

PRACTICING HOME IN THE FOREIGN

The multiple homing practices of artisan journeymen on the tramp

Abstract

Research in migrant practices has recognised that home crystallises into multiple forms subject to constant re-enactment when viewed from the perspective of mobile populations such as nomads and refugees. In this article, we illustrate how artisan journeymen who went on the tramp around the turn of the 20th century performed home in multiple ways when on the road and at arrival in new locations. Using a historical example, we oppose the suggestion, which is common in contemporary migration and transnational studies that recent years have witnessed a paradigmatic new way of enacting belonging. Ultimately, the argument is that instead of idealising certain notions of the traveller, or ways of practicing home, we need to keep an eye to the real-life tensions of homing and the multiplicity through which it expresses; we need to understand homing as the performance of “belonging trouble.”

Keywords

Homing • journeymen • migration • tramping • multiplicity

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Received 20 June 2016; Accepted 29 August 2017

What is striking about the “new” internationalism is that the move from the specific to the general, from the material to the metaphoric, is not a smooth passage of transition and transcendence. The “middle passage” of contemporary culture [...] is a process of displacement and disjunction that does not totalize experience. Increasingly, “national” cultures are being produced from the perspective of disenfranchised minorities. The most significant effect of this is not the proliferation of “alternative histories of the excluded” producing, as some would have it, a pluralist anarchy. What my examples show is the changed basis for making international connections. [...] The testimony of my examples represents a radical revision in the concept of human community itself

Homi Bhabha 1994

A home is more than the house we live in. It can be our nation, our mother's food or the hat we wear wherever we might go in the world. What Homi Bhabha (1994) in the nineties coined “a new internationalism” emphasising the history of diaspora, migration, displacement and exile as a new paradigm of belonging (see the quote above) has in recent years opened new perspectives on the notion of home. Research into migration and migrant practices has recognised how home crystallises into multiple forms subjected to constant re-enactment and (re)negotiation when viewed from the perspective of mobile populations such as nomads, refugees and exiles (cf. al-Ali & Koser: 6).

In this article, we follow Bhabha's conceptualisation of belonging by drawing on empirical research into the mobile practices of artisan journeymen who went on the tramp around the 20th century. Even when we are timely removed from Bhabha's new internationalism, we nevertheless found that the travelling artisans performed home in multiple ways, e.g., on the road as well as at arrival in a new location. Hence, using a historical example, we also oppose Bhabha's suggestion that recent years have witnessed a paradigmatic new way of enacting belonging, a notion which is also common in contemporary migration studies. Inspired by what has in social research become known as “the mobility turn,” it is often argued that so-called globalisation processes have recently caused a radical break with some of our more traditional notions of belonging, for instance, those related to the imagined and abstract stability of a world divided into nation states (see for instance Grieco & Urry 2011; Sheller & Urry 2005). Hence, globalisation trends have supposedly made people more mobile, and thereby radically transformed our way of belonging into something more unstable than they were previously (Rouse 1991).

The examples illustrated here show that such processes are not new. What is particularly interesting is how the multiplicity enacted consists of performances of home where the foreign plays a constitutive role in the re-enactment of home. Moreover, the performances of home involve multiple references to nation and homeland intensifying the senses of community left behind, yet re-enacted when on the move; performing the homeland in the foreign

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mobility, perhaps paradoxically, emphasises the spatial attachment. Hence, the *situated knowledge* (Haraway 1988/1991) of our artisan journeymen illustrates how stable and unstable notions of home relate dialectically, thereby moving us beyond the fallacies of essentialising concepts of home and foreign as were they two ends on a spectre of belonging, freezing them in time and space as if their performance aims teleologically at an *a priori* meaning.

We begin the article with a conceptual introduction to the notion of home as multiple objects and practices expressing real-life tension situated in the dynamic relation between home and foreign. Then using an empirical example, we illustrate how such real-life tension demands of the travelling journeymen who perform home and re-enact home in multiple ways. Our traveller creatively illustrates the many forms that home may take, something, which we show – via more contemporary examples – is not particular to him but very common for migrants, also in our current time and age. Ultimately, the argument is that we need to keep an eye to the real-life tensions of homing and the multiplicity through which it express, instead of over-idealising certain notions of the traveller or certain forms of home. In other words, we must be careful in drawing too fast conclusions about the prevalence of specific ways of belonging as against others when considering the multiplicity involved when home is enacted. Instead we argue that homing should be understood as the performance of “belonging trouble” (Saunders 2003: 25).

Homing as living-in-tension

According to Winther, “homing” is a practice characterised by practically expressed tensions and contradictions, which can be articulated between and within groups and social spaces and which may also influence the individual at a more existential level. As Bammer puts it:

Semantically, “home” has always occupied a particularly indeterminate space: it can mean, almost simultaneously, both the place I have left and the place I am going to, the place I have lost and the new place I have taken up, even if only temporarily. “Home” can refer to the place where you grew up (the place you perhaps threatened to run away from when you were five), the mythic homeland of your parents and ancestors that you yourself may never have actually seen, or the hostel where you are spending the night in transit. In other words, “home” may refer to a deeply familiar or foreign place, or it may be no more than a passing point of reference. (Bammer, cited in Saunders 2003: 20)

One could argue along with Saunders (2003: 20) that this conceptual indeterminacy must “issue a warning that the inspecificity of home may mask theoretical imprecision, overlook significant detail, or erase crucial differences.” However, the conceptual indeterminacy also indicates the presence of practically expressed tensions and contradictions, which have the potential to open access to investigations of lived experiences that are inherently unruly and unstable. Hence,

[...] while “dizzying” and disorienting [the indeterminacy] can be re-signified not as a constitutive lack but as a fruitful ambiguity, a space of up-rooting and tension ... allowing for ruptures within the continuum of [migration] practices to emphasize their inherent fragility, indeterminacy and vulnerability to contestation. (Andersen, Kramsch & Sandberg 2015: 467)

Like other scholars working with the notion of home, we understand home as a multiple object (cf. Blunt 2005; Blunt & Dowling 2006: 2; Walsh & Näre 2016, 2ff; Walsh 2006). Moreover, we understand home as performed into different versions, which struggle to have the final word; following Anna Marie Mol (1999), we could say that homing is an ontological struggle. As Saunders puts it: “Indeed we have already heard, in the conflicting meanings of belonging, in the shifting sands of home and nation, the murmurings of what we might call ‘belonging trouble’” (Saunders 2003: 25). Taking seriously the multiple ways that homing express, it may, in other words, work as a concept that de-naturalises taken for granted processes of belonging and opens for an understanding of performances better than others to adapt tension and even respond to conflicts. When investigating homing practice, rather than searching for specific notions of home, we believe it is this ontological struggle and the belonging trouble which must be our centre of attention.

In the following sections, we wrestle with the ambiguities of homing practices by emphasising ways in which homing express in the case of Danish artisan journeymen on the tramp at the turn of the 20th century. We reflect these practices in more contemporary migration practices to remind the reader that the practices are common to people on the move, not just the artisan journeymen of past centuries. The homing practices displayed in the examples in turn indicate the presence of intersections between the ways in which home is enacted (Jespersen *et al.* 2012). This is to say that the different enactments of home do not stand alone as isolated incidences but relate to one another, inform and eat into each other, something, which provide a foundation for understanding homing as an ontological struggle and belonging trouble. Homing come to name a state of being which haunts the single human being and the group while on the move and demands of them to be (re)enacted.

Artisan journeymen on the tramp

The tradition of Danish artisans and craftsmen tramping on the European roads, after ended apprenticeship, had roots in the Middle Ages and became an institutionalised migration practice, at the latest from the 17th century until the introduction of freedom of trade in 1857 (fully implemented in 1862). Through it, the guilds controlled and regulated the labour market as well as educated artisans and craftsmen. In other words, tramping was a central career path and a guild requirement for any journeyman with master-aspirations. After 1857 (1862), tramping continued as an informal social practice, but with the wave of industrialisation in the latter part of the 19th and early 20th century; the traditional practice slowly eroded, e.g., due to increasing craft specialisation. However, tramping itself did not cease to exist as industrial workers also found their way to the roads.

Hence, Danish journeyman tramping continued to be a common – and most often temporary – migration practice at the turn of the 20th century. The artisans and craftsmen who went on the European roads belonged to the class of craftsmen, which at this point in time was a part of the so-called working class. Therefore, most craftsmen did not constitute an especially privileged group or elite. They were common people who, as part of their personal and career path or due to unemployment, travelled to different destinations in Denmark and Europe for a shorter or longer period (Edgren 1988; Logue 1983). However, the group of journeymen differentiated themselves from other occupational groups, as journeymen were socialised into a high

level of mobility. Therefore, journeymen tramping was a distinctive group practice (Pedersen 2014: 283).

Herein, the homing practices of Danish itinerant journeymen were studied through a narrative analysis of a larger sample of memoirs collected by the Danish National Museum in the first half of the 1950s based on the questionnaires that serve as guides for the memoir writing. In the same way, as other memoirs and autobiographical accounts, these memoirs referred to with the abbreviation NIHA are not methodologically unproblematic due to the distance between the recollected events and the written accounts (Humphries 2010: 17ff; Yde-Andersen 1966). However, they constitute a unique source when investigating the homing practices amongst Danish tramping journeymen not only due to the quantity of text accessible, but also more importantly due to the specific focus on the memoir writers' journey and experiences on the tramp between 1880 and 1914 (Pedersen 2014: 24–29). As homing is a process entailing expressions of emotional attachment, it is necessary to have access to individual, first-hand accounts of the processes to gain a full understanding of their dynamics.

The journeymen travelled to multiple destinations on the European continent and beyond. The majority of them travelled to destinations along the Rhine in Germany after which they travelled to more craft-specific destinations, for example, carpenters often travelled to Switzerland, painters to Italy, and tailors to London or Paris (Strømstad 1984: 45f).

Travelling sometimes far away from recognisable homelands to at least to some extent unrecognisable foreign regions and lands, the journeymen consciously performed home in multiple spheres and spaces providing them with a form of emotional relief in the foreign. In the artisan practices, homing thereby appears as a multifaceted concept, covering aspects such as material artefacts re-enacting home in various ways, the more psychological aspect of feeling at home as well as something imagined, an idea, such as the community, homeland or the nation, which are symbolically articulated rather than simply physically present (see also Blunt and Dowling 2006: 2). All these various aspects are somehow interlinked when home is done: "The way we understand, think and live in our concrete homes – in the home – the moods we create to feel at home and the ways we are 'homing', tend to merge" (Winther 2006: 177). Moreover, because it opens for possibilities for doing home in various ways, the interlink of one form of homing in another intensifies the creative processes through which homing is performed and exposes the belonging trouble entailed in homing.

The knapsack – homing as material artefact

To take the material expression of home first, it does not necessarily have to express itself as the house, shelter or dwelling. Even the single material object can, as Daniel Miller (2001) shows in his ethnographic work, take possession of us and this to such an extent that specific material objects become determining for our sense of home (see also Walsh 2006). Considering the power of artefacts in such a way that it is worth keeping an eye to how single objects may be able to make people feel at home when they are on the road.

The significance of the artisan's knapsack including its content is an illustrative example of the material presence of home in mobile practices. The craftsmen brought a piece of home with them in and with their knapsack, which typically contained a set of clean clothes and a few of the most praised personal possessions such as book, bible, and photographs (see NIHA, Aksel Ott Jensen, Acc. nr: 1278: 42).

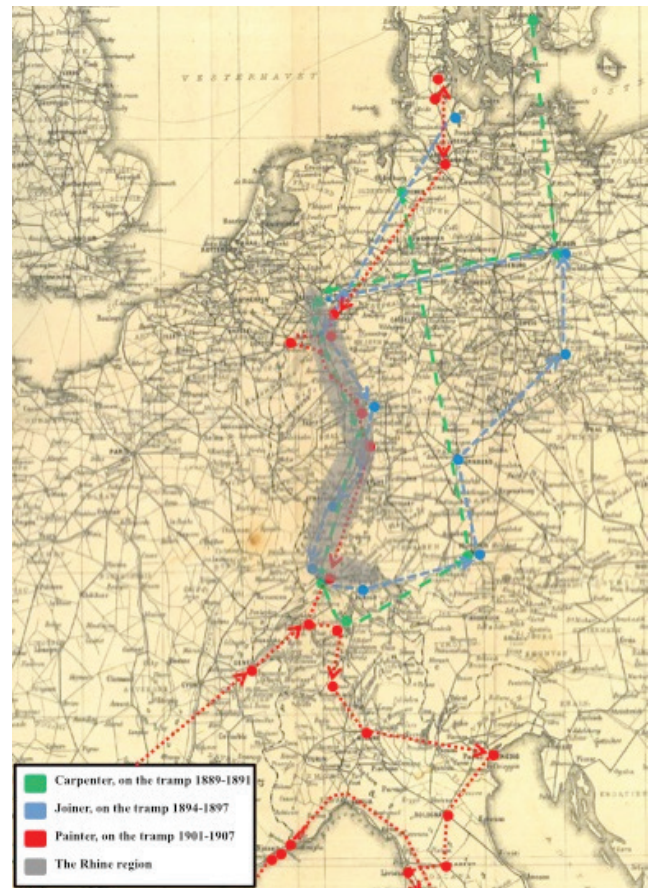


Illustration 1. Routes and main stops of three Danish journeymen on the tramp c.1900. Source: Author's reconstruction of original map (without routes) from a journeyman guidebook from 1901 (VfUH 1901)

What is of interest is how the material artefact has the power to bridge the distance between private and public. As Miller puts it: "It is the material culture within our home that appears as both our appropriation of the larger world and often as the representation of that world within our private domain" (Miller 2001: 3). In this way, the material expression of home might be a single object that is able to locate in the place where the single person is dwelling but at the same time the significance of the single object extends far beyond the private sphere of the shelter making public spaces present in the private sphere. When travelling, we are via transportable objects that are able to take both our private world (the shelter, family and friends, etc.) and the larger social world (i.e., the social, national and/or religious community) with us.

In the case of our artisans, both the knapsack itself and the physical material objects in it performed central functions in the enactment of home. Whereas the knapsack implicitly expressed the familiar practice and community of tramping for the journeymen – something, which was also expressed in the phrase "to lace up the knapsack" referring to and was synonymously with going on the tramp (NIHA, Marius Sørensen, Acc. nr: 2069: 22f; Richard Ferdinand Gustaf Grune, Acc. nr: 0509: 26) – the objects carried in the knapsack could be both expressing the smaller community left behind, such

as pictures of the family, or they could be expressing more abstract notions of community, as did the bible.

The contents of the knapsack carried an almost magical ability to diminish the emotional distance to the home, where the travelling artisan lived, grew up and where family and friends were to be found. Hence, even if the journeyman rarely articulated it explicitly, the knapsack was the home following him from place to place. In a similar way, physical items such as a laptop, pictures or a pyjama make a more contemporary mobile group, that of the so-called transnational UN-professionals feel at home in a random hotel room anywhere in the world (Nowicka 2007: 78-80). As argued by Ralph and Staeheli (2011), the material objects are filling an emotional gap in the (un) known thereby resembling, reminding of or even substituting home (see also Tolia-Kelly 2004). The objects mark and create an emotional attachment to home that is formed by a sense of identity and belonging: "(...) such attachments and identities, however, need not to be enacted in *place* of origin, but instead may be recreated in the places to which they have moved (...)" (Ralph & Staeheli 2011: 522).

Companionship on the road – homing as emotional comfort

Another way of homing is the emotional comfort provided by the presence of companions (friends and foes) en route. When journeymen went on the tramp more than a hundred years ago, it was not uncommon that the tramping artisan or craftsman travelled with fellow craftsmen.

Travelling with a journeyman who was often also a fellow countryman increased security on the not always safe journey. Moreover, it offered an opportunity for the linguistically unskilled journeyman to compensate for his inability to speak in foreign languages and for the lesser-experienced journeyman to learn from the more experienced while being on the road (Pedersen 2014: 292, 317; VfUH 1901: 12).

Equally important was the space of communality created by travelling with a fellow countryman who – at least to some extent – shared common social, cultural and linguistic denominators. The companionship on the road created the possibility of partially separating oneself from the foreign surroundings, in an at times estranging world and "returning home," at least for a little while. Being with familiar others thus provided emotional relief when needed because the companionship shaped the boundaries between home and the foreign; being with recognisable others functioned as an emotional haven where the journeyman for a time was not forced into a confrontation with the unfamiliar other. Our records show how the journeymen themselves emphasised the importance of travelling with a companion (NIHA, Niels Carl Magnussen, Acc. Nr.1952: 48), and for the same reason, the journeymen travel guides published by the journeymen organisations recommended not to travel alone (Nielsen 1888).

Scandinavian Associations – home coming in the foreign

With the Danish and Scandinavian Associations found primarily at major destinations in Switzerland and in the larger German cities (as well as at a few other destinations, e.g., Paris and London), homing in the foreign attained the material form of a house as well as the imagined form of homeland. Hence, in these physically existing locations around Europe, home had an at once material, practical and imaginary significance for the travelling artisans.

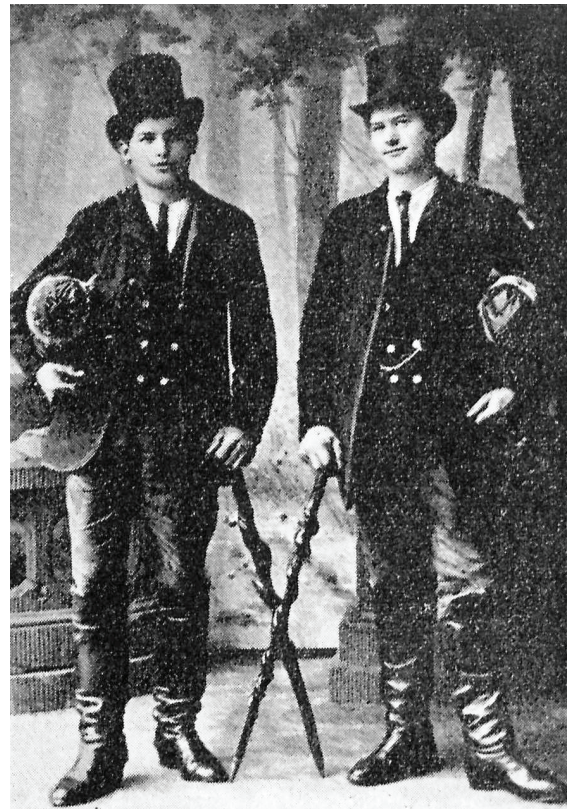


Illustration II. Photograph of two journeymen from the middle of the 19th century in traditional clothing with their knapsack and walking stick. Source: Friis Møller 1955-1959: 50

The associations were spaces functioning as anchors in the foreign both for the Scandinavian journeymen who temporarily visited a destination and for the journeymen who had settled abroad. They were formed and run by Scandinavian (and primarily Danish) journeymen who are residing abroad (Pedersen 2014: 344-347; Pryor 1980: 220, 223). However, the associations were foremost there to perform tasks related to tramping. They offered the practical assistance to journeymen, i.e., accommodation and information on job vacancies just as other journeymen shelters and hostels open to all journeymen (VfUH 1901: 14; Wadauer 2006: 170). They offered travel aid in case of unemployed (if one was a member of the journeymen organisation) with which the next destination could be reached or foodstuff financed for a few days until a job could be obtained (see VfUH 1901: 215; VfUH 1903: 269; VfUH 1911: 76f; NIHA Chr. Kruse, Acc. Nr.: 0936: 4; Peter Andreas Vilhelm Brodersen, Acc. nr: 2074: 16).

The Scandinavian Associations being in a house strictly speaking, the journeymen knew where to find them, i.e., from their peers or the journeymen travel guides that:

[...] recommend the itinerant journeyman to make overtures to the Scandinavian Associations in those towns where they are found. These will always be prepared to assist the itinerant journeyman by word and deed, and in their rooms, lists of the best places of employment within every craft are found. (VfUH 1901: 46)

The associations created a familiar frame, thus performing the role of home for the travelling artisan. This could be for a day when on the road or it could be for years in the town or city where one resided. In this way, the associations had the dual function of bridging the distance between home and the foreign place where the artisans now resided. By creating a haven (cf. Dovey 1985) for the journeymen, as a kind of physical and emotional anchor in the foreign, it also came to constitute a space where the journeymen could attain the sensation of retreating from the foreign when familiar surroundings were needed or an occasional sanctuary, following Bachelard, a space for daydreaming: "The house shelters daydreaming, the house protects the dreamer, the house allows one to dream in peace" (1994: 6).

This phenomenon of a physical retreat functioning as an emotional anchor is by no means delimited to the historical journeyman example. Both within the fields of migration history and contemporary migration research, countless examples show how specific institutions, in geographical or physical locations, function as both practical and emotional anchors when people arrive or live in the foreign. In the 19th century transatlantic migration, the migrants most often moved from Europe to specific locations in America, where familiar people from their own family, hometown or nation had already settled (Moch 2003: 153-160), for example, many German migrants in the 19th century who settled in German communities such as in Pennsylvania. Here an already existing infrastructure and networks with German associations, bars, newspapers, and so on created a familiar and recognisable frame that not only provided practical assistance but also functioned as a cultural bridge settling the tensions experienced because of the gap between feeling at home and the new surroundings (Fertig 2005: 281-283).

The phenomenon of migrants assembling in a physical location forming a home in the foreign is no different today, where various types of migrants be it refugees, labour migrants or others find or establish different physical and social spaces where home is performed and where they can re-enact home. On the one hand, this constitutes a central location for home-making activities uniting a familiar community not only through the practice but also through the physical location of the activities. On the other hand, the physical retreat creates a space where home is or can be re-created, e.g., through the enactment of familiar cultural activities such as cooking, dance and chanting. Rabikowska (2010) for instance shows how "daily rituals of consumption" for Polish migrants in London play a significant role in reconstituting home. Rabikowska argues "... that food making and food consumption projects the concept of 'home', understood as a state of normalcy to be regained in face of the destabilized conditions of life on emigration" (2010: 378). In a similar way, Wiles argues that for contemporary New Zealand migrants living in London, the "[...] discursive and material aspects of New Zealand as home form a framework for everyday life as migrants living in London" (2008: 117). The presence of discourses about and artefacts from New Zealand is not only expressed when migrants visit the kitschy NZ-bars, but "(...) This idea of home is also played out through everyday social activities, whether physical (sport leagues) or less tangible (media connections, websites, newspapers). They develop new understandings of home and self in relation to home, and generate a sense of community and bonds among themselves by performing this home away from home" (Wiles 2008: 127).

The shelter of the homeland

The Scandinavian associations signified the familiarity of a known place, not only as a physical building and practice, but also in the form of the familiar community and ultimately the homeland. One of the ways in which home is expressed without being directly material is in the idea of human beings belonging in a specific geographical location, e.g., the *Heimat*, the region or the nation (cf. Blunt & Dowling 2006: 167ff; Schiller & Fouron 2001). At the time of our artisan journeymen, the Homeland or the nation either was becoming or already had become an important and common marker for a societally anchored sense of belonging, which is directly related to a geographical place or at least the idea of a specific geographical place, the home country or more precisely the nation. This sense of belonging evolved with the nationalism that spread throughout the European continent in the 19th century.

Around the turn of the 20th century the Danish state had developed into a modern nation state with the loss of the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein in 1864. Denmark lost its German subordinates and the populations living in the remaining territories to a large extent gathered around and united in the idea of a Danish nation. Therefore, the nation or homeland became a central identity marker also for the journeymen with an otherwise dominant international mindset.

With the 19th century nationalisms and nation-building processes, homing had thus – also for common people such as our journeymen – become tied to a specific idea of spatial belonging which includes societal structures reaching beyond its immediate meaning. Since the arrival of nationalism homing has for instance become strongly related to citizenship and to democratic participation and thereby to specific institutions and socialisation processes present in specific places of belonging. To be a citizen and have rights and obligations in a country have become almost naturalized expressions of belonging to a homeland, which most people have at a worldwide scale over the years. Even when the relation amongst individual citizens, the soil of the homeland and the set of institutions associated with it is of an abstract nature (Anderson 1991), it has had and has a tremendous power to perform home for most people in the world.

In the case of our artisan journeymen, the continued relation to the homeland "was particularly evident during major festivals such as Christmas or Martinmas eve, where they were gathering points for fellow peers and nationals. Here the associations became substitutes for the family at home, as they created an environment with a familiar and homely framework w[h]ere [sic!] the cultural-symbolic customs were enacted" (Pedersen 2014: 347). Familiar and traditional food, closely tied to the cultural traditions of the homeland, was served and, thus, intensified the emotional proximity and increased the feelings of home amongst the festival participants (NIHA Anton Buus, Acc. nr: 0311: 82; L. Chr. Jensen, Acc. nr: 1276: 12; Chr. Kruse, Acc. nr: 0936; Ferdinand Hjul, Acc. nr: 0775: 26). Although the idea of nation functioned as a symbol representing and thus as substitute for the home left behind, the specific rituals carried out during festival time brought this home into the foreign in a new form, re-enacting it on location.

The emotional proximity to home was also attained through the common outings with fellow nationals organized by the Scandinavian Associations and especially through the lively Saturday nights in its restaurant called Cellar [Hulen]. Especially, the Saturday nights in Cellar were a central memory of most journeymen who travelled to areas with Scandinavian Associations. Here, the Danish journeymen at least for a night found a refuge from the daily trivialities and struggles and a shelter in the encounter with familiar national

(drinking) customs, social practices and the familiar tongue of the homeland (see NIHA Anton Buus, Acc. nr: 0311: 79; Søren Sørensen Acc. nr: 1678: 16; Th. Jørgensen, Acc. nr: 2435: 48; Carl Christian Christoffersen Acc. nr: 0252: 43f; Chr. Jensen Acc. nr: 1561: 15ff; Frederik Hansen, Acc. nr: 0042: 23; Bernhard Johs Hetmar Acc. nr: 2195: 28). Similarly, the journeymen guidebooks also recommended the journeymen to seek contact with fellow Danish journeymen and stated that the Scandinavian Association with its activities was a suitable place (Nielsen 1888: 5f; VfUH 1901: 4f). Furthermore, it is illustrated by a former journeyman who wrote that, "One of the best things that could happen to an itinerant journeyman was meeting fellow countrymen, that is, people from our home town. This was usually an experience that could keep your spirits up for a long time" (Friis Møller 1955–1959: 454).

In the associations, the journeymen had access to Danish magazines and books (VfUH 1901: 217). This materiality increased the emotional proximity to the homeland and thus intensified the sensation of being in the home even hundreds of kilometres away, as is expressed by a former journeyman who wrote that "[i]t is funny to read the news from back home here in Hamburg, everything then becomes as if one was in a restaurant at home" (NIHA, Hans Peter Olsen Acc. nr: 1512: 13).

In a similar manner, contemporary migrants from New Zealand living in London despite them not experiencing an immense cultural gap create retreats for themselves where they can be together and not feel as strangers (Wiles 2008: 129). For the New Zealand migrants in London, the imageries of homeland culture are especially visible in the enactment of "New Zealand-orientated sports events and cultural fixtures (rugby or cricket games, concerts with New Zealand artists or New Zealand food and wine festivals. They can also be seen at social gatherings (such as a weekly 'church' pub gathering at a warehouse on Sunday afternoons) through to personal enactments of home such as frequent emails and call to family and friends at home or reading New Zealand newspapers online" (Wiles 2008: 124).

All the previous examples indicate the importance of homing as a practice which shelters us from something other, the unfamiliar, the foreign and sometimes even a feeling of being in danger. As Al-Ali and Koser (2002: 8) state: "Similar to conceptualizations of belonging and identity, 'home' has often been defined by its relation to the outside. Fear, danger, the unknown, foreign and alien places and traditions, unfamiliar faces and habits are all part of that what is *not home*." This relation between home and the foreign is also constitutive of the sense of national and ethnic belonging (Jenkins 1996). With the introduction of the notion of national belonging, homing becomes a societal practice symbolised by *our* and not *their* national flag and *our* and not *their* national anthems. The nation is the imagined homeland, which always includes traces of the foreign other against which we shelter ourselves, and for which we ultimately fight wars. Hence, one of the paradoxes of modernity is how the close tie between the nation's way of spatially locating identity formation in a specific territory and the more or less reflected relation to the foreign (what is outside the nation) implicit in this way of performing identity, turns belonging into an inherently problematic practice.

Idealizing home

When at home in the nation, the foreign may be understood to remain physically removed from the home, absent and excluded by a border. When in the foreign it inevitably intrudes the home and the relation



Illustration III. Christmas Eve in the Scandinavian Association in Frankfurt am Main 1903. Source: Friis Møller 1955–1959: 393.

between home and foreign is both open to interpretation and in need of constant (re)activation, so to speak. One of the consequences we see in this example was how the Scandinavian Associations had a pivotal importance for the more permanently settled journeymen at the destinations where the associations were located. For these journeymen, it became a permanent substitute for positive connotations connected to the homeland they had left behind and which could not be found elsewhere in the foreign. Here, belonging to a social group of journeymen merged with being Danish and a sensation of being home that was difficult to find privately.

The Scandinavian associations were run by the journeymen living at the destinations, who would shape the associations according to their image of home that, apart from offering the expected practical aid, provided an idealised social sphere (Friis Møller 1955–1959: 99ff, 241ff). In this way, the Scandinavian Associations were central in the multiple homing practices performed in the search for a home left behind.

Living in a foreign place provides the opportunity to creatively reinvent the home (including the homeland) left behind, thus making it into an idealised image of home, which often becomes more of a romantic dream than something which resembles a real, lived place. This way of homing has for years found expression in the figure of the exile: "Home for the exile is, further, imagined space: it is 'not simply removed, but constantly re-imagined', a realm of possibility infused with more reality than present surroundings: a no place like home" (Saunders 2003:73). To be on the move, searching for stability in a foreign place thus also paves the way for the imagination to take possession of home, recreating it as a utopia which at once is and will never be.

A contemporary example of this phenomenon is the New Zealand Kiwi labour migrants in London who gathered in a diaspora framed around an idealised version of the New Zealand homeland just as the Scandinavian Associations did for the Danish journeyman migrants more than 100 years earlier. The idealised version of the homeland was challenged upon return where many returnees struggled with re-adapting to the homeland because it did not live up to the ideals of the imaginary homeland (Wiles 2008; for other examples see Ralph & Staeheli 2011: 522–523). A nostalgic and idealised version of the homeland is also used to sell trips to the Chinese "homeland" by Chinese travel agencies in Germany thereby exploiting the homing desire to profit by selling trips "to their fellow co-ethnics in the diaspora" (Leung 2004: 157).

Migration as homing practice in itself

Our last way of homing turns the migration practice into a homing practice in itself. The journeymen moved away from their place of origin (e.g. place of birth) to partake in the practice of tramping after ended apprenticeship. If not immediately, many journeymen eventually found solace in the practice of mobility, which was not only formed by tradition and necessity but also formed by feelings of belonging to the group of journeymen. The journeymen travelled the European roads along specific routes and most often to destinations central to the practice of tramping. Many for instance travelled along the Rhine, as had their peers and fathers. They re-enacted and repeated the familiar habitual life-course practice in which Danish journeymen had participated for generations, thus socialised into a practice of journeymen mobility that shaped their perception of normality.

In this sense, mobility became a part of the profession and the life of an artisan (Pedersen 2014: 281-287). To be on the road was itself a homing practice as is the case for the kiwi-migrants in London (Wiles 2008: 116-117), but also for Polish labourers who work in other European countries. They travel frequently and as Morokvasic shows they "settle within mobility" (Morokvasic 2004: 11). Similar examples are the highly mobile Romanian migrants after the EU accession in 2007 who have developed a perception of home in relation to their mobile life (Marcu 2014: 339-341), the sense of constant movement visible amongst Roma's from Eastern Slovakia that according to Grill is being reinvented and reproduced through discourse and everyday practice (Grill 2012: 1280), and even for Californian retiree migrants partaking in at least bi-annual north-south migration. A sense of home is created in the relation between home and journey not only for retiree migrants as suggested by McHugh (McHugh 2000: 78) but also for the other abovementioned migrant groups. As Leung argues "(...) home for migrants can be and is often made along the way" (Leung 2004: 55).

For the journeymen, movement at least for a period became an integral part of the performance of home. Migration was not necessarily in opposition to home as they found comfort in their peers and the practice of tramping. To be more specific, the journeymen applied different strategies in the re-enactment and re-negotiation of the notion of home. It is not argued that the journeymen did not experience homesickness or anxiety by being departed from the loved ones, but rather that the journeymen engaged in a psychological process where the home was re-enacted, re-invented or re-negotiated by an entire community on the move. They engaged in homing practices where the journeyman after leaving his physical home, created a sense of home by merging the already experienced with new experiences that (re)formed the perceptions of belonging, and the home obtained different material and emotional expressions.

One reason why the notion of home seems to become more intriguing when viewed in the light of motion and thus in relation to people who are on the move is that the migrant is forced, so to speak, to problematise his belonging and thus what home is and what it has become, thought-processes that non-mobile populations are not forced into in quite the same way. In other words, even when we believe the belonging trouble to be a somewhat basic human condition, it is (almost) necessarily more explicitly reflected in the practice of people on the move. For these people, movement may even become integral to the performance of home, rather than being conceived as was it in complete opposition to homing. In the journeymen example the stability of home and belonging is thereby turned upside down; here the movement itself becomes a homing practice.

Conclusions

It might be one of the most erroneous assumptions of post-modern thinking that movement opposes the stable and restful, and thus also the sense of being at home. As Saunders puts it: "Movement is often taken as tantamount to instability, as in opposition to, and undoing, entities presumed stable – home, nation, self; it is (hence) sometimes deemed synonymous with modernity" (Saunders 2003: 28). In this understanding of movement, being at home would be eternally erased for the mobile populations of the world, something for which they might yearn but may never (again) realise, be in, etc.

Because of post-modernism's influence on transnational studies, contradictory notions of belonging fluctuate in these studies. As Al-Ali and Koser (2002: 7) put it:

Transnationalism is primarily concerned with the social, economic and political links between migrants and their home communities. The peoples engaged in these activities have been conferred with different and often contradictory labels of identity. For instance, in some studies the transnational emerges as a "transmigrant" with "dual" or "multiple" identities, or as a "fractured" subject who operates easily in different cultural worlds. (Rouse, 1991)

This has in turn lead transnational theory to either normatively overestimate the emancipatory potential of transnational migrants or on the other hand to reify national and ethnic belonging as if it was here the true feeling of being at home resides (Rouse, 1991).

Instead of reducing the reality of migrants by stubbornly applying un-reflected and one-sided notions of home, which are in fact ideal theoretical assumptions we must keep an eye to the multiplicity of real-life performances. If we want to truly work with the notion of home as productive space to think belonging anew, our notions of home must emphasise multiplicity as lived tensions. Moreover, there is nothing romantic in the life of a traveller, nomad or migrant; it is a form of life involving constant struggle to maintain a sense of stability. This belonging trouble may provide the traveller with an ability to endlessly adjust to new circumstances, where ever he may be. However, it may also make him into a fanatic nationalist, over-idealising the place where he was born, as has been the case for many exiles.

The examples illustrate how foreignness is appropriated into the sense of home as a present/absent other; in a similar manner as identity can be understood as an effect of the present/absent other (see for instance Jenkins 1996), so is home – perhaps paradoxically – always related to the foreign and affected by the absence and presence of foreignness. And foreignness is Janus faced; it comes in the form of the unwanted other; but it also comes in the form of the other who attract and makes the journeyman go in the first place:

If shifty relations render the concept of the foreign unstable, so too does the fact that foreignness may be either positively or negatively marked, may evoke, on the one hand, the exotic, artistic, or liberatory, or, on the other hand, the strange, improper, or threatening. This evaluative equivocation appears in the "fear of, and attraction to, otherness" [...] (Saunders 2003: 29)

Appearing in the form of the unfamiliar other who makes us to travel long distances at the same time as it is the unfamiliar other we need to shelter ourselves from, the foreign makes homing a struggle migrants have to live with and they often find creative ways of dealing with the tensions.

Homing is a dynamic practice which includes elements of mobility through which home reflects – even when home does provide stability and rest in a psychological sense of the term. Therefore, homing works as a concept that de-naturalises taken for granted processes of belonging and opens for understanding alternative and creative performances better able to adapt the real-life tensions entailed in belonging. As argued by Hooks: “Home is that place, which enables and promotes varied and everchanging perspectives, a place where one discovers new ways of seeing reality, frontiers of difference” (1991: 148). Moreover, it sheds light on the fact that belonging comes in multiple forms, something, which is often forgotten when theorising on communities and their intricate dynamics. The constructive way of applying the concept of homing is to shed light on this ontological struggle and the belonging trouble able to invert our telescope over and over on what home means and ultimately what are spaces and places that truly matter for the populations of the world.

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