**Q: Explain how the voice of a narrator has influenced your response to a text you’ve studied?**

Only until fairly recently did we begin to notice the unfair treatment towards people of dark skin colour. The novel The Longest Memory by Fred D’Aguiar delves into the issues that we face today as a society that’s constantly focused on fixing the wrongs of the past. It represents numerous voices throughout the novel with different characters narrating the text, shaping the reader’s response towards the topic of slavery towards black people. Whitechapel represents a depressed, brittle and miserable voice through the stylistic device of syntax and the structural device of connotation. Chapel represents a hopeful and optimistic voice through the stylistic device of syntax and the structural device of anecdote. Lydia represents a hopeful and optimistic voice through the structural device of anecdote and language feature of metaphor.

Whitechapel represents a depressed, brittle and miserable voice. He does this through the stylistic device of diction and syntax. When Whitechapel narrates the novel, he quite often uses pessimistic words such as “bloodhounds”, “punishment”, “death” and “nightmare” with very few optimistic words. This negative and pessimistic diction represents a depressed, brittle and miserable voice since these words are commonly connotated with feelings of depression, brittleness and misery, and the lack of optimistic diction implies that he doesn’t have happiness in his life. Throughout the text, Whitechapel often writes in short phrases which don’t continue for very long. This chopped syntax indicates a depressed, brittle and miserable voice since it implies that his pain and misery hinders him from continuing a sentence for longer than a short phrase, likely representing the perspectives of the majority of slaves at the time. This voice has shaped my personal response to the novel by causing me to be more aware of the trauma and misery experienced by slaves and makes me feel that their treatment is unfair and unjust. This has caused me to feel that society takes simple things such as freedom for granted and that we’re unaware of how fortunate we are.

Chapel represents a hopeful and optimistic voice. He does this through the stylistic device of syntax and the structural device of anecdote. Chapel narrates only one chapter in the novel and does this in a poetic style with rhyming couplets. He uses enjambment – continuation of a sentence without a pause beyond the end of a line – to imply the message of an idea or rhythm being continued beyond the restrictions of a single line. This enjambed syntax represents a hopeful and optimistic voice since it implies that Chapel’s willingness and desire for love and freedom won’t be stopped by the plantation owners or his father and therefore signifies hopefulness and optimism. When describing how he learned to read and write from Lydia, he said “it was a mighty waste of a good head”. This dialogue indicates through the anecdote that he sees being literate as a universal human right and that by learning to read and write, he’s striving for more than a slave’s life, therefore portraying a hopeful and optimistic voice. This voice has shaped my personal response by making me more aware of the universality of the right to be literate and how unfair it was for slaves in the past. In modern society we treat reading and writing more as a chore, making me feel that we’re fortunate as a society to have the right to read and write.

Lydia represents a hopeful and optimistic voice. She does this through the structural device of anecdote and language feature of metaphor. When Lydia’s brother returns from the North and tells her stories of free blacks associating with white women, she “covered her mouth to disguise what might very well break out as a smile”. This anecdote indicates that she experiences feelings of joy and excitement when thinking about free blacks associating with white women, and the fact that she immediately tells Chapel of her discovery indicates that she feels hopeful and optimistic about their future marriage. When describing this place to Chapel, she describes it as “heaven on Earth”. This metaphor indicates that she sees this place where black men associated with white women as a paradise, therefore portraying a hopeful and optimistic voice since she has hope that she and Chapel would be able to marry each other safely. After explaining her plan to get her and Chapel to the North, they “became excited, they hugged, looked at each other and hugged again”. This anecdote shows that they both feel hopeful that they’d be able to marry each other, therefore portraying a hopeful and optimistic voice. This has shaped my personal response by making me feel sympathetic towards slaves as in modern society, being able to converse with each other freely is often seen as a universal human right and anyone deserves to marry who they wish to marry regardless of characteristics or heritage. In a society where freedom and choice is often the number one priority, I feel that we’ve become less aware of the lack of rights of slaves in the past.

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**Q: Explain how voice has been constructed in a text.**

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