

THE SEARCH FOR CULTURAL IDENTITY IN THE SELECT WORKS OF EDWIDGE DANTICAT

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DECLARATION

I, hereby, declare that the presented work in the thesis entitled “The Search for Cultural Identity in the Select Works of Edwidge Danticat” in fulfilment of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph. D.)** is the outcome of research work carried out by me under the supervision of Dr. Meenakshi Rana, working as Assistant Professor, in the Department of English of Lovely Professional University, Punjab, India. In keeping with the general practice of reporting scientific observations, due acknowledgements have been made whenever the work described here has been based on the findings of other investigators. This work has not been submitted in part or full to any other University or Institute for the award of any degree.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the work reported in the Ph. D. thesis entitled “The Search for Cultural Identity in the Select Works of Edwidge Danticat” submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the reward of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)** in the English, is a research work carried out by Manpreet Kaur Uppal, 41800537 (Registration No.), is bonafide record of her original work carried out under my supervision and that no part of thesis has been submitted for any other degree, diploma or equivalent course.

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Abstract

The present research seeks to study the search for cultural identity in the select works of Edwidge Danticat, a Haitian-American writer. She has been conferred with the American Book Award in 1999, the National Book Critics Circle Award in 2007, and MacArthur Genius Fellowship in 2009. This study focuses on Edwidge Danticat's three Young Adult novels, namely, *Behind the Mountains* (2002), *Anacaona: Golden Flower, Haiti, 1490* (2005), *Untwine* (2015), the biography *The Art of Death* (2017) and her recent short stories *Everything Inside* (2019) although her other fictional and non-fictional works will also be taken into account. Danticat's works have made a very significant contribution to world literature. Most of her works depict the sufferings of the Haitians, the poverty of Haiti and its political and social conditions during and after the Duvalier reign. Her entire oeuvre is based on the lives of the migrants from Haiti and the after-effects of migration. The homesickness, belongingness, and loneliness all result in a feeling of displacement. This displacement leads to a loss of identity, culture and traditions. The migrant, when in search of his cultural identity, faces many problems. He feels marginalised and alienated, and finally, he integrates and assimilates into the host culture.

Edwidge Danticat grew up in Haiti during Duvalier's reign; as such, she has witnessed the brute savagery and trauma the Haitians face. She writes of the violent history and politics of her native country, which led the Haitians to flee and take refuge in other countries as migrants or refugees. Displacement from one's native land leaves deep scars on both the psyche and bodies of her characters. Her characters are in search of their cultural, social and national identity. Cultural identity is the characteristics that make a culture. Culture is a system of beliefs, traditions, symbolic practices, and rules

a group follows. A famous anthropologist, Clifford Geertz, defined culture as “. . . it denotes a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life” (*Interpretation* 89).

Cultural identity defines an individual and gives meaning to his or her life. Cultural identity is identification with members of the same upbringing, values and traditions. Cultural identity is formed when a person identifies with a group while living in the group, forms a place in the group, and forms relations with the group as family, neighbours, colleagues, etc. Stuart Hall, a Jamaican cultural theorist, writes about the relationship between the past and future of one’s cultural identity in his essay, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora.” He gives two different definitions of cultural identity. In the first definition, he defines cultural identity as ‘a shared culture,’ a collective ‘one true self’, hidden within ‘superficial or artificially imposed selves.’ It reflects shared historical experiences and codes, providing stable, unchanging frames of reference and meaning for people with a shared history and ancestry (223); cultural identity thus connects people with common history and culture. His second definition is a transformed version, which states that cultural identity is a matter of ‘becoming’ and ‘being,’ belonging to the future and past. It is not something that exists, transcending place, time, history, and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere and have histories, but they undergo a constant transformation, reflecting the Caribbean’s uniqueness (225).

Edwidge Danticat gives voice to the silent Haitian migrants suffering in America. Her characters come from her life. Her protagonists are Danticat, her mother,

her neighbours, her uncles and aunts. They are Haitians from all spheres of life. In an interview with NPR's Lulu Garcia-Navarro, Haitian-American author Edwidge Danticat discusses her experience as a Haitian immigrant. She explains that Haiti was born out of the revolution and has always been hardworking. The country was economically isolated due to its black population and debt to France for independence. Despite being marginalised and stigmatised, Danticat believes this has strengthened the people and motivated them to try harder. Although Haiti is not the country described by the president, it is full of pride and strong people seeking better opportunities elsewhere when they leave.

Danticat, who has migrated, experiences the feeling of displacement that stems from it. She feels that she is searching for cultural identity, and to compensate for her loss, she writes about her land, its culture and the traditions she misses. Danticat's characters are migrants in a new land, a new home, and new people trying to cope with the new atmosphere and adhere to the new culture. Her Young Adult Novels, as the name suggests, are about young migrants living in America or Miami. Danticat herself is among those children whose parents migrated, leaving their children with their relatives. When Danticat migrated at the age of twelve, the coldness she met in Brooklyn is described in her works, and her characters portray her experience, which is an integral part of her works. The Young Adult Novels depict the lives of these migrants, the cold treatment they receive and the impact of the indifference they have on their lives. This indifference creates a void in their life, a loneliness that leads them to a feeling of being displaced and here the search for cultural identity begins. Celiane in Danticat's *Behind the Mountains* feels the coldness as she is on the streets of Brooklyn. She says the sun shone in America, but the warmth was missing. It seemed like a cold

sun that conspired with the chill to spread coolness and hostility around her. Everyone and everything seemed to be against them. Favourable turned to unfavourable in no time. The things she wanted to do when she met her father were all met with changes she could never think of, and she had to give up her childish desires to cope with the situations in the host country. Once the family migrates, Celiane's father finds it difficult to meet the two ends, and her mother, who is still coming up with the situation, comes to the rescue as she gets a petty job in a restaurant's kitchen. Migrants suffer social marginalisation as they are humiliated, ill-treated, given poor accommodation, and offered petty jobs. Celiane's mother, who is searching for her cultural identity, has no time to think, and she accepts the integration as she follows her traditions at home.

Untwine Edwidge Danticat's second Young Adult Novel discusses the first-generation acceptance of the host land and its culture. It also describes the tradition of Haitian storytelling as a medium of passing on the culture to second-generation migrants. Gisselle feels connected to Haiti, and both the girls, Gisselle and Isabelle, like visiting old Cathedrals and museums when in Haiti. The connection to roots defines one's personality. Gisselle finds her true cultural identity by returning to her roots to connect herself to the world as she is twined to her twin sister, feels isolated, and her untwining takes place in Haiti. *Anacaona* describes the national fervour Danticat wants the youth to learn. To inculcate a feeling of nationalism in Haitian youth and the migrants who have left Haiti. She writes the book to make the Haitians feel they have a rich legacy to be followed and passed on to the next generations. *Anacaona* represents the strong Haitian women and the acceptance, assimilation and integration of women who migrate to distant lands with their families and whose search for a cultural identity never ends. *The Art of Death* is a biographical work depicting the sorrow of a Haitian

immigrant who longs for the warmth of the land and the religious traditions of Haiti. Danticat's mother wants the rituals of Haitians to be followed after her death. The migrant's desire to immortalise the Haitian culture and traditions by following them and their integration into the new culture forms an important theme in Danticat's works. Her recent book of short stories, *Everything Inside*, presents a picture of the host country where some migrants assimilate to the new culture while others integrate into the society. Most Haitian migrants integrate rather than assimilate as they bear a rich culture; they find solace in their roots, their home, Haiti. Characters like Elsie, Darline, Maurice, Neah, Carole, and Jeanne all integrate into the new world. They face displacement, undergo alienation, and are marginalised in their search for their cultural identity, which ends in integration.

In his article on purpose of cultural identity Michael Shindler states the purpose of cultural identity as a mechanism that establishes a group's connection to its past, justifying its present and providing guidance to build its future. This mechanism is primarily found in the literature of this group and helps in understanding the group's history, traditions and myths. Danticat's oeuvre is a narrative of the Haitian diaspora helping them legitimise their cultural identity in the country of migration. Danticat's works have received tremendous appreciation from all diasporic writers and people. Cultural identity represents the diaspora's culture, and its search begins when the culture faces opposition. Edwidge Danticat's vividness and picturesque description of the migrant's search for cultural identity are helped by references from cultural theorists like Stuart Hall, the ideas of cultural diversity by Homi K. Bhabha, and the insights on racism by Salman Rushdie. Haiti's historical past, which has had a profound impact on

Haitian migration, will also provide insight into the search for cultural identity by the Haitian migrants.

This study is an attempt to provide knowledge about the different conditions faced by migrants in the new land. It will enlighten future migrants on how to preserve their cultural identity and cope with different situations in the new land. Edwidge Danticat has tried to illuminate the way for future Haitians who migrate to distant lands.

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Introduction

Colonialism led to mobility in the human race as the colonised suffered brutal torture and physical and mental pain. They tried to escape to other parts of the world, which led to the accumulation of large groups of people in countries like the U.S., France, Germany, etc., who were either immigrants or refugees. These migrants were either forced to migrate (because of colonialism) or migrated voluntarily on the lookout for better opportunities and economic stability. Africans brought as slaves by the Europeans discovered the land of Saint Dominique-Haiti. After thirteen years of the Haitian Revolution, Haiti gained independence in 1804. Haiti became the first black postcolonial state and the second country after The United States to gain independence. Haitian immigration to the U.S. results from socioeconomic and political factors to escape poverty and exploitation. The Haitians left their country and became part of the Haitian Diaspora. The Haitians had to adopt the Haitian-American community's new cultural beliefs and arrangements in the hope of survival and peace.

Haiti has a rich cultural and traditional history of which the Haitians are proud. Also, the land paved the way for the abolition of slavery and racism. The Haitians carry these national honours and look for dignity in the other land. Haitian immigration to the U.S. dates back to the Haitian Revolution in 1791-1804. In the violent period between 1915-1934, the U.S. occupied Haiti witnessed Haitian immigration to New York, Boston, and Miami to join their Diaspora. The oppressive Duvalier regime and the rule of Papa Doc and Baby Doc (1960–1971 and 1972–1986, respectively) saw mass immigration of Haitians. Professionally qualified and skilled men from Haiti were either forced to leave Haiti or voluntarily left Haiti. In the 1970s and 80s, middle-class and lower-middle-class Haitians immigrated to Florida. Any discrimination or identity

clashes do not make the Haitians return; they are determined to stay what comes. In *The Haitian Americans*, Flore Zephir writes about the determination and endurance of the Haitians. He writes that the Haitians can enjoy life to its fullest and suffer the worst that comes in their lives (141). Haitian Americans make their presence felt in America through their cultural festivities; they intermingle with different ethnic groups and blacks of African descent. They have set up many new businesses, restaurants, shops, and cultural centres. They have tried to make America their home by having their own media houses, newspapers and Haitian organisations which fight for the rights of the Haitians.

Edwidge Danticat is a Haitian-American writer who writes about Haiti, its history, and the impact of history on the lives of Haitians who leave Haiti due to poverty and political upheavals. Danticat is an immigrant to America; her parents left Haiti in search of economic stability, and she witnessed the reign of Papa Doc and Baby Doc Duvalier. Danticat saw the Haitians facing torture and torment by the Tonton Macoutes, the soldiers of Duvalier. She saw them flee to distant lands to escape the violence. Danticat switched to writing when she faced racism in America and found it challenging to adapt to the culture of the new land. She writes about Haiti and the Haitians; this is how she gives voice to herself and the pain suffered by them. She writes about the aftermath of migration and the difficulties faced by immigrants.

The purpose of this Qualitative research project is to critically analyse the select works of Edwidge Danticat and study the character's search for their cultural identity. Danticat's characters either migrate internally to Haiti or other countries, and in both situations, they face an identity crisis. They search for their nationality, traditions, and language and are in turmoil about whether they are Haitians, Afro-Americans, Afro-

French, etc. Their search for a cultural identity as racial, national, gender-based, or ancestral is the focus area of this study. This research studies the character's struggle through a feeling of displacement to assimilation and integration into the new land. It also studies their quest for national identity and feeling marginalised during the search. The main objectives of the study are:

- To trace the historical roots of cultural identity
- To explore the role of culture in the identity formation of Edwidge Danticat's characters
- To analyse the search for Haitian national identity and other issues in the select fictional and non-fictional works
- To apply the concepts of culture, identity, and Haitian self to the select fictional and non-fictional works of Edwidge Danticat

The focus will be on Edwidge Danticat's select works, namely, *Behind the Mountains* (2002), *Anacaona: Golden Flower, Haiti, 1490* (2005), *Untwine* (2015), *The Art of Death* (2017) and *Everything Inside* (2019). Edwidge Danticat is the author of four novels, two collections of short stories, three young adult novels, four children's books and four non-fiction books. *Brother, I'm Dying* has won the National Book Critics Circle Award, and it was a finalist for the National Book Award. Edwidge Danticat is also the writer of two films *Poto Mitan* (2009) and *Girl Rising* (2013). Danticat writes the best when about Haiti; through her works, she has recreated Haiti. She has woven her work around Haitian life and made it available to Haitians, Americans, and others. Amy Wilentz describes this love of Edwidge Danticat for her homeland in *The New York Times* as Danticat's tender new book about loss and an

indelible passion for the land makes us remember the powerful stuff most fiction is made of, childhood and place. Regardless of their geographical and temporal distance, Danticat writes about them with a feeling of love.

Edwidge Danticat's characters are in search of identity, be it a cultural, social, or national identity. Most of her characters are Haitians who have left Haiti for a better future. These Haitians have migrated internally or externally and live in the host country. Danticat's prime themes are Haitian traditions, the rituals in Haiti, the mother-daughter relationship, and the terror and violence suffered by Haitians in Haiti and as migrants outside Haiti. Haitians who migrate to other lands face many problems living in another country. The relationship in the host country is like the postcolonial binary's whites and blacks, master and slave or colonised and coloniser. The migrant culture does not accept them. Though they have lived in the host land for years, they are treated as refugees. Acceptance becomes an attitude. Frantz Fanon, in *Black Skin White Masks*, writes that the colonised have learnt to be inferior. When one accepts the identity given to him by the coloniser, it is difficult for him to accept a new identity after colonisation is over (108). Cultural identity is influenced by several factors, such as linguistics, religious, ethnic, national and political aspects. These factors contribute to the development of one's identity. Cultural dimensions include lineage, heritage, traditions, roots, ethnicity, and nativity. Culture refers to the rituals, habits and conventions followed by a specific sect of people. Cultural identity is vital for knowing oneself and how one relates to others. A powerful cultural identity bestows a person with contentment and results in one's overall development.

Cultural identities are unstable points of identification. Human life involves many criss-cross lanes, digressions, and breaks. These lead to diversions from one path

to another, which results in a change in quality of life. Sometimes, there are clear obstacles, but other times, the blocks and hindrances make one deviate from one's path. Each deviation is a point of change, not only in the flow of the journey but also in its quality. With the change, the identity of humans also undergoes a change, taking new forms and shapes. Stuart Hall, in his essay "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," writes, ". . . identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past" (225). Hall further gives two concepts of cultural identity, one of a "shared culture . . . 'one people' with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning" (223) and the other of unstable points of identification:

This second position recognises that, as well as the many points of similarity, there are also critical points of deep and significant difference which constitute 'what we really are'; or rather-since history has intervened-'what we have become'. We cannot speak for very long, with any exactness, about 'one experience, one identity', without acknowledging its other side-the ruptures and discontinuities which constitute, precisely, the Caribbean's 'uniqueness'. Cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. (225)

He says that man makes his identity in the process of identification; he works hard to construct his identity without thinking about his gender, ethnicity, family, religion, homeland, class, tradition, culture, or race.

Edwidge Danticat, in *Behind the Mountains*, writes about the fluidity of cultural identity as Celiane migrates from Leogane to Brooklyn. Danticat writes about the transformation in cultures of the two places, and similarly, she predicts the

transformation in Celiane's and her family's lives. In *Untwine*, Gisselle's identity transforms as she sees her twin die, and she has to take the support of her native identity and her homeland, Haiti, to untwine herself from her sister. Macy Halford admires Danticat for writing about tragedies and vanished cultures in *Create Dangerously*, acknowledging her existence and power to create. Another work by Danticat is the travel narrative *After the Dance: A Walk through Carnival in Jacmel, Haiti*, written in 2002. It gives readers a view of the Haitian Carnival, which portrays Haiti's rich heritage and the Haitian Revolution. She tries to recover and revive Haiti's lost culture and landscapes through her work. She also delves into Haiti's rich traditions which she misses as a child and now has a chance to witness.

Brother, I'm Dying is an autobiography narrative about the atrocities faced by Haitians on U.S. soil. Transnational parenting is one challenge faced by migrants who migrate to host land in the hope that they will be able to call their family one day. They work hard and save every penny but as these migrants are given petty jobs, they cannot make enough to call their families easily. It often takes several years before they can meet their families. This book is a description of the woes of the Haitian immigrants. In an interview with Josephine Reed, Danticat tells how immigrants were abused and tortured. This happened because of harsh immigrant policies and cruel followers of those policies. The Americans tried very hard to protect the barbarous laws. The poor immigrants suffered; they were being persecuted, as it was normal there. Immigrants from other countries searching for the American dream find life in America very crude. Materialistic things do not give pleasure; chasing the American dream, one loses one's self and forgets his family. All immigrants are not treated alike. Educated and skilled

professionals have easily accessible jobs, while the middle class and poor cannot get good jobs and handsome salaries, which makes it hard to cope.

Danticat's works have received critical attention from various academic critics and reviewers. Many critics have interviewed her about why Haiti dominates her works. Edwidge Danticat edited *Haiti Noir*, and Carolyn Gan reviewed her work and wrote in her article "The Nuance of Noir: An Interview with Edwidge Danticat" that Danticat published the book following the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. It describes many of the noir writers and the mysteries and complexities in the life of the noirs. The book describes the pathetic condition of the blacks, violence and bloodshed in Haiti. Many interviewers, amongst them Jessica Lanay Moore, Sampsonia Way Magazine, Amy Wilentz, and Carolyn Gan, have talked to her about her writings and the role of race and resilience in the people of Haiti, who have rediscovered their identity through sufferings and struggles. Edwidge Danticat writes about Haiti, its people and their struggles for a living for an identity. Book review journals like *The New York Times*, *Fiction Writers Review*, *Guernica*, *Kirkus Review* and *Los Angeles Review* have reviewed most of Danticat's work. Edwidge Danticat's works have been under scrutiny and many writers have aptly studied the various themes in the works of Danticat. The themes discussed are trauma, identity, grief, fragmentation, gender, and myths.

Several peer-reviewed journals have been searched, and work on Edwidge Danticat has been reviewed, and a further search will be carried out exploring more books and research papers on the writer. Edwidge Danticat's texts will be critically studied in accordance with Cultural identity. Edwidge Danticat has appeared for various interviews, which will help understand Danticat's thought process. The psychological insights and social behaviour of the characters of Edwidge Danticat will be studied

based on different aspects of Cultural Identity by prominent writers who wrote about cultural identity, how the characters in Danticat's works adhere to their values and seek an identity in the new environment where their search for self and culture will be studied.

The present study consists of five chapters followed by a conclusion. The Introduction is a summary of the thesis highlighting the research objectives and the research methodology used to achieve the objectives.

Chapter 1: Brief Candle: Edwidge Danticat- Cultural Identity- The first chapter, Brief Candle, describes the brief history of cultural identity, an understanding of the terms culture and identity, the evolution of cultural identity, its types, and its importance, an introduction of the writer Edwidge Danticat, her works and literature review.

Chapter 2: Migration and Displacement- The second chapter studies how migration complicates the discovery of self as one is confused about whether one belongs to the place left by him or the place where he has arrived. Migration is a common phenomenon in Haiti, as people are motivated by several factors. They migrate in search of good economic conditions and desire to be free from the tyrannous rule of the political dictators in Haiti. This chapter describes the woes of the ones displaced and, in doing so, how they get shattered not only physically but also mentally as they undergo the turmoil of shifting from one place to the other; this confusion leads to an identity crisis. This identity crisis leads to an alienation from the country and oneself. Danticat is an example of this identity crisis and wants her Haitian identity to be recognised. In her work *Behind the Mountains*, Celiane goes through this displacement, and this dislocation always troubles her as she cannot correlate with the American

skyscrapers and landscapes. In her dreams, she cherishes the Haitian environment and thinks Haiti is Behind the Mountains, and this Haiti is her identity hidden behind the giant mountain of American culture.

Chapter 3: Social Marginalisation- A Challenge to Haitian Identity- The third chapter discusses marginalisation as an inescapable and compulsory phenomenon of human societies. In every society, some groups and communities are not considered a part of society, especially immigrants and women. Haitians face social marginalisation in host countries. They are disregarded in schools, workplaces, homes, and religious institutions. Haitian women writers like Edwidge Danticat face discrimination as they must fight for their rights. Children like Celiane and Gisselle face discrimination at school and are bullied by others. Haitians are offered petty jobs despite their skills. In *The Art of Death*, Danticat's mother, who has suffered marginalisation all her life, doing petty jobs to raise her family, wants to unite with her ancestors in Haiti through her death. She wants a burial according to Haitian culture so that she is not marginalised in death.

Chapter 4: Quest for Haitian National Identity- The fourth chapter explores how the Haitian Revolution imbibed a spirit of nationalism in the Haitians; they were united to get their country liberated. Freedom was difficult and could not be cherished as long as the rulers exploited the people and resources. Haiti became a dreaded place. Haitians migrated to countries like the U.S., France, and Spain, where they were met with hostility. In their efforts to adapt, they could not keep their Haitian identity safe. This chapter explores their efforts in search for their Haitian national identity. Haiti is a land of diaspora; different ethnic groups live together, and most of them are Africans. Their native language, Creole and their love for Haitian food unite all the characters in

Danticat's works. Danticat herself misses the flavours of Haitian spices in the food. The food, language, clothes, traditions, and myths are all forms of recognition of national identity. The characters like Aline, Celiane, Danticat's mother, Isabelle, Gisselle, Anacaona, Elsie, and Arnold all love Haiti and feel proud of their Haitian nationality. Opening Haitian restaurants, churches, shopping malls, and Haitian clubs add to their respect for their Haitian National identity. Danticat and many other Haitians contribute to the settlement of new immigrants and help in case of need.

Chapter 5: Assimilation and Integration- The fifth chapter studies the awakening of the people, their realisation, and their acceptance of the new order and old culture. The creation of a new identity is globally accepted between the two cultures. Assimilation is the total acceptance of the new host culture, which results in the loss of one's original or native culture. Integration between two cultures is a two-way process wherein both communities try to understand each other. The Boyers in *Untwine* accept the host culture without leaving their culture and ways. Stuart Hall writes that cultural identity is becoming rather than being. It is constantly changing and is always becoming something new. Danticat supports the view and believes that cultures are dynamic and constantly changing. Elsie in *Everything Inside* lives in Miami, accepts her lifestyle and does not want to return to Haiti. Celiane and Moy have accepted the American way of Haitian life; they live like Americans in a Haitian home, following Haitian traditions.

Conclusion: This concluding part explains that cultural identity is not static. It changes with changes in place, dimensions, workplace, etc. Old identities are destroyed, and new identities are constantly forming. Assimilation and Integration are only partially achieved. The immigrants appear to be a part of the host community, but the burden remains that they are away from their native country and culture. Haiti is still

not free from violence and bloodshed. The Haitian government has a long way to go so that Haitians do not migrate. Haiti also needs a stable government, which is the cause of its social and economic failure. Haitians still migrate to other countries in search of food and economic stability; when in the other country, they will always search for cultural identity.

The present thesis is an attempt towards a detailed examination of subsects of cultural identity with a focus on the Haitian diaspora in the above-listed works. The action in the works revolves around the search for the cultural identity of the characters. This study includes Edwidge Danticat's fictional and non-fictional works, her young adult novels, her story collection and a memoir. The works of many critics, philosophers, authors and scholars are cited in the present work. Since the main focus of this study is on the migration-led search for cultural identity by the migrants, insights provided by Stuart Hall, Homi Bhabha, Salman Rushdie, and J.W. Berry, among others, are of great help in this context.

This study gives an insight into the search for a cultural identity of the characters Edwidge Danticat, the Haitian immigrants. Though this work relates only to Edwidge Danticat's characters, the appeal is immense. Even today, the condition of Haitians has not improved; they are facing insecurity in Haiti and are not treated as equals or given equal rights in the U.S. The *UN News*, dated 1 January 2022, states: "The number of Haitians who have tried to migrate by unofficial channels to neighboring countries by boat has increased dramatically in 2021. They are being driven by economic hardship, insecurity, and a recent earthquake to seek what they believe will be a better life" ("Waves of Haitians"). In her article in *The New York Times*, dated 9 June 2022, Eileen Sullivan writes about the deportation of Haitians: "The Biden administration expelled

nearly 4,000 Haitians on 36 deportation flights in May - a significant increase over the previous three months” (“U.S.”). This work puts forth the challenges Haitians face in Haiti and the U.S. It will be a message to the Haitians and migrants in general about the hardships they must endure in the migrant land.

Chapter 1

Brief Candle: Edwidge Danticat- Cultural Identity

Culture is one of the most complex concepts studied in the humanities and social sciences. Matthew Arnold, in his work *Culture and Anarchy*, defines culture as: “It is sweetness and light, it is the best that has been thought and said, it is internal to the human mind and general to the whole community; it is a harmony of all the powers that make for the beauty and worth of human nature” (48-49). He considers culture to be the best, as it stabilises human nature. Culture refers to the great ideas found in the works of classics in literature, painting, philosophy, music, art, design, architecture, and entertainment, referred to as mass culture. In the social context, culture refers to the distinction in how a group of people lives in a community, society, or nation. It refers to the values shared by people in a society or group. When two people belong to the same culture, they share ways to express their thoughts and feelings as understood by each other. Culture is about emotions, feelings, sentiments, ideas, and concepts. People do not have a meaning in themselves; culture lends them meaning. The representation of things by people in society gives them meaning. Meaning gives a sense of identity, who one is, and where one belongs, so culture marks the identity of and within a group.

E. B. Tylor, the founder of cultural anthropology, defines culture in his book *Primitive Culture* as: “. . . that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by a man as a member of society” (1). According to Tylor,

culture is spiritual, artistic, technological, and moral development in a man's life. The *Cambridge English Dictionary* states that culture is 'the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time.' Thus, Culture is the traditions, beliefs, and values of a community or society belonging to an ethnic group or nation; it is the peculiar practices within a subculture or a counterculture. A culture forms from a union of various other cultures. Cultural identity is being a part of a particular culture. Everyone belongs to a culture when they share the beliefs, customs, and values of the culture and own its language, religion, ethnicity, nationality, and gender. Cultural identity helps people identify with others with the same historical traditions and beliefs. The various aspects of cultural identity include national identity, ethnicity, gender identity, and religious identity. Culture contributes to shaping the identity of a character. Identity makes one know who people are, how they relate to others, and where and why they live in a specific place. Identity defines us, our self, our social life, and how others perceive us. Erik Erikson, a follower of the Freudian school of thought, stated that Identity formation is an integral part of one's life. Erikson believed that identity is dynamic and an ongoing process throughout life; it keeps changing as one faces new situations and circumstances in everyday life. Identity is tied to a person's sense of belonging. His identification with the characteristics of a group determines why and how he belongs to the group or particular class. Edwidge Danticat and her characters belong to Haiti, and all belong to Haitian culture. Their sufferings in their land, their migration to other lands, and the

effect of this migration on their self, national identity, and cultural identity are the central themes of Danticat's work.

The present research explores the questions of Identity: What is culture? What is identity? What is cultural identity? Why is the search for cultural identity? How does the identity change after migration or displacement? What are the challenges faced after displacement/dislocation? Which is the native land? Where do they belong? All these questions are part of this research, which tries to find answers to all of them, considering the characters in the works of Edwidge Danticat. A question of multiple identities also arises here, whether one is Haitian, American, or Haitian-American. When one looks into diversity, the diaspora writers universalise the situation. In his work *The Location of Culture* in 1994, Homi Bhabha writes that culture acts as a representation and heals, "Culture reaches out to create a symbolic textuality, to give the alienating every day an aura of selfhood, a promise of pleasure." (172).

The evolution of cultural identity through various stages and its various historical and political developments forms a significant part of this study. The historical, political, and social situation in Haiti will provide the theoretical underpinnings of this study. Haiti was the first black Caribbean country to gain independence in 1804. Haiti was an independent country, but to get independence, it came under an enormous debt to be paid to France. Many presidents ruled Haiti, but no one could lead it to development because of the impending debt. It was a poor country as it came under the cruel rule of Papa Doc and Baby Doc Duvalier. The period saw violence against people,

exploitation, corruption, and economic stagnation that ended in 1986. Haiti has been looking for a democratic establishment since then but never succeeded. Historically poor and economically unstable, people have a low standard of living, almost no employment, and a meagre income. The Haitian Revolution, the Haitian struggle for independence, and the country's struggle to become a democracy and stand up financially serve as a backdrop for the study of the characters of Edwidge Danticat in the search for Cultural Identity.

Cultural identities are not static. They are constantly changing. Life is full of new paths and turns; every turn is a new point of change. These changes help identity development, taking new forms and shaping every turn. Stuart Hall, a Jamaican cultural theorist, describes this change in the identity of individual and cultural identity in his essay, "Who needs an 'Identity'?" he writes that identities are formed according to different positions one is at during different phases in one's life, these are the superficial masks over one ordinary self, which is the root, the cultural identity one belongs to. In the *Questions of Cultural Identity*, Stuart Hall describes this concept of identity as:

The concept of identity deployed here is not essentialist but a strategic and positional one. Directly contrary to what appears to be its settled semantic career, this concept of identity does not signal that stable core of the self, unfolding from beginning to end through all the vicissitudes of history without change; the bit of the self which always remains already 'the same,' identical to itself across time. Nor-if we translate this essentialising conception to the stage of cultural identity, is it that

‘collective or true self hiding inside the many other, more superficial, or artificially imposed ‘selves’ which a people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common and which can stabilise, fix, or guarantee an unchanging ‘oneness’ or cultural belongingness underlying all the other superficial differences. It accepts that identities are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions. They are subject to a radical historicization and are constantly in the process of change and transformation. (4)

The purpose of this study is to critically analyse the characters in the select works of Edwidge Danticat and put them under the broader scope of the search for cultural identity by studying their migration, displacement, social marginalisation, assimilation, and integration in the host culture, taking into consideration different cultural theorists mainly Stuart Hall, other cultural theorists whose works will be studied are Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, Salman Rushdie, etc. In his two definitions, Stuart Hall states that cultural identities are fixed to roots and second, cultural identities are dynamic; they change throughout a person’s life.

Tracing back the historical roots of cultural identity, the study first looks at the origin of identity and culture. The term identity was introduced and popularised by the American psychologist Erik H. Erikson in the 1950s and 1960s, who defined it as the self-understanding of a person or an individual. This suggests that identity politics existed before the Second World

War, but people were not interested in questions of identity. The expression gained popularity as a common usage by minority groups in the country, individuals who needed to assert an identity or anyone who thought his identity had been lost. The term identity came to be used in Social Sciences and Humanities after the Second World War. The concepts of national identity were part of research in the early 19th century. However, after the Second World War, sociologists based their research on class identity and political consciousness, and the concept of ethnic identity was also under study. According to Erikson, a person's identity is how a person understands the similarity of his behaviour and personality. Erikson points out that a person's identity should match his self-definition of himself and the definition of how people see him. If these definitions do not match, there is a distorted image of the person's identity. This study of identity dates back to the Second World War when the identity of non-Western cultures was studied, compared to the dominant foreign culture or the Western Culture. Western culture's superiority in humanities, social sciences, and identity studies continued until the 1960s and 1970s; this comparison was not related to a particular group or culture but to society and culture. The theorists belonging to Imperialism and Colonialism were critical of Western-centred thinking. Many theorists like Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, and Homi K. Bhabha wrote about the East, the Other, the Subaltern, and the Orient. This gave rise to the study of ethnicity, nationality, and identity of minority groups.

Edward Said writes in his book *Orientalism* that the world was divided into the civilised and the uncivilised by the Europeans. The civilised they

called the Occident, the West and the uncivilised was the Orient, the East. Thus, the Orient was the other than the Occident, who was culturally superior to the Orient, and this justified Colonialism as the Orient had to be taught to be civilised. In his other work, *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said writes that powerful countries like America, Britain and France enjoy their power today due to colonialism. Power relations are essential for building an identity, as the one in power is superior to the other without power. This leads the other to search for identity as he considers himself a slave or refugee, as portrayed by the powerful. Power relations led to the development of identities as white/black, master/slave, and orient/occident. He writes that Western critics have powered the domination of the West over the East. Orientalism is a resistance to this Western domination.

Homi K. Bhabha, a well-known Indian English critic, is against the binary oppositions of West and Non-West. Postcolonial cultures are 'hybrids' formed due to colonisers and their people. Instead, he sees post-colonial cultures as 'hybrids' identified by their people and the colonial power. In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha describes the theory of cultural hybridity; he writes that hybridity results from cultural collisions and interchanges. Colonisers created anglicised subjects, repressing disavowed traits as a mutation or hybrid (111). Bhabha writes that all cultural activities operate in a space he calls the "Third Space of Enunciation" (37). Cultural identity exists in an ambivalent and equivocal space. When one recognises this ambivalent space, one will accept cultural diversity and favour hybridity, which accepts cultural differences: "It is significant that the productive capacities of this

Third Space have a colonial or post-colonial provenance. For a willingness to descend into that alien territory . . . may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity" (38). Bhabha says new identities are formed by different hybrids in society who interact with each other socially and culturally, and they belong to different ethnicities. Bhabha insists that the identity of a person is not only their ethnic traits. It is defined by their social experiences and the experiences and cultures of everyone they come into contact with.

Frantz Fanon, a West Indian psychoanalyst and social philosopher, explores the interrelation of politics and culture to colonialism. Fanon's writing on culture in *The Wretched of the Earth* has earned much contemporary post-colonial criticism on the role of national culture in liberation struggles and decolonisation. Colonialism, as said by Fanon, makes the colonised subject physically weak and takes away his pre-colonial cultural heritage. According to Fanon, colonised intellectuals cannot come to terms with the oppression of modern history and so lose themselves to return to a time that is furthest from colonialism. They seek to return to pre-colonial times and culture due to colonial powers' distortion and disfiguration of indigenous culture, the true national culture. Fanon states that it is the culture of developing nations to fight for liberation. Fanon also says that pre-colonial culture is rich and valuable, but it needs modification to develop the nation and its culture. A nation can develop a new culture when its intellectuals are empowered.

In the last two decades, research has been conducted on the concepts of identity like personal identity, social identity, national identity, sexual identity, ethnic identity, cultural identity, religious identity, etc. Identity theorists were now using these concepts as Constructions. According to the new thinking, a person's cultural and personal identities are not acquired by him because of birth or through genes. However, these are constructed in this world and form according to a person's historical, social, and cultural context. These identities are dynamic and change along with the vicissitudes in a person's life.

The French post-structuralists expanded this view and brought sexual identity and national identity under the constructionist point of view. Today, Constructionism is a widely accepted way of thinking about identity. Marx and his successors believed that these concepts of ethnicity and nationality would gradually vanish as modernisation and globalisation took root. However, after the Second World War, the terms nation, national character, and nationality were gaining popularity, especially in the 'Third World', where ethnic and national movements were rising because of irrational colonial policies. Due to the rise in the national movement, freedom, secularity, and democracy were the day's words. The concept of nation-states gained popularity because of colonialism. After independence, the countries (former colonies) had multiple ethnic and national groups; these groups or tribes were in conflict with each other and the nation. They demanded their state, establishment, and identity. The groups that demanded a nation-state shared the same nationality and national identity. The ethnic and national groups that shared the same beliefs

and values belonged to the same cultural heritage, resulting in the popularity of cultural identity.

In their article “Beyond Identity,” Roger Brubaker and Frederick Cooper write about the popularity of identity and cultural identity in the recent decades in the United States. According to them, people’s identities are shaped historically, socially, and culturally. On the other hand, Thomas Hyland Eriksen, a Norwegian social anthropologist, suggests that concepts like ethnicity, ethnic group, and ethnic conflict all belong to the same family with nationality and cultural identity. Cultural identity is a broad term that includes ethnic and national identity.

Cultural identities and social identities are part and parcel of each other. Identity is never fixed. A person can have multiple identities; he not only belongs to a religion but also lives in a society, follows certain traditions, belongs to a nation, and has a national, social, religious, and cultural identity. All these together construct a person’s identity and identification in society. In *Questions of Cultural Identity*, Stuart Hall writes, “Identification is, then, a process of articulation, a suturing, an over-determination, not a subsumption. There is always ‘too much’ or ‘too little’- an over-determination or a lack, but never a proper fit, a totality. Like all signifying practices, it is subject to the ‘play’ of difference. It obeys the logic of more-than-one” (3). Identity is a dynamic process and always in the process of change and formation. Dorothy Holland et al., in the book *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds*, state that Identity formation is a continuous process that involves both internal and external factors, with the majority of identities remaining unfinished. They

study two different individuals, Roger and Tika, who in their lives suffer and are engaged in a process of formation of identity in different atmospheres with different backgrounds and conclude that:

We picture Roger, Tika, ourselves, and other individuals and groups as always engaged in forming identities, in producing objectifications of self-understandings that may guide subsequent behavior. This vision emphasizes that identities are improvised-in the flow of activity within specific social situations-from the cultural resources at hand. (4)

Different elements of society play an essential role in an individual's identity formation. As Stuart Hall asserts, "Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a 'production,' which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation" ("Cultural" 222). As several factors determine an individual's identity, they also distinguish him from others, and similarly, these factors distinguish different cultures.

Culture is the way of life of a group of people, their behaviour, beliefs, values, and symbols. These behaviours and beliefs are passed from one generation to another through communication and literature. People and groups define themselves through culture, abide by society's shared values, and contribute to society. Thus, culture includes many societal aspects such as language, customs, values, norms, rules, tools, and technologies. Being cultured means being well-educated, having knowledge of fine arts and music, being stylish, and being well-mannered. Culture differentiates one group or

society from the other. Culture and society differ as culture is the traditions and beliefs of people, while society is where these beliefs are followed and shared. Both society and culture exist together. Culture is our understanding as individuals and as members of society; it includes religion, rituals, language, habits and even food. According to Stuart Hall:

Primarily, culture is concerned with the production and the exchange of meanings - the 'giving and taking of meaning'- between the members of a society or group. To say that two people belong to the same culture is to say that they interpret the world in roughly the same ways and can express themselves, their thoughts and feelings about the world, in ways participants interpreting meaningfully what is happening around them, and 'making sense' of the world, in broadly similar ways.

(Representations 2)

He further elaborates that in culture, there is a great diversity of meanings and many ways of interpreting them; these meanings organise and materialise our conduct and social practices. Culture binds people together to the group they belong to and defines them. Culture acts as a base for social and personal identity. When people answer the question of who they are or where they belong? their cultural belonging provides the answer.

The origin and development of the study of culture date back to the 1950s in *The Uses of Literacy* by Richard Hoggart and *Culture and Society* by Raymond Williams. Raymond Williams' works paved the way for studying culture and cultural geography. His works are essential to understanding the history of cultural studies. His work, *Culture and Society*, argues that culture

developed due to the Industrial Revolution and led to social and political changes. These changes led to societal transformations, not only in everyday life but also in the individual psyche. Culture is not only the culture of the rich but a culture that lives in everyday life and experience. He writes about two types of culture: the middle-class culture and the working-class culture. Another of his works, *The Long Revolution*, analyses culture further as a way of life. The revolution is brought about by: “. . . the progress and interaction of democracy and industry, and by the extension of communications” (12). The analysis concerns how this affects all aspects of everyday life. Williams describes three development levels of culture: the lived culture, the recorded culture, and the one connecting lived and recorded; the selective tradition. In his essay, “Cultural Studies and The Centre: Some Problems and Problematics,” Stuart Hall describes *The Uses of Literacy* by Richard Hoggart as one of the founding works of cultural studies. It is about the working-class life in which Hoggart grew up and it is a critique of the post-war ‘commercial culture’ that was beginning to take root along with the working-class culture. In *The Uses of Literacy*, Hoggart explains how the daily marginalised workers are excluded from culture.

Another important work on culture is *Culture and Anarchy* by Matthew Arnold, in which he writes about the difference between culture and anarchy. Arnold says that culture is as intrinsic as the power of God. On the other hand, anarchy means the society or group of people who reject a hierarchy or absence of governing authority. Arnold further wrote that culture does not value classes; it treats all men equally. He recommends culture as a great help to

come out of our difficulties. He writes that Culture is a way of leading people to think clearly about society's problems, which makes them aware of the different beliefs and habits of other people that they respect so that society can progress. He says:

. . . culture as the great help out of our present difficulties; culture being a pursuit of the total perfection by means of getting to know, on all matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world, and, through this knowledge, turning a stream of fresh and free thought upon our stock notions and habits, which we now follow staunchly but mechanically, vainly imagining that there is a virtue in following them staunchly which makes up for the mischief of following them mechanically. (5)

When talking of culture and cultural identity, Diaspora studies form an important place as it is where the search for identity begins. When one labels people who migrate or are forcefully made to migrate as the other, the refugee, the subaltern, or the Black, the person's identity seems lost. Does he belong to the place he left or the place he is in? Is this his new place, his new identity? Will he be accepted, or does he have to be the other and live life in seclusion? All these questions and many more concern Diasporic studies and are indirectly linked to our study in the search for cultural identity. It is because of non-acceptance, a fear of non-recognition, that one searches for an identity, a definition for oneself. These diasporic writings primarily focus on the homeland, dislocation, displacement, loss, alienation, cultural identity, and ethnicity.

Displacement is one such theme. The immigrants are aware of the sense of displacement. They face problems like longing for a home, homelessness, fear of getting lost in the new world, exile, alienation, and unbelongingness. They are forced to accept the cultural displacement, but the state of migrants remains problematic, as they cannot delete the memory of their native land from their minds. Their acceptance and identity in the new land is their sole motive. After living in the new land for several years, the feeling of belongingness grows; nevertheless, the fear of acceptance remains. To overcome this fear, the immigrant accepts the new culture and tries to enlarge his boundaries by accepting and assimilating it into his culture, creating a new identity. Every aspect of his life changes his looks, language, food, and behaviour. He is on the lookout for an identity. He lives with a distorted image of himself and a dual personality, referred to as a fractured identity in cross-cultural studies. This distorted identity also finds solace in what Homi K. Bhabha terms Hybridity, which is the intermixing of two classes, or as Bhabha writes, the contamination of the dominant culture by the native self.

In Stuart Hall's terms, hybridity is 'becoming' to 'being.' The first generation of immigrants lets the host culture exploit their cultural lives, whereas the second generation is less caring than the first. It is more prone to accept the culture of the host country. Both generations interact in the hybrid space of diaspora, which is 'becoming' in Hall's terms. Both 'being' and 'becoming' contribute to the formation of their cultural identities. They constantly negotiate and interact with the host and native cultures, accepting

hybridity. Stuart Hall further writes about cultural identity as everchanging; he says:

. . . cultural identity is not a fixed essence at all, lying unchanged outside history and culture. . . . It is not a fixed origin to which we can make some final and absolute return. Of course, it is not a mere phantasm either. It is something- not a mere trick of the imagination. It has its histories – histories have their real, material and symbolic effects. The past continues to speak to us. . . . It is always constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth. Cultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made within the discourses of history and culture. Not an essence but a positioning. (“Cultural” 226)

He defines cultural identity in two terms, first as one shared culture having a self, artificially imposed by multiple selves, which people with shared culture have in common. The theory of Negritude by Aime Cesaire and Leopold Sedar Senghor also shared a similar concept: Blacks shared a common culture and demanded Black Identity. It is this identity that the cinema and media try to recreate in the form of representation. Cultural identity is a matter of “becoming” and “being” (“Cultural” 225) in the second meaning. It belongs to both the past and the future. Identities are the labels we assign to the numerous ways we position ourselves and place ourselves within the tales of the past, writes Stuart Hall (“Cultural” 223). According to Hall, immigrants’ identities are shaped by their culture. He links culture with identity because, in his view, culture always shapes immigrants’ identities.

Both the past and the future are involved. The problems of space, time, culture, and history are not present. Both ‘what we truly are’ and ‘what we are becoming’ are important topics. Cultural identities always have a history; they originate from a place with a past. They undergo a process of shifting and metamorphosis, nevertheless. They are no longer fixed, as they once were, but rather contend with a never-ending game of power, culture, and history (“Cultural” 225). It is not just about looking for or finding something from the past or something that has been lost to preserve immigrants’ sense of identity and give them a place in history. Immigrants are always seen as ‘others’ in a foreign land. Identities are always changing as they are universal. The migrants cannot eliminate their existing identities and face difficulties adopting new ones. Identities are not the same for everyone, so they can shift or change themselves at any time. Stuart Hall describes the formation of identity as an ever-shifting or ever-changing process. The media represents the dominant culture and reproduces it. This way, it deconstructs the meaning and images which may intersect with the representation of the dominant culture.

Hall lists the three presences- Presence Africaine, Presence Europeenne, and Presence Americaine, in relation to which Caribbean identities have been repositioned. Displaced African identities have their roots in Presence Africaine. Africa as we know it no longer exists. Hall requests that the Caribbeans restore Africa and all of its pristine values. Since exclusion, imposition, and expropriation are the themes of Presence Europeenne, displaced African authors saw power as entirely external. Presence Americaine continues to have its silence and suppressions. According to Hall, the Diaspora

is constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, and the Caribbean is the mix of colours, pigmentation, and blends of tastes of the diaspora. According to Hall, modern black cinema reflects and recognises their histories, thereby giving their cultural identities an identification.

Many sociologists, anthropologists, cultural researchers, and critics have written about identity, but cultural identity needed more of a place and description in their works. An anthropologist, James Clifford, describes that cultural identity has come to the forefront from anthropology. The anthropologists believe that culture and identity are required to identify ethnic groups biologically and culturally. Clifford says that self-identity is blurred and strained by culture. According to M.W. Lustig, an intercultural researcher, in his work *Intercultural Competence: Interpersonal Communication Across Cultures*, writes that cultural identities are important for a person to know and understand himself as they “are central, dynamic and multifaceted components of one’s self-concept” (133). He says cultural identities are dynamic and adapt to changes in the social atmosphere and a person’s identity changes through life experiences. Boski et al., in their essay “Cultural Identity, Existential Anxiety, and Traditionalism,” describe cultural identity as a person’s shared lifestyle, important symbols, and guiding ideals, even if they don’t always fall into recognised groups (457). A significant addition to the study of cultural identity by Lawrence Grossberg is his book *We Gotta Get Out of This Place: Popular Conservatism and Postmodern Culture*. In this work, he investigates how popular culture and the media shape identity formation, particularly in light of societal and political shifts: “. . . what once was thought of as an

‘identity crisis’ has become an advertising slogan: ‘Is there a real me or am I just what you see?’ Or more accurately, the question Who am I? seems to have become either Who am I to judge? or Where am I? as if one can no longer invest in any stable identity” (215). Through highlighting the influence of media, power dynamics, and common practices on how people define themselves in larger cultural contexts, Grossberg’s work highlights the intricate nature of cultural identity. According to these writers, cultural identity was an ignored theme, whereas social identity was mostly worked on.

This thesis deals with the search for cultural identity in the select works of Edwidge Danticat. Edwidge Danticat describes the turmoil faced by a migrant whether he moves to or from a country. Her works celebrate Haiti and Haitian belonging. She loves the country where she was born and always wants to be associated with it. She is a Haitian American author whose works focus on the lives of Haitians and their relationships. She also addresses the issues of power, injustice, and poverty suffered by the Haitians. Danticat’s works are based on Haiti, its culture, and its traditions. She writes about the Haitian people, their food, myths, radio, carnivals, history, and tourist places. Her entire oeuvre is full of Haitian life. She lives in Miami, but her heart is in Haiti. In an interview with Tyler Cowen, she imbibes Haiti’s spirit. “I often say, and my parents used to say as well, that I left Haiti, but Haiti did not leave me. Twelve is, I think, young enough to transition somewhat easily, but also to have formed so many memories” (“Edwidge Danticat”)

The select works of Edwidge Danticat that will be studied to achieve the objectives of the study are *Behind the Mountains* (2002), *Anacaona*:

Golden Flower; Haiti, 1490 (2005), *Untwine: A Novel* (2015), *The Art of Death: Writing the Final Story* (2017) and *Everything Inside* (2019). These works of Danticat are all full of descriptions of life in Haiti and its people. The characters of the works are sketched as though they were true pictures of Haitian culture, and when they migrate to a foreign land, they are deprived of their country, culture, traditions, food, language, and self. The character's search for their self-identity, Haitian identity, and Black identity is a part of this research as all these are a subset of cultural identity.

Edwidge Danticat is a celebrated writer, a great activist, and a literary critic writing against racism, sexual harassment, military interventions, anti-immigrant policies, and police brutalities. Her literary oeuvre comprises multiple genres like short stories, memoirs, novels, travelogues, narratives, adult fiction, and non-fiction. Edwidge Danticat is an award-winning author. She is also one of the well-known authors of American literature's most under-represented cultures (Haitian diaspora), using a passionate and poetic style. She is one of the essential American-Haitian writers today, writing in English rather than Creole or French. Edwidge Danticat was born on 19 January 1969 in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Her parents immigrated to the United States to support their family and provide a promising future for their children. She was 12 years old when she joined her parents in Brooklyn in 1981, before which she lived with her aunt in Belair. As an immigrant, Danticat finds her surroundings uncomfortable; she finds herself a misfit here and turns to literature for solace. A passage in Edwidge Danticat's "New York Was Our City on the Hill" (an

autobiographical essay written in 2004 for the *New York Times*) epitomises the story and the talent of this young writer:

If you are an immigrant in New York, there are some things you inevitably share. For one, if you're a new immigrant, you probably left behind someone you love in the country of your birth. In my case, I was the person left in Haiti when my mother and father escaped the brutal regimes of Francois and Jean-Claude Duvalier in the early 1970s and fled the extreme poverty caused by the Duvalier's mismanagement and excess. ("New York")

Edwidge Danticat studied at Clara Barton High School in Brooklyn, New York. After graduation from Barnard College, she wanted to become a nurse, but her love for writing won over, and she received a B.A. in French literature. She received an MFA degree in creative writing from Brown University. The title of her thesis was *My turn in the fire-an abridged novel*. Danticat taught creative writing at New York University and the University of Miami. She also worked with filmmakers like Patricia Benoit and Jonathan Demme on documentaries about Haiti and Haitian art. Her short stories are part of over twenty-five periodicals and have become a part of several anthologies in other works.

During these early years, the Haitian storytelling culture influenced Danticat, a prevalent culture in Haiti. It was a part of their daily routine at home because much of the population was illiterate. Her first experience with racism in America was when she joined college. Two years after joining college, she published her first writing in English, "A Haitian-American

Christmas: Cremace and Creole Theatre,” in *New Youth Connections*. This paved the way for writing more about her immigration experiences. She writes in the first person in most of her works; her narrator is the I. Danticat, in her short story about her immigration experience, writes that she felt that her writing was unfinished, so she framed it into her first book, *Breath, Eyes, Memory*. *New Youth Connections* had made her bold and audacious. She lost her silence. Danticat was born and brought up during the reign of Frank Duvalier from 1957 to 1971 and Jean-Claude Duvalier from 1971 to 1986, and her works describe the violence and torture suffered by the Haitians during the reign. In addition, they portray the dictatorship and militarism of Duvalier and the aftereffects of Duvalier’s reign.

Granta, a literary journal based in the U.K., named Edwidge Danticat as one of the country’s best young authors, opinionated by several critics, librarians, and booksellers. Edwidge Danticat is a strong voice for Haitians abroad and at home. Danticat’s works of fiction and non-fiction include *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994), *Krik? Krak!* (1996), *The Farming of the Bones* (1998), *After the Dance* (2002), *Behind the Mountains* (2002), *The Dew Breaker* (2004), *Anacaona: Golden Flower, Haiti, 1490* (2005), *Brother I’m Dying* (2007), *Create Dangerously* (2010), *Eight Days: A Story of Haiti* (2010), *Tent Life: Haiti* (2011), *Claire of the Sea Light* (2013), *Mama’s Nightingale: A Story of Immigration and Separation* (2015), *Untwine: A Novel* (2015), *The Art of Death: Writing the Final Story* (2017), *My Mommy Medicine* (2019) and *Everything Inside* (2019). Danticat has also edited four collections of short stories, poems, and essays; *The Butterflies Way: Voices*

from the Haitian Diaspora in the United States (2003), *Haiti Noir* (2010), *Best American Essays* (2011), and *Haiti Noir 2* (2013). Danticat's creativity also touched heights in filmmaking. Danticat has also worked on two films, *Poto Mitan* and *Girl Rising*. *Girl Rising* achieved much fame because of its star cast. Danticat was to narrate the story of Wadley, a character from Haiti.

Danticat's works connect to Haitian literary movements, like Pan-Africanism, the Haitian Revolution, etc. They talk of the plight of the peasant class; her works are set such that they belong neither to Haiti nor to America. She talks of all the spheres of life, whether mothers, daughters, immigrants, or peasants. She creates a space for the voiceless; she writes of the people of Haiti forced to adapt to a new culture, and if they do not want to adapt, they are marginalised and treated as misfits in society. She talks of the Haitian revolution, Haitian politics, the Haitian economy, and Haitian traditions. In her conversations with Tyler, Edwidge Danticat discusses her affection for Haiti and her sentiments for fellow Haitians. She says that she left Haiti, but Haiti didn't leave her. She goes on to describe her experiences in Haiti. She studied both oral and written history of Haiti and took a lot of that knowledge to the U.S., which was enough to stir up her interest when she arrived in the U.S. to learn more about Haiti's history from the U.S. point of view. This was because of her love for Haiti and also her urge to know about Haitian history. Danticat says Haiti is a cultural land; still, much culture rests inside Haiti. Many talented writers, visual artists, and musicians live in Haiti, and it is this Haitian culture she wants to bring to the forefront through her story writing. She says that Haiti and its culture feed her stories.

Danticat also speaks of the connections of the Haitian Diaspora to Haitian culture in her interview with Tyler, “Edwidge Danticat on Haitian Art and Literature (Ep 108)””; she says that a lot happens in Haiti and every Haitian is anxious to know about Haiti their tie, the umbilical connection of being born there makes them inclined towards Haiti. The diaspora, according to Danticat, goes through many changes; there is integration, assimilation but the tie to Haiti is never snapped. The fact that Haiti is frequently in crisis and that Haitians in the diaspora frequently become the first responders after those in Haiti is what ties the link together. If there is a sickness, it sometimes affects not just our families but also the greater community. Integration exists, but we also have a diaspora that predates most individuals by several years, and despite this, ties to Haiti have been forged over the decades. (“Edwidge Danticat”)

National identity, mother-daughter relationships, and diasporic politics are prominent themes in Edwidge Danticat’s work. . Danticat’s works can be categorized into five broad types: fiction (novels and short story collections), non-fiction, children and youth, anthologies, and films. Her fictional works, *Breath Eyes Memory*, *The Dew Breaker* and *The Farming of the Bones*, describe the trauma and violence faced by the Haitians in the backdrop of Duvalier’s rule and the Parsley Massacre. Her works are a vivid picture of the inhumanity and oppression suffered by the Haitians during the Duvalier times and, to escape this, their migration or refuge in other countries. These works differ from her later works which though share the theme of violence and suffering but in a lighter sense deal with the miseries of the migrants in host

lands. *The Claire of the Sea Light*, *Behind the Mountains*, *Untwine*, and *Create Dangerously* all portray Haiti as scarred by violence, corruption, class disparities, and social taboos. Her non-fiction works include the memoirs- *Brother I'm Dying* and *The Art of Death*, which are her real-life stories. The short story collections- *Krik! Krak?* and *Everything Inside* are stories about the displacement and assimilation of the Haitians in other lands. The anthologies and films that she edited and wrote are also about Haitian discrimination, violence, and turbulence due to the political and economic upheavals in the lives of Haitians. Haitian culture and Haiti are inseparable from the entire oeuvre of Edwidge Danticat.

In *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, Danticat examines the relationship between women and Haiti. She writes about the violence that afflicted black women and the search for a diasporic identity by the protagonist, Sophie. Danticat's *Breath, Eyes, Memory* is a first-person narrative by Sophie Caco, a Haitian woman who grew up in the United States and later returned to her home country. The book tells the story of her experiences with violence, trauma, and abuse, focusing on her body as a medium for pain. Sophie's mother's rape and the lack of accurate records in Haiti's civil registration system contribute to her trauma and struggle to express herself fully. The novel explores historical silence and Western culture's marginalization of peripheral voices. Sophie's journey to acceptance is challenging, but she acknowledges her hybrid self by speaking Kreyol in the United States and resisting the erasure of her traditions and past. The novel explores the challenges faced by Haitian women in the United States and the struggle to maintain their identity.

Throughout the novel, Sophie Caco experiences various problematic events, such as vaginal testing, which is a Haitian tradition carried throughout generations, which leaves her with post-traumatic stress disorder and a poor body image. She breaks the cycle of silence by breaking her hymen; it defies the old customary system, which is an abuse to the young women in Haitian society. Her mother perceives it as a betrayal. Sophie's ambivalence about her body and her desire to escape her husband's pressure to have intercourse is key to breaking the cycle of silence. Sophie's acceptance of Haitian-American values helps her denounce testing. The novel is a tool for addressing the silence and trauma faced by Haitian women to achieve freedom and develop a self-identity. *The Farming of the Bones* is the story of those who survived the massacre of 1937 and is about the trauma suffered by the Haitians. Edwidge Danticat writes about the torture and suffering of the people of Haiti. Her works also describe Haiti's political, social, and economic life. In *Behind the Mountains*, Edwidge Danticat writes about the different relations migrants build with America. Just like *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, *Behind the Mountains* is about Haitian immigrants in the US. Celiane knows that her father cannot come back as he has a migration issue; this makes her think, "Was America a prison that once you entered you were never allowed to leave?" (*Breath* 77). *Behind the Mountains* describes the progress of the child protagonist as the child migrates to the host country. This is how Danticat's novels are different from other Caribbean texts. In Jamaica Kincaid's *Annie John* and Merle Collins's *Angel*, the protagonist's migration coincides with adulthood. Most of Danticat's characters that migrate are children who have yet to develop an

identity and take the sweet memories of Haitian culture with them. The children Danticat portrays are the forebearers of Haitian identity in the migrated land. Danticat's novels describe that migration is not only a change in place but also in language. Celiane describes the beauty of Haiti, the sun, the mountains, the rainbows, and her longing for her home and Haitian identity.

Haitians are a minority, marginalised due to skin colour, language (Creole), and because they are immigrants. To revive Haitian culture, Haitian youth have started wearing their traditional dress. They have opened new Haitian restaurants to promote Haitian food and speak Creole, the Haitian language. Many Haitian children migrate to the U.S. to join their parents after living a part of their childhood in Haiti; their meanings of family change, as they reach the U.S. Their acceptance of the American culture and cultural assimilation, complicates their being, leading them to search for whether they are Haitians or Americans. After five years, Danticat and her brother moved to New York to live with her parents. She meets two new brothers born in Brooklyn, making it "a tremendous task to be a family again" (*Behind* 163). In *Behind the Mountains* and *Untwine*, Danticat rewrites these themes. *Untwine* and *Behind the Mountains* both focus on restructuring a family unit. Giselle and Celiane are an example of Haitian-American youth who migrate to the US in adolescence, dodge between two very different nations and search for national and cultural identity.

Behind the Mountains is the journey of a 13-year-old Haitian girl named Celiane Esperance, who immigrates to the US for familial bonding. The

novel is narrated from the first-person perspective of the protagonist, Celiane, who records her life events in a journal from October 18, 2000, to January 1, 2001. Celiane, her mother, and her brother live in a rural place named Beau-Jour on the crest of the mountains in Haiti. Celiane's assimilation and integration is seen when she moves to Port-au-Prince and New York. Before Celiane immigrates to New York, she and her mother, Manman, visit her father's sister, Tante Rose, in Port-au-Prince. Celiane narrates her experience as she enters a new environment: "I always feel like I am being pushed and shoved by crowds of people. Even when we are in a taxi with Tante Rose, there are always people surrounding the taxi" (*Behind* 25). The novel highlights Celiane's reluctance to adapt to a new setting, but as the novel progresses, she accepts the realities of Port-au-Prince and joins her father in New York as a voluntary immigrant for familial unity.

Celiane narrates her experiences in the host culture once she arrives in the United States. She observes people who walk past them keeping their heads low, closing their chests, and covering their entire bodies with thick material because of the cold climate; hence, she realizes her displacement from Haiti and her existence in a new land, she says, "It suddenly occurred to me that we looked like those people" (*Behind* 89).

Celiane notices the changes in the world as she compares people in her village who illuminate the nights with lamps and people who live in the city with giant lamps on street corners, but later, she accepts these host differences. Celiane is forced to acquire a new language, which she believes might modify her personality. Celiane finds herself lost on her way home, feeling lonely and

searching for her identity. Celiane feels too shy to approach other students in the school; she finds Immacula Cadet, a girl in her class, to be her neighbour, and Immacula helps her board a bus with her, which makes her happy and relieved. She maintains her equilibrium throughout the assimilation process; she preserves the ties of her native land while allowing for smooth coexistence in a host country. According to Gordon, “As social contact initiates interaction, assimilation is its final perfect product” (“The Nature of Assimilation” 62). Celiane’s unsuccessful attempts to socialize with other individuals in the host culture during her initial stage of assimilation imply that immigrant children struggle to engage with various social groups in their initial phases of assimilation. The novel *Behind the Mountains* affirms that despite the challenges, immigrant children are resilient because they conform to the societal norms of their host country and retain their ethnic identity. The characters in all the works of Edwidge Danticat face challenges and adjust to the host countries’ demands as they have no other option, as going back is not possible.

In *Brother, I’m Dying*, Danticat’s father uses the term “Pa pi mal” (185), a Haitian Creole phrase that means both ‘Not so good’ and ‘Not so awful,’ and which also relates to his situation as a Haitian exile living in between two different worlds. The same is the case in *The Art of Death* when Danticat’s mother is said to be “lot bod lo” (12) in Haitian Creole, which means on the other side of the water or almost dead. After death, her mother wants to be buried with all the Haitian rituals. Her mother does not want Danticat to turn into a zombie as she witnesses her silence on receiving the news of her

mother's cancer. She tells Danticat to relieve her sorrow by eating salt. According to Haitian folklore, those who unexpectedly get bad news should eat salt to prevent shock and the possibility of becoming a lost and wandering corpse. Her mother immediately served them coffee 'sprinkled with salt' when they arrived home. All her life, she searched for Haitian identity, longing to follow her culture, and now she wants to return to her roots with death. She wants to be recognised as a Haitian with a Haitian cultural identity, which was assimilated with the American identity as she lived in America.

Everything Inside is a recent work of fiction by Edwidge Danticat. It is based on the Haitian cultural tradition of storytelling and deals with the stories of migrants who lose their identity as they migrate to new lands. One of the stories, "Without Inspection," commences as a man falls 500 feet and dies. In 6 1/2 seconds, he remembers his life and everything he is leaving behind. Arnold is an immigrant to the U.S. without valid documents; he escapes his native land, Haiti, looking for a better life in the States. Luckily, he is rescued by Darline (another immigrant) from the beach, where he is washed up and survives the voyage to the U.S. Darline gives him shelter and helps him look for food and accommodation in this new country. Eventually, Arnold starts liking Darline and her son, Paris. He wants to be accepted and have a home with Darlene and Paris. Arnold is in search of a self-identity as well as an identity with Paris as his father. When he fell, he realised he was to be free and this freedom he had been waiting for till today, he could see and have anything he wanted. However, he cannot have the life he most wants; he must wait for what comes next: "And that was not to die" (*Everything* 142). The people in

these stories are Haitians, the Haitian diaspora who fled the poverty in Haiti because of political and climatic disasters. They live in communities such as Miami's Little Haiti. These first and second-generation immigrants all live through similar experiences and share the same difficulties while making a life and a livelihood in America. These immigrants accept the new homes and the homeland but are still disturbed to see the treatment met to them by the new homeland.

Edwidge Danticat relates to them in her interview with Steve Inskeep, saying that she can relate to the immigrants and that she, too, is a part of them. When her uncle died in immigration custody, she felt she could save him as she was an American, but she was wrong. Here, the immigrants are made to realise that whether they belong or not is not their decision; the authorities decide it. *Everything Inside*, Danticat says to Steve Inskeep, is her own story; it reflects her own life. The life of her father as he left his children and overstayed his tourist visa. The mother followed, and the two lived illegally in America. Her characters are his own people as she sees them, as she feels for them and as they are related to her. Danticat also describes the period in her life when she lived with her uncle and how the parents obtained their documents and sent for their children to join them in Brooklyn, New York, in 1981. Jenny Shank describes the various themes employed by Danticat and how she handles the lives of her characters in the stories in *Everything Inside* in *Star Tribune*. She writes that *Everything Inside* is a collection of eight lyrical stories about Haitian immigrants in America and their descendants. Danticat handled the limelight with grace and continued to develop her craft. Danticat's

main theme is love and the fragility and sorrow that come with it. Traumas disturb even everyday lives in these stories, which center on secrets, betrayal, and accidents, without ever becoming overly dramatic.

Edwidge Danticat, the author of more than 18 books, including six works of fiction, five works of non-fiction, seven young adult books, children's books, several essays and articles, is one of the era's most celebrated and award-winning authors. She was a finalist for the National Book Award in 1995 for her short story collection, *Krik? Krak!* She was awarded the Pushcart Prize in 1995 and the Grant Award for Best Young American Novelist in 1996. In 1999, Danticat received three prestigious awards for her fictional work, *The Farming of the Bones*, the American Book Award for excellence in American literature, the International Flaiano Prize for literature, and the Super Flaiano Prize recognising her achievements in the field of creative writing, cinema, theatre, radio, and television. In 2005, Danticat became a finalist for the PEN/Faulkner Award and received the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award for *The Dew Breaker*. The Dayton Literary Peace Prize was given to her in 2008 for her work *Brother I'm Dying*. She was nominated for the National Book Award for *Brother I'm Dying*. Danticat was awarded the National Books Critics Circle Award for her autobiography, *Brother I'm Dying*, in 2007. She also received the Mac Arthur Fellows Program Genius Grant in 2009. She was shortlisted for the Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction in 2014 for her novel *Claire of the Sea Light*. She won the Neustadt International Prize for Literature in 2017, a lifetime recognition award for her contribution to literature.

Some of Edwidge Danticat's contemporaries who, like Danticat, are searching for native identity are Jamaica Kincaid, Samuel Selvon, Caroline Mackenzie, Lesley-Ann Brown, Elena Molchanova, Krystal A. Sital, Naomi Jackson, Nicole Dennis Benn, Breanne Mc Ivor, etc. Most of them are immigrants to foreign lands and write about the traditional and cultural life of their native land and the ordinary people in the present country. These Caribbean writers depict the lands and seas in these foreign countries as Paradise in their works of art. Their work deals with migrant culture, the trauma of displacement, and the marginalisation the immigrants face in the host country. They write of natural disasters, hurricanes, and earthquakes that frequent their native lands and the fury and destruction caused by them. They write about the cruelties inflicted by the colonial rulers and the sufferings of the colonised and the coloniser. These writers write about their lands' poverty and immigration to a new land (exile). All these writers have accepted the foreign land as their new homeland and want an identity in the new place. The Caribbean label them as American-African, American-French, and French-African, but they want the identity of the land to which they belong. Edwidge Danticat also wants to be known as a Haitian writer who lives in America. Amidst her turmoil of finding an identity, the characters in her works also deal with the same identity crisis of belonging to their native land in search of their roots and cultural ancestors. Edwidge Danticat cherished both writing and reading. She developed a special fondness for African-American authors and was fond of Haitian literature. She was initially inspired towards literature by her grandparents and aunts and the stories they narrated, which were oral in

the form of beautifully structured folktales and the casual talks they had with one another. In her interview with Thomas Spear, she says:

My first ‘literary’ influences were actually oral: my grandmothers and aunts and the stories they told, both in the structural forms of folktales and in the informal conversations they had with each other. I was also influenced by some very wonderful Haitian writers such as Marie Chauvet, Jacques Roumain, J. J. Dominique, and Jacques Stephen Alexis [. . .]. The works of Paule Marshall, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, Amy Tan, Maryse Conde, and Jamaica Kincaid have also had a great impact on me. (*Conversations* 76)

Danticat’s translated works are available in French, Italian, Spanish, German, and many other languages. Danticat and her works form the subject matter of many scholarly critical articles and dissertations. Her works dominate the fields of Haitian studies, diaspora studies, Caribbean studies, post-colonial studies, feminist studies, and Global studies. Many interviewers and critics have also interviewed Edwidge Danticat; her views lend us some deep insight into her mind and her portrayal of different characters. A lot of articles, research papers, and dissertations are available as a critique of the works of Edwidge Danticat. The themes of trauma, violence, myths, zombies, mother-daughter relationship, migration, class, economic troubles, gender disparities, and family form a vital part of the study of the works of Edwidge Danticat. Several journals and magazines have reviewed Edwidge Danticat’s works. *The New York Times* remarks Edwidge Danticat as an ‘accomplished novelist and memoirist.’ *The Brooklyn Review*, *The Washington Post*, and *The*

New Yorker have published many short stories and essays and often review and analyse her works. Some critics provide a very extensive and comprehensive overview of the work of the Haitian-American writer Edwidge Danticat. The major full-length critical works include Martin Munro's *Edwidge Danticat: A Reader's Guide* in 2010, Maxine Lavon's Montgomery's *Conversations with Edwidge Danticat* in 2017, Nadege T. Clitandre's *Edwidge Danticat: The Haitian Diasporic Imaginary* in 2018 and *The Bloomsbury Handbook to Edwidge Danticat* in 2021, edited by Jana Evans Braziel, Nadege T. Clitandre. All these works mark the beginning of the scholarship in Edwidge Danticat's fiction and nonfiction writings, along with several critical essays, interviews, and articles. O. P. Adisa, in her interview, "Up Close and Personal: Edwidge Danticat on Haitian Identity and the Writer's Life," writes about Danticat's love for Haiti and its traditions. It lays bare the personal life of the author as well as her entire oeuvre. When asked about her characters, Danticat tells Adisa that her characters are true to life and not archetypes; she says that perhaps some novelists treat their characters as archetypes, but she doesn't view her characters in this way. She considers them to be common people, just like us, and she says if this was not true, then she might be writing myths and not stories (349).

In *A Reader's Guide*, Martin Munro addresses all of Danticat's writings from the first novel, *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, in 1994 to the personal memoir *Brother, I'm Dying* in 2007. J. Michael Dash, in the first section, writes about "Danticat and Her Haitian Precursors," the article reveals how the so-called Haitian literary fathers are failing the people of Haiti. Dash writes of them as

“grand narratives of collective action and utopian dreams (as) inadequate for the ‘tired ghosts’ of the present” (*Reader’s Guide* 31). Scholarly critics like Charles Forsdick, Evelyne Trouillot, Lyonel Trouillot, and Kiera Vaclavik have written on her nonfictional works, travel writings, and young adult fiction. The fourteen essays provide a thorough understanding of the life and work of Edwidge Danticat, whose life’s story is, as Munro describes, “that of modern Haiti” (*Reader’s Guide* 25), and her work, as stated by Danticat, “every word I write is to pay homage to that love (for Haiti)” (*Create* 182). In another article, “Desire for Certainty,” Katharine Capshaw Smith describes the post-earthquake situation in Haiti; homeless people and children are all distressed but have one thing intact: Haitian identity, family ties, and deep love for the country and its culture.

In the essay, “Novels of Transformation and Transplantation: The post-colonial Bildungsroman and Haitian American Youth in Danticat’s *Behind the Mountains* and *Breath, Eyes, Memory*,” Jo Collins describes the direct relationship between individual biography and the biography of nations. One changes, and the other does. In their joint work, Elizabeth Clifford and Maya Kalyanpur, “Immigrant Narratives: Power, Difference, and Representation in Young-Adult Novels with Immigrant Protagonists,” tell us about the immigrant portrayals young people are getting from books. They discuss two themes that influence the process of immigration; the first is the dynamics of power, which relates to the socioeconomic status differences between immigrants and natives. The second theme is the difference; it examines the transformational impact of immigration.

Maxine Lavon Montgomery's *Conversations with Edwidge Danticat* in 2017 sheds light on Edwidge Danticat's determination to reveal why the Haitians migrate and what they undergo in the host country. Danticat wants the world to know about Haitian culture and its traditions. These interviews portray Edwidge Danticat as a memoirist, fiction writer, essayist, anthologist, young adult book writer, children's book writer, editor, and cultural critic. This volume includes her interviews from the year 2000 to the year 2016; it includes her entire oeuvre from *Breath, Eyes, Memory* and a personal interview that tells us about her life and art.

Nadege T. Clitandre in *Edwidge Danticat: The Haitian Diasporic Imaginary*, 2018 explores the diasporic immigrants' experience and reaction, the history of their displacement, and their perseverance. The writer looks into the world through the eyes of diasporic immigrants. Clitandre studies these diasporic imaginations based on the theories of scholars like Michael Bakhtin, Roland Barthes, etc. The book also relates Danticat's work to echo, voicelessness, and silence. The third chapter focuses on *Breath, Eyes, Memory*; the echo paradigm is personalised through the mother-daughter relationship. Both protagonists resort to doubling as self-preservation in response to the trauma of testing. Another scholar Olivia Tracy in "'Rise Up through the Words': Postcolonial Haitian Uncoverings of *Anacaona*," investigates the modern significance of Anacaona, the last Taino leader, as represented in the works by three diaspora writers; the play *Anacaona* by Jean Metellus, the poem *Anacaona* by Danielle Legros Georges and the young adult novel

Anacaona, Golden Flower, Haiti 1490 by Edwidge Danticat. These writers describe Anacaona with the history of conquest and colonialism in Haiti.

Edwidge Danticat and some migrant women writers in: “‘By Way of Their Fingers’: Making Sense of Self and Home in Selected Short Stories by Edwidge Danticat, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie” study how women diasporic migrant writers redefine their identities and depict their problematic relationships with the imaginary homelands and the host country. The short stories of these writers are studied to describe how migrant women embrace loss, change and painful memories. It describes how using ten fingers gives them a survival by working, and writing helps them raise their voice to set an example for other women to follow. A research scholar Marlisha Marcellin, in her thesis *Dispelling Victimization: Cultural Resilience despite Marginalization of the Haitian Diasporic Community*, writes about the interviews and memoirs of Haitians and analyses what the Haitian Diaspora community is doing to strengthen its roots and help the host country progress, so they can put off the with negative victimisation of Haitians as portrayed in Edwidge Danticat’s, *Create Dangerously* and *Brother I’m Dying*. Another scholar, Leyla Savsar, in her article “‘Mother Tells Me to Forget’: Nostalgic Re-presentations, Re-membering, and Re-telling the Child Migrant’s Identity and Agency in Children’s Literature,” presents the child protagonist’s journey from repression to self-knowledge in Fran Leeper Buss’s *Journey of the Sparrows* (1991), Ibtisam Barakat’s *Tasting the Sky: A Palestinian Childhood* (2007), Sandra Cisneros’s *The House on Mango Street* (1984), and Edwidge Danticat’s *Behind the Mountains* (2002). It provides an

insight into how young people tell their stories of migration and trauma to purge themselves.

Elizabeth Sprague, in her work, “Haitian Life, Traditions, and Culture in the Works of Edwidge Danticat.” writes about the fear of separation and loss as suffered by Danticat in *Brother I’m Dying*, about mother-daughter relation in *Breath, Eyes, Memory* and Storytelling culture in Haiti in *Krik! Krak?* Lauren Marlatt, in her thesis, “*I Felt All The Pangs Of Exile*”: *Trauma And The Fight For Human Rights In The Memoirs Of Nabokov, Soyinka, And Danticat*, writes about each author’s going through personal trauma because of their socioeconomic factors. Lauren also states that through their works, these migrant authors advocate establishing human rights in the host countries. Alicia E. Ellis, in “The Art of Death: Grief and Loss in Edwidge Danticat’s *Untwine*,” considers how grief is represented through art forms of music, painting and fine arts in *Untwine*. Giselle, the protagonist, uses the works of art and performs the five stages of grief as theorised by Kubler-Ross. This book offers accounts of how people experience dying and its anxieties. Paula Weinman, in “The Sound of Separation: The Stravinskian Resonances of Edwidge Danticat’s *Untwine*,” presents how Giselle the protagonist never grows out of her grief and loss. Danticat’s weaving of the theme of the Stravinskian symphony, *The Firebird*, into the novel, is thought by Giselle as one of the reasons for Isabelle’s loss and as the Firebird could be summoned so Isabelle could be and this grief thus could never depart.

In his thesis on Edwidge Danticat, Justine Browning writes about how Danticat, in her short stories collection *Krik? Krak!* describes the torture and

violence inflicted on the Haitians during Duvalier's reign. The effects of loss, poverty, genocide and displacement on the Haitians are also described by the author. Kerry Hasler Brooks, in his work, "Confront and Remake: Literary Reading and Institutional Racial Justice, or Learning to Reading with Alice Walker, Edwidge Danticat, and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie," condemns the racial injustice suffered by the Africans and Haitians alike in host countries. He describes the lives of three migrant writers who write about their migration and go through racial discrimination. Hence, they encourage literary reading to confront racial justice. In her interview with Edwidge Danticat, Megan Jeanette Myers talks about Edwidge Danticat's support to support the Border of Lights Mission to improve relations between Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and the Haitian diaspora. Anastasia M. Collins, in the work "Call and Response: Constructed Identity and Legible Experience in Danticat's Young Adult Novels," undergoes a study to determine how well the works of Edwidge Danticat are received and reviewed by scholars and people. The writer studies that several factors, like gender, culture, history, etc., are responsible for the readers' response.

Adding to this critical analysis, the year 2021 welcomed a book comprising various scholarly articles on Edwidge Danticat, *The Bloomsbury Handbook to Edwidge Danticat*, edited by Jana Evans Braziel, Nadege T. Clitandre. It is an extensive study of the fiction and non-fiction works of Edwidge Danticat. The writers offer a multidisciplinary study of the entire oeuvre of Edwidge Danticat, taking into account the different genres worked on by the author. Jana Evans Braziel, in her article, "Alleys, Cappillaries,

Thorns: The Violated Terre-Natale of Ville Rose,” describes Ville Rose, which is one of the geographical locations for Danticat’s works, and its significance in the works. Braziel says, “Ville Rose is not only the geographical heartbeat and cartographic compass of Danticat’s oeuvre; it is also the intellectual focus of this chapter, which asserts that Ville Rose is essential, even foundational, for understanding violence, particularly sexual, maternal, or infant violence, in Danticat’s oeuvre” (*Bloomsbury* 81). In an interview with Nadege T. Clitandre in chapter two, Edwidge Danticat, on the question of whether she is an insider or outsider (Haiti), says that she has wrapped herself into a variety of identities. She is from Haiti. She is black. She is a female. She is of Caribbean descent. She writes as a black woman from the Caribbean. She belongs to multiplicities. When she first started writing, authenticity used to be a concern. To relieve herself of the burden of feeling inauthentic while writing about Haiti in English, she would say that she is the least authentic writer ever. However, she asserted that she always saw a kind of welcomed multiplicity in the inauthenticity (*Bloomsbury* 31). E. Walcott-Hackshaw, in the chapter “The Good Daughter: Danticat’s Migrating Memories,” writes about Danticat’s desire to confront, through her writing, her fears about death and dying in the handbook.

After studying all the scholars and critics above who write about Danticat and her works belonging to Haiti, most of the critics write about migration after colonialism and study the effects of migration on the lives of immigrants in foreign lands. Some critics also talk about the mother-daughter relationship, nationalism, and Haitian traditions in the selected novels of

Edwidge Danticat. However, the works under consideration have yet to be touched on from a cultural point of view. Cultural identity is not only the culture and traditions of the person. It is a broader area that covers; Haitian, self, racial, gender, black, ancestral, language, and food identity, and identities related to art, sculpture, architecture, film, etc., the cultural arena of a person. The work attempts to have a detailed examination of various components of cultural identity, focusing primarily on the Haitian diaspora in the select works of Edwidge Danticat. Edwidge Danticat migrated to America from Haiti when she was twelve years old. As such, she knows about Haitian culture, traditions, values, and beliefs. All her works are set in Haiti, her homeland, or in America, her present living place. Her writings combine knowledge about Haiti and her experiences as an immigrant. This thesis attempts to portray the duality of cultures of the two states through the characters of Edwidge Danticat, which will become less obscure for the upcoming generations.

Danticat's oeuvre spreads over a period when people from Haiti were fled the island in search of new opportunities and peace, and prosperity. Haiti was a free country but could never come out of its poverty. There were no prospects in Haiti as the ruler was cruel and violent. He was not concerned with the growth of Haiti; instead, he was trying to satisfy his urge for power and rule. The period in Edwidge Danticat's writing falls after the colonial era, so the theoretical analysis of the works is conducted from a colonial perspective of identity formation with stress on Cultural Identity that will also cover the issues of racism and social and Haitian identity. It was a period when people were fighting for their rights. As colonial rule had ended, people were

adjusting to the new free Haitian government. The new government did not prove to be of help to the people, and so they rebelled, fled the country, or immigrated to a new country, a foreign land. Society was awakening to the call of a few cultural studies writers like Homi K. Bhabha, Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, and Stuart Hall.

The present research aims to study Edwidge Danticat's select works in the light of varied elements and conceptual theories framing cultural identity, mainly Stuart Hall's concepts on cultural identity and issues forming cultural consciousness and experiences. The characters in her works search for an identity, a national identity, a cultural identity, a Black identity, and independence. She has tried to be loyal to her culture and nation and has attempted to portray the miseries suffered by people who want recognition in the form of their cultural existence in a foreign land. The characters in her works are not only Haitians struggling for Haitian cultural identity but also represent people of the world who move on to other lands and search for their cultural identity. Thus, the search for cultural identity becomes the subject of this study.

This study is divided into five chapters, followed by a conclusion. The present thesis is an attempt towards a detailed examination of subsects of cultural identity with a focus on the Haitian diaspora in the above-listed works. The action of the works revolves around the cultural identity of their protagonists. Edwidge Danticat's fiction and nonfiction works, including her young adult novels, her story collection, and a memoir, are part of this study. Danticat is a contemporary Haitian-American writer, but only a little research

is available on her works. This book-length study will give an insight into the search for the cultural identity of the characters of Edwidge Danticat, who are Haitians. Edwidge Danticat's characters' search for self, national, black, gender, and racial identity will be critically explored in the proceeding chapters.

Chapter 2

Migration and Displacement

Migration is the movement of people from their native place, either within the state or abroad. This movement can be to start a new job, look for better living conditions or negatively to escape oppression, political conflict, disaster or human rights violations. Migration brings about a change in the cultural construct of the migrants and the host community. Displacement is the forced migration of people who flee and leave their homes because of the effects of armed conflict, violence, human rights violations or natural disasters. Migration started with man's efforts to adapt. Natural calamities, disasters, weather changes, war and political strife, lead to the displacement of people. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (*UNHCR*), in an article in 2022, "Understanding Migration and Displacement," globally, 89.3 million people were displaced from their homes at the end of 2021 as a result of war, violence, fear of arrest, and human rights violations. This is the highest number since World War II and more than double the 42.7 million people still forcibly displaced ten years ago. The total number of people forcibly displaced now exceeds 100 million, up from 20.7 million in 2020 to 21.3 million at the end of 2021. This indicates that 1 in every 78 people on the planet has been forced to flee (*UNHCR*).

Migration, dispersion, discovery, eviction, banishment, diaspora, and escape are different forms of displacement. Displacement is the act of people being forced to leave their normal living place, as defined by the *Cambridge Dictionary*. Displacement is not only the movement of people from one place

to another, but it is also the uprootedness to a level that a person is deprived of his self, which is taken over by the people living in the new place. The separation of people from their native culture can occur physically (as refugees, immigrants, migrants, exiles, or expatriates) or theoretically (by implementing a foreign culture). She not only talks of physical dislocation but stresses cultural displacement as she says displacement results in the transformation or replacement of one's ancestral and birthplace culture.

Displacement changes a person's physical life and affects cultural and psychological life. We can categorise Displacement into two classes; the first category comprises the physically dislocated emigrants who dislocate voluntarily or because of social, political, and economic factors. The second category comprises those dislocated by colonialism, these migrants get displaced from their native country or within the native country.

The historical background of a country has a profound impact on its literature. Many people have migrated to other countries; some express this physical, emotional, and psychological change by writing. These writers used autobiographical elements, and the characters they created in their work portray the insights and trauma they suffered because of dislocation and assimilation. This phenomenon dates back to postcolonial times. Modern writers also portray displacement in their works. Colonised people forcibly left their motherland, their nation, their traditions, their culture and their languages. The colonised left their native lands because of unfavourable living conditions, tyrannical rule, violence, trauma, torture and exploitation. Modern man was displaced from his roots, culture, food, and language in search of new

life, a good standard of living and optimum business prospects. The colonised and the modern man are displaced culturally, traditionally and philosophically. They both suffer the different phases of displacement, namely dislocation, alienation and marginalisation.

All creatures face displacement in life at one point or another. The feeling of alienation, self-recognition, and self-sustenance engulfs the one displaced. According to Nasir Abbas Nayyar in the article “Displacement in Literature,” there must be some first place or some primary identity to endure the agonies of displacement. This first place as said by Nasir, is a Paradise for a person, and everyone wants to return to this Paradise (here it is the Homeland). A. Ajulu Okungu in her work on diaspora and displacement describes an emotional bonding with the place one lives and how one wants to belong to the place, take the place with him featured in his culture, food, and language. All living beings have a basic sense of identity; everybody can recognise friends and foes. One finds protection between friends and family, but one is indifferent and hostile to aliens.

Post-colonial writers also write about cultural displacement along with physical dislocation. When a person migrates to a new land, he has to abide by a new cultural and social life; otherwise, he will not be accepted. He is an alien in that society. His cultural identity staggers between the two places as he tries to adapt to the values of the new place. He finds his identity overtaken by the new life and struggles to find his new self. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, in their work *The Empire Writes Back*, write that post-colonial literature was concerned with this dislocation of self and culture resulting in

one's identity crisis; they point out the relationship between self and place. When one is displaced, his self, suffers the loss of the place he was associated with, and the self is fragmented. They write:

A major feature of post-colonial literatures is the concern with place and displacement. It is here that the special post-colonial crisis of identity comes into being; the concern with the development or recovery of an effective identifying relationship between self and place. . . . A valid and active sense of self may have been eroded by dislocation, resulting from migration, the experience of enslavement, transportation, or 'voluntary' removal for indentured labour. Or it may have been destroyed by cultural denigration, the conscious and unconscious oppression of the indigenous personality and culture by a supposedly superior racial or cultural model. (9)

People get displaced because of many social, economic or political reasons. They remember their homeland on the one hand and must align themselves in the new settlement. They cannot forget the people, culture, landscape, and language of the native place. Also, they need help to disassociate themselves from the new place, country, and language they chose or were forced to adopt. They must accept the new culture and traditions, remembering their own culture. Cultural theorist Homi K. Bhabha, in his article "The Postcolonial and the Postmodern", writes that culture is transnational and translational. It can cross boundaries, and concepts of culture are exchangeable in and across boundaries. We can always relate to all the cultures of the world. Bhabha says:

Culture as a strategy of survival is both transnational and translational. It is transnational because contemporary post-colonial discourses are rooted in specific histories of cultural displacement, whether they are the 'middle passage' of slavery and indenture, the 'voyage out' of the civilisation mission, the fraught accommodation of Third World migration to the West after the Second World War, or the traffic of economic and political refugees within and outside the Third World. Culture is translational because such spatial histories of displacement- now accompanied by the territorial ambitions of 'global' media technologies-make the question of how culture signifies, or what is signified by culture, a rather complex issue. (*Location* 172)

Displacement gives rise to a series of problems. When a person migrates, the issues of identity, acceptance, belonging, un-belonging, otherness, feelings of nationalism, home, and boundaries all affect a person physically and psychologically. Displacement is, therefore, a denial of comfort and disorientation. People lack access to emotional solace. Displacement results in the separation of families and children and the meeting of new siblings in the host country, which gives rise to emotional instability and fear of unacceptance. They might settle in a comfortable physical place, but they cannot experience the emotional sense of love and acceptance. Arjun Appadurai, an anthropologist, writes about the displacement of people and how it impacts them and the host country. Appadurai forms a scheme in which a variety of 'scapes' exist; they are ethnoscaples, mediascaples, technoscaples, financescaples and ideoscaples, and they are constantly at play with the

movement of people. Most importantly, the space shared by people who are a part of the shifting world is the ethnoscape; it is the landscape of people who make up the changing world in which we live: travellers, immigrants, exiles, guest workers, refugees and other migrating groups and individuals form a crucial part of the world and appear to have a great impact on international politics (*Modernity at Large* 33). As people move from one place to another, the capital shifts, and so do production and technology (technoscapes). Many software engineers migrate to the U.S., and labour migrates to Dubai. Money flows, it becomes difficult to study the global market as it needs to consider the investment and finance that shifted from one country to the other (financescapes). Despite many difficulties, the migrants and refugees try to adapt but to fulfil their needs, the country has to change its socio-political life and economical production, and in this process, the states frequently change their policies regarding refugee populations, thereby shattering their imaginative world.

Many writers have faced displacement from their homeland and have accepted or are accepting the new place and the culture of that place. Salman Rushdie, one such Indian-born, British-American writer, states that dislocation from the East to the West leads to multiple personalities in his case. It leads to the creation of an imaginative place that the migrant inhabits; he longs for the homeland and success and prosperity in the new land. Salman Rushdie's migration from India to England enabled him to create a hybrid identity as a creator. His experience of loss, his history of displacement, and his cultural dislocation gave him a duality of thought, and these helped him to be creative

in his writings. Rushdie as a writer, became a point of connection and intersection between the two cultures. According to Rushdie, when a writer writes from a new homeland, he writes about two places, two cultures and two identities. His geographical area of thought has grown. He has more ideas, thoughts and experiences of both the places, the native Homeland and the new alien land.

Rushdie says it is a moment to celebrate instead of a moment of loss and trauma. He writes in *Imaginary Homelands* that the writer belongs as much to the new homeland as to his native land. He says that the writers who have immigrated to England belong to the West. Their identity is both collective and fragmented. Sometimes, they feel caught between two cultures, and other times, like perched on a tightrope. Although the new situation may be ambiguous and unstable, but it is not infertile for a writer to occupy (15). Jhumpa Lahiri, Anita Desai, Stuart Hall, Jamaica Kincaid, Paul Gilroy, and Edwidge Danticat are some writers who have migrated from their native homelands. The characters in their works portray a fusion of the two worlds, one they have left behind and the other they live in. Their works have the flavour of the food they have left behind and a twist of their languages. They also portray their characters as displaced from their motherlands, their desire to return and to celebrate the traditions and culture of their native lands.

Another writer and critic about migration and identity is Stuart Hall, a Jamaican-British cultural theorist who moved to England to pursue study. As a kid, he wrestled with the questions of recognition and understanding of life as he witnessed racial hierarchy. Although he belonged to an upper-class

Jamaican family, he was darker than the rest family; his sister called him a coolie baby. In Oxford, he was a migrant, and here he realised and felt his connection with his countrymen and their suffering on being labelled as black or brown. Stuart Hall is considered the founding figures of the theory of cultural studies. He spent his adulthood around displaced migrants, the diaspora. As he considered himself one of them, he searched for new ways to make these people culturally at home by giving new definitions to the term's cultural identity and diaspora. In the article, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," Stuart Hall, states that all diaspora meets and collide in America, not in the old sense of settlement but in the 'New world' where all displacements settle and recollect the past by not going back physically but through metaphors as representation (230). The creation of these representations of the past through cinema lets the displaced recreate and relive their past in the present and construct points of identification called cultural identities (237). The diaspora accepts America's culture and remembers the native culture through representation in art, cinema and films. They do not return to their native lands but relive their cultural identities and identify with them through the actors in the cinema. Edwidge Danticat is a displaced Haitian writer whose work embodies her experiences during and after displacement. She beautifully drapes her stories around her cultural and ancestral homeland. Danticat expresses through her characters the pain and the suffering that the Haitians have gone through as they have come a long way of displacement from their native land. She gives voice to the voiceless Haitian peasants, the Haitian

youth, the Haitian women and children, describing their sorrows on losing their homeland.

Danticat's works are read extensively all over the world. Along with Haiti and its culture, her works celebrate Caribbean culture, Caribbean women writers, literature on gender violence and cultural identity. She believes her work gives the readers a look inside Haiti's cultural legacy. She writes to recover the essence of the lost cultural markers of Haiti. According to Edwidge Danticat, Cultural Identity is fluid, and whether one is a migrant or a citizen, his identity constantly changes throughout life. In her interview with Sandy Alexandre, Danticat says:

I think whether you are an immigrant or not, whether you spend your whole life in your country of origin or not, identity is fluid. It's something that changes with every single experience we have. Migration forces some striking experiences on you. It makes ordinary things new and striking to you. So as you adjust, perhaps you change a lot more-for better or for worse than you might have otherwise. ("An Interview" 162)

It becomes crucial at this point to know about the history of Haiti to understand displacement from Haiti. Why were people displaced? What reasons resulted in displacement? and What was the result of this displacement? Haiti has witnessed dictators like Trujillo, Papa Doc and Baby Doc Duvalier till 1986. After a lot of turmoil and unrest in 1986, Jean Bertrand Aristide came in 1990. However, because of his reformist approach, he was overthrown by the military in 1991. Amidst this chaos, many Haitians fled and

migrated to other countries. Danticat, who migrated to New York when she was twelve, witnessed Baby Doc Duvalier's cruelties and violence. She carried these memories, which then exchanged and intermingled with the memories of the new American culture and identity after displacement. The matter and political viewpoint of Danticat's writing are significantly influenced by her migration from and upbringing in Haiti. She resides in the United States of America and writes in a language that is not hers. She is an immigrant artist. Her narratives cannot be equated to the firsthand encounter of living under an authoritarian regime for most of her adult life (*Create* 13-15). She feels pride in imaginatively visiting Haiti and writing about its realities. Haitians have long been under the dominant rule and cruel leadership. They have been displaced and are migrating from Haiti to protect their pride and dignity. Haiti is not only economically suffering but also has a violent political history, the horror of which still prevails in Haiti. Patti M. Marxen, in his article, "The Map Within: Place, Displacement, and the Long Shadow of History in the Work of Edwidge Danticat," writes about Haitians still suffering the pangs of colonialism and the Haitian Revolution:

. . . while all post-colonial cultures share a sense of divided reality and, perhaps, disillusionment, the situation of Haiti is unique among nations in the Western world. Because slavery in Saint Domingue was so brutal, the revolution so unexpected, and recovery from its deleterious effects so slow and incomplete, the legacy of colonialism in Haiti remains particularly strong, even today. (142)

Danticat writes about the displacement of Haitians internally and their immigration to new places, namely America, France or other European countries. Various cultures engulf these migrants in the new place. Homelessness, belongingness and unbelongingness give rise to several emotions in their hearts. They are homesick, isolated, and do not want to leave their cultural heritage. They are facing a turmoil of choice between two cultures. Displacement creates a cultural rift between the two cultures and has an intensive impact on the migrants both physically and psychologically. The migrant faces many problems in the new country. The circumstances, as desired, are not always favourable. Though one's desire for money and development is fulfilled, one must succumb to the power and pressure of the new world, its culture and language. Survival means acceptance of the new and merging the two, socially, politically and economically. The two cultures merge at a boundary, and it is the place where the migrant stands between the home and the alien country. The cultural displacement is brought about by education, literature and administration. Danticat's characters are all Haitians displaced inside Haiti or migrated/dislocated to some new place outside Haiti, and they all try to get along in the new place, culture and atmosphere.

Edwidge Danticat's oeuvre revolves around the lives of displaced Haitians. The tyrannous rulers tormented Haitians, and they suffered many atrocities at the hands of these cruel rulers. They flee Haiti for a happy life with self-respect and dignity. Danticat's works narrate the violence and trauma suffered by these people and their search for a physical, cultural, and national identity. Edwidge Danticat's writings consist of Young Adult fiction. Young

Adult fiction is fiction for young teenagers, stories of migrant teens written by Danticat to make the readers, especially teens in Haiti and America, aware of the situations that arise due to migration and also the problems faced by the migrants, homelessness, homesickness, aloofness, alienation and their struggle to assimilate into the new culture by accepting it. Danticat's readership is not only for Haitian Americans but for non-Haitians as well. In an interview with Katharine Capshaw Smith titled, "Splintered Families, Enduring Connections: An Interview with Edwidge Danticat," Edwidge Danticat says, "I hope my books do that for readers, introduce them to a Haitian character that they might find surprisingly like themselves"(203). In *Behind the Mountains*, Edwidge Danticat writes about displacement and fractured family bonds. The exploitation, daily problems and oppression of the ordinary people in the daily life of Haitians are portrayed through the child protagonist, Celiane Esperance. Life in Haiti is simple and rugged. The people of Haiti are innocent and homely. Migration of a family member is a common phenomenon, and the people hope that one day, the migrant and the family will call them will unite. Still, the doubt of the unknown prevails; perhaps they will be forgotten and left alone. Celiane's father has to migrate to New York for more resources and hopes to call his family over one day. Celiane, who loves her father, feels displaced in her own house; she cannot share her feelings with anyone, so she takes her diary to be her best friend and confides her secrets in her diary. She says that as the diary will remain silent since it lacks a tongue and the ability to talk, she will disclose all the information to it. The pen will serve as its voice, and the writer will be the spokesperson, and she is confident that her secrets

will never be exposed. Through this diary, she tells the reader about the evolution of the name Haiti, the invention of the island by Columbus and the elections in which Aristide is one of the contestants. Young minds are naturally disturbed by the displacement of someone endear. Reading the novel, one also learns about the Haitian diaspora, Haitian cuisine, Haitian crops, religious customs and traditions. Story-telling is one of the traditions of Haiti one comes across in the novel. Granme Melina and Granpa Nozial narrate stories about Haitian folk traditions to Celiane. In another of her Young Adult fiction, *Untwine*, Edwidge Danticat writes about another family with teenage twins that migrated from home in Haiti and lived in Miami. The sisters love Haitian culture; Isabelle loves music and playing the flute, and Gisselle loves Haitian art. They are all trying to adapt to life in Miami, facing problems at school as Haitians. The second displacement in their life is of a loved one, a loss one can never get accustomed to. Gisselle loses her twin Isabelle and can never accept the fact of having her gone to the other world. She feels Isabelle's existence in herself as both are identical. She feels here that her identity as Gisselle will never come to the forefront now as she will be the untwinned twin. Displacement results in a fractured cultural identity, which Giselle tries to find and recover when she goes back to Haiti after her accident. In *Questions of Cultural Identity*, Stuart Hall writes that Identities are never consolidated and, in contemporary times, progressively divided and broken; never solitary but manifoldly formulated across various, diverse intersections and conflicting conversations, activities, and stances (4). Displacement leads to an identity crisis when one migrates to another country. One does not have a single unified

identity. Hall states that Identities are always in the process of modification and change; multiple identities are formed during the interaction with different societies and cultures.

Danticat's *Behind the Mountains* is a First-Person Fiction (First person Fiction features authors of different backgrounds writing about their experience of migrating to America). Danticat migrated to America when she was twelve; her first experience with discrimination was when she went to college. Her disorientation resulted from a Haitian-American neighbourhood, and to find solace from this racism, she turned to literature. *Behind the Mountains* features teenagers as the central characters of the fiction, and the action takes place between Beau Jour, a village in Haiti, to Port-au-Prince, a city in Haiti and finally, the migration to New York in America. *Behind the Mountains* is the story of a poor Haitian farmer family meeting ends with farming and cattle grazing, the old Haitian occupations keeping with their traditions and culture. The richness of Haitian culture, their love for the rustic, their spirit of enjoyment and the rich Haitian landscape are vividly portrayed in the work. Celiane loves the mountains, the countryside, the flora and fauna of Haiti, "I can see many advantages myself to living in the mountains as opposed to the city. For me, there are fewer people here" (25). She further says that she adores the mountains, the vetiver and citronella plants that line the pathways, the sound of the rain on the tin roof, and even the afternoon fog that moves from one spot to another. She likes rainbows that appear after sundowners. She enjoys detours through cornfields, smelling burning pinewood, and seeing golden-brown sap trickle into the fire. She enjoys dining

in their yard while listening to Granpe Nozial's stories and sleeping on the sisal mat on the clay floor of Granme Melina and Granpe Nozial's one-room home.

Danticat beautifully describes Haitian natural beauty and its family culture as she makes the reader aware of what the protagonist is leaving behind: joy and paradise. Once displaced, this paradise will only remain a dream. Displacement hinders the familial bond; the father has to migrate to New York in search of work, though physically in New York, he is emotionally with his family. His peace of mind is disturbed whenever he speaks to them; he tries to comfort his family and himself that they will soon be united. Celiane feels the pain in his voice the majority of the time while her father speaks to them on the cassettes; he loses himself, forgets that he is speaking to his family, and converses with himself in an effort to comfort himself just as he is attempting to comfort his family. Haitian society is a patriarchal society. The man is the head of the family, the protector, with the father in New York; the mother worries about her children's welfare and misses her husband's support outside the house. She feels that teenagers need both parents, and it becomes difficult for her to take care of her teenage son. Migration leads to new developments in one's life; one tends to forget the responsibilities at home and search for a new home, a new self, which he has to create by himself in this new world. His acceptance of the new land and the different culture are based on how he adapts or defends himself in the new culture. Homeless, alien, alone and full of responsibilities, he accepts the new home and culture, not forgetting his past, but the warmth still rests in his home. Manman says, "People get lost in the city, . . . Not lost in the same way people usually get lost when they are

looking for a place they cannot find” (25). Father who lives in America changes his way of life, and his cultural values and traditions are a mixture of Haitian-Americans. His cultural identity is Haitian-American, and his family already fears that displacement would lead to a change in cultural identity, as Cultural Identity, according to Stuart Hall, is: “‘becoming’ as well as ‘being’. It belongs to the future as much as to the past.” (“Cultural” 225). The future of the migrant is acceptance in the host country, and to attain this, the migrant can overcome any obstacles to build a place he can call his family to live in a home. He accepts the cultural identity enforced on him by the new world, and when the family comes, he educates them on the host country's values; thus, his cultural identity is still in formation.

The Haitian culture of story-telling by grandparents to children is described by Danticat when she says Granpe Nozial told Celiane different stories related to the mythology of the Haitians, like the one Celiane likes the most, the story of Galipot. The stories act as a stress buster for the children who, through these stories, learn to be brave and strong as these also help them relieve the stress created by the migration of father, the bombing that Celiane and mother underwent and many such gloomy situations. Story-telling has been an incredible part of the culture and everyday life of the Haitians. Many writers like Danticat relive that past by using the technique in the modern-day art of writing. Danticat's *The Dew Breaker*, *Krik? Krak!* and *Everything Inside* are based on the Haitian story-telling technique; some stories also have Haitian myths as story-telling elements. The important myths are that of Marassa and Voodoo. These myths and stories are passed on from one generation to another

through this tradition as the stories of Granpe Nozial will always be a part of the cultural identity of Celiane, and the characters in the stories also form a part of her dreams. In her interview with Katherine Capshaw Smith, Danticat writes how story-telling makes her creative in her writing and she carries this tradition all through her work. Danticat says, “I see myself as a storyteller, someone who is always looking for different ways to tell a story. Haiti, though, is a very inspirational place for artists. I think the richness of the culture, the complexities of life there, the vibrancy of the place, including the difficulties, enrich one’s vision of life and add several layers to the narrative and creative process” (“Splintered Families” 197).

Displacement disrupts all spheres of life; a person feels alienated even when surrounded by people. People get displaced, fearing aloofness and estrangement from others and society. Displacement to New York would change Celiane’s and her family’s life and identities but even moving to her aunt’s place in Port-au-Prince for a short period disturbs Celiane. She feels uncomfortable in the city, “I always feel like I am being pushed and shoved by crowds of people” (25). The cities are filled with people, and Celiane fears being lost in the crowd. The migrant feels insecure about submitting to the crowd and losing his identity. She feels dislocated from her home, her culture and her place. She feels insecure and lost. She tries to figure out her being and identity, which she thinks is in the mountains. She loves her village and the traditions and culture where she identifies and is bound to its cultural heritage. Moy, her brother, on the other hand, loves the city, the carefree attitude, the

freedom, the opportunities and the new technology, which is part and parcel of city life. He loves to enjoy life and wants to do something new to make a life.

Danticat presents the political atmosphere in the cities as a menace. The political leaders turn the city into a violent space; people kill each other and destroy public and private property. The migrant, who is new to the city and has never witnessed such an atmosphere, thinks the city is a dreadful place and fears his existence there. The city becomes a battlefield for him; he has already escaped violence, fear and poverty, and now he starts feeling displaced, out of place, and alien in the new place. Celiane dreads displacement as she witnesses the political riots in Port-au-Prince. The political environment is grave in Haiti, and the elections in Haiti ruin city life. There are bombings and riots in the streets, and people stay inside to protect themselves from mob attacks. Celiane and her mother are a part of the bombing in Port-au-Prince, and both are badly hurt. Celiane is even dislocated to a farther town and found by her aunt after a few days.

A feeling of aloofness arises and she dreads being lost and missing. She is also afraid if no one finds her, how will she be able to recollect her identity? Displacement brings about a change in the mental state of the children. Celiane wants to live with her father as she feels secure with him. She feels scared and she has nightmares. Though one accepts the dislocation in one's mind and at heart, there is always a need to be secure, and the father represents security. Celiane has had nightmares since her father left her, and now, as she goes through the trauma of the bombing, she loses her cool and is mentally displaced. She fantasises some evenings that following the explosion, she gets

misplaced and never discovers who she is; she fails to remember her identity and is incapable of informing anyone of her true self. Other evenings she fantasises that Manman is misplaced and fails to remember her identity and is never discovered. After her Papa departed, Celiane also has such fantasies that he would reach New York and discover a different son and daughter and a different spouse and overlook them. Danticat also portrays contrasting attitudes toward politics; some characters hold on to their faith in the political process, going out to vote despite the dangers of riots, and others are confused or disappointed. Aunt Rose's and Moy's commitment to voting is thus contrasted with Mother's dissatisfaction with the political people, who ignore the country's rural communities, "Don't waste your time, Rose," Manman said. "None of those politicians are going to do anything for the country . . . They never think about the people in the mountains. Victor had to leave so we would not eat dust up there. I vote for Victor, my husband. He is my president" (58-59). People lose faith in the political leaders and become disinterested in voting, thereby giving the leaders a chance to manipulate the situation and formulate new policies that do not favour the people, especially the migrants. People get displaced from their loved ones, and feelings of sorrow and fear grip their hearts. Family separates, houses become empty, and relatives go far. Celiane is sad to leave her grandparents and thinks her homeland and family will move farther away. She is also worried that her father, who she thinks will be a stranger when she meets him now, "I mean my whole family will grow much further apart rather than closer together" (74). Immigrants in a new place often find themselves in a new world, altogether having a different place and

identity; “here it is, the Tenth Department” (86). Haiti comprises nine geographical regions or departments and the Haitians who migrate and live in different countries form the diaspora, which is considered the tenth department. Jean Bertrand Aristide created the tenth department of Haiti, the floating homeland, the ideological one, which joined all Haitians living in the diaspora. The department is an organisation that houses all Haitians living outside the country under one big canopy. The tenth department comprises almost one of every four Haitians; the strong ties with the homeland make this tenth department a solid political and economic force. The new place is alien to the migrants; even though people accept them, they still do not feel at home.

People feel alienated and strange; they have a home but are homeless. They have everything they want, which they have migrated for, but they still long for the heaven they left behind. This heaven is their freedom of speech and expression and their rights as citizens of their country. Celiane meets her father, she is happy she has all the sunshine, but she says it is cold inside her. She was deprived of her father’s love and affection, making her feel cold inside out. Celiane met her father, so the movement to New York fills the bond of the father-daughter/son relationship. With all the apprehensions about America, she migrates to America with her mother and brother, “Was America a prison that once you entered you were never allowed to leave? Would we be ‘legal’ when we got there?” and also, “What if the plane falls out of the sky? What if we never make it to New York? What if we hate New York? What if we all hate each other when we get to New York?” (77, 83). The Haitian migrants follow a pattern; the bread earner migrates to find a job and make way for the

rest of the family. This results in his detachment from family relations and weakens the bond of trust and security associated with the family. Despite not facing many problems in America, all members struggle to unite as a family. After almost five years of living apart, everyone developed a thought process different from one another and unacceptable to the other in some form.

In a foreign land, when one meets people belonging to one's culture, it is as if he meets his family. Celiane felt happy to meet people from Haiti who migrated to New York. Haitian culture was very much alive in New York. Though away from home but with the family, they had a glimpse of Haitian culture. Many Haitians were in the church on Christmas Eve; the mass was in Creole. Meeting someone from one's own culture, speaking the same language, one finds solace in seeing one's cultural identity alive. Celiane felt Haiti was not so far away from Saint Jerome's. She had the impression that if she touched anyone at the mass, she may be transported back to Haiti once again. It was as if they were carrying a tiny bit of Haiti onto them, hidden behind their winter coats (95).

Celiane's attitude towards America changes; her initial dislike of the city is changed by her appreciation of the ways of the city. This change is experienced by the migrants who face a new culture in the host country. Critic Homi K. Bhabha, in his work *The Location of Culture*, argues that "we find ourselves in the moment of transit where place and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion." (1). Life changes in the city with the introduction of new techniques and luxuries. Manman has a stove to cook on, they do not have

to wash clothes with their hands, and many other luxuries and amenities make her accept life in America. Despite all the beautiful things, there are still some things which Celiane likes about Haiti. She is not always praising America as Haiti is in her heart; American neon signs are “. . . not as colourful as the ones that Bos Dezi made or as brightly embellished as the ones in Carrefour” (92). Danticat always writes about Haiti as much as about America. According to her, America has helped Haitians greatly by giving them an opportunity and helping them with economic projects. Nevertheless, Haitians have also fought alongside America in its war for independence. When she writes about Celiane’s father, she also writes about her father, who immigrated to America and saved his family from poverty and hunger. So they are grateful to America as they can call their families. Danticat says all have a right to follow their culture, but they have to accept the American culture as well; otherwise, they all are alienated in their home and the outside world.

Danticat writes about her displacement as she does for Celiane. She writes about the different causes of migration and the aspects of a migrant’s life. The tortures, the bearings they are put to, and crimes like child trafficking in the garb of migration. The migrants are inclined towards false lures, good living conditions and progressive life, and they submit, not knowing the reality, which is miserable as they end up working as child labourers and slaves. Danticat’s other characters are small children who are manipulated in the name of education and a promising future, like Faidherbe, Celiane’s friend who is adopted by his aunt and uncle in America, leaving the rest of his family in Haiti to join him once he grows up and earns enough to call them in. Another of

Celiane's friends, Immacula, could not join her parents in America until she was nine years old and finds three new siblings joining her in America after their departure. Also, there is Therese, sent by her parents to work as help due to poverty and hunger in an affluent family in the capital, who have agreed to educate her in a good school, and Celiane is relieved to think that she is not her. Here, the people are forced to submit and suffer to live a happy and decent life. They accept the new cultural aspects of the society, not leaving their own, and thus, their identities split and change with changes in places and circumstances.

One of the challenges the newly arrived immigrants face is adapting to a new language. In *Black Skin and White Masks*, Frantz Fanon writes about the power of language as he describes the one who holds on to the mother language as the one who is accepted culturally. Fanon writes, "A man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language. What we are getting at becomes plain: Mastery of language affords remarkable power" (18). Celiane knows Creole and must learn English to attend a good school. She has to face communication problems in the class; she cannot make friends and is lost after school, unable to find the bus stop. As she is unfamiliar with new people, she fears asking them and, most of all, how to ask which language she does not know in English. As she is searching for the bus stop, a taxi stops, but unable to communicate, the driver goes off:

Finally, a black car stopped. The driver rolled down the window and asked me something in English. I handed the driver the piece of paper Papa had given me. The driver said something that sounded like a

command, which I did not understand. He repeated it a few times, his voice growing louder each time. I did not move. The driver got impatient, handed me back the paper and drove away. (*Behind* 110)

The language here acts as a cultural barrier. Celiane's cultural identity as a Haitian is at stake as no one can understand her Creolised English. This demolishes an immigrant's pride and identity when she is not accepted culturally but only physically. Language can be used to unite people rather than create cultural friction. The novel is written in English by Danticat, but the narrator, Celiane, does not know English. She listens to Haitian channels on the radio in Creole, and the people she meets talk to her in Creole; she has not left her Creole culture, and her assimilation is slow. On the other hand, Danticat writes in English, using some expressions in Creole and French. She asks her readers to think that it is a translation by her and that Celiane is writing in her native language. Kiera Vaclavik, in the article "Writing Young," writes about Danticat's use of different languages:

Danticat's novel is happily heteroglossic. This does not in itself denote concern for a Haitian audience since foreign language words could be incorporated as a form of exoticisation signalling the priority of a non-Haitian audience. But Danticat's approach is very different: via a range of strategies, due attention is paid to the needs and competencies of the various parts of her readership. A frequent pattern is the use of italicised Kreyol words immediately followed by their English equivalent, as in the opening words: "Ti liv mwen" (92), my sweet little book. (92)

Celiane, in *Behind the Mountains*, faces the challenges of displacement; though her displacement was voluntary, the social and cultural transition affects her life profoundly, and her identity changes from a meek, small, chirpy little girl. She suddenly matures to find her way home and be ready in the wake of the need to help her friend Immacula. She is also annoyed with her father, whom she idolises, as he has changed a lot according to the city culture and is against Moy's choice in studies. She finds a significant change in her father and accepts that she, too, will have to change her language and focus and live with the monstrous buildings rather than the beautiful mountains of Haiti. *Behind the Mountains* illustrates the migrants' issues and experiences that cause their identities to change and be reformed. The most challenging issue facing immigrants who have been culturally displaced is of identity. When immigrants move to a new nation, they experience an identity crisis. The identities of immigrants are not uniform or united. Instead, during migration, dual and multiple identities are created.

Untwine is another Young Adult fiction by Edwidge Danticat, similar to the earlier work *Behind the Mountains*, where the family has migrated to Miami, and the narrator is a young teenage girl, Gisselle, who has a twin sister, Isabelle. The story moves about the tragic accident, which leaves the twin alone as the other sister dies. Gisselle's mind, which is already disturbed by their family's separation, now loses its balance as she finds this displacement of her sister to the other world unbearable. They are the second-generation migrants, but their Haitian traditions and culture are intact. The family has migrated to Miami, also called Little Haiti, as many Haitian families live in

Miami. Migration to Miami has also helped them as they are not in an altogether new world. Displacement in-between relations and people belonging to the same culture is less challenging as one is familiar with the cultural traditions and ways of life are similar. Despite that, people have to access other places for work and for making a living, so there remains a vast ocean of cultural and social differences that one has to cross, and, in some manner, the identity of a person undergoes a change, he has to accept the change thereby assimilating the other's cultural identity. Stuart Hall, in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, states that: “. . . identities are constructed through, not outside, difference. This entails the radically disturbing recognition that it is only through the relation to the Other, the relation to what it is not, to precisely what it lacks, to what has been called its constitutive outside, that the ‘positive’ meaning of any term-and thus its ‘identity’-can be constructed” (4-5). Gisselle, the narrator of *Untwine* loves Haitian food and celebration, the culture of Haiti. She says even in death, she would want there be in heaven for them Haitian food to celebrate Haitian Independence Day:

Whatever is after this world, I pray that there's room for the four of us to always sit together. In the after world, let there be music for Isabelle and drawing pencils and pads for me. Let there be fellow army vet pals for Dad and clients for him to defend—even though I don't think there'll be people needing political asylum in heaven. Let there be yoga classes for Mom and news anchors' faces for her to transform with makeup. Let there be Haitian food, rice and beans and fried pork, griyo, and pumpkin

soup, especially on January 1, when we celebrate Haitian Independence Day by drinking bowl after bowl. (13)

Haitian culture is an inbuilt consciousness in the natives. Even though leading a tough life, the Haitians keep their culture intact where ever they live and always try to revive it by adopting Haitian names or traditions. The children cherish Haiti as an ancestral legacy given to them by their parents. The protagonist also describes in her words that the Haitians must struggle in the host lands for survival. Giselle's father and mother met in Haiti, and so it is heaven for her, "For me, heaven would be . . . Haiti, where Mom and Dad were born and fell in love and where Isabelle and I sometimes spend summers with Dad's parents, Grandma Regine and Grandpa Marcus" (14). She says her parents were devoted to Haitian culture, and so they even named their cat after a Haitian hero, Dessalines, "Haitian revolutionary hero Dad named him after. Like us, he'll have to fight for his survival. It was Dad's idea to name our copper-eyed black Burmese Dessalines. Dad takes every opportunity he can to teach us lessons about Haitian history, even making a hero into a cat, a cat into a hero. It's a good way to teach someone a lesson, though" (19). The two girls were named traditionally as their names had their Granma's name in them, "Our middle names are the first names of each of our grandmothers, so I am Giselle Sandrine Boyer, for my grandma on Mom's side, and my sister is Isabelle Regine Boyer, for Dad's mom. In Haitian Creole, the word for 'twin' is marassa. If we had a sibling follow us, a brother or a sister, that child would have been our dosa, the 'untwinned' one." (20-21). Another traditional belief related to twins was that they are bad omens. They can cast spells, Giselle says,

“in some places people thought twins were bad omens. When they were born, their parents left them out in the forest to die. In other places twins were revered and even worshipped. In some parts of Haiti, for example, twins were thought to have special powers, and if you didn’t give them what they wanted, they could put spells on you” (22). Displacement has created a distance between the relations, but they have not been forgotten. Even if there are some changes in the identities of people still, they are rooted in their native land. The feeling of unbelonging is always prominent in their hearts, so parents always try to teach their children about the stories of their native land. The first-generation migrants want the children to know about their heritage and carry the Haitian legacy forward through story-telling, music, and paintings.

There are many exhibitions regarding Haitian art, Haitian restaurants and ancient Cathedrals in Haiti. The two girls love the museums, the cathedrals, and their designs. They always go to see them with Granpa. Isabelle loved Haitian music and harmonies, she wanted to be like the Haitian singer Emeline. Giselle has food in a Haitian restaurant, “I went to a restaurant called Chez Moy in Little Haiti. The place was my idea” (100). Haitians loved the Haitian music and Haitian concerts they were a way to remember their culture and enjoy it. Big Night in Little Haiti was a weekly outdoor event where the Boyer family enjoyed Haitian music with Haitian friends. They were amidst Haitians who were dancing and singing on the muraled courtyard in front of the Little Haiti Cultural Center. Grandpa Marcus had told them a lot about cathedrals, and they loved seeing the people worshipping and pouring out their deepest feelings:

We liked the cathedrals a lot more than the monarchs. We liked the way the outside towers loomed over us, as though they were built to make the rest of the world feel small. We liked the way the light travelled through the stained-glass windows to create a golden glow. We liked the hundreds of tiny candles, each representing a person's deepest desires. We liked watching people bow, then cross themselves, then dab their faces with a bit of holy water, the water of life. We liked wowing Mom and Dad and Aunt Leslie with everything Grandpa Marcus had taught us about cathedrals. We liked experiencing all of this together. (43)

Parents and Grandparents have imbibed the kids with their culture. Although they form a different cultural identity staying outside Haiti, Haiti is present in their everyday life.

The displacement of boundaries is not so significant to Giselle as is the displacement of relations. The separation of the mother and father is more fatal to the girls than the car accident. Displaced migrants often face such crimes in the new place as signs of unacceptance. They are ill-treated at the workplace, abused, mocked, tortured and traumatised. In a state of self-denial, loss of identity, and crashing dreams, they accept what is in front of them, the new way of life, and they change their cultures and traditions to live in the society. Danticat has also faced the same problems of denial and acceptance, so she writes that identity is fluid and capable of changing with situations. Giselle, Isabelle and their parents have accepted the American way of life but still find it hard to survive in America because of hatred-crime, of which they become victims. Isabelle loses her life while Giselle loses her twin and, with that, her

identity as Giselle. They were identical twins, and people always looked for Isabelle in Giselle. Giselle herself is not able to say Goodbye to Isabelle. Paula Weinmann, in “The Sound of Separation: The Stravinskian Resonances of Edwidge Danticat’s *Untwine*,” describes *Untwine* and Giselle’s journey in the work. She describes how Danticat gives a model of grief and mourning in Giselle, the child heroine of *Untwine*, who does not rush to finish off the pain. The story refuses to rush toward a simple ending or follow a typical, five-step sequence from denial to acceptance, as Alicia Ellis expresses in her article on *Untwine*. Instead, it repeatedly and abruptly returns to the car accident, and more than a third of the book is devoted to a time when the narrator is immobile and unable to move, talk, and, at times, even hear. Giselle’s parents want to make sure she can attend the burial so she can say goodbye to her sister, but at one specific moment in the story, Giselle makes up a chat with her deceased sister Isabelle in which Isabelle promises that they “We’ll never say goodbye” (84). In several aspects, this young adult book is not the one where the narrator comes to terms with her sister’s passing gradually and finally; Giselle’s grieving is erratic, repetitious, and even stubbornly cyclical, where she holds to her sister more than she lets her go.

Death is a second displacement for Giselle. The one she loves the most, the one to whom she is twinned now, is untwinned. She loses a part of her as a migrant loses his homeland, so Giselle loses her part, which had been with her since birth. She still felt the warmth of the hand and the gesture of holding it, which made them both aware of the other’s feelings. She wants to feel her again just as an immigrant’s paradise is his homeland, so Giselle’s heaven is

her sister's presence. She tries to enliven her presence through the works of great musicians. Isabelle has been displaced physically but Giselle cherishes her attachment to her people and her place. She often feels her presence as she listens to music and looks at her art. Giselle reflects on the night after the combined wake, wishing to find Isabelle's trace in everything she touches. She is always looking for signs of Isabelle's presence to break the impossible veil between both of them. Danticat frames grief as an experience that recurs, returns and evolves.

At the funeral procession, Giselle's parents are not burying Isabelle. They have fulfilled all the traditions of Haitian culture, but as they have changed culturally in America, they have adopted the new culture. They have broadened their point of view towards death, and they think it appropriate to cremate Isabelle. There is a tradition in Haiti that the parents do not watch the burial of their children. Giselle's parents do not agree to this as they have made a will that their daughters would be cremated. As Isabelle lay in the coffin, the parents say that their daughter will be cremated, not buried, "this is a picture coffin, made of a hundred per cent recycled clapboard, honeycomb based. It's on loan for the service. She won't be cremated in it" (136). Those details are important to her and to us, too. "I didn't realize that Isabelle's body was going to be here. I didn't even know she was going to be cremated. Both our parents have it in their wills that they want to be cremated, something they'd sat Isabelle and me down and told us, something that none of their parents had agreed with" (136). Giselle says, Dad had told Isabelle and her that on both sides of the family, going back several generations, parents have never gone to

cemeteries to see their children being buried. They would have gone to the chapel, or the church then they would have gone home to wait for everyone else to return from the cemetery for the repast. Later, they would have visited the filled-in grave, but parents were not supposed to witness their children sinking into the ground. So her parents were not going to bury Isabelle.

Haitians are under the impression that if they do not tell stories, something bad may occur not only to them but to the world. Stories are a way of communication between people in the present and the past. Story-telling is used by Danticat as a tool to enrich Haitian culture and to make the migrant children aware of Haiti, its culture, its myths and superstitions. Granma tells Giselle stories to help her with the loss of Isabelle. Giselle does not accept her transition to a state where she will be alone without her sister. She feels she has no identity without her sister. Only returning to her roots, the embrace of her homeland and its culture, helps her accept the change of living without Isabelle.

Danticat suggests that the artist is only fully released after the acceptance of death, as in the case of Grandma Sandrine: "It was knowing she was going to die. This finally released the artist who'd been trapped inside of her" (34). Giselle, too, must release her artistic impulse by accepting her sister's mortality. Her new thinking correlates with a Vodou practice that occurs only once Giselle's family returns to Haiti and brings Isabelle's ashes home. At the same time, Giselle experiences a Haitian aesthetic that "spilled over into nature and ravelled in people's veins" (34). Joelle Mann writes, "Giselle's mourning is situated within the acceptance of an uncertainty that

defines her transition into adulthood. Giselle makes a final transition after her return with her family to Haiti, highlighting an emotional undercurrent that celebrates an outward manifestation of a creative, national spirit” (“Aesthetic” 151).

Haiti, as a homecoming, becomes a site of Giselle’s acceptance of her sister’s death: she recognises that she must learn to “sketch myself alone . . . to draw myself as no longer a twin, as the *dosa*, the untwinned one. The untwinned one” (231). Giselle’s family is reunited for the first time after Isabelle’s death on her birthday in Haiti, recognising at once the loss of Isabelle and the growth of Giselle. Haiti’s resilience works as Giselle remembers how Isabelle loved to be in Haiti and she loved the garden, “Isabelle had loved this garden and this view, because from this spot, she could pretend to hold an entire city, even if a half-broken one, in the palm of her hands” (242). Danticat weaves a beautiful cultural and natural framework of Haiti’s scenery. This is presented through the depiction of Giselle’s grandparents’ Haitian home: “The sky is cornflower blue over their estate, their Victorian-inspired house and their boundless-looking garden, which overlooks the city below. In the middle of the garden is a two-hundred-year-old silk-cotton tree. Like the house, the silk-cotton tree is still standing in spite of a massive earthquake that nearly destroyed the city a few years back” (95). Danticat describes Haiti as a site where the natural and human worlds are interconnected. Haiti here serves as a motherland that embraces the child when it is lost. Giselle is lost, displaced by land, by death, and comes to recognise that Isabelle is mortal and she will have to find a companion when one is lost; it is nature, the glory (the rainbow which

they call Glory) which initiates the process of coming back in case of Giselle, as she says half goodbye to glory her heart is lightened by the burden of Isabelle identity which she was carrying, as she was acknowledging Haitian tradition of Marassa, having both their cultural identities in one. In her interview with Renee Shea, Danticat describes the tradition of Marassa as an essential component of the African heritage where twin deities exist. In the Ibegi custom of Africa, twins hold significant importance, and in certain instances, they are regarded as immensely influential. If one of the twins passes away, the surviving twin will bear a representation ("Stretching the Limits" 385). Myths and the supernatural are important elements of Haitian culture. The migrants pass this culture onto the next generation, though, in an assimilated form, yet the going back to roots feeling is very strong for assimilation.

The Art of Death: Writing the Final Story is a memoir by Edwidge Danticat written in memory of her dying mother, who is suffering from a deadly cancer and in substantial compliance with how people view death. Many writers have written about death, and many find solace in writing about death. Danticat says that she has compensated for most of her losses through writing, and from the very beginning, her works feature death, may it be in any form, the death of Sophie's mother, sugarcane farmers, her uncle and now her mother. Danticat, in dedication to *The Art of Death: Writing the Final Story* takes a passage from Michael Ondaatje's work, *The English Patient*, in which he describes that death takes with it all the feelings and belongings of a person, all that one has made of oneself and one day all will become books if someone

remembers them. He wants to be remembered after death not as a physical name or inscription but through words in some poem or chronicle; he writes that we pass away with a wealth of lovers and tribes, flavours we've ingested, bodies we've dived into and swum up like rivers of knowledge, personalities we've scaled like trees, and anxieties we've buried in like caverns. He wants all his deeds to be inscribed on his flesh when he is dead. He believes in such mapping that one should be identified by nature rather than merely putting one's name on maps like famous people's names on famous structures. He wants to be shared through stories and written books.

Danticat quotes Albert Camus as he writes in *The Myth of Sisyphus* that we are all displaced by death and cannot describe the experience to anyone. It is an illusion similar to the illusion a migrant has when he is displaced from his native land to a new land with which he is not familiar. As said by Michael Ondaatje, he carries with him whatever he has in the present world. Camus writes that there is no encounter with death; it is scarcely feasible to discuss the encounter of others' demises. It is a replacement, a mirage, and one is never convinced by any explanation of death (*The Art* 26). Death is moving, a displacement from one home to the other, which is more reliable and permanent. Danticat, after seeing her mother die, thinks death does not mean an end but is a new start; she says, "I'd rather think that it's some type of new beginning, a positive one for her. I like to think as well that it's like moving from one place to another, a more beautiful and peaceful place, a more permanent tenement or town" (*The Art* 32). Every writer brings different beliefs, experiences, and observations to their writing about death.

Danticat, in *The Art of Death*, describes many of her experiences living in Haiti for twelve years, suffering exploitation at the hands of her cousin Joel and how she lost her self-identity. The experience shattered her identity, and when she left Haiti, a similar threat to her identity was felt when she met her two American siblings. A feeling of awe and joy at the same time; her displacement was not an easy or happy one. She was not taught Haitian literature in school, so she studied it at the library. She accepted the Americans but never left the Haitians. In the present times, when she heard of the earthquake in Haiti, she was sad, silenced, could not speak, and was blurred in image and sight. Engulfed with sorrow to be away from home, which she so much belonged to from her heart, she could not help or even know about the welfare of her family in Haiti. The duality of her identity troubles her now when she cannot keep in touch with her family. Death terrifies Danticat. She writes:

During most of the post-earthquake nights I spent in Haiti, I would sleep on the roof of the house of one of my husband's uncles in Carrefour. The two-story cement home had survived the earthquake intact. Still, I was too afraid to sleep inside the house, which I kept imagining crumbling on top of us in an even more powerful earthquake. So I lay in a sleeping bag on the roof and looked up at a sky full of stars while listening to the voices of neighbors who were also sleeping on their roofs or on the street, because they were too terrified to sleep inside what was left of their homes. (40-41)

The Haitian culture of seeing the dead before death is referred to by Danticat; this way, she tells the readers that her cultural identity may have assimilated, but she still believes and lives with Haitian culture. She writes that the dead were seen before in dreams as death approached. It was believed that dear ones come to take their loved to the other world and this was true when Danticat's father was dying and this again is witnessed by Danticat as her mother sees her father in her dream come to take her.

Slaves are immigrants whose masters have bought them for work in the households or the fields. The master-slave relationship has been continuing long past and these slaves do not have an identity or any culture; they belong to the culture of their masters. During slavery, slave patrols were the police, and the law was deadly for slaves, the slaves who were the ancestors of the present immigrants and were considered the property of the master. Death here symbolises a saviour, freedom. Death means giving oneself a self-identity and emancipation from slavery. In literature, this emancipation from slavery comes to children through death given by their mothers. Danticat writes:

One of the most powerful scenes in Toni Morrison's *Beloved* is the infanticide scene, in which Sethe, a former slave, kills her daughter rather than allow her to be returned to slavery . . . Sethe's story is based on that of Margaret Garner, an enslaved woman who ran away from a plantation in Kentucky and who, after slave catchers tried to take her and her family back, slit the throat of her two-year-old daughter with a butcher knife. Margaret Garner would probably have killed herself too, had she not been stopped. (67)

Garner, the slave, has only one prayer she wants God to fulfil: Death or Liberty. Finally, liberty comes through death. Death for her is a gift; otherwise, she and her children have to be slaves not only physically but psychologically as well.

Displacement hardly affects her mother's cultural identity. Though she has changed a bit to live in America, she still does not like to talk in English, which is unfamiliar to her. When diagnosed with cancer, she accepts that a second migration is calling her, which is permanent and will end all her fears and sorrows of acceptability. She instead tells Danticat not to be a Zombie, that is, not to be a rock, silent, but to accept and live the days left happily and fulfil all dreams together. As a part of Haitian culture, the mother wants to pray and listen to hymns at this stage before she dies. Danticat says, they had nightly devotions together when her mother was ill at her request. They would sing a hymn from her collection of French and Creole hymns after everyone had gone to bed, pray, say the Lord's Prayer, read another verse, and then turn in for the night. The Beatitudes were one of her mom's favourites. There must have been additional comfort provided by the Beatitudes. Her mother would probably tear a hole in the heavenly curtain to tell her more about them right now, if she could, because they were assurances and promises that were about to come true. They both found solace in the Beatitudes (Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God), and Danticat believed she still had time to purify herself (92).

Danticat wears black clothes from her college days, and after her mother's death, she wants to follow the Haitian tradition of wearing Black clothes. She writes:

After my mother died, I tried to follow one of the rituals she had followed after her mother died when I was a teenager. My mother had left my brothers and me in New York with my father to go to Leogane with her sisters to attend her mother's funeral. When she came back she wore only black clothes for six months. . . . I have been wearing mostly black clothes since college. Both my parents used to joke that when they died, I wouldn't need to buy anything to wear during my official yearlong mourning period. (99)

The memoir or autobiography on Danticat's mother's death commences from the shock of her mother's cancer diagnosis and includes references to her personal life, and her upbringing in Haiti, all the while talking about the various aspects of death from examples that range from Albert Camus' *The Myth of Sisyphus* to Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. The narrative revolves around many stories of death, which include different migrant characters and their sufferings and how to evade the torture they accept death. The memoir finally culminates in a beautiful prayer by a mother for her children. A mother who wants her children to be safe and settled in this new migrant country and have an intact cultural identity with its roots in origin.

Anacaona: Golden Flower is Danticat's tribute to the Taino princess who fought for her people and their culture. The Tainos were illiterate but had different ways of keeping their accounts safe. They passed on their stories,

myths, cultural practices, and healing methods through songs, dances, and ballads performed at their feasts and celebrations called areitos. The Tainos had no written language. They had petroglyphs, rock paintings and pictographs through which they kept records of their lives. The Tainos measured time through agricultural seasons and a lunar calendar and did not count beyond twenty; that is their number of fingers and toes. This young adult fiction, is also narrated in the first person by Anacaona. Danticat tries to recreate a new modern version of the legend Anacaona to teach the Haitian and non-Haitians the rich culture and the sacrifices made by their ancestors. She wants the young generation to know about their roots, and it discusses the customs and rites, legends, dress, agriculture, geography, flora, and climate of the Tainos. The Tainos had a rich culture Anacaona was one of the successors of the Taino throne, which, according to tradition, is taken by maternal grandchildren, Anacaona or Behechio, Anacaona's Brother. People have no education; the only way they are literate is in arts; this education of arts is passed on to the future generations through stories and ballads. Anacaona is one of the intelligent and outstanding children in all forms of art, and she always finds new ways of telling stories and ballads, painting them on the temple walls. Her uncle Matunheri, the chief, wants his culture to spread and flourish, so he orders his men to provide new tools to Anacaona so that she can spread the art and tradition. One of his men has created a new fabric to record Anacaona's ballads, stories and other important knowledge.

Many cultural traditions followed by Haitians originate from the Tainos, the traditional visions which predict an upcoming important event or

disaster, the way the spirits communicate to the living. The Haitians still believe in the tradition of not venturing in the night not to see the Night Marchers as they take them to the after world, as Danticat describes in *Breath, Eyes, Memory* and *The Farming of the Bones*. Ancestral worship is also one of the practices of Tainos that the Haitians follow. The Taino chief goes to the temple to fast and pray to the ancestors for protection. The threat may be from natural forces or the enemy. It is the ancestral spirits that protect the Tainos. Anacaona says, “When he heard of the attacks, my uncle simply ordered the carving of a special zemi in the shape of a serpent, to call on our ancestors to protect our villages (I myself would prefer to find the Kalinas, destroy them, and leave them for real serpents to eat.)” (43).

Anacaona is married to Chief Caonabo, resulting in her displacement from Xaragua. She had been raised to be a chief successor, and suddenly, she has to leave all her dreams and education, as training in weapons and artistry have no use for her. She will have a new home, culture and identity as the chief mistress and maybe she will be allowed to carry on her artistry and weapon training are just some questions in her mind. Kiera Vaclavik, in her article on Edwidge Danticat, writes about Anacaona’s separation from home; she writes, “It too tells of a young woman’s departure from her place of birth and arrival in a new home and the difficulties-of loneliness and homesickness associated with such a shift” (“Writing Young” 94). Anacaona has to undergo many rituals before her marriage. She must be in isolation and pray to her ancestors to be a good wife. She says, “Our customs dictate that I am to remain in isolation in a special chamber of Matunheri’s temple until the day of my marriage. I will

have no hand in the marriage preparations, I will do nothing at all, except reflect and pray to the heavens and plead my ancestors' favors for the courage and grace to be a good wife" (64). After marriage, Anacaona has a great welcome in Maguana. Anacaona is in a new place and not aware of the culture and traditions of the place. She feels lonely and has no one to share her thoughts with; she misses her Baba and Bibi, "I also miss Baba, Bibi, Behechio, and my uncle so much. It is as if there is a large, empty space in me, a dark star that neither sun can light, nor moon shade, nor Caonabo with his kindness and love blot out" (76).

Anacaona finds a friend in Simihena, a carver. She can relate to her as her Baba was also a carver and has taught Anacaona to carve furniture, amulets, necklaces and stories told by the ballads. She is happy to return to her art, and cultural identity, which was in duality. She accepts the Maguana culture and weaves in the Xaragua culture to make it more beautiful. She says:

I will carve Caonabo's strong and handsome image. I will carve images of caves of the way our world was created. And in addition to all that, I will make ceremonial chairs, effigy vessels, ceramic flasks, bowls, graters, scepters, baskets, headdresses, pendants, stone collars, all with images of frogs, fish, and birds carved into them. Nothing will be carved in Maguana that will not bear the mark of Anacaona's heart or hand. (77)

She has a strong identity as Anacaona the warrior, which emerges singularly; Stuart Hall defines cultural identity to be one hidden behind the other superficial ones. People with a common history and ancestry share a

single culture, or a sort of collective ‘one true self,’ which is hidden inside the many other, more surface-level or artificially imposed ‘selves,’ according to Stuart Hall, who defines ‘cultural identity’ as the set of shared characteristics that people share. According to this definition, our cultural identities reflect our shared historical experiences and cultural norms that give us, as ‘one people,’ constant, unchanging frames of reference and meaning despite the varying divisions and ups and downs of our actual history (“Cultural” 223).

Anacaona, the warrior princess, carries the tradition of being a true warrior as she fights in the campaigns against the pale men, the Spanish, to protect her people. She preserves her cultural identity and defends it till the end when after Caonabo’s death, she becomes the ruler of Maguana. She fights the Spanish and is captured and hanged to death brutally by them. Anacaona is not only a ruler but also a poet and storyteller. After a battle with the Spanish, which results in victory for the indigenous peoples, she recites a long tale, “an account of our season of war” (*Anacaona* 155). Kiera Vaclavik writes, “In *Anacaona*, she seeks to redress the balance: giving the ‘victims’ a voice, privileging their perspective, emphasising their pride and dignity, and demonstrating, in short, that their identity far exceeds their victimhood” (“Writing Young” 97). *Anacaona* is Danticat’s sermon teaching the Haitians and the non-Haitians that they all have to stand up for their self-identity; cultural identity is a part of this self-identity. There are many displacements in one’s life; one must accept whatever new is coming their way and succeed with dignity.

Joseph Zajda and Suzanne Majhanovich, in their article, “Cultural Identity in the Global Era,” write that, along with other things, globalisation has helped to “strengthening various cultural identities: religious, national, ethnic, and geographic” (2). As a defining aspect of the dominant discourse on identity, the reification of culture is connected to the construct of cultural identity. Marx attempted to explain why workers accepted the exploitation of their labour and wages as natural by using the concept of reification, which is the process of giving concrete form to an abstract concept. This concept of reification can also be applied to the migrants who ultimately accept the host land and try to assimilate into its culture. *Everything Inside*, as the name implies, is a picture of the migrants who have assimilated into society, have accepted their displacement and are living in America with pride and dignity as Americans. In *Everything Inside*, Edwidge Danticat portrays the lives of ordinary Haitian migrants who have left their families, their emotions as they live alone and how they form new friends, indeed Haitians, as they live in the United States. Danticat’s stories are all based on the experiences she faces in her everyday life. The incidents she sees or listens to being a part of the immigrant community, she feels for them and shares with the readers so they are universalised. She wishes her books are far read that every human of any country, state and race feels and shares the sufferings of the immigrants so that their situation may improve. Danticat wants the people to know what the immigrants go through living in displaced lands and what turmoil their identities are in due to displacement to a new land.

In the opening story, “Dosas,” Haitian immigration in Miami is depicted by Danticat in the form of Elsie and Blaise. Elsie starts to work as a nurse, she takes care of the elderly and the ageing. Blaise leaves her in his desperation to earn money. Shattered by her broken relationship, she is depressed but continues to work happily caring for an old man. Blaise takes advantage of Elsie’s emotional state and wants all her savings he knows of. Displaced from Haiti and left alone, Elsie is in a dilemma if Blaise loves Haiti and its culture. She discovers that her identity crisis led her to be manipulated. It is she who gets assimilated into a foreign cultural identity, and it is she who is suffering from adapting to the new. Dosa is also a twin in Haiti. Elsie is deceived by Olivia, whom she believes to be a twin sister. Her displacement after this has left her in confusion about whom to accept. In the story “In the Old Days,” Nadia, an English teacher, is the daughter of a Haitian immigrant. The story describes a conflict between a husband and wife who immigrated to America; the father wants to return to Haiti. He does not want to leave his country or homeland and wants to serve his land by using his degrees from America. The wife wants to stay in New York, so they separate, and Nadia, the daughter, is born in New York. She has recently learnt from her mother that she has a father of whom she was unaware and that her father was unaware of her existence. Now an American taken to American traditions, Nadia is more dedicated to her work. She has no feelings for the long-gone father, and when she meets him dead, she realises what it is to have a father.

The following story sheds light on the migrants who do petty jobs in Miami to earn a livelihood. In the story “The Gift,” Anika, who lives in Miami,

remembers falling in love with a Haitian man. Anika thought Thomas would migrate to Miami and settle with her, but she finds him married and having a child. He loved Haiti and would never think of migration. After Thomas lost his wife and child in the earthquake of 2010 in Haiti, a feeling of regret surrounded him. He lost his senses and stopped seeing everyone, even Anika. Anika wanted a family and lost her child with Thomas as she had no medical access, being a Haitian. She wanted to live with Thomas but he was stuck to his roots in Haiti he did not want to migrate to Miami.

Another story, “Hot-Air Balloons,” describes the impoverished condition of Haitian women who endure the cruelties of men and society and are left as garbage in the streets of Haiti. Neah a rich man’s daughter wants to help such women but the immigrant and rich father does not want her to go to Haiti. He fears that she might be misguided and misused being a witness to Haitian society himself. Lucy, the narrator, is a Haitian and has lived in Haiti. She has certain dark memories of Haiti that she does not want to go to Haiti but is compelled by Neah’s rich father. The class difference in society which results from displacement is depicted in the story. Lucy, a farmer’s daughter, has been displaced a lot due to frequent movements of the family. Her displacement is for food. Neah was rich and could never know the feeling of accepting another language, culture or tradition. On the other hand, Lucy has a fluid identity changing with the change of place. The story “Sunrise, Sunset” talks of the new generation in Haiti who accept the new traditions, and want to live like Americans and be called American. The new-age Haitian mothers who think taking care of their children makes them look old and disfigures

their bodies are described by Danticat when they forget their culture of raising the children and give it up for the American Dream. Jeanne suffers from postpartum depression and does not like nurturing her child. Her mother, Carole is shocked to find her daughter challenging her upbringing. She has raised her children taking a lot of pain in the host country and now suffers from dementia. Danticat has beautifully put up the expectations of a mother from her child which the child fails to fulfil as she has Americanised. “Without Inspection” is the tragic story of Haitian immigrants called Boatmen. Darline came in a boat with her husband and Arnold enters the same way both are illegal immigrants. As time passes the laws are gruesome and boats are capsized, men are imprisoned as they try to enter forcefully. Arnold is saved by Darline but his fate is death. He cannot cherish his American dream of a family with Darline and Paris. The final story, “Seven Stories,” is a story that brings out the difference between life in America and Haiti through a rich island and Haiti. It also describes the slums, the malpractices, the tortures inflicted on poor people and the hidden corners of the rich countries which are concealed under the garb of beauty and riches as described by Danticat. The friendship between the two girls forms as a result of mutual help. It continues to be challenged on the rich island as Kim is the Prime Minister’s wife. The richness of the island stands in contrast to Haiti which though poor has kept its culture and its traditions alive whereas the elite forget the downtrodden. The Haitians keep their characters intact by being true in friendship.

Everything Inside are stories of immigrants who have migrated long back and their children are second-generation children who have assimilated

into the land and the culture of the new land. Displacement for them is a long-accepted process; they have not felt the pangs of split identity, homelessness, or unbelonging. They face some problems due to race, culture and class differences but have not felt the longing to return home or attraction towards their roots. Danticat writes about the displaced and the assimilated families of the migrants. She sees her nephews and children born in America and feels that they are the ones who will have to be taught about their roots in Haiti. They do not share the same feelings of love for their land as their grandparents or parents. In her interview with Aysegul Sert on September 21, 2013, Danticat speaks about the children who now migrate to America. She says they do not have emotions about leaving home and coming to terms with a new culture, as they have already taken to the culture of America. Danticat says, she didn't think much of the United States when she was getting ready to move from Haiti to the country, besides the fact that her parents lived there and that it could get cold. Her Haitian cousins wouldn't be as noticeable today as she was when she first arrived there. They resemble American teenagers in terms of attire. Some of them even have a basic command of English. They see these Hollywood productions. Even before they leave their home country, today's immigrant children have, to some extent, been exposed to the culture of their new home.

Danticat's characters depict her belief in the change of identity and that identity is fluid. The characters change according to the new land, its language, its fashion, its etiquette, its culture and its traditions. They adapt to the new but are nostalgic for the old; they want the new as well as the old.

Celiane, Aline, Moy, Giselle, Anacaona, Elsie, Lucy and Danticat herself all accept the new cultural identity but do not want to leave the old. Following the publication of *The Dew Breaker* in 2004, Terry Hong in one of the first interviews to appear in *The Bloomsbury Review* reviewed Danticat about the evolution of her identity as an established immigrant in the United States: “Now that you’ve been in this country for many years, do you feel American? As an immigrant, have you found a sense of peace with both your Haitian and American identities?” (“Horror”). Danticat answered that she has always felt at ease with being both Haitian and American. Immigrants now have an easier time returning home. It takes ninety minutes to get to Haiti from Miami, and now she frequently returns there. She has not been forced to give up her Haitian identity to become an American, as many older immigrants were. Danticat says she feels very American but also very Haitian because she has spent more time in the United States than Haiti. That’s what makes America exciting right now. The immigrants don’t have to liquefy or vanish into some ideological stew. They can be who they are, make small contributions to American culture, and maintain connections to their home nations.

The identity quest often becomes an existential issue in the novels of Edwidge Danticat. When somebody leaves his birthplace to settle in a foreign land, he/she carries with him numerous world views, beliefs and hopes. These beliefs serve as a defence mechanism that aids the immigrant in his battle for survival in a foreign environment. An individual’s sense of belongingness is connected to the location of his or her birth, and this sense of identity differs from person to person based on the roots that person has grown and established

in that area. There is initial excitement and thrill when an immigrant migrates to a foreign settlement. However, when he faces the problems of acceptance and identity crisis, the excitement finishes and the feelings of insecurity and displacement arise. He has some sweet nostalgic remembrances of the past. Both home and nation become prominent in the immigrant's memory, and suddenly, he/she feels dislocated and displaced. When he migrates from one place to another place or one country to another country. The change affects his attitude towards life, his values, culture, beliefs and thinking are all affected by this change.

Displacement leads to the search for identity, and there is no identity without culture. Displacement consists of many aspects of a person's life; they are social, psychological, economic and cultural, which are affected by the person's adapting to a new culture. This does not mean that one leaves his culture, but one's life becomes an amalgam of cross-cultural and intercultural themes, as stated by Salman Rushdie in *Imaginary Homelands*. Thus, displacement is the study of the life of these displaced people. Besides all the challenges during globalisation, displacement allows immigrants to progress and cross-cultural interaction, resulting in isolation and assimilation. Immigrants experience many types of displacements, but it is through the inner consciousness that they can adapt, acculturate and even adjust with the same consciousness of being independent and self.

Chapter 3

Social Marginalisation- A Challenge to Haitian Identity

Marginalisation is the significant behaviour of humans and societies, where people thought of as undesirable or useless are excluded or marginalised. These marginalised people are not included in the society or have no rights. They have limited opportunities and meagre means of survival. In *Justice and Politics of Difference*, Iris Marion Young observes, “Marginalization is perhaps the most dangerous form of oppression. A whole category of people is expelled from useful participation in social life and thus potentially subjected to severe material deprivation and even extermination” (53). *Merriam-Webster’s online dictionary* defines marginalisation as, ‘to relegate to an unimportant, or powerless position within a society or group.’ Marginalisation results from discrimination due to power relations; to be marginalised is near the margins, close to the border, and away from the center. A marginal position is not being deprived or abandoned. However, society proclaims marginality as social inequality and imbibes the same, giving a picture and feeling of being marginal to others.

Marginalisation occurs in all spheres of life and is a multidimensional and historical phenomenon. A country’s social, economic, political, and cultural conditions, human actions, and reactions significantly affect marginalised groups and individuals. Marginalised are distanced by and from the powerful, which makes them vulnerable in social and political scenarios. Broadly, marginalisation is divided into three types: social, political, and

economic marginalisation. The marginalisation of groups of people can be witnessed all over the world. Marginalised literature studies the themes of exploitation, agony, pain, and suffering. It describes the marginalisation suffered by the people in the social, economic, political, and geographical aspects of life and how the trauma of marginality is deeply rooted in their lives and consciousness; it lives with them through the past, present, and future. The difference in minorities, ethnic, religious, diasporic, or linguistics constitutes most marginalised groups. They have subcultures that have relations to their mainstream culture or native religion.

Globalisation and the development of the world have led to the spread of knowledge and print material across the world. Literature has become the voice of millions of those who were either silenced by colonialism or have become silent, suffering the aftermaths of colonialism. Many authors write about the hardships faced by these silenced, tortured, marginalised minorities in their works. Thousands of people suffer because of marginalisation, and its degree and type vary from country to country. Writers like Jamaica Kincaid, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Salman Rushdie, and Edwidge Danticat write about displacement and marginalisation. Marginalisation results from displacement or migration. The migrants face social marginalisation as they find themselves excluded from society in one way or the other. The disregard of the minority, the ethnic groups or the diaspora during the socio-economic and political transformations of the country results in their marginalisation. Haiti, India, and the Dominican Republic face marginalisation as countries and their citizens face social marginalisation in countries like America and France.

Haiti, in 1804, became the first Black nation and second nation to the U.S. to get freedom from the French. In his book *Silencing the Past*, Haitian anthropologist Michel Rolph Trouillot writes about Haiti's marginalisation in the Western Hemisphere. He also writes how the U.S. denied the success of the Haitian Revolution as they thought of Haitians as poor, weak people who could not think of freedom or free themselves. This marginalisation and U.S. denial were successful, as the French wanted an indemnity of \$21 billion to allow the new nation-state to trade globally. This debt resulted in the economic poverty of Haiti and its people.

Racism and imperialism are the causal forces resulting in the displacement and marginalisation of countries and people. Racism forced the Africans to exile into the New World, and the United States supported the racists and imperialists in accomplishing this. Haiti, a marginalised, impoverished country, was occupied by almost 500,000 Africans and approximately 30,000 whites, of which almost 20,000 died or fled during the Haitian Revolution. Malissia Lennox in her work which is a critique on the US immigration policy towards Haitians quotes La Doris Hazzard Cordell who portrays the Blacks' experience in the New World as follows:

Initially the African native was stripped of all traces of his identity. He lost his country. He lost his tribe and thereby his understanding of his place in the world. He was wrenched away from one land and transported to another in which everything was foreign. His religion was deemed heathen; his language was heard as a compilation of primitive utterances. His value system was irrelevant to the mechanics of a

capitalist society. The Black African was catapulted into a universe the fabric of whose daily life was of an entirely different texture from the one he had previously known. He was a person imported here for the purpose of slavery, whose highest possible achievement would be to enter the ranks of 'good slave.' He was a person without hope. ("Refugees, Racism" 689)

The condition of slaves in Haiti was miserable. Almost thirty per cent of slaves died of disease, corporal punishment, and filthy and violent surroundings. Racial discrimination was the primary cause of slave deaths and their feelings to repatriate. Haitians have long migrated to the United States, which is not the case only in the last decade. Haiti and Haitians have made significant contributions to America and its society for the past 200 years. The United States was connected to Haiti as it needed cheap labour, and for the world, the Blacks were cheap labour that was abundant in Haiti. One of the historians, Alfred N. Hunt, writes that trade, Haiti's close vicinity, the influx of refugees into American seaports, and the cultural ties between the Caribbean and the South, which practised slavery, contributed to Americans' early interest in and informal involvement in the affairs of the troubled French colony (*Haiti's Influence* 30). The U.S. exploited Haiti. When the slaves in the U.S. suffered and started demanding a better living, they turned them to Haiti. George Washington, the first president of the U.S.A., had these 'unmanageable' slaves shipped to Haiti, and Thomas Jefferson, the third U.S. president, suggested deporting slaves back to Haiti and establishing a black colony in Haiti to protect whites in the U.S. from a slave revolt. The Haitian

Revolution of 1804 enlightened the United States against bonded slavery; it resulted in the first successful overthrow of slavery and the establishment of a black republic in the New World. After the success of Haitians against slavery in 1804, Jefferson was confident that it was not long before U.S. slaves would rise against slavery, and their revolt would lead to the abolition of slavery. After the Haitian Revolution, black Americans, African Americans, and whites united against slavery. The black Haitian refugees took shelter in the U.S., fleeing Haiti due to the horrors of the French and Haitian Revolutions. These black Haitian refugees have played an essential role in the development of South America despite all discrimination and marginalisation. They have contributed and assimilated into the U.S. culture but have never earned recognition because of their colour and race. Alfred N. Hunt, in his book *Haiti's Influence on Antebellum America*, writes about this discrimination, the Haitians are mostly impoverished, have dark complexion, speak patois, and are from a region in the south where there isn't a lot of European influence, thus white Americans haven't really noticed them or their effect (192).

The United States has dominated Haiti and Haitian politics for much of the 20th century. It occupied Haiti between 1915 and 1934. Though economically insignificant, Haiti was politically important to the United States. The United States started the military occupation of Haiti in the pretence of helping to preserve the independence of Haiti. An election was feigned, and the U.S. installed the first pseudo-president in 1915. In 1917, the United States transferred Haiti's foreign debt from the French to U.S. creditors. Haitians were strongly against the U.S. occupation. The military became all

powerful and had supreme control in Haiti. A prominent historian, James Ferguson, writes, “. . . the success or failure of a Haitian government is always ultimately determined by relations with the U.S.” (*Papa Doc* 35). Haiti was exploited, and thousands of Haitian lives and occupations were lost. Haiti soon discovered that the racist policies of the US were against all men of African origin, the Blacks by colour and race. In his book *The United States Occupation of Haiti*, Hans Schmidt writes about this racism: “Haitians were caught in a web of vicious American prejudices from which there was no escape” (30). American prejudice existed in all forms, in all occupations, specifically racist hostility to blacks and inhumanity towards illiterate peasants; this resulted in forming a barrier to Haitian-American communication and cooperation at all levels.

Haitians were resentful of the undemocratic government run by the United States. Riots and strikes started in 1929, and the United States was disturbed by the rebellion in Haiti. Twenty years of racial discrimination and economic exploitation had left Haiti politically and economically bankrupt when the United States withdrew from the country in 1934. Not only had the American occupation entirely failed to fix the underlying structural problems that plagued Haitian politics, but it had also set up the country for a continuance of authoritarianism and a resurgence of instability. Worst of all, the United States supported Francois Duvalier as he became the president in 1957, which began the most ruthless dictatorship Haiti had ever witnessed. Papa Doc promised to elevate Haiti from poverty. He destroyed the Haitian economy like his U.S. predecessors. In 1971, Papa Doc passed the dictatorship

to his son, Jean-Claude Duvalier ‘Baby Doc,’ supported by the U.S. The U.S. sent a warship to ensure that Baby Doc succeeded to the presidency unharmed. Baby Doc’s rule far exceeded the atrocities and led to a massive death toll. Thus, the United States joined the countries demanding that Baby Doc depart from Haiti. After two centuries of dictatorship, in 1991, Haiti saw the sun of democracy rise for a short while. Haiti’s dream of democracy, freedom and economic stability was shattered. The Tonton Macoutes removed Aristide from the president’s position on September 30, 1991. People of Haiti fled because of political violence, which resulted in refugees in various countries.

The first Haitian refugees arrived in the United States between 1791 and 1809 after the French and Haitian Revolutions. The United States passed its first fugitive slave legislation to curb immigration. The subsequent influx of Haitian refugees came in the early 1960s as a result of mass violence and economic crisis in the regime of Papa Doc. At the onset, the United States granted these Haitians asylum but later Haitians were given refugee status instead of permanent resident status. The United States tried to deny asylum to Haitians by accelerating deportation, detention, and interdiction at sea. The number of Haitians as refugees rose in countries like France, Spain, Europe, and the U.S. The countries were overflowed, and they started deporting the refugees waiting for asylum and sealed their borders for further refugees. In the 20th century, Haitian immigrants and refugees to the U.S. rose drastically and were refuted violently.

The literature produced by the Haitian diaspora in the 1990s and the works created by a generation that was reared outside of Haiti but was born in

Haiti in the late 1960s and early 1970s are aware of these developments. With the establishment of Francois Duvalier and the dictatorship that followed in 1957, this literature represented an exodus trend that was developing. The emigration pattern can be categorized into three main areas, according to Alex Stepick's book *Pride Against Prejudice, Haitians in the United States*: internal migration from Haiti to the Dominican Republic and from rural to urban areas is caused by the country's working-class majority's poor economic conditions; migration as a privilege of the upper-class and intellectual elite; and, finally, migration because of political factors. The writings of Haitian authors from the 20th century mostly draw on these facets of the country's exodus. They write about the migration of Haitians, their experience of displacement, and social marginalisation, thereby reflecting their eulogisation of Haitian culture and their search for cultural identity.

Haitian immigrants face social marginalisation of many sorts in America. They face subordination and discrimination based on race, colour, and religion. They are rejected and separated by the natives because of their cultural and physical features. Edwidge Danticat, one of the many Haitian-American writers, writes about immigration to America. She writes about marginalisation faced by immigrants in the form of harsh immigration rules in her book *Brother I'm Dying* and also about the various problems faced by immigrants. She tries to portray through her characters the marginal status of the Haitians as they immigrate to America. In one of her podcasts at the *National Endowment for the Arts*, titled "Danticat on immigration," she says that she hopes that her book *Brother I'm Dying* is one of many that portrays an

immigrant experience that is relatable to the general public because, at our core, we are all human. Our parents had big aspirations. They paved the way. It was these individuals who made the decision that they wanted a better life. She hopes the book gives a face to at least one immigrant family who functions the way many immigrant families function these days. They are very committed to the country where they are, in this case, the United States, but also have strong ties back home. She hopes it provides a window into the complex immigration system. Immigrants from various countries are not welcome by the host country with their native cultural identity; every time there is a crisis or a turbulent condition, their loyalty is demanded in the form of their documents or by marginalising them from the country's affairs. A Prominent immigrant writer, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, writes in her essay, "The Reluctant Patriot," in the *Los Angeles Times* how the Indian immigrants are marginalised and are seen with suspicion every time there is a significant conflict in America during the Iranian hostage crisis, the Persian Gulf War, or any other major conflict in America. She writes that we who live in America but don't seem American must bear the responsibility of demonstrating our patriotism.

One of the Diasporas most marginalised in America is the Caribbeans-Haitians and their generations who live in America. Haitians face threats in their daily lives, including exploitation, racial discrimination, and unethical deportation, showing the hostility of the light coloured towards the poor races. Haitians work as slaves and cheap labour, but the status given to them is neither Haitian nor American. They do not get access to education or health care

services. Due to the shabby living conditions in shantytowns and the country's slums, these people have no social or political rights and are also prone to dangerous diseases like HIV. Many Haitians even turned to becoming sex workers to earn a livelihood. In *Everything Inside*, short stories by Edwidge Danticat, Anika, the female character in the story "The Gift," who is an immigrant to Miami, becomes a sex worker to make ends meet. Barrymore A. Bouges, a Professor at Brown University, in an interview with Doug Becker, a journalist on Haitian poverty and political marginalisation, says that 99% of blacks live in Haiti. However, light-skinned people control the economy of Haiti. Their interests clash with the black people; hence, there is poverty and distress among the Haitians. They face social marginalisation in their own country due to colour and race, and when they migrate to the U.S., they get the same treatment as in Haiti, which is different from the American Blacks. The U.S. became the last country to recognise Haiti as a Democracy. Haiti is synonymous with poverty, backwardness, evil magic, etc. It has caused Haitians to be disrespected and marginalised, not only in the Caribbean but in North America as well. The Haitians have also migrated due to natural calamities like earthquakes and landslides in Haiti, and their situation as migrants is often more pressing. According to Stuart Hall, print, broadcast, and multimedia explore the challenges faced by Haitians and other marginalised countries in the Caribbean and Dominican countries. They reveal the details of the socially marginalised people being shattered and tortured, their suffering leading to their numbing silence. The marginalisation of the Haitians and Dominicans affects their psyches; this seclusion results from poverty and race.

Marginalisation has a societal impact; it affects societies globally, and in societies, marginalisation affects small communities, ethnic groups, individuals, and classes. People marginalised socially have no access to resources or things of livelihood. They often suffer from negative public attitudes. It has adverse effects on their health, both physically and psychologically. They develop low self-esteem, consider themselves underrated, and have low self-confidence. They have low participation in local affairs, resulting in their isolation from social policies and limited access to health services, education, workplaces, and affordable accommodation. Poverty, dependency, and feelings of shame are problems faced due to social marginalisation. Different people and groups react differently to marginalisation. A person who cannot access his basic needs and civic amenities faces social marginalisation. It is also called social exclusion. Marginalisation is the non-availability of good education, access to healthcare services, employment, non-availability of good roads, and secure surroundings. Thus, being excluded from society, being poor, unemployed, or discriminated against can adversely affect the lives of individuals and groups.

Edwidge Danticat's works portray the lives of many migrated Haitians. Haitians face social marginalisation in their day-to-day life, both in their own country, where a handful of fair-coloured politicians do not give freedom and rights to the blacks as well as in the country they migrate where they are not citizens but immigrants, refugees, or unwanted people who have invaded the host country. The natives do not cherish the presence of these unwanted people, whom they consider a burden on their country, uncivilised and

barbaric. In Danticat's *Behind the Mountains*, Celiane, the protagonist, belongs to a poor farmer family in Beau Jour, Haiti. The father, Victor, a poor farmer who cannot fulfil his family's needs, migrates to New York in search of new prospects. He finds a friend who helps him; he still feels marginalised from his land and family. Immigration does move him to a new and prosperous place, but he remains poor; he cannot call for his family at his expense. Celiane, on the other hand, when she shifts to the city, feels out of place. The seclusion here is from the family; all the members work to make the two ends meet. Celiane says that though sunlight is there, facilities are there, and the family is not together. Haitians get petty jobs. They get miserable salaries, but they do not complain of this social marginalisation as in Haiti, they have no jobs. They face the inhuman behaviour of dictators. Victor and Aline work in restaurants; they are paid less but are happy to be together. This type of marginalisation is also termed voluntary marginalisation, where the marginalised submits to the terms of the host country. Voluntary immigrants view the US as a land of economic opportunities; they earn meagrely, and their jobs are the ones Americans consider demeaning. They suffer marginalisation in their day-to-day life and submit as they do not want to return to Haiti, where they are considered unskilled and unemployed.

The characters in Danticat's work are subject to various forms of social marginalisation in the host country. In New York, Celiane has to attend a particular class in school as she is Haitian and does not know English. The immigrants are not acceptable with the knowledge of their language and culture; they have to be civilised and learn the host's language. Celiane feels

uncomfortable as she speaks Creolised English. Celiane, a bright student in Haiti and a topper in her class, is given a backbench and the impression that she is weak. She feels marginalised and thinks of herself as dumb as she cannot cope with the new learning. When asked by Moy how she was doing, “I told him I was not doing so well. I was having trouble with the lessons and I didn’t have any friends” (114). Celiane had always felt that speaking a different language would change her, but she is happy to learn a new language in a new country. She says that when she used to consider moving to New York back in Beau Jour, she used to think that learning a new language would change her. However, she and Moy were speaking a few words to each other in English and were nonetheless the same people that they had always been, even though they were speaking a different language.

Social marginalisation also affects the family as the family ties break. The family needs to adjust to the new atmosphere, so there are differences between the father and the children. As feared, they all are affected by the change of place, and everyone has new responsibilities to make life possible in the new land. Another form of social marginalisation is the non-availability of affordable housing for Haitians. In *Behind the Mountains*, Immacula’s mother works hard to raise her children, and the landlord is always against her not being home and leaving her children alone. The landlord constantly threatens the lady to throw them out; Immacula has to leave school some days to be home and look after the children. The landlords want to take financial advantage and exploit the people psychologically by maltreating them. The feeling of marginalisation thus creeps the mind of the Haitians that the natives

want them out, not only from society but also from the country. Celiane feels upset as she speaks about Immacula's distress:

Immacula's mother has been working both a day and a night job since Immacula's father died. . . . This is why she is often absent from school. Immacula's landlord has repeatedly told Mrs Cadet that he does not like the idea of minors being home alone so much. He worries that the girls could damage his property without adult supervision. Last night he threatened to throw them out (147)

Social marginalisation takes place at the micro and macro levels. Social marginalisation at an individual level means an individual's exclusion from meaningful social participation. Individuals often face discrimination in different social institutions, such as family, workplaces, schools and neighbourhoods. Discrimination in religious places is prevalent. Certain castes or races are prohibited from entering religious places.

One of Danticat's characters in *Untwine*, Giselle, thinks of herself as marginalised as she cannot meet her family. She thinks she is prey to all dangerous things in the world around her as she does not have her protection, that is, her mother and father, "I have become prehistoric, I want to tell both Aunt Leslie and the policewoman. If I were left out in the forest the way I am now, I would become prey for the hunt. Wild bison would devour me. And I don't even have my amulets to protect me. I don't have Mom and Dad. I don't have the Hand of Fatima. I don't have Isabelle" (25). Giselle's memories of the past help her overcome this feeling of being marginalised in the hospital; she wonders if her sister Isabelle, her mother and her father are alive and will

meet her again. She thinks, “The things I do remember are what’s keeping me on the surface. Happy or sad, these memories are mine. They are what I want to go back to when I am well again. If I am ever truly well again. This must also be true for Isabelle. How could it not be? Our lives began with one cell. We are almost the same person. So if I am alive, she must be, too” (38-9). Giselle tries to remember her family and the happy days she shared with her sister, and all these memories make her live and give her hope that she will be well and with her family. The diaspora often faces crimes related to marginalisation by the host country; the people face racism, kidnapping, child trafficking and colour discrimination. Gloria Carlton, the girl who hits Gisselle’s family’s car, faces discrimination at the hands of society in the form of her foster parents misusing and abusing her. This hate crime profoundly impacts her mind, and she suffers the trauma, thereby showing suicidal tendencies and, in the event, hurting Gisselle’s family. The foster parents mistreat and kidnap her, and the girl is secluded from society and used in crime. Her true identity is Janice Hill, and she lives under the garb of Gloria Carlton, “The girl has several aliases and so do the parents. If they are her parents” (217). When the police catch the girl, she feels happy that she will be free of being a part of her parents’ crimes. Gisselle finds relief in the girl’s smile when she sees the news: “Janice doesn’t look nervous at all. She even smiles a little, a restrained but real smile. A smile of relief” (223).

In *The Art of Death*, Edwidge Danticat writes about the marginalisation of her mother by death. All-powerful death marginalises one from the self, family and society. Danticat’s mother accepts her death and wants to face it

wholeheartedly. She writes that we feel our loved ones will fight with death for our sake, but here, Danticat's mother does not want to fight death. She is tired and submits, "On my mother's cassette, I heard some ambivalence. She did not want to die. But she eventually came to terms with the fact that she might (But we all must die someday). Still, she was not willing to rage, to fight until her final breath" (21). Death for Danticat's mother is freedom from the social obligations and marginalisation and a final meeting with one that is God; she writes, "I'd rather think that it's some type of new beginning, a positive one for her" (31). Danticat says that her mother's marginalisation from this world by her diseased body will end soon as she joins their father, as she thinks it is a culture that Haitians see the dead when they are approaching near death. She explains:

When my father was dying, he would tell my mother that he couldn't sleep, because he'd see shadows circling his bed. Sometimes he would even see his long-dead parents, most frequently his mother, who he said was wearing a celebratory red dress. "They've come for him," my mother said. My father died a few days later. The weekend before my mother died, she was sleeping an average of eighteen hours a day. One afternoon she woke up and appeared extremely alert and surprised to see me. Looking right past me, she said, "What are you doing here?" in a tone of voice I immediately recognised as the one she used to speak to my father. (56)

Danticat also describes the deaths of thousands of people who died in Haiti's earthquake. Haiti is a marginalised country, and an earthquake shattered

it in 2010. The country has a poor social network and was disconnected from the world until other countries came for help. Danticat feels for the Haitians and says that it is the darkest night in her life and for the Haitians. “When I returned home, the dark night continued. With daylight came the first images of the devastation” (37). Social marginalisation excludes one from the self as well as from society. As death approaches, Danticat’s mother excludes herself from everyone and does not want to meet anyone, not even her children. It is only Edwidge who is beside her mother. She wants to devote herself to the teachings of God. She wants to have nightly devotions with her daughter; both sing hymns after everyone sleeps. She loved the Beatitudes; they offered her some consolation. Beatitudes are promises that are about to be fulfilled. Beatitudes will comfort both of them; the mother will meet God, and the daughter will be comforted after the mother’s death. Mother withdrew herself from the world. She had stopped watching television, going out, and talking to anyone on the phone, and she felt excluded and marginalised inwardly as cancer had invaded her whole body. She did not want to listen to the Bible, which supposedly had shifted into her head. She had turned mute. Danticat says, “Instead of talking now, my mother mostly listened” (94). Death is the most potent power that takes over the marginalised body and ends its sorrow.

Haitians migrate to New York for job prospects and to fulfil their materialistic temptations. In the new place, they are looked down upon by society and not given better opportunities in studies and work. The story “Dosas” in *Everything Inside* Danticat describes the job ventures of two female characters, Elsie and Olivia. They meet in Miami, where they complete a one-

week refresher course for home attendants. They are not fortunate enough to get entry to a nurse's course. They joined for the nurse's assistant's jobs, where they cared for the older adults; here, Olivia fares well as she is well versed in English. Danticat condemns the marginalisation of the Haitians in society and their denigrating jobs and salaries. Danticat criticises the wealthy for marginalising their elders and leaving them at the disposal of nurses. Danticat writes about these poor, underrated Haitian nurses who care for these elders in seclusion; they primarily care for elderly, bedridden patients. They would stay up late at night when their wards were well-medicated and asleep and gossip in low tones, passing judgment on and condemning the children and grandchildren of their patients, whose pictures were displayed next to medication bottles on bedside tables but whose voices they hardly ever heard on the phone and whose faces they hardly ever saw in person. In many cases, the diasporic situation involves a lot of bewilderment and suffering, and it may take a turn for the worse. People who cannot cope with the adverse circumstances of displacement lose control of life and yield under pressure. This approves Homi Bhabha's words in his *The Location of Culture*; "... his existential evocation of the 'I' restores the presence of the marginalised ... illuminates the madness of racism, the pleasure of pain, the agonistic fantasy of political power" (58).

Haitians are poor, illiterate people who look for decent jobs to make a living. In the story "The Port-au-Prince Marriage Special," Edwidge Danticat describes the miseries of Haitians. People of Haiti were deported from the United States as possible carriers of HIV. Haitians were mistreated, shunned,

marginalised and secluded from society as spreaders of the disease AIDS. Melisande, a Haitian girl, works in a hotel with her mother and is diagnosed with AIDS. She takes care of the Hotel owner's eleven-month-old son, Wesley. The mother and father are worried and get Wesley checked for HIV infection; the results are negative. They decide to get good treatment for Melisande to defend against the disease. The rich exploit the poor Haitian workers who come to the hotel. They have fun attracting the women with some money and are responsible for Melisande suffering from the disease. According to the United States, Haiti was the chief spreader of AIDS. The hotel owner is educated and asks the girl's mother to take life easy and take care of the girl and love her, not to marginalise her as happens in society. She asks her to spend valuable time with her daughter as she would always spend and love her instead of cursing her; this way, she can help her the most. The story also brings to light the practice of quackery, the quacks that played with the people's lives. With all his degrees, the Canadian doctor fooled the lady and Melisande by giving fake medicines, which led to the deterioration of Melisande's health. The degrees attracted the lady, she says; she shouldn't have believed the physician. Maybe the white skin and numerous degrees on his wall made her blind. A thought enters her mind: if Melisande had been her daughter, would she have trusted him? This also shows how Haitian doctors were marginalised and mistrusted against white doctors, and skin, not quality, was checked. The Haitian doctor told them the truth; he revealed that the treatment Melisande received from the Canadian doctor was ineffective compared to aspirin. It was a dummy pill. It had been doing absolutely nothing for her. Her immune

system may have been weakened. The Canadian doctor had been exposed by some colleagues, who had reported him to the Ministry of Health for selling those useless pills to dozens of unaware patients throughout the city, and he fled Haiti. Everyone questioned if he was a doctor at all.

Marginalisation denies access to rights and liberty to choose for oneself and the fruits of one's labour. The people at the margins are denied discretion and equal opportunities, whereas the ones at the centre enjoy their freedom and rights. It denies basic human rights, especially the right to live equally. Race, colour, classification and faith become a criterion of prejudice in many societies; this discrimination excludes people and communities and obstructs their productive participation in economic and social development. In the story "The Gift," Anika is at the margin deprived of all means of survival and turns to become a sex worker to meet her ends. Thomas, a wealthy businessman, is the centre, with all the luxuries of life. Anika, a migrant artist, faces many odds in Miami and is happy to meet Thomas, who helps her sell some of her paintings. Despite help and her relationship with Thomas, she is still the other, marginal when it comes to Thomas's family; he does not even share his grief with her. He thinks of himself as being socially marginalised as he loses his family and his limbs. Anika saw the scars of tears, dips, folds, keloids, and patches on his back, stomach, and thighs where he had been bruised, scratched, pricked, or had lost layers of skin, as well as other scars that covered every inch of his body. She also witnessed his prosthetic leg. He thinks Anika would make fun of his unreal body, so he feels aloof and alienated. He feels that Anika is the centre and is being marginalised from society as he has lost everything

in his life but is unaware that both of them are marginal, she in society and he in his life. Two college roommates, one looking for opportunity and one rich, privileged American, become friends in Danticat's other story, "Hot-Air Balloons." Neah is an American citizen, and Lucy is a Haitian who grew up travelling with her migrant parents, always searching for a good future, and the journey never ends. Lucy knows what displacement is and how it is to survive amidst people in different places.

She has gone through the pain of disapproval and suffered society's marginalisation and unacceptance every time they changed places, schools and society. This story also portrays the plight of women in society and how they are used and misused for selfish gains. Neah volunteered to work in Leve, a women's organisation, a rehab centre in a village in Port-au-Prince. This centre highlighted the marginal sect of ill-treated women who had suffered through the Duvalier regime, their bodies mutilated and violated by cruel, tyrannous men. Danticat writes to soothe the wounds of these women. The scars, the wounds, and the silence all have an atrocious tale to tell, which is penned in the works by Edwidge Danticat.

The migrants hide their emotions and their disgraceful jobs from their children. They fear disregard from their children and society. In the story "Sunrise, Sunset," Carole and Victor get petty jobs as migrants. Victor is a bus driver while Carole works in people's houses to fulfil the needs of their children and hides this from her children so as not to disgrace them in society. She would also clean other people's homes while her children were in school and her husband was at work whenever money was tight, especially after she

and Victor bought their home in Little Haiti in Miami, something that her husband and children were unaware of. Life in the host country is less fantastic than one fantasises. The stories on social media and the pictures in magazines are unreal and fake when one faces reality. Only the whites or the wealthy enjoy luxury and respect: the migrants and the blacks live in dirty slum areas that do not fulfil life's basic requirements. The story "Seven Stories" depicts the beautiful and the ugly: a Caribbean shantytown and the Prime Minister's Mansion. The disbelief of the writer about the beautiful island is shattered when she sees the slum area of the town, the filth and the dirt, and the miserable condition of the people in the hospital, which was shown as picture perfect on the visit of the minister all describe how poor people are marginalised and secluded to suffer in the society. The driver took the writer into the life of these people excluded from society. He turned off the main road, and took a side path that narrowed into a hilly dirt path that was strewn with plastic water bottles, flattened foam containers, and used clothing and rags that were partially buried in the red soil. Women were cooking food for sale in large pots resting on boulders and sticks on one side of the car while a line of men washed their rental motorcycles in a muddy stream on the opposite side. From the terrace of the residence, they had probably seen a few shantytowns like this one. The writer was not astonished to see the poor's pathetic condition as she had witnessed many such slums and shanty towns in civilised and cultured countries. This story is symbolic of the malpractices of countries hidden behind the appealing and angelic.

Edwidge Danticat has faced social marginalisation in the form of racial discrimination in college. She has seen racism. In Haiti, racism was one black against the other. Noirism meant pride in being a Black. It had nothing to do with colour, creed or class. Duvalier distorted the meaning of Noirism to mean black skin. He used colour to demonstrate nationalism. According to him, people of black origin were nationalists, whereas people of mixed origin were not nationalists and were to be driven out of the country or killed. Danticat, in one of her interviews with Opal Adisa Palmer, “Up, Close and Personal: Edwidge Danticat on Haitian Identity and the Writer’s Life,” writes about Duvalier’s approach towards Noirism and nationalism, Francois Papa Doc Duvalier had equated nationalism with Noirism, according to which a person is only authentically Haitian if they had a dark complexion. That was his plan to exterminate, expel, and kill the nation’s mulatto aristocracy (347). In the same interview, Danticat also talks about her ragging in school because she was black. Danticat grew up in an all-Haitian, all-Black, all-Caribbean neighbourhood before starting college. She didn’t experience a deliberate racist attack. Once, she was at Brown University and was referred to as a brown dog by some inebriated football players following her down the street. That day, she recalls thinking, “Well, it feels like this” (“Up, Close” 348). Perhaps because she was protected by her community, she didn’t identify it as being directed towards her until it was so clear.

Celiane, one of Danticat’s protagonists in *Behind the Mountains*, also faces racism in her school in Brooklyn, where she is shifted back in line and ends up getting the food in last place. Her classmates also guided her to be

vigilant of some students who mistreated and teased the Haitian students. She is introduced to the class and told to avoid some students who practised discrimination, “. . . and the best time to go to avoid some of the more quarrelsome kids who liked to tease the Haitian students” (105). Racial discrimination has become an inseparable part of the lives of the diasporic people. The natives of the host country are educated and cultured, yet they follow discrimination. The diaspora being fewer in number makes them vulnerable to discrimination. Bill Ashcroft et al. write in *Key Concepts in Postcolonial Studies* that the “complex existence” that migrants lead compels them to face and rewrite various hegemonic constructs of identity that they have acquired in their home or new nation states, and to restructure both their identities and their actions (89).

In *Untwine*, the Boyer family faces social marginalisation as they face the accident, which they thought to be a hate crime but eventually turns out to be an outrage of a young girl towards her own life. The family, especially Giselle, feels isolated and does not know what happened to her family in the accident. According to Human Trafficking Report 2014, more people are trafficked into Haiti than any other country in Central or South America. Haiti is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children who are subjected to forced labour and sex trafficking, according to the United States Department of State’s “2013 Trafficking in Persons Report.” The majority of trafficking instances in Haiti involve kidnappings for domestic labour. After the Earthquake in Haiti in 2010, human trafficking has increased. During slavery, Blacks were susceptible to barbaric and erotic treatment. They

were subjected to brutal beatings, and females were forced to breed and forcibly raped to gain physical and psychological control over their bodies. Bell Hooks, in *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*, states that “Rape was a common method of torture slavers used to subdue recalcitrant black women. The threat of rape or other physical brutalization inspired terror in the psyches of displaced African women” (18). This callous treatment and sexual abuse of the Black women affected their consciousness, forcing them to lead a life of subjugation and devaluation. She could never get up again as she was consciously fed with torture that she was meant to be abused.

Growing up in Haiti and then migrating to America, Edwidge Danticat has witnessed the discrimination suffered by the Blacks and Black Haitians. In America, Haitian blacks face discrimination against the American blacks, who hold a superior position to the Haitian or Afro-Blacks. In *The Art of Death*, Danticat describes journalist and memoirist Ta-Nehisi Coates, who writes in *Between the World and Me*, his 2015 National Book Award-winning letter to his teenage son, Samori, where he says that black people love their children obsessively because they have seen the blacks and their children killed by Americans in the streets of America. Coates further writes that Blacks would rather kill their children themselves than see them miserable on the streets of America. Danticat, who has faced criticism in college as a black student, writes that many other writers also write about the tortures suffered by slaves and blacks. She writes how Toni Morrison in *Beloved* describes a slave mother committing infanticide to protect her children from discrimination and violence a slave has to face throughout their lives. Danticat describes, “During

slavery, slave patrols were the police, and the law itself was deadly for people like Coates's ancestors and mine, who were considered property" (67). The slaves were the property of the masters from birth to death. They had to obey the master in every possible manner. In *Beloved*, the protagonist Sethe kills her children to save them from slavery. Sethe's story is the real life of Margaret Garner, an enslaved woman who ran away from a plantation in Kentucky, and after slave catchers tried to take her and her family back, she slit the throat of her two-year-old daughter with a butcher knife. Margaret Garner would probably have killed herself, too, had they not stopped her (67). Sethe is a lifetime slave whose entire family is a slave, and her children will also be slaves. After a lifetime of slavery and going through the pains and sufferings of being a slave, Sethe does not want her children to die a slow, torturous death at the hands of their masters, so she kills them to save them from slavery. Danticat describes the story as a torturous death but much better than a slave's life:

The scene begins concisely, though it is filled with the kind of tension that commands us not to turn away. Two boys-they are allowed to be boys, children, hurt and wounded children-are bleeding. But their mother is not yet allowed to be their mother. She is a 'nigger woman' who is holding bleeding children, one of them by the heels. Then the moment that always makes me gasp, no matter how many times I've read the book, is when Sethe avoids eye contact with the slave catchers, then swings her baby against the wall, missing, then tries again to connect. (69)

Danticat writes that a mother killing her children is awful and heinous, but living as a slave is more tormenting than death. She writes, “It would take struggle and effort to kill her own child, but there was something else, which in her mind was much worse: the living death that was slavery” (69).

Colonisation and Globalisation gave birth to many evils in society. Discrimination is one of the evils bred by both. Race, colour, caste, and gender all types of discrimination evolve because of the two. The Haitian revolution long challenged colonisation, but Haiti’s freedom was engulfed by the darkness of racism in Haiti and the outside world in the so-called civilised countries. Danticat, in her stories in *Everything Inside*, describes how racism affects the migrants’ years after they have settled in the host country. In “The Port-au-Prince Marriage Special,” Melisande and her mother, Babette, face disgrace in society as Haitians (blacks) are believed to be the spreaders of AIDS. Melisande has AIDS. She contracted the virus from a Haitian visitor in the Hotel. Melisande is put off work and asked to stay away from everyone, but the owners are good and help her with medicine. Melisande isolates herself from the society, and her condition deteriorates. United States deported all Haitians as it feared the spread of AIDS. Writers like Edwidge Danticat and Jamaica Kincaid write about the ill-treatment met by the blacks and Haitians in the U.S. Danticat writes in *Create Dangerously* that many of them had grown extremely sensitive and were willing to censure anyone who did not provide a ‘good image’ of Haiti and Haitians since they had been unfairly maligned in the media at the time as disaster-prone refugees, boat people, and AIDS carriers (32).

Danticat's works deal with the lives of the immigrant Haitians. She writes about the most marginalised section of society: the women. Many of the narrators of her stories are women. Haitian society is patriarchal; women are at the margins and have to connect to the centre, the patriarch. Being a woman and a Haitian simultaneously makes the narrators even more submissive and invisible. These women are Haitians; they belong to poor or middle-class families, and society pays no heed to their voices. Edwidge Danticat gives voice to such women, and her works portray the discrimination against these women. Women do not have any rights, and they have to accept the rules made by the men of society. Danticat writes about Haitian women, their sufferings, traumas, and the ill practices they face in the name of culture. In *Breath, Eyes and Memory*, her first fictional work, she writes about the oppression of young Haitian girls at the hands of their mothers checking their virginity. Sophie, the mother, suffers a deep psychological trauma because of this testing and still wants her daughter to undergo it as it is Haitian culture. Danticat is accused of shaming Haitian women to gain financial benefits and become famous. However, Danticat is trying to uncover stereotypical malpractice that puts the women folk to the test for ingenuity, and they suffer from the trauma caused by it all their lives as Sophie does. Danticat defends herself by writing an afterword in the second edition and defending her heroine, Sophie. Danticat writes that she is writing as the word spreads, and they both are revealed as being involved in the revelation. She is sick of protesting, so she needs to explain. In contrast to what she had intended, people will understand that she is trying to bring forth a malpractice, but some voices have turned against her

and Sophie. She feels light as she unburdens herself of her fear and thanks Sophie to be the process of her healing.

Women constitute almost half of the society. She is often portrayed stereotypically, meek, silenced, oppressed, and marginalised by many authors in their works. Society needs to be made aware of the roles of woman as a fighter, supporter, and one who binds all together because these roles and experiences do not find a place in literature. As a woman migrates, she has to transform and has to stand for her family not only inwardly but outwardly as well. The woman faces a dilemma; her identity is at stake. She contemplates what her identity was before or what it will be now. Erik Erikson writes, “In the social jungle of human existence, there is no feeling of being alive without a sense of identity” (*Identity* 38). Identity formation is a dynamic process, and globalisation has made it possible for identities to transform, undergo change, and be reformed. In *Behind the Mountains*, Celiane, her brother and her mother are left in Haiti by her father as he migrates to a new land. The two strong women, the mother and daughter duo, live in the mountains, waiting for their call to the country. Celiane and her mother also show strength when their carrefour meets an accident, and they face distress and confusion in Port-Au-Prince. Celiane, however, wanted her father to be with them. When Celiane moves to Brooklyn, she has to accept the change and assimilate into the new life. Celiane feels out of place; she is marginalised in the new place, has no friends and knows she cannot make friends as she is poor at it. Suddenly, her life has changed, and she has to obey her father. Father whom she loved, but as they were away, she was unaware of patriarchal care and bond, which she

suddenly realised. Marginalisation makes a person depressed and under stress to make oneself visible. Celiane makes her father happy, tries things on her own, makes things worse and is scolded for not talking about her whereabouts. This leaves her questioning that Moy, her brother, is not asked where he goes, and she has to answer all the questions. This feeling of seclusion is for a short period as Celiane accepts her new life and her marginalisation in society; the void is filled up with her new friends, and she gets accustomed to the new atmosphere. She feels being a girl is burdensome; one must look for security and love, which she thinks she will only find with her parents and brother.

Danticat lived in Haiti, and the family followed patriarchy. The Haitian culture regards the male as the head of the family, and his decisions are to be followed. *Anacaona* is about a Haitian warrior princess who is brought up as a warrior as she could be a possible choice to be the ruler, as it is a tradition in Xaragua that the maternal grandchildren (matriarchal) take the throne. Though Anacaona is raised as she desires, she is a witness to the dominance of males in society and the oppression of women. Danticat here compares the ducks to the women who are unaware; the hunters have caught them, and once caught, they have no going back; they are never free. Anacaona narrates a ballad describing the innocence and misery of these ducks. Women suffer the same fate as the ducks. Matunheri, the chief, has a number of wives who must obey him and make him happy. These women have no going back; they live and die for the sake of their husbands. Anacaona says, “Are the ducks not aware of the gourd-men? Do the ducks consult each other about these gourd-men? Why, after all this time, have the ducks not learned to flee the gourds? When I posed

these questions to Matunheri, who is the wisest man in Xaragua, he asked me to remember that the ducks caught by the duck hunters never return to their flock” (19). The wives of Matunheri must submit or suffer; we learn that as the eldest wife, Guamayto says that they all should be loyal to their husbands and love him so much that when he dies, they should be ready to be buried beside him as per the custom. Guamayto, in her advice to Anacaona, says:

‘Be obedient.’ ‘Do as Chief Caonabo says. He is the ruler of Maguana, not you.’ ‘Be kind to everyone.’ ‘Learn to love your new land.’ ‘Love him so much that if he should die, you would readily be buried with him, but if he should live, you would be even more joyful.’ This gave us all pause, as we knew that Matunheri did not have much time left and it seemed as if Guamayto was telling us that she was ready to follow the custom and be buried with him at the time of his death. (64)

The men in Haiti followed polygamy; Anacaona’s brother Behechio had twenty wives. If he is displeased by any, he leaves her. Like other lifeless things, a woman is considered a ‘thing’ for man’s consumption. In Haiti, women’s lives are shaped by patriarchy. Women who leave their homes and settle abroad or marry in a far-off land continue to follow the rigid forms of patriarchy as they did in their native homes. These women are advised to be loyal, faithful and obedient by the older women. Disobedience will lead to conflict, which is not welcome. Women are born to serve man and die with him. These stereotypical values force a woman into guilt if she disobeys, and she can never form an identity. She must sacrifice her cultural identity when she goes to a new place. Cultural identity for her is the cultural identity of her

husband. Anacaona has been raised as a warrior as an heir to Chief Matunheri. She is marginalised to give the succession to her brother Behechio, and she will be married to Chief Caonabo to strengthen the ties between the two tribes, as Caonabo is a powerful ruler of Maguana.

Anacaona reconciles with her new identity and says, “Not that I didn’t know this before, but my suddenly empty days are reminding me that to be the wife of the cacique is not at all the same as being the cacica” (74). Anacaona accepts her new identity but does not want to assimilate. She wants a new identity different from being Caonabo’s wife, so she tries to show Caonabo that she possesses excellent carving and warrior skills. Caonabo wants her to polish her skills and agrees that she works with the artisans in Maguana and train as a warrior. Danticat faced several issues when she migrated from Haiti; she resisted, fought and rose high to become a renowned writer today. In her interview with Sandy Alexandre, she says, “I am interested in the role of women unravelling and recounting history and culture both in the private and public realm, and that’s one of the things I try to explore in my work” (“An Interview” 165). She writes about such women who have submitted, have undergone trauma, faced marginalisation, and were depressed but came out victorious, realising the power in them. Edwidge Danticat, in her 1996 essay “We Are Ugly, but We Are Here,” describes that the significance of Haitian women and their experiences in life, in Haitian history and the present, have remained unacknowledged:

Where was really my place in all of this? What was my grandmother’s place? What is the legacy of the daughters of Anacaona? What do we all

have left to remember, the daughters of Haiti? Watching the news reports, it is often hard to tell whether there are real living and breathing women in conflict-stricken places like Haiti. The evening news broadcasts only allow us a brief glimpse of presidential coups, rejected boat people, and sabotaged elections. The women's stories never manage to make the front page. However, they do exist. (139)

Anacaona had a bold approach towards life and an unflinching attitude, even after being excluded and marginalised from the throne. Her creation of a new self, adaptation of a new culture, her new cultural identity as a cacique, she welcomed all and ruled Xaragua after the death of Caonabo and Behechio. She became a strong Taino ruler who fought against the Spanish to defend her culture, cultural identity and country. Danticat writes about her to portray the rich heritage of cultural identity of Haitian women, who are not only black women but are powerful women who can save their national and cultural identity.

Edwidge Danticat in *Untwine* tells us about the cruelties afflicted on children; child trafficking is rising. The children, especially female child, is mistreated and misused by the kidnappers to fulfil their selfish desires. Society marginalises these children and does not accept them. Danticat describes one such girl, Gloria Carlton, whose foster parents took her away and did not know whether they were her foster parents, and her so-called foster parents mistreated her. This psychological torture made her susceptible to depression, and she even showed suicidal tendencies. The accident in Gisselle's family results from one such suicidal attempt when Gloria tries to commit suicide but

fails, and, in her desperation, the family suffers as they lose their daughter in the accident. In her search for Gloria, Gisselle discovers she is being forcibly pulled out of the police station, her father is hurting her, and her mother is staring at her. Their cold behaviour also showed their lack of interest in each other and the child:

Gloria Carlton's father is digging his fingernails into her bare elbow. He is biting down on his lower lip and is frowning so hard that his bushy eyebrows meet in the middle of his forehead. Gloria's mother has a fixed, nervous smile on her face. She's pulling Gloria forward with one hand while waving the photographers away with the other. There's a large gap between the three of them, as though the mother is trying to run away from both Gloria and her father. (176)

Gloria, who is Janice Hill, was an alias. She has several aliases as discovered by the police, “‘Something strange is going on,’ Officer Butler says. ‘Your tip was legit. The girl has several aliases and so do the parents. If they are her parents’” (217). Gloria admits that her foster parents took her over, and she feels happy to be in the custody of the police rather than her so-called parents. Gisselle observes Janice relieved when the police catch her, “Janice doesn't look nervous at all. She even smiles a little, a restrained but real smile. A smile of relief” (223). Janice feels sorry as she had no intention to kill Isabelle; Gisselle writes, “Her eyes get cloudy, and her lips tremble. She regrets it, saying, ‘I would change places with her if I could’” (223). Children belong to society, and when marginalised or excluded because of being an orphan, a black, a girl, or a unique child, suffer pain in the form of depression,

aggression or silence. Janice wants to hurt herself in aggression, but the victim is Isabelle instead.

Kaiama L. Glover, in her article “Ordinary People” in the magazine *Public Books*, emphasises that Danticat enjoys the status of an internationally acclaimed writer. She is more privileged than the rest of her countrymen and can inspire many people in the world. Danticat appreciates her success and is aware of her role as a Haitian. Haiti is her home, and Haitians are her countrymen whom she wants to appraise by writing to the world that Haitians are faithful, hardworking people and have a right to live respectfully anywhere they live. Her writings have the power to cross borders and influence people. Glover writes about Danticat’s love for Haiti. Danticat staunchly describes herself as ‘Afro-Haitian-American’ and has addressed this subject in a way that is both deft and powerful. She has been battling the categorisation of her nation as a failing state and its people as stereotypical victims for almost twenty years now. She has provided us with narratives that remind us of the same environmental, social, and political issues that Haiti’s most vociferous critics worry about. Still, she has always emphasised the universal aspects of the stories she recounts. Danticat writes in full acknowledgement of both the perks and the obligations that come with being a spokesman and spokesperson for Haiti in the North Atlantic literary establishment.

The majority of sufferers visible on social media are women and children. Helpless victims need protection and a voice to speak for them. Women especially are thought to be disempowered and distraught in crises, and the most evident destruction is caused to women. Danticat offers a voice

to such women, and one woman who suffered the pangs of migration and being away from her children is Danticat's mother. Danticat uses her life experiences to construct her characters and their narratives as reflections of her life. Her characters are connected to and located with the history of Haiti. In her memoir, *The Art of Death*, Danticat lends voice to her dying mother, who has been a migrant to Miami and has shared all the troubles with her husband to unite their family. She has been overburdened with not only assimilation to a new land, but she faces marginalisation as a migrant and exclusion for not learning English. Her mother has also been strong enough to lend a hand to other women build their identity whilst keeping her cultural identity intact and always longing to have free will to follow her traditions and keep Haiti living in her and her children's lives by teaching them and making them follow their Haitian cultural identity. Danticat writes that her mother is an inspiration for a lot of migrant women, as also for Danticat. She was always a strong woman and wanted Danticat to be one; her last words for Danticat were, "Be a strong woman" (16). Danticat's mother raised her to be a strong woman by giving her all the freedom and choices to endure the world herself. She wants her to stand up for herself and other Haitian women.

Danticat tells the reader of the hardships endured by a Haitian woman who suffers in Haiti and has to change as she migrates and gets marginalised in an alien land. Danticat writes that when a Haitian dies or travels abroad, it is said, "'lot bodlo,' 'on the other side of the water;'" (12), and her mother was on the other side of the water at a very early age due to her sufferings and pain. She writes about the seclusion of her mother despite being with her family:

“My mother at thirty-four was giving birth to me in Haiti. Then two years later she gave birth to my brother Bob. My mother at thirty-eight stayed behind in Port-au-Prince with my brother and me after my father moved to New York to look for work. Then she left us with my uncle Joseph and his wife, Tante Denise, to join my father in New York, when I was four” (12). She was an undocumented immigrant residing in Brooklyn in her late thirties, separated from her two young children. She created handbags in a factory for cents on the dollar. Danticat’s brothers Kelly and Karl were born to her mother in her early forties. When someone is described as being *lot bodlo*, or on the other side of the sea, in Haitian Creole, it either denotes that they have travelled abroad or have passed away. At forty, her mother was already *lot bodlo*, on the other side of the water (12).

In the article, “Must The Subaltern Speak: Edwidge Danticat, Feminism, and the Right to Silence”, Kaiama L. Glover writes how, without resorting to clichés of superhuman resiliency or subhuman abasement, Danticat relates stories of the traumatised bodies of Haitian women. By letting the ‘I’ narrate its own tale and concentrating on the effects of trauma on the bodies and brains of her characters, she can avoid such stereotyping. She describes the pain her mother suffered throughout her life; the end is nonetheless painful. She waits for her death and accepts it bravely.

A Haitian woman’s struggle with the concept of marginalised identity starts in her birthplace. As she grows old, she enters womanhood and being safe is a threat. She becomes an object of interest and violation by powerful, creepy men. She becomes a toy in her mother’s hands; she has to undergo a

test for assurance of purity. Then she leaves her homeland to enter the diaspora, looking for safer, better opportunities and a new free identity. She leaves her birthplace but cannot defy the norms attached to womanhood by society. Her journey is complicated because she is a woman and exists on the margins of the diaspora. Simone de Beauvoir, in her book *The Second Sex*, observes that a woman is not born; she is transformed. She writes, “Only the mediation of another can constitute an individual as an *Other*” (283); a woman being Other to man, she is considered inferior to males who are considered superior and powerful. Edwidge Danticat describes the pathetic condition of women during Duvalier’s reign; women were violated, raped, killed put in miserable situations. A woman was considered the property of the man who wanted her, and there was no denial. Danticat states that her parents fled Haiti in the midst of a 30-year dictatorship, which terrorised the majority of the population. It wasn’t unusual to see women and girls being sexually assaulted. If one of the dictator’s henchmen fell in love with a girl when she was strolling down the street or going to school alone, he may take her. Her aunt and uncle were able to keep her safe from dangers on the street. There was a threat of violence and dishonour outside the home, but Danticat says we were also unsafe at home. Danticat describes one of her fears of death coming alive when Joel, one of Tante Denise’s godsons, exploited young girls in the house during his stay, and one of them was Edwidge Danticat. She was ashamed and depressed. She was hurt to an extent not to tell anyone but to keep mum as she did not want her parents to be ashamed and upset about the incident. Danticat writes that Uncle Joseph and Tante Denise were her guardians in Haiti. Tante

Denise's godson and nephew, Joel, came there when his grandma passed away when he was eleven years old. He would enter the room where Danticat and three other ladies slept several times over several weeks, slipping his hands beneath their night clothes to touch their sensitive areas. It was occasionally two of them. Sometimes, it was the four, and all were too scared to even talk about what was happening among them out of fear that he might murder them if they yelled or informed anybody.

Witnessing crime, being tortured and violated leads to such trauma that one's reaction is denial, silence or submission. Danticat's first reaction to the violation is denial. She accepts her defeat and silences herself for the sake of her parents; she does not want to offend them. With time, her stance changes; now, she knows that her voice is heard and will reach the world, bringing justice not only for her but also for the many more women suffering in their homes. Danticat gives voice to women exploited in their homes and cannot raise a voice due to shame. Kaiama L. Glover, in her article on Edwidge Danticat, describes how storytelling or talking to someone relieves one of the pains suffered by a traumatic event. She writes about Edwidge Danticat's book, which proposes that the experience of extreme violence may be transcended through narrative and hearing processes. Memory develops and brings together a body and a voice separated by trauma and testimony, which rests on the relationship and process between the victim and the witness. In order to overcome trauma, the survivor needs to share her tale with a person who can both hear and listen to her. She has to locate a sympathetic person

who will acknowledge the terrible occurrence and understand her sorrow without making a show of it.

Simone de Beauvoir further writes on the condition suffered by the victim, “. . . her wings are cut, and then she is blamed for not knowing how to fly” (*The Second* 624). She writes that a woman is tortured, suffers, is bound, cannot take leaps, give her freedom, and she will fly. Danticat suffers from the trauma caused by physical abuse. The experience numbs her senses, and she does not want to recall it, so she defies her physical self and merges it with the bed sheets. Her fear of death overpowers her speech, and her freedom and self-identity are lost by the cruelty inflicted on her. She writes that she fantasises that she had blended with the bedsheet and that her body was no longer hers at such times. She used to find specific things to distract her mind from the night during the day, including homemade amulets in the shape of stunning black and brown ladies on toothpaste cartons. She would carve out these faces and their brilliant white teeth, reflecting on how fortunate these bodyless ladies were because no one could harm them. She reasoned that these ladies could protect her by lulling her into a realm of make-believe where everyone smiled constantly and had no exposed body. Edwidge Danticat becomes a voice for the many Haitian women who are silenced. Danticat chooses to be silent, but when she speaks, she writes of herself, which portrays the universal. She writes in *Create Dangerously* that she becomes a representative of the silenced; she exploits her own life and bearings in her works to lend a voice to others. She often feels guilty of using herself, as she has no option other than “self-censorship” as she does not want to offend anyone else (22).

Danticat uses fiction to narrate Haitian history that is too often marginalised or ignored. Haitian historical events such as the Haitian Revolution, the U.S. Occupation of Haiti and the Haitian Massacre in 1937 find their way into Danticat's works. This shows the deep impact of the past traumas and pains that find their way out when given the freedom to. As a Haitian immigrant to the United States, Danticat is a part of this history, and her work forebears its presence. In *Everything Inside*, Haitian history forms a backdrop, but the concerns shift to the present; characters move from Haiti to Miami to New York City and then to modern Haiti, building families and love. Haitian diaspora forms a continuous theme in *Everything Inside*, but instead of describing migration themes, she focuses on the impact of migration. The stories present a day-to-day picture of Haitian-American life. The stories describe the difficulties faced by the previous generations of Haitians to settle in the host countries. They lend a message to the newcomers and the people of Haiti. They vividly describe the various situations Haitians face in accepting and being accepted in America. These experiences include their displacement, seclusion, loneliness and acceptance. Women's roles, hardships, and endurance all play an essential part in their settlement in Haiti. *Everything Inside* describes the characters coming to terms with America. Though we talk of beautiful things in America, some ugliness remains hidden behind the beauty. The ugliness is accepted and portrayed as beautiful by the writer.

The eight stories in *Everything Inside* hide the miseries of the marginalised section of society, the women. Women in a new land are searching for shelter but also become selfish to survive in the new place. Some

get hurt as they have been exploited, but they still linger on to the past to feel secure. Women are an easy target as they adapt quickly and will do anything to survive and live in the host country. The plot of “Dosas” involves a husband, wife, and best friend who are involved in a love triangle “All three of them untwinned, lonely, alone together” (22). Elsie is marginalised in the trio where the husband betrays her and leaves her alone, shattered and broke; as she finds some solace in her work and has started earning well, her peace is destroyed by her husband’s deception, who now wants all her money. Alone as she is, marginalised, isolated, robbed of the only thing she has: her love, Blaise. In this shattered state of mind, her ex-husband exploits her emotionally, and she agrees to help him and part with the meagre amount of money she has. Her mind is preoccupied with Blaise’s thoughts and deceit when she meets Dede, a friend of the two and learns that Blaise has cheated her and Dede by telling him a concocted story of the kidnapping of Olivia. Dede puts up with Blaise as he is a friend, more like a brother. Elsie now feels that only someone you love can harm you as badly as Blaise did. Migrant fellows deceive one another in pursuit of home and food. They are the deprived others who are excluded from all rights and amenities. Thus, they form a separate, unorganised underclass kept out of society. She is depressed and shocked and remembers the day she ignored the friendship between Blaise and Olivia. Now, she is diseased and affected the most, and she puts out everything in the open because she knows from working with the weak and the sick that the ailment you overlook is the one that kills you.

In her story "In the Old Days," Danticat writes about the period when the dictatorship in Haiti ended, and with that, many marriages ended. Some people wanted to return to Haiti, while others wanted to stay in America. Nadia's father wanted to open a school in Haiti, and he went back, leaving her mother alone and isolated to fight for herself as she wanted to stay. It is difficult to define the story's centre and margin as it could be any, Nadia's mother or father. Both were at the margins as they could not define their future at that particular time. Haitians were associated with the spread of the disease AIDS. The U.S. modified rules for Haitian immigration, and Haitians were not allowed to cross U.S. boundaries. Haitian women led a miserable life. Melisande saw her mother work and suffer all her life, and to lessen her burden, she took to pleasing guests in the hotel but ended up suffering from AIDS. A twenty-one-year-old Haitian black girl tricked into a sexual act, fascinated by the riches and promised a good, happy life, Melisande is deceived into earning not a good life but a diseased future. The hotel owner feels sorry for her and says this ring resembles the fake drugs she had taken. It didn't contain any magic, truth, or healing.

The characters portrayed in novels by Edwidge Danticat are marginalised by the patriarchal West that tries to silence them because of their gender, colour, class, and sexuality. Social marginalisation acts as a tool in the fragmentation of these characters as it challenges their identity. Fragmentation means fractured; it results from multiple traumas, each trauma causing a fractured identity. The characters in Danticat's story "Sunrise, Sunset," Carole and Jeanne, the mother and Daughter, are both fragmented individuals. The

mother has sacrificed her life for her children without their knowledge, working in people's homes, and the daughter thinks she would be marginalised because of body shaming due to childbirth. Carole suffers from dementia due to the stress of appraising her family in the host country. She took the task at hand when she arrived in a new land and was able to fulfil her children's dreams.

Danticat writes that Carole ought to have explained her sacrifices to her daughter. If she had, it would be simpler to explain to her now that she couldn't be depressed indefinitely. Where would the family be today if Carole had remained dejected when she first came to this nation? Sometimes, you have to shake the devil-whatever that devil may be. You must begin living for your child even if you don't feel like doing so (*Everything* 120). Women are mostly marginalised section in the society. They are suppressed, violated and tortured. A woman suffers when she leaves her home. She accepts the new home; she adjusts and sacrifices for the sake of her children. Society remains unaware of the roles played by a woman unless a writer gives her a thought and a voice. Anika, in the story "The Gift", a painter, gets exploited and sacrifices her dignity to earn a living. Thomas, the wealthy lover, uses her emotionally and sexually only to leave her in disaster in the guilt of losing her child. Anika epitomises love and sacrifice as she does not tell Thomas of the loss of their child.

The new-era women, the second-generation descendants of the migrants, are not aware of the violence inflicted on the women in Haiti. Neah is a student who belongs to a wealthy family in Miami. She volunteers to work

for a women's recovery centre in a neighbourhood in Port-au-Prince, against her father's wishes. She learns here about the sadness and sorrow of the rape victims and is moved by their pain. She witnesses the brutalities levied on their bodies and minds by the dictatorship in Haiti. In the story "Hot Air Balloons," Danticat describes the violence and pain suffered by the rape victims. This pain is not only physical but also psychological. The trauma was so intense that it had an impact on the perpetrator as well. Neah's ordeal has left her feeling guilty about being there. She says she witnessed all kinds of stuff one wouldn't believe. She witnessed ladies whose tongues had been chewed off by the individuals who had sexually assaulted them. She spent most of her time with juvenile girls there, some as young as thirteen and fourteen. These girls had fistulas as broad as the tops of the drinking cups, and some had syphilis scars that ran down their legs. She encountered several females who had been working on street corners in dimly lit regions where they had been gang-raped by customers, as well as those who had been enlisted in affairs with foreign charity workers, exchanging sex for food before realising they had little control over how much they were granted.

Lucy, Neah's friend, was an immigrant student who witnessed Haitian women and their miserable lives while travelling with her migrant parents. She compared the working, impoverished women to her mother when she saw a flyer one day: "On the flyer were color photographs of undernourished Haitian women who looked like my mother, some carrying heavy buckets of water on their heads while walking narrow dirt paths in the countryside, others sitting on riverbanks washing clothes, a few selling fly covered meat in an open

market” (91). Lucy says that she always wanted a safe home, “a safe harbor.” Neah is “too easily swayed by other people’s stories” (91). The two friends try to analyse their dreams, interpret the pain of others, and help those who are marginalised in society.

More social and cultural capital is required for members of marginalised populations to participate in the development of the host nation. Their weak access to social, economic and political networks deprives them of the right to vote, education, and cultural freedom. This results in social isolation and excludes them from participating in the development process. Economic structures, or the organisation of markets and their integration, are related to economic marginalisation. Some people or groups who participate in the market are divided from others to the point that it is argued that they are marginalised from the rest of the economy. Discrimination on the basis of gender, caste, or ethnicity may result in exclusion from the economy. People who are socially marginalised are likely to have difficulty finding work and rising on the economic ladder. Their revenue comes from several sources. These events have diverse effects on men and women and change with age. People’s health and happiness are impacted by poverty and economic marginalisation both directly and indirectly. Danticat’s narrators belong to the labour class or peasant class. They have a low economic status, which renders them invisible in society. Though the place of origin of Danticat’s stories is the United States, they are the narratives of immigrants who want respectable and high-paying jobs. These immigrants are ill-treated in the markets and given low-paid, small income group jobs. Sometimes, they are not even paid after

the job is done. The Shanty towns described in the story “Seven Stories” are a vivid picturisation of the poor economic condition of the immigrants living in dirty houses and filthy streets.

Political marginalisation does not grant democratic rights to the marginalised. They are not allowed to participate in political decision-making. This curbs their other fundamental rights as they have no say in government policy formation. Political empowerment is necessary for getting social and economic privileges. The lack of political empowerment immensely affects minorities, the blacks, the diaspora, the elderly, and women, who are marginalised. The women do not indulge in political affairs. The power lies in the hands of the men. The men decide the country’s fate; if a woman is needed, the male-oriented religious and cultural environment guides her.

Haiti faces many political problems; the rich and the elite regulate the Haitian economy. The power to manage society rests in the hands of the dictators and the elite. The wealthy enjoy the privileges of quality education, good health and hygiene. Thus, the rift between the haves and have-nots is deepening. The mulatto elite rule the country and do not offer any security to the commoners. The people live in poor, shabby slums and unhygienic surroundings. They do not have access to health facilities and are not given any social or economic security. Living in Haiti becomes a challenge when one faces such a barbarous atmosphere. Many Haitians escape Haiti due to this tyrannical political regime. Approximately two million people have left Haiti during the 20th century, and the migration is continuous. Though the migrants are aware of a rough journey towards the host country, they leave Haiti to

escape the torture and violence in Haiti. Social marginalisation is promoted by globalisation. The cost of living has increased due to inflation, which has a great effect on the migrants. The gap between the rich and the poor keeps on widening. Globalisation has created a difference between people and between countries; the wealthy countries overshadow the underdeveloped and developing countries. These countries are marginalised socially, politically and economically.

Edwidge Danticat has covered almost all forms of marginalisation in her works, focusing primarily on social marginalisation as it greatly impacts people's lives. She, being a woman, also writes about the difficulties she faced as a women writer. In an interview with Bonnie Lyons, published in 2003, Danticat discloses that she read the works of female Haitian writers only after she left Haiti for the United States. The majority of the authors she read as a child were men. Before moving to the US, she had never ever read a single work by a female author. In Haiti, writing was almost like a banned activity. Writing novels as a woman and a poor person was not natural. It was two offences in one. Danticat says, for her using female analogies was almost like forcing the feminine metaphors and female-like behaviours onto what is typically perceived as masculine territory ("An Interview" 192). Danticat also tells how writers like her also suffered social marginalisation as they were condemned and put to the test. They were challenged and silenced forcefully and also threatened. In the essay "Women like us," published as the epilogue of *Krik? Krak!* Danticat talks on how writing is affected by this marginalization of women's history. Danticat says that in Haiti writing before

the age of eighteen was as taboo as wearing thick rouge or going on a date. It was considered as a lethargic activity and according to them the women should learn to cook instead of sitting in a corner. The question was, Can women have a dual career as cooks and writers? They referred to them as kitchen poets. they thought that the women would start cooking sentences in pots (219-20).

In the end, we find that when the immigrants stay for generations in the host land, they adopt the habits of the host land and start thinking of that land as their native land. After spending a long time in the host society, they are also partially accepted by the natives. The situation becomes problematic for the immigrants when accepting nativism becomes the main issue with the native people of the host land. As the narrators in Danticat's works, predominantly women, relate their stories of Haitian history, a more comprehensive picture of domination develops, creating a clear awareness of the vicious methods of oppression employed. The techniques used by the government to control people are harsh and frightening but effective in implementation. However, resistance and rebellion erupt against these oppressive forces by the modern women who challenge the old ideals and myths. Edwidge Danticat has portrayed the subjugation and then the empowerment of women in all of her novels.

Further, in the present times, marginalised women try to find their freedom in the host country. However, they become doubly marginalised, firstly as an immigrant and secondly as a woman. Most female characters, including Sophie, Anika, Carole, Melisande, Babette and others, leave their

native land in the hope of a promising future and life. In some ways, they find themselves free from cultural bondage and become able to make an identity of their own, but in the other way, they are treated as marginalised by the natives of the host country. John McLeod in *Beginning Postcolonialism* discusses that diaspora and migration can be synonymous, but they can be two different entities; both face problems in the new country. Many writers like Bharati Mukherjee, Paul Gilroy, Homi K. Bhabha, Stuart Hall, and Amitav Ghosh have explored diaspora and migrants in their works. Migrants and Diaspora are not initially accepted in the new country, which creates a difference in understanding and leads to their marginalisation. Diaspora is often marginalised in the new country. McLeod writes that very often, diaspora peoples have been ghettoised, denied a sense of belonging in the new nation, and have seen their traditional cultures derided and subject to prejudice (*Beginning* 208). McLeod adds that though the migrants live in the new country yet they cannot make a place for themselves in the lives of the people of the new country, the new people do not accept them and do not let them accept the new country as their home. He writes:

Although migrants may pass through the political borders of nations, crossing their frontiers and gaining entrances to new places, such 'norms and limits' can be used to exclude migrants from being accommodated inside the imaginative borders of the nation. The dominant discourses . . . may function to exclude them from being recognised as part of the nation's people. (*Beginning* 212)

As the migrants stay in the host country, they face aggression, violence, hindrance and low in society, so a notion of marginalisation settles in the minds of these migrants. The government policies for the host country are not favourable for the migrants. They face in humanitarian policies and unfavourable laws. Society never accepts migrants as they are; they must follow the norms and laws of the host country. Socially marginalised both in their native land and in the host country, the migrants rise for their rights. Black Lives Matter is one such organisation in the U.S. that fights for the rights of Blacks.

Chapter 4

Quest for Haitian National Identity

A nation comprises a set of people who inhabit a particular geographical location and share rights and duties. A nation is an expression of people's ideas and aspirations. These ideas originate, evolve, and take the shape of certain symbols and rituals. Patriotism is respect, love, and admiration towards these rituals and symbols. Patriotism leads to the formation of national identity. Blank and Schmidt define national identity as “. . . the status quo in the process of individuals identifying with a nation” (“National Identity” 291). Unlike nationality, which is an objective indicator of an individual's affiliation with a nation, national identity is a subjective concept. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines national identity as: ‘a sense of a nation as a cohesive whole, as represented by distinctive traditions, culture and language.’ It is formed by a sense of common feeling shared with people about the nation, its language, food, culture and traditions. It arises from common elements in people's lives like national history, national symbols, national culture, etc.

The idea of national identity originates from the idea of a nation-state. Nation-states originated as a result of colonialism. The French Revolution paved the way for the development of the nation-state in France. This idea of nationalism gained momentum and spread throughout Europe and across the world. The formation of nation-states took place in two ways: first, a shared feeling of national identity develops among the people living in a particular geographical location, and they organise a state based on their shared identity.

Second is a violent and oppressive method, by colonising the territory and imposing power on the people under the rule. History is a witness that the latter method of nation-state formation is prominent. Colonised people were forced to adopt the identities given to them by the coloniser. When the colonisers left, the colonised were confused as they had the native and the coloniser's identity, so they did not understand which was their self or another identity. Ginetta E. B. Candelario, in her book *Black behind the Ears: Dominican Racial Identity from Museums to Beauty Shops*, writes "Thus, identity is a process of both internalization and externalization; it is at once structured through institutions and left open to interpretive practices of its subjects; and it relies on the expressive and perceptive practices and paradigms of both the self and the other who reflects back the existence of the identified self" (8).

National identity requires self-categorisation, identification of people belonging to a group, and differentiation of people outside the group. Recognition is based on common factors such as common descent, culture, and ancestors. People who identify are said to be belonging to a nation, and people who are different belong to a different nation. Most people have a single national identity, which is acquired either by birth or by choice. However, if one belongs to different nations, one may have more than one national identity that is related to these nations. People whose parents belong to different nations and are migrants, the first and second generations, tend to have different national identities from the nation they live in. National identity is a feeling of affiliation to a nation, emotions towards one's nation, typical characteristics of a particular national group and their difference from other

nationalities, belongingness to a nation, having an opinion about the developments and problems of the nation, following a common national culture, if there is a difference in culture the ancestors are same and following same national principles. National identity is just like other social identities, which teaches one to have emotions like pride and love towards one's nation and feelings of love, selflessness, and obligation to help other citizens.

Every nation is proud of its citizens, and the citizens feel proud to be a part of any nation. Sometimes, the social, political, and economic circumstances force the people of a nation to move away from their homeland. An underdeveloped country ruled by a tyrannous leader with no civic amenities, misery, poverty, and hunger forced the people of Haiti to leave Haiti for a better future for themselves and their coming generations. Though a person subsides in another land, he cannot give away his feelings and emotions for his homeland. The Search for Haitian Identity amidst several different identities is Edwidge Danticat's aim, which she is trying to discover through her works and present to the people living outside and in Haiti.

Haiti means 'land of the mountains' in the Indigenous, or native, Taino language. Socially and politically, Haiti and Haitians have faced a lot of tumult in the last few decades. A large number of Haitians immigrated to the United States of America after the colonisation of Haiti by Spain in 1492. The Spaniards brought the first blacks, Africans, into the new world to extract gold from the mines in Haiti. When the gold from the mines was depleted, Spain's interest in Haiti decreased, leading to deterioration in the lives of the Haitians. France controlled the colony from 1795 to 1802. The production of tobacco,

indigo, sugar, coffee, cotton, and cocoa brought some economy to Haiti. It was one of the wealthiest French colonies and was called 'The Pearl of Antilles.'

According to Flore Zephir, the slave population in Haiti in 1791 was 500,000. However, Thomas Madiou, a Haitian historian, suggests that it was closer to 700,000 as the colonists underreported the slave numbers for tax evasion (*Haitian Americans* 28). When the revolution broke out in 1789, the society consisted of three major classes: the White colonists, approximately 40,000; the African slaves, about 500,000-700,000; and the Affranchis or gens de couleur, approximately 28,000. Saint Domingue was the previous name for Haiti. The grands blancs (big Whites) were the colonial officials, Les couches moyennes (the middle class) were the planters and overseers, while the petits blancs (little whites) were the landless shopkeepers and retail merchants. The White class was separated into these three social divisions based on their social status, financial resources, and land ownership (*Haitian Americans* 29). Mulattoes made up the majority of the Affranchis; they were the progeny of French dads and black slave mothers. Many Affranchis were freed slaves; they sent their children to study in France and considered themselves French persons of colour. The slaves were divided into two major groups, the slaves from Africa and the negres bossals; the French characterised them as uncivilised, while the negres creoles who were born in Haiti were civilised according to the French colonialists. This class division and their differences and struggles show that the Haitians had a belief in identity formation, a self-identity and finally were linked to their land and had a national identity, a Haitian identity.

French colonialism helped form Haitian social classification, but its revolution and independence were the most important period in Haitian history. The long revolt and rebellion by the slaves finally resulted in the Haitian revolution, which was rewarded as Haiti got its independence on 1st January 1804, and the Haitians formed the first black republic in the world. The nations like the U.S. and many other European countries denied the proclamation of Haiti as an independent country. As Haitians believed in Voodoo so, it is said that it faced many inauspicious events from the day it gained independence, the new country was split along racial and territorial lines. Events such as the assassination of Jean-Jacques Dessalines created chaos. This led to the division of the country into two camps, the Mulattoes and the Blacks. Haitian independence also faced a threat as the countries like the U.S. and Europe refused to trade with Haiti. Haiti, which had to pay a massive debt to France instead of its freedom, could never stand up. This was a critical situation for Haiti as it became weak economically. The country has still not recovered from this loss as it had to pay a debt to France which finally ended in 1947.

The Mulattoes and Black elite came to power and used the military to protect Haiti from possible foreign invaders. Haiti was the First Black Republic. The colonies dependent on slaves feared loss, as Haiti was a free country and no more a country which could be exploited and this put an end to the slave trade. Though Haiti followed democratic ideals, many Haitians migrated to the U.S. Haiti depended on its trade with powerful countries for its economic stability and as the U.S. and French moved back. The Americans

occupied Haiti. They helped Haiti to organise a government and administration. They also lent a hand in training the Haitian army. The mulatto elite came into power and tried to establish their control over Haiti. The blacks revolted but were suppressed. The Black Revolution of 1946, led to severe repercussions, the military was called in to curb the uprising by students, trade unions, and communist groups.

After the uprising, Duvalier came to rule and the father and the son ruled Haiti from 1957 to 1986. The Duvalier regime over Haiti was maintained by his paramilitary forces called the Tonton Macoutes. The torturous regime forced many intellectuals and professionals to flee Haiti between 1957 and 1964. These were skilled people who wanted to return to Haiti after the Duvalier regime. These were the first Haitian migrants to the United States. In 1964, the second group of middle-class Haitians left Haiti, when Papa Doc proclaimed his presidency for life. When Duvalier's son Baby Doc came to power in 1971, large numbers of Haitians escaped Haiti through Boats. They were called the Boatmen; these Boatmen still try to evade the borders of other countries to flee from Haiti. More than 50,000 Haitians travelled by boat to South Florida in 1977-1981 and some 5,000 to 10,000 landed by plane ("Political Refugees" 58).

Jean-Claude Duvalier was overthrown in 1986 and fled to France. In 1990 Jean-Bertrand Aristide won the Haitian general elections and he was elected Haiti's first democratic president until 1991. Flore Zephir states in his book *The Haitian Americans* that the poorest areas of Haiti were affected by the U.S. government's embargo on the country, he depicts the deplorable plight

of the Haitians. Haiti was once more thrust into a state of emergency, leading another wave of emigrants to travel to the United States by water in boats and makeshift rafts. A family-unification program allowed almost ten thousand Haitians to enter the country in 1993. Under the protection of the US administration, Aristide returned to Haiti in late 1994 to complete his tenure before it ended in February 1996. Washington gave Aristide specific instructions to tone down his political rhetoric and promote reconciliation after his return (15).

In 2004 Aristide was removed from power following opposition by a new coalition group, and another group of Haitians migrated to the U.S. The government of the United States was hostile to these migrants. Haitians were among the groups who experienced the most discrimination, according to Alex Stepick, et al., in their article “Shifting identities and intergenerational conflict: Growing up Haitian in Miami.” For instance, U.S. officials frequently turned down political asylum claims from Haitians more often than from any other nationality and imprisoned undocumented Haitians disproportionately. They stopped boats before they entered the Haitian seas. Strong opposition from civil and human rights organisations, religious organisations, and black Americans prevented the attempts to isolate Haitians and keep their forcible and illegitimate expulsion from their homeland from succeeding.

Stepick writes that the first batch of Haitians who migrated to the U.S. were educated intellectual people who were well versed in English and French and were skilled in their fields which helped them earn name and fame in Haiti. “Those that have most evident presence in Little Haiti include the Haitian

Refugee Center (HRC), the Haitian American Community Agency of Dade (HACAD), the Haitian-American Chamber of Commerce (HACC), the Haitian Task Force (HTF) and the Haitian-American Democratic Club (HADC)” (“Refugees Nobody” 71). All these organisations gave them social and economic prominence and encouraged them to emphasize their support for less fortunate Haitians. The difference in education and skill also reflects in the living of these Haitians, the more skilled and wealthier reside in the tri-county area while the lower-income Haitians, the working class live in the areas for lower-income groups. To study the identity formation of Haitians, the history of Haiti plays a vital role in determining the causes of Haitian displacement and migration. The concern of Haitians for their country is a result of their love for Haiti. They faced atrocities and witnessed their fellow citizens suffer at the hands of tyrannous rulers. The history and the upcoming future help them form a new identity imbibing the ancestral cultural values of Haiti. Haitian identity construction in the host land among the diaspora depends on their socioeconomic status in the host land and their position in Haiti. The Haitian emigration stories and autobiographies by different authors share with us the diversity in experiences of migration, identity formation, and the processes of adaptation to a new life in the United States.

The description of this history of how meticulously Haitians fought to earn their independence is why they feel proud of their past. The glorious past they carry with them wherever they go. Haiti helped the Blacks in obtaining their freedom as it was the first Black Republic. Haitians celebrate the day worldwide, irrespective of the place they live in. All these celebrations and

recognitions enliven the spirit of Haitianness, which helps them locate the Haitian identity in the host countries where they have migrated. In her interview with Opal Adisa Palmer, Edwidge Danticat describes Haitian history to be an intricate part of Haitians, she says:

History is very present in Haiti. We're always talking about the past because the present is either a recycling of the past or an echo of it or is too painful to discuss as much as the victories, or hindsight failures, of the past. You meet even now people who are so nostalgic about the Duvalier dictatorship because things have gotten so bad. The past is always with us. History is, after all, just another story. ("Up Close" 352)

Edwidge Danticat writes about Haitian identity and the Haitianness she carries wherever she goes. Haitian identity is the identity belonging to a Haitian. Anyone living in Haiti is said to be a Haitian, and the Haitians who migrate to different lands have a Haitian identity that is either retained or transformed according to need in the host country; what matters is how it is visualised. As written by Flore Zephir:

Haitianness is demonstrated mostly through an intense involvement in the Haitian diasporic community and an interest in Haiti and matters at home and in the United States. It can also be expressed by a preference for the label Haitian as a self-ethnic descriptor, an acknowledgement of one's birthplace of Haiti and parent's birthplace, length of residency in Haiti or repeated trips to Haiti and a high level of fluency in Haitian Creole. (*Haitian immigrants* 130-134)

Edwidge Danticat, the Haitian-American writer wants herself to be labelled as Haitian; she writes about Haiti and the calamities and disasters faced by the country. She brings Haiti into the world picture, a forgotten, poor country. She writes about every economic or political strife Haiti witnesses and is witnessing. She wrote about the disastrous earthquake in Haiti in 2010 and helped bring the plight of Haitians to the world through her writings. She also raised funds and helped Haitians in every possible manner. In her interview with Opal Palmer Adisa, Edwidge Danticat says that she bears Haiti in herself; it is part and parcel of her life. She says that the two locations she can call home is and will always be Haiti and the United States. She was born and raised in Haiti, which served as her first home. Like the majority of Haitians, she lives in two different universes. She visits Haiti as frequently as she can. Many of her family members are still there. Although she has left Haiti, it has never truly left her as she has always resided in Haitian communities in the United States (“Up Close” 345).

Danticat’s love for Haiti has no bounds. She was born in Haiti and is paying her nation’s debt by being true to her National identity, her Haitian identity. Her entire oeuvre describes Haiti, not only the people and the language but also the landscape and the political, social, and economic strife Haiti is going through. She writes about present-day Haiti, and her characters, mostly Haitians, imbibe Haitian identity. She speaks Creole, and so do her characters. Danticat thinks that as a writer, she must educate Haitian-American youth about the cultural richness of Haiti to show the world that whatever negative is portrayed against the Haitians is wrong. Haitians are good people;

their circumstances force them to flee their country and take refuge in other countries. It is the new world that, unfortunately, contaminates their virtues. Edwidge Danticat and many other Haitian artists portray this intense form of Haitianness and feel a commitment to Haitian affairs for examples writers like Jean Price-Mars, Wyclef Jean-artist, Lolo Bean Brun, the State House representative, Marie St. Fleur are always seen in the limelight when the matters are about Haiti, be it any celebrations or any welfare talks about Haiti. Edwidge Danticat, in her interview “Up Close and Personal: Edwidge Danticat on Haitian Identity and the Writer’s Life,” with Adisa says that One of the writers, notably After the American occupation, Jean Price-Mars started encouraging Haitians to look within Haiti for inspiration. He encouraged the writers to shift away from European influences, particularly the powerful French ones, and to look towards the Haitian countryside, for inspiration for their works of fiction, music, and other genres. Jacques Roumain and Jacques Stephen Alexis both wrote about Haiti and the Haitians. The Harlem Renaissance represented a historical image that served as a significant source of inspiration for Haitian writers, and Roumain was good friends with Langston Hughes and Mercer Cook, who translated *Masters of the Dew*. Roumain included some of Langston’s writing in his lyric poems on lynching. He wrote about the tragedies and suffering experienced by black Americans in Harlem and the American South. After a lengthy period of racial occupation, the idea that everything about being black was positive gave rise to Noirism. Danticat believes that it is a certain brand of nationalism that excludes some people. In the general society, some conceptions stated that one is a mulatto if

one is wealthy and a black person if one were poor. Haitians were underprivileged and had a dark complexion; therefore, they would have been included in it, but that was also not true (347).

Edwidge Danticat, in her oeuvre, portrays her characters feeling a sense of displacement after migration; there exists a binary opposition between the home country and the new country. The synthesis between the two countries is hardly possible, and the home country is always victorious over the other. The memories and fondness of the home supersede the new country despite its charms. A balance between the two seems impossible because of the trauma that lingers around leaving one's homeland. In her celebrated texts, like *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, *The Farming of Bones*, *Krik? Krak!* and *The Dew Breaker*, Danticat has probed into various forms of identity formation of her characters, be it cultural, social, ethnic, or national identity, emphasising them as migrants and adapting to a new culture. Carine M. Mardorossian, in an article on migrant literature, "From Literature of Exile to Migrant Literature," writes that Caribbean literature describes the reason for the migration of a person from his native land to the U.S. and other European countries. The migrant literature describes the migrant's unfinished identity concerning the homeland and the new host country. The characters in the works often try to assimilate and find similarities between the two sites rather than finding differences and oppositions. In her young adult novel *Behind the Mountains*, Danticat tries to figure out the possibilities of giving a name to Celiane's identity, and she wants her Haitian identity to be acknowledged in America. She creates curiosities in Celiane's mind that she tries to find answers to, not

becoming Haitian-American but realising herself as a Haitian and accepting the American dream by not giving up her Haitianness. Haitians do not quickly move the American way; any injustice or multiplicity makes them more dedicated to their Haitian origin. Danticat finds Haiti a powerful identity, so the characters she creates find it difficult to fuse with other countries.

Danticat uses childhood as a tool to study the implications of migration and national identity. Writers often use the Bildungsroman model to describe a person's moral, cultural, and national development in the formative years, emphasising the progress and education of the child. Writings on children create an empathetic atmosphere that brings people of all ages together, and all understand the displacement and the feeling of marginalisation felt by the refugees, the migrants, and the diasporic communities. The experiences of these migrant children resonate with other migrant children who long for their homeland and are forced to assimilate into the new culture. Katharine Capshaw Smith, in her article "Trauma and National Identity in Haitian-American Young Adult Literature," writes:

But migrant literature uses childhood as a conduit for discussions about reluctant movement since emigration stems often from social rupture, economic deprivation, and political violence. Children, imagined as less empowered to determine the course of their lives, and more subject to victimisation (developing into, in some cases, icons of victimhood), become an ideal model for writers to explore this forced migration. And inevitably the construction of migrant subjectivity stems from the unhappy displacement. (86)

Celiane in *Behind the Mountains*, a Haitian child, spends the formative years of her life in the capital of Haiti, Port-au-Prince, where she lives in the mountainous town of Leogane with her mother and brother. The Haitian love for the land and its beauty is described through Celiane. The innocent child loves her school, her grandmother's house, and the local market; she belongs to rural Haiti and feels secure here. The few resources in the little town, the poverty and the urge for a better future are responsible for a person's migration. Celiane's father migrates to Brooklyn. Migration also leads to a rift in the family bond, and a void is created in one's heart when someone leaves a nation to transgress; this void can never be filled, but the national identity of the migrant moves with him as it is not materialistic but an inbuilt attribute. Danticat tries to portray an array of feelings Celiane is going through while she sways between her Haitian and American identities. The migrant cannot accept and adjust to the new national identity as he already belongs to his native land, as Celiane is a Haitian with a Haitian identity. Her fears of the new nation and identity make her submissive and intolerant to situations in life. Celiane experiences the trauma of displacement and psychological violence. She is treated differently in school; she no longer has the protection of her brother and father, who want her to be independent and leave her alone to find her way out. Despite all the dreads, she is happy to be with her family; Danticat here emphasises the values of a Haitian family and Haitian cultural traditions. Haitians have a tradition that different generations of the family live together, and all follow the rituals and traditions of the culture and are linked together to their pasts by stories told by their grandmothers and grandfathers. These

stories are a way to link the past and the future. In *The Bloomsbury Handbook to Edwidge Danticat*, Wilson C. Chen, in his article, “‘A PEOPLE DO NOT THROW THEIR GENUISES AWAY’: DANTICAT’S ‘KITCHEN POET’ LITERARY ANTECEDENTS” writes that: “On Haitian storytelling traditions, Mardorossian observes that ‘the storytelling practices that best represent those Haitian national and cultural traditions embody a transitional space between change and stability.’ I would place Danticat’s kitchen poets, ancestral figures along with their daughters, in these spaces of transition as they carry forward a literary tradition” (275). Carine M. Mardorossian, in the same book in her article, “‘AHA!’: DANTICAT AND CREOLISATION,” identifies Danticat as the true heir of black consciousness movements whose roots can be traced back to movements like Haitian revolution and Haitian ‘Indigenism,’ based in a nationalist ethos (27,21). Danticat admires her black identity and always fights for black people. She writes for the black and also spreads the messages of the proclamation of the identity of the black nationals.

Celiane’s stronghold on her roots and her love of Haitianness make her a strong girl, and she does not shatter when she is in a new environment and tries to accept the Americanness of things, though deep in her heart, she is Haitian. Celiane’s love for the mountains, her liking for the stories told by her Granpa, her carrying on the Haitian tradition of storytelling, and her carefree life in Haiti are her roots, and she never cuts off from them. America is a country that accepts everything with an American label with open arms, and everything non-American is seen with contempt and disrespect. The feeling of coldness and ignorance prevails for people of a different culture. Danticat has

felt this bitterness, and she portrays the same in Celiane, who feels that America is a country where people discuss politics and are less understanding towards one another. Celiane says she lives in a village in Haiti, where politics is not discussed at home or with children. Also, children are not allowed to gather outside their homes. Edwidge Danticat weaves the autobiographical element in the novel as she portrays her grandmother's displacement from the country to Port-au-Prince. She feels this was the beginning of the loss of Haitian identity, and she was never able to adapt to the new identity. In the essay, "We Are Ugly, but We Are Here," Danticat explains, "My grandmother was an old countrywoman who always felt displaced in the city of Port-au-Prince where we lived and had nothing but her patched-up quilts and her stories to console her" (138). Celiane is a portrayal of Danticat's love for Haiti and her Haitianness.

When a migrant is displaced to a new place, the host community also feels a threat to its national identity. When they witness the newcomers following their religion and festivities with great fervour and zeal, a feeling of hostility for the immigrants enters the host community as they feel that they are the true natives of this land, which has now been occupied by the new diaspora which is trying to implement its culture and traditions in their society. This hostility gives rise to friction between the two communities. Even when the displacement is internal, the hostility between the two communities exists as they may have different notions of national identity. Both groups face threats from each other, and their cultural affinities produce hostility. Celiane's feeling of displacement emerges when she first travels to Port-au-Prince in Haiti. She

finds her mother grudging over her idea to go to the city as Manman feels people get lost in the city. She says, "People in the city . . . know where they are going, but they still feel lost, as though they are looking for themselves" (25). Celiane understands these words from her Manman when she faces such a situation in New York when she tries to find a bus after school and gets lost. She suffers an identity crisis as she fears asking anyone for help in Creole. Celiane says, "It was cold and my feet were beginning to feel numb. I felt like Galipot, looking for his fourth leg. I understand now what Manman meant when she talked about being lost in the city. I felt as though I was looking for my new home as well as for myself" (108). In his paper on national identities, Mikael Hjerm claims that: "National identity is based on perceived similarities to some people and differences from others" ("National Identities" 337). He continues that affiliation to a country acquaints one of the insiders and outsiders. Therefore, like every other type of social identification, national identity has a dual nature; it both defines who a member is and establishes the limits of the collective (national community) and implicitly defines who is not (the outsider) ("National Identities" 335). Celiane feels like an outsider as she is unaware of the political violence in cities. She realises that she is out of place and also realises the importance of her identity as a Haitian when Port-au-Prince faces political violence due to elections. She sees her aunt and brother go to vote amidst violence, not giving up their right. Movement from the countryside to the city is also full of challenges as the difference in lifestyle, social and economic; make the migrant's life full of hardships. Celiane and her mother become a part of a bomb attack when travelling in a Camion during

the elections. Celiane feels the pressure and thinks, “Why must children be killed? They are not involved in politics” (*Behind* 53); here, she realises that as a citizen of a nation; even children have social and national identities and get affected by everything happening in the nation. The bombing resulted from turbulence due to the Haitian elections in 2000. The migrants’ sufferings never end as they face the psychological pressure of existence in a new place. Celiane suffers an identity loss as she is not found after the bombing. She feels that she has lost her family, forgotten herself, and lost her Haitian identity. She has sleepless nights when she fears being lost and never found. She panics some nights that she may lose her family and her mother, and as she is a migrant, this fright grasps her deep down that she is alone and an alien.

The migrants feel that the city is cold towards the people who are not a part of it. The violence and the bombings in the city portray that the people living in the city grow cold with time, and here, one realises that the self and the Haitian identity are compromised as the stay in the city increases. Celiane feels the cold of the city, its harshness and its rough terrain during her short stay in Port-au-Prince. She finds the scars on her head and her Manman’s legs portraying pain and speaking much about the city’s tolerance towards the newcomers. It is a common perception that people tend to forget their relations and their homes as they leave their country, their bond with their country weakens as they migrate, and they also forget their culture and adopt the new culture of the host land, as does Celiane she feels that maybe her father too has grown cold towards his family and will not be able to recognise them, love them as he used to, she feels her father will find a new son and daughter and a

new wife and forget about them. America is a two-way street. One gives, and one gets. Americans have always welcomed immigrants. Some immigrants were brought here forcefully as enslaved people, others were chased by hatred, and some came for the opportunity. American values of openness to new neighbours, tolerance, and the importance of family and charity are prevalent in American culture. Most Americans see immigrants as future Americans. These new Americans with different cultures will influence America and change the American culture similarly as America modifies them. Pizza, sushi, tacos, and Greek yoghurt did not come from New Jersey. American arts and culture are a combination of segments from different parts of the earth, and this assimilation is the result of American jazz, country, and rock music.

America may not be a melting pot, but it is a country of a combination of diverse people and cultures. Celiane doubts that going to America, she would leave her legality and her Haitian identity. She learns that her father is not legal in America; she perceives America as a prison and doubts her authenticity in the country. She thinks, “Was America a prison that once you entered you were never allowed to leave? Would we be ‘legal’ when we got there?” (*Behind* 77) Grandpa Nozial’s proverb on Port-au-Prince indeed describes Celiane’s thought about New York as, “a city filled with ice crystals and light” (*Behind* 83). The immigrants find the atmosphere cold, and the snow covering the buildings, the trees, and the people symbolises the people’s attitude toward one another. The people cannot look up due to the snow, which is the bitterness and hostility of the people around the host country. Celiane feels a cold and chilly atmosphere around her. Nature and people are both cold

and irresponsive. The sun was shining but lacked warmth. Danticat describes how the sun was beaming, yet it didn't give its warmth at all. Instead, it appeared to be united with the coldness and changed into a chilly sun, which Celiane never thought existed. Edwidge Danticat describes cities as cold and harsh, not accepting but always demanding acceptance. Danticat and Celiane both fear the loss of their Haitian identity.

The migrants feel happy to meet the people of their community. They feel comforted in the cold, hostile atmosphere when they meet a friendly hand and a warm touch. America welcomes immigrants but also wants them to acquire the habits, practices, and spirit of Americans. The immigrants must help to strengthen American virtues, learn work ethics, and know their social responsibilities. The immigrants must know about the American people, their history, beliefs and commitment to their nation. They must know the American principles of the Declaration of Independence. They must understand and appreciate the Constitution, the government, and the law of America. Celiane's advent to New York is met with resilience, discrimination, and a lack of warmth by the host country. Her Haitian culture, traditions, and identity slowly diminished in the new country. Frank welcomes them to the Tenth Department, saying, "Welcome to the Tenth Department" (*Behind* 86) (Haiti is made up of nine geographical areas or departments, and people living abroad, in the Diaspora, are considered part of a tenth one), she is relieved to discover some warmth in the friends they meet. Aristide's inauguration address, in which he honours the "tenth department" (*Behind* 141) of Haitian migrants, makes Celiane happy as well. He says: "Honor, respect, and bravo for the Tenth

department Haitians residing abroad. Home is the best place to be” (*Behind* 141). She visits the church with her family and attends the Christmas Eve mass at St. Jerome’s in Creole. The church was full of Haitians; she felt she was in Port-au-Prince with Tante Rose. She describes it as she thought Haiti was not so far away from Saint Jerome’s. She had the impression that if she touched anyone at the mass, she may be transported back to Haiti once again. It was as if each person there was carrying a small bit of Haiti on their bodies, hidden behind their winter coats (*Behind* 95).

Celiane finds her father searching for a Haitian channel on the radio. She feels proud to be a Haitian, and her Haitianness is further elevated when she hears Creole on the radio. At school, she attends her class in Creole, speaks Creole, and learns English amongst Haitian students. She is slow in forming friends and forms Haitian friends who, like her, have immigrated to New York. Their class discusses the U.S. recognition of Haiti as a Sovereign. In an interview with Katherine Capshaw Smith, when asked how Celiane imagines herself, Danticat replied that “she simply sees herself as Haitian, as a Haitian immigrant. But like many young immigrants, her view of herself will probably change. In a few years, she’ll probably end up calling herself Haitian-American, like a lot of us” (“Splintered Families” 202). Edwidge Danticat’s characters show how gradually and slowly the Haitian Identity merges with the American but still carries the Haitian impact.

In “Cultural Identity and Diaspora”, cultural identity, as the second meaning by Stuart Hall suggests, involves both ‘being’ and ‘becoming.’ It belongs to both the past and the future equally. It is not a pre-existing object

that spans space, time, history, and culture. Cultural identities have a past and a source. But they always change, just like anything historical (225). Celiane is learning new ways of life; her Americanism is building on her Haitianness, but her Haitian identity will remain built. Celiane carries with her Haitian art and lifestyle, in the form of writings in her Diary. Danticat describes Diary writing as an art form representing the flourishing culture as a means of preserving Celiane's cultural Haitian identity. Celiane writes about the tap-taps and the pictures which describe Haiti on the tap-taps. She writes about her brother Moy, who paints Haiti in his pictures. He is an artist, and he paints the beautiful landscapes of Haiti. He painted the whole journey of the family from Haiti to New York. This treasure is witnessed by Celiane, who gives the art a befitting title, 'behind the mountains.' She also wants to write a story on his pictures; both brother and sister want to relive their past through pictures and words. Edwidge Danticat is a portrayal of Celiane with her inbuilt Haitian identity, which has not changed but has only acquired formal American attire. As Celiane, she also universalises the Haitian cause and thus teaches one and all to keep their national identity intact wherever they go. On being asked by *NPR*'s Leila Fadel how she felt when living in the United States as a Haitian American. Danticat answered that she feels pain when she watches individuals suffer, who can be Danticat as an immigrant or the kid of immigrants. She says, all those are my brothers. They could be any one of them, and they suffer in a lot of ways. The pain persists; it's not a pity to feel sorry for them. It serves as motivation. It's sort of a call to action for those on the other side who are here to attempt to advocate.

Edwidge Danticat, through her young adult novel *Anacaona*, portrays the Haitian princess Anacaona as a symbol of Haitian heroism and Haitian icon. She wants to leave a message for the young Haitians to be proud of their legacy, which has been brought forward by great effort and violence on the part of the Haitians. Anacaona represents Haitianness that every Haitian can learn from, as she represents sovereignty. Cultural theorist Stuart Hall describes representation as “an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture. It does involve the use of language, of signs and images which stand for or represent things” (*Representation* 15). Danticat, through the fiction of *Anacaona*, wants the new generation of Haitian migrants to learn from Anacaona the virtues of obedience, strength, discipline, and, above all, nationalism, as she sacrifices her throne for the sake of her country and marries Caonabo, for political interests of their country. Her identity as a leader is deeply rooted in the cultural memory of her people, and her decisions are influenced by her understanding of her heritage. Danticat, who tells the story of Anacaona, a real-life Taino queen who resisted Spanish colonization in 15th-century Haiti, brings to life the cultural memory of pre-colonial Haiti, exploring Taino traditions, beliefs, and struggles. Through this historical figure, Danticat connects young readers to Haiti’s indigenous past, offering them a memory of resistance and leadership.

Anacaona is a historical figure to whom the migrant Haitians can relate, and she becomes a symbol of the hardships suffered by the people of Haiti to get their freedom. Danticat also features gender identity through Anacaona,

though in a matrilineal society, women were not free to learn war strategies or weaponry or indulge in politics. Anacaona symbolises women's freedom and her love for her country, Xaragua or later Maguana, now Haiti. Anacaona is the representation of free and robust women, also a vital society as she is the one who never moves alone but, through her songs and poetry, awakens people for the national cause. Danticat's young-adult novel illuminates the Haitian princess Anacaona, describes her history, and sets it as an example of a pre-colonial revolutionary to unite the modern Haitians and stir their nationalism and Haitianness as they share some of her Taino identity and the land she inhabited.

Danticat's *Anacaona* is narrated in the first person by Anacaona herself, and her words emphasise the intense feelings of nationalism in Anacaona to be a ruler and a protector of her land. Her uncle raises Anacaona as the future Cacica. She has to follow the customs of the ruler and, for this, has to abandon living with her mother and father; she says, "There is now so much to learn in preparation for my rule, so much to get accustomed to. Behechio, who has never been as attached to our parents as I am, says that I must act as though I am already cacica, thinking only of Xaragua as my mother and my father" (31). Anacaona's grandmother was a great Cacica, and she thinks herself to carry some of her qualities, one of which is not able to leave one's national identity. Anacaona questions her stature after marriage and agrees to be married to the one whose position is the same as hers in Xaragua. She says:

Why would I consider leaving Xaragua for Chief Caonabo's Maguana?

Response: My marriage to Chief Caonabo would strengthen the already

agreeable ties between our two peoples. My husband would be a cacique and I would help him rule. Another riddle to myself: Why would I stay in Xaragua, even if I remain unmarried? Response: In Xaragua, I can rule in my name or with my brother. In Maguana, I can only be the wife, or one of the wives, of the supreme chief. (33)

Anacaona's love for her nation far exceeds her desires for marriage or any other art. She feels her grandmother always with her wanting her to be the Cacica; she says, "I often have the sensation that my grandmother would like to rule again from the land of the dead and will choose to do it through me. Perhaps she has made me superior in height so that in my own body I can bear both her carriage and mine and still have enough courage to look any chief in the eye and fight at his side if needed or against him if necessary" (35).

Anacaona has to give up her desire to rule, as her uncle is ill, and she thinks Caonabo is a powerful Cacique who will protect Xaragua if she marries him. She leaves Xaragua for Behechio and goes to Maguana. Danticat praises Anacaona's leadership skills. Anacaona asks Caonabo to accompany him on his hunting expedition and surprises him with her skills with weapons, "learned from my grandmother's old warriors" (74). Caonabo allowed Anacaona to hunt herself and also learn to combat enemies. The natives address her as a 'warrior,' she feels responsible and says, "The people of Maguana even call out that Caonabo and I are their 'warriors' because Caonabo has fought the Kalinas so many times. I am startled to hear myself called a warrior, for even though I have trained to defend my people, I have not yet had a chance to prove myself" (72), "I want to be a true warrior" (90).

Anacaona, who is replete with heroism and has inherited nationalistic qualities from her grandmother, has her first encounter with the Spanish when they raid Maguana. They were pale men twice their size who had come to attack them. They were huge, bald, dark, hide-clothed, not very pale; their hands and faces were light pink. Anacaona and Caonabo fight the strange men and kill them. Anacaona and Caonabo show their retaliation through violent resistance against the Spanish in Guacanagari's camp. Anacaona engaged in physical warfare against the Spanish. She suggests Caonabo keep repeating the word 'gold' and pretend cooperation; they deceive the Spanish and enter their camp, and the battle ends with their victory. Anacaona celebrates with Caonabo and his brother, Manicaotex. During the feast, she narrates a long tale, the longest tale, "an account of our season of war. This tale was long not because I described every detail of the battle but because I also spoke of the days that came before it" (110). Danticat wants many more people, the generations to come, to tell and share the story of Anacaona with future generations so that it imbibes in them respect and love for their country, and they, too, feel nationalism and national identity. Olivia Tracy, in "Rise Up Through the Words," writes how Anacaona is a role model for the Haitians who inspires them to fight for the freedom of their nation, "Anacaona was ultimately killed, her spirit continues to call out to Haitians through the shared experience of place, providing a more universal model of resistance and resilience for the nation" (117). Tracy further writes that Danticat, through Anacaona, is writing about the multicultural perspective of Haitian identity. She writes that Danticat does not make the direct appeal to the future as the

others did, most likely due to the form of the tale and its role as a historical narrative. However, her decision to engage with Anacaona as a historical figure may also be connected to the fact that she grew up in the regime of Papa Doc Duvalier, whose idea of nationalism was heavily based on Noirism. Perhaps this remembering of Anacaona is an attempt by Danticat to engage with a more multicultural perspective of Haitian identity (“Rise Up” 122).

Carine M. Mardorossian, in her article “Danticat and Caribbean Women’s Writers,” states that Danticat’s oeuvre draws parallels between home and host countries rather than opposing them, further stressing the creation of national and cultural identity (42). In *Untwine*, Danticat describes the similarities between life in Little Haiti and Haiti. Her characters have migrated from Haiti but adapt to life in Little Haiti quickly, as this is where many Haitians reside. Internal immigration results in displacement, but the challenges for a migrant are less evident as the place is part of the same nation. The culture or traditions can differ but the national identity remains the same. The intent of nationalism is not the same everywhere; it may vary with the place. *Untwine* is a young adult novel by Edwidge Danticat which she dedicates to the young Haitians and wants them to learn from the stories the meaning and the difficulties faced after immigration as the young Haitians have lots of desires and dreams as they migrate, they think of the host country as a land of fairies, and it is their dream that Danticat wants to challenge through her novels showing them the reality and the scary. *Untwine* is the story of twin sisters whose parents have migrated to Little Haiti. Gisselle is a visual artist, while Isabelle is a musician. The novel begins with a car crash and

moves on as a first-person narrative by Gisselle, the survivor of the crash, in the form of flashbacks and life post-accident. Marta Gierczyk, in her dissertation on immigrants, describes *Untwine* as: “*Untwine* reflects on death, family, and memory. It is also a novel about being a Haitian-American girl in Miami, which explores the complexities of diaspora life for a young reader” (*Fictions of Immigrant* 118).

The girls grow up in an upper-middle-class Haitian family, the parents teach them Haitian traditions, and the grandparents who live in Haiti help them learn Haitian culture. The family tries to preserve its Haitianness and hence their Haitian identity. The girls love to go to Haiti and see the signature cathedrals in Haiti. Their house in Little Haiti resembles the one in Haiti, but this is smaller than the one in Haiti. Their house in Little Haiti has a backyard pool and a lap-cat Dessalines; the garden of their Little Haiti home has many fruit trees like banana, mango, papaya, and avocado trees. Their grandparents have a massive house in Haiti that has a “boundless-looking garden” (*Untwine* 288). Giselle says, “. . . few other people have houses like this...on top of a broken city, in a country that is still beautiful though it isn’t supposed to be” (*Untwine* 288). Giselle and her family’s love for Haiti have led them to emulate the similarity in their house. Marta further writes that Danticat writes about the best of Haiti and never talks of its shortcomings, “Making the child protagonist marvel over Haiti’s mountains, water, and trees, its homes and churches permit Danticat to recognize the beauty of Haiti without romanticising the homeland or excusing its shortcomings of inequality,

corruption, and environmental vulnerability that have pushed Haitian people into diaspora for decades” (*Fictions of Immigrant* 119).

Little Haiti serves as a cultural bond uniting Haiti and America, and it is a place where all cultural transitions take place; here, the communities learn to assimilate to the new world, and this is the place that makes the Haitians strong to forbear the future. Little Haiti churches, Little Haiti cultural complexes, and Haitian-owned restaurant Chez Moy all symbolize the existence of Haitian identity. The Haitianness of the Haitians is preserved by the little places and things they have tried to build and create in the new land. The Big Night, arranged by the Haitian cultural centre, and a concert performance by a renowned Haitian singer all portray the presence of Haitianness. The artist performs for her people, the Haitians, who enjoy her concert and cherish their cultural bond. Little Haiti churches served as places for community socialising; these were also places that carried on Haitian culture and religious traditions. These churches symbolised the presence of Haitianness, the Haitian identity in the society. Gisselle remembers in one of her flashbacks how she and Isabelle enjoyed the service and loved Pastor Ben:

Our parents have always been religious, but Isabelle and I have often stood, as Isabelle likes to say, on the margins between belief and disbelief. Our faith is a mishmash of many things. We believe in family, in music and art, but we mostly believe in each other. We love our minister though, Pastor Ben. He was the one who christened us. We also like the church youth choir. Isabelle plays step flute for them and I sing alto with my best friend, Tina. We like the church building’s high, gabled

ceilings. We like the dark burgundy cushioned pews. We love Mom's cloche hats and Dad's Sunday morning black and navy suits. We love how we all sit together in our favorite mid-row pew. (10-11)

Cultural memory is also crucial in forming one's national identity, as it shapes how a community understands itself and what is its place in the world. Memory preserves the cultural heritage of a nation, passing down language, customs, and traditions that maintain a sense of continuity. It allows societies to anchor their present in a shared historical and cultural narrative, which is essential for national cohesion. Celiane's memory of making traditional lanterns is revived when her mother makes one and though they cannot hang it outside, they hang it in their kitchen. Her use of Creole, listening to Haitian radio, and also singing in Creole keep up her national integrity. These memories, when passed from one generation to another, help in keeping one's national identity intact. Language, religion, art, and traditions are preserved and transmitted through memory, often becoming central to national identity. These elements help differentiate one nation from others, reinforcing a sense of uniqueness and pride in one's national heritage. Listening to the president speak in Creole on the radio Celiane is filled with pride, being a Haitian. In "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," Jan Assmann and John Czaplicka states that "The concept of cultural memory comprises that body of reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose 'cultivation' serves to stabilize and convey that society's self-image"(132).

The well-known storytelling technique passes on Haitian national identity and culture to future generations. Storytelling is a famous culture of Haitians. The Grandparents narrate stories to their future generations that are full of Heroism and replete with Haitian cultural traditions. The stories are made interesting that the children want to listen to them repeatedly. Gisselle and Isabelle are raised in a Haitian house with the mother and father following Haitian culture and speaking Creole instead of English. The neighbourhood in Little Haiti also served well in making them aware of their Haitianness. Both loved art; Gisselle loved to paint, and Isabelle loved playing the flute. Their grandparents lived in Haiti, and Grandpa Marcus took them to visit the cathedrals, churches, and different places in Haiti. They loved to be with their Grandparents on holidays and special occasions. Grandma Regine told them Haitian folklores, storytelling being an essential component of Haitian culture. They were named by their parents so that their name rhymed with Jumelle, the word for female twin in French. Gisselle tells:

In Haitian Creole, the word for 'twin' is marasa. If we had a sibling follow us, a brother or a sister, that child would have been our dosa, the 'untwinned' one. When we were little, Isabelle and I promised our parents that if we had a brother or sister, we would never make him or her feel left out. We would teach the dosa our twin speak, we told our parents, what Isabelle called 'the language of the palms.' (21)

In the host country, the parents want their children to follow Haitian culture, so they try to teach them by using names of Haitian heroes, talking about Haitian traditions, and taking the opinion of the young in following

Haitian traditions and visiting places related to Haitian culture. The father names the cat Dessalines after a great Haitian revolutionary, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, offending his friend Moy as he wanted the children to learn more about Haiti. The girls like Haitian painters, singers, and musicians. They also liked Chez Moy, the Haitian restaurant, as they felt at home and secure in the restaurant. In Haitian culture, if a child dies, the parents do not go to the cemetery to attend the burial; they wait for the dead to be buried and come back the next day to visit the filled-in grave. As the family in the story moves to the city and is educated and aware, they decide to be cremated, though against their culture, but they want to be given a farewell by their loved ones. Gisselle describes that their parents had opted for cremation in their will, and now Isabelle will also be cremated:

I'm sure that if Mom wasn't too sad to speak up, she'd remind everyone, just as she and Dad had told Isabelle and me, that on both sides of the family, going back several generations, parents have never gone to cemeteries to see their children being buried. If Dad had died in the car crash, for example, Grandpa Marcus and Grandma Regine wouldn't have stood by his open grave and watched as his body was lowered into the earth. They would have gone to the chapel, or the church then would have gone home to wait for everyone else to return from the cemetery for the repast. Later they would have visited the filled-in grave, but parents were not supposed to witness their children sinking into the ground. So my parents were not going to bury Isabelle. (137)

Physical manifestations of memory, such as monuments and memorials, remind people of their shared history and reinforce national identity.

Food plays an integral part in cultural communication. It helps spread culture. Chez Moy in Little Haiti served Haitian food, a place where one felt as if in Haiti, and through its food, it spread Haitianness. The owner Moy, was a veteran Haitian soldier; he was also politically potent and won the elections to be the commissioner in District 3, which included Little Haiti and some parts of Miami, thus spreading Haitian influence in Miami where Haitians were discriminated against. Edwidge Danticat presents a picture of Miami and describes the advances made by the Haitians living there and helping the other migrants from Haiti. Through Gisselle and Jean Michelle, Danticat represents the second generation of Haitian migrants who like Haiti, its culture, and Haitian identity. Gisselle loses her twin, and her reconciliation with her sorrow and the fact that she is now the Dosa, the untwinned one, comes with her visit to Haiti. She feels grounded and at home in Haiti; she loves Haiti and knows that Isabelle also loves Haiti. Here, she bids goodbye to her sister and becomes the untwinned one, Dosa. Joelle Mann writes about Gisselle's transition and accepting her loss as she visits Haiti. She feels as if she has a permanent companion with her, in the form of her nation, and she accepts Tina as her Dosa, the untwinned one. Mann writes:

Giselle's mourning is situated within the acceptance of uncertainty that defines her transition into adulthood. Giselle makes a final transition after her return with her family to Haiti, highlighting an emotional undercurrent that celebrates an outward manifestation of a creative,

national spirit. . . . Haiti becomes a site of Giselle's acceptance of her sister's death: she recognises that she must learn to 'sketch myself alone. . . . to draw myself as no longer a twin, as the dosa, the untwinned one.' The untwinned one. ("Aesthetic Reading" 270)

Marta Gierczyk, in her dissertation *Fictions of Immigrant Placemaking: Countering Gentrification in Contemporary American Literature and Fieldwork Narratives*, writes how Danticat, in her works, describes all that is beautiful in Haiti and also the shortcomings of Haiti that lead to the migration of the Haitians. She writes, "Making the child protagonist marvel over Haiti's mountains, water, and trees, its homes and churches permits Danticat to recognize the beauty of Haiti without romanticising the homeland or excusing its shortcomings of inequality, corruption, and environmental vulnerability that have pushed Haitian people into diaspora for decades" (119). Danticat's works describe that migration does change the physical lifestyle or appearance of living, but the Haitians bear with them their Haitianness, which resides deep in their Hearts.

Edwidge Danticat's characters do not leave their basic Haitian manners and habits; they do not appear what they are not. As described earlier, Danticat's works have an autobiographical element. She has a presence in all that is happening in the lives of her characters as if it were hers also. She is one of them, most of the time the protagonist, who is narrating. The national spirit of belonging to one's nation never dies. The immigrants who have faced the host community and culture help the upcoming immigrants make their path easy in the host country. *The Art of Death* is a memoir of her mother, who died

of cancer. The primary protagonists are Danticat and her mother, who are attempting to come to terms with her mother's impending death and migration to the afterlife. Danticat characterises her mother with her Haitianness. She doesn't speak English, despite the fact that she resides in America. "I love you okay" (16) is all she ever says in English, according to Danticat, even after living in the country for over 40 years. She uses Haitian Creole throughout the recording she has left for her children. She also continues repeating, "Met fanm sou ou," to Danticat. "'Be your own woman'; 'Be a strong woman'" (16). Danticat's mother was born in Haiti, loves her traditions and cultures, and wants her children and grandchildren to be Haitians at heart. She is religious, "she was deeply religious. 'God is good' was her mantra" (17). She has been brought up learning all Haitian traditions and has the Haitian culture intact. Hence, her children, especially Edwidge Danticat, have her Haitianness intact, and she feels and writes for the Haitians. In 2010, an earthquake shook Haiti, and many Haitians got killed. Danticat broke down after hearing the news: "There was an earthquake in Haiti," a family member told her. "They say 7.0 degrees is catastrophic"(36). As she drove home, she looked out of the window; her eyes were full of tears, and she could barely see the colourful homes and storefronts of Little Haiti. Nights in January get dark early in Miami, and this night was no exception. Still, she felt as if she was surrounded by dark clouds that had swallowed the day much earlier than usual. Danticat was disturbed, and a feeling of rootlessness surrounded her as she thought her country had finished; she could not describe her feelings. The nation where she was born and lived through the primary twelve years, a long time of her

life, where numerous of her family individuals still lived, had been crushed. She felt a profound sense of deadening fear that everything was gone and the entire nation had been devastated. She says it is perhaps the darkest night in the history of Haiti.

Benedict Anderson describes Danticat's love for her country and her grievance for her people as she is living as part of an Imagined Community. Imagined Community, as described by Anderson, is the human desire to be connected to people of the same kind, in blood, by language, or by having a common enemy. These people emerge from a shared past and are all on the same way to the future. The nation is imagined, according to Anderson, "because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (*Imagined* 6). Further, "it is imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately, this fraternity makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings" (*Imagined* 7). Danticat stands for the cause of Haitians and displays her Haitian identity when she speaks against the media, which calls it a public, global disaster. She personalises it by saying it was a personal loss. She writes that we should not compare tragedies, but there is no reason not to compare tragedies experienced by the same body and mind. The horrors of the past give us the language and foundation to create new languages and define new disasters. Public terrorism is personalised.

Those of us who saw the jumper that day, either in the field or on our television screens, saw the rain of life pouring down from the sky. Coming from nations that were on the verge of extinction in their own way, we are now able to act as advisors to our protected friends, but only in justice. Because no matter how much we delve into community grief, we all still carry personal losses.

Danticat's mother preserves her Haitianness. She sings hymns in Creole and French to purge herself when she knows she is near death. She wants her children to remember their roots and be part of the Haitian community. Danticat follows her mother believing in Haitian culture and traditions, not becoming a zombie, and wearing pale colours to mourn her mother's death. In an interview with Tyler, "Edwidge Danticat on Haitian Art and Literature," Danticat says:

I often say, and my parents used to say as well, that I left Haiti, but Haiti didn't leave me. Twelve is, I think, young enough to transition somewhat easily, but also to have formed so many memories. I had, actually, a big chunk of primary education in Haiti. Having learned both oral history and written history, I brought a lot of that with me to the U.S., enough that I was curious when I got here to find out more from this side of things. I think it was, in part, a love for Haiti that continued and also a curiosity about history in general, but Haitian history in particular. ("Edwidge Danticat")

One of the important traditions and cultures of Haitians is telling stories. The intergenerational storytelling helps the young Haitians and the young characters in Danticat's novels, understand their place in the world. It

also serves as a reminder that their individual experiences are connected to a larger historical and cultural narrative, which shapes their worldview. Danticat's mother and grandmother told her stories related to Haitian life, and Danticat used the tool efficiently by writing short stories about Haitian life and preserving Haitian identity. She uses the storytelling culture to add a spirit of Haitianness to her works. Her characters, the grandmothers Melina and Regine, Anacaona's Bibi, Danticat's mother, and here Danticat herself, tell tales of Haitian immigration, based on the Haitian historical implications. *Everything Inside* is her recent work of short stories, which is based not on history and immigration but on the impact of immigration. It gives a complete picture of the lives of Haitian Americans, the acceptance of the host country, and the feeling of belongingness to Haiti, the Haitian identity cannot be compromised, but the acceptance of the Americans is also inevitable. *Everything Inside*, seen as a collective work describes the submission of the Haitians.

Although some of them want to return to Haiti, the circumstances are still unfavourable. In the story "Dosas," Blaise and Olivia deceive Elsie, about their relationship and money. Olivia loved Haiti and wanted to go to Haiti; Blaise, who fell in love with Olivia, moved with her. They also duped Elsie of the little savings she had by playing with her feelings. The migrants accept the host culture, but they cannot give up their love for their homeland, they desire to return once they are well off, and there is a feeling of homesickness equivalent to their nationalism. Though away from their homes, they always are worried about Haiti and its people and thus have their national identity

intact in a foreign land. Haiti is a long-cherished dream, and all the migrants from Haiti love their Haitianness. Haitians have revived the spirit of Haiti in America by opening Hotels, Haitian restaurants, and Haitian clubs in America. This not only enlivens their culture but also helps in paying back as it adds to the economy of the host country. Dede, Blaise's friend, loves Haiti, and opens a Haitian restaurant with Haitian music and food, so that Haiti becomes a part of every Haitian's life. Elsie, moves on by living with an old man Gaspard, caring for him and proving herself to be a true hardworking Haitian. In the story "In the Old Days," Danticat writes about the immigrants who desire to serve Haiti by returning to Haiti after education or learning new trades. Maurice is one such Haitian whose Haitian identity and his love for his country make him return to Haiti as it is his dream to educate the children of Haiti, for which he leaves his wife, who wants to live in Brooklyn. Maurice does not know of the existence of his daughter Nadia whom her mother raises. The mother does not tell Nadia of her father, and one day Nadia gets a call that her father is dying and knows from her mother that her father left them for the love of his nation. Nadia says that she knew only her mother's version of the tale. At a time when her father thought the future of the nation (Haiti) was bright, he left Brooklyn to go back to Haiti. He planned to create a school for underprivileged children in Port-au-Prince using his American education degree after the thirty-year father-son tyranny came to an end. When her mother arrived in the country by herself at the age of 22, she had no desire to go back to Haiti. Her mother remained in Brooklyn while her father travelled. Her mother sent him the divorce papers after learning that she was expecting.

They didn't ever cross paths again. Recently, her mother, the one who initially revealed to her that her father had abandoned them-confessed that she did not let him know that he had a daughter. Thus the father daughter relationship was sacrificed for the love of his nation.

Danticat also describes the feeling of Haitian identity surging up in second-generation migrants as they come back to Haiti. Their love for Haiti builds up as they witness the beauty of the country and its traditions, the only hindrance being the political strife in Haiti. Danticat also writes against the discrimination of Haitians as immigrants, who are labelled as the transmitters of AIDS. She exposes the quackery being run as a trade, in America in the name of official practitioners. She exposes the farce hidden behind the garb of honesty when the medicines given were duplicates. Nadia goes to Haiti, loves the landscape and witnesses Haitian traditions at her father's funeral. She feels sorry to have never known about her father. The father's wife describes how a Haitian father would have raised his child had he known about her.

In the third story, "The Port-au-Prince Marriage Special," Danticat describes the spread of AIDS and Haitians were the carriers. Melisande works in a Haitian household, but she has some dreams and aspirations, which put her in a trap of Haitian visitors who lure the young girls into sex and, in the process, transfer the deadly disease. Haitian identity became linked with transmitting the disease, so they were not allowed migration. The story also brings forth the quacks who take advantage of the misery and illiteracy of the Haitians and cheat them. It is the Haitian doctors who help their compatriots to fight against the disease. The kindness and caring nature of the Haitians is

depicted; the owner of the restaurant helps Melisande get good treatment and food despite the fear of their son's exposure to the disease. The story "The Gift" brings forth the misery suffered by the Haitian migrants, their poor and shabby accommodations, and the petty jobs they get for survival. The story also describes how men use women and the loss suffered by the Haitians. It describes the Haitian earthquake, the death of near and dear, and how Thomas returns to Haiti after losing his wife during the disaster.

The Haitian quest for national identity leads the Haitians to distant lands, but there is a spirit to return and serve their country. The Haitians want Haiti to flourish, and they want to bring back its prosperity and beauty. Danticat in *Create Dangerously* remembers the Tourism in Haiti, which peaked during the Duvalier era; however, it decreased with the natural disasters in Haiti and also due to Covid. Danticat also describes how the initial generation helps the subsequent generations develop their cultural identity by teaching them the significance of family and other traditions they have lost in the host nation. "Hot-Air Balloons" builds around two Haitian immigrant college students sharing a hostel room. Lucy is the daughter of farm labourers, while Neah's parents belong to a high-class society. Neah wants to help women suffering from the aftermath of the revolution, broken families, and societal conflicts, and she leaves school for charity. Lucy has seen Haiti and its life with her parents; she wants to study and make a good living, a choice of every Haitian, to uplift her Haitian identity. Neah's father does not like Haiti and poverty, and he wants Lucy to bring back Neah. The story "Sunrise, Sunset" is about Jeanne, a daughter of Haitian immigrants. The recent birth of her child

moves her into postpartum depression; her weight and looks all make her detest her role as a mother. Her mother, Carole, wonders how a mother would not care for her child. Carole, who is a good and caring mother herself, has dementia. Carole tells about her working in other people's houses to make two ends meet and also helping her husband cope with the poverty of their nation, Haiti. Carole, though poor, had to suffer but never lost her Haitianness, her strength of being a Haitian woman who fights for her and her family's appraisal. Haitian immigrants' woes on reaching America as boat people are also described in one of Danticat's stories, "Without Inspection." She writes about the illegal immigration of Haitians through boats at sea. They are caught on the shore by the police and kept in detention centres, where they face lousy treatment. They are called the boat people; they are tried and then deported. Some die during the process, while others die at sea. In *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, Danticat writes about one such girl who is pregnant and suffers labour in the boat. She gives birth to a dead child whom she does not want to drown in the sea; the people fear the dead body and want her to throw it. Finally, she plunges into the sea with the child. Immigrants face many hardships to migrate and adapt to the host country. They also have to wait for their acceptance by the host country. Some Haitians who are already in the country help others survive, and one such person is Darline, who saves Arnold. Danticat's "Without Inspection" is the tragic love story of Haitian immigrants Arnold and Darline. Darline, an immigrant to Miami, helps the Haitian immigrants, Arnold being one. Danticat writes about Haitians helping their fellow Haitians to adapt to the new surroundings. Their Haitian identity makes them feel for their

fellow citizens. Darline saves Arnold, and they fall in love. Arnold also accepts Darline's son Paris and wants to become a good Haitian father one day. At his construction job one day, Arnold slips and falls from a building. His immigration, Haiti and his love for Darline and Paris rush into his mind during the six-and-a-half-second fall. Arnold dies, and the death is presented as an accident. Darline says this is the fate of Haitians in America. The Haitians have worked hard to bring about prosperity in America and to make a Haitian identity, but all this effort is regarded as futile. It is invisible to the Americans who still regard Haitians as migrants or refugees.

In the final story, "Seven Stories," Danticat describes the difference between the elite and the working class in the form of a friendship between Kim and Callie. The two form a bond when Kim's family saves Callie. Callie marries a rich man who becomes the prime minister of the same island she lived on with her family; she invites Kim to thank her for her courtesy long back. Here, Kim realises and feels that Haitians are not welcome on this island. She feels like an alien when people stare at her, being a Haitian. She protects her Haitian identity as she informs that she is not staying there. The shabbiness of the political and social system of the so-called elite class is portrayed beautifully by Danticat, who makes a satirical remark on the practices of discrimination in the 21st century. Danticat's *Everything Inside* was written in 2019, the 21st century, and people have still not accepted the Haitians. Haiti is still considered an impoverished and ignored country. Danticat's stories, when studied individually, portray a single element of Haitian life, whereas collectively, they describe Haitian society and Haitian identity, which still rests

in the hearts of the Haitians in the country and outside the country. Kelsey Mitchell, in her review of the book *Everything Inside*, writes that when viewed artistically, *Everything Inside* works better when studied as a whole than when evaluating the merits of each narrative separately. These are portrayals of life in all of their diversity taken as a whole. Some people long to go back to Haiti, while others do not; some people fall in love quickly, while others struggle. Throughout the several pieces, characters are linked by references to flight and the influence of their Haitian background. This collection illustrates what it's like for immigrants from Haiti to start over and what they create on the inside: flaws, resiliency, and optimism. Aminatta Forna, in her article, "Haitians May Leave Their Country, but It Never Leaves Them," in the *NY Times*, writes about the inbuilt Haitian identity in the people living in Haiti, which goes with them wherever they go. She writes, "Throughout the stories in '*Everything Inside*,' Edwidge Danticat's birthplace, Haiti, emerges in an almost mythic fashion. It is a land where life can be changed, a land that exists both in the past and the present, whose essence may be carried as far as Miami or Brooklyn. Perhaps most of all, it is a land that is rarely visible, for despite its overwhelming presence in these stories . . ." ("Haitians"). Class, race, and religious differences led to internal conflicts that destroyed Haiti since its independence. These matters mainly were dualistic, like mulatto/negro, white/black, and rich/poor. Jean Price-Mars, the leading proponent of Haitian Indigenism, proposed the construction of a Haitian identity that respected all differences and accepted all Haitians as one belonging to one country. Danticat's works portray all people living in Haiti as Haitians without the

economic, political, or social hierarchy. She writes about Haiti, Haitians, and Haitian identity, which has lived as long as Haiti.

National Identity never dies; it lives forever. Once constructed, it cannot be destroyed or weakened, as one always loves one's home. Developing a national identity in a country one lives in but does not belong to is possible. It is also possible that the national identity of the nation one belongs to gets weak with time. However, for a national identity for the Haitian diaspora can never end as till now Haiti's poverty remains. In the host country, one can form a love for that host country, but that cannot overpower or destroy the love for one's native country.

CHAPTER 5

Assimilation and Integration

Migration is when people move from one place to another. It is a crucial part of the human experience. Migration has become an unavoidable part of human development as it is a push-and-pull process. Migrants get pushed away from economic deprivation, social inequalities, and persecution and are pulled in for a better future, good education, and better opportunities. Migration results in various experiences, individual or with family; some leave the family, some welcome, and some do not participate. Migration results in the exchange of views, cultures, and beliefs among different people, leading to the sharing of ideas and cultures. Migration also leads to an interference in the identity of the migrant who leaves his homeland and comes to the host land, where he finds different cultures, traditions, and people he has to live with and learn from. This migration process involves displacement, alienation, marginalisation, and, finally, assimilation. So, migration is the transition of a human being from displacement to assimilation.

Migration triggers several problems, identity crisis being one of them. The migrant's search for identity faces many issues, and differences arise in all fields: Blacks/Whites, West/East, Ancient/Modern, etc. In the host country, he tries to defend his native culture as he feels alien to the new culture and is insecure about the new world. His non-adaptive nature, his fear of losing what he has, and his love for his land lead him to think, Who am I? Where do I belong? What is my origin? and What is my future? This future is delved into

when we discuss identity formation, assimilation, and integration. In “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” Stuart Hall explains that identity has never stopped its formation. It is not just something that “exists” (225) but something that continues to “become” (225). In the formation of identity, processes such as resistance, adaptation, integration, and assimilation take place. Immigrants who have strong ties with their past native culture find it difficult to accept the host culture; they gradually adapt to new cultures, and with time, they might get assimilated into the host culture. A migrant survives different cultural behaviours in the host country only as he feels he will be accepted. When he tries to follow his culture and rituals, he is not accepted, a feeling of dislocation enters his heart, and a feeling of unbelongingness and helplessness troubles him. He faces psychological issues of double identities, homesickness, rootlessness, and returning to the homeland.

The immigrant faces revulsion and has to take refuge in his country’s glorious past and so correlates it to the present. Salman Rushdie, in his work *Imaginary Homelands*, says, “‘The past is a foreign country,’ . . . ‘they do things differently there.’ But the photograph [of his home in India] tells me to invert this idea; it reminds me that it’s my present that is foreign, and that the past is home, albeit a lost home in a lost city in the mists of lost time” (9). This past gives him the strength to move on and try to take on the harshness and rudeness of the natives. Edwidge Danticat writes about these fearless migrants. They are her characters, who bear the grunt in their faces and make the Haitians proud. Haitians are strong and self-independent people. Danticat proves this herself as she is one of the migrants to America who faced displacement and

suffered dislocation but has assimilated, though partially, with the Americans. Her assimilation has not cost her identity as a Haitian, as she proudly says she is a Haitian-American writer. She writes freely about her homeland and Haiti's problems and proposes solutions. Haitians are generous people who help their fellow Haitians by supporting them socially and financially in the host country despite being poor. They help their families in Haiti by providing them with monetary help. They support the Haitian students to migrate and educate in the host land.

The historians Unaeze and Perrin, in their work on Haitian Americans, write about Haitian immigration to America. They describe Haiti to be the first Black Country to be independent and second after the U.S. Haiti eventually became an unstable country, as it could not stand up after the colonial rule. Haiti witnessed the rule of 20 different presidents from 1867 to 1915, which included the Marine servicemen. Haitians were compelled to leave their country and migrate to other lands for better life and safety. They have a long migration history with lots of ups and downs. The migrants look for safe countries which offer better futures and safety for their families and the United States is a country which offers both. Migrants in the U.S. face many dangers and prejudice based on colour, language and race. The first batch of Haitians who migrated to the U.S. in the 1960s-70s was discriminated against because of their language and race. Highly skilled people, professionals who were nurses, doctors, and teachers found it difficult to assimilate due to changes in the U.S. education system. It took the U.S. lot of time and the Haitians a lot of pain to accept the culture of the United States. Haitian students migrate to the

U.S. looking for a good education so they can return and be a part of the development of Haiti. The migrants want to help Haiti prosper and also that the political system in Haiti is amended. They face all the turmoil, insult and abuse in search of a better life and a better Haiti.

Immigrants in the United States come with big dreams and are all busy pursuing the great American dream. Haitian Americans and many other immigrants wish to buy a home, symbolising security and identity. These dreams are shattered when buying a home becomes challenging as they do not get a loan in the U.S. The problems faced by Haitian immigrants are challenging and perplexing. The problem of undocumented immigrants dominates all the other problems as they always fear deportation or being jailed. Unaeze and Perrin, in their article “Haitian Americans,” cite Marc Abraham, a Haitian who has been on Long Island for 37 years, as saying that Americans view Haitians as desperate individuals rather than fine people who suffer. Abraham says he needs to comprehend that animosity to get it out of his heart. America already faces enough issues, leaving behind theirs. Despite all the shaming and prejudices, the Haitians try to adapt to life in America. They try to assimilate and succeed to some degree. Edwidge Danticat has witnessed all these migrations and discrimination suffered by the Haitians. Danticat writes about her migration experience in her interview with Katherine Capshaw Smith, her woes as an immigrant, and her ragging in school; her characters also depict the mental agony immigrants face, the hurdles they overcome, and the sorrow that one has left their country. The pull of the

homeland, its love, never lets one assimilate. Even if one tries to, the natives do not accept the change of colour, race, and culture foremost.

Assimilation is becoming a part of or making someone become a part of a group, country, society, etc. Ideas regarding assimilation can be traced back to the eighteenth century, the colonial assimilation to the nineteenth-century transition to mass immigration in recent years. Several definitions of assimilation have led to confusion, but this problem was solved when Milton Gordon came up with his work *Assimilation in American Life* in 1964. He gives the various definitions of assimilation by different authors in the book *Assimilation in American Life* as follows: in the early twentieth century, Robert Park and E. W. Burgess provided an early definition of assimilation as: “a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons and groups and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life” (62). It specifies assimilation as a way to Americanize the immigrants, and many Americans were promoting this. Assimilation, according to Park, is when one creates a place in society; it is not to encounter the natives or live with them or bear their grudge. He goes on to add that in the United States; immigrants are considered assimilated once they have acquired the language and social rituals of their native community and can participate in everyday life, economic and political, without prejudice. This view suggests that immigrants can find a place in the community based on their merits without mentioning their racial origin or cultural inheritance. This approach

ensures that immigrants can “get on in the country” and contribute to the community without encountering prejudice (*Assimilation* 63).

Over the decades, several definitions of assimilation have accumulated. Brewton Berry describes assimilation as the process through which tribes with various cultures merge to become a single civilisation. Naturally, this refers to more intangible cultural components, such as values, memories, feelings, ideas, and attitudes, in addition to more easily appreciable and attainable ones like clothing, knives and forks, cuisine, sports, and vehicles. Thus, amalgamation refers to the biological blending of historically separate racial strains, whereas assimilation refers to the melting of cultural heritages. (*Assimilation* 65)

Assimilation is “a social process by which two or more people or groups adopt and execute one another’s behavioral patterns” (*Assimilation* 65), according to Joseph Fichter. We often refer to a person or a minority group's assimilation into a group or culture. However, this term should not be taken to mean a ‘one-sided’ process. Even if one party may be significantly more influenced than the other, there is reciprocal behaviour in this kind of interaction (*Assimilation* 65). Finally, Milton Gordon, who has worked on the multidimensional approaches of assimilation, describes it as a process by which a collection of distinctive and independent individuals come to share a similar culture and combine with the host community (*Assimilation* 46). Newcomers might acclimate to the new society in a variety of ways.

Assimilation and acculturation are often used interchangeably, but they differ in meaning. Assimilation is a gradual process of how different groups

become increasingly similar to one another, and acculturation is a process of adaptation of cultural values and practices of another culture, still retaining one's cultural values. John Berry proposed the acculturation theory, categorising the acculturation strategies as assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalisation. He defines assimilation in his article "Immigration, Acculturation, and Adaptation" as, a process of adaptation in which a group of migrants adapts the norms, values, and social characteristics of the host society to the point that they blend in with the majority. Integration is the process by which an immigrant or immigrant group may actively engage in host society while maintaining their own ethnic identity. Marginalization is the state in which a person does not identify with either their own background or that of the host community. Separation happens when ethnic minority attempt to preserve their unique identities while declining to actively participate in the greater society. (27).

When two cultures influence each other to such an extent that one accepts minor changes to live with the other, this process is called Integration. This requires a great effort and sacrifice; people modify their culture according to the laws of the host country while adjusting with their norms and laws. This happens when both cultures live amicably without any harsh feelings towards each other. Integration is said to take place when the minority culture engages and participates in the cultural activities of the majority culture, preserving their own culture. In an interview with Carola Suarez-Orozco, Harvard sociologist Mary Waters shares his views on integration. He says, according to the NAS panel, integration refers to the possibilities for immigrants and their

descendants to succeed in a country by taking part in important social institutions and achieving social acceptability. Greater integration involves equal access to important life opportunities as most Americans born abroad. Integration is a two-way process that takes place due to the changes that immigrants go through after they arrive and the changes that native-born Americans go through in reaction to immigration. But there's a chance that integration won't always lead to better health for immigrants and their kids. The definition of assimilation has constantly evolved as several immigrants have undergone immigration. Conceptions about immigration, integration, and assimilation have also changed as immigration contributed to the growing diversity of racial and diasporic groups.

As the diversity of migrants grew, with them grew the different identities and the delirium of one's identity; what was his identity? This gave way to the concept of transnational identity; the concept of 'transnational identity' is a type of 'national identity' linked to at least two national referents: the society of origin and the host society - the national link with the society of origin being an aspect that cannot be wholly replaced by a possible national link with the host society, or, indeed, vice versa. Transnationalism refers to the process through which migrants maintain ties and connections to both their country of origin and their host country, challenging the binary view of migration as a one-way movement from one nation to another. One of the central ideas of transnational identity theory is that individuals can hold multiple, overlapping identities that incorporate elements from more than one

culture or nation. This concept differs from older views of identity that saw it as fixed, singular, and tied to a specific nation-state.

The formation of diaspora communities plays a key role in transnational identity, as they create spaces for migrants to share their cultural practices, maintain connections to their homeland, and provide mutual support. According to Steven Vertovec, in “Transnationalism and Identity”, “These identities play out and position individuals in the course of their everyday lives within and across each of their places of attachment or perceived belonging. Transnational(ised) identities may also, indeed, form the basis of homeland or receiving country-focused political engagement” (578). Diasporas often form strong transnational networks that link people across borders. Transnational identity is not limited to first-generation migrants but can also be passed down to second and third-generation children. These individuals may not have lived in their parents’ homeland, but they inherit cultural practices, languages, and a sense of connection to that country. However, they also face the challenge of integrating into their host country, leading to complex identities.

Edwidge Danticat lives in Miami and migrated to Brooklyn when she was twelve. She speaks about Haitians, writes about the country’s calamities, and gives voice to the silence of Haiti. Haitians speak through her. She assimilated into a form that she is called a Haitian American writer, but her heart and her mind are always in Haiti, and we feel its presence in her stories. Renee H. Shea, in her essay on Danticat, writes about Danticat’s devotion to the cause of Haiti. She writes that Danticat continues to interpret Haiti’s legacy,

deportation threats, and earthquake and hurricane devastation, highlighting its ongoing impact. The characters in her works suffer displacement, are marginalised, are alienated, and try to assimilate into the host country. Carole Boyce Davies, in her article on Haiti, its landscape and migration, writes about the works of Edwidge Danticat, describing Haiti's geographical beauty as:

the most phenomenal contemporary writing of the Haitian landscape, nation and migration though comes through the contributions of Edwidge Danticat. . . . It is a multi-layered and textured reading which captured ahead of this particular trauma, the experiences of difficult lives, pain and disappointment which permeates a consciousness of being in a world which seems to reject one's humanity at every turn. ("Haiti" 95)

In her young adult novel *Behind the Mountains*, Edwidge Danticat writes about the double migration of a young girl, Celiane and describes her experience of immigration to Port-au-Prince and New York. She faces all the challenges as she desires to live with her father. She undergoes all the terrors of living in cities as she faces the bomb explosion, survives, and tries her best to find her way into the cities. Celiane is a fighter who can do anything to live in New York with her father. Edwidge Danticat compares Celiane's struggle to the fight for the victory of Anacaona's daughters. Carole Boyce Davies quotes Danticat's essay, "We Are Ugly But We Are Here," and says:

'We are ugly but we are here' ugliness capturing the Fanonian wretchedness of the way that we are presented to the world but still a resolve to survive and transcend. My grandmother believed that if a

life is lost, then another one springs up replanted somewhere else, the next life even stronger than the last. She believed that no one dies as long as someone remembers, someone who will acknowledge that this person had despite everything been here. We are part of an endless circle, the daughters of Anacaona. We have stumbled, but have not fallen. We are ill-favored, but we still endure. Every once in a while, we must scream this as far as the wind can carry our voices: We are ugly, but we are here! And here to stay. ("Haiti" 97)

First-generation migrants find it hard to assimilate. In contrast, second-generation migrants, either born in the country or their parents have taught them to adapt, have little difficulty assimilating into the majority culture. Migrants also find it difficult to integrate because they have to leave some aspects of their culture to integrate. The solution to the question of whether the migrants assimilate or they integrate depends on the acceptance level, as well as the accommodating nature of the host country. Edwidge Danticat's characters, who are Haitians, migrate to America. As we read, America is open to immigration, but if we deal with the reality, the American immigration rules vary from country to country. They are very precise and strict for Haitians. Haitians have become the most undocumented migrants in America, so they are seen with contempt in American society. As such, their assimilation and integration is a complex process. Americans will not have the Haitians have their way, so assimilation is somewhat easier than integration. As Celiane is a first-generation immigrant, she finds it difficult to assimilate into the new ways of life. Port-au-Prince bombings leave her astounded. She thinks city life is full

of violence and fears going to the city until her father assures her of safety. As the family migrates to New York she feels secure once she meets her father and can endure any hurdle to live with her father. Celiane loses her way back home from school, bringing forth her fears of city life. She feels her village in Haiti is better than the city, but she accepts and curbs her fears as her family tries to assimilate into the city. Celiane is caught in a situation of in-betweenness; she does not belong to the host country. Her identity is divided between Haitian culture and the host country's culture. Her identity becomes a hyphenated identity. The new country becomes a place of conquest between religion, class, culture, and home. As stated by Stuart Hall, this interaction between the past and the present is the transformation of cultural identities. Celiane now tries to make out her ways to live in the city; she is trying to transform, accept the new, and assimilate, keeping her past intact. Stuart Hall in "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" terms this to be the transforming of cultural identities based on past histories:

Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in a mere 'recovery' of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past.

(225)

Haitians cannot return to Haiti because of its political strife and poverty. The only option is to accept the majority culture and submit to the American lifestyle. Haitians with strong cultural and traditional roots find it very hard to assimilate into the American way of life. In the case of integration of migrants, it becomes challenging, but some Haitians do not assimilate they prefer to integrate into the majority culture following their own native culture. America is known worldwide as the great melting pot. The American immigration system rests mainly on this theory of melting point. The idea is that the cultural differences in the United States melt together as metals meltdown, to become strong alloys. The United States encourages different cultures to assimilate into its own, unlike Canada and Australia which have adopted multiculturalism. Celiane remembers her Haitian legacy as she follows the traditions taught to her by her grandparents and parents. She sees her mother assimilating with life in New York and going out to work in a hotel that looks pretty new to her. Celiane feels proud of her mother and wants to be like her one day. Kristine Abrahamsson, in her article on Edwidge Danticat, writes about the change in the mother-daughter relationship that comes when the mother moves out to take care of her children, the mother tries to conceal her assimilation. When the daughter sees her babysitting another child, she harbours jealousy towards the child and she assesses the change in the mother's character and tries to accept it. Kristine writes:

Danticat uses the working mother to show that she has found a place in the American community. When she is keeping it a secret this suggests that she, in a way, is ashamed of it. Her assimilation is more extensive

than her daughter previously thought: ‘even in a flowered dress, she is lost in a sea of pinstripes and grey suites’ (*Krik* 148). Quite stunned she watches her mother melting into her surroundings and maybe also losing herself when taking part in the community. When the daughter watches her mother actively taking part in New York life, she has to re-value her definition of her. (10)

Celiane eventually feels proud of her mother and wants to be like her one day. Women are presented as moral, social, and economic support to the family. The woman who migrates accepts the new social and moral norms and sacrifices her freedom of home to join the other for economic gains, thereby supporting the family and adding to the country’s economic progress.

Danticat’s characters settle and reach a point where they accept and assimilate. Haitians try to Americanise themselves. They wear the garb of the host culture, whereas internally, they love Haiti, their country, and its culture. Moy, her brother, is also transforming, as Stuart Hall says his identity is “becoming” (“Cultural” 225), and Moy is happy to adopt the changes which give him more freedom and good prospects. He is the one in the whole family who cherishes this transformation the most. He looks for independence and somehow becomes aggressive and disobedient in his manners, but as a Haitian, he remembers his culture of respecting his parents and returns. He also keeps a girlfriend keeping in with the culture of the host country. He assimilates into the host country but remembers his homeland as well. His returning home after his transformation is symbolic of returning to his roots and culture.

Danticat's works on the Haitian diaspora offer deep insights into how migration, displacement, and transnationalism shape identity, memory, and belonging. One of the key elements of transnational identity in Danticat's works is the tension between Haitian heritage and American (or foreign) culture. Characters often straddle two worlds, navigating their Haitian roots while trying to assimilate or survive in a new country. In *Behind the Mountains*, for example, the protagonist, Celiane, grows up in Haiti and New York, constantly negotiating her dual identity. She is torn between the cultural expectations of her Haitian mother, the trauma associated with her homeland, and the American lifestyle she encounters in the U.S. This negotiation of identity is central to transnational experiences, where individuals form a sense of self that is neither fully Haitian nor fully American. Celiane's struggle to reconcile her Haitian upbringing with her American surroundings reflects the broader tension many immigrants feel when trying to integrate into a new society while maintaining a connection to their homeland. Danticat portrays the emotional and psychological complexity of belonging to two cultures but not fully identifying with either.

In her second Young Adult Novel, *Anacaona*, Edwidge Danticat writes about the brave Taino queen Anacaona, a strong warrior, a patriot, and a devoted mother and wife. In her review of *Anacaona*, Kyras M. Daniels emphasises the connection between the past and the future. She believes that the past can build hope for a better future. Similarly, as Haiti, the first Black republic to abolish slavery and defeat the French, Spanish, and British military, could rise again. Edwidge Danticat's approach in drawing hope for the future

in Haiti evokes a spark of hope for a rebirth and renaissance despite the possibility of history repeating itself (“Review” 163). According to Stuart Hall, this interaction between past and present, between two cultures, leads to the production of cultural identities that are in transition and negotiation with the time (“Cultural” 225). Olivia Tracy, in her article “Rise Up through the Words,” writes about Anacaona’s various attributes and her just sacrifice of the throne of Xaragua:

When Caonabo asks Anacaona to marry him, she sees the decision as crucial to Xaragua’s future and says that, at that moment, ‘I had never felt so much like a cacica, more like a mature person, more like a woman, in my entire life. I had never felt more like my grandmother, who I was certain would have made the exact same decision.’ Danticat presents Anacaona’s choice to marry Caonabo as a political one, one that will ensure the success of Xaragua’s future. (116)

Forced Migration is also speculated as sacrificing one’s desires and independence to build one’s future and help improve the native country by contributing to its economy. As someone migrates, he carries with him dreams of a better future, new opportunities, and the host country’s acceptance of his skill and education. His dreams and wishes are fulfilled if he gets a good job and accommodation, which is tedious. In *Anacaona*, Anacaona migrates from Xaragua to Maguana as she is married there and has dreams of acceptance and a bright future. Anacaona accepts the proposal as a prospect of Xaragua, which will get protection from a strong Cacique. She says, “I wanted him to leave us with no worries about Xaragua’s future, a future that depended partly on my

decision. I had never felt so much like a cacica, more like a mature person, more like a woman, in my entire life. I had never felt more like my grandmother, who I was certain would have made the exact same decision had she been in my position” (62).

Anacaona gradually assimilates with the Maguana culture. At first, she feels alone and lonely in a new place and misses her Baba and Bibi, but she understands the culture with time and tries to become a part of it. She says, “I also miss Baba, Bibi, Behechio, and my uncle so much. It is as if there is a large, empty space in me, a dark star that neither sun can light, nor moon shade, nor Caonabo with his kindness and love blot out” (76). Anacaona was to rule over Xaragua, and as she gets married to Caonabo, people in Maguana address them as ‘Anacaonabo’ and treat her as a warrior, a saviour of Maguana. The people call them warriors: “The people of Maguana even call out that Caonabo and I are their ‘warriors’ because Caonabo has fought the Kalinas so many times. I am startled to hear myself called a warrior, for even though I have trained to defend my people, I have not yet had a chance to prove myself” (82). The migrant’s assimilation is complete when he stands equal with the host community. The migrant does not leave his nationhood and accepts the host nation as his own. Anacaona’s assimilation is complete when she goes on her first expedition with Caonabo to attack the pale men in Guacanagari and return victorious. Anacaona wants to leave a message for her future generation to fight for the cause of their country and be strong and brave. She wants her victory to be exemplary for the Haitians so they are proud of their brave

ancestors. Kyrrah M. Daniels, in her review on *Anacaona*, tells us about the message Danticat wants to give to future generations:

Another one of the most touching qualities in the book is the author's portrayal of strong family ties and enduring relationships. This type of ancestral veneration and those connections that bind generations to generations can be valuable lessons for a youth that has seemingly lost touch with its past and communal grounding. All characters, and Anacaona in particular, honor their ancestors in ceremonies, in songs, in poetry; their mid-set and daily actions reveal a reverence for all elders and ancestors. They carry them in their mind, heart, and spirit. ("Review" 164)

Edwidge Danticat's third young adult novel, *Untwine*, is the story of two twins and their bond. Giselle describes her bond with Isabelle as "[o]ur faith is a mishmash of many things. We believe in family, music and art, but we mostly believe in each other" (10). In *Untwine*, Giselle and Isabelle, two sisters, were born with intertwined fingers, and the doctors had to separate them one at a time. The girls were born in Miami and were second-generation Haitian immigrants, their parents being the first. The novel starts with the family meeting an accident, which was thought to be a hate crime but turns out to be a domestic violence act. The family, as Danticat writes, is well-established in Miami, so it can be said to have gone through assimilation. Giselle and Isabelle are second-generation immigrants who consider themselves complete Americans, but their sense of identity is shattered after the accident. Giselle and Isabelle love art and follow their dreams of becoming

great artists one day. People living in America see prospects in the arts. They have moved off from the stereotypical hatred towards the arts. Many immigrants opt for a future in music, painting, singing, and writing. Self-expression has become more important to identify with the natives. When the first generation arrived, there was a sense of survival; now, the immigrants fit in and have integrated with society. The present generation looks for developed ways, and their parents agree to the new ways leading to success. Giselle and Isabelle's parents provide them with enormous opportunities in life despite the announcement of their separation, which is also new in Haitian tradition, where there were no separations. The Boyers have assimilated into the new culture but have not left their own culture, as the house they build is similar to the one in Haiti. Mr. Boyer tells the children everything about Haiti, and he even names his cat after Dessalines, a Haitian revolutionary. He tells them about various Haitian traditions now and then: "Dad takes every opportunity he can to teach us lessons about Haitian history, even making a hero into a cat, a cat into a hero" (19). The twins go to Haiti at their grandfather's house and feel at home rather than in Miami. They find the landscape and the atmosphere very peaceful and happy. Although the parents of second-generation immigrants want their children to benefit from the education and opportunities in America, they also want them to be related to their diaspora's past culture and heritage.

Haitians' lives are influenced by their customs, artwork, culture, and paintings even when living in the host country. They rise socially and economically and make a place for themselves in the host society. Danticat

describes the artists and their works, recognising Haitian art in other countries. She further emphasises that art can console a grieving person and act as a soul mate to one who loses someone dear. One's native art forms are built into one's heart, and they help one in disaster and self-recognition. The family meets an accident, a crucial turnout in their life. Giselle loses her sister, and as she has assimilated into her twin identity, she suffers an identity crisis about who she is. Her parents, who are themselves recovering, fail to recognise Giselle and donate the organs of the twin, naming her Giselle, adding to her identity crisis. Giselle tries to adapt to her grief by submitting to various art forms and coming to different conclusions, trying to reconcile with the death of Giselle. Giselle interprets Basquiat's painting *Riding with Death* (1988) as, for Basquiat, death was a celebration which he puts forth through his painting, and this gives Giselle a lesson to accept and celebrate death rather than submitting to it. Joelle Mann describes Giselle's grieving in her work, "Aesthetic Reading and Reflexivity in Edwidge Danticat's *Untwine*," as:

Giselle's expression of bereavement is colored through an assemblage of artforms and artists that collectively have links that span her Haitian and American heritage. The artists bridge cultures in the novel, and Giselle links her grief with the work of artists as diverse as Mexican painter Frida Kahlo, Norwegian painter Edvard Munch, Haitian artist Louisiane Saint-Fleurant, American sculptor Alison Saar, and American Haitian artist Jean-Michel Basquiat. (148)

Though living in Miami and assimilated into its culture, Giselle finally comes to terms with her identity in Haiti. She is culturally entwined

with her native country. She returns to Haiti, where the two twins' untwining occurs. She says a final goodbye to Isabelle that too half, she wants her memories to live with her; she says, "'You will say 'Good,' I say. 'And I will say 'Bye'''" (*Untwine* 260). This will be a half-approval of displacement into the other world, allowing Gisselle to live with Isabelle in her heart. Anastasia M. Collins, in her article "Call and Response: Constructed Identity and Legible Experience in Danticat's Young Adult Novels," describes how *Kirkus Reviews* describes Danticat's *Untwine* as a lyrical, heartbreaking novel for teens about love, friendship, and loss that travels through "multiple worlds between life and death, between twins, and between the past and the present" (22).

The Art of Death is a memoir written on the death of Danticat's mother. Danticat briefly describes her journey from Haiti to Brooklyn and narrates her mother's death in Miami in *The Art of Death*. Edwidge Danticat is an inspiration to read more authors of her calibre, according to Jim Higgins, who discusses *The Art of Death* in the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* article "In 'The Art of Death,' Edwidge Danticat faces mortality in life and fiction." He writes, "Danticat writes clearly and judiciously about a subject that is challenging for both writers and people to face directly in 'The Art of Death'" ("In 'The Art'"). Her knowledge of literary allusions is broad and profound. Higgins says he is grateful to Danticat for introducing him to books he had never heard of, like "One Amazing Thing" by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. Anyone who has lost a mother will be both in tears and laughter when they read the final prayer written by the mother.

While searching for a cultural identity in America, Danticat has observed her mother closely and learnt a lot about her journey from displacement to assimilation. She feels bad about the period of life she was not with her, living with her uncle due to the migration of her father and mother. She finds her mother to be a deeply religious lady who loves her culture and has taught her children about Haitian culture. Danticat's mother has worked in a factory to bring up her family, and she tries to assimilate with the Americans in her own ways. She follows the American culture but in a Haitian way. She has been to America for a long time but still is not proficient in English, and she does not want to leave her Creole language. Danticat says:

My mother wouldn't have been funny in English. Even though she'd lived in the United States for decades, her English sounded like that of a newly arrived immigrant. Part of it was shyness. The other part was her lack of practice. There was not much English spoken in the factories where she worked. Everyone there had come from someplace else. She was embarrassed to speak English in other settings as well. (101)

Stuart Hall and Edouard Glissant describe this process of mixing two cultures and languages as Creolization, which Hall defines as the process of “cultural and linguistic mixing” (“Creolite” 15) that occurs from the mingling of “different cultures in the same indigenous space or location” (“Creolite” 15). Glissant writes that it originated from Creole, a “composed language, that evolved out of the contact of diametrically distinct linguistic elements”- European and non-European languages (*Kultur* 16). The meaning of Creolization, as used by the critics, is not only the mixing of two languages

and cultures but also the creation of a new culture. Danticat writes of this creolization involving the African elements in the Caribbean society. Like Glissant and Kamau Braithwaite, she valorises the African legacy in the Caribbean cultural identity. The Haitians try to mingle with the hosts, but it is not easy as they face a new challenge every time they submit to the change. Mother also attends the American church but likes singing French and Creole hymns as they sang in Haiti. Assimilating into the American culture, she tries to live hers as well. In her last days, both mother and daughter sang these hymns at night, more of Beatitudes, as they offered consolation to both. She thinks that her mother is blessed as she has a pure heart, and she is blessed as she will mourn her mother's death and will hence pray and lead a life of devotion as she still has a lot to live.

Danticat's assimilation is further challenged when she feels empathetic to the earthquake victims. She goes in for an interview, but she only wants to know what is happening in Haiti after the earthquake, as all the modes of communication have come to a standstill. She feels helpless and weak as she has no means to know about her near and dear in Haiti. She describes her feelings as, "What I was feeling was nearly indescribable. The country where I was born and had spent the first twelve years of my life, where many of my family members still lived, had been devastated. For all I knew, there were very few people left still alive. . . . the whole country had been destroyed" (*The Art* 37).

Another incident where Danticat felt that living in America for such a long time and assimilating into its ways was useless was when her uncle died

in prison due to harsh immigration laws, and Danticat was of no help. Edwidge Danticat writes about death and says one cannot talk of death if one has not lived. She lives and talks of death, which she witnesses as her mother dies; she sees her mother's final assimilation with death. She describes that as she has seen her mother die, she now understands that death is inevitable it involves both their body and the mind. Death is not the end. It is a fresh start of some kind, one that will benefit my mother. I also like to see it as being relocated to a new location-one that's more serene and lovely, perhaps a more permanent townhouse or tenement (31).

In her article on *Everything Inside*, Keith writes how Danticat gives voice to the silenced Haitians living in America. She writes, "Each story in this slim, beautifully written volume revolves around Haitian immigrants to the United States, the cultural shifts they experienced, and the challenges of settling in a country that still has racism and xenophobia in its DNA" ("Everything"). In the story "Dosas," Elsie lives in a live-in with an old, sick man trying to assimilate into society and share their culture, food, and habits. However, she finds her thoughts wandering toward a lost relationship. She wishes she had been in Haiti with her ex-husband Blaise, who wanted to live in Haiti. Olivia, her friend, matched her interests with Blaise and showed interest in Blaise, which was responded to as both wanted to return to Haiti. Olivia betrays her friend and runs away with her husband, cheating Elsie of her belongings, her home and her savings.

People migrate to distant lands to earn money, live happily and help their families in their homeland to survive. Danticat helps Haitians to this day

in migration, helps the immigrants to survive till they start earning, and even helps Haitian students to get admission to schools. Her characters, like Elsie cannot be free to live unless they have sufficient as she has a family to provide for. Haitians have family values and tend to take care of the family. Elsie provides her family with money and other essential articles that they can live happily. Elsie came to America looking for a happy and peaceful life, but found a petty job as a private nurse there. She worked all day and night for a meagre income, but she was happy with Blaise, and one day her happiness turned into sorrow to find that her husband and friend cheated on her not only in their relations but also for her money. They duped Elsie and their friend Dede of money had turned criminals to earn money and return to Haiti. At one point of time the migrants fear and anxiety rise to a level that they do anything to survive and fulfill their dreams. They go in for stealing, kidnapping, destroying other's property, and killing for money. Their desire turns them into criminals and culprits. This is when the natives turn against them and want them out of their land. Separation is not a tradition in Haiti, so Elsie longs to live with Blaise even when he leaves her. Anika shares a similar experience in the story "The Gift," she comes to Miami in search of prospects as a painter but cannot get a respectable job. The migrants work day and night to meet the two ends and also save money to be sent back home. They work as waiters, painters, and nurses. They do any dirty jobs in the host country to earn money to improve the economic status of their family. They tend to go to extremes to get a better future, Anika builds a relationship with Thomas in search of a better future. This is an integration, into the life of a rich man to lose oneself for good

prospects. She became friends with a wealthy Haitian businessman, and the relationship, which was to be fruitful and bring happiness turned out to be regretful as she could never win over Thomas, who deeply loved his family and Anika was just a pass time for him. Anika loved her culture and made beautiful paintings but was never accepted in Miami as she did not get the desired job. Also, her dream of having a family and home was shattered when Thomas showed his indifference toward her. She realised that she was just a luxury commodity which had value till it was thought to be beautiful. The beauty faded with the realisation that Thomas had after losing his family and the culprit was Anika who deepened his sorrow as he witnessed her and she became an offense. The misery of the immigrant who becomes responsible for anything that happens in the hosts life is unspeakable. The sorrows suffered by the migrant are negligible while the sadness of the native is huge, giant and invincible.

Some immigrants face alienation at home. The parents want the children to follow Haitian traditions and raise their family according to their culture. The mother wants her daughter to be a good mother and teach her children Haitian traditions, but she cannot cope with the change in the children's lifestyle as they assimilate and teach their children to assimilate. In the story, "Sunrise Sunset," Jeanne cannot detect the feelings and behaviour of her mother, Carole. The two families, Victor and Carole and the second James and Jeanne are caught between two cultures. Carole raised her children without compromise during oppression in Haiti. At the same time Jeanne, the next generation, feels that giving birth to a child leads to disfiguring of the body

and leaves her child to be taken care of, which annoys her mother as she questions her upbringing. Carole is hurt as there is a lack of understanding between her and her daughter. The stress between the parents and the children results in Carole facing a blank spot. She also yells and shouts at her daughter for being selfish and giving away her traditions. As a result of their lack of assimilation into the mainstream, they lead an isolated and protected life. In “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” Stuart Hall, writes about the formation of identity which is never complete but always under production. He writes, Identity is not as transparent or problematic as we think. Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a ‘production’, which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation. This view problematises the very authority and authenticity to which the term, ‘cultural identity’, lays claim (222).

“In the Old Days” describes the American-born daughter Nadia who does not know her father Maurice, who lives in Haiti. As an immigrant to Haiti, her parents sought a better life. Maurice realises he has a debt to pay to his country so after acquiring his education; he opts to go back while Nadia’s mother wants to stay in Brooklyn as she likes life in Brooklyn. Nadia’s mother gradually assimilates into American society, while Nadia, born in Brooklyn, does not know about Haiti and its culture. Her father is dying and she receives a call from his girlfriend that he wants to meet Nadia. Though in the dark, she longs to see her father, who eventually dies before she can meet him. The immigrants who are the second-generation of immigrants, are born and bred

in the host country do not know about their country of origin and have no feelings towards it unless they are educated by their parents and are taken along for a visit. Nadia has never been to Haiti personally, so Haiti is a strange, distant land and she could not even think of knowing her Haitian father. However, she also feels that she does not belong to America. McLeod, in *Beginning Postcolonialism* observes that migrants have no homes, no country, they leave behind their homes to look for new accommodation, they differ from the host in their culture and ethnicity; he writes, “Migrants may well live in new places, but they can be deemed not to belong there and disqualified from thinking of the new land as their home. Instead, their home is seen to exist elsewhere, back across the border” (212). This may be why Nadia visits her father’s place and feels sorry for not knowing her father and Haiti. Salman Rushdie says that the knowledge of this distant home is unavailable to the children of the migrants, and their reflections of this home are different from others.

Danticat portrays the difference in the availability of sources and privileges in her next story, “Hot-Air Balloons.” She compares the lives of two young Haitian girls who have migrated to Haiti but belong to different strata of society. Neah is the daughter of a renowned doctor who is the chair of the Caribbean Studies Department, while Lucy is a poor labourer’s daughter. Neah, who has never been to Haiti, goes to Haiti for a trip and never returns as she starts working in Leve, a women’s recovery centre in Port-au-Prince. Neah’s parents, who have assimilated into their new country, want her back from Haiti. They do not want her to have any relations with Haiti. They could

be said to have acculturated as they adopted the host country's culture. Milton Gordon writes that acculturation is a precursor to cultural assimilation, which cannot be avoided amongst upper-class migrants. He further says that acculturation occurs as the minority group comes in a country as a condition for survival (*Assimilation* 77). Lucy's parents, on the other hand, have wandered from place to place to raise their children, so Lucy is well aware that her studies are of utmost importance if she has to survive in America. Lucy's parents do not want her to forget Haiti, and she lived in Haiti so knows a lot about Haitian culture, and she accepts her Haitianness with her Americanness. She is gradually assimilating into her new life as an American, keeping her Haitian culture intact. Haitians are portrayed as a sick, diseased community in the story "The Port-au-Prince Marriage Special." An immigrant to Miami owns a hotel and finds one of her maidservants suffering from AIDS. Melisande, another immigrant with her mother Babette, lives in poor, deplorable conditions, and as Melisande acquires AIDS, she cannot keep up with the disease and grows pale. The owner helps her by getting her the required medicines and care. In this story, Danticat not only describes the poverty of the Haitians but also points out that while Haitians are said to be diseased people, the tourists are responsible for spreading the disease to Melisande. In the lure of money and gold, the poor Haitian girls submit themselves to these tourists who cheat them and deceive them by giving them fake rings, which these girls think to be made of gold. The owner tries to tell poor Melisande the truth that she has been befooled not once but twice by the doctor and by the seducer. Edwidge Danticat also suggests the cruel nature of

the foreigners who attracted the innocent Haitian girls and also the fake doctors, the quacks who dupe them by giving them false hopes and fake medicines.

Edwidge Danticat also writes about the discrimination faced by Haitians by people of different races. Haitians are looked down upon as shabby, dirty and illiterate people, while the others hide their dirt in beautiful surroundings disguising themselves as sophisticated and fanciful. “Seven Stories” by Edwidge Danticat portrays the bureaucratic life on an island near Haiti. The whims and fancies of the rich portray the island to be the best place to live. However, the shabby shantytowns and dirty hospitals hidden from the camera are the lives of people on the island, which Kim finds very much like hers as a Haitian. This life is the outlook of Haiti, and on this island, it is hidden from the world. Kim, a second-generation immigrant, assimilates into life in Miami, yet she is proud to be a Haitian. The islanders find Haitians poor and wanting people, so they discourage any immigrants from Haiti. They talk about the immigration policies and want to upgrade them to dissuade the Haitians from immigrating to their island. The elder gentleman who had remarked on Haitian poverty seeks forgiveness as Kim tries to protect her Haitianness by saying that she does not want to stay on their island. She is just a visitor.

Kelsey Mitchell, in her review of *Everything Inside* by Edwidge Danticat, writes that the stories are about the effect of migration on Haitians’ lives. Danticat writes about the movement of the Haitians to Miami, to New York and back to Haiti. She also writes about how they settle and make

families and try to assimilate into the host land. Haiti is an incredibly poor country. Haitians try to escape the economic instability and political insecurity by emigrating. Almost 82% of Haitians have emigrated to the United States. The government faces challenges regarding the assimilation of immigrants in the U.S., so many Haitians have to live illegally in the country with a constant fear of being caught and deported to Haiti. These illegal immigrants cannot assimilate as they do not find work and live in isolation, changing from one place to another for fear of jail.

Arnold in “Without Inspection” is an illegal immigrant, or we can call him the ‘boatmen,’ who arrive on the shores of Miami every day as their boats leave them in the sea away from the shore; some swim across, and others drown, accepting their fate. This miserable condition of humanity in the search for food and a future is witnessed in Miami, and the immigrants are mostly Haitians. It is Arnold’s good luck to find Darline, who protects him by taking him to a refugee camp and helping him thereafter by changing locations. Darline, who came to Miami with her husband as an immigrant, loses him to sea, but she gradually accepts assimilation for her son’s future. Arnold, who has high hopes and wants to fulfil the American dream of his own house in America, meets an accident where he falls from a scaffold 500ft high. He relives his life in those six and a half seconds, and he becomes a good husband and the father of Paris. He is free; death frees him from all bounds, jails, and all misery and responsibilities. He is free after all his struggles in life; he is no longer enslaved. He is assimilated with death. Danticat’s stories reflect Haitian

culture as no one else can; she presents an accurate picture of the immigrants in America as she sees them, hears them, and talks to them.

In Danticat's works, home is often a fluid, shifting concept for her transnational characters. For Haitian migrants and their descendants, home can simultaneously refer to Haiti, the United States, or the idea of belonging to both. This dual sense of belonging, where individuals feel at home in multiple places yet fully at home in neither, is a critical aspect of transnational identity. In *Everything Inside*, Danticat further explores the idea of transnational belonging through characters who live between worlds, navigating geographic and emotional borders. The stories emphasize how migration reshapes the idea of family, relationships, and home, with characters constantly crossing literal and metaphorical borders in search of belonging. Through her rich storytelling, Danticat provides a nuanced portrayal of how migration and displacement shape the individual and collective identities of those who live between worlds. Transnationalism is one form of economic, political and cultural adaptation that co-exists with other, more traditional forms. According to Thomas Hylland Eriksen in his book *Globalization*, globalization has created more diverse migration patterns, with back-and-forth movements of people through networks rather than permanent settlements in another country. This results in such migrants being less likely to see themselves as belonging to one culture or another, and instead, they may develop transnational identities and loyalties. In her works, Danticat portrays two cultures, one of which is subjugated, inferior, and racialized. Haitians may form transnational identities, but they still will not be accepted by the Americans.

Thus, it can be said that Haiti and America represent two different cultural diversities. Immigrants into a country come with high hopes as a new bride to their in-law's house. Mr. and Mrs. Boyer, Anacaona, Danticat's mother, Elsie, Blaise, Arnold, Darline, Anika, Babette, the family of Celiane, etc., who are all first-generation immigrants keep their Haitian identity intact and also assimilate into the new country's culture. In contrast, second-generation Haitians must be told about their culture and belongingness to Haiti. Isabelle and Giselle, Jeanne, James, Neah, Lucy, etc., are second-generation immigrants. Danticat has described both generations following their culture, holding on to their Haitian cultural identity, and rising in life by assimilating to the host country's values. The Haitians assimilate and integrate, but unfortunately, the Americans do not integrate. The first-generation immigrants get lost in the new world, feel alienated and displaced, and eventually realise that they need to learn new things to survive. This is the beginning of Assimilation when the immigrants find that their coming to normal is not accepted whatever they do. The immigrants assimilate, but the natives do not. If the change is not accepted, it leads to a feeling of unbelongingness, and disapproval leads to depression and marginalisation. Felix Eme Unaeze and Richard E. Perrin, in their article "Haitian Americans," write about the Haitian's struggle to assimilate and still get no recognition; they write about a Haitian, Father Thomas Wenski, director of Pierre Toussaint Haitian Catholic Centre in Miami, who writes about why Haitians do not assimilate, he says:

Haitians have been specifically and harshly excluded because of “America’s endemic ‘negrophobia’ and inherent racism.” Haitians have been excluded because of their race and economic condition. “Thus,” says Wenski, “one must ask: will the Haitians be able to assimilate into American society as other immigrant groups of the past? Again, Haitians are black and can Haitians hope for a ‘piece of the American pie’ while native-born American blacks still fight for crumbs? Many would see an eventual amalgamation into the African American community but does such a view give too much importance to race as a determinant and underrate such values as religion and culture?” (“Haitian Americans”)

According to Father, Haitians are not accepted for their religious and cultural practices; how can they be assimilated? Garcia-Navarro, in an interview with Edwidge Danticat, asks her about the future of Haitians as President Trump called Haitians ‘shitholes’ and said that: “they should welcome immigrants from Norway rather than Haiti”(“Author Edwidge”). Danticat replies that Haitians are strong fighters and will come out victorious in their struggle for their rights. She says:

We have to see that Haitians are always part of the larger struggle for immigration rights and for, you know, racial equality in America. We’re going to continue that struggle however we do it, put letters on the streets. And we’re going to try to take care of our neighbors who have come to this country, just like we did in the past, for a better opportunity. (“Author Edwidge”)

Her words prove that Edwidge Danticat, although she assimilated with the American culture, is a Haitian daughter in the true sense; she bears a Haitian identity. Migrants have adapted to the American lifestyle. Assimilation is natural, and nobody can survive like an alien in a society; one has to accept and adapt. The migrants assimilate and integrate, but they always retain their cultural identity. Assimilation does not mean they have stopped being Haitians; it is a form of submission to live in the host country, as without submission, one is not accepted. The Haitians, over time, come to resemble the Americans and their future generations assimilate to become Haitian Americans.

CONCLUSION

The present research study explores the search for cultural identity as undergone by the characters of Edwidge Danticat in her select works, *Behind the Mountains*, *Anacaona*, *Untwine*, *The Art of Death* and *Everything Inside*. In the search for a cultural identity, the other identities of being black, a woman and a migrant also play an essential part in the study. Culture plays a vital role in shaping our identity. The entire oeuvre of Edwidge Danticat focuses on Haitians' migration because of Haiti's socioeconomic and political upheavals. Through her characters, she describes the impact of migration on the Haitians. A sense of displacement and marginalisation results from non-acceptance and issues of belongingness, all leading to a search for cultural identity, which forms the basis of all identities, social, class, gender, religion, linguistics, etc.

The study answers the question Who am I? Where do I belong? What is my cultural identity? in the context of Haitian Diaspora. It further establishes that the search for cultural identity is a never-ending process. As stated by Stuart Hall, cultural Identity is dynamic and always "becoming" ("Cultural"225), and the immigrant's search for cultural identity leads them towards assimilation and integration. The study also states that Haitian identity is formed when the Haitians incorporate Haitian culture. The marginalisation of Haitian women and children in the host countries, the racial discrimination of the Blacks and the Haitians (who are black), and the discrimination between the American Blacks and Haitians is a result of cultural disparity. This cultural disparity ends with acceptance or denial; here, the search ends, and the other submits. The binaries of whites and blacks, master/slave, host/other, still exist

despite the end of colonialism. The present study also highlights the concerns of the writer Edwidge Danticat as she unveils the history of Haiti through her works and gives an insight into the plight of the Haitians who have lived through the Haitian revolution and the Duvalier era. She unravels how forces of nature and political instability led to the ruin of Haiti and were responsible for the people's sufferings. She loves Haiti and is a proud Haitian who writes about the land's mysteries as she lends a voice to the wounds of the Haitians, be they physical or psychological. Another outlook to this research could be a search for the cultural identity of Edwidge Danticat, the Haitian-American writer, as her entire life forms a part of her oeuvre. She gives her wounds words and desires a form as she writes her works, and her characters are people in her life and herself. Edwidge Danticat's works are filled with rich images and descriptions of Haitian culture. She uses a mixture of Creole and English as she writes for both Haitians and American Haitians.

When a person migrates, he leaves behind many things and people and takes with him hopes of a secure and bright future. The migrant and the host community have to undergo major changes in their cultures which accompany this dislocation from one place and relocation to another. The migrant's economic, social and cultural environment changes completely. This change is not always adaptable for the migrant and the host community. The insecurity breeds alienation, and the migrants feel displaced. This period of displacement is short-lived as they try hard to learn new ways and try to assimilate. Danticat's characters face displacement and are marginalised but do not yield; they are there to stay. Danticat's texts mirror the Haitian diaspora. Their

struggle for identity and culture, their weaknesses and their acceptance to survive are all depicted in her works. In *Create Dangerously*, she describes the two worlds of the Diaspora by referring to the phrase ‘My country’, and she explains that if used by her, it could be understood as Haiti by one, as she is a part of the Haitian Diaspora, and America by others, as she lives in America; she writes:

I had told him that I envied the certainty with which he could and often did say the words, “My country.” “My country is suffering,” he would say. “It’s being held captive by criminals. My country is slowly dying, melting away.” “My country, Jean,” I said, “is one of uncertainty. When I say ‘my country’ to some Haitians, they think I mean the United States. When I say ‘my country’ to some Americans, they think of Haiti.” (46-47)

Danticat herself, an immigrant in America, takes the responsibility to keep the Haitian identity intact by writing for them. Her texts have a powerful impact on society. She presents an accurate picture of the immigrants in America. As an immigrant Haitian, she raises a voice against the immigration rules and harsh policies framed for Haitians expressly. She also writes and talks against the derogatory names used for the Haitians by U.S. officials. President Trump, in his welcome speech, used a vulgar term for her country. He called the African countries ‘shitholes.’ In an interview on the Radio with Garcia Navarro, Danticat replied that it was very disheartening, disrespectful and profoundly racist. She further said that Haitians are also contributing to the economy and progress of America, and it is surprising for a president to

have made such a remark. President Trump's remarks could revive history. What was can be reintroduced. These damaging comments and beliefs could again bring forth long-forgotten racism and hatred.

Edwidge Danticat is often criticised for demonstrating Haitian culture to the world. She is accused of earning money by writing about the rituals personal to Haitians and laid bare to the world through her texts. Her works are replete with Haitian culture. Modernity makes a man lose his cultural identity, and one can compromise anything for its sake. However, Danticat, in this era of globalisation and westernisation, writes about the myths and traditions of the Haitians to awaken the spirit of nationalism and Haitian national identity in the migrant Haitian Diaspora. Haitian tradition of storytelling, spirituality, and the practice of Vodou, the Haitian religion by Danticat's characters, shows that Haitians are deeply spiritual. Danticat feels the need to educate second-generation immigrants about Haitian culture, which is reflected in her works for young adults. Her young adult novels are a message to the young Haitians to imbibe their cultural values and pass them on to their children. *Behind the Mountains* describes the journey of the protagonist to retain her cultural identity through internal and external migration. The protagonist, a young child, finds it difficult to accept the host culture and feels afraid and lonely in the new country. She wants to live in the host country and so finds ways of survival, learning from the experiences of other migrants who she feels have suffered a lot and are still traumatised being a part of this society. Americans see all that is not made in America with contempt. Haitians are a part of that contempt; the torture, the hardships and

the abuse are all part of their life. The petty jobs, the racial discrimination, the substandard accommodations, and the low salaries are a ritual followed towards the migrants. Danticat's characters face the abuse but do not submit; rather fight strongly to earn a place in society and succeed without leaving their culture. Their never-ending search for cultural identity continues despite the horrors the host country offers. Political violence, bombing, looting, and mass deaths are all features of the modern era which are to be accepted by the immigrants in the host country.

The Haitians love their landscape, their religious practices on festivals and their spirituality. The migrant family feels happy going to a Haitian church on Christmas, and meeting Haitians gives immense pleasure to Celiane, who thinks that Haiti has shrunk to this church today. The novel also highlights the importance of the host country's language as one does not belong if one does not know the language. Danticat also stresses the educational difference as migrant children have different classes for weak students. Celiane feels low as she was a bright student in Haiti and now sits in a class of weak students. Another theme the writer stresses is the loosening of familial bonds as the parents fear their children's insecurity and feeling lost in the host country. The parents want the family to live together, but the new culture teaches them to be independent. The search for cultural identity begins here when the children retain their native cultural identity or the host's cultural identity. Haitian culture promotes joint family, and Danticat's characters are true Haitians who follow their culture and have strong family bonds. Celiane feels displaced; she suffers marginalisation in society, at school and even at home by her father,

but she tries to assimilate. On the other hand, Moy feels alienated and leaves home but realises that his identity is his home and his family culture. The characters disperse as they feel insecure in the host community, but they struggle and reaffirm their cultural identity.

Anacaona is her tribute to brave Haitian women who endure everything but are never in the limelight. Anacaona was a fifteenth-century Arawak queen, a warrior, and a worthy heir to the throne of Xaragua. Danticat uses vivid imagery and historical facts to connect to the readers. Anacaona sacrifices the throne for her brother and remains the unsung heroine who marries Caonabo to become the queen of Maguana. Danticat's characters portray generosity, care, sacrifice and love versus the greediness and selfishness of the plunderers. Anacaona for Danticat symbolises heroism in Haitian culture, which she wants the Haitians to relive even in the migrated lands. Danticat's characters are all images she sees of future Haitians who assimilate with the Americans and always cherish their Haitian National Identity. Anacaona is also symbolic of nationalism in the hearts of the Haitians. Haitian women have always been strong and the bread earners for the family. Looking back to Haitian history and Danticat's other works, she writes of the role of Haitian women in the progress of the family and the country's economy. Danticat gives the Haitian women credit for keeping the Haitian culture alive by assimilating and leading their children to assimilate in the host countries, living with their cultural identities.

The migrant's search for cultural identity begins when he/she faces misfortunate events in the host country. Gisselle in *Untwine* loses her sister

Isabelle, and she finds herself in chaos finding her identity as a Dosa, the untwined one. In Vodou, the Haitian culture, there is a culture of Marasa, which means the twin deities and the surviving twin must carry the lost twin's effigy. Giselle is the surviving twin and a second-generation migrant; she is familiar with Haitian rituals and has the burden of Isabelle's death in her heart. She thinks Isabelle overshadows her identity. Danticat gives a detailed view of Haiti's rich architecture as she describes the churches visited by the twins. A beautiful, vivid picture of a Haitian house is described by Danticat, which she writes has a replica in America as the house the protagonist lives in resembles the house in Haiti. Danticat's theme of return to the homeland and its culture is what Gisselle finds solace in. It is the ancestral home in Haiti where Gisselle untwines herself from the effigy of the twin and accepts her loneliness. Danticat uses Haitian cultural values, such as the stories that link the Haitians to their culture as Danticat remembers that whether as a ritual or tradition or just as folktales, stories were an important part of her family that linked her to her grandmother, her mother, and father. She says in one of her interviews with Gleibermann, "We're connected by our stories. You are who you are because your grandmother was this person and your mother was this person or your father was this person, and there are certain traits you carry. I've always wanted to incorporate that in my work" ("The Story").

The Art of Death is an autobiographical memoir describing Danticat and her mother's search for a cultural identity. This search ends when her mother assimilates in death. The search for cultural identity never ends for a migrant in the U.S., as the policies in the U.S. are harsh and never changing

for Haitians. Danticat's uncle fell prey to these immigration policies and was detained despite his poor health; he was not offered medical assistance and succumbed to his disease. Haitians mete inhuman treatment by U.S. agencies. They are detained and put in nasty and dirty cells, in unhygienic conditions, and sent to immigrant camps from where they never return or are deported to Haiti. The writer feels sad at the death of her uncle and father; she uses the Creole expression "lot bodlo, on the other side of the water" (*The Art* 22), which means either someone has migrated abroad or has died. Danticat's stories address many intertwined themes such as migration, death, comfort, acceptance, denial, home, culture etc. Danticat herself, an immigrant, tries to find solace, acceptance and comfort by writing about death. She portrays death as satisfying and soothing. It is a pleasure one seeks after a long search for cultural and social identity, and it is the end of the never-ending trauma as an immigrant in a host country.

Danticat's anthologies of short stories are her collection of various phases in the life of a Haitian in Haiti and as a migrant in the Haitian Diaspora. *Krik? Krak!* which became a National Book Award finalist, is her first book of short stories. Most of the stories revolve around poverty and the difficult era in Haiti, mother-and-daughter relationships and a search for cultural identity. In "Children of the Sea," Danticat writes how people left their country fearing abuse; a young man leaves Haiti because of violence and suffering at the hands of the colonisers in search of new land and self-esteem. The mishappenings on the way shatter his belief, and when he reaches the host country, he is ill-treated and labelled as a boat-people. His destiny now is to live in an immigration

camp and suffer the atrocities suffered by most immigrants, especially Haitians. “A Wall of Fire Rising” is an engrossing portrayal of the poverty of Haitian migrants and also of racial discrimination, which puts the black to death having crossed his limits. Another young girl is painted naked by a French artist in “Seeing Things Simply.” Haitians are awakening to the new world. They are looking for a new and free self. Stories are based on the approval of black identity, and most characters, Blacks and migrants, expose the dark reality of life back in Haiti. They are all trying to accept the new reality of living as a Black in the host country.

Everything Inside is the story of Haitians in America who have assimilated but are still searching for their cultural identity. The stories deal with the immigration of the Haitians and revolve around the trauma which lingers until they live, and they always face the threat of being deported. Danticat often uses the Haitian story-telling tradition to connect to Haiti, Haitians and the Haitian diaspora. Haitian immigrants are the protagonists of her stories, and she voices their discontent in host countries through her stories. Haitians are immigrating to Haiti, and the stories describe the horrors suffered by the Haitians, their plight and the sorrow resulting from their race and colour.

Haiti’s people are Africans, the slaves brought to this region by the explorers. When Haiti became a country, they became the citizens of Haiti, and as they were Africans, they were black. Danticat writes of an awakening in the people of Haiti when Negritude comes into Haiti. She wants the Haitians to rise above race and colour and hence find an identity, the Black identity. This black identity is the search for their self-identity, glorification of race, colour

and promotion of Black art and culture, giving it recognition in society. The characters in the works of Edwidge Danticat are tortured and suffer at the hands of the whites. They either submit or run away to distant lands. Even in these places, they are deprived of their identity and treated as Afro-Americans or Caribbean. They are in new lands but facing the same old discrimination and torment. They can fight for themselves only when they realise their power, which is in being a Haitian, a Black. When they regain this consciousness of being a Haitian, they can stand for an identity as a Haitian, a Haitian artist, a Haitian politician or a Haitian writer. Danticat stands for the Black identity as she supports organisations like Black Lives Matter, which ask and stand out for the rights of blacks. Another issue raised by Edwidge Danticat is the marginalisation of women and children in Haiti and host lands. Danticat, as a child, suffers discrimination at school. She was tortured and beaten up being a Haitian as the Haitians were excluded from society, being labelled as spreaders of AIDS. As an advocate of Haitians, Danticat reports many such incidents as the deportation of migrants unlawfully or the sudden vanishing of Haitians from boats across the sea. She also defends the Haitians on issues relating to AIDS and discriminatory immigration policies against Haitians. Many newspapers and magazines like *The New Yorker* and *The New York Times* publish Edwidge Danticat's articles on discrimination against Haitians by the U.S. government and write about the difficulties faced or the voices raised by the Haitians. In recent news in "The U.S.'s Long History of Mistreating Haitian Migrants", *The New Yorker*, Danticat writes about the mistreatment of the Haitians by the U.S. government. She writes:

This past week, while looking at the heart-wrenching images of Haitian migrants packed by the thousands under the Del Rio International Bridge, in Texas, or crossing at shallow points of the Rio Grande, or being chased by Border Patrol agents on horseback, or landing back in Haiti for the first time in years-thought of some of my family's own migration nightmares. . . . The mass expulsions from Del Rio this week are not the first time the current Administration has moved forcefully against Haitian migrants. During Joe Biden's initial weeks in office, invoking a public-health measure known as Title 42, which had previously been used by the Trump Administration at the height of the corona virus pandemic, the Administration deported more than a thousand Haitians, including babies. ("U.S.'s Long ")

Danticat, through her works, advocates for Haitians in the diaspora and wants the governments of the host countries to realise that Haitians are humans. They have a national and cultural identity and a right to follow their cultures and traditions. This study discusses the importance of cultural diplomacy in fostering positive international relations. It advises policymakers to be sensitive to cultural differences and to avoid cultural imperialism and appropriation.

Culture significantly influences people's identities by shaping their values, beliefs, and behaviours. It provides a framework for recognizing one's position in the community and altering social interactions, language, and customs. Cultural norms foster a sense of shared identity and belonging, and are shaped by shared experiences, traditions, and values passed down through generations. A community's distinct identity is shaped by interactions,

migrations, and historical events that impact language, customs, and social conventions. Understanding these roots helps illuminate the rich tapestry of cultures around the world. Migrants face a dynamic process of negotiation and adaptation when relocating to a new nation, changing their culture, identity, and sense of self. This fusion affects social customs, dietary preferences, and linguistic changes, which lead to the formation of Transnational identities. Transnational individuals often embody a hybrid identity that blends aspects of their homeland and new country. For example, children of immigrants may grow up speaking multiple languages, celebrating different cultural traditions, and negotiating values from their heritage and the dominant culture in their new country. They may not fully identify with either their parents' country or the host country, resulting in a unique, transnational identity. Challenges such as acculturation stress may arise, but migrants also experience personal growth and enrichment by incorporating diverse elements from their host environment. The interactions between immigrants and the host culture add to the depth and complexity of the individual's and the community's culture.

The present study not only examines how culture shapes Edwidge Danticat's characters' identities and their search for cultural identity, it also adds to our knowledge about a small, poor country, Haiti and its cultural legacy, which the Haitians carry with them to all places they migrate. It also speaks of the young Haitians and is a message to them, especially the second generation of migrants, to inherit the rich Haitian legacy, never forget their attachment to their roots and keep their cultural identity intact. This study brings forth the Haitian diaspora's struggles or generalises the diaspora's efforts to live in the

host country. This struggle continues today. The diaspora has not been given recognition by the host governments, chiefly the U.S. government, which not only levies harsh immigration policies but also curbs the rights of the migrants, violating human rights. The contribution of the present study is that it will help other researchers to further work on the aspects related to the search for cultural identity like displacement, marginalisation, assimilation and integration, which can be approached as separate subjects in research. This research can also be furthered by taking the responses of the migrants who underwent the search for cultural identity.

The present study is useful for society as it gives a positive approach to the migrants that, though living in the host country, they sustain their cultural identity by partially accepting the culture of the host land, not abandoning their own. This study is a moral awakening for the host country's citizens to accept the newcomers and not discriminating against them. The host country's citizens can help the migrants live harmoniously with their cultural identity while they still need to adapt to the host culture so that displacement and marginalization of people can be avoided. Writers like Edwidge Danticat are true daughters/sons of their soil, raising their voices for their people in the host land. This study is a message to the young migrants that life in host countries is not always as dreamt. Migration is still a young phenomenon, and migrants will always search for cultural identity, a never-ending search that will continue for generations.

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LIST OF PUBLICATION

Sno.	Title of paper with author names	Name of journal / conference	Published date	Issn no/ vol no, issue no	Indexing in Scopus/ Web of Science/UGCC ARE list (<i>please mention</i>)
1.	Displacement and Marginalization of Haitian Immigrants - Manpreet Kaur Uppal and Dr. Meenakshi Rana	Journal of Namibian Studies	Pub. March 2023	ISSN 21975523	Scopus
2.	Traumatic Experience of Migrants in Edwidge Danticat's <i>Breath Eyes Memory-</i> Manpreet Kaur Uppal and Dr. Meenakshi Rana	Journal of the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute	January 2024	ISSN: 0970- 0609	UGC CARE LIST 1

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1.	“Linguistic Diversity in Business: Helping Build Employee Relations” - Manpreet Kaur	11th National Conference on Contemporary Management Research (NACCMAR 2020)	6 March 2020	Vol.19 No. 1.	National Conference
2.	Taboos Related to Menstruation In Various Cultures - Manpreet Kaur Uppal, Dr Meenakshi Rana	Journal of Pharmaceutical Negative Results,	2022	Volume 13 Special Issue 9	Web of Science