domini 1366–8).

'Well met, obstinate knave. You
will have sharp blows on the
chin.'

"a vyl gadlyng dues yn rag |
wertyweth whet crok ath tag" (*Passio*
Domini 1817–8).

'O vile vagabond, come forth.
At last hanging will choke you
yet.'

"me a wrathy'smur a throk | ha dyspit
so mot y go" (*Passio Domini* 2098–9)

'I will do thee very much evil,
and spite, so mote I go'

A torturer code-switches with English when he accepts the order from Pilate to crucify Jesus.

Anon syre so mott y thrive | to the deth they schal blyve | yn dyspyt thaga hehen | com forth ihesu yn ow dorn | heil myghtern an yethewon | ty a fyth cawal anken (Passio Domini 2525–30)

Anon, sire, so mote I thrive, to the death they shall remain, in spite of their efforts. Come forth, Jesus, in my hand. Hail, King of the Jews! You shall have full pain.

In *Resurrexio Domini*, upon conversion to Christianity, the Emperor addresses Veronica in Cornish, then code-switches into English to summon his torturers, and then code-switches back into Cornish.

A Vernona war ow feyth | un gusyl da ha perfeyth | thym ty a ros | tormentors com hyder snel | namna gessof ow merwel | orth agas gortos (Resurrexio Domini 2141–6)

Veronica, on my faith, a counsel good and perfect to me you have given. Executioners, come hither quickly, I almost get my death by your delay.

In the Saints' Plays, *Beunans Meriasek* (Ton 1504) and *Bewnans Ke*, the tyrant kings Teudar and Constantine and their entourages code-switch into English. Thus in *Beunans Meriasek* when Teudar addresses the Duke of Cornwall, Teudar begins in English before code-switching into Cornish.

"By may fay an we[l] besen | a latha margh a calla" (*Beunans Meriasek* 2421–2)

'By my faith and well beseen, if I could kill a horse.'

When the Emperor Constantine summons his torturers in order to send them to persecute Christians, his torturers first greet Constantine in English before the dialogue code-switches back into Cornish.

"Heyl costenten the nobil | del on ny the lel bobil" (*Beunans Meriasek* 1172–3)

'Hail, Constantine the noble! As we are thy loyal people'

Constantine replies first in English and then code-switches back into Cornish.

"Wolcum knyghtis everych on | reys yu dywy lafurya | rag chastya an crustunyon" (*Beunans Meriasek* 1178–80)

'Welcome knights, everyone! You must go to persecute the Christians.'

In *Bewnans Ke*, when Kea arrives in Cornwall, he is met by King Teudar's forester, who first addresses him in English before code-switching back into Cornish.

"Wel we met cosy[n] forsoth | barth in forest ow arluth" (*Bewnans Ke* 40–1)

'Well we meet, cousin, indeed, within the forest of my lord.'

When Kea attempts to convert Teudar to Christianity, Teudar replies first in English before code-switching back into Cornish.

"Out out out I am ful wod | harow harow | by mahumys precyus blod | bethyth marow" (*Bewnans Ke* 256–9)

'Out, out, out! I am quite mad. Alas, alas! By Mahound's precious blood, you shall die!'

In *Resurrexio Domini* Pontius Pilate code-switches into English.

"rak ow colon ow honan | gans ou hollan me a wan | ogh ellas and welawo" (*Resurrexio Domini* 2042–4)

'For my heart, I myself will pierce with my knife; Oh! alas! And wellawo!'

Code-switching and Power

Code-switching into English is also used to indicate the power relationship between interlocutors. In *Bewnans Ke* a messenger

addresses Teudar first in Cornish, code-switches into English, then back into Cornish and then back into English again.

<p>"Lowena thum Arluth flowre Now new tydynges hav I brought Me a lever the why dowr <u>Al or</u> <u>labor ys for nowght</u>" (<i>Beunans Ke</i> 494-7)</p>	<p>'Hail to my finest lord! Now I have brought new tidings. I shall tell you exactly, all our labour is for nought.'</p>
---	--

When Kea comes to Cornwall from Brittany and is captured and taken to Teudar, Teudar addresses Kea, beginning in Cornish then code-switching into English.

<p>"Te javal ew henna gwyr lavar heb gow A bele eta then tyr menyk the bow what hath thyman <u>Ho ys thy lord tel me</u> <u>that</u>" (<i>Beunans Ke</i> 78-83)</p>	<p>'You scoundrel, is this true? Don't lie! From whence do you come to the region? Declare your country and further your domain! Who is your lord tell me that!'</p>
---	--

Kea shows deference to Teudar by replying at first in English before code-switching back into Cornish. This indicates that Kea acknowledges the power relationship between Teudar and himself.

<p>yf thow wylt her the clen ryght truly syr kyng my Lord ys god of al myght that mad al things both gret & small ha me a vyth gylwys ke drys voer A Golan in dre nowyth e tof re vyhal (<i>Beunans Ke</i> 86-90)</p>	<p>If you will hear the clean right, truly, Sir King, my Lord is God of all might, that made everything, both great and small, and I am called Kea. Over the sea from Colan into the town I am newly come, by St Michael.</p>
---	---

Code-mixing

Code-mixing is a process that incorporates material from a second language into the base language. Typically it is lexis that is incorporated. The writers of the miracle plays use code-mixing for the

same purpose that they use code-switching, that is to associate their bad characters with the English language. (It should be noted that the many loanwords from Old Norman French, most of which were also borrowed into Middle English, are not used in this way.) Thus in *Beunans Meriasek* Teudar uses English *wel* ('well' *interj.*).

"wel wel na for[s]" (*Beunans Meriasek* 1058) 'Well, well, no matter!'

Also in *Beunans Meriasek*, the Tyrant uses English *wyght* ('weight')

"eff a pee pur guir y wyght a our
kyn boys dylfrys hag a nagh
pelle y fay" (*Beunans Meriasek*
3550-2) 'He'll certainly pay his weight in
gold before being set free, and
further shall renounce his faith.'

Morphological markers of the base language are retained. For example "talkye" takes its stem from English *talk* and retains the Cornish infinitival suffix *-ye*.

"Eva prag na thuete nes | rag cous
orthyf ha talkye" (*Origo Mundi*
149-50) 'Eve, why don't you draw near to
converse with me and talk'

In this extract from *Origo Mundi*, the Serpent uses both the Cornish "cous" ('talk') and the English code-mix "talkye".

Sociolinguistic Variables

Pairs of synonyms such as *cous* and *talkye* are sociolinguistic variables that distinguish, within the plays, the speech of bad characters from the speech of good characters. Thus in *Beunans Meriasek* Teudar uses the English word "hardygrath" ('vengeance').

"mahum darber hardygrath | ze
neb a ruk ou throbla" (*Beunans Meriasek* 948-9) 'Mahound, inflict vengeance on
he who has troubled me!'

Whereas a mother whose child is about to be slain uses the Cornish word "dye!" ('vengeance').

"a du an neff tayl *dye!* | warnogh a 'O God of heaven, wreak
tus ongrassyes" (*Beunans Meriasek* vengeance upon you, O wicked
1595-6) people!"

In *Gwreans an Bys*, the Serpent uses the English word "shame" when he berates Eve.

"Shame ew genaf tha glowas | Ow I have shame to hear you
cregy then gyrraw na" (*Gwreans an* believing those words.'
Bys 637-8)

Whereas Adam uses the Cornish word "meth" ('shame') when they discover that they are naked.

"rag *meth* dean ny a lemma | tha For shame let's go and hide
gutha in tellar close" (*Gwreans an* somewhere close by.'
Bys 865-6)

The bad characters greet one another with English *heyl*. For example, in *Origo Mundi* the demon Belsebuc ('Beelzebub') greets Lucifer thus:

"heyl syr arluth lucifer" (*Origo* Hail, Sir Lord Lucifer.'
Mundi 563)

And in *Beunans Meriasek* a messenger greets Teudar thus:

"Heyl dyugh ser a[r]luth teudar" 'Hail to you Sir Lord Teuder'
(*Beunans Meriasek* 768)

Whereas the good characters greet one another with the Cornish *lowena thyugh* (lit. 'joy to you'). For example, Meriasek greets the bishop thus:

"Ser epscop *thyugh lowena*" 'Sir Bishop, hello.'
(*Beunans Meriasek* 499)

In *Beunans Meriasek* the Tyrant uses the English word *snel* ('quickly') when he commands his torturers.

"dugh genevy desempys alemma 'Come with me to the forest
then guelfos snel" (*Beunans* quickly at once.'
Meriasek 3367-8)

Whereas the young Meriasek uses the word *uskis* ('quickly') when he requests permission from his schoolmaster to return home to his parents.

Me agis pessé mester | mar a I would beseech you, master, if
pewy sur plesiis | mones ze dre you would indeed be pleased, to
heb awer | ze vyras ou zas *uskys* go home without trouble to see my
(*Beunans Meriasek* 193-6) father quickly

And in *Origo Mundi* Cherubim uses Cornish *scon* ('quickly').

"the parathys *scon* yth af" (*Origo* 'To Paradise quickly I go'
Mundi 339)

In *Passio Domini* an Executioner uses English *soul*.

"henna me a wra rum soul" (*Passio* 'That I will do, upon my soul'
Domini 2919)

Whereas Jesus uses the Cornish *enef* ('soul').

"rak yma yn ou *enef* | trystyns fast 'For there is in my soul great
bys yn ancow" (*Passio Domini* sadness, even unto death'
1022-3)

In *Gwreans an Bys* the Serpent uses English *mystrustya* ('mistrust').

"Ny ryse thewh ow mystrustya" 'you need not mistrust me'
(*Gworeans an Bys* 677)

Whereas in *Resurrexio Domini* Cleophas uses Cornish *gymer gorgys* (lit. 'take mistrust').

"na gymer hemma gorgys" 'Do not mistrust this.'
(*Resurrexio Domini* 1501)

Conclusion

It has been shown in this article that code-switching and code-mixing are used in the Cornish miracle plays to signal certain roles and power relations between interactants. Furthermore use of English for this purpose is conditioned by recent historical context.

NOTE

1 "*Moufras*" is a borrowing from Old Norman French *Mauferas*, 'evil doer'. This character occurs in some of the Breton plays (*Best. lap. Rosarius S.*, c. 1330, 162).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- A Cople of a Letter Contayning ... the Articles ... of the Cornyshe Rebelles*. 1549. Lambeth Palace Library, London.
- An Acte for the Uniformitie of Common Praier, and Service in the Church, and the Administracion of the Sacramentes*. 1559.
http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/1559/front_matter_1559.htm.
- Angarrack, J. 2002. *Our Future is History: Identity, Law and the Cornish Question*. N.p.: Independent Academic Press.
- Berresford Ellis, P. 1974. *The Cornish Language and its Literature*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Beunans Meriasek* Colophon, "Finitur per dominum Rad Ton anno domini 1504". National Library of Wales: MS. Peniarth 105.
- Bewnans Ke*. National Library of Wales: MS. 23,849D.
- Cranmer, T. 1549. *Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacramentes, and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church: after the Use of the Church of England*. London: Edw. Whitchurch.

- Fowler, D. 1961. "The Date of the Cornish Ordinalia" *Medieval Studies* 23: 91-125.
- Hayward, J. 1630. *The Life and Raigne of King Edward the Sixth* London: John Partridge.
- Jenner, H. 1928. "King Teudar" *Tre, Pol and Pen*. London: The Cornish Association.
- Lhuyd, E. 1707. *Archaeologia Britannica: Vol. 1 Glossography*. Oxford: The Theatre.
- Madan, F. and Craster, H. H. E. 1922. *A Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford*, Vol. II:1 Oxford.
- Olson, L. 1997. "Tyranny in *Beunans Meriasek*", *Cornish Studies* 5: 52-9. *Ordinalia*. Bodleian: 791.
- Payton, P. 1993. "'A Concealed Envy against the English': A Note on the Aftermath of the 1497 Rebellions in Cornwall" *Cornish Studies Series 2*. I: 4-13.
- Peter, T. C. 1906. *The Old Cornish Drama*. London: Elliot Stock.
- Rose-Troupe, F. 1913. *The Western Rebellion of 1549: an Account of the Insurrections in Devonshire and Cornwall against Religious Innovations in the Reign of Edward VI*. London: Smith, Elder and Co.
- Stoyle, M. 2002. *West Britons*. Exeter: University of Exeter Press.
- Thomas, G. and Williams, N. J. A. (eds). 2007. *Bewnans Ke: The Life of St Kea*. Exeter: University of Exeter Press.

ILTEANGACH, ILSEIFTIÚIL

Foilsithe i 2012 ag
ARLEN HOUSE
42 Grange Abbey Road
Baldoye
Dublin 13
Éire
Fón/Facs: 00 353 86 8207617
Ríomhphost: arlenhouse@gmail.com

Dáileoirí idirnáisiúnta
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY PRESS
621 Skytop Road, Suite 110
Syracuse, NY 13244-5290
Fón: 315-443-5534/Facs: 315-443-5545
Ríomhphost: supress@syr.edu

ISBN 978-1-85132-068-4, crua

© Liam Mac Amhlaigh agus Brian Ó Curnáin 2012

Gach ceart ar cosnamh. Ní ceadmhach aon chuid den fhoilseachán seo a atáirgeadh, a chur i gcomhad athfhála, nó a tharchur ar aon mhodh nó ar aon tslí, bíodh sin leictreonach, meicniúil, bunaithe ar fhótachóipeáil, ar thaifeadadh nó eile gan cead a fháil roimh ré ón bhfoilsitheoir.

Is le cabhair deontais i gcomhair tograí Gaeilge a d'íoc an tÚdarás um Ard-Oideachas trí Choláiste na hOllscoile, Corcaigh, a foilsíodh an leabhar seo.

Clúdach & Dearadh | Arlen House
Clódóirí | Brunswick Press

CLÁR ÁBHAIR | CONTENTS

- 8 Brollach / Preface
Liam Mac Amhlaigh agus Brian Ó Curnáin
- 11 Réamhrá / Introduction
Alan Titley
- 27 Schliemann ar thóir na Traí
Aifric Mac Aodha
- Ailt / Articles**
- 29 Latin and Celtic: the Substantive Verb
George Broderick
- 49 Befuddled in three languages: the readers of the 'Purgatorium Hibernicum' (c. 1670)
Andrew Carpenter
- 71 Some thoughts on early Irish roads and travel
Thomas Charles-Edwards
- 97 Irish influence on mediaeval Welsh vocabulary: the case of the gnomic poems
Nicolas Jacobs
- 123 Gaulish *bussu-*, Irish *bod*, 'penis', and Sanskrit *buddha* 'aroused, enlightened'
Kim McCone
- 139 The Depiction of Tyranny in the Cornish Miracle Plays
Jon Mills