was

PEACE

Linden
Royce
by 02.02.23 - 24.03.23

HOME
was ~~never~~ a
PLACE

I've moved five times, attended seven schools, and lived in four different countries so far. I say so far because moving is a constant in my life, it's bound to continue. Even when I think about my own independent adult life, I don't see how I could settle down and stay in one place forever. Moving is what I understand as normal. As a result, I've struggled a lot with the idea of home—I don't know where to call home because I don't belong to any one given place. This book is an exploration of "home" through lenses of place, family, moving, nostalgia, and overall growing up.
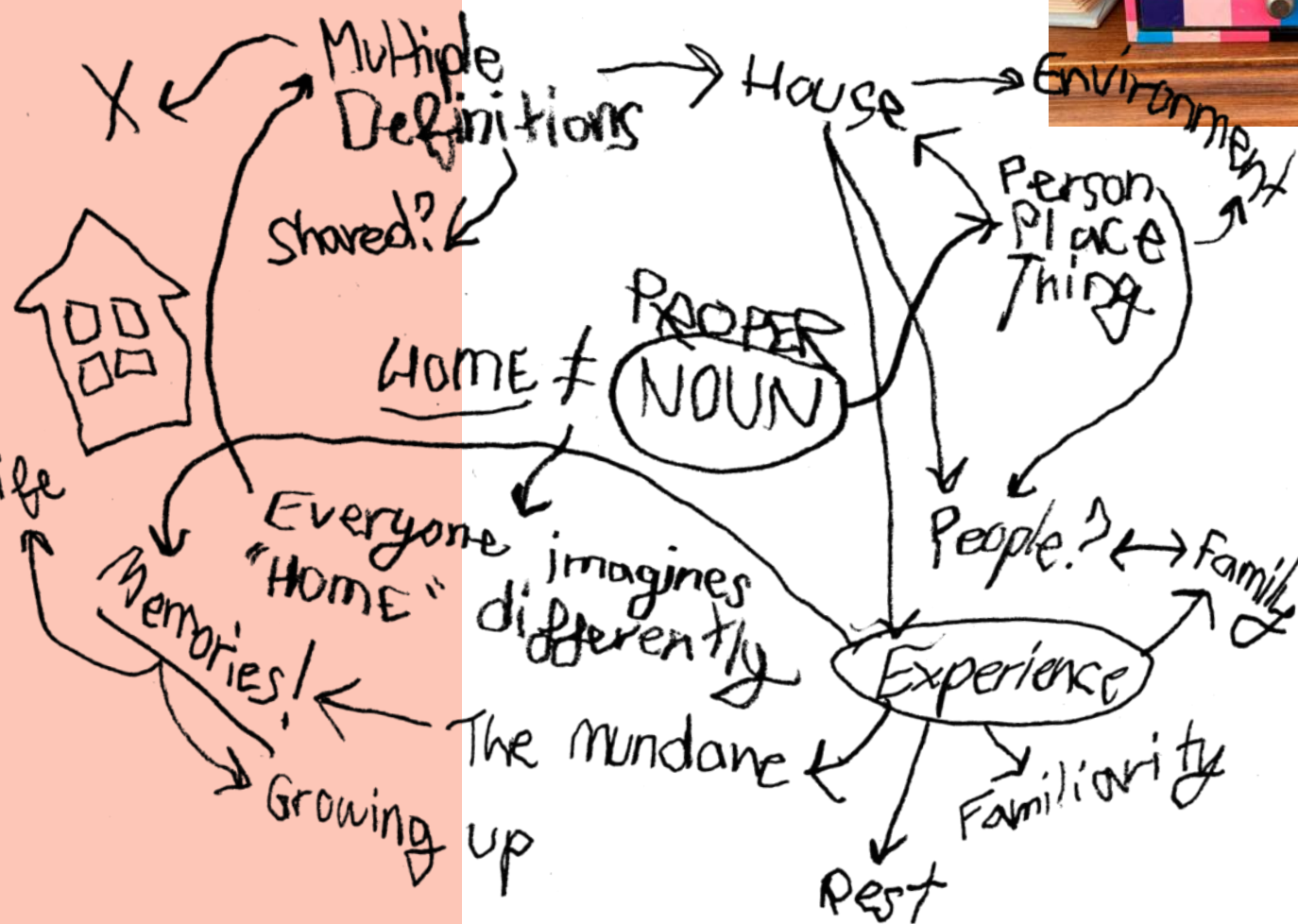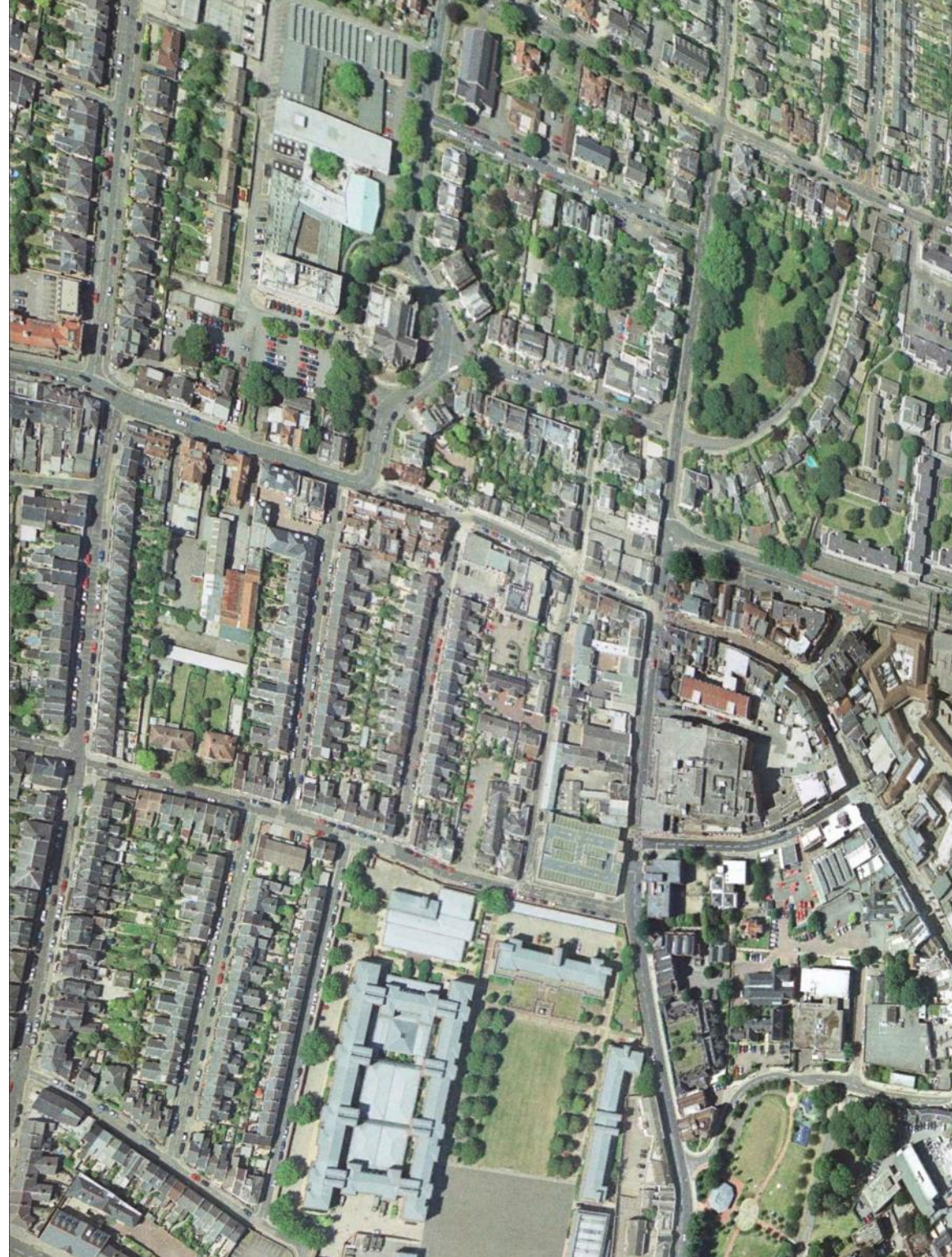
HOME

IS MADE
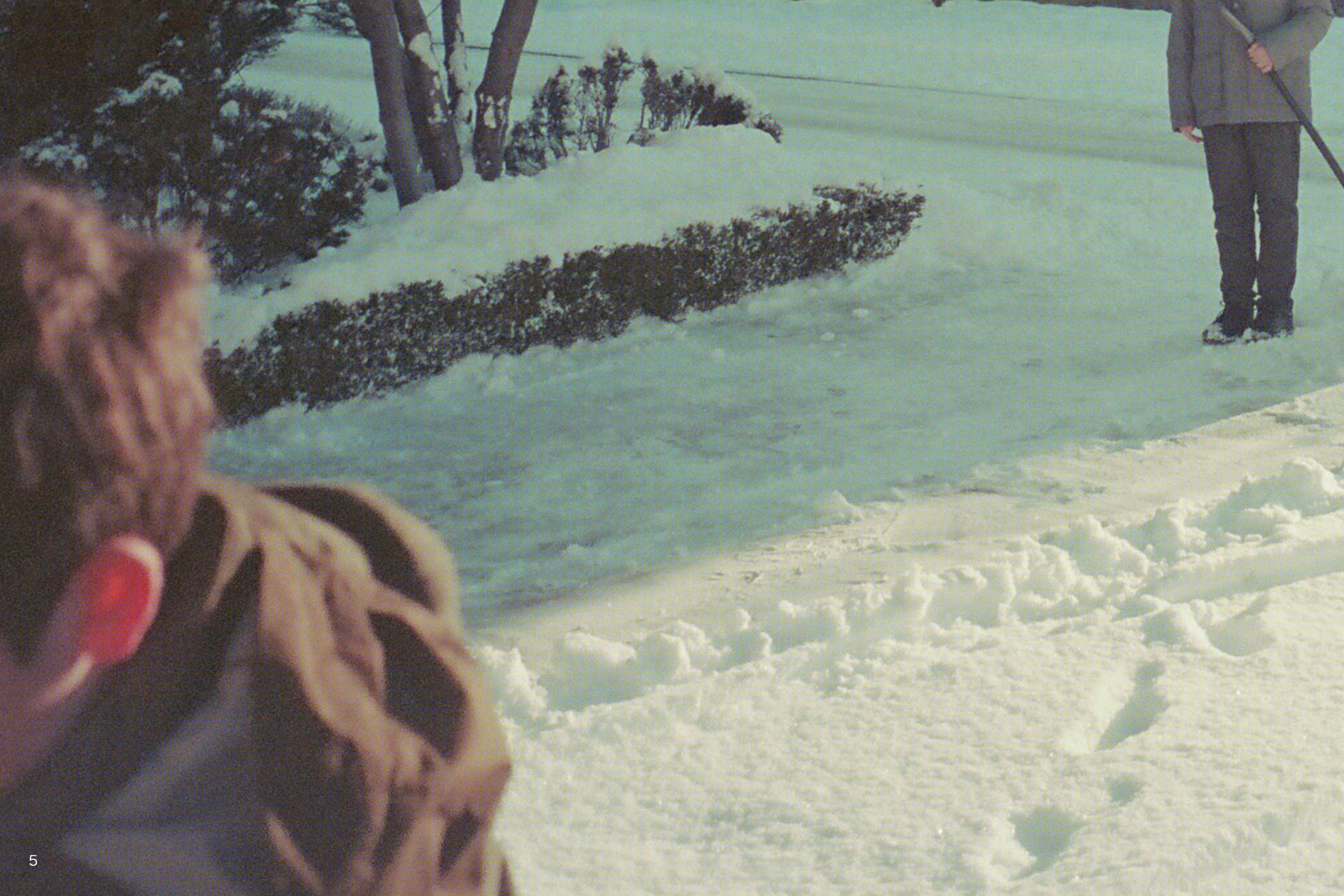
For a while I considered England my home, as it was where I had lived the longest, but it's been so long since I lived in England that I'd feel like a fraud if I went back—not to mention the fact that I don't even have a British accent anymore. I never really considered France my home, yet I still wish I spoke French. Not just because it would've been cool to be bilingual, but also because it was a part of me and my "global" identity. How else do people know where you're from other than how you look or sound? But when you're from so many places, how do you synthesise that? When people ask me "where are you from?" I don't know how to answer them without some long winded-explanation. I think because I'm simultaneously from everywhere and nowhere, I'm left searching for an impossible identity. With moving around being such a crucial part of my life, I want people to know about it, but something about simply telling people doesn't do it justice; if I still spoke French or sounded British, it feels as though it would validate my lived experiences more. Those feel like strange or even vain things to mourn, but you want people to know the life you've lived because you want them to understand you, and in a way, losing those things has made my story less visible.

X — Multiple Definitions → House → Environment

Shared?

Person Place Thing

Home ≠ PROPER NOUN

HOME

Life

Everyone "HOME" imagines differently

Memories!

Growing up

The mundane

People? ↔ Family

Experience

Familiarity

Rest

9

JOB RELOCATION SOURCES of STRESS & SENSE of HOME

pp. 12————20

by JEFFREY W. RIEMER

INTRODUCTION

Martin (1999, p. 231) defines job relocation as 'the process of a simultaneous job and geographical move.' Workers have always had to follow job opportunities in order to improve their life situation or to survive. But what kind of social impact does job relocation carry? What are the social costs and rewards of moving away from family and friends for a job?

Historically, the onset of the Industrial Revolution in America made relocation from farm to city more common. The city was where the well-paid jobs were located (Henslin, 2000). When suitable employment is unavailable in a region, relocation may become necessary for economic survival (Woodruff, 1993). When young people decide to strike out on their own in search of economic independence or advanced education to improve their place in society, relocation is often necessary. This has been particularly true in rural areas of the country (Fuguitt & Heaton, 1995).

Over the last few decades, increased global competition has led to plant closings and companies moving to places where they could be more competitive. When a company decides to move, employees may be given a chance to relocate in order to keep their jobs. An employee may be asked to relocate to another city, or even to another country, as part of his or her company's offer. Anderson and Stark (1988) report that large corporations relocate an average of 100,000 employees and their families each year. Some of these moves up-root entire families and seriously fragment extended family relations. Increasingly, one spouse may have to quit a job so that the other can make a career advancement move (Cohen, Brummer Buono & Hill, 1994; Hendershott, 1995). Such a decision can strain family relations.

Mounting evidence suggests job relocation can be disruptive to the lives of people and can splinter families (Dobrzynski, 1996). A longitudinal study by Martin (1996) found that job relocation was stress specific and remained so following the move. LaVan, Katz & Hochwarter (1990) report that the fastest growing category of workers' compensation cases are stress claims, and the increase is partially attributable to job relocation. Evidence from various sociological and epidemiological studies suggests that persons who relocate tend to have higher rates of suicide than non-movers (Rothberg, 1991).

Our research explores job relocation from the point of view of those who have relocated for work. Emphasis is placed on the kinds of stress experienced with the move and how it was managed. Focus is placed on the varieties of experiences encountered and the impressions these persons had relative to the move, especially as these feelings are related to their family. We will show that people and their families are often adversely impacted by job relocation, and this can be consequential for both the family and the workforce in society. We will demonstrate the importance of the adage 'home is where the heart is,' and how it makes sociological sense to consider this neglected aspect of job relocation. We will show that work and family are strongly linked (Voydanoff, 1984).

A SENSE OF HOME

Our data reflect the importance of 'home' on those who relocate. This concept needs a brief introduction before presenting the findings of this research.

Relocating from one's home to a new and often strange place is typically not easy or without consequence. People tend to identify with a place, and it affects other parts of their lives (Cuba & Hummon, 1993; Milligan, 1998). 'Pulling up one's roots' and setting them down in a new location always carries some risk and uncertainty; it is a chancy venture under the best of circumstances (Flynn, 1995; Laabs, 1994; Romano, 1995).

This is because self-conception is linked to one's 'sense of home.' Our identity is based in the social experiences in our lives. Our self-conception is a social construction, emerging out of the context of social interaction (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Blumer, 1969). How a person is defined, and defines himself or herself, occurs within the context of social interaction and social relationships. Who we are is linked to our meaningful social relationships and important social experiences. Our personal values are embodied within these social arrangements and experiences.

Milligan (1998, p. 2) refers to 'the emotional link formed by an individual to a physical site that has been given meaning through interaction' as 'place attachment.' Hummon (1986, p. 34) writes about place-identity as a 'sense of place' rather than a specific site of attachment. For Hummon, place-identity is 'an interpretation of the self that uses place as a sign or locus of identity' (Hummon, 1986, p. 34). Our personal 'sense of home' is typically the locus for many valued experiences and fond memories, often based in childhood remembrances. Our identity, how we see ourselves, provides us with a sense of purpose and worth. Our 'sense of home,' the imagined as well as the physical place, serves as an important context for our self-conception. Our research will show that a person's 'sense of home,' of fond memories and meaningful social relationships with family and friends, can serve as a stable feature in an unstable environment brought about by a job relocation.

How persons feel about their location influences their behavior in other aspects of their lives. How people view their work, their community, their neighbors, these are evaluated in the context of what they know, what they like, with what they are familiar and comfortable. A person's 'sense of home' is used in this evaluation. When away from home, there may be feelings of being adrift, of being 'homesick,' or a preoccupation with searching for a way back 'home.'

Even objects taken from home have been shown to comfort relocated persons. Silver (1996), in a study of role transitions among college students, found that students who relocated to attend college learned that meaningful objects taken from home made their relocation easier. Similarly, Bennett and Luebberman (1995) suggest that 'home' can be captured in special objects like a family photo, a bed, a quilt, or a memento of some kind. These studies demonstrate that a person's 'sense of home' is portable when a physical location must be left behind. In old age, the motivation to be at 'home' appears paramount. To retire close to the memories, to the people and places that are most important to you, often becomes the direction and desire of those in their later years. One's 'sense of home' may literally be the end of the road in a person's life quest for purpose, peace, and happiness.

Where a person resides, or has to reside, then becomes an important feature of his or her overall life. We know that one's work is linked to one's status and conception of self (Mortimer & London, 1984), but relocating can effectively sever a person's 'sense of home' and damage this view of self, leaving a void in the person's life and family.

It is much too simple to view a move away from one's family, 'home,' or community as just a change in location, a new experience, or an adventure, and we suggest here that these moves can have serious consequences for those who make them and for those who are left behind. Moreover, we believe one's 'sense of home' becomes a significant article of baggage many people carry throughout their lives. There is a persistent longing for those places of fond memories and valued people, and although miles and days distant, one's 'sense of home' can influence how he or she feels, thinks, and behaves. We find in this research that the threads to family and 'home' can be long and durable and may exert a steady pull to our images of security and purpose in life.

SOURCES OF STRESS IN JOB RELOCATION

Initially, the process of relocation was found to produce stress among most of those persons studied. Stress is used here as a 'sensitizing concept' (Blumer, 1969), where the persons studied informed us of their common-sense usage of the term as they reflected on the experiences that would wear them down, or drain their stamina and energy, or cause them to worry excessively. Security, provided by familiar surroundings and an extended family and friends, was noticeably absent.

The sources of stress related to job relocation that emerge from this research centered on two separate but interdependent areas. First, a category of operational stress emerged. All of the persons relocating for a new job expressed some of this kind of stress. This is an expected kind of stress typically emanating from a variety of sectors including the job, where the person is faced with a new set of job expectations, new people and relationships, a new setting, different rules and ways of doing things, and new bosses. Until the newness wears off and the work expectations become clarified for the relocated worker, some unease is unavoidable, and adjustment becomes necessary. These new conditions at work can become very stressful for the worker, especially in the beginning. With time, this kind of stress usually dissipates.

A related kind of operational stress is located in the setting-up activities required when relocating into a new area. All of the persons we interviewed spoke of the stress involved with this activity. A place to live had to be found and utility services (electric,

gas, telephone, water) had to be arranged. At minimum, this activity takes time and money and can be stressful, especially when the job-related stress is present. Other start-up activities mentioned in the interviews include: getting children into a school or daycare; locating a place to shop for groceries, finding a church to join; choosing a bank and getting accounts established; taking care of a mailing address change; cable TV and computer service attachments; finding ways to drive, or get around, the area; becoming familiar with local ordinances for trash pick up and recycling rules. As with the job-related stress, pressure from these set-up activities usually dissipates with time.

Operational stress is an important dimension to consider in job relocation, but it is a routine occurrence and usually improves for most persons through time.

Initial stress can be reduced by the help of similarly situated persons and by those persons sympathetic to the demands of relocating. Employers sometimes help, but these are usually employers with higher

status positions to be filled (see Flynn, 1995; Laabs, 1994; Toliver, 1993). Among blue-collar workers, we found minimal employer help was provided in the relocation. 'No help' was the common response from blue-collar workers to this question. Blue-collar workers rarely mentioned that a sympathetic employer provided a 'temporary flexible work schedule,' or 'time off for getting settled,' or 'time off for family emergencies,' but white-collar and professional workers did mention these things.

We found the initial stress seems to be partially reduced by the social status of the persons relocating, and this is supported in the literature (Gaylord, 1979). Those persons interviewed who had higher paying jobs seemed to have an easier time of relocating. Occupation holders like, banker, dentist, and corporation administrator, told us of less pressure on the family, more employer help and, in some cases, financial assistance. Our informants mentioned 'the move was paid for,' 'a cost of living increase' was given, the employer 'created a flexible schedule,' and the employer 'understood the problems.' For these individuals much of the stress that accompanies setting up a new household and getting the family members into a new routine was reduced, freeing the new worker from these strains and allowing him or her to concentrate on the new job. Lower status workers did not have these aids and were usually plagued with upsetting circumstances and new pressures being placed on them and their families.

A second source of stress that results from job relocation is emotional stress. This kind of stress is far less predictable than operational stress and is

likely to last longer and place a continual strain on the relocated person. It is this source of relocation-based stress that we will now focus on.

Emotional stress was mentioned frequently in this research and includes feelings of being `homesick' and the occurrence of demands from, or on, the family, or extended family. Most of this variety of stress was centered within the family as the unit was forced to adapt to a new job, a new place, lifestyle, and set of circumstances. We found that some families strengthened under the initial pressure by becoming more cohesive, while most weakened, and a few collapsed or disbanded. This early period was a particularly trying time for most families. A woman with a 6-year-old son, who moved from Oklahoma to Tennessee for work, expressed this strain in her comments:

When you move from one city to another city and you don't have any family or any friends, your whole life changes. All the responsibilities are on you, and if you are not used to these responsibilities, it can cause a lot of problems; it can cause big problems. It was all on my shoulders. I had to do it all by myself, [while] not being experienced and [not] realizing what I had to do.

Relocation costs money, takes time, and is aggravating, stressful, and potentially damaging to the family structure. Home and, perhaps more accurately, one's `sense of

home,' is left behind for work, career, money, or new opportunities. A 'home' near friends and relatives and a life grounded in valued memories and experiences, is exchanged for a house, or apartment, in a new place, among strangers. Stress, adjustment problems, and loneliness are likely to result.

We learned that this was a time that required family members to draw together for support and comfort. One of the persons interviewed, a male with a wife and two small children, who moved from rural Tennessee to urban Pennsylvania to find work, told of how the dinner hour (evening meal) was an important time for the family. This man's philosophy for keeping his family close and protected was to insist that the entire family sit together for dinner each night. He used this time to learn about each family member's day and to address any problems that might have occurred. Being particularly concerned about the adjustment problems of his young school-age children he suggested, 'You have to have a tightly knit, immediate family because your children are going to have different pressures on them at school.'

We found that very young children adapted well to relocation. Our informants who did mention problems related to children often said school-age children had more difficulty. 'Lower grades,' 'getting in with the wrong group of kids,' 'truancy,' and general 'trouble at school' were mentioned as problems. A study by DeWit (1998) found that children, especially males, who move around a lot were more likely to be involved with alcohol and illegal drugs.

Some of the persons interviewed mentioned the help of fellow workers

who had relocated earlier and knew the problems entailed. Others mentioned a local church, neighbors, and friends, as helpful. Sometimes, family members who lived in the area provided help. But typically we found the relocated family had to adapt to this new environment without support or assistance.

For most of those interviewed, the void left behind by family and friends made them quickly appreciate what they had left behind. We feel this is the recognition of a 'sense of home' discussed earlier. As one man, who had moved with his wife to a large city to find work, put it, 'We were used to being around friends and relatives. Going all day, everyday, and never seeing a face you know. You see so many people and you don't know any of them.' Similarly, a single man, who left his rural family home for work in the city said, 'You don't have a family to lean on, or talk to. You are pretty much on your own.' And a single woman, who had left her family home for work in another city, brought out the financial strain she experienced in her comment, 'It was not easier. There were times when I would get homesick. It was different. It was hard. It was hard to manage when you are paying your own way.'

We learned in our research that pressure also came from back home, from family and friends who were left behind. Family and friends would often make long-distance demands, producing both guilt and strain for those who had relocated. Telephone calls were the most common remedy to manage the distance, but an illness or death in the family might require a trip back home. 'Travel for Christmas, funerals; it puts pressure on the family,' is the way one man put it, who had moved from rural Tennessee to urban Illinois for work. We found that demands and pressures from back home were most likely to occur among families that were very cohesive.

For a few of the relocated, being away from home was never accepted. One man, a journeyman electrical lineman, never made the adjustment. He would drive back to rural Tennessee once a month (a 12 hour drive one-way trip, before the interstate highway system was in place). Other persons interviewed told us they returned home 'every vacation, summer, and most holidays.' Still other persons spoke of the sorrow that resulted for them because of the move, commenting, 'I lost my roots,' 'I gave up everything to move: social life, dating, quality time,' 'A known environment, that is, neighbors and a specific tried and true way of life,' I was 'just not satisfied; I felt away from home,' and we felt that 'our family's been separated.' These statements reflect the 'homesickness' many persons experienced with their relocation. They provide evidence of a 'sense of home' that was lost.

We found most of the persons interviewed adjusted to their relocation over time. They had to. Having work, in most cases, meant survival, and the work was away from 'home.' A man, who with his wife left their rural Tennessee home and family to work in an auto assembly plant in Dayton, Ohio, expressed it this way, 'You're always wanting to come back home, but you're here and have to make the best of it. You always miss your family, but you couldn't just leave your work and go home.' This view was also captured by a young woman, who left the comforts of her home to find work and independence in the city. 'It was hard being away from all my loved ones, but there is a time in your life when you need to make a change and experience living without your family, and being on your own.'

In retrospect, most of the persons interviewed defined their overall relocation experience in more positive terms. Relocation for work was frequently viewed as something that had to be done at the time, and most persons told us they would do it again. This was true for those who were away from home for only a few months and those away for 40 years. We feel it may be that persons tend to gloss over the difficulties and hardships and choose to remember the good things, especially if they survived the stress of relocation. The following are some typical comments that capture these sentiments on the rewards of relocation:

I think you learn when you move from [one place to another]. The different types of people there are, their ways, and that tells you the difference in each way of living and how they feel about things. I learned a lot. (A woman who moved with her husband from rural Tennessee to Detroit, Michigan, and later to Dayton, Ohio, to find work. She had married at 15 to a man 19 and had been married for 43 years at the time of the interview)

Insight. What else is out there. How other people live. Those that did not [relocate] missed the experience. (A single male who did not return to rural Tennessee after service in the Vietnam war, but took a job for a while in a Pennsylvania steel mill. After three years and feeling 'homesick,' he returned to Tennessee)

Others are not aware of what is around them. (A male reflecting on the importance of new experiences, who along with his wife moved to urban Michigan from rural Tennessee for an auto plant job as a machinist and pattern maker in 1950. He recently returned to Tennessee for a business opportunity and to be closer to family)

Career advantage, a perspective on life, and my children know more about life and have gained in school. (A man from Tennessee, who moved to Pennsylvania in 1960 with his wife and two small children for a vice president of marketing position. He returned to Tennessee to retire)

Another informant was able to express her initial frustration with relocation in retrospect, as a 'learning experience.' As she remarked, `If I relocate again, I'm going to know what to do, how to do it, what I have to do first. The relocation will be a lot less stressful.'

Some persons defined their job relocation as 'freedom' and 'independence,' a chance to be on their own and test

their worth in the world. We found that persons responding this way tended to see their families as overly demanding and controlling. These persons tended to be younger and just starting out in their adult life (see Buck & Scott, 1993; Goldsheider & Goldscheider, 1993).

We found it was usually older persons, those closer to retirement or already retired, who longed for the past and harbored fond memories of 'home,' friends and family. These persons were more likely to express a desire to return to the place that held those memories and people. It was from these older persons that we found the clearest recognition of what we describe as a 'sense of home.' Their comments are filled with words like, 'reduced stress,' 'peaceful,' 'slower pace,' 'family,' 'roots,' 'friends,' 'better living,' and 'lifestyle.'

Only a few of the younger persons we interviewed, who were distant from retirement, also expressed this same level of desire. A husband, who had moved repeatedly with his wife and children to find work, illustrates this younger exception: '[We wanted] to be back where we grew up, back in our own environment. We wanted to raise our children where we grew up.' But it was the older persons who clearly expressed the strength of this same conviction. An older woman told us, 'My husband retired and told me he was moving back to [his hometown], with, or without me!'

CONCLUSION

This research suggests that initial job relocation is potentially disruptive to families. By removing the support system an extended family and friends provide, persons who relocate must generally fend for themselves in unfamiliar territory, being forced to adjust and adapt to new circumstances. This is typically a stress-producing event, worse at the onset, improved as adjustments and accommodations are made. We found that when people looked back on their job relocation experiences, they often recast the problems they encountered as a challenge endured or a worthwhile learning experience.

We suggest that initial job relocation stress occurs within the family (emotional stress), but emanates from the changes required by the new living place, the new employment expectations (operational stress), and the demands from back home by family and friends. Awareness of these kinds of job relocation stress may lead more persons not to relocate.

Wong (1999), citing a study by Runzheimer International, a Rochester, Wisconsin-based management consulting firm, says '44 percent of professionals predict there will be more employee resistance to relocation in the next five years.' Also, Wong (1999) cites a survey conducted by the Employee Relocation Council that found 'employee/family resistance to move' has been the top reason for the past four years why employees resist relocation.

'Home is where the heart is' captures much of the insight provided in this research. There is evidence of a longing and search for one's roots, the importance of valued memories and people who are missed, of feelings of being adrift, of pursuing other things at the expense of one's 'sense of home.' But, at the same time, the image of 'home,' based on memories and people, past and present, serves to anchor a person in the sea of new and unpredictable circumstances.

'Home' is not necessarily a house, or piece of property; home is a layer of valued emotional experiences and memories, accumulated over a period of time and grounded in social relationships with family and friends. Most people have some 'sense of home,' stronger for some, less for others. A 'sense of home' can be a comforting, safe place to be, where the stressful encroachments of daily life are held at bay. This emotionally based zone of comfort can support and strengthen a person in difficult times. A 'sense of home' is a feeling of belonging, of having a history of important and valued experiences, that give purpose and direction to life. Persons or families who relocate may not realize at the time the emotional bonds they may have fractured or severed. Employers, too, may lose sight of, or ignore, a person's 'sense of home' when they request the relocation of their workers.

The concept 'home' is embedded in our larger culture and thus serves as a permanent backdrop for many people. 'Home' has symbolic meaning for people. We suggest that older persons are more sensitive to this 'sense of home'. The 'journey home,' the 'safety of home,' the 'love of home,' have been forged in film, story, novel, and television show (Moore, 1994; Nallon, 1993). 'The Wizard of Oz,' 'The Waltons,' and 'Little House on the Prairie' illustrate this.

Relocation for work is likely to continue in an economy of plant closures (Moore, 1996) and bankrupt family farms (Conger & Elder, Jr, 1994). More family members will leave their homes and communities to find work elsewhere, perhaps away from family, friends, and the memories they hold dear.

Since more and more people today are undertaking journeys away from 'home' for employment opportunities (Fuguitt & Heaton, 1995), it is important to understand what these relocation decisions might mean for their future lives and the lives of the family members who go along and for those who are left behind.

Martin (1999) reports from a longitudinal study of persons who relocated that the better the pre-move relocation preparation the better the person's post-move mental health and job-related contentment and enthusiasm.

We suggest, along with others, that if it is feasible, it might be a better choice to stay near the good memories and the people that you have enjoyed and care most about (Sanders, 1993). Our research suggests that 'sense of home' should definitely be an important consideration when deciding to relocate.
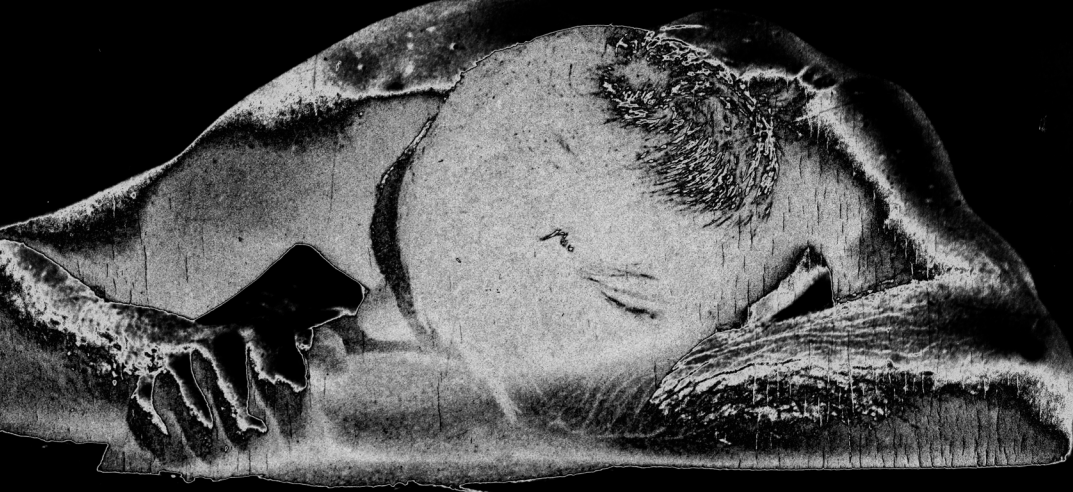
MOVING ON FROM THE PAST MEANS LEAVING YOURSELF IN IT

31

32

Although my sisters and I look at this snapshot and see the same man, we do not see him in the same way. Our "reading" and experience of this image is shaped by our relationship with him, with the world of childhood and the images that make our lives what they are now. I want to rescue and preserve this image ██████████ not let it be forgotten. It allows me to understand him, provides a way for me to know him that makes it possible to love him again, despite all the other images, the ones that stand in the way of love.

Such is the power of the photograph, of the image, that it can give back and take away, that it can bind. This snapshot ████████████████ ██ gives me a space for intimacy between the image and myself, ██████████████. I am captivated, seduced by it, the way other images have caught and held me, embraced me like arms that would not let go.
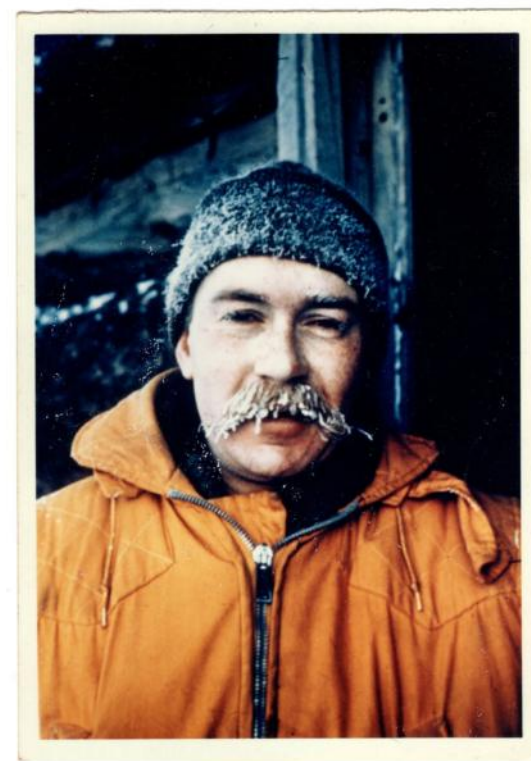
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MERLYN ROYEA

Barrie Pelland
Age 19, position, defence, weight 180 lbs., height 5'11", Hometown Winnipeg. 3 years with McLennan.

1960-62-62

WHERE?

My mom listened to this album when she gave birth to me. Apparently there are benefits to listening to music while in labour and she said the nurses actually encouraged it (back then at least). She said she loved it, and that she even tried to recreate the experience by playing the same album when my first brother was born, but it wasn't the same, she said "I think each kid has to have their own soundtrack."

PAUL SIMON · THE RHYTHM OF THE SAINTS

Point of light — screen — Picture

HAVE YOU STOPPED GROWING?

HOME AS AN ESSENTIALLY CONTESTED CONCEPT AND WHY THIS MATTERS

By **JED MEERS**

The core insight of Walter Gallie's theory of the 'essentially contested concept' (ECC) can be summarised briefly: a certain class of concepts are defined by intractable disputes over their meaning. As Gallie puts it, there are 'concepts the proper use of which inevitably involves endless disputes about their proper uses' (1955, p. 169). However, notwithstanding that the 'concept of home' is a prime contender for an ECC, Gallie's theory has not been used to date to interrogate the burgeoning literature on the home and consider the implications. Drawing on Gallie's theory, I argue that the 'concept of home' satisfies the criteria for an ECC and that this has significant implications for scholars using the concept in their arguments.

This argument is not a criticism of the growing literature on the home. Rather it is a recognition that, while there has never been so much academic attention on the concept of home, there has also never been so much disagreement over what the concept entails. Some researchers have gone as far as to call for abandoning the 'concept of home' altogether (Bevan, 2015, p. 197; Coolen & Meesters, 2012, p. 2) and others lament its conceptual 'confusion' or the 'chaotic' state of the literature (Heywood, 2005, p. 132). Instead, I argue that recognising the concept of home is an ECC and heeding the implications, can help to address criticisms levelled at parts of the literature on the home and improve the ongoing conceptual debate.

Gallie's theory is that scholars make arguments about the value of certain concepts that can never be resolved. For a particular class of concepts, researchers are contributing to a dispute that can never be settled by empirical evidence or logical reason. As Gallie puts it, the ongoing arguments will never succumb to 'a definite or judicial knock-out' (p. 179). In his 1955 article outlining the theory, he uses examples of 'art,' 'democracy,' 'social justice,' and 'a Christian life' (p. 180), to define ECCs by this intractability and presence of 'endless disputes' (p. 169).

Seemingly endless disputes will be familiar to social scientists. However, Gallie's argument is more specific than diagnosing that a particular concept is subject to intense disagreement. Gallie's focus is not the concept itself, but rather on its disputants. He is not concerned solely with intrinsic abstract features of a concept, but instead with the 'continuous competition for acknowledgement between rival uses' (p. 186). This leads Gallie to emphasise the practical purpose of the ongoing debate and that different uses of concepts can serve 'functions' for disputants—for instance, arguments over the meaning of democracy serve diverse functions for 'different political groups and parties' (p. 168). Likewise, recognition of an essentially contested concept can help to affect a 'marked raising of the level of quality of arguments' in the theoretical debate (p. 193).

This focus on the ongoing dispute leads Gallie to make a series of empirical observations about how the concept is used in arguments. Scholars debating these ECCs will emphasise some features of the concept over others or adopt new features of their own to help convince disputants of their approach (p. 184). For instance, in a dispute over democracy, one scholar may suggest that 'equality of citizens' is its most important feature; another may underscore the 'power' of citizens to remove their leaders (pp. 184–185). This leads to a series of sub-concepts [and] Gallie's observation is that the correct application of these sub-concepts will characterise much of the dispute over the ECC. Is the 'home' defined in part by 'security' or 'territory'; if so how? Notwithstanding debates over these features of the concept, these scholars are in no doubt they are arguing about the same concept. Redefining their focus more narrowly or using alterative terms does not resolve their dispute.

Gallie provides a series of 'semi-formal conditions' for an ECC (p. 168), which I argue are met aptly by the literature on the home. The first four conditions outlined by Gallie— (i) an appraisive character, (ii) internal complexity, (iii) various describability, and (iv) openness—all deal with whether the use of the concept fits the requirements of essential contestability (pp. 171–172). The final three—(v) reciprocal recognition, (vi) an original exemplar, and (vii) progressive competition—all refer to the function of the ongoing debates on the concept (pp. 173–180). Each of these will be considered in turn below. In the interests of keeping the analysis succinct and avoiding repeating arguments, (ii) and (iii) are taken together, as are (v) and (vii).

First, in order to be considered essentially contested, the use of the concept of home must focus on some ascription of value, be it positive or negative (or both) (Collier et al., 2006). This criterion ensures that the concept is not being used as a purely descriptive label, as may be the case with object noun concepts, such as a 'house,' when researchers wish to label their findings. In other words, the conceptual debate should not focus solely on the semantics of the description: is this about the home or not? It should deal with an appraisal of something of value.

It is clear from the broad literature tackling the meanings of home that the 'home,' much like 'democracy,' is an appraisive concept. Perhaps the best illustration is Fox's influential formulation of the 'home = house + X,' with the conceptual challenge to 'unravel [this] enigmatic 'X factor'' (Fox, 2007, p. 590). Much of the literature on the home is focused on exploring these 'X factor categories' of home, drawing on the now familiar coterie of sub-terms such as identity, security, territory and so on. In geography, recent contributions by Baxter & Brickell (2014) and Nowicki (2014), on home unmaking and domicide respectively, go further by conceptualising the fluidity of this value and the nuanced ways in which it is 'made, unmade, and remade across the life course' (Nowicki, 2014, p. 785).

These values need not be positive. Feminist perspectives have been influential in underscoring the darker side of home. Kreiczer-Levy describes the

'inherent duality' of home, being a place of 'empowerment and vulnerability' and 'autonomy and subordination' (2014, p. 142). The Covid-19 pandemic has brought with it a renewed focus on [the] 'darker side' of home, with Gurney arguing that the crisis may lead us to 'look at home in a different way' (2020, p. 23).

However, perspectives that highlight the negative values accompanying the home very rarely advocate abandoning the concept altogether, instead emphasising the need to 'extend its positive values to everyone,' ensure that 'home is re-configured as a universal value that is equally available to all' (Fox, 2008, p. 492), or simply to recognise that the value of home can be negative as well as positive. Whether ascribed with positive or negative connotations—or both—it is clear that theoretical disputes over the 'concept of home' are appraisive in character.

In addition to appraisiveness, to meet Gallie's criteria the concept must also be 'internally complex' and 'variously describable' (1955, pp. 171–172). Both of these requirements are satisfied at once if: (i) the debate surrounds a series of sub-concepts but the concept's worth is 'attributed to it as a whole' (p. 171), and (ii) the concept of home must be capable of being described in multiple ways simultaneously, in part because of the diversity and complexity of the concept's sub-features.

Any researcher engaging with the 'meaning of home' literature will be familiar with the coterie of sub-terms often used to signify its constitutive elements—territory, identity, privacy, security and so on. Lawrence's account of the thirty 'dimensions' of home across three categories—cultural, social, and psychological—is an archetype example of internal complexity (Lawrence, 1987).

It is this effort to create 'taxonomic generalisations' that Gurney describes as the 'list fetishism' that dominates much of the earlier theoretical work on the home (Gurney, 1990, p. 28). However, even as scholarship has increasingly been 'moving away' from 'lists' (Moore, 2000, pp. 207–210), the academic debate is still dominated by disputes over 'internally complex' and 'variously describable' sub-features or processes of the home, such practices of home-making or unmaking (Baxter & Brickell, 2014), or the different layers at which the home is conceptualised as operating within, such as Blunt and Dowling's distinction between the home as both a 'material and an imaginative site' (Blunt & Dowling, 2006, p. 61).

These compound elements are infinitely describable and consequently can give rise to rival versions of the concept which prioritise and define these differently. However, despite the diverse nature of these internal elements, the worth is attributed to the home is as a whole. The home is a 'composite concept' (Lewin, 2001, p. 353). This is not to say that these sub-concepts are not individually important or subject to different weighting by theorists, but rather that any one of these sub-terms which form the subject of so much of the academic debate over the home cannot be spliced for analysis on its own. They work in tandem to create something of value which is more than the sum of its parts.

The next criterion is 'openness.' This focuses on the interaction between the concept and the context, the way in which any concept of home advanced must be capable of 'considerable modification in light of changing circumstances' (Gallie, 1955, p. 172). The concept's proper use in one setting does not guarantee its proper use in another future setting. In this way, the concept is 'radically context dependent' (Boromisza-Habashi, 2010, p. 277) and capable of sizable modification to meet ongoing changes. Gallie provides the example of 'art.' At any one point in time, 'no one can predict or prescribe' what may in the future be regarded as of artistic worth (p. 182).

Some, such as Somerville, argue that there is remarkable consistency across the literature, suggesting that 'all types of study have revealed the same recurring meaning of home' (1997, p. 277). However, as Heywood argues, although this 'degree of perceived consensus is partly reassuring' (2005, p. 533), it does not follow that the meanings attributed to the home are static, complete, or not capable of considerable modification over time. Even if the same words are often used—as Somerville suggests, 'family,' 'safety,' 'privacy,' and so on—it does not mean their meanings over time are fixed. The literature highlights continually the way in which the home is 'shaped by wider cultural processes' (Atkinson & Jacobs, 2016), and in the burgeoning body of work examining this in the context of migration, the way in which meanings can and do differ across space over time. As Taylor argues in her work with Cypriot refugees living in London, 'home is continually being made and remade as actors' circumstances and contexts change' (Taylor, 2015, p. 152). Indeed, Boccagni argues that the openness of the meanings attributed to the home over time, or as he describes it the 'temporal bases of home,' require more longitudinal research, particularly with migrant populations (2017, p. 66).

More broadly, the analysis of home is not sealed hermetically at the micro-level, but instead has been conceptualised as relating to grander societal shifts or abstractions. As argued by Duyvendak and Verplanke, 'one cannot separate questions of how people inscribe space with meaning from social struggles involving class, race, gender and sexuality' (Duyvendak & Verplanke, 2013). In their introduction to the edited collection *Queering the Interior*, Gorman-Murray and Cook underscore the 'evolving' nature of the concept of home, which is inevitably coloured by 'whatever ideas and configurations of the "normative" are circulating at a particular time' (2017, p. 1). In the spirit of Gallie's article, these recent studies underscore that the concept of home is far from static, but is instead capable of considerable modification—it is an 'open' concept.

These initial characteristics were described by Gallie as the 'formally defining conditions of essential contestedness' and have the potential to be broad in reach, arguably applying to most social concepts (p. 180). These two final conditions focus on the function of the debate. The first of these is that the debate over the concept should be rooted in a common exemplar, or shared analytical starting point, and the ongoing debate on the concept should advance understanding of this exemplar.

All this criterion demands is that there must be some common focus among the contested uses of the concept, however broad. This shared focus, a 'common problem' which the studies are seeking to address, ensures the debate is about one contested concept, not a number of separate concepts suffering from over-aggregation (Van der Burg, 2017, p. 11). Without this shared focus, the disputing parties could resolve disagreements by adopting different terms and recognising they are not part of the same dispute, or as Evnine puts it, 'simply choose new names and go on their own separate ways' (2014, p. 118).

Disputants in the literature on the home do not doubt that they are dealing with a 'concept of home.' Their shared focus is on conceptualising the value of a 'home' as something more than just the physical environment of property. This is perhaps best articulated by Rapoport, and later Fox, in their formulation of Home = House + X (Fox, 2002, p. 590; Rapoport, 1995, p. 29). The point is that this 'X-factor' warrants a conceptualisation of the home on its own terms, rather than through other theoretical interests. The literature clusters around approaches to assessing

the value of this X-factor: its influences, components, importance, or construction/ destruction.

This conceptual treatment of 'home' as something related to, but distinct from, the physical property stretches arguably back as far as Engel's 1872 polemic, 'The Housing Question,' where he laments the driving of families from 'hearth and home' by factory owners in the 18th century (Engels, 1970), aligning with modern studies on forced displacement informed by a conceptual analysis of home (Fox & Sweeney, 2016, p. 1).

Gilman's influential *The Home: Its Work and Influence*—published in 1903—is the first detailed examination of the conceptual treatment of the home. As she describes it poetically, her focus is on what 'the sweet word means' and what is 'vital to the subject,' as if 'bravely pruning a most precious tree' (Gilman, 1903, p. 13). Her organising concepts of 'shelter, quiet, safety, warmth, ease, comfort, peace and love' (Gilman, 1903, p. 16) and analysis of the 'exclusive confinement of women to the home' (Gilman, 1903, p. 323) would not be out of place in a modern study. Later sociological studies have been particularly influential, such as the sociology of Dennis Chapman and—to a lesser extent—Merton (1948) and Schuetz (1945). Chapman's *Home and Social Status* (1955) focuses throughout on how 'the home is thought of in terms of social and emotional function' (Chapman, 1955, p. 41) with a conceptual analysis of the 'creation' of new homes (Chapman, 1955,

p. 39). Merton's formative work on the sociology of housing acknowledged how individuals are 'linked to neighbourhoods and to society via the homes we inhabit' (Atkinson & Jacobs, 2016, p. 19). He was particularly interested in the home and social networks, and how the home can act as a site of projection (Merton, 1948, p. 163). Another strand of research can be seen within architectural studies, where researchers made sizable efforts from the 1940s onwards to 'tie together the somewhat divergent thought patterns of architecture and sociology' (Riemer, 1943). Polikoff's question—'whose meaning of home?'—sought to assess the way in which the built environment should reflect the 'soft domain' (Polikoff, 1969, p. 102) of home meanings.

Gallie's requirement of an 'exemplar' does not require any particular antecedent study, nor does it suggest that earlier studies occupy some kind of privileged position. For the 'concept of home' to satisfy this criterion, it is enough to observe that there is this shared focus that anchors the conceptual dispute and that the debate cannot be resolved through the adoption by disputants of alternative terms.

The penultimate feature of essentially contested concepts—referred to elsewhere as 'progressive competition' (Collier et al., 2006, p. 220)—underscores that ongoing theoretical debates are valuable in leading to a better understanding and realisation of the concept, notwithstanding its essential contestability (Gallie, 1955, p. 180). This has been characterised as akin to the 'marketplace of ideas' metaphor, where continuous competition between conceptions weed out those which are 'less defensible' and in turn, improve the quality of the ongoing debate.

Two areas of conceptual debate in the literature demonstrate this well. First, the longstanding feminist contributions seeking to highlight the home as a 'site of struggle' and which argue against 'uses of the concept' that neglect the often negative elements of the home for some women (Suk, 2011, p. 4). Summaries of the debate by Gurney (1997) and Darke (1994) highlight how these disagreements between those advancing conceptions of the concept of home has served to deepen the literature's assessment of negative home meanings. See, for instance, Brickell's appraisal of feminist arguments over the home (2012, pp. 226– 228), and her subsequent use of these ideas, with Baxter, to develop conceptual arguments on 'home unmaking' (Baxter & Brickell, 2014, pp. 136–138).

Second, the conceptual work by numerous scholars to turn over the coin by exploring the meaning of home for those who are homeless. These

studies generally compare the results of empirical work with individuals who are homeless with 'specifications of "home" in the literature' finding they often appear 'rather different' (Tomas & Dittmar, 1995, p. 510) or, as Parsell has argued in this journal, some familiar dimensions from the literature (here, feeling, control and family) are experienced as an aspiration or ideal (2012, p. 170). Somerville's influential study highlights how what he describes as the 'dimensions of meaning' of the home—a range of those familiar sub-concepts, such as shelter, privacy, hearth and so on— differ for homeless households in order to 'stimulate debate and guide future research' (Somerville, 1992, p. 532). This continuous debate around the 'values inherent in the concept' demonstrates its capacity for continual improvement and increased understanding, even if the debates themselves are inherently irresolvable (Van der Burg, 2017, p. 12).

The existence of these debates themselves serves to satisfy the final criterion considered here: the recognition of debate. This criterion requires that those utilising the concept of home 'are aware that others are doing their own evaluations by their own criteria' (Markoff, 2016, p. 126). This does not mean that those using a concept of home within their analysis need acknowledge explicitly the conceptions against their position, but rather that their use of the concept may not be 'consensual among scholars' (ibid, p. 130). Given the sources discussed above, this is clearly the case for debates over the concept of home.

Conclusion

The label 'essentially contested' does not mean anything in its own right. Instead, arguing the concept of home meets Gallie's criteria is a 'theoretical tool' to help explain the use of the concept and to recognise its limitations (Ehrenberg, 2011, p. 40).

The 'concept of home'—like the concepts of 'democracy' or 'art'—is a prime example of an ECC. The use of the concept in academic debate meets the criteria laid out by Gallie's influential 1955 article aptly. However, applying the label of 'essential contestability' is far from an end in of itself. Instead, I argue that there are two key implications for scholars using the concept of home in their arguments and a third for addressing criticisms of the literature on the home more broadly: the recognition of the concept of home as an ECC underscores that there is no politically neutral concept of home (whether advanced in academic work or not) and that researchers should adopt a reflexive approach to their work, presenting their arguments in a way that recognises the concept's essentially contested status. The recognition of the concept as an ECC can also serve to obviate the criticisms of those who argue the literature suffers from the lack of tangible definitions or a unified front.

Looking ahead to the ongoing theoretical dispute, Gallie's theory calls for a clearer recognition that scholars can offer simultaneously valid, if divergent, interpretations of the 'concept of home'. The theory of an ECC seeks to explain why competing interpretations of a concept may be 'regarded as legitimate and defensible' (Van der Burg, 2017). For instance, a number of scholars have drawn on the concept of home to support their analysis of a particular form of housing benefit penalty in the UK (the so-called 'bedroom tax'): Nowicki's focuses on the rhetorics of home and everyday practices of home making (Nowicki, 2017), and Moffatt et al. focuses instead on home's importance to a sense of community (Moffatt et al., 2016). These uses of a concept of home do not exist in a zero-sum competition with each other; all can usefully offer different interpretations that hold logically on their own terms.

Gallie's work implies that empirical consequences flow from this 'critical value' and recognising a concept as an ECC in a dispute. These are difficult to predict. For the concept of home, such a recognition may lead to methodological implications. It may result in greater reflection by scholars on whether conceptual engagement with the 'home' is truly necessary and fruitful for their project at hand, or whether another concept may fit their aims better. It may lead researchers to re-consider the translation of their research findings, not just to policy-makers but also to other researchers.

It is hoped that the implications outlined in this paper help to advance ongoing debates over the concept of home and to inform its use in conceptual arguments that will continue—infinitely, never to be resolved—into the future.
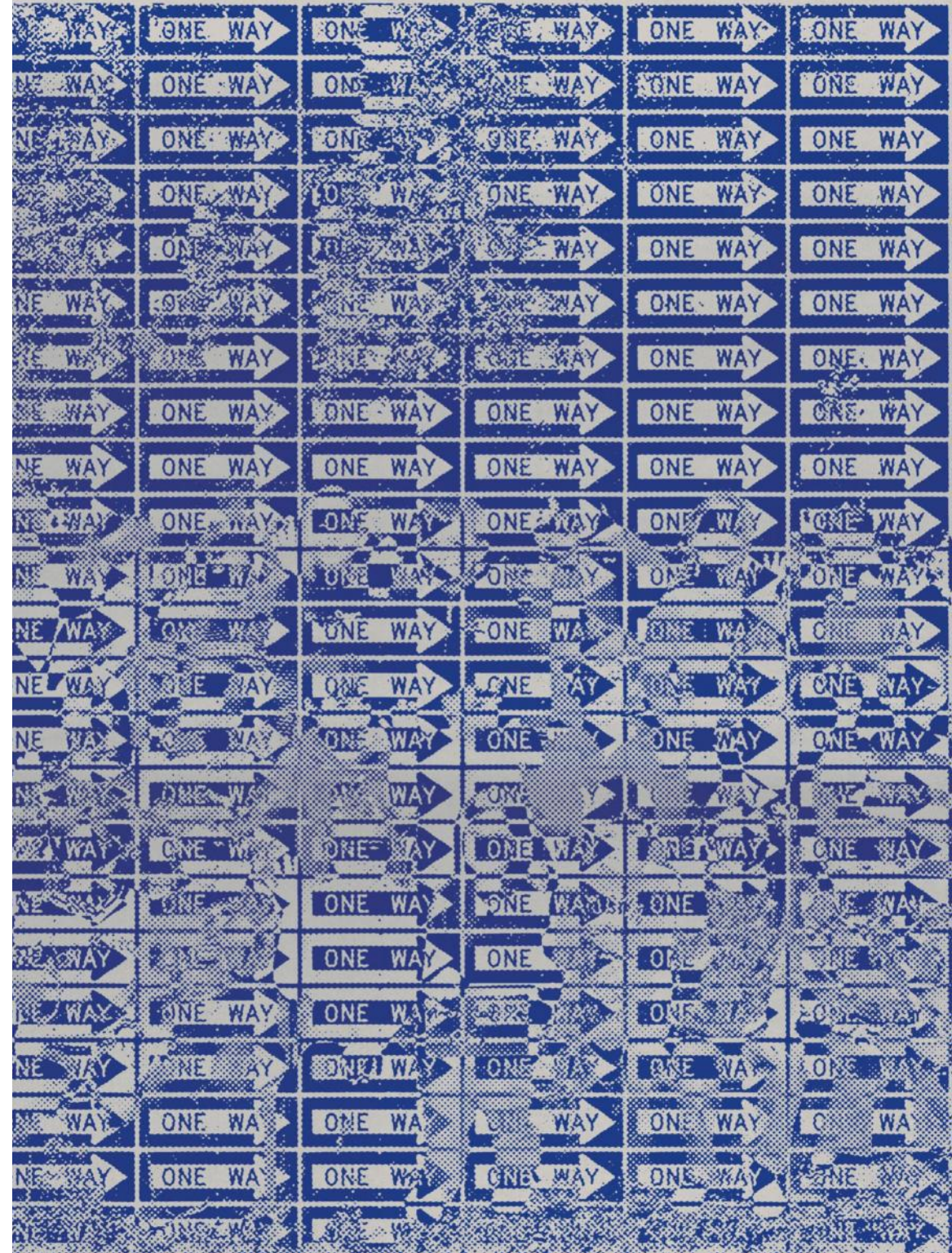
HOME = HOUSE + X
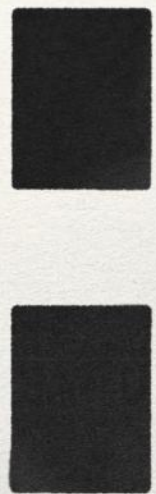
The word home has lost a lot of meaning for me. I say I'm going home in reference to wherever I'm staying at the moment, I say I'm going home when headed to wherever my parents live, I think of most of the previous places I've lived as home. But I think trying to hold onto the idea of home as a distinct place has only hurt me. You can have more than one home, and I'm starting to think of it as other things. For starters, people make a home: family, friends, even neighbours. The stories that make up your relationships, the meals you share, the warmth of coming home to a noisy household, this is all home. Belongings make a home; your dad's old shirt, photos stuck to your fridge door, your parents' art that you've grown to like, your favourite spoons that fit in your thumb just right. A sense of place is really important, whether that considers privacy, comfort, routine, or love. Memories also make a home. Where you were when you learned to ride a bike or learned how to drive a car, when your mom made your favourite meal when you needed it most, when you lost your first baby tooth, when you laughed and cried countless times. Ultimately, home is a feeling. Home is an experience. By no means is home tied down to a location.

HOW DO WE ORGANIZE OURSELVES FOR THE THINGS WE DO NOT BECOME?
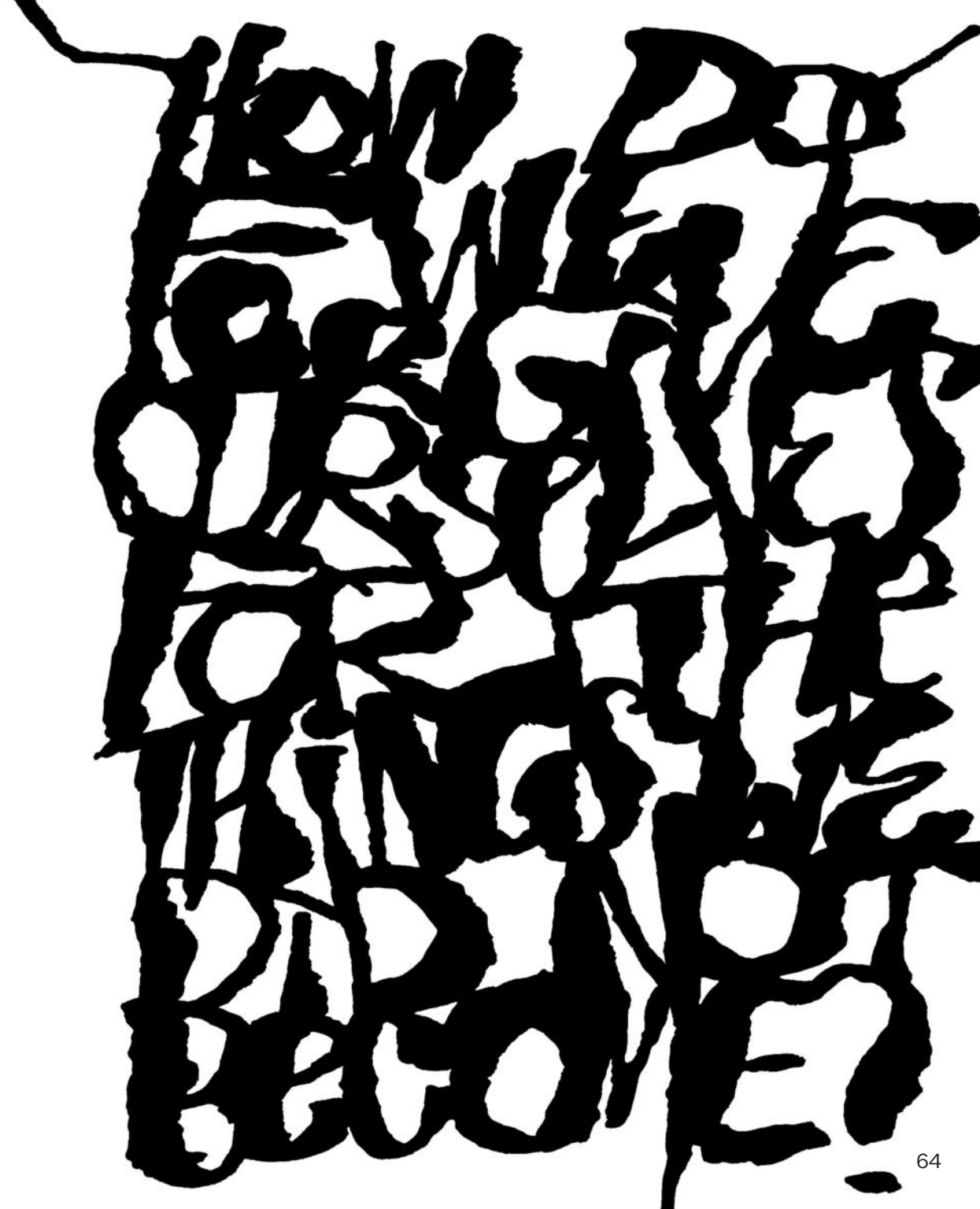
"As a kid, darkness in media can make it feel more valuable. Because whether we conceptualise it this way or not, I think early art can be a training ground for experiencing emotions before we have to feel them in the real world—and positive experiences don't necessitate training wheels."

– Jacob Geller

When I was younger,
sometimes my dad would buy pear juice ,
the fancy kind **in a glass bottle,**
and we   saw it as this a b s o l u t e   d e l i c a c y .
It's possible that was just me, but it **was** this special_thing

that we would get once in a
blue moon
and just savour it.
We'd even try to ration out our glasses
so as to get the most enjoyment out of it.

Today I s t i l l s e e pears and pear juice as this special food
and I forget

that I can simply go and buy some
whenever I
want.

My great grandparents Wilhelm and Dora (Theodora) van den Elzen, who were the first generation of my family to immigrate from Holland to Canada. Wilhelm was a baker and opened a bakery in Northern Alberta

Homesick

Passages from

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

by M. A. L. Van Tilburg, A. J. J. M. Vingerhoets, and G. L. Van Heck

Homesickness refers to the commonly experienced state of distress among those who have left their house and home and find themselves in a new and unfamiliar environment. It is generally represented as an intense longing for home accompanied by a depressive mood and a variety of somatic complaints. Leaving home, as in migration and residential move, is not only associated with distress, which may be labelled 'homesickness,' but there is also evidence for far-reaching negative effects on health status. For example, there are data indicating that this event is associated with the onset of depression, deficiencies in the immune system, diabetes mellitus, and leukaemia. Moreover, it has been suggested that from a clinical point of view, homesickness is an especially relevant issue in refugees. It may not only interfere with integration into new societies, but it may also lead to adjustment problems, when being back in the home country, because the situation there turns out to be less ideal than it was in the imagination.

Throughout history, homesickness has not only been of interest to poets and writers, but also scientists, although to a much lesser degree. Nevertheless, as far back as the seventeenth century, the importance of a systematic study of homesickness was recognised, particularly by Swiss investigators. For instance, Johannes Hofer concluded that homesickness was an illness of young people who were socially isolated in strange countries, whereas Scheuzer speculated that the cause of nostalgic feelings among Swiss soldiers in France was the deprivation of the refined Swiss air. On the other hand, Detharding suggested that it was the depressing Swiss air which led to feelings of homesickness among French soldiers in Switzerland. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries homesickness— in these days often called nostalgia—was considered to be a disease of certain ethnic groups, predominantly the Swiss. Since early work on homesickness was focused, in particular, on hospitalised patients suffering from other diseases, organic pathology was stressed as an important cause of homesickness. This view was not eroded until the last decades of the nineteenth century, when developments in medicine led to a better understanding of the symptoms in the homesick. Subsequently, for no apparent reason, the interest in homesickness disappeared.

The doctoral dissertation 'Heimweh und Verbrechen' (Homesickness and Crime) of Jaspers (1909), however, has given new impulses to the study of this phenomenon. From then on, homesickness was predominantly described among maids, child minders, and emigrants and was assumed to lead to criminal behaviour and fire-raising. A typical illustration is the case described by Jaspers, of a 16-year-old maid who raised fire in four places in order to be sent home. In this period various psychoanalytical ideas, like regression and infantile bonding, emerged in the homesickness literature. Then, after World War II the interest in the phenomenon disappeared almost completely; again, for no obvious reason.

The recent psychological literature on homesickness is rather slim and scattered. This is rather surprising, considering the commonality and intensity of the homesickness experience and the large numbers of people who nowadays (are forced to)

travel because of work, study, and holidays, or due to the fact that they are prosecuted in their home countries. Homesickness has been studied among conscripts, migrant populations and refugees, non-resident students, student nurses and boarding school children, and institutionalised people.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY HOMESICKNESS?

Homesickness is a well known phenomenon for most people. Fisher (1989), found considerable consensus on key features, such as: (a) preoccupation with family, friends, home, and routines; and, (b) attitudes to the new environment and its consequences. More individual differences were found at the level of symptoms, which 'feature at subordinate levels in the definitions provided by subjects' (p. 123). This is an important aspect, because it is necessary to know that the term 'homesickness,' at least at the level of key features, is used consistently across affected and non-affected groups. In spite of the fact that there seems to be sizable convergence in written definitions of homesickness, some idiosyncrasy also

exists; not only with respect to symptoms, but also regarding the breadth of the concept. For instance, other states like nostalgia (a yearning for bygone days) or missing deceased persons are sometimes viewed as manifestations of homesickness by lay persons (Thijs, 1992).

Furthermore, homesickness is often considered to be a reactive depression. Characteristic of the homesick, as opposed to the depressed, are the ruminative and obsessive thoughts about home and the desire to return home.

Most authors consider homesickness as a singular syndrome. In contrast, Dutch psychiatrist Rümke (1940) distinguished several kinds of homesickness, namely homesickness for the familiar environment or area, homesickness for persons in the familiar environment, pseudo-homesickness (which is a pattern of homesickness-like reactions resulting from personality disorders) and a fourth form in which unbearableness of the new situation is the predominant aspect. Bergsma (1963) has made a distinction between

normal and pathological homesickness. He considered homesickness feelings as normal phenomena, which can become pathological when they cannot be conquered. It may be clear that Rümke and Bergsma both were inspired by Freudian theories that are no longer held by the majority of clinicians today. Nevertheless, it is interesting to examine whether homesickness, given current psychological knowledge, can be divided in subcategories with a specific aetiology and different expressions. If these classifications turn out to be valid, then this will have major implications for theory, research, and intervention of homesickness. Particularly because different causes and consequences for the separate forms are assumed.

Preliminary data of our own research group strongly suggest the existence of at least four independent types of homesickness, namely homesick for persons, homesick for the environment, difficulties with adapting to the new environment, and difficulties with new routines. These types considerably overlap with Rümke's classification. Seen from a more practical

and clinical perspective such a differentiation is of the utmost importance, assuming that each type may have a different aetiology and demands a specific therapeutic approach. Therefore, adequate assessment procedures and research concerning the validity of these subtypes are badly needed.

SYMPTOMATOLOGY OF HOMESICKNESS

Homesickness manifests itself by certain physical, cognitive, behavioural, and emotional symptoms. The most frequently reported physical problems are: gastric and intestinal complaints, sleep disturbances, appetite loss, headache, fatigue, and a 'funny feeling' in the legs. In addition, all sorts of vague complaints and minor aches and pains have been reported.

At the cognitive level, especially missing home, obsessional thoughts about home, negative thoughts about the new environment, and absent-mindedness are reported. It is remarkable that at this level attention is not primarily directed at problems at home, but rather at idealising the home environment (Fisher, 1989).

Behavioural characteristics are apathy, listlessness, lack of initiative, and little interest in the new environment. For instance, talking about home all the time, not wanting to eat, crying, withdrawal, attention-seeking behaviour, acting out, and fighting have frequently been observed in school camps (Winland-Brown & Maheady 1990).

Emotional manifestations of homesickness are mainly characterised by depressive mood. Moreover, feelings of insecurity, loss of control, nervousness, and loneliness are frequently reported. Therefore, homesickness is often considered to be a reactive depression, comparable with depression following grief. Fried (1963) spoke of it as 'grieving for a lost home,' although he recognised that the grieving can also be directed at lost relationships. Hamdi (1974) hypothesised a two-stage process of adaptation to a new living environment: 'The process of giving up the previous way of life is marked by anger, depression, acknowledgment of loss, and mourning. Resignation, detachment, adaptation, and hope indicate that the individual is prepared to accept and make the best

of the new life situation' (p. 16). Thus, not only the confrontation with the new and unfamiliar environment, but also the loss of the home environment and important relationships can be crucial factors in homesickness.

PREVALENCE OF HOMESICKNESS

Homesickness is experienced by people of all cultures and all ages. Nevertheless, to provide estimations of the prevalence of homesickness is rather problematic. Apart from the above mentioned definition problems, there are good reasons to assume that the homesickness experience is, at least partially, situation specific. Prevalence rates are, therefore, always limited to specific contexts like holidays, hospitals, universities, school camps, or the army. Moreover, homesick feelings are generally not experienced continuously. There is evidence that only intense homesickness experiences are reported spontaneously. In a study among boarding school pupils the spontaneously reported incidence of homesickness was 18%. But when the question was probed, 60-70% reported that they had suffered from homesickness

to some degree (Fisher et al. 1984). This may be due to the fact that, while homesickness experiences generally are episodic, in severe cases these feelings are continuous. In the episodic homesick, periods of homesickness are predominantly reported at the beginning and end of the day. Moreover, they occur more frequently during mental (rather than physical) and passive (rather than active) tasks. However, as homesickness is linked to depression, it could also be that this passivity is a consequence of the homesickness experience rather than a cause (Fisher, 1989).

Fisher concludes that 50-75% of the general population have had at least one homesickness experience, whereas serious forms are estimated to occur in 10 to 15% of these cases.

MODELS OF HOMESICKNESS

With the exception of Fisher's work, the current work on homesickness is generally not theory driven. Fisher has put forward the following five theoretical explanations for the distressing effects of leaving home, namely: (a) loss; (b) interruption of lifestyle; (c) reduced control; (d) role change and self-consciousness; and, (e) conflict.

LOSS

The focus of the first model is on attachment and loss. The individual is separated from family, friends, and acquaintances, which may be experienced as a loss resulting in serious distress. The response of the individual to the loss experience may be a manifestation of separation anxiety or grief. It is characterised by anxiousness, distress, anger and searching behaviour, sometimes shifting to apathy and helplessness at a later stage. Leaving home is a partial loss, because home still exists and the individual is able to contact or visit home and eventually to return. Therefore, homesickness can be conceived of as a form of reversible bereavement. Besides family and friends, the losses may also include valued possessions, careers, and places of emotional significance. Objects and activities associated with home, but also available in the new environment, can become of transitional value in that they acquire a symbolic value representing lost relationships or objects.

The importance of attachment in the development of homesickness is stressed by several authors and it is often mentioned as a cause of psychological and physical problems of immigrants. Aroian (1990) has observed that loss and disruption was a predominant theme in interviews with 25 Polish migrants in the US. For instance, one of Aroian's subjects described the feeling as: 'You have to divorce yourself from the past' (p. 7).

INTERRUPTION OF LIFESTYLE

The second model features the view that interruption or discontinuity of lifestyles and routines may lead to feelings of anxiety, distress, and fear (Mandler, 1990). These negative emotions can be labelled as homesickness, when being away from home. Old routines, habits, and behavioural plans become

ineffective in the new situation; so, one cannot fall back on them. The person is unable to cope with the situation, because old plans still dominate the present behaviour, which is inappropriate in the new environment. Some support for this view is found in the literature on acculturation, where adjustment problems due to lack of knowledge of how to behave, and disruption of careers and educations are recurring themes.

REDUCED CONTROL

The third model focuses on reduced personal control or mastery over the environment. A move away from home nearly always results in reduction of control. A person does not know how to cope with the demands of the new situation and this results in increased perceived threat. Therefore, homesickness can be seen as a response to strain, created by changed circumstances over which individuals feel they have little or no control. This is in line with the notion that homesickness is best conceived of as a form of depression. The idea is that low control may lead to feelings of helplessness, which in turn are associated with depressive feelings.

Fisher (1989) has reported some support for this hypothesis in a study among first-year university students. It was found that homesick students differed from the non-homesick in terms of both perceived demands of university life and lower control over these threats and requirements. Burt (1993) also has concluded, on the basis of results from a study among first-year students, that homesickness is a reaction to a lack of control over the environment.

ROLE CHANGE AND SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

Distress can also be assumed to originate from a transition which is accompanied by a change in perceived roles. In the new environment, new tasks have to be fulfilled and as a consequence the self-concept needs to be changed, which may lead to raised anxiety. Unfortunately, until now there are no empirical data available supporting or rejecting this hypothesis.

CONFLICT

The last model proposed by Fisher refers to the potential conflict experienced by individuals leaving home. The

homesick person is assumed to be torn between approach and avoidance tendencies toward the new environment. There is a conflict between the wish to acquire new experiences, while at the same time wanting to return home. Home is attractive because it is secure and comfortable, whereas new environments are challenging because of the new experiences and opportunities. It is hypothesised that this conflict may create anxiety and–if periods of anxiety are prolonged–homesickness.

These five models are not mutually exclusive. All factors, may, to a different extent, contribute to the development of homesickness. How much influence each factor has depends on particular characteristics of the individual and the specific situation. Each of these models suggests certain characteristics of the person and the environment as crucial factors in the development and maintenance of homesickness

ADDITIONAL FACTORS

Freedom of choice has been emphasised by Fisher (1989) as an important factor. If the choice to leave was made by

persons themselves, then they will experience less homesickness compared with persons who were in some way obliged to leave their house and home. Indeed, Fisher found an effect of perceived level of responsibility in homesick university students, but not in boarding school children. Burt (1993), in a study among first-year Australian students, also found that perceived control regarding the decision to relocate was a significant predictor of the intensity of homesickness. Moreover, in refugees, who are in many ways obliged to leave their country, it has been found that feelings of homesickness are very common (De Vries & Van Heck, 1994). For example, 53% of Khmer adult refugees reported feelings of hopelessness, which were extreme in 29% of the cases (Mollica et al. 1994). There are at least two ways to interpret these findings. First, freedom of choice implicates controllability of the situation. If one is forced to leave, the situation will not be perceived as controllable. As a consequence, feelings of helplessness develop, which in the end result in homesickness. Alternatively, people who know, or anticipate, that they will easily develop homesickness, will presumably be less inclined to move. So, their option for not leaving will result in a selection bias in study examples.

SITUATIONAL FACTORS

Certain characteristics of the situation apparently promote the occurrence of homesickness. 'Geographical distance' is such a factor, but its role in the development of homesickness is not yet clear. Other factors like psychological distance, opportunities for communication with the home base, and similarity of environment appear to moderate the effect of geographical distance.

Gruijters (1992) presented 12 hypothetical situations to subjects and asked them to indicate the intensity of their homesickness, if they would find themselves in such a situation. The 12 situations descriptions differed systematically in terms of distance (nearby v. far way), length of stay (short v. long), and companionship (alone v. with acquaintances or close persons). It was not surprising that the situation 'nearby, short, with trusted persons' was indicated as arousing the least homesick feelings and 'long, far away, and alone' the most. More interesting however, was the observation that length of the stay and type of companionship were of more importance than distance. Thus, the results of this study suggest that the risk of becoming homesick increases, if: there are no trusted persons, or worse, no companions at all in the new situation; and if the length of the stay away from home increases.

Social support is a factor that has been shown to diminish the stressfulness of various problematic situations. Thus, more social support should be associated with less homesickness. Nevertheless, social support might also have a negative influence. Several studies have shown that homesick persons are inclined to affiliate with other persons who have similar or relevant experiences. These contacts can intensify the homesickness through modelling and positive reinforcement. Fisher (1989) found that the presence of a sibling in a boarding school led to more severe, rather than to less intense, homesick complaints. These children might 'infect' each other. Burt (1993), on the other hand, failed to find differences in the intensity of homesickness for those first-year students who relocated alone and those who came with a friend.

Homesickness is a complex syndrome associated with distress, psychoneurotic symptoms, absent-mindedness, intrusive home-related thoughts, dissatisfaction with the new situation, high demands of and low control over the new situation, low decisional control over the move, and depressive feelings before the move. As soon as homesickness is more clearly defined and can be diagnosed on the basis of self-report instruments, real progress can be made and more insight can be obtained into this highly intriguing, but regrettably neglected phenomenon.

"Our Need to Belong," a researched blog post affiliated with Penn State, talks about this need and how it stems from an evolutionary cause. "According to researchers Baumeister & Leary (1995), this need to belong has its roots in evolution," the article states. "In order for our ancestors to reproduce and survive it was essential that they establish social bonds. Thus, from an evolutionary selection perspective we now possess internal mechanisms that direct humans beings into lasting relationships and social bonds. Our need to be connected and establish healthy bonds is as essential to our emotional and physical well beings as food and safety."

And in contemporary times, it would be understandable to conclude that finding such belonging can only reap in psychological benefits.

"The Experienced Psychological Benefits of Place Attachment," a 2017 study published in the Journal of Environmental Psychology, narrows the discussion down to "place attachment" and explains that while this specific premise is "under-explored," there are positive implications for our well-being.

"If forming emotional connections to places is part of human nature," researchers note, "we must ask, for what purpose? Uncovering the psychological benefits afforded by person-place bonds can help to answer this question. In general, place attachment bonds, while intact, are positively associated with quality of life, life satisfaction, and varivous other dimensions of well-being. The connection between place attachment and well-being has been more commonly investigated at the neighborhood, community, and city scales than at other scales, and a number of studies have focused on this relation among older adults in particular."
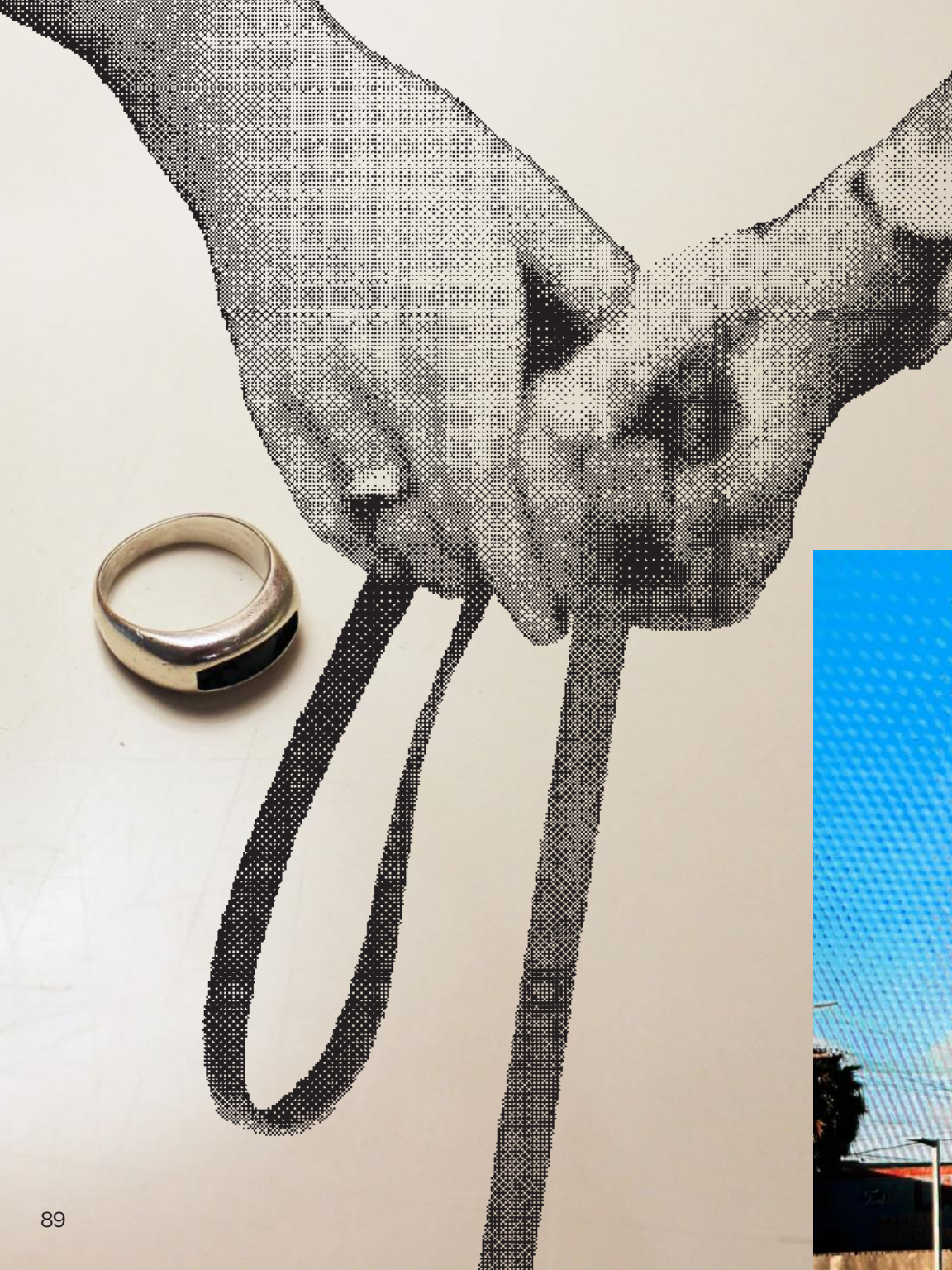
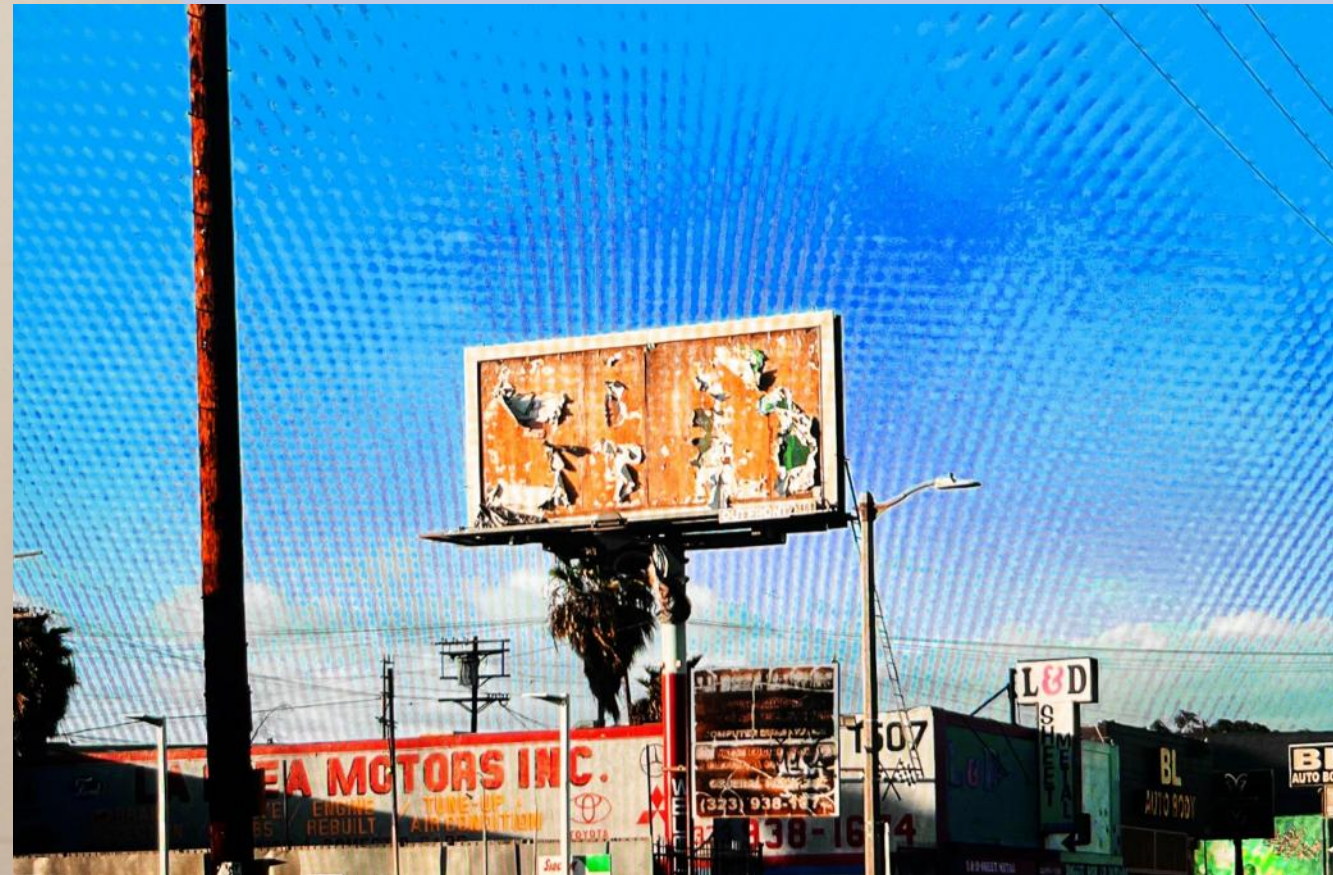GROWING PAINS
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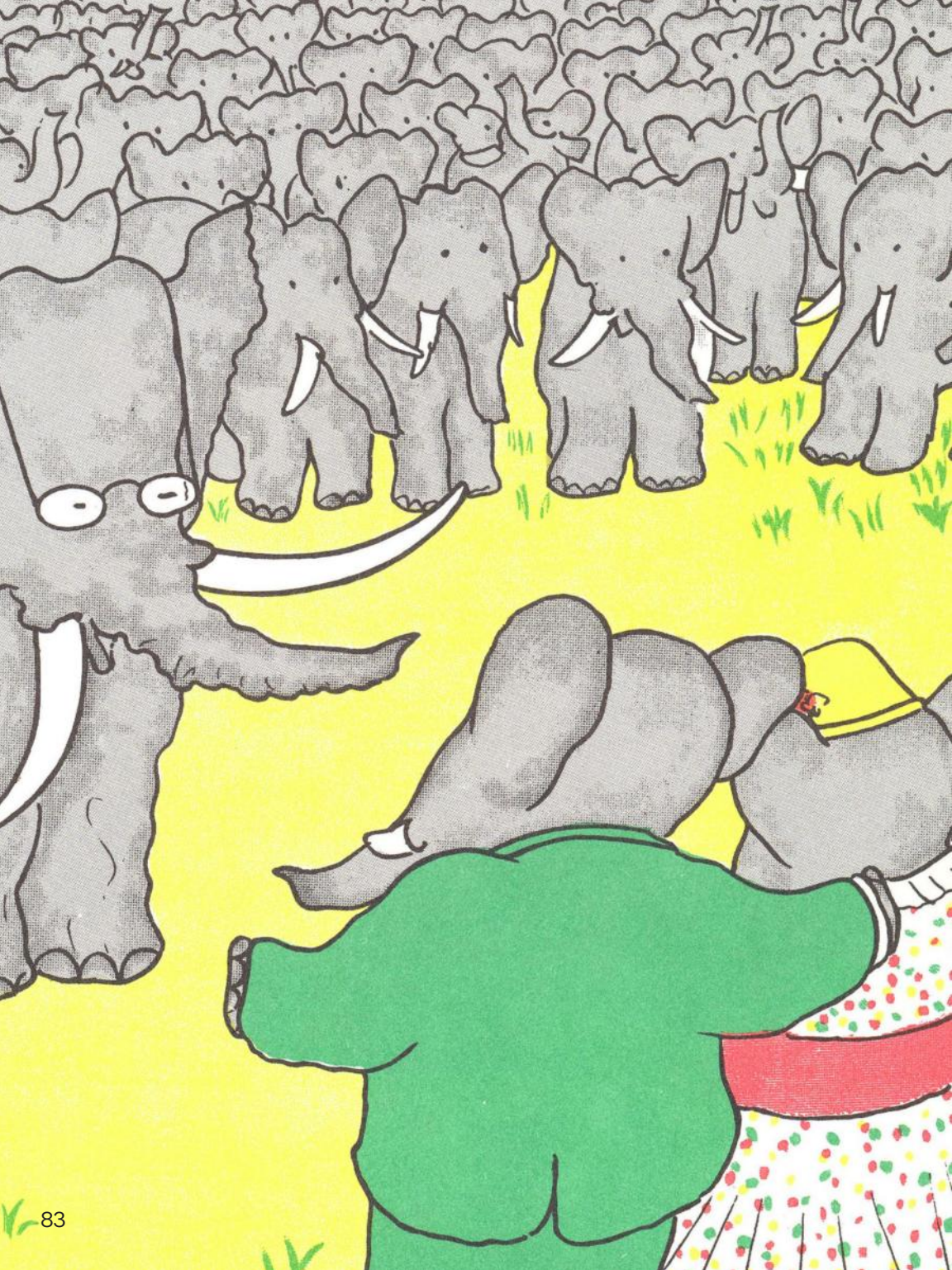
(001)

(002)

(003)

(001)   My great great great grandparents Peter Royea and Mary Caderre, 1920. They got married on 7 April 1877.

(002)   My great great grandparents Joseph Royea and Martha Jane Young, 1926. They got married on 22 October 1899. Joseph appears to be the spitting image of his father.

(003)   My great grandparents (left) Lyndon Royea and Kathleen Vincent with friends; this was taken before they got married on 28 June 1931. I was named after Lyndon.

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IT FEELS
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THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HOME: WHY WHERE YOU LIVE MEANS SO MUCH

by Julie Beck

My house is a shrine to my homes. There's a triptych of sunsets next to my bedroom door, dusk forever falling over the small Michigan town where I grew up, the beach next to my college dorm, and Place de la Concorde in Paris, where I spent a cliché but nonetheless happy semester. Typographic posters of Michigan and Chicago hang above my bed, a photo of taxis zooming around Manhattan sits atop my dresser, and a postcard of my hometown's famous water tower is taped to my door. I considered each of those places my home at one time or another, whether it was for months or years. When laid out all together, the theme to my décor becomes painfully obvious, but why it was more important to me to display the places I've lived rather than pictures of friends, or favorite music or books, all of which are also meaningful, I couldn't initially say.

Susan Clayton, an environmental psychologist at the College of Wooster, says that for many people, their home is part of their self-definition, which is why we do things like decorate our houses and take care of our lawns. These large patches of vegetation serve little real purpose, but they are part of a public face people put on, displaying their home as an extension of themselves. It's hardly rare, though, in our mobile modern society, to accumulate several different homes over the course of a lifetime. So how does that affect our conception of ourselves?

For better or worse, the place where we grew up usually retains an iconic status, Clayton says. But while it's human nature to want to have a place to belong, we also want to be special, and defining yourself as someone who once lived somewhere more interesting than the suburbs of Michigan is one way to do that. "You might choose to identify as a person who used to live somewhere else, because it makes you distinctive," Clayton says. I know full well that living in Paris for three months doesn't make me a Parisian, but that doesn't mean there's not an Eiffel Tower on my shower curtain anyway.

We may use our homes to help distinguish ourselves, but the dominant Western viewpoint is that regardless of location, the individual remains unchanged. It wasn't until I stumbled across the following notion, mentioned in passing in a book about a Hindu pilgrimage by William S. Sax, that I began to question that idea:

"PEOPLE AND THE PLACES WHERE THEY RESIDE ARE ENGAGED IN A CONTINUING SET OF EXCHANGES; THEY HAVE DETERMINATE, MUTUAL EFFECTS UPON EACH OTHER BECAUSE THEY ARE PART OF A SINGLE, INTERACTIVE SYSTEM."

What I learned, in talking with Sax, is that while in the West we may feel sentimental or nostalgic attachment to the places we've lived, in the end we see them as separate from our inner selves. Most Westerners believe that "your psychology, and your consciousness and your subjectivity don't really depend on the place where you live," Sax says. "They come from inside—from inside your brain, or inside your soul or inside your personality." But for many South Asian communities, a home isn't just where you are, it's who you are.

In the modern world, perceptions of home are consistently colored by factors of economy and choice. There's an expectation in our society that you'll grow up, buy a house, get a mortgage, and jump through all the financial hoops that home ownership entails, explains Patrick Devine-Wright, a professor in human geography at the University of Exeter. And it's true that part of why my home feels like mine is because I'm the one paying for it, not my parents, not a college scholarship. "That kind of economic system is predicated on marketing people to live in a different home, or a better home than the one they're in," Devine-Wright says. The endless options can leave us constantly wondering if there isn't some place with better schools, a better neighborhood, more green space, and on and on. We may leave a pretty good thing behind, hoping that the next place will be even more desirable.

In some ways, this mobility has become part of the natural course of a life. The script is a familiar one: you move out of your parents' house, maybe go to college, get a place of your own, get a bigger house when you have kids, then a smaller one when the kids move out. It's not necessarily a bad thing.

But in spite of everything—in spite of the mobility, the individualism, and the economy—on some level we do recognize the importance of place. The first thing we ask someone when we meet them, after their name, is where they are from, or the much more interestingly-phrased "where's home for you?" We ask, not just to place a pushpin for them in our mental map of acquaintances, but because we recognize that the answer tells us something important about them. My answer for "where are you from?" is usually Michigan, but "where's home for you?" is a little harder.

If home is where the heart is, then by its most literal definition, my home is wherever I am. I've always been liberal in my use of the word. If I'm going to visit my parents, I'm going home and if I'm returning to Chicago, I'm also going home. My host parents' apartment in Paris was home while I lived there, as was my college dorm and my aunt's place on the Upper West Side, where I stayed during my internship. And the truth is, the location of your heart, as well as the rest of your body, does affect who you are. The differences may seem trivial (a new subculture means new friends, more open spaces make you want to go outside more), but they can lead to lifestyle changes that are significant.

Memories, too, are cued by the physical environment. When you visit a place you used to live, these cues can cause you to revert back to the person you were when you lived there. The rest of the time, different places are kept largely separated in our minds. The more connections our brain makes to something, the more likely our everyday thoughts are to lead us there. But connections made in one place can be isolated from those made in another, so we may not think as often about things that happened for the few months we lived someplace else. Looking back, many of my homes feel more like places borrowed than places possessed, and while I sometimes sift through mental souvenirs of my time there, in the scope of a lifetime, I was only a tourist.

I can't possibly live everywhere I once labeled home, but I can frame these places on my walls. My decorations can serve as a reminder of the more adventurous person I was in New York, the more carefree person I was in Paris, and the more ambitious person I was in Michigan. I can't presume my personality to be context-free. No one is ever free from their social or physical environment. And whether or not we are always aware of it, a home is a home because it blurs the line between the self and the surroundings, and challenges the line we try to draw between who we are and where we are.
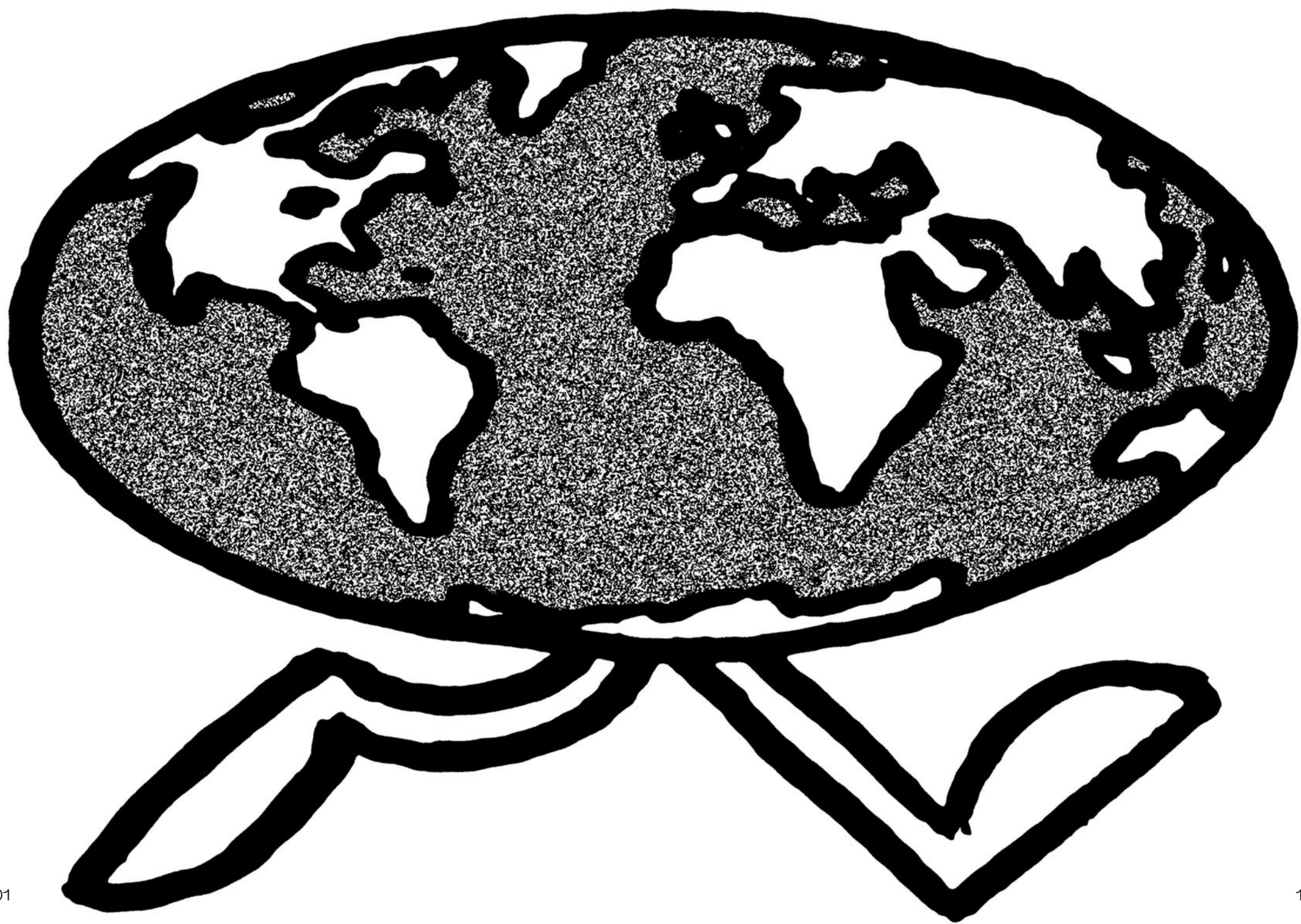
For a long time, I've considered my parents to be my best friends, and I always found it weird when other kids I met didn't have much of a relationship with theirs—I've known kids who wouldn't even hug their parents. Now, maybe I'm in a privileged position in having a relatively healthy and loving family, but I do think a lot of that has to do with moving. By now, I've shared this sentiment with plenty of people in my life, but when you move together, you are all dealing with the same problems; each of you are the "new kid" in your environment, each of you are establishing a routine, and learning to be comfortable in a new space, a new world, a new kind of life. I didn't even come to this conclusion until I was older and my mom started sharing with me how much she struggled with certain moves—like when we moved to France. When you're a child and you go through stressful events, your parents keep it together to help you, but also to act as a model for how to navigate said stressful events. Yet what you fail to realise as a child is that your parents are also struggling. With moving, you rely on one another because that's who you have, and to have even one person with you in that process that you know is there for you and that you know loves you is so important. As a result, you become extremely close because despite the fact that you're all struggling—in different and similar ways—you're not struggling alone.

there is no WASTED TIME
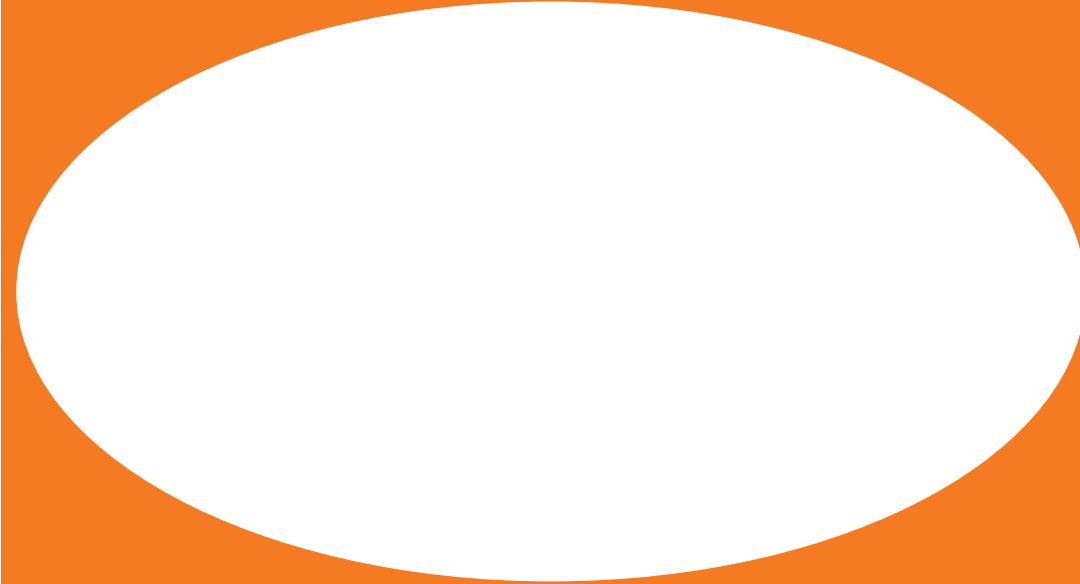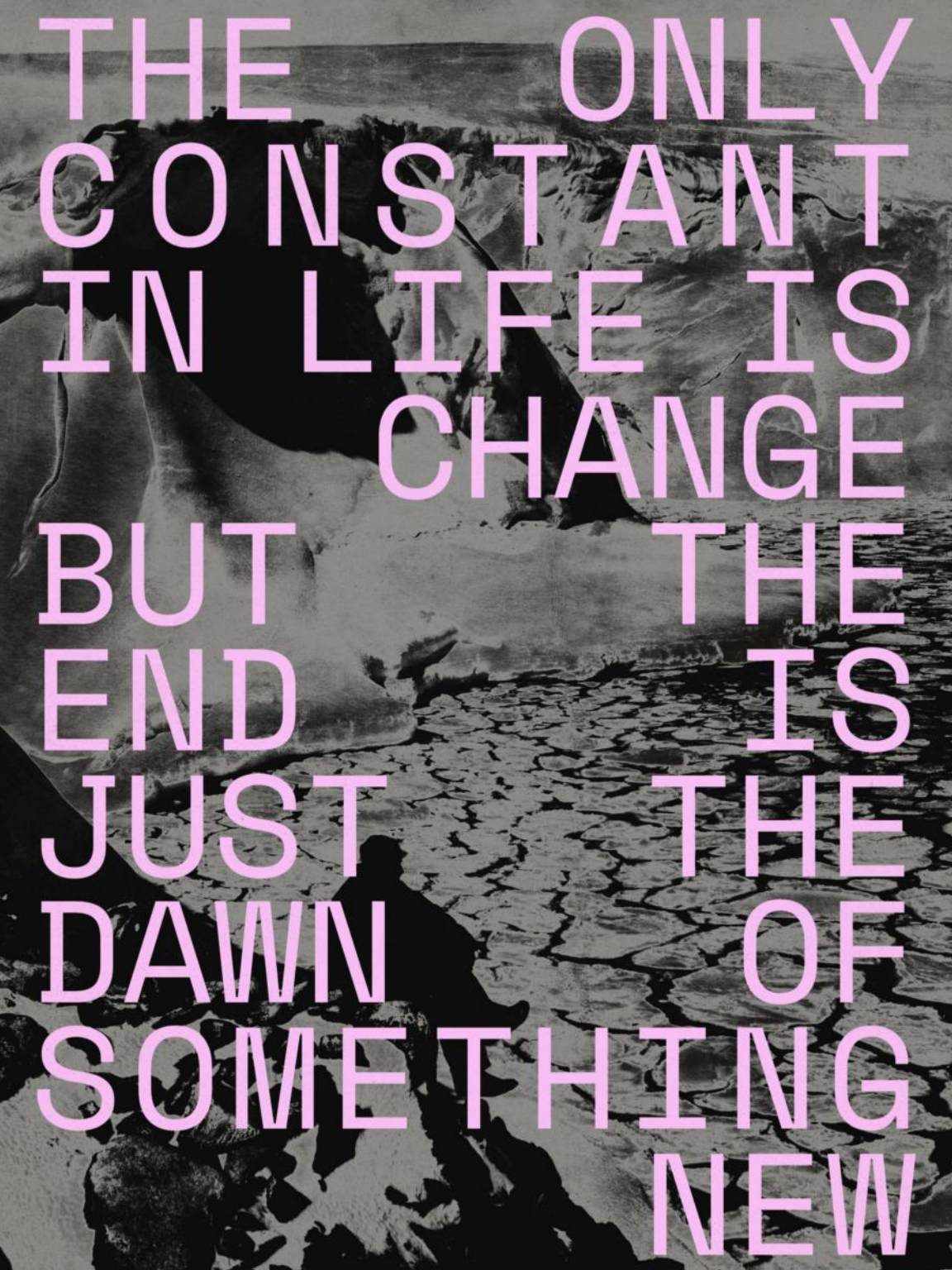
THE ONLY CONSTANT IN LIFE IS CHANGE BUT THE END IS JUST THE DAWN OF SOMETHING NEW

Perhaps this is why we delight in telling stories about heroes battling the odds and the elements, rather than about the magic of seasonal change. Why we relish stories that lionize individuals who start at the bottom and fight their way to the top, rather than stories that frame these forms of competition as varying degrees of insanity. Why we tell our children that life is hard, when we could just as easily tell them that it is sweet.

TEXTS INCLUDED

"Job relocation, sources of stress, and sense of home" by Jeffrey W. Riemer

Art on my Mind: Visual Politics by bell hooks

"'Home' as an essentially contested concept and why this matters" by Jed Meers

"Homesickness: a review of the literature" by M. A. L. Van Tilburg, A. J. J. M. Vingerhoets, and G. L. Van Heck

"The Psychology Behind Instilling a Sense of 'Home'" by Lauren Suval

"The Psychology of Home: Why Where You Live Means So Much" by Julie Beck

The Truth About Stories by Thomas King

All photos included were either taken by me, old family photos, from Google Earth, or public domain.