

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

Edwidge Danticat is the author of nine novels and two short stories. Granta Magazine mentions her as one of Twenty Best Young American Novelists in 1996 (“Edwidge Danticat”). Most of her works are inspired by her own experiences as a child and by her family’s experiences so that the characters look tangible. “In nine interrelated stories, Danticat used some her own family’s experiences as a basis for the lives of the characters” (“Edwidge Danticat”). Among her works, I am interested in analyzing *Breath, Eyes, Memory*.

In the novel *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, the protagonist, Sophie Caco is raised by her aunt in Haiti until later she migrates and has to be separated from her beloved aunt because she has to join her mother, whom she barely knows, in America. The author portrays how hard it is to leave her loved one and live with a mother who is a stranger to her as a young girl.

Sophie is also portrayed as a child of a rape victim, which causes her mother to be concerned about virginity. To prevent the same thing from

happening to Sophie, her mother does a traditional practice of virginity testing to her. Edwidge Danticat says, “The essential thing to all the mothers in the book is to try, in their own way, to be the best mothers they can be, given their circumstances, because they want their daughters to go further in life than they did themselves” (“An interview with Edwidge Danticat”).

In such a situation, it is inevitable that both mother and daughter should have disagreement between them. That is why, in this thesis I would like to analyze the conflicts in *Breath, Eyes, Memory*. According to Harry Shaw in his *Dictionary of Literary Terms*,

Conflict is the opposition of person or forces upon which the action depends in drama and fiction. Conflict is an important element of plot; they are the material from which a plot is constructed. There are three types of conflict; first type is physical conflict, a struggle between man and the physical world. It represented man versus forces of nature. Second type is social conflict, a struggle between man and man. Third type is inner conflict, a struggle between desires within a person. (Shaw 91-92)

### **Statement of the Problem**

The problems in this study are:

1. What conflicts occur in the protagonist’s life?
2. What are the causes of the conflicts?
3. What are the resolutions of the conflicts?

## **Purpose of the Study**

Based on the statement of the problem, the purposes of the study are:

1. to show the conflicts that occur in the protagonist's life.
2. to show the causes of the conflicts.
3. to show the resolutions of the conflicts.

## **Method of Research**

In my analysis, I use the library research. I read Edwidge Danticat's novel, *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, as the primary text. Then, I search for other sources from books and electronic websites as references to support my analysis; moreover, to help me in writing my analysis. Finally, I draw a conclusion based on my analysis.

## **Organization of the Thesis**

This thesis is organized into three chapters. Chapter One contains Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Method of Research and Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two contains the analysis of conflicts of the protagonist in Edwidge Danticat's *Breath, Eyes, Memory*. Chapter Three is Conclusion. The thesis ends with Bibliography and Appendices, which consist of the synopsis of the novel and the biography of the author.