

B I B L I O G R A F I EA. PRIMÊRE BRONNE

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S U M M A R Y

This dissertation is devoted to a study of the homodiegetic, extradiegetic narrator (terms derived from Genette). The main premise was to study the child as narrator, to differentiate between the child as narrator and the adult narrator, to peg down specific problems but also to show the advantages of the child narrator over the adult narrator.

With Genette as basis the writer has tried to clear up the widespread confusion in the literary world between the narrator who presents the narrative and the character whose consciousness orients the perspective, the *who speaks* and *who sees* of Genette. The first part of the study provides a theoretical background to the second part and is largely based on the typology of Gerard Genette.

As the youthful reader is the most likely reader of the three chosen texts (Skrik kom huis toe by Dolf van Niekerk, Woorde is soos wors by Rona Rupert and Boom bomer boomste (Tree-more, tree-most - translated by Eve Merchant, 1983) by Elsabe Steenberg), a chapter in the first part is devoted to an investigation of the enforceability of the criterion used to differentiate between books meant for adults and books meant for children.

Concerning these texts the writer's contention is that the degree of presence of the narrator as well as the placing of emphasis, either on the narrator or on the character whose perspective orients the narrative (the one who focalizes), determine the specific perspective of the narration. Personal traits of characters are often revealed by their respective objects of focalization.

The three short novels previously mentioned are thematically related, but because of the specific handling of the narrator and of focalization in each, a multiplicity of perspectives is opened.

In Skrik kom huis toe, the younger, experiencing self is emphasised. Albert's vision, and not that of the narrator, orients the narrative to such an extent that the reader easily identifies with his personal existential crisis. The voice of a narrating instance is barely discernible and has, for all practical purposes, no role in the text. The protagonist focalizes intently upon matters of personal concern and thus reveals an egocentric personality. The thinly populated narrative space as well as the bleakness of this space suggests something of the unhappiness and utter loneliness of the boy, Albert.

In Woorde is soos wors, which is thematically related to the previous work, a completely different perspective is revealed because of the accent falling on the narrating instance himself. Uncommon in Afrikaans, the use of *het ge-* is sustained throughout the text, thereby undeniably creating a distance between the narrator and his story. In contrast to the previous text the narrator emphasizes the fact that his experiences belong to a distant past. Direct identification with an experiencing self is ruled out because of the outspoken diegetic nature of the text. The stress falls on the event rather than on the experience thereof. The protagonist seldom focalizes and if he does this text is obviously imbedded in the text of the narrator. His world is nevertheless populated by a variety of people with whom he, without exception, relates positively. The narrative space shows a much greater variety and is more colourful than that of Skrik kom huis toe. This is meaningful in the characterization of the protagonist, Josias.