

A is for Africa, B is for Belonging

Maxine E Ankrah

The Return

I once wondered how it would feel to arrive back in Anomabu (home of Aggrey and Robert Gardiner) and be referred to simply as Kodwo's wife, rather than as the *American*, wife of . . . For I am black, 12 years married, dress in the traditional Ghanaian 'cloth', speak a bit of the Fanto language, as a type, have features indistinguishable from my in-laws, have lived and worked for eight years in West and East Africa. Politically, I am firmly aligned with those working towards a genuine economic and political liberation of Black Africa. Nevertheless, for the likes of me in Africa, 'Black' does not yet fully mean 'belonging'.

I'm not sure I understand all the implications of this for the Black or for Africa. During a recent, five-week home-leave in Ghana from Switzerland I thought about it a little in between talking with others of my kind in my kind of dilemma: a being poised between two worlds. Observing trends in Ghana and reflecting on life as I experienced it, I have come to some tentative statements which may interest persons for whom the question of Blacks living in Africa is of any import. The following three conclusions are tentative, as neither Blacks nor Africans claim to have found final answers. They are that: (a) black tourism is a development worthy of consideration for its potential impact on shaping Black/African relationships of the future; (b) for the 'non-transient', to discover that the much heralded concept of the African extended family does not yet extend to him is to really *begin* to make progress in living in Africa; (c) but more positive: because the Black approaches the African not as an inferior, a rival, a subject for exploitation, but as a brother (with all the psychological connotations this presupposes) and he approaches Africa with a sense of belonging, there is the potentiality for working together toward a common good, irrespective of the past.

Home at Last?

Over from the Ghetto.

The 'negro' or 'negress', the 'Afro-American' of my era is gone, and in his place has come the Black. No longer the renowned scholar or he who influenced political or theological thought; neither resident nor the 'invisible' man, he is the tourist—supposedly rich, but definitely an American! His coming represents to the African businessman lucrative American trade. But to very many Blacks, the footsteps on African soil symbolise a return and reunion of 'brothers' after centuries of separation. Tourism has now in the space of three or four

years taken these contrary views from the academic and political halls into the streets, as thousands of Blacks each year make their way Africa-ward.

The net result appears to be that the Black has become immediately more 'accessible' to the average African. This fact was humourously brought home to me last August through the kind of incident that never occurred previously. During one of my several trips into Accra, I went to Kotoka International Airport to interview a Ghanaian. Completing my assignment, I hailed a taxi already containing two passengers—a common practice where private vehicles are essential to meeting transport demands. The two young men at the back seat and the driver each had tribal facial marks that enabled me to hazard a guess as to their origins in Ghana. Without waiting for the taxi to leave the curb, all three began asking me about mine—in the U.S.A.! A bit taken aback, as I was traditionally dressed and many Africans do not have markings I gave, rather in a monotone, my Ghanaian name, locality, tribe, etc. Unperturbed, but even more convinced of my true identity, they then promptly proposed themselves to me for marriage! Each was seeking to wed a Black, because, they argued, she could (a) preferably give him plenty of money, or (b) provide the much-pursued scholarship for study in America, or (c) at least sponsor his short vacation to New York! The word had got around.

Although few Africans have such fantastic expectations of the tourists they see in the streets—or at least, would express them so boldly—there is considerable evidence that the Black is a 'curiosity' to all ages. Moreover, his presence is having an immediate impact on the younger generation of Africans.

In contrast to my contemporaries a decade back, this new breed of homecomer brings a different set of 'luggage'. Rather than an ideology, the young visitors are sporting 'new identity bags'. This is a coinage alleged to have been created by the Nigerian writer, Wole Soyinka, with reference both to the image conveyed by the outfits worn by black youth, and to their search for identity.

My impression after talking with a score or more of youngsters housed in the University of Ghana at Legon is that the motivations and circumstances influencing their coming are very mixed. On the rather practical level, the explanation is that even the man from the ghetto can 'go now, pay later'. Money and credit are both plentiful. One black diplomat expressed the view that when the tourist begins shopping around for a place to travel, his 'brain-washing' conditions him to 'wanta go home to Mother Africa'! All too frequently, this choice grows out of a lack of, or misinformation, about 'home'. And of course, ignorance about Africa fails to impress or endear him to the more sophisticated, mature African. Lacking an ideological base, but feeling strong emotions, the Black sets about to create an Africa that does not exist, says Marcia Sparks, Educational Counsellor in Ghana's Office of U.S.I.S.

The Black's stereotyped Africa is reflected in his dress. He conceived Africans as having bushy hair: thus his 'Afro' hairdo that surrounds

his head like a 'space helmet' (*Newsweek*, September 4th, 1972). His *daskikis*, medallions, assorted baggage (from which the term 'identity bag' was derived) makes his costume flamboyant even in the African context. So much is this the case that Rajat Neogy, editor of the Ghana-based publication *Transition*, has humorously branded them as 'imitation Africans'. However, seeing the widespread adoption by Africans of styles in dress and other cultural forms, e.g. soul music, I really question who, in fact, is imitating whom—and why. I wonder, also, what the model offered by the Black means to my nephew-in-law who emulates him. For he, too—as a fisherman's son—is constructing an ideal world out of which he supposes the Black comes. Could it be that the African elite is taken up with materialism on a scale that the young can never hope to achieve? Or does he reject the materialism of his elders, where the Jaguar has become the new status symbol, and reach out—away from his society—for more acceptable models? If this be so, then his imitation of Blacks has serious social and political consequences and implies a change more than skin deep.

Some of the old timers with whom I talked insisted that because of their ignorance of Africa 'as it really is', the tourist types lack an 'ideology'. What seems to me probably closer to the truth is that the majority of Blacks, to the contrary, do hold to an idea of an affinity with Africans. But as earlier suggested, the ideology may be quite incongruous with that of their African persona. For their expectations were born 'out of context', in the U.S. as a Black experiences that nation. A Black is never totally unconscious of himself and strictures colour places upon the self. He prizes his 'freedom' from the white man. The Black is therefore simply unprepared for the discovery that the 'freedom' of Africa is just another part of the myth about Africa he has imbibed. He comes assuming that 'independence' means economic control, that 'African leadership' is synonymous with 'leaders dedicated to the advancement of exploited Africa'. The continued dominance of whites over Blacks—whether directly (as in Southern Africa) or indirectly through aid and advisers, shocks him. He had secretly hoped that his African 'brother' would be equally outraged by the Black man's political and economic impotency, and therefore, basically hostile to whites generally.

The Black's hatred springs from years of close humiliating contact. He is not so tolerant of the truth—that while the Africans have had whites on their soil for centuries, their contact with whites as individuals has not been of a quality that generates a similar rage.

This preoccupation in turn sometimes provokes intolerance in Africans. At a professional conference at the University of Ghana, I was introduced by a former colleague as 'one of us', something that does occasionally happen! During a tea-break, a Ghanaian lady trained at a university in the West, feeling exasperated by a group of young black students nearby commented to me: 'As for them, they are so obnoxious. Why don't they just relax and enjoy the tropics?' My companion at the lunch table was an eminent Israeli social work educator who had been invited as a guest speaker and consultant.

Leaving the group together, we concluded how different the meaning of Africa was for the Blacks and their 'relatives'—hence the tremendous gap that exists. Furthermore, each of us realised instinctively why this elite young woman could not understand the rapture of the Blacks who had returned to 'the promised land'. She, unlike the two of us, was never a child of the diaspora.

Such an African does not perceive her world in terms palatable to the Blacks. They moreover, may not appear to offer this African a worthy substitute to her present way of life. Communication, despite brief tourist contacts, could remain seriously blocked. It is certain that for many Blacks, visions of Africa begin to pale after encounters of the sort just described, and they become tourists indeed! The prospects of their 'struggle' at home look brighter than the victory won in Africa.

Be that as it may, the tourist experience has a positive value beyond economic returns. Although limited in time and space, the contact of Black with African gives some 'reality' to the Africa of the Black's dreams. And reality is where both should start when reaching out toward each other.

The Old Ideologues

No one called us 'loud', 'obnoxious', 'over-dressed', 'overbearing' when, in the '50s and '60s we arrived 'home at last'. Neither tourists nor the product of the Black Revolution, we were ideologues in the full sense of the word.

In spite of the efforts of integrationists such as Martin Luther King, there were still in the late fifties many divisions between Blacks—along generation, status or class, and religious lines. At an even deeper level there was the alienation of the Black from himself. He could not accept who he was, i.e., that he was Black could not be faced. Reflecting with me, Lou Gardiner, the Black owner of a thriving plumbing business, recalled that at that time to call someone 'black' was 'tantamount to asking for a fight'. A host of Blacks not immune to the tensions in America vis-à-vis the white man, as well as he, saw in Africa an alternative: and they took it.

Some came because of vague notions about 'roots'. Others found easy rapport with the crop of future 'African leaders' to be found at universities in many parts of the country. Many of them were very politically minded, self-confident, glamorous. And women have been known to marry for much less than an identity! Others made a complete swing: to believing that they were *still* Africans, stolen from Africa centuries back. I am sure that I was never in this last category, but I can recall listening with rapt attention to the Black Muslim disciples of Mr. Mohamed in New York, Philadelphia and Hartford. I further remember giving a talk at a leading Black church in the latter city in 1958 in which I pleaded for greater efforts on the parts of Blacks to get to know the real African. He was not the African of the Tarzan movies! I argued then that we had a common past and thus a 'common destiny'. I 'clobbered' them with my personal view that 'the

achievements of black leaders of Africa should inspire them' to shake off their chains of apathy, fear, etc., etc., etc.

But there were far more eloquent spokesmen than I, propounding a rationale for the immigration. Marcus Garvey and Dr W. E. B. Du Bois, perhaps more than any other men, made black Americans aware of and interested in their African links. Dr Du Bois' long active life bears testimony to his faith in those links, dying as he did on African soil. Dr St Clair Drake, his and my contemporary in Ghana for a period, wrote in the late 1960s :

'Some Negroes have come to realise that so long as people of African descent anywhere are mocked, villified, subjugated, oppressed, and their culture and physical traits derogated, no Negroes, no people of black descent are fully free, that we are in the same boat' ('The American Negro's Relation to Africa', *Africa Today*, December, 1967, p. 12).

This idea was equally well put by Mr Wilson Mande, Makerere University, Uganda :

'... the Black Americans must appreciate that their survival as a race is tied up with the survival of their *fellow* Blacks in Africa. The struggle for racial equality cannot be localised because racial discrimination has a demonstration effect' (Letters to the Editor, *Africa*, II, July 1972).

Choosing Africa as an alternative to the conditions of America was more than 'escapism' of a few deluded Blacks. Dr Du Bois, St Clair Drake, Sutherland, Lee and many others were not just running away from something. They were positive : going to share in a future with other Blacks. The African continent, they believed, offered the possibilities of genuine freedom and human dignity. They were not merely haters of the white man, but of a system that dehumanised and debased all in the so-called democratic process that for the Black was a travesty of democracy.

The euphoria that lingered for sometime was not without cause. Citizenship (actually, dual nationality) was extended in some countries on agreeable terms. Most others were rather favourably disposed in their review of citizenship applications from Blacks. Residency was easy to arrange. Or without citizenship, jobs, usually on equal terms with locals, could be easily obtained. And in Ghana's case, a number of Blacks held influential governmental and non-governmental posts up to 1966.

To the extent that the new experience was 'heady', stimulating, even exotic, we too tended to idealise, rather than admit to some of the hard facts of our new surroundings. Whereas the idealism of the young tourist is suddenly jarred, as he is brought face to face with reality, those coming to stay had, in my view, a rather delayed reaction, and thus only a delayed shock. The things that bothered most in West Africa were not, e.g., foreign domination of the economy. Too much was seen of the aggressive female petty-trader and the prosperous African businessman for the Black to be overly anxious about any non-African involvement. (However, this was not equally true in

Eastern and Southern Africa where Europeans and Asians were more in the forefront.) What did arouse anger was that although we looked the same, dressed the same, a few even spoke the same, we were still 'strangers'. To discover that the 'African brother' began to say to the Black things designed to win favours, as he had done to the whites, really galled! And even though he had many African 'friends', the Black could not claim to have deeply penetrated their inner circles or inner life—especially in the case of East Africans—no more than could whites. This led many times to the creation of clubs and other forms of corporate life by Blacks chiefly for Blacks.

One matron of 12 years' stay in Ghana said to me rather pessimistically: 'No matter how hard you try, you will never be accepted as an African'. In terms of integrating into the society, she claimed that deference is paid rather to white persons, e.g. wives of Africans. The African community appears not to expect whites to understand—and therefore, follow—the 'African way of life'. This 'sympathy' permits the African to accept the other's ignorance or even rejection of his culture without penalty, i.e., condemnation or ostracism. For the Black, there is no such sympathy, she thought, and the husband's family all too harshly lets the Black wife know it!

When politics was the determining motive for Black men and women to come to Ghana, they gradually moved on to more politically congenial countries such as Tanzania and Zambia as the regimes under which they lived became too reactionary or too corrupt.

The problem never did nor will arise for a surprising number of Blacks. These are they who repudiate any connecting links with an African past. The argument goes something like this: the Black man has been brainwashed, has swallowed hook, line and sinker the white man's definition that even a drop of 'Black' blood makes him a 'negro'. The truth, these apologists hold, is that the African origins cannot be denied. But whatever roots existed were irrevocably pulled up so long ago as to make invalid any claim to kinship. The Black in America is left no more an African than he is a Greek, Swede, English or Portuguese, whose drops of blood he also contains! Observing the local scene, they contend that if tribal ties serve as barriers to brotherhood within the continent, how much more is there a problem of bridging the gap of centuries. They conclude: if he has any identity at all it is American.

Blacks not sharing this view, but nevertheless feeling less than elated by their African 'brother's' aloofness, question at one time or another whether they should stay on in Africa and under what assumptions. The basis for the commitment of many remains the belief in ancestral ties while others see another black man's need as an opportunity for sharing—of ideas, 'culture', technology, material wealth. More than 30 families (estimated at about 100 individuals) have opted to stay on in Ghana. Some have lived and worked there for periods of up to 15 years and do not plan to leave.

Black Presence—The Collective

Thinking of my ultimate resettlement in Africa, I believe I approve of this shift as the only realistic emphasis—from efforts toward being

'absorbed' as a brother, to co-existence as a *distinct*, though not indifferent, other. Such a position I note, does not require that the Black 'blends' in. Although he does not deny the historical fact of a common past he will now admit to being the *product* of yet another set of circumstances and, thus, different. This attitude is in no way an admission of defeat in the attempts of Blacks to relate. Rather, it is the basis upon which many feel that real 'togetherness' starts.

After more than a decade of 'living' with the local people, over the past two years, prominent Blacks, chiefly in Accra, have been engaged in erecting a 'symbol' to represent their presence and contribution to the development of the country. The group and its supporters in other African countries and elsewhere operate under the banner, *African Descendents Association Foundation*. Its president, dental surgeon Robert E. Lee, a Black possessing Ghanaian citizenship, explained that formerly each individual Black operated separately to improve relations between Africans and himself *via* friendships, clubs, etc. Failure to make a satisfactory impact, he said, was due to the absence of a concrete indication of the Black's presence and former links with Africa.

The group has begun a \$50,000 project to achieve this end: the renovation of one of Ghana's many ancient forts. In a circular letter (February 1972) sent to many parts of the world to would-be supporters of the scheme, Dr Lee explains that the slave castle, or former 'trading' fort, was chosen as 'the symbol of the split' of the African race into the slave and the colonial branches. All such castles stand 'as a hollow reminder to us all of the point at which we were separated. The African Descendents Association Foundation proposes to reunite the branches of the race in a cultural awakening'. The slave fort (some 70 odd miles from Accra at Cormantine) is the symbol of that reunification. It is to be a tangible memorial, not only of the spanning centuries of relationship, but also of the source (Blacks) from which present day help comes.

While the distant goal of reunification may someday be realised, the immediate effect of this action is to single out the 'descendents' in a way that they never were when simply 'brothers'. Instead of being a uniting force, the project so far has engendered very diverse reactions, both from Africans and from Blacks not in favour of the venture. The specific symbol chosen resurrects the ghosts of slavery—at once those of the victims and those of the local African merchants who, like modern-day capitalists, made huge profits by selling other Africans.

Except for the odd intellectual, the African is embarrassed when Blacks begin to refer too much to that aspect of the past. They would prefer not to talk about slavery. And so would many Blacks who think that the distinction, 'descendents', and the implied 'former slave dealers', places unwelcome strains on relationships among themselves and with the Africans. Although they agree on the need for a symbol of the 'black presence', not everyone is happy about the choice made. Several voiced the view that any memorial should be a living entity, e.g., a school, a clinic, a village even!

Moreover, what to the Black tourist was the new 'identity bag' for

resident Blacks, was described by my relatives-in-law living only 3 miles away as 'just another example of how those rich *Americans* throw away their money'. But perhaps fishing villagers are not *supposed* to see historical significances and connections between themselves, well-dressed, camera-carrying (American) visitors, and the reconstruction of a crumbling castle! This notwithstanding, instead of strongly seeking total integration and assimilation, the Blacks appear now to be directly and indirectly affirming a separate identity. In doing so, at least in Ghana, the Blacks are groping for new unifying ideas and forms of relating that do not obscure the *real* problems confronting both them and the Africans.

The Individual

Opting 'to be myself' 'to be natural' is the way Blacks who now feel 'at home' in Africa have described to me their choice of personal styles of living. The middle-of-the-road posture seemed more acceptable as the *modus operandi* to 'getting-on' than frenzied efforts to 'go native'.

Not to do this can sometimes have rather amusing results. My sister-in-law had disappeared to buy fresh pineapples. I waited, standing amid cassava and other roots being sold in one section of a huge, open-air market of more than a thousand tradesmen and women. Immediately upon return, a quarrel began between her and the trader from whom I had just bought combumbre, a local spinach. Fists all but flew in the ensuing exchange of words, which attracted a large crowd, delighted by the entertainment. When the police advanced to swell its ranks, I was able to get my heated relative into the car. Only when we were safely out of the market did I discover that all the palaver was over me!

To avoid the sellers' increasing the price when I approached in western clothing, I had carefully (or so I thought) dressed completely traditionally. My sister-in-law had returned in time to overhear the vegetable-seller say: 'What are those things she has on her feet? It can't be her skin. She must be some kind of mad woman'! . . . at which time Aba (my sister-in-law) came to my defence.

What amazed the villagers and so set me apart was an item of clothing worn without thought because of the cold: a pair of nylon stockings! I was cheating and I had been caught.

On the other hand, adopting the traditional costume can have real significance in Black/African relationships. In Nairobi, Kenya where in 1966 only the elite urbanite—and then at social functions—or the old women used traditional dress with any regularity, I set something of a trend when I began appearing at work as a divisional director of a Government Ministry, clad in 'African dress'. This seemed gradually to have a 'liberating' effect, as an increasing number of my African colleagues followed my example. When commenting on my action before my departure, however, a Kenyan friend said: 'We like the freedom you Americans take in how you dress'. To her, there was no equating the apparent form with true identity.

Another acquaintance of mine—a successful Black naturalised

Ghanaian business woman in a highly competitive wholesale trade described how, frustrated to her limits, she arrived at a formula that enabled her to keep equilibrium. She would no longer pretend that corruption—even in Black businesses—did not exist. Or that, left without supervision, her well-paid staff would see to her interests. To the contrary, she admits to her need for the familiar values and practices derived from her American background in order to continue functioning. In her words: 'Fourteen years have taught me that I need to keep one foot in the western world, if I am to keep the other in Africa'.

Perhaps for me the answer to the questions of a personal Black 'presence' is to have first and foremost something of the sensitivity of the actor to his audience. He is always visible. Where it is important to stress full identification and solidarity with the local people for whatever purpose, any symbolism should be adopted that bridges the gaps between himself and the African. On the other hand, there are circumstances where differences will be obvious. Pretending, or minimizing these may actually be a barrier to communication. Responding to such circumstances without hypocrisy—even if this seems to be an 'American' reaction—proves generally to be more effective.

In essence, the Black is not only seen by the African to be a 'distinct other', an American. But he himself, remains so, and switches either consciously or unconsciously to his old American self, as the occasion warrants.

My Brother's Keeper

One young student, a Black, sitting in on a discussion about 'links' exclaimed: 'If he ain't my brother, I'm still my brother's keeper, and he's the next of kin'. A position allowing for distinctions, but not indifference, could not be more plainly stated. The *gap* between Blacks and Africans earlier mentioned was brought about by separation and unshared experiences. As have I, other Blacks, living and working side by side with Africans, have seen the gap narrowed or made irrelevant by the positive, contrasting processes: uniting and sharing.

Dr Lee was most emphatic on this point. He felt that USAID or other such bodies, even when represented by a Black, cannot make the same impact as a single Black having a permanent stake in the local area. He is one of a number who see no impediment. Rather, I believe that we are all in a formative period. Not only is it useful that the Black redefines the image of himself in Africa, but there must be a reorientation of Black/African relationships as a whole. A new way of sensing the presence of each other is required.

All through this paper I have attempted in a rather lighter vein, and drawing chiefly from personal, past and recent experience to delineate obstacles preventing Blacks coming to remain in Africa in appreciable numbers. Now I wish to comment briefly on what I see as the Black/African problem from a wider perspective.

In recent months a new word has arisen and is receiving international acceptance, although in practice the concept has actually been applied in Europe for many decades. The term is 'Europe Overseas'

and relates to the immigration from Europe of persons to, e.g., Australia, New Zealand, North and South America, Rhodesia and South Africa. Such movement goes on in the interest of the powers and governments that receive the immigrants. This immigration is permitted not so much out of charity, as in anticipation of real benefits that accrue from the reception of skilled workmen, craftsmen, managerial personnel and scientists from abroad—Europe. It is sometimes encouraged to populate specific areas in the countries of reception. These are the policy-makers who suffer little and were identified by the late Dr Nkrumah in his book, *The Class Struggle*, as the elite who replaced the white colonial masters (in substance as well as form).

It is from this type that the Black as well as the African wishes to flee. He wants to avoid being identified as just being part of the clique. For as a group, the elite still apes the white man and his culture, two elements the Black abhors.

Another factor worthy of attention by Blacks is the fact that the elite is almost a 'tribe' within itself, an oligarchy behind the seats of power. It is therefore not only the Black as 'a stranger' who finds it extremely difficult to get into the class, but numbers of Africans within the countries are locked out as well. Many Africans, in other words, do not 'belong' either. They are prevented from making a valuable contribution to the development of their own country, let alone the world. This takes place in various ways: (a) the importation of foreign 'experts' and 'advisers' culminating in diminishing challenge and competence, and the subsequent dependence of the national; (b) futile attempts by the educated of minority tribes or such divisions to influence the established, privileged group lead to feelings of impotence and resignation; (c) grinding poverty—too frequently grinding poverty—too frequently increased because of the personal greed of a few—leads to an inability to compete or to participate in any significant way.

For the moment, the Black, arriving in Africa, needs to recognise what Africans are discovering: that too many of their countries are still 'follower nations'. Dr Aluko writes of this condition:

'Africa's political, economic, intellectual and cultural leaders follow almost exactly the path beaten by the developed nations. They are, therefore, alienated from the societies and the masses of the people whom they lead'.

As implied earlier, the Black who comes expecting to find conditions otherwise will soon begin to be disillusioned. But precisely at this point, he must join in efforts being made to change the society of which he intends becoming a part. For the Blacks who believe, the 'promised land' or 'home' must be fought for and maintained.

It has taken me and a number of Blacks I talked to considerable time—almost a decade—to conclude that the process of adjustment must continue into the next generation. Then, *our children* through 'roughing it out' with the African in school, social clubs, community institutions, in politics, etc., will begin to achieve real belonging without much effort. In the meantime, we do not really integrate, we co-exist. In doing so we must expect to undergo the vicissitudes and hard-

ships of all 'immigrants'. The prevailing state of tension, the social, political and economic conditions will affect the Blacks as well as the African. Our success in 'bridging the gap of centuries' may largely depend upon our individual ability to adjust and the motives underlying our decision to come.

Technical Aid

'Keeping the brother' implies among other things, sharing. In this connection, Mr Tom Brown, refrigeration specialist and contractor concluded that more Blacks should come to Africa, irrespective of present apparent obstacles. He set out three conditions, however: (a) that they should be highly qualified, preferably with technical knowledge; (b) that they must not expect to 'get rich quick'; and (c) they should be prepared to take the 'hard knocks'. The Black who comes out to exploit the potential of the African market is in the same category as the white foreign businessman. If he has the capital and the know how, he is given every inducement to succeed. There are already quite a number of Blacks in Ghana and elsewhere. Especially if they come to train Africans for modern industry and technology, they are welcomed and given facilities to work with the Africans. This is vividly illustrated by the collaboration between the *Opportunities Industrialisation Centre, International OIC* (founded by Rev Leon Sullivan), the Ghana Government and private interested citizens. Mr Albert T. Jacobs, Adviser, explains that Africans seeing the programme of the Centre in operation in the ghettos of the United States—developing manpower and economic opportunities—felt that the approach was appropriate for Africans and invited his organisation to Africa. He finds no difficulty, as there is no imposition.

An African businessman acquaintance has seen some problems in dealing with Blacks that, in my view, relate to basic differences in values. Sometimes the Black's excessive desire to acquire material goods, his obsession with being precise, his readiness to express vocally his misgivings and disagreements, put the two of them at odds. On the other hand, one Black business executive believes, through experience, that the African is not inclined to be introspective. He does not see his own actions as the cause of his failures. He does not count himself responsible, he cannot affect a cure. In sum, both hold views of the other needing clarification. The Black does, as an American, look critically at himself—perhaps too much so. On the other hand, given an opportunity, the African is equally materialistic. The comments of both imply that here may be a lack of common value system which needs to be accepted. Work should start toward finding a mutually acceptable basis for co-operation.

I do not wish to suggest that the Black is not wanted. He is welcomed—by the majority of Africans: the ordinary man or woman who has no privilege to lose. Like the young men in the taxi, he expects to gain by the Black man's coming. Blacks who have something to offer inevitably find a warm emotional response; I am convinced that the Blacks and Africans can offer much more to each other. Viewing the

dismal failure of the developed countries really to lift the 'Third World' from its misery through a fair share of capital and power, it is not arrogance on the part of the Black to opt for solidarity with Africans. Whether or not his contribution is accepted depends very much upon his own tenacity and determination to beat the odds.

I no longer wonder if I will ever be considered simply 'one of the family'. But I am sure my great grandchildren will. That is now the important thing.

HEDGE-SCHOOL

The tan clay between the stones in the foot of hedge was cool and wet. Nettles and ivy and moss and docken flourished in the ditchback. The whitethorn was green as the blackthorn.

Their skirts brushed away over the headrig, their voices humble and familiar as pads across grazing. How the big air of the evening was saddened by them, as if it lay over utensils on a back window-sill, as if it might begin to whisper, 'Pray for us, pray for us, pray for us'.

Primroses grew in a damp single bunch out of the bank, imploding pallors, star plasm, nebula of May. He stared himself into an absence.

'Pull them for the May altar and hurry up'. He knelt and reached the stems. Pod ridges. Legs of nestlings. 'Hurry up'.

Patently, deliberately, they retraced their steps. 'What are you crying about now, son? What is it next? Come on, come on, come on, we have to go. There's a good boy'. He walked behind them, homesick, going home.

SEAMUS HEANEY