

Acknowledgement

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Abstract

Edwidge Danticat is a Haitian-American diasporic writer who writes in English. She was born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, on January 19, 1969. Her literary oeuvre consists of novels, short stories, travelogue, and memoir. She has written five novels: *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994), *The Farming of Bones* (1998), *The Dew Breaker* (2004), *Claire of the Sea Light* (2013), and *Untwine* (2015).

The introductory chapter concentrates on the blossoming of Caribbean literature from folklore and oral traditions. It delineates the major works in Haitian literature starting from the classics to the contemporaries. It gives an aerial view of Haitian-American diasporic writing, highlighting Edwidge Danticat and her works. As Danticat's novels are intertwined with the politics of Haiti, a brief political history of Haiti has also been described. The historical and geographical backgrounds of Haiti are analysed.

Trauma is universal and it is omnipresent in Danticat's narratives. It is a rigorous emotional shock caused by an extremely distressing experience. Chapter II titled "Society, Culture, and Politics as Agents in Creating Trauma" focuses on the social, cultural, and political factors prevalent in Haiti and US which create dark episodes in the lives of the Haitians. The trauma that the protagonists experience is embedded in social evils like racism and corruption which is apparent in *The Farming of Bones*, gangster culture in *Claire of the Sea Light*, and child trafficking in *Untwine*. Poverty and rigid social codes add to their unhappiness. Women in Danticat's narratives are victims of cultural practises like testing and female genital circumcision. Danticat pictures their agony in *Breath, Eyes, Memory*.

The atrocities of the Haitian paramilitary are detailed in *The Dew Breaker*. Danticat's fusion of the personal with society, culture, and politics cultivates a new insight and addresses the contemporary dilemmas of injustices. The protagonists are caught in the swirl of these factors which force them to live in exile, prod them to adopt a secluded life, and ultimately result in their trauma. The aftermath of these traumatic events has a huge impact on the psyche of the protagonists which will be analysed in the next chapter.

Chapter III titled "The Magnitude of Traumatic Memories" deals with the impact of traumatic memories on the individual's psyche. Trauma has been the central concept in psychology of the present day. The increase in violence all over the world had received more attention which led to the growth of professional research in this field. Psychic trauma deals with extreme personal suffering and memory becomes a source of trauma. This chapter traces the history of trauma in the field of psychology beginning from Freud till date and analyses the role of memory in trauma studies. The trauma inflicted by the memories has a strong impact on the psyche of Danticat's characters as it surfaces in the form of psychotic symptoms like restlessness, anxiety, fear of future, visual intrusions, flashbacks, and nightmares. As a result they suffer extreme anxiety disorder known as Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This chapter analyses the symptoms of PTSD exhibited by the protagonists using A dual representation theory of PTSD framed by Brewin.

The Caribbean concept of recovery from trauma opens up new avenues which offer possibilities for survival and healing. Chapter IV titled "Strategies and Factors for Survival and Healing" sketches out the diverse strategies and factors which help

the trauma-stricken protagonists in their journey towards survival and healing. While some of them surrender to fate, a majority of them display a heroic courage in their battle against trauma. They adopt various strategies to overcome the catastrophic loss and embrace life. There are also few factors which aid them in recovery. The characters reconstruct themselves with the help of these techniques and emerge successful in life.

The final chapter of the dissertation summarizes the previous chapters and discusses the style of the writer. It details on the symbols, themes, and techniques used in the novels. A real life case study is cited to emphasise the extent of truth in Danticat's trauma narratives. This study attempts to highlight the fact that healing is possible for trauma survivors.

List of Abbreviations

<i>Breath, Eyes, Memory</i>	-	<i>BEM</i>
<i>The Farming of Bones</i>	-	<i>FB</i>
<i>The Dew Breaker</i>	-	<i>DB</i>
<i>Claire of the Sea Light</i>	-	<i>CSL</i>
<i>Kirk? Krak!</i>	-	<i>KK</i>

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