

Week 5 Writer's Report: Tjieng, Tjang Tjerries

When I first encountered the story, *Tjieng, Tjang Tjerries*, it was very much an experience that was exciting from beginning to end as we are taken on the journey of a character by the name of Skerul, who seems to have something that bothers his mind and this is made evident to us by the way that he reacts to the buzzing in his head. It was immediately evident in this story that this was a case of a spirit or soul that took over Skerul's mind and just by the way that he acts and the way that he is with other people, this story was very intriguing to see whether or not Skerul would overcome this spirit that took over his speech and mindset and this alone managed to keep me engaged from beginning end.

The story title *The Legend of Tjieng, Tjang Tjerries*, and there were immediately two things that I deciphered from this. A legend story is a historical story that has been passed down from generation to generation and these stories are also often believed to be true. So, this story follows the idea that *Tjieng, Tjang Tjerries* is a passed down historical story and just by the sound of this, it immediately gave me an idea of the setting of the story and what group of people are being highlighted in this story, being the coastal Cape people. This title was perfect to set of what the story would entail due to the use of Afrikaans accent and style of pronunciation for the title. From the title alone, I could gauge about this is about a legend story and based in an Afrikaans populated scenery.

A line that solidified this for me was the narrative hook of the story which states, "It is one o'clock in the afternoon and Katriena can-meisie and Skerul are sitting on the harbour wall with their backs against the dollosse." This first line of the story gave me idea of the setting that the story takes place which the harbour gave an idea that it was in the Cape and what solidified this is the Cape slang and Afrikaans phrases that are used in this first line alone. The Afrikaans slang was a huge indicator that *Tjieng, Tjang Tjerries* is a reference to the Afrikaans slang that is the main dialect for the story.

The story follows the beginning, middle and end structure but I believe does kind of end on a note that leaves us in suspense and wanting to find out what happens to Skerul. The story does experiment with its structure where we begin the story in the present and then we shift from the present to the past where are introduced to how Mr Wong, this spirit or soul that haunts him enters his head and messes with his thoughts and state. We get to understand how and why he is in the state that he is in the present and the flashback provides an understanding of why he lands up in hospital and doesn't remember how he got there and also the way that Mr Wong has been in his life for a long time, offering us the interpretation of a time lapse.

The first point in the story serves as a turning point was when Mr Wong was revealed to us in the story as one of Skerul's teachers or instructors and I interpreted this via the sentence, "The first lesson he got from Mr Wong was in Standard Five class." This line gives the audience an opportunity to get comfortable with the character of Mr Wong but the as the story progresses, we notice that he is a problem to Skerul and a mental state/spirit instead of a physical being and he lives in Skerul's mind.

We also see a change in POV that is exchanging from both the narrator's POV and Skerul's POV as the narrator documents what Skerul experiences in the story.

A figure of speech that worked well in the story took place in the line, “he feels like there is a thousand little bee wings buzzing in his brain no matter how he rubs.” This line offers a clear description of the sound/buzzing that Skerul was experiencing in his head and the use of the bees to describe the buzz shows just how strong and audible the buzz was in his head and this line serves as a simile that compares the buzz in his head to the buzz sound that bees make. This description provides an imagination for the audience and just from this alone, we get how irritating and unbearable the sound was in Skerul’s head.

The sentence where the word choice stood out and was a sort of foreshadowing of what was happening in the story was the line, “Maybe it’s a bad spirit talking to his Bos. He thinks he can speak karate.” This line worked well for the story as it shows what language he was trying to speak and highlighted the way that the people close to him and around him portrayed what he was going through. They believed he was going crazy.

The protagonist in this story may be Skerul, yes, but it is the narrator that speaks for Skerul and interprets his thoughts to the readers. The narrator assumes the perfect role as Skerul’s thoughts and voice as, remember, Skerul can only say “Seven up Tjieng, Tjang Tjerries!” The narrator speaking not only just tells us the story but also assumes the accent and dialect of the Cape Afrikaans slang that is used by most of the characters in the story close to Skerul. For example, the line, “He likes Katriena can-meisie for dancing boude,” which sites an internal thought that Skerul has and shows how the narrator also speaks like the rest of the characters and the way that Skerul would assumedly speak.

Overall, the stories pacing and technique of going back into the past to recall crucial events is something that I admired from the writer and how the dialect was maintained from beginning to end making the story experience much more fun to take on. It really felt like I was in their world when reading this story alone and the way that the narrator represented Skerul’s thoughts resulted in a connection with him and sympathy for him too, where I even wanted to continue the journey with Skerul at the end, wanting him to get rid of this spirit in his head.