

Chapter Three

The Transformations of Human Rights of Mobility in Our Global Age: Jamaica Kincaid's *A Small Place* and Stephanie Black's *Life and Debt*

Chapter Three aims to discuss global mass tourism, another form of global mobility, and its impacts on human rights represented in two works: Jamaica Kincaid's *A Small Place* and Stephanie Black's *Life and Debt*. Global mass tourism is the most representative activity of globalization. Global tourism is not simply an international commercial activity, it is also practiced as one form of human right of mobility, which is defined in the Universal Declaration and allows people to freely and legally leave and go to another place or country. I choose to juxtapose these two texts about global tourism because Black uses part of Kincaid's work in her film. Analyzing these two texts, I try to reveal the more complicated global capital distribution in process behind global tourism. This chapter indicates the tendencies of human rights in the global age and examines their impacts on marginalized area and the hope both texts provide.

A Small Place and *Life and Debt* represent global tourism and its impacts on local people's life. *A Small Place* is an essay written by Jamaica Kincaid in 2001, focusing on the development in Antigua from its colonial past to the globalization era. The narrator identifies with an Antiguan who angrily accuses the global tourism, colonial domination, and the corruption of the Antiguan government. *Life and Debt*, an unorthodox documentary film shot from 1991 to 2001 by Stephanie Black, records the serious impacts of IMF (The International Monetary Fund) and globalization on

Jamaica, the popular tourist island.¹ Confronting the highly penetrating and disembodied influences of globalization, Black aims to make visible these influences through the practice of everyday life of Jamaican people who are supposed to benefit from globalization.² This film reveals many specific and material forms and effects of globalization, such as international companies, tourism, governmental institutions and the financial oppression they cause. Identifying first with the eyes of a tourist, this film endeavors to create a concrete space to accuse globalization of its false promise by adapting part of Kincaid's essay for its voiceover.

I take the Caribbean countries represented in two texts as a site that helps to examine the right of mobility in global tourism because Caribbean area is severely struggling in economic globalization. Struggling between the exploitation of economic globalization and colonial relics, the Caribbean countries almost hardly have any opportunity to prosper and compete economically with other countries. Unlike other countries that were colonized by UK, such as India and South Africa, the Caribbean countries can survive by mainly developing global tourism.³

Different from a lot of commentators who use economic or colonial perspectives to understand these two texts, this chapter analyzes these two

¹ Stephanie Black is an American white female director. Her major in college was environmental science but she never finished her study before she started her career as a director. *H2Worker* is her first famous film about the Caribbean men as the guestworkers in American sugar corporations. This film won both Best Documentary and Best Cinematography at the 1990 Sundance Film Festival. She has other works, such as *Incident at Oglala*, *Making of Chant Down Babylon*, and *More Than Luck*. She spends most of her career life on speaking for the weak and minority.

² The film, in the beginning, quotes the statements of Director of IMF (at that time), Horst Kohler, who declares that globalization works for the benefit for all people, especially the poor because, as he says, "there is no good future for the rich if there is no better future for the poor."

³ "South Africa is a world leader in mining." The country holds the world's largest reserves of gold and platinum. Diamond industry also contributes a lot to the national economic growth. As for India, it is "a major exporter of highly-skilled workers in software and financial services." According to Wikipedia, "India is the second fastest growing major economy in the world...at the end of the first quarter of 2006-2007." Both countries have different advantages to be certain leading characters in global economy. http://www.southafrica.info/doing_business/economy/key_sectors/mining.htm and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_India

representations with the discourses of human rights. For example, John Rapley explains how *Life and Debt* criticizes the false economic promise of the supra-national financial agencies for educating the first-world audience who rarely suffer from economic globalization.⁴ Chris Dashiell connects the supra-national organizations like The World Bank and IMF in the film with the colonial era and shows that global economic control nowadays is exactly another version of modern slavery.⁵ As for *A Small Place*, Vanessa Puccio explains that how Kincaid relates today's governmental corruption with its colonial past.⁶ Rhonda D. Frederick argues that Kincaid clarifies the similarity between the tourists and colonizers and the process that colonizers become tourists. This chapter examines these two representations of globalization with a different aspect—the human rights of mobility.

I argue that these two texts capture the capitalization of the right of mobility as a contemporary globalization phenomenon by representing the severely exploited Antigua and Jamaica. The phenomenon of being capitalized shows that human rights, which are concepts based on equality, turn to be a hierarchical power or capital that can be monopolized and allotted. By capitalization of the right of mobility, I mean, on the one hand, the mobility which is declared as a universal right for every human being can start to be accumulated according to the capital one has in hand. On the other hand, the right of mobility which is a *human* right and takes *human bodies* to perform begins to be “de-bodied.” The right of mobility belongs no longer only to human beings but also to economic agents, that is, corporations. They are capital

⁴ For more information, please see

<http://www.jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20010823/cleisure/cleisure3.html>

⁵ For more information, please see <http://www.cinescene.com/dash/life&debt.htm>

⁶ Please see <http://www.english.emory.edu/Bahri/Kincaid.html>

holders and groups of people authorized to act as individuals without being physical present. They are able to claim rights as individuals in the global age. In both representations, the characteristics of accumulability and de-bodiness are the contemporary transformations of the right of mobility in globalization.

The paper is divided into four major parts. The first part deals with the colonial background of Antigua and Jamaica represented in the texts. The colonial history is not only the predecessor of global exploitation toward the Caribbean countries but also the consequence caused by the global mobility of the colonizers. The second section discusses the global polarization of the right of mobility. Part three focuses on the de-body phenomenon of human rights in two representations. The fourth part points out the hope two representations express.

I. Colonial History

To understand both representations and the intertextuality in *Life and Debt*, one must realize the similar historical context of Antigua and Jamaica located in Caribbean Ocean.⁷ Having Siboney and Arawaks as its aborigines, Antigua was first discovered by Columbus in 1493. In 1632, English monarch started to rule until 1967. Under British dominance, Antigua turned to be a sugar-producing island. Numerous slaves were imported from Africa since British settlement. The slavery was finally abolished in 1838. During the middle of 20th century, Antigua gradually developed its status of Associated Statehood. It was granted full independence in 1981. Today, it mainly depends on tourism as the national principal income. Jamaica's history is

⁷ The following information about two countries' history can be found in the websites: <http://www.wiol.com/antigua/history.html> and <http://www.iexplore.com/damp/Jamaica/History>

similar with Antigua's. Arawks inhabited the island before Columbus arrived in 1494. A few years later, it was colonized by Spain until 1655. British became the new colonizer and turned Jamaica into one British Caribbean slavery colony since 1517. In 1834, slavery was abolished. During 1930s to 1940s, Jamaica started to self-rule and became independent in 1962. Besides selling drugs and training dogs, global tourism has been the major source of foreign exchange. Undergoing the similar colonial past, Antigua and Jamaica is to some extent unified metaphorically in their history. Their historical experience would refer to each other's past. They do not "constitute a common origin" of identity or history, but their similar past makes them "a translation" among their cultures and identities (Stuart Hall 236). The translatability between the two texts represents a fuller picture of colonizers from different perspectives; one is from the local's and the other is from a tourist's viewpoint.

Although with different perspectives, *A Small Place* and *Life and Debt* share one common observation of the colonial history; that is, the hyper-mobility of the colonizer. In *A Small Place*, all the miseries that Antiguan must passively accept start with the moment of colonization which, according to the narrator, originates from some British people who would not like to stay home.

You [the British] murdered people. You imprisoned people...There must have been some good people among you, but they stayed home. And that is the point. That is why they are good. They stayed home. (35)

Those who stay in England remain good people, while those who appear in Antigua are "un-Christian-like," "pigs," and "criminal" (27-31). The distinctions among the British suggest a process of transformation from being merely whites to becoming bad

colonizers (Frederick 7). In fact, mobility plays the key role in their transformation. *Life and Debt* represents as well the colonizers with great mobility by the extracts of the news-styled documentary. In the film, one news-styled episode shows the queen gets off the luxurious car when the narrator talks about the smoothly paved road, “queen’s highway,” and says, “We were ruled by a queen.” The camera then takes a bird-eye view to see the queen strut on the red carpet across the crowd of people standing along the carpet. She waves at them while elegantly walk down on the carpet which gives her plenty of space to move to the throne at the end of the carpet. She is the only one privileged with spaces to move and her mobility is to display her sovereignty. The mobility represents the colonizers’ power to dominate and intrude. These representations of the colonizers in both texts already reveal the inequality of mobility in the colonial time.

A Small Place further points out that the greater mobility of the colonizers results in their privilege and superiority to use Antigua’s land. The narrator of *A Small Place* describes that,

It [Mill Reef Club] was built by some people from North America who wanted to live in Antigua and spend their holidays in Antigua but who seemed not to like Antiguan (black people) at all, for the Mill Reef Club declared itself completely private, and the only Antiguan (black people) allowed to go there were servants. (27)

The colonizers arrive at Antigua and turn the land that does not belong to them their private property. Privatizing the land, colonizers make Mill Reef Club their spaces for their leisure. The only Antiguan who are allowed to move in their spaces are servants.

The servants' mobility is not a power but a function that is granted only for satisfying the colonizers' needs. The right of colonizers' far greater mobility leads to the further inequality of other rights--the spatial production which becomes a privilege of the colonizers to occupy the foreigner land, dominate the natives, and reorganize the social hierarchy for creating their spaces of pleasure.

Pointing out the damages resulted from the unequal access to global mobility between the colonizers and the colonized, both texts suggest colonization and globalization are deeply connected. The representations of the colonizers are the parallels of that of globalization because the colonizers in the past overlap the image of the tourists in the contemporary global era.

The great mobility of the colonizers is also emphasized in the both representations of the tourists. In *Life and Debt*, the image of the colonizers and the tourists are associated in the black-and-white scenes. Black herself explains that in *Life and Debt*, the black-and-white scenes "are used as a reference to earlier colonial time which endorsed contemporary economic globalization." She films the tourists who are crossing the Jamaican customs and welcomed by the local band with black-and-white shots. Their arrival suggests both the image of superior colonizers, who came for exploiting the colony, and of course, the image of the tourists who turn the local's life into their entertainment. In *A Small Place*, the images of colonization and globalization are often juxtaposed. For instance, the narrator talks about the enormous amount of death of black slaves in the Caribbean Sea right after describing how tourists enjoy themselves in the same sea (14).

Both texts suggest that global tourism develops under the shadow of past

colonization. Globalization is not very much different from colonization; their “particular strategies may be different because the specific targets are different, but the overall agendas and objectives have remained intimidatingly consistent” (Logan 3). L.A. Perez, a scholar of West Indies tourism, argues that global tourism can be regarded as an “evolution of the neocolonial context” or imperialism (qtd. in Colin Hall 123-124). Imperialism is a hegemonic state that controls another nation or people and it may be too wide for a country to exercise a degree of imperial control over another nation through tourism. However, “ideas of ‘neocolonialism’ or ‘imperialism’ act as powerful metaphors...[which] serve to illustrate the potential loss of control...the host community may have in the face of foreign tourism interests” (Colin Hall 124). Although there are no more colonizers in today’s Antigua and Jamaica, their power and influence still lead the globalizing development of both countries. Both texts imply that the experiences of colonization not only repeat themselves in the process of globalization but also become worse due to the polarization of the right of mobility as well as the right of spatial production, a right to make claims on the spaces for creating a way of living that one wants.

II. Polarization of the Right of Mobility

A Small Place and *Life and Debt* both believe that the past colonizer’s mobility metamorphoses into the worldwide polarization of human rights of mobility. In both works, people are clearly divided into two groups. One is the European and North American tourists, represented as inheritors of the colonizer’s mobility. The other is the local people who are seriously exploited and rarely having any mobility, even on

their own land. In *A Small Place*, the tourists in Antigua are explicitly identified with the white, North American or European, the ex-colonizer (4). They can “move through customs swiftly...with ease” without their bags being searched (4-5). *Life and Debt* shows the same conditions with the narrator emphasizing the tourists’ incredible global mobility. “You can travel everywhere...you can get into the country simply by showing your driving license. You are indifferent to this fact because you can travel everywhere.” On the contrary, the local in the texts seem to be strictly confined to their islands. As the narrator in *A Small Place* says, “...every native would like a tour. But some natives—most natives in the world—cannot go anywhere...They are too poor to go anywhere” (18-19). Like what the essay depicts, *Life and Debt*, seeing from the tourist perspective, shows a lot of Jamaicans doing nothing when the tourists pass by in a vehicle in their ghetto. Another sharp contrast in both texts takes place in the representations of the hotel. In *A Small Place*, it says,

Even though all the beaches in Antigua are by law public beaches, Antiguans are not allowed on the beaches of this hotel; they are stopped at the gate by the guards; and soon the best beaches in Antigua will be closed to Antiguans. (57-58)

In *Life and Debt*, the beaches and the hotel built on Jamaica’s land seem to be all occupied by the tourists. All the Jamaicans who can move around in the hotel or on the beaches are security guards, waiters, and cleansers. While the tourists in both texts can enjoy their hyper-mobility so that they can even privatize other’s spaces overseas for their entertainment, the local can only move on their land for entertaining the tourists. The inequality of mobility is no longer a simple result of colonial domination.

Mobility which is supposed to be an equal right guaranteed to everyone is polarized between the tourists and the local.

Representing the polarized right of mobility among the tourists and the local, both works suggest one feature of the transformation of the right of mobility in globalization: the separation of the right of mobility and citizenship. As regards the right of mobility, basically, citizenship is to guarantee the citizens with the right to legally and freely move to another place and claim spaces on their land. However, as mentioned above, though having no citizenship at all in Antigua or Jamaica, the tourists are still permitted with high mobility when they stay in these Caribbean countries. In the film, they pass the customs swiftly with their driving license, not even a passport. Their driving license emphasizes that the tourists have the ability to move. In fact, driving license should not be able to politically empower them as a visa to enjoy their mobility on others' land. Showing that the tourists use the driving license instead of a visa to qualify their mobility to enter Jamaica, the film ironically suggests that the tourists are not actually going abroad but traveling in their own countries. In other words, Jamaica can almost be regarded as part of the tourists' countries. Without a citizenship or visa, the tourists can still enter Jamaica and Antigua to use the beaches and lands. Having a citizenship or not does not cause any effect on the tourists' high mobility to pass the borders of Jamaica and Antigua.

The separation of the right of mobility and citizenship leads to the unequal access to entering and using spaces in the texts. Rights to place are directly related to the constitution of citizenship (Sassen, *Globalization* xx). As long as one has the right to be a user of a place, he or she is the "citizen" of that place. With no rights to places,

one's citizenship is in danger. In these two texts, the Antiguan and Jamaicans' right of mobility is seriously shrinking in their own countries even though they are citizens. In *A Small Place*, the privatized beaches for the tourists are the reproduction of the Mill Roof Club which was preserved only for the white colonizers. To be more precise, in the film, the image of all kinds of fences is highlighted. In the scene that the tourists take a day tour in Jamaican ghetto by jeep, the camera purposefully cuts the frame with the fences as its foreground. The objects in the foreground often "comment" the subjects in the middle (Giannetti, 74). These shots emphasize the definite separation between the world of the Jamaican and that of the tourists. Identifying with the tourist eye, the camera watches the Jamaicans living behind the fences built with bricks, iron sheets, and wire nettings. This scene ends with the shot that the camera sees the tourists' jeep driven by the ghetto behind a wire netting. It is directly followed by another shot that the hotel guard closes the beautiful iron gate of the hotel. Standing at the position of the local, the camera regards the fences as the boundaries of their rights to places. The wire nettings or gates declare the spatial boundaries that the local can not transgress while the tourists can swiftly cross and enter. The hotel gate represents that only the tourists have the right to use the spaces within. The spaces tourists can use seem much larger than the spaces the Jamaicans can enter. In both texts, the degree of one's right to spaces is not in accordance with one's citizenship. In these two exploited marginalized islands in the global era, the citizenship is no more the key factor that determines one's right to the land, including the right to move/enter and the right to spatial production.

Both works further point out that the right of mobility, separated from

citizenship, gradually integrates with capitalism in economic globalization. The more money one has, the more mobility one can enjoy. In the essay, the narrator says that the tourists “earn some money” so they can stay in Antigua to freely imagine the sun is always ready to serve them (4). The reason why a person can become a tourist is because of some money he/she earns. The narrators in both texts also explain why the local can not move away from their miseries. The narrator of *Life and Debt* repeats what Black claims: “They are *too poor* to go anywhere” (18-19, emphasis added). Being the richer ones, the tourists are the main users of the places to create their own spaces and to crave for exotica. The much less rich local people have to sacrifice their living spaces to cater to the tourists’ needs, like the local-free beaches in both representations and the tourist boutique which replaces the previous library in Antigua (48). In other words, the local must give up some part of their right to move. As Harvey observes that globalization “has a long presence within the history of capitalism” whose main purpose is to accumulate more capital by keeping reorganizing spaces (*Spaces of Hope* 54). Since global tourism is one form of globalization, it is developed for more capital accumulation. The spatial reorganization that is done in both Jamaica and Antigua for global tourism, such as building the fancy hotel and privatizing the beaches, is to facilitate the process of accumulating capital. The rebuilt spatial structure must be primarily planned for the convenience of the tourists who hold capital. The mobility of the tourists is the value exchange of their money so that it actually represents another form of capital, instead of merely a practice of human rights.

The trend of capitalizing the right of mobility is also seen among the local

themselves, some of whom are very rich while others are extremely poor. The furious narrator of the essay accuses the corrupted government of benefiting from owning shares in selling Japanese cars or from drug dealing (6-7, 59). The narrator continues,

All the ministers have “green cards”—a document that makes them legal residents of the United States of America. The ministers, the people who govern the island of Antigua, who are also citizens of Antigua, are legal residents of the United States, a place they visit frequently. (68)

The ministers in Antigua are represented as rich people with the kind of mobility that the local are too poor to afford. The polarization of mobility among the Antiguan citizens and the government is resulted from the extreme disparity of wealth. As far as global mobility is concerned, capital is so powerful that it decides how far one can go. The global polarization of the right of mobility stops mobility from continuing to work as one human right; instead, it turns mobility a privilege or a power that is possessed and practiced only by certain people. It is not only a simple ability to move from one place to another but an ability to escape (from ordinary life). As Kincaid depicts, it is an “ability to leave your [tourists’] own banality and boredom” (19). Not owned by everyone, the great global mobility can be regarded as one kind of privilege.

As long as the global mobility represents a power over spaces, it would cause impacts on life of others who have no such power; in the film, as far as global tourism is concerned, the power of the tourists’ mobility is mainly shown in their gaze. Tourist global mobility makes their gaze so powerful that it can even control the local’s life to certain extent. Tourist gaze can “turn [the local’s] own banality and boredom into a

source of pleasure” for themselves (Kincaid 19). Their gaze represents a power to escape one’s ordinariness and to consume others’ life. Tourists can romanticize whatever they see for their own pleasure. Tourist gaze is similar to the Foucaultian panopticon gaze (Urry 151). The gazer’s observation is a power that can supervise the gazed behavior and make them work in orders. It keeps “the *seer* with the sense of omnipotent voyeurism and the *seen* with the sense of disciplined surveillance” (Friedberg 17). This power relation in global tourism is incarnated in the gazer-gazee relationship between the tourists with capital and the local who need income for their survival.

In *Life and Debt*, the power of the tourists’ gaze is concretely displayed in the representations of their camera and in how the tourists urge the local’s performance. There is one shot that Black catches one male tourist taking a photo of the arranged welcome dance of the Jamaicans in the airport. The tourists’ cameras represent their eyes searching what they expect to see. Tourists take pictures of what they think they want to gaze upon, even it is an artificial object or performance. Camera eye, similar with the central tower of panopticon, gives the spectators great power of gaze while keeps them “totally invisible, absent not only from self-obscuration but from surveillance as well” (Friedberg, 20). Surrounded by the camera (including Black’s camera, too), the local people perform what these cameras expect to catch. In the rest of the film, the audience would learn that the local people are actually furious at globalization. However, in the early part of the film, when the local meet the tourists, they spontaneously perform what the tourists want to experience and keep silent about the reality that would disillusion the tourists, including the aboriginal dance, the

“local” food that is in fact imported from Miami, and the beautiful hotel without sewer system. The local people do this because the global tourism is one of the few income sources that their survival relies on in economic globalization. All these hospitable performance reveals a controlling power that makes the local oppress their anger in order to please the tourists’ (also Black’s camera’s) gazing desire. The tourist ignorant but powerful gaze, caused by globalization, indeed becomes cruelty. Black’s camera eye does not only reinforce the local people’s hospitality but also oversee the tourists’ cameras and the controlling power behind their gaze.

In *A Small Place*, the tourists’ gazing power over the local’s life is in the tourists’ imagination which can turn others’ pain into their entertainment and spectacle. The narrator describes clearly how the tourists romanticize “the unfulfilled promise of repair” sign in front of the library: “you might see this as a sort of quaintness on the part of these islanders, these people descended from slaves” (9). Without correctly understanding the sign as the weakness of Antiguan government and as the serious problem of illiterate, the tourists simply see fun in Antiguans’ sufferings. Their gaze power not only makes others’ life their entertainment but also even controls how the local see their own suffering life. The narrator identifies the local’s desire to please the tourists’ gaze as “strange voice,”

And it is in that strange voice, then—the voice that suggests innocence, art, lunacy—that they say things, pausing to take breath before this monument of rottenness...as if they were tour guides; as if...they have absorbed it so completely that they have made the degradation and humiliation of their daily lives into their own tourist attraction. (68-69)

The rottenness of Antigua, after being gazed again and again for so many times, thoroughly becomes a monument for tourist attraction. The local even learn to see their life from the tourist perspective and make their rottenness the heritage for attracting tourists rather than a serious problem that should be addressed. Under the tourist gaze, Antigua is really in a state of slavery even though they are already a nation free from colonialism (Pupello).⁸ Antiguans still “do to [themselves] they very things [colonialists] used to do to [them]” (Kincaid 36). Adopting the behavior of the colonialism, the local absorb the tourist gaze to see themselves as attractive Other and submit their everyday life to the tourist gaze. The tourist gaze influences the daily life of Antiguans, or more precisely, it shapes their life.

In addition to the polarization and capitalization of the mobility which makes the tourist gaze a dominant force that shapes the local’s life, Kincaid and Black also observe that the right of mobility in globalization has another transformation which I call “de-bodiness.” The de-bodiness challenges the very foundation of the concept of human rights; its impacts on the local’s life are even deeper and severer.

III. De-Bodying Human Rights (and Its Colonial History)

A Small Place illustrates how the concept of human rights is uprooted from human body in Antigua’s colonial slavery history which contributes to globalization. The concept of human rights is based on human body as its working site. All the human rights, such as the right to life, the right to be free from torture, and the right to move, require a human body to bear and carry out.⁹ Human body and human rights

⁸ <http://www.english.emory.edu/Bahri/Kincaid.html>

⁹ These rights are mentioned in Article 3, 5, and 13 in the Universal Declaration.

are supposed to be unified and unbreakable. However, as the narrator points out, that Antiguan who were traded as slaves were not human beings but “only commodities” to the colonizers and slaver-traders (26). The slave’s body is taken as a lifeless product or commodity for slave-traders to make profits. The human rights are separated from these slaves’ bodies. As the narrator describes,

To the people in a small place, the division of Time into the Past, the Present, and the Future does not exist. An event that occurred one hundred years ago might be as vivid to them as if it were happening at this very moment. (54)

In global age, the similar pattern takes place again. The tourists bring a book on economic history; it says,

...the West got rich not from the free (free—in this case meaning got-for-nothing) and then undervalued labour, for generations, of the people like me you see walking around you in Antigua but from the ingenuity of small [wristwatch] shopkeeper in Sheffield...(9-10)

For generations, Antiguan get nothing for their labor that the West exploits to build their international companies. Their labor, like the slave’s body, is used for other’s benefits. Their body and labor may similarly be exploited and oppressed from the past to the present and not be regarded and treated justly as the working site of their rights.

Based on *A Small Place, Life and Debt* further shows through international corporations and Free Trade Zone that in the global age, human rights may not only be separated from human body but also be granted to conceptual human who only exist in laws—corporation. The corporations, companies which are taken as

individual human beings in laws, are able to practice rights without a concrete physical body. In the film, Free Zone is a special area in which the international companies can have a lot of rights but meanwhile, not being restricted or regulated by Jamaican government. One anonymous male interviewee says in the film, “Free Trade Zone is not part of Jamaica. It doesn’t pay taxes. It is a separated entity...Those factories are not leveled for local controls... [They are] free from duties. Free Trade Zone gives an opportunity...to operate without a control of laws, the systems...” In Free Zone, there are another set of rules and laws. The supra-national organizations and Free Zone enable the international corporations to practice the right of mobility to legally use other’s land to get profits for themselves. Here Sassen’s concept called “economic citizenship” might be helpful to explain what is going on in Jamaica. Such economic citizenship is not restricted to nation-states or nationality:

This notion is not part of the history and theorization of citizenship as conventionally understood...It belongs to firms and markets—specifically, the global financial markets—and it is located not individuals, not in citizens, but in mostly corporate global economic actors. (*Losing Control?* xiv)

She continues,

The fact of being global gives these actors power over individual governments. This is all deeply bound up with fundamental changes brought about by economic globalization. (*Losing Control?* 41)

Because of economic globalization, the firms start to gain power over the restriction of state laws and governmental regulation. The global transnational economic

citizenship gives the companies rights to move globally and use spaces in other countries for self-profiting. The film records exactly this ongoing transformation of economic citizenship and rights which do not belong to real humans but to de-bodied conceptual human beings.

More importantly, *Life and Debt* points out the absence of responsibility and duty as one flaw of the de-bodying transformation of rights. In the film, the factories suddenly withdraw from Jamaica without paying up Jamaican laborers as soon as they find out they can earn no more profit. They get no punishment or sanction for this irresponsible behavior. They leave freely because they are protected by their global right of mobility and “economic citizenship.” They do not need to take any responsibility or do any duty for the rights they have in Jamaica. When the concept of rights is separated from human body, the concept of obligation that should always go along with the rights does not get the same transformation. “While people have rights and responsibility, the corporation only has rights” (Shiva 90). The film indicates a serious problem of the new form of rights. The corporations which exist as de-bodied conceptual human beings in laws have rights internationally without equal responsibilities at the global level to be the conditions of their global rights.

The film shows that the imbalanced global development of rights and duty is mainly due to the growth and decline between supra-national organizations, which grant “economic citizenship,” and nation-state’s sovereignty. In *Life and Debt*, new supra-national institutions, including IMF and WTO, integrate all kinds of world economic spaces regardless of the national border and become a new power to define and grant rights. It is clear that, in the film, the supra-national organizations become

so powerful over Jamaican economic policies that they can decide to open up the Jamaican market to international corporations. In other words, they can grant “economic citizenship” to let those corporations enter to use the spaces of Jamaica (Sassen, *Losing Control?* 41). In Jamaica’s case, their sovereignty over the global economic spaces is superior to the nation-state’s access to their own territory. One of the Free Zone workers comments in the film, “our country is like a state, not country.” As Sassen observes, in the global age “sovereignty has been decentered and territory partly denationalized...It is instead a denationalizing of specific institutional arenas” (*Losing Controls?* 29-30). As we see in the film, it is not the Jamaican government that supervises the Free Zone but the different denationalized institutions. The problem is that these institutions can not wholly replace the nation-state as a sovereign entity to regulate the Free Zone in every aspect; they only care about profits. They do not need to take care of at the same time the economic damage and maintain justice in Free Zone which they supervise. When the factories in the film hastily withdraw and abandon the Jamaican laborers with unpaid wages, the Jamaican government can not expect IMF to uphold justice. Through the sovereignty of supra-national organizations over Jamaica, rights are given to certain economic actors for profit-making instead of for fulfilling the basic human needs of individual’s life and security.

In both texts, nation-state does not only play the role of victim but cooperate in the global restructuring of rights and duty to exploit people. In *A Small Place*, the narrator indicates explicitly the corruption of the Antiguan government which collaborates with the Japanese car company to share the profits of local car market by

making an unreasonable loan policy (6-7). One Jamaican claims as well in the interview in *Life and Debt* about the Free Zone, “our government is a co-conspirator in exploiting of our people.” The Free Zone laborers earn thirty use dollars per week and they need to pay taxes that the factories never pay to the government. The Jamaican local news reporter says in the film that, “one factory workers stop working accusing government prospers the exploitation of Free Trade Zone laborers by foreign companies. Their pay were suddenly began to be issued two weeks late and longer.” One factory female worker comments, “we don’t have any government.” The de-bodied rights/citizenship of international corporations in Jamaica and Antigua is not just a simple exclusive zero-sum game between supra-national organizations and nation-states. The Antigua and Jamaican governments are also the players in the game of supra-national forces of reorganizing global economic spaces. They may be the victims of the global economic development; however, they may be as well the beneficiaries who gain profits in the process of transferring their sovereignty to supra-national institutions at the cost of giving up their sovereignty over part of their national territory.

Supported by the supra-national organizations and local governmental policies, the international corporations in these two works violate the local’s human rights without taking the responsibility. The local people’s human rights are the sacrifice in the global transformation of the de-bodiness of rights. *Life and Debt* regards it as a global plight. As the dilemma of banana farmers are facing in globalization, they can not compete with Chiquita which produces bananas on a large scale by exploiting Latin American laborers. Latin American people are facing the same fate of Jamaican

Free Zone workers, whose jobs are totally controlled by foreign companies. The film shows how the local Jamaican TV broadcasts similar conditions in Chiquita farms in Colombia. It says that 25,000 workers who strike and protest for better wages were settled by firing shots at the striking workers and killing 40 people.¹⁰ The news reveals shockingly the local police firing at their own people in order to protect Chiquita's benefits and rights. A Jamaican banana farmer's voiceover explains, "They [the Colombia workers] were literally forced to go back to work. There are no unions." In the Chiquita Farms, as in the Free Zone of Jamaica, there are only unfair exploiting and violation of local people's labor, safety, rights, and even life.¹¹ No union or government executes laws to restrict the rights of Chiquita whose rights are so infinite that violate others' rights to live. The local people can do nothing but being forced to accept those companies using their economic rights to move and produce their economic spaces globally without duties.

The economic rights of international companies give them as well the panoptic gazing power that can control the local's life to an extent of violation. The film directly interviews the Jamaican workers in Free Zone, a place of no government that upholds justice and easily becomes a space of rights violation. Showing Kingston Free Zone, the camera keeps closing-up the wire fences and all kinds of barriers of its gateway. It also takes a bird-eye view to see the inside of factory buildings which are crowded with work tables. These shots try to give the audience an impression of strict control, like a prison in which there are people deprived of certain basic rights. One

¹⁰ For more information, see "Life and Debt, a film by Stephanie Black."
http://www.newyorkerfilms.com/nyf/t_elements/life_debt/life_debt_pk.pdf

¹¹ According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the first Article claims that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." In Article 3, it says, "everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."

laborer frankly tells that “you can not talk to anybody; you can not eat; you can not go to bathroom. They are watching you.” Foucault defines panopticon gaze as “the exercise of disciplinary power” (198). It must be understood as “a generalized model of functioning” (205). In Free Zone, the factories are exactly like prisons. The laborers feel they are spied all the time and they have no choice but work faster and faster to achieve the requirement of production. Because no union is allowed in Free Zone, the laborers are like prisoners who can only obey all the rules made not by negotiation between the capital and the employees but totally by the capital. As one worker discloses, “If you complain, they will close the company and go to Mexico.” This statement discloses that flexible production of global economy makes the capital able to flow flexibly among countries. In other words, flexible production grants international economic actors the global mobility. In the film, their right of hyper global mobility allows them to enter to use Jamaican territory and to leave anytime they want. Fearing the hyper-mobility of these companies, Jamaican workers must completely obey what they demand and work under their surveillance.

Another impact, shown in the film, of the “economic citizenship” is the power of corporations to globally relocate and reorganize the labor market for their benefits. The international corporations bring Chinese women to Jamaica. One Jamaican worker replies, “...they bring Chinese to back to Jamaica. And they trained Chinese to beat all of us.” These Chinese can come to Jamaica, not because they are able to practice their right of global mobility but because of that of corporations. The corporations’ power to move is so great that, even though they are not governments or authorities, they can grant others global mobility. Their powerful global mobility

brings laborers from other countries to Jamaica to dominate and manipulate the local labor market. By doing so, all the laborers must obey the corporations. For Jamaican laborers, not obeying the capital means losing jobs and worse, there will be more and more factories leaving Jamaica for other countries of cheaper laborers, like Mexico. For Chinese laborers, because it is the corporations that give them mobility and earns them more working opportunities, they must be docile as well. The film suggests that the economic citizenship of the international corporations may be able to deeply manipulate and control over the labor market in Jamaica.

IV. Representative Style: Hope in the Reoccurring Trauma

Two works under discussion reflect the suffering and hopeless conditions of the local in the global transformations of rights in their writing and shooting styles. *A Small Place* is written in a very ambiguous way. It puts all the readers in a confronting position by referring to them as “you.” The “you” in the narrator’s mind is not consistent. It can both be identified as tourists and colonialists. Kincaid also imitates the style of tourist guidebook. Although the essay keeps talking about the hateful tourists, colonialists, businessmen (capitalists), and the Antiguan government, it is still introducing Antigua as a tourist guidebook will always do. What the narrator introduces includes the past and the present, colonialism and tourism, racial hierarchy and social classes, which are mixed up all the time. For example, when the narrator shows the tourists the rich drug smuggler’s house of the best paved road in Antigua, it immediately relates it to “the road that was paved for the Queen’s visit in 1985” (12). The image of the best-paved road mingles Antiguans’ memory and detestation about

the present capitalist social hierarchy and the past colonial experience. The unclear distinction between the past and present would imply that the Antiguanans are living under the reoccurring endless experience of colonialism and slavery. It causes a sense of confinement in history. James Clifford's interpretation of the black ex-colonial experience might help us see Kincaid's intention of choosing this writing style:

Linear history is broken, the present constantly shadowed by a past that is also a desired, but obstructed, future: a renewed, painful yearning...Enslavement and its aftermaths—displaced, repeated structures of racialization and exploitation—constitute a pattern of black experiences inextricably woven in the fabric of hegemonic modernity.
(264)

The narrating style of *A Small Place* is not chronological but it keeps switching between the past and the present. The past-shadowed present of exploited Antiguan echoes how Kincaid regards Antigua: a place of "smallness," of confinement in its history.

Life and Debt is using the non-chronological techniques of the narration of *A Small Place* and multi-perspectives, one of which belongs to the tourists and another a critic of globalization, to analyze the global violation in Jamaica. It relies on black-and-white scenes and non-chronological narration to represent the reoccurring past events in the present, such as the reference to slavery in black-and-white shots of the Chinese laborers and that of Jamaican women getting out of prison-like Free Zone. Slavery, colonialism and globalization are all mixed up in these scenes. They reveal not only the interrelation between these historical and contemporary developments but

also a sense of confinement in the past that Jamaicans will never get over. The film can expose the global violation done to Jamaica since colonialism because it takes advantages of its multi-positions of camera. The camera eye represents at the same time two perspectives, that of tourists and that of a protester of globalization. It first identifies with the tourists then it looks back at the tourists to criticize their ignorance. As a superior tourist, it can deal with the reality and go to the exploited areas that most tourists will not go. Having the audience first on the side of tourists, the multi-perspective camera exposes the ignorant audience to the reality of global exploitation.

Life and Debt also uses several symbols to emphasize the plights of Jamaica. Hands and wire fences are two major symbols that keep showing up to highlight its theme. As mentioned before, the wire fences, appearing throughout the whole film in Free Zone, in Jamaican ghetto, and in tourist fancy hotel, express the suffering and confinement of Jamaican people. Hands are also an important symbol. There are basically two kinds of hands in the film. One is a white soft female tourist hand. It appears in few scenes to touch the windows of the airplane and jeep and to flush the toilet in the hotel room.¹² It expresses the tourist desire to “touch” exotic places with safe distance. The other kind of hand is the hard-working hands. Those hands are always black and they belong to the Jamaican laborers. They appear to wipe the white chair in hotel, to milk a cow, and to turn the tap on to dispose of gallons of fresh milk. Hands represent the life and social status of people in Jamaica. Using white female hands to represent all tourists, the film may imply the ignorance and softness of the

¹² Black uses a female hand instead of a male's to refer to herself who was once a tourist and ignorant of the sufferings of Jamaica.

tourist who are protected from hard reality. They experience Jamaica within the world surrounded by transparent windows through which they can see everything while stay safe and distant. The hard-working local's hand is exactly the contrast of the tourist hand. It deals with real life. When the tourist hand flushes dirty water away from their hotel room, the local hand turns on the tap to throw away the white fresh milk along with which their living is destroyed. The suffering of the dilemmatic life of Jamaicans is clearly displayed in the metaphorical images of fences and in the contrast of different hands.

Although dealing with the unavoidable trend of globalization, two works still express some hope in their representations. As Balibar perceives that whenever there is a movement, there will be a dispersed border; whenever there is a border, there will be a border area. It refers to a space where differences cruelly and directly confront with one another so there may be violation, sufferings, and struggles but as well as possible hope for democratic development and coexistence (1-2). In *A Small Place* and *Life and Debt*, global people and capital flow forms border areas among both Caribbean region and Western countries. The border areas, like Free Trade Zones that reorganize the national territories, may bring the foreign force to oppress the local but at the same time, thanks to global flow, the local may also gain some opportunities to cross the porous borders to struggle abroad for better life. Economic globalization and global labor division do harm to these two poor countries by establishing Free Trade Zones and bringing foreign firms to exploit the local people and their living spaces, but globalization and global labor division as well grant the local mobility and agency to struggle for better economic living conditions for their family just like those

Chinese women represented in the film.

For both works notice the mobility of the local people who may work in Europe or North America (which are their ex-colonizers) to earn some money and improve the life of their family back in Antigua and Jamaica. "...an Antigua black returning to Antigua from Europe or North America with cardboard boxes of much needed cheap clothes and food for relatives" (4). The queuing people with cardboard boxes suggest that some of Antiguan and Jamaicans have chances to go abroad to work. Their mobility or agency is due to global flow that opens up all countries and their borders. They get a job that Europeans and Americans disdain to do and bring foreign money back to their countries. It is important to note that in both works, the local people practice their mobility for economically improving the poor life of their whole family, unlike the foreign corporations and tourists who move for accumulating more capital or entertaining themselves. Their mobility represents hope of economic improvement for their family and country. They are not totally relying on and waiting for foreign investment and tourism in a passive way to give them a chance to survive in the age of globalization. Although their works in Europe and the U.S. are possibly dirty and dangerous as implied by those Chinese women, because of economic globalization, they still have some agency and global mobility to bring hope to their homeland.

On the other hand, facing the traumatic reoccurring experiences of colonialism and globalization, Kincaid suggests that the very last hope of the miserable small place may still count on having rights returned to their primary and fundamental meaning, that is, returning rights to human being and be body-based again. Body-based human rights are the basis on which people of the small place can be

equal with the people of the huge and powerful world. The ending of her essay says,

Antigua is a small place...it was settled by human rubbish from Europe, who used enslaved but noble and exalted human beings from Africa...Of course, the whole thing is, once you [colonialists, tourists] cease to be a master...you are no longer human rubbish, you are just a human being...So, too, with the slaves. Once they are no longer slaves, once they are free, they are no longer noble and exalted; they are just human beings. (80-81)

Calling the colonialists who think they are superior “human rubbish” and slaves who were treated as worthless rubbish “noble and exalted human beings,” Kincaid reveals the unequal relationships between different identities (81). No matter how Antiguans are glorified and the colonialists, who later become tourists, are degraded, their relationship to the end is still unequal. As long as there is inequality among human beings’ status and value, there is disdain, violation or oppression in the world. Kincaid re-proposes the known idea of “human beings” to replace all the terms of human rubbish and noble human beings (81). The idea of human being is the starting point of equality and justice among people. Getting rid of the social hierarchy formed by all kinds of economic, social and cultural capital, each human being may reach equality and deserve justice simply by owning his/her body as the site of rights.

Life and Debt, shooting from a tourist perspective, puts its hope on the growth and change of the tourists. Identifying with the tourist eye, the camera starts with the shots that most tourists expect to see when they visit Jamaica. John Urry summarizes Edensor’s research that the tourists are protected from harsh reality by their surrogate

parents, travel agents and hotel managers, among others. (7). The film, first seeing things tourists normally see, challenges their protecting bubbles to unveil the miserable Jamaican everyday life by giving the audience/tourists an alternative tour. As what Black says in her interview, the target she criticizes is not the tourists but the lack of knowledge of the tourists. “I [Black] felt that there’s a certain victimization in lack of knowledge...So the tourists are a metaphor for the lack of understanding, of our own policies, imposed in our name.”¹³ Bringing tourists to see things they are not able to see, including themselves, *Life and Debt* tries to speak the unspeakable trauma of repeating exploitation that is never able to reveal itself to tourists. Successfully educating the audience what tourists will never learn through the “surrogate parents” of global tourism as Urry describes, it hopes that the tourists would grow with the camera to be sophisticated and see the truth hidden under their naïve imagination of Jamaica as a paradise inhabited by happy people.

The whole narrative style of the film corresponds with the attempt to hopefully educate the public. The film is basically shot in a circular structure, which is often used in *buildungsroman*. It begins with natural scenes and local news talking about street riots and violent protest in Jamaica. In the end, it juxtaposes several interlaced shots of the ignorant tourists ready to go home with great satisfaction and that of the street riots still going on. It then returns to the natural scenes of Jamaica. Although the beginning and the end are almost the same, when the audience sees the ending, they are supposed to grow more sophisticated than they are in the beginning. After showing the natural view, the film has the reggae singer sing about everyday reality in

¹³ Quote from the web site: <http://www.popmatters.com/film/interviews/black-stephanie.html>

the street and the Jamaican people peacefully surround the campfire to sign and read Biblical works. These two elements, reggae music and fire, are related with hope Stephanie Blacks wants to bring in her work. Reggae is famous for criticizing capitalism, associating “freedom and justice with truth” (Gilroy 207). In the film, it is music of truth. More importantly, it is spread globally. Like reggae music, the symbol of fire represents as well the reality or knowledge of truth. On the other hand, the gunfire, the car set on fire, and the campfire around which intellectual Jamaicans share their knowledge about globalization reveal the traumatic consequences of exploitation to the audience.

The very last shot of the film suggests an appeal for the growth of the tourists. It is an extreme long shot that a Jamaican kid sitting on the dock and gazing upon the sea at sunset. Meanwhile, the narrator says again the exact same words in the beginning, “If you come as a tourist, this is what you will see.” In the beginning, what tourists see is Jamaican paradise-like Nature satisfying tourists’ imagination. In the end, they see in the distance a little immobile and hopeless shadow of a young life without an identifiable face. The film expects the audience at least grow in the end to be able to accept reality even though they may not be able to identify themselves with Jamaicans. As long as they think deeper and become more sophisticated, they would see things differently. Their surveillance gaze might then probably not ignorantly exploit Jamaica but gaze back to criticize economic globalization.

Observing the impacts of globalization on human rights, both works warn seriously that these global transformations of rights, including capitalization and de-bodiness, aggravate the disparity between the so-called first and third world. These

transformations make it harder for the two poor ex-colonized Caribbean countries to survive. When the rights of corporations are virtually globalized and protected by global institutions, such as WTO and IMF, the rights of human beings still count on the national government which may benefit from exploiting its people, just like what Kincaid discloses angrily in her essay. No supra-national organizations of real executing power in both representations can rival with these economic ones to secure individual rights. Both works not only represent some kind of contemporary economic oppressions in Antigua and Jamaica but also foresee a miserable crisis in the unbalanced development of globalization. The crisis is caused by the undue emphasis on the global development of economic rights at the expense of human rights which are the foundation of global justice. Both texts endeavor to expose the hard reality about the serious ongoing crisis which is totally concealed from the paradise-like world imagination promoted by global tourism.