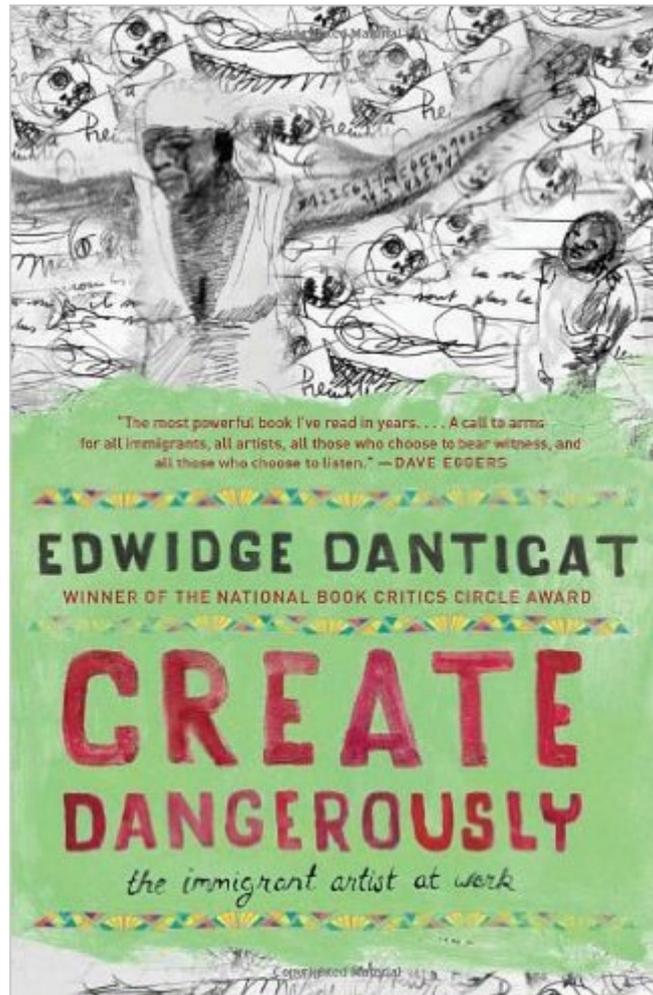


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Create Dangerously: The Immigrant Artist At Work (Vintage Contemporaries)



Synopsis

A New York Times Notable Book A Miami Herald Best Book of the Year 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

"In this deeply personal book, the celebrated Haitian American writer Edwidge Danticat reflects on art and exile, examining what it means to be an immigrant artist from a country in crisis. Inspired by Albert Camus lecture *Create Dangerously*, and combining memoir and essay, Danticat tells the stories of artists, including herself who create despite or because of, the horrors that drove them from their homelands and that continue to haunt them." The above is from the inside flap and truly captures what this book is about. Danticat opens with the 1964 public execution in Haiti, under dictator Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier of two artists, Marcel Numa, Louis Drouin. The author quickly establishes that some artists risk their lives to create and speak in a hostile environment. This work addresses the role immigrant artists must play for their birth countries that suffer from censorship and unjust rule. We learn about many Haitian artists. Some who gave hope and inspiration, others who

were exiled or murdered. Danticat tells us about Jean Dominique, a journalist who spent his life speaking out against the government and was assassinated. Sharing stories and memories, Danticat makes Dominique real."During the dictatorship in the early 1960's, a young Jean had created a cinema club, hosting weekly screenings at the Alliance Francaise in Port-au-Prince. There he showed films such as Federico Fellini's La Strada, which is, among other things, about a girl's near enslavement as a circus performer. "If you see a good film correctly" Jean said, "the grammar of that film is a political act. Everytime you see Fellini's La Strada, even if there is no question of fascism, of political persecution, you feel something against the black part of life.

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.

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