

Anglo-Cornish in *The Siege of Trencher's Farm* and *Straw Dogs*

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Introduction

This essay aims to focus firstly on the typical features of Cornish dialect, also called Anglo-Cornish, Cornish English or Cornu-English (the variety of English spoken in Cornwall) and then on how those typicalities are rendered in Gordon William's novel *The Siege of Trencher's Farm* (1969). One of the two film versions, *Straw Dogs* (1971) by Sam Peckinpah, will be later analysed in order to see if and to what extent these regional characteristics are preserved.

The more recent movie *Straw Dogs* (2011), although no less interesting from a linguistic point of view, will not be discussed here as it replaces the original Cornish setting with the Southern United States in the attempt to turn the original USA/(rural/regional) UK divide into a Nothern US/Southern US divide, reshaping and reconfiguring the original "linguistic otherness" embodied by the Cornish accent.

1. Anglo-Cornish

1.1. Grammatical features

With regard to grammatical features of Anglo-Cornish, one of the most distinctive is pronoun exchange, namely, the usage of subject pronouns instead of object pronouns and vice versa.

I did give *she* a 'and and she did give *I* a 'and and we did 'elp one another (Beal, 2010: 42)

Back over here, my old uncle, he brung *I* up (Filppula, Klemola, Paulasto, 2008: 106)

Well, *her* couldn't go on with the farming, *her* sold out (*Ivi*, 107)

Us didn't have no stores or nothing of that then in they days (*Ivi*, 108)

This characteristic was first believed by Ihalainen (1994: 231) to 'divide the country up in an east-west direction', but in later years Trudgill (1999: 95) and Beal (1993, 2004) have pointed out that it occurs in Essex as well as in North-East, although it is generally acknowledged to be more frequent and marked in the South-West (Beal 2010: 42).

According to Wakelin (1977: 114-115), the exchange is due to the speaker's wish to place a special emphasis on the pronoun. This idea, however, is still open to discussion. An exception to such a rather widespread phenomenon seems to be the usage of *me* in subject position at the beginning of a sentence (Filppula, Klemola, Paulasto 2008: 108). Nonetheless it should be noticed that although using *us*, *him/her* or *them* in subject position generally sounds regional, the use of *me* following *and* even when it is one of the subjects is becoming increasingly common even in what ought to be regarded as correct English, so much so that the Oxford Dictionaries website has an article explaining when *I* or *me* should be employed (<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/usage/i-or-me>). Instances of blurring between *I* and *me* can be found in spoken English, in the ever-present *you and me* of pop songs as well as in ads.

The water, the earth, the sun and *me* (2017 Dior slogan)

This might lead us to conclude that pronoun exchange is neither a new nor an extraordinary phenomenon in English. Besides, as Cornish has retained the old distinction for second person pronoun *thou/you*, the object-form *thee* may be sometimes utilised where the subjective *thou* should be used (often in the shortened form 'ee). Sometimes inconsistent question tags may indicate a slight degree of uncertainty on which pronoun should be used or a conscious wish to stick to the traditional *thou/thee* form while being unable to resist to the general language standardization represented by *you*.

They speak posh; *you* caan't speak rough, can 'ee? [*ee=thee*] (Elmes 2005: 9)

Despite being a recessive feature, the conservation of second person singular *thou* as opposed to second person plural *you* is emblematic of a tendency in Cornish English to retain words and expressions which are nowadays seen as 'archaisms', sometimes dating back to Middle English or even Old English. Arguably, this is due to the fact that this area was not ruled by the Danish prior to the Norman conquest and conservativeness of certain linguistic traits has therefore been facilitated. As a matter of fact, Elam (1986: 104) stresses that in Shakespeare a tendency to use nominative form in object position and the other way round exists, possibly because of the confusion and the uncertainty following the loss

of the declension system. It is not altogether clear, however, whether it was already perceived as a vernacular 'mistake' or it was more or less acceptable.

I would wish me only *he* (*Coriolanus*, 1.1.)

Shall's [s=us] to the Capitol? (*Coriolanus*, 4.6.)

Another recurring feature is the pronoun *en*, a typical southwestern element, i. e., an oblique form of the masculine third person singular pronoun, which is believed to derive from Old English *hine* (*Ivi*, 114).

Sep Smith or Peg Smith. [...] Nobody couldn't beat *en*. (Filppula, Klemola, Paulasto, 2008: 108)

It is worth considering that this pronoun may be applied not only to men, but also to inanimate entities, as in the South-West inanimate countable nouns are linguistically treated as being masculine, whereas for uncountable nouns, which are always neuter, the much more standard *it* is employed.

I said "Well, I'm on the six to two next week. I'll come home one day and sweep the chimney" [He] said, "How art going to sweep *en*? (*Ibid*).

I bet thee cansn climb *he* [the tree] (Beal 2010: 43)

Wagner (2008) posits that this genderisation of inanimate referents is particularly pervasive in Cornwall.

Concerning the verb *be*, *am*, frequently shortened to '*m*', is often used for all person pronouns in the present tense except for third person singular (Elmes 2005: 9).

We'*m* livn on the moors! [...] we think they'*m* a bit thick! I'ss a bit loik two cans a pain'. (*Ibid*.)

Especially in Eastern Cornwall, however, *be* could also be utilised for all person pronouns in the present tense along with its negative correspondent *bain't*. This is a hardly surprising characteristic if one compares it with the usage of *be* present tense in Shakespeare.

Aw he's cutt'n' up - try'n' t'be a bi' bigg'r'n I *be* (*Ivi*, 9)

I said, 'Hold on, *bain't* 'ee going [to] give I [I=a] bit of a badge or something to show I *bain't* no jibber? (Wakelin 1986: 169)

Where is thy husband now? Where *be* thy brothers? (*Richard III*, 4.4.)

With regard to the past tense, *were* might be used instead of *was* and vice versa (this is also common in several other dialects). *It was* is often shortened to Elizabethan-sounding *twas*, *it wasn't* to *twoddn*.

Periphrastic *do*, i. e., the unstressed usage of auxiliary *do* as opposed to emphatic use in Standard English, may be common with certain speakers. This is another feature that is occasionally believed to be ascribable to a Celtic substratum or to be the result of Celtic-English contact. It is a fact that periphrastic *do* was rather current in the 16th century, although Stein (1992: 47) shows that initially it belonged to courtly speech and was a style marker for the Euphuistic style. Its usage decreased at the beginning of the 17th century together with the rise of the middle class and the gentry. In any case, the retainance of it might be seen as the preservation of an ancient feature of the English language. The following examples show that in both cases (especially the first one) there would be no need to place a special emphasis on the facts described, thus confirming that auxiliary *do* is not deployed emphatically as it would be in Standard English.

William, my son, *do* live down there (Wagner 2008: 435)

She *did* do a lot of needlework (*Ibid.*)

The use of *like* as a 'filler', despite being looked down on today as a marker of teenage slovenly speech, is far from being a recent feature in a number of dialects. However, it has been observed that older speakers are inclined to place *like* at the end of the sentence and employ it, however frequently, in a less 'approximative' way.

Becuz 'ey 'ear us wiv our accen' they fink we've go' nothin' between our earrs, *like* [...]

And tha'ss wha'ss 'app'nin to arr language, *like* (Elmes 2005: 9)

'so she comes into the room and she's *like* 'Where is everybody?' (Oxford Dictionaries adverb 2.2.)

As can be gathered from these examples, in the first two sentences, 'like', despite not immediately preceding the object, is basically still used as "in the manner of; in the same way or to the same degree as" (Oxford Dictionaries 1.1.), where in the third sentence it is

utilised to get across the general attitude of somebody while not really quoting his or her words and the analogy is less straightforward, implying that somebody is behaving as if they could potentially say or think those words.

Articles may be omitted or employed irregularly (with proper names, for example). Regarding demonstrative pronouns, *they* might be utilised instead of *those*. Elmes also reports (2005: 9) that "go to *they*" is more common than "go to them", thus showing that *they* may replace both Standard English *those* and *them*. Although this seems inconsistent at first sight, it becomes perfectly understandable if one takes into account the fact that in many regional variants *those* is replaced by *them*. Consequently, *they* may be here simply regarded as the local variant of *them*.

Us didn't have no stores or nothing of that then in *they* days (Filppula, Klemola, Paulasto, 2008: 108)

Other more regionally widespread features such as double negation or failure to have a special present tense form ending in *-s* for the third person singular pronoun are also to be found in Anglo-Cornish.

Sep Smith or Peg Smith. [...] *Nobody couldn't* beat en (*Ibid.*)

He *do* go now. He 'ave ['ave=have] been a good watch (Wagner 2008: 425)

The *-s* ending, though, is sometimes used for third person plural.

I think they *thinks* we're a bi' thick somtaams [...] (Elmes 2005: 9)

1.2. Pronunciation patterns

Cornish English, a rhotic dialect, is characterised by a marked *r*, quite appropriately transcribed as *rr* and metaphorically described as 'a thick stratum running right through the granite of Cornish dialect' by Elmes (*Ibid.*). In regard to other consonants, unvoiced consonants are often voiced, thus turning *t* into *d*, *p* into *b* and *f* into *v*.

As is often the case with English dialects, differences in the pronunciation of vowels are pivotal. While short *i* and the *eh* sound in *there* may sound like *uh* (similarly to the *u* in *Hull*), in other cases *i* might be sounded like *e* as in *west*. The *eye* sound in *dive* becomes more like a long *aa*.

H-dropping, namely, the deletion of the aspirate sound *h*, a somewhat geographically extensive albeit once stigmatised phenomenon, appears to be virtually the norm in Cornish English. In addition to the *h* sound, sometimes the *t* preceding it is also erased, thus turning, for instance, *thee* to 'ee or *they* to 'ey. *T* in final position is also frequently deleted.

Aw he's 'cutt'n' up - try'n' t'be a *bi'* bigg'r 'n [*n= than*] I be, yuh know, bi' posher like!
(*Ibid.*)

Sometimes even regular English expressions undergo a rather significant change in pronunciation. For instance, even though at first sight *ennuh* might look reminiscent of *innit*, it is actually the Cornish variant of *you know*.

'S like the gutt'rin on yuh roof, *ennuh* (*Ivi*, 8).

1.3. Lexis

As Wakelin (1977: 128-9) pointed out, Anglo-Cornish has also retained a number of Cornish words, such as *crow* 'sty', *bannell* 'broom', *fuggan* 'a kind of pastry flavoured with raisins', *gook* 'bonnet worn by female labourers', *griglans* 'heather', *groushans* 'dregs', *gurgoe* 'warren', *hoggan* 'pastry-cake', *kewny* 'rancid', *padgy-pow*, also spelled '*pajer paw*' (literally 'four-feet') 'newt', *rab* 'gravel', *scaw* 'elder tree', *stank* 'to walk, trample, step (on, in)', *tidden* 'tender' and *whidden* 'weakling of a litter of pigs'. The latter, however, is mostly found in West Cornwall, while in East Cornwall *nestle-bird* or *nestle-drish* is utilised. Besides, whilst the Cornish word *muryan* for 'ant' is used in West Cornwall, the Old English term *emmet* is predominant in East Cornwall (notice that this is also used as a derogatory term for an annoying tourist or someone who has moved to Cornwall from another part of the country). Elmes also mentions the term *launder*, originally referring to 'a wooden or steel trough used to carry water', which has taken on the general meaning of 'any form of guttering' (2005: 8).

2. Anglo-Cornish in fiction

2.1. *The Siege of Trencher's Farm*

The novel revolves around George Magruder, an American professor moving with his family to the fictitious village of Dando, in Cornwall, with a view to completing an essay about a 18th-century British writer. The isolation and the resulting diffidence of the locals towards strangers are outlined from the very beginning of the book and continue to play a pivotal role throughout the text.

In the same year that Man first flew to the Moon and the last American soldier left Vietnam there were still corners of England where lived men and women who had never travelled more than fifteen miles from their own homes. [...] Cut off from the rest of that side of the country by low hills and served by roads no wider than a single motor car, the farmers and villagers had over the years come to regard themselves more and more as being apart from other people. [...] The men of Dando [...] had been apart for a thousand years and more and when the outside world threatened them and their land they knew best the strength of their own apartness (*TSTF*, 6-8).

To them a Londoner was a foreigner - an American might as well be from outer space. (*Ivi*, 12).

But a yank was different. He was an intruder (*Ivi*, 23).

Some of the locals are perfectly aware of their distinctiveness and much as some of the prejudices about them appear to be a bit off, they are almost willing to justify them.

In the army, when he told them where he came from, they'd make jokes about inbreeding and incest and such things and he could understand why the outside world would think that about the West Country. (*Ivi*, 22).

The second chapter starts off by pointing out at the increasing conflict between George and his British wife Louise because of, as we might call them, "cultural differences", which get amplified by the environment. Several passages bear witness to how both spouses are perfectly conscious of them. Especially Louise grows more and more intolerant of certain typically American traits, almost as if the mood and the mindset of her fellow contrymen worked on her and affected her thought patterns. On his part, George gradually begins to develop a similar hostility towards the villagers and England in general.

For a man who was thirty-five and did nothing more strenuous than walk and swim he thought he was in pretty fair shape.

"It's my morning walk that does it," he said to Louise [...]. She seemed bored. "I know you think I'm silly, my routines and all, but it isn't as silly as you think. [...]"

For a long time he'd been sure the difference in their nationalities was of no significance, but in the three months they'd been living here at Trencher's Farm she'd changed, somehow. Had she ever felt like a stranger in the States? He was sure she goddamn well had not, but he certainly was beginning to feel like a stranger here in England [...] (*Ivi*, 11).

In Philadelphia [...] she had never thought of him as anything but a normal husband; now that they'd been living in England for three months she could see things about him, *American* things. [...] He took the *stupidest* things seriously. Like his weight. [...] He didn't smoke - of course. Impeccable, that was it about Americans, they had a neurotic fixation on health and hygiene (*Ivi*, 17).

[...] he was typically American, anything that upset his *wonderful* home and their *wonderful* relationship came as a deep shock. She often thought that every tiff they had was in some way an insult to the American way of life (*Ivi*, 35).

How often in arguments back home had [George] used the B.B.C. as an example of public-interest broadcasting? Now it sounded like a third-rate copy of the worst kind of American huckstering. [...] Nothing like jolly old British to tell you the obvious. They probably made up their weather forecasts by looking out of the window (*Ivi*, 44).

George is also baffled by the inconsistent mixture of civilisation and apparent primevalness of English culture, as he ends up judging a whole country by his impressions of a Cornish village and the way in which the mentally insane are treated in Dando.

He was learning a lot about the English. For one thing they were not the cosy little islanders they were pictured in the States. [...] One of the impressions he had gathered was of an unsuspected brutality. When he looked at the cold slopes of Torn Hill he thought of the big, prison-like building which stood beyond it; [...] he could never believe that a people who had split the atom and produced Robert Graves could be primitive enough to put their mentally sick in a place like Two Waters. [...]"

The English, he often thought, could yield to no people in their ability to accept various manifestations of unconscious barbarity... (*Ivi*, 16).

After George's first visit to the Dando Inn pub, the inhabitants of the village widely comment on his "Americanness" and his privileged position in a place where most of the people live in dire conditions. Regional features in the dialogue are italicised.

They [...] knew who he was, the rich yank who'd rented Trencher's [...]. The ones who had been in the army didn't like Americans for they knew that Americans were loudmouths with fat bellies and a yellow streak down their backs a yard wide. [...]

"*They'm* yanks *be* takin' over the whole world," [Tom Hedden] said [...]. "How does '*ee* afford Trencher's then, what they'*m* say the rent *be*, Norman?"

"Twelve guinea a week, I hear. More '*n* [=than] some folk get for feedin' [*absence of the article*] whole family."

[...] "I don't get twelve in my wages, do I?" said Philip Riddaway, who took his time about entering conversations.

"That's because you'*m* thick, Phil," said Norman. "*Them* yanks *aint* thick, they'*m* richer '*n* you nor I'll ever be. You see his wife, then? Cor, Phil, she'd give you a good time, you dirty big booger."

[...] "*Aye*, it's all right for *them* yanks, bein' rich *like*," said Tom Hedden. "*Us* got to scratch for the price of a pint '*r* [=or] two." (*Ivi*, 14).

The usage of both '*m* [=am] and *be* replacing Standard English *are* and *is* can be observed. The more colloquial shortening *aint/ain't* is also used instead of *aren't*. Demonstratives *them* and *they'm* (apparently a sort of fusion between *they* and *them*) are regularly used instead of *those*.

Elisions are frequent, including some which are more widespread in English (*takin'*, *feedin'*, *bein'*) and others which are more typical of Anglo-Cornish, such as '*n* [than] or '*r* [or]. Pronoun exchange (*us* substituting *we* in subject position) is also present, as well as *like* as a 'filler' at the end of an utterance.

The absence of an article preceding *whole family* is consistent with what has been described as irregular usage of articles in the dialect. The more archaic and regional *aye* is also employed in place of *yes*. In Standard English *aye* may refer to an affirmative vote, while *aye aye* or *aye aye, sir* are regularly used to respond affirmatively to a superior in naval language. The use of *aye/ay* as a general substitute for *yes*, however, is still common nowadays in Scotland, as well as in Cornwall, Ireland, North Wales and more generally in northern England.

If one compares the passage analysed with the above examples of real Cornish English, it becomes evident that the dialogue in the book looks and, as a matter of fact, is

rather easier to understand than real English Cornish. Nonetheless, not a few features of the dialect are preserved in order to give a sense of it. At least one of George's remarks on local speech makes it clear to the reader that the literary rendering is not meant to be thoroughly faithful, as the *real* dialect is far more obscure, but rather to imitate it while still being largely comprehensible.

The men looked like farm-workers. The one with the sideboards looked at Niles and said something to the other two, George didn't catch what he said, the local dialect was beyond him (*Ivi*, 61).

Anyway, it should be noted that most of the "respectable" inhabitants of Dando seem to actually speak Standard English, as if the dialect also served the purpose to highlight a low level of education as well as a certain degree of threatening "otherness" in the speakers. This "otherness" is immediately recognised by George both as a stumbling block to sociality and a lurking menace and it could be argued that one of its main signposts is language/dialect. Dialect, in effect, is widely employed during the climax of the book, as a group of deranged locals led by drunk armed Tom Hedden try to break into Trencher's Farm, namely, George's house, in order to retrieve and kill runaway murderer Henry Niles, as they take for granted that he's responsible for the disappearance and alleged murder of Hedden's little girl Janice. George makes it a point to protect Niles as he realises that at the time being not only is Niles probably innocent and cannot defend himself, but he's also altogether unable to harm anybody.

"Us want that Niles" [...]

"Us'll burn the bloody house down if us don't get him" (*Ivi*, 70).

"Mibbe [=Maybe] us oughter [=ought to] clear off, Norman," [...] (*Ivi*, 71).

"Us want to get into the house and get Niles without that yank seein' us like," [...]

"Aye, you'm be a bloody burglar, Norman," said Chris Cawsey, "you'm show us how to get into her [the house]" (*Ibid.*).

"All right then. Us stick together. Folk in Dando *won't* be tellin' the cops *nothin'*. They *ain't* goin' to take their sides against us, are they?" (*Ivi*, 87).

"Give I [=me] the gun, give I the gun," he suddenly yelled [...] (*Ivi*, 103).

In the extracts above, in addition to the features already discussed, dialectal pronunciation of certain words (*Mibbe*, *oughter*), double negation (*won't...nothin'*) and even genderisation of inanimate referents (*her*=the house) can be observed. It is the elderly, however, who traditionally speak a more ancient and purer version of the dialect.

In the following passage, the words of a man confessing a heinous crime echo in his son's mind.

Bert Voizey's father had been one of the men who'd hacked the soldier's head off in the field. Bert had always guessed this, but it wasn't till the old man was dying that he'd started to talk about it.

Us all done him, 'e deserved her[=it], us niver told nobody... any man talkt an' us'll do him, sure enuff... (*Ivi*, 101).

Whilst common Cornish English features recur (pronoun exchange, double negation, *h-* and *th-*deletion, genderisation in *'e deserved her*) other more marked features are also present, such as standard past simple *did* being replaced by *done*, regional *talkt* in place of standard *talked* and a more quaint syntactic structure in the last sentence (meaning "if anyone had talked, we would have killed him, sure enough").

George is ultimately forced to use both brutal force and intelligence to stop the locals from harming his family and Niles. The day after, while reporting the events to a policeman, he thinks of the assailants' names.

Cawsey, Voizey, Scutt and Riddaway. He could even say their names in a local accent. He repeated them over and over again in his mind. Like a line of poetry, an old ballad maybe. Their names would become famous. Four mean heading for gaol. [...]
A terrible event had taken place, lives lost and ruined. Why? He had come as a total stranger, into a life and place he didn't even begin to understand. (*Ivi*, 129).

The cultural divide between George and the Cornish/English remains therefore one of the key issues, the driving force behind the nightmarish events he has been through.

2.2. *Straw Dogs* (1971)

Far better known than the book it is based on, *Straw Dogs* renames the spouses David and Amy Sumner, the latter being not simply English, but Cornish herself and a

native of Dando. This makes it easier for the viewers to understand how the environment affects her attitude and her mood. As the movie displays several other changes and additions, the plot is a bit more complex and the characters appear to be more subtly drawn. To mention only a few of the differences, David is here a mathematician leaving the US partly to dodge the Vietnam draft, some of the locals are invited by the couple to Trencher's Farm to make some repairs, so that David and Amy get better acquainted with their future assailants, and Niles, despite looking harmless at first sight, is actually guilty of killing the child. One addition in particular, namely, the rape of Amy by her former boyfriend, but also the graphic scenes towards the ending made the film controversial, as some critics saw it as an apology of machism and violence.

With respect to Anglo-Cornish, only very seldom do features which are specific of the dialect come up in the movie. For instance, when the workmen call it a day and are ready to leave Trencher's Farm (at about 18:52), one of them says to David:

Uh, we're leavin' now, Mr Sumner. Mr Riddaway *be* givin' us a lift.

One of the songs the workmen start singing on another occasion, apparently a piece of northwestern band The Wurzels, also contains the same feature:

Where *be* the blackbird... (35:39)

Besides, Tom Hedden uses twice periphrastic *do* when ironically apologising to the Dando Inn bartender and then to the local magistrate.

I *do* beg your pardon, Mr Harry Ware. (06:42)

I *do* beg your pardon, Mr Magistrate (07:56)

Apart from these few examples, however, there are almost no traces of specific grammatical features of Cornish English. This is hardly surprising as the dialogues had to be immediately understood by as wide an English-speaking audience as possible. Furthermore, the sound dimension of the movie allows the spectator to *hear* how starkly different David's American pronunciation and the locals' English sound, and, as a result, there is less need to emphasise that difference in terms of morphosyntactic features. Still, alongside a more or less marked Cornish pronunciation, regional features which are more widespread as well as features of informal speech are often used in order to give a sense of authentic spoken language.

In a scene which is rather paradoxical in the light of the violent attitude of the locals later on, two of the workmen inquire whether David has ever been a witness of violence in the street in the US (at about 12:02).

Chris: I hear it's pretty rough in the States, sir. 'uuhve you seen some of't, sir? Bomb'n', *raah'tin'* [rioting], *snipin'*, *shoot'n'* the blacks? Can't walk down the streets, they say, Norman.

Norman: Was you involved in it, sir? I mean, did you take part?

Chris: Seen anybody get *knaahv'd?* [knifed]

David: [short pause] ... Just between commercials.

While *was* in lieu of *were* is, as we have seen, typical of different dialects, and the deletion of generic *you* before *can't walk down the streets* is reminiscent of spoken language, at least the way in which *knifed* and *rioting* are pronounced by Chris match with the pronunciation patterns of Cornu-English, with *f* being replaced by *v*, the *eye* sound in *riot* and *knifed* sounding a bit like *aah*, and the *eh* sound in *have* pronounced as *uuh*. On the whole, Norman seems to speak a less marked variant, arguably because he is younger than Chris.

On one occasion, Tom Hedden also uses dialectal *meself* instead of Standard English *myself*.

Tell her I'm behavin' *meself*. I'll be along soon. (37:55)

Some instances of right dislocation come up as well now and then. Where in other languages right dislocation may be occasionally seen as an alternative, usage of the structure in English is much more marked as it is far rarer and usually limited to very informal and regional speech. In the second and third samples right dislocation sounds even more bizarre and unnatural as it does not really help disambiguate the subject's referent, but it rather seems to work as an emphasiser ("how rare/small they are!", "they are really rare/small!").

What I am, I am. (08:07)

It's a real antique, sir. *Rare, they are.* (11:47)

We'll beat the *docks* [ducks] right *t'yuh* [to you]. *Small, they are.* (54:08)

A bawdy song sung by the locals at the Dando Inn pub has -s ending for third person plural:

Now, some men goes for women/ And some men goes for boys/ But my love's warm and beautiful/ and makes a baa-in' noise (40:00)

Furthermore, words which are distinctly British like *lads*, *bob* [shilling] or *bleeding/bloody* (as opposed to American English *damn/damned*) are employed.

Bloody early, Harry. (06:14)

And I'll even pay for the little bit of plaster to put on your *bleedin'* finger. (07:01)

You *bloody* fool. (13:12)

It's *bloody* heavy. (46:26)

Let's call it... 30 *bob*. (8:11)

Come on, *lads*. Work to be done. (8:33)

I showed him, eh, *lads*? (8:45)

In the sixth of the previous sentences, the deletion of *there's* before *work to be done* might be also considered another feature of informal speech. In the following sample, it is not clear whether *it* and Standard English -s ending are dropped (*It bites*) or a periphrastic *do* structure is implicit (*It does bite*).

Bite, sir. (49:18) [talking about an ancient mantrap]

Regardless of these minor elements, the variety of English spoken by the inhabitants of Dando is rather close to standard British English. Whilst Cornish English in the book was already largely diluted in comparison to real dialect, the film seems to mostly rely on pronunciation and capitalise on few regional features which do not impair comprehension and are not exclusively typical of Anglo-Cornish.

Conclusions

Although this analysis was not meant to be exhaustive, it has shown that in *The Siege of Trencher's Farm* Gordon Williams seeks to reproduce a number of grammatical and lexical features of Anglo-Cornish. While representation cannot completely match reality

for several reasons, not a few passages prove that Cornish English is rendered rather accurately in the book. The fact that there is very little referring to pronunciation has probably to do with the difficulty of establishing a spelling norm for dialects. Another reason for giving up pronunciation might be that even though reading, unlike watching a movie, allows one more time to focus on the dialogue and words in general, reading dialect or what is supposed to sound like dialect is not particularly easy nor enjoyable for all prospective readers.

The movie seems to compensate this loss by making the best of the added dimension of sound and presenting the audience with different accents. Due to this, what in the book was embodied by morphosyntactic features is now conveyed through pronunciation and minor regional features which serve the purpose to give a general idea of a non-standard supra-regional British English. Besides, the visual dimension must not be underrated, as it enables the audience to *see* the setting and the characters, thus minimising the need for a regionally connoted English defining both environment and characters. As a matter of fact, the reader may have a more or less precise idea of how a rural village and a small community in Cornwall may look, sound or feel, or even no idea at all. Consequently, this kind of information is also conveyed through language in the original text. Conversely, a film allows the spectators to almost experience what they are watching and, as a result, a movie needs to rely on dialogue to a lesser extent.

In a nutshell, *The Siege of Trencher's Farm* and *Straw Dogs* seem to make up for each other's drawbacks, as both of them concur to enrich and complete a linguistic picture.

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