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Hey — When Did Pinocchio Become a Muslim?

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The Telegraph [London] reports that Islamic schools in Turkey are transforming characters from the Western literary canon into Muslims. Some of the books carry the crest of Turkey's ministry of education.

In the new version, Pinocchio makes this request of Geppetto: "Give me some bread, for Allah's sake." Later the puppet expresses appreciation: "Thanks be to Allah." You won't find that in the original version.

Other characters are similarly converted. Heidi, the Swiss orphan girl, is told to relax by praying to Allah. Most amazing is Tom Sawyer, who is praised for learning his Islamic prayers and is given a "special treat." No kidding. Before his conversion to Islam, Tom Sawyer was primarily known for mischief. I wonder if Becky Thatcher is now wearing a burkha?

Where will this end? What if Huckleberry Finn becomes a Buddhist? [*"Honest, Injun Joe, all I desire now is the absence of all desire. Honest"*] What if Aunt Polly becomes a Christian Scientist? [*"Don't worry about that gunshot dear, pain and illness are only illusions."*] What if Jiminy Cricket becomes a Zoroastrian? It would give "When You Wish Upon a Star" a whole new meaning.

The literature of the West acknowledges the existence of non-Christians. The literature of the Islamic world does not acknowledge the existence of non-Muslims in the same way. Pinocchio must convert. That is a distinction worth reflection.

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