The Embrace: Narrative Voice and Children’s Books

Roderick McGillis

Abstract

Dans cet article qui fait l’analyse précise des paragraphes initiaux de plusieurs œuvres extrêmement connues, comme The Paper Bag Princess de Munsch/Martchenko ou la série des Jacob Two-Two de Mordecai Richler, R. McGillis observe que l’enclenchement de la narration dans l’œuvre destinée à l’enfant-lecteur tend à adoucir, à amadouer, à produire une adhésion et un rapport de sécurité. Ce “ton” particulier pourrait s’appeler l’êtreinte, unissant le lecteur et son narrateur.

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Embrace your inner child -- no, this not a new-age, feel-good article but a skill required to successfully deliver a story from a child’s perspective. The child that was still lives in you, as does your knowledge of your own children and every child you’ve ever come to know. You must dig deep and find those youthful voices that live within you, if you want to truthfully write in the voice of a child. This is not a book for children, but a book written (at least in the early chapters) in a child’s voice -- first person narrative. I should add there are two narrators, Bria who we meet at 9 and Mary, who becomes a mother figure. Yes, as I state in my article, children do mirror what they receive, and children who are given the stimulation of articulate parents and good books will reflect that back. Narrative perspective encompasses more than narrative voice. It also involves the point of view, mood, and focalizer. This in-depth article explains all this and more. This voice does not necessarily mean we’re experiencing the story from the narrator’s point of view. What is narrative perspective? Narrative perspective encompasses more than the voice. It also involves the point of view, mood, and focalizer, to name a few. In our example, the narrative perspective is the child. Genette would say the story is “focalized” through the child, because the story unfolds with the child as the main character. The other concept is narrative voice. The voice of the narration in our example is the mother. This voice can take on many forms completely unrelated to the main character’s emotions.