

The Representation of Black Masculinity in Post-apartheid Children's Literature

Candy Lynn Thyssen

THYCAN001

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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Date: 2 April 2013

Supervisors: Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela (University of the Free State) and Floretta Boonzaier
(University of Cape Town)

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Abstract

The significant changes to the political landscape of South Africa since the abolition of apartheid and the implementation of democracy have had far-reaching effects in social order and gender relations. With the new dispensation has come the promise of new opportunities for men and women of all races to participate fully in the creation of a multicultural society, making the issue of transformation an important agenda. As a social artefact, children's literature has also been influenced by these changes, and the didactic function of this medium make it an interesting site to explore the ways in which historical stereotypes are both perpetuated and challenged. This study focused on the representation of black masculinity in a sample of South African children's literature published after apartheid. The aim was to investigate how race, gender, and class intersect in the representation of black masculinity. A discourse analysis of ten picturebooks written and illustrated by South Africans was used to inform the investigation on of the text, the images, and the stories as a whole. Although there were some promising changes in the representation, stereotypical stories which perpetuated the themes of black people as rural, barefoot and poor dominated the sample. In particular, the absence of fathers and a lack of strong black male characters were noted. The reiteration of such stereotypes in the absence of strong aspirational images is troubling given the potential of children's literature to influence attitudes.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The significant changes to the political landscape of South Africa since the abolition of apartheid and the implementation of democracy have had far-reaching effects in social and gender relations. With the new dispensation has come the promise of new opportunities for men and women of all races to participate fully in the creation of a multicultural society, with the issue of transformation being an important agenda. The year 1994 may have marked the formal end of apartheid, but as a way of life, remnants of its social and ideological influence have proven to be more enduring (MacCann & Maddy, 2001). This makes post-apartheid South Africa as a country in transition where new identities are being negotiated an interesting context in which to explore race and gender.

The many indignities of apartheid laws emasculated black¹ men by imposing strict regulations on almost every part of their lives (Morrell, 1998). The advent of democracy has challenged men of colour to reclaim their manhood and find positive ways of being men in the new South Africa. Language and books remain an important medium for the transmission of social values and cultural ideals, and young children are particularly susceptible to the messages about race and gender received at a time when they are developing their identities (Gooden & Gooden, 2001). Exploring the representation of black males in post-apartheid children's literature can be used as a way of gauging the extent to which an ethos of transformation is reflected in the opportunities and roles available to male black characters.

Children's literature has many functions, and is viewed variously as an introduction to the world of reading, entertainment, and even as a socialization agent. Books written specifically for young children often have an instructive purpose, and serve to educate them about culturally

¹*In this project, the word 'black' will be used as an inclusive term comprising black, coloured, Indian and Asian races.*

appropriate behaviour and their place in society. As a means of conveying social norms, children's literature can be seen as simultaneously reflecting the ideals of society, as well as the inherent prejudices within it (Van Vuuren, 1994). Picturebooks are a particular genre of children's literature aimed at young children who are beginning to learn how to read.

These books combine the distillation of ideas into simple language illustrated with pictures, the interaction of the visual and the verbal being instrumental in telling the story. The apparent simplicity of children's books belies the complex ways this genre acts as a "transparent window on the future - a way to glimpse how the literary imagination constructs cultural value" (MacCann & Maddy, 2001, pxi).

This thesis explores the representation of black masculinity in post-apartheid children's picturebooks by South African authors by examining a sample of picturebooks published between 1994 and 2010, using discourse analysis to discover and describe how black masculinity is constructed. Chapter Two presents a literature review of pertinent research in the areas of representation, identity, race and masculinity as they relate to children's literature. Chapter Three presents the theoretical framework and outlines the research methodology used to guide the study. Chapter Four is a discourse analysis of a sample of South African children's picturebooks published after 1994. Chapter Five explores themes in the meanings attached to various geographical locations where black people are represented. Chapter Six looks at the symbolic meaning of shoes and being barefoot in the books. Chapter Seven examines the role of black families, and how black fathers are represented. Chapter Eight discusses the representation of black people as, and their recurrent juxtaposition with, animals. Chapter Nine concludes with a discussion of the main findings and limitations, and suggests directions for further research in the field.

CHAPTER 2: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON BLACK MASCULINITY AND ITS RELATION TO CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN SOUTH AFRICA

This chapter is concerned with outlining the scholarly work in the areas of black masculinity, children's literature, and where these fields intersect. It will address the role of children's literature and its relationship to the growing child, race and the representation of multicultural identities in children's literature, as well as masculinity in children's literature.

From infancy until the start of formal schooling, children are engaged in reading and writing behaviours classed as emergent literacy, which describes what they know about these activities before attending school (Sulzby & Teale, 2003). The types of books young children are most often exposed to are picturebooks, a specific genre of children's literature consisting of simple text combined with illustrations designed for children unable to read. Books for children serve various purposes: the three most important being to entertain, to promote psychosocial development and to instruct (Mendoza & Reese, 2001). The instructive function of children's literature can be seen both as an educational tool and a socialization tool through which culture may be transmitted (Taylor, 2003), and often children's books reflect the values and prejudices of the societies that produce them (Thompson, 2001). Since 1994, South African society has been negotiating the transition to democracy from apartheid. Some of the research on South African children's literature from the apartheid era has addressed the issue of racism, and found examples of white supremacy and derogatory representations of blacks in these books (Khorana, 1988; McCann & Maddy, 2001). This review seeks to highlight the trends of the representation of black masculinity in children's literature by looking at relevant research on the topics of representation, identity, race and masculinity in children's literature.

The relationship between children's literature and the growing child

Children begin learning about how language works before they start school, with skills such as vocabulary and story comprehension developing during interactions with adults and books (Dickinson & Smith, 1994). In her study of emergent literacy, Bloch (1999) found that young children used “stories to explore and make sense of their lives” (p. 48). When they are read to, children are familiarised with the structure and conventions of language, making the books they are exposed to at a young age more than entertainment, but also an important teaching tool (Simcock & Dooley, 2007). One of the more important ways children's picturebooks have been used instructively is to teach sexual abuse prevention strategies, for example the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touching (Lampert & Walsh, 2010).

In picturebooks, text and image work jointly to tell the story, and the pictures themselves can aid learning, by visually representing unfamiliar concepts (Fletcher & Reese, 2004). Representational pictures, those that literally depict textual content, are the most prevalent kind of illustration found in picturebooks. Studies have shown representational pictures to be useful in helping children to remember and understand narratives better (Carney & Levin, 2002). Toddlers as young as 18-months old were able to learn new behaviours from picturebook interactions. In a study investigating the effect of a picture's iconicity (how closely it resembled reality), it was found that the more iconic a picture was, the better the performance on learning new tasks (Simcock & DeLoache, 2006). Picturebooks can foster visual literacy and encourage children to become aware of pictures as meaning-makers, an increasingly valuable skill in the context of contemporary society's culture of images (Galda & Short, 1993).

Simcock and DeLoache (2006) related pointing to and labelling pictures, asking questions and giving feedback, elaborating on narratives and highlighting relations between categories as ways parents use picturebooks to teach their children. Categories are important for identifying and sorting through information, as well as making deductions about the unknown (Gelman, Coley, Rosengren, Hartman & Pappas, 1998). Children's books can expose children to people and experiences beyond the familiar and they can come to learn about the socially constructed categories of race and gender through storybook characters different from themselves. Books allow children to learn about how other boys and girls behave, and experience worlds outside their immediate environment (Gooden & Gooden, 2001; Kortenhaus & Demarest, 1993).

The role of children's literature

A strong national literature is integral to the nation-building project in a fragmented South African society (Hart, 2002), especially at the foundational levels of reading – children's literature. One of the most important methods of transmitting the values and norms of a society to its members is through storytelling, both oral and written (Kortenhaus & Demarest, 1993). Therefore, language and books are some of the most powerful mediums through which this process takes place. As a result, children's literature can play an important part in the reconstruction of society post-apartheid.

Picturebooks seem deceptively simple, but often have “complexly interwoven visual and textual imagery” (May, 1997, p. 95). However, there are challenges involved in presenting a subject as sensitive and multilayered as the issues emerging in a post-apartheid context to a young audience. Jenkins' (2007) study of collections of child-authored children's literature

published during the transition to apartheid considers how different editorial choices present differing portrayals of South African children and youth during this tumultuous period. The sombre, stark appearance of certain books dealing with harsh subject matter such as police brutality and juvenile delinquency is made more striking and authentic by the unmediated nature of facsimile reproductions. In contrast, the use of bright, cheerful colours in photographs and reproductions of colour drawings in books such as the *Letters to Madiba* volume paints a picture of youthful vitality and hope, concurrent with conceptions of the “New South Africa” as a place of opportunities (Jenkins, 2007).

Children’s literature has long been viewed as having a hand in moulding the attitudes and behaviours of children by the adults who share these stories with them (May, 1997). The books children read at a young age can influence their developing perceptions and values, making the “cultural and historical accuracy and authenticity of these books” a legitimate matter of interest (Taxel, 1986, p. 248). Children’s books play an important role in how children come to view themselves and others, and serve as a “mediator between children, cultural knowledge, and socialization by adults” (Harris, 1990, p. 541). Young children are especially susceptible to these messages because they are in the process of developing their identities, and books provide some of their early exposure to expectations of how men and women are to behave (Gooden & Gooden, 2001). It is safe to say, therefore, that books have an effect on the way children come to conceptualise their own gender and that of the opposite sex.

The assumption that books can influence how children see themselves and others also underlies studies examining the way race is handled in children’s literature. Reading books that depict black characters in a stereotypical or negative way is not only damaging to the self-concept of black children, but also to their attitude towards books and reading (Chall, Radwin,

French & Hall, 1979). This is a particularly important point in relation to the South African context, where illiteracy is still highest in the black population (Aitchison & Harley, 2004).

Race in children's literature

Children are often thought of as being too young to understand the complexities of race, but racialization and socialization go hand in hand, meaning that they learn that race is linked to power by the time they reach preschool (King, 2008). For example, Roy (2008) uses Critical Discourse Analysis, a method which views language as social practice, to find out what kind of impression of India and Indian people was being put forward in a selection of children's picturebooks published in the United States. She identified Orientalised depictions of India as a colony and Indian people as constrained by the past without prospects for development (Roy, 2008).

Studies such as this come from a strong tradition of Western scholarship on race in children's literature, where the discipline is more sophisticated. There are many studies from North America regarding African Americans in children's literature. Some of the earliest of these date back to the sixties, and found black characters to be greatly underrepresented, implying that non-white children were learning to read and understand the "American way of life" in a literary world from which they were absent or hardly mentioned (Chall et al., 1979, p. 527). This was a worrying trend, especially since segregation had been outlawed and attempts were being made to move toward a more racially integrated American society (Taxel, 1986). The lack of black characters in picturebooks is noted by McIntosh (1988) as an indicator of white privilege. It was also found that where black characters were included, they were often portrayed negatively in derogatory roles, while the heroes and heroines were white (Chall et al., 1979). Subsequent

studies have produced mixed results, with some reporting an improvement and others finding no change, with the depiction of black characters varying according to contemporary social and political circumstances (Pescosolido, Grauerholz, & Milkie, 1997).

Negative constructions of black characters work to reinforce racial binaries which value whiteness and devalue blackness, and also contribute to the reproduction of white privilege. This is damaging not only to black readers, who are either erased or denigrated in picturebooks, but also to white readers. Although the effects of stereotypes in picturebooks on children of different races is yet to be empirically tested, at least one study has shown that both black and white children are influenced by racial stereotypes (Sagar & Schofield, 1980).

Three important issues emerged in African American research on race in children's literature: audience (being talked *about* versus talked *to*); the author's interpretation of the "Afro-American experience" (positive or negative) and emic or etic perspectives of the cultural group portrayed (authenticity) (Sims, 1983). These interrelated issues remain useful in any consideration of the representation of race in children's picturebooks. In South Africa, the question of whether white authors can authentically write black experience is an especially pertinent one, given the complexities of representing indigenous culture post-apartheid (Jenkins, 2002). The South African context is unique because although black people make up the majority of the population, the historical legacy of discrimination has contributed to the dominance of the white minority in most skilled industries, including publishing. This industry is also subject to market impulses which make English books the most profitable, meaning that the majority of children's books published are in English, and by white authors (Van Vuuren, 1994). Issues such as these highlight some of the complexities faced by both writers and their audiences as they attempt to balance creativity with sensitivity.

MacCann and Maddy's study of apartheid and racism in South African children's literature questions the veracity of white authors writing about black subjects, who portray them either "as servants or as violent township extremists who are challenging their status" (2001, p. 20). The subtext of their argument is that white writers have no right to depict black experience. This viewpoint is challenged by Jenkins and Muther (2008), who contend that this assumption "ultimately reifies racial difference and distorts the complex and interconnected social forces that, under apartheid, contracted and distorted the lives of both the oppressed and the oppressor (2008, p. 248). Some white writers themselves have responded to this issue by using rural upbringing and a closeness with black people as justification for writing stories about them, insisting their interpretations have a place among the many world-views expressed in children's literature (Jenkins, 2009).

In their review of research on African American children's literature, Brooks and McNair (2009) stress the importance of developing an African American literary tradition because it allows African Americans to participate more fully in their textual and public representation. They found that culturally authentic views of African American life tended to be rejected by publishers in favour of stereotypes, the most prevalent being that of the absent father. Two seminal studies, one by Broderick (1973) and another by MacCann (2001), on stereotypes of black people in children's literature found the following common derogatory representations of African Americans as lazy, unintelligent and unattractive (as cited in Brooks & McNair, 2009).

Amongst the negative stereotypes of black people as superstitious, violent, animal-like, and ugly described in Broderick's (1973) survey of the representation of black people in children's fiction, of particular interest is the positioning of black characters in subservient roles. Black characters are unlikely to be represented as having professional aspirations, with little

career opportunities beyond service or, if they are fortunate, as performing artists, with the overwhelming sentiment that the “character’s goals seem tied to the colour of their skin” (Broderick, 1973, p. 92). Excluding black characters or portraying them in stereotypically negative ways is detrimental to both black and white children. Without positive images of blackness in books, black children have no way of developing a healthy racial identity through reading, and white children are limited in their understanding of other cultures in books where most of the characters are like them (Sims, 1983; Sims Bishop, 1990). The best cross-cultural stories are those that deal with race positively by avoiding stereotypical depictions and celebrating diversity; such books can potentially “transport children to other cultural settings, geographic regions, or even time periods” (Labbo & Field, 1998, p. 474).

The representation of multicultural identities in children’s literature

A look at some of the research on Native Americans in children’s literature reveals the following significant issues in the representation of minorities. Mendoza and Reese (2001) suggest the mirror/window analogy for judging representations of minorities in multicultural children’s literature. Children’s literature can be a mirror, reflecting back the child’s own experiences, or it could be a window, opening a view on different experiences.

A problem parallel to underrepresentation is the problem of a preponderance of derogatory material. Distorted views of Native Americans as “painted, whooping, befeathered” savages (Thompson, 2001, p. 368) are also damaging. “The appropriation of cultural symbols as pop culture icons contributes to distorted understandings of Native American culture, which is rich and heterogeneous, while allowing negative stereotypes of Native Americans as brutal, drunk and lazy to be perpetuated (Mendoza & Reese, 2001; Thompson, 2001). Mendoza and

Reese (2001), Thompson (2001) and Taylor (2000) found historical inaccuracies in the representation of Native Americans in children's literature problematic, especially the portrayal of white paternalism which positioned Native Americans as unable to survive without the help of white people.

In South Africa, the initial impetus for publishing folktales was driven by white paternalism, but they were later employed in the promotion of apartheid ideology by emphasizing ethnic differences and portraying black people as primitive (Jenkins, 2002). Currently these stories still make up a substantial part of children's literature in South Africa, although they are popular for different reasons. "Traditional folktales and their derivatives are thus readily available and apparently eagerly purchased by both middle-class white parents anxious to expose their children, who are growing up in a post-apartheid context, to African culture and by newly prosperous black parents wishing to affirm traditional cultural values that are becoming increasingly alien to their children's predominately urban lifestyles" (Brown, 2008, p. 261). Resolving the tension between "the cultural specificity of folktales and the project of national unity" is a challenge faced by writers attempting to portray a shared identity for all South Africans in stories for children (Jenkins, 2002, p. 272).

The nation-building potential of children's literature in South Africa is related to ideas of children being the future of the "New" South Africa (Jenkins, 2007). It is acknowledged that children's literature has a role in shaping the identity of children, but this is complicated by various issues in South Africa. Post-apartheid, the terms used by the former government to label races are being contested as individuals exercise the freedom to determine their own racial identity. The incorporation of multiracialism as part of the national identity of South Africa post-apartheid is apparent in children's books where the race of the characters is not explicitly

identified, but is inferred in other ways (Lehman, 2006). Efforts to make race irrelevant in a bid to erase the past, however, may be taken too far when “rainbow nation” images ignore difference with homogenous characters free of “distinctive racial or cultural features” (Van der Walt, 2005, p. 137).

Language and literature also play an important role in identity, as “both carry a nation’s sense of self and culture” (Serote, 2000, p. 53, as cited in Hart 2002, p. 32). This is a complicated issue in a country such as South Africa, where we have eleven official languages. Under apartheid, indigenous languages were marginalized, and children’s literature in these languages were not developed or published as much as English and Afrikaans (Van der Walt, 2005). It is significant that the majority of books published for children are in English and Afrikaans, languages which are often the second or third – language of most of the children in South Africa (Lehman, 2005). Publishing pressures (Van Vuuren, 1994), the difficulty of finding a profitable readership for books in African languages beyond the educational market (Jenkins, 2009), as well as the fact that some authors are more comfortable writing in their language of literacy rather than their oral home language (Van der Walt, 2005) influence the shortage of children’s books in indigenous languages.

While children’s literature in indigenous languages is underrepresented, translations of indigenous folktales have always formed a significant part of children’s literature in postcolonial countries (Jenkins, 2009; Muriungi, 2004; Van der Walt, 2005). Comparisons can be drawn between postcolonial and post-apartheid literature as both address a transitional time period in which the balance of power has shifted. Bradford (2001) highlights the tendency of postcolonial literature to silence painful aspects of the past in order to create a new national identity, using the treatment of Aborigines in Australian literature as an example. In South Africa, post-apartheid

children's literature also went through a phase of producing "melting-pot books where a homogeneous South African society with no racial conflict [was] depicted" (Van der Walt, 2005, p. 138). The enduring impact of the past on the present makes postcolonial, as well as post-apartheid, children's texts "a site of tension, producing different and conflicting significances" (Bradford, 2001, p. 198). The retelling of an African story in *Fly, Eagle, Fly!* (Gregorowski, 1982) is an example of how indigenous children's literature can use "the promise of a radiant future" to comfort young readers who are part of a "public in difficulty or transformation" (Perrot, 2006, p. 22). The story seeks to authentically represent black South Africans, and is presented as a metaphor of liberty, without reference to political debates (Perrot, 2006).

Masculinity in children's literature

In the wake of feminism, there has been considerable interest in the under-representation and stereotypical role of females in children's literature, and concern about the messages this sends to girls about their abilities and potential (Weitzman, Eifler, Hokada, & Ross, 1972). Research has been heavily focussed on this area, particularly with a view to rectifying the situation by advocating for non-sexist children's books. The prevalence of male characters and their positive characterisation in children's literature is accompanied by a surprising lack of academic enquiry into the representation of masculinity in books for young children and its varied consequences. There is also less commentary on children's literature from other cultures and ethnic backgrounds outside of the European and North American settings in which the majority of the studies were conducted, although differences in the way other cultures conceptualise and represent gender in their children's literature were evident (Jiahua, 2006).

In research on the representation of gender in children's literature, the focus has been on the inequalities between male and female characters, which has led to a limited view of masculinity in the genre. It could be that the dominance of male characters in children's literature has resulted in an analysis of their representations in comparison with that of girls, and not as separate subjects in their own right. The research finds boy characters in children's books to be independent, dominant and authoritative, and engaged in active roles outdoors (Marshall, 2004; Kortenhaus & Demarest, 1993; Williams, Williams, Vernon & Malecha, 1987). It has been observed that stories about boys sell better than stories about girls, and the greater number of male characters in stories and illustrations in books for children of both genders implies that they are more interesting and important than females (Hamilton, Anderson, Broaddus & Young, 2006; Turner-Bowker, 1996). Boys in children's literature are brave, heroic leaders who go on exciting adventures, occasionally rescuing girls and animals; they are competitive, aggressive, and assertive, aspiring to career roles that require skill or training (Hamilton, Anderson, Broaddus & Young, 2006; Turner-Bowker, 1996). It can be seen that such descriptions of boys using oppositional descriptors to those of girls do not begin to fully engage with the complexity tied up in the representation of masculinity in children's literature.

It is well-documented that the effects of gender stereotyping are detrimental to girls, because it limits their opportunities for personality development and career options (Weitzman et al., 1972; Turner-Bowker, 1996; Gooden & Gooden, 2001), but less attention has been paid to the harmfulness of gender stereotypes to boys (McArthur & Eisen, 1976; Hamilton, Anderson, Broaddus & Young, 2006). Characterising boys according to these stereotypes, even though attributes such as strength, leadership and assertiveness are desirable, may not necessarily be beneficial for them because it disallows a range of emotional expression, such as tenderness and

nurturing, as reserved for girls (McArthur & Eisen, 1976). Narrow gender roles with strict rules about what either sex can or cannot do restricts development and excludes those who do not conform to the gender stereotype prescribed by their sex.

The boundaries between genders are more permeable for girls than boys, as it is more permissible for girls to identify with male characters than for boys to identify with female characters (McArthur & Eisen, 1976). Boys unable to identify with the stereotypical male character pressed upon them in much of the literature for children are presented with limited opportunities for access to a masculine identity suited to them. Wannamaker's analysis of the evolution of the pop-culture icon Tarzan through history shows the contradictory and subtle connections between hegemonic masculinity and constructions of "race, social class, sexual orientation [and] empire" in mainstream representations of masculinity (2008, p. 40). This struggle between competing tensions in the negotiation of contemporary masculinity "reveals an ambivalence... about what we, as a culture, expect our boys to be and to become" (Wannamaker, 2008, p. 66). These questions highlight how the complexity of identity formation and representation is negated when femininity and masculinity are compared according to their relative worth and not as distinct states in their own right. To address this issue, scholars have suggested a move away from essentialist conceptualisations of identity, and binary male/female distinctions (Ellis, 2008; Jiahua, 2006). This entails a recognition that male individuals do not make up a homogenous group, and include marginalised categories, such as young boys, who have different masculinities.

The role of popular literature in the construction of masculinity has been examined by Farley (2008) in a study of twentieth-century English boys' annuals. These 'handbooks' of acceptable behaviour for boys communicated the dominant beliefs regarding race, class and

culture to an uncritical readership in the process of forming their gender identity. As was found in children's literature, the most pervasive characterisation of boys was as independent, active individuals, as hunters, fighters and navigators, looking for adventure (Farley, 2008). Archetypes such as these have been recommended as tools for engaging young boys in reading from an early age, as well as including atypical ones which "help boys understand that there are many ways to manhood and that some paths look very different from traditional ones" (Zambo, 2007).

Exposing boys to stories where male characters display behaviour that is non-traditional allows those who do not fit stereotypical masculine identities more agency and diverse opportunities for self-expression (Wellhousen Tunks & McGee, 2006).

Specific aims and research question

The central question of this study is: *How is black masculinity constructed in post-apartheid South African children's picturebooks?* The purpose is to identify and analyse the ways in which text and image combine to represent particular ways of being male for black characters. In order to address this question, inquiry will be centred on the following sub-questions:

- How is black masculinity constructed in the text and illustrations of children's picturebooks written in South Africa after 1994?
- In which ways are these representations of black masculinity repetitive and reflective of perceptions of black people held during apartheid? In which ways do these stories challenge perceptions from the past?
- How are black fathers represented? What kind of role models are they for their sons?
How are black families portrayed?

- Where are stories about black people located?

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CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter gives an overview of the methods used to investigate the construction of black males in picturebooks. The purpose of the study is outlined, as well as the conceptual framework guiding the research design and the main research question. The selection of the sample and data analysis technique is discussed, together with a consideration of the ethical implications of the project.

Purpose of the study

Stories have the potential to play a powerful part in how we come to see ourselves and others. History provides numerous examples, in our country and abroad, of the power of books to indoctrinate the young. A generation of black males were prepared for servitude by Bantu education during apartheid. Therefore, it remains important that inquiry be conducted into the messages children's literature communicates, especially in post-apartheid South Africa. Children's books can be seen as portraying the dominant cultural ideals of society, and constitute a reflection of the roles and opportunities available to its members. They represent important cultural products as the "process of purposeful nation building and culture-shaping is often heavily and explicitly inscribed in children's texts" (Jenkins & Munther, 2008, p. 242).

An investigation into the representation of blackness and black masculinity in children's picturebooks seeks to inform an understanding of what a black boy is and what he can hope to become, according to the literary imagination. As works of creative writing, children's literature are both products of fiction and offer their readers unique opportunities to create their own fictional worlds. This allows for play around different constructions of identity, an especially integral part of childhood development. Narrow and stereotypical representations limit the nature

of such reinventions, while richly detailed and diverse conceptualisations of race and gender enable more room for creative play around identity, an especially important objective in the post-apartheid context.

Representations of children, and narratives for children, often mirror directly questions about national identity formation. “Which children will be the “representative” children for the new nation? And what “ought” children to learn about themselves through collective political aspiration or in the wake of political change?” (Jenkins & Munther, 2008, p. 242). These questions are especially pertinent in the post-apartheid context, as issues of transformation and empowerment take precedence in the wake of democracy and the country’s nation-building efforts. The legacy of apartheid and its many hurtful and derogatory conceptions of blackness need to be countered with more authentic and empowering representations. Studying the portrayal of blackness in post-apartheid South African children’s literature can be useful in determining whether positive understandings of and ways of being a black man are presented to young audiences.

Just as post-apartheid South Africa presents a rich and dynamic context within which to explore gender because of the changes to the political and social landscape, so too boyhood offers an interesting site to interrogate masculinity. Age, as a transitional category, makes the study of masculinity in boyhood, and its depiction in children’s literature, particularly engaging (Ellis, 2008). Understanding boyhood is crucial to an understanding of gender because, unlike girlhood, which women assimilate into their identities as they grow older, men must renounce boyhood in order to achieve manhood (Groth, 2007).

The literature on gender in children’s fiction is skewed toward investigations of stereotypes of girls and women, revealing a gap in research on masculinity in this genre.

Although some important work has been done in this field (Stephens, 2008; Wannamaker, 2008), these studies are largely conducted from a Western perspective which overlooks the complexities of the African context. This kind of viewpoint serves to perpetuate the myth of the “universal boy”, who conforms to a dominant hegemonic masculinity, most often middle-class, heterosexual and white. These narrowly defined conceptualisations of masculinity offer restricted behaviours and ranges of expression for boys othered by such notions. The reification of social constructions of gender denies an understanding of how subjectivity operates in shaping identity as a man (Wannamaker, 2008). Gender is an important psychological construct, and a better understanding of how black masculinity is represented can contribute to a fuller comprehension of the socialization processes involved in boyhood and identity formation.

The purpose of the study is to examine the ways blackness and black males are represented in post-apartheid children’s picturebooks. This is important given the way books are able to simultaneously reflect and shape perceptions in society. In the South African context, the role of books as a contributor to the process of nation-building post-apartheid makes the messages in them worth studying, especially when children comprise the target audience. The dominant way of being a black male, the position of black males in society, and the implications of these representations in light of ongoing social changes are especially of interest in such an endeavour.

Conceptual framework

The theoretical perspectives informing this study are social constructionism and postcolonial theory. A social constructionist perspective interrogates taken-for-granted ways of understanding ourselves and the world, and can be particularly useful for exploring issues related

to race, gender and representation. A postcolonial lens focuses on new ideas of nationalism following colonial rule and how the cultural inheritance of imperialism can be recognised and left behind.

Social construction

This study is guided by the tenets of social constructionism, a theory which emerged in opposition to traditional social science positions rooted in positivist views of reality as objectively knowable (Potter, 1996). The relationship between reality and representation was challenged by a reconsideration of Western philosophy which questioned the nature of truth and reality, as well as what and how we can know about the world through research. It developed together with a group of related theories within the qualitative research paradigm as an alternative to the dominant positivism of the 20th century (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). Social constructionism runs counter to essentialist views seeking unitary categories and fundamental characteristics while disregarding social context. It recognises that perception and human experience are mediated by history, culture and language. The idea of language as productive, rather than merely reflective, means that “‘reality’ isn’t so much mirrored in talk and text as constituted by them” (Edley, 2001, p.435).

The social constructionist contention that language “is not a mirror of life, it is the doing of life itself” (Gergen, 1999, p. 35), and its position on the arbitrary nature of ‘facts’ has led to criticism that such an emphasis on language denies the existence of truths. Social constructionism does not deny the existence of material reality; however it maintains all views of it are based on interpretations derived from “socially shared understandings” (Durrheim, 1997, p. 1). Social constructionism offers an alternate version of meaning, and of ontological and

epistemological relations, which recognizes that descriptions are rarely neutral, and tend to be tailored for the contexts in which they appear (Edley, 2001). The construction of particular discourses is what gives rise to gender, class, national identity, and other forms of social life.

Social constructionism has been defined in various ways, but there are four basic assumptions which distinguish this approach. The first is that “what we take to be experience of the world does not in itself dictate the terms by which the world is understood” (Gergen, 1985, p. 266). The objectivity of conventional knowledge is challenged, and the view that observation is able to directly mirror our experience of the world fails to recognize how it is mediated by other processes, such as language. The second assumption is that the “terms in which the world is understood are social, artefacts, products of historically situated interchanges among people” (Gergen, 1985, p. 267). According to this view, knowledge is produced by culture, and the way the world is understood is the result of active social efforts couched in the social and economic conditions of the time. The third assumption is that definitions are constantly in flux in response to changing social circumstances. Consequently it is social processes (such as communication, negotiation, conflict and rhetoric) rather than empirical validity, which sustain perspectives across time. The fourth assumption recognizes the importance of these socially constructed understandings because they are critically aligned to other human activity. “Descriptions of the world themselves constitute forms of social action” (Gergen, 1986, p. 268).

Although the theory has had a profound influence on many different areas of psychology, there is no one type of psychology that can be labelled ‘social constructionist’ (Nightingale & Cromby, 1999). The idea that “external reality is meaningful only to the extent that it is apprehended as a condition of its social embeddedness” (Uebel, 2007, p. 566) can be seen as providing continuity between approaches from a social constructionist angle. The theoretical

application of social constructionism as it applies to masculinity, race and representation in the post-apartheid context occurs in interlocking ways, and they will each be considered in turn for the sake of expediency.

The social construction of gender

Connell defines gender as “the structure of social relations that centres on the reproductive arena, and the set of practices (governed by this structure) that bring reproductive distinction between bodies into social processes” (2002, p.10). This definition acknowledges the biological basis for the cultural attributes of masculinity and femininity which are constructed. These qualities are not innate – men and women have to learn and conform to the norms of the gender-specific behaviour determined by the various societies, classes, cultural groups and ethnicities they belong to (Buchbinder, 1994). It may seem that the social constructionist view of gender is simply another version of the nurture side in the “nature/nurture” debate, however such a reductionist view belies the intention of social constructionism to serve as a deconstructive lens which gives the issue under scrutiny the same attention as the alleged “causal mechanism” (Vance, 1995).

Social construction, race and representation

Social constructionism views race not as an inherent characteristic, but as also originating from various socially constructed notions which may be related to physical characteristics. This does not make the effects of racial categories any less “real”, especially given South Africa’s history of the injurious effects the imposition of ‘race’ and ethnicity had on people during the colonial and apartheid eras. The legacy of these times persists, with racial classification in public

as well as private life being as prevalent as it was after democracy as it was before 1994 (Mckinney, 2007). Hall (1992, cited in Mckinney, 2007) presents blackness as a politically and culturally constructed category. Blackness itself has undergone various permutations in meaning in response to political forces such as slavery, the struggle against racial discrimination, the black consciousness movement and democracy. These changes, together with changes in “the politics of bodies and identities, as well as the opening up of and reconfigurations of material and psychological spaces” (Ratele, 1998, p. 60) have made blackness as an identity increasingly heterogeneous and elusive to define. The understanding of blackness used in this project was an inclusive one which comprised races historically classified as “non-white”, namely black, coloured and Indian.

Blackness is socially, politically, economically as well as linguistically determined. Language was used and continues to delineate racial groups in South Africa, despite the destabilization of blackness as a category since the end of apartheid, there being “no “black” community (as much as there is no white one) except through the insertion of subject bodies into racialised structures and discourses” (Ratele, 1998, p. 63). These discourses have a history of being derogatory and presenting black people negatively. Stereotyping as a representational practice works through the use of essentialism, reductionism, naturalization and binary oppositions to depict the Other (Hall, 1997). Images used to represent blackness may be influential, but they are not a “hypodermic syringe”; “people do not simply and straightforwardly act upon messages to which they have been exposed”, but the connection between these representations and the inequalities in the real world cannot be ignored (Burr, 1998, p. 100).

Social construction of race and gender in children's literature

Race, class and gender are all ideas which can be described as social constructs as they offer insight into the way society is organized and how its members make sense of social experience and themselves. Assumptions that categories such as race, class and gender represent objective divisions are challenged by social constructionism. It takes a critical stance toward taken-for-granted ways of understanding ourselves and the world (Burr, 2003). Such an approach challenges assumptions that the simplicity of children's literature means they project objective, unbiased views of black males.

Social constructionism is cognizant of the historical and cultural specificity of the way meaning is made in the world (Burr, 2003). This problematizes the idea of gender and race as natural or biologically determined, and recognizes their contingency on historical and cultural factors. The category of race has been shown to have no natural or biological validity, having come into being over a long period of time as "a fundamental principle of social organization and identity formation" (Mckinney, 2007, p. 7). In the same way, masculinity can be seen as a derivative of societal influences, rather than simply the innate product of male biology (Vance, 1995). Social constructionism also opens up a space for the examination of the historical milieu and cultural influences that have, and continue to, shape the way black male characters come to be represented in children's picture-books post-apartheid.

According to social constructionism, knowledge is constructed between people and sustained through social processes (Burr, 2003). The production of children's literature is one such social process in which the construction of knowledge is managed by passing it on to the next generation. Social constructionism views knowledge and social action as working hand in hand, an outlook which recognises how power relations are bound up in our understanding of the

world (Burr, 2003). The performative quality of language is foregrounded by this approach, which is crucial to understanding masculinities, as language “actually inscribes certain forms of masculinity through discourse” (Cooper & Foster, 2008, p. 5).

Postcolonial theory

Postcolonial theory in its simplest sense can be seen as an examination of societies following colonial rule, but is also characterized as an oppositional response to marginalization as a result of Western domination (Childs & Williams, 1997). This resistance to colonial processes is in retaliation to the denial of history that accompanies colonization, and also includes the ‘colonisation of the mind’. As a postcolonial and post-apartheid society, the nation building project in South Africa, including the role of books and other media, fits into this perspective because it recognizes the interpenetration of the past in the present (McEachern, 2002). This is echoed in the concerns of social construction with the transhistorical and transcultural specificity of knowledge, as well as the constructive nature of language.

In his books *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), prominent psychiatrist Frantz Fanon discusses the effects of colonialism and oppression. In psychological terms he outlines what he calls an “inferiority complex”, the existential crisis which stems from the social and economic realities which alienate black people as a result of colonialization, and the internalization of this state, which he associated with various mental disorders (Fanon, 1967). Language is identified as playing an integral role in the maintenance of this “inferiority complex”, particularly as the language of the colonialists took precedence over the language of those being colonized (Hilton, 2011). Subsequently, both fictional and non-fictional literatures are co-opted in the circulation of colonialist ideas. This is highlighted as

being of importance as it encourages the black child to adopt the subjective attitude of the white man, one which casts black people as savages, and white people as civilizing heroes (Hilton, 2011).

Also of interest is his discussion of the term *negrophobia*, which he describes as a fear white people have which underlies their racism toward black people (Hilton, 2011). This phobia is predicated on perceived biological differences which distinguish black bodies from white bodies (Fanon, 1967). In this view, racism can be traced to “the black savage’s perceived sexual potency and superiority” (Hilton, 2011, p. 50), which Fanon used to explain how black men were dehumanized and reduced to sex symbols. Historically, ethnic and racial others have been represented in academia and popular culture as “barbarians who lack culture, self-restraint, moral sensibility, and cognitive capacity.... The savage has brutish appetites for violence and sex, is impulsive and prone to criminality” (Haslam, 2006, p. 252).

Haslam (2006) goes on to articulate the theoretical underpinnings of dehumanization, which includes the likening of people to animals and sexual objectification. A particular form of dehumanization he outlines is “animalistic dehumanization” (Haslam, 2006, p. 258), which occurs when people are perceived as lacking in qualities which differentiate human beings from animals. A perceived deficiency in attributes such as civility, refinement, rationality and logic may result in individuals being seen as animal-like, but more subtle forms of dehumanization occur in everyday life when individuals are not granted “full humanness” because of stereotypes that deny groups uniquely human qualities (Haslam, 2006, p. 259).

The Wretched of the Earth (1961) speaks of the psychological effects of colonial oppression, which Fanon believed could be enduring: “For many years to come we shall be bandaging the countless and sometimes indelible wounds inflicted on our people by the colonial

onslaught” (Fanon, 1963, p.181). He refers to the way black and white are conceptualized as being opposite to each other in the same way as dark/light and good/evil as “Manicheanism”, a philosophy which he used to explain how colonized subjects are dehumanized and referred to as animals (Hilton, 2011, p. 51). Another example of how the colonial world was Manichean is given in the way he contrasted the clean, orderly structure of the colonial quarters with the filth and degradation of the native sector, describing it as a “famished sector hungry for bread, meat, shoes, coal and light” (Fanon, 1961, p. 4).

Research design

This study is located within a social constructionist epistemological position and as such, it aims to draw ‘attention to the fact that human experience, including perception, is mediated historically, culturally, and linguistically’. In particular, language constitutes an important part of socially constructed knowledge. Research in the social constructionist tradition aims to identify the different ways of constructing social reality available to a culture, explore how they are used and map out their implications for human experience and social practice (Willig, 2001, p. 7).

As part of the qualitative research paradigm, which includes various methods designed especially for the analysis of textual data, both written and visual (Gough & Madill, 2007), this approach offered the most suitable tools for addressing the questions of this study. Qualitative research methods are designed to study human lived experience, and “describe and clarify experience as it is lived and constituted in awareness” (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 138). The complexity of human experience cannot be examined in the same way that tangible objects are, and require methods which are suited to its multilayered, dynamic nature. The investigation of how people make sense of the world result in different findings than quantitative studies using

numbers. Qualitative research produces richer, more textured descriptions of meaning in context through the researcher's active engagement with and interpretation of the data (Willig, 2001).

The interpretive paradigm focuses on illuminating human experience and the aim is to generate an understanding of "social life and describe how people construct social meaning" (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, & Davidson, 2002, p. 719). This approach strives to capture richness of meaning by considering the whole rather than fragments, as well as by looking for latent meanings rather than surface appearances, and is able to assign more importance to significant cases (Alexander, 2008).

Discourse

Discourse analysis can be seen as a marriage of theoretical principles and methodological procedures which provides a useful way of understanding and analysing the social world. It has various definitions, but is primarily concerned with talk and texts as social practices, and "the resources that are drawn on to enable those practices" (Potter, 1996, p. 129). A "system of statements which construct an object" constitute a discourse (Parker, 1992, p.5).

Racism as an ideology is manifest discursively, with discrimination being organized, propagated and rationalized through the use of discourse (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001). Representations are not arbitrary, and there are systematic choices available for depicting social actors, starting with whether they are included or excluded. If included, they may be personalized or impersonalized; and when personalized they can be classified in various ways according to their identity, which includes such characteristics as age, race, social class and physical appearance. Characters may also be marked by their function in society, which may be related to their profession or social involvement. Social actors can also be designated, formally

or informally, by their family relations. All of these pieces of representational information work together to create a positive or negative evaluation of the character (Rosa, 2003).

Sample

In qualitative research, sampling is guided by the selection of appropriate sources which will best inform the research, and are able to contribute to the development of a full description of the phenomenon being studied (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, & Davidson, 2002). Data collection is done with the intention of providing evidence for the topic under investigation. In this endeavour, the interpretation of the researcher becomes a tool for analysis, and excerpts from the data can be used to show how these findings were made (Polkinghorne, 2005). The data under investigation in this project consisted not only of text and of images as marks on paper in children's picturebooks, but also the meanings represented in them. For this kind of analysis, the intention is not to produce results that can be generalized, but to do a close reading of the data to provide an in-depth understanding (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). A small sample size is necessary in this case, and is sufficient as long as enough data is gathered to determine the various discursive forms involved in the research topic (Coyle, 1995).

The documents for analysis in a qualitative study "are not selected because they fulfil the representative requirements of statistical inference but because they can provide substantial contributions to filling out the structure and character of the experience under investigation" (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 139). This means that the most relevant exemplars are purposefully sought out and selected in order to reach a refined understanding of the topic of study (Polkinghorne, 2005).

The units of analysis in this study were social artefacts in the form of children's picturebooks. Picturebooks may be defined as 'a unique combination of graphic art and narrative in which a sense of story is completed and more frequently extended by the illustrations' (Cianciolo, 1973, p. 1). They are often seen as an introduction to reading because of their simplicity and brevity of text and abundance of accompanying illustrations, and although they are particularly suited to younger children, picturebooks are not limited to a specific age range as children of different ages are able to understand and enjoy them. There is variety in the complexity of various picturebooks, with some targeting the very young ranging to more sophisticated books with more words for older children.

There are three main types of picturebook: those "in which pictures dominate the verbal text"; those without verbal text; and those "which interact with verbal text in a fundamental way" (Zipes, 2005, p.1051). A distinction is made between these types of books and illustrated books, in which the text is more important than the images (Zipes, 2005). Most writers agree that picturebooks are designed specifically for very young children, the underlying assumption being that understanding visual material paves the way for understanding words (Zipes, 2005). This has also been called "pre-reading" age or the beginner stage, and books catering for these children should be "well illustrated, colourful, attractive and written in large prints" (Okafor, 1992, p. 55), and use "short, repetitive and simple writing" (Nnabuko, 1992, p. 193). Although children of this age are unable or just learning to read, they are capable of building up associations (Wilson-Tagoe, 1992).

Although children's literature encompasses both non-fiction and fiction works, a distinction must be made between it and textbooks for educational purposes. Literature for children aims to "satisfy their spiritual, emotional and intellectual needs; irrespective of their

contents, such books should provide pleasurable and instructional values” (Nnabuko, 1992, p. 187). At the extreme end of the spectrum are baby books for infants, these may contain nursery rhymes or lullabies, and are often made of sturdy materials such as fabric. The next step is simple stories for children from the ages of 1-3 years old in toddler books, which are also sturdily constructed, and may teach concepts such as shape and colour. Picturebooks cater primarily to children between the ages of 4 and 8-years old, and can be approximately 32-pages in length with up to 1500 words. Given the importance of the visual to the genre, they often have illustrations on every page or each alternate page. Early picturebooks have simple stories told in less than 1000 words. Children from 6-8 years old who are just beginning to read can appreciate easy readers, which average 2-5 sentences per page and tell stories “mainly through action and dialogue, in grammatically simple sentences” (Backes, n.d., ¶4).

For the purposes of this study, picturebooks were defined as fiction books (early picturebooks and easy readers) written specifically for children where the text is supplemented by illustrations to tell a story. For inclusion, the criteria were: English fiction books; written and illustrated by South Africans; published between 1994 and 2010; with black male protagonists. The starting point for the period “post-apartheid” was taken as the year of the first democratic elections (1994) and continued to 2010. Only English books were selected, as the best possible analysis could only be achieved in my mother-tongue. Furthermore, translations into other African languages of some of the books are available. Many children’s books have animals acting as humans, but only stories with human characters were considered as anthropomorphized characters require a separate analysis outside the scope of this study.

A version of non-probability sampling, purposive sampling, was used because it allowed for the selection of items for analysis based on personal judgment, the purpose of the study and

its research aims (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 166). This method of selecting texts is directed by “theoretical principles, purpose and relevance” and the “boundaries placed around text are based purely on pragmatic considerations, as it is recognised that meaning is never achieved within the boundaries of a work, sentence, or even an extract, but rather in an infinite network of text” (Macleod, 2002, p. 21). This allows for texts to be included in the sample based on their relevance to the research question, within the confines of the inclusion criteria.

The sample was composed by consulting all the books that fit the inclusion criteria available from the public libraries (Rondebosch, Claremont and the Central library), two book shops (Exclusive Books Cavendish and Folio Books), as well as the Cape Town Book Fair, an annual trade exhibition. The books in the sample were chosen in consultation with specialist librarians, and can be taken as a reflection of the books with black male protagonists available to the public. Seven of the books featured young black males as the central character, while the remaining three had adult black male protagonists.

Materials

Ten books² that fit the selection criteria were selected spanning the period between 1994 and 2010. The majority of the selected picturebooks were loaned from the Rondebosch Public Library and the Claremont Public Library, for two week periods at a time. Many of the titles were also available from the UCT Library’s Rare Books Collection, although these were not available for loan; copies were made of relevant portions. One of the books (*Perfectly Me*) was sourced at the Cape Town Book Fair, and another (*Out of the box*) was ordered from Exclusive Books.

² Unless otherwise noted, the picturebooks referred to were unpaginated.

Procedure

The qualitative data collection method most suited to archival documents such as books is naturalistic data collection. This includes textual material and visual material, in this case illustrations, the meaning and impact of which together constitute the subject of enquiry (Gough & Madill, 2007). Secondary data, in the form of texts and images contained in children's picturebooks, was gathered from the selected books for analysis by reading them carefully multiple times. They were first read in their entirety and then a page-by-page analysis was conducted. Although picturebooks seem short and simple when considered alone, the analysis generated a large amount of information, which was then checked for pertinent themes and examined using an interrelated analytic perspective.

Data Analysis

The main guiding principle used for investigation and interpretation was Discourse analysis, together with the more genre-specific tools of compound multimodal and visual analysis, which facilitated an in-depth study of the picturebooks.

Discourse analysis is typically used to analyse interview transcripts and other examples of talk, but lends itself to the analysis of any verbal or visual text (Allred & Burman, 2005). It has been used to illustrate how racial prejudices are acquired and circulated amongst the dominant white group by means of "everyday conversation and institutional text and talk", such as interviews and press reports (Van Dijk, 2006, p. 506). Discourse analysis is also suited to examining social order in 'ready-made' texts, as utilised in Schneider, Cockcroft & Hook's (2008) study of how male sexuality is constructed in a South African men's interest magazine.

Discursive data analysis methods “tend to focus on the detail of the text explicating the ways in which phenomena are brought into being through the use of linguistic resources” (Gough & Madill, 2007, p. 9). Discursive psychology looks at what people do with language and its performative aspects (Willig, 2001). A close reading of the texts was undertaken with particular attention given to the way the words and pictures work together to represent black masculinities and how these construct the various roles they offer to young boys. Parker’s (1992) seven criteria for working with discourse were used to guide analysis. These principles include: examining the meaning in text; identifying the objects and subjects in texts; finding a coherent system of meanings, revealing references to other discourse; finding how a discourse reflects on its own way of speaking; and acknowledging its historical location (cited in Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 496).

The definitions of discourse are many and varied, but most identify its constructive effects and implications regarding meanings and practices (Macleod, 2002). Discourses can be seen as “frameworks of meaning produced in language” which “operate independently of the intentions of speakers or writers, as ideas that cohere and not only reflect the social world, but serve to construct it” (Alldred & Burman, 2005, p. 178). This definition highlights the intention of discourse analysis to gain “a better understanding of social life and social interaction from [the] study of social texts” (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 7). Rather than attempt to describe people’s psychological life, discourse analysis focuses on language and how people use it to construct versions of their worlds and the value of these constructions (Coyle, 1995).

Texts which present information using written text, pictures, design features, and other resources are termed multimodal texts. Written text and visual text each make use of different ways of creating meaning: the written depends on the logic of time and temporal sequence,

whereas the visual is ordered according to the logic of spatiality and structured arrangements (Kress, 2003). Picturebooks are multimodal texts which require a compound analytical approach to effectively make meaning of the images and text. The picturebooks were analysed using an interrelated framework of perceptual, structural and ideological perspectives. The perceptual analytical perspective is concerned with the literal, apparent elements of design in a multimodal text, for example the borders and font. The structural perspective focuses on constructing meaning according to prospective socially recognized schema based on a knowledge of convention, for example the connotations of a particular colour. The ideological perspective incorporates an analysis of “the socio-cultural, historical, and political contexts of the production, and dissemination of visual images and multimodal texts” (Serafini, 2010, p. 97).

Although the books were analysed in their entirety, an analysis of the pictures and the particular ways in which they construct black masculinity was also done to analyse the representation of black masculinity in the picture-book images. Visual analysis of the illustrations using an interpretive approach allowed for “hidden meaning, ambiguity, and intertextuality” to be captured (Alexander, 2008, p. 468). This method is also useful for capturing richness of meaning and uncovering latent meanings. The basis of this approach to visual analysis is semiotics, which involves identifying binary opposites and recurrent signs in order to build up a “visual grammar” of images, and how they create meaning (Alexander, 2008, p. 469).

Discourse Analysis

Discourse Analysis is dynamic, fluid, and adaptable to various types of texts, which makes it a good tool for analysis. However, these same qualities mean it has various definitions and different methods of application. Parker’s Seven Criteria for Distinguishing Discourse provides a useful base from which to begin analysis. These points are able to provide an

understanding of the text at a deeper level than a surface reading. The criteria used and method of application are included in the appendix (Parker, 1992).

In addition, analytic tools developed specifically for examining picturebooks were useful in providing guidelines for the systematic investigation of the books in the sample. For example, Parker includes three further points concerned with institutions, power relations and ideological effects. These auxiliary criteria were not used in this form, but questions to do with these factors specifically formulated for use with picturebooks were combined with the analysis. Stephens' (1992) components of story and discourse were used in their place because this schema deals with ideology, discourse and narrative fiction specifically as they relate to children's literature.

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Each of the books was analysed using the following table of guidelines, and the tables for each picturebook in the sample appear in the appendix:

STORY (what is narrated)	DISCOURSE (the narrating)
<p>Events:</p> <p>Actions: processes (improvements Happenings: deteriorations)</p> <p>Existents:</p> <p>Characters/Actors</p> <p>Setting { time place</p>	<p>Processes of Selection (what is <u>read</u>, but includes both what is stated and what is implied)</p> <p>Mode:</p> <p>narrative descriptive argumentative</p> <p>Narrative Processes:</p> <p>a) Narrating agent(s) narrator(s) implied author</p> <p>b) Receptors narratee(s) implied reader</p> <p>Point of view from which 'story' is presented:</p> <p>narrator p.o.v. character focalization ideology (overt/implicit)</p> <p>Order (or sequence)</p> <p>Duration</p> <p>Relation (connections between 'story' existents)</p> <p>Specifications of setting</p> <p>Symbols, allusions, intertexts</p>

Table 1: adapted from Stephens (1992)

The analysis on each book in the sample according to the above criteria is included in the appendix in table form.

Within this framework, Nikolajeva and Scott's (2001) outline for working with narrative perspective in picturebooks was useful, especially with regards to the terminology used to describe different points of view. The narrative voice is used in reference to naming who speaks the words in the text, while the point of view describes who sees the pictures. There are three types of narrative perspective, namely: the literal/perceptual point of view, which describes through whose eyes events are presented; the figurative/conceptual point of view, which refers to the ideology or worldview; and the transferred/interest point of view which describes what gains the narrator makes from telling the story. The different types of character focalization are nonfocalized (from an omniscient, omnipresent perspective), externally focalized (from the perspective of one character), and the internally focalized (penetrating the thoughts and feelings of characters). These can further be termed as either extradiagetic-heterodiagetic (an assumed adult omniscient narrator, not participating in the story) or intradiagetic-homodiagetic (a first-person child narrator).

The Harris (1995) typology of gender-roles was used to tie in to the discourses of masculinity and was helpful in naming messages about male behaviour. Although these categories were generated in a Western context, globalization and the proliferation of American media contribute to certain stereotypes about masculine ideology which have become recognizable. These categories do not point to universal ways of being a man, but instead highlights some of the consistencies in the messages informing male behaviour norms. These "scripts" of normative behaviours help men organize their actions, as well as set standards for what they need to achieve as men. Many of these standards are inconsistent, often contradictory, for example sometimes men are expected to be tough and at others it is expected of them to be sensitive and show emotion. These standards largely reflect middle-class, heterosexual ideals,

making it difficult for all men to meet them equally. Failures or deviations from these standards can either result in gender role strain (Levant, 2011) or new performances of masculinity outside the norm.

The typology is made up of five broad categories; containing various traits which highlight different facets of some of the dominant messages men receive about how to be a man. The most recognizable masculine traits are found in the “Rugged Individuals” category, which point toward men as being strong and emotionless, and the “Bosses” category, which reflects aspects of male behaviour concerned with striving for success. The “Workers” category encompasses those features of masculinity to do with being skilled, working hard and making a living. A category which receives less attention is the “Lovers” category, which reflects the capacity of men to love and maintain relationships.

The “Standard Bearer” category contains traits which are not stressed as part of male identity because they are often at odds with the more forceful traits of masculinity. Although these traits were formulated with adult men in mind, it was interesting to note how many of them emerged in the picturebooks, which reiterates the didactic function of this genre of literature.

Standard Bearer	Workers	Lovers	Bosses	Rugged Individuals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scholar • Nature lover • Be the best you can be • Good Samaritan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technician • Work ethic • Money • Law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breadwinner • Nurturer • Faithful husband • Playboy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control • President • Hurdles • Adventurer • Sportsman • Be like your father • Warrior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stoic • Self-reliant • Rebel • Tough guy • Superman

Table 2: adapted from Harris (1995)

The texts were all subjected to the same question scheme. Each book was analysed on its own, with similarities and differences noted as they were drawn out under examination within the question structure, with particular attention paid to discourses to do with masculinity and race.

Ethical considerations

The study did not involve any human participants, and as such the general ethical considerations of informed consent, confidentiality and so on, were not applicable. Issues of intellectual property, plagiarism and copyright protection are of importance when working with texts. The Department of Trade and Industry Copyright Act of 1978 (amended 1998) regulates the use of textual material. The copyright regulations permit the reproduction of a work by a student within an educational institution provided a copy of the whole work is not made. My use and reproduction of parts of selected published children's books as a student belonging to an educational institution falls within these legal parameters (South Africa, 1978).

CHAPTER 4: SYNOPSIS AND PICTORIAL ANALYSIS

This chapter will contextualize the analysis by providing a synopsis of each of the picturebooks in the current sample, as well as analysing selected illustrations from each of them. The main themes will be mentioned, setting the stage for the discussion of the key discourses in the chapters to follow.

Kensani's Kite

Kensani's kite (Deall, 1995) tells the story of an elderly man and a young boy who strike up a friendship while making a kite together. It is the earliest published book in the sample, and was selected to the *White Ravens Recommendation List*, an accolade given to books that “deserve worldwide attention because of their universal themes and/or their exceptional and often innovative artistic and literary style and design” (“White Ravens”, 2012). In this story, the old and young work together and collaborate to make something new, a fitting metaphor for South Africa at the time of transition following the first democratic elections. Kensani wants a kite that will fly highest of all, be “the eagle of the village kites” (Deall, 1995) but when his brother refuses to help him, he makes do with a plastic bag on a piece of string. Pondamali offers his experience and knowledge to help Kensani make a kite, a project which makes him feel young again.

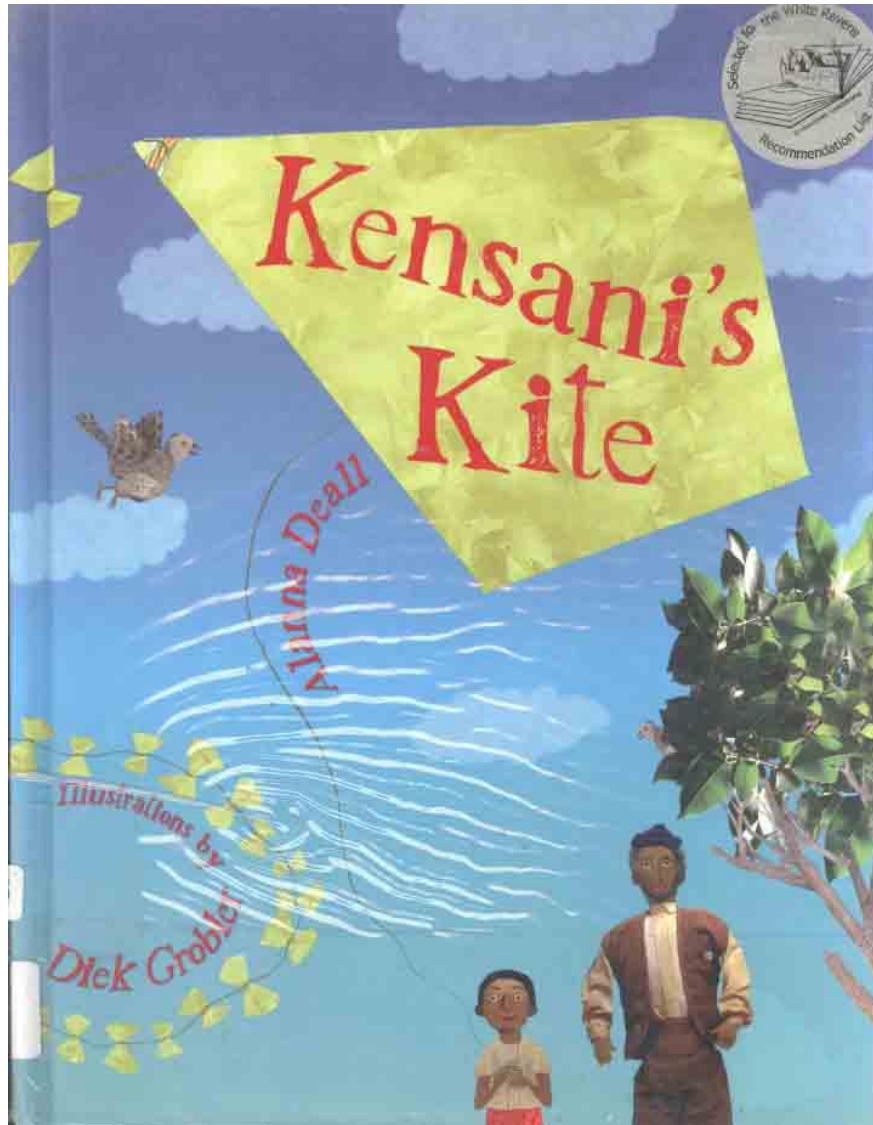


Fig. 1.1 – Cover

The book is one of four in the sample set in a rural area. It centres on the two main characters, Pondamali, an elderly widower, and Kensani, a young boy. Pondamali lives by himself and longs for companionship, but chooses to stay in the village he knows rather than live with his children in the city. Kensani is an imaginative young boy who pretends a plastic bag is a kite, until Pondamali helps him make a proper one, a project which develops into friendship despite the age difference.

Pondamali enjoys his work but misses the companionship of other people. He is lonely since his wife died and his children grew up and moved away. Pondamali's children seem to have achieved success in the city, and want their aging father to live with them, "but it would mean leaving everything he knew and loved, so he had chosen to stay" (Deall, 1995)

Pondamali carves animals and sells them for a living when he visits town for the monthly market day. He is presented as a meticulous artist, familiar with his surroundings and able to skilfully reproduce the animals of the veld in his popular carvings. No mention is made of who buys them, only that he manages to sell them all. The rural/urban dichotomy suggests that people from the city and foreigners would be the ones to find his work appealing. The entire story takes place outdoors, and although other people are mentioned, only Kensani and Pondamali are shown. The illustrations add to a feeling of rural isolation, as the only signs of other people are a few huts drawn in the distance.

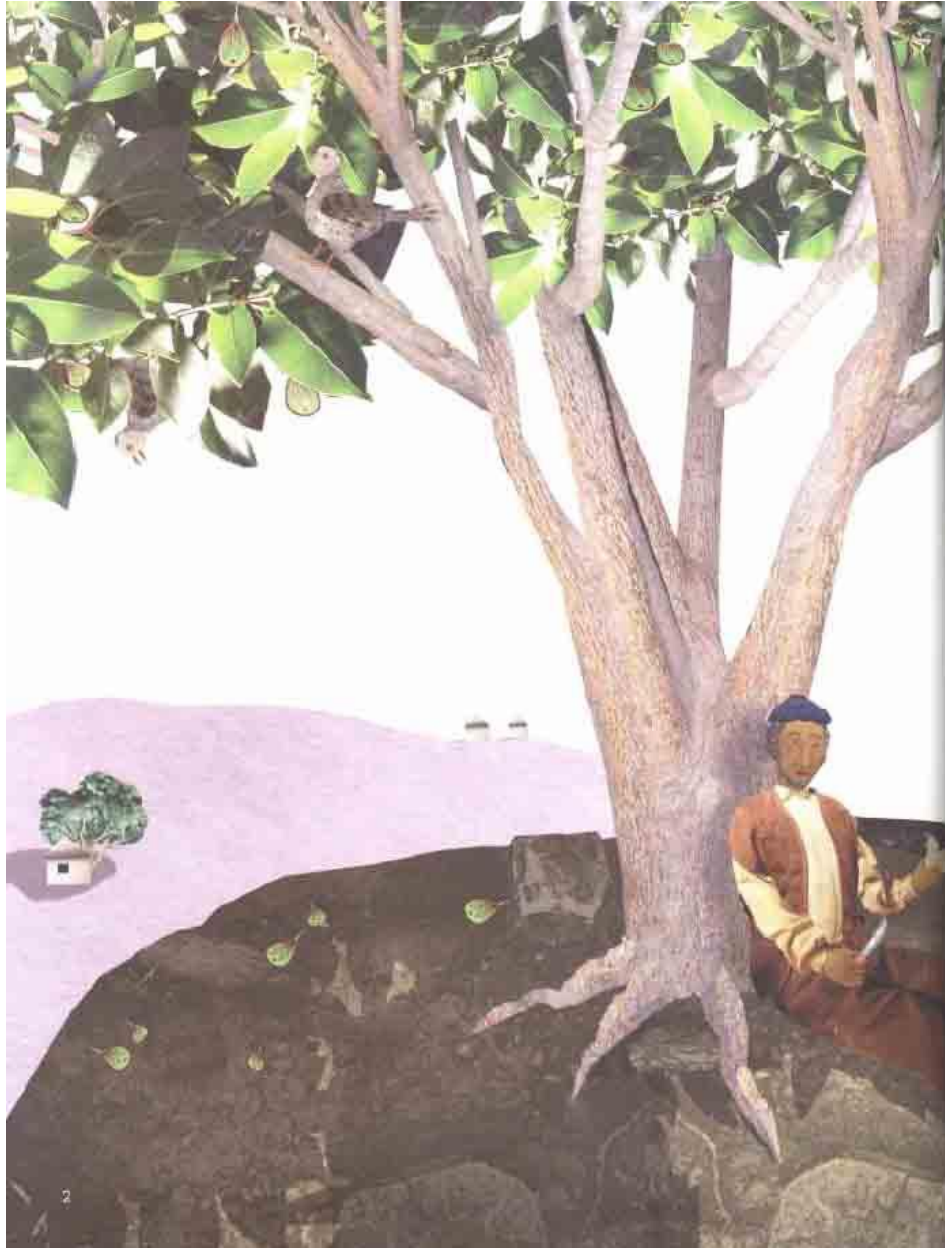


Fig. 1.2

The rural sensibility is maintained in the text by the traditional way they communicate: Pondamali calls Kensani 'son', and he respectfully addresses Pondamali as 'Grandfather', introducing himself as "lastborn son of Siphon the shoe-maker", citing his birth order and father's occupation (Deall, 1995). Pondamali is familiar with his father, which draws on the stereotype of

a close-knit village where everyone knows each other. The text has further examples of a traditional, rural flavour with animal references, which will be further discussed in Chapter 8.

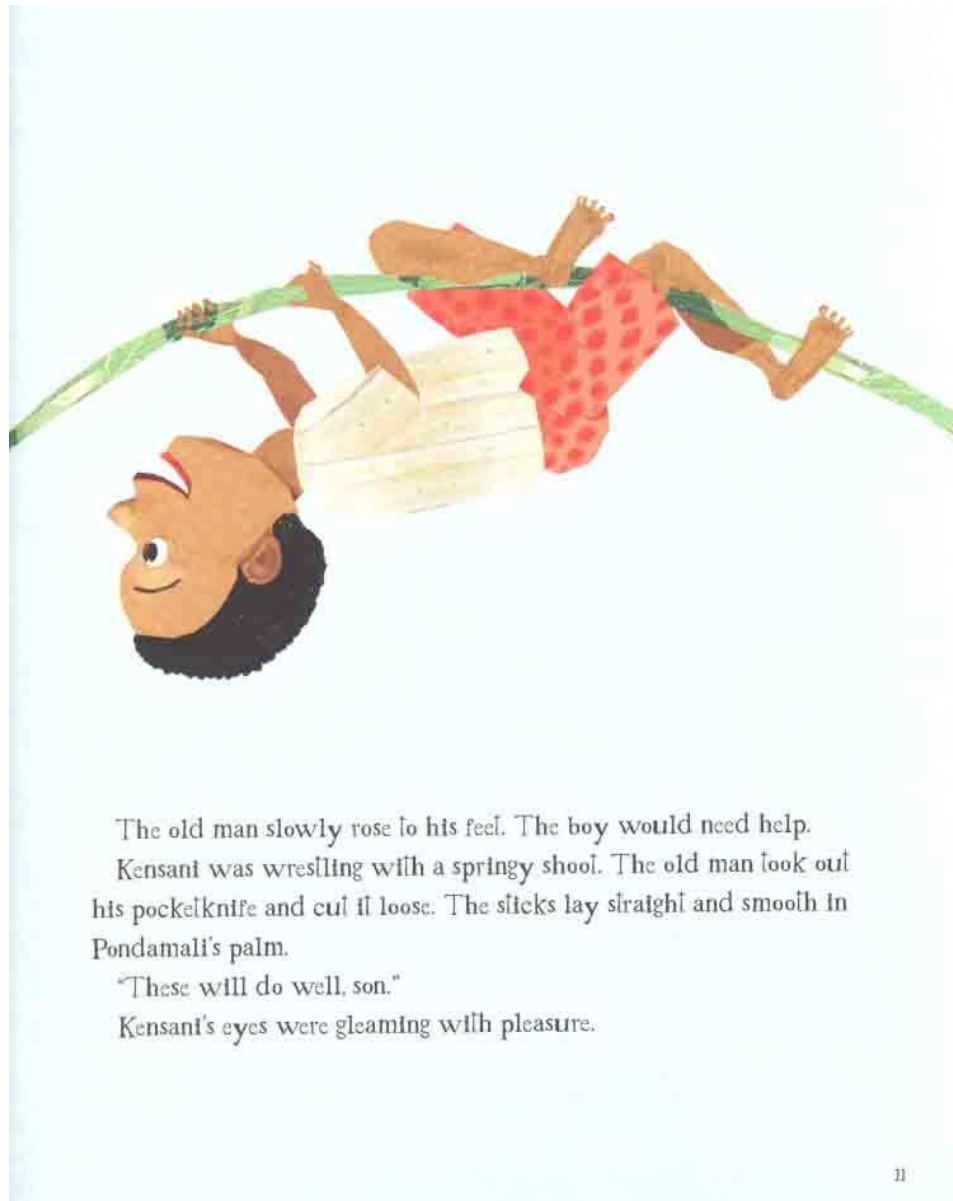


Fig. 1.3

Pondamali is reminded of how he made kites as a young boy, and he offers to help Kensani make one. They use scrap materials easily available in the surroundings to make a

home-made kite. Pondamali instructs him on what they need to make the kite, but needs to step in and help Kensani get the bamboo shoots they need. The entire plastic bag is used to make the kite, and even the scraps are turned into a tail so there is no wastage. Pondamali compares the kite's tail to the tail of an eagle, which helps it balance and direct its flight. The final step in finishing off the kite is tying the string to the frame. Kensani can hardly contain himself, and dances with enthusiasm as he watches the kite coming together. The accompanying illustration represents Kensani in a style reminiscent of the 'Little Black Sambo' character conceptualised by Helen Bannerman, a Scottish children's author (Yuill, 1976). It became popular in America during the early 1900s, with various and increasingly more racist misappropriations of the original in unauthorised spin-off versions (Yuill, 1976). These stereotypical depictions of black children can be seen as part of the "picaninny caricature". This style of representation portrayed black children with exaggerated features such as wide eyes, and oversized mouths; they were poorly dressed, spoke broken English and their main function in the text were as 'natural buffoons' (Pilgrim, 2004).

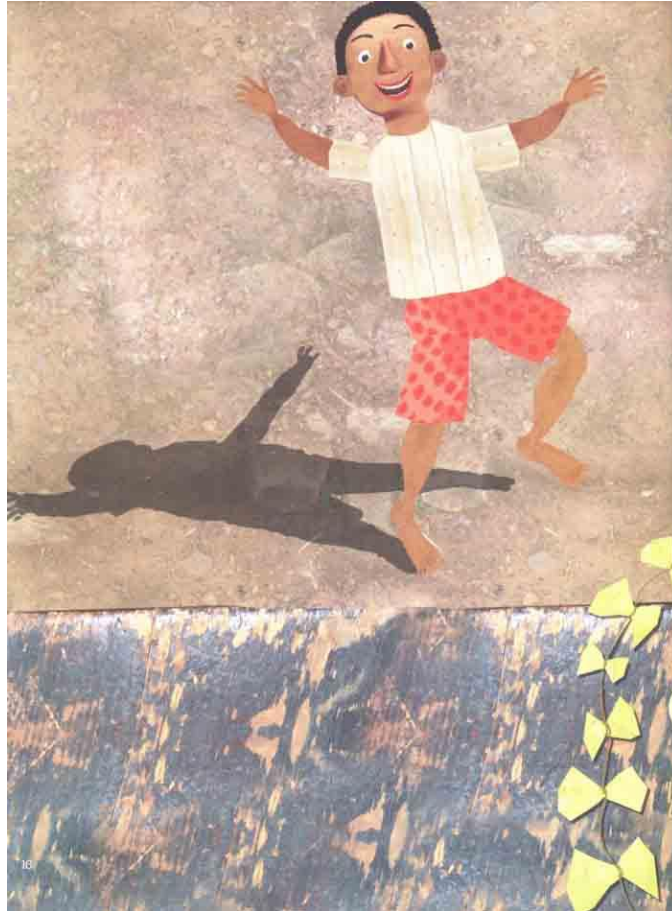


Fig. 1.4



Fig. 1.5 – Helen Bannerman’s Little Black Sambo (1899)

Pondamali uses the same care and patience he has when making his animal carvings to make the kite. “Kensani watched in admiration as the old man skilfully bound the sticks together” (Deall, 1995). Kensani looks on in awe as his kite is made, but does not seem to participate in the process, and Pondamali gives no commentary on what he is doing. Kensani cannot wait to get his kite in the sky, and Pondamali is also excited to take it on its maiden flight. This activity and spending time with Kensani has brought joy to his “old heart” and a twinkle to his brown eyes. They walk together up a hill to take advantage of the wind. Kensani animates the kite with living qualities when he says it wants to fly. “The kite began to rise – like a wounded bird at first, but then it lifted, gaining height steadily” (Deall, 1995). This metaphor describes the initial difficulties of rising up and flying, and then how height is gained with momentum, imagery that could be read as a political analogy referencing South Africa’s transition to democracy.

The theme of flying runs through the story, with the kite, the eagle, as well as the birds in the tree representing flight. The birds are drawn as stiff, awkward creatures, and appear on almost every page, either flapping their wings clumsily on the ground or in a tree. Although it wavers at first, the kite’s flight is more elegant, and is compared to that of an eagle (Deall, 1995). After flying the kite together, Pondamali carves an eagle, a bird known for its strength and prowess in the air. The experience of flying the kite transforms Pondamali, so that his spirit is described as “soaring in the wind – rising, then dipping, and then gliding, effortless as an eagle” (Deall, 1995). The story ends with Kensani bringing Pondamali a pawpaw as a gift, a gesture of thanks for his time and help in making the kite. The experience has also been memorable for Pondamali, who carves an eagle as a reminder of their time together and a symbol of hope for the heights their relationship will reach in the future.

The warm characterisation of the budding relationship between the older, more experienced Pondamali and the young Kensani is a positive feature of the story, especially in the relative absence of the depiction of nurturing father-son relationships in children's literature (Anderson & Hamilton, 2005).

The back covers of books usually give a teaser of the contents and can be seen as a way the text comments on itself by condensing the essence of the story into a few lines:

Since his wife had passed away and his children grown up, Pondamali spent his days carving wooden animals. While carving in the shade of his favourite old fig tree one day, a rustling sound disturbed him. A large yellow bag flittered towards him. Following closely behind was a pair of small brown legs, carrying a rather out-of-breath little boy. Kensani and Pondamali become good friends as they build a kite together. This is a tender story of a lonely old man and the cheer a young boy brings to his life (Deall, 1995).

This blurb highlights the mutually beneficial nature of the relationship between the two characters: Kensani learns how to make a kite and no longer has to play with a plastic bag, and Pondamali gets the companionship he desires.

The most prominent discourses related to masculinity in this book were those of men and companionship and men as mentors. Conventional understandings of masculinity have identified independence, emotional detachment and toughness as key dimensions of hegemonic masculinity (Luyt, 2003). The masculine trait of unemotionality does not deny that men struggle with feelings, but rather that these struggles are expected to be kept inside (Luyt, 2003). This is

illustrated by the narration of Pondamali's psyche which speaks about his yearning for conversation and companionship in the absence of his family: "He loved his work, but at times he longed to talk to other people. His wife had passed away and his children, now grown up, had gone to the city to seek their fortunes" (Deall, 1995). This longing is never voiced by Pondamali, rather it is expressed indirectly through the omniscient narration. As a man, his need for companionship can be inferred, although it is not articulated by the character.

Harris' (1995) typology of male behaviour based on masculine cultural myths recognises the capacity of men to have caring relationships in the "Lover" category. In this category, the role of "Nurturer" exists as a kind, gentle, supportive and empathetic facet of male behaviour. Pondamali's role as a mentor, teaching the young, inexperienced Kensani how to make a kite fits into this category of male gender-roles. The human interaction involved in the kite-making process appears to be more beneficial to the lonely Pondamali than Kensani, as it affirms his worth as a useful man with knowledge to contribute and pass on to the younger generation.

The most noticeable discourses regarding race were black social structures as close-knit, black people as poor, black people as craftspeople and black people as rural. Communalism features strongly as a part of African culture (Mtose, 2008), with the word *ubuntu* evoking this sense of interconnectedness and community spirit in the South African context. The legacy of apartheid fractured South African society along lines of race and class, with the injustices of history continuing to play out in inequalities which see black people bear the brunt of poverty. However material this problem, the consistent depiction of black people as poor perpetuates the status quo and does not offer any aspirational or alternative ways of being black. Similarly, having black characters represented in low-paying, low-skilled jobs reifies such stereotypes.

Objects in the black community discourse include the respect for elders, which is exhibited in the mode of interaction between different age groups. This is visible in the talk used to sustain the discourse. For example, though the characters are not related, Pondamali refers to Kensani as “son” and Kensani calls Pondamali “Grandfather”. When Kensani introduces himself to Pondamali, he also positions himself as part of a family: “I am Kensani, Grandfather, the lastborn son of Siphon the shoe-maker” (Deall, 1995). Pondamali replies that he is familiar with Kensani’s father, which can also be read as an example showing African communities as close-knit.

The types of person talked about in the discourse of black rural people appear in the role of elder/teacher as Pondamali and Kensani as the young novice. As the elder, the character of Pondamali is able to give instruction and show Kensani how to construct the kite. This role also prohibits the character from being vulnerable and discussing the loneliness of living alone. Pondamali’s age and position as an elder prevents him from voicing his emotions, especially to the young Kensani. The old man’s appreciation for the unexpected friendship of the young boy can be inferred from his reluctance for their kite-flying session to come to an end, as it is Kensani, and not him, who notices it is time to go home at sunset. As the younger character in the story, Kensani is able to ask for help in making the kite and express his thanks. His role as the younger, more inexperienced character also prevents him from actively participating in the construction of the kite or offering his opinion on the process.

The picture of the world presented by these discourses in the story is of a small, isolated rural enclave where old-fashioned values are treasured and passed down from generation to generation. The material world represented is of a deserted, bare rural village in a dry part of the country, which is cut off from the city and provides a poor, simple existence for the people living

there. In this story, the rural area is positioned as a place of limited economic opportunities. Pondamali's children have to leave the village for the city, and ostensibly the better opportunities available to them there. Pondamali himself travels to the town to sell his carvings. The social world of *Kensani's kite* is based on traditional standards, such as good manners and respect for elders, which are prioritised and taught to the youngest members of society. Even though Pondamali's contact with other people is limited, he is familiar with other members of the close-knit community. The backward, under-developed existence of the characters in the story is presented in a charming, almost whimsical way so as to suggest this as the natural and expected way of life for black people.

The main objective of this story is to show how young and old can work together and have a mutually beneficial relationship. The positive connotations of respect include good manners and a way of smoothing social interaction. Objections to this aim would most likely be seen as disrespectful, as are messages from the "Rebel" trait in the "Rugged Individual" category, which favours questioning authority over respect. Negative connotations of respect could view it as being old-fashioned, and challenge the practice of elders being deserving of respect by virtue of their age without having to earn it.

The Gift Of The Sun

The gift of the sun is set in a rural area on the farm of Thulani, a lazy farmer with good intentions but bad judgment. His favourite activity is relaxing in the sun, and he spends most of his time basking outside and thinking of ways to avoid work. His ill-considered plans keep backfiring, much to his longsuffering wife, Dora's despair. He longs to please her, and finally gets the chance to do so when he is rewarded for taking initiative. The book was selected as the 1998 South African International Board on Books for Youth Honour Book for illustration. The illustrations of Jude Daly (wife of renowned writer and illustrator Niki Daly) were praised for their "accurate observation of genuine rural life in Africa presented with dignity and affection", which reflect both the lack and abundance of the country with its spacious, open style (Heale, 2000).

Thulani makes his first mistake in exchanging the cow they use for milk for a goat, reasoning that "goats can look after themselves" (Stewart, 1996). He makes this decision without consulting his wife, and without any consideration for the future, his only concern being to reduce his workload. They have different views on how much an animal is worth: Dora estimates the value of the animal on what it can provide (for example, the cow is valuable because of the milk it provides), whereas Thulani values the animal based on how much maintenance it requires (for example, the goat does not need to be tended and milked). Dora is not impressed by Thulani's foolish decision, and turns away from him to focus on her work of picking bananas, a productive and sustainable activity.

In the accompanying illustration, Dora is shown barefoot, picking bananas from the tree alongside their house. Her shoes lie neatly next to the basket of bananas at her feet. It is not clear why she would remove her shoes for this activity, as she is otherwise dressed for work, wearing

an apron and her hair covered with a scarf. Their house is a modest building, with cracks and peeling paint. A bird, a lizard, and a hen and her chicks are also depicted, in keeping with the farmyard motif.

Early next morning, Thulani left the house with his cow and returned at midday, led by a grizzly old billy-goat.

"Oh Thulani!" sighed Dora, his wife. "You've sold the cow and now we'll have no milk! What good is this goat to us?"

"Goats can look after themselves, Dora," said Thulani.

Dora turned away and went to pick bananas.



Fig. 2.1

Another recurring theme across the sample which presents itself in this book is the image of black people without shoes, which will be discussed further in Chapter 6. In the illustration above, Dora is shown working barefoot, although her shoes are next to her. Thulani also seems to favour working without shoes, an unlikely state of dress for a farmer doing manual labour.



Fig. 2.2

In this picture (Fig. 2.3) Dora is again shown working while Thulani relaxes in the sun. She does the work of tilling the soil while her husband enjoys a nap. She looks forward to a good harvest, unaware that Thulani has planted sunflower seeds. He is shown resting under a tree, with his hat pulled low. This depiction is reminiscent of the Mexican asleep under a cactus stereotype, a derogatory representation based on ascribing indolence to a particular race. It naturalizes ideas of black men as lazy, which are often extrapolated as a contributing cause to poverty in informal discourse. The division of labour between Thulani and Dora reflect traditional gender roles, with the male being responsible for the main economic activity supporting the family (running the farm, and later trading animals), and the female taking care of domestic activities (such as washing clothes, feeding the chickens, picking bananas). Initially, Thulani shirks his

responsibilities as a man by looking for ways to avoid work, and it is Dora who must take the lead and remind him of the family's needs. In almost all the illustrations, Dora is shown working (picking bananas, feeding the chickens, collecting eggs, baking and washing) or ready to work (holding a basket or pail).



Soon the first green shoots broke through the cloddy soil. Dora weeded the field and imagined the wonderful crop they would have.

Fig. 2.3

The story ends with Thulani having recovered his manhood by becoming successful in his trading and farming, and consequently pleasing his wife. He becomes so absorbed in his business, that he no longer has time “to sit about in the sun. Life was too exciting!” (Stewart,

1996). Success seems to have changed Thulani's attitude toward work and he enjoys being productive. He still makes time to unwind by milking the cow, joking that his best thoughts come to him when he is milking. This amuses both him and his wife, because they remember that Thulani's scheming stemmed from him trying to avoid the hard work of milking the cow, which has now ironically come full circle. The final illustration shows them together on their farm, surrounded by the sunflower field and the various animals Thulani has acquired. Dora wears a hat and a pearl necklace, further proof of Thulani's financial achievement and a new thoughtfulness that he did not have during his sunbathing days.

The story puts forward the moral lesson that hard work is the only way to success. It condemns laziness as unmanly by associating Thulani's initial fixation with relaxation, with the trouble he causes for himself with his wife. The marital relationship is what spurs Thulani on to do the right thing, and he is driven to action by his desire to please his wife, which is different to the expected way women are treated in traditional patriarchal societies. An idyllic, if somewhat romanticized rural existence is portrayed in the book, with the only real obstacle facing Thulani being his own work ethic.

The man as the breadwinner was the most prominent discourse related to masculinity in this story. The idea that men need to work to provide for their families, even if it means sacrificing things they enjoy doing, was a central theme. This can be related to Harris' (1995) category of the "Worker", which recognises the importance of labour, production, earning potential and career success in constructions of masculinity.

In the beginning of the story Thulani's only concern is to make time to laze in the sun, but a series of bad decisions distress his wife and jeopardise their productivity. He changes his ways when a chance discovery, the "gift of the sun" (Stewart, 1996), allows him to become a

trader, leaving no more time for sunbathing. The main development in the story is Thulani's change in character from being lazy to being productive.

The discourse of the lazy black man emerged in the story, framed by Thulani's repeated efforts to reduce his workload. It is interesting how this particular discourse gained currency during the era of slavery in North America at the exact same time when black men were sold as workers based on their ability to do manual labour. These discourses seem to contradict each other, but were used to support one another when attempts by slaves to escape or minimise their output were interpreted as "laziness". The story conceives of black men as inherently lazy, but shows their capacity to work if rewarded with results. The story hinges on Thulani's conversion from a lazy layabout to a sensible man concerned with providing for his family.

The discourse of the lazy black man is supported in the illustrations and text of the story. The first description of Thulani's character is that he loves "to bask all day in the sun" (Stewart, 1996). His existence revolves around being lazy and enjoying the sun so much that he is described as having a "life in the sun", and when winter comes, he misses "being able to sleep in the sun" (Stewart, 1996). Throughout the story he concocts various plans in order to escape work so that he can have more time for sunbathing. When his wife Dora instructs him to shear the sheep, he thinks "This work is too much for me" (Stewart, 1996), and decides to sell the sheep to avoid having to shear it again, without thinking of the consequences.

Many stories require the reader to identify with the main character. *The gift of the sun* portrays the foibles of Thulani with sympathy to endear him to the reader, referring to him as "poor Thulani" when he has to rectify his mistakes. His laziness is contrasted with his desire to please his wife: the line "Dora will be pleased" is repeated twice, and when she compares him to

the “useless” sunflowers he has planted by mistake “Thulani felt sad. All he wanted was to please Dora” (Stewart, 1996).

The discourses of black people as poor and rural-dwellers identified in *Kensani's kite* also appear in this story. The discourse of the rural idyll centres on farm life, with pastoral objects, such as farm animals, seed and land constituting the discourse. These objects, which the characters depend on for their survival, appear to be their main source of income. In this position, the lives of the characters are determined by the seasons because of their dependence on natural conditions for their survival.

The types of people represented in the discourse of men as workers can be contrasted with women as workers. In the story, Thulani learns to enjoy working after he becomes successful, but it is his wife who is consistently depicted as working, in the text and illustrations, as well as being the one who reminds Thulani of what needs to be done. Thulani is cast as lazy and cunning, while Dora is accepting or nagging. The role of provider belongs to the character of Thulani by virtue of the fact that he is male and can be expected to have this responsibility in a traditional, rural setting, but he spends most of the story trying to avoid work. He cannot negate the responsibility of this role, even though he would rather “bask all day in the sun.”

In this work discourse, Dora has the role of the long-suffering wife who must tolerate her husband's shortcomings, even though they potentially threaten her well-being. She admonishes him, and has to remind him when it is time to shear the sheep and buy seed, but as a dutiful wife this is as far as her criticism goes. She cannot take over Thulani's duty and go to the store herself, she has to stay at home. Dora compares Thulani with the useless sunflowers Thulani has mistakenly planted: “Thulani, come and look! You have planted a field of sunflowers. What good are they to us? All they do is follow the sun from morning to night – just like you”

(Stewart, 1996). The sun is the source of light and energy which almost everything that grows depends on. The book is called “*The gift of the sun*”, which could be a reference to the sunflowers or the sun which Thulani enjoys lazing about in. As Thulani is the man of the house, he plays the same role as the sun in the Earth’s ecosystem for his family: he has to provide for their needs in order for them to survive.

The world as depicted in *The gift of the sun* is one of man against nature, as Thulani is pitted against the seasons to survive. In the beginning, he absconds from his duties by enjoying the sun, but after harnessing the benefits of the sun (and sunflowers) he is able to become successful. The material world of the story is set on a rural farmland, with the only contact with other people being Thulani’s trips to the trading store. The pattern of isolation and having to travel to the shops also appeared in *Kensani’s kite*, and again in *Vuyo’s Whistle* and *Ouma Ruby’s secret*. The social world of the story centres on the husband and wife relationship of Thulani and Dora. Although children are seen in the illustrations, it is not clear whether they are the couple’s own or neighbouring children.

The same positive and negative connotations for rural areas discussed in *Kensani’s kite* apply here. Rural living can be peaceful, quiet, pure, wholesome and uncomplicated. It could also be seen as backward, poor, and a struggle without modern technology. The positive connotations of hard work are that it is seen as a sign of good character and an honest way of attaining success. Negative connotations of hard work are that it may be seen as useless in an unequal society (no matter how hard you work, if you start off disadvantaged it is difficult to attain success) and, in the case of Thulani especially, he is dependent on factors beyond his control to make a living. The situation of the plot in a timeless past suggests the characters, and

by inference, people like them are stuck in a rural world with little opportunity for development or growth.

The back cover highlights that despite his ill-advised decisions, Thulani “receives a gift from the sun”, the sun he loves to bask in and the *sunflowers* are responsible for his success. The story is described as “charming”, with “delightful” illustrations. The author and illustrator are also credited with creating another “highly successful” book, which adds credibility that the current book also tells a good story.

The discourse of ‘black people as lazy’ has current recitations in discussions of unemployment, crime and social grants. The main message of the story (“hard work pays off”), reinforces the importance of work ethic as a component of masculinity. Harris (1995) noted that this trait was more important to older men, than younger men. The story can therefore be seen as a simplified interpretation of conservative values tailored to young audiences. As such, it is in opposition to the notion of a “culture of entitlement”. People interested in maintaining conservative values would be in agreement with the message of self-sufficiency in the “hard work pays off” discourse. People unable to participate in the economy or at a disadvantaged position to do so, are excluded from this discourse.

What A Gentleman

What a gentleman (Case, 1997) has a different narrative to the rest of the picturebooks in the sample because it is not strictly a story as such, but recounts a conversation between a grandmother adoringly telling her granddaughter about former President Nelson Mandela. The book was published in the aftermath of the first democratic elections, and portrays a “rainbow nation” all united in their shared admiration of President Mandela. The grandmother recounts Mandela’s worthy traits to her granddaughter, describing him as brave, wise, caring, inspiring, kind and gentle, generous, fit and healthy, a trendsetter, and a family man, handsome and charming with a good sense of humour, and romantic.

The overall theme of the book is a celebration of President Mandela as an icon. He represents the highest model of masculinity to aspire to because of his position and reputation. His abilities and good qualities are presented without question as a template for male behaviour. Throughout the book there is an interesting interplay of text and image, with further information being provided in the pictures in the form of speech bubbles with text. The illustrations are done in a vibrant, colourful style with bold outlines, patterns and exaggerated features which give the book a playful, exuberant feel. Another interesting visual element in the book is the use of photographs incorporated into the illustrations.

The cover of the book has a bright pink background, traditionally a feminine colour, with a bright orange border on the right hand side and festively coloured drawings of shapes, sweets, flowers and other objects. In the centre of the cover is a head and shoulders portrait of Mandela, smiling and waving a South African flag. He wears his classic patterned ‘Madiba’ shirt, and a zig-zag burst surrounds him like a halo. Other South African icons, such as a Protea flower, Table Mountain silhouette and a hand-made wire bicycle, surround the centre portrait with other

decorations. The collection of these items tie in with the patriotic theme in the book, which encourages pride in South Africa by celebrating ‘Mandela the man’, and highlighting the contribution of other great men to the country, most notably the Archbishop Desmond Tutu and sporting heroes.

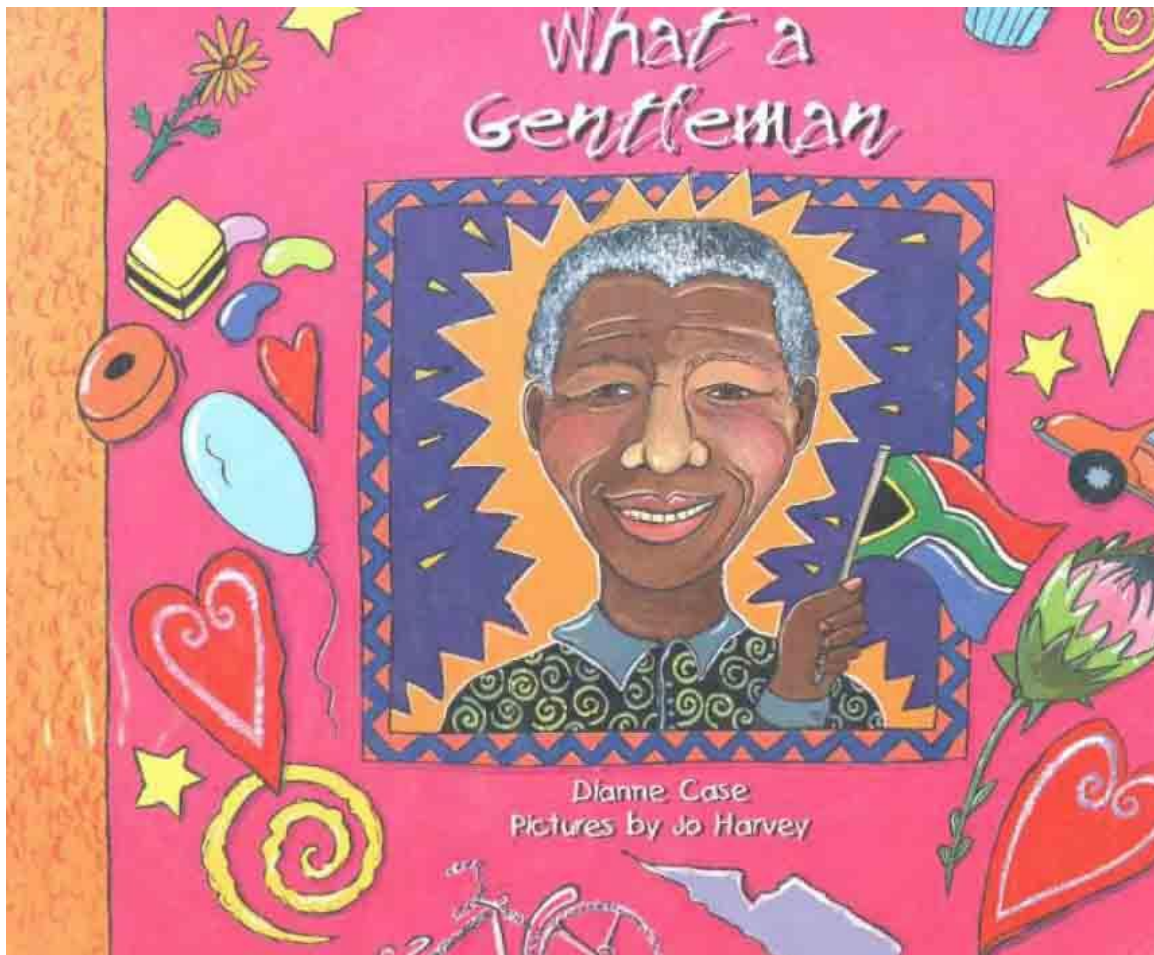
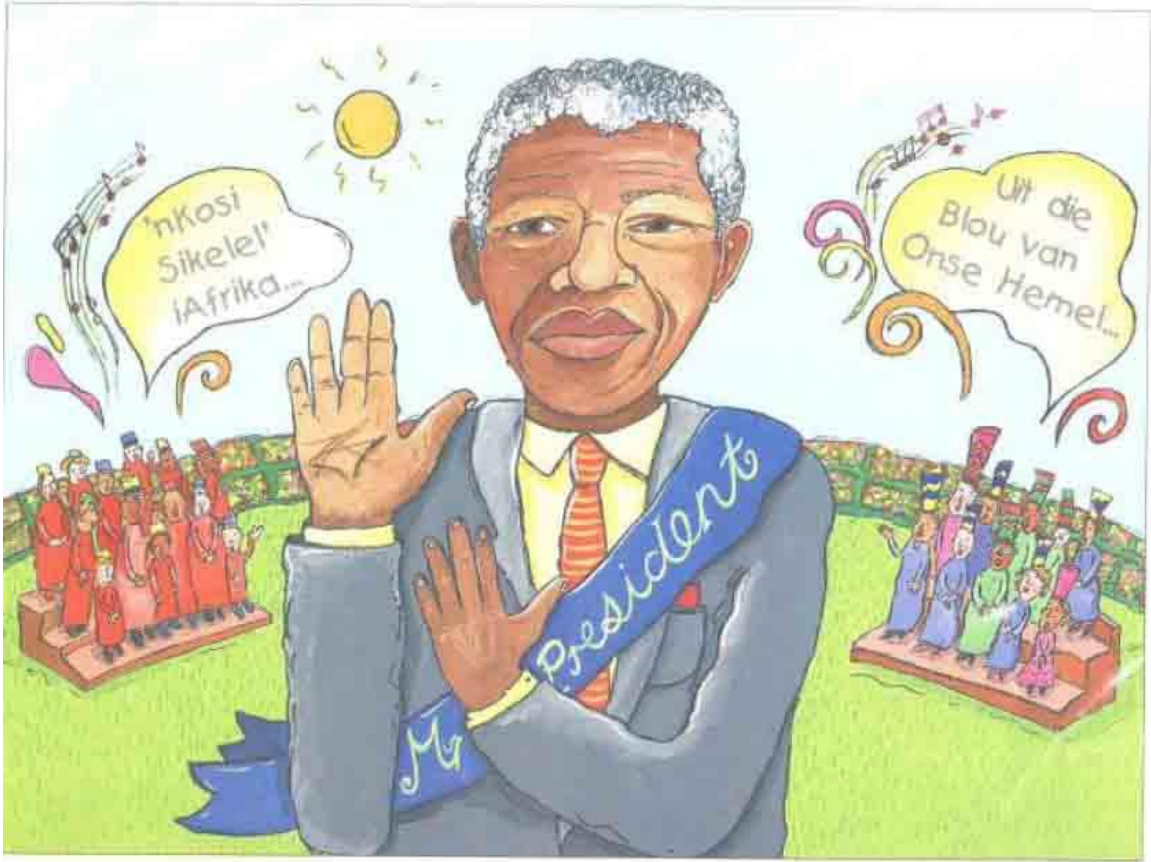


Fig. 3.1 - Cover

Right at the beginning of the book, its purpose to venerate Mandela is made clear in the dedication: “This book is dedicated with love and admiration to the great man himself, and to all the children of South Africa”, as well as the forward, written by another prominent South

African, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who also features in the book: “President Mandela is a V.I.P. (a very important person) You are a V.S.P. – Very Special Person, because God loves you. You can walk tall because you are a V.S.P. Mr Mandela is A Very Special Person Too. God bless you Archbishop Desmond Tutu” (Case, 1997).

Figure 3.2 is a picture of the president at what appears to be his inauguration. He stands in the centre of the picture space, his left hand raised and his right hand over his heart, a gesture indicating the swearing of an oath. He is wearing a blue sash emblazoned with the words “Mr President”, an accessory which is more reminiscent of a beauty pageant contestant than a statesman. This could possibly be a visual device to reinforce the connection between the man (Mandela) and his role as president in the minds of young children. It is an outdoor scene, in a vast, grassy area lined by flowerbeds in the background. Two choirs made of singers of different ages, races and genders flank the president on either side, singing the national anthem. Speech bubbles show one singing “nKosi Sikelel’ iAfrika...” (Xhosa/Zulu) and the other “Uit die Blou van Onse Hemel...” (Afrikaans) – a visual and textual representation of the multicultural rainbow nation that the inauguration symbolised (Case, 1997). The narrator quotes the grandmother throughout the book, investing her words with the credibility and authority of an experienced elder with the prefix “My grandmother says”. Mandela’s wisdom is cited as the reason for his election as president of the country.



My grandmother says Mr Mandela is a very wise man.
'That's why he is the president of our country,' she says.

Fig. 3.2

Another example of the depiction of multiracial interaction in the book is an illustration of the national rugby team celebrating World Cup victory in 1995 (Figure 3.3). The captain hoists the trophy while the triumphant team celebrate in the background, one team member atop the shoulders of another, as a pair embrace. At the time, much was made of the President's support of rugby, a traditionally white sport, and his solidarity with the team demonstrated by wearing the Springbok jersey at the final match. This moment has become iconic in South African history, and represented one of the first instances of shared national pride under democracy. Sport was touted as a nation-building instrument, despite debate over the inclusiveness of rugby. At the time, there was only one black player on the squad, Chester

Williams, a fact reflected in the illustration showing a single player of colour celebrating. The game of rugby is a team sport characterised by contact and aggression, and a socially accepted male heterosexual bonding practice.



'That is why we won!' she says,

Fig. 3.3

The roles and functions of the president which put him in the public eye are foregrounded in the book, without any mention of the less glamorous but more important aspects of running the country such as negotiation and decision making. This ties in to certain perceptions of Mandela as an “Uncle Tom” figure, whose main function was to extend equal privileges to black people without alarming white people. He is portrayed as a unifying force, bringing people of

racess, ages, genders and religions together, as shown in the multicultural crowds which surround him on his public appearances.

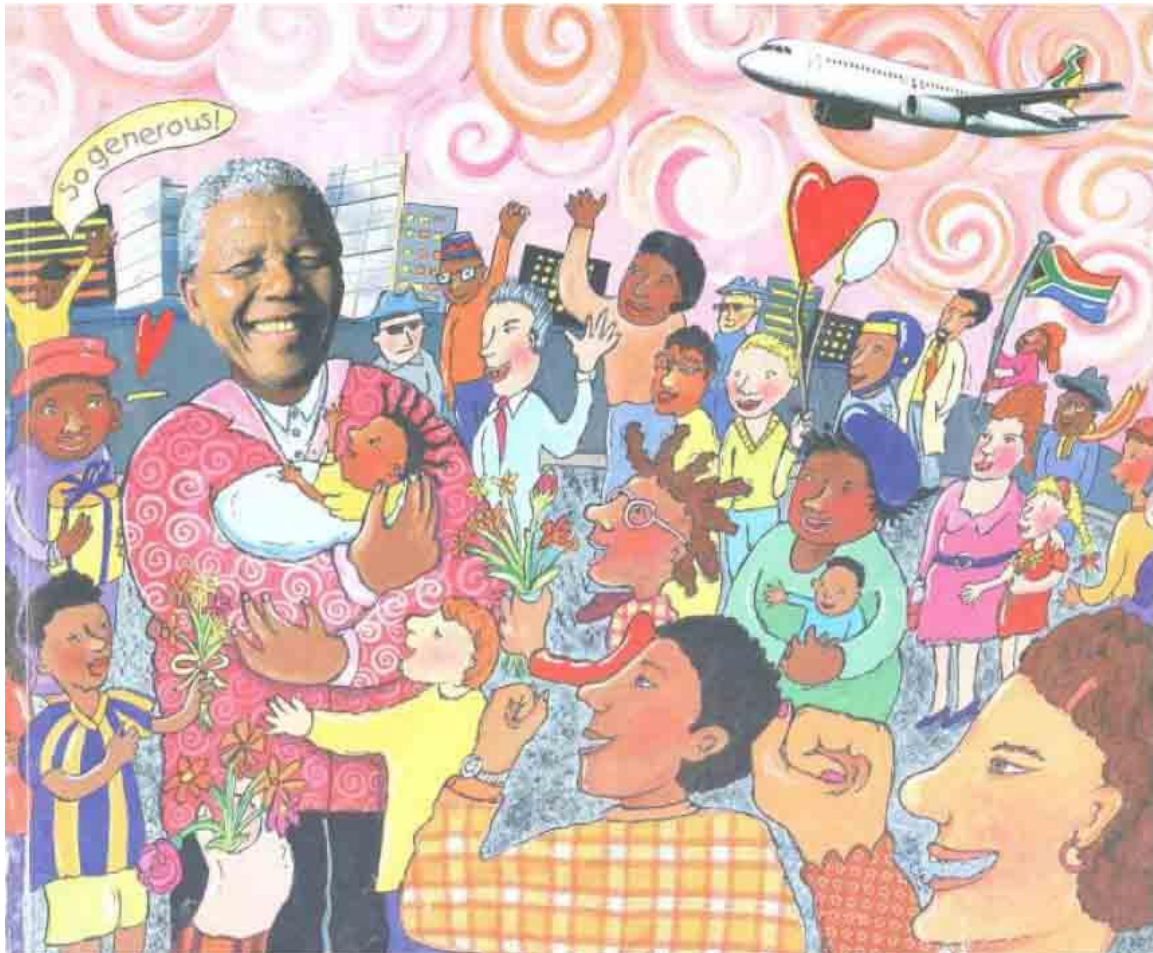


Fig. 3.4

Another side of the President is shown in Figure 5, which depicts him dancing with Graça Machel in a dimly-lit nightclub, a heart hovering above them suggesting romance. The text also hints at romantic involvement: “My grandmother says she’s heard a rumour that Mr Mandela has been seen in the company of a very beautiful woman...”, with the ellipsis suggesting the rumour is more than just gossip (Case, 1997). The inclusion of this commentary on the president’s love

life forms part of the storyline in the book which paints Mandela as an “ordinary extraordinary” man. He is shown as a man who is respected as a political icon, yet still enjoys the simple things, such as exercising, spending time with his family, friends, and the woman he loves. Also, the ability to attract women is a necessary part of hegemonic masculinity, the final ingredient in the book’s recipe for the perfect man.

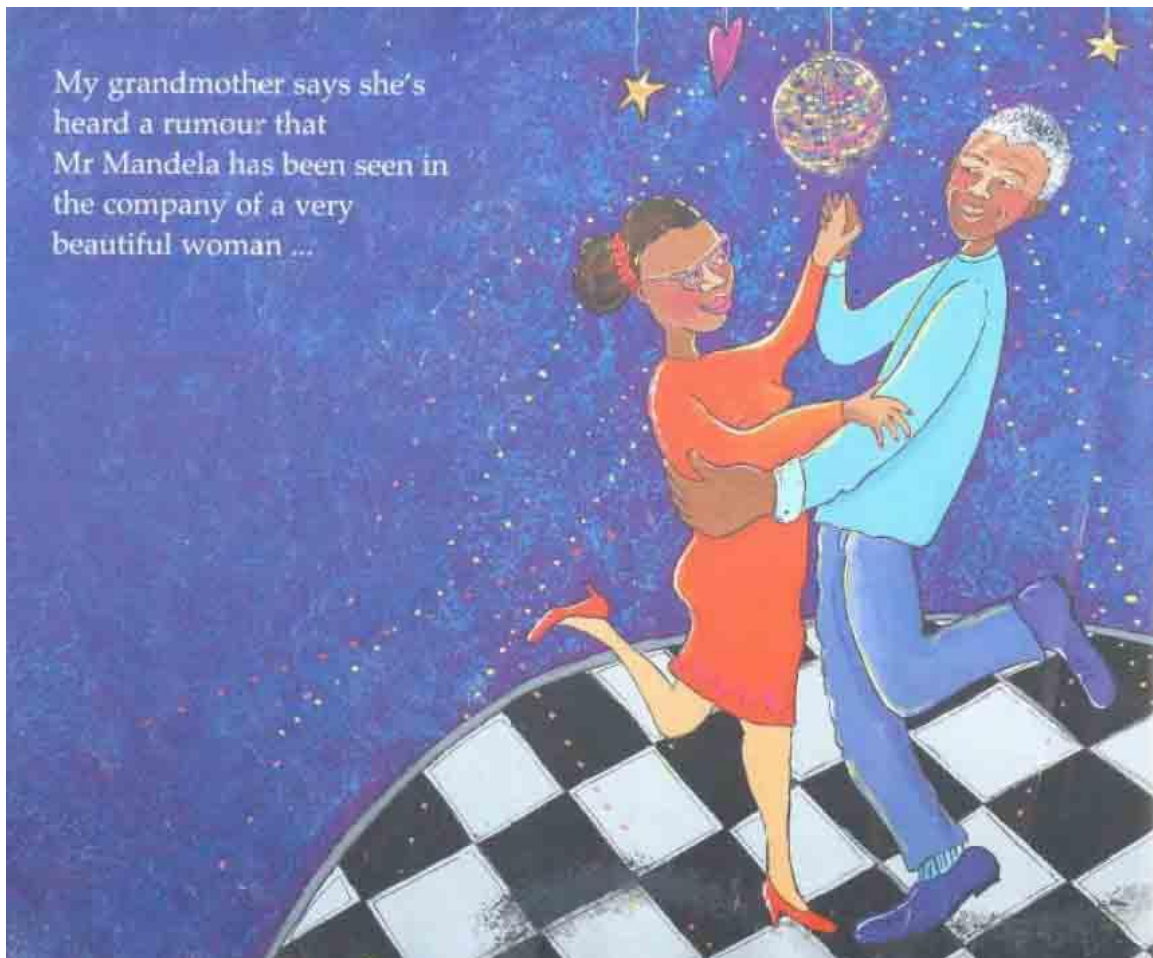


Fig. 3. 5

Reviews of the book praised it for its playful take on a South African icon, but some were left uneasy by the ending, and found it inappropriate for the target age group as it might raise

questions beyond the understanding of young children. The final pages of the book in particular were criticised for being too risqué for its young audience. One illustration shows Mandela bending over and placing shoes under a bed, while the accompanying text reads: ‘But still,’ she says. ‘He can put his shoes under my bed anytime...’ (Figure 3.6). The sexual innuendo of this comment is lost on her young granddaughter, who enquires “I wonder why she says that?” on the next page, but the grandmother leaves before answering (Case, 1997). Representing the president as a Casanova does not add anything to the storyline, but can be seen as part of another more general trend in the representation of black men as promiscuous and virile. The book starts off by celebrating Mandela as a great man, but by ending with the odd “ladies’ man” connotations, it falls into a stereotypical and derogatory representation of black masculinity.



'But still,' she says. 'He can put his shoes under my bed anytime'

Fig. 3.6

The dominant themes in the discourse of masculinity identified in the story were to do with men and power, but *What a gentleman* encompassed almost all of the categories of Harris' (1995) typology. This is why the character of Mandela can be thought of representing the quintessential model of masculinity, one which is to be aspired to as "the best a man can be". In the "Standard Bearer" category, Mandela exhibits the "Nature Lover" trait (he grows a vegetable garden on Robben Island); the "Be The Best You Can Be" trait, (his position as President), and the "Good Samaritan" trait (his charity and acts of goodwill). In the "Lovers" category, Mandela

is shown to be invested in maintaining close relationships, with family and a lover, as well as being a “Nurturer” (his interest in children). Mandela demonstrates the qualities of “President” in the “Bosses” category, quite literally. From the same category, he also overcomes “Hurdles” to achieve his goal (referenced by his time on Robben Island), as well as having been “a keen boxer in his day”, and exercising, an attribute of the “Sportsman” trait. In the “Rugged Individual” category, Mandela shows the “self-reliant” trait (he makes up his own bed). He even exhibits the “Playboy” facet of masculinity when he is shown romancing a lady.

The description of a black leader provided a unique space for the analysis of how black men are represented in positions of power. The focus of the book was on the showmanship and status of being the president, rather than leadership or other presidential duties. The story also ended with a double entendre, which echoes other representations of black people which focus on their bodies and sexuality.

The main object in the discourse of masculinity in the book is Nelson Mandela. He is praised and admired for his outstanding traits by a woman (grandmother telling her granddaughter about him). He is portrayed as the ideal male, and as the President of the country, he represents the standard all men should aspire to. In the nationalist discourse, the objects of the national anthem, the welfare activities, charity endeavours, sporting victories all speak to national pride and efforts at nation-building post-elections. Patriotism in the new “rainbow nation” of South Africa is encouraged.

Different terms are used to refer to Mandela in the story. The girl and her grandmother both call him “Mr Mandela”. A boy calls him “Madiba”, and a young girl writes him a letter addressed to “Tata Madiba”.

Talk as objects in the discourse of nationalism appeared throughout the book as intraiconic text. These are instances where text appears in the illustrations of a story, adding to the meaning (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001). Snippets of the national anthem in both Sotho and Afrikaans appear, which could be intended to show the new unity of the country and its inclusiveness of previously marginalised cultures and languages. A sign on a plane flying over the World Cup rugby match declares “Good Luck Bokke”, as well as expressions of support in Afrikaans (“Pale toe!”) and Ndebele (“Shosholozza”). Another nationalist reference is a “Cape Town 2008” sign at the Olympic stadium, which refers to the country’s bid to host the games in that year (Case, 1997).

The story describes various aspects of Mandela’s personality which are presented as qualities of the ideal man, a “gentleman”, as the title says. According to the book, being a good man is about being brave, which is what the grandmother describes him as on the very first page. Good men are caring “about ordinary people”, like Mandela, who “goes out of his way to help” old people, children, the sick and the destitute (Case, 1997). He is also patriotic, and shows his support for the national rugby team by wearing the Springbok jersey. It is important for a man to keep in shape, and Mandela is fit and healthy, having been a “keen boxer in his day” and exercising (Case, 1997). Men should look good, as Mandela does in his signature shirts. They should be self-sufficient, as Mandela was when he tended a vegetable garden while on Robben Island. Good men value family relationships, as Mandela shows by believing “families are precious” (Case, 1997). Men should attract people to them with their good looks and charm, which Mandela expresses as “Madiba Magic.” This also attracts women, and Mandela is portrayed romancing “a very beautiful woman.”

Many of the qualities shown to be the ideal man are also some of the qualities shared by the ideal South African. As a proud South African, the book suggests admiring the President as much as the grandmother and the other people in the story. It implies that knowledge of the national anthem, doing good deeds for others and supporting the national teams, just like Mandela does, are good ways of displaying nationalism.

The roles in the story are clearly delineated; there is the admired (Mandela) and his admirers, a speaker and listeners. In the foreword, Archbishop Desmond Tutu reiterates this distinction with his V.I.P/V.S.P categories. In this role, Mandela is expected to indulge his admirers. He is continually on display to the public, with even his private life open to scrutiny, as the grandmother discusses his habits and romantic affairs. In his role as the President, he is unable to respond or engage meaningfully with his admirers because of his position and commitments. The admiring characters in the book are able to express their love and admiration for Mandela, he is the focus of everyone's attention throughout the book. Voices of dissent or criticism are silenced in this discourse; the only option is "Mandela-worship". The grandmother plays the role of the speaker and the granddaughter the role of the listener, but the story is the granddaughter's retelling of their conversation. She qualifies the veracity of her grandmother's by stating that "my grandmother knows everything" (Case, 1997).

The text presents a particular kind of masculinity, the archetypal man, who represents a new way of being a male in South Africa. During apartheid, black masculinity was formulated around the struggle, which emphasised the strong, aggressive and sometimes violent natures of men. The changes that came after apartheid affected gender relations too, which meant that different ways of being a man became available. Mandela shows some of the different qualities of men in the 'new' South Africa. As the president he is powerful, but also shows his gentle side

by caring about children. He associates with important people and ‘ordinary’ people alike. He is a hero, having endured years of imprisonment and not harboured any bitterness. The stereotypical masculine traits of aggression, arrogance and forcefulness are replaced in the character of Mandela as represented in the story by gentleness, kindness and good humour. Mandela is presented as the standard for men to strive toward; he is a ‘gentleman’, not like the average man, and an icon.

The book portrays South Africa as a prosperous, unified country, thriving in democracy post-1994. The prodigious use of national symbols on the cover and inside the book, such as the national flag and flower, the prominent landmark of Table Mountain, and positive political graffiti reinforce this message. A positive image of the country is also painted with the representation of active social services and service delivery taking place, with even the president participating in hospital visits and disaster aid relief. Almost every illustration shows multicultural crowds of admirers united in celebrating Mandela. The material world of the book presents a panoramic view of the different living conditions in the new South Africa: from the luxurious Huguenot farmhouses of the winelands, to the shacks in the townships. There is a tacit acknowledgment of crime in the illustration of the grandmother’s house, which shows the burglar-guard on the front door. This contrasts with the “Home Sweet Home” cross-stitch hanging on her wall, the juxtaposition of this and the burglar-guard is a somewhat ironic comment on how safe South Africans can be in their own homes. The social world of *What a gentleman* is centred around the collective celebration of democracy and its personification in the figure of the President. There is an implied comparison between the veiled apartheid past (briefly referred to when the grandmother speaks about Mandela’s time on Robben Island) and the democratic present.

The book sets a high standard for the characteristics of an “ideal” man. The excessive admiration shown towards the character of Mandela suggests that such a standard is too high, and being like Mandela or better is impossible, but nevertheless, an admirable goal to strive towards. Nelson Mandela is presented as more than a man, an almost supernatural figure, and an icon. The description of him can be read as a sort of deification of an icon of democracy, the embodiment of the “success story” of peaceful transition South Africa was hailed as post-1994.

Alternative discourses are silenced or not mentioned, and there is no room for criticism. Any contrary opinions run the risk of being cast as unpatriotic, a sensitive issue in the wake of a new democracy because it would open critics to accusations of racism. The unbalanced distribution of the gains made by democracy could cause those disgruntled with the new dispensation to object to the new discourse of nationalism as presented in the story. People who were oppressed under apartheid and continue to be marginalized by the new government, as well as those disillusioned by the (forced?) “rainbow nation” rhetoric would also not buy into the “new South Africa”. The main idea of the book is the celebration of Mandela as an icon. Objections to this discourse could be interpreted as unpatriotic, and even racist. The story focuses on extremes, polarising the positions so that absolute hero worship or the opposite are the only options.

The quip by the grandmother that she wouldn’t mind Mr Mandela putting his shoes under her bed is a reference to masculine virility. This sexual innuendo is above the understanding of children for whom the book was intended (the granddaughter asks ‘what does that mean?’, and a picture accompanying the text is a literal one of Mandela putting shoes under the grandmother’s bed). The ending of the story is intended as a tongue-in-cheek joke for adults. The literal depiction of Mandela putting shoes under the grandmother’s bed together with the comment

need a certain level of sophistication to decipher, especially as the grandmother does not offer any clarification on her statement.

The term *masculine* is one which has been undergoing various changes as gender roles have shifted and become less static. The changing political state in South Africa also had an effect on the conception of manhood, especially for those involved in the struggle who had to abandon a “struggle masculinity” and redefine themselves in line with the new, uncertain rights and responsibilities of manhood with the fall of apartheid and the advent of democracy. The categories of people who stand to gain from the discourse of ideal masculinity presented in the story are men who are able to participate in the roles of leadership, power and heterosexual conquest represented by the character of Mandela shown in the story. These types of people would support the promotion of heteronormative masculinity, as well as facets of the “New Age” man. Not all men agree with this type of masculinity, and homosexual men, for example would stand to lose from this discourse. The positive features of masculinity are highlighted in the person of Mandela when he is shown being caring, providing for the needs of others, playing with children, being a family man. His portrayal as a ladies man could be interpreted negatively.

The beneficiaries of the nationalist discourse in the story would be people invested in the “new South Africa” and nation-building. The state and politically motivated groups would be interested in promoting such a discourse. The positive connotations of nationalism are that it is patriotic, unites people and is necessary for nation-building. Negative associations with nationalism are conservatism, and in extreme cases, nationalism is connected with exclusionary politics and even xenophobia. People opposed to the nationalist discourse would be those marginalized or not permitted to participate, such as immigrants and foreigners. Not everyone was co-opted into the rainbow nation as easily and smoothly as the text suggests. Black people

who wanted revenge and a wholesale overhaul of government and economy were not invested in a unified South Africa. White people, displaced from their position of privilege and wary of the change were hesitant to become part of the rainbow nation. Views of patriotism that differ from the one presented, such as the “separate but equal development” plans of groups such as the exclusively Afrikaner town of Orania and even some of the ideas of the Pan African Congress are in opposition to the nationalist discourse presented in the story.

University of Cape Town

The Boy On The Beach

That favourite family pastime, a trip to the beach, is retold by renowned author and illustrator Niki Daly (1998) in *The boy on the beach*. He was inspired to write the book after seeing the mix of trepidation and excitement of a boy at the water's edge, and his own memories of what it was like to be a boy on the beach. The simple plot follows the adventures of a young boy who wanders away from his parents and goes exploring on the beach. His boisterous antics lead him to an abandoned boat, where he is content to play pretend until he gets lonely and frightened. A lifeguard comes to his rescue and reunites him with his parents, and the story ends happily with them making friends over ice-cream.

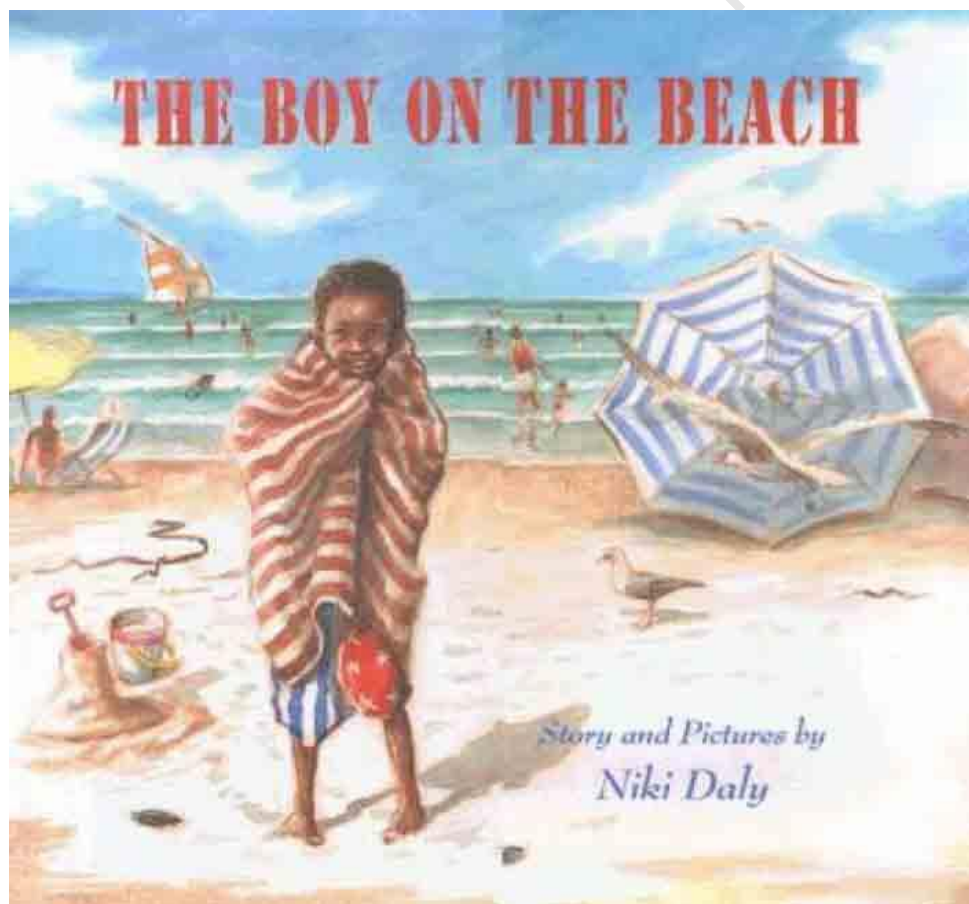


Fig. 4.1 – Cover

Throughout the book, the main character is referred to as “the boy”, and only at the end of the book is his identity revealed. Even his name, Joe, is common; and in the same way that “Joe Blog” and “your average Joe” are placeholders referring to the everyday man, this name positions the story as a universal narrative with which all boys are meant to identify. The race of the main character becomes even more relevant in the face of these efforts at homogenisation. It positions the behaviour of this boy as not only characteristic of black boys, but all boys in general. This is different from the many texts that cast the universal boy as middle-class and white (Wannamaker, 2008). The story takes place entirely on the beach, which is perhaps significant given the status of some beaches as reserved for whites and others for non-whites under the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act (1953). The post-apartheid beach in Daly’s story shows an integrated, multicultural gathering which would not have been possible before democracy.

The characteristics exhibited by the boy throughout the book are those typically associated with young boys: being inquisitive, adventurous, impulsive, mischievous, playful and inventive. He also gives no thought to the consequences of his actions for others (as when he jumps around, spraying sand onto sunbathers), downplays his own fears by exaggerating the enormity of the challenges he faces (he labels the waves he is scared of as “BIG ONES”) and has an urge to lead (he assumes the position of captain on his imaginary ship).

His parents are protective of him, making sure he applies sun cream and warning him not to stray so that he does not get lost. They also encourage him to try out new things (waves like the “BIG ONE”), in their presence. Although he is bold in exploring the beach, the boy seems wary of the sea, and has to be bribed with ice-cream to face the waves with his parents. Even

with his mother and father holding his hands, he prefers dry land and leaves them to explore the beach on his own, ignoring their warning to stay close.

The minimal text and illustrations narrate his beach expedition as he goes “leaping, bumping, kangaroo jumping – spraying sand wherever he goes” (Daly, 1998). His antics are compared to an animal: wild, reckless and inconsiderate, ignoring the caution of sunbathers to slow down.

The boy continues on his own, venturing further and further away from his parents as he is intrigued by all the different attractions of the beach. “Just see him zip through the crowd like a high-speed boat – past surfers and sailboards and lazy sunbathers. Zigzag, around a smelly, shaking, shaggy dog but there’s no time to play a wild seaweedy game” (Daly, 1998). The use of alliteration gives rhythm to the words, making them aurally convey the speed and excitement of the boy. He spies out the lifeguard lookout atop a sand dune, and is drawn there where he finds a hollow and an old boat. Here the imagination of the boy takes over, and he conjures up a fantasy world with himself as a brave “captain who isn’t afraid of sharks and storms and BIG ONES that can knock a man right overboard” (Daly, 1998). As captain of a ship, he forgets his actual fear of the sea, instead highlighting his courage in the face of the exaggerated ‘dangers’ he lists.

With his imagination running wild, the boy envisions the waves rising like monsters, and becomes aware that he is all alone. This scares him, and he calls out for his mother and father. He draws out the sounds in the word “Daddy”, indicating his desperation. The small figure of the boy, sprawled out in the sand where he has fallen, with his face upturned shows him as a lost, vulnerable little boy, vastly different from the brave, fearless adventurer he was before. The illustration echoes his sense of abandonment, with imposing dunes rising above him and seeming

to mimic the waves he fears with their windswept peaks. The colours in the picture are also less bright, and contribute to a darker, more sombre mood.

A lifeguard comes across the boy, who seems to be wiping tears from his eyes. The lifeguard is described as being tanned from hours in the sun, and “cool as a Coke”, comparing his carefree demeanour to the youthful, trendy soft drink. He casually addresses the boy, who replies: “*I want my Mom and Dad,*” (Daly, 1998). The lifeguard gives the boy a piggy-back ride back over the dunes to the Lost and Found to find his parents. The boy tells them about his adventures straight away: “There was a terrible storm. I fell out of my boat and saw a shark. The waves were EVEN BIGGER THAN THE BIG ONE!” (Daly, 1998). His parents seem so relieved to have him back that they do not admonish him for getting lost, but instead offer him ice-cream. The boy insists on an ice-cream for his new friend the lifeguard. The lifeguard introduces himself, giving both his name (Bruce) and his nickname (Speedo), and asks the boy what his name is. His parents urge him to respond, but he is too busy enjoying his ice-cream to talk, so he decides to write his name in the sand. The boy seems to enjoy the attention he is getting, and spells out his name, Joe, in the sand, finally revealing his identity.

The main message of the story was that of overcoming fear of the unknown and the rewards of being brave, adventurous and independent, even in the face of scary situations. These boyish traits are celebrated in Joe, but he ultimately needs to be rescued when he gets lonely and afraid by a white lifeguard. The story makes an effort to cast Joe as a universal boy by keeping his name a secret until the end, but it falls into the stereotypical pattern of having a black, inexperienced and needy character in need of help from a white, more experienced and professional character.

Bravery and exploration are the dominant discourses related to masculinity in this book. The story focuses on the bravery and hunger for exploration typical of many representations of boyhood. These traits figure in Harris' (1995) typology in the "Bosses" category as the "Adventurer". The boy attempts to be self-reliant, but has to be rescued by a lifeguard to be reunited with his family.

The discourse of race in the story seeks to illustrate the similarities between white and black families by using a trip to the beach to show them enjoying the same experiences. Racial difference is still evident, however, in the different roles played by black and white people. The objects in this discourse are black people as victims, and white people as saviours.

The setting of the beach itself is also an object in the race discourse. Beaches were opened to all the people of South Africa as public space when apartheid was abolished. It represents an exciting place for the boy to explore countered by the ocean as a dangerous place. It is described as hot (temperature), colourful and crowded ("Between bright umbrellas and tropical towels they find their spot"), and divided between the safe space of the beach and the more sinister waves of the ocean (Daly, 1998).

In this familialist discourse, the parents play the role of protectors. They are concerned with their son's welfare (tell him not to wander away and put on sunscreen), but also encourage him to face the ocean with them. They do not force him to listen to them or follow their suggestions. In his role as the beach explorer, the boy is able to say which activities he wants to participate in. The boy does not admit he is afraid of the ocean, even though he is very adventurous on the beach. His name is also not revealed until the very last page of the book, which he chooses to write in the sand instead of speak. This symbolic answer to the lifeguard's question can be seen as his way of reclaiming the space of the beach after being rescued.

The picture of the world this discourse of masculinity presents is one of man's attempts to overcome nature. The boy at first is an explorer, dominating his surroundings by freely behaving as he wishes on the beach. He is hesitant to explore the sea because of the unpredictability of the waves and his inability to have the same free reign over this natural element. Finding an abandoned boat gives him the chance to act out his fantasy of having control over the sea, but he is overwhelmed and wants to return to his parents when he gets lonely.

The material world of the story is set on a clean, beautiful beach which has attracted many visitors. There are amenities, such as shops and lifeguards on duty for the holidaymakers. The social world presented shows people of all races enjoying the seaside together. The author writes the story from his own experience as a young boy visiting the beach, yet makes the main character a black boy. This can be read as an attempt to universalise the experience of a family outing into something that can be enjoyed by people of all races post-apartheid. The only person trained with the skill to be a lifesaver is still a white person.

The main idea of the story is to reinforce the importance of listening to your parents. Objections to this goal would be termed disobedient, and are characteristic of the "Rebel" characteristic's disregard for rules.

The story presents the tension between exploration and discovery as a way of finding and experiencing new things, while also harbouring the possibility of danger and the threat of the unknown using the beach and ocean as a figurative expression of these ideas. For the lifeguard, the ocean is safe because of his training and expertise. The young boy is more wary of the ocean because of his age and inexperience.

The father attempts to bribe the boy by offering to buy him a "King-size Twister with sprinkles on top", a reference to a brand of ice-cream, probably familiar with children at the

time. The lifeguard is described as being “as cool as a Coke”, another popular culture reference children might recognise. The story was written from the author’s own recollections of beach visits, and these references are reflective of an urban sensibility.

The author explains his inspiration for the story on the back cover:

Last summer, I saw a boy on the beach, standing ankle deep in the surf. He was looking out at an enormous stretch of Indian Ocean. Observing his small body, that seemed caught in spasms of excitement and fear, I started to remember what it was like to be a boy on the beach – Niki Daly (1998).

This marks the story as an explicitly gendered discourse (“what it was like to be a boy”), and brings the actions of the boy across as expected masculine behaviour. His young age permits him to display traits of masculinity not usually emphasised, such as fear of the unknown and being dependent on the assistance of others. The author attaches his name to the end of the message, as a special message from author to reader, implying they share the same ideas of how a boy should behave on the beach.

The traditional pastime of families making a trip to the seaside used to be the privilege of white people during apartheid, when the best beaches and facilities were reserved for their use. The story of the beach as a place to be explored, which becomes threatening to an adventurous young boy can be seen as symbolic of assumptions about the experience of black people making use of public spaces they were once excluded from.

The discourse of race as exclusionary with regards to public space has changed in post-apartheid South Africa. The laws of segregation no longer impose racial restrictions on who can

and cannot make use of certain areas. All beaches are open to everybody, but there are still places and times when certain races make use of particular beaches (Dixon & Durrheim, 2003).

Vuyo's Whistle

A young boy's excitement at the novelty of a new toy and how it helps him find his lost sister is told in *Vuyo's whistle* (Urson, 2002). Vuyo picks up a broken whistle, and has fun making a noise with it, much to the delight of his younger sister. His mother, however, is not impressed, and after the whistling upsets his grandmother and causes a commotion, she tells him not to whistle anymore. Later when they go Christmas shopping, his younger sister is lost in the crowd, and everyone is frantically searching for her. Vuyo has the bright idea to use his whistle to call her, and it works when she recognises the sound and comes to him. Everyone is relieved when Baby is found, and his mother gives him a big hug as he gives the whistle a victory tweet.

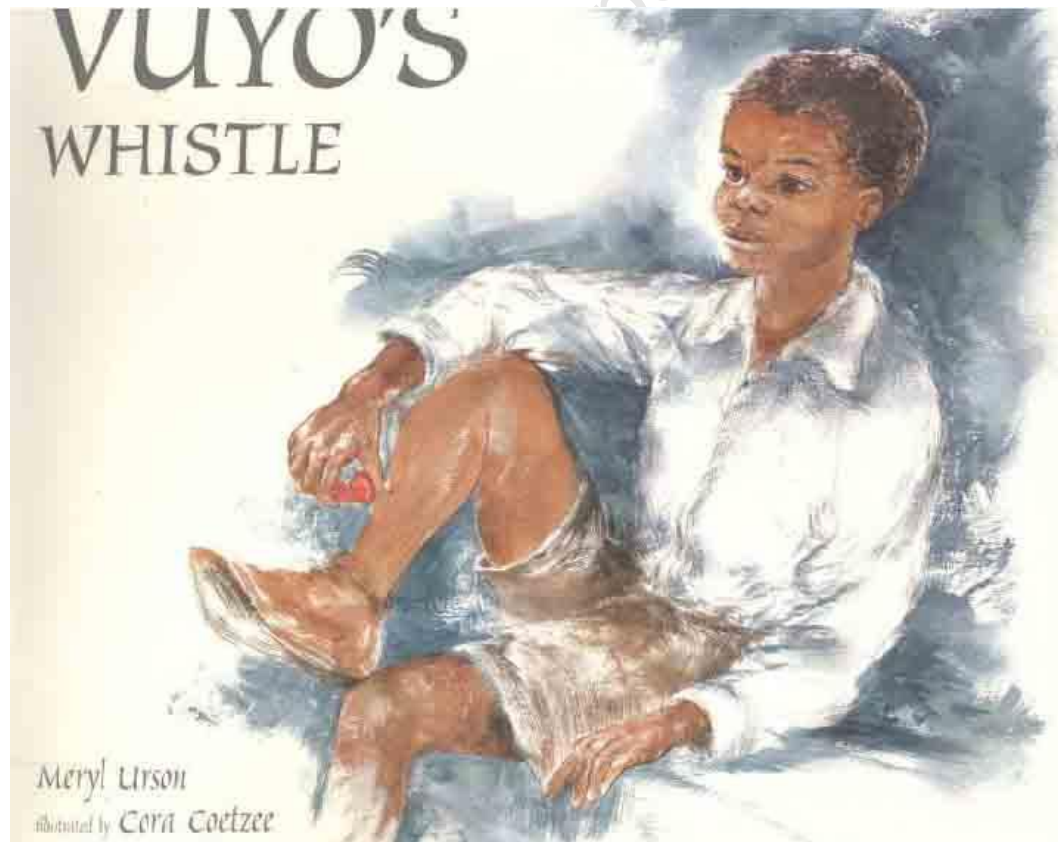


Fig. 5.1 – Cover

This story also takes place in a rural setting. The location is not specified in the text, but there are certain markers which suggest it is set in the country. There are animals, such as goats and chickens, and Vuyo also compares the sound of his whistle to a newborn chick, implying they are part of his lived experience. The family also looks forward to the annual excursion to town for Christmas shopping in anticipation, which intimates that it is a special occasion for them because that does not happen regularly as they live outside of town. Town is bigger and has many different shops and things to buy, unlike the local café where Vuyo picks up his broken whistle. The name of the café is “de Freitas”, a Portuguese surname, suggesting white owners, while the men standing outside the shop suggest the patrons of the café are mostly black.

Vuyo seems fascinated by the whistle, even though it is broken, which may mean he does not have many other toys. The novelty of the sounds the whistle can make entertain him, and he enjoys blowing it at the goats and a passing taxi. His mother asks him to take care of his younger sister, referred to as “Baby”, while she takes down the washing. Baby enjoys the sound of the whistle so much, she knocks over a glass of milk, which disrupts Makhulu’s (grandmother) nap and prompts his mother to instruct him to only whistle outside. They go outside to play with the whistle some more, but the tweeting upsets the dogs and chickens, causing such a commotion that his mother forbids him to use the whistle again.

Mama consoles Vuyo with the prospect of Christmas shopping the next day, “We’ll take the bus to town, to those big shops with the lights and music and decoration” (Urson, 2002). These attractions must have been very interesting for a young, rural boy, but Vuyo was still preoccupied with the thought of his whistle. There is much excitement at “Big Bazaar” the next day as people gather to look at all that is on sale. Mama and Auntie look at pots while Tata (Father) and Uncle dance at the music counter (Figure 2). This is the first mention of Vuyo’s

father in the story, and he does not appear again, except when Mama sends him off to find a security guard to help them find Baby. This is concurrent with research in children's literature which has found that father figures tend to be portrayed as withdrawn and uninvolved in the lives of their children (Anderson & Hamilton, 2005). The division of labour between the genders also align with stereotypical male and female roles. Mama does household chores, such the laundry, taking care of the children and disciplining them. She examines the pots when they go shopping, another indication of her compliance with traditional feminine gender roles. The only information given about Tata is that he enjoys music and dancing.

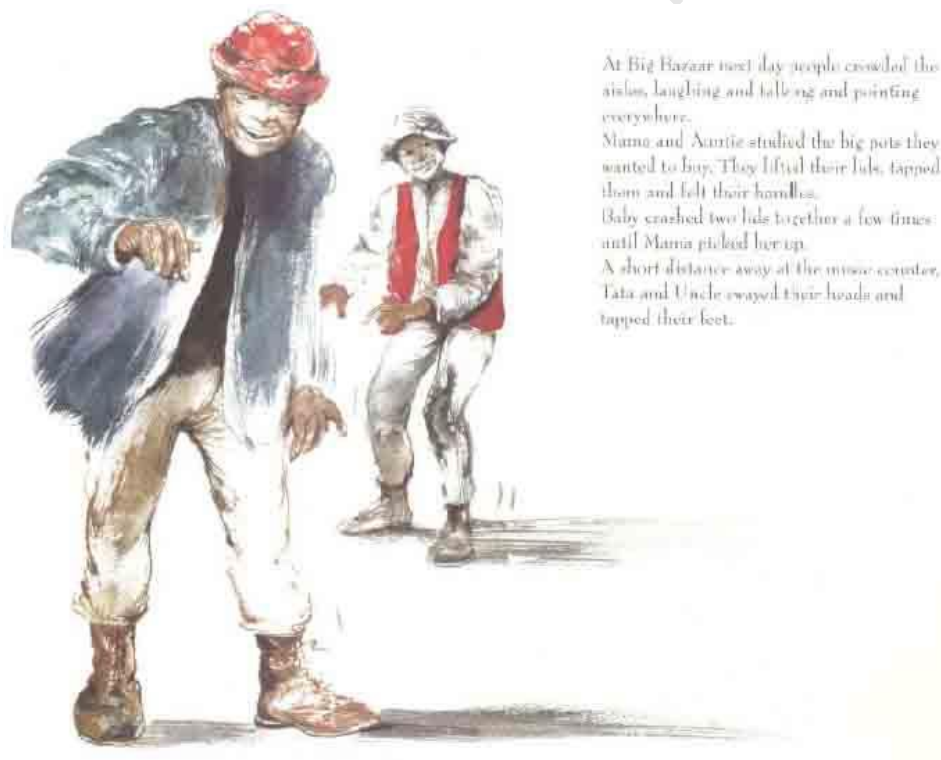


Fig. 5.2

Probably the most blatantly stereotypical picture in the book is one of a woman carrying a basket on her head. The image of a black woman carrying something on her head is a much repeated stereotype in South African popular culture and advertising. The text accompanying the

picture further characterises her in a negative way. She bellows “Hai, suga!”, and tells Vuyo “Quiet boy!”, abrasively expressing her annoyance at the whistling. Her body and weight are also unnecessarily mentioned, with the text describing her as a “big lady”.

“Hai, suga!” bellowed a big lady with a basket on her head. “Quiet, boy!”
But Vuyo would not be quiet.
“PEEP PEEP!” he shrieked, pushing his way down the next aisle where pillows were piled up like heavy clouds.
“Stop, boy!” called a man wearing sunglasses.
But Vuyo scurried on. “PEEP PEEP!”
In the third aisle, bowls of sweets lined his way, bright and delicious.



Fig. 5.3

Vuyo takes matters into his own hands when his mother tells him that Baby has gone missing in the busy shop. She is obviously distressed, “He’d never seen her eyes so wide or worried before” (Urson, 2002), and this makes Vuyo worried about his little sister as well. Disregarding his mother’s instruction to stay with his Auntie while the other adults go off in

search of Baby, Vuyo comes up with a way to find Baby: by blowing on his whistle. He remembers that she enjoyed the sound when they were playing at home and hopes she will recognise the distinct “PEEEEP” and come to him. He begins making his way through the store, blowing the whistle as loudly as he can, much to the irritation of the other shoppers, but Vuyo is not dissuaded. Finally he comes across Baby, and they both return to their mother, jubilant. She is happy to see them both, and commends Vuyo and his whistle for finding Baby. Vuyo is rewarded for his ingenuity with a “hug as warm as a blanket” from his mother, and he gives the whistle one last toot for good measure (Urson, 2002).

In this story, a young boy uses his initiative to turn something that initially seems useless and annoying into something useful. The story celebrates his creativity in recognising value in that which has been discarded, and having the courage to carry out his plan in the face of negative comments from adults. Vuyo’s disregard for the instructions of his mother and other adults turns out to be beneficial and he is, in effect, commended for his disobedience. The positive response to his boyish defiance is an acknowledgement of the benefits of independent thinking. Although the book was published in 2002, it still shows the characters living a relatively backward lifestyle, a choice which may be linked to the tendency to romanticise rural living so that it appears acceptable and normal for black people to live in rural, undeveloped areas. The caricatured representation of black women as basket-carrying mamas and black men as jovial performers shows little depth of character and is stereotypical.

In the masculinity discourse of this book, boys are described as resourceful and able to take matters into their own hands for the greater good. This corresponds to the “good Samaritan” trait in the “Standard Bearer” category. When Vuyo ‘disobeys’ his mother and the reprimands of

the shoppers, it can be seen as corresponding to the “Rebel” trait in the “Rugged Individual” category.

The story also repeats some of the same discourses of race found in the other picturebooks, of black people as poor and rural dwellers. Additionally, it also portrays black people as being out of touch and backward. In the story, Vuyo’s description of a remote-controlled car toy shows he is too young or inexperienced to know the word for it, and therefore has to describe it literally. The rural-city divide constitutes one of the objects in the discourse of ‘black people as rural’. This divide contrasts the things of the rural area (animals, café) with the objects of the city (bright lights, music, many more products). The material world of *Vuyo’s Whistle* is an isolated, rural area. There is one small café, and taxis to commute to the town, which has more amenities. The trips to town are presented as a special occasion which is anticipated as an enjoyable outing for the family. The family features strongly in the social world of the story, with Vuyo’s mother, father, baby sister, grandmother, aunt and uncle being mentioned.

In this familialist discourse, the character of the mother plays the role of disciplinarian, and is able to reprimand her son. She does not have to explain why Vuyo is forbidden from playing with his new toy, saying “It’s just making trouble” is enough for Vuyo to realise he cannot blow his whistle anymore. As a child, Vuyo is limited in what he can say and he is prevented from arguing with his mother about her decision. The father is less involved in the story, his only action is to dance and enjoy the music in town with Vuyo’s uncle. It is Mama that notices Baby is missing, we are not told his reaction to this, only that Mama will ask him to find a security guard to help them. This corresponds to the traditional role of women being more likely to be involved with child-rearing duties than men.

Vuyo first shows his “new” toy to his mother, and even though she is sceptical that a broken whistle found in the dust could be called “new”, she recognises that he enjoys playing with it and tells him to do so outside. She does this in an encouraging manner, cupping his chin in her hands. The closeness of the mother-son relationship is further shown when she comforts him with their trip to town when he is sad after she forbids him to whistle because of all the trouble it causes. Her parental love is again illustrated through physical contact when she embraces Vuyo at the end of the story for finding Baby.

The definition of “disobedience” changes in the story: when Vuyo blows the whistle and it upsets the dogs and chickens, wakes up Makhulu, makes Baby overturn her milk and mess up her clothes in the dust, this behaviour is termed disobedient and banned by his mother because of all the trouble it causes. When Vuyo blows the whistle inside the busy shop, other adults also see it as disobedient and naughty, and he is told to stop, but when he finds Baby using the whistle, Mama exclaims “Vuyo and his whistle have found our baby!” and hugs him.

Many onomatopoeic words and words describing sound are used in conjunction with the whistle to illustrate how much fun Vuyo has playing with it, as well as the disruption it causes. Here a metaphor uses the rural comparison of animals to describe an object: “Peep, peep,” the whistle said like a newborn chicken.” It is also compared to the sound a bird makes (“cheeped”). More animal references are used to describe sound onomatopoeically: “Ruff, ruff,” answered the dogs...” and “Cock, cock, cock,” clucked the chickens”.

The text also makes use of vernacular register, a reference to an African way of addressing older people, referring to “Mam’ Mtathi” (older woman), “Makhulu” (grandmother), Mama (mother), Tata (father) and “Malume” (uncle). Other phrases used include Makhulu

exclaiming “*Tyhini!*” (a vernacular expression of surprise), and a woman admonishing Vuyo with “Hai, suga!” (Urson, 2002).

The roles that feature most strongly in the story are those of the disturber (Vuyo) and the disciplinarian (Mama), and the rescuer (Vuyo) and the rescued (Baby). The first pair shows the tension between authority and obedience. In the family values discourse, parental figures set the rules for behaviour and children have to follow them. Vuyo violates the conventional codes of behaviour in a public space when he blows the whistle in the shops, infuriating the other customers. Finding Baby overrules their reprimands and his mother’s original decision about the whistle. In the rescuer role, Vuyo is commended for doing a good deed, even though it went against his mother’s original rules.

The main idea in the story is to show the benefit of using initiative and creativity to help others. This is quite a sophisticated concept for most young children to understand, as their concept of right and wrong is largely based on the consequences. As such, it is difficult for them to conceive of weighing up the options to discern grey areas. The front cover dust jacket flap sets the scene of the story:

One hot December day, Vuyo found something lying in the dust outside the café. He picked it up. It was a whistle, or half of one, because the end had broken off. He wiped it on his shirt and blew it softly. Peep, peep, the whistle said like a newborn chicken.

At home the sharp sound of his whistle annoyed everybody – except Baby. She kept on asking: “More! More!” In the end Mama had to say: I’m sorry, my boy, but no more whistling. It’s just making trouble.” The next day the whole family went Christmas shopping. In the overcrowded shop, amongst the noise and jostling, Baby got lost. The

adults looked all over for her – but it is Vuyo and his whistle who came to the rescue! An exciting, original tale with the expressive and pleasing illustrations which have become Cora Coetzee’s trademark (Urson, 2002).

This excerpt makes reference to the failed attempts of the adults to locate Baby, stating that Vuyo and his whistle instead were more successful. This statement implies that adult logic is not always suitable in every situation, and in some instances children are able to use their own initiative with better outcomes.

University of Cape Town

Ouma Ruby's Secret

Ouma Ruby's secret (Van Wyk, 2006) tells the story of the special relationship between a young boy and his grandmother (Ouma). He loves reading, and she treats him with a visit to the bookshop, allowing him to choose two books. Chris wishes to show his Ouma how much he cares for her with a gift for her birthday, but he does not have enough money to buy her something special. He decides to write a letter sharing his feelings for her to read at her birthday party, in front of the family gathered to celebrate with her. When his grandmother avoids reading the letter, he wonders why, until his mother tells him she cannot read. Chris does not let this stop him from giving Ouma his gift, and instead reads the letter to her himself.

The book has been commended for the natural and genuine quality of storytelling in the text and pictures. The illustrations of Anneliese Voigt-Peters, considered to be a true-to-life portrayal of the people and places in the story, were selected to the International Board on Books for Youth (IBBY) Honours list. The book won the 2007 Exclusive Books IBBY South Africa Award for “the humanity and the homespun South African authenticity of both text and illustrations” (Heale, 2007).

The first page of the book positions the story as more than just made-up fantasy with the text “This is the story of a real boy and a real ouma” (Van Wyk, 2006). This is done to cast the story in a meaningful, factual light as one about people who actually existed and events that actually took place. This deliberate separation of the story from fiction is meant to lend it credibility and reinforce the message of the book as one that should be taken seriously. The writer of the book, Chris van Wyk, shares his name with the main character in the story, making it possible to deduce that he tells the story from personal experience. The accompanying illustration shows an old-fashioned oval, cameo-type black and white photograph of a young

woman, who we assume is the grandmother from the title. She is well-dressed, wears a hat and holds gloves and a handbag. The photograph gives a sense of history and makes it seem more believable.

This sense of history is extended by the text on the facing page, “A long time ago miners dug into the earth for gold and they left behind this mountain of yellow sand and rock. From the top of the mine dump the houses and the cars and the people look like toys. Down below is a suburb called Riverlea. And 13 Flinders Street is where Chris lives with his mom and dad, two brothers and sister” (Figure 6.1). It places the story historically, although the illustration shows more contemporary time and surroundings compared to the previous one. It situates the narrative in a time and place influenced by the legacy of mining in South Africa, and by mentioning the suburb Riverlea, a predominantly coloured neighbourhood, a time of segregated spaces. Their modest, face-brick, tin-roof house without a garden is flanked by similar looking houses, with the mine dump rising up imposingly in the background. The family form a close-knit group in the foreground, arms around each other, with Chris in the centre.

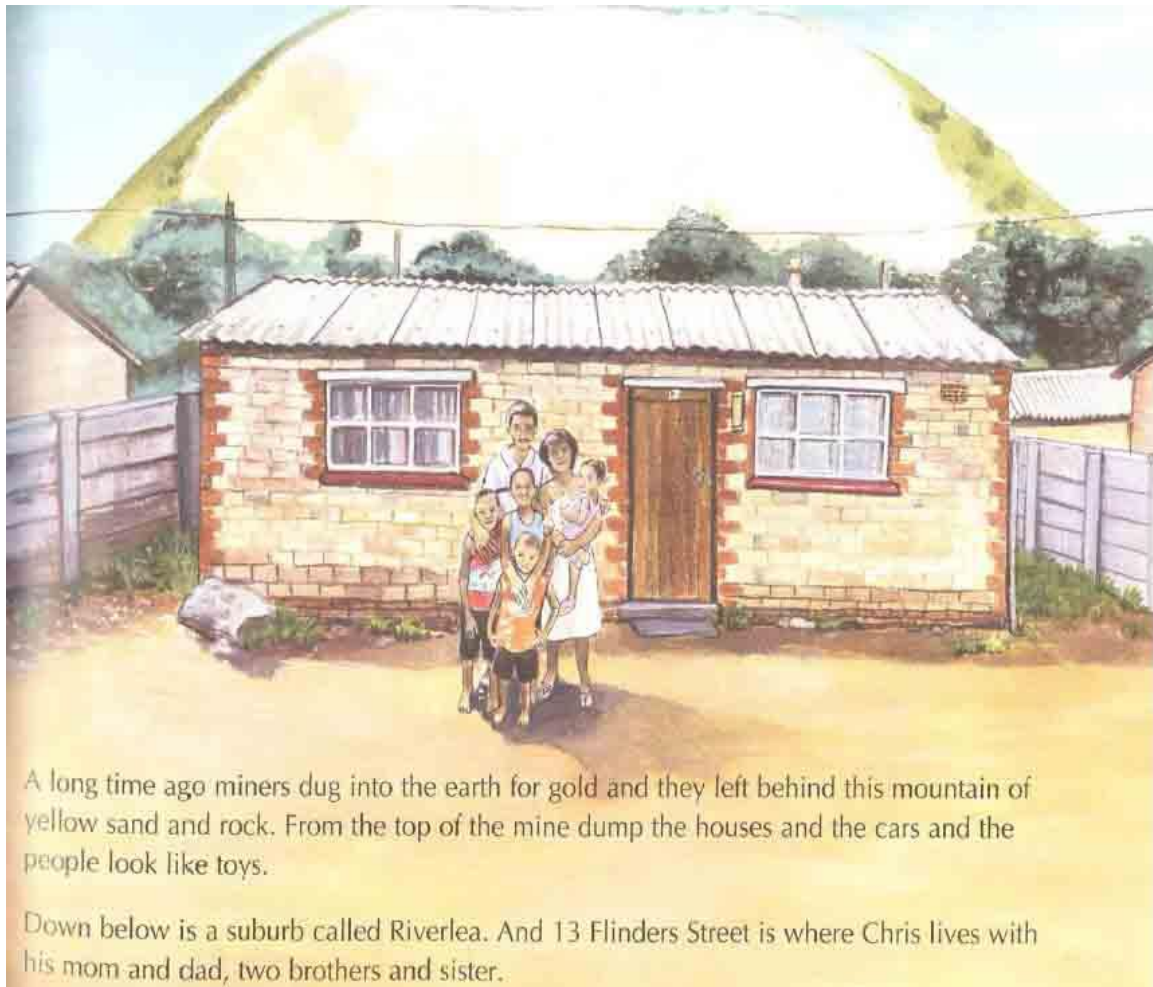


Fig. 6.1

The first thing the reader is told about Chris, the main character, is that he is an ardent reader, eagerly reading anything he can, even the labels on tomato sauce bottles. Chris's grandmother is introduced as "Ouma Ruby", using the Afrikaans word for grandmother. Younger people are expected to refer to their elders by their family position, not just their first name as a mark of respect. This way of speaking shows how culture is inscribed through language, and has an effect on family relations and the hierarchy within them. These two pieces of information: Chris's love of reading, and Ouma Ruby's place as a respected member of the family form the cornerstones of the story.

Chris is obviously close to his grandmother, as he is willing to walk the distance, saying “You can chew the sweetness out of three Chappies’ bubblegums before you reach Ouma’s house” (Van Wyk, 2006), to visit her at her home in Coronation, another coloured suburb in Johannesburg. It is also close to the mine dump, which dominates the landscape. Coronation appears to be a nicer suburb than Riverlea, as it has well-kept gardens and fruit trees. Chris enjoys visiting in the summer when there are peaches, apricots, grapes and mulberries to eat. Ouma Ruby also seems to enjoy having him and other family members visit her. Figure 6.2 shows her surrounded by relatives, and the text explains that many of them live with her. They appear to be a close family who enjoy spending time together.

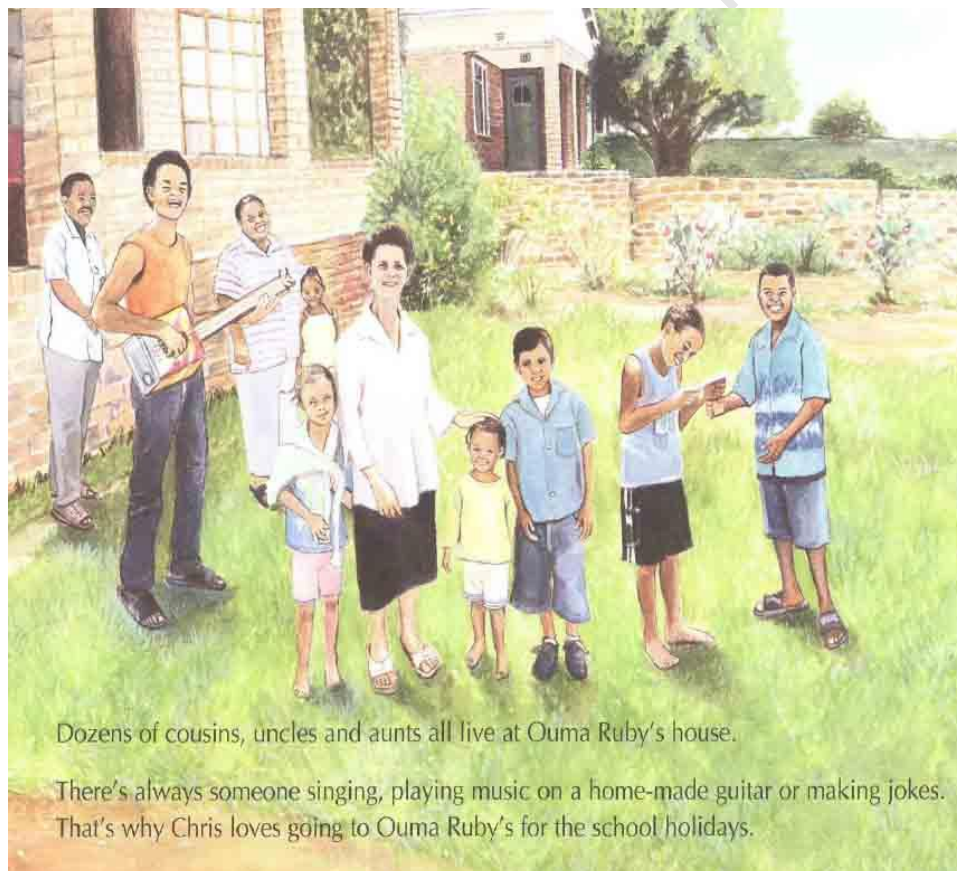


Fig. 6.2

Ouma has asked Chris to meet her in town for a “surprise”. He has no idea what she has planned for him, and tries without luck to get her to tell him. They make their way through the

street vendors of downtown Johannesburg, and pass an Indian hawker selling curry powder (Figure 3). The association of Indians with curry and owning shops is so widespread to be almost stereotypical. Chris and his grandmother have a special bond, as she is aware of his love for reading. She knows he will enjoy the opportunity to pick out books, and he is delighted when he discovers that is his surprise.

Chris wishes to return the favour by doing something special for his grandmother on her birthday. He does not have the money to buy her a gift, so instead decides to write her a heartfelt letter expressing how much he loves her. He is excited for her to read the letter out loud to all the family members gathered at her birthday party, perhaps to show off his skill at writing to them as well. When his grandmother makes up excuses not to read the letter, he insists, until his mother takes him aside and explains that she cannot read. Chris is surprised by this, especially given the pretence she made when she examined the books he chose at the bookstore. This does not dissuade him from his goal of making his grandmother feel special, and he offers to read the letter to her himself. She appreciates his thoughtfulness, and the story ends with Chris giving her a birthday hug.

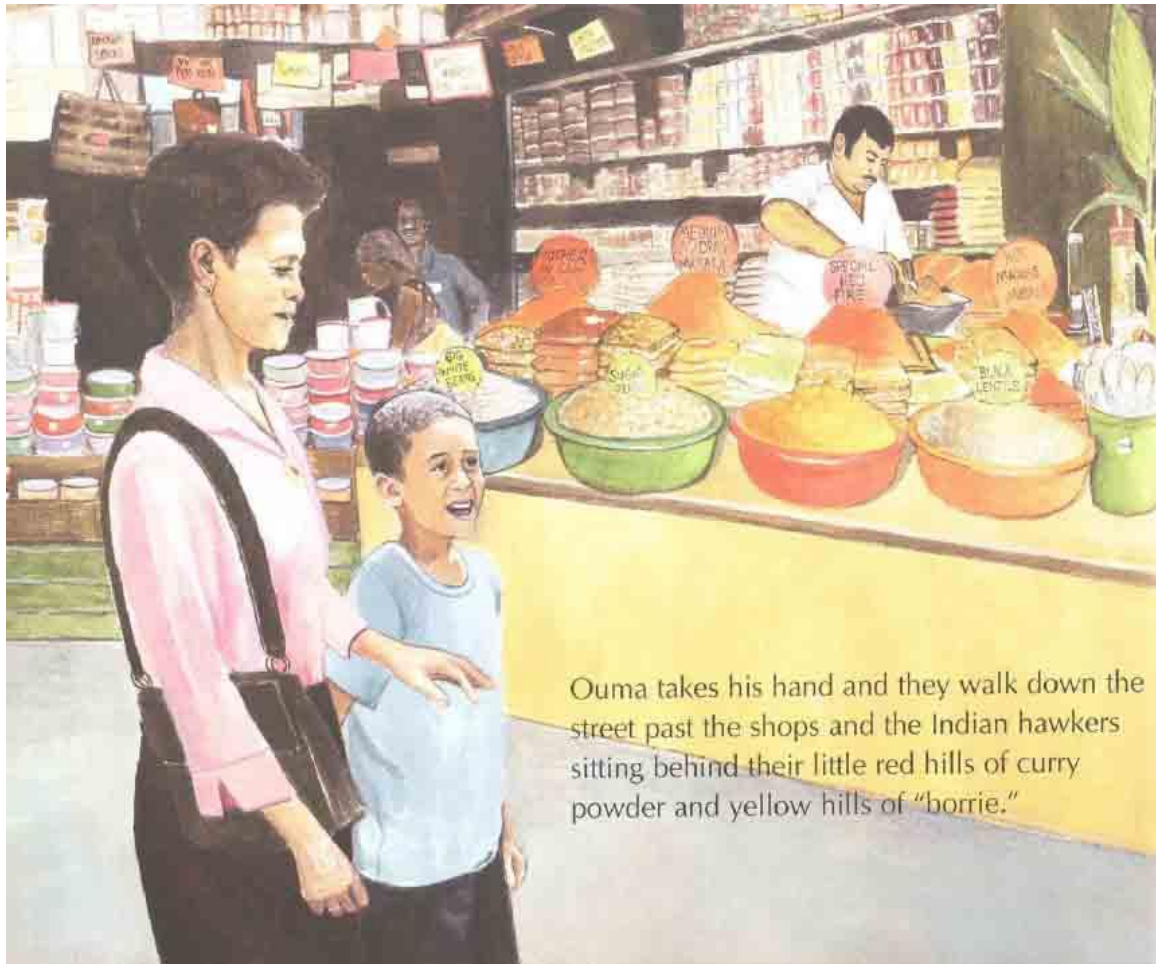


Fig. 6.3

It is perhaps significant that this is not the only story of its kind written for children. Dhanam Naidoo's (1996) *My granny can read and write* (Figure 6.4) also tells the story of a grandmother who is illiterate and her grandson. Her son, and the young boy's father, has gone away to the mines to work and spends long stretches of time away from home. He communicates with them through letters, which both are unable to read. A man in the community reads letters for a fee, but the grandmother dislikes having to go to him because it is done in public, so that everyone knows what is going on. The young boy does not enjoy school, and thinks of new excuses everyday to avoid going. His grandmother encourages him to go to school so he can

learn how to read and write, but he is not convinced it is important and would rather spend his time with her on the farm. Unbeknownst to the boy, his grandmother has been attending adult classes with his schoolteacher, and soon she is able to read the letters herself. This encourages him to stop his truancy and also learn to read his father's letters.

The reasons why these two women never learned to read and write are not given in the text, and are left to the speculation of the reader. One possible explanation, given their age and the era during which they would have grown up, is the lack of emphasis placed on educating girls within a patriarchal society. The apartheid government also did not place much emphasis on the education of black people, deeming it unnecessary to spend money on educating them because they were being groomed to do menial jobs as “hewers of wood and drawers of water” (MacCann & Maddy, 2001, p. 6). The “why” in these stories is important because it seems to speak to a large cross-section of people, given that there are two books with those particular similarities, and should have been included in the text. It is encouraging that both women recognise the value of reading and encourage their grandchildren to be literate, an especially important detail for Chris van Wyk, as he grew up to be a writer.

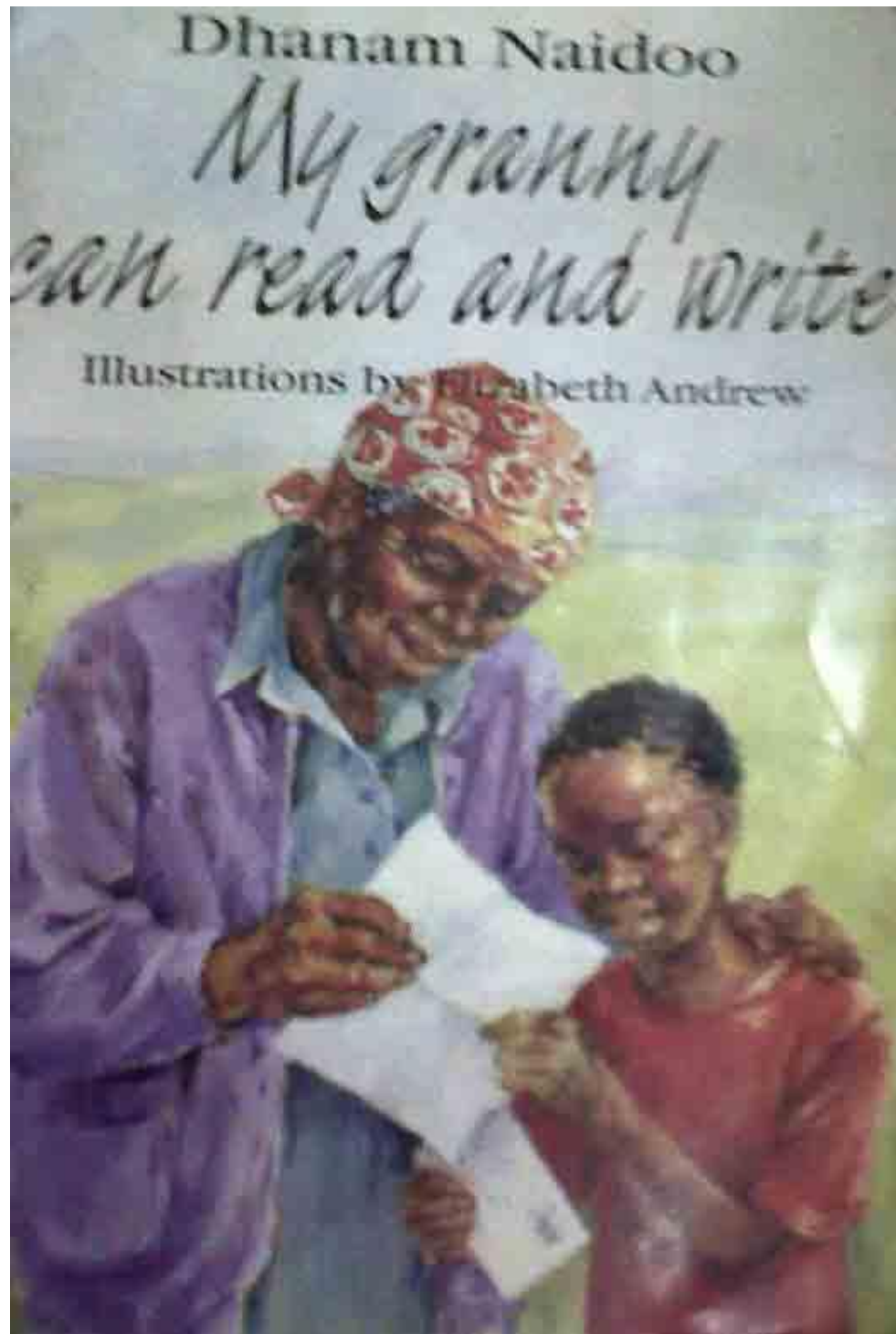


Fig. 6. 4 – Cover

The discourse of masculinity presents an idea of boys not usually portrayed, that of boys as readers. This is most similar to the “Scholar” trait in the “Standard Bearer” category (Harris,

1995). Chris also shows independence in his behaviour and patterns of thought when he takes the bus alone to town and comes up with the idea of writing a letter to his grandmother in lieu of a birthday present. These actions are in line with the “Self-reliant” facet of the “Rugged Individual” category (Harris, 1995). The importance of family and respecting elders expressed falls under the “Nurturer” facet of the “Lovers” category (Harris, 1995).

This is the only picturebook which appears to be set in apartheid, highlighted by the references to segregated living areas. Related to this is the pattern of black characters having to travel to reach the city, as apartheid geography situated most black residential areas outside the urban centres. It comments on the disadvantaged background of many black people, with the underlying message that education is the route to success.

The importance of family is also an important theme in the book, emphasising the value of the grandmother-grandson relationship. The familialist discourse situates Chris and his immediate and extended family in a network of relationships based on kin. The story begins by mentioning Ouma, his grandmother, and then goes on to talk about his mother, father, brothers and sister on the next page. Beginning the story in this way foregrounds the importance of family relationships in the book (coupled to the opening line of the story: “This is the story of a real boy and a real ouma.” This statement of veracity reiterates that this true story shows how family relationships should be: warm, caring and nurturing, according to this discourse.

The use of the word “Ouma” and its connotations of a caring matriarch, similar to the English “granny”, also convey this message of family closeness. As part of the familialist discourse, the story addresses the reader as someone invested in the idea of the nuclear family, and who thinks of families as nurturing, caring and protective structures. The value of respect for elders is emphasised and displayed in Chris’s admiration and respect for his grandmother

Books and reading are also objects which make up a literacy discourse in the book. The next thing described in the story is Chris's love for reading. His love of reading is what gains him the special treat of getting books from his grandmother. It is the first piece of information we are given about Chris, it defines him. Books form the centre of the bonding experience between Chris and his grandmother. He is rewarded by her for his ability and interest in reading (although she is unable to). It is also what separates them at her birthday party when Chris insists she read his letter but she rebuffs his requests. They are reconciled when he reads his note for her.

The literacy discourse addresses the reader as someone who values the importance of reading and education. This is particularly interesting in the picturebook context, as it often involves an adult reading to child unable to/learning to read. This illustrates how the lesson of cultivating a love for reading is deemed important enough to instil in children from an early age. The message is also that not being able to read is embarrassing and excludes you from many things. In the case of Ouma, it is only possible to speculate as to why she cannot read, but the Bantu system of education under apartheid and the historical neglect in educating girls could be possible reasons. The reasons are not addressed in the text, as they are probably beyond the comprehension of young children and do not contribute to the essential message of the story.

To be able to identify fully with the reality presented in the book, it is necessary to subscribe to a traditional, heterosexual model of the family and the egalitarian view of education provision the book promotes implicitly. The text paints a picture of family harmony; extended relations get along with each other and enjoy one another's company. Framed pictures of Ouma, and the birthday party organised in her honour show how much they respect and love her.

In the world of the story, everyone can read, or it is taken for granted that everyone has the ability to read. This may be why Ouma Ruby conceals her inability, it is a "secret" and

something she is ashamed of. Chris does not know her secret, despite her close relationship with him, but her age and position in the family might also be factors in her decision not to share this with him. The material world of *Ouma Ruby's secret* explicitly refers to apartheid geography in the race-allocated suburbs of Riverlea and Coronation where the characters live. The social world is centred on the close-knit family structure of immediate and extended relatives who live and spend time together.

Objections to the terminology used in the discourse might conceive of the notion of the nuclear family as outdated, as the reality of broken homes, divorce, elder neglect and abuse differs dramatically with the idea of family relationships presented in the story. Traditional gender roles have also not made education for women a priority, making expectations of their abilities to care for and raise a family more important than learning how to read. The historical link between race and educational attainment during apartheid also limited who was able to access basic schooling. The main ideas of the story are the importance of reading and respect for elders. Reading is a skill almost universally acknowledged as beneficial, and objections to the promotion of this concept would be imprudent, especially considering the high rate of illiteracy in the country. Opposition to having respect for elders would be viewed as ill-mannered.

It is interesting that the family hierarchy is centred around a female (as opposed to a patriarchal system). Even though Ouma is deficient in reading ability, she still manages to command respect. This may be influenced by her means in being able to support the family members living with her, but the story communicates the special place she has in the family.

Although reading is not usually seen as contributing to masculinity, it is interesting to think about whether Chris's love for reading would have been fostered in the same way if he had been a girl. The duties of a girl in a traditional family such as the one described would not have

allowed the same amount of leisure time to indulge in reading. Books and the ability to read are framed as social and cultural capital that can be used to elevate position in society. The message that education can be the key to unlocking doors to success is illustrated by the author, Chris Van Wyk, who went on to become a writer. The story of how he was influenced by his illiterate grandmother, fostering and supporting his interest in reading, is an inspirational one.

The back cover of the book encapsulates this message:

He loves visiting her house to pick mulberries in the garden and to tell jokes and sing with his cousins. Chris especially loves it when his Ouma Ruby takes him into town to buy books from the second-hand bookshop. Then one day Chris learns that Ouma Ruby has a secret...

Chris van Wyk is a well respected South African author who writes poetry, novels, biographies, short stories and children's books. He has won prestigious literary prizes for his work and his poetry has been published in many countries around the world. His latest book *Shirley, Goodness and Mercy*, the story of his life in a 'Coloured' township during the 1960s and 70s, has become a bestseller. Anneliese Voigt-Peters, who was awarded the 1997 Vivian Wilkes Award for *Die Rooi Rok*, lives in New York with her family.

The author and illustrator accolades are listed, qualities which would attract the attention of adult buyers of the book. Chris van Wyk also dedicates the book to his grandmother: "For my granny, Ruby van Heerden – Chris van Wyk", further confirming the "truth" of the account.

The familialist discourse is one which still has a lot of currency in society, despite rising social problems and the emergence of different, modern family structures that are unorthodox. It

is also one of the first social structures encountered by the young child, making it the subject of many picturebooks. The various roles in the traditional family structure of mother, father, son, daughter, grandson-grandmother, as well as the nephews, nieces of the extended family are all mentioned in the story. Not all people are able to identify with this family structure, with orphans, for example, being excluded.

The literacy discourse promoted by the story may seem like an automatic value judgment, which privileges those with the ability to read above those that cannot. Chris counters this possible casting of his grandmother as “less than” by accepting her inability and loving her in spite of it. Educators, parents and other people interested in encouraging children to read and love books would gain from this discourse. The promotion of a culture of reading is generally recognised as an important priority, especially with South Africa’s high level of illiteracy.

Little Lucky Lolo And The Cola Cup Competition

The story of *Little lucky Lolo and the Cola Cup Competition* (Varkel, 2006) is based on a young boy who is small in size, but longs to show his worth by excelling in soccer. He is determined to take part and help his team win, and begins training in earnest. He finally gets a chance in the spotlight when he scores a goal against the biggest boy in the opposing team, helping to win the game.

The story begins by recounting how Lolo was born. His mother (referred to as “Mama Lolo”) desperately wanted to have a baby, “so she wished for one every night” (Varkel, 2006, p. 1). While she waits for her wish to come true, she opens a spaza shop, which is successful because of her cooking skills (Figure 7.1). No adult male characters appear in the book, and no mention is made of Lolo’s father, which follows a trend in both children’s literature and, in many cases, reality, of absent father figures (Anderson & Hamilton, 2005; Morrell, 2006). Although Mama Lolo is a strong character, who is financially successful and able to raise a child on her own, the omission the father’s details could be read as a stereotypical comment on the sexual irresponsibility of black people.

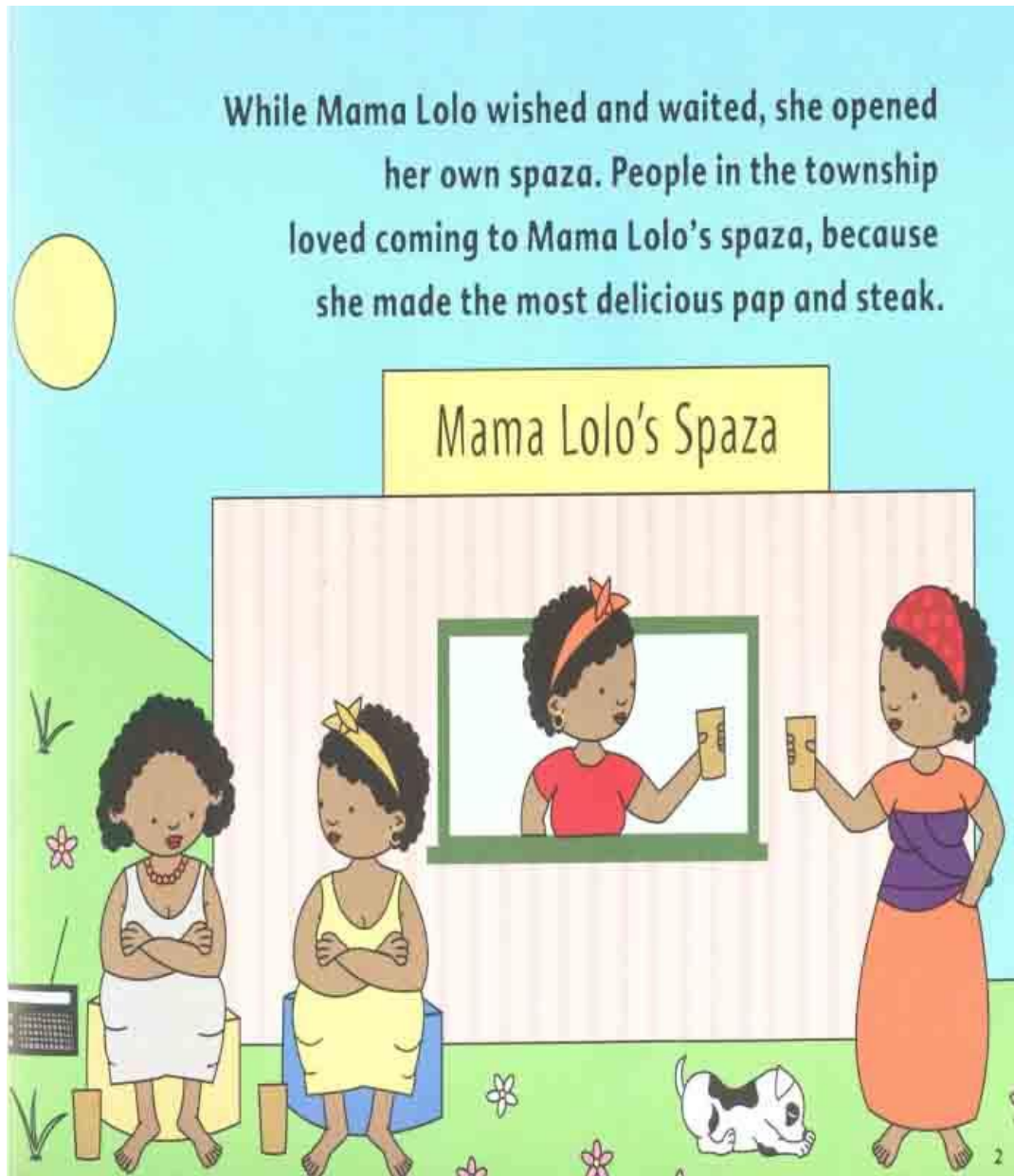


Fig. 7.1 – page 2

The setting of the story, according to the text, is a “township” (Varkel, 2006, p. 11), but the illustrations are more suggestive of a rural village, with the open, green spaces, and huts instead of shacks for houses. This conflation of village and township iconography is an example of how the text attempts to distinguish the race of the characters by using both these stereotypical

markers. Apartheid allocated separate living spaces for people of different races, many of which persist today, with townships and rural villages being largely populated by black people. These areas were historically neglected in terms of amenities, and continue to lag behind with service delivery today. When it is time for Mama Lolo to give birth, she goes to the “hospital”, which is a small hut with a red cross designating it as a medical facility (Figure 7.2).

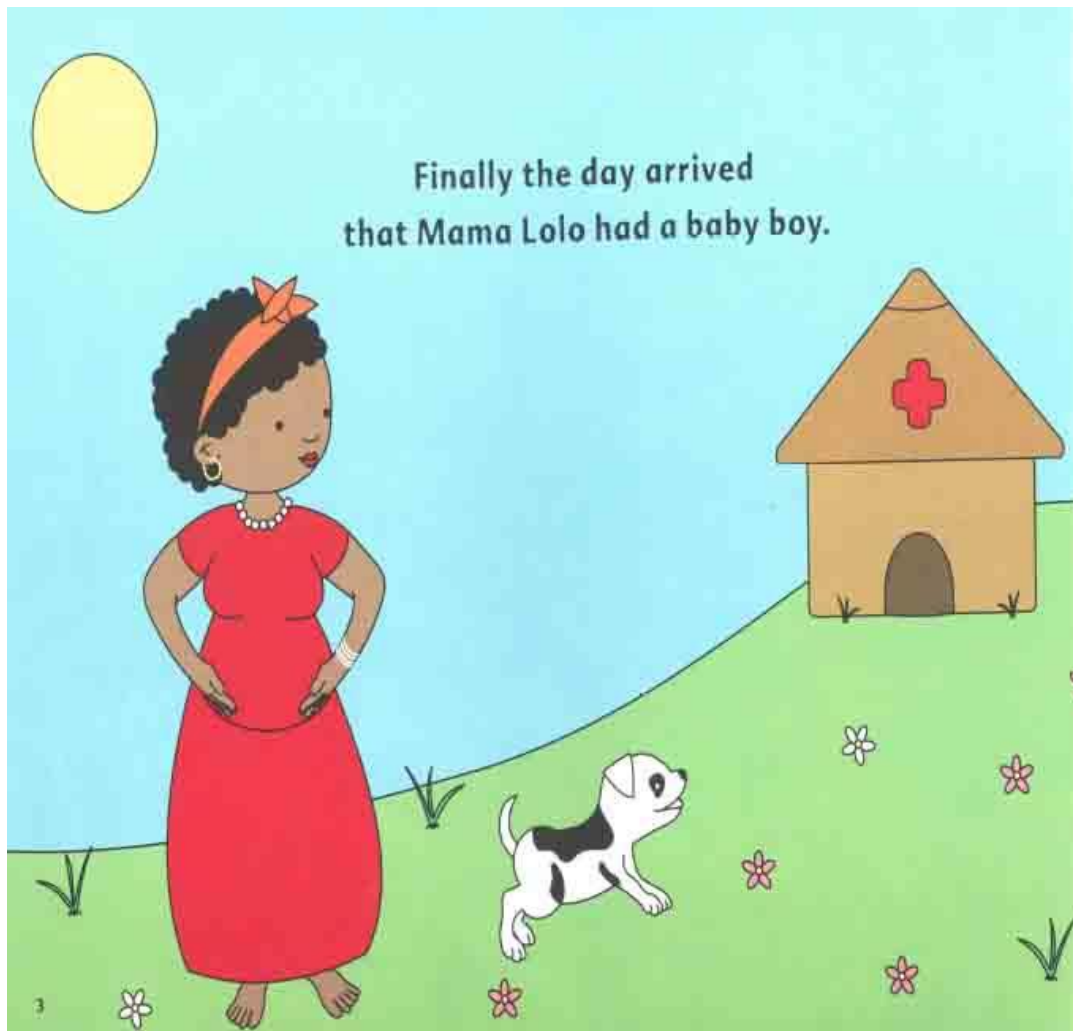


Fig. 7.2 – page 3

Another marker of race present in the representation of the characters in the story as black is the absence of shoes. Throughout the entire book, all of the people in the story, both

children and adults, are depicted barefoot. Even the schoolteacher, Miss Khumalo, a figure of authority and expertise who should be respected, is shown without shoes in the class photograph (Figure 7.3). Portraying the characters in this way is derogatory and naturalises the idea of all black people as poor. This is particularly important when influential adults, such as Miss Khumalo, are subtly ridiculed.

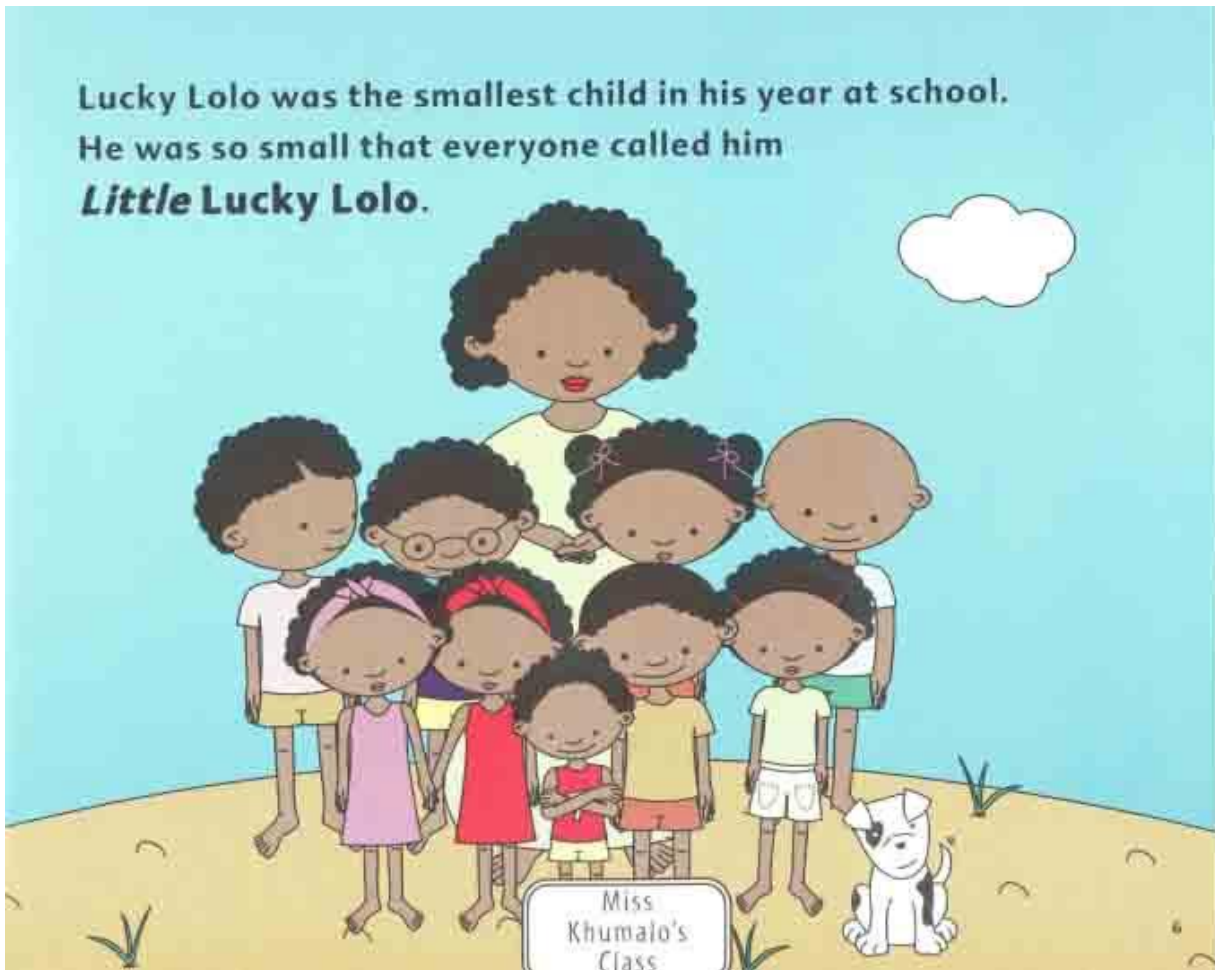


Fig. 7.3 – page 6

A consistent pattern throughout the story is the presence of a little dog in almost all of the pictures. The dog plays along with Lolo, accompanies him while he trains, even helping him practise corners and penalty kicks (Varkel, 2006).

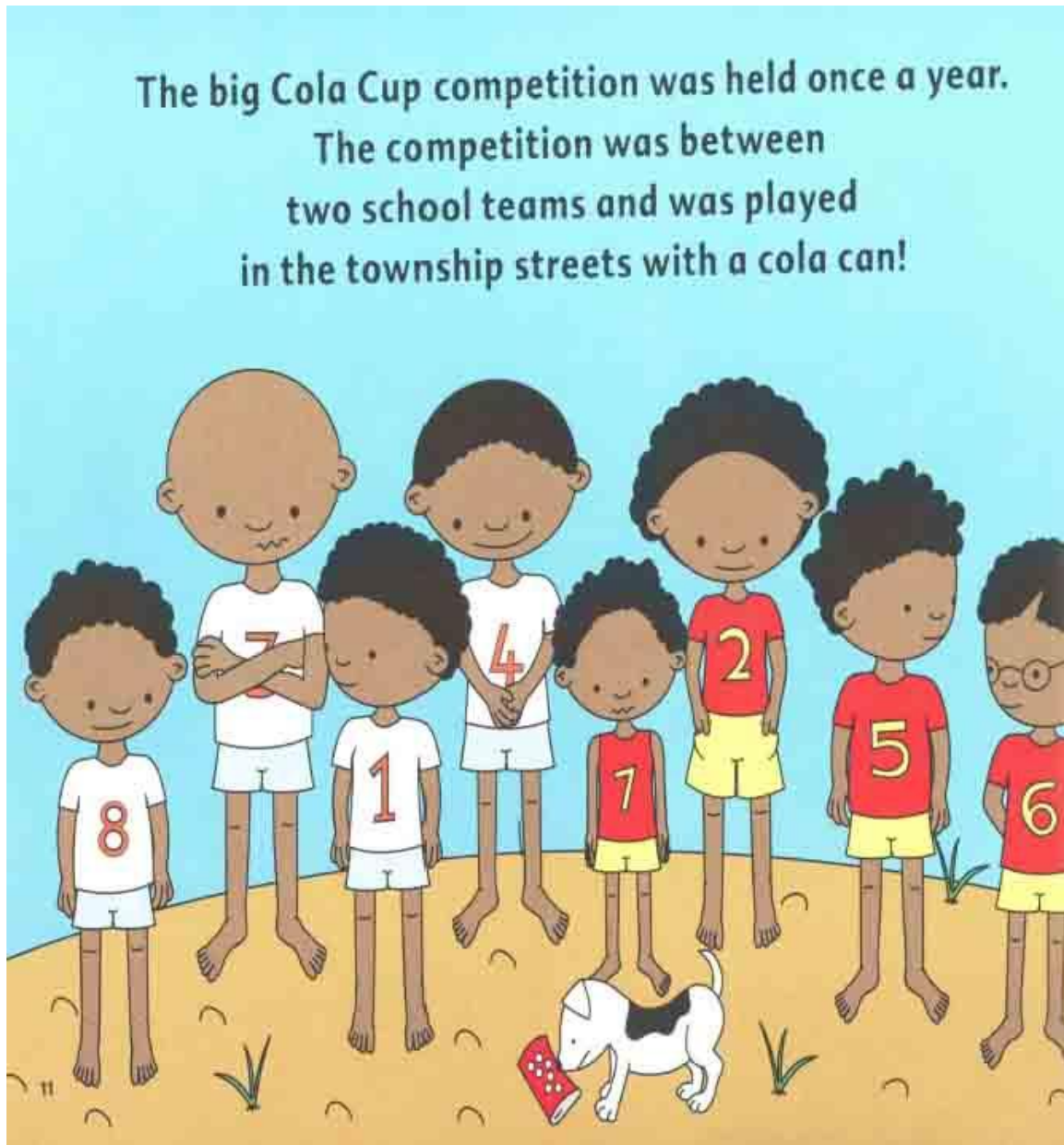


Fig. 7.4 - page 11

Lolo's favourite pastime is playing sport, and he is a talented soccer player. He waits in anticipation to be old enough to take part in the annual Cola Cup competition to show off his skill, and practises every day. The Cola Cup is so named because an empty cooldrink can is used instead of a soccer ball. Eventually the day of the match arrives, but Little Lolo is prevented

from taking part in the game because of his small size as the bigger players push him out of the way each time he tries to get the can. In the final minute of the game, the scores are tied, and Lolo is finally passed the can. His training stands him in good stead, and he is able to bypass even the biggest player in the opposing team to score an impressive goal. His team wins the Cola Cup and everyone is so proud of Lolo they decide to reward him with a real soccer ball. His mother is also proud of her son, reiterating how he was born under lucky circumstances and brought luck to his team by scoring the winning goal.

The main message of the story is that it does not matter how big you are – if you work hard enough, you can achieve your goal. There are also positive messages about women as business owners and successful single mothers. The absence of a father figure or an older male figure is a curious omission. The representation of black people in a rural/township setting, as poor, barefoot and always surrounded by animals is similar to derogatory and racist discourses of the past.

The most prominent of Harris' (1995) categories to feature in this story were the “Sportsman” and “Hurdles” traits from the “Bosses” category, and the “Be the best you can be” facet of the “Standard Bearer” category. These traits all relate to the main messages about masculinity in the story, which are that boys like to win and be the best, and that even if you are not physically endowed “practise makes perfect”.

The recurring discourses of race that appear in the other picturebooks of “black people as rural” and “black people as poor” were also noted in the story. The text of the story situates the story in the “township”, however the dwellings in the illustrations depict huts, which are more typical of a rural village setting. The conflation of township and village is extended in one of the pictures which depicts a hut with a red cross on it, denoting a hospital. The poverty of the people

in the story is reflected in the Cola Cup Competition, a tournament played in the dusty township streets using a cola can in place of a ball. All the people in the story, children and adult, are consistently depicted without shoes throughout the entire book, another indication of the 'black people as poor' discourse.

The circumstances surrounding Little Lucky Lolo's birth are of interest. There are no adult men mentioned in the story, and Lolo seems to be the result of an immaculate conception. His mother "wanted to have a baby very much and so she wished for one every night". Her wish is granted, but no mention is made of who Lolo's father might be or what could have happened for him not to be included in the story. This omission could be interpreted as an implicit comment on black people as being promiscuous with poor family planning. On the other hand, it could also be read as an empowering message about a strong, single mother who is able to care for her son and herself by running her own business, all without the help of a man.

The world as presented in the story centres on soccer and how Little Lucky Lolo has to prove himself to his team mates that despite his size, he is a valuable player. The material world of the story consists of a poor township, which contains huts as signs of the rural. This conflation of rural and township signifiers flattens black culture into a homogenous, one-dimensional object using the signs of the township, soccer, spaza shops, pap and steak, and barefoot children playing in the dusty streets. There is also the tension between individual achievement and team sport. Little Lucky Lolo scores the goal that wins the match for his team, and for his efforts he is given the prize of a soccer ball.

The main idea of the story is the value of practising and working hard to achieve a goal. This contradicts Mama Lolo's own way of achieving goals, which involves simply wishing for what she wants. Lolo awaits his chance to be on the team eagerly, and when he is finally old

enough, he does everything he can to improve his soccer skills. He trains in the morning before school, in the afternoon after school, and practises penalty kicks, corners and dribbling, “all with a can.” Lolo perseveres to improve his skills, overcoming the hurdles of his small size and lack of proper equipment. Even though the two methods, wishing and practising, are at odds with each other, both Mama and Lolo get what they want. Both of them triumph in overcoming physical limitations: Mama Lolo overcomes the limitation of the lack of a partner to give birth to a child and Lolo overcomes his small size by practising and improving his skills so he is able to score the winning goal. The story is focused on Lolo as the main character, thus privileging his method of attaining success.

The back cover of the book reiterates this message:

Little Lucky Lolo was the smallest boy at school. He loved to read, listen to music, and to dance. But most of all Little Lucky Lolo loved playing sport, and especially soccer. Little Lucky Lolo dreamed that one day he would play for his school team in the big Cola Cup competition. Finally, Little Lucky Lolo got his chance. But can the smallest boy in school help win the township’s biggest competition? (Varkel, 2006).

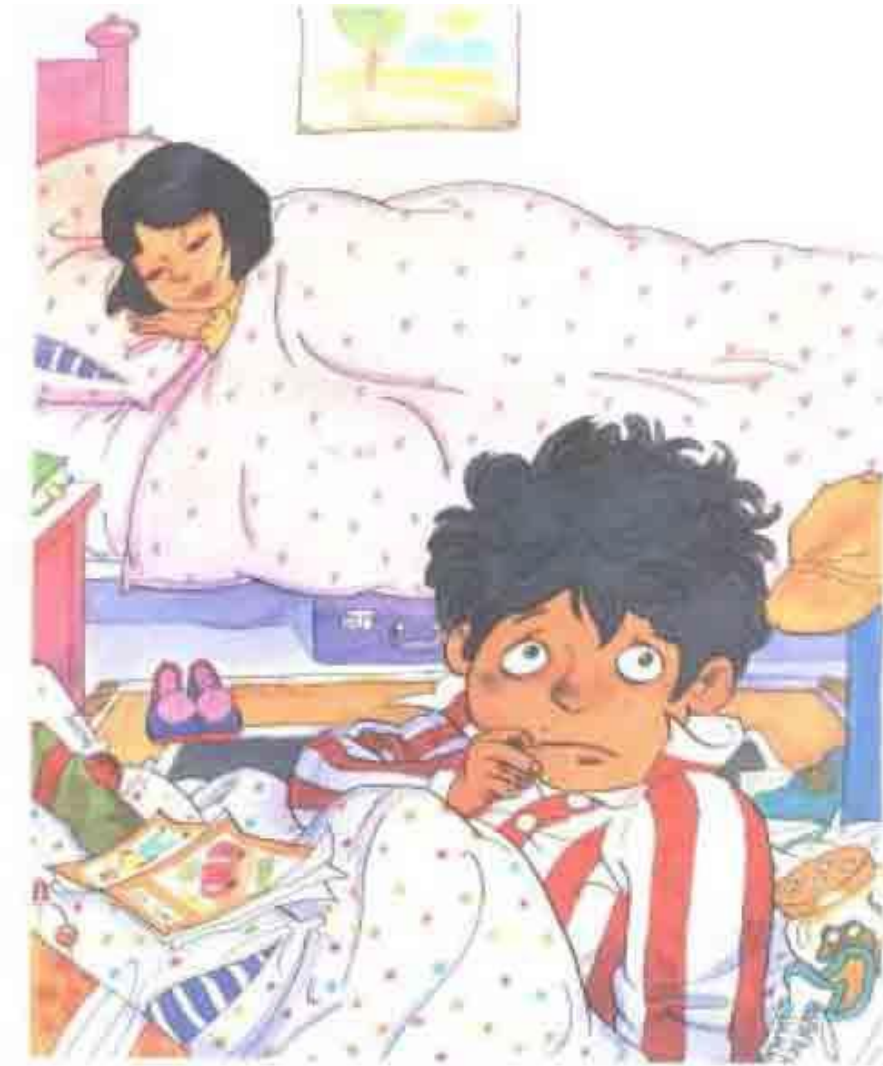
In addition, there is also information about the author which elaborates on the discourse of family in the story: “Adrian lives in Cape Town with his wife, Stacy, and his baby boy, Seth. He likes to cook pasta, eat ice-cream and swim. He looks forward to reading *Little Lucky Lolo* to Seth” (Varkel, 2006). The familialist discourse is repeated in the author’s connection to his wife and child. There is also a similar focus on size, with the author having to wait for his son to grow

up more for him to be able to read his story to him, just as Lolo has to wait to grow up to be able to participate in the competition.

Perfectly Me

Perfectly me (Preller, 1998) is the story of a boy who realises his worth, even though he is the opposite of his “perfect” sister, Aisha. Throughout the book, the boy’s untidy disorderliness is contrasted with his “prim and proper” sister, whom he describes as ‘perfect’. This doesn’t seem to bother him, until he sees his unruly reflection in the mirror, and wonders if his mother can love a “monster” like him. He is motivated by this thought to improve his personal hygiene and take a bath. He still acknowledges how “perfect” his sister is, but finally comes to the conclusion that he is fine the way he is, “perfectly me”.

The entire story takes place inside the home of the main characters, which is drawn as a middle-class suburban household. The cover shows the characters in an outdoor setting, and it can be deduced that the boy spends a fair amount of time getting dirty and playing outside, as various sporting paraphernalia litters his side of the room. A dichotomy between Aisha, the “perfect” sister, and the boy is set up at the start of the story when the boy admits that he has no outstanding traits, he is just himself – “I am just me” (Preller, 1998, p. 3). His concern about this is evident on his face as shown in the illustration below (Figure 8.1), which shows him with a perturbed expression, while his sister sleeps peacefully on her clean side of the room.

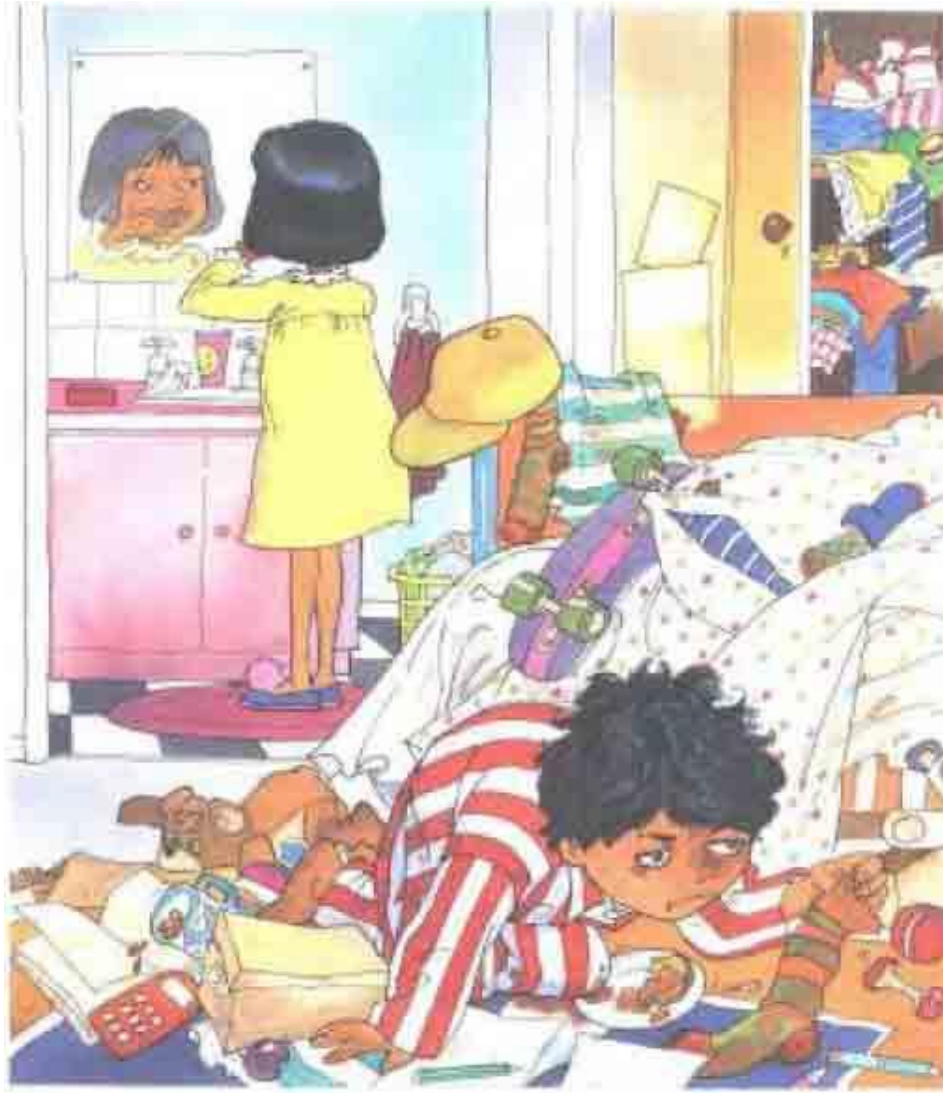


My sister Aisha is perfect, but I am just me.

Fig. 8.1 – page 3

The comparisons he makes between himself and his sister highlight her efficiency and neatness in contrast to his haphazard messiness. The tone of the text frames this as the usual state of affairs; it is in his nature to be disorganised: “My sister always brushes her teeth, but I can’t find my toothbrush” (Preller, 1998, p.5). The word “always” is repeated in each of the boy’s

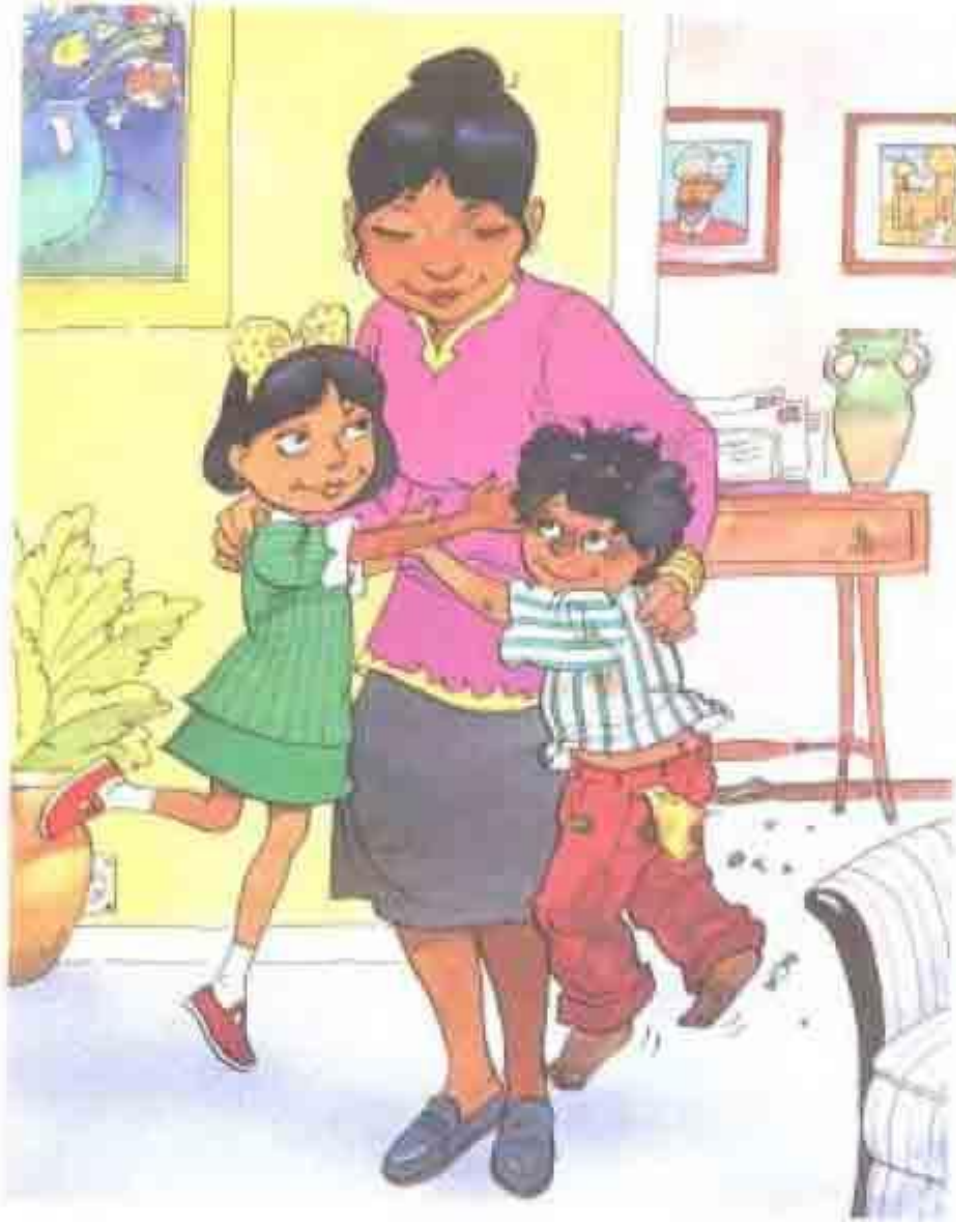
statements, emphasising the enduring character of her good behaviour in comparison to his inefficiency. He also begins the first few statements with the words “My sister Aisha”, and by leading with her behaviour he reinforces the idea that that is the way things should be done.



My sister Aisha always brushes her teeth, but I can't find my toothbrush.

Fig. 8.2 – page 5

Even though they differ so much in the things they do and the way they do them, their mother loves them both equally. In the illustration in Figure 8.3, she embraces her perfect daughter on one side, and her grubby son on the other, with a smile on her face. He is happy about this, exclaiming: “but she also loves me!”(Preller, 1998), an indication that although he is not the same as his sister, his mother still cares for him. It can be seen from the illustration that the mother and sister are alike in their habits; both are neatly dressed and well-groomed. The living room is spotless and neat. It is only the son who is the “odd one out”, with his dirty, bare feet, messy clothes and debris falling out of his pockets. The illustration also contains hints of the family’s cultural background, as pictures of a man with a turban and Arabian architecture are visible on the wall. This points to the Muslim religion, and they could be either Indian or coloured. Very few children’s books portray characters of these minority ethnicities. It remains important for children of all backgrounds to have stories with characters they can relate to.



My mother loves my sister Aisha, but she also loves me!

Fig.8.3– page 7

The boy is unaware of the terrible state his physical appearance is in because of his inability to keep track of his grooming tools. He is content to go about his business and be messy, as shown in the preceding illustration, where he is shown nonchalantly playing with a yo-

yo, his eyes closed to his own state and the untidiness of his side of the room. In Figure 8.4, he is stunned by what he sees, eyes wide and hands raised in shock at his appearance. His sister peers around the corner, seemingly amused at her brother's surprise.



... I looked and looked, What did I see? There was ...

Fig. 8.4 – page 9

After the mirror opens his eyes to the “monster” he has become, the boy doubts whether his mother could love someone so horrendous. ”Can a mother love a monster like me?” (Preller, 1998), he wonders in the illustration in Figure 8.5. Here he is shown fully aware of his unkempt state, and, appearing to be running from the “monster” in the mirror, he turns to his mother for reassurance. She is busy serving tea, and looks at her worried son with benign distraction. Again, he is the odd one out, in both his physical appearance and his emotional state. While he is flustered and dishevelled, his mother and sister are impeccably turned out and have almost the same calm, satisfied look on their faces. They seem to be used to his unruly appearance and behaviour, paying him little attention.

Aisha barely seems to notice her brother’s outburst; she is too absorbed with manicuring her nails. This seems to be the only activity Aisha is engaged in throughout the book: that of improving her appearance. The table she sits at has a bottle of perfume and a mirror, also grooming tools. The boy idolises his sister for washing her face, brushing her teeth, combing her hair and being generally neat and tidy, while he cannot. She perfectly conforms to the stereotypical feminine ideal of being preoccupied with her appearance. The boy was initially engaged in stereotypical masculine behaviour – his adventures outside playing and exploring are what have made him dirty. His change in behaviour is brought about by concerns that his mother won’t love him.



Can a mother love a monster like me?

Fig. 8. 5 – page 11

In order to rectify the situation, the boy turns to the methods of his sister to restore his appearance, and subsequently the love of his mother that he fears is conditional on him being “perfect”. He takes a bath (Figure 8.6), and is shown meticulously cleaning himself and getting rid of all traces of “the monster” with soap and water. He is determined to be “perfect”, being

careful not to leave any spot out: “I washed my ears. I washed my nose. I washed my feet. I washed my toes” (Preller, 1998, p. 13). Even though he is cleaning himself using the example of his sister in order to impress his mother, he still does so in his own, unique way. The personality of the boy remains in the haphazard and messy way he takes his bath. The tub is overflowing and water splashes everywhere, an overturned bottle spills onto the floor, and soap and bath toys surround him. The final steps are to comb his hair and brush his teeth, which he does in amidst the chaos he has created in the bathroom. He seems unaware of the mess he has made in the process of getting clean, but is so excited about his new, improved appearance that he does not seem to notice or care that it has come at the cost of the bathroom’s tidiness.

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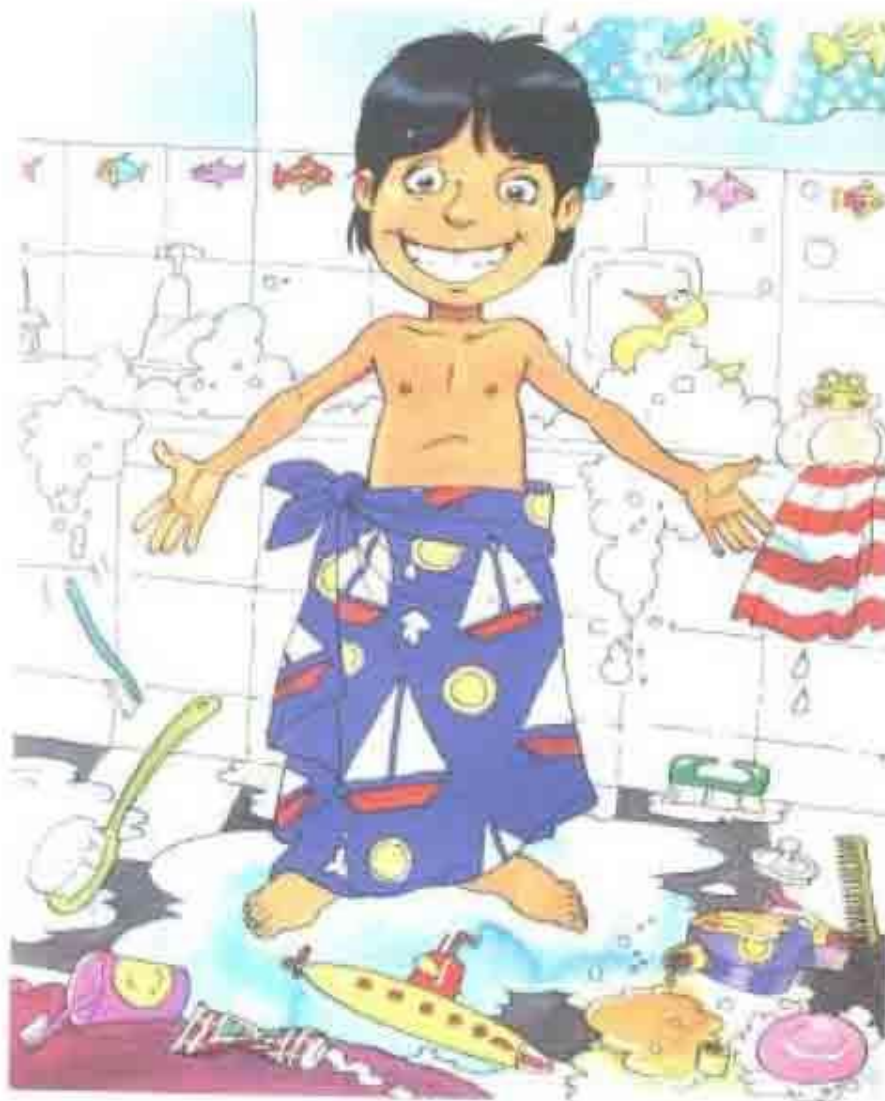
So I had a bath.

Fig. 8.6 – page 12

The main character is an anonymous young boy, an interesting omission since his sister's name is repeatedly mentioned. Not naming the boy could be an attempt to emphasise the universality of his behaviour as a boy, his anonymity saying "this is how boys are and how they are expected to behave". He is proud of his "perfect" sister, and is initially unperturbed that he

seems to fall short of her standards. The message of the book is one of gendered behaviour, what boys are like, in opposition to what girls are like. It aims to teach the lesson how important it is to be clean while subtly reinforcing traditional gender roles. There is also the theme of self-esteem and being comfortable with “who you are”, as the boy comes to realise he is also perfect because of his own unique character. It is interesting to see this positive message being conveyed using characters of a minority ethnicity that does not often feature in children’s literature.

However, although the message is one of self-acceptance, the boy is only able to achieve this after changing himself by taking a bath, in imitation of his sister. He goes about this in a way that is stereotypically boyish, making a mess as he goes along and not caring to tidy up after himself, showing that although he is clean in the outside, he is still the same person inside because of his untidy habits. Stereotypical masculine and feminine behaviour are thrown into sharp relief in the comparisons the boy makes between himself and his sister. His activities are wide and varied, and necessitate him “getting dirty”, while all her time and energy seem to be consumed with herself and taking care of her appearance. These static gender roles leave no space for experimentation by either of them, even though the book urges readers to be themselves perfectly.



But I am also perfectly me!

Fig. 8.7 – page 16

This story relays a modern and psychological discourse of masculinity which focuses on the main character's journey to self-acceptance. The boy learns not to compare himself with his sister, and realises he is perfect in his own way. His behaviour coincides with the "Rebel" trait of the "Rugged Individual" category at first, although later it seems to change as he undergoes a

transformation and is more like the “Be the best you can be” trait in the “Standard Bearers” category (Harris, 1995). He realises that the best he can be is himself, and that he is perfect in his own way.

The issue of race in the book is not made prominent, and the depiction of events in the story is done in such a way as to smooth racial difference. The same story could easily be told with a white character, something which is not possible with most of the other books in the story. This type of almost ‘generic’ characterisation and plot, especially in a middle-class setting serves to present black people in more diverse ways than the poor/rural discourses.

Two distinct types of person are portrayed in the story, and it can be read as a view on masculine and feminine norms. The boy is completely opposite to his sister, Aisha. From the front cover, these differences are displayed, and inside the book, until the boy questions whether his behaviour and appearance have an effect on his mother’s love for him. The roles of clean versus dirty and monster versus perfect emerge as oppositions between male and female behaviour. The girl is clean because her behaviour conforms to typically feminine expectations of conduct, such as staying indoors, being neat, and spending time and effort on her physical appearance. The boy is dirty because his behaviour conforms to typically masculine expectations of conduct, such as playing outside, having various hobbies and interests, and not being concerned about his appearance.

The events of the story are relayed through the boy’s eyes, and he is the only character whose thoughts are expressed in the text, and he is able to comment on his appearance and the implications he imagines it has for his mother’s love. The mother and sister are silent throughout the story, and although he assumes both of them to be critical, they do not say anything. The

importance of family is shown in how much the boy values his mother's opinion of him, to the extent that he voluntarily changes his behaviour so that she will love him.

The world of the story revolves around the boy acknowledging the differences between himself and his 'perfect' sister, which do not seem to bother him until he sees his reflection in the mirror. The mirror reveals how dirty he is, and he questions whether "a mother can love a monster like [him]". The social world of the story makes strong references to the family relationships, as the young boy feels the need to change his behaviour to be more like his "perfect" sister in order to secure the love of his mother. The material world is focused on the domestic, and most probably takes place in a suburban, middle-class setting. The boy in the story appears to have many more toys than any of the other boys in the stories.

There is no back cover or dust jacket summary of the story, but the back cover shows Aisha and her brother both holding up paintings which symbolise their different personalities. Aisha's painting is a watercolour of a still life scene depicting a vase of flowers on a table. It is well-drawn, with all the colours inside the lines and a neat white border surrounding it like a frame. Her brother's picture is of a cat leaping through the air, done with vivid colours and wild brushstrokes. Again, she is "perfect", while her brother's painting is already crumpled and he has paint all over himself and his clothes. They are both smiling, and obviously pleased with their respective works of art, which although different, are special in their own way.

Out Of The Box

Out of the box (Levin, 2008) is a simple book with a complex message. It tells the story of how George, a young boy questioned about his identity, comes to find his place in the world after trying to fit into various boxes. His search to define himself leads him to a baker, a florist, a grocer, and even a funeral parlour, where he learns that the only box everyone fits in is a coffin when they die.

The story begins with an anonymous white man questioning George about his identity by asking him ‘What box do you fit into?’ (Levin, 2008). George is depicted as a young boy with a darker skin tone, with no specific racial markers to definitively place him as black, Indian or coloured. His indeterminate race could be part of the reason the nameless stranger enquires which box he fits into. This is something George has never considered before, and he thinks it is “a funny question” (Levin, 2008). The man, however, is insistent, and repeats his query, which sets George off “in search of his perfect box” (Levin, 2008). The box that George goes looking for is a literal box, but it also serves as a figurative descriptor for his place in the world. The interplay between the literal and figurative ‘box’ for which George is searching forms the lynchpin of the story.

There are quite a few interesting points to note about the start of the story. First of all, the race of the nameless man is white, and his question comes from a “site of privilege” (Wannamaker, 2008, p.32). This normalises whiteness, so that “white middle class boys are not viewed as white or middle class but simply “boys”, boys who are not white or middle class are regarded as ‘other’” (Wannamaker, 2008, p.32). This position of power allows the man to question George’s identity without giving any reason for doing so or having to give any personal

information of his own. The man is also older than George, another point which makes it possible for him to ask questions.

The character of George is drawn in a way that is racially ambiguous, so that it is in fact difficult to place him in a particular box of race. A trend in South African publishing has been to demand characters erased of any distinct racial or cultural features, in an apparent attempt to create an ideal 'rainbow nation' where the racial difference was minimised in denial of the country's past obsession with colour (Van der Walt, 2002). This glossing over of racial difference is characterized by Töttemeyer (1986) as simply another way of misrepresenting black people by disregarding the physical markers of blackness in favour of generic characteristics. George's indeterminate race could also have been deliberate so that the largest number of people possible would be able to relate to him. The increasing number of interracial marriages may also mean there are more children whose race falls outside of the predetermined categories. George's search for a place to fit in amidst questioning about his identity from strangers could resonate with the experience of people with mixed racial heritage.

George begins his search for a box to fit into in his own home. He finds a shoebox, and noticing how well they fit inside, he tries to see if he could also fit. The box is, of course, too small, and George concludes he is not a pair of takkies. He then takes his search outside, stopping at a bakery (*Beauty's Bakes*) first (Figure 9.1). It is not clear whether the woman behind the counter is the Beauty from the sign or simply a worker. She is not dressed like a business owner and her apron and "puffy white hat" are more indicative of a subservient role. George asks her for a cake box to try out, which he subsequently flattens. The woman angrily tells him that the box is too soft for him and is only good for cakes. George admits that he is not a cake, and

returns the squashed box to her. He seems to be going through a process of elimination, testing out different types of boxes to find the perfect fit.

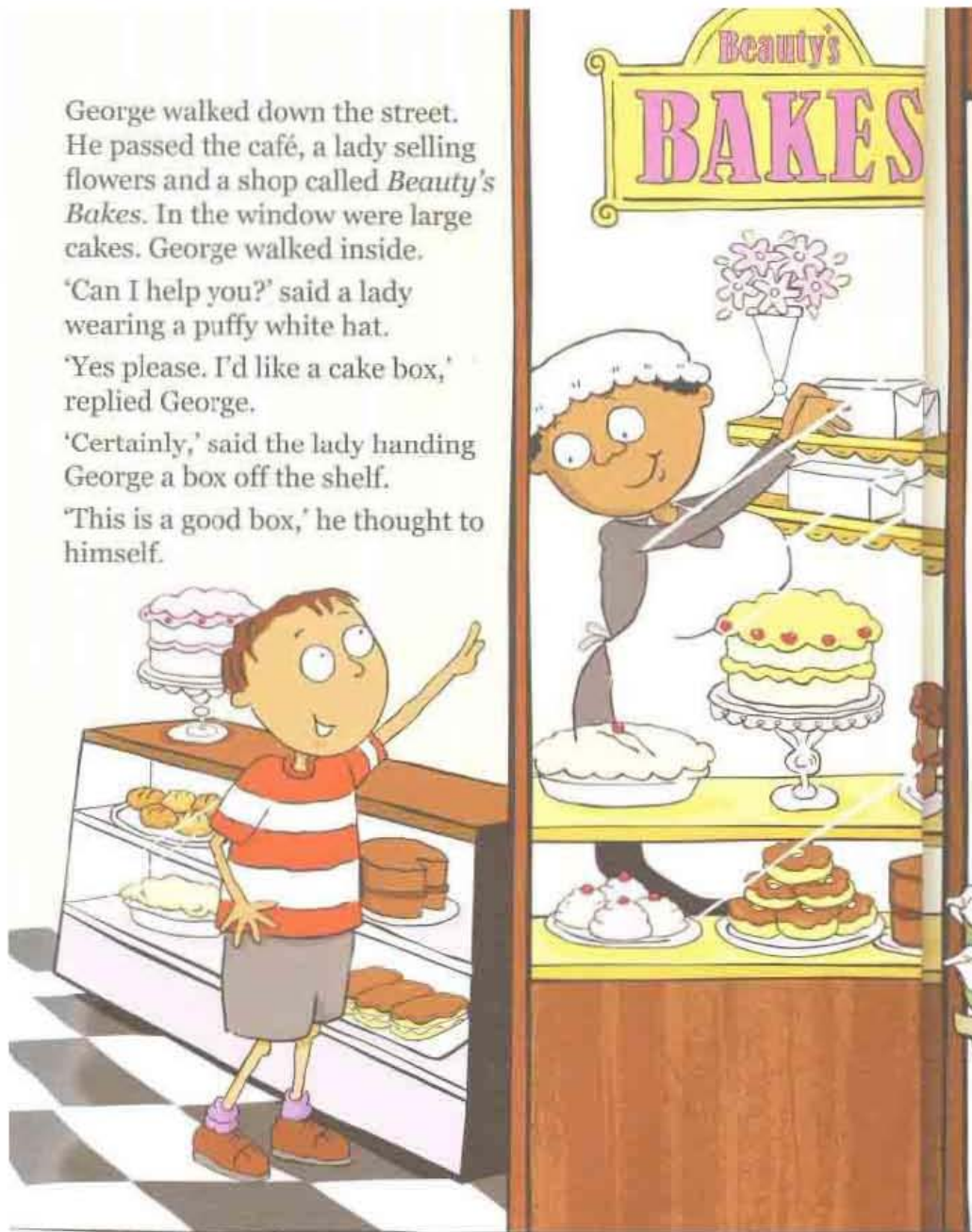


Fig. 9.1

The next place George stops is Moosa's Fruit and Veg, where he finds tomato box (Figure 9.2). At first he thinks it is a good box, but a few steps later he begins to feel uncomfortable. "He took a few steps down the street but he couldn't walk easily. His knees hit the side of the box. It was hard work holding the box up and soon his fingers were hurting. If he let go, the box would fall to the ground" (Levin, 2008). This piece of text shows the struggle George has trying to conform to a box which does not fit him properly. The box was not made for him, and so constricts his movement, making it difficult to walk. He also finds it hard work to hold the box up, and hurting his fingers as he tries to do so. This analogy is meant to illustrate the difficulty involved in "keeping up appearances" when trying to be someone you are not. It is difficult for George to move with the box that was not made for him, implying that progress is restricted with a false sense of identity.

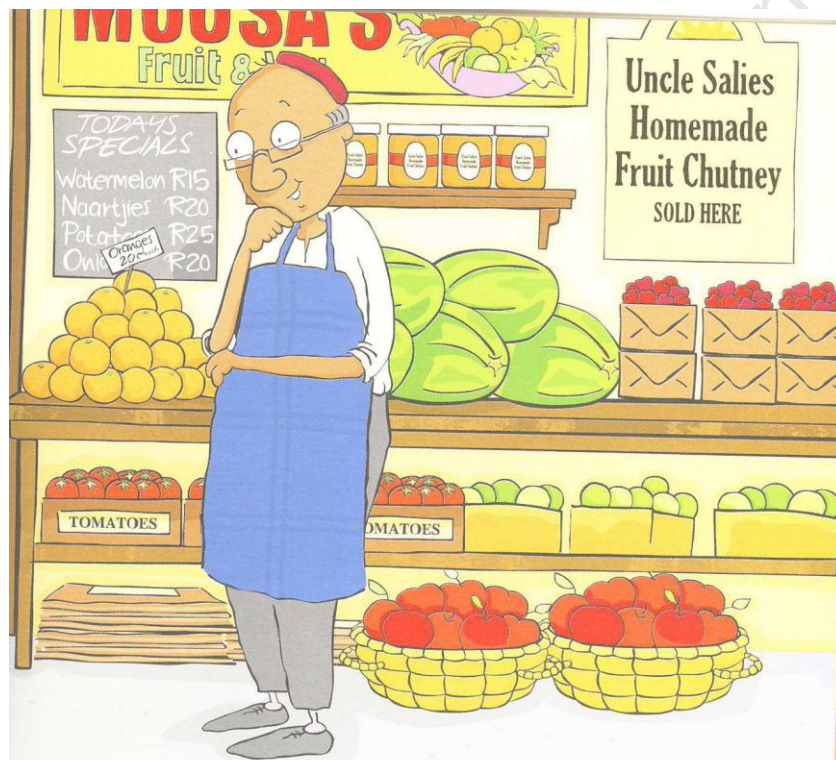


He took a few steps down the street but he couldn't walk easily. His knees hit the sides of the box. It was hard work holding the box up and soon his fingers were hurting. If he let go, the box would fall to the ground. George wriggled. His elbows got stuck in the corners of the box. He felt very uncomfortable.

Fig. 9. 2

Mr Moosa, the shop owner, sees George struggling, and asks him what he is doing (Figure 9.3). When he tells him he is trying to find a box that fits, Mr Moosa laughs and tells him he is not a tomato and the tomato box will not fit him. George agrees he is not a tomato, and gives Mr Moosa back his box. The representation of Mr Moosa, surrounded by his goods, is

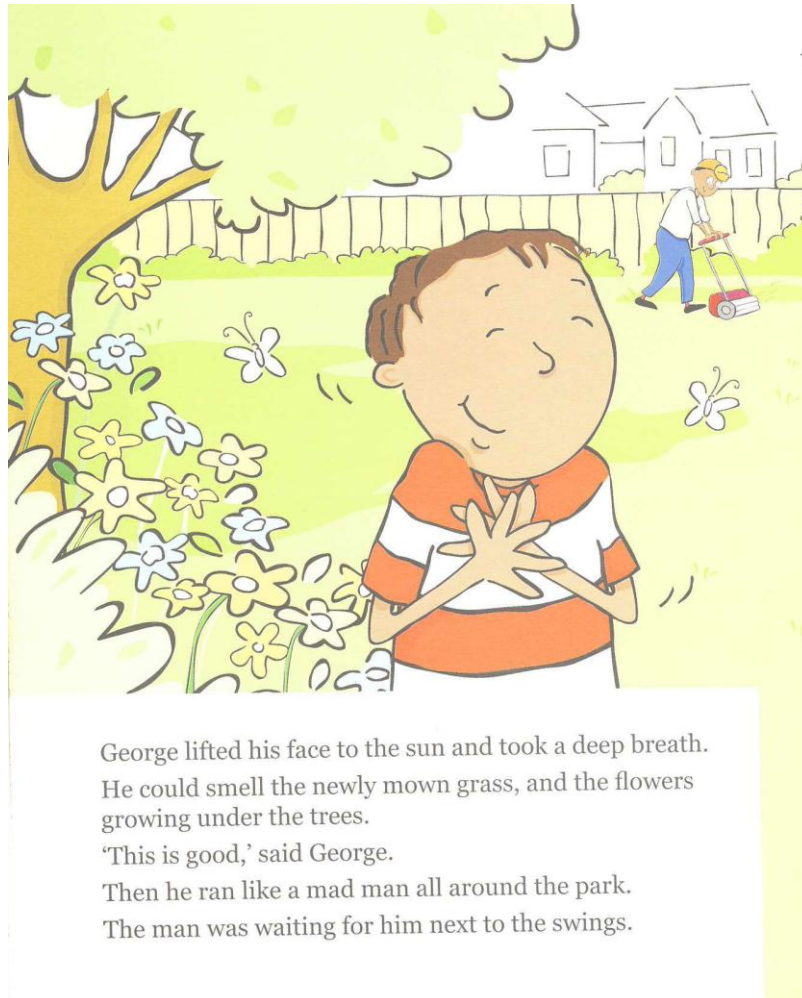
reminiscent of that of another Indian shop owner, as depicted in *Ouma Ruby's secret* (2006). While the book deliberately makes the race of George unclear, it sticks to using stereotypical examples of race for the other characters in the story. Beauty from the bakery is recognizably black. Flora from the flower shop is recognizably coloured, and fits the stereotypical flower seller in Cape Town. Mr Moosa can be identified as Indian because of his surname. The white characters are unambiguously pale-skinned, making their race clear. George is alone in his search for a racial category.



'What are you doing young man?' asked Mr Moosa, the shop owner.
'I'm trying to find a box that fits,' said George.
Mr Moosa laughed.
'That's a tomato box,' he said, 'You're not a tomato.'
'No, I'm not,' said George and he stepped out of the box and gave it back to Mr Moosa.

Fig. 9.3

George's final stop is at a funeral parlour, where he tells the man there he is looking for a box that fits. He is delighted when the man informs him the boxes at the funeral parlour fit everyone, and offers George the chance to try one out. At first, George is comfortable inside the coffin, even saying he is prepared to buy it. The man tells George that coffins are only for dead people, and when he closes the lid George changes his mind. "It was very dark. George felt the air pressing down on his chest. He couldn't breathe. He felt very scared" (Levin, 2008). Here the experience of being trapped in category is compared to being buried alive, and made out to be as nonsensical as a live person wanting to be inside a coffin. The man advises George to stop looking for boxes unless he wants to be dead, bringing his search for somewhere to fit in to an end. Ironically, in the beginning of the story a white man prompts George on his journey of self-discovery, and it is another white man that closes it off. This makes an important statement about whose hands power and knowledge, even about the self, rest in, according to the author. White men hold the knowledge and authority to influence the self-concept of others, while darker skinned people do not have the same power, and are all workers. The anonymous white stranger who questions George does not seem to have a job, as he is at leisure to wait for him to complete his quest. All the darker-skinned characters are associated with a particular kind of job, which are all subservient, and even menial, such as the gardener mowing the lawn in the park (Figure 9.4).



George lifted his face to the sun and took a deep breath. He could smell the newly mown grass, and the flowers growing under the trees. 'This is good,' said George. Then he ran like a mad man all around the park. The man was waiting for him next to the swings.

Fig. 9.4

Once outside and in nature, George realises he does not need to fit in anywhere – the best place to be comfortable is “in one’s own skin”. He enjoys this newfound sense of self by playing in the park. He notices things in nature, such as the sunshine, fresh air, and colourful flowers, suggesting that his discovery has re-awakened his senses to the beauty of nature. George plays on the merry-go-round and jungle gym, jumps in a pile of leaves, and even rolls “on the grass like a puppy”, obviously happy about not having to conform to any restrictions. Even as George is enjoying his freedom from imposed categories, a reminder that they can never be completely

evaded presents itself in the background of the illustration (Figure 9.5). A set of swings, with one painted pink and the other blue, subtly suggest that while racial categorisation may be optional and self-determined, there is still the immovable category of gender, with only two options: male (blue) or female (pink).



Fig. 9.5

George's interrogator waits for him in the park, and asks George if he has found a box to fit in to. When George explains that he does not fit into a box, the man challenges him by saying:

“None? But everybody fits into at least one box” (Levin, 2008). George tells him that the only time everybody fits into the same box is when they are dead. This response does not satisfy the man, who seems intent on labelling George: ‘So what am I going to do with you if you won’t fit in a box? Where do you fit?’ (Levin, 2008). George replies by saying he fits inside “himself right in his middle” (Levin, 2008), indicating that the only place he has to fit in is in his own skin. He then leaves the man, dancing all the way back home.

Out of the box encourages non-conformity to labels imposed by others, and carries a positive message of self-acceptance, regardless of race. It encourages experimentation as a means of finding out more about the self, ultimately leaving the decision of where one fits in up to the individual. These are complex themes to convey in a picturebook, and the story does so creatively by using the analogy of the box. Racial stereotypes of who has the power to name and be named are subtly perpetuated in the roles of the white and black characters.

The masculinity discourse in this story also highlighted the sophisticated concepts of self-discovery and self-acceptance. The main message was that men can learn things about themselves by thinking and experimenting, a message which contrasts with the idea of men as stoic and emotionless. Engaging in acts of self-improvement such as these falls under the “Be the best you can be” facet of the “Standard Bearer” category in Harris’ (1995) typology of male messages.

An important aim of the book with regards to race discourse was the use of box symbolism to illustrate the idea that race classifications are stifling and that people should accept themselves and be accepted without having to fit into predetermined categories. The racially ambiguous main character, George, is used to show that race is irrelevant. The story uses the box as a metaphor for belonging, which can also be read as a coded reference to race.

The roles in the story are that of the questioner (the anonymous man) versus the questioned (George), and advisers (people in the street). The power dynamics of naming and being named puts the person doing the naming in a position of privilege, and the person being named at a disadvantage. Consequently, when the man questions George's place by asking him which box he fits into, he makes a value judgment on who George is based on his own preconceptions. George thinks the question is "funny", and has never given thought to such a question before. His bewildered response shows that he has not thought of himself as having to "fit in" anywhere, and up until that point had been comfortable with his sense of self. When he doesn't reply, the man asks him again, which comes across as an interrogation. George replies: "I'm not sure," said George, "But I'll try and find out" (Levin, 2008).

The white man in the story is able to question George's identity without having to say why he is interested in which box he fits into. He is silent on his background, his own "box" being taken for granted. George is able to ask people for different boxes in his attempt to find which he fits into. Although he cannot resist the man's initial inquiry about where he fits in, when he discovers he does not need to fit into any outsider's categorisation, he feels confident enough to tell his questioner this without feeling the need to convince him why.

The picture of the world the story presents is one of relative safety in which to explore philosophical questions in an experimental way. A middle-class, suburban setting forms the backdrop for the story. The world George inhabits seems better-off than the circumstances in most of the other stories, as he has easy access to the shops and lives in a house where he has his own room. The social world of *Out of the Box* differs from reality in that George freely talks to strangers, something most children are usually advised against doing because of the possible

dangers. He is fortunate in that all the people he comes across and asks for advice are friendly and willing to help him.

The main idea of the story is “you are unique and don’t have fit into anyone’s mould”. While this could be applicable in various contexts, it seems most pertinent to race, given South Africa’s history. The character of George is also interesting in this regard. He seems to be deliberately drawn as being racially ambiguous, which probably prompts the anonymous man to question him. He is darker than the white people in the book, but other than that, there are no definitive racial characteristics which could categorise him as anything other than mixed race. This makes it easier for a wider range of children from various backgrounds to identify with the character. Not putting people into racial ‘boxes’ has become increasingly important as multiracial families increase, and more children who do not fit into predefined, apartheid-era categories are born.

The message of the book becomes important for all children, as it teaches that they are unique and do not have to conform to other people’s preconceptions of them based on race or other factors. Instilling this self-concept from an early age can help them to appreciate difference while maintaining their own individuality. This is similar to Bishop’s (1990) concept of multicultural children’s literature as a mirror which reflects the self, and also a window on the worlds of others.

The worldview promoted by the book has its roots in a Western style of thinking which places value on the discovery of the self. This principle could also be interpreted as extreme individuality, which is generally thought of as a Western-style way of thinking, which is opposed to a traditional African worldview, which focuses on the person as part of a community.

The back cover summarises the story events and draws attention to its main aim: “Prompted by a mysterious stranger, George sets off on a strange quest to find the box he best fits into. His search takes him into some strange and sometimes scary places, but eventually George makes a wonderful discovery” (Levin, 2008).

The blurb frames what could also be interpreted as an intrusive and unpleasant experience, as an exciting one that takes George to “strange and sometimes scary places”, but is ultimately beneficial to him.

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A Kite's Flight

The most recently published book in the sample, *A kite's flight* (2010), tells the story of a kite's journey across Africa. It was written by former Deputy Editor of *The Sowetan* newspaper and author of *Thabo Mbeki and the Battle for the Soul of the ANC*, William Gumede. The main characters in the story are a young boy named Andile and his father, who make a kite together. A gust of wind blows the kite out of reach, and starts it on a voyage across the continent, highlighting prominent landmarks along the way. The kite finally ends up in the hands of another young boy, named Ahmad, all the way in North Africa, who also gets his father to help him fix up the kite so it can fly again.

The characters are drawn in a cartoon-style which downplays physical racial markers, the only way of tentatively deducing their blackness is from their brown skin tone and the boy's name (Andile). During the 1950s and 1960s, there was a move toward "colour-blindness" in multicultural children's literature of North America in efforts to promote equality by disregarding physical characteristics which distinguished black people, and instead drawing them with Caucasian features and slightly darker skin. Such illustrations had the opposite effect, as smoothing over racial difference by creating generic, sterile characters was both racist and dishonest (Töttemeyer, 1986). Illustrations which downplay race can be seen as one extreme on the continuum of representation, the opposite side being the exaggerated and overtly derogatory depictions of black people which caricatured their features to be ridiculed.

It seems that perceptive, sincere renderings of black people are also lacking in children's literature of South Africa. Local children's book writer and illustrator, Piet Grobler, remarked on the propensity of South African publishers to regulate the representation of black people in a way that minimised their race.

“...black children should be black, but not too black. Their noses should be African, but not too African. Their hair African, but not too much so. It is as if South African publishers and illustrators are trying so hard (maybe subconsciously) to get rid of the country's past and the whole notion of race, and to create the 'ideal' image, the image of how it should be in this new 'rainbow nation' where everybody is the same, where there are no divisions and separation, that their characters have become homogeneous and without distinctive racial or cultural features” (Van der Walt, 2002, p. 136, 137).

It is interesting to note that he cites educational publishers as being particularly prone to this tendency, an issue which is beyond the scope of the current study but should be paid attention to, given the vast reach and impact of educational reading materials.

The backdrop of Table Mountain visually situates the characters in Cape Town, but the story is conceptualised as part of a wider project meant to teach the reader about Africa.

“One summer morning, when the sun was beginning to spread its warmth across the clear, blue African sky, Andile asked his papa, “Are you busy now?” (Gumede, 2010, p. 2).

The main idea of the story is to show Africa as an intriguing and exciting place of natural beauty. Wild and exotic animals and people are shown, but no modern cities. There are no buildings, besides the pyramids and turrets of Egypt, and no economic activity or industry, other than the dated Kimberly mines. The picture of Africa presented is one locked in a Western gaze, which objectifies the continent as a place valuable for the scenic beauty of its landscape and wildlife, but not much else. As the kite moves from the south to the north, there is a subtle difference in the landmarks shown: the south is dominated by the wild, untamed landscape such

as deserts, jungles and forests, while in the north the more civilised landmarks such as the pyramids are highlighted.

The first place the kite flies over is the diamond mines of Kimberly, which shows a cross-section of a mine with an old, faded photograph superimposed over it (Figure 10.1). It shows the excavation of the Big Hole. There are two types of men: workers without shirts who are kneeling, digging and pushing wheelbarrows; and fully clothed men with hats who ride mules, give orders and see to the equipment. From the limited racial markers in the illustrations of the book, it is possible to deduce that the workers are black (because of their darker hair and skin), and the foremen are white. This picture reflects an historical inequality in skilled and unskilled labour in the country, but does so in an exaggerated way by depicting the black workers without shirts, a subtle reinforcement of their lower socio-economic status and lack of power in the job market.

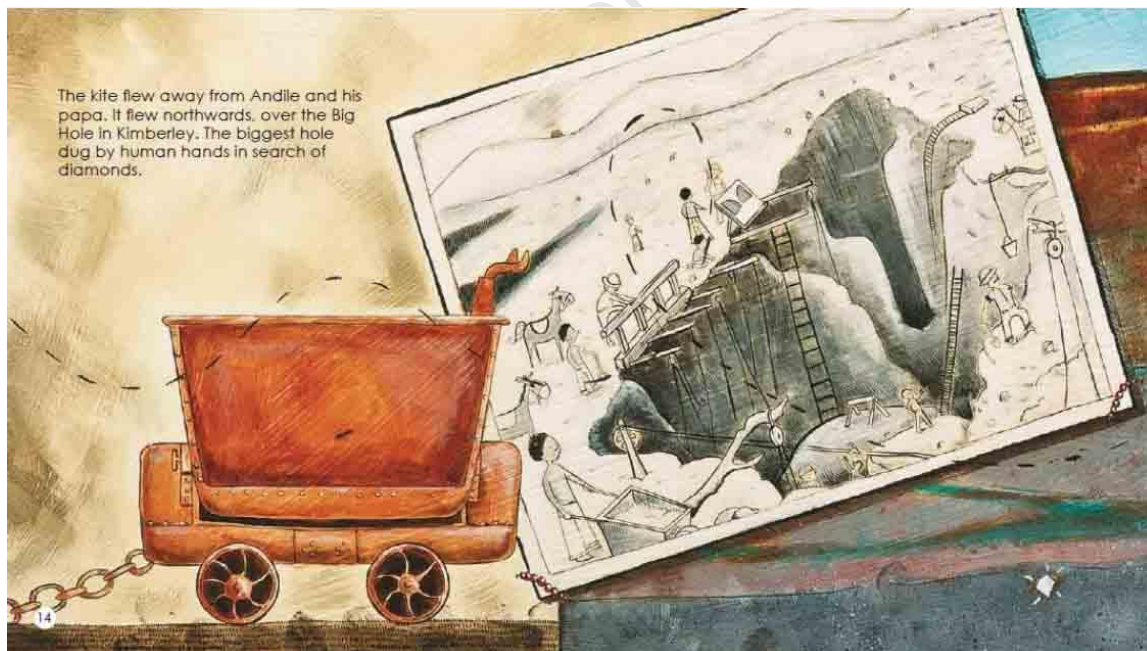


Fig. 10.1

The following three pictures all show examples of the “Africa as a Place Where People Share Space with Animals” message as discussed in Yenika-Agbaw’s (2007, p. 23) study of the visual representation of Africa in children’s literature. This pattern obsessively connects black people and animals in a way that implies they are no different to “the domestic and wild animals with which they share space” (Yenika-Agbaw, 2007, p. 24).

Figure 10.2 contains an insert over the Zambezi River, which shows one crocodile offering another a glass of water. There are no people in the picture, and the impression of Zambia created is of a wilderness populated by animals (acting as humans). This is an example of anthropomorphism, the attribution of human characteristics to animals, a device which denigrates the inhabitants of the country by depicting them as crocodiles.

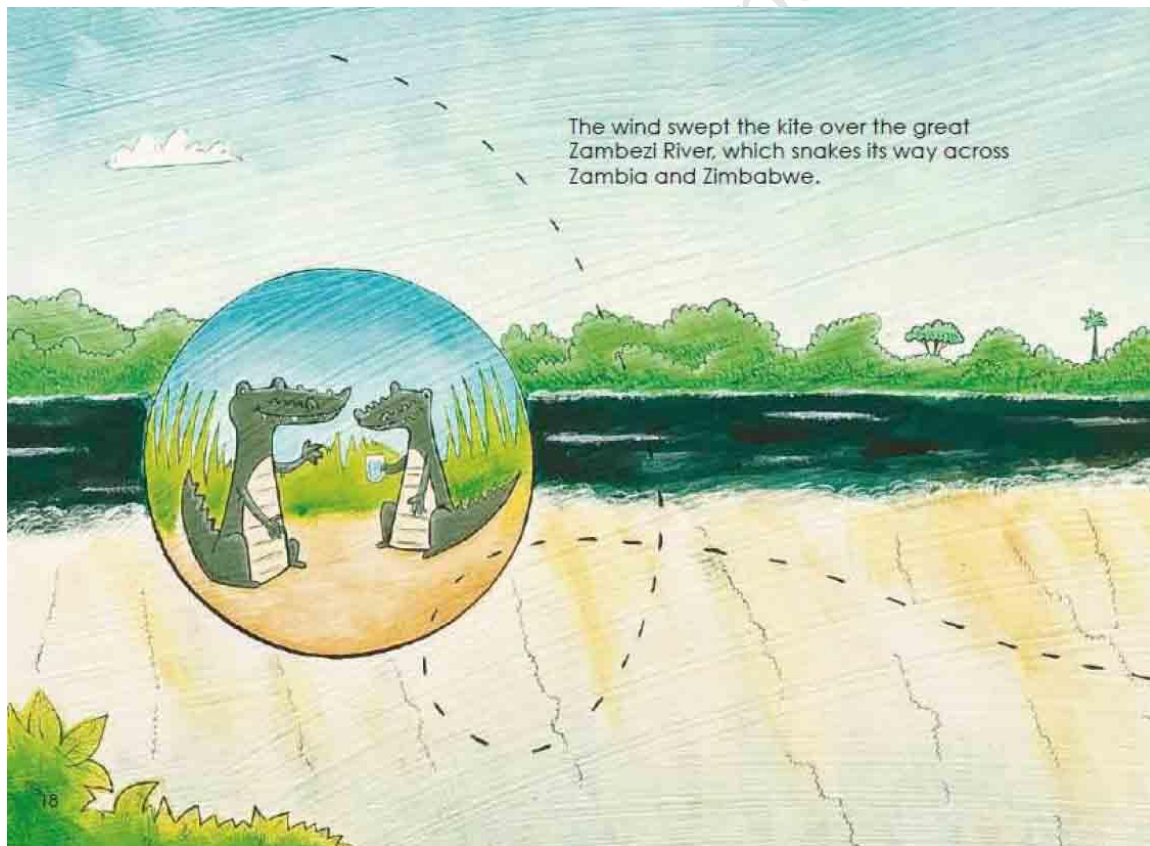


Fig. 10.2

Figure 10.3 shows a gorilla smiling cheekily from the corner of a postcard stamped with the “Congo Basin”. In the background, three small figures surround a hut in the forest. One sits cross-legged on the ground, and appears to be unclothed, while the other two stand waving near the entrance to the hut. They are identified as Pygmies in the text, but are not clothed in any kind of traditional clothing. Two seem to be wearing only shorts, somewhat modern attire for their uncivilised surroundings. Drawing indigenous people wearing Western attire is often a decision made by publishers based more on morality than accuracy. Historically, in children’s literature depicting black characters, the trend up until the late twentieth century was to “portray naked black characters as comical, repulsive or exaggeratedly different from whites” (Jenkins, 2003, p. 88). In relation to the representation of the San, also an indigenous people, Jenkins (2003) noted that wearing European clothing often accompanied their capture, and their discomfort at being dressed was mocked.

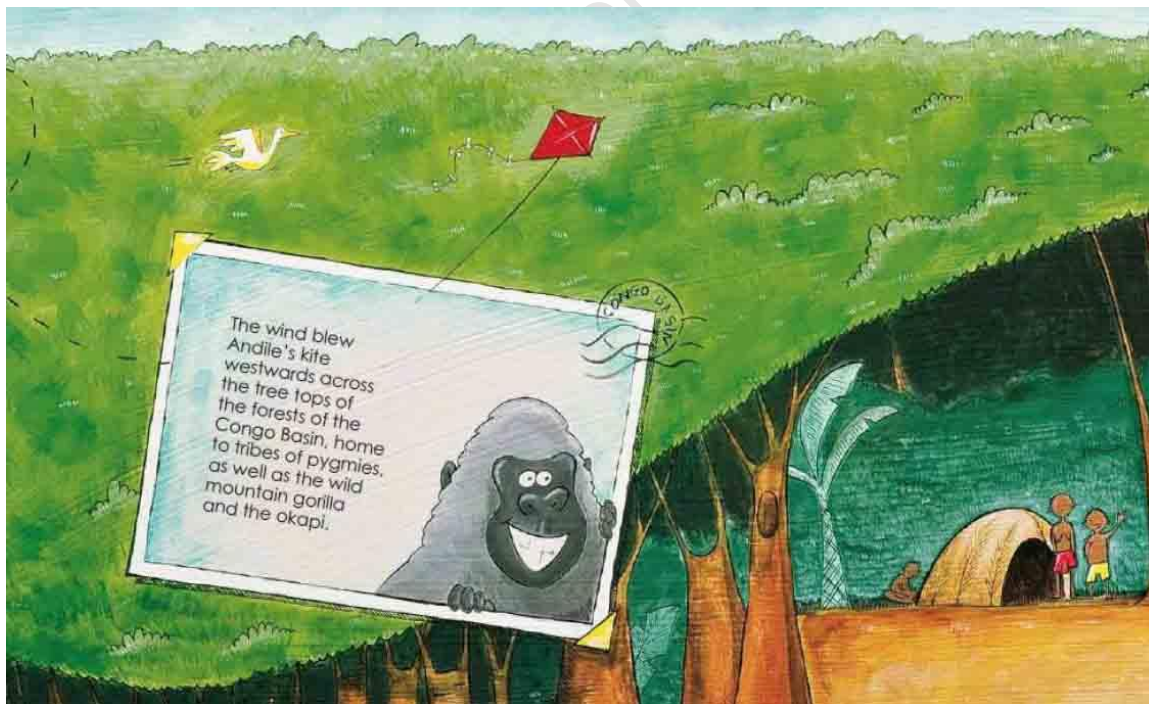


Fig. 10.3

In Figure 10.4, a traditionally attired figure appears in the foreground, surrounded by various animals. In this case, it seems the decision to depict the character in traditional dress seems to be for the purpose of exhibiting the exoticism of African culture. A safari vehicle is visible in the background of the picture, suggesting that this display is for the benefit of tourists. Here, both the animals and the people of Africa are offered as objects for a foreign gaze, in line with stereotypical ideas of Africa as uncivilized.

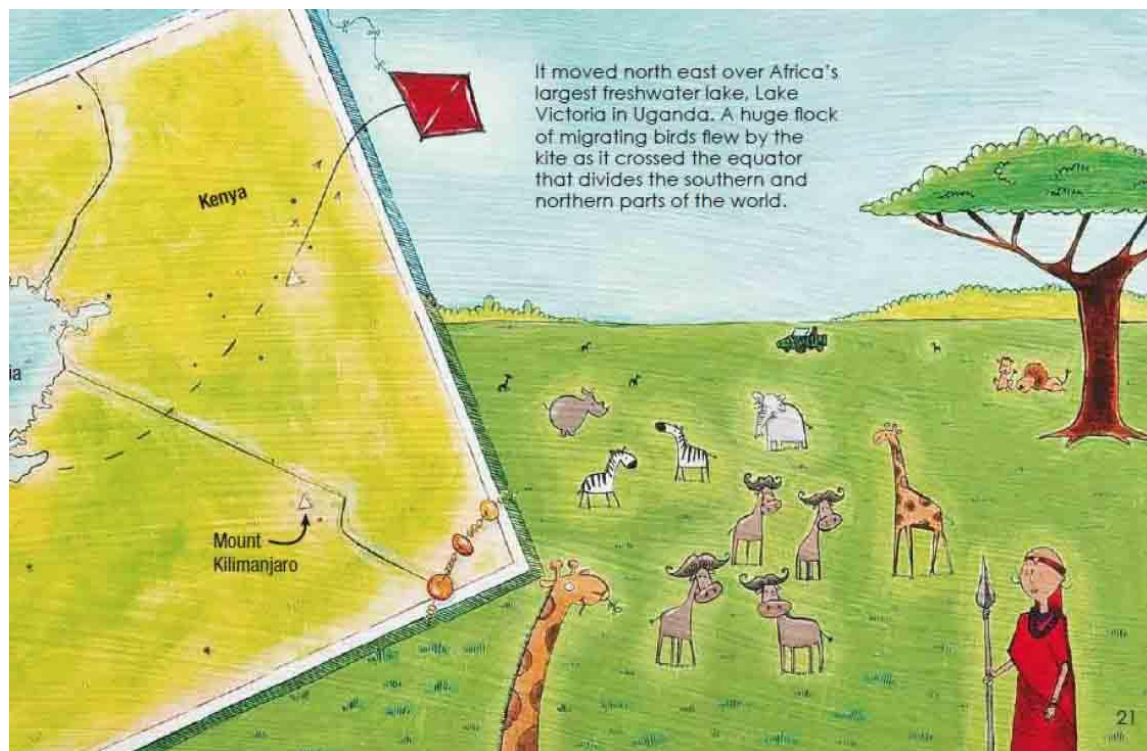


Fig. 10.4

A kite's flight presents a positive depiction of a father-son relationship, with fathers shown engaging with their sons in an enjoyable and constructive activity. Making a kite is presented as something that transcends differences in culture, as boys from opposite sides of the continent both enjoy. The items needed to make a kite are labelled and directions on how to make a kite are given on pages 4 and 5, suggesting this as a project for readers to attempt. This is a

refreshing change from the “invisible father” trend in much of children’s literature (Anderson & Hamilton, 2005). Another positive message in the story is of pride in national origins, with the kite’s journey through Africa showing what the author regards as notable areas of interest. Patriotism is also subtly encouraged, an example being the South African national flag on Andile’s shirt. However, the picture of Africa presented is one stuck in a tribal past, as no progress is shown and there are no contemporary depictions of its places and people. This still conforms to the stereotypical idea of Africa as a backward, uncivilised continent, with the inhabitants serving as little more than tourist attractions together with the wildlife and landscape.

The father-son relationship and its importance was the main component of the masculinity discourse in this book. According to the story, an important part of being a man is about building things and teaching your son how to. These goals correspond to the “Nurturer” trait in the “Lovers” category.

The discourse of “black people as rural” is repeated in this story, as well as the idea of black people in the wild, surrounded by animals. The picture of Africa presented in the story is intended to foster an appreciation of the continent based on its natural diversity and beauty, but relies on old, almost colonialist representations which lock Africa in an underdeveloped past.

The main object in the masculinity discourse is the father-son relationship. It is prioritised as valuable for men and boys as it allows the passing down of knowledge from one generation to the next. This can be seen as supporting the “Be like your father” trait in the “Bosses” category, which emphasises the role of fathers as role models for their sons. The father-son relationship is an important one to highlight; especially given the valuable role that male role models have in the development of young boys. As such, it is interesting that in a large number of picturebooks

fathers appear to be “under-represented and portrayed as relatively stoic actors who took little part in the lives of their children” (Hamilton, Anderson, Broaddus & Young, 2006, p. 758).

The father-son relationship in this discourse follows conventional patterns of speech for these roles, with the sons asking questions (Andile asks “Are you busy now?”; “What do we need to make a kite, Papa?”; “Will our kite fly, Papa?”; “Shall we let it go higher, Papa?” and Ahmad asks “Can we fix it?”) and the fathers responding (Andile’s father answers him “Why do you ask?”; “Let me see. We need paper, two sticks, glue and tape”; “We won’t know until we’ve given it a try”; “If it goes too high we won’t be able to see it. We also don’t have enough string” and Ahmad’s father says “Mmm, we could,”). The knowledge and potential to make contributions are the father’s responsibility and the son’s is to listen and willingly participate.

The material world of *A kite’s flight* starts in what appears to be a middle-class suburb close to the beach. It then takes readers across the continent of Africa, visiting Namibia, the Kalahari, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Uganda, Congo, the Sahara desert and Egypt. The social world focuses on the father-son relationship, between Andile and his father, and Ahmad and his. Though they are from different sides of the continent, they both enjoy the pleasure of spending time together engaged in productive activity. Andile shares his kite with the multicultural onlookers (he wears a t-shirt with a South African flag on the front, and there is a lady wearing a traditional hat from Lesotho). The line: “Friendly hands on the beach tried to grab the string and rescue Andile’s kite” (Gumede, 2010), indicates the spontaneous sense of community the simple act of flying a kite brings to this group of people at the beach.

The main message of the story is that Africa is a great place with many natural wonders. Objections to this idea could be seen as unpatriotic or elitist, given historical views of Africa as the “dark continent” at the time of European imperialist explorations which brought them into

contact with black people for the first time. Most views of Africa circulating in the public sphere via the news and other media still conceive of Africa as a wild, war-torn place of poverty, famine, and dictatorial leaders who live in excess while their people starve.

Positive attributes of Africa that are most often emphasised are its status as the “cradle of humankind”, an ancient civilization with rich culture, traditions, music and art, great leaders, sportspeople, hardworking people overcoming great odds and the natural beauty of the landscape. Negative views of Africa focus on it as a backward, poverty and famine-stricken place with limited resources, low levels of education, corrupt governments, ethnic violence, disease, under-development and danger. Some of the points in the “positive discourse” of Africa could be viewed as negative because they revolve around stereotypes and present a limited view of Africa. They perpetuate the idea of Africa as only good for its geographical landmarks and black people as primarily entertainers (instead of scientists, for example).

The last page has a map of Africa with the places visited by the kite labelled, and a quiz to test knowledge on the facts presented in the book.

The back cover focuses on the book’s intention to showcase Africa:

This richly illustrated book tells the story of how Andile and his father make a kite. While flying the kite its string breaks, releasing the kite on an epic journey across Africa. From the thundering Victoria Falls and the snow tops of Kilimanjaro, to the Sahara Desert and ancient Egyptian Pyramids, follow the kite’s flight over some of the great landmarks of Africa! (Gumede, 2010).

The back cover is styled as a postcard, with a stamp featuring a stylised Maasai warrior holding a spear, a picture of Mount Kilimanjaro with the words “Greetings From Africa” on it, and another postcard with a smiling gorilla. This further reinforces the idea of Africa as a wild place inhabited by animals and animal-like humans (black people) the Maasai warrior is drawn in a stylised way, as are the rest of the characters, to minimise racial characteristics. Representations such as these reinforce the idea of “Africa as place where people share space with animals” (Yenika-Agbaw, 2005, p. 40). This view of Africa and African people insinuates that “Africans are no different from the domestic and wild animals with which they share space” (Yenika-Agbaw, 2005, p. 41).

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER 5: SPACE AND RACE – THE THEME OF LOCATION IN REPRESENTING BLACKNESS

The word apartheid translated literally means “separateness”, a condition that had to be sustained on every level: physically, socially and psychologically, by creating and maintaining divisions between people of different races. In 1950, the Group Areas Act came into effect, representing one of the most concrete ways of ensuring this. This set of laws shut out people who were not white from the most built up areas, monitored their movements with pass books, forcibly removed them from areas designated for whites only, and relegated the largest portion of the population to the smaller and much less productive portion of the land to live on (Omond, 1985).

As an “intrinsically spatial regime”, an important function of apartheid was the policing of public space to ensure each race remained within their designated areas (Houssay-Holzschuch & Teppo, 2009, p. 351). The labelling of people and their allocation to racially-determined spaces dictated the structure of South African cities, and the country was shaped at a national, provincial and city level by racist policies which created geographies based on racial classification and socio-spatial control. The regulation of public space was enacted in such a way as to limit interaction with the “racial Other” in public spaces, which were claimed and controlled for white use. Access to public space and the roles available to those using them were solely defined by race. The Pass Laws and other such “petty apartheid” devices worked on a microgeographic level to separate the use of transport, accommodation, services, as well as amenities such as parks and beaches (Houssay-Holzschuch & Teppo, 2009).

The survival of apartheid depended on black and white people living in separate areas, as well as intrinsically identifying with these spaces. Apartheid geographies did more than just

separate black from white, they created spaces which naturalized this separation and even gave “separate development” the appearance of being beneficial. The benefits were one-sided, however, as the massive contrast between black and white worlds economically showed. Black dispossession prevented black people from seeing the hand they had in sustaining white privilege, and insulated white people from the origins of this privilege (West, 2007).

West (2007) goes on to suggest that physical space was woven into the very fabric of what it meant to be black or white. By extension, this disconnect between the two worlds translated into an association of impoverishment with blackness, and, conversely, wealth with whiteness. The Group Areas Act was eventually repealed in 1991, 41 years later, however the same tensions persist. Space continues to be an essential element of racial identity post-apartheid, with the battles for land claims and furores over the renaming of streets and districts serving as reminders of a segregated past. Although democracy has offered people of different races new opportunities to engage with each other, places of residence are still largely segregated (Houssay-Holzschuch & Teppo, 2009). Most suburban areas are still largely populated by the historical groups that populated them during apartheid. This shows how deeply ingrained the stereotypes about particular living areas are, as well as the material nature of apartheid and its enduring effect on the opportunities available to the black populace for economic empowerment.

Importance of setting in story

The setting of a story, which includes the time and location, is significant for various reasons. It is an important element of fiction as it creates the context and mood of the story. In some stories, the setting plays an important part in the plot, and can even be a character itself. The setting can be used to establish a sense of place, and it often serves a particular function in

telling the story by providing background about the characters and helping the reader identify with them. In the same way, the setting in children's picturebooks also establish the situation and nature of the storyworld (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001). The most basic function of setting is to convey a sense of time and place for the action, but it may go beyond this by commenting on and developing the characters. In picturebooks, setting can be conveyed in the text, or images or both. Space is most effectively and efficiently described visually, and, as younger audiences are often less attentive to text, pictures are able to communicate what words may not (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001).

Children's picturebooks often feature the contrast between rural and urban settings. "Rural settings reflect the adult writers' idealization of the child, which goes back to the Romantic view of childhood as innocent, happy and natural" (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001, p. 71). The juxtaposition of black people and rural surroundings and their consequent identification with these childlike characteristics is consistent with the tendency toward their infantilization. This was a feature of black representation common during the era of American slavery (Hall, 1997). Urban settings are used to counterpoint this, with writers contrasting the natural rural with the civilized urban (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001). In this context, the contrasts between idyllic countryside and bustling city settings can also have ideological implications. These relate to the common sense assumptions concerned with socio-cultural values and everyday life implicit or explicit in the images and text (Sarland, 1999). Identifying ideology in the settings is also one of Serafini's (2010) steps in analyzing multimodal texts such as picturebooks.

It was not always readily apparent in the text which time period each of the books were set in, but there were indicators which placed them during or after apartheid. One of the books, *Ouma Ruby's secret* (2006), is a story from author Chris Van Wyk's childhood, which places it

during apartheid. The following three books can be placed in a post-apartheid time period: *What a gentleman* (1997) explores the aftermath of the first democratic elections. *The boy on the beach* (1998) can be read as a post-apartheid story because of the shared use of a public space, the beach, by all races, as well as *A kite's flight* (2010), which also shows people of all races together on a beach. The rest of the books are set in an indeterminate time with no visible markers in the images or text to position during or after apartheid. *Kensani's kite* (1995), *The gift of the sun* (1996) and *Vuyo's whistle* (2002) are all set in rural surroundings, giving the stories a timeless feel. *Perfectly me* (1999), *Little lucky Lolo and the Cola Cup Competition* (2006) and *Out of the box* (2008) also have no explicit time markers, but are set in the more modern settings of township and suburb, making the time period more likely to be post-apartheid.

Ideology may be revealed explicitly, passively in unexamined assumptions, and in the use of language that serves the interests of dominant groups (Serafini, 2010). The ideological implications of particular settings in children's picturebooks mean that besides being merely a stylistic feature, settings can also provide commentary on what perceptions of the "place" of black people in South African society are. Given the history of the country, it remains important to be aware of how race is represented. The picturebooks were divided into those set in rural settings (in the country, connected with agriculture) and their opposite, urban settings, (in the cities, connected with commerce and built-up areas).

The romance of the rural – black people in the country

Of the ten books, five are set in a rural locale (*Kensani's kite*, *The gift of the sun*, *Vuyo's whistle*, *Little lucky Lolo and the Cola Cup Competition*, *A kite's flight*), there are visual references to rural areas in one (*What A Gentleman*), and another takes place outdoors at the

beach (*The boy on the beach*). Almost all the books set in rural areas had all of the action in the story taking place outdoors. In the earliest book in the sample, *Kensani's kite*, the story takes place entirely outdoors, in the open spaces of a rural village. The illustrations depict sparse vegetation and few huts dotting the hillside, which contribute to the feeling of isolation echoed in the character of Pondamali, a lonely widower. The romance of the rural idyll is subtly built up by the text, which mentions 29 different words related to nature.

The image of black people populating the rural areas of South Africa is not unfamiliar. Even with the rapid urbanization of the country's population, a large number of black people maintain ties to family in rural areas and visit occasionally, usually for holidays and special occasions. This interplay between rural and city life has been used to comedic effect in contemporary popular culture as well, with movies such as *White Wedding* (2009), where the tension between rural and urban worlds has humorous results. The theme of leaving the country to "make it" in the city is a familiar literary motif. The story has an example of the rural-urban divide between Pondamali and his attachment to the village, and his children who have left it to become successful in the city. The symbolism implies that the city offers progress, aspiration, and development, everything the backward rural cannot. Even Pondamali, who loves the village, has to go to town to make a living selling his crafts, as there is no market for them in the village.

Leaving the farmland to become successful in the city is not always a viable option, and *The gift of the sun* presents an alternative for success in rural areas. The quaint and beautifully rendered setting of the illustrations is shown to be less pliable to the efforts of the main character, Thulani, to make his living off the land. What is made clear is the relationship between the people and the land, and how their survival is intimately linked with nature. They have to plant their seeds by a certain time to yield a crop and make most of their decisions based on utility for

basic necessities. It is not stated whether or not Thulani owns the land he lives on, but it is clear they are poor and have to work hard to survive. They have to save up and plan to buy the seeds and livestock they need, which makes Thulani's aversion to work seem out of place and selfishly foolish. *The gift of the sun* connects black space with the land, farming and manual labour and is even used to define Thulani as a man. His wife judges him by his ability to work the land, and when he fails to live up to her expectations, she invokes imagery from their surroundings and compares him to a "useless" sunflower, just following the sun.

Vuyo's whistle was written in 2002, but appears to depict an earlier, simpler time with Cora Coetzee's keenly observed nostalgic illustrations. It begins outside a shop, named de Freitas Café, the name a reference to the possibility of the shop having Portuguese owners. Portuguese, Lebanese, Indian and Asian people are often stereotyped as being involved in the retail business. The rural setting is confirmed with a full page illustration of an open field of goats. The difference between exterior and interior space is defined by colour: the outside is green and brown, while the inside of the home is white with small details such as a lampshade or table to indicate domestic space. The artist makes use of white space, also called negative space (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001) around characters. This negative space decontextualizes the characters from their surroundings, making it ambiguous whether they are outside or inside. For example, Mama blocks her ears, while the dog barks against a white background, making it unclear where either is. The ambiguity in space is related to the theme of black people sharing common space with animals and being compared to them. The rural-urban divide is also evident in the story when Mama speaks of the shopping excursion to town as a special event that is looked forward to with anticipation at Christmas. The difference between the rural world of dusty streets and animals is contrasted with the bustle and noise of the shops in town. The city is

a world which the black person can enter, but also a threatening world for the black person to get lost in, as shown when Baby goes missing.

In *Little lucky Lolo and the Cola Cup Competition* (2006), township is referenced in the text and symbolised by a tin-container spaza shop, but the huts and green hillsides are more typical of a rural village, conflating the two. Identifying the township and the village as the same place is much like the conflation of all black people into a single homogenous, often stereotypical group, which disregards the differences in ethnicity and language which differentiate them. The entire story takes place outside, either on the uniform green hillside dotted with flowers, or the dusty ground associated with the township school. Even Mama Lolo cooks outside, stirring a big potjie over a fire in an inset on the opening page. The “township” of the story is misrepresented as a generic green outdoors, with no development and no movement forward. Even the Cola Cup Competition of the title references an outside corporation sponsoring the event which gives Little Lucky Lolo a real soccer ball instead of a cola can to play with. The township as a place of poverty is presented without question in a way that implicitly supports the status quo of poor black people.

Rural settings highlight the co-existence of black people with nature. In her study of illustrations in children’s picturebooks, Yenika-Agbaw (2007) identified “Africa as a Place Where People Share Space with Animals” as a theme in the representation of African culture. The tendency of white people to link blacks and animals is reproduced in the underlying message that “Africans are no different from the domestic and wild animals with which they share space” (Yenika-Agbaw, p. 24, 2007). Such ideas stem from outdated “historical/scientific conceptions of blackness as being more proximal to animality” (King, Bloodsworth-Lugo & Lugo-Lugo, 2010, p. 396). Linked to this is the attribution of animal characteristics to humans, known as

zoomorphism. This particular pattern of representing black people as animals forms part of a larger stereotype of black people as primitive (Broderick, 1973). Its parallel, anthropomorphism, involves the attribution of human characteristics to animals. An example of this can be found in *A kite's flight*, where a crocodile sips a glass of water.

The most recent book in the sample, *A kite's flight* (2010) is set from Cape to Cairo, as it takes readers on a tour of the major landmarks of the African continent. Although the book was published three years ago, the Africa it shows is one locked in the exoticism of Western imaginations. The land is defined by its natural features; deserts, mountains, forests and waterfalls are highlighted in the kite's travels, presenting Africa as a wild, untamed and uninhabited place. There is hardly any exploration of the people or effort to depict contemporary African life, which is instead replaced by a focus on exotic and tribal aspects, such as the Pygmies. Where people are portrayed, they are shown living with and sharing space with wild animals. The animals are also anthropomorphised with human expressions and behaviour, an implied comparison of the similarities between African humans and African animals.

The country setting and its associations with innocence and purity appear to provide an ideal backdrop for a children's story, but the historical connotations of black people and rural areas mean this type of representation is not unproblematic. Positioning black people in settings which carry associations of a primitive lifestyle and their representation in untouched rural surroundings lock these characters in a timeless, backward lifestyle with no opportunity for development. This naturalises the idea of black people as farm workers and labourers, a stereotype which offers little incentive for more aspirational objectives. Children need be exposed to literature which depicts experiences different to their own in order to develop an appreciation for diversity, but it is also important they be presented with stories they can see

themselves in which affirm “positive images and a sense of worth and belonging in society” (Lehman, 2006, p. 17).

The “urbanized” black – black people in the city

One of the first South African picturebooks for children to feature black people as part of city life was Niki Daly’s (1985) *Not So Fast Songololo*. It was applauded for foregoing the stereotypical “small black boy, barefoot and in rags”, or the “small Bushman-boy clad in a loincloth” with its striking, full colour visualization of “the urbanized black” in an engaging way (Töttemeyer, p.45, 1986). Books such as this one, which told stories of “both everyday and momentous events—set the stage for post-Apartheid publishing” (Lehman, 2006, p. 9). One of the most telling indicators for positioning books within the post-apartheid context is the depiction of groups of people of different races using public space together.

What a gentleman contains many panoramas showing such multicultural scenes as people of different races united in their admiration of South Africa’s first democratically elected president. On the streets, in stadiums, in public parks, and other places people of diverse ages, races and backgrounds are shown honouring Mandela. Everyone is happy and appears excited to be in the presence of such a great man, some even raise their fists in a power salute. The feeling of national pride is emphasized by prominently featured South African flags and the focus on sporting victories throughout the story. Most of the action still takes place outdoors, but an effort is made to portray a wide spectrum of South African landscapes, from the rural to the urban, with farmlands, shacks and metropolitan centres all being depicted on the front piece montage.

The story begins in what appears to be a working class neighbourhood with brightly coloured Cape Flats-style apartments. Political graffiti on the walls and litter in the streets lend authenticity to the artist's otherwise fanciful style and imaginative use of colour.

The grandmother's home has a security gate, a regular feature of most suburban homes and a subtle reminder of South Africa's notorious crime rate. This contrasts, somewhat ironically, with the "Home Sweet Home" cross-stitch hanging on the wall. *What a gentleman* shows a world where black and white occupy the same spaces and mingle freely in the streets, parks and stadiums in celebrating Mandela as the personification of democracy. However, there are subtle reminders of the legacy of segregation. Rugby is still primarily viewed as a "white sport", and the picture showing a team of white players and one black player celebrating their victory at the 1995 Rugby World Cup. The inclusion of only one black player, Chester Williams (nicknamed "The Black Pearl"), on the squad sparked controversy at the time. Many thought he was only selected as a token player, but his performance and critical contribution to victory made him a household name after the tournament. Josia Thugwane, a successful athlete who competed at the Olympic Games, is shown being interviewed in a township, sitting on a petrol can, while wearing his gold medal. Mandela accompanies (white) aid workers to assist destitute (black) people in a flood-stricken area, reflecting the persistence of structural inequalities. These examples, offset against the other "rainbow nation" images in the book, show the complexity of post-apartheid race relations in the country.

The story is also an example of how different settings are used to emphasise different aspects of Mandela's character. He is shown in his capacity as a President in public, greeting the many people anxious to see him. In one such scene he is shown at the seaside with a long line of people from different countries waiting to "share in the Madiba Magic". An odd montage of

skyscrapers, houses and a lioness appears in the background, which seems to reference the well-known joke made of tourists who are surprised to learn wild animals do not roam the streets of African cities. The politically important location of Robben Island is instantly recognizable and positions Mandela within the struggle history. Surrounded by his children and relatives, he is shown to be a family man, another admirable quality. Mandela is also shown in less likely places which are not connected to his roles as the President. He is shown as a performer on stage entertaining, and in his private life, at a disco, romancing a lady. The stereotype of black men as a minstrel entertainer is a common one, as is the stereotypes about the libido of black males which characterises them as virile (Broderick, 1973). These seem to be an attempt to present him to children as a more human figure, but the focus on these characteristics diminishes his accomplishments as a statesman.

The physical proportions of a book can also be used to reinforce its message, as the horizontal orientation of *The boy on the beach* shows, giving the feeling of expansive space beyond the edge of the page. The horizon of the beach is also present on almost every page, a metaphor for freedom and exploration. The theme of discovery and independence is explored in the simple story of a young boy's adventures on the beach by contrasting safe and unsafe space. It also contains echoes of segregated spaces, as during apartheid the most beautiful beaches were reserved for white use. This story is assumed to be set post-apartheid, as it shows a black family using the same beach as white people.

The story begins in the parking lot, where the mother seeks to restrain her energetic son and warns him to stay close so that he does not get lost, the first reference to safe and unsafe space in the book. Although all are free to use any part of the beach they desire, there are still areas which are not open to use. For example, the common stereotype that black people do not

swim is alluded to by the boy's trepidation at venturing into the water. When the boy wanders away from his parents, he enters the unsafe space of the dunes. Although they allow him the chance to act out his fantasies, he eventually gets caught up and feels trapped behind the walls of sand. This is symbolic of an underlying message in the story that not all space is free, and sometimes the most threatening space can be conjured in the mind. He has to be rescued by a white lifeguard, a symbol of a more experienced user of the beach and someone who is more familiar with it than the young boy. The boy is taken to the Lost and Found, a place usually reserved for objects, where he is reunited with his parents. The use of a change in setting to take characters away from their familiar surroundings is a mechanism which is used to contribute to and clarify conflict in the story (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001). In this case, it is a cautionary tale for children not to wander too far from their parents, but also subtly reinforces the status quo of white rescuer and black person in need of being rescued. The story ends, however, with the boy claiming a place on the beach as his own by writing his name, Joe, in the sand.

Ouma Ruby's secret is the only book in the sample set during apartheid. It is not mentioned anywhere in the text, but it can be deduced that this is the time period as the story is from author Chris Van Wyk's childhood, which coincides with apartheid. The story begins with a decontextualised portrait of Ouma Ruby as a young woman, which would probably hang inside the house. It then moves outside to show Chris and his family outside their modest home. A mine dump rises imposingly behind the house and is a defining feature of the landscape. The suburb of Riverlea, where Chris lives, is a poor suburb surrounded by mine dumps, about eight kilometres west from the central business district of Johannesburg. It is historically a "coloured" suburb, as is Coronation, another suburb where Ouma Ruby lives. The mine dumps are also a feature of this suburb, as are factories, but it appears to be slightly more well-off and settled than Riverlea.

Ouma Ruby seems to own the home she lives in, and it is large enough to accommodate extended family. This particular living arrangement of having aunts, uncles and cousins living in the same house is not uncommon within many coloured communities.

The houses of Coronation are larger, there are lush gardens with various fruit trees, and there are wide streets with children playing outside and neighbours chatting. Ouma Ruby living in a coloured area and her son and grandson also living with his family in another coloured area can be seen as an example of the generational pattern of settlement. Although laws no longer govern where certain people may live, the years of identification with particular areas have grown into communities with distinct characters. Chris Van Wyk himself raised his sons in the suburb of Riverlea and continues to live there, attributing this to a cultural factor: his love of stories and gossip from the community he grew up in, above any other reason (Davie, 2004).

The story also positions town as a place of opportunities and amenities not readily available to black people, who have to travel to make use of the shops in the city. Chris is excited to have the chance of an excursion to town with his grandmother, and is even more overjoyed when he learns the reason they are there is so he can choose a book from the bookshop as a treat. Chris takes the bus to town by himself and seems comfortable with negotiating the streets of Johannesburg on his own. They are lined with vendors selling goods on trestle tables, and even feature a stereotypical Indian vendor hawking curry powder. Ouma and Chris pass these street traders on their way to the bookshop, depicted as a double-page spread crowded with shelves lined with a myriad of books. Interestingly, the only white person in the book is the teller manning the cash register, symbolically in charge of dispensing the books and their knowledge to customers.

Perfectly Me is an example of post-apartheid, middle-class suburban life. The interior of the house the book is set in could belong to a middle-class family of any race, but two framed pictures, one of a man in a turban and another showing an exotic building with minarets, hint at an Indian or Muslim background. It is the only story to take place exclusively indoors, although there are references to the main character spending much of his time outdoors. The main theme in the book regarding space is the division of domestic space according to gender. The story centres around the tension between the unnamed main character, and his “perfect” sister, Aisha. Where she is organised, clean and well-behaved, he is disorganised, dirty and rambunctious. Her “perfection” seems to stem largely from her efforts at improving her appearance, a traditionally feminine pursuit, and she is shown washing her face, brushing her teeth, combing her hair and filing her nails. Her pristine appearance suggests that she does not spend as much time outside as her brother, who is covered in dirt with torn clothes and even insects on his person from his outdoor adventures. This division of outdoor space as masculine and indoor space as feminine is not unusual, as a woman’s place has traditionally been limited to the home while men explored the outside world.

The young boy’s exploration of the outdoors does not come without a price, however, and he comes to suspect his stereotypically boyish behaviour of getting dirty makes him a “monster”, and decreases his mother’s love for him. To right this situation, he decides to imitate the behaviour of his sister by taking a bath and making use of the space she regularly occupies to improve her appearance – the bathroom. His use of feminine space to improve his appearance, a traditionally feminine pursuit, to gain the approval of his mother, is not as emasculating as it may at first appear. He makes use of feminine space in a stereotypically masculine manner by having a bath in the most messy way possible, splashing water everywhere. When he is done cleaning

himself and approximating his appearance to that of his “perfect” sister by bathing, combing his hair and brushing his teeth, the bathroom is left in a mess. The puddles of water on the floor, the overturned bottles of soap and scattered bath toys are the marks of manliness left on his appropriation of “feminine” rituals and space to become perfect like his sister and gain the approval of his mother.

Out of the box is also set in middle-class suburbia, but most of the action takes place outdoors. The metaphor of the box as the quintessential exclusionary space is the central theme in the story. The idea of separate spaces for different people is very apparent in the storyline, and the first page introduces this theme with a man’s question to the main character, George, “What box do you fit into?” (Levin, 2008). This question in itself presupposes the existence of distinct spaces for certain people, and George’s violation of this idea by his ambiguous race is a catalyst for his journey of self-discovery. His search for a box to fit into begins in the domestic space of his room at home, but he is unsuccessful and ventures outside. The shop owners he encounters seem to rigidly fit the racial stereotypes of their businesses. Even their headgear seems to signify their race, with the African “mama” baking cakes in her white cap, the coloured flower-seller with the “doek”, and the Muslim greengrocer in his topi.

As George makes his way from each of these places looking for a box to fit into, he becomes increasingly disheartened as his efforts come to nothing. Ironically, it is in the most inhibiting and suffocating of spaces, a coffin, that he decides to give up the search. After being prompted by the undertaker’s assertion that only dead people fit into boxes, George goes outside into the open space of the park and enjoys not having to fit into any imposed box. The park and the natural beauty of the fresh air, sunshine and flowers that George has a new appreciation for is parallel to his fresh realisation that he does not have to fit into any preconceived notions of race

imposed on him by others. After trying out a “black”, “coloured”, “Indian” and “white” box, he realises he is none of them and quite happy to just be himself. This answer baffles the white man who first questioned George’s place, but George does not feel the need to justify his affirmation, and leaves the man and the park confident with his newfound identity.

The question of representing people of particular races honestly and compassionately is one that continues to be controversial. The relationship between the real, structural inequalities which exist and blackness, and how these are addressed in fictional representations is an important one. The reality is that many black people face the challenges of impoverished circumstances, broken homes and destructive relationships, but the “realistic” portrayal of such circumstances is harmful to both black children’s view of themselves and white children’s understanding too (Stinton, 1979). A book which focuses on the negative “bleak and dismal portrayal of lower class black life” disregards the efforts of many to the contrary and cements prevailing stereotypes without offering any insight into the “‘hows’ and ‘whys’ of ghetto life” (Stinton, 1979, p. 72). These issues have been the concern of academics who advocate for the replacement of negative images with positive ones, and question why this process has taken so long and why there are still comparably few positive representations of black people (King, Bloodsworth-Lugo & Lugo-Lugo, 2010).

The challenges facing writers in creating multicultural children’s literature are neither new, nor limited to countries with a racialised history such as that of South Africa. In Puerto Rican children’s books, minority children have been repeatedly shown to be living in the ghetto. “The continual suggestion that this is the norm must surely make it so, when these conditions are inherited rather than inherent” (Stinton, 1979, p. 4). The analyses presented make apparent the importance of location as a marker of where race and class intersect. In Lehman’s (2006)

discussion of class as a factor in South African identity, she highlights the fact that although many more people of colour occupy the middle and upper classes, the majority of children's literature continues to show black children in impoverished or rural settings. She also goes on to emphasise the importance of hope as a key theme in children's literature that seeks to contribute to nation-building. Such messages are best communicated in children's literature that provides positive role models who are successful for black children to emulate.

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER 6: BAREFOOT BLACK PEOPLE - SHOES AS A MARKER OF RACE

Images have come to define much of modern culture. People are confronted with an increasing number of images from a multitude of media sources, making visual literacy an important skill in deciphering the world. In his discussion of the “pictorial turn” and the rise of pictures in culture, Mitchell (1994) uses the word “figural” to describe the privileged position of images in “figuring” or how we come to make sense of the world. Images cross boundaries of language, a characteristic which makes them essential in communicating ideas to children still learning to read and understand picturebooks.

Simple images sometimes become so entrenched through their perpetuation in visual and written text that they are eventually naturalized and accepted without question. When such images are attached to people of a particular race, they can become part of stereotypical associations made of people of that race. More often than not, such stereotypes are negative and based on hurtful, racist exaggerations and misrepresentations. Stereotypes attempt to fix the meaning of a limited set of characteristics to particular groups of people based on gender, class, race, ethnicity, and other markers. These narrow sets of traits dictate the opportunities available to people, what they may become, effectively constraining them. Hall (2005) refers to the struggle to contest such representations and open up these stereotypes to the possibilities of new identities as “the politics of the image”, a struggle that usually takes place in the realm of representation and discourse.

The representation of black characters and their dress

The physical description of black characters in image and text is recognized as a means of assessing negative stereotypes in children’s picturebooks (Gary, 1984). The clothes black

characters wear are also important in this evaluation. Töttemeyer (1986) maintains that the representation of black characters in clothing that makes them look ridiculous is a form of covert racism. Black characters in literature of the colonial-era showing them dressed poorly to the point of ridicule often appear in books where the inability of black people to adapt to Western culture is a theme (Jenkins, 2003). The idea of African people being unable to adjust to urban life socially and culturally was an opinion which served the interests of colonial forces interested in maintaining a decentralized locus of control (Packard, 1989).

The stereotype of “the barefoot African” is an old one which, despite society’s endeavour towards tolerance and racial sensitivity, is still invoked in the contemporary media. The repetition or recitation of such stereotypes can be likened to a path, or a particular way of seeing things, that is repeated. The recitations about race in South Africa are well-worn paths which connect blackness with negative stereotypes of poverty and inferiority. Two such recitations are “the healthy reserve” and “the dressed native” (Packard, 1989), which work together to maintain discourses of the primitiveness of black people and their inability to adapt to development. The “healthy reserve” referred to a romanticised idea of rural homelands for black people which supplied their every need, making it unnecessary for them to have access to the cities. This rural myth was not reflected in the deteriorating conditions of the reserves, and problems such as “high morbidity rates, alcoholism, family separations and crime” were explained as the inability of African people to cope with urban industrial life. This idea, encapsulated in the “dressed native” myth, simplified these issues into a manner of dress. “For many white South Africans, the Africans’ wearing of European-style clothing, which was often of inferior quality and worn in what appeared to be an indifferent manner, symbolized this difficult social and cultural adjustment” (Packard, 1989, p. 687).

Although these recitations arose during apartheid and were used then to justify a migrant labour system which supported white capitalism to the detriment of black workers, the ideas connected to them are still used today. The reason for the popularity of such images lies in their recognisability. The narrative of black poverty and underdevelopment forms part of what can be seen as a “widely shared and recited discourse”, making it easily recognizable (Durrheim, Mtose & Brown, 2011, p. 101). They are more subtle but still recognizable as recitations which function to legitimize the paths which connect blackness with lack, and reinforce a way of thinking about black people which has its roots in apartheid. Another reason for the existence of such recitations is that they continue “to fulfil important social and psychological functions” (Durrheim, Mtose & Brown, 2011, p. 102). These myths privilege whiteness because they make Africans responsible for their own problems and absolve white people of their part in contributing to inequality.

The connotations of being barefoot

The ‘barefoot native’ forms part of these textual and visual representations of black people, and over time, shoes have come to have symbolic meaning as objects. Archaeological studies have shown the practice of wearing shoes emerged about 35, 000 years ago at around the same time other forms of human decoration such as jewellery (Trinkaus, 2008). The wearing of shoes has come about for practical reasons, to protect feet from the elements, as well as social convention. It only became widespread and commonplace when mass production made it possible to produce large quantities of shoes at a cheaper price. As the design and manufacture of shoes became more sophisticated, shoes became a status symbol. Shoes are seen as a marker of class, and communicate the amount of disposable income available to spend and taste of the wearer.

Being barefoot carries both positive and negative connotations. On the one hand, it can signify a return to nature and an unaffected, carefree state, which is why being barefoot is often associated with childhood and innocence. It can also be used to communicate a rejection of societal conventions of dress and public behaviour, as embraced by the hippie culture of the 1960s and 1970s. The associations made of people who go barefoot are generally negative. Shoes and clothing are themselves symbolic of civilization, and conversely, being barefoot coincides with uncivilized, tribal ideas of primitive blackness which are often depicted by exotic Western conceptions of African people as naked savages. People who do not wear shoes are often seen as poor, ill-prepared, and unable to take proper care of themselves. The freedom of expression of people who choose to go barefoot is sometimes stymied by certain businesses, especially those serving food, which have a “No shoes, no shirt, no service” rule, and refuse to serve barefoot customers in the name of health and decency. The saying “barefoot and pregnant” is a derogatory term which describes a woman’s traditional role as a mother and homemaker, and also conveys her subsequent restriction to domestic duties and inability to engage in public life. A “barefoot doctor” is a person with rudimentary health care training who serves remote communities that have difficulty accessing professional medical services. Being barefoot is generally regarded as improper, but there are certain situations when it is acceptable for particular people. For example, some cultures prohibit shoes indoors, certain religious rites are performed without shoes, and at places such as the beach it is easier to walk without shoes. It is also more acceptable for certain people to be barefoot than others. For example, it is not unusual to see young children barefoot, but it is less common for adults not to wear shoes. Being barefoot has various connotations, depending on the context and the person. However not wearing shoes is generally regarded negatively.

Multicultural children's literature and stereotypes

The practice of revising history in the pages of children's books is done with the intention of instilling future generations with better values than their forebears. Writing positive narratives and replacing negative images with representations which are empowering to black people is a priority in most countries with a history of racial discrimination and inequality. In North America, although the situation is different to South Africa with black people being in the minority, there are also efforts to ensure multicultural representation in children's books.

Schools and publishers in North America recognise how important it is for children to be able to see themselves reflected in the textbooks they learn from. The process of ensuring the positive representation of minorities in educational material remains a delicate matter. At present, quotas stipulating the number of black, Native American, Asian and disabled children in textbook illustrations is worked out according to state demographics. This method is not without its flaws, and has been criticized for being, at best, misguided political correctness, and at worst, sidelining the education of children for publisher's profits. While this may seem a crude method for ensuring multicultural representations, there are more specific ways black representation is managed. Certain publishing houses have detailed guidelines for artwork and photographs which specify that African Americans be shown "in positions of power, not just in service industries" (Golden, 2006, p. 4). They also stipulate that African Americans not be portrayed living in poor areas, but that they be shown living in all neighbourhoods, as well as upmarket ones.

A particular stereotype of black people which is almost universally taboo is that of "the barefoot African child". It is deliberately avoided in textbooks because of the associations this image has with poverty, low class and degradation. "For a spread on world cultures, one major publisher vetoed a photo of a barefoot child in an African village, on the grounds that the lack of

footwear reinforced the stereotype of poverty on that continent, according to an employee familiar with the situation. It was replaced with a photo of a West African girl wearing shoes and a gingham dress” (Golden, 2006, p. 4).

In his study on the subject of nudity in South African children’s literature, Jenkins (2003) notes the habitual nakedness of children and traces the implications of this state of undress through time for different races. Culture is represented by types of clothing in many of the stories, and indigenous children often appeared in their historically accurate state of nudity or near-nudity. The theme of black people wearing European clothing appears in much historical fiction dealing with the colonial period. Here clothing is represented as an imposition of white culture on the San and synonymous with enslavement. For black people to wear clothes was also seen as their attempt to adopt Western ways of life, and this challenge to the status quo was often used to comedic effect, showing just how ridiculous white people found this idea. Such storylines accentuated the differences between black and white in a way that implied that for black people to be dressed as white people was “socially destabilizing” (Jenkins, 2003, p. 91). Images of African people dressed in traditional attire can be an empowering acknowledgement of heritage. Depicting African people in a way which ridicules them by showing them as improperly dressed or not wearing shoes does not achieve this, and repeats negative stereotypes from the past.

Although racist depictions of black people from the past in the *Little Black Sambo* tradition are easily identifiable as derogatory stereotypes, Töttemeyer (1986) points out the “covert racism” of more recent portrayals of black people as belonging to a lower socio-economic class. One of the recurring signifiers of low socio-economic status that emerges in her analysis is being barefoot. Stereotypical illustrations of black characters as naked, or poorly

dressed in rags set against the well-dressed, neat white characters conspicuously contrasting the haves and have-nots, were common in early South African children's literature. While stereotypical depictions of this nature have declined, drawing black characters without shoes still seems to be a way of assigning lower socio-economic status.

The barefoot pattern in South African children's literature

Barefoot characters have made an appearance in previous work examining South African children's literature (Thyssen, 2009). For the protagonists in two of the books analysed, *Sipho's new shoes* (1992) and *Not so fast, Songololo* (1985), getting new shoes was tied to themes of money, as they both had been accustomed to hand-me-downs, and had never had a pair of brand new shoes of their own. The yearning for a new pair of shoes can be seen as more than a material desire, but signifies a longing for a better life and economic stability.

In *Sipho's new shoes* (1992), a young boy is excited to be getting new shoes for the first time. Money (and not having money) is a central issue in this story. Although Sipho seems young, he has to contribute to the family income by helping his mother sell vegetables at the market. He has hopes of one day making enough money to buy new shoes, his desire evident in the following excerpt:

He had never had new shoes. His had always been given to him by other people – worn, not the right size, no longer shiny. He would love new shoes. He would treasure them. Perhaps he wouldn't even wear them? Perhaps he'd keep them in a box wrapped in tissue paper, just to look at (Christopher, 1992).

After a good day of sales, his mother asks him what he would like to buy with the extra money. It is clear that having extra money is a rare occurrence, as Siphos mother usually complains about barely having enough money for school fees and food. Siphos is so excited at the prospect of getting new shoes that he can hardly sleep the night before they go to the shops. Once there, he is enthralled by the selection of shoes, and enjoys the sensuality of touching and smelling them. The illustration reinforces this, depicting the shoes as Siphos object of desire, glowing tantalisingly as he looks on with obvious glee at the prospect of owning his very own pair. Unfortunately, his dreams are dashed after his mother is mugged leaving them with no money to purchase the new shoes. Mr. Mabaso, a kind stranger, offers him a weekend job so that he can save up money to buy the shoes himself.

Not so fast, Songololo (1985) is also about a young boys excitement when he receives a new pair of takkies. The new shoes, a gift from his grandmother, change his entire demeanour. His nickname, "Songololo", is a slang word for a centipede, given to him because of his dawdling ways. After he tries on his new shoes for the first time, he gets a "spring in his step", prompting his grandmother to admonish him "Not so fast, Songololo", as he hurries about. The preoccupation of both boys' with getting new shoes can be read as a symbol for wealth. In these stories, shoes take on meaning beyond footwear as shorthand for the aspirations of financial security of the characters too poor to afford them.

The symbolism of shoes is not a notable feature in all of the books included in the present sample. For example, even though the first box George tries to fit into in *Out of the box* happens to be a shoebox, all the characters wear shoes throughout the book. *The boy on the beach* has barefoot characters, but this is appropriate for the outdoor setting of a story taking place at the beach. Some of the few characters in *A kite's flight* supposedly represent the native dress of the

land, such as the Pygmies, who are half-clothed and do not wear shoes. This corresponds to the image of Africa as a backwards and primitive place constructed in the book. In *Kensani's kite*, the icon of the “barefoot rural child” is personified by the young protagonist. As he is a young child, and lives in a rural area, it is not particularly unusual for Kensani to be without shoes throughout the story. He is not hindered by being barefoot in any way, and runs, climbs trees and walks on rough ground and veld grass without shoes. The other character in the story, Pondamali, wears nondescript shoes. The boy in *Perfectly me* is barefoot throughout the entire story, in contrast to his impeccably dressed sister. His feet are also dirty, an indication of his time spent outdoors without shoes. He remains barefoot, even after his bath, leaving his transformation from a scruffy adventurer to a clean “mamma’s boy” incomplete. By not wearing shoes or clothes at the end of the story, he retains his masculinity after participating in all the “feminine” rituals that distinguish his sister.

The pattern of black people depicted without shoes is most striking when adults are represented barefoot. In *The gift of the sun*, both the main character, Thulani, and his wife, Dora, are portrayed barefoot in inappropriate situations. Thulani is a farmer, and the outdoor working conditions necessitate protective footwear. Dora also takes her shoes off to pick bananas and collect eggs. They both own shoes, as shown in the illustrations, and wear them occasionally, but are portrayed barefoot almost as often as they are with shoes on.

The most blatant instance of barefoot adults in inappropriate situations is found in *Little lucky Lolo and the Cola Cup Competition*. All of the characters, both adult and child, are barefoot in this story throughout the entire book. The main character, Lolo, plays soccer and walks to school barefoot, as do the rest of the children. The adult characters are also barefoot. Mama Lolo quite literally exemplifies the saying “barefoot and pregnant”, although it seems to

be inconsistent with her style of dress, as she is shown wearing makeup and jewellery, but not shoes. Lolo's school teacher, an adult in a position of authority, is also portrayed as barefoot. This demeaning portrayal of women ridicules them despite their achievements as a business-owning single mother and an educator.

What a gentleman is the only book in the sample that mentions shoes explicitly in the text and illustrations. Madiba is the only character ever depicted barefoot, while all the other characters wear shoes. He is shown exercising barefoot, with his slippers shown under the bed beside him. Shoes make an appearance in two other important instances in the book. First, Josia Thugwane is shown being interviewed at his township home. He is shown seated on a tin drum, with his running shoes lined up next to him. Here, the shoes represent the tools of achievement and are symbolic of his success, yet when juxtaposed with the township surroundings, seem to suggest that it is not enough to elevate his living conditions.

The second time shoes are of importance in the book are at the end when the grandmother uses the expression "he can put his shoes under my bed anytime..." This provocative statement is illustrated literally, and depicts Mandela putting a variety of shoes under what is presumably the grandmother's bed. A child would most likely interpret the saying in this way, but most adults would pick up the implied sexual innuendo. Representing the president as a Casanova does not add anything to the storyline, but can be seen as part of another more general trend in the representation of black men as promiscuous and virile. Frantz Fanon (1967) discusses the obsession of white people with the black sexuality, and explains that the physicality of the black man's body is conceptualised as an indicator of sexual potency and a further marker of animal-like "Otherness". The book starts off by celebrating Mandela as a great man, but by ending with

the odd “ladies’ man” connotations, it falls into a stereotypical and derogatory representation of black masculinity.

The remaining two books, *Vuyo’s whistle* and *Ouma Ruby’s secret*, share a similar theme with regards to shoes – being barefoot at home and wearing shoes to town. The main character in *Vuyo’s whistle* wears plain veldskoene on the cover, but his feet are not visible in the rest of the book. His younger sister, Baby, plays barefoot outside, but is shown wearing shoes on their excursion to town.

“Don’t be sad,” said his Mama that night as she tucked him in. Vuyo shook his head. “Tomorrow will be wonderful,” she smiled. “It’s our Christmas shopping day, remember?” “I remember, Mama.” “We’ll take the bus to town, to those big shops with the lights and music and decorations.” Vuyo nodded. Christmas shopping was always fun, but he couldn’t stop thinking about his whistle, even in his dreams (Urson, 2002).

The shopping trip to town is positioned in the text as an occasion that is looked forward to. Mama describes the attractions of town, “those big shops with the lights and music and decorations”, something they do not have access to or experience every day. Getting dressed up and wearing shoes would fit in as part of the preparations for this event

In *Ouma Ruby’s secret*, the main character, Chris, also wears shoes to town when he goes shopping with his grandmother, but prefers to be barefoot when he plays outside with his cousins, as many young boys often do. He is shown barefoot with his brother in the beginning of the book in a family photograph illustration outside their house, while the mother, father and

younger sister all wear shoes. The representations of barefoot characters in this book are not out of place, as they are shown wearing shoes at appropriate times as well.

CHAPTER 7: BLACK FAMILIES AND BLACK FATHERS

Although the configuration of families have changed much over the years, as have their functions, families remain the most important institution for raising, taking care of and socializing children into society (Barbarin, 2001). Family plays an integral role in the lives of children, providing support in a number of ways, including financial and emotional. Families are where children learn values and are educated. The impact of family on the lives of children is implied in statements which attribute the moral decay of society to the breakdown of traditional family structures.

Especially in Africa, fatherhood is conceptualized as a social role, as is characteristic of collectivist societies, and continues to carry this meaning even with the modern influences of urbanization. The isiZulu word *Baba*, captures this combination of the social and traditional definitions of fatherhood (Richter & Morrell, 2008). Many men take on the role of father by providing for children who are not their biological offspring, broadening the definition of father to a man who takes the responsibility of caring for and protecting a child (Richter & Morrell, 2008).

In many developed countries, men are becoming increasingly involved in the lives of their children. Progressive laws in countries such as Australia and Sweden, which allow for generous paternity leave, encourage men to be more involved in the lives of their children from an early age (Haataja, 2009; Ray, Gornick & Schmitt, 2010). While differences exist between various countries, there seems to be a tendency noted toward a slight increase in the time men allocate to care activities associated with decreases in family size in general (Barker & Pawlak, 2011). Historically, there is evidence of black fathers being involved in rearing their children, as noted by Hunter, writing about life in Pondoland in 1936 (cited in Wilson, 2005): “Fathers also

are often devoted to their children, and make much of them when small, carrying them about in their arms, fondling them, playing with them, and teaching them to dance.”

Times have changed, and the influence of this trend in the South African context seems less widespread. Recent estimates suggest that 54% of males between the ages of 15 and 49 are fathers (Posel, Devey & Morrell, 2004, 2005). Of this number, less than half have daily contact with their children. Research also indicates the percentage of deceased and absent fathers is also on the increase. Another study by Posel and Devey (2005) indicates that the number of absent and deceased fathers is highest in black families. Changing economic circumstances and the persistent effects of HIV and AIDS have also impacted the preponderance of female- and child-headed households.

High numbers of men abscond from their parental duties, even when they are able to afford child maintenance, but many fathers are often forced to abandon their responsibilities because of their inability to provide for their families financially. The competitive job market makes it increasingly difficult to earn the income necessary to support a family, especially for men who lack the education. The shame of not being able to provide forces many men to detach themselves from their families, showing the importance of the economic aspect of the fatherhood role to them. The “burden of failure” prompts many of these men to desert their families physically, as well as emotionally, by absconding their responsibilities and turning to substance abuse (Ramphela, 2002). The Zulu practice of *Inhlawulo* mandates men who have impregnated a woman outside of marriage to pay a certain amount of money to her family. Men who cannot afford to pay this sum often choose to stay away from their children because of the shame of not being able to provide, or are restricted from being involved by the family of the mother (Hunter, 2006).

This desertion has negative consequences for children with absent fathers, of which poor, black children are disproportionately affected. In *Steering by the stars* (2002), Mamphela Ramphele asks the following pertinent questions:

“How do poor young black men model their emergent manhood in the absence of adult male guidance? Or even worse, how do young men shape their own manhood in the presence of negative models: unemployed, alcoholic, abusive and destructive men in such large proportions in their own homes and neighbourhoods? How do young men avoid asking the question: what is wrong with black men? Or how do they respond to the same question if asked? How do young men develop the self-confidence to relate to women if women dominate the provision of so much of their everyday survival needs? How do these young men learn to give as men when men seem to be overwhelmingly recipients of care and not its givers?”

These questions are important in examining how black fathers are represented in post-apartheid children’s literature.

The definition of a father

The meaning of the word “father” is varied, with different connotative and denotative definitions. The word father in its simplest definition refers to the biological partner involved in the conception of a child, but the role of a father extends beyond the physiological. Fatherhood encompasses a range of meanings according to differing cultural contexts; it is a social role (Richter & Morrell, 2006). In comparison to motherhood, fatherhood is often thought of as more of a “provider” role than a nurturing role.

May and Strikwerda (1996) suggest that contemporary fatherhood be understood in terms of nurturance. They define this as an ideal “which involves caring and rearing toward maturity, involving nourishment, but also humane discipline and creative education in the public domain” (May & Strikwerda, 1996, p. 208). Fathers are not typically thought of as nurturers, with biological and psychological arguments for why women are more suited to nurturing being used to justify this point. Historically, the roles of father as ruler and educator have taken precedence, with discipline and physical sustenance being valued over caring. These functions centred on fatherhood as ownership and didacticism, which leaves little room for nurturing (May & Strikwerda, 1996).

They identify three contemporary types of father: the traditional father, the augmented traditional father and the Sensitive New Age Guy or SNAG father (May & Strikwerda, 1996). The first, the traditional father, earns a living outside of the home and conforms to conventional expectations of the father as dominant in the public realm, and as provider and disciplinarian. In the second type, the augmented traditional father, similar characteristics of the first type are maintained, but with the acknowledgement of the necessity of partnership between husband and wife in response to modern economic pressures. The third type of father aligns closely with recent conceptions of metrosexuality, and differs from the other two types in that he sees his relationship with his children as fulfilling in a way other relationships are not (May & Strikwerda, 1996).

All three of these models are inadequate for various reasons. It has become increasingly difficult to rely on an economic division of labour which restricts women to the home and men to the workplace. While the augmented traditional father avoids this, this type still fails to incorporate nurturance as a primary factor in fatherhood. The SNAG father seems to move closer

to this ideal of caring, but focuses on the experiences of the father, to the detriment of reciprocity. The model of a nurturing father presented by these authors is one which aims to give children “a broader, more expansive view of what men and women are capable of is perhaps the most important long-range developmental benefit of having a nurturing father” (May & Strikwerda, 1996, p. 207).

The links between fatherhood and masculinity appear to be evident; however, the two concepts intersect at complex levels. The two most important factors to consider when looking at constructions of masculinity and fatherhood in South Africa are the “persistence of unemployment which affects young black men disproportionately” and the “historical legacy of racial emasculation by which African men were infantilized” (Richter & Morrell, 2006). Redefining fatherhood in positive terms requires an understanding of these issues. Beardshaw (2005) identifies education as an important avenue which has the potential to influence young people’s thinking about the roles of mothers and fathers. In his view, some important interventions in education would include portraying accurately in all aspects of the curriculum the diversity of fatherhood, including responsible fathers who are active participants in their children’s lives.

In general, empirical research supports the idea that men and children both benefit from good father-child relationships. Men are motivated to look after their health and work hard knowing they are responsible and receive love from children who are dependent on them. Mboya and Nesengani (1999) found that boys who lived in father-present households had higher academic achievement than boys who lived in father-absent households. All children are adversely affected from growing up without a father, but father absence or lack of contact with fathers appears to have its most dramatic effects on male children. Boys who grow up with their

father tend to be less aggressive than boys who grow up without this male guidance (Richter & Morrell, 2008).

Fathers in children's literature

The way fathers are represented in cultural artefacts is interesting because they may be related to the social reality of fatherhood and cultural expectations associated with this role. Fathers are typically underrepresented in children's literature in general, and have often been portrayed as cold and distant from their children (Anderson & Hamilton, 2005). The lack of fathers in children's literature could be related to the preponderance of female writers in the genre, but can also be seen as part of the social problem of fatherless families, which appears to be prevalent in the changing family structures of contemporary society (Anderson & Hamilton, 2005). In a study of American award-winning picturebooks published between 1938 and 2002, it was found that while fathers appeared almost as often as mothers, they were depicted in significantly less interactions with their children as were the mothers (Flannery Quinn, 2006).

Where fathers do appear, they are seldom involved in the lives of their children, and "are portrayed in a capable, take-charge manner, seldom consulting the mother about any decision" (Kortenhaus & Demarest, 1993). Flannery Quinn's (2006) research on the culture of American fatherhood in children's literature was based on the premise that construction of meanings associated with fatherhood may be aided by cultural artefacts, such as picturebooks. In this study it was found that fathers provide verbal encouragement, teach their children skills and play with them, but are less likely to show physical affection when compared to mothers in picturebooks. It also noted that a trend toward increasing involvement of fathers and children in storybooks coincides with shifting patterns of fatherhood imagery in America (Flannery Quinn, 2006).

Adams, Walker and O'Connell (2011) found similar trends in their content analysis of representations of parenting in picturebooks. One important difference was the elimination of sex difference in the expression of nurturing, which indicates a positive shift in the representation of fatherhood.

Black fathers in children's literature

Research on the representation of black fathers in particular in children's literature is limited, and reflects the need for more books from all cultural backgrounds that reflect full involvement of both parents in child-rearing. Lane (1998) views children's literature as a powerful tool to shape the minds of young children before they are influenced by the barrage of hegemonic media images. He argues that scholars, thinkers, parents and educators need to harness this valuable tool to develop critical minds. The positive representation of black fathers in children's literature has the potential to "heal, mend, and teach an aspiring generation, providing the kind of literary model for fatherhood that children need" (LaFaye & Hendrickson, 2001).

Black Fathers in South African Children's Literature

During apartheid, laws such as the Group Areas Act (1950) and other legislation was aimed at partitioning the country in such a way as to preserve the most productive areas for white use, and the rest for black people. These circumstances made it necessary for many black men to leave their families on the poor reserves and seek work to support them on the mines and in the towns.

Migrant labour has emerged as a theme in many South African children's picturebooks. *At the Crossroads* (1991), is a story about children who anxiously await the return of their fathers who have been away working at the mines. A similar story is told in *Jafta's Father*, which deals with a father who has to leave his son in the rural areas to work in the city. Their separation is echoed in the way in which they are dressed: Jafta is dressed in shorts, while his father wears Western clothing

The entire *Jafta* series, and other stories such as these, function as a reminder of an important time in the history of the country, as well as portraying the diversity of family situations. In *My Granny can Read and Write* (Naidoo, 1996), the young protagonist's father also works away from home for long periods of time. Narratives such as these illustrate the importance of being able to provide financially for the family, and how this often supersedes the nurturing role and ability of many fathers in this position. The value placed on financial provision is again highlighted in *I love my father* (Ngobese, 1997). A boy gives reasons for why he loves his father, with almost all of them being related to his father's ability to work and provide for the family. He admires his father's work ethic, saying "I love my father. Every morning very early he leaves the house to go to work" and "I love my father. Every morning very early he goes to work to make money". The repetition of these sentiments almost implies that the boy's love for his father is contingent on his ability to make a living, or at least is very important to him.

The books examined in earlier work (Thyssen, 2009) made connections between Harris' typology of male norms (1995) and South African children's picturebooks. One of the themes was the "Be like your father" message, which positions fathers as an example of manliness for their sons. This message emphasises the importance of fathers as role models from whom they

can learn to be men. Of the 20 books in the sample, father figures made an appearance in only five, were briefly mentioned in a further three, but completely absent from the remaining 12. In *We shouldn't keep it* (Walton, 1991), the absence of a father figure or any adult male character is especially noticeable, given that the story includes the birth of a new baby.

Where they did play a role in the stories, fathers were idolised, they worked hard to provide for their families, they were disciplinarians, as well as giving their sons encouragement and affection. In *Too small Themba* (Boucher, 1992), a young boy wants to help his father fix the car, but is shooed away because he is “too small”. Fatherly love and dedication is shown in *Sipho hides* (Mntubu, 1997), which portrays a hardworking father who goes to great lengths to find his missing son. A disciplinarian father figure is represented in *The boy in the middle and the flying spaghetti* (Donvé, 1998), which shows a father admonishing his son's rambunctious behaviour.

An example of nurturing fatherhood is shown in *I want to see the moon* (1984), which depicts a father as a single parent, which is quite progressive for a book published in the eighties. He is very involved in his son's life, and plays the role of mother and father by attending to him at night, being affectionate, and playing with him. The illustrations show him to be a competent parent, and adept at the “motherly” tasks of changing his son's nappies, doing the laundry and keeping him occupied. Stories such as this, which challenge traditional gender role norms by showing fathers engaged in nurturing and caring roles, can be used to encourage more egalitarian parenting. The benefits of close relations with fathers in the development of healthy masculinity is evident (Connell, 2000), and there is also evidence that absent fathers can be detrimental to the development of young boys (Anderson & Hamilton, 2005).

Black fathers in the sample

Fathers are mentioned in six of the picturebooks in this sample, and play an active role in four of these books (*A kite's flight*, *What a gentleman* and *Vuyo's whistle*). It is unclear whether the main character in *The Gift of the Sun* is a father or not, as no mention is made of the children in the illustrations being his. No father is present in three of the stories: *Perfectly me*, *Out of the box*, and *Little lucky Lolo and the Cola Cup Competition*.

Three of the four picturebooks in which fathers play an active role portray them as loving, nurturing men interested in the well-being of their children and invested in spending time with them. In *A kite's flight*, the father-son relationship forms an important part of the narrative. The story begins with a young boy asking his father to help him build a kite. The activity itself is represented as an opportunity for bonding, with the labels indicating the required materials as a suggestion for readers of the book to engage in the same activity. The father is portrayed as being helpful, giving direction, but also allowing his son to take action and make his own decisions. He shares both his knowledge of building and flying a kite, as well as, it appears, Africa. The father uses the kite's travels across the continent to highlight all the important landmarks. It finally comes to rest in Egypt, with another father and son who undertake to fix it. It can be inferred that the nurturing father-son relationship depicted is something that transcends cultures and should be part of the experience of all boys growing up.

A nurturing father-son relationship is also portrayed in *The boy on the beach*. The simple story of a common nuclear family excursion includes the model of a father who is involved in his son's life. He appears to have a very close relationship with his son, encouraging him to try new things while still being protective of him. The father provides a safe base for his son to explore new territory, and appears to value independence and initiative when he is not angered by his

son's wandering. He is also not critical of the boy's apprehension, and instead encourages and rewards his son's efforts with a treat of ice-cream. This positive representation of black family and fatherhood was written in 1996, and can be seen as part of a movement toward more nuanced and three-dimensional representations of black people and families.

What a gentleman presents Nelson Mandela as an icon and the quintessential family man. The intersection of masculinity and fatherhood require that a good man be a good father as well. Mandela is portrayed as both the "father of the nation", in his diplomatic capacity as the president, and as the head of his own home. As a father figure for the country, he is universally adored, mingles and takes care of the needs of the people, and is especially loving and attentive to children. He provides for a multicultural group of children economically (as illustrated in the Children's Fund cheque), as well as emotionally (inviting children to a special birthday celebration each year). Family photographs with him surrounded by children and relatives are intended to show the importance of maintaining family relationships in being a good man. It is interesting that this part of Mandela's character is highlighted as part of the requirements for being a "gentleman", an indication of the importance of family to masculinity. These ideals seem at odds with the depiction of him as a Casanova later in the book, making this an ambiguous representation of black family and fatherhood.

The father in *Vuyo's whistle* does not play an important role in the story, which is centred on a young boy and how his toy whistle gets him in and out of trouble. He is depicted as a solitary character, spending more time by himself than in the company of others, even though other family members make an appearance. Vuyo's father is only mentioned once in the story directly, as dancing to the music at the shops during their Christmas shopping excursion to town.

There is no interaction between Vuyo and his father, and the reference to him dancing casts him as an ineffective, distracted element removed from his son's life.

Fatherhood is not expressly referred to or mentioned in only one of the books, *The Gift of the Sun*. It is not indicated in the text or the images of the book whether Thulani and Dora have any children of their own. Although there are children featured in some of the illustrations, they seem to serve in a more decorative function and do not have any important role in the narrative. Thulani's initial ineptitude in his agricultural pursuits could also be an indication of his deficiency in fatherliness.

In *Kensani's kite*, it is mentioned that the main character, Kensani, has a father, but he does not appear again in the story. Pondamali himself is also a father, although his children have left him to "seek their fortunes in the city" (Deall, 1995), attesting to the persistence of forms of migrant labour splitting families because of economic decisions. Although Kensani and Pondamali are not family, the relationship which grows between them is similar to a father-son relationship. Pondamali is nurturing, kind, and shares his knowledge and skill with the young Kensani, making the story an example of a positive representation of a black male in a fatherly role. This ties in to various types of African world views which view child-rearing as a collaborative effort, as sayings such as the following illustrate: "it takes a village to raise a child".

Another story in which the father is referred to briefly, but does not play a significant part in the narrative is *Ouma Ruby's secret*. The main character's father only appears in the family photograph on the second page of the book, and is not mentioned in the text at all. Chris appears to interact more with his mother, and she is the one who tells him about his grandmother's inability to read. He also seems to have a close relationship with his grandmother, as she is aware

of his love for reading. Even though fathers and male characters do not play a big role in the story, the family is presented as being a close-knit unit, living together and sharing holidays and celebrating special occasions with each other.

Perfectly me omits any father or male character entirely, with the nameless main character displaying stereotypically masculine traits without any direct source of influence to attribute this to in the story. Aside from a framed picture of a man on the wall, who could be the father, another family member or religious figure, there is no other overt male influence besides the antics of the main character.

In *Out of the box*, no parental figures are mentioned in the story. Although George's journey starts at home, he embarks on this quest for self-discovery without the help of any family members. The absence of parental figures is a feature of certain Disney animated feature films for children, such as *Bambi*, *The Lion King* and others, in which the absence of parental authority is used as a tool for character development. This seems to be the case for George, the main character in this story, as he comes to realize his self-worth independent of any input from a father or mother figure.

The most striking omission of a father is in the story of *Little lucky Lolo and the Cola Cup Competition*. The main character's father is not mentioned at all, and he is born as a result of his mother's prayers according to the story. This is not too far from reality, with a recent study indicating that half of the children born at Baragwanath Hospital in Johannesburg had no male support (Richter & Morrell, 2008). Aside from there being no reference to who his father might be or what might have happened to him, there are also no other adult male characters in the story.

The lack of black male characters speaks to the legacy of migrant labour which separated fathers from their families for long periods of time. The effect of absent black fathers on

generations of black boys who grew up without consistent male role models cannot be assumed to have no impact on contemporary problems of broken homes. The idea of black people as promiscuous and the perpetuation of the stereotype of an unstable family unit can be traced in narratives which naturalize the absent father in stories about black people. The counterpoint to this is the representation of a strong, single mother figure in the absence of a father or male role model, and thus is encouraging.

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CHAPTER 8: REPRESENTATIONS OF BLACK PEOPLE AS AND WITH ANIMALS

Various academic disciplines have offered explanations for why difference is of such importance. Linguistics suggests that difference is necessary because it is essential to the existence of meaning. This approach posits that meaning is relational, and is often expressed through binary opposites. While such distinctions can be useful, there is also the danger that they disregard grey areas by being oversimplistic and reductionist. In addition, binary opposites are rarely neutral, meaning there is a relation of power which privileges one concept over the other. Language theories of difference argue that difference is necessary because meaning can only be constructed through dialogue with the 'Other'. According to this understanding, meaning cannot be fixed, as it is constantly being renegotiated in dialogue. Anthropological explanations of difference work from the premise that culture is dependent on the assigning of meaning to things according to a system of classification. These systems are based on the marking of difference, and consequently constitute culture. Problems occur when things appear in the wrong categories, disturbing cultural order. Psychoanalytic explanations of difference argue that that the 'Other' is necessary in order to constitute the self and sexual identity. It can be seen from these different views that the notion of difference is of significance, and can have both positive and negative meanings (Hall, 1997).

One of the most contested areas in the realm of difference is that of race. Hall (1997) argues that many of the markings of racial difference evident in popular representations can be traced back to three critical encounters between the 'West' and black people: slavery, colonization, and immigration from the Third World. Black people were valued as slaves because of their strong, athletic bodies, and treated and traded in ways similar to that of non-

human animals. The colonial enterprise was partially fuelled by the impetus to discover more about Africa, and its mysterious and exotic creatures and people, which were often conflated. While slavery and colonialism in their original sense have both ended, the ideas of black people they generated remain. The influx of people from Third World countries to the First World in search of economic opportunities has reiterated these stereotypes in different forms as seemingly progressive societies deal with problems of racism and xenophobia.

Although the biological reality of race as a legitimate subdivision of humanity according to genetics has been discredited (Smedley & Smedley, 2005), the meanings attached to socially constructed categories of race persist and continue to have tangible effects. Bogle's (1973) study on black stereotypes in American films identifies the "Coon" as a derogatory representation of black people as "subhuman creatures", the name itself being a disambiguation of the word raccoon. This stereotype originated during American slavery, a time when black people were bought and sold as livestock and viewed as animals, to the extent that some slave owners boasted about working their slaves "like horses" (Pilgrim, 2012). Another racist stereotype based on the representation of black people as animals is the Golliwog. This caricature is based on a character from a children's story book written by Florence Kate Upton in 1895. The Golliwog, described as a grotesque creature, with very dark black skin, exaggerated red lips and wild frizzy hair, was based on black minstrel dolls the author played with as a child (Pilgrim, 2012). MacGregor (1992, as cited in Pilgrim, 2012) describes the Golliwog as a "cross between a dwarf-sized black minstrel and an animal". The animal-like comparisons were often times so literal that he was sometimes depicted with paws (Pilgrim, 2012).

The conceptualization and portrayal of black people as animals is not only seen in popular discourse, but is also found in children's literature. In her study of the representation of

Africa in children's literature, Yenika-Agbaw (2008) discusses the theme of representing Africa as a place where people share space with animals. This pattern of representation is repeated to the point where the line between depicting African people with animals and as animals becomes blurred.

The setting of the stories would understandably influence the inclusion of animals in the text and illustrations. Of the ten books in the sample, eight of them had animals. The two books that did not feature any animals (*Out of the box* and *Ouma Ruby's secret*) were set in urban locations. Of the remaining books which did have animals, three were set in rural locations (*Kensani's kite*; *The gift of the sun*; *Vuyo's whistle*), one in a township (*Little Lucky Lolo and the Cola Cup competition*), two in suburban areas (*What a gentleman* and *Perfectly me*), and two outdoors (*The boy on the beach* and *A kite's flight*).

Following Strömberg's analysis of the representation of black people in cartoons, there are three levels on which racism may be distinguished. The first is the pictorial, which refers to "depiction with stereotypical attributes"; the second is the textual, which refers to "language [which] presents the person negatively" and thirdly content, which refers to the "consistent portrayal [of black people] as evil, stupid, subservient" (2003, p. 24). These levels were considered in the analysis of the sample, with a focus on the portrayal of black people and animals in the illustrations (pictorial), references to animals in the text (textual), as well as the overall theme of the picturebook (content).

All appearances of animals in the text and images of the picturebooks in the sample were counted and tabulated (see Appendix C). The animals which were counted in the illustrations were only those that were of actual animals, and not pictures of them. Textual references were

divided into simple (mentioning the animal by name) and complex (associating the animal with a deeper meaning, metaphor or other type of comparison).

A pastoral setting would presumably make the inclusion of animals in the story necessary. *The gift of the sun* makes reference to animals in the text a total of 16 times. Of those, 14 are simple, and two are complex. There is an example of zoomorphism in the description “horns of the crescent moon”, and Thulani connects the appearance of the first swallows with the approach of summer. A wide variety of farm animals (13 different types) are depicted in the illustrations of the picturebook. They appear on almost every single page of the book, as well as on the front cover. The depiction of animals and their young also herald the change of season: hens with chicks; cat with kittens; sheep with lambs and cow with calf.

What a gentleman contains no references to animals in the text, but they do appear in the illustrations. The cat and dog in the illustrations appear in domestic settings, as family pets. A whale, and shark fins around Table Bay are also shown. In a picture of Nelson Mandela greeting a queue of his admirers, a photograph of a lioness appears in background, surrounded somewhat inexplicably by RDP (Reconstruction and Development Programme) houses and skyscrapers.

The boy on the beach takes place outdoors at the seaside, but the only animals that appear in the illustrations are seagulls and a dog. In the text, there is one simple reference to animals, and two more complex references. The young boy is compared to an animal with the description of him “kangaroo jumping” across the sand. Although not strictly animals, the author personifies how scary the big waves appear to the young boy by calling them “monster waves”.

The dusty rural setting for *Vuyo’s whistle* depicts goats, dogs and chickens in the illustrations. In the text, animals are mentioned four times, with three more complex references in addition. The author uses onomatopoeic comparison to describe the sound of the whistle as

similar to “a newborn chicken”. Onomatopoeia is also used to describe the barking of the dogs (“ruff ruff”). When Vuyo’s whistle-blowing upsets the animals, it takes some time for “the dogs and chickens and Baby” to settle down again. The arrangement of words in this manner positions Baby as one with the animals, and also one of the animals.

Although there are no references to animals in the text of *Little Lucky Lolo and the Cola Cup competition*, the same puppy appears on almost every single page. The puppy is Lolo’s constant companion, accompanying him to school and even practicing with him as he trains for the soccer competition.

Kensani’s kite is set in a rural village, but the only animals that appear in the illustrations are birds. The carvings Pondamali makes are of animals too, a buck and an eagle, an indication of how closely intertwined his livelihood is with animals and nature. The mentions of animals in text contain the highest number of metaphoric references in the sample. The contextual framing of phrases such as “a dassie warmed itself” and “little creature of the veld” indicate an affinity with nature. Pondamali’s care and precision in the crafting his carved animals and the success he has in selling them show his skill in keen observation from hours spent in nature. The kite Pondamali helps Kensani to make is compared to an eagle in the text throughout the book. “Just as the eagle uses its tail to balance and direct its flight, so this tail will help our kite to fly as well”. Kensani excitedly declares that his kite will be the “eagle of the village kites”. The kite takes flight, “like a wounded bird at first”, but then soars high. Pondamali’s joy at being productive and his new friendship with Kensani is personified by the description of his spirit “soaring in the wind, dipping, and then gliding, effortless as an eagle”, an example of anthropomorphism. The story ends with Pondamali carving an eagle as a gift for his new, young friend, an eagle, as a symbol of his spirit for Kensani to keep.

The story *Perfectly Me* is set in middle-class suburbia, and does not contain any explicit references to animals in the text. The young protagonist does, however, compare himself to a “monster” when he sees his dirty reflection in the mirror. In this case, being unwashed and ungroomed is associated with being in a state that is less than human. The illustrations support this idea, with all the animals that appear in them being connected to the boy. The well-known children’s rhyme, which states that little boys are made of “frogs and snails and puppy dogs’ tails”, is evident in the way his “boyishness” is confirmed and emphasized by his association with animals in the illustrations. His side of the room is decorated with animal patterns, his window looks out onto a bird catching a worm, a frog captured in a jar is amongst his toys, and, most tellingly, animals are even found on his person. A small, indeterminate creature hangs from his shirt, and a worm burrows from an apple core in his pocket.

A kite’s flight has the largest variety of animals depicted in the illustrations, with 25 different types of animals being depicted. Aside from a dog, all the animals portrayed are wild and exotic, which is consistent with the majority of representations of Africa as a place filled with strange and dangerous creatures. The references to animals in the text confirm this, speaking of “wild animals” as the kite flies over “the hunters and the hunted”. It is unclear which category humans fall into in this phrase, but the illustration on the adjacent page of a native figure in traditional dress, holding a spear and surrounded by wild animals suggests that African people form part of the natural landscape in the same way animals do. This is further emphasized by the presence of a safari vehicle in the distance. In this picture, African people are exhibited and being watched in the same way as the wild animals of the bush, both by the implied tourists in the 4x4, and by the readers of the story.

The similarities between historically derogatory representations of black people as animals in the illustrations and text show that although such depictions are not as blatant, the remnants of these ideologies persist in contemporary children's literature, albeit in a less malevolent form.

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CHAPTER 9: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter presents a discussion of the results of the study, focussing on the themes which emerged, as well as the limitations and suggestions for future research in the field.

Ten picturebooks published in South Africa between 1994 and 2010 (listed in Appendices) were analysed using a discourse analytic framework (Parker, 1992) incorporating ideological (Stephens, 1992), narrative (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001) and visual (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006; Serafini, 2010) methods.

The themes that emerged most strongly about race were all interrelated, and presented negative stereotypes about black people. The ‘black people as rural dwellers’ discourse positioned black people away from the cities in impoverished conditions, and was seen in picturebooks where characters had to travel to town. The ‘black people as poor’ theme portrayed black people as disadvantaged. The most obvious symbol used for this message was the depiction of black people, adult or child, without shoes. This barefoot symbolism appeared in almost all the books, and in some none of the characters wore shoes for the entire story. Black people were also shown surrounded by domestic or wild animals in many of the stories, in a way that minimised the difference between them and the non-human animals they shared space with. The professions of black characters in the books on the whole offered no aspirational professional ambitions to black boys, depicting black people as simple, backward and uneducated.

Black boys expressed a range of emotions and behaviours in the stories, some of which were typical of hegemonic masculinity, and others which were closer to “New Age Man” characteristics. Men were portrayed as workers, leaders, providers and creators, as well as having the traditional male traits of adventurousness, inventiveness and rebelliousness. They were also

portrayed as family men, sensitive to the feelings of others and interested in self-expression and personal growth. Although most of the books had no father characters, two portrayed positive father-son relationships.

Limitations and recommendations

This study focused on books generally classified as “recreational” reading material. That is, the books in the sample are usually only available to people who make an active effort to procure them, through public libraries or bookstores. Recreational picturebooks are written with this particular demographic in mind, and are often designed to appeal to the tastes of adults buying them. Future research would benefit from a comparative analysis of books used in schools to teach children to read. These “first readers” reach a much larger audience than other picturebooks and have the potential to shape the perspectives of many children at an early age.

Another limiting factor was the fact that all the books analysed were written in English. Although South Africa has nine official languages, the publication of literature in indigenous languages, besides Afrikaans, remains beleaguered for various reasons. The dominance of English and Afrikaans titles is replicated in children’s literature. The publishing industry, like many others, relies on supply and demand. However the dearth of African language books for children is influenced by this very system which feeds into itself.

The study focused on the representation of black, male characters specifically, and while this narrow categorisation provided a crisp and clearly defined area of inquiry, it overlooks the relation of blackness to whiteness. The observations made in the study many times emerged as a result of the implicit comparison with a hypothetical white character. A comparative study

looking at the representation of white male characters in South African children's picturebooks would be better positioned to make such assessments.

The category "black" was used as an inclusive term to denote all non-white races. While this aided analysis and was useful as a starting point, it negates some of the nuances of racial identity in South Africa. Being "black" does not constitute a homogenous grouping, and has been used to speak about people with vastly different backgrounds and experiences. While the use of apartheid-era race classification continues to be a topic of debate, many people identify themselves within these categories and find them meaningful despite their history. The aims of equality and transformation can still be achieved while acknowledging the many different ways people choose to define themselves in terms of race.

This study can be seen as a useful starting point for further investigation into issues of the representation of race and gender in children's literature. It would benefit and inform future research concerned with how children make sense of stereotypes. Reader response research, which focuses on how readers make meaning of texts, shows the varying interpretations different people make of the same subject matter. It would be interesting to see how the results of this study correlate with the impressions children and even adults have of the same books.

The continuing investigation of the representation of black masculinity in South African children's picturebooks is useful for the following reasons:

- to gain further insight into how stereotypes are maintained and transferred in text and images
- to identify reading material which promotes positive role models for young children, especially young black boys

As South Africa makes strides toward building a society which values each of its members, it is important to recognise the potential of children's literature in presenting aspirational role models, especially for young black boys. "*Le langage est source de malentendus.*" Antoine de Saint-Exupery (1943) notes in his classic children's book *Le Petit Prince* that language is the source of misunderstandings. Projects which examine the representation of blackness and masculinity can be a useful starting point for raising consciousness about the power of language and exploring ways of using this power in more positive ways.

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Appendix A

Parker's Seven Criteria for Distinguishing Discourse

1. *A discourse is realized in texts* – texts are ‘delimited tissues of meaning in any form that can be given an interpretative gloss
2. *A discourse is about objects* – two layers of reality referred to in objectification: the layer of reality the discourse refers to AND when the discourse sometimes refers to itself
3. *A discourse contains subjects* – we cannot avoid the perceptions of ourselves and others that discourses invite; we are also positioned in a relation of power when we are placed in relation to the discourse itself
4. *A discourse is a coherent system of meanings* – the metaphors, analogies and pictures discourses paint of a reality can be distilled into statements about that reality. We have to employ culturally available understanding as to what constitutes a topic or theme, here making a virtue of the fact that there are different competing cultures which will give different slants on the discourse, ranging from those whom the discourse benefits (and who may not even want to recognise it as a discourse) to those whom it oppresses (who are already angry about that way of talking about things and categorising people in that way).
5. *A discourse refers to other discourses* – Discourses embed, entail and presuppose other discourses to the extent that the contradictions *within* a discourse open up questions about what other discourses are at work. First, metaphors and analogies are always available from other discourses, and the space this gives a speaker to find a voice from another discourse, and even within a discourse they oppose, is theoretically limitless. (It is not limitless in practice. Second, analysis is facilitated by identifying contradictions between different ways of describing something.

6. *A discourse reflects on its own way of speaking* – it is possible to find instances where the terms chosen are commented upon. At these points, the discourse itself folds around and reflects on its own way of speaking.
7. *A discourse is historically located* – Discourses are not static; Discourses are located in time, in history, for the objects they refer to are objects constituted in the past by the discourse or related discourses. A discourse refers to past references to those objects.

Three auxiliary criteria

8. *Discourses support institutions* – the most interesting discourses are those which are implicated in some way with the structure of institutions.
9. *Discourses reproduce power relations* – Discourses often do reproduce power relations BUT discourse \neq power (discourse and power do not necessarily entail one another)
10. *Discourses have ideological effects* – not all discourses are ideological (because then it would be everywhere and be redundant); ideology \neq truth (We should see ideology, rather, as a description of *relationships* and *effects*, and the category should be employed to describe relationships at a particular place and historical period)

Steps for analysis

1. Treating our objects of study as texts which are described, put into words
2. Exploring connotations through some sort of free association, which is best done with other people
3. Asking what objects are referred to, and describing them
4. Talking about the talk as if it were an object, a discourse
5. Specifying what types of person are talked about in this discourse, some of which may already have been identified as objects
6. Speculating about what they can say in the discourse, what you could say if you identified with them (what rights to speak in that way of speaking)
7. Mapping a picture of the world this discourse presents
8. Working out how a text using this discourse would deal with objections to the terminology
9. Setting contrasting ways of speaking, discourses, against each other and looking at the different objects they constitute
10. Identifying points where they overlap, where they constitute what look like the 'same' objects in different ways
11. Referring to other texts to elaborate the discourse as it occurs, perhaps implicitly, and addresses different audiences
12. Reflecting on the term used to describe the discourse, a matter which involves moral/political choices on the part of the analyst
13. Looking at how and where the discourses emerged
14. Describing how they have changed, and told a story, usually about how they refer to things which were always there to be discovered

15. Identifying institutions which are reinforced when this or that discourse is used
16. Identifying institutions that are attacked or subverted when this or that discourse appears
17. Looking at which categories of person gain and lose from the employment of the discourse
18. Looking at who would want to promote and who would want to dissolve the discourse
19. Showing how a discourse connects with other discourses which sanction oppression
20. Showing how the discourses allow dominant groups to tell their narratives about the past in order to justify the present, and prevent those who use subjugated discourses from making history (Parker, 2004, p. 252 – 261).

Appendix B: Story Tables

STORY (what is narrated)	
Events:	Pondamali carves, Kensani chases plastic bag, Pandomali instructs Kensani to find bamboo, Kensani struggles to break the bamboo, Pandomali uses his knife to cut two shoots, Pandomali cuts the plastic bag, fastens it to the bamboo sticks and makes a tail, they walk up a hill and fly the kite, they draw the kite in together, Kensani goes home. Pandomali carves an eagle, Kensani brings Pandomali a pawpaw.
Actions (processes)	
Happenings (improvements / deteriorations)	Plastic bag flutters by, the kite flies, sun begins to set
Existents: Characters/Actors	Pandomali, an old widower, and Kensani, a young village boy
Setting { time place	A rural village, an indeterminate time (the present or not too distant past). No visible markers in text or image to position it pre, during, or postapartheid.
DISCOURSE (the narrating)	
Processes of Selection (what is <u>read</u> , but includes both what is stated and what is implied)	Let the string out!” Ponomali shouted, somewhat surprised at the intensity of his voice. He suddenly felt like a boy again. He was no longer an old man in a tired body, but felt as if he was reaching new heights along with the kite. He laughed in delight, his spirit soaring in the wind – rising, then dipping, and then gliding, effortless as an eagle.

	<p>This excerpt of text describes Pandomali's excitement as the kite takes flight. The beginning of the story starts with him carving alone with only the veld creatures for company, longing for conversation. It is no wonder the passion in his voice as he excitedly watches the kite surprises him. The kite becomes a metaphor for his rejuvenation. It is implied that there is renewal for the old who are open to the young. For this to take place, the experience and expertise must be appreciated and respected by the young.</p>
<p>Mode: narrative descriptive argumentative</p>	<p>The mode is narrative, as the words and feelings of the characters are portrayed, and descriptive, as the progression of events is told.</p>
<p>Narrative Processes:</p>	<p>The narrative voice switches between a nonfocalized perspective and an externally focalized narrator using one character's point of view (from Pandomali's perspective). This is another way in which age is given precedence over youth, as Kensani's point of view is neglected.</p>
<p>a) Narrating agent(s) narrator(s) implied author</p>	
<p>b) Receptors narratee(s) implied reader</p>	
<p>Point of view from which 'story' is presented: narrator p.o.v. character focalization</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The literal/perceptual point of view is that of a detached outsider (extradiagetic-heterodiagetic). • The figurative/conceptual point of view is that of a traditional African worldview and family values.

ideology (overt/implicit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The transferred/interest point of view benefits people interested in promoting African and conservative values.
Order (or sequence)	<p>The order of events starts with Pandomali, an old, lonely man carving by himself. A gust of wind blows the plastic bag young Kensani is playing with by (interesting, the wind is how they meet and also what makes the kite fly). Pandomali helps Kensani make a kite and they take it to a hill to fly. The next day Kensani brings Pandomali a pawpaw in thanks and Pandomali has started carving an eagle. The sense is that their friendship will continue.</p>
Duration	<p>The story occurs during the space of one day.</p>
Relation (connections between 'story' existents)	<p>Pandomali is connected with nature (he knows the veld creatures and has carved them many times, he does not want to leave the rural areas for the city). Pandomali and Kensani live in the same village, and Pandomali knows Kensani's father. Pandomali and Kensani are connected when they make and fly a kite together. Their friendship is cemented when Kensani brings Pandomali a gift of a pawpaw the next day, and Pandomali is inspired to carve an eagle (possibly for his new friend). The characters are also connected to their environment, using bamboo sticks to build the kite and the wind to fly it. Pandomali makes his carvings out of wood, and Kensani thanks him with a pawpaw.</p>
Specifications of setting	<p>A small rural village in the country provides the setting. The landscape is sparse, with an old fig tree, a bamboo grove and veld grass providing vegetation. The entire story takes place outdoors.</p>

Symbols, allusions, intertexts	Kite (plastic bag 'kites' make an appearance in the illustrations of <i>The Gift Of The Sun</i> ; <i>A Kite's Flight</i> is also the story of how a kite is made) Eagle and Spirit Old/Aged and New/Youth
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STORY (what is narrated)	
Events:	Thulani basks in the sun, milks the cow, sells the cow for a goat, the goat eats their seed. Thulani sells the goat for a sheep, he shears the sheep, sells the fleece and sheep for three geese, he exchanges the geese for seed, plants the seed, collects the sunflower seed and feeds them to the hens, sells the eggs and buys a sheep, sells the sheep and buys a cow, starts trading animals, still milks the cow. Dora picks bananas, prepares the ground for the seed to be sown, weeds the field, and collects eggs.
Actions (processes)	
Happenings (improvements / deteriorations)	The seasons change from summer, to winter, to spring. The sunflowers grow and drop their seed. The hens lay more eggs after being fed the sunflower seed. Their (one) sheep has twin lambs.
Exists: Characters/Actors	Thulani, a farmer, and his wife, Dora.
Setting { time place	Rural farmland, an indeterminate time. No visible markers in text or image to position it pre, during, or postapartheid.
Processes of Selection (what is <u>read</u> , but includes both what is stated and what is implied)	Early the next morning, Thulani left the house with his cow and returned at midday, led by a grizzly old billy-goat. “Oh Thulani!” sighed Dora, his wife. “You’ve sold the cow and now we’ll have no milk! What good is this goat to use?” “Goats can look after themselves, Dora” said Thulani. Dora turned away and

	went to pick bananas.
Mode: narrative descriptive argumentative	The mode is narrative, as the words and feelings of the characters are portrayed, and descriptive, as the progression of events is told.
Narrative Processes:	The narrative voice is nonfocalized most of the story, but switches to externally focalized when Thulani's perspective is portrayed.
c) Narrating agent(s) narrator(s) implied author	
d) Receptors narratee(s) implied reader	
Point of view from which 'story' is presented: narrator p.o.v. character focalization ideology (overt/implicit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The literal/perceptual point of view is that of a detached outsider (extradiagetic-heterodiagetic). • The figurative/conceptual point of view is a conservative worldview that stresses the importance of hard work; could also be interpreted as similar to a Calvinist ideology (hard work, "gift of the sun/Son") • The transferred/interest point of view benefits people interested in promoting conservative values.
Order (or sequence)	Thulani starts out as a slacker, basking in the sun all day. He milks the cow,
Duration	The story takes place over an indeterminate time period, possibly over a couple of months as the seasons change from summer to winter in the story.

Relation (connections between 'story' existents)	Thulani and Dora are married. They are also connected to the land they farm for food and to make their daily living.
Specifications of setting	Rural farmland. They have a banana tree. The soil is described as "cloddy". They live in simple houses with tin roofs, and burn fires for warmth in winter.
Symbols, allusions, intertexts	The sun (giver of life and energy), seeds (new growth, change and renewal).

STORY (what is narrated)	
Events:	
Actions (processes)	

Happenings (improvements / deteriorations)	
Exists: Characters/Actors	
Setting { time place	
Processes of Selection (what is <u>read</u> , but includes both what is stated and what is implied)	
Mode: narrative descriptive argumentative	
Narrative Processes:	
a) Narrating agent(s) narrator(s) implied author	
b) Receptors narratee(s) implied reader	
Point of view from which 'story' is presented: narrator p.o.v. character focalization	

ideology (overt/implicit)	
Order (or sequence)	
Duration	
Relation (connections between 'story' existents)	
Specifications of setting	
Symbols, allusions, intertexts	

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STORY (what is narrated)

Events:	
Actions (processes)	
Happenings (improvements / deteriorations)	
Existents: Characters/Actors	
Setting { time place	
Processes of Selection (what is <u>read</u> , but includes both what is stated and what is implied)	
Mode: narrative descriptive argumentative	
Narrative Processes:	
a) Narrating agent(s) narrator(s) implied author	
b) Receptors narratee(s) implied reader	

Point of view from which 'story' is presented: narrator p.o.v. character focalization ideology (overt/implicit)	
Order (or sequence)	
Duration	
Relation (connections between 'story' existents)	
Specifications of setting	
Symbols, allusions, intertexts	

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STORY (what is narrated)	
Events:	
Actions (processes)	
Happenings (improvements / deteriorations)	
Existents: Characters/Actors	
Setting { time place	
Processes of Selection (what is <u>read</u> , but includes both what is stated and what is implied)	
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Point of view from which 'story' is presented: narrator p.o.v. character focalization ideology (overt/implicit)	
Order (or sequence)	
Duration	
Relation (connections between 'story' existents)	
Specifications of setting	
Symbols, allusions, intertexts	

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STORY (what is narrated)	
Events:	
Actions (processes)	
Happenings (improvements / deteriorations)	
Existents: Characters/Actors	
Setting { time place	
Processes of Selection (what is <u>read</u> , but includes both what is stated and what is implied)	
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Point of view from which 'story' is presented: narrator p.o.v. character focalization ideology (overt/implicit)	
Order (or sequence)	
Duration	
Relation (connections between 'story' existents)	
Specifications of setting	
Symbols, allusions, intertexts	

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STORY (what is narrated)	
Events:	
Actions (processes)	
Happenings (improvements / deteriorations)	
Existents: Characters/Actors	
Setting { time place	
Processes of Selection (what is <u>read</u> , but includes both what is stated and what is implied)	
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a) Narrating agent(s) narrator(s) implied author	
b) Receptors narratee(s) implied reader	

Point of view from which 'story' is presented: narrator p.o.v. character focalization ideology (overt/implicit)	
Order (or sequence)	
Duration	
Relation (connections between 'story' existents)	
Specifications of setting	
Symbols, allusions, intertexts	

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STORY (what is narrated)	
Events:	
Actions (processes)	
Happenings (improvements / deteriorations)	
Existents: Characters/Actors	
Setting { time place	
Processes of Selection (what is <u>read</u> , but includes both what is stated and what is implied)	
Mode: narrative descriptive argumentative	
Narrative Processes:	
a) Narrating agent(s) narrator(s) implied author	
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Point of view from which 'story' is presented: narrator p.o.v. character focalization ideology (overt/implicit)	
Order (or sequence)	
Duration	
Relation (connections between 'story' existents)	
Specifications of setting	
Symbols, allusions, intertexts	

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STORY (what is narrated)	
Events:	
Actions (processes)	
Happenings (improvements / deteriorations)	
Existents: Characters/Actors	
Setting { time place	
Processes of Selection (what is <u>read</u> , but includes both what is stated and what is implied)	
Mode: narrative descriptive argumentative	
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Point of view from which 'story' is presented: narrator p.o.v. character focalization ideology (overt/implicit)	
Order (or sequence)	
Duration	
Relation (connections between 'story' existents)	
Specifications of setting	
Symbols, allusions, intertexts	

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STORY (what is narrated)	
Events:	
Actions (processes)	
Happenings (improvements / deteriorations)	
Existents: Characters/Actors	
Setting { time place	
Processes of Selection (what is <u>read</u> , but includes both what is stated and what is implied)	
Mode: narrative descriptive argumentative	
Narrative Processes:	
a) Narrating agent(s) narrator(s) implied author	
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Point of view from which 'story' is presented: narrator p.o.v. character focalization ideology (overt/implicit)	
Order (or sequence)	
Duration	
Relation (connections between 'story' existents)	
Specifications of setting	
Symbols, allusions, intertexts	

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STORY (what is narrated)	
Events:	
Actions (processes)	
Happenings (improvements / deteriorations)	
Existents: Characters/Actors	
Setting { time place	
Processes of Selection (what is <u>read</u> , but includes both what is stated and what is implied)	
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Order (or sequence)	
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Relation (connections between 'story' existents)	
Specifications of setting	
Symbols, allusions, intertexts	

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STORY (what is narrated)	
Events:	
Actions (processes)	
Happenings (improvements / deteriorations)	
Existents: Characters/Actors	
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Processes of Selection (what is <u>read</u> , but includes both what is stated and what is implied)	
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Order (or sequence)	
Duration	
Relation (connections between 'story' existents)	
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Appendix C: List of picturebooks used in the current sample

Year	Title	Author	Illustrator	Publisher
2010	<i>A kite's flight</i>	William Gumedede	Maja Sereda	Jacana Media
1995	<i>Kensani's kite</i>	Alanna Deall	Diek Grobler	Jacklin
2006	<i>Little Lucky Lolo and the Cola Cup competition</i>	Adrian Varkel	Jacki Lang & Daley Muller	Pan Macmillan
2006	<i>Ouma Ruby's secret</i>	Chris van Wyk	Anneliese Voigt-Peters	Giraffe Books
2008	<i>Out of the box</i>	Nicole Levin	Sandy Lightley	Shuter & Shooter
1999	<i>Perfectly me</i>	Martie Preller	Ian Lusted	Cambridge University Press
1998	<i>The boy on the beach</i>	Niki Daly	Niki Daly	Margaret K. McElderry Books
1996	<i>The gift of the sun</i>	Dianne Stewart	Jude Daly	Frances Lincoln
2002	<i>Vuyo's whistle</i>	Meryl Urson	Cora Coetzee	Anansi
1997	<i>What a gentleman</i>	Dianne Case	Joanne Harvey	Kwagga Publishers cc