

Madeleine Chansky

Writing Pain: Hybridity, Home, and Haiti

Migration creates the desire for home, which in turn produces the rewriting of home. Homesickness or homelessness, the rejection of home or the longing for home become motivating factors in this rewriting. Home can only have meaning once one experiences a level of displacement from it.

— Carole B. Davies (113)

In Caribbean literature, the concept of home is problematic. Movement, departure, and deracination illustrate characters' understanding of origins, equating home to exile and migration. This notion of home proves dichotomous: to which nation, which culture does one belong? To the native land of Haiti, to the nation of exile and emigration, or to both? Edwidge Danticat, a contemporary Haitian novelist, characterizes this national and cultural binary, encapsulating a "dual identity" as a Haitian-American (Vega González, "Exiled Subjectivities" 182). Having emigrated from Haiti to America as a girl, she spans both cultures and nations, understanding Haiti as her home; yet, as a Haitian-American she is also distanced from it. Danticat addresses the subject of belonging through the experience of exile. In two of her texts, *The Farming of Bones* and *The Dew Breaker*, characters undergo departure and exile, followed by feelings of separation from and longing for their native land.

However, exile and emigration can come at a price. Often, they result from threat and oppression that lead to "forced migration" (Hron 7). Each of Danticat's aforementioned texts deal with some form of oppression and are "laden with suffering" (Hron 172): *The Farming of Bones* gives a fictional and personal account

of the 1937 massacre of Haitians living in the Dominican Republic whereas *The Dew Breaker* follows multiple stories of encounters with a Haitian *tonton macoute* and the subsequent physical and psychological trauma attached to their torturous experiences. Madelaine Hron in *Translating Pain: Immigrant Suffering in Literature and Culture* remarks that, “Because suffering is viewed as an inherent part of the immigrant narrative, it easily becomes regarded as part of the immigrant group experience” (18). Suffering becomes connected to the Haitian condition in multiple ways. For those that leave Haiti (or enter it) escaping death or torture such as in *The Dew Breaker* and *The Farming of Bones*, the pain becomes a physical one; many Haitians in Danticat’s stories bear marks that attest the atrocities they endured. Further, the experience of torture can also lead to haunting memories that cause psychological harm.

Pain and torture manifest themselves in different fashions in these two works, yet both indicate the suffering experienced, stemming from exile and migration. This pain and the trauma associated with it “consumes language,” leaving Danticat’s characters a-linguistic, incapable of communicating (Novak 104). However, in writing, Danticat chronicles each character’s experiences. She engages in the “rewriting of home,” providing a “testimonial” to their exiled existences and “[giving] voice to the silenced” (Davies 113; Novak 95; Vega González, “Sites of Memory” 20). Through her writing, Danticat documents the suffering connected to exile and emigration that Haitians experience, recognizing and thereby valorizing the diasporic Haitian identity. She helps to reinstate the

idea of home within the larger Haitian community, a hybridity that spans borders and nations.

Over the course of this essay, I will delve into the different notions of home followed by a discussion on the manifestations of pain, torture, and suffering exhibited in each of Danticat's works individually. I will then examine the various ways in which each leads to an inability to communicate one's suffering. Each of these texts depict an experience that is unique yet emblematic of the Haitian condition throughout history. Danticat's characters, as fictive, represent the Haitians who were unable to express themselves. Danticat, an exiled writer, therefore assumes "role of artist as 'the voice of the community'" (Mardorossian 28). In giving a voice, Danticat symbolically speaks for the transnational Haitian population.

Across the Border

In *The Farming of Bones*, we see reference to both the concepts of home and pain: the protagonist, Amabelle, separated from her homeland of Haiti, returns over the course of the novel only after the terrible 1937 massacre of Haitians, sustaining traumatic injuries. When she was a girl, Amabelle's parents died in the Massacre River that separates Haiti from the Dominican Republic during a violent hurricane. She remains in the Dominican city of Alegría and works as a housemaid in the home of a wealthy family. While Amabelle has spent a large portion of her life across the border, her identity remains Haitian. Here we can see that she is exiled, in the sense of alienated, from her home country. Rosemary Marangoly

George in *The Politics of Home* investigates the understanding of the “home-country” and its implications on the subject:

The term ‘home-country’ in itself expresses a complex yoking of ideological apparatuses considered necessary for the existence of subjects: the notion of belonging, of having a home, and place of one’s own. And yet, in the very reference to a ‘home-country’ lies the indication that the speaker is away from home...The politics of location come into play in the attempt to weave together a subject status that is sustained by the experience of the place one knows as home or by resistance to places that are patently ‘not home.’ (2)

The home involves having a “place of one’s own,” yet for Amabelle, we know that she owns nothing in the Dominican Republic, explaining “Nearly everything I had was something Señora Valencia had once owned and no longer wanted” (Danticat, *Farming* 45). Similarly, because we know Amabelle is Haitian yet living across the border, we understand her condition of being “away from home.” Exile induces feelings of separation and loss when removed from the homeland, and functions, as Myriam Chancy notes, as “the source from which [people] find the strength to counter their multiple points of oppression and generate their own sense of self as they move homeward” (qtd in Vega González, “Exiled Subjectivities” 184).

Separation from Haiti distances Danticat’s characters from their Dominican counterparts and enhances their Haitian identity, fostering within them a longing to return.

Amabelle explains this concept in recounting an interaction with Father Romain, a Haitian priest: “Father Romain always made much of out being from the same place... Most people here did. It was a way of being joined to your old life through the presence of another person... It was their way of returning home”

(Danticat, *Farming* 73). We see here how the simple act of communing with others of the same origin substitutes through replication the feeling of the “home-country.” For the Haitians living in the Dominican Republic, “home” includes the far-away Haiti that exists predominantly as a memory, something that they can only wish to attain.

Amabelle finally returns to Haiti in the context of the massacre during which she is forced to flee. Here, the notion of pain manifests itself, visible most importantly in its physical manifestations due to violence and brutality. The “bodily marks and disfigurements of [Danticat’s] characters” affirm the damage their bodies have endured first due to the nature of their work in the Dominican Republic and secondly as a result of the killings (Hewett 125). Amabelle, while in Alegría, maintains ties with the Haitian community, most of whom are cane-cutters having left Haiti to find work in the neighboring country. She establishes a romantic relationship with Sebastien, and, at the beginning of the novel, she details the effects cutting cane has had on his body: “He is lavishly handsome... even though the cane stalks have ripped apart most of the skin on his shiny black face, leaving him with crisscrossed trails of furrowed scars” (Danticat, *Farming* 1). For Sebastien, his separation from Haiti is characterized by physical hardship. He suffers, yet swears to Amabelle, “this will be my last cane harvest,” implying his wish to end the pain he endures each day while away from Haiti and from home (Danticat, *Farming* 55). However, Sebastien does not survive the massacre, for which there is “[n]o documentation...found in Dominican archives” (Novak 47).

The victims of this atrocity remain unnamed, unrecorded. His pain and suffering then defines him as one of “the voiceless and faceless victims of the 1937 massacre,” unable to communicate his story, his testimonial, and his existence (Pulitano).

For Amabelle who successfully escapes to Haiti, the physical scarring and pain she acquires as a result of the massacre precedes and, thus, characterizes her re-entry into her “home-country.” While fleeing, she and a few other Haitians find themselves at a plaza in Dajabón where Dominicans, infused with violence, attack them. Amabelle sustains debilitating injuries: “My chipped and cracked teeth kept snapping against the mush of open flesh inside my mouth. All the pain of first being struck came back to me. I reached up to touch my misshapen face” (Danticat, *Farming* 197). In particular, Amabelle’s injuries prevent her capacity to speak. Upon receiving the blows from enraged Dominicans at Dajabón, “she loses language and the ability to mentally register pain... At the time, the physical assault escapes articulation, registering in screams on the border between silence and speech” (Novak 103). The physical suffering she endures disables communication. Recovering on the Haitian border with other refugees, exiled from exile, each begins to tell their story, but Amabelle, stripped of her speech, can only nod and listen. While the scars and consequences of her attacks chronicle her experiences, the same injuries impede her ability to testify with the other refugees having finally escaped to security in Haiti.

And while Amabelle “[does not] look as bad as some,” her body becomes “a map of scars and bruises, a marred testament” (Danticat, *Farming* 205; Danticat,

Farming 227). Her body represents the hate Dominicans felt toward the Haitians who now outnumber the Dominicans themselves. The Dominican Republic represents the “home” for the Dominicans, not belonging to the Haitians. The words of the Dictator justify the killings through propaganda: “How can a country be ours if we are in smaller numbers than the outsiders?” (Danticat, *Farming* 260). Naming the Haitians as the outsiders confirms the lack of belonging Amabelle feels for the Dominican Republic. Though she was exiled from Haiti in a foreign land, she did not choose to leave the Dominican Republic. She was exiled from her exile and so sent back to her “home-country.” For Amabelle, exile holds the memories of physical pain, traumatic loss, both of her parents and Sebastien, and instills in her a longing to return to Haiti — not only an emotional longing, but one of survival and security.

Upon arrival in her native land, Amabelle returns with Yves, a friend of Sebastien’s, to his childhood home. When Amabelle meets his mother, she remarks that, “Hearing him say [her name], listening to the mother repeat it, made me feel welcomed” (Danticat, *Farming* 223). She is accepted, not persecuted; comforted and not assaulted. She seems to feel a sense of “belonging, of having a home” (George 2). However, returning to Haiti does not satiate longing for a home: “I couldn’t recognize anymore any place that resembled where our house had been, nor did I want to” (Danticat, *Farming* 278). It seems as though Haiti is not completely her home: “One’s native land is no longer necessarily home once the writer has left” (Herndon). It seems as though Amabelle left a piece of herself

behind in Alegría. At the end of the novel she returns there, only to feel dissatisfied. Instead, she returns to the river that consumed her parents and that she crossed to free herself from the hands of Dominicans. She enters into the symbolic water, which provides the border between the two lands she had inhabited; the river then “becomes a second transitional space that completes the journey Amabelle began on the road out of Alegría” (Hewett 140). Amabelle now resides in the in-between between her two worlds, evoking the “dual identity” that Danticat, herself, also embodies. Through Amabelle, we see how the Haitian conception of home is constructed through exile but encapsulates the “home-country” of Haiti and so straddles national borders, affirming hybridity.

Across the Sea

This notion of hybridity that follows the interplay between exile and the problematic construction of home is similarly reflected in *The Dew Breaker*. This work portrays the experiences of several Haitians through distinct yet connected short stories. Many of the characters, having emigrated to the United States during the Duvalier era were tortured by the infamous *tonton macoutes* while in Haiti and, in response fled, evading further threats and suffering. Within the context of exile and emigration, *The Dew Breaker* presents a side of separation distinct from the exile Amabelle encounters. As mentioned, the majority of the characters emigrate voluntarily to the United States; yet they depart in response to threats of torture and violence inflicted on many innocent Haitians during the Duvalier reign. I will discuss both “The Book of the Dead” and “Night Talkers.”

In “The Book of the Dead,” we are introduced to Ka, the daughter of the unnamed Dew Breaker who learns of her father’s violent past working in the prison after years of believing he was, in fact, a prisoner. Told from Ka’s perspective, we are privy to both her and her father’s understanding of home in relation to Haiti, providing both a Haitian-American and Haitian immigrant point of view. At the beginning of the novel, when asked where she is from, Ka responds, “I answer ‘Haiti’ because it is one more thing I’ve always longed to have in common with my parents” (Danticat, *Dew* 4). However, Ka is not from Haiti, having been born in America; in fact, she has never even been there. While this response seems bizarre, it illuminates the hybrid identity experienced by some Haitian-Americans as a route of connecting to one’s past and one’s family history. For Ka, as for Danticat, “Haiti has always been home,” though she has grown up in the American context (Walcott-Hackshaw 72). This emphasis on her more contemporary, hybrid Haitian identity counters that of her father who, in fleeing Haiti, tries desperately to rid himself of any notable connection.

The Dew Breaker’s departure characterizes both an exile and an emigration. In exile, one is forced out of the country whereas in emigration, one leaves voluntarily from one country to another. The Dew Breaker, having recently killed a prisoner without orders faces the possibility of imprisonment himself. Because of the threat of confinement and condemnation, he chooses to leave. For the Dew Breaker, who actually lived in Haiti unlike Amabelle, his connection to his native land is complex. After committing murders as a *tonton macoute*, he flees. Yet once

in New York, he chooses to hide his identity:

In the past he has always said that he was from a different province, each time because he'd really lived in all of those places, but I realize now that he says this to reduce the possibility of anyone identifying him, even though thirty-seven years and a thinning head of widow-peaked salt-and-pepper hair shield him from the threat of immediate recognition.
(Danticat, *Dew* 28)

He lies about his past, hiding it from his daughter and from others for fear that they will identify him and link him to his violent deeds. He changes his stature, losing weight, he has aged and his hair is grey now. He looks different and perhaps uses this difference of appearance both to avoid recognition but also to fool himself. After explaining to his daughter the reasons for his departure, he states, "Now you see, Ka, why your mother and me, we have never returned home" (Danticat, *Dew* 27). In essence, for the Dew Breaker, the construction of home is a reminder, a memory of the crimes he committed that represents the past filled with pain and trauma; and so he hides from it, internalizing the shame and guilt he feels.

We see here that pain manifests itself in "The Book of the Dead," in part as psychological torture, and also as physical deformity. Nicole Waller in the aptly named article, "The Book of the Dead: Inscribing Torture into the Black Atlantic," explains a more theoretical view of torture:

In Western psychology, the trauma of torture is understood to tear what specialists have called a 'black hole' or an 'empty circle' into the psyche... As a result, traumatized persons can often no longer trust their own perceptions and memories, let alone speak of them. (61)

For the Dew Breaker, the trauma of torture, as mentioned, is two fold as the "black

hole” that digs into his psyche also inflicts his physical body. Torture both literally and mentally tears people apart. I will first begin by discussing the physical pain Ka’s father endures: in the altercation in which the Dew Breaker killed his last prisoner, the prisoner wounded him, resulting in the “blunt ropelike scar that runs from my father’s right cheek down to the corner of his mouth, the only visible reminder of the year he spent in prison in Haiti” (Danticat, *Dew* 5). This scar presents the Dew Breaker now as a “marred testament” to horrible acts he committed as a *tonton macoute* and serve as a daily reminder of his past (Danticat, *Farming* 227). In this way, the physical pain that Ka’s father experiences becomes psychological torture, even though he was the torturer and not the tortured.

Racked with guilt, Ka’s father cannot bear to tell his daughter the truth of his past. He tries to give her subtle hints as shown in his preoccupation with the Ancient Egyptians, and in particular the “Negative Confession,” which “giv[es] the dead a chance to affirm that they’d done only good things in their lifetime” (Danticat, *Dew* 23). Ka finally realizes that “Now he was telling me I should have heard something beyond what he was reading” (Danticat, *Dew* 23). The suffering is so great that Ka’s father cannot reveal himself openly; he detours around his past that torments him in hopes of permitting his daughter to understand without directly stating. Similarly, the Dew Breaker avoids his past through lying. Oppressed by the torment he caused, the Dew Breaker resigns himself to a concealed life, remaining silent about the truth, for fear of recognition. Ka wonders about his last prisoner who scarred his face in the “ropelike” way:

Maybe the last person my father harmed had dreamed moments like this into my father's future, strangers seeing that scar furrowed into his face and taking turns staring at it and avoiding it, forcing him to conceal it with his hands, pretend it's not there, or make up some lie about it, to explain. (Danticat, *Dew* 32)

Unable to tell the truth, the Dew Breaker remains caught in a web of tormenting memories from the past. Lying then represents his inability to communicate and deprives him of the language with which to explain himself and his past. This inability to speak characterizes torture: Waller continues that, "torture leaves both torturer and tortured without the proper language to speak about the past" (65). Lacking the linguistic capacity to communicate the torture one has experienced, or in this case, that which the Dew Breaker has perpetrated, inhibits the subject. In response, Ka's father hides from his past and his home.

In essence, Ka realizes that her father "has never wanted the person he was, is, permanently documented in any way" (Danticat, *Dew* 34). Contrasted to *The Farming of Bones*, the Dew Breaker wants to remain undocumented so that his violent actions cannot be traced back to him. His need to remain unknown opposes the condition of the tortured that stresses the need to be heard. Further, his desire to remain unidentified explains his motive to avoid recognition and exhibits how he cannot trust his own "perceptions and memories" (Waller 61): he perceives that everyone will recognize him and connect him back to the life he left behind in Haiti. This parallels his emigration and self-exile from his home country, emphasizing his necessity to distance himself from his homeland and start anew.

However, while it seems that no one recognizes the Dew Breaker, in fact,

Dany, the protagonist of “Night Talkers” immediately identifies him “as the man who had waved the gun at him” as his childhood home burned, killing his parents (Danticat, *Dew* 105). As part of the interwoven storylines of *The Dew Breaker*, Dany functions as a counterpoint to the Dew Breaker on two levels: he symbolizes the tortured— “the prey”—and fulfills an act that the Dew Breaker cannot bear to face— returning to his native land of Haiti (Danticat, *Dew* 20).

The story begins as Dany makes his way through the forests of Haiti headed toward his aunt’s home in the mountains. We learn that he has moved to New York, urged by his aunt “so he would be as far away as possible from the people who’d murdered his parents” (Danticat, *Dew* 115). Dany’s immigration to the United States hinges on the motive to escape threat and centers around Hron’s assertion that, “Immigrants must often heal the scars of their past while rebuilding their lives in immigration” (27). Dany’s departure from his homeland is an attempt to rebuild his life and heal his scars, but he cannot. The threat of the Dew Breaker regains potency following Dany’s encounter with him in New York when he realizes that the man he rents a basement apartment from is the man that killed his parents. Preoccupied with “the way [his parents] died,” he leaves New York to return to his aunt’s home, wishing to tell her of the news that the Dew Breaker lives (Danticat, *Dew* 99). However, his aunt suddenly dies, prompting the villagers to pronounce that “Blood calls blood,” as though he intuitively knew to return to Haiti because his aunt had somehow roused him to do so (Danticat, *Dew* 116). The mention of “blood” suggests the link between Dany’s notion of home and

genealogical belonging: Haiti is the country of his family and thus belongs to him as well. It is undeniably his home-country; he is “rooted” there (Redman qtd in Walcott-Hackshaw 81). America, in contrast, holds the demons of his past. It seems as though Dany leaves Haiti because of the barber and then leaves America for Haiti because of the barber. He considers that, “Perhaps the barber was not his parents’ murderer after all, but just a phantom who’d shown up to escort him back here” (Danticat, *Dew* 116). In a way, the barber has a dual role for Dany: first, as the phantom that haunts and second as a reminder of his family and his home. For Dany, pain, exile, and home are each intertwined.

The consistent torture the memory of the barber induces takes its toll on Dany as psychological pain. Elizabeth Walcott-Hackshaw in “Home is Where the Heart Is: Danticat’s Landscapes of Return” elaborates on Dany’s plight stating that “the characters in the novel, still haunted and often psychologically traumatized by the Dew Breaker’s acts, remain entrapped in a landscape of memory, unable to put an end to their mental torture” (79). “Entrapped in a landscape of memory,” Dany cannot distance himself from the psychological torment the Dew Breaker causes him to feel. That he ruminates constantly on the death of his parents, especially through dreams, reveals the trauma that perturbs him. Even the title, “Night Talkers,” implies the importance of dreams for Dany. He explains the meaning of night talkers: “[he and his aunt] were both *palannits*, night talkers, people who wet their beds, not with urine but with words. He too spoke of his dreams aloud in the night, to the point of sometimes jolting himself awake with the sound of his own

voice” (Danticat, *Dew* 98). We see here how Dany’s dreams act as manifestations of the psychological consequence of torture even when separated from Haiti: he remains haunted, unable to escape his past, even when asleep.

However, while Dany talks his torture aloud in dreams, he cannot talk about it while awake. Once arriving home in Haiti, Dany meets Claude, an American with Haitian descent sent to live in the Haitian countryside after killing his father. The first connection they have is their linguistic one: Claude, unable to speak Creole, is delighted to finally speak English again, and uninhibitedly recounts his “entire life story” (Danticat, *Dew* 103). While Dany at first cannot comprehend Claude’s “apparent lack of remorse” for his patricide, he affirms at the end of the story that “Claude was even luckier than he realized, for he was able to speak his nightmares to himself as well as to others, in the nighttime as well as in the hours past dawn, when the moon had completely vanished from the sky” (Danticat, *Dew* 103; Danticat, *Dew* 120). Danticat juxtaposes these two characters, “wish[ing] to establish a parallel in the lives of Dany and Claude,” to emphasize Dany’s inability to communicate his pain and suffering, while envying Claude’s ease in discussing his past (Walcott-Hackshaw 78). Claude’s lack of remorse can perhaps be attributed, instead, to a psychological reconciliation of his past. For Dany, his inability to speak about his pain caused by the Dew Breaker psychologically injures him, forbidding him from coming to terms with his past like Claude has. Even in the wake of his aunt’s death, one of the villagers remarks, “Can’t you see he’s not able to speak?” (Danticat, *Dew* 111). From the initial shock

and trauma of his aunt's death, Dany is rendered speechless. His language eludes him.

The Writer in Exile: At Home in Two Lands

I will take this time to contextualize Danticat's place as a writer in exile, which will inform the role she plays in testifying each of her character's stories, giving language the language-less. Danticat, as mentioned, symbolizes the hybrid identity many Haitians now understand, feeling as though they belong both to their inhabited country and their "home-country." However, she is still separated from her homeland and so encapsulates the position of the writer in exile. Carine M. Mardorossian in "From Literature of Exile to Migrant Literature" explains this special condition: "Exiled writers, for instance, are often seen as better equipped to provide an 'objective' view of the two worlds they are straddling by virtue of their alienation" (16). Yanick Lahens in "Exile, Between Writing and Place" confirms this status of the writer asserting that "to write, for the modern writer, is always to accept distancing oneself, or to desert momentarily" (742). Danticat's distance and separation from Haiti then becomes an asset to her writing in that she can objectively "straddle" the two cultures and nations with which she associates. Exile, whose definition, in this sense, envelops that of immigration and separation from one's native land, almost seems to be a necessary condition for the writer. And with exile comes the burdens of assimilating to a new culture. Within this transition, many exiles and immigrants cross the notable threshold of the learning of a new language.

Danticat, upon arriving in America as a twelve-year-old, only knew Creole and French and took it upon herself to learn the English language. Interestingly enough, Danticat writes in English, her second language and the one she learned last. Mardorossian continues, remarking that Danticat “writ[es] in English, a language [she has]... identified as [her] ‘home’”(32). The process of writing in English reveals how Danticat has adopted the American culture as part of her own, fabricating her hybrid identity. In doing so, however, Danticat symbolically connects each of the characters in her works to her nation of exile and separation. For Danticat, this happens to be America, similar to the Dew Breaker and Dany, whereas for Amabelle it is the Dominican Republic.

Subsequently, the characters’ separation from their homeland becomes connected to Danticat’s hybrid identity. This further implies how they are then like her, hybrid, connected to both — part of the land they live on and always part of Haiti, whether they venture back or not. That Danticat employs the English language also implies the internationality that the “borderless Haitian nation” has acquired (Larrier 102). Gerise Herndon in “Returns to Native Lands, Reclaiming the Other’s Language” elucidates how Danticat’s works extend to encompass the scattered persons of the Haitian diaspora: “Writing about home in the Other’s language puts the exiled writer beyond national boundaries and thus enables the reader to understand the statelessness of the diaspora¹.” Writing in English, the language of the “Other,” i.e. America, Danticat transcends the national borders

¹ Herndon’s article is an electronic source and therefore no page number is available.

through her writing, and subsequently, her characters do as well. Herndon's assertion further implicates the reader, indicating the reader's role as the witness to the story; in essence, what Danticat writes becomes the testimonial of each account that the reader observes.

Novak asks, "How do the silenced testify to trauma? With what Voice and to whom" (94)? The answer lies in the written word. Danticat's characters are victims of the Haitian past: exiled, forced to flee, separated from their homeland, enduring physical and psychological pain, torture and suffering. Pain renders them voiceless such that they are unable to speak and communicate their stories. As we have seen, linguistic expression has eluded not just Dany, but also the Dew Breaker and Amabelle. Hron supports this concept in her comment that for some, as part of the immigrant experience, "the event of pain inevitably destroys language itself" (35). The inability to speak and express oneself coincides with the torture and pain that results from each character's differing experiences of exile and separation from Haiti. Without language, each character is unable, then, to document and archive their stories. Danticat assumes that role: voicing the forgotten testimonies of the victims of Haiti's violent and tortured past. This kind of literature reflects *testimonio*, which, as April Shemak describes, is a genre that arose out of Caribbean and Central America social and political movements as a way to foreground the voices of the oppressed" (qtd in Sesnic 234). Danticat documents the undocumented, inscribing them in the history from which they were erased.

In doing so, she incorporates them into the hybrid Haitian identity, which fuses the dichotomy of home to include both the “home-country” and the nation of exile/separation. Martin Munro posits that, “the images of scars healing, of acceptance of the tragic fate of Haiti, suggest a new sense of self, and of the future” (122). In this way, despite the pain in the wake of Haiti’s past, we see a brighter future for the Haitian nation in which the suffering gives way to the hybridity that characterizes many of the Haitian novelists, characters and, subsequently, the Haitian people.

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