

## *A Small Place* by Jamaica Kincaid

### Essay Section #1 (pp. 3-19)

**Major Theme: tourist versus native**

**Discussion Questions – answer these in as much detail as you can:**

1. a) Identify some of the key ways in which Kincaid attempts to make the reader (most likely someone who could be that tourist) feel “uncomfortable” within the first few pages of the book.  
b) Describe your own reaction to these various methods (mood/atmosphere).  
c) Do her attempts to unnerve you work? Why or why not? (tone)
2. “You may be the sort of tourist who would wonder why a Prime Minister would want an airport named after him—why not a school, why not a hospital, why not some great public monument? (Kincaid 3).

Do a quick search of “Vere Cornwall Bird Senior.” Then, attempt to answer Kincaid’s rhetorical questions.

3. Kincaid spends most of this first section setting up her notion of “the tourist gaze” - which is largely a construct (in other words, we see what we want to see rather than what is actually there - it is actually a very sophisticated literary theory idea!) What is the effect of Kincaid’s construction of the tourist gaze upon you?
4. How would Kincaid respond to the following statements about travel? How would you? Write a 2-3 sentence response to each.
  - a) “Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness.” (Mark Twain)
  - b) “People travel to faraway places to watch, in fascination, the kind of people they ignore at home.” (Dagobert D. Runes)
  - c) “The next best thing to being rich is travelling as though you were” (Stephen Birnbaum)

### Essay Section #2 (pp. 23-37)

**Major Themes**

- “we cannot erase history”
- the power of language (the colonizers had power over the natives because of language; but, those oppressed now can use that very language against those who oppressed them)

- the power of oppression through institutions – “wherever you went you made sure to build a school, a library (yes, and in both of these places you distorted or erased my history and glorified your own)” (Kincaid 36).
- “I met the world through England, and if the world wanted to meet me it would have to do so through England” (Kincaid 33).
- lasting effects of colonial oppression - “from afar you watch as we do to ourselves the very things you used to do to us” (Kincaid 36).

### **Discussion Questions**

1. “[England was] a place they loved so much, a place they had to leave but could never forget. 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, so you can imagine the destruction of people and land that came from that” (Kincaid 24). From your own experience, can you list institutions within our own society (and others that were colonies) that owe their existence to this colonial method of imposing “England” upon the world?
2. What, according to Kincaid, is the difference between the England the Antiguan were taught to love and “the England that was so far away, the England that not even a boat could take us to” (Kincaid 30)?
3. Kincaid repeatedly highlights a major post-colonial theme: language is power. Thus, whoever possesses language, possesses power. How is Kincaid herself reversing the trend? Make specific reference to the text in your answer.

### **Essay Section #4 (pp. 77-81)**

#### **Rhetorical Devices**

1. This final short essay starts out with a great deal of repetition – why? Is it effective?
2. Kincaid constantly relies of visual imagery to reinforce her idea that “the beauty of [Antigua] seems unreal” (77). What is the message in this?

## Post-Colonial Bingo

Find quotations from within the text to match the following concepts AND Kincaid's use of the listed stylistic elements. For each of your quotation choices, you must provide an explanation of how it is "working" within the quotation (analysis). OR, answer the "po-co" question ...

<b>P</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>O</b>
Tone (sarcasm)	The Use of "You"	Repetition	Irony
Rhetorical Question	Historical Allusion	Alliteration	Imagery
How did the experience of colonization affect Kincaid?	Logos	Pathos	Ethos
Who does Kincaid see as having "power" in Antigua?			

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