



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
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**DETECTING DOMINANT DISCOURSES IN SELECTED DETECTIVE FICTION BY  
ENID BLYTON AND AGATHA CHRISTIE**

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

Doctor Litterarum

University of Pretoria

Pretoria

2010



## **DECLARATION**

I declare that this thesis is my own original work. Where secondary sources are used due acknowledgement is given and reference made according to departmental requirements.

This thesis is submitted to the University of Pretoria in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Doctor Litterarum. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or for examination to any other university.

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Liesel Coetzee



## **DEDICATION**

Gerhard, you have made all the difference in my life. Every day, I love you more.

Mom and Dad, you have always been there for me. Thank you for all your love, patience and encouragement.



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

To my supervisor, Ann Smith, I am sincerely grateful to you for your unwavering guidance and understanding. Your support throughout this journey has made it an enjoyable experience filled with learning and growth. Thank you.



## **ABSTRACT**

Enid Blyton and Agatha Christie were the most successful British women writers of their time. Christie and Blyton were contemporaries, living and writing in the United Kingdom during the first half of the twentieth century. This study takes into consideration these similarities in its examination of the depiction of dominant discourses in relation to emergent, alternative and oppositional discourses in their writing. This thesis suggests that while Enid Blyton and Agatha Christie offer alternatives to the dominant patriarchal discourses of the British Empire in the first half of the twentieth century, they show allegiance, too, to the dominant discourses of their time. Specific consideration is given to the portrayal of discourses concerned with gender, feminism, classism, British colonialism, racism, and xenophobia in their writing.

The work of Enid Blyton and Agatha Christie was extremely popular in their time and still is today. Their important contribution to popular literature in England in the early twentieth century justifies a study of a selection of their work in relation to detective fiction and children's literature as well as to studies of social history that include the investigation of how dominant discourse is both endorsed and challenged.



## **KEY WORDS**

Agatha Christie

Enid Blyton

Detective Fiction

Children's Literature

Discourse

Horizon of expectation

Hegemony

Michel Foucault

Raymond Williams

Antonio Gramsci

Hans-Georg Gadamer

Hans Jauss

Gender

Race

Class

Nationality



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