

**IDEOLOGY AND LANGUAGE IN SELECTED TEXTS
OF KATHERINE PATERSON**

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Thesis submitted for degree of Doctor of Philosophy, 2005

University of Technology, Sydney

Certificate of Authorship/Originality

I certify that the work in this thesis has not been previously submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of the requirements for a degree.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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Acknowledgements

Rosemary Johnston has shown infinite patience and her expert guidance and insights during this journey have been invaluable.

My family has been wonderfully supportive during this journey and my heartfelt thanks will always be with Joyce, Rodney, Audrey and Les.

The CREA research group and my colleagues at UTS have been very supportive and I am appreciative of their encouragement – special thanks to Barbara Poston-Anderson and Lesley Ljungdahl for their advice.

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Abstract

This thesis explores connections between ideology and language in selected works of Katherine Paterson with a view to understanding the ways in which her Christian ideology informs the language and narrative. The tools of analysis are literary and linguistic: the thesis brings together the triangulation of literary criticism, postmodern literary theory and linguistic structuralism as the means of analysing text. Ideology is strongly identifiable in Katherine Paterson's work and represents a profoundly Christian worldview, especially in relation to the theological notion of grace as 'unconditional love'. However, the texts do not have to be read as 'Christian' and offer options of multiple readings through strongly identifiable positive values.

The overall narrative design in the novels is to tell stories of diverse experiences of childhood, through what is represented as the focalized voice of the child. The family and one's place in it become critical issues, as does the role of fathers in the family structure. The child's journey can be seen in metaphorical terms as both dark and light, the former representing the deep, intense spiritual struggle within (often initiated by abjection), the latter representing emergence from the struggle into a more positive, mature future with hope.

The study demonstrates how linguistic analysis provides a tool for identifying focalization in texts and examining the voice of the child thus revealed. This, in turn, helps to reveal ideology. The study confirms how literary theory and linguistic analysis complement and reinforce each other. It also notes that despite the overt Christian ideology espoused and declared by the author, readers can still read Paterson's novels and enjoy them without either understanding or sharing that ideology.

The thesis explores, again through both linguistic and literary analysis, concomitant ideologies that reflect Paterson's social context. Thus, her works give voice to female protagonists and reveal values, attitudes and assumptions relating to such issues as the importance of education as an agent of social empowerment; the connections between poverty, class and education; the value of loyalty; the significance of creativity and imagination, and the value of finding an identity and place for self in both the family and community.