

FRASER, Robert. *Lifting the Sentence. A Poetics of Postcolonial Fiction*.  
Manchester & NY: Manchester Univ. Press, 2000.

# ASPECTS OF STYLE

## I- LANGUAGES

- Imperial voices** → creation of new nation-states – the problem of telling through one language stories set in communities where many tongues co-exist → unicity
- Postcolonial approaches** → the narrator is a native speaker representing his/her community – one language permeated by local use – act of translation
- Voicing the nation** → the nation as fiction (Rushdie & Soyinka)
- Textual underlay; virtual texts** → constant interpolation of vernacular words into the flow of an English-language narrative language
- **The crux of creole** → paradoxes provoked by the encounter of two cultures

Ex. John Agard; Linton Kwesi Johnson.

## II- USES OF PERSON

Personal and national identities are intertwined– grammatical codes → group identification; commitment to particular viewpoint

- The anthropological/imperial third person plural → autobiographies, diaries → the colonized human → “Other” = “Them”
- The colonial first person singular → “I” = act of psychological liberation: a move towards visibility. A political ploy (remote dream).
- The evolving self → narrative subjectivity leads outwards: towards the needs of a community feeling its way towards genuine autonomy.
- The representative ‘I’ → implicit identifications of the private and public spheres; the first person singular is co-terminous with the nation itself.
- The marginalized first person → the narrator is somebody different from the protagonist. The marginality of such narrators, mirroring the marginality of the nation.
- The third person singular: deceptive narratives → represents social realism; social injustices claim for representation (a marked reliance on the apparently objectivized third person singular (a ‘he’ or a ‘she’ ).
- Collective consciousness: the first person plural → stylistic *tour de force*  
Complexity → paradoxical straightforward extreme of alienation

### III- USES OF TENSE

-The imperial anthropological present → life occurs in a thoughtless **present** – indigenous peoples: costumes, hypothetical habits, pseudo-iterative action (imperfect tense)- pseudo-iterative of attitude, of thought, even morals.

-The anti-imperial past historic → narratives of resistance and of anti-colonial persuasion – imperial travelogues; pseudo-iterative present (anthropologists) & the past historic (historians); grammar of literature + grammar of politics

-Dissident tenses →

- a) colonial narratives: imperialist discourse (the local *past* as an ahistorical condition of sleepwalking from which the empire had wrested order X the *present* had implied organization; the *future* (progress X chaos) – **discourse of resistance** (*past*: an idyl of authenticity – the *present* is a nightmare of oppression– the *future* is a utopia of realized dreams)

b) Narratives of independence: the *present* is an arena of blissful and purposeful actions; the *future*: the designs of the present would be fulfilled.

- The didactic present → unmasks the constructs of the characters X perfect antidote to nostalgia or to the ‘optimism disease’ (Rushdie).