

Ways of Listening: Hearing Danticat's Calls to Multiple Audiences in *The Dew Breaker*

Ellen J. Goldner

Abstract: This essay argues that in *The Dew Breaker*, Edwidge Danticat constitutes her audiences as multiple in order to initiate decolonized relations across differently positioned groups of readers. She stresses the importance of equal and reciprocal relations among communities while emphasizing the problems with idiopathic empathy. As a short story cycle, *The Dew Breaker* suggests that the dialogic relations among its stories and among the different perspectives that focalize them might prompt similar relations among its audiences, undercutting the centrality of Western readers. *The Dew Breaker* assigns different cultural tasks to its different readerships: it encourages agency and community building for Haitians in and out of diaspora; it calls on non-Haitian African-Americans to recognize overlapping experiences with Haitian immigrants as a tentative basis for common struggle; and it calls on Western readers to recognize the interpretive agency of other communities and the effects of US governmentality.

Keywords: postcolonial trauma theory, decolonization, plural readerships, US governmentality

I. Introduction

The penultimate story of Edwidge Danticat's *The Dew Breaker*, "The Funeral Singer," features three women from different classes and regions of Haiti who might never have interacted in their home country: the wife of an artist, the niece of a brothel keeper, and the daughter of a fisherman. Yet in "The Funeral Singer" the women are drawn to one

another as equals in diaspora in New York City.¹ Because Danticat's style gives symbolic resonance to realist detail, she suggests the women's relationship through the stains left by their glasses on the table over which they talk: they comprise three "circles touching and overlapping" (*Dew Breaker* 172). The different but overlapping circles suggest a model for relations among Haitians in diaspora. As the women, who met in an English class, gather to study, talk, and drink, they gradually come to bear witness to one another's stories of loss. Circles that maintain their differences even as they overlap also provide a model for differently positioned readerships, which I argue *The Dew Breaker* consciously addresses. The book gives these different readerships overlapping but distinct cultural work to perform if they are to dismantle persistent colonial relations. With its fragmented form and many narratives, *The Dew Breaker* invites differently positioned readerships to foreground different narratives, to urgently seek different connections with the text and with one another, and to treat differently the text's dissociations.

Before turning to the specific readerships Danticat addresses, I discuss relevant aspects of postcolonial theory, which often sorts groups of readers, authors, and texts between the Global South and the West. Danticat's text, however, also requires a more nuanced differentiation of audiences in light of their specific histories because it challenges each readership in a way that is keyed to its historical experience or position. I highlight *The Dew Breaker's* calls to three implied readerships: the extended Haitian community; the older, established African-American community; and the large community of dominant, mainly white, readers in the United States. I include Haitians and members of its diaspora in a single group because *The Dew Breaker's* Haitian voices speak across national borders.² I define the text's implied African-American readership as people of African descent whose families were in the US before the 1965 Immigration Act, which facilitated Afro-Caribbean immigration.³ I characterize the dominant US readership somewhat more ideologically, drawing on Danticat's observations about "average Americans" in a 2007 *Callaloo* interview: "I think 'average' Americans, who are . . . 'average' in quotation marks . . . have proven that when they are informed and motivated they change things" ("Dyasporic" 31).

The dominant US readership, then, is politically empowered enough to affect laws and policies but often remains insufficiently informed or motivated to so. It is largely white and can be supportive of whiteness, as Danticat implies in her description of US immigration policy: “It’s just driven by this fear that people of color, Muslims, poor brown and black people will end up crowding America” (“Dyasporic” 31). Yet because this group’s definition has a strong ideological component, it can include people from other groups. For example, Danticat need not be commenting on whites alone when she says of US policy abroad that “a lot of Americans don’t know what is done in their name” (“Dyasporic” 30–31).

Although *The Dew Breaker*, translated into several languages, clearly has additional readerships both within and beyond the US, the text addresses the three readerships I discuss in specific ways: it calls on them to recognize that they stand either on common or contested ground with Danticat’s characters in their struggles within and against US colonialism. Additionally, in moments when *The Dew Breaker* makes appeals to its established African-American and dominant US readerships, it suggests specific targets for political action, challenging readers to avoid the pitfall, highlighted by Jo Collins, of reading trauma fiction as a substitute for such action (14). At the same time, however, *The Dew Breaker*’s calls to multiple readerships suggest a mode of reading that is itself political and emergent. If Danticat inspires different groups of readers to increase their awareness of one another, then the story cycle can invite them to imagine all readings as decentered and all readerships as open to the influence of others.⁴

The phone call between Anne Bienaimé and her daughter that is cut off at the end of *The Dew Breaker* marks not only the limit of its characters’ abilities to forge connections with one another but the limit of Danticat’s fiction to speak of and to the colonialist policies that have caused her characters’ traumas. The symbolic break in communication, however, is also a potential starting point for future interchanges among characters and for anticolonial relations that might emerge amid differently positioned readers. Because *The Dew Breaker* strongly underscores the difficulty of realizing new relations, I probe Danticat’s calls to

readerships rather than her readerships' reception of *The Dew Breaker*. Given the challenge Danticat highlights, a study of the former logically precedes a study of the latter.

II. Historical and Theoretical Context

I begin with a brief history of the colonial relations between the US and Haiti because they position the three readerships that I discuss as they encounter characters traumatized by the Duvalier regimes. I then discuss idiopathic empathy as a problem that Danticat undercuts through the pluralized relations of the short story cycle. From the early nineteenth century, the US has treated Haiti primarily with reference to its own needs and interests. Although Haiti overthrew the French in 1804, the slaveholding US refused for nearly sixty years to recognize the one New World country in which slaves had successfully revolted against Europeans. Only in 1862, with US slavery all but ended, did the US grant recognition to Haiti, and then it almost immediately aimed to make Haiti its colony. In 1870 the US Senate voted on annexing the Island of Santo Domingo. Supporters of the bill, including President Grant, sought to gain access to raw materials, a market for US manufactured goods, and control of commerce in the Caribbean (Pinkett 31–32). In the early twentieth century, the US occupied the country from 1915 to 1934. After the occupation, the US maintained control of Haiti's finances to ensure payment of its debts to foreign corporations, incurred in the treaty it had signed with France after its revolution (Dash, "Disappearing" 8). According to J. Michael Dash, the enforcement of payments on Haiti's debt under US neocolonialism has contributed significantly to Haiti's enduring poverty ("Disappearing" 7–8).

The Dew Breaker attests to the brutal conditions in Haiti under the dictatorships of François Duvalier (1957–1971) and his son, Jean Claude Duvalier (1971–1986), both of whom the US armed. During the Cold War, the US treated Caribbean and Latin American countries as staging grounds for its battles with communism across the hemisphere. After the Cuban Revolution, President Dwight D. Eisenhower armed François Duvalier, who announced that he would fend off communism in the Caribbean (Arthus, "Omnipresence" 4). Eisenhower also

sent a naval mission to support him, even though the US Ambassador to Haiti had warned that Duvalier would use the Marines against any opposition to his power (Arthus, "Omnipresence" 5). Duvalier formed a paramilitary force, known as the Ton Ton Macoutes, which tortured and killed people suspected of opposing him. His rule was so brutal that the US briefly suspended military aid to him under John F. Kennedy's presidency (Arthus, "Challenge" 517). After resuming aid to Duvalier senior, the US supported his son, Jean Claude, economically and militarily into the 1980s, despite his continuation of his father's policies (Moulton 1222). Under President Ronald Reagan, the US formed an agreement with Jean Claude Duvalier to return to Haiti refugees it encountered at sea (Farmer 268). This policy was carried out despite the murder of more than thirty thousand Haitian civilians by the Duvaliers (Ibarrola Armendàriz 32).

The relationship between colonial power and colony that serves the needs of the former but not the latter can be repeated in the relationship between Western readers, critics, and theorists and those who have suffered under colonialism. Several postcolonial critics find such a dynamic at work when it comes to the empathy involved in reading trauma narratives.⁵ Jill Bennett's 2003 essay "Tenebrae after September 11: Art, Empathy, and the Global Politics of Belonging" offers a postcolonial critique of empathy by drawing on Kaja Silverman's discussion of empathy as idiopathic identification and by elaborating on the difficulties it raises. In idiopathic identification, a term Silverman borrows from the German philosopher Max Scheler, one "assimilate[s] . . . the other to the self," interpreting the other's experience only with reference to one's own (Bennett 180). Instead of understanding events in the terms of the person who has suffered trauma, a Western reader fits the trauma into her or his prior experience, wondering "what it would be like if this happened to me" (Bennett 180). "In this process," Bennett explains, "unfamiliar experience is never directly confronted and the other is effectively annihilated, as Scheler puts it, 'completely dispossessed and deprived of all rights in its conscious existence and character'" (180). Bennett observes that Silverman and Scheler oppose idiopathic identification to heteropathic identification, in which one identifies with

another at a distance while “[open] to a mode of existence or experience that is beyond what is known by the self” (180). Nonetheless, Bennett warns that identification treated by postcolonial literature and theory as heteropathic often collapses into self-serving identification (181).

The difficulties posed by idiopathic identification underlie a number of key concerns raised by postcolonial trauma studies about relations between people from the Global South who have suffered trauma and those who assist in their recovery—and similarly between characters in and readers of trauma fiction. In both cases, theorists raise variants of the following question: How can people, especially Westerners, acknowledge others without reference to the self? The problems stem from the model of psychoanalysis that treats the listener or reader as analyst and the person or character that speaks of trauma as analysand, an approach supported by Birgit Spengler (195–96). As Steff Craps observes, this model subordinates a speaker to a listener, often Western (42), who is positioned as the Lacanian subject-presumed-to-know, or the subject that Western culture constructs as knowledgeable. Michela Borzaga raises the question of whether the Western psychoanalytic model can be meaningful within “indigenous knowledge systems” (71). The question is especially pressing in cultures in the Global South where local communities’ spiritual connections and rituals are important (Visser 259–61) but individualism and the professional therapist-client relationship are of little relevance. Moreover, because postcolonial scholars find the causes of trauma in specific historical circumstances, some worry that the Western psychological model is too narrow, inviting the elision of history and thereby leaving unjust colonial relations in place (Collins 8; Visser 251–52; Martinez Falquina 836).

For critics, avoiding idiopathic identification often requires a nuanced negotiation amid conflicting views. On the one hand, there is a conflict between those Western theorists who treat traumatic events as beyond memory and speech and hence unrecuperable, following Cathy Caruth’s germinal *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, History* (1996), and thinkers and activists from the Global South who find the lack of possibility for healing troubling, because they seek to support post-traumatic agency.⁶ On the other hand, resolutions reached too easily, as Silvia

Martinez Falquina warns, also pose risks (177). They might, for example, encourage Western blindness to ongoing conditions of colonialism (Mbembe 5–7).

Insofar as *The Dew Breaker* suggests relations among characters as a model for the relations among its readerships, it inverts and transforms idiopathic identification. To do so, Danticat invites readers to assimilate themselves to the relational model of her characters and not the other way around. Yet she avoids merely inverting, and thereby reinscribing, idiopathic identification, because her characters and narratives are multiple. Should readers hearken to Danticat's calls, the act of mirroring the text would, paradoxically, displace the binary terms (self and other) on which idiopathic identification is based.

The genre of *The Dew Breaker*, the short story cycle, elaborates Danticat's figure of overlapping circles to suggest the kinds of relations into which she calls her readers. James Nagel observes that the story cycle is "more coheren[t] than a mere collection of unrelated stories" (17). Morris Grubbs underscores the affinity of stories in a story cycle to individuals in a community: it is a "model of interdependency," a "highly intricate alliance in which individuals function as 'parts' of a membership, each depending on and affecting all the others" (qtd. in Horton 30). Drawing on Nagel's observation that the genre is especially apt for the experience of immigrants, Wilson C. Chen describes the dialogic character of the story cycle as rooted in the encounters of diaspora (222), in which the identity of each group impinges upon and alters the identities of other groups (227). *The Dew Breaker* dramatizes the need for characters and readers to recognize multiple, interactive perspectives in order to comprehend the traumatic events in Haiti and for an openness to being altered by the voices of others to frame a just response to those events.⁷

Yet the ongoing dialogism that opens *The Dew Breaker* toward justice also dramatizes the long process necessary before any resolution of injustices or injuries can be reached. Forrest L. Ingram's observation that the meanings of the stories in a story cycle shift as they comment on one another (13) makes clear both the value and the difficulty of Danticat's dialogism. Because space is limited, I summarize the stories

about the Bienaimé family in order to highlight how other narratives reflect on them to alter their meanings. In the opening story, “The Book of the Dead,” Mr. Bienaimé reveals to his daughter, Ka, a young sculptor, that he was not a victim of torture in Haiti, as she believed, but a prison guard who tortured and killed others. By the story’s end, Ka must revise her art, which has focused on everything she thought she knew about her father, her mother, and herself. In “The Book of Miracles,” Ka’s mother, Anne, tells one of her many stories about miracles on the way to Christmas Mass. In church, she experiences mixed emotions over Ka’s anger at a henchman of the Duvaliers. We learn why in the volume’s last story, “The Dew Breaker.” Dew breakers were paramilitary men in the service of the Duvaliers, known for arresting their victims early in the morning, when the dew was still on the grass. The final story recounts Mr. Bienaimé’s relationship to his last victim, a minister who criticized the Duvalier regime. After killing the minister, the man who will become Ka’s father flees with the minister’s sister to the US, where they marry. We learn that Anne yearns for miracles because she hopes her love has redeemed her husband, who is now a changed man. Speaking to Ka on the phone, Anne hopes that Ka can forgive her father, but the phone call, cut short, leaves Anne’s silent question unanswered.

Other stories in *The Dew Breaker* comment on the themes and unanswered questions of the Bienaimé thread from multiple angles, as each story affects and alters the meaning of the others and readers shift perspectives with each narrative. “The Bridal Seamstress” introduces Beatrice, who was tortured in Haiti because she refused a date with the Dew Breaker, Mr. Bienaimé. Decades later, she suffers from the delusion that her torturer still follows her. A reader who has sympathized with Anne’s hope that her husband can be forgiven must reassess his or her perspective in light of the enduring harm of torture. “Night Talkers” tells of Dany, whose parents the Dew Breaker killed. As an adult, Dany has come to live in the Bienaimé’s house in order to kill the Dew Breaker, but he cannot carry out the deed because he is not certain he has found the right man. He worries he will make “the wrong woman a widow and the wrong child an orphan” (Danticat, *Dew*

Breaker 107). The meanings of “right” and “wrong” shift for readers as the stories refract one another. While Bienaimé is the “right” man (the one who killed Dany’s parents), Dany’s narrative, set after stories focalized by Ka and Anne, foregrounds the question of whether it is right to impose such loss on innocent family members, a theme underscored by “The Funeral Singer.” “Night Talkers” and “Seven” complicate the innocence of not only Anne, who shields a criminal, but perhaps also Ka. The protagonists of both stories live in a basement apartment in the Bienaimés’ house, highlighting the Bienaimés’ relative prosperity and raising the question of whether it has been enabled by money linked to crimes in Haiti.

III. Readerships’ Shifting Positions and the Recurrent Foregrounding of the Haitian Community

Before *The Dew Breaker* can call different readerships into an equal, interdependent, and dialogic relation, in which each can become aware of the concerns of the others, the story cycle must decenter its Western audience. Collins observes that Danticat’s readership is markedly Western, because Danticat writes in English rather than in French or Haitian Creole (8). Collins also notes that Danticat deploys tactics to prevent the appropriation of her Haitian characters by her Western readers (9). I underscore Danticat’s awareness of the pitfalls of addressing a Western readership, and I argue that the adjustments *The Dew Breaker* makes between Western readers and Haitian characters help to bring Danticat’s extended Haitian readership to the foreground, at times even for Western readers.

If a Western readership is to recognize its relative position among other readerships, *The Dew Breaker* must displace it from both the authoritative position of the Freudian analyst and the presumed position of central addressee. Perhaps more than any other story, “The Bridal Seamstress” invites psychoanalytic readings and analyst-like roles by readers because its protagonist clearly suffers from delusions and compulsions. Beatrice believes that the prison guard who tortured her in her youth in Haiti follows her everywhere, even in her old age in the US. She compulsively acts out her fear of the prison guard every time

she changes her address, certain that finally he has caught up with her. As the story ends, Aline, the young Haitian-American journalist, investigates the house Beatrice has pointed out as the prison guard's current dwelling, only to find it empty. Still, "The Bridal Seamstress" reminds Western readers that they stand at a distance that is not the distance of objectivity. Western readers can patch together only partial understandings, a difficulty caused more by the disjunction between Haitian and Western cultures than by aporia in Beatrice's psyche. Danticat's enigmatic story titles designating roles in Haitian culture, like "The Funeral Singer" and "The Dew Breaker," engages the specific knowledge of Haitian readers, and not Westerners. Hence, the bridal seamstress must explain her role of mother-like advisor: "I make them call me Mother, it's more respectful" (Danticat, *Dew Breaker* 126). The story titles provide small windows into Haitian culture even as they invite readers to realize that they confront the unfamiliar. Danticat allows Western readers to draw on their knowledge of Western literature to see that the loss of a cultural role these Western readers do not fully understand poses a problem for Beatrice's community. A bridal seamstress prepares for the ceremony that in Western literature has long celebrated the ongoing life of the community. When Beatrice gives up her traditional role, fearing that her shop makes her an easy target for the prison guard, she leaves an aporia in the Haitian diasporic community.

In Spengler's view, Aline, the daughter of Haitian immigrants, is a potential "model for the reader," as she responds to Beatrice's narrative about her torture by the Haitian prison guard: "By deciding to write about these men and women, Aline becomes one of the novel's exemplary witnesses, and a possible model for the reader: a stand-in for those who have difficulties speaking for themselves" (Spengler 198). An awareness of multiple readerships, however, can lead us to question Spengler's confusion of the direct witness (Aline) with indirect witnesses (readers), much as Collins questions such confusions in trauma fiction generally (14). We might also question the assumption that all readers are positioned in the same way and at an equal distance from the "model." The distinction matters because the extended Haitian community should be the primary readership to construct the history of

political crimes in Haiti. If, as Michel-Rolph Trouillot argues, “[t]he constructed past is constitutive of the collectivity,” then the community in need of recuperation must do much of the work of constructing its past (16). Addressing the extended Haitian community first, “The Bridal Seamstress” calls to its younger generation in diaspora to learn about Haiti’s history and to speak on its behalf. When Beatrice tells Aline the story of her torture, she addresses that community specifically insofar as her story begins to compensate for her lost role within it. If in closing her bridal shop Beatrice leaves a gap where the culture would link the current generation to future generations, then, by telling her narrative to Aline, she begins to bridge that gap.

Aline’s role as primary witness in “The Bridal Seamstress” sets Beatrice, the object of empathy, at some distance from Western readers, who cannot appropriate her. More importantly for my argument, Aline’s position alters the expected primary position of the Western reader, suggesting she or he step back at least temporarily and listen for the voices, agency, and interests of others. Stepping back acknowledges experience that is beyond the dominant group’s apprehension and suggests the possibility of displacing the self with the other, an inversion of idiopathic identification. When “The Bridal Seamstress” encourages Western readers to step back into a secondary position in order to acknowledge and listen to its Haitian characters, it also encourages them to acknowledge the book’s Haitian readership.

As Collins observes, the Haitian community makes up a very small part of Danticat’s readership (8). Nonetheless, it comprises her most urgently addressed audience, because it must heal wounds and orient itself toward justice amid adversity. Hence, Danticat calls out to this readership specifically through some of the text’s most prominent features: its symbolic moments, its structure, the plot of its centermost story, and its most troubling moral question.

The Dew Breaker highlights the primacy of the Haitian community in the symbolically resonant moments that punctuate its narratives. Such moments speak to the extended Haitian community temporally before any other group of readers. Consider the female character in “Seven,” in her role as official weeper at the Jacmel carnival:

She had volunteered to be one of the official weepers, one of those who wailed most convincingly as the carnival relics turned to ashes in the bonfire.

“Papa Kanaval ou ale! Farewell Father Carnival!” she howled, with real tears running down her face. . . .

She could never fake weeping, she told him. Every time she cried for anything, she cried for everything else that had ever hurt her. (Danticat, *Dew Breaker* 49)

The description of the carnival crier is one of the moments in *The Dew Breaker* that Collins finds to be “rendered poetically[,] . . . where meaning is enigmatic or resonant” and which replace sequential narratives, thereby preventing readers’ full access to characters and their stories (9). Recognition of a Haitian readership requires us to complicate Collins’ observation. The same moment that prevents access by Western readers urgently addresses Haitians at home and in diaspora. Although Westerners may find official weepers at carnival strange and the unexplained pain of this weeper obscure, Haitians know why the carnival crier howls, even on a first reading.

Dash regards the fragmented structure of Danticat’s story cycle as a means for the characters’ voices to speak to one another (“Danticat” 33).⁸ He observes that literary dissociations may invite readers to respect aporia in some cases but to bridge aporia in others. Dash describes Danticat’s text as “a narrative space where the voices of the disempowered victims and the perpetrators are allowed to speak[,] . . . a narrative space in which communication is initiated between voices, histories, and places that were never previously connected” (“Danticat” 33). Insofar as the voices in Danticat’s text speak dialogically to one another, and not to a dominant US or Western readership, the text defies colonial hierarchy. As a story cycle with multiple Haitian voices, *The Dew Breaker* also makes an appeal for democratic, participatory action by Haitian readers at home and in diaspora, even amid the pain voiced by the carnival crier. In the dialogics of the story cycle Danticat holds out a hope, albeit amid great uncertainty, for a democratic Haiti.

Precisely because of the aporia trauma has introduced between characters and between characters and readers, *The Dew Breaker* issues multiple calls to its extended Haitian readership to find the agency necessary to break silences and to draw tentative narrative threads between the text's fragmented histories. Hence, not only do individual stories like "The Bridal Seamstress" and "The Funeral Singer" gesture toward the Haitian readership's self-healing, but the fragmented stories of the story cycle, with their different focalizations and styles, call out to each other, like members of a community, across the experience of loss. Such a call is evident, for example, between "Night Talkers" and "The Bridal Seamstress." While in "The Bridal Seamstress," Beatrice moves repeatedly because she believes that the Dew Breaker or a prison guard like him is stalking her, Dany unknowingly responds to Beatrice's fears with a complementary obsession in "Night Talkers": he has stalked and found the Dew Breaker. This is not to say that Western readers do not also seek links across the disjunctive narratives but rather that, for them, recognition of an extended Haitian readership alters the meaning of the voices and the narratives, if only by highlighting that *The Dew Breaker* performs cultural work beyond informing Western readers of historical traumas suffered under the Duvaliers in Haiti.

Dany's narrative in "Night Talkers" most fully realizes postcolonial calls to community, agency, and justice as part of a process of healing. At the center of the volume, the fifth of nine stories, it balances the framing narrative, which is about disconnections between Ka Bienaimé and her family. When Dany returns to Beau Jour, Haiti, after a ten-year absence, he takes solace in the peasant ritual of his Aunt Estina's funeral, the only funeral in a book replete with deaths and disappearances. For Dany, ritual within the local knowledge system provides a connection across generations and between Haitians and Haiti's diaspora. Because the Dew Breaker murdered Dany's parents, all he has of family after his Aunt Estina's death are fragments of cloth—"three tiny pieces of cloth that had been removed from the lining of his aunt's last dress; and he would carry them with him forever" (Danticat, *Dew Breaker* 113). But he transforms these material fragments into spiritual connection just as the rituals of the funeral interweave his life with the community.

Equally important is Dany's choice of an agency oriented toward justice. Although Dany has obsessively tracked the Dew Breaker, he halts his obsession out of a sense of justice—paradoxically, by deciding not to act. Dany stops himself from killing his parents' murderer because he feels "the dread of harming the wrong man" (107). Dany's concern for justice ends a cycle of violence.

Perhaps the strongest indication that *The Dew Breaker* addresses the extended Haitian readership in a call for agency and respect for justice is that only this community can answer the text's most troubling moral question: can the perpetrators of terrible crimes in Haiti be forgiven? Both human rights activists and legal scholars argue that only those who have been harmed can determine whether the perpetrator of a crime can be forgiven. Aryeh Neier writes of "the victim's exclusive right to forgive his oppressor" (qtd. in Minow 17), on which Martha Minow elaborates: "The ability to dispense, but also to withhold, forgiveness is an ennobling capacity and part of the dignity to be reclaimed by those who survive the wrongdoing" (17).

Significantly, Danticat raises the question of whether murderers can be forgiven within *The Dew Breaker's* motif of treacherous fathers and parricidal sons. Elizabeth Walcott-Hackshaw argues that the fathers are reminiscent of Haiti's dictators (82), and the book clearly casts the moral question of whether torturers can be forgiven as a family matter. At the end of "The Dew Breaker," Anne Bienaimé is left awaiting an answer to the unspoken question of whether Ka can forgive her father. "Night Talkers" broaches the question for the case of a parricidal son when the community at Beau Jour accepts the character Claude, despite rumors that he has killed his father. An answer to the text's largest moral question will require responsible action based on a careful consideration of justice.

IV. Calls to the Long-Established African-American Readership

This story cycle also makes specific appeals to African-American readers, asking them to recognize both commonalities with and differences from Haitian immigrants. In both cases, Danticat's text must override tensions between the two communities. According to Mary C. Waters,

during the 1990s both groups were well aware of their cultural differences, even as they experienced the pressure of racism, which failed to draw distinctions between them (796). Such conditions fueled tensions between the groups because they dramatized the invisibility of black cultures to a white gaze and projected onto each group cultural attributes not its own. Hence, as Waters notes, in the 1990s Caribbean immigrants and members of older African American communities were often wary of one another (797). Moreover, Alex Stepick et al. observe that Haitians in the US have had to grapple with the stigma attached to immigrants, sometimes at the hands of African Americans (117).

The Dew Breaker initiates affiliations between Haitian immigrants and African-American readers at points of common experience and places of cultural overlap, as Angela A. Ards suggests of a later work by Danticat (108–09). The text speaks most pointedly to non-immigrant African Americans when it highlights the precarity of black lives. Danticat invites idiopathic identification amid the shared burdens of racism, encouraging African-American readers to refer to their own experiences to understand those of Haitian immigrants in the case of US police brutality. As Judith Butler argues, power shapes institutions to increase the precarity of some lives while diminishing that of others (xii), and it often does so by categorizing people on the basis of race (68). Danticat's references to police brutality raise questions similar to Butler's: "Who counts as human? Whose lives count as lives?" (Butler 20).

Danticat weaves into her story "Seven" recent historical instances of police brutality against Haitian men in the US: the New York City police's beating and sodomizing of Abner Louima in 1997 and their killing of the unarmed Patrick Dorismond in 2000. In both cases, Danticat solicits from readers of the established African-American community a sudden realization of the common experience of police brutality in the US. The reference to Louima is only a sentence long. The narrator has stopped frequenting a Brooklyn nightclub "since the place [became] famous—a Haitian man named Abner Louima was arrested there, then beaten and sodomized at a nearby police station" (Danticat, *Dew Breaker* 38). A factual event set within Danticat's fiction, the brutality against Louima likely stands out for readers who recall news stories about it.

From African-American readers, Danticat's reference to Louima invites memories of police brutality against members of their communities as well. All African Americans old enough to remember the early 1990s can recall a national experience that preceded *The Dew Breaker*: in 1991, national television news played and replayed a video of Los Angeles police officers beating and kicking the prone body of Rodney King, who had been stopped for a traffic violation. The perpetrators were acquitted in a 1992 trial that sparked riots in Los Angeles.

Danticat integrates another factual instance of police brutality into the plot, in a paragraph of "Seven" focalized through the male protagonist's wife. The unnamed female protagonist has just arrived in the US from Haiti, and her Brooklyn surroundings are so unfamiliar that she fears she will get lost if she ventures out of his apartment while he is at work. Trying to remain safe, she passes the day by listening to a Creole radio station: "She . . . sat up to listen as some callers talked about a Haitian man named Patrick Dorismond who'd been killed. He had been shot by policeman in a place called Manhattan" (45). In this passage, Danticat appeals foremost to African-American readers who recall the event. But, at the same time, she solicits the recognition of danger from a broader US audience through dramatic irony. Most US readers, but not the character, recognize how very close the woman is to "a place called Manhattan," where the precarity of black life in the US has become, with that news story, suddenly and starkly visible.

The story's female protagonist covers her head with the bed sheet when she hears the news of the killing. If she fears that police violence against Haitians has followed her from her old life in Port-au-Prince to her new life in New York City, she is not wrong. On a second reading, we can contrast her fears with those of Beatrice in "The Bridal Seamstress." Whereas Beatrice's fears appear unfounded in reality, readers from the long-standing African-American community know from experience that this woman's fears are not. For readers ready to draw the connection, echoes of the Ton Ton Macoutes in the New York Police Department suggest that racism within the US is interleaved with the racism that has governed US imperialism in Haiti, a theme that Ards finds important in Danticat's later works (108). Black lives have mattered neither to local

officials nor to US imperialist policy. When the female protagonist of “Seven” begins chanting with the protesters on the radio news—“No justice, no peace!” (Danticat, *Dew Breaker* 47)—she adopts a slogan used transnationally in movements for social justice, one familiar to African-American readers. The empathy Danticat solicits is not an end in itself but an opening toward common struggle against injustice.

Waters argues that Caribbean and older African-American communities in New York City in the 1990s often saw each other through stereotypes (797), but Danticat dispels stereotypes of Haitians, especially to African-American readers, by revealing an unrecognized difference of Haitian culture. She invites an African-American readership to learn from Claude, the character in “Night Talkers” rumored to have killed his father, who had strongly identified with African-American culture. In diaspora, Claude adopted a US black, urban speech idiom. He spent so long in New York that he now speaks no Creole at all. In an idiom hip hop has made transnationally recognizable as African American, Claude explains the discrepancy between the stereotypes he had held of Haitian peasants and his experience of the community in Beau Jour, which, he insists, “saved [his] life” (Danticat, *Dew Breaker* 103):

“When I first got here,” he [said], “I thought I’d get stoned. I mean I thought people would throw rocks at me, man. Not the other kind of stoned. I mean, coming out of New York, then being in prison in Port”. . . .

“These people don’t even know me, man. . . . They still took me in, after everything I did. Because my moms told them I was their blood. I look at them and see nothing of me, man, blank, nada, but they look at me and they say he has so-and-so’s nose and his grandmother’s forehead, or some shit like that. . . . It’s like a puzzle, a weird-ass kind of puzzle, man” he said. “I’m the puzzle and these people are putting me back together, telling me things about myself and my family that I never knew or gave a fuck about. Man, if I’d run into these people back in Brooklyn, I’d have laughed my ass off at them. I would’ve called them backward-ass peasants. But here I am.” (101–03)

Even as Claude's voice reminds Haitians in diaspora of ties to Haitian peasant culture, it speaks to African Americans to dispel a hegemonic US stereotype of Haiti as primitive ("I thought people would throw rocks at me, man") and a black US stereotype that constructs urban "cool" against rural life, the two together producing "backward-ass peasants." Danticat replaces the erasure of Haitian culture through stereotypes with Claude's narration of its high valuation of kinship and of its response to the precarity of his life.

V. Calls to the Dominant US Readership

The urgency of Danticat's stories addresses the dominant group of US readers differently from readers of the Haitian diaspora or African-American readers. For the dominant group of US readers, narratives like those focalized through Beatrice, Dany, and the preacher tortured in "The Dew Breaker" carry an urgency meant to puncture racist ideologies. As the Haitian anthropologist and theorist Trouillot observes, "new facts cannot emerge in a vacuum. They will have to gain their right to existence in light of the field constituted by previous facts" (49). Because ideology obscures new facts, Danticat punctures US cultural narratives so that her fiction's "facts" about Haitian history and Haitians in diaspora can register through the gaps. To address her dominant US readership, Danticat complicates her usual strategy. As in the book's addresses to Haitian and African-American readers, *The Dew Breaker* bridges gaps between characters and readers at the point of overlapping cultures. But in this case, the bridge gives way to shifting ground around the aporia in Haitian lives that US policies and practices have rendered precarious. Yet, even as *The Dew Breaker* invites US readers to imagine themselves in the place of characters whose experiences rupture US cultural narratives, the text dramatizes the limits of empathy and substitutes for empathic reading the more difficult task of tracking the US governmentality that produces these aporia in Haitian immigrants' lives.

In *The Dew Breaker's* opening story, "The Book of the Dead," Ka Bienaimé provides a likely point of idiopathic identification for dominant US readers because she is, as Mary Gallagher notes, strongly assimilated within US culture (149). She has never been to Haiti because

her family lacks ties to friends and relatives there. Moreover, Ka has long responded to her mother's observations with the ironic expressions of a US teenager, in words like "Ouch!," 'Cool!,' . . . or "Whatever" (Danticat, *Dew Breaker* 69). When Ka first learns that her father was a perpetrator of torture in Haiti rather than a victim, she realizes that she must reassess everything she has ever known. Her father's revelation suddenly sheds light on many aspects of her family life that were hitherto inexplicable, including silences and her parents' distance from her. As Ka recognizes that her relationship with them—and, indeed, her whole sheltered life in the US—has been based on a lie, she is unmoored.

Danticat prepares a parallel experience for US readers when she invites empathy with Ka. On a first reading of "The Book of the Dead," middle-class Americans of all ethnicities likely find it easy to empathize with Ka's anger. Mr. Bienaimé has just thrown into a lake the first sculpture she has ever sold—and to a Haitian-born actress and US soap opera star, no less. Knowing nothing about him or later stories in *The Dew Breaker*, readers ideologically invested in US capitalism are likely to recognize that Ka's father may have just ruined her career: "I know I'm already defeated. I know the piece is already lost. The cracks have probably taken so much water that the wood has split into several chunks and plunged to the bottom. . . . I want to hit my father, beat the craziness out of his head" (16). To have sold her first sculpture to a soap opera star, who knows other people with enough money to buy art, was a remarkable break for Ka. But when her father tells her that he was "never in prison" in Haiti, as she believed, but rather "working in the prison," and that he "shot and killed . . . many people" (22), dominant US cultural concerns with celebrities and careers fall away to reveal the painful history of Haiti, narrated in fragments in later stories. If *The Dew Breaker* encourages members of Danticat's dominant US readership to empathize with Ka in her new awareness, it cuts their empathy short when it leaves her in a state of shock and leaves her response to the upheaval in her life unnarrated. "The Book of the Dead" punctures capitalist ideology only to leave readers facing the limits of both their empathy and their knowledge.

Even though *The Dew Breaker* cuts off idiopathic identification with Ka when her father destroys her sculpture, it calls US readers of the dominant group to a task similar to Ka's: the rethinking of their relation to violence and injustice. The moments in *The Dew Breaker* when capitalist ideology suddenly falls away to expose the effects of often-disavowed colonialist policies. The sudden intrusion of Haiti's history into a plot about celebrities and careers in "The Book of the Dead" punctures the presumption that events in countries in whose politics the US has intervened need not interfere with lives in the US. The next narrative in the story cycle, "Seven," also breaches US capitalist and nationalist ideologies. The passage about the killing of Patrick Dorismond by New York City police, which evokes solidarity in African-American readers, further calls its dominant US readership to account for racist violence and injustice within the US. When the Haitian woman newly arrived in Brooklyn learns that Patrick Dorismond has been killed in Manhattan, US readers are also subject to the dramatic irony that suddenly exposes her proximity to danger. Even readers who do not believe that there is police brutality must acknowledge at least those historical instances that Danticat mentions. The attacks on Louima and Dorismond disrupt the ideological insistence that all people in the US are treated equally before, and by, the law.

Even as *The Dew Breaker* boldly breaks through US capitalist and nationalist ideologies in some places, it deploys more subtle strategies to undermine it in others. "Seven," with its nameless protagonists and parodic style, subordinates empathy with characters to the tracking of US governmentality, which is portrayed primarily through its effects on Haitian immigrants' lives. Unlike the brutality of the Duvaliers, who used murder and terror as a form of power, US governmentality in *The Dew Breaker* is subtle and insidious, producing what Trouillot calls a "practice of silencing" directed at Haitian immigrants (48). Trouillot offers a simile to describe the practice: "[O]ne 'silences' a fact or an individual as a silencer silences a gun" (48). Trouillot insists that hegemony not only silences groups of people in an attempt to produce their social death but also hides its acts of silencing.

“Seven” parodies the governmentality that serves US immigration policy and challenges dominant US readers to notice it. Danticat asks US readers to account for the suffering of undocumented Haitian immigrants in what we might think of as US imperialism at home. We might ask why the text emphasizes imperialism inside the US while barely mentioning the US imperialist role in Haiti. I suggest that Danticat begins her critique of US imperialism where readers in the US are most likely to take responsibility for it. In a 2007 *Callaloo* interview, Danticat speaks of US policies abroad: “[A] lot of Americans . . . [are] not aware of things that have been done as part of U.S. policy. And you know, as long as bread is cheap and . . . as long as it’s not in my front yard . . .” (“Dyasporic” 30; final ellipsis in original). Danticat places her critique in “Seven” in Americans’ “front yard,” inviting them to own their connection to structural violence and injustice. It highlights specific policies against which they might act.

In her discussion of Danticat’s 2008 memoir *Brother, I’m Dying*, Nicole Waller draws on Giorgio Agamben to argue that Danticat’s memoir treats the US border as a “state of exception” (362): a place where laws respecting human rights are suspended and life is made precarious amid US governmentality (Waller 359). In “Seven” *The Dew Breaker* maps the spread of a despatialized and less deadly mode of exception woven into the daily lives of undocumented Haitian immigrants, whom it attempts to render silent and invisible, making their chances for a full and meaningful life unlikely.⁹ The male protagonist of “Seven” has lived in the US with no legal identity and hence no name. He has survived in the gaps in recognition within the US and its immigration policy for almost seven years. He lives a literally subterranean life: in a basement room in a Haitian neighborhood in Brooklyn, where his living and working conditions remain largely unseen by whites. Danticat parodically reveals the US governmentality that operates through immigration law to dehumanize this protagonist.¹⁰ In the opening paragraph, the language echoes US immigration law as it reduces his life to a number:

Next month would make it seven years since he’d last seen his wife. Seven—a number he despised but had discovered was

a useful marker. There were seven days between paychecks, seven hours, not counting lunch, spent each day at his day job, seven at his night job. Seven was the last number of his age—thirty-seven. And now there were seven hours left before his wife was due to arrive. (Danticat, *Dew Breaker* 35)

The number seven comments ironically on the 1990 US Immigration Act's eligibility requirements for foreign nationals seeking resident alien status, which confers the right to work in the US. The Act describes applicant eligibility, including four categories of family-based preferences and five categories of employment-based preferences.¹¹ Danticat's protagonist fits none of the four categories of preference for green cards based on family and none of the five categories based on employment. The number seven falls outside all the preferences. Hence, he must earn money to hire a lawyer and place his hopes on a lottery to obtain a green card.

The title of "Seven" and its opening paragraph rebuke not only the governmentality that acts through US immigration policy but also the policy itself. From the beginning of the Cold War to the 2010 Haitian earthquake, the US refused to grant Haitians the status of asylees, which would have allowed them to apply for permanent residence and the right to work after one year.¹² For over half a century US immigration policy artificially opposed Haiti to Cuba (Lennox 712; Collins 15n11). It treated those fleeing Cuba, with its communist regime, as political refugees whose lives would be in danger should they return, while treating people from Haiti as mere economic refugees, ineligible for preferred status (Lennox 712; Collins 15n11). Many scholars have noted the racism of the policy (Charles 196). Moreover, refusing to treat Haitians as victims of political violence guards the US against accountability for its role in that violence.

"Seven" invites US readers to attend to the aporia that US governmentality opens in the most intimate relations of its characters and to track their spread throughout the New York Haitian community. Lack of legal immigration status has forced the protagonist and his wife to build a marriage around absence. Because they married the day before

he left Haiti, absence marks the very inception of their marriage, and a chain of new aporia proliferate from it. During their years of loneliness, both the husband and wife took lovers. Their breaches of trust in the past give rise to a painful silence in the present as each character grows increasingly complicit with the secret of betrayal: “Gone was the phone number he’d had for the last five years. . . . (He didn’t need other women calling him now)” (Danticat, *Dew Breaker* 39); “She wanted to tell her husband about that neighbor who had slept next to her in those days after he’d left. . . . Only then would she feel that their future would be true” (48). But neither speaks of the distance between them. Absence and guilty silence spread like disease to other characters, most notably Nadine of “Water Child.” Danticat suggests that the male protagonist in “Seven” is Nadine’s former lover. This man, her ex-boyfriend, holds a second job as a night janitor at Medgar Evers College, a position, shift, and employer that match the second job of the character in “Seven” (62, 38). He is the male counterpart of most of the women he meets in New York, who “ha[ve] husbands, boyfriends, fiancés, and lovers in other parts of the world” (38). Since Nadine’s lover convinced her to have an abortion before leaving her, she too has a guilty secret, and her consequent silence exacerbates her absence for her family in Haiti.

Through the trope of the guilty secret, *The Dew Breaker* hints that US readers might trace absences and aporia further, though it leaves gaps of knowledge even within the absences. The trope uncannily associates the characters’ intimate betrayals with the hidden political crimes of the Dew Breaker and the absences in immigrant lives in the US with those produced by terror in Haiti. The trope of the guilty secret entangles unseen governmentality in the US with unseen US foreign policy in Haiti. The Dew Breaker’s crimes hearken back to the corrupt US-trained army that oversaw the election of François Duvalier (Dollar 647): “His family had lost all their land soon after the Sovereign One had come to power in 1957, when a few local army officers decided they wanted to build summer homes there. Consequently his father had gone mad and his mother had simply disappeared” (Danticat, *Dew Breaker* 191). US policy in Haiti that produces aporia and absence for the Dew Breaker remains just beyond our view. Only those dominant US readers ready to

learn the history can trace the gaps back to their cause. Here, Danticat suggests that the role of the US remains a secret, disavowed and unseen by many Americans.

VI. Conclusion

In its calls to multiple readerships, *The Dew Breaker* prepares them for political action beyond the reading of fiction, both through the division of labor it allocates to its separate but overlapping audiences and through the relational practices initiated by the calls themselves. Beyond the activities common to all readers, *The Dew Breaker* suggests different cultural and political work for each group of readers so that, together, they might begin the difficult project of revising colonialist relations. For the extended Haitian community, *The Dew Breaker* treats aporia as symptoms of historical trauma and calls to community, agency, and social justice. In moments when readers of the established African-American community share the experience of racism with Haitians in the US, *The Dew Breaker* solicits their empathy to provide a tentative basis for common struggle, but not without also highlighting differences. In its address to the dominant US readership, Danticat's text breaks through capitalist and nationalist ideologies to reveal the suffering of others as their underside. In "Seven," Danticat suggests that her dominant US readership look to its own role in the persistence of colonialism, urging its members to break with empathic reading in order to track US governmentality. Yet the division of labor that prepares for dismantling colonialism also indicates the ambitious project's vulnerability: there can be no success without work on many fronts and by many hands.

Amid their differences, all of Danticat's readerships share a parallel relation to the text as groups of interpreters who have agency. *The Dew Breaker's* calls to different audiences, each alert to the others, encourage readers to recognize the interpretive agency of other communities. Awareness of such agency decenters Danticat's Western readers and disturbs any readership's attempt to treat other audiences as objects primarily referenced to itself. Moreover, the parallel relation to the text that characterizes all groups of readers implies an equality among them. In addition to encouraging an awareness of plural audiences, *The Dew*

Breaker's addresses to various readerships introduce dialogical relations among them. As Danticat calls one readership to the foreground at one time and other readerships at other times, her calls dramatize how each audience impinges on the others, and the alternation of positions enacts their interdependence.

The Dew Breaker's calls to readerships to dismantle colonial relations—both among its readers and beyond the reading of the text—are rudimentary. Tentative beginnings, however, are the hallmark of Danticat's story cycle. As *The Dew Breaker* yearns beyond itself for the resolution of the ongoing traumas of most of its characters, it also suggests the need for further work with plural audiences in postcolonial criticism and theory. Specifically, a comparative study of *The Dew Breaker's* reception across cultures might be fruitful. More generally, the text encourages theorists to ask how the presence of plural readerships expands or complicates an array of reading practices that avoid appropriation. This concern is especially important when considering readerships in the Global South, even when they are small, and readerships of the African diaspora, which are related to the Global South differently from Western readerships. Danticat's calls to multiple audiences also highlight the need to theorize about how readers' responses might contribute to social action.

Notes

- 1 Danticat uses this spelling of diaspora to refer specifically to the Haitian community living outside of Haiti in the introduction to *The Butterfly's Way: Voices from the Haitian Diaspora in the United States*. The spelling specifies Haiti's diaspora, emphasizing the strong relation Danticat draws between communities in Haiti and communities that have emigrated.
- 2 As Chen observes, Danticat treats Haiti's diaspora as imaginatively part of Haiti when she speaks of the diaspora as Haiti's "tenth department" (qtd. in Chen 227). (Haiti is divided into nine geographical departments.)
- 3 Older or long-established African-American culture differs from that of more recent black immigrants to the US in several ways. Most notably, it traditionally has prioritized the history of and resistance to slavery and Jim Crow policies in the US as integral to their understanding of struggle (Ards 11). Waters notes the importance of the 1965 Immigration Act in facilitating Afro-Caribbean immigration to the US (796).

- 4 My discussion of Danticat's multiple readerships is indebted to Chen's treatment of *The Dew Breaker's* multiple points of view in stories which, he argues, "simulat[e] the dialogic, polyphonic qualities of a community's response to trauma and displacement" (222).
- 5 Collins argues that a focus on Western readers' responses to texts of the Global South that bear witness to trauma risk remarginalizing the witnesses (8). Martinez Falquina warns against the pitfalls of Westerners seeking self-serving, "triumphalist narratives" on the one hand and empathizing with the traumas of others as a means of assuaging Western guilt on the other (838). Craps also warns against the cross-cultural use of Western psychological models, highlighting their blind spots: failure to respect indigenous belief systems as sources of healing and failure to recognize the trauma caused by daily living conditions amid poverty and imperialism (21–24).
- 6 See, for example, Borzaga 74.
- 7 Gallagher suggests the difficulty of framing a just response to Danticat's text amid its blurred boundaries. Treating *The Dew Breaker* as belonging to a hybrid genre that undercuts the border between the short story collection and the novel (148), she argues that the "multiple layered . . . relations that it establishes on the levels of genre, language, narrative, text theme, and plot . . . [blur] the contours of identity . . . and the lines innocence, implication, complicity, and guilt" (160).
- 8 Another critic who treats Danticat's Haitian readership as important is Subramanian, who finds that the dialogical community engendered by literary writers enables Danticat to address a Haitian and Haitian diasporic audience as well as audiences of other nations (151). Vaclavik discusses the heteroglossic address to multiple audiences, including Haitians, in Danticat's young adult fiction (92).
- 9 Examples of suspended law in the daily lives of undocumented immigrants are the unenforced laws that prohibit employers from hiring undocumented immigrants so that employers might pay workers less than the minimum wage.
- 10 I am indebted to Butler's observation that power under governmentality operates differentially to mark and manage particular populations in ways that deny the humanity of their members (68).
- 11 The four family-based preferences are "1. Unmarried sons and daughters of U.S. citizens," "2. Spouses and unmarried sons and daughters of permanent resident aliens," "3. Married sons and daughters of U.S. citizens," and "4. Brothers and sisters of adult U.S. citizens" (Visaplace, "What You Should Know"). Under employment-based preferences, the Act ranks five categories: "Priority Workers . . . [including] aliens with extraordinary abilities," "members of professions holding an advanced degree," "Skilled Workers," "[c]ertain special immigrants," and "immigrants . . . investing capital" in US businesses (Visaplace, "Immigration"). According to US Citizenship and Immigration Services, "certain special immigrants" includes religious workers (*US Citizenship*, "Green Card").

12 After the 2010 earthquake, Haitians living in the US were invited to apply for “Temporary Protected Status,” which allows them to work legally in the US (US Citizenship, “Temporary”). The Trump administration has announced an end to the protected status of Haitians in the US as of July 2019, after which they risk deportation (Jordan).

Works Cited

- Ards, Angela A. *Words of Witness: Black Women's Autobiography in the Post Brown Era*. U of Wisconsin P, 2016. Wisconsin Studies in Autobiography.
- Arthus, Wien Weibert. “The Challenge of Democratizing the Caribbean during the Cold War: Kennedy Facing the Duvalier Dilemma.” *Diplomatic History*, vol. 39, no. 3, June 2015, pp. 504–31. *Academic Search Complete*, doi:10.1093/dh/dhu001. Accessed 18 May 2016.
- . “The Omnipresence of Communism in the US-Haitian Relations under Eisenhower and Duvalier.” George Washington University-London School of Economics-University of California International Graduate Student Conference on the Cold War, 23 Apr. 2010, George Washington University, Washington, DC, www2.gwu.edu/~ieresgwulassets/docs/Arthus_cwc.pdf. Accessed 14 June 2016.
- Bennett, Jill. “Tenebrae after September 11: Art, Empathy, and the Global Politics of Belonging.” *World Memory: Personal Trajectories in Global Time*, edited by Bennett and Rosanne Kennedy, Palgrave MacMillan, 2002, pp. 177–94.
- Butler, Judith. *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. London: Verso, 2004.
- Borzaga, Michela. “Trauma in the Postcolony: Towards a New Theoretical Approach.” *Trauma, Memory and Narrative in the Contemporary South African Novel: Essays*, edited by Evald Mengel and Borzaga, Rodopi, 2012, pp. 65–91.
- Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Johns Hopkins UP, 1996.
- Charles, Carolle. “Political Refugees or Economic Immigrants?” *Journal of American Ethnic History*, vol. 25, nos. 2–3, Winter-Spring 2006, pp. 190–208. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/27501695. Accessed 19 May 2016.
- Chen, Wilson C. “Narrating Diaspora in Edwidge Danticat’s Short Story Cycle *The Dew Breaker*.” *Literature, Interpretation, Theory*, vol. 25, no. 3, pp. 220–41, doi: 10.1080/10436928.2014.932242. Accessed 12 Apr. 2017.
- Collins, Jo. “The Ethics and Aesthetics of Representing Trauma: The Textual Politics of Edwidge Danticat’s *The Dew Breaker*.” *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, vol. 47, no. 1, Jan. 2011, pp. 5–17. *Taylor and Frances*, doi:10.1080/17449855.2011.533947. Accessed 23 Sept. 2015.
- Craps, Stef. *Postcolonial Witnessing: Trauma out of Bounds*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.
- Danticat, Edwidge. *The Dew Breaker*. Vintage-Random. 2004.

- . “Dyasporic Appetites and Longings: An Interview with Edwidge Danticat.” By Nancy Raquel Mirabal, *Callaloo*, vol. 30, no. 1, Winter 2007, pp. 26–39. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/30135860. Accessed 6 Apr. 2016.
- . Introduction. *The Butterfly’s Way: Voices from the Haitian Diaspora in the United States*. Soho, 2001, pp. ix–xvii.
- Dash, J. Michael. “Danticat and Her Haitian Precursors.” Munro and Laferrière, pp. 26–38.
- . “The Disappearing Island: Haiti, History and the Hemisphere.” Center for Research on Latin American and the Caribbean Colloquia, New York City, Apr. 2004. cerlac.info.yorku.ca/resources/colloquia-papers/. Accessed 21 June 2016.
- Dollar, Jordan E. “Haiti Is Black! Racial Essentialism and United States Involvement in the 2004 Removal of President Aristide.” *St. Thomas Law Review*, vol. 20, Spring 2008, pp. 642–69. *EBSCOhost*, web.a.ebscohost.com.proxy.library.csi.cuny.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=4&sid=59e6b60d-cf8b-4547-8da0-006113e58323%40sessionmgr4007. Accessed 18 May 2016.
- Farmer, Paul. “Of Suffering and Structural Violence: A View from Below.” *Daedalus*, vol. 125, no. 1, Winter 1996, 261–83. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/2002736215. Accessed May 2016.
- Gallagher, Mary. “Concealment, Displacement, and Disconnection: Danticat’s *The Dew Breaker*.” Munro and Laferrière, pp. 147–60.
- Horton, Matthew R. “‘Remembering’ the Wayward: Wendell Berry’s ‘The Wild Birds’: The Possibilities of Membership in the Short-Story Cycle Genre.” *South Atlantic Review*, vol. 69, no. 2, Spring 2004, pp. 25–53. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/20064576. Accessed 5 Mar. 2017.
- Ibarrola Armendáriz, Aitor. “The Language of Wounds and Scars in Edwidge Danticat’s *The Dew Breaker*, A Case Study in Trauma Symptoms and the Recovery Process.” *Journal of English Studies*, vol. 8, 2010, pp. 23–56. *EBSCOhost*. web.a.ebscohost.com.proxy.library.csi.cuny.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=3&sid=82f5bcf4-09bb-4242-b812-cec8e336b0fc%40sessionmgr4010. Accessed 8 Mar. 2016.
- Ingram, Forrest L. *Representative Short Story Cycles of the Twentieth Century*. De Gruyter Mouton, 2012. De Proprietatibus Litterarum.
- Jordan, Miriam. “Trump Administration Ends Temporary Protection for Haitians.” *The New York Times*, 20 Nov. 2017, www.nytimes.com/2017/11/20/us/haitians-temporary-status.html. Accessed 27 Dec. 2017.
- Lennox, Malissia. “Refugees, Racism, and Reparations: A Critique of the United States’ Haitian Immigration Policy.” *Stanford Law Review*, vol. 45, no. 3, Feb. 1993, pp. 687–724. *JSTOR*, doi:10.2307/1229010. Accessed 13 May 2016.
- Martinez Falquina, Silvia. “Postcolonial Trauma Theory in the Contact Zone: The Representation of Grief in Edwidge Danticat’s *Claire of the Sea Light*.” *Humanities*, vol. 4, no. 4, Nov. 2015, pp. 834–60. doi: 10.3390/h4040834. Accessed 30 Jan. 2016.

- Mbembe, Achille. "Apartheid Futures and the Limits of Racial Reconciliation." *Public Positions*, 2015, www.google.com/#q=membe+apartheid+futures+2015. Accessed 5 June 2017.
- Minow, Martha. *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness*. Beacon, 1998.
- Munro, Martin, and Dany Laferrière, editors. *Edwidge Danticat: A Reader's Guide*. U of Virginia P, 2010.
- Moulton, Aaron Coy. "Haiti 1954–1975." *Imperialism and Expansion in American History: A Social, Political and Cultural Encyclopedia and Document Collection*, vol. 4. *The Cold War to the War on Terror*, edited by David Bernstein and Chris J. Magoc, Abc.clio, LLC, 2016, pp. 1121–22.
- Nagel, James. *The Contemporary American Short Story Cycle: The Ethnic Resonance of Genre*. Louisiana State UP, 2004.
- Pinkett, Harold T. "Efforts to Annex Santo Domingo to the United States, 1861–1871." *The Journal of Negro History*, vol. 26, no. 1, 1941, pp. 12–45. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/i327555. Accessed 23 Jul. 2016.
- Spengler, Birgit. "Art as Engagement: Violence, Trauma, and the Role of the Reader in Edwidge Danticat's *The Dew Breaker*." *Contemporary Women's Writing*, vol. 8, no. 2, 2014, pp. 189–205. *Oxford Journals*, doi-org.proxy.library.csi.cuny.edu/10.1093/cww/vpt020. Accessed 9 May 2016.
- Stepick, Alex et. al. *This Land Is Our Land: Immigrants and Power in Miami*. U of California P, 2003.
- Subramanian, Shreerexha. "Blood, Memory, and Nation: Massacre and Mourning in Edwidge Danticat's *The Farming of Bones*." *The Masters and the Slaves: Plantation Relations and Mestizaje in American Imaginaries*, edited by Alexandra Isfahani-Hammond, Palgrave-MacMillan, 2005, pp. 149–61.
- Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Beacon, 1995.
- US Citizenship and Immigration Services. "Green Card Eligibility Categories." 2017, www.uscis.gov/greencard. Accessed 15 May 2017.
- . "Temporary Protected Status." 2017, www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/temporary-protected-status. Accessed 8 May 2016.
- Vaclavik, Kiera. "Writing Young: Danticat's Young Adult Fiction." Munro and Laferrière, pp. 86–98.
- Visaplace. "Immigration through Employment-Based Petitions." Visaplace, 2016, www.visaplace.com/usa-immigration/permanent-residence-green-card/employment-based-petitions?landingPage=true. Accessed 7 May 2016.
- . "What You Should Know about Family Based Petitions." Visaplace, 2016, visaplace.com/usa-immigration/permanent-residence-green-card/family-based-petitions?landingPage=true. Accessed 7 May 2016.
- Visser, Irene. "Decolonizing Trauma Theory: Retrospect and Prospects." *Humanities*, vol. 4, no. 2, June 2015, pp. 250–65, doi:10.3390/h4020250. Accessed Jan. 2016.

- Walcott-Hackshaw, Elizabeth. "Home Is Where the Heart Is: Danticat's Landscapes of Return." *Small Axe*, vol. 12, no. 3, Oct. 2008, 71–82. *Project Muse*, muse-jhu-edu.proxy.library.csi.cuny.edu/article/252592. Accessed 7 Apr. 2016.
- Waller, Nicole. "Terra Incognita: Mapping the Detention Center in Edwidge Danticat's *Brother, I'm Dying* and the US Supreme Court Ruling *Boumediene v. Bush*." *Atlantic Studies*, vol. 6, no. 3, Dec. 2009, pp. 357–59. *EBSCOhost*, www.ejournals.ebsco.com.proxy.library.csi.cuny.edu/Article.asp?ContributionID. Accessed 10 May 2016.
- Waters, Mary C. "Ethnic and Racial Identities of Second Generation Black Immigrants in New York City." *International Migration Review*, vol. 28, no. 4, Dec. 1994, pp. 795–820. *Gale General One File*, go.galegroup.com. Accessed 3 June 2016.