

LIBR 588 Oral History Interview Transcript: At Home in 2020

Interviewee: Milou

Interviewer: Sophie Penniman

Date: 3/10/21

Location: Bozeman, MT, United States (Milou) and Vancouver, BC, Canada (Sophie), via Zoom

SP: All right, we're recording! So, first of all, hi, thanks again for doing this! Could you state your name and today's date for the record?

M: My name is Milou, and today is the tenth of March, 2021. And it is 5:04 PM.

[Both laugh]

SP: Do you provide consent for the interview today?

M: I consent.

SP: Cool, thanks!

M: Yes, I consent—Oh okay. I think there's...

SP: Yeah, I think it's a little bit slow. I'm going to go ahead and turn my video off when I'm not talking just to make sure that everything goes smoothly. But to start off: Where are you currently? And can you describe your surroundings to me?

M: I am at home in Bozeman, Montana, and I am currently in my room, or what was my room when I lived in my parents' house, and the room is half turned into my mom's office and half my room—half her space. It's in the basement, there isn't really much on the walls or around me—there's a tall bookcase filled with all my old childhood books, and a closet that I've cleaned out—a bed because I'm in a bedroom—yeah, so that's where I am.

SP: **[2:11]** Thank you! Do you consider this space to be home, and why or why not?

M: Probably not exactly home, because it's my parents' house now and not really my house since I've moved out a while ago. The space [unintelligible] my own sense of home.

SP: I know that you live in Helena [Montana]—would you say that you feel at home there?

M: It definitely feels more like a sense of home, because I think I've been able to make my room more of my own place, but I'm only living in Helena for like a year, so it's not really the most solid sense of home there either. I feel like I'm still kind of waiting to have a place and a more permanent job and for things to settle and feel more like I'm building something in terms of a sense of home.

SP: Awesome, thank you so much! Sorry, just taking some notes here—So, I'm going to come back to this question later on in the interview but I wanted to ask this first: Thinking back to before the pandemic, what would you have said home had meant to you? [Pause] Like, how would you have defined the concept of home?

[Long pause]

M: **[4:25]** I guess maybe before the pandemic, I would have thought of home in the more stereotypical sense of a place you live with your family and have set down roots—and I guess based on my previous answers it sounds like my mentality is still kind of there, but I think that through the pandemic my sense of home has morphed a little bit more in that home is not necessarily a physical space, but more a feeling of safety or comfort and belonging with the people that you're around, so it's more of like not necessarily a physical space but maybe more of a non-physical—not a tangible entity, but more of a non-physical space.

[Pause]

M: ... I think you're on mute, Sophie.

[Laughter]

SP: That actually segues really well into the next question that I had. So, I know that you were saying earlier [in a prior informal conversation] that you're not someone who is particularly attached to material objects— so you think you'd define home as more of an intangible or imagined space?

M: **[6:15]** Yeah—I think I would definitely see home as more of something intangible that's not tied, for me, to physical objects. And also, I think an important concept of home is that it's a shared feeling—for me home is not a solitary place—it's a place of community, a sense of feeling, a sense of belonging. So I guess for me, defining home, it's more important the people that are in it than the space itself.

SP: That's really interesting—that's a really eloquent way of putting it. All right, so from there we're going to move more into talking about the pandemic itself and more—anecdotal things. So, this week actually more or less marks the one-year anniversary of the global COVID-19 lockdown. So, thinking back to a year ago—March 10th or so last year—where were you this time last year?

M: At this point last year I was, well—probably on a plane leaving Latvia [laughs]. Yeah, basically nobody really knew how bad COVID was getting and I was really optimistic—more optimistic than I probably should have been about COVID. I was teaching English in Latvia, and my spring break was coming up, and I was going to meet up with my mom and a friend in Paris and Prague, and then I was going to speak at a conference in Berlin, so I had all these really exciting plans and I thought they would keep going—I think everyone thought they would keep going, but then all the borders were shutting down and then we got a note from the U.S. embassy in Latvia being like “get on the next plane home”. So, that is what I did—I boarded literally the next plane home.

SP: **[8:49]** Backing up just a tiny bit, I wanted to talk a little bit about your experience being in Latvia. Did you feel at home when you were in Latvia?

M: No, I definitely did not. I wasn't there long enough to establish a sense of home, I think—I was there for 8 months, and it was just kind of like—an odd transitional year for me too, just coming out of college and not really knowing myself or what I wanted out of life—not that I know those things now, but, you know, in a stronger sense. And I think being in a foreign country where you don't really speak the language and you don't know anybody, and you're just kind of thrown into a job and an apartment that you also don't really know anything about was very jarring, and I was also still in a transitional phase, I think. I think that was one of the sadder things about the pandemic is I think I was really starting to feel more at home—I finally had a good group of friends, and professionally I was doing well— I was going to speak at this great conference, and my students and I were bonding better—and then everything came to a really sudden halt. So in that sense I don't think I was really able to develop a sense of home in Latvia just because of the way the timing worked out.

SP: **[10:38]** That is really interesting, thinking about how the pandemic— like, we've been talking about how it changed the concept of home, but thinking about it stopping the concept of home or prolonging the concept of home is really interesting. Do you have anything more to say about that? That's something I'd love to hear more about.

[pause]

M: I think that home is not an instant thing, at least for me—feeling a sense of home takes time to develop, and I think that you can see that sometimes with other people who are more attached to objects than I am—maybe who carry something around with them since childhood that is 'home', or that have a very clear image of their childhood bedroom or their childhood *something*—and just even just the fact that I mentioned childhood adds that extra time of growth—things take time to develop and feel like home, and then I think it also requires a sense of—I don't know, when you think of home you think of this sense of nostalgia that implies some sort of grieving or ending process, whereby you are leaving your home and no longer part of that home for various reasons, and I think COVID was so sudden and so jarring for everyone in the world, and I think that we just weren't able to go through any sort of—any sense of process. Everything was just kind of sudden.

SP: **[12:46]** Yeah, totally. I know—I forget the author, but I was reading this one article where this author talked about home as a place that we leave and long to return to,¹ and that’s interesting that home is something that you actively cultivate and—it evokes nostalgia.² [Pause] What would you say, in your mind, allows you to build a home—what are some things or some concepts or experiences that make you feel like you are connecting to a home?

M: I’m a very people-focused person so it’s for me really about the relationships that I’m building with the people around me, and if I feel that sense of belonging, developing—that for me feels very—that’s when I’m at home. And, anytime you start to develop any sort of attachment to a place, or to a feeling— because you can be at home in a lot of things, like feelings, or pursuits, or relationships, and so for me it goes back to that feeling of attachment or belonging, kind of connection with something or someone.

SP: **[14:32]** That’s really nice. I did really quickly want to explore maybe the flipside of that— talking about that feeling of homesickness or even of nostalgia. What are some ways in which you’d feel like an outsider—specifically in Latvia, or just in general—how would you describe the sense of not feeling at home?

M: So, in Latvia, for the majority of my time I did not really feel at home, and I think part of that is just the cultural differences between myself as an American and the Latvians—in the community I was in—[pause] Latvians tend to be, from my experience, more reserved people, and they’re not as warmly, openly hospitable like on the streets or something. But they have a great sense of hospitality and welcoming when you do end up being able to go to their homes or visit with them. It’s just that they have a little bit of a colder exterior sometimes. To break through—not to make any generalizations, this is just what I found, in my experience. So it just took a long time to make those personal connections, and it just doesn’t happen right away—you don’t become best friends with somebody overnight. So in that sense, when you don’t feel particularly—for me, when I don’t feel particularly attached to people—and also, I didn’t really know what I was doing—it was my first time teaching English, so I didn’t really understand what I was doing, or I didn’t feel at home in what I was doing. So having that sense of directionlessness and unattachment led me to feel that it wasn’t exactly home.

SP: **[16:56]** For sure—yeah, definitely. So, going back to what you were talking about a little bit earlier about being in Latvia as the world was starting to shut down-- you said that the U.S. Embassy basically told you to get on that next plane going home: What was your thought process hearing that—what went through your mind when you heard that you were going to have to go back to the U.S.?

¹ The original wording is “[Home] is a place we depart from and have a desire to return to”.

² Samanani, F. & J. Lenhard. 2019. House and Home. In *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Anthropology* (eds) F. Stein, S. Lazar, M. Candea, H. Diemberger, J. Robbins, A. Sanchez & R. Stasch. <http://doi.org/10.29164/19home>

M: For me, it was a little bit less jarring because a couple of weeks earlier I had had a medical emergency, so I had been kind of in the mindset of maybe I would have to go home, just to deal with that medical emergency that had come up. So I guess I was a little bit more prepared—I was pretty disappointed, though—there were a lot of things I had wanted to see through, that I just feel like I couldn't see through. And, not being able to say goodbye—it just happened so quickly there was no hope of [muffled]—to the ending and I think that feels very unnatural when you aren't able to process an ending or something.

SP: **[18:24]** That goes back to what you were saying before about how a home takes a while to build up and it takes a while to cultivate, and then having to very suddenly leave that is the complete antithesis of what you were talking about earlier.

M: Yeah—

SP: I know that you mentioned that you had a medical emergency in Latvia—is that something that you'd want to talk about a little bit?

[pause]

M: I mean, not particularly—in what way?

SP: I guess like the experience of having a medical emergency somewhere that wasn't home—if it's something you don't want to talk about that's totally fine.

M: Oh—Yeah, that was very jarring, to have a medical emergency happen—it was my first time ever having something like that occur, and it definitely, again—the people and relationships [muffled]—sense of home—it's kind of weird to be so far away and have something really serious happen to you, and not really having anyone close to you that you can really share that or feel like will advocate for you or understand what's going on, so that was difficult. And then, in terms of medical practice and whatever, there are a lot of cultural differences between Latvia and the United States and those are kinda difficult to navigate when you're not feeling well and you are alone in a foreign place.

SP: **[20:25]** For sure. All right, so, jumping a little bit forward, you had to get on that flight back to the United States—can you describe your first weeks back in Montana? Was there anything that surprised you about being back, or anything that you weren't expecting when you first arrived?

M: Like the rest of the world, all of sudden we were all at home and not going anywhere for a very long time, so—I don't know, I guess I needed that time of quiet to just process the abrupt ending, and just process everything that was going on. It was just a time of enormous uncertainty for everyone. And you know, in some ways I think it was nice to be able to stay at home, and I was lucky to be able to stay at home with my family, and kind of go through it together, quietly, in our own way.

SP: What were your family members' experiences of the early stages of the pandemic—did they feel kind of the same as you, or did you process it in different ways?

M: [22:05] I feel like it was different for all of us—I mean, my mom was still working at that time, and she was still going into work because she worked at a lab by herself, so she didn't really see anybody. And my sister was in high school at the time and that was pretty sad for her to not get her last semester of senior year, but she adapted really well to online classes and loved online classes, so it really wasn't that big of a deal to her, I think. And my dad is retired so he's always at home, so his life didn't change. And then I was coming from another country, so it was very different. [Laughs]

SP: I know you had to quarantine for the first couple weeks you were back, because I think we were quarantining at the same time, because I had just come back from North Carolina—what was that experience like, having to be separate from your family but also together?

M: It was kind of scary— I was really worried that I would get them sick, or—I think there was just so much we didn't know in the beginning of the pandemic—I remember wiping down all of the vegetables that we got from the store, and now we know you're probably not going to get COVID from that. So I just think, yeah, that sense of unknowing, not knowing, really was very frightening, I think.

SP: [24:01] I feel like I maybe know this, but remind me again—was this your first time spending a prolonged period of time with your parents since leaving for college, or had you lived with them in the past after leaving college?

M: Yeah, so this was my first prolonged period of being home in Montana since I left for college— I guess I did spend two summers at home, but I was busy working, and this was just really in the house with my parents all the time. That has not happened in a very long time. So, it's always kind an adjustment being in the house and—yeah, I mean it's honestly been really nice to be back in Montana, back where I grew up, and I would have never come back if it hadn't been for the pandemic. The pandemic—there's only been one. [Laughs] Knock on wood.

SP: The current pandemic we're in, the first of—[Laughs]

M: [Laughs] Yeah. So that's been a really nice part of the pandemic, to kind of bring me back to my childhood home and back to my family and back to where I'm from, because I would have never come back, at least not for this long and in this way, had it not been for COVID.

SP: Yeah, that is interesting, having to leave a very nascent home—kind of situation and then come to a place that you *are* from and to spend a lot of time being at home. Was it different being back than you remember in high school? Like, the way you interact with your family or with your hometown?

M: [26:06] It's definitely very different. I feel like, for me, when I'm away from a place and I come back, I think things always feel a lot smaller than they did. I think for me my sense of place can get really distorted by the feelings and the emotions that took place in that place. And I actually felt this when I was visiting ya'll in Appleton in October and just walking around the university.³ It felt so small to me, and so different. Because I think when I was going there, it felt so large and so—such a big space, because it was a really important space for me at that time and a lot of really key emotional and developmental things happened in that space. And then when you're away from it, you have space, you have distance, and so the feelings are not as immediate, and things settle and return to their normal size and their "normal"—I say "normal" in quotes—a less emotionally large and powerful space because of that distance.

SP: That's a really interesting way of thinking about it, because I've thought about, you know—you go back to your old elementary school or whatever and it feels smaller, but that's because you're physically bigger than you were when you were there. But thinking about the way that physical space and emotions intermix—because you're not a physically different person than you were when you left Lawrence [University], but you've changed and grown in other ways, and the fact that your imagined sense of home and the physical space not changing—the way that those intersect is really cool.

M. [28:22] Yeah.

[Pause in recording]

SP: So, that talking about coming back home and being in back Bozeman and leaving Latvia—that was all about a year ago now. So, I thought we could spend some time right now talking about what you've been doing since. Do you just want to give a really quick summary of—starting like last March or early April—of what life's been like for you?

M: I guess last March I came home very suddenly, and I kind of spent the first few months just not doing anything—I had medical things I needed to take care of as well, and so once those were taken care of—a couple months later—I started applying to jobs. I thought I was going to move to D.C. with one of my really good friends but that fell through, so then I had to regroup and think about what I wanted to do, and started looking for opportunities in Montana because I thought it might be nice to be close to family in these very uncertain times, and also Montana's really not a bad place to be during a pandemic. And, also just seeing all the other things going on at that point—so I found this program called Justice for Montanans, which is an AmeriCorps program that has—brings—basically, it's a Service Year program where you spend a year serving at a nonprofit law firm or various other civil legal aid positions around the state. So that's the position that I have now—That was a really bad explanation of what I'm doing!
[laughs] Oh my gosh!

SP: No worries!

³ Appleton is the narrator (and interviewer)'s former college town.

M: **[30:40]** I just decided to stay—I'm just—I'm going to restart over, because that was extremely convoluted—so, I decided to stay in Montana! I was looking for things in Montana to do, and then I found this organization called justice for Montanans, that is run through AmeriCorps, and—for all of you Canadians, AmeriCorps is a program that [laughs] is a service year program for people who have graduated from high school or college, so they can do various service and volunteer activities in their communities. And this one particular program is serving in civil legal aid, so I serve at a civil legal aid nonprofit in Helena, Montana. And we work on a lot of civil legal aid cases like housing, family law, crime victim stuff, and that kind of thing—we work all over the state, helping people with their civil legal needs—which is a wild thing to do during the pandemic, when a lot of people are going through really really rough times, so there's been a lot of evictions, a lot of domestic violence, a lot of public benefits, a lot of bankruptcies—that we've been helping people with.

SP: **[32:12]** It sounds like—I mean, it's an emotionally challenging job in any situation, but it seems like the pandemic has really just been compounding that—

M: Yeah, the pandemic has really screwed—really stressed people out, and it's really sad because they're people who are already very vulnerable—we work mostly with low-income populations—already, their lives are not easy and the pandemic has really made it so, so much worse. So that's been really nice, to be able to work, or serve in a position that's addressing all the concerns and systemic problems that come to the forefront in a time of crisis, but also emotionally draining. And I also work from home, so home and work become one.

SP: That was actually something I was about to ask about—I know you were saying last night that when you are back in Helena, and you're working from home—your bed is visible from your angle—I think your boss was making a comment about keeping your—compartmentalizing that. Can you talk about what that's been like, both working from home but also doing an emotionally challenging job from your living space?

M: **[33:46]** It's definitely challenging. So, when I am in Helena I have a very, very tiny room—it is literally just my bed and my desk and that's it—nothing else fits. So, I roll out of bed and then immediately get to work, fielding calls from clients in crisis. And so that was actually something my boss was very, very concerned about, when I first started serving from home. She asked me, “are you sure you're going to be okay with that—your room's really small”—for her, she—they were able to have their own office in their own home, but that's not feasible for me. And I actually responded that for me—I guess it wasn't really that big of a deal. I had to come up with my own kind of rituals, or ways to separate out my day. So, I knew that—I get up in the morning and I make a cup of tea and I turn on my computer, and that cup of tea and my computer means that the day has started. And then, when I turn off my computer and I bring my dishes back to the kitchen it means that my day is over and it is no longer a work space. So, having to come up with some sort of routine in order to delineate work space vs. home space.

SP: Yeah, for sure. Actually, something I was reading earlier that I really liked—it was this passage by this anthropologist named Mary Douglas, and she says that “home starts by bringing space under control”, and that really resonates with that, of—you’re bringing a space under control.⁴ Do you think that you’re making your home by having rituals—by things that you do that delineate different parts of—or different spaces in your life?

M: **[36:17]** Definitely, just at least making a separation for myself that work is not home—especially not *my* work—it’s most definitely not home. And that just comes with having your own professional boundaries—I am a person who works and I am also a person, outside of work—and I think that’s a balance everyone has been struggling to have during the pandemic. I feel like I’ve seen it go both ways, where people become workaholics because their work and home life have melded, or they become extremely lazy because their work and home life have melded. So, it’s just a balance that’s really difficult for everyone to have and I can’t imagine, for people who have kids who are also at home or other such demands that add so much complication into it all.

SP: Totally. I know that usually you can go to different places to have different parts of your life, like you can go to a place for work and a place for leisure and a place for childcare, and that’s just all at home.

MdM: Yeah.

[Pause]

SP: I know that you were mentioning that for you, something that you’ve been doing to make home and also as a fun thing on the side is cooking. Is that something you think that you’ve been doing more since the pandemic started, or has this been something that you always do and have been doing now?

M: **[38:08]** I think it was more of a Latvia thing, learning how to cook—I think food really brings a sense of home and a sense of place, and people always get really nostalgic and sentimental about food, I think—have strong emotional attachment to food. And definitely for me, I have foods that bring me comfort. And I think it started in Latvia—feeling very out of place and having a difficult time being alone in a new country. Usually—because I’ve had that experience before, when I studied abroad in St. Petersburg, Russia—but usually what I did to mitigate that was I hung out with friends and we would go to a restaurant and eat food, and there became restaurants or places that started to have a sense of home, and the food there started to have a sense of home and that would be how I would comfort myself in periods of isolation. But I couldn’t do that when I lived in rural Latvia alone. I did not have any friends and the cafes didn’t really have—what I was looking for. And so I started cooking as a way to comfort myself and self-soothe, and that was really—yeah, I think that was a very healthy thing for me to do—very

⁴ Douglas, M. (1991). The Idea of a Home: A Kind of Space. *Social Research*, 58(1), 287-307.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40970644>

helpful for my relationship to food, my relationship to my body, my relationship to cooking as a process—it was never anything I ever really liked to do before. And honestly, when I think about the pandemic, I think it's really been a continuation of this—of Latvia, in the sense of the social isolation and the loneliness continuing, and me just having to learn how to be at home with myself throughout that. And I think that's something that's really important to learn, and something I feel like otherwise I would have not been able to do, because I'm generally a pretty social person but—learning to be at home with yourself when it's just yourself I think is probably one of the hardest things you can learn how to do. And it's not like I've figured that out, but it's a process that I've been on for the last two years [laughs].

SP: **[41:03]** I really like that phrase of learning to be at home with yourself—it's really nice, Milou. Yeah, I know that—obviously, this is just a tiny slice of it, but the thing I really remember about coming to visit you in Latvia is making food with you, and just trying different foods and cooking, and it was really nice that you were able to make a space and make a home—[Pause] Also, I know that I was reading this study of—I think I was telling you about this, of Greek college students in London.⁵ And the author was finding that these Greek students were going back to Greece and just bringing back like 60 pounds of meat in their suitcase—⁶

M: Oh my God—

SP: Like, packing meatballs alongside their underwear.

[Laughter]

SP: And, like olive oil and figs, and what have you. And that for these people—food was home, and they would—their family would send them food, and they would purposely get food to take back to where they were living—It's interesting that you obviously weren't importing Kraft singles or whatever, but you were still finding a way to make a home in a place that maybe wasn't your home.

M: Yeah.

SP: All right. So, I kind of alluded to this earlier, but do you think that the way you've thought about home has changed since the beginning of the pandemic? What contributed to that change?—I know you did mention this earlier, but—

M: **[42:41]** Yeah, I think I've really—[pause] I guess thinking about the phrase 'to be at home', and the pandemic has helped me really be at home with myself and be at home in my relationships with my family, my friends, and to really value those relationships that I have, and

⁵ Petridou, E. (2001). The Taste of Home. In Miller, D. (Ed.), *Home possessions : Material culture behind closed doors* (87-104). Oxford: Berg.

⁶ This refers to one of the students interviewed by Petridou, who admitted to having once returned to London from Greece with 16 kg (35 lb) of meat packed in her suitcase amongst her things.

to see their importance, and that—those relationships that you have with yourself and other people that you care about—that's home. And I think that's not something that I had originally really thought that much about—I hadn't really thought that much about home or the feeling of home in general because I've always been a pretty ambitious person who wanted to get as far away from rural Montana as possible when I was younger, and everything was kind of built on the traditional ideas of success. And I think the pandemic has really helped me to take a step back and kind of reevaluate my own values and what is important, that finding a sense of home—finding a sense of security and stability—is something that is really important to me and important for me living a healthy, happy life. And I don't think I would have realized that without this global pause button on everything that I had thought I would be doing. And I think—that's one way that I've been able to reevaluate things. And then also, I can't speak enough too about how important it is to be at home with yourself. I think that when life is busy and distracting you, it's easy to be distracted from yourself, but first and foremost we are people in a body—our body is our home, and if there isn't a healthy relationship there, with being in your body and being in your own mind—I think it can make finding a sense of home outside of your body and your mind difficult. So, for me it was really a chance to also reevaluate my relationship with myself and become more at home with being me when I'm just me and not me in relation to other people.

SP: **[46:11]** That's really—that's really good! What struck me about what you were saying was that maybe an earlier version of yourself would define success as going out and chasing things or going and seeking stuff out, but that maybe success and home are more about finding and letting things come to you and being yourself... would you say that that's maybe the case?

M: Yeah—I think letting home happen—and again I think home is not a rushed process. It's an organic, slow process, and it needs to be that way. I think it can't be something that you're chasing after and trying to control—you have to let things be what they are and accept that. And that's something I think I'm always working on—it's not an easy thing for me or for anyone, I guess. Letting life being what it is but still feeling comfortable within the uncertainties of life.
SP: With the pandemic, it's just—it's taken away all the control we have, and we just have to kind of let it happen— [Laughs]

M: Yeah!

SP: For myself that's been hard, trying to be okay with relinquishing that control, and just rolling with it—

M: **[48:00]** It's not easy to do! [Laughs] I've by no means figured any of this out—I speak such wisdom that I am still figuring out myself. [Laughs]

SP: That's the best place to be, though—having wisdom but also recognizing that you don't—no one can know everything.

M: Yeah—I think that’s also important to realize, that home is a process, and you’re never there—There’s always—Speaking again about the nostalgia aspect, sometimes there can be these degrees of separation—home is something that exists in your dreams, and it’s something of the past, but not the present. And that’s its own feeling, too—There’s a lot of different conceptions, I guess, or ways that home can be, whether it’s like a memory or something you’re striding towards in the future, or trying to build—I think it’s never really a static thing.

[Pause]

SP: That’s the end of the questions that I have—before we wrap up, is there anything else you’d like to talk about that I haven’t brought up yet? Or anything else you’d like to elaborate more on?

M: No, unless there’s something you want me to go off about for! [laughs]

SP: **[49:59]** That was so nice—yeah, well I think that we can wrap up unless you—do you have anything you want to add—but, thank you again for participating in this—it’s just been really nice to think back about home and about the ways in which we construct and imagine—

M: I definitely feel like at first my conception of home was very narrow, when you were first asking the questions, and as I was thinking about it more, I started to realize that—how broad of a concept it is, and multifaceted... so that was something I felt during the process of the interview.

SP: I know that there’s... okay, I’m really bad with names, but—one theory of home is that... this came out of a study about refugees and migrants in uncertain positions, is that... this theory that home is a—triadic constellation, I think is what it’s called?⁷ So, home with a lowercase ‘h’, is your physical house, or the space you currently inhabit, and then Home with a capital ‘H’, which is the feelings that you have, and your idea of belonging, and then HOME all uppercase is the imagined or real homeland that you come from and the place that you’re striving towards, and just like everything that’s happening.⁸ And I think that’s what you’re saying, that you can think of home as, like, I don’t feel super connected to this apartment or whatever, but everyone has a home, and everyone has a place that they’re either constructing or striving towards.

M: I like that a lot.

SP: I feel like I’ve probably butchered it in the retelling, but—

⁷ Brun, C., & Fábos A. (2015). Making Homes in Limbo? A Conceptual Framework. *Refuge: Canada’s Journal on Refugees*, 31(1), 5–17. <https://doi.org/10.25071/1920-7336.40138>

⁸ Brun and Fábos’ triadic constellation of home distinguishes “home” as the day-to-day practices of homemaking; “Home” as representing values, traditions, memories, and feelings of home; and “HOME” as the broader political and historical contexts understood in the current global order and embedded in institutions.

M: No, you're all good. [Laughs]

SP: **[52:00]** Okay, well I'm going to stop recording now, but, yeah, this has been really nice! All right, I am stopping the recording.

[End of interview]