CHAPTER 3

IMAGES OF CORNWALL AND ITS PEOPLE

In this and the following chapter we explore some aspects of narratives about Cornwall and its people. These helped to construct both the distinction and the integration central to identity claims. Following Paasi, the imaginations of Cornwall and its people that emerged by the early nineteenth century can be seen as part of the symbolic shaping of the region (Paasi, 2001, 17). The emphasis of this chapter is on the identity of the territory and on those narratives, symbols and images associated with Cornwall (cf. figure 1.2, p.40 above). After briefly reviewing some historical and anthropological approaches to the Cornish identity we shall re-assert the role of social context in the production of representations of Cornwall. We then review in turn perspectives on Cornish landscapes, discourses of industrialisation and the role of the Cornish language and dialect in the production of new symbols of distinctiveness in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Towards the end of the twentieth century, political and academic doubts emerged about accepted meta-narratives, whether of 'Britain', 'history' or 'anthropology'. As a consequence, the Celts generally, and Cornwall and the Cornish identity more specifically, were sometimes focused on in terms of what they represented for the formation of British national identity or as living case studies for disciplinary re-assessments. Because of this, the emphasis was on the period after the 1860s when railways, artistic fashions and tourism brought the English intelligentsia face to face with Cornwall (see also Dodd, 1986, 14-15). The period before the 1870s, in contrast, remains obscure and ignored. For example,

Vernon (1998), in an otherwise perceptive contribution, makes no mention of mining, Cornwall's dominant industry before the 1870s. Dazzled by the semantics of the metaphorical trope accompanying the meta-narrative of late nineteenth century cultural re-positioning (c.f. White, 1973, 34), such writers stumble backwards into the earlier nineteenth century with a severely impaired vision. The result is that they tell us little about how Cornwall was imagined by its own inhabitants in the earlier part of the nineteenth century. But, seen from the inside, this is precisely the crucial period that requires analysis, the period during which a popular sense of Cornish identity was re-fashioned. That re-fashioning created a sense of self that persisted, albeit residually, well into the late twentieth century, and helps explain aspects of the contemporary Cornish condition (Deacon, 1993; Deacon and Payton, 1993).

Therefore, such language-centred accounts neither offer a description or explanation of the sense of territorial identity extant during Cornwall's industrial period before the 1870s. In contrast, materialist perspectives produce suggestions more relevant to this period. Langton (1984, 155-162) claims a new kind of mass regional consciousness began to take shape in the 'new' industrial regions after the 1760s. Nevertheless, as we saw in chapter 1, writers on emergent eighteenth-century industrial regions (see Hudson, 1989) do not expand very far on the link between industrialisation and territorial identity. In particular, there has been little exploration by economic historians or historical geographers of the way such identities were imagined, reproduced or contested. Moreover, in a direct contrast with idealist accounts, the impression is conveyed that territorial identities in the industrial regions were constructed primarily by insiders.

Language and social contexts

A crucial element of place and territorial identities is the way they are imagined. As the work of postmodern social historians suggests, social identities cannot simply be 'read off' from the social structures (Jenkins, 1997; Joyce, 1995; Jones, 1996). However, we should also avoid a mirror image cultural 'reductionism'. So meanings cannot also be entirely unstable, entirely autonomous. Just as language itself is a structure, with rules and continuities, so the imaginations that make up social identities exist within a structure of meanings. As Duncan and Duncan argue, these meanings are 'negotiated, contested and maintained or transformed' by social processes. The plurality of meanings is finite, interpretations being 'constructed by interpretative communities ... most interpretations will be constrained to some degree by their relation to that which is interpreted' (Duncan and Duncan, 1988, 119-120). Such imaginations of place therefore cannot exist entirely independently of historical, social and political processes.

In the Cornish context, as elsewhere, the content and form of dominant or hegemonic representations of place and people are constrained by certain social parameters. Of course, these parameters are not confined to Cornwall itself. Indeed, representations of Cornwall can be and were produced outside Cornwall and may in that case owe much more to cultural processes and pressures being worked out elsewhere. This possibility of simultaneous insider and outsider production of images is recognised by Paasi. He divides the identity of a region into two parts, the 'subjective' images held by the inhabitants, demarcating their place from others, and the 'objective' images held by outsiders, classifying regions in broader social consciousness. Both insider and outsider, internal and external images are essential parts of the dynamic process of regional identity creation and

reproduction (Paasi, 1986, 133). This might seem to provide us with a possible classification of place images. However, insider and outsider representations overlapped and intertwined so considerably in Cornwall that this proves to be an unworkable division. The description of outsider images as 'objective' also carries a debatable implication and implies an unwarrantable distinction between 'insider' and 'outsider' views.

We should also note the danger that the demands of a linear text constrain and seriously over-simplify the shifting web of identity. In particular Paasi emphasises that identities cannot exist independently of institutions and these institutions emerge and change in parallel with the content of identities (Paasi, 1986, 125). Nevertheless, we will confine this section to an identification of aspects of the identity of Cornwall and will leave the institutions that reproduce them for later consideration.

Landscapes: symbols of place

Agents from outside Cornwall have always, in the modern period, heavily influenced images of Cornwall as a place. Cornwall's size, its place on the periphery of England and its fascination for members of the literate, metropolitan classes have led to an avalanche of works on its special character, its mystique and its attractions. In this deluge, representations of the landscape have been of major importance and, for these reasons, outsiders have been crucial in articulating some dominant views about the Cornish landscape (Westland, 1997).

Traditional academic approaches to landscapes saw them as 'expressions of material culture'; landscapes were the result of human endeavour as different economic needs resulted in particular landscapes (Baker, 1992, 6-7). This approach

to landscapes as material products, however, ignored their symbolic aspects. Landscapes are, indeed, created by productive forces, but they also have meanings for people and are interpreted within shifting cultural norms and fashions. They are thus symbolic as well as material. Landscapes can be seen as visual expressions of identity, certain landscapes acting as the symbols of particular places.

For example, the importance of rural landscapes to notions of Englishness is now well recognised. During the later eighteenth century a taste for the picturesque and a fashion for landscape gardening paid for by the rents and profits of the landed classes helped to establish a dominant vision of the countryside, producing what Darby terms ‘unpeopled landscapes’ (Darby, 2000). Wild picturesque nature gave way during the early nineteenth century to tamed and ordered pastoral landscapes, arboreal, small scale and neat, producing a dominant domesticated ‘south country’ image of the English countryside for the twentieth century (Daniels, 1993. See also Matless, 1990; Lowenthal, 1991). As these images continue to be institutionalised and commercialised through the activities of English Heritage, the National Trust and the mushrooming garden centres of suburbia ‘nowhere else (than in England)’, in Lowenthal's words, ‘is landscape so freighted as legacy’ (Lowenthal, 1994, 20)

The recognition that landscapes are symbolic has led to complex new approaches to them, part of a more humanistic approach within the social sciences. (For this see also Cosgrove, 1984; Miller, 1995; Cosgrove and Jackson, 1987; Duncan, 1994). Various metaphors have been employed to make sense of landscape, from icebergs to theatre to dance (see Baker, 1992, 8-9). One of the more credible is the metaphor of landscape as text, something that is read and through which meanings are produced (Duncan and Duncan, 1988). In addition, landscapes encode certain, usually dominant, ideologies, making them concrete.

Thus their reception and decoding can be seen as part of an inherently political process linked to power. 'Whether examined as forms of discourse, representations or physical reality, landscape and territory are embedded in relations of power and knowledge' (Darby, 2000, 15).

If we adopt the metaphor of landscape as text, at least three readings of the Cornish landscape may be discerned around the beginning of the nineteenth century. First there was a landscape of power. It was the landscape of ordered design, parks and country houses, symbols of landownership and wealth (cf. Butlin, 1993, 139-140). This was the landscape within which travellers and visitors moved and inside which the local gentry spent a large proportion of their lives (Hext, 1965; Greig, n.d.; CRO AD648/12). The Cornish landed gentry may not have been so thick on the ground as in the south east of England but there was still a visible landscape of power stretched across Cornwall, protected behind its park walls and its plantations. This landscape sometimes starkly contrasted with surrounding industrial landscapes, as at Clowance in Crowan or Tehidy at Illogan.

A second reading was the landscape of nature, one influenced by romantic readings of the countryside as a primitive and timeless arcadia, read in opposition to the growing presence of urbanisation and industrialisation (Daniels, 1993). This can be illustrated by early guidebooks with their references to places such as Lands End or Kynance Cove: wild, picturesque places usually on the coast. A good example of this reading is presented by Cyrus Redding's *Illustrated Itinerary of the County of Cornwall*, published in 1842. Interestingly, Redding was an insider, originally from Truro. He wrote of the 'charm of some of the most romantic and sublime scenery in the Empire. Cornwall is the land of the wild, the picturesque and the imaginative' (Redding, 1842, 3; for an earlier example see Paris, 1816).

However, while this was later to become the dominant representation of Cornwall, it was relatively subdued in the early nineteenth century and competed with another reading.

In contrast to the romantic reading, for many visitors in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries Cornwall was a dismal place. Caesar Thomas Gooch wrote back to his family in Norfolk in 1754:

> I have now seen a great deal of Cornwall and think it upon the whole a dismal country to live in ... the inland dwellings are a vast distance from neighbours, everywhere surrounded with rocky mountains, and the prospects chiefly over barren lands (Gooch, 1962).

Later in the same century, another East Anglian visitor, Thomas Preston, summed up the country from Bodmin to Truro as 'the most dreary possible, a complete moor with scarce a dwelling visible, you may travel for miles over a swamp and see nothing but a few men at work at what is called "stream work"' (Preston, 1972). While inland Cornwall seemed to be a desolate waste, the fishing villages on the coast were to be avoided as far as possible. John Wesley found their attractions marred by 'the perfume' of pilchards and conger-eels (Wesley, 1864, 327). Before the 1820s the dominant reading of the Cornish landscape was not that of the picturesque despite the emergence of Romanticism.

Perhaps the most striking example is provided by William Gilpin who, in the 1780s, had been a key figure in popularising the picturesque aesthetic in relation to mountain scenery in Wales, the English Lake District and the Scottish Highlands (Darby, 2000, 60). On one of his last tours, travelling through western England around 1800, he reached Launceston Castle and found it 'picturesque'. However, twenty miles further into Cornwall, having crossed the 'coarse, naked country' of

Bodmin Moor, Gilpin decided to turn back to Devon instead of continuing to the Lands End, as was his original intention. 'To travel over deserts of dreariness in quest of two or three objects seemed to be buying them at too high a price; especially as it is possible they might have disappointed in the end'. Instead of the 'picturesque' Gilpin had discovered a landscape that was 'heavy, unbroken and unaccommodating', one where the views 'wanted the most necessary appendages of landscape, wood and water, but even form' (Gilpin, 1808, 190-197). The words of the Reverend Richard Warner echo this representation of the Cornish landscape current at the turn of the nineteenth century; 'however valuable it may be in a commercial point of view, it can offer no claim to the praise of the picturesque or beautiful' (Warner, 1809, 346).

A third reading is, therefore, the most relevant in the present context. This was the landscape of industrialisation. In stark contrast to the emerging view of pastoral rurality in south-east England, the most commonly remarked landscape features of Cornwall were created by its industry (c.f. Daniels, 1993, on Coalbrookdale). (While landscapes of nature and industrialisation are identified as separate representations here there was clearly an overlap; descriptions of the industrial landscape were more than often couched in the language of romanticism, as we shall see below.)

On a visit in the 1760s Thomas Kitchen observed that 'as the county abounds in mines, the air is filled with mineral vapours' (Kitchen, 1764, 89). In fact, at the time Kitchen was writing Cornwall as a whole did not 'abound in mines'. Mining in the 1760s was still relatively localised; the bulk of copper ore production was accounted for by just seven parishes from Gwennap in the east to Gwinear in the west and John Rowe has claimed that 'practically the entire (copper) mining region was within eight miles of the summit of Carn Brea' (Rowe, 1953, 66). While it must

be noted that tin mining was more widely spread, until the last decades of the eighteenth century there was not much underground mining east of Truro. But, although the mining landscape was confined to only a part of its territory, Cornwall was already being represented by mining, the dynamic factor in the landscape.

This was because the mining districts of Cornwall imprinted on outsiders their most vivid impressions. An intrepid visitor to Redruth in the 1790s found that 'it is in a cloud of smoke, which was the reason we did not breakfast' (cited in Spreadbury, 1971, 11). In the same decade William Maton described the appearance of the towans near Hayle as:

> truly dismal. The immense volumes of smoke that roll over it, proceeding from the copper houses, increase its cheerless effect, while the hollow jarring of the distant steam engines remind us of the labours of the Cyclops in the entrails of Mt. Etna (Maton, 1797, 235).

The volcanic metaphor also crops up in the writings of Warner. Travelling on the edge of the mining country to the north west of Penryn, he described it as 'a district filled with extinguished volcanoes, which, having exhausted their fury, could now only be traced in the universal desolation they had occasioned'. For Warner, this was the 'remarkable feature of Cornwall' (Warner, 1809, 106). These landscapes of fire fascinated the visitor unused to the impact of industrialisation.

> The dismal scene of whims, suffering mules, and hillocks of cinders, extends for miles. Huge iron engines, creaking and groaning, invented by Watt, and tall chimneys, smoking and fuming, that seem to belong to 'Old Nicholas's' abode, diversify the prospect,

wrote a visitor to the Consolidated Mines at Gwennap during the 1790s (*Mining Journal*, 22 Feb 1840). It was the mining landscape that, for outsiders, made Cornwall different. One jaded traveller, George Lipscomb, who meandered across

southern England in the 1790s, in an increasingly frustrated search for the 'interesting', finally found it at Polgooth Mine near St.Austell: 'Now we had arrived at a spot which was truly interesting - at a kind of new country of which we had previously formed no tolerable idea' (Lipscomb, 1799, 249). Here, finally, for him was a landscape markedly different from those to the east.

The significance of the mining landscape was that it then coloured representations of Cornwall as a whole. As early as the 1760s the dominant representation of Cornwall was being derived from its mining sector. As this representation strengthened its hold on later writers, they went further, interpreting the non-mining landscapes of Cornwall in the light of its mining landscapes. When William Maton was still in the 'bleak country' between Looe and Fowey in the 1790s he began to fancy himself 'already arrived in the mining country, and that we had bid adieu to fertility and picturesque beauty' (Maton, 1797, 137). In a similar fashion, Robert Fraser, in his *General View of the County of Cornwall* (1794), prepared for the Board of Agriculture, discussed the mines of Cornwall before what was intended to be the substantive subject of his treatise, farming. For him it was the mines, 'to which so great a part of its capital and industry is directed' that were central for understanding late eighteenth-century Cornwall (Fraser, 1794, 14). The farmer, by the 1790s, played second fiddle to the miner in representations of Cornwall. It was the industrial *landscape* that most impressed outsiders, at a time when industrial *society* was transforming the lives of insiders.

So far we have identified an all-pervasive landscape of industrialisation that outsiders were, by the 1820s, finding it impossible to ignore. To a considerable extent, as we shall see below, this imagery mirrored dominant insider

representations of Cornwall in its industrial period and marked a convergence of outsider and insider imageries. However, we might propose another landscape reading, a more restricted native reading, the landscape of Cornishness. The spectacular results of industrialisation were a part of this particular landscape but in a more intimate and less escapable way. In the mining districts the people were living their lives in what was described in 1855 as:

> a hungry landscape, everywhere deformed by small mountains of many-coloured refuse; traversed in narrow paths and winding roads, by streams of foul water, by screaming locomotives with hurrying trains; white wheels and whims, and miles of pumping rods, whirling and vibrating, and the forest of tall beams, make up an astonishing maze of machinery and motion (cited in Newman, 1994, 27).

But this landscape of Cornishness included more elements than just the artefacts of industry. For instance, it would also have 'seen' the grid of small chapels that had been superimposed on the Church of England's parochial geography by the 1840s. Along with the chapels, often isolated and serving a dispersed rural population, were the settlements of that population - scattered towns, villages, hamlets and single cottages with no clear urban focus. Around these settlements were the small fields comprising the holdings leased by miners on three life leases. And interspersed with these elements were the engine houses and the burrows of the mining industry. The prime motif of this landscape was a decentralised, even egalitarian, aspect; a rural-industrial network itself reflecting the complex ties of community, work and kinship that bound together industrial Cornwall. These settlement features, moreover, were not confined merely to industrial communities. This was surely the landscape that insiders 'saw', a landscape that was a product of their endeavour, a distinct cultural landscape and a symbol of 'Cornwall'. (This

landscape can be recognised in the pages of late nineteenth century Cornish novelists such as H.D.Lowry, 1893, 1906 and in early twentieth century texts such as Maker, 1935 and Clemo, 1948)

'A peculiar people': discourses of differentiation

We can turn from the way in which the Cornish saw their landscape to images of the Cornish people. Two non-native voices provide a window into Cornish self-representations. In 1877 Bishop Benson, relatively recently installed as bishop of the new Cornish diocese, wrote, with a hint of irritation, 'the Cornish are never weary of saying, "Since they are a most peculiar people": it is quite the truest thing which I have heard them say' (cited by Morrish, 1983, 256). In fact, one of the main claims made during the long campaign for a separate diocese for Cornwall, a campaign that began in the 1840s, was that the Cornish were in a 'peculiar and very interesting condition', because of their reliance on mining and fishing. This 'renders them an independent, and intelligent, and a self-relying people' (Morrish, 1983, 246-247). It was not just clerics who were using this discourse by the 1850s. Herman Merivale, a barrister who had acted as Recorder at Penzance, Falmouth and Helston in the 1840s, and who was later to become Under-Secretary of State for India (in 1859) wrote of the 'the profound attachment professed for it (Cornwall) by its own children' (Merivale, 1857, 289).

So we have a population that apparently saw themselves as different and combined this with an attachment to 'Cornwall'. But how did they represent this Cornwall? One possible representation was that of Cornwall as 'West Barbary', a lurid and dramatic place populated by food rioters and heavy-drinking roisterers

who lived most of their lives underground. A.K.Hamilton Jenkin reported one visitor from London in 1775 as writing that the 'natives' of Cornwall were happiest when:

> they can sit down to a furze blaze, wringing their shirts and pouring the mud and water out of their boots. But the common people here are very strange kind of beings, half savages at the best. Many thousands of them live entirely underground, where they burrow and breed like rabbits. They are as rough as bears, selfish as swine, obstinate as mules, and hard as the native iron (Jenkin, 1925, 13).

Such representations went on to claim that in their spare time these troglodytes sallied forth to lure innocent mariners onto the rocks of their inhospitable land. In this representation of the primitive periphery by someone from the civilised centre we have Cornwall as 'the Other', populated by a barbarian and uncouth tribe of people, who exhibited characteristics diametrically opposed to those doing the labelling. But by the final decades of the eighteenth century another contrasting representation was fast emerging.

In the 1760s the visitor Thomas Kitchen identified three 'peculiarities' distinguishing the inhabitants of Cornwall 'from those of other counties'. These were their 'former' [*sic*] language, their sports of wrestling and hurling and their 'tinners'. These latter were 'in many respects a community distinct from the other inhabitants of the County' (Kitchen, 1764, 107-108). This was echoed later by Lipscomb, who focused in the 1790s on the miners as:

> a race of men distinct from the common class of British subjects; they are governed by laws and customs almost exclusively their own ... they are separated from the manners of modern improvement, and resemble the primitive possessors of an uncultivated soil, rather than kindred brethren of a great and enlightened nation (Lipscomb, 1799, 262).

Clearly, Lipscomb was still leaning here towards West Barbary imagery. But his view of the miners as a distinct class was supported by Warner in 1808:

> We observed a few circumstances in their character as a body, which appeared to distinguish them from all other tribes of workmen that had fallen under our notice. These peculiarities naturally arise from the nature of their employment, which is altogether unlike that of the labouring classes in general throughout the kingdom (Warner, 1809, 297).

Cornwall's industrialisation provided a context for presenting its people and others with new representations of the Cornish. In its new role as one of the leading centres of late eighteenth century capitalism, Cornwall could be dressed in new imageries. Insiders such as William Pryce, a Redruth surgeon, were clearly mesmerised by deep metal mining. Claiming that Cornwall produced 'more tin in one year than Devonshire has done in half a century', he proceeded to argue in 1778 that 'this little province of Great Britain deserves to be ranked amongst the first principles of this island, as a nation and people whose very name ... is derived from Bratanack, which signifies the Land of Tin [*sic*]' (Pryce, 1778, preface). The publication of Pryce's *Mineralogia Cornubiensis* was itself a tribute to the role of mining in late eighteenth century Cornwall. By the 1820s mining had suffused the whole of Cornish society. According to Thomas Preston, by 1821:

> the mines of Cornwall occupy the attention of the principal inhabitants. As you advance to the west, so you hear them more and more talked about till you arrive at Truro; there their whole ideas are immersed in the value of the shares of such and such a mine; if you go to Redruth, then it is the weight of a piece of ore or the quality of what was raised or dug up yesterday (Preston, 1972, 489).

Even the efficiency of steam engines was of sufficient interest to warrant its own newspaper from 1811 devoted to detailing the duties achieved (see *Lean's Engine Reporter*).

In the late eighteenth century, therefore, transfixed by the experience of industrialisation, the preferred local myth became one of progress from darkness to light, from 'West Barbary' to 'Industrial Civilisation' (For the importance of myths, both individual and collective, see Samuel and Thompson, 1990, especially p.9. For the culture of industrialisation in Cornwall see Payton, 1992a, 77 and Todd, 1967). This narrative of achievement both fitted the rationalist, science-based discourses of technical progress that were dominant in industrialising Cornwall and was encouraged by Wesleyan Methodism, which claimed for itself the credit for this moral revolution (see chapter 9 below).

At first sight, the adoption of such a myth would seem to be the opposite of a 'discourse of differentiation'. After all, industrial civilisation was a generalised representation and one that could be applied to several other regions. In addition, the social upheavals that accompanied it seemed to many observers to be erasing old customs and producing uniformity. Nevertheless, the way the global process of industrialisation was experienced in Cornwall was itself interpreted as part of a local discourse of differentiation. Conscious attempts to create this discourse had already appeared in Cornwall by the 1820s. Industrialisation and the change to 'Industrial Civilisation' had produced its own 'peculiarities' – perhaps not so dramatic as those representations of the peoples of the western periphery as West Barbary perhaps, but 'peculiarities' that were used as a representation of the group and a basis for self-identification.

Three main elements seem to have been involved in this representation of 'industrial civilisation'. First, the Cornish were 'independent'. Independence was an attribute ascribed generally to industrial populations and prized by working class communities. But aspects of pre-modern local society may have especially reinforced this representation in Cornwall. Hatcher shows how a lack of manorialism, the influence of the political institution of the Duchy, conventionary leasehold tenures, and the tinning industry had combined to produce an independent and mobile tenant farming class as early as the fourteenth century (Hatcher, 1970a, 52, 60-61, 70, 220 and 1970b). This tradition of an independent tinner-farmer group was reinforced in west Cornwall by early industrialisation which may have led to greater sub-division of holdings as population grew (Cullum, 1993, 281). Some access to land continued as wastes were cultivated in smallholdings let out on the three life leasehold system, a factor that, together with other collateral aids, removed a proportion of labour from total dependence on market relations in the workplace (see Rose, 1987 and below, chapter 8). These powerful enabling factors helped reproduce the myth of independence. Moreover, that myth is best seen as an ideological process, partly because independence was generalised to include the Cornish as a group (whether or not there was access to land); and partly because it was naturalised.

> Among the prevailing propensities of the Cornish, there are some striking features in their character, which seem to arise from their natural courage, and from that proud spirit of independence, which no revolution, either in politics or morals, has hitherto been wholly able to subdue ... their spirit of independence not only pervades their general actions, but it enters into their various views, and incorporates itself with their conflicting opinions (Hitchins and Drew, 1824, 710).

Indeed, ‘independence’, with two other aspects - ‘combination’ and ‘enterprise’ - had come together to make up a coherent ideology of ‘the Cornish as industrial civilisation’ by the 1820s.

Independence could also be expressed as individualism, producing a ‘promptitude of decision, which frequently degenerates into obstinacy, that among the lower orders sometimes terminates in quarrels, and among those who can bear the charges, in tedious and expensive litigation’ (Hitchins and Drew, 1824, 710). Methodist secessions and sectarianism after 1815, disagreements over proposed railway routes in the 1840s, the rivalry and competition between the small Cornish towns and the absence of trade unions could be and have been interpreted as consequences of this individualism. ‘Never was a small people more curiously and readily divisible into factions, or more disinclined (we are sorry to say it) to really useful co-operation’ (Merivale, 1857, 311). However, the individualist side of the independence coin was a representation that became more widespread at the end of the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries when it became a convenient scapegoat for the difficulties caused by de-industrialisation (see for example Jenkin, 1927).

In contrast, any tendency to individualism in the early nineteenth century was tempered by the second component in the ideology of the Cornish as industrial civilisation - a willingness to combine. The motto ‘One and All’ was already in common use by the 1820s. By the 1850s it was being described as ‘the watch word and battle cry of the Cornish ... of great antiquity’ (Burt, 1972, 231). A ‘conspicuous’ feature of the Cornish, according to Drew, was the:

> warmth and ardour with which they undertake an enterprise, and persevere in its prosecution. Accustomed to associate in bodies, they mutually encourage each other to perseverance, even on occasions when all rational

> hopes of success have taken their leave. Hence 'One and All', accompanied with three huzzas, will ... infallibly reanimate their drooping spirits, in the midst of a doubtful exploit (Hitchins and Drew, 1824, 711).

Merivale also noticed what he called a 'spirit of aggregation', which 'rather finds a vent in camp-meetings, temperance parties and monster tea drinkings'. Merivale again notes how this aggregation was marked by a 'tendency to the enthusiastic', echoing the insider Samuel Drew's 'warmth and ardour' (Merivale, 1857, 311). The revivalist aspect of Cornish Methodism was here helping to underpin this particular representation of enthusiastic combination.

Myths of 'independence' and 'one and all' combined with a third component, 'enterprise', to make up the trilogy of the industrial ideology of Cornishness that had appeared by the 1820s. 'Few', argued Drew, 'are more active, more enterprising, or more persevering' than the Cornish (Hitchins and Drew, 1824, 708). This 'restless aspiration after change' had made 'the Cornishman one of the most locomotive of mankind', wrote Merivale, attributing the emigration patterns of the Cornish to their enterprise (Merivale, 1857, 317). Here we have the representation of Cornish emigration as that 'high point of Cornish achievement' which Payton has noted (Payton, 1992, 113). George Henwood, Cornish mine captain and Mining *Journal* correspondent in the late 1850s, neatly combined enterprise, emigration and Cornish pride:

> The Cornish are remarkable for their sanguine temperament, their indomitable perseverance, their ardent hope in adventure, and their desire for discovery and novelty; hence their wide distribution all over the world, in the most remote corners of which they are to be found amongst the pioneers; and to this very cause has science to boast of so many brilliant ornaments who claim Cornwall as their birthplace (in Burt, 1972, 232).

It was not just the Cornish who represented themselves in this way. To Warner what was noticeable was the miners' progressive and industrial spirit; the employment relations in the mines 'keeps their spirits in an agreeable agitation, renders their minds lively and alert, and prevents that dullness which generally characterises the English labourer' (Warner, 1809, 298). Other outsiders echoed this perception. As early as the 1790s Fraser was reporting that 'the people of Cornwall also possess a great degree of perspicacity and acumen; they attend to new improvements; if they find them successful, they are not slow in imitation' (Fraser, 1794, 13). And what is also noticeable here is that the qualities of the mining population were being extended to the whole population, just as the landscape of industrialisation was colouring representations of Cornwall as a whole. As the miners were now so large a proportion of the population, the inhabitants of Cornwall generally were considered all to be 'marked by peculiar features of character'. However, though labelled as peculiar, in the sense of being different, these peculiarities were themselves gendered in decidedly familiar ways. Thus, as Warner commented, 'its men are sturdy and bold, honest and sagacious; its women lovely and modest, courteous and unaffected' (Warner, 1809, 348).

Outsiders, aware of the representation of the periphery as barbarian, were inducted quickly into the locally preferable alternative. Joseph Farington seemed slightly relieved and surprised to find in 1810 that, far from having a 'savage character', as he had been led to believe, the Cornish miners were 'civil and obliging and not at all of the description supposed. Lord de Dunstanville said when assembled in bodies they are rough when moved by some occasion, but individually are sufficiently peaceable' (Greig, n.d., 133). As a result, for the majority of bourgeois visitors as well as Methodist insiders, the Cornish working class became

paragons of industrialisation, ingenious, inventive, civil, well mannered and alert. In the account by the conservative commentator J.D.Tuckett in 1846 we find the Cornish miners in particular presenting 'by many degrees the brightest picture we have met with, of the condition of any considerable body of the labouring class in England at the present day' (Tuckett, 1846, 537). By the time that J.R.Leifchild visited Cornwall in the early 1850s he could state, without too much fear of contradiction, that 'the Cornish miners hold a high rank amongst English workpeople for their general conduct' (Leifchild, 1857, 148). Representations of the miners as a barbarian race of primitives had been exchanged for an equally overdrawn opposite picture. The Cornish miners, in particular, had metamorphosed into a body that was:

> highly intelligent, compassionate, hospitable, industrious, speculative and brave. Among themselves they use the greatest familiarity, expressing their ideas without flattery or fear. On many occasions their language abounds with lively sallies of poignant wit, and their sarcasms are frequently keen and pointed, without being always low or vulgar. To strangers they are civil in a high degree: being always ready to communicate the information they desire, and sometimes they astonish those with whom they converse, by the promptitude of their replies, and the quickness of their apprehension (Hitchins and Drew, 1824, 727).

In this representation the beershops, drunken brawls and occasional rioting that continued to be part of life in the mining districts into, at least, the 1840s, faded into the background. These aspects were difficult to interpret as part of 'one of the most orderly and civilised societies in the world', as indeed were the few examples of strike action after the 1840s. And so they tended to be conveniently ignored.

Yet, paradoxically, representations of industrial civilisation and narratives of achievement required a point of origin and comparison. The older representation of

Cornwall as barbarian ‘Other’, as West Barbary, was perfectly placed to provide this. In the re-telling of the myth of industrial civilisation in the nineteenth century West Barbary became more barbarian whilst Industrial Civilisation became more civilised. Without West Barbary Industrial Civilisation could not thrive, so insiders, in particular, adopted West Barbary in retrospect and re-affirmed it as the alternative to their newly dominant industrial discourse. The image of West Barbary was one constantly referred to by insiders:

> In the scale of intellect, and in the improvements that have been made in the effects which have resulted from mental cultivation, the inhabitants of Cornwall hold out an example worthy of imitation, to those who still affect to call them the barbarians of the west ... a comparative revolution may be said to have been accomplished in the morals and manners of the inhabitants of Cornwall (Hitchins and Drew, 1824, 717 and 728).

One of the best examples of this need for insiders to re-affirm West Barbary as opposition is seen in the vigorous writings of Francis Harvey, a Cornishman from Hayle who emigrated to Natal in 1850 and wrote his autobiography in the 1860s. Harvey was a local preacher and an auctioneer who expressed, in forceful language, his sense of Cornishness. Not the least of this was his outrage at the ‘West Barbary’ image:

> More monstrous stories of the fearful doings of Cornish wreckers have been manufactured by the ‘penny-a-line dreadful accident makers’ in one London low newspaper in one winter, than ever really happened in Cornwall since the time when Noah's ark was stranded, ... [In contrast] as to the general relative moral character of Cornish men, amongst whom the too common infamies of inland English counties, such as burglaries, poachings, murders, incendiary burnings, treasonable irruptions have not been known, it is indeed a matter of just pride to be a Cornishman! (Harvey, 1867, 25).

Old traditions, new peculiarities

However, industrial virtues were only part of the emerging discourse of Cornish 'peculiarity' in the early nineteenth century. The local literate classes were casting around for other 'peculiarities', ones that were much less bound to the social relations created by industrialisation. For as well as creating new, albeit subtle, differences, industrialisation was destroying old ones. The social upheavals accompanying it seemed to many observers to be erasing old customs and producing uniformity. In 1817 Heard noted that 'these local habits which might once have been deemed unconquerable, have almost completely disappeared' (Heard, 1817). Hitchins and Drew's *History of Cornwall*, written around 1820, catalogued a long list of dying customs, from church ales to Christmas plays, from maypoles to mock mayor processions:

> In some places a few vestiges of these customs still remain; but more generally they have been so far neglected or forgotten, as to leave scarcely their original names as a memorial behind them. And even in those places where they still exist, the more enlightened grow ashamed of them, and the procession is consigned over to the conduct and management of the illiterate and vulgar ... (Hitchins and Drew, 1824, 722).

What appears to be a pattern of growing uniformity has, however, to be qualified. First, writers such as Drew were themselves writing from that dominant discourse of 'Industrial Civilisation' and Methodism that left little room for irrational pursuits. Second, when, after the mid-century, other writers turned their attention to re-discovering 'old customs' they seem to have managed to find them without too much difficulty (e.g. Bottrell, 1870; Hunt, 1871). And third, there always seemed to be new candidates for extinction, new 'differences' on the verge of dissolution (cf. Chapman, 1992, 138-139). The spirit of industry may have been

erasing differences but it was much slower in its task of creating uniformity. Merivale could still write in 1857 that:

> strong local peculiarities ... (will be) replaced by that uniformity of thought and action, and extinction of mere local influences, which seems destined to be the ultimate result of our present course of improvement ... Whatever sentimental regrets we may entertain for the past, we cannot doubt that anomalies of this kind do substantially act as so many obstacles, so much unnecessary friction, in the way of the machinery of civilisation, and that the power of combined action on the one hand, the power of human thought itself on the other, will gain enormously by their entire removal (Merivale, 1857, 328).

But the point to note here is that after at least 100 years of industrial change and the dynamic growth of mining there were still 'local peculiarities' waiting to be 'extinguished'.

Indeed, the parallel growth of regional self-assertiveness accompanying industrialisation led to increasing valorisation of these older peculiarities as well as the appropriation of new symbols of 'peculiarity', new banners around which the 'imagined Cornish community' could be proclaimed as somehow different from others. The differences were sometimes real, sometimes invented. This distinction is not perhaps as important as it might seem, as both 'real' and invented differences gave meaning to the experience of living in a particular place at a time of profound change.[1] Dellheim has shown how, by the 1860s, writers in Lancashire and Yorkshire had, in a similar way, evolved a discourse about their counties that allowed them to express a county pride. In that discourse, differentiation was

[1] The 'invention of tradition' approach took on the task of deconstructing traditions in the early 1980s (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983). But the discovery that traditions are not 'true', that they are socially constructed and have their

stressed, differentiation from southerners in general and differences between Lancashire and Yorkshire in particular (Dellheim, 1986).

In the early nineteenth century what struck outside observers was, whereas the mining industry had its own local peculiarities such as the tributing system of wage payment, it had also helped to produce a supremely rational population. Warner wrote in 1809 that 'the miners of Cornwall are free from the shackles of these terrors of the imagination' (Warner, 1809, 303). At around the same time Daniel Carless Webb concluded that the people's 'manners bear no striking difference from those of large towns in general, arising from the influx of strangers and the facility of travelling' (Webb, 1812, 132). However, fashions were changing. Merivale, writing in the mid-1850s, could still suggest that superstitions were relatively unimportant in Cornwall. In contrast to Ireland:

> Cornish superstitions have been less 'exploités' for the market, partly because less known, and partly because less attractive from what we have termed the essentially unpoetical spirit of the people, which has never invested them with any kind of legendary interest (Merivale, 1857, 325).

But his mention of the market was percipient as a market was emerging for Cornish superstitions.

Indeed, some local writers, influenced by the general fashion for Romanticism and antiquarianism, were already before mid-century representing the Cornish as superstitious. This became part of a deepening discourse of differentiation in the first half of the nineteenth century. For example, the Reverend Richard Polwhele, with his roots firmly in the small gentry class, concluded in 1806 that, because of its 'intercourse with other provinces, if (the manners) of the Cornish were in any

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own histories, is hardly profound. What is perhaps more important and more difficult is to understand the context

way peculiar, it could only have been in former ages' (Polwhele, 1806, Vol.7, 133). Yet, thirty years later, Polwhele was busy pinpointing Cornish peculiarities, from a supposed adherence to superstitions to a predilection for saffron buns. Moreover, the superstitions of Cornwall, he argued, 'assimilate in a surprising manner' to those of Scotland, Ireland and Wales (Polwhele, 1836, Vol.1, 112 and Vol.2, 163 and 8). In this Polwhele was anticipating the Anglican, Tory Celticists of the early twentieth century Cornish Revival (see Payton, 1997b).

By the 1860s, for some this romantic representation of Cornwall had become as important as the industrial representations. For example, even Max Muller, that early debunker of 'Celtic Cornwall', opened his account of 'Cornish antiquities' in 1867 with the words:

> It is impossible to spend even a few weeks in Cornwall without being impressed with the air of antiquity which pervades that county, and seems, like a morning mist, half to conceal and half to light up every one of its hills and valleys (Muller, 1867, 35).

Here, those widespread views within England of the countryside as a place of stability and a reservoir of timeless certainty, in contrast to the uncertain futures and the social problems generated in the large cities, were being applied to Cornwall. Of course, in this imagery the social changes of the countryside were absent: changes in land-ownership patterns, enclosure and rural depopulation were forgotten in the imagining of a spiritual timelessness. From such a perspective, superstitions, with their apparent link to pre-modern modes of thought, had an obvious place. And the further removed from the centre, from the heartland of rational logic, the more one was likely to meet the superstitious 'Other', pursuing

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within which new traditions were constructed and the meanings they held for the populations who adopted them.

ways of life abandoned years ago in the centre but clung to tenaciously in the 'traditional' periphery (Chapman, 1992). As such images of the timeless countryside took hold, and a nostalgic desire to preserve old ways in the face of rapid change gripped the antiquarian classes of mid nineteenth century England, the search for superstitions spread into every nook and cranny of the periphery. Despite the strength of the parallel imageries of industrialisation, Cornwall was no exception. Indeed, although superstitions and industrial imagery seem strange companions, they could still co-exist quite amicably as representations of Cornwall. For example, Robert Hunt combined a scientific interest in Cornish mining with his pursuit of customs and folk tales (Hunt, 1871 and 1887).

The Cornish language

Other 'peculiarities' were less a response to either of the demands of an outside market or dominant representations of peripheral places. For example, William Pryce appended to his largely technical treatise on mining in 1778 a list of Cornish language terms. He did this because:

> the idioms and terms of Cornish miners are mostly derived from the ancient Cornish British dialect, and therefore not easily intelligible to gentlemen unaccustomed to Mining, who may have occasion to converse or correspond with them (Pryce, 1778, i).

The Cornish language itself was a relict of a former pre-industrial society, but not something that could easily be ignored.

Although marginalised both socially and geographically since the mid-seventeenth century, the language had been used as a vernacular throughout the early modern period to the end of the eighteenth century. By the early 1700s it was

restricted to the coastal parishes of West Penwith and the Lizard, and to the poor and the older generations (Pool, 1975). Outsiders writing about Cornwall in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries would give it a passing mention and note the consequences of its loss. As we have seen Kitchen in the 1760s viewed the Cornish language as one of the three 'peculiarities' of Cornwall. But, as Warner wrote in the 1800s, 'with the disappearance of their language, the Cornish have lost almost all those provincial peculiarities in customs and amusements, which distinguished them from the inhabitants of other English counties' (Warner, 1809, 359).

Nevertheless, the Cornish language did not just disappear on the passing of the final generation of vernacular speakers in the last decades of the eighteenth century. It remained important in two ways in images of Cornwall. First, as the example of Pryce shows, it could not easily be ignored by antiquarians and writers on Cornwall in the late eighteenth century. Three decades earlier than Pryce's compilation of Cornish mining terms, William Borlase, in pursuing his explanation of the antiquities of Cornwall, had also found it necessary, for equally instrumental reasons, to acquaint himself with the meanings of placenames (Pool, 1986, 118). The fact that over 80 per cent of placenames in Cornwall, with the highest frequencies in the west, originated in the Cornish language meant that the death of the spoken language could not erase its memory. In addition, the starting point for nineteenth century writers, especially indigenous writers, was often Carew's *Survey of Cornwall*. Yet, this had been written at the very end of the sixteenth century, at a time when Cornish was still spoken widely in mid and west Cornwall and, although not himself a Cornish speaker, Carew had devoted a section of his book to the language (Carew, 1811, 150ff). Therefore, later writers were presented with

this reminder of the existence of the language. This meant that Cornish retained the potential to be employed as a factor of territorial differentiation.

The second way the language remained important was less instrumental. For example, in 1748/49 Borlase wrote that ‘it will be a kind of duty in us Cornishmen to gather together the remains of our departed language’ (Pool, 1986, 118). There is more than a hint here of the injunction almost 200 years later by the cultural revivalist Morton Nance to Old Cornwall Societies to ‘cuntelleugh an brewyon us gesys na vo kellys travyth’ (collect the fragments that remain so that none might be lost) (Nance, 1925, 3). And it was hardly for instrumental reasons that such an enthusiast for the new industrial age as Davies Gilbert arranged a series of Cornish placenames in alternate rhyming stanzas in 1828. As he commented, the sounds of the placenames, even though the meanings had largely been lost, ‘cannot fail to affect a Cornish heart with that peculiar sort of pleasing melancholy which is excited by the portrait of a dear departed friend’ (anon [Gilbert?], 1828, 199).

This was the same Davies Gilbert who had welcomed the end of the Cornish language as a colloquial vernacular in 1826: ‘no one more sincerely rejoices ... that the Cornish ... language has ceased altogether from being used by the inhabitants of Cornwall’ (Gilbert, 1827, v). Brian Murdoch regards it as curious that the ‘demise of Cornish as a language of everyday discourse was actually welcomed in some respects, especially in the nineteenth century’ (Murdoch, 1993, 142). But the curious thing is not the welcoming of the end of a spoken language that was seen as separating Cornwall from the progressive endeavours of an industrialising England. This, articulated by a progressive and outward looking bourgeoisie, was surely to be expected. The curiosity lies more in the nature of the welcoming. In Gilbert’s case the language’s demise was celebrated in an introduction to one of its

preserved texts, in the form of an edition of the last miracle play, ‘Gwreans an Bys’ [The creation of the world]. In forgetting it, it was being remembered. And in the 1820s, this remembering was taking a much more nostalgic, romantic form than the remembering of those local small gentry who, in the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, had tried self-consciously to ‘write a modern Cornish’ and preserve the fragments of what was still (just) a living, spoken language (see Murdoch, 1993, 127-142; Padel, 1975).

Thus, for insiders the language was taking on a symbolic meaning almost as soon as it had been detached from its social base. It was a local example of that nostalgia for ‘pre-industrial cultural variants’ that Langton (1984, 157) has identified. But it was also one that, in an emerging world of nation-states and nationalisms, had a potential for the mobilisation of future generations. This made it qualitatively different from the usual run of local customs.

Cornish dialect

The Cornish identity did not intersect only with language in the form of a recently deceased Celtic vernacular. Patrick Joyce identifies two roles for language in fostering group identities. First, it bears the values and ideas of the group; and second, it has itself a symbolic meaning, standing for the desires, beliefs and associations of that group (Joyce, 1991, 279). The renewed interest in the Cornish language identified above can be seen as having symbolic meaning but that language itself could no longer bear values, at least not values accessible to the vast majority of people in the early nineteenth century. For a combination of these roles - as symbol and as a carrier of ideas - we need to focus on a more relevant linguistic register, that of English dialect.

Joyce argues that in the north of England dialect literature, which emerged in the 1840s, and enjoyed its heyday from the 1860s to the 1920s, played a crucial role in constructing and elaborating the identities of working people. This literature was a continuation of the older oral tradition and ballad broadsheets, at first written by a 'literary intelligentsia' (schoolmasters, clergy and the like) but addressed to a wider audience. Moreover, in Lancashire and Yorkshire especially, the major dialect writers of the second half of the nineteenth century were themselves members of the working class or the sons (only it appears very rarely daughters) of the working class. A 'mass dialect literature' emerged, a literature of the 'working poor', in which the values of northern working class communities were played out and, of particular significance to this study, this was the means through which regional pride was expressed (Joyce, 1991, 279-301).

Outside the north, Joyce submits, dialect literature was less widespread, its writers more respectable, its themes more paternalist. In the north, 'popular ... dialect developed primarily out of the cultural resources of the working poor' (Joyce, 1991, 268). The implication is that outside these regions an extra-proletarian dialect literature represented the world of the working poor from the outside. Although many dialect writers were of Liberal and dissenting backgrounds and were sympathetic to the plight of the labouring poor, real empathy was difficult and the role of dialect literature more limited.

However, Joyce's conclusions concerning the 'extra-proletarian' dialect literature outside the north are drawn from limited sources and suffer to some extent from a failure to apply in practice his own observation that 'to a considerable extent regional diversity was more marked than is often thought' (Joyce, 1991, 312). Specifically, Cornish dialect literature is noted only in passing and then as part of a

‘westcountry’ regional framework. Having suggested that class and culture do not exist before language but are ‘actively constituted by language’ it seems strange that Joyce then takes a ‘westcountry’ region for granted (Joyce, 1991, 10, 265-268). Like other academics writing within the dominant territorial discourse, Joyce fails to differentiate Cornish dialect literature from a general rural literature, the principal themes of which concerned the small farmer and agricultural labourer.

Oddly enough, despite seeing Cornwall as a unit distinct from the ‘westcountry’, Vernon’s reading of Cornish dialect echoes that of Joyce. He prefers to emphasise its ‘reification of the peasantry as a pastoral and deeply moral people’ and its role in constructing a ‘ “primitive” folk’ as the ‘source of Cornish national identity’ (Vernon, 1998, 154-155). However, this insufficiently deconstructs both the content and the reception of dialect writings in Cornwall. In contrast, we might suggest that Cornish dialect literature, while in some respects fitting Joyce’s broad model of ‘extra-proletarian dialect literature’, actually occupied an intermediate position between the ‘high’ upper-class dialect literature of rural southern England and the ‘mass’ dialect literature of northern England.

The timing of the emergence of a popular dialect literature in Cornwall, popular in the sense of being consumed by a wide market, is remarkably similar to that outlined by Joyce for Lancashire and Yorkshire. In 1846 William Sandys, a solicitor born in London and educated at Westminster School, edited *Specimens of Cornish Provincial Dialects* under the pseudonym ‘Jan Trenoodle’. As its title suggests, this, published in London and with its introduction explaining Cornwall and its dialect to the reader, was clearly aimed at a non-Cornish audience. Most of the stories in it were actually reprints of the work of Charles Fox, who was born in 1749 in Falmouth but who died at Bath in 1809 (Boase and Courtney, 1874, 160). Fox was

a member of one of the branches of a gentry family which had considerable involvement in industrial enterprises in Cornwall and one, with its Quaker connections, somewhat marginalised from the mainstream of local landed society. Sandys' publication, however, was soon followed by the emergence of a new generation of dialect writers, the most prolific of whom were John Tabois Tregellas and William Bentinck Forfar. Tregellas was born in the mining parish of St.Agnes in 1792, became a merchant and mines purser, introducing a cast steel borer into his mines in 1848, before taking up lecturing 'on the peculiarities of the Cornish dialect' to literary and mechanics institutes across Cornwall (*WB*, 20 March 1863; Bizley, 1955, 130). His stories were published widely in the 1850s and 1860s. Forfar was a solicitor, born in Breage, another mining parish, around 1800 (Boase and Courtney, 1874, 158). Other important figures in the explosion of dialect publishing which occurred around mid-century were the brothers James and Edwin Netherton, printers and publishers at Truro. And from 1854 James Netherton began to publish *Netherton's Cornish Almanack* on an annual basis. Thus, the social origins of those involved in the early phase of Cornish dialect literature was, as Joyce and Vernon suggest, middle and upper class in status, professionals and businessmen. Some clerics were also involved, for example the Reverend Francis O'Donoghue, Irish born and incumbent of Godolphin in the early 1850s, who published *St.Knighton's Kieve, A Cornish Tale* in 1864, but none of the farmers' sons that Joyce links to rural higher class dialect writing have been identified in this study.

Nevertheless, the themes of this dialect literature had their own regional characteristics. Differences lay in the content rather than the tone of the writing which was, as elsewhere, comic and ironic, and took as its subject the events of daily life. Fox's early stories were, if anything, more realist than some of the

writings of Tregellas half a century or more later. In dualogues such as ‘Saundry Kempe and Mall Treloare’, ‘Jan Knuckey and Graacey’ or ‘Gracey Penvear and Molly Treviskey’ the characters discuss the day to day details of employment and personal relations, the quality of ore, the violent and drunken husband (see Trenoodle, 1846, 22-26, 38-42, 43-46). Some of Tregellas’ writings are more obviously comic caricature, as in ‘The St.Agnes Bear Hunt’ and the ‘Perran cherrybeam’ and are clearly aimed at entertaining a lecture audience (Tregellas, 1853). However, the ‘gullible fools’ of these stories, a device that no doubt fed on the intense parochialism of community rivalries within Cornwall, are also joined by the ‘wise fools’, a common motif of dialect writing. In the title story of *The Adventures of Rozzy Paul and Zacky Martin* (1853) Tregellas tells the tale of two illiterate miners who go to London to give evidence at an election lawsuit. Their earthy and direct manners lead to a series of mishaps when they arrive in London.

The pretensions of London society are contrasted with the injured pride, but also stubborn independence, of the two heroes. Finally, inevitably, the wise fools win the day. They go to Parliament

> And made the folk with laughter roar;
> How brazen barristers were vex'd,
> And lawyers with their words perplex'd;
> Suffice to say, they gained the case,
> And bragging Bullion lost his place (Tregellas, 1853).

Rozzy Paul and Zacky Martin were miners, as were the majority of the characters who appear in early and mid nineteenth-century Cornish dialect literature. Fox’s earlier stories more often than not also took miners as their subjects and stories are littered with mining terms even if miners are not the

ostensible subjects. William Bentinck Forfar's first published story in 1850 was also titled, significantly, '"The Bal" or "Tes a bra keenly lode"' (Forfar, 1850).

These stories, dense with mining references, reinforced the connections of the industry with the region. Just as dialect literature in Lancashire concentrated on the textile industry so did dialect in Cornwall focus on mining. The interests of mining were identified with the interests of Cornwall. Indeed, it was, according to Sandys in the 1840s, only 'in the mining districts' and other 'parts most remote from traffic and intercourse with strangers' that the 'Cornish provincial dialect' was 'to be heard in its full richness' (Trenoodle, 1846, 1). It was not therefore, a pastoral peasantry who were being reified by Cornish dialect writings, as Vernon (1998, 155) claims, but a mining 'folk' community.

The mining communities were thus at the centre of dialect literature in its early period. That literature, through ignoring real variations in spoken dialect within Cornwall (see Trudgill, 1990), helped to construct a uniform region where mining was the ascendant and inescapable presence. Regional pride crystallised around the idea of a local monopoly of mining knowledge. In Tregellas's tale 'The London Director, Hannibal Hollow, at Wheal Blue Bottle', the subject of the story visits a Cornish mine and, because he does not understand the dialect, ends up completely confused (Tregellas, 1857a, 29-43). The frontispiece of the booklet reinforces the message:

> When copper and tin no longer are found,
> And Owld Gwennap lodes turn up no more ore,
> When London directors do work underground,
> Oh then, Captain Stephen, love mining no more (Tregellas, 1857a).

Only the Cornish knew how to mine: outsiders, particularly London investors, were the gullible fools soon to be parted from their money as the insiders surveyed the

industry with a confidence born of practical knowledge. Here is something more then the ‘wise fool’ of the dialect stories. This is the knowledgeable expert expressing local pride and independence.

These stories, which welded representations of Cornwall and the Cornish to the mining industry, reached a considerable audience. John Tregellas’ booklet *The adventures of Rozzy Paul and Zacky Martin* went through seven printings in the three years after its publication at Penzance in 1853. *The humorous adventures of a Cornish miner at the Great Exhibition* by Jimmy Trebilcock (a pseudonym), printed at Camborne in the heart of the mining district in 1862, sold at least 5,000 copies within two years (Boase and Courtney, 1874, 1012). Given a far smaller potential market this suggests sales of a magnitude much higher than those dialect journals and prose works Joyce cites in Lancashire, which regularly reached 10,000 copies in the 1850s and 1860s (Joyce, 1991, 264).

Cornish dialect literature in the 1850s and 1860s can thus be regarded as a mass literature although it was not at this stage a working class literature. It was only later that working class authors appeared (see Thomas, 1893) but by then the literature was more restricted to particular districts and social domains in Cornwall. It remains to be explained why Cornish dialect literature occupied this intermediate position in the 1850s, a mass literature but without working class authors. Joyce suggests that dialect literature helped manage the disruption caused by social change by emphasising links to the past and to notions of traditional plebeian culture (Joyce, 1991, 281-282). But it also required a sufficient degree of literacy to support a commercial market as well as the means to produce and disseminate cheap published material.

We might speculate that in Cornwall the period of most intense change - in the eighteenth century and early decades of the nineteenth - preceded the emergence of a sufficiently literate market. And perhaps there was less space for dialect literature when we consider the hegemonic role played by Methodism, especially in mining communities. As we shall see in chapter 9, it might be suggested that Methodism, rather than, or in addition to, dialect, fulfilled the function of continuity in the face of change. Dialect, of course, had a role here, but it was a spoken dialect, in the form of the exuberant sermons of the scores of lay preachers who were scattered across Cornwall, that met the need for continuity before the 1840s. And, by the time a market for dialect literature and the technology that allowed cheap production and distribution had emerged, another factor was working against the creation of working class authors. By the 1840s mass emigration had begun, removing potential authors out of the orbit of the localism that dialect literature thrived on. It is no coincidence that one of Tregellas' best selling stories was that of 'Hecky Retchatts and Marky Daniels' who, in a number of versions in the late 1850s, pursue their adventures to the New World (Tregellas, 1857b, 1859). While concentrated on mining, the horizons of Cornish dialect literature were drawn towards the global labour market that accompanied mining. This, if nothing else, makes Cornish dialect literature difficult to classify easily in terms of Joyce's 'high' and 'mass' forms of dialect literature.

If the peculiarities presented by Cornwall's mining economy and Methodist culture go some way towards explaining the rather different role of dialect literature in imaginations of the region, the Cornish language added yet another difference. The first edition of Netherton's *Cornish Almanack*, published in 1854, contained five dialect stories along with, among other things, a selective list of 'historical events'

and lists of banks, copper ore ticketings, mechanics and literary institutions and fairs. But also, significantly, it contained over six pages about the Cornish language, including meanings (sometimes rather fanciful) of placenames and specimens of the 'ancient Cornish language', including the names of months, numbers, proverbs and sayings (see Netherton, 1854). So, in this journal aimed at a popular readership readers were being re-presented with the Cornish dialect at the same time as being re-introduced to the Cornish language. This suggests that, even at this early stage, the region and its people were not being imagined solely in terms of a dialect literature that looked to past continuities but via a language that had its roots even further in the past. These images prefigured the similar, and sometimes uneasy, combination of dialect and language that marked the Old Cornwall movement of the inter-war period (see *Old Cornwall*, 1921-39).

Conclusion

Out of the embers of an ethnic identity based on a distinct language, an identity that had occupied a residual status since the 1650s (see Scawen, in Gilbert, 1838, pp.194ff.), there emerged in the final decades of the eighteenth century a reformulated identity. While there was some overlap with the earlier sense of identity, this revised territorial identity rested centrally on the symbols of Cornwall's industrial experience.

In this chapter we have seen how a dominant ideology of Cornwall as 'industrial civilisation' had emerged by the 1840s, ordered, religious, temperate, one that rested on the three central representations of 'independence', 'one and all' and 'enterprise'. However, this ideology also required the opposition of West Barbary in order to emphasise the transformation through which the Cornish people had

passed. Assertions of identity rested on the achievements of mining and representations that were based on features inherent to that industry. The popularity of dialect stories in the 1840s and 1850s was one symptom of that. While dialect literature written by working people had not emerged on the lines of the industrial regions of northern England the wide appeal of this literature ensured that Cornwall was imagined through the icons of mining and the manners of the mining population.

This suggests that the Cornish identity of the early nineteenth century was one primarily forged in the crucible of industrialisation, rather than remoteness (cf. Ardener, 1987, 50). And it was one in which, as Langton suggests, insiders were actively involved (Langton, 1984). Unlike the deconstruction of the 'Celtic' identity that Chapman (1992) presents, where the main actors are outsiders imposing a romantic identity upon a basically passive population, we have, in this particular periphery, an example of an actively asserted territorial identity. And this merged into a more general cultural process, involving an interest in old traditions and superstitions at the very point at which they were seen as under threat and on the verge of disappearance. But in searching for old traditions people encountered the more unique local aspects of the Cornish language and the institutional structures and customs associated with mining. Eventually, in confronting these, insiders and outsiders would put radically different interpretations on them. However, for a period, in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, where the dominant representation of Cornwall was that of 'industrial civilisation', insider and outsider representations of Cornwall were closer together than at any time since. We have now identified some representations of Cornwall and its people. The next chapter

attempts the more difficult task of assessing the intensity of feeling for the place called Cornwall and explores further the territorial consciousness of its inhabitants.