

# British Muslim Fictions?: Literary Merit, Political Commitment, and Pedagogical Possibilities.

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# Paper Structure



- Background
- Muslim Writers Awards
- My book's writers and reasons for their inclusion / recurring themes
- Pedagogical possibilities
- Conclusion: John Siddique poem

# Background

- Aims of research
  - to contextualize the authors' varied situations
  - to suggest ways in which the interviews contribute to current debates about culture, politics and education
  - to connect research to teaching in universities and schools
- Case study: Pakistan and its diaspora
- Methodology



# Muslim Writers Awards

## What is MWA?

- a not-for-profit company
- offers:
  - prestigious literary prizes:
    - Young Muslim Writers
    - Unpublished
    - Published (I was a Judge for 2009 Published Non-Fiction Category)
    - Journalism
  - outreach work in schools,
- Controversy around MWA, particularly around issue of 'censorship'





# Writers, Reasons for Inclusion, Recurring Themes

- Ahdaf Soueif  
(Cairo/London)
- Abdulrazak Gurnah  
(Zanzibar/Canterbury)
- Mohsin Hamid  
(Lahore/NY/London)
- Kamila Shamsie  
(Karachi/London)
- Robin Yassin-Kassab  
(Damascus/Dumfries)



# Pedagogical Possibilities

- 2009-10: Creative writing workshops in Year 9 classrooms
- 2009-: Arooj ('Acension' or 'Arising')
- 2013-: Kids' Own Publishing

# Making it up

**John Siddique**

Making it up

Fold yourself the mind you  
want.

Make a paper hat  
and wear it on your head.

Hold it tight  
when the wind blows.

Paint yourself the heart you  
desire. Pin it

on your jumper, be proud of  
your colours.

Pin it fast and don't mind the  
rain.

Write yourself the love  
you love. Hold that  
paper tight in your hand.  
Unfold it often,  
read your plan aloud in  
sun and in snow.

Walk yourself the world  
you want. Each step  
is breath. It's your life.  
Stamp big-footed.

Walk soft. Dance your  
way in all the weathers.