

# **Dissolving Linguistic Borders?**

## **Contemporary Multilingual Literature in German-speaking Countries.**

BY

KRISTINA FOERSTER

Diploma, Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf, 2008

M.A., University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, 2010

THESIS

Submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Germanic Studies  
in the Graduate College of the  
University of Illinois at Chicago, 2014

Chicago, Illinois

Defense Committee:

Elizabeth Loentz, Chair and Advisor  
Imke Meyer, Germanic Studies  
Kay González-Vilbazo, Hispanic and Italian Studies  
Kim Potowski, Hispanic and Italian Studies  
Sara Hall, Germanic Studies

Für Nikolas

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are a number of people without whom this thesis might not have been written, and I am eternally grateful for their help. First and foremost, I would like to thank my dissertation advisor, Professor Elizabeth Loentz, who has continuously supported me throughout the writing process and who was always there for me and believed in me. Allerherzlichsten Dank.

I would also like to thank my other committee members, Professor Imke Meyer, Professor Kay Gonzales, Professor Kim Potowski and Professor Sara Hall for their invaluable feedback and inspiring suggestions for further research. Your enthusiasm for my project gave me the strength to believe in my work and keep doing it.

I would never have been able to finish my dissertation without the help of my wonderful colleagues and friends to whom I am greatly indebted. To Sharon, a very special thanks for providing a writing space and helping me through the last hard month. To Jorge, who taught me to appreciate the third floor of the “Reg” and who kept me company. To Pedro, who was always there to celebrate our achievements, big or small. And, most importantly, to Nikolas, without whom this project would never have existed.

KF

## TABLE OF CONTENT

<b>1 Beyond the Language-Literature Divide.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1. Defining Multilingualism .....	3
2. Situating Dissolving Linguistic Borders.....	5
2.1. Focusing on Language.....	5
2.2. ... with the Help of Linguistics .....	8
3. Overview of Dissolving Linguistic Borders.....	10
4. Contextualizing Dissolving Linguistic Borders .....	15
4.1. Multilingual Literature in the Past.....	15
4.2. Multilingual Literature in the Present.....	18
4.3. The German Context .....	24
4.4. Contemporary Multilingual Literature In Germany .....	29
<b>2 The Staple Remover. Literature and Linguistics. ....</b>	<b>34</b>
1. Why Linguistics and Literature? .....	35
2. The Outsider's Perspective: What does Multilingualism entail for the Relation to Language?.....	38
2.1. Interaction of Languages .....	38
2.2. Language Awareness.....	40
2.3. Critical Distance .....	41
2.4. Conclusion .....	44
3. The Insider's Perspective: What does Multilingualism entail for Creative Writing? .....	44
3.1. Interaction of Languages .....	45
3.2. Language Awareness.....	46
3.3. Writing through the Filter of a Second Language .....	47
3.4. Conclusion .....	49
4. Code Switching.....	50
5. Code Switching in Writing.....	53
6. Conclusion .....	58
<b>3 What is Foreign and What is Familiar? Melinda Nadji Abonji and Marica Bodrožić.....</b>	<b>59</b>
1. Abonji and Bodrožić: Multilingual Right from the Start .....	61
2. Abonji and Bodrožić Reflecting on Language .....	63
2.1. Learning German.....	63
2.2. Multilingualism as Impetus to Write .....	65
2.3. Language and Music.....	68
3. Metalinguistic References in Abonji's and Bodrožić's Work.....	69
3.1. Abonji's Tauben Fliegen Auf.....	70
3.1.1. Learning German.....	73
3.1.2. Multilingual Background – Multilingual Future .....	74
3.1.3. Language and Integration .....	75
3.1.4. Different Meanings for the Same Thing.....	78
3.2. Bodrožić's Sterne Erben, Sterne Färben.....	79
4. Abonji's and Bodrožić's Multilingual Magnifying Glass .....	81

## TABLE OF CONTENT (continued)

4.1. Accommodating the Monolingual Reader.....	83
4.2. Code Switching to Swiss German .....	86
4.3. Code switching to English.....	88
4.4. Bodrožić's Tonal Wordplay .....	89
5. Conclusion.....	90
<b>4 “Die Welt als Vokabel! Das ist mein Trost!” Terézia Mora is Multilingual on Principle.....</b>	<b>92</b>
1. Terézia Mora.....	95
1.1. Mora's “Conglomerate of languages” .....	97
2. <i>Seltsame Materie</i> .....	99
2.1. Metalinguistic References in <i>Seltsame Materie</i> .....	101
2.2. Big and Small Languages in <i>Seltsame Materie</i> .....	104
3. <i>Alle Tage</i> – Multilingual 2.0.....	107
3.1. Metalinguistic References in <i>Alle Tage</i> .....	110
3.1.1. An Infinite Number of Languages.....	111
3.1.2. Multilingualism as Compensation or Survival Mechanism?.....	112
3.1.3. Artificial Language Learning .....	113
3.1.4. Artificial Pronunciation .....	117
3.1.5. Silence and Language Loss .....	118
3.2. Good Old Babel: Language Mixing in <i>Alle Tage</i> .....	119
3.2.1. Breaking Sentences Apart .....	119
3.2.2. Corrections.....	120
3.2.3. Phonetic Spelling.....	121
3.2.4. Code Switching.....	121
4. Der Einzige Mann Auf Dem Kontinent.....	125
4.1. Metalinguistic References in <i>Der Einzige Mann</i> .....	126
4.2. Hungarian Flavor and an “armes, ganz konfuses bad english speaker” – Language Mixing in <i>Der Einzige Mann</i> .....	128
4.2.1. Exotic Hungarian Flavor .....	129
4.2.2. Phonetic Spelling.....	129
4.2.3. Optical Code Switching.....	130
4.2.4. Code Switching.....	131
5. “Lange, fundiert und hymnisch werde ich über die Sprache sprechen...”.....	134
<b>5 On the Other Side. Multilingual Expatriate Writers Barbara Honigmann and Gregor Hens. ....</b>	<b>136</b>
1. Honigmann and Hens: Writing from Outside in .....	138
1.1. A Writer is Defined by the Language S/he Writes in.....	140
1.2. Dépaysement as Prerequisite for Writing.....	141
1.3. Staying at Home in Language .....	145
1.4. Language Awareness.....	146
2. Fluid language identities, uprooted expats and very loose translations .....	148
2.1. Language and Identity .....	149
2.2. Miscommunication and Silence.....	150
2.3. Speaking with an Accent.....	153

## TABLE OF CONTENT (continued)

2.4. Speaking in a Dialect.....	155
2.5. Working with Language(s).....	156
3. Code Switching to “Big” Languages.....	158
3.1. Code Switching to a Second Language .....	160
3.2. Code Switching to Third Languages .....	166
4. Conclusion .....	168
<b>6 Conclusion, Implications, and Limitations .....</b>	<b>171</b>
1. Metalinguistic References in Transnational Literature .....	174
2. Language Mixing in Contemporary Transnational Literature.....	178
3. Implications for the Writer and the Reader .....	184
4. Limitations and Future Research.....	186
5. Conclusion .....	187
<b>CITED LITERATURE .....</b>	<b>190</b>
<b>VITA .....</b>	<b>207</b>

## SUMMARY

This dissertation explores contemporary multilingual literature in the German language. Current research has experienced a wave of interest in literature by multilingual writers. The question of language mixing in their texts, however, has scarcely been touched. Existing studies focus instead on common themes more than on language itself (see for example Arnold, Bürger-Koftis, Schmitz); and widely used terminology like “Migrant Literature” or “Intercultural Literature” demonstrate that literary criticism is still trapped in the focus on the cultural background of the writers. Even when critics allude to the importance of writers’ use of multiple languages, they tend to avoid an analysis of the actual language mixing in the texts, and rarely draw from linguistic scholarship on multilingualism. I adopt a new focus by concentrating on language itself – both thematically and stylistically – using linguistic research on multilingualism as a framework for a close textual analysis of language mixing in literature.

This project sets out to show that language takes center stage in multilingual literature not only thematically. Rather, I show that a stylistic analysis informed by linguistics research can help determine how the author’s multilingualism impacts the language of the texts. This approach allows me to demonstrate precisely what makes the language of multilingual writers sound unique and innovative to critics – their style is a product, at least in part, of their multilingualism. My work thus provides a new methodological framework for the discussion of the literature in question and sheds new light on the unique voice of multilingual writers.

My research is based on five case studies: it analyzes the works of two writers who learned German at a very young age (Melinda Abonji and Marica Bodrožić), in tandem with the work of polyglot writer Terézia Mora and two German expatriate writers

(Barbara Honigmann and Gregor Hens). In applying linguistic insights as a tool for literary analyses, I investigate how the writers' multilingualism contributes to their literary works.

My readings offer insights into the different ways in which multilingualism influences literary production. Abonji and Bodrožić question the dichotomy of foreign versus familiar or foreign versus native language. Mora intentionally creates an unintelligible language mix and Honigmann's and Hens's code mixing reflects their expatriate lifestyle.

My findings suggest that the thematic concern with language is equally important, and that language mixing techniques are similar in all of the works discussed in this project, with the exception of the English language, which has a special status both in quantity and in the ways in which it is embedded. My findings thus demonstrate that, even though contemporary multilingual literature destabilizes the binary of concepts like native versus foreign or standard versus non-standard, and slowly makes its way into the mainstream, there are still limits and restrictions. Contemporary multilingual literature conforms to the current linguistic situation in German-speaking countries where multilingualism is highly valued but in a selective way.



## 1 Beyond the Language-Literature Divide.

Phenomena of globalization such as increasing migration and new communication technologies have facilitated multilingualism and made it more visible. Like other manifestations of multilingual practices, literature written in more than one language has become more common over the last decade. While multilingualism in literature is not new, it is expanding in new directions. The “increase in titles on literary multilingualism” (Yildiz, Tawada 78), the journalistic and scholarly criticism about such literature, and literary prizes awarded to multilingual writers are indicative of the growing interest. Despite this interest, however, *written* multilingual discourse is still under-researched compared to *spoken* multilingual discourse (Sebba 1). Multilingual literary texts are often subsumed under categories such as migrant literature, intercultural literature or transnational literature. Although literary critics allude to the importance of writers’ use of multiple languages, they tend to avoid a critical analysis of the actual language mixing that occurs in the texts, and rarely draw from linguistic scholarship on multilingualism.

I will argue that these texts must also be read as *multilingual* literature, a field in which language takes center stage both stylistically and thematically. Multilingual writers depict the inherent ambiguity of language by writing about alienation, detachment and disconnection from language, and by paying close attention to silence and speechlessness. By incorporating elements from other languages they deconstruct established paradigms about nation and national literature. Whereas literary scholars have noted multilingual writers’ thematic concern with their multilingualism, my readings focus also on how multilingualism manifests stylistically in their literary texts. I analyze how certain common features of oral multilingual discourse that have been identified by

linguists are deployed by multilingual writers, and I argue that a detour to linguistic research on multilingualism can help us explain the strong language-awareness of multilingual individuals.

In 2007, the Modern Language Association report “Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World” expressed the wish to align the two branches of modern language research, literature and the linguistics, more strongly. The committee points to the missing link between literary and language studies and proposes replacing the “two-tiered language-literature structure with a broader and more coherent curriculum in which language, culture, and literature are taught as a continuous whole, supported by alliances with other departments and expressed through interdisciplinary courses” (3).<sup>1</sup> While the MLA report dealt primarily with the divide between language instruction and literature courses, there exists also a divide between literature scholars and (applied) linguists. Both have shown considerable interest in multilingualism, yet their work rarely intersects in any substantive way.<sup>2</sup> This project is positioned at the intersection of language and literature research, seeking to overcome the language-literature divide by applying the insights of linguistic research on multilingualism in the close textual analyses of multilingual literature.

To construct a framework for the analysis of multilingual literature, the following section spells out how the terms multilingualism and multilingual literature are used here. Section 2 situates this project into the larger framework of existing research on

---

<sup>1</sup> MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages. *Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World*. MLA, May 2007. Web. 28 May 2012

<sup>2</sup> Recent exceptions are the edited volumes by Mark Sebba (*Language Mixing and Code-Switching in Writing*, 2012), and Donna Miller (*Language and Verbal Art Revisited*, 2007) and Laura Callahan’s book-length publication *Spanish/English Codeswitching in a Written Corpus* (2004).

transnational or multilingual literature. After outlining the subsequent chapters of this project in section 3, I map the terrain for my approach to multilingual literature by first turning to multilingual literature in the *past* (4.1) in order to present *contemporary* multilingual literature as distinctly different from older multilingual practices (4.2). The discussion of past and present multilingual literature is then followed by a specific description of multilingualism in *the German context* and a brief overview of the history of contemporary multilingual literature in Germany (4.3 and 4.4).

### 1. Defining Multilingualism

While linguists tend to favor the term ‘bilingual’ even when referring to speakers of more than two languages, this project works with the term multilingual to include speakers of two or more languages. As defined by linguists Suzanne Romaine, Francois Grosjean and Aneta Pavlenko, a multilingual is someone who uses two or more languages in his/her daily life.<sup>3</sup> A multilingual speaker might use different languages for different purposes, in different situations, and with different people but is not necessarily equally competent in all languages. According to linguist Grosjean a multilingual is “not the sum of two (or more) complete or incomplete monolinguals; rather, he or she has a unique and specific linguistic configuration. The coexistence and constant interaction of the languages ... have produced a different but complete language system” (76).

---

<sup>3</sup> Although most multilinguals not only live their lives in two or more *languages* but also take part in the life of two or more *cultures*, multi-lingualism does not necessarily come with multi-culturalism. Someone who has been exposed to the social rules, behaviors, beliefs, values, customs and traditions of two cultures and has internalized them, can behave biculturally. A bicultural is able to switch between behaviors just like a multilingual is able to switch between languages. Grosjean defines bi- or multicultural as the “synthesis of cultural norms into one behavioral repertoire” (255). But a multilingual individual is not necessarily bicultural. Consider for example a Swiss-German who spends his whole life in Zurich but is fluent in High German, Swiss German and French.

Similarly, linguist Vivian Cook describes people who know more than one language as having a distinct compound state of mind that is not equivalent to two monolingual states. Thus a multilingual does not necessarily have equal and perfect knowledge of both or all languages but rather has a unique language configuration, quite different from that of a monolingual and therefore needs to be looked at in his or her own right and not as a deficient monolingual. Consequently, literature written in multiple languages by multilingual writers is the product of that unique language configuration and likewise needs to be looked at in this context: as multilingual literature.

Linguists interested in multilingual writers have used the term “translingual” (Kellman, Pavlenko) for an author who has published in more than one language or in the second language. Since this project focuses on language mixing in the text itself more so than on the multilingualism of its writers, it builds upon concepts like “multilingual literature” (Gramling, *On the Other Side*). Other suggestions have been “multilingual literary texts” (Jonsson), or “text-internal multilingualism” (Kremnitz). Multilingual literature is characterized by the fact that its writers draw back on their multilingualism as a creative resource – the most apparent manifestation being code-switching. Since I am especially interested in the combination of different languages in one single work, the concept of “mixed language fiction” (Miller) can also be useful to categorize the literature in question.

Looking at contemporary multilingual literature, literary scholar Brian Lennon distinguishes *weak* from *strong* multilingual texts and describes the former as a reproduction of the relationship between the dominant national language and a minority language (Lennon 83). Lennon’s “weak multilingual literature” keeps the foreign

language to single words and phrases, tags it with italic type and translates it; the foreign language comes in such a small dose that it only offers “a touch of cultural verisimilitude that ‘season’ the text ever so lightly with the foreign without dulling its domestic flavor” (Lennon 10). However, the close textual analysis of language mixing in this project shows that there can be multiple languages at work without necessarily having words or phrases in the foreign language printed on the page – whether they are italicized and translated or not.

## 2. Situating Dissolving Linguistic Borders

### 2.1. Focusing on Language...

As already mentioned, literary scholars and critics struggle to find the right terminology with which to categorize multilingual literature. This project leaves terms like “migrant literature” behind to focus on the language of the text instead. The term “migrant literature” groups works according to characteristics found outside of the text. As the term itself implies, the migrant background of the writer stands in focus. Some writers themselves denounce the term because it focuses on the cultural background of the authors instead of looking at their works (Chiellino 391) and are wary of according the literature in question any special status based on the mere fact of the writers biographies. Bosnian-German writer Saša Stanišić rejects the label “immigrant literature” as “simply wrong, because it is wrongly simple.” He jokes that the “colors of the novels’ covers has a greater literary relevance than our biographical backgrounds” (Stanišić). “Migrants literature” can, of course, also refer to thematic characteristics and include

works that tell stories of migrants.<sup>4</sup> German scholars and critics have used the term “Interkulturelle Literatur,” a literature in the German language by writers who did not learn German as their first language, who are the children of migrants, or who grew up in a linguistically and culturally different environment (Pekar 88).<sup>5</sup> The definition of “Interkulturelle Literatur” is closely related to “Chamisso Literatur,” a term created around the recipients of the Chamisso Prize, awarded to “authors whose mother tongue and cultural background are non-German and whose works make an important contribution to German literature.” (Robert Bosch Stiftung).<sup>6</sup> According to those definitions, the terms “Intercultural Literature” and “Chamisso Literature” are still trapped in the focus on the cultural background, grouping authors according to their resumés.

American Germanists have proposed concepts like transcultural or transnational<sup>7</sup> instead of guest worker or migrants’ literature.<sup>8</sup> Other concepts used interchangeably with

---

<sup>4</sup> While many transnational writers no longer focus on the themes of loss and transition common for migrant writers, some Eastern European authors still do. Consider for example Melinda Abonji’s *Tauben fliegen auf*, Terézia Mora’s first publication *Seltsame Materie* (both discussed in this project), Saša Stanišić’s *Wie der Soldat das Grammophon repariert* and Marica Bodrožić’s *Tito ist tot*. Interestingly, Terézia Mora turns her back on the typical migrant material in her third book after she had told her own story and a more general immigrant’s fate in her first two publications.

<sup>5</sup> For recent publications that still use the term ‘migrant literature’ see, for example, Klaus Schenk, *Migrationsliteratur* (2004) and Michaela Bürger-Koftis, *Eine Sprache, viele Horizonte* (2008). For publications that use the terms “intercultural,” “transcultural” or “transnational” see for example Immacolata Amodeo, *Literatur ohne Grenzen* (2009), Helmut Schmitz, *Von der nationalen zur internationalen Literatur* (2009) and Carmine Chiellino, *Interkulturelle Literatur in Deutschland* (2000).

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.bosch-stiftung.de/content/language2/html/4595.asp>

<sup>7</sup> Transnational texts transcend national boundaries in their awareness of the “processes by which immigrants forge multistranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement” (Basch et al., 8).

transnational literature are cosmopolitan, hybrid, and in-between literature (Fachinger, Jankowsky, Boa, Ghaussy). In regards to the literature in question, the term “hybrid” is most often used in relation to language: critics talk about the hybrid alienation in language use (Jankowsky), linguistically hybrid texts (Boa) and the hybrid and in-between realms of language (Ghaussy). Likewise focusing on language, Evelyn Ch’ien has suggested the term “Weird English” (Ch’ien 4).<sup>9</sup>

Literary scholars working on transnational literature have tended to focus on common themes (e.g. space and identity) more than on language itself.<sup>10</sup> Transnational literature – as the term itself implies – has to do not only with crossing political/geographical borders, but also with transcending the concept of nation. And the concept of nation, especially in the German context, is inextricably linked with national language. Following David Gramling’s critique of the focus on *transnational* film and his suggestion to consider *multilingual* film alongside more commonly used concepts like multicultural or transnational my project likewise seeks to look beyond a primary concern with migration or the writer’s background. It shifts the focus *thematically* to metalinguistic references: language learning, pronunciation and accent, language loss and

---

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Azade Seyhan, *Writing Outside the Nation* (2001), Evelyn Ch’ien, *Weird English*, (2004), and Deniz Göktürk, *Germany in Transit: Nation and Migration*. (2007).

<sup>9</sup> “Weird English,” as defined by Ch’ien, deprives English of its dominance, it expresses aesthetic adventurousness, it is derived from nonnative English and it is used because “orthodox English” cannot adequately express the minority culture (Ch’ien 11).

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, Aigi Heero, “Zwischen Ost und West”; Christoph Meurer, “Ihr seid anders und wir auch”; Volker Dörr, “Third Space vs. Diaspora”; Michaela Haberkorn, “Treibeis und Weltensammler: Konzepte nomadischer Identität”; In *Von der nationalen zur internationalen Literatur* (2009). See also *Eine Sprache, Viele Horizonte* (2009), *Literatur und Migration* (2006).

silence, etc., and *formally* to creative language use in a literature that switches codes between two or more languages.

Even though the main focus of this project is on the language of the text itself, multilingual literature is still defined through a biographic characteristic: the multilingualism of its author. And while many multilingual writers reject the discussion of their linguistic background for programmatic reasons, it is nevertheless pertinent to my analysis of their work. Consequently, I will touch upon the language biographies of the writers discussed here in order to show how their own multilingualism is the prerequisite for their work. Their linguistic biographies are vital to my readings, because the authors use their multilingualism as linguistic resources in their writing: through uncommon linguistic constructs, language games, through direct translations of sayings or idioms, through rhythmical imitations and neologisms. While some multilingual writers even reject the idea that writing in a second language enriches their style and believe that the focus on the language of the text is just another way to say, “Oh look how well that foreigner learned German,” they concede that writing through the filter of a foreign language “can lead to beautiful results” (Stanišić). As a response to the criticism that a focus on language is merely an excuse to praise a migrant’s language skills, this project includes another set of multilingual writers: expatriates who write in their first language. The close textual analyses will show that even without “the filter of a foreign language,” these writers also produce a literature of multilinguality.

## 2.2. ... with the Help of Linguistics



Most investigations of multilingual practices have taken place in fields other than literary studies, such as linguistics, educational policy, and sociology. In some cases, research on multilingual literature has touched upon the author's language. For example, critics praise the writers for "adding new voices and aesthetic influences to contemporary German-language literature" and sometimes even find their works more "innovative and interesting than those of native German authors" (Biendarra, Terezia 47). Despite interest in the language of the text, these readings are rarely informed by linguistic insights into multilingualism. An exception is literary scholar Elizabeth Klosty Beaujour's *Alien Tongues* (1989), which includes a chapter on neurolinguistics. With her focus on Russian-American writers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, she laid the groundwork for a discussion that combines linguistic and literary research. Other publications that focus on multilingual literature – Leonard Forster's *The Poet's Tongues* (1970), Steven Kellman's *The Translingual Imagination* (2000), and Evelyn Ch'ien *Weird English* (2004) – do not incorporate linguistic research. Concentrating on multilingual authors writing in the German language, and expressing interest in the "sprachliche Besonderheit," the unique language aesthetics of that literature, Immacolata Amodeo edited two volumes of multilingual literature without including any linguistic background on multilingualism.<sup>11</sup>

In general, the scholarship on multilingual literature in Germany almost exclusively focuses on writers with a Turkish background. See, for example, David Gramling's *The Caravanserai Turns Twenty: Or, New German Literature—Turns Turkish* (2010), Azade Seyhan *Writing Outside the Nation* (2001) and Yasemin Yildiz *Beyond the Mother Tongue* (2011). Not one of the scholars draws on linguistic insights

---

<sup>11</sup> *Literatur ohne Grenzen* (2009), *Zu Hause in der Welt* (2010)

on multilingualism. Linguists interested in multilingualism, on the other hand have used literary works as ‘data,’ but they, in turn, show little interest in aesthetic questions.<sup>12</sup> To date literary criticism and linguistics have intersected only in translation studies.<sup>13</sup> This project aims to show how literary critics gain by taking into account linguists’ insights.

### 3. Overview of Dissolving Linguistic Borders

For the purpose of exploring formal strategies of language mixing in literature, this project relies on linguists’ insights into multilingualism that will be outlined in chapter 1. The opening chapter sets up working definitions for the literary analyses of multilingual literature in the subsequent chapters. It first draws on linguistic research on multilingualism and argues that linguistics can provide us with a terminology to describe the language of the text and can thus help explain precisely what it is that scholars and critics have described as unique, new, or creative in the language of multilingual literature. The chapter then points to the resources that multilinguals – as opposed to monolingual writers – bring to their texts, considering also what multilingual authors have written about their relationship to language. It finally turns to techniques of language mixing and considers how the role of code switching in written language differs from its role in spoken language.

Building upon chapter 1, the close readings in the following chapters examine different forms of “breaking” with monolingualism. Because I understand the texts in this

---

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Aneta Pavleno’s *Autobiographic Narratives as Data in Applied Linguistics* (2007), *Language Learning Memoirs as a Gendered Genre* (2001), Mary Besmeres *Translating Lives: Living with Two Languages and Cultures* (2007), and Laura Callahan *Spanish/English Codeswitching in a Written Corpus* (2004).

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, Mirella Agorni “Translation teaching and methodology: a linguistic analysis of a literary text and Ute Heidemann, et al.. “Text linguistics and comparative literature: towards an interdisciplinary approach to written tales. Angela Carter’s translation of Perrault.”

project as case studies for analyzing the impact of multilingualism on writing, they were not chosen at random. My choices have been directed by the effort to analyze works that display different varieties of multilingual literature, written by a variety of writers with very different language biographies (from growing up bilingual to learning the second language as an adult). Further, in order to demonstrate how book publishing and language politics influence multilingual literature, I analyze both literary works that combine German with less frequently studied languages (e.g. Hungarian) and literary works that mix the base language, German, with English and French, the two languages with which German readers are most familiar.<sup>14</sup>

My analysis concentrates on works published after 2000 by multilingual writers who migrated to or left German-speaking countries in the late twentieth century and write in German. The writers in this group grew up bilingual or learned their second language as children. The first group includes contemporary writers from new immigrant communities, such as Hungarian-German Terézia Mora, Croatian-German Marica Bodrožić, as well as Melinda Nadj Abonji, who was born into a Hungarian-speaking minority in former Yugoslavia, writes in German, lives in Switzerland, and publishes her

---

<sup>14</sup> They are designated the two most “useful” languages in the European Union: English is known by 41 percent of the population and chosen as the first foreign language by 88 percent of European pupils, French is known by 19 percent (Tabouret-Keller 681). The abundance of code switches between German and English (without glossary or in-text translations) in the works analyzed here suggests suggest that the monolingual German reader is expected to be fluent enough in English to be able to follow the narrative.

work with an Austrian publishing house.<sup>15</sup> Writers like Abonji, who defines herself as a Hungarian Serb living in Switzerland, leave the idea of the primacy of one national identity behind and are perfect examples for Doris Sommer's concept of "Either And," which, in contrast to "either... or" allows individuals to identify with many languages and places of origin. Abonji speaks German *and* Hungarian, she is from here *and* from there (Sommer, *Either* 12).

In line with my focus on language rather than the history of migration to German-speaking countries, this project also includes authors who left their German-speaking surroundings and write their oeuvre abroad. This second group includes Barbara Honigmann and Gregor Hens, who live in France and the United States respectively. Both learned their second language later in life and started to publish literary works only after they moved out of Germany. This project thus goes beyond the common use of "transnational" that is focused exclusively on immigrants *to* a country and ignores expatriates *from* that country. My dissertation will not only consider mixed language fiction by immigrants to the German language but will also analyze the combination of different languages in works by authors who left the country and work from abroad. Using different multilingual forms to bring German together with other languages, from Hungarian, to French and English, these writers offer the textual basis for the analysis of

---

<sup>15</sup> By concentrating on Eastern European authors this project continues a trend of growing scholarly and public interest in contemporary literary production of German writers coming from Eastern European countries (see for example programmatic titles like *Die Osterweiterung der deutschsprachigen Literatur*, edited by Michaela Bürger-Koftis, or *The Eastern Turn in Contemporary German, Swiss and Austrian Literature* by Brigid Haines.) The recipients of the Chamisso Prize in the past few years also demonstrate this 'Eastern turn.' From 2006 to 2011, the recipients came from Hungary, the Czech Republic, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Poland. In 2012 the Chamisso Prize went to the Czech-German Michael Stavaríč, and the sponsorship award was conferred to the Hungarian-German Akos Doma and the Albanian-German Ilir Ferra.

the (im)possibilities of multilingual literature. All five writers are united in their use of the German language but they find very different ways to mix in other languages and to relocate “German literature.”

Chapter 2 presents a subtle form of breaking with monolingualism in the work of Melinda Abonji, who was born in a Hungarian speaking minority in former Yugoslavia, is now a citizen of multilingual Switzerland, publishing in German with an Austrian publishing house.<sup>16</sup> The chapter also examines the work of Marica Bodrožić who turns her multilingual gaze primarily to the German language. Both Abonji and Bodrožić grew up speaking a minority language and learned German before puberty.<sup>17</sup> Abonji’s and Bodrožić’s multilingual literature makes the reader examine what we consider familiar and what we consider foreign. It undermines the binaries of native/foreign and standard/nonstandard: Abonji embeds her first language, Hungarian, exactly the same way as she incorporates the Swiss German dialect – italicized and accompanied with a translation in Standard German. Bodrožić on the other hand zooms in on German words until they lose their familiarity to the native German reader.

Chapter 3 is interested in ways in which multilingual writers can use their linguistic resources when one of their languages is perceived as too foreign (i.e. not

---

<sup>16</sup> Since this project focuses primarily on language, and standard German played a pivotal role in Abonji’s career, it is not of concern here that Abonji is not a German citizen; the language she works in is German.

<sup>17</sup> Studies on the age of acquisition show that there is a “strong linear relationship between age of exposure to the language and ultimate performance.” Johnson and Newport see puberty as a critical period in language acquisition and describe participants who learned the second language before the age of fifteen as “early,” and those who learned the second language after the age of seventeen as “late.” Only participants who learned the second language before the age of seven reach “native performance on the test. For arrivals after that age, there was a linear decline in performance up through puberty. Subjects who arrived in the United States after puberty performed on the average much more poorly” (Johnson and Newport 90).

learned in school like French or English) for the German readership. It takes up the works of Hungarian-born writer Terézia Mora, who lives in Berlin, and who purposefully conceals her linguistic biography. Mora grew up in the German-speaking minority of her home region but claims that she actively started to speak German only when entering secondary school.<sup>18</sup> The chapter traces Mora's development throughout her three publications to date: from literally translating Hungarian, to portraying an unintelligible mix of multiple languages, and finally to code switching between German and English and visual code switching by using different fonts and alphabets in print. While Mora's work represents the most obvious experiments with language mixing, it also expresses the most critical perspective on the beneficial effects of a multilingual literature given that multilingualism in her work is either cancelled out completely or rather obstructs than enhances interpersonal relationships.

The last chapter moves from migrants *to* German-speaking countries to migrants *from* German-speaking countries and analyzes their combination of German and West-European languages. Chapter 4 looks at multilingual authors who learned their second languages later in life and who do not write through the filter of a second language. It analyzes the ways in which they use their resources if one of their languages is a very common second language for the German readership. It turns to Honigmann, who lives in France, and Gregor Hens, who lives in the United States. My reading of Honigmann's novels shows that living outside of the German language was a prerequisite for

---

<sup>18</sup> In an interview, Mora describes the situation as follows: "My family spoke an Austrian dialect mixed with Hungarian words, and I spoke Hungarian as a child. In other words, we always spoke a foreign language to each other. I grew up with the German language, and could passively practice so-called Standard German by watching Austrian television" (Foreigner).

Honigmann to become the writer she is today. In contrast to Honigmann, who exclusively publishes in German, Gregor Hens has published scholarly work in both of his languages. Chapter 4 shows how both authors mix their German base text with French and English, respectively, without translating or explaining the foreign languages, thus addressing an intended reader who is in full command of these two languages.

The concluding chapter reflects on the political significance of a selective multilingualism that leads to very different strategies in mixed language fiction by immigrant writers combining German with their native language and expat writers who mix German with English and French. Indeed, some languages seem to be more easily accepted by the book publishing industry than others.

#### 4. Contextualizing Dissolving Linguistic Borders

##### 4.1. Multilingual Literature in the Past

Writing in more than one language was the norm for the European cultural elite up to the late eighteenth century. Monolingualism took off on its triumphal course only with the creation of modern nation states. This section situates multilingual literature historically in order to provide a background for the discussion of differences between multilingual practices in the past and in the present.

Writing in two or more languages is not a new phenomenon. It was quite common for the literate elite of medieval and Renaissance Europe to write and read in multiple languages. Most educated people in the seventeenth and eighteenth century were able to write in Latin and their native tongue. Latin served as a scientific language across geographical borders until French became the new lingua franca in seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe. Writers chose their languages according to genres and

perceived languages as tools that they could easily change according to need (Kremnitz 43). Focusing on Germany, linguist Michael Townson speaks about a period of triglossia with Latin as the language of science, French as the language of the aristocracy, and German as the language of administration and day-to-day communication (Townson 56). For the educated upper middle classes, Latin-German bilingualism was the “default case”, since Latin was the norm in writing and necessary for official language use (Braunmüller 10). Linguist Georg Kremnitz defines the readership of that time as a “polyglot elite readership.” But by the end of the eighteenth century this readership was replaced by the “monoglot average reader” (Kremnitz 56).

Before the end of the eighteenth century, the connection between language, political loyalty, and personal identity did not exist. With the rise of modern nationalism, however, native languages became national languages, a privileged cultural possession and a metaphor for the nation. The integrity of the language became inseparably linked with the integrity of the German nation (Townson 3). In late eighteenth century Europe, the multilingual practice that allowed writers to choose languages according to genre, publishing scientific work in Latin while writing poetry in Italian, became less common. Hand in hand with the formation of nation states and the romantic devotion to national languages, the connection between writing only in one’s “mother tongue” and national languages emerged. National literatures were distinguished by characteristic traits of national languages in order to foster the self-image of the newly created nation states and to affirm a national identity.

In the early nineteenth century, German thinkers were at the forefront of the movement away from multilingual practices. Friedrich Schleiermacher, for example,



maintained that “every writer can produce original work only in his mother tongue, and therefore the question cannot even be raised how he would have written his works in another language” (On the different methods, 50). Despite Schleiermacher’s claim that a writer can only produce original literature in his first language – which of course ignores the possibility that one can grow up with more than one language and thus have two “mother tongues” – canonical multilingual authors of the period produced literary works in their second or in more than one language. French-born scientist and author, Adelbert von Chamisso, was fifteen years old when his family settled in Berlin in 1796. He published his most famous literary work “Peter Schlemihls wundersame Geschichte,” in 1835 in German – shortly after Schleiermacher proclaimed that “every writer can produce original work only in his mother tongue” in his lecture “On the Different Methods of Translation” in 1813.

With the rise of fascism, the nineteenth century ideology of ‘one state – one nation – one language’ became linked to racial purity (Townson 106). For German National Socialists, race became the basis for securing national identity. Language as a marker for national identity did not quite fit into the National Socialist’s agenda because German was the ‘mother-tongue’ of many Jews. But the fascist regime found ways to keep Jews out of the German speech community and, for example, portrayed “true Germans” as speaking dialect, while urban “cosmopolitan Jewish speech was lacking dialect-coloring, i.e. lacking in authenticity” (Jacobs 199). Similarly, the campaign of the German Student Body “Wider dem undeutschen Geist” in 1933 put forth that Jews can only think “Jewish” and when using German, they are guilty of misinterpretation. The German Student Body further demanded that all Jewish work should only be published in

Hebrew and if published in German, it should be considered a translation from Hebrew (Townson 136-9).

Despite the efforts of monolingualization in the nineteenth and twentieth century, writers published their works in languages other than their “mother tongue.” Eugène Ionesco wrote in Romanian and French, Russian-born writer Nathalie Sarraute only published in French, Polish-born Joseph Conrad only published in English, and Vladimir Nabokov and Samuel Beckett switched back and forth between their first language and English and French respectively.<sup>19</sup>

#### 4.2. Multilingual Literature in the Present

Contemporary multilingual literature is distinctly different from multilingual practices in the past. One could even say that a new literary trend is developing: A field in which authors draw on their multilingualism and use it as linguistic resources in their writing, a field distinguished by code-switching, a field in which writers work with living languages of everyday use and multilingualism is no longer a privilege of the educated upper class.

Even though multilingual literature as such is no new phenomenon, “the great numbers and the visibility,” the media attention for multilingual writers and their works is new (Sommer 27). In 2008 the Afghanistan-born French writer Atiq Rahimi won the Prix Goncourt, the British Booker Prize went to the Indian-born writer Aravind Adiga, and the

---

<sup>19</sup> It is interesting to note that many contemporary Austrian writers (for example Ernst Jandel, Peter Handke, Elfriede Jelinek, and Thomas Bernhard) focus on language (Winkler, *Pluridimensionale*). Similarly, Anne Betten notes that Austrian writers are generally very interested in language use, language games and linguistic experiments (Betten 215). Their interest in language might have been triggered by the multilingual Habsburg Empire, the diglossic use of standard German and dialect in parts of Austria.

Pulitzer Prize went to the Dominican-American writer Junot Díaz. Since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, due to worldwide migration, multilingual literature has become a “collective phenomenon” (Amodeo, Migration 114).

Multilingualism in the past was usually expressed in the exclusive use of one language or another for different works, a technique that some used to call code switching. The alternation of languages in one text, however, was rare and if writers used more than one language within one work, they did not switch languages mid-sentence (Callahan 82). Thus, terms like Miller’s “mixed language fiction” pin down the difference between past and present multilingual practices in their focus on language mixing *within one text*. The increasing growth of literature in more than one language in the United States – especially in the Latino community – indicates that mixing languages in writing has obtained a certain level of legitimacy and is viewed as a “positively creative innovation in literature” (Montes-Alcala 68).

Despite this level of legitimacy, multilingual literature is still difficult to publish. Lennon’s *In Babel’s Shadow* examines the resistance that multilingual literature faces on the book publication market in the United States. He shows that there is an “editorial pressure to write ‘nondifficult English prose’” (Lennon 4) and argues that writing in a language other than English “would be to violate the market mandate of transmission” (Lennon 10). Writer and translator Tim Parks observes this trend of writing “nondifficult prose” not only in the United States but also in literary works from all over the world. Writers create “a lingua franca..., a particular straightforwardness, an agreed order for saying things and perceiving and reporting experience, that made translation easier and more effective.” The multilingual works discussed in this project oppose this trend of

nondifficult writing. Instead of creating a straightforward lingua franca, the authors presented here break out of “the agreed order of saying things,” they break languages apart and put them together on their own terms. Their works are further notoriously difficult to translate.<sup>20</sup>

Another important distinction between older multilingual practices and contemporary literature is that the latter works with *living languages* that are part of *everyday communication*. “Dead” languages like Latin were only used in special contexts in written form, like the common practice of Victorian novelists like Thackeray and Dickens who pepper their works with Latin references. Most of this Latin – called “schoolboy Latin” by Victorian scholar David Skilton – was only familiar to people of a certain background and education (Skilton 39). It was not a language of everyday use for either the author or the intended reader, as is the case for multilingual authors and their readers today. Latin was nobody’s “native” language and could only be acquired through education (Lennon 56).<sup>21</sup>

The difference between living a life in multiple languages and incorporating a foreign language like Latin is crucial. It lies in the linkage of language to personality. Linguists see multilingual living situations as a site of identity re-construction: our thinking, behavior, and perception of the self and the world changes when we live our

---

<sup>20</sup> One of the authors in this project, Terézia Mora, who works as a translator herself, pities the person who had to translate her works back into Hungarian, because of the “many Hungarian elements” she works with (in Kasaty 253). How does one translate Hungarian elements in a German novel back into Hungarian?

<sup>21</sup> Georg Kremnitz notes that Latin was the only Lingua Franca that was a foreign language for all its users. Both French and English, which have played and still play a similar role, are always also the first language for some of its users. Kremnitz argues that the balance that was created by Latin as the Lingua Franca has never been reached since French and English took over (46).

lives in several or new languages (Pavlenko, *Bilingual* 12-3). Pavlenko believes that a shift in language leads “to the shift in cultural constructs and memories activated by that language and, consequently, to the shift in self-knowledge, self-perceptions, and self-descriptions” (*Bilingual*, 16).<sup>22</sup>

The distinction in language use goes hand in hand with the fact that most of the contemporary authors are not only bi- or multilingual but also bicultural. Authors using Latin in medieval and renaissance Europe were not “bicultural” according to Grosjean, who defines a bicultural as someone who is able to mix cultural norms into one behavioral repertoire and has the ability to switch between behaviors (255). Latin was not the language of a living culture and users could not switch into something like their Latin self.

While multilingualism in writing in the past was a privilege of the highly educated upper and middle classes, contemporary multilingual writers come from many different backgrounds. The most-studied examples of contemporary multilingual authors come from Latin Americans living in the United States. The multilingualism of Chicano literature is not a sign of high education or class. Chicano literature is rather the result of deliberate migration and an expression of a bicultural life style. Looking at the German equivalent to Chicano literature, Turkish German writers, literary scholar David Gramling argues that unlike “polyglots studying foreign languages in educational settings, speakers of Turkish in post-wall Berlin ... have routinely clashed with the politics and preemptory expulsions of monolingualism” (*Linguistic*, 136). These

---

<sup>22</sup> Chapter 5 will discuss in greater detail how language is linked to personality.

contemporary multilingual practices should be clearly distinguished from using a dead language like Latin or peppering a literary work with fashionable French phrases.

Many contemporary authors chose their multilingual living situations and the languages they are working in freely, whereas multilingual practices in the past did not necessarily result from voluntary immigration. It is no longer just a question of social class that determines the mobility of contemporary writers; they are no longer just exilic migrants but voluntary expatriates. Many of the exile writers who fled Germany during WWII could have produced multilingual literature as a way of working through their new, multilingual living situations, but never wrote in the languages of their host countries.<sup>23</sup> Generally, exile seems to carry little importance for language choice, since most writers in exile do not change languages (Kremnitz 189).<sup>24</sup> Contemporary multilingual writers like Sevgi Emine Özdamar, who was born in Turkey, or Yoko Tawada, born in Japan, voluntarily moved to Germany, live their lives both in German and Turkish or Japanese respectively, and publish in both of their languages. Writers like Melinda Abonji or Feridun Zaimoglu, who came to German-speaking countries involuntarily – as young children of work migrants - nevertheless live their everyday lives in two languages which was not the norm for previous generations who only used the second language in restricted aspects of their lives (e.g. Latin in school).<sup>25</sup>

Another important distinction between multilingual practices in the past and in the present has been made by literary scholar Yasemin Yildiz, who is interested in

---

<sup>23</sup> Consider, for example, the work of Bertolt Brecht, Thomas Mann and Anna Seghers.

<sup>24</sup> One of the exceptions is Peter Weiss, who also published numerous works in Swedish after moving to Stockholm in 1940.

<sup>25</sup> Also note the significant difference to language contact during colonialism: English was brought to India whereas Özdamar and Tawada made a conscious decision to come to the German language themselves.

contemporary multilingual literature because she sees a radical difference between multilingualism before and after the “monolingual paradigm” established in the late eighteenth century.<sup>26</sup> In *Beyond the Mother Tongue*, Yildiz argues that the “monolingual paradigm” postulated that individuals have only one true language that is linked to one culture and one nation. This “linguistic family romance” constructed a narrative of true origin to a single culture and nation (Yildiz, *Beyond* 203). Yildiz looks at “postmonolingual” literature in order to show how multilingual practices work against the monolingual paradigm that still persists today (Yildiz, *Beyond* 5).

I am particularly interested in contemporary multilingual literature in order to work out the tense relation between a social / political trend in twenty-first century Europe toward a stronger nationalization, which stands in direct contrast to a scholarly and artistic move away from the concept of national literatures and national languages. National languages are still the major definer of national identity. Especially since the eastward expansion of the European Union in 2004 and the ensuing flow of immigrants, linguistic proficiency has gained importance for immigrants applying for residence rights in the EU (Hogan-Brun 3). Stricter integration policies require good knowledge of the language and culture of the host country (Avermaet 19).

Social scientists like Eleonore Kofman argue that European nation states have reasserted their position through strict migration systems (e.g. over 600 hours of German language classes in order to gain citizenship) and see an opposition between the intellectual discourses on hybridity and the growing demand for “undivided loyalty and affiliation to national cultures and polities” (Kofman 454, 464). Others understand stricter

---

<sup>26</sup> Yildiz’s work stands in the tradition of Ingrid Gogolin (1994) and Carmine Chiellino (2000) who have also criticized the “monolingual paradigm.”

immigration policies as evidence for the revival of the nation-state that opposes processes of globalization (Avermaet 36), or even depict stronger nationalization as defense mechanism: “The contemporary manifestation of linguistic nationalism thus operates as a defensive reaction to the 21<sup>st</sup> century emergence of transnational and cosmopolitan communities” (Hogan-Brun 11). Where does multilingual literature stand in this opposition between political reality and critical thought?

#### 4.3. The German Context

Considering the role that the German language plays for acquiring citizenship on the one hand, and the German cultural elite’s attempt to honor multilingual literature on the other hand, the German context is especially suitable for working out the opposition between political trends and literature / literary criticism.

The strong link of language and nation is particularly important for Germany, a country that was divided and fragmented for most of its history (Townson 1). Partly because the course of German history did not offer other defining characteristics, the German language was regarded as a major component of nationhood. Not only did the German tradition play an important role in establishing a romantic commitment to national languages in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century; the German context remains unique in several ways up to the present. In the late eighteenth-century, German thinkers like Johann Gottfried Herder and Friedrich Schleiermacher played a key function in establishing the connection between language and nation. As already mentioned, Friedrich Schleiermacher postulated that original literary production is only possible in the “mother tongue.” In the early nineteenth century, the German empire



promoted the belief that a true nation state only has one language (“one state – one people – one language”) in order to create the fiction of cultural homogeneity (Hansen 159-60).

The German education system also has its roots in the second half of the nineteenth century, when Germany started to form a “monolingual self-concept” (Gogolin 3). The German language as a subject in school gained more and more importance, German studies became an established field at universities and the teacher of German became a well-respected profession. But the German language reached the peak of its career when the instruction in German became “Träger und Garant” [“medium and guarantor”] of a national education at the end of the nineteenth century (Gogolin 73).

The interconnection of language and nation still exists today, in twenty-first century Germany, where the German language plays an especially prominent role in the politics of immigration. While German citizenship no longer depends on blood kinship since the change in immigration laws in 2006, membership to the German people is still defined by the use of the German language. With the slogan “Sprache ist ein Schlüssel für erfolgreiche Integration,” [“language is the key to successful integration”] the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees promotes the core of the new immigration law, the “integration course” that consists of 600 hours of German language instruction and a 60 hour long cultural “orientation course” required of new immigrants and their families.<sup>27</sup> The class is mandatory for immigrants who do not speak German. Taking the integration course can reduce the eight years of residency required to gain citizenship in Germany to seven years. But according to Gramling, the *ius sanguinis*, the “right of blood” was only

---

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.bamf.de/DE/DasBAMF/Aufgaben/Integrationskurs/integrationskurs-node.html> /.

officially replaced by the *ius soli*, the “right of territory.” What has taken hold is the *ius linguarum* or “right of language” (Gramling, *Linguistic*, 131).

While Germany strongly promotes the acquisition of the German language, it slowly begins to acknowledge the advantages of multilingualism: education programs promote bilingual teaching for children with a migrant background. In response to the challenge of a population decrease and the resulting demand for immigration, bilingual instruction as early as elementary school level and classes in the first languages of immigrants are becoming more common (Hansen 162).<sup>28</sup> There still is, however, a crucial difference between the attention given to immigrant languages compared to English and, to a lesser degree, French. In reaction to modern work-related migration and developments in the European Union, education policies in some German federal states promote multilingualism by introducing English as a second language in first grade, and by broadening the perspective even beyond the language classroom by teaching history, literature and music with an European dimension rather than focusing on German-speaking countries and thus promoting a European rather than a German national identity (Hansen 164-5). Even multilingual writers take part in the political debates about immigration and education: the Leipzig Book Fair 2011, for example, combined political and literary interests in a panel called “Zu Hause in der Fremde – Versuche zur Integration.” Writers from several German-speaking nations, among them Melinda Abonji (Switzerland), Doron Rabinovici (Austria) and Natasa Dragic (Germany) talked about questions of identity, belonging, and migration.

---

<sup>28</sup> See for example programs like *FörMig*, Förderung von Kindern und Jugendlichen mit Migrationshintergrund, <http://www.foermig.uni-hamburg.de/web/de/all/home/index.html> and *LiMA*, Linguistic Diversity Management in Urban Areas, <http://www.lima.uni-hamburg.de/>.

Language policies in the larger context of the European Union are often used as a multilingual role model for the United States. However, the languages supported by European policies are only the languages of the member states and not the languages of large minorities residing in Europe, for example Turkish in Germany, that is rarely part of the curriculum in German schools (Kremnitz 131). Even the most inter-culturally oriented domains of the German education system valorize English and French over Turkish, Russian or Arabic (Gogolin). Olga Grjasnowa's debut novel *Der Russe ist einer der Birken liebt* (2012) broaches the issues of selective multilingualism and describes how languages like Turkish are not valued in the German education system: "Lauter Kanaken. Marcel sprach italienisch, Georgi griechisch, Taifun türkisch, Farid persisch und armenisch, genau wie seine Zwillingschwester. Und wir alle sprachen auch Deutsch, akzentfrei. Aber keiner von uns wurde als intelligent genug erachtet, um auf das Gymnasium wechseln zu können, wir sollten lieber alle auf die Hauptschule oder im besten Fall auf die Realschule" ["All these Kanaks.<sup>29</sup> Marcel spoke Italian, Georgi Greek, Taifun Turkish, Farid Persian and Armenian, just like his twin sister. And we all spoke German without an accent. But nobody thought that we were smart enough to go to a good secondary school, at the most we were good enough for lower secondary education"] (Grjasnowa 221). The language policies promoting multilingualism are confined to using other European languages and hardly include big languages from other parts of the world such as Arabic, Chinese and Japanese (De Bot, 13) and there is no official EU document that sets out policies "concerning the linguistic needs of

---

<sup>29</sup> "Kanake," originally derived from Hawaiian "Kanaka" for human is a derogatory word for immigrants to German-speaking countries, especially from Turkey. The closest equivalent in American English is "Nigga," however, the term is not easily translated, given that "Nigga" refers to a specific race and "Kanake" refers to foreignness in general.

immigrants and minorities” (Tabouret-Keller 663). My project aims to show how the selective multilingual policies of the European Union play into the rules of the publication of multilingual literature.

The German-speaking context is especially interesting because the only two countries with a literary award that is conferred to multilingual writers publishing in their second language are Germany and Austria.<sup>30</sup> Even though literary prizes do not necessarily designate what good literature is, they are a “base camp for cannon formation” (English 245) and “determine which authors will we recognized as worthy of special distinction” (English 47). Of course, prizes are always also political (English 194). The Robert Bosch foundation, for example, that sponsors the prestigious Adelbert von Chamisso Prize sees its role in the promotion of “Völkerverständigung” (international relations).<sup>31</sup> The Bosch sponsored Grenzgänger Stipendium (Border Crossers) follows the same political agenda. It provides research grants for authors who are working on Central and Eastern European or North African topics. The supported publication should “inspire discussion and promote dialogue and mutual understanding.”<sup>32</sup>

The German Adelbert von Chamisso Prize is awarded to authors who have a cultural background other than German and who publish in German even though it is not their first – or their only – language. In the first years of its existence, the Chamisso Prize

---

<sup>30</sup> The German Adelbert von Chamisso Prize, sponsored by the Bosch foundation, grants 15,000 € for the first place and includes Swiss, Austrian or German citizens. The Austrian exil-literaturpreis is financially much smaller (3,000 €) and only addresses Austrian authors.

<sup>31</sup> “Border Crossers” <http://www.bosch-stiftung.de/content/language2/html/1100.asp>. Bosch Stiftung.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. Two of the writers included in this project (Melinda Nadji Abonji and Olga Grjasnowa) are recipients of the Grenzgänger Stipend.

honored writers who did not find recognition in the mainstream. Since then, recipients like Emine Sevgi Özdamar have become an integral part of Germany's literary scene, a development discussed in greater detail in the following section. One might argue that special literary prizes like the Chamisso Prize became superfluous once many Prize winners entered the mainstream, or even suspect that conservative critics use these awards to keep immigrant writers in a place that is securely outside of the national literary canon. However, the Chamisso Prize has transcended this traditional migrant-native author divide by honoring writers like Jean Krier (Chamisso Prize winner in 2011), a multilingual non-migrant Luxembourgian poet, who cannot be utilized for a discussion that keeps "migrant's literature" outside the mainstream.

#### 4.4. Contemporary Multilingual Literature In Germany

To situate contemporary multilingual literature in Germany, the following brief history of the literature in question will show a process of "normalization" concerning its place on the book market, starting out as a niche phenomenon called "guest worker literature" to becoming part of the literary mainstream in the twenty-first century.

In 1979, the Institute for "Deutsch als Fremdsprache" at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University in Munich called for literary works from authors of non-German origin living in Germany. The first calls for entries ("Deutschland fremdes Land," "Als Fremder in Deutschland bleiben") showcase the legal situation of immigrants: Germany was a foreign land and immigrants were strangers. This contest was the forerunner of the Chamisso Prize. Since the first prizes were given out in 1985, journalistic and scholarly critics have struggled over the appropriate terminology with which to categorize that literature, a question that has not been resolved.

In the late twentieth century “guest worker literature,” “foreigners’ literature,” “intercultural literature” and later “migrants’ literature” were most commonly used to name the works in question (Dörr 59). Literary scholar Leslie Adelson rightly criticizes these terms because they clearly separate immigrants’ writings from those of native German authors and categorize them as a “foreign addendum” that is not considered a legitimate part of the German literary scene (Migrants’ Literature 382-3). Just as immigrants in the 1980s were considered short-term guest workers, their literature was perceived as an addition, rather than as an integral part of the literary production in Germany. In the 1980s, the predominant view in society was that guest workers were in Germany temporarily and for purposes of work only. Hence, the authors of that decade wrote as foreigners and the terminology applied to their literature clearly distinguished it from contemporary German literature.

By the 1990s, it became clear that the “guest workers” were there to stay. This sparked both right wing violence as well as attempts at increased dialogue between the cultures. In line with the latter, non-native authors gained more public and scholarly attention. Turkish-born writer Özdamar’s works, however, mark a historical moment in the “naturalization” of multilingual literature: the unpublished manuscript for *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei* won her the prestigious Ingeborg Bachmann Prize in 1991. The critical discussion of Özdamar’s work however ethnicized it in a way that set it at the margins of “German literature.” Her writing, style and text were “cast as representative of the Turkish other” (Jankowsky 263), and critics understood Özdamar’s “victory as good will gesture to encourage other non-native speakers” (Jankowsky 267). Still, Özdamar was the first migrant writer to ever win this literary award, and the jury’s decision to

confer it to her has been understood as a “Paradigmenwechsel in der deutschsprachigen Literatur von Migranten” [“paradigm change in literature by migrants in the German language”] (Hielscher 196). The paradigm change is twofold: first, aesthetically, Özdamar’s literature is not trying to integrate, but rather to develop a distinctive voice by deliberately mixing the German “base language” with Turkish. And second, *Karawanserei* also marks a change in the book market, since it was published by one of the most prestigious German publishing houses, Kiepenheuer & Witsch. However, scholars like Adelson still criticize immigrants’ writings’ position in the literary canon in the late twentieth century by arguing that the terminology of *Migrantenliteratur* presents this body of literature as a superfluous “enrichment to ‘native’ German literature” (Opposing 305).

The beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century saw major immigration reforms that for the first time defined a formal process of naturalization and that caused a heated debate about the “German guiding culture.” Bassam Tibi, Professor of Political Science in Göttingen, first used the term “European Leitkultur” in 1998 to describe the norms and values of the European cultural community. Before the 2000 elections, CDU party member Friedrich Merz coined the phrase “Deutsche Leitkultur”: immigrants should be willing to accept

German values and norms in addition to acquiring Germany's language and recognizing its laws.<sup>33</sup>

Much of the multilingual literature of that decade, however, opposes the political discussions about the "German guiding culture" and leaves themes of migration and the homeland – host-land dichotomy behind. Many of the very contemporary authors rewrite and dispute earlier categories of minority writing, and it becomes increasingly hard to designate their work as "migrant literature." The authors' opposition to being defined by their migratory past increasingly blurs the distinction between "German" and "non-German" literature. They are no longer the "objects of a political discussion" but active participants (Köstlin 377). The award of prestigious literary prizes like the German Book Prize and the Ingeborg Bachmann Prize indicates their increasingly mainstream position.<sup>34</sup> The "Chamisso Literature" of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is best characterized by an increasing internationalization, both in setting and language. In line with the reluctance of the authors to be defined primarily by their migratory past, the

---

<sup>33</sup> For a detailed discussion of the events surrounding the "Leitkulturdebatte," see Hartwig Pautz's "The Politics of Identity in Germany: The Leitkultur Debate." Russian-German writer Wladimir Kaminer comes close to a definition of what German leading culture is. He suggest that he and his family could serve as "Leitfiguren" or "Leitwürstchen" (leading hot dog) since his wife is "a member of the kindergarten PTO, they are for absolute quiet after 11pm ... they like eating hotdogs, and they regularly watch the *Harald Schmidt Show* (the German equivalent of the *Tonight Show*)" (Wanner, *Out of Russia*, 59).

<sup>34</sup> In 1999, the Ingeborg Bachmann Prize went to Hungarian-German Terézia Mora; in 2009, Romanian-born author Herta Müller won the Nobel Prize, in 2010 the German and the Swiss Book Prize went to Hungarian-Swiss writer Melinda Nadj Abonji; in 2011 the Swiss Book Prize went to Rumanian-Swiss writer Catalin Dorian Florescu; in 2012 the Ingeborg Bachmann Prize went to Russian-German writer Olga Borissowna Martynowa; and this years Ingeborg Bachmann Prize was awarded to Ukrainian-German writer Katja Petrowskaja.



theme of migration is losing importance in their works.<sup>35</sup> The first works of younger writers, however, often still deal with migration.

This project looks at multilingual literature in the twenty-first century, at a time in which scholarly and journalistic debates have begun to present this literature as a ‘natural’ part of the literary scene and the literary works that have left questions of belonging to national literatures and languages behind, whereas political and social trends in Europe continue to move in the opposite direction in order to reinforce the notion of individual nation-state.

---

<sup>35</sup> As noted earlier in this chapter, writers with an Eastern and Central European background have turned to more traditional narratives again (Melinda Abonji’s *Tauben fliegen auf*, Terézia Mora *Seltsame Materie*, Saša Stanišić *Wie der Soldat das Grammophon repariert* and Marica Bodrožić’s *Tito ist tot*). It will be interesting to see if Abonji and Stanišić follow in Mora’s footsteps and turn towards less traditional topics in their future publications.

## **2 The Staple Remover. Literature and Linguistics.**

The Japanese German writer Yoko Tawada states that foreign languages work like a staple remover for her. Whereas words in the mother tongue cling so closely to thoughts that it is hard to enjoy language in a playful way, the foreign language offers a loophole: it unstaples everything that sticks together in the first language (Tawada 15). Tawada's bilingualism offers her a different perspective on language and enables her to take a critical distance towards it that makes room for language games. The foreign language opens up a space for creative and intellectual play. Similarly, reading multilingual literature can work like a "staple remover" for the native speaker. It can help to create a critical distance to the material of the text, to see the dimensions of language that are too natural to realize otherwise.

Tawada's observations are borne out by linguistic research that shows that multilinguals do actually process language differently. In this first chapter I offer an overview of linguistic approaches multilingualism, aiming to show how a background in linguistics can inform literary analysis. I first describe earlier attempts to combine literary criticism and linguistics and argue that linguistic insights can provide a valuable and often overlooked tool in the analysis of multilingual literature. Linguistics can help to draw the attention of the literary scholar to the "raw material" of the text and to the specific function of its language (section 1). By drawing on linguistic research and multilingual writers' accounts of their relationship to language, this chapter then points to the "resources" that multilinguals bring to their texts (section 2 and 3). Finally, this chapter discusses in greater detail one of the obvious results of multilingual resources: it turns to techniques of language mixing and considers the role of code switching in

spoken and in written language (section 4 and 5). By documenting what multilingualism involves and how language mixing works and what it looks like, this chapter sets up the working definitions that I use in my analyses of multilingual literature in subsequent chapters.

### 1. Why Linguistics and Literature?

Can the application of linguistic insights to literary criticism be fruitful? To answer this question, I turn to an earlier attempt at combining literary and linguistic scholarship – “linguistic criticism” or “stylistics” from the nineteen sixties and seventies – to show its limitations and possible solutions for its shortcomings. I argue that linguistics provides the literary critic with tools with which s/he can ground a literary analysis in the verbal structure of the multilingual text. Linguistics as “the subject whose task is precisely to show how language works” (Halliday 70) seems to offer the most appropriate framework for reading a literature in which language takes center stage.

The focus on language in literature is not new.<sup>36</sup> Neither is the application of modern linguistics to literary analysis: In the nineteen sixties and seventies, literary

---

<sup>36</sup> Philology, defined as a “slow reading that aims at establishing and commenting upon documents” (Ziolkowski 6) or “the science which teaches us what language is” (Peile) focuses on language as used in literature. The philologist analyzes “words, which make up a language, not merely to learn their meaning, but to find out their *history*” (Peile 5, my italics). In contrast to modern linguistics, philology is interested in the *historical* development of languages and focuses on classical languages like Greek and Latin (Watkins 22). In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Ferdinand de Saussure made a clear distinction between philology and modern linguistics: instead of the diachronic study of language, Saussure suggested to study language synchronically. Further Saussure believed that philology “is too slavishly attached to the written word” (in Watkins 21). My project does not stand in a philologist tradition but rather builds upon modern linguistic research concerned with the spoken word (multilingualism, code switching) and applies the findings to the written word.

critics like Roger Fowler, Jonathan Culler and Donald Freeman turned to linguistics.<sup>37</sup> They wanted to incorporate the methods of linguistics into the practice of literary criticism and planned to study literary language utilizing concepts, terminology and methods of modern linguistics. They argued that style comes from the “manipulation of variables in the structure of a language” with the underlying assumption that there are constant and variable features within “the language as a whole” (Fowler, *Essays*, 15). But linguistic criticism was only concerned with linguistic features on the level of form, and the context was not of interest. Fowler and his fellow linguistic critics limited the range of inquiry too much, and avoided “discussions of anything but the analysis of the structure of the text” (Miller et al. 2). They were not concerned with the functions of language nor did they relate linguistic structures to social context (Miller et al. 3)

Some of the linguistic critics pointed to these limitations themselves: noting that linguistic analysis alone is not enough, and that one needs to understand the text as a mode of discourse (Fowler, Traugott and Culler). Since literature is a means of communication between the writer and the reader, and texts are part of a society’s communicative practice, what is missing in linguistic criticism is the concern with the user and uses of language. Today, an approach interested in the function of language has to bring the political and the social aspects of language back in. But linguistic criticism was not concerned with the relation between the reader, the author and the text; it only viewed the text as an object and not “as an act of communication between a writer and a public” (Traugott 255).

---

<sup>37</sup> See for example, Roger Fowler’s *Linguistic Criticism*, Jonathan Culler’s *Structuralist Poetics. Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature*, or Donald Freeman’s *Linguistics and Literary Style*.

What linguistic criticism in the nineteen-sixties had to offer was pure stylistic description. This project seeks to pick up where the linguistic critics stopped. Although the close readings in the following chapters are based on the foundations of linguistic insights, they also consider multilingual literature as an act of communication between a multilingual writer and a mono- or multilingual reader and the impact of the production preconditions on multilingual literature.

Further, a study of multilingual literature concentrating on the reasons for code switching could help answer the ongoing discussion of *why* multilinguals code switch and what the *effects* of code switching are. Although this question is very important, it cannot be addressed fully in the present work.

While literary criticism is, of course, not dependent on linguistics, linguistic research on multilingualism can contribute to our understanding of literary works by helping us to become aware of why we experience contemporary multilingual literature as unique. Likewise, a literary analysis of multilingualism might be able to contribute to linguists' understanding of the reasons for code switching. Especially for a field in which authors use their multilingual background as linguistic resources in their writing, a field in which language contact phenomena are a distinguished feature, it seems fruitful to turn to linguistics as a conceptual framework. Linguistics can help literary critics to find words for describing the – previously only intuitively sensed - difference, by providing

them with terms with which they can express how the experience of a work is in part derived from its textual structure.<sup>38</sup>

## 2. The Outsider's Perspective: What does Multilingualism entail for the Relation to Language?

What can linguistic research on multilingualism tell us about language processing? This section demonstrates that multilingual individuals typically activate all languages, and it shows that multilinguals have a critical distance to language in general and can perceive it as constructed. Linguists believe that multilinguals have a wider range of strategies for processing both linguistic and nonlinguistic information and that multilingualism brings about cognitive advantages (Beaujour 13). Correspondingly, neuroscientists (see for example Jenny Crinion and Karl Kim) have documented that multilingualism profoundly affects the brain: it leads to operational and structural changes in the regions in our brains that are dedicated to language processing and executive functions.<sup>39</sup>

### 2.1. Interaction of Languages

Multilingual individuals typically activate both languages when communicating; when they are using only one of the two languages, the other one remains active and available (Bialystok, *Bilingualism and Development* 53). This fact leads the literary

---

<sup>38</sup> Since some linguists already turned to literary works as their data it seems that this is a two-way street where literary critics take into account linguistic insights into multilingualism and linguists consider literary text as valid sources for their research. See for example Aneta Pavlenko's "Autobiographic Narratives as Data in Applied Linguistics," "Negotiation of Identities in Cross-Cultural Autobiographies" and "Language Learning Memoirs as a Gendered Genre," Laura Callahan "Spanish/English Codeswitching in a Written Corpus" and Claire Kramsch's "The multilingual subject."

<sup>39</sup> See for example "Language control in the bilingual brain" (Jenny Crinion, et al.) and "Distinct cortical areas associated with native and second languages" (Karl Kim, et al.).

scholar to the question of how the constant activation of two languages influences the writing process.

Neuroscientist Ellen Bialystock explains what is going on in a multilingual's brain as follows: "If you have two languages and you use them regularly, the way the brain's networks work is that every time you speak, both languages pop up and the executive control system has to sort through everything and attend to what's relevant in the moment. Therefore the bilinguals use that system more, and it's that regular use that makes that system more efficient" (Bialystok, *Bilingual Advantage*). New neuroimaging technologies show that the multilingual brain appears to be completely rewired because of constant choices the speakers have to make. And not only does the first language influence languages learned later in life, there is also evidence that the second language influences the mother tongue. This demonstrates that adults' first language systems are "neither stable nor impermeable" as was once thought (Pavlenko, L2 178). This insight might explain the overarching similarities between multilingual literature written through the filter of a second language and multilingual literature written in a first language. I will discuss the direct interaction of multiple languages in communication – code switching – in greater detail in section 4.

The activation of the second language has been tested with eye tracking experiments and functional magnetic resonance imaging of Broca's area (Spivey et al.

281).<sup>40</sup> Notably, the use of MRI scans to test the activity in the brain of multilingual speakers is described in detail in one of the novels I discuss in this project. In Terézia Mora's *Alle Tage*, a team of linguists, neurologist and radiologist maps the protagonist's brain (Mora, Tage 465). They are interested in the "motoric and auditory language areas in the left temporal lobe and in the frontal lobe, also known as Broca's and Wernicke's areas" (Mora, Tage 490).

Multilingual individuals thus have more strategies for processing *linguistic* information because they constantly juggle multiple languages in their heads. They further have a broader range of strategies for processing *nonlinguistic* information, presumably because the "process that manipulates attention to one language or the other during language use may be the same cognitive functions that are responsible for managing attention to any set of systems or stimuli" (Grosjean 224). Learning how to cope with constant interference has documented benefits: Children growing up with more than one language are better equipped to learn abstract rules and to ignore irrelevant information; and there is evidence that multilingualism delays dementia (see for example Bialystock, Bilingualism and Aging).

## 2.2. Language Awareness

Linguists further believe that multilingual individuals can analyze language as an abstract system better (Romaine 112). Multilingualism enhances "metalinguistic skills,"

---

<sup>40</sup> Multilingual participants in an eye tracking study hear words in one language, while seeing objects that share initial phonetic features of the other language. For example, Russian-English bilinguals hear the English word "marker" while seeing a "marka" (Russian stamp) among multiple other objects. The participants look at the "interlingual distractor" significantly more often than at other objects that do not share phonetic features with the audio input. Thus, "bilingual listeners do not appear to be able to deactivate the irrelevant mental lexicon when in a monolingual situation... spoken language automatically activates both mental lexicons in parallel" (Spivey et al. 283).



which linguist Suzanne Romaine defines as “the use of language to talk or reflect about language,” and the ability to step back “from the comprehension or production of language to analyze its form” (Romaine 114). The heightened language awareness and the ability to analyze language as an abstract system might explain the sheer quantity of references to language and the presence of language and communication as leitmotifs in multilingual literature.

Linguist Laura Callahan adapts the term “metalinguistic” for her analysis of multilingual literature. Callahan detects a high proportion of references made to linguistic competence and language choice in texts that contain Spanish-English code switching (Callahan 3). She refers to those instances as “metalinguistic references.” Similarly, Evelyn Ch’ein notes an interest in “defining and theorizing” about language in Asian-American multilingual literature. She explains that interest with the “outsider status” of multilinguals who can see language “as ‘art,’ since they can communicate efficaciously in other languages” (Ch’ein 29). The close readings of the multilingual texts in my project take up Callahan’s term of “metalinguistic references” for the thematic concern with language in general. They will show how multilingual authors use language “to talk or reflect about language,” and how their ability to step back from the close connection between signifier and signified helps them to see “language as art” and use it creatively.

### 2.3. Critical Distance

In *Bilingualism in Development*, Ellen Bialystock argues that multilingualism has a positive effect on logical skills. This assumption was recently supported by a team of psychologists lead by Boas Keysar, who showed that using a second language reduces

inconsistencies in decision-making,<sup>41</sup> most likely because a second language provides greater cognitive and emotional distance than the first language does.<sup>42</sup> The second language provides greater distance because it is less grounded in the emotional system and because it is processed less automatically than a first language.<sup>43</sup> Words in a second language carry less emotional weight. Thus thinking in a second language can reduce emotional reactions – and cognitive inconsistencies, as Keysar’s team has shown. The research results are of interest to my analysis because they suggest a difference between emotional attachment to first and second language, and I am interested in finding out if that difference impacts the multilingual writer’s use of first or second language.

This “foreign-language effect” does not depend on a particular native - or second language. The psychologists tested Korean and English as native languages and Japanese, French, Spanish and English as foreign language. In all scenarios, thinking in a second language improved decision-making. In showing that thinking in a second language leads to increased reflection and thought, and that inconsistencies vanish if we think in a

---

<sup>41</sup> Participants were given the option of *saving* 200 out of 600 lives, or choosing a scenario that could either save all 600 lives or none at all. In their native language, nearly 80 percent chose the safe option for “saving lives.” When the same problem was rephrased in terms of *losing* lives, however, many more participants prefer the all-or-nothing chance rather than accept a guaranteed *loss* of 400 lives. Only 47 percent chose the safe option when framed in terms of “loss.” The decision making process was clearly inconsistent when participants had to make choices in their native language. But when native English speakers had to deal the same problem in a second language, this inconsistency vanishes: for both frames – saving lives or losing lives – only 40 percent chose the safer option.

<sup>42</sup> The results were first published in April 2012 in an article (“The Foreign-Language Effect: Thinking in a Foreign Tongue Reduces Decision Biases”) in *Psychological Science*.

<sup>43</sup> Note that code switching is used in counseling settings: linguists report that patients switch to the second language when they want to distance themselves from emotions. In such a scenario, code switching works as a defense mechanism (Heredia et al. 168). The second language works as filter and can shield the patient from uncomfortable material.

second language, Keysar's experiment indicates that multilingualism has a positive effect on logical thinking.

In line with Keysar's results, multilingual individuals often report a greater awareness of the relativity of language and a more critical approach to language (Beaujour 16). Note, for example that multilingual writer Eva Hoffman argues that each of her languages "makes the other relative" (Hofmann, 273). This insight might explain the alienation, detachment or disconnection from language that is a reoccurring theme in multilingual literature. The distance to language and the reflection about it is an important component of applied linguist Claire Kramsch's "Multilingual Subject" (Multilingual 116). Kramsch believes that multilinguals maintain an outsideness that allows them to play with meanings in language. According to Kramsch, multilinguals retain a critical distance to language; they have a "double sensibility," and retain a "dual perspective" (Multilingual 189). Drawing on Ferdinand de Saussure's definition of language as made up of signs, Kramsch understands language as "a symbolic system made of linguistic signs." For the monolingual speaker, linguistic signs are so strongly attached to the objects they refer to, that they seem to be part of the object itself. For multilingual speakers, however, the linguistic sign is arbitrary (Multilingual 6). Rather than assuming a concept of the fixed meaning, multilinguals are aware of the complicated relation of representation and signification in language and the inherent ambiguity of language. This scientific insight correlates very well with Tawada's metaphoric use of the staple remover: a foreign language helps to "un-staple" (destabilize, deconstruct) the connection between word and meaning. Since multilingual speakers have different semantic networks associated with words in all of their languages, the critical distance to language

in combination with their linguistic status can enhance flexibility and creativity even in their native tongue (Romaine 114).

#### 2.4. Conclusion

In summary, psychologists have supported that multilingualism enhances logical skills in showing that using a second language reduces cognitive inconsistencies (Keysar et al.); neuroscientists have shown that multilingual individuals process language differently (Crinion et al., Kim et al.); and linguists argue that multilingual speakers have greater “metalinguistic skills” and keep a critical distance to language (Romaine, Kramsch). This raises the question in what ways the different language processing strategies of multilingual individuals influences the production of multilingual writers.

### 3. The Insider’s Perspective: What does Multilingualism entail for Creative Writing?

The following section shows what the findings regarding language *processing* entail for language *production*, or in our specific case creative writing. What can multilingual writers tell us about their relationship to language? How do multilingual writers perceive the critical distance to language? Does the critical distance to language offer opportunities for multilingual writers? What are the “resources” or the linguistic “bonus” they bring to their texts? To answer these questions, this section considers the self-concept of multilingual writers. Needless to say that interviews, autobiographical accounts and critical literature by multilingual writers have to be taken with a grain of salt. The accounts might be self-stylized or just as literary as their creative writing itself. But in combination with linguistic research on multilingualism and close textual analysis of the literary works, the multilingual writer’s self-concept can help detect the resources that multilingual writers bring to their work. And while multilingual writer Saša Stanišić

would maintain that it is a myth that “an author who doesn’t write in his mother tongue enriches the language he has chosen to write in” – including himself – the following will demonstrate that many other authors do consider their multilingualism a bonus for their literary work, regardless of which language they are writing in.

### 3.1. Interaction of Languages

As already mentioned, for a multilingual all languages are constantly active and available (Bialystok 53). Kramsch argues that the interaction of languages is an advantage for creative writing: “The absence of what is postponed continues to work, obscurely, on the chosen language, suffusing it, even better, contaminating it with an *autrement dit* that brings it unexpected eloquence” (Multilingual 16). Romanian-born writer Herta Müller refers to this “*autrement dit*” as “*Hintersinn*,” a deeper meaning that being familiar with the Romanian language offers; and she infuses her German language with Romanian elements in direct translation (Bozzi 121). Thus, no matter what language choice multilingual authors make, the other language is always there, hidden under the surface of the base language of their works.

While the critical distance to language might be greater if the writer decides to write in his or her second language, all multilingual writers benefit from having different semantic networks associated with words in their languages that interfere with the language they chose for the text. Multilingual writer Eva Hoffmann describes how her first language, Polish, is affected by her second language, English: “When I speak Polish now, it is infiltrated, permeated, and inflected by the English in my head. Each language modifies the other, crossbreeds with it, fertilizes it.” (Hofmann 273). Likewise, Croatian-German writer Marica Bodrožić, states that the ambiguous [*doppelbödig*] qualities of her

first language, Croatian, only became apparent after learning a second language, German (Bodrožić 95). In the same way, Tawada explains “how the creative presence of a foreign language shatters one’s unquestioning belief in the naturalness of one’s native language” (Brand 4). Likewise, Herta Müller describes the impact that the second language has on the first language when she states “the mother tongue is evaluated” by a language learned later in life, and words that were understood as matter of course suddenly turn into something coincidental (in Bozzi 120).

### 3.2. Language Awareness

The Polish-born novelist Eva Hoffman defines herself through her multilingualism: “Like everybody, I am the sum of my languages ... though perhaps I tend to be more aware than most of the fractures between them” (Hoffman 237). Being aware of these fractures, Hoffman perceives her multilingualism as a bonus that fertilizes all of her languages. Japanese-German writer Yoko Tawada likewise talks about the “broken relationship” to her first language Japanese and languages in general. Similarly, this “broken relationship” offers opportunities for Tawada: “You become a word fetishist. Every part or even every letter becomes touchable, you no longer see the semantic unity, and you don’t go with the flow of the speech. You stop everywhere and take close-ups of the details. The blow-up of the details... shows completely new pictures of a familiar object” (Writing 150). For Tawada, being multilingual means being obsessed with language and becoming aware of the arbitrariness of lexical signs. Instead of “going with the flow,” single letters catch her attention and help her to step back from the familiar. Likewise, Hoffman loses “faith in... absoluteness” and is never able to take “any set of meanings as final” (Hoffman 275).

### 3.3. Writing through the Filter of a Second Language

Multilingual authors report that their linguistic status helps them to not slip into usual habits. It can force them to reflect on what they want to express and can make their writing more intentional. Russian-German writer Vladimir Vertlib describes writing in his second language German as both a loss and a gain. While emotions are more directly expressed in his mother tongue Russian, German plays a more cerebral and abstract role. Writing in the second language offers the necessary distance that allows creative use of language: “Not a single German word has completely lost its strangeness for me. But this also provides the opportunity to give a new, sometimes surprising significance to seemingly well-known and yet not entirely familiar words or to place them into an unusual context” (In Wanner, *Out of Russia*, 83). The missing link between words and the conventional meaning in a second language puts the arbitrariness of language in focus and can lead to new perspectives and associations. Writing in the second language can offer the writer the opportunity to separate from the immediate meaning-bearing experience of language; the author can take a step back from the familiar; and multilingual literature carries that experience to the reader and forces him into a heightened awareness of the limits of language. Slavicist Gabriella Safran even argues, “only by detaching one self from a native speaker’s immediate perception of meaning can one become a verbal artist” (Safran 256). Of course, many great monolingual writers are “true verbal artists;” but perhaps this art comes more easily to multilingual writers because they lack the immediate “perception of meaning” of the native speaker and are constantly aware of the inherent ambiguity of language. A multilingual perspective challenges established meanings and conventional forms of expression; it can force both

reader and writer to focus on language – or to “take close-ups of details” as Tawada puts it. Multilingual writers are more aware of the “abstract and disembodied” quality of language (Tawada, *Writing* 150). Just as multilingual speakers are better equipped to avoid inconsistencies when making decisions in their second language, a multilingual writer may be better equipped to resist conventional meanings.

Psychologists have shown that *thinking* in a second language reduces inconsistencies in decision making because words in the second language are less emotional. Emotions in the first language come from “affective linguistic conditioning in childhood, when languages are learned with the full involvement of the limbic system and emotional memory,” whereas languages learned later in life rely to a greater degree on explicit memory and “produce weak responses” (Pavlenko, *Bilingual* 22). *Writing* in a second language can have a very similar effect. The second language can offer writers “new, ‘clean’ words, devoid of anxieties and taboos ... and allows them to gain full control over their words, stories, and plots” (*Bilingual*, 20). Writing in a second language can free the author from the commonplace connotations and emotions associated with the first language. The multilingual writer Rosario Ferré states that English “chills” her, and gives her the necessary distance to deal with certain very hot topics and still feel in control (in Callahan 111). Russian-born writer Andre Makine writes that, “Russian was too loaded subjectively ... The French language is a tool that is not mired in routine things ... It is a literary language, free from the prosaic and the vulgar. That fact creates something like a space for freedom between me and my text” (in Safran 249). Makine’s statement highlights the critical distance, which linguists like Romaine and Kramsch attribute to a multilinguals’ relation to language. Just as Vertlib ascribes his second



language, German, with a more cerebral and abstract role, Makine perceives French as a tool that enables him to write less automatically and offers emotional distance. Similarly, Yugoslavian-born writer Josip Novakovich believes that writing is a form of translating thoughts into stories and when “writing in the foreign language, the aspect of translation is magnified. Every phrase from home can be turned, cliché examined, and repaired in the process” (15-16). Just as Tawada perceives her multilingualism as an opportunity for her work, Novakovich appreciates the critical distance that allows him to take a step back and examine his writings.

### 3.4. Conclusion

Multilingual writers have a peculiar relation to language. Some writers perceive their relation to language as fractured and describe the distance to language mostly in critical terms: “The problem is that the signifier has become severed from the signified. The words I learn now don’t stand for things in the same way they did in my native tongue” (Hoffmann 106). Others describe their relation to language as broken but take pleasure in the results of this broken relationship, seeing it as beneficial for their work. For Tawada, being multilingual means being obsessed with language and becoming aware of the arbitrariness of lexical signs. Instead of “going with the flow,” single letters catch her attention and help her to step back from the familiar. Likewise, Hoffman loses “faith in... absoluteness” and is never able to take “any set of meanings as final” (Hoffman 275). Interestingly, the Polish American writer Eva Hoffman learned English, her second language and the language of her creative and scholarly work, at a much younger age than Japanese German writer Yoko Tawada. Thus, age of onset does not necessarily make a difference in a multilingual writer’s relation to his or her second

language. The critical distance to language helps multilingual writers not slip into usual habits, it makes their writing more intentional and makes room for creative use of language.

Writing in a second language can further free the author from emotions associated with the first language. Tawada states that when using a foreign language “all taboos have suddenly disappeared” and it becomes possible to talk about memories that were cut off over time, in a foreign language (in Brand 8). And multilingual writers like Makine portray their linguistic status in purely positive terms and describe it as a “space for freedom,” thus affirming that multilingualism can be an opportunity for creative writing. Others (Müller, Tawada, Bodrožić) describe the interaction of languages as a resource, or linguistic bonus for creative writing. Thus, the final two sections will turn to the direct interaction of languages in multilingual spoken and written discourse.

#### 4. Code Switching

As established in earlier sections, multilingualism brings about cognitive advantages because multilingual speakers typically activate all languages when communicating and cope with the constant interference of the other languages (Bialystock, Spivey et al.) But multilingual individuals do not necessarily keep their languages apart when they speak; they switch between them. In order to map the terrain for a discussion of code switching in writing (section 5), this section discusses what code switching means and what it looks like in spoken discourse.

Code switching has been understood as one of the distinguishing features of multilingualism. It has been defined as any combination of words or phrases in two languages. My project works with Grosjean’s definition of code switching as the alternate

use of two languages. A code-switch is a complete shift to another language for a word, a phrase or even a full sentence, followed by a shift back into ‘base’ language (Grosjean 52). Linguists like Peter Auer define a “competent bilingual” as someone who does not necessarily have the same competence as a monolingual speaker in both languages but has “a linguistic competence of its own, distinguished by ... code switching” (Auer 91). Likewise, Grosjean believes that a bilingual individual has “a unique and specific linguistic configuration. The coexistence and constant interaction of the languages in the bilingual have produced a different but complete language system” (Grosjean 75). A Japanese German bilingual’s competence is thus not the sum of a Japanese plus a German monolingual, instead his or her competence combines the knowledge of the two languages and is qualitatively different from a Japanese or German monolingual speaker. Language mixing and the constant interaction of languages are thus an inherent part of a multilingual’s competence and code switching is *not* necessarily a consequence of the multilingual’s insecurities in one or all of his or her languages. Rather, it “follows functional and grammatical principles and is a complex rule-governed phenomenon” (Heredia et al. 164).

While linguists used to dismiss code switching as random and deviant (Weinrich), empirical observation shows that code switching is grammatically constrained: bilinguals tend to switch “at certain syntactic boundaries and not at others” (Poplack, Code-switching 2062). A switch can take place at any level of a linguistic structure. A switch that occurs at sentence boundaries, for example, is called intersentential switch, (Romaine 4). Regarding single sentence units, nouns are switched most frequently, because they are comparatively free of syntactic restrictions (Romaine

124-125). When a single element is inserted, it is adapted to the grammatical rules of the base language. Code switching within the confines of a single sentence, called intra-sentential switching, has attracted the most attention from linguistic research (Poplack, Code-switching 2062). Intra-sentential code switching is considered as characteristic for fluent bilingual speakers in a bilingual and bicultural community and understood as the “most intimate type of code-switching, that characterizes stable bilingual communities” (Mendieta-Lombardo et al. 569).

Linguist John Lipski applies the differentiation of intersentential and intrasentential switches to written texts. Literature with intersentential code switches – at phrase or sentence boundaries – can be produced by an author “who has learned a second language late in life,” and it is impossible to establish “the true bilingual competence of the writer” from such a text. Lipski defines a work with intersentential code switches, a “handful of words” in another language “thrown in for flavor” as a monolingual text. According to Lipski, the supreme discipline is a text with intrasentential code switches. Such a text provides the “richest and most rewarding terrain for literary analysis” (Lipski 195.) It is important to note, however, that writing requires a degree of consciousness that allows the writer to manipulate language that is completely different from the spontaneous spoken word. The subsequent close readings will show that even texts that according to Lipski would be “monolingual” can nevertheless be rewarding terrain for literary analysis.

Auer, Romaine and Callahan mention the notion of style in oral code switching. According to Romaine, switching for fluent multilinguals is comparable to style shifting for the monolingual (Romaine 143). When code switching is utilized for quotations,

repetitions, interjections, emphasis, elaboration, it has many of the same functions that “are performed by monolingual speakers with the help of prosodic variation or shifts in register” (Callahan 16). Code switching can thus be understood as one more tool multilingual writers have in their stylistic repertoire. Thus, by focusing on the functions of code switching in literature, a close textual analysis could examine if the aspect of code switching for stylistic effect is magnified in the far more thought-out and edited realm of literary writing (as opposed to speech) and thus help linguists to understand the reasons for code switching in general.

### 5. Code Switching in Writing

The interaction of different languages finds a way into multilingual literature through phonetic rendering – for example the English pronunciation of the German name Darius “Därjäss! From Börlän!” (Mann 322) – and thematically through metalinguistic references made to pronunciation and accent. Equally pertinent for this project is another form of language interaction: code switching. This section first turns to existing literature on code switching in creative writing to provide a basis for the close textual readings in subsequent chapters. Second, it will discuss the inclusion or exclusion of the (potentially monolingual) reader. Third, it will touch upon the correlation between the popularity and prestige of the author and the amount of code switching in his or her work.

While there is a large amount of literature on oral code switching, little has been said about code switching in writing, and multilingual literature is generally “unexplored and under-researched” (Sebba 1). There is, however, a small body of literature that studies written multilingual discourse in comparison to spoken multilingual discourse and is interested especially in motivations for code switching. Authenticity, however, is not

my concern here. Studies that have focused on the “authenticity” of literary code switching want to find out whether literary code switching reveals similar functions to those assigned to spoken multilingual discourse (see for example Keller, Lipski, Montes-Alcala, Callahan).

Laura Callahan’s seminal work *Spanish/English Codeswitching in a Written Corpus* (2005) is one of the few book-length publications on written code switching in literature. Callahan’s main concern, however, is to show that written code switching follows the same syntactic patterns as oral code switching. She is not interested in the creative or aesthetic side of language mixing in literature. Nevertheless, her work offers a terminology with which one can approach multilingual literature. This project adapts some of Callahan’s terms to describe code switching in literary texts – for example her use of the terms “metalinguistic references,” and “embedded language,” which is the marked, unexpected choice compared to the language that provides the grammatical frame in a novel and is “unmarked” and “expected” (Callahan 12).

In his analysis of code switching in Chicano literature Gary Keller distinguishes *mimetic* code switching that mirrors spoken multilingual discourse from *literary* or *stylistic* code switching. The question of authenticity lacks significance when looking at contact phenomena in writing since texts are produced under vastly different circumstances (just consider the possibilities of editing that are simply impossible in spoken language!) Hence, my project is interested in the ways in which bilingual writers use code-switching as a stylistic device.

This project is further interested in the role of the reader in multilingual literature. Since code switching in spoken discourse has been understood as “a conversation

strategy used to establish, cross or destroy group boundaries” (Stigter 50), it can both include and exclude the reader. It can “express solidarity with an interlocutor from the same speech community,” or it can “exclude or express animosity toward an out-group member” (Callahan 77). Multilingual texts work differently for different audiences. If a reader of multilingual literature has no knowledge of both languages and cultures, the reading experience will be completely different from that of a multilingual reader. Multilingual awareness can create a dialogue, whereas the monolingual speaker “is left in a binary “us/them” situation” (Stigter 53). Translation techniques used for greater accessibility for a monolingual readership, however, can have negative effect for the multilingual reader (Callahan 110). It is interesting to note that the role of the reader of a multilingual text and a translated text are somewhat similar. When a translator intends to closely reproduce the source text, hoping to preserve the text’s characteristics, and thus adapts a ‘foreignising’ strategy, the translator can exclude the reader at times. The “excluded reader” of a translation – just like the monolingual reader of a work with a lot of language mixing – has to make his or her own way into the text. Reader-friendly translation strategies, called naturalizing or domesticating strategies, facilitate the reading process and let the reader participate without requiring any active engagement.

Looking at contemporary Chicano literature, Torres argues that multilingual texts published with a mainstream press tend to address a monolingual reader. In such a work, the foreign language is usually italicized, translated, or glossed. According to Torres, this form of multilingualism only gives the work a foreign flavor and makes the texts seem exotic. It creates mainstream expectations and reinforces monolingualism. The readers do not have to leave the “comfortable realm of [their] own complacent monolingualism. The

monolingual is catered to” (Torres 78). In multilingual literature that addresses a monolingual reader, the foreign language is there but at the same time “virtually canceled and familiarized for the monolingual through translation” (Torres 82). Torres critique might be valid for the special case of Chicano literature, which addresses a significant multilingual and multicultural readership and has been examined at Hispanic departments in the United States.<sup>44</sup> One of the reasons that there is such a rich tradition of mixed language works from Chicano writers is because they have the privilege of finding a large audience within their own community.<sup>45</sup>

Writers that address a smaller – or almost nonexistent – multilingual community have to find other techniques to satisfy both the multilingual and the monolingual reader.<sup>46</sup> For example, many of those writers for whom code switching is not an option can still play with multilingualism, and resort to literal translations of elements in the foreign language. In order to address questions of readership, marketability and publishing in the German context, this project analyses multilingual literature in “small” languages that cannot address such a large readership as Chicano literature (e.g. Hungarian and German) in contrast to works that mix more commonly taught European languages (French, English) with German and that can resort to different techniques of language mixing, assuming that a larger readership will be able to understand both the

---

<sup>44</sup> See for example Laura Callahan, Lourdes Torres, Gary Keller and Guadalupe Valdes.

<sup>45</sup> Hispanic or Latino Americans make up over 16% of the population of the United States. In comparison, people of Turkish decent, the largest immigrant group in Germany, only make up about 5% of the population.

<sup>46</sup> An example for a less well-known language in the American context is the Afghani-American writer Khaled Hosseini, who, in his first publication *The Kite Runner* (2003) always includes the monolingual English reader by translating all instances of code switching to Dari. Hosseini keeps the code-switches in italics, and sticks to single words, mostly nouns, only using a few interjections and idioms (Mahootian 206).



matrix and the embedded language. There is of course a difference in the degree of multilingualism in the potential readership of Chicano literature (multilingual and bicultural Hispanics living in the United states) in comparison to the native German readership for which French and English are school-learned languages. However, I am not concerned with the actual degree of multilingualism of the reader here. I rather want to find out how techniques of language mixing change once the embedded language is familiar to the intended reader. In fact, similar patterns in code switching to English show that the monolingual German reader is expected to be bilingual by default.<sup>47</sup>

Another important factor for the amount and technique of language mixing is the commercial success of a writer. Once a multilingual writer has established him or herself as a big player in the literary scene, it is much easier to use a significant amount of untranslated foreign language. A multilingual writer at the early stage of his or her career might have to concede to the “editor’s mandate” to italicize, translate and or use glossaries (Callahan, Ch’ein). One of the multilingual writers analyzed in this project states that after having published her second novel, her negotiating power increased immensely (Mora in *Foreigner*). Likewise, Chicano author Diaz by now has “effectively removed visual boundaries between the two languages” and his most recent publication works with whole phrases in Spanish and not just single words as in his first publication of short stories (Mahootian 205).

---

<sup>47</sup> The assumption of an inherent bilingualism can also be found in English-Spanish code-switching. In a review of Junot Diaz’ work, the New York Times critic Michiko Kakutani talks about a “streetwise brand of Spanglish that even the most monolingual reader can easily inhale.” The monolingual English reader is thus assumed to be familiar with enough Spanish to understand the code-switches.

## 6. Conclusion

I am interested in the ways in which multilingual narrators use the resources offered by their various languages and how their critical distance to language influences their writings. Guadalupe Valdes argues that the multilingual poet, “as opposed to the poet who confines himself to one language, can at any point ... choose to foreground in the language, which to him, offers the greatest possibilities” (884). What are the techniques that the authors resort to in order to embed foreign languages into their German base text? And to what extent are other languages used? How does the prevalence of a language influence whether the embedded language is italicized or not, if a glossary provides translation, if the passage in the embedded language is followed by literal translation, or if the context gives clues for the monolingual reader? How important is the establishment of a writer for the amount of untranslated material? And is there a difference in writing through the filter of second language compared to multilingual writing in mother tongue? Focusing on specific linguistic constructions in the text, I will address these questions in the close textual analysis in the following chapters. While the primary focus is on code switching in literature, this project is also interested in the direct translation of idiomatic expressions and collocations and choice of vocabulary and neologisms or new compounds that “challenge the reader’s imagination by suggesting new and concentrated meaning or casting a new light on the conventional meanings of the components” (Traugott 115).

### **3 What is Foreign and What is Familiar? Melinda Nadji Abonji and Marica Bodrožić.**

This chapter explores the ways in which multilingual writers advocate multilingualism by undermining the binaries of native and foreign language. It discusses two writers with similar language biographies: Both grew up in multilingual regions in Central Europe and came to German-speaking countries before the age of ten. In view of puberty as the critical period in second language acquisition, both writers in this chapter can be considered “early learners” (Johnson and Newport 90).

Specifically, this chapter will discuss Melinda Nadji Abonji’s work as exemplary for a literature that promotes “multilingualism and polyphony” (Abonji, Zuhause 188) alongside Marica Bodrožić’s essay *Sterne erben, Sterne färben* in which she urges her reader to lose their “fear of the unknown.” Bodrožić writes: “Don’t be afraid! Ne soyez pas crainte! The unknown has it’s own alphabet. One can learn it... The unknown is not the foreign” (Bodrožić 143). By switching to French – a foreign language for the German-speaking audience – Bodrožić puts her theory into practice.<sup>48</sup>

Even though the thematic focus on language is prominent in both Abonji’s and Bodrožić’s texts, their work is representative for a multilingual literature that might seem conservative if one were only to consider the instances of language mixing and their

---

<sup>48</sup> Bodrožić’s agenda is reminiscent of Ilija Trojanow’s *Kampfabsage* in which he writes against the fear of the “foreign” (Trojanow 12). In *Kampfabsage*, Bulgarian-German author Trojanow argues that cultures cannot exist without the “confluence” of other cultures (Trojanow 18): “Ohne Zusammenfluss keine Kultur... Nur durch die Interaktion mit dem anderen bleibt Kultur lebendig” [“Cultures cannot exist without confluence... Only through interaction with the other can a culture stay alive”] (Trojanow 18). Even though Trojanow is multilingual himself, *Kampfabsage* does not touch upon the “confluence” of multiple languages in one work and the “invigorating” effect language contact and language mixing can have.

effort to accommodate the monolingual reader. But, as I will argue in this chapter, their works is nevertheless an important contribution to multilingual literature. Both writers employ other means than language mixing in order to take a multilingual stance by asking what is foreign and what is familiar: Abonji treats the embedded foreign language just as she does passages in German dialect – italicized, and explained through context or direct translation – and thus puts the immigrant’s language on par with a “native” Swiss non-standard variety of German. Moreover, the code switching to the German dialect is translated, but passages in English are not. The question of what is foreign consequently depends on who is assumed to be reading.

Bodrožić, on the other hand, confronts the monolingual German reader with “the unknown” in the German language itself. Focusing on single words and unexpected tonal connections between them, her method to teach the monolingual reader the “alphabet of the unknown” seem to be based on Karl Kraus’ aphorism: “Je näher man ein Wort ansieht, desto ferner sieht es zurück.” [“The closer you look at a word, the more illusively it looks back at you”]. Bodrožić takes the monolingual reader as close to the German language as if s/he was looking at it through a multilingual magnifying glass and therewith opens up new, unexpected connections and associations.<sup>49</sup>

To map the terrain for a reading of Abonji’s and Bodrožić’s highly autobiographical works, this chapter first presents the writers’ language biographies (section 1). It then examines their focus on language: first their metalinguistic reflections in interviews and critical literature (section 2), and second the depictions of

---

<sup>49</sup> Note the similarity to Japanese-German writer Yoko Tawada who also focuses on the smallest language unit and states that the close-up of details shows a completely new side of a familiar object (Tawada Writing 150).

multilingualism in their work (section 3). Finally, the chapter turns to the ways in which Abonji and Bodrožić work with language. Despite the many biographic and thematic similarities between the two writers, Abonji and Bodrožić resort to different means to promote multilingualism. While code switching plays only a minor role in both oeuvres, this chapter demonstrates that their work still reflects a critical multilingual perspective (section 4).

### 1. Abonji and Bodrožić: Multilingual Right from the Start

In contrast to multilingual writers like Terézia Mora who use a pseudonym (Literaturen 30), both Melinda Nadji Abonji and Marica Bodrožić publish their works under their enigmatic names that provoke questions about their birthplace and challenge the monolingual German speaker's pronunciation. Both writers were born in multilingual regions, Abonji then immigrated to Switzerland, a country with four official languages, and Bodrožić has lived in several European countries.

Born in Dalmatia, a border region in Croatia where Serbs, Albanians, and Croats live, Bodrožić spend the first years of her life with her grandparents. When she was nine years old, she joined her mother and father who were already working in Germany. Bodrožić's family was part of the Croatian majority, but due to the close proximity of other languages in Dalmatia, Bodrožić describes her first language as a "Dalmatian dialect with Herzegovinian sprinkling" (Bodrožić, Sterne 61). Even before immigrating to Germany, where multilingualism is presumed to be the exception, Bodrožić's environment was multilingual and multicultural.

Abonji grew up in a similar environment. Her family is part of the Hungarian-speaking minority in the Vojvodina, a province in former Yugoslavia that has six official

languages (Abonji, Zuhause 183). When Abonji was five years old, she joined her parents in the German-speaking part of Switzerland. Today, she lives and works in Zurich and defines herself as a “Hungarian Serb living in Switzerland,” a definition so precise that it almost pokes fun at the confining concepts of nation states (Abonji, Zuhause 188). Interestingly, Abonji does not define herself as “Swiss” – only as a resident of Switzerland. Her strong connection to her origins might explain her choice to describe herself as a Hungarian Serb.

It goes without saying that concepts of nation and national literature are different in a multilingual state like Switzerland. In a country with four official languages, there is no such thing as *one* national literature. Four Swiss national literatures are “written simultaneously in a multitude of sharply distinct cultural regions of Switzerland, each of which has a unique cultural tradition” (Kieser 439). Writing in in the German speaking part of Switzerland places Abonji at two margins: coming from the Hungarian-speaking minority in the Vojvodina, she now writes in her second language, German. The standard German Abonji uses is again just one of two varieties in the German speaking part of Switzerland, where bilingualism is the norm given that the spoken dialect differs markedly from the written Standard German. The Swiss German dialect, however, also finds its way into Abonji’s texts and constitutes an important part of her multilingual literature.

Both Abonji and Bodrožić describe their identities and their languages as hybrid. In critical literature, the concept of the hybrid is often used indiscriminately with transnationalism, or the in-between (Fachinger, Jankowsky, Ghaussy). While Bodrožić describes her language as hybrid (“Hybrides, Gemisch” Bodrožić 97), she positions

herself decisively not in an in-between when she notes that she considers herself neither “stuck in-between her birthplace and Germany, nor to be completely assimilated” (Bodrožić 153). Abonji’s alter ego in her novel *Tauben fliegen auf*, believes that “Mischwesen,” hybrids, like herself, “are generally happier beings, because they can feel at home in multiple places without the necessity to feel at home anywhere” (Abonji, *Tauben* 160). She thus attributes the concept of hybridity with a positive aspect of not being bound to a single geographical location – and, of course, not to a single language.

## 2. Abonji and Bodrožić Reflecting on Language

Abonji and Bodrožić’s observations on language, summarized in the following section, shed light on their literary writings, which share similar ideas. In interviews and essays, both writers reflect on their experience of learning German and their literary works depict the language learning process of their characters. Abonji and Bodrožić stress the important role that reading literature played in their language acquisition and both later produce literature themselves. They talk about their multilingualism as an impetus for their literary work and the following close textual analysis will show how the “impetus” actually affects their writing. Abonji and Bodrožić further discuss the significance of music for their literature and in their works music is imagined as a realm outside of the restrictions of language.

### 2.1. Learning German

Both Abonji and Bodrožić came to German speaking countries without any knowledge of the German language. Abonji was unable to talk to the German speaking foster parents who took care of her when she first moved to Switzerland. The very concrete experience of not being able to understand or express herself taught Abonji to

listen very carefully (Abonji, Zuhause 183). Bodrožić shares the experience of verbal isolation. She describes frightening periods of speechlessness. As a child, she sometimes kept silent for days and felt as if she might completely forget how to speak (Bodrožić 43). Other multilingual writers express similar feelings: Herta Müller has expressed the fear of losing her language (in Bozzi 123) and Terézia Mora is also preoccupied with language loss (in Kasaty 247). The personal experience or fear of losing one's language might account for the thematic concern with silence and language loss in texts by multilingual writers.

Having to play a silent part – a “tree” – in a pre-school play taught Abonji the practical importance of language for integration. Even though her teacher tried to integrate her by assigning her a role, Abonji felt excluded. At the age of five, she wanted to be just like the other children who played dwarfs or princesses. She neither wanted to be the tree nor the Hungarian girl in folkloristic dresses that her parents forced her to wear, because both costumes – the tree and the Hungarian outfits – embodied her status as an outsider (Abonji, Zuhause 182). Moving to Switzerland meant being different and it meant losing her first language. But it did not take long until she discovered literature and later in life found her place in writing (Abonji, Zuhause 185).

Literature played a major role in learning German for both Abonji and Bodrožić. Bodrožić learned German with the help of books that she read as a child (Bodrožić 153) and books offered Abonji a way out of her silence. Standard German, “the language of the books” that Abonji learned at school opened up a whole new world in which she could immerse and express herself (Abonji, Zuhause 184). The schooling in standard German was an eye-opening experience for Abonji on another level: suddenly she was



not the only one struggling to learn a new language, her classmates who spoke Swiss German had to learn the standard variant like a new language, too (Abonji, Zuhause 184). Ultimately, the German language helped Abonji to feel at home in Switzerland. Bodrožić also describes the German language as an important factor in feeling at home. In her effort to make herself at home, words “were very generous. Better than people” (Bodrožić 136). Thus, both writers filled the void that the loss of the first language and their home created first with absorption of language – with books – to then later produce literature themselves and therewith find a new home in a new language.

## 2.2. Multilingualism as Impetus to Write

Abonji began to write literature while spending a summer abroad (Abonji, Finnougrisch). She was staying in Graz, Austria, where yet another variety of German – Austrian German – is spoken. Likewise, her first book-length publication *Tauben fliegen auf* was inspired by a trip to the French-speaking part of Switzerland. In an interview with the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, she states that the familiar experience of not being able to communicate with the local population in combination with strong emotional reactions to the add campaigns of the Swiss Peoples’ Party that were on display all over Switzerland encouraged her to write the novel (Haas).<sup>50</sup> The urge to write coincides with the experience of being a stranger in a place where one does not speak the “right” language, a feeling that Abonji knows all too well from immigrating to Switzerland.

---

<sup>50</sup> One poster depicts white sheep kicking a black sheep out of the Swiss flag; the slogan is “Creating security.” Another poster depicts gigantic scary looking black crows picking at a tiny Switzerland and it asks: “Open the door to abuse? No.”

Both Abonji and Bodrožić describe the German language as a major driving force for their literary career. For Abonji, standard German is a “great fortune,” in that it opens up new exciting spaces and fires her imagination (Abonji, Zuhause 184). She further describes her multilingual status as highly motivating: The tension between the two languages “is probably the most productive ... incentive” and she recognizes her multilingualism for the unsettling effect that language has on her. Abonji is constantly on the lookout for commonplace sentences and she knows all too well where language fails (Abonji, Finnougrisch). Playing with different meanings of the word “dicht” as in “dichten” [compose] or “nicht ganz dicht sein” [literally: permeable, figuratively: to be crazy] Abonji emphasizes her openness for language: “Ich würde mich gern als Dichterin bezeichnen, mir gefallen die Worte dicht, nicht ganz dicht sein, dichten, andichten. Als Mehrsprachige bin ich nicht ganz dicht, poetisch gesagt bin ich durchlässig” (Abonji, Finnougrisch). Her multilingualism makes Abonji more “permeable” or “porous” for language than a monolingual speaker and allows her to have an illicit affair with language, [“mit der Sprache gehe ich fremd,” literally: “to strange-walk with language”] (Abonji, Zuhause 190).

Similarly, Bodrožić describes her multilingual status as the basis for her artistic work. She notes that her first language, Croatian, works as an “Unterpfand,” a pledge or security that always drifts up to her writings in German. It is the presence of her first language that warrants her work in her second language. But the warranty is one-sided: Bodrožić believes that she can only produce literature in the German language; it is only the German language that enables her to “listen to her home” (Bodrožić 11). Bodrožić needs the emotional distance, the “new, ‘clean’ words” that the German language offers

her and that allow her to “gain full control over... words, stories, and plots” (Pavlenko Bilingual 20). Writing in her second language gives her the necessary distance to deal with her past. Like other multilingual writers, Bodrožić needs the “space for freedom” that the second language creates between her and her works (in Safran 249). The undercurrent of Slavic languages, however, is the reason why she started to write. Her multilingualism turned her into a person who has a story to tell (Bodrožić 11).

In contrast to Bodrožić’s clear separation of the Croatian undercurrent and German as the only language she can write in, Abonji believes that the metaphors, the sentence structure and the subtleties of the Hungarian language influence her work in German. When her readers tell her that her “German sounds like Hungarian with an underlying Swiss melody,” she has achieved her goal to depict polyphony by infusing her German base text with elements from other languages (Abonji, Zuhause 189). To recreate the melodic qualities of the Hungarian language and the Swiss German dialect in her Standard German prose might be especially appealing because it can give the reader a feeling for the polyphonic without necessarily confronting her/him directly with words in the foreign language or dialect.

And contrary to Bodrožić who believes that she cannot write in her first language, Croatian, Abonji sometimes works in her first language. While she was never schooled to write in Hungarian, she taught herself the basics. She notes that when writing in her autodidactic, incorrect Hungarian, she feels “finno-ugric,” the language family Hungarian belongs to, and realizes that the language creates a different bodily reaction than the

German language does.<sup>51</sup> Psychologists Catherine Harris, Jean Berko Gleason and Ayşe Ayçiçeği have done extensive research on the “physiological aspects of bilinguals’ emotional response,” measuring skin conductance activity via fingertip electrodes (Harris et al. 257). The researchers confirm Abonji’s portrayal of self-monitoring, namely their research shows that the body reacts differently to a first and a second language. They measured the strongest difference between words in the first and the second language for childhood reprimands (Harris et al. 262).

While other multilingual writers reject the idea that writing in a second language enriches literary production (Stanišić), both Abonji and Bodrožić specifically credit their multilingual status and their relation to their second language as the foundation for their work.

### 2.3. Language and Music

Besides multilingualism as an impetus for their literary work and the benefits of writing in a second language, both Abonji and Bodrožić stress the importance of music for their writing. The affinity to music has practical implications and explications: Abonji is a musician and works with Rap Poet and Beatboxer Jurczok 1001 and Bodrožić had always wanted to become a vocalist but “life pressed her to become a writer” (Braun).

---

<sup>51</sup> Note that bodily reactions to languages are also a common theme for the Japanese-German writer Yoko Tawada, who describes words in a foreign language as something that she can consume, or “consciously eat” because they are not part of her body (in Brand 5). Similarly, Bodrožić introduces her sister’s name, Zdravka, as a name that “causes sore muscles in the German tongue just by looking at it, even before the name is pronounced” (Bodrožić 16). These instances are extreme examples of the correlation of multilingualism and identity perception, described in greater detail in Chapter 4. Abonji’s “finno-urgic” sense of self, Tawada’s edible foreign words and the sore muscles that the name Zdravka evokes, embody how the change in language can lead to a different perception of the self that is very physical in the truest sense of the word.

Musicality also impacts Abonji's and Bodrožić's writing directly. Critics have argued that Abonji's work reaches its full potential when read out loud, so that the musicality and the rhythm of her language can be appreciated (Mazauer, Spoerri). In Abonji's *Tauben fliegen auf*, music is further imagined as a realm that has the potential to lift the curse of misunderstanding and language barriers. Similarly, Bodrožić employs musical metaphors to describe the relation between her first and second language. She can only experience a certain flow in German that is missing in her first language and thus cannot imagine writing in Croatian. But her first language has a part to play: it forms the "rhythm" or "background music" for "the choir of letters" in German (Bodrožić 14). Given the experience of language loss early in their lives, it seems only natural that Abonji and Bodrožić are interested in other forms of expression that are not bound to language. Other multilingual writers turn to fine arts instead of music: Barbara Honigmann, for example, is also a painter and Herta Müller's her poems are at the same time collages.

### 3. Metalinguistic References in Abonji's and Bodrožić's Work

Even though critics have touched upon Abonji's and Bodrožić's innovative language use (Diener, Ebel) little attention has been paid to the metalinguistic references in their work. The following section examines the thematic concern with language in Abonji's and Bodrožić's artistic work, a general feature of multilingual literature. Here, metalinguistic references are straightforward and immediately related to living in and writing in multiple languages. Specifically, in Abonji's work metalinguistic references are made to the concrete problems that are directly related to immigration: the struggle of learning a second language and the importance of language for integration. Bodrožić is

especially interested in emotional attachments to words and opportunities to express oneself in the first and second language.

### 3.1. Abonji's Tauben Fliegen Auf

Abonji's first novel, *Tauben fliegen auf*, mirrors Abonji's multilayered multilingualism: it describes a family's move from a multilingual region to a multilingual state, where they have to learn both standard and Swiss German. Before this section turns to the thematic concern with language, it will briefly touch upon the critical reception of the work that predominantly focused on Abonji's immigrant background and then briefly summarize the novel.

Published in 2010, the novel won both the German Book Prize and Swiss Book Prize. All major newspapers reviewed the novel positively, but with headlines like "Gut für Deutschland: Der Immigrationsroman erweitert unsere literarische Vorstellungskraft" [Good for Germany: An Immigration Novel expands our literary horizon"] (Radisch) or "Ein Integrations-Roman gewinnt" [An Integration-Novel Wins"] (Gauss) critics labeled *Tauben fliegen auf* as an immigration – or integration novel, emphasized the immigrant status of the author and set Abonji's work apart from "our" – the native German's – literary imagination. Critics stressed that *Tauben fliegen auf* describes the in-between: life in between two worlds (Gauss) or life between two cultures (Haas), implying that Abonji's characters never feel completely at home, neither in the Vojvodina nor in Switzerland. The focus on Abonji's immigrant background and the immigrant theme of her work was preceded by discussions about the Long List of the German Book Prize. Ten out of twenty novels on the 2010 Long List were written by authors with a migrant background. Names like Alina Bronsky, Nino Haratischwili, Nicol Ljubić, and Olga

Martynova lead critics to speculate that the nominations for the Book Prize were confused with those the Chamisso Prize, awarded to “authors whose mother tongue and cultural background are non-German” (Robert Bosch Stiftung). Some critics talked about “balkanization” and “the Eastern Turn,” while others quickly pointed to the positive side of “globalization making it into literary production in the German language” (Krekeler, Melinda).

Abonji’s first book-length publication has strong autobiographical elements and is a more traditional narrative that focuses on themes of cultural loss and transition common for migrant writers. It follows the protagonist Ildiko and her family on their journey from the Hungarian-speaking part of the Vojvodina to Switzerland and describes their struggle of trying to integrate into the Swiss society. The fourteen chapters alternate between long summer trips to their village in former Yugoslavia and their new life in Switzerland. Every summer, when Ildiko’s family drives back to her grandmother’s house in the Vojvodina, Ildiko has to make sure that nothing has changed, that everything is just as it was before. She identifies with objects in her grandmothers house that “protect her from the fear of feeling like a stranger” (Abonji, Tauben 13). The most important never-changing item seems to be a Hungarian soft drink called “Traubisoda,” the “magic potion” of Ildiko’s home country (Abonji, Tauben 15). The longing for home and the concept of the “homeland” are attached to a specific time and place: the idyllic atmosphere of Ildiko’s childhood.

Ildiko’s present life in Switzerland is less idyllic than her memories of her childhood and even though her family is said to be “well integrated” and gained citizenship several years ago (Abonji, Tauben 53), Ildiko’s mother claims that they have

not yet gained full acceptance: “Wir haben hier noch kein menschliches Schicksal, das müssen wir uns erst noch erarbeiten” [“Our fate here is not human yet, we still have to work for that”] (Abonji, Tauben 85).<sup>52</sup> In their struggle for recognition, they overcompensate by internalizing prejudices. They try to hire only Swiss citizens to work in their café, but the only people who respond to their advertisement are immigrants (Abonji, Tauben 88).

Even though Ildiko’s family tries hard to integrate, they are time and again reminded of the fact that not all natives accept them as fellow citizens: the right-wing Swiss People’s Party (Schweizerische Volkspartei, SVP) ironically plasters their café with invitations to a free breakfast and at the end of the novel, a customer smears his excrement all over the men’s bathroom. The family’s quiet acceptance of the incident leads first to Ildiko’s extreme reaction of cleaning the bathroom without gloves – since it is so obvious that this was not an accident, she decides that she does not want “any rubber in between myself and the shit” (282) – and finally to her decision to move out of her parent’s home. She then tries to make herself at home in Zurich, just like Abonji herself.

---

<sup>52</sup> Note that in Switzerland, naturalization is granted not by the central government but by individual cantons. A permanent resident can apply for citizenship if he or she has lived in the country for at least 12 years, is able to speak at least one of the four official languages, and is familiar with Swiss habits, customs and traditions. The permanent resident has to pass a naturalization exam that differs from canton to canton. In *Tauben fliegen auf*, Ildiko’s parents fail the first time they try to take the “Einbürgerungsprüfung” [naturalization exam]. After passing the second attempt, they cannot celebrate yet since their canton requires them to win the majority of the vote of the local naturalization committee: “Wir sind ja noch keine Schweizer, die Schweizer müssen erst mal noch abstimmen für uns” [We are not Swiss Citizens yet, the Swiss first have to vote for us] (150). And “Die Gemeinde, die demokratisch für uns oder gegen uns abstimmen durfte” [“The community that was to allowed to vote for or against us democratically”] (284).



### 3.1.1. Learning German

In *Tauben fliegen auf*, the parents who immigrated to Switzerland as adults struggle to learn German. Ildiko's mother complains that speaking German makes her sweat because she knows that she is making mistakes (Abonji, Tauben 149). Describing the skin conductance test that they use to measure the physiological aspects of bilingualism, Harris and colleagues explicitly mention sweating: "The automatic nervous system responds to signs of threat by preparing systems of the body to take action... Part of the overall physical response to danger is sweating of the palms and fingertips" (Harris, et al. 259). The change in bodily perception that Ildiko's mother experiences when speaking German is a very physical expression of the influence of language learning on identity perception that other multilingual writers describe as well. The negative effect that the German language has on Ildiko's parents also becomes apparent in the contrast to the neutral state in which they speak Hungarian. Ildiko notes that her parents' appearance changes completely when speaking Hungarian (Abonji, Tauben 149).

The struggle with the second language goes hand in hand with the fear of losing the first. Ildiko's father always swears in Hungarian so that "his mother tongue does not cool off" because "as long as the cursing flows, the beloved words cannot be extinct" (Abonji, Tauben 165). Here, the fear of language loss is directly related to the acquisition of another language. It seems as if the father is afraid that the second language might annihilate the first, a feeling shared by multilingual writer W.G. Sebald who is afraid that his resources in his first language might get smaller (in Jaggi).

Ildiko and her sister, however, have a very lighthearted attitude to their second language and enjoy playing games with words. One of the games consists of passing on words to each other that either rhyme or start with the same syllable: “locker!, ... Loch!” (Abonji, Tauben 27). Another language game involves “dissecting” words: “Tompá – Pat – Pam – Pot – Mot – Ma – Pa – Oma – Opa.” (Abonji, Tauben 66). Through similar sounds, Ildiko and her sister make their way from the Hungarian word for border, *tompá*, to the German words for grandma and grandpa. Living in a second language seems to have the opposite effect on first and second generation: While speaking German is a burden, and an unpleasant bodily experience for the parents, it is a game, a creative bonus for the children who learned the language at a much younger age. Harris and her collaborators also demonstrate this generational difference in the physiological aspects of using a first or a second language. Their results show that the difference in skin conductance response is significantly smaller if the second language was learned before the age of seven and measured the most significant emotional arousal associated with first language in late learners like Ildiko’s parents (Harris et al. 646).

### 3.1.2. Multilingual Background – Multilingual Future

The languages – standard German and the Swiss German dialect – that Ildiko and her family learn after immigrating to Switzerland add another layer to their multilingual background. When Ildiko leaves her village by train to move to Switzerland, she notes that the sign marking the town limit has three names on it: “ZENTA, CEHTA, SENTA.” Abonji goes on to explain that the sign not only had three languages but also two different alphabets on it: the names are written in Serbo-Croatian in Latin letters, in

Cyrillic letters and in Hungarian (Abonji, Tauben 178).<sup>53</sup> En route to her new life in a country with four official languages, the sign marking the limit of the past that she is about to leave behind reminds her of her multilingual origins.

In Switzerland, Ildiko falls in love with a Serb.<sup>54</sup> Their shared language is English and she thus adds yet another layer to her multilingualism, to her multilingual past in the Vojvodina and the diglossic present in Switzerland: “I fell in love in Hungarian, German, Serbo-Croatian, English” (Abonji, Tauben 198). When her Serbian lover sings in his mother tongue, Ildiko wants to be able to understand songs in any language: “God should have restricted his Babylonian confusion to the spoken word only” (Abonji, Tauben 197). Here, Abonji’s understanding of music as a realm beyond linguistic restrictions finds its way into her literary work.

### 3.1.3. Language and Integration

The German language and the Swiss German dialect that Ildiko’s family has to learn play a crucial role for integration. Ildiko’s parents came to Switzerland only with “one suitcase and one word.” Today, they have “a red passport with a cross on it and a gold mine,” a café in a good neighborhood (Abonji, Tauben 46). Swiss citizenship can only be gained automatically through the *ius sanguinis*, the “right of blood” but David Gramling’s concept of the *ius linguarum* or “right of language” (Linguistic, 131) also holds for Switzerland: being able to speak at least one of the four official languages is a

---

<sup>53</sup> Note that Mora takes the notion of different alphabets to the next level and actually uses Greek letters in one of her novels: “ετσι ειναι η ζωνη, said Aris Stavridis” (Mann 150).

<sup>54</sup> Analyzing Chinese-American literature, Petra Fachinger finds that relationships with people of another ethnicity are very common among the protagonists. Fachinger argues that the choice is often represented as a rebellion against family tradition and ethnic loyalty (Fachinger 40).

crucial part of the naturalization process. Some cantons even require that the applicant is able to speak the local dialect.

By focusing on the pronunciation of the non-native speakers in *Tauben fliegen auf*, Abonji points the native speaker to the small and sometimes arbitrary differences an umlaut and the like can make. Through the eyes – or the mouths – of her multilingual characters – Abonji invites her monolingual readers to a heightened perception of language. When Ildiko just arrived in Switzerland, she got lost and asked people on the street for the “Todistrass,” that nobody seemed to know until a passerby finally understood that Ildiko was asking for the “Tödistrasse.” Since then Ildiko always has to think about “this tiny difference between o or ö” (Abonji, Tauben 274).

Likewise, Ildiko’s parents make mistakes, mispronounce or change words slightly so that it takes some time to understand them: “Der Ausweis war der *Eisweis*, die Wartefrist die *Wortfrisch* und Niederlassung klang aus ihrem Mund wie *Niidärlasso*” [“An ID turned into an idea, the waiting period into wailing period and when they pronounced the word location it sounded like *lookation*”] (Abonji, Tauben 47). One of the waitresses who works for them, however, passes as Swiss because she speaks Swiss German almost fluently (Abonji, Tauben 88). Similar to the waitress, one of the regular guests in the café – an Italian who immigrated to Switzerland – only met with success because he speaks Swiss German without any accent (Abonji, Tauben 238). The correct pronunciation conceals their immigrant backgrounds and helped both the waitress and the patron to make a living in the host country. Interestingly, a novel I will discuss in chapter 3 presents a character whose flawless pronunciation enhances his strangeness and thus underlines the importance of the regional touch that can tell the interlocutor where you

are coming from – or, in the case of the waitress and the Italian immigrant, conceal where you came from.

Looking at heritage languages in the United States, Kim Potowski states that immigrant communities typically shift to the language of the host country within three generations. The language of the home country can be expected “to begin to die out with the children of immigrants, and not to be spoken well or at all by the grandchildren” (Potowski 4). While Ildiko and her sister are still able to speak Hungarian, the parents are unsure of their command of their mother tongue. Thinking that Ildiko did not understand, her father translates the Hungarian collocation “*Hülye csíny*” [stupid prank] for her: “Ein *Streik*, ein dummer *Kinderstreik*, sagt er” (Abonji, Tauben 100). But he confuses the German “Streik” [strike] with “Streich” [prank]. The close tonal connection between “Streik” and “Streich” destabilizes established meanings of the German language and, at the same time puts more weight on the “prank” that was rather an assault against, or a boycott of, Ildiko’s family. Thus, the mispronunciation is in fact much closer to reality than what Ildiko’s father intended to say. Similarly, the parents pronounce the German abbreviation for the flat share – “WG” – that Ildiko wants to move to as “*Wegge* (because the word does not even exist in Hungarian!)” (Abonji, Tauben 200). The mispronunciation reminds the German reader of “weggehen” [to leave)] or “Wege” [paths] and embodies the parent’s fears of losing their daughter. Again, the parents “mistake” is much closer to reality than the correct pronunciation of “WG.”

While mistakes and mispronunciation put a strain on the communication with Ildiko’s parents, they also add a playful touch to boring, bureaucratic terms like “Wartefrist” [waiting period] that literally translated turns into “Wortfrisch” or

“wordfreshness.” Pronounced by Ildiko’s parents, the German language suddenly takes on a new and lighthearted meaning for the reader, and provides the multilingual author with a source for creative wordplay.

#### 3.1.4. Different Meanings for the Same Thing

In *Tauben fliegen auf*, Abonji examines words in her two languages that seemingly refer to the same concept but evoke different associations. In fact, the associations can be so different that the words seem to refer to two different things altogether. Words like the Hungarian term for house, “ház” for example, seem impossible to translate. The correct German translation would be “Haus.” But what constitutes the “ház” – the large inner courtyard and the long hallways that are used to dry herbs – is missing in the “Haus” (Abonji, Zuhause 184). In *Tauben fliegen auf*, the essence of the word for “house” lies in Ildiko’s grandmother’s home: “Mamika’s house... the prototype of a house” (Abonji, Tauben 12). In the same line, the Hungarian language evokes different emotional reactions than the German language does. The Hungarian word for family reminds the protagonist of a good, warm meal (Abonji, Tauben 46). Compared to the German “Ochsenschwanz,” the Hungarian word for oxtail sounds “inedible” (Abonji, Tauben 49). And the “drastic measures” sound even more drastic in Hungarian (Abonji, Tauben 96). Linguist Pavlenko explains why words in two languages that refer to the same concept can evoke different associations and hence different emotional reactions with the fact that in contrast to languages learned later in life first languages are “learned with full involvement of the limbic system and emotional memory” (Pavlenko, Bilingual 22). The words in Hungarian and German that evoke different associations and emotions in the character Ildiko and the author Abonji embody the multilingual character’s /

writer's dual perspective and make both character and author aware of the arbitrariness of language.

### 3.2. Bodrožić's Sterne Erben, Sterne Färben

Even more so than Abonji, Bodrožić's autobiographical essay *Sterne erben, Sterne färben. Meine Ankunft in Wörtern* [*Inheriting stars, coloring stars. My arrival in words*] focuses exclusively on language. The programmatic title *Sterne erben, Sterne färben* indicates the way in which Bodrožić's interest in words manifests itself: In language games with homophones. Bodrožić plays with the similar sound of the words "erben," to inherit and "färben," to color. While Bodrožić "inherited" the German language, she colors that inheritance individually and plays an active and creative part in it. The subtitle "My Arrival in Words" had a double meaning. It can denote both "my arrival put into words" or "my arrival into the German language." The latter alludes to the possibility of finding a home in language, as Bodrožić did with the help of words that "were very generous" to her (Bodrožić 136). The subtitle further underlines Bodrožić's interest in the smallest language unit, the word – rather than full sentences or the grammatical structure.

In *Sterne erben, Sterne färben* Bodrožić describes her life and her development as a writer through the lens of the languages she has learned. She depicts her first language, an "ensemble called Serbo-Croatian," as something "hybrid, a mixture of my Dalmatian dialect, a longing for the High-Croatian flow ... with Herzegovinian word endings, idioms from here, and idioms from there" (Bodrožić 97). Bodrožić's first language is already more than a single, closed-off entity: it is an ensemble, a hybrid. Her second language, German, is presented as a protection against emotions. She writes, "The

German language vitrifies the former child's concerns that are buried deep inside. It covers the pain. Sublime and sacred. It thus shields me" (Bodrožić 99). She calls the German language a "levee" against her sadness (Bodrožić 27) or a "protective garment" that enables her to express herself without dolefulness and keeps her from turning into a "language-being in tears" (Bodrožić 132). Bodrožić further describes how events that took place in her first language always hurt her more (Bodrožić 29), and that it is much harder for her to be sad in German (Bodrožić 70). Her depiction of the second language as a protective force against emotions is supported by linguistic research, as discussed in greater detail in chapter 1. Linguists have shown that the second language is less grounded in the emotional system, and thus thinking (and writing) in a second language can reduce emotional reactions (Keysar, Pavlenko). Other multilingual writers experience a similar attachment of languages to emotions: Some can express emotions more directly in their first language (Wanner, *Out of Russia*, 83). Some only feel in control of emotionally charged topics when writing in their second language (Callahan 111), and some simply cannot work in their first language, because it is "too loaded subjectively" (Safran 249).

While Bodrožić believes that her first language Croatian forms the "underlying rhythm" for her writing, she ends her essay with a strong statement for the German language: "Even in my dreams, the Croatian words withdraw. In my dream sentences, only German stands clear ... German images. No undertones. My life." (Bodrožić 153-4). According to the closing words, Bodrožić's German can stand free of the subliminal traces of her first language. Consequently, her focus on language manifests itself in her



interest in single *German* words and the unexpected tonal connections between them, as the following close reading of her work will show.

#### 4. Abonji's and Bodrožić's Multilingual Magnifying Glass

Journalists reviewing Abonji's and Bodrožić's literary work welcome the way their language enriches German literature but are hard put to explain what exactly it is that makes the language noteworthy. Reviewing Abonji's *Tauben fliegen auf*, one of the major German newspapers, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* writes: "The first sentence makes you think that if she is able to keep up with that language, if she succeeds, nothing can go wrong" to then quote the said sentence, which stretches over a paragraph, in full length. The article goes on to describe Abonji's language as melodic and forceful (Diener). Swiss newspapers hail *Tauben fliegen auf* as a "well-nigh perfect book" thanks to its language (Ebel). In Bodrožić's case, critics argue that language takes center stage in her work and stress the author's "language sensibility" (Winkler, Marica 108).

The following section grounds the general appreciation of Abonji's and Bodrožić's literary language in a close textual analysis and shows that it is less the direct language mixing but more the underlying influence of their multilingualism that makes their language noteworthy. Both writers employ similar techniques when incorporating their first languages into the German base text. They keep the embedded language in italics and neither *Tauben fliegen auf* nor *Sterne erben*, *Sterne färben* have a glossary. Rather, Abonji and Bodrožić accommodate the monolingual German reader in explaining the embedded language in the text itself. Bodrožić mostly utilizes direct translation to make her text accessible ("The lindens are no longer called *lipa*, and even their scent

became stronger” Bodrožić 18). Abonji reverts to three techniques to help the monolingual reader understand the Hungarian passages in *Tauben fliegen auf*. She explains the embedded language through context (“Nonetheless they serve *fasírt*, because Aunt Macis’ minced meat dishes are to die for.” Tauben 35), she provides direct translation (“*Isten, Isten!* Lord Lord!, father exclaims.” Tauben 46) or simply renders Hungarian dialogue in German, marking it as such elsewhere in the narrative (“Mother switched back to Hungarian long ago.” Tauben 94). While Abonji italicizes and explains Swiss-German just like Hungarian, she leaves code switches to English without further explanation and thus seems to expect that the intended German reader is fluent in English.

If one were only to consider the code switches in Abonji’s and Bodrožić works, the texts would fall into what Brian Lennon would consider “weak multilingual literature” (83). The embedded language is almost exclusively kept to single words or short phrases; it is marked with italic type and translated; and there are moments where Abonji’s use of Hungarian only “seasons the text ever so lightly” (Lennon 10). Linguist John Lipski even goes a step further and defines a work with few code switches “thrown in for flavor” as a monolingual text (195). But as the close analysis of Abonji’s and Bodrožić’s style will show, both writers go beyond Lennon’s “weak multilingual literature” and their works are by no means “monolingual texts.” Both writers demonstrate a critical multilingual stance: They draw the reader’s attention to language and question the binary of “foreign” and “familiar” by treating Swiss German dialect just like the Hungarian passages while keeping code switches to English without explanation (Abonji) or by zooming in on single German words and thereby alienating them from the

native speaker (Bodrožić). By doing so, the writers do not reproduce the relationship of dominant national and minority language but move beyond the “strongly fixed places” of immigrant and host language (Lennon 61).

#### 4.1. Accommodating the Monolingual Reader

Abonji and Bodrožić succeed in taking away the “fear of the unknown” by making it known. They explain every smallest bit of their first embedded languages, Hungarian and Croatian. They translate the embedded language verbatim to Standard German, describe it through context and even go through the trouble of explaining multilingual language games for the monolingual reader in order to make sure that the essence is not lost. Their code switching techniques mark the embedded language as “the other” and seemingly reproduce “the strongly fixed places” of dominant national, and minority language. Abonji’s code switching to Swiss German (section 4.2) and Bodrožić’s close-ups of the German language (section 4.3), however, question these fixed places again.

The majority of the Hungarian-German code switches in *Tauben fliegen auf* are for locations, proper names and food. They add local color and literally “season” the text. Most of the place names are explained through context or direct translations that precede or follow the Hungarian terms. When Ildiko and her sister are about to join their parents in Switzerland, an uncle tells them that they will “travel to Switzerland, *svájcba*” and he puts their “documents, *a papírokat*, on the table” (Abonji, Tauben 172). By translating the Hungarian nouns verbatim to German, Abonji accommodates the monolingual German readers and makes sure that they can follow her narrative. When Ildiko’s family returns to the grandmother’s house, their car “makes a left turn, into the *Hajduk*

*Stankova*, drawing an elegant curve” (Abonji, Tauben 12). Here, the context helps the monolingual German reader understand that the *Hajduk Stankova* is the name of a street. Thus, while Abonji incorporates “unknown” material into her German base text, she makes a concession to the monolingual reader by explaining the embedded language right on the spot.

Similarly, most of Bodrožić’s code switches to her first language Croatian consist of single nouns. By directly translating the embedded language, the monolingual German reader can follow her narrative without difficulty: “In my first mother tongue, the word for love is *ljubav*” (Bodrožić 14). “The linden tree is no longer called *lipa*, and its smell became stronger, too” (Bodrožić 18). “*Tuga*, mourning, still rhymes with the word for rainbow, *duga*” (Bodrožić 24). Multiword units in Croatian follow the same principle. Bodrožić directly translates poems and songs for her German readership: “Literally translated the song ‘Ima neka tajna veza’ means ‘There is a secret tie’” (Bodrožić 49). Only if the Croatian is accessible to the monolingual German reader, phrases stay without translation: “*Nema problema* sagten wir dann.” (Bodrožić 64). Instead of confronting us with “the unknown,” Bodrožić takes away the fear of the foreign language by making it known.

If a simple literal translation is not enough to carry all the meaning of the embedded language over to the monolingual German reader, Bodrožić goes into greater detail. She explains that, growing up in a multilingual border region, she liked the different words for train: “I especially liked the Serbian word *voz*, because it seemed so thoroughly consistent, and even announced the ride – *voziti se*. The Croatian word *vlak* on the other hand, had a very gentle aura, it sounded like *mrak* and *mlad* to me, a

combination of the words *darkness* and *youth*” (Bodrožić 97). Growing up in a multilingual environment in Dalmatia taught Bodrožić to be very attentive to the different sounds of languages and the different associations that came with the sounds.

Abonji uses to similar techniques. When Ildiko and her family drive back to the Vojvodina in the summer, they cross the border at a place called *tompa*: “*tompa*, in German “dull” or “blunt” (Abonji, Tauben 67). Here, further explanation is needed so that the proper name becomes accessible to the monolingual German reader. In the same manner, Abonji not only translates but rather explains traditional dishes to the monolingual reader: when Ildiko and her family attend a wedding in their village, most of the dishes served during the festivities keep their Hungarian names but the term is followed by an explanation: “The most airy *pogácsa* of all times, a salty pastry made out of yeast, pig greaves or curd” (Abonji, Tauben 35-36). In instances like these, Abonji is most accommodating to the native German reader. The literal translation of *pogácsa*, cake, would have been far less specific than her explanation that offers the German reader a “taste” of traditional Hungarian dishes.

Similarly, Abonji also goes into greater detail when explaining the made-up word for politician in her family: the “kusko” is a “malapropism for the Hungarian *politikusko*, which sounds like the German word “Kuscher” because the Hungarian ‘s’ is pronounced like a ‘sch’” (Abonji, Tauben 232). The tonal similarity of the Hungarian politician and the German term for somebody who bows to the authorities allows Ildiko’s family to poke fun at politics. This sort of neologism that combines elements of both languages is called loan blend in sociolinguistics. The convergence of two languages into a unitary system distinct from both languages has not only been documented in the lexicon – as in

“kusko” – but also in phonology and pragmatics (Pavlenko, L2 199). However, to make sure that the monolingual German reader can follow the multilingual word play, Abonji has to explain the difference in pronunciation between German and Hungarian.

Once, Abonji deliberately plays with double meaning when using both a German and a Hungarian proverb. The night before the opening of the new café, neither the parents nor the daughters are able to fall asleep. The next morning, it is so obvious that nobody slept a wink that it is needless to say “Ich habe kein Auge zuge drückt, oder, wie man auf Ungarisch sagt, meine Augen sind traumlos geblieben” (Abonji, Tauben 52). Literally, “kein Auge zuge drückt” and the Hungarian proverb “my eyes stayed dreamless” mean that nobody closed their eyes that night. But the German proverb “ein Auge zudrücken” also means to turn a blind eye. Abonji thus hints at the fact that the family pretends to ignore that they all look sleep-deprived.

In summary, Abonji and Bodrožić clearly cater to a German reader unfamiliar with Hungarian or Croatian, considering the small amount of code switching and the remarkable effort to make the foreign language accessible to the German-speaking audience. Instead of recreating a multilingual’s critical distance to language, they translate and explain even the smallest code switch and thus mark the embedded language as “the other”.

#### 4.2. Code Switching to Swiss German

Not only the techniques to incorporate Hungarian are otherness creating, the Swiss German dialect is “othered” as well. Abonji uses the same means to incorporate the dialect into her Standard German base text that she uses for the Hungarian passages:

she italicizes the Swiss German phrases and accommodates the Standard German speaker by explaining Swiss German terminology through context or direct translation.

Examples for direct translations following the Swiss German term are the following: One of the guests tips Ildiko with a “*Fünfliber*, five Swiss francs” (Abonji, Tauben 107). The Swiss Germans take notes on a “*Sudel*, the Swiss German word for scratch paper” (Abonji, Tauben 147). And Ildiko’s sister Nomi is called a “*Bubenschmöckerin*, a girl who clings to boys” (Abonji, Tauben 226).

At times, Abonji only adds site-specific information without actually using the Swiss German phrase, for example when Ildiko and her sister make fun of an acquaintance who has short fingers – or sweaty, stubby fingers in Swiss German: “Kurze Finger (schwitzende Wurstfinger, sagen wir auf Schweizerdeutsch)” (Abonji, Tauben 32). Or Abonji expects the monolingual German reader to understand the Swiss German “guetzlis” through context: for the day of the opening of the café, Ildiko’s family has prepared multiple different kinds of cookies. Their first patrons seem to enjoy them because they compliment the family on the “*Guetzlis*” (Abonji, Tauben 55).

When Abonji depicts direct speech in Swiss German, she does not explain or translate dialect as long as it is easy to understand for the reader who only knows Standard German. Her father thanks Switzerland in Swiss German: “*Ein grosse Dank an Schwiiz!*” (Abonji, Tauben 102). Patrons in their café ask for the bill: “*Froilein zalle!*” (Abonji, Tauben 104). And one of their employees expresses her anger at Swiss politics in Swiss German: “*Die Politiker muesch doch alle in ein Rakete inestopfe und uf Mond ufeschüsse*” (Abonji, Tauben 157). As Abonji keeps the dialect in italics, she optically distances it from the Standard German just as she distances the Hungarian language. With

the optic distinction between Standard German and dialect, the direct translation and explanation of Swiss German, she makes a concession to the non-Swiss reader. At the same time, she underlines the difference between standard and dialect and presents the Swiss German as bilingual in standard and dialectal variations of German.

#### 4.3. Code switching to English

Abonji does not only incorporate Hungarian and Swiss German into her novel *Tauben fliegen auf*. The shared language for immigrants from different Eastern European countries is English. While Abonji also uses italic print and thus optically marks the code switches to English, she never explains or translates the passages. The previous section has argued that the ways in which Abonji treats Swiss German present the dialect as almost as foreign to the Standard German reader as Hungarian. The following section shows that English is not “othered” in the same way.

Consider the following examples in which different characters switch between German and English: One of the Croatian employees of the café tends to call Ildiko darling: “*Great darling*, sagte Glorija” (Abonji, Tauben 89). Even Ildiko’s German friend Mark switches to English when accusing her of living off her parents money: “*So what?* ... ihr bekommt den *cash* von den Eltern.” Ildiko retorts by asking him who paid for his outfit: “Und du, woher hast du dein *outfit*, frage ich” (Abonji, Tauben 139). The shared language of Ildiko and her Yugoslavian boyfriend is also English. Abonji embeds short, common phrases in English in order to depict their conversations: “*Who knows much*, sagt Dalibor, erzähl mir das, was du weißt” (Abonji, Tauben 187). Or “*It is evident*, sagt Dalibor, dass man Städte, ein ganzes Land nicht nach Ethnien aufteilen kann” (Abonji, Tauben 189). Note that contrary to the code switches to Hungarian and Swiss German



that either consist of single nouns or proverbs and oftentimes have a lighthearted and playful quality (consider for example the germanization of the Hungarian politician into “kusko” and the stupid children’s strike/prank), the code switches to English mostly consist of very short common phrases or fill-ins, like “darling,” “so what” or “it is evident” and lack the original quality of the code switches to her other languages. By not explaining or translating the passages in English, Abonji seems to suggest that the native German reader is more familiar with the English language than with a German dialect.

#### 4.4. Bodrožić’s Tonal Wordplay

Bodrožić’s most creative play with language happens in German only and she deliberately admits that she is “besotted with twisting letters in German” (Bodrožić 137). She focuses on homophones and, for example, connects the German word for “angel” with “narrowness” because of the close tonal connection between the two words: “Nur im Deutschen läßt sich denken, dass *Engel* auch etwas mit *Enge* zu tun haben müssen [Only the German language makes it possible to see the connection between *Engel* and *Enge*]” (Bodrožić 14). Likewise, Bodrožić connects “Wunder,” [miracle] to “Wunde,” [wound] (Bodrožić 21). She makes her way from similar sound to similar sound until she gets from Croat, to cinematograph: “Kroate, Granate, Granatapfel, Apfelsine, Cinématograph – die Welt wurde austauschbar [Croat, grenade, pomegranate, orange, cinematograph – the world becomes exchangeable]” (Bodrožić 39). Bodrožić’s word games are very similar to those that Abonji’s characters play.

Thanks to her critical distance to the German language, Bodrožić can point to structures that sound alike but have very different meanings and thus can alter our perception of words and language. Her re-reading of the German language invites the

monolingual German readers to take up her multilingual perspective by making such connections for themselves. To make use of that critical distance and to share it with the reader is an important bonus that multilingual writers bring to their texts.

## 5. Conclusion

The thematic focus on language is a general feature of multilingual literature and both Abonji's and Bodrožić's scholarly and artistic writing is rich in metalinguistic references. Both works discussed in this chapter depict characters who are coming from multilingual regions and have to adapt to multilingual environments, which, in *Tauben fliegen auf* even means to master the Swiss German dialect. Both works describe the fear and the actual experience of being unable to express oneself and acknowledge the importance of language for integration. Abonji's work portrays the difficulties with which the older generation learns the language of the host country – Ildiko's mother experiences bodily discomfort speaking German – while the children perceive their multilingualism as a creative bonus and play language games that involve both Hungarian and German. The younger generation in *Tauben fliegen auf* even believes that their hybrid status turns them into “happier beings” (Abonji, 160). Bodrožić, part of that younger generation herself, moves the creative language play that connects Hungarian and German in Abonji's work to the German language only.

While their code switching might seem unduly conservative in their effort to accommodate the monolingual German reader, their literature is nevertheless marked by multilingualism. Bodrožić's agenda to make her reader lose fear of “the unknown” applies to Abonji as well: both writers raise questions about what is foreign and what is familiar. By closely focusing on the German language, Bodrožić offers her readers a new

perception of words and forces the native speaker to realize how foreign the mother tongue can be. By treating her first language Hungarian in the same way as a German dialect and explaining these two in greater detail than the English language, Abonji also points to questions of familiarity and foreignness and undermines the binaries of native/foreign and standard/non-standard.

#### **4 “Die Welt als Vokabel! Das ist mein Trost!” Terézia Mora is Multilingual on Principle.**

Even though critics have argued that “the question of language cannot be used to create a binary divide” between writers from Eastern Europe and other German native speakers (Haines 144), close readings of multilingual texts in this chapter show that the preoccupation with language plays a crucial role for authors with an Eastern European background. As a general feature of multilingual literature, both subject matter and stylistic devices such as code switching draw attention to language itself.

Specifically, this chapter turns to Terézia Mora’s work as a showcase example for a multilingual literature that has its roots in the writer’s bilingualism but goes beyond the two languages. This chapter thus investigates how Mora creates multilingual literature independent of her own Hungarian-German bilingualism: Over the course of her three publications, Mora succeeds in writing her specific language biography virtually out of the picture. The underlying Hungarian influences in her first publication make room for a true polyphony in her second novel that then opens the way for code switching to English in her latest work. Further, Mora’s work is exemplary of a strong mixed language fiction that purposefully excludes the monolingual reader at times. Mora’s strong multilingual literature is exemplary for her own linguistic background: She grew up in a linguistic border region between Hungary and Austria, and her parents were part of the German-speaking minority in Hungary. Mora, however, claims that she only actively started to speak German after puberty and thus purposefully obscures her language biography. Even though this chapter focuses primarily on Mora’s work, it will also touch on Olga Grjasnowa, who, just like Mora, learned German after the age of ten, having moved from

Azerbaijan to Germany when she was eleven years old. Grjasnowa's debut novel *Der Russe ist einer der Birken liebt* (2012), that complements Mora's work in interesting ways and demonstrates that specific characteristics of multilingual literature transcend the individual style of one writer.

In order to demonstrate her development in style, from Hungarian traces to a focus on English, this chapter analyzes Mora's work chronologically. To map the terrain for a close reading of her work, it will first present Mora's background with a special focus on her language biography and her reflections on language in general (section 1). It will then turn to Mora's first publication *Seltsame Materie* (1999), an autobiographical collection of short stories (section 2). Here, metalinguistic references are made to pronunciation and dialect as identity markers and markers of foreignness. Passages that appear in languages other than German are explained in a glossary. The many literal translations from Hungarian to German, however, are not discernable to the monolingual German reader; they form a sub-text that is hard to detect.<sup>55</sup> In her first publication, Mora's Hungarian creates what Romanian-born author Herta Müller refers to as "Hintersinn," a deeper or subtle meaning that the foreign language adds to the texts in German (Bozzi 121). Just like Romanian is "not a closed chapter for Müller," the Hungarian language in *Seltsame Materie* lives on through the German that Mora uses (Glajar 536).

---

<sup>55</sup> Mora has stated that she pities the Hungarian translator because her German is so rich in these elements (in Kasaty 253). However, *Seltsame Materie* was translated and published as *Különös anyag* in 2001. And while Mora was afraid that the Hungarian readership would not like the work because of the realistic depiction of the claustrophobic atmosphere in her hometown, the collection of short stories was very well received in Hungary (in Kasaty 233).

Mora's second publication *Alle Tage* (2004) deals with language and pronunciation as well (section 3). The main character learns ten languages to such perfection that he speaks them without an accent. He thus completely eradicates pronunciation as a marker for foreignness. Mora mixes the ten languages – among them Hungarian, Russian, English and French into the German base text. No glossary provides translations. While the amount of foreign languages is too small to obstruct a monolingual reader's comprehension of the main story line, s/he misses most of Mora's language games entirely. Mora's second publication is exemplary for a multilingual literature that consciously excludes the monolingual reader at times.

Section 4 shows how Mora finally achieves her goal of obscuring her (linguistic and geographic) background fully with her latest publication *Der einzige Mann auf dem Kontinent* (2009): "Das zweite Buch muss so sein, dass danach praktisch nicht mehr wichtig ist, wer es geschrieben hat" ["The second book should be written in a way that it does not matter who wrote it"] (Literaturen 30). The metalinguistic references are made to "wireless data communication" that breaks down completely in the course of the novel. The language of the protagonist's workplace is English, and Mora switches between German and English deliberately without having to refer back to a glossary or in-text translations, assuming that the intended reader is fluent enough that s/he has no difficulty deciphering the text. Similar patterns in other multilingual texts (Abonji, Honigmann) suggest that the monolingual German reader is in fact expected to be multilingual by default.

# 1. Terézia Mora

While Mora rejects the categorization of her work based on biographical markers – she does not want to be the “Hungarian on duty” and cannot accept that people always expect her to write about her past (in Kasaty 230) – her multilingual literature originates in her own bilingualism. Thus, before I turn to Mora’s work, I will briefly present Mora’s language biography and her relationship to language itself, the material she is working with.

Mora was born in 1971 in Sopron, Hungary, close to Lake Neusiedl that forms a natural border between Hungary and Austria (Krekeler 25). She not only grew up in a geographical border region; she also spent the first nineteen years of her life in a linguistic border region. Her family was part of the German-speaking minority in Hungary.<sup>56</sup> Mora notes that the first language of her grandmother and her mother was an Austrian dialect spoken in that area.<sup>57</sup> However, she purposefully conceals her own linguistic background and claims that she did not actively start to speak German until she entered secondary school (Foreigner). She explains her refusal to speak German with her inability to speak the dialect of the German-speaking minority she grew up in. Since she did not want to use standard German, she simply stuck to Hungarian: “Meine Kenntnisse

---

<sup>56</sup> The role of German in this geographical area changed over time: Standard German was the language of the “political, administrative and cultural classes” in the Habsburg empire and the only official language until the beginning of the First World War (Stevenson 52). In the mid- to late nineteenth century the ethnic German population spoke both standard German and the respective local dialects as a first language, and acquired Hungarian later in life. Today, due to “the backlash against the German language following the Second World War,” even the local dialects are stigmatized (Stevenson 80) and it is the norm to grow up with Hungarian and to learn standard German later in life (Stevenson 44).

<sup>57</sup> Standard German was not the first language of the minorities in Eastern Central Europe. Their heritage was anchored in “specific local dialects,” and spoke variants of southern German and or Austrian dialects (Stevenson 49).

waren als Kind aber ein deutscher Dialekt, den ich nicht sprach und ein Hochdeutsch, das ich nicht sprach. Als ich aber ins Gymnasium kam, in eine Sprachspezialklasse, hatte ich eine wunderbare Deutschlehrerin, die mich dazu gebracht hat, auf Deutsch zu reden und zu schreiben” [“In my childhood there was the German dialect that I did not speak, and Standard German that I did not speak either. When I entered Secondary School, a special language class, I had a wonderful German teacher that got me speaking and writing in German”] (Foreigner). Literary critic Elmar Krekeler describes Mora’s teenage years as living in a no man’s land, not only because of her linguistic outsider status but also because of her literary ambitions. The poetry she wrote was inaccessible to her family that was never schooled to read literary texts (Krekeler 26). This feeling of not belonging seems to have stuck with Mora: even today she admits that no matter where she is, she “feels ridiculously foreign” (Biendarra 3).

Mora left the stifling atmosphere of her hometown – she describes it as “Catholic, obedient, conservative, and cruel against men and animals” – to study German and Hungarian literature and language in Budapest (Foreigner).<sup>58</sup> After moving to Berlin in 1990, when she was nineteen years old, she added theater and then screenwriting to her studies (Kasaty 225).

An assignment for a screenwriting class that professors reviewed as “too literary” turned into her first short story (*Der Fall Ophelia*), which won her the prestigious Ingeborg-Bachmann Prize in 1999 and was published as part of *Seltsame Materie* in the same year, followed by *Alle Tage* (2004) and *Der einzige Mann auf dem Kontinent*

---

<sup>58</sup> The repressive atmosphere Mora describes is very similar to the one Herta Müller depicts in her first autobiographically influenced collection of short stories *Niederungen* (1982). Looking back at the environment of her childhood, Müller talks about “Schule der Angst” [school of fear] or even “Lebensangst” [fear of life] (in Eddy 332).



(2009). Since that first success in 1999, Mora's work has been conferred with many other literary prizes: In 2000 she received the Chamisso Förderpreis, in 2005 she won the award for fiction at the Leipzig Book Fair and in 2010 she was conferred the first place of the Chamisso Prize.<sup>59</sup>

### 1.1. Mora's "Conglomerate of languages"

Like the multilingual writers presented in chapter 1, Mora is highly aware of language in general. She considers both Hungarian and German to be part of her mother tongue: "I don't have two mother tongues, only one and that one consists of two big languages and a couple smaller languages and all together form a conglomerate" (in Kasaty 251). Thus, while German and Hungarian feature prominently as "big languages" in Mora's rather unconventional conception of mother tongue, she also includes other languages that she learned later in life. Mora believes that all her languages – no matter whether spoken fluently or not – contribute to her writing because "they are part of one's reality" (in Kasaty 251).

---

<sup>59</sup> Even though winning the Ingeborg-Bachmann prize was a seminal step in Mora's career, her attitude towards the business of literary prizes remains very critical. She states that the Bachmann competition – or the Bachmann "spectacle" as she calls it – was a traumatizing experience for her, partly because of the "perverted" process of choosing the winner in front of the camera. It was not until she was part of that spectacle that she realized how "vain" the competition is and how much it revolves around the posturing of the jury members (in Kasaty 234-5). Mora also criticizes the practice of the Leipzig Book Fair, where the winners are not announced until the award ceremony, and she suggests that she is done with the matter of literary awards all together (in Kasaty 253). While the show business atmosphere of the Ingeborg Bachmann competition and the award ceremony at the Leipzig Book Fair were traumatic experiences for Mora, the financial benefits that come with these literary prizes seem to out-weigh her animosities against them. After winning at the Leipzig Book Fair in 2005, Mora has accepted several other literary prizes (the *Franz Nabel Prize* in 2007 and the Translator's Prize of the North Rhine-Westphalian Foundation for Art in 2011).

Her work reflects that belief: Mora incorporates more than just her two “big languages” and switches to Russian, English and French among others. However, Mora, a *multilingual* writer who can choose between two languages for her literary works, is still preoccupied with language loss: “Imagine that you speak four languages, you look out the window, see a chimney and cannot remember the word for it in any of your four languages. I know that feeling and it is incredibly painful” (in Kasaty 247). The fear of language loss is a prominent metalinguistic reference in all of Mora’s works: in her first publication, protagonists experience the complete loss of language (“Ich verstehe meine eigene Vatersprache nicht. Ich spreche fünf Sprachen. Und ich habe nicht eine verstanden” [“I don’t understand my father-tongue. I speak five languages. And I didn’t understand a single one.”] *Materie*, 24) or revert to silence as a defense mechanism. In *Alle Tage*, the main character suffers from aphasia, and in Mora’s last publication, the “wireless data communication” breaks down completely.<sup>60</sup>

While Mora chose German for her literary career, she still works closely with the Hungarian language in translating works from Hungarian into German.<sup>61</sup> Working as a translator helps her to realize that there is no such thing as the perfect sentence or the perfect solution for a translation problem, and it helps her to come to terms with the fact that language is not necessarily congruent with reality (Kasaty 246). In *Bilingual: Life and Reality* (2010) linguist Francois Grosjean includes translators and second language

---

<sup>60</sup> Other multilingual writers seem to struggle with the same fear: Herta Müller, for example, notes that she is afraid to lose her language “in a twinkle of an eye, or in the night during a half-crushed [halbzerquetscht] dream” (in Bozzi 123).

<sup>61</sup> Mora won two major awards for her translations of Péter Esterházy’s works: The Jane-Scatcherd Prize in 2002 for her translation of *Harmonia Caelestis* and the prize for literary translations from the Arts Foundation of North Rhine-Westphalia in 2011 for *Ein Produktionsroman*.

teachers as “professional multilinguals.” Following Grosjean, Mora then is doubly multilingual: once by growing up bilingual and once by choosing translation as a profession. Mora shares this “double multilingualism” with Gregor Hens, another multilingual writer discussed in chapter 4. In both oeuvres, the twofold multilingualism leads to a particularly critical relation to language.

Mora believes that writing in her second language helps her to comply with her maxim of keeping it simple, as one of the characters in her first publication *Seltsame Materie* puts it: “Sag es einfach. Wort für Wort” [“Say it simple. Word for Word”] (Materie 19). The process of telling a story word for word is easier in a language “von der nicht zu viel abzuschälen ist, in der einem nicht zu jeder Situation unendlich viele Zitate, Bilder einfallen, in der man um Ausdrücke, Bilder ringen muss” [“where there is not much to peel off, a language in which one does not have unlimited sayings and images, a language in which one has to fight for expressions, images”] (in Krekeler 28). Keeping her writing simple is thus easier for Mora when writing in German because the German language is not as rich in quotations and imagery as the Hungarian language for her and because she has to struggle for finding the right words and images in German. For Mora, writing in German is a more conscious act than writing in Hungarian. Other multilingual writers share this impression and describe their relation to the second language as “cerebral” or “abstract” (In Wanner, *Out of Russia*, 83).

## 2. Seltsame Materie

Before this section discusses the thematic concern with language, a comprehensive feature of multilingual literature, and the stylistic characteristics of language mixing, I will briefly summarize Mora’s first publication, the short story

collection *Seltsame Materie*, in which Mora already disconnects from her own background by neither labeling the locale nor the languages spoken there.

Each of the stories in *Seltsame Materie* has a different first-person child or teenage narrator. Mora explains that the stories were a means to work through her own childhood experiences: she was so angry and desperate that she simply had to put her experiences on paper (in Kasaty 232). Mora felt she had spent the first nineteen years of her life somewhere she did not fit in, where the suffocating and cruel atmosphere made her “fear for her life” (in Biendarra 4).<sup>62</sup> Mora’s experience of not belonging finds a way into the short stories: all her protagonists are outsiders and their outsider status manifests itself in language. They either speak a different language than the majority, or a dialect, or have an accent in the shared language. Notably, in most of the stories, languages are not labeled. Rather, tourists speak “foreign” (“ausländisch” *Materie* 16), refugees and illegal immigrants speak an unintelligible mix, and the first language of the protagonists is simply “our language” (“unserer Sprache” *Materie* 117). Likewise, Mora refrains from using proper names, but the setting for the short stories in *Seltsame Materie* still reveals the autobiographical elements of her first work. The eleven stories take place in and around Mora’s hometown in sight of the Austrian border. The border region, the village and the two countries on each side of the border remain nameless, but of course, the reader will try to localize the anonymous locations. The other side is constantly referred

---

<sup>62</sup> After WW II, German minorities were made responsible for the crimes committed by National Socialists. They often were “subjected to sanctions and – sometimes violent – reprisals if they were overheard speaking German in public “(Stevenson 62). The discrimination against the German-speaking minority might partially explain Mora’s negative childhood experiences.

to as “drüben,” or over there.<sup>63</sup> By not labeling the region and the languages, Mora writes a more general multilingual literature, which already previews the disengagement from her personal linguistic background and the development from a “personal” multilingual literature to an increasingly “anonymous” multilingual literature, independent of the writer’s biography.

### 2.1. Metalinguistic References in *Seltsame Materie*

As this project shows, language is an important subject matter in multilingual literature in general. In Mora’s first publication, the numerous references to language are rather negative: mispronunciation and accent act as strong identity markers that lead to exclusion; communication breaks down and characters retreat to silence; and only in one story; and language choice is depicted as an empowering means of resistance.

The relativity of language comes into play when one character in *Seltsame Materie* proclaims to no purpose that all languages are interchangeable and that one can understand each and every language when spoken slowly: “Les langues sont relatives. Vous devriez me comprendre, si je parle lentement” (Materie 31). Mora undermines the statement by making it in French: without consulting the glossary, a reader unfamiliar with that language will not understand, no matter how slowly s/he reads. In *Seltsame Materie*, however, languages are not relative or interchangeable. Rather, communication can break down completely. One protagonist has lost the ability to understand any language even though he is capable of speaking five (Materie 24). Two of the stories begin with silence (Materie 9, 21), many of the characters do not speak at all (Materie 57,

---

<sup>63</sup> “Die drüben ist. Akademikerin” (Materie 45). “Er denkt, er ist schon drüben” (Materie 53), “Außer denen, die drüben, jenseits der Grenze arbeiten” (Materie 155).

63, 206, 207) and the shared silence bonds them: “We get along well. We don’t talk” (Materie 206).

For those who *do* speak, pronunciation, dialect and accent turn into strong markers for geographical belonging and identity. In the eponymous first story, *Seltsame Materie*, her teacher singles out the protagonist because she lisps. On top of the speech impediment, the protagonist is afflicted with her non-standard pronunciation. Her teacher continues to criticize her pronunciation of the letter A, and says that she will never be able to get rid of the mispronunciation. The protagonist concludes that it is useless to pretend to be from somewhere else because everybody will hear where she is coming from anyway (Materie 13). And she is proven right: during auditions at drama school, the protagonist pays careful attention to her pronunciation, only to hear from the jury that she speaks with a dialect (Materie 19).

Some of Mora’s characters retreat to silence to conceal their accents: in *Der See*, the grandfather rarely talks and if he does, he speaks with an accent, because his first language – most likely German – is also spoken “on the other side of the lake” (Materie 57). Others put their accent to good use: in *Die Lücke*, the protagonist’s mother deliberately utilizes her accent to set herself apart from the other villagers. Especially when she is angry, she speaks with an accent to let everybody know that she is “better” than the neighbors thanks to her higher education (Materie 83).

But language not only marks the geographical space where you are from. Language choice can also be a political statement. In stories in which the first language of the protagonist is presumably German – Mora rarely specifies what languages are spoken – villagers either denounce it as the language of the enemy or praise it as respectable. In

an interview, Mora explains that the communist regime in Hungary indoctrinated the children at school: The world was separated in “friends,” fellow socialist countries (Poland, UDSSR etc.) and “enemies,” and Germany was one of the worst of the latter (Foreigner). For followers of the regime, Russian was thus the language of the ally and German was the language of the worst opponent.<sup>64</sup> For the villagers that were against the communist regime, however, the protagonist’s language is better than the language of the “real” enemy, the Russians (Materie 121). In the award-winning story *Der Fall Ophelia*, a teacher tells the protagonist that her language – German – is the language of the fascists and that everybody who takes private lessons with her mother is learning the language of the enemy (Materie 117). But using the “language of the enemy” can be a political statement and a means for resistance. When the protagonist runs into the priest of the village, she first greets him in her language – German – accidentally. But when he wants her to compliment him, she pretends that she does not understand and reverts back to German on purpose: “Ich verstehe nicht, sage ich in unserer Sprache. Guten Tag” [“I don’t understand, I said in our language. Have a good day”] (Materie 117). Even though Ophelia understands the priest perfectly well, she defies his wishes simply by switching back to her mother tongue.

Pronunciation and accent also play a significant role in Olga Grjasnowa’s *Der Russe ist einer der Birken liebt*. The protagonist Mascha, who immigrated to Germany as a child, is complimented for her pronunciation, which is “better than that of most the

---

<sup>64</sup> Russian was the mandatory foreign language during communism, but it lost importance after its collapse because it was “the language of the former hegemonic power” (Stevenson 45). And even though German could have been a ‘legitimate’ foreign language as the official language of a socialist state, the GDR (Stevenson 45), the animosity against German that Mora depicts most likely comes from the negative experiences with the German language after WW II.

ethnic Germans from Russia” (Grjasnowa 18). For Mascha, whose German is flawless, the intended compliment is rather an insult. Other characters speak particularly slowly and articulate particularly well when interacting with Mascha, assuming that she does not understand (Grjasnowa 15). And at the municipal immigration office, Mascha learns that language is equal to power: “Those who don’t speak German have no voice. Those who speak broken German are ignored. And applications are processed according to the thickness of accents” (Grjasnowa 37-8).

In multilingual literature language takes center stage in different manifestations. In Mora’s and Grjasnowa’s work, languages play a crucial role: certain languages are completely rejected and characters retreat to silence; certain languages are criticized or are pronounced in non-standard ways. But languages can also be a choice: just as the authors themselves, the multilingual protagonists choose their means of expression freely.

## 2.2. Big and Small Languages in *Seltsame Materie*

The following section presents stylistic manifestations of languages that come into contact in writing. Specifically, I will show how foreign languages influence the German base text when directly appearing on the page itself. Additionally, Mora’s different use of the languages she grew up with (German, Hungarian) versus languages learned later in life (English, French) demonstrates how the influence of actual multilingualism differs from the impact of perfunctory knowledge of a language.

Critics have mentioned the Hungarian influences in Mora’s first publication (Tráser-Vas, Albrecht). But little attention has been paid to the fact that Mora also incorporates French, Rumanian, English, Russian and Italian into her German base text.



Passages in languages other than German are in italics and translated in a glossary at the end of the collection of short stories. Looking at multilingual works and writers, literary scholars Ch'ein and Callahan suggest that italics and glossaries might reflect “an editor’s mandate.” Given that *Seltsame Materie* is Mora’s first publication it is likely that she had to concede to her editor’s wishes. Callahan argues that commercial success and secure material position make it easier to use a significant amount of untranslated embedded language (141). After having published several works with major publishing houses, Mora sees herself in such a secure material position. She writes that after having published her second novel she has increased her negotiating power immensely: “Es gibt viele Verlage, aber nur eine Terézia Mora. Natürlich spreche ich heute aus einer Position der Stärke heraus” [“There are many publishing houses but only one Terézia Mora. Of course I speak from a much stronger position today”] (Foreigner). The following discussion of Mora’s second and third publications will show how Mora makes use of her position of power vis-à-vis her editors.

In her first publication *Seltsame Materie*, however, Mora still works – or was forced to work – with a glossary. The only passages without translation are in English: “*Los Angeles Tower AA eight two one final three one. AA eight two one cleared to land ... New York habe im Moment twenty-four Fahrenheit, Schnee*” (Materie 34). The editor probably expected the targeted German-speaking audience to be fluent enough in English and familiar enough with American culture to understand that American Airlines flight number 821 from L.A. to New York is about to land and that twenty-four degrees Fahrenheit means temperatures below freezing.

Less obvious than the direct code switches are the Hungarian influences in *Seltsame Materie*. Many words that appear to be creative inventions of the author are in fact calques, literally translated reproductions of Hungarian words or phrases. For example, “Sommersprossencreme” [freckle lotion] is a literal translation of a real Hungarian product called “szeplőkrém,” a face lotion to lighten the skin and prevent dark spots (Materie 74). Likewise “Mückenbeine” [mosquito legs] is a literal translation of “szúnyogláb,” whereas the common German term to describe small wrinkles around the eyes is “Krähenfuß” [crow’s foot] (Materie 81). Similarly, Mora’s “Staubzungen” [dust tongues] is a play with the Hungarian “pormacska,” literally meaning dust cat, instead of the German “Staubflocken” [dust flake] (Materie 194). Especially interesting is Mora use of “Katzenkopfpflaster,” derived from “macskakőburkolat” [cat’s stone pavement] instead of the common, Standard German term “Kopfsteinpflaster” [head stone pavement] (Materie 193). But “Katzenkopfpflaster” is not only a derivation from the Hungarian “cat’s stone pavement” but also the common term for cobblestone in the Austrian dialect spoken in that area and thus a manifestation of language contact in border regions.<sup>65</sup>

In *Seltsame Materie*, Mora only code-switches between German and the “smaller languages” that form the conglomerate of her “mother tongue” (in Kasaty 251). Hungarian finds its way into the German base text only in the form of calques, as literal translations of words and lyrics of popular Hungarian folk songs. Both the calques and the code switches are the direct result of Mora’s unique linguistic configuration: the calques show how the Hungarian language works as an undercurrent to her work in the

---

<sup>65</sup> I would like to thank Adam Gacs for his help with the Hungarian-German translations.

German language and the code switches demonstrate that Mora does not limit herself to her two “big languages” but rather believes in the constant interplay of all of her languages. Mora’s different use of Hungarian compared to French, Italian and English demonstrates that she is not using her “big” and her “small” languages in the same way. In their coexistence and interaction, her two big languages, German and Hungarian, have a special place in *Seltsame Materie*. The lighthearted playfulness that forms the ground of Mora’s unique language is not to be found in the code switches to English or French but in the interplay of Hungarian and German. It is Mora’s German-Hungarian bilingualism that provides the basis for the unique language in her first publication. To keep the Hungarian language hidden in translation further complies with Mora’s goal of keeping her own (linguistic) background out of the picture.

### 3. Alle Tage – Multilingual 2.0

In her second publication *Alle Tage* (2004), Mora comes one step closer to blurring her own linguistic and geographic background beyond recognition: She purposefully conceals the geographical setting and at times creates an unintelligible polyphony. Additionally, she also blurs the protagonist’s gender. Again, language is an important theme – it is even more vital than in her first publication. Specifically, the novel depicts a truly multilingual protagonist who speaks an infinite number of languages without accent. In the following, I will argue that language learning in *Alle Tage* works as compensation or escape mechanism; I will further demonstrate that the language learning process is presented as detached and machine-like. While silence and speechlessness were an inherent part in *Seltsame Materie*, they become more concrete in Mora’s second publication: the protagonist suffers from aphasia. Mora’s also takes code switching to

another – at times unintelligible – level and turns to additional means (optical switches, corrections, phonetic spelling) to draw attention to language.

The protagonist, Abel Nema, leaves his unnamed home country to avoid the military and ends up in an unnamed Western European city. Thirteen years later, we find him beaten up and hanging upside down from a jungle gym in a park. He survives, but has lost the ten languages he learned during his first four years of living in the host country.

The unrecognizable polyphony that Mora produces in *Alle Tage* is reflected in a general blurring of geographical spaces, national belonging and the protagonist's gender. The close connection of language and space becomes apparent in a quote from the poem of expatriate Ingeborg Bachmann: "Ich grenz noch an ein Wort und an ein anderes Land" ["I am still bordering on a word and on another land"].<sup>66</sup> Just like Mora is bordering on words in multiple languages, she is also bordering on geographic locations.

The geographic spaces in *Alle Tage* are hard to pinpoint, Abel's story begins: "Let us call the time *now*, let us call the place *here*" (Tage 11). Mora's "continual and nimble avoidance of any proper place-names... that would attach the literary work to a particular (cultural, national, linguistic) locality" has been aptly called "circumlocation" (Buchholz). Mora never localizes the narrative and only hints at where Abel is coming from and where he is. Likewise, the languages spoken are not labeled. Abel's first language is referred to as "mother tongue" and the language spoken in the host country is the "Landessprache" or language of the country (303). Hints at Abel's nationality are deliberately left blank and his name denotes no ethnicity. When somebody asks about his

---

<sup>66</sup> The title *Alle Tage* is quoting Ingeborg Bachmann's 1953 war poem with the same title.

peculiar name and wonders if Nema stands for nothing, Abel responds: “Nicht wie das Nichts. Es ist ein ...scher Name” (41). The suffix “-scher” could stand for any given language and Abel’s name could be anything from Hungarian (“ungari-scher Name”) to Hebrew (“hebräi-scher Name”).<sup>67</sup> Nema in Hungarian invokes the word *nem* or “no,” and is thus “a name that negates the name.” (Buchholz). Further, his first name, Abel, is reminiscent of “Babel.” Mora broaches the biblical story of the confusion of language in the prologue of *Alle Tage* when a journalist questions Abel: “Good old Babel. And Transylvania of course. The Balkans etcetera. Do you really speak all these languages? All ten of them?” (Tage 7) and thus sets the stage for the incomprehensible polyphony that follows.

Just as Abel’s home country and the languages he speaks stay nameless and vague, the city Abel travels to is impossible to locate.<sup>68</sup> Mora leaves the reader uncertain about Abel’s origins and the country and city he travels to but she makes it very clear that

---

<sup>67</sup> Mora herself chose her pen name so that it would not reveal her nationality: “Mora ist übrigens auch nicht mein richtiger Name. Ich wollte einen Namen wählen, dem man nicht sofort anhört, wo er herkommt. Ich wollte mich maskieren. Ich bin zu hochnäsig, um einen Trend auszunutzen. Ich wollte die Wahrheit erfahren: Man sollte nicht wissen, wer diesen Text geschrieben hat, aber diesen Text dennoch als gültig erkennen” [“By the way, Mora is not my real name either. I chose a name that was difficult to locate. I wanted to disguise myself. I am too proud to exploit a trend. I wanted the truth: I wanted the reader to accept the text without knowing who had written it”] (Literaturen 2005, 30).

<sup>68</sup> The city B. has a metro and is a bus ride away from the ocean. Contrary to the neutral English term ‘metro,’ the German ‘Metro’ is far more specific. The neutral term in German would be ‘U-Bahn.’ European cities that have a metro system are usually in French-speaking countries (Brussels, Paris). Other locations in B., like the Bastille and the Perron (Tage 392) again resonate with a city in France rather than the German capital. While critics still assume that B. stands for the German capital Berlin, the public transportation system, the close proximity to the ocean and locations like the Bastille and the Perron eliminate the German capital as a possible location. Or they rather camouflage it since Mora reveals in her last publication *Der einzige Mann auf dem Kontinent* that B. does in fact stand for Berlin: a character from *Alle Tage* reappears in the very same location in *Der einzige Mann auf dem Kontinent*, which is definitively set in Berlin.

the protagonist is completely state- and homeless. His passport is issued by a state that no longer exists (Tage 74), and the political changes in his home country have turned him into a stateless person: his home country is now split into “three to five” new states and none of those states feels like it owes him citizenship (Tage 410).<sup>69</sup> Additionally, Abel’s gender remains questionable or hybrid. Mora presents him as ‘Mannweib’ or ‘Zwitter’ [‘manwoman’ or ‘hybrid’]. Abel himself experiences his own body as blurred, genderless and falling into pieces: “This is not my calf, these are not my testicles, but I’d be happy to take these breasts” (Tage 550).<sup>70</sup> Abel borders on many spaces and languages, and even on the female sex, but belongs to none of them permanently.

### 3.1. Metalinguistic References in *Alle Tage*

Mora’s second publication is full of metalinguistic references that play a more vital role than in her first publication. *Alle Tage* takes language as a theme to another level: The number of languages spoken is now infinite, the speechlessness is officially diagnosed as aphasia and the language learning process is described in detail. Given the

---

<sup>69</sup> It is interesting to note that Grjasnowa also focuses on political changes and their implications for the citizen’s nationality and feeling of belonging: In *Der Russe ist einer der Birken liebt*, people are nothing but their nationality. After the Nagorno-Karabakh war in 1994, the population no longer has “faces, eyes, names or professions,” they are nothing but Azerbaijani, Armenian, Georgian or Russian (Russe 46-7).

<sup>70</sup> Abel is obviously interested in slipping into a female body and his mother’s best friend seems to know about Abel’s inclination when she reproaches his mother for not having raised Abel as a girl – now he is neither “fish nor fowl” (Tage 560). Sometimes it seems like he has no gender whatsoever and is rather a strange hybrid: “Plötzlich schien er überhaupt kein Geschlecht mehr zu haben, ein Ichweißnichtwas, ein seltsamer Zwitter, der Mensch glitt ihr seitwärts von der Zunge” (328). Note that Grjasnowa’s protagonist Mascha is also bisexual. Abel and Mascha resist clear-cut categories, be it their nationality, their linguistic status or their sexual preferences. Film scholar Hamid Naficy’s concept of “accented art” combines the transnational and the transsexual. In Naficy’s concept of, ‘accented’ art “the boundaries between self and other, female and male, inside and outside, homeland and host land are blurred and must continually be negotiated” (Naficy, *Situating*, 128). Abel’s and Mascha’s sexual orientation and their statelessness turn them into literal examples of Naficy’s ideas of transnationality.

breadth of *Alle Tage*, the following section will present the metalinguistic references most relevant to this project: The true multilingualism of the protagonist, the way in which it works as compensation or survival mechanism, the protagonist's artificial language learning and his artificial pronunciation and finally the loss of language.

### 3.1.1. An Infinite Number of Languages

The protagonist in *Alle Tage* is a language genius. We do not know all ten languages that Abel speaks, but Mora uses Hungarian and Russian among others; Finnish and Portuguese are mentioned as well (Tage 18). In fact, like many of Mora's protagonists, Abel works closely with language: he is a translator and interpreter just like the author. Abel makes his living with translation and interpreting jobs after the funding for his mysterious dissertation project – notably on “comparative linguistics” runs out.<sup>71</sup> Portraying protagonists who professionally transport meaning from one language to the other is one of the many instances in which the literature in question is self-reflexive.<sup>72</sup>

In his multilingual heydays, Abel believes to be capable of understanding everybody (Tage 175) and thus lives out what one of the characters in *Seltsame Materie* proclaimed in vain: “Les langues sont relatives” (Materie 31). Abel explains that he only officially speaks ten languages; in reality he speaks an “indefinite number” (Tage 615). He is even able to understand “absolute nonsense. Gibberish created on the spot. *Kerekökökokex*” (Tage 616).

---

<sup>71</sup> Midway through the novel, Abel decides to write a dissertation in linguistics. He really seems to be working on something until his laptop – and therewith the whole project – is stolen and the dissertation is never mentioned again (Tage 248).

<sup>72</sup> Consider, for example, Grjasnowa's protagonist Mascha, who works as an interpreter, Hens's protagonist Tobias, who works as a translator and Abel who works in both fields.

As argued in the introduction, languages play a major role in the creation and preservation of nation states. Since Abel believes he can speak every language, his language skills put him in a pre-nation state or even a pre-Babel state. This is especially interesting for Abel's birthplace since language borders were created in former UDSSR countries just after the Yugoslavian wars.

### 3.1.2. Multilingualism as Compensation or Survival Mechanism?

One of Mora's characters suggests that Abel only learned ten languages to be even lonelier than somebody who speaks "three, five or seven" languages (Tage 504). By learning ten languages, Abel appears to be compensating for something. It might be his current immigrant status; it might be the silent part he played in the relationship with his first love, his childhood friend Ilia, or a combination of both. The boys used to go on long walks through their hometown and Ilia talked, while Abel listened: "All sentences were with him [Ilia], I was only the audience" (Tage 90). The spoken word belonged to Ilia and Abel's role was that of the eternal listener, his interaction with Ilia was rather that of the collector than that of the communicator.

Olga Grjasnowa depicts a similar situation of compensation through language learning: after the protagonist Mascha loses her boyfriend, she compensates for the loss of a loved one with language and delves into her studies to "fill the void with vocabulary" instead of working through the traumatic experience (Grjasnowa 126). Multilingual Mascha speaks Russian, German, English, French, Italian and some Polish and adds Arabic after getting her first degree in interpreting (Grjasnowa 31). She considers herself fluent in five of her languages and speaks a couple more like "German tourists in Majorca" (Grjasnowa 40). Both Mascha and Abel seem to put languages on as if they



were a disguise for their true selves. Additionally, by choosing to work as interpreters, they do not have to speak for themselves but only transport other people's thoughts into another language. Thus, both the experience of having to start from scratch in a foreign language after immigrating to a German-speaking country, and the personal loss of a loved one might explain while both protagonists escape into multilingualism.

Both Mascha's and Abel's multilingualism is connected to traumatic experiences of physical violence, either directly experienced or witnessed. Mascha's family had to leave Azerbaijan because of violent uprisings and Mascha compensates for the new linguistic situation by learning not only German but three other languages to perfection. Abel's miraculous language learning process begins and ends with physical injury: after almost being killed because by a gas leak while traveling, Abel wakes up in a hospital in an unnamed country and suddenly memorizes everything he hears, even though he is not familiar with the language spoken there (Tage 115). Everything in Abel's mind, "memories and projections, past and future, that had clogged up the hallways and had brawled in the rooms" is stowed away; his mind is empty and there is room for only one form of knowledge: language" (Tage 115). Both protagonists fill the void created by forced immigration in combination with physical violence with language. The new languages compensate for the loss of the home country, the loss of their first languages and in Abel's more extreme case even for the loss of all memories.

### 3.1.3. Artificial Language Learning

As already mentioned, Abel's language learning process begins with an almost deadly accident. And even though Abel cannot understand his fellow patients in the hospital, he already notices their mistakes and he can see their sentences, "als würden

kleine Astgebilde aus den Mündern ... wachsen" ["as if little branch-like formation would grow out of their mouths"] (Tage 113). Mora describes Abel's language learning process in very scientific and detached, or mathematical terms. At a point where Abel is still unable to comprehend what his fellow patients say, he focuses on their mistakes and the structure of language instead of trying to grasp the meaning. He is looking at the "spider-webs of construction" and it is as if Abel is standing in a forest made of language: "Wie das aufklappbare Märchenschloss entsteht aus zwei Buchseiten ein gläserner Wald auf. Jeder seiner Bäume ist ein Satz, die Äste schließen mit dem Stamm den und den Winkel ein, ebenso die kleineren Äste mit den größeren, an den Enden blinken zarte Syntagmen" ["like a fairytale castle a glass forest appears between two pages of a book. Every tree is a sentence, the branches form such and such angles with the trunk, likewise the smaller branches with the bigger ones, and delicate syntagmas are blinking at the very tip"] (Tage 153). Abel experiences language like an abstract, linguistic system with mathematical rules – namely certain angles – governing the combination of segments (syntagmas). In Abel's "language forest," the largest syntagma is the tree-sentence that then breaks up in a trunk, branches and even smaller "delicately blinking syntagmas." This is one of many passages revealing Mora's extensive linguistic background research<sup>73</sup>: In linguistics, "Concrete Syntax Trees" are used to represent the syntactic

---

<sup>73</sup> Consider also the team of experts who are extremely interested in Abel's languages and try to map Abel's brain (Tage 465). The scientists are working on psycholinguistic tests to figure out the activity in the brain of multilingual speakers (Tage 480). They are especially interested in the "motoric and auditory language areas in the left temporal lobe and in the frontal lobe, also known as Broca's and Wernicke's areas," but also consider the areas responsible for "memory and emotion control, the hippocampus etc." (Tage 490). The result of the brain mapping looks like a rainbow to Abel, some parts are highlighted and others are not. The highlighted parts in different colors stand for "L1 bis L10. L wie lingua" (Tage 466).

structure of language: the sentence constitutes the top-level structure and it breaks down into smaller units like the noun phrase and the verb phrase. The nodes in the syntax tree are called root node (the sentence), branch node (noun or verb phrase) and leaf node (single lexical units).

Abel's language learning process continues in the same detached and scientific manner: he does not learn in interaction with human beings, he learns in a lab, language after language, sound system after sound system: "He rummages through the codes of phonetic transcriptions and colors his tongue black to compare the imprints ... technology comes first, mankind comes second" (Tage 154).<sup>74</sup> At night, in the language lab, Abel is creating a "homunculus... a perfect clone of a language" (Tage 154). By comparing Abel's method to a homunculus or clone, Mora allows room for a critique of Abel's machine-like approach to language learning. This might explain why he is unable to utilize his ten languages as bridge between people and indeed is lonelier with ten languages than he was with just his mother tongue. Abel is able to *speak* ten languages but he cannot *communicate* in a single one of them. Similarly, Grjasnowa's Italian professor, who speaks "clear and sterile" Italian, has no dialect whatsoever and his Italian sounds "soulless as if it had been cultured in a lab" (Grjasnowa 132). Both Mora and Grjasnowa deny the lab-learned languages a human touch. They compare them to artificial copies (homunculus, clone) of the real thing (human) or directly describe the language as being without soul.

---

<sup>74</sup> Abel's technique brings to mind the audio-lingual approach that was popular in the 1950s and 1960s. Typical learning methods were pattern drills and the use of the language laboratory.

At the very beginning of Abel language learning process, he seems unable to keep the languages he is learning apart: “I start my sentence in Russian and end it in French” (Tage 136). Later in the novel, Abel’s ability to switch is the main focus of one of the research studies. The team of experts wants to find out how code switching changes when Abel gets tired. They test “the poor ape” for several hours, “from L1 to L2 to L3 to L1 to L5 to L7 to. Within and among language groups, from which group to which group is it easier, or more difficult, are words mixed, which language disappears first. All his languages disappear one after the other” (Tage 523). Again, with a reference to Kafka’s speaking ape Rotpeter in *Ein Bericht für eine Akademie*, Mora underlines the unnatural nature of Abel’s multilingualism.<sup>75</sup>

The passage describing neurologic research on the language “genius” is the closest the reader gets to Abel’s ten languages. In real life, Abel talks very little: “In der Praxis hört man kaum einen Satz von ihm” (Tage 18). The ways in which Mora presents Abel’s multilingualism depict language learning as an escape mechanism, or compensation. Abel finds solace and a way to organize and make sense of the world in language: “Die Welt als Vokabel! Das ist mein Trost!” [“The world as vocabulary! That’s my solace!”] (Tage 596) but is unable to use his many languages as a means of communication.

---

<sup>75</sup> Mora directly places herself in the tradition of writers like Kafka when she states: “Ich bin genauso deutsch wie Kafka. Ich komme ungefähr aus derselben Gegend. [I’m just as German as Kafka. I even come from the same region]” (Literaturen 28). Kafka interrogates humanness with the figure of Rotpeter in *Ein Bericht für eine Akademie*; and portrays language as Rotpeter’s first step towards his life as a human being. But just like Abel’s multilingualism does not help him find his place in society, Rotpeter never becomes a fully accepted member of mankind.

### 3.1.4. Artificial Pronunciation

Since Abel learns the ten languages in a lab and rarely interacts with living native speakers, his pronunciation is “without location... no accent, no dialect, nothing – he speaks like someone who is coming from nowhere” (Tage 18-9). Notably, one of Grjasnowa’s characters – a professor – learned Italian in a lab and now speaks “clear and sterile.” (Grjasnowa 132). Abel’s ten languages will stay completely rootless. His perfect pronunciation makes it impossible to trace the language back to a specific geographic location and thus make him hard to read for his acquaintances, who are used to categorizing – both geographically and socially – interlocutors by pronunciation.<sup>76</sup> A dialect would show rootedness and attachment to a place, as it does for one of the band members Abel temporarily stays with: “I’m just a boy from the country side, you can hear it in my dialect. Cut off from the homeland, the language stays where it once was, in my childhood” (Tage 349). But Abel’s pronunciation is perfect. He has no accent or dialect – until the end of the novel: when he wakes up after another almost fatal incident with psychedelic mushrooms, he has a “hardly existing, hardly noticeable, only perceptible: accent” (Tage 644).

---

<sup>76</sup> The artificiality of Abel’s language is reminiscent of the situation of German Jews who also missed the mark linguistically – they either sounded too Jewish or their German was too pristine / too standard. After the shift from Yiddish to “pure” German during the *haskalah* in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century the “Jewish establishment embarked on a campaign to eradicate all traces of Jewish dialect ...and eliminate the Jewish accent, Jewish pronunciation and other linguistic peculiarities” (Lowenstein 18). Jewish speech had a tendency toward “nondialectal – even supradialectal – German,” free of identifiable dialect features (Jacobs 185). But the supradialectal German as a strategy for linguistic and social acceptance had similar consequences as Abel’s perfect pronunciation: “In out-purging the Austro-Germans, these Jews exhibited linguistic behavior that was, once again, different from the speech of Austro-Germans” (Jacobs 209). The standard German often kept Jews separate from their non-Jewish neighbors, who spoke local dialects (Lowenstein 6).

### 3.1.5. Silence and Language Loss

Silence is an inherent characteristic of the multilingual protagonist. His last name Nema, means mute, “it comes from the Slavic name Nemec ... describing somebody who did not speak a Slavic language, hence the mute” (Tage 19). As already mentioned, Abel also played the silent part in the relationship with his childhood love Ilia. And at the end of the novel, due to a violent holdup, Abel literally loses all languages except the “Landessprache,” the national language of his new home country. The attack has caused aphasia. In his stepson’s words, aphasia comes from “Greek: phanai, to speak. Loss of speech, and also loss of the ability to judge” (Tage 658). The first almost fatal accident provided Abel with the ability to learn countless languages. The second nearly deadly incident took Abel’s flawless pronunciation away. And the last violent attack leaves Abel with only one favorite sentence: “This is good” (Tage 657). The novel ends with Abel’s favorite sentence: “He says it gratefully: This is good. One last word. It is good.” (Tage 663). In the end, Abel lives up to his name, the mute. His one sentence “Es ist gut” might be an allusion to the biblical creation story. It can also be understood as a direct translation of “amen,” an expression of affirmation of what has just been said. “Amen,” of course, is also Abel’s last name read backwards: “Jawohl, sage ich. Amen leba” (Tage 630). By losing his languages and the ability to judge, Abel has also lost part of his strangeness and the notion of being a stranger. Only at this point is he able to accept his existence. The rather gloomy end reflects Mora’s skeptical attitude towards multilingualism as a fully accepted way of living.

### 3.2. Good Old Babel: Language Mixing in *Alle Tage*

As noted in the previous chapter, linguists attribute multilinguals with an outsidedness that allows them to take more liberty with language. In contrast to monolinguals who perceive the signifier as strongly attached to the signified, multilinguals can perceive the linguistic sign as arbitrary. They are equipped with what multilingual writer Yoko Tawada has called a “staple remover,” which unlinks the connection between word and meaning and thus enhancing flexibility and creativity. In *Alle Tage*, Mora not only plays with code switching to multiple languages. She further draws attention to language by breaking out of established norms regarding font and print, she corrects the text in the text itself, and uses phonetic spelling.<sup>77</sup> Her unique style forces the reader to pay close attention to details and thus puts the reader into a ‘multilingual,’ (i.e. more detached and attentive) relationship to language. The following section will present the techniques with which Mora points her reader towards the raw material of her work.

#### 3.2.1. Breaking Sentences Apart

Mora introduces several new techniques to draw the reader’s attention to the language of her texts. One of these methods consists of rather unconventional spatial breaks in the middle of sentences. For example, an open-ended half sentence at the end of one chapter continues in the title of the following chapter: “So kommt man in neue **Kreise**” (Tage 248).

Likewise, pronouns in the first sentence of a new chapter refer to the noun used in the last sentence of the previous chapter: “He fell into my lap like a ripe *apple*.”

---

<sup>77</sup> See also Moraldo on phonetic spelling in Turkish-German multilingual literature.

## Games

Technically speaking *they* were half rotten” (Tage 277, my italics). If the reader does not trace the “they” back to the “apple” in the previous chapter, s/he cannot find out what exactly is half rotten. Mora creates unusual spaces and makes unusual connections by letting sentences grow beyond the conventional borders of periods or the end of a chapter. By doing so, she forces her reader to pay close attention and to reconsider what s/he has just read.

### 3.2.2. Corrections

Another way to draw attention to language is Mora use of correction. She begins a sentence with the phonetic spelling of “Accessoires” [accessories] to then break off in the middle of the word, correct herself and use the proper, French spelling of the word: “Diese Wohnasse... Korrektur: Accessoires!” (Tage 161). In “Man muss bloß eine Weile rastlos, Korrektur: ratlos herumstehen” (Tage 582) Mora points the reader to the close similarity between the words “rastlos” [restless] and “ratlos” [helpless]. The similarity would probably escape the monolingual native speaker who does not question words in the same way a multilingual speaker does. Mora uses the same principle here: “Wiesen, furchtbare Auen. Haben Sie *furchtbare* Auen gesagt? Oder fruchtbar. Eins von beiden wird es sein” (Tage 594). She plays with the similarity between “furchtbar” [frightful] and “fruchtbar” [fruitful] and points the reader to the striking difference in meaning that the re-positioning of one single letter can make. Again with “oecumenical, correction: economical and biological restraints” (Tage 617) Mora points to the difference a few



letters can make and thus forces the reader to pay close attention to the language of her text.<sup>78</sup>

### 3.2.3. Phonetic Spelling

Yet another means to change the monolingual's perception of language is Mora's use of phonetic spelling, as in: "Esszettbeekaeftaajoto" (Tage 138). Abel memorizes the route of a train with the help of the first letters of stops. But instead of writing "S Z B E K F H A J O" Mora puts the German spelling of the letters into writing. She does the same with abbreviations like IQ: "Der *Aikju* von Senf reicht aus, um die Königin unserer Herzen zu sein" ["The *aikju* of mustard is sufficient to make her the queen of our hearts"]. (Tage 237, my italics) and foreign terms like refrigerator: "frisch aus dem *Refridscherator*" ["fresh from the *refridscherator*"] (Tage 573, my italics). Just like the optically divided sentences that stretch over the conventional borders between chapters, and the word play in Mora's corrections, the phonetic spelling compels the reader to pay close attention. In instances like these, Mora forces the monolingual German reader to not just consume but to carefully decipher. She puts him into a similar position of distance to and detachment from the German language than a multilingual speaker.

### 3.2.4. Code Switching

Mora also puts the reader out of the comfort zone with her use of other languages than German. In contrast to her first publication, in which Hungarian elements only appear "in hiding" – in literal translation to German – and other elements in foreign

---

<sup>78</sup> Other multilingual writers like Marica Bodrožić and Yoko Tawada play with tonal similarities as well. Bodrožić, for example connects "Wunder," [miracle] to "Wunde," [wound] (Bodrožić 21) and Tawada connects the Japanese noodle soup "ramen" to German "Rahmen" [frame]. Through homophones, all three writers points to structures that sound alike but have very different meanings. Their re-reading of the German words alters the monolingual reader's perception of language.

languages are explained in a glossary, Mora's second publication *Alle Tage* switches languages without providing any explanations, be it in a glossary or through context. Significant portions of code switching in *Alle Tage* are truly multilingual. Mora mixes at least four languages, among them Hungarian and Russian, and the code-switches remain highly confusing and unintelligible on purpose.

The chaotic code-switching that takes place in earlier stages of Abel's language learning process is evoked in the short prologue that precedes the first chapter, in which a journalist refers to Babel, Transylvania and the Balkans in one breath (Tage 7). In referring to Babel, the prologue points the reader to the biblical story of the confusion of one universal language in order to weaken mankind in creating misunderstanding through language barriers. This is exactly the situation that Mora's multilingual code switches not only depict but also recreate for her reader. When Abel wakes up after almost being gassed, he says things like: "Prime bjien esasa ndeo, ... Prime. What? Songo. Nekom kipleimi fatoje. Pleida pjanolö" (Tage 111). Abel's first attempt at multilingual communication appears to be a combination of pure gibberish with a few real words interspersed and the reader is just as lost as Abel's interlocutor ("prime" meaning "prime number" in Portuguese, "esasa" meaning "substantive" in Turkish and "nekom" the preposition "a" in Croatian). The same situation occurs when Able has been taking synthetic drugs in a nightclub and is trying to talk to a boy dressed up as an angel: "Tunne sa belesi houkutenel smutni filds. What? asked the angel" (Tage 50). Here "tunne" means "feeling" in Estonian, "houkuten" means "to lure" in Finnish, and "smutni" means "sad" in Slovakian. Both character and reader are unable to understand

Abel. Several other occasions in the novel present such an unintelligible language mix (Tage 111, 255, 493, 626).

Other passages might be more accessible to a reader who knows any of Abel's languages. Midway through the language learning process, Abel checks how many languages he speaks so far: "He thought Semmel, zsemle, roll, petit pain, bulotschka. Thought vaj, Butter, butter, maslo, beurre. Thought..." (Tage 136). The German, Hungarian, English, French and Russian words for bread roll and the Russian, German, Hungarian and French words for butter are understandable for a reader who speaks any of the languages.

The Russian-German bilingual has the edge over the monolingual reader – and the interlocutor – in the following examples: "I ogurezi i vodku! Omar proclaimed, but Mercedes did not understand. Thus, his wish was not fulfilled" (Tage 468). Abel's stepson is asking for "pickles and vodka" but since his mother does not speak Russian, as the majority of the readership, Omar's craving for a drink and a pickle cannot be satisfied.

Again, for a monolingual reader who does not speak Russian the following dialogue is more difficult to understand:

Po russki, poschalujsta.  
 Woksal.  
 A full sentence, please.  
 Ti...  
 Naschol. Nachadjit, naidtji.  
 ... naschol woksal?  
 Da. (Tage 397)

Abel asks Omar to please speak Russian. Omar answers with just one word: Train station, but Abel wants a full sentence. Omar gets stuck and Abel conjugates the verb "to find" so

that Omar can ask: found the train station? And yes, Abel did find the train station. The conversation between Omar and Abel then becomes easier to understand because Mora reverts to giving part of the answer in German:

Do you want to travel?  
 Njet, ja ne chatschu ujechatj.  
 No, I don't want to travel.  
 ...  
 I cannot understand, Omar would have said. Ja nje panjimaju (Tage 397).  
 You never took the bus?  
 No, Abel replied. Ja njikagda nje jechal n'avtobuse (Tage 398).  
 Po tschemu? Why did you do it? (Tage 410).

While the monolingual reader cannot be certain that the passages in Russian do actually replicate the passages in German, s/he can still follow the conversation. And when Omar's mother wants proof of the successful Russian lessons and wants him to say: I love my mother, Omar responds: "Ja jublju maju matj" (Tage 415). That a monolingual reader cannot check if Omar fulfills his mothers wish – he actually does say that he loves his mother – and cannot be quite sure if Omar is learning Russian or one of Abel's other languages is part of Mora's technique of putting the reader in the (multilingual) shoes of her characters.<sup>79</sup>

Mora's detached relation to the German language in which she has to "fight for expression," discussed in greater detail in section 1.1, fully comes to life in *Alle Tage*. Her outsidedness to German allows Mora to unlink the bond between word and meaning and creatively connect words like "furchtbar" ["frightful"] and "fruchtbar" ["fruitful"]. Mora recreates a similar situation of outsidedness for her reader by breaking sentences

---

<sup>79</sup> I would like to thank Natalia Dudnik for her help with the Russian-German translations.

optically apart, by using corrections, a unusual phonetic spelling and by a language mixing that purposefully excludes the monolingual reader.

#### 4. Der Einzige Mann Auf Dem Kontinent

Mora's latest publication repositions multilingual literature again. By focusing mainly on English – both in metalinguistic references and in language mixing – Mora comes even closer to writing herself out of the picture and to a strongly mixed text that reaches a broad audience without having to rely on glossary or in-text translation.

The protagonist in Mora's latest publication *Der einzige Mann auf dem Kontinent* (2009), is Darius Kopp. Darius could not be more different from the estranged characters in Mora's previous publications. He is a “chubby cheeked, snub nosed, blond boy in his early forties, very optimistic and portly” – only the geographical orientation stays the same: he was born in the East, more specifically in the former GDR (Mann 8-9). His wife Flora, however, has much more in common with previous protagonists and with Mora herself. Notably, their first and last names almost sound identical. And in fact, Flora and Mora both were born in Hungary and grew up in the countryside. They both studied literature and dramatics (Mann 58), tried to gain a foothold in the film industry (Mann 10), and now work as translators (Mann 53). This new cast is emblematic for a general shift away from the thematic concern with Mora's place of birth. However, the theme of the Hungarian immigrant is not entirely extinguished, it is only moved into the background, to the ‘supporting role’ Flora.

Not only does Mora shift the geographic origin of the protagonists from her first to her last publication, there is also a shift in geographic location itself. Whereas Mora purposefully conceals – or circumlocates – geographic locations in *Seltsame Materie* and

*Alle Tage*, which share many scenes of action, *Der einzige Mann* is clearly located in Berlin (Mann 9).<sup>80</sup> The novel only takes place in the city and a little summer home in close proximity to the German capital. It follows Darius through exactly one week in his work- and private life, during which Darius loses his job and (almost) ruins his marriage, starting and ending on a Friday and all eight chapters are separated in sections entitled *The Day* and *The Night*. What happens during the night following the last Friday stays open: the novel ends with the usual heading “*The Night*” but no chapter follows (Mann 379). Mora thus concludes her latest novel with an open end and quite literally leaves room for silence, a recurrent theme in all of her works.

After her first novel-length publication, Mora decided that her next book “should be such that it becomes effectively irrelevant who wrote it” (Literaturen 30). Considering the protagonist, the locality of the story, the general storyline and the many code switches to English, she seems to have achieved the goal of writing herself (mostly) out of the picture.

#### 4.1. Metalinguistic References in *Der Einzige Mann*

In Mora’s latest publication, the thematic concern with language takes a new turn: metalinguistic references are mainly made to English as a second global language and to one of the main reasons of the spread of the English language: The World Wide Web. The concern with language is thus a general, global one.

Darius works in “wireless data communication” (Mann 77) and cannot live without the Internet. It satisfies one of his basic needs: “Food, drink, internet. This is

---

<sup>80</sup> “Die Stadt ist an drei Seiten von Grenzen umgeben” (Materie 195) and “In einer kleinen Stadt in der Nähe dreier Grenzen... eine ruhige, dunkle Insel anstelle eines ehemaligen Sumpfgebiets” (Tage 36).

what nurtures, informs and amuses me and only invades my private space as far as numbers and pictures can do” (Mann 294). Darius is connected to the World Wide Web at all times. He checks his cell-phone right after waking up (Mann 6), and when he is bored he “goes a) online, b) out for dinner or drinks” (Mann 74). On the contrary, Darius feels very uncomfortable when he gets caught in a dead spot over the weekend: “I need to go online! I need to go online since three days!” (Mann 127).

An important aspect of Darius’s language at the workplace is his insecurity speaking English. Having to speak English always comes along with stage fright (Mann 196, 157). Mora depicts how Darius tries to correct himself, and resorts to fumbling and self-editing: “The Armenians have/had brought (?) the money ... the Armenians did actually pay...” (Mann 157). Not entirely sure if the Armenians have or had brought the money, Darius resorts to circumlocution and finds an easy way out by phrasing the sentence differently.

In a conversation with his supervisor in London, Darius gets caught in his insecurity regarding the correct use of “hurt” and “harm”:

Oh, I *am* sorry, sagte Kopp mit Zerknirschung in der Stimme. I did not want to hurt you.

You did not *hurt* me.

Kopp war abermals sorry, falls das das falsche Wort gewesen sein sollte. Du weißt, Englisch is not my mother tongue. Ich meinte möglicherweise harm you. Nein, das war auch falsch. Ich kann dir gar nicht schaden. Du weißt was ich meine: Ich drücke ein drittes Mal mein Bedauern aus. Ich verspreche, von nun an, brav zu sein. But please, Anthony, never ever talk to me like this (Mann 30).

This dialogue depicts how non-native speakers of “global” English are at a disadvantage in dealing with native speakers. Silence, misunderstanding and miscommunication were part of Mora’s previous publications and were explained through prejudices against and barriers between languages. In *Der einzige Mann* communication is constrained not only

because Darius and his boss are speaking different languages but also because people are simply not listening to each other (Mann 51, 52) or because the “wireless data communication” is unreliable. For several days, Darius tries to reach his supervisors and their secretaries in London and in California in vain. When nobody picks up the phone in London, he resorts to email: “Dear Stephanie, ich erreiche euch nicht. Is there anything wrong with the phone?” (Mann 230). When nobody answers his emails, he tries to call his boss in Sunnyvale again and again (Mann 309, 310, 312, 313) only to get the same free-line signals over and over. Finally, Darius realizes that he is “lonely, and has not been able to make contact with anybody” (Mann 316). Thus, even though Darius is in theory “constantly connected to the data stream” via cellphone and laptop, the reality shows that both the wireless data communication and interpersonal relations fail him and he is not in touch with anybody – neither online nor in person.

#### 4.2. Hungarian Flavor and an “armes, ganz konfuses bad english speaker” –

##### Language Mixing in *Der Einzige Mann*

Since the language of Darius’s workplace is English (Mann 136), Mora’s latest novel is peppered with English expressions. Rather than incorporating her first language – the literal translation of Hungarian expressions (*Seltsame Materie*) or code-switching between the two languages (*Alle Tage*) – Mora shows how English is becoming the lingua franca of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, particularly due to the Internet. She switches between German and English deliberately without having to refer back to a glossary or in-text translations, assuming that the intended reader is fluent enough that s/he has no difficulty deciphering the text. For the first time, Mora integrates single embedded words into the grammatical structure of the base text. The use of untranslated English in other



multilingual texts (Abonji, Honigmann, Hens) implies that the publishing industry expects the monolingual German to be practically bilingual. Besides the focus on the English language, Mora expands her repertoire of optic code switches.

#### 4.2.1. Exotic Hungarian Flavor

Few Hungarian influences still sneak their way into Mora's latest publication, mostly through food and drink: Darius has the best drink of the summer in a Hungarian Café (Mann 36), Flora makes Letscho, a Hungarian soup, when they first meet (Mann 57), and Darius eats "zuzás kakas töke pörkölt with galuschka," rooster testicle stew with noodles, a traditional dish in Budapest (Mann 348). These Hungarian expressions literally only give an exotic flavor to *Der einzige Mann* and are quite different from the calques in Mora's first publication.

Notably, Mora also turns to Hungarian for purely aesthetic reasons. In the following example, only the code switch to Hungarian renders the alliteration possible. Flora grew up between "Korn, *Kombajn* und Kühe auf der einen, Katholizismus und Kommunismus auf der anderen Seite" (Mann 59, my italics). "Kombajn" is the Hungarian, Czech, Polish or Serbo-Croatian term for a combine harvester and comes from English "combine."

#### 4.2.2. Phonetic Spelling

While Mora moves further away from the Hungarian language that still found its way into her first two publications in the form of literal translation or code switching, she maintains many of the language games developed in *Alle Tage* that force the reader to read closely and that draw attention to language itself. Most prominent is her use of phonetic spelling: Darius's belly is "rotund wie ein ey," instead of German "Ei" (Mann

10). When called by a Frenchman, Kopp is called “Dariüs” (Mann 363) but when speaking to his American co-workers, he refers to himself as “Därjäss! From Börlän!” (Mann 322). Cabaret girls are introduced as “Sö Kabarett Görls” (Mann 196) and when Darius is asked how he is doing, it sounds like this “Owsidgoin mate orright?” (Mann 296). Further, Mora writes out abbreviations like V.C.: “Ich hab’s nur heute früh schon den Wießies erzählt. Was sind Wießies? V.C. Venture Capital” (Mann 173). And she also plays with pronunciation similarities between German and English, when one of the characters is asking for a “lead” as in hint or track and his interlocutor understand “Lied,” as in German for song (Mann 179-80).

#### 4.2.3. Optical Code Switching

In *Der einzige Mann* Mora is concerned with different media of communication and switches codes optically in using a different font for all things Darius reads online: “Welcome, Benvenuto, Välkommen, Sulamat datang... auf Ihrer Startseite, welche die Homepage Ihrer Firma ist, the Leader in End-to-End Broadband Wireless Networks, with more then 20 years of experience. WE MAKE YOUR WIFI VISIBLE. TURN TO US. (*I will*)” (Mann 133). Since Darius has no face-to-face interactions with his co-workers and does his work via email and phone, Mora eliminates non-verbal cues like gestures in communication. But she makes use of capitalization and italics to convey intonation. Here, the visual marker of capitalization takes the place of stress, etc. in verbal communication. For example, she put Darius’ angry supervisor on record / in print: “You are NOT in Charge of OEM-Business! *I* am! ... Dein Kunde ist defaulting. ... Kunden all over the world stehen mittlerweile mit nahezu 14 Mio bei uns in der Kreide” (Mann 27).

These passages show Mora's concern with different layers of code switching: the optical switch between different fonts and the linguistic switch between different languages. While the most common pattern for different typefaces in code switching would be the standard font for the base language and italics for the embedded language, Mora's non-differentiation of English and German versus her differentiation of the world wide web versus traditional communication / life outside the internet reflect her attitude toward both code switching and "wireless data communication." English as a second language and German are part of one reality while the WWW forms a world on its own.

#### 4.2.4. Code Switching

Several other instances put characters and readers in the same boat: they are at loss because they do not understand. Consider Darius' friend, Stavridis, expressing his fondness in French: "I really like you, said Stavridis. More precisely he said: Je t'ai à la bonne, but of course Kopp did not understand" (Mann 150). Stavridis's first language is Greek, and once Mora even uses Greek letters to let Stavridis express himself: "ΕΤΣΙ ΕΙΝΑΙ Η ΖΩΗ, said Aris Stavridis" (Mann 150).<sup>81</sup> It is up to the reader to figure out that Stavridis says: That's life. This optical and linguistic code switch is emblematic for Mora's last two publications in that it puts the monolingual reader into a multilingual situation without offering any tools to help him detect the meaning.

Some of the code switches in *Der einzige Mann* look rather conventional but Mora actually plays with double meaning when using the following code switches that

---

<sup>81</sup> Sociolinguistics describes a similar phenomenon - the use of multiple writing systems for one language - as digraphia. With English becoming the new lingua franca, the Roman alphabet is increasingly used in societies where the official language is using a different writing system, e.g. in Japan, and texts thus switch between the Roman writing system and Kanji (Angermeyer 255).

happen at sentence boundaries. “Falsch abgebogen. *Lost in links*” depicts an online search as actual movement through space, where one can turn at the wrong corner and get lost on the way (Mann 138). The word play it taken to yet another level when we read the English term “links,” meaning references to data is read as German “links,” meaning “left.”

In “Der Freund habe ihr einen Vogel gezeigt – *You have bats in the belfry*” Mora incorporates a reflection on the difficult task of translation (Mann 351). While there are collocations both in American English and in German that resort to birds, and would thus lend themselves to the translation of this passage, the gesture that a native English speaker associates with “flipping the *bird*” is entirely different from the German “showing somebody a *bird*.” In order to stay within the realm of animals, Mora resorts to bats. Note that Mora italicizes the switches. Given that she also uses italics in order to emphasize stress and intonation, and that she keeps most of her code switches to English in standard font, the different typeface for *lost in links* and the *bats* does not necessarily mean that English is a marked code here, it rather stresses her language plays.

Some of Mora’s intrasentential code-switches point the reader to stereotypes, e.g. that of the smiley American: “Im Fahrstuhl richtete er sich noch ein letztes Mal, smile, stieg in der dritten Etage aus” (Mann 204), or to the English language taking over the German work environment: “Die Firma ist ebenso der hohe Mythos der Corporate History wie der niedrige des Gossips.” (Mann 147) Whereas “corporate history” might very well be a common term in “Businessdeutsch,” gossip is certainly not.

Especially interesting are Mora’s code switched verbs. “Ich überlege, etwas zu downsize” is a perfect example of an English term that has entered the German

language, and is now grammatically integrated and part of the German lexicon (Mann 16). In other instances, the English verb fits perfectly well into the grammatical structure of the German language but has not entered the German lexicon yet: “Außerdem hat er sein verdammtes Englisch im verdammten Oxford *improved!*” (Mann 136).

Only a reader fluent in both English and German can detect Mora’s use of false friends: “Später *picken* sie Kopp an seinem Hotel *auf* und man fährt gemeinsam zum Baker Beach.” Here, the German “aufpicken,” to peck, is used just like the English expression “to pick somebody up” (Mann 92). Mora likewise translates the English “fine” with the German cognate “fein,” that is not idiomatic in this situation: “Fine, sagte Bill. Das ist fein. Cash. Nicht ganz üblich, aber fein” (Mann 323). Whereas the idiomatic expression “fine” can be substituted by “good,” or “okay,” the German “fein” does not cover the same meaning and could rather be translated by “nice.” Along the same line, Mora makes use of the similarity between German “konfus” and English “confused” as an entryway into another code-switch: “Obwohl die kleine Schlussnummer – bin armes, ganz konfuses bad english speaker” (Mann 30). And time and again, Mora presents Darius as someone who makes mistakes: instead of hot-air balloon, Darius says “high flyer” (Mann 321). And instead of congratulating on the engagement, Darius says: “Congratulations... for your fiancé!” (Mann 351). In some cases, Mora corrects Darius, in others she leaves it up to the fluent English-German bilingual to notice the mistake.

Mora’s wordplays and her code switching to English document the original use of one of her small languages. Her use of the English language in *Der Einzige Mann* enriches the text creatively and forces the German reader to think about his mother tongue, reflect about the differences between languages and acknowledge the

incorporation of the English language into German that is under way (see for example “downsizen”).

5. “Lange, fundiert und hymnisch werde ich über die Sprache sprechen...”

In summary, this chapter has established Mora’s work as exemplary for a multilingual literature that has its roots in the writer’s bilingualism but goes beyond the two languages. Mora’s second “big language,” Hungarian, finds its way into her writing in literal translation and forms an undercurrent to her German base text in *Seltsame Materie*. After having won the Ingeborg Bachmann Prize, which established Mora as a major player in the literary scene, Mora’s language games and her language mixing become bolder and in the course of her three publications, the Hungarian language loses importance. First forming a creative undercurrent in *Seltsame Materie*, the Hungarian language is just one out of many languages in Abel’s language learning process in *Alle Tage*, and only plays a minor role in *Der einzige Mann*, in which it merely gives an exotic flavor or is used for purely aesthetic reasons. In her second and third publication, she switches codes without providing explanations through glossaries or in-text translations and deliberately keeps passages in foreign languages obscure, both to characters and readers.

This chapter has further demonstrated that the preoccupation with language plays a crucial role in transnational literature. References to language play the same key role in all of Mora’s works: her chosen subject matters draw attention to language itself and her literature is as self-reflexive as it is multilingual. A quote from *Alle Tage* that also provides the background for Mora’s homepage reads: “Lange, fundiert und hymnisch werde ich über die Sprache sprechen, welche die Ordnung der Welt ist... die grandioseste

Täuschung, das ist mein Fach” [“Long, informed and hymn-like I will speak about language, which is the order of the world... the most grandiose delusion, my specialty”] (Tage 614). In Mora’s work, language takes center stage but more often than not plays the part of the villain: communication not only fails between characters but also – through obscure code switching – with the reader and language becomes, in the end, the most grandiose delusion.

## **5 On the Other Side. Multilingual Expatriate Writers Barbara Honigmann and Gregor Hens.**

Multilingual writers like Terézia Mora, Feridun Zaimoglu, and Saša Stanišić strongly oppose their literature to be labeled “immigrant literature,” and even reject the idea that working in a second language enriches their texts.<sup>82</sup> In order to step away from the focus on the author’s immigrant biography, this chapter turns to another kind of multilingual literature. It investigates mixed-language fiction by German expatriate authors who write in their first language, German.<sup>83</sup> Coincidentally, the German native expatriate writers discussed in this chapter are both late learners of their second language, which is, according to one of their characters, “preposterous to nature” (Hens, Licht 9). Additionally, both of their second languages (English and French) are dominant European languages, which might simply be because dominant languages are more accessible to learners of all ages. This chapter thus looks at a different linguistic phenomenon than previous chapters and examines if writing under the influence of multilingualism impacts the literature in the same ways as writing in a second language does.

The expatriate writers discussed in this chapter did not relocate in the same way as the writers in previous chapters did: They moved geographically but continue to write

---

<sup>82</sup> See, for example Stanišić “Three Myths of Immigrant Writing,” or Elsing “Genauso deutsch wie Kafka.”

<sup>83</sup> The inclusion of expatriate writers reveals how arbitrary the definition of “immigrant literature” or “expatriate writer” is. The terminology entirely depends on the critic’s perspective: the authors discussed in this chapter are just as much immigrants, or foreigners in the countries they moved to, as the writers discussed in earlier chapters are foreigners in German-speaking countries. By continuing to write in the German language, however, the expatriate writers keep a stronger bond to their home country than the authors discussed in earlier chapters.



in their mother tongue and thus return to their birthplaces in the language of their texts. Moreover, immigrant writers *to* German-speaking countries working in German as their second language do so in the language of the majority they are living in (their first language becomes the private language of the home or is not used at all), whereas expatriate writers *from* German-speaking countries working in German do so in a minority language. German may still be part of their everyday lives (be it the language spoken at home or the language of their profession), but their surroundings speak another language. In short, whereas the immigrant writers discussed so far work in German as a public, majority language, the expatriate writers in this chapter work in German as a private, minority language. Similar to immigrant writers, the expatriate is insider and outsider at the same time and his or her writing is characterized by a double perspective (Kramsch, *Multilingual* 189). However, the following close reading demonstrates that the expatriates writing in their first language do not maintain the same outsideness to the linguistic medium of their work as their colleagues working in their second language do.

While some critics have argued that “only by detaching oneself from a native speaker’s immediate perception of meaning can one become a verbal artist” (Safran 256), this chapter demonstrates that multilingual writers who write in their native language – and thus are still imprisoned in the “immediate perception of meaning” – nevertheless produce a literature of multilinguality that moves between languages and explores connections between them in original and critical ways. Compared to those discussed earlier, the writers discussed in this chapter lack the level of distance to the base language of their texts, but their work is affected by other languages that infiltrate and modify it. Indeed, since the multilingual literature examined in this chapter mixes widespread

European languages – English and French – with a German base text, this chapter demonstrates that there is a significant portion of untranslated and unexplained code switching when the audience is expected to be fluent in all languages used in one text.

The first section of this chapter situates the expatriate writers within the larger framework of this project and briefly presents their language biographies. Section 2 then turns to the thematic concern with language and argues that the general language awareness is similar to works discussed in previous chapters. The preoccupation with the impact of language on identity and the focus on fragmented identities can be explained by the fact that both Honigmann and Hens are late bilinguals. Both of them moved to France and the United States late in their lives, and it is especially in adult migration contexts that “one’s identity and sense of self are put on the line” (Block, Second 5). Section 3 aims to explore language mixing in a literature in which the base language is also the writer’s native language and the embedded languages are learned later in life. Is there is a significant difference in language mixing given that the expatriate writers switch to their second language(s)? While I will not be able to quantify this claim in the course of this project, it appears – at least among the authors studied in this project – that the critical distance to language is indeed greater for authors who write in the second language. The base language of their literary work, German, was never unfamiliar or strange for the native German writers discussed in the following.

#### 1. Honigmann and Hens: Writing from Outside in

After situating the writers into the larger framework of this project, the following section introduces Barbara Honigmann and Gregor Hens, two transnational and transcultural authors who expand what it means to be a “German writer” by writing their

oeuvre abroad. Defined through the languages they write in, both are multilingual authors for whom the physical distance to Germany was a prerequisite for their work but who also return to Germany in their writing. Even though Honigmann and Hens write in their first language, both oeuvres express a heightened awareness of language similar to that of their colleagues writing in their second languages.

Including Barbara Honigmann and Gregor Hens in my analysis of multilingual literature allows for a different take on one of the goals of this book: uncoupling transnational literature in the German language from the thematic concern with migration *to* German speaking countries as a defining feature of the literature in question. Migration *from* German speaking countries is as fundamental to Honigmann's and Hens's literary work as is the decision to geographically and linguistically migrate *to* German-speaking countries for writers discussed in previous chapters. Texts by expatriate writers are essentially the other side of the coin of multilingual literature.

Paradoxically, every other writer examined here is typically categorized as having a hyphenated (writer) identity – Abonji as a Hungarian-Swiss writer, for example – while both expatriates Honigmann and Hens remain “German writers.” Following the paradigm that establishes writers like Abonji as hyphenated, Honigmann and Hens should be German-French and German-American, respectively.<sup>84</sup> But rather than classifying writers according to their home and host country – as stated before the labeling as “expat” or “immigrant” depends exclusively on the critics' perspective! – this project aims to shift the paradigm towards language.

---

<sup>84</sup> The fact that Honigmann is sometimes hyphenated as a German-Jewish writer focuses on her religious identity rather than putting her national identity center stage.

### 1.1. A Writer is Defined by the Language S/he Writes in

Even though Honigmann does not consider herself “German,” she describes herself as a “German writer” because she believes that a writer is in essence what s/he writes and first and foremost the language s/he writes in: “Ich bin eine deutsche Schriftstellerin, obwohl ich mich nicht als Deutsche fühle... Ich denke aber, der Schriftsteller ist das, was er schreibt, und er ist vor allem die Sprache, in der er schreibt.” [“I am a German writer, even though I don’t feel German... But I believe that a writer is what he writes, and particularly the language he writes in”] (Honigmann, Damals, 18). Honigmann’s description of the essence of a writer either defines all authors in this project as “German writers,” or, if we read more closely and account for all the other languages that leave traces in their texts, as a category apart, a category that goes beyond a national literature. Since the writers discussed in this project produce a multilingual literature, they are not just German or Hungarian, Croatian, Russian, French or American. Following linguist Grosjean’s definition of a bilingual as having a unique linguistic configuration, a different but complete language system, multilingual writers are more than the sum of the two (or various) languages they are working in.

If an author is defined by the language(s) he writes in, Gregor Hens is more than just a “German writer:” he incorporates a large amount of English into his literary work, and he switches languages for academic and non-academic writing just like he splits his time between living in Germany and the United States. Most of his linguistic research has been written in English while both literary criticism and literature itself is published in German.

Both Honigmann and Hens can chose between the languages they write in, and both writers opted for German, their first language, as the base language for their literary work. When taking into account their language awareness and the amount of other languages than German in their work, however, Honigmann and Hens clearly write a multilingual literature and their texts should be considered a natural part of transnational or multilingual literature.

### 1.2. Dépaysement as Prerequisite for Writing

For Honigmann, writing in the German language was only possible after leaving her home country and moving to France. Likewise, Hens only started to write after having lived in the United States for over ten years. Both writers are thus quite literally writing “outside the nation” as Azade Seyhan puts it – given the German-centric approach of this study.

Barbara Honigmann’s parents survived the persecution of Jews in WWII in exile in London and returned to East Berlin in 1946, where Honigmann was born. She was always surrounded by multiple languages since her mother spoke German, Hungarian and English to her. Even though Honigmann grew up in a secular household and her parents did not speak Hebrew or Yiddish, Honigmann decided to learn Hebrew while still living

in East Berlin.<sup>85</sup> She went on to study drama at Humboldt University and worked as a dramaturge and stage director. Before she could become the writer she is today, however, Honigmann had to move out of Germany. In 1984, when Honigmann was in her mid-thirties, her family relocated to Strasbourg, France.<sup>86</sup> It was only after this self-imposed exile that Honigmann started to write novels: “Als ich nun in das andere Land gekommen war, ... habe ich zu schreiben begonnen” [“Once I got to the other country, ... I started to write”] (Damals, 46).

Honigmann had her breakthrough two years after moving to France, in 1986, with her first publication, *Roman von einem Kinde*. In an interview, Honigmann states that she would never have started to write if she had not left Berlin (in Mesch). She had to break away not only from the familiar geographic location and the people but also from the language (Honigmann, Damals, 53). Consequently, Honigmann chose a country that was utterly foreign to her, where she did not know anybody and did not speak the language (Honigmann, Damals, 52). Following the urgent need to cut herself loose from the suffocating atmosphere in East Berlin that did not give her the space she needed for the (re)discovery of the Jewish faith; and from the German language to make room for her

---

<sup>85</sup> Even though this paper focuses on Honigmann’s ‘secular’ bilingualism rather than the influence of her Bible study on her work, we need to take into consideration that multilingualism is often an inherent part of Jewish identity. Steve Kellmann writes that “for most of their [Jews] troubled history, knowledge of several languages has been a crucial survival mechanism ... More so than for any other people, language has defined Jewish culture” (Kellmann 86). From the second half of the nineteenth century Eastern European Jews were mostly trilingual in Hebrew, Yiddish and Russian or Polish (Fishmann vii). According to Yiddish linguist Dovid Katz, the Ashkenazic community that Honigmann belongs to, had – and in traditional communities still has – three Jewish languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Yiddish, Hebrew being the language of the sacred texts, Aramaic the language of the Talmud or rabbinic literature and Yiddish the spoken language (Katz 46). Many also spoke the coteritorial language.

<sup>86</sup> By moving to Strasbourg, where not only French but also Alsatian is spoken, Honigmann picked a multilingual living environment.

literary career, Honigmann was deliberately looking for a neutral place where she could justifiably feel like a stranger (Damals, 17). Additionally, moving to Strasbourg, the “Jerusalem of the West,” enabled her to live in an active Jewish community as opposed to the almost non-existent Jewish community in East Berlin. Honigmann alternates between a more and less positive view on her life outside of Germany. This ambivalent relationship is typical for late bilinguals who “may perceive the world differently, and change perspectives, ways of thinking, and verbal and non-verbal behaviors when switching languages... and *may feel that they inhabit distinct and at times incommensurable lifeworlds*” (Pavlenko, Bilingual Selves 29, my italics). Honigmann’s relocation to France at the age of thirty-five inevitably implies the reconstruction of her linguistic, her cultural and her social identity. There are times when Honigmann considers her life to be split between her career as a successful German writer and her everyday life in France. She talks about “Leben zwischen hier und dort, ... eine Art Doppelleben, oder ein Zwiespalt” [“A life between here and there... some sort of dual life or antagonism”] (Fiero, Barbara, 135) or describes her life as a state of in-between: a “Leben zwischen den Welten” [“life between the worlds”] (Damals, 15). She speaks of being bound to two different – presumably irreconcilable – identities and describes how her “mother tongue German and her life in France often stand in each others ways and do not do anything for each other” (Honigmann, Gesicht, 27). Honigmann seems to be stuck in a phase of repositioning or self-translation, or what Pavlenko calls “the reinterpretation of one’s subjectivities” (Transformations, 133). Considering her two lives to be an antagonism, Honigmann has not yet reached the “overlapping second phase of gain and reconstruction” (Pavlenko and Lantolf 162).

Especially during the first years in France, the immersion into a new culture and into a new linguistic milieu impacts Honigmann's sense of self in rather negative ways. But the feelings of loss and the phase of repositioning, life in a foreign country, and the sounds of an unknown language, were the prerequisites for Honigmann's literary career. The separation and isolation from familiar places, faces and sounds provides the "in-betweenness necessary to establish fertile ground of difference, the place for self-interpretation and artistic self-representation" (Guenther 218). Writer Luc Bondy uses the French term "dépaysement" in order to describe this phenomenon of relocation as an impetus for literary production, when he compares Honigmann to authors like Beckett, Conrad and Nabokov who also needed to relocate in order to write (Bondy 9). The physical distance to Germany was an existential necessity for Honigmann and has been observed as a source of productive energy by other writers living and working abroad. Josip Novakovic, for example, who started to write only when he moved from Croatia to the United States in his twenties, believes that the geographical and cultural distance to the home country can help a writer to realize that the past life is valuable story material.

Just like Honigmann, Hens is both a "late" bilingual and a "late" writer. Born in Germany, Hens moved to the United States in his mid-twenties. He studied at the University of Missouri, and earned a Ph.D. in linguistics from Berkeley. His dissertation – written in English – looks at *Ditransitive constructions in German* (1995) and his first major academic publication – in German – analyses the work of Austrian wordsmith Thomas Bernhard (*Thomas Bernhards Trilogie der Künste*, 1999). Hens started to write literature ten years after moving to the United States: "I only seriously started to write in 1998/99, I'm a sleeper, relatively speaking... Since I'm a linguist by training but took a



detour into literary studies, I wanted to try some things for myself” (in Biendarra, Jedes Buch). Both Honigmann and Hens were already in their late thirties when their first book was published (incidentally both thirty-seven). Today, Hens splits his time between Columbus, Ohio and Berlin, Germany and has established himself as a well-known creative writer: the German feuilleton praised his first literary publication, *Himmelssturz* (2002) as the “best debut of the year” (Krekeler), a “masterpiece” (Kraft) and the “book of the year” (Zachau).

### 1.3. Staying at Home in Language

Unlike Beckett, Conrad and Nabokov who needed the “dépaysement” as an impetus for literary production, Honigmann and Hens only relocated geographically, without switching languages in their literary work. They abide by their first language, German, instead, and Honigmann defines her relation to the language as particularly strong: she has “Urvertrauen” [“primal trust”] in the language (Fiero, Barbara 133).

Neither feeling at home in France, nor considering herself German, Honigmann finds her home in language. Note the parallel to other multilingual writers (Abonji, Bodrožić) who also find a home in the German language. But instead of filling the void that the loss of living in her first language and the loss of home country created with the new language, French, Honigmann returns to her mother tongue. Her husband puts the language-as-home-phenomenon in a nutshell when he answers to her feeling of rootlessness that they can find a home in their work/art, which in Honigmann’s case is language: “Ich habe zu Peter gesagt, eigentlich wissen wir gar nicht mehr so recht, wo wir nun hingehören, aber Peter hat geantwortet, das ist auch nicht so wichtig, wir gehören eben an unseren Schreibtisch” [“I told Peter that we don’t really know anymore where we

belong, but Peter said that it does not matter and that we belong at our desks”] (Honigmann, Damals, 39). Similar to Abonji and Bodrožić who felt at home first in the German language, Honigmann can overcome the feeling of not knowing where she belongs in her literary work.

#### 1.4. Language Awareness

Hens is particularly interesting for this project because, as a trained linguist, he first turned to literary criticism and finally to creative writing, and thus transcends the language-literature divide in one person. Additionally, Hens has translated eight novels in the last six years and thus is, according to Grosjean’s definition, also a “professional multilingual.” Similar to Terézia Mora, Hens is doubly multilingual: first by living his life in two languages and secondly by choosing translation as a profession. As a linguist, a scholar of German literature, and a translator, Hens is trained to pay close attention to the material literature is made of; and his literature is extremely self-reflexive in that he often choses a translator/narrator who re-traces the journeys of another writer in the past.<sup>87</sup> But what matters most to him is the linguistic part in his work: “Was mir an dieser Arbeit am wichtigsten ist, ist tatsächlich die sprachliche Seite” (in Biendarra, Jedes Buch).

Similarly, Honigmann is very aware of languages in general and the irreconcilable difference between them. Her multilingual living situation plays into her very precise and careful way of writing. Honigmann tries to “find the right place for the right word. You have to weigh your words, and then the sentences, their sequencing, their rhythm and their musicality” (in Mesch). Living and working in multiple languages teaches

---

<sup>87</sup> Consider, for example, the protagonist Tobias re-writing D.H. Lawrence’s manuscript “Quetzalcoatl” in *In diesem neuen Licht*.

Honigmann to be alert to the ambiguity of words. She is used to taking notes in three languages – German, French and Hebrew – not because she is “so polyglot, but rather because the appropriate term that comes to mind spontaneously does not always come from the same language. Many of the terms... somehow sound wrongly charged and overblown in translation” (Honigmann, *Gesicht*, 66). When she switches from German to French to Hebrew, she does so because some words and ideas cannot be translated directly, a process that reveals the blind spots of perception in both languages. Living and working in multiple languages further offers Honigmann a distance to and appreciation of her mother tongue. She states that to speak another language is like “carrying your mother tongue around like a secret” and prevents you from “spending it casually” (Honigmann, *Roman*, 38). Living her everyday life in French frees the German language from being mired in routine things and keeps Honigmann from using her first language thoughtlessly.

Considering the language mixing in their text, both Honigmann and Hens are multilingual authors who needed to separate geographically from Germany – they needed the “*dépaysement*” – in order to find their voices. Both expatriate writers are relatively late bilinguals and also started to write late in their lives compared to the authors discussed in previous chapters. While both decided to write in their first language, German, their works convey their exceptional language awareness that is heightened not only because of their multilingual living situations but also because of their activity as translators, either privately in their religious studies (Honigmann) or professionally (Hens).

## 2. Fluid language identities, uprooted expats and very loose translations

Similar to the multilingual works discussed in previous chapters, language plays an important role in Honigmann's and Hens's work. First, this section explores the thematic concern with language and identity fragmentation that is a prevalent theme in Honigmann's novels and also finds its way into Abonji's, Bodrožić's and Mora's texts. To this end, I turn to poststructuralist approaches – a common way of conceptualizing identity in applied linguistics – that consider identity not as fixed, but rather as constructed and expressed through languages (Omoniyi, Block, Pavlenko). Second, I discuss the absence or failure of language in Honigmann and Hens, a dominant theme previously examined in chapter 4. In Hens's case, the general instability of the characters is caused by the transnational lifestyle. His characters “try to recapture a coherent, authentic sense of self” but “eventually realize the difficulty, if not futility of this process” (Shafi 506) and are often unable to relate to each other in successful communication. I then turn to pronunciation and accent as markers of identity, equally important themes discussed in the chapters analyzing Mora, Abonji and Bodrožić.<sup>88</sup> Lastly, I turn to the self-reflexive depiction of characters working with language, again

---

<sup>88</sup> Compared to metalinguistic references in Honigmann's novels (and every other text discussed in this project) the theme of language, and particularly language learning, plays a less pertinent role for Hens's protagonists. While most of the protagonists by female writers consciously reflect on their language learning process, Hens's protagonist if at all are interested in the language learning process of other characters. This might be part of a larger trend observed by linguist Aneta Pavlenko. In *Language Learning Memoirs as a Gendered Genre*, Pavlenko analyzes a corpus of multilingual literature by male and female writers and finds that “language learning ... is a dominant theme for female narrators” (Language 214) and is much less dominant for male narrators. Pavlenko explains the difference with the „sociohistoric and sociocultural shaping of the autobiographic genre, where performance of contemporary femininity – but not masculinity – is predicated upon explicit questioning of ideologies of gender and selfhood” (Language 236).

also a dominant theme in many of the previously discussed novels. Almost every one of Hens's protagonists works with language in one way or the other. Hens's deepest reflections on the interaction of languages, however, are connected to questions of translation.

### 2.1. Language and Identity

Early studies of the impact of language learning on identity framed identity as “a fixed and measurable phenomenon” (Block 72). Poststructuralist approaches to identity and language learning, however, understand identities as flexible and constructed in linguistic and social interaction and assume that identities are not fixed but rather “self-conscious, ongoing narratives that individuals perform, interpret and project” among other things in languages (Block 27). In fact, sociolinguists see language as playing a central role in both interpreting and proclaiming identity (Omoniyi and White 2). When depicting her multilingual mother as having very different personalities according to the language she speaks, Honigmann gives a prime example of identity performance through language.

Honigmann's mother, Lizzy Kohlmann, was born in Hungary and grew up in Vienna; she lived in Paris and London during WWII. A switch in language goes hand in hand with a switch in her personality: “When my mother spoke Hungarian, she turned into a completely different person, very lively and agitated... When speaking English, my mother gained composure and serenity, qualities that she learned to appreciate in England... Speaking Viennese was her way to express feelings of foreignness against Berlin and against the Germans... Being Austrian only survived in her accent and her vocabulary” (Damals, 91). Here, Kohlmann utilizes dialect to set herself apart from the

Germans in Berlin, where she never felt completely at home. A dialect turns into an empowering means to express difference when used voluntarily. Similarly, Kohlmann's first language, Hungarian, helps her to regain strength, it works like a "secret reserve," a source from which she can gain "lust for life and happiness," character traits that are rarely part of her when speaking her second languages (Honigmann, Kapitel, 28). In contrast, her "Austrian side" is "very sensitive, more complicated and contradictory" (Honigmann, Kapitel, 53). Thus, instead of depicting her mother as having a "fixed and measurable" identity, Honigmann describes her as performing different identities in two different languages (Hungarian and English) and two different dialects of German (Viennese and Berlin). In the depiction of her multilingual mother Honigmann explores the links between multiple languages and selves.

Hens is interested in a different – but related – facet of fluid and fragmented identities; his work focuses on "the fragility of identity construction" (Biendarra, Globalization 243). Biendarra argues that the "alienating forces of globalization" lead to a sense of displacement in Hens's characters; they search for a "bygone sense of place and identity that the experience of globalization has called into question, maybe even eradicated" (Globalization 248). While Biendarra focuses on geographic spaces when arguing that "living in a globalized, deterritorialized world entails the fissure of stable identities" (Globalization 148), I aim to explore the role that language plays in the lost sense of a stable identity.

## 2.2. Miscommunication and Silence

Building upon Biendarra's reading, I argue that deterritorialization, the dissolution of ties between culture and place, is not the only factor creating the state of

limbo in which Hens's characters find themselves. Language – or rather the absence of it – plays an equally important part in their feeling of uprootedness.

Miscommunication and silence loom large in Hens's first publication, *Himmelssturz*. Hens's skepticism about language is reminiscent of the multilingual philosopher of language Fritz Mauthner who declared communication between people impossible (Ben-Zvi 194). Hens's characters are not able to relate to each other in successful communication: "Wir hätten an diesem Sonntag ein vernünftiges Gespräch führen sollen... Aber wir hatten den Mut zu diesem Gespräch nicht aufgebracht" ["We should have had a serious conversation that Sunday... But we did not get up the nerve to talk."] (Hens, *Himmelssturz* 100). Even though the characters speak the same language, they lack the courage to engage in a conversation. In his later work, characters even lack the ability to talk to themselves: "Versuchten, ein Gespräch zu führen... Wie zwei Menschen... die nicht einmal wissen, welche Worte sie an sich selbst richten können. Geschweige denn aneinander" ["We tried to talk to each other... Like two people who don't even know how to address themselves let alone each other"] (Hens, *Transfer* 123-24). Even father and daughter resort to silence: "Sie sah ihn an, schweigend, und er wusste, dass sie auch geschweigen hätte, wenn ein Gespräch möglich gewesen wäre... Denn sie hatten sich zu diesem Thema, zu dem einzigen Thema das zählte, nichts zu sagen" ["She looked at him, silent, and he knew that she would have kept silent even if a conversation would have been possible... Because there was nothing to say about the one matter, the only important matter"] (Hens, *Transfer* 141). Biendarra argues that the characters in *Himmelssturz* are caught between "the desire to be heard and the inability to connect truly in interpersonal communication, leaving them in the numbing state of limbo

that ensues from a deterritorialized existence” (Globalization 242). Rarely do characters succeed in connecting through language and there are only fleeting moments in which language is used as a bridge: “She used surprising analogies, words of foreign nature... She wanted to build that bridge, wanted to introduce him to her language, and he understood” (Hens, *Transfer* 25). It is not the language of the everyday that connects the two speakers in this passage. It is a surprising, foreign and very personal – and short-lived language. In the end, the connecting “language bridge” does not hold and the two characters drift apart.

More extreme than all the moments of failed communication or misunderstanding is the actual loss of language. The first story in Hens’s collection *Transfer Lounge* is especially interesting in this regard. “Landgang” [“Shore Leave”] brings together a formerly multilingual harbor master, who has lost almost all of the languages of his childhood, “except for the Flemish, that he cannot use, because he does not know any Flemings” (Hens, *Transfer* 9) and a young editor, Leonard, who literally loses the ability to speak after suffering from aphasia due to a stroke. The harbor master is not very communicative by nature, he usually remains silent (Hens, *Transfer* 12). But in the course of the story, he gives voice to Leonard by reading out all the poems that have been sent to the editor’s journal for submission. Leonard’s sister and the harbor master are desperately waiting for Leonard to regain his voice: “they bend down to him and looked at his paralyzed lips... they were hoping for a word, for a single recognizable sound” (Hens, *Transfer* 14). In the end, it is not the speech therapist that draws the first words from Leonard. It is thanks to the poetry that the harbor master reads in the hospital that the editor forms a few words: “Only once... he seemed to gather all of his strength and



said heavy-tongued the word *rose*, then, after a pause, he seemed to whisper *low*, and something that sounded like *perilous tide*” (Hens, *Transfer* 15). Hens depicts both multilingual characters who in theory have many languages to choose from but have a hard time communicating in practice, and characters that suffer from complete language loss because of accidents; characteristics that are brought to the extreme in Terézia Mora’s character Abel Nema. As multilingual writers and translators, Hens and Mora seem to be more aware of the fleeting qualities of language. Consequently, language and interpersonal communication in their work fails more often than not.

### 2.3. Speaking with an Accent

Honigmann describes pronunciation and accent as strong and evident markers of identity. These language-related themes recur in several of Honigmann’s novels and, as discussed in previous chapter, also play a similarly pertinent role in Mora’s, Abonji’s and Bodrožić’s work. Pronunciation is among the most striking features in creating a sense of personal identity. Linguist Claire Kramsch argues that the way we speak is a crucial part of identity construction and negotiation. Kramsch states “by their accent, their vocabulary, their discourse patterns, speakers identify themselves and are identified as members of this or that speech and discourse community. From this membership, they draw personal strength and pride” (*Language* 65-66). Honigmann’s novels, however, depict the opposite: characters speaking with an accent are *not* part of a speech community and instead of drawing “personal strength and pride” from the in-group experience, speaking with an accent results in feelings of being shut out.

In her autobiographical novel *Damals, dann und danach*, Honigmann describes her struggle with her imperfect pronunciation of French. She shows how speaking with

an accent sets her apart from her French friends who make fun of her and make her feel excluded (Damals, 70-74). Since Honigmann learned French late in her life, it is almost impossible to reduce the influence of her first language German on her second language. When a second language is learned that late in life “it becomes impossible to lose totally one of the most salient identifying characteristics of any human being, a means by which we identify ourselves and are identified by others, namely the way we sound” (Guiora 46). Linguist Jan Blommaert differentiates between the identity people themselves articulate and what he calls ‘attributed’ identity, the identity given to someone by someone else (Blommaert 238). The judgment of her accent is *not* a self-constructed position, it is a position imposed by others. Honigmann is not a full member of her group of friends but rather the “odd fish” because her French is not perfect [“Heute bin ich wohl unter meinen Freundinnen so etwas wie ein bunter Vogel, ich gehöre nicht ganz in der gleichen Art zu ihnen, ... Weil ich nicht perfekt Französisch spreche”] (Honigmann, Damals, 70). In her autobiographical work *Ein Kapitel aus meinem Leben* Honigmann describes how the ‘attributed’ identities are multiplied for her multilingual mother. Only in her first language, Hungarian, is her mother in a neutral, natural state [“wie ein Fisch im Wasser”], in Berlin, however, her Viennese accent sets her apart and when she finally moves back to Vienna her accent sounds foreign even in her hometown. When she speaks French or English, others identify her as a foreigner because she rolls the “R” (Kapitel, 30).

One of Hens’s protagonists, a teacher of English as a second language, explains why Honigmann is bound to be the “odd fish” in France when he states that “language acquisition is meant to happen in the first ten or twelve years... acquiring a language in

adulthood is and remains preposterous to nature” (Hens, Licht 8-9). Of course, the pronunciation of the protagonist himself is perfect even though he is not a native speaker of English (Hens, Licht 8). A female character who speaks “excellent English” nevertheless has a beautiful accent (Hens, Licht 36, 80). Former linguist Hens describes her pronunciation described in greater detail: “Her English is nearly perfect, almost a little too beautiful with this slight, virtually non-existent accent. The vowels float just over the words... as if she had a second voice” (Hens, Licht 136). Hens gives a similarly detailed description of pronunciation in another novel: “the word city, which she pronounced with a hard t and two tinted, but differently tinted vowels, so that her lips did not move at all” (Hens, Himmelssturz 44). In instances like these, the linguist in Hens seems to take over and describes the pronunciation, position and timing of “the phonemes t and k” in detail (Hens, Licht 136). In all of these cases, the male protagonists – just as the author – are fascinated by the accent of a female character he is about to fall in love with. Here, the identity that the male protagonist ‘attributes’ to the female character is positive: her accent makes her even more attractive.

#### 2.4. Speaking in a Dialect

Honigmann is not only interested in accents, she is also very attentive to dialects and the effect they can have on both speaker and listener. In the case of dialects, pronunciation plays a more positive role when employed voluntarily. Speaking a dialect is presented as a way to articulate or claim one’s identity. When purposefully utilized by the speaker, the “way we sound” can also be an empowering experience.

Dialects, just like Honigmann’s own German accent in French, reveal the geographical region the speaker is from; and, being born in Berlin, Honigmann speaks

German with an accent typical for that region. On vacation in Vienna, this dialect works as a means to set her apart from her Austrian friends: “Zudem berlinerte ich noch laut und stolz, das war meine kleine Auflehnung gegen das Mutterland” [“Moreover, I spoke the Berlin dialect openly and haughtily, a small revolt against the mother country”] (Damals, 95). The Berlin dialect is more than a deliberate and empowering revolt against the mother country, it is also a rebellion against the mother herself who considers the dialect to be an embarrassing “horrible handicap” (Honigmann, Kapitel, 115). By willfully speaking dialect Honigmann identifies herself as part of a speech community – namely the Berliners – and draws personal strength and pride from the way she sounds.

## 2.5. Working with Language(s)

The material that Hens and most of his protagonists work with is language. More often than not, Hens’s protagonists combine all of the author’s professions: they are trained linguists that turn to the study of literature, or professors that start to translate. Consider, for example, the professor of literature who sits in a linguistics Ph.D. examination on “computergestützte Generierung natürlicher Sprachen” [“computer assisted generation of natural languages”] (Hens, Himmelssturz 175), or all the editors and translators in Hens’s short stories (Hens, Transfer, 8, 17, 34). One protagonist is particularly interesting: a linguist by training, Tobias is “an authority in Second-Language-Acquisition” (Hens, Licht 8). He became the “star of the SLA-scene” after developing his so-called “Wet Linguistics.” “Wet Linguistics” is interested in the processes of vocabulary learning in the human brain. It measures brain waves, tracks eye movement, and researches patients who suffer from “strokes, dementia, autism and aphasic schizophrenia” (Hens, Licht 73). But the protagonist turns his back on linguistics

and teaches “Global English” instead (Hens, Licht 6). Tobias considers himself to be “an old fighter for multilingualism” even though he does not believe in language learning in adulthood (Hens, Licht 16). In the course of the novel, he also quits his teaching position to devote his time fully to translating D.H. Lawrence’s 1925 manuscript *Quetzalcoatl*. Now, Tobias is a “translator, a relocater... a voice impersonator, the man for the missing words” (Hens, Licht 121).

Just as Hens considers the translator to be a specialist for “the missing words,” Honigmann justifies her code switching with the impossibility to find the exact translation for some words (Honigmann, Gesicht 66). She sometimes finds the “missing words” in another language. Hens’s protagonist ultimately considers his *métier* to be one of “almost-accurateness, of approximation, endless revolving” because he knows the “holes in the lexical fields” (Hens, Licht 121). Hens’s “holes in the lexical fields” are the very reason for Honigmann to code switch to another language.

Both Honigmann and Hens question the possibility to translate word for word from one language to another because they know about “the holes in the lexical fields” that force them to paraphrase or code switch in case a word cannot be translated directly. The awareness of the blind spots in their languages establishes multilingual literature as essential for authors who live in multiple languages. Their multilingual living situation, and their work as translators – be it professional or in their private religious study – makes them aware of the incommensurable language worlds they try to balance in their writing.

In sum, the general thematic concern with language is equally strong in multilingual literature by expatriate and immigrant writers. Similar to their multilingual

colleagues discussed in previous chapters, Honigmann and Hens are interested in pronunciation and accent, silence and miscommunication. Honigmann's particular interest in identity fragmentation is a result of her comparatively late move to a new cultural and linguistic environment. Likewise, Abonji describes how her protagonist's parents, who came to Switzerland as adults, undergo a drastic change when speaking German or Hungarian (Tauben 149). Hens's particular focus on writing professions (linguists, literature professors, translators) can be explained in part by the fact that he was a trained linguist and an established literature scholar before turning to creative writing himself. Hens shares this emphasis on the writing professions with Terézia Mora, the other professional translator in this project.

### 3. Code Switching to "Big" Languages

If we consider the amount of foreign languages in their texts, Honigmann and Hens write a multilingual literature even though the base language of their work is their first language German. The following section thus focuses on language mixing in their work. Honigmann and Hens code switch to their second languages, two widely spoken European languages, French and English respectively. To describe Hens's use of the English language a literary critic resorts to code switching himself: "Und zwischendurch switchen die Figuren unvermittelt und *for no apparent reason* ins Englische, tauchen mitunter seitenlang in die fremde Sprache ein, in Dialogen, *both hauntingly shallow and utterly gratuitous*" ["And occasionally the characters switch suddenly and *for no apparent reason* to English, plunge into the foreign language for dialogues that stretch

over pages, *both hauntingly shallow and utterly gratuitous*”] (Mesch, Hens).<sup>89</sup> The plethora of code switches to English that work without translation and stretch over pages strengthens the assumption that the intended reader is expected to be bilingual by default.

My close reading demonstrates that Honigmann’s code switches to French are not gratuitous but rather express her expatriate lifestyle, in which a French term may be preferable because it is uniquely suited to its meaning; and Hens’s code switches to English are oftentimes more tongue-in-cheek than shallow and likewise embody his expatriate living environment (section 3.1). We are thus looking at different functions of code switching than the ones in the works discussed in above. The language games, the playful focus on single words, the sound or even the spelling of a language, that is characteristic for the style of the immigrant writers is less pronounced here. I also show that language mixing looks quite different when the expatriate authors switch to languages less well known: English for Honigmann and Spanish for Hens (section 3.2).

In general, Honigmann’s and Hens’s writing is deliberately simple. Both writers share the language philosopher Mauthner’s perspective that “the only language should be simple language” (Ben-Zvi 196). Knowing about the “holes in the lexical fields” teaches them to keep it simple, or as one of Mora’s characters puts it: “Say it simple. Word for Word.” (Materie 19). Hens’s prose has been characterized as minimalistic, there is “no passage, not even a single word too much” (Mesch, Hens), his style is “concentrated” and “transparent” (Krekeler, Schöner, 4). Hens himself states that the linguistic component is of highest importance in his work (in Biendarra, *Jedes Buch*). Likewise, Honigmann’s style has been characterized as spare, “einfach,” “naiv” (Gsoels-Lorensen 372) or

---

<sup>89</sup> Note that the first code switch, the verb “switchen” is not marked in italics, but nicely adapted into the grammatical structure of the German sentence.

“innocent” (Schaumann 170). Marcel Reich-Ranicki even talks about a “simplicity that is hardly to surpass” [“kaum zu überbietende Schlichtheit”] (in Schaumann 171). Writing in the German language while living in France and studying religious texts in Hebrew certainly creates a constant alertness for all the languages Honigmann uses; and that alertness leads Honigmann to pay careful attention to every single word she puts on the page.

### 3.1. Code Switching to a Second Language

Multilingual writer Terézia Mora defines her mother tongue as a conglomerate of all her languages but differentiates between “big” and “small” languages. Honigmann’s second big language (next to German) is French, after having lived in France for many years. When she switches to French in her writing, it is usually for a proverb that she believes to be more telling. The code switch is marked in italic print and in most cases, Honigmann explains the French passage, not by translating it word for word but rather by finding an expressive translation, a corresponding German proverb, that carries the meaning of the French saying to the German reader. One of the most frequent functions of code switching in spoken language is to repeat the same thing in both languages (Romaine 143) and Honigmann’s code switching technique reproduces that function. Consider the following example: “*La boucle est bouclée*, sagen die Franzosen, unter denen ich jetzt lebe. Der Kreis schließt sich, ich kehre heute an den Ausgangspunkt zurück” [*“La boucle est bouclée*, say the French amongst whom I live now. Everything comes full circle, tonight I return to the point of origin”] (Gesicht, 157, 158). Here, Honigmann even identifies the proverb as French by introducing it with “say the French.” Honigmann resorts to the same technique when she writes about a get-together after one



of her public readings: “Eine Stimmung *bon enfant*, wie man das in Frankreich nennt, wie bei einem Kindergeburtstag” [“The atmosphere was *bon enfant*, as the French say, like a kid’s birthday party”] (Licht, 142). Her ability to find telling German translations for French proverbs proves Honigmann’s familiarity with and her ease in the French language. Honigmann’s bi-cultural and bi-lingual lifestyle provides her with two different ways of looking at the world and two different ways to express that worldview. By code switching to her second language, Honigmann can foreground that double view and carry it to the reader.

There are, however, exceptions to Honigmann’s technique in code switching described above. French phrases that are more familiar to a German audience are still in italics and thus optically marked as ‘foreign’ but Honigmann neither introduces them as French, nor does she provide her reader with a German equivalent: “Alle echten New Yorker sind aber *comme il faut* angezogen” [“Every real New Yorker is dressed *comme il faut*”] (Licht, 84). “*Comme il faut*,” meaning proper, according to standard, entered both the German and the English monolingual lexicon and is thus considered “borrowing” rather than code switching (Callahan 10). Assuming that the monolingual German reader is familiar with the phrase, Honigmann can do without a translation.

The following is a unique example of a perhaps unintentional multilingual and multicultural language game that is best appreciated by a reader familiar with France and the United States. Describing the audience at one of her readings in New York City, Honigman notes that: “Dieses Publikum ist noch mehr »B.C.B.G.« als sogar in Paris. B.C.B.G ist die Abkürzung von *bon chic bon genre*, vom Volk persifliert zu *beau cul bonne gueule*\*, man könnte auch einfach sagen, Snobs” [The audience is even more

»B.C.B.G.« than in Paris. B.C.B.G. is short for *bon chic bon genre*, satirized to *beau cul bonne gueule\**, or one could just say, snobs”] (Licht, 18). Marked with an asterisk, “Beau cul bonne gueule” is translated as “\*schöner Arsch, nette Schnauze” [“nice butt, nice kisser”] at bottom of the page. Honigmann seems to be unaware of the French fashion designer Max Azria’s line BCBG, which is quite popular in the United States. The fashion label adds another layer to her multilingual and multicultural code switch. Honigmann can describe the New Yorker crème de la crème not only with a French phrase, “B.C.B.G” but also with a German equivalent, “Snob,” which is much less illustrative, but nonetheless noteworthy since it is a borrowing from English.

Similar to Honigmann’s work, some of the double meanings of language in Hens’s novels are only accessible to a German-English bilingual reader. Consider the following dialogue – in English in the original German text – between one of the main characters and his sister, who ran three people over with her car but gets away without a jail sentence:

- Thank God, - hat sie gesagt. – I would have been crushed.
- Did you say crushed?
- Well...
- Du hättest schon in den Rückspiegel schauen können  
[You could have checked the rear mirror].
- Well, I had no idea there were people out there. Past midnight! In early February! What were those fuckers doing there? (Hens, Licht 99)

The macabre word play with the double meaning of crushing something – in this case three people – and feeling devastated is only accessible to a reader fluent in English. The code switching here establishes group boundaries and works as an insider joke that excludes the monocultural and monolingual reader. Since Honigmann goes through the trouble to explain and translate the acronym B.C.B.G. but does not point to the reader to

the fashion label, it is not clear if she made the in-joke on purpose. Hens, however clearly expresses solidarity with readers from the same multilingual speech community.

Compared to Honigmann's rather abrupt move from a German- to a French-speaking environment, Hens's transition was smooth: He was already familiar with the English language – he majored in English before moving to the United States – and the German language was always part of his work as a professor in German Studies. His first publication, *Himmelssturz*, takes place in an American university town, the protagonist, a professor of German, is caught between his marriage to a successful American art collector and a German exchange student. While the novel is rich in points of references to American culture (“Dreistellige Fahrenheitwerte,” “Cola in Jumbo, Giant oder Excess,” “Fünfdollarportion Popcorn,” *Himmelssturz* 10) there are few code switches to English, and even fewer to Spanish (the best friend of the protagonist is of Puerto-Rican origin). On the rare occasion, Hens, similar to Honigmann, introduces the embedded language as English and paraphrases it for the German reader: “Chemistry, sagen die Amerikaner, es entstehen chemische Verbindungen” (Hens, *Himmelssturz* 52). Only once does the embedded language go beyond the word level: “Seeking challenges for the humanities in a rapidly changing world, stand über dem Bild. Und etwas von benchmarks und global excellence“ (Hens, *Himmelssturz* 53). Note that the embedded language is not marked with italic type and there is no explanation for the non-English speaker. When Hens alludes to the multilingual living situation of his characters and not only switches to English but also to Spanish, the embedded language is so simple and easy to understand, that there is no need for explanation or translation: “Wir hatten uns noch einmal umgedreht, bye bye gerufen und gracias und es war beinahe, als verabschiedeten wir uns

vor einer langen Reise” [We turned around once more, calling bye bye and gracias and it was almost as if we said good-bye before a long journey.”] (Hens, *Himmelssturz* 161). As argued in earlier chapters, the comparatively small amount of code switches in Hens’s first publication might reflect his editor’s directions, which Hens had to concede to. The amount of code switching increases significantly in his later publications, *Transfer Lounge* (2003) and especially in *In diesem neuen Licht* (2006). The fact that Hens’s debut novel was celebrated as the book of the year perhaps made it easier to use a significant amount of untranslated embedded language in subsequent publications.

Similar to his debut novel, the short story collection *Transfer Lounge* is rich in points of reference to American culture, especially to measuring units and geographical markers: “zwei Meilen entfernt” (Transfer 7), “über sechs Fuß groß” (Transfer 113), “vierundachtzig Grad Fahrenheit” (Transfer 125). Another feature of American English that finds its way into all of Hens’s publications is the description of a location by city and state as in: “Lexington, Kentucky” (Transfer 69), or “London, Ontario” (Transfer 89). Contrary to his first publication, the code switches in *Transfer Lounge* are marked with italics but Hens does not provide any translation.

In the first story of the collection, Hens focuses on the sound of the English language. He talks about the “Harte Umgangssprache der Weltmeere: *emergency, dispatch, medical evacuation, county response team*” [“harsh vernacular of the sea”], and calls that vernacular a “destructured language” (Hens, Transfer 9). Contrasting the harsh, destructive vernacular, Hens enumerates beautifully resonant terms that one of the main characters reads out loud: “Murmelte ein Wort oder zwei, sagte *falacious skies* oder *sunburn, sensation*, oder *the anomaly of blue*... dann las er die Wörter *form, formidable*,

und *multitudinous refractions* ... Fast war es, als sänge er, wenn er *lucid* sagte, *lucid rendition* oder *pennywise, these days*.” (Hens, Transfer 13) This pure focus on sound, removed from any meaning-making components of language, has a defamiliarizing effect and is reminiscent of other multilingual writers, who focus on single aspects of language, like, for example Yoko Tawada, who defamiliarizes the German language by taking it literally. By simply enumerating beautiful sounding words, Hens zooms in on the sound, on the “abstract and disembodied” quality of the English language (Tawada, Writing 150).

Hens’s techniques to incorporate his second language are similar to Honigmann’s ways of working the French language into her German base text: both writers find corresponding German equivalents to their code switches. Consider, for example, “reibungslos die Abläufe *like a well-oiled machine*” (Hens, Licht 9), “Zivilgesellschaft, social fabric” (Hens, Licht 33), “aus seinem Trott, seinem *deep funk*, herausreißen” (Hens, Licht 115), or “Notgeil? He needed to get laid. Quickly. Der arme Kerl.” (Hens, Licht 33). The ease with which Hens moves between the two languages demonstrates his familiarity with both German and English. Given that many of the novel’s chapter headings are in English (“Life on the Ranch,” 206, “Doctor Death,” 210, “Up,” 316), and that a significant portion of the dialogue in the novel is entirely in English, Hens expects a great familiarity with the English language from his reader (see for example the in-joke mentioned above). The sheer quantity of untranslated and unexplained code switches to English alone strengthens the assumption that the German readership is expected to be bilingual by default.

Most of Honigmann's and Hens's code switches to their second languages are expressions of their bi-cultural and bi-lingual lifestyle. Honigmann resorts to French phrases whenever they seem to be more fitting; and Hens incorporates not only a significant amount of English but also, as an expression of his expatriate existence, numerous American measuring units (Fahrenheit, miles, feet etc.). The majority of their code switches reads like a translation practice and thus questions the dichotomy of original and translation, just like multilingual literature questions the concept of a national literature and a national language. The outsider-perspective on the base language (German) that enriches the texts discussed in previous chapters, and that leads to a focus on words beyond the meaning making qualities of language, moves to the embedded languages in Honigmann's and Hens's work. However, both writers rarely play with their second languages in the ways in which Mora, Abonji or Bodrožić do.

### 3.2. Code Switching to Third Languages

Compared to the code switching to French, Honigmann utilizes entirely different techniques when switching to her "small" language, English. She inserts single words – mostly nouns and adjectives – and seems to be less familiar, and less at ease with the English language. Nevertheless, a plethora of English nouns can be found in Honigmann's latest publication *Das überirdische Licht*. While Honigmann keeps the code switches to English in italic print, she refrains from providing a translation for the monolingual German reader. Supported by the "dear German Literature Funds" (Licht, 7), Honigmann spent ten weeks as visiting scholar and writer in residence at New York University. *Das überirdische Licht* reads like short diary entries from those ten weeks and there is at least one English noun on every single page: "Der *doorman* unten im Haus, an

seinem *frontdesk*” (Licht, 11). Honigmann further mixes English adjectives into her German sentences, *busy* and *packed* appear most often: “Da muss sie jetzt schon sehr *busy* sein” (Licht, 27), “In Soho sind die Straßen so *packed*” (Licht 31). It might be that the concepts of being “busy” and of “packed” streets appear so typical for New York as to be untranslatable for Honigmann. Since those are the words that she hears people say and has hence learned to say herself, they might be the ones coming to mind spontaneously and the German translation might sound out of place. As is the case with Honigmann’s more elaborate French code switches, the code switching to English might express her new multilingual living environment.

Similarly, Hens’s code switching to Spanish is quite different from his code switching to English. The majority of the code switches to Spanish consist of single nouns and are followed or preceded by a literal translation: “mit ihren bunten *sarapes*, den Überwürfen... unweit des mächtigen *Zócalo*, der von Regierungspalast und Kathedrale eingerahmten Plaza... in jeder *cantina*, in jedem Restaurant” (Hens, Licht 198). While Hens incorporates complete dialogues in English, plays with meaning, and accompanies the English language either with telling, creative equivalents in German, his use of the Spanish language is limited to nouns that do not add any deeper meaning or creative touch, but only give exotic Mexican flavor.

In *Das überirdische Licht* Honigmann goes so far as to blend English vocabulary into the grammatical structure of the German language: “Bevor die ganze Familie schließlich in New York *settelte*” (Licht, 58), “Der Autor isst vielleicht gerade in einer Wohnung neben, über oder unter mir sein Sandwich, oder er telefoniert, oder *wacht*

televison” (Licht, 74), “New York sei eine der *safesten* Städte der Welt” (Licht, 124).<sup>90</sup>

Since – contrary to nouns – verbs and adjectives are syntactically restricted, Honigmann has to conjugate the English verbs – or adapt the adjective *safe* – according to German grammar rules to make the sentence work.

After all the switches between German and English, the end of the short story collection offers a surprising insight. The reader learns that Honigmann does not really know how to write English: “Dann müsste ich erst einmal Englisch lernen, eine Sprache, die ich seit langem nur halb spreche, dreiviertel verstehe, ganz gut lese und wie eine Analphabetin schreibe” [“I would need to learn English, a language that I only speak half, understand three-fourths, read pretty well and write like an illiterate”] (Licht, 155). If we understand *Das überirdische Licht* as a collection of diary entries from Honigmann’s time in New York, the use of English might simply reflect the mixture of languages that surrounded her at that time. The English terms come to mind first, they seem more fitting and the equivalent in German does not capture the essence of the things described. The confession that Honigmann writes English like an illiterate at the very end of the book underscores the difference between language mixing of “big” and “small” languages given that her code switching to English is quite limited stylistically, especially in comparison to Terèzia Mora’s original and oftentimes funny use of her “small” language English in *Der Einzige Mann*.

#### 4. Conclusion

While this chapter fleshed out several comprehensive features of multilingual literature in the German language, it also points to differences between authors writing in

---

<sup>90</sup> Note that the English term “sandwich” entered the German lexicon and is thus considered borrowing and not marked with italic print.



their first and in their second language. Similar to their multilingual colleagues, Honigmann and Hens express a strong awareness for language. Their work thematically focuses on language, and the expatriate writers seem to struggle with the same problems as their immigrant counterparts: characters describe feelings of uprootedness, they stand out because of their pronunciation (both positively as in Hens's work and negatively as in Honigmann's work) and silence and miscommunication loom large in their novels. Their work further confirm trends noticed in previous chapters in regard to language mixing: the significant amount of untranslated and unexplained code switching to English underlines that the targeted audience is expected to be fluent in German and English.

Nonetheless there is a major difference between the "immigrant" and the "expat" writers: Honigmann and Hens are not writing through the filter of a second language. They are rather writing their texts from the "outside" back into the German language. They state that the geographical distance to their home country and their mother tongue was a prerequisite for their literary production. But they did not go all the way: they continue working in their first language. Living abroad, the language of their literary work is freed from routine things and their multilingualism provides them with a double perspective. The German language they are working in is a private, minority language that is cherished but not questioned in the same way in which non-native writers approach it. The outsider-perspective on German as the base language that enriches Mora's, Abonji's and Bodrožić's work is shifted to the embedded languages in Honigmann's and Hens's work. Consequently, there is less space for language games because the foreign language that helps to destabilize and deconstruct the connection

between word and meaning is used less frequently in the expatriate's multilingual literature.

## **6 Conclusion, Implications, and Limitations**

This final chapter summarizes the insights gained in this project. After merging the results of the thematic focus on language (*Metalinguistic References*, section 1) and the stylistic analysis informed by linguistics (*Language Mixing*, section 2) this chapter will discuss the implications of producing and reading a multilingual literature (section 3). It concludes with a reflection on the limitations of this project and potential areas of future research.

This project investigated contemporary multilingual literature in the German language by bridging the gap between literary criticism and linguistics. Specifically, I focused on language itself, both thematically and stylistically. To this end, I turned to linguistics as a framework for my analysis of language mixing in literature.

This project set out to show that language takes center stage in multilingual literature thematically; and that a stylistic analysis informed by linguistics can help determine the impact of the author's multilingualism on the language of the texts. This approach allows explaining precisely what makes multilingual writers sound unique—their style is a product at least in part of their multilingualism. My work thus provides a new methodological framework for the discussion of the transnational / multilingual literature and sheds new light on the unique voice of multilingual writers.

The foray into linguistics in the first chapter established multilingual writers as special cases. Generally, multilingual individuals process language differently than monolinguals (Crinion et al., Kim et al.). Multilingualism further enhances logical and metalinguistic skills (Keysar et al.), which enables multilingual speakers to keep a critical distance to language (Romaine, Kramsch). The outsider perspective on language entails

the possibility to notice and question language in a way that is hard to achieve for monolinguals who take their first and only language for granted; and the multilingual's distance to language can even facilitate alternative ways of thinking (Jullien 185). The characteristics of multilingualism identified in the first chapter enhance our understanding of the importance of multilingualism on literary production.

The first chapter further established that the different language processing strategies influence the production of multilingual writers. The critical distance to language can be perceived as an impediment: living and writing in a second language can be a painful, alienating experience. Barbara Honigmann, one of the “late” multilinguals in this project, expresses the uncomfortable aspects of living in a second language most explicitly. Age of onset is a very important factor that could not, however, be addressed fully and leaves room for further research. But critical distance can also be perceived as a bonus and teach the writer – and the reader of multilingual literature – to pay close attention to every detail of language. All multilingual writers in this project – independent of age of onset – emphasize language, the raw material of literature. Its purely aesthetic qualities stand in stronger focus in the texts written in German as a second language, in which the multilingual language games can disrupt the transmission of meaning (see, for example, Bodrožić's, Abonji's and Mora's focus on sound similarities; Mora's optical code switches; and Hens's interest in the tonal qualities of English). The ensuing critical distance to language can help the writers and the readers alike to not slip into usual habits. Working in a second language can be an opportunity for creative writing: it can make the writing more intentional; and it allows the writer to contemplate the space of language rather than reducing it to a mere instrument. Generally, multilingual writers – if

writing in their first or second language – perceive the interaction of their languages as a linguistic bonus – or even as the foundation of their work.

The wealth of contemporary novels that are “distinctly globalized and transnational in outlook: from subject matter” to “the language of the texts” (Marven 1) has provided material for numerous studies of this body of work. My choice was guided by the attempt to analyze novels that display different shades of multilingual literature.

Chapter 3 presents two authors who learned their second language German at a very young age and thus have the least complicated relation to their bilingualism. Both Abonji and Bodrožić work with comparatively little language mixing. By taking close-ups of German beyond the meaning-making qualities of language, and by treating foreign languages en par with German dialects, however, Abonji and Bodrožić ask us what is foreign and what is familiar and thus soften or question the dichotomy between foreign and native language.

Chapter 4 analyzes the work of a writer with the most obscure language biography, who correspondingly writes the densest (what has been called “strong”) multilingual literature. Mora works with an abundance of code switching that purposefully excludes both characters and readers at times. Her work represents a global polyphony and includes the most pronounced experiments with language mixing, but at the same time, also the most critical perspective on the effectiveness or “survival rate” of a multilingual lifestyle and a multilingual literature.

Chapter 5 turns to a different group of multilingual writers: German expatriates writing in their first language. Coincidentally, both Honigmann and Hens are not only late bilinguals but also learned the most widely spoken European languages, French and

English respectively. Thanks to their “elite bilingualism” (Sommer, *Bilingual Aesthetics*) Honigmann and Hens can incorporate a large amount of foreign languages into their texts. The outsider-perspective on German as the base language that enriches the texts discussed in previous chapters, however, is moved to the embedded languages and less pronounced in Honigmann’s and Hens’s work.

# 1. Metalinguistic References in Transnational Literature

The close textual analysis has uncovered many overlapping ideas directly related to language. Overall, metalinguistic references are equally important in Abonji’s, Bodrožić’s, Mora’s and Honigmann’s work and less pronounced in Hens’s texts. Thus, there is not a difference between immigrant and expat writers but rather between the male and female authors in this project. Although my sampling is not large enough to make general statements, this discrepancy is in line with Pavlenko’s findings. In *Language Learning Memoirs as a Gendered Genre*, Pavlenko analyzes language memoirs. Her corpus has over twice as many female authors despite of a “careful search and policy of including all memoirs which had a discussion of language issues in at least one chapter” (Pavlenko, *Language* 221). Out of the seven texts by male writers in Pavlenko’s study, only three are explicitly concerned with language. Many male writers “choose to avoid talking about their own language learning and instead ponder upon more ‘universal’ and philosophical issues such as belonging and acculturation, ... the relationship between two or more languages in translation and use” (Pavlenko, *Language* 221-222). Pavlenko’s findings hold for Hens’s work as well: Language learning is never an issue for his male main characters and his deepest reflections on language are concerned with translation.

As part of their craft, all writers have a special relation to language; it is the material they work with. For *multilingual* writers the awareness of language is multiplied, and the preoccupation with language manifests itself in language-related topics in their work. The language awareness is magnified for the multilingual writers in this study who are also “professional multilinguals,” like linguist and literature scholar / translator Hens, or translator Mora.

When Terézia Mora announces: “Lange, fundiert und hymnisch werde ich über die Sprache sprechen, welche die Ordnung der Welt ist... die grandioseste Täuschung, das ist mein Fach” [“Long, informed and hymn-like I will speak about language, which is the order of the world... the most grandiose delusion, my specialty”] (Tage 614), she speaks for all her multilingual colleagues discussed in this project. At the same time, she points to a peculiar phenomenon, namely the deceptive qualities of language. Even though all the authors discussed in this project could potentially address their reading public in more than one language, some of them communicate a fundamental skepticism about language. The multitude of languages that they have at their disposal does not offer a way out of this distrust - or maybe it’s the multitude that raises the awareness and hence causes the problem? Mora’s multilingual character Abel Nema embodies the seeming contradiction: despite the ten languages he speaks, he has little humanity to put into his words. His multilingualism impairs rather than enhances his ability to communicate with others.

Regarding the dominant metalinguistic references in the works analyzed in this project, there is, first, the abundance of languages. Like the writers themselves, most of their characters are multilingual. Reference to their multilingualism, however, often has a

negative connotation, as for example the overarching thematic concern with mispronunciation and accent as identity markers that lead to exclusion (Mora, Grjasnowa, Abonji, Honigmann). Accented speech seldom has a positive connotation in the literature. Sometimes, however, language choice turns into an empowering means of resistance as it does when one of Mora's characters consciously switches to her first language in order to undermine the repressing power of the church; when Honigmann depicts speaking in a dialect as a conscious choice that strengthens the sense of self; or when Hens describes speaking with an accent as an attractive plus for his female characters. Mora's character Abel, the only protagonist who speaks a seemingly infinite number of languages *without* an accent, creates the contrary effect and only enhances his foreignness with his flawless pronunciation. Here, the goal of the perfect pronunciation takes a new turn: super-standard speech is not desirable either. In order to sound right, pronunciation needs to be rooted, it has to be bound to the place where it is coming from.

Furthermore, language acquisition itself plays an important role in this body of literature. In many of the works discussed in this project, learning a new language is directly related to immigration: Abel solves at least one of "every immigrant's problem[s]: he needs papers and language" by learning not only one but ten languages to perfection (Mora, Tage 18). Grjasnowa, Abonji and Bodrožić describe the struggle of the adult migrant's language learning and the ease with which their children adapt to the second language, thus explicitly thematizing the importance of age of onset for bilingualism. Learning that language equals power, younger characters often turn into their parent's mouthpiece, because "those who don't speak German have no voice, and those who speak piecemeal are ignored" (Grjasnowa 37-8). Some novels focus on the



actual process of language acquisition, and again take a rather negative stance: Second language learning in adulthood is proclaimed to be “preposterous to nature” (Hens, Licht 9) and both Grjasnowa and Mora describe language learning as compensation or escape mechanism. They further depict the ways in which their characters learn languages as highly sterile and machine-like. The preoccupation with mispronunciation, accents, etc. leads to the assumption that writing is so attractive because speaking (the second language) can be such a struggle.

Second, there is the absence of language. At the other end of the spectrum of the abundance of language, silence and miscommunication are reoccurring themes in the multilingual texts analyzed in this project. Time and again, communication breaks down and characters retreat to silence (Mora, Honigmann, Bodrožić). In two of the works, silence and speechlessness are taken to the extreme and characters suffer from aphasia. Two language geniuses, Mora’s protagonist in *Alle Tage* and Hens’s lyric editor in *Transfer Lounge* are stripped off all their skills and can only mutter a few words each at the end of the narrative. Since all the writers discussed in this project lost their first language one way or the other, they know what it feels like to be unable to express oneself, and they still experience the fear of losing their languages. As multilingual author W.G. Sebald puts it, when you are multilingual “you also have problems, because on bad days, you don’t trust yourself, either in your first or in your second language, and so you feel like a complete halfwit” (in Jaggi). Even though the writers discussed here speak several languages, they know how painful it is to search for a word in vain (Mora), they lived through periods in their childhood when they were unable to understand or to

talk because they were thrown into a new language environment (Abonji) and they carry that experience over into adulthood (Bodrožić).

Third, there is the self-reflexive representation of characters working with language. Most of the protagonists in the novels discussed in this project work with language in one way or another. Abel Nema is not only cutting edge when it comes to language proficiency, he also has the most language-related professions: He is a translator, an interpreter, and – at least a potential – linguist given that he writes his dissertation on “comparative linguistics.” Aside from Mora’s *Alle Tage*, many other novels present characters that work with language. Grjasnowa’s main character is an interpreter; Honigmann’s and Bodrožić’s strongly autobiographical texts focus on writers; and Hens’s protagonists are literature professors, linguists, translators and journalists. The number of characters that are either “professional multilinguals” (translators, interpreters, second language teachers) or trained linguists adds to the self-reflexive character of the multilingual works discussed in this project.

## 2. Language Mixing in Contemporary Transnational Literature

Focusing on the actual language mixing in transnational literature, this project was interested in the techniques authors use to embed foreign languages into their German base text and to what extent other languages are used. I further examined how the prevalence of the foreign languages and the establishment of a writer influence the language mixing.

The stylistic analyses revealed many common characteristics regarding the amount and the techniques of language mixing but it also pointed to different linguistic phenomena in texts by writers working with widespread languages like English compared

to less dominant languages like Hungarian; and in works written in the writer's first compared to the writer's second languages.

#### a) Language Mixing Techniques

Most writers discussed in this project employ similar techniques when incorporating foreign languages into their German texts. Only one out of the ten novels works with a glossary (Mora, *Seltsame Materie*). Most of the works included in this project keep the embedded language in italic print and the code switching to single words or short phrases. Abonji, Bodrožić, and Honigmann very consistently use italics for passages in other languages than Standard German – including, in Abonji's case, a German dialect! – and explain the embedded language with literal translation, through context, or they paraphrase it. If only considering the amount of language mixing, these works would be considered what has been called “weak multilingual literature” (Lennon 83) or even “monolingual texts” (Lipski 195). I have argued, however, that despite the small amount of embedded languages and the great effort to accommodate a monolingual reader, these works take a critical multilingual stance by employing the foreign language as an “undercurrent” to the German base text (Mora, *Seltsame Materie*); by questioning what is more familiar and what is more foreign to the German-language reader, another German dialect or the English language, (Abonji, *Tauben fliegen auf*); and by zooming in on the German language itself (Bodrožić, *Sterne erben*, *Sterne färben*). By doing so, these works require the monolingual, native-speaker reader to re-consider the relationship to his or her mother tongue.

In Mora's later publications and in Hens's works, however, the embedded language is not italicized and not explained. Both writers code switch beyond the word

level and incorporate full sentences, up to complete dialogues in the embedded language. Furthermore, Mora not only incorporates a large amount of foreign languages into her work, she also switches codes optically by using a different font to distinguish verbal from virtual communication and by including a different alphabet – Greek – into her texts. I would even argue that her use of phonetic spelling is, in a way, a code switch from standard written language to spoken discourse. Mora's and Hens's "strong" multilingual texts take a critical multilingual stance by recreating a multilingual environment for the monolingual, native German reader and require him to adopt a more detached and attentive relationship to language. Interestingly, the two writers that are most extreme in their language mixing also seem to be most skeptical of language in general: in Hens's and in Mora's work language fails as a bridge between characters and they depict the most extreme cases of language loss. Given that Hens and Mora are the only professional translators, their distrust in language might be related to their work that constantly points them to the "holes in the lexical fields" (Hens, Licht, 121).

#### b) Special Treatment: Switching to English

A surprising result of the focus on language mixing is the fact that writers do not limit themselves to the languages they live in. Mora explicitly reflects on her use of more than the two languages she grew up with: she considers all of the languages to be part of *one* mother tongue, which is a "conglomerate" of multiple languages (in Kasaty 251). Nonetheless, Mora differentiates between the languages by characterizing the languages she is most proficient in as "big" languages and those she learned later in life as "small" languages. Mora's code switching to English, one of her small languages, however,

demonstrates that her original and creative style is independent of whether she is switching to “big” or “small” languages.

The “small” – meaning third or less proficient – language most prevalent in the novels analyzed in this project is English. Four out of the five writers discussed in this project incorporate English into their German base text, even though it is the “big” – meaning second – language for only one of them. The English language finds its way into the German base texts for many reasons: In Honigmann’s *Das überirdische Licht* it embodies the fascination with and the gravity towards the United States and particularly New York City. English is the language of the business world in Mora’s *Der Einzige Mann*, and English is also the language immigrants with different first languages resort to in Abonji’s *Tauben fliegen auf*.

At the beginning of this project, I have asked whether the prevalence of a language influences the techniques used to incorporate that language into the base text. English is the widest known and most studied second language in German-speaking countries: fifty-six percent in Germany and seventy-three percent in Austria are fluent in English as a second language (Eurobarometer 21). Parallel to that, the English language undoubtedly has a special status in the multilingual literature analyzed here, not only because it finds its way into the majority of the texts but also because it is embedded differently than all the other foreign languages: passages in English stand on their own and are rarely marked in italic print whereas smaller languages like Hungarian and Croatian, or even French, are italicized and translated – the only exception being Mora’s *Alle Tage*, in which an unintelligible polyphony remains untranslated. The difference in use between English and all other embedded languages in this project demonstrates a

“selective multilingualism” at work. Even compared to French, another dominant European language, English keeps its special place, as becomes apparent in Barbara Honigmann’s work.<sup>91</sup> While Honigman keeps both English and French in italics, only the latter is accompanied by translation.

Taken together, I have argued that the amount of untranslated English in this project (especially in Mora, Honigmann and Hens) shows that the intended reader is expected to be German-English bilingual. This expectation is en par with the fact that more than half of the potential readership in German and even over a third of the potential readership in Austria are “able to speak [English] well enough in order to be able to hold a conversation” (Eurobarometer 23) and thus can be expected to follow the code switching in the novels discussed above.

At this point, I would like to stress the political significance of a selective multilingualism that becomes apparent when analyzing texts that mix Western European languages (especially German and English) compared to works that mix German with non-Indo-European languages. This “selective multilingualism” mirrors reality: The limitations of language policies in the European Union that promote multilingualism but focus on European languages only, in addition to the fact that bilingual education in German-speaking countries is highly valued when it comes to English or French but frowned up when Turkish-German schools come into discussion (see Wierth’s article *Französisch ja, Türkisch nein!*) can also be found in the multilingual literature analyzed in this project. The distinction between “elite” bilingualism and “migrant” bilingualism

---

<sup>91</sup> French is the second most studied second language after English with fourteen percent of second language speakers in Germany, and eleven percent in Austria (Eurobarometer 21).

(Sommer, Bilingual Aesthetics) that becomes apparent when English-German bilingual education is seen as an advantage while Turkish-German bilingualism is understood as an impediment, also finds its way into the language mixing in multilingual literature, which allows special treatment for the use of the English language.

c) Established writers switch more

The stylistic analysis has further confirmed the conjecture that the standing of a writer is crucial for the amount of embedded language and for the ways in which the language is incorporated into the German base texts. Critics have argued that the commercial success of a writer is of great importance: The more established the writers, the more freedom they have with their work (Callahan, Ch'ein). After having won the prestigious Ingeborg Bachmann prize (and € 25.000) with an excerpt of her first publication, Mora no longer uses a glossary in subsequent publications, nor does she explain the embedded language at all. In fact, she deliberately excludes both characters and readers with her unintelligible code switching. The same holds true for Hens, who, after having published his first novel in 2002, was nominated for the Ingeborg Bachmann Prize in 2003, and consequently increased the amount of code switching in later publications considerably. I conjecture that Honigmann would not have gotten away with the abundance of untranslated code switches to English in *Das überirdische Licht* (2008) if it had been her first publication. At the time Honigmann published the novel she was already one of the most established writers among the authors discussed here. She had successfully published her works for over twenty-two years and had won a multitude of literary awards, the two most prestigious and lucrative ones being the Kleist Prize and the Max Frisch Prize.

### 3. Implications for the Writer and the Reader

The previous sections have argued that transnational literature in the German language is multilingual in many ways: writers mix different languages using different techniques and code switch to different degrees, depending both on the prevalence of the language and the standing of a writer. But why exactly do they switch between languages? In what ways can their multilingualism and code switching provide multilingual writers with alternatives that combine the strength of both of their languages?

Several of the writers discussed in this project answer these questions directly: Honigmann believes that languages are not equally fitting and she switches when a word in one of her languages appears to be more adequate than a word in another language. Mora considers all her languages to be part of her mother tongue – so why keep apart what forms a coherent aggregate? Some writers literally combine their languages into one creative fusion, consider for example Mora's use of *clagues* in her first publications and Abonji's combination of her two languages in words like "kusko" (Tauben 232). The authors working in German as their second language further describe their multilingualism as a "productive ... incentive" (Abonji, *Finnougrisch*). The second language forces them to pay close attention to details and they consider themselves more open ("permeable" or "porous") for language (Abonji, *Zuhause* 190). The second language offers them the possibility of reconfiguration, and opens up new perspectives and new experiences; their multilingualism provides the grounds for their artistic work.

If multilingual writers themselves perceive their linguistic status as a bonus for their work, what is the bonus for the reader? Just as multilingualism comes with



enhanced metalinguistic skills, multilingual literature forces us to think about and question language. Multilingual writers have the choice between languages and they know that language cannot be taken for granted. They have experienced the loss of one of their language identities when they immigrated to – or left – German-speaking countries and they know about the arbitrariness and ambiguity of language. The outcome of this experience, however, is different for each individual writer, depending in part on the age of onset of their second language. Some of the writers express a deep trust in their first language (e.g. late bilingual Honigmann), some feel completely at home in their second language (e.g. early bilingual Bodrožić), and others express a fundamental skepticism about language altogether (e.g. “professional multilinguals” Mora, Hens).<sup>92</sup> Their literature carries that experience to the reader: it teaches us to question the language that we might otherwise take for granted. It can force us to take a closer look and question what would otherwise be self-evident. The language of multilingual literature can “de-staple,” destabilize and deconstruct the connection between word and meaning that had become fixed for the monolingual / mother-tongue reader. Both the writers and their works discussed in this project are the product of multiple linguistic sources and they transform and enrich the German language by the co-existence and interplay of all the other languages that they bring to the German base texts. The works let the monolingual reader see the world through the multilingual lens of its writers.

---

<sup>92</sup> The interest in non-verbal art (Abonji is a musician and Honigmann a painter) might be another form of expression of this skepticism. Abonji imagines music as a realm outside of the restrictions of languages (Tauben 197) and Honigmann states that it is “impossible to talk about paintings, because the translation of the language of images into regular speech... takes the essence away” (Gesicht, 79).

#### 4. Limitations and Future Research

Given my background in Germanic studies, I limited the scope of this project to transnational literature in the German language. Since multilingualism is indeed a global phenomenon, extending this project to other literatures and authors would allow for a comparative approach to multilingual literature. Future research with literary scholars in other language departments or comparatists would allow a deeper understanding of the features of language mixing exposed in this project. It would be especially interesting to include authors coming from other writing systems (Arabic languages, Chinese, Japanese), in order to find out if a greater difference between languages influences the language mixing techniques and enhances the critical distance to an Indo-European language like German. Collaborative work with scholars from other disciplines would also aid in truly bridging the gap between literary studies and linguistics.

A study of multilingual literature concentrating on the reasons for code switching could help to answer the ongoing discussion of *why* multilinguals code switch and what the *effects* of code switching are. While this question is very important, it could not be addressed fully in the present work.

Further, this project has only touched upon the importance of age of onset for multilingualism. A larger sample of writers with different language biographies would help to deepen this discussion. I hope that my research will serve as a base for future studies that go beyond my German-centric focus and combine the strength of both trained linguists and literary scholars in one study.

## 5. Conclusion

Before I conclude, I would like to turn to the coexistence of contradictory discourses: the articulation of a “multicultural crisis” and the celebration of a literature that represents a successfully diverse Germany.

On the one hand, language still works as a boundary marker: the right of blood that only granted citizenship by birth has been replaced by the *ius linguarum* or “right of language” (Gramling, *Linguistic*, 131). Current trends in Germany “again stress homogeneity as an ideal” (Yildiz, *Monolingual* 207). Linguistic proficiency for immigrants applying for residency has gained importance (Hogan-Brun 3). Chancellor Angela Merkel declared the failure of multiculturalism in October 2010 (Siebold). A more extreme position is taken by Theo Sarrazin’s book *Deutschland schafft sich ab* (2010) that argues that Germany’s tolerance of immigrants will lead to the destruction of the country in the long run. The success of the book demonstrates that many Germans are sympathetic with such a position. And the *Leitkultur* Debate emerges time and again after the 2000 elections.

On the other hand, the literature discussed in this project and the ensuing criticism are moving away from the concept of national literatures and national languages, transnational literature is understood as a ‘natural’ part of the literary scene and transnational writers have been recognized by mainstream literary prizes. In this opposition between political reality and critical thought, transnational literature could be seen as an ideal of integration: it softens the “*ius linguarum*” by presenting the German language as open and welcoming to other languages, it takes a heterogeneous stance against the “homogeneous ideal,” it gives voice to immigrants that have mastered the

German language to perfection but also infuse it with all their other languages, and contrary to Sarrazin's claims, it shows that immigrants enrich the (literary) landscape. Even though multilingual literature seems to show a promising path, it would go too far to say that, in the realm of literature and literary criticism, multilingualism multilingual writers have become fully integrated into "German" literature.

To conclude, let me turn to Mora again, whose work I consider to be exemplary for contemporary multilingual literature in the German language. Just like Mora speaks for all of her multilingual colleagues when she proclaims that she will talk about language (Tage 614), her character Abel Nema's fate is emblematic for the literature itself. Biendarra points out, "by linking Babel to Abel, the novel gestures toward a failure of cultural diversity that is, among other things, represented in Abel's linguistic polyphony" (Térezia 51). While Abel is able to learn a multitude of languages, his linguistic status proves unviable. In order to adopt a stable existence, Abel's ten languages must be reduced. In the end, he is restricted to a few words in only one language and it seems as if "transnational subjects such as Abel can achieve emotional closure and integration only at the expense of physical integrity, subjectivity and agency" (Biendarra, Térezia 57) and – most importantly at the expense of their multilingualism.

Contemporary transnational literature in the German language is highly aware of the material it is made of; it is self-reflexive in its thematic focus on language and it is influenced by and infused with languages other than German. I have therefore proposed to use the term and focus *multilingual literature* instead. To different degrees and with different means, all the works discussed in this project question paradigms of national literature and national languages. By interweaving multiple – in Mora almost countless –

languages in one text, they destabilize the binary of concepts like native/foreign, standard/non-standard and force us to think about the “balance of power in the language marketplace” (Callahan 4). The works represent the “newest German literature” (Marven 6) that mirrors the impact of a diverse immigrant and expatriate population.

But there are still limits and restrictions, as my focus on the actual language mixing has shown: the amount of smaller foreign languages is restricted to single words and the only other language that must not be reduced is English. Contemporary multilingual literature thus conforms to the current linguistic situation in German-speaking countries. Multilingualism is highly valued – the EU “encourages all citizens to be multilingual... with practical skills in at least two languages in addition to his or her mother tongue” (Eurobarometer 2) – but the reality lags behind. Contemporary multilingual literature is a reproduction of the relationship between the national language, German, and the dominant second language, English.

I hope that this project raises attention for both the potential and the limitations inherent in contemporary multilingual literature. I hope that it can bring forth a new methodological framework with a focus on language in the academic discussion of transnational literature and that it gives rise to more investigations in how multilingualism can influence literary production.

## CITED LITERATURE

- Abel, Julia. "Migrationsliteratur ist ein toter Kadaver. Ein Gespräch" Literatur Und Migration. Ed. Heinz Ludwig Arnold. München: Edition Text + Kritik, 2006. 159–66.
- Abonji, Melinda Nadj. Tauben fliegen auf. Salzburg: Jung und Jung, 2010.
- Abonji, Melinda Nadj. "Zuhause in der Fremde." Sprache im Technischen Zeitalter. 198 (2011): 181-190.
- Abonji, Melinda Nadj. "Finnougrisch." Volltext.net Zeitung für Literatur, 9 May 2004, n. pag. Web 14 Dec. 2012.
- Ackermann, Irmgard. "Die Osterweiterung in der deutschsprachigen "Migrantenliteratur" vor und nach der Wende." In Michaela Bürger-Koftis, ed. Eine Sprache - Viele Horizonte... Die Osterweiterung der deutschsprachigen Literatur; Porträts einer neuen Europäischen Generation. Wien: Praesens, 2008. 13-21.
- Adelson, Leslie. "Migrants' Literature or German Literature? TORKAN's Tufan: Briefe an einen islamischen Bruder." The German Quarterly. 63.3/4 (1990): 382-89.
- Adelson, Leslie. "Opposing Oppositions: Turkish-German Questions in Contemporary German Studies." German Studies Review. 17/2 (1994): 305-30.
- Adelson, Leslie. The Turkish Turn in Contemporary German Literature. Toward a New Critical Grammar of Migration. Gordonsville: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Agorni, Mirella. "Translation teaching and methodology: a linguistic analysis of a literary text." In Donna Miller and Monica Turci, eds. Language and Verbal Art Revisited. Linguistic Approaches to the Study of Literature. London: Equinox, 2007: 197-211.
- Albrecht, Terry. "Erzählerische und sprachliche Nähe. Bilder in interkultureller Erfahrung in den Texten von Terezia Mora und Yoko Tawada." In Helmut Schmitz ed. Von Der Nationalen Zur Internationalen Literatur. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009. 263-274.
- Amodeo, Immacolata, et al., eds. Literatur Ohne Grenzen : Interkulturelle Gegenwartsliteratur in Deutschland : Porträts Und Positionen. Sulzbach/Taunus: Ulrike Helmer, 2009.
- Amodeo, Immacolata. "Migration, Literatur und sprachliche Kreativität: Zur interkulturellen Gegenwartsliteratur in Deutschland." In Hiltraud Casper-Helme, Irmay Schweiger eds. Kulturelle Vielfalt deutscher Literatur, Sprache und Medien. Göttingen: Universitätsverlag Göttingen, 2009. 113-124.

- Amodeo, Immacolata and Heidrun Hörner, eds. Zu Hause in Der Welt : Topografien Einer Grenzüberschreitenden Literatur. Sulzbach (Taunus): Ulrike Helmer Verlag, 2010.
- Angermeyer, Philipp. "Bilingualism Meets Digraphia. Script Alternation and Script Hybridity in Russian-American Writing and Beyond." In Sebba, Mark, et al., eds. Language Mixing and Code-Switching in Writing. Approaches to Mixed-Language Written Discourse. New York: Routledge, 2012: 255-272.
- Arndt, Susan, et al., eds. Exophonie : Anders-Sprachigkeit (in) Der Literatur. Berlin: Kadmos, 2007.
- Arnold, Heinz Ludwig. Literatur Und Migration. München: Edition Text + Kritik, 2006.
- Auer, Peter. "Competence in performance: Code-switching und andere Formen bilingualen Sprechens." In Ingrid Gogolin and Ursula Neumann, eds. Streitfall Zweisprachigkeit. The Bilingualism Controversy. Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2009. 91-110.
- Avermaet, Piet. "Fortress Europe? Language policy regimes for immigration and citizenship." In Gabrielle Hogan-Brun, et al. Discourses on Language and Integration. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2009: 15-43.
- Baker, Colin. Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2006.
- Basch, Linda et al. Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Beaujour, Elizabeth. Alien Tongues. Bilingual Writers of the "First" Emigration. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989.
- Ben-Zvi, Linda. "Samuel Beckett, Fritz Mauthner, and the Limits of Language." PMLA 95/2 (1980): 183-200.
- Besemeres, Mary, and Anna Wierzbicka. Translating Lives: Living with Two Languages and Cultures. St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2007.
- Betten, Anne. "Deconstructing standard syntax: tendencies in Modern German prose writing." In Miller, Donna and Monica Turci, eds. Language and Verbal Art Revisited. Linguistic Approaches to the Study of Literature. London: Equinox, 2007: 212-233.
- Bhatia, Tej, and William Ritchie, eds. The Handbook of Bilingualism. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004.
- Bialystock, Ellen. Bilingualism in Development. Language, Literacy, and Cognition. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

- Bialystock, Ellen, et al. "Bilingualism, Aging, and Cognitive Control: Evidence From the Simon Task." Psychology and Aging, 19/2 (2004): 290-303.
- Bialystock, Ellen. "Effects of Bilingualism on Cognitive and Linguistic Performance across the Lifespan." In Ingrid Gogolin and Ursula Neumann, eds. Streitfall Zweisprachigkeit. The Bilingualism Controversy. Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2009: 53-67.
- Bialystock, Ellen. "The Bilingual Advantage." The New York Times, 30 May 2011. n. pag. Web 19 Nov. 2013.
- Biendarra, Anke. "Terézia Mora, Alle Tage: Transnational Traumas." In Lyn Marven and Stuart Taberner, eds. Emerging German-Language Novelists of the Twenty-First Century. Rochester: Camden House, 2011: 46-61.
- Biendarra, Anke. Germans Going Global. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2012.
- Biendarra, Anke. "Jedes Buch ist ein eigenes Projekt, das eine eigene Form findet. Interview mit Gregor Hens." Glossen 27 (2008). n. pag. Web 22 Apr. 2013.
- Biendarra, Anke. "'Schriftstellerin zu sein und in seinem Leben anwesend zu sein, ist für mich eins': Ein Gespräch mit Terézia Mora." Transit 3/1 (2007). n. pag. Web 10 Nov. 2011.
- Biendarra, Anke. "Globalization, Travel, and Identity: Judith Hermann and Gregor Hens." Gegenwartsliteratur: Ein germanistisches Jahrbuch (2006): 233-251.
- Block, David. "Identity in Applied Linguistics." In Tope Omoniyi and Goodith White, eds. The Sociolinguistics of Identity. New York: Continuum, 2006: 34-49.
- Block, David. Second Language Identities. London: Continuum, 2007.
- Blommaert, Jan. Discourse: A Critical Introduction. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Boa, Elizabeth. "Özdamar's Autobiographical Fictions: Trans-National Identity and Literary Form." German Life and Letters 59/4 (2006): 526-539.
- Bodrožić, Marica. Sterne erben, Sterne färben. Meine Ankunft in Wörtern. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2007.
- Bondy, Luc. "Hier ist es so schön, da können wir nicht bleiben. Laudatio für den Kleist-Preis an Barbara Honigmann." In Günter Blamberger et al., eds. Kleist Jahrbuch. Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2001, S. 7-12.
- Bonfiglio, Thomas. Mother Tongues and Nations: The Invention of the Native Speaker. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010.



- Bozzi, Paola. Der fremde Blick: Zum Werk Herta Müllers. Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2005.
- Brand, Bettina. "Ein Wort, ein Ort, or How Words Create Places: Interview with Yoko Tawada." Woman in German Yearbook 21 (2005): 1-15.
- Braun, Michael. "Ankunft in Wörtern. Interview mit Marica Bodrožić." kas. Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 16 Dec. 2010. n. pag. Web 11 Dec. 2012.
- Braunmüller, Kurt and Gisella Ferraresi, eds. Aspects of Multilingualism in European Language History. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2003.
- Buchholz, Paul. "Bordering on Names: Strategies of Mapping in the Prose of Terézia Mora and Peter Handke." Transit 7/1 (2011), n.pag. Web May 25 2013.
- Bürger-Koftis, Michaela, ed. Eine Sprache - Viele Horizonte... Die Osterweiterung Der Deutschsprachigen Literatur ; Porträts Einer Neuen Europäischen Generation. Wien: Praesens, 2008.
- Callahan, Laura. Spanish/English Codeswitching in a Written Corpus. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2004.
- Cameron, Deborah. Verbal Hygiene. London: Routledge, 1995.
- Cenoz, Jasone. "Multilingualism and the Role of English in a Post-9/11 World: A European Perspective." The Modern Language Journal 88/4 (2004): 622-624.
- Cerri, Chiara. "Interkulturelle Literatur. Eine Annäherung." In Petra Meurer, et al. Interkulturelles Lernen. Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag, 2009: 9-18.
- Chiarloni, Anna. "Alle Tage. Krieg und Frieden im Roman von Terezia Mora." In Michaela Bürger-Koftis, ed. Eine Sprache - Viele Horizonte. Wien: Praesens, 2008: 39-51.
- Chiellino, Carmine, ed. Interkulturelle Literatur in Deutschland. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2000.
- Chiellino, Carmine. "Interkulturalität und Literaturwissenschaft." In Carmine Chiellino, ed. Interkulturelle Literatur in Deutschland. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2000: 387-398.
- Ch'ien, Evelyn. Weird English. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004.
- Cook, Vivian. "The metaphor of access to Universal Grammar in L2 Learning." In Nick Ellis, ed. Implicit and Explicit Learning of Languages. London: Academic Press, 1994: 477-502.

- Crinion, Jenny, et al. "Language control in the bilingual brain." Science 312 (2006): 1537–1540.
- Culler, Jonathan. Structuralist Poetics. Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975.
- D'Andrea, Anthony. Global Nomads. Techno and New Age as transnational countercultures in Ibiza and Goa. New York: Routledge, 2007.
- De Boot, Kees, et al. Institutional Status and Use of National Languages in Europe. Augustin: Asgard Verlag, 2001.
- De Courtivron, Isabelle, ed. Lives in Translation. Bilingual Writers on Identity and Creativity. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
- Diener, Andrea. "Ein Krieg ist ein Krieg, ein Arbeitslager ist ein Arbeitslager." Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 10 Sep. 2012. n. pag. Web 1 Feb. 2013.
- Deleuze, Gilles. Kleine Schriften. Berlin: Merve, 1980.
- Dörr, Volker. "'Third Space' vs. Diaspora. Topologien transkultureller Literatur." In Helmut Schmitz, ed. Von Der Nationalen Zur Internationalen Literatur. New York: Rodopi, 2009: 59-76.
- Ebel, Martin. "Wenn die Fremde zur Heimat werden muss." Tagesanzeiger, 6 Sep. 2010. n. pag. Web 1 Feb. 2013.
- Eddy, Beverly and Herta Müller. "'Die Schule der Angst': Gespräch mit Herta Müller." The German Quarterly 72/4 (1999): 329-339.
- Elsing, Sarah. "Genau so Deutsch wie Kafka." Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 6 Mar. 2009. n. pag. Web 15 Dec 2012.
- English, James. The Economy of Prestige: Prizes, Awards and the Circulation of Cultural Value. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008.
- Esselborn, Karl. "'Übersetzungen aus der Sprache, die es nicht gibt.' Interkulturalität, Globalisierung und Postmoderne in den Texten Yoko Tawadas." Acadia 42/2 (2007): 240-262.
- Esselborn, Karl. "Neue Zugänge zur inter/transkulturellen deutschsprachigen Literatur." In Helmut Schmitz, ed. Von Der Nationalen Zur Internationalen Literatur. New York: Rodopi, 2009: 43-58.
- Eurobarometer. "Europeans and their Languages." Special Eurobarometer 386 (2012): Web 30 May 2013.

- Fachinger, Petra. "Cultural and Culinary Ambivalence in Sara Chin, Evelina Galang, and Yoko Tawada." Modern Language Studies 35/1 (2005): 38-48.
- Fiero, Petra. Zwischen Enthüllen Und Verstecken : Eine Analyse Von Barbara Honigmanns Prosawerk. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2008.
- Fiero, Petra. "Barbara Honigmann als Brückenschlägerin zwischen den Kulturen." In Steven Martinson and Renate Schulz, eds. Transcultural German Studies / Deutsch als Fremdsprache. Building Bridges / Brücken bauen. Bern: Peter Lang, 2008: 133-142.
- Fischer, Gerhard, ed. W.G. Sebald: Schreiben ex patria. Expatriate Writing. New York. Rodopi, 2009.
- Fischer, Gerhard. "Introduction: W.G. Sebald's Expatriate Experience and His Literary Beginnings." In Gerhard Fischer, ed. W.G. Sebald: Schreiben ex patria. Expatriate Writing. New York. Rodopi, 2009: 15-24.
- Fischer, Gerhard. "Schreiben ex patria: W.G. Sebald und die Konstruktion einer literarischen Identität." In Gerhard Fischer, ed. W.G. Sebald: Schreiben ex patria. Expatriate Writing. New York. Rodopi, 2009: 27-44.
- Fishman, David. The Rise of Modern Yiddish Culture. Pittsburgh: The University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010.
- Foreigner. "Don't cry, work. Interview mit Terézia Mora." Foreigner. n. d. n. pag. Web 5 Feb. 2013.
- Forster, Leonard. The Poet's Tongues: Multilingualism in Literature. London: Cambridge University Press, 1970.
- Fowler, Roger. Linguistic Criticism. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Fowler, Roger, ed. Essays on Style and Language. Linguistic and Critical Approaches to Literary Style. London: Routledge & Kegan, 1979.
- Freeman, Donald, ed. Linguistics and Literary Style. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970.
- Fröhlich, Melaine. "Komplexe Prozesse des Weiter-, Um- und Widerschreibens am Beispiel von Terézia Moras Roman 'Alle Tage' (2004). Eine kulturwissenschaftliche Analyse gegenwärtigen Erzählens." Trans. Internet-Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften 16/5 (2006) n.pag. Web 10 May 2011.
- Gauss, Karl-Markus. "Verwehungen des Glücks." Süddeutsche, 5 Oct. 2010. n. pag. Web 28 Jan. 2013.

- Ghaussy, Sohelia. "Das Vaterland verlassen: Nomadic Language and 'Feminine Writing' in Emine Sevgi Özdamar's *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei*." The German Quarterly 72/1 (1999): 1-6.
- Gilman, Sander. "Becoming a Jew by Becoming a German: The Newest Jewish Writing from the 'East.'" Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies 25/ 1 (2006): 16-32.
- Glajar, Valentina "Banat-Swabian, Romanian, and German: Conflicting Identities in Herta Müller's *Herztier*." Monatshefte 89/4 (1997): 521-540.
- Gogolin, Ingrid. Der monolinguale Habitus der multilingualen Schule. Münster: Waxmann, 1994.
- Gogolin, Ingrid, Ursula Neumann, eds. Streitfall Zweisprachigkeit. The Bilingualism Controversy. Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2009.
- Göktürk, Deniz, et al., eds. Germany in Transit. Nation and Migration. 1955-2000. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.
- Gramling, David. "The Caravanserai Turns Twenty: Or, New German Literature—Turns Turkish?" Alman Dili ve Edebiyatı Dergisi / Studien zur deutschen Sprache und Literatur. 24/2. (2010)
- Gramling, David. "On the Other Side of Monolingualism: Fatih Akın's Linguistic Turn(s)." German Quarterly. 83/2. (2010)
- Gramling, David "The New Cosmopolitan Monolingualism: Linguistic Citizenship in Twenty-First Century Germany." Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German. 42/2. (2009)
- Grjasnowa, Olga. Der Russe ist einer der Birken liebt. München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2012.
- Grosjean, Francois. Bilingual. Life and Reality. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010.
- Gsoels-Lorensen, Jutta. "Un dram interdit d'accès": Remembrance and the Prohibited Past in Barbara Honigmann's Generational Texts." German Quarterly 80/3 (2007): 369-90.
- Guenther, Christina. "Exile and the Construction of Identity in Barbara Honigmann's Trilogy of Diaspora." Comparative Literature Studies 40/2 (2003): 215-31.
- Guiora, Alexander et al.. "Language and Person: Studies in Language Behavior." Language Learning 25/1 (1975): 43-61.

- Haas, Daniel. "Ein deutscher Integrationsroman gewinnt." Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 5 Oct. 2010. n. pag. Web 28 Jan. 2013.
- Haines, Brigid. "The Eastern Turn in Contemporary German, Swiss and Austrian Literature." Debate: Journal of Contemporary German Affairs 16/2 (2008): 135-49.
- Halliday, Michael. "Descriptive Linguistics in Literary Studies". In Donald Freeman, ed. Linguistics and Literary Style. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970: 57-72.
- Hansen, Georg. "Zwei Jahrhunderte Produktion von Monolingualismus (plus Englisch): Der schwierige Weg zum multilingualen Europa." In Kees de Bot, et al., eds. Institutional Status and Use of National Languages in Europe. Augustin: Asgard Verlag, 2001. 159-169.
- Harris, Catherine et al. "When is a First Language More Emotional? Psychophysiological Evidence from Bilingual Speakers." In Aneta Pavlenko, ed. Bilingual Minds: Emotional Experience, Expression, and Representation. Buffalo, NY: Multilingual Matters, 2006: 257-283.
- Heidmann, Ute and Jean-Michel Adam. „Text linguistics and comparative literature: towards an interdisciplinary approach to written tales. Angela Carter's translations of Perrault. In Donna Miller and Monica Turci, eds. Language and Verbal Art Revisited. Linguistic Approaches to the Study of Literature. London: Equinox, 2007: 181- 196.
- Hens, Gregor. Himmelssturz. München: Goldmann, 2002.
- Hens, Gregor. Transfer Lounge. Deutsch Amerikanische Geschichten. Hamburg: Marebuchverlag, 2003.
- Hens, Gregor. In diesem neuen Licht. Frankfurt/Main: S. Fischer, 2006.
- Heredia, Roberto and Jeanette Altarriba. "Bilingual Language Mixing: Why DO Bilinguals Code-Switch?" Current Directions in Psychological Science. 10/5 (2001): 164-168.
- Hielscher, Martin. "Andere Stimmen – andere Räume. Die Funktion der Migrantenliteratur in deutschen Verlagen und Dimitré Dinevs Roman 'Engelszungen.'" In Heinz Ludwig Arnold, ed. Literatur und Migration. München: Edition Text + Kritik, 2006. 196-208.
- Hoffman, Eva. Lost in Translation. A Life in a New Language. New York: Penguin Books, 1990.
- Hogan-Brun, Gabrielle, et al., eds. Discourses on Language and Integration. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2009.

- Honigmann, Barbara. Das überirdische Licht. Rückkehr nach New York. München: C. Hanser, 2008.
- Honigmann, Barbara. Das Gesicht Wiederfinden : Über Schreiben, Schriftsteller und Judentum. München: C. Hanser, 2006.
- Honigmann, Barbara. "Das Schiefe, das Ungraziöse, das Unmögliche, das Unstimmige. Rede zur Verleihung des Kleist-Preises." In Günter Blamberger et al., eds. Kleist Jahrbuch. Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2001, S. 13-21
- Honigmann, Barbara. Ein Kapitel aus meinem Leben. München: C. Hanser, 2004.
- Honigmann, Barbara. Damals, Dann und Danach. München: C. Hanser, 1999.
- Honigmann, Barbara. Roman von einem Kinde: Sechs Erzählungen. Darmstadt: Luchterhand, 1986.
- Jackson, Jane. Language, identity and study abroad: Sociocultural perspectives. London: Equinox, 2008.
- Jacobs, Neil. "On the Investigation of 1920s Vienna Jewish Speech: Ideology and Linguistics." American Journal of Germanic Linguistics & Literatures 8/2 (1996): 177-217.
- Jaggi, Maya. "W.G. Sebald: The last word, Interview with Maya Jaggi." The Guardian, 20 Dec. 2001. n. pag. Web 4 Jun. 2013.
- Jankowsky, Karen. "German Literature Contested: The 1991 Ingeborg-Bachmann-Prize Debate, 'Cultural Diversity,' and Emine Sevgi Özdamar." The German Quarterly 70/3 (1997): 261-276.
- Johnson, Jaqueline and Elissa Newport. "Critical Period Effects in Second Language Learning: The Influence of Maturational State on the Acquisition of English as a Second Language." Cognitive Psychology 21 (1989): 60-99.
- Jonsson, Carla. "Making Silenced Voices Heard. Code-switching in Multilingual Literary Texts in Sweden." In Sebba, Mark, et al., ed. Language Mixing and Code-Switching in Writing. Approaches to Mixed-Language Written Discourse. New York: Routledge, 2012: 212-232.
- Judson, Pieter. Guardians of the Nation. Activists on the language frontiers of imperial Austria. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006.
- Julline, Francois. Das Universelle, das Einförmige, das Gemeinsame und der Dialog zwischen den Kulturen. Berlin: Merve Verlag, 2009.
- Kafka, Franz. Die Erzählungen und andere ausgewählte Prosa. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 2007.

- Kakutani, Michiko. "Travails of an Outcast" The New York Times, 4 Sep. 2007. n. pag. Web 10 Mar. 2013.
- Kasaty, Olga Olivia. Entgrenzungen : Vierzehn Autorengespräche über Liebe, Leben und Literatur. München: Edition Text + Kritik, 2007.
- Katz, Dovid. Words on Fire: The unfinished Story of Yiddish. New York: Basic Books, 2004.
- Keller, Gary. "The Literary Stratagems available to the Bilingual Chicano Writer." In Francisco Jimenez, ed. The Identification and Analysis of Chicano Literature. New York: Bilingual Press, 1979: 263-316.
- Keller, Gary. "How Chicano authors use bilingual techniques for literary effect." In García et al., eds. Chicano Studies: A Multidisciplinary Approach. New York: Teachers College, 1984: 171-192.
- Kellman, Steven. Switching Languages : Translingual Writers Reflect on their Craft. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003.
- Kellman, Steven. The Translingual Imagination. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000.
- Kieser, Rolf. "The Four Literatures of Contemporary Switzerland." Literary Review 36/4 (1993): 437-445.
- Kim Karl, et al. "Distinct cortical areas associated with native and second languages." Nature 388 (1997): 171-174.
- Keysar, Boaz, et al. "The Foreign-Language Effect: Thinking in a Foreign Tongue Reduces Decision Biases." Psychological Science (2012). n. pag. Web 17 Jul. 2012.
- Kofman, Eleonore. "Citizenship, migration and the reasserting of national identity." Citizenship Studies 9/5, 2005: 453-467.
- Köstlin, Konrad. "Kulturen im Prozeß der Migration und die Kultur der Migration." In Carmine Chiellino, ed. Interkulturelle Literatur in Deutschland. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2000: 365-386.
- Kraenzle, Christina. "The Limits of Travel: Yoko Tawada's Fictional Travelogues." German Life and Letters 61/2, 2008: 244-260.
- Kraft, Thomas. "Schiefer Hausseggen. Gregor Hens' Roman Himmelssturz." Neue Züricher Zeitung, 17. Aug. 2002: 35.

- Kramsch, Claire. "The Multilingual Experience: Insights from Language Memoirs." Transit 1/1 (2004): n. pag. Web 18 Nov. 2011.
- Kramsch, Claire. The Multilingual Subject. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Kramsch, Claire. Language and Culture. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Krekeler, Elmar. "Melinda Nadj Abonji bedient eine aktuelle Mode." Die Welt, 5 Oct. 2012. n. pag. Web 11 Dec. 2012.
- Krekeler, Elmar. "Schöner Wohnen. Gescheitert. Gregor Hens hat mit Himmelssturz das beste Debüt des Jahres geschrieben." Die Welt, 13 Jul. 2002: 4.
- Krekeler, Elmar. "Terézia Mora: Ein Porträt von Elmar Krekeler." In Robert Schindel, ed. Klagenfurter Texte: Ingeborg-Bachmann-Wettbewerb 1999. München: Piper, 1999: 25-30.
- Kremnitz, Georg. Mehrsprachigkeit in der Literatur. Wie Autoren ihre Sprachen wählen. Wien: Edition Praesens, 2004.
- Lennon, Brian. In Babel's Shadow. Multilingual Literatures, Monolingual States. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.
- Lipski, John. "Spanish-English language switching in speech and literature: Theories and models." The Bilingual Review 9/3 (1982): 191-212.
- Literaturen. "Ich bin ein Teil der deutschen Literatur, so deutsch wie Kafka. Interview mit Terézia Mora, Imran Ayata, Wladimir Kaminer und Navid Kermani." Literaturen 4 (2005): 26-31.
- Lowenstein, Steven. "The Complicated Language Situation of German Jewry, 1760-1914." Studia Rosenthaliana 36 (2002-2003): 3-28.
- Lübcke, Alexandra. "Enträumlichung und Erinnerungstopographien: Transnationale deutschsprachige Literaturen als historiographisches Erzählen." In Helmut Schmitz, ed. Von Der Nationalen Zur Internationalen Literatur. New York: Rodopi, 2009: 77-97.
- Mahootian, Shahrzad. "Repertoires and Resources. Accounting for Code-mixing in the Media." In Sebba, Mark, et al., ed. Language Mixing and Code-Switching in Writing. Approaches to Mixed-Language Written Discourse. New York: Routledge, 2012: 193-211.
- Marven, Lyn and Stuart Taberner, eds. Emerging German-Language Novelists of the Twenty-First Century. Rochester: Camden House, 2011.



- Marven, Lyn. "Introduction: New German-Language Writing since the Turn of the Millennium." In Lyn Marven and Stuart Taberner, eds. Emerging German-Language Novelists of the Twenty-First Century. Rochester: Camden House, 2011: 1-16.
- Mendieta-Lombardo, Eva and Zaida Citron. "Marked and Unmarked Choices of Code Switching in Bilingual Poetry." Hispania 78/3 (1995): 565-572.
- Mesch, Stefan. "Irgendwo auf der Welt muss es Menschen geben, die mich verstehen. Interview mit Barbara Honigmann." Die Zeit, 17 Oct. 2011. n. pag. Web 22 Apr. 2013.
- Mesch, Stefan. "Geh nicht, fahr nicht, lass mich nicht allein! In Gregor Hens' Thirtysomething-Roman 'In diesem neuen Licht' wird Freundschaft zur Fußangel." Literaturkritik.de 11 (2006) n. pag. Web 6 May 2013.
- Meurer, Christoph. "'Ihr seid anders und wir auch': Inter- und transkulturelle Russlandbilder bei Wladimir Kaminer." In Helmut Schmitz, ed. Von Der Nationalen Zur Internationalen Literatur. New York: Rodopi, 2009: 227-241.
- Meurer, Petra, et al., eds. Interkulturelles Lernen. Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag, 2009.
- Miller, Donna and Monica Turci, eds. Language and Verbal Art Revisited. Linguistic Approaches to the Study of Literature. London: Equinox, 2007.
- Miller, Joshua. Accented America the Cultural Politics of Multilingual Modernism. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Montes-Alcala, Cecilia. "Code-switching in US-Latino Novels." In Sebba, Mark, et al., ed. Language Mixing and Code-Switching in Writing. Approaches to Mixed-Language Written Discourse. New York: Routledge, 2012: 68-88.
- Mora, Terézia. Seltsame Materie. Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1999.
- Mora, Terézia. Alle Tage. München: btb Verlag, 2010.
- Mora, Terézia. Der einzige Mann auf dem Kontinent. München: Luchterhand, 2009.
- Moraldo, Sandro. "Kanak sprach: the linguistic features of Turkish migrants' communicative style in Feridun Zaimoglu's works." In Miller, Donna and Monica Turci, eds. Language and Verbal Art Revisited. Linguistic Approaches to the Study of Literature. London: Equinox, 2007: 234-252.
- Novakovich, Josip, and Robert Shapard. Stories in the Stepmother Tongue. Buffalo, N.Y.: White Pine Press, 2000.
- Omoniyi, Tope and Goodith White, eds. The Sociolinguistics of Identity. New York: Continuum, 2006.

- Omoniyi, Tope and Goodith White. "Introduction." In Tope Omoniyi and Goodith White, eds. The Sociolinguistics of Identity. New York: Continuum, 2006: 1-8.
- Parks, Tim. "Your English Is Showing." The New York Review of Books 2011. 15 Jun. 2011. n. pag. Web 15 May 2012.
- Pavlenko, Aneta. "Autobiographic Narratives as Data in Applied Linguistics." Applied Linguistics 28/2 (2007): 163-188.
- Pavlenko, Aneta, ed. Bilingual Minds: Emotional Experience, Expression, and Representation. Buffalo, NY: Multilingual Matters, 2006.
- Pavlenko, Aneta. "Bilingual Selves" in Aneta Pavlenko, ed. Bilingual Minds: Emotional Experience, Expression, and Representation. Buffalo, NY: Multilingual Matters, 2006: 1-33.
- Pavlenko, Aneta. "How am I to become a woman in an American vein? Transformations of gender performance in second language learning." In Aneta Pavlenko, et al. Multilingualism, Second Language Learning, and Gender. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001: 133-174.
- Pavlenko, Aneta. "'In the world of the tradition, I was unimagined': Negotiation of Identities in Cross-Cultural Autobiographies." International Journal of Bilingualism 5 (2001): 317-346.
- Pavlenko, Aneta. "Language Learning Memoirs as a Gendered Genre." Applied Linguistics 22/2 (2001): 213-240.
- Pavlenko, Aneta. "L2 Influence on L1 in Late Bilingualism." Issues in Applied Linguistics 11/2 (2000): 175-205.
- Pavlenko, Aneta and James Lantolf. "Second Language Learning as Participation and the Restruction of Selves." In James Lantolf, ed. Sociocultural theory and second language learning. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000: 155-177.
- Peile, John. Philology. London: MacMillan, 1877.
- Pekar, Thomas. "Zum Motiv der Zunge." In Petra Meurer, et al., eds. Interkulturelles Lernen. Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag, 2009: 87-102.
- Pizer, John. "Goethe's 'World Literature' Paradigm and Contemporary Cultural Globalization." Comparative Literature 52/3 (2000): 213-228.
- Pogoda, Sarah. "Erzählerische Kontingenzverwaltung bei Gregor Hens." In Evi Zemanek and Susanne Krones, eds. Literatur der Jahrtausendwende. Themen, Schreibverfahren und Buchmarkt um 2000. Bielefeld: Transcript 2008: 225-234.

- Poplack, Shana. "Code-switching: Linguistic." In Neil Smelser, ed. International encyclopedia of the social and behavioral sciences. Toronto: Elsevier Science, 2001: 2062-2065.
- Potowski, Kim, ed. Language Diversity in the USA. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Prutti, Brigitte. "Poesie und Trauma der Grenze: Literarische Grenzfiktion bei Ingeborg Bachmann und Terezia Mora." Weimarer Beiträge: Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft, Ästhetik und Kulturwissenschaften 52/1 (2006): 82-104.
- Radisch, Iris. "Neue Heimat, weiblich." Die Zeit, 5 Oct. 2010. n. pag. Web 28 Jan. 2013.
- Robert Bosch Stiftung. Über den Chamisso Preis. n. d. n. pag. Web 23 Jan. 2013.
- Romaine, Suzanne. Bilingualism. Oxford: Blackwell, 1995.
- Rosenwald, Lawrence. Multilingual America. Language and the Making of American Literature. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Safran, Gabriella. "Andrei Makine's Literary Bilingualism and the Critics." Comparative Literature 55/3 (2003): 246-265.
- Schaumann, Caroline. Memory Matters : Generational Responses to Germany's Nazi Past in Recent Women's Literature. New York: W. de Gruyter, 2008.
- Schenk, Klaus, Almut Todorow and Milan Tvrđik, eds. Migrationsliteratur. Schreibweise einer interkulturellen Moderne. Tübingen: Francke Verlag, 2004.
- Schleiermacher, Friedrich. "From On the Different Methods of Translating." In Schulte and Biguenet, eds, Theories of Translation, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992: 36-54.
- Schmitz, Helmut, ed. Von der Nationalen zur Internationalen Literatur : Transkulturelle deutschsprachige Literatur und Kultur im Zeitalter globaler Migration. Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2009.
- Sebba, Mark, et al., ed. Language Mixing and Code-Switching in Writing. Approaches to Mixed-Language Written Discourse. New York: Routledge, 2012.
- Sebba, Mark. "Researching and Theorising Multilingual Texts." In Sebba, Mark, et al., ed. Language Mixing and Code-Switching in Writing. Approaches to Mixed-Language Written Discourse. New York: Routledge, 2012: 1-26.
- Seyhan, Azade. "From Istanbul to Berlin." German Politics and Society 74/23 (2005): 152-169.
- Seyhan, Azade. Writing Outside the Nation. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

- Seyhan, Azade. "Lost in Translation. Re-Membering the Mother Tongue in Emine Sevgi Özdamar's *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei*." The German Quarterly 69/4 (1996): 414-426.
- Shafi, Monika. "German and American Dream Houses: Buildings and Biographies in Gregor Hens's 'Himmelsturz' and Monika Maron's 'Endmoränen.'" The German Quarterly 79/4 (2006): 505-524.
- Siblewski, Klaus. "Winterreise." In Heinz Ludwig Arnold, ed. Literatur Und Migration. München: Edition Text + Kritik, 2006. 211-221.
- Siebold, Sabine. "Zuwanderungsdebatte – Kanzerlin erklärt Multikulti-Gesellschaft für tot." Hamburger Abendblatt Online, 17 Oct. 2010, n. pag. Web 20 May 2013.
- Skilton, David. "Schoolboy Latin and the Mid-Victorian Novelist: A Study in Reader Competence." Browning Institute Studies 16 (1988): 39-55.
- Sommer, Doris. Bilingual Aesthetics: A New Sentimental Education. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004.
- Sommer, Doris. "Either And." In Giannina Braschi. Yo-Yo Boing! Pittsburgh: Latin American Literary Review Press, 1998: 11-18.
- Spazzarini, Serena. "Wladimir Kaminer: Kulturautor zwischen Literatur, Musik, Theater, Radio und Journalismus." In Michaela Bürger-Koftis, ed. Eine Sprache, Viele Horizonte. Wien: Praesens, 2008: 97-106.
- Spivey, Michael and Viorica Marian. "Cross Talk between Native and Second Languages: Partial Activation of an Irrelevant Lexicon." Psychological Science 10/3 (1999): 281-284.
- Spoerri, Bettina. "Mobile Grenzen, neue Sprachräume. Das Phänomen der Osterweiterung in der deutschsprachigen Literatur der Schweiz." In Michaela Bürger-Koftis, ed. Eine Sprache, Viele Horizonte. Wien: Praesens, 2008: 199-211.
- Stanišić, Saša. "Three Myths of Immigrant Writing: A View from Germany." Words Without Borders Magazine (2008): n. pag. Web 6 Jun. 2013.
- Stanišić, Saša. How the soldier repairs the Gramophone, Anthea Bell, 2008.
- Stevenson, Patrick and Jenny Carl. Language and Social Change in Central Europe. Discourses on Policy, Identity and the German Language. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010.
- Stigter, Shelley. "The Dialectics and Dialogics of Code-Switching in the Poetry of Gregory Scofield and Louse Halfe." American Indian Quarterly 30/1 (2006): 49-60.

- Stippinger, Christa. "Das Schreiben der 'Expatriatii' Zur Literatur von AutorInnen mit Migrationshintergrund in Österreich. Am Beispiel der exil-literaturpreise 'schreiben zwischen den kulturen'" In Michaela Bürger-Koftis, ed. Eine Sprache, Viele Horizonte. Wien: Praesens, 2008: 121-133.
- Suleiman, Yasir. "Constructing languages, Constructing National Identities." In Tope Omoniyi and Goodith White, eds. The Sociolinguistics of Identity. New York: Continuum, 2006: 50-71.
- Tabouret-Keller, Andrée. "Bilingualism in Europe." In Tei Bhatia, and William Ritchie eds. The Handbook of Bilingualism. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004: 662-685.
- Tawada, Yoko. Talisman. Tübingen: Konkursbuchverlag, 2002.
- Tawada, Yoko. "Writing in the Web of Words." In Isabelle De Courtivron, ed. Lives in Translation. Bilingual Writers on Identity and Creativity. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003: 147-155.
- Torres, Lourdes. "In the contact Zone. Code-switching Strategies by Latino/a Writers." MELUS 32/1 (2007): 75-96.
- Townson, Michael. Mother-tongue and Fatherland. Language and Politics in German. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992.
- Träser-Vas, Laura. "Terézia Moras Seltsame Materie: Immigrantenliteratur oder Minderheitenliteratur." Trans Internetzeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften 15 (2004): n. pag. Web 12 Sep. 2012.
- Traugott, Elizabeth, and Mary Louise Pratt. Linguistics for Students of Literature. New York: Harcourt, 1980.
- Trojanow, Ilija and Ranjit Hoskoté. Kampfabsage. Kulturen bekämpfen sich nicht – sie fließen zusammen. München: Carl Blessing Verlag, 2007.
- Valdes, Guadalupe. "Code-Switching in Bilingual Chicano Poetry." Hispania 59/4 (1976): 877-886.
- Wanner, Adrian. "Wladimir Kaminer: A Russian Picaro Conquers Germany." The Russian Review 64 (2005): 590-604.
- Wanner, Adrian. "Russian Hybrids: Identity in the Transligual Writings of Andrei Makine, Wladimir Kaminer and Gary Shteyngart." Slavic Review, 67/3 (2008): 662-681.
- Wanner, Adrian. Out of Russia. Fictions of a New Translingual Diaspora. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2011.

- Watkins, Calvert. "What is Philology" In Jan Ziolkowski , ed. On Philology. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990: 21-15.
- Wierth, Alke. "Zweisprachige Gymnasien: Französisch ja, Türkisch nein"! TAZ, 29 Mar. 2010, n. pag. Web 23 May 2013.
- Winkler, Dagmar. "Marica Bodrožić schreibt an die "Herzmitte der gelben aller Farben." In Michaela Bürger-Koftis, ed. Eine Sprache - Viele Horizonte... Die Osterweiterung Der Deutschsprachigen Literatur; Porträts Einer Neuen Europäischen Generation. Wien: Praesens, 2008. 107-119.
- Winkler, Dagmar. "Pluridimensionale Kreativität und Interpretation von Text und Sprache." Trans Internetzeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften 17 (2010): n. pag. Web 20 Nov. 2012.
- Weinreich, Uriel. Languages in Contact. The Hague: Mouton, 1968.
- Wellbery, David, et al. A New History of German Literature. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004.
- Yildiz, Yasemin. Beyond the Mother Tongue: The Postmonolingual Condition. New York: Fordham University Press, 2011.
- Yildiz, Yasemin. "The Postmonolingual Condition: Karin Sander's Wordsearch and Yoko Tawada's Wordplay." In Transit 7/1 (2011). n. pag. Web 15 Dec. 2012.
- Yildiz, Yasemin. "Tawada's Multilingual Moves: Toward a Transnational Imaginary." In Doug Slaymaker, ed. Yoko Tawada: Voices from Everywhere. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2007: 77-89.
- Zachau, Rainhard. "Gregor Hens. Himmelssturz." Glossen 17 (2003). n. pag. Web 6 May 2013.
- Ziolkowski, Jan, ed. On Philology. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990.

VITA

NAME: Kristina Foerster

EDUCATION: Diplome d'Études Françaises Avancées, Université Lumière Lyon II, 2003  
Diploma, Translation of Literature, Heinrich-Heine Universität, Düsseldorf, Germany, 2008  
M.A., Germanic Studies, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, 2010  
Ph.D., Germanic Studies, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, 2013

TEACHING: Department of Germanic Studies, University of Illinois at Chicago, Teaching Assistant, 2009-2012

HONORS: DAAD scholarship for Diploma Thesis, University of Chicago, 2007  
Max Kade Fellow, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2008-2009  
Robert Kauf Memorial Award for Academic Excellence, 2011  
Robert Kauf Memorial Award for Excellence in Teaching, 2011  
Max Kade Fellow, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2012-2013