The home as a foreign place in film:

A case study of *The Foster Boy* (*Der Verdingbub*, Markus Imboden, 2011), *Undine* (*Undine*, Christian Petzold, 2020) and *Synonyms* (*Synonymes*, Nadav Lapid, 2019)

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Abstract

This thesis explores the home as a foreign place in the three films *The Foster Boy* (*Der Verdingbub*, Markus Imboden, 2011), *Undine* (*Undine*, Christian Petzold, 2020) and *Synonyms* (*Synonymes*, Nadav Lapid, 2019). The theoretical framework draws on the concepts of *Heimat* and home as well as on aspects of diaspora, exile and nomadism, which are combined in a conceptualisation to which I refer to as 'the foreign home'. Relevant literary sources are Hamid Naficy, David Morley, Peter Blickle and others. The film analysis discusses how the foreign home is narrated and expressed on the narrative itself as well as on the stylistic and aesthetic level. The discussion of the foreign home occurs in reference to an underlying storytelling structure in which the home and the non-home become one place, the foreign home. The underlying storytelling structure entails five different sections that reveal the foreign home and its gradual development. These sections are: leaving home and moving on, the space and the objects of the new home, modes of displacement, adjustment to the new home, and hostility and opposition in the new home. The analysis is conducted based on these sections. This research contributes to the study of home in film and focuses especially on the opposite relationship of the home as a foreign place in film.

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1 Introduction

Even if home is a central part of life, it has not been a main focus of film analysis. A place of home in one form or another often appears in films and there is more to research about those homes. Literature on home in the context of film usually discusses home in relation to the concepts of diaspora, exile, nomadism, identity, migration and *Heimat*. Previous research and film analyses are often concerned with films about migration, the forced leaving of home, how a home is constituted or with sub-genres such as migratory, diasporic and exilic cinema.

In contrast to previous research, my focus lies on the home as a foreign place in film. By this expression, or alternatively by the foreign home, I mean the circumstance that the home is not what it is supposed to be and becomes its own opposite, a non-home. Instead of a secure and warm place where one feels at ease, the home is strange, unfamiliar and hostile. If a place does not show a home's qualities, then one could consider it invalid to call it a home in the first place. However, the foreign home is a concept of contradiction where a place is two things at once. In this thesis, I will analyse the foreign home in the three films *The Foster Boy* (*Der Verdingbub*, Markus Imboden, 2011), *Undine* (*Undine*, Christian Petzold, 2020) and *Synonyms* (*Synonymes*, Nadav Lapid, 2019),[1] and how the home as a foreign place is shown on the films' narrative as well as their stylistic and aesthetic levels.

The home as a foreign place is a conceptualisation that I will conduct as part of the theoretical framework and then apply in the film analysis. This foreign home concept entails a leaving home narrative which tells the development of the foreign home. In this narrative, the protagonist leaves their old home but cannot succeed in building up a new one because the new home place develops into a foreign home. The endeavour of striking roots in this foreign home includes different aspects such as having a living place and personal belongings, moving within the home environment and adjusting through an occupation or personal relationships. The character faces too many obstacles and hostilities, and once the foreign home has grown too burdensome, the protagonist needs to leave. The concept of the foreign home implicates the search for a home and a continuous travelling where home and homelessness coexist. While we usually consider one place as home and that which is unknown as foreign, in this concept, the home and the foreign are not two separate places but they are one and the same. In the merging

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[1] Hereafter, I will primarily use the original film titles.

of the home and the non-home, it is the latter that prevails. The foreign home is a space detached from time and place in that it lies in the past, in the present and in the future. Thus, in the foreign home narrative, the home as an alienated space is continuously present, it travels with the protagonist and when they arrive at a new but foreign home, they have also left a foreign one.

My research endeavour is on the one hand a film analysis of the home as a foreign place in three films. On the other hand, I want to develop a theoretical tool in the form of the foreign home concept which is presently missing in theory and which then can be applied and used by others for further research on the foreign home in film. This research is relevant because the issue of leaving home and arriving at new places is a subject typical of our global time. There is a nomadic state we all can find ourselves in, moving and travelling have become an everyday occurrence and implicate homelessness and uprootedness as a frequent condition. It is no surprise that this theme of home and foreign also appears in cinema and thereby acts as a reflection of our society and its development today. My research is a case study on the foreign home that will add a new angle to the study of home in film. It is not meant as a representation of the general depiction of the foreign home in film. The analysis will neither consider other aspects of the film production but focus on a textual analysis only. The three films chosen for the analysis differ in their thematical foci but were selected because they share the underlying storytelling structure of the foreign home. In these films, the foreign home is an omnipresent state that challenges the contradictory combination of home and foreign. My research questions are: How do the films *Der Verdingbub* (Markus Imboden, 2011), *Synonymes* (Nadav Lapid, 2019) and *Undine* (Christian Petzold, 2020) engage with the home as a foreign place? How does the home develop into a non-home and become foreign for the protagonist in these three films? How is the home as a foreign place expressed on the films' narrative as well as on their stylistic and aesthetic levels? How can the foreign home act as a theoretical term for the understanding of home in contemporary film?

In the following, I will establish the theoretical framework that entails a discussion and definition of the key concepts *Heimat*, home, diaspora, exile and nomadism from which I will then conceptualise the foreign home. This concept will constitute the theoretical foundation for the film analysis. Thus, the following theoretical framework is not based on one already given theoretical concept but it presents a combination of concepts that formulate the idea of the home as a foreign place. Thereafter, I will present my methodology and the structure of the film analysis. I will further mention what has already been written on the films and the directors. Eventually, the main chapter with the film analysis of *Der Verdingbub*, *Undine* and *Synonymes*

will follow. Subsequently, the thesis is rounded off with a concluding discussion of the analysis and the research.

2 Theoretical framework: The foreign home

In this chapter, I will present the relevant theory and concepts which I will use for the conceptualisation of the foreign home. This concept will function as the theoretical framework for the film analysis. First, I will explain and illustrate how the chosen key terms are relevant for the conceptualisation of the foreign home. After that, I will define and discuss the key terms *Heimat*, home, diaspora, exile and nomadism as well as outline their respective application in the concept of the foreign home. This chapter also functions in the manner of a literature review of what has been written on the different key concepts as well as on home in film. However, it is not a chronological review that discusses the individual works by different authors but instead, it combines parts from different previous works for the definition and conceptualisation of the foreign home. Using this concept, I aim to analyse the depiction of the foreign home in the films' narrative, style and aesthetic as well as how the term itself allows for an understanding of the depiction of home in contemporary cinema.

2.1 The key concepts

Before I start defining the above-mentioned key concepts, I want to outline why I have chosen precisely these terms and what difficulties their definitions can pose.

2.1.1 Defining the concepts

The theoretical framework builds on the afore-mentioned key terms *Heimat*, home, diaspora, exile and nomadism. In literature, the definition of these terms is an ongoing discourse and while main characteristics certainly can be outlined, there are also differing views on what these terms and concepts entail or which parts of the concept should be focused on. Such differences can arise because terms can have gained new meanings over time as a result of either historical events or different approaches to applying and interpreting them. Furthermore, scholars today can have different understandings of a term that lead them to different definitions.

The definition of the key terms will focus on the respective concept's essential and relevant components, which can provide a valuable overview of what these concepts mean. The definition also occurs in relation to the conceptualisation of the foreign home. This means that I will not be including aspects which are unnecessary or of no relevance to the foreign home concept or the thesis. My discussion of the key concepts is thus not complete, conclusive or more correct than anyone else's, but it is the one that applies to this thesis and is relevant for this text. Besides that, the discussion of the different key concepts aims of course to give an understandable and truthful picture of what the terms *Heimat*, home, diaspora, exile and nomadism mean. In a continuation of these definitions, I will outline how the key concepts, and which parts of them in particular, become integral to the concept of the foreign home. Some features of the key concepts are, for instance, present in the foreign home concept but in an altered or even contrary form, while others are not included at all.

The foreign home or the home as a foreign place is a novel conceptualisation, which I will conduct and use as the theoretical framework for the film analysis. I will conceptualise the foreign home myself because there is not an already given concept or terminology regarding this particular subject of study which I could apply instead. This concept combines home and the German *Heimat*, it adds aspects of rootlessness and homelessness as well as elements of diaspora, exile and nomadism. Together, they form the terminology for the contradictory pair of the foreign and the home.

2.1.2 Choice of key terms

The reason why I have chosen precisely the terms *Heimat*, home, diaspora, exile and nomadism for the theoretical framework is because they describe home from both an outer and inner perspective, home as static or in movement, and home as a physical but also a psychological space. Another aspect that the combination of these terms implicates is identity and its connection to home and displacement. Identity is part of the home as a private space but also of the more public one such as in *Heimat*. In the foreign home concept, the question of identity will play a role as well. Diaspora, exile and nomadism entail a transcultural movement and the home in change. The chosen key concepts give insight into the structures and dynamics of home, a place that is connected to both soil and soul. They draw a picture of home in itself but also point out the contrast to the non-home and the foreign. Knowing what counts as home or homely, and what does not, is relevant in order to be able to assess when a home becomes foreign. Therefore, it is these terms that are part of the foreign home concept and the ones which will be applied in the film analysis.

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2.2 *Heimat* & home

The first two key terms that I will discuss are *Heimat* and home. I will give definitions for both of these terms and explain why they do not mean exactly the same but also where the two intersect. It is important to include both *Heimat* and home in the concept of the foreign home because they cover more ground in combination than they would just by themselves.

2.2.1 Terminology: *Heimat* versus home and *Fremde* versus foreign

As I have stated above, the combination of home and foreign in the concept of the foreign home is a pairing of contradiction. In addition to that, I also use the words home and foreign as direct opposites, which might not appear to be terminologically correct. I want to consider this opposition from a linguistic point of view and give reasons for my choice of exactly these two terms.

While the adjective foreign can be nominalized and then becomes 'the' foreign, the noun form may not be the most frequent usage of the word foreign. In the phrase 'the foreign home', foreign clearly stands as an adjective and home as the noun. Thus, in this particular phrase, the opposition lies between an adjective and a noun. However, this should not be an interference factor since both the adjective foreign and the noun home have their describing qualities from which the substantial opposition emerges. Further, there also exists the noun foreignness, which goes more into the direction of otherness and strangeness and which I would contrast with familiarity. The reason why I chose the opposition of home and foreign rather than home and foreignness is most probably due to my understanding of these terms in the German language. As this is my language background, I also think in these terms and have their respective signification in mind. Considering the German words *Heimat* and *Fremde*, my spontaneous translation becomes 'the' home and 'the' foreign. However, these translations are not exactly correct. *Heimat* is a word that cannot directly be translated into English;[2] it signifies an entire concept around home, homeland, place, origin, a feeling and an ever-existing harbour to which one can return. *Fremde* is the foreign land, all of that which is not known and lies outside of the area associated with *Heimat*. In English, the opposite of (the) home could be the non-home or (the) unhomely, and the opposite of (the) foreign becomes (the) known or (the) familiar. So many terms might be confusing but the major contrast lies in that which is known,

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[2] While *Heimat* is difficult to translate into languages such as English or French that have other words connected to the home and home area, there are languages with a word that has the same (or a very similar) meaning as *Heimat*. For example, many Slavic languages such as Croatian, Serbian or Slovene which have the word *dòmovina* and Czech *domov* for *Heimat*. In: Peter Blickle, *Heimat: A Critical Theory of the German Idea of Homeland* (Columbia, S.C.: Camden House, 2004), 2.

familiar, comfortable and close, and the other, which is unknown, strange, uncomfortable and remote. Breaking down *Heimat* and *Fremde* into the words homeland and foreign land results in an opposition that is more consistent. Yet, since I do not only mean the land or the geographical site and do not want the terms to be taken literally, I decided on the two terms home and foreign. I find them more inclusive as they leave room for both home and foreign as a physical place, a feeling and a concept. In addition, the words home and foreign are also suitable because they pose the word root from which various other words that are connected to the home and the foreign can be formulated. This means that the terms home and foreign allow space for what they encompass. Lastly, I chose the English over the German terms because in the theoretical framework, I do not only consider the meaning of *Heimat* but both that of *Heimat* and home. I feel that the word home gives an ampler scope than *Heimat* in terms of what can be included in its signification. Furthermore, this thesis is written in English. Since I will be using words such as homely, unhomely, foreigner etc., it will be more consistent in language than if I were to juggle with *Heimat*, *Fremde* and related words in German within an otherwise English text. I will thus proceed with English and only if suitable apply the words *Heimat* and *Fremde* as well as other terms in German or further foreign languages. I will discuss in more detail what the terms *Heimat* and home stand for in the following paragraphs.

2.2.2 The concept of *Heimat*

For author and mathematician Helga Königsdorf, *Heimat* "is like a body part 'which you can't get rid of even though it isn't quite the way it should be – but which you don't really want to be rid of anyway'."[3] This eternality is somewhat of a core part of *Heimat* because *Heimat* usually cannot disappear. To define *Heimat* means to explain an understanding of a place, a state of feeling, circumstances and the connection between these different components. Including all the angles relating to the term and idea of *Heimat* here would transcend the framework of what is relevant and helpful for the thesis. I want to explain what *Heimat* means but I will not go into all the ramifications such as, for example, *Heimat* being endowed with a connotation such as feminine and thereby also being sexualised, *Heimat* as part of problematic political incidences or *Heimat*'s misuse for propaganda, racism and exclusion.[4]

The definition and description of *Heimat* can be challenging regarding which German scholar Peter Blickle notes that scholars from different research areas often focus on different

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[3] Königsdorf (1990: 17) quoted in: Blickle, 4.

[4] Blickle, x, 3 and 8.

aspects of *Heimat*, – in each case the one that fits their field.[5] He even describes scholars' work on *Heimat* as a task that makes them feel uncomfortable because the idea of *Heimat* "often seems to defy rational analysis."[6] In defiance of *Heimat*'s complexity, I will outline different essential features that should give a good understanding of *Heimat* and then relate it to the concept of home.

The literary scholar Gabriele Eichmanns writes that "[e]ver since the word emerged in the Middle Ages, *Heimat* has come to describe the epitome of Germanness, encompassing, among many other things, a place of comfort, unspoilt nature, one's mother tongue, blood relations and familiar traditions and customs."[7] It should be mentioned here that while *Heimat* is often described as typically German, the word is just as present and used in other German speaking countries besides Germany. As Blickle notes, "Heimat is an idea that is shared by German-language cultures,"[8] which alongside Germany also includes, for example, Austria, Switzerland or Liechtenstein. Eichmanns' statement above already focuses on some important characteristics of *Heimat*: its pure nature, family, traditions, the familiarity of the mother tongue as well as its ease and comfort. "*Heimat* is the refuge we return to" when everything else changes and is in turmoil.[9] Everything might be uncertain but *Heimat* is not, *Heimat* is secure and stable, it is as solid as a rock.

Heimat is also the place we come from, where we were born but as philosopher and educationalist Eduard Spranger points out, this place can only become a true *Heimat* if one has found one's bearings, settled in and made the place one's own.[10] The acquisition of *Heimat* is a process of interaction with the environment, building up relationships with other people, family, the cultural traditions and the nation.[11] The identification with an environment and the stability of this connection is a foundation pillar of *Heimat*. While one needs to build a relation

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[5] Ibid, 5.

[6] Ibid, 9.

[7] Gabriele Eichmanns, «Introduction: Heimat in the Age of Globalization", in *Heimat Goes Mobile: Hybrid Forms of Home in Literature and Film*, eds. Gabriele Eichmanns and Yvonne Franke (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), accessed November 29th, 2021, https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezp.sub.su.se/lib/sub/detail.action?docID=1336797, 1.

[8] Blickle, 1.

[9] Eichmanns, 4.

[10] Spranger (1943: 12) in: Elizabeth Boa and Rachel Palfreyman*, Heimat: A German Dream. Regional Loyalties and National Identity in German Culture 1890-1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 6.

[11] Elizabeth Boa, "Some Versions of Heimat. Goethe and Hölderlin around 1800, Frenssen and Mann around 1900", in *Heimat: At the Intersection of Memory and Space*, eds. Friederike Eigler and Jens Kugele (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), accessed May 9th, 2022, https://www-degruyter-com.ezp.sub.su.se/document/doi/10. 1515/ 9783110292060/html, 34.

to the environment, the structures and the other people in it, one also forms a connection to the geographical site. This results in the association with one's *Heimat* also becoming strongly connected to nature, buildings, towns and other sites that most likely will always be possible to localise.[12] The geographical part of a *Heimat* is stable; a town might change its appearance over a time span but ideally, the town will remain at the same spot.[13] This stability marks a point of security that is characteristic for *Heimat*.

If we oppose *Heimat* to home, then home would be the place where we live in practice and call this living place with its surroundings our home. The difference is that a living place, the home, can change from time to time while *Heimat* will remain the same. *Heimat* is where our roots lie and where there is an intrinsic feeling of being at home. This feeling also applies to a place someone is calling their home but the scale of the feeling is somewhat different in the case of *Heimat*. It has a strength and depth to it because it can last a lifetime. Of course, *Heimat* is also a relative term; there are many different *Heimaten* considering that individuals from different places have their distinct origin and thereby also *Heimat*.[14] Historian Eric Hobsbawm has noted that while the home is a private, enclosed space that "belongs to me and mine and nobody else," *Heimat* is the opposite: it is public and collective.[15] He continues that *Heimat* cannot be an individual's belonging[16] and indeed, the area that one associates with *Heimat* is so much larger than one's own four walls. This greater space implies that it can include more individuals than just one who associates the area with *Heimat*. There are different *Heimaten* but most likely, every *Heimat* is shared with others.

The word *Heimat* is part of a word group that contains related terms such as: *das Heim* (the home or a type of institution), *heimisch* (to feel at home), *heimatlos* (homeless), *Heimweh* (the longing for home), *heimlich* (meaning secret but it is also an obsolete form of cosy or homely) and *unheimlich* (uncanny).[17] With *heim-* as the word root, these words describe different components connected to the concept of *Heimat*. I will build on the understanding of the terms *Heimat* and home as connoting a safe, secure and familiar place because this is their

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[12] Blickle, 4.

[13] Even in case a town or a village would become destroyed, they usually do not move such as people do and neither does the land (geologically it does but not in a visible way during one's lifetime).

[14] Blickle, 4.

[15] Hobsbawm (1991: 67-68) quoted in: David Morley, *Home Territories: Media, Mobility and Identity* (London: Routledge, 2000), accessed October 8th, 2021, https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezp.sub.su.se/lib/sub/detail.action?docID=164908, 4.

[16] Ibid, 4.

[17] Morley, 80 and Jenny Bourne-Taylor in: Morley, 80.

major meaning and association. The concept of the foreign home presents a situation where *Heimat* and home have developed into an untypical state.

2.2.3 The concept of home

"Is there any other word that can feel so heavy as you hold it in your mouth?"[18] asks novelist Kamila Shamsie[…]. Scholar Aleksandra Bida adds that this "heaviness" arises from the fact that home is connected to the "construction of identity and notions of belonging."[19] Indeed, the meaning of home is extensive and complex. In the Oxford English Dictionary, home is defined as "a place, region or state to which one properly belongs, on which one's affections centre, or where one finds refuge, rest or satisfaction."[20] This definition already outlines important elements of what home is commonly connected with: the belonging to a space, the emotional attachment and the feeling of safety. In order to gain a deeper understanding of home, I will outline different characteristics of home and how the concept of home has been described and defined in literature. It will become apparent that these definitions often lead back to the foundation of home's connection to a place, belonging and safety.

2.2.4 Home as a physical and temporal place

One important characteristic of home is that it denotes a physical but also a temporal place. Media scholar David Morley notes that the changing mobility, migration and technologies of communication have altered, or actually "destabilised", the traditional ideas of home, the homeland and the nation.[21] This is not surprising since concepts can gain new meanings with time but they can also co-exist with former ideas. Dietmar Dath describes homes as "'origin stories' constructed as *retrospective* signposts within visual space, acoustic space, and even tactile space."[22] These signposts look back on different levels and tell us about where one is coming from. Signposts in a city or on a road refer to a physical place. In the case of the home, the signposts looking back do not necessarily have to point to a physical place because home is more than just a location.[23] Home is place and time because everyone comes from somewhere

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[18] Kamila Shamsie (2002: 63) quoted in: Aleksandra, Bida, *Mapping Home in Contemporary Narratives* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), accessed November 26th, 2021, https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezp.sub.su.se/lib/sub/detail.action?docID=5522134, 1.

[19] Bida, 1.

[20] *Oxford English Dictionary* quoted in: Morley, 16.

[21] Morley, 3.

[22] Dietmar Dath quoted in: Naficy, ed., *Home, Exile, Homeland. Film, Media, and the Politics of Place* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 68.

[23] Morley, 17.

but also from a certain time. Elaborating on anthropologist Mary Douglas' idea about the spatial aspect of home, Morley describes home as "the organisation of space over time."[24] This suggests that at different points in time, the space associated with home can alter. As home changes its physical and temporal shapes, the people who live in a home and consider this place home move along as well. What we associate with home or where we locate it can change and this can happen voluntarily or not. We shape our home just as much as we are shaped by it.

While there is the continuous construction of home through space and time, home can defy this change by remaining the same in one's memory or heart. However, in contrast to *Heimat*, which has the stability of (ideally) remaining at the same place, home is usually temporary and cannot be returned to indefinitely. If we leave the physical place of home at a certain point in time and come back to it at an entirely different point in time, the home as 'our' home is most likely not there anymore. If we move and sell a house, then this will not be our home in the future because the place has stopped being ours. If we leave but keep an apartment and return after several years, all the things in the apartment might belong to us but the factor of time can have taken away the identification with the place as a home either more or less. Thus, when it comes to the home, space and time are always strongly connected with each other.

Home is a temporal place, a geographical one as well as a tangible, physical one in the forms of a house, a flat, the rooms one is living in, the furniture and all things filling these rooms. All the individual pieces, the parts of living and time create the home together.

2.2.5 Home as an emotional place

Besides being a temporal, geographical and physical site, home is also a state: home is an emotional space. This means that there is a bond with the particular space one calls home. The emotional component entails the association of home with belonging, warmth and safety, the feeling of being at ease, of 'being at home' as it is called.

In order to gain and maintain this feeling of home, some requirements have to be met. One concerns the factor which philosopher Vincent Decombes calls, "rhetorical territory."[25] Home entails the ability to communicate with other people in a space, to share a rhetoric and to understand them as well as "make oneself understood without too much difficulty."[26] The home space lives from communication and exchange, the contact with others enriches our feeling of a warm home and is thus a necessary condition in order for a place to be a home. Ágnes Heller

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[24] Ibid, 16.

[25] Vincent Decombes (in: M. Augé, 1995, 108) quoted in: Morley, 17.

[26] Ibid, 17.

points to another requirement of this emotional home space; the circumstance that one's presence needs to be approved of.[27] She notes that "[i]n a home one needs to be accepted, welcome, or at least tolerated,"[28] which implies that if this does not apply, the place cannot reach the status of a real home. The conditions of being able to communicate and be accepted by others who live in the same surroundings where one wants to be at home are legitimate. The feelings of safety and familiarity that one feels at home usually come from the interaction with other people with whom one lives or who live around one. Heller denotes home as the "firm position" from which we start and to which we return because we know and are used to this position; we feel safe there and have strong emotional relationships.[29] The longer this position remains stable, the stronger these relationships and the feeling of safety can grow. This refers back to the organisation of space over time in that time usually strengthens the intensity of relationships and likewise the feeling of being at home. It is important to point out that this starting from and returning to the home should be because home is associated with safety and security[30] and not because of an obligation or because one has nowhere else to go. Were this to be the case, this place would seem to have lost (or have never acquired in the first place) its quality as a home.

Home as an emotional space is also part of a process where the feeling of home is acquired through what we know and learn. Morley refers to Jon Bird who stated that "it is the space of the home which differentiates between the known and the familiar, and the loss of security and innocence."[31] This means that the home space draws a borderline and while within the line there is security and the known, outside of the line lies the risk and the foreign. This picture of the inner and outer opposition reminds us of the juxtaposition of *Heimat* and *Fremde*. Just as a *Heimat* can only become one through the process of settling in, living in this place and making it one's own, so does the home as an emotional place need time to grow and become stable. If this is successful, the home space will start forming a contrast to the space outside of the line, which remains foreign.

A third aspect of the home as an emotional space is the most personal and individual space. Hamid Naficy, scholar of film, diaspora and exile, stresses that also the body can be

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[27] Ágnes Heller, "Where Are we at home?" *Thesis Eleven* Volume 41, Issue 1 (May 1995), 18.

[28] Ibid, 18.

[29] Ágnes Heller, *Everyday Life* (London: Routledge, 2015), accessed February 8th, 2022, https://www-taylorfrancis-com.ezp.sub.su.se/books/mono/10.4324/9781315682495/everyday-life-%C3%A1gnes-heller, 239.

[30] Ibid, 239.

[31] Bird (in: J. Lingwood (ed.), 1995, 114) in: Morley, 24.

considered as a home and a house.[32] The body is the starting point from which we go out into the world and which "gives dimension and sense and value to our lives through its motility and senses and gravity."[33] We need a functioning body in order to feel well and safe in it. The body comprises both the physical and psychological components that instantaneously communicate how we feel. That is, how this personal home feels. If either of these parts becomes destabilised, also the feeling of home is at risk. A snail with a shell travels with its own house on its back, which makes the home of the body even more visual. Instead of a literal shell, the human body constitutes a shell of all our experiences and emotions instead. The body as a home always depicts an emotional place. Furthermore, the body marks the one home we cannot leave (at least as long as we live) but just as every other home, the body can change too. It can move in space and time, provide better or worse home conditions and it can be familiar or grow foreign. The body could be considered as the home of homes because in the body is where our emotions that connect us to the outer world start out from.

2.2.6 Application of *Heimat* and home

In this section, I want to bring together the concepts of *Heimat* and home, show their connections and explain their application in the concept of the foreign home. Regardless of the fact that the concept's wording only includes the term home, *Heimat* and home are equally important and, in their combination, they become something else in how they function.

2.2.6.1 *Heimat* and home in comparison

As the preceding discussion has shown, a home is more than just a house. It is a temporal, a physical and an emotional place that is not static but often in a process of change even if only slightly. Home's meanings and associations touch upon aspects that were also established in the concept of *Heimat.* Both denote a safe, familiar, warm space to which one feels connected and at ease.

There are also some differences between home and *Heimat.* While home is a private, enclosed space, *Heimat* is much broader, it is collective, open and something that is shared with many others even if one does not know these others. Further, there is usually only one *Heimat* per person but one can have different homes over the course of one's life. This links to the circumstance that *Heimat* is something that most likely will exist perpetually. *Heimat's*

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[32] Hamid Naficy, ed., *Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media, and the Politics of Place* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 47.

[33] Ibid, 47.

appearance might change over time but the environment and the space we connect with *Heimat* do not geographically change their location. *Heimat* remains where it has always been. In contrast, home is much more bendable and can have many different shapes. Home can change in form, place and time, we can change a home and it can change us who are living in it. A home can be lost and found, it can be stable and firm but it can also be fleeting or non-existent.

It is important to remember that home's connection to place, time and emotion is more flexible than the steady one of *Heimat*. Also, all of these three factors have to function in order for the home to be able to remain a home. For example, if there is no social acceptance from the other people, the emotional place suffers and will not feel homely. If time has gone by but the home space did not grow more familiar and safer or if we return after having been away for a long time, the home can appear strange and not home-like because time did not play along. If we move house, it is usually from one place to another and we set up shop in a new place that then becomes the new home. In the case of someone staying at the exact same place throughout their entire life, then home will remain the one and only home. While moving from a home means leaving this home behind, moving from *Heimat* does not change anything about its status as our *Heimat*. A possibility to give a home a sense of eternality is by keeping its memory. Yet, already the fact that we remember it as an image in our heads indicates that it is only a home from the past and not from the present.

2.2.6.2 The *Heimat* tradition in the concept of the foreign home

In both literature and film, there is the tradition of the *Heimat* theme. In such traditional *Heimat* narratives, *Heimat* does not mean something entirely different from what I have been discussing above but it is connoted with particular attributes. In the *Heimat* tradition, the feeling of *Heimat* is strongly connected with the idyll of living in the countryside and the contact to nature.

The *Heimatfilm* sets out from an idyllic view on *Heimat* but the *Heimatfilm* is not a synonym for *Heimat*. In the tradition of the *Heimatfilm*, the classic narrative is set in the idyllic countryside, which in return is the typical representation of *Heimat* in this film genre.[34] The setting characterises the genre and constitutes the framework for the conflict in the film: the threat to the idyll.[35] This threat is associated with the *Fremde*: the bad foreign stands against the good familiar.[36] However, the confrontation of good and bad is not because of some external

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[34] Wolfgang Kaschuba, *Der deutsche Heimatfilm: Bildwelten und Weltbilder. Bilder, Texte, Analysen zu 70 Jahren deutscher Filmgeschichte* (Tübingen: Tübinger Vereinigung für Volkskunde, 1989), 28.

[35] Ibid, 28.

[36] Morley, 64.

intruder but due to a conflict within a human individual who has been estranged from nature and *Heimat*'s traditions.[37] The person has come into contact with the foreign world and diverged from their idyllic home. The conflict resolution occurs within this person and the balance is only restored if they return to their *Heimat* and a life with traditions.[38] This focus on *Heimat* and the concrete perceptions of what the only true *Heimat* is puts the concept of *Heimat* on a pedestal. Interestingly, the *Heimatfilm* is a mise-en-scène of folklore elements and prototypical landscapes that achieve rather the opposite of authenticity and often create a staged, artificial and romanticised version of home.[39] The idyllic life in the countryside remains merely an ideal.

　　None of the three films that will be analysed is a classic example of a *Heimatfilm. Der Verdingbub* would be the one most adequate in terms of environment as it is set in the countryside and in a mountain region but otherwise it does not really fit either. In fact, *Der Verdingbub* is more of an anti-*Heimat* narrative. The traditional *Heimat* narrative does not occur in the concept of the foreign home. The protagonist's conflict with their *Heimat* and the feeling that they have to find their way back to nature and their traditions does not correspond to the foreign home narrative; neither does the circumstance that *Heimat* designates nature and the most idyllic place. In the foreign home narrative, the protagonist's old home is not an idyllic place and the protagonist does neither want to return. Their aim is to find a new home where they can strike roots instead. What is similar to the *Heimat* tradition is the fact that the protagonist of the foreign home narrative is faced with the journey of finding their true home. The place that they search for is one with the intrinsic feeling of home that *Heimat* gives. Only that, in contrast to the *Heimat* tradition, in the foreign home narrative, the protagonist will not be able to find this home because *Heimat* as a given anchor does not exist. The protagonist cannot return to a *Heimat* and they cannot find a true home either despite their longing for one.

2.2.6.3 *Heimat* and home in the concept of the foreign home

The concept of the foreign home includes features of both *Heimat* and home, and applies the above discussed understanding of *Heimat* and home. The idea of home is a warm, safe, familiar place where one finds refuge and feels most comfortable. *Heimat* is the home we come from, a permanent home to which one can return. Having *Heimat* and home as the starting position, the concept of the foreign home challenges their components. This means that in the foreign home narrative, characteristic aspects of *Heimat* and home do appear but usually in an altered or

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[37] Kaschuba, 28.

[38] Ibid, 28.

[39] Ibid, 18.

contrasting form. They are, for example, not as strongly present than what would be needed for a real home or they develop negatively. The concept of the home as a foreign place designates a circumstance where the home is always foreign. The home can differ in time and place but not in the fact that it is foreign and thereby a constant opposite of what it is supposed to be.

In addition to the home being foreign, the protagonist of the foreign home narrative does not have a *Heimat*. Not only are they homeless despite living in a home place but they are also *heimatlos*. In theory, everyone should have a *Heimat* but the origin and roots of the protagonist in the foreign home narrative are blurred. There is no steady *Heimat* to which the protagonist could return and they face a homelessness and rootlessness through which they are somehow always in the *Fremde*. The protagonist is the foreigner. The circumstance of a lacking *Heimat* and roots implicates that the protagonist does not have a clear identity either. Despite these missing elements does the protagonist show a form of *Heimweh* because they have a strong longing for a real home even if they do not know where it is. They think home and *Heimat* are there somewhere even though in the foreign home narrative they are not.

The foreign home concept considers further the home as a spatial, temporal and emotional place. Concerning place and time, the foreign home follows the narrative's protagonist anytime and wherever they are. Likewise does the home as a physical place that is expressed in a living place and personal belongings gradually add to the home becoming foreign. The home as an emotional place requires acceptance or tolerance, the ability to communicate with others (language, customs), positive interactions and emotional relationships with others, stability and familiarity. The foreign home concept challenges these components of the emotional home in that the narrative's protagonist is unsuccessful in their attempts to create a comfortable emotional home. They are in a home but still remain outside in the *Fremde*. Eventually, the foreign home narrative also includes the body as a home being threatened. While the body should be both safe and stable in order to constitute a feeling of home, in the foreign home narrative, the body is hurt physically and/or psychologically.

Home should stand for refuge, rest, a sense of belonging and affection. In order for home to be that, the interplay of the spatial, temporal and emotional space of home has to work. The foreign home concept depicts a situation where these different spaces are troubled and fail more or less. The home as the ultimate place of comfort is challenged and unsettled, and the home develops to a non-home, the foreign home. One of these spaces might be more unsettled than the others but because they are entangled with each other, they also affect one another. Thus, in the foreign home narrative, the home is prone to destabilisation and thereby renders impossible to function as a real home for the narrative's protagonist.

2.3 Diaspora

The next key term that is part of the foreign home concept is diaspora.

2.3.1 The term diaspora in literature

Just like home, diaspora is a concept that has not only one fixed definition. It is so often mentioned in literature that the application of the term has become inflationary. Waltraud Kokot, ethnological scholar, et al. write that diaspora is "widely contested, both as a term of reference and as a concept of research,"[40] which makes diaspora a tricky concept to mention as not everyone understands it within the same frame of reference. Especially because the concept of diaspora already has transformed from its original meaning in ancient Greece and become much broader over the years. The historical meaning of diaspora is namely the dispersal of the Jewish, the Armenian and the Greek peoples, their forced expulsion and displacement from their homelands.[41] The expansion of the term diaspora allowed the inclusion of peoples who are in different situations where there have been no forced dispersals or the desire to return is not present.[42] Diaspora studies scholar Khachig Tölölyan remarked on how diaspora has become a concept that is now connoted as the "paradigmatic other"[43] and is a term used in various fields besides political science such as for example psychology, anthropology, history, religious studies and literature.[44] However, considering diaspora just as a paradigmatic other is blurring the complexity of what diaspora is and entails. The inflationary use of diaspora has led to this as political science scholar William Safran points out; the term has become less precise in predetermining the situation or which minority communities it actually means to include.[45]

Using this concept in my thesis as well does not aim to add to the term's inflation but instead to consider the structures of diaspora and apply parts of them in the concept of the foreign home. In my analysis, I will not take the classic diaspora word by word but apply diaspora intentionally and deliberately as it works in the concept of the foreign home. This is so because the three films under analysis are neither classic diaspora stories nor do they pertain

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[40] Waltraud Kokot, Khachig Tölölyan and Carolin Alfonso, "Introduction", in *Diaspora, Identity and Religion: New Directions in Theory and Research*, eds. Waltraud Kokot, Khachig Tölölyan and Carolin Alfonso (London: Routledge, 2004), 2.

[41] Vijay Agnew, "Introduction", in *Diaspora, Memory and Identity: A Search for Home*, ed. Vijay Agnew (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 3.

[42] Ibid, 4.

[43] Tölölyan (1991: 4) quoted in: Kokot et al., 1.

[44] William Safran, "Deconstructing and Comparing Diasporas", in *Diaspora, Identity and Religion: New Directions in Theory and Research*, eds. Waltraud Kokot, Khachig Tölölyan and Carolin Alfonso (London: Routledge, 2004), 9.

[45] Ibid, 9-10.

to the diasporic cinema. In one form or another, the diasporic context nevertheless appears in the narrative of the foreign home because diaspora implies home and moving between homes.

2.3.2 A morphological view on diaspora

The word diaspora has its origin in the Greek preposition *dia*, meaning over, and the Greek verb *speiro*, meaning to sow.[46] For the ancient Greeks, diaspora denoted migration,[47] the move to a different place and the beginning of striking roots. Diaspora refers to the process of a people scattering and while the 'over' not only indicates the change of place, it also implies a connection among the scattered peoples over the distance between them.[48] It seems logical that the word derives from the Greek language since the Greek people were one of the first to experience a diaspora.

Talking about the origin of words, Naficy also mentions the German word for diaspora, *Zerstreuung*, which is interesting because it has a double meaning; the one is dispersal and the other distraction.[49] The denotation of dispersal refers to the fact that a people is scattered all over the world. *Zerstreuung* in the sense of distraction implies being absent-minded, which refers to the fact that in diaspora one can be in one place but with their thoughts in another one. One can be present with their body but absent with their mind.[50] In diaspora, there is always a process of migration but Safran writes that diasporas "comprise special kinds of immigrants" because the bond to the homeland often remains strong and is also cultivated.[51] While the word diaspora comes from ancient Greek, the term migration has its roots in Latin. Migration derives from the Latin *migrare*, meaning "to move from place to place" or "to change one's residence or position" and refers to just that, the movement of people within a country or across its borders.[52] Migration can be temporary or long-term but migration always comes before the diaspora.[53] Thus, a diaspora develops from a migratory movement.

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[46] Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 1997), accessed June 9th, 2022, https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezp.sub.su.se/lib/sub/detail.action?docID= 166043, IX.

[47] Ibid, IX.

[48] Peters (1999: 20) in: Anh Hua, "Diaspora and Cultural Memory", in *Diaspora, Memory and Identity: A Search for Home*, ed. Vijay Agnew (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 192.

[49] Naficy (*Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media, and the Politics of Place*), 24.

[50] More on this in chapter 2.3.6 'The implications of leaving home and living in diaspora'.

[51] Safran, 10.

[52] Daniela Berghahn and Claudia Sternberg, "Locating Migrant and Diasporic Cinema in Contemporary Europe", in *European Cinema in Motion: Migrant and Diasporic Film in Contemporary Europe*, eds. Daniela Berghahn and Claudia Sternberg (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 12.

[53] Ibid, 13.

2.3.3 The original diaspora

The migrations that led to the original diasporas concerned the Jewish, Greek and Armenian peoples. Sociologist Robin Cohen remarks that in order to understand diaspora, it is important to know some key aspects of the Jewish diaspora experience,[54] not only because the Jewish people was one of the first to become dispersed but also because the Jewish diaspora is a "non-normative" example for the discourse on diaspora.[55] Safran calls the Jewish diaspora the "archetypical" diaspora owing to several aspects.[56] Firstly, there is the absence of a homeland for the Jewish people that lasted for almost two millennia and in addition, the questioning of this homeland's existence.[57] Secondly, Jews still lack a full acceptance in their host countries and by their host societies.[58] This status and the fact that they have faced repeated threats throughout history have led to a feeling of threat to their "national existence."[59] Lastly, Safran points out that the Jewish diaspora "seemed to be considered a 'normal' aspect of the Jewish condition," so they even became labelled as a diasporic people.[60] The history of Jewish diaspora is a trapped situation in-between homes and in search for one. Safran points out that the Jewish diaspora is also unique because it has been enforced externally, institutionalised and the compulsion "to eternal wandering" justified by their non-Christian faith.[61] The case of the archetypical Jewish diaspora is the forced dispersal of a people which struggles to find acceptance and a home elsewhere.

2.3.4 Different types of diaspora today

Besides the original diaspora, there are also other forms of diaspora today. Naficy writes that the concept of diaspora suggests first a "displacement from a center," then a scattering and eventually a following reconvergence and recomposition of the individuals.[62] Diaspora further indicates that there is a community, a network among people who have been scattered and relationships ("real or imagined" ones) between them.[63] This connection is based on a shared

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[54] Cohen, 2.

[55] James Clifford (1994: 303) in: Cohen, 2.

[56] Safran, 10.

[57] Ibid, 10.

[58] Ibid, 10.

[59] Rubinstein (1980) in: Safran, 10.

[60] Safran, 10.

[61] Ibid, 11.

[62] Naficy (*Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media, and the Politics of Place*), 20.

[63] Ibid, 20.

culture, language or kinship, and because of this fellowship, diaspora is collective.[64] Diaspora and cultural scholar Anh Hua states: "When I use the word diaspora, I am referring to the dispersion of a group of people from a centre to two or more peripheral places, as well as to the collective memory and trauma involved in such a dispersion."[65] The factor of dispersion is essential for it even being able to become a diaspora. The aspects of trauma and collective memory are likewise significant features present in diaspora but can vary in their degrees. Many but not all diasporic situations originate from a forced dispersal, which means that while trauma is often involved, some might be free of it. As Safran writes, "oppression is not a *sine qua non* of the diaspora condition."[66] Diaspora can develop out of different circumstances and thereby form different types of diaspora. Cohen lists five such types, which are: "Victim/refugee", "Imperial/colonial", "Labour/service", "Trade/business/professional" and "Cultural/hybrid/ postmodern."[67] These types show the range from enforced displacement, enforced self-immigration, economic necessity to the voluntary, individual decision to leave. Safran points out that there also exist special forms of diaspora, for example an "internal diaspora" such as Americans in the United States feeling European but still being at home, or Armenian-Americans who settle in Armenia but do not sense a full belonging.[68] Safran asks which place then is home and which is diaspora or whether one can ever go home if living in such a situation.[69] This demonstrates the complexity of migratory and diasporic situations.

2.3.5 Criteria for a diaspora

There are several features that are typical for a diaspora and some I have already touched upon. It is important to note that neither do all criteria have to be present for the condition to count as a diaspora, nor is there an "ideal diaspora."[70] Cohen has made a list of such common diasporic features, which I want to present here:[71]

1. An often traumatic dispersal from the original homeland to two or more foreign regions, or the departure from the homeland with the pursuit of work, trade or colonial intentions.

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[64] Ibid, 20.

[65] Hua, 193.

[66] Safran, 15.

[67] Cohen, 178.

[68] Safran, 16.

[69] Ibid, 16.

[70] Agnew, 4.

[71] Quoted and paraphrased from the complete list in: Cohen, 26, (drawn on the list by Safran (1991: 83-84) in: Cohen, 23).

2. A collective memory and myth about the homeland.

3. An idealisation of the homeland, a collective commitment to the maintenance and restoration of the ancestral land.

4. The collective anticipation of a return movement.

5. A long-lasting strong ethnic group consciousness based on a sense of distinctiveness, common history and the belief in a common fate.

6. A difficult relationship to the host society, possible lack of acceptance or the eventuality of another threat.

7. A sense of community and solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement.

8. The possibility of a creative life if the host country tolerates pluralism.

As Agnew pointed out, important factors of a diaspora are "the shared history of displacement, suffering, adaptation, and resistance."[72] This entails a separation from the homeland causing trauma and difficulties of adapting into the host culture and society while at the same time continuing to solidarise with the homeland and other members of the diaspora as well as anticipating the eventual return.[73] Yet, interestingly, this return lies somewhere in the future, there is no date and it becomes a "someday fantasy" as psychology scholar Salman Akhtar calls it.[74] Thus, a diaspora looks back to the past, lives in the present and makes plans for the future.

2.3.6 The implications of leaving home and living in diaspora

Salman Akhtar points out the destabilising effects of a geographical dislocation and the trauma that can arise from this.[75] The trauma varies depending on factors such as attachment to the original place, the person's age, the degree of choice in leaving, the capacity for bearing separations, the degree of anticipation for the new place or the magnitude of the distance between the two places.[76] A larger geographical change can threaten the "safety feeling"[77] that

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[72] Agnew, 4.

[73] Anthias (1998) in: Agnew, 4.

[74] Salman Akhtar, *Immigration and Acculturation: Mourning, Adaptation, and the Next Generation* (Lanham: Jason Aronson, 2011), 14.

[75] Grinberg and Grinberg (1989) and Akhtar (1999) in: Akhtar, 3.

[76] Ibid, 3.

[77] Sandler (1960) quoted in: Akhtar, 5.

every human being needs, which can then cause a traumatic experience.[78] Thus, the loss of a place can cause different physical and emotional reactions.

Living "in a diaspora implies a tension between being in one place physically – the place where one lives and works – and thinking regularly of another place far away."[79] This focus on two places at the same time relates to the above-mentioned *Zerstreuung*. The diaspora member is torn between two lands but while they start to adapt to the host land and keep the memory of their homeland as it was when they left, the homeland changes without them actually experiencing the change. The inner turmoil is orientated towards both the present time (host land) and the past (homeland). Safran writes that this "homeland focus" is part of a diaspora identity,[80] which is a second identity that one acquires through living in diaspora. There is the identity of the homeland prior to the departure and then the diasporic identity whose construction starts out from this first identity.[81] This is only a natural process because identity develops and is formed both over time and through one's surroundings. Kokot et al. write that this formation process is tied to cultural and socio-political contexts as well as to the presence of an Other.[82] Moving to a different country with a different culture entails the meeting with Others and in consequence an identity transformation. One's identity construction is tied to the home context. Thus, "diaspora's lesson is that 'peoples and lands are not naturally and organically connected'."[83] One's identity can transform or develop further, when the context and the place are different.

2.3.7 Application of the concept of diaspora

In this section, I will conclude the concept of diaspora by taking a look at diasporic cinema and how diaspora will be applied in the concept of the foreign home.

2.3.7.1 Diasporic cinema

As I have noted above, the *Heimatfilm* tradition stands in relation to the term *Heimat*. Regarding diaspora, there is the diasporic cinema. The three films *Der Verdingbub*, *Undine* and *Synonymes* do not show the typical criteria for diasporic cinema and traditionally, they would not be

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[78] Akhtar, 5.

[79] Safran, 12.

[80] Ibid, 16.

[81] Hamid Naficy, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 14.

[82] Kokot et al., 7.

[83] Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin (1993, 723) quoted in: Naficy (*Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media, and the Politics of Place*), 38.

considered as diasporic cinema. Yet, as the films are not typical *Heimatfilme* either but have elements of *Heimat*, they also show diasporic elements.

Naficy states that diasporic cinema is characteristic for "its vertical relationship to the homeland" and "its lateral relationship to the diaspora communities and experiences."[84] There is always the relation to the community around and in other places of the world as well as the connection to the homeland. This is essential for a diaspora and is also reflected in diasporic cinema. Naficy continues to write that diasporans have a plurality, multiplicity and hybridity which shapes the diasporic cinema and differentiates it for example from the exilic cinema, which is more about duality.[85] Diasporic films are about the plurality of identity and how identity is performed or shaped.[86] These aspects of multiplicity and plurality appear in stories about diasporic situations, migration, questions of identity and more.

A film can be diasporic developing from two different starting positions where either the film-maker has a diasporic background or solely the story is a diasporic narrative. Berghahn and Sternberg define the diasporic film-maker as a member "of the second, third or later generation" and that "[t]hey were born or raised in a diasporic setting and have no, or only a very remote, first-hand experience of migration."[87] Berghahn and Sternberg differentiate this from a migrant film-maker whom they consider as a member of the first generation that migrated.[88] The diasporic film-maker has a relation to the migration, the culture, the language of their family and more[89] and this connection provides a background to their film narratives. However, not every film-maker with a diasporic and migratory background addresses diasporic narratives.[90] In contrast to this, film-makers without a diasporic and migratory background can likewise make diasporic cinema in that they "are centrally concerned with questions of migratory and diasporic existence."[91] This marks the second starting position of how diasporic cinema can come about. The foreign home narrative shares the aspect of a migratory existence. It is likewise concerned with identity and how identity is performed. Due to the non-existent *Heimat*, the protagonist's identity is abstract and in the new home, there is a new identity construction which can be conducted more or less deliberately.

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[84] Naficy (*An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*), 15.

[85] Ibid, 14-15.

[86] Ibid, 14.

[87] Berghahn and Sternberg, 16.

[88] Ibid, 16.

[89] Ibid, 16.

[90] Ibid, 16.

[91] Ibid, 16-17.

2.3.7.2 Diaspora in the concept of the foreign home

The element of diaspora that is part of the concept of the foreign home is not a one-to-one copy of the classic diaspora but rather an orientation towards diasporic features. The foreign home concept includes firstly the movement of leaving 'a' home (the journey's cause and effects), the personal relation to the homeland (in the narrative to 'the old home') and how the character positions themselves towards the old home, the new home (where they are at present) and the future home. In the foreign home structure, the protagonist seeks a real home, which is first thought to be attained in the new home and later on in the future home. Just as a diasporan anticipates a return to their homeland as in their true home, the protagonist in the foreign home anticipates a true home as well. However, different to a classic diasporic situation, the aspiration to leave the host land again is not already present at the protagonist's arrival in the new home but it becomes an inevitability. It is also important to note that in the foreign home narrative, the anticipation of this true home does not mean a return to the old home because there is no idealisation of the homeland (or the old home) as it is in a typical diaspora. The idealisation of the perfect home lies rather in the now or in the future. This links to the narrative in the *Heimat* tradition where *Heimat* is the idyllic home to which one eventually will return. In that regard does the foreign home concept mark a contrast to both the *Heimat* and the diasporic narrative. Another contrast is that in the foreign home structure, there is not a trauma connected to the leaving of the old home. There can, however, exist a trauma from the time in the old home that the protagonist has taken with them. Considering the different types of diaspora how it is understood today, the cause and reasons why the protagonist in the foreign home narrative leaves their old home can vary as well.

Secondly, the foreign home concept entails the aspect of otherness: the position of being different and foreign which prevents full acceptance of the host society and sets up for a difficult relationship. A diasporic situation usually entails meeting a new culture and a new language (or several) in the host country. The diasporan has to get to know others and this aspect of the other is also part of the concept of the foreign home where the protagonist needs to build relationships in order to feel more at home. The cultural differences, on the other hand, are not considered literally and only in the way that two kinds of worlds meet each other. In contrast to the diaspora situation with the strong sense of community among the diasporans, the foreign home narrative does not entail this companionship and situation of support. While the protagonist meets other well-meaning people, in the end, they are always on their own. The foreign home narrative does not have the plurality of the diasporic cinema. In addition, while diaspora implies that there is a group of people coming from the same homeland, in the foreign home concept this is

considered to be more flexible. The protagonist might meet someone sharing a similar history or fate but a strong relationship is not guaranteed and the support of an entire group rather unlikely. The diasporan has a homeland identity and builds a second identity in the host land. The protagonist of the foreign home structure builds an identity in their new home (as in the host land) but their prior identity is abstract just like their old home is abstract too.

Lastly, the foreign home structure does not open up for the possibility of building a new home for oneself within the host land and the host society. In contrast to diaspora where this could be possible, it is not an option in the foreign home narrative even if it might not be so obvious at the beginning. This aspect refers to the original diaspora of the Jewish people that I have described above. The state where a people is continuously wandering around because it does not have its own homeland. Such a continual journey is also characteristic for the protagonist of the foreign home narrative. In addition, the feeling of threat that a diasporan can feel in the host land is very much present in the foreign home narrative but not just as a feeling. There, the threat in the form of the home becoming foreign is unavoidable. Different hostilities and obstacles are individual contributors to this prevalent threat. The concept of the foreign home entails the same or similar difficulties for the protagonist as a diasporan faces. There is a reflection on the relation between the different places and among different people. In comparison to the traditional pattern of a diaspora, the foreign home concept lacks some aspects such as the idealisation of the old home, the community of outsiders within the host land and especially the actual possibility to strike roots.

2.4 Exile and nomadism

To round up the discussion of the theoretical framework and to complete the concept of the foreign home, I will now look at the key terms exile and nomadism.

2.4.1 The concept of exile

In contrast to diaspora, exile is characterised by leaving the homeland but not being allowed to return. Naficy notes that "[e]xile is inexorably tied to homeland and to the possibility of return"[92] even if that return lies very much in the unknown. The cause for exile is the banishment from the homeland due to a threat (often political) of the safe home.[93] Exile is a

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[92] Naficy (*Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media, and the Politics of Place*), 3.
[93] Ibid, 19.

forced displacement that is also meant as a punishment.[94] This forced displacement from one's home and usually also one's *Heimat* constitutes an involuntary breach for the person in exile. Edward W. Said writes that exile "is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted."[95] Because the enforced expulsion is also a deliberate rejection of one's homeland, it becomes especially traumatic and hurtful. The mourning that arises from this loss "can invite the project of restoring the 'original' – the original home, the original state of being."[96] Because this original home is far away, one tries to keep it alive, which is a feature that also occurs in diaspora. This recreation can for example be expressed in displaying objects and artefacts from the homeland in one's living place, even "to the extent that this home acquires a shrine-like quality."[97] Naficy emphasises that this far away and "for the time being unapproachable" homeland turns the factual home into an "impossible object."[98] Furthermore, the circumstance of being away from one's homeland as an exile entails that one is homeless.[99] This feeling of homelessness is expressed in the sadness and the process of mourning the lost homeland.

While there is the situation of being in exile in a country that is not one's homeland, exile can also be within one's home country. There, it becomes too dangerous or is not possible to leave one's home, which makes the home into an unsafe place all the same. Naficy points out that one can be in an internal exile at home but long for another one, or one can be in an external exile with the wish to come back.[100] In addition, one can either be forced into exile or go voluntarily, and one might choose to come back or not.[101] Even if the choice is not to return, the exile can "continue to dream of and imagine a glorious return."[102] There are different forms of exiles but something that they all have in common is the aspect of "pining for home."[103] This sought-after home is a safe one where one is accepted and allowed to exist instead of being threatened.

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[94] Ibid, 19.

[95] Edward W. Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000), 173.

[96] Naficy, (*Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media, and the Politics of Place*), 19.

[97] Teja and Akhtar (1981) et al. in: Akhtar, 15.

[98] Naficy, (*Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media, and the Politics of Place*), 31.

[99] Ibid, 31.

[100] Ibid, 3.

[101] Ibid, 3.

[102] Ibid, 3.

[103] Ibid, 20.

The exile and the diasporan both live abroad from their homeland but while a diaspora is only existent through a group of people away from their homeland, exile is already in place through one person. This is an important difference in that diaspora is always collective but exile can be collective or solitary.[104] Furthermore, there are clear boundaries between the homeland and exile. Said notes that exile is not continuous; there is a cut between the land, the roots and the person in exile.[105] Thus, there is a finality of the exile condition but regardless of this, the homeland is not forgotten. Exiles have an awareness of at least two homes, cultures and settings; Said calls this simultaneous awareness "contrapuntal"; the two homes are not the same but they exist at the same time.[106] This also means that the exile is very aware of the Other in the host land, the one who is not an exile. This Other is the host society who considers the exile as an Other in return and which effects that exiles can "*feel* their difference"[107] as Said notes. When living in a foreign land, the exile starts out from being a foreigner just as a diasporan does. Putting the concept of exile in a nutshell, Said writes that "[e]xile is life led outside habitual order. It is nomadic, decentred, contrapuntal; but no sooner does one get accustomed to it than its unsettling force erupts anew."[108] Thus, exile is not just a stable, new home; it also carries an element of nomadism.

2.4.2 The concept of nomadism

In contrast to exile and diaspora, nomadism is not orientated towards a specific place associated with home. In nomadism, there is no centre around which life revolves and the nomadic life can even include defiance or avoidance of authorities, a state or a society.[109] Such a defiance concerns thus structures of organising land and communities or the assignation of different centres in this land (e.g. a town). The journey of nomads can cross borders because they do not have a state to which they feel obliged but without any designated places, there is no specific home place either. Naficy writes that nomads' homes are mobile, which brings a 'doubleness' with it: "being at home everywhere, but lacking any fixed ground."[110] This appears to make it easier in that there is no lost home which one would have to mourn, but there is also the lack of rootedness. Naficy suggests that in nomadism, there is no hope or a dream of a homeland

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[104] Ibid, 20.

[105] Said, 177.

[106] Ibid, 186.

[107] Ibid, 182.

[108] Ibid, 186.

[109] Naficy (*Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media, and the Politics of Place*), 20.

[110] Ibid, 21.

because home is always present.[111] However, it also disappears as soon as one has passed it. Having a home everywhere and nowhere poses a special form of homelessness. Both home and the non-home become fleeting moments. It is like a limbo, one is in-between places, in-between homes and non-homes, and it might be unclear what or where the goal is. Exiles and diasporans long for their home and homeland, which lie in a specific place. The nomad's "desire [is] to be everywhere at home"[112] and the home lies more in the now and not in the past or the future. Their home might also be the not-knowing and the not-anticipating of a specific place to function as the only right home.

2.4.3 Application of the concepts of exile and nomadism

In this third application chapter, I want to show how exile and nomadism are integrated in the concept of the foreign home. For this, I will also make a short excursion to exilic cinema and show its connection to the foreign home narrative.

2.4.3.1 Exilic cinema

Naficy writes that exile is about the relationship to the homeland rather than the relation to other communities from the same place and that this is also expressed in exilic cinema.[113] Said cinema focuses on the individual and the place from where the exiled person comes. Naficy allocates the terms "binarism and substraction" to exilic cinema and "multiplicity and addition" to diasporic cinema.[114] Exilic cinema becomes a more reduced view on the circumstances around the separation from one's homeland while diasporic cinema has an expanding approach to this separation. Naficy also notes that in contrast to diasporic cinema, exilic cinema is "dominated by its focus on there and then in the homeland," meaning that it is about the being instead of the becoming which is the characteristic element of diasporic cinema.[115] Exilic cinema is thus concerned with that which is now and real rather than with the idea of a potential future.

The three films *Der Verdingbub*, *Undine* and *Synonymes* are not typical narratives of exilic cinema. Nevertheless, there are some parallels such as the binarism of the individual and the home. While in exilic cinema, it is about the individual's connection to the homeland, in the foreign home, the focus lies on the individual's dream of a home. The foreign home narrative is about the protagonist and their journey. While they meet other people, the narrative revolves

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[111] Ibid, 21.

[112] Ibid, 30.

[113] Naficy (*An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*), 14.

[114] Ibid, 14-15.

[115] Ibid, 15.

around them as an individual and how they try to find their home. Further, the protagonist is focused on the home in the now and (initially) not on one in the future. The narrative of *Der Verdingbub* is the only one of the three in which the future home is really anticipated. In the foreign home structure, it is at first about "being" like in exilic cinema and only later about "becoming" like in diasporic cinema. Thus, the foreign home narrative's main focus lies on the relation between the protagonist and the present home. Only after some time does the future home come into the picture. The foreign home narrative in film becomes thereby a combination of diasporic and exilic cinema.

2.4.3.2 Exile and nomadism in the concept of the foreign home

The concept of the foreign home is about the journey of one protagonist who meets others but eventually is on their own. While an exile has experienced enforcement and pressure to leave their homeland (or the prevention of being able to leave it), the enforcement in the foreign home comes first with having to leave the new home. The protagonist experiences a form of exile from the new home once it has become too foreign even if they not necessarily would want to stay or return. The foreign home narrative further plays with the internal and external perspectives. The protagonist can, for example, be forced to leave the old home (like Max) or not (like Undine) but this is not the decisive enforcement. Furthermore, the old home is not idealised like in a traditional exile situation, which means that there is neither an attempt to restore the old home, nor the dream of a spectacular return. The protagonist of the foreign home narrative does not want to return to the old home despite them living in a foreign home. This also implies that there is no rupture with the homeland as it occurs in exile and no subsequent sadness about this breach. In fact, both the rupture and the homeland are non-existent in the foreign home narrative. Instead of trying to keep up the bonds to the old home, the protagonist might even try to exclude the past. Therethrough, they exclude part of their (already abstract) identity and together with their otherness which they can feel in the new home, they become even more homeless. Just as the exile banned from their homeland is homeless in the host land. The foreign home concept describes a situation where there is no homeland and no *Heimat* to which one could or would want to return. *Heimat* is unapproachable because it simply does not exist rather than because one is in exile. The protagonist does not belong anywhere, they are decentred like an exile but in contrast to the exile, the centre (as in the homeland) is always absent. In the foreign home structure, the protagonist is in exile form the possibility to have a home and this type of exile is solitary. In consequence, the protagonist of the foreign home narrative becomes involuntarily a nomad, a nomad with characteristics of an exile because they

want to find a place that can be their home. Other than a nomad, the foreign home protagonist wants to have a centre, they have a dream of a homeland but are forced to continue travelling because they can never find such a centre that a real home would pose. They are nomads but not such who can find a home everywhere and have their homeland in all places but instead, nowhere. Because if they find an alleged home, it reveals itself as foreign. The protagonist of the foreign home narrative is a nomad without a home anywhere.

3 Methodology

In this chapter, I will outline the methodology of my thesis. This includes the research material and a reasoning for my choice of films, the procedure of analysis, the point from where I will set out and how I will combine the theoretical framework (the concept of the foreign home) with the film analysis. For the sake of clarification, the research of this thesis is a textual film analysis only and will thus not consider other aspects which are connected to a film production. Thus, I will not go into the examination of the film productions, distribution, box office figures, film reception or how the films have been reviewed.

As I have mentioned previously, the research material for my thesis consists of the three films *Der Verdingbub* (*The Foster Boy*, Markus Imboden, 2011), *Synonymes* (*Synonyms*, Nadav Lapid, 2019) and *Undine* (*Undine*, Christian Petzold, 2020). The films are all feature-length films between 90 and 125 minutes long. The study in this thesis is a qualitative film analysis of these three films in relation to the concept of the foreign home. The analysis focuses on the narrative as well as the stylistic and aesthetic level and aims to explore how these express and depict the foreign home.

3.1 Choice of films

In the first part of this methodology chapter, I will give some background on the films, outline how they are connected to each other and explain why they are suitable in a joint analysis.

3.1.1 The storytelling structure

The three films *Der Verdingbub*, *Undine* and *Synonymes* that I have chosen for this case study of the foreign home might at first glance not be an obvious combination for a joint analysis. The films have different storylines, settings and backgrounds which set them apart. *Der*

Verdingbub is set in the countryside in the Swiss alpine world of the 1950s. A boy is put into a farming family and used as child labour. The film tells a story representative for the history of all the *Verdingkinder* ('contract children'/'indentured child labourers') in Switzerland who had been indentured up until the 1960s. *Undine* takes place in Berlin and combines realism with mythology because the protagonist is the water spirit Undine. Like *Der Verdingbub*, *Undine* has a particular background to which the narrative is linked, which is a mythological instead of a historical one. The third film, *Synonymes*, is set in present time too but tells the story of an Israeli moving to Paris aiming to become a Frenchman. This storyline is a link to the director Nadav Lapid's biographical experiences of moving from his home country Israel to France.

The three films take place at different points in time and different places, and all have their individual themes. What connects the films is the underlying storytelling structure that shows the same progression of events. The films have different realisations of this structure that is expressed by different plots but the common thread is the foreign home. The underlying storytelling structure puts the foreign home into the centre and constructs this foreign home in different phases. In short, the storytelling structure entails the arrival at a new place which is supposed to be a new home for the protagonist but despite continuous efforts of the protagonist, they cannot manage to strike roots because the home does not grow familiar but only more foreign. Neither the space of the home, the personal objects, the exploring of the home environment, nor the efforts of adjustment are fruitful. In addition to this, the protagonist is confronted with obstacles and hostility. The protagonist lives in a foreign home that makes them homeless nevertheless. As these parameters form the foreign home more and more clearly, they eventually force the protagonist to depart.

3.1.2 The expression of homelessness

The choice to combine specifically these three films in an analysis was a deliberate selection based on different aspects. The three films share the underlying storytelling structure, which I have explained above. The films further tell about homelessness in different contexts and examine this from different points of view. While they do not show exactly the same perspectives on the foreign home, they complement each other and give a broader picture of the foreign home in film. A core element of the films is the nomadic state in which the protagonists find themselves. They live somewhere but are homeless at the same time and eventually, they have to leave and search for a new potential home. The nomadic aspect is typical of our time. People all over the world are moving within a country or over borders for different reasons. They may stay for a longer time or move on after a while. This fleetingness

as a distinguishing feature of the present time makes the home grow more abstract. What is home when we all move and becomes nomads?

The three films are European or partly European (*Synonymes*) productions and were produced between 2010 and 2020. They are from the same period in the history of film and are also arthouse or festival films with individual styles of narration. *Der Verdingbub*, *Undine* and *Synonymes* are films typical of their time in which the fleeting and the lost home are featured. They show a home that is more like an abstract and indistinct dream than a tangible one and never really becomes a true home. These three films might be a possible representation for the European design and form of homelessness in film. However, this research is a case study of the home as a foreign place in film and does thus not claim to be representative for all European films with the theme of home. My purpose is not to make a mapping of the foreign home in film but to conceptualise a term and apply this concept in an exemplary study.

3.2 Procedure of analysis

The underlying storytelling structure that the three films *Der Verdingbub*, *Undine* and *Synonymes* share can be divided into five different sections. The film analysis will be conducted following these sections, which are:

1. Leaving home and moving on
2. The space and the objects of the new home
3. Modes of displacement
4. Adjustment to the new home
5. Hostility and opposition in the new home

The sections cover the different aspects that are part of a move to a different place and the process of building up a new life. They are chosen because they cover the necessary steps of integration and migration, which are also present in a diasporic or exilic situation. In addition, they show the cause and effect of the failed integration which is the inevitable outcome in the foreign home narrative. The storytelling structure of the foreign home includes both the movement to and away from the home in question. It concerns the living place and the personal possessions, which signify the geographical epicentre of the home. There is further the moving in and around the environment of the home, which marks the mobile part. Then, there are all forms of adjustment to the new home and its customs, which usually entail some kind of work,

social contact and communication. Finally, there are also obstacles and hostilities, which are either already given or develop further over time. While this last section might indicate the foreign home most obviously, all of the five parts are essential and give indications on how the home grows not more familiar but foreign. The protagonist struggles to strike roots owing to all of these parts.

The discussion of the three films will occur section by section, which means that all films are discussed in each section. The sections have varying emphases on which theme or stylistic devices are more prominent in the analysis. Sometimes, the films will be discussed more in relation to each other and at other times, one by one because there is more to say about each one. The analysis focuses both on the narrative level, and on the stylistic and aesthetic one. This means that the expression of the foreign home will be discussed regarding both levels in order to gain a fuller understanding. All of the five sections will entail discussions on both the narrative and the stylistic aspects. Every section is structured into subchapters which focus on particular thematic or stylistic elements. Certain sections can be mainly concerned with a narrative aspect or if a stylistic parameter is very specific, then the focus lies only on this aesthetic feature. In most of the different subchapters, narration and style are discussed together. This is so because when describing a stylistic element, it often includes parts of the storyline.

Connecting the narrative level with the stylistic and aesthetic one will be important in order to show how both of these levels contribute to the home becoming foreign. Depending on the section of the storytelling structure as well as on the film, different narrative or stylistic parameters will be most relevant or suitable to discuss. For example, in the section "Modes of displacement", which is about movement, the parameter of the camera becomes naturally an important one to discuss. The discussion of the five different sections can vary in how many scenes or aspects from the film will be touched upon. The same goes for the focus, which can be very detailed but also more general depending on what aspect of the film is being discussed. Along with the discussion, I will also be referring back to the theory, and mentioning when aspects of *Heimat*, home, diaspora, exile and nomadism in terms of the foreign home concept occur but also when there are instances that actually contradict the foreign home concept. The analysis is thus a discussion focused both on the three films, *Der Verdingbub*, *Undine* and *Synonymes* and the theoretical conceptualisation of the foreign home.

4 Previous research on the films

This chapter is intended for a discussion of previous literature and research on the three films *Der Verdingbub*, *Undine* and *Synonymes* and their respective director. This thesis will not have an individual chapter on previous research regarding home in film but instead, I have included a relevant part of the works discussing this topic in the theoretical framework. Thus, that chapter was also an overview of previous works on home in film as well as the terms *Heimat*, diaspora, exile and nomadism even if structured differently. The present chapter is mostly focused on previous research concerning the three films. On a short note, former research of home in film is often concerned with the connection of home and migration, which is not as typically present in *Der Verdingbub*, *Undine* and *Synonymes*. In addition, literature on home often materialises the home more than the way we see it in the three films. They, on the other hand, express more strongly the aspect of homelessness, the absence of a home, than what the relevant literature on home does in which the home is often discussed in relation to what makes a home but not necessarily what the opposite, as in the non-home, looks like.

There has not been conducted much research or film analysis on any of these films. It will thus be a short insight into some background on the films and their directors. *Undine* and *Synonymes* are both quite new films that have been discussed or mentioned in film reviews but not yet in any larger studies. *Der Verdingbub* is from 2010 but is for one thing a Swiss film, which means a film from a small film industry. For the other, the film has a very specific topic and is thus also a niche film production subject-wise (at least in an international context). While the history of the *Verdingkinder* and the film's part in the accounting for this past is of strong relevance in Switzerland, it does not necessarily mean that this is common knowledge across the borders. Texts in relation to *Der Verdingbub* and the film's Swiss director Markus Imboden are usually film reviews. Further texts on Markus Imboden discuss his other films but they are kept article length as well.

Nadav Lapid is an Israeli director whose film *Synonymes* contains autobiographical elements.[116] Literature that can be found on the film are likewise film reviews discussing the story, its different scenes, characters, subject matter and more. Other texts on Lapid discuss for example his previous film *The Kindergarten Teacher*. Longer studies on Lapid's *Synonymes* were difficult to find. Jora Vaso has written an essay on the character of Yoav and the journey

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[116] Jay Weissberg, «Hong Kong Film Festival. Synonyms,» *Variety* (March 20th, 2019), 13.

of the exile becoming an artist, in which Vaso considers Yoav's exilic situation and how exile is connected to art. While Vaso does mention some similar aspects as I will such as Yoav's solitude and exilic position, the exile is considered in its classical meaning and Vaso focuses on how exile can inspire creativity and artistry.[117] I will thus not go into this essay any further.

The German director Christian Petzold is probably the one of these three directors about whom along with his films the most has been written. Petzold is an important figure of the *Berliner Schule*, a stylistic direction in German cinema which developed in the 1990s. There is various literature about Petzold and his films but because *Undine* is such a new film, there have not been any studies or closer film analyses carried out on this particular film yet. What can be found are film reviews that usually discuss the mythological background of Undine, the combination of the mystic and the real as well as the love story between Undine and Christoph. In the written discussions of Petzold and his films, the films are either discussed individually or in relation to each other, looking for common themes. Literature on the Berliner Schule and German cinema can include discussions combining films by Petzold and those of other directors. In Petzold's films, we often encounter elements of home and memory and the films become a memorial site of something bygone. Jaimey Fisher describes some important and recurring themes in Petzold's films which are "global in scope and engage with the present moment in general."[118] Such themes can be ghosts, individuality, accommodation, economic adaptability, mobility, movement or the characters' dreams and desires.[119] Fisher also points out that "transit spaces" (this could for example be a hotel or a petrol station) are central in Petzold's films.[120] He further notes that Petzold's characters "are active agents in their own desperation and alienation," so they act outgoing from their situation which can result in betrayal, theft but also murder.[121] While the discussion of Petzold's different themes was written prior to the production of the film *Undine,* it is striking that a lot of these aspects can be recognized in *Undine* as well. It is only the realisation of these themes that is different from that of previous films, not the least because *Undine* has a mystical element. *Undine* is nevertheless a characteristic example for Petzold's filmmaking and his dealing with the mentioned key themes.

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[117] Jora Vaso, «The Millennial Antinostalgic: Yoav in Nadav Lapid's *Synonymes*» *Cinej Cinema Journal* Volume 9.1 (2021).

[118] Jaimey Fisher, *Christian Petzold* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 2.

[119] Ibid, 4-5.

[120] Ibid, 7.

[121] Ibid, 4.

5 Film analysis

In this chapter, I will analyse the three films *Der Verdingbub*, *Undine* and *Synonymes* as to how they depict the development of the foreign home and express this on the narrative as well as on the stylistic and aesthetic level. With the analysis, I also want to find out what the theoretical concept of the foreign home might tell us about home in contemporary cinema. I have previously only given a rough outline of the structure that the narrative of the foreign home has and would like therefore to explain it in more detail and give examples in the following chapter.

5.1 The foreign home narrative

This first chapter of the analysis is about giving an overview of the narrative of the foreign home, which includes the narrative structure and how the different phases of moving and staying within this structure are designated.

5.1.1 The foreign home in the film narratives

The starting point of the foreign home narrative is the protagonist's move to a new place that is intended to become their new home. Which point in time of this move is shown can vary but what is essential is the arrival in the new place and the portrayal of the protagonist trying to settle in. In this, the protagonist needs first of all a place to live and sleep; they need a living place. These personal four walls should pose a warm and safe space but instead, they remain sparsely furnished or decorated, have only few personal belongings within them or appear as a provisional arrangement. Then, the protagonist has to start orientating themselves in the new surroundings, exploring and engaging with the environment and getting to know its customs and habits. While these movements have a purpose, they also suggest the continuation of the protagonist's nomadic journey. Further, the protagonist needs to find an occupation such as work or education in order to gain structure and routine within their everyday life and as a part of their integration. In relation to this, the protagonist also tries to get into contact with others and get to know new people. They try to form new and positive relations to other people. The protagonist may meet welcoming characters who accept them (e.g. Max's teacher who encourages him in his passion for music, Undine who meets Christoph) and others who are more cautious or in an unclear position (e.g. Yoav's colleagues at work in the Israeli embassy).

All of these stages entail an effort to create a safe and steady home but these endeavours are accompanied by incidents or circumstances that threaten to become a hindrance. While the

protagonist tries to adjust and integrate in different ways, they are continuously confronted with obstacles and hostility. Some of these obstacles which the protagonist has to face can be the given differences that are difficult to overcome such as one's role or language (e.g. Max is a *Verdingkind*, for Yoav French will remain a foreign language). The protagonist's relation to the old home might interfere with the life in the new one and impede the process of adjustment. Further obstacles can be the lack of a personal space or personal belongings that would help the protagonist in solidifying their identity and thereby give them a place in this new home. Another hindrance can be the hostile attitude towards the protagonist by other people whom they meet. Such attitudes can be a simple aversion towards the protagonist by other characters (e.g. the farming family does neither try nor care to make a good home for Max) or the active rejection of the protagonist by other characters (e.g. Johannes breaks off his relationship with Undine). There is further the imbalance of power between the protagonist and other characters (e.g. Max is in a dependent relationship to the farming family for which he has to work) and eventually, there is also the abuse and exploitation of the protagonist by others (e.g. Max is beaten, Yoav meets a porn director who uses Yoav for his project and merely sees him as an object for the film). These oppositions and rejections complicate a deeper integration into the new home place. As the obstacles and the hostilities start to outweigh the positive experiences, they prevent the protagonist from a stable feeling of safety and being welcomed as well as from feeling able or willing to settle in more. Eventually, the imbalance of positive and negative experiences becomes too large and heavy for the protagonist to bear so that they either do not want or are not able to continue trying. The home has become foreign and does not seem to become familiar for the protagonist at any point in the future. The protagonist is and was homeless in a home, they have to move on and are still on their journey of trying to find a real home.

The protagonist's decision to leave can come with different emotional states such as relief (e.g. *Der Verdingbub*), resignation (e.g. *Synonymes*), melancholy (e.g. maybe *Undine*) or others like disappointment, disgust, anger or anticipation. It remains vague where the protagonist travels to next but on their journey, they are still homeless. The old home which the protagonist leaves at first is a non-home and one they do not yearn for. Neither the foster home, the water nor Israel are places to which Max, Undine or Yoav would want to return. There is no longing for a conventional home but instead the dream of a new home. They search for this new and true home but will not find it. It remains an abstract place and instead of eventually finding a real new home, they only encounter foreign ones. The three films do not all show the exact same order in the development of the foreign home. They have different ways of telling

and showing this foreign home narrative such as where the story begins and ends, at which I will take a closer look in the following chapter.

5.1.2 The different stages: which home, which movement?

In the analysis, I will frequently be referring to the different home places and the protagonist's movement between them. In order to clarify how I distinguish between them, I want to give an overview here.

Starting with the first home place, I will refer to it as 'the old home'. It is the place where the protagonist comes from geographically, the place they have been living in before and have left for the home that the viewer sees within the narrative framework of the film. It is their old home but because the foreign home narrative implicates the continuousness of the foreignness, the old home was also a non-home. The first movement is the one away from the old home and termed as 'leaving home'. This movement stands for the transition between these two places and means to include both the departure from the old home, and the arrival and first encounter with the new one.

The second home place will then be referred to as 'the new home' but also 'the foreign home'. Both the new and the foreign home apply because on the one hand, an unknown place is new and foreign at the beginning. On the other hand, it is the new home because the protagonist intends to make this place their home but over time, it grows more foreign in the sense that it develops into a non-home. Or rather, the foreignness becomes more apparent as time goes by because it has always been there and so the new home transitions more and more into the solely foreign home. I sometimes will also be using the term 'living place' by which I mean the actual place where the protagonist lives and sleeps. This is the home in its material form. The second movement referred to as 'moving on' is not called leaving home again because of the emphasis on the new home being foreign. The protagonist does not leave a real home but a clearly foreign place and they have to continue their journey. Through this second departure, their nomadic status becomes even more apparent.

After the moving on comes the third place which is called the 'future home'. It is even vaguer than the old home because it leaves room for interpretation about what or where this place really is. This future home is likewise a part of the protagonist's continuous nomadic journey and it is likely to become a foreign home too. The future home could be the place the protagonist has been at before or somewhere entirely different. However, the protagonist of the foreign home narrative does not intend to return to their old home. Also, if we consider that time has gone by and that the protagonist has had new experiences, they are not the same person

they have been in the old home and likewise their former home will have changed somehow. This means that they will not return to the same home place either way. As I have discussed in chapter 2.3.6 on the implications of living in a diaspora, the homeland changes even without the diasporic or exilic person being present and able to experience it. In addition, the protagonist of the foreign home narrative does not have a *Heimat* or a home to which they could return at any time. Thus, the phrase 'to return home' would not be suitable. The protagonist moves on to an abstract future home instead.

The title of the first section in the analysis, called 'Leaving home and moving on', refers to all three homes and the travelling between them. What the caption especially comprises is the period of time at the new home, the home between the old and the future home and which becomes most easily perceptible as being a foreign place. The old and the future homes are abstract, dream-like and the films are not very informative about how their protagonist has lived or will be living there. That which is obvious is that while the place the protagonist intends to make their new home is indeed a home, but it is only so for others and not for the protagonist.

5.2 Section 1: Leaving home and moving on

This first section of the foreign home narrative is about the frame of the storytelling, the opening and the closing. Leaving home and moving on indicates that there is a stay in-between these two movements and the development of foreignness is responsible for the moving on. The first relocation can happen for different reasons. In the foreign home narrative, already the arrival at the new home shows elements of its foreignness. This means that both movements, towards and away from the new home, are indicators of the foreign home. The section 'Leaving home and moving on' touches upon aspects of *Heimat*, home, migration and nomadism.

5.2.1 The time frame of leaving home and moving on

The three films have different time frames concerning when their plot begins and ends on the timeline of the foreign home narrative. I want to outline these in order to show how the narrative of the home as a foreign place can be approached differently on its temporal level.

In *Der Verdingub*, the narrative begins at least one season before the leaving from the old home occurs and aside from that, the new home is introduced prior to the old one. Then, the viewer follows Max in his first move from the old home (a foster home) to the new home with the farming family, his time there and the second move (from which we are allowed to see some snippets) to the potential future home. There is a sense of conclusiveness in the storytelling arc because it includes all three homes and the movements between these places. However, both

Max's journey at sea and Argentina as the future home are abstract and it remains uncertain whether this actually happens or not. This element of uncertainty as to where home is supports the nomadic structure that is part of the foreign home narrative. *Der Verdingbub* spans approximately a year at first and then makes a time jump of somewhat fifty years forward to a potential older Max.

In *Synonymes*, the viewer meets Yoav for the first time when he is walking on the streets of Paris. It must be shortly after Yoav's own arrival in the city and he is on his way to the apartment where he intends to stay for his first night in Paris. The viewer does neither get to see Yoav's actual arrival in Paris, nor his departure from the city later on. The narrative in the film almost starts where it begins geographically and probably also timewise, just after arriving in Paris and just before leaving it. While in the narrative's beginning, Yoav is walking with his backpack on the Parisian streets at first and then enters the building where Émile and Caroline live, this is also the place where the film ends. Yoav, again with a backpack on, stands in front of Émile and Caroline's door in the same staircase as in the film's opening sequence and he calls into the silence once more. When exactly or how Yoav actually leaves is not disclosed but because Yoav himself in a voice-over says that his stay in Paris lasted for seven months, we can be sure of his departure. Where he will go and what his possible future home will be like remains unclear. This is an interesting solution of how the moving on part is narrated because in contrast to *Der Verdingbub* and *Undine* where the departure is shown, *Synonymes* does not tell it visually but instead audibly after about a quarter of the film's running time.

In *Undine*, the narrative starts later than in both *Der Verdingbub* and *Synonymes*. Undine has already left her old home and settled into the new one. She has a place to live, a job and a relationship but the latter only until the film's narrative starts. A moment before we see the opening image with Undine, her relationship with Johannes has ended and what she has built up in her new home is starting to crumble. *Undine*'s narrative jumps over the transition from the old to the new home and begins instead with the shift of the new home into the foreign home. The fact that Johannes is leaving Undine and does not declare his love for her anymore means that there is a time limit for Undine's stay in the Berlin home. This is a condition of Undine's very existence as a water spirit who lives on land; she needs the human person whom she loves to love her back. Even though she experiences this mutual love with Christoph later on, he cannot undo the foreign home because Johannes has already left Undine. Such a situation where given rules decide over whether or when the protagonist must leave the new home is an aspect that does not occur in the two other films. Yet, Undine also appears to make this decision herself in some way since she is not dragged back into the water. As a way of compensation for

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not having showed the viewer how Undine had left her old home and arrived in the new one, the references to water continuously accompany her. Furthermore, the narrative of *Undine* continues even after Undine has left the foreign home. Christoph is looking for Undine and two years later, he eventually meets her in the water. A tangible home on land is mixed with an abstract one in the water. Like in *Der Verdingbub*, Undine's future home remains abstract even if we can see her in the water. She appears to be the one character of these three who stays the longest in the new home while the narrative of *Der Verdingbub* covers the longest time span in total. In the following graph, the beginning and ending of the films are marked in respect of their particular point in time in the narrative timeline of the foreign home.

Graph 1: Timeline of the foreign home narrative
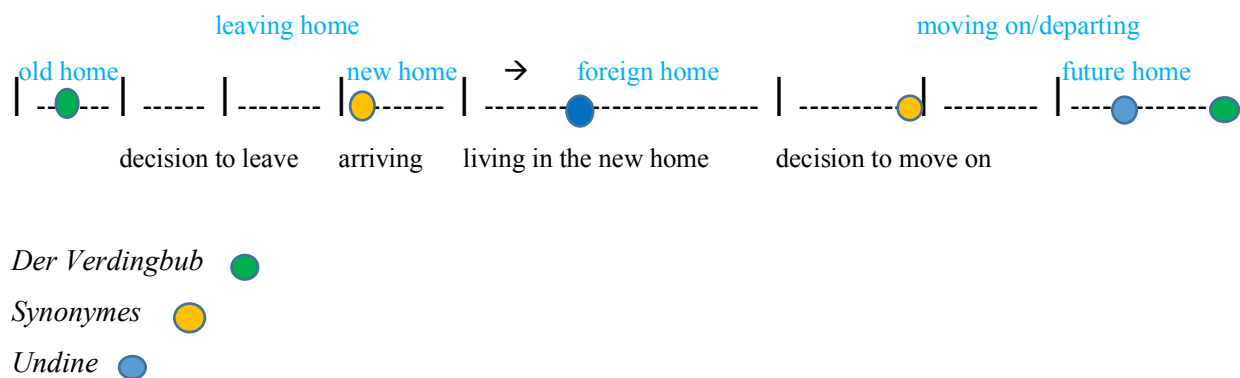
Both the old and future home are abstract places about which we do not learn much. The protagonist leaves the old home and does not want to return to it, which suggests that this place cannot be a form of *Heimat*. As the protagonist of the foreign home narrative does not have a *Heimat* to return to, they will keep wandering around like a nomad and continue looking for a home. This reminds us of what I have touched upon in the theoretical framework about the Jewish people and the fact that their nomadic status becomes almost taken for granted as it is seen as a characteristic feature.[122] The future home might be even vaguer because we do not know for how long the travelling will continue or where the protagonist will try to settle again. Even if the narrative endings imply potential future homes (Undine in the water, Max in Argentina, Yoav in Israel), they remain interpretations and assumptions to which the film narratives give no truth verification.

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[122] See chapter 2.3.3.

The films' different time frames of leaving, staying and departing again draw three different portrayals of the nomadic journey. At which point in time the plots of the three films start and end as well as what is shown might be an emphasis on the protagonists' willingness to leave or not and whether this decision is relevant to show. Undine wanted to come on land which the film does not show but when she returns to the water, she is hesitant and waits for Christoph, which is part of the film plot. Max had to move from a foster home because someone decided over him. This circumstance makes it important to show him leaving the farm, because this time, he decides for himself. In *Synonymes*, the present narrative always stays in Paris and does not show Yoav's journeys because Yoav did indeed want to leave the old home, but not Paris. Instead, we hop back to his time in the military and get a glimpse of his former home which he does not want to be a part of him anymore. On the nomadic journey, the future home becomes a new home but eventually foreign again and the protagonist needs to move on once more. On that journey, the narrative timeline shifts as the protagonist changes their location. The foreign home becomes the old home, the future home the new one but possibly a foreign home again and another future home follows and so forth.

5.2.2 The (in)voluntariness of leaving

The protagonists Max, Undine and Yoav leave their old home due to different causes. When they leave the second time, they all have in common that they leave a foreign home. The connection that the protagonists still have to their old home points to the migratory aspect in their narratives. Yoav and Undine leave their home on their own account; they migrate in a way, in hopes of a better life somewhere else. Max is forced to leave the foster home but is likewise in hopes of a better home. He moves voluntarily for the first time, when he decides to run away from the farming family and thereby leave the foreign home.

Yoav is not forced by any outer impact but the film communicates Yoav as having a pressing inner urge to leave Israel and leave it behind forever. There are indications that he is war-traumatised but tries to suppress this trauma and while this leads him to leave Israel, it still shows. During the second move, Yoav again does not leave because he is obliged to; it is rather a decision taken in resignation and disappointment because Paris as a home has grown too foreign.

Undine is somewhere in the middle between Max and Yoav concerning voluntariness. According to the Undine myth, she comes to the world above-water out of love for a human being. When she moves, she becomes tied to the condition that she can only stay as long as this person loves her back. Although Johannes leaves Undine and she meets Christoph who can give

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her the required love instead, Undine is still forced to return because of Johannes. She might also decide herself to return to the water in an attempt to save Christoph who had been declared brain-dead. Undine is the one of the three protagonists who leaves someone behind in the foreign home, which makes her return (for Christoph). Yoav leaves Caroline and Émile but he has somehow fallen out with them prior to his departure. Max leaves the farming family but they have played a decisive part in the development of the foreign home.

In a process of emigration, leaving the homeland also means leaving things behind such as a house, personal belongings or the familiar environment. This aspect of leaving behind is not typical for the foreign home narrative and does neither really occur in the three film narratives. The film does not show Undine having left someone in the old home but she leaves behind Christoph in the new and foreign home. Initially, Yoav left behind family in Israel and his father even travels to Paris because he wants Yoav to return. However, the film does not narrate the separation from Israel as a nostalgic loss (on Yoav's side) but rather as non-existent until Yoav's father shows up. Max has no (real) family or friends whom he could have left behind, which also makes it easier to leave.

5.2.3 The old and the future home

In relation to leaving the old home and moving on towards the future one, I want to consider what it actually is that we learn about these old and future homes of the three film narratives. Max, Undine and Yoav share a homelessness that they carry with them even if they live in a fixed living place. Their old and future homes are abstract and it remains unclear what they looked or might look like. In contrast to the situation in a diaspora or exile, none of the protagonists is nostalgic for their old home. They do not want to return and neither do they have an idealised image of the previous home. The idealisation is more in relation to the new or the future home. Yet, the film narratives show the protagonists' connections to their old homes and indicators of their future homes, which can tell us more about the three film worlds. I want to divide these connections into two main aspects. The first is the element of water that is central in the narrative of *Undine* but also appears in *Synonymes* and *Der Verdingbub*. The second is instability, which is more prevalent in the old and future homes of Yoav and Max.

5.2.3.1 Water and home

In *Undine*, water is a central theme pervading the narrative and is prominent in the new home of Berlin, but it also stands for Undine's old and future homes. In *Synonymes* and *Der Verdingbub*, water is not present as strongly but both films have a scene in which water is

involved and concerns one of the homes. Undine's old and future homes are depicted as the element of water but not as a specific place. We do not know whether there even is such a place underwater even when Christoph shows Undine a stone underwater that has her name carved on it. In *Undine*, the water is communicated as being the old and future home but the home as a place is deselected. This actually undermines the thought of a home as described in all theories about home. According to the theory of home, water could not constitute a home but yet it functions as a home in *Undine*, which makes it interesting that the film *Undine* is also part of a foreign home narrative. While water depicts Undine's old and future home, it is also an element that bears different meanings.

Water is not a fixed, static place but it is an element and force of nature in constant movement. Water has a transformative nature; it is something in-between like a kind of limbo that can carry something but also absorb it. Water stands for cleansing, purification and a new beginning, it denotes transition, a rite of passage or a non-identity but it can also designate a bridge to an ending. In baptism, which is a form of a fresh start, water is essential for providing and symbolising this new beginning. In adult baptism, the procedure is a baptism by submersion and not just some symbolic drops of water. This instance of being under water triggers also a submersion into the subconscious, the immersing within the psyche. If one is submerged physically and psychologically, the time under water can become dangerous and could potentially result in death. Thus, while the ritual of baptism stands for giving life, it is also a situation where life and death are close to each other.

Research on water in film covers different aspects such as water as an essential part of the environment. In both documentary and fiction films, we learn of the relation to water or the role and meaning of water. While I will not go into this field of research much further, it is nonetheless important to point out the consistency and essentiality of water in film. Nicole Starosielski's text on the history of film under water looks at different approaches to and understandings of water that have been present in cinema. In history, water and film came in different forms such as in underwater documentary or fiction films where the subaquatic is "an ethnic Other", a territory of conflict and war or a potential place to colonise.[123] Enoch Yee-Lok Tam's article on images of water in Chinese and Taiwan documentaries discusses how water is

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[123] Nicole Starosielski, "Beyond Fluidity: A Cultural History of Cinema Under Water", in *Ecocinema Theory and Practice*, eds. Stephen Rust, Salma Monani and Sean Cubitt (New York: Routledge, 2013), 150.

represented in documentary film;[124] and there especially in relation to the natural and man-made disasters that threaten to damage the environment and also the water.[125] These two essays are examples of case studies of the presentation and identity of water in film. The occurrence of water in film often challenges the question of the fixed identity and water functions instead as an identity in-between, a hybrid identity.

A human being cannot be underwater for too long if just breathing on their own. In Undine's case, her abilities as a water spirit to live underwater appear to have disappeared when she leaves the old home in the water. Undine undergoes a transition from a water creature to a human and then back again, which makes her a hybrid between human and animal, and between a human life and a life as part of nature. Even though she can live in both worlds, underwater and on land, the two are not compatible with each other or only for a limited time and under certain conditions.

The transformational aspect of water that is characteristic for baptism is also shown in the film *Undine*. Undine's link to the old and the future home is present through Johannes and Christoph. While it is not expressed explicitly, the two names suggest a biblical reference that Petzold has made here. John the Baptist (who is *Johannes der Täufer* in German) is the one who gave life in a ritual and spiritual way during baptisms. In *Undine*, Johannes' love for Undine enables and gives her a life above water but when Johannes ends their relationship, he also takes this life away. This kind of baptism effects both Undine's life and death on land. It is not Undine's literal death, which cannot be said for Johannes. Before Undine leaves, she kills Johannes by pushing him underwater. Johannes' whole body is underwater like in a baptism by submersion but Undine does not let him surface again. She 'baptises' him for too long which results in Johannes' permanent death. Water and Undine's leaving of the old home as well as the moving on to the future home are connected to Johannes.

The other person connected to water and Undine is Christoph. The second biblical reference is namely that of Christoph in the figure of Jesus Christ. Christ was actually baptised by John the Baptist and while Johannes and Christoph only meet once when they are walking past each other, they are still connected to each other through Undine. When Christoph and Undine talk to each other the first time and the aquarium bursts, they are showered with all the water pouring from above. This can also be seen as a baptism, one that gives Undine a

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[124] Enoch Yee-Lok Tam, "Colourful Screens: Water Imaginaries in Documentaries from China and Taiwan", in *Transnational Ecocinema: Film Culture in an Era of Ecological Transformation*, eds. Pietari Kääpä and Tommy Gustafsson (Bristol: Intellect, 2013), 48.

[125] Ibid, 47.

purification of her old relationship with Johannes and a new beginning together with Christoph. The option for such a new beginning was indirectly enabled through Johannes who had broken off with Undine by that point. Another biblical aspect is that Christ dies and resurrects again. Christoph is declared brain-dead after his accident underwater and while his body is supported by machines and thereby continues to function, this diagnosis means that he is gone. Yet, after Undine has gone back to the water, Christoph wakes up and, in a way, resurrects.

Another interesting connection between the characters, the water and the home is that both John the Baptist and Jesus Christ have a day of celebration. The feast of St. John the Baptist is at the time of the summer solstice when the days start to become shorter again. Christ is celebrated at Christmas, which is during the time of the winter solstice, when the days become longer again. It is as if Johannes stands more for death and Christoph more for life. Johannes takes Undine out of the water but also ends her time on land. Christoph prolongs Undine's time on land and comes back to life as she leaves.

The theological references of *Undine* do not require a religious interpretation but they become relevant as they open up for a wider understanding of the relation between Undine, Christoph, Johannes and the water. Baptism refers to the cycle of life and the new beginnings that occur in *Undine*, and the water as a means of transition connects to the water as an abstract home. Both John and Christ are figures from a long time ago who remained in theology and Undine is a mythological water spirit. This combination stands in correlation to the film *Undine*, which entails mystic elements. The water as a rite of passage is present independently of a theological, mystic or realistic context.

In *Synonymes*, Yoav is taking a shower after he has arrived at the apartment. It reminds us of the aspect of the new beginning, the cleansing of the old home and welcoming the new one. When he wants to take a shower the second time in order to warm himself, the water stops running. Instead of there being too much water around Yoav that could drown him, as happens to Johannes, the lack of water leaves Yoav in a likewise unprotected situation. He is on this bridge between life and death as he cools down during the night. For Max in *Der Verdingbub*, water is most prominent when he potentially travels to Argentina. Water becomes again a rite of passage, a new beginning but this time in reference to the future home and not the old home as in Yoav's case. However, within all this, the water still has the aspect of uncertainty to it because we do not know whether this journey to Argentina is real or what might happen during Max's time at sea. The water is a vague world in-between, where situations and people can change.

<u>5.2.3.2 Instability and home</u>

Yoav and Max's old homes both give an impression of instability. In contrast to the water, the home places are more fixed and not unstable in the way that they would be mobile like floating water but they have an unpredictability in what might happen. The parts we see of Yoav's old home are scenes from the military that show elements which are loosening in their own right but become bizarre in the shown combination. Soldiers are standing in rank and file while a group of singers perform a cheerful sounding song and dance around the soldiers. Another scene shows Yoav, who thinks of the beat of a song and shoots according to it while his companion has to guess the song. These scenes create an uncomfortable tension and make it difficult to pinpoint what this old home was really like but they express an instability. In these scenes from the old home, we can also hear Yoav speaking Hebrew, that part of himself that he tries to get rid of in the new home of Paris.

The little we see of Max's old home in the foster home is the women who work there waking up the children ungently and with much noise. The foster children have to stand straight next to their beds just like the soldiers must stand upright. The women discipline by harsh words or by force. There is not much explanation but orders instead. This home gives the impression of a tense and intimidating atmosphere, a strict education and likewise with an unpredictability even if different than in Yoav's old home. It is not told where this foster home is; it does not appear like a safe home but an unstable one instead.

Max comes from a home that was a non-home, a transit place. The same goes for Yoav's old home, the military service, which is a temporary place to live but not a stable one. Both of these old homes entail violence and the alternation between silence and noise. We do not know what comes next, which creates a tenseness and an incalculability. This state continues very similarly for Max in the new home with the farming family. For Yoav, his time in the military reappears in different forms in Paris such as when he has to sing the Israeli national anthem in the French class. The instability of the old home continues to be present in the new one. Like Undine's old home, also Yoav and Max's old homes are abstract and not really tangible. Yoav's future home is even more vague because we do not know whether he will return to Israel or travel somewhere else and what this future home will be like. It could be a suggestion of his homelessness, his dream of a home that does not exist. Max's dream is Argentina, a home where everything will apparently fall into place. There is the scene of a man playing music on a stage for the audience, but we do not know whether this really is Max or just his anticipation and imagination.

The circumstance that the characters are linked to their old homes even when in the new home place is a feature that is also present within migratory movement such as in a diaspora or exile. It is not possible to just erase the old home and there will remain different types of connections. Furthermore, while exile is characteristic for not being continuous in that there is the homeland and here the land of exile, the protagonist of the foreign home narrative lives in forms of exile but the relation between the different home places (e.g. old and new home) is continuous and not marked by a clear boundary. Undine is tied to the water, Yoav is an Israeli beneath his constructed French identity and Max's role as a *Verdingkind* connects the foster home and the farm. The different homes are linked and thereby, the foreign home can move in-between them and becomes detached from a fixed time and place.

5.2.4 *Synonymes* – arrival and departure in Paris

While I focused on the depiction of the old and future homes in the previous section, I want to consider the movements between these two homes and the new one. The foreign home is already looming at the arrival and even more clearly visible at the time of departure. This will now also be discussed with reference to the stylistic and aesthetic level.

5.2.4.1 Yoav's first day in Paris

The beginning of the film *Synonymes* shows Yoav's arrival in Paris as his self-chosen new home. We do not see him leaving his old home but instead a new beginning that already suggests a lostness and solitude. The photography, especially the camera movements and the framing, as well as the sound, illustrate this in different ways.

The film opens with a sequence shot; first from above, looking down on the pavement in what appears to be a point-of-view shot. But the camera moves away, shows parts of a fountain and then moves again showing Yoav entering the frame. Or rather, we can see parts of his legs and his arms swinging back and forth. It reminds of the mechanical movements of a soldier. The camera is very close (a close-up shot), somewhat shaky but keeps the same frame as it follows Yoav's hasty steps, first sideways, then facing the back of his head. The camera plays with the distance to Yoav by alternating between being close or giving him a head start like when he runs across the street. It also imitates further point-of-view shots such as when turning to a bistro which Yoav walks past, but when the camera is pointed towards Yoav again, we realise it was not he who looked inside. The camera is an observer in its own right following Yoav but also letting its own 'eye' wander around. Already in this opening scene, the camera introduces how it alternates between following Yoav and letting him walk off alone. This gives

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the impression of the camera watching Yoav. The sequence shot ends after we have seen Yoav walk away from the camera in its observational mode. The camera's role of the follower and observer is an important and reoccurring stylistic device throughout the film. On the one hand, it tells the story of Yoav but on the other, it also creates distance between him and the world around him.

Yoav's fast pace, captured by the camera as it quickly moves with him, as well as only showing him from behind, makes it feel as if Yoav is on the run. The close camera adds a claustrophobic element to the scene. We do not know whether there actually is someone following Yoav, why he is walking so fast or where he is going. Nor are we given the chance to read his facial expressions that might indicate some answers to these questions. The camera shows a person that is not a natural part of their environment, which sets the tone for Yoav's time in his new home.

The weather is rough and rainy, and grey tones prevail. There is traffic noise and blaring horns which create an unsettled and stressed mood that underline Yoav's fast pace. This is contrasted with the interior of a building which Yoav enters after the sequence shot has been cut. The staircase has a warm lightning, a red carpet on the stairs and it is quiet. It suggests a welcoming place but this is deceptive. When Yoav enters the building, the camera stays more in place than before, which emphasises the position of the observer. Now, it shows Yoav from further away, from behind or above as he is running up the staircase and looking for the keys under the doormat. The camera frame is static and the tempo has lowered. As Yoav enters the apartment, the camera changes position and awaits him from inside. It now frames several rooms from which one can gain an understanding of the size of the apartment. At first, there is darkness and while Yoav opens window shutters, he also comes closer to the camera until his face is finally shown from up-close.

By the time night has fallen and Yoav is hopping in a sleeping bag through the empty apartment, he looks a bit lost. There is no furniture but several doors and windows; a labyrinth of an apartment as Yoav's search for a home is a labyrinth of its own. The camera is still in an observational mode and follows Yoav's hopping from a different room but then stops at the bathroom door.

Image 1: Yoav in his sleeping bag (©*Synonymes*, 2019*)*

While Yoav is taking a shower, the blurry contours of the door frame in this shot again give the impression of the camera watching Yoav. When Yoav comes back from the shower and his backpack and sleeping bag are gone, the place feels even more empty, almost like an abysm that swallows what does not belong here. In addition, the naked Yoav in the empty room with high ceilings looks alone and unprotected. Yoav's following dance-like but agitated running into every room of the apartment appears like a choreography. Every room has a different lightning and the camera follows Yoav with sharp pans but it also stays back and keeps its distance. Once again, we see a camera that sometimes follows Yoav's movements but also makes its own. For instance, the camera does not follow after Yoav out to the staircase right away but stays in the dark of the apartment, staying pointed at the door left ajar. Or, the camera tilts down vertically while Yoav runs down the stairs zig-zag-wise. Generally, the camera is now much calmer than before while Yoav is still running and sometimes leaves the frame partly, sometimes even entirely. While the camera watches Yoav but does not show his every move and lets him walk outside of the shot frame, we continue to hear him shouting for help in French, also from the off. Overall, there is no non-diegetic sound; we hear Yoav running, his screams and sometimes car sounds from outside. The scene is quiet and loud at the same time, the walls and doors remain silent and the camera waits, which enhances the tension of the situation. After just six minutes, we see Yoav, a stranger in the city, alone in a posh but empty Parisian

apartment and with all his possessions gone. He returns to the bathtub under the open window and tries to warm himself with water which, however, quickly stops running. The bathtub seems to be the only furniture in the apartment, and reminds us of a bed or a coffin. As I have mentioned above, these scenes with the bathtub form a rite of passage where water is cleansing and the lack of it endangering. The fresh start in a new home already becomes challenged. Yoav came alone, all his possessions which he has had with him were stolen and he could not find any help in the building. He is a stranger by himself who does not receive any welcomes.

When Émile and Caroline carry Yoav into their apartment the morning after, the camera cuts their heads off and focuses instead on the naked Yoav hanging in-between them. It makes him look vulnerable and like a helpless baby that is dependent on its parents. The fact that Yoav is naked and still sleeping makes him even more exposed. Like parents, Émile and Caroline put Yoav to bed under a blanket. While the camera rests on Yoav, we only see the legs and backs of Émile and Caroline and hear their voices from the off. Yoav, the stranger, is inspected by all three, the camera, Caroline and Émile.

Although Émile and Caroline take care of Yoav, they immediately form a contrast to him, which is also underlined by the camera and the set design. The shots in Émile and Caroline's apartment often contain several layers in that we see other rooms in the background or reflections in mirrors, a device which expands the space. The large apartment is filled with furniture, all kinds of objects and art, and it gives the impression of a good home. It poses a sharp contrast to Yoav, who at this moment possesses nothing. Another form of contrast that is established when Émile and Caroline are introduced in the narrative is the visual distance that the camera creates between the different characters in the film. The camera often focuses on one character only and leaves the other ones out of focus or cuts parts of them off. Even if the characters are standing right next to each other or are having a conversation with each other, the camera frequently chooses to give room to only one at the time or to two characters as opposed to one. This is for instance the case when Émile fetches clothing and other things for Yoav and the camera rests primarily on Yoav even though he interacts with Émile.

Yoav's position as a stranger in Paris becomes even more stressed when he comments every item that Émile gives him by its French name. He sometimes asks about the right term and while this listing might be important to him, it is also peculiar. Caroline points out to Yoav that his French is correct but very aristocratic, which is something that will make him stand out. Because even though he knows the language, which is an essential part of integration, he speaks

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a more proper French than that which mother-tongue speakers would. This only serves to accentuate his position as an outsider.[126]

A further factor that makes Yoav stand out throughout the film narrative is the yellow coat received from Émile on his first morning. During his time in Paris, Yoav continues to wear the coat with its flamboyant colour, by means of which he never blends into the masses whenever he is out and about in the city.[127] In addition, we do not know whether this really would be Yoav's style but by putting on new clothes, he also takes on a new identity. And yet, it is still the identity of the foreigner. As a thank you for his help, Yoav gives Émile the only thing he has left, his lip piercing. This is also the last physical possession that he had brought with him from the old home. By giving it away, everything that Yoav possesses from this moment on is new; it is like a clean slate, a new life in a new city.

A final aspect that points towards Yoav's exposedness and loneliness is the mise-en-scène of Yoav standing in front of a large window with muntins in a grid-like array. While he receives clothes from Émile, he stands still and is framed by both the window and long red curtains, which makes him look as if he is trapped, maybe in his role as the stranger, which he will not be able to shake off.

The camera framing and movements, the colours, the interplay between distance and closeness expose Yoav's foreignness in this new home. During the first evening, it was not a welcoming home and even though Yoav is helped the second day, other elements of distance and rejection are introduced, which already implies the development of the foreign home. Being a foreigner at the beginning of migration is normal but in *Synonymes*, the different stylistic and aesthetic factors stress Yoav's foreign position and it appears like a conscious opposition to him. He is presented as an Other through both the narrative, the dialogues as well as the camera's style of moving and framing.

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[126] More on this will be discussed in chapter 5.5 'Adjustment to the new home'.

[127] More on this in chapter 5.4 'Modes of displacement'.

Image 2: Yoav in the yellow coat framed by the window and the curtains (©*Synonymes*, 2019*)*

5.2.4.2 Yoav's last day in Paris

When Yoav arrives in Paris, the camera is like an observer standing by but not giving a helping hand and the same applies for when he is about to leave again. Referring back to Yoav's arrival, there is again a shot from behind that shows Yoav walking past a café with typical French bistro chairs and lets him walk away further and further. In a way, this is ironic: he who wanted to become the definition of Frenchness now walks past this cliché of France on his way to leave. Yoav carries again a backpack and this time, he also wears the yellow coat with which he still stands out from the grey tones of the city. Orchestral music starts from which we can discern the oboe as if this was a last goodbye from Caroline.

When Yoav stands in front of the door to Émile and Caroline's apartment, the camera is static and at first behind, then next to Yoav showing him in a profile shot. Yoav rings the doorbell, knocks and starts shouting for Émile but no one opens just like on the day of his arrival. The camera is again a silent observer and one that does not follow all of Yoav's movements. Yoav leaves the frame more than once, during which the camera just waits. There is an empty frame, as the apartment on Yoav's day of arrival was empty. In addition, there is no response from the other side of the door just as there was no help when Yoav was here on his first day in Paris. It emphasises how he is all by himself in this home that has already become foreign at this point. The camera continues to remain still when Yoav starts throwing himself

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at the door more and more fiercely, as if unimpressed or bored by Yoav's outburst. This also emphasises his frustration and despair at the fact that this home did not open its doors despite Yoav having tried and wanted it so much. As he now does not receive any replies, Yoav cannot even try to communicate with the Others; those who are at home in Paris. In order for the home as an emotional place to be intact, the ability to communicate and be understood by these Others is a required feature, which Yoav has now lost. The new home became more foreign the longer he was there and just as he cannot get through the door that he stands in front of, neither could he find a way into the life in Paris. The camera holds the situation of Yoav throwing himself at the door for quite a while and does not let go. As the image eventually goes black, we continue to hear some of Yoav's screams; then there is silence. It is not disclosed where Yoav will go when he has left Paris. While a diasporan or exile usually leaves the hostland in order to return to their home country, Yoav's home country may be Israel but he is nevertheless a *heimatlos* figure who does not know where his real home is.

Image 3: Yoav in front of the closed apartment door (©*Synonymes*, 2019*)*

5.2.5 *Undine* – travelling between waters

Undine's journey takes place between underwater and above water (on land) but as noted before, her old and future homes in the water are abstract and do not have any shape other than water.

5.2.5.1 Transition to the foreign home

Neither Undine's leaving of her old home, nor the arrival in the new one is part of the film plot. The film's opening marks instead a transition within her new home in that it becomes unstable and foreign. This change is induced by the fact that Johannes ends his relationship with Undine, which means that she will have to leave the world on land. How Undine's world is turned upside down becomes more tangible through the close but not intrusive shots of both Undine and Johannes. The camera picks up on Undine's facial expressions and her stare at Johannes who looks back anxiously. His blue eyes are piercing and shining at the same time. They are almost the same colour as the swimming pool in which he will be floating dead later in the narrative. His jacket is blue too, blue as water can be, as if he wants to remind Undine of what implications their conversation has, that she will have to leave this home even though Johannes himself does not know this.

Undine's hair glows reddish and matches her firmness when she fixates Johannes and tells him to stay at the café until she comes back because otherwise, she would have to kill him. The atmosphere changes instantly; Undine is calm but insistent and deadly serious. The camera stays close to them and their faces, capturing Undine's tears or the uneasiness that comes over Johannes. Not only is the camera close to Undine and Johannes, the two of them are sitting close to each other too.

Images 4 & 5: Undine and Johannes (©*Undine*, 2020*)*

When Johannes stands up, he looks down on Undine, who is in the vulnerable position of being about to lose her life on land. While the two are sitting at the café table, church bells are chiming in the background, somehow calling time for something or someone. It would pertain to them both. When Undine gets up and walks to the *Haus am Köllnischen Park* where she works, the distance between her and Johannes increases. The camera moves with her and mirrors her pace as she starts running. There are point-of-view shots directed back to Johannes sitting at the café table. The aesthetic is following Undine's emotional state rather than guiding it. In the moment where Undine is standing on the steps inside her work building, it is now she who looks down on Johannes, down and over the street to Johannes who is still at the café. It is a long shot that visualises the distance between them and sets a contrast to the situation before where they had been sitting so close to each other. This suggests a change in their dynamic because Undine's home is not a safe and warm place anymore but neither is that of Johannes. Even though Undine is inside the building she appears as if being outside, a foreigner observing the home which she cannot reach. As an exile becomes an outsider to their own homeland, Undine's home with Johannes has closed its doors too. She cannot return to this home but only observe it from afar.

After Undine has walked away from Johannes who disrupted her life in this new home, she holds a presentation about just this home, Berlin. She looks down on the models of the city but they are only a construction of Berlin and of this home. Undine's home in Berlin is likewise

a construction that she tries to uphold. Undine has an overview of the city and knows historical facts but she looks from above and is outside of the model just as she is outside of Berlin.[128]

Like in *Synonymes*, also *Undine*'s opening sequence introduces some recurring elements of the film. We see Undine's fast walk and the assertiveness it expresses. The colours blue and red that are present in many scenes, perhaps suggesting the contrast between the water and the land. There is also the location of both the café and Undine's work place, the *Haus am Köllnischen Park*. While the café is an important place in relation to turns of events, the *Haus am Köllnischen Park* goes back in time and tells about the development of today's Berlin which is Undine's new home but also the foreign one. We further learn that Johannes might die and that the connection between Undine and Johannes remains even though he has broken up with her. The camera in this opening sequence is closer to the protagonist than in *Synonymes*. It reflects the emotions in a sympathetic style rather than distancing itself from them. The opening also introduces the music piece that is the guiding soundtrack throughout the film: A concerto in D minor by Johann Sebastian Bach.[129] Johannes' rejection of Undine stands in contrast to what is needed for a home. One has to be welcomed and accepted but instead, she experiences the opposite. Losing Johannes puts her into a situation where she is alone again. She is on the one hand exiled from the home with Johannes, but on the other hand the Berlin home is threatened too. The fact that Johannes leaves her is similar to the potential threat which a diasporan can feel in the host land and it is a threat that has now become reality and thereby put Undine into a vulnerable position.

5.2.5.2 Transition to the future home

Undine's departure from the new but foreign home can be divided into three parts. The first is her killing Johannes, going into the water and Christoph waking up, the second is Christoph looking for Undine and the third when Christoph and Undine meet in the water.

In the first part, the scene is set in the evening, it is already dark, there is no music but just the sound of air, crickets and the water in the pool in which Johannes is swimming. The calmness is interrupted by the calls from Johannes' girlfriend stressing that he should hurry up and come inside. While she does not know what Undine is about to do, her calls break the silence and raise the tension. The swimming pool shines with a shrieking turquoise, it is a constructed place with water in it and not natural as a lake or a river usually are. Undine has to

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[128] More on this in chapter 5.5.1 'Occupation'.

[129] Concerto D minor BMV 974, originally written by Alessandro Marcello as an Oboe Concerto in D minor, S D935 and then transcripted by Johann Sebastian Bach for harpsichord/keyboard.

face this last puzzle piece of her constructed home that has now become too foreign. The camera alternates between the characters, depending on from whose perspective it narrates. First, it is with Undine observing Johannes in the swimming pool. Then, the camera switches into the pool to Johannes' view as he is surprised by a splash into the water. Like him, we cannot see Undine at first but as the viewer, we at least know it is her. As Undine surfaces from the water right in front of Johannes, their faces are shown in close-up shots. They are face to face but do not talk. When Undine takes Johannes' head and presses him down underwater, the perspective switches back to her. The camera does not show Johannes underwater but lets the sound narrate instead. He is heard fighting and trying to come back to the surface, and Undine breathes heavily while holding him down. When Undine leaves the pool, the camera is less close again and watches her as she walks towards the bushes. Here, the concerto sets in again. A long shot shows Johannes' body floating in the pool. The shots go from total to close-ups (in the pool) and to totals again. Even if the camera switches perspective to Johannes in the middle of the scene, it is focused on Undine. We approach the place and leave it again just as she does. The tapestry of sound is primarily interrupted by Johannes' girlfriend; both when calling him in the beginning of the scene and then screaming when she presumably sees his body (this is not shown because the camera is still resting on Undine).

In the next scene, the camera first awaits Undine on the forest path but then it pans with her as she starts walking into the lake. The camera stays behind her and just watches. Just as the camera in *Synonymes* lets Yoav walk away, it does the same with Undine. In contrast to the loud turquoise from the pool before, the lake water is a softer blue and the light has a blueish shimmer that implies early morning. It is a calm scene in which Undine walks into the water until she disappears entirely and the camera only shows the blue water surface. The next shot underwater shows a whirl of bubbles pulled downwards, there is a muffled drumming and the water is much darker than before. Undine is not shown anymore, she has disappeared into the water but we do not know where she went, only that she left the home above water on land. As the bubbles and maybe also Undine are sinking downwards, Christoph is awakening with a start, performing a movement into the other direction, that is, upwards. The background concerto stops at once but the colour blue is still present as the hospital staff are wearing blue shirts. Undine's future home echoes also in the hospital room.

The second part of Undine's leaving is about her absence and that even though she is gone, the places she had been to most often are still there. They are almost the same, only slightly changed as if she had never been around. Her apartment has the same furniture, the wine stain on the wall caused by Christoph is still there but different people live there now. At

the café, there is an aquarium that looks the same, there is no industrial diver in it anymore but two other figures instead. In the model room at the *Haus am Köllnischen Park*, Undine's colleague is holding a presentation about Berlin. She talks about how difficult it was for people to find a home in Berlin already in the beginning of the 20th century. The discourse on the reason for the difficult housing market lasted for several decades until there was an agreement that the land price was the decisive factor. The search for a home in Berlin has long been difficult and while other people were in need of a physical home, Undine had a living place. Nevertheless, this home became a non-home. Undine's former colleague creates a link to her without being aware of it. It is not Undine anymore who is sitting at the café table that we saw in the film's opening but her said colleague. She is sitting on the side of the table, drinking coffee where Johannes sat and not Undine. Christoph starts the conversation in the same way as he did with Undine; that he was at her presentation but then goes on to ask as to whether she knew anything about Undine's whereabouts. The woman's reaction is very different from Undine's when she and Christoph first met. She is brusque and in a hurry. Apparently, Undine has not appeared for work for several months and while we return with Christoph to the same places that we have seen before, the absence of Undine becomes more tangible even when it is not noticed or cared much about elsewhere. This repetition of going to the same places, reliving situations but now in a different form might be a suggestion of Undine's nomadic journey where there is the constant structure of new home, foreign home, future home and so on.

The third part of Undine's leaving takes place back at the lake two years later. We see two scenes where the abstract home of the water meets the concrete home of Berlin. In both scenes, we see Undine underwater but it is not entirely clear whether she really was there, just as it is unclear where her home is. In the first instance, Christoph is doing repair work and when Undine shows up and puts her hand on his, we see her from his point of view. This perspective is also the one that his camera records but when Christoph checks the recording afterwards, there is no Undine visible. The water is green-blue, the drumming underwater sound is mixed with that of an underground train from afar. Undine looks pale and tilts backwards away from Christoph. Her floating creates a mystic atmosphere as if she was in a limbo, not quite here and not quite there. In the second instance, Christoph walks into the water just as Undine had done but this time, the camera is showing this from the front perspective. The light is blueish again but almost too blue so that it looks somewhat unrealistic. Maybe a hint at the transition between the mystic underwater world and the realistic one on land. Differently from when Undine left, we then get to see Undine and Christoph together underwater, floating weightlessly. Undine looks pale and again a bit like a ghost. Maybe she stayed around and waited for Christoph to

say farewell. Even if the home became foreign and she could not stay, she still made a friend about whom she continued to think and who thinks about her.

The final shot shows Christoph and his girlfriend walking away on the bridge. The camera captures them in a long shot but is close to the water surface and then sinks slowly into the water where the image turns black. This shot suggests a point of view by Undine, who watches the two of them. In contrast to Max and Yoav, we see Undine returning to the foreign home after already having left it but we do not know where she has been in the time in-between. In addition, she gives Christoph her essential object, the figure of the industrial diver.[130] Because Undine does not live in the foreign home anymore and does not have to try to hold on to it, she might not need the figure anymore. In addition, the industrial diver figure is her connection to the space to which she belongs; that is, the water to which she has now returned. The rejection of the foreign home and the fact that Johannes left Undine, threatened her body as a home which could not remain on land anymore and had to return to the water.

5.2.6 *Der Verdingbub* – from mountains to sea

In the film *Der Verdingbub*, the first move is from the foster home to a farming family in the countryside, the second one from this farm in between mountains to a land beyond the sea. In *Der Verdingbub*, the mise-en-scène is an essential indicator of the foreign home.

5.2.6.1 Coming to a farm in the mountains

In the opening shot of *Der Verdingbub*, the camera is close to the wooden floor on which a white blanket is opened out and where the body of a young boy is laid. Two men are folding the blanket over him and as they are walking downstairs, the farming family is sitting around the kitchen table and staring at them. In a total shot, we see the two men beside the cart with the coffin walking through the snow, a wooden house in the background with a backdrop of mountain scenery. The introduction of the new home in this foreign home narrative tells about a boy's death and becomes an uncanny foreboding of what destiny might await Max, the story's protagonist. The new home is presented with its dark rooms and an uncomfortable stillness. The first shot showing the place from outside is a long shot in which the two undertakers are walking away from the farmhouse with a coffin on the cart. This image will appear twice again but the first time, it is the widest shot of the three. The second instance is when the undertakers

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[130] More on this in chapter 5.3.4.2 'The essential object - a different kind of home'.

walk towards the house with an empty coffin (this is the closest shot) and the third as they leave the farm again with the dead Berteli in the coffin. The second and third shot occur both towards the narrative ending. The undertakers walking to and away from the farmhouse with a coffin on the cart frames Max's time in the foreign home. It suggests a theme of death and while there is literal death twice (the boy and Berteli), it could also mean the death of a real home because this home on the farm becomes foreign. The film does not begin with the protagonist Max but with the main location of the narrative, the farm *Dunkelmatte*, which will be Max's new home and the foreign one.

Max's moving from the foster home shows a transition from a place with a cold atmosphere, a harsh tone and a slap in the face to a farm in the countryside where green grass and sunshine paint an idyllic image of a home. This would be a typical image of a *Heimat* narrative but while there, the home is idyllic indeed, the depiction of the farm *Dunkelmatte* and the nature around it is deceptive, especially because the contrast to the rough foster home is quite stark. However, this distinction lasts only for a short while and instead of narrating a traditional *Heimat* narrative, *Der Verdingbub* is rather an anti-*Heimat* film. Max gets excited over his own room and when he plays the accordion and feels joy, the viewer can see the farmer's wife's melancholy at first and how it changes into discontent. Her harsh interruption takes Max by surprise and it sets the tone of this house and home. The unpredictability and harshness will become everyday life.

The place where Max has to live is decided by others. The film's opening introduces this power relationship between Max and the adults as well as his inferior position. He is exiled from a home place (the foster home) which was not even a real home to him. This process of exile will reoccur later on when the farming family banishes him to the stables as well as when he leaves the farm. There he chooses to go into exile himself because the home has become foreign. In the process of the first exilic situation when he arrives at the farm, Max is not welcomed with much joy and his way of communicating, playing music, is quickly disrupted. Thus, the rhetorical territory is already malfunctioning. An important requirement for an intact emotional home is lacking and it will not develop sufficiently either.

5.2.6.2 Going to a land far away

In *Der Verdingbub*, it really is Max's own decision to leave because the home with the farming family has just become unbearable. He and Berteli had planned to leave together and when she dies and the farmer's wife tries to sweep the manner of her death under the carpet, it is enough. Max has no reason to stay any longer and runs away. This home has been hostile from the

beginning but the degree of foreignness has only accumulated more and more. In contrast to Undine and Yoav, Max receives help on his departure. The butcher, who meets Max in the middle of the night, listens to what Max tells him and eventually gives him money so that Max can leave by bus and get away faster.

On the ship, Max thinks of Berteli and tells her about life on the high seas and with the crew on board. Even though he talks about him being part of a group, in the shots on the ship, we only see Max by himself. When he goes outside, the width of the sea behind him might stand for expectation and possibilities but it also makes him look small. He is still travelling and on his nomadic journey. He chooses to leave the land where he was born and go into exile himself. The cause for someone to become an exile is some kind of threat to them in the homeland and for Max, this threat is his status as a *Verdingkind*. Only by leaving can he try to escape this threat and the foreign home. He is a kind of exile who leaves from a home that has never been good to him.

In the final scene, a man is sitting on a chair on stage and playing the bandoneon. He is all alone on this stage and the audience is on the other side of the concert hall. This future home might be Argentina or it might just be Max's dream of a true home. But regardless of what is true, the man who is supposed to represent Max is all by himself and not part of a community. He is still the foreigner, an Other who is always on the outside and this position impedes him from gaining entrance to a true home.

5.3 Section 2: The space and the objects of the new home

The second section of the narrative structure of the foreign home concerns the living space and the personal objects that belong to the protagonist. In diaspora and migration, the personal objects play an important role as well. The wish to recreate the original home can include displaying things that they have taken with them and that remind them of home. However, in the narrative of the foreign home, the protagonist does not have a home they would think about in nostalgia and neither have they taken many possessions or anything at all with them. In the three films *Der Verdingbub*, *Undine* and *Synonymes*, there are either not many personal objects or they seem just temporary. There is neither a strong connection to the old home nor to the new one but mostly it is just a matter of being in a living space. The home as a private space that gives comfort is not really present.

5.3.1 One's own four walls

The situation and state of the living place (a house, a flat, a room) where one resides and lives is an essential part in the process of the home construction. In *Synonymes*, *Undine* and *Der Verdingbub*, the living place lacks several aspects that would make it a warm and friendly home and remains rather anonymous instead. For example, the rooms in which Max in *Der Verdingbub* and Yoav in *Synonymes* live are very sparsely furnished. Undine's apartment is furnished and thus not an equally empty place but it makes a provisory impression. It looks more like things have been unpacked and put somewhere but she has not really lived with them.

5.3.1.1 A dark room

Max is the one protagonist who technically lives in a classical home, a house surrounded by forest and pasture, furnished and equipped with things the family needs for their everyday life. They eat their meals together around a table as a family. The farmer's wife says that this is now Max's home; she also tells the two foster children Max and Berteli to call her 'mother' but this makes it more like a constructed home, just as Undine and Yoav construct a home in their own way through the models of Berlin and the French language. Max is not respected as an individual and he is not included or welcomed into either the home or the family. Even if the farmer's wife calls it his home, it is not his real home. There is a sense of understanding on the part of the children that the home is a construction, that it is not real and so they also refuse to call the farmer's wife 'mother'. Max is only accommodated there and eventually sent off to sleep and eat in the stable.

Max's room is very small; a bed chamber in dark wood that makes a quiet but sinister impression. His own four walls are the most Spartan and impersonal of the three protagonists. The only kind of decoration that we get to see are a couple of photographs that he has brought with him. There is for example a photograph of his mother who stands for a home where he had family. Yet, this is a home that does not exist anymore and to which he cannot return. While Max does enjoy some quiet when he is in his room, such as when he caught a rabbit and takes it in as a pet animal, this changes quickly when Jakob, the family's son, gives the rabbit to the mother to cook for Sunday lunch. Even Max's own room is not a safe place anymore and neither is the rest of the house where he is often confronted with harsh words and blows. The stable becomes a substitutional home even though it is even less home-like with no bed but instead hay to sleep in. In addition, in the stable, Max is at the mercy of the family's father who starts coming over and beating him with a belt without anyone hearing or noticing. Max is not allowed into the house anymore and lives in the stable, where this space is invaded every time he is

beaten. He is exiled from the house but neither the former home in the house nor the exile home in the stable is peaceful. The house embodies the image of a home but it fails to be one and becomes a cold and hostile place instead. It takes some time until Max dares to confide in the teacher. Because the farming family is in a position of authority and Max is dependent on them, he stays loyal despite the house becoming more and more unsafe.

The mountain village and especially the farmhouse give a picture of an idyllic home that would comply with scenery from the *Heimat* tradition but in *Der Verdingbub*, this idyllic image is misleading. The village and the farmhouse look like a home but for Max, they are not. The farm has the name *Dunkelmatte*, which translated means dark alpine grassland. The place is also quite literally dark. By day, there is sunlight coming in from outside but the house has its dark corners as well. By night, they can light lamps but the lightning often comes with a heaviness and shadows. The mood and the atmosphere are dark as well.

5.3.1.2 An empty room

Yoav's first encounter with a living place is the large but empty and cold apartment where he spends the first night. This place does not give him anything but only takes away, since Yoav is robbed of all his possessions. The place he stays at afterwards is a tiny, run-down studio with some essential furniture such as a bed, table, cabinet, a hotplate and the leftovers of an old fireplace. It is a sparse place like Max's room. There are more objects than in the empty apartment Yoav stayed in the first night but because there was an interlude at Émile and Caroline's neat and sophisticated apartment, this studio looks even poorer and shabbier. The yellow-beige wallpaper is partly torn and there is a hole in the ceiling, which Yoav stuffs with Émile's shirts. There is not much space to walk around but the tall windows at least let in plenty of daylight, which marks a contrast to Max's living place. Besides some (stolen) postcards of Napoleon Bonaparte, Kurt Cobain and Vincent van Gogh, which Yoav pins on the walls, the studio stays the same. Yoav no longer has any possessions from his old home which he could put into this new living place. There is no attempt of recreating the past home, adorning the new living space with objects from the homeland. Since there is neither a nostalgia towards the old home, it is not surprising that Yoav does not show such a behaviour as it can occur in a diasporic or exilic situation. Yet, because there are no personal belongings or objects, the place remains impersonal and does not reflect Yoav, what he likes or what is important to him. He might have put on a new identity by changing language and wearing Émile's clothes but this identity is still impersonal. It is rather a pretend-identity. Despite the fact that Yoav spends time in the studio, studies French, writes a job application and eats, the place neither appears homely nor cosy. It

continues to look empty. Furthermore, Yoav is restless, dances around, paces back and forth or works out; he cannot calm down but is often in movement, even at home. A home should offer the possibility to rest but this studio appears more like a transit place. It is not capable of becoming a steady home. Yoav also cooks the same meal every day and explains in detail how he cooks it and how much it costs him per meal. Just as his cooking routine does not change, neither does the home space. The inalterability is also a reflection of the city's impossibility of opening up for Yoav and becoming a real home.

Image 6: Yoav in his studio (©*Synonymes*, 2019*)*

5.3.1.3 A blue room

Undine's apartment is the one living place of the three that looks the most liveable. It is furnished, has books and art on the walls, which gives it a livelier character than is the case with the other two living places. However, as I have mentioned previously, Undine's bedroom (which is the room that is mainly shown) looks also somewhat temporary. Looking closer, one can see a pile of books on the floor, individual objects spread on the shelves that look a bit lost and the room does not give a personal impression. Even though Undine has a room which looks more like a home than Max or Yoav's, the homely character to this room is lacking nevertheless. In addition, much of Undine's room comes in blue tones which creates a cold atmosphere.

Sometimes, Undine appears to be somewhere else such as when she looks out of the window over the rooftops of Berlin. She is outside of this world just like when she talks about the development of Berlin at her work and walks past the different city models. There, she looks down on the models which are constructed versions of Berlin and at home she likewise looks down on the different houses or into the distance; this shows her detachment from the world around her. When Undine is at home, she is usually occupied with work or together with Christoph but we do not really see her actually living there. Just like Yoav's studio, the apartment appears like a transit place as well. It is not a safe harbour. Interestingly, Undine's apartment and the things in it remain there even after she has left. When Christoph bursts into the apartment looking for Undine, a couple is living there but the place looks the same. Even the wine stain is still there, a reminder of Christoph and Undine together. This home and living place are not her real home; it is only temporary and not as personal as it may appear at a first glance. All the blue in the room reminds of the water, Undine's old home, and in contrast to Yoav who does not have anything with him from the old home, Undine's room suggests at least a reference. However, because this bedroom expresses something impersonal, it is more like a space in between; no belongings from the old home, no personal ones from the new one but more of a transition between the two.

Image 7: Undine at home in her bedroom (©*Undine*, 2020*)*

All three living places are somehow anonymous. The protagonists did not bring any objects or furniture with them from the old home (Max's family photographs are the only ones) that they could put into the new home. The three home places have a provisory character which impedes the feeling of really arriving and being at home. The living space, which is the physical home, is empty but it needs to be filled and one has to settle in order to be able to really arrive at their home.

5.3.2 Colour scheme of the home

All three places have one prevalent colour tone. In Undine's apartment, there is blue everywhere, which reminds us of water. Did she paint and furnish the apartment like this on purpose or did it just happen to be like this? Was it even she herself who did it? The walls are blue-green; there are blue curtains, shelves, a blue table and blue bed sheets. The painting hanging on the wall is blue just like the rest. The kitchen seems to be kept in the same colour tone but we only ever see it in the background as Undine is either in her bedroom or on the balcony. The kitchen gives the shots depth but its status is more that of an empty room. The blue theme reminds us of Undine's old home and might hint at where she will ultimately have to go. The staircase in the house, on the other hand, is yellow; yellow with blue stripes. One colour in her apartment that sticks out is the red wine stain on the wall that Christoph accidentally causes. It marks a contrast to the blue room, but the wine splash was like an imitation of water splashing.[131] Even if the colour stands out, it also connects to water. Yoav's studio is in light tones of yellow, beige and white. The walls have not at all the vibrant yellow of his coat but they look pale and reserved instead. They also mark a contrast to Yoav's usual energy and quick pace. The colour tones of his living space form a kind of brakes. Max's room in dark brown is of course due to the wood of which the entire house is built but it makes a sombre, confining atmosphere that allows in neither much joy nor light. As time goes by, the room only becomes gloomier and more hostile but the colour has been warning from the very beginning.

The three home places have their own different colour schemes that do not give a warm or welcoming impression in their individual ways. The colours express coldness, emptiness or darkness, which does not correlate with a safe home.

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[131] There are further instances with the colour red that will be talked about in later sections. It is not clear what this means but it appears like the red colour is chosen carefully and usually marks this contrast between water and land.

5.3.3 The home surroundings

While the colour scheme creates distance, so also does the juxtaposition of the home with its surroundings. In the shots where we can see out of Undine's apartment, it is sometimes during daytime, when one can see the distance to the other buildings, the roofs of Berlin and the yellow underground going past. During nighttime, they show the lights of other houses but also the darkness. Through these shots, we realise that Undine lives on a floor somewhere high up, but this height also makes her detached from the world outside. In *Synonymes*, we cannot clearly see outside of the windows but only perceive the vague contours of roofs. Yoav is in this bubble of his tiny studio like it was a world of its own, but it is also a world separating him from the one outside. Around the farmhouse in *Der Verdingbub*, there is grass, forest and a mountainous landscape. It is an idyllic view at first but it also shows the house standing by itself in the midst of nature and the remoteness gives it a captivated character.

What the protagonists do at home stands in reference to what they are occupied with otherwise. Yet, their situation is alike in that when they are at home, they are mostly alone. Yoav is visited by Caroline, Undine is sometimes with Christoph and the teacher stops by when Max is playing the accordion and wants to get to know the farming family. Max lives with the farming family in the house but he remains an outsider. We can see the protagonists in the living place and the relation to the surroundings but it separates them from the world outside and from possibilities to build up a deeper connection to the home in its entirety. They are a foreigner in other people's homes.

5.3.4 Possessions and the importance of one essential object

The possessions that someone has in their living place enable the place to become more personal and contribute to their identification with this place as home. Such a personal space with one's own objects is important and the lack of them might make it harder for a place to feel homely. These personal items can be clothes or objects. Furthermore, there is also one particular object that has a special meaning for the protagonist and is a hint to where they really feel at home. Only that this home is not a physical place.

5.3.4.1 Personal belongings

Both when the characters arrive at their new home and when they leave, they do not have many possessions with them. Yoav arrives with a backpack which, with all his possessions in it, is stolen the same day. When Yoav is about to leave, he has a different backpack and wears different clothes, which he obtained in Paris. In the opening of *Undine*, she does not have much

with her and loses Johannes in addition. When she returns to the water, it does not seem like she would take something with her. However, when she and Christoph meet again underwater more than two years later, she gives him the industrial diver figure, which she thus must have taken with her. Max's belongings with which he travels are only his clothes and the accordion, at first his own and when he leaves with the new one that his teacher gave to him. Max too travels with a humble number of possessions. The fact that the protagonists do not have so many personal belongings and that they disappear (in Yoav's case) or are burned up (Max's accordion) already creates a starting position of a less personal home. They cannot fill the living place with their own possessions and with whatever would give them a feeling of familiarity and being at ease. Instead, they are surrounded by unfamiliar or new objects.

The three protagonists often wear the same clothes and while this is not a negative point, it also connects to the fact that their living place does not change and develop into a real home. Undine and Yoav change to different clothing at work but besides that, Undine is dressed in black and blue, Yoav wears the yellow coat. He wears the coat throughout his time in Paris and also on the day he leaves. It not only stands for his otherness but literally separates him from all the others. In bird's-eye shots showing the streets of Paris, we can instantly localize Yoav because of the coat's obtrusive yellow. He does not blend into the masses of black and grey. Just as he never can while wearing such a vibrant colour, neither is he able to blend in as a person into this new home. Max's clothes are in brown and grey tones, a blue-checked shirt, a jumper with holes in it. The way in which this attracts attention is that he might look poorer than the other children in his school class.

Clothing can point towards a person's otherness, to the fact that they are foreign. Yoav is the only one of the three characters who is noticeable in this way. However, the clothes he wore on the day that he arrived in Paris actually attracted much less attention than Émile's yellow coat. Clothing can also tell about someone's identity but this is likewise distorted in that Yoav wears clothes which initially were not his own and Max is dressed in old clothes. Their clothing does not narrate something personal about them but instead, it marks them as an Other.

5.3.4.2 The essential object - a different kind of home

Amidst this emptiness, the three protagonists all have one object that is most important and dear to them. This object suggests where they really are at home but it is not a physical home or tangible place. The industrial diver figure that fell out of the aquarium is Christoph's present to Undine and connects the two. Christoph is an industrial diver himself and Undine is from the water world so through the industrial diver figure there is always this link between the two of

them. The figure is important for Undine because she received it from Christoph. She does not let go of the figure, glues it together after it had broken and takes it with her when she returns to the water. It seems like the figure keeps their relation alive and when the two meet one last time, Undine hands the figure over to Christoph like a goodbye. Undine's element is the water, to which she will always be connected and the industrial diver is something of a bridge in the middle between the underwater world and the one on land. Just as the narrative ends with Christoph walking over a bridge with the industrial diver figure.

The most valuable object for Max is his accordion. It is not only a gift from his mother but also what makes him happiest. When he can play music, he lightens up and often the world around him does too. Sound and music are his element but like water, this is an abstract home that is not tied to a place but can be found everywhere and nowhere. Max still has to live in a physical place and so music becomes more like an escape from where he is.

Yoav's essential object is the French dictionary which he buys early on and carries with him wherever he goes, a *Larousse* as his daily companion and the words with which he builds himself a world where he seeks to become the essence of Frenchness. The language is his element and sphere where he feels at home even though French is not his mother tongue. One could say that it is rather an ideal and an imagination of feeling at home. Yoav is eager to read Émile's manuscript and almost absorbs all the words when scrolling through the text. He also repeatedly tells stories of his military time and of Hector, the great warrior in the Trojan War, who eventually died. As I noted in chapter 2.5.5 on the home as an emotional place, one has to be able to communicate and make oneself understood in order to be allowed into a home. Language is an essential part of this process but even though Yoav is an avid learner, the French he speaks is old-fashioned. His French is artificial and stands out because it lacks the naturalness of a mother tongue speaker. Yoav's element and home is language but when he speaks French, it only becomes a make-believe home because it is constructed language. In addition, by refusing to speak Hebrew his mother tongue, Yoav banishes a part of his origin, his identity and thereby a part of his inner home, because his body and mind would be most at home in his mother tongue where there are no linguistic hindrances. Speaking one's own language is a part of one's *Heimat* (even if Yoav's *Heimat* is otherwise unclear) and it is something that a person is usually able to take with them. However, Yoav exiles himself by trying to erase his own language and he tries to construct a new home with a new identity but they do not have the same strong foundation. He merely adopts someone else's linguistic home but it remains foreign for him because he cannot just turn French into his mother tongue.

5.3.5 The counter home

In addition to their room or home place, Undine, Yoav and Max also find themselves in counter homes. I call these places counter homes because for one thing, the characters feel comfortable at these places and in two cases, they also look like homely and welcoming homes. For the other, the counter home is not the protagonist's home and nor will it ever be. The protagonist is allowed to be there but will remain a spectator from the outside.

For Max, the counter home is the teacher's apartment where she lets him rest and they listen to music on the radio. In *Synonymes*, it is Émile and Caroline's apartment, which Yoav frequently visits and which always gives a glimpse of those people's lives who really are at home in Paris. The scenes in their apartment often entail shots where the image composition shows several layers at once. There are further rooms or the hallway visible in the background and reflections in the mirrors expand the space. The camera certainly can create some layers in Yoav's studio too, as when he writes his job advertisement and behind him are the hotplate, the windows and then the world outside. Yet, these layers do not accomplish the same depth, they are flatter and closer to one another while in Émile and Caroline's apartment, the space is stretched and feels generous. Even though Yoav is taken care of by Émile and Caroline, and once we can see him just walking right into the apartment where he opens the refrigerator and helps himself to a yoghurt without asking them, he still does not fit in. He is just a guest and his status as a guest is by definition only temporary, because eventually, even this counter home has no open doors for him anymore. Undine's counter home is somewhat more unclear because while she stays at a hotel with Christoph, the hotel room is even less personal than her living place. The curtains are drawn and the yellow walls make for a plain atmosphere. Maybe the security lies in the fact that in this room, she is away from all the oppositions that she faces outside. In the hotel room, Undine is with Christoph who gives her stability and safety even if it is not for always. Concerning for example the furnishing, Undine's counter home is an opposing example because it has a less homely character than her own home place as well as Max and Yoav's counter homes.

In a diaspora or in exile, it is not only important to create a home for oneself but also find other friendly and welcoming places such as the homes of friends. These places should contribute to the feeling of home and give some stability outside of one's own four walls. The difficulty in the foreign home narrative is that these counter homes which can be real homes only open their doors to the protagonist temporarily. The counter home is welcoming but limited as well.

5.4 Section 3: Modes of displacement

The third section of the analysis of the foreign home in the films *Der Verdingbub*, *Undine* and *Synonymes* is about the protagonist's different ways of moving within their home environment; that is, not the movement at their living place but the modes of displacement between different locations such as apartment, work, school, café, train stations and more. This aspect is important because for one thing, the movements tell us about how much the protagonist engages with the home environment and what they experience when out and about. For the other, the protagonist of the foreign home narrative is in a nomadic state which does not stop even if they try to settle in a home environment. This nomadic characteristic continues to be visible in their frequent movements in and around the new home environment. The protagonist of the foreign home narrative wants to strike root but continues to travel all the same. The longer they move around, back and forth, the less likely it is that they will eventually arrive.

5.4.1 The nomadic movement

Taking oneself from one place to another can have different causes or aims. In the structure of the foreign home, the movement in the home environment becomes an allegory for the nomadic movement in which the three protagonists find themselves. While in the film plot, the protagonists mostly know to which place they are heading and eventually get there, they never really arrive at their true home. Like nomads, they move from one home to another but in addition, they show the same pattern within the new home environment. The protagonists are in one place but are just staying for a while before they walk or drive to the next one. This back and forth movement of the protagonists is a constant behaviour which on the one hand is due to the routine of everyday life where they go to work or school, while on the other hand, it also expresses a restlessness of continuously having to move on. A similar pattern of restlessness can be observed in all of the three films. The movement can be a form of exploring their new home environment. Yet, the characters do not always seem to pay much attention to their surroundings and the focus lies more on the places from which they come and to which they go. The focus is on the home as a place and not the journey, which pertains more to a diasporan than to a nomad. And yet, the protagonists' nomadic state is a constant in their life, which they cannot shake off.

5.4.2 Routine movements

Some of the routes we see Undine, Yoav and Max taking recur throughout the narrative. They are a part of a routine where they go to work (Undine, Yoav) or to school (Max) and give them

a reason to move within their home environment. This would correspond to a process of integration as their routines entail occupations and the possibility to become more familiar with the home environment. Yet, their movements act more as a buffer between the different places and what awaits them there. Other journeys and movements are due to visits such as when Undine takes the train to Christoph's work place or Yoav, who goes to see Émile and Caroline at their place. This means that they move between where they live and where they work, between the living place and the counter home or between other sites. Yoav even appears to just walk around sometimes but likewise as a routine.

All three films have their own aesthetic of narrating the routes which the protagonists take. While the aesthetics remain the same within one film, we get to see both different and the same parts and places on their routes. The fact that these movements are repetitive makes it feel like the protagonists are stuck in the same loop. The new home environment does not open up but remains foreign even if they come by the same streets over and over again.

5.4.3 Forms of displacement

There are different ways as to how the protagonists move in their new home environments. Undine sometimes takes the train, Yoav the underground and once he rides on a motorbike with an acquaintance; Max leaves by bus and ship. However, we see the protagonists mostly walking and their exploring of the new home environment occurs mostly on foot. On their way, they all have a fast pace and make it look as if there was not enough time. This suggests that there is a pressure to arrive.

Yoav's walks through the city of Paris are shown with a hand-held camera. It moves with him and shows both a point of view when pointing down to the pavement, to other pedestrians or up in the sky and the view of the observer when walking beside or behind Yoav. Sometimes the camera shows Yoav from up-close and only so fleetingly that we cannot really see his face. Characteristic for Yoav's walks is the fact that he uses them for learning French by repeating French words and often synonyms. It is a stream of synonyms, adjectives, nouns and more, continually strung together in his mind while he walks fast through the streets. The way Yoav reels off all kinds of words in his head appears compulsory. He constructs this linguistic world through which he wants to incorporate the targeted Frenchness; the identity of this new home. Yet, the haste and the reciting of the dictionary do not leave room for pause or for consideration. There are several such scenes throughout the film constituting a consistent motif through the narrative. Yoav also takes the underground, another implication of the travel aspect and the distances one thereby can cover.

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When Yoav is outside, he also wears his yellow coat. In these outdoor scenes, where the weather is often gloomy, stone and concrete in grey shades and other people wearing dark clothes, Yoav is instantly identifiable. When the camera shows a bird's-eye shot of Yoav crossing a street or when it follows him from the other side of the street, he is always visible. He does not only attract the viewer's attention but also contrasts himself with everything else in the film's mise-en-scène. Yoav does not blend into this Parisian life; he is like a foreign body making its way through the coherent mass of all the Others.

In relation to the aspect of water that I have discussed in the earlier chapter on the old and the future home, this also makes an appearance on Yoav's walks and moments when he is in the city. There are several scenes where he stands on a bridge, once with Émile, twice with an Israeli colleague and eventually also when Émile tells him and Caroline that they should get married. The bridges under which the river Seine flows suggest the transitional state in which Yoav finds himself. He is not in Israel anymore but not quite in Paris either. He is still on the move and continues moving just as the water does.

Undine's journeys taken by foot are often in relation to work and when she takes the train, they are related to Christoph. She moves between her home and work place, by train outside of town and back and the short distance between the house *am Köllnischen Park* and the café on the other side of the street on foot. She walks this way between her work place and the café several times, looks focused and while she is walking hastily, the camera glides with her. Undine walks these different ways by herself just as she does when she takes the train. However, there, she is welcomed or said goodbye to by Christoph. The same goes for when he takes the train; they often meet and part at a train station. These train stations are another place of transit and suggest travelling. Sitting on the train, Undine is calmer in her movements than when walking and instead, the train takes over the pace. The camera focused on Undine in movement is now showing the landscape outside the train windows that passes by in blurry shapes. Another aspect of these train rides is that Christoph runs with the train on which Undine is sitting, either when she arrives or when she leaves. He tries to catch up and stay near her but he only manages to do so when she is coming to him and not when Undine is leaving.

The trains are often red and stand out like the red wine stain on Undine's bedroom wall. The trains' noticeable colour might be a reference to the journey Undine is on and which she will have to continue. One time when Undine takes the train back to the city, Christoph gives her a little package in which there is the industrial diver figure. Undine has it with her as she leaves Christoph this time and also when she leaves him to return to the water.

On a different journey, Undine walks with Christoph, their arms around each other and in a less hurried tempo than when she walks by herself. Because we see parts of this scene in slow motion, it feels almost like they are floating over the pavement. Despite the fact that they are together, this movement too is a hint of Undine's nomadic journey. When Johannes walks past them and her heart stops beating for a short moment, it functions like a reminder for Undine of her direction, which is not the same as that of Christoph. She has to follow the rules that her old home has given her. Besides the trains, we repeatedly see the yellow underground passing by. All these trains express travelling and moving. They are the opposite of standing still and reflect Undine's nomadic nature.

Max's movements are from the house to the school and back again. One time, they attend the Sunday service and make their way home from the church but it is likewise the distance between the remote farmhouse and the village. When Max walks or even runs on his way to school, we see mostly the shots where he is leaving or arriving at either place instead of him on his way. The camera is steady or moving slowly when he leaves and arrives. Only on his and Berteli's first mutual way to school, do we see some more of the surroundings on this journey. They have to walk up a steep slope and as Max stands on the top, there is the mountain panorama behind him, an idyllic view and also a glimpse of the world outside because otherwise, the camera does not have very wide shots but stays closer to the characters and the sites. Yet, it is only the view that is idyllic because while the way to school and back should be a pause from both work and studying, it becomes often a stressful walk instead. Max needs to hurry home in order to start working and often does not really get some rest in between. On their way back from church, both Max and Berteli have to walk barefoot so that their shoes would not outwear too fast. Max's days are divided in constant displacements between the farm and school; he walks back and forth which only emphasises his nomadic character.

Usually, the protagonists are alone on their ways from one place to another. There are exceptions such as Yoav walking with Émile, Undine with Christoph and Max with Berteli or both her and the farmer's wife. However, most of the time they are by themselves, which also mirrors the fact that they are on their own on the journey of finding a home.

5.4.4 Sound and movement

The protagonists' movements all have their own tapestry of sound. In *Synonymes*, it is a cacophony of traffic noise, people walking by, muffled voices and within this Yoav's voice reciting the dictionary. The sound level on his trajectories in the home environment is often high and a mixture of different parts. When he arrives at a place, there is always an initial

quietness that sets in. In *Undine,* movement is often accompanied by Bach's concerto that is the tonal motif in the film. In addition, there are often underwater tones accompanying the journeys. Another sound that we can hear repeatedly in *Undine* is the one of the underground, which occurs not only when there are Berlin underground waggons visible but also in other shots and scenes. As this sound is of a moving underground train, it suggests an aspect of travelling and the nomadic state in which Undine is. This same sound can actually also be heard in *Synonymes* when Yoav himself is on the Parisian underground. Other than that, we can hear sound of the environment but it is not as obtrusive as in *Synonymes*. Rather, it makes for a calm but also melancholic mood. Undine's movements in the home environment do without talking which stands in stark contrast to Yoav's where there is constant talking (even if only in his head). The reoccurring sounds of underwater, underground and the concerto in *Undine* function as a reminder of the travelling aspect and Undine's direction on this journey. On Max's ways, it is rather quiet but since we do not see him actually moving between locations, they cannot be linked to a particular type of sound. Instead, it depends on which destination he arrives at, the school or the farm.

5.4.5 Pause entails consequences

In contrast to their recurring movements, there are also instances of rest and sleep. However, these all entail consequences as if to signalise that they must not stop moving. While Yoav falls asleep in the bathtub and becomes chilled, Undine nods off in the staff room at work and as she awakes with a start when her colleague calls her name, the industry diver figure falls off the table and breaks. Max falls asleep at his teacher's place when told to rest but when he realises how much time has gone by, he has to hurry back home. As a consequence of him coming late, he has to go to work immediately without having any lunch. We usually see the protagonist at the end of the sleep phase and the moment they awake and become startled. We see them more in movement than in the moments where they rest.

It is like a reminder to Yoav, Undine and Max that they always need to be on the move. Because they are nomads, they have to move on and staying in one place for too long will not be beneficial. This nomadic journey is a solitary one and even though they move repeatedly in the home environment, they do not arrive anywhere, as if being told that this is the wrong environment and they should look somewhere else.

5.5 Section 4: Adjustment to the new home

The process of adjustment to a new home environment and culture is an essential part of integration. The people living in diaspora and exile (abroad from the homeland) are confronted with this early on when arriving in a new home environment. I want to discuss the different ways in which the protagonists try to integrate and adjust to the new home. The positive aspects are often contrasted with negative responses or happenings, which leaves the protagonist left alienated and on the outside nonetheless. Despite their efforts, the adjustment process does not work, is not accepted or not even cared about. Some causes of the adjustment process not working are partly the hostilities and obstacles which the protagonists have to face. This means that this chapter on adjustment will contain some overlapping with the final section of the analysis, which will be about said hostilities and oppositions.

5.5.1 Occupation

One part of the process of adjustment is finding an occupation such as work or education. Yoav in *Synonymes* is looking for several types of employment in order to be able to earn a living. Undine already has her work as a historian and Max in *Der Verdingbub* goes to school but also has to work for the farming family without receiving any compensation for this.

5.5.1.1 Yoav: working among diasporans

Yoav quickly finds work in the security service of the Israeli embassy in Paris. Like his working colleagues, he wears suit and tie at work, which makes him blend in visually for once. However, while the others talk Hebrew with each other, Yoav refuses to do the same. He certainly answers when they address him in Hebrew but then always in French. Puzzled, they ask him why he would not speak Hebrew, to which he does not reply at all and leaves his colleagues even more uncomprehending. They cannot understand his refusal of his mother tongue but neither do they try very hard to find out the reason. Already on his first day of work, Yoav distances himself from the others by which he finds himself outside of the group. The Israeli embassy is the link to the Jewish diaspora in Paris of which Yoav is a part, whether he likes it or not. It might have been an opportunity for him to strike roots in Paris through the Jewish diaspora, at least at first. However, by positioning himself apart from the Jewish diaspora, Yoav misses the chance of support and solidarity from others diasporans. This sense of community is usually a characteristic of a diaspora but the fact that Yoav refuses the companionship stands in coherence to the foreign home narrative where the protagonist is on their own. In a way, Yoav exiles himself from the diasporic home in the host country, which leaves him on his own twice. One

incident at work that mirrors Yoav's endeavours to find his way into the French people is when he opens the gate at the Israeli embassy and lets all the people waiting in line gain access to the premises. When he invites them in and they flock past him into the inner courtyard, it has an almost euphoric touch to it. However, just as quickly as Yoav opens the gate, security officials push the people back again, grab Yoav and carry him outside of the premises. They stop Yoav and this is perhaps an allegory, meaning that, as he cannot effect entry to the embassy for all the waiting people, neither will he himself find his way in. In addition, he stands out even in this group of people when waving them to come inside; he is alone and they are the masses as well as when he is the only one that is carried away. Yoav's other job is as a model for a photographer who turns out to be a porn director. I will discuss this part in more detail in the chapter 5.6.2 'Hostility' because this angle will be more fitting.

5.5.1.2 Undine: a historian in her own history

When the narrative of *Undine* starts, we see Undine at her work place where she works as a historian and gives guided tours in the exhibition of the *Haus am Köllnischen Park*. She talks about the construction and development of Berlin and how the present centre of the city came about, while walking through a room with several models of Berlin. Undine talks about her new home but all that she says is learned and memorised. Furthermore, she might be explaining the history of Berlin to people who know less about it despite coming from Berlin and calling it their home. This only shows that an accumulation of knowledge about a place does not automatically give you access to this place in terms of a real home. As Yoav has learned and memorised French, Undine displays such constructed knowledge too. It is artificial and not natural free speech. She has incorporated the association of Berlin with home but it is a construction. In another scene, we can see Undine practicing a presentation where she repeats the sentences several times in order to be able to remember all these specific facts about Berlin.

The city models represent something constructed as well, they are Berlin in a miniature format on which Undine looks down. She is not part of the model but outside of it and observes instead. Like she is outside of these Berlin models, she finds herself also outside of the real Berlin and does not find a way in. She has a bird's-eye view of Berlin when she is on land and when she was in the water, it was more a worm's-eye perspective. Wherever Undine is, it is outside and not inside. This is also the case when she is in her apartment as I have mentioned earlier. In her presentation that takes place at the beginning of the film, Undine talks about the origin of the name Berlin, which is an old term for bog but also a dry spot in the bog. The place which she wants to be her home poses a direct opposite to her old home; the element water. If

we consider that she is a water spirit and water is her natural habitat, then she should not be able to exist on land for very long. What draws the eye in the scenes in the model room is the blue colour that marks all waters in Berlin. The vibrant blue attracts attention as if pointing to Undine's actual home. Her remark on Berlin's terminology is another reminder, maybe to herself even. This refers to the status that also a diasporan can have. They are inside a country but still outside of society and it can be difficult to find a way into it. While Undine is not a member of a diasporic group, she is an Other like diasporan are and not really part of Berlin.

A third aspect of this outside perspective at Undine's work is when she stops on the stairs and looks over to the café. She sees Johannes on the phone, sitting and waiting for her or the empty table once he is gone. She is inside the building where she works and looks out of the window but she observes still from the outside as if she cannot find her way in. This observational perspective excludes her once again. Even though she tries to integrate through her work, she keeps the role of the observer.

5.5.1.3 Max: a child worker

In *Der Verdingbub*, Max has both work and school as a part of his everyday life. However, he did not choose to work and he does not receive anything positive in exchange (leaving aside the food and a roof over his head) but instead criticism, insults and beating. One day, they are outside on the field sowing potatoes. The green grass and the mountains in the background give an idyllic picture but this is soon broken when we see Jakob's grudge against Max. It marks the beginning of a work life that is located in beautiful nature but does not correspond to this idyll. Like I have established before, the traditional *Heimat* narrative is not present in the three films. In *Der Verdingbub*, the idyllic looking nature contradicts this and unlike in a *Heimatfilm* where the 'bad' is the protagonist's estrangement from nature, here we can clearly see that the opposition comes from particular individuals (more on that in chapter 5.6 'Hostility and opposition'). Another time when Max comes home late from school, he has to go to work, skipping lunch, and as they face crop failure, it also means less food in general. The work as part of Max's adjustment to the new home has a direct impact on his quality of living, which puts him in a vulnerable living situation. Undine and Yoav are not quite in the same situation even though Yoav needs to earn money in order to support himself; he has for a while support from Émile and Caroline. Max's other occupation is school but the longer he has to balance work and school, the more difficult it becomes. Max comes late to school and sleeps during the lessons because he does not get enough rest. This marks him out as different from the other children once more. While school is like a break from the work that awaits him at home, it

mostly complicates his adjustment in the home place, not least because the family does not consider school as very important. The lack of sleep and rest, the stress induced by the family's expectations of his work and to a certain degree also his achievement in school threaten the emotional and physical home of Max where both body and mind do not experience a safe and tolerating environment.

5.5.2 Relations

Finding other people with whom one can bond and have warm and positive relationships is crucial for the home development. In all three films, the protagonist finds a friend, a partner or benevolent people. Despite this positive development, these bonds of friendships are at risk for different reasons. They can be threatened (Berteli in *Der Verdingbub*), torn apart (Christoph in *Undine*, the teacher in *Der Verdingbub*) or be too unsteady (Émile and Caroline in *Synonymes*). The people whom the protagonist meets aim to help them but cannot or do not want to follow through.

5.5.2.1 Yoav: Émile and Caroline

The first two people Yoav meets in Paris are Émile and Caroline. Émile is instantly intrigued with Yoav, seeks his company and wants to hear about his life. Caroline is more reserved in the beginning and rather observing of Yoav. In the scenes with this trio or Yoav alone with either of them, the camera often works as a parameter that creates distance. For example, in Émile and Caroline's apartment where the rooms are so big that the characters stand further apart from each than for example in Yoav's studio, the camera also keeps the characters apart such as when cutting them off in a shot. When Yoav and Émile go on a first walk in the city, the camera often focuses on only one of them. It ignores for example the one speaking by having him out of focus or half cut off. Instead, the camera is directed to the other character who is listening. However, this opposition of in-focus and out of-focus gives the impression that they are not in the same place or not equal.

Yoav tells Émile and Caroline many stories from the military in Israel. These stories seem to pour out of him and stand in discrepancy with the fact that he actually wants to make a cut with Israel, which he repeatedly emphasises. Yet, telling stories also gives Yoav the possibility to speak French and thereby try to adapt. He is eager to see what Émile is writing for his book, a document full of words in French. In return for his help, Yoav gives Émile his life story as a present. Like a snake, he wants to cast his skin and thinks he can break off his ties to Israel by this. Instead, he rather ends up hanging in between because if his stories now

belong to Émile, then Yoav has given away a part of his identity, even if that identity is abstract. While Yoav wants to get rid of all of it, this would leave him without any identity and an identity is always also a piece of home one bears with them despite everything else. Giving up his Israeli identity makes Yoav only more homeless.

Not only is giving Émile all of his stories problematic for Yoav's own identity keeping, but also there is always the fact of a certain distance between the two. It is depicted through the camera language, their individual energies (Émile is very calm, Yoav a ball of energy) and the necessity of their contact. Even though Émile is fascinated by Yoav in the beginning of the film narrative and eventually even wants him to marry Caroline so that Yoav can stay in Paris, he suddenly loses interest. The distance becomes even more visible in the scene where Yoav asks Émile to give him back his stories. Émile gets into the car and the two talk but we can only see Yoav, alone outside of the car and Émile inside. When they kiss goodbye, Émile is leaning out of the car window but the door remains closed and then the car drives away. It seems as if Yoav is only a project and when it is over, he is not needed anymore.

Caroline is the other helping person during Yoav's time in the new home. Even though she seems sceptical at first and doubts Yoav's stories, she is also hesitatingly helpful. After some time, she even starts an affair with Yoav. While she is taking away some distance, she actually puts him into a more vulnerable position as this goes behind Émile's back. Eventually, Caroline starts to reject Yoav as well and even stops speaking to him when he visits her at the concert. They are in the backstage area and Yoav starts to become loud. Again, he stands out from a group of people, he has taken off his coat and is dressed in a tank top among the musicians who are all dressed up for their concert. Caroline presents him as the 'Israeli rooster' who has been amusing her and Émile for the past months. Ironically, in one of the French classes, Yoav's teacher called the rooster typically French due to its braveness for instance. Yoav replies to what Caroline said about him by starting to ask questions like his French teacher used to; they always end with '*vrai ou faux?*' But the musicians remain silent and neither does Caroline say anything. Yoav walks around in the room with its red walls, starts shouting and trying to get a response from the people around him. Instead of talking, they start playing their instruments and walk towards the stage. Caroline calls Yoav mad and walks away from him. Even though he continues shouting, none of the musicians shows any reaction; they just ignore him. He is not granted a place in their community. The way Yoav continues shouting suggests an expression of his frustration and understanding that this home in Paris has not been a real home to him and neither will become one. He faces the fact that he will have to leave this

foreign home. Caroline only comes backstage again for a short moment, near to tears but leaves again without having said anything to Yoav.

In Yoav's relation to Émile and Caroline, there is often this element of distance, either spatial or effected through the camera and in many scenes, it is two versus one. This can be Émile and Caroline on the one side of the room and Yoav on the other, but also Yoav together with Émile and Caroline is on the opposite side. This mise-en-scène creates a tension and instead of being a group, it often looks like they are against each other. Even though it changes throughout the narrative, at the end, it is Émile and Caroline on one side and Yoav on the other. Émile and Caroline are not visible at the very end but the film communicates the opposition of them and Yoav, where the door is in the middle and keeps them apart.

5.5.2.2 Undine: Christoph

In *Undine*, the person who poses a link to Berlin as a home and who could help Undine in her process of adjustment is Christoph. It is also he who seeks her after the presentation about Berlin and all parts come together: the water, Johannes and Christoph. Undine is looking for Johannes and hears calls from the aquarium but is drawn back into the Berlin home through Christoph addressing her. As the aquarium bursts and the force of the water throws Undine and Christoph to the floor, they are 'baptised' as I have noted earlier. With Christoph, Undine is given a second chance for her life above-water but at the same time, the contact with the water seems like a reminder for her to return to the water. Christoph is an industrial diver and gives her the diver figure from the aquarium. Water is always resonating in some way when the two are together, as if there is no escape from the water. One way of showing this is the underwater sound that starts to accompany scenes that are not set in or around water. It is like an echo of the aquarium's calls for Undine and a reminder that she has to cut ties with Johannes.

When Christoph and Undine go diving, she needs oxygen from a scuba despite being in her actually natural habitat. This refers back to her transition when she left the old home in the water and took on a different identity on land. Like a diasporan constructs a diasporic identity that is not the same as the one they had in the homeland. Christoph has to perform rescue breathing during which he has the song *Staying alive* in his mind. It becomes an entangled situation in that he saves Undine from the water to which she will go back to anyhow. The song *Staying alive* is the second musical piece in the film next to the concerto and is present in only those moments where a life is at risk, first Undine's, then Christoph's due to his accident while doing repair work under water. The song might also suggest a theme for their relationship, their wish that this relationship can survive and can stay alive together despite the water.

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Their relationship is accompanied by these contrasts of water and land, of moving alone and waiting for each other, of being together and apart. While Undine's bedroom is in many blue shades, the staircase outside, where Christoph shows up, has a yellow, brown tone. The hotel room is kept in yellow colours as well, which makes for a different atmosphere, a more tranquil one. The different aspects of a home such as the home place, the objects of the home or the movement in the home environment are often present in the relationship between Undine and Christoph. They join the two like magnets but at the same time separate them. While we do not see Undine being social with other people, she is adjusting through finding a partner. First, it is Johannes and when he threatens her life above-water, Christoph becomes the saving anchor, for a while a least because he is also partly the reason why Undine leaves nonetheless. Without Christoph, who is declared brain-dead, she does not have anyone left in the home. She is all by herself and still a foreigner. This favourable relation between Undine and Christoph cannot stand up against the fact that the new home becomes foreign and pushes Undine to leave.

5.5.2.3 Max: Berteli and the teacher

In *Der Verdingbub*, Max's positive relationships are with Berteli, the other *Verdingkind*, his teacher, the village butcher who helps him get away and the rabbit he keeps as a pet and friend for a short time. In contrast to Undine and Yoav, Max is hesitant at first and dismissive of these people who mean well and want to be a friend. Max dislikes Berteli because the farmer's wife favours her and only over time during which Berteli continues to be kind and tries to be his friend, does he begin to relent. Berteli enjoys hearing Max play the accordion or steals some chocolate for him to cheer him up. Eventually, Berteli and Max become each other's safe place at home because they can trust each other. Max even wants to look out for Berteli but in the end, he cannot save her because the farming family cares more about their reputation than about her. Neither did the authorities take action in time. It is Max and Berteli against the others but because the home is too hostile and foreign, it is not enough. In the end, Max is by himself again.

The other friendly character is Max and Berteli's teacher, Esther, who rebukes Max when he comes to school late or falls asleep during class but she is also the one who realises that something is not quite right at the farmer's home. The teacher lets Max rest at her place, gives him some syrup and is generally warm and caring. She notices Max's interest in and talent for music, lets him play in class and accompany the class at the *Schwingfest*. While Esther is delighted about Max's musical vein, the farming family feels disturbed by it instead. This turns the school and the teacher into a safer place even if Max is hesitant to allow it. Yet, Max feels

the teacher's benevolence and tries to protect her when Jakob is harassing Esther at the festivities of the *Schwingfest*. The difficulty is that Max always faces consequences or punishment when he takes the side of a friend. In this case, Jakob beats up Max and burns his accordion while the parents, the farming couple, do not care. This is a next step in the home turning more foreign. Previously, Jakob has for no reason already taken Max's rabbit, which has ended up as Sunday lunch. He deliberately took away Max's animal friend. Such hostilities will be discussed more in the final section on the foreign home narrative. The teacher is also the one who speaks with the vicar and the council workers, trying to convince them that something is not quite right on the farm *Dunkelmatte*. She tries to speak with the mother but the result is only that Max and Berteli have to take the blows of the enraged mother. While Esther takes a stand for Max and Berteli, it is the system that reacts too slow and by the time the authorities are on site, Berteli has already died. Esther's efforts were still not for nothing because when she gifts Max her own accordion, she also opens up a way for him to leave.

All the friends that Max makes can only be friends for a certain period of time and while they try to help him or vice versa, it exposes him to the farming family's resentment. The longer this goes on, the more uncomfortable and foreign this new home becomes. Making friends and building up meaningful and welcoming relationships is a part of making a new home such as in a diaspora. The lack of a social network is making it more difficult for the place to really become a home.

5.6 Section 5: Hostility and opposition in the new home

The analysis on hostility in the new home is the final section that discusses the films in relation to the narrative of the foreign home. The obstacles which the protagonist has to face can be various in nature. For one thing, they can be connected to the old home interfering in one way or another. For the other, they occur through direct hostility of other people towards the protagonist, which is expressed in rejection, insults, abuse or violence. The oppositions which the protagonist experiences are often also a threat to their body, physically, psychologically or both. As I have talked about in the theoretical framework, also the body serves as a home and is especially important to be safe and intact. In the following discussion, I will look at where hostility harms this most personal home of the body.

5.6.1 Obstacles

The first part of the hostility in the new home is concerned with obstacles that are already given or emerge and which are difficult or even impossible to overcome. Frequently, it can also be seen as interference of the old home with the new one. The protagonist arrives in the new home but brings with them certain preconditions that are connected to the old home. Even though the protagonist of the foreign home narrative does not intend to return to the old home and shows neither any idealisation of it, they are still influenced by this past home and it prevents them from fitting in.

<u>5.6.1.1 Yoav: a foreign language</u>

Arriving in Paris also means arriving in a different setting than the one Yoav has been in before. He wants to erase his old home but it will continue to be a part of him. On his first walk with Émile, Yoav rattles off a list of all kinds of negative adjectives that describe Israel the way he sees it. Émile tells him that one country cannot be all of these things and that he should pick one instead. As the two of them are walking, Yoav turns around in order to face Émile and tells him that he will not return to Israel. He likewise turns his back on Israel but through this movement of turning around, he also cannot see what is happening behind him. This is a part of what *Synonymes* narrates because while Yoav goes to great lengths in order to not have to look back on Israel and face his old home, he misses seeing how the new home grows more and more foreign. In addition, Yoav repeatedly initiates a contact with his homeland himself by talking about Israel and telling stories of his military experiences. He keeps the memory of his old home alive. Furthermore, he also meets other Israelis and becomes a part of the Israeli diaspora in Paris even if he does not want to be part of it.

Yoav's compulsiveness in learning the French language and wanting to become French sets a contrast to his Israeli origin but because we know that French is not his mother tongue, it constantly puts Yoav in the spotlight as the Other. His French is more revealing of his difference than of his integration and becomes visible in all sections of the foreign home narrative. Yoav arrives in Paris with the intention to become French and to incorporate the Frenchness. He studies French at home and on his walks and drives through the city, always with a dictionary at hand. He practices French with Émile and Caroline but eventually, it is not enough. Yoav is not French and however much he tries, the language remains constructed and sets him apart from all the speakers who really are at home with French.

When Yoav learns French, he lists synonyms or word groups such as adjectives or nouns at a fast pace as if this would speed up the process of integration. It also reminds us of the target

practice in the military from which we see a scene where he shoots to the beat of Édith Piaf's song "Je Ne Veux Pas Travailler". The song title is like an ironic hint at Yoav's destiny as a nomad. All the French words become like a weapon against himself because he constantly exposes himself as non-French. Furthermore, many of Yoav's vocabulary exercises contain a row of words with negative connotations. Yoav speaks an aristocratic and outdated French that attracts Émile and Caroline's attention right away. His French is learned, literary and not natural just as Undine's presentation about Berlin is constructed. Yoav might even speak more correct French than mother-tongue speakers but he cannot disguise the constructed character of his French. Yoav's different French distances himself from all the mother-tongue speakers but also from his working colleagues. Yoav does not want to speak Hebrew but since Hebrew is his mother tongue, it is also the linguistic home in his body. By rejecting this part of him, Yoav only makes himself more vulnerable in his position as the foreigner. He cuts off a part of his identity in exchange for a constructed French identity.

In addition to his own way of studying French, Yoav also attends a French class in which a pedantic teacher teaches the class about correct grammar and cultural behaviour. One time, she fittingly wears a red jumper and asks the students to sing the bloodthirsty *Marseillaise*. Yoav does this and stands just as straight as he had done as a soldier. When Yoav has to sing the Israeli national anthem, he does the same as when learning vocabulary, reciting the text like pistol shots. The film suggests that Yoav is war-traumatised but is not aware of this himself. As he recites the anthems, he only puts himself into a vulnerable place again.

Another situation that points out Yoav's otherness is when he sneaks into a club. While the people there are dancing, he is crawling on the floor over to the buffet. The shot shows him crawling between the moving legs. When he gets hold of a loaf of bread, Yoav starts dancing on the counter with the bread in his hand. Dance is a basic, human language but even here, he speaks it a different way. Yoav moves differently, against the current and exposes himself as the foreigner.

Even though Yoav wants to integrate so badly, there is always a discrepancy. He says that he wants to distance himself from Israel but he keeps pulling it back through talking so much about it, his childhood or the military service. There are unresolved issues we do not learn more about but it could be that they do not allow him to arrive in Paris fully. His past, his old home, is still very much present in his thoughts. Just as it is for someone living in exile or in a diaspora because the homeland is rarely forgotten. A more physical interference is when Yoav skypes with a woman from the old home and she questions him about being in France or when his father travels to Paris and tries to convince Yoav to come back home. In contrast, there is

no one asking Yoav to stay in Paris (especially after Émile and Caroline have started distancing themselves from Yoav). With a war traumatisation, the psychological part of the body is hurt and cannot provide a safe home. The wound might not be visual such as in Max's case but the body is nevertheless not entirely healthy and thus, no safe home environment. Refusing to speak Hebrew means shutting of his mother tongue that stands for of a type of home as well. Yoav's stress on everything French only accentuates his foreign position and makes the home more alienated.

5.6.1.2 Undine: the water

For Undine, the given obstacle to her living in the new home is the water itself. I have mentioned this several times before because this circumstance flows into all of the different parts of the foreign home narrative. The water imposes the condition of her having to love someone who loves her back so that she can stay on land. When this condition becomes unstable, the water starts calling her back. It has a drawing power to which she has to succumb in the end and both kill Johannes and return to the water world. This element of the water, the fact that Undine is a hybrid creature but essentially belongs to the water, and the fact that her body also needs the water, is visible in different stylistic elements. The colour blue is often present, we hear underwater sounds even if there is no water in the scene, Christoph works underwater in a storage reservoir, Undine hears calls from the aquarium and clings to the figure of the industrial diver. Such a drawing power that one is compelled to answer to, as Undine does, is not exactly what someone in a diaspora experiences but it could be compared with a very strong longing to return home. Undine does not want to return but eventually there is not much point in staying with Johannes dead and Christoph declared brain-dead. The fact that Undine is a water spirit prevents her from really finding her way into the home in Berlin. She is outside of it and more of an observer than a participant.

5.6.1.3 Max: One's destiny as a *Verdingkind*

In contrast to Yoav who sets himself apart through his different behaviour and Undine who is something else than a human being, Max's obstacle that differentiates him from the people around him is his role as a *Verdingkind*. He did not have a choice to become one but authorities have decided this for him. He is left alone in this without any chance of freeing himself from this role and status (until he eventually decides to leave). His position as a *Verdingkind* implies a certain treatment and certain expectations of him. The family sees him as a workforce but not as an individual. He is at the bottom of the hierarchic system and however much he tries, he

cannot live up to the expectations and demands. In addition to this, he enters a home that is already shattered by dysfunctional relations, bitterness and desperation. The farming family is not a joyful one. Max as the outsider is put into a home that has an outsider function in itself. Their harvest is not going well; food and money become less and eventually, the father chucks the whole business. When they attend the *Schwingfest* where Max can play the accordion, the family cannot afford an entry ticket and watches from afar. The mother orders no food at the restaurant but instead, she slips Max and Berteli a piece of bread that she has brought with her. Max is a foreigner in a family that is itself foreign. Tied to this role as a *Verdingkind*, he has to take his destiny into his own hands.

5.6.2 Hostility

Besides obstacles, there are also hostile situations where the protagonist becomes actively rejected, maltreated or used. This creates an unsafe and unstable home.

5.6.2.1 Yoav: rejected and abused

The hostile situations Yoav experiences are of different nature. For one thing, there are Émile and Caroline who start distancing themselves from him. It is a slow rejection that becomes much clearer when Yoav has an outburst backstage of Caroline's concert. He yells at the musicians but they, as well as Caroline, mostly ignore him. It is like a silent wall and this wall shows up once again when he stands in front of Émile and Caroline's apartment. Yoav calls for Émile but he does not answer or open the door (we do not know whether he even is at home). He does not let Yoav inside in the way that he let him into his life before. This silent rejection puts Yoav into a vulnerable situation as he was in the beginning when he was lying in the bathtub. Both the opening and ending scene of the film play with the contrast of Yoav's yelling against the silence around him. He is ignored and not part of this place; he was not when he arrived and nor is he when he leaves.

A second significant situation of hostility is when Yoav is in the studio of a porn photographer who responded to Yoav's advertisement. First, Yoav wrote the advertisement text, which was written in a kind of child-like handwriting, attesting to the vulnerability to which a child can be exposed. Second, Yoav probably did not anticipate a naked shooting. The longer the shooting goes on, the more exposed Yoav becomes, an exposure both to the photographer and his tablet that he uses for filming but also to the film's camera. It takes a long while until we see the photographer's face for the first time because before he is always cut off, only visible from behind or just blurred. By this, the hostility is not given a face. While Yoav

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is sitting naked on the floor, the camera is tilted downwards to Yoav just as the photographer's camera is. Yoav is watched by more than one pair of eyes. He looks defenceless like a baby and follows the instructions of the photographer despite feeling uncomfortable. This scene too reminds us of the opening scene when he first lies in the bathtub and is then carried upstairs by Émile and Caroline. During the filming, Yoav eventually even speaks Hebrew which puts him into a situation where he is both vulnerable through this exposed situation but also because he speaks in his own language where all emotions and nuances are much more precise. The photographer pushes Yoav to speak Hebrew and when Yoav asks *pourquoi?* ('why?'), the photographer whispers simply *pour moi* ('for me') and adds with a sharp voice that he wants to have the sound of Yoav's language. He does not understand why Yoav does not want to and hesitates. Neither does he seem to care about that he also exploits Yoav, because Yoav needs the money and the director takes advantage of his position of power. He exposes Yoav and abuses his unprotected position. There are point-of-view shots of Yoav who sees the photographer in a worm's-eye-view, leaning over him with his tablet. We can further see the photographer hovering over Yoav while filming and actually sticking his bottom right over Yoav's face. This underlines once more the power relations and that the photographer does not respect Yoav's body, which thus is harmed. As soon as the photographer says that they are finished does Yoav stand up and quickly put his pants back on. The camera only shows the two men's legs as the photographer is handing over some money to Yoav. This all occurs in bright daylight, which is not a threatening atmosphere, but it gives the scene an even more precarious tone. A home with rejection and abuse is not a safe place; it is unsafe and foreign.

5.6.2.2 Undine: left and called for

In *Undine*, the first rejection already takes place at the beginning of the film when Johannes tells her that he wants them to separate. Before that, he was her partner and friend, the way into this new home, but in this moment, he becomes the antagonist who jeopardises her permission to stay on land. This also puts pressure on Undine because it implicates her return to the water and Johannes' death. Even though Christoph can delay Undine's destiny for a while, she cannot avoid doing what she has to: killing Johannes.

As discussed before, the water plays a role in that the new home grows more foreign and is an obstacle but also a hostile element. After all, Undine falls unconscious after she goes diving with Christoph and he has to use live-saving skills. Then Christoph has his accident underwater during which he is not sufficiently supplied with oxygen. Undine is called back by the water just as when standing in front of the aquarium at the café. When she and Christoph

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are walking together (next to the dam in Berlin) and Johannes walks past them, Undine's heart stops beating for a moment. Her body begins to act weirdly and gives her signs that something is not quite right. Her body on land is not at home anymore because she is not in the water, it was only temporary. Similar to Yoav and Max, also Undine's position as a foreigner in her new home is expressed in her body's condition.

5.6.2.3 Max: used and neglected

The hostility in *Der Verdingbub* comes primarily from the farming family who rebuke Max, blame him for whatever reason, hit him, give him too little food and do not look after him in general. Every misstep is being punished. The family sees Max merely as a workforce, call him often only 'boy' and accuse him of not being grateful enough. They only emphasise and amplify his homelessness despite him living in their home. Both parents and their son Jakob create an unstable and hostile atmosphere in which Max has to live every day. Max has to work hard, which results in not enough sleep and rest. In addition to that, the father of the family starts coming to the stables where Max has to sleep and beats him with a belt. Jakob regularly rapes Berteli but the farmer's wife just looks away. When Jakob burns Max's accordion, he actually burns the one space to which Max feels a sense of belonging. It is his element, his abstract home space that is taken away from him and destroyed. Max becomes homeless in an already non-home. The farming family's language is violence, they use the children without remorse and make this home to a cold and unprotected place. Both Max's physical and emotional states are affected. His body as his own private home is not healthy, which is also visible through his wounds. The farm *Dunkelmatte* grows more foreign by the day.

6 Conclusion

This thesis examined the depiction of the home as a foreign place in the three films *Der Verdingbub* by Markus Imboden, *Undine* by Christian Petzold and *Synonymes* by Nadav Lapid. The focus of the analysis lied both on how the narrative level tells the story of the foreign home and how the stylistic and aesthetic level expresses the home as a foreign place. The films' storytelling, the visual style and composition, the audio-design and their interplay with each other created three depictions of the foreign home that had similarities but also distinctions. The films had different foci on which part of the foreign home they displayed more and the three

film plots showed three distinct protagonists whose lives in the foreign home came with different but also similar challenges.

For the study of the home as a foreign place in film, I set out from conceptualising the foreign home. For this concept, I took *Heimat* and home as a foundation and combined it with aspects of diaspora, exile and nomadism. It further entailed factors such as identity, migration, homelessness and rootlessness. The concept of the foreign home draws on already existing concepts which were then applied in respective ways to describe the home as a foreign place. In addition, this concept has been formed according to my starting point of what I wanted to study, the depiction of the foreign home in film. The conceptualisation of the foreign home also entails the foreign home narrative which was structured into the five sections 'leaving home and moving on', 'the space and the objects of the new home', 'modes of displacement', 'adjustment to the new home' and 'hostility and opposition in the new home'. While the three films *Der Verdingbub*, *Undine* and *Synonymes* had different structural and stylistic approaches, they all showed this underlying storytelling structure which narrates the development of the foreign home. The film analysis was organised according to the narrative structure of the foreign home and the narrative's five sections. The discussion focused on the narrative level, the stylistic and aesthetic level and their connection to the theoretical framework of the foreign home. That is, on the aspects of *Heimat*, home, diaspora, exile and nomadism. This thesis proceeded from the research questions of how the three films *Der Verdingbub*, *Undine* and *Synonymes* engage with the theme of the home as a foreign place, how this non-home develops in the film narratives and how narration, style and aesthetics express the foreign home. The fourth research question was how the theoretical concept of the foreign home can act for an understanding of home in contemporary cinema, which I will come back to further below.

The analysis has shown that the foreign home is the result from a destabilisation of several factors that are necessary for the safe home to exist. Home is a place and time, it is physical and emotional, it is the body and the mind. In the foreign home, too many of these characteristics are threatened, destroyed, absent or non-developing so that the home not only cannot grow and establish itself but it also turns into a non-home instead. The key terms *Heimat*, home, diaspora, exile and nomadism were especially important in order to find these destabilisations because they all relate back to the home, finding a home, or the original home.

The analysis of the three films has shown protagonists who do not have a *Heimat* or a home to which they could return to. Their old home is abstract, it might not exist anymore and it cannot be seen as a safe or real home. This lack of a *Heimat* and origin also denies the protagonists a clear identity which emphasises their uprootedness. The missing identity and

lack of rootedness could for example be seen in the way the protagonists' living places look, what clothing they wear and what kind of possessions they have at home. The analysis has found an anonymity, impersonality and a provisional state in the protagonists' way of living. Furthermore, the three protagonists all show a belonging to different spaces or elements. Spaces that are abstract but in which they feel comfortable and safe as they should feel in a home. Undine's element is the water, Yoav's the language and Max's music. These spaces exist despite the foreign home and show some home connection that the characters have but they are not tangible places and leave the protagonists homeless nonetheless. A real home for them merely exists in the imagination just as the diasporan or the exile dreams of the homeland and the return to it. Wherever the protagonist of the foreign home narrative goes, the foreign home goes with them. The analysis has also shown that the protagonists of the foreign home narrative are Others. They are foreigners who remain outside of the new home. Yoav with the French language and the constructed identity as a Frenchman as well as with his attempt to erase his past as an Israeli. The colour of his yellow coat sets him apart wherever he goes. The camera uses movements and framing for creating distance between the characters, follows and watches Yoav at the same time but does not invite him into a home. Undine is an Other already due to her hybrid form of a water spirit who came on land. She has assumed a new Identity but whether she is at work passing along her constructed knowledge or at home looking over the city, she remains outside. Her blue bedroom reminds us of water where she actually belongs. Max is put into a family who does not provide a warm and welcoming home. He is used as a work force, abused violently and not given a safe and stable home environment. His position as the Other arises through his being a *Verdingkind* and he cannot get rid of this status as long as he stays in the foreign home. The protagonists meet benevolent people and start building relationships but this positive aspect is not enough to compensate for all the foreign and unfavourable elements. The characters undergo a process of integration by having a living place, personal possessions, finding an occupation and forming relationships. Yet, they can only accomplish partly or not at all what would be necessary to build a real home. The obstacles and hostile situations in the form of them being the Other, rejection by other people, abuse and violence threaten their bodies as a home both physically and psychologically.

The protagonists of the foreign home are a combination of an exile, a diasporan and a nomad. They are foreigners in a new home, do not want to return but can neither stay in this new home and have to move on travelling. They are exiles from the possibility of even having a real home. They are alone in this world and on a continuous nomadic journey, only that they do want to find a permanent home and settle in. The analysis has shown how the characters

constantly move along even when they are in a home place. Their nomadic nature, although involuntary, is characteristic and depicted through the camera and reoccurring sounds or music. The analysis discussed the different aspects of the foreign home, how the narrative and the design construct this foreign home and how *Heimat*, diaspora, exile and nomadism all become a part of the foreign home.

In the foreign home narrative, the home is fluid, it is a transition space and only one part on the continuous alternation of travelling and trying to strike roots. Considering the concept of the home as a foreign place and its depiction in these three contemporary films, then home has shifted away from its traditional and safe existence. Home becomes now connected with rootlessness, a non-identity, disorientation and destabilisation. Home is upheaval and departure but also uncertain and not reliable. The home shown in these three films reflects the transitional character of water in that it constantly moves, it changes, it brings about new beginnings but likewise endings. It suggests that the contemporary home is more of a transition place than a space where one settles in and stays. It is part of the nomadic journey but not the final stop and like water, which floats in a continuous circle, this journey and the search for a real home seem continuous as well. Home is presented in relation to homelessness and a *Heimatlosigkeit*, and implies the question how we actually can find back home to a home which remains.

The films show a phenomenon typical of our time: the moving between homes, travelling around and trying to find one's place in this huge world. The protagonists are part of a foreign home narrative and in this, the real home cannot be found. The three films of the analysis are set in different places (Berlin, Paris, the mountains) and in different times (present time in the cities and the 1950s in the mountain region). The protagonists are adults in two films (*Undine* and *Synonymes*) and a child in the other (*Der Verdingbub*). The three films were chosen because they apply to the foreign home structure. This study of the depiction of the foreign home in these three films was a case study of three European arthouse films from the years 2010 to 2020. My research does not claim to be representative of how films depict the foreign home, how European cinema approaches the theme of the home as a foreign place or that the foreign home narrative which I developed would be the only possible structure of narrating a foreign home. The foreign home can certainly be understood differently and examined from a different angle. Nevertheless, the concept of the foreign home opens up the possibility to conduct further research. For example, a more systematic research on a greater scale to find out whether there exists some form of representation of the foreign home in film. The research could also be elaborated into looking for other or alternative foreign home narratives. For now, this thesis makes a start for the study of the home as a foreign place in film.

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