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There are several ways of bringing about slavery. One is fear: by acknowledging that you are the master, he is the slave, and the consequences will be unpleasant if he ever strays from that idea. Another way, longer to do but equally effective, is education. Create for your slave the idea that you, the master, are the epitome of all that is good and beautiful and the slave will want to do the work, pleased to be associated in any way with such a grand personage. But it is still slavery. That is what Jamaica Kincaid, who wrote this passage, early realized and rebelled against. No matter how great or beautiful England was, she and her country were still slaves—mentally, if not physically. The strategy used by Kincaid to convey this to us is quite unusual—it might be described as an "and what is the pill in all this jam?" idea. Kincaid, instead of openly and quickly displaying her ideas, used a clever mix of syntax and rhetorical structure to gradually realize that something is wrong in such a seeming paradise.

Kincaid is apparently writing in retrospect as a very little girl, and presents to us first what England seemed like to the little girl. "A special jewel"—a fairyland, no less. But also a great a glorious place, from which comes her "sense of what was meaningful, and...... what was meaningless, her sense of myth and sense of reality" altogether a splendid place. But, as the praise piles higher and higher, the sense of bemusement grows over the reader. Surely—surely nothing could really be this magnificent? There must be something wrong somewhere. And, gradually and stealthily, Kincaid begins to undermine her former statements. Despite the great English tradition of a big breakfast—when applied to her family and people it "made us sleepy and tired": But they still did it. Why? Why, because it was English, of course! In the same way, the
The author's father was a hat unsuitable to the climate of
this country-he regularly wore it, saying it was "sold as English."
Also, an atmosphere grows very quickly—an atmosphere of
inferiority. "If England was so great, we aren't that great," it seems.
It was perhaps that that sparked young Kincaid's scorn
and rebellion against England—the idea that she and
her family were inferior to a race that, with all the pretense
of helping them, were really hopelessly wrong on everything.
Did she eat her food in the "pretty," English way? Yes—"but
I knew then that I could enjoy my food more when I ate it
with my bare hands."

Finally, after so much suppression of what she really thinks,
of subtle clues that gave us half the answer, Kincaid breaks
cast into her true beliefs. When before she had begun each
sentence with "England this" and "England that," she switches
her use of syntax and begins sentences with the word "I:
"I had long ago been conquered," and, in retrospect, "I did not know
"I did not know then that this statement was meant to make me
"feel as in awe and small when I heard the word "England." "I
did not know that this... was part of a process that would
result in my erasure... in fact "I did not know much of
anything then." The long dormant voice of the narrator bursts
forth in the last paragraph, charging it with all of the emotion
that was left out before, and compelling the reader
with no doubt at what her true feelings were—rebellion and
hatred—on the subject of England.

There are different kinds of slavery. It may have been
physically outlawed, but the slow and sure torment of physical
slavery was still rampant in Kincaid's childhood world.
She did not realize it then, but later it dawned on her, and in this passage she expresses her courage and rebellion against the mental master of her home. By a unique rhetorical strategy of suppression of her feeling, which was emphasized in her use of syntax and sentence structure, Kincaid reveals to the reader her rich and vibrant emotions and rebellion against such a system, and how she now sees "what a blessing it was that I was unable to draw a map of England correctly." For it saved her from being a slave.
When I saw the opening of "On Seeing England for the First Time" for the first time, I was a teenager sitting at a desk. As I read the piece by Jamaica Kincaid, I discovered that the author uses repetition and figurative language comparisons to convey the overpowering presence of England in her life.

The most obvious use of repetition occurs in the second paragraph. Kincaid begins by describing her very British breakfast, listing each item of her two alternate morning meals. Then she tells the reader that certain items of her breakfasts were "Made in England," whether she eats them or not, and for the rest of the paragraph, names other various objects in her life that bore the oppressive phase. Her shoes, a bolt of gray linen cloth, the box her shoes came in, her socks, her undergarments, her hair ribbons, her father's shoes, her father's shirt and trousers... Kincaid assaults the reader with these English-made products. The effect mirrors hers—she feels helpless against this influence just as the reader quickly realizes the recognition of the pattern but is forced to slog through the rest of the paragraph. The reader may even develop a distaste for the endless list of things "Made in England," just as Kincaid resents the authoritarianism which English life is forced upon her.

Kincaid's comparisons clarify her stance toward England. With dripping irony, Kincaid likens England to a "very special jewel" that "special people get to wear." The prevailing attitude in her experience is that English people are good because they are from England, and have obviously been rewarded by being from such a noble, fine place. To Kincaid, England seems like a "Jerusalem," a holy land for those fortunate who must achieve such a privilege. Naturally, Kincaid develops a resentment because of this preconception, and believes that she
has already been "conquered" by the English, she has already been made to feel inferior.

The repetition and analogies presented by Jamaica Kincaid show her resentment toward the overpowered English influence and pride in her country.