

The Wall of Rising Fire by Edwidge Danticat

Posted on September 12, 2018

The wall of rising fire is a symbol used in one of Edwidge Danticat's short stories. This essay is addressed to my fellow academic peers and seeks to explain the meaning of this symbolism in the short story (Danticat).

Danticat tells the story of a small family living in a small town in Haiti. This story features three chief characters: Lili (Guy's wife), Little Guy (son of Lili and Guy), and Guy. This family lives in extreme poverty, where Guy has to do odd jobs to earn a living while Lili remains at home (Davis). Jobs are hard to find in that country, and therefore, no matter the kind of work one is assigned to do, as long as it can at least provide them with food, they dare not reject it. The poverty is so extreme that, at times, Guy and his family drink flavored water for their supper. This kind of life is not appealing to Guy. It pains him because he cannot provide for his family (Davis). He feels so miserable and longs to reach a point where he can be in a position to build a house for his family. He remembers his father, who struggled to raise them in poverty, and he never wanted to be like him. This mental torture builds up in Guy to the point that He decides to commit suicide (Nge).

The title of the story, "The Wall Under Fire," is a symbol that depicts a picture of a fire burning from the bones of human bodies. It perfectly fits the explosion of emotions that build up in Guy that eventually leads to premeditated suicide. His self-esteem lowered as he thought of his incapability to earn a decent living and at least gain identity in their society (Nge). He envies men like Assad, who are rich and can even own a hot-air balloon. He does not want to leave his son, a clear example of a father who failed in life, and neither does he want to continue living in his state of poverty. Therefore, he decides to get into Assad's hot-air balloon and commit suicide by jumping out of it in the air. By doing this, he believes that he could get freedom out of poverty and yet still leave a good example for his son as an audacious father. v.

The symbol is also relevant in that it depicts the balefire that the Haitian people lit near the sugar mill after watching the news. Every evening, after taking their meal, Guy and his family could watch television at the nearby sugar mill. The government placed This television there to enable the local people to follow the country's news and progress. After the news, people gathered and lit a fire overnight where they could bring their charges against the government for oppression and poor living conditions. They expressed discontent with the inadequate government provisions for their needs (Danticat). They wanted to rebel against all these. It was a wall of a fire building up within them. A wall of emotions and rebellion against government oppression. They believed that the rising fire from within them could lead them to freedom. Freedom from poverty and freedom to gain identity as humans in society. They were tired of being servants. They were tired of working for the rich for meager earnings. They had to build a wall of rebellion. Their emotions stirred. The fire was rising (Danticat).

Before Guy commits suicide, we can see Little Guy attending school. Back at their school, he is assigned a role to take part in a play. Every evening, he comes back from school and recites the lines to his parents, who cheerfully applaud him. This play is about Haiti's revolution, which led to its independence from France (Davis). Dutty Boukman led the revolution. The play is a call to all people, the youth and the old, the weak and the strong, to come together and fight for their freedom from the oppressive rule of the white man. The symbolism of the wall of rising fire comes out distinctly when the fire of rebellion from the Haitian people builds a wall against French rule, eventually leading to freedom (Davis).

We can as well consider the fire of emotions in Lili, Guy's wife. Lili has a strong feeling that her husband is planning to do something terrible, perhaps committing suicide and leaving them alone with her son. Her instincts act as a foreshadowing of the fate that is yet to befall them (Nge). Her strong emotions make her constantly keep warning her husband against going to Assad's hot-air balloon. She tells him that he should not go near it (Danticat). Her strong emotions of care and concern try to build a wall on her husband against going to the Hot air balloon. Unfortunately, Guy goes there in the absence of Lili and their son and commits suicide (Nge).

Ideally, it is evident that the symbolism of a wall of rising fire perfectly fits into this short story. It precisely states what is taking place in the story. It shows the battling and increasing emotions of different characters in the story (Davis). The characters have a deep conviction about achieving what they desire in life. The guy wishes for a wealthy lifestyle. He wants to be a man of high ranking in society. However, his built-up walls against poverty went the wrong path. His fire rises even to the fearful thought of committing suicide as the only solution to escape poverty. He thinks of death as the only way of leaving his son a legacy of having been a brave man who dared to jump from an already moving hot-air balloon. His wall of fire rose to destruction (Davis).

On the other hand, we have these individuals who brought a great revolution to Haiti. Men such as Dutty Boukman rebelled to free their country from France (Danticat). Their wall of rebellion led to independence. It brought useful results to their country. Ideally, the wall of rising fire is all about emotions. It is about the passions in people's hearts that can lead to evil or good. It only depends on how wise the various individuals can make their decisions.

Work Cited

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