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Embodying Trauma and Post-colonial Feminist Perception in Breath,

Eyes, Memory (1994) By Edwidge Danticat.

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Dedication 1

Dedicated to my Mother; My Arcturus that shines brighter than any star.

To all the women living their suffering in silence.

Ouarda BENHAYAHOU

Dedication 2

Dedicated to the reader : may you find happiness

To “***SOU***” who means the world to me

Nouhed HAZEM

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Abstract

The research aims to investigate the role of Memory in Edwidge Danticat's 1994 novel *Breath, Eyes, Memory* and how Sophia's mother identity was destroyed, in contrast to the radical act made by Sophie the first spoken woman who dared to speak on behalf of all Haitian women. Therefore, this study will analyze Edwidge Daniticat's novel as a postcolonial production. Therefore, this research will address the significance of trauma, violence, memory, and their influence on the two major characters, Sophia and her mother Martine. In fact, Edwidge Daniticat's novel is regarded as a representative example of Intergenerational trauma theory in literary studies, that discusses the term trauma and highlights the Haitian female struggle, In addition, this study will explore the feminist viewpoint in connection to the impact of postcolonial feminism on Diasporic women. Meanwhile The thesis takes a psychoanalytic approach to trauma analysis in connection to memory, identity, As well as the application of Postcolonial Feminist theory in Edwidge Danticat's novel. Most previous studies on *Breath, Eyes, Memory* focuses on one of the traumas experienced in the novel by the characters, The research is expanded to cover not only one but multiple traumas and the role of the Diaspora that added doubts to the heart of the Haitian-American women to start questioning her society beliefs and looking at traditions from a different angle, which marked the beginning of a feminist Movement.

Keywords: (5/6)

Trauma, Memory, Sexual violence, Female empowerment, Diaspora

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Introduction

Postcolonial Literature is a saga of human conditions, a reflection of the state of the colonies after independence, in which the literary postcolonial works reflect the effects of colonial practices, such as the effects on identity, social traditions, women's status, taboos, etc. It shifts the international views towards different spots in the world in which violence is taking different forms, so the domain of literature has a lot to offer. In fact the same year 1994 Danticat has published her first novel *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, the US intervenes in Haitian to stop the series of killing, the violence and the terror that took place in Haiti. This indicates that that literature indeed is a powerful tool that give the voiceless a voice.

Usually, Post-colonial literature is associated with both African and American Haitian authors such as Edwidge Danticat and many other writers following and preceding her works such as Dany Laferrière, Danielle Legro Georges, Jean Dany Joachim and Ibi Zoboi. Both the colonial and postcolonial eras had a profound effect on the function of the traumatized protagonists in fiction.

Today, intergenerational trauma catches the attention of authors and critics and several studies are conducted about trauma that resulted from the violence committed against women ,as it is illustrated In the postcolonial novel *Breath, Eyes ,Memory* by the Haitian American Edwidge Danticat's (1994). Most of Edwidge novels and short stories focuses on acts of memory as a response to traumatic experience that are manifested on the diasporic space and the black woman's body. It is said that even the person who wasn't present during the Traumatic event can

be affected by it if he shares the same race culture and from the same ethnic and religious group etc.

The novel *Breath, Eyes, Memory* offers an example of the intergenerational trauma and explores the psychological transformation of a young Haitian-American woman Sophie Caco. that underlines the concept of racial identity formation it tells the story of a young Haitian-American woman Sophia Caco who tries to find a way in order to break free from the social legacy of Intergenerational trauma. It all started with her realizing that in fact what she grew up knowing as the social norm was not normal at all and the accumulation of a variety of individual traumas from sexual violence of the test that is tackled by the author Edwidge as a form of female empowerment, like it is depicted in the female character Sophia that represents the strength of Haitian women.

The author shows how trauma seeks to hunt its victims in diaspora, also she highlights on the importance of post-colonial feminism sheds light on the oppression of Haitian women. Edwidge Danticat examine how being in diaspora has actually helped the main female characters for the first time in generations to ask the simple question "why" and how the Haitian-American women become consumed by the overwhelming desire to do something about the sexual violence, the legacy of the test, and the trauma she saw in her community.

Trauma theory and post-colonial feminism was and still until today the center of the debate and the focus of many works. They have been used by many writers at that time, and postcolonial writers tend to use trauma, and feminism among their characters over the seas, in order to reflect about the violence. They also tend to show how this psychological phenomenon affects their characters whether in bad or good way as it is portrayed in *Breath, Eyes, Memory*. In the sense the

psychological phenomenon pushed one character to the edge, and the other towards victory marked by a form of female resistance, When Sophia confronts her trauma at the heart of its existence, she is a true symbol of female power who shows a new beginning and a new generation free from past traumas. Leading us to question is Trauma an endless cycle, a legacy of shame, or it can fade with the upcoming newer generations in a post colonial contexts experienced by female subject, full stop Hence, by utilizing trauma, Throughout utilizing trauma theory we get to explore the psychological impact of trauma on the two main characters.

Caribbean literature is used as a vehicle to highlight and discuss the inexpressible suffering of the traumatized individual. Moreover, with the development of psychology and thanks to many scholars in the field of literature, trauma took another turn in exploring different categories of trauma, mainly historical and intergenerational traumas; therefore, psychology stands as a mirror reflecting on the violence, and directs towards the path of healing, Trauma theory is the representation of traumatic experiences, violence, history, and truth in postcolonial texts. Most of Edwidge Danticat's novels and short tales focus on the impact of trauma on memory and how it can be experienced even in diaspora.

Scholars have shown an increasingly interest in trauma as one of the most timeless sensitive issues that continued influencing people's lives through out centuries. there are several works that tackle the relationship between trauma and exile. Jennifer C.Rossi in her article " Let the words bring wings to our feet :Negotiating Exile and Trauma through Narrative in Breath, Eyes, Memory" where she claimed that exile and Trauma are interconnected meaning because trauma of sexual violence caused emotional detachment from her own body as well as the geographical displacement caused by trauma. Moreover, the work entitled "Trauma and Telling Examining the Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma Through Silence" Addresses the issue of

intergenerational trauma. In addition to that the book entitled “*Bodies in Pain: Edwidge Danticat's Breath Eyes Memory*”. Studies the impact of trauma in the novel entitled *Breath, Eyes, Memory*.

The research aims to investigate the role of Memory in Edwidge Danticat's novel *Breath ,Eyes, Memory* and how Sophia's mother identity was destroyed, by her own society trauma that led to her own death, and the radical act made by the first spoken woman who dared to speak on behalf of all Haitian women. Furthermore, the study explores the extent to which postcolonial feminism manifests itself in the book when the hybrid subject articulates his authority to question such violence. So, for the first time in generations, the main female characters were able to ask the simple question "why," and how the Haitian-American women became consumed by the overwhelming desire to do something about the sexual violence, the legacy of the test, and the trauma she witnessed in her community.

This analysis of *Breath ,Eyes ,Memory* will rely on two literary approaches to determine the examination of the mentioned themes. The first one is the psychoanalysis approach , which is going to help analyzing characters Sophie and Martine and their struggle to break free from the cycle of intergenerational and trauma and its effect on the on their psychological state. The second approach is post- colonial feminism, which will guide us to expose the violence they endured.

The work consists of three main chapters. the first chapter is mainly a theoretical introduction to the framework of the study falling into five sections,. The first section gives a brief overview about the origins of trauma entitled trauma theory and post colonial literature additionally, the second section is about the representation of post colonial feminism in literature; meanwhile

section three and four tackles the relationship of trauma theory with both memory and violence. The final section deals with both historical and intergenerational trauma.

The second chapter gives an overview of the author Edwidge Danticat along with a brief summary to the novel *Breath, Eyes, Memory*. Also, The second chapter explains the ways of breaking the cycle of Intergenerational trauma and how trauma transcends beyond one's origins. Eventually it studies the impact of trauma on the two main characters (Sophia and Martine), and their journey on the path towards recovery, growth, emancipation and the struggle they faced along the way. The last chapter is mostly concerned with the development of post -colonial feminism over the seas and its contribution in *Breath, Eyes, Memory*. Therefore, the focus will be on the efforts of the Haitian women as a form of resistance to make their voices heard after being silenced for so long.

Chapter One: Trauma Theory and Postcolonial Literature: An Overview

This chapter is a theoretical examination of trauma in general and in relation to postcolonial literature in specific, it specifies the origins, definition and development of trauma theory while providing the important features, terms and themes tackled within this chapter. The first section deals with the definition of trauma and its expansion to include fields such as literature. The section answers questions like how scholars defined the term trauma? What are its features and major concerns? The second section sheds light on the concept of feminism in literature, how it is handled in postcolonial societies and its relation with postcolonial feminist approach in order to analyze the main factors that contributed to the emergence of a female power that marked a turning point in the history of Caribbean women. The third section exhibits the most crucial question when dealing with trauma that is how can we link the term trauma with the issue of memory? It attempts to introduce different perception on trauma theory throughout different scholars and what makes Edwidge Danticate's trauma different from other traumas. The fourth section deals with how trauma studies applied to the issue of violence; does trauma creates an endless circle of violence? Lastly, the final and fifth section deals with two types of traumas Historical and intergenerational trauma that give further insights on how to explain the notion of intergenerational and historical trauma?

I.1.Origins of Trauma Theory: A Brief Overview

The origins of trauma theory go back to centuries before the discovery of the psychoanalysis as a field of study. Trauma theory is one that seemed to exist since the beginning of time, but its emergence refers to different reasons and causes that are further explained in the book entitled

The Development of Trauma Theory in Psychoanalysis by Werner Bohleber who elaborates interesting brief overview on the development of theories about trauma stating that:

Freud always had doubts about his seduction theory. What seemed to be a sudden withdrawal of his theory had by no means been a sharp break and shift, they claim. Freud's theoretical thinking was more like a serpentine path that was traversed only with great difficulty over the course of twenty years. He was forced to assume that his female patients' accounts did not involve real experiences, but fantasies. (1)

In Freud discovery of the Oedipus complex and unconscious fantasies he explained trauma theory as mainly a result of the seduction theory where he had doubtfully questioned the authenticity of his female patient's stories whom he had listened and observed for quite some time. He finally reached the conclusion that everything he heard was nothing more than a fantasy. Significantly, Freud questions the existence of an actual sexual violence or abuse and the situation at that time obliged him to assume that his female patient's accounts did not involve a real experience, but fantasies. That is to say trauma is no longer a direct result of the experienced traumatic event when there is no traumatic event to begin with. Yet, Freud had never given up on attempting to explain how sexual abuse or violence is one of the major reasons that justifies the neurotic illnesses that women had suffered from at that time. Besides, Freud had explained how the trauma takes place and how it threatens the psyche. The psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud states, "It [trauma] breaks through the protective shield that is formed by the psychic texture. It is indelibly recorded in the body and has a direct effect on the organic substrate of mental functioning" (2). Moreover, the psychologist Cathy Caruth claims that re-enactment is the psychic way of dealing with traumatic memory because there is no other way to express how

trauma wants to reveal itself in every possible way whether it re-appears in the form of flashbacks during the day or in the form of nightmare every night.

Furthermore, Sigmund Freud book *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, edited by James Strachey ; it explores how the re-enactment of the traumatic experience is manifested through dreams not only in a form of a pleasant dream but also in the form of nightmares indicating that dreams are not only defined as a wish fulfilment which totally contradicts with the distractive nature of dreams that people of trauma suffer from. James Strachey proposes:

Their dreams should put them back at night into the situation that caused them to fall ill has misunderstood the nature of dreams. It would be more in harmony with their nature if they showed the patient pictures from his healthy past or of the cure for which he hopes. If we are not to be shaken in our belief in the wish-fulfilling tenor of dreams by the dreams of traumatic neurotics.(7)

Interestingly, not all dreams are a wish fulfilment instead the dream can be a manifestation of the traumatic experience for some it may be while they are awake for others who chose to repress and deny those memories, but it appears in their sleep. Moreover, Freud notices that “The ego, which normally develops an anxiety signal when in danger, is now flooded by automatic anxiety. A traumatic situation can occur due to excessive internal instinctual demands as well as external, real experiences ... [Where] the ego enters a traumatic state of helplessness” (Bohleber 5). In other words, when there is an external or internal threat or a stimulus it triggers the traumatic experienced memory and in such circumstance the ego is somewhat paralyzed, and no longer functions.

Another book entitled *Trends in Literary Trauma Theory* by Michelle Balaev defines the term trauma as, "One creates a speechless fight that divides or destroys identity[...]Trauma refers to the person's emotional reaction to the overwhelming traumatic event that disrupts previous ideas of an individual's sense of self and the standards by which one evaluates society" (150).

Consequently, trauma can have a serious and long-term effect that can lead to the destruction of one's self. This explains how identity can easily get shattered by a traumatic event such as sexual abuse or violence.

As it is illustrated in literary works that deal with traumatic experience, trauma is viewed as one where the main character not necessarily bound to a collective human disaster like war or a natural disaster like tsunami, but it is mainly bound to the protagonist (Balaev 150). For example, the initial personal experience that causes trauma is not mainly linked or shared between a large group instead it can be personally experienced. Likewise, Michael Balaev states Jennifer Murray states in her search done about trauma studies and reveals in her article entitled "Trauma and Telling: Examining the Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma Through Silence", where she relies on Freud works about trauma in psychology used them to develop a theory that studies the impact of trauma in literature and history. The book entitled *Trauma* further tackles the effect of trauma from mental to physical as Lucy Bond and Stef Craps state:

Trauma, then, is slippery: blurring the boundaries between mind and body, memory and forgetting, speech and silence. It traverses the internal and the external, the private and the public, the individual and the collective. Trauma is dynamic: its parameters are endlessly shifting as it moves across disciplines and institutions, ages and cultures. Trauma is contested: its rhetoric, its origins, its symptoms, and its treatment have been subject to more than 150 years of controversy and debate.(5)

Trauma effect confuses the person's mind, it causes both psychical and psychological scars; it is like a fire that cannot be easily put down once it starts and it has existed for centuries sometimes as the subject for discussion and other times as a subject for oblivion. In addition, the pioneer scholar Cathy Caruth argues, that trauma is only known through repetitive flashbacks that literally re-enact the event because the mind cannot represent it otherwise. She notes, "The historical power of trauma is not just that the experience is repeated after its forgetting, but that it is only in and through its inherent forgetting that it is first experienced at all" (Caruth 17). That is to say, Caruth formulation of Trauma unlike Sigmund Freud she says that trauma can be contagious through the act of narration can affect another pure soul. Cathy Caruth conveys, "Traumatic experience is repetitious, timeless, and unspeakable, yet, it is also a contagious, and unified event"(2). Furthermore, Cathy Caruth argues in her book entitled *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* that the experience of a trauma repeats itself, exactly and unremittingly, through the unknowing acts of the survivor and against his very will (2). It can be said, that the subject who experienced trauma of rape or sexual violence have no control on the time and place where the traumatic memory can reappear as well as they can do nothing to stop it.

Furthermore, Jennifer Murray points out to the idea that Freud was the first to describe the repetitive and intrusive dream manifestation of the Traumas of war that would nearly century later become known as Post- Traumatic Stress Disorder (Murray 9). In another sense, we cannot deny Freud important works that turn around the theory of trauma which rely heavily on psychopathic approach that highly requires us to refer to Sigmund Freud works that laid the groundwork for the emergence of trauma theory.

At the same time Cathy Caruth was the first to introduce the term Trauma Theory that appeared in her book *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. She explains trauma as “A shock that appears to work very much like a bodily threat but in fact is a break in the mind’s experience of time” (Caruth 61). Actually, the subject who experience rape or sexual violence or any type of physical violation lose the sense of reality and time, they become no longer able to separate their nightmares from the actual reality. Also, in relation to Freud’s text that unfolds, “The experience of trauma represents itself, exactly and unremittingly, through the unknowing act of the survivor and against his very will”(17). Truly, running from one's traumatic memories is impossible and out of question, Trauma is defined as “A wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind, [...] not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual’s past, but rather in the way that it’s very unassimilated nature the way it was precisely not known in the first instance returns to haunt the survivor later on” (Caruth 3-4). In another turn, trauma is considered as a continuous cycle that continues to influence the subject and it returns to prey its victims.

Over the years trauma was the center studies for many, psychologists and scholars who have shown an increasing interest in trauma as one of the most sensitive and dangerous issues influencing people’s lives (Caruth16). Moreover, Caruth’s book, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* highlights how representing trauma, in literature is a challenging task (7). Besides, Caruth states, " Having the meaning that literature and psychology remain the closet ground in which the image of trauma can be represented" (3). That is to say, literature is the window to which the unrepresented is demonstrated and it is a place where the voiceless have a voice. Furthermore, Cathy Caruth maintains, "An imaginative literature or figural, rather than literary language can speak trauma when normal, discursive language cannot, and fiction helps gives

voice to the voiceless, traumatized individuals and populations. Hence, her theory of trauma is a ringing endorsement of the testimonial power of literature" (334). Thus, the mission of postcolonial literature at that time was more like a testimonial ground for women to speak when the government and law had silenced them during a time when literature was the only weapon for women. Besides, the book entitled *The Inner World of Trauma* by Donald Kalsched explores:

The interior world of dream and fantasy images encountered in therapy with people who have suffered unbearable life experiences ... [Is another way of] the psyche's normal reaction to a traumatic experience [to] withdraw [al] from the scene of the injury. If withdrawal is not possible, then a part of the self must be withdrawn, and for this to happen the otherwise integrated ego must split into fragments or dissociate. (Kalsched 25)

Trauma constantly functions to hurt its subjects and one of its causes is destroying the human self and chattering the voice of reason. In this case the personal self's quest to protect itself against any aggressive traumatic event that might be threatening, leads into a split and annihilation from the actual painful event. Donald Kalsched further explains the annihilation process as:

A normal part of the psyche's defenses against trauma's potentially damaging impact a trick the psyche plays on itself allowing life to go on by dividing up the unbearable experience and distributing it to different compartments of the mind and body ... [and]the person who has experienced unbearable pain, the psychological defense of dissociation allows external life to go on but at a great internal cost.(25)

The trauma victim adopt a reflexive protection techniques to avoid feeling the intensity of the pain resulted from the original traumatic experience, yet these are temporary and does not imply

to subject ability to fully be recovered because, as Donald Kalsched explains, “The outer trauma ends and its effects may be largely “forgotten,” but trauma continue to haunt the person’s inner world... appearing in the form of a “frightening inner beings,” and are represented in dreams as attacking “enemies,” vicious animals, etc” (26). In another word, the memory of the actual event continues to appear in forms of continuous dreams that portrays the vividness and power of the dream world holding its prisoners captivated by the monsters of their own subconscious creation. So, in his only essay explicitly about trauma, Jung argues:

A traumatic complex brings about dissociation of the psyche. The complex is not under the control of the will and for this reason it possesses the quality of psychic autonomy. Its autonomy consists in its power to manifest itself independently of the will and even in direct opposition to conscious tendencies: it forces itself tyrannically upon the conscious mind. The explosion of affect is a complete invasion of the individual, it bounces upon him like an enemy or a wild animal. I have frequently observed that the typical traumatic affect is represented in dreams as a wild and dangerous animal a striking illustration of its autonomous nature when split off from consciousness. (qtd. in Kalsched 26)

The traumatic memory is a complicated process in the sense it stems spontaneously from the unconscious mind; thus, its consequences are unpredictable occur at any place and any time loosen upon the conscious mind with no constraints, which makes it highly dangerous. In contrast to trauma theories that explains, trauma as one that can still be fully expressed through language implicitly or explicitly as a way to overcome the traumatic memory, Suárez argues, in the process of traumatic memory expressions “A story that describes the impact of trauma functions effectively in getting the effects of the horror if not the horror

itself (Suárez 116-7). Which is to say, remembering and speaking the trauma do more than just narrating a story. In fact, telling a story to someone can make him relate to it and increases the possibility to transmit trauma across generations just by the simple act of telling a story.

I.2. A Representation of Postcolonial Feminism in Literature

Women have always suffered from a history that is best remembered by its constant episodes of violence where women are the most damaged part in any society target to different kinds of abuse. Therefore, Judith Herman states, “In the absence of the justice and law in a time where women are abused and lived in silence” (18). In the lights of those events the psychologist Judith Herman points out to the idea that the post traumatic disorder for women did not gain much attention and recognition at least not until the women’s liberation movement of 1970 when it had truly started to become more common and dealt with as a serious issue than that of the post traumatic disorder for men which resulted from war. Later on, Judith Herman book entitled *Trauma and Recovery* points out that “Many psychologists were competing for the first discovery that clarify “women hysteria “ there was Freud and Janet they both reached the idea that whatever causes hysteria is an unpleasant event that is repressed in the unconscious and banished from memory” (Herman 18). To put it differently, the psychologists reaches the conclusion that violence and sexual abuse cause women hysteria and the traumatic memory is hidden and kept away from the conscious reach.

At that time there was what was supposedly to be called the civilized life meaning that, women issues were considered as taboo as well as the idea of having writers writing about them, this has led the ugly reality of women to remain secretly buried under what was known as” The

personal or private life” (Herman18). Furthermore, Judith shows the true struggle of women and how they did not give up despite the fact that their testimony was disbelieved; not considered as the truth and on that light Herman states, “After every atrocity one can expect to hear the same predictable apologies: it never happened; the victim lies; the victim exaggerates; the victim brought it upon herself; and in any case it is time to forget the past and move on” (Herman 8). In other words, the few who dared to speak the truth about their abuse were faced by humiliation and accused with lying. As it is illustrated in Judith Herman book *Trauma and Recovery*.

“Women were silenced by fear and shame, and the silence of women gave license to every form of sexual and domestic exploitation”(19). Indeed, the horrors of the abuse makes women submissive and gives the abusers right to perform violence on its victims.

Later on it was followed by the American feminist movement forming what was known as the Conscious Raising; it is a group that had shared a similar characteristics with that of previous Veterans Rap groups, its main goal is the encouragement to reveal the truth, so this Conscious Raising group, gives women safe space where they can testify of all the witnessed sexual and domestic abuse or violence committed in their right. This small extract of poem by Judith Herman denotes the power of speaking with the title “ The Combat Neurosis of the Sex War”:

Today in my small natural body.

I sit and learn.

My woman’s body.

Like yours.

Target on any street.

Taken from me.

At the age of twelve...

I watch a women dare.

I dare to raise our voices. (20)

Well, the study of women's psychological trauma over the years took different directions, so women's voices become bit by bit heard. The feminist movement did not gain its place during the third Republic it was still weak and in the 1870s, feminist organizations were not able to publish their literature and the feminist movements could not take place until the social context was finally ready to accept change. And such change is created by the political movements that give voice to the disarmed and the disempowered (Herman 5). Significantly, there is no other power that can bring change than politics, so in order for a change to take place in a certain society, the context should first embrace change. In this case, the political context is depicted in the feminist movement in Western Europe and North America. Otherwise with the absence of awareness and strong political movements of human rights the case study will be once again closed and it is out to be forgotten once more. The studies report, "The last and most recent study of trauma to come into public awareness is sexual and domestic violence" (Herman 5). Women issues of rape and sexual abuse as long as they seek to exist, such issues will never grow old unless someone put an end to the violence.

As it is demonstrated by the psychologist Judith Herman who states, "A veil of oblivion is drawn over everything that's painful and unpleasant" (4). Victims of trauma prefer to forget, press and burry those harmful memories. Therefore, most women who have been sexually abused, kept it as a secret that continuously tortured them in the shadow and "As a result of fear

from the perpetrator and a feeling of shame and disguise entering a state of denial. Her experience becomes unspeakable” (Herman 5). Throughout many centuries, the aim of studying psychological trauma was to help the victims such as women to drop that veil and to step into the light, and in other words, “to render her invisible” (Herman 5). Due to the fact that women throughout history were faced with oppression despite the time, their origins, their financial situation rich or poor, black, or white, their place in the society educated or illiterate, they fought for centuries and still fighting until the present day for their rights.

It can be said, the previous feminist movement had shaped the way to a different type, which is postcolonial feminism, one that is related with the Caribbean women for this study seeks to shade the light on the post-colonial feminism that have played and still play a significant role, by calling attention to issues that specifically affect Caribbean women. For example, sexual violence and rape are considered as everyday routine weapons within the communities of the Haitian society. The book entitled *Writing Rage Unmasking Violence* written by Dominick LaCapra introduces the beginning of a postcolonial resistance initiated by the Caribbean women in chapter number five written by Bat Teneb entitled: "Haitian Women’s Narratives of Resistance" It provides an insight on the journey of the women of Haiti after the country’s independence and their brave continuous struggle for full emancipation in circumstances which have oppressed them at every level and how they managed to cope with the horrors of the violence.

Consequently, Bat Teneb points out, to the “horrendous violence, which is at once public and private, societal and personal. The chapter draws on testimonies from Beverly Bells text "Walking on Fire". In which she has presented oral narratives from thirty-eight Haitian women whose stories she recorded throughout Haiti as they travelled to meet her in difficult circumstance (101). These women choose to fight back as follows:

The Resistance of [women] as informants ... despite their ranking as some of the most oppressed in the world. The resistance took on different shapes as the writer Beverly Bells explains “the definition of resistance is expanded to include any act that keeps the margins of power from being further encroached upon . . . simply to kenbe la: [Meaning] to hold the line, is a victory. . . Survival can be a powerful act of defiance. (103)

In another expression, the resistance did not necessary involve weapons and guns, but the way these women continued to live each day is, in itself an act of resistance. On that note the writer Bat Teneb states, " By resistance I mean the ingenuity we use that allows us to live. Resistance is inside how we do the thing that lets us hold on and gives us a better life. It's in the very manner in which we organize ourselves to resist our situation. Women resist with what means they have" (103). That is to say, fighting back against the sexual violence and abuse does not necessarily have to be visible because the resistance can also be internal not all the time can be visible seen by others. It is time to give the voiceless a voice which means, “To give the oppressed group to whom the powers that be have allowed no voice, a right to be heard and to have an impact in changing their circumstances” (Teneb 103). Indeed, the very act of narrating experience provides a means of ordering and coming to terms with reality; thus, the act of telling or narrating the struggle, the fact that these women gave testimonies is in itself a brave act, an act of emancipation. Moreover, for women to be able to express ones feeling and experience is, in itself, liberating and restorative. "[...] It becomes a complex act of liberation in itself” (109). The possibility that women can loudly speak up against the injustice of their countries contributes to the birth of female empowerment portrayed in postcolonial feminist writings.

It is of no avoidance that talking about the Caribbean oppression towards women without referring back to its history regardless of the fact that Haiti was the first independent Caribbean nation and the only one to witness a successful slave revolution(104). Yet, its struggles have continued largely and the injustice have grown instantly after the country got its independence, in which the country become corrupted and devastated right upon the arrival of an oppressive leaders who fought to control the country for their own advantage and who oppressed most Haitians as it is introduced in chapter five by Bat Teneb:

The foreign influence, in particular from the United States, has characterized the twentieth century, and has been heinous in its oppressive, self-serving force begging with the reign of the Duvalier family from 1957 until 1986 was the most oppressive of all the regimes, first, under François Duvalier, better known as “Papa Doc”, and second, under his son, Jean-Claude. Papa Docs Tonton Macoutes, a personal security force with unlimited power, assassinated, tortured and imprisoned whom they pleased. (104)

Clearly, the situations of the newly independent country at time whether politically, economically or even socially was not in the favor of the Caribbean women. In an oppressed society, it is of no doubt that the women are the most effected ones and since men are the ones in control and holding the leadership, it is likely for women to suffer the abuse more than men. As the writer reveals, "Poverty, unemployment and political oppression undermine and emasculate the male, who is constrained to work out his struggle for power at the personal level if he is powerless in the wider society. Women are physically weaker when it comes to combat, and patriarchal societal organization has already deprived them of rights" (Teneb 106). Starting from within the family and society traditions all this laid the ground for all types of violence to take place against women which makes it an acceptable part as a social behavior and inseparable part

of the everyday life routine in the Haitian society marked by the spread of rape and violence, enacted by the government forces. Sometimes even after years of rising their voices to speak up and uncover the truth, the experience of the violence and abuse remains alive in the memory of those victims. Upon that realization this upcoming section will further examine the idea of memory and its relation with the traumatic memory in attempt to answer the following question are they seemingly the same or totally different?

I.3.Trauma Theory in relation to Memory and Violence

The scholar Dirk Göttsche in the book entitled *Memory and Postcolonial Studies*. Deals with the significance of memory in postcolonial studies that tackles the notion of trauma. Dirk Göttsche believes:

Postcolonial Studies interact with trauma Studies. That had led to the emergence of One prominent example is the notion of “post memory”, developed by Marianne Hirsch to define the specific memory discourses of those whose parents or grandparents went through traumatic historical experiences, such as the Holocaust, slavery or colonialism, passing elements of such historical trauma on to their children and grand children.(9)

Trauma studies become the focus of many postcolonial writings that centers around the idea that trauma can be transmitted through history and generations forming a new notion known as “Collective Memory” which in return refers to “The family as the smallest social unit, as well as to larger groups (milieus, generations, institutions, classes, religious or ethnic groupings) and societies or nations as a whole” (Göttsche 8). This denotes the idea that Collective Memory is one shared by a group of society who share the same ethnic background from society traditions, believes, religion...etc. In continuity to the idea of Memory. *Narrating* is considered as the first

key to memory to function as Nandita Batra and Vartan P. Messier add, “[The] solution to a problem of general human concern, namely, the problem of how to translate knowing into telling” (Batra and Messier 1). One could say, the moment the victim remembers what happened he will be able to transmit his traumatic experiences or events.

Also, Nandita Batra and Vartan P. Messier further claims, “For many people and civilizations, knowledge of the past has been conveyed amongst and through generations in the form of myths, legends, anecdotes, and oral histories” (Batra and Messier 2). It fosters the belief that trauma can transcend throughout the act of narrating and telling just like people for centuries have been transferring the “unspeakable” (Herman 5). Throughout an ancestry line, and since memory can be considered as a deadly disease especially when it comes to forgetting bad experiences such that of a sexual abuse or violence like rape; it seems that memory helps to transmit an endless trauma. However, Memory can also be a way of healing and breaking the silence that once held the Caribbean women, victims of rape captivated in their endless and silent suffering from a domestic violence to a society trauma. Women were silenced by traditions both in their homes and in their society in return the act of narrating and telling those memories is viewed as a courageous way that clear the healing path in order to break the endless cycle of trauma, simply remembering and telling is the first step towards healing rather than denying and remaining silent for generations and without the act of speaking they are out to share the same predestined faith that the minority women has indulged for centuries.

In contrast, drawing from the article of Nandita Batra and Vartan P. Messier that reviews the historicists works of Michel Foucault and the French *École des Annales* “ A historical text does not present a thoroughly truthful or strictly objective account of history, but rather, it is the attempt by an author; thus, labeled “historian” to make sense of a series of historical events by

molding them into a plausible story to produce meaning” (Batra and Messier 4). In other words, not everything literature conveys is the truth or reality rather it is subject to manipulations and alterations; the subjectivity of the writer himself who performs the act of telling. Hence, Caruth theory of trauma is, " A ringing endorsement of the testimonial power of literature (334). In another expression, literature hold the unspoken or untold truth, and when words fail us to express the "Unspeakable" (Herman 5), fiction helps us and here comes the process of memory and how it works as it is stated by Batra and Messier :

Events are witnessed or experienced by various people, passive or active participants, they are stored as a particular and personalized image or impression in their individual or collective memory, through an unconscious process of internalization. to be transcribed into intelligible form to be communicated, shared, and understood, these events are collected or extracted from each individual or from a collective memory (“rememorized”) before being reconstructed they are then codified into common language statements and sentences. (5)

Upon the occurrence of a certain action, moments later, the memory is placed automatically in the long-term memory with no sense of conscious only to be remembered later and transcribed into words and eventually expressed ideas. Furthermore, one of the questions that many might ask about the influence of the Caribbean history on postcolonial literature and concerning the important of narration, mostly turns around postcolonial feminist writers who tend to narrate the past in all its forms as Batra and Messier demonstrates, “ Both personal and collective, fictional and historical, literary as well as visual, are shaped and created, told and retold, read and reread, grasped, understood, and reassessed by authors and audiences, past and present, in a wide variety of contexts”(7). Since the beginning of time,

the power of narration is carried throughout space and time. As well as, Batra, P. Messier insists on the importance of postcolonial feminist Caribbean writings that sheds light on the violence and gender oppression that these women lived through and to further write about it in diaspora; thus, the late Edward Said reminded us:

The crucial role played by postcolonial literature in the (re)affirmation of “otherness” not only within the social sciences but within the context of world history as well in the decades-long struggle to achieve decolonization and independence from European control, literature has played a crucial role in the re-establishment of a national cultural heritage, in the re-instatement of native idioms, in the reimagining and re-figuring of local histories, geographies, communities. (qtd in Batra and Messier 10)

To put it differently, the literature emerged after Haiti independence it was efficient in transmitting and preserving the Haitian culture with the use of re-imagination and oppressed memory which has been of particular importance in the history of the Caribbean, whose legacy of slavery, colonization and violence is interweaved with its art and culture. So, in response to V. S. Naipaul’s assertion that “ Culture was “mimicry” and history “dead” in the Caribbean” (10). They famously argue, ”The Caribbean history is irrelevant, not because it is not being created, or because it was sordid; but because it has never mattered. What has mattered is the loss of history, the amnesia of the races, what has become necessary is imagination, imagination as necessity, as invention” (Batra and Messier 10). That is to say, fiction born out of necessity to speak up using a pen and imaginary people to deliver the unspoken truth because women at that time they had no other choice they were held captive by their own silence and memory was their only weapon.

Many psychologists added to the notion of trauma and emphasized how hard is for the human conscious self to eliminate any memory that is too overwhelming and harmful to bare or handle. Luckily, the human conscious and unconscious side has a self-mechanism defense towards any unbearable pain or threat that may cause a potential harm that is what Michael Balaev, analyzed in Carl Jung *Theory of Dissociation*, that the remembrance of trauma is always an approximate account of the past, since traumatic experience precludes knowledge, and hence, representation (150). The literary trauma theory articulated by authors and critics such as Cathy Caruth and Judith Herman considers the responses to traumatic experience, including cognitive chaos and the possible division of consciousness, as an inherent characteristic of traumatic experience and memory. The scholar Michael Balaev reports, " [the]Traumatic experience pathologically divides identity is employed by the literary scholar as a metaphor to describe the degree of damaged one to the individual's coherent sense of self and the change of consciousness caused by the experience. For this reason, I refer to the employment of the abreactive model in literary criticism as the shattering trope" (150). Which means, the reason behind writer's tendency to apply the notion of trauma in their writing is to show the numerous impacts that trauma leaves on the individual sense of self.

The notion of trauma lead to the basic frame work of the dominant literary trauma theory best articulated by Cathy Caruth in *Unclaimed Experience* when she argues, "Trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way it's very unassimilated nature the way it was precisely not known in the first instance retunes to hunt the survivor later on" (Caruth 4). Because, the memory of the original traumatic event is never forgotten, instead it is reformed to appear without a notice as flashbacks during the day and in forms of dreams during the night here a link between memory, testimony and experience can be

made. Lucía M. Suárez states, “Experience [...] becomes the origin of our explanation, not the authoritative seen or felt evidence that grounds what is known, but rather that which we seek to explain, that about which knowledge is produced” (116). It can be said, the traumatic event feeds on the memory of the traumatized subject until it leads its victim to a complete mental breakdown and in extreme cases suicide where the individual can no longer continue to live with that memory, no longer distinguishes their nightmare from their reality and they are known of their avoidance of seeking help or psychological treatment.

Furthermore, this section will discuss how violence leads to trauma that in return will lead to more violence structuring an endless circle of trauma that continue to live through an ancestry line and across generations and even transcending beyond one’s cultures and country. Normally women innate nature is taking care of their children and supposedly women universally will do anything to protect their children and to secure their future. However, it is important to recognize, women who were subject to abuse and can render the women themselves to become violent towards their own children for it has been found that women who have been the targets of domestic violence actually abuse their children more than the women who never experienced violence. As Bat Teneb claims, “A recent enquiry within Haiti, quoted in Merveille (2002), reveals that women who approve child-beating the most are those living in the regions of Grand Anse and Artibonite, the very areas which are characterized by the highest rates of domestic violence” (107). To put differently, the studies have shown that women who have been abused and exposed to violence, those exact women will transmit the same abuse to their own children and that will lead to endless cycle of Intergenerational trauma. In addition, it has been found that witnessing domestic violence “Has a profound impact on children” (Teneb 107). Which implies that it is not necessary for the traumatized women to experience the abuse first hand. For

instance, a child witnessing her mother suffers from abuse, will also develop a trauma of her own and became a victim.

Respectively, Vartan P. Messier and Nandita Batra view Smith's essay that focuses on how Danticat's novels *Breath, Eyes, Memory*. Is "Through the memories of their protagonists [to] take the reader to Haiti during the time of the corrupt rule of Haiti's President François "Papa Doc" Duvalier from 1964-1971 and the feared Tonton Macoutes policemen" (11). Additionally, Bet essay investigates the ways in which the violent history of Haiti during Duvalier's rule is reconstructed and re-told through Danticat's novels, by drawing attention more particularly to the mental and physical abuse suffered by women at the hands of the Macoutes. Here comes the job of narrative therapy, explored by Danticat's novels and short stories that aim to heal the psychological wounds of the traumatized subject through the externalization of such traumas. Bet Teneb describes the results of the study:

This brings us back to the "Rape in Haiti" and the Truth Commission's report. These reports, and others like them, expose the problem but do not really put in evidence the mechanisms that have led to such widespread, and often invisible, rape. Furthermore, they do not examine the effects of violence on women, their families, and their communities. These reports are limited to detailing the confessions of rape, falling short of explaining rape in social terms. (12)

The reports describe the state of Haitian or Caribbean women during a postcolonial era and how it was mainly depicted by rape and violence and its impact which is further discussed in the Book entitled *Writing Rage Unmasking Violence* by Pumla Morgan and Valerie Youssef states, "As the physical, psychological and moral violation of the person and violation is in fact a

synonym for rape the purpose of the rapist is to terrorize, dominate and humiliate his victim. Thus rape, by nature, is intentionally designed to produce psychological trauma” (171). Haitian women throughout generations have always witnessed a continuous cycle of abuse where men thought they have the disciplinary right towards their wives and daughters. As it is illustrated in chapter six from the book: *Writing Rage Unmasking Violence* by Pumla Morgan and Valerie Youssef contend:

violence is ritualized to the extent that it conforms to a social script giving the husband the permission to use violence towards his wife due to the perceived right and belief that the husband “discipline” his wife therefore women experience strong pressure to conform to authority and to suppress aggression ... According to the [husband] violence is seen as something that goes with the territory of being married. The violence has shifted from an unwholesome mode of conflict resolution to violence as ontological assertion in which the male position seems to be: I beat because I am. (148)

It is assumed that the wife’s priority should be to attend to her husband’s physical needs and to always be at his service taking care of him like a personal maid. In addition to women, children mainly girls are exposed to their own share of violence and sexual abuse. Pumla Morgan and Valerie Youssef points to the fact that there were numerous stories of sexual abuse and incest within the Afro-Caribbean community. The prey is usually vulnerable young girls who gets abused and used for sex by either their stepfather, brothers or even uncles and what is more surprising is the mothers who stand by the side of the abuser instead of protecting their daughters they believe that their daughter is owned property and they have all right of taking control without anyone interference (138). More importantly, when someone with unhealed trauma chooses dirty pain over clean pain, the person may try to sooth his or her trauma by blowing it through another

person using violence, rage, deception, betrayal, or emotional abuse. This never heals the trauma. Instead, it increases the first person's dirty pain by reinforcing harmful and aggressive survival strategies as standard operating procedure. It creates a sense of ongoing unease in the first person's body that he or she then must override. It may also provoke a reflexively defensive or aggressive response in the second person's body. In most cases people who suffers from trauma intentionally hurt others and the side effects of trauma are mostly unconsciously inflicted and triggered by a stimulus in the subject life where they totally lose control over their behaviors, these behaviors make them more violent. For instance, a victim may say, " What the hell am I doing? I don't want to hurt this person!" (Menakem 34). This further shows a person with trauma have no will or whatsoever on their actions.

The psychologist Judith Herman further investigates, that in most extreme cases of trauma, survivors of childhood abuse may attack their own children or may fail to protect them leading to endless circle of abuse. However, many argued in contrast to the popular notion of generational cycle of abuse mentioning that "In most cases its totally the opposite the survivors are often terribly afraid that their children will suffer a fate similar to their own, and they go to great lengths to prevent this from happening. For the sake of their children, survivors are often able to mobilize caring and protective capacities that they have never been able to extend to themselves" (Herman 82). Which means, it is not necessary women who experienced violence or sexual abuse will pass it on to their children the same way their parents and their grandparents did but instead they tend to give their all from protection, empathy.... etc. The kind of affection they wished they received from their parents as it is illustrated in a study of mothers with multiple personality disorder, the psychiatrist Philip Coons observed, "I have generally been impressed by the positive, constructive and caring attitude that many mothers with multiple personality disorder

have toward their children they were abused as children and strive to protect their children against similar misfortunes” (Herman 82). However it is of no doubts that there are individuals who consciously or unconsciously transmit their traumas to their own children and on that context Michelle Balaev supports the psychologist Cathy Caruth claim, “ That traumatic experience is transhistorically passed across generational gaps, primarily through verbal or written acts of remembering” (Balaev 152). It indicates, the possibility of transcending trauma from one place to another and from one person to another. The study investigate the next point that answers the question can trauma transcend between generation?

I.4. Trauma Between Intergenerational and Historical

Trauma theory deals with various types of trauma. For instance, historical, cultural, transgenerational, or sexual trauma where the victim often suffers from a continuous and spontaneous flashbacks that isolates its subjects from the real world all of which are found in *Breath, Eyes, Memory*. As it is demonstrated in the following extracted statement, Danticat narrates the traumatizing experiences of individual women and their suffering from a society that insufficiently punishes sexual violence against women (“Bodies in Pain: Edwidge Danticat *Breath, Eyes, Memory*.” 236). This leads us to the next idea that trauma consists of two kinds: “Historical and intergenerational traumas are said to be the enduring legacies of colonialisms”(1) as the writer Luis Urrieta Jr book entitled *Indigenous Reflections on Identity, Trauma, and Healing: Navigating Belonging and Power*. The book covers, the discussion about intergenerational trauma by stating:

The difference is that this work situates my ancestral pueblo at the center of an origin narrative and in the process, by default, it is also about my family and the people of my

community, their ways of knowing and being that I now know more intimately. And yes, it is the intimacy that bears heavily on me and borders on the fear of betrayal, of breaking silences that are not meant to be broken, of re/opening wounds that are already seemingly healed. (1)

Whenever postcolonial trauma is out on the table, this does not exclude one community over the other instead it cover every postcolonial community that has undergone throughout the same violence. The author of *Breath, Eyes, Memory* declares, that the traumatic experience is a result of the legacy test carried throughout history by the Haitian African women, have produced *Intergenerational trauma* that continued over three generations from the same lineage. In other words, the legacy of the test brought a trauma that was experienced in the three generations that of the grandmother, mother and the daughter. This standpoint leads to the conclusion by critics such as Kirby Farrell who argues, " Since[the] traumatic experience is intergenerational transmitted based on shared social characteristics, then everyone can experience trauma through vicarious means based on one's ethnic, racial, gender, sexual, or economic background "(Balaev 152). In other words even if the individual did not experience trauma personally or went through it himself, trauma can still be passed on through generations.

However, Michelle Balaev in his journal *Trends of literary trauma*. announce, " The Intergenerational trauma has limited the meaning of Trauma in literature"(152). In the sense that he conflates ,blended, fused and failed to spot the difference between two types of trauma the one experienced by the individual in which he live the same trauma through trauma narration either written or oral that can abreact ; this is known as Historically documented loss, that was experienced by a person ancestors not by the person or individual himself; in another words, it is timeless cycle of trauma whereas on the other side of the argument is the trauma that can create

trauma, is the one in which the individual who suffers from trauma is the one who experienced trauma first hand and therefore was present in the event(152). Another critic Stef Craps who analyzed works done by Sindiwe Magona, David Dabydeen, Fred D’Aguilar, Caryl Phillips, and Anti Desai, generalized the term trauma and thus making it cross cultural during which he compared different writings and works done in totally different historical times explaining that trauma can move from one generation to another when one person shares an identical ethnicity with another. Furthermore, he wants to globalize it making it one shared by all humanity.

To further extent, Jeffrey Prager proposed what was referred to as the *Re-enacting scene* in which he explained it within an analogy that is formed through the death dance of the necklace victim; a traumatic event that happened within the past, and it had been all re-performed by a bunch of a children who no way they would have ever been present during that era in which they acted the same traumatic event by remodeling the unspoken memory and turning it into a less terrifying traumatic memory Prager states, “This theatrically narrated scene provides an illuminating metaphor for the way during which trauma is passed on through generations in subtle ways through stories or silences, through unarticulated fears and also the psychological scars that are often left unacknowledged " (2). Prager shows the possibility of the newer generation to live a future marked by the traumas passed on from their grandparents past. That is to say, people belongings to the same ancestry line, can be said that their future is already predestined by the history of their grandparents and those who lived before them shall transmit their own traumas and those who fallow shall receive and relive their own cycle of abuse and violence. In addition to that Michelle Balaev illustrates how traumatic experience effect the human brain across generations:

Few topics stake a more compelling claim to Humanities research than the legacies of historical trauma the impact of mass atrocity not only on individuals and groups that experienced the violence directly, but also across multiple generations of the descendants of survivors.[Whereas on the opposite hand there is the trauma linked with society traditions] is understood as a fixed and timeless photographic negatives to read in an locatable place of the brain, but it maintains the ability to interrupt consciousness and maintains the ability to be transferred to non-traumatized individuals. (151)

According to Michael Balaev, Caruth while the experience is isolated in the brain, it still carries the potential to infect another pure and integrated subject through the act of narration, or based upon a shared ancestry or ethnic origins; therefore, trauma generates trauma, one that is passed on from one generation to another from the grandmother to the mother and to the daughter. Caruth suggests, traumatic experience is contagious by stating that trauma “Is never simply one’s own [. . .] [but] precisely the way it is implicated in each other’s traumas” (24). Actually, Caruth concept on trauma theory pushes literary critics to claim that traumatic experience is transhistorically passed across generational gaps, primarily through verbal or written acts of remembering.

Unlike the many who claim that intergenerational trauma is an obstacle and is of no use to the next generations. Judith Herman differently thinks that the trauma story is part of the survivor’s legacy; only when it is fully integrated can the survivor pass it on, in confidence. In another expression, the traumatic experience told by others can greatly educate the newer generations so they do not fall in the same stigma of the endless cycle of violence. Ultimately it is now clearly understood that trauma can come to an end and the cycle of violence, suffering and sexual abuse can be broken.

Finally, authors all around the world resort to writing when it comes to the comprehension of important matters like trauma studies, which turns around the post-colonial trauma theory that plays an immensely important role in the Caribbean literature as a whole. It tackles different yet, closely related matters such that of rape, virginity test, diaspora, the issue of identity.

Correspondingly, post-colonial feminist authors in literature, find their own unique voice heard by the wider sphere of audience, authors and critics across the globe. Writers who are passionate about presenting female empowerment, and analyzing the relationship between trauma and feminism in postcolonial contexts that contributes to the emancipation of the Haitian women from the intergenerational cycle of abuse is strongly presented in the postcolonial literary works.

Chapter Two: The Psychological and Feminism Dimensions in *Breath, Eyes, Memory*

The second chapter is dedicated to discuss the narrative of trauma and its power and effectiveness in breaking the cycle of intergenerational trauma through the death and rebirth notion portrayed in the voice of Sophia, a trauma survivor; In addition to highlighting the extent to which the characters had faced trauma in Diaspora and how it can transcend beyond one's origins. Furthermore, surviving as an act of resistance which had given the Caribbean woman Sophie the ability to look at the world from a different lens enabling her to question for the first time her own society traditions and believes and being able to confront her own traumas, therefore Sophie become the symbol of Postcolonial Feminism and a female empowerment. That allows us to discover the effect of trauma on the two main characters both mentally and physically in order to discover whether being on Diaspora and the exposition to that foreignness has indeed created a hybrid identity that has increased the actual possibility for trauma survivors to recover.

II.1. Edwidge Danticat, *Breath, Eyes, Memory*: An overview

The author Edwidge Danticat, whose moving and insightful works across many genres, enriches our understanding of Haiti and the complexities of the immigrant experience. She was born in Port-au-Prince in 1969, the capital of Haiti. She was left by her parents in Haiti at a very early age to be raised by relatives. When she was twelve years old her parents, brought Edwidge and her brother to the United States where she explained how she always had a constant fear of abandonment. Danticat also experienced the death of several relatives and friends because of violence, fear, sickness or ocean crossing as they live in Diaspora. In other words, Edwidge Danticat's novel *Breath, Eyes, Memory* 1994 is a reflection of the author's childhood past that mirrors the Haitian girls and their situation at that time. Her mother tongue is Haitian Creole, and

she also speaks French, which was used in Haitian schools, and she learned English after moving to New York. In the United States Danticat studied at Brown University where she gained a Master's degree in creative writing. She published her first novel and former master's thesis *Breath, Eyes, Memory* in 1994 and was listed as follows, "Among one of the thirty artists under thirty likely to change the culture for the next 30 years by New York Times. *Breath, Eyes Memory* was chosen to Oprah's Book Club in 1998. Although she is an acclaimed author in the USA, she has received some negative criticism in her native country because of her "outsider" status." (Eerinen 3). Like any other writer who writes in a language that is not his native despite of his or her noble intention, there would always be a criticism. Other works by Danticat are ;*Farming Bones* (1998), *Krik? Krak!* (1995), *The Dew Breaker* (2004), *Claire of the Sea Light* (2013) and *Farming Bones* a historical novel.

Through a mix of fiction and reality, the author brings to the forefront some of the most pressed problems of the postcolonial era, such as oppression, rape, racism and male violence perpetrated upon Black women. Her novel carries a journey of an unquestionable search for assertion of identity as well as the liberation of women. Moreover, in the afro mentioned novel there are several issues portrayed and one of them is traditions, and the predestined cycle of experiencing sexual violence. Danticat is Black feminist author who explores the obstacles Haitian women face in the sphere of patriarchy, as well the attempt to exemplify their struggles for freedom, giving them a voice against a cruel world that has for centuries oppressed and silenced the Haitian women. Hence, Danticat is highly committed to give voice to those less fortunate who did not possess the courage to speak up and break the intergenerational cycle of abuse.

The novel portrays the life struggle of a Haitian woman, Sophie tells the story of her childhood back in Haiti, where she lives in a small village with her aunt, Atie. When Sophie is twelve, she has to move to New York to live with her mother, Martine. In New York Sophie faces difficulties in understanding her mother's strict rules. Little by little Sophie learns about the traumas that affect her mother's life. One of the most significant of these traumatizing experiences is the practice of "testing," an examination to make sure a girl is still a virgin, described as painful and humiliating, to both Martine and Atie who were regularly subjected to it. Another traumatic event in Martine's life was when she was raped as a young girl and became pregnant to her rapist, whose face she never saw. Yet he kept hunting her dreams as a faceless man. In Haitian culture, losing one's virginity before marriage was a horrible dishonorable act for a girl that would bring shame to the entire family, which is why Martine was sent away to have Sophie.

Then Martine flees her memories to New York, but never truly recovers. When Sophie falls in love with a jazz musician, Joseph, her mother starts to test her, which ends only when Sophie uses a pestle to break her hymen and runs away. Years later Sophie still struggles with her own sexuality and having sex with her husband. She makes both a physical and a mental journey to come to terms with the different sides of her identity as being a hybrid subject living with two cultures: the open minded American and the strict old school Haitian mind set. Sophie finally makes peace with her mother when she becomes a mother herself, and learns that her mother is pregnant again, this time to her boyfriend, Marc. Despite all the support they try to give Martine, the pregnancy opens up all the wounds she strived to forget and takes her back to the memory of rape and drives her to the edge of her mental breakdown. As a result, Martine commits suicide and kills the unborn baby with a knife and moments later she was found laying dead on the

kitchen floor. In the novel, Martine and Sophie are in a way two trauma survivors, were kept together by their shared traumas of Haitian motherhood which they both try to run away from. When Martine is buried in Haiti, Grandma Ifè tells Sophie that she is finally free of her mother, the cycle of trauma has been broken by Martine's death and a new generation free of trauma was born with Sophie's daughter Bridgette.

II.2. Breaking the Cycle of Intergenerational Trauma

Over the past decade or so, therapists have become increasingly aware of the importance of the body through the healing process. Until recently, psychotherapy was what we now refer to as talk therapy, cognitive therapy or behavioral therapy (Menakem 21). Simply, the process involves a therapist and a patient who come to his office and they start by opening a conversation then the therapist induces from both the cognitive or behavioral insights to help the patient. Hence, trauma diagnosis and healing are seen as belonging in the realm of psychology, psychotherapy and counseling, and in the Western context this means professional training in specific skills and techniques. Processes of healing, forgiveness and Reconciliation are associated with personal, spiritual transformation (Lambourne and Niyonzima 299). That is to say, the significance behind investigating trauma theory is to find answers to questions that have been the main topic discussion for many scholars, critics, psychologists and writers who put an end to the cycle of intergenerational trauma. Besides, Lambourne and Niyonzima announces, that "Truth and reconciliation commission has the potential to enable group mourning and begin to heal" (297). In effect, once the truthfulness and credibility of that traumatic memory is out into reality and recognized once the self reaches a state of acceptance, conciliation, and peace, healing takes place.

Furthermore, Trauma leads to changes in the brain and nervous system that are essential to survival in response to real or perceived threat to the safety of the individual, along with a sense of loss in everyday life concepts. That is why Martine intentions are to protect her daughter out of love but instead she ends hurting her daughter mistaken love with pain. Whereas Sigmund Freud in his book *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* as it is referred to in chapter one, "The process by which repression turns a possibility of pleasure into a source of displeasure"(5). In the sense that for years Martine has repressed memories of rape her dreams brought up her traumatic experience to life ; for Martine every time she closes her eyes it was as if she was raped every night as Freud states, "The fact that the traumatic experience is constantly forcing itself upon the patient even in his sleep is a proof of the strength of that experience: the patient is, as one might say, fixated to his trauma"(7). That explains Martine inability to move forward because she is stuck in that same timeline and space where she was initially raped. As it is illustrated in the article entitled "Breath, Eyes, Memory: Rape, Memory, and Denunciation." By Lucía M. Suárez who claims, " [That] through literature, Danticat joins with activists in Haiti and in the diaspora to create intimate spaces of disclosure of violence. Specifically, Danticat gives violated women a space for remembering and mourning their traumatic pasts"(Suárez 119). Haitian female writings centers on the importance of memory that enables the woman to mourn her past in order to move forward.

On that basis the psychologist Donald Kalsched points out in his book entitled *The Inner World of Trauma: Archetypal Defenses of the Personal Spirit* to the necessity of grief and its effectiveness in the process of working through as the first step towards recovery. He proposed the idea that the journey of recovery requires one to mourn because it is only when they allow themselves to feel the pain, to grieve and to face their traumas rather than repression and only

after allowing themselves to feel then they can move on eventually and if the victims wish to heal, they must first be torn apart. On the light of that idea Kalsched states from the book section entitled "Grief and the Process of Working Through":

Her grief unites, as it were, the hope of anticipation and the violent disappointment of loss. Both sides of the archetype the "tearing apart" and the "throwing together" are held together in the overarching symbolic narrative of the dream. This is an important reminder of the healing efficacy of dream experience, quite apart from the interpretive meaning our analysis may give it. (43)

Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela further demonstrates the grief procedure and how it works by stating that remorse, as in forgiving or mourning, involves a reparatory process in which there is an integration of one self and other on both internal and external levels. This opens up the possibility of connection between victim and perpetrator and the transformation of the relationship between them (6). In other words, regret on the side of the perpetrator and his alterations of the word sorry can bear a great effect on the victim herself it might even lead to forgiveness. Madikizela further supports Jaco Barnard Naudé view that demonstrates, "Remorseful apologies by perpetrators of apartheid atrocities and statements of acknowledgement and reconciliation by beneficiaries of apartheid are not enough to assuage the continuing pain of the still dispossessed, the poor and the disenfranchised" (4). That is to say, saying sorry would not be enough for the victim to heal and restore her old self so apologies alone can neither ease that traumatic memory nor fully break the cycle of pain felt by the victim in almost every day of her life.

Additionally, the healing path took on a whole different level to the point where it can be done also through Art as in theaters. For example; “It engages people’s bodies, emotions, and sense of spirituality” and opens up the possibility for conversations about the past on multiple levels, including with self and with others where is the second quotation mark (Madikizela 9). For this kind of artistic means, people could be allowed to converse and open their souls in order to share their own traumatic stories. The critic Madikizela further shows:

People did not leave after the performance of rewind. Instead, they gathered around one another, around friends and strangers alike weeping, talking, being silent and sharing the most tragic, shameful or confusing aspects of this collective past. Through these brief dialogue encounters, members of post-conflict communities can take some first steps into the light of hopefulness hope, not as an abstract concept, but as a moment imbued with the possibility of deepening reflection that may lead to the kind of acknowledgement.(10)

In continuation to what Kalsched, Madikizela and Naudé proposed as an attempt to answer the question what it requires to reach the healing point? Menakem views that healing involves discomfort but so does refusing to heal (24). In other words, only by walking into our pain or discomfort and experiencing it, moving through it, one can eventually grow from it after all that is how the human body works. Healing requires pain, but not all types of pain can be useful just the *Clear Pain* not the *Dirty Pain* that generates from refusing to heal as a result a distinction is made between two different types of pain, which Menakem describes as the following:

Clean pain hurts like hell. But it enables our bodies to grow through our difficulties, develop nuanced skills, and mend our trauma. In this process, the body metabolizes clean pain the body can then settle; more room for growth is created in its nervous system; and

the self becomes freer and more capable, because it now has access to energy that was previously protected, bound, and constricted. When this happens, people's lives often improve in different ways. (24)

The Second type is referred to as the *Dirty pain*. "The pain of avoidance, blame, and denial. When people respond from their most wounded parts, become cruel or violent, or physically or emotionally run away, they experience dirty pain" (Menakem24). It denotes, one must experiences that clean pain in order to let themselves recover and heal with an avoidance to the later type. However, it is important to remember that people by nature are different, and so in return the traumatic experience, its intensity and impact also differs from one person to another. Indeed it is of no doubt that all people would not experience the same trauma when people respond to trauma differently and this is what the scholar Menakem has examined through the following statement, "Trauma responses are unique to each person. Each response is influenced by a person's particular physical, mental, emotional, and social makeup and, of course, by the precipitating experiences themselves" (Menakem 20). Because, trauma is more of a mind disease that disrupts the human both psychologically and physically to a greater extent, and these consequences continue to harm Sophie's mother Martine long after the traumatic experience has taken place to the point where she no longer can make a distinction between right or wrong, reality or dreams, love or pain.

Therefore, not all women recover as fast as some do, but nothing can break a determined soul that is willing to heal if that person wants to recover, whenever they have to face their most darkest traumatic experiences which means trauma responses are considered as, "Unpredictable two bodies may respond very differently to the same experience"

(Menakem22). For instance, Sophie was able to admit and face her trauma back in Haiti, but Martine, she refused to seek therapy as consequences her trauma led her to commit suicide.

Narration is considered to be the most important when dealing with trauma in the article entitled "Transgenerational Transmission of Holocaust Trauma and its Expressions in Literature" Written by the critic Bina Nir when discussing the theory of intergenerational trauma, he points out to the evidence that there is trauma that continues to further influence the upcoming generations, as a result he states, "The Holocaust trauma was not limited to the survivors themselves, but was passed on to the next generation born after the Holocaust and raised in its shadow. It is possible to see the effects of growing up in the shadow of the Holocaust and transgenerational transmission of trauma in many aspects of the second-generation children's lives" (Nir 37). He also shows, that writing itself has the potential to heal and that past traumatic events are not only limited to the past generation, but it constantly seeks to affect the new generation and only the act of narrating traumatic experience have the power to mend those wounds. It is undoubtedly to say that therapist sessions are of great benefit and help the victims of trauma, and gives them a safe space where they can narrate their most traumatic experiences that they shame to speak about. Sophie's low self-esteem developed by the trauma caused by the virginity test, and her sexual phobia all this changed for the better after seeking therapy.

As it is depicted in Edwidge Danticat's novel *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, in one hand there are women like in the case of Sophie who chose to face her trauma and her mother's trauma the nightmares which become her own. She sought therapy by narrating her own trauma story and she decided to trace its origins that were in Haiti. On the other hand, Sophie's mother Martine refuses to seek therapy though her daughter only wanted to provide her with the help she needs, but Martine was too afraid to face her own trauma. Though there was no escape from the terror of

her dreams. She chosen to deny what was happening to her because the action of Martine's sexual oppression thwarts her mind when it becomes for her inevitable to remain silent. It is needless to say that all the women who experienced sexual, social or domestic abuse all can dare to seek or to speak up and break the silence. That is why the act of speaking is in itself a courageous and revolutionary act of survival. In confirmation to the previous idea Menakem emphasizes:

In most cases, people do the exact opposite: they reenact or precipitate situations similar to the ones that caused their trauma. This may seem crazy or neurotic to the cognitive mind, but there is bodily wisdom behind it. By recreating such a situation, the person also creates an opportunity to complete whatever action got thwarted or overridden. This might help the person mend the trauma, create more room for growth in his or her body, and settle his or her nervous system. (20)

Thereupon, the reenactment of the original scene of trauma can soften the intensity of the traumatic experience by eliminating the feelings of helplessness experienced in the initial traumatic event. Just like Menakem, Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela further investigates the idea of reenactment scene that holds a possibility to soften the traumatic experience and makes it less terrifying. Wherefore, Madikizela reveals in her book the reenactment of violent events that took place in South Africa in the mid-1980s. In addition, Madikizela introduces the reenactment scene illustrated through a game as a metaphor. Hence, the game surprisingly was enacted by a group of young girls who were not born when the events they were enacting. Yet, did not take place. As Madikizela discusses, "Mlungisi was one of many black residential areas affected by a wave of "necklace" murders committed against those who were suspected of collaborating with the apartheid government (2). What was witnessed is fascinating for it is no way that these girls can exactly enact the real necklace event that took places, there it goes, Resmaa Madikizela was

astonished at the fact that these girls were able to recall virtually everything that happened in a real necklace murder, even though the girl had not been born when the last necklace killing occurred in Mlungisi township she states at her amazement:

... none of the girls I saw re-enacting the necklace game that morning had actually witnessed a necklace murder ... What's more to explain is the unspoken events of the past [and the] the silence ... [That] become imprinted on their mind ... the death dance of the necklace victim may well have been a way of transforming the unspoken memory of it into something more accessible and less fearful for the girls.(2)

Despite the fact that reenactment can speed the healing process yet the scholar Resmaa Menakem did not neglect the possibility that reenactment of the same traumatic scene would only contribute in the opening of wounds that has seemingly just started to heal as she states, "The attempt to reenact the event often simply repeats, re-inflicts, and deepens the trauma"(20). In another words, it might only add fuel to fire in the sense it will magnify the person trauma to a complete mental breakdown .

Similarly, Donald Kalsched in chapter two entitled "Clinical Illustrations of the Self Care System." From his book entitled the *Inner World of Trauma* points out to the possibility that traumatic memory is recovered through the unfolding of a dream series in psychotherapy. In another manner, therapy turns around the notion "Talking Cure" where women narrate their dreams and experiences; it's a safe zone that the psychologist create for his patients.

Correspondingly, to what Kalsched has stated it is important to recognize the traumatic symptoms how it occurs and what can be considered as trauma; thus, it is necessary for the subject to know and study his or her trauma. Closely to what Kalsched said about trauma

Menakem explains trauma as "Psychological term as a wordless story our body tells itself about what is safe and what is a threat that our rational brain cannot stop either from occurring, nor talk our body out of it. Trauma can cause us to react to present events in ways that seem wildly inappropriate, overly charged, or otherwise ... known as "The over-the-top reactions"(20).To put it differently, the way Martine over reacts to a small problem or situation, it is often a result of trauma as response to a painful memory or discomfort in that case the body tries to address it with the reflexive energy that still stuck inside the nervous system portrayed in sudden behaviors like freaking out.

In the book entitled *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies*. By Resmaa Menakem which signifies the steps that would contribute to the break of the cycle of intergenerational trauma in a quote by Maya Angelou from chapter three: "Body to Body Generation to Generation." She states, "No man can know where he is going unless he knows exactly where he has been and exactly how he arrived at his present place." Same goes for Intergenerational trauma no one can heal unless he knows exactly what characterizes it, what causes it, what triggers it, and what mends it. That is exactly what Sophie has done, she traced her trauma back to its source and the same goes for Martine her only way to stop seeing those nightmares is by interpreting her dreams and figuring out their source and allowing her to talk about them.

For good measure Urrieta Jr essay explores, the intergenerational remembering's of native identity, trauma, and healing based on personal, family, community memory, and in part on politically engaged social research in which it contains testimonies of people from his previous academic work. Moreover, intergenerational trauma has several definitions one of them is found in the article entitled "Indigenous Reflections on Identity, Trauma, and Healing: Navigating

Belonging and Power." By Luis Urrieta, Jr who defined intergenerational traumas as, the result of hundred years of colonialism and enduring power (1). In addition, the article entitled "Breaking the Cycle of Intergenerational Trauma." written. By Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela discusses, one of the characteristics of Intergenerational trauma that of being contagious as it is illustrated in the novel throughout the protagonist Sophie her mother transcends the trauma that of the virginity test which her grandma had inflicted on her when she was the same age as Sophie.

Transgenerational trauma has been transmitted within families. It means, "Children "inherit" their parents' traumatic memories." (8).

Furthermore, writing as a legitimate test and as mean to break the silence imposed by a society's trauma can be a challenging task that brings discomfort for the person who gets to bear that responsibility and as confirmation to the previous idea. The author Luis Urrieta, Jr validates, "Yes, it is the intimacy that bears heavily on me and borders on the fear of betrayal, of breaking silences that are not meant to be broken, of reopening wounds that are already seemingly healed." (2). Indeed, many authors fear to speak about the traumatic past though it is the beginning of a long road towards recovery. In accordance to Judith Herman, the answer to this question of how to overcome their trauma comes from those fortunate survivors who found a way to take control of their own recovery; thus, trauma have become the subjects of their own quest for truth rather than the objects of inquisition (70). Clearly, Sophie was able to control her own trauma better than her mother and she uncovers her own trauma and attempts to persuade Martine to do the same thing and to seek the help of a therapist.

In addition, most of us think of trauma as something that occurs in an individual body, like a toothache or a broken arm. But intergenerational trauma is one that is collective shared by a large number of people or women like in the case of Haitian women who share a predestined faith of

doom; thus, "Healing is a process that requires time and support in order to build resilience and guard against relapses."(Lambourne and Niyonzima 298). Indeed, maintaining the road to a healthy psyche is a difficult one requires a great will in order to face any traumatic flashbacks that may pop up; thus, it remains such a challenging quest for victims of sexual trauma to get their life back on track. As the novel scenes depicts, "There is always a place where nightmares are passed on through generations like heirlooms. Where women like cardinal birds return to look at their own faces in stagnant bodies of water. I come from a place where breath, eyes, and memory are one, a place from which you carry your past like the hair on your head" (Danticat 234). Surely ,Sophie and Martine past will always seek to exist. Freedom cannot be achieved through denying their past, but through reconcile, moving on and not keep living in the past.

Likewise, the article entitled "Narrating the Past: (Re)Constructing Memory, (Re)Negotiating History." By Nandita Batra and Vartan P. Messier discusses several postcolonial works written by female Haitian women. For instance, through Danticat's novel, *Breath, Eyes , Memory* which draws more attention particularly to the mental and physical abuse suffered by women at the hands of the Macoutes. From the view point of narrative therapy, Danticat's novel parallels stories that aim to heal the psychological wounds of the traumatized subject through the externalization of such trauma.

In comparison to the Holocaust, traumatic historical event where studies have found out that healing can be done through confronting the Holocaust past and its transgenerational repercussions among both survivors 'children and the descendants of perpetrators and bystanders (Herman 8). That is to say the key to heal is based on confrontation, dealing with the traumatic memory is the way to self-salvation creating a true female empowerment a woman who fought her way out of her own trauma of sexual abuse marking the beginning of true female power a

survivor; therefore, trauma can be ended by the individual himself and one woman can still be resilient and leave an impact. As it is portrayed in Edwidge Danticat's novel *Breath, Eyes memory*, Sophie was that resilient women who fought her way out and made sure the trauma cycle that lasted through out generations will not once again repeated through her daughter.

Eventually, after months or years, unhealed trauma can appear to become part of someone's personality as it is illustrated in the following statement, "Over longer periods of time, as it is passed on and gets compounded through other bodies in a household, it can become a family norm and if it gets transmitted and compounded through multiple families and generations, it can start to look like culture. But it is not culture. It's a traumatic retention that has lost its context over time" (Menakem 35). In other words, certain social traditions and behaviors that manifest a threat of causing traumatic experience when they are overlooked after a period of time they become part of that society norm like for instance the trauma of the virginity test that has been transmitted from generation to another without questioning its effect or impact on the Haitian women; as a result, a history of violence and years of sexual abuse, that was transmitted from grandma Ifé to Martine, Tante Atie, and Sophie shaped a Haitian culture defined by violence where Haitian women are left to follow blindly, they even started to believe they do not have neither a choice nor the power to make decision about their own body.

Correspondingly to what has been dealt with in the previous article "Breath, Eyes, Memory: Rape, Memory, and Denunciation." By Lucía M. Suárez, similarly the ratified essay "Let the words bring wings to our feet: Negotiating Exile and Trauma Through Narrative in Danticat's *Breath, Eyes, Memory*" by Jennifer C. Rossi highlights the importance of overcoming traumas through recalling the memory of sexual trauma, absorbing and confronting, as well as talking about them like Sophie has done with her trauma; she told her trauma story to her therapist with

the use of confrontation therapy that allowed Sophie to face her trauma at the heart of its existence, as it is demonstrated in chapter thirty-two Sophie's therapist says, "I thought we were going to do some more work before you could actually try confrontational therapy" (165).

In approximation to the later claim announced in Michelle Balaev essay "Trends in Literary Trauma Theory." Stresses on the same idea that "The act of speaking or narration is the primary avenue to recovery (Balaev 151). Thereby, "One must develop an internal narrative, by recovering memories of her abuse; then she must tell a public narrative, testifying about her abuse, in order to heal from trauma and end the cycle of secrecy. In this manner, memory and storytelling become acts of resistance against fragmentation and silence" (Rossi 208). This sums up the power of narration, the act of telling, testifying and memory all together forming unbreakable line of defiance and willingness.

II.3. Trauma Transcends Beyond One's Origins

Is it of benefit to live in Diaspora despite the fact the main characters trauma seek to hunt its victims? Diaspora Literature involves an idea of a homeland, a place from where the displacement occurs and narratives of harsh journeys undertaken on account of economic compulsions. Basically, Diaspora is a minority community living in exile. Portrayed in the Article entitled "Memory, Diaspora and the Female Body in Little Haiti: Edwidge Danticat's Reading Lessons." Written by Silvia Martinez Falquina .She portrays Haiti as "A little community characterized by the coexistence of different languages and codes of behavior: on the one hand the official, US authority of school rules, where college titles should be publicly exhibited for a teacher's validation, and where, perhaps somewhat hypocritically, no hint of violence is supposed to be allowed(104). Normally, universities and school is a place where

people are taught that violence is something unacceptable and whoever commits it will be punished. But that was not the case schools teaches something and what is actually happening is totally something else.

As a matter of fact, the impact of trauma can even transmit within families generally from the parents to the children and so on a good example for this would be the story that Martine narrate to her daughter Sophie whenever she does the virginity test .In other words, "Story telling both establishes and reproduces the maternal bond. Telling a tale binds mother to daughter and creates cross generational connections. " (Gerber 194).To phrase it differently, Martine stories created a mother daughter relationship one that is based on transmission of trauma and abuse. As consequences the Critic Marc A.Christophe further explains, the mother daughter relationship in his article entitled "Truth, Half-truths, and Beautiful Lies: Edwidge Danticat and the Recuperation of Memory in *Breath, Eyes, Memory*." As it is stated, "Ultimately, her[Martine] latent obsession with being close to her daughter prompted her to impose several virginity tests on Sophie. Although this act is a tradition in the Caco family, as we discover later, it takes on a morbid aspect when performed by Martine on Sophie".(Christophe 98).Though the virginity test is considered as a tradition in Haitian societies once it is performed by her mother on diasporic space takes a different direction one that is linked with violence. This following quote extracted from the novel illustrates, the mother daughter relationship "The Marassas were two inseparable lovers. They were the same person, duplicated in two. They looked the same, talked the same, walked the same . . . When you love someone, you want them to be closer to you than your Marassa. Closer than your shadow . . . You and I we could be like Marassas" (Danticat 85). The later exemplifies how violence can be transferred and at the same time justified the relation between the mother and the daughter which is mostly based on violence and abuse.

Also the critic Nancy F. Gerber affirms, that the reason Martine continue in the cycle of abuse and does not seem to find anything shameful about it is because Martine does not experience herself as isolated from Sophie, in the same time she enters in a state of denying so that she is able to prevent herself from feeling the pain and the shame, she inflicts during the testing(194).That explains the way she refused to admit how truly sorry she is to Sophie when she told her how much she hated the testing in an effort to apologize to Sophie, she says: "I did it [the testing] because my mother had done it to me. I have no greater excuse. I realize standing here that the two greatest pains of my life are very much related....The testing and the rape. I live both every day" (Danticat 170).After all there is no greater excuse that could take back all the pain Sophie had to go through.

In the article "Diaspora Literature and Stereotypes Concerning Contemporary Art." Written by Jacob Shai who investigates Suketu Mehta work that advocates the idea of a home while he states, "Home is not a consumable entity. He says: You cannot go home by eating certain foods, by replaying its films on your T.V. screens. At some point you have to live there again." (Shai 39). However, in all the different forms of Diaspora there is a common characteristic and these Diasporic people all have one common purpose, they all share the same pain and injustice which made them leave their home in the first place. They are all wanting to escape their countries miserable conditions and in most cases running from their own past. Thus, on Diaspora these Haitian women are all united under the concept of pain and the trauma that seek to hunt them, it is what make them closer to the cycle of abuse. As it is manifested in the novel every time Martine tests her daughter Sophie, she would tell her the story of the Marassas, Martine thought if her daughter suffered from the same trauma of virginity test than they will have something to share and unites them just like those people who left home.

It is important to notice that Diaspora can be either obliged or chosen meaning, "Forced or Voluntary (Shai 37). Diasporic writings are to some extent about the new aspect that the Diasporic culture possess, it is about the geographical and cultural norms that leads to hybrid identity. An identity that resists cultural sacred authoritarianism; identity that challenges and questions what it supposed to be the superficial official truth that views everything related to Diaspora, as the reason of every downfall and distraction to these emigrants, because not even Diaspora can save them from the trauma of their past. However, Diaspora pushed Sophie to confront her past rather than running away, in order to come to terms with her past. What can be concluded is that Diaspora is the place where she can remain hidden and escape her destiny, but it can be a chance for her to change her destiny, the mean for her salvation.

The history of any country is another lesson for the future generations after all it is, "From those who have suffered the sentence of history subjugation, domination, Diaspora, displacement that we learn our most enduring lessons for living and thinking" (Shai 39). It is of no doubt that in the middle of struggle one can truly find his or her inner power the strength that will allow them to speak up and break the silence. Everything is interconnected starting from Sophie's exile, sexual traumas that of the virginity test, Martine death all are necessary entities that later will contribute to the empowerment of Sophie, allowing her to break the intergenerational cycle of abuse. So, Sophie had to meet her mother and leave her home in Haiti, in order to have what most postcolonial Haitian girls did not have which is a western education. Diaspora allowed Sophie to acquire some western characteristics that of freedom of speech, choice ...etc. It widened and opened her eyes to ask why mother's continue to perform the same harm that they suffered from when they were children. Also, Martin's death was essential because her death marks the beginning of an end and the birth of Bridget Sophie's daughter will put the final dots to the end of

the abuse and oppression cycle, for all Haitian women. Sophie is the Bridge that leads to different cultures.

Furthermore, Philippe Zacaïr in the article, "Haiti and the Haitian Diaspora in the Wider Caribbean" examines, "The encounters between Haitian migrants and host societies as one that is "Reflected in the ever-changing perceptions that the different cultural groups have of one another." (5). In any cultural exchange occurring between two different cultures there is an effect and affect relationships and in this case the Diasporic culture had a positive impact on Sophie's life eventually. Philippe Zacaïr discusses how a person from postcolonial countries when he travels to Diasporic land to some extent he is displaced from the margin to the center therefore, engages, "In the notion of movement to observe how the creation of diasporas has moved margins to the center, bringing marginal groups suddenly into close proximity and shared spaces" (5). In another sense, Diaspora can change this whole notion of inferiority and marginalization and these two different cultures can positively come together and adopt good qualities from each other and this can be very beneficial to both groups.

Nonetheless, Zacaïr also supposes that like any other immigrants who traveled to the host country they are out to be a target for racist oppression from both sides of people and the government. For example, as "Haitian migrants coexist with host societies, they are often stigmatized, despised, and assigned to the lowest level of the social hierarchy" (5). Certainly, the picture of Diaspora is not all romanticized and the struggle of Haitian women is real they were subjected to all types of racism and this is another drawback of living in Diaspora yet, the experiences of Haitians in diaspora is something unique that differs from one person to another. There are some Haitians who managed to make a place for them in the Diaspora as Philip Zacaïr states, "The interactive attribute of diasporic exchange also encompasses a paradoxical fascination with

the rich cultural patrimony of the Haitian people who seem to have emancipated themselves from an obsession with the “white,” “colonial” gaze" (5). Despite the coexistence of fragmentation and dislocation one of the negative sides from being Diasporic subject. It is surprising to see that Haitians have managed on their own to free themselves from under the grasp, the labels and the eyes of the former western colonial countries.

One of the prevailing interconnecting narrative problem Danticat posses is, the sexual trauma that hunts the Caribbean woman. In general, writing on Diaspora becomes an act of healing and resistance for Danticat, as she introduces through her narrative cultural taboos from sexual abuse, rape, virginity test...etc. On that note Philippe Zacaïr agrees with Gerise Herndon’s discussion that deals with hope and centers around writing as testimonial act stating, “Remembering in writing, however, fulfills the desire for testimony, so that trauma doesn’t isolate the individual self” (Zacaïr 9). The act of narration can keep one from being self-exiled by their own traumas and this confirms the point that exile is not only geographically, but it can be also internally.

Trauma is capable to transcend beyond one’s origins it is the same thing just like why would mothers willingly inflict pain upon their daughters, especially pain they themselves have experienced ? Sophie explains this cycle as “Our mothers’ obsession with keeping us pure and chaste” (Danticat 154). When Sophie asks her grandmother Ifé why mothers perpetuate this act, she replies, “People, they think daughters will be raised trash with no man in the house... From the time a girl begins to menstruate to the time you turn her over to her husband, the mother is responsible for her purity. If I give a soiled daughter to her husband, he can shame my family, speak evil of me, even bring her back to me” (Danticat 156). Martine replicated on her daughter Sophie the same sexual trauma once committed against her as the critic Rossi states, "This cycle of violence is perpetuated among generations of mothers, whose protective impulse paradoxically

results in harming their daughters”(207).Clearly, Martine abuses her daughter under the name of love and protection as a way of preserving her honor. However, this only furthered the abuse creating a trauma cycle where pain becomes their daughters only legacy and inheritance.

Additionally, when the mother conducts purity testing, she herself is violating her daughter’s purity, by committing sexual abuse (Rossi 207). The virginity test in its essence is traumatic thus upon conduct left psychological wounds and scares on Sophie. As it seems Sophie learns in the exile to practice “Doubling” (Rossi 207). As a way to lighten the intensity of the test through escapism. She used to imagine herself in a pleasant place in order to endure the repeated sexual trauma inflicted by her mother. Sophie dissociates her mind from her body, pretending she is somewhere else pleasant while her mother tests her. For Sophie, doubling is her only survival tool. Although repression initially helps Sophie survive the abuse, it is not that effective it is only a short-term coping strategy for she later on when she escapes her mother’s abuse, Sophie finds the need to confront these memories. She got the urging need to do something and to act while she is on exile, but her confrontation will take place at her home where all had begun.

Exile and trauma are interconnected as it is demonstrated in the article entitled "Breath, Eyes, Memory: Rape, Memory, and Denunciation" by Lucía M. Suárez. It uncovers how trauma trace its victims even on the Diaspora characters such as Martine and Sophie and highlights how "Traumatic events in Haiti are psychologically, physically, and cognitively re-experienced in the Diaspora"(Suárez 111). Meaning, not only Diaspora lead to exile but so does trauma and not only Diaspora is concerned with leaving the birth home country but forced immigration also falls in the same category of exile like in the case of Sophie, she had no news that she is about to be reunited with her mother until the very last minute. As it’s revealed in the article “Let the words bring wings to our feet: “Negotiating Exile and Trauma through Narrative in Danticat's "Breath,

Eyes, Memory" by Jennifer C. Rossi. She states, "A child forced from her country, with no control over her immigration (exiled), can feel traumatized by this geographical separation. Exile from one's younger self, birth mother, and/or birth country creates interlocking desires to return and escape"(203). Like many other critics Jennifer C.Rossi views trauma as a result of exile she argues:

Edwidge Danticat first novel, explores the pain created by diasporic exile backing up her idea with Sophie's situation that reflects the circumstances of many Haitian-American daughters, whose mothers have emigrated to the United States to better their families' economic conditions, leaving their children behind in Haiti, until the children's visas can be secured. These daughters have been forcibly separated from their birth mothers and raised by other family members through most of childhood. In order to achieve the desired reunion with their mothers. (204)

However, this thesis disconfirms the previous idea that sees exile as the reason of all her traumas and goes on insisting to examine exile from another angle. It is on the exile Sophie managed to end her traumas. In Haiti, rape is widely spread. Yet, it is unknowledgeable. The abuser goes unpunished of their actions and women are left with no choice. As consequences many critics, scholars, and writers were attempting to turn the political, social views towards the unjustness. On that thought the Critic Lucia M. Suárez analysis, "The recent efforts of the activist groups such as Solidarité Fanm Ayisyenl SOFA (Haitian Women's Solidarity Group) and Kay Fanm (Women's House), and global attention to women's rights at meetings such as the Fourth International conference on Women in Beijing in 1995" (111). The concluding findings of these groups included litter effect made to stop the continuous rape crimes and violence committed towards women. In other words, not admitting the ugly reality of a country situation and

oppression from violence and rape, and not putting strict laws to deal with the matter will only encourage the growth and continuity of the violence forming a loop of intergenerational trauma that hunts its victims wherever they went. In addition, Suárez article reports, "Martine struggles in isolation pointing out that "She cannot find wholeness because of her ever-increasing flashbacks which made her disconnected from reality and despite her efforts to live in the present. She cannot seem to escape the memory of her rape" (114). A traumatic memory that of rape is indeed hard to suppress regardless of how hard Martine struggles to forget events, situations in her life, everything works as a daily reminder of that horrific memory and not even exiling herself will save her from her own memories. Therefore, Martine every day is saying, "There are ghosts there that I can't face, things that are still very painful for me" (Danticat 78). Martine is haunted by images of ghosts from her past, they continue to haunt her and these ghosts are here to stay.

Sooner, Martine's nightmares became Sophie's own nightmares that woke her up every night, Sophie words were "Later that night, I heard the same voice screaming as though someone was trying to kill her. I rushed over, but my mother was alone thrashing against the sheets. ... When she saw me, she quickly covered her face with her hands and turned away . . . "It is the night," she said. "Sometimes, I see horrible visions in my sleep." (Danticat 48). It shows that Martine's rape took place during the Duvalier dictatorship and it is the central incident driving the plot of *Breath, Eyes, Memory*. She flees Haiti to escape the painful Memory, but that memory hunts her and her daughter Sophie was a daily reminder of her rape which makes it almost impossible to forget or to escape her traumas informed to cast those memories.

Upon Danticat first arrival to New York she had trouble of adapting the life in America, she had difficulty In adjusting her overwhelming feelings of missing her aunt and uncle, who raised

her for eight years; to adapting to the presence of two new younger brothers, whom she had not met before this occasion; and to coping with the taunts of school children because she was Haitian. As a child, Danticat kept a journal as she states, “[t]hat was the only way I knew to try to better understand what was happening in my life by reading and writing” (Rossi 214). Yet, exile had a positive influence on The writer Edwidge Danticat along with every black Haitian woman because it is the exile that encouraged the author to further pursue her curiosity to know more about the Haitian history and therefore to bring forward matters like the Haitian cultural taboos and Historical traumas into her writings. As a result, Jennifer C. Rossi considers, " Danticat’s elite education is the reason, that motivated her ongoing personal quest to learn more about Haitian writers and informed her more deeply about black women’s writing across the diaspora than many of her Haitian and African American literary foremothers, who often knew only vaguely, or not at all, about their literary sisters and foremothers" (214). It shows that although Danticat is living in a foreign country this does not imply that she will completely forget about her roots, on the contrary the moment she is exposed to that oddness, is the moment one truly starts to value their origins.

In contrast, many critics and readers criticized Danticat’s writings for forwarding stereotypes of Haitians as backward (Rossi 215). Although Danticat speaks on behalf of Haitian women both back in Haiti and on the Diaspora, some Haitian-American women object and disagree with the way she introduced the “testing” in the novel she was perceived as if she was giving them more reasons to justify their previous quests through promoting and confirming stereotypes that the westerners already had about the Haitian community. But, exposing negative Haitian cultural practices was necessary part as the critic Jennifer C. Rossi believes, “In order to move forward, a community must recognize its failings, yet they also need hope, in order to make the difficult

changes in consciousness necessary to stop oppressive cultural practice"(215). It is inevitable for each culture to have its own negative aspects, but the question is: Are they willing to admit their flaws in order to reach a change for the better.

II.4. The Impact of Trauma on both of Martine and Sophie

In one hand, the impact of trauma caused by rape further continue to effect Martine life both mental and physical health, her life is hunted by images of a faceless ghost that ceases to appear in the form of nightmares whenever she closes her eyes at night. Sophie's upon her arrival to see and meet her mother for the first time she describes her with a "Face that was long and hollow. Her hair had a blunt cut and she had long spindly legs. She had dark circles under her eyes and, as she smiled, lines of wrinkles tightened her expression. Her fingers were scarred and sunburned... and there was her flat chest" (Danticat 42). The life has been sucked out of Martine by her traumas that she consistently represses and with her refusal to seek the help of a therapist meant she chose to live in fear and denial. Rape has robbed Martine of the life and dreams she had in Haiti. When talking about her youth with her sister she recalls, "We always dreamt of becoming important women ... Imagine our surprise when we found out we had limits" (43). Martine is unable to get help from her family, her community, or a psychological specialist and ultimately commits suicide, finishing the job the Macoute had started years earlier in Haiti.

In comparison to Sophie Martine stands for all the Haitian women who struggled in silence just to meet their predestined end of that same doom and in that case, it was Martine Sophie's mother who her hope for life was long gone. On that note the scholar Lambourne and Niyonzima described the impact of trauma and its long ever lasting effects on the individual declaring that "A repeated or ongoing experience of trauma for an individual and their ethnic group over long

time period, is likely to affect individual health and resilience, as well as the ability to continue life with hope for the future" (297). Her life become a living nightmare, every day is a struggle for her to continue living, But like any other disease there must be a cure, and in Sophie's case she found the cure. On the other hand, Sophie saw hope in her daughter's eyes. It was her every day chance to make things right this time to not inflict the same cycle of trauma her mother and her mother before her lived through. Finely allowing herself to heal. But people in nature are not all alike.

Thereby, the fragmentation caused by surviving sexual trauma has ever lasting effects on Sophie despite the fact she leaves Martine's house and marries Joseph as it talked about in the novel . "In this place, nightmares are passed on through generations like heirlooms" (234). The ghost of Martine's rapist remains powerful through Martine's nightmares. These nightmares later haunt Sophie as well. Martine's pain becomes Sophie's, not only through the images Sophie gets from her mother's dreams, but through the purity testing and the continuous stories Martine tells Sophie realizes: "Yes, my mother was like me. From the thick of the cane fields, I tried my best to tell her, but the words would not roll of my tongue" (Danticat186) Although, they both have endured similar pain, they are not identical because their reactions to trauma differs. Martine endures secrecy and this leads to her death. Sophie exposes her secrets and breaks the cycle of violence. Unlike Martine and Atie, Sophie chose to stop the testing the only way she know how by taking an action.

Conversely, Sophie remains silent clinching to faith and every time her mother tested her she would say," I mouthed the words to the Virgin Mother's Prayer: Hail Mary... so full of grace. The Lord is with You... You are blessed among women. . . Holy Mary. Mother of God. Pray for us poor sinners" (Danticat 84). It gives away that Sophie is a very religious person another reason

that made her bear the suffering in silence. The initial act of testing is met with another violation: Sophie's self-mutilation when she breaks her own hymen with a pestle from the kitchen. The next time her mother tests her, there is no barrier left (Suárez 118). Sophie's reaction to her trauma was depicted in the act of rupturing her own hymen to stop the testing, was a challenging behavior to the thought of the test itself:

My flesh ripped apart as I pressed the pestle into it. I could see the blood slowly dripping onto the bed sheet. . . . It was gone, the veil that always held my mother's finger back every time she tested me. . . . Finally, I failed the test. . . . "Go," she said with tears running down her face. . . . "You just go to him and see what he can do for you."
(88)

Soon after, Sophie runs away from home. Which means denying women sexual autonomy and keeping sexual abuse secret perpetuates the cycle of shame and oppression, ensuring that the daughter will grow up to despise her own body (Rossi 207). Though Sophie left home yet she kept having suicidal thoughts for a year, and Martine's nightmares become her own Sophie denies her sexuality, continuing the cycle of repression and guilt, and her soul begins to die, which is manifested physically by her purging food, yet Sophie soon she figures out the danger of passing her own traumas to her daughter Brigitte, as a solution Sophie visits a therapist, telling her that Brigitte is her source of hope and comfort she is the beginning of a new cycle free from trauma she says, "I feel like my daughter is the only person in the world who won't leave me" (210). Ironically, this is exactly the way Martine felt about Sophie. However, in order to stop the cycle of protection and harm, Sophie must learn not to reflect her pain onto Brigitte, allowing Brigitte the space to become autonomous and not harming her in the process of loving her. Sophie realized in order to ensure she will not inflict the same test on her daughter she must break the

intergenerational silence surrounding the rape and the testing. So, her therapist asks Sophie to write the name of her abuser on a piece of paper and burn it as an effective method to release all her anger and resistance after Sophie says:

I felt broken at the end of the meeting, but a little closer to being free. I didn't feel guilty about burning my mother's name anymore. I knew my hurt and hers were links in a long chain and if she hurt me, it was because she was hurt, too. It was up to me to avoid my turn in the fire. It was up to me to make sure that my daughter never slept with ghosts, never lived with nightmares, and never had her name burnt in the flames. (Danticat 161)

Sophie was able to control her trauma, from the knowledge that she gained from her therapist. First by confronting Martine's rape, when she went to the cane field and started hitting the ground. The rapist furthers this by suggesting that Sophie go to the rape site in Haiti. Sophie must recreate the memory of her mother's rape in order to heal this is a form of confrontation she learned at her therapy sessions. Second, by taking steps to control her bulimia, through counseling and peer support, along with her insistence on educating Brigitte, and her vow that she will never exercise the testing on her, by that Sophie creates change.

Anyhow, the critic Jennifer C. Rossi believes, "Brigitte Ifé Woods will never be completely free from the mother and daughter circle of violence, for she is connected by memory to her mother's difficulties with sex. However, there is hope for Brigitte, for she is the product of Sophie's love for Joseph, rather than of rape" (Rossi 211). Even though Sophie has managed to find her inner courage and hope to confront her ghosts and demons. Her mother has completely surrounded to her traumas that become more vivid the moment she refused to seek help by narrating her trauma story when her old memories of rape were reinforced and triggered by her

pregnancy that leads her to edge of her mental breakdown where she sought suicide as her only escape from her traumas and finally, she managed to silence the voices in her head including her own. As Martine 's character evokes victims of the past who had little recourse to human rights action, Sophie's character suggests the possibility of recovery from trauma (Suárez 120). Proving the idea that as long as there is a will there is a hope of recovery.

Yet, Victims of trauma have no clue on what causes their symptoms the impact of traumatic wounds which people may be afraid to speak about. It is ambiguous to the individual himself and it is proves that many people do not understand why they are having such symptoms or what is known as the " Intrusive thoughts or behaving strangely, perhaps thinking that their trauma symptoms are the result of 'demonic attacks or the work of ancestral spirits'"(Lambourne and Niyonzima 301). Despite how odd it may seem, victims of trauma have no control on their behaviors; thus, when Martine commits suicide and stabs the baby in her womb with a kitchen knife, she believes that it is a demon something other than human. Clearly, she was not conscious of her own reality. Her mother had not been able to speak of the horrors that had isolates her, and Sophie struggles between wanting to speak up or stay silent.

Her discomfort with her physical body suggests that she does not value herself for whom and what she is (Suárez 118). This is the impact of trauma on the person. Martine was helpless to her nightmares because she did not give a face to the guy who raped her and that is why she is haunted by the ghost of a faceless man; the therapist in the novel says to Sophie "Your mother never gave him a face. . .that's why he can control her. . . Even if you can never face the man who is your father, there are things that you can say to the spot where it happened. I think you'll be free once you have your confrontation. There will be no more ghosts" (Danticat 168). After all, during the day and in the sun one's shadows disappear and sharing secrets lightens their

weight. These nightmares serve as a warning to newer generations, so they can avoid the mistakes of the past, and work toward liberation. Like her mother, Sophie is “brave as stars at dawn.” (Danticat 234). She dares to disturb the traditions of her family, and, in doing she altered the stories she will tell Brigitte. Therefore, Sophie converts the painful cycle of abuse. These stories evoke positive memories of a mother’s love, and in this love, there is a hope for change.

Sophie’s learns that embracing those memories is the only way to move beyond the pain of trauma and exile is significant. By talking to Grandma Ifé, later Martine, than asking them about the testing, Sophie Begins a public dialogue on this issue, and helps them all to confront this painful secret. Sophie talks about her traumatic experience the way her mother inflected on her the virginity test to her therapist and to her Grandmother Ifé it is her way of speaking about topics that are taboos and breaking the silence. That is to say, recovering memories of one’s past selves, loved ones, and home country creates connections that form a new identity as states, “Bridging the pain of physical and emotional separation, by using recovered memories to tell one’s personal and cultural narrative, ensures survival. Both Sophie and Danticat expose painful individual and cultural memories, respectively, through their external narratives” (Rossi 217). For Sophie she chooses to addressee her trauma in order to heal and be able to break the cycle of this intergenerational trauma.

However, Sophie realizes the danger of passing her own trauma to her daughter Brigitte, as a solution Sophie visits a therapist, telling her that Brigitte is her source of hope and comfort she is the beginning of a new cycle free of any traumas she says: “I feel like my daughter is the only person in the world who won’t leave me” (210). This affirms, that trauma affects both the psyche and the psychic human state on that note, the psychologist Judith Herman announces, "The ordinary system of care that give people a sense of control, connection and meaning are

destroyed, attachments of family, friendship, love and community are shattered, and the belief system that give meaning to human experience are undermined"(296). It explains Martine loss to the meaning of love. For instance, Martine intentions was to protect her daughter, but instead she ended hurting her. Therefore, her therapist asks Sophie to write the name of her abuser on a piece of paper and burn it as an effective method to release all her anger. It is clearly that Sophie handles her trauma differently she refuses to give in, all for her daughter Brigitte and so many Haitian girls. It was up to Sophie to stop the intergenerational cycle of trauma : it was up to Sophie to stop the intergenerational cycle of trauma, for the Haitian future generations of girls get to be blessed with a faith than hers.

Also, the novel illustrates the impossibility to forget as well as the significance of the past for the present. The fact that Martine has not sufficiently dealt with the rape becomes apparent when she recounts it to her daughter. As it is mentioned in the book entitled *Bodies in Pain: Edwidge Danticat's Breath Eyes Memory*. It pinpoint how crucial is to observe and analyze Martine's way of telling her personal story of rape. It bring forward Martine's serious psychological state that needs to be instantly studied. For that reason, by one announcement, is the distant, objective tone noted by Sophie who realizes that "[s]he did not sound hurt or angry, just like someone who was stating a fact. Like naming a color or calling a name. Something that already existed and could not be changed" ("*Bodies in Pain: Edwidge Danticat's Breath Eyes Memory*" 239).In her recount, Martine seems to completely dissociates from the abuse and to trivialize it to an everyday occurrence implying that there is more to see in Martine than what she is desperately trying to council. As it declared by one statement:

This [coldness in speaking] is an individual strategy not of accepting and coping but of forgetting and denial which in fact is impossible as the event is engraved deeply in her

body. Also, the sense of sobriety in her pointing out this “something” as if she were pointing to a color is indicative of the perceived ordinariness and omnipresence of violence that seems to determine Haitian society. In addition, Martine’s lacking anger about the rape is accompanied by self-hatred and shame. She alone carries the burden of being soiled underlining her helplessness fostered by an atmosphere of cruelty, general mistrust, and governmental tyranny. (“Bodies in Pain: Edwidge Danticat's Breath Eyes Memory.” 239)

Eventually, women’s stories of violence had paved the way for many postcolonial feminist writers and activists from both sides of the Atlantic to have the enough courage to give their own testimonies. The moment these women narrated their stories, secrets started to unfold and Haitian women become more aware of their rights and the case is now officially recognized by the international public viewers who encouraged the contributions of the several postcolonial feminist groups in the fight for women rights. Edwidge Danticat had a remarkable impact in taking actions towards the unjustness committed in the name of these women in their own home country ;thus, her works contributed to change the situation of the Haitian women as well as uncovering the political corruption and the oppression. Instead of regarding Diaspora, as something that leads to displacement, she analyzed it from a positive point of view she sought strength from diaspora instead of weakness as many critics may believe. It was the motive that leads her to question the unquestionable sacred circle of trauma that was passed on from birth by unbreakable ancestry line and which can only be broken by the confrontation of truth and reconciliation with the past.

Chapter Three: Postcolonial Feminism Over the Seas and the Contributions of Postcolonial Feminism in *Breath, Eyes, Memory*.

Sometimes, looking at a situation from a different lens can change one perspective, the same thing with Exile. Most view Diaspora as being ripped off from one's home and thrown into a hostile environment. However, no one has stopped to question: whether exile is a curse for the misfortunes or is it a blessing for the fortunate? Despite the negativity that might follow from being on Diaspora, its positivity speaks otherwise.

Plenty of Haitian lives were rescued thanks to Diaspora that gave them the courage to raise their voices, to start questioning their society beliefs, traditions, and the beginning of a feminist movement that replaced death, with rebirth, struggle with courage demonstrated throughout the remarkable resistance of the Haitian women. Thus, the final chapter discusses the relationship between trauma and postcolonial feminism in an attempt to answer the question can one seek to exist with the absence of another?

Additionally, the chapter undergoes the role of diaspora from the perspective of an instructor rather than a destroyer, and explaining how a hybrid identity proclaimed to put an end to the oppressive nature of their society. Furthermore, Desiring Diaspora leads to both ways either Subjugation or Liberation. Eventually, this chapter concludes with the contributions of Postcolonial Feminism in Edwidge Danticat novel *Breath, Eyes, Memory* that shapes the ground for the analysis.

III.1. Postcolonial Feminism Over the Seas

Throughout the Haitian history women has been subject to all levels of violence, from rape and sexual abuse; therefore, women have always been discriminated. Hence, Rossi illustrates,"

The condition of postcolonial women on Diaspora, sexual purity testing as an outcome of the suppression of female sexuality and the codification of women's bodies as vessels for male gratification in marriage" (Rossi 206). In other words, discussing women sexuality is seen as taboo and her body is considered as a male possession since the day she is born.

A history of psychological, social, and political violence places policy ideas that aimed at improving women's lives into jeopardy. Reports and policy suggestions, on the other hand, are the initial step toward understanding and combating violence against women, as well as introducing and implementing long-term changes to enhance the situation for women's lives. The author Edwidge Danticat is a remarkable example of a brave woman who fights her way out through the use of memory and creativity to explore two worlds: the actual and the hypothetical, by utilizing fiction as a vehicle to testify for real Haitian women who have been sexually abused in silence. Moreover, as a writer, Danticat uncovers the injustice and speak on behalf of both Haitian Americans and Haitian themselves.

Rape in Haiti remains unknowledgeable and Rapists in Haiti are rarely prosecuted; therefore, victims are rarely vindicated. Here it comes the mission of literature as a productive and effective alternative platform that exposes sexual violence against the lack of representation. Danticat utilizes fiction to testify and speak on behalf of her victims. Sophie has suffered both the trauma of her exile and sexual assault, which Danticat explores. Some Haitian-American women have casted and criticized Danticat for bringing up forbidden topics like purity testing. As she initiates dialogue on these cultural taboos, Danticat's work becomes revolutionary. Her desire to pursue writing and public speaking as a subversive act is based on her own cultural identity. Writing is a dangerous act in Haiti portrayed in one of Suárez analysis of Danticat's interview that quotes, "Most of the writers I knew were either in hiding, missing, or dead when I was growing up.

Danticat finds the balance between silence and testimony both perilous and fascinating” (115). Because, the problem has yet to be fully addressed verbally or socially with forceful legal and government actions as well as local, in order to put an end for violence that continues to strike Haitian women; thus, it is of necessity to raise people awareness to the conditions of Haitian women.

Interestingly, literature plays a critical role in the fight against rape because of the ongoing testimonies of women’s accounts of violence and the difficulties faced in passing pain and suffering act of narration. It serves as a record of memory: these crimes occurred, and they cannot be ignored. For instance, Edwidge Danticat’s novel reveal the unimaginable, creates a voice and a memory that can serve as a break in the future intergenerational cycle of violence. Also, it uncovers the struggles of living with the memory and trauma of bodily violations as well as the urge to address such topics globally or on a larger scale and there is no better way to achieve it than the act of writing itself. It shifts the international views towards the minority women of postcolonial societies. On that matter Jennifer Rossi states, “Edwidge Danticat and other writers like her give us hope and help us start the healing process” (217). Certainly, authors transmit pain into words, but they also hold the key that ends the suffering.

Sophie’s character reflects the memory that Elisabet Jelin’s thesis gives insight to, in other sense, it provides a space for justice through literature and the weapon of narration, with implications on how to find a solution in order to escape the trauma .So, in the novel Sophie joins other victim’s survivors from, different nations and in variety of circumstances , making memory the only available weapon that would win the battle against the intergenerational circle of violence. Because, Memory gives women the strength, and it is one of the few ways available in the fight against violence and the pursuit of justice. Typically, Haitian women are born into

struggles from the oppression of both during colonialism and the postcolonial eras, and they are titans in comparison to other women. They fought and carried the weight of their traumas on their shoulders, yet pain has made them even stronger, because centuries in the shadows made them able to see through the dark. Eventually, they managed to find their light as Danticat highlights:

She told me about a group of people in Guinea who carry the sky on their heads. They are the people of creation. Strong, tall, and mighty people who can bear anything. Their Maker, she said, gives them the sky to carry because they are strong. These people do not know who they are, but if you see a lot of trouble in your life, it is because you were chosen to carry part of the sky on your head. (26)

Danticat's believe Haitian women are exposed to harsh circumstances their whole life, because God believes they are strong enough to pass through the test and overcome every obstacle and any challenge they may face. Therefore, the unjustness for Haitian women become part of their lives. Yet, they remained courageous and maintained their strength. Tante Até said to Sophie "Remember that we are going to be like mountains and mountains don't cry" (Danticat 28). Continuously, in one of the scenes of the third chapter in the novel Sophie asks her Tante Atie expressing how some illnesses they do not kill its victim right away, but instead it makes them suffer until they die as Tante Atie states, "something that could kill you slowly, taking a small piece of you every day until one day it finally takes all of you away" (Danticat 26). Same thing goes for trauma; it keeps torturing and hunting its prey like a predator until it completely devours its victims. But when it comes to Sophie, she admits the cycle of trauma until she is no longer tied up by her feelings of shame and guilt. Finally, she moved on stating, "I didn't feel guilty about burning my mother's name anymore. I knew my hurt and hers were links in a long chain and if she hurt me, it was because she was hurt, too" (Danticat 161).It can be said, Sophie is

finally free in the sense she actually was able to forgive her mother and most importantly herself; thus, it is no longer necessary for Sophie to sleep “Hugging her secrets” (Danticat 71). No other Haitian woman is obliged to keep the sexual violence, the injustice and oppression as a secret anymore because all the secret, and the topics that were considered as taboos all have been told, retold and revealed in the novel. This indicates the importance of Caribbean literature in reflecting the oppression ; thereby, this will be the first step towards enhancing and improving the image of the Haitian women to brave fighters. She is as the quotes depicts:

I Come from a place where breath, eyes, and memory are one, a place from which you carry your past like the hair on your head. . . My mother was as brave as stars at dawn. She too was from this place. She was like that woman who could never bleed and then could never stop bleeding, the one who gave in to her pain, to live as a butterfly. Yes, my mother was like me.(186)

Interestingly, the past in Haiti is never considered as past, as if history repeats itself. But, despite the unjustness, Haitian women’s bravery is surely unquestionable since their history exemplifies how Haitian women stood brave staring in the face of the struggle day by day. Then again, both the political and social system of Haitians were oppressive towards women. During that time the Macoute was everyone Bogyman as the novel portrays, “In the fairy tales, the Tonton Macoute was a bogeyman.”... Who invented the Macoutes? The devil didn’t do it and God didn’t do it.” The passage describes the ugly truth and the terrifying reality of many Haitian women that was hidden from the sights of justice during a time were criminals are classified into non ordinary and ordinary one’s, as if there is something called ordinary criminal and non ordinary one, criminals are all alike,; as a result, Danticat novel shows, “Ordinary criminals walked naked in the

night. They slicked their bodies with oil so they could slip through most fingers
“(Danticat 111).

It implies how oppressed women during the postcolonial era are on Diasporic spaces hunted and controlled by the horrors of the Macoutes. As a result, many Haitian women and men were illegally traveling crossing oceans on boats trying to flee their miserable country conditions knowing that death could be their destination. Yet, they went for it anyway. As Edwidge Danticat’s novel *Breath, Eyes, Memory* sets out, “I know the other side. Thousands of people wash up on the shores. They put it on television, in newspapers”(82). In the request to protect the minorities women rights and rise the international public awareness towards oppression every little attempt counts in making a difference in improving the condition of Haitian women.

III.1. Trauma in Relation to Postcolonial Feminism

The postcolonial Haitian women seek to put an end to the trauma. They represent oppression and at the same time depict freedom. The liberty that Sophie sought to fulfill not only for herself, but for every girl and women who were doomed to live a predestined cycle of abuse and violence. Without the trauma that had given Sophie a cause, there would not have been a battle to win or a fight to concur. Surly, there would be no need for female power or courage, and in return there would be no need for questioning women rights. If Sophie had never left Haiti than she would never have been able to see the hidden bitterness behind her sacred society believes and tales that are merely seen as a curse rather than a prophecy waiting for fulfillment. Those stories and tales told by the grandmother, the mother Martine and her aunt Atie hold their own and only inherited history. Trauma functions in the light of the absence of justice in a place where right is

replaced by wrong, where silence is taken for weakness and where women are stripped from their slightest rights.

Exclusively, in the novel Sophie's trauma of the so called the virginity testing contributed to Sophie's own empowerment after all there must be pain for salvation to take place. It is important to realize that without a cause there would be no effect to put it differently, there would be no change. For instance, in Haiti most girls stayed at home and their only job were to take care of the children, clean the house and do chores. In fact, girls education is another right that these women were deprived of, because knowledge equals power and the man in authority made sure that Haitian women will never possess the power of doubts, questions, and to never dare to raise their voices. Tante Atie says in one of the scenes of the novel " Cutting cane was the only thing for a young one to do when I was your age" (Danticat 10). Unlike her aunt and her mother, Sophie was given the opportunity of education both in Haiti and outside of Haiti, a chance not many Haitian girls had; thus, she begins to possess the power of knowledge which is mightier than any sword. Differently from Martine, Sophie took that power she gained from her knowledge and took a step forward and eventually what saved her is the science of psychoanalysis therapy. She took a leap of faith for her daughter Brigitte. One that would build her a brighter future as it is depicted in chapter thirty two of the novel:

Sophie's sudden trip to Haiti is her leap of faith. In a conversation with her therapist Sophie says, "I told her [Therapist] about my sudden trip to Haiti, the trip that had caused me to miss my Appointment the week before. I told her about my mother coming for me and my Finding out that my grandmother, and her mother before her, had all been tested" (164).

Nurit Shnabel and Arie Nadler article entitled “Perpetrators Need Acceptance and Victims Need Empowerment in Order to Reconcile: A Needs-Based Model of Reconciliation” tackles the idea that “Victims feel inferior regarding their power honor, self esteem and perceived control and may experience feelings of victimization or anger(5-6). The Trauma victims of sexual abuse and rape often find the needs to regain their power over their own body that can be achieved through reconciliation, make peace with themselves in order to achieve the justice they deserve. However, the true power lies in the victim ability to forgive the perpetrator. Therefore, the path crossed towards recovery empowers the victimized female subject. The reconciliation can be done throughout different ways, and in the case of Edwidge Danticat’s novel *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, Sophie was able to reconcile with the traumas that follows the virginity test only when she fully forgives her mother Martine she will truly be able to move on. Before she forgives her mother first, she waited for an apology than she sought empathy and emotional support from her relatives, her therapist and the support group. Thus, it can be said traumatic experiences pushes its subject to restore the power and control loss due to the traumatic experience caused by rape or sexual abuse. Nurit Shnabel and Arie Nadler define the term reconciliation as :

Reconciliation [...]is a relatively new term in the social psychological literature. It is different from the concept of conflict resolution in two main aspects: First, it emphasizes the emotional motives and interests rather than the tangible and realist ones. Second, it focuses in the process of healing the relations rather than merely terminating the conflicts. In other words, reconciliation must include a changed psychological orientation towards the other [and it] involve a willingness to come together to work, play, or live in an atmosphere of trust and may occur only once the parties have resolved the emotional issues that may have left them estranged.(7)

In the light of this context, Sophie truly was able to put an end to the emotional conflicts she had with her mother Martine, she understands that she is still struggling with her trauma and she does not have the power to acknowledge it. From a broader perspective, Shnabel and Nadler add, “These impaired emotional resources can be subsumed under the human need for power and the human need for love and belonging, two needs that constitute the core of interpersonal experience we suggest that the resource that is threatened in victims falls into the category of ‘status’ (i.e., the need for relative power)” (6). That justifies Sophie visit to her family in Haiti her conversation with her Grandmother and her Tante Atie. It was Sophie’s’ hope to seek emotional support from the people she loves because she needs to know it is not her fault.

As a result, the deprivation of the above resources leads to a corresponding motivational state in which the individual experiences his or her deprivation as a need that must be fulfilled. So, once the perpetrator asks the victim for forgiveness, the power that once was in the hand of the abuser will automatically transfer to the hands of the victim (Shnabel and Nadler 6-7). To put it in a different manner, Sophie always asked about the reasons why her mother was testing her, even if she has not directly asked her mother she kept asking herself that question, but she did not seem to find an answer, because it is not like Martine found admiration in such norm. In contrary, she hated the testing and whenever she used to do the same for her daughter, covers her face with her hands. Yet, in continuation on that important note Sophie realizes, “Although seeking justice is a major practice through which victims may be empowered, there are also other ways of empowering victims, depending on the context” (Shnabel and Nadler 7). Which means that is, having perpetrators admit that the victims were treated unfairly and apologizing for causing them pain is another way to achieve justice.

Indeed, people are born by nature different so their power and resilience differs that goes with several methods of reconciliation. For example, the empowering of a victim may be achieved by pointing out to the traumatic experience via testimonies and story telling. Besides, As Shnabel and Nadler states, "It is understanding that empowerment and acceptance are basic needs that can be manifested in many different ways (i.e., mainly, but not only, as an enhanced need for justice and apology or empathy and forgiveness)[...]. This generates a process of symbolic erasure of the roles of 'victim', and leads to a greater willingness to reconcile with one's opponent"(9). It changes the label that victims are always weak and vulnerable instead every obstacle is a chance for them to break free from the oppressive innate and nature like of their society. Postcolonial feminists are seen by their society and the world as radicals, outsiders in the Haitian society those women are the winning card in the fight for women rights. Women like Jenann Woche and Franswaz Metelis, lawyers and activists.

Without forgetting to speak about the outrageous violence that takes place within the homes of the Haitian women not just in the cane fields, and woman are raped in broad daylight while the government is not taking any action to put an end to the series of violence and rape. The protagonist takes note of the daily threats lived by all the Haitian women:

Who invented the Macoutes? The devil didn't do it and God didn't do it. [...] But the Macoutes, they did not hide. When they entered a house, they asked to be fed, demanded the woman of the house, and forced her into her own bedroom. Then all you heard was screams until it was her daughter's turn. If a mother refused, they would make her sleep with her son and brother or even her own father.(111)

The Macoutes are portrayed as monsters they become the definition of terror leaving traces of nothing but violence, distraction and death in their way causing a psychological scares and trauma caused by rape does not end with Martine death but it follows Sophie who inherits Martine's trauma, but instead of facing her trauma she Inflicts on Sophie the same pain she once endured, as it is illustrated, "Martine attempts to reconcile her split existence by creating a double, believing that by sharing Pain, their souls will be [somehow] united "(Rossi 207). However, the testing leads to the opposite effect, distancing Sophie from her mother and creating an intergenerational cycle of trauma.

Thus, the mother way of showing her love to her daughter was by making her experience her own trauma like that they would be closer to each other united and hunted by the same trauma, as consequence the critic Nancy F. Gerber maintain that the narrative art of telling [explaining] how [can] a story empowers Sophie to rewrite the script of the mother-daughter relationship. In so doing, she transforms it from a relationship dominated by recrimination, loss, and violation to one marked by reconciliation, hope, and freedom (189).The act of narration alters Sophie's relationship with her mother for she chose to stop pointing fingers and blaming others and embraced forgiveness. In that case the scholar Nancy F. Gerber states," Sophie's growth into motherhood involves compassion for her mother as well as forgiveness as she comes to know the ways in which they are alike, yet separate and with identification comes understanding, and from this forgiveness" (198). Which means, she did not totally rejected her relationship with her mother instead she realized that she was not the only one who was suffering she comprehend the reasons Martine did what she did, and showed her empathy and even tried to help her to confront her nightmares. In that case Gerber states :

Telling the story creates a space for the writing of another script, one marked by hope for a better future. Sophie vows that she will never test Brigitte, that her daughter will not suffer as she did. Although Sophie's coming-of-age involves a rejection of the role of Marassa, she does not reject Martine. On the contrary, she claims her place as her mother's daughter and as a daughter of Haiti.(197)

Remarkably, narrating one's own tragic stories of pain and violence can be self awakening and educational, in the sense that it allows others to learn from their mistakes and acquiring new lessons that will keep them from not falling in the same mistake and therefore ensures new and bright endings.

III.3. The decisive Quest of Diaspora in the Emancipation of Haitian Women.

In general, Danticat novel *Breath, Eyes, Memory* inspire more women from postcolonial countries to promote awareness about the historical background of the violence in Haiti. As a matter of fact the same year 1994 Danticat has published her first novel *Breath, Eyes, Memory*. The US intervenes in Haitian to stop, the violence and the terror that took place in Haiti which means, the international views has shifted towards the Haitian society and the injustice that is taking place. However, what the US saw as a success it was another attempt that was ended by failure because, change doesn't happen over night it requires time. Once again, Haitian women started to establish themselves in a group become known as EPICA (Ecumenical Program on Central America and the Caribbean).The group goal was to witness as well as to report the violence that was taking place the article entitled, "Rewinding History: The Rights of Haitian Women." Led by the "Let Haiti Live Women's Rights Delegation " Which is sponsored by the Ecumenical Program on Central America and the Caribbean (EPICA). Reports that Haiti Port-au-

Prince, is the place where violence most centers, the delegation witnessed first hand the climate of violence that exists in Port-au-Prince.

During the investigation, the team observed how violence is taking place even in the middle of the day light, without forgetting to speak about the violence taking place in Diaspora and its role in the middle of the intergenerational circle of violence and sexual abuse. It is of no avoidance that trauma follows its victim and running away is not the solution. Yet, it is of no doubt that being on Diaspora laid the ground for Sophie to question a harmful and mischievous social trauma that was inflicted upon Haitian women for centuries and with Diaspora emerging as the helping hand that gave Sophie the advantage that empowered her to take the ultimate responsibility as a representative and the first spoken woman that empowered her society and invites active human rights work to change the history of violence.

In correspondence to the previous relationship between trauma and postcolonial feminism, Diaspora further plays a fundamental role in Haitian women quest for freedom. So being on diaspora does not necessarily means exile. In other words, Sophie remains connected to her home in Haiti. The book entitled *Bodies in Pain : Edwidge Danticat Breath, Eyes, Memeory* elaborates the idea that “Sophie is eventually liberated from the transgenerational burden passed on by her foremothers(269)”.Lastly, the novel contains an individual strategies and survival ways of coming to terms with pain. For example, Martine death saved her from her trauma, but Sophie’s salvation on the other hand lies in her visit to her Haitian home and regardless of the fact that this connectivity is achieved by her traumas and the suffering that these women survived through, this is one of the outcomes of desiring Diaspora on both of the characters. For example, one Martine chooses death, while her daughter prefer justice ;however, the two strategies set them free.

While Sophie values Haitian culture and tradition, she is highly critical of the ritual of testing, which she sees it as featuring patriarchy. According to custom, a man is not required to remain married if he discovers his wife has had intercourse prior to marriage; he may return the bride to her parents like a piece of damaged good (Gerber 190). It is true that Sophie despite the tradition of testing, she neither neglects nor refuses her original Haitian traditions and unlike the many who wish to forget ,she desperately wants to remember. Moreover, the article entitled “Being Haitian in New York: Migration and Transnationalism in Danticat’s *Breath, Eyes, Memory*,” Adlai Murdoch who argues, “Haitian identity is now inevitably diasporic, shaped as much by what happens beyond its island borders as within” (51).In another sense, Sophie’s Diasporic identity is influenced by what was happening back at her home in Haiti allowing her to challenge the Haitian traditions from a insightful and a critical eye. Sophie does not reject all traditions just the destructive one’s such as, the former story of the virginity test that consume the life out of every Haitian girl and women. The Next point is discussed in the article entitled “Binding the Narrative thread Storytelling and the Mother-Daughter Relationship in Edwidge Daniticat’s *Breath, Eyes, Memory*.” [it]signifies the continuing role of the oral tradition in literary texts of the African diaspora.”(Gerber 189). That is to say, it highlights how important is for Haitian women to tell their stories beyond the borders of their own home and it allows far more reach for other Haitian women living both in different diasporic spaces or back home in Haiti.

To put it differently, if Sophie have never reunited with her mother and she did not have to experience the exile would that mean she would not have been exposed to the same cycle of sexual abuse that her mother and her mother before her endured would that means she would not be the strong women she is today. All Haitian women share a predestined cycle of trauma that continues to live from one generation to another. It is of no doubt that Sophie might have lived a

worst future than that of her mother if she remained at her home in Haiti. There is no other evidence that would ensure the opposite, it is likely that Sophie would not have been able to break the Intergenerational cycle of trauma and surely exile or geographical dislocation. For instance, Sophie moving back to United States to live with her mother, is not out to blame for Sophie or Martine's trauma. The trauma was always there, it was only hidden. "Sophie's journey toward autonomy includes creating a meaningful self identity and breaking the silence surrounding cultural taboos"(Rossi 208). Which means, being Diasporic women living in exile forced Sophie to construct a new hybrid identity based on The united stated principles. For example; freedom of speech...etc. These ideas helped her to form an identity that will enable her to speak about things that are considered as taboos in the Haitian culture and braking the social norm of the virginity test.

In short, from an analytical and psychoanalytical perspective trauma is explained as "An event in a subject's life defined by its intensity, the subject's inability to respond adequately, the shock and the permanent pathogenic effects that it generates in the psychic organization" ("Bodies in Pain: Edwidge Danticat Breath, Eyes, Memory" 236).The impact of trauma it is not one that easily can be forgotten it's a complicated psychological process which designates with Sophie's fallowing statement, "It took me twelve years to piece together my mother's entire story. By then, it was already too late" (Danticat 61). Here, the protagonist reflects on how heavily her mother's past weighted her shoulders by becoming her own. Certainly, trauma effect the person long after the traumatic experience has taken place and there is always something that triggers the traumatic memory in that case Martine is constantly reminded of the pain she has been trying to hide so, upon seeing her daughter her first words were, "I cannot believe that I am looking at you" (Danticat 41).Her words are less an expression of her joy but rather of disbelief and sudden

awareness of the reality of rape. Consequently, “The arrival of Sophie triggers the trauma’s re-emergence” (“Bodies in Pain: Edwidge Danticat Breath, Eyes, Memory” 237). This leads to the ultimate conclusion that trauma is transcendental as it can be deduced from the book that reveals, “Trauma has neither temporal nor spatial limits as it has undertaken the journey and is transplanted from the Haitian cane fields to urban New York. Martine is reluctant to visit her place of birth (and trauma) because “[t]here are ghosts there that I can’t face, things that are still very painful for me” (“Bodies in Pain: Edwidge Danticat’s Breath Eyes Memory” 78). Although, the roots of trauma origins are in Haiti, particularly the cane fields, but those roots are spread to reach Martine and Sophie in the United States.

III.4 The Contributions of Postcolonial feminism in Breath, Eyes, Memory

Breath, Eyes, Memory is a text of memory and healing that acknowledges the victims of Haiti and it makes a political and personal appeal. It speaks to an international audience, projecting the consequences of rape to survivors of abuse, reminding them to breathe, see, and remember. Therefore, Danticat promotes other people to challenge the misuse of power and committing violence against women. Thereby, the title should be interpreted as a series of commands: inhale, exhale, maintain a supply of oxygen in your body, stay alive, see, observe, witness, testify, remember, recall, historicize, contextualize, honor, and understand” (Suárez 119). Commonly, the novel recounts a survivor story a heroin born from the ashes of her mother empowering death and in the middle of that tragedy, hope remains. Besides Edwidge desires to expose the violence and underscores ways by which women cultivate a tradition of survival despite the odds that does not go in their favor. In the past Postcolonial feminist literary criticism, was overlooked by many scholars and researchers. However, as noted in the article entitled” Postcolonial Feminism:

Teaching How to Avoid Prejudices About Muslim Women in an ESL Classroom” written by Antonia Navarro Tejero. It denotes how:

Postcolonial feminist critique made a significant addition to literary studies by integrating together several disciplines, challenging Western ethnocentricity and restoring plural subjectivities to literary history. The concept of a worldwide “sisterhood” gained root in academia in the 1990s, supporting the articulation of different voices to establish an inclusive feminism. The goal was to make postcolonial women’s works visible and understandable to the West.(284)

Namely, modern postcolonial feminist works have gained the recognition they opted for and postcolonial feminist critics they do not only emphasize the contributions of women, but also demonstrate how they are deprived from expressing themselves. Moreover, postcolonial feminist women are also falsifying the widely held belief that the western woman is the role model for every woman as if they are the only ones who are deprived from their rights. At the same time, they are also battling a stereotype that portrays the postcolonial women as submissive.

When it comes to the history of the feminist movements there was some upsides downs. For instance, the first-wave feminism is composed of advocators and organizations demanding for women’s rights from 1880 until the start of the twentieth century, when women started to obtain the right to vote. Women’s participation in sexual equality and abortion were the second wave goals. Third-wave feminism is a movement that came as a result to the failure of the previous two feminist waves. It aims to attain a broader perspective of women’s problems by focusing on the differences between each group differences from norms, traditions, religious, ethnic...etc. It is the reality for women all over the world. The third wave of the feminist movement might be seen

as a continuation of the preceding two waves. In other words, The demands of women who were not white, generally were ignored and disregarded by the first and second-wave feminism.

On that account, Sherin Saadallah declares, “When we strive to define third wave feminism, we should also redefine feminism, because feminism should be characterized by emancipatory activity rather than an ethno-specific ideal type.” To put it in another way, Third wave feminism does not exclude any women regardless of their origins and color, white or black treated equally...etc. and it focuses especially on liberating postcolonial women. As an illustration to the previous idea the critic Antonia Navarro Tejero argues, “[t]his is where Muslim feminism finds its strengths, and it is for this reason that Muslim feminism is one of the numerous voices of third wave feminism” (225). Muslim feminism is another example of women groups that was neglected by the previous two waves of feminism and despite the fact that Muslim feminism has its own differences, but when it comes to asking for rights like having equal opportunity to attend schools, it becomes a shared purpose among all the postcolonial women.

For that matter the article entitled “Postcolonial Feminism: Teaching How to Avoid Prejudices about Muslim women in an ESL Classroom” by Antonia Navarro Tejero who points out that, western women and feminists are surprised to find that there is and has been a powerful Arab feminist movement in the Middle East. Indeed, postcolonial feminism is not only limited to one group of women. Also, postcolonial feminist theory exerts the necessity to consider patriarchy. Post colonialism and feminism have been in contradictory with one another, with some feminist critics pointing out that postcolonial theory is a male-dominated field that has not only excluded but also exploited women’s issues. Besides, the article entitled “Understanding Postcolonial Feminism in relation with Postcolonial and Feminist theories.”, Ritu Tyagi declares:

Women were also misrepresented in nationalist discourses. Edward Said's fundamental work, paid little attention to female agency and studied just a few female writers. Homi K. Bhabha's work on the ambivalence of colonial discourses investigates the connection between a "colonizing" subject and a "colonized" object without taking into account how gender characteristics may complicate his model. Critics such as Carole Boyce Davies who are skeptical of the male-centered bias of postcolonial critique often ask where are the women in the theorizing of postcoloniality?.(tyagi 46)

Women are invisible in the international discourse while normally postcolonial theory aims at highlighting women suffering. Instead postcolonial theory deviates the original meaning of postcolonial feminism and pays little attention to women issues. Furthermore, the Caribbean postcolonial feminism reports the fact that the Haitian women began to organize themselves in groups called "Let Haiti Live Women's Rights" in what become known as EPICA (Ecumenical Program on Central America and the Caribbean). The group's purpose was to report on the violence that was happening behind the sites of justice as it is found in the article entitled "Rewinding History: The Rights of Haitian Women." Led by the "Let Haiti Live Women's Rights Delegation" A group of eight independent women had researched women's rights in Haiti from January 13 to 22, 2005. The team was funded by the Ecumenical Program on Central America and the Caribbean, a peace and justice group located in Washington, D.C. The group announces that actions should take place in reaction to the violence. Furthermore, severe laws were enforced to prevent rape, by raising the Haitian National Police. The investigation was conducted in Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti where the majority of the violence occurs. The group experienced firsthand the horrors of the violence that exists in Port-au-Prince. During their

investigation, the party noticed a corpse in front of the National Palace; Thus, the party concluded that killing is carried out on a daily bases by both the men of law and criminals.

Haitian women have been historically oppressed, and they are caught in the middle of what many calls a “rewind” to the time of the 1991-94 coup d’état, a period characterized by random murders especially in the poorest areas in Haiti that forms a terror campaign of rape, murder, and disappearance,; the international community, led by the United States and the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), is promoting democratic elections, despite the fact that those elections cannot be held in the current environment. The foreign assistance that spent a billion dollars has done little to improve the conditions in Haiti. This indicates borrowed money does not make things better it adds no change, but making things worse and the only thing that can have an impact one that will lead to a better change is described in the article entitled “Postcolonial, Feminist and Transatlantic Studies a Confluence of Ideas in Jamaica Kincaid’s Fiction” written by Izabella Penier. She states:

The writing of Caribbean diasporic women embedded in the postcolonial conceptualization of post nationalism and transatlanticism achieved two interrelated goals. Firstly, it liberated Caribbean culture from the confines of nation state. Secondly, it empowered these women writers who, once they found themselves far away from their birthplace, were able to politicize their discourse.(188)

Take for example the novel *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, as a political discourse it shows that women endure the most difficult human trials: violence, violation, abandonment, poverty, mental illness. They do not always survive gracefully; pain is often passed on from one generation to the next. In the novel, Tante Atie, Sophie’s aunt and Martine’s sister, learns how to read, love, and

cope with loss over the course of the novel and also they grow emotionally. Tante Atie can be characterized as a feminist in the novel. Tante Atie has a difficult time expressing her emotions and dealing with her pride. She took great care of Sophie Caco like she was her very own daughter. Atie uses only gentle loving words with young Sophie, calling her “my angel” and adorable terms of endearment. Atie is, in many ways, servant to the emotional needs of the family. She embraces this role fully, making it her goal to show Sophie that she is totally loved. Atie had a deep want for Sophie to go to New York because she knew life would be better for her there.

Moreover, the novel takes place in Haiti around the 1980s-1990s. During this time, women did not have a lot of rights. Women had to work for themselves and they could not own property so they had to work for it. This is shown in the novel *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, when it comes to the character Tante Atie. Throughout the novel, Tante Atie had to work for herself. She had to work all day to support her niece Sophie. She did not have anyone to help her when it came to finances, so this is why she would always play the lottery so she can get extra money. Tante Atie was a strong independent woman that did everything she could for her niece, but she did not know how to control her feelings. This goes back to third wave feminism because most women had to support themselves without the need of a man. According to the novel, Tante Atie was rejected by the only man she loved, Monsieur Augustine. She would go to the window and would watch Augustine and his wife together. She had nobody to go to so she can express her feelings. She had nobody to care for her. She wanted Sophie as a daughter, but she did not want to take her from her actual mother. This is shown in the novel when she rejects her Niece’s Mother’s day card to her. She was strong and independent, but she did not know how to express her feelings.

Therefore, it can be said from a postcolonial feminist perspective Tantie Atie embodies a postcolonial feminist prototype based on the fact that Sophie lived in Croix-des-Rosets, Haiti from 1980's to 1990's, it can be inferred that when Tantie Atie was young, it would have been around the 1940's and 1950's. In the time of Tantie Atie and Sophie's mother (Martine) were in their adolescence, they did not have the same opportunity as Sophie. "No one is going to break your heart because you cannot read or write. You have a chance to become the kind of women Atie and I always wanted to be" (Danticat 39). Women in Haiti did not get the opportunity to attend primary school until the 1980's, only men were allowed to go to school. Tantie Atie never learned how to read and this made things more difficult for her than what they should have been. "so I could read that old Bible under my pillow and find the answers to everything right there between those pages. What do you think that old Bible will have us do right now, about this moment" (Danticat 19). She believes that if she can read, she can find the answers to many of her questions, like why did Monsieur Augustine leave her for another women. Tante Atie took the role for both a mother and a father for Sophie, cooking for her and working to maintain food and shelter for both of them. "There were no men in Tante Atie's and my house so we carried the food ourselves" (Danticat 15). Tante Atie really had her best interest in Sophie by wanting her to go to New York because she knew that things would be better for her over there, like Monsieur Augustine.

In a time were women were silenced by fear, unable to speak the truth to the world, in a place where those who are supposed to enforce law and order are the reason that contributes to the spread of violence, sexual abuse and chaos ;Thus, literature become their free space where they can write, speak and testify about the unjustness. It was their only mean that set them free

from their past trauma that seeks to hunt their present. The book entitled *Bodies in Pain: Edwidge Danticat's Breath Eyes Memory*. Announces the fact that :

Writing about and fictionalizing rape can indeed become a feminist act in order to transcend hegemonic social structures. Literary scholars Brigley Thompson and Gunne argue that the challenging task of creating a subversive rape narrative lies in re-focusing the attention to the victim and writing her back into life. Subversion is further created by the dissolution of the binaries of victim/perpetrator or agency/passivity as well as the application of alternative narrative strategies such as narrative silence on the rape or suggesting suicide as legitimate possibility to overcome sexual trauma. Danticat's novel accomplishes this by re-adjusting the focus on and privileging the voices of those women who have fallen victim to sexual violence and whose voices are often overheard. The narrative shifts away or blanks out the incidents of abuse and the act of rape and neither questions the victims' credibility nor the truth of what had happened.(276-7)

To phrase it differently, the main job of feminist writers is to write about women suffering from rape and violence and one of those authors is Edwidge Danticat who uses imaginary people to express the reality, in order to spot the light on the injustice. She is a politically engaged writer advertising and advocating the Haitian politics, culture, and arts,; a community activist who dangerously writes about her Haitian background in hope it would break the silence placed on the oppressive nature of the social, economic and political life of these women. In this sense, Danticat's novel *Breath, Eyes, Memory* is in itself a major contributor to the creation of a postcolonial feminist power.

As the novel aims to describe how outrageous and disappointed Sophie is towards the whole idea of testing which she has experienced at the hand of her own mother. Sophie is the speaking subject who claims her place among the brave women of Haiti, grandmothers, mothers, aunts, sisters, cousins, daughters, and friends, she speaks on behalf of every Haitian women or girl. She represents the symbol of power and hope strongly obtained and implied from Sophie's poem implication while Sophie is reading the poem she had prepared for her Tante Atie on Mother's Day. Tante Atie announces her as a poet: "My mother is a daffodil, limber and strong as one. My mother is a daffodil, but in the wind, iron strong" (Danticat 29). The poem evokes Sophie's brave side and how she always finds the urging need to be brave and strong. Unlike other women around the world what makes the Haitian women braver is the fact even their death is in itself revolutionary and liberating in the book entitled *Bodies in Pain: Breath, Eyes, Memory*. Significantly begins with a quote that goes as the following, "I threw another handful for my daughter who was not there, but was part of this circle of women from whose grave stones our names had been chosen" (*Bodies in Pain*: Edwidge Danticat). The author emphasizes that death is not the end their soul will remain vivid in the memories of those who still alive.

The novel gives a sense of unity and solidarity between victims of sexual abuse rape from all around the world which contributed to the empowerment of the postcolonial woman. She is no longer helpless; therefore, the resistance of postcolonial women living in Diaspora is legendary. One whose stories worth remembering. As it is confirmed by the critic Gerber "Sophie is no longer alone on her quest for healing and freedom. Sophie joins a sexual phobia support group, in which women from other countries, such as Mexico and Ethiopia, share their experiences of violation, rape, and genital mutilation." (196). Thereby, Sophie is finally free from the burdens of the past, free to write her own life story the way she wants it to be. Added, the book *Bodies in*

Pain: Edwidge Danticat Breath, Eyes, Memory advocates that Sophie is eventually liberated from the transgenerational burden passed on by her foremothers”. The novel contains an individual strategies of survival and coming to terms with pain Martine death saved her from her trauma Sophie’s salvation on the other hand, lays in her visit to her Haitian home.

Ultimately, violence have long effect on the human sense of security as stated “The incestuous acts they enforced upon the family members destroy the safety and structural unity provided by the family. The violation of Martine’s body should not be read solely as a metaphorical act of conquest and possession ... [which] is an act of force against the flesh.”(“Bodies in Pain: Edwidge Danticat’s *Breath Eyes Memory*” 233). Nevertheless, the article entitled “ Violence against Children in the Caribbean”, written by Gardner et al spots light on the violence in Haiti and explores enormous types of violence that includes, “ ... Drive by shootings, sexual molestation at home and in the community, were particularly worrying. In some countries, children were targeted for kidnappings and murders, and problems with security forces were documented including beatings and incarceration in highly unsuitable ‘lock-ups’ along with adult offenders (3). In another sense, Haiti has registered as one of the countries with the highest level of violence. One of the underlying causes include no fair trial for the oppressed as mentioned in the later article that states, “Historical precedents of violence for punishments and in addressing conflicts, politically based arming of civilians”(Gardner et al. 3). Even the way Haitian deals with political, social or economic dilemma is catastrophic.

On that note, the book entitled *Bodies in: Edwidge Danticat’s Breath Eyes Memory* explains how “[u]nresolved traumatic experiences can be transmitted from one generation to the next, as well as affect or disturb the life of the descendants. They can create problems with identity and cause generational conflicts” (“Bodies in Pain: Edwidge Danticat’s *Breath Eyes Memory*”282).

Certainly, Martine passes on her nightmarish fear and the trauma caused by the sexual violation to her daughter depicted in all those nights when Sophie regularly awakens her mother from the nightmares only to find a terrified mother staring at her. “When she saw my face, she looked even more frightened” (Danticat 81). In this moment [half] ... unconsciousness of sleep, a victim of rape mistakes her daughter not only for a stranger but identifies her with the violator himself a mother is afraid of her own child. Martine does not see herself in her daughter’s face but beholds the rapist whose face she actually never saw: “He had it covered when he did this to me. But now when I look at your face I think it is true what they say. A child out of wedlock always looks like its father” (Danticat 61). Martine sees the face of her rapist whenever she looks at her daughter face; therefore, Sophie embodies the sexual abuse and the resulting trauma that she had tried to escape from.

Magnificently, healing can also be achieved through dying that explains the book entitled *Bodies in Pain : Edwidge Danticat Breath Eyes Memory*, which states, “Sometimes, when people have something they want to do, you cannot stop them. Even if you want to” (172). Martine, who made a final decision, it was necessary for her to erase all memories of the rape, to stop re-living it over and over again, and liberate herself by returning her body to her ancestors in Guinea, the spiritual and imagined homeland of the African diaspora, is in the novel, in a positive sense, the “End of each of our journeys” (“Bodies in Pain: Edwidge Danticat’s Breath Eyes Memory “ 309). She kills not only the unborn child but also herself. Her suicide as an effective embodied resistance makes sense when placed in relation with colonial history, enslaved women’s resistance strategies (“ Bodies in Pain: Breath Eyes Memory” 264). Martine’s Killing herself was her own method to break free from the cycle of trauma. It was her way of saying I had enough because she wanted to show that she is the one in control over her own body and she perfectly

demonstrated it through committing suicide .It was her revolutionary act. It is further symbolized as depicted in the “Wound she inflicts on herself cries out a greater injustice of sexual restraint enforced especially on young women of Haiti’s lower class, like the Caco-women, again the poor girl in the tale. If they want to maintain a respectable status or achieve upward mobility, sexual surveillance is the price to pay and virginity the ‘good’ to trade in (“ Bodies in Pain: Breath Eyes Memory” 249). Haitian women body are put for sale as a result, women cannot have their slightest rights and if they wanted some of their rights they have to give up or trade a part of themselves because, nothing is given for free.

In parallel to *Breath Eyes Memory* novel, *Krik? Krak!* (1995) a collection of short stories is another writing done by Edwidge Danticat. Thereby, the stories combined together recount an unfortunate series of events and a predestined faith of violence, history of violence and sexual abuse that functions through generation bonding all Haitians together. The end of every story holds the beginning of a new story one interconnected in their search for liberation after all they seek to be free even if it meant death. In one of the stories a woman keeps having miscarriage in hope she would have a child and at the same time abused by her husband who cheats on her in front of her own eyes. Later on the woman finds a baby thrown in the garbage she takes him home to take care of the abandoned child in a place where women can not afford having children due to their finical state than day by day she realized that the child have not cried not even once, and he started to smell bad, and she was accused by her husband of killing the baby and calling her a monster who eats babies. She had no chance to stood in front of a judge she was tortured and left there to die her whole life was a prison and eventually she get to die in one. That baby was already dead the moment she held him into her arms.

That put the woman psychological health into question. Another story about a man who lives in Haiti works as an assister at the sugarcane fields. He hates his job for he wishes to leave a grater legacy for his son than his father has left for him. But again in Haiti there was not much to do. Most of people were jobless ,he had an urging will to be free that embodies his admiration of the bird's ability to fly. He had his wish fulfilled he found a hot air balloon rides it and jumps from it. Once again death was their way for freedom. Moreover, another male character in children of the sea, who illegally emigrated over an endless seas. Once more a character chooses to take his chance with death in the sea rather than to live in the ever ending suffering Despite the fact that Sophie's Mother also committed suicide, but at least she is finally free and even though Sophie may not totally be free but she made sure that her daughter will be fully liberated.

In conclusion, Haitian women have witnessed a history of violence and abuse at different levels, a violence so intense to the point where it kept following its victims on Diasporic spaces ,women who their origins are traced back to Haiti and to Sophie's Home which is considered as the starting point and the place where violence most centers in Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti. So even though these women endured a struggle one that no other women can handle and despite all the odds that was not in their favor. Yet, hope and faith restored the life back to Sophie an enlightened woman who was open to try everything to overcome her traumas not for her sake but for the sake of her newly born daughter, and every other Haitian girl and woman In order to stop herself from repeating the same mistakes, without even self awareness or consciousness about the wrongs that comes from a society based on discrimination of women. Martine pain made her realizes the strength of Haitian women and how strong they truly are. Neither Martine nor the girl in the tale who once she started bleeding she could not stop bleeding (Danticat 73). None of them died in vain even their death is considered revolutionary, it uncovers

the hidden truth thus, contribute to women fight for liberation and rising both public and international awareness. Although, Edwidge Danticat's most novels and short stories have a similar and tragic end, but it is an end that is necessary in order to portray the reality of these women ,and the novel screams their pain and suffering, but it is also a call for justice. From this point forward it can be noticed that Edwidge Danticat's novel *Breath, Eyes, Memory* is a political novel that wishes to change the entire system of Haiti from its roots that are embedded in violence and unjustness where women are the most affected part.

Conclusion

In the past few years, postcolonial literary works about the Haitians experience as immigrants have been doubling in numbers, mainly because writing itself has become more radical and relevant now than ever, due to the horrific situation of women. Literature today is related to all domains especially political ones. Years ago, literature was written for certain cultural dimensions but today it might influence certain political doctrines, so here postcolonial feminism is doing an incredible job and it is working towards women emancipation from the cycle of trauma.

One particular work that emerges from the Caribbean literature is the Haitian American novel entitled *Breath, Eyes, Memory* by Edwidge Danticat, a novel that follows a young Haitian female and her experience on the diaspora. It discusses intergenerational trauma of sexual abuse, rape, exile, and all kinds of violence that the Haitian women undergo. Narration, oral or any sort of written text has contributed to the discussion about intergenerational trauma and this is the most important part of diasporic literature or postcolonial literature; to discuss and highlight the malficence reality of the postcolonial Haitian women. As well as postcolonial feminist power that is born out of the women's struggle. The study aims at analyzing the novel on both psychological and postcolonial feminist level.

It is safe to say that the world is mostly divided into two types of countries, countries that have colonized and people that have been subject to colonialism; the former, mostly being western countries, while the latter being eastern. Post-colonial studies tackle the country situation after independence in order to compare the changes that took place. Usually, postcolonial literary works address issues like exile, racism, exploitation, and discrimination. However, this time they sheds light on the horrendous effects of colonialism, but most importantly to the women situation

after the Haitian revolution succeeds to gain independence, normally the contrary conditions are out to improve for the better, but they only got worse.

Postcolonial trauma opens and reveals the suffering of Haitian women throughout trauma studies that plays an immensely important role in the Caribbean literature. Moreover, the study shows that post-colonial feminist authors in literature, found their own unique voice that reached the wider sphere of audience, authors and critics like Edwidge Danticat novel contributes to the change of the situation of Haitian women even if it is a slight one.

Women's stories of violence had paved the way for many postcolonial feminist writers and activists from both sides of the Atlantic to have the enough courage to give their own testimonies. Therefore, secrets started to unfold and Haitian women become more aware of their rights and the case is now officially recognized by the international public viewers who encouraged the contributions of the several postcolonial feminist groups in the fight for women rights. The dissertation analyze Diaspora from a positive and strengthening view. It was the motive that encourages Sophie to question the unquestionable sacred circle of trauma that was passed on from birth by unbreakable ancestry line and which can only be broken by the confrontation of truth and reconciliation with the past.

Caribbean postcolonial literature in particular, is considered as a major part of postcolonial literature as a whole, with authors like: Edwidge Danticat, Mary Seacole, Mary Prince and Haile Selassie... etc. Being considered as one of the most activist figures of the post- colonial era. Intergenerational trauma is a very commonly discussed issue in postcolonial Caribbean works, the cycle of violence, rape and its effect on one's identity that results in issues like Intergenerational trauma. Along with the role of postcolonial feminist theory that uncovers the

female trauma in the middle of a diasporic context. As developed throughout this study, the relationship between the mother and daughter and the country history of inherited trauma and sexual abuse, with the emphasis on the positive side of diaspora and the act of narration. These are ways that contribute to the empowerment of the oppressed nature of Haitian women in their endless postcolonial feminist quest to make their voice heard and to gain enough representation and recognition that will allow them to ask for more rights.

As the young Sophie goes to the U.S to be reunited with her mother, she soon discovers the truth about her mother's nightmares, becoming her own when Sophie falls in love with a character Joseph, her mother starts testing her; therefore passing her traumatic experience of the virginity test on to her daughter. But unlike Martine, Sophie chose to defy, she goes back to Haiti looking for answers and unlike the many who want to forget, Sophie desperately wants to remember. This marks the beginning of female power and a turning point in the Haitian history. The author of *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, Danticat successfully transmits an authentic and brutal experience, from dealing with rape, immigration, and identity crisis, which the main character overcomes with a contradictory image of survival, death and rebirth. She also provides a contradictory image of a female power and realistic depiction of bitterness that defines the lives of these women and unfolds their secrets.

The study uncovers the struggle of the main character Sophie as she experiences life in the United States for the first time and witnessing her attempts at battling her nightmares and her curious and determined self to find answers to questions that have never been asked before. Furthermore, the study reveals the main character's struggle with identity and how one eventually chose forgiveness and with the end of Martine's life Sophie is given a new beginning. Anyhow,

they can not end the oppressive nature of their society when a society is built on certain principles and it is very hard to pull out those roots from the ground.

However, nothing is static. Postcolonial discourse or feminine discourse is getting ameliorated and it is moving towards development but it is a never-ending debate due to the fact that societies by nature are patriarchal, oppressive and racist. Hence, the woman character still suffer till nowadays, and what is different is how literature is written, the intention to change and when there is self- awareness there is always progress and through this progress and self- awakening any individual can reach a certain method and strategy that someday after decades and centuries, Haitian women might be able to finally end the cycle of intergenerational trauma. This what paves the road to other research and give a further insight to the contribution of the current study like addressing the concept of womanism in relation to Diaspora and cosmopolitanism.

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المخلص

يبحث العمل الحالي في أثر كل من الصدمات والعنف على التحول النفسي للنساء الهايتيات المغتربات اللواتي عشن الحلقة المفرغة لبلدهن الأم التي تمتد عبر الأجيال في رواية ادويج دانتيكات " *Breath , Eyes, Memory* " التي تعبر عن الواقع المرير للاغتصاب واختبار النقاء فضلا عن القوة النسوية بعد الإستعمار التي ولدت من نضال المرأة وعلاوة على ذلك تسعى الدراسة إلى الكشف عن تجربة الصدمة التي عاشتها المرأة الأمريكية الهايتية التي إستهلكتها الرغبة العارمة لفعل شيء إزاء العنف الجنسي وإرث الاختبار والصدمة التي رأتها في مجتمعها و التي قادتها من جانب واحد نحو رحلة من الصراع ومن الجانب الآخر نحو كسر الصمت، و دور الهجرة الذي أضاف شكوكا إلى قلب المرأة الأمريكية الهايتية للبدء في التشكيك في معتقدات مجتمعها والنظر إلى التقاليد من زاوية مختلفة.

ويسعى هذا البحث إلى توفير فهم عميق للدراسة من خلال إستخدام نهج التحليل النفسي، وتحليل الصدمات فيما يتعلق بالذاكرة، وتحديد الهوية وتمكين المرأة فضلا عن إستخدام نظرية الحركة النسائية بعد الاستعمار وينقسم العمل إلى ثلاثة فصول الفصل الأول يتكون أساسا من مقدمة نظرية للدراسة، أما الفصل الثاني فيتضمنن لمحة موجزة عن السيرة الذاتية للكاتب، مع ملخص للرواية بينما الفصل الثالث يتناول مساهمات المرأة بعد الاستعمار في الرواية التي شكلت بداية حركة نسوية.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

الصدمة/ الذاكرة/ العنف الجنسي/ تمكين المرأة /الهجرة.

Résumé

Le présent travail examine l'impact des traumatismes et de la violence sur la transformation psychologique des femmes haïtiennes en diaspora qui ont vécu dans un cercle vicieux au sein de leur ville natal intergénérationnel. Dans *Breath, Eyes, Memory* d'Edwidge Danticat, on retrouve la malfaisance et la réalité du viol et du test de virginité, ainsi que le pouvoir féministe postcolonial né de la lutte des femmes. En outre, l'étude cherche à révéler l'expérience traumatisante de la femme haïtienne-américaine qui était consommée par le désir profond d'agir contre la violence sexuelle, l'héritage du test de virginité, et le traumatisme qu'elle a vu dans sa communauté qui l'a menée d'un côté vers un voyage de lutte et de l'autre côté pour briser le silence et le rôle de la diaspora qui a mis la puce à l'oreille de ses femmes haïtiennes-américaines pour commencer à remettre en question les croyances de leur société et à regarder les traditions sous un angle différent.

La présente recherche tente de fournir une compréhension profonde à l'étude en utilisant une approche psychanalytique, pour analyser les traumatismes en relation avec la mémoire, identifier et l'autonomisation des femmes. Ainsi que l'utilisation de la théorie du féminisme postcolonial. Le travail est divisé en trois chapitres ; le premier chapitre consiste principalement en une introduction théorique de l'étude, le deuxième chapitre contient un bref aperçu de la biographie de l'auteur ainsi qu'un résumé du roman tandis que le troisième développe les contributions du féminisme postcoloniale dans le roman qui a marqué le début d'un mouvement féministe.

Mots clés :

Traumatisme, Mémoire, Violence sexuelle, autonomisation des femmes, Diaspora.