

# Colonization in annie john



**ASSIGN  
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Martha Lee ENG 92W 4/13/10 In *Annie John*, the lasting effects of Antigua's colonization are reflected through Kincaid paralleling her own experiences with those of the West Indian colonies where she has lived. In *Columbus in Chains*, the issues of Antiguan colonialism and postcolonial culture are apparent in the text, beginning with Annie's discussion of the history of slavery in Antigua through Ruth. " I could see how Ruth felt from looking at her face.

Her ancestors had been the masters, while ours had been the slaves. She had such a lot to be ashamed of, and by being with us every day she was always being reminded" (Kincaid 76).

Annie believes that Ruth possesses an innate sense of guilt because black people were once enslaved by white and everyone knew. She pities Ruth knowing that she knows less about the West Indies than them. Through the interaction of these two girls, Kincaid provides an individualized perspective upon the dynamics of life in a colonial state. Annie also briefly comments on the irony of colonization, considering that, " all of us celebrated Queen Victoria's birthday, but we, the descendants of slaves, knew quite well what had really happened" (Kincaid 76).

The Antiguan children still celebrate even when they are aware that the British once enslaved them. Annie continues on the topic of colonization as she contemplates Columbus who returned to Spain imprisoned in chains. " King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella had sent [Columbus] back to Spain fettered in chains attached to the bottom of the ship. How I loved this picture —to see the usually triumphant Columbus, brought so low, seated at the

bottom of a boat just watching things go by” (Kincaid 78). Annie enjoys seeing Columbus brought so low because he returned to Spain in the way that slaves were sent to the Americas.

The phrase, “ the great man can go nowhere” (Kincaid 78) resonates so strongly in her mind that she “[writes] it out with her fountain pen” (Kincaid 78). This act proves to be a heinous crime, that after the discovery by her teacher, Miss Edwards, “ her whole face was on fire. Her eyes were bulging out of her head” (Kincaid 81). Miss Edwards is a representation of the English social order and has defined herself according to the rules of this order. Annie’s action against the discoverer of Antigua’s honor is against Miss Edwards’s system of belief so she refers to Annie’s action as “ blasphemous. (Kincaid 82). Because Columbus’s importance is essential to the colonial system, Annie’s act not only criticizes him, but also subverts the whole dominant colonial order. For this reason, Miss Edwards sees to it that Annie must be punished. Kincaid’s experiences clearly parallel the experiences of Antigua and its colonization by its British protectorate. They are reflective of her own memories and feelings towards Antigua’s colonization, and through Annie John’s journey, gives insight into how a once controlled culture seeks its independence.