

Australian Children's and Young Adult Literature: Gender, Prizing and Reviewing

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The industry for children's and young adult books represents a unique case in terms of the feminised gender composition of authors, reviewers, and prize-awarding associations, as well as other gatekeepers surrounding book consecration within schools such as teachers and librarians. Literature for young people is also a distinct in that it is the only category or genre which is written by one group of people (adults) for another group of people (children). Adults have sought to counter this obvious power differential in the world of prizing through the institution of prize categories judged by children or teenagers themselves. In this paper, I will discuss the gendering of children's book prizes and reviewing cultures in Australia through consideration of prizes such as the Children's Book Council of Australia Award for Young Adult Fiction and the teen-judged Inky Awards, as well as the reviewing cultures surrounding publications aimed at teachers and librarians including Magpies. I will share preliminary thoughts about how we might embark on a fuller exploration of gender imbalance in the book industry as it pertains to fiction for young people within Australia. There are potential synergies in exploring Australian practices comparatively with those of the German industry for several reasons, including the fact that both markets are somewhat isolated in terms of geography or language and must compete with the popular American and British texts that have a stranglehold on film and TV adaptations, which fuel sales of the novels and series on which they are based.

Speaker Bio

Dr Michelle Smith is a Senior Lecturer in Literary Studies at Monash University where she teaches children's literature. She is the author of three books, including *From Colonial to Modern: Transnational Girlhood in Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Children's Literature, 1840--1940* (U of Toronto P, 2018, with Clare Bradford and Kristine Moruzi) and *Empire in British Girls' Literature and Culture: Imperial Girls, 1880--1915* (Palgrave, 2011). She has also co-edited five books in the fields of children's and Victorian literature, the most recent of which is *Young Adult Gothic Fiction: Monstrous Selves/Monstrous Others* (U of Wales P, 2021). Co-edited projects in-progress include *The Edinburgh History of Children's Periodicals and Literary Cultures and Nineteenth-Century Childhoods* (Palgrave).

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