

“Centripetal Forces: The Construction of Hometown Loyalty in a West African Migrant-Sending Community”

A good deal of scholarly effort has been directed at explaining why people in poor rural areas of developing countries leave home; various theories from “bright lights” to wage differentials to new economic strategies of household security have been developed. Relatively little effort, however, has gone into explaining why those who depart continue to be active in the affairs of their home communities, or why they come back—even though forms of return-oriented mobility, from seasonal labor migration to temporary visits by “permanent” migrants, are common in poor villages all over the world. When referenced at all, homeward movement is either attributed to push-factors in place of destination, or more vaguely to homesickness, “strong family ties” or “allegiance to the home society” (Gmelch 1980:139). Although most studies indicate that non-economic factors predominate in migrants’ decisions to return home (King 2001), social causes of return or of maintaining ties with the sending community seem to be a kind of “black box” whose functions too often go unexamined. My aim in this paper is to try to unpack this box, to explain the multilayered motivations that bring some migrants back and keep them involved in their communities of origin, and in so doing to elucidate an aspect of human migration which has received scant attention from researchers, anthropological or otherwise. Return is crucial for the continued vitality of rural communities with high emigration rates. I hope to show, however, that “return” can assume some unexpected forms, as can “community.”

The persistence of attachments between West African migrants and their places of origin has been widely noted, especially among rural-urban migrants (Gugler 1971, 1994, 2002; Trager 1995, 2001; Lambert 2002). In my own examination of these attachments I

employ the concept of centrifugal and centripetal forces, a metaphor borrowed from Newtonian physics. *Centrifugal* forces are outward-driving; they push objects away from some center around which they revolve. *Centripetal* forces are directed inward; they prevent objects from being spun off into space, never to return. Here I will discuss a set of five centripetal forces which act on a particular migrant population and discourage its members from severing the bonds linking them with their village of origin. This discussion is based on data gathered from interviews, participant observation, and archival research I conducted in a rural community which I call Togotala, located about 100 miles north of Bamako, the capital of Mali, in 2002.

This community is in the heart of a region where “labor mobility or voluntary migration is a dominant economic strategy” (Pratten 2000:6). Throughout the West African Sahel, poverty, unemployment, and periodic drought all constitute powerful centrifugal forces that encourage migrants to leave home. Migration in this region also has a critical cultural component, however. Writing about a rural Senegalese community, Lambert (2002:138) describes a “culture of migration,” where “most people enter the migration stream as an expected life-course event.” Indeed, in Togotala there are no non-migrants, with the exception of some of the youngest children; every adult and adolescent has spent at least one dry season away from home, most often in Bamako.

Togotala’s people are almost entirely from the Soninké ethnic group, which is known for its history of migration both within West Africa and beyond, a history which predates French colonial domination of the region in the 19th century (cf. Manchuelle 1997). Since medieval times, their strategic position between the desert to the north and the forests to the south has guaranteed them a role in regional commerce. While

agriculture has long been the foundation of their society, the Soninké have also acted as merchants, taking advantage of lengthy dry seasons to trade salt and acacia gum from desert caravans for kola nuts and cloth from coastal areas. Today's generation of village elders in Togotala had fathers who took part in this trade, accompanying donkey caravans on three-month expeditions carrying salt and dried river fish to coastal regions, then returning with kola nuts. This particular form of sub-regional trade ended only in the 1950s when trucks made it obsolete. The Soninké were also very much involved in the *navétanat*, a form of seasonal agricultural migration in which young migrants farmed groundnuts for cash in 19th-century Senegal and the Gambia; they were also active in the French colonial merchant marine (Manchuelle 1997). By the time Mali became independent in 1960, Soninké merchants were firmly established in Bamako, and the Soninké comprised over ten percent of the population, up from just 3.1 percent in 1948 (Meillassoux 1965:127-8).

Soninké migrants began moving beyond West Africa in the late 19th century, particularly to various parts of Central Africa. In the mid-20th century their migration strategies began to include France, where by the 1970s Soninké men were shown to compose more than two-thirds of black African workers (Kane and Lericollais 1975; Condé and Diagne 1986). Since the 1980s, Soninké immigrants have been moving in increasing numbers to North America and many parts of Western Europe, and today Soninké traders routinely do business in cities of the Persian Gulf and the Pacific Rim. While all the migrants I interviewed had returned from destinations in Africa (especially Congo, Gabon, Libya and Côte d'Ivoire), I also spoke with relatives of Togotalans currently in Japan, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Germany, France, the United States, and

Canada, none of whom have yet reached the end of their migratory careers. Even if many of these young Togotalans do engage in wage labor abroad, commerce remains a vital activity: merchants and shopkeepers from Togotala and other Soninké communities are numerous in urban marketplaces from Bamako and Bouaké to Brazzaville. In Togotala, migration is perceived as an opportunity for men to seek their fortune in a high-risk foreign setting. Women also migrate abroad, though they seem to do so with much lower frequency than men. In Brazzaville, Congo, for example, an unofficial 1995 tally by a Togotalan voluntary association counted 270 men and 81 women from Togotala, making a sex ratio of over three males per female in that population. While I have no figures for any other migrant destinations, I suspect that the sex ratios are more balanced in cities closer to home, and particularly in Bamako.

The migration narrative in Soninké society is a circular one: since they began to participate in sub-regional trade and seasonal agricultural migration in the early 1800s, they have proven to be extremely return-oriented. According to Findley and Sow (1998:101), migrants in this region

evoke a strong identity with the home village, and there is no transfer of orientation from the village to the destination. This is true not only of migrants in France, but also of migrants to other African locations, or even to other towns in Mali. When they leave, it is always to come back home.

Even if some wayward migrants do occasionally slip through the cracks, in Togotala the stated intention of migrants is never to settle abroad permanently; it is to acquire financial resources, see the world, acquire knowledge as well as wealth, and return home. *Tunga*, in both the Soninké and Bambara languages, refers to any space to which people migrate. Its rough translation is “land of exodus” (Dantioko 2003:204), “abroad” or “foreign country” (Bailleul 2000:471), though one need not cross a national boundary to be in

tunga. Its polar opposite is *kaara*, which means fatherland or place of origin, essentially the village of one's patrilineage, where one is not a stranger. *Kaara* is the place where one truly belongs, where one's family lives, and where one is known. It is commonly associated with one's city or village of origin, although it may also be identified with a modern nation-state. One can never have the same rights and status abroad as in one's *kaara*. "If you go abroad, even if you are making money, people call you a foreigner," said one returnee from Gabon. "Even children can disrespect you and you can't say anything. That's being a foreigner." In the local popular imagination, there is no allowance for integration or assimilation into a foreign society. According to one common proverb, "However long a log may float in the water, it will never become a crocodile."

Once Togotalans leave home and enter into *tunga*, given the poverty and desolation of their homeland, what is it that brings them back? In the following sections I discuss the impact of five distinct but interrelated centripetal forces: family ties, farming, endogamy, migrant networks, and child fostering.

Family ties

Foremost among the centripetal forces I analyze here is loyalty to one's family, which constitutes the most common stated cause of return for interviewees. Many men spoke of being well-established in distant locations, but having to leave their businesses behind when the call came from someone in their village household (usually their mother or father) to come home. The return of migrants is often conditioned by transitions in the domestic cycle of their households of origin. Sometimes they return home to marry, and

are unable to migrate again. Most often, though, they come back to care for an elderly or ailing parent and to take over as acting household head, as exemplified by the following case:

Baba emigrated as a young man to Côte d'Ivoire, where he worked in the diamond trade for twelve years and earned good money, living with his wife and children. One day he received a letter from his mother asking him to return home. He did not obey initially, but after she arrived at his doorstep several weeks later, telling him that he was needed at home to help his elderly father, he could not refuse. "For us, when someone gets old, it's not a question of just sending him money," Baba says. "He wants to see his children with his own eyes—he prefers that to money. They obliged me to abandon my job and be with him."

In this social context, duty to family is intimately bound up with religious values. Like almost all Soninké, Togotalans are Muslims, and as such they are mindful of the enjoinders in the Qur'an to honor and respect one's parents. While many of them first left home without parental permission, in some cases sneaking away from the village in the middle of the night, such unauthorized departures are seen as a minor offense. Refusing to come to the aid of one's parents in their time of need, however, is a much more serious transgression, bringing with it the threat of grave sanctions. One who fails to fulfill obligations toward parents risks being declared by them a *dangaden*. This word, which literally means someone "good-for-nothing, damned," is derived from *danga*, meaning "curse" (Dantioko 2003:120, Bailleul 2000:88). This curse can be levied against migrant children who refuse to share what they have, or those who defy their families' wishes regarding marriage. A man who doesn't provide for his mother and father is nobody at all, and being a *dangaden* means drawing no benefit from one's wealth. According to one interviewee in his late teens, "even if [a *dangaden*] makes millions abroad, he'll lose all of it and he'll be stuck in a foreign land with empty pockets

and all sorts of problems.” More importantly, being a *dangaden* means losing favor in the eyes of God, and with it losing all hope of going to heaven.

The importance of this sanction—being denied access to the afterlife—should not be underestimated in any analysis of these migrants’ behavior. Muslims are encouraged to strive to become “companions of the right hand,” those who reach heaven one day. Selfish acts, particularly failing to share one’s wealth with one’s parents, bar the gateway to paradise. In trying to understand the earnings and remittance patterns of these migrants, we must think of them maximizing not only value (the rewards of which exist only in the short-term) but also virtue (with rewards in the long-term). *Baraka*, or blessing, provides the carrot to *danga*’s stick; it is *baraka* that the pious seek to amass through their actions. For these individuals, there would be no point in building up short-term rewards if it meant forfeiting long-term ones—the blessings that accompany righteous deeds.

Farming

Growing millet, the staple of the local diet, is a near-universal activity of Togotalan households during the three-month rainy season, and is virtually the only local form of economic production. Yet despite intensive, back-breaking labor throughout the four-month growing season using ox-drawn ploughs and hand tools, Togotalan households produce on average less than 50 percent of their annual food requirements, relying on migrant remittances to make up the shortfall; this finding is consistent with studies of predominantly Soninké communities in the Senegal River valley (Findley et al. 1988). But if agriculture is no longer of primary economic importance, it plays a vital

role in the process of social reproduction. Its most obvious effect is in simply increasing the physical presence of Togotalans in the community: the seasonal cycle of cultivation brings migrants and their children back to the village every year, anchoring them geographically to their *kaara*. Agriculture is also a socially conservative force in the community: in a system Quiminal (1991:123) has given the paradoxical name of “assisted self-sufficiency,” village households continue to be organized as economically independent units of agricultural production, even in an age when much of the food they consume is purchased using migrant remittances. This form of domestic organization, which favors the authority of elder males, ensures the preservation of community’s political status quo.

Perhaps most importantly, however, agriculture provides a framework through which young Togotalans, especially those born and/or residing abroad, can be exposed to the values of their *kaara* and their relatives living there. Time and again, informants stressed to me the positive influence of farming on young people’s moral fiber—not only for those living in Togotala, but for the children of Togotalans living in Bamako and elsewhere who are sent “home” each rainy season, to stay for anywhere from a month to half a year. As one household head put it, “For those who come to farm here, it is first and foremost an education. It gets the children accustomed to work, and to knowing who they are.” French-speaking interviewees used the word *souffrance* (“suffering”) to express the condition that draws out this self-knowledge; Bambara-speakers used the word *sègèn*, connoting not only fatigue but the general condition of poverty. For one 75-year-old informant, “*sègèn* makes people smarter! If you’ve never farmed, you don’t know anything.” Many informants voiced the belief that children who experience *sègèn*

will grow up to be responsible, particularly where money is concerned. “If you haven’t worked hard,” an elderly household head told me, “as soon as you come into some money you’ll spend it all.” The symbolic value of farming is evident in the example of one Togotalan family whose nominal household head is a migrant in France.

Sekou has worked as a salaried employee in France for 20 years. He lives alone there, but every other year he takes three months’ leave and rejoins his two wives and three teenaged sons in Togotala, where he spends the rainy season managing the family farm. According to one of his sons, “If I am accustomed to farming, to fatigue, after I emigrate I will be able to do any kind of work without difficulty. Even our well-off relatives in Bamako send their children to work the fields here during the rainy season and to experience suffering.”

Wherever else they may have lived, Togotalans learn through their early experiences in their village to be thrifty, industrious, and attentive to the needs of their kin. These values may appear to have little to do with the actual work of farming; nevertheless, they are all bound up in a complex of binary oppositions which define *kaara* against *tunga*, farming against migration, rural life against urban life, and Soninké identity against otherness.

Endogamy

Togotala is a highly endogamous community: all 92 civil weddings celebrated in the village in the first eight months of 2002 were between Togotalans. Nonetheless exogamy does occur: in fact, there are reports of Soninké migrants taking host-country wives in order to ease the difficulties of living and working abroad, both in France (Konaté 1997) and in Central Africa (Bredeloup 1993). But if migrants are allowed to take wives abroad, they may only do so after they have found their *first* wives in their home village; these village brides will be senior to their co-wives and will therefore dominate domestic activity. As Muslims, Togotalan men may marry up to four wives; as Togotalans, they are under strong pressure to find their first wives within their *kaara*.

Some men who marry out can face extreme pressure from their families, a point made clear by the case of Ngolo, a 57-year-old head of household:

As a young man Ngolo lived in Bamako and married a non-Togotalan woman there. His parents did not approve but Ngolo, determined to win their consent, sent a cousin to Togotala to persuade them. In the end they acceded to his wishes, but only after arranging another marriage for their son to a Togotalan woman, and stipulating that this marriage would be recognized as the first. Two weeks after his “first” wedding in Togotala (which was actually his second), Ngolo was joined there by his “second” wife from Bamako (who was actually his first). Some years later he took another wife in Bamako, whereupon his mother arranged another Togotalan bride for her son behind his back (“She doesn’t consider the women from Bamako as my wives,” Ngolo explained). It is worth noting that although both of Ngolo’s Bamako wives now reside in the capital, the children of all four wives have grown up in Togotala.

By obliging sons to find their first wives within the community, Togotalan parents ensure not only that migrants are linked to their hometown by ties of marriage as well as blood, but that Soninké will be the dominant language of migrant households. Male migrants demonstrate continued allegiance to their parents and to the larger community when they marry within the village.

Togotalans justify the preference for endogamy in various ways. Some explained to me that women from elsewhere, particularly Bamako, would find it difficult to adapt to the harsh living conditions of the village. Others suggested that foreign women would be unwilling to settle in Togotala in the first place: “If you marry a Bamako woman, or a Senegalese or a Gambian, when you’re out of money and tell her that you’re taking her and your children to your *kaara*, she won’t accept,” one man said. But perhaps the main purpose served by endogamy at the village level is the cementing and reinforcing of kinship ties within the community. Togotalans often told me that “our village is one family,” and it is certainly true that the Togotalan community (including migrants abroad) is a dense fabric of intertwined kin networks, each connected to the others by multiple links of marriage.

One difficulty of endogamy in such a widely dispersed group is that young persons seeking a mate “within the village” cannot be aware of all the eligible candidates, many of whom live in various migrant destinations. To address this problem, Togotalans organize weddings *en masse*: at least once during each rainy season, the village is host to enormous multiple-wedding ceremonies. In the course of one four-day period, I observed hundreds of migrants return home from as far away as Angola to attend several dozen weddings. These occasions offer an ideal opportunity for members of the extended village community to join with non-migrants, and for young people to identify potential fiancés.

Migrant networks

The kinship ties that endogamy reinforces foster the creation of densely interwoven migrant networks. The capacity of networks to ease migrants’ integration into receiving societies has been well-documented by migration researchers (e.g. Boyd 1989, Brettell 2000). In the case of Togotala, a host of informal networks coexists with at least two formal, transnational migrant associations. Togotalans stressed to me the importance of both formal and informal networks in getting migrants “unstuck”: to help them out of difficult situations, and to give them access to lodging, credit, and employment. Migrants know that they have a village-based safety net to fall back on, and villagers know that they can count on their fellow Togotalans abroad to look out for one another and come to the aid of anyone who needs to be “unstuck.” Consider the experience of Ousmane, a Bamako-based Togotalan, and his brother Madu:

Madu decided to migrate and join relatives in Brazzaville. He set out overland, but for six months Ousmane had no news from him. At his mother’s insistence, he began to make inquiries with fellow Togotalans returning from abroad;

eventually he learned that Madu had gotten “stuck” in Lagos, Nigeria, where he had run out of money. Ousmane arranged to send his brother 80,000 CFA francs (about \$150) with another Togotalan merchant bound for Lagos. Madu used this capital to arrange some business deals in the port, and after four more months he had accumulated enough savings to continue on his way to Brazzaville.

But networks do not serve only as safety nets, helping migrants satisfy their individual needs. When based on ties of kinship and common village origin, as they are in the case of Togotala, networks also serve to remind migrants of their obligations to their families and to the wider community and to ensure that they are respected. The power of public opinion within migrant communities, coupled with migrants’ desire to maintain a good reputation at home, discourages shifts of orientation away from the home village. Such pressure may be channeled through formal village development associations, hundreds of which have been chartered both in Mali and by migrants abroad, particularly in France, since the 1980s (see Bredeloup 1994, Timera 1996). The power of public opinion within migrant communities, coupled with migrants’ desire to maintain a good reputation at home, discourages shifts of orientation away from the home village. Thanks to these networks, “opting out” of one’s home community becomes extremely difficult. Describing the power of migrant networks in Nigeria, Gugler (2002:24) writes, “[w]hether to remain involved in the rural community is no longer simply a matter of individual affection and calculus; rather, such involvement is expected among members of the social network of home people. An ideology of loyalty to home is established.” This is not to imply that migrants cannot choose to dissociate themselves from their *kaara*. Given the risk of social stigmatization from peer- and kin-based networks, however, and the threat of a powerful curse which their parents can invoke against them, migrants have strong incentive to remain part of the community.

Fostering

We have seen that migrants express their loyalty not only through the act of return, but also through remittances, which are vital to the economic survival of the village, and endogamous marriage. In the case of Togotala, however, perhaps the most important expression of loyalty pertains to the upbringing of migrants' children. This brings us to the final centripetal force: the transfer of children born abroad from their migrant parents to village-based relatives. The practice of child fostering is widespread in West Africa (cf. Isiugo-Abanihe 1985, Bledsoe 1990), and especially in Mali, where it is an important link between rural and migrant households (Findley and Diallo 1988). The Soninké, in particular, have been noted for their tendency to send "home" young children from distant migrant destinations, particularly in Central Africa and in France, to be raised by rural kin (Manchuelle 1997, Barou 2001). We have seen the importance of farm labor in the moral instruction of village youth; to this must be added the importance of being enculturated in the home community. The following case illustrates this importance.

Kadi, a 42-year-old woman born to Togotalan parents in Brazzaville (Congo), was sent by her parents to Togotala at the age of three. She remained there and did not see her mother again for 19 years, when Kadi herself married a Brazzaville-based Togotalan man and returned to the city she had left as a toddler. But she did not consider being separated from her parents too high a price to pay; rather, she saw her extended family in Togotala as her true home. "It wasn't hard, because I was with my family," she told me. "Plus I wasn't alone; many kids came from Brazzaville. Whoever was born over there came back [to Togotala] to grow up." (Her father, by his three wives, had 11 daughters and 13 sons, all of whom he sent "home"—even though only one of his wives was Togotalan.) Kadi spent 13 years as an adult in Brazzaville, during which time she sent all of her own children back to Mali and contented herself with letters and snapshots of them sent by Togotalan relatives.

Kadi's example is an extreme case rather than a typical one; it is unusual for Togotalan parents to have no contact with their children for 19 years. Nonetheless, it demonstrates

the lengths to which families may go to ensure that their children have what they consider a culturally appropriate upbringing. “Cross-border parenting” has been described in other contexts as problematic for many transnational migrants, including the Dominicans studied by Levitt (2001) and the Chinese studied by Ong (1999). In Togotala, however, the experience of Kadi and others like her suggests that separation from migrant parents need not be seen as traumatic, as the extended family structure of Soninké households is well-suited to accommodate migrants’ offspring. The out-fostering of children from migrant destinations ensures that no “second generation” comes of age abroad, and I believe this practice explains in part how Sahelian and especially Soninké migrant communities have maintained a distinct ethnic identity in Central African cities like Brazzaville for over a century.

Discussion

The village community described here illustrates that migration is above all a socially embedded phenomenon. In Togotala as in other migration-oriented societies, a vast array of centripetal forces works to mold young minds, bind villagers to each other, create an ideology of loyalty to home, and ultimately instill in migrants a worldview in which the sole kind of achievement that makes sense is that which demonstrates responsibility to the group. “The plan is not to cut all their ties with their village and their people,” Timera (2001:44) writes of young Soninké migrants. “It is to go out and seek their fortune, and only the attachment to family and village can give meaning to any success.” These forces, developed over the course of several generations, reduce the social distance which separates migrants from their *kaara* and exposes them to increased

risk. The upbringing of children through fostering, the dynamics within and among households, the institution of marriage, and the activity of “voluntary” associations and informal networks all enable the community to hold sway over those who have gone away: they ensure that migrants will provide long-term economic support for their kin who so desperately require it, and will continue at least to contemplate the prospect of permanent return, and oftentimes to realize that prospect. Those who return for good come back to what they still consider, even after what may amount to an entire life abroad, their true home.

One significant aspect of the centripetal forces I have described, however, is their potential to problematize the idea of return, which is never as straightforward as the terms “return migration” and “circular migration” suggest. These labels call to mind a boomerang-like trajectory, arcing away before finally coming full circle to its point of origin. What the stories of many Togotalan migrants demand is that we begin to imagine these loops extending over two or more life courses. Migration trajectories do not always come full circle within an individual migrant’s lifetime; those that do not may be completed by the migrant’s children who return to Togotala for a period of their youth before embarking on their own migratory journeys. Even if many migrants do not return home, as long as their children are brought up in the village setting the social reproduction of the community can continue uninterrupted.

Of the three principal duties migrants feel toward their hometown kin discussed in this paper—giving economic support, exposing children to hometown lifeways, and returning home—it is this final one that, perhaps surprisingly, receives the least emphasis from migrants and their families, and which is more easily disregarded. As long as one is

meeting the first two obligations by providing for one's family and the proper upbringing of one's children, one may be exempted from the third, and may therefore remain abroad for an indefinite period without facing social sanction or loss of status. The smooth functioning of social reproduction in this community does not require a 100 percent rate of migrant return. As long as there are enough adults in Togotala to care for and educate the children (their own, as well as those of absent migrants), the system can be perpetuated. Return, the third duty, is more often an ideal than a real obligation. To underscore this point, I must revisit the case of Baba, the man who was called home from Côte d'Ivoire. While his return would appear to be that of the archetypal dutiful son, it is important to add that Baba has an older brother who is well-established in New York and who provides the school fees for 11 children in his parents' household in Togotala. Under normal circumstances it is the oldest son who would be expected to take over from the aging father, but in this instance it was Baba who was brought back. His case is hardly uncommon in this respect. In Togotala, it is distinctly possible that for every returnee like Baba, there are two or three others who remain abroad, perhaps indefinitely, yet who remain very much involved in their household and village of origin, sending home remittances, sending children to grow up, and looking for Togotalan spouses. Their lives in exile may be structured more by contacts with fellow Togotalans and the activities of Togotalan migrant associations than by local individuals and institutions.

Given this arrangement, we need to think of the symbolic role played by sending communities in the lives of those who have left. For people like Baba's brother in the U.S., Sekou in France, or Madu in Congo, and countless more like them, Togotala figures less as a place than as an idea. Even as they return for periodic visits, weddings, and

religious holidays, they remain rooted abroad by economic necessity. Nevertheless, for them Togotala will always be the one place where they “belong,” and they are conscious of the fact that exile is the price they must pay for Togotala’s continued viability, both as a community located in space and as a sign for a shared set of social relations. As Gupta and Ferguson (1997:39) remind us, “[r]emembered places... have often served as symbolic anchors of community for dispersed people.” In pondering the impact of migration on sending communities, we should keep in mind that migrants have multiple ways of belonging to them, including many which need not be played out within their geographic boundaries. The lives of these migrants may have become deterritorialized, but their loyalties have not.

The centripetal forces I have described have thus far ensured that Togotala is not dispersed by economic necessity. It is worth asking how long this situation can continue, particularly as migrants set out for ever more distant locations, including many Western countries where immigration restrictions and the expense of travel prevent them from making regular return visits. I can only speculate about this, but there has been at least one hopeful sign as far as Togotalans are concerned. In 2003, about a year after my fieldwork in Togotala, a migrant who had been living in New York for about six years became the first Togotalan to return definitively to Mali from a Western country. Reports indicate that he is not settling in Togotala, but like many of his fellow villagers decided to set up house in Bamako, having invested in real estate there. Given the extremely close ties between Bamako and Togotala, he is considered to have come “home”; this ambiguous kind of homecoming demonstrates that there are many ways to belong to a community and to contribute to its well-being.

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