

Islamic Imaginings: Depictions of Muslims in English-Language Children's Literature
in the United States from 1990 to 2010

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ABSTRACT

This research examines changes in the depiction of Muslims in Islamic-themed children's literature over two time strata, one decade before and one decade after the events of September 11, 2001. Random sampling with replacement across the two strata yielded a total sample of 59 books, examined at three coding levels: bibliographic data, story/plot data (genre, rural/urban setting, time epoch, conflict type, conflict context, religious instruction), and primary character data (age, culture/ethnicity, and gender). Content is examined using both quantitative comparisons of manifest characteristics and qualitative comparison of emergent themes. Mann-Whitney U tests revealed no statistically significant changes regarding the quantities of manifest features, while additional qualitative analyses suggest six substantive latent thematic changes identified with respect to genre (3), time epoch/setting (1), conflict type (1), and gender related to conflict type (1). Regarding genre, while the quantity of books with humor, with Arabic glossary additions and those employing non-fiction are consistent, the kinds of humor, the nature of glossaria and the subject focus of non-fictions are believed to have changed. With respect to a story's setting, shifts are identified in the treatment of rural and urban spaces, even while most books continue to be set in rural locales. Finally, with respect to a story's conflict type and the primary characters engaged in that conflict, it is believed that changes are evident with respect to self-versus-self conflict type and that female characters are generally lacking in stories of self-identity discovery.

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Chapter 1: Introduction, Statement of the Problem and Rationale

1.1 Problematizing the Social Self

To discuss the concept of “Self” we must acknowledge John Locke and his Enlightenment-era formulation of just such an entity, born without imprint of meaning or context (Flew 1979), at once “of” the whole and “in” it and without definition of “I” or “we” or “they.” The process of forming those definitions is neither simple nor uniform nor entirely permanent. It remains a process filled with ambiguity.

What is not ambiguous is that this process of defining and being defined begins immediately when one or more “I’s” come to learn that within some months another “it” will arrive, without knowledge of its own “I-ness.” The forthcoming “it” is labeled, measured, viewed, assessed. Names are contemplated, plans are made, word is spread and this soon-to-emerge “it” is, without participation, already being made part of a “We.” It will be sometime before this “it” comes to define itself as “I.” Or it may never.

Since the time of Locke and his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* in 1690 (Flew 1979) there has been a consistent flow of harmonizing theory and philosophy that demonstrates that this “I”, this self, is a social construction. This construction *is* the process that helps the “it” define itself as “I” and to situate itself in relation to the “we” and the “they.” At no time in life, perhaps, is this social self more malleable and adaptive to all the various inputs of life than when this self is learning to define — when it is the self of a child.

This process of the social construction of the self is one that we became more fully aware of in the 20th Century. Charles Cooley articulated that this process, at its most basic, has three phases: that we imagine self, that we imagine and even come to learn how others see us, and that

we ultimately form our definition of self through some reconciliation of the two (Robertson 1987).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This research will answer the questions What is the depiction of the Muslim in early-reader children's literature from 1990 to 2010? and How has that image changed, or not, between the decade before and the decade after September 11, 2001, from 1990 to 2000 and from 2002 to 2010? This analysis proceeds along two parallel and complementary forms of content analysis, including both quantitative and qualitative analyses. Specifically, this research seeks an understanding of Muslim depiction by examining children's books for changes related to genre, time epoch and setting, conflict type and context, religious practice, and the age, gender and cultural identity of the main character.

The broad questions posed by this research can inform queries made by educators and librarians and parents, who may ask themselves, practically and rhetorically: Are we presenting Muslim and non-Muslim children in the U.S. a representative depiction of Muslim and Islamic culture? Are we presenting Muslim children a distorted view of their own religious and cultural heritage? What are the depictions in Islamic-themed children's literature, with respect to race, ethnicity, origin and gender? Where is Islam and what does it look like in these books?

The books that young children read and the images they see, particularly as they are just beginning to learn to define the things around them, function as social texts. That is, they function as a means to facilitate the "imagining" of self and also as a means of social reflection — a coming to learn how others see the things that we, too, see.

These early images to which children are exposed are intricately linked with the cognitive processes of learning the symbols of the social world and their associated meanings, and it is this fundamental process, these beginnings of literacy and identity, that are foundational of the social

self (Forster 1989). The kind of society we build, the way we treat our neighbors, the idea we have of self is informed by and bound to these early childhood literary and imagistic experiences (Baker-Sperry 2007; Boobani n.d.; Forster 1989). That these incoming impressionistic symbols are tied to our centeredness regarding gender, race, and religion makes them powerful signifiers. When these symbols and signifiers, as experienced through printed images, do not match the world in which we live our daily lives, dissonance and dilemma develop: We become un-centered; our reality does not appear in the codex of signs, symbols and images that seem meaningful to those around us; our sense of a social self suffers.

The broader aim of this inquiry is to empower publishers, libraries, teachers, parents and students to make informed choices about the children's literature that they produce and consume. Additionally, an understanding of these images may alert us to the successes and failures in constructing the image of the Muslim and in interacting with that image in our texts.

Over the past half century, a growing body of interlocking knowledge and interpretive tools have developed to further define the functioning of "social texts" and also to clarify the processes of the "reading" of those texts (Boobani n.d.). Through these years a range of perspectives and tools of literary and critical theory have been used by sociologists and education scholars to better understand the production and consumption of social texts. From such literary theories, intersecting at all angles with social theories, a variety of methodologies specific to cultural textual analysis have been developed. Semiotics, discourse analysis and deconstruction are currently prominent and are all rooted, as it were, in a post-modern scientific paradigm. And then there is narrative theory, which seeks to answer questions at once as simple and as complex as: what is this narrative?, how is this narrative conveyed?, and what elements are used in this narrative? Taken together, these kinds of questions collectively are a text's narrativity, that

which “implies the sum of all features in a narrative that make it a narrative, including composition (plot, temporal structure), characterization (narrative devices used by writers to reveal a character)” (Nikolajeva 2003:4).

Whether or not we must diverge from traditional sociologies and sociological methods into avenues of more esoteric work in order to fully understand questions of narrativity is perhaps only a matter of perspective, training and preference. No matter the preference or perspective, the end result of these varied, but linked, horizontal pathways of inquiry is a common goal: To understand the ways in which symbols, in whatever medium they are encountered, act and interact to shape the conception of the self and its relation to the broader social world. From the present perspective and training the view is decidedly sociological, and so the approach and the tools arise from the historicity of social research while avoiding altogether parallel inquiries in social psychology, literary philosophy and the like. The pursuit herein is rooted in the most basic questions of the social self, implying what that does about difference and sameness.

1.3 Rationale

1.3.1 Emergence of Children’s Literature Research

Children’s literature has become an active site of inquiry into the process of identity construction and literary theory (Boobani n.d.), but the examination of children’s literature in a sociological context, alongside a traditionally pedagogical context, really began from within a discourse around race and power. It can be argued that this discourse started in a meaningful way in the 19th Century and was broadly organized by the early 20th Century by W. E. B. DuBois and the Niagra Movement. That movement continued through the formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) (DuBois 1903 [1994]). From

within the framework of this continued development, children's literature as an active site of race-based inquiry was formalized as a platform of the Civil Rights movement by the NAACP's assistance in the formation of the Children's Inter-Racial Book Council (CIBC) in 1965 (Banfield 1998). By the end of the 1960's, children's literature and the depiction of Black Americans had been so on the public's mind that special inquiries were launched by the Congressional Committee on Education and Labor, chaired by William Clayton Powell, a prominent African American in the U.S. House of Representatives (Office of History and Preservation 2008). From the NAACP to the U.S. Congress, inquiry into the social role of children's literature had fully arrived as a locus for sociological and literary inquiry. That this shift in perception coincides with the emergence of academic fields of study called "Black Studies" or "Africana Studies" is no accident, and the two ascendancies are linked. Throughout the 1960's and 1970's, the various disciplines of African-centered research approaches and inquiry into racial depiction continued to evolve (Karenga 1982; Lambdin, Greer, Jibotian, Wood, and Hamilton 2003; Lampert 2004; Lazim 2002; National Council of Teachers of English 1996; Schmidt 1970).

As early as the 1970's, other researchers studying depiction and identity in children's literature wrote, regarding the depiction of African Americans, that "most authors were white with little knowledge about Black life and yet they wrote as if they were authorities" (Baker 1975:79). In 1978 Gayle Tuchman was documenting what she called the "symbolic annihilation" of African Americans by the mass media (as cited in Pescosolido, Grauerholz, and Milkie 1997b:443). A decade of analysis of the image of African descendants in children's literature helped confirm the idea that "as social significance is manifest through the presence and varied depictions of a social group, so too can the devaluation of groups be transmitted" through these

same depictions (Pescosolido, Grauerholz, and Milkie 1997b:444). Research growth on the topic of minority depiction in children's books peaked between the late 1960's and the beginning of the 1980's (Cobb 1995), but the revelation of the paucity of actual depictions of difference, and a startling awakening to the quality and character of images in children's books, painted a picture that rippled through the highest levels of American politics and rapidly changed the children's book publishing industry (Banfield 1998). Since 1965, also the year when Nancy Larrick published her article on the "all-white" world depicted in children's books, a hyper-consciousness has developed which has eradicated the most obvious and glaring expressions of racism, gender bias and stereotyped inequality (Cobb 1995). Continued research has shown that there exists a vibrant layer under the overt depiction, that operates through stereotype (Anderson and Hamilton 2005; Beal, Garrod, Ruben, and Stewart 1997; Cobb 1995; Diekman and Murnen 2004; Gooden and Gooden 2001; Hamilton, Anderson, Broaddus, and Young 2006), through gendered language (Anderson and Hamilton 2005; Beal, Garrod, Ruben, and Stewart 1997; Bradford 2007; Butler 2009; Clark, Lennon, and Morris 1993; Diekman and Murnen 2004; Gee and Jackson 2005; Gooden and Gooden 2001; Grauerholz and Pescosolido 1989; Hamilton, Anderson, Broaddus, and Young 2006; Marshall 2002; Marshall 2004), through subtle racial animation and even an "animal as male" primacy in gendered interpretation of characters by young children (Lambdin et al. 2003). While these are areas at the edge of sociological inquiry, and therefore not addressed directly in this research, they contribute to its construction and are important in order to frame and center a sociological analysis inside a wider scientific discourse about identity, its production and social inequality.

1.3.2 Intersectionality: Muslim in America

Estimates and data vary, but in the United States there are between 4.1 million and 8 million Muslims, and of these about 30% are African American (The Islam Project 2008; US State Department 2007). Of native-born Muslim Americans, 57% are African American (Pew Research Center). Global estimates indicate that Muslims are approximately 20% of the world population, or about 1.27 billion people. While the prevailing media image is that Muslims are Arab and Middle Eastern, the fact is that a large proportion of the global Muslim population is African and European. For example, Egypt, with 75 million people — more than Iran — is 94% Muslim.

All of that to say that, without a range of popular depiction, we are bound to those few depictions that exist in the mass and popular media and we hold them as representative of the image of Muslims. Muslim children, too, receive this narrativity and thereby incorporate its meaning into their formative processes.

This research is important in order to understand the Muslim child's experience of Self and Other in their early literature. It is important so that we may better engage both the historical and contemporary reality of the Muslim within the world's population and also so that we do not repeat the mistakes of the past and marginalize those who are different.

1.3.3 Forces Acting to Marginalize Islamic Depictions

Teachers consistently report that they would like to include religious diversity instruction in order to meet the specific needs of the composition of their classrooms, yet these same teachers are unsure what is or is not allowed in this regard (Green and Oldendorf 2005). Publishing companies in the United States, where library and school-based consuming audiences are a bulk of sales, are sensitive to the risk of providing overtly religious content, reinforcing the

cycle of marginalization of cultural and religious depictions of Muslims. Much of the misunderstanding about the inclusion of Muslim-oriented educational discussion stems from reported fear of violating First Amendment standards. Educators interpret the First Amendment to include prohibitions on teaching *about* religion, which is not constitutionally prohibited (Green and Oldendorf 2005). This fact has not escaped the Islam Project, which places an emphasis on communicating about the application of the First Amendment in classroom instruction (The Islam Project 2008). The time frame of the proposed study will allow an examination of pre- and post-September 2001 publications, in order to compare and assess whether these attacks mark a change in the depictions of Muslims in this children's literature. It is only possible, at this point, to wonder whether evidence of change will be identifiable in these depictions or whether the effort of writers, artists, publishers, educators and parents to present a positive 'multi-cultural' view will be noticed.

Because of the vulnerability of children and the power of such images, and because of our repeated tendency to reduce difference to sameness through stereotype and marginalization, it is important to examine the content of early childhood reading and picture books.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

2.1 *Emergence of Various Academic “Studies” Programs*

The history of the analysis of children’s literature is particularly linked to a variety of disciplinary and paradigmatic shifts within academia. As the characteristic social conflicts of the 1960s, particularly regarding race and rights, gained momentum, these same conflicts produced changes within social science, education and humanities academic programs (Karenga 1982). Black Studies, Women’s Studies, Gender Studies, and Native American Studies paradigms — to name only a few — did not emerge, full-blown, on the pages of political and academic texts. All academic disciplines evolve and some even grow to challenge the disciplines of their origin (Gordon 1981) in an historical process of paradigm-making that is built on the expressed values of real people in real places at real times (Kuhn 1962). Similarly, social movements do not materialize fully-formed, but grow or contract over time and condition. Generally, however, we can speak of the 1960s and 1970s as decades characterized by the popular emergence of a number of social movements in conflict with an array of societal norms. Through these various asynchronous movements in their historical context, sometimes at the cost of “armed battles, loss of life, imprisonment, [and] economic intimidation” (Young 1984:285), there was a required shift in existing educational, social, political and legal structures in order to make room for alternate viewpoints and scientific paradigms within historical disciplinary boundaries. Out of their political and social contexts these new disciplines emerged as the most critical lenses of existing disciplines were turned upon the disciplines themselves, with particular interest in applying the discipline’s questions to the non-white, the non-European and the non-male -- in short, the “Other.” And so these new frameworks were, by nature of their emergence, multidisciplinary and intersectional, and shared generally the quality of being a correcting

movement with respect to traditional (that is, white) curricula and questioning (Karenga 1982).

The tools of new paradigms or academic disciplines are never entirely new. In the pursuit of an understanding of the experience and history of Other-ness, these tools have generally been those of the established social sciences, particularly anthropology and sociology. Maulana Karenga (1982) described the formation of the then-new academic discipline of Black Studies as being from within other disciplines and as a process of “ongoing synthesis and utilization of the most incisive and productive theories, methods, techniques, models and strategies and research designs” (p. 34) filtered through some newly focused academic lens.

Just as the particular paradigmatic lens of the researcher is related to the questions asked, so, too, is the level of social inquiry. Some researchers are interested in broad socio-political forces, while others are interested in specific kinds of micro-social relationships. In this way, the level of inquiry of our interest, the disciplinary tools of the time and the paradigmatic views of our positionality interact to guide the formulation of questions we ask. The history of analyses of children’s literature is subject to the same interactions between discipline, paradigm and level of inquiry as any other subject area within education and sociology, and in that sense any body of research is its own history of these academic shifts. So let us turn to the varied history of the analysis of children’s literature.

2.2 Children’s Literature, Philosophy and Nation-Building

In 1934, Simon Doniger published “Soviet Education and Children's Literature” in the *Journal of Educational Sociology* (Doniger 1934), where he opens with the observation that from Plato to Erasmus to John Dewey, there is a persistent political philosophical contention that it is children that must be the audience for any substantive future political change. Doniger specifically is concerned with the then-current and quite public policy of building the future communist conditions of the Soviet Union through the direct educational targeting of children

through state-controlled education and children's literature programs. His analysis is filtered through a building, if nascent, "red scare" concern about the vast collective of Soviets. But Doniger's acute focus on Lenin and worry over the policies of the post-revolutionary empire, as a specific or unique case, belies the reality that we all -- social and therefore political beings the world over -- inherently accept Plato's argument that the future of a society can be altered through what we teach children. Doniger's fear of this plan of post-Revolutionary Russia (with no less a goal than changing an entire social-political-economic system) is not that it is training future workers, but that it is controlled by the State that threatens to challenge our own national perception of the best possible future. In short, Doniger does not deny the efficacy of using children's literature and education programs to influence particular social outcomes (quite the opposite — it is the root of his fear), but he clearly has a problem with the actors involved.

In 1950, as the aftermath of global war was sorted out in the midst of a U.S. post-war economic boom, Helen Fisher examined the presentation of family life in children's literature. She, too, took the view that children's literature functioned in a political, nation-building role, writing, "Education for democratic family living is being increasingly recognized as vital to our democratic society" (Fisher 1950:516). Here again is the Platonic belief, expressed by the educational and political philosopher Erasmus, "Give me for a few years the direction of education and I agree to transform the world" (Doniger 1934:163). The mid-20th Century concerns about children's literature were essentially no different than the surface concerns of 19th Century children's writers, where the focus was nationalism, colonial expansion, the discovery of species and peoples, and the adventures of anthropology.

For both Doniger and Fisher there is a wholly accepted agreement that, yes, it matters what children read. Their macro-political concerns are situated within an historical period where the

global political zeitgeist was very much dominated by the values of industrial capitalism, rather than its antecedent, colonial capitalism.

Although not of the particular academic time period we are presently discussing, but of immediate relevance to the theme of nation-building, Imogen Forster (1989) framed an analysis of the depiction of Black peoples in children's literature in this very context, but on a different continent. Forster examines colonial themes through an historical analysis of the depiction of Black peoples in British children's literature across the 17th, 18th and 19th Centuries. This time quite obviously contains our own U.S. colonial origins, and in British literature we find the source of our own children's literature. Forster (1989) notes that this literature was intended for consumption by White European juvenile readers and that as formal public and compulsory schooling became normative, additional need was created for "content" in the form of primary readers and other materials (even while some of this literature was intended for use to make literate the growing diverse populations on many geographic frontiers). One such text uncovered by Forster, *An ABC for Baby Patriots*, is an English reader of 1899 wherein children read and rhyme "C is for Colonies/Rightly we boast,/That of all great nations/Great Britain has most" (Forster 1989:67). Forster posits that "slavery, colonial expansion and the consolidation of imperial rule, together formed a dimension of the world into which children were socialised" (*sic*) and "picture books and illustrations may be assumed to impress them earlier and more deeply or more directly than text" (p. 60). That is, like Doniger and Fisher before her, she makes the case that it matters what children read.

In 1969, John Crandall published a look backward at children's literature from this critical nation-building time-period of the United States of America in his "Patriotism and Humanitarian Reform in Children's Literature, 1825-1860" (Crandall 1969). Again in Crandall, children's

literature is examined for the role it may have played in a macro-social process of nationalism and attitude formation. The social dynamics of that particular era of U.S. history seemed so worthy of exploration that in 1976, Anne MacLeod again addressed the same time-period looking for further evidence of the transmission of national values in her work, “For the Good of the Country: Cultural Values in American Juvenile Fiction, 1825-60” (MacLeod 1976). The characteristic quality of analyses of children’s literature remained, in general and for many decades, broadly macro-social through the mid-20th Century.

2.3 Children’s Literature, Sub-Culture and the Self

During the period of the 1960s, with changes afoot in academia, attention was turned to the role of children's literature in a number of sub-group cultural processes and in relation to identity formation and maintenance. That is, the processes under analysis shifted from broadly political effects and social forces (building patriots, instilling national values) to meso- and micro-social forces and effects. Leading up to 1970, research had been published “documenting the underrepresentation of women and girls in children's books” that “included statistical surveys of the number of stories about girls as opposed to boys; the number of illustrations of girls and boys; activity vs. passivity relative to sex; and the depiction of adult role models” (Wigutoff 1979:57-58). A discernible shift from examination of macro-social forces toward the micro-social analysis of images, depictions, and characterizations of sub-groups and identity, including gender, race, and ethnicity, appears in the literature.

Indeed, the academic movement toward such analyses, fueled in part by the social movements of the 1960s, manifested itself in the 1970 commercial and academic founding of The Feminist Press by academics Florence Howe and Paul Lauter. In the next decade, through 1979, The Feminist Press published 48 titles, including a journal (that became the official journal of the Women's Studies Association) as well as academic research regarding children's literature

(Wigutoff 1979). The primary focus of these analyses was then called “sexist” bias and The Feminist Press had, from the beginning, “a commitment to provide young children with books that countered the images put forth in standard children's literature” (Wigutoff 1979:57). During this time-period, the groundwork was laid for the conceptual movement that would come to be called “multiculturalism.”

Reflecting this emergent interest in the micro-social and sub-group specific, Nancy Schmidt published “Children's Literature about Africa” (1970) and 1971 saw “Women in Children's Literature” (Nilsen 1971). At the 30th annual session of the English Language Institute, at Columbia University in 1972, one of the addresses was noted children’s literature researcher Francelia Butler's “Death in Children's Literature”, and the first issue of the journal *Children's Literature* featured “The Child as Rebel in Song and Rhyme” (Hornstein 1972).

The clearly developing interest in looking at smaller spheres of social influence, and in looking at more contemporaneous works for children, did not entirely supplant analyses of macro-political questions about children's literature and neither did it replace examinations of distant historical eras. During 1972, again in the first issue of *Children's Literature*, Robert Bator offered an article “Out of the Ordinary Road: John Locke and English Juvenile Fiction in the Eighteenth Century” (Bator 1972), and Hugh Keenan offered “Children's Literature in Old English” (Keenan 1972). Despite these historical examinations, over the next decades, academics focused their work on specific social locales, looking at ever more narrow geographies of influence within education and culture.

This change in level of focus and the concomitant increase in the focus on multiculturalism was not confined to children's literature, or social forces, in the United States. The 1970s saw a proliferation of regional, national or cultural contextual examinations of children's literature,

including studies of the depiction of India in Victorian literature (Rowland 1973), cultural depictions in the children's literature of Norway (Bozanic 1974), Austria (Lederer 1974), Israel (Cohen 1979; Mendelsohn 1974), Greece (Placotari 1974), contemporary (non-colonial) India (Kamal 1975), Italy (Poesio 1976), Argentina (Colavita 1978), and Canada (Mendelsohn 1975).

Just as the geographic locale of the analysts' focus changed, the shift from broadly political (macro) forces continued to give way to very specific social locales predicated on sub-group analysis. Francelia Butler (1976) contributed an ethnography of children's rope-skipping rhymes, Haskins (1976) looked at "Racism and Sexism in Children's Non-fiction", Baker (1975) examined "The Changing Image of the Black in Children's Literature", Tremper (1979) examined linguistic trends in, and Chrisman (1977) took an intersectional approach in "Blacks, Racism and Bourgeois Culture."

It is from within a race-based analysis that much of the academic literature of the coming decades would look at children's books and stories, and the images they contained, even as that analysis continued to drill down further to ever more specific examinations.

2.4 Children's Literature, Social Problems and the "Issues Approach"

By the conclusion of the 1970s another change in the general focus of children's literature analysis was clear. From cultural identity, multiculturalism and meso-level social interests, interests began to reflect specific social "issues" concerns, like Leslie Fiedler's (1980) "Child Abuse and the Literature of Childhood." By the mid-1970s an "issues approach" movement had caught on within the highest levels of government funding and manifested itself in the Council on Inter-racial Children's Books' (CIBC) journal "The Inter-racial Digest" (Kuznets 1980). Although formed in 1965-66 (Banfield 1998), the CIBC had until this time primarily concerned itself with creating guidelines for evaluating children's texts — textbooks as well as general titles. It would not be until the mid-1970s that the CIBC's efforts would be tapped by the

Department of Education through a series of grants (Banfield 1998), lending legitimacy to the belief that children's exposure to depictions of their own cultural positionality mattered to their educational development.

This issues-based approach was clearly not a universally settled or accepted approach, and Kuznets alludes to a "controversy that rages over this approach in the children's literature" (Kuznets 1980:18). Whether or not this characterization of an academic "controversy that rages" is an accurate depiction of the normal tensions between different views, Kuznets notes with concern that the 1979-80 Winter issue of "The Lion and the Unicorn" children's literature journal was devoted to what he called "social issues in children's literature" (Kuznets 1980:18).

Along with a reflection of interest in specific causes or issues, the 1980s sees in the academic literature a number of niche academic literary theory questions being argued, most particularly between a call for more realism in children's literature (versus the replication of traditional stories, like fables and folk tales). In a critical piece in 1981, Linda Burns examined the choice of winners for the Caldecott Medal (a prestigious award for children's books) over the decade of the 1970s and concludes that "of the ten winners, nine are directly connected to the folk tradition" (Burns 1981). Her reading is that "the decade of the seventies has been described as a time of withdrawal, of turning inward after the social trauma of the sixties" (Burns 1981:18). If we accept that her characterization has merit, and the content of children's books over the decade reflected an inward view by turning to distant, unchallenging traditional folk tales, then we see that this same characterization might apply to the academic literature on children's stories at the same time. By 1980, the niche literary movement begun decades before in general literature, the New Realism, had filtered down into specific social academic argument around the role of realism in children's literature, as evident in Hirsch's (1980) "Realism in Children's Fiction",

Segel's (1980) "Realism and Children's Literature: Notes from a Historical Perspective", and Gannon's (1980) "Critical Approaches to the New Realism."

As the decade moved on, analyses turned to examining all manner of social forces and cultural tropes. There were analyses looking at the manifestation of political authority, whether from a single seminal modern authors' body of work, as in 1983's "Another Perspective on Political Authority in Children's Literature: The Fallible Leader in L. Frank Baum and Dr. Seuss" (Cook 1983) or from within an entire genre, as in Janis Svilpin's (1983) "Authority, Autonomy and Adventure in Juvenile Science Fiction."

Coincident with burgeoning environmental movements, there was examination of the natural world and our pastoral social values, as in "The Fresh-Air Kids, or Some Contemporary Versions of the Pastoral" (Kuznets 1983), "Perceiving Prairie Landscapes: The Young Person's View of a Western Frontier" (Whitaker 1983) and "Laura and Pa: Family and Landscape in Little House on the Prairie" (Frey 1987).

Further niche developments of literary and social theory were applied to children's literature analyses, including narrative theory (Hunt 1984; Hunt 1990; Roxburgh 1983), class theory (Wojcik-Andrews 1993), queer theory (Pugh and Wallace 2006; Pugh and Wallace 2008; Tosenberger 2008), feminist and gender theory (Clark 1993; Herzog 2008), and animal theory (Lambdin et al. 2003) as well as art and aesthetic theory (Goldberg 1984; Nodelman 1984).

Throughout the remainder of the 20th Century, the cumulative body of work on children's literature remained concentrated on race, ethnicity and gender. Jeanne Cobb (1995) examined a sample of 41 texts, published between 1989 and 1991, using a set of variables designed to capture gender differences, common stereotypes and character relationships. That set of variables drew on elements identified by the Council on Inter-racial Books for Children (CIBC) as book

elements to consider when analyzing a children's book for what the CIBC terms very broadly 'inclusiveness'. She was looking for images of Hispanic Americans and African Americans, and in her assessment she concluded that stereotypes, while present, generally "were positive and not of an explicit nature", such as the portrayal of African American women as "housewives" 15.9% of the time (Cobb 1995). This notion of 'benign' stereotypes is perhaps a concept that is dated, and I would not so easily characterize a stereotype as such. There is significant evidence that, particularly regarding gender, the effects of such stereotypes are significant (Clark 2002; Clark and Fink 2004; Clark and Kulkin 1996; Gee and Jackson 2005; Turner-Bowker 1996). Social psychological research suggests that male and female children have very similar moral dispositions, but that these dispositions are affected by depictions of gender in storybook characters experiencing moral dilemma (Beal, Garrod, Ruben, and Stewart 1997). Beal and co-authors found that there were measurable differences in gender response to moral dilemmas when the characters experiencing the dilemma were gendered and whether the plot description of the moral dilemma was accompanied by a gendered image depiction. Further, children tend to remember incorrectly that animal characters were male (when they were female) and that this is influenced by an accompanying image depiction of the textual treatment of the character. The authors conclude that children's literature plays a role in children's gender stereotyping and expectations of characters. There is further linkage to the "animal equal male" theory in children's literature, and this is taken up at length in "The Animal=Male Hypothesis" (Lambdin et al. 2003).

In 1997, an historical examination of Black characters in children's picture books was undertaken in which the authors analyzed 2,400 children's books published from the mid- to the late-20th century and the authors drew as one conclusion that there are distinct 'waves' of

inclusion of Black characters: there is declining inclusion from late 1930 into late 1950; there is “nearly zero representation” from late 1950 to 1964; and there is a “dramatic increase” from the late 1960s to the early 1970s, with a leveling effect from 1975 onward (Pescosolido, Grauerholz, and Milkie 1997a:444).

The Master’s Thesis of Tomeka Berry (1999) examined African American depictions in children’s picture books from 1980 and 1990. She, as in a number of similar examinations, looked at the primary elements identified by Council for Inter-racial Books for Children. Her focus was the language, the situational nature of the character, family integration and illustration, examined on a number of variables. Berry’s findings are that storybooks that depict Black characters overwhelmingly have less happy endings, and are nearly always told from a non-Black perspective. The sample size was sufficiently small to be of some concern as a measure or guide, but the general nature of the findings serve to fill a small time gap in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The alignment of variables and time-frame make this a useful comparative study, in the present context, even if Berry’s findings are likely to be less generalizable than desired.

2.5 Children’s Literature and Islamic Identity

These described changes in the scope and purpose of children’s literary analyses, particularly those changes toward examination of multiculturalism or ethnicity, have not had a noticeable influence on the production of knowledge about Islamic or Muslim identity in children’s books. Even as academic trends narrowed the sociological and educational gaze and multiculturalism and ethnic identity gained attention, this did not extend directly, or specifically, to Muslim identity.

One’s social identity and experience as “a Muslim” is distinct from the social/political/religious concept of “Islam.” Though these certainly are related concepts, they are related through overlapping levels of social scale. Put another way, analytical inquiry into the

experience of being a Muslim and inquiry about Islam have units of analysis that can be conceptualized at a meso/micro level and at a macro level. Practically no research is available on either specifically Islamic-themed children's literature or on the image of the Muslim within mass-produced commercial children's literature (Lampert 2004; Lazim 2002) and Islam itself gets rare mention in prior research, even when that research includes historically predominantly Islamic geographies, like northern Africa, "Arabia," or the "Middle East."

Nancy Schmidt's (1970) examination of young and middle-grade readers about Africa, including African, Arab and Middle Eastern biographies and childhood geographies, is without any substantive look at Islam. She noted, with specific regard to Islam, that there were a few biographies recounting tales of travel or leadership that include discussion of the practice of Islam, as for example in Roland Bertol's 1970 *Sundiata: The Epic of King Lion* (Schmidt 1970). Beyond citing this specific instance, she mentions Islam no further.

Recalling again the discussion of Imogen Forster's (1989) examination of colonial-era British children's literature (and therefore early American as well), her specific historical analysis was of textual reference to depictions of Black peoples in juvenile literature. Forster traced the first evidence of non-European peoples in this literature to "at least since James Janeway's *A Token for Children* of 1671" (p. 59). The cases uncovered in her work provide for the most disparaging of images, in keeping with the times' prevailing European thoughts about the non-White peoples of Africa and "the East."

Although September 11, 2001 is seen as a political event that altered the global political space and the hyper-local social space in our relation to Islamic ideology, there is little research on that event's presence in or relation to children's literature. In "Tugging on Superman's Cape: Heroic Identity in Children's Literature post 9/11" (Lampert 2004), a range of literature

including comic books, picture books and young adult fiction is examined in an attempt “to understand any shift in heroic cultural identity” (p. 2) that may be associated with those events. There is no purposeful examination of Islamic identity, or Islamic heroic construction, in Lampert’s work and, in fact, Islam is only mentioned in the paper twice, and not at all in relation to analysis or findings, but rather in reference to general books on Islam which appeared in re-print shortly after September 11, 2001 (see Lampert 2004, p. 2).

Within a line of inquiry centered in an Islamic perspective, there are works on Muslim religious pedagogical materials for children in countries outside the United States. “The Margins of Print: Children’s Religious Literature in Egypt” (Starrett 1995) is a highly detailed analysis of such literature as it is consumed in an educational system built on religious inculcation as well as secular educational goals. But this is a wholly other form of children’s content and, as such an overt ideological literature, it’s relation to English-language mass-market children’s books is only marginal.

That there is no serious inquiry into the depiction of the Muslim or of Islam in contemporary children’s literature is astonishing, given the influence Islam has had on other forms of mass media, on the global political discourse and on the (re)construction of the Muslim within these media and discourses. Overall, the historical focus of the analysis of children’s literature has been around depictions of race, gender and multiculturalism. Absent from the literature is attention to Islamic and Muslim depiction.

Chapter 3: Models

3.1 *Bakhtinian Dialogics & Polyphony: Multiplicity of Voices*

Books provide not only image but voice: Voice of the characters, voice of the author, and voice of the child. The voices that children hear, that is, the voices to which they are able to enter into dialogue, shape their conception of self and of others. In his theoretical work on literary forms, Bakhtin describes a condition of multiplicity of voices, or *polyphony* (Boobani n.d.). When there is a *dialog* taking place, there is a recognizable polyphony, and other voices can be discerned. Bakhtin theorizes two opposing forces always at work in the text: the centrifugal and centripetal forces. The centripetal forces seek to converge elements, threads, ideas and images into a single point of sameness. The centrifugal forces act to create distance, diversity and distinction between elements, creating a sense of multiple voices. The former is *monologic*, the latter is *dialogic* (Boobani n.d.; Mandelker 1994). Labeling texts as such is not the point, but polyphony is a quality that imbues texts and that guides the way in which we look critically at them, their characters, plots, contexts and conditions of story. These all work together to form a picture of the world in which we implicitly ask the child to exist and with which we implicitly ask the child to compare.

3.2 *Narrative in Critical, Interpretive, Feminist and Multi-Cultural Studies*

As previously introduced, and appropriately and cleverly circular, “the concept of narrativity implies the sum of all features in a narrative that make it a narrative” (Nikolajeva 2003:4). But each narrative must be told by someone, in some manner, to someone else, and we are generally without means to validate, or “authenticate”, any narrative against the “lived experience” (Kershaw 2003) of those who are the subject of the narrative. By formally idealizing, in an *a priori* way, based on literature and analytic goals, and by supplementing that

possibly flawed *a priori* idealization with emergent idealizations, we have a better chance of finding some centeredness, an approach to data that places the subject at the center (Asante 1992; Karenga 1982; Kershaw 2003) and seeks to ask questions around that center.

In a trend that broadens the domain of Black or Africana studies paradigm, there has been a consistent development of a multicultural perspective — multiculturalism — in social research. Sometimes called a multicultural feminist approach, there are well-argued further delineations of this approach in both Fishman (1995) and in Clark & Fink (2004). Fishman identifies three varieties of multiculturalism and, finding them all lacking, offers a hybridized fourth variety. In her review of the literature, Fishman (1995) delineates a “National literatures approach” (p. 75), which sorts and organizes literature by the nationality of its writer, a “Disney/Coca-Cola” approach (p. 76) which sees the world as essentially small and similar, and a “tribal approach” (p. 76) which is concerned with differences and not similarities. She offers a fourth approach to multiculturalism that she terms the “pluralist perspective”, where the goal is to “understand the multiplicity, legitimacy, accessibility, and similarity of differences” (p. 76).

Building on Fishman’s (1995) examination of multicultural approaches to literary analysis, Clark & Fink (2004) identified three varieties of feminist inquiry, of which “multicultural feminism” was only one variant. In their terminology, they read a “liberal feminism” (p. 102) which advocates equality of representation, non-stereotyped portrayal and has led to a large number of postivist-like counting studies in literature. They read a second brand of feminist inquiry that they term “difference feminism” (p. 103) and that seeks to understand the ways in which boys/girls (men/women) are different and to understand how, in children’s literature, boys and girls respond to moral dilemma and crisis. They cite research on children’s responses to literature that yields a “rights orientation” for boys and a “response

orientation” for girls (p. 103). Finally, Clark & Fink (2004) find the fewest number of studies adopted a “multicultural feminist” approach where there is a “concern for the multiple systems of oppression — such as sexism, racism, classicism, heterosexism” (p. 103).

The fourth variant of multiculturalism suggested by Fishman (1995), a “pluralist perspective”, along with the “multicultural feminism” identified by Clark & Fink, in so far as they both emerge from the more broad critical and interpretive paradigms discussed by Neuman (2006) and Kershaw (2003), represent the general framework which speaks to the questions being asked in this present research.

3.3 Textuality, Contextuality and Intertextuality

Deriving from literary theory, which has opened the realm of textual literary analysis to sociology, philosophy and other fields, Baz Kershaw in “The Politics of Performance” (1992), discusses the interplay between multiple levels of textual “reading.” That is, when we encounter any social “text”, we are engaged in an interpretive and sense-making process that draws not only on the literal text (whether literary or performative in nature) but also on our placement of that “text” into a broad social “context.” And yet still, as we “read” (perhaps not literally) and interpret that “text”, in its “context”, we fit it again in relation to the content of still other texts, thereby creating a relationship of “intertextuality”, which is the dialogue that emerges from these fluid relations of self to text.

What this implies for the sociological literary analysis is the framing of the publication of children’s inside, or around, some perhaps arbitrary but meaningful shared social frame. That frame for this research is a frame bounded by the two decades centered around the deeply inter-textual events of the 11th of September, 2001, when two planes, hijacked by Al Qaeda extremists, were purposefully diverted into the two independent towers of the World Trade Center, while a third plane was purposefully diverted into the exterior wall of the U.S. Pentagon

and a fourth plane was downed into an open field. The event claimed the lives of over 3,600 people and ushered in a wave of global political action against Islamic and extremist “terrorist” movements. From these events, and the U.S.-lead events that followed, including military action in Iraq and in Afghanistan as well as the declaration of (another) “war on terror”, the world’s attention has been turned toward Islam, for good or for ill. While this particular element is considered secondary to this research, it provides the component needed to bind two groups of texts — one group each from the decades bounding the shared reference — and to facilitate, at minimum, a context through which we can engage with these texts.

Chapter 4: Methods

4.1 Overview

By what method should this or that question be answered? It is convenient to argue that a plausible proposition derived is a method justified, but in social research, the problems and questions must determine the methods and we are interested in more than merely plausible propositions. Just as the questions one asks are formed from within a particular paradigmatic viewpoint, so to, then, must the methods be compatible with that paradigm. Lawrence Neuman, in his ubiquitous introductory text on research methodology, reminds us that there are “competing approaches to social research based on philosophical assumptions about the purpose of science and the nature of social reality” (Neuman 2006:104). My interests and goals are aligned with an interpretive approach to asking and answering questions. Within that approach, this study will use qualitative methods of data collection and analysis as well as quantitative methods, particularly to analyze and report on patterns that emerge.

The following sub-sections address: the process of qualitative content analysis, the development of a sampling frame, sampling procedure, coding and analysis methods for both quantitative and qualitative components, a statement on the reflexivity of the researcher as it bears on this qualitative analysis, and finally a brief description of the coding interface developed to serve as the coding instrument.

4.2 Interpretive Content Analysis

Interpretive approaches involve the telling of a story. They are inherently inductive processes that seek to build a dense, detailed and meaningful description of that which is being observed. At the heart of this research is uncovering ‘the story of the Muslim in the story’ and to

do that it attempts a rich idiographic representation and a dense count of the most salient social symbols and signifiers invoked within the pages of these books for children.

The content -- the symbols and signs -- of interest in these pages are the graphic images contained within these children's books and the contextual and intertextual relationship of these images to the textual characteristics of the plots, stories, themes and main characters. In content analysis, the term "content" refers to "any symbolic representation [that] can be recorded and retrieved for description and analysis" (Altheide, Coyle, DeVriese, and Schneider 2008:127). Lawrence Neuman generally defines content as "words, meanings, pictures, symbols, ideas, themes, or any message that can be communicated" and text as "anything written, visual, or spoken that serves as a medium for communication" in his standard methodology text (Neuman 2006:322).

In order to answer the broad question "what are the stories and depictions of Muslims in children's books?" one must, of course, look at appropriate children's books. But how will these books be identified? How will they be considered for analysis? How, specifically, will the textual and graphical content they contain be reliably captured? What methods will be used to uncover meaningful themes?

The remainder of this chapter will address each of these, in turn, in sections labeled: Building a Sampling Frame, Sampling Procedure, Analysis Methods, Proprietary Database.

4.3 Building a Sampling Frame

The goal in selecting books for analysis is to provide a useful representation of what is available to children, minimizing selection biases. Qualitative research methods offer a number of possible approaches to sampling, but the empirical object-facts of books suggests that it is also possible to identify, label, count and sample them.

According to the Book Industry Study Group (BISG), from 2002 to 2006 there were between 26,000 and 40,000 “juvenile titles” (generally meaning for children through age 13 and across all genres) published each year in the U.S., with a peak in 2004 of just over 40,000 titles and editions published (2007, *Beneath the Cover*). The trend is fewer titles each year since that peak, but there were 29,248 new juvenile titles or editions published in 2006, which is about 10% of all book titles published in the U.S. that year (Grabois 2007; Poynter 2008).

This general industry classification of “juvenile titles” represents a broad category too coarse for the interest of this research, so the additional criteria that define the unit of analysis provide further filtering to identify a sub-set of books appropriate for ages 0 to 8 years within this juvenile segment. These are sometimes called “children’s books”, “picture books” and “primary readers.” These ages loosely correspond to the beginning reader stage up to and including elementary school grade four. This range is acceptable as an understood or generally agreed category across many databases, library classifications and commercial groupings. Furthermore, within the physical retail space of bookstores, books are often grouped together loosely around this age range and reading stage.

4.3.1 Unit of Analysis and Frame Criteria

The unit of analysis for this study is book titles that are published in the English language, that are appropriate for readers aged 0 to 8 years, where the story or text is about Muslims or Islam (that are Islamic-themed), where the book is published from 1990 to 2010 inclusive, where the book is not first published in 2001, and where the book has been issued an ISBN (International Standard Book Number). I will address in turn each of the elements that comprise this unit of analysis: (a) it is a book, (b) that has been published, (c) that is in English,

(d) that is appropriate for ages 0 to 8, (e) that is Islamic-themed, (f) that is first published in date range, (g) that is not first published in 2001, and (h) that has been issued an ISBN.

- *(a) Book Criterion*

The word "book" does not now, and perhaps never has, described an exactly specific type of object. Some people refer to stored electronic versions of text, or even stored recorded sound, as a book. Some people consider a bound set of crossword puzzles (or blank pages for coloring or painting) to be a book. Some books are designed for students in classrooms. Some books are manuals designed to instruct workers. Here we are interested in mass-produced, print-based, commercially available books that contain textual and/or visual content.

Further, we are specifically interested in those books that are Islamic-themed and that have a story, plot or informational purpose. So publications like the aforementioned crossword puzzles or genres like "coloring book", "game book" or "activity book" are not included here. The identification of appropriate content (as being Islamic-themed) is dealt with separately, below.

- *(b) Published Criterion*

The objective of this criterion is to assert that the book's content is socially available. Because the act of creating and making public a text that may be called a "book" is available to anyone with the resources to do so, a valid book must be published in the real sense of being "made public" by inserting the book into the available public and commercial spaces.

- *(c) English-language Criterion*

If the book is published in English, even in translation or in bilingual versions with English and an additional language, then this criterion is met from the first English instance of publication. If a book is first published in a non-English language in year x and then later

published in English in year y , then only those instances of the book from year y and forward meet this criterion.

- (d) Age-Range Criterion

Not every publisher identifies an age range or reading level that they believe is appropriate for any given book. The Library of Congress and the WorldCat database of published materials both use broad legacy terms, like "Juvenile" and "Adolescent" and "Preschool", to generally group published works. Some large school systems and libraries, as well as some bookseller professional and commercial organizations, have devised terms used to designate the age-appropriateness of books. The problem emerges that these systems are not consistent or aligned in either terminology or developmental reading point of view. School-based systems, like the California Department of Education's age-range classification system, are typically structured around grade level break points, like "Kindergarten", "Grade 1 to 3", or similar. Commercial bookseller databases tend toward systems structured around developmental or age-specific groupings, like "Ages 0-4", "Ages 4-8".

In order to combine data from multiple sources into an ultimate sampling frame, as much age- and reading-level data as was available was combined into a single data record. As long as information was available that the book was intended for the age 0 to age 8 group, the book was eligible as for its reading-level. Where there was conflicting information, for example where a commercial data source indicated "Ages 4-8" but where another data source indicated "Adolescent" or "Ages 9-12", attempt was made to resolve the conflict by examining other available data, such as page count, review text, cover or jacket text and the like.

If a conflict over reading-level could not be resolved from multiple data sources but other evidence suggested that the book may be appropriate and met other eligibility conditions, the book was included in the sampling frame.

- *(e) Islamic-themed Criterion*

That any book was discoverable by the process and terms implemented to initially search for possible valid books (detailed in the section below titled “Initial Book Searches”) and to assess those discovered titles against these criteria, then the book met some minimum level of suggestion toward being Islamic-themed. That is, if an electronic database included a designator that a book was a member of some arbitrary taxonomic group (e.g. “fishing book”), then other data may confirm or refute the appropriateness of that designator. But the actual validity of the assignment of that designator, for any particular purpose, is not confirmed until one applies their own purposeful assessment of that validity. The mere labeling of a book as “about fishing” may prove upon reading by a fishing enthusiast to be unacceptable as a useful label, for example, while a mother shopping for a gift may find that labeling sufficient to classify the book’s content as, indeed, “about fishing.” Only a direct encounter with a book and an assessment of its relation to Islam or Muslims by some subjective standard of the observer (in this case, me) can fully confirm that a book is, indeed, “Islamic-themed.”

The subjective standard applied to confirm a book to be “Islamic-themed” is, quite simply, that if a book merely has an Islamic character or mentions Islam, then that is not enough. A book’s content, purpose, context and Islamic self-reference all contribute to assessing that book against this criterion. As a practical example, consider the fairy tale “Cinderella,” since it is widely known in various forms in many places and times. It would be quite possible to tell that

story in an Islamic context and with Muslim characters. More importantly, any objective reader would be able to distinguish that “Islamic” Cinderella from some other version of Cinderella.

If a book tells its story(ies) in an Islamic context, with Muslim characters, or is otherwise about Islam and the experiences of Muslims, then it meets this criterion.

- *(f) Published from 1990 to 2010 Criterion*

If the book was first published in any of the years 1990 to 2010, inclusive, and was not first published in the year 2001, then this criterion is met. Books first published in the year 2001 are purposefully excluded for reasons previously described.

This reasoning is made immediately clear if we consider whether, for a book published in 2001, we should assign that to the meaningful category of “before” or “after” the dramatic events of September 11, 2001. Books from this boundary year would cloud distinction and confuse comparative ability through the introduction of assignment error. As we have no consistent historical way of knowing the month of the release of a book, not to mention when it was actually created and prepared for release, then the methodological solution to the problem of case (book) assignment when the case is “on” the boundary is simply to discard books from the boundary year.

If a book was first published in the period 1990 to 2000, inclusive, and then subsequently released in another edition in the time period 2002 to 2010, inclusive, then only the editions published in the earlier time period are eligible for selection. For example, if a book is published in 1998, 1999 and 2003 then only the two editions published prior to 2001 are eligible for inclusion in the sampling frame. (Books can be edited before a subsequent edition is released, for whatever purpose of the publisher.) In cases of multiple editions of a title, no matter what time period, the book is only entered into the sampling frame once, although any of the available

editions that meet all other criteria are eligible for selection. More on this in the section on "Sampling Procedure".

- *(g) ISBN Criterion*

If a book has been registered and issued an ISBN and has been made available (whether on a physical shelf or in an online context) then it is discoverable for parents, teachers, libraries, or others to find and acquire the book: to come in contact with its content. If a book has been issued an ISBN and was discoverable (*prima facie*) this criterion has been met.

4.3.2 Initial Book Searches

The process of locating book titles that meet the above criteria was conducted in multiple waves, utilizing three primary data sources: The Library of Congress (LOC) Cataloging Data, the World Catalog of Published Material (WorldCat) and Amazon Books. (Other data sources were consulted, including niche catalogs and publishers, to supplement and cross-reference the accumulated list of eligible books.) The LOC and Amazon are publicly accessible databases and the WorldCat database was accessed under general university license via the Virginia Tech Libraries system.

- *Library of Congress Cataloging Data*

We often think of the Library of Congress (LOC) as the place where we can find any book. While that may be more or less true, the LOC is considered an authoritative data source for books published for the U.S. market. Standard cataloging data emerges from the initial data records created by the LOC, and these data make their way into all manner of databases, both public and commercial. Additionally, the taxonomies used in much of the world to classify and organize books emerge from the LOC, where cataloging terms dictate a book's call numbers, in several library number systems like the Dewey decimal system or LOC call number system. This

process — cataloging book data and, in modern times, linking that data to a book's issued ISBN — provides only one data source, and for only a few pieces of immutable data.

- World Catalog of Published Material

Librarians themselves often begin a search for a published item by relying on the World Catalog of Published Material, or WorldCat. This is a rich source of data and it has, for the most part, been curated a further time, with a more useful introduction of age- and reading-level data into any book title's overall data record. The data fields captured by the WorldCat are, therefore, quite useful in finding books that meet more specific criteria.

- Amazon Books

Because the purposes of publicly-funded databases, like the LOC, and private but commercially available databases, like the WorldCat, are different, the kinds of data in which they specialize is different. These two sources provide, essentially, authoritative meta-data — data about books. In these data sources we can find authoritative spellings of author's names, shelf cataloging numbers from a variety of library number systems, physical page counts, publisher names and so on. However, of immense importance to any book researcher, is the vast commercial but freely available database of Amazon.com, a global leader in book sales. What Amazon can offer, in most cases, is a picture of the cover of a book and sometimes even a selection of a few pages of the book in image form. Further, Amazon book records are often supplemented with other commercial data, like reviews from prominent education and library data companies, reviews from librarians and other curators of books.

The Amazon data source is able to supplement the other two sources by filling-in other kinds of data, and in that way it is a successful disambiguation source. One can, in many cases,

see the multiple editions of books and how they differ in cover art and so forth. We may even discover, for example, that the book has other printed text on its cover that provides further data. Perhaps the book has non-title printing that says "For young readers" or that says "Now in Spanish and English".

4.3.3 Combining Data from Multiple Sources

Since each of the primary databases used to build the full sampling frame has a particular speciality, it was decided that data from as many of the three sources as possible should be combined into a single data source, where direct researcher review of each book item record could make final distinctions about conflicting data items.

To serve that need, a specialized database was created with data fields to capture the LOC data, the WorldCat data and the Amazon data. Not every book identified appeared in the LOC data or the WorldCat data, although the majority were from WorldCat, but every book in the sampling frame is represented by a data record in at least one of these data sources. That is, a book may show up as a data record in the WorldCat and Amazon.com, but not be listed in the LOC data under the same cataloging terms. This is a weakness of classification taxonomy rather than any particular database.

To acquire data records, consistent search terms were used, specialized for each data source. For the LOC, and based on advice from librarians of children's literature, the LOC Subject Headings taxonomy was searched for the following terms:

- (i) Muslims--Juvenile fiction.
- (ii) Muslims--Juvenile literature.
- (iii) Islamic stories.
- (iv) Islamic stories--Juvenile fiction.
- (v) Islamic stories--Juvenile literature.

Within the WorldCat database, subject and keyword terms were used to isolate possible books. WorldCat searches performed were:

- (vi) su: islam and yr: 1990-2010 and la= "eng" and dt= "bks" and (mt: juv)
- (vii) kw: islam and yr: 1990-2010 and la= "eng" and dt= "bks" and (mt: juv)
- (viii) su: islam or su: muslim and yr: 1990-2010 and
la= "eng" and dt= "bks" and (mt: juv)
- (ix) (((su: children's and su: stories)) and kw: islam) or
kw: muslim and yr: 1990-2010 and
la= "eng" and dt= "bks" and (mt: juv)

Guided variations based on the search results from the LOC and the WorldCat yielded a total of about 60 (LOC) and about 250 (WorldCat) non-duplicates.

Searches at Amazon.com were also performed independently, searching for the following terms (site drill-down sections that constrain the search are separated by ">" with the search term appearing in quotes):

- (x) Books > Children's Books > "islam"
- (xi) Books > Children's Books > "muslim"

These searches yielded just 1,000 books, with many duplicates, and for ages identified as "baby" to "young adult". Using only the categories for ages "Baby to 3" and "Ages 4 to 8", yielded a total of 230 book titles.

This list was supplemented and cross-checked with the International Reading Association (IRA)'s "Teachers' Choices" Annual Listings (1998-2008) (International Reading Association 1998; International Reading Association 1999; International Reading Association 2000; International Reading Association 2001; International Reading Association 2002; International Reading Association 2003; International Reading Association 2004; International Reading

Association 2005; International Reading Association 2006; International Reading Association 2007), New York Public Library's '100 Picture Books Everyone Should Know' List (New York Public Library 2009), the Database of Award-Winning Children's Literature (DAWCL) for available years 1997-2008 (Bartle 1997-2008), the California Department of Education's Annual Recommended Reading List K-12 (California Department of Education 2007), and the Miami University Children's Picture Book Database (MUCPBDB) (Miami University 2008).

Across all data sources, starting from the search terms described, I identified 818 books that met, minimally, the criteria of being published in the full 1990 to 2010 data range (including 2001) and that were identified in at least one database as being within the definition of "juvenile" literature (even if outside the required ages 0 to 8 range) and that had an ISBN number assigned. This figure includes duplicates that were present in more than one data source and included entries for each edition of a title.

From that list of 818 books a total of 564 books were kept. This figure still included some books with information missing about the appropriate age- or reading-level and books that were subsequent editions, alternate bindings or non-English editions of those already listed and those books first published in 2001 (which will be the last removal step, so that even those books meet all other criteria for selection.) Narrowing this list of 564 books required reviewing each now-combined (multi-sourced) data record to identify whether a book was a subsequent edition and to determine — from all available data — the final age-range appropriateness for the book.

The exclusion or inclusion based on age-appropriateness relied on the most complete age description data, which came from Amazon Books at Amazon.com. Although this is the most complete data set, it is not entirely complete. Some books, in none of the sources of data, had no indication of age-appropriateness. In those cases, an examination of the book's page count, its

cover artwork, and available reviews, led to me making a decision to keep or exclude a book. In each such case, when no other information was found to purposefully and meaningfully exclude a book title, then that title was included in the sampling frame. It was decided that it was better to physically examine a book and find out that it was not of the appropriate age level for this study than it was to exclude those that may be appropriate. If any such book that is missing age appropriateness data in the collective data set is subsequently selected in any sampling pass and then successfully physically located and the book is determined not to meet the age-appropriateness selection criterion, it was to be excluded and replaced, as explained below in the section “Sampling Procedure.”

In order to handle books that were published in more than one edition, more than one binding or more than one language, but still appeared as separate records in the database, any edition that was in a non-English language was excluded. Then, any book that had multiple editions or multiple binding formats (paperback, hardback, library binding, etc.) was collated into a single book title entry (data records were not destroyed, but each book title was entered in the frame only once, such that a book published in 1990 and then again in 1994 would only have one entry in the frame, even though the 1994 copy of the book might be located.) The handling of multiple editions in the actual sampling procedure is described in the subsequent section.

After eliminating duplicate titles, collapsing subsequent editions and bindings into a single eligible item, determining a final age-appropriateness, and applying all of the previously described selection criteria, the list of 564 books yielded a total of 270 books that were eligible on all criteria except possibly the boundary year exclusion. There were 23 books from this list that were first published in 2001, and those were removed to form the final valid sampling frame of 247 books eligible on every selection criterion. Again, it is possible that there could be data

disagreement on the arbitrary age-appropriateness of any book inserted by others into any of the data sources, and so this figure may include books that, upon actual sampling and examination, suggest that they are outside the sampling frame inclusion criteria and should be excluded upon direct observation and assessment.

4.4 Sampling Procedure

The general sampling procedure used was a basic random sample, with replacement sampling, of books from both time periods to be used as sub-groups for comparison.

From the defined sampling frame of 247 book titles 87 books were first published in the decade 1990 to 2000, and 160 were first published in the nine years of 2002 to 2010. Based on prior research and a general desire to analyze as many books as finances and time would allow, it was arbitrarily decided that a general goal of 50 books from each of the two time periods under consideration (1990-2000 and 2002-2010) was a reasonable goal. The general size of samples in prior research has been limited to usually several dozen, so this goal seemed both useful and possible and perhaps therefore able to contribute to the research on children's literature. If the availability of some books was limited, or if acquiring them fell outside of reasonable time goals, then a few unavailable books would not negatively impact the analysis.

To sample books from the frame of 246, entries were sorted by publication year and the frame was split into two strata, representing the years 1990-2000 and the years 2002-2010. Each data record (representing a single book) was assigned an unseeded randomly generated number from 0 to 9999 and then each stratum was independently sorted, from lowest to highest, on the random number. The first 50 books from each stratum comprise the first sample pass, for a total of 100 books.

In order to get as close as feasible to the goal of analyzing 50 books from each strata, it was anticipated that a search for any given book may not produce the book, and that this might

especially be true for books published longer ago (titles are available in a finite quantity which, presumably, diminishes over time). That is, it was considered that a book being discoverable may not mean that it is available (out of print, out of stock, unable to be located via retail, library or other source) or not available within resource means. And so, for example, if 50 books were being sought, but only 30 of the books could be found within reasonable means, then an additional 20 books would still be needed to reach the loose goal of 50. To address this it was decided to use replacement sampling on the remaining eligible but non-sampled books in the appropriate strata of the sampling frame in order to draw the next (replacement) sample and to use the return rate of the pass to determine the replacement sample for a subsequent pass.

Based on principles of sampling and return rate, the specific formula used in replacement sample passes was:

$$\begin{aligned} & \textit{Number of Replacements Needed / Prior Sampling Pass Return Rate} \\ & = \textit{Next Pass Sample Size} \end{aligned}$$

Applying that process and formula, two sample passes were made yielding and a total of 59 books coded, 21 of 50 for the earlier time period and 38 of 50 for the later time period, for a total return rate of 59%. Return rates for each pass, for each time period, are detailed below.

For the 1990 to 2000 time period, 14 books were acquired in the first pass, producing a return rate of 0.28 (14/50), or 28%. The number of replacements needed was 36 (50-14). Dividing that replacement size (36) by the prior-pass return rate (0.28) yields 128, the number of titles to be drawn from those remaining in the frame. For this time period, there were only 37 books remaining in the frame (87 original minus 50 drawn in the first pass) and so all of the remaining 37 books became eligible. In pass two, 7 books were ultimately acquired and coded,

producing a pass two return rate of 0.24 (7/29), or 24%. The overall return rate for this time period was 42%, or 21 of 50 books.

For the 2002 to 2010 time period, 29 books were coded in the first pass, but during coding two of these books presented problems that led to their exclusion. One was discovered to have an inside-cover date of first publication of 2001 despite cataloging data that indicated 2002 (*The Two Brothers, 2001*) and so was excluded, leaving 28 valid books and yielding a return rate of 0.56 (28/50), or 56%. The number of replacements needed for pass two was 22 (50-28). Dividing that replacement size (22) by the prior-pass return rate (0.56) yields 39, the number of titles to be drawn from those remaining in the frame. In this case, there were 110 titles remaining in the frame (160-50) and from those 110, the replacement sample was drawn. In pass two, 11 books were acquired, of 39 needed, but in this pass one of the books (*Zinnia's Flower Garden, 2005*) was a children's gardening activity book. Discarding that book lowered the total coded in this pass to 10, of a needed 39, for a pass return rate of 0.26 (10/39), or 26%. The overall return rate for this time period was 76%, or 38 of 50 books.

In summary, these two passes yielded 21 books for the earlier time period (14 plus 7) and 38 books for the later time period (28 and 10), for a total of 59 books coded out of a desired 100, yielding an overall return rate of 59%.

4.5 Coding and Analysis Methods

This is a conceptual content analysis conducted from within an interpretive realism paradigm and relies on both interactive concept (theme) development and pre-defined concepts. Coding methods therefore include emergent coding (open, interactive) at a molar level (Miles and Humberman 1994) as well as *a priori* coding (pre-defined). Guidance on the identification of possible variables and qualities comes from (Asman 1982; Berry 1999; Boobani n.d.; Bradford 2007; Clark and Fink 2004; Clark and Kulkin 1996; Cobb 1995; Council on Interracial Books for

Children 1980; Forster 1989; Gee and Jackson 2005; Ghazi 1984; Gooden and Gooden 2001; Hamilton, Anderson, Broaddus, and Young 2006; Lambdin et al. 2003; Lampert 2004; Pescosolido, Grauerholz, and Milkie 1997b; Schmidt 1970).

Having previously defined the unit of analysis, the actual process of coding breaks that unit of analysis into three coding units: Bibliographic Data, Plot/Story Level Data, and Character Level Data. Some of the data at these levels is countable, in the form of “objective characteristics” that can be captured through “manifest coding”, while other data are considered “latent content” (Pescosolido, Grauerholz, and Milkie 1997a:447) and can only emerge through ordered observation, thematizing and the development of dense and meaningful descriptions of imagistic presentations and their context.

The first of these coding units, bibliographic information, has no emergent qualitative component (although surely we can count publishers, authors, pages, and so on.) The other two coding units, for plot/story and character, provide both manifest (quantitative) data as well as latent (qualitative) data. Therefore, they recur in each of the sections below, where specific “variables” within each coding unit are further elaborated.

4.5.1 Quantitative Methods

Referring back to the notion of “content” as symbols, signs and contexts, and to the general literature on the progress of children’s book analyses, consider that it is one thing to identify themes within or categories of such symbols. Once identified, one task is to count examples of the emergence of those symbols. While the primary focus is to understand the subtle story within the stories, it is nonetheless relevant to engage in counting, and then to compare those quantities in a variety of ways using basic tools of descriptive and comparative statistics. The frequency of the presence of this or that symbol is important, just as it is important how that

that symbol is presented and contextualized. That is, both kinds of data are useful for answering the questions at hand, and the kinds of analysis available from each of these views of the data are different and complementary.

Manifest content — that which is countable and objective — exists at all three data coding levels (even with bibliographic information, we could, for example, count authors, publishers, pages, etc). These are countable “objective characteristics”, captured in a form of “manifest coding” (Pescosolido, Grauerholz, and Milkie 1997a:447), intended to isolate various qualities of representation.

These kinds of data, while prevalent and common in the prior research, have been criticized as overly positivist and counter to interpretive, feminist, and critical research approaches. Peter Clark (2002), in his literature review and essay “Why all the counting? Feminist social science research on children’s literature,” examines the issues and historical trends of counting in critical feminist research on children’s literature by framing the problem in this way:

[O]ne of the toughest questions I am asked at [Children’s Literature Association] ChLA conferences: “Why is there so much counting going on in what passes for feminist social science research on children’s literature?” (You know the kind of thing: 12% of characters in this set of books is female, and of those, 73% are shown in domestic roles.) (P. 285)

This kind of argument presents a false dichotomy. We do not simply slip into a positivist paradigm because we use a numeric quality rather than a textual one. While overall qualitative, I will use a number of quantitative techniques for analysis and comparison.

All of the isolable qualities of representation and depiction that are undertaken in this project are listed in Table 1, grouped by coding unit. Some of these qualities have an associated

“value list” of valid values for attributes. Those that accept a pre-defined value list are marked with (*) in Table 1 and then the full set of values for each can be found in Table 2 for the Story/Plot Coding Unit (Genre, Time Epoch, Setting) and in Table 3 for the Character Coding Unit (Character or Object Gender). Each of these is discussed below, by coding unit.

Table 1: *A Priori* Manifest Coding Concepts for Each Coding Unit

Bibliographic Coding Unit	Story/Plot Coding Unit	Character Coding Unit
Title	Genre*	Title or Main Character
Publisher	Time Epoch*	Age (Child/Adult)
Year of First Publication	Setting (Macro)*	Cultural Designator*
Creators	Conflict Type	Character Object
		Gender*
Author	Internal (Self vs Self)	
Illustrator	External (Self vs Other)	
	Nature (Self vs Nature)	
	No Conflict	
	Conflict Context	
	Family	
	Peers	
	Secular vs Religious	
	Religious Practice	
	Direct Teaching/Practice	
	Just as Context	

** Each of these attributes has a pre-defined set of values. The value list for each of these is shown in a subsequent table, by name.*

Table 2: Pre-Defined Value Lists for Story/Plot Coding Unit

Genre	<i>Quoted directly from California Department of Education. 2007. "Recommended Literature (K-12) - Reading/Language Arts." CA Dept of Education (http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/rl/l/).</i>
Fable	Narration demonstrating a useful truth, especially in which animals speak as humans; legendary, supernatural tale.
Fairy Tale	Story about fairies or other magical creatures, usually for children.
Fantasy	Fiction with strange or other worldly settings or characters; fiction which invites suspension of reality.
Folklore	The songs, stories, myths, and proverbs of a people or "folk" as handed down by word of mouth.
Legend	Story, sometimes of a national or folk hero, which has a basis in fact but also includes imaginative material.
Fiction	Narrative literary works whose content is produced by the imagination and is not necessarily based on fact.
Historical Fiction	Story with fictional characters and events in a historical setting.
Realistic Fiction	Story that can actually happen and is true to life.
Non-Fiction	Factual information.
Narrative Nonfiction	Factual information presented in a format which tells a story.
Poetry	Verse and rhythmic writing with imagery that creates emotional responses.
<hr/>	
Time Epoch	
Ancient	<i>Contextually defined. Example: "A very long time ago..", "In the year 570..."</i>
Contemporary	<i>Contextually defined.</i>
Timeless	<i>Fairy tales, fables or other non-realistic stories may not indicate time period.</i>
Indeterminate	<i>When neither textual nor visual context clues provided data.</i>
<hr/>	
Story Setting (Macro)	
Rural	<i>Ex: desert, farm, pastoral</i>
Urban	<i>Ex: city or town as setting,</i>
Non-specific	<i>When the story is not centrally located but covers multiple locales.</i>
Indeterminate	<i>When neither textual nor visual context clues provided data.</i>
<hr/>	
Story Setting (Micro)	<i>Coded value is the most specific value for the main plot or story, if there is something more specific than Urban/Rural.</i>
Neighborhood	
Home	
School	

Table 3: Pre-Defined Value Lists for Character Coding Unit

Character or Object Gender	<i>When specific contextual clues provide a gender identifier.</i>
Female Human Male Human Indeterminate Human	
Animal as Animal Female Anthropomorphized Animal Male Anthropomorphized Animal Indeterminate Anthropomorphized Animal	
Female Anthropomorphized Object Male Anthropomorphized Object Indeterminate Anthropomorphized Object	
Cultural Designator	<i>When specific contextual clues provide a cultural locator.</i>
African African-American Middle Eastern White/American White/European Asian Multicultural	<i>As when there is no central character (non-fiction, etc) and the text and images depict a variety of cultures, ethnicities and races</i>
Indeterminate	<i>When no determination is able to be made from the contextual clues.</i>
Not Applicable	<i>As when the primary character is non-human.</i>

4.5.1.1 Plot/Story Coding Unit

Qualities associated with the plot or story content involve literary aspects like genre and conflict type. Other qualities involve creative specifics like the story's location in time, its geographical context, its localized setting and the character actions it contains. That is, these qualities are those that we all generally learn in introductory literature classes, plus a number of qualities particularized to this project. All of these are provided in Table 2.

Genre: The value list associated the story level “genre” uses a sub-set of value labels defined by the California Department of Education (2007) for genre classification. The Genres sub-set used for coding is: Fable, Fairy Tale, Fantasy, Fiction, Folklore, Historical Fiction, Realistic Fiction and Narrative Non-Fiction. These are all defined, as directly quoted from the California Department of Education (2007) listing, in Table 2 under Genre.

Time Epoch: The current project uses time epoch in an extremely coarse sense, coding only whether a story's setting is “Ancient” (for example “A long long time ago...”) or “Contemporary” (present day or modern setting) or “Timeless” (as perhaps in a fairy tale or non-realistic story). When neither textual reference nor visual context clue provides enough information to make a distinction, the value is coded as “Indeterminate.” This provides enough of a qualitative grouping to make general distinctions.

Story Setting: This quality of the story and plot captures the national political geography (country), rural/urban geography, and the specific social context. First, I coded a “Setting (Geography)” value when available from textual reference, which may even include reference from front- or back-matter (e.g. “This traditional story from Pakistan is sure to thrill...”). Second, I coded a “Setting (Macro)” location, as either Rural, Urban or Non-Specific (when no textual or contextual clues are present.) Third, I code a “Setting (Micro)” location value, if

present. This “micro” location is intended to capture the specific social setting in which the main character is engaged. This can take the values Neighborhood, Home, Private School, Public School, Mosque and the value is coded at the most specific setting location that can be determined for the main story. If no determination is possible, the value is empty.

Conflict Type: As high school students we are introduced to a literary model for comparing the type of conflicts found in literature or drama. There are generally three conflict types, from a literary perspective, involving the relation of the main character to self, to others or to the generalized world. In various forms, these conflict types are Self v. Self (as in an internal conflict), Self v. Other (as in a fight or argument) and Self v. Nature (as in either enduring a shipwreck or in the sense of being in conflict with a decentralized outside force, like obstacles in learning a task, for example.) These three relational labels are used to code the primary conflict of the story’s title or main character. Of course any story or character may have many conflicts in due course, but we are interested here in the story’s main character’s central conflict. A story may also have “No Conflict,” as when the story is non-fiction or when it is informative or learning-based rather than plot-based.

Conflict Social Context: Here I am interested in the relational sphere in which the conflict takes place. Unlike values for the plot’s physical location, this captures the social actor level of the story’s conflict, if one exists. Coding values used are “in Family,” “with Peers,” and “Secular v Religious.” If the conflict type is “No Conflict” (from above), then this value is empty.

Religious Practice: This quality is intended to capture whether or not the story involves the direct teaching or execution of a religious practice or whether religious practice is merely a background story element. The possible values for Religious Practice are “Direct Teaching/Practice” and “Just as Context.” Direct teaching or practice looks like “...and his father

showed him how to roll out his prayer rug to face Makkah.” Religious practice merely as context or setting looks like “...so she knew she had to go to sleep early because tomorrow was Eid and everyone would be coming over.”

4.5.1.2 Character Coding Unit

In order to offer the best opportunity for useful comparison across prior research, the coding of character qualities should capture minimally salient features of a character’s social identity: general age, cultural designator (ethnicity/race), gender and occupation. Values for these characteristics are captured for each of the title or main characters, as central to the story. Pre-defined value lists for the Cultural and Gender attributes are more complex and are dealt with after Age and Occupation.

Age: Age is captured in a coarse and binary way, as either Adult or Child, relying on textual and contextual clues to provide the data.

Cultural Designator: This is captured only from direct textual or imagistic reference, for a title or main character only. The code assigned is a text string from a pre-defined value list that is derived from, although reduced and modified for the present purpose, the list of cultural designators developed for usage by the California Department of Education (2009). The value assigned here is the one that is the closest in meaning to one of “African”, “African American”, “Middle Eastern”, “White/American”, “White/European”, “Asian”, or “Multicultural.” If no information is available, then no value is assigned.

Gender: Gender is more complex because children’s books are filled with inanimate and non-human characters that may or may not be anthropomorphized. Following Hamilton, et. al. (2006), who implemented a set of gender-counting variables based on research from the early 1970’s onward, I implement a compatible but not identical counting scheme. The coding scheme

they implemented is specifically focused gender roles and stereotyping, which is only one of several thematic backdrops through which to look at the depiction of Muslims and Islam. Despite the more narrow focus, a sub-set of their coding structure provides just what is desired here, so following their model characters are counted by gender. Specifically, the main or title character is recorded along with gender coding, as are the other contextually primary characters. For example, in a story about a young girl that involves her mother and brother as other primary characters, then they are counted and recorded along with their gender. Gendered information comes from textual clues, such as pronouns and familiarity with gendered names, as well as from visual information in the form of illustration. When textual clues are not enough, alone, to assign gender, then contextual clues in the form of clothing and dress are used to make a determination.

A problem in “gendering” children’s stories is that these stories often contain animals or other objects that may be anthropomorphized but textually gender ambiguous. As discussed in the review of the literature, prior research has examined the ways that children gender objects and the consensus is toward an assumption that “un-gendered” means male. In the same way that both textual and contextual clues are used to assign gender to human characters, both the words and the pictures combine to assess the gender of anthropomorphized characters. To address this issue, the complete set of values from which a character gender can be assigned (coded) indicates whether the character is Human, Anthropomorphized Animal or Anthropomorphized Object; and then whether the character is gendered Female, Male, or Indeterminate. The cross-union of those attributes form 9 distinct labels (such as female human, female anthropomorphized animal, female anthropomorphized object, and so on), and then I also add the plain label Animal as Animal (for example, in the case where a main character is a pet or an animal encountered that remains an animal). The complete list of character gender labels is then 10 items (Table 3).

Crowds as imagistic character of significance also deserve treatment. Looking again to Hamilton, et. al. (2006), I have implemented their simple “if it’s the majority” rule of thumb. If a story involves, as central to its conflict or action, the presence of a crowd or a crowd as a character, and when that crowd is presented non-textually as an illustration that includes group or crowd images, then these social actors of the crowd are counted as an aggregate central character. For example, if an illustration of the story line puts the title character in a crowd of gender-discernible characters, then those characters that are discernible are counted by their gender (as they would be if not in a crowd, by visual reference or other clue) and the “crowd character” is then given the gender of the majority of discernible characters. For purposes of defining a “crowd” in this sense Hamilton’s 2006 model used six (6) people as a baseline criterion to be a significant crowd in an image, and that is as useful as any other arbitrary value and so it is also implemented here. So, by way of example of coding, if a picture supplementing the main plot of the story involves a group of 6 or more gender-discernible people that are central to that plot, then we should count that group as a character. To assign a gender to that “crowd character” we simply assign the gender of the majority. In practice, this condition does emerge in some of the books coded and so it is a useful heuristic. The mere presence of a crowd in any image does not establish that that crowd is central to the story. That can only be determined from the full context.

4.5.2 Quantitative Statistical Analyses

In addition to the reporting made possible by qualitative thematic analysis (described in the next sub-section) an additional goal is to compare the two time periods, 1990-2000 and 2002-2010.

Because these are small sample sizes and because there is no support for any assumptions

about normality, the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test, executed in SPSS version 16, is used for testing whether or not a nominal category (of variable) differs between the two decades. For categorical data that is attribute-based, this kind of analysis will shed light on sameness, difference and change between the two respective sub-groups, 1990-2000 and 2002-2010, and will allow a meaningful comparison to supplement the thematic qualitative differences observed between these two periods of time.

4.5.3 *Qualitative Analyses*

It is one thing to describe an object via some operationalization. It is quite another to see that object in relation to other objects and then to make meaning from that relation. Qualitative methods provide the binding agent that allows one to fix a meaning to an observation. Even in the most positivist-oriented paradigm, under the most stringent quantitative methodologies, the assessment of meaning in patterns is a qualitative undertaking. We can not interpret a quantity as meaningful without treating it as a quality of some concept. And so the textured and nuanced layering of the subjective observation of the content must be considered atop the objective operationalization, even while at the same time partly emerging from it. These things are not distinct entirely from each other and neither am I distinct entirely from them. It is I who is tasked with making meaning, through a process designed to minimize that which is solely me and to highlight that which is common. Though I arrive at a point of assisting in the qualitative making of meaning with the support of that process, and its intended safe-guards, it is here where the “I” is most present. And so you should know something of me and of my relationship to the themes I seek to identify.

Reflexivity

I am a white male, over forty years old, who does not practice religion of any kind. Although

only very loosely religious, my early childhood did include fairly infrequent attendance at a Christian church and participation in that church in a social way. My family mainly attended church on specific and special occasions, related to Christian holidays or to marriage or death. By the age of 12, and with the requisite pre-adolescent dramatic declaration, I firmly distanced myself from even the loose association I had with any religious interest, other than purely academic. I remained (and remain) fascinated by the cultural and social differences between myself and others and it was only through my own means that I even came to experience Catholicism, to visit a “Black church”, to know of Islam or Judaism, to learn of Quakers and Shakers. And it would not be for another eight years that I would truly have my first intellectual encounter with Islam, through many readings of Rumi’s inimitable Sufi quatrains. Those short four-line poems introduced me to a classical and mystical Islam that still informs my primary frame of reference, but provided only a literary familiarity.

Until that time, during my childhood, adolescence and early adulthood, the social reality of my experience with Islam was the Black Islamic movement in the United States, news footage of planes under siege on tarmacs around the world, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Russia at war in Afghanistan, images of PLO fighters, Camp David, 444 days of a hostage stand-off with Iran, CNNs explosion onto the scene with live coverage of the U.S. bombing of Baghdad, and so on through the years. These were the predominant images of political Islam of my youth and early adulthood.

Nearly a dozen years after my introduction to Rumi, Sarajevo was under siege, the international community was considering ways to stop the lethal targeting and intended extermination of Muslims in the Balkans, and my professional life conspired to take me to the heart of Sarajevo to work on several community development arts projects implemented through

the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). I saw there again, in the face of Islam that I encountered in the Muslims hanging on to life in a depleted and distressed Sarajevo, a part of that hopeful and mystical Islam found in Rumi. And I also saw the embattled, angry, aggrieved and trapped face of Islam in other parts of the Balkans, among those who were fighters, or who had fought.

Again, at the turn of the millennium, I found myself again in a Muslim country in the midst of war. Now in Kosovo, just as in Bosnia, I encountered an Islam that was under siege. But, working with a group of about 60 teenagers, half of whom were Serbian and half of whom were Kosovar Muslims, I also saw again a hopeful and romantic Islam. And in the 30 or so young Serbs, I saw a complete unwillingness to conform to the received message of conflict that had spread across Kosovo. These young people had grown up together, as neighbors and schoolmates, and now chain link and barbed wire ran down whole blocks of their town and they were expected to be somehow in conflict. This was not a condition they were willing to accept and all were committed to use the arts as a way to combat an adult-imposed reality. Their work together was not without conflict, of course, and the same bigotry that we know here in the United States along lines of race are present, and have been, there too.

Within months of my return from Kosovo, and in the midst of making plans to return for a second arts-based conflict camp, it would be September 11, 2001. The funding for the second and subsequent Kosovo youth projects vanished immediately. All talk of extending our success ceased. The world's attention regarding Islam shifted instantly and the rhetoric escalated and reverberated in every corner of life. Suddenly, everyone believed they could see "Islam," reified and in action. Public discourse, up to then primarily devoid of Islam except in relation to Israeli-Palestinian issues when at all, now filtered every conceivable discourse through a lens of Islamic

scrutiny.

All of these experiences, taken together, frame my present day understanding of Islam. Beyond framing that understanding, it also colors it. My own positionality toward Islam and Muslims is absent any direct negative experiences. I am present in this research in the sense that I have posed the question “What does Islam look like here, and here?” and I am present in this research in that I have identified the things I will try to observe and opened a pathway to things that I might observe.

Categorical and Thematic Coding

The coding unit(s) considered during emergent coding of interactive concepts related to plot/story characteristics and character characteristics.

While it is relatively easy to identify a story as being set in one time period or another, or to classify a conflict as taking place at a school or at home, the specific content of that story or conflict, in relation to other stories and conflicts, is a matter of emergent categories. It is these categories and themes from the text that provide the context through which each is related to the others, intertextually. And it is the process of open molar coding to observe, categorize, reduce, remove, add or otherwise organize these abstract concepts.

I am interested here in developing a dense description of the most salient themes identified throughout these books, and then to assess whether those themes are similar or different across two distinct periods of time. The process of constant comparison between emergent categories will isolate those that have substantive resonance.

4.6 Data Storage: Proprietary Database and User Interface

In order to analyze the data captured from the texts under scrutiny, and as already discussed, it was important to weave together two kinds of related data: that collected from *a priori* coding and that developed through interactive theme development. It was equally important to store this

captured data in a way that allowed for both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis and reporting. No existing off-the-shelf tool was ideally suited to this hybrid approach. Computer-aided qualitative data analysis (CAQD) is not new, but as of this writing, and in my opinion, no single tool meets the needs of the fluid process of qualitative research while at the same time allowing the construction of a highly structured user interface (UI) to assist and guide the coding of texts. To address that lack, it was decided to construct a database using generic desktop database software and to build a UI on top of that database that perfectly suited the specific capture of manifest *a priori* data and that provided a way to make open coding more manageable.

Within the data framework, each book title included in the sampling frame is represented by one database record, referred to here as the Permanent Data Record (PDR). It is important to distinguish between “a book” and “a book’s PDR.” The PDR for each book holds the data from a variety of data tables, all linked to a single publication instance (recall that a book published in multiple editions is represented only once in the sampling frame). The PDR user interface presents the researcher/user with a means to add to and access stored data across all three coding units (bibliographic, story/plot, character).

The PDR’s user interface (UI) is where the researcher works when coding a text or when searching for and working with book records and data. The UI exposes menu items, check boxes, form fields and other interface elements for the selection of *a priori* variable values as well as for the “free coding” or “emergent coding” that qualitative content analysis entails.

The complete list of those manifest qualities already detailed were executed into a computer screen UI that included checkboxes, value list menus and other UI devices that allowed consistent and systematic data collection for those values. The UI coding screen (the coding

instrument) for a book visually divides the coding process by level of coding unit (Bibliographic, Story/Plot, Character). A full view of the screen UI is shown as three separate images in Appendix B: Figures, as Figures 1, 2 and 3. An additional figure, Figure 4, shows the uncluttered working user interface for coding. This separation into images is merely a formatting convenience for this document as they all appear in the same screen view inside the database. One of the advantages of electronic, on-screen, coding instrument development is the visual/graphical adaptability of the screen space used. Just like a web site may have a version designed for desktop computer viewing as well as an alternative visual format suitable for a mobile phone with a small screen, each of which uses the same content but simply formats it differently, on-screen instrument development allowed the rapid formatting of un-cluttered small-screen views for use on a laptop computer when coding directly in the field (as at a library or bookstore). Simply put, one single combined database can have many different visual interfaces, each designed for a particular screen size or usage condition, or isolating and displaying only a specific set of on-screen “form fields” allowing to focus on just one level of coding unit at a time, or to move freely between structured *a priori* coding and more open text-based thematic coding. As you can see from Figure 4, which aggregates the exact same data shown in Figures 1 through 3, all of the user interface elements except the data collection fields are removed, leaving a solid, clean electronic coding instrument. For managing data the more fully featured screens were useful, but the stripped-down screens provided focus while coding.

Chapter 5: Results and Discussion of Themes

Given that this work includes both quantitative and qualitative examination, the reporting of findings will first cover those *a priori* (manifest) quantified concepts, in the typical manner of quantitative reporting, and then will move on to address emergent (latent) concepts, including how those relate to the quantitative differences observed. This reporting of “results” for the qualitative component of this project incorporates the discussion of the quantitative analysis, using a narrative style (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995) and textual examples from the books themselves.

5.1 *A Priori Concepts*

Descriptive analysis of the quantitative data showed that, while there are proportional differences of qualitative note, there are no statistically significant differences (by Mann-Whitney U test) on any of the *a priori* concepts between the two time periods. Descriptive data are reported for each of the concepts along with results from a Mann-Whitney U test of nominal change, comparing 1990-2000 to 2002-2010 differences on each of the concepts.

From the 1990-2000 time period 21 books were coded and from the 2002-2010 time period 38 books were coded, for a total of 59 books. (See Appendix A for a full list of the titles.) To reduce potential number fatigue, I will generally refer to 1990-2000 as “the earlier time period” and 2002-2010 as “the later time period.”

5.1.1 *Bibliographic Coding Unit*

Publisher: The relative frequency of country of publication for each of the time periods is shown in Table 4. The predominant countries of publication of the books analyzed were the United States (28 books) and the United Kingdom (18 books), a combined 78% of the books. Egypt was the country of publication of 7 books, another 12%, with Pakistan (2), Canada (1),

India (2) comprising another 9%, and with 1 book where the geographic location of the publisher could not be determined. Those rankings remained the same regarding the United States, United Kingdom and Egypt across both time periods. None of the books in the later time period were published in Pakistan or Canada. From the United States there were 17 books (45%) published in the later time period, from the United Kingdom there were 14 (37%), from Egypt 6 (16%) and from India another 1 (3%). Figure 5, in Appendix B: Figures, shows graphically the relative proportion of sampled books published by country of publication over both time periods. It is clear that majority Christian and Caucasian countries (the United States and the United Kingdom) are the largest producers of these children's books.

Table 4: Frequency of Country of Publication of Sampled Books by Time Period

Country	Books in Time Period		Total Books
	1990-2000	2002-2010	
United States	11	17	28
United Kingdom	4	14	18
Egypt	1	6	7
Pakistan	2	0	2
Canada	1	0	1
India	1	1	2
Unknown	1	0	1
<i>Total</i>	21	38	59

5.1.2 *Story/Plot Coding Unit*

Genre: Across all pre-defined values for Genre (recall Table 2), with 12 category labels, the counts on each category were very low. Counts on those 12 categories are reported for the combined totals, and then counts on a reduced number of categories are reported by time period. Overall, there were 6 fables, 1 fairy tale, 3 fantasies, 10 works of fiction, 7 works of folklore, 2 retellings of legends, 3 works of realistic fiction, 13 narrative non-fictions, 5 of poetry or verse, and 9 non-fiction works.

When fables, fairy tales, fantasies, fiction, folklore, legend, realistic fiction and poetry or verse are combined into a collective “fiction” group, and the two specific types of non-fiction are grouped, overall 63% (37) of all books were works of fiction or verse and 37% (22) were non-fiction. In the earlier time period 38% of works were non-fiction and 62% were fiction or verse. In the later time period, 37% of works were non-fiction and 63% were fiction or verse. A Mann-Whitney comparison of the time periods on genre found no significant change ($U=394.0$, *ns*).

Time Epoch: Across both time periods there were 15 books (25%) that were set in an “Ancient” setting, 34 in a “Contemporary” setting (58%), and 10 in either a “Timeless” or “Indeterminate” setting (17%). From the 1990-2000 period, 29% (6) were set in an ancient time, 52% (11) in a contemporary setting, and 19% (4) in an indeterminate time setting. From the 2002-2010 period, 24% (9) were set in an ancient time, 61% (23) in a contemporary setting, 3% (1) in a timeless setting and 13% (5) in an indeterminate time setting. A Mann-Whitney comparison indicated no significant change in the “time epoch” of a story’s setting across the two publishing periods ($U=394.5$, *ns*).

Story Location Setting (Macro): For the pre-defined value lists for the plot or story’s primary setting (Rural, Urban, Non-Specific, Indeterminate), over both time periods, 46% (27) of the

books were set in a rural locale, 27% (16) were in an urban locale, 25% (15) were a non-specific locale or many locales, and 2% (1) was indeterminate as to setting (that is, there were not enough textual or contextual clues to make a distinction.)

Comparing the two periods, in the earlier period of the 1990s, 9 books (43%) were rural, 33% (7) were urban, 19% (4) were non-specific, and 2% (1) were indeterminate. In the later period, 18 books (47%) were rural, 9 (24%) were urban, 11 (29%) were non-specific, and none were indeterminate. A Mann-Whitney U comparison of the time periods indicated no significant difference on story location setting ($U=394.5$, *ns*).

Story Location Setting (Micro): A great majority of books (43 of 59, or 73%) had no additional relevant story location beyond their macro (rural/urban) distinction, leaving 4 books (7%) that were set at the neighborhood level and 12 books (20%) that were set at home. Comparing time periods, and disregarding the large proportions that had no specific “micro” locale, 10% (2 books) were set at the neighborhood level and 10% (2) in the home. There was no significant difference between the time periods regarding a story’s specific social setting (Mann-Whitney $U=342.0$, *ns*).

Conflict Type: Recording the plot or story’s central conflict, if it had one, with the labels “Self vs Self”, “Self vs Other”, “Self vs Nature” or “No Conflict” showed that, across both time periods, 59% (35) of the 59 books had no discernible conflict (for example, a non-fiction work or a primary reader or picture book), 10% (6) had a ‘self vs self’ conflict (for example, being afraid of the dark), 9% (5) had conflict involving another, and 22% (13) involved a ‘self vs nature’ conflict (for example, getting lost in a crowd).

Within the time period of the 1990s, 52% (11) had no conflict, 19% (4) involved a conflict with some aspect of the self, 10% (2) involved conflict with another, and 19% (4) were a general

‘self vs nature’ conflict type. Within the later time period, 63% (24) of the books had no conflict, 5% (2) were of type ‘self vs self’, 8% (3) involved conflict with another, and 24% (9) were of a general ‘self vs nature’ conflict type. Mann-Whitney results ($U=377.0$, *ns*) found no significant difference between the time periods regarding a book’s conflict type.

Conflict Social Context: Examining the social context of the story’s main conflict, on the categories “family”, “peer” and “secular v religious” revealed that, overall, only 3 books (5%) were in a secular versus religious context (1 in the earlier time period and 2 in the later). Additionally, only 3 books involved a family conflict context (2 in the earlier period and 1 in the later) and only 3 had stories of a conflict with a peer or other person (1 in the earlier period and 2 in the later). Mann-Whitney results indicated that neither the secular versus religious context ($U=397$, *ns*), the family context ($U=371.5$, *ns*), nor the peer ($U=397$, *ns*) conflict context were significantly different across time periods.

Conflict Resolution: Recall that a large proportion of books had no discernible conflict (above). Within the earlier time period, of all books, 5 had their conflict resolved (24%), 1 did not (5%) and the remaining 15 had no conflict to resolve (71%). Within the later time period, 16 books had resolution to the conflict (42%) and the remaining 22 books had no conflict to resolve (58%). Comparing within the category of having a conflict resolved (21 books), those 5 that were in the earlier time period are 24% and those 16 from the later time period are 76%. Mann-Whitney results ($U=353.0$, *ns*) indicate that there is no discernible difference between the two time periods regarding conflict resolution outcomes for the main or title character.

Religious Practice: As discussed, there were two qualities of religious practice depiction that were addressed: direct religious practice or training (as when the title or main character engages in prayer or is instructed directly in the story) and religious practice as context (as when a story is

set in the context of a religious event, like a holiday). Of course, a book or story need have neither.

Over both the time periods, 56% (33) books contained direct religious practice or training and the remaining 44% (26) did not. Within the earlier period 13 books of 21 (62%) had direct religious practice or training while within the later period 20 books of 38 (53%) had the same.

Regarding merely being set in a religious practice context, over both time periods, 70% (41) of the 59 books had stories that took place in an overt religious practice context. Within the earlier period 14 books (67%), and within the later period 27 books (71%), had a religious practice context.

A Mann-Whitney comparison indicated that there were no significant differences between the two time periods regarding the main or title character engaging in direct religious practice or training ($U=362.0$, *ns*) or regarding whether or not the story took place in the context of religious practice ($U=381.5$, *ns*).

Religious Holiday or Event: Over both time periods, 24% of the books (14) involved an Islamic holiday or event, always Ramadan, Eid-ul-Fitr or the Islamic pilgrimage Hajj. Within the first time period, 29% involved or were about one of these and within the second time period 21% did so. A Mann-Whitney test indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between the time periods regarding religious holidays and events ($U=369.0$, *ns*).

5.1.3 Character Coding Unit

Age: Over all of the books in both time periods, 27% (16) had children as main characters versus 73% featuring adult main characters (43) and these proportions are generally the same within time periods, with 29% of the books (6) in the earlier time period featuring a child as a main character and 26% of the books (10) in the later time period reflecting the same. A Mann-

Whitney U confirms that there is no difference between periods regarding the child/adult status of the main character ($U=374.0$, *ns*).

Cultural Designator: As there were no statistically significant differences between periods regarding the ethnicity or cultural designation of the main character using the relatively large number of categories (9, as listed in Table 3) ($U=148.0$, *ns*), this was collapsed into three categories, isolating those that were coded “multicultural”, those that were coded “white” (whether American or European) and those others (African, African-American, Middle East, Asia). Although still not statistically significant by way of a Mann-Whitney test ($U=372.0$, *ns*), 81% of books across both time periods featured main characters that were in this combined “others” group (30) versus 11% that were coded white (4) and 8% that were coded multicultural (3).

Character Object Gender: Across both time periods, of 59 books coded the plurality of books had either a male human (39%) main character or were not character-based and therefore had no central character (34%), leaving 17% with female human main characters, 9% that were tied on gender (as when a story featured a boy/girl pair, usually of siblings) and 2% (1 book) that had a main character that was indeterminate on gender. Within the earlier time period 9.5% (2) had human female main characters, 48% (10) were male, 33% (7) where gender wasn't applicable, and 9.5% (2) that were tied on gender, over 21 books in the period. Within the later time period, 21% of the books had female main characters, 34% had male, 3% (1 book) where the gender was indeterminate, and 8% where the gender was split between the main characters, over 38 books in the period. A Mann-Whitney test indicated that, despite these proportional differences, there was no evidence that gendering of the main character differed significantly between the time periods ($U=372.5$, *ns*).

5.2 *Emergent Thematic Concepts*

Given that, on quantitative measures, there were no statistically noticeable differences on the manifest (*a priori*) concepts, the qualitative differences are best understood as being qualities of nuance across time. There is evidence that, among these books, there are indeed differences on several qualities that are able to be teased out with finer distinction among those concepts and to better understand what is reflected in the proportional differences between comparative time periods.

The presentation of these thematic concepts is constrained by the textual format of this manuscript and its organizational structure, with sub-headings for coding unit and further breakdown by concept. That is to say, the presentation of these findings in this manner suggests that they are derived, that they operate, or that they are somehow fully separable from one another and from the original text itself. These are interconnected qualities of literary works, all operating, as discussed in the beginning, at a textual, contextual and inter-textual level. They inform, and are informed by, each other and their original context. The structure provided to organize and communicate them follows the same presentation as in other chapters of this manuscript. Appendix A contains a list of all 59 books.

5.2.1 *Story/Plot Coding Unit*

Analysis of the 59 Islamic-themed children's books at the story/plot level produced eight categories of nuanced changes observed within this set of books. A category, recall, is a related and substantive grouping of coded examples of a particular phenomenon. Three of these categories are related to Genre, one is related to Time Epoch and Setting, and two are related to Conflict.

5.2.1.1 Genre

Three themes were developed related to Genre, helping to isolate particular qualities of style and presentation that further specify these books and, most especially, helping to situate a book within a much larger shared culture. Creative works of fiction, most particularly, engage the reader not only in the story of the fiction, but also engage the reader in a dialogue with other works, references, tones and styles of other cultural texts.

Linguistic Humor as Cultural Connection

The complexity of humor is built, assuredly, upon cultural understanding of what is funny. Equally assuredly, then, these understandings may be more or less different across cultural backgrounds. In addition to what may “look” funny there is the kind of humor based on “sounding” funny, and so we may see an image with some text and be without facility to process the text while still finding the humor. That interplay between visual and linguistic humor, as an aspect of fictional genres, is different in the two time periods, and emerges more clearly in the books published from 2002 to 2010.

While most of the fictions were populated with male characters, two early works feature a mouse with a funny name, Fasfoose Mouse (*The Hajj Adventure of Jamila and Fasfoose Mouse, 1994*). Fasfoose is the companion of Jamila, an early 1990s character who is a female and has her own adventures with the mouse. The linguistic humor of the phrase “fasfoose mouse” is partly derived from the combination of an Arabic-sounding name and the English word mouse, but the humor is not contingent on that juxtaposition. Linguistic humor is a common feature of language in general, but the interplay of rich vowel and consonant sounds produces humor for reader and listener alike, as Fasfoose Mouse has brothers named “Taktook” and “Nafnoof.”

This pleasure with sounds is evidenced again in the earlier period’s *Magid Fasts for*

Ramadan (1996), where the title character Magid attempts to remember the words to a song, and sings “wahawi ya wahawi”, a non-sense phrase like we might use in English when we know the tune but sing “tra la la la la.” Again this turn of phrase is rooted in the same place across cultures, with a similarly humorous effect. Indeed, the information is important enough to include in a short Arabic glossary at the end of the book.

Also from this earlier period the story “Sabse Oongli and Og” in *Finders Keepers and Other Stories (1998)* sound is used, but it is combined with a meaning-derived humor. Here the cultural context of spoken language is important and so the reader learns (through a page note by the author) that the funny sounding “sabse oongli” means “best finger” in Urdu, a reference to the forefinger one holds up when praying. The other boys turn this into a mean-spirited humor as an insult to tease and bully Hasan. The “inside” joke of that teasing phrase is meant to make fun of Hasan for being too pious for his fellow Muslim classmates. Add to that linguistic humor the character of “Og”, an over-sized and awkward boy who moves around and grunts a bit like a troll, and he too is teased verbally by his classmates.

These comparative linguistic humors — one derived from sound and one derived from context — help to form an undercurrent of Muslim humor that derives in part from the generally multi-lingual nature of that religion, with Arabic, at least in short phrases and Quranic reading, being shared by many otherwise language-diverse cultural groups.

In that time period from 2002 to 2010, the instances of humor were greater but they were of a wholly other type. In these examples, the humor is socially and situationally derived rather than rooted in nuanced linguistic play or tropes of language. In *The Silly Chicken (2005)* the humor is wholly derived from gullibility in this retelling of the story that many of us learn as children in which an anthropomorphized chicken, Henny Penny, makes a wild claim about apocalypse. In

the English, Henny Penny is female while the silly chicken here is a male. Not only does the humor of the silly chicken derive from the presence of a talking chicken — a humor made broader with wild and kinetic illustrations — but it also derives from the behavior of those who believe the apocalyptic chicken. Exactly contrary to shared linguistic understanding, the people who live in the village are annoyed that they can not understand the chicken’s incessant “tuck-tuck-tuck” and so one hilariously drawn villager decides to learn to speak “chicken”, which he does but can only say “tuck-tuck-tuck” and still no one knows the meaning. He then sets on the task of teaching the chicken to speak the language of the village and that succeeds, to the astonishment of all who learn that the chicken is proclaiming the end of the world.

Published in 2007, *Nabeel’s New Pants: An Eid Tale* plays on yet another facet of communication for humorous effect. In this case, the humor also derives from non-communication when the shoemaker Nabeel buys a pair of pants that are too long for his legs. The festival of Eid-ul-Fitr is the next day and as Nabeel delivers wonderful gifts that he’s bought for his family, he is unable to get his mother, his wife or his sister to cut and hem them (they are all too busy cooking their best dishes for the party). He decides to cut them himself and makes a success of it and puts his pants away for tomorrow. Having their own success with the cooking, each woman in turn concludes that Nabeel is so kind and the Eid gifts so lovely that they shouldn’t have refused to help and so while Nabeel is out they each, alone, cut and hem his pants. As the next day breaks, on the morning of Eid, Nabeel and the family don their new clothes and, much to everyone’s surprise and laughter, Nabeel’s new pants come up to his knees. The family shares a laugh and the reader can happily conclude that communicating with each other is important.

Language-based humor in these examples derives from both internal and external sources

and can derive through the humor of “getting” the language, as in the early period examples, or through the “not getting” of language, as in the later period’s humor of misunderstanding. In both cases, the linguistic humor provides a means of understanding and practicing that part of their identity that includes Islam, while non-Muslim children enjoy the same visual and linguistic humors from within their own cultural and linguistic context.

Cultural Accessibility Through Glossaria

It is not only humor that requires a shared language. The practice of Islam itself requires the practitioner to engage across a particular culture and language in ways that require exposure to some part of the Arabic language. A large number of these children’s books, all in English, include a glossary that instructs and engages the reader and also offers a resource to parents and other adults who assist young children in building their reading skills. Not only are there customary greetings and phrases that we share with others in our own cultural sphere, but young Muslims must also acquire a second Arabic-based set of phrases.

The emphasis on reading skills for young children toward language development is executed frequently through Islamic-themed early readers, like *Alhamdulillah: Praise be to Allah (1994)*, *We Are Muslim: Alhamdulillah (1994)*, *Assalamu Alaykum (2009)*, and *What do we say? (2010)*. These readers function as “phrase books” but a distinction between these works in the different time periods is in the context in which the language skills are demonstrated. In the earlier time period examples, the focus is on internally directed best practices, like how to worship (linguistically) and to praise Allah. The later time period examples illustrate a different kind of focus in the context of these early reader phrase books, toward externally directed best practices, like how to properly greet another person or to say good bye or that you like something. That is, in the early reader examples from the first time period we see a skill-based teaching that uses

textual exemplars that are about the relation of the Self to Allah. In the later two books noted, the exemplars depicted are about the relation of the Self to Others, and how to engage them in greetings and goodbyes.

Documentarian Non-Fiction to Clarify Facts

Just as there is not one kind of fiction, neither is there one kind of non-fiction. The two time periods differ with respect to the non-fictions they produced, with a contemporary trend toward photographic factual presentation and documentation of aspects of Islamic practice and the daily life associated with being a practicing Muslim. From historical and geographic non-fictions in the early time period, the trend among these cases is for raw data through photographs and other information-based visuals.

The non-fiction of the early time period essentially focuses on historical events and geographic places of importance to the Islamic diaspora. The book *I Love al-Madinah al-Munawarah (1993)* is a local geography of Madinah (Medina) and although it does use some photo exposition, the primary goal is to document “place.” The audience is clearly Muslims and the non-fictions supplement their historical knowledge of the development of their religion.

In the more contemporary time period the non-fiction focus is almost exclusively devoted to photographic documentation of daily life and ritual associated with Islamic practice. That is, the primary goal is to document “Islam” and to show through photos the relation of those practices to each other and to the reader. The reader for these books appears to be the non-Muslim more so than the Muslim. A spate of non-fiction photo-documented children’s books are to be found in the time period from 2002-2010, where even the titles of works seem very un-childlike in some cases, as in *Islam: Discover the Faith, Culture and History that Shaped the Modern Islamic World (2010)*; *World of Islam Series: Islam in America (2010)*; and *Holidays Around the World:*

Celebrate Ramadan and Eid-ul-Fitr (2004). Not only do these titles convey the almost encyclopedic nature of their content, they seem especially geared toward “the rest of us” and toward separating unfounded knowledge from factual information.

5.2.1.2 *Time Epoch and Setting*

Although the analytic concepts of time epoch and story setting were quantitatively isolated within the Story/Plot coding unit, they are conceptually related in practice in a much more nuanced way. Further, they relate back to the thematic variation on Genre just discussed. One theme emerged here, linking the concepts of time setting and physical location.

Rural = Ancient = Good

Some historical geographies that were at one time rural now constitute an urban space. The once isolated Pyramids of Giza are now bypassed by highway; the urban remains of Rome are only more urban today. The fixed historical geography of the origins of Islam and the primacy of place within its practice (making a Hajj to the fixed geography of Makkah, for example) contrast with the present reality of those same fixed geographies. And outside the space of actual geographies, if we go backward in a mytho-chronology and follow the Islamic story of creation to just after its origins, we find the exemplar for nature that is shared by all Abrahmic faiths: the Garden of Paradise. In *Iblis (1994)* it is this garden where “for 500 years Adam and Eve lived in paradise, and for 500 years Iblis, the great Satan, had been trying to get in.”

In these children’s books, those stories from the earliest decade, 1990-2000, reflect a rural nostalgia by referencing these places as they were, or by referencing even mytho-ancient places, as in *Iblis*. Books like *The Battles of the Prophet Muhammad (1997)* and *The Travels of Ibn Battuta (1995)* place children in rural desert landscape where nature itself becomes an obstacle of conflict, either through exposure to “the elements” or because of great distance. Ibn Battuta, as a

young boy, travels from Arabia to Indo-China, overcoming great obstacles of nature that are minimalized in the context of his spreading of Islam. The places he visited are reimagined as embued spaces, worth protecting in a particular form that may be incompatible with their present-day reality. When Muhammad is in Mecca, it is a rural space that he tames and claims. But when Jamila leaves her rurally reminiscent (and Fasfoose Mouse-friendly) home in America to visit Mecca in *The Hajj Adventures of Fasfoose Mouse (1994)*, her primary conflict is that she is lost in pulsing throngs of thousands of people, “Pilgrims in front of her, pilgrims behind, pilgrims on her right, pilgrims on her left, walking, marching, moving, moving, moving.” The rural idyllic of 6th Century Mecca is replaced by an urban throng that threatens to squash Jamila and her mouse. And yet it is, with Jamila and her family, that the urban reality of a modern-day Mecca is ultimately cleansed of its urban danger and the mytho-rural space is honored as holy when, after reuniting with her parents, Fasfoose mouse, Jamila and her family “again walked seven times between Safa and Marwa, where Hajar had searched for water for her child, and where Zamzam had sprung.” (Zamzam is the name of the water that flows from a desert spring and from which modern-day pilgrims also drink, named from the mythical hidden river Zam.)

In *Ali and the Spider (2000)*, the title character is afraid of nature and particularly of spiders. By situating Ali’s conflict within creation mythology, thereby equating that which is god-made as god-like, those around him are able to help him build a “rural = ancient = good” model to experience nature. Through being taught and accepting that Allah made nature and that it is therefore not to be feared, Ali is able to engage and expand his ecological interests when he overcomes his fears.

The children’s books from the 1990-2000 time period eschew or disregard urban settings and situate rural as good, no matter the inherent conflicts of nature (a snake, a spider, even a mass

crowd), by recreating mytho-rural spaces through fixing them far back in time or by re-asserting and blessing their once-rural qualities (a disappeared river).

Those children's books from the later time period are more fluid and comfortable with rural and urban co-existence while still maintaining a "rural = good" paradigm. A significant number of books from this time period avoid the complexities of modern urbanism by situating their main characters in ruralized urban spaces, like large cities that are still safe for children to navigate alone, or by avoiding urbanism altogether and embracing fables, which have a distinct quality of always seeming rural, despite the actual environs. In *The Old Woman and the Eagle* (2002), the city in which the "old woman" lives, with its high roofs and many houses, functions as a metaphor for herself, as she lures and traps a great eagle and then proceeds to make him more compatible with her home by cutting his sharp talons and to make him more beautiful by cutting the feathers from the top of his head. She is unable to retain her control of the eagle, however, and it makes its way from her, back to nature.

In *The Boy Without a Name* (2007), Benaam (the nameless) is in search of a name and engages in travels around the city with his friend Anwar. They move about the urban space, free from any of the real dangers that an urban reader might experience, and are engaged in a search for a Wise Man, who can command even the nature of names. Urban reality has the potential to make us all Benaam's — without a name — only able to solve problems with the assistance of magic boxes, filled with flying sprites, names and dreams. Urban is made rural is made good.

In *The Man With Bad Manners* (2006) a very urban group of hip New Yorkers is placed in a mytho-rural village where "everyone who had a house in the village also had a field" and they all seem to be self-sustained vegetarians. The peace of the village is disrupted by the Man with Bad Manners, who refuses any of the rural niceties of politeness and pastoral peace and opts for a

truly urban style more like Archie Bunker. When he takes a short trip out of town, everyone in the village agrees to rearrange his garden, re-paint his house, rearrange all of his belongs and pretend he's not from that village. The collectively agreed solution works — “So, the Man With Bad Manners promised again to change his ways. [...] And then the people changed everything back for him” — and the peaceful pastoral rurality of this decidedly urban lot is restored.

Children's books from the later time period do not engage the rural/urban dichotomy through the direct use of ancient spaces, reinforcing their central role in Islam and their goodness. Rather, they resolve rural/urban tension and conflict by shifting genre to fable and fantasy, where the tensions are played out metaphorically. Yet, in both cases, but through different mechanisms, they achieve a “rural = ancient = good” equation.

5.2.1.3 Conflict

The central conflicts of these stories — the types of conflict, the actors involved, the resources available for its resolution — reflect changes across the time periods. From conflicts that deal with external circumstances, which are predominant (but not singular) in the time period from 1990-2000, books from the 2002-2010 time period reflect a focus on internal conflict related to adherence to religious values.

Self-Identity is Ascendant

Contemporary works feature literary conflicts of the type “Self vs Self”, where it is the character or condition of the character that is the source of the conflict. While both time periods had conflicts of each type in numbers that were, overall, even, there are subtle shifts toward presenting, and resolving, conflicts of self-identity that occur in the later time period. The subtlety plays itself out in that, in some cases in the later time period where the direct conflict is interpersonal, the conflict resolution comes through reframing that conflict as one of personal

identity, a feature not found in any of the earlier works.

In *Neem the Half Boy* (2007), the common children's story trope of a Queen and apple (a harkening to Eve and Iblis) come together in a story where the Queen who wants a son seeks the counsel of a magician and wise man but she does not follow through on his directions. When she is told to eat a particular apple in order to produce a son, she becomes distracted and eats only half and so "the boy she had was a half-boy" who had one of each limb and one eye and ear. As the boy grows, he wishes to become whole and sets out to find a way to become so. His quest is ultimately successful and he is made whole. This reflects the central nature of the conflict in *The Boy Without a Name* (2007), as discussed, where personal identity is the ultimate goal of the character.

In much the same way, a sick and bed-ridden Helena is made whole in *Helena's Voyage* (2008), when an un-nameable angel visits her bed and takes her on a journey to four remote lands. "When they reached the first port, she beheld an ancient city graced by magnificent...synagogues" and there is given a "glimmering gold Star of David" before the angel takes her to another port, where she sees "a church steeple on every corner" and is ultimately given a golden cross. At the third port Helena sees "the slender minarets of splendid mosques" and is given a golden crescent moon. Upon arriving at the fourth far-off land, Helena is saddened to see "the remains of a barn, an overturned oxcart, and a neglected garden" on the landscape. Visual images of pixelated artwork show Helena and the angel entering an urban building smoking and crumbled, as if from a battle. Inside they find a small boy who "was very thin and open sores covered his body." Through parental-like guidance from the angel, Helena gives the three gold pendants to the boy, who is miraculously healed and made whole. No mention is ever made of Helena's own healing (recall that she was sickly and bed-ridden). The

boy's wholeness is made possible by Helena, who may or may not herself have received repair through the miracle.

In *My Name is Bilal* (2005), the title character and his sister start a new school. He is easily able to appear like the others in his school, but his sister wears a hijab and so becomes the target of persecution from bullies. To hide his Islamic faith, he pretends that his name is Bill. As the bullying becomes more cruel, Bilal's identity as a Muslim is learned by one of his teachers who gives him a book about the historical Bilal ibn Rabah, a contemporary of Muhammad and the first to make the Muslim call to prayer. The Bilal of our story reads and dreams of the violent torture that Bilal Rabah endured and he gains the courage to stand up for his sister and to declare that "My name is Billal", becoming whole and finding his identity.

The subtle shift, even underlying Self vs Other conflict, in the second time period, is toward wholeness and control of social identity both as it relates to other kinds of conflict in our lives, but also as it relates to religious ideology and wholeness. While these shifts are neither radical nor blatant, constant comparative analysis reveals this shift to be of note.

5.2.2 Character Coding Unit

At the level of the character coding unit, and without re-stating those emergent categories from the story and plot level that connect to character, only one salient category emerged. This is related to the gendering of stories, but connects itself directly to the conflict type and genre themes that I've just discussed. We know that there were no overly discernible differences in the relative representation of gender across the time periods. However, by examining the gendered stories in relation to the emergent themes related to genre and time epoch of the story, these themes interconnect to produce a qualitative difference in the kinds of stories that feature females and the kinds that feature males as their central characters.

Self-Identity is for Boys, Girls

Those self-identity tales previously recounted have the common feature of male protagonists, with the exception of *Helena's Voyage* (2008). Even in that story, a male angel is the guide and only the male child with open wounds is healed explicitly. When it comes to notions of self-identity for females, that identity is bound closely to the provision of something to someone else — to caretaking.

In the book *Silly Chicken* (2005), (and not to be confused with the very different *The Silly Chicken* (2005), which is the “Henny Penny” re-telling previously discussed), a young girl (whose name I purposefully do not reveal just yet) is desperate for her grandmother’s attention. Instead, her grandmother, Ami, is consumed with caring for a chicken. The young girl’s thoughts open the illustrated picture book with sparse text and we read, “Ami loves her hen better than me. She calls her Bibi. I call her silly.” The young girl’s own identity in her family seems, to her, to be subsumed by the attention given to this nothing-special chicken. It cannot even manage to lay an egg, which it drops while standing and so the egg breaks. After much coddling and the moving of the chicken inside, the young girl is resolved to be without her grandmother’s attention. Finally, the chicken manages to lay a single egg, which is set aside, but then the chicken disappears and can not be found. At first considered the culprit, the young girl professes her innocence and after some time, the matter is dropped but her Ami still sulks and is not available to the young girl. After some time, a noise is heard and it is discovered that the single egg, forgotten in a cupboard amidst the search for Bibi, has hatched a chick. It is only at the end of the book, when the noise is heard, that the young girl’s name, Rani, is called. Upon finding the chick, Rani immediately emulates her grandmother and tends the chick, whom she names Bibi Ki Buchi, “It means Bibi’s child,” and then the story concludes with “Ami says I love Buchi

even more than I love her, but that's just silly." The story seems, on its surface, to be a story with a central female main character, and one in which the conflict is resolved successfully by her. However, the young girl character's name, Rani, is starkly withheld until the last pages of the book and only at the point where she becomes the caretaker of a chicken and assumes the role of her grandmother. Her self-identity, as Rani by name to the reader and as integrated into her family, is bound to the identity of others, Buchi the chicken, just as Helena's identity is bound to the boy Abraham in the squalid urban conditions.

In *Fatima the Spinner and the Tent* (2006), Fatima the spinner is told by her merchant father that it is time for her to find a husband and so she accompanies him on a cloth trading journey on a large ship. The ship is wrecked in a storm and only Fatima survives, washed up on a shore. She is enslaved with others and is forced to work as a rope maker. After some time, Fatima is purchased by a "kinder" ship mast builder and she comes to work closely with him and his family, making and selling masts for ships. Sailing on one such ship, again Fatima is wrecked at sea and washes up on the shores of China. During this time, the Emperor of China desperately wants a tent as he has seen in other places, but no one has the technical skill to make a tent. In keeping with local tradition, which dictates that strangers to the land are to be brought, on one day per year, to the Emperor because it has been said that a strange woman would come to the land and that she would build a tent. As required, Fatima is brought before the Emperor and, in quite the spirit of a survivor of two shipwrecks and enslavement, Fatima says that she can try to make a tent for the Emperor.

From her skills as a weaver, she is able to produce tough canvas. From her skills learned at rope-making during her first enslavement, she is able to make the ropes needed. And from the skills she learned in her second enslavement (from which she was ultimately freed by the owner

prior to her journey that landed her in China) she is able to make a strong wooden mast to serve as the tent's central pole. Fatima makes a grand tent that is adored by the Emperor, who grants her a wish. And here is where the story connects with the emergent theme of self-identity. Fatima "chose to settle in China, where she married a handsome prince, and where she remained in happiness, surrounded by her children, until the end of her days." We do not, of course, as the reader, begrudge Fatima her family and her happiness. Indeed, as reader we are happy to have Fatima safe. But the resolution for Fatima comes only when she "settles" in China, marries and has children. From Fatima's father's announcement that she should marry, her course is laid. Despite conflicts with nature, with others who enslave and hit her, with those who are kind but still slave masters, and with Fatima's considerable skills learned throughout her years, her self-identity is bound intricately with the identity of others and the provision of something, whether that be service to the Emperor or by becoming a wife and mother.

The nature of conflict functioning in a literary way reveals the social relationships at work in that conflict. In the case of young females in these stories, even when they meet the measure of being a main character, or the main character, they are situated differently in relation to male characters when the conflict involves a component of self-identity.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Considerations

Having opened this manuscript with a short reflection on the nature of Self, it is fitting to turn to the Self again as we close. This curious concept is, as described, a social construction. As such, it is both an individual and a shared quality. That is, there is no monolithic self that is shared by all members of this group or of that one, but there are clearly qualities and aspects of social life that are indeed shared by many. These published books, serving purposes as varied as building English-language reading skills, building bilingual Arabic skills as required to practice Islam, entertaining young children, provoking children to think within an established value system, encouraging factual understanding of a religious group that is spread across many distinct cultures, and providing an ongoing contextualization of Islam within history, all act to reinforce a Muslim identity by setting that identity in contrast to others and to history.

In response to the question “What is the depiction of the Muslim?” in these books, the overwhelming depiction, both before and after 2001, is generally one of a male, engaged in a variety of conflicts, including those with the self, common to children in their primary years, set in the most remote and rural locations, devoid of modernity and urbanism. A child-like grounding in fiction and fable paints the Muslim in a desertified landscape, complete with camels, turbans and hijabs. Women are overwhelmingly cast in domestic roles and are identified through their dress and action as wholly distinct and excluded from the majority of self-identity stories. While there are a few stories, across both time periods, that feature females as central to the story, they are inevitably restrained in the kinds of adventures and self-learning in which they engage. That these observations could be seen as “qualities” of Islam, they are not inherently qualities of the cultures and societal conditions under which children might encounter these texts.

Religious doctrine of sacrifice is not unique to Islam. Indeed, a single story of sacrifice, that of Ibrahim (Abraham), provides the locus that is the center of Christianity, Judaism and Islam. These children's books do not seem to engage directly, in any substantive way, those conflicts that emerge from the religious doctrines and ideologies that formed in response to this shared cultural story of sacrifice. Instead, and overall, these stories frame their conflicts around a relationship that is supra-social and super-natural. For all of the global conflict that derives in part from the events of September 11, 2001, these children's books represent a corrective to the narrative that is written at the layer of political conflict. Instead of presenting a Muslim identity that is engaged in religious or cultural conflict with others, these children's books present a Muslim identity that is in conflict with internal and external forces that seek to position the Muslim outside a value system. That is to say, outside of historical stories where conflicts are depicted as battles and the overcoming of natural obstacle, the primary conflicts presented are not with non-Muslims but with ideas and behaviors that deviate from a set of prescribed Muslim values. Respect for nature, for self and for others are paramount in these stories, and despite observed relegation of roles along subtly gendered lines, equality of things in relation to Allah is a consistent value. When Amira, in *Amira's Totally Chocolate World (2009)*, finds herself in an all chocolate dream world, she comes to understand the value of difference and distinction as an intentional fact of creation. She comes to learn about diversity. When stories involve conflict with others, this conflict is not a conflict of conversion or even of primarily secular versus religious thought. Rather, it is a conflict borne of non-acceptance that appears socially as bullying.

These kinds of distinctions, within these thin and child-like texts, are in dialogic conversation with the texts of the media and political regimes following September 11, 2001, and

they respond loudly. Islam in these children's books is devoid, outside of historical tales of conquest and conflict, of those things that are repeatedly presented by the media as part of the Islamic character. Muslim children who are learning English, as part of the developmental and social processes shared by all children, are engaged by these books in the same ways that children's books engaged me. They stimulate visually and textually, they teach by repetition, they teach by historical example, and they introduce fable and fantasy to create metaphors to teach social behavior. When I, as a child, read the story about the apocalyptic chicken Henny Penny, the moral of the tale is that I shouldn't be gullible and that I shouldn't listen to those who are untrustworthy. That same teaching of social behavior is embedded in the Pakistani version of that story in *The Silly Chicken*. The mere fact that one story is situated in among a community of Muslims and that one is situated among rural farmers in a small Christian village is neither relevant nor unexpected. Idries Shah's retelling of *The Silly Chicken* can be read by any person, of any religion or none at all, and can hold its value as a common social teaching and as an admonition to listen to oneself and to be a cautious follower.

These books, overall, suggest nothing overtly different about Muslims and non-Muslims other than particular religious practice. The doctrinal aspects of religious morality reflected in these books are shared by the majority of the world's population through Abrahamic descent. They do not deviate from those general themes that are common in children's books that are otherwise without an overt Islamic context. That our own historical children's tales in the United States derive from a broad history of classic tales, drawn from a wide variety of cultural origins, they too reflect an aggregate set of values that we attempt to impart to children even while we are merely teaching them an alphabet or language phrases.

But in the context of these particular books, located and acquired through mostly electronic commercial means, whether located in a library or a retail outlet or an online catalog, the audience of possible readers for these books may very well be considered to be a more cosmopolitan and urban audience. That the majority of these books were published in the United States and the United Kingdom — countries with growing but decidedly minority Muslim populations — their distribution and availability in these countries is granted. Whether or not these books are as readily available to those living in other commercial and technological conditions is not known and this work did not examine the distribution patterns or availability of these works in other geographic locations. However, given that the market for children's books is, at its core, an adult buying market (librarians, teachers, parents) who might browse book lists or search Amazon.com, the depiction of Muslims as primarily rural, village and desert dwelling, and non-White suggests that there may be a dialogic disparity between the reality of the modern Muslim population and that of the Muslims depicted in the pages of children's books.

Particularly regarding non-fiction, where we have a more easily compared reality, while we saw that the quantities of non-fiction may not have changed, the specific types of non-fiction shifted decidedly from geographic and historical non-fictions to outright photo-realism in the presentation of the Muslim in a nearly encyclopedic way. This shift seems, viewed through the prism of 9/11, as a shift intentionally designed by Western publishers to fill a need for factual representation of Muslims in everyday life, in modern and even urban contexts. In this way, non-fiction serves as a clear and distinct counter-balance to, and a corrective of, that image of Muslims depicted in fiction and fable. That many children's books address the same storied tales of magic and communal fiction, it falls to the proliferation of photographic non-fiction works to offer a more accurate and realistic depiction of those Muslims who live and work and attend

school in the very same communities and neighborhoods as that majority of children in the United States. That is, as a nation concentrated in urban systems with a pluralistic population, these non-fiction works provide the most direct and realistic depiction of the Muslim. In those few works of fiction that are set in urban and contemporary settings, there, too, are Muslims depicted in a way that is fully integrated with our own sense of “nation” and of community, and to these stories — modern, realistic and urban — offer the clearest view to children, both Muslim and non-Muslim, of a pluralistic society in which Muslims exist, interact and behave in just the same ways that other children interact and behave. These contemporary fictions provide the same kinds of struggles that concern parents and teachers on behalf of all children — bullying, fitting in, discovering the world and understanding the self. And these non-fictions stand as a clear corrective to the wild depiction of Muslims in the press and media that proliferated after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

It has taken considerable effort for the media and the arts to offer alternative views of Islam and of Muslim life and culture that counter those dusty images from the front lines of Iraq and Afghanistan and Pakistan. We have struggled as a culture to include alternative dialogues with Islam and with Muslims, even while still falling back quite easily on those stereotypes. The texts of children’s books are no different than that the texts of our movies and television shows in that they, too, must undergo scrutiny and careful analysis in order to ferret out those deeply embedded stereotypes and to remove caricature. From the over-simplified role of Muslims in the wildly popular television show *24* to the antics of the fictional Central Asian character “Borat” to the hummus-selling Palestinian terrorist in Adam Sandler’s “Don’t Mess with the Zohan,” there is still a considerable distance to go in squaring our fictions with the modern Muslim reality.

Weaknesses in this Work

While every attempt was made to conceptualize and operationalize themes that were deemed important for comparison, those themes may not be the most relevant in understanding whether there are substantive changes in this children's literature. Although these identified thematic areas are derived primarily from prior research, there is still no certainty that these are the themes to which we should be paying the most attention.

As the process of emergent coding of latent themes continued, it became clear that merely knowing whether the gender of a main character was male or female was not enough to understand gendered distinctions. Future work on this topic must devise ways to build models of "interaction" of gender and conflict, gender and location, and other thematic aspects. Much as the qualitative analyses attempted to do just that, by looking at how female and male title characters are situated, it was analysis that reveals areas in which to look rather than analysis that firmly answers the question of whether there are verifiable differences over time in how character gender is enacted. By uncovering these areas of potential difference, a guide for future research is suggested.

Further, the coarseness of some thematic attributes may obscure distinction. The design undertaken here attempted to capture a wide variety of genre types, for example, but unless a greater number of books are examined then the frequencies within these categories are held to very low values. When categories are collapsed, distinction is lost. This complicates both the quantitative analysis as well as qualitative thematic analysis and requires a sample that is greater in number.

An additional weakness is that, due to the nature of this research as a Master's thesis and thereby limited to a single coder, there may be distinctions that are obscured by my own

positionality. In future research, using a shared data coding system through the proprietary database interface, multiple coders would be needed. These should also be of a variety of gender, ethno-cultural and religious background.

Future Research

Those weaknesses just discussed could be addressed in a redesigned study that included more books and additional coders. In addition to those changes, books that are in languages other than English should be addressed. At the time of this writing, there is firm commitment for an additional two coders, both female, one who is Muslim and one who is a Christian, to look at these books and then to include children's books published in Arabic and in Persian. There is a less firm commitment to include an additional male coder, from a secular Islamic country, to look at books in Turkish. Whether funds immediately permit these re-codings of the books sampled here and the inclusion of books from other languages, I believe that future research into the purposes and content of Islamic-themed children's literature can shed light on how dialogue is created within and outside of values-based communities.

The traditionally derived way of looking at children's texts, primarily hinged on quantitative analysis, is insufficient to provide a rich analysis of the deeply thematic and nuanced differences noted here. Deeper and more finely tuned qualitative analysis is required utilizing other perspectives and social positionalities.

The "social self" presented here, although at times localized to some geography, is not distinct from the social self that is presented in those children's books that I know from within my own family. Despite emotional hyperbole about Muslim children being indoctrinated with values that support the elimination of non-Muslims, what we find in these books is a value system and a developmental approach to children that is no different from those values

embedded in the stories that we collectively share. Muslim children are not taught, in these books, that they are better or more divine. They are taught to be polite, to be respectful to others and to nature, to be confident in their heritage and religion, to stand up for family, to wish and to dream, to follow directions and to lead, to be self-reliant and to accept help, to be kind and considerate and to be proud of their identity. These are themes to which, I hope, we can all agree are shared across time and place. They are human social values that tend toward the reduction of social conflict through the acceptance of difference.

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Appendix A: List of Sampled Books by Year of Publication

- 1990, One Watermelon Seed, Celia Barker Lottridge and Karen Patkau, "Markam, Ontario, Canada: Fitzhenry and Whiteside"
- 1993, I Love Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah, Abid Ullah Ghazi, "Skokie, Illinois: IQRA International Educational Foundation"
- 1994, Alhamdulillah: Praise Be to Allah, Fazeel Sahukhan, "Lahore, Pakistan: Ahamadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam"
- 1994, Iblis, Shulamith Levy Oppenheim and Ed Young, "New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt"
- 1994, Ramadan and Id Al-Fitr (Best Holiday Books), Dianne M. MacMillan, "Berkeley Heights, New Jersey: Enslow Elementary"
- 1994, The Hajj adventure of Jamila and Fasfoose, Ediba Kezzeiz, "Indianapolis, IN: American Trust Publications"
- 1994, "We Are Muslim, Al-Hamdu Lillah", Kathy Fannoun, "Skokie, Illinois: IQRA International Educational Foundation"
- 1995, The Hundredth Name, Shulamith Levey Oppenheim, "Honesdale, Pennsylvania: Boyds Mill Press"
- 1995, The Travels of Ibn Battuta, Abd al-Rahman Azzam, Hood Hood Books Limited
- 1996, Knowledge is Wealth & Other Stories, Matina Wali Muhammad, "London, U.K.: Ta-Ha Publishers Limited"
- 1996, Loving Letters: An Islamic Alphabet, Riad Nourallah and Harriet Dell, "Cambridge, UK: Lutterworth Press"
- 1996, Magid Fast for Ramadan, Mary Matthews, "New York, NY: Clarion Books"
- 1996, Muslim Poems for Children, Mymona Hendricks, "Lahore, Pakistan/Chicago, IL, US: Kazi Publications"
- 1996, Ramadan, Suhaib Hamid Ghazi, "New York, NY: Holiday House"
- 1997, Animals (Allah the Maker), Farah Sardar, "Leicestershire, U.K.: Islamic Foundation"
- 1997, The battles of the Prophet Muhammad, Deny Johnson-Davies, "Cairo, Egypt: Hoopoe Books"
- 1998, Finders Keepers and Other Stories, Samina and Qasim Najar, "New York, NY: International Books and Tapes Supply"
- 1999, Adam (Adam): Peace Be upon Him (Stories of the Prophets from the Qur'an), Siddiqa Juma, "New York, NY: Tahrike Tarsile Quran"
- 2000, Ali and the spider, Rowaa El-Magazy Stratford, "Leicestershire, U.K.: Islamic Foundation"
- 2000, My First Arabic Alphabet Book, Siddiqa Juma, "New York, NY: Tahrike Tarsile Quran"
- 2000, Tell Me About Hajj, Saniyasnain Khan, "New Delhi, India: Goodword Books Pvt Ltd"
- 2002, Life Begins, Saniyasnain Khan, "New Delhi, India: Goodword Books Pvt Ltd"
- 2002, Muslim Child: Understanding Islam Through Stories and Poems, Rukhsana Khan, "Park Ridge, Illinois: Albert Whitman & Company"
- 2002, The Old Woman and the Eagle, Idries Shah, "Cairo, Egypt: Hoopoe Books"
- 2003, Grandma Hekmatt Remembers: An Arab-American Family Story, Ann Morris and Peter Linenthal, "Minneapolis, Minnesota: Millbrook Press"
- 2004, Fasting and Dates: A Ramadan and Eid-ul-Fitr Story (Festival Time), Jonny Zucker and Jan Barger, New York: Barron's Educational Series

- 2004, Traveling Man : the Journey of Ibn Battuta, James Rumford, "London, U.K.: Sandpiper Books"
- 2005, Grandma's Garden, Ediba Kezzeiz, "Indianapolis, IN: American Trust Publications"
- 2005, My Name is Bilal, Asma Mobin-Uddin, "Honesdale, Pennsylvania: Boyds Mill Press"
- 2005, Silly Chicken, Rukhsana Khan, "New York, NY: Viking Juvenile (Penguin Group)"
- 2005, The Silly Chicken, Idries Shah, "Cairo, Egypt: Hoopoe Books"
- 2005, What Makes me a Muslim?, Catherine Petrini, Thompson Gale
- 2006, Holidays Around the World: Celebrate Ramadan and Eid Al-Fitr, Deborah Heiligman, "Washington, DC: National Geographic Children's Book"
- 2006, Id-ul-fitr (Why Is This Festival Special), Jillian Powell, "Mankato, Minnesota: Smart Apple Media (Capstone Publishers)"
- 2006, The Man and the Fox, Idries Shah, "Cairo, Egypt: Hoopoe Books"
- 2006, The Man With Bad Manners, "Idries Shah Santiago, Rose Mary", "Cairo, Egypt: Hoopoe Books"
- 2006, Fatima the Spinner and the Tent, Idries Shah, "Cambidge, MA: Hoopoe Books"
- 2007, My Muslim Faith (My Faith), Khadijah Knight, "Weybridge, Vermont: Cherrytree Books"
- 2007, Nabeel's New Pants: An Eid Tale, "Fawzia Gilani-Williams Roy, Proiti", "Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Children"
- 2007, Nahj Al-Balaghah (Peak of Eloquence) for Children, Ali ibn Abu-Talib, "New York, NY: Tahrike Tarsile Quran"
- 2007, Neem the Half-Boy, Idries Shah, "Cairo, Egypt: Hoopoe Books"
- 2007, The Boy Without a Name, Idries Shah, "Cairo, Egypt: Hoopoe Books"
- 2007, The Brave Boy, M.S. Kayani, "Leicestershire, U.K.: Islamic Foundation"
- 2007, The Lost Ring: An Eid Story, Fawzia Gilani-Williams, "Markfield, Leicester, U.K.: Islamic Foundation"
- 2008, Celebrating Ramadan, Duane Hoyt-Goldsmith, Holiday House
- 2008, Helena's Voyage, Paul Harbridge, United Kingdom: O Books
- 2008, The night of the moon: a muslim holiday story, Hena Khan, "San Francisco, California: Chronicle Books"
- 2008, Under the Ramadan Moon, Sylvia Whitman and Sue Williams, "Park Ridge, Illionois: Albert Whitman & Company"
- 2009, Assalamu Alaykum, M.S. Kayani, "Leicestershire, U.K.: Islamic Foundation"
- 2009, Call to Prayer: The Story of Bilal, Edoardo Albert, "Leicestershire, U.K.: Islamic Foundation"
- 2009, Muslim Nursery Rhymes, Mustafa Yusuf McDermott, "Leicestershire, U.K.: Islamic Foundation"
- 2010, Amira's Totally Chocolate World, Samia Mair, "Markfield, Leicester, U.K.: Islamic Foundation"
- 2010, I Can Make Du'a Anywhere!, Yasmin Ibrahim, "Leicestershire, U.K.: Islamic Foundation"
- 2010, "Islam: Discover the faith, culture and history that shaped the modern Islamic world", "Kitty Blount, editor", United Kingdom: Dorling Kindersley Ltd
- 2010, Miraculous Happenings in the Year of the Elephant, Mehded Maryam Sinclair, "Leicestershire, U.K.: Islamic Foundation"
- 2010, Ramadan and Id-ul-fitr (Acorn: Holidays and Festivals), Nancy Dickmann, "Mankato, Minnesota: Heinemann Library (Capstone Publishers)"

- 2010, We're off to make 'Umrah, Sana Munshey, "Markfield, Leicester, U.K.: Islamic Foundation"
- 2010, What Do We Say?: A Guide to Islamic Manners, Noorah Kathryn Abdullah, "Leicestershire, U.K.: Islamic Foundation"
- 2010, World of Islam Series: Islam in America, Anna Melman, "Pennsylvania, US: Mason Crest Publishers"

Appendix B: Figures

Figure 1: Coding Interface for Bibliographic Coding Unit

Coding Instrument (Full Detail)

Title	Nabee's New Pants: An Eid Tale		Authors	Gilani-Williams, Fawzia, Roy, Proiti, ; (illustrator)		Creators Standardized	Gilani-Williams, Fawzia Roy, Proiti		Has Free Code Data Point ID	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Publisher	Tarrytown, NY : Marshall Cavendish Children								_ms_Where Located	Blacksburg Public Library
Year	2007								Data Source	WorldCat DB
Publisher Standardized	Marshall Cavendish Children								_ms_Is In Sampling Frame	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1
Descriptors	1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 24 cm.								_ms_Is In Sample	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 pass 1
Language	English									
Standard Cataloging Numbers	ISBN:9780761456292; 0761456295 LCCN:2009									
ISBN										
Material Type	Fiction (fic); Preschool (pre)		Pages	32						
Abstract	While buying gifts for his family to wear to the mosque on Eid a shoemaker is persuaded to get new pants for himself, but the only pair available is too long and no one seems to have time to shorten them.									
Notes	2010 edition									
Comments	From School Library Journal Starred Review. Kindergarten-Grade 2—Nabee's dilemma with his new pants is a familiar sort of predicament borne by simple, good-hearted folks in many strains of folklore. He's a shoemaker whose business has gone well on the eve of Eid, the holiday culminating Ramadan. Purchasing gifts for his family, he also buys new pants to replace his patched trousers. <i>Measure, though, as "four fingers too long."</i>									
Genre	Fiction		Reading Level	Ages 4-8		Illustration Format			Edition	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 This entry is a SUBSEQUENT edition (# 1st)
Age Range	Preschool (PRE) [WC]									

Additional Book Meta Data for Book ID 0000001345



Title: Nabee's New Pants: An Eid Tale

Awards Lists: [dropdown]

Book Lists: [dropdown]

Source: Proprietary Database Interface

Figure 2: Coding Interface for Plot Level Coding Unit

Plot Level Data / Counts

Book	Plot	Secondary Story Title	Time Epoch	Conflict Type	CR?	Plot Macro Loc	Plot Location	CC#	Genre
000000134	101		Nondescript	Self v Nature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	Home			
Plot Open Notes		Nabee has some new pants for Eid-ul-Fitr but they are too long. Several people trying to help each end up cutting and hemming, so that his pants are ultimately very short.							
Go PLOT									
Hajj		<input type="checkbox"/> 1							
Mention Sept 11	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	Terrorism	<input type="checkbox"/> 1						
Religious Practice Direct Teaching	<input type="checkbox"/> 1		<input type="checkbox"/> 1						
Religious Practice as Context	<input type="checkbox"/> 1		<input type="checkbox"/> 1						
Social Conflict Family	<input type="checkbox"/> 1		<input type="checkbox"/> 1						
Social Conflict Peers	<input type="checkbox"/> 1		<input type="checkbox"/> 1						
Religious Holiday	<input type="checkbox"/> 1		<input type="checkbox"/> 1						
Secular vs Religious Conflict	<input type="checkbox"/> 1		<input type="checkbox"/> 1						
Has Violence	<input type="checkbox"/> 1		<input type="checkbox"/> 1						
Has Nonviolence	<input type="checkbox"/> 1		<input type="checkbox"/> 1						
Social Behaviors Engaged									

Source: Proprietary Database Interface

Figure 3: Coding Interface for Character Coding Unit

Character Level Data / Counts

000000029 Char ID Character Name: Protag? 1 Char Object Gender:

101 Plot ID Character Occupation: Age:

0000001345 Book ID Character Cultural Designation:

Character Object Color Matching

Head Dress	African American	Black-African	Middle Eastern	White	Asian	Other
Hijab F Turb M Wit F Wit M Osh F Osh M	Adult					
Niqab F Fez M	Child					
Burqa F Pray M						

Female_Headress_Notes:

Male_Headress_Notes:

Character Action Notes:

000000030 Char ID Character Name: Protag? 1 Char Object Gender:

101 Plot ID Character Occupation:

0000001345 Book ID Character Cultural Designation:

Character Object Color Matching

Head Dress	African American	Black-African	Middle Eastern	White	Asian	Other
Hijab F Turb M Wit F Wit M Osh F Osh M	Adult					
Niqab F Fez M	Child					
Burqa F Pray M						

Female_Headress_Notes:

Male_Headress_Notes:

Character Action Notes:

Source: Proprietary Database Interface

Figure 4: Combined Simple Coding Screen

Coding Instrument (Simple View)

Title	Nabeel's New Pants: An Eid Tale	Authors	Gilani-Williams, Fawzia. Roy,
Publisher	Marshall Cavendish Children		
Year	2007		
ISBN			
Pages	32		
Genre	Fiction	Illustration Format	

Plot Level

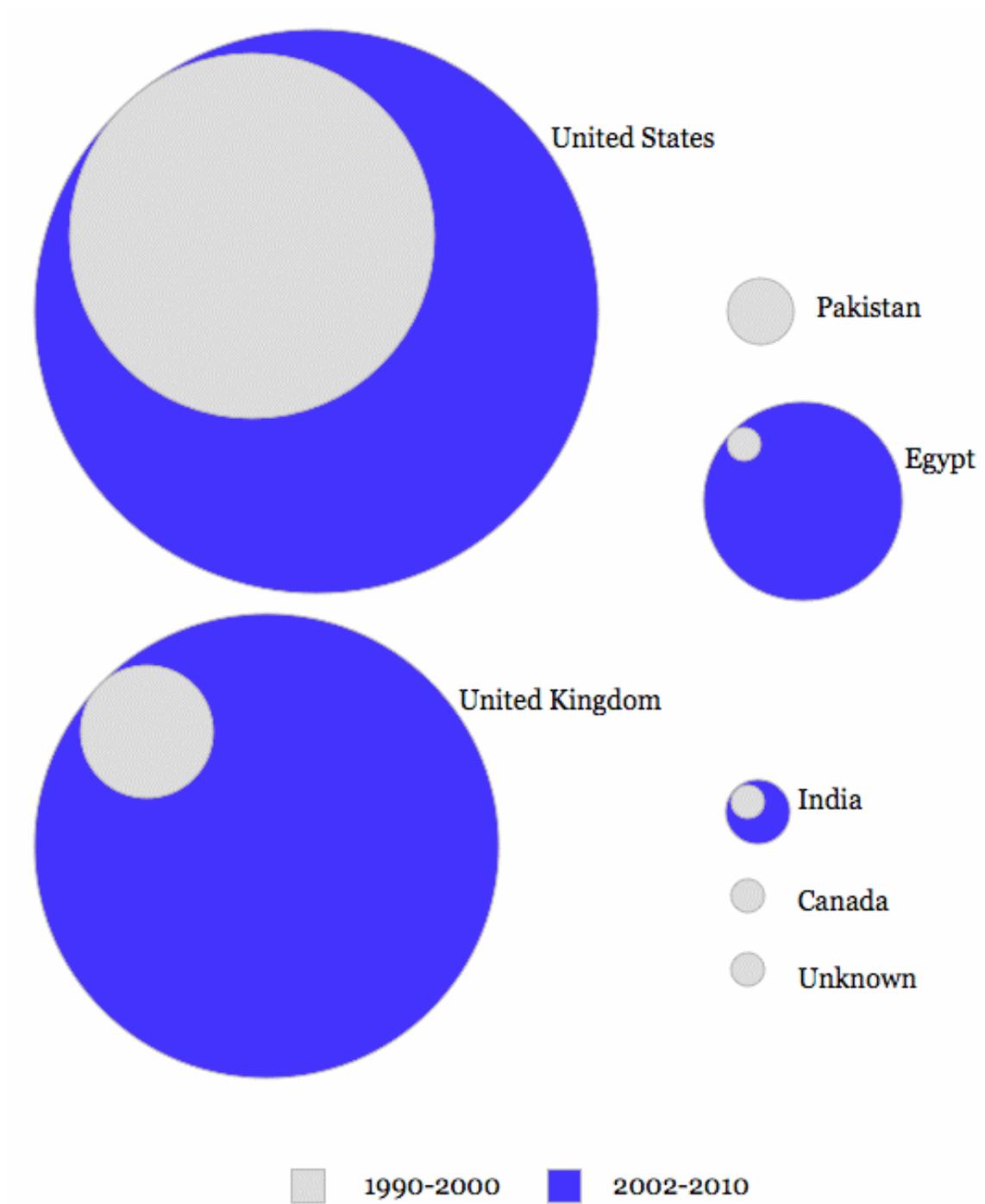
Time Epoch	Conflict Type	CR?	Plot Macro Loc	CC#	Genre
Nondescript	Self v Nature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	Home		
Mention Sept 11 <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Terrorism <input type="checkbox"/> 1			Has Violence <input type="checkbox"/> 1	
Religious Practice Direct Teaching <input type="checkbox"/> 1				Has Nonviolence <input type="checkbox"/> 1	
Religious Practice as Context <input type="checkbox"/> 1				Social Behaviors Engaged	
Social Conflict Family <input type="checkbox"/> 1					
Social Conflict Peers <input type="checkbox"/> 1					
Religious Holdiay <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	Ramadan and				
Secular vs Religious Conflict <input type="checkbox"/> 1					
Plot Location	Plot Notes Nabeel has some new pants for Eid-ul-Fitr but they are too long. Several people trying to help each end up cutting and hemming, so that his pants are ultimately very short.				

Character Level

Character Name	Character Occupation	Cultural Designation	Protag?	Siblings?	Is Parent	
Nabeel	Shoemaker	Middle Eastern	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	
Char Object Gender	Character Action Notes					
Male Human						
Head Dress						
Hijab F Turb M Wst F Wst M						
Niqab F Fez M Oth F Oth M						
Burqa F Pray M						
	African American	Black-African	Middle Eastern	White	Asian	Other
Adult	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	F M	F M	F M	F M	F M	F M

Source: Proprietary Database Interface

Figure 5: Relative Proportion of Sampled Books by Country of Publisher



Source: Table 4, "Frequency of Country of Publication of Sampled Books by Time Period"