

# **Big Books across Markets: From Bestsellers to Celebrity Authorship**

## **Reporte der Beiträge**

Beitrag ID: 1

Typ: nicht angegeben

## Memoirs, Megasellers and Markets

*Mittwoch, 17. Mai 2023 11:30 (1 Stunde)*

What makes a memoir move across languages and markets? More particularly, how does an English-language memoir become a bestseller in the German market? In this presentation we begin to parse out the different roles played by publishers and readers in producing bestselling memoirs in Germany by focussing on some recent high-volume sellers. Some, like Prince Harry's *Spare* (Random House 2023) and Michelle Obama's *The Light We Carry* (Crown 2022), have been published simultaneously in German and English, apparently in an effort to maximize audience reach in German-speaking countries. These memoirs exemplify a relatively new strategy adopted by German publishers which we will examine through one case study. Meanwhile, other best-selling memoirs, like Jeannette McCurdy's *I'm Glad My Mom Died* (Simon & Schuster 2022) and Baek Sehee's *I Want to Die but I Want to Eat Tteokbokki* (Bloomsbury 2022, translated into English from Korean) have become bestsellers in Germany in their English language versions prior to the publication of German translations (in May and March 2023). Can these successes be attributed to readers' involvement in online recommendation cultures? And how do readers, especially those who can read in German, respond to and talk about these books?

In this work-in-progress presentation, we will begin to make sense of the results emerging from our collaborative investigation into "Memoir Across Markets," in order to understand the various factors that "move" a memoir across languages, territories and platforms; and in order to interrogate how value is being brokered around the genre - and by whom.

### *Bios:*

Danielle Fuller is a Professor in the Department of English and Film Studies and an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Alberta, whose research focuses primarily on contemporary cultures of reading, Canadian literature and interdisciplinary research methods that combine textual and empirical modes of investigation.

Corinna Norrick-Rühl is Professor of Book Studies at the University of Muenster in Germany. In her research and teaching, she focuses on book culture, bookselling and publishing in the 20th and 21st centuries.

**Hauptautoren:** NORRICK-RÜHL, Corinna; Prof. FULLER, Danielle

**Vortragende:** NORRICK-RÜHL, Corinna; Prof. FULLER, Danielle

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## SF Genre Markets and Forms of Economic Organization: Questions of Representation and Economic Knowledge Generation

*Dienstag, 16. Mai 2023 14:15 (45 Minuten)*

My current book project examines the significance of contemporary science and speculative fictions to ideas about economic freedom and concepts of collective economic living. What work precisely do these fictions accomplish in these areas of knowledge? How do their forms, narrative techniques, rhetorics and discourses, as well as cultural functions and institutions relate to them? As the editors of *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and Economics* (2022) assert, how literary texts register the pressures of the literary marketplace—"the economic pressures to which they are most directly exposed"—presents one of the key ways in which they "offer singularly insightful cognizance of economic forms and processes" (Crosthwaite, Knight, and Marsh 3). I am curious in particular, then, about the relationship between the ways in which markets for science and speculative fictions have been organized since the postwar era and the treatments that different forms of economic organization have received in these fictions at the same time. Which pressures do these treatments register, and by which means?

### *Bio:*

A. Elisabeth Reichel is Assistant Professor of American Studies (Akademische Rätin a.Z.) at Osnabrück University. She is the author of *Writing Anthropologists, Sounding Primitives: The Poetry and Scholarship of Edward Sapir, Margaret Mead, and Ruth Benedict* (U of Nebraska P, 2021) and co-editor of *Boasian Aesthetics: American Poetry, Visual Culture, and Cultural Anthropology* (spec. issue of *Amerikastudien/American Studies*, 2018). Her forthcoming publications include the special issue *Posthuman Economies: Literary and Cultural Perspectives* (*Interconnections*, April 2023) and an article in *Book History* titled "Unmaidenly Labor: Helen Wright's Collection of Autographed Books, Literary Labor in the Modernist Market, and Edith Wharton," which is based on archival work conducted at Vassar College and seeks to advance the discussion of how literary studies and book studies scholars can do justice to an understanding of literary production as integrally involving forms of labor that have historically been undervalued. Together with Jennifer Wagner-Lawlor and Stephanie Peebles Taverna, she is co-editor of the journal *Utopian Studies* (Penn State UP).

**Hauptautor:** REICHEL, A. Elisabeth

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## Manufacturing Interracial Family Memoirs for the Post-Racial Market (1996-2016)

*Mittwoch, 17. Mai 2023 09:45 (45 Minuten)*

While the US Supreme Court decision *Loving v. Virginia* legalized interracial marriage in 1967, it was only in the 1990s that one could witness a broad paradigm shift toward the cultural legitimization of interracial kinship. Part of this cultural shift was the emergence of numerous autobiographical bestsellers that focused on experiences of interracial family life, ranging from James McBride's *The Color of Water* (1996) and Barack Obama's *Dreams from My Father* (1995/2004) to Bliss Broyard's *One Drop* (2008). Building on Julie Rak's research on the larger memoir boom since the 1990s, this paper subsumes these works under the umbrella term "interracial family memoirs" and unfolds their formulaic production in a market that capitalized on the fantasies of a post-racial America.

First, memoir is highlighted as a technology through which private individuals could assert interracial familial belonging in public. I identify and analyze a set of recurring autobiographical scripts and explain how interracial family memoirs consistently translate the previous taboo of "miscegenation" into the alleged fulfillment of civil religious mythology that celebrates "America" as a democratizing melting pot.

Second, I ask how the redemptive formula of the interracial family memoir is not only manufactured by a larger social desire for racial reconciliation, but also by the politics of specific publishing companies and, where applicable, their imprints. I track which publisher and imprint focused on what kind of memoir model, what kind of stories were actively recruited by agents, and what kind of stories were rejected to sell the idea of the interracial family as a unifying bridge across the historic color line.

### *Bio:*

Cedric Essi is post-doctoral scholar at the Collaborative Research Center "Law & Literature" (Osnabrück U) and associate editor of the journal *Amerikastudien / American Studies*. He graduated from the University of Würzburg, received his PhD in American Studies from FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg, and also taught at the University of Bremen. Essi's work focuses on Black studies, cultural legal studies, life writing, and queer studies.

**Hauptautor:** ESSI, Cedric

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## Big Books, Small Food: The Secret Role of Canapés in Publishing Success

*Dienstag, 16. Mai 2023 16:45 (1 h 15m)*

In our Cambridge Element, *The Frankfurt Book Fair and Bestseller Business* (2020), we theorised buzz as existing in “hard” and “soft” forms. Hard buzz, we argued, occurs in market-ready reports in the mainstream media. Soft buzz, on the other hand, exists in the form of partial, lived experience, frequently generated at convivial events. Movement between these two buzz states - for example from one-on-one rights sales meetings or an after-hours party into a trade press report or social media post - is indicative of how a business-to-business event such as the Buchmesse operates in generating big bookness.

In the work-in-progress we present in this paper, we will consider some of the ethical and social dimensions of buzz creation, as it happens at in-person events and online. We will also contemplate how buzz creation relates to the understanding and (lack of) researchability of global bestsellers, and the predicaments such research can produce. In so doing we will explore the role of small food (canapés) in forming publishing success, as well as considering the digital interventions of reading communities and AlgoBooks (bookish algorithms).

This paper will include an (as yet unwritten) musical number destined to go viral and become the go-to citation for all future scholarship on big books.

**Hauptautoren:** DRISCOLL, Beth; SQUIRES, Claire

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## Community Cookbook Crossovers: From Regional to Mainstream Markets (and Back Again)

*Dienstag, 16. Mai 2023 15:00 (45 Minuten)*

Beginning in the 1950s, the American market for cookbooks was transformed from one with a small number of all-purpose cookbooks to one overflowing with cookbooks competing for space on best-seller lists. In order to fulfill the demand for unique and inventive cookbooks, publishers began to buy the rights to community cookbooks: self-published fundraising cookbooks by women's associations. However, and as this talk will explore, although a crossover into nationally-distributed mainstream markets seemed to promise more visibility and therefore greater financial rewards for associations, community cookbook self-publishers were often more successful at marketing, selling, and creating long-lasting cookbook 'classics' than traditional publishers.

**Bio:**

Ellen Barth is a research associate and doctoral candidate the the University of Münster, Germany, and is currently writing her dissertation on American community cookbooks.

**Hauptautor:** BARTH, Ellen**Vortragende(r):** BARTH, Ellen

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## The Big Book that Wasn't: Caroline Calloway and the Influencer Book Deal

*Mittwoch, 17. Mai 2023 10:30 (45 Minuten)*

The Age of the Influencer has had a significant impact on the publishing industry, from the ubiquity of Bookstagram and BookTok, to celebrity book stylists and influencer book deals. The influencer book deal has become an established phenomenon, often accompanied by handsome advances and elaborate publicity campaigns. However, as Julie McCarron and Michele Matrisciani point out in the Publishers Weekly article "What's an Influencer Worth to Books?", follower counts don't always materialize in sales—and similarly, as we explore in this case study, the "influencer book deal" might not produce a book at all. Caroline Calloway, a now infamous internet personality who first shot to fame through an Instagram account chronicling her life as an American in Cambridge, netted a \$500,000 book deal with Macmillan in 2016 but failed, ultimately, to ever produce a book. However, rather than spelling the end of Calloway's literary career, this scandal seemed to signal a new era of bookish intrigue. In this presentation, we follow the story of a Big Book that Wasn't, drawing on Simone Murray's notion of performing authorship (*The Digital Literary Sphere*, 2018) to examine the wisdom or logics that underpin the influencer-publisher relationship.

### *Bios:*

Chandni Ananth is a research assistant at the SFB 1385 "Law and Literature" at the University of Münster, where she received an MA in National and Transnational Studies. Her research interests include contemporary book culture and publishing, post-digital print cultures, the global anglo-phone publishing field and Indian book history.

Nayantara Srinivasan is an M.A. student in the British, American and Postcolonial Studies programme at the University of Münster, specialising in Book Studies. She has previously worked in sales, foreign rights and editorial at a publishing house in India. Her research interests include contemporary publishing networks, bookselling, and digital book cultures.

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## **"Professional Make Believer": Colleen Hoover's Paratexts Across Markets**

*Dienstag, 16. Mai 2023 16:00 (45 Minuten)*

She calls herself a "Professional Make Believer": Colleen Hoover, best-selling author and literary phenomenon, is storming the best-seller lists world-wide. Hoover does not like "to be confined to one genre", and her books are published as romance, YA, thriller, women's fiction and paranormal romance, among others. Having achieved great success with self-publishing her first series, Hoover also does not commit to one publisher and has worked with Atria Books, Grand Central Publishing, Montlake Romance, and HarperCollins.

In this work-in-progress presentation on my MA thesis I am going to use Gérard Genette's theory on paratexts (with a focus on covers and blurbs) to examine how Hoover's books are branded in the United States compared to Germany.

*Bio:*

Lena Fleper is an M.A. student in the British, American and Postcolonial Studies programme at the University of Münster. Interested in translations and contemporary publishing, she is currently writing her MA thesis about the English and German paratexts of Colleen Hoover's books.

**Hauptautor:** FLEPER, Lena

**Vortragende(r):** FLEPER, Lena

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## Conclusions

*Mittwoch, 17. Mai 2023 12:30 (15 Minuten)*

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