

**Flore Zephir. *Haitian Immigrants in Black America: A Sociological and Sociolinguistic Portrait.* (Westport, Connecticut: Bergin & Garvey, 1996). 180 pp., \$59.95 cloth.**

Zephir explores Haitians' identification with Americans through the transitional nature of Haitians' ethnicity, roles of languages, the roles of bilingual educational programs, the generational transmission of Haitian ethnicity, and Haitians' and Black Americans' relationships. For historians and sociologists who are unfamiliar with the history of Haiti and Haitians in America, this book is informative and insightful, especially because of its useful maps and tables.

Scholars interested in migration and adaptation are provided with helpful demographic information on Haitians' immigration and settlement in America. Very relevant is a critical discussion of Haiti's history and the resulting effects in the behavior and attitudes of Haitian immigrants in New York.

Haitians' triple invisibility is explained with reference to their dilemma over ethnicity, race and language. Their notion of race and ethnicity conflicts with that of Americans. Hence, this theme of subordination based on blackness in America, becomes Haitians' quest not to be Black Americans or African Americans, but to identify themselves through their ethnicity and culture. The effects these issues have on Haitians' settlement in New York when they realize that inequality is part of their American existence would encourage interesting scholarly discussions. Zephir explores Haitians' ethnocentric perspectives on African Americans. Haitians identify with African Americans' struggle against racism, but believe in Haitians' ethnic superiority. Their views on assimilation, isolation, intermarriage, and adaptation show their strong need to be Haitians while maintaining strong cultural ties to their homeland.

Zephir makes a genuinely interesting argument for language being "real" and essential as Haitians' collective inheritance - the uniting force in the construction of their identity. The notion of ethnolinguistic vitality using status, demography, and institutional support shows that Haitians are not ambivalent about their distinctiveness in US society.

Creole language is a marker of ethnolinguistic identity, serving as an emblem of ethnicity to combat American racism. Haitians seek to preserve their distinctiveness and educate others about those distinct features. Social class definition is built around the symbolic functioning of language, for French is a social marker not an ethnic one.

The specific functions of Creole, French, and English languages are discussed in the context of ethnic maintenance. Haitians' patterns of language use involving high and low density networks of individuals, code-switching to denote class divisions, and intimate versus nonintimate relations should be interesting to linguists.

The examination of cultural aspects of hegemonic relations be-

tween White Americans and Haitians is a topic that is relevant to scholars interested in cultural pluralism. Although Zephir specifically referred to educators, this book makes a poignant case for public and private policymakers to seriously review their notions of a multicultural America, where equality of conditions and status for each citizen should be a reality.

This book also cautions us to socio-psychologically, historically, and politically review our notion of skin color as a unifying force among various Black groups, who wish to retain their cultures and nationalities, because there is no monolithic minority and Black population in American society. Although some of Zephir's ideas and Haitians beliefs are shared by other Black English Caribbean immigrants, there are many obvious differences with respect to languages and Haiti's history which this book highlights.

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