

A small place



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Jamaica Kincaid's *A Small Place* focuses on her cynical views toward politics, poverty and tourism in Antigua. Kincaid begins by telling the readers about the island's natural beauty: the sunny sky and warm weather, and the picturesque nature. She then, encourages the reader to look beneath the island's beauty to discover and get to know the real state of the people and their culture.

The reader is addressed as you all throughout the book. Kincaid would like the reader to understand the people's poverty and their culture, which is highly influenced by the English colonizers, and the political system riddled with corruption. She challenges the reader to look beyond the natural beauty of the island to discover and acknowledge its ugly side. All throughout the book, the author's opinions, views, criticisms and comments regarding these three issues are apparent.

The author's narrative is laced with bitterness and sarcasm, particularly when relating about the island's colonial past and the present's dependence on tourism as a source of income. Kincaid's tone changes when she recalls memories that are precious to her as a child. But predominantly, she writes with indignation.

This paper will discuss Kincaid's narrative and criticism against tourism, poverty, and politics through the book's content, setting, theme, major characters, and symbolism.

Content

A Small Place is not strictly divided into titled sections. Instead, there are four untitled sections that tackle different aspects. In the first section, the

narration was about being a hypothetical tourist in Antigua, the author's birthplace. Antigua is then described as an island of great, natural beauty.

As a tourist, you only see the beautiful sights and the positive aspects of the people and the island. You don't program your mind to think of the natives other than the usual warm and welcoming hosts, and as the people to serve your needs.

The narrative in this section is laced with insider knowledge, often about the harsh reality that a tourist doesn't see. These include the poverty of the people, the corruption and unlawful activities of some of the islands mansion owners who Kincaid claims are drug lords, and references to why most of the cars in the island are Japanese made. This section ends at the hotel and the author's opinion about a tourist's moral ugliness.

In the next chapter, the author brings back memories of the " old" island, which she described as a colony of Great Britain. The author highlights theracismin the island and how the locals loved the English culture. One of this section's main points is the author's derision against the fuss the people made over Princess Margaret's visit when Kincaid was just a child.

The colonial mentality of the Antiguans was criticized. For the Antiguans, the author says, bad behavior is not bad so long as it was an Englishman who committed it. At the end of the section, the author relates colonialism to the present impoverished state of Antigua.

It was in the second section that Kincaid asked " why people like her can't forget the past"? She calls the reader's attention to the British colonial system, and condemns the human trading in the past. Her ancestors, she

said, were dragged to Antigua as chained slaves. According to Kincaid, slavery will never be forgotten because institutional reminders remained in the island. The Barclays bank is an example of trading firm that made its fortunes from bartering humans like they were goods.

After amassing wealth through the sale of slaves, the Barclays went into banking and continues to be prosperous up until the present. What's more ironic to Kincaid is the fact that Barclays is a major financial institution in Antigua that provides loans and fundings to the descendants of the slaves they traded years ago. While the slaves made them rich, it is their descendants who are making Barclays continue to be rich.