1. INTRODUCTION

Research Context

In a number of Middle Eastern contexts, the state primary and high school education systems have commenced using English literature texts. While these texts can afford improved access to English which is a highly valued commodity in these contexts, the use of English texts also has the capacity to provide increased access to a range of cultural values that may contradict local 'traditional' values. The state of Qatar is one of these contexts. While literature from other Middle Eastern states has revealed the emergence of tensions between the cultural frameworks offered by the English literature texts and those of the local culture/s, this research project aims to investigate the extent to which such tensions may also be present in the specific context of Qatar.

English literature used in Arab English language classrooms often appears in the form of graded readers from Western publishers[1] and inherently presents Western values, concepts, attitudes and behaviours to impressionable children. Can this Western English literature support the values of Islamic religion and culture? Who in fact, are the determinants of Islamic culture/values in the Qatari school context? From where does the power to influence curriculum come: Qatar's governmental educational body, the Supreme Education Council (SEC), the school Board of Trustees (BOT), school leaders, influential parents, influential tribes, the local Imam or teachers? Further, do teachers feel there is a recognizable subset of English literature that satisfies the demands of all the major proponents of local Islamic culture? Perhaps the abridged classical texts, perhaps folk tales, perhaps English versions of Arabic tales, perhaps contemporary young people's literature? Or are the works of classic or contemporary English literature in whatever forms a threat to the very fabric of Islamic Qatari society? This thesis examines teacher attitudes towards the use of English literature, particularly graded English language

readers, in the teaching of English as a second or foreign language in Arab Muslim classrooms (Yrs 1-12) in Qatar's Independent (State) schools. It recognizes that Arab Muslim English language teachers in Qatar have a dual responsibility: to support local Muslim cultural and religious values, and to provide best practice in using English literature to support English language acquisition. It explores to what degree teachers feel they can fulfil both commitments.

New Reform and New Tension In The Classroom

It should be noted that this study examines an issue which has only arisen in schools where English literature has begun to be read. Prior to the education reform in Qatar, Arab students in English language classes were exposed only to the shorter passages of English language found in traditional English language Qatari school textbooks. In fact, the subject of English was taught exclusively from a single state published text book which provided all the readings and all the activities for students to complete in order to develop English language mastery. The short passages in this single textbook were usually innocuous, consisting of 1-3 paragraphs, possibly a brief description of a setting or character, often non-literary expositions relating to daily living, and occasionally an excerpt from a famous English text (often abridged for early language learner access). These short passages did not cause offense. That is because there was insufficient time to develop a context and a pretext. When a passage is long enough, especially if it is a narrative, the reader meets characters who have motivations which lead to attitudes and behaviours. This appears to be where problems are evident, according to each of the research participants. When a character despises his father, for example, and rejects the ways of his family or community expressing an attitude of dishonour for traditions and perhaps leaves his village in anger, he presents a portrait that does not model what a good Muslim son would do. This more complex type of portrait usually

requires a longer passage. Literature, in the form of graded readers or novels and plays, can develop characters and plots and therefore present a more complete picture of life. The problems begin here when the vision of life and responses to the issues of life do not mirror the range of local Islamic views.[1]

Research Problem

This in-depth study of the personal values, beliefs and teaching practices of expatriate Arab teachers from a range of Arabic schools in Qatar where the education system has recently undergone significant reform comes against a background of questions about the threat of the influence of western ideas to this tiny but wealthy gulf state. Some have questioned whether English should be the language of instruction in five of the seven major subjects: English, Mathematics, Physics, Biology and Chemistry (Note: Subject choice is limited. All students do these subjects in Yrs 7-12). Others fear that western ideas, including new educational concepts, may threaten certain Islamic ideas. Reflecting this concern is the question raised by some parents about why western literature is being studied in English language classes. These questions come against a background of many similar challenging questions facing Islamic societies elsewhere. How does a society with a strict code of belief and behavior that has successfully existed for 14 centuries interface with a world that is in so many philosophical, moral and ideological dimensions different to its own religion and culture? Imams in mosques throughout Arabia daily exhort Muslim parents to guard against the sinful portals of the West which, evidence seems to suggest, is overwhelming their children. One Islamic commentator puts it like this: 'they (youth) are continuously bombarded with Western culture via the television, school and society at large' (Jassat, 2002). Yet an upward glance in even the most dusty, dilapidated streets of Amman, Cairo, Baghdad and even Riyadh will reveal a network of satellite TV dishes and

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[1] The list of publishers servicing this ever growing market is extensive but includes companies like Black Cat, Burlington, Cambridge, Compass, Egmont, Macmillan, McGraw Hill, Oxford, Penguin and Scholastic. They are all Western companies and for the most part rely on authors with a Western orientation.

cables accessing both the best and worst image-based reflections of various cultures throughout the world. But it is Western culture, with its broad-based, secular and pluralistic value system which tends to dominate the IT world frequented by teenagers (Warschauer, El Said, Zohry, 2002). Whether it's a computer game, an action packed Hollywood movie or simply a chat or blog site, it is more likely to be using the English language and reflect foundational values traceable to either modern secular pluralistic society or the West's Christian heritage. As the 2002 Warschauer study of Egyptian Arab internet use demonstrated in 2002, 'English is used overwhelmingly in Web use' by Arab youth (Warschauer, El Said, Zohry, 2002). Furthermore the same study concluded 'the continued encroachment of English on the prestigious realms of language use, in business, commerce, and academia—bolstered now by online communications—could be viewed as a threat to the national language and values' (Warschauer, El Said, Zohry, 2002).

When the Qatari father of a 16 year old Year 10 student challenged the boy's English teacher at Abu Baker Asedeeq Independent School (a fictitious name of a state school) in Doha with the question, "Why is my son reading Western literature in his English class?" he did more than ask about the texts used in the English classroom. There are many possible implications, profound in their impact on one's view of education. They might include: (1) I, the parent, am responsible for my son's education; (2) Education is more than just learning a series of subjects, such as English language acquisition - it involves the formation of ideas and character; (3) Literature is not just a complex form of language structures; it is a vehicle to transmit culture and values; (4) English language is from the West, so English literature is ideologically Western. But there is one that most concerns this research project: (5) I don't want my son exposed to Western (i.e. potentially non-Islamic) values.

It is this final implied statement that motivates this research project. This research demonstrates the imperative of education in the Islamic state as an integral support to the family and the community's religious commitment. Given this, the Arab parent who fears the influence of alien non-Arab values is merely expressing his desire, and that expressed by Qatar's Emir, that education achieve both academic and religious/cultural objectives. This leads to the primary research question posed by this thesis: What perceptions about the use of English literature texts are held by Arab Muslim English Language teachers in Qatar, in relation to their society's traditional cultural values?

Research Justification

There is a paucity of English language academic literature that directly addresses this question in the local Qatari or nearby Gulf areas. The existence of studies addressing this question in the Arabic language is not known. Nor has it been possible for this researcher to access and translate such studies if they do exist. This is recognised therefore as a major limitation of this study. However, this English language thesis makes an important contribution to our understanding of the socio-cultural ramifications of education reform based on English language instruction in most major subjects. Education reform is well underway in Qatar and it is essential that emerging issues be identified, analysed and addressed with responses evaluated in review. Contributing to the body of knowledge surrounding this issue can only better facilitate this process and therefore promote the efforts of many to balance modern world participation with traditional values, customs and beliefs. As such, by further expanding on the knowledge base in the field of cross-cultural studies in education, this study has the potential to make a modest contribution to the cause of world peace through understanding, tolerance and respectful practice.

Research Methodology

To explore the perceptions of English language teachers this research project has utilized qualitative research with semi-structured interviews to discover how Arab Muslim English language subject teachers feel they can support Qatar's cultural and religious values while using English literature texts in their teaching. The research investigates how Arab Muslim English language teachers utilize western literature resources in communicating theirs and the local communities' religious and cultural values and beliefs. It examines how English language subject teachers negotiate the use of English literature in their classrooms, which local communities can view as a threat to their religious and cultural values.

The six teachers who participated in this research are all male. Each in-depth interview went for an hour or more. All participants have experience teaching preparatory and secondary students (Yrs 7-9, & 10-12), and some have taught primary classes (Yrs K-6). They are all Arabs, but none are local. There are very few local Qatari teachers, and not one male Qatari English teacher in any SEC Independent school. This is partly because the work ethic and job status considerations have changed in the country. Following the explosion of wealth generated by the exploitation of the rich reserves of oil and gas in Qatar the local population began to adopt an aversion to work, especially work in jobs that were perceived as lower in status. Certainly cleaning jobs, trade and services work is never attended by Qatari men (Countries and Their Cultures, 2012, para. 11). There are a small number of Qatari male teachers and numerous female teachers but the bulk of the workforce consists of Arab expatriates. The interviewees are four Egyptian teachers, one Tunisian and one Syrian.

These participants were recruited by an emailed offer to be involved in research into their attitudes and practice as English teachers followed by a follow-up phone call to

arrange a mutually suitable time and place for the interview. Having worked in four different Qatari state (ie Independent) schools as an educational consultant and attended/delivered numerous professional development seminars I had a wide network of professional contacts to invite to participate in this study.

The six teachers are all practicing, committed Muslims who pride themselves on their adherence to the faith of Islam. They have all grown up in Muslim communities, attended state schools with Muslim ideology and taught in the context of Muslim values. All have taught outside their home countries (given that the interviews took place in Doha, Qatar in 2010 where they were teaching). The countries in which they have taught include: Tunisia, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Kuwait, UAE, Oman and Qatar. With an average age of 38 they have all had experience teaching what the Australian education system identifies as Primary and Secondary students. At the time of the interview they each, on average, had had approximately 4 years teaching experience in Qatar and additional years in neighbouring Arab states such as Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.

In the interviews the following general ideas are explored with each respondent:

1.   Their key personal values & beliefs.

2.   Their perception of the local community's key religious and cultural values and beliefs, if different from their country of origin.

3.   The essential values and beliefs consciously or subconsciously transmitted in the classroom.

4.   The literature (English language texts) studied in Arabic boys schools.

5.   The literary theory, if any, applied to the teaching of literature?

6.   The teaching and learning processes adopted in the English language classroom?

7.   Whether the use of English literature supports or detracts from the Islamic beliefs and values of the students? Explain.

8.   How English texts containing non-Islamic ideas and behaviours are treated in the classroom?

9.   Possible threats posed by the teaching of English literature?

10.   Pedagogies applied to the teaching of English literature.

The study was limited to male English language teachers. Due to the cultural prohibition on males speaking to females who are not close relatives, no participation could be invited from female teachers. As a result the context of this study is boys education but I believe from anecdotal evidence over a number of years from teachers and fellow consultants in SEC schools for girls in Qatar that the findings can readily be extrapolated to girls education because the question of values transmission is also relevant to the education of young females in Arab states and the process of female teachers educating girls has all the same characteristics as male teachers educating boys. Only further study by those qualified could confirm this however.

The Need for Education Reform in Qatar

The Emir of Qatar initiated a state wide educational reform progress in 2003 agreeing to subject the nation's schools to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). The results placed Qatar at the bottom of the international educational ladder ahead only of Kyrgyzstan in the three categories: Reading, Scientific and Mathematical literacy (McKay, 2010). Education reform was seen as essential for two reasons of national significance. Firstly, diversification of national income sources: if and when the massive gas and oil reserves of Qatar were depleted, Qatar would require an alternative industry to sustain its very high standard of living. While some auxiliary industries have been developed to

augment the State's healthy GDP, (eg fertilizer production and a huge aluminum smelter), it was deemed important to find alternative wealth producing industries. A vision was promoted which saw Qatar serving as the educational hub of Middle East (Sobhani, 2006). To be such a hub enormous changes needed to be made to the rather primitive educational infrastructure and systems previously existing in Qatar. Secondly, the Qatari leader recognized that high quality education was the single most essential component of every developed and developing nation. Facing the reality of a poor quality education system against international standards and a cultural predilection resisting work /academic effort by native Qatari, it was seen as imperative that reform address both systems and culture if Qatari were ever to overcome? dependence on expatriate workers in the petroleum and wider business fields (Razak, 2009).Before education reform occurred, Qatar, like its neighbouring countries, had an educational system which was a product of its social, religious and physical environment consisting of religious schools or 'kuttabs' teaching reading, writing and religion. It was not until the 1950s that a more comprehensive form of schooling took place. Although the curriculum was expanded in the 1950's, the learning was still rigidly teacher-centred and dependent on rote-learning. Lamontagne's description of the Arabian peninsula before wealth generated by oil production made significant changes (post 1960's) is dominated by descriptions of the beliefs and practices of the desert Arabs. Lamontagne explains that in this harsh environment there was little formal education. In fact, most education was religious: *Islam was practiced in its purest sense, and was paramount; unquestioned* (Lamontagne, 2005, p. 11). In 2001 the Emir, HH Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani called upon the RAND-Qatar Policy Institute to conduct an assessment of the educational system. Initially, Primary (1-6), Preparatory (7-9) and Secondary (10-12) schooling was studied, and later post-secondary education was examined with a view to reform. As the PISA results later demonstrated, the Rand

Institute found that the overall standard of education was extremely low, with very limited evidence of analytical thinking, research or communication skills or the use of modern resources or innovative pedagogies

Qatar Educational Reform: 'Progressive Fears'

In addition to diagnosing the performance of the K-12 basic education system, the Rand assessment also proposed measures to progress the education available to locals by making significant improvements to it. The Emir chose the option of an Independent School system with a new curriculum based on a set of Curriculum Standards and a comprehensive assessment programme. Now, after seven years of the reform process, the Qatar Supreme Education Council has over 150 "Independent" State run schools implementing the diverse elements of reform including use of Information Computer Technology (ICT), student-centred teaching strategies, use of a broad range of resources and continual teacher capacity building (SEC, 2010). The introduction of English as the language of instruction in Mathematics, English, Biology, Chemistry and Physics has been an essential pillar of the reform agenda in the effort to create an internationally competitive education. This move, however, has met with resistance and the objectors to this 'pillar' of the reform have criticized the Supreme Education Council with subsequent attempts to undermine the entire education reform program (SEC, 2010).Protests regarding the introduction of English language teaching have appeared over many years in the local Arab press[2] and often appear as a defence of the religious, cultural and moral high ground. Customs and traditions and religion are at stake, claim many, who have fought to reverse the seven year change from Ministry of Education (ME) schools to Supreme Education Council (SEC) Independent schools. Locals report that the opposition

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[2] This author's inability to provide evidence of this debate is a clear research limitation but does not decrease the weight of anecdotal evidence collected over years of communication with Arabs noting these discussions in local Doha media. The most recent reports of the stalled reform as of late 2012 provide the best evidence of the centrality of this issue.

is often political, that rival and powerful tribal leaders are objecting and using the fear of western influence at the core of the nation's future – its youth – as reason for concern. However, with the Emir's backing, and spearheaded by the Emir's very public and respected first wife, Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al Missned, the reform is beyond reversal. The protests, though, provide a platform for a continuing power struggle threatening social unrest or another coup, like the successful one committed by the present Emir who ousted his father from power in 1995. Two failed attempts to wrestle power from the Emir of Qatar, Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, have occurred recently: in February 2011 and July 2009. The most recent attempt was particularly interesting in that in a public statement of demands members of the Emir's own ruling family criticized, among other things, His Highness' first wife, Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al Missned, for her 'shameful' public appearances in the media, which they considered as 'contrary to the traditions in Qatar' (Al Bawaba News, 2011).Given Sheikha Mozah's initiative and prominent support for the education reform of the SEC any attack on her position can be extrapolated and perceived as an attack on the education reform process. Not surprisingly, the same rationale is used: elements of the reform are culturally offensive.

What remains, though, is a palpable fear by many parents and religious leaders of what is perceived as an inevitable and ideological influence. These fears in Qatar are based on the following concerns: as mentioned, the imperative of critical thinking; the loss of the dominance of Arabic language; the role of technology; the introduction of child-centred pedagogies, and the broad use of resources.

Perhaps the most significant element of the reform perceived as a threat by some of the Arab community is the imperative to introduce higher order thinking into the classroom. The traditional rote learning pedagogy of the past gave little room for critical

thinking. Indeed, the questioning, analysis, synthesis and judgment encouraged in higher

order thinking tends not to fit easily with a culture that for centuries restricts religious

conversion and significant cultural variation. The Arab culture, especially the Gulf Arab

culture, has no real tradition of open minded questioning of political, cultural or religious

systems. To begin to question single gender schooling, for instance, is to challenge a core

value. To question female choice in marriage partner, or to suggest marriage between

tribes, is to again challenge core social values. And yet higher order thinking can only

occur in an environment of intellectual rigour where questioning becomes habitual. To

think that one might question the historical accuracy of the Koran, or the authenticity of

the claim of the Koran's origin is to court criminal action or even death. Yet the West has

a tradition of critically reviewing everything from political systems to religious beliefs.

Edward Hulmes puts it this way: Muslims are not free as Muslims to speculate about the

existence of God, about their religious duties and beliefs, or about the correct way for

society to be regulated (Hulmes, 1992, p. 131). That explains why I had many difficulties

when introducing debating while working as an educational consultant in schools in Qatar.

There was always a problem with a topic. It was very difficult to find any element of life

and society that was not regulated by Islam and which therefore did not place one side of

the debate in an awkward position arguing against the religion.[3] It is valuable to note at this

point the debate surrounding critical thinking. Post-structuralists like Foucault, Derrida,

Deleuze and Lyotard, strong champions of critical thinking as a means of analyzing the

implicit power within discourses, have recently been criticized for being complicit in the

ideological and cultural reproduction of postmodern capitalism. Choat extols 'Marx's way

of securing critique [by rooting] philosophy in active social struggles' (Choat, 2010,

p.174). Choat's criticism of the paucity of philosophical foundation for much critical

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[3] The establishment of the BBC Doha Debates has done much however to suggest that issues can be debated
without threatening the security of the Islamic religion but this has yet to significantly influence school
administrations.)

thinking is valuable, not in so much as valorizing any particular neo-Marxist perspective on issues of educational conflict involving the West and the East, but more so in recognizing the firmness of any particular foundation for critical perspectives. As such, while the conservative Muslim perspectives of leaders encountered by this researcher in numerous Qatari Independent Schools perhaps appear anti-international minded (Tamatea, 2011), their actions are in fact well-grounded as a philosophically consistent response to issues. Whether this be a response to my suggestions for debating topics (such as *smoking*, *mixed gender schooling, certain clothing*) or the use of English literature in English language classes, it can be argued that comments from Islamic commentators are equally rich in critical thinking as any logical positivists (like Russell and Wittgenstein) or educational theorists (like Glaser and Dewey), but perhaps better secured in a life encompassing worldview.

The key difference is that all critical thoughts pass through the same broad worldview mental webbing of Islam, despite the various expressions, theological preferences and degrees of strength with which views are held. That is, the epistemological basis of the whole society is remarkably relatively uniform (compared to Western cultures). This differs markedly to the pluralist West with its diverse epistemologies. Despite this the reality is that the education reform in Qatar, initiated as it was by the political leadership, has invited Western education experts whose ideological posturing and promotion of critical thinking has been seriously influenced by recent philosophical notions which are reflected in the work of key thinkers in this area, like Jennifer Moon who claims that the capacity to think critically 'relies on an understanding of knowledge as constructed and related to its context (relativistic) and is not possible if knowledge is viewed only in an absolute manner (knowledge as a series of facts)' (Moon, 2005, p. 12). In sharp contrast, to the Qatari school leaders, teachers and Supreme

Education Council members, so much of knowledge is viewed in an absolute manner. That is why multiple suggested debate topics were inevitably unsuitable: truth claims (knowledge) are rarely relative, they are absolute.

Another fear exists: the loss of status of the Arab language. Parents and teachers of Arabic and Islamic studies are decrying the loss of Arabic language skills in students. Children are coming home from K1 and K2 classes reading English[4], sometimes ahead of Arabic which is perceived as a more difficult language to acquire due to its very complex grammatical case system.[5] This has implications for the Islamic religion because the Arabic language is the only language in which one can properly read the Koran. In fact, the Arabic language has a unique status amongst world languages due to the religion of Islam. While the English language of 1400 years ago is entirely unrecognizable, the classical Arabic language of today, read on news reports and taught in Arabic language classes, is much the same as that of the Koran, which is the same that the Prophet Mohammed used 1400 years ago. It is not only a unifying language, tying 25 Arab states into the Arab brotherhood, but it is also a religious net for Islam. James Coffman in his research into linguistic practices of students in Algiers concluded similarly: 'Arabic and Islam are complementary and mutually reinforcing. Arabization and Islamization are inseparable parts of a single cultural ideal that now pervades the Arab world' (Coffman, 1995, p. 51). A threat to the Arabic language can therefore be seen as a threat to the religion of Islam.Despite the excitement felt by stakeholders about the introduction of

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[4] The education systems of many non-English speaking nations teach the subject of English, recognizing that English is a global language, the international language of commerce, transport and diplomacy. In some countries English is taught as a Second Language (ESL). In the Independent schools of Qatar, however, English is currently mostly taught as a foreign language (EFL) (see Appendix 1:Glossary of KeyTerms). The distinction depends on which language is predominantly spoken in the classroom. If the English teacher can communicate meaningfully in mostly English then the subject is known as ESL. If not, as in many Qatari Independent schools, they are teaching EFL (Nayar, 1997, pp. 9-37).

[5] As a K1 teacher of English in Doha at Al Wajbah Independent Girls School my wife faced numerous parent complaints about their children's interest in reading English over Arabic. Anecdotal evidence suggests this was a common complaint.

information and communication technologies which are encouraged in both teaching and learning in the reform, certain intrinsic fears exist about this innovation. Seeking to discover and implement the best of educational practice and resources throughout the world the Qatari Supreme Education Council has resourced all the new schools with modern equipment and accompanying teacher training. Classrooms data shows (projectors), whiteboards, designated computer classrooms, student laptops, online learning and internet research are promoted widely. ICTs provide access to the world in an instant. This of course is a wonderful asset to learning but again poses a threat as ideas, attitudes, behaviours and language of non-Islamic people present alien values and beliefs that need a new vigilance, response and control not previously required.

Numerous educational studies (Hattie, 2009) promote the value of student-centred learning. Student-centred learning is more relevant, engaging, collaborative and interactive. This is widely recognized, including by the Qatari government who has contracted Western educational consultants to implement education reform utilizing such pedagogies. But another fear held by some in the Qatari community is that the fountain of wisdom, knowledge and understanding which exists in the male (usually) head of home (father), school (teacher), community (imam) and state (emir), may be found elsewhere. This could be seen to erode the authority of the traditional relational structures which give both meaning and support to the Arab Islamic society[6]. Many references to the pre-eminence of male authority in Islam exist within the Holy writings and beyond. One key Koranic scripture is verse 4:34: 'Men have authority over women because God has made

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[6] Jean P. Sasson's biography, *Princess, the* account of the life of a Saudi royal princess, further reinforces the portrait of the ubiquitous supremacy of the male authority figures with countless stories of women marginalized and suffering at the hands of men in the Saudi patriarchal society. (Sasson, 2001)

the one superior to the other, and because they spend their wealth to maintain them…As for those from whom you fear disobedience, admonish them and send them to beds apart and beat them. Then if they obey you, take no further action against them. Surely God is high, supreme' (Dawood, 1995).

A final fear that has been expressed by some stakeholders in the reform is that potentially subversive views may surface from the broad use of new resources. While students learnt from a single textbook, as they did for many years under the old Ministry schools, they had the content they accessed easily scrutinized and controlled. With a move to expand the resource base for research and learning in general, many educators, parents and tribal leaders see possibilities that do not suit the proper development of children ideologically and morally. Children can be exposed without adequate supervision to alternative views of society, morality, relationships, sexuality, politics and even religion when they have the freedom to access a wide range of resources in the name of education.

Perhaps more concerned than anyone at the local Qatari school level was the Palestinian-American literary theorist Idward Wadi Said who highlighted the subversive inaccuracies of Western imperialist representations of the East in multiple texts used primarily in the West but also in the East. Said took his cue from Derrida and Foucault and in *Orientalism* claimed that many Western texts on the East were biased with a view assuming that the West was the standard from which the "exotic", "inscrutable" Muslims (and others) deviate (Said, 1979, pp. 38-41) More recent and perhaps more widespread are the concerns of numerous Islamic commentators, like Abd-Hamid Jassat, critical of what they believe are the flagrant and openly subversive depictions of sexuality and relational norms portrayed in so many Western texts (Jassat, 2011). Both writers are concerned about 'representations' - Said with representations of the East in the West and Jassat with representations of morality and values.

These fears exist in the reforming education environment of Qatar but also in the broader Arab Muslim world as nations undergo education reform, but also as they broadly interface with the modern Western world. Education reform is currently underway in the neighbouring countries of United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Oman and Jordan. (World Bank, 2011, para. 5) In each instance it is likely that the broader fears outlined above may be felt by different members of the community, to a greater or lesser degree, usually dependent upon extreme or moderate religious views respectively. What is clear is that each education reform process involves the teaching of English and, more than likely, gives rise to the question this paper raises and attempts to address, namely: What perceptions about the use of English literature texts are held by Arab Muslim English Language teachers in relation to their society's traditional cultural values?

Religious Context: Background

Qatar, like many gulf countries, and to a lesser degree like many other Arab countries, is essentially monotheistic. Islam has existed in this wider region of Arabia for 1400 years as the pivotal element to a stable society, providing a worldview which accommodates a consistent view of self, society and the universe in submission to the will of Allah. Allah's will, communicated in the Koran and the Hadith / Sunnah, is explained by the local Imam and implemented by the leading male of every household. Every subset of every community has a mosque within walking distance and where possible males over 12 years of age are encouraged to attend weekly if not daily.

The local school, whether state or private is an extension of the home. It supports the community's expectation that Islam be promoted in direct teaching and personal encouragement. Without exception state schools from Primary (K-6) & Preparatory (7-9) to Secondary (10-12) have daily assemblies which always include a reading from the Koran and often an enthusiastic diatribe on a matter of spiritual, personal, communal or

even political nature. I experienced this every day for almost four years as did my colleagues in the Australian company favoured with many successful contract bids and likewise my colleagues from New Zealand, United States and Britain. In fact this practice was evident in both boys' and girls' state (Independent) primary, preparatory (middle years) and high schools throughout this gulf state.[7]

Following the formation of the early Islamic states, *Sharia*, religious law based on the *Koran* and the *Hadith* (or statements and actions ascribed to Mohammad), became the implemental policy of the *Shia*. According to Anderson, Seibert and Wagner (2006) the *Shia* developed in various Middle East states in opposition to the corrupt secular governments and the rise of the different sects. They point out the interaction of religion, law and politics in their seminal work, *Politics and Change in the Middle East*, discussing the impact of Western Imperialism and the consequential development of nationalism and the establishment of individual Arab states. These political structures stand in opposition to the Koranic *Umma* notion, or the entire body of Islamic believers. According to Anderson, Seibert and Wagner (2006), the newly emergent and very complex political landscape in the Middle East, but also in the Gulf specifically, followed such events as the failed Oslo Accord.

This comprehensive code of law in Islam known as *Sharia* is combined in Qatar's legal system with civil law codes in a discretionary system of law controlled by the Emir. Sharia law has two basic divisions: *ibadat*, personal obligations towards God, and *muamalat*, dealing with the collective relationships of the Muslim society including commerce, penal laws, family affairs, international relations and finance (Gates, 1996).

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[7] Most Independent schools proudly promote this element of their school's culture on their web sites. See, for example, the Hamza Bin Abd Muttalib Preparatory Independent School for Boys site: http://www.hamzaschool.edu.qa/main.aspx. Other sites are available through links on the Qatar Supreme Education Website: http://www.english.education.gov.qa/.

Qatar's political system is an emirati system, with the Emir essentially ruling as a benevolent autocrat assisted by government ministers of various portfolios. The Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, utilized the discretionary system of government in 2008 when he decreed that one minute of every lesson be devoted to teaching Muslim values in state school classrooms. In the same year he banned all school uniforms directing that the national dress (the black abaya for girls and the white thobe for boys) be worn at all times at school (except for physical education classes). Classroom teachers are expected to not only enforce these decrees but also integrate the wide range of Muslim values and practices into their subject content. Arab men and women are raised in such a context of cradle to grave religious saturation that teaching with reference to this worldview is an entirely natural process.

An Islamic state such as Qatar implies an Islamic education. This applies not only to the state run independent schools of the reform but also to every other private or international school. The Emiri Decree # 14 for the year 2009 stated that all private schools must fall under the umbrella of the SEC. Consequently HE Saad Al Mahmoud, the Minister of Education and Higher Education and Secretary General of the SEC issued decision # 8 for the year 2009 to oblige private schools to

> commit to teaching Arabic, Islamic studies and Qatari history beginning with the 2010/2011 school year as stated in article 2 of the ministerial decision … [to] teach the Islamic curriculum as a basic subject as it represents the corner stone for building the national and spiritual identity of the students…They should also be helped to take Islam as the main standard for their life. In teaching Islamic education, stress on the Islamic culture should be considered... (SEC Press Release, 2010)

The reform has taken Qatar a long way from the *kuttabs* of the past. But although much of the recent reform has occurred with the assistance of Western consultants at the bequest of the Qatari government offering lucrative educational contracts, Qatar's modern State education programme undergirded by the Islamic worldview is still diametrically

opposed to the pluralistic, secular ideology predominating in the West. Muslims not only reject the separation of church and state as an aberration, but insist that Islam is the true religion for mankind (Hulmes 1992. p131). In fact, as Hulmes points out, no orthodox Muslim (Hulmes does not define *orthodox* Muslim) is in a position to allow what pluralism demands, namely, the concession that different religious traditions (Islam included) are all merely 'relatively' true (Hulmes 1992, p. 132).[8]

This distinctive difference is critical in understanding the context of the issue this paper addresses. If we assume for the moment, as Wright does in *Spirituality and Education*, that the claims of Islam are true, that Allah did indeed create the world and reveal His will for humanity in the Koran, then only Muslims whose ultimate concern is obeying Allah have true spirituality. Correspondingly, the concerns and perspectives of non-Muslims, whether atheist, agnostic or some other religion are just illusions. As Wright claims, all positions are just as much acts of faith …whether it be positive, negative or non-committal (Wright, 2000, p. 26). And given the
assumption of Islam being 'true', these 'faiths' are false.

This is the perception then of the Islamic community when assessing education reform, or for that matter any interface with the rest of the world. So while Western education strives for inclusivity based on its pluralist worldview, Islamic education in Qatar tends towards exclusivity. This is evident in diverse ways, from teachers and office staff staying late after school in September 2009 at Abu Baker Asedeeq Secondary School, Doha, to erase or remove questionable material in science and social studies textbooks before the books were assigned to students the following day, to the removal of a particular book from a series of Graded Readers, to the careful discussion with students

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[8] Although Hulmes was writing some two decades ago, his insights are still very applicable in Qatar today.

deconstructing in the light of the Islamic worldview the forbidden dialogue between male and female characters in a comprehension reading passage.

Wright identifies two possible responses to this dilemma. He says a contrast needs to be drawn between religious orthodoxy and religious fundamentalism (Wright, 2000, p. 31). He goes on to explain the two possible responses: An orthodox religious tradition will generally seek to consolidate its identity by drawing on its 'inner resources', 'internal coherence' and 'received wisdom', rather than through a fundamentalist reaction to the threat of secular culture (Wright, 2000, p. 31).

Furthermore, Wright talks about a process of engagement-and-challenge which, though surprising to some, orthodoxy can supply (Wright, 2000, p. 31). He refers to this in the expansion of early Christianity. Another author, Colin Gunton, says of the early Christian theologians that they developed a view of the world and of human society which formed a victorious alternative to classicism. He argues that the early Christian Church flourished because in certain respects it proved itself intellectually superior to a bankrupt alternative (Gunton, 1983, p. 1).

Today Islamic scholars and teachers are doing the same. Outspoken Imams like Akhbar Ahmed and even western intellectuals like John Esposito interface regularly with plausible alternative ideological posturing. Such apologetics this paper argues occur every day in the Arab Islamic classroom as teachers largely reject fundamentalism and adopt orthodoxy, presenting a plausible case for difference and the superiority of the Islamic way. It is with one of these educational settings that this research is concerned: the English language classroom with the use of western texts often reflecting secular, pluralistic ideology, alien to many Islamic values and beliefs.

Conclusion

This explanation of the background to education reform in Qatar has highlighted the challenge of Arab Muslim teachers of English language meeting dual commitments: the professional and the cultural/religious. The first commitment: teachers in Supreme Education Council schools in Qatar are automatically participants in the educational reform process and face the professional challenge, among other things, of improving the level of English language usage. To this end all core subjects except Arabic and Islamic Studies aim to use English as the language of instruction. English language teachers have a significant responsibility then to support the emphasis on English language development. Best practice in ESL teaching involves reading more than just paragraphs without a narrative or non-fiction context (as the older Qatari curriculum was limited to) and should extend second language learners to narratives in chapter books written with a language level suited to the reading age of the student.

> It is widely accepted among leading linguists that extensive reading can be very useful in improving ESL & EFL students' general English level. Graded Readers [introduce]... reading to students at a level appropriate to their stage of development in English. (Maggs, 2007).

The second commitment: teachers of English language, like teachers of all subjects, in Qatar's state schools face the responsibility of supporting the local cultural and religious expectations. Of course, within any community those expectations are likely to vary somewhat, but compared to the average Western school community there appears to be universal support for enthusiastic promulgation of the Muslim faith. I observed that every day for nearly four years and this is further evidenced by the data collected in this study. This second challenge requires teachers of English language to maintain support for and promotion of distinctive Muslim beliefs, values and behaviours even while using Western texts, such as Graded Readers.

Chapter Overview

Chapter 1 has explained the background to the author's initial exposure to the question raised by Muslim Qatari Arab parents concerning the place of English literature in English language classes in Qatari Independent schools. It is this question which gave rise to the research question. Chapter 2 also explains Qatar's place on the world stage, Qatar's educational reform, the distinctives of Western ideology and some responses to it from those on the Islamic ideology spectrum. The chapter has then identified the structure of the research, the biographical details of the respondents and the key terms used throughout the dissertation.

Chapter 2 gives a review of the literature relevant to this study and includes a broad sweep of similar points of issue as Western meets Islamic cultures throughout the world today. It examines the effects of globalization and the power the English language has in this process. It documents research confirming the value of literature study as part of a foreign language program, and then this chapter explores the underlying philosophical similarities and differences of Islamic and Western societies with a view to framing the discussion of the results provided by this research of Arab teachers' perspectives in the Qatar educational environment.

Chapter 3 explains the qualitative research methodology utilized in this study. It justifies the use of what Scott and Usher call 'interpretative frames' (Scott and Usher, 1999) which Green unpacks as 'slices of life' (Green, 2002). It shows how these 'slices' are analysed by the research methods Denzin and Green (2000) described in their *Handbook of Qualitative Research,* using phenomenological case study techniques and enucleated further by Kvale's valuable categories of: Thematizing, Designing, Interviewing, Transcribing, Analyzing, Verifying and Reporting (1996).

Meanwhile Chapter 4 takes this analysis of the data set and presents a discussion of the research findings in the context of this methodology and the literature examined in Chapter Two. The findings of Ahmed and Donnan (1994) and numerous other researchers appear to be confirmed by the results of this research in the Qatari context. Ahmed and Donnan's assertion, for example, of the political and religious dominance of Islam appearing to resist the pressures that may appear from real or perceived threats such as the introduction of English literature texts in the English classroom are confirmed by the evidence echoing their words concerning Islam's "sustained handrail …that regulates daily life, (but) does not sacralize it" (Ahmed, Donnan, 1994 p.xi). But the discussion highlights two essential parameters this research data articulates for the specific context of Qatar's state schools which concerns this study: the text selection process, and the text teaching strategies.

Finally, Chapter 5 presents conclusions arising from the research, ramifications to teachers and the reform in general, and includes recommendations for further study. Chapter 5 ties the various elements of this study together to suggest conclusions about the knowledge obtained by the data, its relation to existing knowledge of similar issues and their treatment elsewhere, and areas requiring further investigation to add meaningfully to this field of study.

The thesis concludes with references and appendices containing the research data analysis as well as the research data in transcript and audio file format. Two additional appendices provide insight to foreign words and commonly used abbreviations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

       This chapter begins by noting that the philosophical base of modernism provided by the Enlightenment gives the Christian and Islamic worldviews a common ideological enemy because the Enlightenment thinkers effectively removed faith and left only reason as an epistemological base for truth and reality. This has significant ramifications for many discussions beyond the scope of this research paper, but certainly is clearly related to the dual challenge for English language teachers expressed in the conclusion to the previous chapter. This challenge it was explained is the competing commitments of the professional and the religious.

       The notion then, of both faith and reason providing an epistemological framework is explored deeply in this chapter where the salient literature, both polemic and academic (despite its paucity in direct relation to the topic of English language teaching in the Gulf), is examined. The Enlightenment's children, the modernists, and its grand-children, the post modernists, provide valuable insight to the changing face of Western literary narratives in terms of the reflected values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours that Arab English language teachers in Qatar may feel do support or do not support the local Islamic imperatives. Later, in Chapter 4, the survey and interview data will be discussed in the light of these underlying ideological positions explaining where Western literature and local Islamic expectations are more aligned and where it raises an impenetrable obstacle.

       Beyond an examination of merging and diverging worldviews, this chapter goes on to explore a variety of contexts where the Islamic world interfaces with the West. This is not new. The earliest records of Qatar itself (and other gulf tribes) feature trading relationships with African animalists, Indian Hindus and various Christian states (Commins, 2011) while today, according to Petersen (2002, p7), Qatar like other gulf

states benefits from close reciprocal relations with the West, 'For decades, a pattern has been established for the recycling of oil income into infrastructural development, consumer goods, and arms that in turn benefits Western economies'.

Indeed, this chapter takes the 'funnel' approach by at first broadly examining literature discussing similar dichotomies where East meets West, whether it be in the apparent diminished interest of the Shia Muslims of Trinidad in celebrating the Hosay festival, or the impact on local religious culture of the return of some of the diaspora of Turkish Muslim's to the mother country, or the impact of modern media on young Muslims in suburban Sydney or the Muslims of Java 'negotiating modernity'. These examples provide an insight as to what might be happening right now in Qatar, and specifically in Supreme Education Council schools where English language subject teachers are deciding to support the language learning process with Western titles and authors, whether modern or classic, abridged or original. Can these choices be made and still satisfy the demands of the very traditional orthodox Islamic community? Will parent protests force the hand of reform? Can Islamic Arab teachers select and then treat texts judiciously so as to avoid conflict? On what basis might titles be selected and what treatment would fit the curriculum and religious restraints?

Merging and Diverging Worldviews

Christianity and Islam have much in common. Both the *Bible* (Matt.6:21-22) and the *Koran* (3:110) label those outside of their respective religions as *unbelievers* or *Kafirs*. Both religions recognize the first man Adam (Gen1:26; *Koran* 2:31), both recognize Abraham as a father (of the faith: Rom. 4:16; of the Arabic race *Koran* 2:124), and both recognize Moses as a great prophet (Exodus 4:11; Al-Baqara 2:51). Muslims call Christians *ahl al-kitab*, 'people of the book'. That points to the idea that both religions are revealed religions to varying degrees, claiming that God has spoken into this time-space

world and revealed himself and provided an exclusive way to live and know God. Those that do not accept that *way* are mistaken, misguided and misinformed. They are *heathen* or *kafir*. They have other ways of thinking, of seeing the world, origins, purposes, values, endings. Western Civilization is essentially a civilization of unbelievers to the Muslim (*Koran* 98:6).

The history of Islam demonstrates the religion's incredible resilience to major ideological change. Of course there have been leadership disputes, major sects or divisions within Islam and specifically the Arab community, but the religion with its five pillars of faith has been a bastion of strength in one form or another, given its 1400 year history and the persistent influence over that period. Indeed, the Arab cultures, bred from both the different forms of the religion and historic Arabic cultures, reflect such an intrinsic strength that much of the historic way of life can still be observed today. But this way of life may be facing its greatest challenge.

While the religious West has experienced numerous challenges and changes to its dominant ideologies, the Arab Islamic worldview somehow has not seen these largely secular humanist ideological attacks have any significant impact. The Judaeo-Christian worldview was the foundational ideology of the developing Western world. But the practices, beliefs and religious habits of generations of Westerners have changed, certainly since the 19th century, but also very clearly in recent times. The Australian Federal Bureau of Statistics, for example, notes the trend of decreasing adherence to the Christian religion in Australia since the first census in 1911 (ABS, 2011). At the same time in Muslim countries like Syria, Iran and other Arab lands the Babi and Bahai movements, for example, were quashed and their leaders exiled. The communists infiltrated a number of Arab states, notably Oman and Algeria, but in time this was seen not only as a political

attack but an attack on Islam. Despite many military and political successes communism did not gain wide acceptance in Arab Islamic states.

Yet in the West thinkers like Descartes (1644) hailed the might of the rational mind determining man's purpose and existence: *I think, therefore I am* (Descartes, 1991 Part 1, Article 7). Centuries later the notion had been reversed. Beckett hailed the inevitability of the absurd. Beckett wrote in his novel *The Unnamable,* 'That the impossible should be asked of me, good, what else could be asked of me? But the absurd! Of me whom they have reduced to reason.' (Beckett, 1994, p.686). Islamic societies do not boast a grid of optional answers to the axiological, cosmological, epistemological, ontological and teleological questions. Islam has its own clearly defined responses to the big philosophical questions, but it has no history of a Friedrich Nietzsche, for example, who in 1883 in his magnum opus *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, declared "God is dead". It does not know a time when not only are the age old certainties (the greatest being that Allah/God exists) questioned but they begin to lose their certainty, and eventually are abandoned. Yeats prophetically spoke of this in the Western context in 'The Second Coming':

> *All things fall apart; the centre cannot hold,*
> *Mere anarchy is loosed upon the earth;*
> *The blood dimmed tide is loosed* (Yeats, 2000)

Like elsewhere in the world Arab Islamic states have effectively suppressed challengers to the contemporary political and occasionally religious discourse, labelling such questioning as subversive, seditious and even sacrilegious. The riots of 2009 in Iran demonstrate the modern potential for wide scale protest of the ruling hegemony, especially demonstrating the role of technology in mobilizing minds and bodies faster than the state can suppress them. During my two trips to Iran in the past few years I spoke privately to dozens of young people. Almost without exception, especially in the big cities, those

under 30-35 did not support the Islamic theocracy and many even questioned the veracity of the religious claims, suggesting that religion had always been used as a tool to control the populace. To many the young Neda, who was shot and killed in June 2009 (Wikipedia, 2012), became an Achaemenid Persian warrior from some battle of antiquity fighting passively for justice and election honesty. Then the 2011 Arab spring of discontent led to the major upheavals in Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, Libya, Yemen and Syria where the populace are still protesting what they claim is the oppressive regime of President Bashar al-Assad (BBC, 2012, para. 3).

These large scale protests throughout the Arab world are significant, as much for their relatively rare occurrence in Arab Muslim history as for their universality, activating millions of Arabs across vast regions of the Middle East and North Africa. According to Hassan Mneimneh from the German Marshall Fund (2011) 'The political discourse of the transformations, while often uneven and vague, is clearly informed by "positive" (liberal, democratic, secular, progressive) notions' (para 9). This commentary from a United States 'think tank' is subject to the same critique that Edward Said says should be applied to the orientalist positioning that undergirds much of the language used in writings about the East by Western authors. Said (2001) might question whether these notions are indeed 'positive', but they do reflect an ideological influence that is clearly Western, perhaps though only to the point that democratic power is valued and seen as a means to assert a new overtly Muslim constitution as in Egypt under the Islamic Brotherhood's President Mohammed Morsi (BBC, 2012, para. 23).

Westerners saw the anarchy that Yeats spoke about in the First and Second World Wars but perhaps in its most stark forms the whole world saw it in the consequences of the ideas of leaders like Stalin, Mao Ste Tung and Pohl Pot. Ionesco, like Beckett, saw then an absurd vision of the world: "Absurd is that which is devoid of purpose. ...Cut off from his

religious, metaphysical, and transcendental roots, man is lost; all his actions become senseless, absurd, useless" (Esslin, 1986: p.23)

Could a unifying, purposeful view of life be placed at risk by having a new generation of Arab Islamic students read literature in their English language classes that concludes, as Beckett does when asked what was valuable about life, "Precious little" (Linley, 1998)? Indeed, what is to become of a culture exposed to characters such as Heller's Yossarian who concludes in *Catch 22* after seeing Snowden's entrails sliding out beneath his flak jacket that "man is matter – that is all" (Heller, 1999), or reads Golding's vision of humanity as millions of western high school students have, turning Ballantyne's *The Coral Island* into an inferno of uncivilized destruction in *Lord of the Flies* (Golding, 2002)? Neither does the character of Malone in the literature of Beckett offer much that is positive to the Islamic system that generations of Arab imams and fathers and national leaders have perpetuated: *Let me say before I go any further that I forgive nobody. I wish them all an atrocious life and then the fires and ice of hell in the execrable generations to come* (Beckett, 1951: p. 247).

Thus, Western Civilization has experienced *significant forces influencing* and shaping what exists today in its plurality of expressions. It is not surprising therefore that a culture which has a proud history of resilience to religious and cultural influence is suspicious of elements of Western culture that emerge as potential forces during the education of their children. Further, neither is it surprising when one considers the impact of Western civilization on other cultures and even its own.

Federici's volume, *Enduring Western Civilization*, cleverly titled with an adianoeta questioning the West's dominance, challenges both the semantics of the term Western 'Civilization' as well as its historic development. The collection of essays examines the heritage and fruit of the West. Furthermore, the book asserts the alleged rational and

civilized West has left no third world culture intact (Federici, 1995, p.xii). Foregrounding

his discussion of the authoritarian crises the West bred last century, Federici quotes from

Marguerite Duras' war memoir *The War*

> It's August 1944…Nothing yet has been discovered yet about the Nazi atrocities…We're still living in the first age of humanity, pure, virginal, for another few months. Nothing has been revealed about the Human Race. (Federici, 1995, p.63)

That Western civilization could give birth to the likes of Hitler and the Nazi

horrors appears surprising when one examines the utopian dreams of the Enlightenment.

And yet the furnaces of untold *stammlagers* (prisoner of war camps) stand as sombre

monuments to that which Federici and others saw revealed of the human race, something

which the Modernity project could only subsume until its very own tradition of free

thought and liberal democracy sponsored an authoritarian regime that spawned the ideas

of Nietzsche and gave application to an idea that there was such a thing as 'a life unworthy

of life' (*Lebensunwertes Leben*), an idea promoted by the Germans Karl Binding and

Alfred Hoche. These 'unworthy' included the handicapped, elderly, infirm, homosexuals,

gypsies, Jews, Jehovah's Witnesses and more. What if such freedom to think was

restricted? What if cultural taboos and civil laws prevented the promulgation of such

notions? Sharia law and Arab Muslim cultures have had such restrictions for generations,

explaining why no major religious or ideological challenge has shaken the dominance of

the Muslim worldview in the Arab world, because the 'Enlightened' have been kept at a

distance.

The Challenge of the Enlightenment

As the opening of this chapter states, Islam and Christianity share common ideological enemies. Essentially the modernity project stemming from the Enlightenment presents alien notions to the two religious belief systems. The Enlightenment gave birth to thinkers like Rene Descartes, John Locke and later David Hume who successfully dethroned revelation as a source of truth, replacing it with reason. Reality was seen as the sum of the materials of the universe, as opposed to important elements which cannot be empirically determined by the senses. This is anathema to both religious positions because it eliminates the faith claim that there is a God who has spoken because it cannot be supported by empirical evidence. Indeed, David Hume asserts in his *A Treatise of Human Nature* that man's empirical experience gives us little more than a collection of random sense impressions that we organize and structure to give meaning and improved living (Hume, 1978). The subsequent development of science and technology further led to the marginalization of religious beliefs. Francis Schaeffer noted that this was not immediately seen in common life but filtered down from the intellectuals through the arts in time (Schaeffer, 1983). This would explain why English classics, usually in abridged form, have greater popularity among Arab English language teachers than contemporary literature, one of the findings to be discussed in Chapter Four. Texts with a greater semblance of Christian values and ideas have more in common with Islamic values. The chances increase as the text is older and therefore more reflective of a Christian era, that it will contain such values and concepts (These values are many and varied. They range from acceptance of a Creator God, to male authority models, to modesty in female clothing, to restrictions of sexual practice and orientation, and much more.).

The modernity project with its roots in the Enlightenment has four expressions according to Wright. He identifies Materialism, Romanticism, Post-modernism and Critical Realism as major philosophical traditions stemming from modernity (Wright,

2000, p. 17). The materialists' version of truth and reality has been discussed by noting that by making sense of sense impressions alone, science and technology have made enormous contributions to the material well-being of humanity. But consider post-modern notions: while postmodernism appears to repudiate much of modernity, postmodernism also poses a common threat to the religions of Islam and Christian fundamentalism by virtue of the questioning of the epistemological base of each.[9] Foucault tends to destabilize all, including the modernity project, by claiming that there is no meta-narrative, no single stabilizing view (such as a vision of God's kingdom or even the pursuit of a materialist utopia). He is adamant that we must abandon all those discourses that once led us to the sovereignty of consciousness (Foucault, 1991, p.202). In this he destabilizes such claims as "This is the Book…" (Koran 2:2) or "In the beginning God …" (Genesis 1:1). Meanwhile, Derrida claiming that words have no real symbolic value, that they neither label physical nor mental, nor even divine objects, challenges the first verse of the Koran and the verse of the Gospel of John (Derrida, 1976, p.11). Wright's understanding is instructive in the face of this epistemological challenge. In the previous chapter it was noted that Wright claims that religious adherents can either 'react and retreat' or 'engage and conquer' in the face of a major challenge. This notion frames the discussion of results from this research data. However, as the discussion of results will reveal, the teachers interviewed in this research project appear not to be challenged by the philosophical presuppositions of modernism and post-modernism; in fact, they appear oblivious to these latter concerns: the destabilisation of language and therefore epistemology. They are concerned with more readily perceived threats: references to pork or pigs, for example, or

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[9] Interestingly, the ideas of men like Derrida, Foucault and Rorty were reflected in the recently replaced Senior High English syllabus in Queensland. The former 2002 QSA Senior English Syllabus which in its rationale made direct reference to the guiding theories of post-structuralism has now been replaced with a much more widely accepted document published in July 2010. The problem with the former document was essentially the discourse focus.

shows of intimacy between unmarried characters, or any demonstration or discussion of sexual matters, or the mention of alcohol in a story.

This paper concludes, as indicated earlier in reference to Wright's suggestion that responses to issues of cultural effrontery (in this case those emerging from the study of English literature) can be either reactionary or orthodox, that staff in Islamic schools can either 'react and retreat' or take the 'engage-and-challenge' approach to challenging issues out of the strength of their religious orthodoxy.

The react and retreat approach of fundamentalism does not give an opportunity for religious adherents to know what they believe and why, as opposed to what they do not believe and why not. If a faith claim is said to have coherent rationality, then it needs to interact rationally with intellectual and experiential challenges. Both Islam and Christianity claim to have a solid rational base. As this research suggests, Arab teachers in Islamic classrooms engaging with the issues that arise from the teaching of English literature in their English language classrooms can either react and retreat and simply eliminate challenging words, pictures or whole texts, or they can engage and explain basing the strength of their discussion on the coherence of the entire Islamic worldview.

'Engage & Conquer', or 'React & Retreat'

Ahmed and Donnan present in *Islam, Globalization and Modernity* a compelling examination of the global processes now challenging Muslims everywhere to 'engage and explain' (to use their phrase) as the heathen are not kept at quite such a distance, as Muslims around the globe interact in the 21st century with dynamic forces of change. According to them,

> Muslims are now forced to engage these issues and to formulate responses to them so that matters which in the past might have been considered by the well-informed few are now debated throughout society by people at every level of social organization. (Ahmed, Donnan, 1994, p.iii)

Enerst Gellner, in his foreword to *Islam, Globalization and Modernity,* claims that this engagement has proven the resilience of Islam. He points out that while all other industrialized or industrializing nations have succumbed to secularism, where

> the scientific basis of the new technology undermines faith …[it] deprives religion of its organizational base, …or eventually cuts its throat … One thing, however, is clear: the secularization thesis does not apply to Islam. In the course of the last one hundred years,
> the hold of Islam over the minds and hearts of believers has not diminished and, by some criteria, has probably increased (Ahmed, Donnan, 1994, p.x).

Gellner argues that while many 'under-developed' nations have lost their religious traditions and commitment, Islam has successfully resisted, in fact, developed a 'conspicuous fundamentalist trend in Islam' (Ahmed, Donnan, 1994, p.xi).

I experienced anecdotally this 'conspicuous fundamentalist trend in Islam' over a number of years in the Middle East. Perhaps the most powerful evidence were reports of women whose dress habits changed radically after 9/11. Many reported that this was a trigger for a return to traditional ways. One story from Kuwait illustrates the change at first away from local customs and then a return to these traditions. A number of Qatari ladies told me of Bahraini and Kuwaiti women who just 15 years ago were wearing mini-skirts and short sleeved tops. These women had previously worn the black abaya and hijab and had adopted more western clothing. Yet today, in addition to the abaya and hijab, these same women were wearing a nose/eyes face mask.

This trend of loyalty to the ancient religion in the face of the secular challenge is due to 'a firmly delineated divine message, providing ...a sustained handrail …that regulates daily life, [but] does not sacralize it' (Ahmed, Donnan, 1994, p.xi). Using the term 'sacralise', Gellner curiously contrasts the resilience of Islam with the 'dismal failure' of Marxism to weather the storm of secularism which revealed the squalid state of 'real socialism' (as opposed to the utopian dream). There's no 'pie in the sky' with Islam but a practical vision of all life and work as equally sacred.

Gellner's comments are perhaps premature though. He may be accurately describing many instances of Islamic response to the threats of modernity, but it is early times yet. The world has yet to see the passing of a generation or two and the rise of a new generation or two more completely immersed in the globalized world of communication technology and popular Western culture exposing the Islamic 'High Traditions', which Gellner refers to, to relentless rational and cultural attack. The Islam of today may look very different tomorrow. I have gathered much anecdotal evidence of how this cultural and intellectual threat works in the lives of young Islamic adherents and I question if now, 16 years since Ahmed, Donnan published their collection of essays, it really is 'engage and conquer' or 'engage and mutate'.

What do I mean by these terms? Wright's 'engage and conquer' relates to a coherent rational response to an ideological or cultural challenge confidently based on the encompassing worldview framework that a religion, like Islam, boasts. My term 'engage and mutate' suggests that the process of engaging with an ideological or cultural challenge may not result in such a clear victory for what Gellner calls the religion's 'high traditions' (Ahmed, Donnan, 1994). I suggest that 'engaging', either by explicit rational deconstruction, or by implicit interaction and adoption, may actually result in a 'mutation' of the 'ancient religion'. This could occur in Islam across a range of possible cultural contexts interfacing with the West. The example I give below (p.55) concerns a young man and his views on dating, clearly a mutation from his parents' view of dating.

The Muslim Diaspora – Clash or Mash?

Ahmed and Donnan (1994, pp. 4-8) discuss one means by which Muslims interface with the West and that is through the diaspora of millions of Muslim migrants to western countries. They identify a number of different circumstances encountered by Muslim

migrants: some encounter very different forms of Islam in their adopted land; some experience new freedoms to express their difference, such as the Turkish Alevis, who become free of the Sunni hegemony they experience in Turkey when they emigrate to Germany; some return home to what appears a 'fossilized' form of their religion, bringing their new experience; others return to find they are the fossils, having faithfully preserved the old ways in their absence only to find a changed homeland. 'The very elasticity of the diasporic tie thus ensures the reciprocal redefinition of identity at both ends of the migratory chain as elements of culture rebound first this way and then that' (Ahmed and Donnan, 1994, p. 6). Thus the diasporas redefine the religion over time. This process of struggle for cultural identity and religious re-formation is occurring in Muslim homes everywhere, but particularly where diaspora forces a conflict of values and depictions of those values.

Likewise, like Samuel P. Huntingdon, I see a clash of civilizations occurring. I certainly have seen it daily in the bedrooms (where children have access to satellite television) and living rooms (where parents contend with 'other-minded' children) of hundreds of Muslim families and don't doubt that this is widespread. Most families, no matter what culture, experience manifestations of adolescents struggling to express their newfound identity approaching young adulthood in what feels like a constricting world, but this world is usually within their own culture. How much more in the Islamic home where the clash of cultures of two civilizations is now occurring daily?

However, although what is occurring in their homes may seem like World War III to many Muslim parents, it is nothing yet as Huntingdon depicts it. In *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996), he argues that the conflicts of the future will not be economic or ideological, but religious and cultural. Huntingdon's argument is somewhat flawed in that he fails to see the inevitable connection between

ideology and religion and culture, particularly in the Islamic context. Others have been

scathing in their criticism of it. For instance, in *The Clash of Ignorance*, Said (2001)

claims that Huntingdon sees the world too clearly delineated into fictitious lines of religion

or some other arbitrary division. Said says that there exists a dynamic interdependency and

interaction of culture of the world, that there is no such 'fixed' civilization as Huntingdon

presumes. Likewise, Seyyed Hossein Nasr criticized the notion of a clash of civilizations,

preferring instead to use the term raised by a former Iranian President, Mohammad

Khatami, who offered to the United Nations the suggestion of the title 'dialogue between

civilizations', a theme which was adopted for the year 2001. Nasr admits that the diaspora

of Muslims has been significant. He describes in detail the Muslim migrations to Europe

and to Canada and to the United States noting there is much in common to celebrate. For

example, he claims that during the last few decades there has been a much more active

presentation of Islamic thought and art in the West and especially the United States.

> For the first time works of Islamic philosophy, theology, religious thought and so
> forth have gone from departments specializing in these fields to other departments
> in universities…novels, literature has now spilled over from the concern of
> specialists to the more general public …Muslim saints and poets have become
> household names (Nasr, 2004, Lecture 14).

Nasr, in fact, strongly repudiates Huntingdon's idea saying,

> Most Muslim's are totally opposed to this thesis…as many westerners are opposed.
> In the Islamic world I don't know of a single Islamic thinker – Arab, Persian,
> Pakistani, Turkish, or anywhere else, who is in favour of this thesis. (Nasr, 2004,
> Lecture 14).

He points out that although Muslims might be opposed to the presence of the West in the

Islamic world, to military occupation, to the threat to Islamic identity through the spread

of popular culture, by far the most widely held view of Muslims, especially among famous

Muslim thinkers, is the idea of a 'dialogue of civilizations, of trying to meet the West…'

(Nasr, 2004, Lecture 14).

Nasr points out that this dialogue has actually been taking place for some time. He makes the point that at least on a religious level the leaders of the three great monotheistic religions, Islam, Christianity and Judaism, have realized for a number of decades now that they have a lot more in common than they have differences. Many ecumenical meetings have been held since the 50s and 60s. "I was for years a member in the Kennedy Centre of a 'trilogue'…and this is going on very much in the Western world, in the Arab world, even within Israel…" (Nasr, 2004, Lecture 14). He goes on to say that even at the political level leaders who have been influenced by these religious ideas have even 'joined hands' in certain debates and international dialogues.

What can one conclude then about the two apparently conflicting perspectives – Huntingdon's clash of civilizations and Nasr's dialogue of civilizations, a type of 'mash' of cultures? And what relation does either position have to the question addressed by this paper? This contribution is actually very significant. A full discussion of its relevance appears in the concluding section of this chapter but suffice to say now that the philosophical presuppositions become supremely important in recognizing what is an ultimate point of conflict and what is a point of potential compromise or an exercise of tolerance.

Fun, Fun, Fun

Every teacher of English in the West interfaces with popular culture resources that are relevant, engaging and fun, and which serve the learning outcomes of the curriculum. Increasingly teachers of English as a second language are prompted to use the variety of Western popular culture expressions, especially those of the electronic media, to connect students to the foreign language of English. What happens though when the literature selected for use in Qatari Independent schools to support English language programs is drawn from the pool of electronic or print texts in Western young popular culture?

Many Muslim academics like Nasr are adamant that Western popular culture is the problem. Popular Western popular culture, for example, challenges the traditional upbringing of most Muslims in dress, dance, music, language, relationships, sexuality, alcohol, social habits, eating habits and recreational activities. There is not a lot of emphasis on prayer in popular Western popular culture (a difficulty to a Muslim parent encouraging their children to pray five times a day). Popular culture does not refer often to God, and certainly not respectfully nor specifically by name, Allah, nor does it valorise the reading of the *Koran*. Referring to popular Western culture Nasr says,

> It appeals to the passions of the young, it is very wooing and enticing, and it stands opposed to the traditional disciplines which were used in the upbringing of people and which defined traditional culture.(Nasr, 2004, Lecture 14).

In Muslim Java Muslim identity is also being challenged by this same popular Western culture. Ronald Lukens-Bull has documented and analysed this process thoroughly in his book *A Peaceful Jihad: Negotiating Identity and Modernity in Muslim Java* (Lukens-Bull, 2005). Lukens-Bull quotes a Muslim conference speaker, Kyai Djauhari who placed most of the blame on the outside forces that he ... attributed to globalization (Lukens-Bull, 2005, p. 79).

Regarding the power of communication technologies to transport and infiltrate popular Western culture Lukens-Bull quotes Kyai Tholchah Hasan, a leading Indonesian Muslim cleric:

> The information boom…has torn national boundaries, penetrated cultural walls with ease…There is not even one culture that has not been influenced…this age of computers and modern telecommunications has already planted a wide influence in patterns of thought and behavior including in those areas concerned with religion and theology (Hasan, as quoted in Lukens-Bull, 2005, p. 80).

Asef Bayat, writing in the journal *Public Culture,* makes the following observation in his article "Islamism and the Politics of Fun"

> One of the ironies of 'fundamentalist' Islamism is that it has tenaciously withstood waves of political challenges but has felt powerless before simple displays of spontaneity and joy and the pursuit of everyday pleasures. It seems as though every occasion of mundane festivity, private parties, and gatherings at bustling street corners, teahouses, shopping malls, and secular celebrations becomes a matter of profound doctrinal anxiety and delegitimation (Bayat, 2007, p. 433).

In his article Bayat draws mainly on the experience of Muslim states, in particular post-revolution Iran, and explores why Muslims appear so distinctly apprehensive of 'fun' — 'a preoccupation most people in the world seem to take for granted' (Bayat, 2007, p. 433). His definition of fun is broad referring to:

> an array of ad hoc, nonroutine, and joyful conducts — ranging from playing games, joking, dancing, and social drinking, to involvement in playful art, music, sex, and sport, to particular ways of speaking, laughing, appearing, or carrying oneself — where individuals break free temporarily from the disciplined constraints of daily life, normative obligations, and organized power (Bayat, 2007, p. 434).

My experience of numerous years in diverse Muslim states from Iran to Qatar to Oman and Saudi Arabia suggests that Muslims have as much or more capacity to express and enjoy fun as anyone else but are indeed limited as Bayat suggests by cultural and social restrictions in the expression of that fun. In Iran, for example, I knew young people who met clandestinely to make hip hop music and to dance. In fact, even their assembling together as a mixed gender group was risky…but fun. One young man told me that Iran is the best place to be a man with young women striving to emulate the perceived sexual freedom of the Western lifestyle. As a result this young man boasted having seven sexual partners at the time, that is, until his mobile phone rang and he announced, "No, now six!"

The Iranian Republic's Shia version of Islam actually provides a controlled setting for carnal passion. Fun can be had with another woman in a 'marriage of pleasure'

(*mot'a)*. This might be an agreement censored by the Imam lasting for just hours or even years. Indeed, the Islamic Republic, according to Bayat, invoking a saying of Imam Sadeq wishing every man to have a *mot'a* at least once in his life, initiated in 2002 a move to 'channel some three hundred thousand prostitutes into 'chastity houses', where men could 'marry' prostitutes' (Bayat, 2007, p. 437). He makes the point that Islamists were not concerned about sex but rather the control of sexuality.

I experienced nearby in Qatar, and more so (because of Westernisation) in the Emirates (particularly Dubai), Muslims participating in a range of fun activities from gathering at sheesha bars, to camping on the Persian Gulf beaches to playing ten pin bowls. Clearly, though, the range of fun activities is heavily restricted in the Middle Eastern Islamic context compared to what those in the West experience. Many of my Muslim friends and colleagues marveled at my lifestyle of sport, social outings and parties that did not necessarily involve alcohol, illicit sex or the consumption of pork but did mix genders, ages and featured a wide range of 'fun' activities.

Bayat makes the point that while all ages (like all cultures) enjoy fun, youth are the 'prime practictioners of fun' which tends to 'subject them to different degrees of prohibitions and regulations that can be subsumed under the rhetoric of "anti-fun." (Bayat, 2007). Bayat says that today's more affluent and globalised Muslim youth 'tend to embrace more spontaneous, erotically charged, and commodified pleasures' and that this explains 'why globalizing youngsters more than others cause fear and fury among Islamist anti-fun adversaries, especially when much of what these youths practice is informed by Western technologies of fun and is framed in terms of "Western cultural import"' (Bayat, 2007, p. 434).

Bayat's article is very interesting because after describing the tendency in fundamentalist Islamic society to censor fun he asserts that this is all part of a 'power

paradigm' whereby the limitation placed on fun activities is not just stabilizing the 'moral order' but is actually perpetuating the ruling elite. If this is true it may have significant repercussions for this study. Reading is not just hard work; it is meant to be 'fun', an aesthetic experience that rewards the curious, the adventurous and those that simply like a good story. Indeed, Bayat talks of a hegemony created by a 'regime of power' whose 'legitimacy lies in deploying a particular doctrinal paradigm.' He argues that this 'fear of fun revolves around the fear of exit from the paradigm that frames their mastery' (Bayat, 2007, p434).

Bayat's accounts, like my anecdotes, link certain perceived offensive fun pursuits in Middle Eastern societies to Western cultural influence. But in Trinidad a major shift has occurred where the local Muslim population appears to have been strongly influenced in this area of 'fun' by the local 'non-Western' society. Muslims in Trinidad are a minority group, accounting for about 7%-8% of the population. The sacred celebration of the Hosay, a famous and important memorial event signifying sacrifice and courage for Shia Muslims, is not today what it used to be. Gustav Thaiss describes in detail the change that has occurred in the way the Shia Muslim community in Trinidad celebrate the festival. That which was once a dirge in terms of atmosphere and music is now mirth and dance. Thaiss describes the loss of traditional concern for the Muharram commemorations as 'concepts, patterns of behavior and images and symbols derived from the wider society's carnival domain, as well as from the field of popular culture' replacing those from 'a strictly Shia religious sphere' (Thaiss, 1994, p. 48). The current day event could be enough to send fear through the minds of any conservative Muslim facing the encroachment of secular and popular culture. It was less than 20 years ago, according to Thaiss, that this ceremony had great significance to Muslims in Trinidad. Now its significance is measured more by the number of opposite gender contacts made, phone numbers collected, new

clothes purchased, dances had – in short – the amount of fun experienced. Thaiss reveals from his research, "Sunni informants to whom I spoke even noted that because some of the parents are very strict, girls have secret boyfriends, 'and they're glad also for the night time to come to get a break, to come meet their boyfriends..'" (1994, p. 45). Thaiss concludes that what is happening in Trinidad, especially in St James, is the older Shia Muslim population losing control of at least this one expression of their religion: 'the Shia are aware that they are losing control of the …Muharram rituals' (1994: p.47) He quotes a young Shia woman: 'Women no longer weep or sing the *marseeha* …since the younger generation do not speak Urdu … all they think about is what outfit they are going to wear – because the young ones are looking for boys' (1994, p. 47).

This is not quite the traditional matchmaking ceremony from the Islamic tradition. What was once the domain of the father finding a partner for his daughter (or the mother for her son) here looks very much like the rituals of courting of popular Western culture. For this paper's author this story was repeated numerous times in the years he spent with young people in Doha, Qatar. At a weekend beach retreat with boys and fathers and uncles and school teachers one 16 year old Qatari lad confided saying, 'You know, Mr Ian, I'm not going to marry the girl my father wants me to marry.'

'Oh, no?'

'No, I'm going to marry the girl I love.'

In reply to that novel but defiant assertion he was asked about how he could meet a girl in order to love her. 'That's no problem, Mr Ian. I meet girls on the internet where we *chat*.'

'But that's not like actually talking to them!'

'Ah, but then we exchange phone numbers and talk on our mobiles when we are free."

'But that's not real relationship.'

'And then we organize to meet at the shopping centre, or in the cinema.' Thus such innovative uses of technology are being used in the pursuit of what is portrayed as 'normal' boy/girl relationships in the West.

But where to once a broad cultural shift occurs of this nature? And what happens in the school yard, even in single sex schools with young people experiencing new avenues of relationship building? Certainly those involved in the Muslim diaspora in Western countries have been exposed to what now is commonplace in homes and schools. According to Wadham, Pudsey and Boyd 'These ideas about sex and these aspirations to achieve the ideal are taken into the school arena' (Wadham, Pudsey, Boyd, 2007: p.241). The *Good Weekend* described vividly the sexual environment that any young person (or adult) could be exposed to in Australia

> Paris Hilton's sex video. Girls masturbating on Big Brother, women falling over themselves to flash their breasts, free, for the camera. The sound of pelvises grinding on dance floors across Australia, before their vampish young owners tear off in girl gangs to an ice-cream parlour. Babes and Bitches. Bratz Dolls. News items about newsreaders' cleavage. The 'fuck buddy', the booty call where you phone a friend for no no-strings-attached sex. (*Good Weekend,* 11 February 2006, Quoted in Wadham, Pudsey, Boyd, 2007, p. 241)

Broad cultural forces are at work at home, but also abroad. Many of these forces are market driven. The 'Bratz' doll, for example, is marketed as an upgraded Barbie Doll. Her exaggerated physical features (big breasts, small tight posterior and long legs) are sexual in nature, closely depicting a 'hooker's' outfit. While viewing the cartoons on weekend morning television, young people can see such images fleshed out in raunchy music videos. Shaggy, Sugababes and Beyonce are some examples of the clips that feature scantily clad young women gyrating in spectacular exemplary sexual style for their young and impressionable audience.

All this is fun, of course, unless you are the mature, responsible, caring parent, teacher or psychologist. And then you recognize that this 'fun' is denying the young child their natural childhood and reshaping the adolescent into the image portrayed by the sex media. Of how much more concern then might this be to the Islamic Arab immigrant from the Middle East who wishes to perpetuate the values and culture of the homeland, a culture where a female may not even expose her face to more than her family, let alone the rest of her body, a culture where to talk about sex, let alone simulate it, is anathema, a culture where a boy and girl must not talk unless engaged or approaching betrothal, let alone hold one another depicting sexual moves.

Qatari schools and school communities face daily decisions about censorship in the face of an already significant volume of western mass media influencing tomorrow's generation of Muslim leaders. Satellite television offering hundreds of channels to viewers, young and old alike, is commonplace in Qatar. The issue of censorship of these mass media products led to a regional conference in 2009. Qatar's first lady, Sheikha Mosah, initiating the meeting in Doha of Arab leaders to discuss the issue, expressed her grave concerns for the moral health of children left without supervision to a wide range of media introducing very offensive non-Islamic material into the conservative Islamic homes in Qatar and beyond.

It is this context of censorship concern of what some call 'fun' and others call 'sick' that this research lies. If, as Bayat maintains, there is more than a moral purpose in censoring fun activities then this 'moral political authority', as he calls it, could impact on an educator's decision with regards to the use of Western literature. Under the new curricular reform that has introduced English novels and plays in the English-language classroom, Qatar English teachers might have to negotiate the cultural implications of Western novels,plays and magazines that can be perceived by parents and government authorities

as 'fun' or 'dangerous.' Can one observe, either in the practice of teachers or in in-depth interviews with teachers, any basis to suspect that the fear of Western literature, or in fact fun, (if indeed this fear is widespread) is based on a fear of the loss of a particular regime's power base, or rather on a sincere concern for the moral and religious health of a student?

Radicalism – Engaging the Disengaged

Wright's options for responses to cultural challenges such as the 'fun' of experiencing Western popular culture, and the reading of Western popular culture, is central to this dissertation. Out of the strength of orthodoxy he argues comes engaging (and the resultant conquering), while out of fundamentalism comes reacting (and retreating to a more narrow world). These options, and the continuum which this study concludes exists between the extremes, is often exported in the religious and cultural remix for which diasporas are many times catalysts. Appadurai (1990, p. 11) points out that this is 'now at the core of a variety of global fundamentalisms, including Islamic and Hindu fundamentalism'. What it means is that the interface, working both ways, means radical religious elements from Islamic, Hindu or any other religion can adopt a new home abroad complete with their radical and sometimes aggressive ideology.

Abd-al-Bari Atwan, Chief Editor of the London based Arabic newspaper *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, outlined the justification felt by terrorists for their actions in his article "Al-Qa'idah Has Not Been Defeated, and Here Are Our Reasons" (2008). Atwan points out that most of the means enacted by Western powers to counter both Sunni and Shiite extremism have been counterproductive. He argues that among other factors inequities across Arab nations has fostered extremism. What is particularly notable for this dissertation, though, is the angst Atwan says was generated by so-called education reform moves,

> The Arab regimes changed school curricula in response to US pressure on the pretext of modernizing their societies and keeping them away from extremism. By doing so, these regimes imparted greater legitimacy to this extreme thought and

shifted it from books to the Internet. Students now spend more time using the Web net than in crowded and worn-out schools where frustrated teachers give lessons, while anything prohibited becomes desirable and every deleted subject becomes welcome. (Atwan, 2008, July 28)

Moreover, Atwan says, speaking of Arab Muslim leaders,

> The [Arab] regimes took only the exterior part of Western modernity, such as video clips, chat channels, non-virtuous words of love, and cheap singing and dancing. They left out its most important values of justice, democracy, transparency, accountability, independent judiciary, and protection of citizens' private and public rights. This policy created a larger room for the culture of rejection and extremism… (Atwan, 2008, July 28)

Atwan here could be referring to the sort of education reform occurring currently in Qatar. It can be seen too in Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Jordan. If intentions count Sheikha Mosah, Qatar's First Lady and patron of many education reform projects, has already gone a long way to engaging the disengaged potential radical. She has stated that she is aiming for improvements in education to reduce the growth of terrorism. An article about Qatar's education initiatives in *The Washington Post* links her ideas of good governance with the elimination of the breeding ground for terrorism.

> For the sheikha, the three major pillars of good governance are education reform, religious tolerance and political pluralism, all of which she firmly believes can take root in the Middle East. The sheikha believes that education is an anchor of good governance because it encourages free thinking and tolerance of other cultures and ideas. (Qatar leads, 2006, p. 13)

She argues that a "free zone" of political tolerance will allow for the free flow of ideas and opinions between traditionalists and modernists, where change is enacted through the ballot box, not by resorting to terrorism.

> As Washington struggles to contain the evil of global terrorism by promoting democracy in the Middle East, Sheikha Mosah bint Nasser al Missned's road map of transforming the hearts and minds through education is an excellent starting point. (Qatar leads, 2006, p. 13)

Of course these ideas are not readily espoused by all the population, and the Qatari father complaining about English texts in the English classroom is likely to be loathed to allow even more controversial material via the world wide web or through satellite TV or a Western magazine, despite the pronouncements of Sheikha Mosah's encouragement of pluralism and tolerance.

Extended Graded Readers & Other Literature in English Language Teaching

It is widely accepted among leading linguists and educators that extensive reading can be very useful in improving ESL/EFL students' general English competency. Graded Readers are one way of introducing reading to students at a level appropriate to their stage of development in English (Maggs, 2007). Numerous studies compared extensive reading practices with limited text approaches to second language acquisition. Kitao , Yamamoto , Kitao & Shimatani (2009) explored the studies of dozens of linguists and ESL educators who tested in pre and post tests students who were exposed to authentic English extended text experiences and those who compared results of those exposed to only limited length passages. They reported

> that students who reported reading more English books experienced significantly greater improvement in reading ability and vocabulary knowledge than those who reported reading less ...(that) extensive reading (was) not only more pleasurable, but also beneficial for language acquisition than instruction in grammar. ... (that) people's overall exposure to print has a direct relation to their vocabulary knowledge and comprehension abilities. (Kitao , Yamamoto , Kitao & Shimatani , 2009, p 133).
> This fairly recent compilation of research confirms many other studies over

decades including research conducted by Shanefield (1986) who investigated in independent reading the value of extended Graded Readers. Shanefield's (1986) results suggest longer texts with real life fictional or non-fictional or even fantasy scenarios had a significant positive effect on the

language competency of ESL students.

Collie and Slater (1987, pp. 3-6) promote the use of literature in the language classroom because they say it provides useful real life depictions, it develops individual student involvement and aids the readers' cultural and language development. These benefits they say are dependent upon teachers using accessible, relevant and enjoyable texts with a range of engaging activities promoting involvement, individual student response and a clear bridge between the language of the text and the literary experience. Regarding the language benefits Collie and Slater say

> Literature provides a rich context in which individual lexical or syntactical items are made more memorable. Reading a substantial and contextualised body of text, students gain familiarity with many features of the written language – the formation and function of sentences, the variety of possible structures, the different ways of connecting ideas – which broaden and enrich their own writing skills. The extensive reading required in tackling a novel or long play develops the students' ability to make inferences from linguistic clues, and to deduce meaning from contexts... (Collie and Slater, 1987, p. 5)

Similarly, Lazar (1993, p. 11) claims that literature should be seen as a valuable tool for motivating language learning and as a bridge providing access to cultural landscapes enriching students. Literature, she goes on to say, promotes second language learning, it develops students' language awareness and their ability to interpret linguistic contexts. These assertions are also reflected in studies examining the role of stylistics in the study of literary texts. (Alderson and Short, 1988; Short, 1988; Lazar, 1993; Cook, 1994; Short, 1996).

Maley (2001) discusses the different ways extended literary texts can be treated in the classroom. He says the activities usually 'fall into one of two categories: those that focus on the linguistic analysis of the text, and those in which the text acts as a springboard for a variety of language activities, including discussion and writing' (Maley, 2001, p. 183). Of course they both have value according to the claims of the research

above but it is the latter set of activities that tend to pose difficulties to teachers treading the cultural sensitivity line!

Conclusion

Arab teachers of English in Qatari Independent schools walk this cultural sensitivity line supporting an ancient religion which now faces numerous challenges. These challenges are foundational, questioning its epistemological base, and cultural, with wide new doors of global technologies introducing alien values, attitudes and behaviours primarily from the West. Many believe that engaging these cultural challenges out of the strength of Islam's coherent epistemology can result in 'free thinking and tolerance'. Qatar's leading lady believes education leads this approach which Wright calls 'engaging and conquering'.

While various scholars like Huntingdon see a major clash of civilizations occurring, others like Nasr are confident of the intellectual, artistic and cultural endurance of Islam in the face of such challenges. Meanwhile others like Atwan point to the risk of reactive fundamentalist elements in society adopting alternative approaches to perceived threats. Sheikha Mozah, who initiated education reform in Qatar, says that 'education is an anchor for good governance'. It is clear that as English language teachers adopt proven best practice in introducing extended reading material into their classrooms they are engaged in contributing to this good governance by overseeing the struggle occurring in the hearts and minds of not only their students but all education and community stakeholders.

The following chapter discusses the research methodologies considered and selected for analysing the research data set. This data, consists of interviews and surveys

collecting information about the values, beliefs and practices of individual English

language teachers.

3. METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Is the use of English literature a threat or a support to the Qatari Islamic culture? Chapter One explored the background to the issue, explaining the educational setting prior to and since the reform movement which saw the establishment of the Qatar Supreme Education Council and the resultant changes to learning and teaching in Qatar, including the use of Western literature in English language classrooms. Chapter Two explored the literature of diverse authors, demonstrating two things, amongst many others: first, that surprisingly there is very little specific literature about the conflict that may exist in using English stories in English language lessons in Arab Muslim schools; and second, that there is a vast array of concerns which have a bearing on this question, many of wide reaching significance. Of ultimate concern is the type of response to the issue of cultural threat that religious communities, like the Islamic community of Qatar, may adopt. Wright suggested this could be either a fundamentalist 'retreat and react' approach or an orthodox 'engage and conquer' approach. Of foundational concern is the epistemological gap between this orthodox Islam and the humanist philosophies that have emerged in the modern and post-modern West, and to a lesser degree from the Christian philosophy. Arab teachers of English in the Islamic state schools of Qatar it was shown have the dual responsibility of honouring the epistemology of Qatar's culture and religion, as well as honouring their professional duty of utilizing real literature in the classroom as ESL best practice demands.

This chapter provides a justification and explanation of the methodology applied to the collection and analysis of the research data. It also explains the procedure whereby I sought to find answers to the question, *To what extent could the use of Western literature*

in Arab Islamic English language classrooms be considered a cultural threat or a

support? Finally it accounts for the confidentiality, the reliability, the generalizability, and

the validity of the research data and results.

Research Design Orientation

This study is guided by Scott and Usher's (1999) discussion of qualitative research

methodology. They argue that 'human action is inseparable from meaning, and

experiences are classified and ordered through interpretative frames' (Scott and Usher,

1999, p. 25). This leads them to conclude that research starting with 'what exists' is

justifiable with the next step being 'to work with and make sense of the world' – that is,

with what exists (Scott and Usher, 1999, p. 25) If research is designed to make sense of

'what is' then a subjective epistemology within a qualitative research framework is

appropriate because my concern was with what exists in the minds of Arab teachers, that

is, their perceptions.

Given then that the goal of this study was to discover the perceptions of English

language teachers and that access to a large number of teacher participants was difficult, I

selected a mostly qualitative rather than quantitative methodological approach. In this way

the data could be elicited from fewer participants at considerable depth. Also, qualitative

research methodologies best account for the detail of the language expressed, as opposed

to numerically articulated, subjective perceptions. The in-depth interviews recorded the

spoken responses of participants to questions exploring their understandings and views.

Although the values survey was numerical in nature the vast majority of data collected in

this research project was language based and analysed (provided by the interviews). In this

way the subjective perceptions of participants were not open to empirical quantitative

analysis. Furthermore, the predominantly qualitative research approach better suites my

epistemology which is essentially phenomenological.

Epistemological Positioning for Phenomenological Method

My epistemology is my belief about how knowledge exists and how it can be shown to exist according to Holloway (1997), Mason (1996) and Creswell (1994). As such I find the description of phenomenology by Rossman & Rallis (1998) useful:

> "Phenomenology is… a focus on the essence of lived experience…focus in-depth on the meaning of a particular aspect of experience, assuming that through dialogue and reflection the quintessential meaning of the experience will be reviewed. Language is viewed as the primary symbol system through which meaning is both constructed and conveyed (Holstein & Gubrium, 1994). The purposes of phenomenological inquiry are description, interpretation… (Van Manen, 1990) Central are the notions of intentionality and caring: the researcher inquires about the essence of lived experience. (Rossman & Rallis, 1998, as quoted in *Phenomenology*, n.d., para. 3)

I am indeed interested in the 'lived experience' of the Arab Muslim teachers of the English language subject in Qatari State schools. I understand that language, and primarily spoken language, is the 'primary symbol system through which meaning' about this 'lived experience' is 'constructed and conveyed'. Furthermore, as a researcher I care about the 'essence' of the individual participants' experience and recognise that this 'essence' is obtained through a process of detailed elicitation.

At the same time 'phenomenologists, in contrast to positivists, believe that the researcher cannot be detached from his/her own presuppositions and that the researcher should not pretend otherwise' (Hammersley, 2000). That is because, as Mouton and Marais (1990, p. 12) contend, individual researchers "hold explicit beliefs". Green explains this well in her authoritative text *Slices of Life: Qualitative Research Snapshots* where she explores five different but similar methods of qualitative research. She states in her introduction that there is a 'subjective epistemology in which the transactions between the researcher and the research participants create understandings that are value mediated or subjective' (Green, 2002, p. 6) thus justifying the interview and its analysis as a

legitimate research tool, especially when this researcher submits to the process of epoche and bracketing as I do below to identify and distance my own 'explicit beliefs'.

This is further defended by Denzin and Lincoln (2000) who argue the post-modern notion that reality is 'socially constructed'. They say there is a legitimate framework of understanding generated by interview and analysis due to 'the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied and the situational constraints that shapes the inquiry' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p. 8).

Case Study – A Qualitative Research Method of Choice

Case study methodology is most valuable when there are interpretive and subjective elements of educational experiences as there are here. Again this post modern notion is posited clearly by Stake (1994) in Denzin and Lincoln's seminal work *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Stake, drawing on Derrida (Derrida, 1976), claimed all meaning is subjective and is 'shaped and filtered by each reader's uniqueness' (Stake, 1994, p. 48). This was first argued by Husserl who rejected the belief that objects in the external world exist independently and that one can know reliably anything about objects. It was Husserl who took the nascent ideas of Kant and Hegel and said that people can only be certain about how things appear in, or 'present themselves to', their consciousness (Eagleton, 1983; Fouche, 1993). Likewise, Groenewald (2004, p. 3) explains that authentic reality comes from an analysis of individual discrete experiences. Merriam had earlier observed this in *Case Study Research in Education: A qualitative approach*, declaring that case studies as a qualitative research method are 'more concrete, the knowledge produced is more contextual and more developed by reader interpretation' (Merriam, 1988, p. 31).

Merriam further notes that the case study methodology provides 'an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance or phenomenon, or a social unit' (Merriam, 1988, p. 21). The six individual participants of my research project both

represent a social unit, namely Arab English language teachers, but at the same time have reasonably diverse training, teaching experiences and religious/cultural views that contribute richly to the quest for meaning. This diversity is made more measurable, however, because so many of the racial, cultural and religious characteristics are similar, it means other differences, especially those relating to the issue of Western literature use in the English language classroom, can be effectively highlighted. Be this as it may, only modest generalizability exists with the conclusions of this research, limited as it is by the sample size and the interview duration of just one hour or slightly longer.

Participants

In considering how to source participants for this study I considered the view of Hycner who claims 'the phenomenon dictates the method (not vice-versa) *including even the type of participants*' (1999, p. 156). Welman and Kruger (1999) were directive when considering how to approach the selection of interviewees. I chose purposive sampling because it is the most important kind of non-probability sampling. The sample was chosen primarily because of the purpose of the research (Schwandt, 1997; Babbie, 1995), thus requiring Arab Muslims with English language teaching experience in Qatar and beyond. The table below indicates that each of the male research participants was an expatriate Arab teacher of English with many having experience teaching in neighbouring Arab countries. All were committed Muslims

Table 1

Interview Participant Information

Participant Details	Ash	Em	Khal	Abd	Al	Sad
Country of Origin	Egypt	Egypt	Tunisia	Egypt	Syria	Egypt

Age	39	30	37	52	32	38
Total Years Teaching Experience	18	9	16	25	10	17
Teaching Experience Locations	Egypt Saudi Arabia UAE Qatar	Egypt	Tunisia Saudi Arabia Kuwait Qatar	Egypt Saudi Arabia Qatar	Syria Qatar	Egypt Saudi Arabia Oman Qatar
Years Teaching in Qatar	4	1	5	1	1	5
Religion	Committed Muslim	Committed Muslim	Committed Muslim	Committed Muslim	Committed Muslim	Committed Muslim
Education Sector Teaching Experience	Preparatory Secondary	Preparatory Secondary	Primary Preparatory Secondary	Preparatory Secondary	Primary Preparatory Secondary	Primary Preparatory Secondary University

In selecting participants for the research interview potential participants were
approached verbally, given an overview of the project and asked if they would like more
information with a view to being a participant. Potential participants were male, Arab,
Muslim, English language teachers with experience teaching in Qatar's Independent
(State) Preparatory (Yrs 7-9) or Secondary (Yrs 10-12) schools. They were also people
that I had had some previous association with. This was important to ensure there was an
easy rapport immediately the interview began. Without this previous association there was
a major risk that a sanitized version of perceptions might be presented, especially given
the racial, cultural and religious divide I the researcher was attempting to bridge with both
my own Western background and the questions I had prepared. One advantage of an
existing relational connection, particularly in a foreign setting where the culture was not

mine, was the apparent removal of natural suspicion. Indeed, it was important that participants felt at ease to express their thoughts. This appeared to be the case and very frank responses to my questions were forthcoming.

One disadvantage of having a prior association with the participants was the occasional unexplained reference to an event or idea that was assumed to be understood by both the interviewer and the interviewee due to a prior shared experience or knowledge. The information needed to be explicit for a wider audience to comprehend. I therefore requested a couple of times that speakers explain further a comment that may have otherwise been assumed due to the interviewer/interviewee familiarity. Another potential disadvantage of interviewees having a previous association with the interviewer is the temptation to tell the interviewer what they think the interviewer might want to hear. I considered this a potential danger in both scenarios (known and unknown interviewees), however, so it did not influence the participant selection process.

All potential participants were approached initially by email and then personally. They all expressed their interest in participating in the study. Each was given a letter of explanation and a consent letter (Appendix D), having been informed that the process and documents had been approved by the University of New England Human Research Ethics Committee. Participants were shown the contact numbers of both the local and external point of reference for any concerns, namely Dr Jomon John of Hamad Hospital, Doha, and the Australian contacts at the University of New England. Each of the participants signed the Human Ethics Committee approved Informed Consent Form and understood that the transcribed record and audio data would be kept for five years in a locked cupboard. They also understood that the final paper analyzing the data they provided might be published. Each teacher was sent a copy of the transcribed interview with the invitation to protest, amend or question any rendition they were not happy with. No comment was received

from any participant correcting the transcript. The interviews were then conducted individually at mutually suitable times and locations. All were held in public places – a sheesha bar, a hotel foyer, a sports club and at restaurants.

Data Collection

Values Survey

The data collected for this research took two forms. The primary evidence was the in-depth interviews with six Arab English language teachers. The secondary evidence consisted of a subsequent 'follow-up' quantitative research survey completed by each of these teachers, providing feedback on the values valorized by individuals privately and within their classrooms. The aim of this survey was to numerically confirm the initial analysis of values I had made of the interview data.

The values survey consisted of 32 values divided into four numerically equal divisions: citizenship, work ethic, respect for self and respect for others. These divisions seemed to best provide universally workable categories for allocating values. I wanted to provide value choices that would accommodate religious and non-religious cultures. The 32 values were a compilation from a number of key documents on either values education or values for successful living. Peters & Waterman (2004) were perhaps the first to identify the foundational role of values in successful businesses. Harris (2011) addressing the individual, argues that by adopting positive values individuals gain personal confidence leading to successful living. In values education the Australian National Framework for Values Education identifies nine key values for healthy education communities. This was released in 2005 following the research and consultation of Values Education Study (2003) which aimed to identify what values in Australia provide a foundation for healthy, strong communities. Numerous lists of values exist with obvious intersections of commonly held elements. My list of 32 was such an intersection but

deliberately inclusive of specific religious values such as the two which scored so highly

in this survey as explained in the following chapter. Participants were emailed the survey

following their interview and they returned them completed as a similar emailed

attachment.

In-depth Interviews

The in-depth interviews were audio filed using a computer equipped with Audacity

digital recording software. These audio files were later transcribed by the author using

Word processing and, as mentioned above, a copy sent to each participant for verification.

After the interviewees responded to the invitation to comment on the accuracy of the

transcriptions, the transcriptions were then analysed according to the process outlined

below. The survey results were analysed not according to any particular quantitative

research methodology, but used to inform the conclusions drawn in the qualitative data

analysis. This is because there were so few survey responses (6), an insufficient sample

space to satisfy the requirements of any of the quantitative data methodology

requirements.

Although I had prepared ten questions which guided the interviews, I was keen to

leave the interview as open ended as possible (Liddell, in Green, 2002). To that end, if a

participant was talking freely in answer to a question but straying from the original

question I would not immediately redirect them, believing anything on the topic to be

valuable. The central question, of course, concerned the use of English literature in

English language lessons: *Is it a cultural threat or support?* in the view of each

participant.

Kvale (1996, p. 132) suggests using an active listening technique for the in-depth

interview. I utilized this method, giving special attention to facial expressions and body

language. In fact, in accordance with Kvale's suggestions stemming from interview ethics

concerns, I noted carefully any sign of stress or discomfort coming from the interviewees. I supplied each with a drink (and for a number of interviews, a meal) and was careful to have tissues available and a restroom break also, if needed. This practical advice augments the serious treatment of the philosophical underpinnings of interviews Kvale provides. Kvale shows clearly how the case study in-depth interview supports phenomenological theory. Moreover, Kvale's work was particularly valuable for this project in suggesting interview questions should be formed in such a way as to engage the interviewee in order to maximize the participant's knowledge, understanding and experience of the issue (Kvale, 1996).

Like Denzin and Lincoln (2000), Kvale argues that knowledge is created through the interaction of the interviewer and interviewee in the process of research design, collection and analysis (which Kvale actually identifies as a seven step process). So, armed with Kvale's assertion that inevitably the researcher becomes wiser during the interviews (Kvale, 1996, p. 99) I was prepared for the 'evolution of knowledge' (Kvale, 1996, p. 125). This indeed occurred, assisted by two guides, the first the basic research theme and the second a set of clarifying questions to check my understanding of the interviewees' intentions (Kvale, 1996, p. 130).

The transcribing process, undertaken by myself alone, involves 'translating from an oral language, with its own set of rules, to a written language with another set of rules' (Kvale, 1996, p. 165). This oral set of rules was complicated by the fact that English was a second language for the interviewees. Standard spoken English phonetic rules with Arab speakers of English are often changed and this made the transcribing process particularly tedious. Careful listening was employed with numerous reruns of the audio file to ensure that an accurate transcript was produced.

Data Analysis

It is tempting to label this section 'Data Explicitation' as Groenewald does in deliberate acknowledgement of the serious reservations phenomenologists have about pulling data apart and thereby losing the authenticity of the 'phenomena'. Groenewald uses Hycner's words of caution:

> The term [analysis] usually means a 'breaking into parts' and therefore often means a loss of the whole phenomenon…[whereas 'explicitation' implies an]…investigation of the constituents of a phenomenon while keeping the context of the whole. (Quoted in Groenewald, 2004, p. 17)

Semantics aside, the analysis of my data involved a five step process, borrowed from Hycner (1999):

1. Epoche and Bracketing

2. Identifying units of meaning

3. Grouping units to form themes

4. Summarising & validating

5. Extracting general and specific themes

Epoche and bracketing

The qualitative research literature highlights the value of researchers having shared experiences with the respondents in the area of study (Crotty, 1996; Schulz, 1994). However, the success of this shared experience depends entirely on the manner in which the researcher structures the research and arranges for the operation of *epoche* and *bracketing*. I found the following figure created by Bednall useful in explaining this relationship between the researcher and his understanding and experience of the issue and of the respondents, and the interviewees:
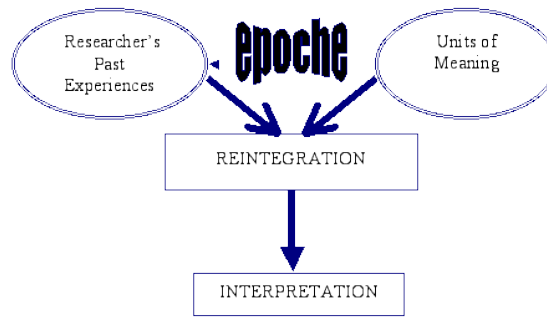
Figure 1. Bednall's model of the place of epoche in research practice. From Gearing, (2004) cited in Bednall, J. (2006). Epoche and bracketing within the phenomenological paradigm. *Issues In Educational Research*, 16(2), 123-138.

As Bednall says

> The challenge for a researcher is to allow the voices of subjectivity to emerge authentically in coming to an understanding of what essentially the research respondents mean in their personal accounts expressed through the data collection devices. (Bednall, 2006, p. 3)

The researcher has on one hand to separate any past knowledge or experience from the data collection process but then has to legitimise that experience by 'connecting it interpretatively to the meanings of the respondents' (Bednall, 2006, p. 3). This occurs in the manner illustrated above in Figure 1. demonstrating the role of epoche and bracketing. While the literature, somewhat inconclusively, discusses the value of epoche/bracketing to deal with the subjectivity of the researcher's interpretation of responses, there is no real clear praxis of the process given by the more significant authors such as Gearing (2004 and Groenewald (2004) to enact the desired distancing of the researcher from the accounts of the phenomenon. That is what makes Bednall's paper so valuable. Bednall has applied the theory in such a way as to manage the subjectivity of experiential connections while recognizing and indeed maximizing previous personal experience and knowledge. I have adopted a similar process in analyzing my research data. According to Bednall, epoche is

the process of separating personal experience from 'units of meaning' as shown in Figure 1. 'Bracketing' then follows and is the process of re-integrating the two.

My epoche and bracketing process was similar to that described by Spirko in her online explication *How to Use Bracketing in Qualitative Research* (2013). Guided by Spirko I worked through a series of brainstorming exercises to effectively elicit key suppositions, preconceptions and salient experiences related to the phenomenon. The result was collated in the mind map captured in Figure 2.
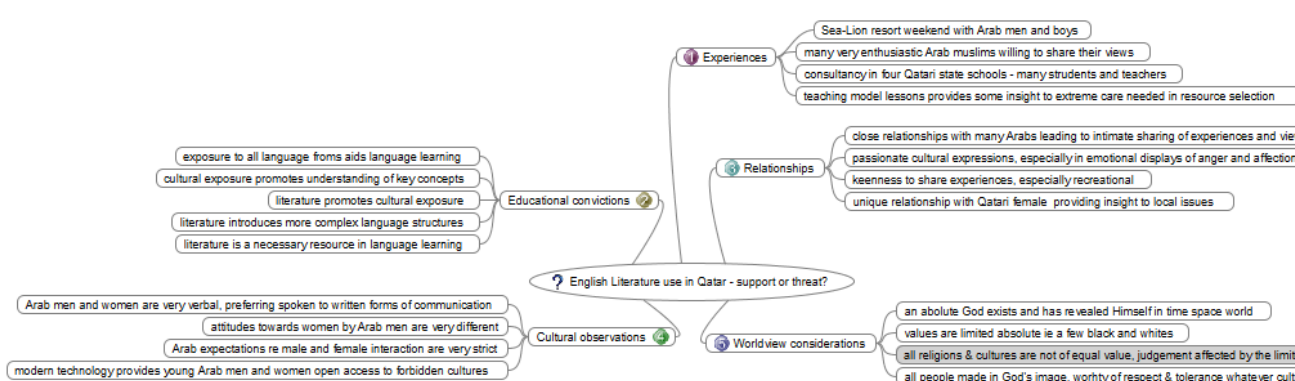
Figure 2. Epoche mind map extraction of researcher's related suppositions.

Identifying units of meaning

As Hycner (1999) and Creswell (1998) explain, this second step in the analysis process is where statements that appear of critical importance are identified, delineated by comparison and contrast, and extracted. I did not use any ICT data analysis instruments in this process because unlike some forms of qualitative research methodologies, phenomenology does not suit analysis by one of the sophisticated computer software programs (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996) such as Nudist and Atlas/ti, or their predecessor ETHNOGRAPH. Kelle points out that this is because phenomena by definition 'cannot be computerized because it is not an algorithmic process' (Kelle, 1995: p.3).

The individual units of meaning were, however, counted. Table 2 identifies the incidence of each unit of meaning used as direct evidence in analysis. Redundant units

were eliminated as suggested by Moustakas (1994). The table, providing a visual scan of the proportion of transcript text quoted as support data in the analysis of research results, effectively enables me to ensure no individual participant's views were dominating or biasing the spread of results in the analysis stage. As it happened close to 20% of each participants transcript were deemed to be significant units of meaning and contributed therefore to the next stage of identifying thematic units.

Table 2

Balance of Participant Transcript Analysis
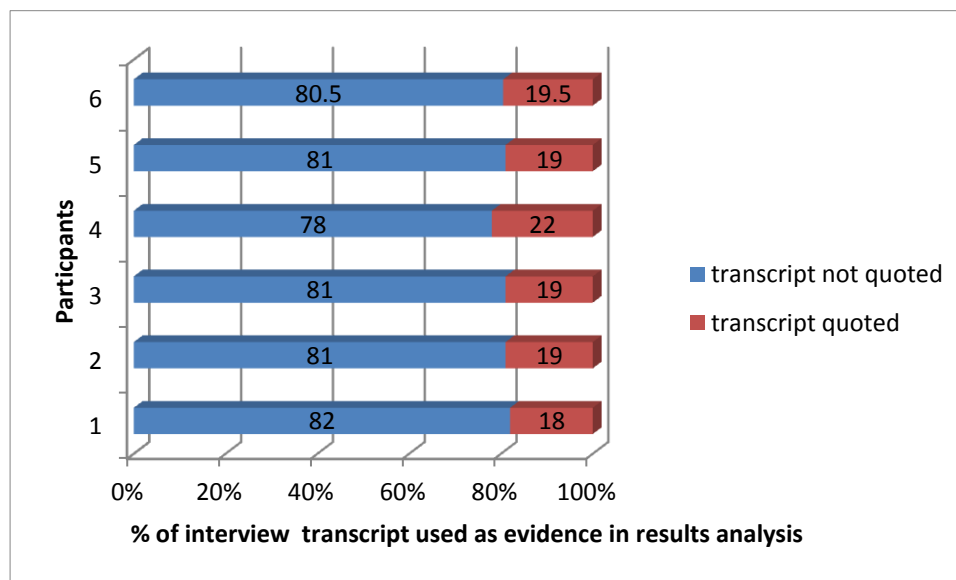
Grouping units to form thematic units

Hycner says this step calls for 'creative insight' (Hycner, 1999, pp. 150). It involves taking the units of meaning and grouping them into semantic sets (Creswell, 1998; King, 1994; Moustakas, 1994) that have ideas which are significant for the purpose of this research. In fact, Sadala and Adorno call these 'units of significance' (Sadala & Adorno, 2001, p. 289). The thematic units which emerged from my data were: Culture & Religion; Moral Values; Teaching Strategies; Ingenuity; Personal Issues; Literature Teaching.

Summarising and validating

In this step I summarized the significant ideas gleaned from the thematic units. The aim was to create a holistic account of all the data identifying broadly the common notions arising from the participant input. These notions are expressed in the results chapter of this dissertation. Validating is the process, according to Hycner (1999), of checking conclusions about participant views actually accord with participant understandings. For me this occurred when the summary of major ideas was returned to the participant for validation. In the event of any misrepresentation of intent adjustments were made accordingly.

Extracting general & specific themes

After any adjustments had been made in the validation step the various individual summaries were examined for common themes and combined to create a composite summary. This was a compilation of all significant themes. It is worth noting here that minor points conflicting with majority views are very valuable and should be included as a specific theme, as opposed to a general (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996).

Limitations of the Study

Various limitations affecting to varying degrees the accuracy, depth and credibility of this research exist. Some of these limitations have already been mentioned. For instance, it was pointed out above that access to female Arab participants was impossible so this study is unable to determine whether there is a gender factor influencing attitudes towards the use of English literature in English language classes. Furthermore, it was duly noted also above that my inability to access Arabic language texts, especially local

newspapers, was a distinct limitation to gleaning a wider range of local responses to both this issue (if it ever has been discussed in the local Arabic media) and related issues such as the reform's promotion of English above Arabic in the main subject areas. And of course, in stating the role of epoche and bracketing I recognised the limitation of my own subjective existence, that it is never possible to disconnect my experience and beliefs from the process of the interpretation of data.

Added to these limitations are the following three factors. First, the delay between collecting the data and analyzing it, a period of about three to four months, may have had some impact on the accuracy of results. Second, participants were communicating in English, their second language. Although each participant was an English language teacher they did not have the benefit of the native speaker's nuanced expressions, and likewise I, as a non-Arabic speaker, did not have the benefit of perceiving the inevitable language structures that reflect the nuances of Arabic. Third, participants' experience and knowledge of the breadth of texts that are and might be used in English subject classrooms was severely limited. Therefore participant understanding of the term 'literature' is by socio-linguistic necessity very different to the term which is defined in this study's appendix as

> stories, poems or plays of some length, usually with an identifiable plot and with characters interacting. Literature could be picture books with limited or no text, or it could be chapter books up to a few hundred pages (at the most advanced). The term 'literature' is not limited to a canon of stories that have classic status, nor does it necessarily refer exclusively to the genre of Young Adult Fiction. (Appendix A)

More often than not examples of 'literature' given by participants came from the 'literature' of their university study of works from the classical canon which might include the likes of writers like the Brontes, Austen, Fielding, Defoe, Hardy, Dickens and Conrad. I suspected that given there was no reference to, or acknowledgement of, writers like

Zindell, Marsden or Bradbury then there was likely no knowledge of it, therefore suggesting a very narrow understanding of the term 'literature'.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed foundational issues such as my epistemology and suggested that phenomenological methodology best supports this epistemology and the 'slice of life' examination needed to explore teachers' views on a certain practice or absence of a certain practice. It was pointed out that phenomenology requires a researcher to examine personal opinions, values and prejudices and having done so to consciously place these aside in order to most effectively analyse data.

This process of epoche and bracketing has been described as has the process of selecting and questioning participants in the research. At the same time the limitations of the research method have been explained. Further, this chapter has explained the rationale behind the approach adopted for data analysis. This approach involves some key steps including identifying units of meaning, then grouping these units to form themes and then summarising key ideas.

4. RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter examines the results of the data analysis in order to draw possible conclusions relating to the thesis question concerning the perspectives held by Islamic Arab English teachers in Qatar regarding the use of English literature in Qatar Independent school English lessons. Do these teachers consider extended texts such as graded readers, junior fiction, and original classics a cultural threat, a cultural support or something else? The data analysis was applied to the two research tools, the lesser values survey, and the more significant in-depth interviews.

Values Survey Results

The following table presents the results of the values survey, identifying the five most and least important values of the thirty values participants were asked to consider.

Table 3

Most and Least Valorised Values

Most Valorized Values	Least Valorized Values
1. Godliness (MOST)	1. Moderation (LEAST)
2. Prayerfulness	2. Environmental care
3. Justice	3. Creativity
4. Honesty	4. Courtesy
5. Patience	5. Productivity

The results of surveys completed by just six participants are never going to be statistically meaningful. That is, of course, until one examines the 32 choices of values that each participant was asked to rate, providing a number between +5 (most valued) and +1(5th most valued) for the most important values, and between -5 (least valued) and -1(5th

least valued) for the values perceived to be less important. It does become statistically impressive, however, when one examines the probability of all six participants nominating the same value, of a choice of 32, as the most important. The probability of this occurring is 1 in 652,458,240. The chance of this is obviously incredibly remote, except in a community where individualism is subsumed under a few very significant communal values. The first is the recognition of Allah and worship of him. It is this homogeneity of essential, foundational beliefs that also, even more statistically incredibly, explains how the six participants again selected the same value as their second most important. This was the value of prayer.

At this point it is worthwhile reviewing the selection of participants. The six participants were drawn from three different schools. Some therefore were colleagues but none shared a family connection and only two were from the same city. While all were Arabs they came from Egypt, Tunisia and Syria. And yet the six again defied the odds by each nominating the same value as second most important, after having defied the same odds for the first choice. Perhaps if one were to sample a small subset of any particular cultural subset in Western society, one might get results close to these. The preceding chapter pointed out that the selection process was purposive in terms of selecting participants known to the researcher who were Arab Muslim teachers of English in Independent schools. But even if an equivalent set of purposive participant selection criteria was applied with a similarly small sample from a Western society it is highly unlikely that these results could be repeated. It is very clear that the shared 'Muslim' characteristic accounts for such statistically significant results.

At the other end of the values survey the results are no less impressive. Participants held in low regard (on the scale of importance the survey was set up to demonstrate) some of the values which would no doubt be highly valorized in most Western societies. I am

referring significantly to environmental care. Our society has come to highly esteem this value but gives very little attention, publicly at least, to godliness and prayer. If these three particular results are significant for the given reasons, then what impact do they have on the question of ultimate concern: whether English literature is a threat or support? This chapter concludes with a discussion which links the results from the surveys with the interview results. Suffice to say at this stage, however, apart from the three values already highlighted and commented on, the survey results do not provide any other useful data for this discussion. Figure 3 provides a snapshot of the values esteemed and considered not so important.

Values Survey Results
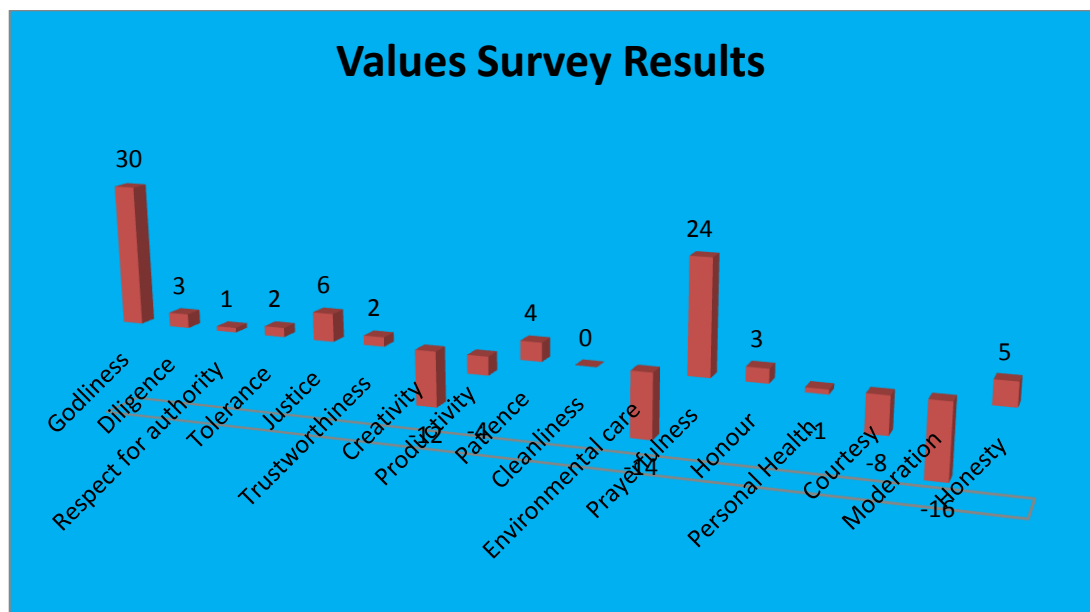
Figure 3. Values survey results demonstrating the valorised position of religious belief & practice against the lesser concerns of environment, creativity and moderation.

Interview Results

The following discussion focuses on the six thematic units of meaning elicited from the interview data analysis. Here common attitudes and opinions are identified and supported by direct quotes from interview participants. The previous values survey results

were obtained subsequent to the interviews and provide supporting evidence of the pre-eminence of religious convictions (about Godliness and prayer for example) above all others. The discussion will show then that each of the following themes is framed by religious (Muslim) priorities.

Thematic Units of Meaning

The previous chapter noted the five steps taken in the analysis of the interview data. The third step involved sorting and analysing data according to units of meaning and thence to common thematic units. The following is a discussion of the result of this process, collating the views of all six interviewees who provided detailed data in response to the discussion stimulus questions. The thematic units of meaning were finally reduced to six main thematic units relating to: culture and religion; moral values; teaching strategies; disingenuity; personal problems; and, literature teaching.

The two most commonly raised themes were the first, culture and religion, and the sixth, literature. It is not clear whether the common educational backgrounds of the participating Arab teachers, or the shared profession, accounts for the reasonably homogenous responses from the six interviewees. Perhaps the mono-religious and mono-cultural nature of the Qatari Arabic society explains what appears in the following discussion. But it is clear that with participants from Egypt, Syria and Tunisia reflecting both their experience from Qatar and their home nations, the homogeneity is not due to the stricter religious/cultural environment of Qatar, but to an apparent widespread perception among mainstream educated Arab Muslims that interaction with Western ideas and values reflected in English literature is inevitable, often positive, but must and can be managed. The discussion below demonstrates this.

Culture and Religion

Participants were unanimous in their belief that a school has the responsibility to support the community's religious and cultural beliefs. Participant comments implied what is well established in Arab nations and that is the dominance of the Islamic religion and the limited influence or strength of alternative religious or worldview persuasions. Ash demonstrates this when he makes the point that the Arab Islamic community 'already (has) many rules for our religion and our cultural values so why don't we use them to bring up our children'.

Em points out that this homogeneity of religion does exist on a spectrum. Throughout the analysis of data we begin to see that this spectrum of moderate to radical Islamic belief and practice is pivotal in answering the question about the use of English literature. Em notes that there are major differences in the application of Islamic belief from one Arab country to another:

> *Interviewer: Would you say that they're much the same?* (The expressions of Islamic religion from country to country.)
>
> *Em: No, of course not. You know in Egypt, the religious background and religious values - you know, families are so simple, and so humble.*

Em talks about the daily encouragement Egyptian students are given in their morning assembly devotional time. This is contrasted by the approach taken to religious instruction in the schools of Saudi Arabia:

> *...schools in the gulf countries, especially Saudi Arabia play a controlling role in giving religious values. I think they do it well because they give their students about five subjects concerning the religious subject – like Hadith, like the prophets sayings, like the Holy Koran and how to say it, and the students are studying and they are studying them more than in other subjects. So I think they have great fortune to learn these things more than any other subjects and I think there for that they pay attention to the values.*

The transmission of Islamic values and instruction is clearly highly valued. No discussion was held concerning the limits of a school timetable to contain the curriculum

breadth of such five Islamic subjects in addition to the range of subjects a modern

education demands (including the development of English language). Our focus was

merely the priority of Islamic values and the different weight educational systems in the

Arab world afford this process.

What became obvious across the various responses from each of the participants

was a perception that societies exist in blocks of religious or worldview affiliation. Khal's

comment captures this notion:

> *education in general serves many purposes. For promoting culture, or let's say, teaching the students **their own culture** and **their own religion** is very important … we should be open to other cultures, we should be open to other religions, but not to the point that we encourage our students to discard their own culture, their own traditions, their own religion and adopt other new ones.*

'Teaching the students their own religion' is a common vision of what are known as 'faith'

schools in the West. These are schools supporting particular 'faith' communities, such as

Christian (Roman Catholic, Anglican, Evangelical, Orthodox), Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist

or ascribing to a particular set of philosophical presuppositions, such as Montessori. Some

are highly critical of these schools in the West while others like the English education

secretary David Blunkett say their ethos should be bottled (Odone, 2010). But the fact is

that the demographics of Western populations don't reflect, say, the Egyptian experience

where the population can be somewhat more clearly delineated along religious lines.

Cairo, for example, has a large majority Muslim population, a small Coptic orthodox

Christian population, and an even smaller evangelical Christian population. Khal's

comment relates well to Islamic countries like Qatar where every state school is a faith

school because almost everyone identifies themselves as a Muslim[10]. The pluralism and

---

[10] According to the International Religious Freedom Report 2007, Qatar's citizens comprise 90% Sunni Muslims and 10% Shi'a Muslims 'except for at least one Christian, a few Bahais, and their respective families who were granted citizenship' (US Department of State Diplomacy in Action, n.d., para. 6). Of the non-citizen population in Qatar other religions such as Hindu, Buddhist and Christian are represented (para. 8).

secularism of the West has produced a large percentage of the population who would perhaps not own any particular faith or worldview[11], and even those who could identify a 'faith', may not wish to be educated in a school promoting that faith's particular vision of education.

Abd expresses this same notion as Khal. He says, 'education in general serves many purposes. For promoting culture, or let's say, teaching the students 'their own culture and their own religion'**.** Likewise Al implies that the idea that each student is a Muslim is a given: 'cultural and religious values are accepted by everyone'. These values are, of course, Islamic 'cultural and religious values'. This is a reasonable comment in a country like Qatar in the Middle East but would rarely find an equivalent expression in a country like Australia where even in faith based schools (eg Catholic colleges) the likelihood of common faith commitment among all staff and students would be highly unlikely.[12]

These comments may seem to explain the implied concern behind the Qatari father who posed the question, "Why is my son reading Western literature?" This father obviously shares the same conviction expressed by all six interviewees that school is a vehicle for the perpetuation of the state (and region) wide religion of Islam. The implication: western literature is a threat to that process.

The comments of interviewees seem to suggest otherwise, however. For example, Khal pointed out that 'we' (presumably referring to Arab Muslims) should be open to other religions, but not to the point that we encourage our students to discard their own culture, their own traditions, their own religion and adopt other new ones.

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[11] This is despite census results (Australia) apparently reflecting the majority of the population declaring a religious faith (ABS, 2011).
[12] The pluralist nature of secular Western society allows in all but the most rigid religious communities an individuality that makes alternative choices of religious commitment or non-commitment possible,

This raises an interesting issue of whether the Muslim is free to change his religion. According to chapter 2, verse 256 of the Koran, "There is no compulsion in religion":

> *Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error: whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah hath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks. And Allah heareth and knoweth all things. (Koran 2:256)*

But this noble notion appears to be contradicted in the subsequent verse of the Koran:

> *Allah is the Protector of those who have faith: from the depths of darkness He will lead them forth into light. Of those who reject faith the patrons are the evil ones: from light they will lead them forth into the depths of darkness. They will be companions of the fire, to dwell therein (For ever). (Koran 2:257)*

The 'no compulsion' theme is applied in the interesting example Ash provides of a student who happens to not be a Muslim and who objects to the use of overtly Islamic material in his English language class. It is extremely rare that a student is not a self declared Muslim. This resource was promoted by the Qatari principal but in fact not supported by the English Department Coordinator whose view was:

> *Basically he (*the Principal*) meant to promote learning in English language, through Islamic stories, which is not, like, convincing to me as a teacher of English.*

This account supports the interviewees' claims of the very earnest approach to religion in the Gulf countries. Em's observation of the five separate subjects promoting Islam taught in Saudi Arabia reflects the honour in which the religion is held.

But not all agree with such an approach. Ash says of the more conservative expression of Islam in the Gulf States:

> *if you confine yourself to the culture here in Qatar you will have the wrong idea of Arab culture because these people are still, like, very limited, very confined to their culture... other cultures like Egypt, like Syria and Lebanon ...now teach English literature, Shakespearian literature, even American literature. ...I even struggle with my friends here in Qatar who object to the teaching of English literature and western literature and who want our own literature.*

Ash not only had disagreements with his principal over the resources his department should use to teach English language, but he had disagreements with his friends, Egyptian friends. This further indicates a spectrum of fervour or interpretation of religious adherence existing among Muslims of the region. Ash calls the local religion (and by extrapolation that of other gulf states) 'very limited'.

Given this continuum of religious expression it is somewhat surprising that all participants gave the confident impression that they could accurately reflect the religious and cultural values of the community. Ash, for example, said when he was asked if he was confident that his values would be the same values as the community – "Of course!" It appears that a solid commitment to the common elements of the religion and values is sufficient to anchor non-Qatari Muslims to the Qatari society where they work as Arab expatriates. And yet Sad also noted that the local culture was different:

> *I think that people here are more religious than us, than our country* (Egypt). *They depend on religion in a different way. Sometimes they are not so open to other countries. But now I think it's changing, and people are changing in their opinion.*

And when asked if he saw those changes as a threat to Islam he said 'no', suggesting that a more moderate Qatari version of Islam would be welcome. This view was unanimously expressed by the participants. Em elaborates on the issue of openness to alien cultural influences. He tells firstly of the intrinsic role of the Islamic religion in the culture, such as the view of Allah's sovereign hand in important affairs of life:

> *once we grow up we find that before we have anything that happens in our lives like picking work, like marriage, like asking for a son or a daughter, you have to refer to the god, you have to refer to Allah.*

It seems Em's religious fervour is not daunted by the scale of alien views, values and lifestyles that exist in other cultures and religions and which are visible and potentially influential through the various technologies available. Indeed, Em says it is a 'crime' to prevent young people from being exposed to 'other cultures':

*if we …close our doors and let our children be educated inside our doors according to our values, our traditions – I think we are committing a crime because you know nowadays we are living in a big world and we find more advantage in having this internet cable **than** [Presumed unintentional spoken error. Intention: **and** (researcher comment)] having satellite everywhere in every house. I think we shouldn't stop being introduced to other cultures.*

His imagery is graphic: 'If we think that a monster has come to swallow us, …our thinking ability is so narrow…'. He reflects on the golden history of the Islamic era, noting the valuable contributions Islamic culture has made to the development of the West, but concludes that the Arab world now also keenly needs the West and its technological developments.

one day our Islamic culture led the world like in the field of medicine, …engineering, a lot of things. They got our theories and built a lot of them and now, …we need them, we need them to develop,… manufacturing, … So if we take the view that the West is a monster that is going to swallow us we will stop living.

Em's attitude of openness to other cultures is shared by all participants, although not expressed so colourfully, with two examples used here to illustrate this:

Khal: *I think that the school policy should take into consideration these two points: we should be open to other cultures, we should be open to other religions …What I say is there is no harm in getting ideas about other cultures from all over the world.*

Khal appears boldly committed to the idea of open-mindedness. The devil may be in the detail of what that actually means though. Khal states his support for exposure to ideas, beliefs, attitudes and practices (cultures & religions) that are different to those locally. But unpacking this thought can be extremely complex. The following issues arise from his comment: 1) School policy – to what degree does school policy reflect the school community, especially the parents; 2) *Open to other cultures & religions* – what degree of exposure, what medium for exposure, what strategy for discussing and processing differences; 3) *no harm in getting ideas* – does this statement imply simply learning new knowledge, or might it involve evaluating and critiquing knowledge, or even adopting new

knowledge? How practically possible is it for a Qatari Muslim student to take 'openness' to this extent.[13]

Sad hints in the following statements to two significant aspects to this issue of openness:

> *Well, for example, when I come to a certain idea or a certain thought or a quotation from a book, and this quotation speaks frankly about things that are not allowed in our Islamic culture I try to give the students a brief analysis: we are not allowed to do such things because they are against our values. But in a country like Saudia Arabia do you think I could teach a story like that. Of course not, so we can forbid it.*

First, his comment makes it clear that he is actually willing as a teacher to 'come' across certain idea(s) …that are not allowed in our Islamic culture', to expose students to 'forbidden' ideas. But second, he also hints at the process he employs in exposing and dealing with these things. This process appears to involve a teacher directed single voiced 'analysis'. One could assume enquiry learning strategies would not be appropriate. Sad highlights the fact that none of this would be possible in a more strict religious environment like Saudi Arabia (where he has taught) where a more simplistic and final solution to the problem would apply, that is, simply forbid the literature (or whatever form the exposure may take) and avoid the need to even consider how to process alien culture content.

Values

Of course there are so many overlaps in any discussion of the dominant thematic units of this study. This is due as much to the fact that the Arab culture of Qatar appears inextricably linked to the Islamic religion with its distinctive values which are reflected in literature and society, as it is due to the fact that naturally so many issues intersect in the

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[13] As in many Arab states that practice Sharia law, conversion from Islam to another religion is technically a capital offence in Qatar, although 'since the country gained independence in 1971, there has been no recorded execution or other punishment for such an act' (US Department of State Diplomacy in Action, n.d., para. 16).

classroom. Nevertheless there is value in identifying common notions about discrete values raised in interviews since they relate directly to the English language classroom.

The immediate observation surfacing from the data analysis is that the valorized values identified by interviewees both in the in-depth interviews and in the values survey is that, apart from the priority given to godliness and to prayer, most other values are commonly embraced in Western societies. Participants were asked about the local community values they felt were important to perpetuate and promote. Ash declared, 'respect, honour, gratitude and obedience'. In reverse he encouraged students to eschew *lying, cheating and deceiving.*

But Abd in the following statement identifies his expectation that Western literature would not actually support Islamic values (and by context here he is not referring to core values of worship and prayer but values of morality, sexuality and relationships):

> Abd: *I don't expect a Western writer to support our Islamic values. We can support our Islamic values but I want the student to learn good English to be able to distinguish between good and bad in the West, to see what's good and acquire and to see what's bad and avoid.*

At the same time this study's research participants all noted the daily conflict of values students encounter in their society:

> *Even if you keep the western literature or the western values away from the students, you can't keep the western values away from the students all the time, because its on TV, on the internet and everywhere. Now, in the end, students have to compare and choose.* (Al)

According to Al, this was a process he personally practised: 'I always compared our values Islamic values, and Western values'. Amongst participants there was a confidence expressed regarding the strength of Islam and Islamic adherents to make what they considered *wise* decisions, confidence in their ability to 'control' these often alien influences:

> *But in our Islamic religion culture and civilization we are not afraid any more of the western civilization because you know we have a strong basis. If we follow our true basis. We can say that the West in some ways is very dangerous in terms of ways of living, in terms of its overdose of freedom, or even young men for girls. I think we can control all of that concerning our religion and concerning the rules in our homes.* (Em)

Just as the literature of academics like Peters (2004), Waterman(2004) and Harris (2011) identifies the core role of values in any human context, so too do these research participants. And most notably, in view of the conclusions drawn in the following chapter, the degree to which individuals can engage in a meaningful critical analysis of one value against another competing, or different, value is reflective of their position on a continuum of conscious interaction with what others (within the cultural context) may fear. Again, the confidence that the religious base provides a coherent and encompassing worldview supports this approach.

Didactic instruction or independent rationalism

Chapter One explained that the pedagogy of the 'Ministry' schools, which preceded the Independent Schools of the Reform, was not unlike the pedagogy of both the former Kattabs and the Mosques – heavily reliant on teacher centred diatribes. This was noted too in reference to the morning assemblies held in every independent school (boys and girls, K-12). Didactic instruction was a ubiquitous strategy for both moral and intellectual training. But curiously, Ash appears to have an approach to his teaching of values to his students which requires them to use a form of independent rationalism, within the framework provided by the Koran, about values. He says:

> *when I teach I am not trying to shape their minds. There must be some kind of creativity ...someone can see something and say that is a very bad thing and someone else can see the same thing and say that's very nice. ...I teach what I teach and the response can vary.*

This is a rare sentiment but not entirely unknown. Khal and Sad express something similar when they suggest values foreign to Islam can be discussed, analysed and found wanting.

Khal expressed to me outside the taped interview that he felt Islam was strong enough to stand up to any competing values, indeed, to any worldview. In terms of the values he aspires to teach in his classroom, Khal said that actually most of the job of teaching values is done already, before students get to high school. He said:

> *The key values are already there either in everyday life or in our religion, in Islam. I am a Muslim. I know exactly what our religion says ...So if I see something bad I know from my instincts that my religion or my culture doesn't approve of that*

It appears that this same instinctive measure of moral values is expected to exist in a Muslim student, having been exposed in the family, the mosque and the community to a strong code expressing these values. The fact is, though, that teachers like Sad help students process these values in literature by direct didactic instruction, while others like Ash consciously encourage independent rational thought (based on the teaching of the Koran) with a stated preparedness to accept whatever the result.

Male/female relationships

Perhaps no issue, apart from reverence for the prophet Mohammed, is as strongly felt by Gulf Muslims as that of male and female relationships. The issue is not merely one of the rectitudes of sexual behaviour, but involves so much more, from dress habits, to eating habits, to conversations, to photography, to intimacy, to courtship, to weddings and even to eye contact. Being thus aware of the particular importance the Gulf Arabs put on the cultural mores connected with male and female relationship it is not surprising that the Arab expatriate teachers interviewed appeared to nurture a sensitivity in this subject. Khal, for example, raises the issue of male/female relationships as an issue he says needs sensitive treatment in the English classroom. He says a key value to be dealt with as it arises in English literature is:

the relationship between the two sexes. I don't allow myself to speak with a foreign woman intimately. We have to respect the other sex … we shouldn't have the kind of relationship with women beyond the marriageable borders.

Ash refers obliquely to contradictions that exist in the local culture regarding the issue of male/female relationships. He says:

Even the students, if you ask them if they can study a romance story for example, they will not mind but their parents will mind, but many of these same parents are actually doing something that is quite shocking if it came to the top [became public].

Ash is referring to the rarely publicly acknowledged fact that many wealthy Qatari men not only have up to four wives, in accordance with Islamic parameters, but they also have one or more mistresses for whom they provide housing and welfare. This practice is certainly not condoned by Islam but happens to be widely practiced among the wealthier Arabs of the Gulf where many male and female workers, most commonly from Asia, seek employment and liaisons to improve their financial lot. But these same Qatari men and their wives (who are often well aware of the practice) are not happy about literature, let alone reality (beyond their ingenuous experience), reflecting anything like this behaviour. Indeed, the participant comments provide a guide to the conventional Arab Islamic code of behaviour between men and women.

Ash implies that this code should be taught and reinforced, ironically (given his earlier comment) didactically. He says it can be done without literature that models 'immoral' behaviour according to the Islamic perspective:

But we do not have to have a boy and a girl in a relationship just to teach a lesson. To teach or show something like this, no, but I can just talk about it, but necessarily in great details, according to our culture and our values.

And yet, Ash is not averse to using literature that includes cases of older boys and girls, men and women having romantic relationships. He is very pessimistic though about

getting the approval of the principal, and sometimes even the students, and as mentioned

earlier, the parents:

> *I would not mind but I would not convince my principal. I would have a problem even with the students themselves.*

Abd's comment is instructive in this and other moral issues:

> *What can be okay in Western culture might not (BE) the same in our culture or religion and we have to keep things clear; we have to keep the borders clear between both cultures and religion.*

This issue of male/female relationships provides an example to Abd's general guidelines:

> *It is very odd to see a girl walking down the street with a part of her body naked. But it's usual in the west. It's not allowed, or it is prohibited, to see a woman, or a man flirting with a woman in the street or a girl. But in the West it is normal. So we cannot allow everything to be used in our schools unless they are revised carefully.*

Abd said 'borders must be kept clear' and 'everything in our schools (must) be revised

carefully'. In this he is including reading material in the English classroom. He is

specifically stating in relation to this matter, that reading material cannot feature a part of a

woman's body naked (that includes arms and lower legs but not usually face).[14]

Although Khal, above, describes in some detail where the boundaries are

concerning relationships with the other sex, he is less inclined to apply censorship than he

is to encourage thoughtful discussion of the issue gleaning direction from the Koran. This

is consistent with what I reported earlier that he had said off-tape. Namely, that he

considered Islam well able to defend itself against any opposing worldview or lifestyle.

When asked specifically about how he would treat literature featuring boys and girls

interacting and possibly becoming more intimate, he said:

> *It's not difficult really. You have just to tell your students that the novel represents western culture, it represents the western way of life and you have to make it clear*

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[14] I experienced the censorship of this type of material at one school where staff blacked out offending sections of females in text books.

that what is acceptable in western culture might not be so in Arab culture or in Islamic culture. I don't think that it creates a problem. If it's made clear from the beginning that we are reading a novel which was written by a western writer and it represents a western culture and it is completely different to our culture and our religion. I don't think it will create a problem here.

Predictably a spectrum exists of responses to both the question of what values should be taught and how they should be taught. Abd suggests detailed censorship, for example, the removing of discussions or images of things like exposed female flesh, the replacing of water or juice for alcohol and of meat for pork or ham. Meanwhile, Khal says he welcomes all literature because of the opportunity to exercise Islamic apologetics. This openness is moderated, however, by his varying approach to boys in the lower grades. Khal welcomes critical discussions in the senior years but seems very aware of a more vulnerable cognitive condition among the Middle school years. Boys in Senior Years (Yrs 10-12) he argues have the maturity to discuss issues drawing on the foundational wisdom of the Koran's teaching. ButKhal advocates moderation when he suggests younger students in Preparatory Years (Yrs 7, 8, & 9) are not sufficiently mature to be exposed to both controversial material and a corresponding discussion):

> *We have to be very, very careful when we teach, for example, students of 11 or 12 years of age. They are very vulnerable. When you teach these kids they are still very young. You have to be careful not to show them internet websites that might if you like affect them badly. You don't show them terrorist acts, you don't show them people drinking alcohol, you don't show them naked women.*

Sad also advocates an approach which engages students in critical analysis of male/female relationships as presented in Western literature in the light of the standards of Islam. But like Khal, he argues for reasonable moderation:

> *I don't think people would accept literature that is rude to them, that is very anti-Islam. But we can be selective. Some literature is universal like Hamlet and Othello. So we can be selective. We don't need to teach a novel or a play which is anti-Islamic, but students need to know about an Islamic approach to literature and should be prepared to know why there is such an approach and what is the right answer for this and how can we defend our values. Now, by studying we can teach the students about how they could defend their values.*

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Em pointed out even more concerning the defence of these Islamic values. This affects not only his approach to teaching literature but apparently his daily life. In relation to this issue of male/female relations Em said:

> *We can say that the west in some ways is very dangerous in terms of ways of living, in terms of its overdose of freedom, or even young men for girls. I think we can control all of that concerning our religion and concerning the rules in our homes.*

Finally, Ash, who appears by his comments to be like Khal more open than others to Western cultural interaction, suggests that this area of male /female relationships with the Qatari religious culture, is not ready for the likes of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*:

> *Even here in Qatar (with many) westerners who are going here and there in all the fields of the daily life – we are in one of the restaurants and ladies are walking here and there with different ways, you know, of dresses, styles and fashion and so on, but do you think we could teach this masterpiece, this romantic story of Romeo and Juliet here in this country? No, so we still have our values, we still haven't spoilt them yet.*

Ash admits that Western interaction is inevitable, in fact, that such blatant and sometimes raw interaction occurs in the streets and restaurants of the country, but that mix of cultures has not yet affected, or 'spoilt', the Qatari Islamic expression enough to this point to allow the inclusion of reading material like *Romeo and Juliet,* the romance story of two unmarried Westerners.

Universal values

It appears from the data that there exists a group of values that have perhaps universal application and adherence. The notion appeared unsolicited in a number of interviews. When asked about Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations,* which each participant had read and knew reasonably well, they suggested that the unforgiveness and resentment demonstrated by Miss Havisham should be discouraged. The resulting bitterness in the life of Miss Havisham was seen as an inevitable consequence and required the application of the value of forgiveness. Abd says of this:

Yes. (I think tolerance and forgiveness belong to a set of values that are common to people throughout the world.) In the story of Great Expectations, the story is aimed at highlighting that lady (Miss Havisham) as a bad lady because she didn't forgive and she is unable to forget her pains – it is a good book if it gets the reader to question, "Why doesn't she forget him? Why doesn't she forgive him?" I think if a book persuades me towards this side it is a good book. But if it teaches me or urges me to be so hard and never to forgive, this is a bad book.

This notion of 'a set of values that are common to people throughout the world' provides the hope of successful community acceptance of resources originating from a cultural and religious base different to the traditionally monocultural Gulf state of Qatar. It is the judicious selection of these resources containing shared 'universal' themes and values that marks the work of teachers willing to engage Western literature.

Worth noting too is Abd's understanding of the nature and purpose of literature as revealed in this discussion. The concept of a work of fiction 'persuading' or 'teaching' or 'urging' tends more to the didactic than to the aesthetic or stylistic. One might best understand this as Islamic literary criticism. Just as Feminist Theory, or Post-Colonial Theory, or New Criticism Theory or Reader Response Theory frames the way a reader reads a text, so one might understand this approach Abd describes to reading literature as an Islamic Literary Theory. Such approaches place ideological parameters in the mind of the reader and thus frame the way literature is perceived. Abd appears to view literature as some sort of diatribe, perhaps not unlike the morning assembly. He frames his reading as he does his lesson, struggling personally to adopt a more student centred pedagogy and intent on explaining the 'lesson' or 'moral' of the story. This leads to the question of what teaching strategies are employed by participants.

Teaching Strategies

The data revealed that participants utilised a range of pedagogical approaches in the process of incorporating English literature resources in the teaching of English

language. The discussion was never purely pragmatic but involved the religious culture integrally. Ash, for example notes his process of checking graded reader content:

...if I am preparing a course of graded readers, I should take care of this issue to make sure that these characters in the story are not mentioned to be dancing or be drinking or to have disagreements with parents. This is like against the culture, and even our religion.

Em argues for the teacher's guiding hand on student comprehension of texts: 'For sure...teachers should influence the students' understanding or interpretation of a text.' He also suggests that teachers highlight literary characters 'as great models of people':

English literature - I think we're going to find a lot of great models of people who have helped a lot who can be introduced to students. For people of the Islamic background I think it will be a bright model for them to enjoy.

Similarly, Khal suggests the strategy of subtle though deliberate values instruction through literature study:

*Whenever I find some things (*in English literature*) that hint at an Islamic value, you have to tell the students about it. You don't have to necessarily mention that this is what Islam says, but you have to teach the values to enhance the values in the students mind because after all they are good values – forgiveness, mutual help, mutual respect.*

Engaging the philosophical underpinning of the cultural challenge, whether of classroom literature resources or the flood of digital entertainment, is what both Wright and the participants of this study have hinted is essential. Khal is adamant that determining what is acceptable for the classroom is just 'tell(ing) your students':

You have just to tell your students that the novel represents western culture, it represents the Western way of life and you have to make it clear that what is acceptable in Western culture might not be so in Arab culture or in Islamic culture. I don't think that it creates a problem.

But just how engaging is 'just telling' senior students? This traditional teacher-centred didactic pedagogy is eschewed by the SEC reform but integrally part of the Arab

culture in Qatar, evidenced from the school's morning assembly often resembling a Nuremberg rally, to the impassioned rhetoric of the Friday mosque. In contrast, critical thinking involves student-centred discovery learning which stimulates curiosity through the use of prompting questions leading to new insights. It is actually what Khal later identifies as the positive value of literature study:

I think that reading English literature is not a bad thing, it is a good thing. It is promoting your language. At the same time it gives you some ideas, some knowledge about other people, and how they're thinking.

Em has a similar very positive attitude to the English literature he uses in his classroom:

literature is something that is very rich ...it takes you beyond the dilemmas of your country... I think without using English literature it is something so boring for our students because as I told you that we have made great use of English literature in our schools in Egypt...

Whether teachers can transform this admiration for the cultural and ideological variety of stories into engaging student-centred learning is not clear. What is clear is that didactic approaches (and more importantly 'perspectives') are still used widely by teachers, but not a lot of evidence for how this more critical, student-centred approach to literature teaching is implemented.

Perhaps the single greatest handicap in Qatar to implementing student centred teaching strategies is the actual level of English competence of the students. Given the number of comparative references to Egypt it is clear that teachers can not employ strategies and even resources they might with students at the same year level in Qatar. For many of these teachers working with students in Years 7-12 the difficulty is getting students' English language competency to a point where they can access even the first graded readers. For Al the prospect of teaching his students using chapter book resources

is dim. It seems for many English language teachers unless they have access to graded readers they find any other extended literature texts difficult to access:

> *If I have to teach chapter books, students will need a certain level of English, they will have to communicate in English. Otherwise its better to teach English as a foreign language.* (Al)

Conclusion

It is clear that the data gathered from the values survey supplements the data from the in-depth interviews to show that core religious concerns are both well established and well understood and therefore foundational to this study. Participants were very strong in their insistence that foundational beliefs and values were shared by expatriate and local Arabs.

The unanimous selection of the top two values of Godliness and prayerfulness from the values survey demonstrates this. Others like Al pointed out that the cradle to grave saturation in the Islamic teachings and practices ensures such a state and actually transfers to a clear and shared interpretation of culture in literature.

Al was referring to the students, the boys who since the cradle had been exposed to the five daily prayers, the call of the mosque and the religious observations and celebrations. Other participants made this point, with Sad even pointing out that students are very quick to pick up any deviation from religious and cultural standards.

What emerges from this strength of shared belief in the sampled teachers is a willingness to engage to greater or lesser degrees with selected literature texts. The selection process takes place against certain somewhat superficial criteria. The criteria tend to be superficial because participants do not discuss the ideological underpinning of behaviours. They do not explicitly identify pluralism, relativism or agnosticism/atheism as

the react and retreat approach of fundamentalism does not give an opportunity for religious adherents to know what they believe and why, as opposed to what they do not believe and why not. If a faith claim is said to have coherent rationality, then it needs to interact rationally with intellectual and experiential challenges.

The greater or lesser degrees of engagement can be plotted for each participant on a graph or figure like the one below:
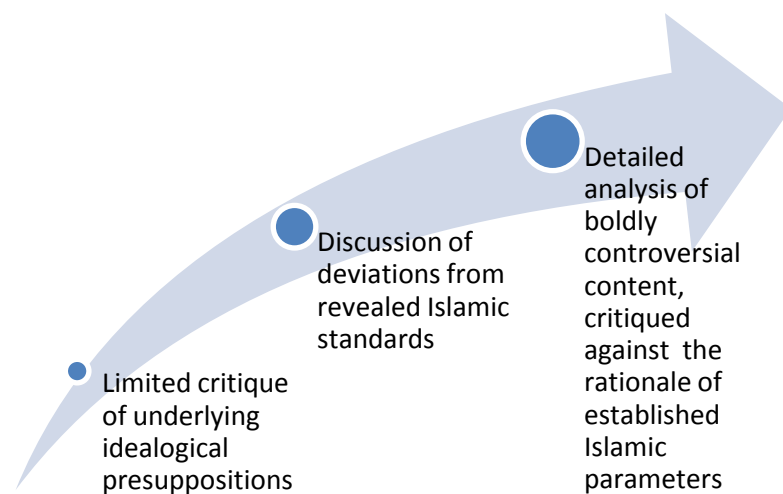

Figure 4: The Engage and Challenge approach to cultural conflict – a continuum.

The research data reveals our six participants were all willing to engage to some degree the alien cultures represented in literature texts. The first stept in the figure above is 'limited critique of ideological presuppositions'. While 'limited critique' is still on the 'engage' side of the response axis (as indicated by Figure 5), it tends to be expressed as more of a blunt prohibition against a certain behaviour, attitude or language act because it contravenes the local Arab/Islamic way. By definition it does include an examination of the moral base underlying the contentious issue.

The second step 'discussion of deviation from revealed Islamic standards' involves as it suggests a discussion of how and why the contentious issue is a deviation from what is accepted and practiced in the local religious culture. This might involve questioning of

students to determine where and what the Koran may say on ceratin matters, and if it is silent, what principles might be applied to make discerning judgements.

The third step does this in detail and goes further to examine the underlying philosophical base of what is deemed to be an unIslamic practice or attitude. The following plots each of the participants on this continuum based on the nature of the engagement they are willing to adopt according to their interview responses:
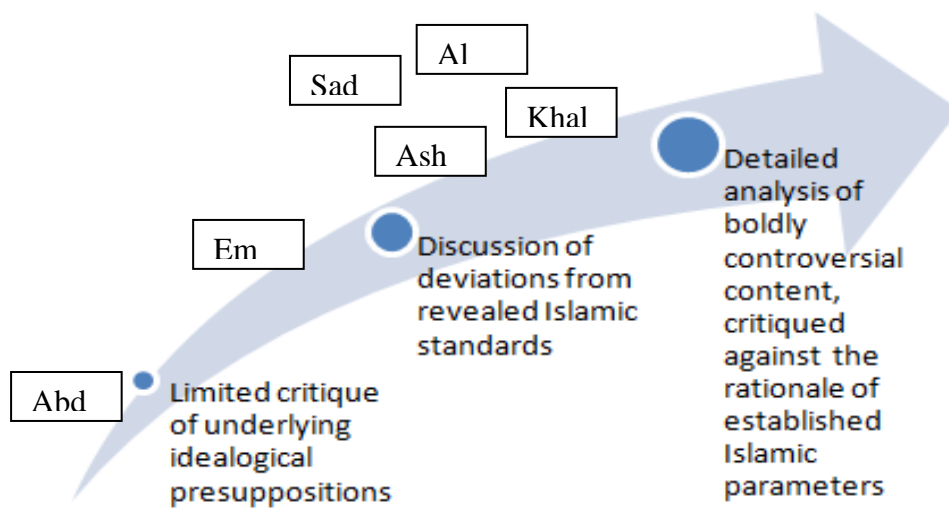
Figure 5: Participants plotted on the Engage and Challenge Continuum.

5. CONCLUSION

Introduction

This study has aimed to explore the underlying attitudes and perspectives of expatriate Arab Muslim teachers of the English language subject in Qatari State Independent schools regarding the use of English literature in their classes. This question has been central in determining whether or not the use of English literature in Qatar's classrooms is supportive of local religious and cultural expectations or is in fact a threat. This concluding chapter will firstly synthesise the key findings in order to draw a firm conclusion and secondly, list the implications for teachers, researchers and policymakers arising from the study.

Key Findings

The first key finding that is clear from this research concerns the depth of teaching, cultural and religious experience of the Arab expatriate teachers. It has been evident that across each of the participants was a clear conviction that they knew intimately how the local Qatari felt about issues relating to religion, culture and classroom texts. All of the teachers had had previous experience either in the immediate region of the Gulf states teaching English (Qatar or Oman), or in Saudi Arabia (where sensitivity to local customs and expectations would be even more essential) or in their homelands of Syria, Egypt and Tunisia (all countries severely affected by the 2011 Arab Spring of Discontent). This suggests that they were familiar with adjusting their teaching to the specific constraints of the local religious, cultural and academic conditions.

These expatriate Arab men all also proudly attended mosque, prayed, ate and interacted socially (within the school context only) with the local Qatari men (and other long term Arab residents of Qatar).

The research found that participants were committed to the use of English literature as a valuable support for English language teaching. The actual use of literature was limited in their experience in Qatar mainly by the level of language competence of their students. This prevented students from reading even the simplest of English sentences and therefore made even Level 1 graded readers inaccessible. The participant attitude to literature in the language classroom confirmed the studies of dozens of linguists and ESL educators regarding the value of literature in the ESL classroom. S, Em, Ash and Al were particularly clear regarding the contribution of English literature to the English language learning process. Another key finding from the research is the recognition from the participants that the sociocultural context of State education in Qatar is clearly influential on the perspectives these teachers have towards using English literature in the English language classroom. On one hand each teacher is influenced by his own sociocultural background and then added to this when teaching in SEC Independent schools he faces a sociocultural setting in flux. This flux is the cultural movement from a strict Muslim culture, to a less strict one, to one facing external foreign influences. The academic literature documents similar contexts around the world. One actor contributing to the sociocultural educational environment in Qatar is the growing population of imported labour and technical help. It has been noted that these expatriates are predominantly Muslim but a significant Western non-Muslim element is also present. Beyond the influence of Westerners on the ground in Qatar though, is the ubiquity of Western culture due to the mass media and the wide use of electronic communication technologies. Thus a former bastion of Islam with its distinctive strict Gulf traits is currently facing potential cultural change. This has been likened in the readings to similar educational sociocultural contexts such as a Muslim migrant in Sydney or London, or a Muslim youth in Bali or Trinidad (Nasr, 2004; Lukens-Bull, 2005; Bayat, 2007) where in

both settings the influence of Western ideological and cultural values meets Muslim values and beliefs. Despite the obvious inevitable conflict arising from the Western presence and influence in Qatar (both increasingly real and virtual), the participants in this study all expressed confidence regarding the strength of Islam to counter competing worldviews and their various cultural expressions. All participants also expressed confidence in individual Islamic adherents to personally make 'wise' decisions to 'control' these often alien influences. This confidence referred as much to the boys they were teaching as to the adult Muslims in the community.

(The obvious rider to this confidence is the ingenuity often pointed out between what is said and what is done. Participants noted a contradiction between statements of what is considered right behaviour and the public appearance of this (such as in the stand against immoral literature), and the actual private behaviour of locals.)

This approach in the classroom then has significant implications for the sociocultural context of Qatari youth, in particular, and their families, in general. This is because the bolder more transparent 'engage and challenge' approach of teachers models an approach that could be used positively by parents, community leaders, and even by youth themselves when faced with the confronting and alluring values, lifestyles and ideologies presented in the array of entertainment and information based mediums supported by the ubiquitous internet, digital and satellite technologies. The approach to English literature in the classroom expressed by our research participants, albeit on a continuum of hesitant engagement to open engagement, supports similar approaches which maintain that Islam is a coherent worldview, and is 'the' truth, thus able to explain, defend and counter the claims (and manifestations) of competing worldviews.

A final key finding from this research suggests unequivocally that the strongest underlying values of participants are religious, with godliness and prayer scoring

significantly higher than other values on the values survey. Interestingly, there was no equivalent demand that English literature reflect these same value priorities, presumably because it was expected that English literature, from the West, would rarely promote Islamic godliness and prayer. But what has emerged from the evidence is the suggestion that older literature, often belonging to the canon known as 'classics' appears a safer, more ready choice as a type of literature selected for study in Qatari Independent school classrooms (albeit in abridged form in readers. This could be connected to the exposure teachers are given to this literature in their degree courses (as reported by two participants) or even to the more ready ideological connection that they as Muslims make with literature produced in periods more dominated by Judeo-Christian values.

Certainly while participants made ready connection to the works of authors like Shakespeare, Defoe, Dickens, James, Emerson and Faulkner, there was a clear absence of reference to any reasonably contemporary author of adult or young adult English literature. Notably absent were the authors whose works appear regularly in the contemporary classrooms of schools in the West, authors like Golding, Salinger, Zindell, Hinton, Meyer, Paulsen or even J K Rowling, clearly the most popular (measured by sales) author in the history of young adult literature in the West. Although there is room for further research here, the tendency to connect with literature from a previous more religious and less secular era is clear.

Synthesis: Engage and Challenge

These key findings suggest in synthesis a similar conclusion to that which Wright draws. Chapter One in fact first mentions this notion of 'engage and conquer' (or 'engage and challenge'). This is one of two possible directions one may take on a continuum of responses to cultural/religious threats like the one English literature may pose to English language teachers in Qatar (and to all other education stakeholders). In the previous

chapter this positive end of the response spectrum is identified in terms of the extent to which teachers and students might deconstruct contentious issues arising from the study of English literature. The responses from research participants indicate what Wright concludes: that responses to perceived threats can be either orthodox or reactionary. An orthodox response is one borne of a deep conviction that the Muslim religion has a sufficient and convincing coherent base to deconstruct and critique any challenging ideas, attitudes and behaviours. A reactionary response is one that shuts down, excludes and fails to engage, examine and critique. It is a response that tends to be simplistic, absolute and final.

Staff in Qatar's Islamic state schools can either take the 'engage-and-challenge' approach to confronting issues out of the strength of their religious orthodoxy, or they can 'react and retreat'. The evidence suggests that a teacher choosing to engage and challenge will not only address the more superficial issues which are obviously more readily discerned by both adults and students. But the teacher adopting an 'engage and challenge' attitude will also engage and challenge the deeper, arguably more significant issues raised by alien or conflicting ideology reflected in the English language literature of the West.

Reacting and retreating is shutting the door to culturally challenging notions. This should not be confused with the discerning choices adults make in any context (Muslim or not) where the age and vulnerability of students will determine text selection and treatment. Reacting and retreating might be the refusal to allow any graded readers in an English language program. Some responses from participants come close to this. These are responses to literary content that more readily raise cultural alarms: references to sex, pigs, intimate cross gender relationships outside of marriage (between a man and a woman, or women), immodesty, any criticism of Islam (Koran, prophets, practices etc), dishonouring parents or community authorities, the Palestinian claim and more.

Although numerous participants were clearly willing to censor certain literary content they were all willing to at least discuss why this was the case. This approach then places participants on the 'engage and challenge' end of the continuum. At the same time some participants identified Western literature as often having culturally supportive literary content. This might include content valuing Godliness, prayer, family, honour, courage, virtue, tolerance, respect, honesty, justice, patience and generally speaking any triumph of good (as perceived by the Islamic community) over evil.
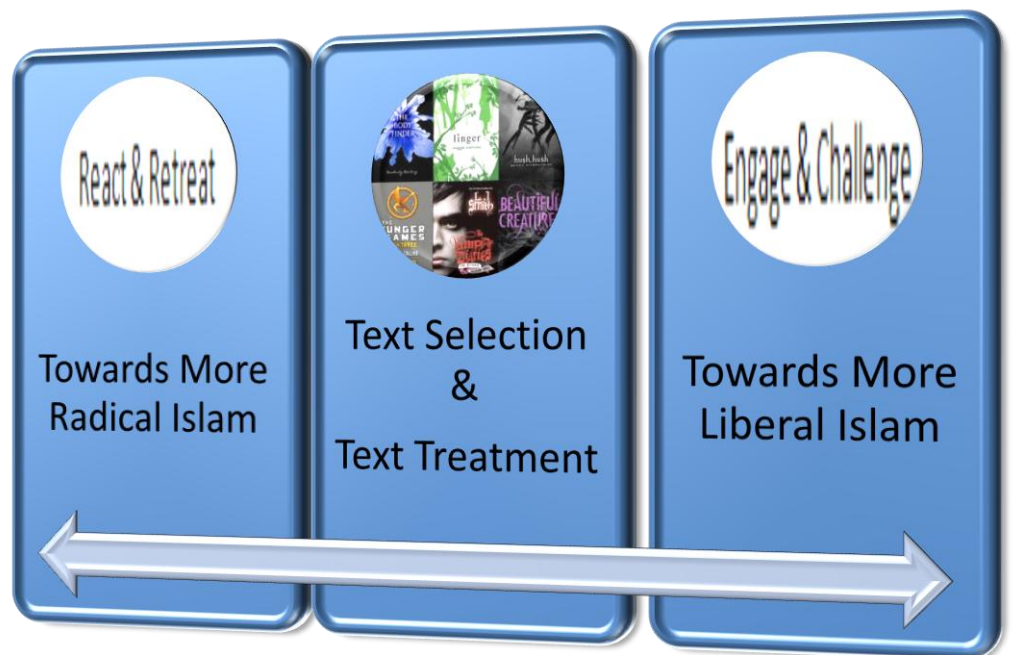
Figure 6: Continuum of possible responses to the question of literature use in the Qatari English language classroom.

This research therefore has demonstrated that Arab teachers in Islamic Qatari Independent school classrooms engaging with the issues that arise from the teaching of English literature can either react and retreat and simply eliminate or avoid challenging words, pictures or whole texts, or they can engage and challenge/explain basing the strength of their discussion on the coherence of the entire Islamic worldview. The

consensus among the research participants was that with judicious selection of appropriate texts the teaching of English language in Qatar's Independent school English classrooms is effectively enhanced. Furthermore, the engage and challenge/explain attitude as adopted by each participant to greater or lesser degrees can effectively draw on the wealth of cultural impartation already experienced by students and provide increased support for local cultural and religious values and beliefs while promoting greater understanding and tolerance of alternative views and practices.

Study Implications

The implications resulting from the knowledge and understanding generated by this research are broad. This is because as the literature of Chapter Three of this dissertation explores, the problem of ideological and cultural confrontation exist widely, from the Islamic communities of London, to the villages of Indonesia, to the English language classrooms of Qatari schools. The approaches taken by expat Arab teachers to the ideological and cultural confrontations that emerge in theEnglish language classrooms in Qatar may inform similar expressions of Islamic/Western conflicts elsewhere in the world. These approaches which have been shown to exist on an engage and challenge continuum could be useful in the face of challenging questions like the one posed by the Qatari father of a Year 10 student. At a parent/teacher interview he asked why his son was reading Western literature. The reason any student is reading English literature in his English language class in Qatar is because firstly it is a valuable proven tool for language acquisition, and secondly because the analysis of beliefs and practices reflected therein can assist a Muslim in knowing what he believes and why, as opposed to what he does not believe, and why not. The engage and challenge end of the continuum (Figure 5) maps a positive position any Muslim parent, teacher, Imam, counsellor, community leader, or in fact, young person might adopt when faced with forces appearing to counter the

established Islamic vision, goals and worldview of the individual, family or community. Indeed, while Figure 5 enables Islamic adherents to identify and monitor where their responses to cultural challenges could lie on a continuum, either from extreme radical reaction, to limited orthodox defense, to a more liberal position. This is what Figure 4 from the previous chapter shows - that just as this research has revealed, there exists a range of possible responses along the spectrum marked by engagement and challenge.

Limited critique of underlying idealogical presuppositions

Discussion of deviations from revealed Islamic standards

Detailed analysis of boldly controversial content, critiqued against the rationale of established Islamic parameters
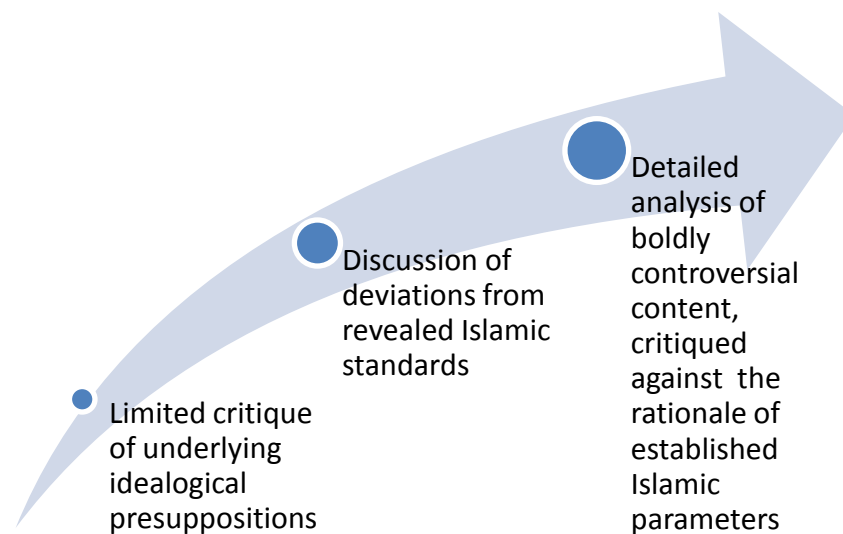
Figure 7: The Engage and Challenge approach to cultural conflict – a continuum. What does this mean for the family argument over access to certain satellite television channels? What does it mean for the Muslim mother in London concerned about a certain woman's magazine her daughter wants to read? What does it mean for the Indonesian village Imam's concern over the values and moral standards inherent in a popular Western movie? The ramifications are the same as for the Arab Muslim teacher in Qatari's State Independent schools wanting to utilise English literature texts to support English language acquisition but who senses an innate objection from students to any story books containing characters and stories from a Western cultural background? The ramification is that just as the six teachers of this study demonstrated, engagement with a sometimes alien culture is

not only possible, but it is preferred. This is because the act of analysis and critique of itself reinforces the precepts, values and standards of a cultural or religious ideology.

This then is what this study has demonstrated despite the serious limitations of minimal participant numbers, restricted participant gender, and the inevitable communication deficits resulting from using English, the participants' second language. (Of course, my inability to access Arabic research combined with my own stated subjective existence which I have noted and attempted to bracket are additional limitations). The study has demonstrated that despite these limitations sufficient data has been gathered to suggest that even within an existing continuum of strict to moderate Islamic belief and practice in Qatar, expatriate Arab English teachers believe it is possible to use English texts to support the teaching of English language while supporting the essential values and beliefs of Islam. They believe that achievement of this fine balance is only possible with both careful selection and treatment of available resources while critically defending the Islamic stance of values and behaviours. This then provides a model for many Muslims worldwide encountering similar cultural conflicts.

While this research provided very limited information regarding the teaching strategies applied in the implementation of English literature study in the classrooms of Qatar's independent schools, it did provide some useful insight to measures taken to limit possible deleterious effects resulting from the presence of offensive content in English literature. No doubt further research would result in an improved understanding of the best strategies to employ when studying English literature if teachers are to support local culture and religion in the Independent school classroom.see Table 4).

Appendix 1

Glossary of Key Terms

Literature - (as used in this paper referring to the use within Qatari Independent schools) electronic or hard copy stories, poems or plays of some length, usually with an identifiable plot and with characters interacting. Literature could be picture books with limited or no text, or it could be chapter books up to a few hundred pages (at the most advanced). The term 'literature' is not limited to a canon of stories that have classic status, nor does it necessarily refer exclusively to the genre of Young Adult Fiction often found in Western public and school libraries. English literature may often appear in abridged forms in ESL contexts.

Graded readers - a form of literature. Graded Readers are designed to supplement and support the progression of English reading skills through the measured acquisition of vocabulary and grammatical structures. Graded readers often come in series form and are marked by attractive layout with pictures regularly interspersed, headings breaking text density and chapters marking story progression. They are available from many companies, graded for both reading age and maturity appropriateness. Furthermore, they exist in culturally sensitive publications which attempt to reduce the offence certain content may cause. The more advanced the reader the more sensitive the material becomes in terms of cultural appropriateness due to the greater variety and complexity not only of language structures but themes, settings, character interplay and plots. Many graded readers are condensed forms of classic English literature texts, such as the plays of William Shakespeare or the novels of Charles Dickens, or even the classic tales of foreign languages, such as Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves (White, 2009) or Sinbad the Sailor (Kipling, 2000).

In-depth review – close analysis of an issue or response to an issue

Phenomenological methodology – research method based on the notion that reality consists of things and events which people are aware of in their consciousness only. That is, reality is not something independent of a person's consciousness.

SEC – Supreme Education Council, Qatar's governmental department responsible for the State education system.

Textbooks - books specifically targeting curriculum goals and usually given to individual students. In English language classrooms textbooks provide a valuable resource and although not containing longer works of English which might be classified as literature they will often contain short passages up to a page or two long. Most often there will be a set of activities for students to complete directed at the passage. Single worksheets are often given to students with similar short passages.

Not all textbooks have even short passages, or excerpts. Some textbooks teach English with reference only to single words, sentences or paragraphs. These tend be more traditional texts. Modern textbooks tend to be more functional in the approach to language teaching, using the communicative approach of language in use in daily life. Thus it is possible to see such functional English language forms as road signs, advertising and newspaper passages in such books.

Communicative approach (to language teaching) - an approach to foreign or second language teaching which emphasises that the goal of language learning is communicative competence

Traditional Arab English Language Classroom textbooks – texts used exclusively without recourse to any other text or stimulus material. They contained reading material limited to a paragraph or two and writing activities also limited to a sentence or paragraph (at most three). They are still used in some Arab countries and were part of the English curriculum of the Ministry schools.

Appendix 2

Glossary of Foreign Terms

Imam – a Muslim religious leader, priest

Hadith - the collected traditions, teachings, and stories of the prophet Muhammad, accepted as a source of Islamic doctrine and law second only to the Koran

Ibadat - personal obligations towards God

Kuttab – originally religious teaching occurring in part of a mosque; later, secular learning was added

Koran – the sacred text of Islam, believed by Muslims to record the revelations of God to Muhammad

Marseeha – a song of sacrifice sung in lament in a procession

mot'a - marriage of pleasure

Muamalat – Sharia laws dealing with the collective relationships of the Muslim society including commerce, penal laws, family affairs, international relations and finance

Muharram - the first month of the Islamic calendar

Sharia - Islamic religious law, based on the Koran

Shia - the second largest denomination of Islam

Sunnah – the practice of Prophet Muhammad that he taught and practically instituted as a teacher of the sharī'ah and the best exemplar. It includes his specific words, habits, practices, and silent approvals; it addresses ways of life dealing with friends, family and government.

Tanzimat – Ottoman reform movement heavily influenced by European ideas

Umma - body of Islamic believers

Stammlagers - prisoner of war camps

Appendix 3

Analysis of Data

This appendix contains the extracted data deemed 'more significant' and therefore utilised in the analysis process. It begins with the values survey for each of the participants who are named with a pseudonym. What follows then is what Hycner called 'creative insight' (Hycner, 1999, pp. 150) where the more meaningful units of data are arranged according to the evident 'thematic units'.

Values Survey

The following directions were given to participants in order to clarify what moral values each person most valorised and which had lesser importance:

***Directions**: Please label what you consider are the 5 most important & 5 least important values. Place **+5** next to the most important, and **-5** next to the least. (You should select 10 of the 32 values to place these ratings: +5, +4,+3, +2, +1, -1, -2, -3, -4, -5)*

The numerical results of this simple quantitative research tool appear after the six participant surveys captured in Tables C1-C6 below. They show unequivocally that 'Godliness' was considered the most highly valued moral trait. Note: no attempt was made to define any of the thirty two values for any participant.

Table C1

Values Survey: Ash

Citizenship		Work Ethic		Respect for Self		Respect for Others	
Equality		Punctuality		Commitment		Courage	
Freedom of conscience		Cooperation		Perseverance		Compassion	
Freedom of expression		Dependability		Self-control		Generosity	
Godliness	+5	Diligence		Cleanliness	+1	Courtesy	
Respect for authority		Trustworthiness	+2	Environmental care	-3	Moderation	-4
Democracy		Creativity	-5	Prayerfulness	+4	Honesty	+3
Tolerance		Productivity	-1	Honour		Cheerfulness	-2
Justice		Patience		Respect for health		Loyalty	

Table C2

Values Survey: Em

Citizenship		Work Ethic		Respect for Self		Respect for Others	
Equality		Punctuality		Commitment		Courage	
Freedom of conscience		Cooperation		Perseverance		Compassion	
Freedom of expression		Dependability		Self-control		Generosity	
Godliness	+5	Diligence	+3	Cleanliness	+2	Courtesy	
Respect for authority	+1	Trustworthiness		Environmental care	-5	Moderation	-4

Democracy		Creativity	-2	Prayerfulness	+4	Honesty	
Tolerance		Productivity	-1	Honour		Cheerfulness	-3
Justice		Patience		Respect for health		Loyalty	

Table C3

Values Survey: Khal

Citizenship		Work Ethic		Respect for Self		Respect for Others	
Equality		Punctuality		Commitment		Courage	
Freedom of conscience		Cooperation		Perseverance		Compassion	
Freedom of expression		Dependability		Self-control		Generosity	
Godliness	+5	Diligence		Cleanliness		Courtesy	
Respect for authority		Trustworthiness		Environmental care	-3	Moderation	-4
Democracy		Creativity	-2	Prayerfulness	+4	Honesty	
Tolerance	+1	Productivity	-1	Honour		Cheerfulness	-5
Justice	+3	Patience	+2	Respect for health		Loyalty	

Table C4

Values Survey: Abd

Citizenship		Work Ethic		Respect for Self		Respect for Others	
Equality		Punctuality		Commitment		Courage	
Freedom of conscience		Cooperation		Perseverance		Compassion	
Freedom of expression	+1	Dependability		Self-control		Generosity	
Godliness	+5	Diligence		Cleanliness		Courtesy	-4
Respect for authority		Trustworthiness		Environmental care		Moderation	
Democracy	-3	Creativity	-2	Prayerfulness	+4	Honesty	+2
Tolerance		Productivity	-1	Honour	+3	Cheerfulness	
Justice		Patience		Respect for health	-5	Loyalty	

Table C5

Values Survey: Al

Citizenship		Work Ethic		Respect for Self		Respect for Others	
Equality		Punctuality	-2	Commitment		Courage	
Freedom of	-1	Cooperation		Perseverance		Compassion	

Citizenship		Work Ethic		Respect for Self		Respect for Others	
conscience							
Freedom of expression		Dependability		Self-control		Generosity	
Godliness	+5	Diligence		Cleanliness	-5	Courtesy	-4
Respect for authority		Trustworthiness		Environmental care		Moderation	
Democracy		Creativity		Prayerfulness	+4	Honesty	
Tolerance		Productivity		Honour		Cheerfulness	-3
Justice	+3	Patience	+2	Respect for health	+1	Loyalty	

Table C6

Values Survey: Sad

Citizenship		Work Ethic		Respect for Self		Respect for Others	
Equality		Punctuality		Commitment		Courage	
Freedom of conscience		Cooperation		Perseverance		Compassion	
Freedom of expression		Dependability		Self-control		Generosity	
Godliness	+5	Diligence		Cleanliness	+2	Courtesy	
Respect for authority		Trustworthiness		Environmental care	-3	Moderation	-4
Democracy	-5	Creativity	-1	Prayerfulness	+4	Honesty	
Tolerance	+1	Productivity		Honour		Cheerfulness	-2

Justice		Patience		Respect for health	+3	Loyalty	

Table C7

Values Survey Totals

Citizenship		Work Ethic		Respect for Self		Respect for Others	
Equality		Punctuality	-2	Commitment		Courage	
Freedom of conscience		Cooperation		Perseverance		Compassion	
Freedom of expression		Dependability		Self-control		Generosity	
Godliness	+30	Diligence	+3	Cleanliness	0	Courtesy	-8
Respect for authority	+1	Trustworthiness	+2	Environmental care	-14	Moderation	-16
Democracy		Creativity	-12	Prayerfulness	+24	Honesty	+5
Tolerance	+2	Productivity	-4	Honour	+3	Cheerfulness	
Justice	+6	Patience	+4	Respect for health	-1	Loyalty	

Note. Highest and lowest scoring values are highlighted pink and yellow respectively.

Thematic Units of Meaning

The following six tables contain the significant data contributing to the emergence of six thematic units: culture and religion; moral values; teaching strategies; ingenuity; personal issues; and, literature teaching.

Table C8

Participant Comments Contributing To Thematic Units of Meaning: Ash

Culture & Religion	Moral Values	Teaching Strategies	Ingenuity	Personal Problems	Literature Teaching
*support the parents and the community's cultural * many rules for our religion and our cultural values * confident that your values will be the same values as the community - Of course * we have good religion values, we have good cultural values * I studied English literature…Shakespearian literature, TS Eliot literature and those people whose values I	*respect and honour Gratitude, obedience * attitudes or behaviours that you would avoid? …I think all the basic values of any	* Actually I see from the texts and books that we choose for our school that we are not the same as the west… * we try to modify these values to our Muslim	*have to differentiate between what should be and what is *I would have a problem even with the students themselves. But you can find the very same principal and the very	*mixing with other cultures * teenage novels feature boys and girls in relationships. Would you ever use that sort of literature in your teaching? I would not mind but I would not	* in Egypt and in Qatar I have graded readers for Grades 10, 11 and 12 …one of these is *Robinson Crusoe* *my school also insisted that I teach short stories that connect to the history of Islam. He asked me one that if I was going to teach biography then I should teach a biography of the prophet

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don't find any contradiction with our values. In fact sometimes I think they are talking about our values.
* But we do not like to have say, a boy and a girl in a relationship just to teach a lesson. To teach or show something like this, no, but I can just talk about it
* if you confine yourself to the culture here in Qatar you will have the wrong idea of Arab culture because these people are still, like, very limited, very confined to their culture… other cultures like Egypt, like Syria and Lebanon …now teach English literature, Shakespearian literature, even American

religion, like the values of lying, cheating, deceiving
* when I teach I am not trying to shape their minds. There must be some kind of creativity …someone can see something and say that is a very bad thing and someone else can

society…. *as the values contained in the materials are matching
* Why not take advice from them? I mean, values concern all humans. I don't think there are good values or bad values. Values are all good values and

same students doing the very same thing outside the school as they condemn in stories but it is not a contradiction in their lives. Like you can find that they do something and yet they talk about something else
*, what happens outside of school is something different. It is another

convince my principal. I would have a problem even with the students themselves.
*…I even struggle with my friends here in Qatar who object to the teaching of English literature and western literature and who want our own literature.
* Islamic stories …not convincing to me as a teacher of English

Mohammed. But I do not have any problem with teaching something like *Hamlet,* simplified I mean. I do not find any problem in that they are not contradicting our values in many cases.
* it is not acceptable, for example, in literature courses here to have characters who drink or dance, or do something like that. If I make a story, if I am preparing a course of graded readers, I should take care of this issue to make sure that these

literature. …I even struggle with my friends here in Qatar who object to the teaching of English literature and western literature and who want our own literature. *	see the same thing and say that's very nice. …I teach what I teach and the response can vary.	they will be good for our study	story. Even the students, if you ask them if they can study a romance story for example, they will not mind but their parents will mind, but many of these same parents are actually doing something that is quite shocking if it came to the top (became public). *an example of unforgivenes		characters in the story are not mentioned to be dancing or be drinking or to have disagreements with parents. This is like against the culture, and even our religion. Although it is acceptable in some minor characters inside our community. (LIT) *could that be used to teach, to promote the Islamic value of forgiveness, for example? **Mr Ash:** Why not? It could be used to show the effect of resentment *Would you

			s and bitterness which I imagine Islam would not support. **Mr Ash:** Would not support but exists in our lives. All these things which are western values which we say we do not support exist in our homes. So this is our dilemma. Everything you ask us not to teach in our schools you		consider using any anti Islamic, not just non-Islamic material. **Mr Ash:** …In literature no, but in the newspaper and media, yes: something anti-Islamic and even anti Prophet Mohammed which pictured him something like a terrorist *I began to read Arabic titles like Mohammed…. & ……. . I found very very common points, like common values which, you know… So I find that I do not mind at all to teach English literature; no one

			will find in our homes, on TV and videos. So if you think everything is ok in our schools you will find the opposite in our homes		minds. *these were graded readers in English promoting Islamic history, famous people? **Mr Ash:** Not necessarily. Basically he meant to promote learning in English language, through

Table C9

Participant Comments Contributing To Thematic Units of Meaning: Em

Culture & Religion	Moral Values	Teaching Strategies	Ingenuity	Personal Problems	Literature Teaching
* You've said that there are cultural things that might differ, say from Egypt to Saudi to Qatar. Would you say that they're much the	*if we face the positives that we can find from this experience I think we can say that what about	* on let's look at what our Islamic religion asks us, how to treat people, and if you are (dealing) with this man		* Qatar, it has been a very, very effective year for me personally as I have been introduced to new styles of teaching * I gain a lot of	*, so you have no objection to the use of novels and literature **Em:** Sure, because we applied that in Egypt, as I

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same?

Em: No, of course not. You know in Egypt, the religious background and religious values, you know families are so simple and so humble. In Egypt we are absorbing our religious values from our parents from our families * once we grow up we find that before we have anything that happens in our lives like picking work, like marriage, like asking for a son or a having a cocktail of educational theories from everywhere in the world. Often then we can judge them to apply what they are saying to see if they are suitable for our environment and civilization * The west nowadays is like a source of everything, but keeping our Islamic religion and and you have given him money and he can't pay back, you can forgive him, and say, If you have money to pay, that's ok, but if you don't have that's okay, one day I think Allah is going to send me more. So okay, if you want to use literature that's okay, but if you'd like to say can I mix it with some religious values, then experience, I gain a lot of success *. I have to tell you that I got great experience from one of my British supervisors from my academy in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. I still remember how this man was sincere, and how he was honest with us in a lot of things to develop my career and I think this man worked hard too. Nowadays when I work with you, Mr Ian, I think that when I ask for you a lot of things, it doesn't told you the students level is completely different to Qatar * literature is something that is very rich…I was amazed at the masterpieces of great writers …it takes you beyond the dilemmas of your country. I still remember, you know, these amazing stories of Charles Dickens and how we were taken from our poor areas

daughter, you have to refer to the god, you have to refer to Allah. * gratitude, god's sovereignty, depend on his guidance. * good start of the day that you read together some verses of the Holy Koran * In Saudi Arabia its completely different… they give their students about 5 subjects concerning the religious subject – like Hadith… * if we …close our doors and let

tradition in addition to our Western science benefits I think we can … But in our Islamic religion culture and civilization we are not afraid anymore of the western civilization because you know we have a strong basis. If we follow our true basis. We can say that the west in some ways

for sure

*the West is a big source of civilization, so I think we have to relate to the West but of course not to throw ourselves in the heart of the west. No, no, no, we have to take what we think is going to modify, is going to add to us *Dr Rufairs, the famous scientist, when he returned back to Egypt, he

matter if this man is from the East or this man is from the West. When I ask you for a lot of advice you provide me with sincere advice. *we are working as brothers, even if we are different in some aspects in religion and so on. But we still know that you believe that there is a God up there who is watching what you are doing. And I believe there is Allah watching what I am doing…with these differences

in Egypt to these stories of these English villages and cities to witness what was going on and how the workers were treated, and how they suffered a lot. *I think without using English literature it is something so boring for our students because as I told you that we have made great use of English literature in our schools in

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our children be educated inside our doors according to our values, our traditions – I think we are committing a crime because you know nowadays we are living in a big world and we find more advantage in having this internet cable than having satellite everywhere in every house. I think we shouldn't stop being introduced to other cultures. * If we think that a monster	is very dangerous in terms of ways of living , in terms of its overdose of freedom, or even young men for girls. I think we can control all of that concerning our religion and concerning the rules in our homes. * orders from my parents, now? Even if they ask me to come back to	called his daughter Ohmamatum, after the name of one of the prophet's daughters, and to find that she lived in America all her life, but she was still putting the scarf around her face, what we call it in the Islamic world – the Hijab. I think related to our Islamic values. * we can take what we can use in our society and		in religion. In our religion we respect Christian people we respect Jewish people, we respect others	Egypt * English literature can help to some extent with the religious instruction * When you come to the character of Shylock in the *Merchant of Venice,* this harsh, vile character, this harmful behavior … this is the same way that Jews are killing in the Gaza strip and Palestine *English literature is very valuable in bringing

has come to swallow us, …our thinking ability is so narrow, *one day our Islamic culture led the world like in the field of medicine, …engineering, a lot of things. They got our theories and built a lot of them and now, …we need them, we need them to develop,… manufacturing, … So if we take the view the view that the West is a monster that is going to swallow us we	Egypt, now, I will do it, obey them at once. We have this kind of respect in most of our families * Let's keep… that which can match our values and we can forget about the others.(rest)	we can neglect or forget about the others * East is far from the west, so far away from the west. I think we have to say that those people are characterized in respect of their crime, drunk person, having illegal relations with some ladies and so on, forget about it. This is something personal I think. They			creativity and interest to the teaching of English language and its language level appropriate (obviously you can read more difficult literature with more advanced students * I think reading about …religious people reading about this relationship, or illegal relationship between a male and female here

will stop living.		can relate to			and there, I
* But in a		their own			think this may
country like		point of view			attract some
Saudia Arabia		but I think we			but I don't
do you think I		should			think it will
could teach a		…forget			attract the
story like that.		about their			majority of
Of course not, so		personal			young male
we can forbid it.		customs.East			and female
* Even here in		and west are			because I told
Qatar (with		creating			you that, we
many)		some…			are living with
westerners who		benefits for a			Islamic
are going here		lot of			values, in an
and there in all		persons.			Islamic
the fields of the		* I still			society among
daily life – we		remember the			our families
are in one of the		story of the			who can deal
restaurants and		lady with the			with us in a
ladies are		lamp, you I			warm way
walking here		know her			and we can
and there with		name.			have this kind
different ways,		Florence			of control.
you know, of		Nightingale.			* English
dresses, styles		While I was			literature I
and fashion and		telling the			think we're
so on, but do		students			going to find

you think we could teach this masterpiece, this romantic story of *Romeo and Juliet* here in this country? No, so we still have our values, we still haven't spoilt them yet.		about she was one of the first nurses in Islam and how she started a clinic in a mobile tent and how the prophet used to visit the soldiers who were injured in the field of battle I used to add something and say this story reminds me of a great rich woman called Florence Nightingale who was the first nurse in England and			a lot of great models of people who have helped a lot who can be introduced to students. For people of the Islamic background I think it will be a bright model for them to enjoy. * But (those) who have written a lot of things against Islam, against our culture, I think we can neglect all of these * you think that teachers should

		who was the first woman who thought of building a school for nursing and how this woman who was from a very, very rich family but she ignored everything for the sake of helping everything and helping very poor people. So I think if we say that we are people, that we have a lot of very good qualities, I			influence the students' understanding or interpretation of a text? **Em:** For sure.

		think we will forget about differences			

Table C10

Participant Comments Contributing To Thematic Units of Meaning: Khal

Culture & Religion	Moral Values	Teaching Strategies	Ingenuity	Personal Problems	Literature Teaching
* education in general serves many purposes. For promoting culture, or let's say, teaching the students their own culture and their own religion is very important … we should be open to other cultures, we should be open to other religions, but not to the point	*The key values are already there either in everyday life or in our religion, in Islam. I am a Muslim. I know exactly what our religion says, …So if I see something bad I know from my instincts that my religion	*What I say is there is no harm in getting ideas about other cultures from all over the world. * But, we have to be very, very careful when we teach, for example, students of 11 or 12 years of age. They are very vulnerable. When you teach these kids they	*They might get these things outside of school, but school is a place where we have to be very, very careful not to allow them	. I was taught and I read many novels from western cultures and I wasn't affected by that. I am a Muslim and I am a professing Muslim, and I don't see any threat whatsoever coming from	*I come from Tunisia. I used to read books from major English or American writers. I read novels from writers like Henry James, Charles Dickens and Faulkner for instance and in my country this doesn't really seem a threat to my religion and

that we encourage our students to discard their own culture, their own traditions, their own religion and adopt other new ones.

or my culture doesn't approve of that

*. So what can be ok in western culture might not the same in our culture or religion and we have to keep things clear, we have to keep the borders clear between both cultures and religion.

* the relationship between the two sexes. I don't allow

are still very young. You have to be careful not to show them internet websites that might if you like affect them badly. You don't show them terrorist acts, you don't show them people drinking alcohol, you don't show them naked women. I don't know – in our culture we have to be very very careful. And not to allow them to be taught these things in school.

Western ideas or Western teaching methods.

*Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism - would hold. Is that your perception, that there could be intersecting values?

Mr Khal: I don't know what other religions say, I just know my own religion. So all I care about is my own religion *

culture * . So it doesn't matter whether the novel is long or short as long they can get the moral easily.

* do you think students could be influenced, attracted, to adopt attitudes, values and ideas that come through the characters of English literature?

Mr Khal: I don't think so, I don't think so. As I told you from my own experience, and I have so many other friends

	myself to speak with a foreign woman intimately. We have to respect the other sex * we shouldn't have the kind of relationship with women beyond the marriageable borders	* the student should have a wide range of resources a wide range of ideas to learn from. * With the short passages that you do use, what is your aim as an English teacher? **Mr Khal:** Mainly if there are good values that promote mutual respect for example, enhancing good family relationships, good social relationships – we focus on those values			who had the same kind of education as me, and none of us were affected by those values from the western culture. So I don't think that simply reading the book either at school or university, values and behaviours of those from western countries would affect the future of somebody. I don't think so, no. *simply we have to be just a little bit careful when showing

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		together with some English language in general. I am an English teacher so I have to teach the English language. **Interviewer:** So just to clarify that are you saying that the discussion of values and themes is of equal importance to your teaching of vocabulary, grammar, comprehension of English. **Mr Khal:** Yes, you could say that if there are certain values,			internet websites to students or when selecting a course book. So I don't think, if we are careful, there is any threat whatsoever to the students. But, when they are at an early age we have to select materials very carefully so as not to offend the student and their culture and their religion * In Charles Dickens *Great Expectation* we see Miss Havisham who is a bitter old

| | | certain qualities then we focus on them, we tell the students that this value promotes such and such a thing, together with the teaching of vocab and grammar. | | | lady who was rejected at the altar. She has lived many decades resenting and not forgiving the man who rejected her on her wedding date.

Islam, along with many other religions, encourages people to forgive others. It is the religion of love, the religion of mutual respect, the religion of forgiveness. Whenever I find some things that hint at an |

					Islamic value, you have to tell the students about it. You don't have to necessarily mention that this is what Islam says, but you have to teach the values to enhance the values in the students mind because after all they are good values – forgiveness, mutual help, mutual respect. * Not a whole novel but just sometimes very short passages. …because of your preference not to teach

					longer works or because of the circumstances? …Mainly circumstances and the fact that I am teaching prep (Yrs 7-9) school so the ability level of the student prohibits study of any longer works. * As I told you, very very short passages with some comprehension questions.

Table C11

Participant Comments Contributing To Thematic Units of Meaning: Abd

Culture & Religion	Moral Values	Teaching Strategies	Ingenuity	Personal Problems	Literature Teaching

* education in general serves many purposes. For promoting culture, or let's say, teaching the students their own culture and their own religion is very important … we should be open to other cultures, we should be open to other religions, but not to	What are the key values that need to be supported in your teaching? **Mr Mohammed:** The religious values and the correct understanding of Islamic instructions which always urge Muslims to be peaceful, to be tolerant, to be good mannered, like all other heavenly religions. All other heavenly religions urge their followers to be so. In every society	*What I say is there is no harm in getting ideas about other cultures from all over the world. * But, we have to be very, very careful when we teach, for example, students of 11 or 12 years of age. They are very vulnerable. When you teach these kids they are still very young. You have to be careful not to show them internet websites that might if you like affect them	*They might get these things outside of school, but school is a place where we have to be very, very careful not to allow them	. I was taught and I read many novels from western cultures and I wasn't affected by that. I am a Moslem and I am a professing Moslem, and I don't see any threat whatsoever coming from Western ideas or Western teaching methods. *Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism - would hold. Is that your perception,	*I come from Tunisia. I used to read books from major English or American writers. I read novels from writers like Henry James, Charles Dickens and Faulkner for instance and in my country this doesn't really seem a threat to my religion and culture * . So it doesn't matter whether the novel is long or short as long they can get the moral easily. * do you think

the point that we encourage our students to discard their own culture, their own traditions, their own religion and adopt other new ones.

there are always people who disobey the heavenly instructions and this is because we are humans and this is our human nature. Also some other values need to be improved like respect for others, cooperation, (selflessness), thinking about all people not just to be interested only in yourself – these are values that need to be improved and I

badly. You don't show them terrorist acts, you don't show them people drinking alcohol, you don't show them naked women. I don't know – in our culture we have to be very very careful. And not to allow them to be taught these things in school.

* the student should have a wide range of resources a wide range of ideas to learn from.

* With the short passages that

that there could be intersecting values?

Mr Khal: I don't know what other religions say. I just know my own religion. So all I care about is my own religion

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students could be influenced, attracted, to adopt attitudes, values and ideas that come through the characters of English literature?

Mr Khal: I don't think so, I don't think so. As I told you from my own experience, and I have so many other friends who had the same kind of education as me, and none of us were affected by those values from the western culture. So I don't think

	think if we are interested we will find that all things are found in the Holy Koran and our self legislations *) it is very odd to see a girl walking down the street with a part of her body naked. But it's usual in the west. It's not allowed, or it is prohibited, to see a woman or a man flirting with a woman in the street or a girl. But in the West it is normal. So we	you do use, what is your aim as an English teacher? **Mr Khal:** Mainly if there are good values that promote mutual respect for example, enhancing good family relationships, good social relationships – we focus on those values together with some English language in general. I am an English teacher so I have to teach the English language.		that simply reading the book either at school or university, values and behaviours of those from western countries would affect the future of somebody. I don't think so, no. *simply we have to be just a little bit careful when showing internet websites to students or when selecting a course book. So I don't think, if we are careful, there is any threat

	cannot allow everything to be used in our schools unless they are revised carefully. *: Do you think there are a set of values that are common and universal? For example, mercy would be identified by what you called heavenly religions as something valuable. For example, Christians, Buddhists, Jews… **Mr**	**Interviewer:** So just to clarify that are you saying that the discussion of values and themes is of equal importance to your teaching of vocabulary, grammar, comprehension of English. **Mr Khal:** Yes, you could say that if there are certain values, certain qualities then we focus on them, we tell the students that this value promotes such and such a thing, together with the			whatsoever to the students. But, when they are at an early age we have to select materials very carefully so as not to offend the student and their culture and their religion * In Charles Dickens *Great Expectation* we see Miss Havisham who is a bitter old lady who was rejected at the altar. She has lived many decades resenting and not forgiving the man who rejected her on

	Mohammed: No, Buddhism is not a Heavenly religion by the way. **Interviewer**: Okay, let me not use your word, *other* religions, would identify mercy as a valuable value. **Mr Mohammed:** Yes, of course. All heavenly religions value or look highly upon mercy and tolerance *: Yes. That's what I'm talking about – tolerance and forgiveness.	teaching of vocab and grammar.			her wedding date. Islam, along with many other religions, encourages people to forgive others. It is the religion of love, the religion of mutual respect, the religion of forgiveness. Whenever I find some things that hint at an Islamic value, you have to tell the students about it. You don't have to necessarily mention that this is what Islam says, but

	Interviewer: So you think they belong to a set of values that are common to people throughout the world? **Mr Mohammed:** Yes. *, if I inculcate such good values deeply into the children's hearts and minds, when I hear things like that (of course I am not with him at home to prevent him from watching such things) but if I				you have to teach the values to enhance the values in the students mind because after all they are good values – forgiveness, mutual help, mutual respect. * Not a whole novel but just sometimes very short passages. …because of your preference not to teach longer works or because of the circumstances? …Mainly circumstances and the fact that I am teaching prep (Yrs 7-9) school so the

	inculcate and make him believe firmly in such good values, even if he is alone at home, he will not allow himself to see such things and this is the high standard I expect from students. To be alone and to behave well, not to be observed, and to behave well. This is the best thing to do but this all depends on how far have you reformed or have you brought up the				ability level of the student prohibits study of any longer works. * As I told you, very very short passages with some comprehension questions.

Culture & Religion	Moral Values	Teaching Strategies
character to believe strongly in good values. Bad values are rejected automatically. *		

Table C12

Participant Comments Contributing To Thematic Units of Meaning: Al

Culture & Religion	Moral Values	Teaching Strategies	Ingenuity	Personal Problems	Literature Teaching
*Yes, cultural and religious values are accepted by everyone. Religion has a strong influence on the Middle East. It would be very useful to the Islamic value and any	* in Qatar there are great values which have to do with the humanity and the religion, such as welcoming guests, and helping the poor, and those who are	* Are you saying that that is reflected in the education practices of the students? **Mr Mohammed:** Yes, and you see they are putting a lot of money on experience and standards and books and	* . At the same time it has to be deed and not words, otherwise it will be a hypocrisy	* : If they are Islamic values why are they absent here in an Islamic country? …..So we have here a very young country in terms of its development, in terms of the	* If I have to teach chapter books, students will need a certain level of English, they will have to communicate in English. Otherwise its better to

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values taught in the school and the class * do you think that the school curriculum should uphold those values? **Mr Mohammed:** Yes, * These values that you mention, are they Islamic values, such as health and well-being, such as independent learning? **Mr Mohammed:** They are related to Islam * you have

in need * he can establish the values that are related to these values. They don't have to necessarily be mentioned in the curriculum standards or in the curriculum * Now values need to be supported, such as self-reliance and maximum utilization of time and resources. Another big issue is health and well-being. People

everything but students here are not taught how to learn; they are not taught the advantage that education gives them. * Actually, we can't do this in one hour or one day. It takes time. It's a matter of generations. So we have to work on this generation who will teach their children how to value education and how to value the resources. And this will take a long time * Do you think those particular values are

discovery of its rich resources, and it hasn't yet learned how to use it wisely? Is that what you're saying? **Mr Mohammed:** Yes. * Because you see the man is born like a blank sheet. So expose him to any values and he will absorb those values. And you see there are many values which are common between

teach English as a foreign language. * does it concern you that students could be influenced to adopt alien values? **Mr Mohammed:** Well, I studied English literature at Damascus University and I wasn't influenced by this kind of literature. Why? Because I came from a solid background

stated that in terms of the thematic elements, the ideas of literature, your aim is to support or to promote what you say is the correct way, the right way of looking at life. **Mr Mohammed:** Yes.	here don't take care of their health. Qatar has become the capital of diabetes. * You said that these were Islamic values, recognizing the value of good health, recognizing the value of independence, the values of education? **Mr Mohammed:** Yes. **Interviewer:** You would be able to justify each of those from the	exclusive or distinctive to Islam or do you imagine that those values are universal, you know, held by all. **Mr Mohammed:** No, they're universal. I think that people in South America, like in Brazil or Argentina, they have work and their societies have improved a lot and the people here should go have the same way. Because in South America the people have become much better educationally too. And they were in		Islamic values and western values. *. I think using the English literature will weaken the Arab literature especially for children because there aren't too many words in Arab literature books, you see * you are concerned about the Arabic language itself that too much exposure to	where Islamic values mean a lot to me. **Mr Mohammed:** I always compared our values Islamic values, and Western values. Even if you keep the western literature or the western values away from the students, you can't keep the western values away from the students all the time, because its

Koran and the Islamic religion?

Mr Mohammed: Yep.

* I don't fear about the values because we don't as teachers, or as parents – we are not the only path that educate our children, there's the TV the internet, you see. Now you don't show him this sight he will go and search himself

*

the same condition one day. So I think if they study these experiences like South America, they can learn how these people went through these experiences

* We can be selective. On the other hand the proceedings are well armed and well prepared. There is no need to fear about them. This is their values; they know their (Islamic leaders/country's) values very well. There is no fear of that.

* So you would rather make that

English language …would dilute the strength of the Arabic language and in time it may suffer from the over-exposure to English language. I …..

Mr Mohammed: There was an article on the *You Tube* website about a week ago. An Arabic teacher had an interview with a BBC correspondent and the Arab

on TV, on the internet and everywhere. Now, in the end, students have to compare and choose.

* In general do you find that Arabs read much?

Mr Mohammed: No, they don't read enough because you see I have statistics that show that an English man reads 24x more than an Arab man. Its horrible and

choice conscious? Is that what you are saying?

Mr Mohammed: Yes, first of all we have to strengthen, or enforce, our values, students values.

Interviewer: Are you talking about Islamic values?

Mr Mohammed: And then they can get an overview of any other values * by studying we can teach the students about how they could defend their values

teacher said (she was an art teacher) that whenever she asked a question (in the classroom) she got the response in English or in French because children were not exposed to Arabic literature at the beginning. * So are you suggesting that you would expose your students to such work as the work of the Danish cartoonist to

30% of Arabic people are illiterate *I don't think people would accept literature that is rude to them, that is very anti-Islam. But we can be selective. Some literature is universal like Hamlet and Othello. So we can be selective. We don't need to teach a novel or a play which is anti-Islamic, but students need

				discuss satirical, critical comments about Islam. **Mr Mohammed:** Yes. **Interviewer**: How would you go about that? How would you treat that? **Mr Mohammed:** I would treat that as a defense, not as literature. You see, I would treat that as a problem and this is the solution, and we have to	to know about an Islamic approach to literature and should be prepared to know why there is such an approach and what is the right answer for this and how can we defend our values * This is something in universal actually because if she was either in the East or the West she would have

				know the reasons behind that * How would you answer the question from the parent who wanted to know why his son was reading Western literature in his English class? **Mr Mohammed:** I think if you are studying English you have to know about the culture of the English people. It's a	the same feeling. Students here can study this kind of literature, like *Hamlet*, *Othello, ...* because this is something universal. The question is whether adultery should be persecuted. This is a universal question and when I discuss this in the classroom I discuss it from the Islamic point of view. We

| | | | | matter of culture because there is a cultural tie to the language. The student has got to know how English people might think and how people act in order to use the correct language by teaching or demonstrating language. But my point, I mean, it's a pristine language. It does no harm to teach literature, it doesn't affect Islamic values | can choose some literature which deals with human issues, with our humanity. All these topics are in … There's no harm in teaching such literature. * Yes of course it is in the English or American literature. For example I mentioned that key values can be supported like self reliance. For example, you |

and you can build Islamic values at the same time. Now one time when I was teaching 'celebrations' in the West, like Christmas. One student objected. He said this is not for a Muslim to read about that. I said after we read about Western celebrations we can talk about Muslim celebrations. He was satisfied and he liked the Unit very

can find this in Ralph Waldo Emerson's poetry and he said, "The best lightning rod for your profession is your own spine." And there are many examples in the Western literature – American or English. * So can I assume that you would not hesitate to use such resources, Western literature, to teach those

				much.	values? **Mr Mohammed:** None at all. * If you were to take a class, such as the Year 10 IGCSE class at your current school which has the language competency to study literature, would you do that here in Qatar, would you use Western literature? **Mr Mohammed:** Yes, of course.

Table C13

Participant Comments Contributing To Thematic Units of Meaning: Sad

Culture & Religion	Moral Values	Teaching Strategies	Ingenuity	Personal Problems	Literature Teaching
* Yes, in my opinion that's one of the most important things that we can actively support the parents and the community at. We think that values and religion promote a good cultural atmosphere and lead the students to be better and to be good citizens. At the same time I think that the support should come from all the parts of the	* good value just like cleanliness, just like being pro-active. If you're doing your job in a good way, all the things which can promote learning attitudes and behaviours in the future. Just like for myself, I have books with values that can be taught for the whole year, just like	* **Interviewer:** How would you treat such English literature when you have a story of boys and girls interacting, either in discussion or even in action becoming more intimate? **Mr Khal:** It's not difficult really. You		* I think all religions have the same, because we believe in Judaism, we believe in Christianity as Muslims. This is one of our pillars that we believe in all other religions because this is mentioned in our Holy Koran, that we have to believe in Christianity and Jesus Christ and we have to believe	* In Egypt … we use literature, even poetry in the Prep (Yrs 7-9) and we teach them full poems, okay, and full chapter books. We teach them in the fifth grade. Sometimes we teach them Charles Dickens * So literature serves the

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educational process

* I think that even from your behaviours, the way you deal with others, you can show the values. You can show religion atmosphere; even if you are dealing in a good way it reflects your religion and reflects your values.

* I think that people here are more religious than us, than our country. They depend on religion in a different way. Sometimes they are not so open to

mathematics, just like cleanliness, just like forgiveness, and being able to deal with students in a good way.

*: I think with some guidance from the teachers they can get the good values, the good behaviours of the Western literature, okay. That means that if you are teaching them something that comes from a foreign

have just to tell your students that the novel represents western culture, it represents the western way of life and you have to make it clear that what is acceptable in western culture might not be so in Arab culture or in Islamic culture. I don't think that it creates a problem. If its made clear from the beginning that we are

in Moses and Judaism and we respect all other religions so I think that all other religions can't be a threat to our religion.

* Is unforgiveness a good thing or a bad thing?

Mr Mohammed Said: It's a bad thing, but I think not only in Islam. In Christianity also you can forgive. One of the things we learn from Christianity in my country is that Jesus

purpose then of influencing proactively with positive values but also by showing the opposite of positive values and that is negative things in terms of your religion, such as the eating of pork.

Mr Mohammed Said: Yeah. I think that.

* So you would find that this particular piece of

other countries. But now I think it's changing, and people are changing in their opinion.

Interviewer: And those changes – do you see them as a threat to Islam?

Mr Mohammed Said: No. Islam is not preventing any other country or person to say whatever he thinks about

*. Do you see the current generation of young people, especially here in the gulf, but also in your home countries of

country like Western literature, it doesn't matter for me to have some bad or have some wrong behaviours, up to our religion or up to our culture. But they have to know about it. But they have to know there are some different cultures, some different ways of dealing with people in some other countries. Even I thought when we were talking about

reading a novel which was written by a western writer and it represents a western culture and it is completely different to our culture and our religion.

*Mr Mohammed Said: In my point of view it depends on guidance.

Christ was a very forgiving person. Now we have something that we say – if someone slaps you on your right cheek, give them your left cheek also. This is one of the sayings of Christ. So I think that Christianity and Islam is the same. The same way of forgiveness. I'm talking about the nature of human beings. Human beings sometimes don't forget.

English literature could be used to support values that Islam supports?

Mr Mohammed Said: Yeah, if you are not going to forgive you will have such a fate

* And it doesn't matter if none of those characters in *Great Expectations* are Moslems?

Mr Mohammed Said: No, it

Tunisia and Egypt, in an age of technology, especially through the internet but also through the spread of movies and games that reflect very strongly Western ideology, do you see change occurring in the younger generation. Do you fear it, or do you think that there is no appreciable difference to the Islamic culture? **Mr Khal:** I think that , especially in Tunisia nowadays, they are more likely to	pork or alcohol or ham or tea, some people say don't mention these things to them. But for myself I am mentioning this to my students just in case for it's forbidden for us to eat pork. If they go to any other western country I think that they have to know that there is such a thing called *pork* and something called *ham*. They just need to know they			And this is not related to the culture and to the religion. * because if you feel it is your right to be so and so, it's your right. I can't say anything. Maybe I can say it's forbidden in my religion, but it's your freedom, you are free to do whatever you want. So this is Islam who told us to be very acceptable to others. *The last book	doesn't matter – as Khal said to you before – and as I am an Egyptian and he is a Tunisian – our whole countries are open minded countries so we have teachings that depend on Western literature. For myself I studied English literature and American literature. My children are taught the same in their school so I

adopt some of the western habits, hairdressing, especially in clothes and language but I don't think that represents a real threat to our religion and culture. Because it's just a matter of using internet and websites more often but I don't think it represents a threat.	can't eat it, up to our religion. So I think that we have to tell them about the things that we have to know. * **Mr Khal:** I think it's very clear concerning these values. The students will see clearly that what is good is good and what is bad is bad. They don't need the teacher for it, to tell them that unforgiveness is bad and forgiveness is			I read was *The Alchemist* (I finished reading it 2-3 months ago). I know it was not written in English but the translation was very good. I think if any of our students read such a book they will get a lot of benefits because it also deals with some Christianity and Islam and the differences. no, not the differences, the things that are the same in	think that we get some good things out of it. * I wanted my students to read English literature so they could get some values and some things out of it because not all English literature has bad values or some wrong behaviours and I think they have some good things. *So I think that reading English

good – it's very clear here. **Interviewer:** Why is it clear? **Mr Khal:** It's human nature. It's known worldwide that unforgiveness is bad and forgiveness is good. Neither Islam nor any other religion states that unforgiveness is good.		the two religions. Also it has a lot of wisdom	literature is not a bad thing, it is a good thing. It is promoting your language. At the same time it gives you some ideas, some knowledge about other people, and how they're thinking * So I think that the teacher has to know the way of thinking of the students and he has to strengthen the good

					things and the good values in every text

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