

## **Cornwall's Experience of the Experience Economy; Longitudinal Impacts**

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The 'Experience Economy' of Pine and Gilmore (1999), posits that in the contemporary economy services are distinguished from other services, gaining comparative advantage through the 'experience' that accompanies the consumption of the service. The conceptualisation of service provision in this way is a link that is made by Pine and Gilmore themselves, and is beginning to gain some ground within tourism studies. However, where tourism research investigates this link, it tends to be made with reference to exploring and measuring the 'experience' itself, without making any kind of critical exploration of the 'experience economy' in general, and its links with tourism in particular (Oh et al 2007, Ek et al 2008, Anderson 2007, Knutson et al 2007). Any end point within the discourse is located in customer satisfaction and loyalty, ensuring return visits (Tsaur et al 2007, Kao et al 2008). On the other hand, there is work within tourism studies which raises questions regarding tourism as a regional development measure related to the differing uses, requirements and developmental needs of tourists and locals. This results in tensions over how the landscape should be developed and maintained. For visitors, the emphasis is on using the landscape for the 'consumption' of place, and the retention of the area as some kind of illusory visitor idyll, whilst 'locals' have a more pragmatic approach to economic development which is often in conflict with tourist perception (Munasinghe 2005, Kianicka et al 2006, Maoz 2005, Dougstad 2008, Tumpenny 2004). Further, some sources have questioned the efficacy of tourism as an activity for relieving poverty in areas which are 'underperforming' economically (Blake et al, 2008, Munasinghe 2005).

In this context, a perspective is required which can explore the impact of the 'Experience Economy' on a given location, looking beyond correlations between economic growth and tourist growth, to a consideration of human affects. To do this, this paper will consider the socio economic changes which have accompanied regional experience economy strategies, and the impact of experience economy discourses on the area. Cornwall is going to be used as a case study as the regional economy places a heavy reliance on the tourism sector. According to research conducted by Visit Cornwall, the Cornish Tourist Board, tourism related employment takes up 21% of the total employment in the county. Cornwall's next competitor in the South West NUTS 3 Region is Devon, with tourism at 11% of all local employment. (Visit Cornwall, 2006). Moreover, the economic landscape in Cornwall has been heavily engaged affected by the tourism industry for over a century (Quiller-Couch 1899, Perry 2002). Whilst this had smaller scale, 'genteel' beginnings, it achieved the status of 'mass tourism' during the post war boom years of the 1950's and 60's (Williams and Shaw 1993).

Firstly, this paper will review the key tenets of the Experience Economy, as set out by Pine and Gilmore. Next it will discuss the Experience Economy with regards to Cornwall before tracing the socio-economic changes that has accompanied it, finding, that in contrast to Cornwall's wealthy, 'lifestyle' image, the region is characterised by

severe inequalities compared to the rest of the UK, and a deepening of 'deprivation'. The research will conclude that in Cornwall, the return to an idealized state which is a requirement of the tourism industry in the region, has more than just hampered Cornish economic development, but has positively harmed it. In the process, it has damaged the opportunities available for Cornwall to engage fully in the knowledge economy. However, a possible way out of this impasse may be found through the latter stages of Pine and Gilmore's book, in the Transformative Economy, which appears to offer an opportunity for tourism strategies to operate in a highly skilled economy.

### **The Experience Economy**

The context of this concept is an unabashed updating of the economic liberalism of Smith (1776), with the starting premise that in the beginning economies developed around the sale of commodities with an emphasis on selling goods cheaply. However, as industrialization deepened, this not only became harder, but had initiated a kind of 'race to the bottom' and new ways were sought to differentiate commodities and goods from their competitors with the advent of an attached 'service'. Over time, the motor of economic growth meant that the service itself became a commodity, or became, 'commoditised' and again, a new way was sought to differentiate one service from another. It is here that the authors identify the 'experience' as a means of doing just this, and the customer, or here renamed the 'guest', becomes not just the buyer of a service (for example, when purchasing a meal) but also the recipient of a memorable experience. Pine and Gilmore's contribution to knowledge is here, in identifying a common phenomena and coining a concept to go alongside it.

In a new set of terminology which utilises the 'stage of life' imagery of Social Role Theorists Mead, Blumer and particularly Goffman, the seller of the service becomes the 'stager of experiences' and the customer the 'guest'. Experiences are, in addition to being memorable, personalized sensations which are revealed over a duration rather than being immediate. Such experiences vary between the massive theme parks of Disney, to the themed dining experiences of the 'Hard Rock Café's, to the experiences marketed to differentiate Pepsi and Coca-cola. They can range from the experience of pure sensation and the adrenaline of extreme sports to the 'real' experiences of for example, camping in the Yellow Stone Park, to the ephemeral of having the 'right' door closing noise on a car.

An 'experience' involves more than just 'entertaining' 'guests', which is described as a passive absorption of an event through the senses but instead is about their active engagement through Educational, Escapist and/or Esthetic<sup>1</sup> means. It is the combination of these four factors which creates an experience that people not only want to experience, but also want to return to and visit again.

Clearly, the Experience Economy is not about any one industry or economic activity, but can be attached to any industry in a bid to gain competitive advantage through creating a memorable event. Further, the parallels with tourism as an industry, in addition to the

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<sup>1</sup> Where individuals immerse themselves in a thing, or event, but remain largely passive, such as standing on the edge of the Grand Canyon, or visiting an art gallery

activities of individual businesses engaged within tourism related activities, relates it directly to that of the ‘experience economy’ not only now, in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, but this has been what tourism has been doing for some time.

### **Cornwall and the Experience Economy**

Tourism in the Celtic peripheries<sup>2</sup> (Scotland, Wales, Ireland and Cornwall) developed from late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century middle class desire for an experience of ‘healthy’ holidays, away from resorts which had become popular with the ‘vulgar masses’ such as Southend and Blackpool (Lowerson, 1994). Cornish business leaders, reeling from the rapid decline in the tin and copper mining industries, decided to turn their attentions, energy and investments to encouraging visitors to the area. To this end, the Cornish Magazine was initiated, a periodical which ran from 1898 to 1899 and discussed what and how to do next (Quiller-Couch 1899). Perhaps reflecting the divide between working people and their leaders, the experience of Cornwall that was presented throughout the periodicals was constructed, through a re-presentation of history, as that of canny individuals, rough, but essentially good – or ‘rough diamonds’. Additionally, and despite several centuries of intense mining activity, the landscape, and particularly the coastal landscape, is described as being incredibly beautiful and very clean,<sup>3</sup> particularly good for the ‘invalid’, but also good for the physic.

The ‘Celt’ gave the healthy holiday ‘experience’ an additional quality, which differentiated it from other areas and fed in to what is termed as the ‘post romantic landscape aesthetic’ (Lowerson 1994;129) of the era. At a similar time to the rise of the Cornish tourist industry, Cornwall was going through its own period of Celtic Revival which, utilising ideas of ‘pastoral spirituality’ and ‘working in harmony with the land’ (Hale, 1997a;94) to which the revivalists adhered, fed neatly into contemporary Romanticism. Importantly, these were not representations of culture to which local people adhered, but were aspects of the Cornish ideal which most appealed to the suburban, bourgeois imagination (Lowenna 2004, Hale 1997a, Payton 1993). A flag, tartan and Gorsedd were created, along the lines of those operating in other Celtic regions, and the by now practically dead Cornish language was revived (Deacon, 1993). This meant that the description of the local rough diamond became overlaid with the ‘enlightened peasant’ and ‘noble savage’ of Romanticism (Hale, 1997b), influencing the offering and experience of tourism in Cornwall.

Payton (1993) relates how generally the tourist representations of Cornwall, and the experience of the region to which visitors were steered, continued to come from persons from out of the region who emphasised aspects of Cornish ‘difference’. Like that of the revivalists, it was designed to most appeal to the bourgeois, suburban imagination rather than presenting a Cornish culture that may have been more immediately recognizable by the Cornish themselves. He reveals how the writers of guide books tended to wrap Cornwall in spiritual and mystical language whilst concurrently choosing to ignore that

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<sup>2</sup> The phenomena described are not unique to Cornish tourism but will be discussed only with reference to tourism in Cornwall, for the clarity of the paper

<sup>3</sup> Although the food and accommodation needed working on

the area was in the grip of socio-economic disaster, and airbrushing over the existence of the working class as a whole. Cornwall, in the meantime was becoming “picturesque, its towns and villages quaint, its people, moody, mystical, superstitious and childlike by turns” (page 71).

Perry (1997) does not believe that there was any direct collusion between the economic revivalists that were looking to tourism, and the Celtic revivalists who emphasised culture. However he does concede that Celtic imagery was utilised by the tourist industry, who were able to use it to promote an idea of a backward people that were incapable of modernising. As a result of the needs of the early tourist experience therefore, people in Cornwall came to be seen not only as ‘foreign’, reinforced with a ‘difference’ to those of the predominantly English visitors, but also as a kind of ‘inferior other’, infantilised, alien and backward.

The final foundation stone for Cornwall’s experience economy comes from the extension of the railway to Penzance, in the far West. The primary business purpose for this was to transport the produce from the plentiful market gardens in Cornwall. However this only required a one way trip out of the region which was not particularly good business practice. Consequently, the Great Western Railway (GWR) came up with the image of the ‘Cornish Riviera’, or the ideal that Cornwall was as good a place to holiday in as the Mediterranean (Payton 1993). Not only then, was the experience of Cornwall to be healthy, but it was also to be warm with, as with countries overseas, an alien and backward people.

Other writers to reach an audience outside of Cornwall such as Daphne du Maurier and John Betjeman come from an English middle class which desired to escape from 20<sup>th</sup> century pressures. Cornwall is represented by them as a romanticised spiritual place (Hirst, 1993). Du Maurier even wrote a book entitled ‘Vanishing Cornwall’ (1972) in which she laments the changes of late modernity, but does not enlighten the reader as to what might be taking the place of the old ways that are being lost. She presents a decaying Cornwall of yesteryear, with no countering ‘tomorrow’ – a ‘this is what they’re changing into’. Interestingly, this seems to be a continual problem, with writers in or about Cornwall rarely talking about the gritty social realism displayed in Rowse’s ‘Cornish Childhood’ (Kent, 2002). Although Kent concedes that contemporary authors are tending to include academic works on Cornish identity, they still often set works in the past, using romantic imagery. .

From these foundations, the Cornish experience developed over the following decades and century. Mass tourism began to arrive in the 1950’s with the end of wartime austerity and sustained economic growth. Tourism in Cornwall developed from being targeted at an elite, to an inclusion of the masses who, with increased leisure time and paid holidays, aspired to a week by the sea. In addition, increased car ownership enabled visitors to find “the nooks and crannies of Cornwall that time had passed by” (Hale 1987;69). A vastly improved road infrastructure also helped to make Cornwall accessible to the everyday family holiday, making the journey to the destination shorter, and less arduous (Williams and Shaw 1993, Perry 1993). The consumption of the ‘natural beauty’

of Cornwall's environment, and its 'cultural distinctiveness' continue to be key attractions of the experience of Cornwall, that have foundations in the genesis of Cornish tourism, but retain a continued relevance (Williams and Shaw, 1993). Moreover, people in Cornwall are still discursively constructed in terms of their 'backwardness' or inferiority (Dickinson, 2008).

Cornwall is still sold to the visitor as being the location of an 'exotic' experience, and an 'escaped' from reality. Laviolette (2003;162) writes of tourist literature and brochures that;

“They engender a structured set of meaning for consumption by illustratively steering tourists away from everyday experiences. They reinforce the modern western search for the exotic, the esoteric and the enigmatic. Consequently the concern is that this creates a need for an escape from the everyday and concurrently generates the illusion of cultural simplicity”

By not being a part of the everyday, the experience of Cornwall is presented as somewhere that is beyond the everyday, and so has no actual, lived reality beyond that of an escape, and so is instead, a real unreality. This places the experience of Cornwall as a part of modernity only in as much as that the consumers of Cornwall are a part of modernity, but otherwise it is 'out of time' and entirely what the consumer (or guest, to use Pine and Gilmore's terminology) decides to make of it. This can be illustrated by the irritation that one consumer feels when their invented reality (ironically, also a performance project) is faced with the intrusion of modernity. "Performers are upstaged by rock-perching a-thespian fisherpeople (and) insensitive Isles of Scilly helicopters" (Mackey 2002; 11), although the intrusion of 'playful' basking sharks are allowed, reinforcing as they do the dreamlike quality, and otherworldliness expected of a visit to Cornwall.

It is interesting that here, the construction of Cornwall is partly a two way process, but partly structurally determined by the path that it is on. Consequently, for the visitor, an out of reality representation was constructed, but, in common with reflections within tourist studies (see Munasinghe 2005, Kianicka et al 2006, Maoz 2005, Dougstad 2008, Tumpenny 2004) the opposing version of Cornwall as being a place of modernity is rejected. For the visitor, the narrative that they have constructed about Cornwall and their experience of it, is that of a retreat, or a return to some idealized period, whether this be that of the individual childhood, or more generic, a return to the pre-modern. Here, the separation of reality and illusion that is made when Cornwall is discursively constructed within the tourism industry means that Cornwall itself has become the 'experience'. It is almost forgotten that this presentation of the area refers to one version of the region, constructed for one particular purpose. However, by applying the unreality of Cornwall to Cornwall itself it also encompasses the people that live in the area. Consequently, the return that is developed from how Cornish tourism is constructed within the experience economy, is not only applied to the landscape and territory of Cornwall, but also to the people and how the people are capable of acting, and what they are capable of doing.

Here again, the 'stage of life' imagery that Pine and Gilmore use helps in the analysis. For Pine and Gilmore, the deviation from the 'script' that the experience is presenting invokes a rejection from the customer, or 'guest'. So, the best attractions or stages of the experience make sure that their show is entirely consistent. Performers (or employees) have to act the part in order to make the presentation believable. This can vary from the restaurant worker maintaining a helpful demeanor and willingness to please towards the 'guest', to a themed restaurant such as the Rainforest Café describing its dining experience as a 'safari', to Mickey Mouse at Disneyland staying in costume when 'on stage' and not revealing the acne faced teenager underneath. Further, it also extends to the conduct of 'performers' who refrain from discussing anything 'off script' until they are 'backstage' and out of the sight of the 'guests'. The guests in turn expect this kind of behaviour from a good 'experience'.

Related back to Cornwall, it can be argued that over a period of time the experience of Cornwall has become indistinguishable from the landscape and the people, or at least, a version of the landscape and the people. This has come to represent not only the experience of the visit, but 'Cornwall' itself, as an object. In effect, this has made Cornwall into a type of theme park, the landscape and environment presents the setting, and the people within it are the 'performers'. This is an argument that was made back as long ago as the late 1980's in Cornwall, which repeated the belief that Cornwall had become a 'playground' for other people to enjoy (Deacon et al 1988, William and Shaw 1993).

Although the tourism industry, or experience economy in Cornwall has changed and updated over the years, there are many things which have remained the same. With increasing affluence in the UK, the 'bucket and spade' market lost out to overseas resorts, and declined throughout the latter 1970's and 1980's. However, to counter this, the strategic decision was taken to expand into 'adventure holidays' (Galsworthy, 1987), the application of which Lavolette and Abramson (2005) describe, and from which stems the idea of Cornwall as being synonymous with adventure sports such as surfing. Added to this is the promotion of Cornwall's industrial heritage, legitimised and popularised with the 2007 granting of World Heritage Site Status for the contribution of Cornish engineering to industrialization, and with its tourist face turned towards the Cornish diaspora, (Hale, 2001).

By 2009, the major signifiers of tourism in Cornwall adopt a number of, but very linked images. There is the Surfer and the Walker, enjoying Cornwall's clean and beautiful countryside, and a landscape, much of which are designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB's). In addition, a number of other watersports in particular, such as sailing, are promoted extensively. For more sedate activities, a number of restaurants under the care of high profile chefs are showcased, as well as some of Cornwall's performing arts (See CEF 2007). Culture and heritage are 'Destination based' 'cultural capital', providing another facet to Cornish Distinctiveness (Busby and Meethan, 2008). Perhaps the grandest of all of these, which cunningly succeeds in combining most of these activities in some form or another, is the Eden Project, which claims to add

environmental and educatory functions too. Nevertheless, despite the changing nature of the Cornish 'experience', the tourist brochures that Laviolette 2003 reviews are from this more up to date end of tourism in Cornwall. The big similarities, which links the contemporary 'experience' of Cornwall to that of previous ages, is the 'other worldly' quality, which places Cornwall as outside of modernity and into a particular play zone, specifically crafted to ensure that the modern and the backstage never encroaches the tourist experience. As such, it retains its return to an idealized, prior, if unspecified time period, with a valorization of the landscape whilst devaluing of the lives of the people that actually live there.

I have tried to argue in this section that the experience economy in Cornwall has had a significant effect on how Cornwall is presented as a place. It has constructed an other worldly, alter-modern theme park in which the actors (the Cornish themselves) are either unimportant, in the way, or have character parts in Cornwall's presented quaint pre-modernity. The next section will extend this analysis to encompass Cornwall's socio-economy over the past several decades, over the age of Mass Tourism and the Cornish Experience.

### **The Experience Economy and the Cornish Socio-Economy**

There are several related parts to the socio-economy in Cornwall. Firstly, there are the bare economic statistics which places Cornwall as an economy in constant decline, despite an increasing reliance on the tourist experience. This has had the added and paradoxical effect, that whilst the economy has been struggling, Cornwall has still managed to attract large scale inward migration. In turn, this has deepened the level of deprivation experienced by local residents through a disproportionate competition for housing. The final element to this part of the story, is that although inward migrants have consistently been hoped to inject some form of 'dynamism', the nature of the persons influenced to relocate by the return of the tourist experience has not been able to provide this. Additionally, the inferiority ascribed by the experience of Cornish tourism is carried through to the perception of what local people can do.

Although it was still poor compared to the South and East of England, the post war Cornish economy of the early 1950's enjoyed a period of relative prosperity, as its traditional heavy industries were much in demand (Perry 1993). Nevertheless, it was still characterised by problems of rural peripherality, such as having a low skills base, a high rate of outward migration, a dispersed population and low wages. Therefore, it did qualify for, and often was in receipt of, some level of regional assistance (Wills, 1998). The latter 1960's and early 1970's saw improvement and growth through an expansion of manufacturing and tourism (Spooner 1972, Perry 1993), to the point where Spooner could hypothesise that Cornwall was losing its peripheral status. However, there was still the feeling that people in Cornwall were significantly poorer economically than even the working class visitors who came down in the summer (Thomas, 1973). Even so, the period of strong growth stopped with the Opec crisis of 1973. At this time, tourism was seen as only one part of a fabric of economic activities or industries within which Cornwall was engaged (CCC 1977, CIDA, 1976). The economic situation worsened

considerably over the latter 1970's and the second Opec crisis, with unemployment rising by 55%, and most of Cornwall was designated a 'Special Development Area' (Perry 1993). Further, tourism itself began to see hard times, unable to cope with either overseas competition or the emerging 'city breaks' in the old industrial towns in the North of England (Perry, 1993). The comparative economic situation in the 1980's saw the Cornish economy drop even further compared to the UK, and unemployment rose to 20% of the working age population, significantly higher than the UK average (Galsworthy, 1987). By the early 1990's the Cornish economy had a GDP of 2/3 of the UK average, with a severe territory wide breadth of poverty as opposed to having some areas of extreme deprivation counterbalanced by pockets of extreme wealth (Payne 1995). In 2000, Cornwall, with a GDP of 69% of the EU average qualified for Objective 1 funding from the European Union, given only to the poorest parts of Europe (Deacon et al, 2003).

However, despite the help from Objective 1 moneys, the socio-economics of Cornwall has still been struggling, which in turn has serious implications for the lives of local people. This is because it is widely accepted that poverty and its associated deprivation, has a negative impact on life chances. Poverty in the UK is measured not in the quantitative, monetary terms of 'absolute' or 'relative' poverty (Alcock 1997, Townsend 1979), but in terms of 'deprivation', and its contemporary variant, 'multiple deprivation'. Behind deprivation is the understanding, akin to Durkheim's 'anomie' (Durkheim, 1987), that relative poverty causes a number of serious health and social issues which threaten not only individual wellbeing, but also social cohesiveness (Hallerod and Larson 2008, Iceland and Bowman 2007). Moreover, deprivation is an intergenerational, longitudinal issue. When individuals or neighbourhoods experience deprivation and its associated health, wellbeing and exclusionary consequences, this affects the capacity of individuals and their children to break out of the poverty trap, resulting in 'cultures of deprivation' (Stepney et al 1999, Holden 1999). Therefore, poverty reduction is not only a short term social justice issue, but has long term benefits for societal cohesion. Failure to remedy the situation is likely to result in increased deprivation over an extended period of time.

In complete contradiction to the fantastical or idyllic 'set' or 'stage' of Cornwall shown to the consumer of the tourist experience, Cornwall's 'backstage' or private image is very different and has had an issue with poverty and deprivation for some considerable period of time. In purely quantitative terms, Cornish people have long had very low wages compared to the rest of the UK (CIDA 1976, Deacon et al, 1988, Galsworthy 1987) which continues up to the present day. For example in the last quarter of 2008 average wages were 23.4% of the England and Wales average, lower than any of the other Objective 1 areas, or that of neighbouring Devon (NOMIS, 2009).<sup>4</sup> These kinds of inequalities extend to measurements of deprivation too. Consequently, a study in 1995 found that although Cornwall did not experience the intense depths of deprivation found in some urban wards, it experienced a breadth of deprivation across the region, which meant that it's economic and accompanying social issues were much more chronic and widespread than is found elsewhere (Payne, 1995). This is a theme continued through the

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<sup>4</sup> Average weekly wages were 9.5% of the England and Wales average for South Yorkshire, 12.7% for Carmarthenshire and 8.5% for Merseyside. Wages in Devon were 12.7% of the national average.

current indices of Multiple Deprivation. The indices for 2007, showed that there is still a widespread coverage of deprivation across Cornwall. Moreover, this had intensified and spread since the 2004 assessment (LINC, 2009). The primary reason for growing deprivation was related to the measurements for access to housing and services, as well as for the quality of the housing stock. The statistics that state that people in Cornwall have serious difficulty in accessing housing are not surprising. According to Land Registry figures, whereas in 2002 the average house price was 6.1 times average annual incomes, by the last quarter of 2008 house prices were 9.45 times average annual incomes, compared to an England and Wales 4.8 times (2002) and 6.3 (2008).<sup>5</sup> This is a phenomena about which local people have complained for many decades (Thomas 1973, Deacon et al 1988). The reasons for these anomalies, can be directly related back to the side of Cornwall that is represented through its tourist experience.

In common with other peripheral locations, the post world war II period saw much outward migration of young local people. This exodus, or population decline, was seen as being very harmful in the context of a set of urban focused economic development strategies. Agglomeration economics and economies of scale dictated that a well functioning regional economy needed adequate levels of population. Consequently, policies were implemented that encouraged inward migration to Cornwall (Mitchell 1993, Wills 1998, Perry 1993, CIDA 1976, Deacon et al, 2003). This was highly successful and between 1961 and 2001 the population of Cornwall grew from 339,000 (Perry, 1993) to 501,000 (Deacon et al, 2003), a rise of nearly 50%. Such growth also flew in the face of economic wisdom, which stated that people relocate to areas where they will become wealthier. Instead, what has happened, is that people have chosen to relocate to Cornwall based on an anticipated better quality of life, which they believe will await based on their previous experience of the tourist return, presented by the regions public, or onstage image. Paradoxically, job creation schemes were also incredibly successful, but were not able to absorb such high levels of inward migration, and increased competition for the available jobs contributed to the maintenance of the very low wage levels in Cornwall (Perry, 1993).

21<sup>st</sup> Century encouragement of inward migration places an emphasis on attracting 'dynamic' immigrants, who choose to move to the region to pursue successful business interests (Cornwall Pure Business, 2008). This is a policy which was attempted previously with the 1960's branch plant relocation too (Spooner 1972, see also Refson 1987). However, what generally seems to have happened is that inward migrants have based their decisions to move to the area not from a desire to improve their economic position,<sup>6</sup> but informed by their experiences as guests of the Cornish experience of tourism (Spooner 1972, Mitchell 1993, Williams and Shaw 1993, Elzey 1998). Interestingly too, and in common with the trend noticed in studies of tourism elsewhere, such people have a vested interest in recreating the public Cornwall, the theme park Cornwall that attracted them in the first place. As a consequence, most tourism businesses are owned and managed by people that moved to the region specifically to

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<sup>5</sup> In comparison, in 2008 house prices were 5.2% annual incomes in South Yorkshire, 5.4% in Merseyside, 5.56% in Carmarthenshire and 8.7% in neighbouring Devon.

<sup>6</sup> As, for example in migrants to Wiltshire (Williams and Champion, 1995)

start a tourism related business (Thornton 1994, Shaw et al 1987), helping to perpetuate the image of Cornwall's tourist front of house.

The desire to keep the region looking like the stage that drew them in has had a long term impact on Cornwall's ability to update and develop, staying in touch with modernity rather than allowing the reality to catch up with the illusion. As a consequence, there have been many tensions between local plans for development and the tourist desire to maintain a 'rural idyll'. The problem derives from that locals tend to view the landscape as a means of production, whilst tourists and inward migrants have a bias towards consumption combined with the feeling that they have a right to a say in local development matters. However, they also have little or no interest in helping to facilitate the creation of employment opportunities and other benefits to the local economy. This means that 'outsiders' connected to tourism prefer the maintenance of the areas natural beauty and recreational features at the expense of the economic regeneration (CIDA 1976, Deacon et al 1988, Thornton 1996). This is a thread which remains throughout current regeneration strategies, which is at pains to preserve Cornwall's landscape, but less concrete about how the gulf of human inequalities that exists in the region, is going to be breached (CEF, 2007).

## **Discussion**

The above has tried to show that within the Cornish tourist experience, Cornwall has perpetually been represented publicly, or 'front of stage', as inferior, backward, or out of time in some way. This is an inevitable consequence of an activity which relies on some kind of 'return' to an idealized or mythical period, whether it is childhood or an earlier era, or something more fantastical. Unfortunately, the nature of the tourism offering means that consumers, or 'guests' do not realise that they are partaking in some kind of show, or performance, designed to give them a pleasing experience to which they will want to return. On the contrary, there is a private Cornwall behind this illusion, in which local people do not subscribe to the inferiority credited to them in the 'show', and instead of living a life of an amazing lifestyle, live in a region of widespread deprivation and inequality, contributing to considerable personal hardship.

The paper has tried to argue that the compelling return in the tourist experience of Cornwall, combined with the repopulation policy of planners, as a response to widespread emigration on economic grounds, has been harmful to Cornwall. In this instance it has resulted in 'imported unemployment', perpetuated a low wage structure, and institutionalized a housing situation which is far beyond sustainability based on local wages. But it has done more than this. It has also repeated the inaccurate image of both Cornwall and local people as being inferior, out of touch, and having not quite made it into modernity. In turn, it perpetuates the idea of Cornwall as a troubled backwater with little hope of improving itself. Consequently, in a move consistent with that found within internal colonialism discourses, it needs better educated 'outsiders' to come and sort it out (see Hechter 1975, Said 2003). However, based on the nature of the return of the Cornish tourism industry, these outsiders are themselves attracted by the desire to 'get out

of the rat race', and return to an idealized life. The same can be said for 21<sup>st</sup> century policies to attract 'dynamic' immigrants to engage in the 'knowledge economy'.

The experience economy in Cornwall, based around the tourism industry, and which, due to its dominance, presents Cornwall not only as a location of many little stages, but as the stage in itself, does not have the capacity within it to positively alter the Cornish economy. It is a wholesale consumption of place with a low skill/low wage structure, which has no room for allowing 'action' to happen if it will challenge the stage set by the tourist industry.

However, Pine and Gilmore do point a potential way out of this impasse. The experience economy is, for them, an explanatory thing, they are introducing a new explanatory concept to describe a commonly occurring phenomena. Their analysis of where this description is going to go in the future, or their normative prescription, exists within the 'Transformation Economy'. Here, businesses move beyond the service-with-an – attached-experience of the experience economy, and attempt to actively transform the lives of customers. This entails personalizing, identifying what it is that the consumer *really* wants and then providing them with a positive, life changing experience. Within the context of tourism and particularly activity or educational tourism, this could potentially mean offering personal development holidays or 'courses', requiring high levels of assessment and educational skills, in the process balancing out 'consumption' with 'action'.

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