MEANINGS OF HOME: LITHUANIAN WOMEN IN SCOTLAND

VITALIJA STEPUŠAITYTĖ

SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Heriot-Watt University
Intercultural Research Centre, School of Social Sciences
November, 2017

The copyright in this thesis is owned by the author. Any quotation from the thesis or use of any of the information contained in it must acknowledge this thesis as the source of the quotation or information.
ACADEMIC REGISTRY
Research Thesis Submission

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>VITALIJA STEPUŠAITYTĖ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School:</td>
<td>School of Social Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Version: (i.e. First, Resubmission, Final)</td>
<td>FINAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree Sought:</td>
<td>PhD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Declaration**

In accordance with the appropriate regulations I hereby submit my thesis and I declare that:

1) the thesis embodies the results of my own work and has been composed by myself
2) where appropriate, I have made acknowledgement of the work of others and have made reference to work carried out in collaboration with other persons
3) the thesis is the correct version of the thesis for submission and is the same version as any electronic versions submitted*.
4) my thesis for the award referred to, deposited in the Heriot-Watt University Library, should be made available for loan or photocopying and be available via the Institutional Repository, subject to such conditions as the Librarian may require
5) I understand that as a student of the University I am required to abide by the Regulations of the University and to conform to its discipline.
6) I confirm that the thesis has been verified against plagiarism via an approved plagiarism detection application e.g. Turnitin.

* Please note that it is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure that the correct version of the thesis is submitted.

Signature of Candidate: [Signature]

Date: [Date]

**Submission**

Submitted By (name in capitals): VITALIJA STEPUŠAITYTĖ

Signature of Individual Submitting: [Signature]

Date Submitted: [Date]

**For Completion in the Student Service Centre (SSC)**

Received in the SSC by (name in capitals): [Signature]

Method of Submission
(Handed in to SSC; posted through internal/external mail):

E-thesis Submitted (mandatory for final theses)

Signature: [Signature]

Date: [Date]
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ........................................................................................................................................... v

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ...................................................................................................................... vi

LIST OF FIGURES ................................................................................................................................... vii

PRELUDE ............................................................................................................................................... ix

1 Looking for a Place Called Home ........................................................................................................ 1

1.1 Place Perspective: Migration & Transnationalism .......................................................................... 10

1.1.1 Lithuanians Abroad: Migration to Scotland ............................................................................... 17

1.2 The Theme of Home ......................................................................................................................... 27

1.2.1 Interpreting Home ....................................................................................................................... 29

1.2.1.1 Heimat or Tėvynė: Placed, Remembered and Imagined ...................................................... 33

1.2.1.2 The Realm of Not-Yet Home ................................................................................................. 39

2 Home-place through Phenomenological Lenses ............................................................................... 45

2.1 Arrival in Edinburgh ........................................................................................................................... 52

2.1.1 Self as a Resource ......................................................................................................................... 57

2.2 Mapping the Fieldwork ...................................................................................................................... 61

2.2.1 Thinking Machine I: Mapping Stories ......................................................................................... 67

2.2.2 Thinking Machine II: Mapping Place ........................................................................................... 72

2.2.3 Thinking Machine III: Following Lina’s story ............................................................................ 79

2.2.4 Knowing through Thinking Machines ......................................................................................... 90

3 Rasa: Searching for One’s Place .......................................................................................................... 94

In-between: From one Place to the Other .............................................................................................. 115

4 Sigita: Towards the Not-Yet Home ..................................................................................................... 117

In-between: Talking with Ona about Tiny Things that Matter ............................................................. 137

5 Lina: Longing for Home ....................................................................................................................... 142

In-between: Collage ............................................................................................................................... 164

6 Laura: Striving for Better ..................................................................................................................... 166

In-between: Deadlines and Places ......................................................................................................... 180
7  Goda: Explorations of the Not-Yet Home................................................................. 181
In-between: No one Knows how long, how far and where to Home Will Take You... 205

8  EPILOGUE..................................................................................................................... 208
    BIBLIOGRAPHY ...........................................................................................................214
ABSTRACT

This dissertation is about the concept of home, captured through life stories of Lithuanian women in Edinburgh. I begin with the question *where*: where does home start, happen and where may be inhabited. I combine migration patterns from Lithuania to Scotland with the philosophy of place to capture the complex narrative of the concept of home. By linking politics of home (narratives about migration and belonging), and philosophical explanations of place (imaginaries of belonging to the place), I am questioning *how* home is made, done, created, or dreamed about.

In the second chapter, I am focusing on my methodology to investigate the concept of home. Home is a social and political, but also deeply personal and intimate phenomenon; therefore, I present a phenomenological approach that is interested in the interaction of external circumstances and inner viewpoints of the experiences. Furthermore, I introduce my use of autoethnographic approach in capturing lived experiences. To illustrate challenges and possibilities in expressing experiences gathered through interviews, observations and personal understandings, I present three research-led *thinking machines*.

The following five chapters focus on five Lithuanian women’s life stories. Each of them explores individual experiences of migration, ways of settling down, and thoughts of home. I focus on dreams and memories that are within us, as they make us linger, but also push or stop us from changing things; dreams and memories are keywords in trying to understand *why* a place is called home, or Not-Yet Home, and *why* and *how* homing and unhoming is done and experienced. Through connecting materiality of a place, social circumstances and personal imaginaries, I talk about *what* is, or could be, happening in the place that is so often described as Not-Yet Home. In between the chapters, I present exploratory vignettes that investigate my personal nuances of the concept of home.

This research contributes to the anthropological understanding of how migrants place themselves abroad, and of their experiences of living the Not-Yet Home. Moreover, I suggest innovative experimental research methods that help not only to capture inquiries that are ongoing and conceptual by nature, but also illuminate how research is approached and done.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The quest for understanding how we linger towards each other, places, memories, and dreams started a long time ago, but this enquiry could have never been so focused without the SML scholarship. It gave me the freedom to think, read, and write about the issues that I am passionate about.

Initially, I would like to acknowledge my great supervisors! I am thankful for Prof. Ullrich Kockel’s trust, patience and for his liberality in giving me space & time to get lost in experiments, and for his subtle intellectual guidance that each time helped me to get back on the track. Also, I am very grateful for Dr. Kerstin Pfeiffer’s constructive feedbacks and support.

A very special thank you is for people who shared their life stories with me; they constantly inspired, surprised, and challenged me. I feel fortunate that during my research I met so many interesting Lithuanians in Scotland, and each of them being in different stages of their lives, taught me more than I could ever imagine what it means to be human.

I cannot find the right words to thank my mother Alma Stepušaitienė, who has been emotionally supportive throughout my ups and downs and has always been encouraging to follow unconventional paths of life.

I would like to express my gratitude to friends and colleagues; they are the people who said the right things at the right time, who wandered with me in Scotland, Lithuania, and in-between, and who discussed with me, disagreed, challenged, believed, and inspired me. Thank you:

Andrius Jonaitis; Carlo Cubero; Charlotte Gray; Giulio Caravagna; Ieva Kontrimaitė; Indrė Rutkauskaitė; Inga Paškevičiūtė; Kate Colwell; Marje Ermel; Rasmus Blædel Larsen; Regina, Robertas, Jonas and Kostas Šimuliai; Ričardas Užkurėlis; Rūta and Tadas Maciulevičiai; Rūta Palionytė; Simona Šilovė; Svaja Katkutė-Katkevičiūtė, Samuel and Jamie McDowells; Tomas Aleksejevas; Vaiva Aglinskas.

Also, I would like to thank Alison Wallace for devoting her time to reading and commenting on my chapters.

And last but not least, an enormous special thank you is for Thomas Wallace, for his support and encouragement, among other great things.
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1 Illustration of Sigita’s story based on Tim Ingold’s theory of lines.

[Drawing] (Source: drawn by the author) ................................................................. 41

Figure 1.2 Visualisation of Ernst Bloch’s ideas of the interconnected and codependent Not-Yet discovered past, the Not-Yet experienced future in the moment of here and now.

[Drawing] (Source: drawn by the author) ................................................................. 43

Figure 2.1 The diagram indicating the arrangement of strings. [Drawing] (Source: drawn by the author) ........................................................................................................... 68

Figure 2.2 Mapping stories: participants during the workshop, 21st, July 2016.

[Photograph] (Source: photographed by the author) .................................................. 69

Figure 2.3 Mapping place: the making of the unfolding map. [Map] (Source: created by the author) ........................................................................................................... 72

Figure 2.4 Mapping place: the juxtaposition of various places, events, and people. [Map] 75

Figure 2.5 Mapping place: memory of my mother. [Map] (Source: created by the author) 76

Figure 2.6 Mapping place: placing memories, dreams, and observations. [Map] (Source: created by the author) ........................................................................................................... 77

Figure 2.7 Mapping place: overlapping insights to memories, places, and events.

[Map] (Source: created by the author) .......................................................................... 78

Figure 2.8 Mapping place: map in use. [Map] (Source: created by the author) ............ 79

Figure 2.9 Following Lina’s story: creating the timeline with two crossed strings.

[Mapping] (Source: created by the author) ................................................................. 82

Figure 2.10 Following Lina’s story: the opposition of home in Vilnius and life in Scotland.

[Mapping] (Source: created by the author) ................................................................. 83

Figure 2.11 Following Lina’s story: the movements from and to home. [Mapping] (Source: created by the author) ........................................................................................................... 85

Figure 2.12 Following Lina’s story: Triangle. [Mapping] (Source: created by the author) 86

Figure 2.13 Following Lina’s story: The meshwork of movements, events and people.

[Mapping] (Source: created by the author) ................................................................. 88

Figure 4.1 The concept of home [Scheme] (Source: Winther, 2009, p.60) .................. 119

Figure 4.2 Scheme that tries to capture the process of homing between real and aspired homes. [Scheme] (Source: Boccagni, 2017, p.25) ................................................................. 120
Figure 5.1 The door to Lina’s apartment in Leith. [Photograph] (Source: taken by the author) ................................................................. 145
Figure 5.2 Lina’s living room, and the much-criticised floor. [Photograph] (Source: taken by the author) ........................................................................ 146
Figure 5.3 New place: the view of the sea just outside the building of Lina’s new flat. [Photograph] (Source: taken by Lina) .................................................................................. 160
Figure 7.1 Childhood: Goda playing with her sister. [Photographs] (Source: from Goda’s personal archive, selected by Goda) ................................................................. 187
Figure 7.2 Goda’s family: mother, sister, Goda, a grandmother and sister; father playing with Goda and her sister. [Photographs] (Source: from Goda’s personal archive, selected by Goda) ........................................................................................................ 189
Figure 7.3 Goda’s things and gifts. [Photographs] (Source: pictures taken by me) ........ 194
Figure 7.4 Moving from one place in Edinburgh to the other [Photographs] (Source: first and second rows: from Goda’s personal archive; third and forth row: pictures taken by me in her new place). .............................................................................................................. 197
Figure 7.5 Screenshots from Skype talks, Goda’s mother showing the dog (left), her sister showing fruits (right). Pictures were taken and sent to me by Goda [Photographs] (Source: from Goda’s personal archive, selected by Goda) ............................................ 199
Figure 7.6 Spice crusher [Photograph] (Source: from Goda’s personal archive, selected by Goda) .......................................................................................................................... 200
PRELUDE

‘This week has passed so quickly, it seems that you just came, and tomorrow you will be away. And whenever you leave Lithuania, it feels so empty, the home contains nothing’, my mum says. She said these words several times as if they helped her to prepare herself for the blankness that was going to happen soon, and once again. She asked me several times about my plans, prospects, opportunities and wishes. I felt disappointing her when I could not assure her that I would be fine there, in Edinburgh. ‘I do not know’, I would say, ‘I do not know.’ She searched for a promise in my words, but I could not provide any.

I look at her, and I notice that she has aged, I see a woman who is strong, and hopeful; she is my mum. She has never asked me whether I think of ‘coming back’, as everyone else keeps on enquiring; the way neighbours, hairdressers, and relatives do. She tells me that her close friends experience a similar emptiness, as all of them have a child who lives abroad. It is not that she does not want me to leave – it is rather the opposite. She imagines that I should have more opportunities in a foreign land, that I could have a better life. And she asks me ‘what are your ideas, what will you do?’ I reply that it is hard to predict the outcomes of the Brexit negotiations and the future job-hunting process is unforeseeable. I try to be rational, but I realise that I am afraid to dream. So much depends on others that many possible unanticipated scenarios may happen.

My flight to Edinburgh is via Copenhagen; I am sitting in the airport writing these words, and just a few hours ago my mother woke me up at 3 am, took a bus with me to the airport, and watched me going through a security check. Before that she filled my hand luggage with home made food, so now I can eat a sandwich that she made. She would ask me ‘what shall I pack for you, what shall I cook?’ She wanted me to have for as long as possible something from home, her home.

I am in Edinburgh now, and my Lithuanian friend has just asked me ‘how was it, were you moved by your visit?’ And I replied ‘not really, but I would not like to live there, that I do not see myself there, in Lithuania.’ ‘I am glad to hear that’ she said.
To leave a place is an emotionally exhausting experience; as a current place is a setting where life has been happening, though the other place that happens being abroad suggests a hope. And we leave. It is not that we leave the place for good; places are always within us that visit us in dreams, memories, and become a comfort when we feel down. Once a home is left, the unfamiliarity becomes a detour from a continuous path of living, but we revisit in our minds what we ‘left’, and anticipate what should happen here, abroad. The present is full of surprises: we recollect what we thought was forgotten, we miss what used to be taken for granted, and we wish for what may or may never happen. And the hope that ‘everything will be all right’ becomes a drive, a source of energy and courage to engage with the unfamiliarity. In time, this commitment becomes ordinary.

It is sad and fascinating at the same time to experience the reverse bond to places. A few years have passed since my first flight to Edinburgh, my short visits to Lithuania become detours from my everyday life in Edinburgh, and the sense of home becomes stretched out. It is not that I am in between, each of the places is a part of me, and I am in distinct ways a part of those places. It seems that all I have to do is to allow them to co-exist to be at home.

18th January, 2017 Edinburgh
‘One has left a version of oneself at the
PLACE OF DEPARTURE
and it waits for us at the
POINT OF RETURN –
but she is not me
when I get there.’

(Kirsty Gunn, My Katherine Mansfield Project, 2015)

1 Looking for a Place Called Home

This project, or rather a journey of searching for home\(^1\) started many years ago. As a child I was always fascinated by the places that people call home; I was impressed by their memories of childhood homes and attachments to things that were lost, destroyed during the Second World War, or nationalised by the Soviets. I was puzzled by the notion that it cannot be better anywhere, but home. I never felt particularly attached to the Soviet block style housing that I grew up in; I moved once, twice, and then more frequently; over the years I realised that many places could become so dear that I would call them home, though I would inhabit each of them in different ways. Am I one of those who does not know the real sense of home? I have been told since an early age that home is a unitary experience.

I have learned how a return to a familiar place, a special kind of place that used to be called home and had become for a while a remembered place, was impossible; I was there, but 'there' was neither the same me nor the same place. I would ask myself: ‘where and who am I? What happened to my place, to my home? Did it abandon me? Where does my home hide? How can I rediscover it?’

We live in places; we are attached to them, we remember and dream about them. Places inhabit our secrets, desires, they evoke memories, provoke our imagination, or they mean nothing to us. I am interested in relationships between places and people, how places that lodge in political, cultural and social patterns are influencing us, and how we as individuals approach those external circumstances, interpret them, embody and make them

\(^1\) Here and elsewhere, in regular style home is used to mark its descriptive use; home in italic stands for the conceptual use.
home. Though being in the same place and sharing it may have such diverse effects on people: places are neither containers with particular properties, nor do we experience them in just the way we wish. What does it mean to be from a particular place, how can we capture the sense of place, and why does one place – rather than another – become meaningful? Philosopher Dylan Trigg suggests focusing on the treatment of place in a phenomenological way, as this is the only way to map out existential significance (Trigg, 2012, p.4). By looking at a place and the experience of it, the focus is on being-in-the-world that is here and now; in other words, the emphasis is on an individual that is placed in the present (ibid).

Social sciences and humanities have been interested in the concept of home (Boccagni, 2017; Jansen & Löfving, 2009; Winther, 2009; Blunt & Dowling, 2006; Jackson, 1995; Olwig, 1998; Rapport & Dawson, 1998; Massey, 1994b) with a focus on experiences and meanings through an idea of belonging to, inhabiting, and dwelling in places and families, nations, and languages. Scholars of (especially forced) migration have focused extensively on dichotomous understandings of home: an old one ‘there’, and new one ‘here’, the former representing ‘roots’ and the latter ‘routes’ (see discussion in Levitt, 2009; Friedman, 2002); to belong to a place was valued as a strength, and to be out of one’s place (homeland) was considered to make one weak. Kockel (2012b) has emphasised that this focus on roots or routes that is more about a relation to the past is only one ingredient of how we dwell, as for humans what matters is not only where they come from, but also where they want to be. Along those lines, extensive research (see, among others Brun & Fábos, 2015; Dam & Eyles, 2012; Gielis, 2009a,b; White & White, 2007; Cuba & Hummon, 1993) has suggested that belonging to places, remembering them, and dwelling are processes that go beyond those dichotomous distinctions (routes versus roots), and though places may be geographically distant, they are emotionally overlapping and connected through a continuous engagement with already established relationships. People, memories, political and ethical obligations merge, and make one transcend the enclosed sense of place here and now.

The objective of this study is to investigate how Lithuanian migrants in Scotland experience the process of inhabiting a place, question their belonging to the place through remembering and imagining them, how home is conceptualised in their migratory context, how relations and meanings to former, current and dream homes are changing and developing in time. The aim of this thesis is to capture the knowledge of and about home
through empirical research. This thesis is based on narratives told by Lithuanian women\(^2\) in Edinburgh and the Lothians, and on my observations of their lives, friendships that we have developed over the past three years, and my own experience of life in Edinburgh as a Lithuanian migrant\(^3\). By analysing my interlocutors’ narratives through the lenses of *who I am* (existential perspective) and *where I am* (placial perspective), I explore how these different aspects of home(s) are interrelated, how they co-exist and thus could not be understood separately.

The research is exploring the meaning(s) of *home(s)* by acknowledging the multi-layered nature of its subject: spatial, material, temporal, and relational, which covers emotional, spiritual and imaginary aspects of relatedness. Moreover, through extended narratives with my interlocutors, I am grasping the intersubjective nature of home(s) as the point where external events and circumstances meet personal lifeworlds – what could be understood as two realms of microcosm and macrocosm (Jackson, 2013b). It is important to stress that this research is not representing all Lithuanians in Scotland, but it suggests intimate accounts on how some of them are practicing their home(s) through the experience of migration, how they cope as individuals with difficulties, embrace challenges and opportunities while living in Scotland. Even though the following stories are unique, they suggest common issues that are experienced by migrants; such as questioning one’s own belonging to the homeland and the hosting country, and the uncertainty in managing the ever-changing emotions towards them.

This study is not only about meanings of *home*, but also how empirical data was conceptualized (see Chapter 2). I suggest three methodological exercises that I call *Thinking Machines*, which visually and through practice unfold my theoretical and interpretative principles in carrying out this research. The first one is concerned with how to tell and retell migration stories; through describing the first *Thinking Machine* I emphasise that there is no universal way, pattern, or framework to explain and tell migration stories. The narratives may share the same focus such as political and economic circumstances, family issues, networks of friends, particular events, may focus on gender, materiality, or languages, but how significant those concerns are varies from migrant to migrant. Furthermore, it depends how the researcher is framing those particular aspects, it

\(^2\) In the section ‘Mapping the Fieldwork’ I will explain in detail why I focus on Lithuanian women.

\(^3\) I started my research before the Brexit referendum and finished most of my conversations before the result of it, therefore, it is a topic that is not analysed in this PhD.
is the researcher who decides to emphasise some aspects (often in a fragmented way), but not others (see Chapter 2.2.1). The second exercise was created in order to understand one’s being in a place by combining the philosophy of place and autobiographical experience of living in Edinburgh, remembering previously lived places, people from those places, and daydreaming. The result is an unfolding map, and the emphasis is on how one’s sense of past, present, and future are co-existing and co-dependent experiences (see Chapter 2.2.2). The last exercise is a mapping of biographical story; I explore emotional connections between inhabited places that are so vital in understanding one’s story holistically. The focus is on emotional continuation of previous places here and now, but how this continuation is expressed and remembered is a changing matter, depending on current circumstances and future dreams (see Chapter 2.2.3). Overall, these three exercises are experimental thinking tools, which illustrate that ethnography is not only a descriptive context, but also the practice and analysis of experiences and arguments (see Chapter 2.2.4).

During three years of research, I encountered quite a number (more than 30) of Lithuanians; however, I carefully chose to mainly focus on the stories of five women (Rasa, Sigita, Lina, Laura and Goda) in this thesis, though each Lithuanian I met contributed to my understanding and interpretation of home, and I will mention some of them in the text. Moreover, my experiences of creating, thinking and imagining home were constantly changing through time, as it was for my interlocutors. Therefore, the encounters presented in the following chapters differ in focus, depth and emerging themes, as they were captured at different times in the research, and represent different concerns and ideas about home(s). The following chapters are written as open-ended stories that represent different stages of migrant’s lives. As a result, chapters could be read in two ways: as co-existing at the same point in time, capturing moments of people’s different worries and experiences; or as an exploration of home that happens over time through the eyes of a researcher, as the order of stories reflect my personal pattern of thought about home and places. During the process of editing, I realised how my inquiries and our conversations were limited to my own knowledge and experience of life abroad. Therefore, I decided to include short, mostly autobiographical vignettes in between the chapters, which express intimate nuances of home corresponding to the theme of the chapter.

It is accepted that home is a broad concept, which can mean various things at different stages in life (Boccagni, 2017; Blunt & Dowling, 2006; Mallett, 2004; Moore,
It is through the physicality of a house or apartment, things (Smith, 2014; Winther, 2009; Rowsell, 2011), emotions and affects (Ahmed, 1999; Frykman & Povrzanović Frykman, 2016), or family life (Luzia, 2011), that one can capture those changing narratives about home(s) (Hoey, 2014; Miller, 2008; 2001), as those aspects are intimately bonded in time (Taylor, 2015). These chains very often manifest inner notions of how the concept of home is understood, though practices, and assumptions of ‘what home is’ change as time goes by. It is important to stress that the concept of home (in a broad sense) is never static (Sandu, 2013); it is attached to (a) particular place(s) (Anton & Lawrence, 2014), and to broader political, cultural, social environment in those places. Such observations lead to the idea, that home is an ongoing process, and ‘homes’ are changing over time, through constant negotiations of how home is perceived, experienced, and dreamed about (see, among others Chawla, 2014; Grønseth, 2013; Khosravi, 2010).

Helen Taylor (2015), based on her research on refugees from Cyprus living in London, writes insightfully that it is not exactly true that lost homes are in a dichotomy to new homes, and that despite the distances, they are rather a continuum of the past. She sees homes as processes but acknowledges that attachments to a lost home can be vigorous. The understandings of home(s) are related to the nation-state, because that implies possibilities of experiencing politically privileged (professionals, economic migration) or limited (forced) migration. Political relations between countries influence how a person is treated and what conditions are created for migration to happen or not. Nevertheless, Paolo Boccagni (2017, p.2) emphasises that the challenge in understanding, researching home is ‘the difficulty to elaborate etic definitions as rich and agreed upon as the emic ones’. In his book, he focuses not on what home is, as that is too slippery a concept, but rather tries to track it down through migrants’ everyday practices, as an ever-evolving idea. Migrants have an extraordinary experience of leaving one place and moving to another: home is absent, home is denaturalised, but migrants also aim to get a sense of home elsewhere, which is by default (Boccagni 2017, p.2). However, the process is more complex: understanding home in migration is not only about ‘being-at-home (in the past) and being-without-it (at present)’ (p.18); rather, it is about exploring the experiences of being-away-from-home and searching-for-home-again. This understanding leads to an inquiry into how migrants face home in a new light, which is not so much fixed, but rather a mobile experience - not something that becomes associated with the real, but rather the desired, though never complete. Boccagni concludes that migration and home are notions that are
complementary at odds, rather than strict oppositions (p.105). Migration emphasises the underlying base of *home* that it is ever evolving through relations and emotions towards a place. Through homing practices, defined as ‘evolving potential to attach a sense of home to their life circumstances, in light of their assets and of the external structure of opportunities’ (p.23), one aims to belong to the place, but also have a sense of control. Treating *home* as a process highlights various dimensions that migrants experience: normative (what home should be like); cognitive (how it is understood); emotional (how ‘feeling like home’ is sensed, what kind of values are attached to it); and practical (capturing migrants’ conditions, struggles, practices and relations to them). In other words, *home* as a process is not only what is placed, experienced here and now, but also very much a future-oriented notion (p.23). Once *home* and migration meet, both enlighten each other and give insights into migrants’ circumstances, conditions, emotions, relations, and migration forces, though this interaction is not only happening on an individual level but also always within broader social and political circumstances.

This brings to my mind how Laura⁴ (at the time 32 years old) was telling me of her attempt to move to London in 2003, and how at the border between France and the UK all travellers were asked to leave the bus, were locked for several hours in a waiting room, and interrogated by the guards later on. The guards were looking through the things people had in their suitcases, and with suspicion queried each item. Laura and her friend were not allowed to enter the UK because the guards did not believe that they were just going on ‘holidays’ with so many things. It was the suitcases that exhibited their intentions (Löfgren, 2016). ‘Why do you need winter hats in summer?’ Border guards asked. The girls felt being left in the middle of nowhere. In 2009, Laura’s trip to the UK was the opposite experience: nobody questioned her intention at Edinburgh airport; her nationality had become a ‘right’ one, once Lithuania joined the EU in May 2004. This short story identifies not only the importance of politics, but also personal determination to cross borders, and both of these themes will be touched on the following chapters.

Place is a concept that implies an object that can be observed or talked about, and a way of looking, how we see and know the world (Cresswell, 2015; Massey, 2005). I am interested in combining those aspects through an approach that is interpreting place as a way-of-being. First of all, people are placed geographically, but also socially, culturally and

---

⁴ Laura’s story will be presented in Chapter 6. All stories are translated from Lithuanian. All personal names in this text are changed to protect individuals’ identity.
politically, by themselves and others, and are experiencing that place here and now as a locale, but also through relations. Furthermore, a place does not exist in isolation; it is always in relation to other places (other rooms, offices, flats, houses, cities, nations, continents). Moreover, lastly, the memories and imaginaries that might be evoked at any moment in a particular place are not limited to that place and time. My argument is that how we react to places, how we perceive them, are interrelated processes - place is more than a locale, nor it is a mere container of relations; it is a much more complex phenomenon, and that is what I explore in the following chapters.

This thesis is about home(s) within a context of migration. It is important to stress that my interlocutors decided to move to another country voluntary, however, very often they would say: ‘there was no other option’ (see discussion Amit & Olwig, 2011). For example, the minimum salary in the UK (2016) is about 1300 Euros (1100 pounds) while in Lithuania (2016) it is 380 Euros. While such differences in salaries within the EU exist, there will be migration encouraged by economic struggle. Migration from Eastern Europe to the West usually falls into the category of economic migration, though it has been observed that economy becomes less emphasised the longer migrants live abroad (Smith, 2014; Moskal, 2013).

An economy may play an important role in the decision making process, and it could be a ‘background reason’ to stay abroad; however, living abroad, being elsewhere, is a much more emotionally and socially involved experience and cannot be reduced to finances. Therefore, I am not limiting myself to an economic explanation of migration; I see it as a complex matter, which encompasses economy, politics, personal development5, independence, freedom, adventure, and very much notions of an existential being-at-home (or not). Greg Madison (2010) approaches voluntary migration as ‘existential’6, when migrants’ longing for home merges with an exploration of uncertainty and foreign: when uncanny elements (referring to Freud) are not pushed away but rather embraced. Through acknowledging existential motives to relocate, Madison focuses on narratives of being-at-home, and not-being-at-home, which are not fixed perceptions, but ‘inside-out’ meanings (Madison, 2010, pp.22-26). Such a phenomenological interpretation moves from an

5 Interestingly, researchers (King & Lulle, 2016) observe that women migrants (mainly from Latvia living in the UK) may re-establish their self-esteem, have a more independent way of living, express greater interest in their health and wellbeing, rediscover their femininity, and create new romantic relationships abroad.

6 Existential migration is experienced when a person is open to various possibilities in life, and chooses to relocate oneself in order to feel at home and confront the unfamiliar. Existential motives indicate interest in the question of who I am.
understanding of home as a geographical place, to home as an interaction between humans’ inner and outer worlds.

Following this approach does not assume that people do not feel at home in places, but rather the understanding of home is shaped by personal meanings, which are within broader contexts. Through combining narratives about emerging lived reality and intimate understandings of being-at-home, experiencing and practising home(s), I intend to recognise how an acceptance of a spiritual ‘homelessness’ becomes an act of ‘coming home’. However, ‘coming home’ has to be discovered or accepted by people to experience coming-to-be-at-home (Madison, 2006; 2010). Heidegger has explained how people believe that they are at home when they are within familiar, reliable and ordinary circles of being. However, to him, the ordinary is extra-ordinary and is essentially uncanny experience (Heidegger, 2001 [1971], pp.52-53). If I put this differently, being within the familiar place-culture may mean being-at-home, and being away from a known, homely environment may explain what it means and feels to be at home. The argument is that comfort, security and familiarity is disguising the essence of being; confrontation with what is uncanny, not belonging to the home, explores the process of dwelling in a place, entering the existential mode by bringing to light that what has been hidden under the familiarity. Heidegger is talking about the discovery of the nature of truth through the immateriality and unpredictability of the process of dwelling:

*The world worlds, and is more fully in being than the tangible and perceptible realm in which we believe ourselves to be at home. World is never an object that stands before us and can be seen. World is the ever-nonobjective to which we are subject as long as the paths of birth and death, blessing and curse keep us transported into Being.* (Heidegger, 2001 [1971], p.43)

A house is a solid substance, but the idea of home is a dynamic process that involves journeying, and it is argued that one should get away to grasp the meaning of being at home, and its boundaries (Case, 1996). Often a person considers home as something that is more of a tangible nature, and being away could on a superficial level be treated as unhomely or uncanny in Heidegger’s terms. However, Madison (2010, p. 177) notes, how we understand home is more related to self-discovery, and migration is a transformative journey of going away in order to return to the self. It is not that future-to-be-migrants are expecting this kind of experience, but living elsewhere questions the
essence of one’s sense of home, place, and relations with people, and even cultural and social practices. The ways migrants deal with these challenges are directly influencing how one feels abroad, how home elsewhere is approached and experienced.

Sarah Ahmed (1999) writes how speaking of ‘leaving home produces too many homes and hence no Home, too many places in which memories attach themselves through the carving out of inhabitable space, and hence no place in which memory can allow the past to reach the present (in which the ‘I’ could declare itself as having come home)’ (pp.330-331). She is talking about the notion of always getting home, and how each place potentially is home, but once it is left, the other place becomes a promise to become another home. And if one looks back at journeys from place to place, one realises that home is both, ‘impossibility and necessity’ (p.331) to inhabit a place, though home is more about how one imagines a future rather than how the self is composed of memories. By focusing on a culturally fixed place, by exploring the differences of here and there, one constructs a sense of security in a place, but for Ahmed (1999) such an indicative approach ignores the underlying concept of home. She is not satisfied with a definition of home that relies on being without a possible wish for something else because this kind of notion would create a fixed place that is bounded, that makes narratives of home and away possible.

In other words, if home is treated as something familiar, then naturally migration becomes what is strange and foreign, though that is a simplification. Therefore, Ahmed is encouraging a focus on affect, on how one feels or fails to feel, on the experience of locality, that is understood as being-at-home when ‘the subject and space leak into each other, inhabit each other’ (p.341). Moreover, migration is not only about inhabiting places, but also how we talk about them, how we remember other places, and how we make sense of the place that is being inhabited now. Such narratives capture the gaps, estrangements that are felt in a place, though at the very same time, these kinds of narratives help people to find each other, share similar feelings and form communities that are so much about ‘being out of place’ and ‘making place’. The question is: how does one grasp this complex experience of a place? Even though it seems life flows in a linear way and can be expressed in a linear narrative, this is an edited narrative that depends on the complex interaction between inner and outer worlds in the moment of sharing it.7

---

7 I will explore and illustrate the issue of telling biographical narrative and listening to it in the Chapter 2.2.1 Thinking Machine I: Mapping Stories.
To conclude, there is a need to cover several layers of *home* through narratives that take into an account physical and metaphorical movement. The physical move from one place to another includes cultural otherness and translocal networks, in order to understand how locality and identity are made. The metaphorical movement that focuses on how places are experienced and imaginatively thought about in a time of *here and now* captures ‘a condition of in-betweenness, a crossroads of various real and imagined comings and goings’ (Dawson & Johnson, 2001, p.330).

### 1.1 Place Perspective: Migration & Transnationalism

There is an increasing interest in displaced people who lost their homes because of war, persecutions, or disasters caused by nature (see among others Stoller, 2014; Jackson, 2013b; Khosravi 2010; Jansen & Löfving 2009; Blunt & Dowling, 2006). Their stories explore how people cope and adjust to new situations, how they recreate homes in new locations, or how they wait to be granted the right to settle. There has been a shift, from seeing people as moving to another country predominantly for economic security while having ‘real’ feelings for the country left behind, to the notion that migrants develop attachments and social networks across several places, and thus manage to live transnational lives (Boccagni et al., 2016).

Migration studies recognise how migrants develop various forms of engagement with their host country and their country of origin, and it has been argued that they thus live transnational lives (Glick Schiller, 1997) and experience modes of transformations (Vertovec, 2009). Migrants are seen as developing dual (or multiple) lives, *there* (in the country of origin) and *here* (in the hosting country), constantly negotiating cultural, religious, moral norms and languages (Moskal, 2015; Marcu, 2014; Daukšas, 2011; Barber, 1997), and therefore living ‘in-between’ lives (Gielis, 2009a). It has been argued (Levitt et al., 2003, p.567) that, in order to understand the experience and activities of migrants, one needs to take into account how these are ‘embedded in multi-layered social fields’, and that migrants' lives ‘must be studied within the context of these multiple strata’, meaning that the analysis should incorporate relations and activities at the subnational, national and supranational levels. The conceptual starting point of transnationalism is the nation state, even if it is taken for granted and used as a synonym, not only for a politically bounded territory but also for a homeland of belonging or identification. Olwig (2003, p.789) reminds us that ‘state boundaries are a legal fact that must be confronted, but the degree to
which people have a national identity, or link that identity to a given state, may vary widely’, and adds that the description of those various aspects is rather a narrow focus of study (p.791).

Despite economic, socio-cultural and political networks that have been developed by migrants between nations, there is a lot of emphasis on how new forms of belonging, notions of identity, and home are practiced through the migrants’ continuous reflexivity and flexibility (Smith, 2014; Nowicka & Cieslik, 2013; Glick Schiller & Fouron, 2001; Vertovec, 2001). At the same time, the concept of transnationalism is criticised for not offering a useful single theoretical approach, being a term that is not saying anything new, and exaggerating the factor of being involved in two realms of two states, only a small portion of migrants engage in economic and political actions in both, the home and the hosting country (for an overview of criticism, see Vertovec 2009). For example, the phenomenon to invest in the countries of origin, help people who remained has been existing for hundreds of years, and simply was an ignored topic for a long time (Portes, 2001), or simply criticised as a term that is too abstract (Levitt et al., 2003).

Transnationalism is often politically charged and tries to underpin challenging themes such as assimilation and integration, a component of multiculturalism, acculturation and so on; thus different approaches suggest various transnationalised identities (Vertovec, 2001). Moreover, actors within transnationalism include not only migrants, who could be considered bodies acting within ‘transnationalism from below’, but also a wide range of governmental and other institutions; from embassies, churches to artists troupes, activists organisations, such bodies are seen as participants of transnationalism ‘from above’ (Smith & Guarnizo, 1998). Despite the various foci within transnationalism, migrants’ wellbeing, the interplay of material, perceptual and relational aspects of their lives, is usually not a topic touched upon (Wright, 2011).

At the same time, strong linkages to the home country do not mean that migrants do not integrate into a new society, but it is argued (de Haas, 2008) that while migrants develop strong networks that are dynamic, based on reciprocity, they are always within broader social units. Therefore, migration touches the lives of non-migrants:

_ A proper understanding of the interlinkages and feedback mechanisms between migration and development necessitates studying entire migrant communities, including nonmigrants as well as the concrete regional and local contexts and transnational spaces in which they live (de Haas 2008, p.23)._
The research interest in socio-spatial actions that create translocal places is capturing a different kind of being-in-the-world through ‘a sense of distanced yet situated possibilities for constituting and reconstituting social relations’ (Smith, 2005, p.6). Even though scholars are analysing how transnationalism takes place, this is done through focusing on ‘social networks’, and as a result economic, political, sociocultural or religious aspects and scales are emphasised among migrant groups or organisations in various forms (Levitt et al., 2003; Smith & Guarnizo, 1998). In a more recent critical study on transnationalism, Smith (2005, p.9) suggested that scholars focus so much on theoretical preconceptions of agencies of translocality or hypermobility, but rather should pay more attention to emplacement of transnational migrants who, ‘like everyone else, occupy multiple social locations, and are subject to the inner tensions and conflicts derived from their multi-positionality’. Smith is emphasising the complexity of connections of microcosm and macrocosm in place, and how a sense of a shared translocal field is generated by sustaining hometown identity, economic remittances, national celebrations or clubs (ibid.).

Moreover, the interpretation of movement as transnational or otherwise depends on how migration is articulated and approached at the political level (e.g. among Commonwealth members or within the EU). However, Paolo Boccagni (2017) suggests to consider what lies beyond the notion that home could be in more than one country; he is pushing for an inquiry into how transnationalism takes place in practice, when physical home is not where it is emotionally felt, how far home reaches, to whom and when such a transnational home matters.

Olwig argues that it is important to investigate how migrants define themselves, how they navigate between countries and alternate national identities, and only then to presume that the movement is transnational. Her insights are based on her research on Caribbean migration patterns to the UK, the US, the Netherlands and France, countries that have colonial links. She points out that if the movement from one country to another occurs in relation to family networks, it is understood as ‘an integral aspect of life that makes it possible for family members to pursue the sort of livelihoods that they value’ (Olwig, 2003, p.799), and by the same token migration may not constitute the most significant event in one’s life. Therefore, she finds it is more useful to focus on livelihoods that capture migrants’ trajectories (Kockel, 1999) and interpersonal ties than starting from an ethnic approach within a framework of transnationalism.
I do not search for transnational forms of life per se in this research, and I would like to leave the national assumptions behind, as I prioritise migrants’ experiences as such without any assumptions about how their lives might be organised just because they happen to be Lithuanians. However, my approach could be taken as controversial: though my interest in how *home* is experienced may seem to be nation-blind, at the same time I am taking the ‘methodological nationalism’ path (Glick Schiller & Wimmer, 2003) because my research is indeed about a particular ethnic group in Scotland. The term ‘methodological nationalism' has three different modes and can mean ignorance of nation state, naturalisation of it, or limitation by territory, and such approaches influence how migrants are described — for example as culturally other, as marginal groups, exceptions, or risk to political security. In other words, this approach is reflecting what is considered to be normal life when a nation is a naturalised vision (Glick Schiller & Wimmer, 2003, p.599). Gielis goes further and states that

*the problem of methodological nationalism does not just concern the particular methodological shortcomings of the nation-state, but it rather refers to the general problem of a lack of analytical distance when studying the interrelatedness of migrant networks through a network lens’* (2009a, p.274).

He argues that various analytical tools used to analyse transnational social networks connecting *here* and *there* usually take the nation and one of the other networks (for example family or friends) for granted and thus do not do justice to the complex reality (ibid.). The opposite of methodological nationalism is a focus on fluidity and cosmopolitanism (Rapport, 2012). However, it is not that one aspect is more important than the other in our lives, as they co-exist, though whether ethnic frontiers (Kockel, 1999; 2010) or individual fluidism is emphasised very often depends on political and social circumstances, when and where the story takes place, who is telling it, and who is writing. Gielis (2009a) twists the interest of transnationalism and suggests focusing on one place (house, workplace or village) to capture how networks of a different kind connect. Referring to Casey (*The Fate of Place: a Philosophical History*, Berkeley, 1997) by saying that there is no self without place, Gielis proposes to start with nationally bound networks, and adds that networks are ascribed to places. Following Appadurai’s ideas about translocalities, he notices that various networks of several places can be experienced while being in one place (p. 275). This leads to the notion that places co-exist, are experienced
simultaneously, and therefore ‘we can no longer say that migrants are in this place and out of that place’ (Gielis, 2009a, p.282). Consequently, concepts of in and out, here and there are not explaining how places are experienced. Gielis is persistently inviting a focus on translocality, which implies a continuum of previous places in a current place, and means that migrants are in-between places, but not in the sense that they are neither here nor there. Gielis sees nation as a ‘social network with other social networks’ (p.283), and by focusing on a single place, he believes it possible to capture ‘how the nation relates to and acts upon other networks’ (p.283); in this way one should catch the complex and context-sensitive (Moore, 2000) everyday life of migrants.

In the criticism of transnationalism it is acknowledged (Gielis, 2009b; Smith, 2005; Olwig, 2003) that there are variations among migrants in the levels of activity, and in how the connections are established between sending and receiving communities. It is quite a challenge to capture transnational aspects of life that are not observable, such as imagination, invention, memories, or emotions. Moreover, it is observed that migrants do not construct and perceive places from a transnational perspective; rather, they tend to emphasise practices, cultural values and social ties through which they and their family relate to a place (Olwig, 2003). There is a need to ‘discover’ the social significance of emotions in transnational families. Emotions are not only occasional resources, but ‘constitutive part of the transnational family experience itself’, because adjustment, settling, sense of belonging and so on are nothing but sources of emotions concerning opportunities, beginnings and continuities (Skrbiš, 2008, p.236).

Political geographer Peter Taylor (1999) talks about how states produce particular spaces through recognisable boundaries. In this top-down political way, that which is familiar is recognised as a local culture, and that is how a more abstract notion of space is transformed into place. Moreover, in the last two hundred years, place and state have become inseparable in the notion of nationalism. This leads to the idea of imagined communities (Anderson, 2003 [1983]) that are placed in particular parts of the world, and the subjects of such a place-state are its citizens who should be treating their place as a special one, as their homeland. The European Union is trying internally to create a borderless region. Kockel (2010, p. 85-6) wondered

‘[w]hether a Europe without borders can ever become a Europe without boundaries’, explaining that ‘[b]orders, the physical and politico-legal expressions of boundaries, may well be removed to facilitate the free flow of goods, services,
ideas and labour, but the maintenance of the underlying boundaries will remain an imperative for some time yet.’

In transnationalism studies, borders are becoming boundaries, and migrants are crossing boundaries there and here, though it is stressed that how transnational life happens depends on political barriers (Gielis, 2009b). The 2016 Brexit vote in the United Kingdom shows that the boundaries very much continue to exist. People coming from the various nations of the European Union to live in this country are under pressure, as no one knows how the legal boundaries will be recreated and how that will affect the less tangible boundaries.

Traces of a division between East and West Europe are still felt both on individual and political levels (Light & Young, 2009), even though the Soviet Union no longer exists. Lithuania joined the EU in 2004, and within a few years Lithuanian citizens could use the right of free movement. However, crossing borders legally does not mean one does not face social and cultural boundaries drawn by others and experienced by migrants themselves. Ruth Behar (1993, p.320) concludes: ‘We cross borders, but we don’t erase them; we take our borders with us’. Therefore, it is important to observe how people place one another, and on what grounds, in which scales the distinctions are noticed. Borders are usually politically determined to divide one from another. The divisions imply differences, though also similarities. Just as we are talking about borders that separate one country from another, that are captured in cartographic representations, so we can say that there are boundaries within a person that have to be addressed in order to achieve familiarity, set up routines in the unfamiliar environment, or accept a stranger. Boundaries are blurred, organic, and problematic to map - or, as Casey (2008) explains, a boundary is found rather than constructed - and allow movement. We experience borders and boundaries through the limits of things that are understood as edges.

It is important to pay attention to how people talk about migration, and try to map how physical movement or an event match the perceptual or emotional shift — in other words, how material borders and personal boundaries interact and when. Borders are no longer solely studied as dividing states, as outcomes, but treated as creating order and othering (Gielis, 2009b). I remember one of my journeys to Kaunas from Edinburgh; once we landed, we were queuing for our passports to be checked. The young Lithuanian woman standing in front of me called someone to inform that she had just landed. ‘I am so happy,
just landed’, she said in English with her Eastern European accent and continued ‘the air is different. It feels so good.’ I thought we barely were outside, and probably on the other side of a phone there was a similar comment as she said with a determined voice ‘of course it is different. It is my home. It can not be otherwise.’ This woman was expressing the differences of here (Lithuania) and there (Scotland), but she was also connecting those experiences. I will explore in the following chapters how divisions of here and there are much more subtle omnipresent experiences, though migrants mark differences and create national and bounded categories, they also connect those divisions (Gielis, 2009a).

I would like to stress that migration starts before the physical move. There are different kinds of inquiries (direct and indirect), getting emotionally and socially ready to move to the other place. However, once a person is physically in the new place, he or she may not immediately be there mentally. As mentioned before, getting to know a place is an activity, which relies very much on previous experiences, before departure, previous dreams, and previous imaginations. The comparisons are constant reminders of how one imagined that it should be. Though we imagine within given situations, we speculate, and though such speculations can be abstract – ‘I want comfort’, ‘I want to be free’, or ‘I want a better life’ – they usually imply specific expectations that derive from that particular situation.

Once a new place has been reached (in this case Scotland), a person experiences things, people and events that he or she could not have foreseen. It could be called a culture shock, or even life ‘in between’ what was imagined in the past, what is remembered, and the dreaming here and now; very often such discrepancy may lead towards nostalgia (Trigg, 2012; Boym, 2001). At the same time, one cannot come back to one’s past. If unfulfilled dreams about a ‘new’ life abroad in the future are interpreted as a failure, that creates a paradox because the decision to move abroad was taken in the past, which in retrospect is seen as better compared to a disappointing now. And if that past is interpreted as better, compared to the disappointment here and now, it suggests that the past was not appreciated as it should have been. One can take this realisation as an experience abroad, or as a lesson, or as a failure of not achieving one’s dreams. Migrants’ narratives and imaginaries are full of tensions, contradictions and are very opportunistic, but at the same time, is it not the case that ‘[l]ife is a matter of compromises, not perfect solutions’ (Jackson, 2013b, p.225)? We talk about changes and finding a ‘better life’, but that does not mean that one knows what exactly this is, how to achieve it, and whether that is possible.
One must have dreams and hopes that inspire us to move towards that dream, and sometimes the best strategy to try achieving it or to existentially/literally survive is to migrate (Jackson, 2013b; Madison, 2006). Jackson sees the migrant’s life as an allegory of human existence, and being-in-the-world, life as such, is a constant struggle to live well, achieving, adjusting, longing, seeking, remembering, falling in and out, loving and forgetting, and many more ‘thrown together’ activities.

Though I am interested in people who identify themselves as Lithuanians, I try to see them as individuals with various personal experiences and original life stories that in a broad sense express their conception of home, the sense of belonging or attachment to a place, dependency on circumstances, or struggles that happen in life. I am searching for the right words expressing the complexities of my new acquaintances, and friends’ lives here in Scotland while trying to navigate between ‘extreme fluidism and the bounds of nationalist thought’ (Glick Schiller & Wimmer, 2003, p.576).

Jeanne Moore (2000) emphasises that there is a need to renew a focus on home meanings by moving away from analyses that rely only on physical structure, territory, space, self, and self identity, or social and cultural unit. The complexity of experiences and associations of home can be explored in detail only if the focus is more on home as a place within a context. Furthermore, in her condensed literature review on home, Moore argues that there should be more focus on materiality and temporality, as analyses of home very often seem ‘to transcend the actual physical context’ (p.213). She suggests a holistic connection of the concept of home with social and cultural context, an ‘entity comprising of inter-related qualities of people, environment and time’ (ibid). Moore (2000) also warns that it is going to be empirically challenging to capture home that disappoints, inspires, neglects, connects and contradicts, and engage with home that exists on so many levels. Moreover, there are questions on my mind: Why do we cross borders? Why do we challenge ourselves in such a way? Wouldn’t it be easier to stay? What makes us go to other places? Is it, as Paul Stoller observes, ‘perhaps the desire for well-being that makes us restless’ (Stoller, 2014, p.xx)?

1.1.1 Lithuanians Abroad: Migration to Scotland

‘We are the grandchildren and the great grandchildren of the thousands who came from Ireland to work in our shipyards and in our factories. We are the 80,000
Polish people, the 8,000 Lithuanians, the 7,000 each from France, Spain, Germany, Italy and Latvia. We are among the many from countries beyond our shores that we are so privileged to have living here amongst us.’

Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister of Scotland

These were the words spoken on the 24th June 2016 by the First Minister of Scotland to assure EU citizens that they will be welcome in Scotland after Brexit (Gordon, 2016). She mentioned 8000 Lithuanians and indicated them as the second largest migrant group from the EU in Scotland. To grasp exact numbers of immigrants from the EU is difficult, as usually these figures are obscured by the census label of ‘other white’. However, the 2011 year census indicates that there were 4 287 Lithuanians in Scotland (National Records of Scotland, 2013), making up 2.9 percent of European-born residents (Packwood & Findlay, 2014, January).

According to the 2011 census, Scotland, long considered only as an emigration country, is becoming more ethnically diverse because of immigration. According to the same census, Scotland is the new home country for 369,000 people who were not born in the UK - that is 7 per cent of the population. Most of these are Polish (55,000), followed by Indians (23,000) (National Records of Scotland, 2011).

Scotland for Lithuanians is not a new destination at all. Coal and steel were the main industries that employed men until the First World War across Scotland. It is said that there were 7,000 Lithuanians in 1914 (Millar, 1998, p.4). Other sources state that at the beginning of the 20th century there were around 5,000-6,000 Lithuanians (Knox, n.d.). After the Second World War, the Soviet occupation of Lithuania restricted people’s movements towards the Western part of the world for some 45 years, but after independence in 1990, the West did not really ‘welcome’ citizens from post-Soviet countries either. Migrants could not stay in Western Europe for an extended period, and getting a work permit was rather difficult; people were commuting between countries (for example 1-3 months abroad, some months in Lithuania) or decided to stay abroad illegally and anonymously.

Violetta Parutis, in her 2009 thesis ‘At Home’ in Migration: The Social Practices of Constructing home among Polish and Lithuanian Migrants in London’, notes that contemporary migration has become ‘not a once in a lifetime’ decision as it was in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries, but part of many people’s everyday life. Similarly,
Barcevičius and Žvalionytė describe contemporary migration as ‘not one way directed’ (2012, p.18, my translation). This shift influences how nowadays migrants differ in their perception of life in the UK from those who migrated in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. For example, Kuzmickaitė (2003) explains the differences between post-World War II migrants to the USA and recent ones. She notices how Lithuanians arriving recently in Chicago are not creating closed clusters with other Lithuanians to preserve their culture, but rather are easily connecting with people from the former Soviet Union, and that this has caused tensions between newcomers and those who had run away from the Soviet regime. The historian Aleksandravičius (2013) is noting a lack of qualitative research on migrants currently living abroad; there is so little known about what their lifeworlds entail.

The post-World War II migrants saw migration as a threat to their ethnic identity, whereas the later ones do not find it so; as they have a different concept of home and life-strategies in mind, it is rather a celebration of possibilities. As Moskal points out, based on her research on Polish migration and the circulation of material, human and social capital between Poland and Scotland, mobility is open-ended and circular in a sense that Polish migrants ‘try to take the best from both of the worlds that they live in’ (Moskal, 2013, p.375).

In general, the United Kingdom is a rather multi-ethnic country which hosts around 7.5 million people who were not born in the UK, making up 13.5 per cent of the population according to the 2011 Census. According to 2015 data, Lithuanians account for 3.3 per cent of foreign-born8 migrants. By comparison, Indians make up 9, Poles 9.5, Pakistanis 5.8, and Irish 4.5 per cent. It might seem that Lithuanians are only a small slice of the pie, but one needs to consider that French make up only 3.1, Germans 3.3, or Nigerians 2.3 per cent (Rienzo & Vargas-Silva, 2017). One also needs to keep in mind that Lithuania in 2011 had only 2,971,905 inhabitants.

It is worth noting that the numbers of migrants reported on various platforms do not match and there are always a few thousand missing. However, Jackson (2013b) reminds us: if a person is not counted, it does not mean that one does not exist.

In 2004 Lithuania became a part of the European Union, but only Ireland, the UK and Sweden did not impose restrictions on work permits; the other EU countries started welcoming Lithuanians later, for example, Germany and France in 2011. But one needs to

---

8 need to clarify that foreign-born people could be also British citizens, but would not count as migrants if defined by nationality, immigration control does not apply to them
bear in mind that the UK and Ireland restricted access to welfare benefits. Migrants coming to the UK for employment between 1st May 2004 and 30th April 2011 were required to register under the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS), and during these seven years ‘transitional measures’ were enabled under EU legislation. Some migrants did register, some did not; moreover, initially, the registration fee was £50, increasing to £90 in subsequent years; there were no fines or sanctions for not registering and the self-employed or unemployed were not required to register (McCollum, 2012). Ironically, it was possible theoretically to fine employers up to £5,000 if an employee coming from an A8-country (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia) was not registered, but in practice some employers still ‘took the risk’ of ignoring this requirement (Anderson et al., 2006, p.105). McCollum (2012) notes that in Scotland up to one third of migrants were not registered under this scheme. Furthermore, registration in the UK and formalising emigration from Lithuania depend on political changes: for example, many legalised their life in Great Britain following the Brexit vote; the number of people leaving Lithuania increased as fees for social insurance in Lithuania were increased. It is important to stress that capturing migration numbers at a particular point in time does not mean that is when the migration happened - often people take time to fully align their status in their former and the new home country.

Migration from the so-called A8-countries to the UK after 2004 has fascinated many academics, and many studies have been conducted concerning new migration patterns (Burell, 2010). However, Polish migrants have received most of this attention (see among others Moskal, 2015; 2013; 2011; Burrell, 2011; 2009; McGhee et al., 2015; 2013; Rabikowska, 2010; Galasinska, 2010; Ryan et al., 2009) compared to Lithuanians (mostly studied together with Poles) in London (Parutis, 2014; 2011; 2009; 2007; 2006; Gill & Bialski, 2011) and Northern Ireland (Liubinienè, 2009). There are similarities between Poles and Lithuanians: they are both European Union members since 2004; both are post-Soviet countries (although Poland, unlike Lithuania, was not a member of the Soviet Union, it was operating under a communist regime); moreover, they are neighbouring countries sharing a lot of history. However, there are many tensions between them, mainly at the political level concerning minority rights in their home countries. Lithuanians abroad tend to stress how they do not want to be considered to be (or be similar to) Poles. Furthermore, migrant groups are not homogenous entities (Rabikowska, 2010), neither on
an ethnic (Lithuanians or Poles) nor on a locational (London or Edinburgh) basis. Kockel has explained this complexity:

\[ \text{not all migrants are, literally and metaphorically, in the same boat: some will move by free choice; others because they feel they have no choice although they do; others again because it is the only way to escape persecution. At least that is the theory; in practice, our neat analytical categories tend to mix and mismatch} \] (Kockel, 2012b, p.51).

Most scholars are researching migrants living in London, so what is happening outside the metropolitan area is still quite a grey area, and more connections between different Eastern European groups should be made (Burrell, 2010; 2009). At the same time, in the last few years there is more and more research on migration to Scotland, aiming to fill the gaps especially with regard to Eastern Europeans, refugees and asylum seekers (Moskal, 2016; Moskal & Sime, 2015; Sime & Fox, 2015; Botterill, 2014; Kay & Morrison, 2012).

Lithuanian media are representing emigration as jeopardising the country’s security and prospects. Lithuania is identified as the country with the most intense population decrease in the European Union. The European Migration Network (EMN) announced that in 2014 there were 36 600 people who declared their emigration, in 2015 this rose to 38 000. The most popular destination is the United Kingdom (124 000), followed by Canada, Ireland, Germany and Norway (Lietuvos statistikos departamentas, n.d.). The Office for National Statistics claims that in 2014 there were 19 300 and in 2013 there were 26 200 Lithuanians who were given National Insurance numbers (Office for National Statistics, 2014), and these numbers support the preference of Lithuanians for the UK as their first choice. UK National Statistics (2013 data) claim that there are 144,000 Lithuanians in the UK, based on The Annual Population Survey, which makes Lithuania 14th on a list of the most common countries of birth (Home Office, 2013).

The Lithuanian statistics department in 2012 announced that, since 1990, some 769,000 people had emigrated – that means one fifth of the population; Eurostat claims that since 2004 some 315,000 have left Lithuania. In the following two years, 75,439 people left in approximately equal proportions of women and men. In 2007, Lithuanians were reported as the second largest national group among the A8 in the UK, representing 10.7 per cent (54,529 people) of the A8 population (National Statistics, 2007). In other words, around 9 per cent of the Lithuanian workforce had migrated once the borders were open (Elsner,
2013). It was noted that the distribution of Lithuanians was quite different compared to the Poles, who make up the majority of post-2004 migrants to the UK. Most Lithuanians settled in Northern Ireland, eastern England, around London and parts of the South East, western Cornwall and Herefordshire. Compared to Poles, Lithuanians were quite absent from much of middle England and preferred the North East region and northern and central Scotland.

As mentioned before, the numbers in different sources do not match; this is because different institutions use different methods. Nevertheless, according to a Eurostat comparison of EU countries (European Commission, 2013), in 2010 Lithuania had the highest rate of emigration (26 out of 1 000 inhabitants), followed by Luxembourg (18 out of 1 000), and in 2011 the highest proportion emigrated from Ireland (19 emigrants per 1 000 persons) followed by Lithuania (18 emigrants per 1 000 persons). These statistics suggest that around 11 per cent of Lithuanians of working age are working abroad.

Demographer V. Stankūnienė presumes that emigration should return to manageable numbers in the middle of this century because there will be no people left who could emigrate (Andrulevičiūtė, 2016). She adds that the population is decreasing and ageing due not only to emigration but also the low birth rate (1.63 when it should be above 2) and the high mortality rate compared to other European countries.

It may seem that migration in a broad sense is a ‘national habit’, but it varies in time (Aleksandravičius, 2013). Therefore, I am not comparing different waves of migration as each of them is of a different kind: circumstances and opportunities change, each country provides diverse chances for newcomers to settle, and how emigration is perceived, controlled and approached at the political level in Lithuania varies depending on who is in power. The concept of a migrant is multi-layered in experiences; even if one limits it to one nationality in one country, it is loaded with various stereotypes. Thomas Nail (2015) explains how a migrant is usually seen through a place-bound perspective: a citizen, and would-be member of a country. He suggests focusing on movement that connects the material, social, and historical conditions of the present. Nail is interested in the essence of presence, its philosophy, which sees a migrant not only in a movement, but also within a society through descriptions, conditions, forces, and personal trajectories (p.7). He emphasises the temporality of the experience of being a migrant by saying that ‘the figure of the migrant is not a “type of person” or fixed identity but a mobile social position or spectrum that people move into and out of under certain social conditions of mobility’
(p.235). In other words, he emphasises that through movement-oriented lenses, one can capture migrants’ subjective experiences that make migration ‘a mixture of territorial, political, juridical, and economic types of expulsion’ (p.236).

One of the Lithuanians I spoke to acknowledged that the label ‘migrant’ fits theoretically but is difficult to relate to emotionally. This insight is related to a popular notion, especially in the media⁹, that a migrant is not ‘fully human’ due to being rootless and displaced, as indicated in the popular Lithuanian expression visur gerai, bet namie geriausia (literally: ‘everywhere is good, but the best is at home’), and home is interpreted as ‘homeland’. I do not want to suggest that this is a wrong interpretation – people feel and think this way – but I believe it is a statement that requires attention.

Lithuanians whom I met occasionally read articles about migration on popular websites, watch programs such as ‘Emigrantai (Emigrants)’ on the national television channel LRT. However, it is one thing to listen to a story, and another to experience a new place, be in the unknown city, meet new people, get a job, make friends, and possibly settle down. When one moves to a new country, a person has to face little mundane things, which in the home country were taken for granted. I will explore this kind of discovery in detail through Sigita’s story (Chapter 4).

Recent studies on return migration (e.g., Čiubrinskas, 2011) in Lithuania show that people emigrate on economic grounds, but those who tend to return do so for personal reasons, usually out of a longing for family members and a familiar cultural environment (Barcevičius & Žvalionytė, 2012). The ones who decide to stay abroad explain that only an improved economic situation and quality of life in Lithuania would make them change their minds. Around 85 per cent of returned migrants emphasised that they had improved their knowledge and skills abroad, though two thirds of migrants were working abroad in less skilled jobs than their qualification and education may suggest.

Worthy of attention is a paradox relating to return migration: while public opinion towards migration is sceptical, on an individual level emigrants are perceived in more positive terms. It can be observed that the media are quite an active and influential factor in forming public opinion about migration and re-migration, usually presenting it as a ‘lucky’ story or a failure. Though migration is portrayed as a possibility to fail or succeed, overall it is presumed that migration is a loss for the country of origin. However, many people have a

---

⁹ I refer mainly to columns on main digital news platforms (www.delfi.lt and www.lrytas.lt) written by migrants (usually anonymous) about life abroad, challenges and opportunities there.
family member or a friend who has migrated, so they relate to the reasons behind the
decision to migrate and therefore can legitimise the individual case positively within an
overall rather negative discourse of migration (Budginaitė, 2012; Barcevičius & Žvalionytė,
2012).

Nevertheless, there is a strong narrative of judging return migrants as either
successful or losers abroad and then in the homeland after the return. It is a narrative that
very often becomes internalised in a migrant’s way of being abroad and how they talk
about their life abroad when they are ‘away’ or during visits ‘back home’. Such
interpretation creates much pressure, and very often migrants do not allow themselves to
complain about things, as family members or friends might suggest to them to ‘come back
if it is so bad there (abroad)’ (this issue will be explored in more detail in Chapter 7).
However, being not satisfied with a situation is part of reality, and migrants feel that friends
and family members living in Lithuania misunderstand them. Furthermore, if one decides
to relocate oneself, one has to come up with an acceptable explanation ‘why’; as a result,
migrants may choose more carefully what to say and what to keep to themselves when they
are communicating with the ones who are in Lithuania.

Nigel Rapport (2013a) argues that there are many human truths, but so often human
practice is defined by limitations and the fetishisation of one component. Placing people is
one of the common practices to ‘judge’ the other, figure out the relation to someone,
especially when a place is determined through the lens of social hierarchy (Jackson, 2013b,
p.8). Other lenses include religiosity, ethnicity, and nationalism, which might limit or stress
our potential expressions and experiences. However, at the same time these closures are
constructed, experienced and embodied by people in order to separate Us from Them in
certain situations. Media represent migration as home and away, and in most cases, these
are compared in terms of how one is better than the other financially, socially, what kind of
opportunities each country suggests, and how all of that influences a person’s wellbeing.
The differentiations between living abroad and in the homeland, migrants and locals, are
usually represented as distinct realities, but based on my personal experience, and
Lithuanians I met living in Edinburgh, these distinctions are experienced as far less clear-
cut. Even though one knows one is physically away from the homeland, emotionally, socially one could feel as close as one chooses or manages to be. It has been noted that re-migration expectations and worries about learning a language, integration in the host country, or relation to the culture of origin affect how everyday life abroad is experienced, how challenges are met and interpreted (Brenick & Silbereisen, 2012). For example, depending on an individual’s characteristics, such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, academic achievement, and peer popularity, discrimination in the host country can be understood as personal or as a group (ethnic) directed. Migrants go through a journey of connecting ‘two worlds’ as they say, home country and the hosting one. They have to redefine what they are in the host and origin countries and to navigate between their own expectations and those of their families and friends. It is important to pay attention to what is happening in both worlds of a migrant, and how slowly those separate realities become parts of a migrant’s singular being. It is not that distance does not matter anymore, but places, people and things that belong to the here and now and far away realms become contributing rather than competing factors to the way a migrant feels.

The Migration Observatory explains that the definition of a migrant is problematic because it is loose and used to indicate diverse factors: place of birth, nationality, the time spent living abroad, even intentions to stay or leave a country, and finally sometimes race (Anderson & Blinder 2015). To put it simply, a migrant is a person who moves from one place (region/country) to another, and usually for a better life. But ‘better’ in what regard - economically, politically, socially, or emotionally? Better than what, compared to what? What happens after the move is a story that is typically full of surprises, as changing the environment is a powerful tool for exploring oneself, finding strengths and weaknesses, re-discovering relationships and attachments to things, places, habits and people. What happens afterwards is always seen in relation to the life that was experienced before; and the reason to explore, to leave, or to discover a new place is always a complex, never just an economically and/or policy driven or love-related decision. If it were otherwise, why would many people in similar situations choose not to move, not to migrate? Why do people extend their stays abroad or ‘return’ sooner than intended? Why do they dream to return or move to other places? How do they settle, how do they create attachments to the

---

10 I am not suggesting that this closeness is the same as if one was in Lithuania; it is inevitably a different experience. Moreover, this emotional attachment does not necessarily mean that a migrant is only nostalgic - there is both, fond memories and criticism.
environment which is here and now by linking past experiences and ideas for the future? How do migrants feel at home, when and where? These questions are inspired by current explorations of migration from Poland and Lithuania, which come to rather similar conclusions: that home is constantly negotiated through attachments, and through the mobility of people, technologies and cultures (Smith, 2014; Nowicka & Cieslik, 2013).

Despite the fact that there are scholars who research Lithuanian migration either to the UK or elsewhere (Čiubrinskas et al., 2014; Daukšas, 2011; Šutinienė, 2011; Malinauskas & Blažytė, 2010; Davoliute, 2008; Kuzmickaitė, 2008; Aidis & Krupickaitė, 2007; Akstinavičiūtė, 2006), they publish mainly in Lithuanian or in journals that are published in Lithuania, and thus their dissemination is rather limited. Most importantly, very often this research focuses on how ‘Lithuanianess’ is performed abroad, how traditions are practised, how communities of Lithuanians form and manage their identities through everyday life and special occasions such as Christmas or Midsummer. Liubinienė (2009) suggests a concept of own space (sava erdvė), within which Lithuanian migrants living in the Northern Ireland create their own worlds through being rooted yet mobile. However, I would like to take a different approach to Lithuanians living in Edinburgh and the Lothians. I did not want to get to know them through a Lithuanian club or organised community events. My argument is that there are many Lithuanians who do not get involved in such clubs for various reasons: they may lack interest in events, or to the people who participate and organise events; already have a circle of friends and/or family members around them; there may be time issues; or there may be no club available. Also, by ‘entering’ a group of people through events based on Lithuanian traditions might suggest topics of our conversations that are about ‘Lithuaianness’. My focus in this thesis is not that much on how particular cultural expressions are occasionally practised, but rather I am exploring the journey of a settlement, remembering, dreaming, and all that may or may not involve cultural practices. I am inspired by Kockel’s (2010) insight on the impact of a migrant’s social field on their cultural practices. He observed among migrants from Germany to the UK that

‘new identity sets are emerging, fostering links with the country of origin that are less conspicuous in terms of outward cultural expressions but structurally as deep, if not indeed deeper, in terms of kinship and social networks, than in previous migrant generations.’ (p.85)
In the following chapters, I am going to explore the wholeness of life abroad, being in a new place, being attached to one’s home country, discovering a new one, and rethinking how one should be living, engaging with both places, and with people there. It is not only how and why people migrate, but also what happens on a personal level: I am interested in emotional and practical journeys from the unfamiliar to the familiar, and vice versa.

1.2 The Theme of Home

Anthropologist Ida Winther reminds us that home is not only a philosophical concept but also a cultural-historical phenomenon and an everyday fact (Winther, 2009, p.50). Nevertheless, home is very tactile; we live in places, in certain localities, but one can experience there an existential homelessness. Home, it could be argued, is a way of being in the world; however, the experience of it is ultimately a combination of place, space and atmosphere (p.52). It is usually a concept that is taken for granted, but the transit, the changes in a person’s life – because of war, poverty, work, lifestyle, or love – remind us that boundaries matter and the divisions between private and public, virtual and tactile are at the core, while people move physically, mentally and virtually (Winther, 2009, p.54).

In an extended literature review on home, Shelley Mallett (2004) concludes that how home is socio-culturally understood depends on various factors and approaches, because the function of home is related to how at a particular time people relate to one another, to places, spaces and things, and Mallett summarises a wide range of possible key aspects. In short, home could be a dwelling place, where interactions with people and things may or may not happen; it could be treated as a concept that is singular or plural, stable and fixed or mobile and changing. Home is usually associated with a wide range of emotions, both positive and negative. Furthermore, it could be an expression of one’s identity, sense of self, or body awareness; for some people, home is about intimacy, gender, sexuality, age or class. Home can also happen, or be perceived, in different ways: as given, ideologically constructed or made, experienced; familiar or not, it could be an activity or an atmosphere. Moreover, home could be what is significant, or fundamental to one’s being, it could be expressed through design, things or could be more related to a sense of nationalism (Mallett, 2004, p.84).

It is challenging, or rather impossible, to cover all aspects reviewed by Mallett in one PhD research project if a rich analysis is an aim, but one can sense that what matters is
that there are various possibilities of how *home* could be understood and interpreted, and what kind of knowledge is produced depends on the researcher’s focus and approach. Research on *home* that is done in similar terms as in Mallett’s extended definition is criticised as focusing only on its ‘symbolic or expressive attributes’ (Jacobs & Malpas, 2013, p.282). However, the other extreme ‘roots’ versus ‘routes’, as mentioned earlier, would be to focus on mobility within the global context. It is not that those approaches are wrong, but rather the focus, according to Jacobs and Malpas (2013), should be on relationality between the symbolic aspects of *home* and human activities.

This research is provided mainly through narratives, as ‘lives are storied and identity is narratively constructed’ (Smith & Andrew, 2008, p.5), meaning that narratives are not entirely individual, but they are social at the same time. Olwig argued that life stories are ‘constructed along a fine line between movement and change, continuity and identification’ (Olwig, 2003, p.797); therefore, they are *personal* – reflecting a personal understanding of oneself and the life lived – as much as *cultural* constructions, to the extent that they are socially acceptable. I would like to stress that what is presented here is a selective combination of snapshots in written and translated\textsuperscript{11} words of what was observed, heard, listened to, and shown.

I have condensed the complexity to the *home* definition to *all that happens on the ground and in the heart*. However, how do those experiences and notions of home coexist? *Home* is usually as much homely as uncanny or unhomely (Ahmed, 1999). However, *uncanny* is often understood as implying bad luck, exception, or tragedy; while one could see *home* purely as a myth, it has a more concrete actuality in that in many ways it is the interpretation of *home* that guides us, or describes, evaluates a situation that we find ourselves in. *Home* usually starts with one place, but due to relocations, *home* can be experienced in multiple places, and not only in dichotomous terms, as only either *here* or *there*, but something that is a continuum, that is beyond physicality and spatiality (Taylor, 2015). How do we negotiate our well-being, and how is it related to places, either in the present, to memories of the past, or dreams of the future?

\textsuperscript{11} I am communicating with other Lithuanians in Lithuanian, so the conversations and stories are translated and/or interpreted by me. For a critical perspective on translation in ethnographic research, see Ruth Behar (1993).
1.2.1 Interpreting Home

Lithuanians say namai when they mean home, which is a plural form of namas, house. If I am going home, I say einu namo, but if I am going to a house, einu į namą.

Although at first glance these words are similar, grammatically they are used differently. Nevertheless, a close connotation of home as a place is implied, though the term could be used on different scales: an apartment, a house, or, in a broader sense: city or country. There are many arguments over the meanings and visions of home, in cross-disciplinary scholarship as much as in cultures and societies. Therefore, the etymology of the word may be a useful starting point.

The modern word home or the Old English hām are cognate in most Germanic languages, e.g.: heim, hjem, hem. Hām meant a collection of dwellings, a village, estate or house. In Old High German heima – home, world, or in Old Scandinavian hjem – dwelling, home world; in Old Prussian caymis – village; old Slavic semija, Lithuanian šeimyna (an extended family; my translation) (see Brink, 1995). It is presumed that these words are linked to the Proto-Germanic form *kaim-, that is used in the Lithuanian words kiemas (village, farm or courtyard in modern times) and kaimas (village). The word kaimas in earlier days was written as caymis; there are many medieval place-names that had this root: Kayme (1261 year), Caymenape (1331), Pupkaym (1374), Pillekaym (1411), and so on. The noun *ka/eima in Baltic languages meant someone or something that belonged to the hutments or family (Mažiulis, 1988-1997, pp.76-80). The root of the words *koim/*kom/*keim- is expressing the meaning ‘to lie’, ‘to settle down’; that is the origin of the words kaimas and kiemas. Interestingly, in Scots Gaelic caim has a meaning of sanctuary, or circle of protection, in Old Irish coim meant ‘dear’ or ‘beloved’. The theme of ‘love’ is also found in Middle High German heimen (take home, marry) or Old English hæman (to have sexual intercourse’, to marry or bringing home (a bride)); moreover, in Old High German hiwo meant ‘husband’, hiwa ‘wife’, and hiun ‘married couple’; in Old Norwegian, hiīn meant ‘married couple’, ‘household’. The semantic analysis of the word home shows that it is very much related to the exceptional bond between people and the place where one lives, a place that one is affected by and has a special relationship to; however, connotations of a physical house began only in the 19th Century (see, for example, Brink, 1995; Benjamin, 1995; Klein, 1966).
Historian Judith Flanders (2014) explains in detail how the home has been thought and made over the last 500 years, and what changes this concept has undergone. How home was practised depended very much on who was living in a household, who was considered a part of a family (only in the 20th century nuclear households started to become an affordable way of living). Houses themselves have been changing stylistically and ergonomically, and that affected how our lives at home could become more and more private as there were more rooms designed for distinct functions. Also, one should not forget events such as changes in marriage arrangements, or the Industrial Revolution that modified working hours and the altered social relations. All that had a direct impact on who made home and kin at a particular place and time.

Evidently, the home has been changing in its form, associated ideas and experiences throughout history – so, why do we tend to associate home with something that is stable in its entity? What home means for each of us may be different: what is home for one person - a house, family, town etc. - may be a non-home for another, and such vagueness needs to be critically approached. We also need to ask: what kind of place, what kind of family does a person mean? It is important to see how the understanding of home is changing nowadays due to relocation to another country, and what does that mean to people experiencing migration?

Due to relocation, the rhythms of life and friendships change. Nothing is fixed; probably none of the habits or relations ever was, but attachment to a familiar environment somehow used to suggest certain fixity. Furthermore, the acceptance of this new aspect of life, becoming and being a migrant (from Eastern Europe), takes time and may be experienced and interpreted in various ways. Being in a new place, a new country, and using other than one’s mother-tongue, may be an overwhelming experience. Too many factors that are usually taken for granted are unknown; there are many things to discover: where to live, whether one needs to buy towels, plates or pans, how to pay bills, discovering a new favourite cheese, figuring out the best value for money in supermarkets, how to open a bank account, and so on. Once basic needs are satisfied in one way or another, one starts wondering how to spend one’s free time, with whom to go out for coffee or a pint of beer, how to make friends, and so on.
Dwelling\textsuperscript{12} takes time, it is an ongoing process wherever we are, but relocation, movement from familiarity, makes the process of grounding oneself more ‘visible’, or could be described as ‘the most salient and significant externalization of the self in its materialized articulation’ (Jacobs & Malpas, 2013, p.285). However, it is important to stress relationality in understanding what home is because we are never on our own, we are embedded in particular material contexts, we are in situations, and we find ourselves in circumstances. Homes are made/created/imagined in the world; as Malpas explains, the relation to place is always with us, and self-identity and self-conceptualisation can be grasped through our ‘active engagement’ in places (Malpas, 2004 [1999], p.178).

Heidegger, writing in response to the post-war Germany housing shortage, emphasised how dwelling is the essence of being, and how housing shapes our ways of being and thinking about homes.

\textit{However hard and bitter, however hampering and threatening the lack of houses remains, the real plight of dwelling does not lie merely in a lack of houses. The real plight of dwelling is indeed older than the world wars with their destruction, older also than the increase of the earth's population and the condition of the industrial workers. The real dwelling plight lies in this, that mortals ever search anew for the nature of dwelling, that they must ever learn to dwell. What if man's homelessness consisted in this, that man still does not even think of the real plight of dwelling as the plight? Yet as soon as man gives thought to his homelessness, it is a misery no longer. Rightly considered and kept well in mind, it is the sole summons that calls mortals into their dwelling (Heidegger, 2001 [1971], p.159).}

Heidegger contemplates that one may feel homelessness not because one is away from or without physical home, but rather as a result of ‘removing’ oneself from the inner home. Therefore, to come back home is not a coming back to the physical place – once presuppositions of what home is, could be or should be are overcome, one can dwell.

Very often the place where one was born or raised is taken as a base for home, where physicality should match emotional comfort; but what if place and emotions do not match, what if a person moves beyond bounded geographical location and social, emotional familiarity? How do we know when home stops being home? How far geographically, how deep emotionally does home extend? As mentioned before, home is a concept that may

\textsuperscript{12} To M. Heidegger (2001 [1971]) dwelling means the way we humans beings are in this world.
have several contradictions, but it may also contain uncertainties. If one thinks about home, then memories and imaginations, how home may be or become are provoked. At the very moment, home becomes a meshwork of one’s past and future, an idea of something stable though on the move.

*It is only when in exile that the outline of our home begins to come into focus, begins to take shape. But this exile is not to be had in the endless to-ing and fro-ing between one international airport and another, between one beach and another, where we gaily frolic in seas around the globe like turtles carrying our homes on our backs. Such exile is beyond the nomadism so popular amongst postmodern globalisationists, it does not require movement but stillness, indeed, it does not require travel but a home which gives shape to (‘images’) ‘the darkness and silence of what is alien.’* (Peters, 2006, p.79)

Gary Peters (2006) is talking about imagination that allows us to move, to search for answers, and that transcends our here and now. Imagination for him is a way to explore future possibilities but within constraints of the present, and it is a nomadic thinking. Furthermore, he is relating imagination and dwelling; for Peters, both are movements, though not in a physical way, but in minds, emotions, dreams and thoughts. However, neither dwelling nor imagination is making home. Through imagination a person enters one’s homelessness, and dwells with this notion:

*To think of our homelessness is not to escape it or to concoct solutions to the ever accelerating and ever more universal onset of the misery it brings; it is, rather, to think thinking, to enter into the authentic (Heidegger would say) homelessness of thought that, properly understood, should give rise to neither misery or happiness, but fascination* (Peters, 2006, p.76, highlighted in the original).

Once we lose that familiar environment, we may realise how many things we used to know in the previously inhabited place, city, or country and were able to read between the lines due to knowledge (intentional or otherwise) that locals manage to develop. Loss and confusion may last for a while in a new place. The loss of familiarity (localities, networks, jokes, food and so on) may be interpreted as the loss of home in a broad sense. It could be a mixture of feelings, when an opportunity of a new start, the forgetting and
remembering merge. There is a lot unknown in a new place, and achieving the level of knowledge associated with home is an *uncanny* prospect.

One could say that it is the imagination that makes us feel homeless when we think of what home should be, though the romantics would argue that it is indeed the imagination that makes us at home, as it liberates. However, it is the prospect of an experience, a transcendental power of imagination that goes to the heart of homelessness. Peters explains transcendental imagination as

> ‘no longer a question of the imagination allowing us to roam freely across the terrain of the there and available, endlessly re-inventing the wheel, but [...] rather a matter of considering and explaining the very possibility of experience’ (Peters, 2006, p.66)

Peters (2006) refers to Heidegger’s ideas about giving thought to homelessness that requires stillness, but not a physical movement. So once a person thinks one’s homelessness, an absence of home, it is not that one tries to think how to escape it, but rather engages with one’s being, dwelling ‘within the alterity of our own homes’ (p.79). These ideas lead to questions such as: What is the relation between the physical place that should provide a sense of home and personal experience of it? How is that experience conditioned by a person’s individual efforts to reflect on one’s being? What is the role of a place, in a broad sense that includes culture, language, or nationalism? How much is home a social product, and a personal matter? Furthermore, can the sense of home be shared with others? How much is it a social or personal phenomenon?

### 1.2.1.1 Heimat or Tévyné: Placed, Remembered and Imagined

Whenever we try to grasp home, it seems that some of the meaning is lost, as the focus on family, location, or its materiality only represents a part of what is called home. In the German language, there is the word *Heimat* that is said to grasp that complexity, though there seems to be no exact word for it in English. Interestingly, in Lithuanian, there is the term *tévyné*, which means the place where you come from, where you belong, which you have memories of, and it implies an unconditional attachment and strong feelings towards it. The meaning of *tévyné* is quite precise if one tries to define it in terms of a birthplace: village, town, but most often a county or even country. It becomes a much more complicated matter if one tries to explain the importance or emotions towards that place.
One could say it is love, respect for the past, remembering, working for the better future. You could ask: ‘whose future?’ Probably the answer would be that all is done for the children’s future and that this is out of respect for ancestors who were fighting for the country’s independences throughout history, believing in and hoping for a better future. Another Lithuanian might say it is about being proud of the country. Yet, another might disagree, saying that it is about forgiveness. Most likely, the latter’s voice would sound sad and tired, as life has not turned out as one expected; one could say that there are no possibilities, little of respect among people for each other, or the happiness has not been found. It is believed that tėvynė is irreplaceable; the sound of it, the landscape, the air, and the atmosphere is the base for home, for one’s identity. The detailed relation among citizens and nation state is not an interest of this thesis, but it is important to stress the importance of moral obligation to tėvynė, which could become an ethical burden once a home place is left. Nevertheless, people leave that special place that should have been home, only to rediscover the importance, meaning and essence of the concept of it.

Similarly, the concept of Heimat started as a rooted place, but Keane (1997) explains that since the 1870s it has acquired new connotations; in time Heimat entered social, cultural, economic and political discourses. On the one hand, Heimat-as-concept became an imaginary of possibilities and ‘illusion of unity’ (p.82), which was in a dialogue with nationalism and regionalism. On the other hand, Heimat is interpreted as a birthplace, shelter, identity, a sense of belonging, native soil, motherland, remembrance, place of origin and belonging (p.86). It represents what is a search for familiarity and home, even though it is known or sensed that it does not exist in reality. Jones (2013) explains Heimat as a constructive, nostalgic, utopian concept, but at the same time as ‘an emotionally charged space inhabited by childhood memories’ (p.756). Most importantly, the individual search for Heimat, or the imaginary of it, is always placed in time and, while a personal matter, happens within broader political and social discourses (Keane, 1997). Heimat becomes needed in the moments of loss. It becomes a desired escape in the moments of realisation when one does not belong when dislocation does not become an imagined relocation. Ullrich Kockel (2010), based on his research with Germans living in the UK, explains that Heimat for them is not only a place but also what happened at (or in) it. They also stress that Heimat is not so much an association with any specific place, but rather particular activities (Kockel, 2010, p.65). Furthermore, Heimat could be understood as
both, a place we are from and towards, through an emphasis on here-ness, being from here (Kockel, 2012a,b).

The question remains whether we can experience heimat/tévynè: maybe it is more of an idea that is so attached to a particular place, or maybe it is a sense of place of where one wants to be. How does one get to know or experience what belongs to a place? Moreover, how does a person get to know or experience that a place belongs to one? It seems that reciprocal relations between people and places are a strange matter – more of a projection than a grounded practice. Ernst Bloch finishes the third volume of ‘The Principle of Hope’ in these words:

*True genesis is not at the beginning but at the end, and it starts to begin only when society and existence become radical, i.e. grasp their roots. But the root of history is the working, creating human being who reshapes and overhauls the given facts. Once he has grasped himself and established what is his, without expropriation and alienation, in real democracy, there arises in the world something which shines into the childhood of all and to which no one has yet been: homeland (Bloch, 1995b, pp.1375-76).*

Bloch sees Heimat as a hope\(^\text{13}\). Hope expresses something for or about the future, but it is important to understand that hope for Bloch is always thought in the present when the past is remembered and acknowledged, and the future imagined. Therefore, Heimat becomes a concept that is future orientated, that is Not-Yet but anticipated in the here and now. Moreover, those imagined horizons change, political-economic environments alter, and personal development constantly transform those hopes essentially or in their details, as they are made through interaction with the world. I see hope, despite its fluidity, as an orientation or direction to act, a moral filter to explain things, and finally, as a source of patience. In the following chapters, I will try to unpack how hope and home interact through everyday practices.

**Topophilia and Philotopy**

Once again, we are always in a place, and every place goes together with a context. A place is situated, but it ‘acts dialectically so as to create the people who are of that place’

---

\(^{13}\) I will discuss Ernst Bloch’s ideas in more detail in the Chapter 1.2.1.2 The Realm of Not-Yet
(Tilley, 1994, p.26). Not only does a place evoke knowledge of belonging, rootedness, and familiarity, but a place is an active ontological concern (ibid.). Moreover, we experience a place always in relation to other places, how we feel and act elsewhere. We may remember how we felt in a particular place, and we wish to feel the same another time, but it is never the same: ‘a sense of place which can never be exactly the same place twice’ (p.27).

The physicality of a place is just in front of our eyes; we walk along the streets, through that old forest, or take that path through the park. We are in a place and we move through it, we notice some things, but not others. We simply live in this locale, we take the same bus to work, go to the same grocery shop, meet friends, cook dinner, prepare lunch boxes, sleep, watch television, get annoyed by loud neighbours downstairs; it is all pleasant, exciting and boring. Also, sometimes we lose track of time, it seems that just yesterday chestnut trees were blossoming, but the year has passed, and the spring has come again. We are always placed, events and even dreams take place, but so often we take place for granted, and we may not even know what kind of love that is, or how deep our fondness for the place is until we lose it, it gets destroyed or damaged. Tuan suggests the term ‘topophilia’, that is, a love for the place, ‘the affective bond between people and place or setting’ (Tuan, 1990 [1974], p.4). It is a concept that is not easy to grasp, but at the same time ‘vivid and concrete as personal experience’ (ibid.).

The core of this concept (Tuan, 1990 [1974]) is an enquiry into how any place is made: through the perception of all the senses, the self, psychological and cultural attitudes towards the environment. To understand and experience a place is a shared sense among humans, yet how it develops depends on how a particular person perceives their environment, and it is important to stress that understanding and experiencing a place transcends external social, cultural and economic factors. Feeling the affection for a place is a complex process as there are great differences from one person to the other in ‘intensity, subtlety and mode of expression’ (p.93), and especially if a place is what we call home. Home is charged with memories, stories and expectations.

Tuan analyses in great detail how the environment is composed and perceived, but what I would like to take from his explorations is the very notion of topophilia. One could think that this is very much about the beauty of a place, aesthetics, fondness and security, about the immediate contact with a place that creates a sense that it is ‘right’, but ‘right’ does not mean easy. Tuan gives an example of farmers in America who are constantly in danger of experiencing another drought or dust storm. They never leave their troubled land
as for them the hardness is a part of being on the land, living with it and appreciating it (Tuan, 1990 [1974], pp.97-98).

The love for a place does not mean that it is always pleasant, but this bond with the environment gets stronger over time through accidental attachments, familiarity and one’s well-being, as the feelings for the place are inseparable from one’s inside, health and the sense of wholeness. Sometimes the everyday seems to be not special at all, but once it becomes a part of a memory, the same not special everyday, even the challenging one, may become a treasure, a record of something that was not realised at the time. Very often a retrospective view from the same or another place is needed to grasp the scale of emotions for the place here and now. Tuan explains how

‘home is a meaningless word apart from ‘journey’ and ‘foreign country’: claustrophobia implies agoraphobia; the virtues of the countryside require their anti-image, the city, for the sharpening of locus, and vice versa.’ (Tuan, 1990 [1974], p.102).

In other words, some sort of difference (time or physical distances) is needed to appreciate a place. Migration is one form of that required difference, as it breaks the familiarity and challenges one’s perspective. It also crystallises the desire to search for the environment that should be ideal for each of us at a particular time.

*How it looks varies from one culture to another but in essence it seems to draw on two antipodal images: the garden of innocence and the cosmos. The fruits of the earth provide security as also does the harmony of the stars which offers, in addition, grandeur. So we move from one to the other: from the shade under the baobab to the magic circle under heaven; from home to public square, from suburb to city; from a seaside holiday to the enjoyment of the sophisticated arts, seeking for a point of equilibrium that is not of this world.* (Tuan, 1990 [1974], p.248)

Tuan wrote these words in the 1970s and many things (technologically, culturally and politically) have changed since then, however the principles of human interaction with the environment have not essentially been displaced by new forms, even though the speed, the method and the format may seem different, but only on the surface. The love for a place is a phenomenon, and it may happen in different modes and tunes.

We humans dwell, Heidegger (Heidegger, 2001 [1971], p.147-149) reminds us, but not anywhere, not anyhow. To dwell means an emphasised sense of the present, the essence
of being that happens through what he calls the ‘fourfold’. Dwelling in many respects is a unity with the world through and with things, but these things are never only things if one appreciates them as what is ‘on the earth and under the sky’, and as ‘remaining before the divinities’ and ‘belonging to men’s being with one another’. In short, there are four matters: earth, sky, divinities, and mortals (human beings). All of them make a unity; if one is talking about one element, then the others are never ignored but kept in mind as all four of them create oneness. Humans experience oneness by a dwelling, ‘Mortals dwell in the way they preserve the fourfold in its essential being, its presencing. Accordingly, the preserving that dwells is fourfold.’ (Heidegger, 2001 (1971), p.148). Humans use the earth, receive the sky, and await divinities: ‘To say that mortals are is to say that in dwelling they persist through spaces by virtue of their stay among things and locations.’ (p.155). Fourfold is not only outwards orientated action, especially when we think, reflect on ourselves, focus on our senses. However, when we are inwards oriented, this does not mean that we leave the fourfold outside us, as we remain among things. The borderline between inwards-orientated and outwards-orientated should not be present if dwelling is considered with things, to and through locations – it is both, thought and within the world of things.

The Lithuanian philosopher Arvydas Šliogeris (1990) argued that we should have filotopija/philotopy instead of philosophy. To explain this concept, one needs to start with his dissatisfaction with the philosophical explanation of being as a constant becoming when this becoming is grounded in a transcendental perspective on life. He wants a philosophy, or rather philotopy, to be oriented towards the world, towards things, towards what is here. Šliogeris reminds us that philosophy is love of wisdom (in Greek philos – love, friend; sophy – wisdom), but this love is placed, and most philosophers have been ignoring the kind of love that is not beyond the horizon, but what is seen and sensed here. He wants philosophy that is open to the phenomenon of still-being (Šliogeris, 1990), because Being is now, not in the past nor the future. Time has no being and being has no attributes of time, he explains, ‘Being reveals itself in its eternal present: there was no being in the past, and there will be none in the future: “the time” of Being is now.’(Šliogeris, 1994, p.54). Accessible Being is only here and now, but this ‘now’ is understood not historically, but as eternity that is coming from nowhere and everywhere, and here is where the mortal human meets the phenomenon of Being. In other words, being is an active stance towards things, and it becomes a single and concrete orientation towards ontological relief in a world of things; though at the same time the human is mortal, limited and bounded, and essentially
meaningless. Only when the human faces mortality, or un-being, one’s Being is identified and becomes something that is significant. However, humans start orientating themselves towards un-being ‘by the naturalistic desire of alleviation, of which the principal vector is a fluttering among the phantoms of quasi-being without a place where things are to be authorizes and naturalized, indeed without things themselves’ (Šliogeris, 1994, p.57). He says that it is much easier to orientate oneself towards un-being, rather than be curious about one’s sensorial Being that is not beyond the horizon but is placed here around each of us. This attentiveness should be interested in attachment and love towards place – what is called home.

Šliogeris (1990) criticises philosophers who are focusing on ideas and ideologies to teach or explain how to live. According to him, the focus should be on being in place, because only in this way one can access Being. All that is said to be beyond this world is about quasi-being; people create this talk as if they had any knowledge about the world beyond; this kind of gnosis is destroying Being, and has nothing to do with teaching or explaining. For Šliogeris, Being starts in a concrete place, seeing it, thinking, questioning, and facing boundaries of humanity through wondering of what being is like. In his words, ‘The basic question of philotopy is where does Being reveal itself for humans as mortal and limited beings. This thinking is directed to the place where Being becomes accessible’ (Šliogeris, 1994, p.51). And it seems that all we need is to be open for appreciating this kind of Being, when the focus is on being attentive towards place through relations to things, phenomena of Being. Philotopy is a way of thinking along a way towards Being.

Tuan and Šliogeris, in different words, are talking about the immediate sensorial emergence of an active entanglement between humans and environment, which is essentially about this place in relation to other places but within a common physical realm. This complex interaction is a mental and sensorial experience that is a part of Being.

1.2.1.2 The Realm of Not-Yet Home

So far, I have been talking about the importance of places, feelings towards them, and how a home is a complex experience in the context of migration. It becomes clear that the experience of time, the sense of temporality, is the lens of how the process of (re)creating, (re)thinking, (re)discovering home is experienced. Time is a phenomenon that takes in, according to Marc Wittmann (2016, pp.xi-xii), ‘feelings, memories, happiness,
language, scholastic and professional achievements, one’s sense of self, consciousness, stress, mental illness, and mindfulness of one’s own self and body.’

In his book *Felt Time*, Wittman (2016) explores how people perceive temporality, and how a certain temporal horizon varies: it may encompass seconds, hours, days, months or sometimes years. How time is experienced is very much a combination of a person’s reason and emotion. For example, migrants tend to focus on the future, which should be brighter, and therefore the present is treated as a pathway to the desired future, while people who have stayed in the home country may emphasise different values, such as being together, expressing solidarity (Wittmann, 2016, p.17). During the process of analysing my data, I realised how much the subjective extent of my interlocutors’ temporal horizon mattered in their narratives about their everyday. The experience of the daily life, handling of waiting, plans, past, comfort or convenience in the very moment, always varied. This temporality depended on a person’s mood, particular circumstances, and interpretations of events (I will touch upon this aspect in more detail in Chapter 7). Wittmann (2016, p.44) says: ‘Experience has presence’ from the perspective of here and now: first, something is placed in the future, the Not-Yet set; secondly, an experience is in the moment, now; thirdly, it already belongs to the past, memories. This kind of engagement happens now, as much as planning one’s future or remembering something. This idea originates from St Augustine’s words: ‘Perhaps it would be exact to say: there are three times, a present of things past, a present of things present, a present of things to come’ (cited in Wittmann 2016, p.45). On a higher level of perception, this experience of the temporarily extended moment\(^\text{14}\) means that the past and future coexist, that there are no distinct lines separating those concepts (I will capture this complex relation between memories and dreams in the moment of now in Chapter 2.2.2.). The experience of duration allows us to feel the enduring self with one’s history, as one manages to narrate stories about self, think of plans, engage with one’s past. And through the process of self-consciousness, we experience the fused concepts of self, time and body; the way we experience the presence is a combination of physical and psychic selves (p.104). Noticing the feeling of time, or to be more precise, the temporal extension of a moment, has become the key tool in understanding my own experiences and my interlocutors’ stories about lives abroad.

\(^\text{14}\) On a level of perceiving verbal and non-verbal experiences of now, experiments have proved that every moment is experienced in units of three seconds; however, the stream of consciousness expands the short perception units of here and now (Wittmann 2016, p. 47-51).
became aware during this research that experiences of *here and now* changed depending on how much the moment was extended towards one’s past, and especially the future.

In this section, I would like to introduce philosopher’s Ernst Bloch ideas of the Not-Yet, which have become relevant during the analysis of my data in the midst of this research. First of all, influenced by Tim Ingold’s (2015) theory of lines\(^\text{15}\), when I was sketching (Fig. 1.1) Sigita’s narrative alongside my notes (for more detail, see Chapter 4), I tried to visualise the intersubjective nature of home(s) when external events and circumstances meet personal lifeworlds.

![Figure 1.1 Illustration of Sigita’s story based on Tim Ingold’s theory of lines.](source)

My sketches (see Fig. 1.1) led me to the description of a situation that could not have been better explained than in terms of Not-Yet. This concept has derived from the data, and only later I started reading Ernst Bloch’s ideas of the Not-Yet (1996; 1995a; 1995b). I immediately connected the notion of living within the realm of the Not-Yet Home to hopes and dreams for the better life that my interlocutors were talking about. The idea of a better life is the drive, which allows us to imagine living in a possible future, and to strive towards the wholeness of life.

*Who are we? Where do we come from? Where are we going? What are we waiting for? What awaits us?* (Bloch, 1996, p.3)

---

\(^{15}\) In the theory of lines, the lines are seen as the elements, inhabitants things, actions, which create places; and if places were visualised, they would look as knots made of lines (see more p.121).
These are the first words of a 1,400-pages book by Bloch, which is an extensive piece on the principle of hope. Hope, according to him, is an active action that sets the ground for the ultimate becoming. To dream or to imagine is a powerful emotion that allows people to experience life as lived, and life is not something that has some sort of essence of itself; one has to throw oneself into it and make it. Hope proposes intentions and therefore is a part of consciousness that has to be actively designed.

Bloch is probably the first philosopher who acknowledged the importance of daydreaming, which may lead to action and creativity, or what he defines as Not-Yet. Through addressing future-oriented hoping he tries to understand who we are in the present, how we lead our lives, what the role is of dreaming of a better life, and how all that relates to our past and present experiences. For Bloch (1996), utopian dreaming is what makes our present; to put it differently: Utopias are instances of the Not-Yet experienced, and therefore, the present is based on utopian conscience. Utopia is not an opposite of reality, but it is a possibility of that reality, which is a part of the present’s content. This experience of Not-Yet experienced is not just a search, a drive, and hope, but also the understanding of the present.

In the following chapters, I am aiming to introduce through personal accounts how people arrive at the notion of home being a temporal experience, how the planned imaginaries clash with reality, and how people try to overcome those unforeseen circumstances and to move to the desired state through economy (having a job, in time having a better job), education (including learning the language), or expanding social networks, finding friends, and creating families. This process is a combination of both, personal and external activities that coexist. I am interested in processes of living within the realm of Not-Yet Home, when 'the Not-Yet characterizes the tendency in material process, of the origin which is processing itself out, tending towards the manifestation of its content' (Bloch, 1996, p.307).

Bloch argues that people are driven towards something through reactions, observations, and correspondences with the world, and all of that stimulates actions and movements towards the New (Fig.1.2). What is novel about this approach is that it acknowledges that a particular dream or hope is not the result of the past per se, although the past features in the process of experiencing the Not-Yet, dreaming the future – it circulates, otherwise it would become the forgotten. People are thinking about their past, and this means that it is active in the moment; therefore it is not yet discovered, as it is not
solid, the interpretations of it change depending on the *here and now* and the dreams. This argument means that the past is an active component in conditioning the possible future, as much as dreams may shed light onto the past, but both remembering or dreaming is through the experience of now. Bloch adds that our understanding of now is never full because there is always something never realised of the past or the Not-Yet, which is driven by daydreaming, by an imagination that has not yet happened. Future does not come as fate but is a combination of courage and knowledge.

![Figure 1.2 Visualisation of Ernst Bloch’s ideas of the interconnected and codependent Not-Yet discovered past, the Not-Yet experienced future in the moment of here and now.](Source: drawn by the author)

Based on my research, I am confident in claiming that the idea of *home*, the practice, the experience of it, is an important matter for migrants, as they have just had an experience of leaving *home*, and have been trying to home one’s place, to move towards other places that could become *home*, though this is not a linear process of recreating a physical home elsewhere, or coming back (returning) to a home(country). Rather, it is an ambivalent juxtaposition of relations, emotions, control attached to past, current and future places, to people in those places, people who have been left behind, others who have been met, and most importantly, *home* is not only a personal matter but also a social interaction with the world. *Home* in migration is discovered through temporal connotations that unfold in habits, layers of psychological, imaginative, but also socio-economic, even political occurrences. These unfoldings, or rather threads, of personal narratives on oneself through
various layers of the inner and external worlds come to a presence in the concluding remarks on home. The sense of home becomes an access to how one’s past, future and present is interpreted, but only for that moment, as this very moment is heading towards the Not-Yet.
2 Home-place through Phenomenological Lenses

People recognising a foreign accent, or looks or behaviours other than ‘typical’ for a particular region, may ask casually: ‘Where do you come from, and how often do you go home?’ It could be that this is just a polite inquiry, but it indicates how deeply the notion of home is related to the place where one grew up, to customs, or to a mother tongue. Trinh Minh-ha reminds us that the choice to live as if there was here and there is a rational decision but notes that the perspective about foreignness is usually ‘not from elsewhere, but more specifically, from an elsewhere within here’ (Minh-ha, 2011, p.2). She talks about the walls that are at once keeping out and keeping in (p.3), for example, the physical walls that are barriers and checkpoints (such as between the West-Bank and Israel). However, she is more concerned about barriers separating people on the grounds of race, nationality, language, or because of fear or hate and other emotions. Racial and national profiling creates doses of anxiety, as Minh-ha observes, and that may result in false comfort, or in her words ‘we’re made to feel we’re not safe yet’ (Minh-ha, 2011, p.5). As Basso reminds us:

'Requiring neither extended analysis nor rational justification, sense of place rests its case on the unexamined premise that being from somewhere is always preferable to being from nowhere' (Basso, 1996, p.87).

The themes of migration and home are profoundly interrelated (Boccagni, 2017); home is very much explored through the right to belong in a particular politico-cultural sphere or ability to feel at home (Duyvendak, 2011), as a private space (Miller 2001), or as a mental notion, which is understood as being-in-the-world (Jackson, 1995). Sandu (2013) recognises that there is a lack of research on the connection to a specific place or dwelling, but not on detachment, or the ‘othering’ of people — seeing them as migrants or refugees. By focusing on home through personal histories, continuities, and renegotiated new and old homemaking practices, on how connections to place, social representations (language, food, certain norms), and re-creations of self are made, and having insights ‘from within’ the homes of transnational families, it is possible to understand actual conceptualisations and meanings of home. If home is conceptualised, first of all, as a ‘private’ site where identity, memory and belonging can be recognised, and secondly, as ‘public’, then such
understanding suggests possibilities for sociality, integration and informal learning. Sandu explains that it may

‘constitute the one place that the migrants can ‘be’ themselves, ‘express’ themselves, ‘make’ themselves—through a variety of practices—and thus feel ‘at home’; and in developmental terms, it may be experienced as the base from which one can ‘become’ a new self—a resource on which to draw when venturing forth into the ‘public’ sphere, a launch-pad to citizenship’ (Sandu, 2013, p.509).

From research on transnational families living in the English Midlands, Sandu (2013) concludes that homemaking practices and engagements within ‘community’ are in a constant shift, never static, and always relational and performative. Chawla and Jones, in their introduction to the edited volume ‘Stories of Home: Place, Identity, Exile’ (2015, p.xx), explain that home can be approached from diverse starting points, but at the core, stories of home are those that ‘shape the selves we become’. Heidegger (2001 [1971]) suggests talking about ‘dwelling’, which is a concept that captures being in and of the world; it is an ontological implication that unites the perception of the world and the groundedness in that world. What does it mean to dwell, how do people dwell? To answer these questions, we need to understand what dwelling encompasses. To Heidegger, it is sparing and preserving, meaning to care for and to look after things and locations. He sees people as dwellers, who build to dwell, and who are embraced in dwelling. Dwelling is understood as the basic character of Being; however, it is not a passive staying, it is staying with things.

Being grounded leads to the concept of place, because places are locales where biographies merge that are separate at first sight, but intimately interlinked, that are psychological and social, histories of places and possible futures. And that is what makes places valued in endless variations of meanings (Feld & Basso, 1996).

Tilley explains that ‘meaning of place is grounded in existential or lived consciousness of it’, but at the same time the full understanding of place is only an attempt, because ‘the limits of place are grounded in the limits of human consciousness’ (Tilley, 1994, p.15). Nevertheless, following the phenomenological tradition means exploring places through dialectics of ideas about them and experiences of them, capturing the multi-layered essences of places, or, in other words, taking a path that is focusing on ontological questions about or rather through places.
During my research, I was listening to various stories about the search of home; understandings of home, and as a border crosser myself, who has had no intentions of ‘going back’, but rather has been focusing on creating home here in Edinburgh, I have experienced personally how this vague though so much needed personal notion of home is challenged by the new localism\footnote{New localism is understood as a constantly changing and relational space, it is seen as an assemblage of relations with other places, people, objects, institutions and networks coming together.} \cite{massey1994b}. My interlocutors and I were experiencing, capturing how we sense this place, Edinburgh or Scotland, and how we interpret our place here through everyday experience. To have a place called home, Massey (1994b) reminds, it is not only belonging to that place but also having a feeling that a place belongs to a person who can actually afford to locate one’s identity there (p.166). Also, being in a place does not mean that one is bounded by it, even though one is physically here, but through various social relations, communication one stretches it. Therefore, I link particular places, their materiality, engagement with it and activities within particular social, political and cultural realms, to better understand how place is lived.

‘Ethnography is not just proto-philosophy but a way of staying connected to open-ended, even mysterious social processes and uncertainties – a way of counterbalancing the generation of certainties and foreclosures by other disciplines’ \cite[p.114]{biehl2014}.

João Biehl (2014) reminds us that anthropologists are creatively telling stories that are about human becomings through encounters with people, stories that are designated as ethnography or ethnographic materials. Those stories are transformation stories that do not have beginnings or finales. Experience, Jackson suggests, ‘is continually oscillating between one’s own inward-looking awareness and the external objects that draw one’s attention outward into a world’ \cite[p.294]{jackson2015}. Therefore, in this thesis, I am combining both experiences of the world that are considered to be external circumstance – social, economic, cultural circumstances – and internal views of the world expressed through actions and words. In other words, that which is considered personal, individual interpretation and experience coexists with those factors of the world thought to be external. Once you separate external and internal, social and private, once the complexity of what it is to be in this world is reduced to single aspects, there is something lost. Frykman argues that in order ‘to shed light upon today’ we need ‘to approach the matter of local
identities from a point of view that puts an emphasis on practice, experience and dreams’ (Frykman, 2003, p.188). What he meant was not to ignore history, cultural practices or ideology; instead, he invited us to take a more poetic approach because, to his mind, that would mean moving from rather dominating perspectives of modernity and cultural constructionism towards a phenomenologically inspired theoretical approach (Frykman, 2003, p.188). Furthermore, Frykman and Gilje (2003) explain that taking such a path (by following Bachelard’s ideas, The Poetics of Space, 1994) should suggest that homes are understood as possibilities when places are treated as happenings, and imagination is seen as a major human power.

Phenomenology is used as a theory that is as much a particular – through its empirical enquiry – as a universal approach to human perceptions and experiences. In the introduction to a substantial volume on phenomenology in anthropology, Ram and Houston (2015) explain how abstract meanings of phenomenology should be narrowed down while being expanded through themes and applications. According to the authors, the encouragement to reduce a wide range of meanings of phenomenology mainly associated with vague interpretations of the experience is needed in order to clarify the understanding of it and embrace the limitations of it. They explain that very often phenomenology is detached from human experiences in this world, as it is theoretical rather than grounded in an everyday life approach. Furthermore, there is a need to acknowledge how little we know about understandings of the world, what experience or consciousness are, because ‘neither the natural environment nor practical social worlds simply exist, neutrally arrayed for consciousness’s contemplation nor awaiting human expropriation’ (Ram & Houston, 2015, p.23).

Nevertheless, the authors argue, it is possible to achieve a connection of both worlds, outside the body and processes that happen within it. They explain that through a phenomenological approach (by focusing on modes of senses, feelings, knowing, and acts, paying attention to embodiment, consciousness, intentionality, intersubjectivity, and even practicalities) one can capture the compound nature of that interaction, what they call ‘an elementary stance’, which is composed or conveyed already through various elements, such as imagination, social-cultural practices, and fields of power (Ram & Houston, 2015). Their suggested definition of phenomenology is:
'an investigation of how humans perceive, experience, and comprehend the sociable, materially assembled world that they inherit at infancy and in which they dwell’ (p.1).

Phenomenologist understands everyday processes through which humans live as explorations, and engages with them to study how experiences are generated, and ‘unfold’ how innate features of the human being are interlinked to outer social-cultural-political structures (Ram & Houston, 2015, p.23-24). Jackson notes in the same book’s afterword that phenomenological anthropology is acknowledging that human lives, which are lived and experienced in so many ways, are seen fully through neither social, nor political nor cultural lenses alone, nor are individual knowledge modes perceived as being superior or inferior. Humans are caught in endless adjusting, rejecting, continuing, reshaping, explaining, assimilating, constructing their relations to the world, they are ‘vital participants in a process of bringing the world into being’ (2015, p.296), and still, so many factors are beyond one’s reason and consciousness. Referring to Simmel, he says that ‘life both stretches beyond itself (toward transcendent or reified forms of thought) and involves making those extant forms responsive to our own specific existential needs’ (p. 296; orig. emph.). There is an emphasis on not trying to distil various aspects of life, such as culture, cosmology, class, or social history, but rather phenomenologically see life as

‘an endless succession of transitional moments in which various potentialities from within each person’s psyche as well as from within each person’s social history and cultural milieu are brought forth and tried and tested, as viable solutions to recurring problems, physical and metaphysical, social and personal, are negotiated’ (p.299-300).

Jackson questions whether it is really possible to grasp the creative and adaptive nature of human beings, who are constantly in the process of becoming. He notes that nothing else but a mutual recognition and empathy are the common ground that we humans share, that each of us has a bit of Everyman, each of us has a bit of ‘migratory imagination’ which allows us to cope with changes. Jackson suggests that this ‘migratory imagination’ is a compact essence of oneself, and that is the capability to see the other as a human being and compare oneself to the other. He believes in humanity that reaches beyond nations, religions, or cultures, and that interaction is what we should focus on. In his book
'Lifeworlds', Jackson explains that anthropology is struggling to find the appropriate political and practical language, the way of conceptual and ethical talking that would balance between two lifeworlds, one intimate and immediate, the other abstract and remote (Jackson, 2013c, pp.xiii-xvi).

We are emplaced, but the horizons of our experiences are ever-shifting and, as Dejarlais and Throop (2011) explain, ‘there is always something more yet to come, a side yet to see, an aspect, quality, action, or interaction yet to experience’ (p.90). ‘Life as lived’ is not only our experiences, actions and perceptions of the here and now, but also the threads leading to narrated pasts, to other people’s life stories, to imagined futures; and those threads are important in order to understand the lifeworld of the other. I do not interpret lifeworld as a concept which essentialises the uniqueness or singularity of each person, but rather I see personal stories as testimonies of the social and personal, of when the intimate collaborates with the outside world. This alliance of inside and outside is what a person does, undergoes one’s ‘social life’ in Ingold’s (2015) terms. The interest in one’s lifeworld allows the exploring of familiarity that is usually taken-for-granted (Trigg, 2012, p.25).

Phenomenological approaches are based on an interest in how people experience and understand the world (Tilley, 1994, p.11); in other words, the focus is on a bond between thought and world. Phenomenology could be explained as a descriptive enquiry, one that allows encountering things in their immediacy. Anthropologists focus on subjective experiences, or on ‘life as lived’. Therefore, I am telling extended life stories of my interlocutors that capture social and political aspects of life, but I also include banal details from their and my own life, which become insights into, or lenses through which to view broader and more abstract issues, nevertheless sometimes politically and economically concrete. The conversations, intentions, experiences are happening here and now, but very often involve stories of the past, dreams of and expectations for the future.

The key of this thesis is the encounter with place, and Trigg (2012, p.114) argues that being in place should be understood through ‘body’, ‘time’ and ‘world’ experiences. In order to understand what place is, one should not reduce it to objective properties, nor should it be conceptualised as something that relies on social and political circumstances. The phenomenological argument is that place can be captured as ‘an expression of our being-in-the-world’ (p.4). Every human is placed, and that means that each of us is in particular here, where our experiences happen. Through our body we experience our
relation with the world; every place is experienced in a particular way, as it is unique and affective. At the same time, places are temporal; we experience them in time, through movements, habits, memories and imagination. Places, through their materiality, constitute who we are – in other words, we become attached, and memories are held by that place (p.9). Places touch us, inhabit our bodies, and shape our experience of them, so there is an embodiment of a place, which leads to the idea that ‘we carry places with us’ (p.11). This idea encompasses much more than practising habits, it is about ‘the continuity of one’s sense of self’ (p.11). Through our bodies we engage with the world, as the world engages with us, we are parts of each other, but once this reciprocity is disrupted, then ‘the world’s texture undergoes change, its mood shifting’ (Trigg, 2012, p.25). As a result, things become strange, feel uncanny, and nothingness may become a presence. The way we feel about the world is within us, ‘the places in which we live, live in us’ (Trigg, 2012, p.33). Such experience encompasses what is here and now, but also what is absent, what we can see, though also what is invisible, and those different threads interweave into a whole. Everyday familiarity creates a belief that it is fixed, but none of the things is pinned in this world.

It could be concluded that what is called home is usually understood as something material, but also emotional and imaginative; in other words, it is dwelling as a noun but also as a gerund and verb describing the action of dwelling in the here and now as well as the there and then, both in the past and in the future. However, the relations between material, emotional and imaginative worlds, between past, now-ness and future are dynamic. Therefore, I need to be attentive to what we talk about when we talk about home; to be innovative in capturing experiences of the multi-layered narratives of home in order to understand the interplay of elements that constitute what is called home.

It is argued that home may not be a useful theoretical and conceptual tool at all because there is no conceptual clarity that could be applied to either the empirical or the theoretical development of the idea. Doreen Massey (1994b) notices that places can be homes, but we do not necessarily need to think about them in such way, as ‘home-places is itself an equally complex product of the ever-shifting geography of social relations present and past’ (p.172). To put it differently, home-places are locations where life discoveries and changes happen, have happened or may happen. Neither home nor place are static concepts; both are in flux, though this does not mean that there is no need to investigate how the notion of home and the experience of place come together and are negotiated. Rapoport (1995) argued that most research on the topic of home does not go beyond popular notions
of home. However, he suggests focusing on ‘a link between the concepts of home and place’, because if they are together, ‘home becomes a special kind of place’. The attention, according to Rapoport, should be on evaluations, actions or behaviours that make home through ‘specific relationships between particular groups and particular systems of settings’ (Rapoport, 1995, p.46). It seems that his advice given in 1995 has been seriously considered in academia; the interest in the concept of home at conferences, in seminars or book titles across disciplines seems to be constantly high since then, which indicates that a deeper understanding of the concept of home is still as elusive as in 1995. This is not so much related to the need for ‘improving’ the term, but probably more to the fact that the notions and senses of what home is are constantly changing. Moreover, based on my research, home is what matters to people, it is a topic that is discussed on a daily basis, and to my mind, it is important to connect very often separate theoretical and philosophical inquiries to the everyday. Many factors of home coexist at once, though expressed in different patterns, and may evoke different notions and senses, may even contradict each other, but those contradictions are reconciled within one concept of home.

2.1 Arrival in Edinburgh

It is an early morning, and I feel quite sleepy when I get off the plane. Moreover, it is chilly, although it is the beginning of September. I slowly walk towards an airport bus and try consciously to be excited that I finally have come to a new town, new country. I try to convince myself that I am already there. In a second I ask myself what is there, or is it already here?

These were the first lines I wrote in my fieldnotes, and they expressed my naïve idea about the concept of fieldwork. As fieldwork usually is defined by time and space, in some ways, it even might relate to the concept of ‘liminal phase’ – when a ‘normal’ life is left behind when one tries for a while to do as the local do, and afterwards leaves the field again. However, this ideal understanding of fieldwork might exist only in application forms, but not in practice (Shore, 1999). Fieldwork does not start when one arrives there; rather, ‘the anthropologist is an adult who arrives in the field with baggage of her own’ (Larsen, 2013, p.63). There is an issue about by whom and about whom a representation is made (Okely, 2012; Reed-Danahay, 1997). Okely (1996, p.23) notes that there is a need to
talk explicitly about fieldwork as a personal experience rather than seek a false notion of scientific objectivity. She argues that when a direct link between observer and observed is excluded, there is ‘hope’ to achieve an ‘objective’ methodology. This search for objectivity is related to the simplified dichotomies of personal and objective, a dualism of emotional and scientific, but fieldwork is a rather more complex experience.

Being a native anthropologist (in this case I mean being Lithuanian and researching Lithuanians), or even just to some extent an insider, also means certain limitations, despite mutuality and a shared understanding of language, history and social, cultural practices. To put it differently: ‘We’ consists of many ‘I’, ‘we’ means togetherness and separateness (Grønseth & Davis, 2010). Casey takes a step further, and places an ethnographer within the context:

After all, the ethnographer stands in the field and takes note of the places he or she is in, getting into what is going on in their midst. The ensuing understanding reflects the reciprocity of body and place – and of both with culture – that is as descriptive of the experience of the anthropologist as of the native. It also reflects both parties' grasp of a concrete universality, a generality immanent in place thanks to the lateral homologies and sidewise resemblances between things and peoples in places. The understanding of place activates universals that are as impure as they are singular (Casey, 1997, p.45).

When one ‘comes’ to a field, one realises how difficult it is to navigate within it, and how long it takes to set up contacts and rapport. Thus ‘being there’ is now very much complemented by ‘getting there’, as the idea of ‘being there’ implies the notion of seeing the world as something ‘out there’ and which it is possible to observe and describe (Grønseth, 2010, p.9). Fieldwork is an activity, the experience of it, or an emergent world of social relations with people who are being researched (Rapport, 2013b, p.79).

One might say that home is ordinary objects, a place, town, something that is familiar, or the illusion that it could be one or the other, but it could be every aspect mentioned, all at once. Gaston Bachellard, in The Poetics of Space (1994), interprets home as a space of the imagination within a familiar physical location, when one arrives at the meaningful self. At the same time, home is a private space, which can be dangerous, violent and cruel, and the opposite of ideal. This is a very intimate interpretation of home. According to Yi-Fu Tuan, ‘intimate experiences lie buried on our innermost being so that
not only do we lack the words to give them form but often we are not even aware of them’ (2011 [1977], p.136); therefore, it is difficult to express them.

However, I would argue that the concept of home is very much at the core of how we, as humans, live in this world, that it is a common human theme of attachment, belonging and experiencing our possibilities and duties. I do not want to suggest that there is a single way to understand home, quite the contrary. In this thesis, I am not covering all possible ways of understandings of home, but rather I am exploring personal accounts of how home is lived by particular people in a particular place. ‘Life is lived, not a pageant from which we stand aside and observe’ (Tuan, 2011 [1977], p.146); for this reason, my personal experiences of places and encounters with other Lithuanians in Scotland, mainly in Edinburgh, becomes a visible part of this ethnography, which is understood as a practice.

I am a Lithuanian living in Edinburgh, who is studying the imaginaries and practices of the concept of home among Lithuanians in Scotland. I moved to Edinburgh on 8th September 2013 to start PhD studies. Once I changed my location, I became a migrant myself. Suddenly, this decision changed how I was being perceived. I had become a foreigner for locals in Scotland, and a migrant for my family and friends in Lithuania. Therefore, I have been a part of this research about experiences of home, and by using my own story, I am trying to express the conversation that is happening between me and other Lithuanians.

My experience (including my mother’s and friends’ stories) becomes a tool to access other people’s stories. It is a methodological decision, which confirms that I am ‘a migrant also’ rather than merely a researcher who needs information. Including the stories that I, a Lithuanian living in Edinburgh, shared with other Lithuanians in order to respond to their compositions and experiences of home could be said to make this thesis auto-ethnographic. However, I am not interested in ‘giving voice’ to myself; rather, I want to focus on the conversations that emerged between me and my interlocutors, which unfold the personal interpretations of home in the process of our migrations and mundane activities, or what, following Tim Ingold, I call ‘correspondence’. Correspondence – what he describes as ‘a practice of participant observation’ (Ingold, 2014, p.389) – is not about representations or descriptions, but about interventions and being attentive with others. In this way, I aim to present livelihoods that capture a person’s trajectories and interpersonalities (Chawla, 2014; Armbrecht, 2009), rather than searching for proofs of transnational experiences of home (see Rolshoven, 2008).
Anthropology is the discipline that is interested in how human beings live in this world. The anthropologist’s aim is to ground knowing in being, and, as Tim Ingold explains, any kind of study of human beings should be done with them (Ingold, 2008, p.83). The dedication to study and work with people distinguishes anthropology from other disciplines, which also are interested in studying people. Anthropology is interested in philosophical questions, and seeks to answer questions such as what it means to be human, how morality, responsibilities, obligations or freedom are understood, on what the relationship between thoughts and words is. One needs to think with people, because they not only ‘furnish us with knowledge about the world – about people and their societies’, but rather educate our ‘perception of the world’ (Ingold, 2008, p.82). Tim Ingold argues that anthropological ‘writing is not an art of description’ (p.87), but is correspondence (ibid.). It means that anthropologists, through observations and correspondence with human beings, can do more than describe, because anthropology is ‘an inquiry into the conditions and possibilities of human life in the world’ (p.89).

The question of what ethnography is, and how it should be done ‘properly’, is not a recent debate. It is rather a continuity of tensions that ethnography has been experiencing as it ‘has never been a stable entity’ (Atkinson et al., 1999, p.466). Can one give a voice to the other? Can I understand what the other is going through? To what extend? Ethnographers should be the ones who manage ‘to put themselves into others’ shoes’. Nevertheless, despite the attempts to empathise, through the process of retelling other people’s story, we ethnographers realise how limited the retold story is. This understanding of the other could be taken from another angle, and it could be concluded that when ‘we’ can become ‘they’ is very subtle moment. Would such transformation be a form of social violence? Jackson (2013b, p.5) talks about such a change in vocabulary when one ‘reduces the other to a mere object – a drudge, a victim, a number, assimilated to a category, a class, or a global phenomenon’. As a researcher I am facing an ethical dilemma, because constructing a certain model of reality makes one responsible for it and what becomes of it (Kockel, 1999, p.73).

Jackson, following Hannah Arendt, explains that storytelling is considered to be both personal and social, or ‘subjective-in-between’. It is an activity that belongs to a person, but also is in need to be shared, though it always is authored and selectively told to be recognisable by others. He (2013a, p.32) expands Arendt’s perspective (she had been exclusively focusing on the political relationship between private and public) and sees
storytelling as encompassing visible and invisible, living and dead, familiar and foreign. Storytelling transgresses the boundaries of the social world and gives an insight into the possible experience of the other. What about truth? Could those narratives that people actively create in a moment, while relying on perceptions of their past, be considered as true? Furthermore, what happens to the narrative, once it is retold or rewritten by an ethnographer?

Stories sometimes become a refuge from one’s shared reality, especially in the moments of grief, anger, felt injustice or personal crises, though they should not be treated as lies. Rather, stories told in those moments should be seen as providing insights into the shared reality, which explore the common imbalance between the inner and outer worlds. Such stories, according to Jackson (2013a, p.273), speak about meanings that are here and now, about notions and experiences of the world that people have or do not have control of. Kockel (2010) notes that the relationship between past, present and future is lost when the focus of analysis is only on the contemporary policy driven and vocational studies. If places are understood as sums of parts, where constituent parts include present, past and future, then ignoring the intimate links between these parts may mean ‘destroying one of the key functions of the contemporary itself – to become the past and the roots of our future’ (Kockel, 2010, p.189).

Through the emphasis on topos/place, where relationships and activities happen, it is possible to open up how the Self and the Other engage or ‘take place’. However, to capture that engagement is a rather difficult task, as it is just a glimpse into a complex dialogue that stretches out in time, and is an emotionally charged activity. Ethnographers and storytellers (participants in research) tend to tell their experiences linearly. Even though linearity helps to put prioritised complex events, experiences, senses and rationale in a more comprehensible manner, it is at the same time neglecting other details that have happened at the same time. Kockel (2014) talks about identity perceptions to understand topology: one he calls inward-directed or ‘home identity’ and the other, outward-directed or ‘public identity’ (p.33). Both have aspects of each other, and this overlap can be explained if identity is understood in two forms. One, auto logical, is about affirming the Self to the Self, and the other is xenological, which is a projection to the Others about the Self. Furthermore, ‘public identity’ is always in active dependency on how one wishes to perceive one’s past, where one is coming from, and how one wants to be seen – in other words: it is future oriented. Over and above that, toposophy treats places as sites of
wisdom, it is a perspective that is interested in why a particular place becomes a special place, one that deeply matters (Kockel, 2014). To put it simply, Kockel suggests to focus on place in ethnography, and in such a way to transcend ‘the human-focused attention given to Self, Other and Third’ (p.36). Place is where the Self, Other and Third meet and mutually create each other, the third being beyond the horizon, what one cannot see, and that what frightens. Through the process of fieldwork I realise that what is happening is neither entirely subjective nor objective, but rather situational and relational (Sprenger, 2010). It is not only a personal experience of uncertainty but also an uncertainty caused by methodological, moral and ethical clashes for me as a researcher.

2.1.1 Self as a Resource

Dialogue is the air we breathe (not just) during fieldwork (Collins, 2010, p.231); however, there is still an issue of how visibly anthropologists include their memories, personal experience and knowledge as ethnographic data, although that is what usually makes the dialogue happen. At the same time, we constantly make decisions about which part of ourselves we would like to reveal to others. It could be that the complexity is explained through conversations over and over again, but because this PhD is an account written by me, based on my experience, though very much inspired by other people, it is important to stress how the self becomes a resource of ethnography (Collins & Gallinat, 2010).

I am Lithuanian living in Edinburgh, and my conversations are in the Lithuanian language. I find myself caught between interpreting and translating my interlocutors’ ideas, and have realised that writing is as important a part of ethnography as doing it. Therefore, I find autoethnography a useful and ethical genre to express my research. Autoethnography is a form of inquiry that expresses the relations between the ethnographer and interlocutors reflexively. The range of voices of a particular narrative does not only report it but actually in a dialogical way express how the knowledge is produced through ethical responsibilities that make the researcher and participants visible (Simon, 2012). Ethnographers do question how people are defined, what is local, what is a stranger, how identities are compromised.

17 In short, the Third stands for an attempt to overcome the binarism such as Us and Them, especially in subaltern or postcolonialism studies. Ullrich Kockel questions whether such trend is just another analytical tool, which unfortunately does not go beyond self-othering (Kockel 2014).
(Grant et al., 2013), and, finally, what are the limits and possibilities of personal engagement in the field at home. In such circumstances, by inserting oneself into the text, an anthropologist may sensitively explore the socially and culturally constructed divisions and humanity that connects people (Behar, 2007). Furthermore, if the researcher acknowledges that a neutral and impersonal way of doing research is impossible, and accommodates subjectivity, this is nothing else but autoethnography – it is a writing that usually expands on the given definitions of what research is and how it should be done through personal and interpersonal perspectives and experiences (Ellis et al., 2011).

Peter Collins (2010) says there are three preconditions for using an ethnographic self as a resource: the practice of reflexivity, the centrality of the narrative self, and a commitment to a dialogic methodology (p.228). Taking the self as a resource is based on the triad of story, memory, and dialogue (p.242). Moreover, if in daily talking relationships there is so much of social interaction through personal narratives that suggest empathy or mutual toleration (p.234) in the emerging dialogues, one may wonder why that aspect should be excluded from ethnography and ethnographic texts. In other words, the anthropologist may enter into a more equal dialogue with people in the field, and this way of communication should be represented in writing too. It is more than reflecting about oneself through gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, education, and so on; such social filters in some ways ‘fail to fully recognise the freedom that is afforded to the anthropologist who moves and thinks and writes and feels and remembers in a mobile world’ (Kohn, 2010, p.186). Tamara Kohn reminds us that researchers are studying others as much as themselves and that the recognition of the subtle changes that happen during interactions with others, and reflections about the events, people and topics, should be rethought again and again, and incorporated in writing/teaching. The understanding of others and the fieldwork experience are changing with time through ‘our own developing sensitivities and interactions with other people and other ‘fields’ (p.197).

To my mind, such an approach helps create a text with a sense of improvisation that reflects what people actually experience, as a decision to migrate and living abroad is not merely a gateway to changes but a controversial journey when dreams, memories, people, places, habits, activities, emotions and attachments merge. Talking about migration (in the Lithuanian case), it becomes obvious that migrants are not simply reacting to the economic situation, flows of information, media and technological possibilities; if they were, then
how come forces that appear systematic, predictable and generalised are experienced usually with a dose of surprise (see general discussion on the issue Amit, 2010, p.209)?

The challenge for anthropologists is the simplification of the messiness of someone’s everyday life, which leads to more general abstractions. To avoid this simplification, anthropologists should use their own story and time perspective. What this means is that serendipity, reflexivity and interactions are rewritten months or years after events took place, in such a way that the author can reflect on shifting relations to those events, by remembering what happened ‘then’ in relation to new experiences. Such an approach allows the inclusion of a sense of the uncertainty and improvisation involved in experiencing life because from a time perspective we can realise how many unexpected opportunities are faced, how often plans are remade, and so on. This approach could also be expressed quite poetically, as in Nigel Rapport’s words: ‘life is a journey, consciousness is a journey, thought and writing are journeys, anthropology itself is a journey’ (Rapport, 2006, p.180).

To do and write autoethnography is both process and product (Ellis et al., 2011). Very often I find myself understanding, being able to link things, or even discovering linkages while writing, and especially when I am translating from Lithuanian to English. The ethnographer does not translate texts in the same way as the translator does, because first of all a text must be produced (Crapanzano, 1986, p.51). Therefore, the process of writing is a powerful part of the whole project: while being in the field, we learn how to write our experiences through our notes, reflections and observations; we select information, we edit, we decide how to tell particular stories. It is personal and emotional, but at the same time, it is a choice of how to tell a certain experience. It is as much a method as a genre – they are interrelated: ‘one informs the other and both are creative acts rooted in experience’ (Sharman, 2007, p.124). Alternatively, as Behar concludes, ‘the method of ethnography is inseparable from the genre of ethnography’ (Behar, 2007, p.154).

Autoethnography is a form of writing where the boundaries between work and the rest of a researcher’s life are blurred. It is done when a tradition of self-protection under a professional title and a silenced ‘I’ is destabilised through rewriting self in the social world, through writing as an insider and questioning the privilege of speaking for or about the others (Denshire, 2014, pp.2-4). There are various approaches in practising autoethnography, producing different kinds of knowledge; it depends on who the author is, to whom and how one speaks, the relationship between the researcher and the social and
cultural world that is being researched. It results in either an inquiry about one’s own group or autobiographical writing per se, but could be written in various topical genres - narrative ethnography, reflexive interviews, reflexive ethnography, layered accounts, interactive interviews, community autoethnography, or personal narratives (Denshire, 2014; Ellis et al., 2011). Writing is understood as inquiry; a main point of criticism is usually whether the researcher’s personal life experiences, attitudes are needed to offer deeper understandings of certain experiences, and this kind of writing is criticised as too artful, or not scientific enough (Ellis et al., 2011), and as going beyond rather well established practices of writing in academia. Though subjectivism is understood as a resource (Grant et al., 2013, p.4), the weakness of this approach is the vulnerability of the researcher, their interlocutors, or family members of a scholar, even though they are usually disguised by pseudonyms.

Frank de Caro writes that stories which come to us have the power to convey meaning and knowledge (de Caro, 2013, p.x). Ruth Behar warns that there is a danger to turn a story of a person simply into a commodity of information (Behar, 1993, p.13), as she argues that to represent a story is not the same as to inform, especially when a listener transforms into a storyteller. When she is trying to understand Esperanza (in her book Translated Woman. Crossing the Border with Esperanza's Story), to show the development of a relationship with her, Behar decides to use a novelistic and dialogical style in English to give a voice to Esperanza, although Esperanza told her story in Spanish. De Caro (2013) re-creates stories; he imagines how the stories by his relatives could have sounded. Moreover, he reminds us that stories of others may make us reconsider how we remember our lives. There is a lot of editing and reformulation in remembering a story, and despite the fact that a big portion of something is lost, he argues that the bit which is told is still crucial (de Caro, 2013, p.xii). At the same time, he admits that the told story might be trivial, yet everyone’s life is of interest, and storytelling tells something of ourselves, the society and culture(s) we live in. Last but not least, it speaks about human existence as such (de Caro, 2013, p.xiv). Henry Miller in ‘Reflections on Writing’ (1969) expresses his disbelief in words, as he believes in language, which is ‘something beyond words’. Like him, I wonder how to express the sensorial experiences and intentions of the very moment here and now through words? Is it possible to grasp someone’s way of being? Yes, I would like to say, but not entirely. There are many limitations, it is a fragile knowledge that has gone through various filters of telling, listening to, taking notes, remembering, re-writing, and other
factors that I may not be aware of, which influence why a person talks the way s/he talks in a particular conversation.

2.2 Mapping the Fieldwork

I remember that drive like it was yesterday. It is hot. I am sitting in a blue car looking through the window. The road is dusty, so the windows of the car are closed. We feel breathless. My long hair is still wet, and I am 5 or maybe 6 years old. I know that soon, just after the next hill, my grandfather will slow down the car. Also, I know that my grandmother will once again be surprised how big those trees are, my mother will point to the horizon and remember how she used to play just over there. All I can see is an empty field. They share memories, and I wish I could say something. Though it lasts only for a minute, I feel so far away from them. Just after the next corner, the asphalt road starts, and we open the windows. The next moment I realise that I am hungry after the long day by the river and I wish to come back as soon as possible to my grandparents’ home.

My first memories of home were the stories about lost homes told by my grandparents or relatives. Those stories were about nostalgic and romantic notions of home. I got to know that it was possible even to die from grief when the land was taken away, and the house was demolished, as it happened to my other great-grandmother in another part of Lithuania. It happened when the Soviet regime destroyed individual farms and created organised villages with one collective farm. My great-grandmother died from sadness when her family house was knocked down in which several generations had been born and many family members passed away. Maybe it was a mythical way of expressing how cruel the Soviet system was, but those stories became my memories of places that I had never been to, but I imagined myself being there. Similarly, Chawla expressed that ‘you can miss home, even when it was not home’ (Chawla, 2014, p.9). A theme of longing for my own place was experienced from an early age, as there was always a lack of room; later on, movements from one apartment to another, from one city to another, later from country to country, trained me in homing and unhoming practices.
There is no place like home, people say, but what does that mean? Can we explain *home* or do we have to experience it in order to understand? But to experience what: rootedness, belonging, dwelling or grounding, or maybe loss? There is a journey to the theme of *home* that started years ago through stories of my relatives, which captured loss and attempts to reground themselves. This theme has been bothering me since an early age, and in many respects, this PhD thesis is a personal project. In this case, it has been impossible to ignore my own experience of migration and mobility, so I decided not to ‘pretend’ that I do not have this experience, that I am a ‘blank page’, but rather use my knowledge in conversations. To my mind, sharing experiences, discussing the topic, has helped me to connect with other Lithuanians, and together become more like co-researchers, thus breaking the imbalance of me as a researcher vis-à-vis them as an informant. I am using my own story in this project with critical self-awareness; very often I found myself surprised, impressed or even worried about the people whom I encountered. I was more often experiencing differences in the details of our lifestyles, choices, emotional stabilities and even political views than similarities. I was rediscovering my own experience through their stories in a different light: conversations were opening a new intersubjective horizon (Finlay, 2009).

At the same time, during my research, I encountered a number of migrants (coming from various places around the world) who were experiencing similar doubts, wonders, disappointments and rediscoveries of manifestations of home(s). Those talks provided me with a sense of confidence that home is an important theme humans face on a daily basis: we were sharing similar emotional sensations during our conversations about the home that had been left or was imagined or being longed for. Despite our different mother tongues, places of origin, cultures, economic and social backgrounds, we were very much on the same page sharing our knowledge and supporting each other in our journeys of searching for home. It seemed that I had more in common with migrants coming from various places other than Lithuanians that I met. However, this kind of comparison might be misleading. Talking with Lithuanians, I could feel nuanced differences between us because in broad terms we shared a language, culture and history – life in Lithuania. It was as if from the strong immediate connection, though externally created, we would search not necessarily for further connecting points, but possibly for individual differences in each other’s lifeworlds. Nevertheless, curiosity about each other was driving the conversation: how the other is dwelling, in other words, living and embodying the experience of life abroad.
My approach could be seen as going against the grain of phenomenological inquiry, as phenomenologists should ‘bracket’ or put aside their own experiences. In order to understand human experiences of the phenomenon, phenomenologists apply bracketing to that what is considered a given knowledge; bracketing means a reduction of preconceptions or creating a distance from assumptions, judgments (Finlay, 2014; 2009). Nevertheless, there are various interpretations and attempts how a phenomenological approach in research should be applied (Finlay, 2009). In this case, I am not claiming that I am bracketing my own experience, I focus on descriptions that allow me to understand the discussed complexity, and this understanding of the other is very much related to my own experiences of life abroad. I agree with Finlay (2014), who argues for an open and sensitive approach when bracketing is not performed. That is, the researcher should be open to receive the given phenomena, and present them by being empathic, curious and reflexively mindful about one’s position. She says:

‘Whatever variant of phenomenology, the task remains profoundly dialectical: researchers need to straddle subjectivity and objectivity, intimacy and distance, being inside and outside, being a part of and a part from, bracketing the self and being self-aware, and so on. Phenomenology champions a holistic nondualist approach to life, and this philosophy needs to be mirrored in its methodology. (p.124)’

As mentioned earlier, even though we speak about places as localities, we treat them not only in a geographical sense; ‘place’ is a concept that includes scales of emotions, practices, various political, social, and cultural interpretations that change with time. It is there, but what do we make of a place? We are placed, stories about home(s) are placed, even if home is defined through emotional links, such as relations with people or emotions towards places. Moreover, the places that we are talking about may not be accessible to us anymore; homes may be destroyed, changed, or left behind, but at the same time, they are within us, they have their own spot(s) on our personal messy timeline. If I tried to locate my fieldwork on a map, it would be in Scotland. If I wanted to map the stories, they would cover various locations, different times, and would include many people. So, how do I navigate through the stories told, how do I listen to them and finally write them down while keeping a phenomenological approach?
Finlay (2014) is emphasising the importance of using one’s understanding in a hermeneutic process of thinking, though it should not be used as an aim, but rather as an attitude to the phenomenon. In this way, the researcher is using subjective knowledge to engage with other beings. At the same time, a researcher should go beyond what is told, and not assume that what was shared about the lived experience was actually all of it. The challenge is to discover the ‘is-ness’ (Finlay, 2014) of the phenomenon, and that could be done through the relation between researcher and participant. This active, critical and personal relationship is used to gain a better understanding of, deeper insights into, someone’s experiences.

In broad terms, there are three layers of the present research: coming to the place and getting to know it, conversations with Lithuanians, and, finally, making sense of their stories and my own experiences through writing. I officially started my fieldwork on the day I arrived; I was attentive to my excitement of being in a new place and lost in the city, finding myself not understanding the Scottish accent, not knowing enough about political, economic and cultural circumstances of Scotland to contribute to occasional conversations in a shop, with neighbours or colleagues. Through friends living in Lithuania I started meeting their friends living in Edinburgh, and establishing my own circle of friends and informants.

Once I started organising the thesis, I had to make the decision not to include any men’s stories, though I never intended to focus only on women. To my mind, I did not manage to create connections with Lithuanian men that would result in open conversations; I felt that their stories could not contribute in equal terms with my chosen women’s stories. This could be seen as my failure as a researcher; however, I interpret this kind of situation as illustrating complicated patterns of relations between heterosexual women and men (see Warren & Hackney, 2000). Instead of conducting straightforward interviews, I was focusing on conversations and friendships that were on equal terms. Most of the time, men did not want to open up for the sake of research, were suspicious of my curiosity about their lives, or I did not feel comfortable in organising individual meetings with them outside a circle of friends and acquaintances. Despite this, I believe it is possible to engage with the written content presented here without gender bias. I am suggesting reading those stories as ones that were shared with me by people I met, with whom I had the opportunity to discuss what mattered to us. To my mind, those stories are neither limited nor
empowered by the individual’s gender; moreover, this theme did not arise as an issue during our conversations, and therefore there is no explicit focus on gender in this thesis.

My use of lifestories in the following chapters is twofold. On the surface, it reflects the conversations that emerged between me and other Lithuanian women. I rely on the stories told to me, but how those stories were told depended on how the women were approached, what kind of relations we developed over time, and what they wanted me to know. However, this is more than the relationship between the interlocutors and me; it is the understanding that was created between us, and later written down by me. Phenomenology relies on descriptions, though not so much on describing mental contents; it rather values subjective knowledge that has originated through experience (Trigg, 2012, p.38). As mentioned before, the experience of place includes memories, imaginations of what should unfold, and interactions. The question remains: how can one capture this entanglement through experience? I am driven by the sensuous search for home, and my questioning of what, when and how home gives direction to the inquiry. This search of home is a shared experience, as it is a mystery as much for me as my interlocutors; it is a personal journey towards knowing the essence of longing for home, it is descriptions by others of what is homing, what feels strange, uncanny, our discoveries and losses during the search for home.

Following Finlay’s (2009, p.9) three levels of phenomenological enquiry, one could focus on: the lifeworld of a person who is a migrant; the essence of the lived experience of being migrant; and, the stories about being migrant. Being open to the phenomenon, to the stories about and experiences of it does not mean that my subjectivity as a researcher is eliminated. To my mind, describing is impossible without interpreting the phenomena, there is a challenge for a researcher to give justice to the migrant’s experiences of home. Finlay (2014) is suggesting four attitudes that should help to establish phenomenological research: seeing the phenomenon afresh; dwelling, meaning describing the ways of engaging with the material; explicating, weaving meanings together; and finally, languaging, transforming analysis ‘into engaging language capable of describing and evoking the phenomenon in all its subtlety and rich layers’ (p.122). I am using my own experiences and memories to capture the depth of some themes that emerged during the research; at times, I felt that using my own experience would describe a phenomenon in a more nuanced detail.
In the next sections, I will explore Finlay’s (2009) three levels of focus through exercises that I call thinking machines, which were created by using autoethnographic material and phenomenological approach to capture storytelling about inhabiting places. The following mapping exercises touch upon issues of subjectivity, making sense of data through connecting events, places and people, and finally issues of how to express the complexity of phenomena in a linear written way.

Ethnography, as mentioned earlier, relies on stories, participation and observation about life experiences. However, how those stories are told or captured depends not only on how a person is telling their story, linking events, places and people, but also on the listener and writer, who has to face editing challenges, decide which aspects to include and which to ignore, which facts or places to emphasise and which to leave behind. I was asking myself to what extent it was possible in a written account to represent accurately particular decisions or experiences of living abroad and creating homes.

Thus I decided to use visual techniques to emphasise stories; one could say that I was almost translating an oral story to another medium in order to capture its limitations and possibilities. All the exercises were of a different scale regarding content and focus. The mapping exercises were very much research-led, which meant that creative work was used as a form of research. In other words, I never had the data in advance that I tried to visualise, nor did I know how my project should look. Therefore, I used mapping as a participatory approach to go through the issues in depth, and this visual method could be called thinking machine. It was a method developed by polymath Patrick Geddes, who believed in learning by doing, and that a thought benefits from presenting and connecting ideas and facts visually.

I represent thinking machines in an order that zooms in on focus and particularity. ‘Opting for Elsewhere’ was organised as a mapping platform that allowed visualising how we listen to and interpret stories through linking places, events, people, things, language, materiality, political circumstances and personal dreams, regrets and hopes. The second thinking machine was based on walking through Edinburgh. I was connecting the experience of walking, observing the environment, and the memories and emotions that were emerging during the walk that made me feel as if I was elsewhere, though I was still walking. As a result, I created an unfolding map of the walk to understand the multi-layered nature of being in the place, when physically being in a place is accommodated with memories of different places, fragments of events that happened over there, with personal
hopes and disappointments. The third one was a conceptual mapping of a particular story, focusing on how Lina, a Lithuanian woman, was telling me about her inhabited places. I was interested in breaking down her story about the idea of home through places, and capturing the scales of each location in relation to each other.

### 2.2.1 Thinking Machine I: Mapping Stories

‘Opting for Elsewhere’ was a laboratory presented at the EASA2016 conference in Milan\(^\text{18}\). My colleague Vaiva Aglinskas (PhD student at CUNY, New York) and I created a platform for participants to listen to each other’s migratory or relocation stories. The drive for this workshop was the interest in capturing limitations of a linear storytelling that usually focuses on one, or few aspects of external constraints that shape our lives, such as gender, ethnicity, language, economy, politics, and so on. Our aim was to visualise stories told on the spot and to see how those factors of analysis were taking place in a story, and then discuss the mapped story with the storyteller. Even though the storytellers were self-aware of telling their individual stories of relocations for the mapping exercise, and were provided with factors to focus on, such as family, friends, politics, economy, events, gender, things and language, after the workshop we learned that those suggested factors were treated by participants and mappers as guidelines rather than constraints. The mapper (participant of the laboratory) was trying to identify the driving forces of a told story by a colleague, link them, and in this way interpret a story while listening to it.

#### Mechanism

All participants were split into pairs. In each pair, one was the interviewee, the other was the mapper. Each mapper sat in a pre-prepared web of threads, each thread representing a common theme: past, present, future, imaginaries, dreams, hopes, regrets, family, friends, politics, economy, events, gender, things (materiality), and language. These were arranged as in the diagram (Fig.2.1).

The mapper now listens as the interviewee tells their story (Fig. 2.2). The mapper takes a single long thread and uses it to represent the story, by threading it between the theme threads. The mapper also attaches paper labels with more detail. The mapper can use a new thread if there is a jump or disconnection in the story, to avoid confusion.

\(^{18}\) See abstract of a workshop: [http://nomadit.co.uk/easa/easa2016/panels.php5?PanellID=4692](http://nomadit.co.uk/easa/easa2016/panels.php5?PanellID=4692) (last access 6 April, 2017)
The first layer: green lines are representing past, present, and future. The second layer: orange lines are representing politics, economy, family, friends, events, gender, things, and language. The third layer: blue lines are representing imaginaries, dreams, hopes, and regrets.

The suggested story factors were organised in three layers (Fig.2.1, green, brown and blue). In the lowest layer, threads formed a triangle, each side representing a different time: present, past and future. In the middle layer, threads were representing themes that usually are emphasised in migration stories, such as social (family, friends), politics, economy, events, gender, things (materiality), and language. The top layer was representing the personal aspects of relocation, or feelings about people, places, or events. These threads were representing imaginaries, dreams, hopes, regrets, and memories of a person.

Afterwards, the participants swapped roles, and using a different coloured thread, would add another mapping onto the same frame.
Reflection

There were no restrictions how a biographical story could start: from the moment of here and now, in the past, or in the imagined future. Participants sometimes chose to start their story from a particular place in the past and move forwards in time; sometimes they started from the present and moved to the imagined future or remembered past. The storyteller would develop their story through reasons and causes, and the listener would map the story through the themes or aspects that were suggested. Later, the mapper would tell how the story was understood and mapped, and the storyteller would comment on this. In all cases (there were four pairs working), people were surprised how their stories looked – they imagined their own story in different ways – and how unalike the stories were mapped. It was noticed that some aspects were insignificant to one person, but not to the other. We, as convenors, suggested common themes, but none of eight mapped stories did suggest a pattern of themes that would be of the same importance to every participant. During our discussion it was noticed that anthropologists have to choose aspects of their inquiry, and it is impossible to capture all of them, though it is important to be aware of how much is ‘cut out’ in academic analytical writing, and how we shape someone’s biographical account to fit our research agenda.

The mappers were sitting on the floor in between the threads, and very often the mapping itself was physically slightly uncomfortable or challenging activity. Participants
emphasised that this aspect created a condition of the mapper not being a passive listener but an active participant in a story through mapping it. The mapper was not only listening to a story but also analysing and interpreting it by making connections. Each participant created a multi-layered story, even though it was an abstract web of strands within the physical web of threads, but this kind of messiness visually identified connections between places, external and internal explanations and reasons through the eyes of a mapper. The created tangle of strings visualised the interconnections of different places in time, and how moving to another place was always related to personal dreams, hopes and very often personal regrets about one’s life elsewhere, rather than to external events.

During the process of creating this workshop and participating in it, as a storyteller and mapper, I realised how much selection is involved in telling a story, shaping the story, and how it is told, how it is listened to, interpreted and retold or written down. In the discussion with participants we evaluated that even though one tries to understand and tell a story in a holistic way, it is impossible to express the very complexity of one’s reality. So many silenced emotions, feelings, sentiments, dreams, disappointments, daily affairs are usually not shared with the researcher.

Ethnicity, politics, language, family, dreams or regrets are ingredients of a complex individual life, as each of them is in a dynamic relation with all the others, reacting to every internal and external event that happens over time. Remembering events, and their telling (or rather interpretations of them) are never a stable matter; none of those essential elements of our life could be taken for granted as fixed positions, as in time the value, the meaning, the importance of a particular event changes. The question remains: how does one capture this kind of dynamics in a written account? Moreover, which version of an event is told?

Any conversation about a specific topic is a dedicated time for a particular issue to be discussed; this kind of purposefulness involves self-awareness of the storyteller, and a particular way of listening – it is not only listening to words but also paying attention to pauses and body language. Storyteller and listener are influencing each other through eye contact, body language, questions and explanations. It is very much that a narrative comes alive between the storyteller and the listener; and the story that is experienced is a narrative that is expressed in words, with respect to silences, and intonation.

Before starting this mapping workshop, I already had learnt that any essentialisation of Lithuanians in Scotland could create one more categorical heterotypic classification, that
would ignore the multiple and diverse local manifestations of values, movement, expressions and experiences of the situation (see also Rapport, 2006). However, I was aware that ‘if everyone is different from everyone else, then nobody is different from anyone any more’ (Kockel, 1999, pp.63-64). I was asking myself how to tell stories of individuals that are connected through ethnicity, culture, shared political past and mother tongue, and at the same time how to capture those essentialisms on an individual level. Moreover, I was noticing how I was taught as an anthropologist to listen to other people’s stories and search for particular themes and to see those topics as analytical tools that should explain migrant’s reality.

However, I wanted to move away from externally applied important factors in migrant’s life; instead, I aimed for the themes to emerge through conversations, but not be suggested through questions. In this regard, I am inspired by Michael Jackson’s existential take on individuality. He argues against an opposition between the individual and everything that is considered to be outside the personal, and encourages seeing interactions of people with the world as intersubjective experiences, based on the phenomenological idea that the way we are in the world should be understood as becomings. Not only our way of being-in-the-world is in constant flux, but also how and what we tell about our past. What seems quite an obvious observation leads to the realisation that the past is not a fixed story, that one’s life is not a story itself, nor that stories embody life (Jackson, 2013a, p.37). Therefore, Jackson encourages focusing on storytelling as an action by which meaning is made, that essentially ‘mediates our relation with worlds that extend beyond us, the important thing is not how we name these other worlds but how narrative enables us to negotiate an existential balance between ourselves and such spheres of otherness’ (Jackson, 2013a, p.41).

I am learning from the mapping exercise the importance of the moment of sharing the story, and about the connection between the listener and the storyteller. I prefer to call the kind of interaction that happened during this research as a ‘correspondence’, referring to Ingold (2014b).
2.2.2 Thinking Machine II: Mapping Place

![Mapping Place](image)

Figure 2.3 Mapping place: the making of the unfolding map. [Map] (Source: created by the author)

This project of capturing the sense of being in a place (Fig.2.3) developed from the five-day workshop series that I attended at the Edinburgh College of Arts called ‘Narrative, Silence and the Intimacy of the City’ (15-19\textsuperscript{th} February 2016), organised by architects Dr Christos Kakalis and PhD student Stella Mygdalli. The very starting point of this thinking machine was one of the workshops run by Marielys Burgos Meléndez. She organised a workshop that had two parts: taking notes of colleague’s dislocations and stories about lived places, and collective silent walks around Edinburgh. Listening to each other’s personal stories created a sensitive mood, and suggested a level of intimacy to the following tasks. During the walk, it seemed that I let my mind wander, but at the same time, I was attentive to what was going on inside me due to what was going on outside, and vice versa. I was watchful of details of the environment and was intrigued how my thoughts were connecting what was in front of me with my memories of other places, events, and people. I was physically walking in Edinburgh, paying attention to the houses, gardens, seeing people passing by, wondering what it was like to live in one building or another, questioning myself as to how I felt living in the city of Edinburgh, remembering how I felt living in Kaunas, Vilnius, Tallinn or Klaipėda. My memories would be infused with dreams from the past: my reflections on failed dreams would suddenly lead to unexpected
discoveries. This wave of recollections was composed of all the places and all times: recollections of a past, even possible futures, and now-ness.

Mathematician Nemirovsky (2005) is distinguishing graphical (physical) and algebraic (mental) places. However, he does so not by emphasising dichotomies, but rather by showing how people embrace both. To put it differently, graphical place is about capturing one’s being in a place; however, to be in the same place for people may suggest different ideas and experiences of it. We may be in the same place, but as individuals, we are rarely ‘on the same page’, there are always individual differences in how we appreciate and engage with a place.

Places are ‘for’ people ‘being in a place’ because for Nemirovsky place is ‘constituted by and through what it is like to be in it’, and that is why places combine the qualities of both, situation and location (2005, p.48). The term ‘to situate’, from the Latin, means ‘to place in a particular state or condition’, and to locate is ‘to establish oneself in a place, settle’. We are where our body is, but our attentiveness to the things and people around us is context-dependent. Therefore, understanding place as something that is ‘for’ people, means talking about places that bi-directionally orientate one towards something, and at the same time, it means being oriented towards/by it. Orientation may change from one moment to the next, or may be focused, but the key aspect is that ‘the body is in a perpetual dance in synchrony with the orientation of the place it is in’ (Nemirovsky, 2005, p.51). Once again, we come back to the idea that interiority and exteriority are within one, that what is considered exterior is actually part of interiority, and that what is inside us is a part of the outside world.

The walk was through the area that I have been living at since I arrived in Edinburgh in 2013. All the paths were familiar to me, and I felt comfortable, secure and relaxed. When I was creating this map, I was trying to connect both, my physical being in Edinburgh, walking through the streets, and my mental place, emotions, memories and imaginaries. Having organised this walk, it was very much about the sense of time, felt through the attention to the here and now, to the memories of other places or dreams, as if I could suddenly grasp it. Marc Wittmann (2016, p.69) has nicely summed it up: ‘The sense of time emerges from the degree to which attention, memory, thinking, and feeling are activated.’

During that particular walk, I understood for the first time that I did not want to leave Edinburgh in the near future; I felt a desire to get to know what it means to stay in
this city, and also sensed that I did not have the curiosity to get to know what kind of life I could have elsewhere. These thoughts naturally led to the question of whether I was at home in Edinburgh.

‘Home is thus a spatial imaginary: a set of intersecting and variable ideas and feelings, which are related to context, and which construct places, extend across spaces and scales, and connect places.’ (Blunt & Dowling, 2006, p.2)

One of many insights of home suggested by Blunt and Dowling (2006) was relived in that moment. My understanding of being in a place, feeling or rather understanding home was made through connections in various scales and forms: material, imaginative, memories, observations, sense of belonging to this place, and many others. ‘Have I been engaging with dwelling’, I thought, ‘is this what dwelling means?’ Ricardo Nemirovsky (2005) is talking about how dwelling is created through placing and juxtaposition. Placing or situating, putting in place, is understood as an activity through which something becomes memorable: when an event or thing is systematically attached to a particular location. Placing allows us, based on personal experiences, to place something that is invisible to others. The other activity, which goes along with placing, is juxtaposing, understood as a mindful encounter with a place through which a person manages to create ‘it’, where that ‘it’ is a juxtaposition of various orientations, other places, events connected by disjunctions or gaps, as collages do.

The other activity, which goes along with placing, is juxtaposing, understood as a mindful encounter with a place through which a person manages to create ‘it’, where that ‘it’ is a juxtaposition of various orientations, other places, events connected by the disjunctions or rather gaps as collages do. The ability to connect places that at first sight appear disconnected actually expresses what matters and contributes to the ‘it’ through revealing how and by what a person orientates oneself (Fig.2.8). Overall, placing and juxtaposing are organic activities, and both suggest growth; therefore they could be understood as acts of cultivation, and not only of a place, but of oneself (Nemirovsky, 2005).
Walking in that particular area in Edinburgh, I was remembering my friends living in Gargždai (Lithuania); the picture is from their garden, the text is from our conversations about migration.

This complexity of various places and times existing at once made complete sense to me, but it was puzzling to grasp the logic of it or explain it in a linear way. Images of places, the garden of my friends, the bus station in Kaunas, or my room in Vilnius, people passing by, participants of the workshop, my mother, friends living in various places, reflections on events, moods, words, voices, and emotions from different times were connecting to a stream of thought (Fig. 2.4). That is the way wondering happens, is it not? It could be obvious, though at the same time a groundbreaking realisation. This kind of flow, that at first sight may seem to be nothing else but randomness, is actually how we experience being in a place. There are surprises, strange comparisons, recollections, imaginaries; a stream of thoughts that are reacting to the environment, and to what is going on in one’s life.

I decided to visualise my walk, to see my experience from a distance. This unfolding map was an attempt to grasp my juxtapositions and the activity of placing my
memories, dreams, and observations. During the process of creating this map, I used my own experience to understand the process of dwelling, and what talking about ‘being in the place’ actually entails (Fig. 2.5). Even though the experience should grasp the notion of being in a particular place, in this case, Edinburgh, the map that represents both, my thoughts and the place, proves that even though one is here and now, one’s thoughts, feelings, emotions are not limited by geography and time. The experience of a place is multi-centred, and interestingly not reflecting the length of time spent in any place, but representing an emotional attachment to one place or the other.

Figure 2.5 Mapping place: memory of my mother. [Map] (Source: created by the author)

The unfolded piece of the map that captures my memories of my mother, the picture of her in Edinburgh, which is combined with a picture of the ‘Ryanair’ plane, taken during my flight to Lithuania and the text relates to a conversation I had with my mother.
Mechanism

A Google map of Edinburgh was printed, divided into 5 equal rectangular sections in width and 4 in length, making 20 units that can unfold. I never knew when one idea let to another, therefore I wanted the unfolding memories to overlap; they were shaped in different forms, and would cover other units (Fig.2.8). The unfolding memories would create a mental map of Edinburgh. I used transparent paper on which personal photographs of those remembered places were printed; on top of the pictures, my remarks on my mood, people, impressions, or descriptions were written (Fig.2.6). If more units were unfolded at the same time, one could have a map that was made of overlapping insights to other places, timescales. To place my mental map, a Google map identical to that printed as the top level was laid underneath, and was visible through the transparent paper (Fig. 2.7).

![Figure 2.6 Mapping place: placing memories, dreams, and observations. [Map] (Source: created by the author)](image)

The maps underneath and on top indicate the location, in between them the unfolding transparent pieces of paper give an opportunity to illustrate how the walking through the place is experienced. The overlapping pieces visualise the impossibility to draw the line between the beginning of one idea, and the transformation to the other memory or observation. I used my personal photographs of remembered places and events that were accompanied with ideas, memories that I had during the walk in that particular area.
Figure 2.7 Mapping place: overlapping insights to memories, places, and events. [Map] (Source: created by the author)

The transparent paper emphasises the temporality and complexity of the sense of here and now; the overlapping pieces capture coexisting thoughts, memories in the moment of here and now; I used my pictures taken of fireworks in Edinburgh, plants at my home and in the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh.
The view of the map when some squares are unfolded, and some are not. The variations and combinations of photos and texts visualise how the sense of place is juxtaposed and composed of other places, people, things, events of elsewhere, different times, and mixed with simple observations of the place here and now, and feelings of one's body.

2.2.3 Thinking Machine III: Following Lina’s story

We are both storytellers. Lying on our backs, we look up at the night sky. This is where stories began, under the aegis of that multitude of stars which at night filch certitudes and sometimes return them as faith. Those who first invented and then named the constellations were storytellers. Tracing an imaginary line between a cluster of stars gave them an image and an identity. The stars threaded on that line were like events threaded on a narrative. Imagining the constellations did not of course change the stars, nor did it change the black emptiness that surrounds them. What it changed was the way people read the night sky (Berger, 2005 (1984), p.8).

It seems that home is many things, but not something that is written about or told in words linearly; it is difficult to describe it as a whole because there is always something left
out. Therefore, I started mapping an ongoing conversation with Lina (a 38 year old Lithuanian) about her home; it was an act of trying to follow Lina’s way of knowing what home is for her. This exercise provided me with an understanding in practice of the complex nature of narratives, storytelling, and listening. Visualising the story, which is explained in detail in the following pages, became a materialised (though frozen in time) correspondence or a map. For Lina sharing her life story seems to be a lively and complex action of understanding and undertaking the world, though for me, to understand her experiences, I have to ‘freeze’ these experiences, in order to get closer to what they mean to Lina. I have noticed that every time she tells me about places where she has lived, there are slight differences in the mood of a particular place, her interpretation of those places changes, depending on the here and now. Through telling her biography, Lina is discovering her past as a ‘foreign country’ (Lowenthal, 2015); however, for me, that is all I know. Therefore, what follows is an extremely simplified and selective narrative about home(s) told through places; yet, this exercise was very much about embracing limitations in understanding the experiences of the other person.

When I started this activity, my aim was not to create a representation of Lina’s ideas and emotions about places, people and events, or to produce a map that would help me navigate, but I wanted to grasp different scales of her home concept. I asked myself: What if I tried to visualise a meshwork of events, places and people to figure out the connections and links? What if I emphasised places that she cherishes? I started playing with paper and strings and produced a rather abstract sculpture that I considered to be a fruitful thinking exercise, or a thinking machine, but not Lina’s concept of home per se. As a result, I created an example of post-representational cartography, that is, a never finished project: more details can be added, more reflections can be included, and it is always in the process of becoming (Kitchin et al., 2013; Caquard, 2014; Caquard & Cartwright, 2014). One may ask: What does that say about home, and does it say anything at all? How do we talk about home and why, in what circumstances?

This exercise was a practice of linking storytelling and listening, capturing the correspondence that was happening between Lina and me. She was telling me her life story; I was listening, asking her questions, and trying to understand the complexity of how and why she talks about home the way she does. Also, I was selecting, emphasising parts of her story through cutting bits of cardboard and connecting them with strings. I was mapping narratives about places in relation to each other; however, personal timelines that are
emotional do not exist in a linear way, but as a complex and messy web of events, people, hopes, misfortunes, and everything that makes life.

The story of Lina’s migrations is briefly explained in this section to understand how this thinking machine was created; in the following chapters, I will write about her life in Edinburgh in much more detail. I decided to illustrate this exercise through her story of relocations, and not to restrict myself to abstract explanations about the mapping. I felt it is important to grasp the scales through a story of what was unfolded through the process of mapping.

**Mechanism**

A craft piece was created to explore Lina’s story. This, as noted, took the form of an abstract, string and card sculpture. The sculpture is based on a pair of crossed strings, at which one end represents past, and one end represents future. The point at which the strings crossed, represents the present. The card circles are used to represent places, and the string diving in and out of the card represents memories and events from Lina’s current perspective (Fig.2.9).

**Mapping**

The fragment of conversation from my field notes (24th February, 2015) that is presented below is what brought me into mapping: I felt the urge to start grasping the scales of places and events that she was telling me about. The more I listened to her, the more questions I had; I wanted to fill the gaps in her timeline; I wanted to understand her movements chronologically, though she tended to select them and tell them in the order of emotional preference, rather than time. Once, in the midst of one of our intense conversations that followed after the 24th February 2015, she said:

‘your questions are difficult, though they make me remember places and events that I sort of have forgotten. I have realised that I consciously select some but not other things from the past, I superficially simplify my life story, because I am afraid to get lost… in my understanding of the world… though there is much more… but everything is related, isn’t?’

I take two strings, make them cross, and I fix them to two chairs so that they are about 1 meter apart (Fig. 2.9). The crossing point is here and now in Lina’s story. The
space between strings on the left goes towards an infinite future, and to the right, towards an infinite past. When I started the project, I imaged that I was creating a physical 3D conceptually driven map; I felt that in this way I would have more freedom to create shapes and tensions of a narrative about home, or I hoped to grasp dimensions and their inter-relatedness. Moreover, I chose paper and strings, because I did not want to be limited by any computer program and my technological illiteracy.

![Figure 2.9 Following Lina’s story: creating the timeline with two crossed strings.](source)

This model draws inspiration from conversations with Prof. Ullrich Kockel, and the way he used the light-cone of relativity theory to map economic development (Kockel, U., 1993. The Gentle Subversion: Informal Economy and Regional Development in the West of Ireland. Bremen: ESIS)

I cut a round piece of a cardboard and fix it to the strings on the right-hand side. Lina talks about her past home as the only home; therefore, the string from here and now goes straight to it. She tells me about activities, things and events there; I attach other strings to the piece that stands for her concept of home. Lina talks about her real home regarding her dishes, friends, sofa, dinner parties, family, ex-boyfriend, studies; the colours of the walls, or the stadium nearby where she used to go jogging. It is a combination of various things, people and events. I attach strings that go along or through the round piece. I could add more strings, though the idea is not to be accurate, but relatively lifelike.
I cut a piece of cardboard representing what she calls ‘real home’, and I fix it with a string that goes through it (Fig. 2.10). Lina does not think that she settles down, she does not feel secure living in rented apartments. She contrasts her life in Edinburgh to the one she had in Vilnius; I jutrapose the cardboard pieces with each other. At the same time, she confirms, that she is fine (in Edinburgh), and she would not like to be anywhere else. Edinburgh is home for her son, and she wants to provide him with the best that the city has to offer. I hesitate, but I make several crossings with a string through the piece. Lina adds that even though they have a modest life here, it is still much more comfortable to live in Scotland compared to Lithuania.

Figure 2.10 Following Lina’s story: the opposition of home in Vilnius and life in Scotland. [Mapping] (Source: created by the author)

I asked Lina for how long she had lived in that apartment she calls her home. ‘Oh, it is my childhood’s home.’ ‘So you lived there since you were born’, I suggested. She replied that this was actually not the case; for the first six years her family, her parents and older brother, lived in a wooden house near Vilnius. She described it as a house with a garden where she would play, would go into woods with her brother; there were vegetables and berries in a garden nearby. ‘What did change for you when you moved to the new apartment in a Soviet block of flats at the age of six, the previous home sounds so ideal?’ I asked. ‘First of all’, she told me, ‘we moved to a bigger flat, three rooms, before that we
had only two rooms in the wooden house; and now we had water, and even hot water, and there was a toilet inside. So there was a difference, especially for my mother. Can you imagine washing nappies in such circumstances? Moreover, she started going to a new school, a new playground, and found new friends. Isn’t it interesting how, through other places, we get to know people?

I cut a piece of cardboard and attach it to the one that I call ‘Vilnius home’. The wooden house was never forgotten; the family always owned it, and twenty years later, her brother moved there to live.

‘What happened afterwards, when you graduated from high school?’ I ask. I want to fill the gaps in her story, and I know that she has lived in several places so far. She replies: ‘Well…I lived a bit in Abu-Dhabi’. She smiles and keeps on talking about the experiences there. I get to know the story about her career as a dancer. Lina graduated from university in music but became a professional dancer in a ballet rather than a musician. As a result, in the early nineties she was touring from time to time with her dance troupe, for example to Abu-Dhabi, or Hong Kong. However, she would always come back. She had to, because of visa restrictions, but also because, deep inside, she wanted to. She would be enthused by new environments, new experiences, tastes and people, but at the same time, she would get sad when she came back, she would face social-political circumstances in Lithuania, and even the weather would make her miserable, although she was at home. She realised that when she was ‘back home’, she wanted to leave, but when she was away, Lina wanted to come back.

I want to grasp those movements, the way Lina talks about them: the string goes from and to a cardboard piece called home, and again from and to her home in Vilnius (Fig. 2.11). The experiences that those trips suggested were emotionally charged for her.
In the meantime, when she was in her early twenties, her father died. Her mother went to the USA, where she worked hard, almost lost her strength, but when she came back, she bought an apartment for herself. It was her mother who moved out from the family home in Vilnius; soon after that, her brother moved out to the family’s first home, and Lina, for the first time in her life, had the apartment to herself. She tells me that she must have been around 26 years old at that time.

I am connecting with string the wooden house, the Vilnius home, and a thick string capturing the flow of time. The connections create a triangle that represents her father’s death, her mother’s trip to the USA, her movement to a new place while her brother moves to the wooden house (Fig. 2.12).
Figure 2.12 Following Lina’s story: Triangle. [Mapping] (Source: created by the author)

Triangle of strings captures her father’s death, her mother’s trip to the USA, moving out to a new place, her brother’s movement to the wooden house

Around that time, she realised that she did not want to dance anymore, and was thinking of changing her lifestyle; therefore, she created a company that sold toys. As a result, every month or two she would go on business trips to China and the USA for a month or so. She was hardly at home, but she started renovating the apartment, which went on for more than a year. She had a strong vision of creating an ideal home, though she describes that time as ‘a constant mess’. Business went well, but with every trip abroad it involved more risks, more negotiations, and when she came back to Vilnius, the apartment was dusty, and everyday she had to supervise building work and make decisions. When she was away, she wanted to come back home, her home, but when she came back, she found a mess and no peace – moreover, a different kind of work.

I attach an extension to the piece called ‘Vilnius home’, by which I want to grasp the new situation that started after her father’s death and her mother’s and brother’s movements from the apartment. She becomes the sole owner of the latter, and the home that was the family home becomes her personal project.

Lina continued the circle of a few months here and a few months there for several years till she felt that it had become too exhausting. She realised that such a career path was
not for her. She sold her business and was driven by the idea of starting to do what she had always wanted – art. At that time, she was taking private drawing lessons, and within two years, she started studying interior design in Vilnius. When she graduated, the economic crisis was at its peak, her long-term boyfriend of around eight years demanded she contributed more to their household financially. She realised that she could not do that with small jobs she found in Vilnius. Therefore, Lina got a job as a waitress in Greece for a few months: the work was hard; she lived in a modest room she shared with another girl. However, she was enjoying her life in Greece. ‘One has to take what that place suggests: sun, sea, food, wine and parties. There were some workers who were miserable, I never understood why. Why were they working there? No one was forcing them. I love sun! So you can imagine how I was enjoying every minute. The first job was pretty terrible, but then I changed it. Anyway, the third time I came back to the same island, the story with Tom started. Moreover, then everything evolved quickly. I broke up with my ex-boyfriend, Tom and I moved to Scotland, I got pregnant, and now it is three of us’.

I add a few strings for ‘going and coming back home’, complementing the ones that I added when she was moving from Vilnius to Abu Dhabi, Hong Kong or the USA (Fig. 2.11). However, I connect ‘going away to Greece’ and her life in Edinburgh. Without complicated circumstances, both personal and economic, she would not have gone to that particular island, would not have started this particular new relationship, and would not have moved here to Edinburgh.

‘What are your plans, Lina?’

‘Do not ask me! I am so afraid to plan, well, I wish things to happen, but I have realised that so many things have happened in different ways so far… in reality, you know… I do not take planning that seriously. No, I take it seriously, but I do not believe that plans have to happen the way I want and that they should happen immediately. So I know, that I would like to live by the sea, have a big bright house, with huge windows, but I know that this is not happening soon. I sort of have developed this belief that things happen the way they happen, we always learn something from every situation, and what happens is for a reason. After our meetings, and during them, telling, and retelling you my story, I have come to realise how things are interconnected, though I have never thought about it. It is quite obvious, but the daily life disguises that.’

‘By the way, Lina, you are living by the sea…’
‘The wrong sea’, Lina laughs. ‘it should be more south… I think… but maybe it is too early for us to move down south. Sometimes we think that certain things should be better for us, but actually, they would not be. So I have to be more open, I try to be open to the life here… I keep on trying, and I keep on discovering… all sides. There are many things that I do not like, but there are really pleasant things too… I have to think what is better for my son. I want him to go to a good school. I want him to grow up in a nice neighbourhood.’

Figure 2.13 Following Lina’s story: The meshwork of movements, events and people. [Mapping] (Source: created by the author)

From the centre (where strings meet) one feels both, the future and the past at the same time, as they form each other.

I connect two pieces that look like a ball as a result, and I hang them on the side of the future (Fig. 2.13). These are concrete ideas of a ‘better life’, but at the same time without concrete place and time: maybe a new apartment in one neighbourhood or another, maybe life in one country or another, maybe doing this or that.
At first glance, what I did in this section is that I retold fragments of Lina’s life in a rather simplified form while I was conceptually mapping the process of how she was telling me her story about home(s) through movements, people and events. In expanding the scope, I was not only focusing on her life here and now and the most vivid memories of what she calls home. I was interested in what happened before and after her migration from Lithuania to Scotland. However, what I have learned from this deep mapping exercise is something that I could describe the whole (experience) being more than the sum of its parts, where the parts are understood not as components, but as movements (see also Ingold 2015, p.7).

It has been argued (Duyvendak, 2011) that due to migration, home either becomes a struggle that is experienced in transnational ways as something between there and here, a longing that may be as much imagined as remembered; or the attachments to places are no longer understood as ‘given’, but become ‘a choice’ of the migrant (p.11), and are expressed through homing practices. However, movements between places are more than changing one location for another; they imply a journey encounters places, people, and things along the way. Even when people come back to the same location, and that particular place evokes particular memories and emotions, that ‘coming back’ is always experienced through a consciousness of here and now that is loaded with experiences, thoughts and dreams of what has happened since the departure (and indeed before that). Lina was telling and retelling her life story, but there was always something new involved, either more people or more circumstances. As a researcher, I have learned that focusing only on what has happened in one place at a particular time is impossible or a naïve intention, because the narrator is talking about a particular place and time through the lenses of experiences that have been gathered till the very moment of telling the story.

Though I was mapping in a more or less direct manner what Lina articulated, I came to realise that what informed me most was not the connections between events, places and people, but rather the correspondence that was emerging. The correspondence is understood as something in-between (Ingold, 2015, p.154). Ingold is explaining the idea of in-between as ‘the realm of the life of lines’ (Ingold, 2015, p.147), and opposes it to what is understood as between. If the word ‘between’ is used to express an interaction that is between this and that, then ‘in-between’ reveals the idea of movement, which is always in an ‘ongoing condition’ (p.147). Lina did not talk about her life experiences as closed entities, but she expressed her correspondence with the world here and now; her perception of events,
places, people and things merged with memories about them through telling, through thinking them over. The stories would become alive every time Lina was talking about the past; Lina’s body was reacting to them through smile, sadness, gestures, or pauses. Though she was speaking of something that was stable and fixed in her mind (like home in Vilnius), it was always becoming something that I could describe as dynamic. The result of mapping, a graphic form, does not reveal directly what home is for Lina; it is a non-representational piece, but the process of deep mapping enunciates in-between-ness of things, places, people and events that have happened, could have happened or may happen over time. Even though home is placed in a particular time and location by Lina, it is not an isolated place; it is always in dynamic relations with other memories, and with people who were, are or may become involved in what she conceives of as home.

2.2.4 Knowing through Thinking Machines

I felt that my research was never just about homes away from homes. Each Lithuanian I met in Scotland was much more than Lithuanian living abroad; I felt it would be almost a betrayal to reduce their experiences to such a narrow feature of their life situations here and now. At the same time, I knew that migration mattered, that such experience provoked reflections on belonging, self, changed relations with places and people. A mess would be the best word to describe the complexity that I was dealing with in terms of how to do a research, how to analyse it and express it. The three Thinking Machines emerged from the sense of ambiguity of my research topic, the absence of divisions between ‘being in the field’ and ‘home’, from the lack of confidence in knowing how to write about such complicated situation. I found a movement from ‘being in the field’ and ‘writing about it’ particularly challenging, because of the lack of physical and emotional distance between them. Therefore, I decided to create depictions inspired by my fieldwork outside its natural setting to check my concepts and to visualise them. The underlying idea of previously presented Thinking Machines was to illuminate to myself how I get to know what I know. In other words, how does an anthropologist decide through which lenses to tell a story, how does the storytelling and story listening look like (see Thinking Machine I), how the concepts that I was dealing with looked like, were experienced (see Thinking Machine II), and finally, how do I understand a story I am told (see Thinking Machine III). I decided to unpack my methodological rules; I reconsidered
them through visualising my thinking about my research and topic itself. The result was a surprise; it was not only a playful engagement with my knowledge that I gained through reading, observing, and experiencing, but it was a way of checking and challenging my understanding, and moving forward with my research. Furthermore, that what intentionally was planned as exercises for myself, became new forms of sharing and discussing the research.

The question remains if these Thinking Machines could be used as research methods universally. The answer is yes and no. No, if one expects to use them as particular frameworks in order to arrive to the same conclusion, as if those machines were capable to represent a single reality, rather they suggest possibilities to explore ideas in less conventional ways. The answer is yes, if one uses them as a practice to engage with stories, theoretical concepts, if one wants to capture an exploration of the topic. I suggest performative ways to engage with stories and ideas, as they depict the process of thought, the performance becomes both, analysis and visualisation of thoughts.

I would like to set three guidelines for the ones who would be willing to create their own Thinking Machines (each guideline represents a Thinking Machine in an order they were presented). The following guides should be used as recommendations and hopefully as inspirations, as each project would require some modifications.

1. Every project is unique in terms of place, time, people, and interactions between the researcher and the interlocutors. At the same time, there are traditions how to investigate the chosen theme; academia is training us to research and write in (a) particular way(s), to follow trends of ever-evolving theories. Some such theories sound more convincing than the others, nevertheless I would like to encourage researchers to leave the written world for a while, and play with approaches and lenses in different forms.

I used strings as a frame for a story to be mapped as it was heard: I chose themes that were the most common in academic accounts about migration and mobilities, which could be placed in time and linked to emotions. This exercise allowed each participant to experience the reflective engagement with the story through mapping it. The action of mapping requires a constant decision making on the spot to identify a theme, emotions, understand the logic of events. Manually mapping ethnographic material is a fruitful way to engage with one’s subjectivity in designing the representation of a research. This exercise supported my decision to organise this
thesis through individual stories rather than through themes, and use stories to illustrate them.

2. Writing down ethnographic stories is a powerful activity on academic and emotional levels. Writing ethnography requires an author to have a particular voice, tone, and angle to the issues discussed, and that is a mixture of one’s experience of the fieldwork, and a dialogue with the written academic accounts on a subject matter. I would like to urge researchers to engage with concepts through situations and experiences. Such engagement should not be expressed in conventional academic writing, but rather involve more creative recording or documentation of a particular concept through ethnography. Mapping experiences through concepts and concepts through experiences means creating a narrative unique to the researcher. I realized that place is one of the key concepts in my thesis, I felt the urge to grasp it not through philosophical jargon but through the practice in order to apply the understanding of it while writing the ethnography. Layering ideas, both theoretical and ethnographic, allowed me to map the unmappable, in this case, the experience of place, which is never limited to the here and now, but is extended to one’s memories of other places and imaginaries. I am suggesting researchers ask themselves how their chosen key concept is embodied and experienced. It is not that a material representation is demonstrating the concept per se, but the action of mapping creates an exceptional possibility for the researcher to rethink, reflect, and understand the chosen concept through an application of it for a situation or a particular context.

3. There are various techniques how to ask questions, how to gather information from people who are treated as experts of a particular subject matter, because they are experiencing it. I would draw stories I am told, I would draw lines connecting events one to the other, try to understand someone’s reasons, choices and emotions about all that happened, which would very often lead to a realization of how little I know. An ethnographer comes back to the same person and asks more questions, getting a multilayered picture of what has been happening. I decided to visualise one particular story to capture storyteller’s relations to places she was talking about, to understand her challenges in creating deeper relation to the place here and now.
Through mapping Lina’s story, I got an opportunity to look to her story as a whole, rather than navigating through it in a linear way. Such visualisation of ethnographic data helps to indicate nuances that are important for analysis but are difficult (or impossible) to capture. Such mapping also allows to consider the ‘weight’ of one’s past and imagined future when it is talked about here and now.

All three of those enquiries were essential to how I wrote my thesis. Firstly, I emphasised individual stories, and chose themes that my interlocutors were expressing, rather than deconstructing their stories to illustrate my chosen themes. Secondly, I used my understanding of a sense of place, and paid much more attention to the connections between one’s present, past and future. Thirdly, I was aware of how little I get to know about the interviewees, all that I can grasp is a small piece of ever evolving interconnections between people, places, things and features that matter to my interlocutors. But researchers can grasp only a limited amount of someone’s understanding and experience of a situation. To fill in the gaps of knowledge, to grasp an atmosphere of situations and moods, I decided to use insights from my personal life. The reason for using my own story was to contribute to the stories in a more intimate way, but also to be transparent in how I interpret their stories, how through reflection on my own experience I connect to what I am told.

In the following chapters, I would like to suggest an intimate insight into how some Lithuanians whom I have been meeting in Scotland experience and understand home. Similar to Chawla (2014), I see home ‘as a spatial, discursive, poetic, and contradictory imaginary that enables (and is simultaneously enabled by) multiple narrations of individual and family identity’ (p. 10), meaning that I focus on how and what kind of narratives are shared with me, and how time and place are sensed and understood.
3 Rasa: Searching for One’s Place

What if we felt at home everywhere, anytime and with everyone? However, home, as Duyvendak (2011, p.106) notes, means to include some factors and exclude many more, otherwise the meaning of home would be lost. The sense of home may be difficult to grasp or describe, but at the same time home is very often expressed through precise activities, when the content, dissatisfaction, or value hide under mundane details. Through Rasa’s story, a Lithuanian woman in her late 50s living near Edinburgh for some 10 years (since 2006), I would like to explore the search for one’s place through a continuous journey of curiosity for adventure, challenges, hopes for and dreams of a better way of being. I am going to emphasise how through being patient one may arrive home within oneself, through reformulation of the idea of home and acceptance that nothing is stable and fixed, but that places, life-worlds and things are open to interpretations, meanings and connections, and what is considered to be an achievement is changing depending on circumstances.

One rainy Saturday, I take a train to Kirkcaldy as it is a non-working day for Rasa. She comes in a small white car to fetch me from the train station and invites me to her home. We stop by a four-storey building. Her apartment is on the third floor, and through the window of her living room I can see the sea, which is just beyond the road. It is a two-bedroom flat that she inhabits alone. The walls, floors and furniture look fresh; it seems that all is brand new, which turns out to be the case. ‘It is a council flat’, she tells me in an apologetic voice. She makes mugs of coffee and we sit down to talk. This is one of the first talks for my research since I arrived in Edinburgh; I feel enthusiastic but also a bit stressed. My digital voice recorder is on a table and it takes one hour of conversation to taste the pie she made.

I hear a rather typical migration story: she works, a part of her family has moved to Kirkcaldy in the last few years, and she has to adapt to unexpected circumstances; she rediscovers what settling down means, and how her attachments to places change in time. I ask myself: Is this not obvious? What am I researching? Is it about how people dwell? Or maybe it is more about how people imagine their lives rather than how they experience them? Ruth Behar notes that ‘nothing is stranger than this business of humans observing other humans in order to write about them’ (Behar, 1996, p.5).
In three hours, Rasa builds a rather complex story of her and her family: through her personal insights, it becomes not the typical and distant story that I first expected, but actually personal and touching. Her story sheds light on those general statements used in describing migratory experiences, such as ‘I came for a short time’, ‘I thought it would be easier’, ‘I did not expect that I will miss home that much at first’, or ‘that feelings towards Lithuania will change in time’.

She came to Scotland in 2006, when her sister suggested Rasa to take her place in the bakery. The sister decided to leave Kirkcaldy because she had saved the desired amount of money; moreover, she already wished to go back to her family – her teenage daughter and her husband were waiting for her return in Lithuania. Before coming to Scotland, Rasa had been working in the same bakery in Kaunas for more than 20 years, but Rasa did not take much time to consider her sister’s suggestion, and seven days later, on 3 January 2006, she started a new period of her life in Scotland. She had left her job in Kaunas immediately, packed a suitcase with some clothes and lots of food; took a bus to London, and from there another bus to Edinburgh.

Rasa tells me that she started working through an agency\(^1\) as most of the Eastern Europeans immigrants do. She recalls how the manager of the agency picked her up at the Edinburgh bus station and brought her to the place where she had to live in Kirkcaldy. Rasa recalls in great detail how she was living in a three-bedroom apartment with three other people, a Lithuanian couple and a Latvian young man. It was such an unexpected experience for her; she did not really think through those circumstances before her arrival in Scotland. For so many years she had lived with her family, and now she found herself sharing a bathroom, kitchen and living space with strangers. Moreover, the Lithuanians were not friendly; the man was always rude and nagging her. He even did not allow his partner Asta to talk to her, as he was jealous if Asta interacted with others. The tension was depressing and constant as they all worked in the same factory. But Rasa smiles when she

\(^{1}\) Working through an agency means that it is an agency that employs a person. In Rasa’s case, she was never employed by the bakery; there was never a contract that would guarantee future work. Late at night or early in the morning, she would get a text message telling her if she was needed that day or not, and for how many hours. Agency workers are also paid less: the agency pays the minimum wage, and takes the difference between this and what the bakery is paying its regular employees. However, a ‘real’ contract is rarely offered to a newcomer, according to Rasa. She got her first one just recently, after 8 years of working through the agency. Her son, who has been working as an engine driver for three years in a vegetable factory, does not get a regular contract on the grounds that he does not have enough experience. However, Rasa tells me, a Scottish person got a contract after only two months doing the same tasks. Some agencies organise not only work, but also accommodation. Usually the conditions provided by agencies are quite poor.
talks about the Latvian man, Rolandas. She still recalls him as her guardian – not because he was a well-built 22-year old man but because he was indeed protecting her from the Lithuanian man. Rasa remembers how once they got into a physical fight, when the Lithuanian man was way too rude with Rasa. Rolandas was the only one who showed her around the house, who said which cupboards she could use for her stuff or which shelves in the fridge belonged to her. She still remembers him with a smile, and recalls how his support was emotionally important and needed. She says ‘we are still friends’.

Rasa explains how she tries to help newcomers, and tries to support them as someone once supported her. She hopes that when she helps somebody, someone somewhere one day will help her children. Rhetorically, she asks: ‘And how many of us are here? [Ir kiekgi čia mūsū yra?]’. Rasa would like to be on good terms with other Lithuanians. However, at the same time, she admits that just because one is Lithuanian one does not have to become a friend. There are more requirements for a friendship than nationality and shared language. With a certain bitterness in her voice she talks about how Lithuanians all too often take advantage of others. She tells of how habitually Lithuanians, who at first seem so friendly, take the nice bits of hospitality and friendship, but do not offer anything in return.

Rasa pauses and starts smiling; I can see she has remembered something. I wait a minute. And she starts cheerfully:

‘It was winter when I came, so I came with my fur coat. Well, you know, winters in Lithuania are cold and fur is just what one needs. So I came with my fur. I went to the factory wearing it. I realised in a day that people do not wear fur here. I felt weird. I did not bring many clothes, as I thought that I am coming here to work, and when I earn money, I will buy them. But very soon I had to buy a jacket in order to look like others.’

She tells me how she did not know much about Scotland; she did not know what winters are like here, what kind of food one can buy. Rasa admits that she adventurously came to Scotland, but she is happy to be here. Her choice seems to have been the right one, but she emphasises that there were many sad and challenging periods. And probably every detail of life abroad was different to what she had expected.

When I ask Rasa about her plans, she replies that it is impossible to know what is going to happen. She says:
‘You do something now, you live somewhere, but you cannot know what will happen later. For example, think about yourself, now you are a student, but you have no idea what will happen after your graduation’.

I nod my head. She has learned the lesson how unpredictable life is, and I am constantly learning how to be open for unexpected possibilities and at the same time to have some sort of plans that would guide me. Rasa says that her life in general was a calm river in Kaunas, although there were little waves from time to time, but only little ones. It seemed that everything was in order, but then one day she finally changed everything. If she thinks back, everything makes sense to her. She had wanted to leave her husband. Things were not going too well, nothing but friction. In a second, in an almost breathless way, Rasa describes to me how the distance with her husband grew. He would not give her the money as he used to do. He would only look after the car and give her only some money for paying electricity and heating bills. With a sad smile, she remembers how they would organise in a bespoken way going to a birthday party: she would buy a present, and he would buy a bottle of alcohol. They lived in two separate worlds.

‘I could have continued living like this for the rest of my life, as most people do, because they believe it is too late to change anything. But I made a change. At the same time,’ she states, ‘I always have been one of those who need to be active, who cannot stay in one place for a long time’. Her children keep asking her what her plans are, but she does not know what to answer them. She has learned that planning ahead is one thing, but in reality one has to make many adjustments. Although she misses Lithuania, she is not sure if she will return there in the foreseeable future. Now she has a place to live. Rasa has invested money in order to create the place she wants; she has a home at last, after all these years. And in a cheerful way she adds: ‘I am divorced now’.

Once Rasa had come to Scotland, she had wanted her husband to follow her, but he turned out not to want any drastic changes in his life. She tells me that he was afraid to come, although she explained to him that one could live here without knowing the language, as her sister’s husband had done for three years. I ask: ‘Do you speak English?’ Rasa laughs and says: ‘I thought I could speak it. I studied English at school, so I could remember that durys is door and langas is window. Not more really. But I believed that I would understand. Oh, how wrong I was! I could not understand a word. At first, I studied, I went to college, and the language course was for free. But I was working… so difficult it was, I would always be exhausted after long shifts, so I quit after some time. Later, I started
again, but the teacher was Polish and most of the students were Polish, so they would switch to the Polish language, I could not understand what they were talking about. I got really angry and disappointed. I quit again. Sometimes I am angry at myself. I feel ashamed, I could put more effort in, but I am lazy. I cannot force myself… I come back after work so tired, I am exhausted. I could study online. Well, I can say basic things, but if I need to go to a doctor, or if I need to go to the Council, I need a translator. So I have this woman, who always helps me. But I know that I could do more’.

According to *Dynamics of Diversity: Evidence from the 2011 Census* (Gopal & Matras, 2013), almost 2 per cent of the population of England and Wales (863,150 people) do not speak English at all or not well. Unfortunately, there are no data about the situation in Scotland, but we can see a tendency that around 40 per cent of Eastern Europeans speak little or no English. For example, in Lincolnshire 39 per cent reported that their main language was not English (almost exclusively Polish, Lithuanian, or Latvian), and almost half of them declared that they spoke little or no English (ibid.).

‘Scotland was not my ex-husband’s plan, and you know, he already had another woman.’ He refused to come, and he became more of a stranger during the first years. She remembers how she even felt awkward when he would hug her, and would get easily annoyed by him during the first visits ‘back home’. Eventually, they divorced. Her son moved to Scotland in 2009, and started working in the factory nearby. Rasa explains to me that he recently bought a house in the same town. He has decided to settle down and has been thinking of creating some sort of business with his Lithuanian girlfriend, whom he met after arriving in Scotland. I guess I looked rather surprised when Rasa said that he just bought a house. And I believe she guessed the question in my mind: Is it possible to afford to buy a house if one is working in a factory? She tells me that there is a story behind this. The story is that her son had an accident in the factory some time ago; he lost a bit of one finger and another one was damaged. He received compensation from the factory, and in this way was able to secure a mortgage. I reply that this is quite good, and then I add that at the same time I am sorry about the circumstances. She says: ‘Oh, do not be sorry, his fingers cannot be fine anymore. It is as it is. Crying will not help. One must move on’.

After her divorce, she wanted to sell the flat in Kaunas and buy a little house in the countryside. However, she realised that no one would look after this country house, as no one in her family would really have more than a week a year to spend time there. So they
did not sell. Her ex-husband is living in the same small flat, and she and her children in this way have a place to stay when they come back, although that happens barely once a year.

Rasa is not afraid to show and tell her family if she struggles here in Scotland. She points out that she does not want to create a myth of an easy life here as other migrants do. There was a period when she did not receive any salary because the factory was economically struggling. She would not have any money for the rent, and barely enough for food. Her sister from Lithuania offered to give her some money. Rasa asks me if I do not find the situation ironic, that her sister was offering financial help to her, the one who was living abroad, who moved to earn money. But she refused to accept the financial help. Rasa recalls how before her own migration she would think that life was easy abroad, that no one needs to work hard, salaries are generous, paid on time, and even state support is given without asking. Now she knows that none of that is true, and is slightly disappointed in those migrants who show up in Lithuania during their holidays, who exaggerate, or rather lie about, their life quality abroad, who promise to help, but never do. Too many migrants do not explicitly tell those who are in Lithuania how much they work, or how, where and in what conditions they live. Rasa does not want to create this mirage for others. She talks in dichotomies about migrants who are sincere and those who are pretending to live their imagined world.

‘They [meaning other migrants] create this paradise world, where everyone does not have to work, where everyone gets flats, gets social benefits etc. … but this is not true. I know people who seek for social benefits, but I think it is not fair. And when politicians talk about migrants, I always say that they talk about those people, but still it hurts. I always say, that this is not about me or my children. We work, we pay taxes, and I believe we give to this country something. They cannot kick us out from the country. If I was a politician, I would say the same. It is not fair that foreigners are just using the country’.

Her daughter happens to be good at saving money. Rasa mentions that sometimes she asks her daughter to stop telling her how to save money. She says: ‘I want to live now. When if not now?’ It seems that both of us have this question in our minds. She adds:

‘You know, I will work as long as I can. I do not think about retirement. People ask me about it, but I do not plan to retire now so I do not want to think about it. When a year or two will be left till retirement, then I will think about it. I want to live now, today. Why do I have to think about it? In Lithuania we plan and plan, we hope and hope, and nothing.
Nothing happens. So I do not want to do the same. It is enough. Well, the only thing that makes me worry is my children, I want them to have a good life.’

There are so many people involved in conversations about someone’s life. I get to know family members; I hear stories about friends, flatmates, neighbours and colleagues. People talk so much about other people; they compare their life choices with other people’s. But in the end is it really about others? For example, when Rasa talks about her daughter, son, friends, or ex-husband, I listen to Rasa, but not to them. She judgmentally explores her views through them: they are her instruments to tell a story of her own.

Rasa would burst into tears back then, when she first came to Scotland. It was difficult for her to find her own way. So she would go to Lithuania twice a year. She describes those first journeys to Kaunas as ‘wow’. Wittmann (2016, pp.54-55) explains that the everyday that has been left for a period of time becomes magical, our perception of it becomes sharper, and it feels new. It seems that suddenly the everyday is much brighter, one may wonder: ‘why did I leave it?’ All too soon the intensely perceived everyday reverts to normal, or as it used to be.

Rasa would bring many presents because she comes from a big family; she has ten brothers and sisters. However, she soon realised that people judgmentally receive those presents, as if they were not good enough, and all this unpleasant pleasure cost too much money for her in the end. So in the last few years, she has travelled only with hand luggage and a present for her mother. Nowadays she goes to Lithuania only once a year. Rasa admits that she loves travelling, and since she is living in Scotland, she can afford that. Moreover, she concludes that Lithuania is a very expensive country, and she has no idea how people make ends meet there. If she thinks about it, it seems impossible, although she could do it herself before. She says: ‘The price of food is pretty much the same, but what I earn here in a week, in Lithuania people earn in a month’. ‘But you know’, Rasa tells me, ‘I would like to be buried in Lithuania. I told my children that they could fly me back in the urn.’ Then she starts laughing and says that they could actually spread her ashes from a plane. Is it a metaphor? Anywhere en route between Scotland and Lithuania?

Rasa tells me: ‘I get upset when my mind and memories flow… they bring me back to Lithuania. Sometimes at work, when no one distracts me, I automatically do my tasks in the bakery; I remember the past, the things, where they stand, I am sad then’. However, I ask myself: is it not that people tend to get nostalgic from time to time no matter where they are? No one can get back to the past or the events of there and then. It
does not matter where one is. The past is a foreign country, as Lowenthal (2015) explains. Michel de Certeau, in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), writes how memory is dependent on circumstances. Memory works when it is affected by something and that something is remembered when it has disappeared. To put it in a more poetic way, I need to quote de Certeau himself: ‘Like those birds that lay their eggs only in other species' nests, memory produces in a place that does not belong to it’ (p.86).

Rasa remembers and starts missing some element and things of the past – or is it vice versa? She misses it first and then remembers? I ask her why she does not bring these things here. ‘Oh, I do’, she replies, ‘slowly. I cannot take everything from there. Because it is home there as well. But maybe this or next summer… my son plans to go to Lithuania with a car, so on the way back, he will bring more things, like photo albums and other small things. You know, I like all these sentimental things’.

‘What do you do when you return to Kaunas’, I ask. Rasa tells that first she goes to a shop, she buys food and then she reorganises her apartment to suit her, although her ex-husband has not made any drastic changes there. However, she likes order, and especially order created by her. She recalls how in the early years of life in Scotland she knew that her home was in Kaunas. She knew her apartment so well, she sensed that it was her home. With time she realised that she misses Lithuania less and less, although she is still interested in what is happening there. She says: ‘You know, when the departure day from Kaunas was coming, I would not be sad; I realised that I was ready and willing to leave home for home in Scotland. I think this change happened after two years or so’.

‘Now I have this flat. It is mine. It is me who signed the papers. If I lose my job, I would not need to pay for rent even.’ I ask Rasa how she got this apartment.

‘Oh, it is a story. You know I was living lately with this woman, Lithuanian, but she found a man, so she moved out, and it was too expensive for me to pay for the whole flat. And my son’s girlfriend is working in a factory, so there is a lot of information exchanged there. So one day she tells me to ask for a council flat. At first I thought that only alcoholics and drug addicts live in council flats, but I got to know that so called normal people get them as well. A woman speaking English and I went to the Council and she told them my situation. They told us that there is no problem and I was sent to live for a week in the B&B, I did not need to pay for that. That was nice. But then the adventure started. I lived in this awful studio, and it was a mess and disgusting… people were loud… every night I would hear someone screaming, I would be afraid to come back there even. People with
bruises on their faces, drinking cider… oh… They would even kick out the door etc. It was horrible. How long did I live there? Eight months. And for this “pleasure” I had to pay 140 in a week, then they reduced to 120. Awful and expensive. Then my daughter went to the Council, talked to officials, and finally after a few weeks I got this. It was not too bad, an old couple lived here before, but my son helps to renovate. I am very happy. My daughter gave me her furniture, a fridge, because she decided to move to France’.

Rasa went through the spectrum of experiences from the start, coming from a calm family life, having two adult children, being married for 30 years, she had found herself living with strangers in odd places, some of them rude and impolite. In the following five years she moved house several times, lived with different people. She also overcame her prejudices and decided to try to apply for a council flat. In the meantime, she had lost her job, because the bakery had gone bankrupt. She had started working in the broccoli factory nearby, but after it went on fire, agency workers were not needed and she was left without any income. During her time of unemployment, she stayed in several temporary places, and each place was worse than the other. It was an insecure situation, and she did not have money, but hoped for better times. Finally, the bakery was bought by Ukrainians, and she started working there again. She recalls how afraid she had been to come back home, her neighbours were drug dealers, alcoholics, the stairs were dirty and the neighbours loud; she could not get much sleep. Eventually her daughter decided to talk to someone at the council office that this situation was not acceptable. Within a week Rasa received a two bedroom council apartment with a view of the sea.

Her son started renovating the flat, and her daughter who was living in another city in Scotland, decided to move to France, giving Rasa all her IKEA furniture. Rasa says: ‘Now I can relax, this flat is under my name, and I feel protected. I can live and arrange things as I want, no one can bother me, finally’. This ‘finally’ is the essential word in this story. But it was a long way to this easiness, and not an easy one.

Her ex-husband still lives in the same apartment in Kaunas, but when she goes there, she experiences more and more that it is not her home. Things are in the same place, but she is not using them, it is not she who is dusting them, it is not she who brings particular food products and places them in the fridge.

Rasa has learned that life may turn out differently; things are not what we conceive them to be. The suggestion to cross borders came at the right time; though she had a relatively well paid job in Lithuania, she chose an adventure, going for a better paid job.
However, she is satisfied, actually more than that: she is happy that she took the spontaneous decision to migrate. Though she did not expect that it would be so difficult, eventually she found her way of being, and especially she learned that there is no need to compare her life story, her way living to that of others, neither to locals nor other Lithuanians.

Rasa was determined to stay. In times of unemployment or when living in scruffy and dangerous places, she kept on believing that it would get better. Her escape was daydreaming (see Ehn & Löfgren, 2010). She would go to Lithuania in her dreams, she would imagine how things were, or could have been. Those days were melancholy, but she did not leave her life in Kirkcaldy. Through going back to the past, she rethought it, and was able to reflect on it, and truly understand that the past is a part of her, and she is ready for whatever the future brings. To a certain extent she has had to ignore the present, because it often was almost unbearable, almost too much to handle.

She would ask herself: ‘What went wrong?’ And she did not know. She was surprised by the circumstances that she found herself in. At the same time they were far from the ‘better’ life that she had expected, and notions of ‘it can not be real’, ‘it is just for now’, helped her to overcome that difficult to define time category of the now.

Hope is an idea that gives energy to do things, to find a reason why we are doing things the way we do – it is a logic of some sort. It is a hope that things will change within a time horizon, and hopefully will improve, and the sooner the better. Jackson (2013b) in his recent book talks with Emmanuel, a young man from Uganda living in Copenhagen for 6 years, about his life journey. Emmanuel struggles in Denmark, and having a daughter with a Danish woman does not improve his situation in finding his place within society. He was so close to giving up after years of trying, because he was failing to get a job. He felt miserable for being unable to support his family; he was losing the belief in himself as a man, as a human being. Moreover, he realised that if he went back to Uganda, it would be a double failure, because Denmark is the country where one succeeds, not Uganda (Jackson, 2013b, p.67). Hope is a powerful imagination, which can inspire, but seeing it vanishing from one’s life is a painful situation. As Emmanuel says, in Uganda everyone is measuring success; he felt pressure in not being able to find the middle ground between Uganda and Denmark, both so different, but both so unwelcoming countries (Jackson, 2013b, p.69). After years of bad luck, almost just before his departure from Denmark, he finally got a job thanks to Anna, whom he met in a language school. His hope was born again, he started
feeling alive, as someone finally believed in him. Emmanuel was thrown a lifeline, and hope was born. There are similar reverberations in the story told by Rasa, which I heard sitting in front of her on the couch, drinking coffee and eating her homemade ‘Draugystė’ ['Friendship'] pie.

How does a new location become one’s place, how does it become an action of dwelling? In order to answer these questions, we first need to acknowledge that talking about places means engaging with two realms, the physical and the mental. However, that does not explain how we correspond to a place. Moreover, there are different kinds of places; some are cherished, some are irrelevant, some are considered only as geographical locations, but some of them become dwellings. How do people respond to places, and why so differently?

It is said that by cultivating places, people make them dwellings, and by doing so they also cultivate themselves (Nemirovsky 2005, p.56). Heidegger in his acclaimed essay Building Dwelling Thinking (2001 [1971]) explained the nuances of the word bauen, which may be translated as ‘building’ (verb); he emphasised that to build is an activity that actually means to dwell, when one remains, and stays, in a place, looks after it, cares for it. But this old meaning, coming from Old English and Old High German, is already lost to us (p. 144). As mentioned earlier (2.2.2 Thinking Machine II: Mapping Place), there are two activities that play a major part in creating dwellings: placing and juxtaposition. I was explaining through the unfolding map how I was experiencing my engagement with a place. And I could grasp in Rasa’s narrative, but mostly in pauses, smiles or a suddenly worried face, how she was revisiting personal experiences, so often invisible to others. Her story was never only about her, she masterfully juxtaposed her own and other people’s intentions, possibilities, sense of opportunities, courage, and pity. The action of juxtaposition connected different parts of her life that were getting more distanced, she needed to fill the gaps. And how can one fill it when family is far away, when one is lonely? It was hope and sweet memories that helped her to carry on through tough moments. Later, when her son moved to Scotland, when she finally divorced, befriended other Lithuanians, the longing for familiarity became less of a burden. Her aim was to improve her everyday life, her every moment of being in Scotland. Therefore, she rediscovered her relation with Lithuania, she stopped feeling guilty that she had left the country, her family, or at least she reduced that feeling to a minimum, which hits her only when she is not having the best day. The satisfaction that she can survive without knowing
the language is a complex one; she is not proud that she cannot speak English, but she manages to have a fulfilling life, it becomes a proof of strength that she can go through struggles, and that there are people who help her. The loneliness does not vanish, but it is always with us, despite our location. Rasa listens to Lithuanian radio, watches television, reads magazines, and books, and explores Scotland with her new friends. All those activities create a sense of oneness, unity and stability in her chosen life path. And that fulfils Rasa.

Similarly, Dawson and Johnson (2001, p.319) remind us that migration and exile is as much a cognitive movement as it is the actual physical change from one locality to another. Relationships between people, places or cultures are never static. At the same time, many studies of people who have moved paradoxically perpetuate a static view of these people, their places and culture, and of the relationships between them. Furthermore, such postulates as “being home in more than one place” (Rolshoven, 2008, p.19) are common, and are used to describe experiences of people who have and use second homes, who are migrants, commuters, seasonal workers or children of divorced parents. This does not mean that one place is more of a home than any other, that a person feels rootless in one place or the other, but several localities actually create complexity as a unity, and are experienced as a whole, when knowledge is imported, exported and adapted by an active and interactive migrant. However, from the so called ‘local’ person’s perspective a person involved in mobility could be seen as a stranger, even though he or she feels at home in a particular lived cultural context; as a result polycentricity is created by a mover, when ‘heres’ overlap with ‘theres’ (Rolshoven, 2008, p.23).

People ask me: ‘where is your home, in Edinburgh or Lithuania, or what is home for you?’ And I fail to express in simple words my notion of home. I feel how I reduce the concept of it through comparing places, through prioritising one over the other. My narrative about two places that should or could be home to me becomes a battlefield. One suggests familiarity, the other hope; one friends, and family, the other the action of pursuing personal happiness; one – mother tongue, the other – less confident communication; one suggests being local, the other – stranger. And the list could go on, and each comparison would express different levels of emotional intensity towards each place, and as a result, would create different hierarchies. It is not that these juxtapositions are not true, but this way of talking creates superficial distances between them, rather than express the unity of places that I embrace. Juxtaposing them is not to take only the ‘good’
bits from each country; it is a much more complex juxtaposition of memories and dreams here and now. *Home* is a combination of all the places, of all heartbreaks, struggles and joys, and it feels unfair to superficially reduce that emotional complexity for the sake of clarity. But the question is, what carries from one place to the other, why the other place may – or may never – become *home*?

Rasa is telling her story through reasons: why she left Lithuania, why she decided to stay, and her attempts to stay in Scotland in the future. I am not sure how much her narrative is a ‘motherly’ explanation about life abroad to me, a newcomer at the time, or how much she is searching for confirmation that she has made the right choice. It could be that both scenarios are likely to be true. I get a sense of hope in her narrative, and this hope is placed in Scotland. She experiences a new place as an opportunity to have a life that is different compared to Lithuania, a place that provides a sense of possibilities that she never felt she had in Lithuania. She wanted to experience a change, she was tired of the same old tiny home in Kaunas, wanted a different relationship with her husband at the time. Her routine was so attached to Kaunas, to the neighbourhood, the apartment, and the same job, that in order to experience a significant change, relocation was required. Once the decision was made, once she had started settling in Scotland, things were never going according to the plan, her plan. She tells me of her journey as a continuous attempt to connect to a place, the little town in Scotland, and to rediscover her relation to Lithuania. It is not that she was pushing away her life in Lithuania, quite the opposite. It was an emotional burden: Rasa was going in her mind through relations with every family member and friend. It was her rethinking time, she would feel even emotionally closer, though she was physically away. It has never been easy in Scotland: the intense atmosphere at places where she was living for the first few years, insecure job, lack of money, unemployment. In order to make sense of why and how she was here, in Scotland, she refused to oppose the two countries; she used both of them through juxtaposition. Rasa created her own way of being in Scotland: she connected different moments from various times in her life. She was making home within herself, that was composed of distinct ideas and intentions. It seemed that there was no other option for her, as there was no home outside her that would suggest comfort, security, or would reinforce that there was a point of being there. Her son was very much against her migration, and it took him a long time to accept his mother’s decision, and later to move to Scotland himself. She took it badly, but managed to persuade her son. The lack of support from her son and husband was challenging, but she was determined to try to succeed. The
daughter was already living in Edinburgh before Rasa’s arrival; she was the one giving moral support. She was nearby, and that created a sense of security and inspiration for Rasa. Nevertheless, it was Rasa herself, and no one else who had to go through difficulties and to find hope.

The home that she was trying to create, or rather imagine, was memories of other places, people living somewhere, not close to her, and her hope to create home was placed in the future, in Scotland. For the first years, there was no sign that her hopes could materialise, but her determination helped her to achieve what is good enough for her to call home. This home was not present in the physical reality, but it was actual in her imaginaries. Drifting towards past, memories or future, dreams could transcend her from the here and now, but interestingly, this subjective experience would shield her all the time: she would rediscover changing relations to what happened, what seemed to be solid, to the ever-evolving dreams, and finally, the way she engages with a place.

Dwelling is at the core when we talk about home, Modeen (2006, p.22) says, referring to Peters (2006), and continues to remind us that dwelling is as much a noun – ‘a house or other building in which somebody lives’ – as it is a verb expressing lingering, staying or pausing. It is an act of inhabiting, of creating a process of habitation through certain habits (Kockel 2010). Through drifting, Rasa was inhabiting Scotland, she was enabled to imagine her dreams, and they were not so much of an escape, but rather an inspiration. However, there must be a linkage between restlessness, which inspires to move, and thinking in the stillness, which makes one conscious of how and where one is (Stoller, 2014; see also Peters, 2006; Modeen, 2006). Modeen (2006, p.10) wonders ‘what aspects of home are self-selected (rather than imposed externally) and how does this choice occur?’ What matters more for defining ‘home’: one’s feelings or one’s birthplace, and how may that definition change over the years?

We get used to the way we move at home: our neighbourhood, how we know the city; but once we leave a place, we become aware of that familiarity that once we had. If the return happens to the place, what was once done in a natural manner becomes a self-conscious experience; the lightness of moves becomes charged with longing for that undemanding familiarity. The most challenging task is to accept that it will never be the same as it was. A path is taken; the path that Rasa once took away will never bring her back to the place that she left behind, because that place, that home, now belongs to the past. That path of experiences and challenges is taking Rasa towards a different kind of home(s).
To compare a possible life in the home country to one’s life in Scotland is to imagine it, and to filter experiences, emphasise differences, and attach nostalgic feelings. Coming back home is impossible, but creating home is always incomplete, it is a process that is happening here and now. Home as a process in the present is what is possible to grasp; however, the past and the dreams about possible homes are part of a relational way of being; dreams and memories are crucial aspects of how we socialise and materialise our ways of being.

Hage (2003) talks about migration as a guilt-inducing process. A migrant may feel indebted to a home country and/or family, especially if a country is going through hard times and the migrant does not share that burden with family or community. That perceived ‘debt’ becomes part of a complicated moral-economy, because one’s feelings are not towards one country, but two, towards different communities. This means that the migrant’s social reality involves aspects of both, lives in a new country and in the home country, and this combination affects how life is lived here and now.

Rasa was experiencing the guilt that she tried to overcome with presents for her family and relatives, though in time her attitude changed. She realised that she chose her path, and she does not need to be sorry about it. The guilt attached to the move depends on the circumstances of how one has left a country, on the conditions in which one is living in the new country, how the new country welcomed the migrant, and finally what kind of better future the migrant hopes to achieve in the new place. A feeling of shame may get mixed with the excitement of emerging social and economic opportunities in a new country. Hage notices that ‘such enthusiasm can be constructed as a form of social treason’ (Hage, 2003, p.91). In the long run, the relations with the home country and the new country depend on how much has been achieved in the process of migration, and what kind of social life has been accomplished on a daily basis. However, those achievements cannot be measured simply in monetary terms. Achievement is understood as ‘an aspect of particular human subjects’ imaginative and fantasmatic engagements with self and other’, and therefore ‘is an ongoing trajectory that rolls forward over time, as the self comes to be understood in new ways, as new relations are forged, and as old relations transform in character’ (Long & Moore, 2013, p.5). What is understood as an achievement is, therefore, a matter of personal interpretation, although informed by social and cultural circumstances; however, a tension is always felt, between what people expect, or what one thinks is
expected of oneself, and what is actually done, achieved, what is happening, and what kind of hopes a person has.

Duyvendak (2011), in his overview of approaching home through stories, migrants who have crossed borders for various reasons and circumstances are usually represented on a scale between two extremes. The first approach is that migrants are people who left their homes behind, whose homes exist in memories or an imagined future. It is presumed that experiences or feelings of home, related to emotional safety, familiarity and public identity, are challenged by political, socio-cultural or emotional circumstances. This approach emphasises how home becomes a light concept, and so-called ‘thin’ feelings of home are explored through the themes of cosmopolitanism, nomadism or lifestyle migration. In following this perspective, the process of grounding oneself elsewhere refers to something that could be described as ‘less home’, because integration into a new environment is impossible, limited or not desired. Scholars focus on how people feel at home in other countries through homing practices that help to create familiarity in new places (or non-places, in Marc Augé’s terms), when homes are not defined by territory, but rather by social interactions (Duyvendak, 2011; see Boccagni, 2017; Winther, 2009; Mallett, 2004). However, the understanding of home as something that is made through social relationships, identities and materialities is critiqued through the concept of unmaking, which is explained as ‘the precarious process by which material and/or imaginary components of home are unintentionally or deliberately, temporarily or permanently, divested, damaged or even destroyed’ (Baxter & Brickell, 2015, p.134). The commentary expands the understanding of homemaking by emphasizing the selection of practices that are continued, adapted or stopped, and this is based on four ideas, according to Baxter and Brickell. First, that unmaking is a part of the life course, and is inevitably experienced at one time or another by all dwellers during their life course; it is a recognition that ‘people’s domestic lives are rarely fixed or predictable, but rather dynamic and varied’ (ibid. p.135). Second, the focus on home unmaking does not exclude homemaking, because in most cases both practices coexist. Third, unmaking could be understood as something that can liberate, empower, rather than scrape away attachments. Fourth, the authors remind us that one should move ‘beyond humanistic perspectives on homes as places of innate sanctuary, homes are generally (un)made in some rather than all senses at any one time’ (ibid. p.136). Overall, this is a turn towards porosity, (in)visibilities, and temporalities, which are experienced during one’s lifetime because of various circumstances, when the private and
the social meet, when materiality of the interior and the exterior are combined, but also when senses, feelings and emotions are approached at once to understand home. It is about changes, the wear and tear of materiality, the comings and goings of people.

I remember my first days, weeks and months in Edinburgh in 2013, figuring out what is what, slowly drawing mental and physical connections between places, houses and other objects. As I was walking Edinburgh streets, my mind was perceiving the environment, and after the walks and even during them, collections of memories were evoked, and new experiences in the place started to be gathered, a new combination of previously lived cities and current observations of Edinburgh began to emerge. In a similar way, continuities were established in my rented room: though the environment was new, my rather limited amount of stuff was finding its place; through things, music, clothes or activities such as cleaning or cooking, I was replacing unfamiliarity with familiarity. Place is something more than physical, it is more like an event (Casey, 1997, p.26). Casey explains that place is something for which something has to be continuously discovered, invented, and understood; new concepts have to be developed in order to grasp it. And this something is actually a kind of something (places happen) and not a definite sort of something (physical, spiritual, cultural social) (p.27). Places are happening; they tend to be open-ended, as they are complex narratives. For this reason, as Casey notes, we never find a pure place because they are within certain contents, which are vocalised in a particular cultural way (p.28); he explains that ‘places gather bodies in their midst in deeply enculturated ways, so cultures conjoin bodies in concrete circumstances of emplacement’ (p.46).

How do we discover places? How is a sense of belonging built? How does the uprooting process happen? The philosopher Edward Casey, who follows Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, says that perception is rather primary, but the ability to perceive is neither pre-cultural nor pre-social (1997, p.18); rather, it is always emplaced. Perception is the interaction between body, place and motion; in other words, we are in a place by our own lived body (p.21). He develops this idea and brings us to the realisation that places not only belong to lived bodies but also depend on them (p.24). This means that all places, even imaginary ones, have bodies that inhabit and vivify them, and at the same time places gather ‘experiences and histories, even languages and thoughts’ (p.24). In order to know the place, one has to experience it or, as Casey notes, body and place interanimate each other (ibid.).
Yi-Fu Tuan (2011 [1977]) reminds us that experience is a key term in understanding place and space. He defines space as more abstract than place: space allows us to move; place is understood as pause. Tuan explains that ‘each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place’ (p.6); pause also makes locality the ‘center of felt value’ (p.138). He argues that places and objects define space, because human beings tend ‘to embody their feelings, images, and thoughts in tangible material’ (p.17), and when we experience objects or places through our senses with an active and reflective mind, we understand them as concrete reality (p.18). Tuan distinguishes experience as direct and intimate or as indirect and conceptual, which is moderated by symbols. Experience is always linked to the external world, it is something that is learned, but it is also a combination of feelings and thoughts. Importantly, Tuan does not juxtapose feelings and thoughts in terms of subjectivity and objectivity, but sees them as situated nearby, because both of them are ways of knowing (p.10). Moreover, ‘knowing’ is more than ‘knowing about’, because we capture the world not only through the mind, but also through our senses, and the holistic intensive experience of the world is the true ‘being-in-the-world’ (pp.200-01).

Casey (1997) explains the relation between culture and place by noting that there are two main approaches to culture in late modern Eurocentric thinking. One explains culture by behaviour patterns; in the other, culture is understood as symbolic systems. Culture, then, is something either observable or ‘sheerly diaphanous’ (p.33), but Casey says that culture exists somewhere, and that it is not just in minds or signs, but in places. He argues that ‘culture has to be embodied’ (p.34), and that the embodiment of culture is always in a place, but at the same time ‘wild in its intensity and force’ (p.35). By taking into account that ‘bodies not only perceive but also know places’ (p.34), and culture is in the midst of knowing and the known, being in a place is a relational alliance between a body and a place.

This journey from unfamiliarity towards the sense of knowing the place is very appealing. The way one is experiencing a new place is always different but at the same time similar to a previous practice. To illustrate the similarity, I think of patterns that are repeatable in moving from one place to the other. For example, to a certain degree it might be important to know streets, notice the same people in the area, have a favourite walking route, know shortcuts, have a routine in passing certain places at certain times, and so on. This suggests that experiencing a new place is never really a new experience per se, it has a
certain cultural background that suggests where, when and how to pay attention to certain things, how to act or move. Trigg explains the experience of place as loading history into the present by saying ‘we are never truly “in” place without already having been in another place, and that other place is never merely left behind within a history of forgotten places’ (Trigg, 2012, p.17).

At the same time, repeatable actions in different places evoke diverse patterns of behaviour. Therefore, those repeatable and known habits are at the same time situated in cultural specificity, which are in ‘new’ and ‘old’ forms of experiences at once. Moreover, Casey notes that place cannot be ‘subsumed under already given universal notions – for example, of space and time, substance or causality’ (Casey, 1997, p.26). Place is in the midst of singularity and commonality, a place gathers that which makes it special, there is continuation and change within it, though it is important to ask: What makes a place special, can any place at any time become particular? How do a person’s memories and thoughts relate to place (p.28-32), and how, through place-making, through practice and interpretation of place, does it become what is called home. *Home*, as I explained earlier, is a special place, a place that is needed to feel secure, emotionally, politically and socially. Though place has different scales (Tuan, 2011 [1977]), and so does home.

Apache people say ‘drink from places’ and ‘then you can work on your mind’ (Basso, 1996, p.76). Wisdom is something that is easier to imagine than to achieve; it may sometimes require too much effort in everyday life, and not many people choose to consciously work on it, as there are worries and activities that may distract: looking after children, relatives, making money, and so on. However, from childhood Apache people are encouraged to remember place-centred narratives, to recall stories about particular places and what happened to their ancestors there; later on, they are expected to think about the stories told and memorise them, and in that way learn through places and ancestors about life as such. Self-reflexive activity, working on one’s mind, becomes a habit. To Apache people, wisdom means not only knowledge but also observation, being watchful, steady, quiet, self-possessed and resilient. In the need of wisdom, to explain, guide or keep the balance within the group, a person ‘gulps’ or drinks from places, and gets to know what must be done. It is a disciplined mental attempt, which eventually should flourish as a permanent state of mind.

‘To drink from the place’ means to obtain knowledge that the environment suggests, to apply it productively to the workings of the mind. In that way people experience how
their surroundings live in them, or, as Basso captures it: ‘like their ancestors before them, they display by word and deed that beyond the visible reality of place lies a moral reality which they themselves have come to embody’ (Basso, 1996, p.86). Basso concludes that though place is a universal genre, an elemental existential fact, the sense of place is trained in various ways across the world, and the main question is not how it becomes formed, but what it is made with. He suggests that sense of place is an expression of community involvement, but not geography per se; it is always linked to the personal and ethnic identity, social and moral force, when mental horizons and sense of place merge and produce personal particulars in a system of thought (Basso, 1996, pp.84-87).

One could conclude that senses are placed and places are sensed, places make sense and senses make place. Steven Feld says that reciprocity happens between places and senses, because the local sense of a place happens through people’s everyday experiences in that place, which are sensually voiced, and connect the embodied memory and perceptual immediacy (Feld, 1996). But what happens when places are changed, when familiarity of place(s) is left behind? Do we experience a new place differently, albeit through the same apparatus, or are there changes in that apparatus, and how do we make sense of new circumstances?

In situations of migration or relocation, we explicitly experience the relation between place and being-in-the-world. The place and self-conception, self-identity, as Malpas (2004 [1999]) emphasises, is always about engagement with the world, about persons and things that take place. He takes Heidegger’s idea that ‘being-in-the-world is grounded’ (p.15), and explains that an inquiry into human experience is research about place. Malpas explains how a sense of the past is achieved through ordering experiences; when the mental self is within a particular spatio-temporal situation, he says:

‘[t]o have a sense of the past is always, then, to have a sense of the way in which present and future conditions are embedded within a complex ‘history’ that is articulated only with respect to particular individuals and concrete objects as they interact within specific spaces and with respect to particular locations.’ (Malpas, 2004 [1999], p.180)

In this chapter, I have explained how Rasa was juxtaposing her past experiences through the content of her dreams and drifts to the past, and how all of that was encompassing the present. It is important to stress that the present is never about her as an
individual without a context, it is about her being in a place. Through memories of places, through always changing narrations about home that are dreamt about, we root our plans and memories daily, consequently, a possibility of a future starts being interwoven into a complex world of wills, musts, shoulds and oughts. Why may we call a place home, or maybe not yet? The answer is both complex and simple at the same time: nothing stays the same.
In-between: From one Place to the Other

I am slowly moving from one corner of the room to the other; I observe things on shelves; several times, I open the same cupboards, and wardrobes. I take a wooden domino into my hands, and I put it back; I take a set of colour pencils and put them back. I go through photo albums, postcards, I touch the furniture, which once was my grandmother’s dowry; I look at the dresses that have not been worn for the last few years, and I wonder whether I need those scarfs lying on the top shelf. I do not need any of that. Or do I not want them? Or: Not-Yet? Do I want to spread things around, and in such simplistic form claim the right to belong to several places? It is not purely a random inventory – these are objects that have effects on me (Frykman & Humbracht, 2013). There is some sort of temptation to have those old bags, glasses, books, plants, towels, pillows and bedding near me, around me, over there; however, it is not about the slight chance that I might use those things from time to time – it is rather more about the promise of a ‘new beginning’ over there. And I mean a real beginning: with the whole package of old me when acceptance of a past merges with unknown possibilities. One more beginning becomes a promise of a ‘better’ self, and a filter of values, friendships, and what matters, when circumstances change.

Once again, I do not take any of that stuff. I still feel the pleasure of finding a trace of me in Kaunas every time I come back from Edinburgh for a few days. It is easier to be in a familiar place and use the same old cup for coffee in the morning, though I also have my cup over there. There is some sort of guilty pleasure to discover what has been forgotten, not used, not looked at. I have noticed that I always leave an open piece of luggage in the room, which may lie there for a week or two, and it reminds me that soon I will need to pack and squeeze my things into the dimensions 55x40x20cm. How should one know what will be needed, required, missed or desired over there?

Those things at friends’ and relatives’ homes, and requests to look after plants while I am living somewhere else, and not knowing what is going to happen in the near future, create a sense of throwntogetherness (Massey, 2005; Löfgren, 2014, 2016),
or creative messiness. My vague notion of home is spread out through memories, journeys, people čia [here] and ten [there], stories that we share, and finally through places, and it seems that wayfinding is a constant way of being. And if that is not home, then when, where, how and why do I establish it? It seems that all I can do is to juxtapose relations, things, stories that belong to my past and may belong to my possible future(s). Ingold says that ‘ways of life are not therefore determined in advance, as routes to be followed, but have continually to be worked out anew. And these ways, far from being inscribed upon the surface of an inanimate world, are the very threads from which the living world is woven’ (Ingold, 2000, p.242).

It seems that home is a never-ending chase in order to feel at the right time in the right place, but there are no rules, no universal schemata for how to achieve that. Home is provoked; home is a spiritual and physical shelter, though very often it seems that it is nothing else but a retrospective view or restlessness towards one’s future.

January, 2016 Kaunas
4 Sigita: Towards the Not-Yet Home

Movement to another place could be considered as a reformulation of one’s life, as a new start, and may suggest different options for one’s life. Brian Hoey (2014) is interested in how Americans decide to relocate themselves and their families in the US, how their conceptualisations of work, family and community relate to their imagined futures, and how such lifestyle migration is often treated as an American dream, a possibility to start over. A promise of getting it right and rediscovering values (taking life more slowly, connecting to oneself, family and community, finding better work-family balance) through relocation essentially means changing the way one connects to a place. Moreover, Hoey argues that place attachment incorporates a concern with character (p.99) because people tend to attach to a place particular cognitive, practical and emotional experiences of the self that have been developed over the last years. They search for a more meaningful life through changing everyday activities. Elsewhere, Hoey (2010) emphasises how the sense of place and self, the materiality of it and interpretation of a social world is intertwined, and how a person attaches or ‘roots’ oneself to real as well as imagined elements of a particular place. Everyday lives for him are personally negotiated embodiments of physicality, interaction with it, mediation and interpretation. He suggests that we should talk about places not only through attachments to them, but also treat them as economic and social opportunities. The individual is never separate from a place, which means we should place individuals within their context, and context is understood in a holistic way. Hoey explains:

context is fundamental not simply as surrounding information but as co-structure, or “co-text” in narrative construction of self. This asserts the existential relationship between personhood and context, person and place, and overlapping nature of individual and local character (Hoey, 2010, p.255).

In the context of Hoey’s research about lifestyle migrants, this means that place and personhood are connected; place is how the desired personhood can be embodied, and embodied experiences of a ‘local character’ become meaningful only in a particular place.
Sigita, a woman in her mid-forties, moved to Scotland in 2010 to join her new partner with her teenage daughter (who was 16 at the time). She packed her daughter’s and her personal belongings into a car and drove to Edinburgh. Sigita took everything that she hoped or believed would make home. However, most of what she brought has become irrelevant over time or turned out to be so from the start. All that stuff brought from Lithuania did not give her the anticipated comfort, did not create ease – it did not recreate her former home. The things were the same, but they could not be appreciated in the same way as they felt out of place. Home is a concept approached and thought about as something that is fixed in some ways (geographically, socially, or culturally), made out of things, but once a place of home is left, home is experienced as open and changing all the time. Concepts are said to represent experiences, although it is impossible to capture everything; some parts of experiences are emphasised, some left out. How do we approach experiences? Is it possible to grasp experiences of being in a place that is considered to be home, of the making and unmaking of it? Jackson (1995) says that nouns expressing transitory matters should rather be verbs, as in the Hopi language, where the words for lightning, storm cloud or flame are verbs.

Home is a complex matter and experience, which is as much intimate as social. One could argue, for the sake of analysis, that the concept of home has an interior and an exterior (as discussed in Chapter 3). The exterior would include the materiality of the place, what can be seen or touched, and also the social and political systems that cover the traditions and rules of how things are done. The interior would include the practices and meanings of home, ideas and emotions about and of home, dreams and memories that happen behind closed doors. However, it is not that one is more valuable than the other, both sides coexist in everyday life, though their relative intensity may vary over time. Questions arise, such as: What is happening within the house(s)? How do people behave in order to create an experience of being at home (even if they think it is temporary)? How is an intuitive urge to feel like at home, to inhabit the place, and feel comfortable/safe, experienced on a daily basis? The answers would always link external and internal factors together. One would not make sense without the other.

Danish anthropologist Ida Winther (2009) divided the concept of home into four categories: the home (as place), home (as an idea), ‘homing’ (how to establish the home-feeling), and to feel at home (a feeling of being home). The scheme is based on the research on mobile people, commuters, and observations of their tactics between different homes.
and places (Winther, 2009). She argues that home is never ‘on the move’, but is done and materialised through actions, possessions and practices (p.56).

This is quite a complex approach combining presence in a place, action, and imagination. Similarly to Winther, I am focusing in my analysis on the place and relations with it. However, I do expand the view on place by including memories, dreams and the notion of the Not-Yet. Throughout this thesis, the sense of time, or rather temporality of home is becoming increasingly evident. Boccagni (2017), in his recent book on the migration-home nexus, has emphasised the aspect of process in his suggested lens for understanding home. He argues that in the process of migration, the focus should not be only on the privileged connection with the roots (home country), and the evolving life as routes to the new place, but rather on homing practices that illuminate how emotional, relational, and material aspects are practised. He highlights cognitive (what we think of home), normative (what home should be like), emotional (how home is perceived and sensed) and practical (conditions, effort to make home) dimensions of home. Homing is an open-ended approach to analysing home that connects material and immaterial, real and ideal, personal and social aspects.
The most important aspect in figure 4.2 suggested by Boccagni, and one that is very similar to the notion of the Not-Yet that I introduced earlier (Chapter 1.2.1.2), is the sense of temporality. While the present home derives to some extent from past home(s), it is also linked to future home(s) (see the mapping of Lina’s story in Chapter 2.2.3); the here and now home is driven by the imagined home, and thus the present home becomes extended towards both, past and future. This extension is done through homing activity that connects relations with places (in the present, remembered and imagined) in material, emotional and social forms. However, this theoretical approach does not explain how homing takes place, what kind of challenges and discoveries one has to engage with, and how home becomes stretched out towards homes that are remembered and aspired to. In this section, I present a narrative of how Sigita understands and practices home; the story focuses on interwoven ideas of an imaginary home, the restlessness that is very much a force to keep trying, in creating and practicing home, and the actuality of life that requires constant social, cultural and emotional adaptation. Sigita did not know if it was the right decision to move to Scotland, but she wanted to give the unknown future a chance to unfold. Following Ingold’s (2015) insights about place(s) as inevitably understood through experiences that are happening along the way, migrant stories can be read as ones that capture the dynamic nature of place(s) through movements to and from. I link Sigita’s experiences to a concept

Figure 4.2 Scheme that tries to capture the process of homing between real and aspired homes. [Scheme] (Source: Boccagni, 2017, p.25)
of place based on Tuan’s (2011 [1977]), Casey’s (1997) and Malpas’s (2004 [1999]) ideas, and finally I return to the theory of lines (Ingold, 2007) that unfold the ongoing connections of past, present and future through the concept of place, as explained earlier (see Chapter 1.2.1.2). Through the lens of a theory of lines that are composed of material, imaginative and emotional elements, I suggest an approach to understanding home as a dynamic place, a knot of lines (Ingold, 2007), a place that is bounded but at the same time open (Malpas 2004 [1999]). How do people choose what to pack when they are moving to another country, what is used, what is missed? Which bits of their life do they want to remember? Where do they put the books they brought, photographs, jewellery, or little statues? Are those things visible or rather hidden in cupboards, as in Sigita’s case? And how do narratives about these things change in time? These are the questions that matter to each person, though in different intensity.

The arrangement of things offers possibilities to engage with a place that captures the notion of difference, although, as mentioned before, this is the continual development of one’s identity. Through things one can enter one’s memories, but in a new place, the relation to those memories shifts; therefore it is important to observe how personal things from Lithuania are displayed, and what kind of narratives are told about those things. It has been argued that stories about objects are attached to particular timescales (Pahl, 2012); this means that narratives are explained through different frameworks in time and space, and the intensities of those narratives change in time. This approach is coming from a belief that space is socially constructed (Lefebvre, 1991), which could be captured through spatial practices or perceived space, representations of conceived space, and the lived space that is considered to be representational space (p.40). To put it simply, space production is a processual action, and objects that should help to frame particular narratives in time are actually dialogic; as the sense of past changes, the timescale that was once attached to a particular object transforms. Objects always take part of one’s story; Janet Hoskins ends her book about biographical objects in Sumba in these words: ‘[a]n object can thus become more than simply a “metaphor for the self.” It becomes a pivot for reflexivity and introspection, a tool of autobiographic self-discovery, a way of knowing oneself through things’ (Hoskins, 1998, p.198).

Personal things help to remember details of one’s past, events, people and emotions. And what a discovery, a moment of realisation, when we start appreciating a particular set of porcelain that belonged to our grandmother, or a tablecloth that mother used to cover a
table with on special occasions, or when a little statue on a shelf is removed to the cupboard, or the beloved cup is replaced. We charge things with potential stories, and at the same time we edit those potential stories through re-arranging biographical objects, as some things are desired to be remembered and some are preferred to be forgotten for a while.

What did Sigita think, hope, and imagine about her and her daughter’s future life in Scotland before the relocation? Immediately after her arrival, she was overwhelmed by the language she could not speak, the city, houses, lack of familiarity; she was longing for usual conversations with friends, relatives or neighbours, facing every day the lack of local knowledge. The unfamiliar place suddenly emphasised who and how she was in a previous place, but this reflection is from the perspective of here and now, and it is from somewhere else but home. Being in Scotland becomes an analysis of one’s memory and self, but not only that: Sigita comes to realise how place and self are interrelated through a wide range of things, such as culture, language, social life, food, weather, feelings, dreaming, and thoughts.

The failure of re-creating a sense of home provided for Sigita an insight that home is not a universal datum, but a combination of emplaced characteristics of previous personal experiences, imaginaries, and of being here and now. To her surprise, this combination is dynamic, and the sense of home is not something that one could hold on to, but rather it is something that alters along with oneself.

‘There are so many things that we own, but we keep them hidden in closets, we even forget that we have this or that, so why to keep it? I even do not remember exactly what we brought, but most of the things were clothes and stuff, just stuff.’

‘At the same time I am affectionate’, Sigita continues, ‘but I have realised that I always put myself in a position when I have to challenge myself, and move beyond my limits’. Sigita did not know a word of English when she came, felt locked at home; she was afraid of people who would ask her something in English, in a shop or the street. She found a job that did not require any language skills. Moreover, the relationship with the man for whom she moved to Edinburgh was far from ideal. She constantly thought: ‘what am I doing here?’ Chawla writes: ‘Nervousness is felt. Movement is experienced. Both are hard to pin down. Drifting may be home. But not for everyone’ (Chawla, 2014, p.147).

Meanwhile, Sigita’s daughter attended school, and a few years later told her mother how she could not understand the distinctive Scottish accent for almost a year, but she patiently tried and finally succeeded. Her older daughter (20 at the time) joined them the
following year. Finally, the family was in one place; however, Sigita’s relationship ended, and the man moved out of the apartment. They were on their own. Sigita had to take care of her daughters. ‘But how?’ she would ask herself; she felt that she herself needed a guardian. Her daughters became her strength and the stimulus not to give up, though they tried to keep their own worries to themselves, wanting to save their mother from challenges that might have been beyond her ability at that moment, such as language issues, loneliness, and a lack of belief in herself. When her personal relationship failed, when she felt lonely and lost, could not express herself, and needed to find strength, Sigita would go for a walk. She would walk for long distances, would walk and walk. She would walk for hours, thinking: ‘Why do I have to struggle so, why do I have to do odd jobs?’ (working in a factory or cleaning offices). Sigita tells me how close she was to becoming depressed, but somehow she found the courage to start attending English language courses at the local college, where she met other Lithuanians and heard their stories.

‘Each of us goes through difficulties’, she continues, ‘in one way or the other, but that’s life, things happen, things are given and things are taken. When I look back, I am surprised that I moved here, but at the time, it seemed so natural at the time. It seemed that there was no other option. But I could not speak a word in English, I was afraid of people in the first months; I was terrified of getting into a situation when someone would ask me something… I was an asocial person, I had no friends here, and till the moment I started going to college, where I met other Lithuanians, females’. She did not feel alone anymore. However, those people have not become her friends, and she shares her ideas with me how it is difficult to meet the ‘right’ people.

Sigita tells me that when she told her friends and relatives that she was leaving Lithuania, no one made a drama of it, the news was taken with dignity, but at the same time people were sure that she would come back. Sooner or later, but she would. Her return is expected, because it is believed that it is a natural decision to come back home. In low moments, she would suggest to her daughters to return to Lithuania, but her daughters would reply: ‘You can go, but we stay. We have a life here, but not there’.

Sigita asks me if I enjoy living in Edinburgh. I explain that I do like it more and more; I have started appreciating the beauty of it, but only after being here for almost a year. Sigita replies that it was similar for her; when she arrived, she was overwhelmed, and she was preoccupied with understanding how things functioned here, especially without understanding the language. I add that I was not really present in the town when I arrived,
and I wonder aloud if it was because I was slow in building conscious attachments, though I did not long for Lithuania; or was it because I was in love for a short while, and heartbroken far too long thereafter? Sigita nods her head, and tells me that she had a very similar experience, and explains to me like a mother would that one needs to overcome the fears, and to accept new circumstances, but that takes time. It took her a year as well. There is the everyday, there is an inside world in each of us that may overtake the beauty of the environment, may overshadow the other aspects of identity; one may forget habits, one may be longing for something that is not meant to happen. ‘Home is where your heart is’. Sigita said it twice.

Sigita’s therapy was walking around the neighbourhood. She repeats how being outdoors helped her to build a relationship with the town. I had a similar experience in grounding myself in Edinburgh. After living for several months in a new city, I started jogging by the canal, and the other joggers, bikers, or mothers with children would say ‘hello’, would smile, I would respond, or I would have a random chat in the deli downstairs. Simple as that, but those eye contacts with strangers, random chats, made me start to feel present in their city, in the city that we share, in our city that we live in. One could wonder how many of us are cruising along similar lines at any one time, experiencing the gradual process of settling down, a slow discovery of wanting to stay in order to know what it means to dwell in this city. Those moments are delightful, but also emotionally tiring, as they are usually accompanied by questions such as: ‘What if I do not find a job, a nice place to live, if I do not have money, if it is not the right place, what if I am mistaken that it is a good decision?’

That humans dwell means, in part, that humans are always in the world in a way such that their own being is bound to the beings around them, and so also to the world – dwelling thus implies relationality, as it also implies indeterminacy and incompleteness, and yet it also requires identity (it is, after all, the human that is at issue here) (Jacobs & Malpas, 2013, p.10).

Philosopher Malpas (2004) says that subjectivity is always understood in relation to place(s), because subjectivity as such, which comprehends the world around it, does not exist independently; it is always relational and found within a structure. At the same time, this does not mean that structure (place) creates a subject’s mental life; the relation between them is always interactive, and thus self-conception and self-identity is created. ‘Without
places, beings would be only abstractions’, Malpas says (p.176). He explains that place is not ‘a dispersion of elements, but rather enables their “gathering together” – their interconnection and unification – in such a way that their multiplicity and differentiation can be both preserved and brought to light’ (p. 174). In other words, we are essentially place-bound, but place is never a location within some pure static space, because the relation between self-identity and place is an active engagement (p.178). We understand our lives as lived in places and through the relation to these places, but place is the interplay of elements (things, people, actions that are located, sounds, landscape and so on).

However, it must be emphasised that place is not a subjective knowledge and experience of those elements, because it is a structure that depends as much as on subjectivity as on intersubjectivity and objectivity. In order to achieve that unity of place, one needs an active engagement within an intersubjective context within objective surroundings (p.185), and only then can the experience of place be understood as ‘humanized and humanizing’ (p.193).

It took Sigita a year to adjust, or actually start adjusting, to new circumstances: breaking up with a partner for whom she had migrated, starting to learn a language, and starting to believe in herself. ‘Oh yes, everything was so unexpected here, everything, everything!’ , she replies to my question about her arrival. No, she did not imagine how it should be, but probably hoped for a different experience. ‘It was so different: traffic, money, system, shops; everything was unalike.’ She does not want to remember her first years. Then she was longing for Lithuania, for so many things, but mainly for her mother. Also, she would miss smells, people, even the central market, which is not too far from her home. Sigita is from the same town as I am, so I am transported to the streets, to people living there, but the image that I have in my mind is of the period that I fondly recall living there, from the times when I was a teenager, around the new millennium period. It seems that I know which places she is talking about when she smiles, and makes longer pauses between sentences. I am in the same place, and possibly in the same mood, though in a different time.

When she returned to her hometown in Lithuania, when she was visiting her mother, she realised how nothing had actually changed; people were struggling, they were tired, and passive. ‘What to miss?’ she asks me. ‘When the greyness is a part of everyday, it is inseparable, isn’t it? But from a distance, one gets a different view’, she tells me. A few years ago, her mother died, and since then the bond with Lithuania has weakened. She
missed her home, the view from the window, the things, the order – her order – and the fact that she owned that small apartment. But the last time she went there, she asked herself: ‘so what?’, and she realised that it was becoming any place, although with memories that she cherished, but she doubted if she belonged there any more. After the death of her mother, her bond with Lithuania weakened even more.

She also realised that as soon as she stepped inside the apartment in Lithuania, she started cleaning away the dust that had covered her things. She was always obsessed with cleaning, everything had its own place, and her daughters would get into trouble if they did not follow her rules. Sigita admits that in this way she used to create tension for others, and for herself as well, though all she wanted was for things to be ideal. Once she came to Scotland she discovered how obsessed with cleaning she actually was, and eventually realised that this compulsion of creating an ideal image through orderliness is unnecessary. One could say that she had to face other problems in Scotland, or that maybe there was no one around who would judge her. Another interpretation could be that tidiness is about the familiarity and ability to control life. Her ‘normal and proper’ life was placed in Lithuania for so many years, and was loaded with habits and familiarity, but once she moved, some of her habits lost their meaning, as if they were attached to those walls of the apartment, where her mother was living, and whose rules her daughters had to follow. A new environment suggested new rules; Sigita took it as an opportunity to live differently, and as a result to unhome her practices of creating and inhabiting home from the times in Lithuania. Making homes is very much about continuing habits that we find pleasant, that suggest security, or evoke fond memories; however, there are habits that remind us of people, places, situations or even aspects of our self that we want to forget, and new ones to develop. It is often believed that relocation may help to forget the unwanted or unpleasant. Once what was care, a part of home may become uncanny, therefore requires unhoming.

Sigita was surprised when she realised that she does not miss Lithuanian food as much as she had hoped or imagined she would. At first, she would do her shopping at the Eastern European shops, but once she tried products from the local shops, she discovered new tastes, which to her surprise were pleasant. She cannot believe that she prefers Scottish sausages to Lithuanian or Polish ones. Though it does not mean that she does not miss the familiar tastes or smells, Sigita admits that at first it was the familiarity that attracted her to the Eastern European shops, and a belief that Eastern European goods (e.g. Lithuanian, Latvian or Polish) were of better quality was used as an excuse not to go to the local Tesco.
She thought she needed her things from Lithuania, she packed quite a lot of them before departure, but she did not feel that they found their place in Edinburgh. Homing and unhoming are happening simultaneously (Baxter & Brickell, 2015), and it is always a surprise which habits we stick with, and which ones we let go in time.

The change in patterns of behaviour happened on the way, it was not something that was planned by Sigita. She had dreams and ideas of her life in Edinburgh, but it was different from the reality she was experiencing. Once ‘the dream had to start to happen’, Sigita realised that her imaginary home in Edinburgh was just a possibility, one of many. It did not even start to evolve, as if her dreams were not meant to begin to materialize; she found herself on a different track. She asks me: ‘Do those dreams ever materialise in the way we want?’

She was discovering a reality that was happening in houses made from different kinds of bricks, where different kinds of habits were practiced, where local people lived and spoke their own language, but it was different than she imagined before relocating to Edinburgh; she could not behave in the same way as she was used to, she could not communicate with them. She could not then. She felt an outsider then. It was a new experience and understanding of herself, she did not know where and how to start to reground herself. It seemed to Sigita that her world, her dream world was destroyed. She was not sure whether she should continue chasing the dream, or whether she should come back to the known, to the place where her friends live, but probably to the place where there is less opportunity for her and her children. Sigita felt caught between a promise and an establishment, between an adventure and an everyday, between something current and something lasting. ‘What to choose? Can I choose? Do I have a choice?’ are the questions asked not just before departure, but also afterwards, because at first, arrival is to a place, but only in a geographical sense, not to one’s imaginary place in actuality.

Sigita describes herself as a more relaxed person now, and laughs at the woman she was, who was rather obsessed with rules and structure; she has adopted a more playful approach to the everyday, and accepted that one can control less than one thinks. ‘Through this movement from Lithuania to Scotland I had to face myself, my habits, I was very much observing myself from the start, and analysing, I wanted to change some things’, Sigita tells me.

‘And I did. I still hate dust, for example, but my approach has changed. Seriously, when I moved here, my life changed. I had to learn how to be here, how to survive. What
does survive mean? To survive means to have dignity for yourself, to stand for your own rights. Of course there are people who manipulate the others who do not know language and rights’, Sigita explains from her own experience. She also tells me that those who cannot speak the language of a country should know their place and either they have to learn it, or be silently respectfully.

‘There are quite many Lithuanians who say how wrong things are here, how they do not like this or that, they complain and complain. Ironically these are the people who do not know the language, who do not try to understand the environment around them. They are ignorant. But that is their choice not to interact, not to understand. When I came here, I could not say a word, and I did not like the situation, I did not like the way I felt. It is a choice, it is a matter of choice’, Sigita explains to me.

It is important to realise how Sigita links the process of inhabiting the new place, and the world that is beyond her apartment, beyond her memories and dreams. Language, culture, traditions, norms are not simply ‘out there’, but have to be thought through and experienced in this place at this time, and what is experienced here and now is always within a broader spectrum in time; memories and imaginaries are a part of it. Through this juncture Sigita expresses how the interiority of home coexists along with exteriority, or it could be said that both aspects make one, they are inseparable. Both require skill and practice, and both are essentially co-dependent on each other.

Sigita had to learn that, and to accept that her dreams are constantly modified, and always within circumstances that may be beyond her power. At the same time, it does not matter whether a dream is possible or impossible to achieve, because having hope is what matters, even though this hope is constantly adjusted. Sigita realised that she was not experiencing the home she had imagined, but at the same time she felt that she was moving towards it, she was dreaming, hoping, placing herself in different circumstances, and that is a part of her present; therefore, in terms of the analysis developed here, one could say that she has been living a Not-Yet Home.

Sigita tells me that actually no one believes that a person leaves a country forever; everyone presumes that eventually he or she will come back. It is unquestionable: one goes away, but returns home. However, the limits of temporality become blurred. ‘Who knows how things will turn out’, Sigita says. Since she came to Edinburgh, her jobs have always been physically tough. She needed to rebalance herself, to convince herself that there was no other option. ‘What else can you do if you cannot speak the language?’ Eventually, she
was looking after rented apartments for tourists. ‘A physical job, but better than cleaning offices’, she explains. She could not stand having to wake up at 4 am every morning for a long time. Sigita tells me that for women who have children attending school it can be quite convenient, they wake up early, do their job by 8 am, manage to get the children to school, then make lunch, dinner, have time to meet them after school, drive them to after-school activities, and then do some cleaning in the evenings, when their husbands or partners come back. And the next day it is the same again. But that was not for her. Moore talks about ethical imagination (Moore, 2011, p.16) meaning that people have their own conceptualizations of things, and there is always an imaginative engagement with the social world, but also with the other as much as with the self (p.18); all this is the driving force for creating the life one wants.

Ingold is approaching the issue of person’s engagement with the world through his developed theory of lines. Even though he talks mainly about lines that are visible on a surface and made by hands, he notices that as well as the lines that are physical and have a presence in the environment or are inhabited by our bodies, there are lines that are more visionary or metaphysical (Ingold 2007, p.47). There are lines like a trail left in the sky by a plane, or lightning, that have loose ends and are not particularly linear, or there are Aboriginal beliefs about the strings that mediate between earth and sky, life and death (p.50). Ingold asks how those lines are connected that complete a pattern which is part of a higher order, and he suggests talking about life lines which are always in relation to knowledge formation, which are on the move.

Ingold gives the example of Inuit people who travel through the tundra or the sea ice of the Arctic, for whom life happens during the process of travelling (Aporta 2004 cited in Ingold 2007, p.76). He calls them wayfarers, whose life happens along a way; they travel from place to place, and there are pauses for resting. However, there is no final destination; life goes on as long as they can go further. Ingold contrasts such movements with travellers or tourists who are transported: whereas a wayfarer stops for a pause, a traveller is actively engaged with a site. The result is that the experience of getting somewhere is different in terms of engagement with place. If a place is imagined as a circle with things and people inside, then such occupants of a place are simply enclosed. Different places, different circles can be connected by transport; however, such an approach cannot explain how those people came from one place to the other, how their journeys have been happening, how their identities have been changing. Transport connects locations, visualised as dots on
maps, and those lines of connection can be called routes, but not trails as in the case of wayfarers. This results in different kinds of knowledge systems: habituation and occupation. If habituation stands for travelling along the line as wayfarers do, then occupation is nothing else but surveying, or indexing locations without focus on how one gets there. Wayfarers who have travelled from place to place Ingold calls successful inhabitants, but at the same time, they are not locals, but neither are they nomads who fail to occupy a place (p.96-103). ‘Wayfaring, in short, is neither placeless nor place-bound but place-making (p.101), Ingold says, and this means that a wayfarer is not someone who is reluctant to place or who is failing to occupy place, but who is actively engaged in an ongoing movement, which always, as mentioned earlier, is related to growth and knowledge.

From the biographical narratives of Rasa and Sigita, it is clear that people place their experiences, but they are never limited to one particular place: the emotional traces, and the experiences or knowledge connecting different places at different times, are within each person. People talk about places in which they are here and now not only through the habits and experiences of the moment, or through situations that they are in; places are often explained through experiences in other places at other times. It is never a particularly linear story in terms of time; it is always in relation to a conception of the past and imagined future, though the narrative is expressed through particular themes and aspects of life that matter in the moment the story is told.

Ingold’s ideas about lines, movement and life can also be explained through the concept of place. In the theory of lines, these are those elements which create places; and if places were visualised, they would look like knots made of lines. Tim Ingold sees places as complex knots that are made of living inhabitants and elements connected to them (people, things, actions), but at the same time, each knot ‘does not contain life but is rather formed of the very lines along which life is lived’ (Ingold 2007, p.100). Furthermore, a knot is always also in a meshwork that is made of other knots. The lines going from one knot to another, from one place to another, are the lines of wayfaring, and this movement happens with time and suggests growth (Ingold 2007, p.100). Moving along the line within a meshwork of interwoven lines means inhabiting places, growing and getting to know the environment, oneself, and other elements around. And finally, those relations are not understood as between people and elements, but as relations that happen along, along the
lines of lives; these relations are in process, because lines interweave and create knots in a meshwork of knots (p.103).

Sigita says: ‘my way of being had to change’. She thought she knew the way she was, but circumstances had changed. She had to find the strength to go beyond her comfort zone. She forced herself to learn the language, and to start using it. ‘It is not that easy when you are over 40’, Sigita says. But she worked hard, and it proved to be the right choice. ‘I was a loyal worker, I was cleaning apartments on the Royal Mile, the ones that are rented out to tourists, but I never missed a day, got on well with supervisors. I knew that it was not for me, I could do much more, I used to work in a theatre, most of my friends were artists, I was used to a different kind of environment in Lithuania. One day I just asked for a reference letter. At that time, I did not have any job in mind, but I knew that I should not get stuck there. I felt that it was enough of only doing physical work, though it was a safe environment, and my salary always paid on time’. Very soon, she found a position in an artists’ community house as a duty manager, and is proud that no one helped her to get that position. Once she got an interview, and was confirmed that she could start working immediately, it seemed to her as a new page of her life in Edinburgh; she finally left a job sector where the language is not needed, and for the first time since arriving she is paid more than the minimum wage.

Sigita is sitting in front of me; I am visiting her during less busy hours in her work place. I see a beautiful confident woman, her eyes are shining, she is relaxed, and explains to me the activities that are organised here, asks me if I want coffee or tea. She sits down and says: ‘It is too good. It is too good, the salary, the time schedule. I could not believe it when I was told of the salary. I love the atmosphere here. It is too good, I am afraid to be happy. I am afraid that something bad will happen.’ ‘But isn’t it the right time for the good period’, I ask her. ‘You have worked pretty hard for the last years’, I tell her, as if she did not know that herself. She agrees, but she is not sure of the future, though she hopes for the best, but too many things before did not turn out as she had hoped.

There are different ways of being, various phases in creating homes, in making a place one’s own, in experiencing belonging and grounding oneself. Phases are personal and emotional, but also occur within broader political, economic and social environments. It is important to stress that it is impossible to separate those aspects from one another, though particular features of home may be more visible or prioritised than others in everyday
interchange. The question is how it is possible to express that complexity of life in a narrative, to connect internal notions of homes and external circumstances.

‘To tell a story, then, is to relate’, Ingold says (2007, p.90), not to defined entities, but rather to one of the lines in a meshwork, or in other words to ‘a path traced through the terrain of lived experience’ (ibid.). In time, I hear more storylines, or more elements join the storyline that I am told. I come to realise that it is impossible to distinguish when the new beginning was initiated: there is always a continuation of the past, ‘there is no point at which the story ends and life begins’ (p.90).

In the biographical narratives told by my interlocutors, the word place is common. Usually ‘home’ and ‘(my) place’ are applied interchangeably, though place is used as a more abstract concept, as something rather new, not yet discovered. I try to illustrate how the notion of living within the realm of Not-Yet Home is related to hope and dreaming of for the better life. Talking about a personal or inner perspective on home, and focusing on the future, does not mean that external aspects of the multi-layered nature of home, such as space, materiality, or temporality, are ignored. Furthermore, an understanding of what makes a ‘better life and home’ is changing or developing, and this personal take on ‘better life and home’ sometimes is in tension with imagined social and cultural understanding of what the ‘real home’ is. Nevertheless, it takes time to reground oneself, and understand oneself as being (or not) at home in a new country; in time the word ‘home’ is used to describe situations, circumstances or relations, loaded with more experiences that are both positive and negative, rather than be defined by geography or closeness of the family members.

At first, a more abstract notion of home seems to be that the new place is ‘less home’ than home in the homeland, but interestingly, through visits ‘back home’ it is realised that actually home is much more than an apartment, things, city and habits, it is also a social and political mood, or opportunities. I question how we measure what is ‘being’ at home, and how that is related to the notion of achievement (Long & Moore, 2013). It is important to focus on how personal emphasis on the future, dreams and memories interweave into an understanding of being here and now.

Many times I have been told ‘kol čia atsidūriau – užtruko’, followed usually by ‘ne iš karto šitaip’. The literal translation of the first phrase is ‘to get here – it took me time’, and the following words mean ‘not immediately (something happened/ was achieved)’. Both phrases are rather common expressions, which are used in terms of time, in terms of
the journey through emotional, cultural, habitual, or economic achievements. A place is understood in terms of being, and that covers various aspects of being: comfort, familiarity, some sort of stability, or better knowledge of work, city, cultural, social and political systems. Therefore, there is a constant journey through a place, which requires an active engagement with the interwoven elements (people, things, actions) within a broader structure (place). Ingold says that the ‘wayfarer is the one who travels with time’ (p.102).

I find the concept of wayfarer useful in terms of talking about experiencing places and at the same time creating homes. Sigita and I talk about inhabited places in Scotland, the places we remember in Lithuania as something, and of constant personal growth or change. We talk of the ways we build our knowledge of cities there or here, as if that actually was or is an event, because it is always an active engagement. As a result, the perception of what was understood as ‘a stable or safe’ home (e.g. an apartment in Lithuania) becomes more of a flux for Sigita – the tensions between staying and leaving, what is a ‘good’ or ‘better’ home. Her new social, political and cultural environment encourages her to become more aware of how she organises her life, what does or does not work for her, and in this way home becomes an everyday topic, it becomes a matter that questions her decision to relocate. Is it worth being anywhere but Lithuania?

Living one’s dreams or failing to achieve them, getting through the everyday, which is a continuation of oneself, but at the same time a new experience, requires critical approaches towards life. ‘It is about people. Home is people. When they are not where you are, what is the point? One may come back for holidays, but if children are in Scotland, then the decision to return to homeland becomes even more challenging than moving out of it’, Sigita tells me.

Through her observations, analysis of herself, and finally making a decision to learn the language, and to survive in a dignified way, she made herself go beyond her comfort zone. As a result restlessness becomes a state of being, the constant activity, both in doing things, thinking, and reflecting on one’s life, on the elements that coexist, and making something called home. Restlessness helps to move forwards, it may be visible in actions, but can also be an inner state of mind. There are many situations when one ‘feels stuck’, or not appreciated in the job market, feels helpless, or lost in personal aims, and starts questioning oneself how stubborn one should remain in achieving dreams, and if it is possible to realise them. The restlessness becomes a force in trying to combine the conflicting surprises: one has changed the location for ‘a better’ life, but it may turn the
sense of oneself upside down, or towards an unexpected direction. ‘It is a choice, it is a matter of choice (to start doing things)’, according to Sigita.

Sigita says that her way of being in Scotland is different from that of the locals. I respond: ‘Why should it be the same?’ The knowledge of a new place is built on a particular base, and it does not mean that it is less true or authentic. Ingold has argued that ‘the past is with us as we press into the future’ (p.119). This past, which is a memory of an intimate past, of relations with people and things in a particular cultural and social environment, are the lines that continue to be, and at the same time evolve in new circumstances. Sigita has learned that nothing is stable, neither ideas nor attachments. Things change, people change, and the limits of what is right, appropriate, acceptable are expanding.

Malpas explains place as something that is never simply a subjective experience, it is always a part of a bigger picture, of what he calls ‘structure’. Neither an objective environment, and the subjective understandings of it, nor intersubjective relations between various elements that create structure are easy to grasp, as they are always in a process. Moreover, daydreaming (Ehn & Löfgren, 2010), or being engaged with one’s life in the future, is also a crucial part of how one is experiencing being here and now, and that is identified as a part of home as well.

To suggest a definition of a never-ending process of home (re)making or unmaking is a rather challenging task; nevertheless, through places we comprehend temporality of the here and now, the past and future; we experience nearness, or distance, physically as much as emotionally. Very often life in the particular place is evaluated as living at home, not at home or Not-Yet. We need places in order to understand personal lives, and we need to be aware of elements that contribute to our well-being and vice versa. The way we feel is directly linked to how we perceive and experience a place; we need the concept of home in order to orientate ourselves. Home becomes an exercise in reflection: am I at home, or not yet? Will I be, or do I want to? Home is an ongoing trajectory (Kockel, 2010) while a past is with us and dreams are with us.

Malpas (2004: 164-165) explains that ‘experience is a matter of grasping multiple elements gathered together as part of a single, complex world of multiple and multifaceted objects, events and persons’. To link the theory of lines and Sigita’s experiences of home, I would first of all reiterate that ‘lines’ are the things, people, or activities; the correspondence between them creates different knots, and these knots compose a
meshwork. A person is moving along a line, experiencing every place in a unique way, and when the movement is happening, from apartment to apartment, from city to city, or from country to a country, the knowledge goes along – a person is wayfaring. The so-called coming back is never a going back along the same line. When Sigita brought some of the things from Lithuania to Edinburgh that she hoped would help recreate her home, she expected it would be a direct connection, but it was not, because the attitude towards them changed, the correspondence had a different vibe, as if those things were out of place. It is not about the relation to those things, but about all that happened in-between leaving and bringing them.

Nemirovsky (2005) talks about the notion of direction, which could be compared to Ingold’s idea of in-between. It is a complex activity, and it requires knowing the rules, following them, but also imagining, embracing orientations towards or by places. Once a person comes to a new place, one slowly develops a sense of it as a whole through placing things, events, and re-/creating memories. The new place suggests new narratives which create various relations, from continuations to alienations. But the key factor is that the place is a process, which includes personal and social aspects, one’s past and one’s imagined future. However, how does a person express that complexity? How can I understand what the other is saying? Can I be ‘on the same page’ as Lina or Sigita is? People’s narratives, their stories are the starting points of a journey of mine to the place of hers or his, to the place that is beyond here and now, as much as it is here and now. That mental aspect of place includes past experiences and ideas about future, and as Nemirovsky (2005) explains, to feel the reality of an algebraic place, one needs to understand empirical facts, events, that are points. The only way I can grasp events, locations, and situations is through a narrative; ‘points’ are the elements that help me to get to the mental level of a person’s place, and understand to a certain extend the cultivation of a place (remember Chapter 2.2.1). Being in place, once again, is as much a mental as a physical activity.

Through her rare visits to Lithuania to spend time with her friends, Sigita realised that her imaginary home is more related to Scotland than to Lithuania. However, it does not mean that her apartment or hometown is not her home any more, but it becomes an acceptance of a situation where memory of past homes actively coexists while Sigita is going along the line of grounding herself in Edinburgh. In other words, it becomes a different kind of participation with the environment when home is changing due to circumstances and understanding of it. Home becomes rather the whole meshwork of
different places that coexist through active engagement with the place *here and now*, through memories and dreams of a future. Lithuania becomes a place that suggests different kinds of experience to her: as tourist, visitor, or wanderer.

‘Being at home’ is a multi-layered process on emotional, physical, and imaginative levels. At the same time, the process of grounding oneself again and again takes time, though grounding does not mean that comfort will ever be achieved, that something stable will ever be created. As long as it is believed that this rather an ideal concept of home exists, the restlessness will be brought to life, the determination to embrace the unknown place in order to emplace those dreams will suggest that one is nearly there, almost at home. The realm of Not-Yet-home is a direction or movement-towards within which the Not-Yet-experienced dreams and the Not-Yet-discovered past coexist. Most importantly, Not-Yet-home is a never finished project.
In-between: Talking with Ona about Tiny Things that Matter

Ona (31 at the time of the conversation) is a friend that I have known for 6 years, but most of the time we have been living in different countries. However, a chain of events made us flatmates in Edinburgh. Ona has been moving from country to country, from city to city, for more than ten years. She started her career as a model at the age of 17 in Paris; at the age of 19 she moved to New York, and later lived in Japan and Taiwan. Till the age of 24 she was between various cities on different continents, sometimes only for a few hours, sometimes for weeks. At 24 she could not stand the fashion industry anymore, and decided to settle in Vilnius. She bought an apartment, which mostly is rented out, as she does not live in Lithuania. She graduated in interior design in Lithuania, then got a diploma in architecture in Denmark, and finally decided to specialize in lighting design in Edinburgh.

The other day I asked Ona if she had anything specific that she always brought along. She replied that she had a small statue, which was travelling with her, and we agreed that the next day she would share with me a story about it.

On Skype I get a message saying ‘jau’, which in Lithuanian means ‘ready’. I go to the kitchen and make two cups of lemon and honey hot drinks, take some chocolate with almonds and oranges, and knock on a door. An enthusiastic voice says ‘užeik’ (come in). My flatmate’s room smells of Nag Champa incense. As it is late and dark outside, the room looks cozy, lit up by street lamps through the big window, on the left shines a warm table lamp’s light towards the floor and there are some lighting candles on the windowsill. I sit down on the floor and have a sip of the drink I brought. She takes a piece of chocolate, stops the music playing from her laptop and smiles. I switch on a recorder and we start talking about things that I describe as ‘things that matter’.

Ona says:

‘Before I was very much into stories, and I would carry more stuff; and I could tell those stories about those things. But it seems that now it is not that relevant any more, becoming more… it gets smaller and smaller with time. It becomes more
complicated to bring stuff when you fly from one place to the other. So it is just a small statue of Buddha that I have. It is the size of a fingernail I think. It is extremely small. To be honest, I brought it, but I cannot find where I put it now, because it is so small.’

Ona starts laughing.

‘Are you worried about it?’ I ask her.

‘No! I know that it is somewhere. I know that it is somewhere here, but I just cannot find it.’

‘How many years have you had it?’

‘Mmm… maybe three years…’

‘Where did you get it?’

‘I actually got it in Denmark, when I just moved there. And before coming to Denmark, I brought something else, probably from some other country, probably from Lithuania. So I suppose I just took what I had for the last three years in Denmark, before coming here.’

‘Do you remember what you took to Denmark?’

‘What did I bring? Well apart from the stuff that… you know, there are things and without them I feel like without the hands, and I am talking about normal practical things…’

‘For example?’

‘For example, speakers! Of course, and then connections to the PC, my iPhone, something where [device] I have my music in. It is a must to have all that wherever I go.’

‘So it is kind of functional…’

‘Yeah, it is functional but it creates… it is the first thing what I do when I go to new places. I just plug in my toys, and then I hear the sounds, and I immediately feel more comfortable, and more home like. And then I can start to do other things.’

‘You travel a lot?’

‘Yes’, she says slowly. ‘Yes. It is funny, now when you asked me, and I thought about it. Before I was probably bringing some kind of a toy, a small toy. For quite many years actually, I had a teddy bear. I promised to my friends that I had to take a photograph of a teddy bear wherever I went. So I did that… teddy-bear in the mountains, teddy-bear in New York, in the market…’
‘For how many years did you do that?’

‘Five… maybe… there is one more thing that I bring. Gifts! I noticed that I can leave the stuff I buy, but certain things, such personal gifts like a cup, I cannot leave behind, and I take it with me. Of course it depends on a size. But as much as I can, I take the presents. And my friends know that I like very small things, so I can pack, they usually do not go for big things, or foldable, practical.’

‘Do you miss things?’

‘Things? Like physical you mean?’

‘Well, not necessarily, but it could be…’

‘Sometimes I do miss some books. Some books I have and I like to open again and again for inspiration, but they are heavy… and you cannot bring them. And they are spread out: they are in different places in the world. I miss that.’

‘And besides that?’

‘I am less and less attached to the things, less and less.’

‘When did you realise that?’

‘In the past few years… when it got really intense. Especially when I was living in Copenhagen for the last year, and I had to change the apartment six times. I was moving from a place to a place, and I realised that I do not really need anything. There is very little that I need. So I just stick to my little Buddha, which is so small that it disappears.’

‘But if you live longer (in one place)…’

‘Yeah! Things tend to … yes, it is amazing how fast… it is interesting to observe how you enter a big empty room, which you’ve just rented. It feels so clear and light; it is a very nice feeling when you have not much stuff and quite a lot of space. And then when you have to move out after a year or so you look around and you are like ‘what!?’ Where do those things are coming from? Something that you found on a street - you bring it home because you think it is interesting. Then there are books, presents of friends and things, and things, and things. And I think every different stage of your life or place, has its own things belonging to it. It is not necessary to try to bring them with you all the time. It belongs there; it belongs to that time.’

‘So it is time limited.’
‘Maybe. I have never thought about it. I got this idea while I was talking to you.’

‘But it is a very interesting idea that things belong to the place for a certain time. So as you are moving, your things might go along or might not. It is like people, they come into your life and then they leave…’

‘Exactly. As there are books, there are people in all those different places who inspire me… There is one more thing that I like to do with things… because I like things, I like beautiful things in general and I like to be surrounded by nice stuff, which I enjoy looking at every day. But closer to the deadline of living in the particular place, I like to give them to people that I met while I was living there. I ask them to choose whatever they want. Just pick it up and it’s yours! It is interesting to see how people find things, and things find people. And then hopefully they can use those things with memory… remembering me for example, thinking like ‘Oh it is Ona’.

‘So in the end you continue being there…’

‘Yeah.’

‘You are still there through those things, through memories of those people.’

‘So the thing becomes not that much of a thing - it is more…’

Ona hopes that she leaves her personal traces through things in various places for people she cares about. She hopes that as much as she cherishes gifts from her friends, they will also occasionally remember her by using certain things that they received from her: eating from her plates, drinking from her glasses, sitting on chairs, reading books, switching on and off a lamp, and so on. Every time she arranges her place with as little investment as possible. She rather concentrates on activities, and sensorial aspects like lighting, music and cooking in the place. Ona spends quite a lot of time discovering the city while walking, getting to know people, and discovering tasty food. It would be no exaggeration to say that she is restless and curious. At the same time, her best friends are living in different countries, and parents and sister in Lithuania. However, sometimes Ona observes that she does not feel the distance because she knows everything that happens through phone calls, Skype and Facebook. She says the opposite: that it is tiring to spend more time online arranging meetings with busy friends than the time the meeting actually takes; that she is fed up with physical distances because they break the intimacy among
people; that she is jealous of people who can have their friends around them. When I provoked her by saying ‘isn’t it your choice to move from place to place, you can always try to stay in a particular place’, Ona replied that her discoveries and adventures in life have a price, they require lots of her inner energy and harmony. She has no regrets, but that does not stop her from complaining.

It is interesting to observe Ona’s changing relations with cities - Vilnius, Copenhagen and Edinburgh - and how she reasons her decisions to stay or leave one for the other. It is a playful and unexpected process, which not only depends on Ona’s priorities, but also is beyond her; it is a reaction to the dynamics in the spheres of love, family, jobs, studies, friends, and opportunities that she discovers or are suggested to her. Ona is trying to combine making a ‘living’ and making a ‘life’. The sense of place for her is a combination of emerging interpretations of her own reality, knowledge and intuition.
5 Lina: Longing for Home

It smells of coconut. Lina has just taken the biscuits out of the oven, made herbal tea. We sit down at the table and catch up with each other’s lives; we have not met for three weeks. She tells me about her son’s achievements (who was a year and a half at the time), and suddenly Lina says: ‘I have to tell you this! You may find it interesting. One day I was walking with Tom [her partner], and without much thought I said: “I miss home, I miss home so much”. Tom looked at me and said: “This is your home too.” So I disagreed because here is the place that we inhabit, you know, but not home. I have my home in Vilnius. I have the physical home there. I miss my apartment, my sofa, and even a balcony. I used to smoke so I would go on the balcony, I would hear nightingales. I really miss those moments. Whenever I pass Tesco here, the big one down the road, I hear them, they must be living nearby, whenever I hear them I remember my home.’

I continue sipping tea, and I do not say anything. I contemplate silently whether she is homesick, or whether it is something that she carries deep inside because it is the first time she has expressed those nostalgic longings. She always talked about home as a place of aesthetics, and her habits to control a place. I never grasped that those expectations of what home is or should be in Edinburgh are so linked to a particular place in Vilnius (see Chapter 2.2.3).

Lina has been living in Edinburgh since 2012. She met Tom (English, 38) in Greece, on one of the islands where they were working in hospitality businesses, and they decided to move together to a place that was new for them both. A friend of Lina’s from college days was living in Edinburgh at that time and mentioned that it was a great town. Lina and Tom packed and came without much of an investigation, but with lots of hope. They visited numerous employment agencies, though it was Lina who would get more short-term jobs in catering than Tom. Eventually, Lina started working full-time in a restaurant and got a second job in a hotel. She worked long hours, and every night Tom came to the restaurant so that she did not have to walk the long way home alone; they were saving every penny, and did not want to spend any money on transport. The new start was not all that easy. Lina recalls: ‘working through agencies was a very intense experience, for
example they call me and tell me the address and the time I have to be somewhere for catering. Can you imagine? I did not know the town, and we still had no PC, Internet. I got lost so many times, but we needed money, and it was a start. It is good that this period is over. The beginnings are always difficult, but actually it never really gets easier, there is always something to discover or to worry about.'

A few months after arrival, Lina became pregnant but continued to work in both of her jobs until the eighth month of her pregnancy. In the meantime, Tom also got two jobs. Despite this rather typical story of settling down – though they do not know for how long – Lina and Tom remained ‘foodies’. Their passion for good food is a strong bond in their partnership. Within a few months, they got to know where the freshest fish or meat can be found in town, on which days the farmers’ markets are happening, and what to buy from whom. They continued their passion for cooking in slightly new tastes. It would not be a bother for them to go from one corner of a city to another just for fresh scallops, or for the sake of the best quality and price match. While one could say that they were living in a rather modest way, they were definitely enjoying delicious food. Since arriving in Edinburgh, Lina has not gone back to Lithuania – there is never enough money for three of them, or there is no time. Therefore, Lina’s mother and brother are visiting them twice a year, and occasionally her friends come too.

I met Lina in the first month after my arrival through my Lithuanian flatmate; since then, I have always known her as a person who makes the best of every situation, who is optimistic, and a real foodie. I was encouraged to write down her stories by her storytelling about places she lived in, events there, people she met, plans for the future, and things that happened on the way. In the section Thinking Machine III: Following Lina’s Story, I was aiming to capture through mapping her conception of home, as I was struck by how strongly she claimed that she did not feel at home here in Scotland. Lina created a family in Edinburgh, was trying hard to inhabit places they rented, but something was missing for her. She said it was the sense of home that was absent. That map is nothing but strings of movements and events connecting places, places where events happened, where things changed, remained or, developed. And those places were of different scales geographically: sometimes it was a tiny apartment in Vilnius, and sometimes it was defined as a country like the US, or a city like Dubai. Nevertheless, each of these was selected as contributors to the story, because every place is needed to understand the others. Though the US or Hong
Kong were less emotionally charged places, they were important for Lina to appreciate, adjust to, or judge the place where she was later in her life and even now.

Through mapping Lina’s story (see Chapter 2.2.3), it became clear that home is a more complex experience; I captured a sense of how we live in a particular place here and now, we simultaneously remember other places, and we dream about them, we actively engage with the past, or we construct one or several possible futures. In those memories and dreams, we travel across time and space. I would argue that what is understood as home is the whole meshwork of people that one has met, places one has lived, events that have happened, and the dreams that one wishes to happen in a particular moment, while one is here and now. The social, cultural and political circumstances do matter, but the restlessness that those circumstances bring is rather a personal project that is constantly evolving.

Lina is a foodie, she is the one who does not mind going from one outlet to another just for a few pieces of fresh fish, or the best fruit; she goes to the local markets, and tries to eat as organic as she can. However, they barely make ends meet. Only Tom is working now, about 50 hours a week. She is looking after their son. But food is one of a few ways to create comfort. They are one of those couples that, if they have £10 left for the next few days, will nevertheless go for coffee in a café on Saturday. Tradition is tradition.

They live in a Victorian apartment in the end of Leith walk by the park (Fig. 5.1). It is a nice area and quiet, but a few steps further on is a different world that Lina describes as ‘awful and hateful. Drunken faces, drug addicts, old ladies smoking all day next to pubs etc. it is not the area that I want my son to see everyday. I think we should change the area, especially when our son will start going to nursery and school. The other day I passed a playground, and there was this child, he looked so mean, he was so angry and aggressive. No, I do not want my son to be among such children. Though my apartment is in a similar dodgy area as well, but I just know it so well. Vilnius is my town, at the same time, I do not live there, and in the last ten years or more, I have been living abroad most of the time. But I always needed a place to come back. I needed a month or so, I upload myself, and can go anywhere again.’

Lina continues: ‘You may be in very beautiful place, your legs may be resting, but your mind will never be that relaxed as at home.’

‘Do you want to create home here?’ I ask.
‘I do not really have any idea of creating home here’, she replies. ‘I do not want to plan. I am afraid to plan.’

Lina asks me what other people tell me when I ask them about home. She wonders if she is thinking as the others, and worries whether she is misunderstanding what home is. I reply that people have various experiences of home(s) and there is no single answer. I ask her to explain to me this puzzle: If her home is in Vilnius, does she find herself without home here? I wonder if she feels out of place, and ask her if she can describe her situation now. She replies that she does not feel homeless, it is nothing like that, and suggests that it could be related to the fact of ownership, the fact that one is linked to property, and feels responsible for it, that property becomes a field of expression. She explains how difficult it is to find a nice apartment here, and especially with a small child, how uncertain life is in
rented apartments, because one can never be sure of how long one will be able to stay. Lina looks around and says: ‘If this apartment were in Vilnius, I would go mad. I could not stand the colour of the walls. I would not wait so patiently. I would do something. I know. I would figure out how to earn money if I did not have, as I do not have now. Only Tom is working at the moment. So, I cannot ask for too much. It is the same with the floor. Look at it, Vitalija!’ ‘Your floor is amazing’, I reply. It is wooden, though a bit worn, but it creates this cosy atmosphere in her Victorian apartment (Fig. 5.2). ‘Yes, but it has those holes between wooden flooring strips; and my son is exploring them and who knows who was living here before. I was rubbing them for a few days, but still. Anyway. And the walls! We do not have money to repaint them. It would look fresher, wouldn’t it? I have to be patient, but at the same time, I am not that stressed. In the end, it is not our home; we do not know how long we will stay there. But sometimes I catch myself thinking that I need to repaint the walls in the bedroom in Vilnius. I know that it is crazy, I will probably never live there, but I want be sure that it is in order. When we moved to this apartment, I was mad for a month. I was constantly cleaning and cleaning. Now I am fine, I cannot change anything. I have to adapt to the situation, and try to be well in these circumstances, I have a little baby, I still breastfeed, I should not feel stressed, otherwise my anxiousness will transmit to my boy.’

![Figure 5.2 Lina’s living room, and the much-criticised floor. [Photograph] (Source: taken by the author)](image)

It has been observed that transnational migrants often obtain or even built houses in their home-countries (Dalakoglou, 2010). Why should one invest money and time in a
house that one may never even inhabit? Dalakoglou talks about how Albanians living and working in Greece ‘make’ their houses, and this process of creating homes materially is approached as ‘not only a fixed spatial and material entity that comprises a proxy presence for otherwise absent migrants, but also as spatially and materially unfixed, dynamic, and mobile, akin to the everyday lives of migrants’ (Dalakoglou, 2010, p.763). By emphasising ‘production and reconfiguration of social relationships through house-making material-spatial processes and vice versa’, he is exploring how migrants become visible in their home-country through building, investing into their inhabited homes, and remittances. Lina is not investing into her immobile uninhabited private property; however she still owns it, and knowing that she has it makes her feel that her ‘made home’ is her real home. Dalakoglou, inspired by Heidegger’s ideas, is arguing that in the case of Albanian migrants, building (materially) and making a house (constantly re-making former and present ways of relations with the place and its people) is a dwelling fragment of their migratory cosmos and manifests their sense of transnational and transitional worlds (p.772). To put it differently, making one’s house is creating a bridge between the homeland and the migrants absent there, and that is done through taking care of one’s house, investing in it. The absence of a person is the key factor, because being a migrant is the financial source of the maintenance of a house, inspiration for aesthetics, the house becomes a strong social and emotional link with the remaining family members who receive remittances, and who very often build the house (ibid.). Lina does not live there, neither has she rented out her apartment, which seems to be frozen in time as no one is using it.

Lina talks about her past through stories of ‘how it used to be’, but I get to know more about her life here and now in Edinburgh, about the absence of particular items, the lack of power in controlling things, or opportunities. She finds it difficult to describe her situation in Edinburgh: on the one hand, she is happy about her son and her relationship with Tom; on the other hand, Lina is still searching how to be in this country, and how to express herself. Lina is reserved about a temporal place being home: she is afraid to invest time and money in it, because she may be asked to move out at any time, which has already happened twice. Lina is a person who cares about aesthetics, who is interested in creating home as ‘a whole’ through things, cleanness and her own style. She struggles in accepting different places with distinctive property styles, but at the same time she is discovering a city through everyday practices: shopping in different markets and shops on particular days, walks in the parks with her son, jogging, dancing classes, weekends spent with her partner
who works long hours. Her discovery of Edinburgh has started not from the intimate place of home bounded by walls as in Vilnius – her well-equipped but no longer lived-in apartment – but rather from the more general atmosphere of the city. She slowly builds her knowledge of Edinburgh, establishing routines, and familiarising herself with an abstract but possible future here, accepting that the dreamt concreteness of the future, which should suggest stability, is actually rather unpredictable.

However, that is only one part of the story. It is not a case of opposition between a physical and nostalgic home in Lithuania, and homing practices in Edinburgh. Lina admits that she always found it difficult living or staying in Vilnius for a long time; she always felt the urge to travel, and therefore she usually found jobs abroad, although she always wanted to come back, at least for a while, and after a few weeks or months she would be ready to go again. Through the process of telling me this, Lina accepts that home is much more than a physical apartment, and it is more than family and friends, it is more than only knowing the place, the history, having a sense of how things are done and arranged.

Lina says that she already knows the taste of career, and it is not something that she misses, though she is interested in finding the right activity in Scotland. She does not rush herself, but at the same time, she is looking forward for that ‘discovery’. Moreover, she waits for the moment when her son is old enough for the nursery, for the time when he starts sleeping better; she dreams about the times when the three of them will be able to go to theatres and concerts.

Through hours of discussions with Lina, and through capturing her journeys and attaching stories to her dislocations, I realised that migration is one of many things that has happened and continues to happen for Lina. It is not that, once a person has decided to migrate, he or she becomes a migrant to him- or herself. But the migrant is reminded of this state of being through encounters with people, through language, through misunderstandings. Though there is always an intense relation between a place and a person, it is perceived rather as an ongoing journey, but not as a sharp change; ‘new’ life due to relocation is a bold expectation, it takes time to accept changes, and it takes time to find ‘the best’ way of being elsewhere.

Though I emphasised places, the important aspect is that Lina’s inhabited places, and the people she has met, create a whole: each place, every event is within a meshwork of other places and events. Her sense of place, her idea of what home is, and how it is experienced, is combining all the different apartments, countries, people, things and events.
Lina’s home is not bounded; it is stretched out, as Massey would explain. Through understanding a place, one can understand what is beyond it (Massey, 1994a, p.156). It is an insight that questions how boundaries of places are constructed; going beyond a place actually suggests how a local place is perceived and experienced, though it does not mean that different ‘characters of places’ are not recognised. The intense relations of different places (geographical, social, political, and so on) express the different ideologies and powers of perceptions. Massey describes this linkage as a mixture of social relations that are local and global, and when these mixtures come together, because of that interaction a new element is created, and histories are formed. Moreover, life in a ‘stretched’ place means using a newly formed global space, communicating with people in various places, consuming products from far-away places, and there has been an argument that such circumstances create a sense of being placeless or disorientated. However, Massey (1994a,b) notes that it is not so simple. Drawing boundaries and creating secure places for a particular identity is nothing but creating a false belief as if a place had a single identity. Moreover, the way we experience place, and how we communicate with people around the globe, how much we get to know about other places due to the internet and various phone applications, it is easy to experience, as Massey says, ‘a new burst of “time-space compression”’ (Massey, 1994b, p.162).

Following this, a sense of belonging to a place might be disturbed, as locality is so much stretched, and less ‘contained within the place itself’ (Massey, 1994b, p.162). However, if one believes that connections, interconnectedness are destroying a secure local sense of place as a closed entity, and therefore disturbing identities, then that means ignoring places as being open. ‘The identity of a place does not derive from some internalised history. It derives, in large part, precisely from the specificity of its interactions with “the outside”’, Massey says (p.169). In other words, even though places, homes and identities are considered relational, those relations are treated as bounded, and belonging to a place is expressed through inclusion or exclusion. This is ignorance of a place being a ‘meeting place’ (Massey, 1994b, p.171).

Lina keeps arguing that her home is in Vilnius. Though she would not use the Vilnius apartment as her second home (see Bendix & Löfgren, 2007), it is a place that for her sets a level of comfort that she would like to have in Edinburgh. Nevertheless, I would argue that home is not identified with one particular place; it covers various locations, and it stretches across time, as we can see through mapping Lina’s story. Lina consciously
decides to organise the place in such a way that it could potentially be called home: to make the most of any situation through food here and now; her home is a node of friendship with Tom, and everyday activities with her son. Through materiality and activities, she does not feel lost emotionally; in difficult moments it becomes a testimony that there is a relatively safe base for the future. This is an affirmation of how home is a combination of place, ideas, feelings and activities. It is a combination of abstractions in very mundane details.

Doreen Massey insightfully suggests expanding the understanding of home, which may not necessarily be related to one particular place; it may not be a singular linkage to a bounded place, and it does not have to be a nostalgic place, a longing of some sort. Rather, ‘you may, indeed, have many of them’ (Massey, 1994b, p.172). Suggesting a conceptualisation that one may have many homes, of different kind, means talking and thinking about each home-place as an ‘equally complex product of the ever-shifting geography of social relations present and past’ (ibid.). Through telling me her story, Lina became aware of how all the places were interconnected, but still one place was more of a home than any other. She explained to me how she created it, how much effort she invested in materialising what she had imagined. I get a sense that what she misses is not so much her physical home in Vilnius, but rather she is experiencing the longing for the ability to bring things into existence; she misses herself in a past that was entrepreneurial, where she could afford to change her everyday life; and finally, she misses the comfort. Connecting Massey’s ideas (1994a,b), my map (see Chapter 2.2.3.) and interpretation of Lina’s ideas, I can grasp the complexity that lies behind the words ‘my home is in Vilnius’. It is a relational statement that is in a wider context of what happened earlier in her life, what is happening now, and her dreams. Lina finds it difficult to imagine that she could have her home, the one she owns, in Scotland. Most of the time, she and her partner barely make ends meet. She cannot imagine saving for a property. All she can do is trying to home the city through walks, shopping patterns, and activities with her child.

One day she tells me that her new neighbour is Lithuanian, not Polish, as another neighbour had told her. She was surprised when she heard the young woman talking in Lithuanian near a baby's pram on the ground floor of the Victorian house she lives in. It was the neighbour and her mother, who had come to visit her daughter, and for the first time meet her newborn granddaughter, chatting. ‘Great news’, I say, ‘maybe your 18 months old son could have a friend, and it could be nice for you to have someone so close, two floors above you, to share the challenges and discoveries of motherhood in the
Lithuanian language’. Lina replies: ‘Maybe, you never know with those Lithuanians! I will meet her next week, and I will see what is what. I do not want to imagine that I have found a friend yet.’ There was no time for them to truly befriend each other, the family upstairs moved to Lithuania within two months. Lina added that probably they would not have been friends anyway – too many differences in motherhood and views of the world.

Lina was never keen on meeting other Lithuanians, though in a playground she would be approached by Eastern European mothers in Russian. She kept her distance; it was not interesting for her. Though things changed – she realised that she wanted more Lithuanians around her once her son became two years old. The most significant event was the third birthday party of her son, where I met her new friends, other Lithuanian mothers with their kids between two and four years old. I remember one conversation with Kotryna in particular, who was sitting next to me with her son on her knees. Kotryna says that Lina is the only Lithuanian that she knows in Edinburgh, and that they met half a year earlier at the children’s dancing classes. She explains to me that she has been living in the UK for the last 10 years, but only four years in Scotland. Kotryna notes that in Bristol her friends were from various places, but here in Edinburgh she is surrounded by British people: her partner is British, she works in a bank, and most of the people there are British, and her friends also. She adds that sometimes she would like to speak Lithuanian, but there is no one around with whom she could. And she decided that she was going to talk with her children in English, not Lithuanian. Kotryna explains that she does not visit Lithuania any more, she has not been there for the last three years, and instead her mom visits her. She is surprised that so many (7) Lithuanian mums came to this party, and that people seem nice.

‘Sometimes I hear Lithuanian in a shop, and I think that I should say something, but once I see those people, I change my minds. I sort of sense that there is nothing between us.’

Connections abroad do not happen based on language or ethnicity. It could be a starting point for a friendship, but it does not guarantee that it will develop. ‘Have you been looking for Lithuanians in Edinburgh?’ I ask. ‘No, I have not’, she replies. And I suggest that maybe there was no real need for her, and Kotryna confirms that probably there was not. She remembers how she met Lina; they started chatting in English, and once their conversation was interesting and in some way they felt a bond, she asked Lina where she was from, as the Eastern European accent was noticeable, and they immediately switched to Lithuanian. Our topic moves to the Brexit issue, and Kotryna starts sharing with me how she was surprised that a double citizenship is not possible for her, as the Lithuanian
constitution does not allow having two. Most likely she will take the British one, and renounce the Lithuanian one. Her two-year-old boy is British, and at the moment she is expecting the second one. She admits that she knows little about what is going on in Lithuania, as her life has been here in the UK for the last 10 years.

Ethnicity is used as a crucial peoples’ mapping criterion, which theoretically should have within itself, or closely related, religion, language and various other aspects of cultural everyday routines. However, such a conceptual framework, which divides people into categories of *them* and *us*, which bounds people into communities based on ethnic background and shared collective identities, may be ‘more apparent than real’ (Amit, 2002, p.45). That is to say, it is a combination of Anderson’s ‘imagined communities’ and actual social relations. However, the question remains: What is shared, when, by whom, and why (or not)? Treating communities as metaphors, as having a magic connection, becomes an evaluation in a political manner of people’s movement from one location to the other. It is political, because people’s incorporation, fragmentation or subordination is judged from a certain perspective, which suggests sort of a clear notion of what it means to be *us* and *them* (Amit, 2002).

Rapport takes Amit’s critique of the notion of community through a ‘post-cultural turn’ (Rapport, 2002). He argues that if a certain community is chosen but is not ascribed, and is important in people’s lives, regardless of the grounds on which the community is based (friends, co-workers, co-ethnics, co-religionists or neighbours), the free choice to be a part of it or not is what explains attachment to a particular community. Communities as such are understood as idioms, imaginaries, though rhetorically they represent themselves to themselves and others (Rapport, 2002, p.111). Rapport would like to see individuals who beneath ‘superficial sameness of symbolic systems and institutions’ are actually understood ‘towards the construction and realization of individual identities and gratuitously diverse world-views’ (Rapport, 2002, p.111). In conclusion, communities do not exist in themselves, and an attachment to one is an individual's choice but not an obligation; it is rather an ongoing negotiation between individuals (Rapport, 2002, pp.111-12). It is individuals who join and form communities; in addition, there is a danger to mix individualism with individuality in this matter: individualism outlines the behaviour, individuality simply confirms the universal human condition in the world. There is a challenge to distinguish those terms, especially if we speak about diversity, enculturation or socialisation, as the relation between society and the individual’s mind is imprecise.
Rapport goes further, following Gellner, to say that understanding culture as a model, a ‘control mechanism’, is misleading and not sufficient (Rapport, 2002, p.137). To put it differently, generalisations such as ‘society’, ‘culture’, ‘class’, ‘ethnicity’, ‘gender’ or ‘habitus’ suggest only a brief and pale explanation and propose only a sense of order. However, these categories are linguistic illusions and do not capture what is behind them, because individuals are self-conscious beings and it is nothing but individuals’ consciousness and agency that creates the diversity of meaningful worlds. Therefore, individual agency and the shared sociocultural forms to which individuals react and manage their world-views have to be brought together, otherwise, anthropology continues treating ‘cultures and societies as if they were things-in-themselves or sui generis’ (Rapport, 2002, p.139). Notably, individuals are more than just members of certain cultural, social or religious groups; as Amit comments, these can be useful heuristic conceptual short-cuts, but they may mislead if they are understood as ‘imperatives in their own right’, especially in the context where movement challenges long-standing notions of community and belonging (Amit, 2002, pp.162-63). To capture the sense of one’s belonging, there is a need to look at how social relationships, networks in specific contexts, are established. It may be that the understanding of self is narrated through specific identities, though the action of narrating, sense making of cultural-social context is a shared phenomenon of human experience (Rapport, 2002, pp.171-72).

Lina, during her first years in Edinburgh, did not feel the urge to search for Lithuanian friends, she needed time to develop her relations to the place. She was also going through personal changes – being pregnant, giving birth. Only once she was interested in how other Lithuanian mothers were educating their kids, what their strategies were in raising their children in a bilingual environment, she started being open for conversations with other Lithuanians whom she met in playgrounds, or at community events for children. Soon she would receive invitations for tea with kids, for walks in the parks, birthday parties, or other events. Lina said: ‘I never imagined that it was so easy to meet other people, it is useful for me to see how others treat their kids, how they talk with them, most often I do not like their attitudes, but that helps me to feel more assure that I am doing it (mothering) right. Also, now it comes naturally, I feel stronger here in Edinburgh.’

How a person lives and what one does in this world depends not only on social and cultural circumstances, but also on biological and psychological particularities. Therefore, the rather emotional level of sense of belonging is linked to particular place(s), and to the
nation state that is tied to a cultural and political agenda. So when migrants experience some sort of displacement, it is almost taken for granted that they develop ‘home and away’ identities (Morley, 2000, p.53). Such questions as ‘do you plan to go back to your country?’ or ‘do you miss your country, culture or family’ are suggesting that migrants should feel a bit nostalgic, a bit lost, or that they are only temporarily here, wherever they happen to find themselves. And migrants have to figure out in the end where their home is, and what is more home, and more than what. Such dichotomies are not productive to think with in many cases, as there are more than two directions to the place one has come from, and to the place where one is. Kotryna and Lina’s cases show how their relations to the place are changing, and the sense of belonging to the homeland and the hosting country is not solid, but depends on circumstances. Both women were finding reasons why their communication with other Lithuanians was limited, or why they wanted to have more Lithuanians around them at one time or another. It takes time to settle with the idea that relations with the homeland, with people in Lithuania or from Lithuania is weaker than one thought it should be. It is an unpleasant feeling that is usually expressed apologetically in a quiet voice, as Kotryna did. Migration is an action that creates circumstances for a migrant to re-think, re-feel one’s attachment to places and people, and very often those experiences surprise the person, as these attachments are ever evolving and changing. Family members, friends and relatives who are ‘left behind’ tend to remind the migrant that it is expected that he or she should regularly return to the so-called home country for Christmas or holidays, or that ties should be kept through letters, phone calls, gifts or money to some extent. And often they are asked when they will return. Research about current return migrants in Lithuania and their employment possibilities (Žvalionytė, 2014) shows that return migrants are facing challenges, and their experience abroad may be interpreted as not relevant and useful; at the same time, possible return migrants tend to see Lithuania as their second choice.

Interestingly, research suggests that Lithuanian return migrants are welcomed with suspicion; people tend to wonder about their reasons for coming back, whether they were ‘losers’ abroad or if they were ‘successful’ and came back to ‘improve’ Lithuania. This is not a phenomenon that exists only in Lithuania; similar suspicious attitudes towards return migrants have been observed in, for example, Ireland (Kockel 1993) and Italy (Dietz 2012). Migration is not only about movement from one country to another, but is also movement across and through the social class systems in other than a national labour market (Barcevičius & Žvalionytė, 2012; Žvalionytė, 2014).
Ingold says that ‘life on the spot surely cannot yield an experience of place, of being somewhere’ (emphasis in the original); furthermore, ‘to be a place, every somewhere must lie on one or several paths of movement to and from places elsewhere’ (Ingold, 2007, p.2). He argues that in order to understand a place, or what it is to be somewhere, one needs to experience paths of movement, because ‘life is lived’ along these paths, ‘not just in places’ (ibid.). Based on my exercises of mapping Lina’s story, and my own sense of place (section 2.2.2.), I was suggesting that being in a place, developing a sense of it, is always beyond that place, and it is useful to borrow the trajectory term from Ullrich Kockel (2010), as he says ‘In moving, staying, and mixing, people create memories, which in turn are the foundation for trajectories and invest them with historical legitimacy and credibility’ (p.188). Trajectories connect events, and along them places are in a process of being made.

In his 2014 Huxley Memorial lecture, ‘On Human Correspondence’, Ingold (2014a) suggests a theory of the life of lines; for him lines are torsion, flexion and vitality, and because they describe a movement they create what is understood as life. Previously, he explained in the book Lines: A Brief History that ‘places do not just have locations but histories’ (Ingold, 2007, p.102), and this means that humans build up their knowledge while they go along the paths they take (ibid.), or simply: they are learning while doing. In other words, humans wander around, wayfaring, and thus ‘place making’ (p. 101) happens, and time is needed in order to be attentive20. Or, in Tuan’s terms: ‘place is a pause’ (Tuan, 2011 [1977], p.6).

It was difficult for Lina to express complex processes that happened in one place or another. She was searching for light words that would capture continuities or disruptions. Lina was not happy with the words *ir tada* (and then), *po to* (afterwards), *staiga* (immediately), *netrūkus* (soon) because she realised that nothing was that immediate, even if she was talking about relational events in time. There was time in-between, which was waiting, longing and dreaming.

Malpas explains that through remembering one is re-emplacing oneself to a particular place in order to encounter oneself and the things around (Malpas, 2013). Soon, Lina would add *o tuo tarpū* (meanwhile); there are several over-layered events that happened to family members, friends, or that were happening on a broader political scale, all of which co-exist, correspond, and create particular circumstances and interpretations.

---

20 This resembles the concept of “flâneur” that poets like Rimbaud and K. White talk about.
‘It may seem from the outside that those changes were inevitable’, Lina says, reflecting on how she needed to stop, to observe and be attentive towards her past, but also her imagined future, from time to time. Pausing is needed for reflection, pauses become moments for catching up with events. There are so many movements that happen between and in places, and those places become remembered as events and moods. Lina knew what happened afterwards, and through her stories she understood what she did not know then. She was noticing how perspectives about places were changing, sometimes surprisingly becoming more important than she expected, or sometimes they were becoming irrelevant. She is surprised how, as she is sitting with me, places that she once had identified as home become strange and foreign locales.

At one point, she says: ‘Isn’t it interesting how I think differently… the first time we met, and you told me your interest, I did not really have much to say. I was avoiding this theme. It seemed to be something that required effort. I needed to solve the issue of an apartment in Vilnius, and make decisions with what to do with things over there. It was painful to think. My life in Edinburgh seemed, and actually continues to be, something else. I still have not solved the issue with the apartment in Vilnius, but I have to admit, that renting it out, or even selling has become not a frightening decision. Though it took me three years to come in terms with that. I am not in a hurry though. No, I do not think that we will move there to live, nevertheless, it could be nice to have that place, where we could stay from time to time. It would be good for my son, wouldn’t it? At the moment we cannot afford those trips. But I hope that once I start working, it will become possible.’

About a year after this particular conversation, Lina, her partner and their son were finally planning a four-day visit to Vilnius. Such a short trip was possible due to cheap flights and her partner’s work schedule. ‘I am afraid to tell people that we are coming to Lithuania, it is going to be a rushing time, from one meeting to the other. There are friends that I have not seen for the last four years. I also want to spend time with Tom, and show him something of “my” Lithuania, of my past, and my mother, and brother. And most importantly it is the first trip to Lithuania for my son, who is already three years old’.

Lina was never satisfied with neither her first, second nor third apartment; there was always something wrong with floors, windows, furniture, or neighbourhood. The couple started accumulating things, as they had come only with two suitcases each. They had just enough plates, cutlery and towels. Lina articulated an opposition between her previous life in Vilnius and that in Edinburgh. She told me: ‘I do not see the point in buying anything
here, though we need more pots and bedding, but I have everything in Vilnius. My home is there, in Vilnius. Here is my life, but not my home’. A year and even two years later, she would say: ‘My son was born here, so it is my son’s home, but not mine’. Her mother and brother would visit her from time to time, and would pack into their suitcases a few things for Lina, but mainly clothes. Lina is a person who enjoys looking stylish, so her clothes from the past suggest for her a sense of continuity.

Lina was denying the option of creating home in Edinburgh, since her home was a physical place in Vilnius, and things that were in her apartment there were the embodiment of her dream home. Interestingly, only after her trip to Vilnius and the experience of her home for five days, she realised that she should change her approach to how she was dealing with life in Edinburgh.

‘I understood that there is no need to wait for home to happen, we are not really saving for it, we cannot afford the way I would like to live, so we should get more of what is possible at the moment. I was reminded what it means to be in a comfortable home, and having a nice bathroom… I was somehow waiting for something to happen in Edinburgh, but not doing anything about it. It somehow hit me that I have all that stuff in Vilnius, but probably I will never be using it, so I finally will rent out my apartment; it would be better if all those things were used. All it matters is how I live now, and it matters that I am here (in Edinburgh), it is important for my son, he should see that I am enjoying life, but we need to move to a better neighbourhood’.

The most important thing in this shift of approach is that Lina has not created her physical home in Edinburgh yet, and rather perceives the rented apartments as places they inhabit, even though she spends quite a lot of time in homing them through cleanness, reorganising furniture, and cooking habits. Lina was homesick for the familiarity and comfort of Vilnius for the last few years. Edinburgh is a place for Lina with little history, though during her visit to Vilnius, she experienced her dream home in Vilnius not as a container of longed-for comfort, but rather as her way of being-in-the-world. She realised that neither her son nor her partner belongs to that world. To her surprise during this trip, she recognised that her sense of home emerges from being with her partner and son rather than longing to live in her apartment.

Over the three years, I would ask Lina directly or indirectly whether she wanted to be here, in Edinburgh. Most of the time, it seemed that she was not convinced herself; she neither particularly liked Edinburgh nor disliked it, but rather wanted to be fond of it. So I
became a witness to her different phases and approaches, different moods, and notions of her relationships with Edinburgh, Vilnius, and other places. She needed time to catch up with events, settling in Scotland, and juggling between apartments, finding the right pace with Tom, having a child, and experiencing way too many sleepless nights. The familiarity (in Lithuania and Greece) was left behind, but there was no immediate comfort in Edinburgh. The first excitement of being in a new place was replaced by dull worries about work, dealings with landlords, agencies, and changing nappies, in other words: daily life.

She got so much immersed into that, it became an escape from facing what she really wanted for herself. She did not feel at home, at least not in the way she was used to, or desired to, but eventually she figured out, through her routines and reflections, that home is an active engagement with an outside world, and with the inner self. And this engagement is a combination of two worlds. Lina feels that she needs orientation that would help her to feel at home, though she does not know how, where and when it is possible to ‘get’ that orientation. It is not ‘out’ there in the world; she figured out that it could be not not so much a place in itself that should ‘throw better life’ opportunities to individuals, but a complex process of engaging with a place that is not bounded, which is stretched beyond through people, memories and dreams.

‘What do you do?’ I would ask. ‘How do you spend your time?’ And she would say: ‘My routine is simple, and does not change: home, dance school (if we have money for that), all my attention is to my son and Tom. I could describe my life between home, cooking, shopping, home, tidying, dancing… And Saturdays? They are quite the same as well, in the mornings we go to the market, then we have a cup of coffee somewhere in town, then our child starts crying, so we go home. Then it is a naptime, after some time we realise that we are hungry, so we start cooking what we have brought from the market. And the day is gone. On Sundays, I want to do something more special, but most of the times Tom is really tired after a week, we just stay indoors.’

A few months later, I was moving from one apartment to the other, and during the period in-between, Lina kindly agreed to sublet me her spare room for a month. I had many opportunities to spend time together with her and the little boy. In the mornings I would get up, start making coffee, then Lina would ask for time ‘off’ and would go jogging in the park, and I would play with her son. Later we would go for long walks, despite the weather. These walks would last 4-5 hours, we would visit several locations that are spread around town – a particular bakery, a particular vegetable shop, and her son’s favourite
playgrounds. Once we were back, it was time for late lunch, or early dinner. While the little one was playing, Lina was cooking three meals, for her son, for herself, and for her partner. We would eat. Later in the evening Tom would come back, she would serve him dinner, afterwards we might watch TV; soon it would be time for the little one to sleep, and the ‘going to sleep’ procedure would take 1-2 hours. And in an hour or two, it would be time for bed for the rest of the family.

Lina would say: ‘You see how I live, and you see how I spend time. There is no time for thinking, but I start seeing or rather sensing the future. My son is growing up, I want him to go to a better school than we have here on the corner. It is a Catholic school, so many Poles are going; moreover, I was told that it is not a very good school. I am aware of the fact that we would need to move, but at the moment we cannot afford living where I would like. I need to start working. But if I start working, my son has to go to the Kindergarten, but if I want to him to go to the better kinder garden, we need to move out of the Leith area, but we cannot afford, because I do not work.’

Lina does not know what she would like to do, therefore she decided to spend time with her son, and not spending all the wages that she would earn as a waitress to pay for the nursery. Lina is very much afraid of the time when her son starts going to the nursery (for free); she keeps saying that she is not interested in a career, that she had one already – that she prefers to be a good mother, that she does not mind doing a simple job; but at the same time she does not manage to convince herself. She is passively searching for inspiration.

Moving to another country means leaving one routine for an undiscovered one. Everyday routines are everyday routines everywhere, in the home country, or in a host country. There are little ways of doing something that connect days, that create a sense of affirmation of continuity. The everyday rhythms suggest safety and continuation even if the scale of it is just for a day or week. In Lina’s case, for three years she has depended financially on her partner, so she took her tasks to look after the son, after home and cooking food as her job. She would create little tours around the city, which involved playgrounds, activities for kids, grocery shopping, cooking. Once her son got a few hours of free nursery four days a week, she did not know what to do with herself during those few free hours. This change hit her as a realisation of how quickly time had passed; she had always thought that by the time her son started going to the nursery, she would figure out what she wanted to do professionally.
It is already October 2016. A few months have unnoticeably passed since our last meeting. We meet in town and head towards her home. I am going to spend an evening with her son, as she, later that evening, is going to the theatre with her partner for her 40\textsuperscript{th} birthday. On the way she says: ‘Have I mentioned to you that we got a flat?’ I reply that she had not, and ask if it is a council flat. She explains that it is not; it is a program run by the government to help young families. Lina explains that the other day they passed the house, which is still under construction. ‘We do not know which floor, which windows, but it is by the sea’. I congratulate her, and ask when they should move. ‘Once they finish building! Should be in the middle of November.’

![Figure 5.3 New place: the view of the sea just outside the building of Lina’s new flat. (Photograph) (Source: taken by Lina)](source)

Being close to the sea is what she appreciates most, it even overcomes her complaints about how far it is from the city centre.

On 18\textsuperscript{th} November, Lina with her family finally moves in to their new apartment (Fig.5.3). I get pictures on Facebook Messenger of their new place, and the views from her
windows. I respond that everything looks so nice and neat. She adds a note that she starts liking the place, it is clean, fresh and warm. She would not dare to compare it with any of the previous places. They still lack some of the furniture, and things that make home cosy, but they are not in a hurry to do that. ‘We need a bed frame, as we left ours in the previous place, we left all our random furniture there actually. We need lamps, more drawers, and there is no cooker hood though the kitchen island is almost in the middle of a room’, she adds ‘also all the house is with the same curtains, it looks like a dormitory, need to get new ones. I cannot imagine how we used to live, we realised that we did not have even a soap plate. We had so little.’

Lina does not elaborate why she did not like the place at first, but persistently invites me to come for dinner and see the neighbourhood; she stresses that the atmosphere of the new-built neighbourhood is different, and there are no ugly faces21 around, and smells of the sea. I never say no to Lina and her partner’s dinners, these are real treats. Between the time of our dinner and the chat on Messenger, Lina gets a job at a hotel as a food and beverage assistant. She starts working on the weekends at 4am. It was the only part-time job she managed to get. Lina does not sleep very well, and getting up so early does not contribute to her peaceful sleep and mind. After some time working there, she admits that it is a perfect job in some sense, as she finishes about noon, and can spend the rest of a day with her family.

One afternoon I take a bus to her new place (home?); I have never been in this part of town. It is an all new-built area by the sea. I get off, look around, and try to remember the detailed instructions that Lina gave me to reach her house. The neighborhood is composed of rounded tall houses, and the landscape is not yet finished. Overall, it looks alright; I cannot find a better word, as I doubt some of the design decisions. Once I enter the house, I witness a quite confusing layout, but in a few minutes, I find Lina’s apartment and knock on the door. She and her son open it with big smiles, we hug, I take off my shoes, and Lina gives a tour. The arrangement of the apartment echoes the look of a house, the corridor is not straight, but bended. We share our skepticism about the obsession with carpeted floors in the Great Britain; her apartment, is covered with wall to wall grey carpeting. We admit that it is soft though. She shows me her kid’s room, which is of

---

21 By saying ugly faces, she means alcoholics and drug addicts that live in the Leith area. It is a part of the city that is nowadays popular among students for cheaper rents, but also it is an area where Irvin Welsh’s novel “Trainspotting” is set.
surprisingly generous size: there is a bed, shelf of toys, drawers for clothes and more than enough space for playing. We enter the bedroom, which is en suite. It seems to be quite a big room, maybe because there is only a mattress on the floor. One wall has an inbuilt wardrobe, which suggests a generous storage. Their personal bathroom is spacious, and shines white. Lina is the most excited about the shower. ‘Once we moved in, we were taking long showers, and just smiling afterwards for hours. Can you remember our last bathroom? It was a disaster compared to this one. It was old, and just functioning, the water power was weak, and the bathroom was cold. This one is a real luxury.’ We look at all the hidden little cupboards for things to hide, she says ‘as a interior designer I see so many mistakes here, the outlay is awkward at times, the materials used are quite cheap. The most obvious flaws are in the kitchen-living room’, she explains to me. We go through them, and I agree that it was not well thought through, but on a positive note I say: ‘It is fresh, the rent is 100 pounds less, the place is bigger, and it is very warm, so no enormous heating bills’.

Lina agrees but says they do not think that they will buy this apartment, as there is a possibility of renting it at a fixed price for five years to apply for a rent-to-buy scheme. She explains to me that this is the most stable housing situation that they ever had, and probably the cheapest, and most comfortable, but it is not the best. At first, I am quite surprised with her ignorance of such a good opportunity, but later I realise that she dreams bigger. And why should she stop at a moment when it is just good enough? Once again is it not as Ernst Bloch (1996) has suggested, that daydreams are the power to move on, to transform the current reality. Lina is still building her dream home. This current situation was her ideal circumstances three or even one year ago, but now, once she is within them, she seeks for a more nuanced home situation. Her ideas of home are context dependent, and at the same time a deep personal dreamworld in which everything is possible. The process of homing places is always incomplete. It may seem that Vilnius was a finished project for Lina, and it was, but only partially so, because she never stayed there for a long time. She created the material environment where she could have home, but there was something missing, probably the wish to stay.

‘Do you finally feel at home, Lina?’ I ask. ‘No. My home is in Vilnius’. ‘Nothing has changed,’ I add. ‘But this place is better than the previous one.’ Lina still has a strong attachment to the Vilnius apartment, but finally she is ready to rent it out. It is a three-room apartment, but it is still full of stuff, so a friend kindly agreed to go through her things, throw away what is not needed. ‘I have so many things, and some of them have been
It is a strange experience to see my things, my apartment, my home via Skype, one by one my friend sorts all my things. The plan is to organise my things into one of the rooms, and rent an apartment as with two rooms.’ During our conversation, her partner comes back from work. ‘Let’s ask him about home.’ Lina says. He immediately replies that this place is definitely not home, because they do not own it, it is a rented place, but it is more of home than the previous place, but still not fully home.’ It could become their owned property once they enter the rent-to-buy phase, though they do not want to do that. This decision suggests that it is not only about being an owner of a place, but it is very much about what kind of place that is.
In-between: Collage
During the process of writing this thesis, I tried to draw maps, write various lists of places I have inhabited so far (19) to evaluate or compare them. However, my constructive attempts to value those places as separate ones were fruitless, as each place meant nothing without the other; they would be incomplete, taken out of context. One day my attention was drawn towards a pile of photos that capture corners, windows, books, tables, chairs, plants of rooms I lived for longer or shorter periods of time in the last ten years. I took those pictures because at the particular time and place: I felt that the light was falling elegantly on the wall, I liked the sharpness of the juncture of ceilings and walls, or I enjoyed the view from the window. I was looking at the photos of previously lived places, and I realised that only when they are together they capture the complexity, they create the notion of open-endedness that I felt was so important in the notion of home. I started arranging them, cutting corners and connecting them. They were composed together not based on their sequences in time but rather based on an unsystematic aesthetic tie. This visual expression of my home-places could be nicely described as a throwntogetherness, in Doreen Massey (2005) terms. Places, events, moments, months, dreams, memories, people, lamps, cats, things came together in an assortment.

I was combining photos of my inhabited apartments, and there was a story emerging through the finished collage. Greverus (1996) describes collage as a dynamic cultural concept that captures life ‘on the making’ in an ongoing discourse. To compose a collage means to select pieces that are essentially different, however, ‘othering’ them in a particular composition emphasises the understanding of their conceptual connections rather than the focus on their contrasts.

What is it that makes those corners, windows, plants, ceilings, floors, and other things so much present in the totality of life that brought me to the Gilmore Place 81 here and now in Edinburgh, and why is it so that composing this collage made me curious and less afraid of the elsewhere in the future?
Laura: Striving for Better

‘You are so brave’, I say. ‘How did you do it?’ I ask Laura. It is probably my first question after listening to her two-hour monologue about her journeys from one place to another.

It was a gloomy day, and before knocking on her door, I had got lost. I had never had an opportunity to visit that part of the city before. I missed a right turn, and later it took me time to figure out the numbering of houses in the newly built quarter. I am always impressed how windy it is in newly-built neighbourhoods; probably developers are not interested in the way the wind may move between houses, just in how to squeeze as many buildings as possible onto a plot.

When she opened the door, Laura told me that her son was sleeping, and immediately added:

‘I do not have what people call a home. I do not. They say “I am going home, visiting parents, going back to the place I grew up.” But I do not have such a place, for me it is moving from one place to the other, and that is probably home. Actually, I would like to settle down, especially once now I am not alone, and we have a child. But it seems that it is my destiny to move from one place to the other. Home is some sort of a constant happening, and it is all about people, isn’t it?’

These were the first sentences by 32 year-old Laura, while I was taking off my shoes. The last time I had seen her (more than a year previously) had been at our mutual friend Lina’s home, where I was living for a while. Laura asked me how it was going with my thesis, and I replied that progress was slow. Suddenly she suggested I should listen to her story.

Laura had been one of the first people I met in Edinburgh, through mutual friends. We were strolling along the sea at Portobello beach, and she told us how she was breaking up with her boyfriend at the time, moving from one place to another, and about her work in a café. Later, she explained to me how difficult it was to find a decent place to rent in Edinburgh, and funny or tragic stories about various flat-mates she had had so far. In the
following year, she met a Scottish man, fell in love, and moved to Glasgow. Very soon, she
got pregnant. Her partner got a work contract for two years in Edinburgh, and Laura moved
back there, only this time with a baby and her partner. ‘I am quite tired of living in places
where I cannot hang pictures on walls, no nails are allowed. The furniture is not ours, just
the bed, and our child’s furniture. You know, I came to Edinburgh in 2009, and I have
already moved from one place to another more than ten times. So there is a wish to have
fewer things. Nevertheless, there is still a lot. But I tend to live light.’ She tells me this
quickly while making us tea, and then we move to the living room for a conversation. It is
the fourth place for Laura and her partner Tim. She does not like this rented apartment on
the ground floor in a new-built housing complex, because it is too dark, the lamps are
switched on all day long, and the rather big space is organised in an awkward way, making
the big apartment seem like a dormitory.

‘If I think hard, then probably my home was the apartment in a Soviet bloc house, it
was a spacious 5 room apartment. I was happy there. There were so many children my age,
we were all friends, doing what children should not, playing on the tracks of trains, and
climbing the walls of neglected buildings. It was dangerous, but our parents never knew
what we were up to. However, when I was 12 we had to move. It was the most tragic day
for me: I had to leave my friends behind. My parents did not have jobs, it was early
nineties, so a difficult period in Lithuania, as you know. So, my younger brother, older
sister, and me were told that for a short time we had to move to our grandmother’s place. It
was such a shock. There was no water in the house, the toilet outside etc. And with this
move, the hardship started, though we were promised that we had stay with our
grandmother only for a short time. Our apartment in a city had 5 rooms, and now we were
cramped to three. One was for my grandmother, one for my parents, and one for us three
children.

My father started drinking, so all the money was gone pretty soon. It was a silenced
truth that we were not able to move anywhere. The chance was gone, though we never
talked about that. Father became violent against us all. So the only dream I had was to get
away. In my last years at school through a girl in a village who was an au pair in Denmark,
I got in contact with a family in Copenhagen. It took me 6 months to prove to them that I
was good for it. I was lying that I have experience in looking after children, but I needed to
get away. My English was bad, really bad, but somehow I managed to convince them. I
think they felt that they had to help me. One day, they sent me the money for the plane ticket; of course, I took a bus.’

‘Why did you not go to another city in Lithuania?’ I asked her. ‘It was impossible. I did not have any money. My school exams results were rather bad, also one needed to pay 120 litai\(^{22}\) for an application to universities. I did not have that kind of money. The only option was to get away from the country. It was 2002, before Lithuania joined the EU. I needed a visa in order to work abroad. An Au-pair program seemed to be the best choice.’

For Laura there was no other option, and leaving the family meant leaving the country. Once they moved to the village, she did not feel that it was right, she did not feel comfortable, it was not the life she wished for herself, and she was sure she had no opportunities in Lithuania. She felt stuck in an abject poverty, stuck in that village, in a house with no running water, on the farm, and in intense relations within the family.

_Laura and I are the same age, we graduated in the same year, though I cannot stop thinking how differently we lived, behaved, and felt about our lives around the same time. Since I was 16, my mother and I moved from one place to another several times. We learned to pack quickly, to leave things behind, to select, to inhabit a new place, and to make it ours. Every move has been treated as a new start, as an adventure, rather than an action of losing stability or some sort of identity. But this approach has been a deliberate decision, otherwise it would be sad, we would feel it is unfair, we would feel unfortunate. I grew up in Klaipėda and, like Laura, wanted to leave my hometown, though not for the same reasons, but there was definitely a desire to leave home. However, there was no other option for me, only university, and in this way moving to another town. That was what I did: I moved to Kaunas to study criticism of art, with no financial plan for the future. I remember that application fee; I still recall the bank where I paid it, and how hot that day was. It was a significant sum for my mom, but there was no question that she would not pay for it._

_Nevertheless, that I would not go to university after graduating from school was not an option for me at the time, nor that I would not move to another town, that I would not start my own journey of homing places. However, going abroad was not a possibility for me then as it was for Laura, probably not one I even considered. It seemed that going abroad was expensive, and one needed to be brave and adventurous._

\(^{22}\) 120 litai is about 30 pounds. The minimum wage at that time was about 430 litai per month.
Laura did not know what was beyond the borders, but she was sure that it could not be worse: She was ready to search for a better balance between her inner and outer realities. What does her feeling of not-being-at-home say about home, and how should home feel or be experienced?

‘When I saw the house in Copenhagen, I was so impressed’, Laura continues. ‘It was so beautiful, big, and so different to the one I was coming from. I was so happy to be there, and it did not matter that my room was in a basement. But you know I had my own little shower! And finally, I had my own room, before I had to share a tiny room with my siblings. Though, the family treated me as a slave. At first, I thought that it had to be so. I was used to hard work on the farm, and harsh conditions, so I did not complain, though I was not only a nanny for three children, but also a gardener and a cleaner. And the family made sure, that I always had something to do. I thought that was normal, till the moment I started enjoying regular chats with Tania that were popular in those days. She was from Vilnius, working as au-pair in the next neighbourhood. It would be fair enough to describe her as a bit wild. I was 19 at that time, and she was 21 or 22. We started partying, I was working at the same family, but I already realised I could have better conditions’.

At that time Laura lost interest in being a good nanny; she was still good with children, who adored her, but she started being dissatisfied once she was given extra jobs to do. Moreover, she stopped making her bed in her room in a basement; the room she had liked so much became just a place where she slept. It was a place that provided her space for sleep, but it was not an escape anymore, or a promise of a better life.

Through detailed descriptions of the house, her bed, shower, or garden, Laura revisits them. She tells me about those places as if she were there, in Copenhagen, in an upper-class neighbourhood. However, the past is told with the knowledge of what happened afterwards, and this implies judgment of oneself from the perspective of the here and now. Laura feels she was a fighter, she was bold, straightforward, she was a girl from a tiny village, who did not want to ‘go back’ to the constant economic struggle, to her alcoholic father and depressed mother. Laura is surprised how confident she was then. Today she is quite the opposite, fighting insomnia, grief, and trying to find the comfort of who she is.

*When I think of all the places where I myself have lived, memories start constructing an expanding meshwork, as with every detail I recall, with every nuance I recollect, the chaotic combination enlarges more and more. The view from the window on Roosikrantsi street in Tallinn, and my dresses hanging on a metal tube along a wall, the cat*
sitting on a pile of books on a wide windowsill, the bed covered with a woollen white and black check blanket that used to cover the sofa in Vilnius, but I had to give the blanket to my mom, as my flatmate’s cat was scratching that red sofa to sharpen its claws. I did enjoy that long and narrow kitchen with a bath along one wall in that spooky apartment with a taxidermy owl watching you. During parties people would squeeze into that kitchen, sit in the bathtub, but I have to admit that taking baths in that ‘heritage’ of Soviet times was really cold. My memories are not chronological, but maybe thematic. I may remember the long and wild balcony in Luxembourg, or the tiny one in Vilnius, and the balcony on Donelaičio street in Kaunas, dodgy but somehow perfect for summer days and nights. From that balcony, I move to the kitchen; I see a tiny round table in the corner, two chairs, fridge, gas stove, and there is no oven. I cannot believe how I managed to live without an oven, and how I did not cook anything appealing for years. At the same time, I could not really afford much more than rice and apples. In the kitchen of my Vilniaus street apartment I was slightly more creative in cooking. Probably the most fun, but also the saddest, was the non-existent kitchen in the attic on Maironio street, where we would sit on the floor to eat; there was no table, no chairs, no fridge. In the winter, I would keep food behind a little window through which you could see a factory on the other side of the river Nemunas. My visual memories are also filled with sounds: Joe Dassin there, jazz over there, electro in Trondheim, Leonard Cohen somewhere else; there is also laughter, sadness, joy, silence, discomfort, coldness, cosiness, and loss. The storyline is expanding, one thing leads to another, I have to stop this meshwork of memories growing, as it overpowers me.

It is not that I am longing to be in those places, and neither do I try to ignore them, but it becomes a state of mind that tends to last. It is nostalgic, melancholic, but also adventurous, as there are always some pieces that surprise me – sometimes a situation, a mood, or ideas from a particular time and place come back to me from a past that seemed to be forgotten. It is an immense experience that allows sensing the time as experiential rather than linear, as a whole, as an inner cosmos. Interestingly, my first home where I lived for 16 years does not play a big role in those memories, usually none, but it visits as a site for nightmares, or mysterious but eerie dreams.

Every time I change locations, I have to rediscover that there are many ways to lead one’s life. Each of us is finding our own ways of dwelling, though there is a pattern of getting to know places through practices of homing and unhoming, but the material
manifestations of places are different, they provoke us in ways we could not think of, and the same place is experienced in various ways by each of us. It is not only that different places are composed unalike, but also that the understanding of self is a relational process, an active engagement with the social and material world. Home becomes a process that is never complete; it is an action of opting, and what is here and now is always negotiated.

In great detail, I get to know Laura’s adventures with Tania, who was soon asked to leave her job; how Laura herself decided to leave her ‘family’, and how both of them set off for London, to start a new life there. However, they were not allowed to enter the UK, so they hitchhiked back to Denmark, because their visas there were still valid. Then their homeless period started, when they were asking friends and acquaintances to host them. Usually they had to leave places after a short time, because they were asked to have intimate relationships. The girls were broke, homeless and somehow just getting by. After a while, Tania fell in love with an Iranian man to whom she is still married. Laura realised that she was on her own, and finally she found strength to phone her mother for the first time since leaving, and told her that she was broke, that things were not going well. Her mother was terrified to hear her story, and told Laura to come back home immediately – and so she did.

Once she was in Lithuania, Laura realised that nothing had changed there; it was the same old miserable life with no prospects in that cold wooden house, along with the alcoholic father and his aggressive nature. Once again, she found herself in a lifeworld of nothingness, and it was uncanny. She felt more at home when she was away from what was supposed to be her home.

She managed to contact the family in Copenhagen, and asked them for a recommendation letter. With a self-judgmental smile, Laura says: ‘I was so bold, I did not think that it was inappropriate.’ She lied to them about Tania, told them that the phone bills that they were receiving were because of her, that Tania took her phone, that Tania lied to her, and now she, Laura, was without job and money in Lithuania. Her former family wrote her a letter of recommendation, and a few months later Laura was again in Copenhagen.

A new house, a new family, and a new room – but again in the basement. In great detail, she describes its size, the furniture, and the darkness of the room. A few months later she moved to a new family, and she finally had a room in the attic. Laura moves her hands in order to help me sense the space that she had over there, and the light. A new series of adventures started, involving a drug dealer boyfriend, who was soon sentenced to a few
months in prison. Laura was in love, but he was dangerously jealous. One day he attacked her with a knife; she was running away through the streets of the upper class neighbourhood in Copenhagen until someone called the police. ‘He was just out of prison, and if I complained, I knew he would be sentenced. I did not want to cause him more problems; I wanted to put it all behind me. So I did not sign any complaint against him’, Laura explains. She decided to start a new period. She was accepted at the art college, and even received a generous scholarship, paid monthly; however, her ex-boyfriend became a stalker, creating a series of unbearable situations for her. She could not find any other solution but to leave the country. She had saved quite a lot of money from the scholarship, and moved to Vilnius for the first time. ‘I took a risk, and just vanished from the college, from the dormitory. I just hoped they would not search for me, and they did not.’

Laura and a friend rented a tiny room in a wooden house in Vilnius; her friend was sleeping on the old sofa, Laura was sleeping on the floor, and there was a bathroom in the hallway, shared with the family living next door. It was cheap, it was cold, but they enjoyed living there in a bizarre way. Laura is telling me about that period of life with a big smile; she is surprised herself, but she did like living there, or perhaps she simply justified it – she does not know any more. The location of the wooden house was very close to the city centre, at that time many wooden houses would be set on fire in order later to be bought by developers. Laura was always joking that their house might be the next one on fire; luckily, this did not happen. She was doing little jobs, to earn some money, and very soon she started studying at the art college. Laura makes a pause, but rather for me than herself. ‘I told you, it is a bit crazy.’ And I reply that her life is like a soap opera. She nods and continues her story. In the following minutes, I get to know how once the money from Denmark was finished, she made a new plan, her aim was to get a scholarship to study abroad. She spent a year at a private Turkish university, where she met a guy living in London. After that year, she came back to Lithuania, but did not stay for long, and moved to London, where both of them were planning to get married.

Laura is telling me her story of her life in Edinburgh, but she chooses to explain it through all the places that she lived, which she remembers in great detail. To a certain extent it seems that this is not her story, it is like a film in which she is the main character striving for a better life, but the circumstances always seem to be complicated by jealous or unfaithful boyfriends, by her adventurous curiosity, or betrayals. Her son wakes up; she changes his nappies, and continues telling me about her life in London. So far, she has
described nearly twenty rooms that she lived in, but through her intonations, and the details about them, it becomes more and more clear that with time she starts to care less about the physical aspects of homes, which were so important when she started her journeys.

Places change quite rapidly, yet to a certain degree each of them becomes a home to her. But once she gets attached, she needs to move on. The place she is at in that particular moment is all she has, there is no other physical alternative anywhere else, she is moving with all her things; there are no traces left behind, she gets rid of the excess. The following stories of a year in London, moving back to Vilnius, finally leaving an emotionally unhealthy relationship, developing depression, fighting it, and at the same time graduating in art, are intensive, dramatic events, on the one hand unfortunate, but on the other hand suggesting new opportunities. Since she met her current partner, she has never been more settled. ‘I have never told my life in one go. It is an incredible experience’, she says. Sharing her story reminds her that she is a fighter, and that if she does not look after herself, no one will. This is the time when I feel that now she needs a break. ‘You are so brave’, I say. But I am curious and ask Laura: ‘How did you do all that, really?’

She immediately responds: ‘If you came from where I did, you would do the same. Then you are brave, you have nothing to lose. I was young, I was not hesitating, and that helped. I knew that I would survive. And every misfortune sort of proved that I could manage more and more.’ Ruth Behar (2013) says that a migrant is someone who has to travel in order to avoid suffering, and a traveller is someone who can afford a desirable change.

‘How did you come to Edinburgh, Laura?’

‘Well, once I realised that I could not continue living the way I was living, I mean, I had depression, and once a doctor suggested to me to stay at the hospital, I sort of woke up. He prescribed me lots of medicine. But I was feeling like a vegetable. I was broken inside. I was hurt by the chain of lies, and I was extremely tired.’

Laura pauses, and explains that she was spending a lot of time at home: firstly, she was avoiding people; secondly, she was forcing herself to write her dissertation. She set up an account on a dating site, and found comfort in words written by foreign men. And one of them knew a lot about depression, as his mother had suffered from it, and somehow they got along, she felt comfortable. She never agreed to Skype, or to send him more pictures of herself; there was only a blurry profile picture. And for some strange reason, he suggested helping her, finding her a job in Edinburgh.
Laura took his suggestion seriously, but vanished from the online dating site for a few months. She concentrated on her thesis, and on her mental health. Once she graduated, she finally sent him a picture of herself with a diploma in her hands, and wrote to him that she was ready to move to Edinburgh. There was no reply for a few days; she was sure that she had lost her chance, but then he wrote to her that he was willing to help her, and he knew that she did not have any money for the ticket, so he bought her one. She could not grasp what was happening. She could not stay a day longer in Lithuania, and she chose to move to a town she had never been to; once again she trusted a stranger. Laura was afraid to hope, but she hoped that this might work out; she said to herself: ‘it must’, as if there were no other option.

Laura landed in Edinburgh. A man just a few years older than herself met her at the airport, drove her to his house just outside Edinburgh, and showed Laura her room. It was a beautiful house, and her room was spacious and clean, and had everything she might need. She was relieved that he was the way he was. For the following days, Paul showed her around Edinburgh; he took a few days off work and drove her through the Highlands. She was observing him, and he seemed intrigued by the whole situation, clearly trying to impress his beautiful new housemate – two strangers under one roof. Paul helped her to find her first job in a café, he was generous with advice, and as he had recently broken up with his girlfriend, he was looking for company. They were ‘using’ each other: one was looking for friendship, the other for opportunities.

One day Laura received news that her mother had died. Laura does not express any wish to go into this matter in detail, but willingly talks about the effects she experienced after her mother’s death. She did not want to feel like her mother, who was stuck, who did not take risks, who was unhappy back at home in a village. Laura wanted to control circumstances. She decided that she needed change; it seemed that it was getting a bit too boring, too stable, not for her. She started looking for jobs abroad, and eventually packed, left Paul, and found herself on a plane to Mallorca. For Laura, moving from place to place is her way of making decisions, that means life to her.

_In my experience, life abroad requires being alert; at first, I feel as if I am living on tiptoes. It is like a new love affair, it is exciting, though you are still not sure if it is mutual, or for how long it will last. There is a lot of uncertainty in creating life elsewhere, and that requires a lot of trust. A trust for success? You think: ‘Things should go the right way, why shouldn’t they?’ At the same time, it is often a lonely experience: Time and again there is_
no one around with whom you could share joy, sadness, doubt, silence or dinner. And by no one, I mean the absence of a particular kind of someone, someone that you know, but it has to be someone simpatico, not just anyone will do. It takes time to find friends, even more time to develop the right friendships. So often, I find myself imagining that I am telling my experiences to one friend or another, or to my mother. I try to remember to tell them over Skype or by phone call, or even Facebook chat, what I so much want to share. But it is not the same: the magic of a moment is lost. In time, I even stop trying to share those experiences, too much of explaining, too much lost in time. And the distance emerges. Less and less we know about each other’s lives, though it is not that we do not care. However, friendships move from sharing experiences to merely acknowledging each other. People from here know little about my life there, and my friends from there just know bits and pieces of my life here. They do not have an opportunity to form their opinion through observations.

People’s paths meet, but they do not always go alongside one another. But when we doubt, and are lost, it is good to know that we are not alone. Though keeping those relations there and developing new ones here is a challenging task. I had to discover with each of my friends the best way to communicate, and to find the right pace. It requires effort, more than one expects. Nevertheless, I am missing mundane details of my family and friends’ lives, and they are missing mine. We do not bother one another with a huge amount of tedious details from our lives: we filter, select, and categorize information that we share. Our friendships change, our communication with family members finds different formats, but once those changes are accepted, once they are not treated as ‘less’, once missing someone does not become a ‘blame-game’, communication settles down to an infrequent, but nevertheless honest format.

Having friends and family, trying to keep the relations with them through occasional postcards, text messages, Christmas cards, short chats or long calls creates the strength to overcome struggles. But what if they, living there, were not interested in me living here? What if there was no waiting for my rare visits, for occasional chats? Waiting for something gives me strength, the sense of purpose. What if there is no waiting? But no one is waiting like mothers do.

Laura tells me her story, and realises how much her life has been a struggle. Even though she often explains her motivation to migrate in terms of economic reasons, those reasons are so intertwined with the necessity to survive on an existential level. Psychologist
Madison explains that family situation and economic factors are ‘intimately infused with the primary hope of fulfilling … [one’s] … potential as a person’ (2010, p.118). Laura always felt that it could be potentially better to be somewhere else – if she faced a challenging problem, if she felt unhappy where she was. Does that mean she was not trying enough to solve problems, or even running away? Or maybe it was the only way she knew how to solve problems, and to move on. To move to another place meant for Laura a possibility to start over, to change her life. I can feel from her intonation and pauses that there is a mixture of disappointment in her narrative that she did not manage to, nor did want to, stay for longer in those places, but there is also a lot of pride in being that adventurous. Laura admits that she has changed; she would not do now what she did 14 or even 8 years ago. At the same time, that was her ‘chosen path’, as all other options were considered non-viable.

Laura says she does not have home, in the sense of a place to which she could return, a place of safety. She comes to realise that this notion of what constitutes home is a personal and intimate contemplation, and it takes time to get to know what home is, though she has never given herself time for this kind of sense to evolve. For Laura, home was taken away when they had to move to the village, and this decision of her parents was fatal. As Laura put it: ‘It must be my destiny to move from one place to another’. She has believed that her fate is to be homeless, to be at home on the move. In other words, the act of searching was her way of trying to discover the place that would convince her to stay, as she has never believed that an arbitrary place, as homeland, is where you meant to stay (see similar discussion in Madison, 2010, p.149).

It did not go that well for Laura in Mallorca: she found that her agreed in advance job did not exist, she had to find another waitress job on a spot. She describes her time on the island as a mess, though in a beautiful environment. She felt that she should not stay there for a long time. Paul asked her to come back, and once again bought her a ticket, but this time she did not go back to his house.

Laura needs to have a sense of control in her life, and she has discovered that there are many ways of leading her life. It does not have to be restricted by a nation state, city, circle of friends, or spoken language, though these factors are all important. She has learnt that she can justify an uncomfortable situation for the sake of achieving her dream, as long as there is a good reason for it. Once it had become unbearable to live in Copenhagen, she found courage to call her mother, and in situations when there was no one around her to
help, she asked strangers. She felt strong when she pushed herself out of her comfort zone; she needed to be surprised. Sometimes it was unpleasant, sometimes the plans did not work out, but Laura knew that without trying, it would all just remain speculation. For the last two years, she has been enjoying her family life with her caring partner Tim and cheerful son. You would think that, finally, she could relax, but she does not sleep much, she is lost.

When does detachment become ignorance, coldness, or a means of leaving things, people, places behind, not caring about them? Does it make sense to talk about migration as leaving (family, country), as running away (from problems, unemployment)? Could it be that detachment from a particular content means engagement with a new one, other things, other people, and different places?

Sometimes home is expressed through habits (cleaning, house rules) or things (used or hidden in cupboards); those material manifestations are treated as continuations of previous home(s)-places, though the meanings of those practices and things change in time. Historically, relating and detaching are understood as oppositions in the logic of relations (for more about detachment in historical perspective, see Cadea et al., 2015). Following Laura’s story, I see detachment as just another kind of relation, which has its purpose and a logic behind it. It is important to pay attention to how detachment is practised in reality, what kind of typologies of detachment one can practise and observe. Detachment can be analysed as two types: stable (state) and ongoing (process/detaching); both can be affirmed with regard to any entity (e.g., detached from knowledge, communities, houses, field sites, beliefs, relationships), and can be experienced between entities or within them. Therefore, there are various tactics or strategies and emotions involved in experiencing detachment, such as negotiation, positioning, cultivation, separation, relationality or negation. Overall, detachment arguably is a dynamic relation that embraces various modes of subjective engagements, and therefore, can nurture new kinds of knowledges (Cadea et al., 2015).

In order to capture the changing nature of relations towards previous and current living places, which may involve detachment, we need to define the entities that become starting points for detachment and at the same time possibilities for discovering a new look at or approach to the ever changing interactions with places. Most often, my interlocutors, including Laura, would talk about Lithuania as a home base, but they were hard on themselves, for thinking that home should be in Lithuania, but not feeling that it was. This criticism and pressure is the result of an active process of searching for meaning and relation to that place (Lithuania) from a distance. Life abroad means detaching from one
place, but at the same time, through being elsewhere, we rediscover or establish our relation with that other place. Yet, this does not happen just by living elsewhere, but through thinking and dreaming about it. The place becomes a part of a sense of oneself.

Following this train of thought, migration is not interpreted as a one-way decision or direction; it is very much a mental experience of here and now that may be captured through things and environments from a remembered life or the lack of that for an imagined life. Home in Lithuania and/or Scotland are locales where at first sight separate, but intimately interlinked biographies merge, generating psychological and social histories of places and possible futures.

In the four years that followed her return from Mallorca, Laura changed apartment eight times. She was desperately looking for the best fit, for the best circumstances to be in, and if things did not go right, she would move on, she would leave people, apartments, jobs behind, she would not hesitate. She has described to me in detail so many apartments, and she would always talk about tidiness, how she kept her things, cleaned the apartment, and how different approaches towards cleanliness usually caused arguments with her former flat-mates.

Once she started dating Tim, she felt that it was right, and she did everything she felt was necessary to make this relationship work. Laura felt that there was no place for her in Lithuania, her ‘coming backs’ were brief, reminiscent more of pauses between journeys. I ask her to describe Lithuania to me; I am interested whether she misses it, how often she goes there. Laura tells me that she has not been back for a few years. She explains to me that the first things she notices are the smelly trolley buses, sadness in the eyes of people, hardship, and impoliteness. She emphasises aspects of society that she has never been fond of. There is nothing in her narrative that would suggest that there is some sort of longing; even if there is, she does not express it. At the same time, this does not mean that she is not critical towards Scotland, or Edinburgh in particular. She complains about politics, housing issues, nursery rules as anyone else. However, for the first time in her life she senses a point in staying.

For Laura a place is a way of being, it is a new start for her. On the surface, it may seem that she does not carry traces of her past, only possibilities for the future. However, this time it is different, settling down with her partner, giving birth to a child is giving her the chance to rethink, to rediscover her past in order to move forward. Though she has been so strong for so long, she suddenly feels weak and anxious. She is loved, looked after, and
she loves, and it seems that there is no reason not to be satisfied – but she is lost. She is trying to discover where she is coming from, what her identity is, what her purpose, and what she wants. For so many years, she was driven by the idea of survival, and for so many years, she has been on her own.

Laura admits that she has not made many friends here in Edinburgh, and does not have a strong circle of friends in Lithuania either. She creates little circles of people around herself, but people, colleagues or flat-mates, are always changing. She is in touch mainly with her sister, who lives in the same village where they grew up, her brother, who is in England, and a few friends. However, conversations with her family are rare, and it seems they require lots of emotional effort for Laura.

Laura tells me it is the first time she has told her life story, and she feels lighter. It must have been a therapeutic experience for her. The action of storytelling is a process which is manifold: it liberates, connects, and restores, but it also expresses our acceptance of circumstances that cannot be changed. Through storytelling one can experience the agency that one has had in one’s life, and the disruptions that have happened on a way; it is a process that connects external events and internal state. Jackson, referring to White, explains that once a person manages to externalize events and re-member them through reorganizing them, one can see oneself as a part of a collective membership; it is a chance to revisit those relationships that one once had (Jackson, 2013a, pp.25-27).

In Laura’s case, migration was seen as the only possibility, to strive for something better, but this is not only about searching for a better economic situation, but very much for a better way of being, which is a broader concept compared to economy – it implies existential migration (Madison, 2006; 2010).
In-between: Deadlines and Places

And why does everyone keep on asking me if I am coming back to Lithuania after my PhD? Do places have deadlines?

‘When do you submit your thesis, what are your plans for the future?’

I receive another message from a friend on Messenger.

I respond ‘I do not know’; I add a smiling face, but I do not smile.

I keep on dreaming of my future home. I decorate it with rocking chair, lamps, plates, and tables seen in the charity shops. And I would get many plants, big ones.

I keep on dreaming about my future home; I try to focus on details of it.

Do places have deadlines?

Contracts have.

‘You can go everywhere. You should apply for positions in several countries.’ I have been told so many times, I have been reminded that academics should not be attached to places, as their love object is the discipline.

I know that I could move again to another country, I know that I could discover a new place, and it could even be called home one day. But it asks for a commitment and courage to imagine oneself elsewhere.
7  Goda: Explorations of the Not-Yet Home

‘I felt so strange after that meeting on Sunday with Gediminas’, Goda says while preparing the dinner. Gediminas is a close Lithuanian friend who used to be one of her flatmates in the first apartment that she shared with three other Lithuanians in Edinburgh. A few months ago, Gediminas moved to Lithuania with his Lithuanian girlfriend; for a few days he had come back to visit his friends in Edinburgh.

‘Honestly, I was surprised with my reaction. Why was I so upset?’ Goda tells me. ‘He told me how happy he was to be there, to be so close with his family, living without any other flatmates but his girlfriend. He had not found a good job yet, but he explained to me that he did not bother about that at all, or not that much, as everything else was so nice. He simply enjoys life!’ Goda explains to me that she felt very uneasy after their conversation; she felt the urge to call her mother and ask her whether she was doing something bad in choosing to be away. Her mother replied that she did have a job, a nice place to live, a boyfriend, and she recently seems to be sincerely happy there, and wondered why all of that should be treated as bad.

Later that evening her sister called Goda and told her that their mother had been distraught for the rest of the evening after the conversation, and had cried. Goda adds: ‘Deep inside, she would like me to be there, in Lithuania, and I remember once she told me that she hoped that I would not get stuck in Edinburgh forever.’

She reminds me that the same time last year, when she was unemployed, had no place to live, and was ready to move to Lithuania, her mother said that she did not approve of her plan to return, she would not ‘take her back’, she said that there was nothing for her to do in Lithuania. Goda and I remember how that encouraged her to stay for a bit longer; we knew that her mother was not serious: she wanted Goda to try harder to chase her chances to stay rather than pack and leave then.

This conversation of Goda’s with her mother was just after ours, on the day when she left her job in a care home for people with dementia. She felt exhausted working there; she would cry when one of them died because she felt attached to those people; but she hated the environment of the institution. Goda felt stuck there, she felt that people who were also working there were not developing, that they were fixed in their boring routines,
they were emotionless, and impatient. She felt that she was becoming one of them, and was afraid of such prospects.

I remember her standing in my kitchen by the window drinking tea, and telling me that she was leaving Edinburgh, and going to Lithuania.

‘Are you?’ I asked her. I did not want her to leave, I hoped to hear proof that it was just a thought, but she sounded so sure. I could feel that all she was saying in the next minutes was well thought through.

‘Yes.’ she replied apologising: ‘Getting a full-time position in any advertising agency is challenging, or maybe impossible...for me. Maybe that is not for me. Though I studied that, and for what? I am lost. My English could be improved, so I cannot aim for the position I could actually do. It is difficult. And I do not understand if I do something wrong, is it me, or is it circumstances. So I finally came to the conclusion that I am here for nothing. I am working in a boring job, I am not happy waking up and knowing that I will go there. I hate my living conditions. I feel somehow sad there, I cannot sleep for months normally. I am stressed, and you see how much weight I lost.’ She is right. She is so right. And I tell Goda that I understand her. ‘When? When are you leaving?’ She replies that she will probably leave in three weeks’ time.

It is her second decision to leave Edinburgh in the last two years. And I am afraid that this time it might be for real. I will lose a friend, or, to be more precise, she will become one of the friends that live far away.

The talk with her mother had encouraged Goda to give herself a little bit of time. It turned out that those two weeks was the time she needed to get a full time job, and a place to live (for the last year she had been renting a room from a friend for less than the market rate, but had not felt comfortable about that).

And today I am standing in her kitchen, listening to how the meeting with Gediminas has touched her. ‘I was so upset after that meeting’, Goda says, ‘so much so that my boyfriend suggested I go to Lithuania for two months, or at least for a few weeks. He told me that I must be homesick. Vitalija, I do not want to go there to live, but somehow my conversation with Gediminas touched something within me that I started doubting the reasons why I am here; what is the point to be far away from my family? Nevertheless, I bought tickets, I will go there in spring for a week.’

Goda is 28 and a university graduate in humanities; for the last five years she has been living in Scotland. Before moving here she had been working in a café in Lithuania.
One of the new clients in the cosy old town café was a charming guy who very soon had to take his flight back to Edinburgh where he was studying. Shortly thereafter, Goda announced to her family: ‘I have fallen in love and I am moving to Edinburgh’. Though their relationship ended after a year, she is still in Edinburgh. Once she came, she started working as a waitress in various cafés, as her English was basic. In the meantime, she received a Masters degree in creative advertising, did several internships with advertising agencies, and worked in a care home. However, only in the winter of 2016 did she, for the first time, get a full-time, relatively well paid job in an international company. Before, one could say that she was financially always in a difficult situation.

I had got to witness her serious plans of moving to Lithuania twice in the last two years when she had stopped feeling that she could have a future in Edinburgh, a future that she wished for. Madison notes that homesickness is an ‘interactive experience’ (2010, p.119), which is both a criticism of the present and a longing for one’s past. Solnit (2006) explains how differently we approach places, the ones in which we are present, and the ones we recall or long for. The latter become deities (p.118). And material objects of the past should guarantee the sense of home, transmit one’s history or provide meaningfulness. We learned from Sigita’s story that things do not rebuild home, but, not having them with you, as in the case of Lina, things keep a link to the former home place, and become an anchor that does not fully allow sailing to a new harbour. Goda was too young to have created her own home in Lithuania, so it is her mother’s apartment that she considers to be home when she talks about her past home in Lithuania. She knows that her personal home belongs to the future, the one she will create, though where her dreams could be inhabited is unknown.

Lithuanians I have met occasionally talk about moving back to Lithuania in terms of ‘coming back to the right place’. This kind of narrative that rarely becomes practical serves as a comfort, as theoretical alternative to dealing with problems, stress, or discomfort. Reading my notes, I find this passage that captures a situation of having the opportunity to return, but choosing not to.

‘I was offered a job in marketing, in Vilnius’, she told me casually one day, she did not give me any time to react to this news, and continued: ‘I love so many things about Lithuania, I love nettles by the house, I really do. I love paths, and this or that. I love many things in Lithuania, from Lithuania, but I do not think I want to live there. Especially, when I got this possibility to get a job there, I have realised that I do not want to. It would be a
step back. I want to achieve things on my own, here [Edinburgh] and further [from Lithuania].’ At that time she had just started her part time work in a care home, and was doing an interesting internship at the advertising agency, with lots of hope that she would finally secure a permanent job. Goda felt trapped in her deceiving wishes: she would like to ‘return’, but not truly; she would like to stay, but asks herself ‘what for?’ During years of life in Edinburgh, Lithuania became a foreign land (cf. Lowenthal, 2015), and it became a place that may promise new opportunities. Goda thought that she had never really given Lithuania a chance. She started dreaming about possibly belonging there, tried to convince herself, that she was ready for the ‘mythical return home’ journey, where she could find her ‘true belonging’. Despite the fact that Goda is theoretically open to this ‘coming back’, she is critical about her way of daydreaming of this possible ‘return’.

One summer evening, Goda and I were sitting in my kitchen eating roasted vegetables with halloumi and hummus, chatting about the approaching summer and holiday destinations. And suddenly she asked me how I felt in Lithuania, as I recently had spent 12 days there. ‘It was good’, I replied. As I could see on her face that this was not the answer she was expecting, I asked: ‘But what do you mean?’ Goda was interested in my emotions about every place I visited. She said: ‘Okay, let’s start from the beginning. You land, and what is happening?’

‘My mum met me at the airport, and we took a bus’, I replied.

‘How did you feel on the bus? Were you actually feeling that you were in Lithuania?’ I was surprised by such a detailed enquiry, and slowly tried to place myself there and then, but all I said was: ‘Well I was with my mother, and later on, I was visiting my friends living in different cities, I was in Lithuania because of them. So it was all about people, rather than place’.

I was saying those words but I could remember myself sitting on the bus, and I could feel the heat, the bus was slow and the journey seemed to last forever. My mum and I were chatting, but I was noticing elderly women in synthetic blouses getting on the bus. I could not tell whether they were tired from the sun or if it was a general disappointment in their eyes. The houses through the window seemed to be so familiar, and most of them were still not touched by renovation. I was contemplating that during those days in Lithuania, I had tried to separate the civic realm (public situation) and the private realm (my mum, my friends) but failed. It was impossible to ignore increased prices in Euros, the insecure political situation, the general instability, and the notion – or rather, the irony –
that it could get worse. Nevertheless, such ‘coming backs’ are crucial in migrants’ everyday experience; one has a need to come back to the home-country/city/particular apartment physically and mentally in order to move forward elsewhere. Even though such returns to the home-country are rare, they are emotionally important, during such journeys the everyday is less likely to be taken for granted, but gives time for reflection on one’s life.

My flow of thoughts is interrupted by Goda’s words: ‘I get sad in Lithuania, there are so many memories there, and I get overwhelmed by my past, I do not know how to deal with that. It seems that I am drawn back, but at the same time I feel that I do not have a future there. Here, in Edinburgh, I feel lighter, as if I had a chance to start it over, and I have a future here, or I want to have. To be honest, I am not sure if I imagine my future in Edinburgh either, but I want to say that it could be anywhere, but not in Lithuania, and Edinburgh is a part of that ‘anywhere’. Goda is tense and puzzled about her relation with Vilnius and Edinburgh. She admits that she has been contemplating this issue a lot, but all she finds is contradictions in her actions: there are moments when she feels convinced that her path is to push her luck abroad, but sometimes she is assured that there is no better place to be than there, Lithuania. She explains:

‘I am confused, I feel tense in Lithuania; therefore I am not going to Lithuania this summer. In Edinburgh, it is somehow easier to be, there is not so much of memories, though I am slowly collecting them. In Lithuania, I am not fresh; I am stuck in the past. My memories are attacking me, and distracting me from reality. Moreover, I know that I am only there for a short period of time. I know that I should enjoy my moments, because I am leaving soon, nevertheless, I feel uneasy. This is how I feel during my trips back.’

‘It is not easy. Goda, it is not easy’, I respond. ‘What if it is a process of letting that embedded heaviness go, the memories do not belong to those walls, they are yours, are they not? Would that mean that by letting your past go, you would allow for your present and possible futures to coexist with those memories of yours.’ ‘Mhmm… interesting. At the moment it seems that I have two presents, one is here, and the other one is in Lithuania, but actually Lithuania’s present is the imagined past of mine.’ After a pause, Goda starts talking about loneliness; that is a common topic of ours. ‘I am simplifying when I say that life is somehow easier in Edinburgh, sometimes it is so lonely. There are so many moments, when I am misunderstood, when I misunderstand others, when I cannot express myself, when I do not get something or someone, when I do not know about something of this place, because I get to know about something else. These moments strike as bold
loneliness, as if it was impossible to belong to this place. In the end of a day, I am a newcomer to this place, rather than from this place.’ Goda explains to me how in those moments, days or sometimes weeks, she seeks comfort in photographs, things, presents that she has around her in her room, all those things become a cure that suggests that maybe back there, in Lithuania, she would not have such worries.

‘When I am in Lithuania, I want to be back to my Lithuania in the past, but it is impossible, because things happened while I was away, and all I have is memories. I want to belong, I feel that I have to belong, but I do not. Because my Lithuania is only in memories, I cannot grasp Lithuania that is here and now, just the surface. I am interested how you feel, Vitalija, as I wonder if it is only I failing in feeling connected but being lost, or maybe there are more people who experience similar feelings. The place of my past becomes an idealised space, and I want to go back, but once I am back I realise that it has changed. I understand that things transform or evolve; nevertheless I want to experience the same emotions that I used to. I understand that I tend to idealise my own past that I even may be lying to myself how things were a few years ago. The irony is that I create an ideal past of my own, and Lithuania becomes a place of the past, or even an imagined place, but when I am there, I realise that ‘my Lithuania’ does not exist. This clash of reality and fantasy becomes painful. I am asking myself why do I idealise it? Is it because I am not satisfied with my reality?’

‘Goda,’ I say, ‘but just a few months ago you were planning on moving to Lithuania.’

‘Oh, I know. I was so lost, so I wanted to come back to the known, and familiar. But actually, this known and familiar is just to a certain extent. If I think more, I have not been living in Vilnius for the last nine years, and I still have a room of my own, but actually, it belongs to my sister now. I do not have my place there; it is my mom’s home. All I have is memories or rather imaginaries of my past or even future.’

I am looking at my notes, reading remarks on conversations with Goda. At first glance it is a collection of contradictions: a wide range of emotions, admiration, longing, comfort, opportunities, challenges, familiarity, boredom, excitement, for both cities, Edinburgh and Vilnius. Through her insights about those places, memories of them and dreams how she would like to live, it becomes obvious how her relation to places is circumstanced by external events (housing situation, job, friends), her sense of home is relational. Furthermore, she notices that everything is temporal: her beliefs, feelings,
memories, emotions. It is not that they are not true in the moment, but she is aware that they may be different next day, week, month, or in a year. This notion unsettles her, it is a state of being between longing to belong and knowing that nowhere could she feel at home, the home that is ‘forever’. Once she described home as an illusion that people chase: it is never as one has imagined, it is never as stable as one wishes, and it is impossible to grasp all circumstances, as home should (Fig. 7.1).

Jeanne Moore (2007) writes about how homelessness should be seen as presence, but not as an absence of home. Both home and homelessness are concepts that depend on time and ideology. On the one hand, how we define our experiences now, or how my great-grandparents did in the mid-20th century, depends on the normative understanding of how and where one should live. On the other hand, how things should be and how things happen can be totally different matters. Moore proposes:

To suggest that homelessness is a total absence of feeling at home, of place, culture, and belonging, is to ignore both the inherent tensions in the concept of home and the presence of homelessness. (Moore, 2007, p.147)

She argues that home and homelessness are in a dialectical relationship and therefore not opposites, because both of them capture the complexities of experiences in time and through time (p.152). For Goda, home could be several things at the same time, and what is emphasised depends on temporal personal conditions. If she is talking about here and now, then home is more about people and interactions, habits, tidiness, personal things, phone and Skype calls. If she is talking about her near future, then it is a rented
place, where she lives alone or with her partner, where family life could happen. She complains how in her current or previous places she had to adjust to other people’s rules, how little power she had over how things were done in communal spaces. Silence, guests, sharing things, and cleaning routines are constant negotiations that may exhaust at times. She dreams loudly about her future place that is arranged, organised to her taste, and looked after, a place that is inhabited by her, where her past can find its own place and her dreams could be attached to it. Once she realised that very soon she might start living with her boyfriend, she experienced once again how her dreams had to adapt to the new circumstances. She is conscious of this temporal state, but at the same time, she is quite uncomfortable about it. One could say that it is both, lost and found at the same time. What if dreams about home change again? Again?

I recall one evening in that period of uncertainty, when after her three month internship she was not offered a permanent position; when she could not stand working in a care home; when she felt guilty that her housing situation had not been sorted, instead a month or two of staying in the guest room at her friend’s; she is still there, though a year has passed. ‘You see, I have to lie…a bit…to my family. I cannot say all the time how things really are here. For example, my grandfather should not worry about me, so I tell him that I am working, that I am fine, you know.’ I asked her whether she would lie if she were in Lithuania. ‘No, I do not think so, he would see that I am fine, that there are people who can look after me, but here, he does not know how I live. So, he would not understand why I am so far away if things are not going well.’

I asked her whether she really thought that the further away you were the better life should be. Goda did not reply immediately, but said: ‘Yeah, I guess so, that’s how people explain migration. Why else to be elsewhere if not for the better?’

Goda adds to her previous remark about having to lie to her grandfather and some of her friends, that she is much more open with her mother and sister. ‘I have a filter when I communicate with my mother or sister. I tell them a lot, but some aspects I have to keep silent, and actually those bits of logic or emotions that I decide to keep to myself are the reasons for our miscommunication. I remember, my sister was here, and we were just about to Skype our mother, and before the call, I told her not to mention this or that. My sister said: “You keep so much to yourself. That’s why we sometimes do not understand you.”’ Goda admits that her sister is right, and explains to me that she usually comes home tired,
and she wants to make conversation on Skype as light as possible, so she decides to skip many details.

Goda feels guilty and tired of explaining how she lives; she speculates whether she needs to legitimise why she is still in Edinburgh. Goda imagines that if she was ‘failing to live the dream life’ close to the family, it would be easier for her family members, because they would at least see her. She is far away, but Skype and telephone calls connect, though sometimes the sound of a Skype call is most annoying.

Over three years Goda talked about her life in Edinburgh in themes of ‘running away’, ‘searching for possibilities’, or ‘going with a flow’. During conversations, I noticed how remarks about events depended on her current priorities or needs at the time. The same stories would be told differently; her reactions and conclusions would get different inflections in words. That does not help to create an overall picture of a phenomenon of movement, or does it? Or to what extent can we generalise people’s experiences?

She would share with me her ideas about leaving friends behind, on developing new friendships. ‘Life abroad is lacking people that know you well. To become friends takes time and in time it is more difficult, people come and go, it becomes scary to get too attached. Such avoidance is protection, but at the same time a burden. All I miss is those people who know me really well. But I am here, and they do not know how I live here, well they know bits and pieces, but not the whole story, they have not been here, they do not know the circumstances, they may try to understand, but they cannot, because it is me here, and without them. And once I am back, we need to have an update talk; usually they are monologues, which cover events, circumstances, and moods in each of our lives. Once that talk is done, then one of us says: “Now we can be together”. Those updates are required in order to be on the same page, in order to be sensitive and attentive.’

Figure 7.2 Goda’s family: mother, sister, Goda, a grandmother and sister; father playing with Goda and her sister. [Photographs] (Source: from Goda’s personal archive, selected by Goda)
Goda, Laura and I in a similar manner ask ourselves: ‘Is it worth to be far away from the ones who already love us? What does really matter in life? Is what we already have in the place that we call homeland not enough? (Fig. 7.2)’

Migration is a decision, but it does have unexpected effects, it is the uncanny lonely act that constantly raises questions of why, what for and for how long. Once she got a permanent job, though not in an advertising agency, Goda phoned me and told me that finally she can afford to move elsewhere or to go to the dentist. Migration emphasises how much time we wait for something to happen, hoping, wishing, dreaming, imagining, and remembering. Everyday becomes much more of a raw experience, as it does not disguise itself under the familiar. Bloch explains:

*When the striving is felt, it becomes 'longing', the only honest state in all men [sic]. The longing itself is no less vague and general than the urge, but at least it is clearly directed outwards. It does not burrow like urging does, but roves around, though quite as utterly restless, addicted. And if it becomes obsessed with itself, the longing remains mere general addiction. Roving around blind and empty, the latter can never go to the place where it would be stilled.* (Bloch, 1996, p.45)

What happens if a person does not want to be where one is, or when one is not sure about the chosen place? Bloch notes that ‘it is easy to wish we were far away from a bad place. But the road out of it is less obvious, it must first be laid’ (Bloch 1995a, p. 746). How to find the right path, and what does it mean to lose one’s way?

*Egg-laying, nest-building, migration are performed by instinct, as if precise 'knowledge' of the future existed, but this very future is one in which only the million-year-old destinies of the species occur. It is an automatic future with old contents, and consequently, since nothing new occurs in it, the false one mentioned above.* (Bloch, 1996, p.142)

The drive to discover the realm of the unfamiliar requires curiosity, and taking paths that are not known. And importantly, once one finds a path, and discovers the unknown, previous knowledge and values change. Bloch (1995a p.750) explains that utopian ideas do not exist in a vacuum, but in a space full of the real Possible. The relation between inner force and environment is two-fold, though the inner force is always outwards orientated, it requires attentive awareness and only then can the drive push beyond the perceptible.
In this chapter, I am focusing on a process of inhabiting places that are temporary and very often described as not homes; however, they are treated as places that should help to provide a sense of home, or rather, should be places that are Not-Yet (Bloch, 1996) homes, expressing the action of heading towards home. My aim is to emphasise the notion of continual home. But this continuation does not focus only on homing or unhoming practices (Baxter & Brickell, 2015), but includes inner takes on what home is, and also reactions to external events, and experiences of unforeseen circumstances. The argument is that what is considered to be processual home is an internally (personally) as much as externally (socially) defined concept, always charged with emotions, memories and dreams, but also always within the world.

What makes a place home, I wonder. ‘It all depends’, as Sharley Mallett (2004) concludes in her literature review about understandings of home. It is crucial to realise all levels of home, and how those scales sometimes shrink to the corner of a room or a particular moment, and expand a bit to cover family, friends, and sometimes home is understood through the use of a mother tongue or becomes a synonym to the entire nation.

It is important to stress that the sense of being at home abroad is practiced through materiality and habits; however, that does not mean that engagement with things, food, or continuing particular practices are related to a nostalgia for one’s homeland, but simply an ability to create ‘palpable connections to places and people in different locations’ (Frykman & Humbracht, 2013, p.65). Nevertheless, extensive studies with migrants show that the relation with one’s homeland is complex, and home itself is a polarised concept (Andits, 2015; Mallett, 2004). In short, migrants engage with the new place through habitual continuities, occasionally have national food, and are surrounded by personal stuff that was brought from the homeland, but these actions and engagements are perceived as a new normality.

Goda says: ‘My understanding of what is home changes in time, maybe I have become more philosophical about it, maybe I am calmer, maybe I start accepting how things are. I am much more perceptive of feelings that are combinations of longing, disappointment, pain, idealism. I sort of understand that we humans are individually on our own. But still, if one is going back to Lithuania more often, one feels that there is something not finished there, that one still has questions about that place.’

Bloch (1996) argues that people are driven towards something through reactions, observations, and correspondences with the world, and all of that stimulates actions and
movements towards the New, and in this case the sense of home. This New is something that has Not-Yet happened, but living the Not-Yet-home is life that is driven by dreams and imagination, and most importantly, it creates a hope that home may happen.

‘I do not particularly see my future in Edinburgh, but much more, I do not see myself in Lithuania. Maybe somewhere, but I do not know where though. I keep on reminding myself that I should know, but I do not. I am not a blank page, I have experiences, but I simply do not know. In Lithuania not knowing is much more difficult. It is in so many ways a familiar place, and in an awkward cultural way you know how to go about there, how to survive, in Edinburgh it is different. I have to discover things, therefore not to know is much more acceptable. In that sense, I feel free abroad. I am actually discovering myself in a much more intense way compared to Lithuania. Living in a foreign country creates much more freedom within oneself, because one needs to experiment more. In Lithuania, there is less unknown in some way. My aim is to feel at home anywhere.’

This ‘anywhere’, for Goda is not only a metaphor, but rather she is emphasising that she can make almost any place her home, by investing time, looking after it, arranging, creating circumstances for her habits to settle there.

Goda reflects: ‘I have noticed that I inhabit different places easily, I create a homely environment, but feeling peaceful, calm in the heart is not that easy.’ Goda creates homely environments, but lacks a sense of belonging in Edinburgh. However, during our conversations I understood that her homesickness is not about her homeland or her past home, but rather it is about the sense of belonging that her family members experience. She is longing for the experience rather than the physicality of her past home. During her visits, she realised that her family’s environment did not have the same effect on her as on them; she understood that she has to seek for her own calmness, she has to find her own way. Goda realised that even dreams are placed geographically, but she has not found her place yet. Therefore, she envisions her home, which is charged with a sense of belonging, her order, with various emotional, social, and even economic connotations, and, most importantly, it is placed in an abstract future.

I have tried to express the emotions of Goda that remind me of a rollercoaster, to grasp the very low moments, and signs of prospects. The notion of ‘home’ has become for Goda a challenge to grasp, as it is full of contradictions; it has become an anxious matter, and a source of existential questioning (see Madison, 2006). Bloch understands anxiety that is questioning, because it is not only determined by mood, but also is an ‘unresolved
element of its Object’ (Bloch, 1996, p.111). How do we get to know how we inhabit places, experience dwelling, create home, if not by losing attachments to places, leaving places, re-creating places for home to become? But once we experience that fixity is not what goes hand in hand with the notion of home, the whole experience of home, which should provide comfort and emotional security, becomes temporal and fragile to both, external and internal shifts. This journey towards home for Goda is not an easy one; she called the whole business of home an illusion, as it is always in the past, which is always remembered differently, or imagined, and the journey towards the dream is usually not as smooth as one wishes. Nevertheless, Goda wishes for her home, so often, she would say: ‘I cannot wait till I have my home finally’. The dreaming of home becomes a desired proof that she has made the right decision to live far from her family, friends, and very often mother tongue; it is the state that is driven by the explicit longing that is directed towards this ambiguous something that we call home. Longing, as something definite, ceases to strike out in all directions at once. It becomes a 'searching', its driving-towards is divided up according to the something at which it is directed, thus becoming this or that individually nameable 'drive' (Bloch, 1996, pp.45-46):

      The All in the identifying sense is the Absolute of that which people basically want. Thus this identity lies in the dark ground of all waking dreams, hopes, utopias themselves and is also the gold ground on to which the concrete utopias are applied. Every solid daydream intends this double ground as homeland; it is the still unfound, the experienced Not-Yet-Experience in every experience that has previously become (Bloch, 1996, p.316).

      As already mentioned, past, present and future coexist, but none of that is a solid entity; it is all on the move, that is, changing through thriving towards the Not-Yet conscious – these three entities are experienced through the action of becoming. Bloch reminds us that a person who dreams experiences a desire for something new that dawns inside him or her. He puts it simply: ‘[w]e’ have in us what we could become’ (Bloch, 1995b, p.927). But the question is: what is it that a person desires and wishes in life over all, and how does a person know that his/her dream is the right one? The answer is related to the moral judgments and values of that person; however, what is considered to be good is not understood only subjectively, but also objectively. To put it differently, what is good is desired, and that which is desired is ‘objectively desirable’ (Bloch, 1995b, p.1325).
Figure 7.3 Goda’s things and gifts. [Photographs] (Source: pictures taken by me)
From left to right: in the first picture we see two T-shirts illustrated by Goda’s several friends. In the second picture, there is jewellery, little statues made by her father; she keeps his presents usually in visible places, or if those tiny precious things are kept in boxes, they are easy to access. The fork is from her childhood. The cup Goda describes as one in which wine tastes good; it reminds her of her friends in Lithuania. A spoon with a ring used to belong to her father, and as a child she was very impressed by it; before moving to Edinburgh she asked her father if she could have it. The last picture illustrates that she likes to be surrounded by memorabilia, and organises presents around her; through gifts she creates ambience of the place – they are moved around, some may be emphasised, others get hidden.
How do people decide to leave a country, choose what to pack when they are moving to another place, what is used, what is missed? Which bits of life do they want to remember? Where do they put the books, photographs, jewellery, or little statues they bring? Are those things visible or rather hidden in cupboards, as in Sigita’s case? And how do narratives about those things change over time? These are questions that matter to each person, though in different intensity. Löfgren (2016) writes about things that create a particular moment in time, or a traffic between the past, present and future. And things that have been carefully selected or randomly packed are micro-universes of a person. Interestingly, those things could feel as if they are out of place, that they do not belong to a place, and at the same time they could suggest comfort, may evoke memories or aspirations.

Arranging possessions allows a possible engagement with a place, capturing the notion of difference, although, as mentioned before, it is the continual development of one’s identity. Through things one can enter one’s memories, but due to being in a new place, the relation to those memories shifts; therefore it is instructive to observe how personal things from Lithuania are displayed, and what kind of narratives are told about those things (Fig.7.3). Goda once told me that for her, ‘home is a combination of physical and emotional realities, and they have to match, otherwise, if emotions are not the right ones for that place, it is difficult to come back home every evening’. According to her approach, the two realms are co-dependent. The physical place becomes an access to the emotions that are wished to be experienced, and because the place is emotionally charged, emotions become associated with the place. However, time plays an important role in the dynamics of this codependency. When a person moves to a new place, this is Not-Yet charged with emotions, and there is little experience of living there, but there is hope that the place will become one that could be called home, even if that is only for a limited period. Over time, experiences of living there are collected and attached to the place, and the attitude towards it may change. Those attitudes do not only depend on the comfort of a place, flat-mates or partners with whom the place is shared, things that are there, wished to be brought or bought; it also is influenced by what happens outside of it. Political events (the Scottish independence referendum, Brexit), economic instability (unemployment, part-time work, rent inflation), cultural differences (habits, language issues) may affect the experience of a place that could be called home. Goda was never too concerned about politics as political decisions seemed to be too abstract for immediate effect on her own
life. So once her work contract changed from temporary to permanent, everyone congratulated her as this created a more stable situation within the uncertain Brexit context, though Goda herself was surprised that such a detail on a piece of paper could or should change her status, or people’s approach towards her.

‘I was packing my things (Fig. 7.4) a month ago, and I wanted to get rid of as many things as possible, so I decided to give up my vinyls collection. Somehow I realised that in this place that I am living now, and I have been there for a year, I have never listened to them. And now as I needed to move, I wanted to make that move as easy as possible. I gave my collection to my neighbour and a friend. However, the next day, I have to say, the very next morning, I realised what I had done; it felt as if I was having a moral hangover. I felt sad; I had given up a part of me. I realised that I keep on giving up so many things. I care about things, and I am rather sentimental, but still I do not have this luxury of keeping, collecting things, or just having them in an attic. Life abroad has many disadvantages in that sense. I realise that in a few years I will be having children, and one day they would go through my things and ask about this or that, but actually so many things would be missing, and I will not be able to tell those stories, and I even may forget them. I always loved to go through my grandfather’s or my father’s pictures, music, or other stuff. But I just destroyed that possibility. And then the saddest thing happened; I was Skyping with my father, who is living in Germany (he has been working there for a few months), and he told me that he went to the local flea market, and saw a vinyl that he liked, but it was too expensive for him. In that moment I felt so miserable, my father could not afford vinyls and I had just given them away, and probably the ones that he could have enjoyed.’
Figure 7.4 Moving from one place in Edinburgh to the other [Photographs] (Source: first and second rows: from Goda’s personal archive; third and forth row: pictures taken by me in her new place).
This conversation happened when I was visiting Goda in her new place, suggested by her friend for a period of a month or two, till she got a full-time position, but a month or two of transition became a year. During such periods, habitating, homing tactics become crucial, as they help to access one’s sense of home.

Jonas Frykman writes that ‘something strange happens: the objects increasingly take on the character of subjects – acting of their own power’ (Frykman, 2002, p.49). He explains that people tend to reason about their identity and interpersonal relations through things; however, he rhetorically wonders if things are not ‘more than just what people around them want to read into them’ (p.49)? He suggests that in order to be involved in the dialogue between the present and the past, things should be understood not in a reducing rational way, but as creative and suggesting diversity when the encounter with things happens, as ideas, memories, perceptions, dreams, and fantasies are provoked.

Tidying, moving objects, and overall creating a meaningful environment guides us, and also constrains, but it is through everyday practices that ‘the place of things’ (Dion et al., 2014) becomes home. Materiality is organised through infusions of abstract social and cultural meanings, and that creates an active cosmology for each person (Miller, 2001; Miller, 2008), being in material form, but evoking particular reactions, patterns of behaviour, senses of homes. Researches (e.g., Dion et al., 2014) note that due to mobility things become out of place, referring to Mary Douglas’s idea of symbolic pollution on a micro-social level, but the focus is not on things being out of place themselves, but on our reactions to them not being in place, and that creates that notion of pollution. It is relevant to ask how a sense of homeliness is re-created.

On the one hand, such homing practices for Goda are about feeling comfortable, rather than about creating a place that would recall her homeland. On the other hand, she has many gifts from her parents and friends, childhood books, and other little memorabilia, which are scattered around her room(s), and her narratives about those things confirm that they are about people and events from her past, and her wish to have them as a part of her present. Though according to her, she treats her memorabilia as a part of any environment that she would create, whether that would be in Vilnius or Edinburgh. Goda emphasises much more the intense emotions that she experiences during Skype talks (Fig.7.5). She says:

‘I skype a lot with my mother, father and sister. My mom even has a ritual, she shows me our cat and dog over Skype. And I ask her sometimes to show me the view from
the window. You can imagine, typical Soviet bloc neighbourhood, nothing exciting or particularly beautiful, but I can notice how the trees have become bigger. My mum usually shows me what she cooked. It is an amazing feeling, I feel good, but this goodness is so close to feeling a pain. Also, when my mom is telling me what she did, what she saw, whom she visited, and the language she uses makes me sad because it is beautiful, those words are so particular, that I may not have used or heard for a while’.

![Figure 7.5 Screenshots from Skype talks, Goda’s mother showing the dog (left), her sister showing fruits (right). Pictures were taken and sent to me by Goda | Photographs (Source: from Goda’s personal archive, selected by Goda)](image)

The Skype talks extend the sense of being in a place. It has been observed in studies on digital ethnography (Pink et al., 2016) that there could be four ways of being somewhere. One is to be physically in a place, when face-to-face-conversations may happen; second is remotely, via Skype or chats; third is the so-called ‘third space’, virtual reality that could be entered through web for a real-time games, mailing lists, and so on; fourth is imaginatively, that allows one to be somewhere through media, sharing sites, blogs (Postill, 2015). Often the ‘ways of being’ mentioned are used as methods by ethnographers doing research; however, I am suggesting that people themselves live in this kind of everyday triangulation. We could recall how Rasa, Sigita, Laura, and I were using all those paths to be elsewhere: phone calls, reading news, watching TV, dreaming, remembering, and also short visits. This extends our sense of being from Lithuania, with family and friends, but living in Scotland. However, I am not arguing that it necessarily helps to connect to stay closer, because it also emphasises distance through the temporality of that kind of interaction. Contemporary migrants are dynamic human beings, who use technologies and transport, and manage to link different cultures, societies, and economies. This new intensive interconnection experience has created a new type of migrant, who simultaneously manages to commit to two or more societies. Journeys of ‘coming back
home’ from Scotland to Lithuania or emotions felt during Skype conversations when a former home-place is seen, are a part of homing and unhoming practices of a migrant that involve negotiations of what to hold on to and what to leave behind. I interpret such actions as emotionally charged journeys, which are complex experiences influenced by desired futures, possibilities of the moment, and acceptances of one's past. Based on my research, I am exploring how material objects or their absence are playing a part in the process of settling down, with the idea of inhabiting a new place and continuing creating home, just elsewhere.

I recall a situation when Goda and I were cooking at her place, and I asked if she had a spice crusher (Fig. 7.6). ‘Oh yes, I do!’ she said. While looking for it in a cupboard she told me: ‘I remember how I bought it, maybe a year ago, I had no money at all, and I was with a friend in a car boot sale, and suddenly I saw that spice crusher. It was heavy, beautiful and somehow “real” and it touched my heart. I asked for the price, and literally that was all that I had, and I bought without any doubt, because it was something that I would like to have at home, not this home, but my home, my future home.’

Living the Not-Yet is living the hope or the dreaming of a better life, though the better life should not be limited to the better lifestyle: it is a much broader notion that includes comfort, both material and emotional, but importantly it requires an attentive way of being. It is a practice and a realisation that things, including the notion of home, exist in active and ever evolving meshworks; however, the discovery of this complexity is usually emotionally difficult and requires self-reflection.
Another time Goda explains to me: ‘I always thought that once I discover or create my home, I will start painting. My father always asks me on Skype whether I do any arts as I used to, and I respond “not yet, but I will”.’ And after a pause, she adds: ‘I need particular circumstances for that, I have to admit that there were probably three or four times, when I started painting in the last four years, but it was just the starting point, I never really did that.’ Goda has a vision how home should feel, she has a hope that one day this vision will happen, and it becomes a drive to keep on moving in improving her situation, or at least changing it. However, it seems that there is always something unforeseen that stops her from starting painting.

Goda describes how she felt in every place she lived in Edinburgh, and Lithuania, once she moved out from her parents’ home, and why she did not start painting there or did not continue doing that, even though before every move to a new place she was convinced that this would happen. In one place her relationship with her now former boyfriend did not develop the way she wanted, in another she was too worried about getting a job and earning money, in yet another place, she felt that it was temporary and she should not stay there for too long; then she did not like the atmosphere of the house because of flat-mates, and so on.

‘To paint’ becomes a twofold indicator of home for Goda. On the one hand it is a motivation to chase her dream of home, on the other hand it is an indicator that home never really happens, that there is always something missing, or not going according to her plan, and therefore she needs to change one or other aspect of her life in order to be closer to the abstract emotional notion of home, a state when she could start painting again. Later, she would sadly add: ‘It could be that home does not exist, I am searching for something that is impossible, and it is just a trick, though a nice one’.

Daydreaming is a play with alternative realities (Ehn & Löfgren, 2010, p.181), and the process of longing for something becomes a pleasure itself; it needs to be stressed, however, that daydreaming is part of reality, not so much an escape from it (p.198). Furthermore, in dreams and hopes changes are visualised, and could thus become a source of inspiration, creativity and coping that is needed at a particular moment.

Philosopher Ernst Bloch (1995a) argues that dreams should not be described as only internally produced ideas, they are always in relation to the outside world, the social and economic context. One could think of a dreamer as a practical person (p.658) who solves problems or challenges. Moreover, dreaming the Not-Yet Home means having a dream in that particular moment, and more or less believing that the imagined home may happen.
The experience of Not-Yet Home most of the time is nothing other than home in that moment, it overwhelms, it combines memories and dreams in the present. The realm of Not-Yet-home is a direction, or movement-towards, in which Not-Yet-experienced dreams and Not-Yet-discovered pasts coexist. Talking about personal conceptions of home, and focusing on a future, does not mean that external aspects of the multi-layered nature of its subject are ignored, such as space, materiality, temporality, nor various forms of relations, such as emotional, spiritual and imaginary, but rather entails all of them through various aspects of life. One may say that experiencing the Not-Yet Home is not tangible, nevertheless it is real for the person experiencing that vision, and probably home never gets more real than in that moment. Solnit (2006, p.121) writes ‘the landscape in which identity is supposed to be grounded is not solid stuff; it’s made out of memory and desire, rather than rock and soil, as are the songs’.

Scholars writing about migration, and especially about reasons to migrate, emphasise the importance of discovery and search for new experiences or knowledge. However, discovery usually goes along with loss. The process from known to unknown is sometimes measured in terms of success or good experience, sometimes through memories, and the high price for being in a new place, but this new place usually means new situations, new circumstances.

For Bloch, utopian dreaming is what makes our present; to put it differently: utopias are experiences of the Not-Yet experienced, and therefore the present is based on utopian conscience, but this is not far away from reality – it actually is always in tune with external circumstances. Otherwise, it would be an abstract dream, which would not be a Real-Possible, but would be simply a fantasy lost in an Empty-Possible (p.144). Utopia is not the opposite of reality, but it is a possibility of that reality, and which is a part of the present’s content. This experience of the Not-Yet experienced is not just a search, a drive, and a hope, but also the understanding of the present.

*The essential content of hope is not hope, but since it does not allow precisely the latter to be wrecked, it is distanceless Being-Here, present tense. Utopia works only for the sake of the present which is to be attained, and so in the end present, as the finally intended distancelessness, is sprinkled into all utopian distances. (Bloch, 1996, p.315)*
Such understanding of the present through a future oriented angle emphasises that
the world is not so much about being, but rather becoming. In other words, the present as
such is not approachable, because it requires distance, but our way of being is a result of
our thought about a future. In order to make utopia happen, one needs to make it happen,
and Bloch calls that action utopian function, which means that utopia becomes conscious
through action, it moves from the area of the Not-Yet-Conscious to a known content (1996,
p.144). Furthermore, he argues that Being-here is always in the darkness of the Now (ibid.
p.307).

‘I am avoiding the reality, all I want to do is sleep actually, but everyone is asking
me if I have got the job.’ Goda tells me about the pressure she feels from her family and
friends during her three-month internship, as she has been talking about working in the
advertising business for the last few years. ‘I knew that with my Lithuanian diploma I could
not really have a career, it means nothing here; therefore I wanted to do a Masters in
Edinburgh. And I did. I just thought that once I have the right diploma, it would be much
easier to get a position. But the field is so competitive, and I am not sure whether I do not
get offers because I am not a native English speaker, or because I am not good.’ Goda tells
me that her third internship is approaching the end, and she is not sure whether she is going
to be offered the position. She feels trapped in time, between her dreams and a reality she
feels she does not have control of. She wants to leave the care home where she works three
days a week as soon as possible; another three days are taken up by the internship, and she
has only one day of rest. ‘I have had this image of me working in that advertising agency;
there were no alternatives in my mind. But now, I am realising that I may not get a position.
And once I think of it, I feel like žemė slysta iš po koją [the rug had been pulled from under
me]’. Goda then explores how she is starting to realise that it is not clever of her to stick to
one particular dream, because if that one does not happen, she feels destroyed, weak, out of
place. We already know, that in the end she did not get the job, and that brought her to
seriously consider the possibility of leaving Scotland for a second time.

Primarily, everybody lives in the future, because they strive, past things only come
later, and an as yet genuine present is almost never there at all. The future dimension
contains what is feared or what is hoped for; as regards human intention, that is, when it is
not thwarted, it contains only what is hoped for. (Bloch, 1996, p.4)

What are people hoping for? What do they daydream about that much? And why
does focusing on becoming say more about who we are than simply being here and now?
Bloch argues that daydreaming has nothing to do with repressed consciousness; it is a drive forwards into the New, which extends the self, but relies not only on the past. This orientation towards the future is called Not-Yet-Conscious, because it has never happened, but is a direction towards fulfilment, it is a hope that includes emotions, ideas and thoughts. It is a fusion of thinking and hoping, and not a separation of thought and emotion. At the same time, the Not-Yet-Conscious could be compared to the preconscious, just not of the repressed or forgotten, but of what is to come; it is something that dawns not from the past, but from the future (ibid p.116). It is an action of reception of the New, or beyond the known and experienced, it is a drive, a longing and a surplus (ideological, cultural and spiritual). It becomes an opportunity that allows people to articulate their wishes. Bloch calls that the Front where matters are decided.

Goda has given me so many different descriptions of Vilnius and Edinburgh, but I am not surprised that those experiences of places were so diverse even though given by the same person. A place is a temporal experience with all the memories and dreams that emerge in the moment, but it is always within wider social, political, and emotional spheres. What is important to emphasise is that the tone of Goda’s narratives very much depended on her hope, her imaginaries of the Not-Yet. Her belief, or the lack of it, became a filter for how she sensed the place, how she made sense of events and how she reflected on her life. Furthermore, the sense of temporality is the lens through which the process of (re)creating, (re)thinking and (re)discovering home is experienced.
In-between: No one Knows how long, how far and where to Home Will Take You

‘How do we know that home is the home, that one’s being is homely enough, but enough of what, or maybe Not-Yet homely or not homely anymore? These are the questions that disturb probably each of us from time to time’, I say to myself, and continue to wonder while walking back to my flat from the local Tesco. ‘Could it be that once home experiences are reflected upon rather than being left to be experiences per se, that kind of talking makes home as if it was an object that is comprehensible, as if we had a language to express the continuous processes of reactions towards the world?’

My thinking was interrupted by a phone call. Mantas called me and said that his wife, the baby, and he were just passing my house, and they wondered if I wanted to go for a walk. I was just around the corner, and did not mind a walk; I quickly ran back to the flat for a minute to put the frozen peas just bought into the freezer. Only a few hours ago the family had landed in Edinburgh after their first visit to Lithuania with their newborn baby. We walked through the park and discussed Brexit, EU funding in engineering, and academia. Our discussion emphasised the situation that we could do nothing but wait. We wished to know that ‘nothing’ could disturb our personal plans on a political level; we expressed uncertainty, which led to doubt whether our dreams could come true. They were talking about settling down, but the couple was convinced neither by the prospects in Lithuania nor those in Scotland. ‘Need to be open for options’, they would say. I ask myself if I am oppressed by the possible change. I find it easier to accept the fact that people, feelings, thoughts change, but I am struggling to welcome that my constantly changing little world depends on the wider, more abstract flows of political rigour.

The next day I meet with Goda, who has recently come back from the trip to Lithuania she had dreamt so much about. She expresses how happy she is to be back and gives me a bag of Lithuanian sweets. Goda explains to me that she needs changes in her life; she feels bored at work, she and her boyfriend want to change their country of residence, as she has never lived anywhere else but Lithuania and Scotland.
On the way back to my flat, I think about yesterday’s and today’s meetings and summarise them to myself: ‘Expectations from home, feelings towards home and thoughts of home shift in time. We aim to move towards the fulfilment of our dreams, those dreams seem comforting and inspiring, but if one takes them earnestly and nourishes them with constant updates of a complex reality, then it is almost impossible to notice any changes (tiny or significant) in dreams’ forms, shades, tones, and volumes. It is like seeing oneself in a mirror, and not noticing how the face has started accommodating wrinkles, how the skin has started losing its elasticity. It is about the ‘I’ that is undergoing changes on grand as well as mundane scales.

I unwrap one of the sweets from the bag, I bite into it, and the taste is so familiar; I am surprised to find comfort in the taste of melting chocolate in my mouth.

It is unsatisfying to spend so much time in talking with people, writing, editing, reading and discussing, and not having a precise definition that captures the concept of home, which seems to stay hiding in-between the daily banal but crucial habits, the materiality of life, the dreams that guide us through the routine, and the memories of one’s past. However, there must be something about the person who takes stands in the circumstances of here and now. But the moment of here and now is never simply a spot on a timeline, it is a complex meshwork of lines that stretches to all possible spheres of life and in time, that captures places we visited, lived, and never dared to stay, people whom we met, loved, or (were) left (by). All that happened matters, but also what never took place, as we keep on wondering what if.

Nevertheless, my argument is not that home is everything at any time, but rather it is balancing between everything. Once one sphere of life takes over the other, instability is brought to one’s life. If one corner of it gets more attention than the rest, the framework collapses, as all of them require nourishment. Things happen, and we find ourselves without a job, so we focus on economic survival or our career; we feel that we want to settle down, we search with whom, how and where; we feel adventurous, we take risks and explore; we want to connect, we look after people and places; we get ill, we try to focus on a recovery. I do believe that this frame is kinetic, flexible; it likes to bend in order to move.

Different stages of life require different foci; nevertheless, we need to find meaning in all that has happened to us, what we have made ourselves to go through. Could it be that the secret of the sense of home is in keeping the balance between the
little things, drinking coffee from one’s favourite cup every morning, having a favourite seat at the table, every year sending Christmas cards to friends and relatives, keeping curiosity in life and in bigger, more abstract flows of other people, politics, economy?

‘And the balance I have in mind is not the focus on conditions, improving or changing them, but finding meaning in whatever we do’, I repeat to myself.

What I have learned from discussions with Lithuanian migrants in Scotland is that one must learn how to connect all the spheres of life as often as possible, otherwise, the meaning could be lost of why and how life is lived the way it is. Very often there is little coherence in how things develop, we get upset, disappointed, but also find new paths to lead our lives. We dream of a future as if the world were stable, but it seems that very often a person is required to be spontaneous. This required spontaneity demands one to go beyond one’s confined narrative of how life should be lived. The sense of home is a temporal notion that captures the meaning behind the mundane, behaviour, choices, reactions, and so on, and it is experienced here and now, but at the same time, the sense of home transcends to memories, dreams, other places and people. So probably what is most important is that the here and now is the starting point for an emerging sense of home, but you never know how long, how far and where to it will take you.

My mother calls me, and she tells me that she is changing jobs, that my flower plant, the one I got for my sixteenth birthday from a friend, has just started blooming. She complains about the weather; also she mentions that she has changed the flour she uses for baking bread, and it tastes different, but reminds me that I will get a chance to evaluate the taste of it myself in a month when I come for a ten day visit. After the talk, I water my plants in Edinburgh and arrange dinner plans with my boyfriend.
8 EPILOGUE

After my plane landed in Edinburgh airport, I calmly queued for my passport to be checked, I got on a bus, showed the bus driver my return ticket, called my mum and told her ‘it is a bit chilly here’. I was sitting on the bus remembering my trip to Lithuania, places visited, bits of conversations with my mum or friends were popping up in my mind. I noticed that this arrival was different from the return to Lithuania 10 days earlier. Landing in Edinburgh was much less exciting, as I knew that my holidays were over, I was coming to my place where I live.

During this research my own relation to Scotland has imperceptibly evolved: the way I navigate in Edinburgh has become a much more relaxed, very often taken for granted experience; I effortlessly switch to the English language in daily life and dreams; I read about politics, and I care about social issues in Scotland, as much as in Lithuania. ‘Are you at home, where is your home?’ are the questions that I have been asked every time I mentioned that my PhD was about the concept of home. To my surprise, I had not managed to create a ready-made answer during those years, and I always tried to answer as if I was questioned for the first time. I noticed that an underlying idea of my responses would be a recurring thought that I was getting there, Not-Yet Home, but on a way there. By there I never meant a particular place, but rather an action of moving towards the state of being when living inside-out and outside-in correlated.

Contribution to the Field

This study is authentic in two ways: the case study and methodology. Firstly, it suggests insights into how some of Lithuanians were living in Scotland at the time of my research. It is contributing to the studies on migration with a particular focus on Eastern Europeans in Scotland. This study was carried out in the Lithuanian language, and therefore there was no language barrier in carrying conversations, furthermore I used my own experiences to express mundane and at the same time intimate thoughts and practices of homing and un-homing places. I have identified at the beginning of this research two angles to approach home: placial (place) and existential (I) perspectives. To my mind, this approach through place and I emphasised the overlapping insights on home, such as
unpredictability, incompleteness and continuous practice of a placed I. I tackled them both through aspects of materiality, time, social relations, personal ambitions, plans, dreams, and politics through my interlocutors’ life stories.

Secondly, I suggest three new ways to engage with ethnography: the Thinking Machines of ‘Mapping Stories’, ‘Mapping Place’, and ‘Following Lina’s Story’. My developed reflective and performative exercises are a contribution to the field as they allow one to unpack the process of knowledge building. The Thinking Machines create novel circumstances for the researcher to perceive, engage with, and think about a representation of research. The suggested investigative approaches emphasise insights into how the research is designed, analysed and discussed. These exercises (described in detail in Chapters 2.2.1, 2.2.2. and 2.2.3) could be treated as techniques by other researchers to discover how their own knowledge is shaped and determined by the ethnographic data and their interpretation of it.

**Reflection on the Process of thinking and writing**

Through conversations with migrants about our lives, through long, sometimes uncomfortable dialogues of being Not-Yet Home, I faced a challenge in writing those abstract, messy ideas and strange moods into a coherent account. Furthermore, I did not want to suggest through my research enquiry that my interlocutors should emphasise their sense of belonging to the past, homeland (roots) or positively focus on emplacement in Scotland (see discussion in Jansen & Löfving 2009). My interest lay in between those two extremes, as I aimed to grasp what being-away-from-home and searching-for-home-again (Boccagni 2017) feel like.

Such focus on one’s own being suggests sensitive explorations of subjective trajectories of lives that include not only where, but also when, how and in what context one’s home happens, is imagined, dreamed about or ignored. The interest in where, when, how, and what created a meshwork that allowed me to capture the temporality of my interlocutors’ senses of home. To my mind, I was able to extend the interpretation of home not only as something that existed or is associated with the past, but also as something that is imagined, longed for, and hoped to reach. Through my interlocutors’ stories, which were very much expressing personal and social interpretations of home through places (Scotland

---

23 Jansen (2009) critically approached researchers’ fascination with place in home, migration and refugee studies by saying ‘displaced persons are not only displaced but persons too’ (emphasis in the original, p.55).
versus Lithuania), I tried to grasp a correlation between a person and a particular place. In Jansen’s (2009, p.59) words ‘the social life of emplaced temporality’ is what emphasises the meanings, hopes and longings of home. It is never just a place and a person, we are always within a broad social, cultural and political spectrum, and that creates a complex interrelation between a person and a place, an individual that is within political, cultural, personal, professional realms and a place, where political, economic, social and cultural dynamics meet and are embodied by us.

Therefore, trying to translate those complex, emotionally charged dialogues into a visual language was a contemplated decision (see Thinking Machine I, II and III). Brickell (2011) called for inquiries that would further develop the ‘critical geographies of home’ suggested by Blunt and Dowling (2006), who argued that in order to understand home we need to look through three components: ‘home as material and imaginative; the nexus between home, power and identity; and the multi-scalarity of home’ (p.254). Brickell (2011) was interested how research could (re)vision a complex and fluid understanding of home that captures different times and scales. Similarly, I was not only fascinated by the meanings of home, but also by how to do research about home, which so often is imagined, remembered, and how to capture the micro-politics of home that are cultural, socially and politically defined and aspired. Brickell (2011) explores how ‘doing’ research ‘through mapping’ means that private becomes public, but also public interest is shaping how we see the private. Therefore, I decided to use mapping not as a tool to gather data from my interlocutors, but rather as a methodological tool to understand my field and the concepts that I was exploring. My experimentation resulted in a form of knowledge that was produced through experience. It was the action of doing that informed the research, not the creating of particular final pieces (see Fig. 2.1; 2.3; 2.13).

Moving to a different language - performative and visual - created a much-needed distance to the multifaceted narratives about home. I needed to grasp the invisible: I was interested in how to express the continual dialogue between what is told by the interlocutor and what is picked up by the researcher (Thinking Machine I); how the philosophy of place comes alive in the everyday (Thinking Machine II); and what my analytical listening to a story looks like (Thinking Machine III). At first glance, it may seem that making those Thinking Machines made me step out of conventional anthropological methods, and made me enter an interdisciplinary arena, but what I did was that I opened up about the process in knowledge production. I wanted to expose my way of thinking in order to gain trust and
confidence in my arguments, and theoretical concepts. Each person I met, generously shared with me their experiences about their lives here in Edinburgh, and there, in Lithuania, but I felt how my own familiarity with the issue of migration and personal search for home, was troubling me. I was hearing stereotypes in their stories, finding contradictions and banalities, which extremely upset me. Therefore, I needed to use different strategies in order to connect to those stories through empathy and have trust in my argument.

**Limitations and Potentials of the Research**

One could argue that each exercise is an experiment (see *Thinking Machines*) that envisions the production of knowledge, though what it produces is vague, abstract and rather a notion than an outcome. In anthropology, such incompleteness could be interpreted as not being worth including in the final piece of a thesis. However, I did not want to leave my fragmented and informal practices of research outside the margins, because these exercises created access to understandings of the enquiries stated above. Schneider and Wright (2014, p.20) invite a more creative, open-ended approach to fieldwork that is in between art and anthropology:

*To treat ethnography (and the concomitant processes of research and representation) as ruin and fragment, possible sites of intended and unintended, past and present destructions and reconstructions, from which new meanings can be engendered in processes of bricolage and assemblage, is a challenge that anthropology can take up, from, and in collaboration with, contemporary art. For anthropology, to have a debate on the incomplete, unfinished and Not-Yet-ready, is more than timely. Despite endless pondering on the status of fieldwork, field notes, and representation, there still has not been enough thorough discussion on how the fleeting experience of fieldwork can be captured and represented in other ways than by artificially crafted texts, that frequently enclose forcible completion.*

I did not take a full step in representing my research in a form other than words, but this could be a task for a future project. There is a lot of potential to use a much more collaborative approach with participants of a research and develop *Thinking Machines* together, which could be tools for telling stories, sharing them and reflecting on experiences. Furthermore, I want to note that some politicised aspects of place, in this case,
the recent Brexit and the possibly changing status of the EU, citizens in the UK are not included. I believe the changing legal status that has been taken for granted for the last years will influence how Europeans living in the UK experience their lives abroad and how a place is understood, lived and imagined. The fear and the need of bureaucracy in applying for permission to stay may underline the uncertainty and the incompleteness of the notion of home elsewhere. However, this topic of uncertainty could be researched in the future.

**Closure**

I would like to suggest incomplete and rather poetic remarks on meanings of home that I have encountered, discovered or was told about during this research.

**REGARDING HOME**

*home* is a place where life happens, is remembered and imagined; to act *here and now*, to remember other places and times, and to imagine one’s future provokes a sense of home, but once you grasp it, it is gone; that what seemed to be solid for a moment, has been disturbed by the sensibility to all what is happening behind the walls, to all that is beyond your control;

*home* is what you know by heart, you think; but the memory of the lost sense of home reminds you that it is something that is acquired and bewildered in time;

the material format of home suggests the possibility of home to happen and to continue to happen here,

but *home* also stays home in new places, with other people, among different things;

*home* is a concern,

individual and shared;

*home* is a decision

made by you, but not only for yourself,
at times it is with others and for others;

*home* is an intention that follows the imaginaries,
it may restrict your choices,
it may become a filter of right or wrong and for how long;
whose imaginary is it?
and once it is not yours, you search, get lost, you learn to be flexible and adaptable,

\textit{home} is the interaction between the two entities, you and the world;
two entities moving in time charged with uncertainties;

\textit{home} is a hope for balance,
for a safe uncertainty;
and it never stops, it is a never ending correspondence
towards the inside, towards the outside
between external and internal worlds.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Home Office, 2013. Table 1.3: Overseas-born population in the United Kingdom, excluding some residents in communal establishments, by sex, by country of birth, January 2013 to December 2013. [Online] Available at: Table 1.3: Overseas-born population in the United Kingdom, excluding some residents in communal establishments, by sex, by country of birth (accessed 12 November 2016).


