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In and between Two Languages: Constructing Homes in  
Eva Hoffman's Autobiography *Lost in Translation*

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### **Thesis Affirmation**

I hereby affirm that this master's thesis was written by me without the unauthorized assistance of a third party. The resources used are clearly indicated and quoted in the references. Moreover, I confirm that this thesis has not been submitted in any form to an examination board earlier.

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# 1 Introduction

If I decided to write an autobiography, I would re-read my diary that I started when I was fourteen years old. The first memory that I noted down is from a holiday in my grandparents' summer cottage by a lake in Finland, a place that I have always considered my second home. Every year since I can remember, I spent my holidays there, mainly speaking the language that I learned from my Finnish mother, but always writing in German into my diary because I consider myself more fluent in that language after having only lived in Austria. However, there are still words in Finnish for which I would have to look up the translations. Surely, I can name more fish species in Finnish than in any other language and some practices such as *löyly* just have to be explained, or rather experienced, in order to be understood. Therefore, I would always name these things with the Finnish words and only sometimes describe their meaning in German when writing in my diary. Switching between German and Finnish and mixing both languages even within the same sentences is also a common practice within my family. I am convinced that without being able to speak Finnish, the summer cottage in Finland would not feel as much a second home as it does now. Things would not have their own names, but they would be German translations of Finnish words, sayings that my grandparents used frequently would be meaningless to me, and I would feel much more as a tourist in Finland. Since I grew up with German and Finnish, however, my home has been constructed both in and also between those two languages.

This process of constructing home takes place on a material, as well as an imaginative, cognitive, and emotional level. Especially when people change location and leave the place once considered to be home, it becomes evident that home is a fluid and ambiguous concept that cannot be explained with the mere dichotomy between here and away. When migrating, one is not only confronted with the movement of material belongings from one country to another and finding a new place to live, but also the re-creation of a sense of home which can be found in, as I will show, places, people, religion, food and music, and all these dimensions of home can be linked to language. Specifically, autobiographical texts by people who migrated and acquired a foreign language lend themselves to the purpose of investigating this phenomenon as they can use both their native and foreign tongue in their writing to construct meaning. Therefore, I will analyze the choice of language in particular situations and its connection to the notions of home in Eva Hoffman's *Lost in Translation: A Life in a New Language*. The author has chosen the English language to describe her experience of emigrating

from Poland to the United States and Canada, although her native language is Polish, and uses Polish words, such as *polot*<sup>1</sup> and *tesknota*, within her narrative which makes her text a translingual autobiography. My thesis is that the author constructs a complex sense of multiple homes via these translingual practices, creating a transnational space that is in and between languages and nations. Through a close reading of significant passages from Hoffman's text, in which she either uses specific words or reflects on significant life experiences, I will assess how and to what effect she constructs homes that are not only in English nor Polish, but in between both languages.

I will start my theoretical framework with the ways in which notions of home can be described. By providing a definition of home and dealing with it as both a concrete and an abstract concept, I aim to outline the multi-layered complexity and interpretability of the term that is at the center of this thesis. For this purpose, I will introduce the terms homeland and dwelling as spaces where homes can be constructed. As these concepts can become places of departure and destination, and of the past and the future, memories and expectations also play a significant role for the way individuals define home. Taking this into consideration, I will discuss abstract notions of home that are constructed in people's minds and through their actions in a second sub-chapter. A third sub-chapter will focus on the idea of home as a practice by introducing the concept as an act of doing home. In the following chapter about transnational or diasporic homes, I will deal with the idea that especially migration and resettlement can cause individuals to redefine concepts of home in the course of home-making processes. Here, I will focus on these constructs of home as a possibility to create and adjust to a new life that migration inevitably implies. In a third step, I will connect the issue of home and diaspora with the genre of autobiography, focusing on the role of written accounts of homemaking and their position towards nostalgia. Here, writing will not only be considered as a way of reflecting on notions of home, but more importantly of constructing them via language.

My second theory chapter will then deal with linguistic constructs of home, taking sociolinguistic approaches to multilingualism into account and zooming in on my central linguistic term, translanguaging. I will start with the introduction of the term home language as a form of language use and show how the parental home, in particular, influences language acquisition and use. After already touching upon the influence of resettlement on notions of

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<sup>1</sup> In this thesis, italics will be used in order to visually mark Polish words to be found in Hoffman's text.

home in the first part of my theoretical framework, I will continue with the consequences of migration on the acquisition, use and switching, and mixing of languages. Based on this, I will examine how acquiring languages in early childhood and as a result of migration has an impact on the linguistic identity and the feeling of home connected to it. Since transnational movements affect not only communication but also written language, I will then analyze the influence of linguistic identity on language choice in literature. The decision in which to write literature is particularly revealing of authors' relationship to their languages and the extent to which they see their home in them. However, since the boundaries between one language and another are not clear-cut and this has the effect that one can construct a home even between languages, I will deal with the topic of translanguaging in the following sub-chapter. I will first define translanguaging and introduce it as a way to construct homes via languages and then concentrate on translingual constructions of home in literature. This brings me to the analytical part of my thesis which focuses on a particular translingual work and the notions of home constructed in it.

After the theoretical part, the remainder of my thesis consists of a close reading of Eva Hoffman's translingual autobiography *Lost in Translation* that I read as a translingual work in which homes are constructed. I will introduce the book and its formal structure by contextualizing and summarizing it briefly and by providing an interpretation of the text's three-part structure, labelled by Hoffman as *Paradise*, *Exile* and *The New World*. This structure and the central motifs of the text will be related to the theme of language in the following, as it is both a focus of the book, which is already reflected in the title *Lost in Translation: A Life in a New Language*, and of the present work in general. Here, I will also outline in how far this autobiography is a translingual piece of literature because on the one hand, Hoffman wrote it in English although her native tongue is Polish and, on the other hand, she mixed two languages within her writing. In my final subchapter, I will present an analysis of concrete passages of the book in which different notions of home are constructed. The aim is not only to investigate the places that Eva Hoffman describes as home, but more importantly, to show how her narrative de-essentializes notions of home. Here, I will specifically analyze how Hoffman finds home in places, people, her Jewishness, food, and music. In all of these analyses of the multiple conceptualizations of home in the text, I will explore the role of translingual practices as a basis for examining Hoffman's home in her autobiography.

## **2 Describing Notions of Home**

Home is a complex term which has been a matter of debate within interdisciplinary research for many years. Although scholars often have a primary focus of attention which is either space, emotions or practices depending on their field of study, literature around the topic of home shows that there is always a relationship between some or even all of these aspects. Both humanities and social sciences are concerned with human beings and even though the latter are typically more research-based, the topic of home is rarely looked at from only one angle. Instead, philosophers, historians, linguists and literary scholars, geographers, psychologists, and architects usually adopt a critical approach at one point or another to take all dimensions of home into account. In this part of my thesis, I will examine the different theories about notions of home and shed a light on home as a physical and social concept, as an imagined space, and as a practice.

### **2.1 Defining Home**

Since home is a multidimensional concept, researchers from various fields of research have tried to provide a definition of home. The key difference between studies on home is that the focus is either on the material or the abstract dimension. Often, home is considered as a physical place or dwelling in a particular country or as a symbolic and mental space found in different spheres of life. The main interest of researchers can be derived from the academic discipline, but also from the words and concepts that are used synonymously to refer to home: Homelands and different types of dwellings are houses that can be referred to by the name of the country, city, or area, as well as the type of building or shelter used for living (Oliver 9). However, dwelling is a social activity in which cognitive processes and emotional relationships to people, objects, and practices play an important role. Involvement in a social network, ownership and use of objects, familiar places and practices all convey belonging and familiarity, which are important for the feeling of being at home. Thus, dwelling is not only something that exists, but also an emotional and cognitive process and the act of doing.

Therefore, researchers, such as Fox and Blunt and Dowling, have tried to capture the multidimensionality of home with a holistic approach to the concept. Even though Blunt and Dowling are situated within the discipline of geography, they do not only concentrate on the various places for homes but consider feelings as key element of the concept of home (Blunt and Dowling 2). While concentrating frequently on one perspective, by, for example, analyzing

home from the viewpoint of a migrant (Blunt and Dowling 196), Blunt and Dowling always highlight the interconnection of imaginaries of home and spaces. In short, they say, home is “a place/site, a set of feelings/cultural meaning, and the relations between the two” (Blunt and Dowling 2f.). Based on this, they introduce the term “spatial imaginary” to define home and describe it as “a set of intersecting and variable ideas and feelings, which are related to context, and which construct places, extend across places and scales, and connect places” (Blunt and Dowling 2). The philosopher Fox supports this idea that a material definition of home as “a house, apartment, or other shelter that is the usual residence of a person, family, or household” would do no justice to the concept of home although he considers it to be the common usage of the term (Fox 4). Instead, he emphasizes the subjectivity of the definition of home regarding its reference points which can be bound to material, imaginary, or no matters to varying degrees (Fox 6). Some essential components that constitute the concept of home according to Fox are “familiarity, attraction, warmth of feeling, pride, a special sense of bonding, and other important characteristics onto dwellings, geographical locations, nations, and traditional regions in which spiritual, ethnic, religious, and historical identities are formed and dovetail into a sense of self” (Fox 8). Thus, his definition stresses the idea that home is bound to both emotional and cognitive processes and the interconnectedness between self and the concept of home as one shapes another

Because I want to include all of these many dimensions of home in my analysis of the processes of constructing home, I arrive at the following definition of home for my own work: home is a concrete or imaginary space to which a person has strong feelings of attachment, grounded in the geographic realm, as in the case of home, the material sphere, such as property, and/or the mental or emotional realm. In both its concrete and imagined forms, home is not so much a fixed object or space, but rather a fluid process of construction and re-construction, evaluation and re-evaluation of notions of belonging, and emotional relationships to one’s identity, people, objects, places, and practices.

### **2.1.1 Homeland and Dwelling**

Home is often associated with a place in its physical and material form. In a geographical sense, there is the nation as homeland which is tied to state borders and often considered in connection with politics of power and relations over history. Mallett explains the origin of the concept of homeland by saying that it “was appropriated by the ruling classes to promote a form of nationalism and patriotism aimed at protecting and preserving their land, wealth and power”

(Mallett 65). According to this, the idea of a homeland is based on power relations between different states controlled by the ruling classes. This thought is maintained and advanced by Fox, but instead of focusing on the bourgeoisie, he sheds light on the importance of a land and place for indigenous societies and the meaning of the loss thereof. When he talks about colonization and the subsequent displacement and expropriation of native people, he points out that the homeland as a physical location is closely bound up with cultural identities that may be shattered through dispossession of land: “The idea of homeland is invoked especially strongly whenever a perceived or imagined external threat appears to require the creation of symbolic and emotional associations that will promote national unity and restore a sense of safety and dominion over territory held dear” (Mallett 90). From this perspective, patriotism is particularly evoked through the fight for homeland which is necessitated through the occupancy of space.

Because the geographic boundaries between different regions are influenced by power politics, they are a fluid concept that also bring a change in the perceived homeland over time. The idea of the nation as homeland and how it developed into a rather abstract than physical concept can be analyzed on the basis of the German word *Heimat*. This term was particularly bound to an idea of the nation as an ethnically and geographically restricted area in discourses of power politics in the 1930s and 40s (Blunt and Dowling 160). During that time, the National Socialist Party used the word *Heimat* to promote Aryan sovereignty (Blunt and Dowling 160). By enforcing a “Blut-und-Boden Ideologie” and equating the terms “Volk”, “Reich” and “Heimat”, the idea of homeland was tied to a specific territory (Bastian 136). Migration and especially times of globalization, however, showed that it is dependent on time and place as explained by Boteva-Richter (Boteva-Richter 4). The association to the German word for homeland has therefore changed after the second world war and “is no longer necessarily bound to an idea of the nation” (Blunt and Dowling 160) or tool for spatial allocation for people (Boteva-Richter 4). Instead, it is a complex term that can be considered “a point (or set of points) of reference for individual social identity” (Wickham 10). This means that even the concept of homeland cannot be considered in isolation from feelings of belonging to a social group. Boteva-Richter confirms this as follows: “Die Menschen, die das Heim bevölkern, die intersubjektiven Vernetzungen sind es also, was aus einem Heim oder aus dem Geburtsland Heimat machen oder aber einem das Gefühl des Ausgeschlossen-Sein vermitteln“ (Boteva-Richter 5). Thus, homeland is not just a region delimited by state borders but rather a fluid concept dependent on political, social, and emotional factors.

Not only homeland is a fluid concept, but also any other notion of home transcends its geographical and material meaning. In general, each word that is used to denote home describes “dwelling places beyond the simple property-based formula of ‘house + identifiable parcel of land’ that prevails in cultures” (Fox 9). There seems to be a consensus among various researchers that “all dwellings are homes and all homes are dwellings” (Fox 48) but that “not all buildings are dwellings” (Blunt and Dowling 3). Heidegger devoted an essay called “Building dwelling thinking” to the question in how far buildings serve as a place for dwelling and concluded that “[o]nly if we are capable of dwelling, only then can we build” (Heidegger 362). As can be seen from these considerations, the word dwelling can be used both as a noun and as a verb. Oliver provides the following definition for it: “All houses are dwellings; but all dwellings are not houses. To dwell is to make one’s abode: to live in, or at, or on, or about a place. [...] Dwelling is both process and artefact” (Oliver 9). This explanation of the word dwelling emphasizes the impact of man on the concept as both processes of homemaking and the word artefact are connected to human actions. When considering dwelling in connection with living, it becomes clear that it is not simply bound to space but encompasses emotional and cognitive processes as well as cultural practices. Selle uses the proverb “My home is my castle” (Selle 9) to outline the metaphorical meaning of home. It implies that the idea of a home is often not so much linked to the building and its characteristics than to the symbolic meaning of it as a safe and comfortable space in contrast to the outside. Thus, the significance of a place to live extends beyond its physical existence which leads me to my next chapter on remembered and imagined homes.

### **2.1.2 Remembered and Imagined Homes**

As a not only material, but also emotional and cognitive concept, homes can be mentally constructed through imagination and remembrance processes. Especially phenomenologists such as Bachelard and Jackson focus on the abstract dimension of houses as dwellings and describes them as a production of mental work. Jackson describes notions of home as a relationship or tension which can be, for example, between the places of origin and destination (Jackson 122; Bachelard 28). Based on this thought, Jackson explains that the word home “begets its own negation” (Jackson 122) as it covers oppositional understandings of the term. For Bachelard, the concept of home is always charged with thoughts and memories that are directed towards the remembered or envisioned home of daydreams. Combining their approaches, the memory of a home that has been left or the vision of a future place to live may be idealized in contrast to one another.

One phenomenon through which homes can be constructed is nostalgia, which is a complex feeling, often described as “homesickness” (Fox 51). It can only be developed under the conditions of “a secular and linear sense of time, an apprehension of the failings of the present, and the availability of evidences of the past” (Chase and Shaw 4). Instead of being an exclusively negative feeling, however, nostalgia can also be seen as “the imagination’s attempt to override, neutralize or cancel loss” through memories (Rubenstein 33). Following Bachelard’s approach, nostalgia is a way to mentally return to the original home that is missed. However, images of the past home are often idealized in order to “comfort ourselves by reliving memories of protection”, Bachelard explains (Bachelard 28). He adds: “Memories of the outside world will never have the same tonality as those of home and, by recalling these memories, we add to our store of dreams” (Bachelard 28). Thus, he promotes the idea that the remembered home is an often-idealized individual construct shaped by personal experiences. The act of remembering and images of the past will therefore always resonate in the notions of people’s home.

While memories and thoughts can cause nostalgia for a place of belonging that has been lost, they can also serve as a tool for constructing a new home. By imagining a future home, feelings of longing and belonging can be re-structured and directed towards the construction of a new place that is considered home. According to Rubenstein, already this imagination process can heal the painful aspects of nostalgia that are manifested in a feeling of longing for belonging (Rubenstein 164). This idea of nostalgia “as the imagination’s place maker for a vision” (Rubenstein 164) is also taken up by Bachelard in his theory about home as the subject of daydreaming. Memories have a great influence on the conception of a desirable home, he explains, but it can sometimes be better for an imagined home to stay an unfulfilled desire in order to prevent the childhood home from being overshadowed. He justifies this theory as follows: “For a house that was final, one that stood in symmetrical relation to the house we were born in, would lead to thoughts - serious, sad thoughts - and not to dreams. It is better to live in a state of impermanence than in one of finality” (Bachelard 81f.). In this sense, home can stay a fluid mental object which is shaped by memories and visions of future homes.

### **2.1.3 Doing Homes**

Home cannot only be seen as a physical and mental construction as described above but also as the act of doing various practices. Similar to Oliver’s definition of “dwelling as the activity of



living” (Oliver 17), the word home can also be considered a verb that “describes the experience of “being-at-home in the world” (Mallett 79). In this sense, home can be both a state of being and an act of doing. There are many different ways in which people can do or be home, but what they have in common is that they are all manifested in social behavior. As Selle explains, the concept of home as the act of living can just be grasped when it is thought of as a social event (Selle 9). “Wohnen (*to live*) ist zentrales Kulturereignis, Inszenierungsform des privaten Lebens schlechthin” (Selle 9), he states. This idea of home as a performance is also taken up by Oliver as he uses the metaphor of home as “the theater of our lives”. He focuses his work on the physical dimension of home and its building process yet highlights the importance of the practices that are done within the buildings. According to him, the acts of doing home that are central to the concept are the “major dramas of birth and death, of procreation and recreation” as well as the “scenes of daily living” which “are enacted and re-enacted in the processes of dwelling” (Oliver 17f.). Thus, not only the construction of a place is a homemaking practice but also the happenings within and around the building.

The structuring of the physical space both inside and outside are a representation of people’s individual and familial preferences and behavioral patterns. The physical and social organization of the place to live is often shaped by the idea of an ideal home which is “not just a house which offers shelter” but also “a place where personal and social meaning are grounded” (Papastergiadis 2). As such, it is affected by “[c]hanging patterns of employment, particularly the organization and location of work, together with shifts in the distribution of wealth, transformations in peoples’ ideas about community, family, even the good life” (Papastergiadis 67f.). Due to the fact that people’s practices are in constant change based on the social and economic situation, building a home that meets people’s needs is highly challenging. As pointed out in a recent architectural exhibition, “home is not just a place to sleep anymore, but a place to work, study, do sport, have fun, etc.” (Hakim 58). These practices have to be considered when constructing homes, because architecture is supposed to be “the physical representation of our way of living” (Hakim 59). Bachelard, who emphasizes the importance of lived experiences in architectural space, criticizes places where the emotional and cultural practices are not taken into consideration in the construction process of houses. Buildings in Paris in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, for example, are, in his opinion, “oneirically incomplete” (Bachelard 47). Instead of homes, he calls the constructions “superimposed boxes” that “have no roots” (Bachelard 47). For him, homes must be inhabited houses and the one that shapes people’s perception of house as home is the place where they lived in their childhood. “In short, the

house we were born in has engraved within us the hierarchy of various functions of inhabiting”, he explains (Bachelard 36). Practices done in past residences thus echo in future homes.

There are material and symbolic practices that constitute homemaking, and both are influenced by various social constructs of life, such as “intimacy, family, kinship, gender, ethnicity, class, age and sexuality” (Mallett 84). Following this idea, Bowbly, Gregory and McKie explore home as an act of doing that is conflated with family, household tasks and organization of space (Bowbly, Gregory and McKie 343). In particular, they focus on home as a place where “gendered identities are used, re- worked, and interrogated in people's everyday experiences of home and family” through practices that are part of everyday life, such as cooking and putting up shelves (Bowbly, Gregory and McKie 344f.). Depending on the practices that are implemented into everyday life, home can “convey messages about wealth, power, poverty, and other matters” (Fox 55). On a material level, a sense of home can be created through the use of objects in hands-on practices, such as tidying up, folding clothes and preparing meals, because they are usually done exclusively in a place that is considered home. On an abstract level, practices can be symbolic for being at home, such as speaking the first language. The way people emotionally relate to both physical and abstract practices depends on psychosocial factors and therefore, home can be considered an expression of various meanings, beliefs, and attitudes (Fox 56). Often practices are personal or cultural metaphors to what constitutes a good home. In this sense, they are all subject to change based on various factors such as local economic, personal, and family circumstances. Therefore, the material and imaginative geographies of home are malleable through different practices.

## **2.2 Relocation of Home**

The peak of today’s migration leads to an increasing number of people who must reconstruct their homes. According to recent statistics by the United Nation’s World Migration Report from 2022, there are around 272 million international migrants globally (McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou 2). The reasons for these high numbers can be based on various social, emotional, political, and economic factors. Although nearly two-thirds migrate because of labor (McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou 2), “plundering and deconstruction of homes and communities was and still is a regular cause of population dispersals and forced migrations” (Fox 88). In academic research, there is a tendency to distinguish between two kinds of people who change their location, namely voluntary and involuntary migrants (Fox 101; Blunt and Dowling 35), the latter being, for example, exiles, refugees and asylum seekers. Some scientists, however,

adopted a transnational approach and do not assume a conceptual difference between migrants and refugees from the outset (Al-Ali and Koser 3). Instead of focusing on reasons for migration, they focus on processes of life, such as home-making, and the factors that influence them. As transnationalism promotes the consideration of relationships, families and other unmaterial aspects of life as important constituents of home, it is perfectly applicable for investigating the impact of migration on the construct of home.

Migration has a great impact on the concept of home as several areas of life are affected by the relocation of one's place to live. When moving from one country to another, home undergoes several transformation processes. First of all, the physical dimension of home is disturbed when the geographical place of residence is relocated. Not only the building that has served as a shelter is left behind, but also the transportation of belongings needs to be considered. Secondly, the physical movement of individuals and their belongings also affects the emotional and mental dimensions of life. The concept of home does not simply change its location, yet notions of it that carry symbolic meaning can be relocated and newly constructed. According to Boteva-Richter, migrants move "immanente kulturelle Artefakte", such as language, styles, religion and eating habits that make up cultural belonging to a new, often unknown place in the world (Boteva-Richter 46). Since these artifacts are closely connected to the concept of home, it can be inferred that "international movements are also process of establishing home, as senses of belonging and identity move over space and are created in new places" (Blunt and Dowling 2). As pointed out by Al-Ali and Koser, "[o]ften a great sense of belonging to a specific place is accompanied by the wish to reproduce and/or reinvent 'traditions' and 'cultures' associated with 'home'" (Al-Ali and Koser 7). This desire can be linked to people who "have multiple allegiances to places" (Al-Ali and Koser 8). They are described as transnational migrants because they engage in practices that "are anchored in but also transcend one of more nation-states" (Al-Ali and Koser 2). As notions of home are relocated and constructed through their actions, the contrast between "home" and "abroad" becomes blurred. This leads to the construction of diasporic and transnational homes that will be described in the following.

### **2.2.1 Diasporic and Transnational Homes**

The concepts of diaspora and transnationalism are strongly connected with the process of constructing homes. In general, both "deal with homeland ties and the incorporation of persons living 'abroad' into the regions of destination" (Bauböck und Faist 20). The similarity between the two terms becomes particularly evident when looking at their etymology: Although

“diaspora” derives from Greek and “transnational” from Latin, the first syllable of each word, Διά (dia) and trans, mean “across”, “beyond” and “between”. Thus, they describe the state of being neither in one place or another, but rather in between. Originally, the term diaspora was used to refer to the forced dispersion of Jews after the Second Temple was destroyed in 586 BC and to African slaves and Armenians fleeing from the massacre during the Ottoman Empire; therefore, it was connected to a sense of involuntary displacement (Koser 25). Nowadays, however, “greatly diversified exile and ethnic communities, expatriates, refugees, “guest” workers, and other dispossessed groups sharing a common heritage have moved into the semantic domain of the term” (Seyhan 11). According to the recent definition by Blunt and Dowling, “[t]he term ‘diaspora’ refers to a scattering of people over space and transnational connections between people and places” (Blunt and Dowling 199). This explanation contains the word transnational which makes the interconnectedness of both concepts evident. Mostly, the terms diaspora and transnationalism are used interchangeably (Ali-Ali and Koser; Bauböck and Faist; Seyhan) in research about migration and home-making across borders in particular.

With migration, the original source of familiarity changes, but engaging in transnational practices can help to re-construct home. As pointed out by Boteva-Richter in her traditional approach to international migration, the changes entailed by migration are a breakdown of established structures, a reconstruction of social relationships and an emergence of new aspects of identity (Boteva-Richter 49). Migration and its consequences are further described by her as follows: “Durch den Umzug in eine zunächst fremde Umwelt und durch die Herausforderung der neuen noch zu konstituierenden menschlichen Verbindungen wird das Ich in einer interaktiven Bewegung als ein Anderes im Zwischen der Migration sichtbar” (Boteva-Richter 48). This “Zwischen”, the “between”, that she describes, is characteristic of transnationalism. Researchers that adopt a transnational approach focus “on the utilization by international migrants of modes of telecommunication and transport, their pooling of resources and successful exploitation of global markets, and their association with new social forms, political challenges and cultural resources generated by linkages across several geographical locations” (Al-Ali and Koser 3). In this sense, transnationalism serves as “a social space clearly opposed to both national and local social space” (Al-Ali and Koser xi). In this space, migrants can “maintain economic, political and social networks that span several societies” (Al-Ali and Koser 10) and thus, re-construct familiarity that was lost through dislocation. Hence, the concept of transnationalism perfectly lends itself to the analysis of the “changing relationship between migrants and their ‘homes’” (Al-Ali and Koser 1) influenced by social factors.

Frequently, transnationals are part of a larger social group of migrants forming a diasporic community that contributes to their sense of home. They are characterized by the fact that they share a common place of origin, the same native language or similar sense of identity regarding their nationality (Al-Ali and Koser 10). On the one hand, being a member of a diasporic community can compensate for the losses accrued from migration. They provide a space for sharing experiences related to homemaking, the process of adjusting to the previously foreign country and difficulties they faced regarding the challenges of relocation (Fox 101). As they often share a common native tongue, they can maintain their first language while eventually becoming bilingual or multilingual through also acquiring the language of their host country. Furthermore, by “sending remittances, travelling regularly, participating in election, etc.” (Al-Ali and Koser 11), transnational ties can be forged that create a sense of being home in more than one country. Characteristic of transnational migrants is the fact that they “are social and political actors in *both* their *home* and *host* countries” (Al-Ali and Koser 166). This way, they can “escape the confines of political definitions such as immigrant or citizen” (Koser 27). This engagement in activities across borders can, on the other hand, also cause “uneasiness, a sense of fragmentation, tension and even pain” as “dual belonging allowed by transnational practices does not merely result in pluri-local homes but might also be accompanied by a sense of rupture and discontinuity” (Al-Ali and Koser 9-10). This may lead to an increased feeling of having lost a home and longing for a reunion with the place of origins as described below.

### 2.2.2 Returning Home

After relocation, the desire to return to the geographical, emotional, or cognitive space of home may occur. Al-Ali and Koser explain it in the following way: “Members of transnational communities often have a common ethnicity, often retain a collective memory of ‘home’, and often also aspire to return to ‘homeland’” (Al-Ali and Koser 10). The wish to go back to a place that was once considered home is nurtured “a feeling of living in limbo” (xi), a “sense of being ‘neither here nor there’, rather than hybrid subjectivity” (Al-Ali and Koser xiii). This kind of distress is expressed by both “migrants who live simultaneously in two places across borders but feel that they belong to neither” and the ones “who are constrained from return migration by poor economic conditions in their ‘sending’ location but have outlived their welcome in receiving societies” (Al-Ali and Koser xiii). Thus, the initial reasons for migration influence the outlook on the future as well as ability of having “a multiplicity of fixed and/or moving homes” (Al-Ali and Koser 7). This sense of having multiple homes is dependent on the

engagement in activities that transcend national borders. With transnational practices, such as being part of a diasporic community in which migrants can speak their native language and share thoughts and feelings that are triggered through moving to another country, people can mentally and symbolically construct a sense of keeping their original home alive and return to their roots when spending time with them.

Moving to another country often involves a feeling of nostalgia for a lost home that, in fact, cannot be returned to in its original sense because it is constituted of various emotional, cognitive and physical aspects that change over time. According to Rubenstein, the feeling of longing usually occurs when a person experiences separation or loss of a person, object, or place of any kind (Rubenstein 5). As migration entails a change of locality, people and things, it can therefore cause nostalgia. On a symbolic level, unlearning the native language after having lived longer in a foreign country than in the place of origin, for example, can cause feelings of losing a part of identity and home. Even though language skills can be regained, the question remains if they are representative of the original home language. Furthermore, moving to another country often involves leaving people behind that once triggered a feeling of home; as soon as new acquaintances are made, however, they can substitute for this emotional part of the concept of home. As people do not only create emotional ties to people but also to things, the sense of home is also affected on a physical and local level. Since various constituents of home such as flats, furniture and other objects usually are either passed on or get lost when moving to another country, it is unlikely that people return to the originals after migration. In fact, many objects and places lose their meaning for the sense of home once they have been left behind as they are replaced. As home is a dynamic and multidimensional concept that does not simply exist but, as explained above, is a process of “doing home”, the nostalgia that is felt for a place is often not a desire to return to the home that has been left, but rather to the original or idealized concept that is constructed in people’s mind.

As soon as individuals and households are mobile, meaning-making processes of home that involve losing, imagining, creating, remembering, and returning come into play. Memories of the original place to live, for example, can revive the “lived experiences of a locality” that, according to Brah, constitute home (Brah 192). Yet, this leads to the question if a home that has been left can still be considered as such. Instead of a homeland located in the country of emigration, homeland rather becomes an abstract ideal located either in the past as nostalgia or in the future as utopia (Al-Ali and Koser 7). For transnational migrants, home can become “a

mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination. In this sense it is a place of no return, even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as the place of ‘origin’” (Brah 192). When home is neither here nor there, but “a social space clearly opposed to both national and local social space” (Al-Ali and Koser xi), a destination for returning does not exist. Gomez and Vannini who explored the concepts of home and belonging in the context of migration explain this phenomenon in the following way:

Migrancy involves a movement in which neither the points of departure nor those of arrival are immutable or certain. It calls for a dwelling in language, in histories, in identities that are constantly subject to mutation. Always in transit, the process of home-coming— completing the story, domesticating the detour—becomes an impossibility. (Gomez and Vannini 48)

Instead, migrants can construct new understandings of home that are pluri- or trans-local in the course of becoming more globally oriented (Al-Ali and Koser 6). Nevertheless, it must be kept in mind that just as “individuals can become transnational, and also stop being transnational” (Al-Ali and Koser 14), the desire to stay or return to a specific location or re-construct a new home can change. Regardless of the geographical location of residence, home is a dynamic, multidimensional concept that never comes to a standstill because it is productive in nature. Since personal accounts are particularly good at showing how home has changed and what has contributed to it, I will discuss home in written life narratives in the next chapter.

### **2.3 Homes in Writing**

Home appears in a myriad of ways in written language. On the one hand, the term can come up explicitly referring to a specific place called home; on the other hand, the concept is also within the lines, as a creative space “that extend[s] far beyond a singular, static and bounded location” (Blunt and Dowling 34). As mentioned by Blunt and Dowling, this is particularly evident in “life writings about both forced and voluntary displacement through migration, exile and dispossession” (Blunt and Dowling 34f.). After moving to another country, home cannot be only either the place of origin or the new residence, but also an imagined destination or even a memory of a space that was once considered the unshakable home as already explained in the former chapter about nostalgia for home. In the aftermath of displacement, the processes of leaving, finding, making, and longing for a home can be reflected upon. By writing about areas of life that contribute to the feeling of belonging, the concepts of home take shape in words. Based on this idea, a narrative can become a space in which home is constructed through language.

Because of its many facets, readers of literature about people's lives are inevitably confronted with verbal representations of home that allow multiple interpretations of the concept. For analyzing homes in writing, one must not only look at the descriptions of material constructions, but also the cognitive and emotional spheres of home that are made up of personal relationships, experiences, beliefs and attachment to things and activities. Fox criticizes that "[t]here is a strong tendency to identify house and home" and highlights the importance to distinguish between those two (Fox 65f.). In fact, houses can serve as the place where homes are constructed but cannot exist as concepts of home on their own. In order to recognize what home means for a person in a written narrative, it is thus necessary to investigate the components of home that appear alongside of material constructions. Blunt and Dowling point out that "material and imaginative geographies of home are closely bound together" (Blunt and Dowling 82), but while houses or countries are referred to explicitly as home in written text, other elements that constitute the construct often have to be derived from the context. "Home is people", for example, is a widespread opinion (Fox 68) that illustrates how the construct of home can come up implicitly. In this case, the people who constitute home for a specific person in the text can be discerned based on the words that are used to describe characters and their relationship. Therefore, language plays a significant role in the interpretation and analysis of homes in writing.

### **2.3.1 Autobiographical Accounts of Home**

Because in autobiographical accounts the memories being recounted were experienced by the narrators themselves, they provide first-hand insights into the (re)construction process of home. Smith and Watson differentiate between life narratives and life writing, the former being various acts of self-representation "whether written, performative, visual, filmic or digital" and the latter encompassing the exclusively written productions of memoirs and autobiographies (Smith and Watson 4). A brief definition of the term autobiography can be derived from its etymology: It is a coinage of the Greek words αὐτός ("autos"), βίος ("bios") and γράφειν ("graphein"), which mean self, life and writing and thus, it refers to self-writing about one's own life. This literary practice has already existed for centuries, but it was not until the eighteenth century with the "Enlightened individual" that the genre became canonical in the West (Smith and Watson 2). Over the last few years, the term memoir has increasingly gained popularity amongst scholars to refer to autobiographical texts "characterized by density of language and self-reflexivity about the writing process, yoking the author's standing as a professional writer with the work's status as an aesthetic object" (Smith and Watson 4). The



American professor Patricia Hampl, who has also written memoirs herself, praises the increasing popularity of life writing in general and states that it “has reaffirmed the primacy of the first-person voice in American imaginative writing” (Hampl 19). Smith and Watson affirm this statement by saying that the usage of the “I” and the focus on “the meaning of larger forces, or conditions, or events of their *own* stories” are the most prominent features of life writing (Hampl 14).

As autobiographies offer insights into personal memories and perceptions, the author’s subjective notions of home can be derived from the writing. Considering that life writing “join[s] form to human agency, history, location, and the dynamics of communicative exchange” (Smith and Watson 19), the concept of home can be analyzed in regard to all of these constituents. Thus, personal memories are a valuable source of information about the development of a concept of home that extends beyond a specific place. Autobiographical accounts of home, however, do not reflect an objective and stable idea of a person’s home. Instead, authors can negotiate their past with their new, present identities and thus, take the liberty to include novelistic features in their life writing (Smith and Watson 12). As pointed out by Kirby, autobiographers choose a “collection of small stories and meaningful moments” they consider essential for their life writing and frequently create coherence through narrative structures and factual additions to create suspense (Kirby 24). Furthermore, some aspects of home may stay undocumented because they are considered too private or unnecessary in an autobiographical text. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that although life writing enables a broad study of home, it is still a creative encounter with an author’s life.

The integration of novelistic elements raises the question about the exact categorization of the genre as fiction or non-fiction amongst various scholars (Smith and Watson; Flohr; Renza). According to Renza who defined a theory of autobiography, it is “unique, self-defining mode of self-referential expression, one that allows, then inhibits, the project of self-presentification, of converting oneself into the present promised by language” (Renza 22). As life writing is a written production both by and about a person (Flohr 4), it does not conform to the standards of truth being objective knowledge. Instead, autobiographies reveal information that can be considered the authors’ subjective truth. According to Stanley Fish, writers of autobiographies “cannot lie, because anything they say, however mendacious, is the truth about themselves, whether they know it or not” (Stanley Fish qtd. in Smith and Watson 15). This also applies to the constructs of home: Even though we are influenced by what Selle calls a “Gegenwartsbrille

unserer eigenen Erfahrungen” (Selle 202) because we always remember the past from a present perspective, the constructed homes still have a legitimate truth value. Instead of being based on facts to satisfy the claim of objectivity as non-fictional literature, autobiographies rely on “[m]emory, identity and experience” as “the pillars of reason in autobiographical subjectivity” (Jayaannapurna 28). Of course, the reported memories are reflective and thus, also changeable, but the claim about a referential world that actually exists in a person’s mind makes the analysis of actual concepts of home taken from autobiographies so reliable.

### **2.3.2 Literary Explorations of Home Abroad**

Literature can provide a space for exploring and conveying a sense of home. As stated by Blunt and Dowling, „[p]ersonal narratives about home provide vivid accounts of everyday, domestic life and about what it means to feel at home or not at home, both in the past and the present” (Blunt and Dowling 33). This is particularly the case for writing in which displacement through migration, exile or dispossession is a central topic as the authors reflect on their memories and sense of home that go beyond their country of origin (Blunt and Dowling 34f.). Through the changes over time the transformative nature of home becomes evident which could cause feelings of nostalgia, defined as “a bittersweet longing for things, persons or situations of the past” which constitute a home and “the condition of being homesick” (Fox 51). As the concept of home is multidimensional, the feeling of longing can be directed towards various absent, emotionally important aspects of one’s past life. Although memories are based on facts about the past, they are elusive and can be influenced by subsequent experiences. Therefore, it can be said that memories nurture nostalgia, but “acts of remembrance may not reveal what they appear to” (Fox 50). As explained by Rubenstein, nostalgia is both the means to “to retrieve emotionally resonant memories” and “the imagination’s attempt to override, neutralize, or cancel loss” (Rubenstein 33). At this point, personal texts come into play because they can serve as “powerful talismans of how things used to be” (Shaw 9) and “represent the author’s attempt to repair and revise the past” (Rubenstein 77). Based on these thoughts, it can be maintained that writing is both a way to return imaginatively, through memory and literature, to the more or less original home and to construct a new home from a “liminal space between longing and belonging” (Rubenstein 77).

Literary explorations of cross-border migration are an exceptional source for dealing with the questions whether home is the country of origin or destination and what influences the associations. This is attributed to the fact that “[m]ovement may necessitate or be precipitated

by a disruption to a sense of home, as people leave or in some cases flee one home for another” (Blunt and Dowling 2). Reflections on this consequence of migration have the potential of bringing out the defining aspects of home which are anchored in the sense of belonging, traditions, places and people. Especially in academic research focused on migration, the concept of home is often analyzed in the contrast of being away from familiarity (Al-Ali and Koser; Boteva-Richter, *Wie viel Heimat*). Although it is common to define homes “in the instances of confrontation with what is considered ‘not home’, with the foreign, with distance” (George 4), experiences told by migrants lend themselves to consider home from a perspective that goes beyond this dichotomy. This is not to say that only migrants have a complex and multi-dimensional definition of home, but that they are more likely to have “multiple allegiances to places” (Al-Ali and Koser 8) than people who might have lived in the same area for all their life. Instead of being restricted to the binary oppositions of home and abroad, life writing by migrants is shaped by the transgression of notions of homeliness that allows a deconstruction of this dichotomy. While writing that includes the topic of migration may often be associated with “themes of loss, painful homelessness and the less-than-whole subject who longs for assimilation into a national culture” (George 8), being constantly on the move does not necessarily exclude feeling home somewhere; it rather sheds light on the possibility to consider the concept of home as something that is not bound to a place. For this, languages play an important role as they are related to the environment in which home can be constructed as well as to identity. Therefore, I will focus on linguistic constructs of home in the next chapter of this thesis.

### **3 Linguistic Constructs of Home**

Languages are not only linked to a nation and identity, but also to imaginaries and practices relevant to the construction of home. By combining arguments for a conception of home as part of a person's identity (Blunt and Dowling 256; Fox 64) and "a conception of the self as partly constituted by language" (Besemeres 16), I aim to show the ways in which notions of home can be constructed linguistically. When Fox states that "self and home are inseparable elements," he cites a person's nationality, birthplace, and kin history as the starting point for the construction of home (Fox 8). Early home, with its geographic location and the people associated with it, has a great impact on the sense of self, as it can serve as a place for exploring and defining one's identity (Fox 64). These processes can take place in one or more languages acquired throughout life. In particular, the mother tongue is often considered a crucial

component of identity (Besemeres 18; Edwards 83; Martin-Jones, Blackledge, and Creese 2). This notion is supported by Riehl, who claims that linguistic loyalties play an important role in identity formation in early life, serving as guidelines for sense of belonging to ethnic and social groups (Riehl 81). In these, languages can serve to connect with others and thus construct a sense of home that is in these relationships or practices. When more than one language is spoken in the immediate environment, linguistic loyalties that contribute to a sense of home can transcend national boundaries. As Martin-Jones, Blackledge, and Creese point out, "languages and language practices are not necessarily synonymous with national identity (but can be) and are not necessarily dominated by the standardized variety" (Martin-Jones, Blackledge, and Creese 9). Languages not only convey a sense of belonging to a particular place or group of people but can also serve as a site for negotiating and constructing a sense of self that transcends nationality. Since this depends heavily on the languages one speaks and identifies with, I will next introduce the concept of Home Language.

### **3.1 Home Language**

While some people speak one language, which is also their first language, others speak two or more languages and are therefore respectively called bilinguals or multilinguals. While in some studies, bilingualism and multilingualism are investigated as two different phenomena (Unsworth; Dolgunsöz), many researchers adopt an inclusive approach (Houwer and Ortega; Li), as I do in this thesis. Especially in the field of linguistics, researchers often make the distinction between bilinguals as the ones who speak two languages and multilinguals as people who have acquired three or more languages. They do that in order to investigate, for example, the differences of both in language acquisition and learning (Unsworth; Dolgunsöz). Li, however, promotes interdisciplinary research on bilingualism and multilingualism and therefore provides the following definition that includes both concepts: "A multilingual individual is anyone who can communicate in more than one language, be it active (through speaking and writing) or passive (through listening and reading)." (Li 4). The active or passive aspect of multilingualism is also related to Cenoz' distinction between a balanced and unbalanced ability to use more than one language. While "[a] balanced multilingual is equally fluent in two or more languages", "an unbalanced multilingual has different levels of proficiency in the different languages" (Cenoz 6). Language proficiency may depend on when multilingualism was acquired. As Li explains, "some may have acquired and maintained one language during childhood, the so-called first language (L1), and learned other languages later in life, while others have acquired two or more first languages since birth" (Li 4). Recently, the

term plurilingualism has been introduced in scholarly literature (Canagarajah and Liyanage) to highlight the ability to acquire more than one language. According to the Council of Europe, plurilingualism is the “intrinsic capacity of all speakers to use and learn, alone or through teaching, more than one language” (Beacco and Byram 17). As explained by Canagarajah and Liyanage, it points to the fact that the competence in languages is integrated as “the directionality of influence is multilateral” (Canagarajah and Liyanage 50). Both multilingualism and plurilingualism, however, imply the same practice, namely the ability to use multiple languages. As the possibility to construct homes in and in between languages does not depend on the precise number of tongues, language level and time of acquisition, I will not distinguish between these concepts any further and use the terms multilingualism and bilingualism in this thesis interchangeably.

Sometimes, in multilingual households, different languages are mixed, forming a distinct way of communicating for the home. However, this depends on the attitudes and motives of the speakers within a household. As a result of migration, for example, the language of the environment may change, but the language of the household may either remain the same or shift to the foreign tongue. If it completely changes to the national language, it can happen that one language replaces the other. As pointed out by García, this is particularly the case in places where monoglossic ideologies persist as people are encouraged to abandon their mother tongue if it differs from the national language (García 51). This form of second language acquisition ultimately leads back to monolingualism. In contrast to this subtractive model of bilingualism, there is the so-called additive multilingualism, meaning that two or more languages can co-exist as the first language is maintained while another is added to the person’s repertoire (García 52). As an example, García and Sylvan mention children entering a school with another language of instruction than their first language and acquiring the language spoken at school as their second language (García and Sylvan 387). According to this theory, migrant students would be double-monolinguals. However, as already pointed out by Cummins at the end of the 1980s, languages are not stored separately from each other, but instead, languages interact and are therefore interdependent (Cummins 202). Drawing on his theories, García presented his recursive and dynamic models of bilingualism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century that indicate that languages are learnt in relation to each so that an own linguistic system comprising several languages is developed. Some migrants may continue using their mother tongue in certain situations and places. Their bilingualism can be called recursive, because, as García explains, “it reaches back to the bits and pieces of an ancestral language as it is reconstituted for new functions and as it

gains momentum to thrusts itself forwards towards the future” (García 53). For others, bilingualism involves frequent linguistic adjustments to communicate in the multilingual world and since those people’s language practices are not only intermingled but also shifting, García called their model of bilingualism as dynamic (García 51). Through these definitions, García shows that antithetical categories such as first and second language, as well as native and foreign tongue, are not useful as they do not imply the multi-dimensionality of a language repertoire. In fact, people can have a linguistic repertoire that constitutes an own system and transcends the distinction between first and second language. I will refer to it as home language, which is not necessarily the first or the second language but can be manifested in and in between more than one language as I will explain in the following.

Home language as the tongue that is associated with home and identity is often influenced by the language(s) spoken by the members of the family and other people for everyday interactions. Because globalization means that many families are made up of people from more than one country, different linguistic backgrounds influence this home language. As Edwards confirms, there are many people who are multilingual because their families maintained or promoted the use of more than one language after migration (Edwards 79). The factors that determine whether multiple languages are adopted depend largely on membership in communities that provide opportunities for first language use and on parents' attitudes toward raising their children in more than one language (Edwards 79). For many migrants, the ability to have a meaningful communication with members of a particular language community or family is the primary reason to raise their children bilingually (Edwards 82). Native language skills can be considered part of the national heritage that is passed on from one generation to the other (Edwards 82), hence the lack thereof would lead to distancing and isolation from the socio-cultural family background (May 133). Edwards explains this with the fact that “[e]ach language is imbued with cultural values that shape self-awareness, identity and relationships” (May 83). Parents often prefer to speak to their children in their first language because they consider it to be “more authentic, natural, spontaneous, more connected with one’s own internal world” (Tannenbaum 59). Thus, when multiple first languages converge in the family, domestic multilingualism can lead to a convergence of identities associated with language and the construction of an authentic home language that contains both a sense of home and identity.

Even if language acquisition occurs later than in the parental home, the development of a language of origin can take place through identification with more than one language, thus

establishing a home that crosses borders. Migrants in particular are usually inevitably faced with the challenge of also expressing themselves in the language of the host country. In addition to the cognitive level of language acquisition, the emotional level also comes into play, because the first language has "important identity functions" (May 136). But the functions of a language, I argue, are dynamic like identity itself and can be shaped by home place and experience. As some language users "hold passionate beliefs about the importance and significance of a particular language to their sense of 'identity'" (Martin-Jones, Blackledge and Creese 10), acquiring another language through living in a foreign language environment can lead to changes in the identity. In order to substantiate this claim, I draw on translingual and transnational theories. In particular, I share Al-Ali and Koser's view that migrants can have "multiple places and arguably multiple identities" (Al-Ali and Koser 3), but I add a dimension that goes beyond their differentiation. As the globalized world increasingly enables movement and communication across countries, a sharp distinction not only between language categories, as mentioned above, but also between home country and destination, or foreign and local identities, is often obsolete. The ability to speak more than one language can serve to construct multiple identities and residences that are not separate from one another, leading multilingual people not only to switch, but also to move between them.

In order to identify with more than one language and place, multilinguals need to engage in negotiations and re-constructions of notions of home. When speaking more than one language, people often "use linguistic resources in complex ways to perform a range of subject positions, sometimes simultaneously" (Martin-Jones, Blackledge and Creese 10). In this process, words and concepts are not simply added to the existing ones, but they are subject to constant negotiation and re-construction as they replace one another or have combined meanings. Even the word for the concept of home itself differs regarding its connotations in various languages. In Polish, for instance, *dom* refers to both "house" and "home" at the same time as well as values related to homeland (Hedge 9); however, its origin is the Latin word "domus" which is exclusively pointing to a building. While Latin has the word "patria" for homeland and "domus" for home as a house, the Polish language combines these constructs in the word *dom*. English, in contrast, differentiates between house and home. The acquisition of more than one language hence leads to the adoption of additional words for the concept of home that cannot be equated as they have differing connotations to them. However, bilinguals do not simply add new words to their linguistic repertoire; instead, they incorporate them into a linguistic system in which they are practiced in relation to already constructed language practices or they create new ones

(García and Wei 14). As pointed out by García, bilingualism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century “involves a much more dynamic cycle where language practices are multiple and ever adjusting to the multilingual multimodal terrain of the communicative act (García 53). With increasing globalization, this is already evident in parental homes, which will be the focus of the next section of this thesis, as a growing number of people are living in a foreign country using another language than their primary one to communicate daily.

### **3.1.1 Languages in the Parental Home**

Language acquisition begins in the parental home as children’s families are usually the first interlocutors in a person’s life. It is therefore not surprising that the first language spoken in early childhood is referred to as native or, in particular, mother tongue in various languages: “Muttersprache, lingua maternelle, mama loshen, sfat em, lingua aternal, modersml, lngua maternsa, matsek jasyik“ (Kellman xi) are all designations for the first language dating back to mother-child relations that put the role of other family members in parenting in the background. After learning their first language, many children are exposed to a second language through society and later in school once their mother tongue is already established. Others, in contrast, grow up speaking two or more languages more or less simultaneously and are thus engaged in “multilingual first language acquisition” (Unsworth 21). As many researchers agree, more than half of the world’s population is at least bilingual (Kellman; Edwards; Martin-Jones, Blackledge and Creese) which can be attributed to globalization as growing cross-border communication and migration bring speakers of various nationalities together. Thus, languages spoken in the parental home can be diverse. In a child’s home, there are at least three types of bilingual contexts according to Komorowska and Krajka: The natural, the didactic and the social one (Komorowska and Krajka 59). A natural context is given when people find themselves in relationships where their partner speaks another language; they might communicate in a lingua franca or the language that is predominant in the country of immigration and thus, decide to raise their children in that language (Komorowska and Krajka 59). This way, migration can lead to a change of the primary language from one generation to another. In didactic contexts, the relationship of the parents is not bilingual by nature, but they deliberately choose to raise their child with more than one language for educational reasons (Komorowska and Krajka 59). World languages such as English lend themselves to this approach because they can be of great benefit to the child’s education and future career. Finally, social contexts are the ones where special importance is given to the national language of the country of immigration because it facilitates integration (Komorowska and Krjka 59). If both



parents are migrants, they thus facilitate their child's assimilation into the culture and society of their host country. However, not every home can provide linguistic diversity due to various factors.

The decision to raise children multilingually seems to depend on their linguistic abilities as well as on their social status and personal attitude towards their first language. Thus, the factors that determine whether international families raise their children bilingually seem to differ according to their national background and social status (Martin-Jones, Blackledge and Creese 9). Especially parents speaking a minority language as their first language tend to abandon it for a majority language (Martin-Jones, Blackledge and Creese 9) whereas majority language speakers usually agree on it as their default option in their children's upbringing (Piller 135). In countries in which English is the dominant language it happens frequently that English displaces native tongues because it places the necessity of other first languages in the background (May 131). Komorowska and Krajka further explain that "[i]n young bilinguals, maintenance of the first language and progress of it depend on favorable parental attitudes toward their ethnic languages, and, at any age, on frequency of exposure to the first language, but also on individual feelings of identity and affiliation, interest in one's own roots and family history" (Komorowska and Krajka 51). If both parents are migrants from the same country and have strong ties to their country of origin, the native tongue is naturally more easily maintained, no matter whether their native tongue is a minority or majority language (Edwards 79). An important reason for migrant parents to raise their children bilingually is to enable communication with family members that cannot speak another language than their native tongue (Edwards 82). Thus, just as family constellations differ, children are exposed to different languages to varying levels that determine their bilingual skills.

Even if parents raise their children with more than one language, this does not mean that they have a control over two languages at the same native-like level. Scholars at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century first defined bilinguals only as the people who were "equally competent in two languages in all contexts and with all interlocutors" (García 44). However, this notion of bilingualism was discarded with the advent of sociolinguistics in the 1960s, when it was found that people use languages differently depending on social context and interlocutors (García 45). As multilinguals use different languages in varying situations, their proficiency is unequal and can fluctuate over time (Komorowska and Krajka 43). García used the following metaphor for the dynamic nature of languages to describe how they complement one another: "[Bilingualism]

is more like an all-terrain vehicle. Its wheels do not move in unison or in the same direction, but extend and contract, flex and stretch, making possible, over highly uneven ground, movement forward that is bumpy and irregular but also sustained and effective” (García 45). Even though the dynamic nature of language proficiency described here does not only apply to multilingual individuals but also monolingual speakers, it is more evident in the case of multilinguals because they have a broader spectrum of language use (Cenoz 12). Especially for bilingual families the ability to use the languages that are spoken at home dynamically is crucial for communication which brings me to the next chapter in which I will describe linguistic practices at multilingual homes.

### **3.1.2 Linguistic Practices at Multilingual Homes**

Multilingual households often feature a wide variety of linguistic practices that are linked to the communication within families. These practices often seem to depend on language proficiency and the conventions of language use within a family. Second-generation immigrants, for example, are often more proficient in the local language than their parents since the elder generation’s skills in the foreign tongue depend on their participation in the economy and society (Milroy and Muysken 2). Therefore, children often serve as the translators for their parents (García 46). It is therefore not surprising that translation skills are particularly well-developed in multilinguals (Jessner 277). They are considered part of metalinguistic awareness which, according to Jessner’s definition, describes “the ability to focus on linguistic form and to switch focus between form and meaning” (Jessner 277). It develops to a higher degree and quality in multilingual individuals because being raised with more than one language makes it necessary to consciously switch between the languages that are available to them (Jessner 277). Even if all family members are bilingual, but to varying degrees, some may want to choose one language over the other in order to make all interlocutors feel included to a similar degree. This constitutes another element of Jessner’s description of multilingual’s metalinguistic awareness that he defines as “communicative sensitivity and flexibility” (Jessner 277). The flexibility of individuals living with two or more languages can thus be seen from choosing one language over the other.

However, bilinguals can not only prefer one language over the other depending on the situation and the interlocutor, but also mix them. Although the language of monolinguals also frequently contains foreign words, multilinguals living in a multilingual environment in particular use them more often (García 49). Their communication therefore differs from monolingual

language use in that it is particularly diverse and uses languages fluidly. In multilingual homes, family members often speak the same languages and can therefore integrate forms of words from one or the other tongue into the other language (García 49). Sometimes the languages are even assimilated to each other because the language repertoire of one tongue affects the other. Weinreich identified this interlingual influence as interference (Milroy and Muysken 5). Instead of considering the ability to transfer words from one language to another as a skill, he dismisses it as oversight (Weinreich 60). According to his view, “the limitations on the distribution of certain words to utterances belonging to one language are violated” when multilingual speakers let other languages interfere in their communication (Weinreich 60). However, as pointed out by García, the transfer of words can be a linguistic response to changes regarding, for example, the content and their interlocutor. It is, moreover, a practice that is not only done by multilinguals. As García points out, all speech includes borrowings which can be defined as words that speakers of one language take from another tongue, such as when German speakers say “bye” or “au revoir” (García 49). In addition to this lexical borrowing, however, multilinguals can also borrow on a syntactic, phonological, morphological, and semantic level (Blackwell 57). These various forms of transfers can be a technique of multilinguals that they adopt to facilitate communication depending on context and interlocutor (Blackwell 56f.). Thus, multilinguals’ deliberate usage of several languages within one speech shows rather “communicative sensitivity and flexibility” and „interactional and/or pragmatic competence” (Jessner 277) than a problem for communication as suggested by Weinreich (Weinreich 93). Especially at homes in which more than one language is spoken by all family members, interlocutors can make sense of each others’ speech even if transfers are used (García 49). Thus, families can have an own way of communicating including various languages. In fact, the language system of L2 users can be even seen “as a whole rather than as an interaction between separate language components (Cook 11 qtd. in Jessner 275). Based on this idea which is elaborated by Cook as the Dynamic Model of Multilingualism, I consider the totality of languages spoken in a household, including all hybrid forms as a language in its own right, which I refer to in this thesis as the Home Language described above. Thus, this language can take the form of a mix at both the word and sentence levels.

With the specific linguistic practices that people incorporate into their language use home, they can construct their own form of communication within their home. By inserting words or even sentences from different languages them into their speech, multilinguals do not only choose “one language-based practice or the other”, such as translating and borrowing, but also “the

process of going back and forth from one language to the other” within one speech act (García 49). García terms this way of alternating between languages “code-switching” and defines two types of it: The intrasentential one, referring to switches that occur within clauses or sentences and the intersentential type which occurs as whole sentences or clauses (García 49f.). For Muysken, the two constitute subcategories of a phenomenon called code-mixing. He describes García’s intersentential type of code-switching as an alternation of languages in which the individual identity of each language does not change (Blackwell 62). The other subcategories of code-mixing that he defines are congruent lexicalization, which is the usage of words from different languages in a shared grammatical structure (Muysken 5), and insertion, in which lexical items or constituents are put into a structure from another language (Muysken 3). While the latter is particularly done by multilingual adults (Komorowska and Krajka 61), bilingual children include particularly whole sentences in another language into their speech (Komorowska and Krajka 61). Thus, they engage in language alternation on an intersentential level. Komorowska and Krajka attribute this difference between grown-up multilinguals and children to the dissimilarity of interactions between family members compared to those between adults who are less close (62). In some families, code-switching is the norm whereas in others, children are encouraged to separate their languages (Edwards 87). In general, family members often have their own dynamics when communicating with each which takes into account the individual language levels. While people who are raised bilingually usually show a higher grammatical proficiency in either of their languages, their word repertoire is not necessarily wider in one or the other language; instead, it differs depending on the context (Komorowska and Krajka 61). As the exposure they have to the different languages is not evenly distributed among various subject areas, multilinguals’ vocabulary is usually domain-related (Komorowska and Krajka 61). Therefore, the topic of conversation often determines the choice of language and words (Edwards 88). As pointed out by Edwards, “each change of language stresses one set of values or ideas over another” (Edwards 88). With linguistic choices, multilinguals can thus emphasize one or the other side of their identities as will be further explained in the next chapter of this thesis.

### **3.2 Identity Issues in Linguistic and Literary Homes**

For many people, the languages that they speak are strongly connected to their sense of self. Because of this interrelationship, identities transform themselves when new languages are learned. As Besemeres points out, languages develop “in response to the pressure of new thoughts” (Besemeres 18). One major factor that is causing people to respond linguistically is

migration. As elaborated by Martin-Jones, Blackledge and Creese, for speakers of languages with a high status such as English, French or German, ethnolinguistic identity is only an occasional issue when it comes to choices regarding the languages that they continue to use, whereas minority language speakers are likely to maintain or abandon their native tongue based on emotional and social reasons (Martin-Jones, Blackledge and Creese 135). Especially in countries where English is predominantly spoken, migration often results in multilingualism (Cenoz 13; Edwards 13). English is likely to be adopted given that it is a global language (Edwards 3), and yet other languages may be resilient, and resist being replaced by it. Therefore, more than one language can co-exist and be even maintained over several generations (Edwards 79). Besemeres suggests that “[a] person’s native language has a particularly strong hold, but the language a person migrates into can come to make a similarly powerful demand on them” (Besemeres 13). Thus, it is not surprising that many migrants decide to raise their children in both their native tongue and the language of the new residence. The next generation is consequently at least bilingual, but their proficiency in both languages has been found to be dependent on the moment of their family’s migration (May 132). While some scholars combine the 1.5 generation of immigrants with the second-generation in their research (King, Skeldan and Vullnetari), Vildaitė emphasizes the differences between those two migrant groups (Vildaitė 51) which is significant when considering their degree of bilingualism. Vildaitė justifies his argument by pointing out that the 1.5 generation has experienced the migration process which can have an impact on their psyche and socialization to the new culture (Vildaitė 52). Thus, learning and speaking more than one language can be a marker of identity to varying degrees, depending on the time and context in which multilingualism developed.

How this process of becoming multilingual was perceived has a strong influence on attitudes towards the languages that have been acquired and the extent to which they are considered part of one's identity. If the acquisition of a language is motivated by migration, the relationship to the language of the country of destination is likely to depend on the reasons for moving. While some people may consider skills in the national language relevant for feeling home, Steinitz reports that others are afraid of abandoning their mother tongue for another language because it may loss and alienation from a part of identity that is attached to language (Steinitz 1). By speaking a tongue other than the national language of the new residence, migrants can hold on to their sense of self by challenging dominant cultures and articulating differences (Sandu 509). As explained by Sandu, language materializes culture, and thus, the native tongue can be used, for example, “to maintain continuity with heritage that extends, both geographically and

generationally, beyond the material confines of a particular home” (Sandu 502). On the other hand, when memories of the country of origin are associated with negative feelings, such as after experiences of flight and involuntary exile, people may not want to hold on to the lingual part of their origins (Steinitz 1). In these cases, a newly adopted language can serve as a refuge (Steinitz 1). The decision to primarily speak another language than the native tongue, however, can also be made because of the desire for assimilation after migration. The agreement to use the first language at home frequently creates a dilemma in assimilating to the language and culture of the host country (Edwards 82; Milroy 2). Especially children often sense a displeasure of citizens towards their native tongue and identity because, as Swain explains, they are told that the language of their parents, home and friends is non-functional in school (Swain 101). Since some people assign great importance of a particular language to their sense of ‘identity’ (Martin-Jones, Blackledge and Creese 10), this can equal the call to negate one’s sense of self (Swain 101). The resistance or ambivalence to one or the other language of multilinguals is described by Skinner with an analogy to the relationship between children and their stepmothers. He calls one of the languages a “stepmother-tongue” (Skinner 11) that may have stepped into people’s life at a later point in time and taken partially or completely the role of the mother tongue. In his research, he focuses on new Anglophone literature as the English language is a particularly common choice in writing, even though it “was never a tongue automatically possessed; it was laboriously learned rather than painlessly acquired” (Skinner 11). The reasons for that choice, as well as what leads authors to adhere to “the conventional concept of writing in the mother tongue” (Skinner 11) or to deviate from it will be explained in the following chapter.

### **3.2.1 Language Choices in Literature**

Language choices that authors make in their writing is closely connected to their desired audibility in the society. The audibility that I am referring to here is not about being literally heard but about reaching a wide readership with the writing and being intelligible to others. On the one hand, English has been chosen and accepted by many authors as their default language for their writing because of its status as a global language that can be understood by large parts of the world’s population (Skinner 11). Since the potential audience of books written in English is big, they have large markets that enable a low unit price (Edwards 196). In comparison to writing in other languages, English books are furthermore less limited to a potential market and publishing infrastructure (Edwards 189). Therefore, it is not surprising that authors who aim “to write a bestseller, or merely earn a living, might consider it prudent to adopt a language

with a wider currency” (Kellman *Literary Translingualism* 341). Kuhiwczak criticizes this tendency towards writing for the globalized market because such texts are “crafted to avoid the pitfalls of too much cultural specificity” and “carry with them a simplified universality, often at the level of the lowest common denominator” (Kuhiwczak 105). In contrast, writing in a minority language or in another unconventional way, such as in various languages, is a way to withstand commercial pressure and promote individuality.

The presence of literature in various languages represents and reinforces the distinctive identities of their speakers and therefore, its absence would not only undermine but also reduce the access of English speakers to diversity. Writing only for an English-speaking audience could cause what Martin-Jones, Blackledge and Creese call linguistic Darwinism as both linguistic and cultural homogeneity would be driven forward (Martin-Jones, Blackledge and Creese 135). In recent years, however, the literary world has increasingly resisted this by drawing attention to minority-language publishers (Edwards 197). Diverse libraries and even American mainstream publishers have started to acknowledge the importance of meeting the various needs of the population: Many migrants have nowadays easy access to literatures from their countries of origin and some also write their own works that are likely to be relatable for their diasporic communities (Edwards 197). Members of such communities, however, may choose English as their default language for their writing in order to make authentic information about their experiences accessible to a broad audience (Block 70). As explained by Block “[a]uthentication is achieved when fellow members of a community of practice accept the symbolic behaviour of an individual as appropriate and ‘real’, in short, as constitutive of membership in that community” (Block 70). This can be achieved through writing in English, although it could also be argued that the identity can be shown in a more authentic manner by writing in the native language.

The choice of the language in which a literary work is written is strongly related to the attachment of the authors' identity to a particular language. As mentioned by Besemeres, “[t]here is an inevitable tension between faithfulness to one’s thought (whatever its reception will be in the foreign language milieu) and the need to say something that will make sense to the people one is talking with” (Besemeres 30) that multilingual authors experience. Therefore, the language chosen for writing is often a focus of the content produced by bilingual autobiographers (Beaujour 45). When authors write about their bilingualism, there is frequently a search for a sense of home in a language that the reader can deduce from the text (Beujour

45). I will show this in the analytical part of my thesis based on Eva Hoffman's autobiography *Lost in Translation*. The primary feeling of having to translate oneself after migration inspired the title of the text and is also analyzed by many researchers (Foster; Skinner; Beaujour) that seem to agree that most authors that speak more than one language are, in fact, "not polyglot *as writers*" (Beaujour 3). As pointed out by Beaujour, "self-translation is frequently the rite of passage, the traditional, heroic, psychic journey into the depths of the self [...] that is a necessary prelude to true self-knowledge and its accompanying powers" (Beaujour 37). Because language is such a significant part of identity, the decision to write in the foreign language rather than the native language can seem like a devaluation of oneself and the culture, people, and environment associated with it (Edwards 84). On the other hand, the decision to write in a foreign language can be a commitment to a particular place while also creating space for the reconstruction of a sense of home. According to Beaujour, the work of multilingual authors is therefore subject to a process of self-translation. In this sense, translation processes would imply the shift from an identity anchored in one language to another. In my view, however, a work written by a multilingual author represents a third dimension of linguistic identity in which multilingual identities are negotiated with each other in terms of word choice. Literature thus creates a creative space for the use of language and the construction of home as I will describe in the following.

### 3.2.2 Languages as Homes in Writing

Multilingualism, in particular, offers creative potential to writers because they can take advantage of the constructive and malleable nature of languages. With the wider linguistic repertoire that multilinguals have compared to monolinguals (Martin-Jones, Blackledge and Creese 9), they can make reflected linguistic choices and negotiate the meanings of words in several languages. For multilinguals in general, Foster records a specific claim that, according to him, usually holds true: "One tends to reserve certain languages to certain purposes; one is more at home in certain subjects in one language than in another; one may conduct one's emotional life in one, one's intellectual life in another, and do the shopping in a third" (Foster 6). Through reflecting on those kinds of linguistic choices, "the contradictions and the sometimes irreconcilable tensions in their different language perspectives" that multilinguals frequently face can become a creative resource for writers (Burck 187). Authors that speak more than one language can exploit the potential and possibilities of multilingualism by engaging in "different kinds of literary multilingual practices, whether it is writing in more than one language, transitioning from writing in one language to another, self-translating, or creating



literary works that are themselves, to varying degrees, multilingual texts” (Bar-Izthak 1). Through these practices, people can creatively adapt their language according to context and purpose.

By creatively using both languages as described above or favoring one language over the other, home can be constructed in writing. This is especially true for migrants, as they are particularly confronted with a change of language and the feelings associated with it. A change of location frequently entails a sense of loss and alienation that can be triggered by a switch to a foreign cultural and linguistic setting and reinforced through a lack of skills in the local language (Steinitz 1). Especially the latter is often experienced by migrants who are not proficient in the language of their new country of residence (Foster 1; Edwards 84). This can be attributed to the fact that communicating in a foreign language implies an accent and necessitates translations and reformulations so that the original meaning or personal connotations to some words may get distorted (Edwards 82). By writing in their first language, they may “maintain continuity with heritage that extends, both geographically and generationally, beyond the material confines of a particular home” (Sandu 507). Thus, they can construct a home that is connected to their country of origin, even if it is physically far away. For people who prefer to break ties with their country of origin, however, the life in another language can also become a refuge. Especially in cases of people in exile, the life lived in the foreign tongue can provide a new sense of perspective and allow the construction of a home that is distant from the former one, albeit still connected to it. By choosing in which language(s) they want to construct meaning authors can therefore construct home in languages.

Through bilingualism, people can feel home not only in one language or the other, but also in between the ones available to them. Some notions of the concept of home can only be constructed when sharing the same languages because it enables communication that does not necessitate translations or explanation of words. This, in fact, is a feature that can be found especially among families. As stated by Piller, “the family is one of the few contexts where there really is an option for individual language choice, much more so than in public and institutional contexts – provided of course that both partners have some knowledge of each other’s languages” (Piller 133). Instead of just choosing one language or the others, bilingual parents can also opt for hybridity that characterized by code-switching or by dual-linguality (Piller 143). By mixing the languages, meaning can be constructed in a way that the thoughts and feelings connected to more than one language are conveyed in the same utterance (Piller

148). This type of speech is defined by Beaujour as a third language in which bilinguals “allow themselves to behave linguistically *like bilinguals*” (Beaujour 55). As she explains, “[a]ll bilinguals know that when they are speaking to another bilingual or polyglot, their language is radically different than when they are speaking to a monolingual in either of their two languages” (Beaujour 55). This behavior can also be adopted for writing. According to Beaujour, “writers who have made peace with their bilingualism” are “permeated by a personal idiolect in which elements from their various languages appear in a polyglot synthesis” (Beaujour 55). This third language may serve to construct a place that is inextricably linked to both languages and thus, to the home connected to them. Then, “selectively using various languages” in writing (Milroy 4) can contribute to the construction of homes that are neither tied to a specific geographical location nor to a language. Instead, they are both transnational and translingual. Now that I have explained in this chapter how language can be an important part of identity, influencing the choice of language in literature and being a constitutive element of the construction of home, I will further discuss in the next chapter how cross-linguistic literature can contribute to the construction of homes.

### 3.3 Literary Translingualism

In literature, many authors make use of their multilingualism and show that there are no clear-cut boundaries between languages. Although there is much literature produced by bi- or multilinguals, their writing has mainly been studied from a monolingual perspective that considers their language skills as a double- or many-monolingualism instead of a linguistic repertoire without clear-cut boundaries (García and Li 5). From a translingual point of view, bilingualism is not considered as “two balanced wheels of a bicycle but as an all-terrain vehicle adjusting to the ridges and craters of multilingual communication” (García 45). It was not until the 21<sup>st</sup> century that researchers acknowledged that this vehicle provides the possibility to translanguage, which is to “treat languages as a continuum and shuffle between them fluidly” (Martin-Jones, Blackledge and Creese 51). Before identifying this in various kinds of discourse, the word translanguage was used in education-related research on multilingualism to describe “multiple discourse practices in which bilinguals engage in order to make sense of their bilingual worlds” (García 45). It was only later that Kellman and Forster investigated this way to approach language by analyzing authors who engage in literary translingualism and Kellman classified two types: first, the ambilingual translinguals who write in more than one language and second, the isolingual translinguals who write in a language that is not their first one to this definition (*Literary Translingualism* 228; *Translingual Imagination* 18). In contrast to this

production-oriented approach that is centered around the expression of the writer's multilingualism in their texts, Gernalzick recently promoted an approach that focuses on the works themselves (Gernalzick 263). For her, "translingual literature means works which are bilingual or multilingual and do not contain translations" (Gernalzick 262). Instead of prioritizing one language over another and assuming a monolingual readership, translingual literature contains lingual practices that treat the languages as a fluid concept (Gernalzick 262). Through their employment, translingual authors can construct a contact zone between their languages and thus, within their homes through writing. Especially after physically crossing the border, language is often an important remnant of the home that has been left after emigrating from the country of origin. Building on Al-Ali and Koser's conviction that migrants can have "multiple localities and arguably also multiple identities" (Al-Ali and Koser 3), I will show that it is also possible for them to establish a sense of home in and in between multiple languages through their creative use of language that positions the constructive potential of their writing juxtaposed to the limitations of monolingualism.

Translingual literature accounts for transnational authors that make a creative use of their multilingualism. While code-switching can also be done sub-consciously during conversations, the fluid usage of languages in writing is a deliberate act that shows creativity and the awareness of the authors to be "language-makers" (Lee qtd. in Baynham and Lee 7). On the one hand, literary studies have been increasingly found to be "more attuned to writers who "play bilingual games" and to "the potential and possibilities found in multilingual writing" (Bar-Itzhak 1). This can be traced back to the fact that a bilingual has been identified as "a person that "languages" differently and that has diverse and unequal experiences with each of the two languages" (García 24) which are both part of the identity so that committing to only one language can even violate the nature of bilinguals (Beaujour 52). On the other hand, monolingual writing is still the norm and writing in various languages at the same time is mostly considered "too experimental for the global readership's taste" (Gernalzick 265). With an increase in globalization and upgrading of code-switching, translinguality in literature may, however, become more popular in the future (Gernalzick 265). Currently translingual literature challenges dominant practices in the literary world (Sandu 509), such as positioning a particular language subordinate to the other (Beaujour 50). This is achieved through the fact that translingual writing displays "elements from within a single repertoire, their copresence, spontaneous interplay, and possibly mutual constitution in a specific purpose-driven context, that are foregrounded in translanguaging" (Baynham and Lee 36). As translanguaging is both

a practice and “a process of knowledge construction that goes beyond language(s)” (Li 15), it lends itself for my purpose of analyzing how authors construct meaning through the dynamic and functionally integrated usage of language in their writing.

### 3.3.1 Defining Translanguaging

The term translanguaging emerged only after the words translingual and translingualism had already been known. Translanguaging comes from the Welsh term “trawsieithu” and was first used in the educational-field of research by Cen Williams in the 1980s (Cenoz 12; Lewis, Jones and Baker 643; Martin-Jones, Blackledge and Creese 241). Martin-Jones, Blackledge and Creese explain that it referred to a bilingual instructional strategy involving “the hearing, signing, or reading of lessons in one language, and the development of the work (the oral discussion, the writing of passages, the development of projects and experiments) in another language and vice versa (Martin-Jones, Blackledge and Creese 241). That is, the input and output are deliberately in different languages” (Martin-Jones, Blackledge and Creese 241). Initially, this practice was translated into English as “translinguifying”, but later Baker called it “translanguaging” and defined it as “the process of making meaning, shaping experiences, gaining understanding and knowledge through the use of two languages” (Baker 288). This translation of the term allows an association with the word “linguaging” that, according to García, refer to the active usage of language in discursive practices (García 24). Similarly, “translanguaging” is focused on the engagement in the negotiation of meaning and knowledge through language practices but adds to the term “linguaging” the idea that bilingualism as not an additive but fluid concept. Therefore, translanguaging accounts for a concept of multilingualism that emphasizes “that there are no clear-cut boundaries between the ‘languages’ that people draw on” and does not only include but also extend practices such as code-switching (Martin-Jones, Blackledge and Creese 10).

In fact, translanguaging assumes a multilingual repertoire but no functional separation of languages. Instead, it includes all kinds of lingual practices that Baynham and Lee categorized as interlingual, intralingual, intersemiotic, interdiscursive and embodied (Baynham and Lee 13) by drawing on Jakobson’s translation typology from the mid-20s. According to them, the interlingual type involves the repertoire in the various languages, the intralingual the “relations between registers such as everyday and technical speech or writing”, the intersemiotic “the selection and blending of modal resources”, the interdiscursive the “interplay and mediation between discourses” and the embodied translanguaging “the communicative affordances of the

body interacting with language” (Baynham and Lee 13). What they have in common is that they are a playful and creative way to use language by including “translation, language switching, and designing information bilingually” (Martin-Jones, Blackledge and Creese 10), but in contrast to an approach to multilingualism, it is user-oriented and emphasizes that the linguistic repertoire of multilinguals is not one of two languages but a continuum (Martin-Jones, Blackledge and Creese 51). As argued by García and Li, “the term translanguaging offers a way of capturing the expanded complex practices of speakers who could not avoid having had languages inscribed in their body, and yet live between different societal and semiotic contexts as they interact with a complex array of speakers” (García and Li 18). García and Li’s implication that multilinguals have a life between the contexts of their languages is particularly interesting for this thesis as it is centered around the possibility of living not only in but also between languages. I will build upon the fact that “translanguaging carries with it a sense of living between and talking across boundaries and borders” (Baynham and Lee 18) and show how this practice is used in literature that to construct the concept of home.

### 3.3.2 Translingual Homes

Through not living bound to national borders and using languages fluidly and dynamically, authors can construct a space that is not liminal. On the one hand, people may inhabit a transnational space that is characterized by a connection “to communities that go beyond their own locality or country through other migrants or through digital media, information flow and economic/production relationships” (Canagarajah 42). On the other hand, translingual practices that involve the generation of new forms and meanings in a continuum can construct a space that Li defined as the translanguaging space (Li 23). Both are “transformative nexus zones where” (Li 23) where people socially construct and actively engage in meaning making processes that go beyond the boundaries of national borders. Translingual and transnational literature can serve as such a space. Even though it is both connected to writing by migrant authors, Seyhan emphasizes that immigrant literature is an own category (Seyhan 11). Although authors such as Eva Hoffman, whose work I will analyze later in this thesis, “have actually *immigrated* to the countries where they now publish and are permanent residents or citizens of the country of immigration, to call their work immigrant writing (the term *MigrantInnenliteratur* [migrants’ literature] is routinely used in German), though technically correct, would suggest that this body of cultural production constitutes a transitory tradition in national literary history” (Seyhan 10). This applies to ethnic literature in comparison to transnational literature as well (Seyhan 10). Seyhan states that she prefers the terms diasporic

and exilic literature as synonyms for transnational literature (Seyhan 11) while Canagarajah, in contrast, maintains that “transnational is also distinct from the construct diaspora. The latter term assumes the homeland (a distinct geographical place) as the frame of reference, even though community members might be living in different nation-states” (Canagarajah 42). Even though homeland is also considered an important topic of transnational literature, it does not consider it as bound or limited to people’s “social relationships and identities” (Canagarajah 42). Instead, it is a genre that “operates outside the national canon” (Seyhan 10). This characterization of transnational literature in comparison to other forms of writing by migrants is particularly important for this thesis as I treat home as a concept that does not only transcend the geographical borders, but also the social and lingual boundaries.

In order to identify how translingual authors construct home in and between languages, it is necessary to adopt a transnational perspective on the concept of home. Instead of considering home as bound to a particular place, it can be a space “within the changing links between ‘here’ and ‘there’” (Al-Ali and Koser 6). This definition often applies to migrants’ homes as movement already entails a change that “presents an abstract ideal that glosses over the multiplicity of ‘heres’ and ‘theres’ as well as the interactions between, and transformations of, these notions” (Al-Ali and Koser 6). This home in between borders can be represented through the usage of language as a fluid concept as in translingual literature. Through the employment of translingual practices, language is not only the medium but more importantly a matter of attention (Kellman 115) that encourages the recognition of the authors’ relationship to their languages. As pointed out by Kellman, especially autobiographies by translingual authors, among them Eva Hoffman’s *Lost in Translation*, “are in effect self-begetting linguistic memoirs, the story of how the author achieved enough fluency in a second language to use it to write the book we are reading” (Kellman 115). Since home is a construct that is recognizable in physical places, abstract spaces and practices, using languages in a dynamic way and engaging in translanguaging at specific parts in the text can reveal in how far this aspect is contributing to notions of home.

#### **4 Analysis of Home in Eva Hoffman’s Translingual Autobiography**

##### ***Lost in Translation***

The following analysis will concentrate on Eva Hoffman’s autobiography *Lost in Translation* and show how she constructs home in and between her two languages, English and Polish. The

author's story is exemplary for many multilinguals that migrated and had to reconstruct a home in a new country and through a new language. The theories that surround migration and the life in multiple languages can be applied on Hoffman's text as the genre of the writing allows for conclusions on real-life situations. Through her experiences, we are provided with a concrete example that the theory can be applied on. I will start my analysis by presenting the main text, its structure and its content with a focus on the topics of migration and language. Next, I will show how Hoffman could be identified as a transnational author and in how far *Lost in Translation* is a translingual autobiography. For this purpose, I will analyze both her usage of language within her text and her own description of her relation to languages that is one of the main topics in her autobiography. Finally, homes that can be identified in the text as constructs within various areas of life that are not only experienced in one or another language, but in between both of them. While living as a transnational migrant in different countries, Hoffman constructs home on a concrete as well as abstract level and through her practices that she describes in her text. This is particularly reflected in her translanguaging within the text, but also in her descriptions of her experiences. Thus, I will analyze her usage of language and the physical places, abstract spaces and practices that the author constructs as homes through her life in and between the two languages Polish and English.

#### **4.1 *Lost in Translation* as an immigrant autobiography**

Hoffman's autobiography is a success story of a migrant who, after struggling with all kinds of losses in the course of integration, finally manages to feel as if she has arrived where she belongs (Hoffman 280). The fact that she even decided to write her autobiography mainly in her second language and not her mother tongue is the climax of her acknowledgment of *A Life in a New Language*, which is also the subtitle of her autobiography. Her life starts radically changing with her emigration from Poland to Canada and this is where her narrative begins. The book starts with her memory of standing at the railing of the boat that took her to Canada. Her mother and father are Jewish and after surviving the Second World War and spending the first years of their children Eva and her sister Alina in Cracow, Poland, they immigrated to Vancouver, Canada in hope for a better life after the restrictions of emigration were lifted in 1959. After graduating in Vancouver, she decides to move to the US and starts studying literature to become a professor. She draws a distinction between her times in these different countries in her autobiography by splitting the text into three parts called *Paradise*, *Exile* and *The New World*. The first section, *Paradise* is referring to her time in Poland, the second one, in which she tells her struggles of re-constructing herself a life in Canada, is called *Exile* and

the last section, *The New World* is about her immigration to the United States which becomes a place of possibilities for her. This threefold structure of the book clearly indicates that the change of location from one country to another has influenced her life. However, it is less the change of the geographical location of her home that she struggles with than the process of re-constructing the feeling and abstract notions of the concept of home. This becomes particularly clear in her descriptions of her disorientation and feeling of foreign in the new country of residence.

Hoffman concentrates on conveying her perspective on the changes and difficulties that immigration implied for her. She provides the readers with insights into her childhood memories and describes her process of constructing a new home in Canada, as well as in America where she moves later in life to study literature. However, does not tell her story in a linear way but including several flashbacks and some flashforwards that reveal both her past and current attitude to her relationship to her location and the English and Polish language. This way, she found “a narrative structure that can make sense of her past and that can aid her in her autobiographical project of producing a coherent self” (Casteel 294). Yet, the author explicitly states that she is struggling with finding “straight lines amid the disarray” of her life because it has been so disrupted (Hoffman 158). This influence that immigration has had on her sense of belonging is therefore reflected in her narrative that, despite its division into three parts, portrays the home-making processes that could not be attributed to a specific country or language but show that it goes beyond borders and were culturally and linguistically intertwined.

While her memories of her life in Poland are pictured in a positive way, the narrative about her experiences in Canada exhibits homesickness that arises due to her feeling of being different and having another native tongue. For her, Poland is “the center of the universe” and thus, it makes her feel foreign when she realizes that her original home and its constituents have become instable through moving to Canada and that she must redefine her reference points. In her autobiography, she states: “I suppose this is the most palpable meaning of displacement. I have been dislocated from my own center of the world, and that world has been shifted away from my center” (Hoffman 132). This feeling of “disruption to the sense of home” is common for the description of immigrant experience (Blunt and Dowling 2), similarly as the dichotomous depiction of home as the place of familiarity in contrast to abroad. According to Besemeres, this dichotomy is also reflected in Hoffman’s autobiography. He describes it as “immigrant experience explicitly in terms of a movement back and forth between two possible



selves, associated with two distinct cultural and linguistic life-models” (Besemeres 38). However, Hoffman is also reconstructing an identity that is not only Polish or American regarding culture and language, but also a mixture of both nationalities. As an immigrant in America, she still engages in practices that are part of her Polish self, such as playing the piano and keeping in touch with her friends in Poland. This way, she is reconstructing home for herself which is not only in the country of origin or the country of residence, but more significantly, constituted of various notions that are in between nations and languages. Therefore, I argue that she is not only reflecting on two distinct life-models, as suggested by Besemeres, but also on one in-between both of them.

In fact, Hoffman’s struggles that she recounts in her autobiography are focused on her immigrant life and her practices to re-construct home in a foreign country. Although the beginning of her journey from Poland was filled with feelings of disconnection and uprootedness, she constructed multiple notions of home on both an abstract and physical level. Throughout her autobiography, she feels nostalgia for the abstract ideal and the physical constituents of the home that she left in Poland. Nevertheless, she does not aim to go back even when she finished school but engages in home-making practices in Canada, such as acquiring the English language and building up relationships with Canadian people. Eventually, she had even moved to the US where she wrote her autobiography in her second language, including several Polish words that make this text particularly interesting for this thesis as she does not only reconstruct a home that transcends the national borders of Poland, Canada, and the U.S. through her transnational practices but also through her language that is rather a continuum that ranges from Polish to English rather than consisting of two separate systems.

#### 4.1.1 *Paradise, Exile and The New World in Lost in Translation*

The division of Hoffman’s autobiography into these three parts Paradise, Exile and The New World are indicative of her journey to find home. As the section titles suggest, the author goes through a process of loss and recovery after her emigration from Poland. Cracow, which stands for *Paradise*, is described as an idealized home for Hoffman. Her life in Poland becomes a reference point for her new experiences and is filtered through a nostalgic lens. Thus, immediately after migration, home has become “a longing for a nostalgic past or a utopian future” (Al-Ali and Koser 7) rather than a fixed space for her. On the one hand, Poland loses its status as a home in its geographical sense, as she does not see it as an option to return to live there, and Polish “has atrophied” because they do not represent her living experiences (Hoffman

107). On the other hand, Canada, which is the *Exile* part of her story, is characterized by disconnection from home and failure to re-construct a new one because of language barriers and the ongoing feeling of being a foreigner in an unknown culture. Although the memories of her former home in Poland impedes her process of constructing a new home in Canada, they are at the same time necessary for her to recover from emigration later in the US, which stands for *The New World*. For her, “[b]eing cut off from one part of one’s own story is apt to veil it in the haze of nostalgia, which is an ineffectual relationship to the past, and the haze of alienation, which is an ineffectual relationship to the present (Hoffman 243). Thus, “Canada’s role as the place of exile and as the receptacle of excess memory” (Casteel 298) makes it possible for her story to come full circle and all three parts, *Exile*, *Paradise*, and *The New World* have to be read together to understand her life in its entirety.

By looking at the section titles, intertextual references to her autobiography can be found that help to understand her meaning even better. *Paradise* and the subsequent part *Exile* tempt to make a comparison between Hoffman’s loss of Poland and Polish with the biblical story of Adam and Eve and their expulsion from the Garden of Eden. As this is also the topic of John Milton’s famous epic poem *Paradise Lost*, an intertextual reference could also be implied to his work. Similar to Hoffman’s *Lost in Translation* which starts with her being exiled to Canada, Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, also begins with Adam and Eve being banished to Hell. Thus, both texts start in medias res and do not recount the happenings that lead to the loss of paradise – be it Poland or the Garden of Eden – from the very beginning. In fact, Hoffman does not recount the actual motives for her parents’ decision to emigrate and devotes little space to their story. Instead, she focuses on her own memories and experiences. Throughout the book, there is little information about anti-Semitism, but in her narrative about a moment in her life when her parents started talking about sufferings her father went through during the Holocaust, Hoffman states that “[t]here is no way to get this part of the story in proportions” (Hoffman 253). As explained by Marianne Hirsch, who called the children of holocaust survivors the generation of postmemory, “the break between then and now, between the one who lived it and the one who did not remain monumental and insurmountable, even as the heteropathic imagination struggles to overcome it” (Hirsch 86). This can be a reason why, even though her Jewishness is a topic in the autobiography, the Holocaust and anti-Semitism are not dealt with in detail. Instead of dealing with the reasons for emigration, Poland is idealized in her narrative. However, Hoffman shows that she is aware of the fact that she draws an unrealistic, Edenic imaginary of her native country as she also says that “the myths run deep, and we believe them

ourselves, for years and decades to come” (Hoffman 42). As Poland, during that time, was “already contaminated by the spectres of war, the trials of survival under the communist regime, and the menace of anti-Semitism” (Karpinski 135), a life in this country was not realistically admirable for her, but she missed it anyway.

The idealization of the native country and feeling of loss in the place of destination are clearly opposed to the experiences of another Jewish migrant autobiographer called Mary Antin. Nevertheless, Hoffman feels a particular affection towards her as she confirms in her autobiography: “Among the many immigrant tales I’ve come across, there is one for which I feel a particular affection. The story was written at the beginning of the century, by a young woman named Mary Antin, and in certain details it so closely resembles my own” (Hoffman 162). Not only the background story of the author, but also the title of Mary Antin’s autobiography *The Promised Land* suggest that Hoffman was inspired by this author. While Antin and Hoffman go through a similar migration process in the sense that they come from Jewish families and immigrate to an English-speaking country, both feel about it differently. Mary Antin, who was born as the Yiddish-speaking girl Mashinke, moves from Russia to America and praises the English language (Kellman *Translingual Imagination* 50). Hoffman, however, feels a loss of home and identity when she started abandoning her mother tongue for the English language (Hoffman 105). Nevertheless, the title of her last part of her book, *The New World* allows for a comparison with Antin’s *The Promised Land* as Hoffman finds America and the English language to be “sufficient” at the end of her narrative (Hoffman 280). Similar to Antin, yet less enthusiastic compared to her, Hoffman sees the English language as a chance to construct a new life and a new home in a foreign country. In the end, both authors wrote their autobiographies in English which, as I think, is a solid sign of great dedication to their second language.

#### 4.1.2 The Topic of Language in *Lost in Translation*

As the title *Lost in Translation: A Life in A New Language* already suggests, languages play a significant role in Hoffman’s text as she had to acquire a foreign language and adopt to a life in which she had to translate herself. This is because she migrated from Poland to North America and had to construct a new home in an environment with a foreign language. As languages are a significant part of the identity and feeling of home, she did not only have to translate Polish to English, but also metaphorically speaking translate her self. For interpreting the title further, it makes sense to have a look at the etymology of the word “translation”: It

derives from the Latin words “trans”, which means “across” and the past participle “latus” which comes from “ferre” meaning “to carry” or “to bring”. Hoffman was brought across borders by her Jewish parents when she was thirteen years old. In the new country, Hoffman goes to school and in the course of that the spelling of her Polish name “Ewa” changes to the English version with a “v”, “Eva” (Hoffman 105). Similarly, her sister, Alina, is called Elaine and their last name, Wydra, was pronounced in with an English accent (Hoffman 105). Hoffman thinks that while this twist of names reduced the distance between them and their classmates from the teacher’s perspective, it caused her and her sister to feel alienated from themselves (Hoffman 105). Instead of identifying with their names, Hoffman describes the situation as follows: “They are identification tags, disembodied signs pointing to objects that happen to be my sister and myself. We walk to our seats, into a roomful of unknown faces, with names that make us strangers to ourselves” (Hoffman 105). Thus, the translation of their names first felt like a loss of identity. Nevertheless, she finally decided to adopt the English language to the extent that she even wrote her autobiography in this second language and under her English name Eva after she migrated from Canada to the United States. This shows that she has, indeed, re-constructed her life in a new language as the subtitle of her book suggests.

For Hoffman, the feeling that she can express herself appropriately is disturbed when the predominant language of her everyday life switches from Polish to English. After moving to Canada, the disconnection of words and her association with them becomes for her a “desiccating alchemy, draining the world not only of significance but of its colors, striations, nuances—its very existence (Hoffman 106). In order to explain that English words are linguistically incommensurate with the Polish and with what they are supposed to represent, Hoffman draws on Ferdinand de Saussure’s famous concept of signs consisting of *signifiants* and *signifié*, or in English signification (concept) and signal (sound pattern) (Saussure 78) and having a value that determines the meaning and use of signs in different languages (Saussure 134f.). For example, the word “river” feels for her as if the “signifier has become severed from the signified” (Hoffman 106), because, as she explains, it “has no accumulated associations” and “does not give off the radiating haze of connotation” (Hoffman 106). In the same way also other words that she knows in Polish do not have an equivalent in English for her. When a friend of hers shares her emotions, Hoffman explains that words such as “happy” or “envious” are not translatable for her in a sense that she feels their meaning (Hoffman 107). Thus, she does not only consider some English words empty of meaning, but also their Polish translation. “I am becoming a living avatar of structuralist wisdom” (Hoffman 107), she explains. In

addition to this sense of language loss in regard to conversations with other people, she also experiences that she does not have any inner language for making sense of the world in her head anymore: “Polish, in a short time, has atrophied, shriveled from sheer uselessness. Its words don’t apply to my new experiences; they’re not coeval with any of the objects, Or faces, or the very air I breathe in the daytime. In English, words have not penetrated to those layers of my psyche from which a private conversation could proceed” (Hoffman 107). Thus, with moving to an English-speaking country, Hoffman became inarticulately suspended between both her native tongue and her second language (Kellman *Translingual Imagination* 53).

Hoffman’s multilingualism contributes to her feeling of being in exile, but at the same time, it is also her instrument to engage in home-making practices. Faced with the choice between Polish and English, she shows metalinguistic awareness regarding her multilingualism as she weighs the importance of speaking either the one or the other language. She knows being able to fluently speak the English language and to pronounce it correctly will allow her to assimilate to her anglophone surrounding: “I know that language will be a crucial instrument, that I can overcome the stigma of my marginality, the weight of presumption against me, only if the reassuringly right sounds come out of my mouth” (Hoffman 123). Therefore, she actively works on her language skills in that foreign tongue. Although she does not consider English as the language that represents herself and her thoughts accurately, she still thinks that it is “the language of the present” (Hoffman 121). Thus, she uses English when writing in her diary: “The diary is about me and not about me at all. But on one level, it allows me to make the first jump. I learn English through writing, and, in turn, writing gives me a written self” (Hoffman 121). Hoffman can therefore re-construct her identity through her writing in English. However, she explains that she does not use the pronoun “I” but “you”, instead to refer to herself. This way, she manages to create a sense of self without feeling that her identity is purely English. She defines this existence as taking place “midway between me and the sphere of artifice, art, pure language” (Hoffman 121). Later in life, it seems that she learnt that her second language is “an extension of selfhood rather than a replacement” (Eriksson 13). With having an extended sense of self in the sense that it transcends national borders, she also accepts that she will always feel as if she was “in the chinks between cultures” (Eriksson 275). Thus, her home can also not be pinned down to either Poland or England but is rather in between. Although she struggled during her process of finding her own language through moving from the paradise to her exile, she regained her voice and found finally found way to do justice to her multilingual self by producing her autobiography.

## 4.2 Transnationalism and Translingualism in Hoffman's Autobiography

Hoffman's autobiography *Lost in Translation* was published in 1989 after her immigration to the US where she established herself as a professional writer. At that time, English had already become the language that primarily represents her world because she had spent most of her time in an English rather than Polish speaking environment (Hoffman 272). Therefore, she knows words in her second language that she cannot translate into her native tongue. As maintained by several researchers, this shift of comparatively higher skills from the first to the second language is typical for migrants, especially when they are speakers of a minority language and move to an English-speaking country (Edwards 80; García 81; Komorowska and Krajka 50). Since Hoffman was not raised with English as a second mother tongue and did not have prospects of moving back to Poland after immigrating to Canada, her focus was to become fluent in the national language to succeed in school and build up a life in the new home country. According to Edwards, this kind of "cost-benefit analysis, conscious or otherwise" is typical for migrant families and frequently "leads to the decision to shift to English" (Edwards 80). Instead of shifting completely to English, however, Hoffman learns the language while keeping ties to her Polish family and friends who speak her native tongue. This way, she re-constructs her identity as neither entirely Polish nor English, but in-between those two cultures and languages. Therefore, she can be referred to as a transnational migrant (Al-Ali and Koser 10) whose life story is representative for many people that live within changing socio-cultural circumstances.

To feel at home after migrating, Hoffman had to build a life in a new language, as the subtitle of her autobiography suggests. First, Hoffman felt lost in the process of translating from Polish to English so that Canada became a linguistic exile for her. After moving to America and succeeding in her ambitions of becoming a writer, however, she started feeling like a "hybrid" instead of an "oxymoron", as she explains (Hoffman 248). Indeed, two linguistic identities do not need to contradict or oppose each other but can complement and be in interplay with one another as bilingualism is an "all-terrain vehicle" (García 45). Instead of replacing her native tongue or simply adding knowledge in a further language to her repertoire, the process of acquiring the English language led Hoffman to grapple with the translation of words and the values and concepts associated with them, as well as with her identity. In this process, one language had an influence on the other and so she found that "[e]ach language modifies the other, crossbreeds with it, fertilizes it" (Hoffman 273). This modification had the effect that her

first language was no longer separately accessible to her: “When I speak Polish now, it is infiltrated, permeated, and inflected by the English in my head”, she explains (Hoffman 273). Hoffman uses metaphors here that compare language acquisition to gardening. Just as the crossing of plants produces a new, mixed species, Hoffman's linguistic identity is not clearly Polish or English, but a mixture that can be called translingual, since it is not possible to precisely delineate her languages. For Hoffman, then, multilingualism, is a plant that can be consolidated through fertilization, that is, through the consolidation of linguistic knowledge. However, for Hoffman, this change also has the effect that her first language is no longer separately accessible to her, as it was before she became bilingual. Instead, it is “infiltrated, penetrated, and inflected by English” (Hoffman 273), which means that she can no longer feel exclusively at home in Polish, but must create a new, translingual home for herself. This is also evident in her autobiography in which she engages in translinguaging by writing it in English but including Polish words although the latter is her native tongue. Her autobiography thus demonstrates that she has become fluent in her second language and found home in an English-speaking culture while retaining ties to her Polishness. The way she did that is reflected in her transnational practices described below.

#### **4.2.1 Language Maintenance and Acquisition as a Transnational Practice in *Lost in Translation***

By continuing to speak Polish with her family while at the same time working on becoming fluent in the English language and trying to assimilate to her new surrounding, Hoffman constructs a transnational identity through languages. However, her language learning process was marked by difficulties in the process of negotiating identities, in Fox's words, “to find a way of being that is both a commitment to a fresh start and a way of still respecting and embodying older allegiances – somehow merging the old and new identities” (Fox 102). Hoffman illustrates that for her, this process is particularly tied to the issue of language. She felt strong ties to her mother tongue, which is a common reason for many migrants to reject the language of the host country as the language they speak at home (Edwards 82). However, despite feeling that English words lack “colors, striations, nuances” (Hoffman 107), Hoffman puts effort into becoming fluent in her second language as soon as she goes to school after her arrival in Canada: “Every day I learn new words, new expressions”, she writes (Hoffman 106). However, the descriptions of her efforts to learn English also show that the learning process is not linear but dynamic, with forward movements that are “sustained and effective” but also “bumpy and irregular” (García 45). In particular, Hoffman reports that she has problems with

the semantic meaning of words that cause her to resist English. "There are some turn of phrase to which I develop strange allergies" (Hoffman 106), she explains. Since allergies are usually triggered by substances that are harmless to other people, Hoffman emphasizes her hypersensitivity to English at this point, symbolically indicating both psychological and physical pain. However, as with allergen immunotherapy for humans, Hoffman's increasing exposure to English leads to a change in her immune system over time and thus, she became injected with English so that not only Polish, but also English became part of her self. Thus, she constructed a transnational identity.

Hoffman's transnational identity was based not only on her language skills themselves, but also on the social relationships she cultivated by maintaining Polish and acquiring English at the same time. Although she had an aversion, or "allergy" (Hoffman 106), to some words that she felt did not represent the same thing in Polish, she was generally eager to learn English. This can be attributed to the fact that after migration, the functionality of a language often overshadows the personal importance of the first language (Martin-Jones, Blackledge and Creese 9). To be a functional language for Hoffman, however, it would have to serve her both as a means of communication and as an expression of her identity, but she seemed to struggle with the latter. While acquiring English, her native tongue and English started to make each other relative so that she found herself lost in both languages because the "signifier has become severed from the signified" (Hoffman 106). Thus, as she grew closer to one language and its idiosyncrasies, she became more distant to her native tongue. However, she needed both languages to create a new home for herself, which I believe she accomplished by finding functionality in both languages through transnational practices. On the one hand, English became her everyday language. Since her arrival, she needed it in school and eventually, she even graduated in English and American literature from Harvard and has worked as a writer since then. Literature has always had a special significance for Hoffman, because, as she explains, she preferred reading classics of English literature, such as *Anne of Green Gables* and *Alice in Wonderland* over texts by Polish authors (Hoffman 28f.) while still in Poland and learnt new English words through books from "Vancouver's well-lit, cheerful public library" (Hoffman 106) during her life in Canada. Finally, she started her own writing in form of journaling in English (Hoffman 121) and eventually worked as a writer. By maintaining her interest in reading, English could thus become a vehicle of written language for her. On the other hand, she retained Polish as the language of communication through speaking with both her family and friends from Poland. Even in the United States, she quickly made new Polish-



speaking acquaintances that she could not only share her native language with, but also thoughts of their and their relatives' past in Poland and the war time, in particular (Hoffman 254f.). Their childhood in the postwar period seems to connect them, as they can share their memories of the time before migration through their common history (Hoffman 254). In these conversations, they speak mainly Polish, and Hoffman is called Ewa or Ewunia by them, as she was previously addressed only by friends and family members in Poland (Hoffman 258). Thus, through maintaining her Polish relationships and her original address in conversations in her native tongue, and immersing herself in English culture and writing, Hoffman engaged in transnational practices that allowed her to "retain a collective memory of 'home'" (Al-Ali and Koser 10) and construct a diasporic home that is not only in her Polish identity but extends across national borders.

Before engaging in transnationalism as a home-making practice, however, Hoffman had to overcome feelings of exile nurtured by a strong sense of nostalgia for the language that she left behind. Although her parents had connections to Mr. and Mrs. Rosenberg, members of the Polish-Jewish community in Vancouver, who provided them with a place to stay when they arrived in Vancouver, Hoffman did not feel closer to home among those people. Instead, she considered Mr. Rosenberg as a "Dickensian character of tyranny" (Hoffman 103). This sense of tyranny is connected to her hosts' assimilation into Canadian culture, and Mr. Rosenberg considers the English language superior to Polish and promotes an idealistic picture of Canada which, in fact, is in line with the hopes of Hoffman's father. While still in Poland, he was convinced that Canada could provide his family with greater prospects of success and majestic landscapes; for Eva, however, Canadians were inhospitable and their country too "odd" and "gray" (Hoffman 92f.), with "enormous width" (Hoffman 92) and "eerie quietness" (Hoffman 135). Already the St. Lawrence Seaway that took her to her new host country was "ineffably and utterly different from the watery landscapes" (Hoffman 92) she was used to in Poland. Even years after her migration, she shares this odd feeling towards people from America with Polish friends she makes abroad. While studying and working in the US, she made friends with "New York Poles" (Hoffman 258) that she speaks Polish with and became part of a bigger group of migrants that moved to New York around 1981 while Poland was under the government of Jaruzelski who introduced the martial law (Hoffman 255). It was only at this stage of her life that Hoffman describes belonging to a diasporic community in which she shares a common native language, knowledge about their parents' past during the Holocaust, as well as interest in Jewishness and literature from Polish author's. She describes it as a group of Poles who have

“transported their habits” (Hoffman 255) but assimilated in so far that they can work on fulfilling their dream of the life they imagined in America by acquiring the English language and working for American companies (Hoffman 258). While doing that, they share their struggles and what they miss about Poland, such as the frankness of its citizens (Hoffman 264). Yet, as Hoffman explains, they would hardly ever consider moving back to Poland, no matter how “disaffected or nostalgic or dislocated” they are (Hoffman 258). The reason that she gives at this point is that “it’s hard to return to a smaller stage from a bigger one” (Hoffman 258). Although they criticize Americans and their country, they still find that “[t]he American stage is large enough, and indeterminate enough, to stand in for the world” (Hoffman 258). The comparison of their life with a performance shows that they feel like they are representing a character in a play and not being themselves, which can be attributed to the fact that migration and the change in language that comes with it can affect the perception of one’s identity (Boteva-Richter 49). The indeterminacy of the American stage, however, seems to leave more possibilities open to them than their homeland, and therefore they strive for a good performance in the form of approximate assimilation, but retain some of their habits and occasionally return mentally to their homeland through nostalgia. These simultaneous aspirations mean that they can have a home not only locally on the American stage, but mentally on the Polish one as well. A certain assimilation and nostalgia can therefore be seen as a diasporic practice through which a transnational space for home and identity is created. This new space can provide a stage for translanguaging, which is a practice that I will explore in the following.

#### 4.2.2 Translanguaging in *Lost in Translation*

As discussed in the previous chapter, the acquisition of English extended Hoffman’s linguistic repertoire and served as a starting point for constructing a space for meaning making processes that go beyond national borders. Translating herself and making meaning of words is an ongoing process that Hoffman entered as soon as she started living within more than one culture and learned a new language. Her life in and between two languages made her acknowledge that neither of her linguistic worlds exist separate from each other: “Because I have learned the relativity of cultural meanings on my skin, I can never take any one set of meanings as final” (Hoffman 275). Such a bodily metaphor that emphasizes the effects of language on the self is also used by the researchers García and Li who would say that Hoffman has several “languages inscribed in [her] body” (García and Li 18). This is reflected in her autobiography that does not only deal with the process in which English shapes her self and her world, but is also a representation of linguistic relativity in itself as it is a translingual text. Following Kellman’s

classification of authors who engage in literary translingualism, Hoffman is both an ambilingual translingual, as she writes in more than one language, and an isolingual translingual author as she writes in another than her native tongue (Kellman *Literary Translingualism* 228; Kellman *Translingual Imagination* 18). Furthermore, she has not included translations in her work, and it is clear from both the content and style that she does not give priority to any language, which is in line with Gernalzick's definition of translingual literature (Gernalzick 262). I see this as a way to represent her identity as extending beyond practices of speakers that have not had more than one language and several cultures "inscribed in their body", as García and Li would say. According to them, people who "live between different societal and semiotic contexts as they interact with a complex array of speakers", which definitely applies to Hoffman, engage in translanguaging as a meaning-making process (García and Li 18). In the following, I will therefore provide a close reading of Hoffman's choice of languages to illustrate the forms and effects of her specific use of translanguaging.

In her autobiography, Hoffman invokes Polish words in certain contexts to bridge the linguistic gap that is created through her life in two languages. Following her belief that English translations of Polish words do not accurately represent certain feelings and thoughts (Hoffman 107), she resorts to the original Polish terms. While translating whole dialogues with Polish family members and friends to English in her narrative, she includes single words in her native tongue and thus emphasizes the cultural specificity of particular lexical items. For example, she uses the Polish forms of address for the people she knew in Poland, such as *Pani* or *Ciocia* that could be, as she explains, translated to "auntie" (Hoffman 20). The people she met in America, however, are referred to with English address such as "Mr. and Mrs. Rosenberg" (Hoffman 102) even if they are Poles. This shows that Polish people from her childhood, in contrast to new acquaintances, remain localized in Poland through their anchoring in her memory. In a similar way, feelings, places and practices that she associates with her childhood in Poland are Polish in her memory, not English, which is also evident in her choice of words in her autobiography. For some Polish words, Hoffman suggests, there is no equivalent and so instead of including a glossary, appended translations or notes that give translations, she uses periphrastic explanations in English for single Polish words in her autobiography which is characteristic for a translingual text (Gernalzick 261). As explained by Gernalzick, translingual literature does not have a target language in the sense that there is no "teleological goal – or the vanishing point – for other languages" (Gernalzick 261). This becomes evident in Hoffman's text as she uses Polish words within her narrative, sometimes even repeatedly the same, "to

convey a sense of local colour, to authenticate the speaker's linguistic competence, and to draw attention to the untranslatable" (Karpinski 135). In particular, she uses Polish to refer to aspects of her origins in a way that is not possible in English exclusively because she is not only physically, but also linguistically displaced in Canada. Before further discussing how language plays a role regarding Hoffman's origins and displacement in the next chapter on homes in *Lost in Translation*, I will outline the causes of her feeling of uprootedness and how they are represented in her autobiography.

Hoffman's sense of displacement and loss were triggered by the foreignness of both the denotations and connotations of words as well as the semiotics of different cultures. This becomes particularly evident in the passages in which she translanguages. Throughout her autobiography, the Polish word *tesknota* is a central expression that "adds to nostalgia the tonalities of sadness and longing" (Hoffman 4) and is thus used frequently in situations where she recalls her original home. She does not only describe a nostalgia for specific places and the Polish language, but also for her lost sense of having an undivided, monolingual identity that was authentic and rooted in her mother tongue. This sense of uprootedness in regard to language stems from her feeling that nuances of Polish words get lost in translation and thus, a sense of Polish identity cannot be transferred into the English language. Especially when it comes to the word *polot*, which, according to Hoffman's explanation, "combines the meanings of dash, inspiration, and flying" (Hoffman 71), "the true Polish values" cannot be represented when the word is translated (Hoffman 71). Here, she seems to speak on behalf of the tradition to honor *polot*, while positioning herself soon afterwards as a non-traditionalist: "No, I'm no patriot, nor was I ever allowed to be" (Hoffman 74). Although she shows cultural consciousness, she considers herself as deeply language is affecting her sense of home and identity. Using English, in these cases, would not have been enough to represent her world on an emotional level. At the beginning of her life in Canada, only English felt denaturalized for her because words such as "river" did not represent the Polish word *rzeka* (Hoffman 106), for example. After trying "to throw a bridge between the present and the past" (Hoffman 117), however, she finds herself in a "verbally deprived condition" (Hoffman 181) in both languages. Thus, she aims at understanding the "repeated symbols, patterns of words, recurring motifs, and motifs that pull against each other" in her English and Polish culture. Symbolic codes in regard to dating are, for example, particularly affected by "rules and constraints of sexual behavior" that she wants to master (Hoffman 150). For this purpose, she needs to "translate gender scripts according to the local notions" and that, again, makes her feel troubled in her attempts at both translation

and acculturation (Karpinski 137). As Hoffman continued to interact with both English- and Polish-speaking people, she lives between two semiotic context and thus, must translanguague to bridge the loss she had by migrating to a country with a different language. After overcoming the feeling of foreignness, however, she managed to construct a nexus between her homes through translanguaging as I will explain in the following.

It is not until her immigration to the United States that Hoffman started feeling home in the present despite differences in culture and a continuous feeling of living in between two languages. Instead of picturing an Edenic home that was lost in the course of her emigration from Poland in the past or projecting a sense of home in an English-speaking environment into the future, she has accepted that translating will always be part of her home as both her languages and linguistic surroundings will continue to affect one another in a way that make her identity translingual (Hoffman 273). According to Besemeres, “Hoffman’s most striking contribution to the debate over the relationship between the self and language is her insistence that any language implies a cultural universe” (Besemeres 41) and, as I argue, at the same time a home. When the two languages, and thus the two universes, collided after their migration, a new home was formed that could not be localized in just one place, but was rather a hybrid home. Based on this, Hoffman has to acknowledge that her home is destined to be “in the chinks between cultures and subcultures” (Hoffman 275), and between languages in which she constantly translates forwards and backwards. This transnationality that stems from her multilingualism and life between cultures, allows her to (re-)construct homes on multiple levels which I will describe in the next chapter.

#### **4.3 Homes in *Lost in Translation***

In Eva Hoffman’s autobiography, notions of home are constructed in various areas of her life that can be identified in physical and abstract places as well as practices. Because Hoffman emigrated from Poland to Canada at the age of thirteen, her definition of home inevitably became complicated, as the dichotomy of home and abroad was abolished. After moving to Vancouver, she was confronted “with what is considered ‘not home’” and thus dealt with the question what “home” is for her (George 4). In her autobiography, she mentions various places that felt more like “home” as opposed to “the foreign” or “distant” and thus, we can identify what Al-Ali and Koser would call “multiple allegiances to places” (Al-Ali and Koser 8). As those researchers further explain, “[t]he changing relationship between migrants and their ‘homes’ is held to be an almost quintessential characteristic of transnational migration” (Al-Ali

and Koser 1). In Eva Hoffman's autobiography, this changing relationship is particularly evident as her migrant narrative shows that home is not only manifested in a place, but also in people, religion, music, and literature that are constantly in process. Those notions of home do not only reflect home, but also contribute to the sense of not being home and are important for the construction process of home. Hoffman's family's Jewishness, for example, had a great impact on their decision to move away from Poland, helped them find a place to stay after they arrived in Canada and influenced their home-making practices in the foreign country. Instead of being a fixed space, home is a fluid and changing concept that is constructed in her autobiography through the process of remembering the past, imagining the future and practicing homemaking in the present.

Hoffman's bilingualism at the time of her authoring allows her not only to analyze her transition from a primarily Polish-speaking teenager to a multilingual adult in the context of her migration to English-speaking countries. On the one hand, she wrote her autobiography in English which, according to Casteel, makes the autobiography "a marker of her successful assimilation" (Casteel 295). From the content of her autobiography, it becomes clear that the importance of the Polish language is increasingly relegated to the background. Although she felt lost in English, it became the language of her everyday interactions and without learning that language, she could not have gotten closer to the Canadian culture and its people. Thus, languages were not only important for her as a means of communication, but also for assimilating to a foreign country. Her goal was to "incorporate the language, make it part of [her] psyche and [her] body" (Hoffman 216). This way, Hoffman constructed herself a sense of home by perfecting her English skills and picking up American values, such as "ambition, achievement and self-confidence" after moving to the U.S. as an adult (Hoffman 270). Her parents, in contrast, maintained a sense of home that is in Poland and nurtured this feeling by sticking to their Polish attitude and character traits. Her mother, for example, prefers being "racked by the movements of passion - *passio*, whose meaning is suffering" (Hoffman 269) and leading a relaxed life (Hoffman 270) over the American, busy lifestyle that Eva has (Hoffman 270). "This ambition is a sickness", declares her mother and her father would only ask in his crooked English "For what is the purpose?" (Hoffman 270). For Hoffman, it is for the feeling of "moving on" that was triggered by migration (Hoffman 271) and this purpose contributed to the fact that she could develop notions of home on various dimensions.

Hoffman's search for a sense of home in and between more than one culture and language led to a hybridity in her identity and literary work. As Skinner would confirm, this pursuit of hybridity expressed through her writing assures her place among transnational writers (Skinner 319). Despite her exilic perspective of her host country and the feeling of being lost in English, she did not wish to return to her origins but rather strived to construct a sense of home that goes beyond national borders and is thus transnational. This is evident in her autobiography as she wrote it in English even though it is not her native tongue and included Polish words. In her writing, meaning is not only made in only one language but in a mixture of two. Therefore, Kellman describes her autobiography as “a linguistic echo chamber tinged with the exhilaration and melancholy of stepping outside a language, if only to step inside another” (Kellman 117). Similar to how echo chambers are known as homogenizing, closed systems, I argue that Hoffman's autobiography is also a translingual space where meaning is created through the hybrid use of language(s). In particular, the work's translingualism provides the concept of home with a particular multidimensionality, as it allows for notions of the concept to be constructed both in and between English and Polish. As a result, home can ultimately not only be fixed to one place, but gains in complexity.

#### **4.3.1 “Dislocation Is the Norm rather than the Aberration”: Home in Places**

Hoffman's home in the sense of homeland became disrupted as she emigrated with her family from Poland to Canada. As Poland was the only place she had ever known at the time of her migration, so it meant “both home and the universe” (Hoffman 5) to her. With this climatic definition of Poland as Hoffman's home and universe, she emphasizes that this country was not only a home for her, but encompassed the totality of her existence, which gave her a particularly strong attachment to it. Emigration from Poland, then, meant the loss not only of her homeland, but of everything she knew, which makes the idea of reconstructing a home there seem very difficult. It was on the ferry on the way across the Atlantic that she first realized what she was about to lose. She describes her feelings at this moment as a “severe attack of nostalgia, or *tęsknota* – a word that adds to nostalgia the tonalities of sadness and longing” (Hoffman 4). This feeling occurred when a band was playing the Polish anthem on the ship and thus, made her return to her mentally constructed home in Poland. As confirmed by Rubenstein, nostalgia is often a response to “the unavoidable journey from rapture to rupture” (Rubenstein 5) which is literally describing Hoffman's way from Poland to Canada. The decision to emigrate was made by Hoffman's parents when she was just 13 years old, so staying in Poland was out of the question for her. Although her parents were confident of a better future in the destination

country, Hoffman's grief at the loss of the constituent of her home, which was still tangibly close at the time of the trip, was greater than her confidence in the home they could construct. This shows that their parents construct a home in the future, while Hoffman's conception of home is exclusively in their past. The grief she feels for leaving home is like that felt when losing a friend. She even writes in her autobiography that she loved Cracow "as one loves a friend" (Hoffman 4). The feeling of nostalgia evoked when leaving a place is also compared by Besemeres to the "intense grief experienced when a loved one dies." However, the mourning is not only for the place itself, but also for the language, people and culture associated with it. For Hoffman, the separation from her familiar surroundings brought back memories of aspects of her homeland that she knew she would miss in Canada. The home that was constructed in her mind was therefore not physical, but an imagined, idealized version of home evoked by the dislocation from her native country.

The geographical rapture from her dwelling led not only to a mental distance from relationships and memories described above, but also to concrete losses of familiar and beloved things and places. The geography of Canada was so foreign and "not home" for her compared to Poland that she felt like living in a crater away from her home after "being pushed out of the happy, safe enclosures of Eden" (Hoffman 5). The Edenic description of Poland as an enclosed space conveys the security that her homeland represented for Hoffman caused by the familiarity with the Polish environment. Even though she acknowledges that Canada is known for the beauty of its nature, she missed her Poland because, in contrast to her new surrounding, it felt more authentic to her: "I want my landscapes human sized and penetrable; these mountains look like a picture postcard to me, something you look at rather than enter, and on the many cloudy days they enclose Vancouver like gloomy walls" (Hoffman 134). The picture postcard-metaphor shows furthermore that Hoffman considers herself an observer rather than an actor in Canada. The perception of her external world helped Hoffman to create an image of Canada, but reality, for her, is still manifested in Poland. The walls Hoffman describes here around Vancouver (Hoffman 134) contrast with her description of her homeland as an Edenic enclosure (Hoffman 5). Enclosures can provide security, but "gloomy walls" suggest confinement (Hoffman 134). The picture Hoffman draws here of Vancouver is thus that of a prison in which she is separated from her social relationships and belongings. Moreover, the walls can also metaphorically allude to a particular behavior, such as walling oneself in and tearing down walls. Since these actions can only be performed in connection to the external world, Hoffman emphasizes at this point that the construction of a dwelling as a home is the responsibility of the people themselves



and not inherent to a place (Oliver 17). By separating herself from the outside world through psychological walls, Hoffman maintained a sense of being in exile in Canada. By engaging in social relationships and practices, her feeling of not being home, Hoffman underscores at this point that dwelling must be created by people and is not inherent to a place (Oliver 17). Although Canada seems to have remained a walled exile for Hoffman, she eventually managed to escape from her prison and to build a new life in the United States.

Only after she reaches her new destination, the U.S., she finally succeeds in recovering from her losses that migration entailed for her. On the very end of her autobiography, she describes how she has made peace with her life in a foreign language:

Right now, this is the place where I'm alive. How could there be any other place? Be here now, I think to myself in the faintly ironic tones in which the phrase is uttered by the liked of me. Then the phrase dissolves. The brilliant colors are refracted by the sun. The small space of the garden expands into the dimensions of peace. Time pulses through my blood like a river. The language of this is sufficient. I'm here now. (Hoffman 280)

In this final passage of her autobiography, Hoffman takes up earlier themes from her narrative to reinforce her point: The garden she mentions, is not competing against other, Polish gardens, as it contains flowers whose names she knows only in English and thus “fit the flowers perfectly” (Hoffman 280). Therefore, the garden does not arouse any ambivalent feelings in Hoffman. However, the word “river”, which she uses here, had evoked a distinct dislike in Hoffman, as she explained in the *Exile*-part of her autobiography (Hoffman 106). By using the word here at the end of her text without controversy, she underscores the peace she has made with the English language. As pointed out by Casteel, “this affirmative and amnesiac conclusion seems less fully resolved” when looking at it “from a vantage point of the Canadian narrative” (Casteel 298). Yet this very realization shows that Hoffman has created a home for herself in which her language, with which she can express herself translingually, “is sufficient” (Hoffman 280). In fact, she sees her condition between languages and nations as normality since “[d]islocation is the norm rather than the aberration in our time” (Hoffman 274). Further, Hoffman explains that we live in such a diverse society that there can be no “geographic center holding the world together” but rather multiple “nodules competing for our attention” (Hoffman 275). Depending on which aspects of her life Hoffman pays attention to, she constructs a concept of home that is not rigid but fluidly and dynamically changing as nodes compete with each other. Therefore, instead of seeing her English skills as something that creates a gap, she now perceives them metaphorically as part of her home, as a “window through which I can

observe the diversity of the world” (Hoffman 274), as she writes. The metaphorical meaning of the window can be interpreted at this point as part of her home which has two functions: On the one hand, it allows the view from inside a private space to the outside, and thus new knowledge can be gained in a safe environment. On the other hand, the window allows one to look inside, as in a show window, but where the outside world sees only what the person inside reveals to the gaze. Therefore, the window serves as an interface between the inside and the outside, just as languages serve for Hoffman as openings for new perceptions and influences. In the following, the focus will be the influence of interpersonal relationships and how the concept of home is constructed through them.

#### **4.3.2 “I Can’t Have One Name again”: Home in People**

Prior to her life abroad, Hoffman’s family members, her piano teacher and her friends from the music school were her closest ties and thus have a lasting influence on her idea of home, even though their relationship has changed. In Poland, Hoffman developed her hobby of playing the piano with her teacher Pani Witeszczak (Hoffman 17), had “conversations and escapades with friends” (Hoffman 4), and also experienced her first love (Hoffman 18). After Hoffman’s emigration to Canada, however, her relationship with her family and friends changed due to the geographical and psychological distance between them. In relation to Ciocia Bronia or Hoffman’s friends, such as Basia, both factors were pivotal for her to stop having contact with them. Although, as Hoffman writes, they sent letters, Hoffman did not reply to them because on the one hand, she felt that the people who stayed behind in Canada would not understand her new life abroad (Hoffman 23), and on the other hand, she did not dare to find out what remained from their “girlish romanticism” (Hoffman 79). By keeping no contact with them, Hoffman has made Poland and the people associated with it a home that will always remain the same and to which she can always return through memories.

However, this is not true for Hoffman’s family members, with whom she emigrated to Canada. While this allowed her to take part of her home with her, it did not remain static, as it was influenced by the transition from a Polish to an English-speaking environment. Hoffman felt that her parents adhered less to the linguistic norms of English (Hoffman 148) and thus lacked understanding of American culture (Hoffman 270). The first impression was based on their “resistance of linguistic looseness” of English which Hoffman explains with the example of the word “friend” (Hoffman 149). She outlines that in Polish, people are only referred to as “friends”, if they enjoy “strong loyalty and attachment bordering on love” (Hoffman 148)

although in English, it is “covering all kinds of territory, and ‘acquaintance is something an uptight, snobbish kind of person might say” (Hoffman 149). Although she does not explicitly mention the Polish equivalents, she seems to be referring to the words *przyjaciółka* (“Friend”) or *znajoma* (“Acquaintance”), which are more semantically distinct in Polish. As explained by Besemeres, “the realm of social relationships is carved up according to quite different categories in these languages, and an attempt to transpose the Polish term into English is therefore bound to fail” (Hoffman 28). At this point it becomes clear that in Hoffman's brain the English and Polish languages were wrestling with each other, especially when it came to emotionally bound words. Although as an adult in American English became the language of her thought, occasionally Polish words would suddenly come to mind that were “from the primary palette of feeling” (Hoffman 272). This shows that Polish remained her default language for feelings despite her cognitive home in English. Nevertheless, while her parents continued to use the word “acquaintance,” Hoffman adapted to English usage and began to use the word “friend” instead (Hoffman 149). This can be attributed to the fact that Hoffman's environment was more influenced by the collective habits of native speakers than her parents’ as she was integrated into an English-speaking environment already at the age of thirteen.

Through Hoffman's integration into the Canadian School, people in the educational context were the first to contribute to a gap in her Polish identity which also served as an important space for constructing a more diverse sense of home. When she started to attend school in Vancouver, the language of her education shifted from Polish to English. Although some educational programs focus on the maintenance of the native tongue in addition to the development of the state or national language (García 80), Hoffman's schooling was definitively the transitional kind that encourages children to shift from their minority language to English as she and her sister were given English names in class and did not attend any Polish lessons after their migration to Canada. Since one's name and language are strongly linked to identity (Steinitz 1), the school thus made Hoffman feel that she had lost a part of her self (Hoffman 105). Nevertheless, as Polish remained the language that she speaks with her family, she could linguistically return to that part of her identity when she was at home. In several passages of her autobiography, Hoffman's name is spelled as “Ewa” instead of the Polish “Eva” when she is addressed by her family members or Polish friends (Hoffman 11, 105, 120, 258). This way, she constructs a sense of homeliness that stands in contrast to the people that called her Eva. While her sister “returned to her Polish name – Alina” (Hoffman 272) after school, Eva kept the English version of her name which shows that she has begun to identify with the

name. In the case of her sister, she found it difficult to switch back to calling her Alina instead of Elaine because her identification tag changed for Hoffman when the language surrounding them shifted to English (Hoffman 272). She explains:

Alina, in English, is a different word than it is in Polish: it has the stamp of the unusual, its syllables don't fall as easily on an English speaker's tongue. In order to transport a single word without distortion, one would have to transport the entire language around it. My sister no longer has one, authentic name, the name that is inseparable from her single essence. (Hoffman 272)

At this point, it becomes clear that Hoffman's worldview has been so strongly influenced by English that Polish feels unfamiliar in her English-speaking environment in America, although at the beginning of her schooling in Canada it was always English that evoked a sense of foreignness. Thus, her English-speaking surrounding seems to have socialized Hoffman out of her attachment to her Polish sense of home (Besemeres 46). While the change of names first created a gap to her sense of self, it later became a part of her identity which makes her realize that she "can't have one name again" (Hoffman 272). With the last sentence of this passage Hoffman makes it clear that English has affected her relation to Polish and that there is thus no return to an original form of the self after a change of language.

Although migration and the associated change in linguistic environment led her to identify herself and her sister with two names depending on the context, those who seem to be at home in a particular place for Hoffman retained their original names. Depending on whether Hoffman knows people from Poland or America, she uses certain Polish or English forms of address. Even though the words *Pan*, *Pani* and *Ciocia* could easily be translated into "Mr.", "Mrs" and "Auntie" respectively, Hoffman decides to translanguage in her autobiography for addressing various adults, such as her mother's best friend Pani Ruta (Hoffman 17) or her piano teacher Pani Witeszczak (Hoffman 17) as well as for talking about Ciocia Bronia (Hoffman 20), for example. By mentioning that *Pani* "means something like madame" (Hoffman 17) and *Ciocia* "means Auntie", Hoffman provides linguistic explanations of the addresses and thus implies that these words would lose their exact meaning in connection with the names if they were translated into English. In fact, the name Ciocia Bronia does not even refer to Hoffman's aunt, but to the family's maid who was living with them like a relative for a long time and has a special relationship with Hoffman's parents since they met when they were hiding from the Nazis in an attic (Hoffman 20). Hoffman also feels very close to her, which is why Ciocia Bronia was like an aunt to her (Hoffman 20). In contrast, the maids that Hoffman's family had after Ciocia Bronia moved to Breslau with her husband, were "simply maids", as Hoffman

explains (Hoffman 21). The reasons for this seem to be, on the one hand, that Ciocia Bronia's caring behavior aroused positive feelings in Hoffman (Hoffman 20) and, on the other hand, that Hoffman's parents shared a common past of traumatic experiences with her (Hoffman 21). The latter created a special bond of trust between the Hoffmans and her, which led to Ciocia Bronia being treated less like a maid and more like a family member, despite her lower social status, and thus becoming part of their home. This association of Ciocia Bronia with home remained with Hoffman even after her migration through her memories. The thought of what originally connected Ciocia Bronia and Hoffman's parents, however, tends to be suppressed. Although the Second World War and antisemitism had a big impact on their past as it was the reason for their migration, it is rarely spoken about in Hoffman's family. However, Judaism had a considerable influence on Hoffman's life and therefore, home in Jewishness will be the next focus in this thesis.

#### **4.3.3 "A Sense of Being Jewish Permeates": Home in Jewishness**

Since Hoffman was born to Jewish parents in 1945 and raised in post-war Poland, her life was strongly influenced by political events. As she explains in her autobiography, the ban on emigration for Polish Jews was lifted in 1957, causing many Poles to leave the country. Although most emigrated to Israel (Hoffman 83), probably because it is known as the cradle of Judaism, Hoffman's father decided to move to Canada for economic reasons after it was advertised to him by a member of the Jewish Community Center in Vancouver, Mr. Rosenberg, as a "land of opportunity" (Hoffman 84). This attitude that opportunities are anywhere better than in Poland seems to be common to the Jewish Poles abroad with whom Hoffman makes acquaintance, regardless of whether they have actually managed to "grow rich and to be happy" there (Hoffman 84). When Hoffman talks nostalgically about Poland to her "New York Poles", they try to convince Hoffman that "[i]t wasn't any good back there" because Jews were not wanted in Poland (Hoffman 115). This shows that nostalgic thoughts of the abandoned homeland seemed to be at odds with the ideological visions of the future held by many Jewish migrants. However, Hoffman thinks that if she were a few years older when her parents decided to emigrate, she would have considered emigration the only right decision because of her collective experiences as a member of a Jewish community in Poland (Hoffman 88). Her "collective identity would develop an intimate logic" that would have motivated her to move abroad, she explains (Hoffman 88). This shows that at the time of her migration she did not yet see herself as part of the Jewish community, but rather as a victim of the consequences of antisemitism.

Despite the impact the Holocaust had on Hoffman, it is only mentioned on the margin of her autobiography, as she only occasionally talks about her parents' past and how they came to terms with it. At this point, it is particularly noticeable that she never talks about her parents' lives before the war in her narrative. Thus, either she knows little about it, as her parents are generally silent about their past (Hoffman 23), or the dark stories of wartime obscure these memories. As Casteel explains, many postwar children are unable to reflect on "the legacy of the Holocaust" (Casteel 293). This seems to be true for Hoffman as well, as she already barely manages to listen to her parents' traumatic war narratives because they are not a "frightening fairy tale" but realistic imaginings of a life that could have been hers (Hoffman 252). Nevertheless, Hoffman also struggles to shake off thoughts of that dark time of anti-Semitism and, like her friends in America, to view her new life with pure optimism (Hoffman 253). By describing her experiences with anti-Semitism only in passing in her autobiography, she nevertheless succeeds in constructing Poland as an idyllic homeland. Thus, Judaism takes on a positive role in the sections about her cultural heritage in terms of its influence on her sense of home, which I will discuss in more detail below.

Although Judaism was rarely talked about in her family, Hoffman identifies as a Jew through domestic practices. She was raised in a Jewish home but her ignorance of some aspects of Jewishness, such as the Jewish language, can be attributed to her parents' reticence about her religious heritage. Instead of associating Yiddish with Jews, it was for her "the language of money and secrets" that her mother and father spoke whenever they had serious conversations (Hoffman 14). Hoffman's parents did not raise their children bilingually with Yiddish and Polish, perhaps because the language "became practically extinct after the destruction of the Jewish community in Eastern Europe during the Second World War" (Kuhiwczak 105) or because her parents had a high "tolerance on the subject of Jewish observance (Hoffman 36) in general. Yet, her parents fasted on Yom Kippur and regularly attended synagogue as a sign of their Jewishness (Hoffman 36). For Hoffman, however, going to the synagogue once a year on the High Holidays symbolized rather otherness than Jewishness (Hoffman 36), which shows that she saw this practice less as part of her cultural identity than other customs. Hoffman's behavior with regard to religion seems to be due to adaptation to her environment rather than to religious reasons. For example, she could not distinguish between Catholic and Jewish customs until her mother asked her to stop crossing herself in front of churches as "Jews don't do that" (Hoffman 29) because her religious education in school was Catholic. Even though she

later tries to pass on her mother's teachings to her little sister Alina and educate her about which practices are Jewish and which are Catholic, she resists the conventions of Judaism which she believes are superstitions (Hoffman 36). She eats, for example, pork, although Judaism forbids it, but does not tell her parents about it (Hoffman 35). The fact that she feels she must keep this a secret shows that Jewish dietary laws are important to her parents, and thus she most likely always ate kosher in her childhood. They also ate the typical Jewish bread hallah, whose "heavy, sweet odor" Hoffman seems to remember even as an adult. This food was the embodied "sense of being Jewish" that permeated their home (Hoffman 29). Thus, as will be described in more detail in the next section, certain dishes embodied cultural identity and a sense of home.

#### 4.3.4 "These Are the Standard Remedies": Home in Food

Hoffman's Jewishness played a significant role regarding eating behavior. This becomes evident as she traces her dysfunctional relationship with food that she had for a while as a little child back to her cultural background (Hoffman 49). She describes her aversion to food as a particularly common problem among postwar children: "perhaps we sense some of what we're drinking in with our mothers' milk, what they've had to ingest, and we refuse it as later, my contemporaries all over the world will refuse to ingest the goods offered by their parents' world, will refuse to inherit the earth" (Hoffman 49). Only after her refusal to eat ended in a serious illness, Hoffman began to develop a healthy appetite (Hoffman 50). Since then, she only had to recover from common illnesses such as colds, for which her family had "standard remedies" called *kogelmogel* which is "a creamy, thick, sweet mixture of egg yolk, sugar, butter and cocoa" (Hoffman 50). As she always gets this food as a remedy, it becomes an embodied practice that continues to be alive in her memory in the Polish language. By using the original name of the dish and thus engaging in translanguaging at this point, Hoffman emphasizes the specificity of the dish. Since it originates from Jewish communities from the 17<sup>th</sup> century and can be compared to eggnog (Rolek), Hoffman points to her Jewish background by mentioning it. Therefore, the food memory of *kogelmogel* is both embodied experience and embodied ethnography. This shows how important food is as a cultural heritage, not only in terms of its consumption but also, as will become clear, in terms of its cultivation and preparation.

In her autobiography, Hoffman makes associations between food and her origins by sharing her memories of a time spent on the countryside which was dominated by agriculture. Although peasant farming alone would not be strong enough to sustain the population due to modern food demand (Collier 71), Hoffman romanticizes this kind of agriculture and home-cooked food

(Hoffman 18). Especially in Europe, there was a romantic hostility to industrial agriculture that led to anti-Americanism based on national agricultural protectionism (Collier 74), but Hoffman is not explicitly hostile towards modern ways of food production. Instead, food in America does not seem to play any role for her as she does not mention it in her autobiography. As pointed out by Abarca and Colby, especially “sensory and affective qualities of food provide mnemonic mechanisms” (Abarca and Colby 4). Thus, it seems that Hoffman had no strong ties to American food. In contrast, she recounts her experiences in regard to farming in Poland and creates a romanticized image of people living in a pre-industrial society that “milk their cows or churn butter in small wooden barrels” (Hoffman 18) and “go off on rattling horse-drawn carts to the fields” (Hoffman 19). As these activities have social and cultural functions, they can serve as mnemonic cues (Abarca and Colby 5) of a sense of identity and home linked to national pride. Hoffman’s description of peasants as patient and hard-working people conveys this pride and shows that for her, memories of the traditional Polish way to produce food brings a feeling of home to her (Hoffman 18). This is particularly evident in Hoffman’s exclusively positive descriptions of her vacations in “peasant houses in the small village of Bialy Dunajec” (Hoffman 17) where she remembers all the sensations regarding food, such as the delicious taste of “the burned skin of the potatoes” and the warmly smell “of horses and fresh straw” (Hoffman 19). Since this kind of “sensory and affective qualities [...] provide mnemonic mechanisms by which experiences are embodied” (Abarca and Colby 4), Hoffman can reconstruct a sense of home that is linked to both food and her origins in her narrative.

The symbolic significance of food described above can be compared to the meaning of languages for her sense of home. Hoffman makes this clear by drawing a parallel between language learning and cooking, where not only the various ingredients are mixed together, but also the “consistency, proportions of ingredients, smoothness of blending” play a role (Hoffman 123). This metaphor shows how important it is for her to master the English language in such a way that her audience perceives her utterances as smooth. Authenticity seems to be her ultimate goal, which becomes evident as she aims at giving “voice accurately and fully to ourselves and our sense of the world” (Hoffman 124). This shows that a person’s second language does not necessarily create a tension to one’s identity (Besemeres 30). Instead, it is possible “to be at home in our tongue” (Hoffman 124), no matter if it is the first or second language, or a mixture of both. Hoffman seems to have achieved this in her second language, at least in its written form, as she even studied English and wrote her autobiography in that language. Regarding her oral language skills, in contrast, her goal was “to speak well as to play



a piece of music without mistakes” (Hoffman 122). Just as experienced chefs and authors can tell if the different qualities of their composition fit together, Hoffman believes she can learn a language like an instrument so that the individual notes harmonize with each other. Since she had this kind of special relationship with music that explains her effort to make her English represent her world and her identity, I will discuss in the following chapter how she constructed home in music.

#### 4.3.5 “*Polot*, of Course, Is Absolutely Necessary in Music”: Home in Music

For Hoffman, music, especially instrumental music, has the quality of evoking memories of her homeland. It was the first trigger of Hoffman’s feeling of *tęsknota*, the form of nostalgia that rises in her whenever she is reminded of notions of home that are associated with Poland. A brass band playing the “mazurka rhythms of the Polish anthem” at the Gdansk port awakened images of Cracow in Hoffman after she boarded the ship that was taking her from Poland to Canada. It was at that moment she realized what she was going to lose: a place “of the sun-baked villages where we had taken summer vacations, of the hours I spent poring over passages of music with my piano teacher, of conversations and escapades with friends” (Hoffman 4). In this passage, it becomes clear that Hoffman’s sense of home manifests itself less in a physical location, but rather in memories of good times, in hobbies such as playing the piano, and in people. Instead of evoking positive emotions, however, those memories make her experience *tęsknota*. As Rubenstein explains, nostalgia in this sense of “haunted longing” for “earlier relationships and the places with which they are associated, both remembered and imagined, impinge on a person’s emotional life, affecting [...] behavior toward current experiences and attachments” (Hoffman 5). In Hoffman’s case, *tęsknota* is an important contributor to her sense of Canada as an exile rather than a potential home. As sensory input has been found to be one of the strongest triggers of nostalgia (Wildschut 981) it is not surprising that music caused this emotion in Hoffman. In addition to the rhythm of the Polish anthem, also sounds of church bells and Christian songs of peasants in the mountains where she used to spend her holidays with her parents equally make her *tęsknota* as she mentally returns to those “fields and meadows” that have the connotation of home for her while she is in her bed in Canada (Hoffman 20).

Hoffman’s strong relationship with music can be traced back to her piano lessons, which she took as a child in Poland. The fact that she started playing the piano and developed her love for music in Poland contribute to the importance of her native country for her sense of home. Thus, moving away from Poland and also from her piano teacher in the course of migration meant for

Hoffman to leave a significant part of home behind. This loss of home is manifested in the aspects of music that create a sense of homeliness on various levels. Firstly, taking lessons in a particular setting, namely her teacher's apartment that "is also shared by Pani Witeszczak's son, and later his wife and their baby" where "everyone [...] moves and speaks softly and treats each other with a sort of respectful tenderness" (Hoffman 69) is a practice within a concrete space that creates a sense of home for Hoffman. Furthermore, the practice of working on Hoffman's competences in playing the piano with the teacher contributes to her sense of identity as it develops her interest in music. Although Hoffman remains a skilled piano player even after migrating to Canada, she is not as eager anymore to take lessons with her new teacher Mr. Ostropov in Vancouver as she was with Pani Witeszczak (Hoffman 155). The importance of Hoffman's relationship to her Polish piano teacher, Pani Witeszczak is evident through the influence that she had on Hoffman's attitude towards music and also the homeliness that playing the piano creates. Through the re-constructed direct speech in the autobiography, Witeszczak's teachings become alive and thus seem to resonate in Hoffman's memory: "Music is a kind of eloquence," she tells me (Hoffman 70). This shows how strongly the relationship with her piano teacher is rooted in her memory and how much its loss contributes to her sense of homelessness in Canada.

In particular, Hoffman felt that music was elsewhere missing an essential quality that is *polot*. During her piano lessons in her native country, she learnt, that *polot* "is absolutely necessary in music" (Hoffman 71) and explains it in the following way: Chopin's A Major Polonaise coming over the loudspeakers in the last heroic moments of the Warsaw uprising, as bullets and grenades ricocheted through the streets – that is a gesture that captures the essence of *polot* (Hoffman 71). In this description of *polot*, she mentions Chopin who was a Polish composer and pianist of the Romantic period, as well as the political event of the Warsaw Uprising in which she sees *polot* as symbolic of the resistance of the Polish against Germans. As she finds that the military efforts of Poland were "heroic moments", Hoffman seems to feel a strong national pride towards her homeland. This is reinforced by the mention of the famous Polish composer and pianist Chopin as her idol for perfection in musical creation (Hoffman 71). Since Chopin was also a Polish expatriate who moved to Paris to escape the November Uprising, Hoffman, who is also a Polish migrant, could identify with the composer and his work. Just as Hoffman's autobiography, Chopin's music is also known for expressing his torments of exile in nostalgia and projecting it in his work (Botstein 328). Hoffman picked up the "flair, and panache, and sparks of inspiration" that she sees as characteristic of this Polish composer when

learning to play the piano in Poland. During her piano lessons with Mr. Ostropov in Vancouver, however, she could not reach these “tonalities of character that are true Polish values” (Hoffman 71) although she recognized that he was trying to teach her notions of *polot* that he called “temperament” and “fire” (Hoffman 154). It was a language which included parts of her Polish sense of homeliness that she had found in music when she was still in Poland. However, it was not directly accessible because the *polot* of her childhood could not be translated into English. Instead of Polish or English, it was a language of her own with her teacher that could not be located exclusively in either Poland or Canada. Rather, I argue that it constituted its own, transnational space of home. This notion of home as a transnational place constructed through its own language is in tension with Hoffman's national consciousness described above. Thus, for Hoffman, music functions not only as a means to evoke a homeland in her memories that is national in character, but also as a constructive element for a transnational place with its own language as a part of home.

The fact that music had a great influence on her as it helped her to construct a sense of home is also evident in the way her autobiography is written. It is organized like a musical composition, namely, as I would argue, in a kind of program music, as it attempts to evoke images in the mind of its audience. As confirmed by Besemeres, the structure of Hoffman's writing is reminiscent of a musical composition because it is not chronological, but thematical in the sense that each part of the work has a specific focus (Besemeres 42). The three parts of her autobiography *Paradise, Exile, and New World* all have a thematic focal point, such as the memory of Poland as an ideal place, as in the chapter *Paradise*, but they are not limited to the time spent in that country. Instead, in terms of its structure, the autobiography can be compared, for example, to Vivaldi's program music "Le Quattro Stagioni," in which the composer depicts the sounds and feelings typical of the seasons. Similarly, Hoffman describes her attitude towards the periods in her life that she spent in the different countries in her narrative by using specific patterns: While her paradise, Poland, is always presented in a positive light, her exile, Canada, stands for all her negative feelings caused by her migration. As in program music, certain themes are repeatedly taken up in the text with a similar choice of words, but with different moods depending on the section: While piano lessons are positively described in the *Paradise*-part and teach her the sense of *polot* (Hoffman 70f.), music in the *Exile*-section lacks exactly this quality (Hoffman 154). Instead of changing the key to represent a change, as would be usual in a composition, she therefore uses words to convey a certain feeling associated with the various themes that have been important in her life. Thus, the tonality of her writing reveals

the extent to which she associates Poland, Canada, and the United States with her sense of home.

## **5 Conclusion**

In this paper, I have shown how the permeability of national and linguistic boundaries allows for the construction of home both within and between languages. In the theoretical part of this thesis, I have not only analyzed existing definitions of the concept of home, multilingualism, and translingualism, but also related them to each other and to the genre of autobiographical literature. First, I defined home as a material and abstract concept as well as an activity and examined it from several angles. From this, it became apparent that cognitive and emotional processes enable the construction of home on a mental and practical level, which means that home cannot be defined as just one place, but forms multiple spaces that are also located between nations. I have explained this particularly in relation to migrants, as emigration involves a separation from the country of origin, from its language and culture, from loved ones and objects and habits, all of which are linked to the concept of home. At this point, I have explained how transnational practices can, on the one hand, enable the re-construction of a home, but also that it can disrupt it, as memories of what had to be left behind because of migration can perpetuate the original home and thus be obstructive to looking to the future. In memories, the home that has been left behind is a constant concept to which one can always return, even if a return to the original home is not possible in reality due to the changeable nature of home. I have shown the extent to which the dimensions of home are shaped by experiences as well as emotional and cognitive processes and practices by means of written life-history narratives. In particular, autobiographical literature by migrants has proven useful for this purpose, as it provides insights into subjective experiences and emotional worlds.

I then continued to discuss the role of language in these subjective processes of constructing the concept of home. For this purpose, I first defined home language as a language that is not only manifested in one or more languages spoken within one's own four walls but transcends linguistic and national boundaries. At this point, I explained that any migration affects subsequent generations by influencing the language spoken at home and defining the multilingualism that often results from it. I have also explained the discourse practices involved as part of home language. Since language and the self are interrelated, I then addressed issues of identity in literary and linguistic homes. In particular, the language in which authors choose to write their works reflects their relationship to and identification with language. By choosing

one language or another, or creatively using the languages available to them, they can construct home, as I have shown. Authors who are migrants can thus distance themselves from their first language or express their closeness to it. Moreover, they can construct a transnational home with a creative hybrid use of language. I then addressed this way of using language by introducing the concept of translanguaging and the idea of translingual homes. Literary translingualism was seen to cross national and linguistic borders and serve to construct homes both in and in between languages.

In the analytical section of this thesis, these findings were used to argue that Eva Hoffman's *Lost in Translation: A Life in a New Language* is a translingual immigrant autobiography in which home is constructed through hybrid language use on multiple dimensions. After analyzing the significance of the three-part structure of the work and its focus on language, Hoffman was found to be a Polish migrant author who crosses not only national boundaries, but also linguistic ones. By writing in English, although it is her second language, and inserting Polish words, it was found that she uses translingual practices in her writing. As I showed in the analysis, she resorts to Polish primarily for terms describing emotional states of mind that, according to her understanding, have no equivalent in English. The words *polot* and *tesknota*, for example, were central to the autobiography as they are symbolic of her sense of home and she constructs a home in memories with the help of what the terms express. Furthermore, the author's choice of language for the salutations within the narrative reveals whether she associates the people mentioned with Poland or America. In the case of two individuals, such as *Ciocia Bronia* and *Pani Ruta*, Hoffman sticks to their Polish nicknames, although they could be translated into English as Auntie Bronia and Madame Ruta, respectively. The names Hoffman uses for herself, on the other hand, alternate between the Polish and American versions depending on the context. Although the author signed her autobiography as Eva Hoffman, her original name Ewa Wydra appears when she refers to her Polish identity. Based on this fact, I showed that the choice of names indicates people's relationships with each other as well as the different places where these relationships were formed. Through this kind of reflective and creative choices regarding her words and language, Hoffman thus constructs multiple notions of her home, which are in places, people, her Jewishness, food, and music.

By analyzing her narrative, I was able to show the construction of homes in and between languages that are negotiated with each other in the process of meaning-making. As I explained, the construction is primarily related to her migration, as it created a rupture in her identity and thus space for a new home. Since the Polish homeland she constructed in her mind was based

on memories due to her emigration to Canada, it was not a physical one, but rather an imagined, idealized version of home brought about by the nostalgia she describes as *tęsknota*. Apart from her memories, however, Hoffman, as I have explained, keeps no contact with the various aspects of her homeland, and so both the places and people in her memory remain unchanged, so that she can return to them mentally. In contrast, however, she and her family were influenced by the linguistic changes caused by migration, settling in Canada and making new social contacts there, so that there is no return to an original form of self, but rather a transnational identity has formed. Her self, as I have shown following these explanations, was strongly shaped by her ethnic backgrounds. The Jewishness that her parents bequeathed to her has shown to be a dimension of home that depends on her family practices. Her parents made a Jewish home for her that is evident in certain dishes, such as *kogelmogel*, that embody her cultural identity. Similar to food, music functions for Hoffman as a means to evoke a homeland with a national character in her memory, but her relationship to music is at the same time a constructive element for a transnational place with its own language as part of the homeland. Because of her deep relationship with music, which I attribute to the fact that she already took piano lessons in Poland and thus learned the importance of the *polot*, a particular flair, as an essential characteristic of good music. Finally, I pointed out that music has also influenced her writing, as she has set her home to music with its structure and a translingual way of dealing with language. National and linguistic boundaries have thus proven permeable to the construction of various notions of home through memories and practices in her autobiography. This confirms my thesis that the author constructs a complex sense of multiple homes via translingual practices, creating a transnational space that is both in and between languages and nations.

32.676 words

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## **7 Appendix**

### **7.1 English Abstract**

Home is a complex concept constructed through processes at material, imaginative, cognitive, and emotional levels. Especially when people migrate and engage transnationally with people and practices in a new country through memories and through social relations and practices, it becomes particularly clear that home is not place-based but transnational. This paper takes up this topic and examines how the concept of home is constructed in Eva Hoffman's translingual autobiography *Lost in Translation*. For this purpose, important concepts such as home and translingualism are first defined and examined in the theory section. In the analytical part, Hoffman's text will then be investigated, especially with regard to its structure and use of words and language. Thus, I will show how the originally Polish-speaking author constructs home in her mainly English autobiography on the basis of its content and with the use of individual Polish words not only in one of the two languages, but also between them.

### **7.2 German Abstract**

Heimat ist ein komplexes Konzept, das durch Prozesse sowohl auf materieller als auch auf imaginativer, kognitiver und emotionaler Ebene konstruiert wird. Vor allem, wenn Menschen migrieren und sich durch Erinnerungen und durch soziale Beziehungen und Praktiken länderübergreifend in einem neuen Land auseinandersetzen, wird besonders deutlich, dass Heimat nicht ortsgebunden, sondern transnational ist. Der vorliegende Beitrag greift dieses Thema auf und untersucht, wie das Konzept von Heimat in Eva Hoffmans translingualer Autobiografie *Lost in Translation* konstruiert wird. Dazu werden zunächst im Theorie-Teil wichtige Konzepte wie das Zuhause und Translingualismus definiert und untersucht. Im analytischen Teil wird im Anschluss Hoffman's Text, insbesondere im Hinblick auf dessen Struktur und Wort- und Sprachgebrauch beleuchtet. So soll gezeigt werden, wie die ursprünglich polnischsprachige Autorin in ihrer hauptsächlich englischsprachigen Autobiographie anhand von deren Inhalt und mit der Verwendung einzelner polnischer Wörter nicht nur Zuhause in einer von beiden Sprachen konstruiert, sondern auch zwischen ihnen.