

**CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN AFRICA: A STUDY OF IMMERSION OF HUMAN
DEVELOPMENTAL VALUES**

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ABSTRACT


Texts and literature are used to ignite critical thought in people and to demonstrate what is of value in society. This research sought to explore and appraise some selected African children's literature with a view to identifying the lessons and morals which are immersed in them for the development of African children. The objectives of the study were to: (1) investigate the reasons given by West and Southern African authors of African children's literature (novels) for why they write for African children; (2) explore the content and message of the selected children's literature; (3) determine the extent to which the content and message of the selected children's literature fit or are consistent with the intended rationale for the writing of these books; (4) determine the extent to which authors of children's books from West Africa share the same philosophy or rationale for writing with those from Southern Africa; (5) outline the African child growth and developmental values immersed in the selected children's literature; and (6) examine the psycho-educational relevance of the selected African children's books.

The study adopted a text-based qualitative research methodology. This is a methodology which, according to Boote and Beile (2005), does not seek information from human participants but only from texts. The data for this research thus already existed inside the sampled texts. Children's literature written in English from two geographical locations namely West Africa and Southern Africa constituted the source of the data for the research. The study revealed that the novels written by the sampled African authors have some major similarities regardless of their geographic location. At the same time, there are also some minor differences between them. The most prominent human-building virtue found in some of the texts investigated is the notion of the importance of family and community in successful child development in Africa. Most of the stories in the novels studied could be classified as cautionary stories which warn against lying, indulgence in mischievous behaviours and breaking of rules. The selected literature provides representations of Africans and real-life experiences of Africans such as poverty, which are current with relatable issues (Caser, 2017). The literature represents Africans as people with laws and ways of social interaction which include respect for elders and one another. They provide an image of African people from African perspectives. The selected children's books are considered suitable for the English language education system and career development of African children. Implications of these findings were drawn from the research and some recommendations for policy and practice were proffered.

DECLARATION

I, Philile Phungula (217 072 693), declare that this study titled **Children's literature in Africa Africa: A study of immersion of African child developmental values** is my original work.

1. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university,
2. All the sources used in this study have been acknowledged as complete references.
3. The thesis does not contain personal data that can make the person identifiable, where photographs are used and the identity of the person is protected by blocking out identifiable features.

Signed:  _____ Date 06 May, 2021 _____

I, Prof Augustine Nwoye, confirm that the work reported in this dissertation was carried out by Philile Phungula, under my supervision.

Signed  _____ Date: 07 May, 2021 _____

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Literature and stories are used to organise thoughts that people have and to explore cultural, societal or religious beliefs (Burke, Copenhaver & Carpenter, 2004). Literature aimed at children and that aimed at adults serve similar functions such as assisting people in making sense of the external world and understanding themselves, through providing societal norms and beliefs (Ngugi, 2012). Burke, Copenhaver & Carpenter (2004) state that texts are not only used to ignite critical thought but also to show what is of value in a certain context or society. Literature serves to educate while contemporaneously entertaining the reader, regardless of the make-up of the target audience.

This research focuses on children's literature, and it is necessary to define what is meant by children's literature. When defining this group of readers there are many definitions regarding which ages should be considered to be within the children category. Furthermore, what may be relevant and interesting to one age group of children may differ tremendously from that of another age group. The difference in interests and relevance is not only due to culture but mostly due to, among other factors, the developmental issues that each child faces as they grow (Piaget, 1972; Shore, 1998).

Given the above, the definition of children's literature which is adopted in this research is that offered by Otoburu and Akpan (2016), who assert that children's literature refers to novels written for children from birth to the age of adolescence and contains topics which are of interest to the specific set of children that the literature is targeting. Otoburu and Akpan (2016) further suggest that as children develop, they are faced with challenges which may be better explained by literature through providing the appropriate themes and conveying those themes in a way that the children would be able to enjoy. The above statement implies that children's literature not only educates but also entertains; a point earlier stated by Burke, Copenhaver & Carpenter (2004). In this way, texts such as novels are written for children to educate these readers about society and to socialise the children into a culture or society in which they were born (Osa, 2001; Burke, Copenhaver & Carpenter, 2004). This research examines the different methods that the sampled children's literature, written by novelists in West and Southern Africa, used to convey values which are relevant for the development and the socialisation of African children.

The research analysed and compared the values that are found in African children's literature, namely novels, from Southern and West Africa. It was assumed that in analysing selected literature from these two geographical locations one would be able to discern if the African authors from both geographical locations have the same, similar or different values that are emphasised in their novels. The values propagated in children's literature inform the understanding of this research in terms of what is considered important in the development of African children from these two different locations within Africa. The development of persons in the African context might be either different or very similar (Piaget, 1972); the same can be said about the developmental values from different locations in Africa. This research aimed to uncover the human developmental values of both West and Southern African traditions within the literature, using a select number of authors from each location. Considering that literature enables learning and entertainment (Burke, Copenhaver & Carpenter, 2004; Ezenwa-Ohaeto, 2015), it was considered important to assess if the selected literature can be used to educate children not only about values and morals but also language skills. This research used readability and levelling to assess the usefulness of the literature as educational tools to teach language skills to the child audience.

1.2 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the present study were therefore to:

1. Investigate the reasons given by authors of the sampled African children's literature for why they write for children.
2. Explore the content and message of the selected children's literature to ascertain the immersed child developmental values
3. Determine the extent to which the content and messages of the selected children's literature are consistent with the intended rationale for the writing of these books.
4. Determine the extent to which authors of children's books from West Africa share the same philosophy or rationale with those from Southern Africa.
5. Outline the African child building and developmental values found in the selected children's literature.
6. Examine the educational relevance of select African children's books.

1.3 Research questions

The major questions that guided the study were the following:

1. What are the major reasons given by authors of the select African children's literature as to why they write for children?
2. What are the key content and messages of the selected African children's literature?
3. To what extent are the content and messages of the selected African literature for children consistent with the intended rationale for writing these books?
4. To what extent do authors of children's books from West Africa share the same philosophy or rationale for writing for children with those from Southern Africa?
5. What are the African personhood or person building values of the selected children's literature and the rationale for which they were written?

1.4 Need for the study

The study was considered significant in that it is one of the few attempts by researchers in African psychology to explore the child developmental or socialising content and relevance of children's literature in contemporary Africa. Adult literature very much preceded literature for children (Hunt, 1999) and this is true for African authored literature as provided by Ngugi (2012). However, with time the same African writers that authored literary fiction or novels for adult readers, soon saw the need to write for children as well.

The famous Nigerian author, Chinua Achebe, for example, was among those that led the way in this regard (Ngugi, 2012 and Otiono, 2013). Of course, it needs to be noted that even before Achebe's books for children came into being, Cyprian Ekwensi had pioneered in writing children's books; the only difference is that Ekwensi's approach was largely entertainment-oriented and he was less interested in writing to educate and instil traditional African values in his young audiences (Peters, 1993). In addition, as a consequence of modernity, most of Ekwensi's writings were focused on city-dwellers and the moral dangers to which African children in the cities are exposed (Ekwensi, 1962).

A preliminary review of the current state of children's literature in Africa also revealed that African writers other than Achebe and Ekwensi have authored many books for children and important topics that are discussed or highlighted in books for teenagers are also discussed

and highlighted in books for children. The South African author of *Cry, The Beloved Country* (1948), Alan Paton, described South Africa in the era of unrest and Apartheid along with the contrasting scenes of a village and the metropolis of Johannesburg. Similar topics to that briefly mentioned above by Alan Paton have been covered by authors of children's books such as Elinor Sisulu in her novel titled *The Day Gogo Went to Vote* (1996) which was this black South African's perspective of the 1994 elections. It celebrated the introduction of democracy in South Africa in 1994, the first time that all South Africans were entitled by law to vote. Among these new African writers for children are Deogratias Simba, Nkem Nwankwo and Meshack Asare, all of whom are male writers. However, it is refreshing to note that some female writers had joined in this venture of writing fiction for children. Among such women writers are well-known novelists like Flora Nwapa, Nokugcina (Gcina) Mhlophe and Elinor Sisulu.

Commenting on the key objective of African writers who decided to write fiction for African children, Segun (1987, p. 205) remarked that "Many of those who write for children and young people have been motivated by the need for culturally relevant books." Osazee (1991), as cited in Ngugi (2012, p. 61) defines African children's literature as "that piece of literary creation which draws its subject matter from the African worldview, and which is written in a language and style the African child can comprehend. It must be seen as promoting African culture and enables the child or young adult to understand and appreciate his or her environment better and it must give him or her some pleasure."

No wonder that writers like Chinua Achebe, Mabel Segun, Elinor Sisulu and Gcina Mhlophe consistently emphasised that their chief concern in writing for children was to promote "the preservation of the cultural identity" (Odejide, 1983, p.13; August, 1990) of the African. The above aim of preserving and informing children's identity and value systems is evident in most of the African literature by African authors, regardless of geographical location on the continent. Therefore, it is common in all African countries or geographies. The above observation suggests that if explored one could find personal reasons why African authors write fiction for children as well as the educational, moral and person-building relevance of such works.

It must be noted that despite the focus of this study, there are many great African authors of children's literature and other forms of literature who come from other geographical regions within the African continent, not just in West and Southern Africa. Other such regions

include Central Africa, Northern Africa and East Africa. For example, many Kenyan writers have written important fiction books for children. Some of these writers and their books are Kelly Cunnane and Ana Juan (2006): *For You Are a Kenyan Child*; Claire Nivola (2008): *Planting the Trees of Kenya*; Cele Meng (2009): *Tough Chicks*; and Meja Mwangi (2005): *The Mzungu Boy*.

This research thus recognises the many authors who have contributed to the development of African children through their fiction, but the focus of the study was on two geographical locations within the African continent, namely West and Southern Africa. The present study was motivated by the present researcher's assumption that whatever the personal or socio-cultural reasons the above-mentioned authors may have for writing for African children, these reasons need to be investigated and their overall significance for positively influencing the childhood development of the children be assessed.

1.5 Summary and overview of the study

This chapter introduced the study objectives, questions, and rationale for engaging in it. The next chapter provides a review of related literature and theories on child development, human personhood and developmental tools including literature and proverbs. The aim of the following chapter is to holistically present documented literature and theories to give the context for the present study. Chapter three presents the methodology for the study and the paradigm that grounded the research. Chapter four presents the findings of the study drawn from the data collected and analysed in themes. Chapter five presents the discussion of findings of the research and concludes the study with recommendations drawn from this research.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL APPROACH AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide and discuss the theoretical approaches and the literature which inform the research. Theories such as the Africentric worldview, the Africentric theory of human personhood, the socio-cultural theory and the reader-response theory are presented along with the ways in which they contribute to understanding the role that African children's literature has in the development of the African children who read African children's literature.

2.2 Theoretical approach

Children's literature constitutes a forum for expressing pride in culture, people and the environment, and it simultaneously serves to educate the reader (August, 1990). Ezenwa-Ohaeto (2015) remarks that children's literature provides the space for the formation of the perception of the self through internalising one's culture and heritage, leading to an identity formation, education and development of the child's language abilities and the child as a whole. What African literature, intentionally or inadvertently does, according to Ezenwa-Ohaeto (2015), is that it uses entertainment to provide a broader view of the world, not just the culture or society that one is from, along with creating pride among the African children who read such African literature. Children's literature, as argued by August (1990), Ezenwa-Ohaeto (2015), and Osa (2001), is to be seen as gold mines which hold the treasures that the African child gains through reading. This treasure is that of elements for building identity and dignity, morals and values along with norms which are valued within a particular culture (August, 1990; Ezenwa-Ohaeto, 2015). Consequently, African children's literature is seen as having an important influence in the development of African children, because immersed within the literature are the person-building values that serve to nurture the moral and cognitive development of the African child.

The values currently found in African children's literature have not always been sown into the literature and the aim has not always been to uplift the African reader. This was because until quite recently, African children's literature according to Jenkins (2004) has been used to build the identity and pride of the European at the expense of the African. Those foreign types of children's literature criticised African methods of doing and being and was a part of

the culture of discrimination which partly led to the injury, suppression and change of African education, healing systems, identity and pride, among other things (Jenkins, 2004; Guma, 1967).

Guma (1967) provides an example of the diminished use of one of the most important rituals in African educational systems and African cultures, this ritual being the use of proverbs, as a result of the introduction and dominance of foreign children's literature. The uses of proverbs according to Guma (1967) have diminished and changed, this being proof that the African traditions and methods of healing, educating and instilling dignity to name a few, have changed, partly due to the criticism of African practices by non-Africans, but also as part of the effort to accommodate the westernised environment and the new generations of Africans who are socialised in westernised societies.

Guma (1967) further noted that the introduction and praise of Western languages, cultures and education systems into Africa, led to the criticisms of African languages, cultures and education systems. These criticisms and abandonment of African education systems and traditions of development, personality and identity led to a lack of cultural knowledge and values that build the identity of an African child thus leading to confused identities and double consciousness (Mwikamba, 1991).

According to Faghfori and Nowrouzi (2015), double consciousness is a state of mind whereby the African individual is in search of a congruent identity. People so troubled struggle with the identity that is influenced by their family, culture, and race as well as by a society or culture which is intertwined within Western or European worldviews (Mwikamba, 1991). Faghfori and Nowrouzi (2015) and Mwikamba (1991) argue that a person experiencing double consciousness is lacking true self-consciousness; having dual identities and struggling to amalgamate the African identity with the European identity. The amalgamation of African and Western means to weave together the African worldview and the Western worldview which, according to Mwikamba (1991) are different and each worldview has its own focus and beliefs. These underlying beliefs of the African worldview cannot be married with those of the Western worldview, thus creating confusion and dissonance within the person who houses both. Mwikamba (1991) argues that the identity of an African may be held within the values of the African worldview. Communicating the beliefs of the African worldview is conducted in many ways including dance, music, and storytelling.

This chapter discusses the African worldview and methods of communicating this worldview which include language and the uses and changes that linguistic tools such as proverbs have encountered. Guma (1967) argues that the linguistic tools of Africans have changed in some ways but still serve the traditional purposes. Among such tools are proverbs. The language used in expressing proverbs has changed and so have the methods of delivery, but the lessons are similar, and the aim stays the same. Sienaert, Cowper-Lewis and Bell (1994) stated that the use of proverbs may not be in oral forms but presented through literature. Thus, children's literature contains the values that African children need to develop emotionally and psychologically. Helping them to achieve this development is the aim of the use of proverbs. Children's literature is vital because children are still forming their identities and can use the values immersed in African children's literature to inform these identities through entertainment. In other words, the values of African cultures displayed within children's literature, and the identities that are formed by the audience would consist of and informed by African values and beliefs (August, 1990). This is aimed at aiding the healthy and congruent development of the African child.

This chapter surveys some of the theories that are used in order to discuss and argue that children's literature is a tool of child development due to the information and principles which are implanted deep within children's literature. According to Mkabela (2005), the Africentric worldview is central to understanding the developmental values and principles which are immersed in African literature and would form the perspective of this research.

The theories to be discussed are the socio-cultural theory of development, reader-response theory, and the Afrocentric theory of human personhood. These theories are intended to illustrate the importance of children's literature and the Afrocentric worldview which holds the tenets and base of African values which inform the African perception of the world (Mkabela, 2005). This literature review is intertwined with theories of psychology and literature in order to provide a background and understanding of the topic of children's literature and what they carry. The aim is to provide and discuss the importance of African children's literature and the principles that they carry that promote the development of African children.

2.3 Africentric worldview and the perception of human personhood

Due to the object of this research being an investigation into the nature and extent the development of the African child is supported through appropriate African literature, the

approach of this study must be supported with a good knowledge of the Africentric worldview. Hence, to begin with a definition of the term worldview is needed. According to Olumbe (2008), a worldview consists of assumptions which are held by a person or his or her people and are used in the perception of reality. The worldview is an underlying set of beliefs which help the person cope in their cultural environment (Thabede, 2008; Menkiti, 1984). Olumbe (2008) teaches that a worldview is wide, and it is easier and more helpful to discuss it in themes, thus the African worldview will be discussed in terms of its beliefs, themes, or basic tenets. The African worldview is defined as the views or perceptions held by Africans about the world (Thabede, 2008). The African worldview is based on the African person's cultural beliefs and morals among other cultural influences such as knowledge (Juma, 2011).

According to Nwoye (2017), the Eurocentric worldview does not encompass the beliefs of the African people through which they perceive and interact with the world. Mwikamba (1991), concurring, provides the argument that the Eurocentric worldview houses tenets which encourage and sustain the individual as being singular and without deep-rooted ties and responsibilities to the community, family, groups or society. The above statement means that the individual within a Eurocentric worldview is able to be an individual outside of the relationships of family, community and society. This individuation is not a part of the African worldview, which houses tenets of community and the beliefs that a person is a person because others are (Mwikamba, 1991). Thabede (2008) argues that the beliefs that underpin the Africentric worldview hold more holistic beliefs or grounding. These beliefs influence and inform the African human personhood and they include the belief in an omnipotent source of life or a supreme being which is a part of all things, the need for harmony between all living things such as nature and people, the definition of the person through other beings, the importance of community, interdependency and moral values (Nicolson, 2008; Mwikamba, 1991).

The theory of the African human personhood argues that similar to some of the Western or Eurocentric theories, the mature person is made through socialisation by their environment; thus, the mature person is not born but made (Nicolson, 2008; Nwoye, 2017). People and culture influence the shaping of that individual into a functional member of a particular community and society. Living people are not the only part of the community which is responsible for the development and grooming of an African human being (Nicolson, 2008; Thabede, 2008). Ancestors and omnipotent beings are a part of human development

(Thabede, 2008). Mwikamba (1991) argues that within the African worldview is held the belief that ancestors are a part of the community as extended family, and therefore they are community members who are to be respected as elders. The relationships within the African worldview are deep-rooted and include multiple layers and people.

Nwoye (2017) states that the basic tenets of the Africentric worldview include an important belief; namely, that there are two realms of existing within the Africentric paradigm: the physical and spiritual realms. These two realms are interlinked, interdependent and interacting (Nwoye, 2017). The belief that people live and die physically and then live again spiritually as ancestors and the belief in a higher power is imperative in the African worldview (Mwikamba, 1991; Thabede, 2008). This belief reveals an understanding that people are guided by their elders even after those elders have physically died (Nwoye, 2017). The spiritual world can communicate with the physical world through signs which could be virtues or punishments or even protection against something. These signs communicate whether the ancestors or higher powers are at peace, acknowledge something or are enraged with an act by people in the physical realm (Olumbe, 2008). Both Nwoye (2017) and Olumbe (2008) agree that this understanding of living in a world with two realms means that the good and the bad are not only in physical form but also spiritual. The spiritual realm, like the physical realm, holds not only good spirits that guide the living but also bad spirits that have the potential to harm the living. Therefore, there is a basic assumption that the world consists of good and evil (Olumbe, 2008). There is an understanding that people are vulnerable to dangers and evils which are physical and spiritual. Nwoye (2017) states that people are susceptible to dangers biologically, psychologically, socially, and spiritually.

Through the dissemination of the tenets of the Africentric worldview, the child is developed and using those same beliefs the person is inspired and strives towards certain achievements (Nwoye, 2017). Nwoye (2017) states that these achievements are: the need to compete with one's age group, the aim and craving to improve and develop and “overcome the limitations of one’s birth,” the impulse and compulsion to defend against and escape shame, the yearning of belonging to and inclusion into a community, and lastly, the desire to refrain from angering the ancestors. These achievements are not individualistic in nature, instead they are social motivations (Yosso, 2005). Moving towards people and society is the primary aim of the matured African person (Mwikamba, 1991). These social motivations are informed by the basic tenets of the African worldview.

Similar to Erikson's assumptions in his theory of psychosocial development, the African personhood is assumed to be developed through social interactions and gains virtue as it grows and develops. Socialisation from an African perspective occurs in many different ways including the use of myths, poems, songs and proverbs. Warfield-Coppock (1995) stated that the above mentioned along with other tools, are tools of socialisation which equip the African child with skills, moral beliefs and values which inform their personality or who they are. These beliefs and values are in place in order to shield the developing African child from identity confusion and immorality (Dolamo, 2013). Sienaert, Cowper-Lewis and Bell (1994) argue that these beliefs and values are tools that the person is able to use in order to negotiate through their communities and through other cultures or societies, as they so often have to in this Westernised world. According to Nwoye (2017), the socialising tool of the narrative is a strong influence on the development of human personhood.

Jenkins (2004) states that African children's books are in keeping with the African worldview and include the belief or respect for nature, teaching lessons on the importance of wildlife and the environment which is in line with the basic tenets of the need for harmony with nature. Furthermore, Nicolson (2008) states that the African person is constantly developing and aiming for the attainment of virtues, the person, from childhood, is exposed to the recognition that there is a higher power and ancestors within the society and that the higher power is within everything and everyday life, along with comprehending the importance of unity between people, ancestors and higher powers. The understanding that people are interdependent and strive for ubuntu and other qualities which define a person within their community are some of the factors which form the base of Africentric perceptions of personhood (Nicolson, 2008; Dolamo, 2013; Nwoye, 2017).

Thus, children's literature in Africa, in order to serve as a tool for socialisation and human people making, must encompass within it values which stem from the tenets of the Africentric worldview. Important content found in African children's literature should be able to be translated into socialising values when the child reads or interacts with the literature (Mendoza & Reese, 2001).

In an effort to understand this interaction, the reader-response theory, the tenets of which are shortly to be reviewed, is employed. Overall, the Africentric worldview as stated above holds a culture which is expressed through an abundance of tools and influences for the education and development of the African child. But the sociocultural theory, next to be reviewed,

develops the notion of and the importance of cultural tools, such as proverbs within children's literature.

2.3.1 Socio-cultural theory of rationale of children's literature in Africa

In an attempt to unpack the rationale for children's literature in Africa, Lev Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory will now be reviewed. Briefly, according to the socio-cultural theory, the cognitive development of humans is influenced and shaped by culture through cultural tools and symbols or signs (Mahn 1999). These tools can be technical or psychological in nature. They are acquired through socialisation or social interaction, modelling and practice, and the tools may be physical or symbolic (Watts, Cockcroft & Duncan, 2009). The most important tool, according to Lantolf and Thorne (2006), in this regard, is without a doubt, language. The tool which is to be analysed in this research is children's literature which is conceived from and through language.

2.3.2 Environmental, cultural, and social influence in meaning-making

According to Vygotsky people are meaning-makers who use cultural tools in an attempt to problem-solve (Watts, Cockcroft & Duncan, 2009). Vygotsky argues that children cooperate in the construction of meaning through social interaction, so children are not passive receivers of culture or cultural tools but rather, active participants (Watts, Cockcroft & Duncan, 2009). These cultural tools are passed down from generation to generation, not genetically; therefore one cannot be biologically born with them, they are inherited and developed over time (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006). Turuk (2008) noted that these cultural tools are subject to change due to the ever-changing circumstances of the people who use them. An example of this evolution is the practice of teaching through the use of oral traditions advanced in literature in the form of hard copy books and now there are online books which are found on the internet. If the cultural tools are to aid the person to problem solve in different situations and at different chronological periods, those tools not only have to evolve but it is also important to have the same language. It is also imperative for the norms or values that are used, to be identifiable to the person using them, in order to make sense and be useful for those who wish to use them or those who have been provided with such tools.

Mahn (1999) similarly noted that an individual's environment or setting is important as it affects the use of tools such as language and computers and thus affects the cognitive processes of that person. This means that a person who has access and the ability to use a

certain tool has the advantages that come with that tool and can better participate in the society of the day. Children learn in different ways and this could be due to the socialisation which is provided by their cultural environment (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006). According to Turuk (2008), different cultures have their own tools and these tools change from culture to culture, but they all serve the same purpose. The purpose is always to help the person make meaning and navigate through their world; these lessons can be used throughout the individual's life. As stated by Watts, Cockcroft and Duncan (2009, p. 469) "We have to appropriate the tools that are used in our environments in order to become a part of the social structure."

Turuk (2008) argues that language is used when socialising children and that the interaction with other people is extremely important in the development of the child's cognition because the child acquires knowledge in this way. The above perspective is known as the inter-psychological plane (Poehner & Infante, 2015). There are internal structures where the child uses individual processes that occur after the inter-psychological plane, which, according to Watts, Cockcroft and Duncan (2009), is called the intra-psychological plane. Turuk (2008) argues that the role of the teacher, in this case, the author, is to make the process of learning meaningful, valuable, and relevant to the individual child. Turuk (2008; p 247) specifically states that "...education can never be value-free; it must be underpinned by a set of beliefs about the kind of society that is being constructed." Mahn (1999), and Reed, et al. (2010) stated that learning occurs during social interaction. Thus, the child is socialised according to and in preparation for the social environment in which they exist.

Reed et al. (2010) argue that it is critical to have a contributor or member of society to guide and nurture the child's needs in order to enable them to develop and reach their potential, and for this reason, Vygotsky developed the Zone of Proximal Development. The zone of proximal development is argued by Turuk (2008) to be the space between the developmental level that a child is at and the developmental level that particular child could potentially reach. A child's current level of development is defined by the problem-solving that a child can do without help (Wertsch, 1984). The potential level of development is defined by the level of problem-solving done by the child with help. Turuk (2008) argued that the zone of proximal development is the space where the child receives help from a more knowledgeable person or source and this help is called scaffolding. According to Watts, Cockcroft and Duncan (2009) and Wertsch (1984), the zone of proximal development can be viewed as the

space where literature is able to help the child problem-solve and reach its potential. This is the space where child development can be encouraged through social values, morals, norms and beliefs that are found in children's literature.

What the above review has shown is that culture shapes all higher mental processes such as perception, attention, memory, and problem-solving (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). It is imperative to note that human consciousness holds a resplendent role in human existence, due to its encompassing and sophisticated ability to create tools, such as literature and the capability to use those tools for an outcome and a purpose (Watts, Cockcroft & Duncan, 2009). African children's literature can be used to maintain or accomplish many things such as their psycho-education and socialisation and provide a wide array of ways to problem solve (Wertsch, 1984; Seroto, 2011). The preliminary review of the selected African children's literature suggests that most oral traditions and children's literature are created for anyone of the above-mentioned outcomes, particularly socialisation. These outcomes can be further reviewed under the following headings, some positive and some counter-productive to the growth of the African child: socialisation and psycho-education using traditional methods such as oral traditions and proverbs; use of children's literature as a continuation of colonialism and 'inferiorization' of the African, and children's literature as a means of corrective education and African cultural affirmation and regeneration.

2.4. Socialisation and psycho-education using traditional methods: Oral traditions and proverbs

The pre-colonial era, as argued by Ngugi (2012), was a period of time in history that predates the colonisation of African countries. During this era, an important and lasting method of socialisation was storytelling and folklore (Seroto, 2011). These methods of communication and tools of human social development are performative in nature. According to Moolla (2012) and wa Thiong'o (2007), communication through performance (as expressed by Pio Zirimu in the early 1970s), was a defining factor or trait of orature. Oral traditions at that time included the oral performance of storytelling; hence the terms orature and oral traditions will be used interchangeably in the further discussions on this theme.

African societies are known for their oral traditions, as this is common practice among all Africans (Seroto, 2011). Before the colonial era in African countries, people told folklore in an attempt to not only provide enjoyment but also to socialise and to educate the audience (Marivate, 1973). At that time, folklore as a tool was created and used by people to provide

educational and societal lessons, through the lens of the socio-cultural theory (Seroto, 2011). Those tools of traditional education were aimed at serving or providing not only education and socialisation but most importantly developing a person with the values and norms of their culture (Ejiofor, 2002). In this way, orature maintains the wellbeing of members of the community and of the many different cultures that use orature as a tool of entertainment, education, and socialisation.

According to Ngugi (2012), the oral stories that were told during the pre-colonial era were considered to be traditional or pre-colonial and consisted of lessons in such values as patience, hard work, generosity, honesty and obedience among other lessons; these were all consistent with the values of African societies. Ngugi (2012) further argues that the folklore also had lessons about what society viewed as immoral or misconduct and the consequences of such immoralities were laid out. Lessons against disobedience, greed, telling lies and misbehaviour along with any other lessons which helped to shape the child into a member of the community, were very important topics that were covered by oral storytelling (Seroto, 2011). Commenting in this regard, Achebe (1990) stated that literature aimed to teach the difference between good and evil and the importance of connecting and caring for the environment. These themes were seen as important and relevant to children and children were able to learn how to be active participants of that particular African society (Sienaert, Cowper-Lewis & Bell, 1994). Additionally, the themes covered by oral storytelling allowed African children to learn from them and in turn use the acceptable or what was deemed the correct way of interaction and problem-solving in real life (Silver, 2001).

2.4.1 The use of proverbs in traditional African education

During the performance of storytelling, along with everyday language or conversations, Ojoade (1977) argues that proverbs were never forgotten and were an intrinsic part of communication. According to Sienaert, Cowper-Lewis and Bell (1994), proverbs were used by a vast number of cultures including African cultures. As a result, there are multiple definitions of proverbs. One example is the understanding of Sotho proverbs as “Pithy sentences with a general bearing on life. It serves to express some homely truth or manners as to make one feel no better words could have been used to describe the situation” (Sienaert, Cowper-Lewis and Bell, 1994, p.156). These are the words of Guma (1967, p. 65) as cited by the three authors just mentioned. In an attempt to unpack proverbs, the articulation of proverbs by Sienaert, Cowper- Lewis and Bell (1994, p. 157) is useful.

The proverb is regarded as a summary of the expression of a given people on a given theme. In other words, these witty sayings are pots that contain age-old wisdom of the traditional people. They are philosophical and moral expressions shrunk into a few words. They contain the fundamental truths about life in general and human nature in particular which people have observed. They are the result of observing nature in general and animals in particular. Proverbs derive from folk-tales, beliefs, values, attitudes, perceptions, emotions, and the entire system of thought and feeling of a people. They are part and parcel of a people's life.

Guma (1967) opined that meaning-making tools such as proverbs are the people's spiritual heritage that should be nurtured and jealously guarded. Proverbs are a quintessential part of humanity in African cultures. They are ultimately developing the cognition of a person and in turn maintaining or improving that person's social functionality and wellbeing through socialisation and education (Lauhakangas, 2007). Of course, this is with the understanding that functionality and wellbeing are defined in different ways within different cultures. This is not to say that proverbs alone can achieve human development building outcomes; they are tools to be used in relation to other human development building tools.

Proverbs are important as tools of culture as they provide a person with identity and belonging. This allows a person to view themselves as an important part of something bigger and provides a person with roles that they are to play as an important part of a culture (Sienaert, Cowper-Lewis and Bell, 1994). Proverbs initiate the young into the culture of the community and remind those who have forgotten the norms of a particular culture that proverbs are universal and convey wisdom and truth (Lauhakangas, 2007). Sienaert, Cowper-Lewis and Bell (1994: 157) quote Chomski (1968) who articulated that proverbs are a part of language and cannot be ignored due to the status that they hold in the cognition of people who use them as the "human essence". To ignore proverbs is to ignore the expression of a people's cognition completely. Proverbs are highly valued and hold great importance in the development of people, but they are only one example of cultural tools. The cultural tools as earlier stated are to be adaptable in order to guide people through their current situation. However linguistic tools can be used for other purposes as well. Tools such as literature have been created to show the superiority of one culture at the expense of another. This is discussed below.

2.5. Children's literature as a continuation of colonialism and inferiorisation of the African

Unlike in the pre-colonial or the contemporary age of the postcolonial dispensation, children's literature in the period of colonialism was Eurocentric in perspective and was read by children in their European missionary schools (Bunyi, 1999). The norms and discourse of the European literature imported into Africa were, according to Ngugi (2012), grounded on an agenda to perpetuate Western propaganda and prejudices about Africans as inferior and Europeans as superior. Such literature aimed at African children and socialised the African child in a manner that was against African pride and tenets.

Jenkins (2004) noted that the literature of this era expressed the prejudices held by the recognised authors of the era, white pro-European authors. The children's literature of the colonial period, in other words, strived to paint a picture of the African as primitive and animalistic, and sub-human; all with the aim of obliterating African dignity. Ngugi (2012) similarly teaches that the literature of this time lacked the African spirit even though the setting was in Africa. Such colonialist literature ignored the proverbs and their guidance, which were previously so greatly appreciated and celebrated by African people (Seroto, 2011). The cultural way of understanding life, and what Sienaert, Cowper-Lewis and Bell (1994) termed the expressions, dreams, and identity of Africans, were suppressed and ignored.

In the early stages of the post-colonial era, according to Ngugi (2012) and Achebe (1990), the stream of literature that was produced and therefore present in the early part of the independence period was similar to literature that was circulated in the colonial era. Jenkins (2004) remarks that colonialist literature aimed to place the white or European race on top of the superiority hierarchy and the black African race at the bottom of the hierarchy. This period was still oppressive to the African ideologies and people, indigenous texts were still restricted, and all successful publishing companies were white or Western (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2003). Ngugi (2012) argues that this was a new form of colonialism which propagated only literature that they knew would sell in most Western markets. For the above reason, most of the children's literature available and sold was imported literature from Western countries (Van Vuuren, 1995). Jenkins (2004), concurring, states that the literature which was produced and sold by the white or European owned publishing companies portrayed the Europeans as powerful and owning land and animals, with no regard for nature

and the animals within it. The Europeans were expressed as people of power and strength, which further stripped the dignity and the power of the African natives (Jenkins, 2004). The literature which propagated white power and beliefs served to belittle the beliefs of the African people and to belittle their respect and conservation of nature (Jenkins, 2004). Thus, children's literature in that era reinforced the hierarchy of race and culture: European race, culture and people were at the top and this ultimately propagated white supremacy (Zornado, 2002).

Sienaert, Cowper-Lewis and Bell (1994) observed that the agenda of the day was to maintain colonialism; with this subsequently leading to the reduced verbal use of proverbs among other African tools of education. In this way, colonialism not only led to a reduction in the use of proverbs but also to a decline in the firm building of identity and dignity of the people who used them. Thus colonialism led to a cycle which hastened the decline of the use of African tools of communication and meaning-making such as proverbs and thus led to the struggles for the colonised to problem-solve and navigate their situations along with issues of identity and decrease or loss of African dignity (Sienaert, Cowper-Lewis & Bell, 1994). Thus, the decline in the intricate use of language by Africans may have led to both a yearning and fight to regain the old traditions. On the other hand, colonialism forced the malleability of such tools into more useful instruments used to navigate through colonial and oppressed Africa and later used during the 21st century Africa for the same purpose (Sienaert, Cowper-Lewis and Bell, 1994).

2.6. Children's literature as a means of corrective education and African cultural affirmation and regeneration

In the 1980s and 90s, according to Ngugi (2012), indigenous and local publishing companies started to emerge particularly in Nigeria and Kenya. Publishing companies such as East African Publishing House which was formally called Heinemann started to publish more and more literature which was written for Africans by Africans. Scholars such as wa Thiong'o and works of the Ugandan dramatist and poet Elvania Zirimu highlighted the importance of Africentric thought. In this progressive period, literature in the form of short stories, poems and novels were available and were produced in African languages such as Kiswahili (Osa, 1985). Literature in this era and onwards up to today focused on a wide range of topics and themes, some traditional, some covered current situations in Africa and the effects of colonialism, globalisation, and urbanisation (Osa, 1985). The aim of the literature for children

in Africa at this stage became about developing and increasing an understanding of the African worldview and correcting the damage created by colonial literature (Lintner, 2005). Seemingly, the literature of this era started to become more sensitive to the African child and his or her experiences.

Sienaert, Cowper-Lewis and Bell (1994) argue that there was a decreased use of oral proverbs which was reinforced by urbanisation and resulted in the greater acceptance of written proverbs. Writing was the main way of communicating through proverbs. The above is viewed by the same Sienaert, Cowper-Lewis and Bell (1994) as a conscious effort to standardise the linguistic use of proverbs. In urban areas more than rural areas, there is a tendency for the youth and elite to code switch which makes it hard to use and understand traditional tools such as proverbs. The youth along with children only have communicative abilities and knowledge and are not bothered with “lexical and grammatical constraints” (Sienaert, Cowper-Lewis and Bell, 1994, p. 157). This leads to a language which has been shaped into a new form thus affecting the shape of proverbs. An example is provided by Sienaert, Cowper-Lewis and Bell, (1994, p. 157) of a proverb which contains code-switching, “Zvabhenda zvabhenda mbambaira haina panel beating: what is crooked is crooked; you cannot apply panel beatings to a sweet potato.” The structure of the proverb is maintained even when the language or lexical item has changed. Proverbs are just an example of the ways that cultural tools can change. Folklore used to be expressed in a performed and oral manner but that has changed, they are now available in the form of written literature (Salami, 2005). Moolla (2012) stated that the assimilation of orality into literature is called oral literature: this is what some children’s books aim to do in order to communicate, educate, entertain and develop the reader.

The above review so far shows that children’s literature in Africa over the years has been grounded in a wide range of socio-cultural perspectives. In sum, currently, African children’s literature is aimed at the balanced socialisation of children, instilling and developing important moral habits in them, and helping them to learn to avoid the mistakes of youth and how to be proud of who they are as Africans and the culture of their forefathers (Wright, 2009; Moore, Heath, & Achebe, 2008). What is argued in this thesis is that through engagement with such literature, African children should be able to develop and progress in life (Wright, 2009).

2.7 The usability of African children's literature in post-colonial education systems

The use of African literature in the academic environment for reading is important and because of its use in reading classes, it is important for such African children's literature to have levelling and readability measures (McLaughlin, 1969). It is important to introduce learners to literature which is not overly difficult, thus it is imperative to obtain levelling and readability scores. According to Fry (2002) and McLaughlin (1969), when determining the difficulty of reading materials through readability assessment, a readability formula is employed (Fry, 2002). Redish (2000) argues that readability formulas present the findings in the form of a numerical ranking or grading. Levelling according to Fry (2002) uses multiple systems in order to establish the difficulty of a book, and similar to readability, represents it in a numerical format. One of the major differences between readability and levelling is that levelling is more subjective compared to the more objective readability measurement (Fry, 2002). Further clarification of the differences between them is given below.

2.7.1. Defining levelling and readability

When defining levelling and readability, Fry (2002) argues that the literacy dictionary definitions are insufficient because they are incomplete, yet, they are correct. These definitions are as follows. Readability is defined as "the ease of comprehension because of the style of writing" (Fry, 2002, p. 286). Levelling is defined as "selecting books to match the competencies of a reader or writer" (Fry, 2002, p. 286). Readability is understood differently between publishing companies and reading professionals according to Fry (2002). Readability in the reading profession means the employment of readability formulas; whereas publishing companies define it as a numerical score which is objective in nature and is obtained using readability formulas (Fry, 2002). Therefore, to have a book's readability score there needs to have been the use of certain formulas which calculate the difficulty and present it in a numerical score (Redish, 2000 & McLaughlin, 1969). These formulas include the Fry Readability Graph, SMOG Grading, The New Dale-Chall Readability Formula, and the Flesch Kincaid Readability Ease Formula to name a few (Fry, 2002; Redish, 2000 & McLaughlin, 1969).

Redish (2000), Fry (2002) and McLaughlin (1969) agree that traditionally readability formulas contain two components, namely syntactic difficulty, and semantic difficulty. Syntactic difficulty refers to grammar and its complexities; this is usually measured through measurement of the length of sentences (Fry, 2002). The semantic difficulty is measured in

either the number of letters or syllables or even the frequency of words (McLaughlin, 1969; Fry, 2002). Fry (2002) states that because readability is objective most of the formulas can be computed through the use of a computer and if two people were to calculate the same readability of the same material, they would reach the same outcome. Readability formulas provide fairly accurate results and comparisons which allow a more accurate match with the reading skills of a reader (Fry, 2002). On the contrary, Redish (2000) argues that readability formulas may not be very reliable because the score one attains from one section of a document may not be the same as a score from a different section of the same document. Redish (2000) furthermore presents that using different readability scores on the same passage might show different readability grades. Most readability formulas calculate a grade level from first grade to 12th or 17, like the Fry Graph which calculates 1st to 17th plus grade. According to Fry (2002) and Redish (2000) readability can nevertheless be limited in the factors which are calculated; as factors which are calculated by levelling are generally not considered by readability measures or formulas. Readability measurements are generally text-based, whereas levelling tends to compensate for that readability limitation.

Levelling unlike readability is a more subjective outcome which, according to Fry (2002) cannot be conducted on a computer. To measure the level of a reading material, multiple factors are considered, such as content illustrations, format, judgement, content and curriculum. Fry (2002) argues that when calculating the level of literature readability, formulas such as the Fry Graph or Dale- Chall can be used simultaneously with the other factors. However, levelling is only used for books or materials which have been written for a school-going audience between pre-primary school to primary school (Fry, 2002). Levelling, unlike readability, is used mostly for literature or material which is aimed at early school-going children and it cannot be used for literature aimed at populations above primary school levels or grades.

2.8 The Africentric theory of human personhood

According to Nwoye (2017), the production of a mature African human being is achieved through multiple methods including learning through songs, peers, elders, stories and proverbs, all of which are cultural tools. The developing person is exposed to values, morals and ideologies that are fundamental to the society that they are born into (Nicolson, 2008). The person receives cultivating lessons through life experiences and communication of any kind, and they, the growing individuals, in turn are a part of their own developmental process.

The human person is thus created and shaped through cultural tools not only by the immediate family but also by the community as a whole, old and young, physical beings and spiritual beings; therefore, it takes a village and the community and its social teachers to raise a child (Nwoye, 2017). There is a collective understanding that it takes a collaboration of people in order to build a person. This understanding of the person according to Mangaliso (2001), is based on the collective understanding of what constitutes a mature person or human within a community, there is also a collective understanding of how one develops. The art of people-making in the Africentric worldview is a collective effort in which at a certain point in time that person participates, but that person cannot be a person without the influence and help of other people in their community (Dolamo, 2013).

Taking into consideration the above, it can be said that the African person is collectivistic (Mangaliso, 2001). Indeed, according to Nwoye (2017) a person in the African context needs to be able to have a strong sense of self and strive for individual achievement but at the same time must strive for communal achievement. The person's achievements are thus not only serving the individual but also the community, and the person not only has themselves to thank but also the community. Supporting the above observation, Dolamo (2013) states that there is an understanding through the values, morals, and ideologies of African societies of 'umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu' (a person is a person through other persons). This is an ideology which emphasises the importance of other people in sculpting the person, therefore, proving the statement made by Nwoye (2017, p.58) that "mature human beings are not born but made." Every culture has its values, ideologies, and beliefs that they instil or cultivate in the child in an effort to build a mature human being within that society, community or culture.

The mature person is thus developed and built over time and one must gain virtues along the way. This is similar to Erikson's theory of development, where the person gains virtues as they progress into different stages of development (Clayton, 1975). In order to successfully overcome crises within the next stage, one must have gained virtues from the previous or current stage of development (Watts, Cockcroft & Duncan, 2009). In the Africentric perspective, the person is developed as earlier mentioned through many mediums including myths, rituals, songs, and other social interactions. Through such methods of socialisation, one gains or learns the values of one's culture and gains the skills which are needed to cope with the challenges which are a part of growing up and of adulthood. Therefore, any

individual needs to learn the valued skills to properly handle any crisis whether the crisis is emotionally, psychologically, or physically demanding be it social or individual in nature. Mature people have skills or virtues that have been instilled in them through song, myths, dance, and other performative and linguistic methods beginning in childhood. Therefore, the responses of an adult will be considerably different from that of a child who is still to gain these virtues.

In terms of the above, this research aimed to examine African children's literature in order to find those values, content and themes which build a person in the African context. The overall aim of the research was to gain and provide an understanding of the content within selected African children's literature which enables the 21st-century child to develop into a mature person with values, morals and teachings which give them direction, advice, identity and coping strategies in an African world which has experienced great social changes including war, colonialism and Westernisation (Igboin, 2011).

2.9. Reader-response theory of children's reception to literature

The projected dividends of children's literature set out above appear achievable and meaningful only when seen from the perspective of the adult world and the writers who produce the texts. The extent to which the children so addressed will be able to draw from these works of literature, the sublime human values put forward in the texts, has been challenged by the Reader-Response theory (Whiteley & Canning, 2017, Whiteley, 2011, and Hunt 1999). Selden (1989) and Shaghayegh (2012) state that according to the Reader-Response theory, popularised by scholars and theorists such as Norman Holland, Roald Dahl, Stanley Fish and Roland Barthes in the 1960s and 1970s, readers must be recognised as active participants who create a work of literature in the process of reading it. Consequently, the meaning that children could draw from a text, according to Reader-Response theorists, exists somewhere between the words on the page and the reader's mind (Hunt, 1999 and Shaghayegh 2012). This means that it is not always correct to assume that children would draw from the literature the same meaning and impression as intended by the author.

According to Hughes (1978), literature is a type of communication which consists of imagination in a written form. Literature, according to Ali (1993) and Mendoza & Reese (2001) offers the reader enjoyment in many ways and forms for example pleasure, heightening awareness and emotional impact, be it sad or joyful. Thus, the assumption that literature carries with it inevitable growth for the reader who enjoys it, can be made. Not all

forms of literature aim to communicate messages of growth such as cautionary stories, but this does not mean that it is not shaping an individual's cognition (Van Sledright & Brophy (1992). The Reader-Response theory, according to Hunt (1990), argues that children's literature holds high merit and a lasting impact on the individual and will be able to connect with that individual at any stage of their development due to the aforementioned reasons that the person (the reader) will always be able to read and enjoy a book which is of the 'highest merit'. In order for a book to have any impact on a reader, the book must communicate a necessary message to the reader. Van Peer and Nardocchio (1992) claimed that in order to communicate there needs to be more than one party, a sayer (speaker) and a listener; in the case of literature, there needs to be a "sayer and a sayee" in order for there to be any communication and receiving of a message. Therefore, in order for the communication to be complete, there needs to be a reader who will complete the work, through receiving the message. Thus, when an author writes a novel or any form of literature, he/ she writes for an audience or what is referred to by Hunt (1990) as a 'sayee'.

According to Iser (1978), the audience or the reader that the author is writing for is known as the implied reader, this is, through the understanding that it takes two to say something. The job of the reader is to understand what the author is saying and uncover the meaning behind the text (Shaghayegh, 2012). In order for the author to achieve a successful negotiation of meaning, Hunt (1990) opines that the author must create a second self which exists in the literature and an image of the reader. The author will be successful only if the image of the reader and the author's second self can agree or grasp a common meaning in the text. The active reader needs to be able to perform their part as the reader. This is discussed below.

The reader must be willing and able to 'give up oneself to the book' but this cannot be done by a novice reader because they have not yet acquired the capacity to do that (Hunt, 1990). However, expert or more experienced readers have the ability to shape or put aside their own beliefs (Hunt, 1990). In the process of putting their own beliefs aside, they allow the literature to build an escape which is too thrilling to let go. Children are, according to Hunt (1990), lacking in this ability which is gained through experience, therefore literature has to conform to the cognition level of the child and their childhood before the child can be enchanted and find enjoyment in literature. Hunt (1990) argues that the child, after having been given the power or trust to take them through a journey by the author, will then be left with no choice but to work with the author and discover the meaning of the text, therefore revealing the

message for them. This process is where the implied reader becomes the implicated reader through the desire to read and discover further the meanings in the text (Iser, 1978). In the child reader's quest to make meaning through the text they are led or guided by what is brought to their attention and what is brought to the foreground by the author (Van Peer & Nardocchio, 1992). Through this process, the child is meaning-making which is what people do according to the socio-cultural theory and this, according to Hunt (1990) is important in literary theory.

The theory of the implied reader and the critical method discussed in the above paragraph are argued by Hunt (1990) to be important because they reveal to the researcher the relationship between the reader and the author. The Reader-Response theory proposes that children are too young to participate in reading literature in the way that adults can and for this reason the author of children's literature needs to write for their implied reader (Cocks, 2004). The authors must find ways to entice the young reader into participating in finding the immersed meanings within the text. In this way, the child is a participant in meaning-making.

According to Van Peer and Nardocchio (1992), the theory of *foregrounding* is also important as it reveals what is provided to the reader as interesting and meaningful. The understanding of the reader as an active participant is important as this will affect the response of the reader and the understanding of the reader (Van Peer & Nardocchio, 1992). As such Van Peer and Nardocchio (1992, p. 148) put forward the view that "Reader response data must be interpreted, and this interpretation is a non-empirical process with a predominantly analytic and hermeneutic character." This presents proof of the child reader as an active participant in meaning-making, using tools which are age-appropriate and culturally appropriate. The reader-response theory shows a way in which the child has the ability to decipher and unpack in their own ways the values and human building morals immersed within the literature.

2.10 Chapter summary

The principal aim of this review has been to explore the research that has been done and written by others within or outside Africa, on the importance of the use of children's literature for socialisation and moral development of children. The chapter provides a review of the theories which contribute to a better understanding of the social development of children through linguistic tools such as literature. It reflects on several theories and literature with the intention to explain and unpack the importance of storytelling in Africa. Therefore, the multidimensional theoretical framework underpinning the study was also reviewed.

Furthermore, the chapter reviewed the evolution of storytelling in Africa from oral storytelling to literature. It also reviewed the usefulness of African children's literature in African education systems through the discussion of levelling and readability. This was followed by the review of the Reader-Response theory that emphasises the ways in which children are assisted to make the most of the literature available to them. The methodology used in implementing the study is highlighted in the chapter that follows.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter the theoretical approach to the study and the literature review were provided. The research design for this study outlined below is that of a qualitative research design. This chapter also discusses the methods of data collection that were used, the location of the study and the method of analysis of the data collected. This chapter also provides a discussion of the ethical considerations of the research.

3.2 Research paradigm and design

The research design used in this research is a qualitative research design which according to Dan (2017) consists of reflections, personal observations and authority or experience when used non-empirically. In other words, a qualitative research design seeks to provide a discussion or a theory or hypothesis about a phenomenon which has not yet been studied at all or has not been studied sufficiently. This type of research seeks to holistically understand the meaning of and the content of the data collected, as in the context of this research, an analysis of African children's literature (Babbie and Mouton, 2005). Within the qualitative research design, reality is understood as a social construction which is ever-changing, and each society has their own understanding of reality and meaning; for which reason, meaning cannot be imposed (Smith, 2007). Therefore, qualitative research aims to capture experience which is rich in diversity of meaning; and in the context of the current research, to document how those meanings are made and transported through the vehicle of African children's literature (Burton, 2000). Furthermore, this research primarily studies the meanings expressed, conveyed and held within a sample of African children's literature published by selected authors from Western and Southern Africa.

The qualitative study design employed in implementing this research uses a constructivist approach to research (Terre Blanche, Kelly and Durrheim, 2006). The constructivist approach studies what constructs people have built and the meanings which have been placed on these constructs. Theme and content is the focus or the object of the study, language helps one understand how the objects or phenomenon functions. The present research explored and compared children's literature from Western and Southern Africa. Terre Blanche, Kelly and Durrheim (2006) claim that the constructivist approach to research is reflexive and discursive

as it focuses on the reflexive function of language that constructs a representation of meaning and values in the African world.

The study adopted the text-based qualitative research methodology. According to Boote and Beile (2005), text-based research does not seek information from human participants but only from texts. The data for this research is thus already in existence inside the texts which is included as the study sample (Boote and Beile, 2005).

Selected children's literature from West Africa and Southern Africa constitute the study population or the source of the data for the research. Kitchenham (2004) stated that some of the advantages of text-based research include processing and providing information that a field of study did not consider and has insufficient information or research conducted on a topic. Text-based types of research are economical and therefore are not expensive to carry out.

3.3 Location of the study

The study was conducted from the Pietermaritzburg campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The University was founded in 1910 and was originally named the Natal University College in Pietermaritzburg. Natal University College gained its independence as a university in 1949; this was due to the wide range of courses that were offered at the university, its growing number of students, its achievements in research and the research opportunities which were offered by the University (University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2017).

In 2004 the University of Durban-Westville and Natal University were amalgamated and named the University of KwaZulu-Natal with five campuses including the Westville campus, Pietermaritzburg campus, Howard College campus, Edgewood and Medical campuses (University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2017).

Currently, the University's vision is to be "the premier university of African scholarship" (University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2017). The University's mission statement states that the aim of the University is to be "a truly South African university that is academically excellent, innovative in research, critically engaged with society and demographically representative, redressing the disadvantages, inequities and imbalances of the past" (University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2017). The University is governed by its vision and mission along with core values which inspire greatness, equality and success, all of which drive the goals of the university. The University of KwaZulu-Natal (2017) proclaims that one of its goals is an African-led

globalisation, which aims to encourage globalisation by Africans through African scholarship. The university aspires to promote this globalisation through teaching, learning, and innovation in order to position itself and its scholars into a space of African scholarship and to enter into the global knowledge system (University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2017). The sample of African children's literature selected for purposes of this study was nominated by a University of KwaZulu-Natal literature lecturer.

3.4 Study sample and sample selection

Two children's books from each of two geographical locations on the African continent namely Southern and West Africa respectively constituted the study sample. These four sample books were selected by means of inclusion and exclusion criteria as suggested by Ford, Berrang-Ford and Paterson (2011). Those which met the inclusion criteria formed the selected sample, while those that did not fit were considered as meeting the exclusion criteria and therefore were excluded from the sample.

Following this procedure children's literature included in the study sample met the following inclusion criteria:

- a. Two authors or two books from Southern and West Africa named in a list of the best West and Southern African literature by a University of KwaZulu-Natal lecturer who was an observer of literature and expert of children's literature. The University of KwaZulu-Natal lecturer referenced as an expert of children's literature was the only available academic source with expertise relevant to the study. This particular lecturer was selected based on his academic background in African literature.
- b. The literature is relevant to children of school-going ages 6 - 12.
- c. The authors of children's literature hailed from Southern or Western Africa and of African origin and descent as per the delimitation of the study which focuses on Western and southern African human developmental values.

Using the above criteria, the following books were selected to constitute the sample for the study:

- (a) *The Treasure in the Garden* by Beato Kasale (2001) from Botswana (Southern Africa)
- (b) *The Haunted Taxi Driver* by Kofi Sekyi (1991) from Ghana (West Africa)

(c) *Taxi to Johannesburg* by Matlakala Bopape and Pete Constable (1993) from South Africa (Southern Africa)

(d) *Twins in Trouble* by Amu Djoletto (1991) from Ghana (West Africa).

The above inclusion criteria meant that children's books from other African countries or regions were excluded from the sample texts for the study. Lastly, literature which was not relevant or age-appropriate to topics which can be understood by children ages 6 to 12 were excluded. The literature which was included in the research was considered not relevant to adolescents and children who are below the primary school-going age.

3.5 Data collection process and analysis

The data was collected through the social constructionist approach, which implied that the researcher had to appraise the selected texts or accounts. Therefore, data was collected through the appraisal of texts. The following assumption was used in this research: that the representations of the world do not reflect an objective reality but reflect constructed subjective objects and reality (Burton, 2000). The aim in a constructionist approach to research is to study the values and discourses which shape social and psychological realities (Boréus and Bergström, 2017).

Given the above, this research analysed the texts by way of thematic analysis. This is in accord with the constructionist approach (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The research question and themes may have begun broadly but through the process of data analysis the information was coded and from those codes categories reflecting commonalities were developed. Thus, qualitative thematic analysis was used to conduct complex interpretations.

The analytic approach was thematic analysis which according to Braun & Clarke (2006) is used in both quantitative and qualitative research. In a qualitative study the data is not measured but systematically describes the meaning of the collected qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In order to achieve the aforementioned systematic description, the division of data into a created coding frame was considered important.

In this study, a step by step process was used in extracting data from the sampled texts for purposes of finding patterns and meaning. The findings from the data analysis were later used to respond to the research questions of the study. The following steps were taken before and during analysis:

1. A close reading of each of the four texts highlighted above.
2. Appraisal of the text in search of theme units, in order to identify themes covered in each text.
3. Appraisal of the text in search of meaning units or coding frame.
4. Synthesising the data to combine themes and meanings that point to using the principle of precise identification of the information to be extracted, specific themes and content analysis.
5. Appraisal of the educational usefulness of the selected literature.

3.5.1 Appraisal of the psycho-educational usefulness of the selected literature

The appraisal of the psycho-educational usefulness of the selected literature was analysed using levelling and readability. Each book had already been levelled as the level of each book was provided on the cover of the book. However, in order to determine the readability of the books that had been selected and used in this research the Fry readability graph was used. According to Gilliland (1972) readability formulae are the most used methods of determining the readability of material. Readability formulae consider the used vocabulary, syllables and sentence length (Gilliland, 1972; McLaughlin, 1969 & Fry, 2002). McLaughlin (1969) states that readability grade levels are generally higher because that is the grade-level reading skills which would ensure enough comprehension for the reader to understand, yet also to learn the language skills which have not yet been achieved. Therefore, it is important to consider this for the purpose of this research.

To determine the Fry readability score of each book the following formula presented by Fry (2002), was used: Random selection of 3 sets of 100 words.

The number of sentences per 100 words was calculated. The average number of sentences was $N \div 3$.

The number of syllables per 100 words was calculated and the average number of syllables was $N \div 3$.

The outcomes of both sentences and syllables were used to find the possible readability grade on the Fry readability graph (provided in Appendix Two).

3.6 Results and discussion of findings

The results and discussion of findings of the study were accomplished through:

- a. Appraising the author's works and how the themes pursued in their texts fit African authors professed reasons for writing.
- b. Relating the themes and meanings extracted to the study aims and objectives, while simultaneously relating findings to research questions.
- c. Responding to the question of whether the study has answered the questions of the research or not.
- d. Determining which Africentric person-building implication stands out from the findings.

3.7 Reliability

LoBiondo-Wood and Haber (2010) define reliability as the level of consistency and trustworthiness that a research commands. Ford, Berrang-Ford and Paterson (2011) argue that in order to make research more trustworthy, researchers can use criteria of exclusion and inclusion when assessing data. In the present study to avoid bias in selecting the texts which were analysed, specific inclusion and exclusion criteria was used. Through that process four (4) texts that met the inclusion criteria were selected and others that failed to do so were excluded from the study.

3.8 Validity

Validity is defined by Golafshani (2003) as the amount of accuracy with which a study answers the intended question(s). Johnson (1997) named two different forms of validity as external validity and internal validity which protect against bias. Managing internal validity according to Golafshani (2003) confers validity on the results of the study, and managing external validity, according to Vokurka and O'Leary-Kelly (2000), provides generalisability of the research.

In this study, the technique of triangulation was used in an attempt to strengthen the rigour followed in drawing data for the study. To achieve this aim, author and environmental or geographical triangulation were used to ensure that the data collected was not coming from one favoured location in Africa. In this way, a more comprehensive way of looking at the data emerged. Through this process, the study sample involved the work of more than one

author, more than one book of children's literature and more than one geographical location, namely, Western and Southern Africa.

3.9 Ethical considerations

According to Wassenaar and Mamotte (2012), research ethics are rules that should be followed by researchers. Ethical considerations are in place for the protection of the wellbeing of participants. Research ethics aim to protect the research participants from harm and ensure that the participants are treated with the utmost respect and dignity (Wassenaar & Mamotte, 2012). The present research aimed to ensure that ethical measures were adhered to and that the conclusions arrived at by the end of the study were not detrimental to anyone.

Although the present study did not deal directly with human participants, the ethical perspectives by Emanuel et al. (2004) were adhered to. For example, Emanuel et al. (2004) claimed that social value is a factor of ethical consideration and that social value is about addressing topics that are of interest, importance and relevance to the society of interest. It is believed that the present research is of great social value since it is important to know the extent to which children's books in Africa are relevant to the growth and development of the children that will read them. And this cannot be ascertained unless a study of this nature was carried out.

In keeping with ensuring collaborative partnership, referencing was used not only to show or to minimise plagiarism, collaborative participation or partnership but also to increase scientific validation of the present study. To limit the possibility of plagiarism this research endeavoured to use minimal direct quotations (Wager & Wiffen, 2011).

In an effort to make this research as ethical as possible too, it was sent to the institutional Research Ethics Committee to be reviewed, for ethical clearance. As stated by Singh and Wassenaar (2016) research ethics committees are established as a means of ensuring that all research is ethical and would bring the least harm to participants as possible, and improve the quality of research along with bringing growth to the community of interest and, in this case, psychology as a discipline. Furthermore, the population of this study was texts.

3.10 Chapter summary

This chapter has outlined the qualitative research design and the constructivist approach which were used in conducting this research. The constructivist approach teaches that people have a subjective or constructed understanding to experiences and meaning. The chapter

provided the rationale for the selection of texts, the data collection and analysis methods that were adopted through examining texts, therefore, making this research text-based, and measures of reliability and validity. The study was conducted at the University of KwaZulu-Natal without any human participants. Lastly, the ethical considerations of the research were outlined. The chapter that follows presents the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this research was to explore and identify human developmental values or themes embedded in the content and message of the sampled novels written by authors from two geographical locations in Africa, namely Southern Africa and West Africa. It was also part of the aim of the present study to identify themes and commonalities found in these novels. Four books were selected and analysed in the present research.

These selected books were: *Taxi to Johannesburg* by Peta Constable and Matlakala Bopape (1993), *Twins in Trouble* by Amu Djoletso (1991), *The Treasure in the Garden* by Beata Kasale (2001) and *The Haunted Taxi Driver* by Kofi Sekyi (1991). This chapter presents the findings of the study organised through the discussion of the research questions that explored: (a) the reasons that authors had for writing African children's literature; (b) whether or not the child developmental values which are embedded in the literature written by Southern African authors are similar to those in literature from West Africa. The findings of the study will now be presented. But this must be preceded by the acknowledgement that the children's literature that formed the sample for this research were all published by Heinemann publishing company which is owned by Pearson South Africa (Heinemann Publishers, n.d.). Pearson is a company dedicated to publishing literature for the education of its readers and creating easy ways of teaching for the teachers who use any books which are published by the company to educate children (Heinemann Publishers, n.d.).

4.2. Presentation of findings: The contents and message of the selected texts:

4.2. 1. 'Taxi to Johannesburg'

This novel was written by Peta Constable and Matlakala Bopape (1993) who are both Southern African authors. The protagonist was a young boy named Itumeleng who was also referred to as Tumi. The story began with Tumi packing with the help of his mother, to go to Johannesburg to visit his cousins. He was on school holidays and his father was going to drive Tumi to Johannesburg, but Tumi did not want to be taken by his father to Johannesburg. Instead, Tumi wanted to go alone and in a taxi. This being the case, after much pleading, his parents finally agreed and allowed him to travel alone, using a taxi. The family agreed that Tumi's older brother Mako would take Tumi to the taxi rank and ask the

driver of the taxi to take Tumi to Johannesburg. His parents gave Tumi a paper with his uncle's address and telephone number and Tumi's mother called Tumi's uncle to inform him of Tumi's departure. With this done Tumi and Mako set out for the taxi rank.

On his way to the taxi rank, Tumi mistakenly and unknowingly drops the paper on which was written his uncle's details, and by this time his brother has left him in the taxi which is going to Johannesburg. After what seemed to be a never-ending terrifying taxi drive to Johannesburg Tumi finds himself in Johannesburg alone. He frantically searched for the piece of paper on which was written his uncles' phone number without success. Eventually, he sees a phone booth and a phone book and decides to search in the book for his uncle's number. Just as he is looking for his uncle's contact details in the phone book, he feels a hand on his shoulder and to his relief, it is his uncle and his aunt. After this experience, Tumi concludes that he does not want to travel by taxi ever again.

4.2.2. 'Twins in Trouble'

Twins in trouble is a novel written by the West African author Amu Djoletto (1991). Its story was set in Accra where there lived a family consisting of a mother and father, namely Mr and Mrs Adama and their two 11-year-old twin sons named Kato and Lawo who looked alike. The Adama family was able to provide everything for their children and lived in a house with expensive furniture. Even though the Adama boys were twins they were described as being very different from each other. Kato unlike his twin brother is never in trouble, he brought gifts for their mother such as pawpaws and bananas, and he is described as being his mother's favourite. On the other hand, Lawo is constantly in trouble.

One Saturday as Lawo was going to play soccer; his mother asked him to go to the chemist for her and gave him the prescription and 3000 credits to buy the expensive medication. Lawo protested as he was going to play a soccer match as he usually did on Saturdays but agreed to buy the medicine after some debate. He planned to go to the chemist after the soccer match. As he walked to the match, he noticed a man who seemed to be following him. When he arrived at the soccer field and changed into his sports kit, he then noticed the same man and it seemed as though he was there to watch the soccer. Lawo placed the clothes he wore to the game which had the money his mother gave him on a rock.

The soccer game ended with Lawo having scored a goal. At the end he couldn't find his clothes and with the help of his friend noticed that they were missing. The man who was

following him had taken the clothes and the money and he was now coming after Lawo. Terrified, Lawo took fiercely to his heels until he eventually got home where the man found him. The man knocked on the door and Lawo's mother opened it to find him outside holding Lawo clothes. When Lawo's mother asked who the man was, he said he was a gardener at the local hospital and everyday Lawo goes to the hospital garden and steals fruits. The gardener revealed that he saw Lawo going to play soccer and recognised him as the thief who constantly stole the fruits, and so to teach him a lesson he took his clothes while he was playing soccer. Lawo realised that the man had mistaken him for his twin brother Kato who always brought his mother fruits after school. When the man looked at the boys, he saw that they looked identical. Mrs Adama knew that Kato was the one who was stealing the fruits from the garden and told Kato to pay for the fruits that he had stolen from the hospital garden by working in the garden every Saturday. For a change, Kato was the twin who was in trouble and his twin brother Lawo was not in trouble.

4.2.3. 'The Treasure in the Garden'

Set in a village in Botswana (Sothorn Africa) and written by Beata Kasale (2001), 'The Treasure in the Garden' told a story about twins, a boy and a girl, who could not attend school because their family was poor. Their mother was unable to pay their school fees and as a result, they had to stay at home while other children in the village attended school. The twins were named Kabo and Thandi and they lived with their mother, grandfather, uncle and aunt. When the twins saw their friends wearing school uniforms and going to school, they too wished to attend school in uniforms like their peers. Kabo and Thandi's mother and grandfather knew that her children wanted to be like other children in the village and attend school.

One day their grandfather who was sitting under a tree told Kabo and Thandi's mother about a treasure which was buried in their garden. Kabo and Thandi's grandfather said his father buried the treasure but did not say where in the garden he buried it. Their grandfather did not know which area of the garden the treasure was buried but he said it might be a good idea to look for it now so that they could pay for the twins' education. The twins' mother bought tools for digging that same day and cooked a celebratory dinner for the family to eat. She also told the twins aunt and uncle about the treasure and asked them to help which they did. The very next day the family started digging for the treasure.

After digging for a while, the family began to plant vegetables and fruit trees where they had dug because the soil was rich. Soon the vegetables and trees that they had planted grew. They soon had more than enough vegetables to feed the family and sell to their neighbours in their village, shops and schools. Soon they acquired chickens and started selling chickens and eggs along with their vegetables. The family never stopped searching for the treasure even when the twins were able to attend school and the family built a new house.

One day Thandi and Kabo's grandfather was very sick and called a family meeting where he told the family that he would die soon and that he was glad that they found the buried treasure. Gomolemo (the twin's mother) asked their grandfather what he meant because they were still digging for the treasure. Kabo and Thandi's grandfather stated that he made up the story about the treasure in the garden because he wanted Thandi and Kabo to go to school. He was glad when the family started digging because they also started to plant vegetables and learned how to live off the land and even generate money. Now they were rich because of their hard work. Kabo and Thandi's grandfather passed away and after the funeral, the family were able to discuss the treasure which turned out to be hard work, which led to the ability to be financially stable and allowed the twins to go to school. The twins' aunt and uncle even stopped drinking during the process of looking for treasure.

4.2.4. 'The Haunted Taxi Driver'

The Haunted Taxi Driver was written by Kofi Sekyi (1991) and is set in a place called Bansa in Western Africa. There was an annual event every year, a big graduation celebration for the students graduating from Bansa vocational school. This event was the biggest event of the year in this town because people came from everywhere in order to witness the graduations and festivities during the day and the dance at night. The high number of people in Bansa during this time led to increased business for shops, musicians, and taxi drivers among other people in Bansa. A taxi driver by the name of Baba Oko was happy during this time of the year because he made a lot of money driving people around the town.

Baba Oko worked all day on graduation day. He decided to take a break in the afternoon. During his break, he drank eight bottles of alcohol and then went back to work in the evening of the graduation day. He thought that drinking alcohol made him drive faster thus meaning that he would have transported more people than usual in one night. Baba Oko was driving on the main road, speeding, and not following the rules of the road. On the same main road,

where Baba Oko was driving there was a girl named Asabea who was waiting for her brother and his friend to fetch her so that they could go to the graduation dance and meet her friend Meeru who had graduated earlier that day. Asabea's twin brother Ata and his friend Simon were late. She was waiting at the bus stop on the main road and was pacing up and down looking for her brother and his friend on the road.

While Baba Oko was thinking about how proud he was about driving, he got into an accident which resulted in the injury of Asabea. He put her body in the middle of the street so that the next driver might see her. As he was driving off, he saw a car coming up behind him. He drove off before the people in the car could see his licence plate. The car that was driving towards Baba Oka was Ata and his friend Simon who were driving to fetch Asabea who had been waiting for them. They stopped the car as soon as they saw a body and got out to find that it was Asabea. After some debate they drove her to the hospital.

After months in hiding Baba Oko started working again and drinking right before he drove his taxi. Before long he had returned to the habits which lead to the accident on graduation night. He worked days and nights and on one night he was working and had to drive through the main road, where the accident had happened three months earlier. While driving he was scared and thinking about the night of the accident. He then saw a man waving him down at the bus stop where Asabea had been standing when the accident happened. He stopped to let the man in only to find that it wasn't a man, it was the ghost of Asabea. This frightened him so much that he passed out. The next day he went to work and the last passenger that he had, wanted to go outside of the city centre. While driving and talking with the passenger it turned out to be the ghost of Asabea. Baba Oko jumped out of his taxi while it was moving. He woke up in the hospital. After a number of horrifying tangles with the ghost, he ran away to the police station. He admitted his crimes to the police officers who were at the police station. He also stated that the ghost was now trying to kill him.

A crowd had gathered in the police station and soon Asabea's parents were also there. As Baba Oko was telling his story someone at the back of the crowd asked if the ghost screamed and again, the ghost showed itself. Finally, the police officer demanded that the ghost stop or he would shoot it. The ghost stopped and the person who was the ghost took off the ghost mask and it was Ata, Asabea's brother who had been acting as the ghost the entire time. Ata explained that he wanted to get revenge. His sister had lived because they took her to the hospital in time, if they hadn't taken her to the hospital when they did, she would have died.

Asabea and her parents walked out and Baba Oko was shocked to see that she was alive. This story ends with Asabea and her family dropping the charges they had laid against Baba Oko because he had learned his lesson.

4.3. Reasons that African authors give for writing African children's literature.

Authors of any type of literature have many reasons for writing the materials that they write (Edwards and Ngwaru, 2011). Unfortunately, the authors of the selected literature for this research do not have recorded interviews about their works and there was no information available regarding the reasons why they write African children's literature or even their reasons for writing the selected books.

However, other authors of African children's literature have provided their reasons for creating literature for African children. Some of these authors include Gcina Mhlophe, Chinua Achebe, Meshack Asare and Elinor Sisulu. Their reasons for writing are outlined below along with a brief biography; this may help to ascertain their influences as writers.

Their reasons for writing African children's literature will be discussed and compared with each other and then compared to the contents and message of the selected texts of the study highlighted above, to determine whether their reasons for writing are consistent with the contents and message of the selected children's books above highlighted. The focus is not on their achievements and their biographies but on the reasons they give for writing. The authors selected here are from two geographical locations West and Southern Africa, this is to try to maintain the theme or focus of investigating the similarities and differences between Western and Southern African children's literature.

The South African author Nokugcina (Gcina) Mhlophe is an author, storyteller, playwright, poet, director, advocate and actress according to Walder (1999), (Gcina Mhlophe, n.d.). In an interview with Walder (1999) Gcina Mhlophe reported that *her aim for writing was to inform South African children about South African history and share knowledge mostly about South African history, culture and society but most importantly for her to produce stories which can be understood by the audience in their own way.*

In an interview with Goba (2019, October 24) Gcina Mhlophe reports that *she tells stories in order to maintain the culture and dignity in African cultures and identities. She stated that she does not produce literature or plays to dictate the audience's views, but for them to be*

able to project their own understanding onto the story being told (Walder, 1999). The above in a way allows the reader to develop their own stories (Gcina Mhlophe, n.d.). Walder (1999) notes that even though Gcina Mhlophe can write in many South African languages, she writes in English in order to reach every reader in this way she uses English as a bridge between all South Africans. Gcina Mhlophe is a part of knowledge sharing by telling traditionally Xhosa, Zulu, Native American and Japanese stories (Gcina Mhlophe, n.d.; Walder, 1999). Her stories hold numerous themes such as body image, wisdom, stopping and taking time or diligence.

Another author of African children's literature who provided the reasons that African authors give for writing for children is Chinualumogu (Chinua) Achebe. Achebe was born in Nigeria and has many achievements in his life, one of which being the founder of the literary movement in Nigeria which was inspired by and drew from traditional oral culture (Ogbaa, 1981). *Things Fall Apart*, a novel written by him which is well known and loved worldwide, was reportedly described by an anthropologist as "the best first novel... since the war" (Moore, Heath & Achebe, 2008, p. 11). *Chinua Achebe reportedly said he wrote with the hope that after reading what he has written African people will be seen and treated as humans, with dignity and respect and not pointed at as the other; as Africans have been for centuries (Moore, Heath & Achebe, 2008).*

According to Dobel et al. (2000); Moore, Heath & Achebe (2008), *Chinua Achebe wrote children's literature because he was frustrated with the representation of African people in literature. He wanted to share African cultures and represent them in a more positive light and give a representation of Africa and its people.*

Chinua Achebe stated that his aim in writing literature is to "help my society regain belief in itself and put away the complexes of the years of denigration and self-abasement" (Dobel, et al., 2000, p. 103). He aimed to educate the Nigerian and broader African people. According to Dobel et al., (2000) and Ogbaa & Achebe (1981), *Chinua Achebe aimed to convey Africans as people who have their own cultures, beliefs and languages and to correct the incorrect and damaging imagery of Africans as primitive, backwards and lawless. He aimed to rewrite the image and identity of Africans without diminishing that of the Europeans.*

Elinor Sisulu, according to South Africa Partners (n.d.) was raised in Zimbabwe and is now the chairperson for the Puku Children's Literature Foundation. The Puku Children's

Literature Foundation is a hub for writers, illustrators, authors and storytellers and it aims to foster culturally relevant literature for African children, namely South African (Kalha 2019). The foundation according to Sosibo (2016, July 16) and Kahla (2019) was developed in order to ensure that children could read literature in their own mother tongue and develop an interest in reading and combat the illiteracy issue in South Africa. Elinor Sisulu states that *she aims to correct the disconnection between the South African literature and South African readers, she attempts to encourage and advance culture, language, heritage and history* (Sosibo, 2019). *She champions the education of South African children regarding language, culture, heritage through her own literature* and Puku Children's Literature Foundation in partnership with South African writers. According to Sosibo (2016), Elinor Sisulu is influenced among other factors, by her inability to read literature in her own language as a child.

The final African author to be discussed is Meshack Asare a Ghanaian children's book author who was the first African author to achieve the NSK Neustadt Prize for Children's Literature and Neustadt International Prize for Literature (Abrams, 2014). According to *World Literature Today* (n.d.), Meshack Asare is one of the most influential African writers of African children's literature. Abrams (2014) states that Meshack Asare's works of literature are universal and have the ability to impact and are relatable by many people who read them. In an interview that he did with Abrams (2014), he stated that *he's aiming when writing African children's literature to create and represent real African experiences which are set in familiar places or environments*. The African representation is visible in his literature, some of which include *Tawia Goes to Sea* (1970), *Brassman's Secret* (1981) and *The Canoe's Story* (1982) (Abrams, 2014). Abrams (2014) notes that *Meshack Asare aimed to not only represent Ghanaian environment and experiences but also Zimbabwean, Basotho, Botswana and South African experiences. His aim was to represent the entire continent in order to provide children from everywhere on the African continent with stories set in their own country and region, this will increase pride and knowledge that they too are represented in literature* (Abrams, 2014). His reasons for writing were the lack of African literature for and by Africans (Abrams, 2014). Abrams (2014) states that according to Meshack Asare *African children cannot experience storytelling by their elders as much if at all in urbanized Africa and many of the children's literature prescribed in schools are European imports and representations*. Meshack Asare argues that the literature which was first published in African languages were mostly for missionary use to teach the Bible and the moral values

which were in line with Christianity (Abrams, 2014). It is evident that Meshack Asare's works of literature are a mixture of cultural moral values and fiction to draw the reader's attention and interest along with educating them through the immersion in people-making values.

The above presentations show that the African writers selected for the purpose of understanding the reasons that some African authors write for African children, have similar reasons for writing (Edwards and Ngwaru, 2011). The first is that they write, among other things, to provide African children with African representations of reality. Second, they write with the aim of helping the children of Africa have the type of children's literature that was unavailable to children of their own generation. Some of the writers said they wrote as a form of therapy for themselves and their readers and these writers include Gcina Mhlophe (Walder, 1999).

Indeed, the findings of this study indicate that African authors seem to write in order to promote positive African values and images (Edwards and Ngwaru, 2011). It seems to be important for African authors to write about African culture, usually the culture that they know about and are capable of representing accurately.

Some of the authors such as Gcina Mhlophe and Elinor Sisulu highlighted that they wrote in order to promote reading and learning among African children. Also, an important aim that all of the selected authors have in common seems to be the need to correct the misrepresentation of African people by colonialist literature, particularly for the sake of African children to have a more positive image of Africa and its people. Achebe (1978) argues that different readers read according to their need. Some need to be consoled, entertained, amused and feel many different emotions while others read to be inspired or to dream. It is clear that the African audience needs the above-mentioned factors in a novel but they also look to heal and the processes of healing, dreaming, entertaining, consoling and feeling can only really occur when the literature is relatable to the reader (Achebe, 1978 & Edwards and Ngwaru, 2011). This is what Chinua Achebe, Meshack Asare, Elinor Sisulu and Gcina Mhlophe seemed to be focused on, in creating relatable and relevant literature.

Most of the above reasons were provided by Elinor Sisulu, Chinua Achebe, Gcina Mhlope and Meshack Asare; and are also common and consistent with reasons provided by international authors of children's literature for children of African descent or ancestry. An

example is Zetta Elliott who according to *AV Interview with Children's book authored by Zetta Elliott* (2017) noted that Zetta Elliot is an author and illustrator of children's books, a poet, playwright and promotes and champions equality and diversity in writing and publishing children's literature. Tate (2009, February 07) reports that Zetta Elliott published her first novel in 2008 titled *Bird*. In an interview entitled 'Interview with Children's Book Author Zetta Elliott' (2017), *she reported writing literature for children because it is important to show children a reflection of their lives and stories. She reported to also write because so many children don't and didn't have this opportunity to heal through seeing them represented in some way in the literature* (Elliott 2019). *She reportedly writes to assist children to heal from their traumas and emotional pain. Zetta Elliott reportedly writes in order to heal herself from her emotional pain and childhood pains one of which is yearning for a book which presented a black girl as a lead or centre with a story which she could relate to* (See 'AV Interview with Children's Book Author Zetta Elliott', 2017). In this interview (2017) Elliott stated that she aims not only to heal herself and children but hopes that her work will heal her community as a whole in some way. Zetta Elliot is from Canada, which is not an African country; however, she does have African ancestry and writes for children as a whole.

Considering the above reasons for writing, it is important to examine whether these reasons are congruent with the moral and human developmental values embedded in the selected literature of the current research: this is provided and discussed below.

4.4. African people-making values and commonality of embedded values in Southern and West African children's literature

4.4.1 Taxi to Johannesburg: Implied moral lessons embedded in the novel

The story of Tumi, written by South African authors Matlakala Bopape and Peta Constable, (1993), is one of youthful eagerness, naivety and growth. This story has lessons about the unexpected instability of the world. The world can be a harsh and scary place particularly for children travelling through it alone. No one has control of their future or plans and experiences. When going out one must do so with caution and vigilance yet still enjoy and learn from the experience. The story suggests that sometimes parents know what is best for their children and that children should try not to rush the process of growing up. This moral vision was shown through Tumi wanting to travel alone to Johannesburg like his older brother; later when he is on his way to Johannesburg, he gets overwhelmed by the

uncertainty. Tumi also learns the important lesson of responsibility and diligently taking care of his possessions. When he was alone in Johannesburg he realised that he had lost the piece of paper which had his uncle's contact details on it. Finally, the story emphasises the relevance of the family in a child's life which provides safety, care and love. The story also emphasised that an African family is not one only of a nuclear family structure but also encompasses an extended family system. This was made clear through the introduction of Tumi's aunt, uncle and cousin in the course of the narrative. These are elements in the novel to enable children to appreciate and internalise the value of other people apart from their parents in fostering their equitable human growth and development.

4.4.2 Twins in Trouble

Twins in Trouble is a story which presents with values and themes about identity. The twins mentioned in the story were described as being identical yet they are two separate people. The novel underlined the value of good behaviour and the need for consistency in being good-natured in character. Unfortunately, one of the twins Lawo was described as constantly being in trouble. On the other hand, Kato, his twin, was described as being thoughtful and well behaved. This story also cautions against the labelling of children, where Lawo was labelled as the naughty twin and Kato the well-behaved twin creating the image of the favourite and least favourite. The story cautioned against the problem of mistaking appearance for reality and cautions against the spirit of dishonesty to present a deceitful image of one being good. The fact that Kato gave his mother fruits every day is dampened when it was discovered that those fruits were stolen from someone else's garden. The story promotes the lesson, the belief, and understanding that every action is followed by a consequence.

4.4.3 The Treasure in the Garden

The novel, *The Treasure in the Garden*, was written by a West African author Beata Kasale (2001). The story has within it the teachings of hard work, teamwork, and perseverance. It was set in a village, and tells about a family who, at the beginning of the story, was said to be poor. This story represents the situation in many African societies and families because poverty is prominent all over the continent of Africa regardless of geographical location. The story teaches that the elders are people endowed with wisdom even though they might not have gotten any formal education. This was contrasted with the naivety demonstrated by young people when facing life. The resounding virtue underlined in the story was the need

for family support and the importance of working together in achieving success in life. This aforementioned virtue was shown in the change that the act of digging and working hard in search of treasure made in everyone's life in the family described in the story. Such hard-work helped Palesa and Gomolemo (Kabo and Thembi's aunt and uncle) to stop using alcohol. It helped Thembi and Kabo's mother to be in a position to provide for the family and it helped them to pay for Kabo and Thembi's school fees allowing them to attend school. The story also emphasised the importance of working together as a family unit. Similarly, the concept of the family in the story also included the notion of the extended family, encompassing the presence of the grandfather, aunt, and uncle. These are crucial process of giving the targeted reader of the novel some valuable pieces of African-centred education.

4.4.4 The Haunted Taxi Driver

This novel highlights many values targeted at helping to increase the child reader's moral development and the growth-oriented values. It emphasises like the previous novels analysed, the importance of family in the life of a child and is a cautionary tale that propagates the importance of vigilance and respect for rules; or in the case of Baba Oko, laws. The novel warns against irreverence towards the law and old people. It underlines the consequences for irreverent behaviour, how haunting some actions may be for the offender in the future. It also suggests that people need to learn from their mistakes and how imperative that is, along with the virtue of forgiveness. The novel's narrative promotes the idea that taking responsibility for one's actions is a preferred value in society; and that one may find that they would relate better with others and may even be forgiven when they have learned from their mistakes and are remorseful and take responsibility for their actions that hurt people emotionally, psychologically or physically. The story also promotes the idea that biomedical health care is a friendly and helpful profession where people in need will find help from the staff; this is shown by the nurse who took care of Baba Oko. The representation of the health system in the novel contained a message that is contrary to the popular but false beliefs circulating in society about the health system. The story of the novel helps children to get a fairer impression and the generally true reality of healthcare facilities, staff, and systems in Africa which are presented by Okello and Musisi (2006) as unsatisfactory and neglectful. The police officers in the police station showed no bias in the way that they handled the issue between Baba Oko, Ata and his family. This was meant to present a non-biased image of the police to the children. The community helped Baba Oko when he was in need and were also active when they thought he was a thief. The aim in all this seems to be to allow children not

starting life with buying into the adult biased image of the police or the health system in Africa. They need to learn things first hand so they can make their own conclusions.

The story also teaches the idea of the community as needing to work together and helping where needed. The story is set in a town during the biggest event of the year, graduation day. The idea of learning and obtaining tertiary level education is set and promoted in this novel to inspire the children. This is another way of saying that some children's literature in Africa presents child readers with something in their culture to be celebrated and aspired for. The author emphasises the idea of the African youth's ability to achieve what they set their minds to.

Some of the themes which are shown in this story also reflect a modern society that many African children can relate to. It shows the existence of a variety of health care facilities provided in contemporary African society, which is very reflective of African societies today, where many people still seek health-related assistance from spiritual healers to diviners and herbalists (Okello and Musisi, 2006). It equally promotes children's trust in the law enforcement system and medical systems. This novel is a big source of knowledge for children and even presents scenarios where an adult can at times be in the wrong and make mistakes. The aim appears to be to teach child readers that mistakes are human.

4.5 Readability and levelling: Using African children's literature for educational reasons

The children's literature or novels selected for purposes of this research were all materials which could be used for English language education purposes. This is evident in the levelling information which is present in all the books, which show the difficulty level of each book thus providing information regarding the reading level of the readers targeted for each book. Moreover, all of the selected works of literature, though set in African communities, were written in English, thus proving their usefulness for reading and the comprehension of English. Each novel also provides questions, activities, and a glossary; this is proof of the use of all the books for academic purposes. According to Fry (2002), when introducing literature for learning purposes it is important to start with literature or reading material which is not too difficult for learners to comprehend. Redish (2000) stated that it is important for reading material to be understandable for the reader or target audience, regardless of age.

As was highlighted earlier, there are two ways of determining the difficulty of reading material. The first is through readability and the second is through levelling which was outlined in the previous chapter and in chapter two under the definition of readability and levelling (Fry, 2002). The following are the results of the readability of each book which were calculated using the Fry Readability Graph which is provided in Appendix Two.

The readability grade level for ‘Taxi to Johannesburg’ was the third-grade level which means the literature is still suitable for a level one learner or reader; yet a third-grade reader would have a complete understanding of the literature. ‘The Treasure in The Garden’ has a grade level of four, which means that the level two reader may use it for learning purposes, but the grade four learners would be able to comprehend the literature better. ‘Twins in Trouble’ was a level one reader but it is nevertheless better understood by a reader who has grade three English reading skills. The ‘Haunted Taxi Driver’ scored a grade level four but would be more useful for a level three learner to learn English comprehension. The readability grade level for all of the selected literature is provided in Appendix Two. In order to determine the grade levels of the selected literature, the Fry Graph was employed.

The above indications mean that all the novels selected for use in this study were written by African authors who gave enormous consideration to the need to ensure that the children reading them do not encounter any difficulty in comprehending what they read.

4.6. Chapter summary

In this chapter an attempt has been made to show that the novels written by the sampled African authors have some major similarities regardless of their geographic location. At the same time, there were some minor differences noted between them. The most prominent human-building virtue found, which was common to all of them, is the notion of the importance of family and community in the development of children. Similarly, all of the selected novels show that it is important to respect family and elders and that it is important to keep good relationships with each other. They all present that for those children who have family, it is a source of love and safety. Qualities of honesty, responsibility and hard-work were also underlined in all of the novels. Most of the stories in the novels studied could be classified as cautionary stories which warn against lying, mischievous behaviour and breaking of rules. The selected novels were about African people with African names and places. They provide representations of Africans and real-life experiences of Africans such as poverty and they are current with relatable issues (Caser, 2017). The four novels represent

Africans as people with laws and ways of social interaction which include respect for elders and for one another. They provide an image of African people from African perspectives.

The above findings are congruent with the reasons given by Chinua Achebe, Meshack Asare, Elinor Sisulu and Gcina Mhlophe for writing and storytelling. The findings show that it is common for African novelists to write about human-building virtues such as those named above. Novels by Southern African authors seemed to focus on the family and the notion of wisdom, hard work and the family versus the problem of naivety, and idleness; whereas novels written by West African authors focused on propounding the importance of the virtues of honesty, handling of responsibilities and the idea that there are consequences for undesirable or negative behaviours such as lying. Overall the authors collectively provided rich stories which provide some insight and representation of African people and some of the important moral values from which children can learn. The findings of the research are shown in a table form in Appendix two.

A recapping and discussion of the entire findings of the study will be undertaken in the final chapter that now follows.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter encompasses a discussion of the research findings of the study and the conclusions emanating from the research. It discusses the results which were outlined in the previous chapter. An outline of those findings emerged from the human developmental values content of the four African children's novels studied. The discussion will be organised in line with the research themes emerging from the findings of the study. These themes are related to the key objectives of the study. The chapter will conclude with the summary and implications of the study, limitations of the research and recommendations for improved policy and further research and practice.

5.2 Discussion of results by research theme

The findings of the present study are discussed below under the themes embedded in the key objectives of the study, namely (1) African authors' reasons for writing African children's literature; (2) Human developmental values propagated in children's literature in Africa; and (3) the commonalities and the differences in Southern and West African literature, including issues of the readability and levelling properties of these novels.

5.2.1 Theme 1: African authors' reasons for writing

The findings of this research in relation to the above theme reveal that, said or unsaid, African authors of children's literature have particular reasons for writing the novels they wrote. Thus Segun (1996) was correct in saying that African authors of African children's literature were inspired to write due to lack of African cultural and societal representations in children's literature authored by foreign writers. This means that although the authors whose novels were selected and used in this study did not directly provide reasons for why they wrote their novels, the reasons why they wrote could be deciphered from a study of the reasons for writings that were provided by other authors of African children's literature reviewed in the present study. In this regard, four authors were selected to provide answers as to why they wrote or write African children's literature. These authors selected for such a review were Chinua Achebe, Gcina Mhlophe, Meshack Asare and Elinor Sisulu. An additional author from Canada by the name of Zetta Elliott who authored some children's literature was reviewed. The aforementioned authors were not among the authors of the

selected literature used in the present study. But it is clear from the results of the present study that all of the five above-mentioned authors stated that they had reasons that inspired them to write what they wrote. One of these reasons is the lack of African representation in the literature read by African children of their generation; in other words due to a lack of authentic African literature available at the time they wrote.

Chinua Achebe's statement that he wrote African children's literature in order to correct the incorrect and negative presentations of African people in western literature (Moore, Heath & Achebe, 2008; Mkabela, 2005) is a major revelation. Such an aim can be found reflected in the stories captured in the books of the four authors studied which presented African societies in West and South African areas, with characters that are realistic and that can easily be found in rural and city areas, and of various economic statuses in Africa. In those African based stories, the names and illustrations of the people were truly African and had African features. Some of the authors reviewed under the current theme highlighted in the interviews that they gave to journalists, that they wrote their novels due to the therapeutic values they wanted to project in their works for the edification of their readers. Furthermore, the authors also reported that they wrote the novels they authored in recognition of the educational value which they believe reading promotes. In general, the results of the study under this theme showed that African authors aimed to create a space for African children to find themselves in the novels made available to them and to learn to problem-solve.

It was also clear from the results of this study that African authors find it important to write and provide children with stories that will present an accurate image of Africa and Africans. In other words the review conducted under this theme showed that African authors of children's literature wrote their novels in order to promote African dignity and to enhance an understanding of other Africans and African culture generally, for African children in their formative years. As stated by August (1990), African authors write in order to preserve the African identity even when having countless ethnic identities to project in their works. Similarly, an in-depth study of the reasons for writing provided by authors of African children's literature in this research revealed that African authors write with the intention of healing Africans particularly African children and to rewrite and re-present Africa and African peoples and societies in a more accurate light than the image of Africa to be found in colonialist children novels in dominant circulation until recently.

In terms of commonalities in the reasons for writing provided by African authors of children's literature, Chinua Achebe and Meshack Asare, both West African authors, gave similar reasons for writing for children as did Elinor Sisulu and Geina Mhlopho who are Southern African authors. The additional author, Zetta Elliot who resides outside the African continent but is part of the African Diaspora also mentioned the same reasons for writing as those given by the African authors of children's literature resident in Africa. Because the reasons for writing which were provided were generally to show realistic and positive images of Africa and its people and cultures, the content of the literature tended to corroborate this objective. However, over and above the psycho-political reasons for writing highlighted by the reviewed authors in answer to the question about why they wrote, and despite the presence of children's novels that were available before they wrote, must be included the attempt they made to promote some human development/moral values in the stories encompassed in their novels. It is those human developmental values reflected in the content of the four novels selected for the present study that will be highlighted and discussed below.

5.2.2 Theme 2: Human developmental values in Southern and West African children's literature

The African children's novels that were selected for this study reflected in their stories and content identifiable values and visions for equitable human development. Among the moral values they emphasised are lessons on the importance of responsibility, respect for law and order, and the important role of the community and families in human development. The stories presented in the four novels showed that African people have traditional and non-traditional nuclear family structures. In other words, they projected African families as being made of different types and sizes, so there were families which had both a mother and father and others with a mother and no father. And there was an instance in one of the novels where one family representation was that of a man and his wife who did not have children or no mention of children. In all of them, the story presented a form of family structure. Similarly, the four novels showed the different images and representations of Africans. Their aim appeared to be to present to child readers the variety of identities of Africans. The four novels studied together represent West and Southern Africa as regions on the African continent with a myriad of economic and social conditions, problems, countries, and ethnicities (Mendoza and Reese, 2001).

The four novels studied also contained multiple African human-building moral values propagated through the English language. As mentioned earlier, they all have within them values such as the importance of family, community, and hard work. The stories projected some similar values and lessons. These values and lessons included the notion that all actions have consequences or punishments and privileges. For example, the positive outcome of hard work was represented in the story by Kasale (2001) titled ‘The Treasure in the Garden’. This novel also shows the richness of African soil and its ability to heal, and to provide for and sustain those who work the land. Kasale (2001), Bopape (1993), Djoletto (1991), and Sekyi’s (1991) novels also provide positive images of African people, that are realistic, current, inspiring, and relevant.

This theme shows the outcome of the investigation on what values and messages formed the content of the novels and also the similarities of the human-building and developmental values from both West and Southern Africa.

5.2.3 Theme 3: The notions of readability and levelling in African children’s literature

According to the relevant literature reviewed, readability and levelling in the words of Lev Vygotsky would fall within the Zone of Proximal Development, prompting the learner or reader to reach their potential (Fry, 2002). Readability and levelling in the context of this study were revealed to be two of the many methods used by teachers who teach reading to assess books. The scores that were provided in the previous chapter demonstrate that the four novels studied were designed for educational purposes ensuring not only readability but also easy to understand. This particular statement responds to the final objective of the study namely, determining the educational relevance of the selected literature. To achieve this aim, the study reveals that all of the novels have a glossary of English words and their meanings towards the end of each book and they all contain activities that are language skill orientated. Each novel shows the reading level that the book is suited for. The results of the research which are presented in the table in Appendix Two, show the grading and the levelling of each of these four novels which indicates the grade and level that the novels are best suited to.

5.3 Summary and implications of the study

5.3.1 Summary of the study

This research explored and compared children’s literature in English from West and Southern Africa. The study was conducted to facilitate a better understanding of the importance of

African children's literature as tools of human development. It investigated four novels that were written by authors from West and Southern Africa. The study used a qualitative research design to implement the study. The qualitative study design used was a constructivist approach to research. This research aspired to holistically understand the immersed values and meanings and to understand the content of African children's literature. Because qualitative research aims to capture experience rich in diversity of meaning, and to document how those meanings are made and transported, this study observed and investigated the immersion of human development values through the vehicle of African children's literature. Children's literature from West and Southern Africa constituted the study population or the source of the data for the research.

The study adopted the text-based qualitative research methodology because the data was found within the texts included as the study sample. The results show that African children's literature tries to propagate important human developmental values. The study also established that the values found in children's literature from West African were very similar to the values found in the selected Southern African literature. Since the authors of the selected children's novels did not directly spell out their own reasons for writing the novels they wrote; reasons provided by five other African authors were investigated. The results showed that these five African authors of children's literature from West and Southern Africa, including the one from the African Diaspora living in Canada, all write for similar reasons. One of those reasons was to provide an accurate and positive representation of Africa, African people and African cultures. Based on this understanding, it can be said that the values and content of the selected literature were dictated by the philosophies or rationale that the authors had for writing.

5.3.2. Conclusions and implications of the study

Based on the findings of the present study the following conclusions can be made:

1. The selected African children's novels contain a number of African child developmental values. Those values are immersed in the stories told in the children's literature studied. The values they propagated for the edification of children are those that need to be upheld and remembered even as the child grows. Hence they can be referred to as human developmental values.

2. The psycho-educational values found in children's literatures authored by West African novelists were similar to and in some instances identical with those found in children's literatures written by Southern African authors. This revelation is interesting because these authors were writing from different cultural locations in Africa and yet they ended up proposing similar human developmental values for the edification and growth of the African children wherever they may be found.
3. Because there is great alignment in the reasons that authors from West and Southern Africa have proffered for writing children's literature, it might therefore be speculated that African authors of children's literature were motivated to write for children against the background of uniform inspiration and experience, particularly colonialist experience.

In light of these conclusions the following implications can be deduced:

1. One of the best approaches for giving enduring education and counselling to children in Africa is through the use of relevant literatures that contain down-to-earth stories with lessons for living.
2. The best way to promote effective decolonisation of the minds of African particularly during their formative years and the years after, is through the avenue of literature, in which a corrective education about Africa and Africans can be presented in stories that African children can easily follow and understand and the ones that present Africans and Africa in the best positive light.
3. African children's literature which accurately projects relevant content particularly where the image of Africa is concerned, can be used to restore African dignity and pride, thus the reader will also gain esteem and pride in their African identity. This will help to create more healing and education which some authors reviewed in this study had reported were misrepresented or withheld in previous children's literatures about Africa and its people.
4. African children's literature can be used to educate African children about the variety of peoples and cultures in Africa. By knowing that Africa holds people from multiple walks of life simultaneously and that human developmental values in one area of Africa are similar to those emphasised in other parts of Africa, will help to promote empathy and good understanding between different African people. Through this

process a way out of the prejudices that fuel xenophobia among people of Africa will wither away with time.

The above indications suggest that children's literature can be used in a multitude of ways that can be effective in the psycho-cultural development of African children.

5.4 Recommendations for policy and practice

In the light of the above implications and conclusions, the following recommendations are made to improve policy and practice:

1. African governments should take greater interest in and critically assess the kind of children's literature recommended for use in African schools. Those recommended must be characterised by the quality of content aimed at introducing the children to important values for living as stipulated in African cultures and traditions.
2. There is a need to use children's literature to showcase the creativity and intelligence of African peoples from different geographical locations: East, West, North and South.
3. There is a need for encouragement of African children's literature to be used to assist in closing the gaps between African cultures and ethnicities; creating a more united African people who are accepting of their differences and similarities. African children's literature can be used to increase empathy, understanding and respect of different ethnic or cultural groups thus decreasing hate and xenophobia in the future.

5.5 Limitations of the study

The present study has a number of limitations that further research can help to address.

Firstly, the study was text-based. For this reason access to the authors of the novels studied was not available. And based on this constraint, their reasons for writing could not be ascertained from them directly in the context of the present research.

Secondly, it would have been useful to find out directly from African children for whom the authors write, which of the novels made available to them they like most, and why.

Thirdly, the present research only studied four novels from two geographical locations in Africa. This provides very limited information when studying the diverse human

developmental values of both geographical locations and indeed Africa as a whole. It would be useful to study a wider variety of African children's literature in order to have a better, more informed view of the important people-making values which are immersed within school going children's literature in contemporary Africa.

Fourthly, tools such as usability testing for the novels selected for the present study could not be used in the study because usability testing requires human participation to assess important subjective factors which work together to make a text usable (Redish, 2000). When attempting to ascertain if the selected African children's literature could be used for academic purposes, the study found that it could, although not all the aspects of literature evaluation were dealt with. This study focused on readability and the provided levelling. The readability only measured the syllables and sentences present in 100 words per three random places in the books. It measured the aforementioned aspects of style and difficulty and did not consider the mood, tone, format, content or graphics (Redish, 2000).

Finally, this research only studied children's literature that was written in English. A study which consists of literature written in African languages would have been helpful to determine which human developmental values are included in literatures written in African languages compared to those written in English or French.

5.6 Recommendations for further research

Based on the above limitations, the following recommendations are made for purposes of further research:

1. African authors of children's literature should be engaged with directly to explore their motivations or reasons for the novels they wrote.
2. It would have been useful to find out directly from the African children for whom the authors write, which of the novels made available to them they like most, and why.
3. A study of a wider variety of African children's literature is recommended in order to have a more in depth view of the important human developmental values which are immersed within school going children's literature in contemporary Africa.

4. Research on children's literature written in African languages is needed to determine which human developmental values are included in literatures written in African languages compared to those written in English or French.

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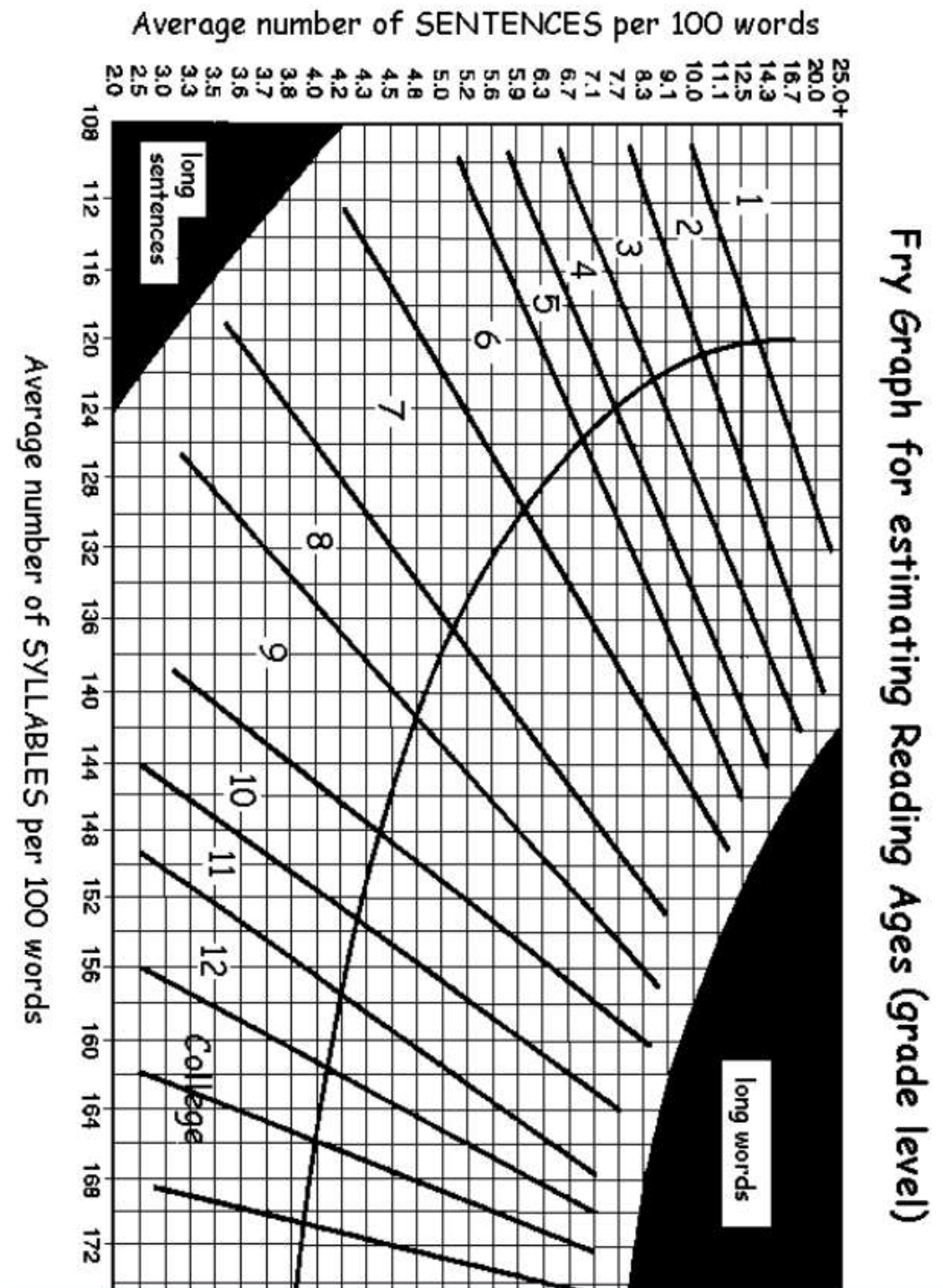
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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Fry Readability Graph



Appendix 2: Table representation of findings

Story title	Author(s)	Year published	Geographic region	Themes/ Morals	Reading level	Readability
Taxi To Johannesburg	Matlakala Bopape and Peta Constable	1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southern Africa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility is important and so is listening to one's parents or elders. The above is important because elders know the word better and are more experienced. 	Level 1	3rd Grade
Twins In Trouble	Amu Djoletto	1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Africa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every action has a consequence. One may do things that are not acceptable and bad such as lying and stealing but there is always a consequence to wrong behaviour. In this case paying for the stolen products through working or helping. • It is important to make your parents proud by doing what is right. 	Level 1	3 rd Grade
The Treasure In The Garden	Beata Kasale	2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southern Africa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teamwork and working hard has abundant possibilities and benefits. • The importance of family. • Listening to elders is highly beneficial and comes with blessings. 	Level 2	4th Grade
The Haunted Taxi Drive	Kofi Sekyi	1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Africa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility, laws and the importance of community. Diverse family structures. Importance and the 	Level 3	4th Grade

				place of law enforcers and medical services. Biomedical health systems as not the only form of medicine and is not superior or inferior to traditional, religious or cultural medicines or forms of healing.		
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Appendix 3: Ethics Approval



31 January 2019

Ms Phillie Nxolo Phungula 217072693
School of Applied Human Sciences
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Ms Phungula

Protocol reference number: HSS/0020/019M

Project Title: African Children's Literature: A study of the Immersion African child development values

Approval Notification – No Risk / Exempt Application

In response to your application received 10 December 2018, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully



Dr Shamila Naidoo (Deputy Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

Cc Supervisor: Professor Augustine Nwoye
Cc Academic Leader Research: Professor K. Durheim
Cc School Administrator: Ms Priya Konan

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