

HOMInG INTERVIEW

with **KARSTEN PAERREGAARD**

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Conducted by Sara Bonfanti¹



Karsten Paerregaard is Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at the School of Global Studies, University of Gothenburg, Sweden. His work concerns migration and climate change and his regional expertise is in Peru and Latin America. For 25 years, Karsten's research has focused on rural-urban migration in Peru and Peruvian transnational migration across the globe (in the US, Spain, Italy, Japan, Argentina and Chile). His work includes studies on migrant networks, remittances, illegality, fiestas, religious practices, political mobilization, family organization, and social conflict. Analytically, his research is inspired by theories of transnationalism and diaspora and, methodologically, by a multi-sited research strategy. Theoretically, he perused how

physical and social mobility are conceived and practiced in a globalized world. Among his publications: *Peruvians Dispersed* (2008); *The Question of Integration. Immigration, Exclusion and the Danish Welfare State* (with K. Fog Olwig) (2011); *Return to Sender. The Moral Economy of Peru's Migrant Remittances* (2014). Karsten's current projects deal with the social and cultural impact of water shortage in the Peruvian Andes and with climate change and its repercussions for Andean culture and religion.

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We are trying to advance our understanding of what home means for migrants in particular, in their everyday experience. To us, home is a fuzzy concept and an empirical object. It implies a material setting as well as a set of relations; it is a lived practice and also a multi-scale idea: as small as your dwelling and as large as your community of reference, your nation and so forth... so, the first question I wish to ask you is: what does home mean to you?

Do you mean as a person or as a researcher?

Both. Better yet, let's enumerate three angles we may look at this issue: home for you as a person, as a scholar of Peruvian migration, and as an anthropologist.

Well, those aspects cannot be separated easily. If we, as anthropologists, do not have a home, you know, we cannot forge a research question and then try to comprehend the home of others. It is a cognitive and a practical issue at once; it is a language point also. For instance, in Spanish, home is *casa*, but also *hogar*. What about Italian?

¹ This HOMInG interview was originally conducted in June 2019, within TMC – The Migration Conference in Bari, in which Prof. Paerregaard gave a keynote on *Grasping the Fear: How Migration Speaks to Anti-Globalization Sentiments and Intersects with other Controversial Issues of the Anthropocene*. The interview has been finally revised in May 2020.

In Italian we have a word similar to *hogar* but we rarely use it. It is *focolare*, which means the place where you light up a fire and somehow nurture your household... I guess it is the same as 'hearth' in English, though both are timeworn terms, hard to relate to a 'modern' western home.

In fact, what makes the *hogar* is the kitchen, it is the practice of eating that brings about the *hogar*. A *hogar* is built up like a house, but it also incorporates relations and affection. Many languages derived from Latin use the term "casa", which is both the house, a physical thing but also the home, a symbolic space. My wife, who is from Peru and is a native Spanish speaker, still mixes the idea of home with the house when speaking Danish...

Do you speak Danish with your wife at home, or do you speak Spanish?

We speak Spanish, mostly, but we also speak Danish, especially with the kids, who are grown up by now and bilingual anyway. Then they both speak English or one of them actually French and Portuguese too. Whatever language we speak, we can at least agree that "home" sometimes is a physical thing for what triggers in you when you return home. I think we all have that feeling when you come back home from work or just being somewhere ... oh, *casa*, you know. My wife, first thing when coming, she changes clothes, and it is like, I wouldn't say a collapse, but complete, you know relaxation... it is about the bodily posture, but also about the 'show off': drop the mask you wear outside, forget it! I'm authentic now, I'm with myself, so home is actually an individual feeling, it is a place where you are not accountable, you don't have to perform for the rest of the world. Anyway, you don't do like that in a hotel room, even if you travel a lot. I think that for each of us "home" has some assets that only you recognize, where not a single item is alien or unrelated to you. It's about the emotional properties of objects. That moment when you say: I know why this present is here, because I bought it or someone in the family bought it, or they used to buy it... Anyone's home is full of things, but those things are in an aura, where you can recognize everything. There is a spatial arrangement which you know, but from there also comes a certain aura, because home can be untidy, but it's not undifferentiated chaos. At home you can create an image of the world which is your order, and it is only yours. And that thing that does not fit in anymore, that shouldn't be there, is called garbage or trash, you know.

In *Purity and Danger* (1966) Mary Douglas said that artfully: "dirt exists only in the eye of the beholder", or something like that... Garbage is a hidden part of home that has been poorly investigated...

Yes, garbage is a fascinating object: see, people just bring their bin bags outside at night, and from there you can see how they, us, consume things all week through and then toss out what's waste and doesn't belong in the home anymore. So, the home is not a bubble, but it also has a hole, like a digestive system we could say... I see a connection between home and digestion. How many people complain that, when away from home for some time, they can't keep up with their metabolism... while as soon as they reach home after travelling, the first thing we do is going to the toilet! We tend to forget how home physically affects us... See, my wife, when she comes home from travelling, she always takes a shower. Often, regardless you have sweated outside or not, you wanna shower off the dust of the world and just being in your own heaven.

To sum it up... to me personally, home is a space to get in touch with your metabolism, and that's a feeling, home is a feeling first and foremost. Any culture has its own terms not just for home, but also for that sense, the state of emotions, that experiencing home makes people feel deep down.

My second question is: what's the meaning of home considering your ethnographic work, your long-term fieldwork with Peruvian transmigrants, in the country of origin and wherever in the world you followed them...

Well, home is first and foremost about social relationship. My informants would say that home is where my family is, but where is home when your family is spread out? See, people like my wife: she lives in Denmark, but she has one sister in Holland and one sister in France, and then three sisters in Peru. In fact, she is going to Peru next week, and her mother is there, in the house where all the six siblings grew up, a huge building that my father-in-law constructed many years ago...

Where was this *casa* then, where about in Peru did you conduct fieldwork, in an urban or rural area?

The house is in Lima... in fact it was a small neighbourhood, but the city has sprawled so much in the last 50-60 years, that today it is not an attractive place anymore. It's a low and middle class *residencia*, but anyway, that's a *casa* when my wife returns there: she immediately recognizes things, her brother lives there and takes care of my mother-in-law... You know, it's kind of a deal: Johnny lives there, he never really had a job, he just doesn't have money. So they took in some inquilines, he gets the money and has to take care of his mother, who is aged and frail by now. At night he never leaves her, he knows all the medicine she has to take it and acts like her own nurse. Then there is a woman who comes to cook, maybe every second day, Nati. She spends time with the two, they talk and she cooks, she is like a member of the family in a way. Johnny and Nati, in a way they make a family too, because everything they do together is all about taking care of my mother-in-law.

No wonder that home is also about care...

Home is definitely about care, in many respects, it's all about care. Most of my work with global migrants, and especially my last monograph *Return to Sender* is a study of care. You know, economists look at a country's GDP and cannot avoid dealing with the size of remittances, but as an anthropologist I've had years to explore what sending and receiving (or failing to do that) meant to my informants in Peru and abroad.

I guess that in Latin America as much as in other "cultures of migration" the circulation of money is vital in order to maintain relationships at a distance within a framework of shared values.

Absolutely, but there's also another aspect that I find important – I mean "the language" of conveying such money transfers. You know, sometimes people may even lie with regard to sending and receiving money from their relatives abroad. There are a lot of matters around fulfilling the expectations to send and receive... When I stayed in my interlocutors' home I overheard their phone calls with relatives in Peru. Often I heard them asking "did you receive the money?", or the relatives asking "did you send it at all?". Many times I heard the interlocutors giving excuses or turning things around to avoid the hard questions... Sometimes the amount is too much, oftentimes is too little...

and then again reciprocal accusations: “How did you spend it, it was not meant for that...” and so on and so forth.” You may see clearly from these acts of communication that sending money is a form of care. Anyway, I don’t even like to say money here, if you understand money as really what it is, it is care...

It is a generator of resources, it can be multiplier of resources...

Indeed! money is more than financial resources, it can be social care, but then what is care? What do I care about/what do I care for? I think, if home is about care, in terms of people caring for each other, again it depends on co-presence, physical or not. If we go back to my wife’s family home, she says it’s “my mother’s home”, *la casa de mi madre*, but what will it happen when the old lady dies, whose home will it be then? Will it be Johnny’s *casa* because he had been living in there for many years caring for their mother? Home is not an ontological thing, only in our minds it is a place where we belong, even if it’s only a room when you are a student in a dorm. But the home as a family construction is not ontological, it can change...

Because there is not only one individual’s life course but also a life-cycle of the household

Exactly, good point. When I was a student, I read Meillassoux (1977), you know, those Marxist approaches to economic anthropology were popular in the 1970s, and the idea that social reproduction gave way to production and the emergence of classes... Anyway, it’s not exactly that, but the same idea that families have trajectories, that they go on as the time passes by...

Absolutely, here and how, but also future and past, a timeline in which to inscribe the genealogy...

Yes, there is a constant, an imminent idea of home, a sentiment that you belong. That’s a belonging to a genealogy, to a family, and that’s very important, because the first feeling when you come home is leaving the world out, behind you, but then, if like most of us we share our home with others, some other members of the household, then the next moment you recognize the feeling of home is when your flatmates enter the place. As for me, I know exactly when I’m home alone or when my wife is there or when my daughter comes home, because they fill in my home in deep ways. Now we also have a grandchild, and you can imagine, when my daughter comes back home it’s all “yes mam”, do as you please... and she leave things, clothes and other stuff because it’s like, I just drop it and then I’ll take it back... but in fact, she makes a storage out of our house. Especially with the little boy, you should see the revolution going on in the fridge, that’s a shelf with my grandson’s food only, its grains, cans and all sorts of baby food!

Well, that’s emblematic of how home is also deposit, where people store objects of all kinds, to consume or to treasure, but also memories in the making. It must be sweet to see the traces of your baby grandson all over the place ...

Lovely yeah, but we also had to learn how to reorganize our home. You see, for many years my wife and I have been living on our own and it’s not been easy to readjust our appropriation of home now that the enlarged family interferes in our spatial routine. You know, these are small details, but I get annoyed if I can’t find my remote control when my programme is about to come on TV screen because my daughter or son-in-law have

put the device away to keep it out of the baby's reach. It's a matter of time and patience, I guess, of readjusting my sense of home to my evolving family.

Well, home is about habits then, individual (and family) habits...

It's definitely about habits! And it's good we also use the term practice (Bourdieu is one of my favourites), to see how home-making happens, since it's actually more habits, it is a repetition of practices: intentional or event inadvertent, some acts that you simply replicate the way you have always been doing them. Personally, I believe there's a difference between practice and habit: practice is the sum of the actions ingrained in your own rhythm of doing things, which makes you feel at home. Habit is a particular practice to which we attribute meaning or appreciation. I think that being at home is also a personal experience of time: when you're at home you can sense the flow of time inside and outside, you feel an intimacy with the rhythm inside, but you also feel the back sound of the outside world. I know it may seem gruesome, but imagine a man in jail in Texas, sitting there on death row for 10 years, 15 years... What if he sits there alone, and he happens to forget for an hour, half an hour why he's there, that the world around him is spinning and will remain out of his reach until that approaching verdict time; will he ever be able to feel a sense of home there and then? Does he ever create habits? Or do all his daily actions merely produce practice?

If you read Paolo's latest book, *Migration and the Search for Home* (2017), there are three features of being at home that he outlines: he says home is about control, security and familiarity, which they all makes sense to me and yet... if we think about that man on the death row, then: whose control, whose security is there? I mean, he is locked away, what kind of familiarity can he experience? Is it familiarity the sense of routine which is imposed upon him by those who are controlling that securitized space?

For sure that man on death row wouldn't call such place home, he would probably call it the opposite of home, if there was a word for that, even if his permanence there goes on for 10 years or more...

Yeah, it is the opposite of home, still I can't find the appropriate word to describe such condition... it's not about homelessness either.

That's a crucial counter-question: what is homelessness? Who are the homeless? I remember when I saw people in the Bronx, you know, in the 1970s, who were barely on social welfare, people begging for money on the street, they would call themselves 'homeless', they had a sort of collective consciousness. Then I remember like 20 or 30 years ago, people who ask for money in northern Europe started using the English term "homeless", why? We know that how certain groups are called and how they refer to themselves may change the status quo, for better or worse. Naming is a way of creating identities and recognised identities can advance claims. I mean that's another way of exploiting the idea of what home is: because saying "I don't have a home" points to something people lack and may obtain at some point, while saying "I'm homeless" is a way of foregrounding the loss of social status and a state of deprivation, it is a way of claiming an identity, which you both can internalize and resist or revolt against.

Actually, Paolo and I were doing some research together in a homeless shelter in Southall, West London. It's a social project which has been put forth jointly by the

local Churches and the Sikh community, which is the migrant majority there. Some of Sikh pioneer migrants were homeless themselves when they came to resettle in Britain, and nowadays, after two generations, many are fully British natives who take care of the new homeless, some of whom come from their former homeland... I find it critical to see how migration, settlement and homelessness intertwine, waves after waves, building on top of each other. To consider home (and home deprivation) in these complex terms is an underexplored terrain, I'll let you know how this research develops...

You see, there is connection between homelessness in the meaning of 'sleeping rough' and being uprooted or displaced as a migrant, and yet of course these experiences and conditions are not the same. And homelessness is not necessarily a black and white distinction: some homeless people do have a home, or they have an attachment to some home. I once supervised the thesis of a postgrad who studied street children in Kathmandu: those youngsters did have a home place somewhere, but they didn't live there continuously, they came and went. This may also apply to other homeless people, to whom the welfare system may have offered a residence but they don't feel they can fit in, for the most diverse reasons, it can be health issues, incompatibilities with other tenants or else, so they leave the place that is provided for them and that supposedly is their home and fall back on the street.

Don't you think that some homeless feel such given residences as if they were homes imposed on them by others? I lived with gypsies, Irish travelling people, many years ago, and this was their attitude of resistance to national policies which forced them to sedentarism...

For groups with a nomadic lifestyle it is even more complex... Let's just say that some homeless individuals don't identify with being homeless at all, despite lacking a house to live in. Actually, I read statements of homeless people in Denmark who did not want to stay in the places offered by the social services. They are considered as being "home-phobic", they get real claustrophobia if forced to live in a house assigned to them. Truly, their sense of belonging undermines our romanticized idea of home.

I understand, but it's likely that these people have a personal history of suffering that prevents them from being 'sociable' as in the common-sense of (well)being at home, of enjoying a place to call home...

No doubt that many have an issue with dropping out of society, but can we assume that some simply turn their back to the mainstream idea of home as haven? As we know home is a social space of a kind, and we all get embedded in the habits of staying at home in certain ways, at certain times with certain people. If I think of myself, I enjoy staying alone at home, but prefer to share the place with my wife. And yet when she is away for a month or so, I get a different experience of being at home... I mean, you don't have to consider anyone else's needs or reactions, because then you do whatever you want, you can just enter the kitchen, grab something and leave the rest, you give yourself permission to be carefree, for a while. Don't get me wrong, there's a difference between being careless (and disrespectful of someone else) or being carefree, and allowing yourself not to care about anything for a brief moment, its' a form of self-care, I would say...

Then if I go back to the second part of your question, the meaning of home for Peruvian transmigrants, I think the most important point to discuss is their dynamic relationship

with “home”, and the need they may have for a ‘surrogate’ home while being away from it. It is then that their ties with the family networks get even stronger, in the absence of a physical place for being together. You see, I did my ethnographic studies from 1997 all the way to 2010, so I went back and forth to Peru many times and I have known hundreds of upper class, lower class transmigrants, not only in Europe, but also in Japan, in the States... Following migrants around the world it happened to me more than once to meet people I already knew from Peru, sometimes way back in the early 1980s when I started to do fieldwork in the country. In some cases, even several times. I would meet them in Chile, in Argentina, then in Spain.... Usually they would ask me with surprise “what are you doing here?” and then I could ask them exactly the same. Some of them had in fact moved, but others were just travelling to visit their relations in a different location of the diaspora. This is what I call “hanging out in the diaspora”.

I worked with Indian diasporas for years and I understand this way of mapping the territory. It is part of a larger mobility framework that does not reduce migration to movement from a point of origin to destination. Even when resettlement in a new country is permanent, migrant families tend to meet up in strategic global points now and then...

Yes, I’ve been hanging out in the diaspora myself for a long time, sometimes taking advantage of informants hosting me in different places, I mean, renting a room from them if it was possible. Other times I couldn’t do that. You should never assume that those who move have a place to stay, which is the case with live-in *empleadas domésticas* (in Chile live-in domestic work is called *puerta adentro* or “inside door”, in Peru *cama adentro* or “bed inside”), who were hired as nannies or cleaners living in the house of their employers.

It’s a curious name for domestic workers, but it’s very pertinent indeed!

This was just one of a sample, I mean, of the different types of migration I witnessed as I followed waves of people moving from Peru and Chile to Argentina, then Spain or Italy and Japan... so I have seen the same patterns over again and again, the way transmigrants share the rooms until they get stabilised and get their own home.

So, do they buy a house in the new destination or not really? Is it more that they send money back to renovate those in the country left behind?

Well, it’s hard to generalise. Many do both if time and money permit: settle down here, prepare to settle back there. Well, many of them in fact end up investing badly their sacrifices. Most migrants work strenuously being paid per hour, and rent apartments or houses in bad shape for a lot of money, so there comes a time when they have to decide whether to buy a place and construct a house in Peru, which is an important dream for many, or whether to settle in the country where they actually live.

You’ve just touched upon an interesting point. Longitudinally speaking, you have done research for 25 years with Peruvians. Do you think most of your informants have shifted their attitudes to home? Do you think their practices of homemaking have changed over this long timespan?

Yeah, I remember when I lived in that flat, in Barcelona in 1997, I had contact with Vanessa and Telmo, then they got separated, and I really had the sense, I mean they were trying to have kids, and they had all this people living in and then coming in and

out, but also family members coming in and out. Telmo really wanted to move on, he wanted to get stabilised, you know, then he got tired of it all, and of these phone calls with six-hour difference. There was very little privacy: just imagine, the phone was in the room where I slept, so I heard them, so you know what goes on, then another call, lack of money here and remittances to send there. And Telmo was just like: if this is going to be my life... You know, it wasn't a home to him, it was some dwelling place, whatever, but that was not in tune with his dream to establish a home in Spain at some point. Then, obviously, he was not going back home, there was no homecoming for him. And I think now we are drifting into the third question about research, if you really wanna do research on home, or on home and migration consistently, first you have to clean up your...

- Vocabulary?

Exactly, terminology is our main puzzle, because often we don't have the right words, we tend to go for simplification. As migration scholars we talk about homeland, sending and receiving country, and so forth, but we impose our categories on something which is not straightforward. Seeing home places in times of migration is like mud, it's moving sand we struggle to walk and talk about.

Yeah, and there is also a need for recognizing how the whole structure of migration works, how national systems interact with the migrants' psycho-logics. What is a "home country" then? Many migrants are, so they say, *split* and you probably know that too. They talk about returning for a long time, and then often they opt out of that dream... many talk about but then abandon the idea to go back. Telmo for example never acted like that, I remember clearly. Unlike others, he only looked forward. Telmo wanted to remain in Barcelona and bring over his mother, clean up and close down their home back in the village. Because if you can close it down there, it means you're not accountable to anyone in Peru anymore, so in a way you're relieved, you are making a statement that you don't belong to that home anymore...

To put it otherwise, multiple belongings are also multiple accountabilities and vice versa...

Oh yes, either way is a draining experience. And if you conduct long-term ethnography with migrant families like we both did, we know the risk of romanticising the idea of home. We should be careful, because it's not only a risk which comes from our part in the ethnographic tales, but also in many migrants' own life worlds. I mean, they invest so much financially and emotionally in a place they want to call home, but sometimes they can't fully be there. Not in the place they leave behind, nor in the new one they are trying to make for themselves... What lingers in between is home in fact, but it feels like something heavy to travel with...

It's a baggage, a heavy baggage!

Yes, depending on the stage you are in your life, and the family you depend on or is depending on you! Like, if you were a migrant and had an old mother left behind, wouldn't you call her? It is just not an option, you would be the worst person in the world, if you left your old mother home dying without caring for her – who could live with that? It's like

- the biggest sin you could commit!

...that would make you such a bad person, if you take off the plunge and move out, it's not an option to go on with your life and forget the rest of your family just because of physical distance. And of course, this real need for bonding whatever the distance is not only about your old parents, but for many migrant women and some men this also involves their kids: who will take care of them? In the case of the families I studied, it could be another Peruvian woman, often a relative, or even a hired help. To some extent it's a matter of class belonging, particularly for Peruvians migrants who are not middle class...

To be honest, most Indians migrants I've worked with are not really low-ranking. Some may struggle for a while settling, but generally speaking, they can afford better lives for themselves and their offspring.

Affordances are another big theme to consider in relation to home and migration. Affordances in economic terms, and also in the physical possibility cross territorial borders. Think of Mexicans, well, this Trump era may have tightened up border controls, but still for Mexicans it is rather easy to enter the US. For South Americans who cross half the world, it is, at least it used to be, very expensive not just to travel to but also to settle in the US while supporting relatives in Peru. I spent quite some time with Julio in Washington, DC, when I lived there from 2009 to 2010. It was a time of hardship for all then, and he had left home in Peru after marrying for the second time. But still his ex-wife and two daughters still in school were living in Peru. We would stroll around talking, he was very anxious, he had just lost his job, was literally depending on his new wife and he would receive calls from his ex-wife asking to send money back. And he also had his mother left behind...

It feels like there were so many women in his life, depending on him in different ways, economically as much as emotionally, I believe...

Sure: he was torn apart between five women, his new wife, his ex-wife, two daughters and old mother. Poor man, he was just suffering inside, you could see like every day his anxiety to send more money, now he couldn't just send enough money for the school, tuition, new computers... He was rummaging in his mind: then they will be going to high school or university, perhaps they'd do better if they came up to the US, but he couldn't bring them over as he was depending on his new wife who was the only one earning an income...

You see, this case expands again the idea of home, of the household and its domestic labour. I mean, even when we talk about an imaginative labour of love, it is labour, emotionally speaking, fatigue...

This makes come to my mind the excellent work done years ago by Micaela Di Leonardo, an American anthropologist, who wrote a feminist ethnography about Italian-American families in California.² Then she published another which is more a study of American culture and its imaginaries of home, you should give it a reading.³ Anyway, because of that exhausting labour Di Leonardo calls "kin work", and that doesn't need to be women's work only, Julio was ruining his health, you know, emotionally. In the

2 Di Leonardo, M. 1984, *The varieties of ethnic experience: Kinship, class and gender among California Italian-Americans*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

end his best bet was to get his daughters to live with him and his new wife, so at least he wouldn't have to send the money back. And still he had to consider what to do with his former home, because his ex-wife was still living there. So, there was much home planning, but where was Julio's home then? When I met him, I don't think he felt at home anywhere, but he wasn't homeless...

Well, in a way there was almost an excess of homes in his life...

Too many homes, or too much home labour to care for! But if you think of home as a physical space of restoration, somewhere the individual feels like grounded, right, it could be a tiny but significant place: we have a wonderful small garden at home, but, poof: my wife just goes away for a few weeks, and by the time she's back it's overgrown by weeds, wild plants and trees... it's a very fragile oasis!

Before we leave, just out of personal curiosity and perhaps with reference to your home garden, may I ask you what is that highly popularised Danish term, the adjective that people use in Denmark for "homeliness, cosiness"...?

Hygge...

Yeah, what does that mean? Does it mean home, is it about a homely feeling?

You can talk about *Hygge* in many ways, it is a quite trivial term, it is home indeed, but it is both more and less than home at the same time...

Could you translate it into English?

I guess not. No, I don't think we can translate it with a single word; it's like cosy, but cosy in a perceptive sense. *Hygge* is a state, an emotional state, of well-being in a place, it's a state of *bienestar*. There is a spatial dimension to it too, but it is not exactly like feeling at home. It's more about being completely comfortable with the situation you are in. You can feel *hygge* on your own, but it doesn't really make sense, it's a social thing.

You mean, is it a sense of wellbeing or comfort that you share, is it about positive connectedness?

I think you can do it also by yourself, but then you will need to arrange it, to make it happen. Typically, in a country like Denmark, something *Hygge* will be preparing and enjoying a nice cup of tea, not alcohol (at least not a lot), it's more a warm cup of tea, something material and ethereal at once. Given our cold climate, there are a lot of warming up things in Scandinavia that make you feel *Hygge*, something to have or drink inside, that when you share with somebody else then it becomes *Hygge*. The pleasure of being together, with your family or friends, you may say it is *Hygge*... Things like 'Thanks for the evening', you know, a kind of homely feeling but is not home, it's *Hygge*, it's a deeply felt emotion that you are not troubled by anything, you are totally unconcerned.

It sounds like a very mundane form of spirituality...

3 Di Leonardo, M. 1998, *Exotics at Home: Anthropologies, Others, American Modernity*. Chicago, Chicago University Press.

Maybe, but it has an exclusive element, because you cannot do it with everybody. It is not exclusionary in principle, but *Hygge* can happen only with particular people you are sharing a special comfortable moment with. And yet, *Hygge* is very ordinary, and most of all a strong sense of familiarity. You could also do *Hygge* with people you don't know, but only if you have been able to identify a communality.

Is there any room for intimacy in *Hygge*?

It's about intimacy, it's very much intimacy, it is that appeasing internalization of the external. Remember that Protestants and Scandinavians in particular, they don't hold things around, it's only me and God, nothing in between... Not that *Hygge* has anything to do with religion. Rather it is an emotionally state, of being in peace with yourself and the people that you know and feel familiar with, is that sense of relief, that you experience when you leave the hassle of the world out. So it is a just way of being there, present in the moment, detached from whatever may upset you.⁴

Thank you so much, it's been my uttermost pleasure to discuss with you throughout our lunch.

⁴ For those interested, see *The Book of Hygge: the Danish Art of Living Well*, by L. Thomson Brits, 2016.