

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.

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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

eighty-two poems from forty-five writers from thirteen countries in Africa, they explain that they had told all entrants they were looking for “originality and imagination as well as evidence of technical skill.” They state, also, that they “strove to deliberate dispassionately . . . without regard to geographical origin or to the author’s previous reputations.” They conclude that the book “represents the remarkable vitality of verse in English all over the continent,” and leave their choices of poems “to speak for themselves, as they do so well.”

The BBC-sponsored competition and its consequent book of selected poems are both commendable and interest-stimulating. Certainly they offer encouragement to writers in English-speaking Africa and help to create a better world-understanding of current ideas, beliefs, and aspirations of peoples in contemporary African nations. One must be somewhat cautious in generalizing, however; eighty-two is but a small fraction of 3,000 and the poems chosen necessarily represent cultural and esthetic biases of the judges-editors, to some extent. The judges have been well-chosen, however; they are serious persons of extensive experience in African cultures. Calder was formerly a lecturer at the University of Nairobi; Mapanje is now a lecturer at the University of Malawi; Pieterse is currently teaching English in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

Whether readers agree with the editors’ judgments concerning the relative merits of the poems included is not important. Vitality and variety are evident. The range of subject matter is larger than it might have been in a similar anthology one or two decades ago. Although there are poems of social and political protest, denunciations of corrupt officialdom, attacks upon urban crowding and confusion, and laments for the loss of power of the older cultures, there are also personal statements of family cohesion, marital health, and appreciated natural phenomena. There are variations in style and poetic techniques. Even though all of the poems are, roughly, “free-verse,” there are stylistic differences among them. One poem (“Fertility Game” by Kofi Anyidoho of Ghana) makes use of a refrain intended for recitation by an audience at a public reading. Another poem (“Shairi La Ukombozi” by Majorie Oludhe Macgoye of Kenya) is identified as written in the Swahili mode. Many poems employ transferred epithets and oblique metaphors, even to the point of obscurity; other poems are simply direct and explicit. Throughout, one does find an abundance of fresh images, like the one concluding “Siren” (by Niyi Osundare of Nigeria). After castigating the haughty official who makes a noisome spectacle of himself, the poet hints to the future in four short lines:

But babies contorted  
in mother’s backs  
are question marks  
for tomorrow’s answer.

A dominant tone of the collection is difficult to identify. There is a good deal of forceful criticism of contemporary behavior, but the criticism does not reflect an attitude of despair or resignation. Many poems are personal rather than political.

Although *Summer Fires* may not be a comprehensive picture of contemporary African poetry, it is a very worthwhile addition to the African literary record. Similar collections ought to be produced from time to time, perhaps even biennially.

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**Stephen Castles (with Heather Booth and Tina Wallace). *Here for Good: Western Europe's New Ethnic Minorities*. (Dover, NH: Pluto Press, 1984) viii, 259 pp., \$11.25.**

A disturbing, extremely important book. The wealth of information provided by the authors illuminates the present circumstances of ethnic minorities in Western Europe, principally West Germany, and points to potential dangers and repercussions in the future. The thesis of *Here for Good* posits the change in status of the guest worker from that of migrant or temporary resident to that of immigrant or permanent settler in one of seven major host countries in Western Europe. This shift should mark a parallel shift in the political and economic policies which address the needs of the immigrants and their impact upon the host countries. The adaptation of political and economic strategies, however, is slow in coming, breeding complex problems at every level. Castles examines the most relevant aspects of the crisis, and it is a crisis, letting the statistical data spell out authoritatively the seriousness of the situation. The book is organized according to seven major concerns, each discussed in a separate chapter and thoroughly documented with statistical tables.

After an introductory chapter in which Castles clarifies the structure and concerns of the book, the discussion turns to the history behind the guest worker system. Castles describes the migration of laborers from Southern Europe, the Third World, and less developed countries to several highly industrialized nations of Europe, beginning with the post-war era and ending in the early eighties. In the next chapter, the history and particular circumstances of migration and settlement in each nation are analyzed. Castles provides meticulously detailed data for understanding the development of new ethnic minorities in Britain, Belgium,