

## An Everlasting Colonisation: A Postcolonial Reading of Jamaica Kincaid's *A Small Place*

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper explores the portrayal of a long-lasting effect of Western colonisation in Antigua and Barbuda, a small country in Central America, in Jamaica Kincaid's *A Small Place*. An imminent power of European colonisation appears to be gone as many of the old European empires started to disperse and many of the colonised countries have gained freedom and reformed their own countries in the new age of modern society. Yet, such gained freedom does not appear to be the real freedom in Kincaid's mind-blowing memoir. As an Antiguan, Kincaid expresses her emotions and authentic experiences to address people's stupidity for not realising the linkage between the past nightmare of colonisation and the ongoing suffering of the same colonisation in the present through the unfamiliar concept of time, the rewriting of Antiguan's history, and the problematic representation of Antiguan tourism. Kincaid defies the familiar linear concept of time by presenting the unawareness of the past and the present and Antiguan's unusual sense of time of Antiguan as a way to portray how the colonisation that happened in the past is still active in the present. She also rewrites Antiguan's history through the integration of her personal experience to affirm Ramond Journey's claim that Antiguan's history has been distorted by the coloniser and Antiguan are the only group of people who can write the history of Antigua. Additionally, Kincaid represents the image of Antiguan tourism in a new light in which the colonial past resurfaced in the present through the manifestation of tourism. In doing so, Kincaid put the colonisers and the colonised in the scenario of a tourist's itinerary through the country. Tourists from North America or Europe, the great empires in the past, are identified as the colonisers, whereas the native of Antiguan are compared to the colonised. Kincaid's writing techniques are effective in showing the everlasting status of colonial manifestation in the modern world.*

**Keywords:** Colonisation, Post-colonialism, Post-colonial Literature, History Writing, Tourism

### 1. INTRODUCTION

A long history of European colonisation seemed to have ended many years ago as most colonised nations gained independence and began reconstructing their nations on their own. These countries have faced a number of problems like of political corruption, inadequate financial means, and poor education and living along their way of renewing their national identity. This is believed to be the result of the modern world's unfairness.

In the age of globalisation, nobody has really sat down and studied the actual causes of those problems or pay enough attention to the solutions of such issues. What most people have in common, however, is the fact that they are not aware of the injustices that occur in the world. The inequity that causes social problems for developing countries in the present is partly the same one that used to happen in colonial times. The same thing that has been going on for centuries is seen even now and not in the colonial past.

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In her memoir, *A Small Place*, Jamaica Kincaid addresses people's stupidity for not realising the link between past nightmares and the ongoing suffering in the present. She shows how the ongoing contemporary injustices in the Third-World countries are the same grievances of the colonial past. She exemplifies her native country, Antigua and Barbuda, as the site where the present and the past are brought together and connected.

In her narrative, tourism is the means she applied as the present form of colonial manifestation; through the tour across the Island of Antigua, contemporary corruption and the history of colonial Antigua are revealed. Despite its smallness, Kincaid's Antigua is the place where the past and the present are interplayed and attached through the portrayal of a non-linear concept of time in which the narrator's personal history of colonial experience and the ongoing corruption of Antigua's most prominent industry – tourism – are connected.

As a consequence, *A Small Place* implants the knowledge that the seemingly long-gone colonisation has not disappeared from the face of the earth but has been going on until the present in the form of contemporary capitalism.

## 2. THE UNFAMILIAR CONCEPT OF TIME

To connect the past to the present, one has to ignore the linearity of time and be able to see the story of the past displaying in the present state. It does not matter that the Europeans and their empires are no longer in Antigua, because the legacies they have implanted on the island are present to the eyes of the Antiguans from generation to generation. In *A Small Place*, Kincaid defies the familiar linear concept of time by presenting the unawareness of the past and the present as the unusual sense of time of Antiguans.

To begin with, the people of Antigua have a strange sense of time. In her memoir, Kincaid writes:

[What] a strange, unusual perception of time [Antiguans] have... perhaps in a world that is twelve miles long and nine miles wide (the size of Antigua) twelve years and twelve minutes are all the same. (9)

According to Kincaid, the smallness of Antigua seems to shatter the sense of chronological flow of time in the minds of Antiguans, so people live day by day within their small world without realising the difference between twelve years and twelve minutes. This claim speaks of the possibility of the connection between the past and the present in Kincaid's narrative. Antiguans' uncommon perception of time is highlighted in the later part of the novel:

To the people in a small place, the division of time into the Past, the Present, and the Future does not exist. An event that occurred one hundred years ago might be as vivid to them as if it were happening at this very moment. And then, an event that is occurring at this very moment might pass before them with such dimness that it is as if it had happened one hundred years ago. (54)

Kincaid shows at this moment in the perception of Antiguans, the past and the present do not exist at different points in the timeline. They neither recognise the events that had already happened as past events, nor perceive the ongoing one as belonging only to the present moment. For this reason, the past is so vivid as if it is the present and the present is as ancient as the past. It can be assumed, then, that the colonial manifestations exerted upon the lives of Antiguans in the past are seen by all Antiguans as clear as if they are the products of the present. Also, the fact that the present events appear as if they are the ancient past connects the present to the past very well.

This trope of non-linear time falls in the postmodern scope of literature because it ignores the conventional form of narrative, which usually runs chronologically. According to Paula Geyh et. al (1998), postmodern literary work is presented as “[the] assault upon traditional definitions of narrative” (p. xii); Kincaid’s *A Small Place*, correspondingly, is manifested to defy the conventional narrative of conventional literary work that is mostly governed by people with the authority to write their own story, while erasing others. By composing her piece of work in an unconventional narrative, Kincaid shows how she can cross the boundary of narrative and present her own story in her own way. Her story, with its own unique style of storyline, is used to connect the past and the present; in other words, *A Small Place* is written in this way in order to tell the world of colonial cruelty and injustices that are still going on in a small island like Antigua. The story in such manner works very well to remind people who play their part in the ongoing unfairness of the island that their misdeeds are the products of what their ancestors have done in the past, and the degree of violence of their actions is equal to that of their ancestors.

### 3. THE REWRITING OF ANTIGUAN HISTORY

*A Small Place* works to unfold the past injustices of colonisation Antigua suffered in the telling of the narrator’s personal history of colonial experiences. Before showing the connection of the colonial past and the present injustices, it is important to examine how Kincaid uses her personal history to reveal her nation’s bitter past as a colonised country.

To respond to Florence Journey’s (2006) claim that “the history of formerly colonised territory has been distorted by the coloniser, replaced with the coloniser’s history” (p. 1), Kincaid rewrites Antiguan history by inserting her personal experience into her narrative as a way to show that Antiguan are the only group of people who can write the history of Antigua. It is the people of Antigua who know best what it feels like to be an Antiguan and the tribulations that their nation has endured.

In her story, Kincaid firstly shows that the old Antigua, as described by the narrator, flourishes under the colonial governmental services and culture. In the old Antigua, the prosperity of colonial government and business are evident and shown by many colonial services that successfully grow on the island especially on High Street. On High Street, there is a library, the Department of Treasury, a post office, a court, a government office, and a bank. Kincaid writes that “in that part of High Street, you could cash a cheque at the Treasury, read a book in the library, post a letter at the post office, appear before a magistrate in court” (p. 25). From the portrayal of High Street, it can be seen that the narrator’s memory of Antigua is so vivid in its colonial prosperity. The street is painted with people who are engaged with colonial governmental services of Antigua, therefore the life of the colonisers plays a more important part than the colonised Antiguan themselves in the occupation of the country.

Apart from this, the narrative shows that the culture of the Empire also plays a very important part in the intervention of Antigua. In describing the library on High Street, Kincaid relates that it is the product of colonisation and that the books of knowledge it provides are those of the colonisers’ stories or what the colonisers want the colonised to know about them. According to Kincaid’s narrator, “the library is one of those splendid old buildings from colonial times” which signifies that the building on High Street is of colonial importance. People go into the library and read stories of the Empire and know nothing of their own. The narrator mentions how the Antiguan schools with teachers from the Empire taught Antiguan children the names of the King of England, and that May 14<sup>th</sup> was a holiday in Antigua because it was Queen Victoria’s official birthday. This shows how influential the culture of the British Empire was in the old Antigua; in that the students learned by heart the names of all the great British persons and celebrated the British ruler’s birthday as their holiday. Kincaid, through her narrator, sends her anger towards

Antiguans who do not realise that this is a part of British colonialism to dominate and control Antigua and its culture. After revealing the fact about Queen Victoria's birthday, Kincaid writes that "we, [Antiguans], didn't say to ourselves, hasn't this extremely unappealing person been dead for years and years? Instead, we [are] glad for a holiday" (p. 30).

Moreover, Antiguan children in the old Antigua learned to read, write, and speak English language in the schools with British teachers. Consequently, the language they used to express their feelings was undoubtedly English and their taste in reading stemmed from English literature, which portrayed only images of a perfect British life. According to Simmons (1998), Kincaid learned English in her Antiguan school with other colonial children on the island. From her acquaintance with English language and literature in school, Kincaid generates the bitter resentment towards the language and what it connotes: she believes that "the constant inference that England was the centre of the universe robbed colonial children of a sense of their own worth" (Simmons, 1998, p. 65). Kincaid is frustrated with the feeling that her reading in English literature "served to diminish, even to 'erase' her while [enhancing] the beauty and power of everything English" (Simmons, 1998, p. 65). The more she learned about the British society in those austere British novels, as implied by Kincaid, the more she values British culture and the perfection of a British life and forgets her own Antiguan heritage.

English studies in the colonised countries were the by-products of British imperialism as the British Empire aimed to stress the importance of their own language and culture on the lives of the natives that they had to subvert and control. This corresponds to what Bill Ashcroft has pointed out that the teaching and learning of English language and literature in colonial school system "emerged as a discipline out of the 'same historical moment' which 'produced the nineteenth century colonial form of imperialism'" (Simmons, 1998, p. 65). The reflection of Kincaid's resentment towards the learning of English language is expressed in the story when the narrator tries to denounce British colonisers of their wrong deeds but then stumbles at the fact that the language being used to accuse the British of their crimes is the British's very own language. Kincaid writes that:

For isn't it odd that the only language I have in which to speak of this crime is the language of the criminal who committed the crime?... For the language of the criminal can contain only the goodness of the criminal's deed. The language of the criminal can explain and express the deed only from the criminal's point of view. It cannot contain the horror of the deed, the injustice of the deed, the agony, the humiliation inflicted upon me. (p. 31-32)

Kincaid grew up using English, and it is the language she uses in her writing career. Ironically, she feels that English bears the mark of crime as it belongs to those who came to her country and robbed her people of everything they had. In writing *A Small Place*, Kincaid uses English to inflict the injustice back to the imperial centre. In fact, the fact that she has her narrator speak directly to a "you" who is identified with a North American or European tourist implies that she aims her novel to speak directly to North Americans and Europeans whom she frequently addresses as the ancestors of the colonisers.

Apart from the growth of colonial government and services in the old Antigua, it is told by Kincaid's narrator that the colonisers on the island are corrupt and malicious; they mainly take advantage of the natives and look down on them. The narrator holds very bad opinion of the colonisers from Europe and corrupt people in Antigua who have become part of the colonial capitalism. To begin with, Kincaid's narrator refers to the British maritime heroes celebrated by most British during the colonial time as "English maritime criminals" (p. 24). She says that she lives with her family on the street named after one of these criminals and points out there are many other streets that are named after other such criminals as well. This observation reflects the dominance of British-celebrated culture in Antigua at that time.

Besides, Kincaid's narrator also mentions several persons both from the British Empire and foreign countries who came to Antigua to work under the colonial authority and act the same way as the cruel colonisers do. For example, she tells about a headmistress of a girls' school who was hired by the British colonial office to govern this particular school on the island. It is told that this school had only recently begun to accept "girls who were born outside a marriage," and that no Antiguan have ever realised that "this was a way of keeping black children out of this school" (p. 29). The narrator implies that the schoolteacher is racist as she kept telling the black girls in her school "to stop behaving as if they were monkeys just out of trees" (p. 29). There was also a doctor who came from Czechoslovakia to Antigua. Kincaid writes that "this man [hates the Antiguan] so much that he [will] send his wife to inspect [the natives] before [they are] admitted into his presence, and she [will] make sure... that nothing... [will] offend the doctor" (p. 28). This doctor is seen as racist as he seems to look down on the Antiguan; his way of having his wife inspect Antiguan patients before taking care of them confirms the idea that he is inclined to suspect the natives of being unclean and smelling unpleasant. Another evidence of the presence of malicious, racist colonisers in Antigua is when the narrator describes a place called "the Mill Reef Club." It is described as being established by the people from North America who came to live in Antigua but the most hideous thing about them is that they disliked Antiguan and deem them as inferior. Antiguan were treated by people of the Mill Reef Club as servants. The Antiguan thought that these people have "bad manners, like pigs" and "[behave] in a bad way, like pigs;". Moreover, people from the Club were thought of as "[the] strangers in someone else's home [who refuse] to talk to their hosts or have anything human... to do with them" (p. 27). As reflected from this quote, people from foreign countries who came to live in Antigua and treat the natives as inferior and regard them as slaves were hated and resented by people of the island. The manifestation of colonialism of the old Antigua brings these people into Antigua, along with the force to establish their wealthy port on the island and shatter the lives of the people to pieces.

#### **4. THE PROBLEMATIC REPRESENTATION OF ANTIGUAN TOURISM**

Tourism, implied by Kincaid, is the present form of North American and European colonialism that brings back the memories of the colonial past, and thereby connects the past and the present together. In the story, the reader will feel familiar with Kincaid's address of 'you' since the beginning of her narrative. The whole course of the account runs like a tour guide in which a tourist from North America or Europe is taken through the island of Antigua by Kincaid's narrator. Through the tour, the information on Antigua provided is packed with the narrator's personal feelings and perspectives which is filled with the truth of what Antigua is actually like. The narrator tends to know the feeling of the tourist as well and assumes the role of her tourist sometimes as to ridicule the cliché of being a tourist. A seeming paradise, which the tourist knows, is turned into a country polluted with poverty and corruption caused a long time ago by colonisation. Kincaid successfully connects contemporary tourist items to those of the colonial past. McLeod confirms that "[Antigua is] no longer a colony, but certainly not free from colonisers" (p. 79).

Firstly, the narrator identifies the tourist from North America or Europe with the past colonisers of the old Antigua. The very tourist who is on tour in *A Small Place* is being addressed in the same way as the 'master' the narrator refers to in the colonised Antigua. For example, before she ends her narrative Kincaid speaks of a colonial master and a native slave in the old Antigua, but then she turns to speak directly to the tourist, or the 'you' as if he/she is that master she is referring to:

[Antigua] was settled by human rubbish from Europe, who used enslaved but noble and exalted human beings from Africa (all masters of every stripe are rubbish...) ...[and] once you cease to be a master, once you throw off your master's yoke, you are no longer human rubbish... (p. 81)

Not only identifying the 'you' with the ugly masters from the past, the narrator also calls him/her 'human rubbish.' The additional aspect in the tourist's character that reminds us of the coloniser is the fact that they feel superior to the natives of Antigua. At the airport, it is noticeable that the tourist moves a lot easier through the customs than the Antiguan themselves. The black Antiguan is often suspected of carrying illegal goods because they do not look clean and white like the tourist, and because they are seen with loads of ugly 'cardboard boxes' (p. 4). After the tourist witnesses some ruined sights of Antigua, he/she feels that these messes of exploitation are not their responsibility as they cannot see the connection between what their countrymen did a long time ago to this country with what their countrymen still do or urge others to do to this country at the very moment they are sightseeing. Kincaid writes at this point to express the tourist's insight: "[the Antiguan ruins] are not responsible for what you have; you owe the [Antiguans] nothing; in fact, you owe them a big favour [of building for them the splendid buildings like Government House]" (p. 10). The tourist feels that they are superior because they see that they have more potentiality to provide to these poor Antiguan who ruin themselves. They do not want to link their luxuriant lifestyle with that of the Antiguan. When Kincaid mentions the Queen of England who came to visit the island, she talks about how the bad roads in Antigua need to be paved and restored so that the Queen would have the pleasant impression of riding on the Antiguan road (p. 12). In mentioning the Queen from Europe, she attaches the Queen's persona with that of the tourist as he/she is also from the same site of the so-called civilised countries. The roads that are renewed for the queen reflect the truth that people from North America or Europe are of more importance than the natives because the government pays more attention to the roads that the Queen would travel on than the roads the natives use routinely. One more obvious example of the disparity between the tourist and the natives is when the tourist has a thought about how they are so different from the ordinary way of life of the Antiguan. According to Kincaid's narrator, the tourist will go back to their countries eventually, and leave Antigua as if they cannot see any important urge to bring them back to the place. The narrator asserts that the tourist is not looking forward to be "a person marvelling at the harmony (ordinarily, what [the tourist] would say is the backwardness)" (p. 16). All things considered, Gaunch (2002) concludes in her article that "the tourist and the Antiguan are not on an equal footing economically" (p. 911).

Secondly, the narrator and the natives of Antigua are identified with the colonized slaves. Through the eyes of the tourist, the natives have "descended from slaves" in the colonial time (p. 9). Kincaid enhances Antiguan's connection with the colonial slaves by pointing out later in the narrative that the Antiguan is obsessed with slavery: "in Antigua, people cannot see a relationship between their obsession with slavery and emancipation and their celebration of the Hotel Training School" (p. 55). The school she mentions is the school in which people enrolled to learn how to work as a servant to the tourist from North America and Europe, so the old scenario of colonial times is being repeated today. More particularly, the narrator shares her anger with the slave descendants. Kincaid's narrator exclaims at one point that "not only [do] we have to suffer the unspeakableness of slavery, but the satisfaction to be had from 'We made you bastards rich' is taken away too" (p. 10). At another point she says:

But what I see is the millions of people, of whom I am just one, made orphans: no motherland, no fatherland, no gods, no mounds of earth for holy ground, no excess of love which might lead to the things that an excess of love sometimes brings, and worst and most painful of all, no tongue. (p. 31)

The anger she expresses here is the same feeling she assumes Antiguan would also feel upon realising their inferiority. They realise their fate to be horrible looking back on the past when they were slaves who were robbed of their life and made into servants for the British colonisers/criminals.

Tourism, like colonisation, works as a tool for First-World countries to take advantage of Third-World countries such as Antigua, and destroy their national identities. As it is shown in the story, Antiguan have learned many things from the British colonisers and use them as a way to make their country appear as a heaven for tourists to gain income from the activity. Tourism encourages corruption in the country because being the primary industry of the nation, the authorities would do anything to make Antigua a famous tourist destination. McLeod (2009) points out that “the expense paid by [Antiguan] government to renovate the airport, roads, and harbour to improve Antigua’s image did not result in an equivalent payoff in terms of alleviating the poverty of residents” (p. 79). The island has become insignificant in its own national identity because everything the government ever puts its effort into is to make the surface of Antigua the best place for tourism, the rest and the actual living on the island are ignored completely. The Antigua and Barbuda’s Department of Tourism website is described as such: “the natives of Antigua are mentioned only for adjectival purposes to describe... scenic areas or as a recommendation for good restaurants” (McLeod, 2009, p. 79). From this information, McLeod shows how the Antiguan are being ignored: they are reduced to a mere exhibit for tourists. It is very sad to learn that the people who actually own and live on has become ‘adjectival items’ to decorate their own home. Their home is, then, turned into someone else’s site for relaxation. In the story, the narrator says that the Prime Minister of Antigua has named the airport after himself but does not want his name to be on the school, the hospital, or the public monument (p. 3). This point speaks to the fact that all the government cares about is making Antigua pleasant for tourists. The school and the hospital stand in dust and are in ruins (p. 7). Moreover, Kincaid points out several times about corruption in Antigua: the corruption that exists under the guise of heaven for the tourists. Besides the neglected school and hospital that mirror the inner corruption of the country, the hospital service is said to be staffed with “doctors that no actual Antiguan trusts” (p. 8). The Prime Minister and the Ministers of the country never use the services of the hospital on the island; they usually fly to North America or Europe when they need to see a doctor. The deeper the tourist travels into Antigua, the more he/she sees how corrupt the place has become. The sight of a taxi-driver driving expensive cars while living in a very poor-conditioned house confirms the tourist of the corruption the government makes. It is revealed that the banks only make loans available for cars, and not houses because “the two main car dealerships in Antigua are owned in part or outright by ministers in government” (p. 7).

The Antigua the tourist sees is populated with old colonial buildings ruined by time. One of the ruined colonial buildings that still stands is the library. It was damaged by an earthquake many years ago, but the government who has full authority to restore it has left it in a damaged condition for years (p. 8). This mirrors the fact that the colonisers came to the country, built their buildings, left the country, and returned once again in the form of tourists who encourage people of Antigua to ruin themselves. This ruin is enhanced by the poverty the tourist, even though being presented only with the superficial part of a beautiful Antigua, cannot escape. A stand-out example from the story is the Antiguan waste disposal system. The tourist is warned from swimming in the ocean because waste and refuse generated by the Antiguan and the tourists themselves have possibly contaminated the beaches and the sea as the Antiguan sewage system is a big mess as shown in the story (p. 8). Another truth revealed by the story is the fact that the rate of income among people of Antigua is not equally distributed. Worse than that, the rich people are usually not Antiguan but the foreigners who came to live in Antigua. For example, there are the rich Middle Eastern merchants who are able to loan money to the government (p. 11), the rich drug smugglers (p. 11), and the notorious rich woman who is believed to be the secret mistress of ministers in the government (p. 12). These people live

comfortably in huge and beautiful mansions, unlike most Antiguan who have to struggle day by day in poverty.

The National Tourism Development has made Antigua to exist as an ideal embodiment in the dreams of others but has not synthesised any solid national identity of its own. This issue is mentioned in McLeod's (2009) article: "as a country, Antigua has wrestled to find its identity [; as] an island with little or no natural resources, Antigua exists mainly as a convenient port for travellers" (p. 78). The descriptions of Antigua to other people outside the country are the ones that will paint the image of the island clearer to the tourists. Not only does the development that happens for the sake of tourism destroy the life and existence of the natives, but it also robs the country of its own identity as an independent nation. The whole tourism scheme "[creates] the complete antithesis of a tourist's everyday reality: Antigua is a place where dreams come true, where the visitor can invent whatever pleasure he or she desires" (McLeod, 2009, p. 79). Antigua, the homes of many Antiguan who have to make a living, is valuable for outsiders only as the place that can distract them from boredom. The tourists come to Antigua because they want to get away from the routine banality of their life, and do not understand the actual living conditions of people on the island. As told in the story, they do not want rain to ruin their vacation but refuse to understand that people in the country suffer from drought (p. 4). They tend to enjoy the badly-maintained roads in Antigua because they are different from what they are used to in their civilised countries (p. 5). The thought of a taxi-driver without a license never worries them because they come to enjoy their holiday, and nothing of that sort cannot pollute their trip (p. 7). The tourist's ignorance towards the...

disparity between [his/her] perceptions of the 'place' he/she is visiting and what that place is for those who call it home [causes him/her to turn] a blind eye to Antiguan's ordinariness, that is, to the economic and social difficulties of the island and the people who inhabit it. (Gauch, 2002, p. 911)

The difficulties that the Antiguan are facing are erased from the portrayal of Antigua, thereby people are clouded with the false belief that Antigua is a Caribbean paradise. This misunderstanding does not make Antigua better, but it obstructs the chance of solutions or improvements to occur for the people of Antigua. As it appears to the tourist's eyes, Antigua has no national identity and pride because its government applied the method of corruption and crime from the colonisers of the past to use to gain advantage for themselves; the governmental officials and the foreigners get richer and richer, while the Antiguan grow poorer and poorer. Tourism, as the main industry of the country, becomes a mere tool for the contemporary form of colonisation to exploit the country. Development is aimed only to lift the status of the country as a port for travellers. Everything that the tourist witnesses on his/her tour reminds him/her of the colonial past, and thus makes connection to the Old Antigua.

To emphasise the lost identity of Antigua as the way to attack the colonial power of the past, Kincaid writes: "and so everywhere they went they turned it into England; and everybody they met they turned English. But no place could ever really be England, and nobody who did not look exactly like them would ever be English" (p. 24). The fact that Antigua fails to be England makes it "becomes a non-place" (McLeod 2009, p. 82).

## 5. CONCLUSION

The unconventional concept of time in Kincaid's *A Small Place* allows her to present the horror and agony of her ancestors who suffered through the colonisation of the British Empire in a contemporary stage in which the same colonial injustices are vividly exposed. The whole account of her essay is presented as a trip to Antigua; a tourist from North America or Europe is guided through the island by the narrator who identifies herself with the Antiguan natives. The



tourist's fantasy of the island as a tropical heaven is shattered bit by bit as he/she learns of the false his/her dream about Antigua. With this bitter truth, Kincaid aims to present to the world that Antigua which has been created for the purpose of tourism and exists only in the dreams of outsiders, and the real Antigua cannot find a place to remain in the contemporary capitalist world. The social and financial difficulties people face today link the unfairness of the present to the cruel and racist injustices of the past. Since the perception of time for people of such a small island provides no division between the past and the present, the colonial memories and the ongoing capitalism are intertwined with each other as if they are the same things. Kincaid additionally presents her personal experience of the colonial past to the tourist in order to tell of the seemingly better Antigua that was governed and dominated by the British colonisers. When these memories are unfolded, the connection between what the tourist witnesses and the narrator's personal experience is established. By doing this, Kincaid implies that Antiguan's independence which they believe they gained when the British left is not an actual independence. As the country still suffers from the power hungers of capitalism and industrialised countries inherited from the building of the empire in the past, Antigua is not free. The reason for the country's problems is not the lack of potentiality of Antiguan's to rule themselves, but because they are not yet truly independent and free.

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