

John Buenker, Ron Podeschi, and Paul Sendry (Co-Producers). *Immigrants, Minorities and School: Clash of Culture*, (1983). Video cassette, 34 minutes, color, VHS \$41.00 plus shipping; ¾ inch or ½ inch \$56.00; no rentals. Educational Communications Division, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, P.O. Box 413, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 53201; (414) 963-4788.

The video program *Immigrants, Minorities and School* raises a number of important issues related to the school experiences of today's racial and ethnic minority groups (Asian, Black, Hispanic, and Native American) when compared with the school experiences of the earlier white European ethnic groups who immigrated to the United States within the last century. There are both similarities and differences in the experiences of each racial and ethnic minority group.

Some of the similarities include the need for both groups to adjust to new languages, the subtle or not so subtle hostility of members of the majority culture toward intruders/outsideers, and the ambiguity of attitude by the school as a social institution toward the new student population groups. The majority culture used the schools against the minorities through improper use of IQ tests; the lack of sensitivity toward language usage, religious observances, and cultural traditions; and the invisibility of minorities in the curriculum, in the choice of instructional materials and as members of the faculty and staff. These same difficulties continue today as schools frequently fail to recognize ethnic identity and often discourage a celebration of cultural pluralism.

The parents of each minority group held a strong faith in education as a means for their children to get ahead both socially and economically. The difficulties and obstacles encountered by many minority youth in school often hinder their development of self-concept and a positive self-image. Frequently the schools failed to respect the values of the family and child. Conflict was almost inevitable. For the most part both groups wanted to retain traditional religious and cultural values so as to maintain some type of group cohesion and group identity in order to secure mutual support. Families ties were strong, although tensions did exist and estrangement between generations soon developed. Parents wanted to hold on to long standing family and cultural traditions, while at the same time the youth were being assimilated into United States society and customs through the school and other social institutions. Many times youth had to explain the new American ways to parents. Discontent with the family structure often developed.

Some of the differing experiences include the ability of white European ethnics to "blend" into American culture over a period of time and not be so readily identified as are today's racial and ethnic groups who are easily recognized because of distinguishing physical characteristics and

skin color. Today many of the racial and ethnic groups are regarded as having castelike status with little opportunity to advance economically and socially due to technology and the changing opportunity structure. In the last half of this century the number of jobs needing unskilled labor has declined and today are virtually non-existent. Minorities today must not only compete against members of the majority culture for an overall declining number of jobs, but especially for those jobs which are generally regarded as unskilled and hence undesirable.

A number of important questions are addressed in the film but not necessarily resolved. Two of the questions which require ongoing discussion are the following: 1) Is the school a connector or disconnecter between and among members of racial and ethnic groups and the majority culture? 2) Must ethnic and racial minorities give up something (culture, values, tradition, language, beliefs, and so forth) in order to be something or become someone?

The film concludes that educators need to overcome their own lack of knowledge of other cultures by recognizing the need to learn from other cultures. Educators need to view the schools as centers of learning for the benefit of all students. Clearly the schools should not educate students for planned failure.

The film is useful for social science and education classes at the college/university level, for civic groups, and all who are interested in recognizing cultural pluralism and promoting human dignity. Teachers at all grade levels and disciplines are able to gain new perspectives about minority youth. The film lends itself to thoughtful discussion concerning the school experiences and expectations of minority background students and their parents.

— Margaret Laughlin
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Angus Calder, Jack Mapanje, and Cosmo Pieterse, eds. *Summer Fires, New Poetry of Africa*. (London: Heinemann, 1983) 116 pp., \$7.00 paper.

When Angus Calder, Jack Mapanje, and Cosmo Pieterse sat as judges for the BBC Arts and Africa Poetry Award of 1981, they were faced with some 3,000 entries from more than 700 contestants from which they were to award three cash prizes and a number of book prizes. In the introduction to the book which they subsequently edited, consisting of