

If i could write this in
fire



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

If I could write this in fire is one of the non fiction essays that have been written by Michelle Cliff's. This essay together with I Would Write This in Fire and Journey into Speech are among the most quoted essays in the Caribbean. They are all about issues that deal with people's identities and how the colonization of the Caribbean left the people divided. If I could write in fire mainly talks about politics of race and classes that are present in our societies today. This novel shows us very clearly that the way the Jamaican population was divided by the colonialists and made to believe that they were not the same as each other.

The light skinned Jamaicans like Mitchell Cliff were considered to be collaborators of the colonialists. They were also assimilated to the cultures of the white man. The white skinned people were meant to believe that they were special people that were never meant to interact with their dark skinned countrymen. It is very hard to find the light skinned people intermingling with the dark skinned people. She goes on to say that such a thing was not hard off in the old Jamaica because they could interact with any person that they chose to. This is blamed on the colonialists who choose deliberately to divide the Jamaicans so that they can very easily and effectively impose their imposed rule on the local people. Mitchell gives an example of her childhood friend Zoe who they did most things together but finds it hard to interact with her now that they are grown up.

In chapter one in Can I write this In fire we see a lot of political statements that are made by Mitchell. She goes on to explain how they are poor Jamaicans are. she explains that many of them are slaves that work for work in the plantations and that they are very small amounts of money that can

not help them meet their basic needs. This can be elaborated by the fact that Zoe her childhood friend did not even own a house of their own. She tells us that they lived in a borrowed place that was in a place called Breezy Hill. She goes on to point out that Jamaicans were not only separated by their skin color but also economically. the light skinned Jamaicans like herself were empowered economically unlike the other dark ones. Unlike her friend Zoe who did not have their own home, Mitchell and her family lived relatively comfortably because they owned their house and they could afford decent meals each day. The quality of education that the different colors of people received was also not the same. Mitchell tells us that she attended a private school while her friend Zoe attended a public school. The quality of education offered by the two types of schools was very big In private schools students are given personal attention by the teachers hence they are able to perform very well than their counterparts in public schools.

It is very important to note that Mitchell Cliff believes in the freedom of every person to choose the sexual partner that they want. She does not believe in the principle where the society dictates that every person should be heterosexual and all the gay people are looked down upon by the others. All through her life she has never been shy to state that she is a lesbian and she is ready to be victimized for stating that. in the novel If I can write this on fire she states categorically what they used to do with her friend Zoe. One day when they were standing on the cliff of the orange river, they began to touch each others chests. She says that they touched each others body in asexual way.

We can say that Mitchell's novel in as much as it speaks of herself she also represents a lot of other people. Many people in the world can identify with her situation it is only that they are too afraid to speak for themselves. Many people around the world for example are gay in nature and due to the fact this category of people are not liked and in some cases in Africa they are excommunicated and sometimes killed, they just choose to keep quiet and pretend that they are heterosexuals. People with opposing political views should also be respected and their political views also taken in to consideration. It is important to note that colonization did not bring meaningful development to the people that were colonized. The colonialist used to divide the people that they were colonizing in order to be able to administer their rule in these places. Therefore colonialists should be made to compensate the people that they forcefully administered their rule to.

The only reason that that Mitchell Cliff chose to writes a non-fiction novel is that she had the feeling that she would be taken more seriously. People tend to take non fiction essays or writing very seriously unlike when one reads a fiction book the motive to do so is usually for the purpose of entertainment and they may even forget the lessons that they get from the readings. It is also important to note that Mitchell Cliff figured out that writing her personal life would have made people curious to know what made her the controversial figure that she is. The in the end would have resulted to many people reading her novel hence passing the intended message to a lot more people than she could have reached had she used fiction. Her narrative is so powerful in that she tries to trace her identity ignoring the fact that she has

been privileged than most Jamaicans. She also recognizes that fact that she has been oppressed by the colonialists that was in her country.

References

Cliff, M. (2008). *If I Could Write This in Fire*. Minnesota: U of Minnesota Press.