

**Title**

If children's literature is a form in which cultural heritage is transmitted, how do migrant children respond when the literature they read embodies the assumptions and ideas of other forms of cultural heritage?

**Research Context**

Writing about the fiction of African authors in the 1960s, Osayimwense Osa wrote that, 'for young children, literature transmits their cultural heritage best.'<sup>1</sup> Taking this as my starting point, I will explore how Ghanaian migrant children respond to the assumptions and ideas of England's cultural heritage expressed in children's literature. The research will begin by comparing and contrasting the themes of cultural heritage within children's literature in England and in Ghana. This will be conducted using empirical research of ethnography and reception studies. I will do this because it will provide background reasons on why Ghanaian children may respond to similar/different cultural presentations in English children's literature. After this, I will research how Ghanaian children view the ideas and assumptions of cultural heritage presented in English children's literature after they have migrated. This will be my main research question. Emphasis will be put on the books used in formal education, as I believe that these represent the traditional views that the respective governments wish to convey.

**Research Question(s)**

- Main question: How do Ghanaian child migrants respond to the assumptions and ideas of cultural heritage expressed in English children's literature?
- Subsidiary question: What are the similarities/differences between the ideas of cultural heritage presented within children's literature in Ghana and England, and what are the reasons for this?

**Research Methods**

Literary sources such as *Children's Literature in Education*. This international Quarterly explores the educative role of specific children's books across the world. Also, Cati Coe's *Dilemmas of Culture in African Schools*, portrays schools as a method to instill Ghanaian culture in children.<sup>2</sup> This will be helpful as background on how schools are designed to function in Ghana, thus providing a basis on the role of children's literature as used in schools.

Use the African Book Publishing Record - bibliographical tool which offers systematic and comprehensive coverage of new and forthcoming African publications in a single source, providing full bibliographic and acquisitions data.<sup>3</sup>

Close reading of texts in children's literature. I will do this in order to realise the implicit details of cultural heritage presented within texts.

Surveys, questionnaires and interviews with school pupils and teachers in schools to learn how the themes of children's literature is taught, and how Ghanaian children adapt to the themes of children's literature taught in England.

There is a concentration of Ghanaian migrants in London and sizable populations in Milton Keynes, Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, Coventry, Slough, Cardiff, Swansea.<sup>4</sup> I can draw on these areas for my empirical research on children's themes in literature when looking at the influence of formal education.

**Objectives of the research**

- To understand the themes of children's literature in Ghana and in England, as well as the social reasons behind these themes.
- Based on these themes, to understand how Ghanaian children understand the ideas and assumptions of children's literature in England after migration.

**Significance/originality of research**

My topic of research will be original because there is no existing study on how migration impacts children's literature in formal education in one's home and host country, and there is very little research on children's literature, especially in non-Western countries. The research is interesting because it brings together both literature, education and anthropology. This combination is original and should appeal to a larger cross-section of research. In light of the current socio-political climate, where subjects related to migration are reported daily, my research will appeal to those looking for a more personal, relatable account on education and literature, both of which have affected almost everyone's lives. My research will fit into already-existing research because it will show new ways of incorporating non-Western with Western literature, especially in a genre that is barely explored. It will contribute to already-existing research because it will illuminate the diversity and importance of children's literature, a genre not yet taken seriously enough, but one that influences many aspects of adult life.

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<sup>1</sup> Osayimwense Osa 'The Rise of African Children's Literature.' *The Reading Teacher*, vol. 38, no. 8, (1985), pp. 750–754.

<sup>2</sup> Cati Coe, *Dilemmas of Culture in African Schools*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Saur De Gruter, *The African Book Publishing Record*. <https://www.degruyter.com/view/j/abpr>.

<sup>4</sup> IOM International Organization for Migration, 'Ghana Mapping Exercise' *London: International Organization for Migration*. (April 2009) <[https://web.archive.org/web/20120304145035/http://www.iomlondon.org/doc/mapping/IOM\\_GHANA.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20120304145035/http://www.iomlondon.org/doc/mapping/IOM_GHANA.pdf)> [accessed 10/1/19] Archived from the original (PDF) on 4 March 2012.

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