Summary

This dissertation explores controversial themes in the youth literature of Barrie Hough. The novels under discussion are *My kat word herfs* (1986), *Droomwa* (1990), *Vlerkdans* (1992) and *Skilpoppe* (1998). *My kat word herfs* was translated as *My cat turns Autumn*, *Droomwa* as *Dream Chariot* and *Vlerkdans* as *In full Flight*.

Afrikaans youth novels historically centered around naive themes such as the idyllic life on the farm or at boarding school. However, young people found it increasingly difficult to identify with these naive storylines and during the nineteen eighties and nineties the Afrikaans youth novel experienced a renewal. Barrie Hough was one of the pioneers, writing about controversial issues like AIDS, homosexuality, teenage sex, suicide, drug abuse, divorce and single parenthood.

The aim of this dissertation is to explore the liberation of Afrikaans youth literature and the role that controversial themes play in this regard. These themes enable the reader to identify with the story and serve as an allurement to draw the reader into the world of the text. Furthermore, the writer is given the opportunity to experience a sense of liberation while he narratively confronts events of his past. This liberation process allows the writer to deal and come to terms with his own past.

At the end of each novel both the reader and writer go through a process of purification and liberation, facilitated by the therapeutic process of writing or reading a story.