

# **Gender Imbalance in the Book Industry: Transnational Perspectives & Knowledge Exchange**

## **Report of Contributions**

Contribution ID: 1

Type: **not specified**

## Welcome Address

*Thursday, 24 November 2022 09:15 (15 minutes)*

Contribution ID: 2

Type: **not specified**

## Ten Years of the Stella Count: Some Reflections and New Findings

*Thursday, 24 November 2022 09:30 (30 minutes)*

This paper will offer an overview of the aims and achievements of, as well as some responses to, the Stella Count, which is an annual quantitative study of gender bias in Australia's 'Books' pages that was established in 2012. The Count now constitutes the single largest dataset of a nation's book reviewing field. This paper will explore what this kind of data can tell us about the shape of contemporary literary culture, presenting, for the first time, some new longitudinal statistics about what gets reviewed, and who reviews it, in Australia.

*Speaker Bio:*

Melinda Harvey is Program Coordinator of Literary Studies at Monash University, Australia. She is Lead CI, alongside Prof. Dr. Corinna Norrick-Rühl, on the DAAD-funded project 'Gender Imbalance in the Australian and German Book Industries'. She is a book critic of nearly 20 years, writing for Australia's major outlets, and - with Dr Julieanne Lamond (ANU) and nonprofit literary organisation Stella - produces the Stella Count.

**Primary author:** HARVEY, Melinda (Monash Universityq)

**Presenter:** HARVEY, Melinda (Monash Universityq)

Contribution ID: 3

Type: **not specified**

## Gender Equality in Contemporary Scottish Writing and Publishing

*Thursday, 24 November 2022 10:00 (30 minutes)*

The UK publishing industry has an equality problem. Recent research reveals systemic gender, ethnicity and class bias (Ramdarshan Bold 2021; Brook, O'Brien, and Taylor 2018; Saha and van Lente 2020; Marsden 2019). However, specific evidence is missing from the Scottish literary sector: while VIDA (2018, 2019, 2020) and the recent Ledbury Emerging Poetry Critics report have shown biases in UK reviewing, their work's scope does not include Scottish national newspapers; while Griffith (2015) has shown gender bias in UK and US literary awards, the dataset does not include Scottish awards; and although gender pay gap reporting in the UK showed stark average differences in pay between men and women "ranging from 11.3% to 29.69%" (Flood 2018), Scottish publishers were exempt from reporting as they comprise mostly small and medium enterprises (Ramdarshan Bold 2012). Focusing on gender, my doctoral thesis submitted in 2022 shows that Scotland is not exempt from inequality, despite ranking third in the world for female political empowerment (Paterson 2018). Drawing on my doctoral research, this brief presentation examines the quantifiable difference between men's literary sector output and that of women and non-binary people, using statistical analysis of gender distribution in publishing, reviewing, festivals (2017-2019) and prizes (1919-2021). Findings indicate continued gender inequality, with women and non-binary authors rarely exceeding 40% of authors published, reviewed, platformed or awarded with prizes.

### *Speaker Bio*

Edinburgh-based researcher, bookseller and writer Christina Neuwirth is the recipient of an AHRC/SGSAH Creative Economy Studentship, and recently submitted their thesis for a PhD in Publishing Studies at University of Stirling, University of Glasgow & Scottish Book Trust. Their fiction and non-fiction writing has been published in various anthologies, journals and magazines in the UK, and their debut novella *Amphiban* (Speculative Books) was published in 2018. [www.christinaneuwirth.com](http://www.christinaneuwirth.com)

**Primary author:** NEUWIRTH, Christina (University of Stirling)

**Presenter:** NEUWIRTH, Christina (University of Stirling)

Contribution ID: 4

Type: **not specified**

## Plans for a German diversity survey: challenges and perspectives

*Thursday, 24 November 2022 10:30 (30 minutes)*

Recent counts such as Frauenzählen and Vorschauenzählen have triggered an (overdue) process of reckoning with the gender imbalance in the German book industry. However, we lack reliable data on the make-up of the German book industry beyond these snapshots of gender imbalance. Other forms of diversity have not been studied whatsoever, though discussions surrounding e.g. the Prize of the Leipzig Book Fair (Preis der Leipziger Buchmesse) in 2021 have highlighted the whiteness of the German book industry.

Together with an interdisciplinary group of scholars in book, publishing and literary studies, we are planning to study the (lack of) diversity in the German book industry. One element will be to conduct a diversity survey inspired by the US “Lee and Low Diversity Baseline Survey”. This informal paper will outline the status quo and describe challenges and perspectives for this project.

*Speaker bio:*

Corinna Norrick-Rühl is Professor of Book Studies at the University of Münster (WWU), Germany. Her research interests revolve around book culture and publishing in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, with a special focus on mass-market formats. Recent publications are “Bookshelves in the Age of the COVID-19 Pandemic” (Palgrave 2022, co-edited with Shafquat Towheed) and “Book Clubs and Book Commerce” (Cambridge University Press 2019).

**Primary author:** NORRICK-RÜHL, Corinna (English Department, Chair of Book Studies)

**Presenter:** NORRICK-RÜHL, Corinna (English Department, Chair of Book Studies)

Contribution ID: 5

Type: **not specified**

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

Thursday, 24 November 2022 11:30 (30 minutes)

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).

**Primary author:** SMITH, Michelle (Monash University)

**Presenter:** SMITH, Michelle (Monash University)

Contribution ID: 6

Type: **not specified**

## Prizing Non-Citizenship Literature: Behrouz Boochani's "No Friend But The Mountains" and the Economy of Literary Nationalism

Thursday, 24 November 2022 12:00 (30 minutes)

Behrouz Boochani, a Kurdish-Iranian asylum seeker and writer, spent six years of his life on Manus Island (Papua New Guinea) held in an Australian detention centre against his will, as were many others. Boochani's memoir *No Friend But The Mountains*, typed out on a cell phone on Manus directly following the closure of the prison in 2017, received global media attention when published in 2018 (transl. Omid Tofghian). Boochani's text illuminates the necropolitical system that was employed against refugees on Manus. It has triggered widespread scholarly and public debate on offshore detention centres and asylum policies, even inspiring new fields of research such as "Manus Prison Theory" (e.g. Tofghian, 2020). Further Boochani, who never obtained Australian citizenship, received numerous literary prizes, including the prestigious Victorian Prize for Literature that normally is awarded exclusively to Australian nationals.

This paper is dedicated to the nexus of citizenship, literary prizes, literary nationalism, and the attention economy, focusing on the apparent transubstantiability of 'national culture' into different forms of 'access,' including access to media attention and 'cultural citizenship.' Gender also plays a role here, given the imbalance of attention that mostly has been allocated to Manus where single adult male refugees were detained, considerably more so than to the system on Nauru, where families, women and unaccompanied minors were forcibly relocated. As both the attention economy and the book industry have geared up to represent the abusive conditions experienced by refugees on Manus, it seems that the genderedness of experiencing detention – and, we might add, of representation – has tended to be an afterthought.

### Speaker Bio:

PD Dr Caroline Koegler is Senior Lecturer of British Literary and Cultural Studies at the University of Münster, Germany. Her research specializes in colonial and postcolonial studies, gender and queer studies, economic criticism, and long eighteenth-century literature, having appeared in journals such as *Interventions*, *International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, *NOVEL*, *A Forum on Fiction*, and *Women's Writing*. Caroline is co-author of *Are Books still 'Different'? Literature as Culture and Commodity in a Digital Age* (f/c with Cambridge University Press), author of *Critical Branding. Postcolonial Studies and the Market* (Routledge 2018), and co-editor of *Writing Brexit. Colonial Remains* (Routledge 2021) as well as *Locating African European Studies: Interventions-Intersections-Conversations* (Routledge 2020). Together with Corinna Norrick-Rühl and Petra Pohlmann, she is PI of "Literature and the Market", a subproject of Münster's Collaborative Research Center "Law and Literature".

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