

AN EXAMINATION OF NEWBERY MEDAL BOOKS FROM THE 1920s  
THROUGH THE 2000s: BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

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AN EXAMINATION OF NEWBERY MEDAL BOOKS FROM THE 1920s  
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## Abstract

Content analysis was conducted to determine the frequency of the presence of positive Biblical virtues and paired opposite traits across 18 Newbery Medal books from the 1920s through the 2000s because the Newbery Award is a prestigious honor bestowed upon children's literature, and the criteria for selection among books specifically precludes the necessity of good character. The fruit of the spirit listed in Galatians 5:22 served as the rubric by which the characters' thoughts, dialogue, and actions were measured. Consensus data was recorded, and chi-square tests of independence were conducted after three readers examined the presence and frequency of each positive Biblical virtue and paired opposite trait. The researcher found that, with few exceptions, Newbery Medal books depict a greater frequency of opposite traits as opposed to positive Biblical virtues. The opposite traits most prevalent include: sorrow, worry, impatience, cruelty, immorality, and violence. The positive Biblical virtues frequently portrayed include: love, faithfulness, and self-control. Among the 18 Newbery Medal books examined, the readers determined that six books are entirely appropriate for young readers, seven of the books are more appropriate for an adolescent audience, and five of the books were found to be inappropriate for children and/or adolescents based on the graphic nature of the content. The moral development and reasoning of children and adolescents must be acknowledged as educators select literature for students. It is counterproductive to marginalize the paramount nature of didactic content given the necessity of promoting good character among this nation's youth. The researcher suggests that the American Library Association carefully examine their definition of the

term “child” as it relates to moral growth. A new system of classification of Newbery Medal books has been proposed as a result of the study.

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## Chapter One: Introduction and Rationale for the Study

### Introduction

This dissertation is a report of a mixed-methods study of Newbery Medal books from the 1920s through the 2000s. A content analysis was conducted to quantify the frequency with which the characters in Newbery Medal books demonstrate positive Biblical virtues versus negative opposite traits. The fruit of the spirit listed in Galatians 5:22 (Maxwell, 2007) served as the rubric by which the morality of characters' thoughts, dialogue, and actions were measured and quantified. Emergent moral themes of each book were also identified and compared across decades by means of descriptive and focus-group interview methodologies. The first chapter of this dissertation will provide the purpose of the study, the professional significance, research questions, and definitions of key terms.

#### Purpose of the study.

Literature serves as one of the most effective means by which character education may be promoted. As such, it is imperative that the research community take responsibility for examining children's literature to ensure that sound morals are, in fact, being imparted through the very books to which children are exposed. Each year, the Association for Library Service to Children identifies one book as the annual Newbery Medal Winner. This award-winning book is often incorporated in classroom lessons across the nation. Given this fact, it is certainly plausible to conclude that Newbery Medal books have an impact on the moral development of children.

The researcher intends to determine the extent to which Newbery Medal books characters' actions are in alignment with Biblical virtues, as well as the general emergent

moral themes of these award-winning books. This topic must be explored, given the paramount nature of promoting positive morals among students, coupled with the fact that the criteria by which Newbery Medal contenders are judged specifically eliminates the necessity of good character. As the moral majority of parents attempt to instill in their children a strong sense of ethics and good character, it is essential that researchers invest the time necessary to gain an in-depth understanding of the morals inherent in the books which parents and educators share with impressionable children.

#### Professional significance.

Very few studies have been conducted in order to examine Newbery Medal books. More importantly, no study, to date, has examined these books from a Biblical perspective. Educators and parents are in need of a rubric by which they may judge the morality of a given book in order to determine whether they are exposing children to books representative of the character traits which they aspire to promote. The current study employs a scripturally sound rubric in the examination of Newbery Medal books. Frequency data and emergent moral themes were quantified and measured through the lens of the Bible. The fruit of the spirit found in Galatians 5:22 and opposite traits identified as appropriate antonyms of the fruit of the spirit served as the very rubric by which Newbery Medal book characters' thoughts, dialogue, and actions were measured. This study is intended to add to the existing body of literature on the topic of literature-based character education.

## Research Questions

Four research questions will be answered through quantitative statistical analyses, and one question will be addressed by means of interview and descriptive methodology. The researcher collected and analyzed data in order to answer the following research questions:

1. Does each Newbery Medal book depict more positive Biblical virtues or opposite traits?

Null Hypothesis ( $H_{01}$ ): There is no statistically significant difference between the frequency of positive Biblical virtues versus opposite traits within each Newbery Medal book.

2. With what frequency are specific positive Biblical virtues and paired opposite traits demonstrated within each Newbery Medal book from the 1920s through the 2000s?

Null Hypothesis ( $H_{02}$ ): There is no statistically significant difference between the frequency of specific positive Biblical virtues versus their paired opposite traits within each Newbery Medal book.

3. Have Newbery Medal books become increasingly positive or negative, with respect to positive Biblical virtues and opposite traits, over nine decades?

Null Hypothesis ( $H_{03}$ ): There is no statistically significant difference between the frequency of demonstrated positive Biblical virtues versus opposite traits across nine decades.

4. To what extent has the frequency of the specific positive Biblical virtues and paired opposite traits conveyed in Newbery Medal books changed over the course of nine decades?

Null Hypothesis ( $H_{o4}$ ): There is no statistically significant difference between the frequency of specific positive Biblical virtues versus paired opposite traits across Newbery Medal books from the 1920s through the 2000s.

5. What are the general emergent themes related to morality within, and across, Newbery Medal books from the 1920s through the 2000s?

This research question was addressed through interview and descriptive methods.

### Definitions of Terms

In this study, Newbery Medal books have been examined through the lens of the Bible. As such, the fruit of the spirit listed in Galatians 5:22 served as the comprehensive list of positive virtues/character traits by which characters' actions were categorized. The fruit of the spirit and corresponding definitions are as follows:

1. Love – “Unselfish loyal and benevolent concern for the good of another” (Merriam-Webster, 2003, p. 737).

For the purposes of this study “love” is understood as the high esteem that God has for His human children and the high regard which they, in turn, should have for Him and other people. Because of the hundreds of references to love in the Bible, it is certainly the most remarkable book of love in the world. It records the greatest love story ever written – the tale of God’s

unconditional love for us that sent His son to die for us on the cross (John 3:1; 1 John 4:10) (Youngblood, Bruce, & Harrison, 1995, p. 775).

2. Joy – “A state of happiness or felicity” (Merriam-Webster, 2003, p. 676).

As this study examines it, the joy experienced by a righteous person (Ps. 150; Phil. 4:4) is produced by the Spirit of God (Gal. 5:22). This kind of joy looks beyond the present to our future salvation (Rom. 5:2; 8:18; 1 Pet. 1:4, 6) and to our sovereign God, who works out all things for our ultimate good, which is Christlikeness (Rom. 8:28-30). This kind of joy is distinct from mere happiness. Joy like this is possible, even in the midst of sorrow (1 Cor. 12:26; 2 Cor. 6:10; 7:4)” (Youngblood, et al., 1995, p. 709).

3. Peace – “A state of tranquility or quiet” (Merriam-Webster, 2003, p. 911).

In the New Testament, peace often refers to the inner tranquility and poise of the Christian, whose trust is in God through Christ. This understanding was originally expressed in the Old Testament writings about the coming MESSIAH (Is. 9:6-7). The peace that Jesus Christ spoke of was a combination of hope, trust, and a quiet in the mind and soul, brought about by a reconciliation with God” (Youngblood, et al., 1995, p. 960).

4. Patience – “Bearing pains or trials calmly or without complaint” (Merriam-Webster, 2003, p. 908). “Forbearance under suffering and endurance in the face of adversity” (Youngblood, et al., 1995, p. 950).

5. Kindness – “Of a sympathetic or helpful nature” (Merriam-Webster, 2003, p. 687).



God's loyal love and favor toward His people. In the Old Testament, the word translated as 'kindness' or 'lovingkindness' refers to God's long-suffering love – His determination to keep His promises to His chosen people, in spite of their sin and rebellion (Deut. 7:12; Hos. 2:14-23). This attribute of God was shown through His divine mercy and forgiveness toward sinners when payment of sins through the sacrificial system was no longer effective (Deut. 22:22; Ps. 51:1) (Youngblood, et al., 1995, p. 728).

6. Goodness – “Something conforming to the moral order of the universe: praiseworthy character” (Merriam-Webster, 2003, p. 539). “The quality of being good; praiseworthy character; moral excellence. The Bible speaks of the goodness of God (Ex. 33:19; Rom. 2:4). God's goodness consists of righteousness, holiness, justice, kindness, grace, mercy, and love” (Youngblood, et al., 1995, p. 515).
7. Faithfulness – “Steadfast in affection or allegiance: loyal” (Merriam-Webster, 2003, p. 450). Dependability, loyalty, and stability, particularly as it describes God in His relationship to human believers. The faithfulness of God and His Word is a constant theme in the Bible. It is particularly prominent in Psalms 89 and 119. God is ‘the faithful God who keeps covenant’ (Deut. 7:9) and chooses Israel (Is. 49:7; great is His faithfulness (Lam. 3:23) (Youngblood, et al., 1995, p. 439).
8. Gentleness – “Tractability, docility: free from harshness, sternness, or violence” (Merriam-Webster, 2003, p. 522). “Kindness, consideration, a spirit of fairness and compassion. The apostle Paul declared that Christians should

have a spirit of gentleness toward all people (Phil. 4:5; 2 Cor. 10:1)”  
(Youngblood, et al., 1995, p. 488).

9. Self-control – “Restraint exercised over one’s own impulses, emotions, or desires” (Merriam-Webster, 2003, p. 1127). “Control of one’s actions or emotions by the will. The New Testament teaches that self-control is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). The Christian is to be governed by God, not by self” (Youngblood, et al., 1995, p. 1143).

The opposite traits have been identified as a result of examining definitions of each positive Biblical virtue by means of cross-referencing two Biblical dictionaries in addition to the Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary (2003). Through careful analysis, the researcher has identified an appropriate antonym for each positive Biblical virtue. The definitions of each negative opposite trait are as follows:

1. Selfishness – Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary (2003) and the Holman Concise Bible dictionary (2001) define love as unselfish concern for others; therefore, the opposite negative trait for the positive Biblical virtue of love is selfishness. Selfishness is defined as “seeking or concentrating on one’s own advantage, pleasure, or well-being without regard for others” (Merriam-Webster, 2003, p. 1128).
2. Sorrow – Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary (2003) indicates that joy is possible, even in the midst of sorrow, and the Holman Concise Bible Dictionary (2001) states, “As Jesus’ death approached, He told His followers that soon they would be like a woman in labor, whose sorrow would be turned into joy (John 15:11, 17:13)” (Holman, 2001, p. 369). Sorrow is consistently

applied as a negative opposite trait of joy. Sorrow is defined as “a deep distress, sadness, or regret” (Merriam-Webster, 2003, p. 119).

3. Worry – The Holman Concise Biblical Dictionary defines peace as “freedom from distress and fear (John 14:27, 16:33)” (Holman, 2001, p. 479). As such, the antonym for peace is worry, which is defined as “mental distress or agitation resulting from concern usu. for something impending or anticipated: anxiety” (Merriam-Webster, 2003, p. 1145).
4. Impatience – The Holman Concise Biblical Dictionary states, “God is patient (Rom. 15:5), slow to anger in relation to the Hebrews’ sin” (Holman, 2001, p. 476); therefore, impatience has been identified as the negative opposite trait of patience. Impatience is defined as “restless or short of temper, esp. under irritation, delay, or opposition” (Merriam-Webster, 2003, p. 623).
5. Cruelty – Youngblood, et al. (1995) indicate that kindness is evidenced by mercy and forgiveness. “Because God has been gracious toward believers, they should treat all people with kindness or grace (Luke 6:35)” (Youngblood, et al., 1995, p. 728). As such, cruelty has been identified as the negative opposite trait of kindness. Cruelty is defined as “causing or conducive to injury, grief, or pain” (Merriam-Webster, 2003, p. 301).
6. Immorality – Holman (2001) states that, as a noun, the term “good” means God. God is representative of all that is good and morally sound; therefore, the antonym for the Biblical virtue of goodness is immorality. Immorality is defined as “conflicting with generally or traditionally held moral principles” (Merriam-Webster, 2003, p. 621).

7. Betrayal – The Holman Concise Biblical Dictionary (2001) states, “faithful is He that calleth you, who will also do it” (Holman, 2001, p. 221). To be faithful is to demonstrate a sense of loyalty and trustworthiness; therefore, betrayal is the negative opposite trait of faithfulness. Betrayal is defined as “to fail or desert esp. in time of need” (Merriam-Webster, 2003, p. 117).
8. Violence – Youngblood, et al. (1995) indicate that gentleness is a state of being free from harshness or violence. Violence is the negative opposite trait of gentleness. In more precise terms, “notably furious or vehement” (Merriam-Webster, 2003, p. 1396).
9. Recklessness – The Holman Concise Biblical Dictionary defines self-control as a “sober, temperate, calm, and dispassionate approach to life, having mastered personal desire and passions” (Holman, 2001, p. 559). Recklessness is the negative opposite trait of self-control. Recklessness is defined as being “marked by lack of proper caution: careless of consequences: irresponsible” (Merriam-Webster, 2003, p. 1039).

The first chapter of this dissertation delineated the purpose, professional significance, research questions, and definitions of key terms, which served as the rubric by which Newbery Medal books have been measured. Chapter Two of this dissertation will provide the reader with background information relating to the Newbery Medal award, in addition to current trends in society, which illuminate the paramount nature of exercising caution in the selection of children’s literature. Moreover, the review of literature reveals Federal legislation that mandates the inclusion of character education in schools, as well as specific character traits that have been derived by man versus

character traits to which God holds His children. The literature review also provides information regarding the moral development of children, as this foundational knowledge is an essential component in selecting appropriate literature for children at various ages and stages in their emotional and cognitive growth. The theoretical framework of the current study is discussed to provide the reader with pertinent information regarding the validity and reliability of the information under study in this dissertation. The remainder of the literature review was written to discuss the history of character education, character education programs currently in place, the educator's role in character education, and the essential role that literature plays in promoting character education.

## Chapter 2: Review of Literature

### Background

#### The Newbery Medal.

Readers readily identify with characters in stories; therefore, parents and educators must be acutely aware of the overt, and underlying, messages conveyed in Newbery Medal books. The absence of purposeful scrutiny, or discernment, is detrimental to the moral growth of students. The salient question is: to what standards should books be held? The moral majority of parents expect teachers to share high quality literature containing characters with which children may relate and potentially emulate. Teachers frequently read Newbery Medal books aloud and promote independent reading of these award-winning books. Given the widespread notoriety of Newbery Medal books, and the fact that they frequently become integral components of teachers' lessons, it is important to gain a historical perspective of the award and examine the standards to which these books are held.

“The Newbery Medal was named for eighteenth century British bookseller John Newbery. It is awarded annually by the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association, to the author of the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children” (Association for Library, 2009). The Newbery Medal serves the purpose of praising the contributions of children's literature authors for their originality and creativity. The following terms must be met in order to be eligible to receive a Newbery Medal:

1. The Medal shall be awarded annually to the author of the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children published by an American

publisher in the United States in English during the preceding year. There are no limitations as to the character of the book considered except that it be original work. Honor books may be named. These shall be books that are also truly distinguished.

2. The Award is restricted to authors who are citizens or residents of the United States.

3. The committee in its deliberations is to consider only the books eligible for the award, as specified in the terms. (Association for Library, 2009)

Given the fact that the character/morality of a book does not affect the selection of the Newbery Medal recipient, educators must be made aware of the morality exhibited by characters in Newbery Medal books. The sentence stating that there are no limitations as to the character of the book is clarified in the last sentence on the website: “Note: The committee should keep in mind that the award is for literary quality and quality presentation for children. The award is not for didactic content or popularity” (Association for Library, 2011). The term “didactic” is synonymous with the term “moralistic” (An Encyclopedia Britannica, 2011). Given the aforementioned criteria selection parameters, blind acceptance of books based on award-winning status would be highly irresponsible. Media plays a large role in influencing children. The question at hand is: will this very role be positive in terms of providing educators and parents with literature-based character education, or will the media perpetuate a conflicting, and potentially detrimental, sense of morality in an effort to dismiss or preclude didactic content?

### Current trends of society.

*Moral relativism.* Current societal trends clearly indicate the need to focus on moral development among children. Moral relativism continues to plague the nation. Culturally pluralistic societies embrace a diversity of theological and anti-theological positions among their citizens. The resultant proliferation and acceptance of moral relativism has brought this nation to its knees. This generation is in the midst of witnessing further moral decline among its youth. The necessity of providing children with the tools required to render sound moral decisions cannot be marginalized. Children are in dire need of character education. Juveniles arrested for murder and non-negligent manslaughter increased by 18.9 percent between 2004 and 2008 (Crime in the United States, 2008). The number of juveniles arrested for robbery increased by 45.8 percent. Teenage pregnancies increased from 414,593 in 2005 to 435,436 in 2006 (Martin et al., 2009). Moreover, a national longitudinal study on drug use among students in grades eight, 10, and 12 revealed increased use of “any illicit drug”--marijuana, cocaine, crack, and heroin--in 2008 when compared to data collected at the onset of the study in 1991 (Johnson, O’Malley, Bachman, & Schulenberg, 2008, p. 46).

For the sake of argument, it should be noted that forcible rape decreased by 21.2 percent in the same time period in which murders and robberies increased. In addition, the use of hallucinogens and inhalants decreased as the use of the drugs listed above increased. One may examine crime and drug-related statistics in search of trends over time and will certainly find that, while some statistics have risen, others have fallen; however, the salient point to be made is the very fact that juvenile crime, drug use, and



subsequent immorality are clearly prevalent in our nation. The question is: how will this nation respond?

*Federal legislation.* The federal government has responded to this moral crisis by mandating that schools provide character education. According to the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001:

Character education is a learning process that enables students and adults in a school community to understand, care about and act on core ethical values such as respect, justice, civic virtue and citizenship, and responsibility for self and others. Upon such core values, we form the attitudes and actions that are the hallmark of safe, healthy and informed communities that serve as the foundation of our society (No Child Left Behind, 2001).

The character elements emphasized in the NCLB Act include: caring, civic virtue and citizenship, justice and fairness, respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, and giving (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Moreover, a host of character education programs have been developed in response to the declining morality among this nation's youth. Each program emphasizes the importance of assisting children in developing specific character traits.

### Character Traits

CHARACTER Counts is a well-known, widely used character education program that emphasizes the following six pillars of character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship (The Six Pillars, 2009). The National Center for Youth Issues purports that the following character traits are most essential: responsibility, perseverance, caring, self-discipline, citizenship, honesty, courage,

fairness, respect, integrity, and patriotism (National Center for Youth, 2007). Lickona (1996) emphasizes the core values of caring, honesty, fairness, responsibility, and respect for self and others. There is no shortage of character trait lists across the literature on character education, and each program has been developed with the common goal of promoting a strong sense of morality and good character among children.

#### Alignment of character traits.

The aforementioned lists of desirable character traits have been derived by man; however, a perfect, comprehensive list was established long before technical research on the topic of character education was initiated. In Revelation 12:13, Jesus testified to the churches in stating, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last” (Maxwell, 2007, p. 1601). God always was, and will never cease to be, the Father of wisdom and morality. God’s instructions regarding character and morality supersede instructions provided by man; however, it must be noted that the character traits delineated in the above lists are perfectly aligned with Biblical principles.

Nonetheless, the aforementioned lists are not exhaustive. God did provide His children with a complete list of positive virtues, or character traits, which serve as indicators that one is, in fact, walking in the spirit. Galatians 5:22-26 states, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit” (Maxwell, 2007, p. 1457).

When comparing character trait lists derived by men and the comprehensive list provided by God, it is immediately evident that there is a degree of overlap, as can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1

*Comparison of Biblical and Secular Virtues*

List Provided by God	Lists Derived by Men
Love	Giving
Joy	
Peace	
Patience	Perseverance
Kindness	Caring
Goodness	Justice/Fairness
Faithfulness	Trustworthiness/Integrity/Honesty
Gentleness	
Self-Control	Self-Discipline

The lists derived by men contain the following traits which are not listed in Galatians 5:22-26: respect, citizenship, responsibility, and courage. One may certainly argue the fact that respect and responsibility are embodied in the term “goodness,” as the term “good” is defined as praiseworthy character (Merriam-Webster, 2003). One who is disrespectful or irresponsible is certainly not of praiseworthy character. It is also important to note that courage is a direct result of a strong inner peace, which allows one to persevere in the face of danger; therefore, courage is embodied in the virtues of peace

and long-suffering. Citizenship appears to stand alone, remaining unparalleled by a fruit of the spirit. However, Jesus did promote citizenship, as evidenced in Mark: 13-17:

Then they sent to Him some of the Pharisees and the Herodians, to catch Him in His words. When they had come, they said to Him, “Teacher, we know that You are true, and care about no one; for You do not regard the person of men, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? Shall we pay, or shall we not pay?” But He, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them: “Why do you test Me? Bring Me a denarius that I may see it.” So they brought it. And He said to them, “Whose image and inscription is this?” They said to Him, “Caesar’s.” And Jesus answered and said to them, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” And they marveled at Him. (Maxwell, 2007, pp. 1243-1244)

Given this scripture, it is clear that Jesus’ definition of citizenship is aligned with justice and responsibility, which may be likened with the virtue of “goodness.” All that is good is of God.

Among the various lists of character traits derived by men, every single trait is, in fact, represented by a specific fruit of the spirit. Man has not invented one original good character trait. However, it must be noted that the lists derived by men are explicitly lacking joy, peace, and gentleness. These virtues cannot be omitted, as they are essential indicators and products of good character. As John Maxwell reflected on Galatians 5:22, he wrote the following note, “Probably the most memorable verses in this book are those that list the ‘fruit of the spirit.’ Fruit results from planted seeds. When seeds grow, they bear fruit. Fruit represents outward, visible behavior” (Maxwell, 2007, p. 1457). Our

visible behavior is, in fact, the embodiment of our character. Morality may be comprehensively evaluated by determining the extent to which one's actions are in alignment with the positive Biblical virtues listed in Galatians 5:22.

## Moral Development

Developmental stages.

*Dewey and Piaget and Kohlberg's beliefs regarding developmental stages.*

Educators are engaged in a partnership with parents to promote positive moral development among children. Proverbs 22:6 states, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Maxwell, 2007, p. 789). Moral theorists, such as Piaget and Dewey, have determined that children pass through various stages of moral reasoning (Kohlberg, 2001). Children in the pre-conventional stage weigh the concepts of right and wrong with the subsequent consequences. This knowledge is useful, as educators may reward good behavior, correct misbehaviors, and assist children in their journey to the next level of moral reasoning. When children reach the conventional stage, they conform to rules in order to please their families or groups, as they have developed a sense of loyalty. At this state, it is essential that the family and school consistently exemplify the positive virtues which they aspire to perpetuate. The post-conventional stage marks a time in an individual's life in which he/she may accept or abandon learned values based on personal opinions and the employment of critical thinking skills.

When children or adolescents reach this stage of development, the lessons learned and ingrained habits may promote continual, positive growth. Dewey stated:

The aim of education is growth or development, both intellectual and moral.

Ethical and psychological principles can aid the school in the greatest of all constructions – the building of a free and powerful character. Only knowledge of the order and connection of the states in psychological development can ensure this. Education is the work of supplying the conditions which will enable the psychological functions to mature in the freest and fullest manner (Kohlberg, 2001, p. 55).

The conditions which may effectively promote the transition to the post-conventional stage of moral reasoning may be promoted in the classroom. Educators are commissioned to act as moral exemplars.

*Aristotle's beliefs regarding developmental stages.* Aristotle contended that our moral maturity is evidenced through our dealings with other people (Cain, 2005). Individuals are just, or unjust, based on their interactions. Virtue of thought may be taught, and therefore requires time and experience. Virtue of character is the result of habit. Hence, it is fair to conclude that Aristotle concurred with the sentiment expressed in Proverbs 22:6. Educators must teach and exemplify good character. The finished product, the virtuous student, is noble of character for the sake of nobility. God's promise states that a child who is trained according to the scriptures will exemplify good moral character.

### Competing Theories

Moral absolutism.

The theoretical framework on which this study is based is that of moral absolutism. God is the author and theorist of moral absolutism. As such, the concept of

moral absolutism and the validity and reliability of the Holy Bible must be examined.

God has provided His children with a clear guide by which we may determine that which is right and/or wrong. It is God's will that parents and educators hold children, and the media to which children are exposed, responsible for adhering to moral absolutes. It is so written in Exodus 20:2-17:

I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other God's before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image – any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it. Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you. You shall not commit murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear

false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's.

(Maxwell, 2007, p. 93)

*Decline of morality.* The acceptance of moral absolutism is a byproduct of faith, which has become a controversial issue in the twenty-first century. The decline of morality is paralleled only by the decline in faith. "In 1988, the General Social Survey (GSS) recorded eight percent of the U.S. adults as having no religious affiliation. Yet by 2004, less than two decades later, the percentage of GSS respondents reporting no religious affiliation topped 14.3 percent" (Dougherty, Johnson, & Polson, 2007, p. 483). Articles have been written to refute the pragmatism of moral absolutism. For example, McConnell (2001) described a "hard case," or scenario in which several men lost at sea would die if they had not killed and consumed a boy on the ship who was already dying of starvation. This is reported as a "hard case," most appropriately solved by serving one's own immediate needs. What if the boy had been the son of one of the seamen? Would that have affected their decision? If so, the value of one life over another is called into question. The answer would have been a resounding "no," as no decent human being would consume his or her offspring for the purpose of survival. Moral absolutism cannot be effectively negated, as the mountains cannot bow down to the wind.

God's Word is unchanging. God provided a very clear set of moral absolutes by which His children are expected to live. Moreover, God gave His children free will. Sin entered into existence through the first humans--Adam and Eve. Despite the human condition of sin, God chose to save His children. John 3:16 states, "For God so loved the



world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (Maxwell, 2007, p. 1307). God’s children are saved by grace; however, Jesus reaffirmed the validity of God’s word, as evidenced in Matthew 5:17-19:

Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Maxwell, 2007, p. 1183)

God has provided His children with the Holy Bible, which is a manual for life and morality. When the human condition necessitated grace, God lovingly rescued His children. However, grace cannot be used to justify continual sin and rejection of the very morals which were provided by God and carefully preserved by man. Romans 6:1-2 states, “What shall we say then? Should we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?” (Maxwell, 2007, p. 1401). Although Jesus paved the way to heaven despite the sinful nature of man, God’s children must make every attempt to live by the absolute moral principles of the Holy Bible.

*Validity of moral absolutism.* One cannot accept the theory of moral absolutism unless the Holy Bible is, in fact, valid. Do Biblical scriptures provide an accurate account of historical events, or are they merely a collection of interesting stories? Can the

scriptures be trusted? Lee Strobel was an atheist who embarked on a journey to dispel what he considered to be the myths of Christianity. In doing so, what this researcher will call “The Strobel Effect” occurred. The result of Strobel’s comprehensive inquiry was that of a newly gained faith and understanding of Christianity. In attempts to determine whether the biographies of Jesus could be trusted, Strobel found, “So early are these accounts of Jesus’ life that they cannot be explained away as legendary invention” (Strobel, 2000, p. 263). Moreover:

The Bible’s divine origin has been established in two ways. First, in defiance of all mathematical odds, dozens of ancient prophecies about the Messiah – including the precise time frame in which he would appear – were miraculously fulfilled in only one person throughout history: Jesus of Nazareth. Second, biblical prophets performed miracles to confirm their divine authority. Jesus’ own miracles were even acknowledged by his enemies.” (Strobel, 2000, p. 251)

If a man enters a convenience store and commits the crime of armed robbery, he is presumed innocent until proven guilty. The presence of an eyewitness provides enough evidence for a jury to convict this man of his crime. The presence of three eyewitnesses strengthens the case exponentially. Eyewitness accounts are most compelling. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8:

For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over 500 brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He

was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.” (Maxwell, 2007, pp. 1431-1432)

There were over 500 eyewitnesses to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, most of whom were still alive as the books of the Bible were written. None of these contested the accuracy of the recorded history. The Bible is valid. As such, the moral principles provided by God have been validated. A search for a theoretical framework which may supersede the authority of the Holy Bible would be grossly misguided.

*Reliability of moral absolutism.* Reliability refers to consistency. “Reliability indicates how consistently a test measures whatever it does measure” (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, & Sorenson, 2006, p. 242). Is the Bible a reliable source of historical facts? “The harmony among the gospels on essential facts, coupled with divergence on some incidental details, lends historical credibility to the accounts” (Strobel, 2000, p. 263). In fact, the New Testament has been found to be 99.5 percent free of “textual discrepancies.” The textual consistency is unlikely to be a product of chance. The written Word has proven to be reliable.

“The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls confirmed the astonishing reliability of some of the copies of the Old Testament made over the years. Although some spelling variations exist, no variation affects basic Bible doctrines” (Rose Publishing, 2005p. ). The Dead Sea scrolls were found in 1947, and it has been determined that they are the oldest copies of portions of the Old Testament, as they were made between the years 100 BC and 100 AD. Biblical scriptures withstand the test of time. This discovery further increases the reliability of Biblical Scriptures.

### Moral relativism.

Competing theories include moral relativism and moral contextualism. Relativism is defined as, “a theory that knowledge is relative to the limited nature of the mind and the conditions of knowing: a view that ethical truths depend on the individual and groups holding them” (Merriam-Webster, 2003, p. 1050). Those who subscribe to the moral relativist theory blatantly reject the concept of right and wrong. “Moral relativism is semantically radical” (Brogaard, 2007, p. 399). The moral majority rejects the theory of moral relativism. As such, the only feasible competing theory is that of moral contextualism.

### Moral contextualism.

Do scenarios exist in which it is appropriate and acceptable to deliberately sin? After all, a lie is a sin. What if a coworker asks if one likes her new (unappealing) dress? Surely, it would be cruel to advise her that she must never wear the dress again, as it is extremely unattractive. Then again, it would be a sin to tell her that the dress is lovely. Those who subscribe to the theory of moral contextualism depend on a host of situations similar to the one described above to support their arguments.

Moral contextualists assert that it is entirely appropriate to sin, at times, if such sin is committed for the greater good of the community or individual (McConnell, 2001). Moral contextualism is based on the assertion that morality is bound to the context of each individual situation:

It has been increasingly recognized that moral judgments in real life are not only social in reference (i.e., they refer to human interactions), but also that they mostly arise in social situations and are shared with members of the group to

which one belongs. As a consequence, the traditional approach has been supplemented with a more social approach in which subjects are not only asked to reason about real-life dilemmas from their own perspective, which is called practical moral judgment, but also to take the perspective of the majority of the group or context in which they participate.” (Beem, Brugman, Host, & Tavecchio, 2004, p. 172)

Referring back to the scenario in which the coworker asks whether her new dress complements her, one must consider the interactions between Jesus and His followers to answer this question in truth, without insulting the woman. What would Jesus do? This researcher predicts, based on studying Biblical scriptures, that Jesus would say, “My child, you are beautiful.” He would not even reference the dress specifically because God’s children are judged only by their hearts.

For the sake of debate, a more difficult situation will now be examined. A “hard case” is presented in which an obese man, who leads a group of potholers out of a cave, becomes stuck in the mouth of the cave (McConnell, 2001). The tide will soon rise, and the men will drown if they cannot pass through the cave. Donagan argues that it is acceptable for the men to use dynamite to blast the obese man away from the mouth of the cave in order to save their own lives. There are, however, moral absolutes. What would Jesus do? He would certainly not murder another to save His own life. In fact, He gave His life for His children. The researcher predicts that Jesus would assemble the men and test their faith. He would remind them that through faith, they can move mountains, and encourage them to help free the man from the mouth of the cave. He would also remind them that it is better to die doing what is righteous than to live as a murderer. As

1Peter 3:17 says, “For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil” (Maxwell, 2007, p. 1556). Moral contextualism can never win a theoretical battle with moral absolutism because, in truth, there are no “hard cases.” Proverbs 3:5-6 states, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths” (Maxwell, 2007, p. 766). God’s children are called upon to trust in the Lord. Contextualists and relativists lean on their own understanding, which is in direct opposition to Biblical wisdom.

### Theoretical Framework

Does character truly count; if so, to what extent does it count? Can one draw a clear line of distinction between that which is “good” and that which is “bad,” or is there a “gray” area in which morality abides? The relativist argument posited by many rests in the following question: Who is to decide what is right and wrong? Surely, one set of absolute laws cannot apply to everyone, as this school of thought would marginalize individuality. Moreover, if one considers morality to be contextually bound, to what set of guiding principles do we adhere? God has provided a clear set of moral absolutes; therefore, moral absolutism serves as the theoretical framework on which the current study is based.

Newbery Medal books were evaluated through the lens of the Bible because the Bible is the most valid, reliable source of truth, wisdom, and morality. With God, morals are absolute. “Without God there is no absolute right and wrong that imposes itself on our conscience. But we know deep down that objective moral values do exist – some actions like rape and child torture, for example, are universal moral admonitions – and, therefore, this means God exists” (Strobel, 2000, pp. 250-251). The true question is: should moral

absolutism be marginalized and considered a “theory,” when it is, in fact, a law? In no way does God present His moral absolutes as theories. Character does, in fact, count.

## Character Education

### History of character education.

Character education was the primary objective of formal school for centuries. English Calvinists brought the Protestant Reformation to our country as Separatists and Puritans settled in Massachusetts. “The Puritans of Massachusetts Bay Colony enacted some of the earliest ordinances requiring education in North America. The laws of 1642 and 1647 required civil authorities to make sure that children learned to read, write, and know the principles of religion and laws of the commonwealth” (Guttek, 2005, p. 117). Over the course of the next two centuries, Calvinist beliefs in North America became known as Congregationalism. The Protestant ethic was supportive of the development of public schools for the purpose of teaching literacy, Biblical principles, and for promoting economic productivity among law-abiding citizens.

Horace Mann is regarded as the leader of the common school movement (Guttek, 2005). As a school leader, Mann was concerned with promoting educational environments which were conducive to a diverse population of students. This concern was precipitated by increased immigration during the 1830s and 1840s. Despite his Protestant faith, “Mann found himself walking a delicate tightrope on the issue of values in the school. He firmly believed that the schools should instill a basic morality, but equally opposed the entry of religious sectarianism into the public schools” (Guttek, 2005, p. 228). Mann sought to incorporate common Christian values in the common schools; however, Roman Catholics contended that the values imparted were largely based on

Mann's Protestant faith. As a result, Catholics opened parochial schools to impart the values of their faith. "Others who believed that common schooling should be religiously neutral later achieved a secular public school system separate from religious denomination" (Guttek, 2005, p. 228).

"Although much of the nineteenth century included educational philosophies that worked to stabilize society by instilling certain beliefs into students, educators in the next century were more overtly concerned with producing specific behaviors" (Brimi, 2009, p. 127). During the early twentieth century, moral virtues were largely replaced with the teaching of good character traits. The *Everson v. Board of Education* (1947) case set the precedence for the current interpretation of the "separation of church and state." This case was brought to the court in order to determine whether New Jersey students should be bused to religious schools at the state's expense. The court stated, "Neither a state nor the Federal Government can set up a church. Neither can pass laws which aid one religion, aid all religions or prefer one religion over another" (Covaleskie, 2009). In the 1962 court case, *Engel v. Vitale*, state sponsorship of prayer in schools was outlawed. In 1963, Madalyn Murray O'Hair succeeded in convincing the court to remove prayer and Bible reading from the public school, stating that it was a violation of her son's First Amendment rights (Le Beau, 2003).

The launching of Sputnik in 1959, coupled with the removal of prayer and the Bible from the public school system, resulted in a marginalization of character education. "Character education was not completely abandoned, but it certainly held no real curricular value in comparison with the needs the Soviet threat mandated" (Brimi, 2009, p. 127). However, the values clarification movement emerged in the 1960s in an effort to



promote discourse in which students attempted to resolve hypothetical issues. Students were encouraged to employ critical thinking skills to solve problems in the absence of moral absolutism. This movement perpetuated moral relativism. “Unfortunately, teachers and researchers discovered that students did not always follow the desired path and move toward desired behaviors. The lack of appropriate guidance and the leeway granted to individual perceptions of acceptable behavior permitted students to justify whatever behavior they felt was desirable” (Brimi, 2009, p. 128).

The 1980s marked a renewed interest in character education in the form of various social programs, such as the war on drugs and the Just Say No campaign, designed to provide students with moral guidance (Brimi, 2009). In the 1990s, Thomas Lickona reaffirmed the paramount nature of character education, which he defines as a purposeful effort to teach virtues (Lickona, 2001). “Objective moral truths have a claim on my conscience and behavior. Take away the notion of objective truth, and moral chaos quickly follows. Character education is founded on the idea that objective moral truth exists and we must help students to grasp the validity of this idea” (Lickona, 2001, p. 74). Lickona defines a virtue as an objectively good human quality which is absolute and unchanging. Moreover, Lickona advocates the use of explicit moral education through direct teaching and curriculum-based lessons, coupled with implicit teaching by means of modeling and cooperative learning. “We cannot expect our students to develop good character through wishful thinking or the hope that someone else will do it” (Sanchez, 2004, p. 109).

## Character education programs.

Leming (2001) explored ten character education programs which are currently employed in various elementary, middle, and high schools. The author dissected similarities and differences of the programs, and reported on their effectiveness. The following character education programs were reviewed: Acquiring Ethical Guidelines for Individual Development (AEGIS), Character Education Curriculum, The Child Development Project, Community of Caring, Project Essential, An Ethics Curriculum for Children, The Giraffe Program, Lessons in Character, Lions-Quest: Skills for Growing, and The Responsive Classroom. The only definitive commonalities found with regard to desired character traits among the aforementioned programs were responsibility and caring. However, over fifty percent of the programs described in the review utilize literature for the purpose of teaching character traits.

In terms of recommended pedagogical practice, a general character education pedagogical model can be identified that at least half of the reviewed curricula share. This model consists of four steps. First, the students are exposed to a behavioral example of the character education objective (virtue) that serves as the focus of the lesson. Typically students read or listen to a passage that contains a story or example of the desired character trait. Second, the students, through classroom discussion, attempt to explore meaning and to relate the character education objective to their personal experience or prior learning. Third, students apply their insights in a writing activity, or in a group activity such as role-playing. Finally, students are encouraged to take some action in their own lives that will exemplify the character education objective (Leming, 2001, pp. 29-30).

It is evident that the success of each character education program is entirely dependent on classroom teachers. Teachers must serve as moral exemplars, and they must realize the inherent value of consistently promoting character education for the beneficence of students' moral development.

### **Educator's role.**

Children spend most of their waking hours with classroom teachers. As such, it is imperative that teachers model the virtues which they aspire to promote among students. Morality, in the deepest sense of the word, cannot exist apart from God. Lickona (1999) has concluded that there are seven methods by which religion may be effectively integrated in the public school curriculum. Lickona's seven proposals include:

1. Schools can help students understand the role religion has played in our moral beginning as a nation.
2. Schools can teach that our country's major social reform movements – from the abolition of slavery to the civil rights movement – have been inspired by a religious vision that life is sacred, that we are all equal in the sight of God, and that we are children of a common creator who calls us to live in harmony and justice.
3. We can help students understand the role of religious motivation in the lives of individuals, both in history and in current times.
4. Schools can select or construct specific curricula so as to include religion.
5. Schools can encourage students to make use of all their intellectual and cultural resources, including their faith traditions, when they consider social

issues (e.g., our obligation to the poor) and make personal moral decisions (e.g., whether to have sex before marriage).

6. Schools can also draw upon religion as a way to engage students in considering the question, Is there moral truth?
7. Schools can challenge students to develop a vision of life that addresses ultimate questions (Lickona, 1999, pp. 23-27).

The salient point to be extracted from the aforementioned proposal is that of the affirmation of the existence of an absolute moral truth and the educator's responsibility to adopt a curriculum that is conducive to providing students with the moral guidance necessary to discern the difference between morality and immorality. There is a clear distinction between right and wrong, and educators must not waver in imparting truth and wisdom. "The interpretation of values and the self-regulation of reasoning, communication and one's own behavior become more refined when the moral development grows" (Veugelers & Vedder, 2003, p. 381). The fact that literature serves as a powerful vehicle through which good character may be imparted underscores the necessity of incorporating literature-based character education in the classroom

### Literature-Based Character Education

#### Culturally responsive literature: Conflicting views.

The paramount nature of exposing children to virtuous literature is irrefutable. However, literature has a strong tendency to mirror the political strife of the time in which the stories are written. "The relationship between literature and social history has long been recognized. In his classic work on children's literature, *Books, Children and Men*, Paul Hazard claimed that 'England could be reconstructed entirely from its

children's books' (1944, p. 128)" (Levstik, 1990, p. 328). Levstik conducted a review of children's literature and found that, when Americans were bitter as a result of the first war of the twentieth century, authors allowed the hostility of the time to influence children's literature. Literature in the 1920s was riddled with racism, anger, and a sense of American superiority. The underlying emotion was that of fear.

However, when faced with the depression of the 1930s, authors responded quite differently. It is assumed that authors made efforts to bring light into a dark world for the children because children's literature presented scenarios of beauty and joy. The economic hardships of this era prompted authors to promote the inherent peace and joy of the simple life in which family members worked and prayed together and thanked God for their blessings. Children's literature in the 1930s also presented other cultures in a more positive light. Whether authors effectively mirrored the hardships of the era, or chose to shed a positive light on an otherwise negative time, it is clear that literature is responsive to current issues in society. As such, it is entirely plausible to question whether Newbery Medal books follow this very trend.

DeCharms and Moeller (1962) examined the values expressed in American children's readers between the years of 1800 and 1950. The authors found that moral teaching in readers consistently declined over the course of 150 years. "In the case of the school readers, it may be argued that the diminishing frequency of moral references is a result of the secularization of the schools during the nineteenth century" (DeCharms & Moeller, 1962, p. 140). Moreover, Bryan (2005) delineated the diminishing emphasis on character education in the schools from the late 1800s and most of the 1900s. The declining morality inherent in literature has been well established over time.

Conversely, Leal (2000) purports that Newbery Medal books from 1922 through 1998 have maintained a representation of positive virtues over time. However, it must be noted that the methodology of Leal's study was flawed, which decreases the credibility of the study and marginalizes the results. The internal validity was compromised for the purpose of increasing the sample size. The author independently examined 27 books, while two additional readers independently examined 25 books. Inter-rater consistency was not established through investigator triangulation; therefore, the results are entirely subjective. Bryant (2008) also conducted a study of Newbery Medal books from 1997-2007. Similarly to Leal, Bryant concluded that the Newbery Medal books within that ten-year period were, in fact, virtuous. Unlike Leal, Bryant did provide evidence of investigator triangulation, thereby rendering her study more credible. However, the Newbery Medal books were not examined from a Biblical perspective in the aforementioned studies. The point of contention underscores the necessity of determining whether Newbery Medal books do shift with cultural tides in representing negative views. This question may be answered most effectively by using the Bible as a rubric to examine Newbery Medal books.

#### Empirical studies of character education.

Watson, Battistich and Solomon (1998) conducted a study to determine the effects of a character education program entitled "Child Development Project" on students' subsequent ethical behaviors and overall sense of community within their schools over a three-year period of time. This study emphasized the importance of a literature-based curriculum in support of the development of good ethics in the classroom as well as the school. Teachers read values-laden literature aloud to students, and meaningful

discussions followed. “The selection of books, the accompanying teachers’ guides, and the supporting workshops are all designed to help teachers encourage children to think deeply about what they have read, while helping them to develop greater empathy for others and an understanding of themselves and the humane values that need to govern our lives” (Watson, Battistich, & Solomon, 1998, p. 575). Among the five schools that demonstrated evidence of having implemented the program, the students reaped great benefits as a result of their participation. The nurturing school environment which was fostered in order to increase students’ commitment to school values was conducive to positive changes in students’ concern for others, as well as their ability to resolve conflicts in an ethical manner.

Clare and Gallimore (1996) examined the effects of teacher-led discussions of children’s literature on students’ growth in moral development and reading comprehension over the course of one year. “A number of moral educators have argued that the future of moral education in US classrooms depends on infusing it into the curriculum, and that such an infusion requires an expansion of student participation, especially in classroom talk. This paper illustrates how moral education can be blended into teaching comprehension of literature” (Clare & Gallimore, 1996, p. 327). Kohlberg’s theory of moral development served as the foundation of the study, as teachers must be aware of the stages of moral development in order to effectively promote growth among students. Stories such as *Charlotte’s Web* and *Quarter for a Haircut* were utilized to facilitate instructional conversations (ICs) ,as teachers scaffolded students in delving deeper to reason beyond the superficial dilemmas of the stories. This strategy was particularly effective in promoting moral sensitivity and awareness among fourth grade

English language learners. The author purported that good values/morals must be embedded in the curriculum if we aspire to promote such values among students, as the additive approach to character education is futile. This study provides evidence of the effectiveness of promoting increased moral conceptualizations among students through literature. “The generative potential of narrative literature is not a new idea in moral education. Lickona (1991) explicitly noted that literature is a good vehicle for infusing moral education into the curriculum” (Clare & Gallimore, 1996, p. 337).

Solomon, Watson, Delucchi, Schaps, and Battistich (1988) conducted a five-year study to determine the effects of a pro-social development program, Child Development Project, in which values were taught through literature, discussion, role-playing, and films on students’ values, social skills, attitudes, and behaviors. The overall effectiveness of values education varied as a function of age. Although students in grades K-4 benefitted from having participated in the program, the kindergarten students demonstrated the greatest growth in cooperative activities, developmental discipline, and pro-social values. They did not demonstrate similar growth in social understanding, as one may expect due to their immature age. The authors also found that students’ standardized test scores were not negatively affected by the implementation of the program. This was obviously a concern, due to the time required to present the values/lessons. “It is our hope that through participating in an environment in which certain central values of the society are both discussed and exemplified (e.g., mutual concern and respect, responsibility, helpfulness), such values and behaviors consistent with them will become more deeply ingrained in the children” (Solomon, Watson, Delucchi, Schaps, & Battistich, 1998, p. 546).



Benninga et al. (1991) compared two programs with a control group in order to determine the effects of values education on the social development of second- through fifth-grade students. The external motivational orientation (EXS) and Child Development Project (CDP) were compared for the purpose of this study. The competitive EXS program emphasized measureable goals and standards, whereas the CDP program was focused on cooperative activities. “The programs are to help children develop an internal commitment to important values and norms, such as responsibility, concern and respect for others, and helpfulness to enhance various collaborative and interpersonal skills and related attitudes and motives” (Benninga et al., 1991, p. 153).

The aforementioned values were primarily transmitted through literature and discussions. “Books are chosen that present the motives, intentions, and values of different characters in varied settings, and teachers lead discussions that focus on exploring these” (Benninga, et al., 1991, p. 154). The EXS program was effective in promoting high self-esteem among students, which is congruent with the emphasis on competition. The literature-based values education implemented in the CDP program promoted more positive interpersonal and supportive behaviors.

Leming (2000) compared the effects of the Heartwood Institute’s “An Ethics Curriculum for Children” program among 965 students in grades one through six with students in a control group. “The Heartwood curriculum is a read-aloud, multicultural, literature-based approach to teaching children ethical values (attributes of character) in Grade One to Six. The curriculum is organized around seven universal ethical values: courage, loyalty, justice, respect, hope, honesty, and love” (Leming, 2000, p. 414). Leming found that the students in the Heartwood program exhibited higher levels of

ethical understanding than their peer counterparts in the comparison groups; however, the results related to ethical sensibility were unexpected. Heartwood program students in grades four through six demonstrated less sensibility than students in the comparison group, although Heartwood students in grades one through three demonstrated decreased prejudicial behavior. The researchers stated, “If knowledge is to advance in the field, and effective models of character education are to be developed, greater attention must be paid to the theories that serve as a basis for curriculum development in character education” (Leming, 2000, p. 425).

#### Review and discussion articles.

Halstead and Taylor (2000) conducted a review of literature to delineate the current philosophical and empirical status of values education and subsequent learning outcomes in schools. The authors contended:

The proponents of Character Education (Lickona, 1991; Wynne & Ryan, 1992; Molnar, 1997) tend to favour direct instruction and the use of stories; the proponents of moral reasoning (Kohlberg, 1969, 1981) favour discussion and the establishment of just communities; and the proponents of caring (Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 1984) may favour circle time, extra-curricular activities, and the narrative approach” (Halstead & Taylor, 2000, p. 181).

The direct approach entails explication of specific values and providing students with opportunities to study the values. This approach has proven to be effective in promoting positive, accepting attitudes among students. The discussion-based approach requires students to apply moral reasoning as they solve dilemmas. This approach has proven to be more effective than academic courses in facilitating moral development. Just

communities are characterized by the “school within a school” alternative approach to education, in which the moral climate is of great emphasis. The author found that, while just communities did not advance the rate of moral reasoning in students, they did effectively promote responsibility and moral development. “A just community experiment in three high schools in North Rhine Westphalia, Germany, was claimed to have ‘almost doubled the effects of normal schooling on moral development’ (Lind & Althof, 1992, p. 26)” (Halstead & Taylor, 2000, p. 183). Similarly, extra-curricular activities, circle time, and personal narratives have been found to positively affect moral development. The author reported the highly acclaimed benefits of literature-based moral education. “The study of literature and biography is widely claimed to enhance moral judgment and hence character (Ellenwood & Ryan, 1991) because it expands the moral imagination (Coles, 1989) and develops the emotional side of a child’s character (Lickona, 1991, p. 79ff)” (Halstead & Taylor, 2000, p. 187). Most importantly, the author stated that agreement among specific values and appropriate measurements is foundational to the evaluation of a given school’s effectiveness in the delivery of values education.

Meijer (2002) emphasizes the importance of imagination over morality. Meijer considers the promotion of good virtues to be equitable with that of censorship. “Small wonder, then, that parents have often been advised to monitor and even to censor their children’s reading matter. The more one is concerned with the transmission of a certain moral code, the more enthusiasm for the development of the essentially unbridled literary imagination will diminish” (Meijer, 2002, p. 568). Conversely, Hilder (2005) contends

that educators opposed to moral education are providing students with a great disservice. Hilder proposes a strong argument against moral relativism in stating:

The position of “art for art’s sake” in the last two centuries is a relatively recent phenomenon. Its apparent objectivity is often regarded as the antidote to education-as-inculcation. But an absolutist adherence to “art for art’s sake” from the position of moral relativity can also be a form of inculcation. (Hilder, 2005, p. 42)

Hilder purports that moral education is the educator’s highest mandate. Based on the historical framework of children’s literature, Hilder disseminated the fact that teaching morality through literature is certainly not novel, nor is it an oddity. Hilder stated, “As I have argued elsewhere (Hilder, 2003) and as Vigen Guroian (1998) also argues, the oddity is perhaps the other way around in what has been regarded as literature’s most serious purpose from Plato onwards – to teach virtue – has been out of fashion with literature teachers in recent times” (Hilder, 2005, p. 42). O’Sullivan (2004) concurs with Hilder’s commentary on the history of virtuous education in stating, “The notion that schooling should be used to instill goodness in children is as old as schooling itself. Plato, for instance, said, ‘Education in virtue is the only education which deserves the name.’” (O’Sullivan, 2004, p. 640).

Rovenger (1988) viewed her role as a librarian as a strong commission by which she had the opportunity to share a world of virtuous literature with students. The author clearly delineates the imperative nature of carefully selecting literature to serve this very purpose. “As an adult working with children, I want to introduce books which can become moral points of reference, which will give children spiritual sustenance

throughout their lives, becoming part of their inner wellspring, a kind of ethical nourishment with the ability to time release its message” (p. 46). Lesnick (2006) wholeheartedly agrees with the notion that literature provides educators with a meaningful method by which they may promote a strong sense of ethics. Moreover, Lesnick speaks out against the additive approach to character education in stating, “Rather than import programs in ‘character education’ through which students may be reduced to competing to prove their master of the virtue of the week, why not explore with them the relationships into which they are drawn by their lives as readers, thinkers and writers?” (Lesnick, 2006, pp. 43-44).

Edgington (2002) delineated the fact that literature-based character education has existed since the beginning of schools in this country. Edgington described the four methods by which values have been imparted in education: values inculcation; values clarification; values analysis; and moral reasoning. Literature-based character education is most closely aligned with “values inculcation.” “Values inculcation may be accomplished simply by having the students read a book with characters possessing worthy values or character traits that can be noted by the students alone or with the teacher’s help. The teacher can stress the values and their importance either through reflection or class discussion” (Edgington, 2002, p. 114). Bernadyn and Traiger (1999) further discuss the four methods by which values may be transmitted. Inculcation is clearly most aligned with the theory of moral absolutism.

The very heart of this review of literature can be summarized by the following quote: “Schools exist not simply to make children smart, but to make them good (Ryan, 1986)” (Bernadyn & Traiger, 1999, p. 726). The educator’s role in promoting good

character among students throughout their academic careers cannot be marginalized. When carefully selected and implemented in lesson plans, literature has the inherent power to foster sound moral judgment and a good sense of ethics. While it is crucial that all stakeholders in the lives of children teach the dichotomy between right and wrong, it is also essential that the ends justify the means when literature is employed as an educational tool. Given the sheer quantity of children's literature to which educators have access, books which are appropriate to children's moral stage of development and emotional needs must be selected. This task cannot be accomplished in the absence of discernment, and one cannot discern the quality of literature prior to a content analysis. The third chapter of this dissertation will provide readers with a detailed account of the content analysis that was conducted in order to determine the extent to which Newbery Medal award-winning books contain characters whose thoughts, actions and dialogue are in alignment with Biblical virtues.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

### Introduction

The current chapter delineates the methodology that was employed in the collection of data. The researcher utilized an exhaustive set of data collection methods in the interest of producing a rigorous research study. Specific characteristics of the research design, data collection methods, and data analysis are reported in this chapter in order to ensure that the current study may be replicated for all future intents and purposes. The application of methods and investigator triangulation are detailed for the purpose of demonstrating the validity and reliability of the research study. The methodology utilized reveals the frequency of demonstrated Biblical virtues and opposite traits in Newbery Medal books from the 1920s through the 2000s, the characteristics of characters' actions in relation to Biblical principles, and general moral themes identified within and across books.

### Research design

The current mixed-methods study is comprised of quantitative, interview, and descriptive measures. Quantitative measures were employed in order to identify the frequency with which characters in Newbery Medal books demonstrated positive Biblical virtues and opposite traits within, and across, Newbery Medal books over the course of nine decades. Interview and descriptive measures were employed to reveal the general emergent moral themes inherent in each book examined. The researcher is primarily concerned with the values conveyed in Newbery Medal books.

### The general perspective.

Quantitative, interview, and descriptive methods were utilized for the purpose of providing a comprehensive depiction of the resultant data. The quasi-statistical methodology was employed in order to categorize Newbery Medal books as predominantly “positive” or “negative.” Quantitative measures were also used to compare the frequency of demonstrated Biblical virtues and opposite traits within and across books over the course of nine decades. The interview and descriptive measures employed provide a detailed account of the emergent moral themes displayed in Newbery Medal books. It is the researcher’s contention that a mixed-methods approach served to strengthen the current study.

### Data collection.

Content analysis was conducted for the purpose of examining Newbery Medal books. “Content or document analysis is a research method applied to written or visual materials for the purpose of identifying specified characteristics of the material” (Ary et al., 2006, p. 464). The researchers delineated the following steps:

1. Specify the phenomenon that will be examined.
2. Choose the media that will be investigated.
3. Create coding categories.
4. Determine the sampling plan.
5. Raters and coders must be trained.
6. Data must be analyzed.

The phenomenon examined in the study includes the presence and frequency of positive Biblical virtues and negative opposite traits. The media, which served as the subject of



inquiry, included Newbery Medal books from the 1920s through the 2000s. Coding categories were established, and the sampling plan was determined. Readers were trained in the utilization of the coding system, and a pilot book was examined prior to the initiation of data collection. The researcher provided each reader with copies of the Newbery Medal books that were included in the study.

The Biblical virtues, which were identified in each Newbery Medal book, are detailed in Biblical scriptures. Galatians 5:22 states, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Maxwell, 207, p. 1457). Moreover, opposite traits were identified as each reader examined the Newbery Medal books. The opposite traits of each Biblical virtue are as follows:

1. Love (selfishness)
2. Joy (sorrow)
3. Peace (worry)
4. Patience (impatience)
5. Kindness (cruelty)
6. Goodness (immorality)
7. Faithfulness (betrayal)
8. Gentleness (violence)
9. Self-control (recklessness)

The definitions of Biblical virtues and opposite traits were provided in the first chapter of this dissertation.

The researcher provided each reader with a codebook containing 380 pages. Twenty pages were devoted to each book included in the study, and 20 additional pages were devoted to the pilot book. The codebooks were organized as follows:

- The first page documented the title, author, and number of pages in the pilot book.
- The next 18 pages listed each of the nine positive Biblical virtues and nine negative opposite traits individually. After the readers read the pilot book, they tallied and recorded the frequency of each Biblical virtue and opposite trait in the corresponding page of the codebook. Readers also included the page number related to recorded frequencies for quick reference during the weekly consensus meetings.
- The twentieth page provided space for the readers to write a brief summary of the emergent moral themes of the book in preparation for the weekly meeting.

The researcher originally contended that the study would take place over the course of 19 weeks – one week for each book (including the pilot book); however, it became immediately apparent, after conducting the first consensus meeting, that the study would become much more lengthy than originally anticipated. The readers examined and coded their books independently. In doing so, the readers annotated the presence and specificity of positive Biblical virtues and opposite traits in the margins of each Newbery Medal book examined. When the readers gathered for the consensus meetings, each positive Biblical virtue and opposite trait that was annotated in the margins by the individual readers was discussed at length. This discourse added an

exponential degree of validity to the current study, as collaborative efforts improve the resultant quality of the study. Every noted virtue and trait was literally put on trial throughout the course of this study. As such, the readers met for (on average) nine hours per book. Although it was originally anticipated that the study would be conducted over 19 weeks, data collection was conducted for a total of 50 weeks. The following tasks were attended to:

- Week One: The Scholastic Reading Inventory was administered to determine whether the readers were qualified to participate in the study.
- Week Two: The researcher met with the readers to explain the methodology, issue frequency data books, answer questions, and provide readers with the pilot books. Readers read and coded the pilot books prior to the next meeting.
- Week Three: The researcher met with the readers to discuss issues and/or concerns regarding methodology. Readers compared frequency data, discussed discrepancies, and worked towards establishing a consensus. Readers also discussed emergent moral themes. Readers received copies of the Newbery Medal winner of 1924, entitled *The Dark Frigate* (1230L).
- Week Five: The weekly consensus meeting was held to compare frequency data and emergent moral themes of *The Dark Frigate*. Readers received copies of the Newbery Medal winner of 1929, *The Trumpeter of Krakow* (1200L).
- Week Seven: The weekly consensus meeting was held to compare frequency data and emergent moral themes of *The Trumpeter of Krakow*. Readers received copies of the Newbery Medal winner of 1934, entitled *Invincible Louisa: The Story of the Author of Little Women* (1150L).

- Week Nine: The weekly consensus meeting was held to compare frequency data and emergent moral themes of *Invincible Louisa: The Story of the Author of Little Women*. Readers received copies of the Newbery Medal winner of 1939, entitled *Thimble Summer* (810L).
- Week 11: The weekly consensus meeting was held to compare frequency data and emergent moral themes of *Thimble Summer*. Readers received copies of the Newbery Medal winner of 1944, entitled *Johnny Tremain* (840L).
- Week 14: The weekly consensus meeting was held to compare frequency data and emergent moral themes of *Johnny Tremain*. Readers received copies of the Newbery Medal winner of 1949, *King of the Wind* (830L).
- Week 16: The weekly consensus meeting was held to compare frequency data and emergent moral themes of *King of the Wind*. Readers received copies of the Newbery Medal winner of 1954, entitled...*And Now Miguel* (780L).
- Week 19: The weekly consensus meeting was held to compare frequency data and emergent moral themes of ...*And Now Miguel*. Readers received copies of the Newbery Medal winner of 1959, entitled *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* (850L).
- Week 22: The weekly consensus meeting was held to compare frequency data and emergent moral themes of *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*. Readers received copies of the Newbery Medal winner of 1964, *It's Like This, Cat* (810L).
- Week 25: The weekly consensus meeting was held to compare frequency data and emergent moral themes of *It's Like This, Cat*. Readers received copies of the Newbery Medal winner of 1969, entitled *The High King* (900L).

- Week 27: The weekly consensus meeting was held to compare frequency data and emergent moral themes of *The High King*. Readers received copies of the Newbery Medal winner of 1974, entitled *The Slave Dancer* (970L).
- Week 30: The weekly consensus meeting was held to compare frequency data and emergent moral themes of *The Slave Dancer*. Readers received copies of the Newbery Medal winner of 1979, entitled *The Westing Game* (750L).
- Week 33: The weekly consensus meeting was held to compare frequency data and emergent moral themes of *The Westing Game*. Readers received copies of the Newbery Medal winner of 1984, *Dear Mr. Henshaw* (910L).
- Week 35: The weekly consensus meeting was held to compare frequency data and emergent moral themes of *Dear Mr. Henshaw*. Readers received copies of the Newbery Medal winner of 1989, entitled *Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices* (Poetry books are not assigned Lexile scores).
- Week 37: The weekly consensus meeting was held to compare frequency data and emergent moral themes of *Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices*. Readers received copies of the Newbery Medal winner of 1994, entitled *The Giver* (980L).
- Week 40: The weekly consensus meeting was held to compare frequency data and emergent moral themes of *The Giver*. Readers received copies of the Newbery Medal winner of 1999, *Holes* (660L).
- Week 43: The weekly consensus meeting was held to compare frequency data and emergent moral themes of *Holes*. Readers received copies of the Newbery Medal winner of 2004, entitled *The Tale of Despereaux: Being the Story of a Mouse, a Princess, Some Soup, and a Spool of Thread* (670L).

- Week 47: The weekly consensus meeting was held to compare frequency data and emergent moral themes of *The Tale of Despereaux: Being the Story of a Mouse, a Princess, Some Soup, and a Spool of Thread*. Readers received copies of the Newbery Medal winner of 2009, *The Graveyard Book* (820L).
- Week 50: The weekly consensus meeting was held to compare frequency data and emergent moral themes of *The Graveyard Book*.

Readers arrived to each meeting with annotated books in order to compare their frequency data related to each Biblical virtue and opposite trait. Readers also brought their codebooks depicting the frequency data. As the readers reviewed/compared their annotated books to establish a consensus regarding the presence and frequency of positive Biblical virtues and opposite traits, the researcher annotated a fourth copy of the book to record the consensus data accordingly. The book that was annotated by the researcher during the inter-rater consensus meeting is representative of the consensus among readers.

Readers also brought a summary of their overall depictions of the emergent moral themes of each Newbery Medal book. Analyses were compared and synthesized through interviews and a focus group style discussion of the morality inherent in each book. The discussions were semi-structured and open-ended in order to maintain a level of relevance without precluding a free flow of ideas. When given the opportunity to discuss moral issues related to the stories with others, readers identified emergent themes that they did not originally notice or consider when writing their summaries. The dialogue of each focus group and consensus meeting was audio-taped. This practice promoted increased credibility of the data.

The researcher utilized an audit trail to maintain records of raw data, audio-taped meetings, and written summarizations. The annotated Newbery Medal books were collected after each weekly meeting. The researcher organized all data relevant to each Newbery book in one of 18 files, as a total of 18 books were examined for the purpose of this investigation.

#### Organization of the audit trail.

The organization of the audit trail is a crucial component of data collection. The researcher organized all documents pertaining to the weekly Newbery Medal books in one of 18 files. For example, file number one contains the following documentation:

1. Readers' annotated books from the first week.
2. Readers' 20-page log of frequency data and moral theme relevant to the first book.
3. Researcher's annotated book from the first week.
4. Researcher's 20-page log indicating the results of the inter-rater consensus meeting from the first week.
5. Audiotapes of the inter-rater consensus meeting for the first book.

The researcher documented data derived from the inter-rater consensus meetings in a codebook. The first page of the researcher's codebook reveals the title, authors, and number of pages of the book. The following pages in the researcher's codebook contain the inter-rater consensus frequency data for each of the nine positive Biblical virtues and nine opposite traits.

### Selection of books.

Newbery Medal books were examined for the purpose of this study. Each year, the American Library Association honors one book by naming it the Newbery Medal book of the year (American Library Association, 2011). The namesake of this prestigious honor, John Newbery, was a book publisher during the eighteenth century. The criteria by which the selection of the Newbery Medal book of the year is based mandates that the award-winning book must be an original work written by a citizen of the United States, and the book must be of high literary quality. The American Library Association does not judge books considered for this award based on the presence or absence of values.

It was originally thought that the two best-selling Newbery Medal books from each decade should be examined for the purpose of this study, as it is entirely plausible that the two best-selling books would have the greatest impact on children. However, upon contacting Karen Muller, the Library and Knowledge Management Specialist for the American Library Association (ALA), the researcher found that the term “best-seller” is misused and misunderstood. Mrs. Muller directed the researcher’s attention to several articles which delineated the true definition and exact nature of “best-selling” books. Best-selling books are characterized as those books which sold the greatest number of copies in a one-week period of time. Longevity of sales is not factored into the equation; therefore, the data misrepresents the titles of books which do, in fact, belong on a best-sellers list (Truitt, 1998). Moreover, selecting books based on the length of time in which they remained in print would preclude the most recent books from the study. Therefore, after discussing the selection of books with the doctoral committee, it was determined that the most recent Newbery Medal book, *The Graveyard Book*, would be included in



the study. Subsequent books included in the study were chosen based on a five-year interval in efforts to promote an accurate depiction of potential changes in literature over time. For example: *The Graveyard Book* was awarded the Newbery Medal in 2009; therefore, the books from the following years were included: 2009, 2004, 1999, 1994, 1989, 1984, 1979, 1974, 1969, 1964, 1959, 1954, 1949, 1944, 1939, 1934, 1929, and 1924. It was the researcher's contention that the chosen method of selection would strengthen the results of the study.

#### Selection of readers.

Three readers examined each Newbery Medal book. "Using investigator triangulation makes it less likely that outside reviewers of the research will question the data" (Ary et al., 2006, p. 505). Several factors were instrumental in determining the inclusion of readers. Each reader was a born-again Christian in order to ensure their likelihood of identifying positive Biblical virtues and negative opposite traits demonstrated in the Newbery Medal books. A born-again Christian accepts Jesus as his/her Savior and Lord. Qualified readers signed statements of faith prior to the initiation of the study. The theoretical foundation on which this examination was based is that of moral absolutism; therefore, it was essential that each reader accepted the Bible as absolute truth. Proverbs 3:5-6 states, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" (Maxwell, 2007, p. 766). The aforementioned verse teaches God's children of the paramount nature of relying on God as our sole source of truth and wisdom.

In addition to the faith-based criteria, readers were required to demonstrate advanced reading skills. The researcher administered the Scholastic Reading Inventory

(SRI) to each of the raters included in the study (Scholastic Reading Inventory, 1999).

The teacher's guide allowed the researcher to correlate the readers' scores with corresponding Lexile scores. The Level 18 test was administered, and the ceiling on the test-- i.e., the highest potential Lexile score--was 1385. The three readers included in the study demonstrated advanced reading skills, as they achieved the highest possible Lexile score for the given test. This score indicated that the readers possessed the fundamental comprehension skills necessary to critically analyze each Newbery Medal book. Strong reading skills were essential to a comprehensive evaluation of text.

Chronological age was also a consideration in the selection of raters. Readers were over the age of 25. Despite the fact that emotional intelligence cannot be determined solely on the basis of one's age, the researcher preferred to err on the side of caution and employ a conservative method in selecting readers. It should also be noted that, in addition to demonstrating advanced reading skills and professing to be born-again Christians, the readers were representative of diverse fields of knowledge. One reader was employed as a clinician, another was employed as a teacher, and the third reader was employed in the field of business. It was the researcher's contention that the diversity of academic and career backgrounds among readers would serve to further strengthen the study.

#### Data analysis.

The readers met consistently in order to establish an inter-rater consensus regarding the frequency of each demonstrated positive Biblical virtue and opposite trait. As the readers delineated the presence of Biblical virtues and opposite traits during the consensus meetings, the researcher recorded the data in a fourth copy of each Newbery

Medal book. Given the subjective nature of such analyses, the researcher did not expect readers to agree upon the frequency data 100 percent of the time. The readers addressed each annotated positive Biblical virtue and opposite trait recorded in their codebooks, and they discussed discrepancies in their findings in attempts to narrow the variance of the frequency data. Discussions were audiotaped for the purpose of the aforementioned audit trail.

The inter-rater consensus results provided the researcher with the frequency data necessary to comprehensively address each of the four quantitative research questions. Chi-square tests were chosen for the purpose of analyzing the resultant data, as this particular nonparametric test is most appropriate in testing frequency data. The chi-square is defined as, “an inferential statistic that compares the frequencies of nominal measures actually observed in a study with frequencies expected under a null (chance) hypothesis” (Ary et al., 2006, p. 630). The following chi-square assumptions were met:

1. Observations must be independent – that is, the subjects in each sample must be randomly and independently selected.
2. The categories must be mutually exclusive: Each observation can appear in one and only one of the categories in the table.
3. The observations are measured as frequencies. (Ary et al., 2006, p. 210).

The chi-square test of independence was conducted in response to research question number one. This test allowed the researcher to compare the positive and negative frequency data within each of the 18 books. “The purpose of the test is to determine whether two variables are independent of one another” (Ary et al., 2006, p. 208). The chi-square test of independence was also conducted in response to research

question number two, as this test allowed the researcher to analyze the extent to which each positive Biblical virtue and paired negative opposite trait varied within each of the 18 books. A chi-square test was conducted in order to test the data in response to research question number three, as the frequency of positive Biblical virtues versus opposite traits from each of the 18 books was compared across nine decades. The researcher sought to examine the presence or absence of a trend across time to reveal whether children's literature had become increasingly positive or negative. Finally, the chi-square test was applied to analyze research question number four in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the variance of frequency regarding specific positive Biblical virtues and their paired negative opposite traits across the 18 books over nine decades. Research questions three and four were included to shed light on potential trends, as it is paramount that the research community delineates the exact nature of specific positive Biblical virtues and negative opposite traits which are depicted in children's literature over time.

The rationale for the selected quantitative tests lies in the fact that they are non-parametric statistical assessments. Non-parametric measurements are appropriate for the current study because the researcher cannot assume a normal distribution of values across the Newbery Medal books (Howell, 2008). If parametric tests were employed, the researcher would have violated assumptions of central tendencies, thereby reducing the significance of the results of the study. Non-parametric measures provided the researcher with a conservative analysis of the data. Moreover, interview and descriptive measures were included in order to provide consumers of knowledge with a rich, detailed account of the books examined for the purpose of this study. Focus-group interviews were conducted which provided the researcher with the information necessary to converge the

readers' thoughts and opinions of each book in order to render a sound description of the emergent moral themes inherent in the Newbery Medal books examined.

#### Validity.

“If multiple investigators agree in their description of the context, in their description of events, and in their reporting of what was said, internal validity is enhanced” (Ary et al., 2006, p. 505). Investigator triangulation is one method employed in this research study for the purpose of promoting validity. Three readers examined each Newbery Medal book included in the study. Another component that enhanced the validity of the study was the use of methods triangulation. “Methods triangulation uses more than one method (e.g., ethnography and document analysis) in the study. The assumption is that the combination of methods results in better evidence” (Ary et al., 2006, p. 505). Through document analysis, audiotaped weekly meetings, annotated books, and raw-data logs, the researcher provided the data necessary to validate the claim of data triangulation.

#### Reliability.

“Consistency is looked at as the extent to which variation can be tracked or explained. This is referred to as dependability or trustworthiness” (Ary et al., 2006, p. 509). Inter-rater agreement of frequency data was established each week in order to promote reliability of the results. The researcher reported the extent to which the raters reached a consensus regarding the frequency of positive Biblical virtues and opposite traits during each inter-rater consensus meeting. Moreover, the utilization of an audit trail provides evidence of dependability and confirmability. All data pertaining to the content analysis of each book examined was organized and maintained in individual files.

## Summary of the Methodology

Chapter Three delineated the methods that were used in the mixed-methods study of Biblical virtues and opposite traits in Newberry Medal books from the 1920s through the 2000s. Appropriate quantitative, descriptive and interview measures that were employed in order to analyze the data were described in detail. The salient goal of the third chapter was to provide full-disclosure of the methodology in order to demonstrate the validity and reliability of the study. Moreover, it is essential that future researchers may utilize this chapter as a guide by which they may replicate the current study. Chapter Four will provide an in-depth analysis of the findings of the study.

## Chapter 4: Results

### Research Question One

Statistical tests were applied to the consensus data in order to provide a comprehensive response for each research question. Table 2 contains the consensus/frequency data relevant to the positive Biblical virtues found in Newbery Medal award books one through eighteen. “Validity based on consensus is defined as ‘agreement among competent others that the description, interpretation, evaluation, and thematics’ are right (Eisner, 1998, p. 112). This type of validity is primarily demonstrated through two methods: peer review and investigator triangulation” (Ary et al., 2006, p. 505).

Table 2 contains the consensus/frequency data relevant to the positive Biblical virtues found in Newbery Medal award books one through eighteen. One hundred percent consensus was reached at the .9913 level.

Table 2

#### *Inter-Rater Consensus Data for Positive Biblical Virtues*

ID	year	consensus	vir1	vir2	vir3	vir4	vir5	vir6	vir7	vir8	vir9
1	1924	100%	6	7	9	12	19	13	22	1	15
		67%	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
		33%	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
2	1929	100%	22	13	18	11	26	37	37	10	6
		67%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		33%	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
3	1934	100%	60	61	35	39	50	68	49	14	15
		67%	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		33%	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
4	1939	100%	16	33	14	9	30	24	2	12	4
		67%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		33%	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
5	1944	100%	41	36	17	27	66	73	56	24	25

		67%	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0
		33%	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0
6	1949	100%	23	45	11	2	32	21	17	7	7
		67%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		33%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	1954	100%	5	19	7	6	11	28	8	11	4
		67%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		33%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	1959	100%	40	56	14	14	44	85	34	23	11
		67%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		33%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
9	1964	100%	3	9	2	3	47	48	3	8	4
		67%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		33%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	1969	100%	27	38	8	17	57	46	59	26	9
		67%	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
		33%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11	1974	100%	1	2	6	13	41	33	8	6	5
		67%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		33%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12	1979	100%	9	20	0	5	37	62	10	9	3
		67%	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
		33%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
13	1984	100%	12	2	6	2	22	42	9	1	1
		67%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		33%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
14	1989	100%	5	11	2	7	2	5	2	0	0
		67%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		33%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15	1994	100%	17	18	4	13	26	21	10	12	4
		67%	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
		33%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
16	1999	100%	16	13	9	35	45	67	27	14	11
		67%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
		33%	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
17	2004	100%	16	28	5	24	37	38	19	13	8
		67%	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
		33%	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
18	2009	100%	2	11	2	8	17	29	7	9	4
		67%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		33%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



Table 3 contains the consensus/frequency data relevant to the opposite traits found in Newbery Medal award books one through eighteen. One hundred percent consensus was reached at the .9948 level.

Table 3

*Inter-Rater Consensus Data for Opposite Traits*

ID	year	consensus	opp1	opp2	opp3	opp4	opp5	opp6	opp7	opp8	opp9
1	1924	100%	24	50	104	27	57	99	7	73	7
		67%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		33%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	1929	100%	26	59	75	15	18	104	4	54	9
		67%	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0
		33%	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
3	1934	100%	10	96	58	16	7	33	1	7	8
		67%	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
		33%	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	1939	100%	6	27	49	22	12	30	0	3	14
		67%	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
		33%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	1944	100%	31	99	127	53	103	164	9	50	9
		67%	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
		33%	0	0	2	1	1	2	0	0	0
6	1949	100%	15	45	63	36	42	54	2	24	4
		67%	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
		33%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	1954	100%	8	24	43	28	14	39	0	6	3
		67%	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		33%	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	1959	100%	22	102	152	59	47	100	2	22	10
		67%	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
		33%	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
9	1964	100%	16	25	65	46	42	64	0	4	8
		67%	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
		33%	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
10	1969	100%	30	81	217	61	46	182	4	92	5
		67%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		33%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11	1974	100%	7	112	138	44	83	285	1	64	1
		67%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

		33%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12	1979	100%	30	52	142	54	62	206	0	5	6
		67%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		33%	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
13	1984	100%	3	38	36	18	10	23	6	0	4
		67%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		33%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
14	1989	100%	1	13	7	2	0	3	0	0	6
		67%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		33%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15	1994	100%	4	58	107	24	11	218	2	5	5
		67%	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
		33%	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
16	1999	100%	13	72	158	39	93	163	4	44	8
		67%	0	2	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
		33%	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
17	2004	100%	21	99	93	35	90	178	14	22	6
		67%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		33%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
18	2009	100%	25	70	214	66	55	793	8	69	21
		67%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		33%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

A chi-square test of independence was conducted in order to comprehensively answer research question number one: Does each Newbery Medal book depict more positive Biblical virtues or opposite traits? Eighteen books were evaluated; therefore, eighteen result tables have been provided to delineate the resultant data. The following 18 tables are presented to report the results related to Research Question One. In each test, there is one degree of freedom; therefore, the critical value is 3.841 at the 0.05 level of significance.

Table 4

*Positive Virtues Versus Opposite Traits in Book One*

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
positive	107	277.5	-170.5
negative	448	277.5	170.5
Total	555		

Test Statistics

	Virtue
Chi-square	209.515 <sup>a</sup>
df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.000

$$X^2(1) = 209.51, p < .001$$

The null hypothesis can be rejected for Book One. There is a statistically significant difference between the frequency of positive virtues and opposite traits. Book One predominantly depicts negative character traits.

Table 5

*Positive Virtues Versus Opposite Traits in Book Two*

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
positive	180	273.5	-93.5
negative	367	273.5	93.5
Total	547		

Test Statistics	
	virtue
Chi-square	63.929 <sup>a</sup>
Df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.000

$$X^2(1) = 63.92, p < .001$$

The null hypothesis can be rejected for Book Two. There is a statistically significant difference between the frequency of positive virtues and opposite traits. Book Two predominantly depicts negative character traits.

Table 6

*Positive Virtues Versus Opposite Traits in Book Three*

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
positive	394	316.5	77.5
negative	239	316.5	-77.5
Total	633		

Test Statistics	
	virtue
Chi-square	37.954 <sup>a</sup>
Df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.000

$$X^2(1) = 37.954, p < .001$$

The null hypothesis can be rejected for Book Three. There is a statistically significant

difference between the frequency of positive virtues and opposite traits. Book Three predominantly depicts negative character traits.

Table 7

*Positive Virtues Versus Opposite Traits in Book Four*

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
positive	144	154.0	-10.0
negative	164	154.0	10.0
Total	308		

Test Statistics

	virtue
Chi-square	1.299 <sup>a</sup>
Df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.254

$$X^2(1) = 1.3, p > .05$$

The null hypothesis cannot be rejected for Book Four, as there is no statistically significant difference between the frequency of positive virtues and negative opposite traits.

Table 8

*Positive Virtues Versus Opposite Traits in Book Five*

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
positive	369	509.0	-140.0
negative	649	509.0	140.0
Total	1018		

Test Statistics	
	virtue
Chi-square	77.014 <sup>a</sup>
Df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.000

$$X^2(1) = 77.01, p < .001$$

The null hypothesis can be rejected for Book Five. There is a statistically significant difference between the frequency of positive virtues and opposite traits. Book Five predominantly depicts negative character traits.

Table 9

*Positive Virtues Versus Opposite Traits in Book Six*

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Positive	165	225.5	-60.5
negative	286	225.5	60.5
Total	451		

Test Statistics	
	virtue
Chi-square	32.463 <sup>a</sup>
Df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.000

$$X^2(1) = 32.46, p < .001$$

The null hypothesis can be rejected for Book Six. There is a statistically significant difference between the frequency of positive virtues and opposite traits. Book Six predominantly depicts negative character traits.

Table 10

*Positive Virtues Versus Opposite Traits in Book Seven*

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Positive	99	133.0	-34.0
Negative	167	133.0	34.0
Total	266		

Test Statistics

	virtue
Chi-square	17.383 <sup>a</sup>
Df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.000

$$X^2(1) = 17.38, p < .001$$

The null hypothesis can also be rejected for Book Seven. There is a statistically significant difference between the frequency of positive virtues and opposite traits. Book Seven predominantly depicts negative character traits.

Table 11

*Positive Virtues Versus Opposite Traits in Book Eight*

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Positive	321	419.5	-98.5
Negative	518	419.5	98.5
Total	839		

Test Statistics

	virtue
Chi-square	46.256 <sup>a</sup>
Df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.000

$$X^2(1) = 46.26, p < .001$$

The null hypothesis can be rejected for Book Eight. There is a statistically significant difference between the frequency of positive virtues and opposite traits. Book Eight predominantly depicts negative character traits.



Table 12

*Positive Virtues Versus Opposite Traits in Book Nine*

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Positive	127	199.0	-72.0
Negative	271	199.0	72.0
Total	398		

Test Statistics

	virtue
Chi-square	52.101 <sup>a</sup>
Df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.000

$$X^2(1) = 52.10, p < .001$$

The null hypothesis can be rejected for Book Nine. There is a statistically significant difference between the frequency of positive virtues and opposite traits. Book Nine predominantly depicts negative character traits.

Table 13

*Positive Virtues Versus Opposite Traits in Book Ten*

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Positive	288	503.0	-215.0
Negative	718	503.0	215.0
Total	1006		

Test Statistics	
	Virtue
Chi-square	183.797 <sup>a</sup>
Df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.000

$$X^2(1) = 183.78, p < .001$$

The null hypothesis can be rejected for Book Ten. There is a statistically significant difference between the frequency of positive virtues and opposite traits. Book Ten predominantly depicts negative character traits.

Table 14

*Positive Virtues Versus Opposite Traits in Book Eleven*

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Positive	115	425.0	-310.0
Negative	735	425.0	310.0
Total	850		

Test Statistics	
	Virtue
Chi-square	452.235 <sup>a</sup>
Df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.000

$$X^2(1) = 452.24, p < .001$$

The null hypothesis can be rejected for Book Eleven. There is a statistically significant difference between the frequency of positive virtues and opposite traits. Book Eleven predominantly depicts negative character traits.

Table 15

*Positive Virtues Versus Opposite Traits in Book Twelve*

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Positive	157	357.0	-200.0
Negative	557	357.0	200.0
Total	714		

Test Statistics

	Virtue
Chi-square	224.090 <sup>a</sup>
Df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.000

$$X^2(1) = 224.09, p < .001$$

The null hypothesis can be rejected for Book Twelve. There is a statistically significant difference between the frequency of positive virtues and opposite traits. Book Twelve predominantly depicts negative character traits.

Table 16

*Positive Virtues Versus Opposite Traits in Book Thirteen*

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Positive	97	117.5	-20.5
Negative	138	117.5	20.5
Total	235		

Test Statistics	
	Virtue
Chi-square	7.153 <sup>a</sup>
Df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.007

$$X^2(1) = 209.51, p < .05$$

The null hypothesis can be rejected for Book Thirteen. There is a statistically significant difference between the frequency of positive virtues and opposite traits. Book Thirteen predominantly depicts negative character traits.

Table 17

*Positive Virtues Versus Opposite Traits in Book Fourteen*

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Positive	34	33.0	1.0
Negative	32	33.0	-1.0
Total	66		

Test Statistics	
	Virtue
Chi-square	.061 <sup>a</sup>
Df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.806

$$X^2(1) = 0.06, p > .05$$

The null hypothesis cannot be rejected for Book Fourteen, as there is no statistically significant difference between the frequency of positive virtues and negative traits.

Table 18

*Positive Virtues Versus Opposite Traits in Book Fifteen*

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Positive	127	281.0	-154.0
Negative	435	281.0	154.0
Total	562		

Test Statistics

	Virtue
Chi-square	168.797 <sup>a</sup>
Df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.000

$$X^2(1) = 168.78, p < .001$$

The null hypothesis can be rejected for Book Fifteen. There is a statistically significant difference between the frequency of positive virtues and opposite traits. Book Fifteen predominantly depicts negative character traits.

Table 19

*Positive Virtues Versus Opposite Traits in Book Sixteen*

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Positive	328	463.5	-135.5
Negative	599	463.5	135.5
Total	927		

Test Statistics	
	virtue
Chi-square	79.224 <sup>a</sup>
Df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.000

$$X^2(1) = 79.22, p < .001$$

The null hypothesis can be rejected for Book Sixteen. There is a statistically significant difference between the frequency of positive virtues and opposite traits. Book Sixteen predominantly depicts negative character traits.

Table 20

*Positive Virtues Versus Opposite Traits in Book Seventeen*

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Positive	190	374.0	-184.0
Negative	558	374.0	184.0
Total	748		

Test Statistics	
	Virtue
Chi-square	181.048 <sup>a</sup>
Df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.000

$$X^2(1) = 181.05, p < .001$$

The null hypothesis can be rejected for Book Seventeen. There is a statistically significant difference between the frequency of positive virtues and opposite traits. Book Seventeen predominantly depicts negative character traits.

Table 21

*Positive Virtues Versus Opposite Traits in Book Eighteen*

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Positive	89	705.0	-616.0
Negative	1321	705.0	616.0
Total	1410		

## Test Statistics

	Virtue
Chi-square	1076.471 <sup>a</sup>
Df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.000

$$X^2(1) = 1076.07, p < .001$$

The null hypothesis can be rejected for Book Eighteen. There is a statistically significant difference between the frequency of positive virtues and opposite traits. Book Eighteen predominantly depicts negative character traits.

In response to Research Question One--Does each Newbery Medal book depict more positive Biblical virtues or opposite traits?--there is evidence to support the claim that, among the 18 Newbery Medal books examined in the present study, 16 were predominantly negative. There was a statistically significant difference between the frequency of positive Biblical virtues and opposite traits among 89 percent of the books included in the study. The null hypothesis cannot be rejected with regard to the books *Thimble Summer* and *Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices*.

## Research Question Two

A chi-square test was conducted in order to analyze the data in response to Research Question Two. Research Question Two states: With what frequency are specific

positive Biblical virtues and paired opposite traits demonstrated within each Newbery Medal book from the 1920s through the 2000s? The null hypothesis purports that there will be no statistically significant difference between the frequency of each positive Biblical virtue and paired opposite trait. Given the fact that there are nine paired positive Biblical virtues and opposite traits across 18 books, 162 statistical tests were conducted to analyze the data collected. The following report has been disseminated to present the resultant data relevant to the second research question regarding Book One.

Book One: *The Dark Frigate* (1924)

- Love versus selfishness: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of love versus selfishness. Selfishness was evidenced more frequently.
- Joy versus sorrow: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of joy versus sorrow. Sorrow was evidenced more frequently.
- Peace versus worry: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of peace versus worry. Worry was evidenced more frequently.
- Patience versus impatience: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of patience versus impatience. Impatience was evidenced more frequently.
- Kindness versus cruelty: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of kindness versus cruelty. Cruelty was evidenced more frequently.



- Goodness versus immorality: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of goodness versus immorality. Immorality was evidenced more frequently.
- Faithfulness versus betrayal: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of faithfulness versus betrayal. Faithfulness was evidenced more frequently.
- Gentleness versus violence: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of gentleness versus violence. Violence was evidenced more frequently.
- Self-Control versus recklessness: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of self-control versus recklessness.

*The Dark Frigate* (1924) clearly depicted a greater frequency of opposite traits as opposed to positive Biblical virtues. The evidence supports the claim that, in seven instances, the frequency of opposite traits was significantly higher than that of the paired positive Biblical virtues. The frequencies of selfishness, sorrow, worry, impatience, cruelty, immorality, and violence were found to be significantly greater than that of their positive Biblical counterparts. In one instance, a positive Biblical virtue, faithfulness, was presented with significantly greater frequency. Moreover, when self-control and recklessness were compared, no significant difference was found. And now we turn to an examination of the results for Book Two.

Book Two: *The Trumpeter of Krakow* (1929)

- Love versus selfishness: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of love versus selfishness.
- Joy versus sorrow: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of joy versus sorrow. Sorrow was evidenced more frequently.
- Peace versus worry: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of peace versus worry. Worry was evidenced more frequently.
- Patience versus impatience: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of patience versus impatience.
- Kindness versus cruelty: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of kindness versus cruelty.
- Goodness versus immorality: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of goodness versus immorality. Immorality was evidenced more frequently.
- Faithfulness versus betrayal: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of faithfulness versus betrayal. Faithfulness was evidenced more frequently.

- Gentleness versus violence: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of gentleness versus violence. Violence was evidenced more frequently.
- Self-Control versus recklessness: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of self-control versus recklessness.

*The Trumpeter of Krakow* (1929) depicted a greater frequency of opposite traits as opposed to positive Biblical virtues. The evidence supports the claim that, in four instances, the frequency of opposite traits was significantly higher than that of the paired positive Biblical virtues. The frequencies of sorrow, worry, immorality, and violence were found to be significantly greater than that of their positive Biblical counterparts. In one instance, a positive Biblical virtue, faithfulness, was presented with significantly greater frequency. Moreover, when four paired positive Biblical virtues and opposite traits (love/selfishness, patience/impatience, kindness/cruelty, self-control/recklessness) were compared, no significant difference was found. The following presents the resultant data relevant to Research Question Two concerning Book Three.

Book Three: *Invincible Louisa: The Story of the Author of Little Women* (1934)

- Love versus selfishness: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of love versus selfishness. Love was evidenced more frequently.
- Joy versus sorrow: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of joy versus sorrow. Sorrow was evidenced more frequently.

- Peace versus worry: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of peace versus worry. Worry was evidenced more frequently.
- Patience versus impatience: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of patience versus impatience. Patience was evidenced more frequently.
- Kindness versus cruelty: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of kindness versus cruelty. Kindness was evidenced more frequently.
- Goodness versus immorality: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of goodness versus immorality. Goodness was evidenced more frequently.
- Faithfulness versus betrayal: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of faithfulness versus betrayal. Faithfulness was evidenced more frequently.
- Gentleness versus violence: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of gentleness versus violence.
- Self-Control versus recklessness: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of self-control versus recklessness.

*Invincible Louisa: The Story of the Author of Little Women* (1934) clearly depicted a greater frequency of positive Biblical virtues as opposed to opposite traits. The

frequencies of love, patience, kindness, goodness, and faithfulness were found to be significantly greater than that of their opposite counterparts. In two instances, negative opposite traits (sorrow and worry) were presented with significantly greater frequency. Moreover, when comparisons were made between gentleness/violence and self-control/recklessness, no significant difference was found. These results differ slightly from those found for Book Four.

Book Four: *Thimble Summer* (1939)

- Love versus selfishness: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of love versus selfishness. Love was evidenced more frequently.
- Joy versus sorrow: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of joy versus sorrow.
- Peace versus worry: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of peace versus worry. Worry was evidenced more frequently.
- Patience versus impatience: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of patience versus impatience. Impatience was evidenced more frequently.
- Kindness versus cruelty: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of kindness versus cruelty. Kindness was evidenced more frequently.

- Goodness versus immorality: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of goodness versus immorality.
- Faithfulness versus betrayal: The chi-square test could not be applied to this data set because the frequency of betrayal was zero.
- Gentleness versus violence: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of gentleness versus violence. Gentleness was evidenced more frequently.
- Self-Control versus recklessness: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of self-control versus recklessness. Recklessness was evidenced more frequently.

*Thimble Summer* (1939) was equally representative of positive Biblical virtues and opposite traits. The evidence supports the claim that the frequencies of love, kindness, and gentleness were found to be significantly greater than that of their opposite counterparts. In three instances, negative opposite traits (worry, impatience, recklessness) were presented with greater frequency. Moreover, when comparisons were made between joy/sorrow and goodness/immorality, no significant difference was found. The chi-square analysis could not be conducted to compare faithfulness and betrayal due to the presence of a value of zero. What do the results for Book Five show?

Book Five: *Johnny Tremain* (1944)

- Love versus selfishness: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of love versus selfishness.

- Joy versus sorrow: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of joy versus sorrow. Sorrow was evidenced more frequently.
- Peace versus worry: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of peace versus worry. Worry was evidenced more frequently.
- Patience versus impatience: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of patience versus impatience. Impatience was evidenced more frequently.
- Kindness versus cruelty: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of kindness versus cruelty. Cruelty was evidenced more frequently.
- Goodness versus immorality: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of goodness versus immorality. Immorality was evidenced more frequently.
- Faithfulness versus betrayal: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of faithfulness versus betrayal. Faithfulness was evidenced more frequently.
- Gentleness versus violence: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of gentleness versus violence. Violence was evidenced more frequently.

- Self-Control versus recklessness: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of self-control versus recklessness. Self-Control was evidenced more frequently.

*Johnny Tremain* (1944) clearly depicted a greater frequency of opposite traits as opposed to positive Biblical virtues. The evidence supports the claim that, in six instances, the frequency of opposite traits was significantly higher than that of the paired positive Biblical virtues. The frequencies of sorrow, worry, impatience, cruelty, immorality, and violence were found to be significantly greater than that of their positive Biblical counterparts. In two instances, the positive Biblical virtues of faithfulness and self-control were presented with significantly greater frequency. Moreover, when love and selfishness were compared, no significant difference was found. The following report shows the data regarding Research Question Two relevant to Book Six.

Book Six: *King of the Wind* (1949)

- Love versus selfishness: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of love versus selfishness.
- Joy versus sorrow: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of joy versus sorrow.
- Peace versus worry: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of peace versus worry. Worry was evidenced more frequently.



- Patience versus impatience: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of patience versus impatience. Impatience was evidenced more frequently.
- Kindness versus cruelty: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of kindness versus cruelty.
- Goodness versus immorality: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of goodness versus immorality. Immorality was evidenced more frequently.
- Faithfulness versus betrayal: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of faithfulness versus betrayal. Faithfulness was evidenced more frequently.
- Gentleness versus violence: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of gentleness versus violence. Violence was evidenced more frequently.
- Self-Control versus recklessness: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of self-control versus recklessness.

*King of the Wind* (1949) depicted a greater frequency of opposite traits as opposed to positive Biblical virtues. The evidence supports the claim that, in four instances, the frequency of opposite traits was significantly higher than that of the paired positive Biblical virtues. The frequencies of worry, impatience, immorality, and violence were found to be significantly greater than that of their positive Biblical counterparts. In one

instance, a positive Biblical virtue, faithfulness, was presented with significantly greater frequency. Moreover, when comparisons were conducted between love/selfishness, joy/sorrow, kindness/cruelty, and self-control/recklessness, no significant difference was found. This leads to a discussion of the results for Book Seven.

Book Seven: ...*And Now Miguel* (1954)

- Love versus selfishness: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of love versus selfishness.
- Joy versus sorrow: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of joy versus sorrow.
- Peace versus worry: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of peace versus worry. Worry was evidenced more frequently.
- Patience versus impatience: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of patience versus impatience. Impatience was evidenced more frequently.
- Kindness versus cruelty: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of kindness versus cruelty.
- Goodness versus immorality: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of goodness versus immorality.

- Faithfulness versus betrayal: The chi-square test could not be conducted because the frequency of betrayal was zero.
- Gentleness versus violence: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of gentleness versus violence.
- Self-Control versus recklessness: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of self-control versus recklessness.

...*And Now Miguel* (1954) depicted a greater frequency of opposite traits as opposed to positive Biblical virtues. The evidence supports the claim that, in two instances, the frequency of opposite traits was significantly higher than that of the paired positive Biblical virtues. The frequencies of worry and impatience were found to be significantly greater than that of their positive Biblical counterparts. There were no instances in which the frequency of a positive Biblical virtue was found to be significantly greater than the paired opposite trait. Moreover, when love/selfishness, joy/sorrow, kindness/cruelty, goodness/immorality, gentleness/violence, and self-control/recklessness were compared, no significant difference was found. The chi-square analysis could not be conducted to compare faithfulness and betrayal due to the presence of a value of zero. This leads to an examination of the relevant characteristics of Book Eight.

Book Eight: *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* (1959)

- Love versus selfishness: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of love versus selfishness. Love was evidenced more frequently.

- Joy versus sorrow: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of joy versus sorrow. Sorrow was evidenced more frequently.
- Peace versus worry: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of peace versus worry. Worry was evidenced more frequently.
- Patience versus impatience: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of patience versus impatience. Impatience was evidenced more frequently.
- Kindness versus cruelty: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of kindness versus cruelty.
- Goodness versus immorality: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of goodness versus immorality.
- Faithfulness versus betrayal: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of faithfulness versus betrayal. Faithfulness was evidenced more frequently.
- Gentleness versus violence: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of gentleness versus violence.

- Self-Control versus recklessness: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of self-control versus recklessness.

*The Witch of Blackbird Pond* (1959) depicted a greater frequency of opposite traits as opposed to positive Biblical virtues. The evidence supports the claim that, in four instances, the frequency of opposite traits was significantly higher than that of the paired positive Biblical virtues. The frequencies of sorrow, worry, impatience, and immorality were found to be significantly greater than that of their positive Biblical counterparts. In two instances, the positive Biblical virtues of love and faithfulness were presented with significantly greater frequency. Moreover, when kindness/cruelty, gentleness/violence, and self-control/recklessness were compared, no significant difference was found. The following report presents the resultant data relevant to Research Question Two for Book Nine.

Book Nine: *It's Like This, Cat* (1964)

- Love versus selfishness: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of love versus selfishness. Selfishness was evidenced more frequently.
- Joy versus sorrow: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of joy versus sorrow. Sorrow was evidenced more frequently.
- Peace versus worry: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of peace versus worry. Worry was evidenced more frequently.

- Patience versus impatience: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of patience versus impatience. Impatience was evidenced more frequently.
- Kindness versus cruelty: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of kindness versus cruelty.
- Goodness versus immorality: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of goodness versus immorality.
- Faithfulness versus betrayal: The chi-square test could not be conducted because the frequency of betrayal was zero.
- Gentleness versus violence: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of gentleness versus violence.
- Self-Control versus recklessness: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of self-control versus recklessness.

*It's Like This, Cat* (1964) depicted a greater frequency of opposite traits as opposed to positive Biblical virtues. The evidence supports the claim that, in four instances, the frequency of opposite traits was significantly higher than that of the paired positive Biblical virtues. The frequencies of selfishness, sorrow, worry, and impatience were found to be significantly greater than that of their positive Biblical counterparts. There were no instances in which the frequency of a positive Biblical virtue significantly

exceeded that of the paired opposite negative trait. Moreover, when kindness/cruelty, goodness/immorality, gentleness/violence, and self-control/recklessness were compared, no significant difference was found. A chi-square analysis could not be conducted to compare faithfulness and betrayal due the presence of a value of zero. How does the data from Book Ten answer Research Question Two?

Book Ten: *The High King* (1969)

- Love versus selfishness: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of love versus selfishness.
- Joy versus sorrow: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of joy versus sorrow. Sorrow was evidenced more frequently.
- Peace versus worry: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of peace versus worry. Worry was evidenced more frequently.
- Patience versus impatience: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of patience versus impatience. Impatience was evidenced more frequently.
- Kindness versus cruelty: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of kindness versus cruelty.

- Goodness versus immorality: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of goodness versus immorality. Immorality was evidenced more frequently.
- Faithfulness versus betrayal: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of faithfulness versus betrayal. Faithfulness was evidenced more frequently.
- Gentleness versus violence: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of gentleness versus violence. Violence was evidenced more frequently.
- Self-Control versus recklessness: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of self-control versus recklessness.

*The High King* (1969) clearly depicted a greater frequency of opposite traits as opposed to positive Biblical virtues. The evidence supports the claim that, in five instances, the frequency of opposite traits was significantly higher than that of the paired positive Biblical virtues. The frequencies of sorrow, worry, impatience, immorality, and violence were found to be significantly greater than that of their positive Biblical counterparts. In one instance, a positive Biblical virtue, faithfulness, was presented with significantly greater frequency. Moreover, when love/selfishness, kindness/cruelty, and self-control/recklessness were compared, no significant difference was found. The following report presents the resultant data relevant to Research Question Two concerning Book Eleven.



Book Eleven: *The Slave Dancer* (1974)

- Love versus selfishness: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of love versus selfishness. Selfishness was evidenced more frequently.
- Joy versus sorrow: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of joy versus sorrow. Sorrow was evidenced more frequently.
- Peace versus worry: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of peace versus worry. Worry was evidenced more frequently.
- Patience versus impatience: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of patience versus impatience. Impatience was evidenced more frequently.
- Kindness versus cruelty: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of kindness versus cruelty. Cruelty was evidenced more frequently.
- Goodness versus immorality: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of goodness versus immorality. Immorality was evidenced more frequently.
- Faithfulness versus betrayal: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of faithfulness versus betrayal. Faithfulness was evidenced more frequently.

- Gentleness versus violence: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of gentleness versus violence. Violence was evidenced more frequently.
- Self-Control versus recklessness: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of self-control versus recklessness.

*The Slave Dancer* (1974) clearly depicted a greater frequency of opposite traits as opposed to positive Biblical virtues. The evidence supports the claim that, in seven instances, the frequency of opposite traits was significantly higher than that of the paired positive Biblical virtues. The frequencies of selfishness, sorrow, worry, impatience, cruelty, immorality, and violence were found to be significantly greater than that of their positive Biblical counterparts. In one instance, a positive Biblical virtue, faithfulness, was presented with significantly greater frequency. Moreover, when self-control and recklessness were compared, no significant difference was found. The results for Book Twelve will now be discussed.

Book Twelve: *The Westing Game* (1979)

- Love versus selfishness: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of love versus selfishness. Selfishness was evidenced more frequently.
- Joy versus sorrow: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of joy versus sorrow. Sorrow was evidenced more frequently.

- Peace versus worry: The chi-square test could not be conducted because the frequency of peace was zero.
- Patience versus impatience: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of patience versus impatience. Impatience was evidenced more frequently.
- Kindness versus cruelty: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of kindness versus cruelty. Cruelty was evidenced more frequently.
- Goodness versus immorality: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of goodness versus immorality. Immorality was evidenced more frequently.
- Faithfulness versus betrayal: The chi-square test could not be conducted because the frequency of betrayal was zero.
- Gentleness versus violence: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of gentleness versus violence.
- Self-Control versus recklessness: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of self-control versus recklessness.

*The Westing Game* (1979) clearly depicted a greater frequency of opposite traits as opposed to positive Biblical virtues. The evidence supports the claim that, in five instances, the frequency of opposite traits was significantly higher than that of the paired positive Biblical virtues. The frequencies of selfishness, sorrow, impatience, cruelty, and

immorality were found to be significantly greater than that of their positive Biblical counterparts. Moreover, when gentleness/violence and self-control/recklessness were compared, no significant difference was found. A chi-square analysis could not be conducted to compare peace/worry and faithfulness/betrayal due to the presence of values of zero. This naturally leads to an examination of the data for Book Thirteen.

Book 13: *Dear Mr. Henshaw* (1984)

- Love versus selfishness: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of love versus selfishness. Love was evidenced more frequently.
- Joy versus sorrow: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of joy versus sorrow. Sorrow was evidenced more frequently.
- Peace versus worry: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of peace versus worry. Worry was evidenced more frequently.
- Patience versus impatience: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of patience versus impatience. Impatience was evidenced more frequently.
- Kindness versus cruelty: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of kindness versus cruelty. Cruelty was evidenced more frequently.

- Goodness versus immorality: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of goodness versus immorality. Goodness was evidenced more frequently.
- Faithfulness versus betrayal: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of faithfulness versus betrayal.
- Gentleness versus violence: The chi-square test could not be conducted because the frequency of violence was zero.
- Self-Control versus recklessness: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of self-control versus recklessness.

*Dear Mr. Henshaw* (1984) depicted a greater frequency of opposite traits as opposed to positive Biblical virtues. The evidence supports the claim that, in four instances, the frequency of opposite traits was significantly higher than that of the paired positive Biblical virtues. The frequencies of sorrow, worry, impatience, and cruelty were found to be significantly greater than that of their positive Biblical counterparts. In three instances, positive Biblical virtues including love, goodness, and faithfulness were presented with significantly greater frequency. Moreover, when self-control and recklessness were compared, no significant difference was found. A chi-square analysis could not be conducted to compare gentleness and violence due to the presence of a value of zero. This leads to a discussion of the data relevant to Research Question Two concerning Book Fourteen.

Book Fourteen: *Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices* (1989)

- Love versus selfishness: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of love versus selfishness.
- Joy versus sorrow: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of joy versus sorrow.
- Peace versus worry: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of peace versus worry.
- Patience versus impatience: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of patience versus impatience.
- Kindness versus cruelty: The chi-square test could not be conducted because the frequency of cruelty was zero.
- Goodness versus immorality: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of goodness versus immorality.
- Faithfulness versus betrayal: The chi-square test could not be conducted because the frequency of betrayal was zero.
- Gentleness versus violence: The chi-square test could not be conducted because the frequencies of gentleness and violence were zero.
- Self-Control versus recklessness: The chi-square test could not be conducted because the frequency of self-control was zero.

*Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices* (1989) was representative of a balance of positive Biblical virtues and opposite traits. In five cases, the null hypothesis was accepted, whereas the chi-square analysis could not be conducted in four cases due to the presence of a value of zero. When love/selfishness, joy/sorrow, peace/worry, patience/impatience, goodness/immorality were compared, no significant difference was found. The following report has been disseminated to present the resultant data relevant to Research Question Two for Book Fifteen. Frequencies of kindness/cruelty, faithfulness/betrayal, gentleness/violence, and self-control/recklessness could not be compared for the aforementioned reason.

Book Fifteen: *The Giver* (1994)

- Love versus selfishness: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of love versus selfishness. Love was evidenced more frequently.
- Joy versus sorrow: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of joy versus sorrow. Sorrow was evidenced more frequently.
- Peace versus worry: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of peace versus worry. Worry was evidenced more frequently.
- Patience versus impatience: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of patience versus impatience.

- Kindness versus cruelty: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of kindness versus cruelty. Kindness was evidenced more frequently.
- Goodness versus immorality: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of goodness versus immorality. Immorality was evidenced more frequently.
- Faithfulness versus betrayal: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of faithfulness versus betrayal. Faithfulness was evidenced more frequently.
- Gentleness versus violence: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of gentleness versus violence.
- Self-Control versus recklessness: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of self-control versus recklessness.

*The Giver* (1994) was representative of a balance between opposite traits as opposed to positive Biblical virtues. The evidence supports the claim that, in three instances, the frequency of opposite traits was significantly higher than that of the paired positive Biblical virtues. The frequencies of sorrow, worry, and immorality were found to be significantly greater than that of their positive Biblical counterparts. In three instances, the positive Biblical virtues, including love, kindness and faithfulness were presented with significantly greater frequency. Moreover, when patience/impatience,



gentleness/violence, and self-control/recklessness were compared, no significant difference was found. But how does this compare to the results for Book Sixteen?

Book Sixteen: *Holes* (1999)

- Love versus selfishness: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of love versus selfishness.
- Joy versus sorrow: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of joy versus sorrow. Sorrow was evidenced more frequently.
- Peace versus worry: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of peace versus worry. Worry was evidenced more frequently.
- Patience versus impatience: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of patience versus impatience.
- Kindness versus cruelty: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of kindness versus cruelty. Cruelty was evidenced more frequently.
- Goodness versus immorality: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of goodness versus immorality. Immorality was evidenced more frequently.

- Faithfulness versus betrayal: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of faithfulness versus betrayal. Faithfulness was evidenced more frequently.
- Gentleness versus violence: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of gentleness versus violence. Violence was evidenced more frequently.
- Self-Control versus recklessness: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of self-control versus recklessness.

*Holes* (1999) depicted a greater frequency of opposite traits as opposed to positive Biblical virtues. The evidence supports the claim that, in four instances, the frequency of opposite traits was significantly higher than that of the paired positive Biblical virtues. The frequencies of sorrow, worry, cruelty, and immorality were found to be significantly greater than that of their positive Biblical counterparts. There were no instances in which the frequency of a positive Biblical virtue significantly exceeded that of the paired negative counterpart. Moreover, when love/selfishness, patience/impatience, faithfulness/betrayal, gentleness/violence, and self-control/recklessness were compared, no significant difference was found. This leads to a report of the results for Book Seventeen.

Book Seventeen: *The Tale of Despereaux: Being the Story of a Mouse, a Princess, Some Soup, and a Spool of Thread* (2004)

- Love versus selfishness: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of love versus selfishness.
- Joy versus sorrow: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of joy versus sorrow. Sorrow was evidenced more frequently.
- Peace versus worry: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of peace versus worry. Worry was evidenced more frequently.
- Patience versus impatience: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of patience versus impatience.
- Kindness versus cruelty: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of kindness versus cruelty. Cruelty was evidenced more frequently.
- Goodness versus immorality: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of goodness versus immorality. Immorality was evidenced more frequently.
- Faithfulness versus betrayal: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of faithfulness versus betrayal.

- Gentleness versus violence: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of gentleness versus violence.
- Self-Control versus recklessness: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of self-control versus recklessness.

*The Tale of Despereaux: Being the Story of a Mouse, a Princess, Some Soup, and a Spool of Thread* (2004) depicted a greater frequency of opposite traits as opposed to positive Biblical virtues. The evidence supports the claim that, in four instances, the frequency of opposite traits was significantly higher than that of the paired positive Biblical virtues. The frequencies of sorrow, worry, cruelty, and immorality were found to be significantly greater than that of their positive Biblical counterparts. There were no instances in which the frequency of a positive Biblical virtue significantly exceeded that of the negative opposite counterpart. Moreover, when love/selfishness, patience/impatience, faithfulness/betrayal, gentleness/violence, and self-control/recklessness were compared, no significant difference was found. The following report discusses data relevant to Research Question Two for Book Eighteen.

Book Eighteen: *The Graveyard Book* (2009)

- Love versus selfishness: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of love versus selfishness. Selfishness was evidenced more frequently.

- Joy versus sorrow: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of joy versus sorrow. Sorrow was evidenced more frequently.
- Peace versus worry: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of peace versus worry. Worry was evidenced more frequently.
- Patience versus impatience: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of patience versus impatience. Impatience was evidenced more frequently.
- Kindness versus cruelty: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of kindness versus cruelty. Cruelty was evidenced more frequently.
- Goodness versus immorality: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of goodness versus immorality. Immorality was evidenced more frequently.
- Faithfulness versus betrayal: The null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of faithfulness versus betrayal.
- Gentleness versus violence: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of gentleness versus violence. Violence was evidenced more frequently.

- Self-Control versus recklessness: The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the demonstrated frequencies of self-control versus recklessness. Recklessness was evidenced more frequently.

*The Graveyard Book* (2009) clearly depicted a greater frequency of opposite traits as opposed to positive Biblical virtues. The evidence supports the claim that, in eight instances, the frequency of opposite traits was significantly higher than that of the paired positive Biblical virtues. The frequencies of selfishness, sorrow, worry, impatience, cruelty, immorality, violence, and recklessness were found to be significantly greater than that of their positive Biblical counterparts. There were no instances in which the frequency of a positive Biblical virtue significantly exceeded that of the paired negative opposite trait. When faithfulness and betrayal were compared, no significant difference was found.

Overall, a total of 162 paired positive Biblical virtues and opposite traits were compared within each Newbery Medal book. Among the comparative values, the null hypothesis was rejected 100 times and accepted 52 times. Ten chi-square analyses could not be run due to a recorded frequency of zero, which the chi-square test does not recognize as valid. With the exception of the instances in which the chi-square tests could not be run, the null hypothesis was rejected among 66 percent of the recorded frequencies, and the null hypothesis was accepted among 34 percent of the recorded frequencies.

### Research Question Three

Research Question Three asked: Have Newbery Medal books become increasingly positive or negative, with respect to Biblical virtues and opposite traits, over

nine decades? Table 22 delineates the trends over time across the 18 Newbery Medal books examined. The frequency of the presence of positive Biblical virtues and opposite traits was determined when a consensus of two among the three readers were in agreement.

Table 22

*Positive Virtues Versus Opposite Traits Over Nine Decades*

Positive/Negative Cross Tabulation					Total
			1.00 Positive Virtues	2.00 Opposite Traits	
Book	1.00	Count	107	448	555
		Expected Count	160.3	394.7	555.0
	2.00	Count	180	367	547
		Expected Count	158.0	389.0	547.0
	3.00	Count	394	239	633
		Expected Count	182.8	450.2	633.0
	4.00	Count	144	164	308
		Expected Count	89.0	219.0	308.0
	5.00	Count	369	649	1018
		Expected Count	294.0	724.0	1018.0
	6.00	Count	165	286	451
		Expected Count	130.3	320.7	451.0
	7.00	Count	99	167	266
		Expected Count	76.8	189.2	266.0
	8.00	Count	321	518	839
		Expected Count	242.3	596.7	839.0
	9.00	Count	127	271	398
		Expected Count	115.0	283.0	398.0
	10.00	Count	288	718	1006
		Expected Count	290.6	715.4	1006.0
	11.00	Count	115	735	850
		Expected Count	245.5	604.5	850.0

12.00	Count	157	557	714
	Expected Count	206.2	507.8	714.0
13.00	Count	97	138	235
	Expected Count	67.9	167.1	235.0
14.00	Count	34	32	66
	Expected Count	19.1	46.9	66.0
15.00	Count	127	435	562
	Expected Count	162.3	399.7	562.0
16.00	Count	328	599	927
	Expected Count	267.7	659.3	927.0
17.00	Count	190	558	748
	Expected Count	216.0	532.0	748.0
18.00	Count	89	1321	1410
	Expected Count	407.2	1002.8	1410.0
Total	Count	3331	8202	11533
	Expected Count	3331.0	8202.0	11533.0

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1038.814 <sup>a</sup>	17	.000

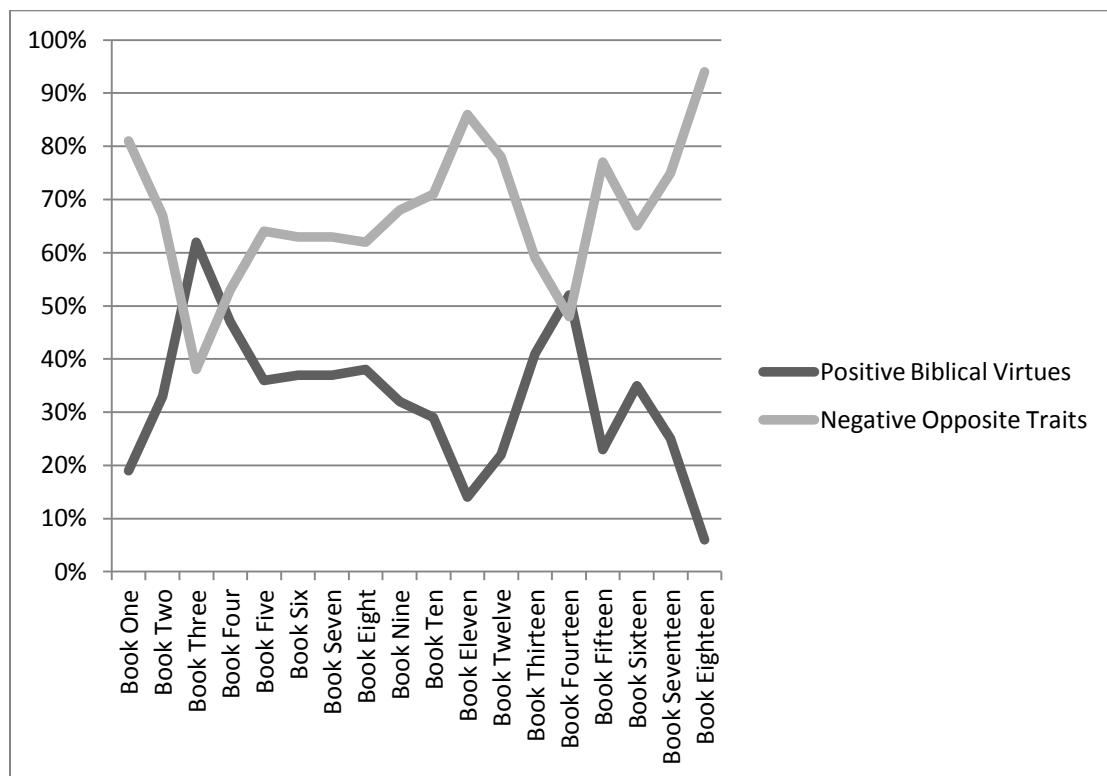
$$X^2(1) = 1038.81, p < .001$$

In response to research question number three, the results of the current study clearly indicate that Newbery Medal books have shown a significantly greater frequency of opposite traits as opposed to positive Biblical virtues over the period of nine decades. The critical value at the .05 level of significance with 17 degrees of freedom is 27.587. Given the chi-square value of 1038.81, evidence has been provided in support of the aforementioned results. Every book, with the exception of the books from 1934 and 1989, met the criteria established to make the claim that there is a statistically significant



difference between the frequency of positive Biblical virtues and opposite traits. The trend over time reveals that, despite short periods in which the Newbery Medal books examined became increasingly positive, the books followed a largely negative trend over nine decades.

Figure 1 provides a clear visual portrayal of the trend of Newbery Medal books over the course of nine decades. Percent values of positive Biblical virtues were calculated by dividing observed frequencies of positive Biblical virtues by the total number of observed frequencies to include positive Biblical virtues and opposite traits. Percent values of opposite traits were calculated in the same manner.



*Figure 1.* The trend of Newbery Medal Books over nine decades

## Research Question Four

Research Question Four states: To what extent has the frequency of the specific positive Biblical virtues and paired opposite traits conveyed in Newbery Medal books changed over the course of nine decades? This question has been posed in order to delineate the presence and frequency of specific virtues and traits in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the tone of Newbery Medal books. Table 23 reveals the frequency with which love and selfishness were portrayed among the 18 Newbery Medal books that were examined.

Table 23

### *Love Versus Selfishness in Books One through Eighteen*

Virtue/Trait One Cross Tabulation					
			Virtue/Trait One		Total
			1.00 Love	2.00 Selfish	
Book	1.00	Count	6	24	30
		Expected Count	15.7	14.3	30.0
	2.00	Count	22	26	48
		Expected Count	25.0	23.0	48.0
	3.00	Count	61	11	72
		Expected Count	37.6	34.4	72.0
	4.00	Count	16	6	22
		Expected Count	11.5	10.5	22.0
	5.00	Count	41	32	73
		Expected Count	38.1	34.9	73.0
	6.00	Count	23	15	38
		Expected Count	19.8	18.2	38.0
	7.00	Count	5	9	14
		Expected Count	7.3	6.7	14.0
	8.00	Count	40	23	63
		Expected Count	32.9	30.1	63.0

9.00	Count	3	16	19
	Expected Count	9.9	9.1	19.0
10.00	Count	27	30	57
	Expected Count	29.7	27.3	57.0
11.00	Count	1	7	8
	Expected Count	4.2	3.8	8.0
12.00	Count	9	30	39
	Expected Count	20.4	18.6	39.0
13.00	Count	12	3	15
	Expected Count	7.8	7.2	15.0
14.00	Count	5	1	6
	Expected Count	3.1	2.9	6.0
15.00	Count	17	4	21
	Expected Count	11.0	10.0	21.0
16.00	Count	16	13	29
	Expected Count	15.1	13.9	29.0
17.00	Count	17	21	38
	Expected Count	19.8	18.2	38.0
18.00	Count	2	25	27
	Expected Count	14.1	12.9	27.0
Total	Count	323	296	619
	Expected Count	323.0	296.0	619.0

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	119.273 <sup>a</sup>	17	.000

The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the frequencies of love versus selfishness across 18 Newbery Medal

books over the course of nine decades. Love is evidenced with a significantly greater frequency than selfishness. Given 17 degrees of freedom at the .05 level of significance, the critical value to which the statistical output must be held is 27.587. The Pearson chi-square statistic of 119.27 indicates that the positive Biblical virtue of love is more prevalent than the opposite trait of selfishness among the Newbery Medal books that were examined. Table 24 reveals the frequency with which joy and sorrow were portrayed among the 18 Newbery Medal books that were examined.

Table 24

*Joy Versus Sorrow in Books One through Eighteen*

Virtue/Trait Two Cross Tabulation			virtue/trait 2		Total
			1.00 Joy	2.00 Sorrow	
Book	1.00	Count	8	50	58
		Expected Count	15.9	42.1	58.0
	2.00	Count	13	59	72
		Expected Count	19.8	52.2	72.0
	3.00	Count	63	97	160
		Expected Count	44.0	116.0	160.0
	4.00	Count	33	27	60
		Expected Count	16.5	43.5	60.0
	5.00	Count	37	100	137
		Expected Count	37.6	99.4	137.0
	6.00	Count	45	45	90
		Expected Count	24.7	65.3	90.0
	7.00	Count	19	25	44
		Expected Count	12.1	31.9	44.0
	8.00	Count	56	102	158
		Expected Count	43.4	114.6	158.0
	9.00	Count	9	25	34

	Expected Count	9.3	24.7	34.0
10.00	Count	38	81	119
	Expected Count	32.7	86.3	119.0
11.00	Count	2	112	114
	Expected Count	31.3	82.7	114.0
12.00	Count	20	52	72
	Expected Count	19.8	52.2	72.0
13.00	Count	2	38	40
	Expected Count	11.0	29.0	40.0
14.00	Count	11	13	24
	Expected Count	6.6	17.4	24.0
15.00	Count	19	58	77
	Expected Count	21.2	55.8	77.0
16.00	Count	13	74	87
	Expected Count	23.9	63.1	87.0
17.00	Count	28	99	127
	Expected Count	34.9	92.1	127.0
18.00	Count	11	70	81
	Expected Count	22.3	58.7	81.0
Total	Count	427	1127	1554
	Expected Count	427.0	1127.0	1554.0

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	146.384 <sup>a</sup>	17	.000

The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the frequencies of joy versus sorrow across 18 Newbery Medal books over the course of nine decades. Sorrow is evidenced with a significantly greater

frequency than joy. Given 17 degrees of freedom at the .05 level of significance, the critical value to which the statistical output must be held is 27.587. The Pearson chi-square statistic of 146.38 indicates the fact that the opposite trait of sorrow is more prevalent than the positive Biblical virtue of joy among the Newbery Medal books that were examined. Table 25 reveals the frequency with which peace and worry were portrayed among the 18 Newbery Medal books that were examined.

Table 25

*Peace Versus Worry in Books One through Eighteen*

Virtue/Trait Three Cross Tabulation					
			Virtue/trait 3		Total
			1.00 Peace	2.00 Worry	
Book	1.00	Count	9	104	113
		Expected Count	9.5	103.5	113.0
	2.00	Count	18	77	95
		Expected Count	8.0	87.0	95.0
	3.00	Count	35	59	94
		Expected Count	7.9	86.1	94.0
	4.00	Count	14	50	64
		Expected Count	5.4	58.6	64.0
	5.00	Count	17	128	145
		Expected Count	12.2	132.8	145.0
	6.00	Count	11	63	74
		Expected Count	6.2	67.8	74.0
	7.00	Count	7	43	50
		Expected Count	4.2	45.8	50.0
	8.00	Count	14	152	166
		Expected Count	13.9	152.1	166.0
	9.00	Count	2	65	67
		Expected Count	5.6	61.4	67.0
	10.00	Count	8	217	225

	Expected Count	18.9	206.1	225.0
11.00	Count	6	138	144
	Expected Count	12.1	131.9	144.0
12.00	Count	0	142	142
	Expected Count	11.9	130.1	142.0
13.00	Count	6	36	42
	Expected Count	3.5	38.5	42.0
14.00	Count	2	7	9
	Expected Count	.8	8.2	9.0
15.00	Count	5	108	113
	Expected Count	9.5	103.5	113.0
16.00	Count	9	158	167
	Expected Count	14.0	153.0	167.0
17.00	Count	5	93	98
	Expected Count	8.2	89.8	98.0
18.00	Count	2	214	216
	Expected Count	18.1	197.9	216.0
Total	Count	170	1854	2024
	Expected Count	170.0	1854.0	2024.0

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	189.864 <sup>a</sup>	17	.000

The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the frequencies of peace versus worry across 18 Newbery Medal books over the course of nine decades. Worry is evidenced with a significantly greater frequency than peace. Given 17 degrees of freedom at the .05 level of significance, the

critical value to which the statistical output must be held is 27.587. The Pearson chi-square statistic of 189.86 indicates that the opposite trait of worry is more prevalent than the positive Biblical virtue of peace among the Newbery Medal books that were examined. Table 26 reveals the frequency with which patience and impatience were portrayed among the 18 Newbery Medal books that were examined.

Table 26

*Patience Versus Impatience in Books One through Eighteen*

Virtue/Trait Four Cross Tabulation

			Virtue/trait 4		Total
			1.00 Patience	2.00 Impatience	
Book	1.00	Count	12	27	39
		Expected Count	10.8	28.2	39.0
	2.00	Count	11	15	26
		Expected Count	7.2	18.8	26.0
	3.00	Count	39	16	55
		Expected Count	15.3	39.7	55.0
	4.00	Count	9	22	31
		Expected Count	8.6	22.4	31.0
	5.00	Count	27	53	80
		Expected Count	22.2	57.8	80.0
	6.00	Count	2	36	38
		Expected Count	10.6	27.4	38.0
	7.00	Count	6	28	34
		Expected Count	9.4	24.6	34.0
	8.00	Count	14	59	73
		Expected Count	20.3	52.7	73.0
	9.00	Count	3	46	49
		Expected Count	13.6	35.4	49.0
	10.00	Count	18	61	79
		Expected Count	21.9	57.1	79.0
	11.00	Count	13	44	57
		Expected Count			
		Expected Count			



	Expected Count	15.8	41.2	57.0
12.00	Count	5	54	59
	Expected Count	16.4	42.6	59.0
13.00	Count	2	18	20
	Expected Count	5.6	14.4	20.0
14.00	Count	7	2	9
	Expected Count	2.5	6.5	9.0
15.00	Count	13	24	37
	Expected Count	10.3	26.7	37.0
16.00	Count	35	39	74
	Expected Count	20.6	53.4	74.0
17.00	Count	24	35	59
	Expected Count	16.4	42.6	59.0
18.00	Count	8	66	74
	Expected Count	20.6	53.4	74.0
Total	Count	248	645	893
	Expected Count	248.0	645.0	893.0

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	138.436 <sup>a</sup>	17	.000

The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the frequencies of patience versus impatience across 18 Newbery Medal books over the course of nine decades. Impatience is evidenced with a significantly greater frequency than patience. Given 17 degrees of freedom at the .05 level of significance, the critical value to which the statistical output must be held is 27.587. The Pearson chi-square statistic of 138.44 indicates the fact that the opposite trait

of impatience is more prevalent than the positive Biblical virtue of patience among the Newbery Medal books that were examined. Table 27 reveals the frequency with which kindness and cruelty were portrayed among the 18 Newbery Medal books that were examined.

Table 27

*Kindness Versus Cruelty in Books One through Eighteen*

Virtue/Trait Five Cross Tabulation

			Virtue/Trait 5		Total
			1.00 Kindness	2.00 Cruelty	
Book	1.00	Count	20	57	77
		Expected Count	33.5	43.5	77.0
	2.00	Count	26	18	44
		Expected Count	19.2	24.8	44.0
	3.00	Count	50	7	57
		Expected Count	24.8	32.2	57.0
	4.00	Count	30	12	42
		Expected Count	18.3	23.7	42.0
	5.00	Count	67	103	170
		Expected Count	74.0	96.0	170.0
	6.00	Count	32	42	74
		Expected Count	32.2	41.8	74.0
	7.00	Count	11	14	25
		Expected Count	10.9	14.1	25.0
	8.00	Count	44	48	92
		Expected Count	40.0	52.0	92.0
	9.00	Count	47	43	90
		Expected Count	39.2	50.8	90.0
	10.00	Count	57	46	103
		Expected Count	44.8	58.2	103.0
	11.00	Count	41	83	124
		Expected Count	54.0	70.0	124.0
	12.00	Count	38	62	100

	Expected Count	43.5	56.5	100.0
13.00	Count	22	10	32
	Expected Count	13.9	18.1	32.0
14.00	Count	2	0	2
	Expected Count	.9	1.1	2.0
15.00	Count	26	11	37
	Expected Count	16.1	20.9	37.0
16.00	Count	45	93	138
	Expected Count	60.1	77.9	138.0
17.00	Count	37	90	127
	Expected Count	55.3	71.7	127.0
18.00	Count	17	55	72
	Expected Count	31.3	40.7	72.0
Total	Count	612	794	1406
	Expected Count	612.0	794.0	1406.0

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	140.479 <sup>a</sup>	17	.000

The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the frequencies of kindness versus cruelty across 18 Newbery Medal books over the course of nine decades. Cruelty is evidenced with a significantly greater frequency than kindness. Given 17 degrees of freedom at the .05 level of significance, the critical value to which the statistical output must be held is 27.587. The Pearson chi-square statistic of 140.48 indicates the fact that the opposite trait of cruelty is more prevalent than the positive Biblical virtue of kindness among the Newbery Medal books

that were examined. Table 28 reveals the frequency with which goodness and immorality were portrayed among the 18 Newbery Medal books that were examined.

Table 28

*Goodness Versus Immorality in Books One through Eighteen*

Virtue/Trait Six Cross Tabulation			Virtue/Trait 6		Total
			1.00 Goodness	2.00 Immorality	
Book	1.00	Count	13	99	112
		Expected Count	23.9	88.1	112.0
	2.00	Count	37	105	142
		Expected Count	30.3	111.7	142.0
	3.00	Count	68	33	101
		Expected Count	21.5	79.5	101.0
	4.00	Count	24	30	54
		Expected Count	11.5	42.5	54.0
	5.00	Count	75	164	239
		Expected Count	50.9	188.1	239.0
	6.00	Count	21	55	76
		Expected Count	16.2	59.8	76.0
	7.00	Count	28	39	67
		Expected Count	14.3	52.7	67.0
	8.00	Count	85	100	185
		Expected Count	39.4	145.6	185.0
	9.00	Count	48	64	112
		Expected Count	23.9	88.1	112.0
	10.00	Count	46	182	228
		Expected Count	48.6	179.4	228.0
	11.00	Count	33	285	318
		Expected Count	67.8	250.2	318.0
	12.00	Count	62	206	268
		Expected Count	57.1	210.9	268.0
	13.00	Count	42	23	65
		Expected Count	13.9	51.1	65.0

14.00	Count	5	3	8
	Expected Count	1.7	6.3	8.0
15.00	Count	21	218	239
	Expected Count	50.9	188.1	239.0
16.00	Count	67	166	233
	Expected Count	49.7	183.3	233.0
17.00	Count	39	178	217
	Expected Count	46.3	170.7	217.0
18.00	Count	29	793	822
	Expected Count	175.2	646.8	822.0
Total	Count	743	2743	3486
	Expected Count	743.0	2743.0	3486.0

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	574.548 <sup>a</sup>	17	.000

The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the frequencies of goodness versus immorality across 18 Newbery Medal books over the course of nine decades. Immorality is evidenced with a significantly greater frequency than goodness. Given 17 degrees of freedom at the .05 level of significance, the critical value to which the statistical output must be held is 27.587. The Pearson chi-square statistic of 574.55 indicates the fact that the opposite trait of immorality is more prevalent than the positive Biblical virtue of goodness among the Newbery Medal books that were examined. Table 29 reveals the frequency with which

faithfulness and betrayal were portrayed among the 18 Newbery Medal books that were examined.

Table 29

*Faithfulness Versus Betrayal in Books One through Eighteen*

Virtue/Trait Seven Cross Tabulation

			Virtue/Trait 7		Total
			1.00 Faithful	2.00 Betrayal	
Book	1.00	Count	22	7	29
		Expected Count	24.8	4.2	29.0
	2.00	Count	37	4	41
		Expected Count	35.1	5.9	41.0
	3.00	Count	49	1	50
		Expected Count	42.8	7.2	50.0
	4.00	Count	2	0	2
		Expected Count	1.7	.3	2.0
	5.00	Count	56	9	65
		Expected Count	55.6	9.4	65.0
	6.00	Count	17	2	19
		Expected Count	16.3	2.7	19.0
	7.00	Count	8	0	8
		Expected Count	6.8	1.2	8.0
	8.00	Count	34	2	36
		Expected Count	30.8	5.2	36.0
	9.00	Count	3	0	3
		Expected Count	2.6	.4	3.0
	10.00	Count	59	4	63
		Expected Count	53.9	9.1	63.0
	11.00	Count	8	1	9
		Expected Count	7.7	1.3	9.0
	12.00	Count	10	0	10
		Expected Count	8.6	1.4	10.0
	13.00	Count	9	6	15
		Expected Count	12.8	2.2	15.0

14.00	Count	2	0	2
	Expected Count	1.7	.3	2.0
15.00	Count	10	2	12
	Expected Count	10.3	1.7	12.0
16.00	Count	27	4	31
	Expected Count	26.5	4.5	31.0
17.00	Count	19	14	33
	Expected Count	28.2	4.8	33.0
18.00	Count	7	8	15
	Expected Count	12.8	2.2	15.0
Total	Count	379	64	443
	Expected Count	379.0	64.0	443.0

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	66.686 <sup>a</sup>	17	.000

The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the frequencies of faithfulness versus betrayal across 18 Newbery Medal books over the course of nine decades. Faithfulness is evidenced with a significantly greater frequency than betrayal. Given 17 degrees of freedom at the .05 level of significance, the critical value to which the statistical output must be held is 27.587. The Pearson chi-square statistic of 66.69 indicates the fact that the positive Biblical virtue of faithfulness is more prevalent than the opposite trait of betrayal among the Newbery Medal books that were examined. Table 30 reveals the frequency with

which gentleness and violence were portrayed among the 18 Newbery Medal books that were examined.

Table 30

*Gentleness Versus Violence in Books One through Eighteen*

Virtue/Trait Eight Cross Tabulation			Virtue/Trait 8		Total
			1.00 Gentle	2.00 Violence	
Book	1.00	Count	1	73	74
		Expected Count	19.9	54.1	74.0
	2.00	Count	10	54	64
		Expected Count	17.2	46.8	64.0
	3.00	Count	14	7	21
		Expected Count	5.6	15.4	21.0
	4.00	Count	12	3	15
		Expected Count	4.0	11.0	15.0
	5.00	Count	24	51	75
		Expected Count	20.1	54.9	75.0
	6.00	Count	7	24	31
		Expected Count	8.3	22.7	31.0
	7.00	Count	11	6	17
		Expected Count	4.6	12.4	17.0
	8.00	Count	23	22	45
		Expected Count	12.1	32.9	45.0
	9.00	Count	8	4	12
		Expected Count	3.2	8.8	12.0
	10.00	Count	26	92	118
		Expected Count	31.7	86.3	118.0
	11.00	Count	6	64	70
		Expected Count	18.8	51.2	70.0
	12.00	Count	9	5	14
		Expected Count	3.8	10.2	14.0
	13.00	Count	1	0	1



	Expected Count	.3	.7	1.0
15.00	Count	12	5	17
	Expected Count	4.6	12.4	17.0
16.00	Count	14	44	58
	Expected Count	15.6	42.4	58.0
17.00	Count	13	22	35
	Expected Count	9.4	25.6	35.0
18.00	Count	9	69	78
	Expected Count	20.9	57.1	78.0
Total	Count	200	545	745
	Expected Count	200.0	545.0	745.0

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	158.009 <sup>a</sup>	16	.000

The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the frequencies of gentleness versus violence across 18 Newbery Medal books over the course of nine decades. Violence is evidenced with a significantly greater frequency than gentleness. Given 17 degrees of freedom at the .05 level of significance, the critical value to which the statistical output must be held is 27.587. The Pearson chi-square statistic of 158.01 indicates the fact that the opposite trait of violence is more prevalent than the positive Biblical virtue of gentleness among the Newbery Medal books that were examined. Table 31 reveals the frequency with which self-control and recklessness were portrayed among the 18 Newbery Medal books that were examined.

Table 31

*Self-Control Versus Recklessness in Books One through Eighteen*

Virtue/Trait Nine Cross Tabulation

			Virtue/Trait 9		Total
			1.00 Self- Control	2.00 Recklessne ss	
Book	1.00	Count	16	7	23
		Expected Count	11.7	11.3	23.0
	2.00	Count	6	9	15
		Expected Count	7.6	7.4	15.0
	3.00	Count	15	8	23
		Expected Count	11.7	11.3	23.0
	4.00	Count	4	14	18
		Expected Count	9.2	8.8	18.0
	5.00	Count	25	9	34
		Expected Count	17.3	16.7	34.0
	6.00	Count	7	4	11
		Expected Count	5.6	5.4	11.0
	7.00	Count	4	3	7
		Expected Count	3.6	3.4	7.0
	8.00	Count	11	10	21
		Expected Count	10.7	10.3	21.0
	9.00	Count	4	8	12
		Expected Count	6.1	5.9	12.0
	10.00	Count	9	5	14
		Expected Count	7.1	6.9	14.0
	11.00	Count	5	1	6
		Expected Count	3.1	2.9	6.0
	12.00	Count	4	6	10
		Expected Count	5.1	4.9	10.0
	13.00	Count	1	4	5
		Expected Count	2.5	2.5	5.0

14.00	Count	0	6	6
	Expected Count	3.1	2.9	6.0
15.00	Count	4	5	9
	Expected Count	4.6	4.4	9.0
16.00	Count	12	8	20
	Expected Count	10.2	9.8	20.0
17.00	Count	8	6	14
	Expected Count	7.1	6.9	14.0
18.00	Count	4	21	25
	Expected Count	12.7	12.3	25.0
Total	Count	139	134	273
	Expected Count	139.0	134.0	273.0

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	46.369 <sup>a</sup>	17	.000

The null hypothesis has been rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the frequencies of self-control versus recklessness across 18 Newbery Medal books over the course of nine decades. Self-control is evidenced with a significantly greater frequency than recklessness. Given 17 degrees of freedom at the .05 level of significance, the critical value to which the statistical output must be held is 27.587. The Pearson chi-square statistic of 146.38 indicates that the positive Biblical virtue of self-control is more prevalent than the opposite trait of recklessness among the Newbery Medal books that were examined.

A close examination of the character inherent in Newbery Medal books from the 1920s through the 2000s reveals a literary trend towards a statistically significant

frequency of the following positive Biblical virtues and opposite traits: love, sorrow, worry, impatience, cruelty, immorality, faithfulness, violence, and self-control. The positive Biblical virtues of joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, and gentleness were significantly underrepresented among the Newbery Medal books included in the current study. Moreover, the opposite traits of sorrow, worry, impatience, cruelty, immorality, and violence were significantly overrepresented among the Newbery Medal books.

#### Research question five.

This question asks: What are the general emergent themes related to morality within and across Newbery Medal books from the 1920s through the 2000s? The readers involved in the study responded to this question by means of qualitative methods. It is important to note that the readers' responses to this research question could not be separated from the specific reasoning which led them to their determinations. The readers judged each book based on the content of the character and selected specific excerpts from the books to illustrate their claims. It is most appropriate to provide the response to the final research question in the discussion chapter of this study, as the discussion is entirely relevant to the determination of emergent moral themes inherent in Newbery Medal books.

#### Results Summary

The results chapter of this dissertation was written to expand on the information gained as a result of applying statistical tests to the data. In response to Research Question One, evidence was provided to make the claim that there is a statistically significant difference between the frequencies of positive Biblical virtues and opposite traits within each of the Newbery Medal books examined. Sixteen of the eighteen books

examined were found to be representative of predominantly opposite traits. In response to Research Question Two, evidence was provided to make the claim that there is a statistically significant difference between the frequency of specific paired positive Biblical virtues and opposite traits within each Newbery Medal book. The researcher found that the opposite traits were represented with a significantly greater frequency than the paired positive Biblical virtues.

In response to research question three, when searching for trends over nine decades to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference in the frequency with which Newbery Medal books demonstrate positive Biblical virtues versus opposite traits, the researcher found that the books have become increasingly negative over time, with few exceptions. In response to research question four, in an effort to determine the extent to which the frequency of specific positive Biblical virtues and opposite traits conveyed in Newbery Medal books has changed over the course of nine decades, the researcher found a statistically significant literary trend towards the portrayal of the following opposite traits: sorrow, worry, impatience, cruelty, immorality, and violence. Moreover, the researcher found a statistically significant literary trend towards the portrayal of the following positive Biblical virtues: love, faithfulness, and self-control. The final chapter of this study will provide an in-depth discussion of each Newbery Medal book examined. Most importantly, the ramifications of the aforementioned results will be discussed.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

### Introduction

Each Newbery Medal book examined for the purpose of this study will be discussed at length, as this discussion is essential to promote a comprehensive awareness of the exact nature of the characters' thoughts, dialogue, and actions. As stated, the absence of such scrutiny would be entirely irresponsible if stake-holders in education aspire to promote a strong sense of ethics and morality among the student population. This chapter begins with a brief summary of each book, along with the readers' recommendations regarding the appropriate classification thereof. Specific excerpts are provided to illustrate the readers' claims and determinations. The subsequent portion of this chapter has been written to shed light on the true definition of a "child." The validity and reliability of moral absolutism, in addition to the stages of moral reasoning, were discussed during the review of literature. The information provided in the literature review supports the necessity for a new classification system with regards to the awarding of books under the guise of "children's literature."

Each reader provided a written summary and participated in a focus-group interview style open-ended discussion regarding the moral themes inherent in each book examined. The readers' responses to this research question have been combined in order to provide a comprehensive depiction of the morality of each Newbery Medal book. It is important to note the fact that, while a portion of the Newbery Medal award books that were examined were considered to be entirely appropriate for young audiences, there were a number of books that the readers felt should be reclassified as "adolescent," as opposed to "children's" literature based on the dichotomy between the moral growth and

reasoning of a child versus that of an adolescent. Moreover, the readers felt that several of the books are inappropriate for children and adolescents. It is important to note that, if educators choose to share literature that is most appropriate for adolescents or adults with a younger audience, the responsibility of scaffolding the moral development and reasoning among students becomes significantly greater. The absence of such purposeful scaffolding may yield undesirable results. Specific excerpts from each book will be provided to solidify the readers' determinations.

Book One: *The Dark Frigate* (1924)

*The Dark Frigate* was written by Charles Hawes and was the recipient of the Newbery Medal award in 1924. This story was written about a boy by the name of Philip Marsham. Philip boarded the *Rose of Devon*, which was a dark frigate destined to take him to Newfoundland. Murderous pirates boarded the ship as they ventured toward their destination, and Philip found himself amongst company that he could not resist; subsequently, he became engaged in numerous acts of immorality. The readers felt that the moral theme of the story, despite their distaste of the plot, included the importance of remembering that one must move forward in life despite negative struggles, in addition to the paramount nature of carefully selecting those with whom one associates. It is most important to note that the three readers agreed that *The Dark Frigate* should be reclassified, and should certainly not be regarded as "children's literature," despite the book's award-winning status. The readers felt that the book was not even appropriate for adolescents, as the ends did not justify the means. Excerpts from the book, which serve to solidify this claim, will now be provided. It is important to note that this study is not based on moral contextualism. Rather, it is based on moral absolutism. As such, that

which an author chooses to submit in print is held to the highest of standards.

The following quotations have been extracted from *The Dark Frigate* to demonstrate the fact that this particular book is not appropriate for children or adolescents:

- The Old One then rose with a look of the Fiend in his eyes and casting the steering oar at the foremost of them, knocked the man over into the sea, where he sank, leaving a blotch of red on the surface, which was a terrible sight and brought the others to observe the Old One's commands (Hawes, 1924, p. 96).
- Thereupon, turning like a flash, Captain Candle spitted the scoundrel with his sword. But the man lying in wait on the right of the door saw his fellow's blow fail and perceived the reason, and leaping on the captain from behind, he seized his oiled hair with one hand and hauled back his head, and reaching forward with the other hand, drove a knife into the captain's bare throat. Dark blood from a severed vein streamed out over Captain Candle's collar and his gay waist. He coughed and his eyes grew dull. He let go his sword, which remained stuck through the body of the man who had first struck at him, clapped his hand to his neck, and went down in a heap (Hawes, 1924, p. 112).
- The three picked up the bodies, one at a time, each with its arms and legs dragging, and carried them to the waist and pushed them over (Hawes, 1924, p. 114).
- It was a sight to remember, for very merry they were and save as they were rough, hard-featured men, a man would never have dreamed they bore blood on their hands and murder on their hearts (Hawes, 1924, p. 122).



- There was, to be sure, one fellow of mean spirit who whined dolefully, upon conceiving his present extremity to be distasteful. But another got comfort by knocking him on the head when no one was looking, and finding him dead, the Old One hove him overboard and there was no further trouble from the fishermen (Hawes, 1924, p. 145).
- The fellow's manner betrayed his cowardice and the Old One pushed the point of a knife against his breast. "If again you stray or loiter," he whispered, "this blade will rip you open like a hog fat for the killing" (Hawes, 1924, p. 167).

#### Book Two: *The Trumpeter of Krakow* (1929)

The *Trumpeter of Krakow* was written by Eric Kelly and was the recipient of the Newbery Medal award in 1929. This story was written about a man by the name of Joseph Charnetski who was commissioned to protect the Great Tarnov Crystal. In attempts to protect the crystal, Joseph had no choice but to leave his home in Ukraine. Their home had been set ablaze by the Tartars. With his family in tow, Joseph fled to Krakow, Poland. Throughout the story, Joseph and his family encountered many people of questionable character, such as pagans, hypnotists, and alchemists. The readers felt that the moral theme of *The Trumpeter of Krakow* was that of faithfulness and loyalty. Despite the readers' positive reviews of the story, they contended that the book should be reclassified as "adolescent literature," as opposed to "children's literature," based on the content. Excerpts from the book, which serve to solidify this claim, will now be provided.

- "It is he who hath bewitched my brother and cut off his head and changed the head into a pumpkin" (Kelly, 1928, p. 44).
- "Hey," said the man, pointing upward, "there they have the magic that takes a

soul away from a body...See.” – there was another flash, brighter than the first and longer continued – “there be devils that come to earth with the fire of hell upon them...Their servant is the alchemist Kreutz, and they have one among us here on earth that is more like them than like us...You know whom I mean?” (Kelly, 1928, p. 81).

- “That I leave to magicians and necromancers, as likewise I leave to them that hideous magic which makes compounds of cats’ paws, and owls’ eyes, and dead men’s fingers” (Kelly, 1928, p. 87).
- A savage outcast, born of a Tartar mother and Cossack father, he had been involved in every dark plot on the border in the last ten years. Houses he had burned by the score, and men and women he had put to death cruelly (Kelly, 1928, pp. 105-6).
- “Then up, every mother’s son of you,” ordered the leader. “There is a man there. Put a knife in his throat and descend quickly” (Kelly, 1928, p. 119).
- “You lie!” He shrieked, “you lie! You have it still. I will find a way...Come here!” He called to Michael the Snake, “take this boy to the house where he lives, and keep always your knife at his throat. I will stay with the old one here, and if you do not return in a quarter of an hour, we will put this Pole out of all trouble in this world...No,” he continued, as if changing his mind, “I will go with the brat myself. While we look the house over, you keep your sword close to the old fox’s throat. If the boy leads me the wrong way, I’ll slit his throat, likewise if he tries to betray me” (Kelly, 1928, pp. 136-7).

Book Three: *Invincible Louisa: The Story of the Author of Little Women* (1934)

*Invincible Louisa: The Story of the Author of Little Women* was written by Cornelia Meigs and was the recipient of the Newbery Medal award in 1934. This story was based on the biological family of Louisa May Alcott. Louisa grew up in Pennsylvania and Boston during times of political and moral strife, and her family was instrumental in helping many refugee slaves as part of the Underground Railroad. Louisa herself was never hesitant to feed a hungry soul. She was the personification of all that is good. The readers felt that the story gave homage to a wonderfully caring, faithful, and loyal woman. As such, the readers contended that the moral theme was that of loyalty, faithfulness, and love. Louisa was willing to sacrifice everything for the well-being of her family, which is the greatest symbol of love. Overall, the readers concurred that this particular story was extremely well-written and entirely appropriate for young audiences. As such, excerpts from this story have not been included, as the story is not considered to be of questionable moral character.

Book Four: *Thimble Summer* (1939)

*Thimble Summer* was written by Elizabeth Enright and was the recipient of the Newbery Medal award in 1939. This story was written about a young girl by the name of Garnet Linden who happened to find a silver thimble along her travels in her neighborhood. After finding this thimble, many positive (and, as Garnet felt, magical) things began to happen. The readers felt that the emergent moral theme was representative of familial devotion, self-sacrifice, and appreciating the little things in life. The readers concurred that this story was appropriate and beneficial to young audiences. As such, excerpts from this story have not been included, as the story is not considered to

be of questionable moral character.

Book Five: *Johnny Tremain* (1944)

*Johnny Tremain* was written by Esther Forbes and was the recipient of the Newbery Medal award in 1944. This story was written about a young boy who became an apprenticed silversmith. Johnny Tremain found himself unable to perform the duties required of a silversmith after his hand became disfigured in his attempts to craft a silver basin. As a result, Johnny began to work as a printer's apprentice, and he learned about political events that were transpiring. Johnny became a Whig and participated in the Boston Tea Party, as well as the Battle of Lexington. The readers felt that Johnny was arrogant and selfish throughout the beginning of the story; however, life's events changed Johnny in many positive ways. The readers contended that the moral theme of the story was that of faithfulness, loyalty, patriotism, and caring about others. Overall, the readers felt that *Johnny Tremain* was an inspiring story; however, due to the graphic violent nature of the content, the story would be most suitable for an adolescent, as opposed to a children's audience. The readers felt that the story should be reclassified. Excerpts from the book, which serve to solidify this claim, will now be provided:

- Only Dove hated him. Sometimes he would get Dusty in a corner, tell him a hoarse whisper about how he was going to get a pair of scissors and cut out Johnny Tremain's heart (Forbes, 1943, pp. 4-5).
- The butcher's boy was a well-known tyrant. He grabbed the Webbs' cat, trussed her, hung her up by her heels to a hook, and began to sharpen his knife. He was going to butcher her, skin her, and give the carcass to the Webbs for stew meat. The butcher sat by and roared with laughter at the frantic children's tears and cries

(Forbes, 1943, p. 130).

- “Yep. We’re going to march right out of here,” he was saying one day. “And we’ll kill every rebel we meet. Skin ‘em. Cut off their heads.” (Forbes, 1943, pp. 235-6).
- “Why, if it isn’t that damned Boston Observer. If I were Gage I’d hang the printer of it and this young imp as well. Boy, you’re going to get a horsewhipping” (Forbes, 1943, p. 242).
- “If they want a war, we give it to ‘em. And they won’t pay taxes? We’ll collect in blood” (Forbes, 1943, p. 285).

Book Six: *King of the Wind* (1949)

*King of the Wind* was written by Marguerite Henry and was the recipient of the Newbery Medal award in 1949. This book was written about a stable boy by the name of Agba who readily and diligently accepted responsibility for a golden-red stallion by the name of Sham. Agba endured many hardships to ensure the safety and well-being of Sham as they traveled from the Sahara to France, and all of the way to England. The readers felt that the emergent moral theme of the story was that of loyalty and love, as the characters survived through the darkest moments in their lives due to their devotion to one another. The readers contended that this particular story should be reclassified as adolescent, as opposed to children’s literature, based on the content. Excerpts from this book, which serve to solidify this claim, will now be provided.

- The sultan was a fierce and bloodthirsty ruler. He thought nothing of ordering a thousand heads cut off to test the edge of a new saber. He thought nothing of commanding his soldiers to wipe out a whole village to test the power of his

muskets (Henry, 1948, p. 46).

- “Aside! You dog!” roared the carter as he struck Agba’s legs with the lash of his long whip. Agba jumped aside, his eyes never leaving the horse. He tried to make the little purling noises in his throat, but they would not come. No matter. This beaten creature could not be Sham (Henry, 1948, p. 85).
- But this day he ordered the logs laid higher and higher and he kicked Agba when the boy tried to interfere (Henry, 1948, p. 90).
- The carter’s temper was growing short. He laid the whip across Sham’s bony hips. He stood up and lashed it across the horse’s ears. He shouted and cursed (Henry, 1948, p. 91).
- Icicles were forming on Sham’s feelers, yet his body was wet with sweat. He backed up. He lowered his head, and as the whip struck him, he made a snatching pull. The load moved, and as if by some supernatural power Sham kept going up the incline. When almost at the top, however, his forefoot began slipping. He clawed with them. The whip snarled and cracked. It cut deep into his hide. Groaning, he tried again and again. His veins swelled to bursting (Henry, 1948, pp. 91-2).
- A great crowd had gathered and a collection of dogs began barking as the carter jerked the reins, trying to lift Sham up by sheer force. But he was caught fast between the shafts of the cart. His eyes were wild and white-ringed with fear, his mouth bleeding. (Henry, 1948, p. 92).

**Book Seven: ...*And Now Miguel* (1954)**

...*And Now Miguel* was written by Joseph Krungold and was the Newbery Medal

award recipient in 1954. This story was written about a boy by the name of Miguel, whose family embarks on a journey to the mountains every summer. Miguel has one goal in mind, and that is to join the Chavez men on their journey. When Miguel finally felt that he had proven his worth by locating and returning his family's lost sheep, he was shocked and dismayed to find that he was still not to be included in the trip. The readers felt that, although Miguel's actions were often self-serving and he did not always think before acting, he demonstrated the fact that, through hard work and determination, anything can be accomplished, which is the moral theme of the story. The readers contended that this particular book is suitable for young audiences. As such, excerpts from this story have not been included, as the story is not considered to be of questionable moral character.

Book Eight: *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* (1959)

*The Witch of Blackbird Pond* was written by Elizabeth Speare and was the recipient of the Newbery Medal award in 1959. This story was written about a girl by the name of Kit Tyler who was forced to leave her home in the Caribbean Islands to live with relatives in Connecticut Colony. Kit never felt as though she fit into the Puritan community to which she was relocated, and she befriended an elderly woman who was regarded as a witch by the community by virtue of the fact that she did not attend their religious services on Sundays. Kit saw the good nature of the elderly woman, and she sought to continue their friendship. The readers felt that the moral theme of the story included the importance of showing kindness and loyalty towards others. They also acknowledged the paramount nature of adapting to new circumstances and deferring judgment on others. The readers contended that this particular story should be reclassified

as adolescent, as opposed to children's literature, based on the content. Excerpts from this book, which serve to solidify this claim, will now be provided:

- When a thin whimper from the child was silenced by a vicious cuff, her anger boiled over (Speare, 1958, p. 8).
- "Scotch the witch out! Fire the house! Give us a light to search by!" (Speare, 1958, p. 187).
- "She's a witch! She's as good as admitted it!" "We don't need a jury trial. Put her to the water test!" "Hanging's too good for her!" (Speare, 1958, p. 215).
- Just south of Hadley, before they could reach Deerfield, they had been ambushed by Indians who attacked savagely with both arrows and French rifles. Four men had been killed outright and two others had died of wounds on the trail home. The rest had been surrounded and taken captive (Speare, 1958, p. 233).
- They had found the scalped body of one of the captives lying by the trail, and they had little hope that in that weather any of the prisoners would have been spared (Speare, 1958, p. 233).

Book Nine: *It's Like This, Cat* (1964)

*It's Like This, Cat* was written by Emily Neville and was the recipient of the Newbery Medal award in 1964. This story was written about a boy by the name of David Mitchell. David and his father often find themselves at odds with one another, and despite David's father's disdain towards cats, David brings a cat into their home as his personal pet. David's family demonstrates a great deal of compassion towards others throughout the story. David is a relatively independent young man, and he befriends outsiders and neighbors, with whom his father unfailingly bonds. David's father is short-tempered, yet



he seeks to aid others in any way possible. The readers felt that the emergent moral themes centered around the fact that, although there are many different types of families, the most important aspects of any relationship includes showing love, kindness, and caring for one another. The readers felt that this book was suitable for young audiences. As such, excerpts from this story have not been included, as the story is not considered to be of questionable moral character.

Book Ten: *The High King* (1969)

*The High King* was written by Lloyd Alexander and was the recipient of the Newbery Medal award in 1969. This story is symbolic of the ongoing war between good and evil. An assistant pig-keeper by the name of Taran and Prince Gwydian find themselves at war with Arawn, the Lord of the Land of Death. They fight to retrieve a powerful weapon from Arawn. The readers felt that moral theme of the story was that of loyalty, sacrifice, and the dichotomy between good and evil. The readers contended that this particular story is not appropriate for young or adolescent audiences. Excerpts from this book, which serve to solidify this claim, will now be provided.

- And those who stand against him – if Lord Arawn chooses to be merciful, he will slay them. His Huntsmen will drink their blood. The others will grovel in bondage forever (Alexander, 1968, p. 48).
- The mute Cauldron-Born did not falter in the storm of arrows. Though every shaft found its mark, the foe moved steadily onward, pausing only to rip the arrows from their unbleeding flesh. Their features showed neither pain nor anger, and no human cry, no shout of triumph, passed their lips. From Annvin they had journeyed as though from the grave, their task

only to bring death, unpitying, implacable as their own lifeless faces  
(Alexander, 1968, p. 127).

- The first of the pallid warriors was upon him. Grasping the flashing sword in his frail hands, the High King swung it downward in a sweeping blow. The warrior's blade turned it aside, and the Cauldron-Born struck heavily. King Math staggered and dropped to one knee. The mass of mute warriors pressed forward, their weapons thrusting and slashing. Taran covered his face with his hands and turned away weeping as Math Son of Mathonwy fell and the iron-shod boots of the Cauldron-Born pressed their relentless march over his lifeless body (Alexander, 1968, p. 128).
- Achren had clutched the serpent in both hands, as though to strangle or tear it asunder. The head of the snake darted toward her, the scaly body lashed like a whip, and the fangs sank deep into Achren's throat. With a cry she fell back. In an instant, the serpent coiled again; its eyes glittered with a cold, deadly flame. Hissing in rage, jaws gaping and fangs bared, the serpent shot forward, striking at Taran. Eilonwy screamed. Taran swung the flashing sword with all his strength. The blade clove the serpent in two (Alexander, 1968, p. 222).
- A horrified gasp came from Eilonwy. Taran looked up as the girl pointed to the cloven serpent. Its body writhed, its shape blurred. In its place appeared the black-cloaked figure of a man whose severed head had rolled face downward on the earth. Yet in a moment this shape too lost its form and the corpse sank like a shadow into the earth (Alexander, 1968, p. 222).

Book Eleven: *The Slave Dancer* (1974)

*The Slave Dancer* was written by Paula Fox and was the recipient of the Newbery Medal award in 1974. This story was written about the kidnapping of a 13-year-old boy by the name of Jessie Bollier. Jessie was forced to board a slave ship and play his fife for the captive slaves as they attempted to dance wearing shackles. The unfathomable violence to which Jessie, and subsequently the readers, bear witness is horrific. The readers felt that the moral theme was that of standing up for that which one knows to be right, even in the face of adversity. The readers stated that the book was beyond inhumane, and entirely inappropriate for children and adolescents. Excerpts from this book, which serve to solidify this claim, will now be provided.

- But he wants *them* in good health to make his profit. But God help the sick nigger for he'll drop him overboard between the brandy and the lighting of his pipe (Fox, 1973, p. 30).
- "For as everyone knows, our whole country is for the trade, in spite of the scoundrels who cry and fling themselves about at the fate of the *poor poor* black fellows. Poor indeed! Living in savagery and ignorance. Think on this – their own chiefs can't wait to throw them into our holds!" (Fox, 1973, p. 63).
- Our holds were pits of misery. Two men were found dead the second morning, and Stout dumped their bodies over the side as I dumped waste (Fox, 1973, p. 77).
- On our last morning, the little girl – the first to be brought aboard *The Moonlight* – was carried to the rail by Stout. He held her upside down, his fingers gripping one thin brown ankle. Her eyes were open, staring at nothing. Foam had dried

about her mouth. With one gesture, Stout flung her into the water (Fox, 1973, p. 78).

- I found a dreadful thing in my mind. I hated the slaves! I hated their shuffling, their howling, their very suffering. I hated the way they spat out their food upon the deck, the overflowing buckets, the emptying of which tried all my strength. I hated the foul stench that came from the holds no matter which way the wind blew, as though the ship itself were soaked with human excrement. I would have snatched the rope from Spark's hand and beaten them myself! Oh, God! I wished them all dead! Not to hear them! Not to smell them! Not to know of their existence! (Fox, 1973, p. 92).
- He fired at the black man whose back burst into fragments of flesh (Fox, 1973, p. 103).
- Now the slaves, aware of their mortal danger, sank down, piling themselves up on one another as though in this way they could protect themselves. They scratched the deck frantically as the seamen ran among them, grabbing them up and shoving them to the rail. I saw Cawthorne himself seize a small woman, lift her up and drop her into the sea. As he turned from the rail, three black men moved unsteadily toward him, flailing the air with their arms as though he were a wild animal. Cawthorne instantly drew his pistol and fired it directly into the face of one of the blacks (Fox, 1973, p. 144).

#### Book Twelve: *The Westing Game* (1979)

*The Westing Game* was written by Ellen Raskin and was the recipient of the Newbery Medal award in 1979. This story brings 16 people together to hear the reading

of the will of the rich Mr. Samuel W. Westing. The characters learned that they were eligible to participate in a game for which the final prize would equal the sum total of millions of dollars upon winning. The characters were commissioned to learn, and reveal the name, of a murderer. The readers determined that the moral theme of the story was to avoid allowing greed to cloud one's judgments, the importance of reconciling relationships with others, and to have compassion and loyalty towards others. The readers contended that this particular story should be reclassified as adolescent, as opposed to children's literature, based on the content. Excerpts from this book, which serve to solidify this claim, will now be provided.

- “Nobody’s seen him for years. Supposed to be living on a private island in the South Seas, he is; but most folks say he’s dead. Long-gone dead. They say his corpse is still up there in that big old house. They say his body is sprawled out on a fancy Oriental rug, and his flesh is rotting off those mean bones, and maggots are creeping in his eye sockets and crawling out his nose holes” (Raskin, 1978, pp. 6-7).
- “Otis Amber says that the old man Westing’s stinking corpse is rotting on an Oriental rug” (Raskin, 1978, p. 10).
- “And the worms are crawling in and out of the dead man’s skull, in and out of his ear holds, his nose holes, his mouth holes, in and out of all his holes” (Raskin, 1978, p. 14).
- Sandy shrugged. “It was common gossip at the time, that Westing’s daughter killed herself rather than have to marry that crooked politician” (Raskin, 1978, pp. 93-4).

- “On the afternoon of Halloween, when you were watching the smoke in the Westing house chimney, you told a story about a corpse on an Oriental rug” (Raskin, 1978, p. 162).

Book Thirteen: *Dear Mr. Henshaw* (1984)

*Dear Mr. Henshaw* was written by Beverly Cleary and was the recipient of the Newbery Medal award in 1984. The story was written about a sixth grade student by the name of Leigh Botts. Leigh’s parents are divorced, and he now lives with his mother. As the story unfolds, Leigh’s resentment towards his familial circumstances, coupled with turmoil regarding a school lunch thief, is revealed. Leigh chooses to vent his feelings by writing to his favorite author, Mr. Henshaw. The readers felt that the moral theme of the story was focused around the importance of relationships and believing in oneself. The readers agreed that this book is entirely appropriate for young audiences.

Book Fourteen: *Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices* (1989)

*Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices* was written by Paul Fleischman and was the recipient of the Newbery Medal award in 1989. This book of poetry was written in celebration of the world of insects. In truth, the readers did not agree upon a central moral theme, although they concurred that the anthology was a cute book that they enjoyed reading. The readers agreed that this book is entirely appropriate for young audiences. As such, excerpts from this story have not been included, as the story is not considered to be of questionable moral character.

Book Fifteen: *The Giver* (1994)

*The Giver* was written by Lois Lowry and was the recipient of the Newbery Medal award in 1994. This story was written about a boy by the name of Jonas who lives

in what is considered to be a “perfect” world, namely because the characters in the book are devoid of real emotions as well as the choice to determine their own roles in the community to which they belong. When Jonas is due to celebrate his twelfth birthday, he learns that he will become the replacement for the current “Giver.” This assignment means that Jonas will be solely responsible for keeping the painful and pleasurable memories from all of the members of his community. The readers felt that the moral theme of the story was that of compassion because Jonas took Gabriel away from the community. They also felt that the theme of the book encouraged readers to embrace the true emotions of life, no matter how difficult this endeavor may be. Moreover, the readers felt that the book may be used as a non-example for older students with a strong foundation in Christianity. The readers agreed that this book is inappropriate for children and adolescents. Excerpts from this book, which serve to solidify this claim, will now be provided.

- To his surprise, his father began very carefully to direct the needle into the top of the newchild’s forehead, puncturing the place where the fragile skin pulsed. The newborn squirmed, and wailed frantically (Lowry, 1993, p. 149).
- “I know, I know. It hurts, little guy. But I have to use a vein, and the veins in your arms are too teeny-weeny.” He pushed the plunger very slowly, injecting the liquid into the scalp vein until the syringe was empty. ‘All done. That wasn’t so bad, was it?’ Jonas heard his father say cheerfully (Lowry, 1993, pp. 149-50).
- “As he continued to watch, the newchild, no longer crying, moved his arms and legs in a jerking motion. Then he went limp. His head fell to the side, his eyes half open. Then he was still” (Lowry, 1993, p. 150).

- “He killed it! My father killed it! Jonas said to himself, stunned at what he was realizing” (Lowry, 1993, p. 150).
- “His father loaded the carton containing the body into the chute and gave it a shove. ‘Bye-bye, little guy,’ Jonas heard his father say before he left the room” (Lowry, 1993, pp. 150-1).
- “So,” Father went on, “we obviously had to make the decision. Even I voted for Gabriel’s release when we had the meeting this afternoon” (Lowry, 1993, p. 165).
- “It’s bye-bye to you, Gabe, in the morning,” Father had said, in his sweet, sing-song voice” (Lowry, 1993, p. 165).

Book Sixteen: *Holes* (1999)

*Holes* was written by Louis Sachar and was the recipient of the Newbery Medal award in 1999. This story was written about a boy by the name of Stanley Yelnats, who is falsely accused of committing a crime; subsequently, Stanley was forced to serve time at a juvenile detention center by the name of Camp Green Lake. Along with the other boys in the center, Stanley was required to spend each day digging holes five feet in width and depth. Stanley learns that the boys are compelled to dig these holes because there is treasure buried in the nearby vicinity. The readers felt that the moral theme of the story was that of goodness, patience, self-control, faithfulness, and loyalty. Stanley always told the truth and even accepted a severe punishment for a crime that he did not commit. The readers acknowledge many strong points of the literature; however, they contended that this book would be most suitable for an adolescent, as opposed to a children’s, audience. The readers felt that the story should be reclassified. Excerpts from the book, which serve to solidify this claim, will now be provided.



- The Warden jabbed at Armpit with her pitchfork, knocking him backward into the big hole. The pitchfork left three holes in the front of his shirt, and three tiny spots of blood. “You’re giving these boys too much water,” the Warden told Mr. Pendanski (Sachar, 1998, p. 78).
- Stanley turned to see Mr. Sir holding the boy’s head against the oatmeal pot. “Is something wrong with my face?” The boy tried to speak but couldn’t. Mr. Sir had him by the throat. “Does anyone see anything wrong with my face?” asked Mr. Sir, as he continued to choke the boy (Sachar, 1998, pp. 104-5).
- The Walker boat smashed into Sam’s boat. Sam was shot and killed in the water. Katherine Barlow was rescued against her wishes. When they returned to the shore, she saw Mary Lou’s body lying on the ground. The donkey had been shot in the head (Sachar, 1998, p. 115)
- Linda hit Kate on the back of her legs with the shovel. “You’re going to take us to it sooner or later. So you might as well make it sooner.” She walked one way, then the other, until her feet were black and blistered. Whenever she stopped, Linda whacked her with the shovel. “I’m losing my patience,” warned Trout. She felt the shove jab into her back, and she fell onto the hard dirt (Sachar, 1998, pp. 122-3).
- Stanley made a feeble attempt to punch Zigzag, then he felt a flurry of fists against his head and neck. Zigzag had hold of his collar with one hand and was hitting him with the other. The collar ripped and Stanley fell backward onto the dirt. “That’s enough!” Mr. Pendanski yelled. It wasn’t enough for Zigzag. He jumped on top of Stanley. “Stop!” shouted Mr. Pendanski. The side of Stanley’s

face was pressed flat against the dirt. He tried to protect himself, but Zigzag's fists slammed off his arms and pounded his face into the ground. All he could do was wait for it to be over (Sachar, 1998, p. 135).

Book Seventeen: *The Tale of Despereaux: Being the Story of a Mouse, Some Soup, and a Spool of Thread* (2004)

*The Tale of Despereaux* was written by Kate DiCamillo and was the recipient of the Newbery Medal award in 2005. This story was written about a mouse by the name of Despereaux who was born in a castle. Despereaux falls in love with the princess, who becomes endangered during the story. Despereaux finds himself unable to fit in with the world of mice. He is persecuted, and he sets his sights on rescuing the princess. The readers felt that the moral theme of the story was representative of love, the paramount nature of believing in oneself, and realizing that there are consequences for every action. The readers contended that this book would be most suitable for an adolescent, as opposed to a children's, audience. The readers felt that the story should be reclassified. Excerpts from the book, which serve to solidify this claim, will now be provided.

- “The meaning of life,” said Botticelli, “is suffering, specifically the suffering of others. Prisoners, for instance. Reducing a prisoner to weeping and wailing and begging is a delightful way to invest your existence with meaning” (Dicamillo, 2003, p. 89).
- “At that point, it is most effective to run back and forth over the prisoner's feet, inducing physical terror along with the emotional sort. Oh,” he said, “it is such a lovely game, such a lovely game! And it is just absolutely chock-full of meaning” (Dicamillo, 2003, p. 90).

- “I would like very much to torture a prisoner,” said Roscuro. ‘I would like to make someone suffer’” (Dicamillo, 2003, p. 90).
- The discussed clout to the ear was always delivered...delivered, I am afraid, with a great deal of enthusiasm on Uncle’s part and received with absolutely no enthusiasm at all on the part of Mig. These clouts were alarmingly frequent. And Uncle was scrupulously fair in paying attention to both the right and left side of Miggery Sow. So it was that after a time, the young Mig’s ears came to resemble not so much ears as pieces of cauliflower stuck to either side of her head. And they became about as useful to her as pieces of cauliflower. That is to say that they all but ceased their functioning as ears (Dicamillo, 2003, pp. 129-30).
- She was twelve years old. Her mother was dead. Her father had sold her. Her Uncle, who wasn’t her uncle at all, had clouted her until she was almost deaf (Dicamillo, 2003, p. 143).
- The Pea opened her eyes and saw Miggery Sow standing over her bed, a knife in one hand and a candle in the other. “Mig?” she said. “Gor,” said Mig softly. “Say it,” commanded Roscuro. Mig closed her eyes and shouted her piece. “If you does not want to get hurt, Princess, you must come with me” (Dicamillo, 2003, p. 189).

Book Eighteen: *The Graveyard Book* (2009)

*The Graveyard Book* was written by Neil Gaiman and was the recipient of the Newbery Medal award in 2009. This story was written about young boy who became known as “Nobody Owens” whose parents were brutally murdered. “Bod” was supposed to be murdered along with his parents; however, the murderer failed to locate him. Bod was raised in a graveyard by the undead. He was haunted and tormented by the Indigo

man, along with other evil forces. The original murderer spent his entire life attempting to locate and kill Bod. The readers felt that moral theme of the story is that of hate and revenge, in addition to a clear disdain for human life, as the author consistently repeated that the living cannot be trusted. The readers agreed that this book is not appropriate for children or adolescents and serves no literary purpose whatsoever. Excerpts from the book, which serve to solidify this claim, will now be provided.

- With his left hand he pulled a large white handkerchief from the pocket of his black coat, and with it he wiped off the knife and his gloved right hand which had been holding it; then he put the handkerchief away. The hunt was almost over. He had left the woman in her bed, the man on the bedroom floor, the older child in her brightly colored bedroom, surrounded by toys and half-finished models. That only left the little one, a babe barely a toddler, to take care of. One more thing and his task would be done (Gaiman, 2008, p. 7).
- One grave in every graveyard belongs to the ghouls. Wander any graveyard long enough and you will find it – waterstained and bulging, with cracked or broken stone, scraggly grass or rank weeds about it, and a feeling, when you reach it, of abandonment (Gaiman, 2008, p. 61).
- “Repeat after me, there are the living and the dead, there are day-folk and night-folk, there are ghouls and mist-walkers, there are the high hunters and the Hounds of God. Also, there are solitary types” (Gaiman, 2008, p. 71).
- The three faces staring into his could have been those of mummified humans, fleshless and dried, but their features were mobile and interested – mouths that grinned to reveal sharp, stained teeth; bright beady eyes; clawed fingers that

moved and tapped (Gaiman, 2008, p. 76).

- The three creatures bowed as one (Gaiman, 2008, p. 76).
- ““Teeth so strong they can crush any bones, and tongue sharp and long enough to lick the marrow from the deepest marrowbone or flay the flesh from a fat man’s face,” said the Emperor of China (Gaiman, 2008, p. 80).
- And all the ghouls were quiet for a bit, until they forgot about the thing in the desert, and began to sing ghoul-song, filled with foul words and worse sentiments, the most popular of which were simply lists of which rotting body parts were to be eaten, and in what order (Gaiman, 2008, p. 85).
- “The Saturday after they drowned and toasted me, a carpet was delivered to Master Porringer, all the way from London Town, and it was a fine carpet. But it turned out there was more in that carpet than strong wool and good weaving, for it carried the plague in its pattern, and by Monday five of them were coughing blood, and their skins were gone as black as mine when they hauled me from the fire. A week later and it had taken most of the village, and they threw the bodies all promiscuous in a plague pit they dug outside of the town, that they filled in after.” “Was everyone in the village killed?” She shrugged. “Everyone who watched me get drowned and burned” (Gaiman, 2008, pp. 111-12).
- She had not thought anyone human could move that silently through the dark, but a gloved hand closed upon her mouth, and a voice that was only barely recognizable as Mr. Frost’s said, without emotion, “Do anything clever – do anything at all – and I will cut your throat” (Gaiman, 2008, pp. 276-7).
- “Well,” said Bod, “haven’t you finally found the master you’ve been looking

for?” He could sense the Sleer writhing and expanding, hear a noise like the scratching of a thousand dead twigs, as if something huge and muscular were snaking its way around the inside of the chamber. And then, for the first time, Bod saw the Sleer. Afterwards, he was never able to describe what he had seen: something huge, yes; something with the body of an enormous snake, but with the head of a what...? There were three of them: three heads, three necks, the faces were dead, as if someone had constructed dolls from parts of the corpses of humans and of animals. The faces were covered in purple patterns, tattooed in swirls of indigo, turning the dead faces into strange, expressive monstrous things (Gaiman, 2008, pp. 282-3).

### Implications of the Study

Given the fact that the Newbery Medal award is bestowed upon the most highly regarded children’s literature, it is the researcher’s contention that the American Library Association must carefully examine the definition of the term “child.” Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary defines a child as: “A young person esp. between infancy and youth” (Merriam-Webster, 2003, p. 214) and “one strongly influenced by another or by a place or state of affairs” (Merriam-Webster, 2003, p. 214). Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary defines a child as: “Offspring born to a husband and wife in the marriage relationship. Jesus clearly expressed his love and respect for children (Mark 9:36-37). He used the innocence and openness of children to illustrate the attitude necessary for entering the KINGDOM OF GOD (Matt. 18:2-3)” (Youngblood et al., 1995, p. 259). A convergence of the secular and Christian definitions would assist one in realizing the obvious – a child is an innocent, impressionable gift from God. Why would

an organized institution, such as the American Library Association, frequently advocate literature that is not in alignment with the moral development and reasoning of children? The fact that the criteria by which “children’s” literature is judged specifically precludes the necessity of good character is most shocking!

### Recommended Categories

Throughout the course of the current study, it has been determined that, among the 18 Newbery Medal books examined, six were entirely appropriate for young audiences. Moreover, seven of the books proved to be of literary value; however, they were most appropriate and congruent with the moral growth characteristic of an adolescent audience. It saddens the researcher to report that five of the books examined were found to be inappropriate for children and/or adolescents, as the content and graphic nature of the books were not in alignment with the moral development and reasoning of the aforementioned age groups.

The researcher hereby formally requests that the American Library Association institute a second annual Newbery Medal award in efforts to acknowledge the variance in moral development between a child and an adolescent. It is the researcher’s hope that the American Library Association will, for all future intents and purposes, support the acknowledgement of two Newbery Medal awards per year – one for children’s literature (after carefully examining the documented definitions of the term “child” in conjunction with stages of moral development characteristic of this age group), and one for adolescent literature. A valid and earnest recommendation has been made. One cannot refute the fact that the excerpts that have been extracted from the Newbery Medal books in question are, in fact, extremely disconcerting. The question is: how will the American Library

Association respond? It is the researcher's hope that the American Library Association will be willing to truly reflect on the content of the current study and make the adjustments necessary to support positive moral growth among children.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

The researcher would like to suggest further examination of Newbery Medal and Newbery Honor books from a Biblical perspective. Christians are commissioned to look at the world through the lens of the Bible, as opposed to looking at the Bible through the lens of the world. The current study examined 18 Newbery Medal books from a Biblical perspective; however, 70 Newbery Medal books have yet to be examined through the lens of the Bible. Moreover, the researcher would like to suggest that a qualitative study be conducted in order to interview members of the American Library Association in efforts to gain insight regarding the literary recommendations and decisions that have been made regarding children's literature.



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