Your Name

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Date

Annie John

The novel *Annie John*, written by Jamaica Kincaid is based on a provocative story of a young girl growing up in the Island of Antigua. The story revolves around Annie and the hardships she faced since childhood (Caton 129). The novel highlighted various themes such as mother-daughter relationship, death, and transition of Annie John from childhood to teens yet the main theme that was identified in the novel multiple times, was about power.

In the novel, Antigua was colonized by the British and Annie was born during this period. Due to the colonialism, black people were suppressed by the white people and were considered less privileged as compared to the white people. The colonial school acts as a physical manifestation of an empire that catalyzes the development of the protagonist (Kincaid 75). The author challenges the imperial foundation of the colonial schools where the books that were taught to the students were written by the western authors. The British also asserted the use of not only English books but English manners as well to persuade peers to obey the British rulings. However, Annie John resisted to be suppressed by the colonial education system therefore she tried to raise her voice against colonialism. According to Annie, Columbus was responsible for bringing colonialism to the Island due to which she despised Columbus. So, after seeing the image of Columbus tied in chains in the history book, she responded “*What just deserts, I thought, for I did not like Columbus. How I loved this picture—to see the usually triumphant Columbus, brought so low, seated by the bottom of the boat watching things go by"* (Kincaid 77). Annie was against slavery and according to her, Africans would not have colonized Europeans the way Europeans colonized Africans. She believed that it is justified that Columbus was brought to the New World tied in chains like slaves because he was the one who brought the idea of colonialism on the Island. Annie proceeded further to deface Columbus's image and wrote the caption “The great man can no longer get up and go”. This clearly explains that when Columbus had the power, he brought colonialism but as soon as he lost power, he was treated as slaves.

However, as Annie was studying in a colonial school where Columbus was treated as a god, she faced the consequences of defacing Columbus's image. Although, she was a brilliant student yet, due to defacing the picture, she was demoted to second place in her class. Annie wanted to read more about the discrimination that black people faced but, her voice was suppressed by the colonial education system that was imposed on her due to colonialization. During colonization, Antiguans were pushed into poverty, and England embraced all the financial benefits of natural resources present in Antigua. Due to the power of British rule, the rights of Antiguans were repressed and they were not able to attain necessities of life. Annie was against this discrimination and despite getting demoted to second place in the class, she was determined to work harder for black women empowerment and to advocate for the rights of black people.

In the novel, the author also depicted power by describing gender discrimination. In Antigua, Annie’s village continues to embrace polygamy for men. In contrast, according to British expectations, women were expected to embrace monogamy (Perry 129). This imbalance of power was the reason that women were suppressed by men. Annie resisted the idea of being suppressed by males and societal pressure. Due to this reason, she decided to leave her parent’s home to start a new life in England so that she can escape the suppression that she had to face in Antigua.

**Works Cited**

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