

"on seeing england for the first time" by j. kincaid essay sample

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Jamaica Kincaid grew up on the dependent island of Antigua. As a result of this, she had a very biased outlook on what England meant. She wrote about how some thought highly of the country, but she had other ideas regarding England.

In the opening of the passage, Kincaid uses plenty of imagery to illustrate how England was first shown to her. It was displayed in such a way that it was made out to be more beautiful than it really was. Due to the fact that Antigua was a British colony, Kincaid makes reference to the fact that the people of England were everywhere. This would've been quite evident with her, because she would have seen the British during her every day activities just going about.

Kincaid also makes use of repetition to help drive home a point. She showed how everything had a ' Made in England' caption. It was as if England were being imposed on the country, because everything that they consumed somehow was ' Made in England.' Kincaid also states how she has to eat an English breakfast every morning before setting off for school. Everything was strict, as it would be in England. She had a choice between two different breakfast's every, albeit with slight differences.

In the penultimate paragraph, Kincaid starts to show how important the concept of England was to those around her. She relates two experiences, one with her father's hat and the other regarding her manners and etiquette.

She explains how her father's hat would start breaking apart and because he wanted to have the image of the Englishman, he would order a new one from England 6 weeks before he would completely get rid of his current one. In the case with her mother, she was taught how to eat properly with eating utensils. When she mastered using them, her mother would brag about how nicely her child could eat with eating utensils. Despite this, Kincaid didn't like the idea of eating with utensils, so whenever her mother looked away, she would eat with her bare hands. This shows how highly both of her parents thought of England.

On the other hand however, Kincaid expresses her emotions while almost being sarcastic when she says, " This breakfast business was Made in England like almost everything else that surrounded us, the exceptions being the sea, the sky, and the air we breathed." This shows how oppressed she must have felt, with everything around being from England. Even though Kincaid didn't see the literal England, she saw the figurative England that everyone wanted so much to be a part of.