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Toward Biotic Justice: An Organismic and TCM Ecocritical Reading of Kincaid's *A Small Place*

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Abstract

This paper proposes an interdisciplinary analytical framework "TCM Ecology" to re-read Jamaica Kincaid's postcolonial text *A Small Place* as a diagnostic case study of a geographic organism under neocolonial siege. Synthesizing the classical medical ontology of the *Huangdi Neijing* (Su Wen) with postcolonial ecocriticism, the study demonstrates that Antigua's environmental and infrastructural degradation, such as chronic droughts, leaded atmospheric pollution, marine sewage contamination, and reliance on imported food supply chains, represent somatic symptoms of systemic pathology. Through TCM taxonomy, these spatial traumas are diagnosed as *yin deficiency*, *qi and blood stagnation*, and *metabolic/excretory breakdown* caused by imperial exploitation and political corruption. Building on theoretical synthesis of the Su Wen, this paper argues that Kincaid's confrontational, second-person narrative strategy functions as an active, purgative clinical intervention to unblock stagnant historical memory, and drain the toxic myths of neocolonial dependency. Ultimately, this study provides a novel diagnostic vocabulary for the environmental and medical humanities, demonstrating how integrating traditional medical concepts with literary critique illuminates structural violence on a macro-somatic scale while charting a path toward biotic justice and organismic restoration.

Key words: Jamaica Kincaid; *A Small Place*; TCM Ecology; Narrative Acupuncture; Environmental and Medical Humanities; Biotic Justice.

I. INTRODUCTION

Jamaica Kincaid's *A Small Place* (1988) is widely recognized in postcolonial scholarship as a searing indictment of how tourism capital exploits and degrades Antigua. However, existing analyses often treat political subjugation and environmental trauma as distinct spheres. By integrating an organismic ontology through the framework of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) Ecocriticism, this paper re-conceptualizes Antigua as a living macro-organism governed by the dynamic circulation of *qi* (vital energy) and *blood*, the harmony of *yin and yang*, and metabolic self-regulation. Within this

ecological framework, British colonial history and contemporary tourism act as invasive pathogens that disrupt the island's organic integrity, plunging its bodily and spatial systems into profound disharmony.

This paper demonstrates how TCM Ecocriticism unifies these socio-ecological traumas into a coherent pathodynamic model, diagnosing Antigua with severe “*yin deficiency*,” “*qi and blood stagnation*,” “*alimentary parasitism*,” and “*metabolic/excretory failure*.” Through close textual analysis, it frames Kincaid's confrontational, second-person narrative as a form of clinical, purgative intervention—a “*narrative acupuncture*” engineered to unblock stagnant channels, purge colonial pathogens, and dismantle the island's pathological geography. Ultimately, the paper argues that shifting from static anthropocentric critiques toward an organismic ontology expands the horizon of postcolonial ecocriticism, establishing a path toward biotic justice that demands the holistic, systemic restoration of both land and community.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW OF A SMALL PLACE

A Small Place exposes how tourism capital commodifies the island's natural scenery and triggers continuous ecological degradation (Sethi, 2017). Chinese scholars have further explored the profound ecological connotations embedded in the text from an indigenous perspective (Zhang, 2024). Over the past two decades, critics have produced abundant scholarship on this work, which can be categorized into three major branches: postcolonial ecocriticism, criticisms of the tourist gaze, and research on narrative and ethnic identity. Centered on postcolonial ecocriticism, particularly through Rob Nixon's (2011) framework of transnational environmental justice, this paper sorts out the dominant research traditions in postcolonial studies and narrative analysis. By comparing academic consensus and divergences between domestic and international researchers, this review lays a solid foundation for further textual exploration of *A Small Place*.

1. Ecocritical Studies and the Transnational Ethics of Place

Ecocriticism has evolved into the dominant interpretive framework for *A Small Place*. Scholars across China and the West have reached a consensus that tourist colonialism leads to the plunder of indigenous natural resources (Sethi, 2017; Zhang, 2024). As Zhang (2024) explains, Western tourism investors package Antigua's coastlines, mountains, and native vegetation into exotic commodities for consumption. Environmental crises including soil erosion and prolonged drought are deliberately concealed by tourism marketing, which portrays the island as a carefree tropical resort.

Crucially, Rob Nixon deepens this ecocritical framework by demonstrating how Kincaid confounds strict binaries between local bioregionalism and global forces. Nixon argues that while *A Small Place* appears to take the natural boundaries of a tiny island as its starting point, Kincaid's “small place” is inextricably local and transnational. For Nixon, place in Antigua is inherently defined by historic displacement: British colonizers eradicated the indigenous population, imported enslaved Africans, and cleared native forests for cash crops like sugar and cotton, transforming a well-wooded island into a deforested landscape. This colonial-induced environmental degradation stripped the land of its water-retention capacity, forcing modern Antigua to import water and deepening its economic reliance on tourism (Nixon, 2011: 247-48).

Consequently, Nixon posits that the island's reinvention as an Edenic retreat for Western tourists represents a supreme irony: a space marked by coercive labor and violence is rebranded as a pure, timeless paradise. Kincaid's essay thus functions as an effort to return this pseudo-Eden to a transnational ethics of place. In doing so, *A Small Place* positions Antigua as a “shadow island”—a historical and ecological corrective to the spatial amnesia of self-contained, regenerative English pastoral traditions (Nixon, 248). Expanding on this historical trauma, Rickel (2024) similarly establishes

an interconnection between ecological trauma and the transatlantic slave trade, revealing how the glossy tourist landscape conceals long-standing ecological violence.

2. Postcolonial Criticism of the Tourist Gaze

Postcolonial interpretation represents the earliest and most established research framework of this text. A large body of scholarship focuses on Kincaid's second-person narration and examines how it undermines the hegemonic perspective of tourists (Alessandrini, 2010; Hu, 2024). Hu argues that the address of "you" directed at white tourists undermines their racial arrogance. Even after political independence, Antigua remains trapped in dual economic and cultural oppression stemming from colonial legacies (2024: 20-21). However, conventional postcolonial criticism often suffers from an analytical dichotomy: most traditional postcolonial readings separate political and economic power structures from environmental deterioration, underestimating how colonial environmental transformations directly produce modern neocolonial vulnerabilities.

3. Narrative, Identity, and the Paradox of Colonial Botany

This research branch concentrates on narrative techniques and the construction of ethnic identity. Chen (2025) defines *A Small Place* as homecoming autoethnography. Based on her personal experience of returning to homeland, Kincaid subverts the superficial sightseeing logic of Western travel writing. International scholars pay close attention to the essay's confrontational tone and rhetorical power (Marquis, 2018). Marquis (2018) points out that the accusatory tone originates from the Caribbean oral tradition, which functions as an indigenous form of resistance against imperial discourse. Larkin (2012) puts forward an innovative argument that the text reverses the power of the gaze: instead of letting readers observe Antigua objectively, the work interrogates Western audiences and compels tourists to reflect on their privileged status.

Nixon provides a pivotal bridge between identity politics and ecological form by analyzing Kincaid's broader reflections on colonial nature (such as in her essay "Alien Soil") (2011: 248). Nixon highlights Kincaid's paradoxical position: in England, she stands on alien soil; yet in Antigua, where neither the people nor most of the cultivated plants are indigenous, the soil constitutes the historical ground of her alienation. Recognizing that she comes from "a people with a wretched historical relationship to growing things," Kincaid nevertheless retains a deep passion for botany and gardening, an inheritance acquired through conquest that she turns against itself by refracting her botanical enthusiasm through the prism of colonial violence (Nixon, 2011: 248).

A review of existing domestic and international literature reveals three prominent research gaps that warrant further investigation. First, integration of environmental history and biopolitics: While scholars like Nixon (2011) have introduced the concept of the "transnational ethics of place," there remains a gap in synthesizing Kincaid's ecological critiques with broader biopolitical frameworks, e.g., how commodified landscapes and the categorization of natural resources into environmental risks reconfigure local embodiment and enforce systemic compliance. Second, comparative Caribbean spatiality: Existing ecological readings mainly focus on *A Small Place* in isolation or in opposition to English pastoralism, lacking horizontal comparative analyses with other Caribbean island narratives that address ecological displacement and the "shadow island" condition. Third, continuity across Kincaid's oeuvre: Few researchers systematically trace how the paradoxical botanical inheritance identified by Nixon (2011) evolves across Kincaid's complete oeuvre—from the polemical non-fiction of *A Small Place* to her later, explicitly horticultural and autoethnographic writings.

III. TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE ECOLOGY

TCM Ecology is an interdisciplinary critical paradigm that synthesizes the holistic philosophy of Traditional Chinese Medicine with modern environmental humanities, medical humanities, and postcolonial theory. Rooted in ancient philosophical foundations, "TCM ecocriticism takes the

ecological thought in TCM theory as its core, combining traditional wisdom with contemporary ecological crises to form a knowledge system with unique interpretive power, becoming an important knowledge construction of ancient Chinese ecological wisdom in response to the challenges of the Anthropocene.” (Jiang, 2025: 64) At its heart lies the principle of *tianren heyi* (the “unity of heaven and humanity”).

According to Chinese Scholar Lifu Jiang, the ecological wisdom of TCM theory is mainly reflected in three levels: 1. Holistic Symbiosis: the concept of symbiosis between humanity and nature from the perspective of holism. “TCM believes that human beings and nature are an interconnected and interacting community of life. This cognition breaks through the limitations of anthropocentrism and highly accords with the core demands of ecocriticism.” Rather than treating the human body as a mechanical biological unit or nature as an inert backdrop for resource extraction, TCM Ecology conceptualizes the body, culture, and the natural environment as a co-constitutive, dynamic micro-macro organism. 2. Balance in Yin-Yang and Five Elements: the idea of balance in the theory of *yin-yang* and *the five elements*. “The theory of *yin-yang* reveals the law of motion in the unity of opposites, while the theory of *the five elements* explains the inter-generating and inter-restraining relationships among all things. Together, they constitute the methodological foundation for TCM to understand nature and regulate balance, providing traditional wisdom for understanding the dynamic balance of ecosystems.” 3. Material Unity in *qi theory*: the idea of material unity in “*qi theory*.” “Ancient Chinese philosophy holds that *qi* is the fundamental substance constituting all things in heaven and earth, and its movement and transformation drive the generation and development of all things in the universe. This idea emphasizes the material unity of humanity and nature, providing a unique philosophical perspective for ecocriticism.” (2025: 64)

Internal organ networks, energetic flows (*qi*), and physiological states are mapped through ecological metaphors of terrain, climate, and circulation. Within contemporary academic criticism, TCM Ecology functions as an epistemic counter-framework to Western Cartesian dualism, industrial biopolitics, and anthropocentric environmental destruction. When deployed as an interpretive method for postcolonial literature, the TCM Ecology offers a novel non-Western vocabulary to deconstruct colonial violence and environmental trauma. Postcolonial texts frequently grapple with how imperial conquest, plantation slavery, and modern tourism degrade both native ecosystems and indigenous bodies. TCM Ecology naturally bridges the somatic and the spatial, allowing critics to read ecological crises, such as deforestation, soil exhaustion, and prolonged drought, as systemic disruptions of an island or region’s macro-somatic equilibrium. Concepts like *qi stagnation*, *internal climatic imbalances* (heat, dampness, dryness), and *meridian blockages* provide a precise taxonomy to articulate how historical displacement directly produces chronic bodily and social pathology in subaltern populations. Furthermore, this framework dismantles the cold, reductive “medical gaze” of Western clinical medicine and imperial administration, replacing it with an organicist counter-gaze that honors localized narrative, historical trauma, and somatic memory.

IV. PATHOLOGICAL GEOGRAPHY AND ORGANISMIC DE-HARMONIZATION IN A SMALL PLACE

To understand the ecological and socio-political catastrophe of Antigua in Jamaica Kincaid’s *A Small Place*, we should move beyond viewing the island as a static geopolitical territory or a mere backdrop for imperial exploitation. Within the framework of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) Ecocriticism, Antigua is re-conceptualized as a dynamic, living macro-organism – a delicate biotic body where geographical features, atmospheric conditions, and human populations form an interdependent, self-regulating ecosystem. When this macro-somatic organism is invaded by the dual pathogens (*xie qi*, 邪气) of British colonialism and global tourism capital, its natural homeostatic balance is shattered. What emerges is a “pathological geography” marked by chronic systemic disharmony, organ failure, and obstructed energetic pathways. The following close reading applies a diagnostic taxonomy derived

from TCM theory to trace how imperial violence actively produces somatic disease across Antigua's landscape, and how Kincaid's confrontational narrative acts as a therapeutic intervention aimed at restoring biotic justice.

1. Desiccation of the Biotic Body: Yin Deficiency, Despoiled Fluids, and the Imperial Tourist Gaze

In TCM organismic ontology, water is the primary physical manifestation of *yin* – the cooling, moistening, and nourishing substance essential for sustaining cellular vitality, metabolic fluidity, and systemic equilibrium. As the foundational medical canon *Huang Di Nei Jing (Su Wen)* establishes, human life and environmental dynamics operate under identical cosmic laws: “Yin and yang, they are the Way of heaven and earth, the fundamental principles [governing] the myriad beings, father and mother to all changes and transformations, the basis and beginning of generating and killing, the palace of spirit brilliance” (Unschuld, 2003: 86). A harmonious biotic ecosystem relies on this reciprocal interaction between *yin* and *yang*. Under the pathologizing influence of global tourism capital, however, this primordial macro-somatic equilibrium is violently disrupted to satisfy exogenous consumption.

Kincaid highlights this ecological schism in her opening pages, contrasting the tourist's desire for uninterrupted sunshine with the desiccation of the island's biotic body:

“As your plane descends to land, you might say, What a beautiful island Antigua is – more beautiful than any of the other islands you have seen... but they were much too green, much too lush with vegetation, which indicated to you, the tourist, that they got quite a bit of rainfall, and rain is the very thing that you, just now, do not want... the thought of what it might be like for someone who had to live day in, day out in a place that suffers constantly from drought, and so has to watch carefully every drop of fresh water used... must never cross your mind.” (1988: 3-4) From a TCM ecocritical perspective, this illustrates a state of acute *yin* deficiency (陰虛) within the Antiguan macro-organism. The tourism industry commodifies and hyper-inflates the *yang* element – the “deliciously hot and dry” climate – while systematically pathologizing and suppressing the Yin element (rainfall). The tourist's aesthetic desire for an arid, cloudless environment directly depends on the fetishization of a severe ecological trauma: a prolonged, life-threatening drought.

This artificial inflation of *yang* at the expense of *yin* depletes the island's vital fluids (*jinye*, 津液). In a healthy organ-system, fluids circulate freely to nourish the entire collective body; here, Antigua's scarce *yin* resources are hoarded and diverted to luxury enclaves. Resort hotels consume vast quantities of fresh water for swimming pools, manicured lawns, and tourist baths, forcing the indigenous population – the living cellular tissues of the Antiguan body – to “watch carefully every drop of fresh water used.” This is not merely an economic inequity; it is a violation of biotic justice and a physiological pathology. The imperial tourist gaze strips the land of its natural hydro-ecological cycles, converting a somatic deficiency into a visual commodity and leaving the native organism in a state of chronic, parched exhaustion.

2. Obstructed Meridians and Vascular Toxicity: Qi/Blood Stagnation in the Island's Structural Conduits

For a living macro-organism to maintain homeostatic vitality, its internal channels – the meridians (*jingluo*) through which *qi*, *blood*, and vital nutrients circulate – must remain unobstructed. As Unschuld underscores in his theoretical synthesis of the *Su Wen*, ancient Chinese medical ontology posits that dynamic, unimpeded motion is essential for systemic health, whereas “stagnation, blockage, reverse flow, and depletion in specific body parts represent disease” (2003: 148). Drawing on the classical analogy that running water avoids putrefaction through perpetual movement, the *Su Wen* explicitly links structural harmony and fluid circulation with systemic pathology: “The sages arranged *yin* and *yang* [in such a way that their] sinews and vessels were in harmony, [their] bones and marrow were solid and firm, and [their] *qi* and *blood* both followed [their usual course]... If one carefully balances

the five flavors, the bones are upright and the sinews are soft. As a result, *qi* and *blood* flow.” (Unschuld, 2003: 148)

In *A Small Place*, Antigua’s physical roads, vehicular traffic, and institutional networks function as these vital macro-somatic meridians. Kincaid’s close-up depiction of the island’s transportation infrastructure reveals a severe state of *qi* and *blood stagnation* (气滞血瘀):

“The road on which you are travelling is a very bad road, very much in need of repair.... You continue to look at the cars and you say to yourself, Why, they look brand-new, but they have an awful sound, like an old car – a very old, dilapidated car. How to account for that? Well, possibly it’s because they use leaded gasoline in these brand-new cars whose engines were built to use non-leaded gasoline, but you musn’t ask the person driving the car if this is so, because he or she has never heard of unleaded gasoline.” (5-6) Here, the island’s physical conduits are literally choking on toxic waste. The introduction of leaded gasoline into unleaded engines serves as a vivid manifestation of external pathogen contamination (*xie qi*, 邪气). The combustion of incompatible fuel generates a toxic, stagnant atmospheric *qi* that physically corrodes both the geographical environment and the respiratory health of the inhabitants.

Furthermore, the structural circulation of the social organism is severely distorted by political corruption. Capital and material resources – the *blood* of the social organism – do not flow smoothly to nourish vital organs like Pigott’s School (which sits “in a sea of dust”) or Holberton Hospital (7). Instead, they are diverted and stagnate in parasitic nodes: the ostentatious mansions of corrupt politicians and merchants. That the best-paved road in Antigua leads directly to a minister’s mistress’s estate rather than to public clinics or schools exemplifies how the island’s pathways have been re-engineered to serve pathological accumulation and blockage rather than organic, life-sustaining distribution.

3. Metabolic/Excretory Failure and Ancestral Phlegm-Toxicity: The Unresolved Traumas of Colonial Sewage

An essential tenet of TCM organismic ecology is the completion of the metabolic loop: the organism’s capacity to ingest nourishment, transform it through metabolic *qi-transformation*, and properly distribute and excrete waste products. In Unschuld’s analysis of the *Su Wen*, the physiological integrity of the vessels relies on the healthy transformation of ingested nourishment: “The *qi* of food enters the stomach. The turbid *qi* turns to the heart. Excessive essence [flows] into the vessels. The *qi* in the vessels flows through the conduits. The *qi* in the conduits turns to the lung. The lung is the meeting place of the one hundred vessels... They transport essence to the skin and the body hair.” (2003: 174) When this natural circulatory and excretory pipeline is compromised, the vessels cease to be conduits of pure essence and instead become transmitters of external pathogens – such as cold, wind, or “evil *qi*” (*xie qi*) – that penetrate the systemic network (2003: 174).

In Kincaid’s text, this metabolic and circulatory loop is catastrophically broken, causing the boundary between paradise and toxicity to collapse:

“You must not wonder what exactly happened to the contents of your lavatory when you flushed it. You must not wonder where your bathwater went when you pulled out the stopper. You must not wonder what happened when you brushed your teeth. Oh, it might all end up in the water you are thinking of taking a swim in; the contents of your lavatory might, just might, graze gently against your ankle as you wade carefree in the water, for you see, in Antigua, there is no proper sewage-disposal system.” (13-14) The total absence of a functional sewage-disposal system represents a literal collapse of *excretory* and *qi-transformation* function. Instead of transforming food and fluids into refined essence that nourishes the “one hundred vessels” of the collective body, the resort infrastructure operates as an extractive parasite, pumping raw human effluent and turbid waste directly back into the surrounding

marine environment. The very ocean marketed as a pristine, curative tonic to the tourist – navy-blue, sky-blue, pale and clear – becomes heavily laden with pathologized waste and stagnant *xie qi*.

This physical accumulation of sewage is intrinsically linked to a deeper historical and spiritual pathogen. Kincaid immediately juxtaposes hidden sewage with the historical trauma of transatlantic slavery: “But the Caribbean Sea is very big and the Atlantic Ocean is even bigger; it would amaze even you to know the number of black slaves this ocean has swallowed up” (Kincaid 14). Beneath the idyllic coastal surface lies an unhealed historical wound. In TCM taxonomy, this historical trauma operates as a deep-seated, ancestral “toxic phlegm” (*tan du*, 痰毒) and stagnant pathogen that has accumulated over centuries, embedded within the spatial memory of the Atlantic. The tourist industry’s refusal to construct sustainable sanitary infrastructure mirrors historical colonial violence: both systems treat the island organism and its surrounding waters as a disposable sink for waste and subjugated bodies, actively obstructing systemic healing and violating the imperative of biotic justice.

4. Disrupted Spleen Metamorphosis and Alimentary Parasitism: The “Miami Food” Loop

In TCM organismic theory, systemic metabolic vitality relies on the central axis of the *spleen* (*pi*) and *stomach* (*wei*). The *spleen* is responsible for transformation and transportation (*yunhua*, 运化) – the vital process of ingesting nourishment, extracting its subtle essence, and generating the body’s internal, nutritive *camp qi* (*ying qi*, 营气). As Unschuld emphasizes in his analysis of the *Su Wen*, ancient medical tradition designates the *spleen* and *stomach* as the ultimate foundation of dynamic nourishment:

“The *spleen* and the *stomach*, the large intestine, the small intestine, the triple burner, and the urinary bladder are the basis of grain storage. They are the location of the *camp qi*.” (2003: 165). When the regular passage of *camp qi* and *protective qi* (*wei qi*) is obstructed or distorted, the organism suffers severe internal decay, manifesting as pathological abscesses, ulcers, and tissue degeneration (Unschuld and Tsumura, 2003: 166). As the *Su Wen* explicitly warns, systemic fatality occurs “when the *camp qi* and the *protective qi* no [longer] move and when the five depots are no [longer] passable” (2003: 165).

In *A Small Place*, Antigua’s modern tourism-driven economy exhibits a severe form of *spleen qi* deficiency (脾氣虛) and structural *camp qi* disruption, characterized by a fundamental inability to transform and nourish its populace from its own native soil: “When you sit down to eat your delicious meal, it’s better that you don’t know that most of what you are eating came off a plane from Miami. And before it got on a plane in Miami, who knows where it came from? A good guess is that it came from a place like Antigua first, where it was grown dirt-cheap, went to Miami, and came back.” (14) This bizarre, circular import-export supply chain represents a radical disruption of the natural alimentary and metabolic cycle. Instead of utilizing local soil to generate authentic *camp qi* that internally sustains the domestic population, the island’s agricultural capacity has been colonized, extracted, and bypassed. The island organism can no longer process its own life-sustaining nutrients; its digestive loop is completely outsourced to the imperial hub of Miami.

This structural dysfunction creates a state of *alimentary parasitism*. The “delicious local food” served to the tourist is a spatial simulation – an imported byproduct of global capital that leaves the island’s actual agricultural body depleted, stagnant, and dependent. Deprived of a self-sustaining *spleen function* and burdened by the unnatural blockage of its internal resources, Antigua’s innate self-healing capacity (*zheng qi*, 正氣) is severely compromised. Just as Unschuld notes that the obstruction of *camp* and *protective qi* causes internal exhaustion and external heat, the structural decay of Antigua’s local agriculture renders the macro-organism permanently vulnerable to the volatile, toxic fluctuations of foreign markets and global capital.

5. Clinical Intervention and Narrative Acupuncture: Purging Colonial Pathogens to Restore Zheng Qi and Biotic Justice

If Antigua is a diseased body suffering from fluid depletion, vascular obstruction, and toxic accumulation, how can biotic justice and organismic recovery be realized? In Unschuld's analysis of the Su Wen, systemic vitality requires a healthy, underlying *stomach qi* (*wei qi*) to nourish the organs. When severe pathogens dominate the organism, "the *stomach qi* cannot arrive... the *true qi* of the depot appears alone," signaling a fatal breakdown where *evil qi* overwhelms the body's internal coherence (Unschuld, 2003: 159). Furthermore, classical pathology recognizes that emotional states directly dictate the physical dynamics of *qi movement*: "the hundred diseases are generated by the *qi*," where anger causes *qi* to rise, fear causes it to descend, and pensiveness causes it to stagnate or "lump together" (Unschuld, 2003: 161-62).

Kincaid's narrative strategy in *A Small Place* eschews comforting prose or passive instruction. Instead, her fierce, uncompromising anger – which in TCM theory violently disrupts stagnant patterns and forces *qi* upward and outward – operates alongside a confrontational second-person "you" address. This technique functions as a targeted clinical intervention, a form of narrative acupuncture that pierces the stagnant, defensive exterior of tourist consciousness: "The thing you have always suspected about yourself the minute you become a tourist is true: A tourist is an ugly human being... you make a leap from being that nice blob just sitting like a boob in your amniotic sac of the modern experience to being a person visiting heaps of death and ruin and feeling alive and inspired at the sight of it..." (14-16) By aggressively confronting readers with their structural role in the island's degradation, Kincaid induces a psychological and somatic crisis of awareness. She systematically strips away the tourist's illusion of innocence, replacing their complacent pensiveness with an unsettling, visceral realization of ongoing colonial exploitation. This rhetorical method functions as a powerful purgative and emetic, forcing the reader to mentally expel the commodified myths of the tropical paradise. By exposing the structural failure of local healthcare, the unrepaired public library left in ruins since the 1974 earthquake, and corrupt ministers fleeing overseas for medical treatment Kincaid diagnostically maps the internal rot of the postcolonial state.

This diagnostic exposure is a necessary prerequisite for organismic restoration and biotic justice. By compelling the reader to confront Antigua's "pathological geography," Kincaid unblocks the stagnant channels of historical memory and resists the imperial temporalities that perpetuate structural neglect. Expelling these external pathogens (*xie qi*) and clearing systemic blockages is the essential first step toward reviving Antigua's native *true qi* (*zheng qi*) – re-establishing its ecological sovereignty, food autonomy, and holistic health.

V. CONCLUSION

Through the integrative framework of TCM Ecology, Jamaica Kincaid's *A Small Place* re-emerges as a rigorous medical case study of a geographic organism under neocolonial siege. This study demonstrates that Antigua's multifaceted ecological degradation – manifested in its chronic droughts, toxic leaded atmospheric emissions, sewage-polluted marine waters, and structural dependence on imported foreign foods – represents the interconnected, somatic symptoms of a systemic colonial and capitalist disease that fundamentally disrupts the island's organic vitality.

By diagnosing these environmental and infrastructural traumas through the classical taxonomy of *yin deficiency*, *qi and blood stagnation*, and *metabolic/excretory breakdown*, this research reveals the precise clinical function of Kincaid's literary strategy. Far from being a passive lamentation of postcolonial ruin, her fierce, uncompromising narrative operates as an active, purgative medicine. By puncturing the tourist's protective illusions, confronting imperial complacency, and draining the stagnant, toxic myths that perpetuate neocolonial dependency, Kincaid's prose seeks to unblock the island's obstructed meridians (*jingluo*). Ultimately, synthesizing traditional Chinese medical ontology with postcolonial literary critique offers a novel diagnostic vocabulary for environmental and medical humanities – one

that exposes structural violence on a somatic scale while charting a conceptual path toward holistic, self-sustaining organismic restoration and biotic justice.

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