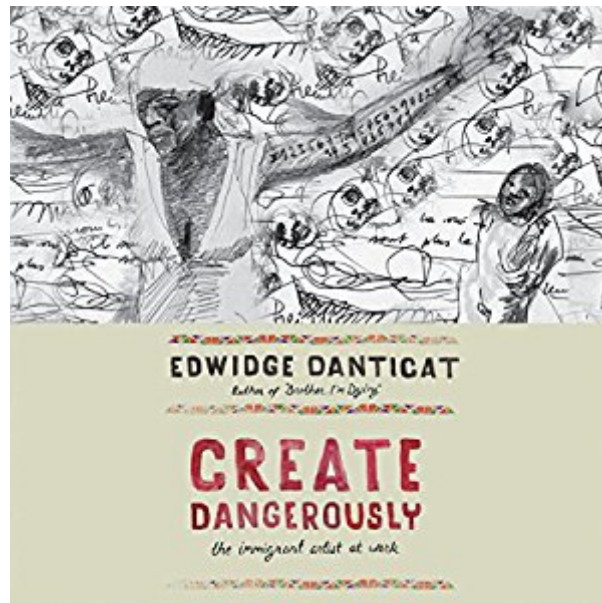




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Create Dangerously: The Immigrant Artist At Work



Synopsis

In this deeply personal book, the celebrated Haitian-American writer Edwidge Danticat reflects on art and exile. Inspired by Albert Camus and adapted from her own lectures for Princeton University's Toni Morrison Lecture Series, here Danticat tells stories of artists who create despite (or because of) the horrors that drove them from their homelands. Combining memoir and essay, these moving and eloquent pieces examine what it means to be an artist from a country in crisis.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The latest collection of essays/memoir by Edwidge Danticat reminds all of us of the true work of the artist: To bear witness to the suffering of others. Danticat traces her own call to the writing life back to a Haitian creation myth that unfortunately was real. Under the dictatorship of Papa Doc Duvalier, Marcel Numa and Louis Drouin -- young, educated Haitian men with everything to live for -- became martyrs to the cause of liberty and freedom. Drouin and Numa left their comfortable lives in New York to go back to Haiti and fight the overwhelming force under Duvalier's command. Not surprisingly, they lost. And they would be assassinated in the town square in full view of thousands of Haitians whom Duvalier had commanded to appear. This is not an unusual story under a despotic ruler (and certainly, it is not unique to Haiti), but what Danticat does with the story is unique. THIS is why we must have artists, she tells us. This is why we must have writers, painters, musicians, storytellers. This is the work of the artist, to tell the truth even when writing the words, and indeed

reading the words, could mean death. Haiti has given birth to some courageous artists, people who were willing to speak truth, to write it, to take pictures, to sing about it, and to paint it on the doors of the country church. What could possibly motivate these artists in doing what they do? The reader. The witness. The audience. Danticat reminds us how important it is to have someone who will read our work and be renewed by it. I was surely renewed by Danticat's words. As a Haitian American and a writer, I feel a responsibility to write down my own stories so that they will not be forgotten. Thank you Edwidge for writing so clearly for those who otherwise might never be heard.

I read this book as a required read in my multi culture English class in college. It tells of those who left Haiti because of the extreme persecution from the rulers, Papa Doc and Baby Doc Duvalier. It tells of how immigrants who are living in exile here in US or any other country have to deal with the loss of the connection to their homeland. Their identity is destabilized as they are unable to claim both places so they end up claiming neither place as home. Torn between the roots of the past and the present moment. This book tells of people who left but could not forget their homeland and their people. Some went back to fight for the people and were brutally killed by the leadership of the country. Others who are affected by diaspora may feel guilty because they are free and so many are left behind to suffer. The books in this class are not books I would choose for myself but I am glad they are required reading because I have a tendency to be like the ostrich. These books are raw and real and force the reader to LOOK when we had really rather turn our head. I especially like a quote in this book by Ralph Waldo Emerson, "We, as we read, must become Greeks, Romans, Turks, priest and king, martyr and executioner,; must fasten these images to some reality in our secret experience, or we shall learn nothing rightly." These books are reminders of what evil can do when it is allowed to rule. These books make me appreciate more than ever our wonderful country that gives the people a voice and the freedom to speak and live. It makes us aware of the price our military is paying in order to keep us free. They are going against some of these countries who have governments exactly like those discussed in these books, ruthless and brutal. These books would be excellent for high school English teachers because it would help the students to relate to them. For those students who are having hardships here, they could identify with the rejection and suffering. For those students who seeminly have it all, the books would be an eye opener into what makes people tick. These books promote empathy as we realize that if we were given the same set of circumstances, and these inner feels where inside our skin, then we would react and feel exactly as they do.

I've read most of Danticat's books, and this one is great from the perspective of the artist. I wish that she had gone deeper on opinion, or that she had laid out her position earlier. It's basically a collection of artists, advocates and writers (including herself) who have found that their hardship has driven them to create in order to tell their stories. I find the theme very loose. But maybe that's her intention.

As an aspiring writer, I found in Danticat's book a way of thinking that not only helped how I view writing but also how I view the world, particularly through Haiti's trail of tears. I plan on reading more of this author.

I really loved the book it gave me an insight about the sufferings that have occurred in Haiti for some 50 plus years.

Got me through a summer of English class. I got a B. Beeotch cheating teacher, cheated me out of my grade! However, the book is very good.

A beautifully crafted and inspiring collection of linked essays on the work of immigrant artists and artists living under repression, specifically in Haiti. As a politically active immigrant writer, I found it uplifting and empowering.

Like all Danticat, beautifully considered and written. Much information, much passion, much clarity. Highly recommend.

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