

## I. Edwidge Danticat's *The Dew Breaker* as a Trauma Novel

The research is an inquiry into working through of trauma in Edwidge Danticat's *The Dew Breaker* (2004), a novel written in the scenario of 1960s Haiti when there was the Duvalier dictatorship. Through the different stories of novel, the ways in which trauma and memory can disrupt the lives of Haitian immigrant living in the New York are exposed. Different characters are haunted by the traumatic experience of Haiti which is revealed through memory. Here, the main source of trauma is Papa Doc Duvalier's brutal regime in Haiti and his corrupt, evil, inhuman and brutal action. This regime and its practice forced many Haitian to migrate from their homeland into the United States where they straddle between two cultures as Andrei Guruianu argues "the characters are always walking the fine line between legitimacy and illegitimacy in the eyes of the "pure" Haitian community and the domineering gaze of "true" Americans" (52). To heal from trauma the characters are sharing their mourning of the loss of loved ones with their nearest and dearest finding peace in their death acts but complete healing is not possible because of the very unconscious level of mind. Like in the chapter "The Funeral Singer" Freda one of the victim of trauma explains the three types of death: "The one when our breath leaves our bodies to rejoin the air, the one when we are put in the earth, and the one that will erase us complete and no one will remember us at all" (87). It shows that how Haitian immigrants are trying to be healing from mourning of loved ones and run the present life doing different works thinking about future being a bit far from the past.

In the novel *The Dew Breaker* different chapters tell the stories of several characters who have suffered at the hand of the dew breaker and portrays them in the aftermath of the trauma as they go through the process of healing and remembering, trying to live a free life from the trauma of the past, and mourning the loss of intimate one. The characters are suffering from

nightmares, melancholy, fragmentation, humiliation, death and etc and they are sharing their traumatic past of Haiti with each other living forced exile life in New York but their complete healing of trauma is not possible because once the traumatic event gets stored in the unconscious level of mind complete healing is never possible and such traumatic events haunt time and again. Almost all the characters like Ka, Mr. Bienaime, Anne, Nadine, Dany, Estina Esteme, Claude, Beatrice Saint Fort, Freda, Mariselle, Rezia and etc are suffering from psychological trauma and having traumatic immigrated life in New York because of the evil war designed by the Papa Doc and executed by the “tonton macoute”. Cathy Caruth in her collection of essays *Unclaimed Experience :Trauma, Narrative and History* remarks that “trauma is not locatable in the simple violent and 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- returns to haunt the survivor later on” (4). According to her the brutality of the traumatic events attacks the victims unexpectedly and their mind is unable to recognize the damage that is being inflicted upon them. In this novel characters who are the victim of “tonton-macoute” are likely to repress their experiences in their unconscious level of mind to the extent that, eventually, they may not be readily available in their memory.

In the novel *The Dew Breaker* Danticat presents the corrupt, evil, inhuman, brutal action of tonton-macoute from which the characters are experiencing trauma and trying to recover from traumatic events of Haiti. Danticat in her novel presents a chapter named “The Book of Miracles”, the character Anne is frequently haunted by the memory of her three years old brother who had drowned into the sea while swimming. One day when she is going to Church with her family members in the car she passes through cemetery and holds her breath and remembers that incident. When she was assigned the task of looking after her younger brother by her parents she

went to the sea with a boy for swimming but unfortunately she found her brother drowned in the sea. “She had gone nowhere near the sea since her brother had disappeared; her heart raced even when she happens to see upon images of waves on television” (36). It means she tries hard to forget the traumatic event by sharing with her husband and daughter but whenever she sees the cemetery or waves on television she feels uncomfortable remembering the traumatic past with brother in the sea. That means that specific incident which Anne tries to forget is stored in the unconscious level of mind and her complete healing is never possible.

This research is deeply invested in the notion of working through of trauma. Almost all the characters of *The Dew Breaker* are haunted by the brutal past of Haiti in the regime of Papa Doc and they go working through psychological trauma for the process of healing but their complete healing is not possible. In the working through trauma the person tries to gain critical distance on a problem of past by sharing with friends, family members, neighbors and etc but the more they try to escape from traumatic past event, the more their psychology is affected and complete healing is not possible. In one of the chapter named “The Bridal Seamstress” Beatrice Saint Fort who is one of the traumatized character is haunted by the traumatic event of Haiti. When she is interviewing with Aline; an intern reporter of newspaper about her lifelong achievement in the field of bridal seamstress she remembers the specific traumatic incident back in the Haiti. In Haiti, one day, the dew breaker- agent of “tonton macoute”- asked her to dance with him but she denied saying that she had a boy friend. After that she remembers: “He tied me to some type of rack in the prison and whipped the bottom of my feet until they bled. Then he made me walk home, barefoot on tar rods” (57). This event shows that she is haunted by this event time and again and that specific event made her forceful immigration to New York from

Haiti and in New York too she cannot be far from the memory of that incident and suffered a lot in her present life.

The characters in each of the novel *The Dew Breaker* are haunted by the traumatic memory of Haiti which repeats the psychological scars and wounds which further makes the future life of the characters unproductive. The characters are trying to gain distance from traumatic memory for the sake of good normal life doing their daily works but the more they try to escape from the harsh melancholy, the more their psychology is affected by the memory of corrupt, evil, inhuman, brutal action of “tonton-macoute”; a secret police that employed corruption and intimidation to create new elites of the country. They are having their life in New York- though it is forceful migration from Haiti- doing different kinds of works like barber shop, beauty salon, bridal seamstress, factory workers and etc but they are feeling hardship in their daily life because of frequently haunted memory of Haiti where they were affected being prey in the hand of dew breaker. To heal from such traumatic memory of Haiti they share their painful past with nearest and dearest one but the result remains unworthy.

Danticat, through the stories of the traumatized characters explores the possibilities of working through trauma even the trauma cannot be completely healed. Traumatic experiences or situation which are emotionally painful and distressing gets stored in the unconscious level of mind it cannot be completely effaced the more one tries to get distance by sharing with each other. The main objectives of novelist to present such traumatized characters in the novel *The Dew Breaker* is to show the evil impact of the war upon the life of the Haitian-American people and the possibilities of coping with cultural milieu of the states. Because of the war designed by the Papa Doc creating “tonton-macoute” made the life of Haitian people suffocated where many people killed, murdered, fragmented from family and many people took the way of forceful

immigration towards New York having diasporic life. In New York also they are affected by the harsh, brutal, inhuman memory of Haiti and haunted time and again.

Since its publication in 2004 Danticat's *The Dew Breaker* has been analyzed by a number of critics from different perspectives with their individual arguments. Susana Vega Gonazález in "Exiled Subjectivities: The Politics of Fragmentation in *The Dew Breaker*" argues that:

In her 2004, *The Dew Breaker*, the Haitian-American writer Edwidge Danticat employs the concept of fragmentation at both a thematic and structural levels.

Around the central figure of a former "tonton macoute" during the Duvalier dictatorship, Danticat creates a world of alienation, estrangement and dislocation peopled by geographic and psychological exiles, which is very much determined by the Haitian political upheavals and oppressive regimes together with the harsh vital experience of Haitian immigrants in the United States. (181)

She argues that Danticat in this novel comes up with the notion of fragmentation. In the thematic level the characters who are living forced exile life are fragmented from their culture, family members and homeland Haiti because of the oppressive nature of former "tonton macoute". So the characters aren't only fragmented from geographically or physically but also fragmented psychologically further creating alienation, estrangement and dislocation in America. Not only in thematic level but also in structural level there is the politics of fragmentation where Danticat exhibits the plurality of voices and perspectives by creating different characters through different stories in the novel.

However, Andrei Guruianu in "Il (legitimates) Third Spaces in Edwidge Danticat's *The Dew Breaker*" looks the novel from different perspective and argues that Danticat offers an

unapologetic look into the political, social, and economic conditions that dictate a diasporic identity. Guruianu further argues that:

Edwidge Danticat's *The Dew Breaker* is a narrative of diaspora where the reader encounters Haitian immigrants attempting to straddle two cultures simultaneously. In the third space they inhabit, somewhere between Haiti and America, the characters are always walking the fine line between legitimacy and illegitimacy in the eyes of "pure" Haitian community and the domineering gaze of "true" Americans. They live and work instead in an artificially constructed third space that allows for ease of movement, but which prevents the formation of a "grounded" or permanent identity. This feeling of being in constant flux between countries and emotions creates a permanent tension between an always encroaching, new identity in a foreign country and the nostalgia that engulfs memories of the homeland. (52)

The characters of *The Dew Breaker* are in diasporic condition because of the forced exile life in America from Haiti because of the war. They are straddle between two cultures of Haiti and America because by born and culture they are near to the atmosphere of their homeland Haiti but because of the forceful immigration in America they are trying to copy the culture of migrated country but they totally couldn't imitate the American culture because memory plays the vital role and they become diasporic remembering Haiti. So that, the characters are hybrid searching the identity of legitimacy and illegitimacy in between the society of Haiti and America.

Moreover, Izabella Penier in "National Schisms and Utopian Diasporas in Edwidge Danticat's *The Dew Breaker*" states that:

*The Dew Breaker* takes issue with the unduly optimistic valorization of diaspora. It shows that Danticat is more interested in the political and ethical dimension of the metropolitan encounter, than in celebration the metropolis as a laboratory place to be applauded, lauded and venerated. The multiple migrant tales included in this collection show that the immigrant's empowerment of the self, so often eulogized by postcolonial critics, is not a one-man success story, as it is often achieved at the price of dissolution of moral responsibility and detachment from the family and community. (233-34)

Danticat in this novel optimistically valorizes the issue of diaspora which is inappropriate for Isabella Penier because she- according to Isabella- is just praising the empowerment of immigrants rather than talking about the political and ethical dimension of the metropolitan encounter. It is much about mobility, hybridity and diaspora as about some misconception of national mythology. It reminds the reader that violent, repressive criminals often escape punishment for their crimes against humanity in diaspora, even thousands of destitute and victimized Haitians fleeing violence on small boats and crossing the Atlantic.

Likewise, Jennifer E. Henton in "Danticat's *The Dew Breaker*, Haiti, and Symbolic Migration" takes the subject matter of migration of Haitian people to New York and states that:

In *The Dew Breaker*, the Haitian family's move to the U.S., executed self consciously, indicates loss in a different sense than lack. In the case of Danticat's novel, loss or lack represent not a source of anxiety that evokes matters read in a psychoanalytical framework; instead loss requires a reading in order to meditate the landscape of the loss. Danticat's text maps out the arrival of the Haitian family in the U.S. where Haiti figures as a symbolic, as well as real landscape. (1)

Jennifer E. Henton analyzes the novel through Lacanian thought and argues that migration of Haitian people towards U.S. because of war designed by Papa Doc is symbolic migration which indicates the loss of Haitian people rather than lack. Lack as a deficiency as opposed to loss stemming from losing. Losing more closely approximates the colonized experience.

However, Jo Collins in “ The ethics and aesthetics of representing trauma: The Textual politics of Edwidge Danticat’s *The Dew Breaker*” argues that “Reading *The Dew Breaker* as trauma fiction reveals how celebratory notions of audience empathy can overlook the fact that reading fiction isn’t necessarily an engaged political intervention” (5). Danticat’s fiction presents the harsh realities of individual and collective suffering which creates difficulties not only for the traumatized people but also for the readers of fiction too.

Judith Misrahi- Barak in “The Vocalisation of Silence in Caribbean Short Stories by Edwidge Danticat” argues that:

Edwidge Danticat wages her battle with silence in such a way that it enables her to transform it into an act of self-discovery, self definition and ultimately an act of liberation... In incorporating the orality of silence within the written words of her stories, in using silence against silence, in turning it inside out like a glove, Danticat’s stories of oppression are converted into narratives of self-narration and self-empowerment. (158)

According to Judith Misrahi- Barak Danticat through short stories presents those silent words that have been bottled up for long time. She links between the individual and its community in the stories where she depicts the Haitian individual, in Haiti or in the Diasporas. Silence is made to function in the text in a dual and paradoxical way: speech is certainly geared against silence, and the virtues of words are being waged in the healing process.



Michiko Kakutani in “Books of the Times; Hiding from a Brutal Past Spent Shattering Lives in Haiti” recommends that: “Haiti’s bloody and bitter history of violence, corruption and vengeance stalks all the characters in Edwidge Danticat’s remarkable new novel, infecting their dream and circumscribing their expectations. It is a nightmare they are all trying in vain to rewind and erase” (Online Posting, 8). In the novel *The Dew Breaker* the massive numbers of characters are suffered by the violence, corruption and vengeance of the then government of Haiti. They are trying to escape from the bloody and bitter history of Haiti but they are unable because of the frequently haunted memory. So they are trying in vain to rewind and erase by sharing with each other.

Likewise, Kai Maristed in “Danticat’s fiction is in touch with fact in Haiti” argues that Danticat in her novel *The Dew Breaker* gives the recent events of Haiti presenting murder, looting and terror through a mingling of personal recollection and concentrated imagination earns praise from critics and enthusiastic readers. He further argues that:

Elliptical at the beginning, squinting only sideways at its once torturing and now tortured protagonist, the book gathers impressive focus and force. Arguably, the drive to pull every strand together takes the story further than needed, with twists that strain credulity. But that is not what matters most. One is reminded page after burning page that merely to enter this character’s mind and memory is virtually taboo in these times of President Bush’s “Axis of Evil” ([Online](#) Posting, 2).

*The Dew Breker* is by definition outside the pale, not us, and most contemporary writers would feel more competent to explore the consciousness of dragonfly or a Martian. Danticat leads her readers into the underworld. It is furnished like home. Danticat leads her readers into the underworld called war created by the former “tonton-macoute” in Haiti to show the looting,

murder and terror. Through this novel she shows the negative impact of war into the characters which further causes their immigration to United States leading forced exile life. The war is well structured like a house and exhibited according the plan.

Moreover, Jonathan A. Knee in “A Sad, True About Haiti” in the book *The Dew Breaker* comes up with his reviews and states that “With her grace and her imperishable humanity, her devotion to lived like “a pendulum between forgiveness and regret,” Edwidge Danticat is every bit Jackie’s equal. About her, too, it can be said: She makes sadness beautiful” (Online Posting, 1). Danticat shows her will power and bravery to show the history of Haiti which is devastated by war. It is appreciable job of Danticat to show the real picture of humanity where people are fighting with each other for their respective purpose. Moreover, she makes sadness beautiful by presenting the characters with remorse searching for excuse from the traumatized people.

Troy Patterson in “Love and Haiti Danticat’s tales in *The Dew Breaker* evokes the violent legacy of the island” states that “Danticat has an emotional imagination capable of evoking empathy for both predator and prey” (Online Posting, 5). The writer through her imagination created the emotion for the readers while going through the lines of novel. She also created many situations where readers simply show empathy not for the prey of war but also for predator.

In this way many critics and scholars have analyzed the novel *The Dew Breaker* from different perspectives. Some critics have taken the issue of diaspora, hybridity and some have taken the subject matter of fragmentation in the thematic as well as structural level providing appropriate evidences. So, the issue of working through trauma has not been touched yet. The researcher focuses on the traumatic characters in the novel to bring out the negative impact of war upon the victims of Haiti. The research focuses on how characters try to reduce the impact of traumatic effect in their ongoing life by sharing with each other. Going through the memories of

past is a way to avoid old moments. But the process of working through trauma does not lead the characters towards healing but it minimizes their trauma because in the working through trauma the victims united and share with each other.

The term “trauma” comes from the ancient Greek word which means wound or injury after- effect. It refers to problematic situations like disorder, injury and destructions caused by the psychological repression and physical destruction. Relating to psychology *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* defines trauma as “an emotional shock producing a lasting harmful effect” and relating to medic, the dictionary defines, “a serious injury or shock to be caused by stressful events like war, rape, kidnapping, abuse, natural disaster, vehicle accidents and etc” (1634). American Psychiatric Association (APA) in *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* specially defines a trauma as:

Direct personal experience of an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury, or other threat to one’s physical integrity; or witnessing an event that involves death, injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of another person; or learning about unexpected or violent death, serious harm, or threat of death or injury experienced by a family member or other close associate. The person’s response to the event must involve intense fear, helplessness, or horror (or in children, the response must involve disorganized or agitated behavior). (463)

The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* provides a list of potentially traumatic events, including combat, sexual and physical assault, robbery, being kidnapped, being taken hostage, terrorist attacks, torture, disasters, severe automobile accidents, and life-threatening illness, as well as witnessing death or serious injury by violent assault, accidents,

war, or disaster. Childhood sexual abuse is included even if it does not involve threatened or actual violence or injury.

Moreover, Cathy Caruth in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and possibility of History* gives the definition of trauma as “an overwhelming experience of sudden, or catastrophic events, in which the response to the event occurs in often delayed, and uncontrolled repetitive occurrence of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena” (181). Trauma causes sudden great damage or suffering with a strong emotional effect upon the traumatic person resulting into a great repetitive destruction.

Psychological trauma is an emotional or psychological injury that damages the psyche because of the extreme stressful events because of harassment, sexual abuse, employment discrimination, police brutality, bullying, domestic violence, war and etc. Traumatizing events can take an emotional toll on those traumatized people, even if the stressful event did not harm physically. Once such stressful event gets stored in the unconscious level of mind it haunts the traumatized people time and again and cannot completely heal. Historical trauma- another type of trauma- is the collective emotional and psychological injury both over the life span and across generations. Historical trauma has been experienced by several cultural and ethnic communities. Powerlessness and hopelessness are associated with historical trauma that likely contributes to high rates of alcoholism, suicide, depression, health issues and etc. The historical trauma is associated with historical unresolved grief that accompanies the trauma.

Trauma Theory is a relatively recent concept that emerged in the health care environment during the 1970s, mostly to study Vietnam armed force and other survivor groups like holocaust survivors, abused women and children, disaster survivors, refugees and etc. Trauma theory is also related to different critical schools like psychoanalysis, feminism, neo historicism, post

colonialism and etc. According to Freudian Psychoanalysis it is a process of repetition of the oedipal scene in later life, the relationship between parent and child in situations such as that of student, teacher or patient/ analyst, in ways that may seem inappropriate. Feminists generate the crucial political contexts and the community which has spoken out the forms of physical and sexual abuse and operation of male ideology. New historicists are fascinated by the ideological omissions and repressions. Post colonial critics share an interest of demystifying and dismantling these institutional mechanisms that reinscribed and favored the interests and continuing privilege of certain groups and nations.

In the subject matter of psychological trauma, Cathy Caruth argues that:

Physicians and psychiatrists have begun to reshape their thinking about physical and mental experience, including most recently the response to a wide variety of experience (including rape, child abuse, auto and industrial accidents, and so on) which is now often understood in terms of the effect of “Post- traumatic stress disorder. (181-82)

For Caruth psychological trauma include the emotional stressful events further causing nightmares, melancholy, humiliation for the traumatized people which physicians and psychiatrists are describing as a Post- traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). PTSD is an intense physical and emotional response to thoughts and reminders of the event that last for many weeks or months after the traumatic event.

Moreover, James Berger in “Trauma and Literary Theory” considers the concepts of trauma as tools of literary and cultural analysis and states that “Trauma is not simply another word for disaster. The idea of catastrophe as trauma provides a method of interpretation, for it posits that the effects of an event may be dispersed and manifested in many forms not obviously

associated with the event” (572). For him trauma allows for an interpretation of cultural symptoms of the growths, wounds, scars on a social body, and its compulsive repeated actions. It also offers a new understanding of the insistent returns of family disasters on talk shows that goes beyond discussions of market share and public taste.

Likewise, Dominick LaCapra comes up with two additional interacting processes: “Acting Out” and “Working Through”, which are interrelated but distinguishable modes of responding to historical trauma. He has taken these concepts from Freud and from psychoanalysis, and then develops them in a way that makes them especially interesting for using in historical studies. Acting out and working through for LaCapra are in general intimately linked but analytically distinguishable process. So, one may never be totally separate from each other and the two may be always implicated in each other. When distinguishing these intimately related concepts LaCapra in his ‘Revisiting the Historians Debate’ argues that:

In acting-out one has a mimetic relation to the past which is represented or relived as if it were fully present rather than represented in memory and inscription. In psychoanalytic terms, the acted-out past is incorporated rather than interjected, and it returns as the repressed. Mourning involves introjections through a relation to the past that recognizes its difference from the present and enacts a specific performative relation to it that simultaneously remembers and takes leave of it, thereby allowing for critical judgment and a reinvestment in life, notably social life with its demand, responsibilities, and norms requiring respectful recognition and consideration for others. (81)

For LaCapra acting out is related to repetition, and even the repetition compulsion tendency to repeat some event compulsively. The people who undergo trauma have a tendency to relive the

past to exist in the present as if they were still fully in the path with no distance from it. The traumatic event comes in the form of nightmare, flashback and etc in compulsively repeated mode with no ordinary meaning because they are taking on different connotations from another situation in another place.

However, another countervailing force working through for LaCapra is a situation where traumatized person tries to gain critical distance on a problem and distinguish between past, present and future. Furthermore, LaCapra In his *Writing History, Writing Trauma* argues that, “It does not mean avoidance, harmonization, simply forgetting the past or submerging oneself in the present... critically engaging the tendency to act out the past and even to recognize why it may be necessary and even in certain respect desirable at least compelling” (144). For LaCapra working through is the ability of traumatized people to say to oneself that past event was distressing, overwhelming and I can not entirely disengage myself from it but now it’s totally different. In working through one tries to acquire some critical distance that allows one to engage in life in the present forgetting past to assume responsibility but that does not mean that you utterly transcend the past.

LaCapra develops acting out and working through for the use in historical studies. He argues that history and trauma are interrelated with each other. In his writing he focuses on the theoretical and historical co-reaction of problems related to trauma. Trauma is the result of past haunting memory in the mind of person. History, memory and trauma are interlaced to each other. People, nation and the community experiencing trauma always act out and work through traumatic memory. All the things the traumatic people do in life are regulated by the past. They cannot avoid their traumatic past and it does not give them way to the future. In this context LaCapra argues that “writing about trauma is an aspect of historiography related to the project of

reconstructing the past as objectively possible without necessarily going to the self-defeating extreme of single-minded objectification that involves the denial of one's implication in the problems one treats" (186). So, here writing trauma is reconstructing the past of one's own history and telling after the effects of traumatic and post traumatic situations. Writing trauma involves processes of acting out and working through in analyzing the past traumatic experiences, limit events and their symptomatic effects that achieve articulation in different combinations and hybridized forms.

Trauma is the special form of memory that makes the pain come back with repeating and traumatizing past event which come through memory and haunts frequently for traumatic person and gives torture. By remembering the past incidents traumatic person always wants to be happy but it is impossible for him/her because if they remember the horrible past incident it gives them more torture and wound in the present. In this regard, Ron Eyerman in his text *Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity* states that:

Memory is always group memory, both because the individual is derivative of some collectivity, family, and community, and also because a group is solidified and becomes aware of itself through continuous reflection and re-creation of a distinctive shared memory. Individual identity is said to be negotiated within this collectivity shared past. Thus, there is always a unique, biographical memory to draw upon; it is described as being rooted in a collective history. Here collective memory provides the individual with a cognitive map within which to orient present behavior. (65)



Memories interpret the past events as people try to make link between past, present and the probable future. Memories are always collective memory, and collective memory specifies the temporal parameters of past and future.

The primary objective of the study is to explore the psychological trauma of the characters caused by the evil nature of the “tonton-macoute. Through critical analysis it brings out the evil impact of war upon the life of the characters which causes nightmares, fragmentation, humiliation, death and etc. Moreover, this research assumes to carry out a survey of psychological trauma, their types, stages and their effect upon the life of the people. This research makes a significant contribution in different aspects. First of all, this research shows the negative impact of psychological trauma upon the traumatized people to run their life smoothly. Secondly, it presents the effect of war upon the psychology of the people where they are suffering by the harsh reality of war further creating fragmentation, destruction, violence and etc. Thirdly, it shows the miserable, frightened, melancholic life of the Haitian-American people living forced exiled life in America. And, lastly, this study aims to be useful for those who want to study psychological trauma.

Although the major objective of this research is to explore the psychological trauma, it doesn't offer the solution to prevent the psychological trauma. This research does not offer the board study of psychological trauma rather it analyzes “working through” trauma through the perspectives of Dominick LaCapra. Likewise it does not address the issues like diasporas, mimicry, hybridity and etc. Given the nature of research, time and resources, these studies neither provides the reason behind the evil purpose of macoute government nor offer an analysis of Danticat's relationship with the then government of Haiti.

This research has been divided into three chapters. The first chapter presents a brief introduction of the research and the methodological framework. The second chapter explains the methodological tools with textual evidences and explores the traumatic sufferings of the characters of the novel *The Dew Breaker*. Some textual evidences from the novel are analyzed through the trauma theory to prove the hypothesis of the study which is the main goal of this research. Finally, third chapter is wrapping up section where the conclusion of research on the basis of textual and theoretical evidences is presented. This research concludes that Edwidge Danticat's *The Dew Breaker* is the trauma novel where characters try to heal by working through trauma but their complete healing is never possible because of the of memory stored in the unconscious level of mind.

## II. Working through of Trauma in *The Dew Breaker*

Edwidge Danticat's *The Dew Breaker* shows the sufferings of Haitian who have lived under the corrupt regime of the Duvalier. Because of the trauma caused by Papa doc and "tonton macoute" the different characters in the novel are preoccupied by the subject matter of suffering, death and recovering from traumatic events. To heal from different kinds of trauma characters attempt to work through the trauma even though trauma cannot be completely healed.

Danticat's *The Dew Breaker* is a novel structured upon the principal that the significance of traumatizing events can only be partly grasped when we look into the effects that may have produced on the lives of those who, directly or indirectly, have been touched by the violence of Haiti. The author uses a community of forced exiled Haitians now living in US to show the repressed memories of experiences that victims and their descendants suffered or witnessed in the old country. Each of the stories in the novel shows the trauma experienced by the characters. This trauma creates significant psychological damage beyond what may be considered normal life events and sorrow. The distress of the traumatic event leaves victims with a disturbed sense of self and sense of their lives. Haitian violence is the main cause of trauma in this novel because the characters are suffering from nightmares, melancholy, fragmentation, humiliation, death and etc because of the evil, corrupt, inhuman, brutal action of Papa doc and "tonton macoute". In the subject matter of violence Kakutani Michiko states that: "The Dew Breaker's name came from the fact that he and his henchmen would usually arrive "before dawn, as the dew was settling on the leaves" to abduct victims from their home; he tortured and killed untold numbers of innocents" (8). It shows the complete picture of violence of Haiti and the actual behavior of "tonton macoute". So the characters are taking the option of immigration towards New York to

heal from the psychological trauma but their mission to heal from the trauma remains unfulfilled because of the frequently haunted nature of memory.

Trauma is a serious injury or shock producing a lasting effect because of the stressful events like war, rape, kidnapping, abuse, natural disaster and etc. In the case of this novel violence and war are the sources of trauma by which every character are haunting by their own individual stressful events. As Cathy Caruth argues: “trauma as an overwhelming experience of sudden, or catastrophic events” (181). Caruth describes trauma as the response of unexpected or overwhelming events which haunts the victim in the repeated form of flashbacks, nightmares and other repetitive phenomena. In the chapter “The Book of the Dead” one of the character Mr. Bienaime is haunted by the memory of Haiti frequently when he is having a migrated life in New York with his wife named Anne and daughter Ka; a young sculptor. Ka’s father who was one of the then agents of “tonton macoute” in Haiti is the victim of trauma because of his evil, inhuman, brutal action which he had done towards the innocent people of Haiti. He remembers the past through nightmares when one day he was giving torture for the prisoner working as a prison guard: “It was one of the prisoners inside the prison who cut my face in this ways” (9). Being angry he shot the prisoner and killed as if like he killed many of them. The scar in his face which was made when one of the prisoners attacked him is also the symbol of his brutal action that made him always remember his past inhuman life back to Haiti. The more he tries to escape from his evil past being good father and husband sharing with each other in present, the more he is haunted by the events of his past which comes through the scar of his face.

Ka’s father is haunted by the fear of revelation of his real identity of Haiti as an agent of “tonton-macoute” which is covered since long time even from his daughter. When daughter Ka made a sculpture of his own father representing him as a prey of Papa doc that made her father

suffocated because in the eyes of his daughter he was the victim of the brutal war of Haiti but in reality he was working for Duvalier. There is the gap between the daughter's understanding and father's actual identity of past life of Haiti. But Ka's father reveals his real identity back in Haiti with his daughter when they are marching for the sake of selling the sculpture to Tampa. Her father says that: "Ka, I don't deserve a statue...not a whole one, at least. You see, Ka, your father was the hunter, he was not the prey" (8). This revelation of truth of Haiti and his real identity takes him in the process of healing. In this subject matter Judith L. Herman in his *Trauma and Recovery* argues: "Remembering and telling the truth about terrible events are prerequisites both for the restoration of the social order and for healing of individual victims...When the truth is finally recognized, survivors can begin their recovery" (1). For Herman before victims can begin healing, they must tell the trauma. Herman offers verbal narrative as a prevention to reduce haunting grief and trauma.

In the novel *The Dew Breaker* Ka's father also feels relief from the suffocation while hiding his past from his daughter also. But this revelation shatters Ka's previously conceived notions of her father that assumed him to be a victim of the terror and violence of the Haitian institutions. With this revelation ka begins to perceive her entire life differently, along with the lives of her mother and father. Immediately she comes to know that: "...why her parents have no close friends, why they never had anyone to the house, why they never speak of any relatives in Haiti or anywhere else..." (8). The family is burdened by memories of the past and they struggle to exist with the trauma of these memories in the present. As Cathy Caruth in her *why Trauma Now* argues: "Memory is the outcome of the complex process of revision shaped by promoting from the present" (35). The main burden of Ka's family is her father's fear of being recognized as a former victim. Immigration was his solution. However, he could not be free from his

personal memories when taking the way of immigration in New York as well as after sharing with his daughter because of the role of unconscious level of mind.

The story of the chapter “The Dew Breaker Circa 1967” is about Ka’s father where he had committed uncountable crimes working as a “tonton macoute”. When he was fed up from his inhuman behavior in Haiti he took the way of migration towards New York because he hopes to escape his traumatic past through immigration. The dew breaker or Ka’s father hopes for the new life in New York and states: “He had constantly thinking about getting out of this life, moving Florida, even New York, making himself part of the new Haitian communities there, to keep an eye on the movements that were fueling the expatriate invasions at the borders” (94). He wants to go to new place because he wants to hide his brutal past by changing his behavior. Though he tries to be changed being a good husband and father but the memory and scar of his face frequently haunted him remembering his past life working as dew breaker and torturing the innocent people of Haiti. It further shows that one cannot simply immigrate away from one’s past. It is part and parcel of the present and future. For the dew breaker this means the constant fear of being recognized for who he is, a killer, by his family and his neighbors.

James Berger cites Freud who held trauma as “An overpowering event, unacceptable to consciousness can be forgotten and revealed in the form of somatic symptoms or compulsive, repetitive behaviors” (570). According to Freud memory of a traumatic event can be lost over time but then regained in a symptomatic form. Traumatic events are unforgettable once it stored in the unconscious level and haunts frequently. In the chapter “The Book of Miracles” when Anne, Ka and Ka’s father are visiting church at that time Ka unfortunately sees the man as if like Emmanuel Constant; agent of “tonton macoute”. After seeing the person like Emmanuel

Constant , Anne feels quite proud of her daughter's righteous displeasure when she stares at the back of the criminal but, naturally, all kinds of questions begin to haunt her soon after:

What if it were Constant? What would she do? Would she spit in his face or embrace him, acknowledging a kinship of shame and guilt that she'd inherited by marrying her husband? How would she even know whether constant felt any guilt or shame? What if he'd come to this Mass to flaunt his freedom? To taunt those who'd been affected by his crimes? What if he didn't even see it that way? What if he considered himself innocent? (40)

Fortunately, in the end the man was not the criminal that ka had assumed him to be, and there comes as a great relief to her mother Anne. Still, those moments of tension brings Anne back to Haiti and haunted by the past events where her husband was famous as a dew breaker and shares her traumatic past with her daughter Ka: "A long time ago, more than thirty years ago, in Haiti, your father worked in a prison, where he hurt many people" (31). It shows that Anne is trying to run far from their past identity of Haiti because that was awful. But the more she tries to go far from past events the role of memory doesn't let her to fulfill her desire and that haunts her remembering past which comes in a repetitive form and her unconscious level of mind doesn't let her to reduce the trauma. But in New York she is trying to be happy hiding their brutal past of Haiti.

The victim of trauma have frequently confused because of the repetition of past. They seem lingering between what to do or what not to do. Anne has confused opinion about her husband and her life. In the past life of Haiti her husband was the agent of "tonton macoute" who had done uncountable evil, inhuman works upon the life of common Haitian people but now in New York he is trying to be good father and husband overcoming his brutal past. He is in New

York living common life because of his wife Anne who brought him. Anne was the only one in the family who witnessed his brutal action of Haiti as well as present life as a barber in New York but she always remains confused by thinking the position of her husband as a prey or hunter and says that: “It was like this, her life a pendulum between forgiveness and regret” (37). Anne’s dilemma between “regret” and “forgiveness” caught between contradictory feelings which she cannot even openly express. It shows that she cannot completely forgive for her husband because of his past deeds where he had killed many innocent Haitian along with her step brother too and she cannot regret about his life because he is improving as a good human being. This pendulum between forgiveness and regret haunts her frequently.

The character Nadine is one of the victim of trauma in the chapter “The Water Child”, she is struggling in New York because of her traumatic past of losing a child and being estranged from her family, home and Haiti. The struggles that Nadine is having are the result of her separation from her homeland and trauma she has experienced in the United State. Nadine’s trauma is her experience of abortion and loss. Nadine and her boyfriend Eric have an abortion, and Nadine then leaves Eric. Dominick LaCapra in the subject matter of loss argues that: “When loss is converted into (or encrypted in an indiscriminately generalized rhetoric of) absence, one faces the impasse of endless melancholy, impossible mourning, and interminable aporia in which any process of working through past and its historical losses is foreclosed or prematurely aborted” (46). In the case of Nadine after aborting her child she feels the sense of loss or the absence of her child is converted into loss and that incident of abortion and the memory of lost child is the source of her trauma which causes her melancholy and mourning haunting time and again. As a result she has built a shrine to her child and this shrine and the memory it provokes slow her assimilation in the United States. Nadine’s shrine is described as a picture, roses,



microcassettes and a glass of water. This glass of water speaks to the title of the chapter “Water Child”, and comes from Nadine’s reflection on a Japanese shrine to dead children: “She had once read about a shrine to unborn children in Japan, where water was poured over alters of stone to honor them, so she had filled her favorite drinking glass with water and a pebble and had added that to her own shrine” (24). This shows that she has stopped her own happiness because of her former sadness. Her memory is halting her experience of happiness and assimilation.

Nadine furthermore not only haunted by the loss of her own aborted child but also from the absence of her own homeland Haiti. She is having migrated life in New York working as a nurse being far from her parents who are in Haiti. Dominick LaCapra states about absence that: “When absence is converted into loss, one increases the likelihood of misplaced nostalgia or utopian politics in quest of new totality or fully unified community” (46). Nadine becomes nostalgic in the absence of her parents love as well as the homeland Haiti. So to be connected with her family:

She always knew that she would repay them. And she had, with half her salary every month, and sometimes more. In return, what she got was the chance to parent them rather than have them parent her. Calling them, however, on the rare occasions that she actually called rather than received their calls, always made her wish to be the one guarded, rather than the guardian, to be reassured now and then that some wounds could heal, that some decisions would not haunt her forever.

(27)

Nadine being the guardian of her parents tries to reduce her personal trauma of aborted child and estrangement for homeland helping her parents by sending them money or calling them in Haiti. Though she wants to heal from her trauma by helping and calling her parents but helping and

chatting with her parent makes her diasporic which result into lingering in the position of in-between in the culture of US and Haiti rather reducing her trauma.

Nadine is in diasporic situation where she had migrated forcefully to foreign country United State. She is haunted by the memory of Haiti which became the source of trauma in the case of Nadine remembering her own birthplace. As Anrei Guruianu states: “The in-betweenness mirrors the reality of individuals’ lives in diaspora, where they are often found inhabiting third spaces” (52). Nadine in New York is having life in between space where she is keeping her two legs in two different boats which are going two different directions. She totally can’t copy the culture of New York because of the memory of past and She could not totally forget her Haiti because that is her homeland. This inbetweenness is also becomes the backbone of frequently haunted trauma which is haunting Nadine frequently. She tries to connect with her family but cannot because the writing letter to her parents simply cannot convey what she needs:

Every time she read the letter, she tried to find something else between the lines, a note of sympathy, commiseration, and condolence. But it simply wasn’t there.

The more time went by, the more brittle and fragile the letter became. Each time she wondered how her mother had not torn it with the pen she’d used to compose each carefully inscribed word. (22)

When she gets letter from her parents she tries to find the lines of sympathy and condolence from her parents to heal from her trauma but she could not find within the letter. Ultimately, she is left traumatized and unable to connect either to her homeland or to her place of immigration. Her traumas have left her frozen, unable to belong anywhere.

Likewise, For LaCapra lack and loss are the source of trauma which haunts the victims frequently. Further talking about loss and lack in relation to trauma he argues that:

Loss is often correlated with lack, for as loss is to the past, so lack is to the present and future. A lost object is one that may be felt to be lacking, although a lack need not necessarily involve a loss. Lack nonetheless indicates a felt need or a deficiency; it refers to something that ought to be there but is missing. Just as loss need not be conflated with absence, for example, by not construing historical losses as constitutive of existence or as implying an original full presence, identity, or intactness, so lack may be postulated without the implication that whatever would fill or compensate for it was once there. (53)

According to LaCapra a lost thing may be felt lacking but lack resembles the sense of missing. Lack is related to absence and one mourns the lack in the present. But in the post traumatic stress disorder lack and loss of something or someone haunts the victim frequently. In the chapter “The Funeral Singer” the three characters Freda, Rezia and Mariselle who are the victim of Haitian war have their individual stories as the source of trauma. Three of them had lost their loved ones and lacking their absence in the present. Freda one of the Haitian American girl as well as professional funeral singer lost her father because of the brutal action of “tonton-macoute”. She remembers the past which made her to leave Haiti:

Long ago my father had disappeared. He’d had a fish stall at the market. One day, one macoute came to take it over and another one took my father away when my father returned, he didn’t have a tooth left in his mouth. In one night, they’d turned him into an old, ugly man. The next night he took his boat out to sea and, with a mouth full of blood, vanished forever. (84)

Freda after her father’s demise forced to leave Haiti for the sake of being alive. She lost her father in Haiti and now she is feeling lack of her father’s presence in present which is the source

of mourning. This absence of her father in the present life makes her to remember the past traumatic event where her father was killed mercilessly. Though she was a professional funeral singer once she was asked to sing a funeral song by the people of “tonton macoute”, she denied remembering her father’s brutal death and after that macoute gave her physical punishment. This incident also made her to take the way of forceful migration. This forceful migration becomes the source of trauma and in US also she is haunting by the same memory.

Likewise another girl Mariselle has lost her husband because of the violence of Haiti and that absence of her husband in present becomes her source of trauma. She also left Haiti to reduce the haunting past where she lost her husband because he had painted an unflattering portrait of the president, which was displayed in a gallery show. Absence of her husband made her to take the way of forceful migration and that becomes the source of trauma. The third character Rezia had her own traumatic story where she was raped by one of the people of “tonton macoute”:

When she was a girl, her parents couldn’t afford to keep her, so they sent her to live with an aunt who ran a brothel. They lived in rooms behind the brothel and that’s where Rezia spent most of her time. One night when she was sleeping, a uniformed man walked in. She dug herself into the bed, but it did no good, so she passed out. (76)

She was raped by the man of macoute and that incident is the cause of her forceful migration towards New York where she is frequently haunted by the event of that night where she became prey in the hand of “tonton-macoute”. When she shares this incident with her friends she remembers: “When I woke up in the morning, my panties were gone. My aunt and I never spoke about it. But on her deathbed she asked for my forgiveness. She said this man had threatened to

put her in prison if she didn't let him have me that night" (76). This shows how inhuman and brutal the war of Haiti was in the regime of Papa doc. The stories of these three Haitian girls show the unutterable grief and repressed memories concentrated on the tactics each of the women develop to cope with a past that keeps haunting them.

Moreover, the nature of losses varies with the nature of events and response to them. Some losses may be traumatic while others are not, and there are variations in the intensity or devastating impact of trauma. Loss greatly harms the mind of people creating the traumatic circumstances keeping the victim into mourning and melancholy. For Dominick LaCapra:

Losses are specific and involve particular events, such as the death of loved ones on a personal level or, on a broader scale the losses brought about by apartheid or by the Holocaust in its effects on Jews and other victims of the Nazi genocide, including both the lives and the cultures of affected groups. (49)

For LaCapra losses are related to the particular event where one loses the loved ones because of the violence, war and etc. In broader level losses are related to the Nazi genocide or the losses caused by apartheid. In the chapter "Night Talkers" the story revealed the scenario of brutal Haiti where many people were killed because of the war and genocide created by Papa doc and his agents "tonton macoute". Dany one of the victims of dew breaker lost his parents in the violence and haunted by the memory of Haiti and his parents when he is living in New York in forced exile life. In this story we can get the picture of violence through the character Dany who remembers the past where he lost his parents:

He was six years old and his father was working as a gardener in Port-au-Prince. The night of the explosion, he had been at home with her parents and his aunt, who was visiting from Beau Jour, when they heard a loud crash outside. His

father went out first, followed by his mother. Dany was about to go after them when he heard the shots. His aunt grabbed him and pinned him to the ground, but somehow he managed to wiggle out of her grasp. (45)

This complete picture of violence haunts Dany frequently because he has lost his loved ones that cause his forceful migration towards New York. He always takes strong determination to revenge against his parent's murderer. According to him his parents were killed by: "the large man with a face like a soccer ball and a widow's peak dipping into the middle of his forehead. The man waving a gun at him as he opened his car door, and he only lowered the gun to drive away" (45). Whenever he sees such kind of person he sees by the eyes of his parents murderer and desires to kill him which is actually his nightmare because he is haunted by the memory of past. In this story he is returning back to Haiti for the purpose of telling his aunt Estina that he had found the dew breaker or his parent's murderer in New York. In conversation with his aunt he says that: "I found him. I found him in New York, the man who killed Papa and Manman and took your sight" (42). He even states that the man who killed his parents is now a barber in New York living with his daughter and wife. Perhaps the barber was not his parent's murderer after all, but just a phantom of Dany. He shares the finding of murderer to his aunt because it can heal him from his traumatic past.

In the chapter "Monkey Tails" Michel one of the character is frequently haunted by the loss of his father which is actually the cause of trauma haunting him in present. He always remember: "According to my mother, three months before my birth I had lost my father to something my mother would only vaguely describe as "political", making me part of generation of mostly fatherless boys" (61). It shows that because of the Haitian war and violence a boy had lost his father when he was in the womb of his mother. It shows how brutal the war was for the

Haitian people who are witnessing war. As LaCapra argues losses are specific and involve particular events such as the death of loved ones, in Michel case loss of his father is specific and that thing haunts him frequently in search of his father. Now because of the absence of father Michel is experiencing the loss of loved ones who is his father.

In “The Bridal Seamstress” some of the lasting effects of the trauma are revealed. The story is about a famous bridal seamstress named Beatrice Saint Forte who is being interviewed by Aline, an intern reporter of Haitian American magazine. During the interview the long lasting effects of trauma by specific incident is presented. Psychological development affects the whole life of the traumatic character. Dominick LaCapra’s theory of trauma focuses on three psychoanalytic topic: the return of the repressed; acting out versus working through; and the dynamics of transference. A traumatic historical event, as LaCapra argues, tends first to be repressed and then to return in the form of compulsive repetition. In this case LaCapra’s further argues that:

The hiddenness, death, or absence of a radically transcendent divinity or of absolute foundations makes of existence a fundamentally traumatic scene in which anxiety threatens to color, and perhaps confuse, all relations. One’s relation to every other- instead of involving a tense, at times paradoxical, interaction of proximity and distance, solidarity and criticism, trust and wariness – maybe figured on the model of one’s anxiety-ridden relation without relation to a radically transcendent (now perhaps reorganized as a absent) divinity who is totally other.(23-24)

For LaCapra hidden truths, death, absence etc when they haunts frequently then that became the traumatic scene from which one can never be transcended. In the case of Beatrice she had a

hidden history where she was abused by dew breaker and made her to take the way of forceful migration towards Haiti. When she is in front of interviewer talking about her lifelong achievement in the career of bridal seamstress she comes to remember her haunting past when she was asked to dance with dew breaker; one of the agent of “tonton macoute” but she denied saying that she had a boy friend but the dew breaker gave her the unbearable physical torture. That incident made her to leave Haiti and in New York also she is frequently haunted by the memory and according to her that dew breaker had been chasing her in New York too. She even tells Aline that now the same macoute is living as her neighbor showing his house. According to her whenever she goes the dew breaker follows her: “This man wherever I rent or buy a house in this city, I find him, living on my street” (57). Aline becomes curious and goes to the house which is the house of dew breaker as pointed by Beatrice but she finds reverse story than that told by Beatrice. Actually here Beatrice is haunted by the phantom and nightmares. This scene provides a strikingly vivid example of the concrete ways in which memory and trauma can disrupt the present experience of individuals.

Past events haunt the traumatic people which come through memory. Memory plays the vital role while remembering the traumatic events, such memories revise the past experience and one undergoes to remember the past events that were unbearable for his/her peaceful existence. When traumatized person go thinks about an event, event gives rise to the torture and haunts his/her mind. While presenting the role of memory in traumatic world, Anne Kaplan in the essay, “Why Trauma Now” argues that:

In arguing that trauma is a special form of memory, they stated that in trauma the event has affect only, not meaning. It produces emotion...terror, fear, shock...but perhaps above all disruption of the normal feeling of comfort. Only the sensation



sector of the brain...the amygdale...is active during the trauma. The meaning - making one (in the sense of rational thought. Cognitive processing), namely, the cerebral cortex, remains shut down because the affect is too much to be registered cognitively in the brain. (34)

According to Kaplan once the traumatic event stored in the unconscious level of mind it haunts frequently through memory producing emotion, terror, fear, shock and etc. In the novel all most all the characters are haunted by the memory of the past especially the war and the violence of Haiti. The characters like Freda, Reiza, Marishelle, Beatrice, Anne, Dany are haunted by their specific past of Haiti which comes through memory. The characters are haunted by the inerasable past where some had lost their loved ones, some were affected themselves because of the inhuman regime of Duvalier. Because of the violence the characters could not run their life in Haiti and takes the way of migration towards New York to overcome the trauma and brutal past. But the memory chased them in New York too and the past event haunts them in their new land coming through memory. They are trying hard to heal from the trauma by sharing their traumatic life with their nearest and dearest being busy in their present life but the memory of past makes their hard work to forget past unworthy.

Psychological trauma causes alienation also. If the person is suffering from psychological trauma that traumatic person feels alienation. When past haunts any one then he/she wants to pass time individually and this individuality makes them alienated and to kill alienation one tries many options. In the chapter entitled "Seven" the character Eric and his wife both of them feels alienation with the absence of each other because Eric lives in US and his wife in Haiti. The opening line of chapter: "Next month would make it seven years since he'd last seen his wife" (15) shows that Eric feels alienation in the absence of his wife. Likewise when Eric left his wife

alone in Haiti after marriage and to kill her alienation she had slept with the neighbor who had slept next to her in many nights. It shows that psychological trauma causes alienation and to overcome from it people wants to engage with different activities as Eric's wife slept with neighbor to kill her alienation. It further shows the family fragmentation because of the war of Haiti. Haitian people of that time are taking option of migration to escape from the war being fragmented from their loved ones. In this case Susana Vega Gonzalez argues: "Edwidge Danticat's literary trajectory has been clearly marked by the fragmentation and dislocation from the historical and political upheavals undergone by her country of origin, Haiti" (181). For Gonzalez the Haitians become exiled subjective not only physically and geographically but also psychologically as they often undergo a process of displacement and alienation. In the case of Eric and his wife they are not only fragmented physically and geographically but also psychologically which became the source of trauma.

Dominick LaCapra presents two forms of remembering trauma: 'Acting Out' and 'Working Through'. Acting out is considered as the desirable one, whereas working through is based on denial of trauma. Acting out should not be seen or expressed and comes as repetitive manner but working through is the process that helps to gain critical distance of a problem and distinguish between the past, present and the future. The concept of working through and acting out are applied to absence where mourning might be seen as a form of working through and melancholia as a form of acting out. Furthermore in the concept of acting out and working through LaCapra argues that:

Acting out is related to repetition, and even the repetition compulsion-the tendency to repeat something compulsively. This is very clear in the case of people who undergo trauma. They have a tendency to relive the past, to be

haunted by ghosts or even to exist in the presents as if one were still fully in the past, with no distance from it. Victims of trauma tend to relive occurrences, or at least find that those occurrences intrude on their present existence, for example, in flashbacks or in nightmares or in works that are compulsively repeated and that don't seem to have their ordinary meaning, because they're taking on different connotations from another situation,, another place. (142-43)

For LaCapra acting out is repeated tendency where traumatized people undergo to remember the past while living in present. They are fully attached into the past memory which occurs as the form of flashbacks or nightmares in the repeated form having no specific meaning. In the case of Beatrice Saint Fort one of the character of novel where she is totally mourning by remembering the past event of Haiti which was the main cause of trauma. For her the traumatic past haunts frequently coming as the form of flashbacks and nightmares. Though she is living forced immigration life in Haiti but the memory of past does not let her to run her life easily.

Beatrice, when she was giving interview for the news reporter Aline she comes to remember the past event of Haiti where she was given the physical torture whipping the bottom of her feet until they bled and making her walk barefoot in tar roads when she denied to dance with the people of macoute. This event comes repeatedly and she remembers that: "They'd break into your house. Mostly it was night. But often they'd also come before dawn, as the dew was settling in the leaves, and they'd take you away. He was one of them, the guard" (57). She even states that wherever she goes the macoute chased her. When Aline asked her if she is sure about the same macoute chasing her in New York also? As a reply she says that: "No one will ever have that much of your attention. No matter how much he'd changed. I would know him anywhere" (57). To be sure Aline visited the home of macoute which Beatrice talked about but

she did not get him. Actually Beatrice is having phantom seeing ghosts of the macoute in other people. She is living in New York but the traumatic incident of Haiti comes repeatedly in her mind as the form of nightmare in the present without letting her time to distance herself from the events of past.

Likewise for LaCapra acting out is a process whereby the past, or the experience of the other is repeated as if it were enacted fully liberalized. He even states that:

As in acting out in general, one possessed, however vicariously, by the past and reliving its traumatic scenes may be tragically incapable of acting responsibly or behaving in an ethical manner involving consideration for others as others. One need not blame the victim possessed by the past and unable to get beyond it to any viable extent in order to question the idea that it is desirable to identify with this victim, or to become surrogate victim, and to write (to perform) in that incorporated voice. (28)

LaCapra states that one relives the past as if one were the other, including oneself as another in the past. In the story of Ka who is living in New York but instead experiences the life of Haiti through the memory of her parents. Family photographs foster some of Ka's connection of Haiti, but this feels insufficient at times and she longs to go. Ka longs for a connection with Haiti just as she longs for a connection with her parents: "I was born and raised in East Flatbush, Brooklyn, and have never been to my parent's birthplace. Still, I answer "Haiti" because it is one more thing I've always longed to have in common with my parents" (1). She wants to be connected with Haiti because that is her root where she belongs to. She not only connected with Haiti but also connected with the trauma of her parents. When her father reveal the reality of Haiti

she begins to perceive her entire life differently, along with the lives of her parents. She discusses with her mother saying:

She'd kept to herself even more than he had, like someone who was nurturing a great pain that she could never speak about. Yet she had done her best to be a good mother to me, taking charge of feeding and clothing me and making sure my hair was always combed, leaving only what she must have considered my intellectual development to my father. (9)

The act of keeping to herself "even more than he had done" shows that the weight of the memories that both Ka's mother and father have stopped from experiencing the "new life" they hoped have in the United States. The weight of her father's crime have followed the family and are a burden in their new home as well as a barrier to returning to their old one: "my father breaks the silence in the car by saying, Now you see, Ka why your mother and me, we have never returned home" (15). The burden of memory has confronted the family both in their homeland and in the immigration experience and now it is being passed to their daughter.

Ka thinks about her families, and particularly her father's, immigration experience, as a natural outgrowth of the atrocities he committed in Haiti. She now understands why a foreign land would be more comfortable to him than the home he had a hand in destroying:

I had always thought that my father's only ordeal was that he'd his country and moved to a place where everything from the climate to the language was so unlike his own; a place where he never quite seemed to fit in never appeared to belong. The only thing I can grasp now...is why the unfamiliar might have been so comforting, rather than distressing, to my father. (18)

This shows that the family of ka is burdened by memories of the past and the struggle to exist with the trauma of these memories in the present. The main burden in the Ka's family is her father's fear of being recognized by a former victim. For Ka's father immigration was his solution. However, he could not account for how his personal memories would stop him from feeling comfortable in his new home.

Likewise, in acting out one has a mimetic relation to the past which is represented or relived as if it were fully present rather than represented in memory and inscription. To add the idea LaCapra recommends that:

In post traumatic acting out in which one is haunted or possessed by the past and per formatively caught up in the compulsive repetition of traumatic scenes- scenes in which the past returns and the future is blocked or fatalistically caught up in a melancholic feedback loop. It is as if one were back there in the past reliving the traumatic scene. Any duality (or double inscription) of time (past and present or future) is experientially collapsed or productive only of aporias and double binds. In this sense, the aporia and the double bind might be seen as marking a trauma that has not been worked through. (21)

In post traumatic stress disorder one is haunted by the repetition of traumatic scenes which blocks the future keeping one in melancholic situation. In the case of Anne she is haunted by the death of her younger brother. When she was assigned to look after her brother they went to sea for swimming and unfortunately Anne found her brother drowned into the sea. This incident haunted her frequently and whenever she passes any cemetery she remembers the past incident and becomes melancholic:

Every time she passed a cemetery, Anne held her breath. When she was a girl, Anne had gone swimming with her three year old brother on a beach in Grand Goave and he had disappeared beneath the waves. Ever since then, she'd convinced herself that her brother was walking the earth looking for his grave. Whenever she went by a cemetery, any cemetery, she imagined him there, his tiny wet body bent over the tombstones, his as-colored eyes surveying the letters, trying to find his name. (30)

This abstract shows not only the trauma Anne has faced because of her sense of responsibility in her brother's death but also the significance of being able to put her brother's body to rest in order to let go of the emotional pain of his death whenever she passes the cemetery. The trauma which Anne experienced haunts her frequently leaving her unable to move forward with her life peacefully.

Moreover, LaCapra says that acting out and working through are not opposite to each other but they are implicated with each other. For him working through is a kind of countervailing force than that of acting out and further argues that:

In working through, the person tries to gain critical distance on a problem and to distinguish between past, present, and future...it does not mean avoidance, harmonization, simply forgetting the past, or submerging oneself in the present. It means coming to terms with the trauma, including its details, and critically engaging the tendency to act out the past and even to recognize why it may be necessary and even in certain respects desirable or at least compelling. (143-44)

LaCapra states that working through is a bit different than acting out trauma. In working through traumatized person tries to find out the difference between past, present and future and let

himself/ herself busy doing the work of present. It is the situation of one when one says yes that incident happened with me in the past and now I am in present time running life. But it does not mean that one completely forget the past but work through trauma remembering the past. In the chapter “The Funeral Singer” three characters Freda, Rezia and Mariselle work through trauma to try to heal from the traumatic past of Haiti. Though all of them have their own traumatic story where Freda lost her father, Mariselle lost her husband and Rezia raped by one of the macoute in Haiti. Living in Haiti they are running their academic life and doing other usual works. They are sharing their past events with each other thinking that by sharing with each other the pain maybe cured.

Freda initiates this storytelling of their traumatic departure from Haiti: “I thought exposing a few details of my life would inspire them to do the same and slowly we’d parcel out our sorrows, each walking out with fewer than we’d carried in” (83). The experience of sharing their stories helps them to extend their relationship as well as helps them to heal from trauma by giving support with each other getting sense that they are not alone. They are mourning the loss of loved ones and finding peace in their death acts as a model from the process of healing from trauma. For the purpose of healing Reza sings her final funeral song of her life with her friends:

I clear my throat to show them that I can do it, am willing to do it. Sing my own funeral song. Why not? And that’s how I begin my final performance as a funeral singer, or any kind of singer at all.

I sing “Brother Timonie.”

Brother Timonie, Brother Timonie, we

Row on without you. But I’ll know we’ll meet again. (81)



This singing of the song in collaboration between three of them makes their relationship stronger to work through the trauma. As Judith H. Herman argues that: “Pulling out of a traumatic condition tends to be easier when a person builds a “healing relationship” with others who have gone through similar experiences” (134). According to Herman Freda, Reiza and Marishelle are building the healing relationship with each other because three of them had similar kinds of experiences in their past life. By sharing with each other the haunts of traumatic event can be less though the complete healing is not possible. When the victim looks forward to his life and focuses on present minimizing the haunted memory it can be easy for the purpose of healing.

Moreover, working through counteracts the force of acting out and the repetition-compulsion in order to generate different possibilities in thought and life. In the subject matter of working through LaCapra opines:

Working through may best enable some distance or critical perspective that is acquired with extreme difficulty and not achieved once and for all. In some disconcertingly ambivalent from trauma and ones (more or less symbolic) repetition of it may even be valorized, notably when leaving it seems to mean betraying lost loved ones who were consumed by it. (70)

For LaCapra working through enables the traumatized person to gain some critical distance from the trauma or extreme difficulty. When one is going to be far from trauma by working through it seems betraying loved ones who was already lost but it helps the living one to heal from the trauma and can focus on present thinking about future. One of the characters Dany could not sit near the corpse of his aunt and went outside with Claude leaving the neighbors in the room:

He got up and walked outside, where many of his aunt’s neighbors were sleeping in mats on the porch. There was a full moon overhead and calm in the air that he

was not expecting. In the distance, he could hear the waterfall, a sound that, once you got used to it, you never paid much attention to. He walked over to the mausoleum, removed his shirt and began to wipe it, starting at the base and working his way up toward the flat top surface and the cross. (51)

It seems ridiculous when one leaves the corpse of their loved ones alone. But here Dany is taking the step of healing from trauma. Here, his trauma becomes multiplied because he had lost his parents in violence already and his only hope of life aunt also left him. He thinks he has long life to live and for the sake of living life smoothly he should come out from the traumatic past. His “walking outside” is symbolic it means he is beginning his new life living alone because he has no one to accompany.

Dany chats with Claude another victim of trauma for long time in the night sitting in the mausoleum. They share their brutal past with each other and feels little bit relief. Not only Dany Clude also share his traumatic story of past when he killed his father himself. When Dany asked the detail of his murdering scene of father Claude without any hesitation tells:

I hated him, never loved him, and didn't give a fuck about him at all. I was fourteen and strung out on shit. He came into my room and took the shit. It wasn't my shit. It was shit I was hustling for someone else. I was fucked up and wanted the shit back. I had a gun I was using to protect myself out on the street. I threatened him with it. He wouldn't give my shit back, so I shoot him. (51)

Though in anger he killed his father he was traumatized by this incident throughout his life. This accident happened in New York and he was send back to Haiti by the government of US. When he came back to Haiti he felt uncomfortable with the culture, life style and language of Haiti because that was massive different than US. He did not know the Creole the language of Haiti

which made his life uncomfortable and the memory of the murdering of his father haunt him time and again. When Claude found Dany a boy who could speak English then he became happy and shares his traumatic past in a breath and tries to reduce the burden of trauma. After the demise of Dany's aunt both Claude and Dany shares their traumatic past with each other and this sharing makes them a bit comfortable in the present. In fact Claude finds himself luckiest person in the planet and says that: "I'm the luckiest fucker alive. I've done something really bad that makes me want to live my life like a fucking angel now...If the prisons in Port had had more room, or if the police down there were worth a dam, I'd in a small cell with a thousand people right now, not sitting here talking to you" (52). It shows that he has totally realized that he had committed the crime by killing his father but in the same time he found himself lucky because the authority could have given him serious punishments rather sending him back to Haiti. Here Claude is a night talker, one of those who spoke their nightmares out loud to themselves. It shows the repetitive nature of trauma upon Claude and sharing is a process of healing or coming out from it.

Likewise Nadine has her own traumatic past because he had lost her baby though it is from aborting, broke up with her boyfriend Eric and she is living far from her homeland Haiti and her parents. She has lost many things in her life but she is trying to reduce her sense of loss by moving her present life working as a nurse and helping the patients in hospital. In this situation LaCapra argues that: "Losses occur in any life or society...Historical losses can conceivably be avoided or, when they occur, at least in part compensated for, worked through...one may learn better to live with it" (65). According to him losses occur in our life and make our life uncomfortable but we should narrow down the sadness of losses by working through it after that we can live a better life. When we go back to Nadine, it is true that she has

lost many things in her life but in the same time it is true that she has to run her life supporting her old parent overcoming the grief of her own. Nadine is working through trauma for the sake of healing: “She thought of this for only a moment, then of her parents, of Eric, of the pebble in the water glass in her bedroom at home, all of them belonging to the widened, unrecognizable woman staring back at her from the closed elevator doors” (29). It shows that Nadine is in the process of working through trauma by overcoming the memory of her aborted child and boyfriend. Lamenting the loss is one of the characteristics of the human beings as the same time overcoming the grief is also needed for the sake of running present and future life. Here, Nadine is remembering the past and focusing on present and future doing her daily usual works to reduce the trauma even though complete healing of trauma is not possible.

Like wise for LaCapra, working through trauma one may heal from his traumatic past but cannot totally be transcended from the history. LaCapra further elaborates this idea and argues that:

The tendency to valorize trauma, along with what is a fidelity to it or to its victims that brings a resistance to working through, is most understandable in the case of victims for whom leaving an unsettling bond with the past may be experienced as tantamount to betraying intimates who died or were destroyed by it. But, even in the case of severely traumatized victims, you may also find other tendencies in the self, including the ability to rebuild a life. (145)

To heal from the traumatic events victims work through trauma by rebuilding the life coming out from the melancholy. One cannot destroy his/her life remembering loved ones death but he/she should come out from those kinds of shocking incidents and should run the present life.

In the novel *The Dew Breaker* all most all the characters are running their present life doing different kinds of works beside their traumatic past. Though all the characters had their traumatic past where some had lost their loved ones or some of them are victims of “tonton macoute” but to come out from that traumatic past of Haiti they are engaging in their present life in New York. Like Ka’s family they have their own traumatic past but to heal from trauma Ka’s father is working as barber opening the barber shop, whereas Anne; mother of Ka is beautician and Ka herself engaged in making sculpture. Nadine another girl is a nurse where as Beatrice is a famous bridal seamstress of New York. Like Freda, Reiza and Mariselle are the students of university and Dany works in the factory of New York. In the process of healing from trauma LaCapra comes up with the notion of mourning and melancholic and states that:

Mourning itself may always seem fatalistically to come back to and endless melancholy. There may be very little, if any, distinction between mourning and melancholy: the mourning that is criticized is that which utterly transcends the past, and the mourning that’s affirmed is virtually indistinguishable from endless melancholy and a kind of repetition compulsion. (151)

For LaCapra, mourning as one of the important mode of working through where one may never entirely transcend an attachment to a lost other or even some kinds of melancholic identification with a lost other. But one may generate countervailing forces an interest in life. One sign of this process of mourning is the ability to find a new partner, to marry, to have children. This shows that characters, though all of them have their own unforgettable traumatic life but in present they are rebuilding their new life engaging with their individual jobs which keeps them busy in their present. Like Ka has her own family with father and mother. Freda, Reiza and Marishelle are making the “healing relationship” with each other. Dany and Clude are forming their friendly

relationship. The characters are engaging in different kinds of works in New York. When the victims of trauma keep themselves busy in present life then there is minimum chance to be haunted from the traumatic past. They even can engage with their friends and co-workers and share their traumatic past which also helps them to cope with cultural milieu of the states even though trauma cannot be completely healed.

The characters of the novel *The Dew Breaker* are interconnected in their memory of the trauma, none can forget while the others remember. Despite this hopelessness of ever forgetting and healing under the weight of the collective memory of society, the novel ultimately offers the reassurance that some wounds could heal whereas some would not haunt forever. In the collective memory of trauma, the characters have a hope of collectively healing and forgetting as they take steps to heal from the horrors of past life of Haiti where they have suffered a lot by the evil, inhuman, brutal regime formulated by Papa doc and executed by “tonton macoute”; a secret police that employed for Papa doc for the corruption and intimidation to create new elites of the country.

To sum up, almost all the characters of *The Dew Breaker* are struggling against memory, trauma and between past and present in their journey from Haiti to the United States. The challenges presented by leaving Haiti and coming to the US are unique in every case but are united by the common experience of having to face the choice of whether or not to assimilate. To heal from traumatic events the characters are working through by focusing in present and doing different kinds of works, sharing with their nearest and dearest ones. But their complete healing is not possible because once the traumatic incidents stored in the unconscious level of mind memory plays the vital role to haunt them frequently time and again.

### III. Working through and Healing of Trauma

This research work is an inquiry into the traumatic experiences of different characters that are the victims of the war and violence of Haiti in the regime of Duvalier. Papa Doc's brutal, inhuman, corrupt, evil regime is the main source of trauma for the characters which causes the forceful immigration from Haiti to the United States. Almost all the characters work through trauma for the purpose of healing but fail and do not gain distance from the traumatic past of Haiti because of the role of the unconscious of human mind.

The characters within the novel struggle against memory, trauma, past and present in their journey from Haiti to the United States. Almost all the characters like Anne, Nadine, Dany, Estina Esteme, Claude, Beatrice Saint Fort, Freda, Mariselle, Rezia and etc are trying hard to overcome the trauma by working through but their effort to forget the traumatic past remain in vain. They are all engaging in their present life doing different kinds of works and sharing their traumatic past with each other like relatives, friends, co-workers and etc. Like in Ka's family her mother Anne is a beautician, her father has a barber shop and she herself is a sculptor. Freda, Rezia and Mariselle are the university students and Beatrice Saint Fort is a famous bridal seamstress in New York. It shows that the characters are engaging in their present life for the purpose of living the remaining life smoothly by forgetting the traumatic past of Haiti but they cannot totally forget the past because of the role of memory. The more they try to escape from traumatic past by working through; the more their psychology is affected by the memory of corrupt, evil, inhuman, brutal action of "tonton-macoute" and haunts them frequently.

In the novel *The Dew Breaker* Ka's family has the fear of revelation of Ka's father's real identity of Haiti working as a dew breaker hurting the innocent people. That memory does not let

them to heal from trauma; the more they work through it sharing with each other. Nadine is fragmented from her family and traumatized by the remembrance of her aborted child. Dany always has a nightmare of the killing of his parents in the violence of Haiti in front of his eyes. Beatrice Saint Fort frequently haunted by the brutal action of dew breaker when she denied dancing with him in Haiti. She has also nightmare and supposed her neighbor as a dew breaker chasing her in New York too. Freda becomes disturbed by remembering her father's murder by the people of "tonton-macoute" without any proper reason where as Mariselle is haunted by her husband's death. Rezia was raped by dew breker and that specific event blocks her present life to run smoothly because of the memory.

The characters have their traumatic past which haunts them frequently in present keeping them passive. In present life in United States they want to heal from trauma by sharing with their nearest and dearest ones as well as engaging in their present respective works. The characters remembers the brutal past of Haiti through memory and the incidents come to their mind one after another and haunts them making their present unproductive. So that the characters cannot completely heal from trauma by working through because once the traumatic event stored in the unconscious level of mind memory plays a vital role to remember the events and haunts them frequently.