

# Translanguaging and place-making in writing for publication: An account in multiple stories

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*In this piece, we consider what the concepts of translocality as place-making and translanguaging can add to an understanding of current academic and creative writing. Our quest is informed by sociolinguistic theory and literary studies. We take up Hultgren's (2020) call for interdisciplinarity in research on multilingual writing for publication and contribute to current debates that question dominant ways of knowledge production. By means of creative conversations between the authors, a sociolinguist in Stockholm, Sweden and a scholar of literature in Bangor, North Wales, we explore how academic and creative writing practices may be enriched by drawing on a broader range of writers' linguistic repertoires. In contrast to previous research that focused on translocality in terms of writers' mobility and networking, we pay attention to translocality as a process of place-making in writing. Drawing on narrative methods, we present four instances of condensed and partly fictionalized dialogue informed by our own lived experience. The creative form reveals various layers of translocal and translingual writing practices. Translanguaging is intricately connected to place-making and the evocation of communities in both fictional and academic texts. While limited by "regimes of comprehensibility" (Bodin, Helgesson & Huss, 2020), it carries potential for learning and for political activism. Ultimately, our insights and our writing experiment aim to question what counts as a legitimate text and to suggest alternative ways of meaning-making in academic and creative writing practices.*

**Keywords:** translanguaging, translocality, writing for publication, academic writing, creative writing, linguistic repertoire

## 1 Introduction: Starting the conversation

For so many of us in academia, the long days of midsummer are anything but lazy – heralding as they do a glut of meetings, marking, manuscripts. We heave a sigh of relief when our over-stuffed June is over and we can breathe easy into July. We may now enter the Silly Season – that in-between time when “Parliament is no longer sitting.... the Times's great men have gone out of town.... and the hands

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which at other times wield the pen for our instruction are now wielding the gun on a Scotch moor or the Alpenstock on a Swiss mountain.” If these gentrified pursuits sound a wee bit dated in 2021, it is because the above description found its way into print in a weekly London newspaper as long ago as 13 July 1861. But the terminology persists and many in UK publishing and politics allude to a certain seasonal dynamic when, in mid-July or August, a paper or media channel puts out the most eigenartig of Sonderbeiträge and the quirkiest of news.

In Sweden, midsommar still sees the silencing of the suburbs as the mountain slopes and lake shores welcome their summer guests. The soundtrack is Sommar, a radio show in which celebrities of the moment play their favourite music and ponder topics of their choice. Perhaps, when it comes to academic flourishing, this Silly Season has a potential all of its own? Freed up for a few precious weeks from our hectic teaching schedules, we can embark on a spot of literal blue-sky thinking – whether in the pleasant contemplation of outlandish ideas when dozing by the lake, or in the enjoyment of a long and quiet morning in the office without the usual email deluge or pesky colleagues reminding us of a deadline that needs to be met.

The reflection that follows has emerged from a personal series of Silly Season conversations, zooming the gap between languages, localities and contexts in a fashion *unvorstellbar* in a pre-2020 world. A sociolinguist in Stockholm, Sweden and a scholar of literature in Bangor, North Wales. Conversations in English with the option of resorting to satisfying German compounds when our powers of description let us down. We sensed a certain mutuality of experience, in that one of us has German as her first language and English a second, while the other grew up in English and acquired German as a young adult. At present, each of us lives our everyday through the medium of a third language – Swedish in Stockholm and Welsh in Bangor. This series of conversations and creative imaginings has proved low on work pressure, high on diversion and surprisingly fruitful to boot. Our conversations have touched on theory but ranged widely through our personal language practices and lived experience of both *trawsieithu* and *translokalisering*. Here we offer some snippets of the conversation – at times fictionalized, at times inspired by others’ narratives – and our reflections on lessons learned. And we share a few thoughts about how we might give ourselves and others permission to exploit the full range of our linguistic repertoire and thus to enrich both our academic and our creative writing practice.

## 2 Musings in Four Acts

### *Act I: Breaking the silence*

*To the left, an easy chair and coffee table. A figure in a dressing gown enters with a mug of tea and flops down in the chair ready to begin writing. To the right, a desk and chair. A figure is hunched over the desk, her face eerily illuminated by a laptop screen. Between the two figures, a perspex screen – signifying digital connection and physical separation – 1400 miles and a time zone.*

- 6 a.m. Bangor: Rosie has just brushed her teeth and it's time for her morning pages. To her own astonishment, she has managed to stick at this for the last few weeks: *The Artist's Way*. The book was a gift from her friend in New Hampshire. Unwrapping it, she had groaned inwardly: 'Not one of those terrible American self-help manuals! Unlock your creativity? Yeah, right.' But maybe she'll have to eat her words. It works surprisingly well. She's even begun to enjoy it. Today, as yesterday, she picks up her A4 notebook and starts writing long-hand. Three pages every morning. In Welsh, the language she is learning to live in, up here between Eryri and the Irish Sea. English words wriggle their way into her writing but by now she has accepted this. The point is to discuss something, to start getting ideas on paper, not an exercise in language purity.
- 7 a.m. Stockholm Kathrin sits up in her chair. She has put in an all-nighter, typing on her laptop for the past six or seven hours. It's still dark outside and her eyes are smarting from staring at the screen. She scrolls up, re-reading her nearly-finished article. She hesitates. Should I discuss this term here? The reviewers told me I should have introduced the key terms earlier. Maybe. Struggling to stay awake, she moves the cursor across the page, inserts a comment box and types, "maybe refer to mobile web weiter oben". 'Nearly there now. Another half an hour and I'll be done. I think I might make that deadline after all! I'll fix the final footnote then come back to this at the end and decide whether to move it.' Kathrin pushes back her chair and smiles with relief. 'Yeah, weiter oben.'

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As Humanities researchers, we both spend an awful lot of time on our own with pen and paper or laptop. This summer we decided to break our individual silences and dive into an extended conversation. We wanted to dig deeper into what the concepts of translolality and translanguaging can add to the practice of academic and creative writing, to find ways to interrogate our assumptions that are rooted in our lived experiences (Erlebnisse) and others' narrated life stories (Erfahrungen). Our quest was informed by sociolinguistic theory and literary studies and influenced by autoethnographic approaches. Coming from very different academic backgrounds, we decided to embark on a creative dialogue traversing the (imagined) boundaries of our fields and associated language ideologies to contribute to current debates that question dominant ways of knowledge production in writing for publication by multilingual authors.

The theoretical touchstones of our inquiry were trawsieithu (translanguaging), translolality, and the linguistic repertoire. These concepts served both as starting points and a kind of reset when we began to stray too far from the rich seam of perspectives which they afforded.

First coined by Ceri Williams in Bangor in the mid-1980s (Lewis et al., 2012), trawsieithu has long been both a pedagogical and political phenomenon. Twenty years earlier, the Welsh dramatist Saunders Lewis had made his famous Radio Broadcast “Tynged yr Iaith” (Fate of the Language). A major contributor to the rapid decline in the Welsh language since the early years of the 20th century had been its near elimination from the educational environment. Children might speak Welsh in the home and grow up in communities where Welsh was the mother tongue of the vast majority of residents, but if they spoke their mother tongue inside the school gate, they would be made to wear around their necks a piece of wood on a string. The child wearing the ‘Welsh Not’ at the end of the day would be subjected to corporal punishment. Lewis’ broadcast was a catalyst for the formation of Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg (The Welsh Language Society), as well as the movement to develop Welsh language education and a series of other initiatives. Today, many students in Welsh language education do not come from Welsh speaking families. In recent years trawsieithu has been introduced in Welsh medium education as a corrective challenge to what Jim Cummins (2008) describes as the “two solitudes” assumption in bilingual education, which promoted the separation of languages in the classroom.

In the past two decades, the pedagogic commitment of trawsieithu has been appropriated in academic writing research and is variously referred to as translingual approach (Horner et al., 2011), translingual practice (Canagarajah, 2013), or translanguaging (Mazak et al., 2017). These conceptualizations are influenced by a shift in focus from languages as systems to individual speakers/writers and languaging as a dynamic process of situated language use (Swain, 2006; Pennycook, 2010). In this piece we will use the terms trawsieithu and translanguaging interchangeably emphasizing their potential for meaning-making. While translanguaging has been enthusiastically connected to processes of transformation, many scholars in the field caution that there is no simple cause-effect relationship due to the constant reproduction of language ideologies and educational structures (see Kaufhold, 2020 for a detailed discussion). In fact, the concept of translanguaging space (Li, 2011) highlights the creative and at the same time critical aspects of trawsieithu. This space is formed by multilinguals when they creatively draw on elements associated with different named languages (or language varieties) for meaning-making. Meaning that goes beyond the mere translation of language elements. At the same time, speakers critically consider the social norms of comprehensibility that delimit the scope of this creativity (Jones, 2020).

The other touchstone for our conversations was translocality – a term originating from research in fields such as human geography and anthropology (Greiner & Sakdapolrak, 2013). This concept became meaningful because of our own mobile trajectories across national boundaries and within such boundaries. Rosie lived in cities in Wales, England, Scotland, Germany and The Netherlands before moving back to Wales to work first in the semi-rural and post-industrial region of the South Wales valleys, and now in rural North Wales. There are many regards in which these semi-rural and rural Welsh communities are culturally further removed from Wales’ capital city Cardiff than is Cardiff from any of the other European cities in which she has resided. Other aspects of translocality also resonated with us. The very fact that we were connecting for this piece demonstrates the importance of networks and flows of knowledge across geographical boundaries for our writing. In our interdisciplinary conversations,

we connected to wider networks and moved in and out of “imagined communities” (Anderson, 1983) that are translocal and constructed on the basis of various disciplines and schools of thought (cf. Uimonen, 2009). Most of all, we came to explore “place-making” as the subjective dimension of translocality (Greiner & Sakdapolrak, 2013, p. 377) – that is, the notion that places are socially constructed and experienced as meaningful by those who dwell in them.

### *Act II: Meaning-making as dwelling*

I want to ask you ob du dir vorstellen könntest, mit mir eine Art Artikel zu schreiben. Thema wäre locality in writing. Ich dachte an unser Gespräch über deine Leseerfahrung mit walisischer Literatur und Referenzen zu Plätzen ... und mein take on localities in sociolinguistic writing. Hättest du Lust, das weiterzudenken? Wäre für einen special issue.

*Kathrin typed whatever came to mind, lazily ignoring conventional language boundaries. She combined some of the terms from the call for contributions to a special journal issue with handy German compounds. Le-se-er-fahr-ung, experience when reading.*

*She did so because she could. That’s what was special about the way they communicated. They shuttled between their shared languages and understood. It was fun, energising, liberating. The opposite of agonizing over finding the words that could express exactly what they wanted to say in just one language.*

*Ding, the phone said. Yes, Rosie liked the idea.*

Das hört sich spannend an! When’s a good time for a catch up? I’m away over the weekend so Mon onwards poss for me... freu mich drauf! 😊 👍

*She joined the game. Freu mich drauf. Yes, that said so much more than I’m looking forward to it. A translanguaging space where the elements of the different languages create something bigger than the sum of their part. An atmosphere. A place to dwell in.*

The link between our two touchstones of trawsieithu and translocality was the linguistic repertoire as conceptualized by Brigitta Busch (2017). It directs the spotlight to our language encounters in our educational and mobile trajectories, the cultural values ascribed to these linguistic elements, and our Spracherleben such as experiences of at times knowing the lingo and at times feeling out of place. We sought moments in writing where linguistic traces of these mobile trajectories, which we share with so many academic or other linguistic nomads, surface and add meaning to our texts. Rather than feeling at a disadvantage, feeling stuck in a place of not mastering any language, a “no-lingualism” (Mahmutović, this issue), how might we draw on these treasures in our linguistic baggage in the face of monolingual expectations?

Brigitta Busch’s research approach also provided inspiration for how we conducted our conversations. Over the period of a summer month, we met through the video conferencing tool Zoom and recorded four conversations often exceeding the two hours we had planned. To stimulate our conversations and introduce experiential ways of reflecting, we incorporated arts-based methods, such as representing our linguistic repertoires by colouring in body silhouettes (following Busch’s language portrait approach, e.g. 2021), reading literary texts on intranational migration as a form of social commentary (Misztal, 2016), and staging a role play in which we enacted a writing class. We extended these conversations in writing by composing and responding to our creative or simply reflective think pieces. In the spirit of autoethnographic approaches, we charted and reflected on our writing experiences in the light of our touchstone concepts and socio-cultural phenomena, such as the politics of publishing (see Chang, 2009; Papen, 2008).

### *Act III: Place-making in the contact zone*

*From: Rosie <Rosie@bangor.uk>  
To: Kathrin <Kathrin@stockholm.se>  
Sent: 15 July 2021 07:43*

*Dear Kathrin,*

*I do hope you’re having a lovely time back in Germany with your family. I’m intrigued that we’ve started this little project at a time in the year when we are both involved in some kind of ‘homecoming’.*

*I’ve planned various meet-ups with family and friends during my four days in the ‘Sowth’. I say ‘Sowth’ because it’s how the characters in the Welsh novel I’m reading at the moment refer to South Wales! William Jones is a sort of anti-hero – a very ordinary, kindly and law-abiding North Wales quarryman in the early years of last century. But the day comes when he takes a massive decision and decides to leave his incredibly selfish wife and go and stay with his his sister and brother-in-law (Meri and Crad) and their family in the cultural melting pot which was the South Wales coalmining valleys in the middle years of the twentieth century. Life is harsh – the local mines have closed and many are out of work. And to his surprise, William Jones encounters Welshmen who do not speak Welsh at all! He also gets used to*

*hearing a mish-mash of Welsh and English and a local Welsh dialect which is strange to his ears.*

*But there's humour in this book as well as tragedy and our anti-hero is all ears and eyes as he encounters and begins to process what is new. He is utterly bemused by the tightly-packed terraced houses and the landscape scarred by King Coal, but he is also intrigued by the tight sense of community and the fact that those he meet speak so highly of their neighbours and friends. Let me translate a little extract for you, in which William Jones views the community from his bedroom window. I think it gives a flavour of his ponderings as well as a certain endearing sense of pride in his own capacity for observation. In muttering to himself before he goes to bed, he reveals to the reader that even though he still doesn't really understand the people in this very different region of his own home country, he is beginning to grasp their values and patterns of speech:*

*He stood by the window for a long time gazing at the valley below. By now, curtains of smog and shadows, like a light mist, hid its ugliness, and long lines of lights hung along it, with two of them revolving around one another for about a mile into the distance and then turning suddenly to the right out of sight. There was no peace and quiet here, even on a fine July night like this one, thought the quarryman to himself. He heard wild voices incant a crude English song in a nearby street and the strains of vulgar dance music reached his ears. This was a strange environment. Do the people make the place? Yes, said William Jones to himself, as he turned away from the window. And as he did so, hark! He could hear some of those cheeky rogues right now. He didn't understand Grad and Meri at all. "Not at all", he said with a sigh as he slipped into bed.*

*Guess what Kathrin? What has been lost in this translation is the fact that William Morgan has created a translanguaging space! Here's the Welsh original of that last sentence:*

*"Ddim yntôl", meddai gydag ochenaïd wrth lithro i'w wely.*

*"Not at all", he said with a sigh as he slipped into bed.*

*Rather than saying "Dim o gwbl" which would have been the equivalent Welsh expression, William has copied his sister-in-law's now anglicised Welsh – which is evidently peppered with English expressions. The novel's author T. Rowland Hughes has communicated this to the reader by choosing a spelling that mimics Welsh pronunciation and clearly both he and his central character are rather proud of their ability to parody the speech of the valley people in this way.*

*Gotta dash now – I've got a dentist's appointment! Look forward to our next conversation once we're both back 'home'!*

*all the best*

*Rosie*

From: Rosie <Rosie@bangor.uk>  
 To: Kathrin <Kathrin@stockholm.se>  
 Sent: 18 July 2021 14:25

*Hi Rosie,*

*I enjoyed your recent email. Before our next conversation, I thought I'd send you a brief response – I was so intrigued by that quote from William Jones. People surely do “make the place”. They do so through language as depicted in the novel. Jones, the “intra-national” economic migrant (!), finds himself in what Mary Pratt called a “contact zone” – social spaces where languages and cultures come into contact and mutually influence each other with borders between languages becoming fuzzy. Jones experiences the variety of Welsh he encounters in his family as alien but begins to appropriate it by using some of “their” phrases albeit with some irony.*

*I guess we can both relate to this experience of migration, arriving in a place where taken-for-granted things have to be questioned, where one isn't yet part of the history and where one doesn't share cultural references! Our identities are challenged and reshaped when, notgedrungen, urged by necessity and curiosity, we interact with the place and the people. Contact zone is an apt metaphor I think because Jones, even though a stranger, doesn't stand outside the place. He is geworfen, to use Heidegger's expression – thrown into the already existing place. It's there and it shapes his response, but Jones also brings something to the place and contributes to making the place. And yes, I agree, we definitely see a translanguaging space that the author devises when Jones creatively incorporates the iconic phrase in his soliloquy and critically acknowledges that it is both strange to him and appropriate to the place. This discursive place-making is the linguistic repertoire in action. It's about bodies, beings who are continuously engaged in place-making.*

*More when we meet.*

*Toodlepip!*

*Kathrin*

Bangor, Stockholm, and the screen connecting them – the following Wednesday evening:

*Rosie: That last email of yours was quite a tour de force, I have to say!*

*Kathrin: Yes, I know. I got carried away and inspired. I was thinking quite a bit about such literature. I've come across a number of novels that use other languages than the main language just like in your example. Expressions, but also terms, that are relevant to the setting. And if I think about it, it adds something of the place to the story. Here it seems to add authenticity.*

*Rosie: I like that. You know, in my creative writing class the other day, I wrote this story and it was in Welsh. But it's all about Leipzig and it used some German words too and that was exactly what I*



*was trying to do. It's a text for a little picture book, a story of a little girl who goes for a walk around the city and she sees the Zooschaufenster and then the Unihochhaus and the Gewandhaus. And then her mother, guess what? She's a Straßenmusikantin! These are things that, if I had translated them, I would have lost them, well in my own understanding at least. But it is a picture book so the child that you are sharing it with will see the picture of the Zooschaufenster and then they will see what it's about. But I love it. And for me that's what creating literature is about. I let go of it without having explained everything to the reader. When one of the editors was asking me the other day about this article I wrote for a Welsh journal and some of the creative bits, she was going, well is this person meant to be this or that? And I said, well it doesn't matter. Because I've left the decision to the reader, and that really gives me joy. I feel like I've said the things I needed to say even if the reader doesn't find all the answers to their questions, but that's because I've left them the space to make some new meanings.*

*Kathrin: That's what I always tell my students not to do in academic writing – leave the reader to make up their own mind.*

*Rosie: Indeed. And for me, in an academic text it's the terminology that is maybe subtly different. Do you remember the article we read about trawsieithu? They spend quite a lot of time explaining what it is not. And in a sense they have to do that because they are taking a Welsh term and coining an equivalent English term and then they say there are a lot of other people who talk about this same term, but stress that it is not this and it is not that and it might be a bit more like this. And personally I'm left wondering why anyone felt they had to translate it out of Welsh in the first place. Feels a whole lot like language imperialism to me!*

*Kathrin: Yeah, what is in a term and its use ... But it's so interesting because we've just shown examples where having other languages in the text is really significant in fiction. But how do you kind of take that over into academic writing?*

\* \* \* \* \*

Pavlenko (2014) has shown in her investigation of *The Bilingual Mind* that drawing on other languages in literary texts is well known. It seems to have gained urgency in the modern era and has become a much-discussed literary device during the accelerated globalization of the past three decades (Yildiz, 2012). At its best, using additional languages is not a cheap means to index a physical space but a literary device that creates resonance with the reader's experience – a social space of belonging or of alienation as in the example above. Yet, including different languages in academic writing, even in research on trawsieithu, is

surprisingly rare. Ofelia García's (2019) translingual commentary stands out here and we will return to her text below.

When exploring the potential for widening the scope of academic and creative writing, we realized that we also had to engage with the creative aspect of translingual spaces in the form of our writing. We therefore chose to incorporate elements of narrative methods in educational studies (Coulter & Lee Smith, 2009) and ideas from creative literary criticism (Marks, 2015). Using fictional elements in academic writing is only slowly gaining ground. Its power lies in evoking resonance and verisimilitude, being honest about (re)presenting one story and one truth rather than the story and the truth that academic prose so often implies (Gibson, 2020). We are alert to the possibilities of multiple points of view and the literary device of an unreliable author to avoid mimicking the powerful position of a researcher-narrator (Coulter & Lee Smith, 2009). Such playfulness invites one into the conversation – and leads one, almost without realizing it, to scrutinize critically the paper's argument. The heteroglossic form affords glimpses into the varied layers of translocal and translingual writing practices.

#### *Act IV: Place-making as activism or the legitimacy of trawsieithu*

*Kathrin: I recently came across this piece by Ofelia García where she exemplifies translingual writing. It's a commentary for a special issue in 2019 in the journal Translation and Translanguaging in Multilingual Contexts and it's called "The curvas of translanguaging". So she combines here linguistic forms from the named languages English and Spanish. Here is how she starts:*

Linking translanguaging with other teorías críticas is the goal of this collection of articles editada por Tian and Link. As the poema "Tren," co-creado by Latinx estudiantes in the article by Link y Arango says, "La vida tiene muchas curvas," and so does translanguaging. [...]

But the viaje in which this issue takes us ends up revealing two very important issues:

1. that the bilingüismo of students is seldom taken up in other teorías críticas;
2. that translanguaging work has often lacked the acto político y crítico of other critical theories.

That is, whereas many teorías críticas have taken up the subject of language and literacy education as political acts, the emphasis on estudiantes bilingües minorizados has seldom been un objeto de interés. At the same time, translanguaging work in escuelas has often not been transformativo, working only as scaffold toward one destinación – the dominant language only. In the United States and Canada, the contextos of the estudios in this issue, the destinación is English only. (p. 86)

*At the end she comments on her translanguaging:*

Besides an acto político, translanguaging must also be creative ... my voice in this piece is a response to Link and Arango's important question [in the same issue]: 'What are ways scholars can incorporate their own translanguaging practices into their research, writing, and presentations with other translanguaging scholars?' I hope that in some small measure, I have started in the viaje that Link and Arango have charted for all of us. (p. 92)

*Kathrin: It's a bit confusing at first, isn't it! What do you think she's trying to achieve? To slow down the process of reading? Or does it add something else entirely?*

*Rosie: I don't want this to sound negative, but I almost find it the lazy approach: choosing to speak in a kind of relaxed way where you know the other person will understand what you're talking about. It's like when I'm talking English, I sometimes say, 'I feel a bit überfordert' or 'What I need to deploy now is a Beschäftigungsmaßnahme', something like that. Normally I would do it when I don't have an appropriate English term in my head and I can't be bothered with a long explanation. So here she is just not having to spend ages thinking 'how do I say teorías críticas?' and trying to work it out in English. Instead, she can just go right ahead and say it how she would normally say it.*

*Kathrin: Yes, but the Spanish words are quite close to their English counterparts. You can follow the text even if you don't know much Spanish. I guess it illustrates García's point about the fluidity between languages. If one reads it out loud, it's at times hard to say where one language ends and the other starts.*

*Rosie: I agree with you. If we look back at the Welsh novel, there the Welsh spelling of English words has a similar effect. It blurs the borders between the languages. But at the same time it makes the distinction sharper. We hear the English words in how the characters speak. And that's what makes the new place strange for William Jones. But is that what the academic text is doing? A clever parody? I'm not sure. So why do you think she is doing it then?*

*Kathrin: Well, if we look at the content, what is she actually saying?*

*Rosie: I think what she is saying is translanguaging could be a political act but it's often not been transformative because it just helps towards the dominant language. I'm thinking about my friend's dad who told me he used trawsieithu when he was teaching geography in a Welsh language comprehensive school in which some of the kids came from English-speaking homes. What he was wanting was for all of the students in the class to get a good education and achieve their full potential. I think he chose to encourage trawsieithu because he was recognising that most of them spoke and understood Welsh but some of them didn't feel as confident in their written Welsh or in their reading. If there were notes*

*provided, he would provide them in both languages. But he also used resources like films and TV clips that were in English. Was he employing English as a scaffold towards the destination of the dominant language (Welsh in this case)? I'm not sure. And I'm not sure what you would call the dominant language where a lot of the resources are in English anyway. I think he was just trying to make sure that they all kind of got the most out of the geography lesson.*

*Kathrin: So in your context Welsh is the target but most of the resources are in English, but in the North American context, the aim is English and the resources are in English. So there is a slightly different context which means that the political act in the American context is to allow Spanish into the classroom whereas the political act in the Welsh context would be to use Welsh in the first place.*

*Rosie: Yeah I was going to say that. The revolution here is that these Welsh medium schools actually exist. There were hardly any in existence when I was in primary school myself back in the 1970s.*

*Kathrin: But if we go back to the academic piece, is that a political act? Of course, it's designed for a public space, in contrast to our whatsapp messages! So it needs to be understood by a wide readership. But it's also designed to challenge expectations of academic reading. Everything we learn not to do in academic writing. So maybe yes, it is a political act in the sense that it breaks with conventions.*

*Rosie: And it is also creative. The poem she quotes takes us into the bilingual North American classroom. But is it transformative? Does it add meaning as well as challenge conventions? Where is the stuff that brings energy, that is lifegiving, that is more than the sum of the parts? Ok, maybe *estudiantes bilingües minorizados* is a specific term that affirms the use of Spanish in North America. But I'm not sure I quite get it. And maybe that wasn't the intention for the commentary.*

*Kathrin: It's definitely different from everything I've seen before. We've talked about academic writing in English that uses terms in the language in which they were coined, like *trawsieithu* or *Spracherleben*. But I've seen texts in Swedish that insert quotes from English texts and assume everyone will understand them. Whereas I'd say I'm usually expected to translate any term or quote into English in an otherwise English text. So there is also a different dynamic. But García doesn't do that in her predominately English text. She expects the reader to work it out.*

*Rosie: It's a complex dynamic. What I have found in writing in Welsh is that it's quite a fine balance to decide when to translate something and when to leave it in the English. I mean, even though everyone would understand it, you have to be really careful not to leave too much in English because it will very quickly be perceived to dominate. On the other hand, if I use too many Welsh words when speaking, especially the neologisms like newly dreamed up words for scientific concepts and bits of tech, then I will be regarded as to big for my own boots!*

*Kathrin: Sounds like it's pretty tricky to strike the right balance?*

*Rosie: Yeah that's right. A bit of a mine-field really!*

### 3. Epilogue

What then have we gained from our Silly Season conversations? What did the concepts of trawsieithu and translocality add to our reflections on creative and academic writing? First of all, we realized the intricate connection between the use of trawsieithu for meaning-making and place-making in our writing (and reading) practices. Place-making in writing goes beyond the description of physical places and can create Erlebnisse or resonate with readers' Erfahrungen<sup>1</sup> of movement and locality, not least by integrating elements of different languages in texts.

Li Wei's concept of translanguaging space has been fruitful for exploring the connection between place-making and trawsieithu. Translanguaging space emphasizes the role of the linguistic repertoires of the writers and readers in negotiating this place-making creatively and critically. The fictionalized responses to a range of texts have highlighted that the creative and the critical, the playful and the normative are not mutually exclusive opposites, but rather functions of each other as the creative meaning-extending derives precisely from the transgression of perceived language boundaries. Words that are recognized as 'other' can evoke feelings of estrangement as well as of familiarity.

The negotiation plays out differently in the Acts within different "regimes of comprehensibility" (Bodin, Helgesson & Huss, 2020, p. 714). Such regimes require writers to keep precautions to ensure readers can meaningfully engage with their texts (e.g. through translation or paraphrasing or simply including the 'other' as a political statement). The 'inner translanguaging' of Act I and the collaborative writing initiative of Act II are informed by the writers' linguistic repertoires that are known to the writers. Such trawsieithu in the drafting or initiation stages is well documented (e.g. Lillis & Curry, 2022). The relational function of Act II is comparable to the "sense of connectedness" experienced in the creation of translanguaging spaces in informal spoken interaction (Li, 2011, p. 1234) that in this case indeed initiated "new ... practices" (ibid., p. 1223).

The published texts in Acts III and IV provide normative frameworks within which writers can draw on their full linguistic repertoire, or calculate effects of transgressing. In fiction writing, trawsieithu is an important rhetorical device for crafting a setting and evoking a social space. Academic publications have generally been considered to contrast with fiction in that they are closed texts that aim to present a compelling argument (Bazerman, 1988). Academic texts rarely pay attention to place-making other than in quotes from fieldnotes or study participants. Inserting terminology in its original language might create an epistemic space, indicating the heritage of a Denkkollektiv (thought collective, see Young, 2018 after Fleck, 1979). These terms are meant to carry over an essence of meaning, but eventually succumb to the push and pull forces of the new meaning environment that will inevitably add further nuances.

Our reflections include the reception of translanguaging texts. We enjoyed identifying the anglicized Welsh and all it invokes in the Welsh novel; we had to adjust our reading habits to engage with the evocative meanings of interweaving

English and Spanish elements in an academic commentary. The two texts function differently in their respective regimes of comprehensibility. In terms of linguistic constraints, readers of Welsh can sound out the English cognate; readers of academic English can understand most of the Spanish elements due to shared Latin roots. In terms of language ideologies associated with language choices, the texts engage in place-making and evoke being in the Welsh coalmining town or possibly the bilingual north American classroom. But how much English would have been tolerated in a Welsh novel published in 1944, and how much now? Readers of English in some academic fields might consider a few German or Welsh compounds to be a sign of sophistication, as appreciating these terms might require some specialized prior knowledge. Too much of the dominant academic lingua franca, English, can be seen as a threat in Swedish, German and certainly Welsh texts. Deviating from such normative frameworks is a political act. But to what extent is it transformative?

Like García, we wanted to test how we can incorporate our own translingual writing practices as a creative and political act. Looking back, we employed fewer techniques for emphasizing the fluidity between languages that García highlights in her work. Instead, we focused on adding layers of meaning by inserting words that might appear alien to some readers. We navigated regimes of comprehensibility by at times translating and explaining as we would expect in academic texts. At times, we omitted any further clues and accepted possible incomprehension and its “aesthetic effects” for different readers (Tidigs & Huss, 2017, p. 210) as we had observed in creative translingual writing.

During the process of arriving at this piece, we realized that making a clearing for new ways of knowledge production requires trans-formation, not only drawing on different languages but also different genres. The narrative form affords evocative meanings, raises questions, and invites the reader to reflect further. The closest characterization of our piece might be a *Sonderbeitrag* in the spirit of the old meaning of essay, *ein Versuch* in all its *Eigenartigkeit*. We hope that, like a good essay, our text can be understood on different levels of meaning and enjoyed.

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