Towards a new Multi-dimensional Ecopoetics of Place: a personal journey towards a multilingual English view of Spanish place

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Abstract

In her recent book, *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), Ursula Heise dismisses 'the conventional assumption that somehow all [perceptions of global processes] still have to be rooted in local perceptions and experiences' (55-6). But might this still actually be true. It is possible to argue that all of Heise's examples of global processes can be evidenced through local case studies. This paper will argue that local experiences of nature are themselves inevitably also global ones, since the local cannot be unaffected by global processes. But our experiences of the global are often local. Hence our experiences of the global do, indeed, "have to be rooted in local perceptions and experiences".

So what are the implications of this for an ecopoetics of place? I will demonstrate that a poetic evocation of the mysteries in the local, of embodied knowledge of place, of dwelling in the biosemiotic richness of the bioregional familiar, is undervalued by Heise's book. Actually, ecocriticism's early engagement with locality might still be a useful entry point, or anchor point, for environmental awareness. But what of the multilingual sense of place in its local/global dimensions? This enquiry will feature an experiment in translation conducted with ecocritics in Spain and be supported by poems in English and Spanish from a duel language collection *Al Otro Lado de Aguilar* by Terry Gifford and Christopher North (Oversteps Books, 2011) that represents a creative enquiry into the multilingual senses of place.

Essay

This is a reflection upon a failed experiment concerning languages and place. It extends an earlier interest in the linguistic construction of place, but now asks questions about the framing of a place in different languages by those who are multilingual and by those who are not but must confront multilingualism. The

methodology adopted here is that of narrative scholarship, a term first coined by Scott Slovic[1] and a key exponent of which is Ian Marshall. All of Marshall's work has situated his reading and reflection upon texts - historical, theoretical, fictional or poetic - within a personal narrative of a journey that is physically engaged with place.[2] In his most recent book, *Border Crossings* (2012), Marshall struggles to understand the nature of haiku – its stresses, diction, punning and stance towards nature in the Japanese – whilst attempting to write haikus in English about the American and Canadian places he is engaged with in walking the International Appalachian Trail over the course of several summers. Marshall charts his own learning in the very process of his ongoing daily study of aspects of haiku during his walk and this learning produces his own attempts at haiku about his immediate environment. His creativity is at once his mode of enquiry and the outcome of it. European critics have tended to be more protective of their subjectivity under the cloak of high theory, but narrative scholarship challenges such a dualism by putting theory to the test of actual experience, just as it demolishes the traditional separation of criticism and creativity. This essay is also a documentation of a learning process as a result of an enquiry into the linguistic construction of place.

As a stage of that process a critique is made of some of the theoretical positions taken by Ursula Heise in her book *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global* (2008) in an attempt to establish a more nuanced notion of the global that is inclusive of bioregionalism. One indication of the global might be the ability, or, indeed, the need to speak more than one language. Yet which language would be chosen by a speaker to describe their most intimate bioregional experiences of place? Would the use of a language that is not of the place itself alter the speaker's ability to describe an intimately known place? Would such a description in a different language feel adequate to the speaker to convey the essentials of a subjective sense of place? And what implications for our concept of globalism might be implied from the answers to these questions? Globalism assumes a multilingual communication, but what are its limits for the communication of a subjective bioregional sense of place? Would this differ if prose and for poetry were the mode of communication? Indeed, such questions might challenge the very idea of a sense of place that has long been embedded in our discourse and is explored in this book. This essay cannot resolve all these questions, of course, and the failure of its ultimate experiment indicates some of the difficulties of getting to grips with realities of their expression in practical terms. It might also be the

case that narrative scholarship is an inappropriate methodology for addressing these questions. But this would not be known unless it were tried. So this essay is a personal journey of thinking about some of the dimensions and features of our discourses of place.

The first chapter of my book *Green Voices* (2011; 1995) was titled 'The Social Construction of Nature' and in it I argued that there can be no neutral description of nature since language inevitably carries, embedded within it, valuations and attitudes that are both culturally and individually specific. Any description of place, for example, is framed twice: by the language of a text assembled by the author from what is culturally available and by the associations the individual reader brings to that language. I attempted to demonstrate this by making a neutral – or at any rate as neutral as possible - a representation in language of the view through the frame of the window in front of which I was writing on the computer. This was as coldly factual a description of place as I could muster. In the frame of my computer screen I composed a paragraph of language as empirically neutral as I could make it:

> I am writing this at my home in Sheffield, England. If I turn my head a little away from the frame of the screen on which I'm writing, I look through the frame of a window. This frame is filled with two things: tree and sky. Both are constantly changing, although at different rates. The Japanese cherry has just finished its two weeks of flowering. Now as I look into the top of the tree I see branches and leaves. In the winter I shall look through the branches to the top of a terrace of houses dipping away to miles of industrial buildings and housing estates. Above the tree the blue sky is filling with clouds. It has started to rain. The newly-arrived swifts have disappeared. The rain gets heavier. I see it and hear it. (32)

First it should be noted that there are at least four elements of the global in single paragraph of a view through a window of home: the Japanese cherry tree, the industry which actually exports Sheffield steel around the world, the migrating swifts, and one could add the global weather system's local effect. Curiously, although this is an urban place in a city of heavy industry, it seems that the mere mention of the tree and the birds in this construction of place gave the writing an association with pastoral beauty, even lyricism although this tone was deliberately avoided, for many readers. Perhaps more significantly, the suggestion that both tree and birds were part of seasonal change evoked a

strongly positive association for readers. This response was consistent with the evidence quoted elsewhere in that chapter that humans gained comfort from living in the close presence of dynamic, changing, elements of nature – what I did not then know had been conceptualised ten years before by E. O. Wilson as 'biophilia' in his book of that title (1984). *Green Voices* went on to distinguish the 'pastoral' idealisation of representations of nature from 'anti-pastoral' corrections to it, leading to the identification of what I called 'post-pastoral' representations or framings that, whilst avoiding both these stances, connected human nature to external nature in a manner that sort to avoid the distortions of both.

Of course, postmodern geography insists on a recognition of multiple frames for representing place, depending upon the economic, political, historical, familial, aesthetic, global and local situatedness of the viewer.[3] For the teacher of creative writing standing with a group of students looking at a landscape this might become a series of exercises that reveal the multi-dimensional frames, or layers, of landscape. The chapter 'Teaching Post-Pastoral Poetry of Landscape' in my book *Reconnecting with John Muir: Essays in Post-Pastoral Practice* (2006: 121-129) records just such an approach to exploring the layers of the landscape of the English Lake District with creative writing students. But especially interesting in terms of a self-aware attempt to represent place avoiding the twin traps of the pastoral and the anti-pastoral is the book's Appendix B titled 'Twenty-five Kinds of Post-Pastoral Landscape Poem' (2006: 181-2) which invites the creative construction of frames such as 'workers in a landscape', 'community uses of landscape', 'futuristic landscape', 'researched history', 'confessional', 'leaving' and 'voicing an "Earth Warrior" in this landscape'.

Some of these dimensions might be seen as a kind of postmodern ecosublime in as far as they deepen an aesthetic sense of place. But they might equally be seen as unsettling an ecosublime with the postmodernity of their challenges to it. The global dimensions of this place could also be seen as endorsing or contesting its role as an English postmodern ecosublime. As one of the international networks of national parks, the Lake District both benefits and suffers from conservation imperatives and visitor pressure. It plays a role in the global debates about water conservation and exploitation. Wordsworth's home at Dove Cottage provides guides to the house printed in half a dozen languages as the Lake District increasingly attracts international visitors as a World

Heritage Site. Global tourism brings its own range of dimensions of class, expectations, social conventions and modes of transport to a distinctively local Cumbrian culture. Bioregionalism is confronted in the English Lake District by a multilingual postmodern globalism.

In her book, *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global* (2008), Ursula Heise has drawn attention to how 'local and national identities depend upon excluded others, how they rely upon but often deny their own hybrid mixtures with other places and cultures' (2008: 42). This may increasingly hold true for the Lake District as it is culturally shaped by its modes of catering for global tourism, for example. But Heise goes further in critiquing localism and bioregionalism by calling for environmentalist thinking 'to shift the core of its cultural imagination from a sense of place to a less territorial and more systematic sense of planet' (56). Heise is usually careful to ensure the inclusion of the local in her broadest definitions, as in the following: 'Understanding global risks as shared environmental realities that are nevertheless shaped by and filtered through a range of different cultural frameworks, including local forms of inhabitation, forms part of the environmentally oriented cosmopolitanism I [have] outlined' (123). But elsewhere she can throw the baby out with the bathwater.

Heise refers to 'a sense of place and the knowledge that comes with it' as perceived by 'most people' as 'a kind of hobby' (55). Although this may be true, it is surely a matter for regret and education, rather than for point-scoring *against* the local. What Heise dismisses as 'the conventional assumption that somehow all [perceptions of global processes] still have to be rooted in local perceptions and experiences' (55-6) might still actually be true. It is possible to argue that all of Heise's examples of global processes can be evidenced through local case studies. Indeed, it is surely a fundamental strategic error to suggest that bioregionalism is, in effect, 'a kind of hobby' for most people and, more seriously, to resist, or even to denigrate, the notion that perceptions of the global 'still have to be rooted in local perceptions and experiences'. The route into a concern for global conservation and sustainability is, for many people, through an intimate engagement with their rootedness in the locality of place. But the notion of cultural hybridity within place, for which I am arguing in this essay, is particularly interesting for places that are inhabited by people who speak more than one language.

What was missing from the multi-dimensions of place in the English Lake District in my Appendix B was the challenge of the multilingual. How might a Japanese viewer on the Wordsworth tour represent this place? What recognitions and differences would such a viewer observe in this place? What would be most powerfully attractive or repulsive in this place? What would such a viewer say about the history, politics, or aesthetics of this place? What words would a Japanese writer use to describe this place? How would this writer translate those signifiers into English? Would completely different signifiers be necessary? How would these translations be different and similar to the writer and to the reader? Is it possible for the key concepts of Romanticism as understood in this place in Wordsworth's time to be communicated? Do the Japanese, for example, have a concept of the sublime, or of Wordsworth's 'commonwealth', or nature's 'ministry'?

Recently these questions have become relevant to me as the co-author of a collection of poems about place in the Alicante province of Spain that is published as a duel language book in English and Spanish, *Al Ortro Lado del Aguila* (2011). This book contains fifteen poems from me about the village of Sella, where I live for half the year, and fifteen poems by Christopher North who lives in the village of Relleu, separated from Sella by the mountain known locally as Sierra Aguila, the eagle mountain. Hence the book's title, *The Other Side of Aguila*. Before going any further, it would perhaps be useful to recognise here that narrative scholarship methodology necessitates a personal and necessarily anecdotal contextualisation. Since this essay has begun by tracing the developments in my personal thinking about theories of place, I ought to go further and briefly indicate how I come to be writing about the village of Sella, inland from the Costa Blanca region of Spain. Some of the elements of the experimental enquiry in this essay will have their source in this contextualisation. A biography of place and its different meanings at different stages of a life is essential to a subjective engagement with theory and its lived interpretation, or enworlding, whether it is Patrick Murphy's Bakhtinian dialoguing with the 'another' in place,[4] or Wendy Wheeler's biosemiotic intuiting of sign systems in place,[5] or Deleuze and Guattari's 'transcendental empiricism'[6] of place.

As a retired university teacher of creative writing I can look back on three phases of experiencing place. These might be called 'family place', 'working place' and 'chosen place' and they might represent three kinds of experience of

bioregionalism. Within each of these temporal notions of my personal biography of place there are wider complications and tensions. Although my family came from the Fens, eight kilometres north of Cambridge in England, I grew up in the city of Cambridge, but visited grandparents often across the flat black fields and under the huge skies of the Fens. To be a student I chose to live in the big northern industrial city of Sheffield and it was in this city that I lived all my working life until I retired eight years ago. But a visit as a 16 year-old with my Cambridge Boy Scout troop to the mountains of the Lake District introduced me to rock-climbing and led to the choice of Sheffield to be a student, close to the crags of the Peak District. Whilst living in the city, the moors and crags were only twenty minutes drive away[7] which my children, as they grew up, came to regard as their back garden where we played in all seasons at evenings and weekends. When I retired, my 'chosen place' was the village of Sella, in the heart of the mountains of what is known locally as the Marina Baixa, yet twenty minutes drive from a beach of the Coast Blanca.

In our book Christopher and I engage in a dialogue about the nature of our relationship with our respective Spanish places. In this I explain that,

> I first visited the village of Sella over New Year 1990 after climbing on the crags outside the village. From the vertical limestone walls the village can be seen a mile away, a cascade of densely packed small houses down a spur, crowned by a little white church. Ten years later my wife Gill Round and I spent a month at Easter in a house on the top street which no car could reach, quietly writing and reading, walking and climbing. Over a paella on the outside terrace of Maria's Bar, looking down towards the sea twenty minutes away, but ringed by soaring terraced mountains, we decided that this was the village in which we would try to buy a house.
>
> By the summer we were living in a new house on that top street that had been built part-time by our neighbour Pepe from the ruin of another neighbour's mother's old house. I began to write poems for the twice-a-year village magazine, *El Cabilló*, about some of the things I was learning about village life, working the land and our relationship to the place. When we acquired 65 almond trees on seven short terraces above the village the learning took on a new dimension. A tiny part of the future of this land had become a personal responsibility and the poetry also had to share some of this complication in its celebration of this place.

> A poetry of place requires first, a humble position of respect, before a right to be enraged or celebratory is earned. My experience has been one of listening, watching and learning. Every poet is an observer, even in his most familiar home, always trying to catch the contrasts, essences, and contradictions, the transient moments and the embedded, enduring spirits of place. The participant observer is always in the field, altering the field in the process of observing it. To my village neighbours I am both an English buffoon and an Alicante University professor, a ridiculously inexperienced farmer of almonds and a tapper at computer keys, a gullible incomer (practical joking is a mode of bonding in Sella) and a writer of unrhyming poems. My inability to be fluent in Spanish is hard to comprehend in this village: supposedly I'm educated and therefore should be able to learn things easily.
>
> The rich culture of this village is not a written one. It is a living one that sees the seasons round. Fiestas are its proud expression and villagers put a kind of casual discipline into its performances. My poems come at a moment of an apparent return to a kind of subsistence, for an aging village population invigorated by returning youth each weekend. This is the culture and debate in which they observe and participate. Is the older generation the last one to harvest the almonds? Will Sella's first new housing development be successful in renewing the village? How will the growing English population, of which I am a part, affect village life? These are some of the questions that lie behind the poetry's indirect attempts at understanding subtle social and landscape dynamics. (Gifford and North 37-38)

All this sounds very sociological, but in this poetry I am actually searching for an expression of the essential spirit of place, although with a post-pastoral awareness of poetic dangers and responsibilities. The most direct attempt to construct this spirit poetically is the poem 'Among Almond Trees' which begins:

She comes among almond trees

terraced to trap water

from the gravity of her steps.

She seeks the late light

red upon the flesh

before the bones of the hill.

She comes in the strong scent

of rosemary crushed

under her small calloused feet.

But the translation of the final stanza has raised the question of what it means to speak of place in this way in two languages, returning us to the cluster of questions raised earlier. The final stanza in English is:

It is why she comes

early and late from the house, why

there is food and a house. (p. 1)

My Spanish translators, Teresa Gomez and Peter Lauber, have rendered this as:

Y por eso llega

tarde y temprano de la casa, pues

no puede haber casa alguna. (p. 2)

There are some felicities in the sound of the Spanish here that improve on the English sounds: 'tarde y temprano', for example. It matters not at all that this is an inversion of the original word order. But in a literal sense, the last line expresses the opposite of the English text. The translators argue that this catches the mysterious, elusive, sense of place that I am attempting to convey in this poem. The Spanish requires an opposite literal sense in order to convey a powerfully expressed broader spirit of this place, which the translators also know well themselves. Actually, the concept at work in the English here is based upon the ending of a poem from the *Crow* sequence of Ted Hughes, 'Crow's Undersong'(56):

If there had been no hope she would not have come

And there would have been no crying in the city

(There would have been no city)

I understand this to mean that hope produces the crying of disappointment at the same time as it has produced the hopeful enterprise of a city in which to cry. My meaning in 'Among Almond Trees' is that the spirit of the almond trees provides both food and the income to make a house in an economic sense, but also sustains the lives in other ways that might be called a spiritual or aesthetic local identity - metaphorical 'food' and 'home'. The mysterious and elusive aspects of this may require in the Spanish the shock of 'pues / no puede haber casa alguna' when a literal translation may have resulted in not only a clunky sound, but a less effable expression.

I've learned most about what would be called in England 'agricultural practices' from the Perez family whose granddaughter, when we first lived in the village was studying English at Alicante University. Her grandfather we came to know by the family name of 'Yayo' ('grandad'). His family practiced transhumance between the village and a small house with land ten kilometres above the village on Sierra de la Real. It was there that he spoke about that life he led as a young man:

> After the snows they'd move up here
>
> to live off the land until after the almond harvest.
>
> 'Once a year my grandparents bought things,
>
> after the harvest.' Yayo looks around him.
>
> *El campo está abandonado.*
>
> A new moon has risen and a cool breeze. (p. 3)

Whilst I obviously had to translate in the poem the complicated things Yayo said, I wanted to capture a flavour of place in the language of that place, so I risked a line in Spanish, hoping that at least the last word would get across to an English reader the important element of what he was saying. Very few people now plough their terraces and harvest the almonds on such high and remote land. Californian almond producers out-priced Spanish growers many years ago. Family pin-money, a love of their own land and family tradition are the

motivations remaining among the evening and weekend almond farmers who take the trouble to work their terraces.

On the other hand the village moves forwards with the times, building huge car parks for the weekend and fiesta returnees, now lit with stark lights. And electricity has been extended on silver poles up the valley towards the mountains for outlying houses. One line in a poem echoes a complaint made at the time: '(too much electricity?)'. But this Moorish village, perched above the confluence of two rivers, is famous for its spring water, collected even by my academic translators from Alicante for its medicinal qualities (people have their favourite springs). So in the poem 'Sella Water' I wanted to capture some of these, often controversial changes in a village where,

nothing stays the same

in quite the same way –

a bridge, a road, less rain,

more English, an urbanisation,

less cholera, another land plan.

So many springs for one small village,

but never the same water. (p. 5)

For local Spanish readers, each of the changes listed will reverberate with remembered debates and experiences, I hope, whilst the writer owns up to actually being part of one of those most recent developments – the arrival of a few more foreigners living in the village, about which, the poet implies, there will inevitably be mixed feelings.

But the writer also has to accept responsibility for the land he now owns above the village. In a poem written on that land, celebrating its qualities, the writer confesses to a real dilemma that comes with ownership:

I am wondering what to do

with this land – to build

a small house, earth yellow,
embedded into a bank,
or to leave it to live
its open life, sun-baked,
storm-fed, criss-crossed at night
by wild boars hunting nuts
fallen from trees I'm beginning
to know as much as they know me.

It was expected by local people that the poet would do as they would do in this admittedly spectacular position and build a small casita - a retreat from the village house. Indeed, the new supply of piped water and electricity to this hillside changes the way one thinks of such land now:

Now the new silver pylons
charge thoughts of building
where none should have been,
and my five black dead trees
I see as stove wood for maybe two
winters behind windows. (p. 7)

To be living in a place is to be implicated in responsibilities for the dilemmas of usage that are shared by all its inhabitants to various degrees. This can be no different for the poet who might think of himself as an ecocritical participant observer. In this case, the book will allow the neighbours to be able to read the reflections of the foreigner in their midst and he must bear the responsibility for this too.

The final point to be made about the enterprise of *Al Orto Lado del Aguila* concerning language is that place also carries with it a series of concepts that can often only be expressed in the language of that place. For a poet in Spain the importance of Lorca's essay on *duende* cannot be avoided or underestimated. It is a particularly Spanish notion that is as subtle as it is untranslatable. My final poem in the book is an evocation of a particular fiesta which one year somehow incorporated a wedding in the town hall so that the villagers all became the wedding guests. 'La Fiesta de las Paellas' begins with the image of the open-air paella cooking competition in the square:

> It was like the feeding of a film crew in the Plaza Major
> in which the glamorous stars, the old hands, the Best Boy,
> could not stop playing themselves under the perfect lighting.
>
> The food had all been obtained locally and the crew brought
> their own wine, waving vaguely in the direction of their vines.
> Extras sat next to stars. Only the foreign writer stood out [...]

At some point an open-topped gold car decked out with flowers arrived with the bride and groom. When they emerged from the wedding ceremony in the town hall the couple began a dance that was both mesmerising and moving. The poem concludes with this wonderful dance that called up in the poet a careful distinction between *duende* and 'grace':

> Like a breath of air through long grasses they moved together,
> like soft waves meeting and making something new,
> arms, hips, feet turned for each other and the silent witnesses.

> Like divine birds in a rare ritual, filmed in slow motion,
> the writer thought, tears in his eyes. Not the *duende*, but
> a delicious kind of grace that might conclude a script. (p. 35)

As I was thinking about these issues of language and place I realised that the opportunity for a small experiment had presented itself at the September 2010 seminar in Alcalá de Henares of the GIECO research group where I was due to present a short seminar paper. The author of the first English language walking guide to the Costa Blanca, Bob Stansfield (1995), had given English names to places that had wonderful local names. For example, Stansfield's 'Fat Man's Agony' – a narrow cleft in the rocks of our highest mountain, the Aitana – was known locally by its Valencian name 'El pas de la Rabosa'(Domenech García *et al* 234). There are many reasons one might guess why this tricky chimney received the name which translates as the Pass of the Vixen, all of them more witty than the vulgar and sexist English name. Stansfield was almost certainly unaware of the alternative. But how would one name or describe a place if one used two languages fluently? Almost all the attendees at the seminar would have at least two languages with which to describe their favourite place. The paper I offered them was a blank sheet of paper. I guided their writing about a chosen place that they knew well to produce two three-lined poems (which I called 'haikus') about the same place in two languages. I asked them to list three words, then a fourth, that summed up the atmosphere in this place they had in mind, underline one of them, and then list three physical things in that place which contributed to that particular underlined atmosphere. By adding an adjective before and a verb after the noun, followed by an adverb, I guided the building of each line of the haiku into a sentence. I invited them to send these to me together with a sentence of reflection on what had happened linguistically in the process of this modest creative writing research in two languages.

Actually, this experiment was a revealing failure. Only two people were willing or able to send me the two haikus after the event, the others offering quite reasonable excuses such as 'this exercise just didn't work for me'. My conclusion is that the exercise could not work because a specific place is probably thought of, possessed, named, in only one language – literally, the

subjective language of that place for the individual writing about it. Just as the words for home country, or sense of home place, in different languages - 'Heimart' in German, or the 'Bario' for Chicanos - are impossible to translate in their complex nuances, so it may be that an individual can only describe a familiar place in one language. That is, the very words individuals use about place are subjective bioregional constructions that are untranslatable into another language. This has huge implications for multiculturalism, and for the European project, for example.

The first respondent, who was English, wrote about a place in Ireland, first in English and then in German:

The Canal Lock (Grandparents' House)
The silent members of the family stand awkwardly.
The plunging water smells musty.
The emerald green grass is trampled.

Kanalschleuse zwischen Baggot Street und Leeson Street
Die bewegungslosen Familienmitglieder schauen nachdenklich drein.
Die gruene Haustuer steht halboffen.
Der glitschige Schleusenuebergang lockt gefaehrlich zum Rueberlaufen.

The following comments by this first respondent reveal that the second haiku must inevitably represent a further stage of thinking about this place so that something additional is conveyed. He calls this 'an interpretation'. This would be true, even if the second haiku was an attempt to render the first as accurately as possible. A deepened sense of this place would perhaps require a slightly different kind of language for a different stage or quality of possession of place.

> The place is the steps in front of 1 Wilton Place, Dublin, where my grandparents lived when I was a child in the early sixties. The first line is based on a photograph. The house looked onto the canal on the other side of the road, with grass and trees along its banks. The only way to cross without a detour was the lock gate, and crossing it was exciting and frightening. When I was writing the German version I thought that the feelings I associated with both the photo of the family and the lock gates are mixed ones (pleasure and apprehension).

> So the German version is probably less an atmosphere and more an interpretation of it.

My second respondent, who was Spanish, wrote first in English, then in Spanish, presumably about the same place, although, significantly, the titles are different:

The Wood

The bright sun shines silently

This long river runs fluently

That blue sky stays peacefully

The city of Zamora

El sol brillante luce lentamente

Este cálido aire sopla delicadamente

Ese cielo azul brilla apaciblemente

Perhaps it is not surprising that the second respondent preferred the Spanish haiku since this is the language of that place. He wrote:

> To the question 'Which one do you prefer?' I´d say the second one, the Spanish. Maybe because I´d just finished [presenting] my paper on Claudio Rodríguez and I was thinking about my city. The words I underlined are the same: Luz/light. Claudio was a poet fascinated by light, and so am I.

A third, Spanish, respondent had lost the paper on which the two haikus were written, but kindly wrote to me about the experience, noting the different qualities evoked by the different languages used about the same (Spanish) place, although clearly the Spanish version went deeper:

> I was somehow surprised to find out that both versions complemented each other in the following way: I felt that the English one captured more vividly the feeling of 'life' surrounding me in that extraordinary landscape whereas the Spanish version depicted more accurately the inner feelings of peace and relaxation that that particular place made me feel - quite curious really!

Each of these respondents notes the way that different languages evoke different qualities in the naming the same place. Clearly, for those who are aware of possessing a place in more than one language there is a multilingual dimension to the other multiple dimensions of place. This can be regarded as an aspect of globalism in the case of a tourist place like the Costa Blanca. But globalism itself is just another dimension of place like history, economics, politics, and its bioregional ecological aspects such as geology, climate, flora and fauna, which globalism should not ignore or displace. Certainly the forces of globalism, whether for good and for bad (which is an essential debate needed everywhere within bioregional or local debates about place) can be powerfully reified. But if we can now recognise that globalism is everywhere embedded in the local, this should not displace the particularities, the unique distinctiveness, the familiar idiosyncrasies of the local sense of place. On the contrary, there is all the more need to attempt to identify and articulate the essential mystery of place in all its dimensions in the representations of poets, fiction and non-fiction writers, film-makers, photographers, musicians and artists.

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[1] See Slovic 2009: xiv.

[2] See Gifford 2006: 105-118.

[3] See Minca 2001 and the praxis in Prieto 2013.

[4] See Patrick Murphy, 'Dialoguing with Bakhtin over Our Ethical Responsibility to Anothers' in Goodbody and Rigby, pp. 155-167.

[5] Wheeler, 2006.

[6] Mark Lussier, 'Blake, Deleuze, and the Emergence of Ecological Consciousness', Goodbody and Rigby, p. 256.

[7] See Gifford 2010 for a reflection in Spanish on the pastoral quality of this regular retreat and return.