

Heteroglossia in Cornish Language Literature – the uniqueness of Enys Tresour

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Mikhail Bakhtin was both a renowned semiotician but also a literary analyst. His concepts of heteroglossia, dialogism, chronotope and the carnivalesque have been applied to many literary classics such as the works of Dostoevsky. The concept of heteroglossia is of particular use when analysing the role of multi-vocal, multilingual variations within a single language hence the Greek etymology hetero- “different” and glōssa language. This concept normally encompasses dialect, patios, and speech patterns of foreign nationals using another language e.g. Yiddish’s influence on New York slang etc. Within the work of Enys Tresour we find not a cultural invariance in a language but a historical invariance in the dialectic between the Modern Cornish (Kernuack Nowedga) of the pirates and the Standard Cornish (Kernowek Standard) of the other characters and the narrator. This is a unique example of how heteroglossia functions within a revived language e.g. in a trans-historical perspective. Also this is an attempt to introduce literary analysis into contemporary Cornish literature, an area which is ripe for expansion.