

YOUNG ADULT READERS AS POTENTIAL CONSUMERS OF LITERARY TOURISM SITES: A SURVEY OF THE READERS OF TWO OF THE DALENE MATTHEE FOREST NOVELS

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ABSTRACT

The Knysna forest is a natural and cultural landscape that nurtured the creativity of author Dalene Matthee. Her literary works *Kringe in 'n bos* and *Fiela se kind*, regarded as the first two of her 'forest' novels, capture a segment of 19th-century rural life and have intermittently been setworks/prescribed texts for senior secondary school learners since their publication.

The aim of the research reported on, was to investigate the effect of prescribed works of fiction on the potential travel behaviour of adolescents or young adults, ranging from 17 to 19 years of age, and more specifically, whether the reading of *Kringe in 'n bos* and/or *Fiela se kind* may influence the reader as consumer to want to visit the Knysna forest, the setting of the novels, and similarly to visit other destinations with a literary heritage and engage in literary tourism. Any potential literary tourism site is a social construction that requires authentic development to attract visitors interested in experiencing the setting of novels.

The fieldwork indicated significant interest among respondents in enhancing their prescribed reading with a real-life experience of visiting the Knysna Forest on an organised school tour. Should this not be possible, a 'virtual' internet tour would be their next choice. The linking of books with a destination could add value to a reader's experience of both. A literary place, such as the Knysna forest as the setting for *Kringe in 'n bos* and *Fiela se kind*, can be regarded as a place that readers as consumers (can) attach meaning to, and that draws tourists to the destination.

Interest in literary tours and literary tourism appears evident, and places could be promoted owing to their association with well-known writers and their books.

KEYWORDS

Literary tourism, cultural heritage, Dalene Matthee, Knysna forest, South Africa, *Kringe in 'n bos*, *Fiela se kind*, networks/prescribed texts, adolescent/young adult consumers.

1 INTRODUCTION

Literary heritage as a genre or specialised subset of cultural heritage (Stiebel 2004:32) aims to convey the way of life of an individual or group(s) of people through characters in books (literature); on an intangible level the reader gains insight into the beliefs, behaviour, codes and special symbols, customs and values of this individual or group, whereas on a tangible level the author describes the personal decoration, dress style, jewellery and makeup of the individual or group through characters and the setting of the book to enhance character identification and/or development.

Within the South African educational context there has been a strong tendency to prescribe the works of a small number of authors repeatedly, specifically within the realm of language tuition. In this case, in secondary schools in South Africa the novels of Dalene Matthee, renowned local author, were prescribed by the Department of Education for the literature component of Afrikaans first/home language and Afrikaans first additional language tuition in grades 11 and 12 (then referred to as standards 9 and 10 – the two final years of secondary school) both from 1984 to 1990, and since 2004 (Van der Westhuizen 2004:149). The aim of the research reported on in this article was to investigate the effect that prescribed works of fiction (setworks) may have on the potential travel behaviour of adolescents/young adults aged 17 to 19 years.

The novels *Kringe in 'n bos* (*Circles in a forest*, 1984) and *Fiela se kind* (*Fiela's child*, 1985) were the most frequently prescribed novels for schools over a period of two decades. Both are set in 19th-century rural South Africa, and deal with issues that still affect the country today. A third 'forest' novel, *Moerbeibos* (*Mulberry bush*, 1987) was published (this title, *Kringe* and *Fiela* are jointly referred to as the forest triad), but has been less frequently prescribed as a setwork (Van der Westhuizen 2004:151). *Moerbeibos* and the fourth forest novel, *Toorbos* (*Magic forest*), published in 2003, do not form part of the research.

The rationale for the choice of the novels was that *Kringe in 'n bos* emphasises the inner struggle experienced by Saul, the main protagonist, and his relationship with Oupoot the elephant, and includes elements of adventure and love. This first forest novel is also ecologically focused and deals with the systematic extermination of elephants and the ancient forest for economic reasons and the exploitation of the woodcutters. *Fiela se kind* portrays the child Benjamin as the protagonist in search of his identity and explores the fundamental changes affecting the white and black families who claim him, in that way attempting to humanise our understanding of the racial differences still affecting

South Africa today. Both novels occupy the same geographical and time space, namely the Knysna Forest between 1860 and 1889.

An additional reason for the choice of the novels within the South African school context is that it has been possible for teachers to successfully integrate them into other areas of secondary school learning, such as art and culture (art and drama depicting the forest), social studies (the historical context of the story), technology (the use of handsaws versus electric saws), life orientation (character identification), natural sciences (wood types), mathematics (calculation of the number of trees felled per day, and the number that need to be replanted) and more. As the teacher's role is crucial in educating learners to engage with literature at school, as it is "likely to influence the way they look at and act on literature outside school and in later life" (Janssen & Rijlaarsdam 1996:513, in Van der Westhuizen 2004:144), this may influence learners as potential consumers of 'engagement' literary places, as this research attempts to investigate.

The aim of the research, as stated, was to investigate the effect that prescribed works of fiction may have on the potential travel behaviour of young adults/adolescents, ranging in age from 17 to 19 years. The following research objectives were explored:

- To ascertain the number of respondents within the target population that had read *Kringe in 'n bos* and/or *Fiel se kind* as prescribed/setworks at school for the subject Afrikaans during 2008 and/or 2009.
- To ascertain whether reading either or both of the novels would influence respondents to visit the Knysna Forest as the setting of the novels on an organised school tour (which would provide an 'informal learning' setting) in order to understand the novel(s) better in terms of the setting and characters.
- To determine whether the development of a virtual internet tour of the Knysna Forest would provide for an adequate experience, should a physical visit (as mentioned above) not be possible.
- To discover whether visiting the Knysna Forest and encountering an imaginary "Oupoot" (an elephant bull in *Kringe in 'n bos*) would make the visit more special to respondents who had read *Kringe in 'n bos*.
- To determine whether linking a book (*Kringe in 'n bos* and/or *Fiel se kind*) with a destination (such as the Knysna Forest) could add value to a respondent's experience of both.
- To discover whether respondents would be interested in visiting places featured in books by famous writers (e.g. J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter books, set in England, Dan Brown's *Da Vinci code*, set in Paris, and Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight saga*, set in Forks, Washington State) that they had read outside the school context.

2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION RELATING TO DALENE MATTHEE (1938–2005)

Dalene Matthee (born Scott, and a descendant of Sir Walter Scott), was born in Riversdale in the Western Cape, South Africa. She was a South African author who wrote mainly in Afrikaans, although her books have been translated into 14 languages, including English, French, German, Italian, Hebrew and Icelandic. Her first work was published in 1970, gaining wide acclaim only after the publication of her first ‘forest’ novel, *Kringe in ’n bos* (*Circles in a forest*, 1984) and subsequently *Fiela se kind* (*Fiela’s child*, 1985), a year later.

Few other novels have been marketed as aggressively as *Kringe in ’n bos*, with radio and TV programmes featuring the author’s experiences while researching the novel in the Knysna Forest. Newspapers played an important role, especially the announcements that *Kringe in ’n bos* had been translated into many languages five months before the original Afrikaans version was published (Van der Westhuizen 2004:150).

In 1985 Matthee received the ATKV’s (Afrikaanse Taal- en Kultuurvereniging) award for *Kringe in ’n bos* for “good” popular prose, and during the award ceremony the novel was described as an original story told in a gripping and readable style, representing a convincing world in which fact and fiction are interspersed (Prosaprys 1985:6). In 1986 Matthee received the South African Institute of Forestry’s prize for alerting the general public to the plight of the Knysna Forest worker community and drawing attention to conservation issues in the forest through her novels.

3 DEFINITION OF TERMS AND CONCEPTS

The growing synergy between culture and tourism has been a significant theme in tourism development and marketing in recent years (Richards & Wilson 2007:1). Tourism destinations seeking to distinguish themselves from their increasingly numerous competitors have turned to culture as a basis for distinction, and culture has increasingly been linked to tourism as a means of generating income and jobs. Since the 1980s there has been widespread interest in the social construction of heritage and the subsequent promotion of literary places.

Places are developed and fashioned according to the image created by tourism, and place or destination marketing is escalating. Destination marketing organisations are positioning and marketing their destinations through both visual and verbal communication so that visitors (and readers) can interpret the meaning of a destination in the way intended. The growth of cultural tourism has been seen as one of the most important trends in global tourism in the past three decades and remains one of the major

growth areas for the future (European Travel Commission 2005). Cultural tourism is recognised as a form of special-interest tourism, where culture forms the basis of either attracting tourists or motivating people to travel (McKercher & Du Cros 2003:4)

Culture is passed on from one generation to the next; however, it is not static and lasting, but changes as each generation contributes its experience to the world and lets go of things that are no longer of use to it. Culture refers to the way of life of a group of people – their beliefs, values, customs, dress style, relationships – whereas heritage is passed on from parents, community and place to children, and is made up of practices and traditions.

Cultural heritage is formed by expressions that demonstrate human creativity. These expressions can be special monuments, buildings, sculptures, paintings, cave dwellings, writings or anything important by reason of its historical, artistic or scientific value.

Writings and literature in the form of books and articles, either paper-based or electronic, both fictional and factual, with an added dimension that is of cultural value, would qualify as “cultural heritage”. Cultural heritage can therefore be seen as encapsulating literary heritage as a particular sub-genre, and literary heritage as heritage contained in writings, books and literature.

Literary heritage is increasingly seen as a means to pass heritage on to future generations through the medium of literature. This entails the reading and assimilation of books that convey aspects of both culture and heritage through books. In this case, the two forest novels discussed attempt to convey culture as an instrument to facilitate harmony and understanding among people, and heritage as a means of encouraging an appreciation of the past. Therefore cultural (literary) tourism can be deemed important, as it has positive socio-cultural and economic benefits for the destination in which the novels are set, and may in addition result in positive educational (or other) benefits and worthwhile experiences for visitors (as potential readers).

3.1 LITERARY TOURISM

Literary tourism as a field of study has been approached from a number of perspectives, including both academic and popular travel writing viewpoints. Within the academic realm the study of literary ‘places’, sites and landscapes has been considered from a literary criticism perspective, focusing on the study of a particular writer or literary text from a place-oriented geographical perspective (Fawcett & Cormack 2001:686–704; Herbert 1996:78; Herbert 2001:312). In this instance the writer, Mathee, and her literary texts are observed from a place-oriented geographical perspective, the Knysna Forest. In addition, Fawcett and Cormack (2001), Herbert (2001) and Wang (1999) postulate various geographical approaches to the study of literature, identified by Kong and Tay (1998) as the regional (the physical place), humanistic (the character depiction) and structural (development of place) approaches. The common denominator among these approaches is their consideration of the way in which literature and geography,

including place and landscape, interact. As the interaction of literature and geography is evident within the novels *Kringe in 'n bos* and *Fiela se kind*, and the Knysna Forest is the physical landscape of both the novels within a particular period, 1860 to 1889, the place-oriented geographic perspective of literary tourism is prominent in this research.

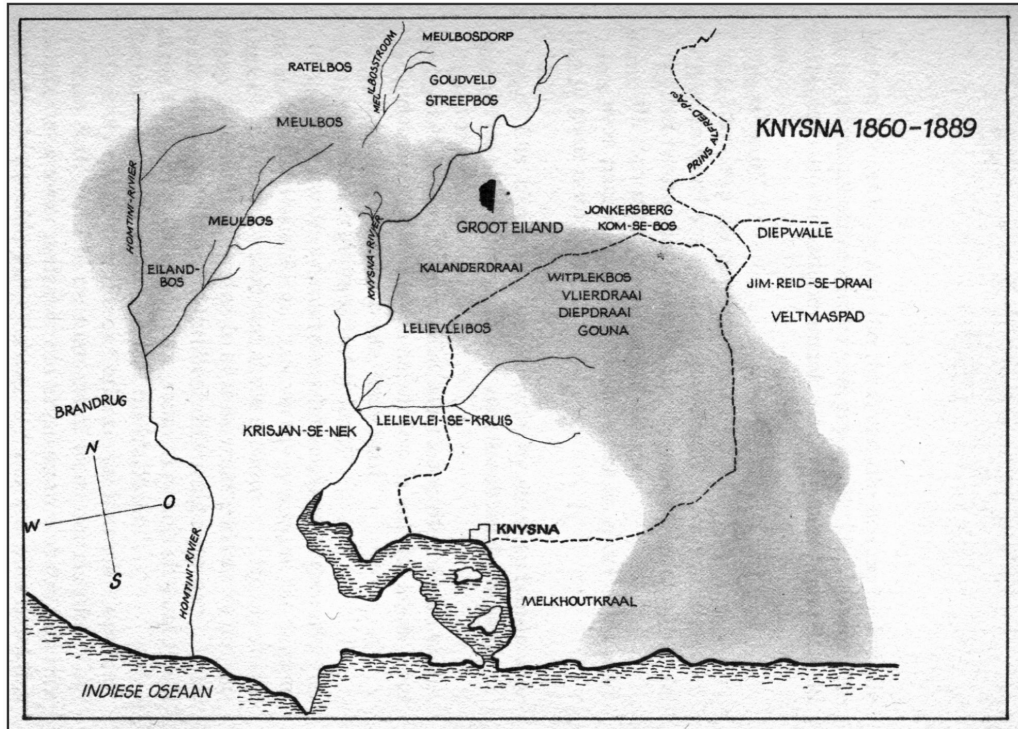


Figure 1: Map of Knysna, 1860–1889 (Matthee 1984)

3.2 LITERARY PLACES

A tourist attraction comprises three interrelated elements, namely: a sight, a marker, and tourists visiting the marked sights (Hall & Page 2002). When applied to a literary place, the sight is formed by a place mentioned in the book (or literature) or in some way connected to the writer's life (in this case the Knysna Forest). The marker is the element that attaches meaning to the place; it can assume various forms, and in the case of literary tourism is the literature or book itself (such as *Kringe in 'n bos*/*Fiela se kind*) that plays a significant role as a powerful marker in creating awareness and interest in places simply by naming them, by attaching meaning to them and by exposing them for a readership (Muller 2006:216). The tourists visiting the marked sights (the Knysna Forest in this case) would hypothetically be the young adult readers of the networks under discussion.

Places associated with writers, their lives and their works have been tourist attractions for centuries (Kapuscinski 2007:5). The development of places as visitor attractions that have cultural (artistic/literary/music) connections has long been studied (Herbert 1996:77; Stiebel 2004:35). There are many literary tourist attractions, including Anne Hathaway's cottage, Shakespeare's house, the Globe Theatre, Dove cottage (Wordsworth's house), and Victor Hugo's house; there are also numerous artistic tourist attractions, such as Picasso's studio in Antibes and home in Paris, Rodin's house in Paris and Dali's house in Spain; and music-related attractions, such as Bob Dylan's house in Ireland, Mozart's house in Vienna, and Graceland: all of these are visited by cultural tourists.

Herbert (1996:77; 2001:314) states that places or sites associated with writers (and artists) hold several kinds of attraction for visitors: for instance, they attract people who are intrinsically interested in the personal life histories of writers and allow contact with items closely associated with the admired persons, such as memorabilia and personal artefacts. Another attraction of such sites is that they have a connection not just with the life of the writer or artist, but also with her/his works – there is a merging of the real and the imagined, which gives such places or sites a special meaning. Pocock (1987; 1992) studied and speaks of “Bronte country” and “Catherine Cookson country”, where visitors are encouraged to experience the worlds of the writers and their novels: for instance, “visitors to Bronte country were strongly affected by the moors and imagery attached to them; but emotions in crossing the moors were suffused less with the excitement of treading in Bronte's steps, than with the thought that Heathcliff might appear” (Herbert 1996:77; Pocock 1987:140). This experience could be replicated in the context of *Kringe in 'n bos* where an (imaginary) encounter with the elephant Oupoot may provide for an emotional experience. A literary place, such as the Knysna Forest, can be regarded as a place which visitors (can) attach meaning to, and it is the value of this meaning that draws tourists to the destination.

Other dimensions of literary places relate to a visit that evokes meaning and emotions that are connected less with the writer, and more with nostalgic memories of childhood and family bonds, together with rurality and the depiction of former lifestyles – for example, the home of Beatrix Potter, Hill Top Farm, in the Lake District, UK, where the Peter Rabbit stories can evoke intense personal childhood memories to be relived (Herbert 2001:214–315). South African books such as *Jock of the bushveld* (set in the Eastern Transvaal), *Die uile* (set in the Kalahari), *Die buiter* (set in Cape Town), *Saartjie* (set in Linden, Johannesburg) and recently *Spud* (set in the Natal Midlands) may similarly evoke childhood memories among readers who then constitute potential literary tourists to these places. Many heritage places acquire specific meaning only because of a person or event associated with them, and without that connection the place may be undistinguished (Herbert 2001:314–333). However, in some instances the place itself may be the attraction – such places are usually very attractive settings, which even

without the literary connection might draw visitors, such as the Knysna Forest, which can be regarded as a geographical site of pristine natural beauty in its own right.

Knysna and its surrounding areas, including the Knysna Forest, is a well-developed tourist destination and a key attraction within the larger Garden Route region. At the time of writing, according to South African Tourism, the Garden Route was fifth on the list of South Africa's top 20 attractions, and third of ten on the Travel and Stay in South Africa website, making it one of the most visited destinations in South Africa for international tourists, and a popular destination for national tourists.

3.3 AUTHENTICITY AND LITERARY TOURISM

The concept of authenticity was introduced into the studies of tourism motivation and experiences in the 1970s by MacCannell (1973; 1976), and since then many authors have written extensively on the topic (Chhabra, Healy & Sills 2003; Cohen-Hattab & Kerber 2004; Herbert 2001; Salamone 1997; Wang 1999, 2007). In terms of the literary tourism objective, authenticity is related mainly to museum visits, or visits to the house-museums of writers where visitors can observe static objects such as the author's favourite chair, the desk at which s/he wrote the manuscript, her/his pen, notebooks, photographs, and more. Constructed authenticity is the result of construction and interpretation by both tourists and tourism producers, and in this case authenticity or inauthenticity depends on how the tourist sees things. In terms of *Kringe in 'n bos* and *Fiela se kind*, the Knysna Forest can be regarded as the 'authentic' setting of the novels.

To develop the Knysna Forest as a literary tourism site and manage it successfully, various tourist needs have to be catered for, including through infrastructure, accommodation and routes. Development of this nature is often seen as a threat to the authenticity of a literary place (Fawcett & Cormack 2001; Herbert 2001). In places representing the settings for works of fiction in particular, guarding authenticity is sometimes interpreted not as providing the real, but as producing what is believed to be real (Fawcett & Cormack 2001).

The merging of fact and fiction must be done with sensitivity; this is skilfully managed at the Green Gables site (the setting of *Anne of Green Gables*), where the interpretation is left open (Fawcett & Cormack 2001:699). The meaning is vague and fluid, changing with tourist demand, and tourists are invited to make sense of the site by interacting with artefacts and fragments of non-contextualised fictional and non-fictional quotes. As Fawcett and Cormack (2001:700) observe, while tourists themselves are the agents of multiple and even contradictory interpretations of sites and heritage, site guides should be committed to directing and influencing these tourist constructions as far as possible in the name of good history and family loyalty, staking their own identities and professional reputations on the successful representation of what they see as the authentic "Montgomery" (or authentic "Matthee"). Site guides should invite tourists to use their imaginations, but must make a clear distinction between the imaginary and the

real. Ultimately the interpretive form of any literary site is highly structured into layers of meaning, and site guides should provide an easily consumed product that is accessible to a wide range of tourists who may choose their preferred level of interpretative entry into the site.

Literary sites are social constructions created and promoted for the purpose of attracting visitors. Nowadays visitors are no longer limited to the sites of writers' birth or death, but instead go to literary sites for experiences of pleasure and enjoyment (Herbert 2001:313).

4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND TARGET POPULATION

A group of 102 undergraduate students from the University of Pretoria who had read *Kringe in 'n bos* and/or *Fiela se kind* as prescribed texts/setworks for grade 11 and/or 12 during 2008 and/or 2009 were interviewed during February–March 2010 using a semi-structured questionnaire. The students, enrolled for Tourism Management as a subject in their first or second year, were briefed on the meaning of the concept of literary tourism. A limitation of the study was that the students were not selected at random, but were students who had a broad understanding of tourism.

Non-probability purposive sampling was used, with respondents chosen on the basis of the researcher's knowledge of the characteristics of the universe and the aim of the investigation. Therefore, a smaller subset of the larger population was interviewed in which many members of the subset were easily identified, but the enumeration of all of them, in terms of the larger population, would have been almost impossible (Babbie 2001:230).

The target population comprised tertiary students who were secondary school learners during 2008 and/or 2009, and had studied *Fiela se kind* and/or *Kringe in 'n bos* as prescribed works for Afrikaans home/first language or for Afrikaans first additional language. In all, 102 respondents were interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire. Of the respondents, 80 were female and 22 male; 78 were Afrikaans first or home language speakers, whereas 24 took Afrikaans as first additional language – these respondents included speakers of English, isiZulu, Setswana and other languages as their first language. Most respondents (73) had completed their secondary school education in Gauteng; of the remainder, 12 had completed their secondary school education in Mpumalanga, five in KwaZulu-Natal, six in North West, five in Limpopo and one in the Eastern Cape. There were no respondents from the Western Cape, Northern Cape or Free State.

5 SELECTED FINDINGS

These findings relate to the objectives stated in the introduction.

The number of respondents who had read either or both of the books: 48 per cent of the respondents had read *Kringe in 'n bos*, 23 per cent had read *Fiela se kind*, and 31 per cent had read both novels.

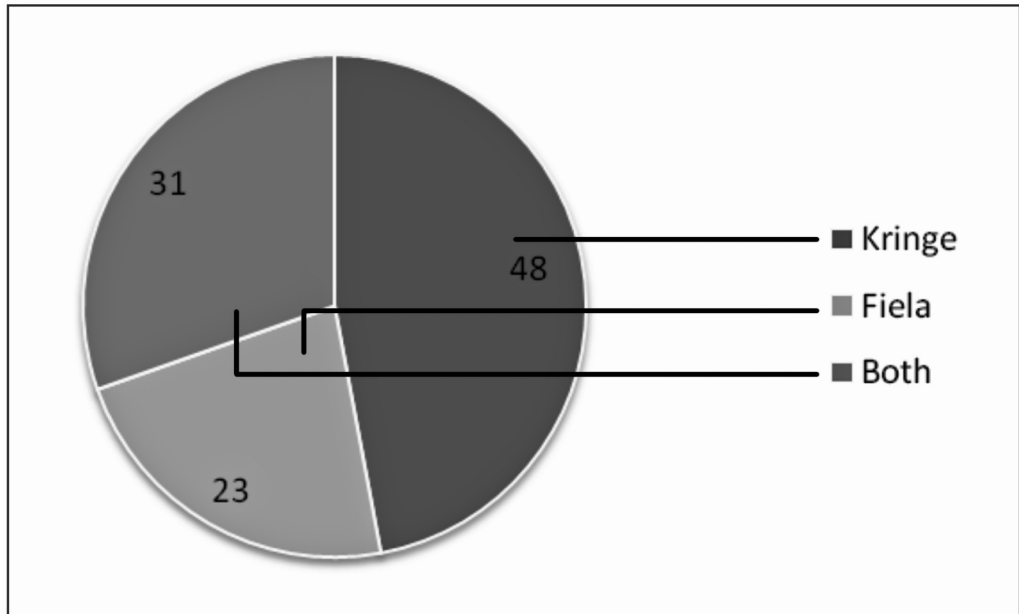


Figure 2: Number of respondents who had read either or both of the novels

The extent to which reading the novels would inspire respondents to visit the Knysna Forest as the setting of the novels on an organised school tour (in an “informal learning” context) in order to understand the story better, was as follows:

Of the respondents, 61 per cent stated that reading either or both of the novels would inspire them to physically visit the Knysna Forest on an organised school tour to experience the setting of the novels in order to understand/interpret the story better; 31 per cent indicated that they were reasonably interested in visiting the Knysna Forest, while eight per cent were not interested.

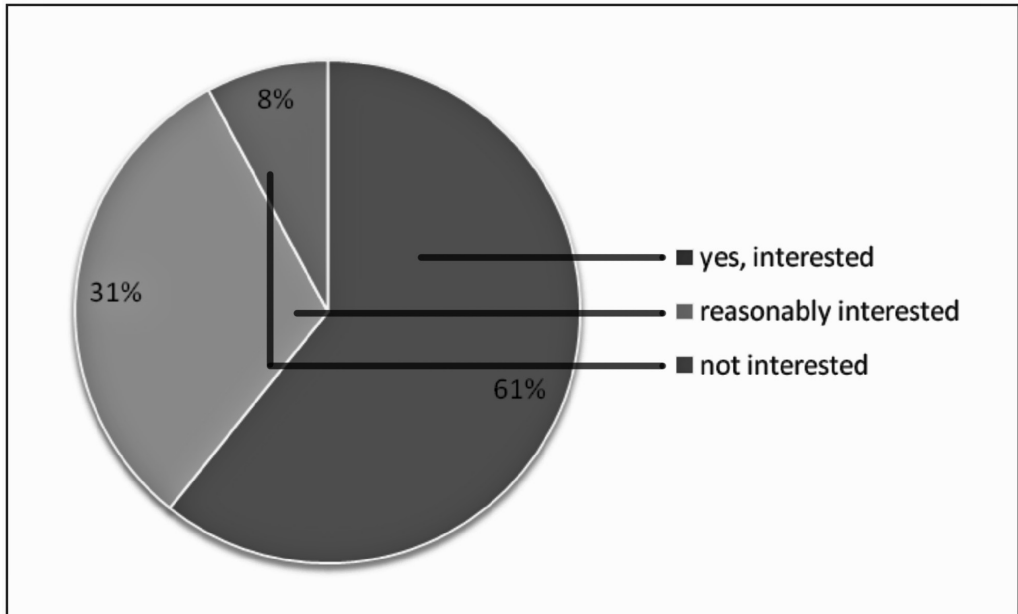


Figure 3: Extent to which the reading of *Kringe in 'n bos* and/or *Fiela se kind* may be enhanced by visiting the Knysna Forest on a dedicated tour

In schools, the reading of books and storytelling are connected to broader language arts and literacy curriculum goals. Research by Casla, Poveda, Rujas and Cuevas (2008:39–46) in urban settings revealed that socio-cultural factors influence successful academic development in that families and children with a lower socio-economic status or who belong to an ethnic or linguistic minority are at a disadvantage or risk academically speaking, as they are not familiar with “middle-class mainstream” book reading and storytelling styles. This leads to the need for information regarding the possible role of informal learning settings in promoting socio-educational equality (McLaughlin 2000:9; Vasquez 2002:31).

The informal learning context could be related to the Knysna Forest, should learners be taken on a school tour to experience the setting of the novels, together with narrative interactions in the forest. However, whether this would enhance the learning experience and simultaneously equalise socio-economic factors is questionable. The findings indicated that in terms of visiting the Knysna Forest as an informal learning setting to help with the understanding of the setting and characters in the stories, 83 of the respondents indicated that such a visit would have helped “quite a bit” to “a lot”. Whether this would have equalised socio-economic factors is not clear, as only 50 of the 102 respondents replied to the question relating to their perceived level of socio-economic status. Of these 50 respondents, only two indicated that they were from a poor or low-middle socio-economic background, while 48 of the respondents indicated

that they were in the middle to high socio-economic brackets, which fails to answer the question whether an informal learning experience could assist in equalising socio-economic factors.

The extent to which development of a dedicated virtual tour of the Knysna Forest on the internet depicting the places in *Kringe in 'n bos* and *Fiela se kind* would provide for an adequate experience should a physical visit not be possible (figure 4): 93 per cent of respondents indicated that in the absence of a physical visit, a virtual tour would be helpful (positive comments ranged from yes, definitely (53%); yes, would help (29%) to yes, partially (11%), while only seven per cent saw no merit in a virtual tour)

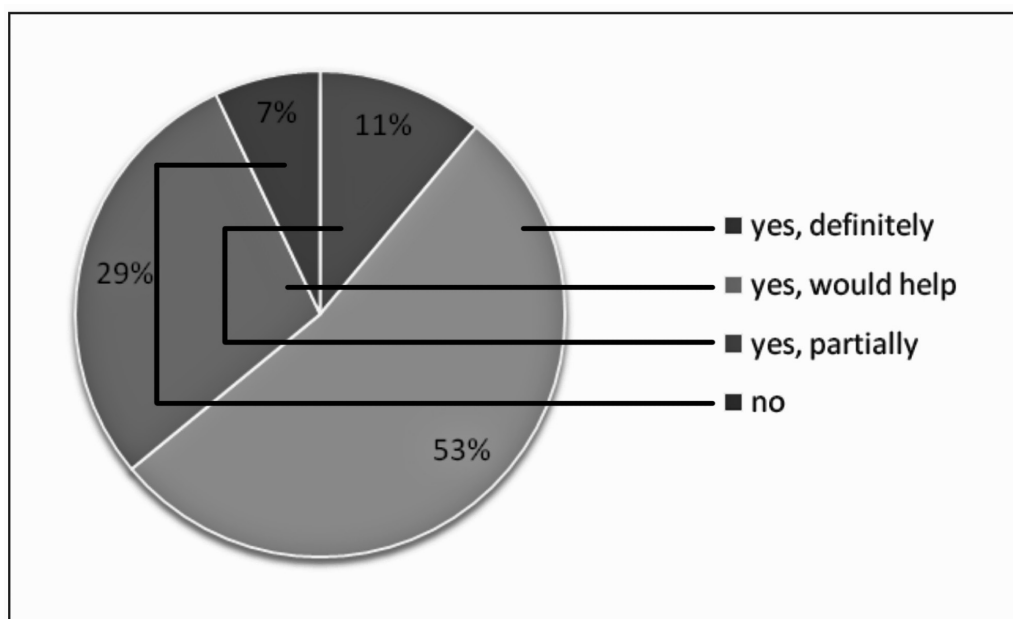


Figure 4: Were an actual visit to the Knysna Forest not possible, the extent to which a virtual tour on the internet would provide an adequate experience of the places depicted in *Kringe in 'n bos* and *Fiela se kind*

Visiting the Knysna Forest and encountering an imaginary “Oupoot” would make the respondent’s visit more special:

Of the 79 respondents who had read *Fiela se kind*, 67 stated that the possibility of encountering an imaginary “Oupoot” would make such a visit more special. The opportunity to compare the Knysna Forest as “Matthee country” with “Bronte country” (see Pocock 1987:140) was unfortunately not explored by the respondents.

Whether the linking of a book with a destination could add value to a respondent’s experience of both – in other words, whether a literary place, such as the Knysna Forest,

can be regarded as a place that visitors (can) attach meaning to, and whether it is the value of this meaning that draws tourists to the site or destination (figure 5):

Most of the respondents indicated that as a result of reading the forest novels, they were interested in visiting the Knysna Forest at some time in the future. Meaning could thus be derived from reading novels such as *Kringe in 'n bos* and *Fiela se kind*, with 93 per cent of the respondents indicating that when a book is linked to a place or destination, this could add value to a person's experience of both the book and its setting. These respondents indicated that they would be interested in literary tours. They were of the opinion that people in general would be interested in tours of this nature, and that places could be promoted due to their association with famous writers and their books.

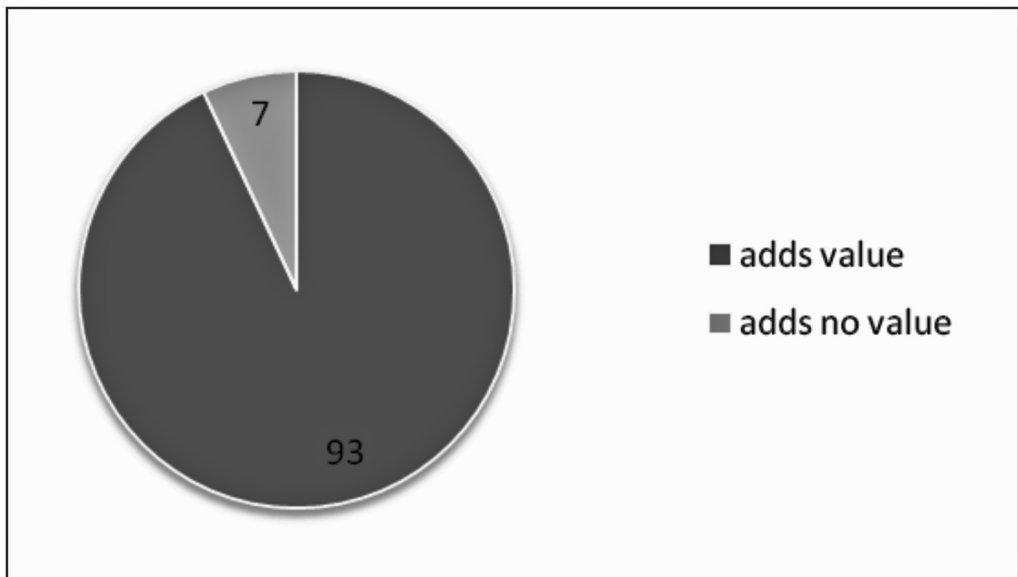


Figure 5: Whether a book linked to a place/destination could add value to the experience of both

The extent to which respondents would be interested in visiting places that feature in books they had read (such as England, the setting for the Harry Potter books; Paris, the setting for Dan Browne's *Da Vinci code*; and Forks, Washington State, the setting for Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight saga*), outside of the school context (figure 6):

70 per cent of the respondents (59% female, 11% male) indicated that they would be very interested in doing so, 29 per cent said that they would be partially interested, and one per cent indicated that they would not be interested at all.

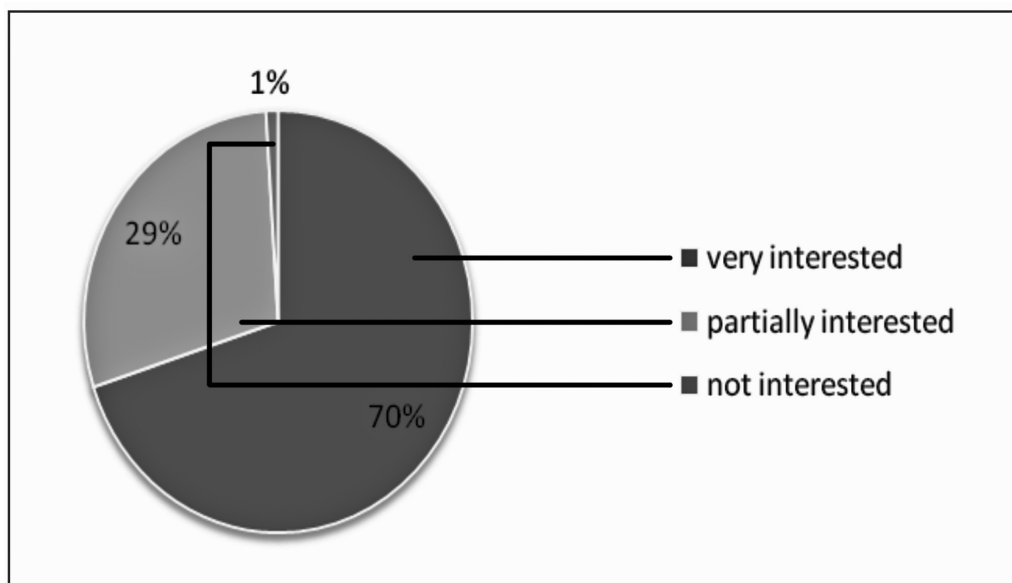


Figure 6: Degree of interest in visiting places that feature in books that respondents had read outside of the school context

Based on the fieldwork, 92 per cent of the respondents surveyed, all of whom were ex-senior secondary school learners, demonstrated interest in enhancing their prescribed reading with an *in-situ* experience such as a visit to the Knysna Forest on a dedicated tour (see figure 3). A significant number of respondents (93% – see figure 4) indicated that a virtual tour would be their next choice should an actual visit not be possible owing to either time or financial constraints. The majority of respondents (70%) indicated that they would be very interested in visiting places that feature in books; this indicates definite potential for the development of literary tours based on Matthee's forest novels (see figure 6).

6 LIMITATIONS

The limitations of the research are that the findings are of a tentative nature and cannot be generalised to a larger population owing to the small size of the sample (102 respondents). The large percentage of female compared to male respondents is also a limitation and may skew the results significantly. The fact that the respondents were undergraduate tourism students may also have influenced the results; none of the respondents were familiar with the concept of literary tourism before the fieldwork, as this particular aspect of tourism is dealt with in tourism studies only at postgraduate level.

Another limitation is that the quoted research by Casla et al (2008) may not be entirely applicable, as it relates to children and not adolescents/young adults; however, taking the low levels of literacy in South Africa into account, it may not have been entirely inapplicable.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

Although some tourism routes already exist in the Knysna Forest area, it would be possible to develop additional dedicated “forest novel routes” in the Knysna forest based on the Matthee novels. Other literary places could also be developed in the area by commodifying place through a variety of related tourist attractions and specialised tourist services. This has already been done to a large extent, and information can be obtained from the Knysna Tourism website. Herbert (2001) states important policy issues for the rural planner, which have been implemented by Knysna Tourism, including the requirement that literary places be protected and managed as heritage sites through their literary connection.

Knysna is a well-developed destination with a number of existing tours based on Matthee’s works (for instance, at the time of writing, Outeniqua Forest Rambles offered educational forest walks); however, this does not mean that additional and new attractions and events should not be investigated as a means of improving tourism to the area, particularly as tourists also seek new experiences at familiar destinations. The concept of literary tourism therefore appears to be a feasible development: with regard to the forest novels of Dalene Matthee, set in the Knysna Forest area, 98 per cent of the participants in the study reported on were of the opinion that literary tourism could be used as a catalyst for tourism development in the region. However, the merging of fact and fiction must be managed with skill and sensitivity (Fawcett & Cormack 2001:699), as tourist demand changes.

Reputable site guides are essential at any literary tourism site, and this also applies within the Matthee and Knysna Forest context. These guides should stake their professional reputations on the successful representation of what they see as the authentic “Matthee”. Site guides should invite tourists to use their imaginations, and make a clear distinction between the imaginary and the real. While tourists have many interpretations of literary sites, guides should be committed to directing these tourist “constructions” as authentically as possible (Fawcett & Cormack 2001:700). Ultimately, the interpretive form of any literary site is highly structured into layers of meaning, and site guides should provide an easily consumed product that is accessible to a wide range of tourists who may choose their preferred level of interpretative entry into the site. In this case, potential literary tourists could visit the Knysna Forest to experience an authentic experience and be engaged in non-ordinary activities (Jia 2009:72) in an informal learning setting that could facilitate in-depth understanding of setworks (this would need further investigation, however).

At the Knysna Forest site, the existing small museum at Gouna (in the San Ambrosio church) could be used as the starting point for tourists to explore the site with the help of a map to discover authentic artefacts and fragments from the novels. Alternatively, the trail could start at the Dalene Matthee memorial at the Krisjan-se-Nek picnic site and Big Tree (see figure 1). Use could also be made of quotes of varying length, as in a treasure hunt or quest, to guide tourists who wish to explore the site on their own. Following the Silver Bush example (as in *Anne of Green Gables*), Knysna Forest tourists should not be channelled into a highly structured experience through thematic signage, well-ordered displays or a carefully structured talk, but should rather piece together their own meanings and experience of the site under the leadership of site guides (Fawcett & Cormack 2001:699), in order to catch a brief glimpse into Dalene Matthee's creative imagination.

The research reported on here could be used as an explorative study for educationalists to investigate the feasibility of exposing learners to informal learning settings as a means of promoting socio-educational depth of understanding and the holistic development of learners. It could also be used by tourism agents to develop and promote dedicated literary tours linked to prescribed works for interested learners during school vacations.

8 CONCLUSION

In the study reported on in this article, two literary texts, *Kringe in 'n bos* and *Fiela se kind*, were explored from a place-oriented geographical perspective, namely the Knysna Forest. Various geographical approaches to the study of literature were postulated, the common denominator being their consideration of the way in which literature and geography, including place and landscape, interact. This interaction of literature and geography was considered in the context of the two novels above, as the physical landscape in which both are set is the Knysna Forest during the years 1860 to 1889.

The Knysna Forest is a natural and cultural landscape that nurtured Matthee's creativity, and her literary works must be seen as depicting a particular facet of 19th-century rural life and a sanctuary for the forest's plants and animals, in addition, they may be considered a resource for the education of tourists about Matthee and her literary heritage.

Young adult/adolescent visitors to literary sites such as the Knysna Forest would visit it to experience informal educational enrichment and enjoyment. Obviously this site is a place-oriented landscape that will need to be specifically constructed and promoted to attract this target market (as well as a wider market) specifically interested in Dalene Matthee's forest novels.

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