

**Possibilities of representation and  
subjectivity in Sade Adeniran's *Imagine*  
*This:***

**Pushing the boundaries of interpretive  
frameworks and research in African  
children's literature**

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“All literature reflects power structures...”

“The main thrust of the literary work is the examination of power positions, the affirmation or interrogation of the existing order of power”

*in Power, Voice and Subjectivity  
in Literature for Young Readers*

Maria Nikolajeva, 2010, p.7-8



IMAGINE THIS  
Sade Adeniran

*Imagine This*  
(2007)

by Sade Adeniran

Commonwealth Writers'  
Prize for Best First Book  
in Africa (2008)

# ‘Aetonnormativity’

- from Latin *aeto-* pertaining to age

“Adult normativity that governs the way children’s literature has been patterned from its emergence until the present day”  
(Nikolajeva, 2010, p.8).

- The superiority of adults to children in terms of social conditions
- The inevitable imbalance of power between the adult narrative voice and the child focalizing character

“Childhood, then, represents a particularly resistant space, of complex, on-going negotiation and articulation of difference that is perhaps not as readily accessible in the stable, socially structured world of adults.”

Madelaine Hron, 2008, p.30

## ‘Third Space’:

“...the inter—the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the *in-between* space—that carries the burden of a culture.”

Homi Bhabha, 1994, p.56

‘Hybrid voice’:

“As children attempt to emulate adult behaviour, speech or cultural practices, they inadvertently render them comic, excessive, or even dangerous, revealing how redundant, stereotypical or even pernicious they may be.”

Hron, 2008, p.29

“I made sure I was in the middle, just in case a lion or tiger attacked from the back.”

“I can’t walk around barefoot like the savages in *Tarzan*. That would make me one of them and I don’t want to be a savage who doesn’t have the sense to hide in a tree when chased by a lion.”

- Lola



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IMAGINE THIS  
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