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SPECIAL ISSUE: AND THE WINNER IS...? PRIZES AND AWARDS IN ARTS AND CULTURE

Guest Editors

Stevie Marsden

University of Leicester (UK)

Will Smith

University of Stirling (UK)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editorial

And the Winner is...? Prizes and Awards in Arts and Culture

Stevie Marsden, Will Smith

<https://doi.org/10.20897/jcasc/6353>

Research Articles

- 1 **The First Rule of Judging Club...: Inside the Saltire Society Literary Awards**
Stevie Marsden, Claire Squires
<https://doi.org/10.20897/jcasc/6354>
- 2 **Speculative Archiving of a Potential Future Literary Award: Embedded Publishing Studies Research**
Christina Neuwirth
<https://doi.org/10.20897/jcasc/6355>
- 3 **Popular Music and the State: The British Honours System and its Treatment of Popular Musicians**
Emma-Jayne Reekie
<https://doi.org/10.20897/jcasc/6356>
- 4 **'Has Anybody Heard of it?!?!': The Constable Trophy for Northern Writers and its Prize Environment**
Will Smith
<https://doi.org/10.20897/jcasc/6357>
- 5 **'You won't See Anyone Promoting a Bronze': Awards and Ambivalence Amongst Craft Gin Producers**
Thomas Thurnell-Read
<https://doi.org/10.20897/jcasc/6358>

Book Reviews

- 6 **Popular Music, Digital Technology and Society**
Sergio Sorcia Reyes
<https://doi.org/10.20897/jcasc/6359>
- 7 **Midlife Creativity and Identity: Life into Art**
Gavin Maclean
<https://doi.org/10.20897/jcasc/6360>
- 8 **What Is Cultural Translation?**
Kyle Conway
<https://doi.org/10.20897/jcasc/6361>



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Editorial

And the Winner is...? Prizes and Awards in Arts and Culture

Stevie Marsden ^{1*}, Will Smith ²

¹ *CAMEo Research Institute for Cultural and Media Economics, University of Leicester, UNITED KINGDOM*

² *University of Stirling, UNITED KINGDOM*

*Corresponding Author: stevie.marsden@leicester.ac.uk

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Keywords: awards, prizes, cultural industries, prize culture

INTRODUCTION

In a 2019 editorial for *The Bookseller*, the magazine's Deputy Editor, Benedicte Page, reflected on the joint awarding of that year's Booker Prize to Bernardine Evaristo and Margaret Atwood as another in a history of 'judging controversies' (Page, 2019). Cycles of commentary and response from industry figures and the media about the Booker judges' decision to break the prize's rule forbidding the splitting of the award (a rule instated in 1992 following a split award between Michael Ondaatje and Barry Unsworth) confirmed, Page argued, the Booker Prize as 'our most powerful literary award-controversies and all' (Page, 2019). Yet, while Page's silver-linings approach to the 2019 Booker Prize scandal focused on the controversy of a split award as good news for the industry, particularly booksellers who were 'delighted to have two Booker winners' (Page, 2019), it failed to acknowledge the imbalance of power and inequity of recognition that 'powerful' prizes like the Booker continue to instil. For many, the problem with the Booker being awarded to two writers was not the contravening of the prize's own rules, but the fact that the prize was split between Atwood, a white, internationally renowned, prior Booker winner, and Evaristo, one of only four black women to be shortlisted for the Booker in its fifty-one year history, and the only black woman to have won. Having Evaristo share what could have been a historic win with Atwood illustrated more than the fallibility of judging practices and the arbitrariness of selecting one 'best' book: it also revealed how the 'most powerful literary award' can wield that power in unfathomable and ultimately dissatisfying ways.

What was at the heart of the 2019 Booker Prize controversy was the underlying anxiety about what work a prize does. Gaby Wood, literary director of the Booker Prize Foundation, identifies the problem as 'the notion of judgement,' asking, 'is the conversation in the judging room actually the point, rather than the result?' (Sethi, 2019). Wood concludes that 'a prize like the Booker should be an investigation more than an act of judgement' (Sethi, 2019). Alongside this anxiety comes the direct question of what any particular prize itself is aiming to identify or 'investigate'. Bud McLintock, Director of the Costa Book Awards, issued guidance to the 2019 judges which set clear criteria that 'a 'Costa' book is a sparkling, eminently readable book with broad commercial appeal' (McLintock, 2019). Given that such candid discussions about the purpose or motivations of a prize are rarely debated in non-industry-focused public arenas (Wood was quoted in a trade magazine and McLintock's guidelines are an internal document written specifically for Costa judges), it would be fair to suggest that public consumption of prizes within culture more broadly aligns the purpose of a prize to the cultural product and work it celebrates. Certain prizes are viewed purely as *judgements* of the quality of a piece of work (e.g. Academy Awards), others are *investigations* into the ideologies of canon formation and value (e.g. Women's Prize for Fiction), and others aspire

for *discoveries* of unknown or under-recognized talent (e.g. Jhalek Prize for Book of the Year by a Writer of Colour). But, in all cases a prize serves to invoke the authority to intervene outside pre-existing market data which might demarcate a cultural product's value, such as sales. Ultimately, however, since prize decisions arrive without consistent means of public understanding of judging labour, there is always room for critique and controversy.

Such critique and controversy is easily co-opted into the cyclical logic of the prize when longer sustained attention is absent, or feels impossible given the consistent emergence of further prize controversies. In the past year, there has been a swathe of prize controversies across the cultural and creative industries, ranging from the sponsorship of prizes (The BP Portrait Award¹); the integrity of those recognised (The Nobel Laureate², The Palme d'Or³), and, as a result, the awarding institutions (Swedish Academy⁴); charges of nepotism (Pulitzer Prize for general nonfiction⁵); and the rescinding of awards (the Nelly Sachs prize⁶). Whilst these controversies fuel interest in such awards, they also hint at attempts to examine the broader logics and criteria of the recognition provided by cultural awards. They force us to ask questions about who is being awarded, why they are being celebrated, and whether they should be receiving awards at all. Yet, this generalised critique instigated by and located in the spectacle of controversy relies on public dissent, often fuelled by feverish, and oftentimes exaggerated, media commentary, and potentially narrows the possibilities for attending to the complex operations of a staggering number of cultural awards.

Despite the groundswell of scholarly approaches to prize culture, which provides a variety of methods for interrogating individual prizes (Griffith, 2015; Moeran, 2012; Roberts, 2011; Todd, 1996; Wu, 2002) and the interconnected network of awards and circulations of value (English, 2005; Squires, 2004), the work of and within cultural prizes continues to be a rich and dynamic area of critical examination. Yes, despite their influential role and placement within the cultural economy prizes remain markedly under-examined. Indeed, prizes and awards in arts and culture are staples of the cultural calendar. Every year there will be Oscars buzz, Booker speculation and Golden Globe predictions. Such prizes are spread throughout the year, so we need only wait a few weeks for another shortlist announcement or awards ceremony to feed our prize cravings.

And the Winner is...? Prizes and Awards in Arts and Culture

This special issue, 'And the Winner is...? Prizes and Awards in Arts and Culture', is the latest contribution to a field of academic examination which aims to understand the prevalence, impact and underlying principles of prizes in arts and culture. This issue emerged from a one-day research symposium hosted by CAMEo Research Institute for Cultural and Media Economics at the University of Leicester, which brought together an interdisciplinary group of scholars to share their research on cultural prizes. Anna Auguscik's opening keynote on the day, 'What is an award? Methods, Media, and the Man Booker Prize', pinpointed many important methodological questions around identifying and recording the rhythm, scope and scale of an individual award that would echo throughout the rest of the day. Indeed, what became clear over the course of the symposium, during which presenters discussed prizes for music, film, food and drink, and literature, is that while there are core similarities to prizes no matter what cultural endeavour they celebrate, there are also critical nuances which we need to understand in order to fully comprehend the wider ecosystem of prize-giving and receiving.

Accordingly, the articles gathered in this special issue take on quite different topics, but they all draw on core theorists who have become key figures in the field of prize culture analysis. The scholars in this special issue employ

¹ "Scottish Gallery to Pull BP Portrait Award Exhibition from 2020." *BBC News*, 11 Nov. 2019. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/50374910> (Accessed November 25, 2019)

² Oliver Moody, "Nobel Prize Goes to Writer Peter Handke Who 'Fuelled Ethnic Hatred'." *The Times*, 11 Oct. 2019. Available at: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/nobel-prize-goes-to-writer-peter-handke-who-fuelled-ethnic-hatred-f6xgr5bvc> (Accessed November 25, 2019)

³ Lucy Pavia, "Cannes Head Defends Honorary Palme D'Or for 'Sexist' Alain Delon." *Evening Standard*, 14 May 2019, <https://www.standard.co.uk/insider/alist/alain-delon-palme-dor-cannes-film-festival-controversy-a4141546.html>. (Accessed November 25, 2019)

⁴ Ron Charles, "The Swedish Academy Took a Year off to Fix the Nobel Prize in Literature. It's Still Broken." *The Washington Post*, 11 Oct. 2019. Available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/books/the-swedish-academy-took-a-year-off-to-fix-the-nobel-prize-in-literature-its-still-broken/2019/10/10/23f1b6da-eb7d-11e9-9306-47cb0324fd44_story.html (Accessed November 25, 2019)

⁵ Valerie Richardson, "Pulitzer Prize Administrator Defends Process after Prize Goes to Board Member's Wife." *The Washington Times*, 22 Apr. 2019. Available at: <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2019/apr/22/pulitzer-prize-administrator-defends-process-after/> (Accessed November 25, 2019)

⁶ Porter Anderson, "Kamila Shamsie's Rescinded Nelly Sachs Prize Fuels Criticism." *Publishing Perspectives*, 27 Sept. 2019. Available at: <https://publishingperspectives.com/2019/09/kamila-shamsie-rescinded-nelly-sachs-prize-fuels-criticism/> (Accessed November 25, 2019)

the research of James F. English, Claire Squires, John Street, Brian Moeran and Nicola Griffith to understand the ways in which prizes are imagined, created and allocated. Through examinations of nascent prizes, dead prizes, industry prizes and civic prizes, each article interrogates the politics of value within arts and cultural industries.

We open the issue with Stevie Marsden and Claire Squires. Marsden and Squires' work draws attention to the administration and judging of awards, and the critical issues that both roles encounter. Based on their experiences as an embedded PhD researcher and prize administrator (Marsden) and PhD supervisor and literary award judge (Squires) for the Saltire Society Literary Awards, Marsden and Squires use autoethnography to shed light on the inner workings of book prizes. Considering how change might be instigated by research findings and the evidence produced by debates on gender imbalance in Scottish literary award culture, authors examine the difficult duality of their roles and the seeming inevitability of their intersection. Christina Neuwirth expands upon these autoethnographic methodologies in the next article of this issue, examining her own complex role(s) as an embedded researcher within ROAR (Represent, Object, Advocate, Rewrite), a group working to combat inequality in Scottish writing and publishing. Neuwirth's affiliation with ROAR is part of her ongoing PhD research project analysing diversity in Scottish publishing and the efficacy of interventions, such as a new prize for Scottish women writers, to combat inequality. Neuwirth explores how her researcher-in-residence role means operating as a 'speculative archivist,' deciding which documents, conversations and statements merit inclusion in a prize archive yet-to-be. Her reflexive approach evaluates what sources prove most important in beginning the development of a prize.

Following this, Emma-Jayne Reekie focuses on civic honours, using a statistical framework to examine how the British Honours System has responded to the music industry. Set in the context of awards which broadly identify contributions to public life, and where a number of understandings of public value converge, Reekie outlines a change from proxy expressions of music's value, via economics, entertainment or charity, to a legitimisation of a cultural industry where individuals are now honoured for their 'services to music'. Reekie's paper illustrates how the monarchical and political institutional context of the British Honours System makes its engagement with popular music and exchanges of value uniquely complex. After Reekie, Will Smith considers the history of a now-defunct literature prize, the Constable Trophy, which, in collaboration with London publisher Constable, intervened to encourage the development of new writing by writers resident in the North of England. Smith draws comparisons to contemporary award initiatives to encourage regional diversity in British publishing, and the benefits of re-appraising the work of defunct prizes. Like Reekie, Smith demonstrates how piecing together a detailed history of an award, via the triangulation of data, such as archival records, contemporaneous media coverage, and, in Smith's case, interviews with those once involved with the award, not only facilitates a deeper understanding of how a prize functions or has functioned, but also illustrates the lasting impact of such awards and their influence on culture today.

Our final article, and the proverbial nightcap to this special issue, is Thomas Thurnell-Read's examination of prizes in craft gin production. Based on interviews with twenty gin producers from around the UK, Thurnell-Read's analysis reveals that, while the conferral and receiving of awards has become central to artisanal food and drink culture in recent years, there is a sense of unease towards such awards. The interviews reveal questions of legitimacy around industry prizes, particularly in terms of judging practices, prize originations and promotional influence.

James F. English notes that it is in 'the specific workings of prizes - their elaborate machineries of nomination and election, presentation and acceptance, sponsorship, publicity, and scandal' that the 'arrangements and relationships that have come to characterize the field' (English, 2005: 4) can be found. These machineries are often off-stage, outside of the media glare and opaque to consumers. Unacknowledged work of administration, organisation and criteria of eligibility orchestrates and supports the definition of what an award or prize is for, only tentatively erupting into the glare of scrutiny via the medium of scandal or controversy. As the articles in this special issue illustrate, examining the nuanced workings of cultural prizes - from their administration, influence and impact, to their (potential) creation and expiration - enables us to understand not only how prizes work within the context of prize culture, but also how they function within popular culture more broadly.

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The First Rule of Judging Club...: Inside the Saltire Society Literary Awards

Stevie Marsden ^{1*}, Claire Squires ²

¹ *CAMEo Research Institute for Cultural and Media Economies, University of Leicester, UNITED KINGDOM*

² *University of Stirling, UNITED KINGDOM*

*Corresponding Author: stevie.marsden@leicester.ac.uk

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ABSTRACT

Book awards are a pervasive aspect of contemporary book culture, attracting both substantial media and scholarly attention. They confer prestige, create marketing opportunities, push sales, and contribute to the early stages of canon formation. Yet, beyond occasional media splashes when judges break ranks and disagree, there is little insight into the administrative and decision-making processes inside book awards. This article draws on the autoethnographic experiences of two academic researchers, who were simultaneously participants (as administrator and judge) for the Saltire Society Literary Awards. In so doing, the article gives insight into particular moments within the administration and judging of the awards, such as changes instigated by research findings and debates surrounding gender imbalance in Scottish literary award culture. It also examines some of the challenges of operating as embedded researchers. The article analyses what autoethnographic methods can bring to an understanding of the Saltire Society's Literary Awards and other cultural awards, and the implications of embedded research and collaborative autoethnography for 21st century book culture scholarship more widely. It reflects upon modes of embedded research by making evident the challenges and dilemmas of researching from the 'inside'. The ethical framework for such research is far from simple, but in exploring particular moments with perspectives from both inside and outside the judging processes, and in interrogating the practices of literary consecration, the article casts light upon this particular 'judging club' and its practices, and illuminates ways in which researchers might consider, orientate, and carry out further research into processes of cultural consecration.

Keywords: literary awards, literary prizes, autoethnography, embedded research, Saltire Society, judging, cultural consecration, literary gatekeeping

INTRODUCTION

Book awards are a pervasive aspect of contemporary book culture, attracting substantial media and scholarly attention (Auguscik, 2017; Cain, 2018; English, 2004, 2005, 2013; Flood, 2017, 2018a, 2018b; O'Brien, 2017; Squires, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2007d, 2013; Roberts, 2011; Ramdarshan Bold and Norrick-Rühl, 2017). They confer prestige (English, 2005), generate marketing opportunities (Squires, 2007a), increase sales (*The Guardian*, 2012; Menon, 2013), and contribute to the early stages of canon formation (English, 2005: 154, 2005: 245; Corse, 1996: 101). Yet, beyond occasional media splashes when judges break ranks and disagree (Flood, 2011; Rahim 2012), there is little insight into the inner workings of administrative and decision-making processes of book awards. Discussions of award culture are, as Moeran suggests, largely 'second-hand reports on what actually goes on during the jurying process' (2012: 3). This article offers a different kind of account of literary award culture - that of the 'researcher-in-residence' and 'researcher undercover' - and draws upon substantial participant observation and

autoethnography of the Saltire Society and its series of Literary Awards from 2011-2015. The authors of this article were 'inside' the awards, an opportunity rarely afforded to either scholarly or journalistic accounts of literary prizes, thereby offering significant insight into a particular example of literary gatekeeping. It takes a micro-analytical approach deriving from its deep immersion in one particular set of awards, but draws on selected comparative evidence to show how the Saltire Society Literary Awards may be similar to or diverge from other book prizes.

Founded in 1936, the Saltire Society is a cultural charity which seeks to 'preserve all that is best in Scottish tradition and to encourage new developments which can strengthen and enrich the country's cultural life' (Saltire Society, 2016). To achieve this aim, the Society administers awards for art, civil engineering and heritage, as well as its Literary Awards. By 2018, there were six Literary Award categories: Fiction, Non-Fiction, First Book (established 1988), History (established 1965), Poetry (established 2014) and Research (established 1998). Between 1982-2015, all fiction, non-fiction and poetry books were considered for the Book of the Year Award (established 1982), but since 2015 these have been judged in their respective categories, with an 'overall' winner selected from the six categories. To be eligible for the Society's Literary Awards, a book must be written by 'a living author of Scottish descent or residing in Scotland' or deal with 'the work or life of a Scot - or a Scottish question, event or situation' (Saltire Society, 2014).

The Saltire Society is a small, Edinburgh-based organisation, with a membership base from across Scotland and beyond. During the period under consideration in this article, the Society was staffed by an Executive Director, a Programme Manager and, at times, an Events Assistant, in addition to the role undertaken by Stevie Marsden, as described below. An external PR agency was taken on during some of the years under consideration, to promote the Society's awards in the media. The Society's Literary Award judges were generally selected on recommendation of existing judges, with turnover largely operating on a one-in-one-out system. Although terms of office were discussed by the Society (both by administrators and judges themselves), ever since the Literary Awards panel was instated in 1982, many of the judges served substantial periods, with the longest panel member serving for over 34 years (despite the Society's other awards panels adhering to strict terms of office ranging from three to five years). While this is unusual practice for many literary awards – the Man Booker, Women's Prize for Fiction and Costa Book Awards have new judging panels each year, for example – there are some prizes, such as the Nobel Prize in Literature (selected by the Swedish Academy whose members are elected for life), and the Prix Goncourt in France (which stipulates that 'jury members be selected by their peers and elected to the Académie Goncourt for life' (Pickford, 2011: 227)) that have long terms of service for judges. Due to its evidence base, this article does not compare the practices of an 'academy-style', long-serving set of judges, to those who are appointed each year, although the long-serving nature of the Society's judges forms part of the discussion. During the time we were involved, judges were not paid for their labour, but travel and subsistence expenses incurred whilst completing judging duties (such as attending panel meetings and events) were covered by the Society.

Our respective roles as judge and administrator provided unparalleled access to the operations of the Society's Literary Awards. This access and insider perspective – made possible through our respective roles as a Literary Award judge (2011–2014) and through completion of an Arts and Humanities Research Council Collaborative Doctoral Award (AHRC CDA) with the Society (2012–2016) – allowed unique insight into the operations of a literary and cultural institution and its production of literary value. (The purpose of AHRC CDAs was to give doctoral researchers 'first hand professional experience outside the university environment' and to 'encourage and establish longer-term links between the partners [university and organisation] that can have benefits for both' (AHRC, 2015: 3)). Through an analysis of key moments experienced during our time working with the Society, this article examines the Awards within the broader thematic contexts of literary award culture. These contexts include the fallibility of processes of judgement (Moeran, 2012), the allocation and power dynamics of cultural value (Belfiore, 2018), and gender disparity in award culture (Demoor et al, 2008; Griffith, 2015; Marsden, 2019). Furthermore, this article reflects upon embedded research (via schemes including the AHRC CDA), the opportunities and challenges it brings to bear on data collection and analysis, and the ethical framework of such intertwined partnerships. Using the Saltire Society Literary Awards as a case study, this article demonstrates how autoethnographic methods can contribute to the study of book awards and book culture more generally.

STRUCTURE AND APPROACH

This article is structured so as to foreground the experiences of its two authors, using Finlay's articulation of the role of 'qualitative researchers' who are 'engaged in contemporary practice, [where...] the researcher is a central figure who influences, if not actively constructs, the collection, selection and interruption of data.' (Finlay, 2002: 212).

Both authors had roles in the 'collection, selection and interruption of the data' discussed in this article: Claire as judge and doctoral supervisor, and Stevie as an administrator of the awards and doctoral researcher. Following Finlay, we 'recognize that research is co-constituted' and a 'joint product of participants, researcher and their

relationship' (Finlay, 2002: 212), and thus the purpose of this article is to examine our experience of those roles and the impact they had on our research and work at the Society.

Our methodological approach is autoethnographic. Using fieldnotes, reminiscences and contemporaneous documentation, we consider particular moments which occurred between 2011-2016 and contextualise these in relation to key themes. We approach autoethnography through Chang's assertion that it 'combines cultural analysis and interpretation with narrative details' (Chang, 2008: 46). Moreover, our analysis aligns with Chang's term 'collaborative autoethnography' which sees 'the collaborating researchers interact dialogically to analyse and interpret the collection of autobiographic data' (Chang, 2013, cited by Lapadat, 2017: 598).

Much scholarship details the nuances and complexities of autoethnography as a research method (Bochner, 1997; Bruner, 1993; Denzin, 1989; Ellis and Bochner, 2000; Freeman, 2004) and considers its advantages and limitations (Denzin, Lincoln & Smith, 2000; Méndez, 2013). While it is not the purpose of this article to discuss these accounts in detail, such scholarship underpins our study. Of particular use to us is the work of Barton, who has explored the ethical dilemmas inherent in autoethnographic work (Barton, 2011). Existing autoethnographic approaches to publishing and literary culture (Radway, 2000; Wulff, 2017) have set a precedent for our analysis, with Moeran's article 'How to Award a Prize: An Ethnography of a Juried Ceramic Art Exhibition in Japan' making a key intervention to the field of ethnography and award culture, in its opening up of the 'black box for scholars', of 'how prizes are allocated' (Moeran, 2012: 3).

Alongside archival records, transcripts of interviews and judging meetings, this article combines fieldnotes from 2011-16 with reflective analysis, prompted either by fieldnotes or the recollection of significant events. As Coffey argues, memory is an imperative and valid resource for the ethnographer:

Our memories are what enable us to reflect upon and locate our fieldwork experiences (...) ethnography is in itself an act of collective and individual memories. Texts of the field are constructed from data that are the memorabilia of fieldwork (Coffey, 1999: 110).

Our co-writing assumes a shared first-person plural voice throughout, although we also refer to ourselves in the third person ('Claire', 'Stevie') when describing our roles (all other individuals are anonymised). In italicised first person singular reflective notes, we present the 'narrative details' (Chang, 2013) of our individual experiences. The subsequent sections of this article, *Multiplying Roles*, *Instigating Change*, and *Gender and Judging*, detail how we navigated our roles within the Society, illustrate how we used our knowledge and experience to make recommendations and enact change, and contextualise our observations and research in relation to the issue of gender in award culture.

MULTIPLYING ROLES

Claire was invited to become a judge for the Saltire Society Literary Awards in 2011, after recommendation for the role by a former judge. Claire described her initial involvement:

I'd gone to visit [the CEO of Publishing Scotland] in her office. I'd just moved to Scotland, and I was doing a round of introducing myself to people. She mentioned that she was a judge for the prizes and my literary prize antenna definitely twitched.

The role of judge involved reading nominated books, participating in judging meetings, and attending and speaking at the announcement events. Claire accepted the invitation to judge, though with some concerns about the amount of reading it would entail, as well as the open-ended nature of the role (as previously noted, there was no formalised system for terms of office for the Society's Literary Awards panel and no term of office was discussed during Claire's appointment, although she recalled in her reflective notes thinking she would serve for three years, but eventually served for four). However, she thought joining the panel would be a good opportunity to read across the output of contemporary Scottish authors and publishers, and see in practice how literary award culture functioned, since this was an area in which Claire had published extensively (see Squires, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2007d; Wischenbart et al., 2010). Until 2013, Claire and her fellow judges would read all books submitted for the Book of the Year and the First Book (including fiction, non-fiction and poetry).¹ However, in 2013 the Society instituted a new system which partnered judges with one or two others. Submitted titles were divided among each

¹ The Saltire Society Literary Award judges would have had to read anything from 70 to over 100 books each year for the award categories they were judging (although when the pairing system was introduced, this lowered the number of books each judge had to read). The number of books submitted for literary awards generally can vary. When the novelist Val McDermid was a member of the Man Booker judging panel in 2018, she noted that 171 books were submitted for the prize (McDermid, 2018). Kate Williams, chair of the Women's Prize in 2019, commented that she had over 170 titles to read. (Williams, 2019). Alternatively, the chair of the inaugural Jhalak Prize for British or British-resident BAME writers, Sunny Singh, lamented that they had only received 51 submissions for the prize (Cain, 2016).

pairing/group, with the pairing deciding which books from their selection to put forward for the whole panel to read. Claire thus had experience of both judging processes, as discussed in more detail in the next section.

Uniting her post as Professor of Publishing Studies at the University of Stirling, and judging role with the Society, Claire developed a proposal for an AHRC CDA project in 2011 (Squires, 2011). Through this project, the Society would gain a kind of 'researcher-in-residence' who was dedicated to formulating a history of its Literary Awards, as well as becoming involved in their administration. The researcher would be given privileged access to internal documents, communications and staff, as well as being an observing participant of the management of the awards. Stevie was selected as the student to undertake the CDA, from October 2012.

Stevie approached the researcher-in-residence format of the PhD with an understanding of the two distinct roles she would be performing: doctoral researcher and awards administrator. The latter role would include ensuring the terms of eligibility for the awards were up-to-date and that entries conformed to them (e.g. publication date, entry into the appropriate category), corresponding with publishers, ensuring publishers had submitted books, and arranging and minuting judging meetings. From the beginning, Stevie approached this work as if it were inseparable from her role as doctoral researcher, believing that the two would, and were expected to, intermingle. In the CDA application, it was made clear that the embeddedness of the researcher was intended to contribute to their overall understanding of the awards, with one of the project's objectives being 'establishing a history of the awards (...) via archival research, interviews, observation and participant observation, and contextual study' (Squires, 2011).

When starting her research, Stevie's understanding of participant observation came via Kawulich's description of a 'process enabling researchers to learn about the activities of the people under study in the natural setting through observing and participating in those activities' (2005: 2). However, when writing reflective notes for this article, Stevie wondered whether the intermingling of her roles was in fact the best approach to take:

I perhaps did not consider fully the nuances of this dualistic undertaking, nor did I think about the complexities of the research methods I would be using. On reflection, I realise that I was unprepared for the fact that, at times, it would be difficult to negotiate my two different roles. My roles often required different approaches and priorities to the extent that effective fulfilment of one role could impede the other. For example, I usually had a working role during the Society's awards ceremonies: I would be welcoming guests and handing out goody bags and making sure the judges were ready to make announcements. Such events would likely have been excellent opportunities to gather data but I approached them as an administrator who was trying to make the event run smoothly.

I was an embedded researcher, but I was also a colleague and, eventually friend, to the people I worked with. Even though my colleagues at the Society were aware of my role as a researcher and were perhaps slightly reticent at first because of this, over the years they became more comfortable with me, eventually seeing me, I believe, as a colleague first and researcher second (...) I therefore felt an enduring discomfort regarding the intermingling of my roles.

Claire was similarly positioned between two roles as judge and as Stevie's PhD supervisor. As she commented in her notes:

This dual role put me in a position where I was an active participant in the processes that Stevie was researching. I was therefore included in her set of semi-structured interviews, was one of the voices captured in her recordings of meetings, and a participant in her field notes.

Although the other judges and Society staff were obviously aware of my role as Stevie's supervisor, and to a degree of my research interest in literary prizes I think - other than in the most practical terms vis-a-vis my relationship to Stevie - they largely viewed me as a fellow judge. In some ways I suppose I was a researcher under cover - I hadn't intended to use my experience to write about the awards, and the CDA was the academic output I anticipated from my relationship with the Society. However, I found it impossible not to bring my knowledge of other awards, my understanding of their role in the marketing and circulation of books, and my sense, underpinned by that knowledge and understanding, of how cultural award decisions were made, to my thought processes and actions as judge.

The intermingled and multiplying roles of researcher and participant that we both encountered are further explored in the next section, which examines the ways in which we used our knowledge and relationships to instigate change.

INSTIGATING CHANGE

The AHRC CDA project came at a significant moment in the recent history of the Saltire Society. In 2010 the Society commissioned a strategic review in order to assess its purpose (Whitekirk, 2011). The review affirmed that the Society was relevant and an important part of Scotland's cultural environment, but that it should reconsider its governance and identity. This conclusion led to the appointment of an Executive Director in 2012. The CDA project, therefore, began at a time of upheaval, but also opportunity for the Society to use Stevie's research, communicated formally via internal reports, to inform changes to the administration of the Literary Awards.

One of the first issues the Executive Director asked Stevie to investigate was whether the introduction of e-readers would help judges and award administrators. As well as pricing e-readers, exploring file formats and methods of delivering e-books to devices, Stevie contacted other literary award administrators to see if they used e-readers, and whether their implementation had been a productive addition to award management. When contacting other award administrators Stevie used her Society email address, believing that awards administrators would be more likely to discuss their practices with a fellow administrator than a doctoral researcher. The report (Marsden, 2013) led to the introduction of e-readers for the judges and a conference paper on whether judging was altered by e-reading (Marsden, 2014a).

However, there were times when the separation of Stevie's roles was not as clear cut. In 2013 Stevie was considering how the awards were perceived by readers, booksellers, publishers and authors, both in terms of prestige (a key research question for her doctoral research) and their marketability. This became a leading question for two reasons. Firstly, after conducting interviews with publishers and authors, Stevie realised there was confusion between the various award categories. Secondly, she thought that the confusion surrounding the awards was having a negative impact on their effective promotion. Prompted by the foundation of the Poetry Book award in 2014, Stevie completed research into how other multi-category awards (such as the Costa Book Awards) functioned, and wrote a report recommending that the Society reconsider the structure of its Literary Awards (Marsden, 2014b). This report provided evidence for change to the structure of the awards which was taken to the Executive Board and, since 2014 (with further developments in 2015 and 2018), was implemented.²

Another change introduced while Stevie was working at the Society was the introduction of the 'pairing' system for judges described earlier. The Society was conscious that the onerous level of reading made it difficult to recruit new judges, and so, following discussion with Stevie, the Society introduced pairing. Instead of reading 70-100+ books, judges read around twenty and selected about three or four from their assigned nominations for all judges to read. At the time, Stevie realised this system was imperfect but felt it was the most reasonable way of managing the reading load, whilst ensuring every book was read and discussed by some members of the panel, as she explains:

At the time I was thinking about this more from a logistical point of view and less from a critical point of view. If I had read about this system being implemented for another literary award, I probably would have questioned its legitimacy. I'd always been slightly uncomfortable with the fact that only two or three judges on the panel could read Gaelic and so it was up to them alone to compare Gaelic entries to books in English or Scots and convince their fellow judges of their literary merit (or not, as the case may be), and yet, here I was arguing for the implementation of a system that exacerbated this problem. I knew it was not a perfect solution, however, by this point I also knew that the awards were inherently imperfect beasts, created and managed over the years by individuals who were passionate about Scottish literature, but inconsistent in their administration. As a result, I started to believe that imperfect, compromised change was better than no change at all.

However, despite her initial concerns about the reading load, Claire's notes explained that she found the pairing process problematic:

I wasn't particularly happy with the decision to pair us up and split the books between us. I worried that this meant some books would be taken out of consideration by some pairs (I felt this specifically happened to one). There was also the instance, due to administrative error, of one book going to two pairs. My partner and I didn't rate it at all, and wouldn't have put it forward, but the other pair who received it really liked it, and put it through. This, in itself, showed a flaw in the system, and – to my mind – undermined quality processes within the prize.

² While Stevie contacted other literary award bodies to ask about their administrative practices and used other awards as comparative examples when proposing changes, the Saltire Society's Literary Awards were rarely discussed or considered in terms of their status or role within the wider ecosystem of literary awards. Neither Stevie nor Claire recall the Society's administration or Literary Awards judges considering the Awards' reputation in relation to other book prizes, but do recall a focus on how the Saltire Society Literary Awards were perceived within Scottish literary culture, with the Society commonly positioning the awards as 'Scotland's most prestigious literary awards'.

Examples such as the pairing of judges and the restructuring of the awards demonstrate how Stevie's role as a researcher-in-residence at the Society had practical, if ultimately imperfect, consequences. Indeed, Stevie was aware of the almost symbiotic relationship between her roles and believes they were demonstrative of Gale and Wyatt's description of collaborative writing and reflexivity: '[w]here we write becomes what we write [and] what we write becomes where we write' (Gale and Wyatt, 2010: 10). However, in retrospect, Stevie recognises how her two roles affected her approach to her research:

My experience with the Society felt unique in terms of a PhD project, since I was able to consider my research in context and make tangible changes to the administration of the awards. Part of the purpose of my doctoral research was to construct a comprehensive history of the awards and their originations and much of this was done through examination of archives at the National Library of Scotland. But, although I spent many hours alone in the library sifting through box files, I never felt as though I was completing my work in an academic vacuum. Instead, through these internal reports and recommendations I felt like I was part of the greater narrative of the Society's history. In other words, I was piecing together a history that I was also helping to shape in the present. However, even though I was happy that my research into the use of e-readers and multi-category awards led to (what I believed to be) beneficial changes to the administration of the awards, I think the introduction of the pairing system for judges is an example of my role as an administrator taking over.

Claire's role as a judge, unlike Stevie's, was not configured to instigate change (although her role as doctoral supervisor meant she advised Stevie). Nonetheless, there were various ways in which she acted in order to foster transitions in the awards' processes while she was a judge, including in the quantitatively-oriented approach to decision-making. As Claire details, these prompts to change came in part from her research knowledge of the judging and administration of literary awards, which led to a feeling of dissatisfaction in some meetings:

By my second year, I was finding the processes for deciding on the shortlist and winner frustrating (we decided on the winner at the same time as the shortlist – it was effectively the top ranked book). After some time discussing the (private) longlist of titles, the chair of the judges moved us to a vote. We were asked to rank each title – I think we'd got it down to 8 or 9, and had to give each one a score. I didn't like this process, but it very much seemed to be what the others were used to doing. We wrote them on pieces of paper, and the scores were totted up. We then dropped some books off the bottom in order to make the shortlist. I was really frustrated by this. The book I ranked the highest had dropped off the list.

There was no real discussion about how the books had been ranked, and about whether it meant that books which were consensus choices made it onto the shortlist by getting 5s and 6s, rather than a book which one person had ranked really highly, but others seemed to dislike. The process of the ranking was done secretly. I thought this was odd – surely we should be willing to express our opinions? It also meant that whichever book was sitting at the top of the rankings would then become the winner, without any further discussion. This also seemed odd, and didn't seem to work like any other prize I was aware of, where the shortlist decision was made, followed by (some time later) a decision about the winner (allowing time for re-reading). I tried – as far as I remember – to make some semblance of protest, but to no avail.

In her notes, Claire went on to detail how she created a spreadsheet (**Figure 1**) for that year's post-awards meeting. The spreadsheet, she recalled, included figures she had scribbled down, but as she had not managed to capture them all they were 'half real, half made up':

My point, anyway, was to show that numbers weren't objective, and that you needed to decide how you were using numbers in order to have them as part of the judging process. I was urging us to be more discursive in our decisions, and use numbers (if we used them at all) only as a guide.

In so doing, she disputed the seeming clarity of using a quantitative approach to prize decision-making, similar to Moeran's exploration (2012) of the challenge of *which* numbers should be used. In the spreadsheet, Claire detailed a scenario in which Judges 1-6 ranked and scored nine titles (A-I), with nine being the highest individual score. The top half of the spreadsheet detailed how one title (H) was highest ranked by Judge 4, but would have dropped out of the shortlist of six (which would produce a shortlist of books A-F, with book A the top-scored book overall). Claire used the lower part of the spreadsheet to detail how this ranking changed if the four lowest marks (scoring 1-4) were taken away from each book, in order to prioritise books which individual judges had ranked highly. Doing this would produce a slightly different shortlist, with books A, B, C, D, E and G in the top six (dropping book F), with books A and D being jointly ranked first.

Book of the Year Award										
NB individual judging patterns are not actual judges										
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	
J1	9	8	8	7	4	6	5	3	2	9
J2	9	8	2	1	7	5	4	3	6	8
J3	8	9	6	1	7	3	2	4	5	7
J4	5	5	7	3	2	6	1	9	4	
J5	8	1	4	9	7	3	6	2	1	
J6	6	5	7	9	1	4	8	3	2	
	45	36	34	30	28	27	26	24	20	
Take away lowest four marks										
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	
J1		9	8	8			6			
J2		9				7				6
J3			9			7			4	5
J4							6		9	
J5					9			6		
J6				7	9			8		
	18	17	15	18	14	12	14	13	11	
	1=	3	4	1=	5=	8	5=	7	9	

Figure 1. Claire's spreadsheet prepared for the post-awards meeting, where J1-6 are judges, and A-I are books. The highest ranked score is 9

In her desire for a more discursive approach to decision-making, and also to separate out the shortlisting and final decisions, Claire attempted to use the spreadsheet to show her fellow judges the variability of quantitative approaches. Indeed, in the subsequent years that Claire remained as a judge, the panel stopped using the voting system as the final decision-making mechanism, and the winner was decided at a later meeting. Claire articulated that "I felt slightly less frustrated as a consequence, but at the same time still didn't feel like we spent long enough discussing the titles under consideration, with a lot of store set by authors who were already highly acclaimed (ie a new [title by a highly acclaimed male author] would make it almost automatically onto the longlist)." Examples of Claire's frustration are evident in Stevie's fieldnotes and judging meeting transcripts. In one instance, the chair of the judges stated that the panel needed 'to proceed towards resolution', by means either of 'verbally knock[ing] out two of the three and be left with one survivor, or we can secretly ballot' (Marsden, 2014c). Claire responded that 'I honestly haven't made my mind up about these so I'd find it quite hard actually to vote, so I need to have more discussion.' A third judge commented, 'More discussion', followed by another saying that 'Yeah I think some discussion would be good' (Marsden, 2014c).

Nonetheless, in this meeting, the chair continued to discuss a voting system (the 'classic thing'), which led Claire to state that a judge could game the system by voting 'a little bit strategically' to get 'the title you want to win, to win'. A fourth judge then commented that, 'even now I'm not sure which I would put first', to which Claire responded 'that's what we've got to get to discursively, so everybody knows what they want...'. The third judge then entered the conversation, saying 'don't we think as a group we could just discuss it a bit more and come to consensus?'. A fifth judge used a trope of reporting literary judging meetings (see Appleyard, 1991; Tonkin, 2005; Sanderson, 2017): 'I would much prefer [one of the three titles to win], but I wouldn't storm out in a rage for any of them'. This trope, accompanied by the fifth judge's ironic laughter, broke the tension, with the third, fourth and sixth judges agreeing. Following this, Claire again expressed her preference for everyone to discuss their favourite title, and during the ensuing conversation each judge openly stated who they wanted to win. The final decision was made without a secret ballot (Marsden, 2014c).

In our roles as researchers and participants, then, we both worked towards instigating and enacting change to the awards, sometimes in variance to existing practice of the long-serving judges, and sometimes even in conflict or disagreement with each other. In the next section, we focus on the question of gender, one which we both felt to have a problematic placing within the judging processes that we observed and of which we were part.

GENDER AND JUDGING

In the previous section, we discussed the point at which Claire made an intervention into the panel's predominantly quantitative judging processes, which led to the adoption of a more discursive approach. As a result Claire was, as mentioned previously, 'slightly less frustrated' with the judging process. Nonetheless, in her reflective

notes, Claire referred to a male author she believed was frequently given a 'bye' onto the longlist. On further reflection, she thinks it possible that some female authors, as well as other men, benefitted from almost automatic longlisting. However, her frustration at the lack of a more discursive approach was exacerbated by the exclusion of the female author she thought should have been shortlisted. This section of the article focuses specifically on issues of gender and judging with regards to literary awards, and a particular moment at which both Claire and Stevie 'broke cover' and commented publicly upon their perspectives on being a judge and administrator. It does so with an awareness that other, intersectional, identities and demographics (e.g. race, class and sexuality) are also affected by literary prize culture, but due to our evidence base and the constraints of space, we focus on gender.

Both critical and journalistic literature on literary prizes discusses issues of gender (Demoor et al., 2008; Griffith, 2015; Marsden, 2019). Such analyses demonstrate that women are less likely to be longlisted and shortlisted for, or go on to win, major literary prizes than men. Practitioners have responded by setting up new prizes (in the UK, the Orange - subsequently Bailey's/Women's Prize for Fiction - in 1995; in Australia, the Stella Prize in 2013). In her blog, 'Books About Women Don't Win Big Awards: Some Data' (2015a), Griffith highlighted gender imbalances in literary awards. Her analysis provided statistical breakdowns of six major literary awards (the Pulitzer Prize, Man Booker Prize, National Book Award, National Book Critics' Circle Award, Hugo Award, and Newbery Medal) between 2000-2014, showing that the gender of characters, as well as authors, affects a book's success: '[w]hen women win literary awards for fiction it's usually for writing from a male perspective and/or about men' (Griffith, 2015a). In a later blog, Griffith added data from the IMPAC Dublin Award and the Costa Book Awards, with these statistics not only reiterating the gender imbalance Griffith had already highlighted, but also that 'the more consciously prestigious the award, the less likely the prize is to go [to] a woman writing about women' (Griffith, 2015b).

The same year, Hutcheson (2015) used Griffith's methodology to examine the literary environment in Scotland, analysing the winners of a number of Scottish literary prizes, noting that the Saltire Society's First Book of the Year had a 50% split of male/female winners. However, this seemingly equal split obscured the fact that few of those winning books focused on a female protagonist, and one of the few that did, *The Echo Chamber* (2011), was written by a man, Luke Williams. The statistics for the Society's Book of the Year showed only 14% of recipients were women. The only winner with a female protagonist, according to Hutcheson (James Kelman's *Mo Said She Was Quirky* (2012)), was written by a man. This data led Hutcheson to the damning conclusion that 'In 2012, the Society stated that "...this suite of awards truly reflects the commitment of civic Scotland to literature in all its forms." A grand claim – one that, alas, they haven't quite managed to reflect' (Hutcheson, 2015).

Griffith's and Hutcheson's blogs provided a moment at which Claire and Stevie's roles as prize judge and administrator came into conflict with their identities as feminists and researchers. Claire's reflective notes detail her actions in response to Griffith's and Hutcheson's blogs, commenting that (in the year after she had stopped being a judge), 'I wanted to add my voice to this, and in turn drafted a piece to publish on my own blog.' Claire sent a draft to the Society, explaining in her covering email that:

I've drawn (...) on my own experience of being a Saltire judge: could you take a look at it and let me know what you think? I want to be candid without being unduly or unnecessarily critical. Do you think this balance is OK? I've tried to make it as clear as I can that this is from my perspective, but I realise that I'm writing from a privileged position, and that if I were a Booker judge I'd have a gagging clause. (Squires, 2015b).

The Executive Director asked Claire for some changes to the draft, and to show it to the other judges. Claire commented in her notes that 'I understood the concern, and made changes as a consequence to the blog' prior to its publication (2015a). With agreement from the other judges, Stevie wrote a blog for the Society's website, which incorporated judges' responses to Claire's draft. These included one long-serving female judge suggesting that 'the balance between men and women writers in literary prizes is surely part of a long historical process' (Marsden, 2015). A more recently recruited male judge 'was also sure there is no "conscious bias against women writers on our panel"' but agreed it was important to "'look back over time at the trends" in order to establish where such biases originate' (Marsden, 2015). Another long-serving female judge commented that 'when she is "in the thick of a judging process" she is "very enthused about certain work regardless of gender and only tend[s] to think about gender balance retrospectively, sometimes too late"' (Marsden, 2015). As Stevie's blog observed:

From my experience, the gender of the authors of the books being discussed (...) is barely mentioned, and is by no means used as a deciding factor in the final valuation of the books (...). The current judges of the (...) Literary Award judging panel (...) have also expressed how, despite remaining keenly aware of gender imbalances in Scottish literature (and the arts in general), gender does not come into the conversations regarding the books they are adjudicating for the awards. (Marsden, 2015).

Reflecting on her blog, Stevie wondered if she could have used it to interrogate the judges' comments more effectively. Stevie was aware of the existing discourse regarding gender imbalance in literary award culture when she started her PhD, and dedicated a chapter of her thesis, 'The Saltire Society Literary Awards, 1936-2015: A Cultural History', to its analysis.³ While her research on gender informed the blog, it was written when Stevie was embedded in the Society, so it was possible that she unconsciously curtailed her response. More recently, Stevie revised and restructured her thesis chapter on gender for an article (Marsden, 2019). In the article, she conducts a quantitative analysis of male/female submissions, shortlistings and winners of the Society's First Book and Book of the Year from 1988-2014. Her findings provide further evidence that women are less likely to be shortlisted for, or win, literary prizes, indicating that the Society's awards replicate the gender imbalance present in other prizes. She argues that, while this imbalance may be influenced by inequality within the production and promotion of women writers in Scottish publishing more broadly, it may also be indicative of implicit stereotyping by the Society's judges. As interviews with current and former, male and female judges revealed, despite their repeated assertion that the judging panel had been gender balanced, this was not supported by Stevie's fieldnotes and research. Women did not make up 50% of the Society's Literary Awards judges until 1999, seventeen years after the Book of the Year Award was established. When Stevie asked a former judge in interview if he had ever thought of inviting particular people to join the panel to ensure an even gender split, he responded: "Oh no, that way madness lies. You don't tailor your committee" (Marsden, 2014d). Such misalignment of the judges' perception of the prizes and the quantitative data suggests, Stevie argues, that there is a fundamental issue with the awards and their gender imbalance and this has reflected, and perpetuated, the historic trend of exclusion of women writers from the Scottish literary canon (Marsden, 2019). However, Stevie had not yet arrived at this critical reading of the awards when writing her blog in 2015. On reflection, she thinks she was influenced by her status as an embedded researcher:

I can definitely sense a change in my tone when reading this blog post in comparison to my article. The blog feels reserved and I do recall being aware that my response was perhaps considered by some as the Society's response. The lack of distance I had between my research and work with the Society was, in fact, an issue that would come up on a number of occasions and for some of my thesis writing it was important that I was no longer working so closely with the Society to be able to apply a more critical reading to its work.

In our blogs, we both questioned whether the issues concerning gender imbalance and the Literary Awards could be considered in relation to the submissions and publication pipeline. Stevie noted that: "Since 1982 (...) more than 2,026 books have been submitted for the (...) Society's Book of the Year and First Book of the Year Awards [but] only 640 of these entries were authored, co-authored or edited by women" (Marsden, 2015). Reiterating this point, Claire wrote: "Judges work from submitted titles: are more books by men submitted for them to consider than by women? The answer for the Saltire Society is yes (...) Judges, therefore, are choosing from an already skewed list" (Squires, 2015a).

Given the unequal number of female/male-authored submissions, the question remains whether judges should be content to replicate the proportions submitted, or to bring the inequality into their discussions. For both of us, we would encourage the latter approach, believing that judging without discussing gender and other identities and demographics such as race, class and sexuality can reassert unconscious bias and power imbalances in the literary field (Nichols, 2015; Harvey and Lamond, 2016). Claire wrote in her blog that "The publication of Griffith's data presents an opportunity for me to reflect on my own practice, as a scholar who studies literary prizes, a literary prize judge, and a feminist" (Squires, 2015a). In retrospect, Claire also noted that "I did feel, as well, that although there might be an expectation of Chatham House rules with the prize, that sense of hiding away the decision-making process might, I felt, be inhibiting discussion of the awards in the media." This approach led to Claire gaining funding for a subsequent collaborative doctoral award, 'Women of Words: Gender Equality in Contemporary Scottish Writing and Publishing' (Squires et al., 2017; SGSAAH, n.d.), alongside the ROAR (Represent, Object, Advocate, Rewrite) working group for a potential prize for women's writing in Scotland (Reid, 2018).

A focus on questions of gender and the judging of the Saltire Society awards, then, reveals problematic areas in the intermingling of our roles, from Claire's concern about betraying the confidence of the judging room, to Stevie's reflection on how her positioning at the Society inflected how she wrote her blog. We both felt, and carefully considered, the tension of stepping out of the process, but also (as active researchers and feminists) of staying within it when we wanted to influence practice and critique the Literary Awards.

Indeed, these tensions have not disappeared, as the writing of this article itself has shown us. The Conclusion meditates upon the ongoing challenges of our positionings, but also demonstrates the value of embedded research, and what our collaborative autoethnographic frame brings to the study of literary prizes.

³ Stevie is currently developing this thesis into a monograph for publication in 2020.

CONCLUSION – THE RULES OF JUDGING CLUB

‘The First Rule of Judging Club’ - *pace* Chuck Palahniuk’s *Fight Club* (1996) - is not to talk about ‘judging club’. This article, then, might represent a transgression of that ‘rule’, as we demonstrate some of the practices and behaviours (including our own) from inside the Saltire Society Literary Awards. As mentioned in Claire’s email to the Society accompanying her draft blog, the Society does not require its judges to sign a ‘gagging’ clause like the Booker, but neither does it court controversy as larger prizes sometimes do (English 2005; Squires 2013; Driscoll, 2014; Flood, 2018c). Stevie’s research at the Society was granted university ethics approval, the various interviews and meetings cited had consent from participants, and other documents quoted are either readily available in the public domain or accessible via the Society’s archival holdings at the National Library of Scotland.

Nonetheless, both of us thought carefully about the ethics of writing this article. There was a tacit understanding among Society judges that they not discuss the decision-making process. Our multiple roles in relation to the Society, and indeed the Scottish publishing and writing community more widely, means we have collegiate relationships with participants in the field. Friendship, our close connections, and the intermingling of our roles, means that we both feel an ‘*enduring discomfort*’, in Stevie’s words, at transgressing that ‘First Rule’, similar to sentiments expressed by other ethnographic researchers, such as Barton’s feelings of guilt when conducting ethnographic research (Barton, 2011: 437).

In this article, we have revealed issues that frustrated us both, and how those frustrations (derived both from our ideological positionings and research backgrounds) sometimes worked to enact change. And yet we have held back some information, although not with the intent to tease or intrigue. We do not, as Claire noted, intend to be ‘unduly or unnecessarily critical’. We sent a draft version of the article to current staff at the Society, wanting them to see it before it was published. We anonymised as much data as possible, even when we had ethics approval to use names. This article is not an exposé of ‘Judging Club’, even where we are recounting moments when we were frustrated with the practices of which we were part. Our continuing relationships delimit what we have recounted here, but also mean that we recognise again the privileged position - one of trust - that we had as ‘researcher-in-residence’ and ‘researcher under cover’ at the Society. Embedded researchers, including those on doctoral schemes such as the AHRC CDAs, face particular challenges and opportunities in their positioning, handling of data, and ability to retain critical distance while benefiting from being inside an organisation. As Neuwirth (2019) explores in her article in this special issue on her similarly embedded research for ROAR, underpinning a potential future prize for women’s writing in Scotland, her role is as ‘speculative archivist’, contributing to the future history and ‘*greater narrative*’, as Stevie called it, of the prizes with which they are involved. The blurring of boundaries that such roles present are only partially mitigated and explained by documents and processes such as contracts between partners and research ethics documentation. As a consequence, we chose collaborative autoethnography for this article’s methodology, as it allowed us to ‘work together collaboratively to write, share, and analyze personal narratives as data’ (Lapadat, 2017). In other words, collaborative autoethnography enabled the triangulation of our memories, fieldnotes and reflective commentary with archival records, interviews and judging meeting transcripts.

Part of our concern, as well as our collegiate relationships, derives from simultaneously wanting to understand, but not undermine, judging processes. This concern links to the contested question of ‘whose cultural value’, in Belfiore’s words (2018). Moeran’s exploration of jurying refers to the ‘condition’ that ‘the organization should be able to identify objective differences that clearly demarcate potters and pots that are consecrated from those that are not’ (2012: 14; citing Allen and Parson 2006: 810-11). It is this condition that makes the judging a ‘black box for scholars’ (2012: 3), and a necessity, Moeran argues, for prize organisers to retain:

Those who hand out awards and prizes *must* keep the processes of consecration secret in a black box if they are to maintain the legitimacy of those in whose trust they are placed. Otherwise it will become clear that the Emperor, while not entirely without clothes, may be somewhat improperly dressed for the occasion (2012: 15).

Are we, then, ‘improperly dress[ing]’ the Saltire Society in our autoethnographic account? We note that Moeran operated his own 30-year rule before publishing his material, while the particular instances we discuss above, and our involvement, are much more recent. Embedded research means that this is not a baring all of the judging process: we anonymised, held back from using some examples, or from critique. We have done this both because of our relationships, but also because we do not believe greater detail would actually have furthered a wider understanding of the judging processes. Ours is one of the very few scholarly explorations of cultural awards that has insight derived from the inside. Because of this positioning, this article has been able to reveal aspects of prize administration, organisational change, judging processes, and the ways in which the particular question of gender have troubled the Saltire Society Literary Awards. Moreover, we question whether, in fact, the ‘processes of consecration’ that Moeran refers to *should* be kept ‘secret in a black box’ in order to ‘maintain (...) legitimacy’. Judging cultural awards is, based on our autoethnographical study, contextual, contingent, value-laden, and

ideological, *not* objective. This observation aligns with that already proffered by scholars of literary prizes (e.g. English, 2005), but offers an amplified viewpoint derived from the inner workings of these particular awards. We argue that this interrogation of judging practices in literary award culture is necessary precisely because these processes are often deliberately opaque, in order to foster notions of prestige and exclusivity. Traditionally, readers might have been encouraged to accept judges' selections uncritically, but a number of literary awards (including the defunct Scottish Mortgage Trust Book Awards) have brought reader involvement to their heart, frequently by digital means (Squires, 2013: 301-2). The Saltire Society itself, at Stevie's instigation, introduced a series of shadow judging panels selected by the Society of Young Publishers, Scotland. As trusted participant observers of judging panel discussions, we offer something additional to these experiments, and different to the critique often found in journalistic accounts of prizes. Rather than expose vulnerabilities, this collaborative autoethnographic study aims to offer insight into literary gatekeeping, and present ways by which scholars might navigate their research alongside relationships with non-academic partners.

In breaking the seeming 'First Rule of Judging Club...', then, we also intend that this article offers productive reflections on embedded research by making evident its challenges and dilemmas of researching. The ethical framework for such research is far from simple, but in exploring particular moments with perspectives from both inside and outside the judging processes, and in interrogating the practices of literary gatekeeping and 21st century book culture research, we hope that this article casts light upon this particular judging club and its practices, but also illuminates ways in which researchers might consider, orientate, and carry out further research into processes of cultural consecration.

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Speculative Archiving of a Potential Future Literary Award: Embedded Publishing Studies Research

Christina Neuwirth ^{1*}

¹ University of Stirling and University of Glasgow, UNITED KINGDOM

*Corresponding Author: christina.neuwirth1@stir.ac.uk

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ABSTRACT

Over the course of my doctoral research in publishing studies, I have become curious about the kind of embedded live collaborative study I am undertaking, which is working towards the potential creation of a new literary prize. This article will add to existing scholarship by examining how research can be conceived of as an active part of evidence-based prize creation. To do so, it will draw on feminist research methodology and record formation scholarship, and examine how other awards and literary organisations conceptualise their archives. The article will then present the original findings of the study, beginning with the conceptualisation of the researcher as inhabiting three distinct roles, moving on to modelling the relationship between the researcher and the prize project, concluding with an exploration of these relationships through autoethnographic observations and semi-structured interviews. The article will conclude asserting what these findings mean for this kind of live award scholarship.

Keywords: publishing, archive, live research, autoethnography, awards and prizes

Interviewer: I know that we don't have much longer, and this is kind of a question out of left field but it interests me; so, because you were there in that first conversation about this group and the prize and you've witnessed it kind of change, I wondered whether you feel comfortable speaking a little bit about the relationship of the PhD research to the wider project, and how you have witnessed that changing from the first discussion of having a PhD about this to-

Jenni Calder: Um

Interviewer: I know it's weird because I'm here

Jenni Calder: (laughs)

(Calder, 2018)

INTRODUCTION

The above is a quote from an interview conducted to examine gender equality issues in contemporary Scottish writing and publishing. In this interview, I wanted to find out what the impact of having a researcher involved in the prize creation process had been like. I asked the question directly, but perceived hesitation in the interviewee, and chose to break the tension by referring overtly to the discomfort and awkwardness of inhabiting both a position as 'the researcher who is currently conducting this interview' as well as 'the researcher who has been involved in the prize creation process'.

Over the course of my doctoral research in publishing studies, I have become curious about the kind of embedded live collaborative study I am undertaking, which is working towards the potential creation of a new literary prize. James F. English has described cultural prizes as ubiquitous (English, 2002: 109), and Claire Squires has shown cultural prizes, specifically literary prizes, to be a 'fertile area of study' (Squires, 2004: 46), but their examinations of prizes do not involve direct active involvement in the creation stage of a literary award. While not concerned with the creation of a new award, Marsden and Squires' article in this special issue presents findings of embedded research 'inside' an established set of literary prizes (Marsden and Squires, 2019). This article will add to existing scholarship by examining how research can be conceived of as an active part of evidence-based prize creation. Fundamentally, this article's discussion of archives and positionality is a vehicle to reflect on how to understand collaboration between present and future; creation and legacy.

What historic and scholarly evidence is there that a prize for Scottish women writers may be needed? Glenda Norquay describes the history of women's writing in Scotland as 'a story both of bold declarations of self and of the, at times, secret and strategic infiltrations of walled areas of literary production' (Norquay, 2012: 1). Borrowing Norquay's words above, the purpose of my doctoral research project is to examine whether a literary prize could be an effective tool for the 'strategic infiltration of walled areas of literary production'. While histories of Scottish women's writing published over the past 25 years have pointed out and addressed the lack of historic representation of women writers in Scottish literature (Christianson and Lumsden, 2000a; Gifford and McMillan, 1997a; Norquay, 2012b), they also share a cautious optimism for better representation in contemporary literature. Gifford and McMillan write that '[h]istories of Scottish literature have tended in recent years to include more women' (Gifford and McMillan, 1997b: ix) and Norquay points out the 'publication of work by a range of Scottish women writers since the 1980s, the appearance of several histories of writing by women as well as a number of critical studies that explore gender dynamics' (Norquay, 2012a: 2). Lumsden and Christianson problematise the essentialising of nationhood and gender within these histories: "Several of the writers here (...) resist being labelled in terms of their nationality or gender, suggesting that to them such categories are limiting" (Christianson and Lumsden, 2000b: 3). Within book history and publishing studies, Stevie Marsden's analysis of the Saltire Society Book of the Year and First Book of the Year¹ winners, shortlists and submissions between 1988-2014 shows that, 'despite the fact that critics argued that there was a change in tide in the late 1980s and early 1990s regarding the gender balance in Scottish literature more broadly, this analysis suggests that Scotland's literary culture, and in turn, book award culture, was dominated by men' (Marsden, 2019: 62). My own work has also evidenced that contemporary book reviewing in Scotland privileges male reviewers and male authors (Christina Neuwirth, 2018).

As these examples show, gender inequality in Scottish writing and publishing is a persistent issue; the creation of a new prize to address this, and the opportunity for live embedded research this presents, is an under-researched area. To address this, this article will first introduce conceptual frameworks, drawing on feminist research methodology. As this methodology encourages and requires reflexivity on the part of the researcher, this article will then present the original findings of the study, beginning with a reflection of myself as a researcher inhabiting three distinct roles. Continuing in this reflexive mode, possible models of the relationship between the researcher and the prize project will be presented, before concluding with an exploration of these relationships through autoethnographic observations and semi-structured interviews. It will then give insight into the intersection of archives and literary prize scholarship, drawing on how literary organisations and awards conceptualise and commodify their archives, followed by an exploration of record formation theory and futurity in archive scholarship. The article will conclude asserting what these findings mean for this kind of live award scholarship, and define its key finding of the unique positionality of a 'speculative archivist.'

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: FEMINIST RESEARCH METHODS AND PRAXIS

This article takes an explicitly feminist stance, as necessitated by a project concerned with gender equality. Feminist research methodology defines the researcher not as an outsider but as directly, politically involved in the research process. Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber describes feminist research as follows:

From data collection to data analysis and interpretation, the process by which feminist researchers conduct their research projects – feminist research praxis – centralizes the relationship between the researcher and researched to balance differing levels of power and authority. Researchers practice reflexivity, a process by which they recognize, examine, and understand how their social background, location, and assumptions can influence the research. (...) Reflexivity is a way for researchers to account

¹ The Saltire Society describes its suite of literary awards as "Scotland's most prestigious annual book awards" ('Literary Awards', n.d.)

for their personal biases and examine the effects that these biases may have on the data produced. (Hesse-Biber, 2013: 3)

Introducing the development of feminist research, Hesse-Biber draws on feminist standpoint epistemology (Harding, 1993; Smith, 1990, cited in Hesse-Biber 2013: 6), which 'is rooted in the shared Marxist and Hegelian idea that an individual's material and lived experience structures his or her understanding of his or her social environment' (Hesse-Biber, 2013: 6). Elsewhere, Hesse-Biber suggests that feminist in-depth interviewing involves reflecting on 'the various ways [the researcher's] social position affects the way [they] observe and perceive others' (Hesse-Biber, 2007: 131). This project therefore foregrounds the individual lived experiences of the researcher and the researched, and how these structure our understanding of our social environment. It practices reflexivity, in particular of the biases and positions an insider brings to the research of their own community (Barton, 2011; Oakley, 1981). I am a woman writer based in Scotland, researching gender equality in contemporary writing and publishing in Scotland; necessarily, my experiences as a writer – before and during this PhD project – will therefore impact my perspective, and may become data (cf. Barton, 2011: 432).

The subject of my research has direct, political relevance to me. This is also the case for my interviewees, who are, like me, women working in the Scottish literary sector. Ann Oakley describes the shift in how interviewing is conceptualised through this direct relationship: interviewing changes 'from being a data-collecting instrument for researchers to being a data-collecting instrument for those whose lives are being researched' (Oakley, 1981: 49). I am a participant of the group whose lives are being researched; yet I am also the researcher who is conducting the data collection which in turn will become an instrument to provide evidence for the group I am researching.

CONTEXT AND THE PROJECT

The research project which forms the basis of this article is a collaborative doctoral research project in publishing studies, examining gender equality in contemporary Scottish writing and publishing, with a view to advising on the creation of a potential future literary prize. I work in close consultation with a group of women working in the Scottish literary industry. My research project is inextricably connected to the work of this group. To begin to tease out the relationship, it is helpful to examine the various ways in which the group defines itself. In interview, group members have referred to themselves as a 'group of activists working within the community' (Armstrong, 2018), or a women's prize project which they were 'working with' (McDowell, 2018) or 'invited [...] to take part [in]' (Oliver, 2018). It was also referred to as a 'group to discuss these issues and look at what we could do' (Shah, 2018), 'the group' (Moir, 2018) and 'the working group' (Squires, 2018). This difference in self-identification points at one of the key shifts within the group's purpose; the group was initially set up following a suggestion by Judy Moir, a literary agent, during an International Women's Day celebration in 2016.² Moir proposed that there might be a prize for women writers in Scotland (Armstrong, 2018; Calder, 2018; Shah, 2018). In interview, Moir said, recalling this day:

I was aware at that time the Bailey's, that's the former Orange Prize, longlist had just been announced and not a single Scot on it. Maybe Ali Smith was on it, but no-one else. (...) And so I found myself suggesting, you know, do you think it would be a good idea to have a literary prize or several prizes for women in Scotland. All these heads just sort of turned around and, 'Yes, Judy, do something about it!' (Moir, 2018)

Jenni Calder, who was present on this day, said in interview: "I think the feeling was that something was needed to support and promote Scottish women writers, and a prize is something very specific; everybody understands what it is, and that seemed like a good place to start" (Calder, 2018).

Members of the group then secured funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities (SGSAH) for a doctoral research project which would examine gender equality in contemporary Scottish writing and publishing (Squires, Reeder, Armstrong, and Shah, 2017).³ This led to my appointment as that doctoral researcher, under a Creative Economies Studentship. My involvement prompted a shift in the focus of the group, who were no longer working solely to set up a prize, as the evidence basis for the prize was now within the remit of the doctoral research project. Rather than going ahead with the prize creation, the group is now waiting on advice on how a potential new prize should be set up, and indeed whether it should be set up at all. My doctoral research project, which will give this advice in its concluding chapter, will not be concluded before December 2020. In its first online statement from August 2018, the group, whose

² This event was run by Scottish PEN (the Scottish centre of PEN International) and IASH (the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities at the University of Edinburgh).

³ The research partners involved are University of Stirling, University of Glasgow and Scottish Book Trust.

name is now ROAR (Represent, Object, Advocate, Rewrite) describes itself as ‘a group working to combat inequality in Scottish writing and publishing’ founded in 2016 (Reid, 2018). The short biography of the group does not refer to the potential for a new literary prize. When referring to the acronym ROAR, I will henceforth call the group ‘the advocacy group’. This is not to shy away from specificity, but to ensure other researchers working in this type of research model will find the visualisations applicable.

According to SGSAAH guidance, the aim of Creative Economies Studentships is ‘to connect HEIs, organisations and a PhD researcher on a project of mutual benefit to all involved. They present an opportunity to work on a fascinating research project, make connections with industry and access resources and expertise not normally available within a PhD’ (‘Scottish Graduate School for Arts & Humanities’, n.d.). The projects encompassed in this run of Creative Economies Studentships were described by SGSAAH as ‘fulfilling a research need already noted by an organisation in the sector,’ (‘Scottish Graduate School for Arts & Humanities’, n.d.) implying the direct usefulness of this research to a question or a gap already identified by the sector. The original funding application for this particular project has proven to be a useful document for gaining an insight into the initial plans and considerations that led to this research. The application says that this project will ‘develop a project plan for the implementation and analysis of a women’s writing prize in Scotland, and an associated suite of activities (...)’ (Squires et al., 2017: 4). As this article will show, the plans set out by the collaboration partners and by the funders in these two documents are not exhaustive and do not encompass the broad range of relationships inherent in the project. The modelling of the shifting relationships between researcher, advocacy group and the prize project, and the understanding of the added temporal dimension embodied in the role of ‘speculative archivist’ are vital to the project’s traversing of academic, institutional, political and personal priorities and the responsibility for documents created throughout the project. While this is important new knowledge for the field of publishing studies and the modes of embedded research, a key application of these findings is also seen in the funding of new collaborative doctoral projects, to facilitate deeper understanding of potential conflicts of discourse and epistemology.

INSIDERS AND OUTSIDERS

Feminist scholarship has reflected on the difficulties and opportunities of researching women as a woman (Oakley, 1981) and researching one’s own community (Barton, 2011), and teased out complications of these perspectives where research participants share some characteristics in common with the researcher, while occupying a position of power which reverses the power imbalance between researcher and researched in favour of the researched (Puwar, 1997). The descriptive reflection that follows, illustrated by Venn diagrams, traverses my position as insider and outsider in my research, and uncovers insufficiency in these terms as they fail to encompass a temporal dimension of positionality. This draws on reflective notes taken throughout my research process.

Role 1: Participant

Firstly, I am a participant. I am an active member of the Scottish literary landscape and bring a variety of perspectives on this field to my research and to the considerations around the new prize. I first came to Scotland in 2013 to pursue a Masters degree in Creative Writing at University of Edinburgh, during which time I began working as a bookseller and programming and performing at live literature events. As of April 2019, I have had a novella and several short stories published in print, as well as a number of creative and journalistic non-fiction pieces in print and online. I have been a mentee of a writing development project, given paid and unpaid writing performances, chaired and organised literary events, and participated actively in informal and formal literary networking. I therefore bring my own experiences as a woman writing in Scotland from a range of perspectives to my research, which will become part of my research as anecdotal evidence.

Role 2: Advocate

Secondly, as well as being an active participant in the literary field I am investigating, I am also an active participant in the advocacy group ROAR, feeding my research findings back to the group as they inform their present and future activities. However, as a researcher, I also use these meetings as sites of observation. In many of my meetings with the advocacy group I am keenly aware of my active participation and my observational role, leading to a double consciousness as I experience decision-making while also playing a part in it.

Role 3: Speculative Archivist

Thirdly, I see my role as that of a ‘speculative archivist’. What I mean by this is that I am aware of the potential longevity of some of the documents I create or have access to. My private note taking, conference papers, and briefing papers for the group are a record of and a contribution to the thought processes that may lead to the creation of a new prize, and as such these documents have a potential to be valuable to researchers in the future who may try to reconstruct the group’s motivation. However, since the doctoral research project was set up to

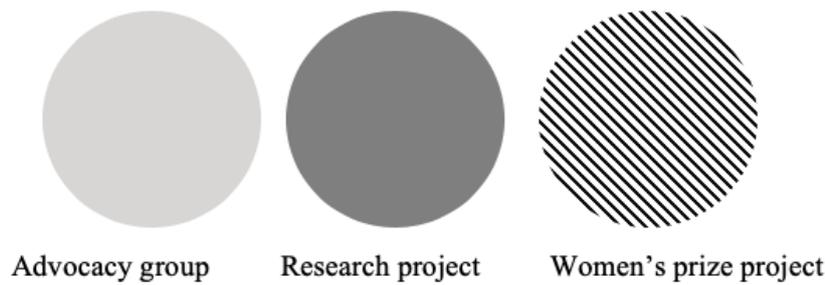


Figure 1. Components of the Collaboration Model

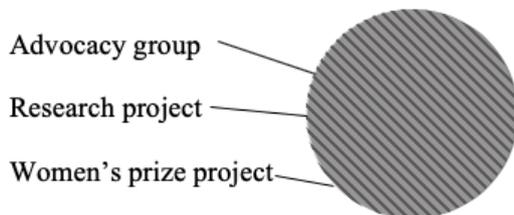


Figure 2. Collaboration Model I

advise on the creation of this new prize, it is not yet certain whether the prize will come into existence – hence the ‘speculative’ part of my archivist role. I will explore this role throughout the rest of this article, and pin down a definition for it in the article’s conclusion.

This triple consciousness becomes particularly apparent during my interaction with the advocacy group. One of my roles is to take minutes at the advocacy group meetings. The purpose of these is to inform the next meeting and be useful to group members who were unable to attend. While taking notes at a meeting I am not simply taking notes at a meeting; I am actively participating in a variety of discourses and creating a document with a variety of purposes. These notes may feed into the creation of a prize, form part of my broader research project, *and* they may be subject to future scrutiny. If the prize comes to be, the minutes of the group meetings would also be a valuable document to show the history of this prize. The transcripts of my semi-structured interviews also capture information about what the prize might be, so these perspectives captured in a moment in time may also be interesting to a future archive to show what our aims and ideas were for the creation of this prize. Illustrating the types of documents which may be used by future researchers to reconstruct the history of a prize, Marsden refers to using archives held at the National Library of Scotland in a study of the Saltire Society Literary Awards. These archives hold ‘several different kinds of documentation, such as hand-written letters, press releases, newspaper articles and faxed documents’ (Marsden, 2016: 35). Whenever I become aware of the existence of such documentation relating to our potential future prize, or when I contribute or am wholly responsible for the creation of such a document myself, I think of a future researcher in the National Library of Scotland looking for this information.

MODELLING RELATIONAL POSITIONS

How do my research project and the advocacy group project overlap and interrelate, and where does the prize fit in? I have come to see this in three distinct ways (see [Figure 1](#)).

When I first began this project I saw it as three entirely overlapping circles in a Venn diagram. The research project and the women’s prize project were one and the same; my research would steer the direction of the group, and I would effectively project-manage the collection of evidence for and eventual set-up of a new prize. This echoes the plan set out in the funding application, which said that the researcher involved in this project would ‘develop, implement and evaluate a programme of activities and advocacy around women writers and women’s writing in Scotland (...)’ (Squires et al., 2017: 4). This is illustrated by [Figure 2](#).

However, as the project moved on, I began to perceive my research as part of a larger project as part of the women’s prize group, which was shifting its focus into broader advocacy (partially outsourcing the evidence creation and investigation of gender inequality to me as the researcher). I also began perceiving the prize as only a portion of the scope of my project.

[Figure 3](#) shows one project sitting within another project, with an implication of the broadening scope of both the group and the research project. The advocacy group defines the potential new prize loosely as one or several

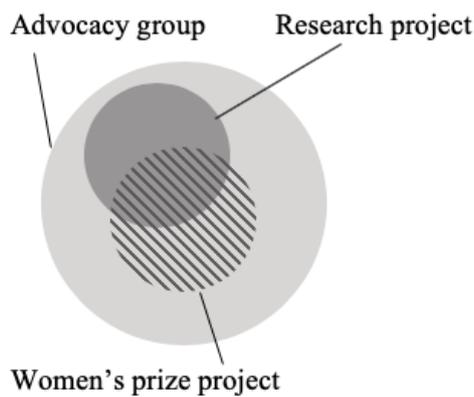


Figure 3. Collaboration Model II

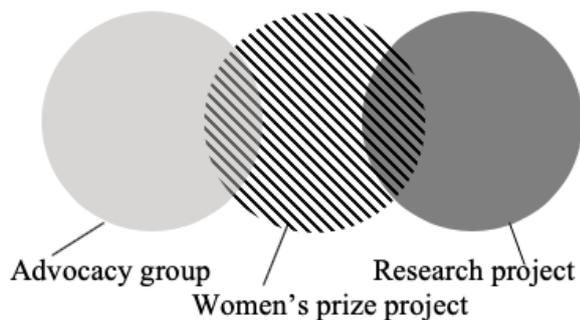


Figure 4. Collaboration model III

prizes, but has not as yet narrowed down what genre the prize would be for, or at what stage of a writer's career it would be awarded. These and all other additional elements of the prize await advice based on the finished research project. Advocacy group meetings form part of the process for investigating what the issues are, yet there are many moments where the conversation is brought back to awaiting results of the research, which situates the group *outside* that process; that is to say, in these moments the research project is seen as a separate process from the advocacy group project.

As described in the Context section above, there was a key shift in the focus of the advocacy group. Interviewees described this shift by charting the development of the group's aims: 'it just kind of got going from [the call for a women's prize] and it's now developed into something which is much more ambitious in a way, more broadly based' (Calder, 2018) and as 'moving away from this just being about a women's prize it's now (...) a group of activists' (Armstrong, 2018). The prize project's instigator Moir said: 'it's been really slow to get going and that's great, it's been very consultative, and it's great that you're involved too, but we need to ... firm things up a bit' (Moir, 2018). These quotes indicate that the advocacy group's focus has changed and broadened as a result of the development of the research project. However, there is also an indication that the prize has been put on hold, and that the scope and length of the investigation through the research project has slowed down the *firming up* of what the prize is intended to do, or indeed whether there should be a prize at all.

Now in the second year of the project, I have shifted again to understand the project as existing alongside and partially overlapping with the advocacy group, with the prize existing in the overlapping area of the two circles, but also in an invisible space outside the circles – my research, and indeed the work of the advocacy group, are not the only factors or groups that could potentially lead to a new prize being set up. As a 'speculative archivist' I also record activities of the advocacy group in which I am not actively involved; the scope of the advocacy group's activities therefore goes beyond the scope of my doctoral research project. This overlapping relationship is illustrated by **Figure 4**.

These diagrams of the projects are useful for my own growing understanding of the complex overlapping relationships at play and how they connect to the prize that may or may not come into existence. In modelling the shifting relationship between myself, the group, and the prize project, the diagrams above lack a temporal dimension.

ARCHIVES IN PUBLISHING STUDIES

Before turning to draw on record formation scholarship, however, it is important to examine how archives have been thought of in relation to publishing and literary prizes. After all, the disciplinary background of this study is publishing and book history, and if the present can be historicised, as science fiction studies suggest, as ‘the past of a future-yet-to-be’ (Hollinger, 2010: 30), then contemporary publishing of the present carries within it potentiality to becoming book history of the future. For example, the Man Booker Prize archive allows for scholarly and journalistic reconstruction. Oxford Brookes University’s acquisition of the Man Booker archive in 2003 was itself the subject of a news article. The introduction to this article emphasises the physical space housing the archive, and the material artefacts within it:

Turn right into the ground floor of Oxford Brookes’s Headington library and you come to a small, nondescript side room. Not so long ago this used to be someone’s - though no one can remember quite whose - office, but now it’s home to 115 cardboard boxes. Or, to be more precise, 115 acid-free cardboard boxes. For this room now houses the entire archive of the Man Booker prize, making it home to one of the most important collections in modern British and Commonwealth publishing. (Crace, 2003)

The article continues to describe that the archive could have been sold for a large amount of money but was given to Oxford Brookes for free (or, the article suggests, in exchange for an honorary doctorate). Squires is quoted in the article saying how useful the archive will be to future scholars:

Claire Squires, senior lecturer in publishing at Oxford Brookes, can scarcely wait to get her mitts on the archive. ‘It’s a brilliant mix of the everyday and the academic,’ she says. ‘It will provide wonderful material on how we promote and create culture, how we decide whether a book is good or bad and how literary reputations are made. It will also chart the globalisation of the publishing industry, with the demise of the independents and the growth of the large corporations.’ (Crace, 2003)

More recently, in 2018, Gaby Wood also draws on the Man Booker Prize archive in an article in the *Times Literary Supplement*, stating that: “[T]he prize had been established some months earlier [in 1968] by the publishers Tom Maschler and Graham C. Greene, with the aim of emulating the Prix Goncourt, which unfailingly stimulated the reading of – and conversation about – new fiction” (Wood, 2018). Wood’s article begins with a discussion of the inaugural Prize’s judges, the places where they met (“Sometimes they met at Bertorelli’s restaurant in London. Once they spent a weekend together at Michael Astor’s house in the Cotswolds.” (Wood, 2018)) and the notes they wrote on the books they discussed (Rebecca West’s typewritten notes on Michael Frayn’s book, for example, described it as ‘curiously dull’ (Wood, 2018)). In constructing the origin of the prize, this piece of literary journalism published in ‘the leading international weekly for literary culture’ (*Home Page – The TLS*, n.d.) draws on the people involved in creating the prize, its inaugural judges, their judgements of the initial longlist, and the aims of the prize.

Yet archives and historical timelines of literary institutions are not only useful commodities for scholars and literary journalists. The institutions themselves frequently make use of their archival assets, as Squires examines in this chapter on publishers’ birthdays: “The development of the brand through anniversary publishing must include the core values of the company, which are constructed and negotiated through the company’s history” (Squires, 2013: 183). In the same way, Wood reconstructs a seamless narrative of the Man Booker Prize’s brand through its archive: “They found an eminently willing sponsor in Booker Brothers, once a Guyana-based colonial enterprise, then an enlightened business run by Jock Campbell, a socialist peer with a strong desire to compensate for the history with which his sugartrading ancestors had been associated” (Wood, 2018). Wood’s article makes use of the history of the Booker Prize to frame the prize in a particular ideological light – and the archive materials themselves are called on to confirm how the prize dealt with the colonial origin of its wealth: “Once the prize was established, the sponsors were routinely referred to in correspondence as ‘the sugar daddies’” (Wood, 2018).

However, publishers and literary awards are not the only literary institutions which hold and make use of archives. Authors also own significant documentation which, through archiving, has the potential to endure beyond their lifetime. Anna Auguscik writes about the mechanisms at play here:

Some of the least publically-available documents will only be preserved for the eyes of collectors and (future) literary historians: the author’s manuscript, correspondence with the publisher and/or literary agent, proof copies, advance reader’s copies and first editions. Yet increasingly, contemporary authors are giving this documentation away in their lifetimes. (...) The acquisition of an author’s estate during their lifetime involves speculation on both sides – the value of the documents is not easily discernible

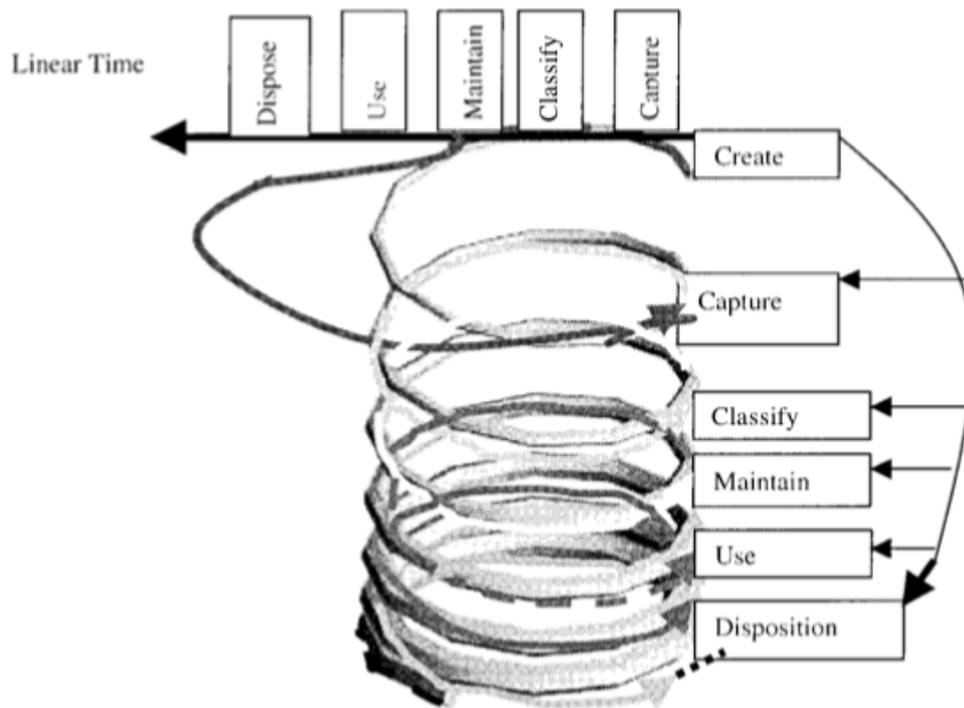


Figure 5. A Helical Model of Record Formation (Brothman, 2006: 263, Fig. 4)

by either party and could always be estimated as higher or lower than the price offered at the time of the transaction at a later point in time – but the presence of an archive also makes authors more available for academic research. (Auguscik, 2017: 72)

ARCHIVES IN RECORD FORMATION

The following section provides insight into the various ways in which archival studies as a discipline has reckoned with this issue. While the discussions of publisher and prize archives above gave the impression of fixed corpora of materials ('115 acid-free cardboard boxes' (Crace, 2003)), Walby and Larsen's research into government agencies through Access to Information defines the idea of a 'live archive':

In contrast with notions of archives and archiving that focus on the preservation and organization of a 'documentary heritage,' the idea of the live archive highlights the dynamic systems of textual production and communication unfolding in government agencies today. (Walby and Larsen, 2011: 625)

A live archive, then, involves a degree of speculation. To follow Auguscik above: just as the (monetary) value of a writer's estate is difficult to gauge before their career has run its course, so are the types of documents required to (re-)construct a history for an event that has not yet occurred. Brien Brothman describes the requirement of an end point for an archive – in my particular study, the end point is the creation of the prize – as 'the final moment,' which is being anticipated or constructed in the process of record formation:

The identity of each of the successive stages (states) of record-keeping – creation, classification, capture, arrangement and description, maintenance, preservation, and so on – also hinges on the anticipation of an ending, on the belief in a moment of closure and completeness, in which records as entities reach resolution, arrive at some final destination. Indeed, the construction of a final moment, a permanently fixed 'presentness,' is critical for giving a retrospective coherence and finiteness to each of the cycle's preceding phases. The finality of the end is an indispensable unifying moment of the model of record-keeping. Belief in the existence of a final moment retroactively enables, indeed determines, the order, function, meaning and significance of each of the earlier phases of the story. (Brothman, 2006: 246)

Rather than seeing documents as having a fixed start and end date – creation and final deposit – Brothman's helical model of record formation, 'represent[ing] documentary temporal existence as involving departure from, and circling back *toward*, a point on a time line' (Brothman, 2006: 261, emphasis in original), allows for a conceptualisation of an archive's fluidity. In this model, illustrated by [Figure 5](#), linearity and strict chronology is replaced with a loop whose trajectory travels back towards the point of creation, representing the different stages

of a document and the multiple temporalities inherent in it. A document that is edited and altered over the course of the years, which begins its life as a private note during a meeting and ends up as a public-facing press release, for example, has many temporal points within it. In the case of my research project and the difficulty of planning the preservation of the archive of a literary award which may come to exist in the future, Brothman's model offers reassurance that the uncertainty of the award's future existence need not become an issue. Brothman argues that this 'final moment retroactively enables' (Brothman, 2006: 246) a narrative. Following this idea, it is not necessary to know from the outset which documents will be required for an archive, as the end point – whatever it may be – will retroactively determine the order of the archive's contents.

In his article on de-historicising the archive, Wolfgang Ernst also writes about the faculty of record formation to encompass multiple points in time within one document: "Let us therefore address the archive not as a coherent depository for memory supply but instead identify its multiplicity of temporal layers with and within memory technologies." (Ernst, 2016: 12) Rather than proposing a new model for record formation altogether, Ernst reads the multiplicity of time in an archive as a road to liberation through non-narrative history:

My epistemological intention is to liberate archival memory from its reductive subjection to the discourse of history and re-install it as an agency of multiple temporal poetics in its own right. (Ernst, 2016: 12)

He continues, asserting that 'the archival mode of memory (record management) is a non-narrative alternative to historiography' (Ernst, 2016: 12). What Ernst's work suggests is that archives can instead present a real, radical alternative through their ambivalence and need not necessarily be commodified and narrativised as marketing tools. Jeffrey Schnapp's work adds to this the idea that within the capacities of 21st century archiving also lies further potential for the types of documentation they can hold:

Last but not least, this expanded sensorium of cultural memory is accompanied by new forms of capture that allow for time-scales that would have been inconceivable only a century ago: from documentation of macro-events that occur over centuries (like environmental changes) to that of micro-events that occur on the scale of seconds (viz. snapshots and tweets). (Schnapp, 2016: 18)

(Imagined) posterity and futurity are often in play in scholarship critically engaged with or describing the work with archives. Barbara McBane's work on the archive of Veronica Friedman, which was preserved after her death in the San Francisco LGBT Historical Society's collection reflects on 'the holes in the archive', which 'catapult it out of linear time, into the blurred, complicating, and asynchronous temporalities of the uncanny and the spectral' (McBane, 2013:63). McBane describes these gaps as 'progenerative (...) activat[ing] links between queers of different generations in different times and places (...) to future archive-interpreters like myself; and to the audiences of us all' (McBane, 2013: 63). McBane can see within this archive the multiple temporal links into past, present and future. The blurriness of the documents' temporalities was also apparent in the nature of the individual documents:

Some of her papers were crafted for the official record - for the archive; others were personal and spoke of the loss of home and family. (...) The two kinds of documents often bled into one another. Sometimes the official documents became very personal, and the lists turned into poems. (McBane, 2013: 59)

Collecting in the present for the future, Nicholas Samuel Fitch describes efforts to collect material in Argentina during a year studying abroad. Fitch's account shows a sense of responsibility for the future, specifically future research. Fitch writes that, due to the political and economic situation of the country, 'the great majority of the nation's immense cultural patrimony is never sufficiently collected, documented, preserved, or made accessible to the public' (Warren Davidson and Fitch, 2002: 561) and that therefore 'individual efforts toward the collection and conservation of cultural materials are vitally important if future generations are to have access to them for research' (Warren Davidson and Fitch, 2002: 561). Fitch also describes a consciousness of the future purpose of documents, even if they are not documents whose immediate impact or relevance can be determined: "Even though they are not always of direct or lasting interest to me, I am very careful to conserve such materials as political ephemera and flyers, which might otherwise disappear" (Warren Davidson and Fitch, 2002: 561). The very fact of the potential that these documents might disappear is the motivation behind Fitch's collection and preservation effort. (Incidentally, Fitch does not appear to have reflected on the ethics of such a collection effort, as the conclusion of the piece reads, "I am hoping to expand my collection significantly in the coming months, as the desperate economic situation further depresses book prices and as the peso devalues" (Warren Davidson and Fitch, 2002: 561)).

In interview with Frances Guerin, the film maker Daniel Eisenberg reflects on his work taking archive footage out of its original context. He is quoted as saying:

We are at a very different point in the history of moving images—where cell phones more likely produce the documents of history. I routinely trace this movement from documents produced officially to unofficial documents to our present moment, when we can see everyday revolutions being mobilized by cell phones and social media. It's a much more democratic space of image production. So the question is, what constitutes the archive today? Is it the Cloud? I don't know if this can be answered, except in the use of images. In the end, the archive is constituted by what is and isn't used, what is and isn't saved, and by whom. It's for others to define somewhere down the line. (Guerin, 2012: 115)

This is a practical application of Brothman's helical model of record formation; the definition of the archive can happen retrospectively.

The artist Julie Bacon reflects on artists' use of archive in their work. "Discourse in the academy - from sociology, feminism, postmodernism and postcolonial theory through to the linguistic strategies of poststructuralism and cultural studies - has created a groundswell of enquiry into history making, identity and representation. This considers how territory is claimed through the power of language, knowledge and the physical occupation of space." (Bacon, 2007: 52) This makes visible the political act of *claiming territory* through the archiving of a new potential prize whose creation is rooted in feminist practice and feminist research. Veronica Hollinger (Hollinger, 2010) discusses in Science Fiction (SF) studies the idea of writing a history of all imagined futures within SF literature. Hollinger quotes Mark Currie, who argues (following Derrida) that 'archive fever' is 'a future orientation, or a mode of interpretation, which structures the present' (Currie, 2007:11, qtd in Hollinger, 2010:30); contemporary culture is 'increasingly conscious of its own present as the object of a future memory' (Currie, 2007:27, qtd in Hollinger, 2010: 30).

While this discussion is about a type of literature and therefore may seem out of place in an article in publishing studies, the lens on archives is particularly relevant to the type of future consciousness my own work, Eisenberg's and Fitch's statements invoke. The potential longevity of documents – their potential survival – is only relevant through this consciousness of the *present* as the past memories of the *future*. This future-directed consciousness of 'present as the object of a future memory' structures and informs speculative choices about preservation and collection in the present.

What do archives mean to feminist research? As Cifor and Wood write in their 2017 article on Critical Feminism in the Archives: "Archives have the potential to work towards dismantling the heteronormative, capitalist, racist patriarchy on many fronts and through many avenues" (Cifor and Wood, 2017: 2). They also reflect on 'what Ann Laura Stoler describes as 'epistemological skepticism'', a focus on 'history as narrative, and on history-writing as a charged political act' (Stoler, 2002: 92, qtd in Cifor and Wood, 2017: 14). Cifor and Wood elaborate on this, arguing that: "Rather than conceiving of the archives as a neutral space within which historical materials were housed and from which the writing of history emerged, [the archive] itself becomes an object worthy of scrutiny and theorization" (Cifor and Wood, 2017: 14). This, in line with Bacon's work above, reframes the *writing* of history and the making of an archive as a deliberate, political act of 'claiming territory', and invites the archivist to denaturalise the set of discourses that make up the archival structure. Cifor and Wood make this territory-claiming work visible:

By employing the methodology of feminist historiography, we simultaneously provide rich context for narratives and counter-narratives while necessarily always turning analysis back on our own process. We are self-consciously engaged in a kind of history making about history makers who conceived of their interventions as vital correctives to standard historical practices. (Cifor and Wood, 2017: 3)

As Gifford and McMillan (1997), Christianson & Lumsden (2000) and Norquay (2012) and Marsden (2019) have shown, Scottish women writers have been largely absent from the historical record of Scotland's national literature. This nascent archive of a prize which may never come to be will match in form and intention the redressing and resisting of this absence, as Cifor & Wood assert: "These archival impulses represent a larger pattern of techniques of self- representation which themselves formed a broader project of resisting the marked absence of minoritized populations from the historical record" (Cifor and Wood, 2017: 5).

CONCLUSION

What, then, is the consequence of these reflections for this kind of live embedded award scholarship? Firstly, this article has shown that the collaboration model is more complex than anticipated, partly due to the project's nature as a live contemporary study that actively works towards future transformative impact. This requires a rethinking not only of the positionality of the researcher but of the nature of the documents used and created as part of the research process.

Secondly, in order to aid this rethinking, these types of projects ought to draw more on scholarship in other fields such as feminist research methodology, record formation, archival studies, and science fiction studies. Collaboration with industry on this new type of prize research relies on other prize research, but until now, publishing's understanding of prize *archives* has been insufficient for charting the responsibility and possibilities for this archive. Drawing on a clear understanding of the embedded feminist researcher and the concepts of record formation, this article has demonstrated that collaborative research is messy and nonlinear, and that the helical model of record formation, along with science fiction's understanding of the present as holding potentiality for the future is a good starting point for thinking about the speculative archive.

Finally, a pragmatic outcome from this article has been the realisation that the future archive of the potential future literary award will have no shortage of documents. Future scholars of the Scottish Women Writers Prize (working title) will be able to draw on a rich and varied archive of meeting notes, email correspondence, interview transcripts, as well as Tweets and Facebook comments. Applying the helical model of record formation to this particular case takes away the pressure of creating 'completed' documents, instead reconfiguring the archiving process as not linear but as a loop, and not thinking of the archive as fixed but as living and moving. I cannot know what future archivists will value, so I feel a responsibility to collect as much as possible, and hold on to my triple position as insider, outsider, and 'speculative archivist.' What is a speculative archivist? A speculative archivist describes a researcher who is actively engaged in collecting documents towards a future purpose. The speculative archivist need not know what the purpose of the document collection is. The speculative archivist should resist the urge to narrativise the documents they have access to, resist the desire to set a key starting or end date to the formation of their records, and embrace a fluid, porous, shifting set of temporalities inherent in their work. Understanding the political and social responsibility of a feminist speculative archivist means understanding that the archive holds the potential to rewrite women into history; specifically, that this particular speculative archive can add to other scholars' and activists' efforts to rewrite Scotland's national literary history.

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Popular Music and the State: The British Honours System and its Treatment of Popular Musicians

Emma-Jayne Reekie ^{1*}

¹ *University of Liverpool*, UNITED KINGDOM

*Corresponding Author: ereekie@liverpool.ac.uk

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ABSTRACT

This article examines popular musicians recognised by the British honours system within its first hundred years of operation (1917-2017). Through a statistical analysis of a unique dataset of the honoured musicians, compiled for this article, it will be asserted that to be worthy of an honour entails possessing certain non-musical attributes including economic worth and notions of a particular type of Britishness. The increasing importance of popular music to Britain's cultural life, identity and heritage through the 20th century and early 21st century is vital for understanding why musicians are valued by the government through the conferral of awards. The volume of musicians awarded post-1997 will demonstrate a shift in the perception of popular music by the British government as the creative industries become increasingly important to the British economy and finally, further analysis will reveal that women are underrepresented in the honours system, a trend which reflects wider socio-cultural trends in the recognition of women artists.

Keywords: awards, popular music, cultural economy, honours system, Britishness

INTRODUCTION

“The thing about honours is that you should never ask for them, and you should never really expect them, but I think you should accept them if they are given to you” (Eliscu, 2002). This rather conformist take on the British honours system comes not from a staunch royalist but instead from Mick Jagger, lead singer of the Rolling Stones, infamous for once labelling Queen Elizabeth II the ‘chief witch’ (The Telegraph, 2012). A number of Jagger’s contemporaries have expressed similarly surprising sentiments at their recognition by the honours system. The Who’s Roger Daltry stated that it was ‘really great to be honoured by my country’ (BBC, 2004) and Paul McCartney declared that he was ‘proud to be British’ when he was awarded a knighthood in 1997 (Kelley, 2016). I use the word surprising here because these artists are among the founding fathers of 1960s and 70s rock music, a genre synonymous with rebellion and anti-establishment values. Therefore, as this article shows, the inclusion of these artists in the British honours system is significant and enables analysis of the honours system to illustrate how popular music’s position and value within British society has shifted over time.

Examining the recognition of popular musicians by the honours system furthers our understanding of how popular music has become an important part of the cultural life and identity of Britain as it has transitioned to an economy increasingly reliant on the cultural and creative industries. The gross value added [GVA] of the creative industries increased by 53.1% between 2010 and 2017 and generates 5.5% of the UK economy (DCMS, 2017), and though there have been reservations about the focus on the growth in GVA in the creative economies (Banks, 2018), it must be acknowledged that since the election of New Labour in 1997 the creative industries have been a

focus of policymakers attempting to signify cultural identity during a period of intensified globalisation (Newbiggin, 2014). The music industry has an important role to play in this as, despite the initial negative effects of digitisation in the early 2000s (Jones, 2012; Moreau, 2013), it has continued to strengthen. In 2017, the UK was the second largest exporter of music in the world, contributing £2.6 billion to the British economy (UK Music, 2018). Popular music has become ‘Britain’s most dominant contemporary cultural export and a signifier of a confident modern identity’ (Morra, 2014: 17). The British government have funded a number of projects supporting British music as an export including the Music Export Growth Scheme, which helps artists signed to independent labels by building their profiles in key overseas markets (BPI, 2017). Music tourism has also grown in the UK by 76% between 2013 and 2016 and the popularity of attractions such as musical heritage sites and festivals added £4 billion to the economy in 2016 (UK Music, 2017). The increasing profitability of the music industry and the growing importance of Britain’s cultural identity, particularly in a post-Brexit world, makes an examination of the honours system, as a government pursuit, essential for understanding the government’s changing view on the value of popular music in relation to British cultural identity.

This article will provide an analysis of the popular musicians who have been recognised by the honours system, when they were awarded and the reason for the award over the course of the system’s first one hundred years (1917-2017). The reasons provided for giving an honour to a musician enhances our understanding of what is being valued about their contribution to culture by the awarding institution at particular times indicating which artists have been considered of most value to the British government. This article considers popular music as a commodity, the increase in popular musicians recognised by the honours system under the New Labour government and popular music’s integration into British heritage. Additionally, the honours system’s reflection of the British popular music canon will be explored and an examination of the gender disparities within the system will show that women musicians are less awarded than their male counterparts.

THE BRITISH HONOURS SYSTEM

The British honours system is a set of awards designed to recognise all valuable contributions to British society. As James English has argued, ‘institutionally, the prize functions as a claim to authority and an assertion of that authority’ (2005: 51), the honours system can therefore be understood as a way of the government honouring that which it understands as valuable to Britain. The system was introduced by King George V in 1917 as the first honour to be given to ordinary citizens in recognition of services being rendered as part of the First World War effort. The recognition of ordinary citizens, as opposed to previous honours reserved for the aristocracy, speaks to the foundation of the honours system at a time when the British royal family’s position was precarious as monarchies across Europe were falling¹, revolution was stirring in Russia (Walt, 1996) and socialism was gaining popularity in the UK as the working classes expanded (Thompson, 2004). Additionally, the honours system was the first set of British government awards to recognise women at all levels, a feat labelled ‘a tardy recognition’ even at the time (The Daily Telegraph, 1917). Since the start of the First World War, the King and his wife, Queen Mary, had taken part in a number of events interacting with the public such as inspecting troops and visiting female factory workers (BBC, 2012). The creation of the honours system was not merely recognising all classes of combatants and civilians aiding the efforts of the war but it was also part of a wider effort on behalf of the monarchy to appear dutiful to their subjects, when their royal position was the most uncertain it had been in centuries.

The four categories of the honours system that this article focuses on were all established with the founding of the system in 1917. Member of the British Empire [MBE] ranks as the lowest of the awards in recognition of ‘an outstanding achievement or service to the community’, Officer of the Order of the British Empire [OBE] is the next level, given for ‘having a major local role in any activity’. After this, Commander of the British Empire [CBE] is given ‘for having a prominent but lesser role at national level or a leading role at regional level’ and the Knight/Dame of the British Empire [KBE/DBE] ranks as the highest award, given for ‘a major contribution in any activity’ (GOV.UK, 2019a). Anyone can nominate a living person for an honour so long as the British government can see evidence that the nominee has ‘made achievements in public life’ or ‘committed themselves to serving and helping Britain’ (GOV.UK, 2019b). Once the nomination has been made it will be passed onto an honours committee who will decide whether or not the honour should be given and what level of honour should be awarded. There are a number of honours committees who review nominations made for specific activities. The Arts and Media committee, for example, review nominated musicians, and once that committee decision has been made it will be passed onto the Main committee for further review. Each committee is made up of official members, who are senior civil servants, and independent members, who are independent of the government. An independent chairman leads each committee and a representative of 10 Downing Street is invited to attend each

¹ Pre-WW1, Europe had 19 monarchies and 3 republics; post-WW1, there were 14 monarchies and 16 republics (De Wijk, 2015: 101).

committee meeting. All nominations are subject to further checks by various government departments, including HM Revenue & Customs, to ensure that no nominee could bring the system into disrepute. Committee decisions are then reviewed by the Prime Minister who will present the approved nominations list to the ruling monarch who ultimately accepts the nominations. Successful honourees are announced twice a year, at the monarch's official birthday – the second Saturday of June – and at New Year.² Recipients of the awards are given a physical trophy in the form of a medal and are entitled to use post-nominal letters [MBE, OBE, etc.]. In the case of receiving a knighthood or damehood, the recipient is also granted the use of the title Sir or Dame. All awardees are invited to collect their medal from a member of the royal family in a ceremony at the monarch's official London residence Buckingham Palace. The accompanying medal has come to be synonymous with the award due to media coverage reporting high profile figures receiving their honour from a member of the royal family, or being knighted with a ceremonial sword in the case of a knighthood or damehood being awarded, and then posing outside of the palace with their medals. Medals are 'objects capable of embodying or giving material shape to the honour bestowed' (English, 2005: 156), and the medal given by the honours system has not only come to visually define the system but has also become a part of popular culture. Paul McCartney and George Harrison, for example, wore their MBE medals on their infamous military regalia for the *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* album front cover, further imbuing the medal with meaning beyond its original purpose.

The British honours system is ubiquitous in British society and espouses a particular British identity. The notion of Britishness, however, is one that is almost impossible to define owing to the complexity of Britain's identity as 'a multinational state with an increasingly diverse population' (Asari et al, 2008: 24) and its history of Empire and imperialism (Lloyd, 2001). The honours system's position as an award that crosses class boundaries to recognise citizens from all walks of life, a rarity in a society so heavily governed by class structures, pays tribute to the multifaceted nature of British identity. It must be noted, however, that the inclusion of the word 'Empire' within the honours system further complicates the notion of what it is to be British. The honours, as orders of the British Empire, allude to a Britain that no longer exists, but is by no means rid of the implications of its colonial past that enabled Britain's expansive Empire. There have been public calls for the system to remove mention of Empire from the awards (Davies, 2017), and Britons who have been nominated for honours have rejected them because of the continued impact caused by the actions of the British Empire (Zephaniah, 2003; Gayle, 2017). The recognition of popular musicians within the honours system can be viewed as a way for the British government to signify a particular notion of Britishness that has helped to form part of contemporary Britain's national and global identity.

METHODOLOGY

As previously noted, this article offers a statistical analysis of the popular musicians who have been awarded by the honours system. The term 'popular musician' is ambiguous and open to interpretation, so for the purpose of this research the term has been restricted to cover a person whose music, in the form of a single or album, has charted in the UK Top 100. The UK's official charts are archived, dating back to its beginning in 1952 and there are only two musicians awarded honours before this date, both of whom entered the charts at later points securing their inclusion in this research (Official Charts, 2018). The stipulation of what constitutes a popular musician has omitted some of the honours received by recipients who are considered to have made significant contributions to British popular music culture, such as radio DJ John Peel and Max Hole, CEO of Universal Music Group. Inglis' work (2010) examines the links between politics, music and celebrity through the lens of the honours system and explores what the individual musician and awarding politician can gain from the award, expanding upon existing work examining the relationship between music and politics (Bennett et al, 1993; Hague et al, 2008; Street, 1986; Street, 2003). This article builds upon Inglis' work and considers how the government's recognition of popular musicians reflects the increasing importance of popular music to Britain's cultural identity and economy. The specific focus on popular musicians does, however, limit this study. Musicians involved in musical genres not traditionally recognised in the charts, such as Channi Singh who was awarded an OBE in 2012 for services to Bhangra music, have been omitted from this research. Consequently, this work cannot be viewed as a comprehensive overview of all involved in popular music. Instead, it is an overview of those musicians who adhere to notions of mainstream popular success.

This article draws upon a unique dataset developed for this research that compiles together the 88 popular musicians awarded over the honours system first one hundred years of operation (1917-2017). The dataset [see Appendix] provides the reasons for their awards, the person's age when awarded, their gender and level of award. Analysing these characteristics has allowed for a richer insight into what the British government has valued about the musicians it has awarded. Data collection for this analysis was hindered by the lack of transparency within the

² The announcement of awards on the Monarch's official birthday and at New Year dates back to Queen Victoria's reign.

honours system, indeed Frey found that there was ‘only partial, spotty and inconsistent evidence available from scattered sources’ (2005: 6) about the conferral of honours. This led to the House of Commons’s Public Administration Select Committee conducting a report about the system in 2012. The report found that ‘many members of the public do not view the honours system as open or fair’ (House of Commons, 2012: 10) and in order to combat this perception, the government have released bi-annual lists of honours recipients and the reasons for their awards through their website since 2013. Consequently, data collection post-2012 was straightforward in comparison to the array of sources necessary to gather the same information pre-2012. Individuals awarded by the honours system have always been listed in the London newspaper *The London Evening Standard*, however, only the recipients’ names and level of honour is listed, not the reason for their award. Furthermore, as hundreds of people are given honours in each of the bi-annual award presentations, it is difficult to locate the musicians, since all awardees are separated by level of award rather than their profession and/or reason for the award. To identify the reason given for an award, I used a variety of sources including newspaper archives and biographies and found that the reasons were always listed as “services to...”. I also calculated the age recipients were when they received their awards and took note of their gender.

POPULAR MUSIC AS COMMODITY: THE BEATLES

The first two popular musicians to be awarded honours were Gracie Fields, given a CBE in 1938 for services to entertainment³, and George Formby who was awarded an OBE in 1946 for his contribution to the war effort in the capacity of an Entertainments National Service Association [ENSA] performer providing entertainment for British armed forces personnel during the Second World War. Neither Fields nor Formby were awarded for their music. Formby’s performances were considered valuable insofar as they provided entertainment for soldiers living through the horror of the Second World War and Fields’ honour recognised her as a member of the entertainment community at the height of her popularity in the 1930s alongside other state recognition that she was using her public position to carry out charitable work. Fields’ and Formby’s positions as entertainers were valued by the government not for art’s sake but for the platform it allowed them to carry out charitable work. The Beatles were the next musicians to be awarded in 1965 by the Prime Minister Harold Wilson. Similar to Fields and Formby twenty years earlier, each Beatle (George Harrison, 22; John Lennon, 25; Paul McCartney, 23; Ringo Starr, 25), was honoured with an MBE for their services to export revenues, rather than, as might be expected, their music or cultural impact.

The lack of popular musicians awarded in the twenty-year gap between Formby and The Beatles is indicative of how the British government viewed popular music during that time; it was something not significant enough to acknowledge. The Beatles’ honours, however, came at a time when their cultural impact was at its height. In 1964 Beatlemania and the so-called British Invasion⁴ were in full swing. The Beatles were dominating charts in the UK and abroad having released two studio albums, *Please Please Me* and *With The Beatles*, the previous year and their first feature film *A Hard Day’s Night* and its accompanying album in 1964. It was clear that ‘commercially, as well as musically, the Beatles were fast becoming a global phenomenon’ (Muncie, 2000: 40), something that British politicians could not ignore. Richard Crossman, a cabinet member in Wilson’s government, wrote in his private diaries that ‘he thought the decision to give the group their MBEs was justified as The Beatles were ‘useful’ to the government’ (Cloonan, 2000: 143). Wilson’s decision to award The Beatles further elevated the band to a status previously inaccessible to a pop star. The award conferred a sense of respectability on the band while also demonstrating the government’s ability to understand the value – both economic and cultural – of popular music and culture to the post-war generation.

However, public reaction to The Beatles’ MBEs was mixed. The *New Musical Express* [NME], the UK’s most read weekly music magazine, celebrated The Beatles’ honour by writing a letter to the band stating:

We’re glad you accepted it. This means that your teenage fans, who made you, can share in the honour. And these days, when teenagers only seem to get bad publicity, how pleasant to have something good happen (Gray, 1965: 3).

Antithetically to this, however, the announcement of The Beatles’ MBEs was also met with hostility and outrage. Cyril Hearn, awarded an MBE in 1944 for his bravery while deployed in Italy during the Second World War, returned his award claiming that the Queen had been ‘ill-advised’ in her recognition of The Beatles and that

³ Fields had been previously awarded as an Officer of the Venerable Order of St. John for her charity work, a British royal order of chivalry implemented by Queen Victoria, and was later upgraded to a Damehood in 1979.

⁴ The British Invasion was a cultural phenomenon, spearheaded by The Beatles in 1963, of exports of popular culture gaining mass popularity in the US. Bands such as The Rolling Stones, The Kinks and The Yardbirds, British film, television and fashion followed The Beatles across the Atlantic and achieved great success throughout the rest of the 1960s.

it was a 'prostitution of the order' (Guardian, 1969: 20). Other members of the public at the time commented that they saw the honour as a 'political effort on the part of Wilson' and that 'it shows how little the MBE stands for these days...you'd expect them only to be awarded if they'd done something for the country and, quite honestly, I don't see what The Beatles have done' (BBC, 2015). Such statements are testament to the attitude towards popular music at this time. There was a clear generational divide between young people and their parents as a result of 'the decomposition of the pre-war working class', increased leisure opportunities and the Americanisation of British youth culture through mass mediated forms (Frith, 1983: 184). At the time of The Beatles' 1965 honours, popular music was a counterculture intended for youth; a far cry from the wide-spread, mainstream success it enjoys today. The Wilson government's decision to include popular music in the honours system helped to legitimise and place value upon popular music at a state level. By the end of the 1960s, 'pop's power was publicly realized' (Frith, 1983: 4), and arguably Wilson's recognition of The Beatles was a small part of the process that allowed popular music to surpass its status as a teenage pastime and instead become an integral part of British culture and identity. In retrospect, The Beatles are exactly the type of popular musician that the government want to be associated with through the honours system because of their musical and extra-musical impact.

John Lennon returned his MBE medal in 1969 as a symbolic form of protest, highlighting the difficulties of the state associating with popular musicians. The honours system, as an awarding body tied tightly to the state and its politics takes risk in its recognition of individuals who live within the public eye as the politics of individuals can change and adapt resulting in an opposition of views between the awarded and the awarder. Attached to Lennon's returned medal was a hand-signed note reading:

Your Majesty, I am returning my MBE as a protest against Britain's involvement in the Nigeria-Biafra thing, against our support of America in Vietnam and against 'Cold Turkey' slipping down the charts. With love, John Lennon of Bag (The Guardian, 1969).

This public and satire ridden return of an honour was embarrassing for the political establishment and the honours system. In the face of all the publicity surrounding the return of the medal, including front-page press coverage in national newspapers, the government attempted to assert its power and position with a spokesperson for Prime Minister Harold Wilson telling the press, 'that although Lennon had returned his insignia, he would not be able to divest himself of the order. He still remains an MBE.' (Evans, 1969: 1). Lennon could return his symbolic representation of the honour, but only the state could officially revoke the honour and post-nominal letters. Despite this, Lennon's act of defiance in the return of his medal did not diminish his public standing, and the symbolism deployed in his action suitably distanced Lennon from the honours system and the institution it represented. The rejection of an award 'has always been a delicate and risky manoeuvre' that has the potential to alienate the participating community, but Lennon succeeded with his rejection because he had 'managed to have already accumulated a wealth of symbolic capital' (English, 2005: 218-219) through the unexpected direction that The Beatles had taken in their musical development from pop band to serious musicians with accompanying anti-establishment actions and views by the late 1960s.

Lennon's return of his MBE medal appears to have acted as a steep learning curve for the honours system. The Beatles demonstrated how the unpredictable nature of popular music and the controlled and precise image that the honours system projects were not necessarily compatible. It took several decades for The Beatles' contemporaries to start receiving honours after Lennon's act of defiance, starting with Eric Clapton getting an OBE in 1994 for 'contribution to British life'. Like The Beatles, Eric Clapton was part of the British Invasion of the 1960s as a member of rock band The Yardbirds. After leaving the band, Clapton went on to have significant commercial success with a number of other bands, including Cream, and as a solo artist having released over twenty solo studio albums since 1970. The reason for Clapton's award is interesting since, although it appears all encompassing and therefore rather ambiguous, it can be assumed that despite Clapton's music not explicitly being recognised, he has been deemed sufficiently significant to have had an impact on the cultural life of Britain. Clapton was awarded the higher honour of a CBE in 2004 and told British newspaper *The Telegraph* that he would have found it hard to accept the award when he was younger but that it was now 'the icing on the cake of his career' (The Telegraph, 2004).

Ten other musicians received honours in the twenty-nine year period between The Beatles and Clapton and stand as much more traditional options for the honours system. For example, Vera Lynn, affectionally known as 'the forces' sweetheart' due to her work with ENSA entertaining troops during the Second World War, was awarded an OBE in 1969 and upgraded to a Damehood in 1975 for her services to the RAF association and charitable services. In 1980, Tommy Steele, Britain's first rock 'n' roll artist in the 1950s, was awarded an OBE for services to drama and entertainment and Cliff Richards was awarded an OBE for services to music and charity. Lynn's award is similar to that of Fields and Formby, and though both Steele and Richards can be classified as more similar to The Beatles than Fields and Formby, they nonetheless occupy a different space in the musical world. Steele and Richards both predate The Beatles and while Steele's significance in the history of popular music

pales in comparison to The Beatles, Richards has retained relevance in the public eye. Richards' public profile is one that is less rebellious and more traditional; he frequently talks about his Christian faith and has avoided the sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll lifestyle stereotype of his counterparts. Clapton's award, therefore, seems to be indicative of a change in the government's perception of the more rebellious figures of the 1960's rock era. Despite the time that had passed since its initial success, the era had retained social relevance, beyond its economic success, that the state could not ignore.

THE NEW LABOUR GOVERNMENT AND BRITISH HERITAGE

Of all the popular musicians recognised by the honours system, 75% of these were awarded post-1997. The British general election of 1997 saw New Labour come into power under the leadership of Tony Blair, after eighteen years of a Conservative government. Blair was the first baby-boomer Prime Minister who, similar to Wilson, recognised the value of popular music and culture. Throughout the 1997 election, Blair focused on attracting the youth vote and capitalised on the popular Britpop movement engaging with artists like Blur, inviting frontman Damon Albarn to the houses of parliament, and attending the BRIT Awards to present a lifetime achievement award to David Bowie. The New Labour government 'attempted an unprecedented incorporation of culture into governance' (Brouillette, 2014: 1) because they recognised the economic and cultural significance that the creative industries represented. Blair said that he 'not only regards music as culturally important, but also sees the record business as more significant than mining or shipbuilding' (Clark-Meads, 1995: 40), recognising that Britain was moving from its traditional industries, which contracted under previous Tory governments, to an economy centred around the creative industries.

In 1997, at the age of 55 Paul McCartney was elevated from MBE to knighthood, Mick Jagger became a knight in 2003 at 60, Roger Daltry and Ray Davies were both given CBEs in 2004 at the ages of 60 and 59 respectively and Jimmy Page was awarded an OBE in 2005 at the age of 61. Unlike The Beatles, these artists were explicitly awarded for their 'services to music' rather than their economic value. The recognition of these artists solidifies an emergent British identity that is:

[I]ncreasingly identified in nostalgic social and cultural terms, not only with the much-celebrated legacy of the 1960s and the anti-institutional legacy of the 1970s – but with the very institutionalised cultural signifiers of Empire it is assumed to have overthrown (Morra, 2014: 170).

These bastions of rock have changed as they have aged; gaining honours in their later years demonstrates not only their continuing musical legacies but also that they have entered into a new social class of the wealthy elite that has given them time to mature and enter an institution against which their younger selves may have protested. The Who's lead singer Roger Daltry, famous for their anti-establishment anthem *My Generation*, said that he did not expect his CBE but accepted it despite his 'criticisms of the establishment', because of his respect for the Queen, calling her "an amazing woman" who would 'probably fall off her podium if she heard The Who's songs' (BBC, 2005). However, those within the honours system do not always necessarily see the value in those they choose to recognise. It was reported that the Queen refused to personally present Mick Jagger with his knighthood because of his anti-establishment views, alternative lifestyle and previous statements where he'd called the Queen the 'chief witch' and announced that 'anarchy is the only slight glimmer of hope' (The Telegraph, 2012). What's more, Jagger's bandmate Keith Richards publicly scorned Jagger's acceptance of the award proclaiming that he 'thought it was ludicrous to take one of those gongs from the establishment when they did their very best to throw us in jail' (BBC, 2003a). Jagger's knighthood displays a tension between traditional British authority and cultural icons that is ultimately overcome by economic value. Jagger's 2003 transformation into Sir Mick Jagger marked the end of a remarkable year for the Rolling Stones who finished a 116 date world tour playing to over 3.4 million people which grossed almost \$300 million (BBC, 2003b), a revenue and enduring popularity that arguably could not be ignored by a government promoting Britain's cultural economies.

The rising importance of the creative industries to the British economy ensured that the role of popular music evolved and became folded into the nation's heritage. As Branderello and Janssen note, 'heritage as a bridge to the past has translated into an economic resource' (2013: 3), and popular music as heritage was displayed at two major events that were witnessed on a global stage in 2002 and 2012, Queen Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee and the London Olympics. The 2002 jubilee had a number of events over a 'jubilee weekend', which was extended to a four day public holiday for the occasion. On Monday 3rd June a celebration of live music called the 'Party at the Palace' took place at Buckingham Palace with 12,000 guests lining the adjacent mall to watch in the presence of the royal family. One million gathered around the palace to watch on large screens, with an additional 15 million domestic viewers and 200 million worldwide (Duffett, 2004: 490). The event saw the recently knighted Cliff Richard and Paul McCartney, Dame Shirley Bassey and Eric Clapton perform alongside a number of artists who

would go on to be honoured after the event: Ray Davies, Brian May, The Corrs, Rod Stewart, Joe Cocker and Annie Lennox. The Party at the Palace has been described as a hegemonic moment (Duffett, 2004: 494), but what was also clear at this event was that popular music was being acknowledged, on a world stage, as a valuable and defining feature of British culture and society. Britain of the new millennium, still coming to terms with its loss of empire and the accompanying power it had gathered in the previous millennium, instead focused its attention on its remaining valuable exports: its culture. Popular music's inclusion as a valuable part of modern Britain's heritage demonstrates the government's commitment to the promotion of its cultural industries as 'the heritage inevitably reflects the governing assumptions of its time and context' (Hall, 1999: 6). This was further reinforced a decade later during the 2012 London Olympics opening ceremony where British popular music was a central, narrative force of the opening and closing ceremonies, the latter being dubbed 'A Symphony of British Music', that showcased 'an elegant mash-up of British music, a rich tapestry of British culture and life' which was watched by 23 million in the UK and 750 million worldwide (Tzanelli, 2013). Similar to the Party at the Palace, there were several artists performing who had been awarded honours, including Annie Lennox, Paul McCartney and Barry and Robin Gibb of the Bee Gees. The central inclusion of popular music at these two national events intended for global consumption demonstrates the importance of popular culture, and in particular popular music, to Britain as part of its identity and as a global export. It can be deduced, therefore, that the honouring of popular musicians by the state is part of a wider acknowledgement of the importance of popular music to the UK in the twenty first century.

Popular musicians have continued to be honoured under the Conservative governments that have succeeded the Labour governments of the late 1990s and early 2000s. For example, Adele and Ed Sheeran were awarded MBEs in 2013 and 2017 respectively. Adele [aged 25] for her services to music and Sheeran [aged 26] for his services to music and charity. Alongside The Beatles, Adele and Ed Sheeran are the youngest popular musicians to ever be awarded which, considering Lennon's change of heart over the acceptance of his MBE, appears a surprising gamble for the government to take. Unlike The Beatles, both Adele and Ed Sheeran had been established artists in the music industry for at least five years before being given their awards and are pop stars rather than the rock icons The Beatles turned into. There are distinctions in popular music between rock music and pop music as both have become more established and accepted in the mainstream. Rock has become a 'cultural rival to traditional high culture' (Gracyk, 2000: 214), due partly to its social, cultural and political importance, whereas pop is still subjected to Adornian criticism of its commodified and simplistic nature (Adorno, 2001). In a similar way to The Beatles in 1965, Adele and Sheeran have both significantly contributed to the British economy through global exports of their music (Smirke, 2017) and their inclusion in the honours system at a young age suggests that, for a British government championing its cultural exports, age no longer matters in the same way when the artist in question is likely to be less controversial and has proven their ability to consistently achieve chart success on a global scale.

GENDER DISPARITIES AND THE POPULAR MUSIC CANON

Adele's 2013 honour marked her as only the 21st female popular musician to be awarded within the honours system. Indeed, of all the popular musicians awarded by the honours system, 67% were men while only 33% were women. The lack of women popular musicians recognised by the honours system is arguably a reflection of the status of women popular musicians in British society and the British music industry. The lack of women receiving cultural prizes and awards reflects a wider disparity in rewarding women in arts and culture and is not exclusive to music (McIntyre and Cheng, 2019). Marsden found that the lack of women authors awarded in Scotland's Saltire Society Literary Awards is 'reflective of the status of women writers within Scottish literary and publishing culture more widely' (2019: 48). Similarly, 'women have never occupied an originating position in the musical canon' (Morra, 2014: 110), due mostly to the positioning of 'serious' music as a male domain which has been perpetuated by the British music press which itself is predominantly authored by male journalists (Davies, 2001). There is a perception that the male-centric consumption of popular music 'has been linked with other forms of social behaviour in which patriarchal discourses and practices of female exscription[...] is ingrained' (Bennett, 2013: 36). Indeed, many of the perceived social practices that accompany music fandom, such as record collecting and attending gigs, are considered to be male pursuits and even when they are practiced by women they are diminished to a lower status because they are seen as less serious when carried out by the stereotypical female fan – the teenybopper motivated by her adolescent desire rather than musical taste (Frith, 1983: 228).

Popular women musicians tend to be awarded in the honours system at a younger age than their male counterparts. **Figure 1** shows the distributions of popular musicians awarded by gender and by their age, separated into decades. The age bracket of 20-29 is the only time when there are more women awarded than men, with the exception of Joy Beverley of The Beverley Sisters [a girl band popular throughout the 1950s and 1960s], who was the only person to be awarded over the age of 80. Men are most likely to be awarded when they are aged between

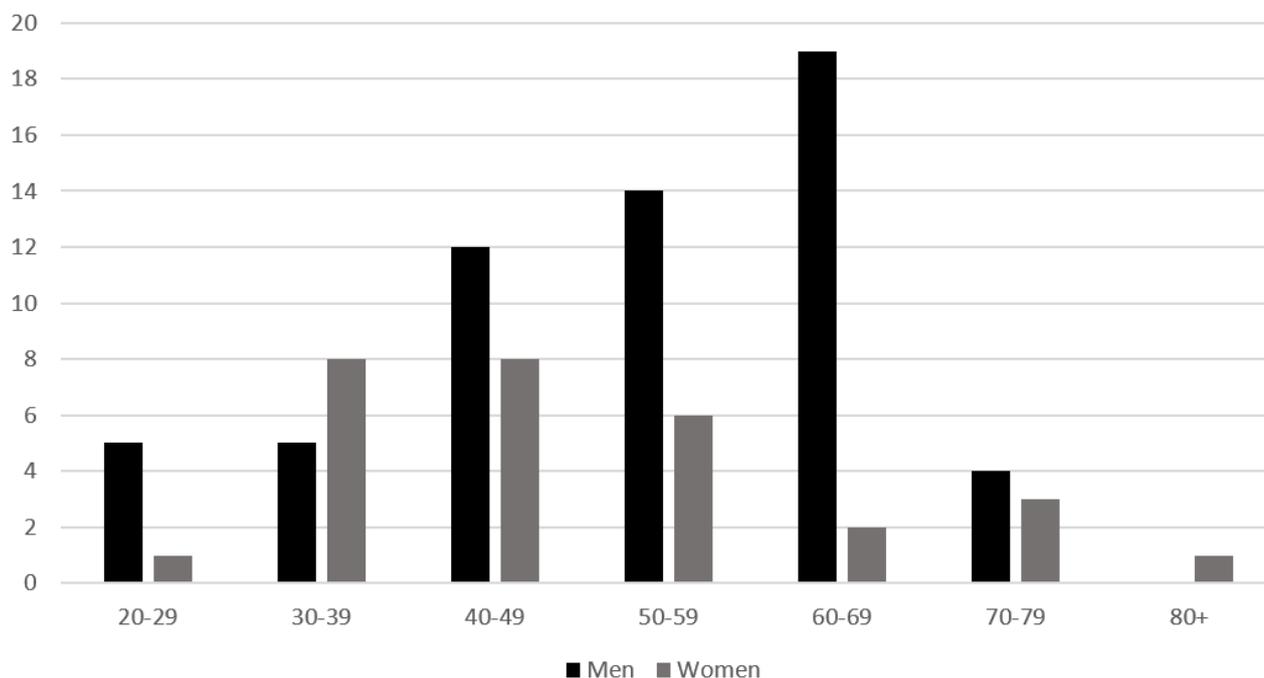


Figure 1. Men and Women Popular Musicians Awarded by Age

60 and 69, whereas women are more likely to be awarded between the ages of 30 and 49. The recognition of women at a younger age than men is indicative of how women are treated in the public eye as they age compared to their male counterparts. The male dominated world of popular music offers advantages to its male performers who are granted an easier succession to the echelons of the popular music canon than their female counterparts who are subjected to the ‘current constellation of historical, social, cultural and biological perceptions [that] still look on women and ageing as mostly problematic, disempowering and in consequence, negatively’ (Jennings, 2012: 36). Women are expected to retain their youthfulness in a way that men are not which impacts upon a woman’s ability to continue performing to the same standard as when she first entered the public eye.

It should be acknowledged, however, that an honour at any level is not an innovative award; it does not recognise an artist at the outset of their career because it is not considered an artistic award. The honours are not making creative judgement, but they are recognising lasting cultural importance which is perhaps why those who have been awarded, such as Ray Davies, Graham Nash, Mick Jagger and so on, are already part of an accepted popular music canon. It also helps to explain why women are under-represented as the honours system is reflecting the values of the music industry, not contributing to it; they are merely cementing it for its own means. The notion of value is integral to both the honours system and the popular music canon, though both value different attributes. To be included in the popular music canon, a musician must display their worth through their innovation whereas to be included in the honours system, a musician must meet a different set of judgement criteria. To be awarded an honour, a popular musician must adhere to values of the canon but also demonstrate certain non-musical attributes including the ability to not bring the system into disrepute, economic worth and notions of a particular type of Britishness. This idea of being worthy of the award ties into the notion of the popular music canon, but there is also something to be said about the institution itself. Watson and Anand assert that the ‘relationship between canon and institution is reflexive’ and consequently that while the ‘canon is legitimised by judgements made by institutions, the accuracy of canonical judgements often decides the continuing legitimacy of institutions’ (2006: 54). This suggests that the process of deciding who to award an honour is somewhat of a double edged sword. The British government and monarchy, those with the final say on who is awarded an honour, need to demonstrate that they understand what is culturally important to the United Kingdom whilst simultaneously balancing which musicians meet their specific requirements.

CONCLUSION

In an interview with *Smash Hits* magazine in 1985, Mick Jagger was asked why he thought he had not yet been knighted. His response was “I can’t think of one pop singer who’s been knighted. And if they did start knighting them, I’m sure I’d be at the back of the queue.” (Hibbert, 1985: 36). Bob Geldof was in fact given an honorary knighthood the following year in recognition of his charity work, but it took another decade for popular musicians to start being honoured at a regular pace. This article has shown how the recognition of popular musicians by the

honours system, and by extension the British government and monarchy, demonstrates popular music's shifting position within British society over its first hundred years of operation, from wartime entertainment to export revenue to a culturally and economically valuable part of contemporary Britain's identity, and offers some explanation as to why this has happened. As illustrated, the popular musicians who have been honoured are those who possess certain attributes at particular times. The Beatles, among the first to be honoured, were awarded solely for their export revenues in 1965, but the increase in the amount of awards post-1997 illustrates New Labour's determination to champion the creative industries as an economic resource at the dawn of the twenty-first century as Britain left its industrial history in the previous millennium. The honours system reinforces the popular music canon; it recognises those who fit within the definition of mainstream success which allows the British government to trade off the popularity and goodwill that the British public already feels towards a particular group of musicians. This ultimately contributes to the lack of female popular musicians recognised within the honours system because it reflects an unequal popular music canon. As the music industry continues to be a significant contributor to the British economy and identity through its global exports, the musicians recognised by the honours system should continue to be examined to help us further understand which artists the British government considers to be economically and culturally valuable and important enough to be recognised as part of Britain's cultural heritage.

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APPENDIX

Popular Musicians Awarded by the Honours System 1917-2017

<i>Year Awarded</i>	<i>Name and Level of Award</i>	<i>Reason for Award</i>	<i>Age When Awarded</i>	<i>Gender</i>
1938/1979	Gracie Fields, CBE/DBE	Services to entertainment	40/81	Female
1946	George Formby, OBE	Contribution to the war effort	42	Male
1965	John Lennon, MBE	Export revenues	25	Male
1965/1997	Paul McCartney, MBE/KBE	Export revenues/Services to music	23/55	Male
1965	George Harrison, MBE	Export revenues	22	Male
1965	Ringo Starr, MBE	Export revenues	25	Male
1965/1996	Frankie Vaughan, OBE/CBE	Youth services	37	Male
1969/1975	Vera Lynn, OBE/DBE	Services to the RAF association and other charities/Charitable services	48/54	Female
1970	Kenny Lynch, OBE	Services to entertainment	32	Male
1979	Olivia Newton-John, OBE	Services to charity and the entertainment industry	31	Female
1979/1997	Cleo Laine, OBE/DBE	Services to music	52/70	Female
1980/1996	Cliff Richard, OBE/KBE	Services to music and charity	40/55	Male
1980	Tommy Steele, OBE	Services to drama and entertainment	44	Male
1986	Bob Geldof, KBE (Honorary)	In recognition of charity work	35	Male
1991	Chris Barber, OBE	Services to music	61	Male
1993	Tim Finn, OBE	Contribution to music	41	Male
1993	Neil Finn, OBE	Contribution to music	37	Male
1994/2004	Eric Clapton, OBE/CBE	Contribution to British life/Services to music	49/59	Male
1994/2000	Shirley Bassey, CBE/DBE	Services to music/Services to entertainment	57/63	Female
1995	Elaine Paige, OBE	Contributions to musical theatre	47	Female
1996/1998	Elton John, CBE/KBE	Services to music and charitable services	49/51	Male
1996	Van Morrison, OBE	Services to music	51	Male
1998	Petula Clark, CBE	Services to music	66	Female
1999	David Essex, OBE	Outstanding services to music	52	Male
1999/2006	Tom Jones, OBE/KBE	Services to music	59/66	Male
1999	Dusty Springfield, OBE	Services to the music industry	60	Female
2000	Mark Knopfler, OBE	Services to music	51	Male
2000/2009	Courtney Pine, OBE/CBE	Services to jazz music	36/45	Male
2000	Lonnie Donegan, MBE	Services to pop music	69	Male
2000	Noddy Holder, MBE	Services to show business	54	Male
2000	Lulu, OBE	Services to the British music industry	52	Female
2001	Daniel O'Donnell, MBE	Services to the music industry and charity	40	Male
2001	Acker Bilk, MBE	Services to the music industry	72	Male
2001	Joan Armatrading, MBE	Services to music	51	Female
2002/2017	Sade Adu, OBE/CBE	Services to music	43	Female
2002	Barbara Dickinson, OBE	Services to music and drama	55	Female
2002	Gordon Sumner (Sting), CBE	Services to music	51	Male
2003	David Gilmour, CBE	Services to music	57	Male
2003	Jools Holland, OBE	Services to music industry	45	Male
2003	Mick Jagger, KBE	Services to music	60	Male
2003	Gerry Marsden, MBE	Services to charity	61	Male
2003	Gary Brooker, MBE	Services to charity	58	Male
2003	Errol Brown, MBE	Services to popular music	60	Male
2004	Roger Daltrey, CBE	Services to music, entertainment industry and charity	60	Male
2004/2017	Ray Davies, CBE/KBE	Services to the music industry/Services to the arts	59/72	Male
2004	Barry Gibb, CBE	Services to music	55	Male
2004	Robin Gibb, CBE	Services to music	55	Male
2004	Maurice Gibb, CBE	Services to music	60	Male
2004	Brian Bennett, OBE	Services to music	64	Male
2004	Bruce Welch, OBE	Services to music	63	Male
2005	Jimmy Page, OBE	Services to music industry	61	Male
2005	Brian May, CBE	Services to music industry and charity	58	Male
2005	Andrea Corr, MBE (honorary)	Services to music and charity	31	Female
2005	Caroline Corr, MBE (honorary)	Services to music and charity	32	Female

<i>Year Awarded</i>	<i>Name and Level of Award</i>	<i>Reason for Award</i>	<i>Age When Awarded</i>	<i>Gender</i>
2005	Jim Corr, MBE (honorary)	Services to music and charity	35	Male
2005	Sharon Corr, MBE (honorary)	Services to music and charity	41	Female
2005	John Mayall, OBE	Services to British music	72	Male
2005	Midge Ure, OBE	Services to music and charity	52	Male
2006	Paul Hewson (Bono), KBE (honorary)	Services to music and humanitarian causes	46	Male
2006	Babette Beverley, MBE	Services to music	79	Female
2006	Joy Beverley, MBE	Services to music	82	Female
2006	Teddie Beverley, MBE	Services to music	79	Female
2006	Eddi Reader, MBE	Services to music	47	Female
2007	Beverley Knight, MBE	Services to music	34	Female
2007	Joe Cocker, OBE	Services to music	63	Male
2007	Rod Stewart, CBE	Services to music	62	Male
2008	Kylie Minogue, OBE	Services to music	40	Female
2009	Robert Plant, CBE	Services to music	61	Male
2009	John Martyn, OBE	Services to music	60	Male
2010	Rick Parfitt, OBE	Services to music and charity	62	Male
2010	Francis Rossi, OBE	Services to music and charity	61	Male
2010	Graham Nash, OBE	Services to music and charitable services	68	Male
2010	Jet Harris, MBE	Services to music	71	Male
2010	John Cale, OBE	Services to music and the arts	68	Male
2011	Bryan Ferry, CBE	Services to music	66	Male
2011	Annie Lennox, OBE	Services to charity	56	Female
2012	Gary Barlow, OBE	Services to music and charity	41	Male
2013	Adele Adkins, MBE	Services to music	25	Female
2013	PJ Harvey, MBE	Services to music	43	Female
2014	Katherine Jenkins, OBE	Services to music and charity	32	Female
2014	Eliza Carthy, MBE	Services to folk music	38	Female
2014	Cerys Matthews, MBE	Services to music	45	Female
2016	Damon Albarn, OBE	Services to music	47	Male
2016	Clifford Price (Goldie), MBE	Services to music and young people	50	Male
2017	Marty Wilde, MBE	Services to popular music	78	Male
2017	Ed Sheeran, MBE	Services to music and charity	26	Male
2017	Emeli Sande, MBE	Services to music	30	Female
2017	Sandie Shaw, MBE	Services to music	70	Female



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'Has Anybody Heard of it?!!!': The Constable Trophy for Northern Writers and its Prize Environment

Will Smith ^{1*}

¹ *University of Stirling*, UNITED KINGDOM

*Corresponding Author: dr.will.smith@me.com

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ABSTRACT

Book awards exist to direct prestige within an economy of cultural power. They are 'a claim to authority' over a given field (English, 2005: 51). As such, they exist 'as a solution to some claimed problem' in the wider field (Best, 2008: 13). The position of an award's given solution will often invoke other book awards, in what Claire Squires terms the 'prize environment' (Squires, 2013: 299) or English calls a 'subsidiary cultural marketplace' remarking on the 'internal logic of the awards scene' (2005: 54). This article seeks to recover the history of the Constable Trophy, a now-lapsed literary prize awarded between 1977 and 1992 to demonstrate the work of recognition performed during the award, and how the prize has a legacy within the wider UK prize environment. Working with a wide variety of sources, ranging from personal correspondence with key agents for the trophy to newspaper coverage and the novels published as a result of the prize, the article demonstrates the continuing significance of the trophy as a counter to the 'London-centric' publishing industry.

Keywords: constable trophy, northern writers, literary prizes, publishing, awards and prizes

INTRODUCTION

Book awards exist to direct prestige within an economy of cultural power. They are 'a claim to authority' over a given field (English, 2005: 51). As such, they exist 'as a solution to some claimed problem' in that given field, or in the field's boundaries (Best, 2008: 13). The position of an award's stated solution will often invoke other book awards, in what Claire Squires terms the 'prize environment' (Squires, 2013: 299) or what English calls a 'subsidiary cultural marketplace' revolving around the 'internal logic of the awards scene' (2005: 54). For long-running awards the solution the award offers will still need to be articulated for the award to garner attention, though in practice this dimension can become muted as a result of confidence or over-confidence in a prize's regular re-enactment appearing self-explanatory. The inception of an award is the prime moment to spell out the problem being addressed, and the solution provided. This is the moment when the inadequacy of the status quo necessitates that the prize becomes an agent of 'redistributive justice' (English, 2005: 265). This article will analyse the history of the Constable Trophy, a now-defunct literary prize which operated between 1975 and 1992, where the London-based publisher Constable sought to recognise, and publish, the best unpublished novel by a Northern writer. It will examine the work the Trophy did in recognising and developing literature in the North of England, creating its own networks, before moving on to consider the legacy of the Trophy within a broad environment of awards and initiatives seeking to answer the same claimed problem of geographic under-representation in the literary industry.

THE NORTH AND PUBLISHER PRIZES, PAST AND PRESENT

In 2017, Stefan Tobler, founder of the publisher And Other Stories, announced a new Northern Book Prize, to represent and recognise the work of writers based in the North of England. Awarded for the first time in the summer of 2018, Tobler articulated the prize as a response to how 'the publishing industry is much too focused on one city' (cited in Wood, 2017). Perhaps uniquely, Tobler does not position the award as a definitive response but merely as one corrective. The new award's formation does not suggest the problem is new. Recognising that the problem of a London-centric publishing industry has a history, Tobler cites Muriel Spark's depiction of London-centric publishing in the 1950s in *A Far Cry From Kensington*. This connection is more apt than a reading of Spark's novel alone would suggest. *Far Cry* marked Spark's departure from her previous publisher Bodley Head to publish with another prominent London-based publisher Constable.¹ Constable's company profile in *British Book News* notes how, despite being a smaller press than Bodley Head, Constable's marketing and publication focus on *Far Cry* meant an increase in Spark's sales (Menkes, 1989: 467). The very same profile documents the existence of a key initiative at Constable to respond to its position in the London-centric publishing industry, the Constable Trophy for Northern Writers.²

In *Marketing Literature*, Squires suggests that "Literary prizes are one of the wider agencies involved in book marketing, and are not, on the whole, initiated, let alone controlled, by publishers" (2007: 97). The Constable Trophy and the Northern Book Prize are exceptions to this trend. Both are awards instituted by publishers and both strive for a similar goal by recognising new writing from the North of England. In each case, the publisher offering the prize also offers the possibility of publication. The Constable Trophy is no longer awarded and so might appear to sit outside contemporary culture's concerns. After all, as English posits, 'the cultural field is littered with dead, cancelled, discontinued prizes' (2005: 113). Contemporary culture is more exercised by the highly shaped, 'particular kind of media event' of the award (Street, 2008: 820), whereby, as Street points out, 'prizes have become a kind of spectator sport' (2008: 819). With so many awards taking place there is little spectator interest or media value in rewatching old competitions (with the possible exception of revisiting old rounds of an ongoing prize).³ The sheer number of lapsed prizes might also be termed as a lapsed exercise of authority. But that is not to say that those littered, dead prizes do not still record traces of cultural recognition or power. Putting to one side the myriad reasons a prize may cease, the work done by a prize can still retain value and circulate long after its closure. In the Constable Trophy's case, one physical legacy of the prize is the publication history it created, with at least ten published novels from Northern writers emerging from fifteen calendar years between 1977 and 1992. Each Trophy win awarded the winner temporary custody of the physical trophy-as-object, and the etching of the winner's name on the trophy. Whilst shortlisted authors were not recorded on the physical trophy, they experienced career progression following their recognition in the running of the award. Many winners and runners up continue to identify their past involvement with the Constable Trophy in published biographical notes. The publicity and administration involved in literary prizes which may go unseen are also key in understanding their work direction prestige. The following history is a chronological integration of all those participants involved in the work of the Trophy.

FOUNDING AND THE INAUGURAL WINNER

Miles Huddleston and Joyce Bentley are both credited with initiating the Constable Trophy. Huddleston, a part of Constable's publishing team from 1964 until 1996, 'suggested' the Trophy for 'an unpublished novel by an author from the North of England' (Menkes, 1989: 467). Book prizes were, for Constable, 'a way of seeking out new talent' and were perhaps inspired by Huddleston's stint on the Arts Council Literature panel in the early 1970s (Cameron, 2009; Menkes, 1989: 467). Huddleston would have seen first hand the geographic inequalities of Arts Council distribution. Jim McGuigan's commissioned report for the Arts Council mentions the Southern skew of 1960s Arts Council Literature Panel for Great Britain funding, and goes on to show that between 1975 and 1978 the Panel awarded 83% of its funds to writers south of Cambridge (McGuigan, 1981: 49).⁴ McGuigan also points

¹ Menkes reports Spark's move from Bodley Head to Constable triggering an increase in sales 'to 16,000 from the mere 6,000 for her previous novel' (1989: 467).

² In the same *British Book News* profile, Menkes outlines three book prizes which Constable was using to find new voices and unpublished manuscripts; in each case the author received a cash prize and an advance on eventual publication with Constable. The prizes run by Constable were firstly the Scottish Constable Trophy, in conjunction with the Association of Scottish Writers, secondly a prize with 'the late lamented *Fiction* magazine' and thirdly the Constable Trophy, focusing on writers based in the North of England.

³ The documentary 'Barneys, Books and Bust Ups: 50 Years of the Booker Prize' was broadcast on BBC Four on 15th October 2018 to mark the 50th annual ceremony of the Man Booker Prize (The Man Booker Prize, 2018).

⁴ 5 grants were received in the North of England from 117 awarded, located in Leeds, Manchester, Newcastle and Hull (twice) (McGuigan, 1981: 49).

to the literature panel's working mechanisms as supporting closed networks and coteries, with panel members endorsing their peers and often receiving funding themselves when not on the panel: 'Since 1966 sixteen individuals have received grants either before or after serving on the Panel [made up of 20 people]' (1981: 46). Constable's funds and offer of publication would have intervened where, unless you happened to be Basil Bunting (in 1966 Bunting in Newcastle was the sole recipient north of London), there was little hope of public support.

In the period when the Constable Trophy was established regional arts boards did spend money on contemporary literature but it was small by comparison, and tended to encourage tours of established writers or limited numbers of writer-in-residence schemes. Emulating the earlier founding of the Constable Trophy for Scottish Writers in 1972, which worked with the Scottish Association of Writers, the Constable Trophy for Northern Writers was established to recognise work by 'members of writers circles in the six northern counties' (Benson, *The Underlings*, inside flap of dust jacket).⁵ Joyce Bentley is named in a brief biography in *The Writers Directory* as 'founder and secretary' of the award 'from 1975 until 1983' (Ferrara, 1997: 112). A creative writing lecturer in Blackburn, and later in life a lecturer for Open University, Bentley wrote a number of novels and works of non-fiction that were widely reviewed. Whilst there appear to be no archives of Bentley's work, her biography hints at significant literary labour, having worked as a freelance writer from 1958 and so Bentley would have been well-placed to anchor the award's interests in the North on behalf of the London publisher.

Some of the solutions public funding bodies found to London-centrism in this period involved supporting organisations rather than individual writers. A key recipient of such funding was The New Fiction Society (NFS) founded within The National Book League (now Book Trust) in 1974. NFS selected and disseminated discounted new fiction titles on a book club model.⁶ John Sutherland praises the society as 'one of the most imaginative schemes of patronage for the novel ever devised' (Sutherland, 1978: 143), but qualifies this praise by remarking on its cost and narrow membership. In Sutherland's words, 'it would have been cheaper to buy the novels at full price from a bookshop and give them away to passers-by at Piccadilly' (1978: 145-6). Constable's working method would have been close to the NFS scheme's goal – promoting new fiction – but with considerably cheaper overheads, since they would publish Trophy-winning works 'in house'. First hand experience of the NFS's demise would have been available at Constable, as the NFS's former manager, Yvette Evans-Foster, became publicity manager at Constable, working directly on the Constable Trophy.

Given the lack of funding or attention for Northern writing, to receive the Constable Trophy constituted a significant intervention in a writer's life. Coverage in the *Newcastle Journal* shows what the publication of *The Underlings* (1977) meant for the first Trophy winner, Barbara Benson (Mortimer, 1977: 10). Interviewed by Peter Mortimer, Benson is presented as being in a stronger position for public arts funding because of the Trophy, 'with publication she has some hopes of obtaining an Arts Council Grant, an opportunity to buy time' (1977: 10). Moreover, the occasion of the novel's publication is framed in highly gendered terms, with a developing writing career seen as fulfilling a desire which had been frustrated by family life and a teaching career, and with Mortimer emphasising Benson's 'literary star blazing relatively late' (1977: 10).⁷ The article fills in some more details of the trophy's early history, mentioning that the news of the Constable Trophy 'was circulated to Northern writers' circles' and that Benson participated in such writers' circles being 'a founder member of "Workshop '74" in Durham' (Mortimer, 1977: 10), of which Benson was secretary in 1974 (Anthony, 1974: 7). The twenty-five founding North East-based writers 'range from absolute beginners to published authors. Some have had work published in magazines and colour supplements and broadcast on programmes including Woman's Hour and Northern Drift' (Anthony, 1974: 7).

The Underlings' subject matter itself mirrors the prize's aims. A drama revolving around a Northern woman's recollections of working in the London-centric publishing industry in the 1950s, the novel foreshadows Muriel Spark's work in the same vein eight-years later. Benson went on to gain further national acclaim, winning the 1977 Authors' Club First Novel Award for 'most promising first novel' (Wecksler, 1980: 419). The material Author's Club recognition comprised of 'a silver-mounted and inscribed quill, presented to the winner at a House Dinner in the Club' (*Cassell's Directory*, 1973: 425).⁸ For the first Trophy winner to accrue additional honours within a wider national frame of reference reflects well on both author and the Constable Trophy.

⁵ Established in 1972, the Constable Trophy for Scottish Writers was 'suggested' to Constable by novelist Hugh C. Rae. The prize has been awarded annually since 1972 and is still in operation, retaining the Constable name whilst having no connection with the publisher or offer of publication. The Trophy is also known as the Constable Stag, as the award itself is a silver stag trophy. Some accidents have befallen the trophy-as-object over the years: 'In 2009 the winner of the Constable Trophy, Alan MacGlas, paid at his own expense to have the antlers properly restored and now it has regained its full magnificent rutting status.' (Personal Correspondence with Marc Sherland on behalf of The Federation of Writers, Scotland)

⁶ A similar process operates in the better known, and still operating, Poetry Book Society, which distributes the choices of expert poet-judges to subscribing members, four times a year.

⁷ Whilst she did not wish to share her age at the time of the interview, it seems useful to highlight now that she was 51 when *The Underlings* was published.

⁸ In 1954, when the club instituted the award, it was initially for 'the most promising first novel by a male author published in the U.K.' (*Cassell's*, 1973: 425) It was in 1967 that 'women authors' first became eligible.

ADMINISTRATION AND TRANSITION

The records of the Trophy briefly run thin. Three winners are recorded, Beth Pickup (1978), Angus Macpherson (1979) and Mary Ellis (1981), but the only source for these at present is the trophy-as-object, still retained by its final winner, Graeme Rigby. Doubtless, there would have been some newspaper coverage local to the winners of Trophy, but without wider digitisation of regional newspapers it has proven difficult to uncover. Another administrator from this period, Elizabeth Battrick, is identified in pleas for entrants to the Constable Trophy, printed in a 1978 issue of *ArtsPack: The Magazine of the Mid-Pennine Association for the Arts* (*ArtsPack*, p. 18), and the next year's award in 1979 in a poetry zine, *The Chair*.

NORTHERN WRITERS are invited to take part in a new competition for a full-length book, fiction or non-fiction of not more than 80,000 words that has not previously been submitted to any publisher. Closing date is 31 March, 1979; the winner will be awarded the Constable Trophy and the winning manuscript considered for national publication. Rules and further details from Mrs E. M. Battrick, Association of Northern Writers, The Wood Farm, Winster, Windermere, Cumbria LA23 3NY. (*The Chair*, 1978)

This is the only mention of non-fiction alongside the Trophy I have traced. Also, Battrick is listed as a representative of the Association of Northern Writers, an organisation which can only be cross-referenced on the physical object of the trophy where the engraving reads 'The Constable Trophy for the Association of Northern Writers'. Battrick is noted for her writings on Beatrix Potter, the National Trust in Lakeland and other regional topics but also appears to have left no archival holdings that might frame her own involvement with the Trophy.⁹ Whilst there are some hopes that the winners' experiences might still be traceable, given the impact of the prize on their writing lives, the subsequent award administrator, Tim Brassell who took over work on the prize in 1982, recalls, 'my memory is that few (if any) winners were ever published' (Personal Correspondence). Assuming this to be the case, the absence of published works (broadly more highly regarded than unpublished works) stemming from an underrepresented regional background would have limited the media interest in the 'spectator sport' of the award. Without publication there would also be no monetary figure to announce, as there would be no advance on the published book's royalties.

Brassell's involvement with the prize began when it underwent a shift in structure and eligibility. In 1982, the Constable Trophy is listed in *Awards, Honors and Prizes* alongside two other funding initiatives administered by the Regional Arts Association, Northern Arts.¹⁰ The shift from Bentley and Battrick's term (1977-1983) to Northern Arts administration meant the chance to reperform a founding moment as a media event. Speaking at the time Brassell, as both Northern Arts' Literature Officer and Press and Publicity Officer, restated the problem and solution of the Constable Trophy: "London so dominates our literary life that the North often feels forgotten. We hope Northern writers will feel a little more enfranchised as a result of this competition" (ctd. in Isaacs, 1983: 10). This amplification of the Trophy's intention is underscored by the altered description of it in *Awards, Honors and Prizes*:

To recognize an author in the North of England for the best unpublished novel of the year. A monetary award of £2,000 and a minimum of £1,000 in advance on acceptance for publication by Constable and Company. Co-sponsored by Constable and Company, Northern Arts, North West Arts, Yorkshire Arts, Lincs and Humberside Arts, and Merseyside Arts (Wasserman and McLean, 1982: 465).

The departure here is not only spatial, from the six Northern counties to a much broader conception of the North, but also away from partnering with writers' circles, towards a collective of established Regional Arts Associations (RAAs). The need for public funds to be invested in the regions was highlighted not only by the Arts Council's own commissioned research, reflected by McGuigan's report on the Southern focus of pre-1977 awards, but in the broader strategy document 'Glory of the Garden' published by the Arts Council of Great Britain in 1984. 'Glory of the Garden' set out a template for devolving decision-making power in investment towards RAAs, to attempt to reach a broader geographic spread. However, for the Constable Trophy to engage with this system it entailed co-ordinating around established Arts Council boundaries, encountering the on-going question of where the North of England begins and ends.

⁹ See Battrick's *A Lakeland Summer* (Cicerone, 1979), *The Real World of Beatrix Potter* (Jarrold, 1986), *Guardian of the Lakes: A History of the National Trust in the Lake District from 1946* (Westmorland Gazette, 1987), and *The Most Active Volcano in Europe: Canon Hardwicke Drummond Rawnsley* (National Trust, 1995).

¹⁰ The Northern Arts Literary Fellowship 'of £10,000 for a period of two academic years at the University of Durham and Newcastle Upon Tyne' and the Northern Arts Writers' Awards 'to recognize established authors resident in the Northern Arts area on the basis of literary merit and financial need. Monetary awards are presented annually' (Wasserman and McLean, 1982: 465).

Reflecting on his first year of administration, Brassell noted in 1984 that ‘expanding the competition to take in the rest of the North of England had allowed prize money to be offered for the first time, increased entries tenfold and created a new contest of considerable value to novelists’ (ctd. in Southwell, 1984: 8). Brassell’s recollection from the present is more revealing in understanding the administrative work Northern Arts took on as lead organiser. Realising that the Trophy was failing in its goal to produce published work for Constable, Brassell responded to writers’ concerns:

So in 1983 having learnt from disappointed local writers that Constable were thinking hard about any future support, I approached the other Northern RAAs (Yorkshire Arts, North West Arts and Lincolnshire & Humberside Arts) with the idea of joining forces with us to expand the competition into something with a much higher profile, a cash prize carrot (we settled on £2000, with £500 from each RAA) and hopefully rather more productive outcomes. They readily agreed in principle and I therefore went to London and met with Ben Glazebrook, Constable’s MD, who was very pleased with the plan. I’m fairly sure this included offering that initial filleting of entries would be carried out by well-qualified members of our four Associations’ Literature Panels (writers, county librarians, academics etc.) so as to present Constable with a manageable shortlist! All administration was coordinated from our office at Northern Arts, since we had taken the original initiative and I was happy to continue to take the lead on it, often reminded by RAA colleagues that Northern Arts had more resources than they did (which was generally true!) (Personal Correspondence).

This pooling of resources meant that each RAA would be promoting the prize and together reaching across a combination of the North’s local media more effectively. Notices regarding the prize after this relaunch often appeared in the *Newcastle Journal*, the *Northern Echo*, the *Liverpool Echo* and the *Yorkshire Post*.

TROPHY WINNERS REAPPEAR IN PRINT

In 1983 the award’s own requirement for Northern residence was stretched. Malcolm Lynch was living in Teignmouth in Devon, working as an editor on the *Teignmouth Post* when he won the Trophy. But Lynch was better known to many for his role in Northern cultural production, as ‘script writer on *Coronation Street*, *Crossroads* and *Emmerdale Farm*’ (*The Spectator*, 1985) before a geographic leap to become editor of popular BBC radio programme *The Archers*. His winning submission had a strong Northern basis and there is every possibility that he qualified for entry through a Northern writing circle in the last year where this affiliation would be necessary. Despite his status, no major newspaper publicity recorded the win itself. However, in 1985, Nicholas Shakespeare remarked on the win whilst reviewing the published novel in *The Times*, describing the Constable Trophy as ‘a north of England award for the best part of an unpublished manuscript’ (Shakespeare, 1985: 11). This might have been provided as context for what is a lukewarm review. Shakespeare suggests Lynch ‘would have written it better as an autobiography’ (1985: 11), perhaps proving that London-based recognition could also reassert London-centric tastes, and that a publication’s national and global reach still takes part in the system it seeks to counter. As with Benson’s win, it was two years between Lynch’s win and publication of the novel, hinting at a conscious period of editorial work with Constable. Lynch benefited from his connection with Constable, as they went on to publish his second novel, *They Fly Forgotten* (1987), revisiting the Manchester-setting of *The Streets of Ancoats*. Constable also benefitted from the association. Robin Baird-Smith, then editorial director of Constable, recalls that *The Streets of Ancoats* ‘was a great commercial success – a triumph of publishing set in a locality – as it seemed that anyone in Ancoats who could read bought the book’ (Personal Correspondence).

Publicised in newspapers, magazines and television, winner and runner up in 1984’s Trophy were both published by Constable. This made significant differences in the careers of the writers selected. Denise Robertson, ‘former agony aunt for Metro Radio’ (Southwell, 1984: 8) won the Trophy with *The Land of Lost Content* and went on to publish a number of subsequent titles with Constable whilst finding fame on television as the agony aunt for ITV’s *This Morning* from 1988. In an excerpt from her autobiography, Robertson recalls “When I submitted a novel I had written about a young coal miner’s widow for the prestigious Constable trophy, I won” (Robertson, 2006). The notion that the Trophy is prestigious as articulated by a winner might seem self-serving, but it is also a measure of esteem for the work of the award. In such circumstances, an award is buoyed by the faith in the solution it is providing to a problem, and how this has a tangible effect. Robertson’s first novel was a commercial success, being followed by two sequels in what became *The Belgate Trilogy*. A collected paperback was published by Penguin in association with Constable in 1988. *Fiction Magazine*, Constable’s sometimes partner in a separate short story award, ran a small article on the simultaneous publication of Robertson, runner up Barbara Gamble and Lynch in the context of ‘Constable prize-winners!’, outlining their media appearances as a result of the Trophy.

Styled by *Fiction Magazine* as a production of the 'Northern Arts Council' the extent to which the award is a media event is evident:

BBC TV's 'Look North' featured both Denise Robertson and Barbara Gamble -- a film of Denise made at home and on location, and an interview with Barbara. There was also a round of interviews with north-eastern radio stations and of features in local papers, for both of them. Malcolm Lynch wrote a 6-minute film-script for Granada TV's 'Reports', and was interviewed by BBC Radio Manchester and Radio Hallam (*Fiction*, 1985: 56).

Presumably the connections with RAAs meant an enhanced understanding of how to circulate notions of success and prestige, and so to perpetuate ideas of the Trophy as a media event. The archived media coverage expands upon the published works, leaving social reflection that underscores the Trophy as a solution to the publishing world's inequalities.

After the RAA takeover of Trophy administration, more details about the prize's operation became public, and were deployed as a way of attracting entrants. Key to this effort was the regular listing of judges who would be presiding over the prize. These judges are, in English's terms, a strong 'source of symbolic capital' for the prize (2005: 123). In 1983, the list of judges included Pat Barker, Adrian Henri, Henry Livings, Maureen Lawrence and Stephen Benetar (Isaacs, 1983). The name Pat Barker here has the most resonance today, as she went on to win the Booker Prize in 1995. Barker's judging work for the Constable Trophy came just after publication of her lauded debut novel, *Union Street* (1982). Winning the Fawcett Society Book Prize, Barker's work would have represented the aims of the Trophy by firmly countering dominant literary biases by representing working-class women in the North. Adrian Henri would also have been a household name nationally, from his work alongside Roger McGough and Brian Patten in the bestselling poetry anthology *The Mersey Sound* (1967), from frequent public performance, and being well connected with networks of artists and writers in Liverpool. Henri's championing of Liverpool as a place of creativity would have added further substance to the Trophy's aims. Subsequent years saw authors with connections to the North, and with prestige gained from other prizes take up roles as judges, e.g. Barry Unsworth, Jane Rogers and Elizabeth North. There was clearly a desire to maintain strong Northern representation, and so writers for television, film and stage with recognisable Northern standpoints were also involved. The 1986 panel included 'Brookside Writer Alan McDonald' and 'Sid Chaplin of Close the Coalhouse Door fame' (Isaacs, 1985: 6) highlighting connections with the then popular Northern drama and Alan Plater's play based on Chaplin's stories of coal mining in County Durham. Chaplin's career as a novelist and contributor to *The Guardian* was premised on representing the North-East and his cultural capital associated with the Trophy would have spoken to a local demographic with few connections to London.¹¹ Unfortunately Chaplin died in January 1986, before he was able to fulfil judging duties. Later juries included previous winners alongside other noted Northern writers, e.g. Jimmy McGovern, Robert Edric and Elizabeth Baines. The inclusion of previous winners as jurors could have been a handy continuation of association, but also suggests the aims of the prize were being met, as writers such as Robertson continued to be published and to gain a wider readership, ascending to a position which attracted the necessary cultural capital needed to be a judge.

In 1985, Edith Brahm, writing under the name Edith French, won the Constable Trophy and *Connie and Ann* was published by Constable in 1986. The novel was described in a publication announcement in the literary magazine *Stand* as 'a lively, fast-paced saga of a north country family in the '30s' (1986: 19). The same announcement mentions Constable's simultaneous publication of the runner-up in 1985, Gerald Phillipson's *A Place Called Adullam*. Whilst there is no trace of any subsequent writing by French, Phillipson had at least one other award-winning story published.¹² In 1986, Gerald H. Morris, won the Trophy and *Doves and Silk Handkerchiefs* was published by Constable in 1987. Kirsty Milne reviewed *Doves* for *The Guardian*, not mentioning the Trophy, but describing the novel as 'somewhere between D.H. Lawrence and "Cold Comfort Farm"... home-produced—and Northern—magic realism' (Milne, 1987). Peter Preston was unable to resist a slight joke at the subject matter in his review, noting 'the author avoids what might be called the pitfalls of the mining novel, tunnelling a skilful passage between Lawrentian earnestness and the traditional absurdities of the genre' (Preston, 1987). Morris followed the novel with two subsequent books *Grandmother, Grandmother, Come and See* (Constable, 1989) and *The Brightside Dinosaur* (Constable, 1991). The three are a trilogy following the Leeds-based Brightside Family, beginning in a West Yorkshire mining town and tracking changes over the course of the next two hundred years. As with Robertson, Penguin collected the trilogy in one volume for paperback publication in 1992. In both cases, the continuation and eventual collection of work initiated by the Trophy are an indication of its impact. Yet, in both

¹¹ As DJ Taylor notes "To read even a few pages of Chaplin's work is to be plunged immediately into a fictional equivalent of the working-class landscapes described in Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* (1957)" (Taylor, 2005).

¹² A short story, 'Henry and Dorthie', appeared in *Stand* in 1989. Adapted by Phillipson as a play, 'Henry and Dorthie' came runner-up in a BBC World Service playwriting competition in 1993 and was subsequently broadcast on the radio by BBC World Service. The original short story 'Henry and Dorthie' went on to be reprinted in Robin Baird-Smith's annual Constable anthology, *Winter's Tales* in 1994.

the 1985 and 1986 prizes, winners appear not to have been as well-advertised. A *Newcastle Journal* article advertising the 1990 prize hints at why the traces of the Trophy as media event are less prominent in these years, listing ‘other Constable winners ... Edith French (1985, North Yorkshire) for Connie and Ann, and Gerald Morris (1986, Leeds) for Doves and Silk Hankerchiefs [sic]’ (Jones, 1989). In these listings, the place of affiliation seems to matter as much as the writer or novel. Following Best’s recognition that in certain awards, ‘the recipient’s importance may even be downplayed, while the group from which the winner comes is exalted’ (2008: 12), there seems to be a slippage here where the part of the North the author belongs to becomes of equal importance. Considering the coalition of RAAs participating, the Trophy’s idea of North is a collaborative imaginary, but at another level, those RAAs retain operational independence to support artistic labour in their own particular geographies. The shifting focus on where in the North an author comes from could have led to a differing, localised geography to the Trophy as media event, but if this did not correspond to Northern Arts’ own boundaries, as the lead administrating RAA, then there may well have been less organisation or resources to promote the win. Presumably reflecting on the considerable resources and organisation required, the Constable became a biennial prize after 1986.

The annual reports of the Northern Arts Association attest to the RAA’s involvement with the prize from 1984 onwards, but the Trophy shifts from a project discussed by officers to a budget line. Public record of these reports cease in 1987/88. January 1988 saw a second landmark funding review conducted by Richard Wilding ‘to examine the working relationship between the Arts Council and the Regional Arts Associations’ (Rittner, 1989: 5). Outlining the context for this review, Rittner, the Arts Council Secretary General notes ‘the relationship between the Council and the RAAs has always been spiced with a creative tension verging on rivalry’ (1989: 5). The RAAs commitments to keeping the Trophy going could appear weakened by the diminishing records, but the way the Trophy was seen might also account for its shift in documentation. Jenny Attala, the literature officer who succeeded Brassell at Northern Arts, recalls that the Trophy was impressive because the partnership of RAAs:

would directly benefit talented people by bringing them to the attention of e.g. publishers who might not otherwise have considered or been aware of the work. I was impressed by the ethos which organised competitive schemes and rewarded quality work, offering support to writers to produce work and initiating partnerships to promote it more widely. The Constable Trophy was an excellent example of this in literature and there were other initiatives in collaboration with Tyne Tees Television and BBC Cumbria to offer competitive opportunities to scriptwriters and directors from the region to make work which would be broadcast. (Personal Correspondence)

Situating the Constable Trophy in a wider field of collaborative industry initiatives is persuasive, but reduces the sense of the Trophy as an exceptional event-based strategy. In a policy framework, or from an administrative outlook, industrial partnership is an important way to outline the professional development work the Trophy is doing, but lacks the notion of spectacle that attracts public attention to the showbusiness of prizegiving. Encouraging public interest in the completion of a ‘competitive scheme’ seems less likely to draw the crowds.

THE PEAK OF THE CONSTABLE TROPHY’S PUBLIC PROFILE

The 1988 winner of the Constable Trophy created the greatest amount of headlines and went on to be a bestseller for Constable. Paul Sayer’s *The Comforts of Madness* (1988) is a significant Trophy winner in many ways, but most surprisingly came to be written because Sayer used the existence of the Trophy as an incentive. Sayer recalls: “My first entry, in 1986, was the kind of weak, partly-autobiographical novel that many writers begin with, though it did make the longlist - the last twenty-four of a hundred and forty-odd entries. It didn’t win ... but it was encouragement enough for the Constable Trophy to be my first port of call with my next effort” (Personal Correspondence). Upon winning the prize, Sayer recalls the Trophy and the award ceremony:

[A] silver tankard - indeed the ‘Trophy’ itself - with my name inscribed on it alongside the previous winners, plus a £1000 prize from Yorkshire Arts, and a further £1000 advance from Constable, was presented to me at a sweet little gathering at Bradford Arts Centre, presided over by Constable’s noted editor Robin Baird-Smith, with whom I was to publish my next three novels. It was covered by the Bradford Telegraph and Argus and maybe one or two other regional papers. (Personal Correspondence)

The local coverage of this event underplays what would happen following the award. Sayer’s *The Comforts of Madness* was reviewed on publication by Mark Casserley in the *Times Literary Supplement*, with the Trophy win mentioned at the head of the article (Casserley, 1988). Whilst Casserley’s response is mixed the novel attracted much greater attention after it went on in the autumn of 1988 to be shortlisted for, and then to win the Whitbread

Award category for Best First Novel.¹³ The winner of this category had never previously won the overall Whitbread Award for Book of the Year. The cross-genre final shortlist included poet Peter Porter, biographer AN Wilson, novelist Salman Rushdie and children's writer Judy Allen. In January 1989, a judging panel including then-Home Secretary Douglas Hurd, chose Sayer's novel as the book of the year, conferring on it the £20,000 prize. Two newspapers ran with headlines of 'Rushdie Pipped At the Post' framing Sayer's Whitbread win as 'an unexpected victory' against the favourite Salman Rushdie (*Daily Mail*, 1989; de Jongh, 1989) or more strongly, as a kind of theft. Robin Young wrote on the front page of *The Times* that "A first novel by a psychiatric nurse last night stole Britain's most valuable literary prize from the year's most hyped novel, *The Satanic Verses* by Salman Rushdie" (Young, 1989). How Sayer came to be published is explained by Young as 'a competition in the North for best unpublished novel' but the Constable Trophy is not explicitly credited. In a follow-up interview with Sayer in *The Guardian*, John Vidal notes:

Although it won the little-known Constable trophy – a biannual competition for the best unpublished novel in the north of England, and £2,000 (half from northern regional arts councils) – Constable only printed 2,000 copies. Today they are chirruping over champagne and talking of reprints and big coin... (Vidal, 1989)

For Constable, the physical book, carrying the mark of the Trophy win on the cover, saw a huge spike in sales following the Whitbread prize win. Menkes notes that 'before the Whitbread announcement it had sold 1500 copies, three months later sales had increased tenfold to 15,000 in hardback and a large number of foreign rights sales had been made' (1989: 467).

The Comforts of Madness is listed in bestseller charts throughout 1989 and received very warm reviews when Sceptre published it in paperback in August 1989. Brian Morton credits both award wins in praising the book: "This, Sayer's first novel, won him both the Constable Trophy and the 1988 Whitbread Book of the Year award. It is a remarkable technical *tour de force*, a luminous first person insight" (Morton, 1989). Speaking now, having published four novels with Constable and two with Bloomsbury, Sayer relates that the Trophy was an incredibly important award:

It was a true game-changer. The chances of a completely unknown writer getting a book published, particularly someone from outside London, were said to be one-in-a-thousand at that time - no internet then, of course - and I had circumvented the iron walls of the literary establishment and made it into their ranks. (Personal Correspondence)

The conversion of the prestige of the Trophy into another accolade, and a regular writing career, must make this the most successful and influential year in the Trophy's history. The assumed function of the Trophy to talent spot is remarked upon in a review of a later novel of Sayer's, where Sutherland mentions the Constable and Whitbread as evidence of literary pedigree.¹⁴ Considering two other upcoming writers (Paul Watkins and Louis de Bernieres) who have been recognised by awards, Sutherland concludes 'the literary prize system is working rather well in Britain' (1992: 18).

THE LAST YEARS OF THE CONSTABLE TROPHY

In 1990, the actress Prunella Pulsford won the Constable Trophy. *Lee's Ghost*, Pulsford's winning novel, was published by Constable in the same year. The inside flap of the dustjacket reiterates the book cover's message that *Lee's Ghost* is the Trophy winner, expanding to comment that: 'the purpose of the Constable Trophy is to discover new talent – here is a writer with a truly original voice' (Pulsford, 1990). Omitting mention of the Trophy's geography, the copy underlines the core purpose that the award serves for Constable in finding and promoting new talent. In framing the Trophy this way, the consumer's perception of the Northernness of Constable's search is diminished. This may have something to do with the setting of the novel. This presentation of the book is replicated in Jo-Ann Goodwin's *Times Literary Supplement* review, which opens: "*Lee's Ghost*, the winner of the 1990 Constable Trophy for Fiction, is set in a small south coast seaside town" (Goodwin, 1990). If the publication of a Trophy winner is still tailored to the book rather than the author, it would seem Constable presumed the audience for a novel set in Southern England might be distracted by prompts of Northern branding. However, the need to adapt the branding for publication inevitably alters one of the few public-facing avenues for circulating notions of the Trophy too. Another positive review in *The Times* does not mention the Trophy win (Nicholson, 1990), again

¹³ In a stroke of synchronicity, in 2019 I am a Costa Book Awards judge for this same category - the current incarnation of the Whitbread.

¹⁴ Sutherland also mentions Sayer's nomination for another award which subsequent research has been unable to corroborate. Sayer's association with 'Northern Male personality of the year' is thus confined to this award-saturated review.

limiting reader recognition of the Trophy in connection with Pulsford, and omitting mention of the Trophy from a key part of its potential media event. Although discourses of review remain outside the award's control, they are a key terrain for award signalling. If the Trophy meant little to a book reviewer in 1990, this would be surprising given Sayer's supersignification as the previous winner. In turn, a reviewer's engagement with the now biennial Trophy may have lapsed in comparison with other annual awards cycles. Retrospective reference to Pulsford's Trophy win is limited given that Pulsford has not had another novel published subsequent to *Lee's Ghost*.

In 1992, the Trophy jury included Robert Edric, Christopher Burn and the 1988 winner Paul Sayer. Sayer's recollection of judging is framed by a discontent with an all-male jury, but points to a wealth of entries:

Our dealings with each other were all very cordial, though I do remember bemoaning the fact that it was an all-male panel. We only met once, I think, which was to come up with a winner and a runner-up. Some of the hundred-and-odd entries were half-baked and mediocre, as is usual in these things, and, as is also typical, a large number were perfectly decent efforts simply lacking that extra spark to make them stand out from the crowd. The winner was a riser from the start, and a fairly obvious choice after we had gone through the rest of the more promising entries (Personal correspondence).

Graeme Rigby was the eventual winner of the Trophy, and in 1993 Constable published *The Black Cook's Historian*. An interview in the *Newcastle Journal* outlined Rigby's path to writing and further emphasised the Northern nature of the Trophy (Sherwood, 1993). James Sherwood noted that "The winner is not guaranteed publication, but Graeme's work not only brought publication but also an agent and an option held by Constable to publish his next novel. Graeme received the trophy, plus a cheque for £2,000, at Durham Art Gallery yesterday from the folk singer Maddy Prior" (Sherwood, 1993). Perhaps Prior was chosen as a resonant figure, being a northern singer who had made a large impression on the nation, but no national media appear to have covered the ceremony itself. The novel gained many reviews, was discussed on Radio 4's 'Kaleidoscope' (*The Times*, 1993), and the Trophy win was mentioned in TJ Binyon's review in *The Times Literary Supplement*:

The synopsis promises a stirring story, and appetite is further whetted by the information that the novel is the winner of the 1992 Constable Trophy for Fiction. (Not the Prix Goncourt perhaps, but surely of some significance) (Binyon, 1993).

The Trophy itself is clearly not familiar or conveying any particular kind of prestige, but Binyon's interest is piqued by the idea of the award. The notion that it carries 'some significance' attests to a qualified notion of meaning, and to its relative obscurity. No further award of the Trophy means that media coverage ceases, and reference retreats to footnotes in biographies. By the mid 1990s, Robin Baird-Smith and Miles Huddleston had left Constable, and by 1999, Ben Glazebrook had sold the publisher to fellow independent Robinson Publishing.¹⁵

THE PRIZE ENVIRONMENT

The physical trophy, well-polished, still lives on Graeme Rigby's mantelpiece (Figure 1). The bare list of names on the well-polished trophy erases the composite nature of the award's benefit. The jurors and runners up experienced their own successes through being part of the process, producing work for the Trophy that went on to be submitted and recognised by alternative awards and publishers. Beyond this, and the winners stories related as part of the history above, the legacy of the Trophy is present in an evolving prize environment.

The first reference I found to the Constable Trophy was in the archives of another Northern book prize, the Portico Prize, due to be awarded again in January 2020 following a four-year hiatus.¹⁶ The Portico Library, an independent subscription library in Manchester, houses the papers for the Portico Prize. Established by the library in 1985, the Portico Prize has a history of recognising both fiction and non-fiction which depicts first the North West of England and latterly the broader North. The Northernness being judged is that represented rather than that of the creator.¹⁷ In the Portico archives, a letter from one of the Portico Prize's judging committee in 1993 was hesitant about potential comparisons to the Constable Trophy. Whilst both prizes deal with a sense of Northernness, they do so in differing ways. The letter is a reflective acknowledgement that prizes are seldom freestanding and instead make meaning in a relational sense. The Portico prize fosters Northern literary culture

¹⁵ Constable & Robinson were bought by Little, Brown Book Group in 2014. The name Constable is still in use as a publishing imprint. Tim Whiting, current head of Piatkus Constable Robinson Publishing Division at Little, Brown assisted in research for this article but confirmed that no archival holdings relating to the Trophy remain with Little, Brown.

¹⁶ A longlist of seventeen titles was announced in September 2019 spanning fiction, graphic memoir, social history, poetry, nature writing and autobiography.

¹⁷ The geography of the Portico Prize evolved from an original focus on a narrowly defined North-West area (minus Cumbria) to a more capacious North from Scottish Border to a line across from Merseyside via the High Peak of Derbyshire to the Humber.



Figure 1. The Constable Trophy. (Left to Right) a) Front on Graeme's Name. b) Front on 'The Constable Trophy for the Association of Northern Writers' c) Front on main list of names.

and so shares a broad remit with the Constable. The Portico judge supplies a biographical note which mentions connection to the Constable Trophy but queries recognition and implicitly prestige:

Here's the paragraph you requested. I wasn't sure whether the Constable needed further explication – ie ('for a novel from the North West')? (ie. Has anybody heard of it?!!!). (emph. Original) (Judge's Letter, 1993)

The explication the judge provides in this letter is not accurate, conflating as it does the Portico's long focus on the North West with the Constable's longstanding focus on the North as a whole. This sets the question of knowledge of the prize in a rather different light. If someone who judged the Constable Trophy in 1988 was unaware of its geographic coverage by 1993, what hope might there be for a broader populace?

The Portico is important to reference here given that, established as an annual event in 1985, it quickly draws local media attention, partnering with BBC North West, Granada and the Manchester Evening News in its early years. The Portico's wealth of information in the archive demonstrates the administration and labour in establishing its own authority, and the solution it offers to questions of Northern literary recognition. The Portico's own founding document highlights how this is tied to the prize environment of the period:

There are already some 140 Literary Prizes, Grants and Awards in the UK ranging from £50 and an engraved goblet to the £15,000 Booker McConnell Prize. However, few of these are for books on specific regions, and not one covers the North-West excluding Cumbria, although the North-East is well represented (Portico Press Release, 1985).¹⁸

The language mirrors the assessments made by the Booker prize in its own founding press release in 1968:

There are already almost fifty literary prizes and awards available in this country, ranging from inscribed quills to sums of £1,000, for almost every conceivable type of literary work and category of author (ctd. in Squires, 2013: 295).

The imitation is deliberate. In planning and in process, the aim of the Portico was to define itself against the Booker, often seeking to cast itself as the 'Northern Booker' or 'Booker of the North'. A 1992 press release was widely reprinted which cast this comparison firmly as an alternative name 'The Portico Prize (The Northern Booker) was founded...?', and later iterations of the prize repeat this naming (Portico Press Release, 1992).

The Portico's recognition that North-East literary work was being supported is a clear hint towards the range of schemes and awards that Northern Arts were offering in the region, alongside their administration of the Constable Trophy. Any direct coverage comparison becomes complicated by the incomparable nature of the prize

¹⁸ The goblet alluded to here is The Katharine Briggs Folklore Award given annually by the Folklore Society for the best book on folklore, established in 1982. The Cumbrian awards implied are Hunter Davies' Lakeland Book Awards which were established in 1984.

environment. There are differences in the stage in the publishing cycle where each intervenes (pre-publication vs. post-publication), and contrasting priorities in Northern residency or Northern content. Yet, broadly, the Portico can be seen to respond to the same problem which the Constable was seeking to address, namely representing the North in a London-centric literary world. The Portico's evolution into a biennial award in 1993, and the more recent turn to working with the Arts Council are also steps which bring it closer to the precedent of the Constable Trophy.

In 2001, the Northern Rock Foundation, the grant-making charity formed when Northern Rock Building Society demutualised and floated on the stock exchange as a Bank in 1997, created the Northern Rock Foundation Writers' Award. This award had the aim of 'nurturing and developing writing talent in the north-east of England' (BBC News, 2003). The prize bestowed £60,000 on one writer over three years, and also, in a biographic note of its inaugural winner Anne Stevenson, laid claim to the title of 'Northern Booker' (Page, 2003: 242). Most recently the name of the second winner of the Northern Rock Foundation Award, Julia Darling, has become attached, posthumously, to the Julia Darling Travel Fellowship, one of a suite of awards administered by the Northern writing agency, New Writing North. In operation since 1996, New Writing North have run the Northern Writers' Awards (NWAs) 'to help regional writers from the North access the national networks of UK publishing' (Shaw, 2018: 9). Katy Shaw offers a compelling case study of how the NWAs have helped support the regional literary economy. Shaw points out how 'historically, Northern writers have been forced to relocate to London and leave the region in order to achieve recognition or success in the UK literary industry. The NWAs address this problem by aiming to improve the economy of the North' (2018: 10). This should be qualified slightly, as the NWAs have only recently embraced a broader definition of the North, focusing primarily on the North-East from 1996 up until 2012 when a new funding settlement with Arts Council England widened to the North. Shaw goes on to suggest that the impact of the NWAs 'offers a vital new model of intervention and social value for the contemporary creative industries' (2018: 12). However, given that the aim of the NWAs since 2012 seems to directly replicate the aim of the Constable Trophy in its years of operation, it might be worthwhile seeing this model of intervention as pre-existing. Recalling the work literature officer Jenny Attala hinted that Northern Arts was undertaking, partnering with publishers and producers in the 1980s and 1990s, and considering that many successful alumni of the Trophy maintained Northern residency whilst going on to write more nationally published work, it would seem the NWAs are re-discovering a prior model.

The Constable Trophy worked across the broader geographic North for fifteen years and in that time the winners etched on the trophy, and those runners up who maintain a written connection in biographic notes, represent an interruption in the continuity of London-dominated literary work. Just as Childress et. al. have suggested that works entered for a prize might reveal 'a meaningful social space' (2017: 51), establishing a discontinuity that might 'act as a "first cut" into the continuity of objects' (2017: 51), entrants, runners-up and winners of the Trophy share the disruption of both the prize environment and the geographic bent of the publishing industry. Considering The Constable Trophy as a forerunner to the Portico Prize, the Northern Rock Writers' Award and the NWAs, it can be seen that working in tandem with public funding, each subsequent award moves closer to the same social space which seeks to uplift Northern writing. In this way, 'the processual nature of consecration' (Childress et. al, 2017: 51), is not simply about one award's internal sifting of entrants, but can expand to recognise both the gradual establishment of authority of the prize itself but also nested groups who have sought to disrupt the prize environment operating under similar notions of authority and solution.

One example of this continuity could be seen in the establishment of New Writing North, with the prior Constable Trophy judge, Pat Barker, as one of the agency's founding patrons. Another example might be the 2006 award of a NWA for 'Time to Write' to Barbara Gamble. Gamble, a runner up in the 1984 Constable Trophy had two novels published by Constable in total, and yet as New Writing North's director Claire Malcolm admitted on awarding the £10,000, 'We met Barbara for the first time yesterday. She hadn't been on our radar at all' (*The Journal*, 2006). A parallel report mentioned that Gamble's first novel 'won £1,000 in a northern writers' competition, but didn't make any money in sales' (*Teeside Live*, 2006). In many responses to Gamble's NWA the lack of cultural memory or the dominance of organising powers in the prize environment seem to omit the fragile network established by the Trophy. Crucial to this is the absence of naming. The differentiation between 'a northern writers' competition' and the Trophy is the particularity of a named award, the Constable Trophy, amidst a sense that there are masses of indiscernible awards.

More recently, in its first year, the Northern Book Prize partnered with New Writing North and was awarded as one of the NWAs. The publication of Amy Arnold's *Slip of a Fish* in the Autumn of 2018 with *And Other Stories* ensures the start of a new Northern publication legacy. In 2019, the Northern Book Prize changed criteria, looking beyond Northern residency to admit the possibility of 'a writer who has a strong connection to the North' (*And Other Stories*, 2019). Likely due to this contradiction with the Arts Council definition of region, the Prize was not run with New Writing North. In 2019, judges Sarah Moss, Fiona Elmet and Stefan Tobler shortlisted titles internally but chose not to award a prize. A statement on the *And Other Stories* website makes clear that the

publisher 'are in the process of signing contracts with authors who entered this year' underscoring the potential value of the prize, despite there being no conventional winner. Amongst the new awards in the 2019 NWAs, The NorthBound Book Award, supported by UCLan Publishing and Manchester-based publisher Saraband has been founded to recognise unpublished 'fiction or narrative non-fiction' for writers resident in the North of England (Lowes, 2018).¹⁹ The award promises money and guarantees of publication with Saraband. Considering this new prize alongside indications that the Northern Book Prize will run again in 2020, the cumulative work in recognising new Northern writing is growing.

CONCLUSION

Precision in reference to a history of Northern writing prizes begins to draw together common work, and recognises how the history of The Constable Trophy alongside the Portico Prize, the Northern Rock Writers' Award, the NWAs, the Northern Book Prize and The NorthBound Book Award provides a stronger answer to the shared cultural question asked by all – how do we address geographic under-representation in the literary industry? Recent work undertaken by Shaw has fed into national consultation on 'new policy formation, including the use of regional literary awards as a potential model of intervention for addressing regional under-representation in the UK literary industries and publishing' (Northumbria University, 2019). Such consultations are only as strong as their evidence base. Admitting the nuanced and particular history of regional literary awards in the North of England to this debate, by recognising the work of the Constable Trophy in the prize environment, would give a deeper understanding of those moments when a variety of cultural bodies have sought to address regional under-representation. Building critical histories of book prizes contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the history behind underrepresentation and imbalance in the book trade, and those strategies sought as redress. Recovering the cultural memory of awards ensures that important developments at the macro level of cultural strategy and the micro level of awards administration are highlighted, not least here the Trophy's navigation of a private-public partnership between the private publisher Constable and the RAAs that invest public monies in literature development. The impact the Trophy has had on creative careers cannot be deemed negligible. Tracing the experiences of past winners of the Constable Trophy, it became clear that some felt they had little or nothing notable to add to research when the opposite was true. Short-term views of public and private arts initiatives mean that recollections of winner experiences are a vital source to account for a longer involvement in answering longstanding inequities. The histories of dormant awards may appear unfashionable or un-newsworthy but hold important information on the prize environment they inhabited, and information for active prizes that constantly make decisions on how best to redirect cultural and economic capital. Understanding the legacy of the Constable Trophy, and accommodating strategic collegiality amidst the prize environment should enable wider legibility of each prize's cultural authority and amplify common efforts towards 'redistributive justice.'

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‘You won’t See Anyone Promoting a Bronze’: Awards and Ambivalence Amongst Craft Gin Producers

Thomas Thurnell-Read ^{1*}

¹ *Loughborough University*, UNITED KINGDOM

*Corresponding Author: t.thurnell-read@lboro.ac.uk

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ABSTRACT

The recent surge in the popularity of ‘craft’ and ‘artisanal’ spirits made in small batches by independent producers raises a range of questions about the processes by which the economic and cultural value of consumer products and practices are assessed and acknowledged. Drawing on qualitative interviews with 20 craft gin distillery workers in the UK, this paper analyses the role played by trade and press awards in this process. Whilst the majority of interviewees had received awards for their products and most recognised the continued importance of such accolades both in terms of attracting new customers and bestowing status on their labour and its outputs, many also expressed notable ambivalence towards the processes by which judgements are passed and awards allocated. This typically involved expressing cynicism about award judging procedures and motivations, as well as proposing alternative measures of judgement involving different referents such as specific influential individuals, hypothetical ‘average customers’ and personal subjective tastes and preferences. The paper therefore seeks to add to understandings of the personal and cultural narratives associated with practices of award giving and consumer culture.

Keywords: craft, artisan, gin, awards and prizes, consumption

INTRODUCTION

The recent rise in popularity of craft and artisanal food and drink products raises a number of pertinent issues for the study of cultural change and, in particular, how value is defined, identified and attributed to particular products and those that make and consume them. Whilst research in cultural studies and cultural sociology has a relatively long history of exploring such debates in relation to established cultural fields such as the arts, cinema, literature and music, it is only with the recent ‘return’ to independent, small-batch and handmade ‘craft’ products (e.g. Cope, 2014; Oejo, 2017) that renewed academic interest in the delineation of quality and value, and the consecration of cultural tastes, has emerged in studies of the food and drink sector (Johnston and Bauman, 2015). Within these craft economies, values and practices that distinguish the mass production and consumption that dominated the late 19th and much of the 20th century are replaced with an emphasis on individual and autonomous ‘makers’ who produce tangible products of high quality and also work upon cultural narratives which establish their products as ‘authentic’ (Thurnell-Read, 2019).

Set within these wider debates about cultural value the academic study of award and prize giving has become of increasing importance to scholars interested in cultural authority, power and recognition. In what has become a landmark work on these matters, English (2009) details how the proliferation of awards and prizes in contemporary culture is ‘perhaps the most ubiquitous feature of cultural life, touching every corner of the cultural

universe' (English, 2009: 2). Whilst progress has been made in studies of award, prizes and cultural prestige in arts, culture and creative industries few have studied their increasing significance in the food and drink industry. Yet, as shall be seen below, winning awards and prizes is a prominent theme in the narratives of craft producers and arises in how they speak about their labour, their products and their industry.

In this article, these issues are explored in relation to awards within the spirits industry. By drawing on a set of twenty interviews with craft gin producers in the UK, nearly all of whom had won some form of award or prize for their products, this article explores how the giving and receiving of awards has been an integral part of the increase in production of artisanal and craft goods in recent years. This surge has seen the number of distilleries operating in Great Britain doubling from 152 to 315 in the five-year period from 2013 to 2018 (Humphries, 2018). Further, this quantitative trend is accompanied by a widely acknowledged qualitative change in how this commodity is viewed by the public. Mainstream news coverage and product brand narratives alike present the craft gin 'boom' as being led by consumers increasingly driven by quality and innovations (Butler, 2018). Thus, what was long-established as a common place or, at best, middlebrow product – a product that Manning (2012: 80) describes as being for many years still rooted in the semiotic landscape of Empire and nostalgia – has undergone a renaissance. In this increasingly crowded marketplace small, medium and large scale producers are all competing for market share but also for recognition and legitimacy.

Amongst established and new entrants to this market, awards are an instantly recognisable feature, appearing on bottles, websites and in the text and images of both traditional and digital marketing content. Whilst the field of prizes, competitions and awards for alcoholic drinks has grown steadily, awards for spirits such as gin focus primarily on two large international competitions. The International Wine and Spirit Competition was established in 1969 and is organised into 37 categories with the Gin category subdivided into seven styles including London Dry, Dutch, Flavoured, Old Tom and Slow Gin. More recent, but equally regarded, the San Francisco World Spirits Competition was founded in 2000 and states that awards are made 'on a merit basis' having been 'evaluated within a peer group of similar spirits' and that 'the judges will not grant an award when, in their opinion, an entry is not worthy of an award'. Competitors pay \$550 per entry and can go on to pay further licence fees for the use of official competition logos and 'medallions' in online and in print material and product packaging. The competition included 2,469 spirit entries in 2018, with the list of medal winners running to 75 pages. These awards have built their reputation on the experience, knowledge and impartiality of its judges (Japhe, 2018) and both have a track record of winners receiving considerable media and market attention (Morris, 2010). Beyond these two prominent international awards, a number of spirit-specific awards have emerged in recent years. For example, the Spirits International Prestige (SIP) Awards were established in 2009 in California and in 2018 saw 783 spirit brand entries, while the Gin Masters competition established in the UK by trade publication *The Spirits Business*, also in 2009, includes categories for 'Design and Packaging' and for 'Marketing Campaign' as well as those set by product style.

Beyond specific awards relating to spirits, a number of more general food and drink awards include prize categories relating to alcoholic beverages. The Great Taste Awards, organised in the UK since 1994 by The Guild of Fine Food, judged 181 categories in 2019 to allocate awards of one, two or three stars in recognition of 'truly great taste, regardless of branding or packaging'. Of these, only eight categories related to alcoholic beverages, with one each for beer and cider joined by a 'Spirits and Liqueurs' category subdivided into sections for Gin, Rum, Vodka and Whisky categories as well as those for 'Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Wines' and for 'Any other alcoholic drink inc. mead, liqueurs & sloe gin'. Another source of awards prominent in the UK were those offered by magazines with a focus on regional lifestyles (for instance, *Cotswolds Life*) and by regional and local food and drinks retail organisations (such as the *Food Drink Devon Awards*).

Importantly, as this article will explore, the ability for small craft-based enterprises, often with paltry marketing budgets, to leverage substantial viability from their winning of awards and prizes means that the award giving culture of these sectors is something that they must unavoidably have an opinion on and develop a strategy towards. This reflects the need to view craft drink making as cultural labour that involves the marshalling of meanings and stories as well as making tangible products through skilled processes and the manipulation of ingredients and equipment (Thurnell-Read, 2014). The craft distiller identity involves skill, knowledge and passion (Ocejo, 2017). In this context, the judging and receiving of awards provides a window into analysing changing understandings of taste and value. Talking to craft spirits makers about awards and prizes proved a useful means to focus discussion on questions of quality, prestige and recognition. Their narratives proved to be complex and multifaceted; the tensions evident within expressions of mixed pride and cynicism revealing a great deal about how meanings related to craft work, craft products and craft consumers were the subject of ongoing negotiation.

REWARDING QUALITY, AWARDING PRESTIGE

The proliferation of prizes and awards has been a prominent yet relatively under-analysed feature of culture in recent years (English, 2009). As Frey (2006) observes, awards and prizes have become ubiquitous features of most fields of culture and are present in most areas of social activity. Prizes are widely accepted as ‘a hallmark of quality’ that bring ‘cultural recognition’ (De Valck and Soeteman, 2010: 291). Prizes and awards therefore play a key role in the ‘consecration’ of tastes in many cultural fields and are ‘seen as essential to an account of the production of culture’ (Street, 2005: 821). The most prominent cultural awards, such as the Booker Prize in literature (Anand and Jones, 2008; Todd, 1996), the Turner Prize in modern art (Stout and Carey-Thomas, 2007) and the Grammy awards in popular music (Anand and Watson, 2004), have come to dominate debates in their respective cultural fields. Such awards have developed richly complicated histories. Awards and prizes can have a formative influence on the emergence and evolution of particular cultural fields; the most influential awards and prizes can shape cultural taste and influence business practices (Street, 2018). Awards and other accolades may add legitimacy to emergent and developing cultural fields when they are regarded as both valid and genuine by both producers and consumers. Thus, in their study of wine shows in Australia, Allen and Germov (2011: 36) observe that ‘symbolic value is created whenever wine show judges determine that some wines are worthy of medals or trophies and others are not’ and that ‘this symbolic value can then be converted into economic value because the quality of a wine, as certified by a medal or trophy, has implications for its price’.

Whilst no academic studies directly address these matters in relation to the spirits industry, debates about the value and purpose of prizes and awards, the processes by which they’re given and how they’re received by consumers has a long history in the wine trade and a more recent trend in studies of agriculture and artisanal food production. As such, wine exhibition awards are said to signal quality to consumers and serve to influence the purchase process through simplification and reassurance of otherwise potentially intimidating complex categorisations of style and quality (Orth and Krška, 2002). Wine awards therefore play an important role in guiding consumer choice and establishing hierarchies of prestige in the minds of consumers (Charters and Pettigrew, 2003; Goodman, 2009). Similar importance has been identified in studies of food production, where particular focus appears to be on the role of awards in supporting smaller or newly established producers. Henryks et al’s (2016) study of participants in agricultural show awards in Australia notes the significance of such awards especially for smaller entrepreneurs who become well placed to use prizes allocated in their niche marketing to set them out as quality-focused producers. Similarly, Marsden and Smith’s study of ecological entrepreneurship mentions awards as valued symbols of recognition and prestige for small and innovative food producers vis a vis ‘mass’ producers with a more corporate focus (2005).

Recent studies have sought to highlight the workings of power, authority and authorship at work in the distribution of awards and prizes. Lane (2013), for instance, explains how those with the position to award prestige in a particular field exercise power and authority and uphold certain values and styles, often at the expense of others. Similarly, Warde (2009) uses a longitudinal analysis of the high-end restaurants selected for inclusion in the *Good Food Guide* to chart the evolution of British culinary identity across six decades to trace changes in legitimacy and recognition in regard to features such as ethics, nationalism and globalisation. Such studies illustrate how the criteria by which awards are allocated can be both a powerful reflection of and an influence on the identities of those involved in that particular cultural arena. For instance, Kersten and Verboord (2014: 9) demonstrate that winning or being nominated for prestigious awards can be used as ‘the parameter for professional recognition’ in providing winners with validation and recognition by peers according to the current structures of legitimacy accepted in a given cultural field. Indeed, in certain fields winning awards may be regarded as the pinnacle of a career or as the primary measure of success and achievement. Thus, Lane (2013: 353) notes that ‘The *Michelin* award system is regarded as an exceedingly important influence on culinary culture and on the socio-geographic identity of chefs and their cooking’ whilst, as shall be discussed below, many gin distillers spoke of certain awards as bringing a huge degree of pride and fulfilment.

Awards may be analysed in order to identify the favoured characteristics of a particular cultural sector. For instance, Lin and Mao (2015) identify particular attributes relating to naturalness, authenticity, indigenouness and craftsmanship as dominating the descriptions of award winning food products. Awards therefore play a key role in determining the symbolic value of products and by extension serve as a major influence of commercial value once products reach the market. Prizes and awards can be seen as highly symbolic communicative acts. Delmestri and Greenwood (2016) demonstrate the importance of awards to the increased cultural visibility and legitimacy of grappa in Italy and beyond and observe how a literary prize created by the grappa maker Nonino allowed associations between the drink and established and already valorised fields of culture to be communicated.

Throughout these debates, and as will become apparent in the present analysis, prizes and awards are appealing for consumers and cultural producers alike for their potential to serve as a ‘fixative’ to complex issues around value, quality and prestige. Squires, for example, asserts that cultural prizes operate in ‘the realm of marketing and

promotion, in which meaning proliferates in the promotional circuit and value is seen to be constructed rather than absolute' (2004: 39). This becomes of particular interest to craft food and drink producers who are engaged with protracted efforts to define and communicate how to make a particular food or drink product 'the right way' (Cope, 2014; Paxon, 2013; Thurnell-Read, 2014). Awards tend to proliferate in cultural fields experiencing rapid change, where such changes give rise to complexity or uncertainty and can be reassuring for consumers and producers alike. Doane (2009), for example, follows Bourdieu in suggesting that award and prize winners are a safe and easy option for new entrants to a given cultural field.

Given the very recent and rapid proliferation of gin products each staking a claim to quality, distinction and legitimacy, it is perhaps logical that a great number of awards and awarding entities should emerge. As such, following a short description of the methodological approach adopted in the research, the remainder of the article will explore the ways in which the prominence of awards is understood and experienced by gin makers.

METHODOLOGY

Whilst there are exceptions, such as Stout and Carey-Thomas' (2007) edited collection of reflection by Turner Prize winners and nominees, few studies have focused specifically on the subjective experiences of recognition and valorisation that award conferment brings on individual cultural practitioners. This paper is based on research involving 20 interviews with craft gin distillery workers from across England, from the far Southwest to the Northeast and across the West and East Midlands. The sample included distilleries based in rural, suburban and urban locations. Of the 20 interviewees, a quarter were female, the majority were white and British but two were British Asian. Age ranged from very early 20s to late 50s. Social class was diverse, some respondents were university educated, many were not; several were privately educated. In terms of previous jobs, they were also very diverse so the sample included former plumbers, IT consultants, graphic designers, and marketing and media executives. Most worked as hands-on distillers, but some were in or had progressed to managerial or marketing roles; a few used a hired-in distiller.

Interviews were conducted face-to-face and, in a number of instances, over the phone. The interviews lasted for an hour on average, with some as long as two hours, and all interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim by the author and then coded for key themes. On completion of analysis, all interviewees were assigned pseudonyms and identifying details such as specific brand names were removed in order to preserve the anonymity of participants.

In addition to this core dataset of qualitative interview transcripts, observations and field notes were made at a range of locations and events including tutored tastings, distillery tours, and gin 'festivals'. Throughout, the theme of value and prestige was prominent and the research focused specifically on how narratives were constructed around the product, its maker and the places and processes by which it was made.

REWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Awards were widely acknowledged as a manifest feature of the spirits industry and as being of particular prominence in the premium and super-premier categories in which most interviewees sought to position their products¹. As conversation turned to interviewees' own experience of winning awards, most could name an award that they had won that they were proud to have received or that they felt had been valuable for their business in terms of customer recognition or secondary media coverage. For Felix, and for a number of other interviewees, the initial response when asked about awards and prizes was to demonstrate a feeling of pride in having received them as recognition of the quality of their product. Felix was therefore characteristically animated as he explained how:

We won the *Great Taste* award, we won a *Spirit Masters* gold award and then just before we left, about a month before we left producing in the dining room, we also won the *IWSC* - which is the *International Wines and Spirits Competition* - gold medal, and last year only 20 gins in the world won those (...) We beat some of our favourite gins in the world that we'd revered for years, which we potentially stolen brand colours from, and they got silver, we got gold.

¹ Typically, the core brand gin for most interviewees had a retail price of approximately £40 per 70cl bottle, in contrast to £13-16 for 'mainstream' brands such as Gordon's. Prices per serving in on-trade licenced venues, however, could be much higher. During fieldwork the author noted gins produced by certain interviewees on sale in cocktail bars priced as high as £19.95 for a double with tonic mixer.

Given that, for example, the Great Taste Three Star award that Felix refers to is only awarded to around 2% of entrants, the linking of award winning to feelings of pride seems well placed. As noted by Squires (2004: 42), ‘one of the most important roles of prizes - ostensibly the most important role - is to recognise and reward quality’. Further, Felix also went on to explain that winning certain awards had been instrumental in their securing of a contract with a prominent UK retailer noted for its association with taste and quality.

Awards were one of many ways of making the often painstaking labour of craft production visible (Ocejo, 2017), and were felt to offer recognition for doing things ‘the right way’. For Martin, this meant awards giving him the faith in his product being worthy of attention from consumers with an interest in quality produce who might nonetheless be hesitant because of a significantly higher price than commanded by other more established mainstream gin brands. He therefore said that he valued awards:

Partly for our confidence, though, because when you’ve made something ourselves and you’re not from the industry and you’re competing against people who *do* know what they’re doing, or perceived to be...yeah, we’re the only gin in the world to get two double gold medals at the San Francisco spirit awards and that gives us absolute confidence when somebody says “why is your gin so expensive?”, you know, “why should I choose yours over these thousands that are out there?”

For Martin, then, the recognition of quality offered by a prominent international award was vital in being able to charge in excess of £50 per bottle but also represented acceptance from an industry in which he had initially felt himself to be an outsider.

Awards help small enterprises quickly establish their credibility and they can leverage this to enter new markets and to gain visibility in sectors led by larger established corporations who dominate mainstream marketing media space (Morrish and Deacon, 2011). For example, Jessica described how ‘for a small brand with no money’ winning awards meant ‘you really want to be able to say “Look, we won this prize!” and to give your consumers a reason to pick your bottle off the shelf. Likewise, Eddie, described how his gin winning a prominent international award was ‘just like a flick of the switch’ in terms of how he suddenly ‘got lots of interest in the local area, the local media’. Based on this, he was largely positive about the role of awards in the sector and went on to say:

Awards and things like that, especially for someone like myself, a small operation, is really useful. And I think people who run the awards, I think that they know that they basically provide a service, I suppose. People who promote craft spirits.

These examples illustrate the importance of awards to the craft gin sector being acknowledged, for various reasons, by nearly all of the 20 interviewees. Indeed, it is likely that those winning awards express degrees of loyalty to or respect for the organisations bestowing them (Frey, 2006) and this was shown by interviewees. Within the premium spirits sector, as elsewhere, prize giving creates highly visible and highly marketable events that seem to capture the imagination of the general public and of particular key stakeholders alike (Street, 2005). Winning an award can give a small producer, particularly those who have only recently entered into the spirits industry, a chance to secure a tangible measure of credibility that affords them recognition by customers and fellow industry professionals and, in so doing, gives them confidence in their own product and the skills and processes by which it is made.

However, whilst certain awards such as the *International Wines and Spirits Competition* were widely accepted as being worth winning, other awards were not so highly rated. Jessica, for example, described the *San Francisco World Spirits Competition* as ‘massive and kind of well thought’, meaning ‘you have to enter that’, while the *World Gin Awards* is ‘a new competition [that] within the industry hasn’t got that much traction’. Yet, as the latter *did* appear to have quickly accrued recognition amongst consumers, the *World Gin Awards* prize for “Best London Dry Gin” was being featured prominently on their bottles at the time of the interview because, in Jessica’s words, it ‘felt like a worthwhile one, in terms of talking to consumers about it’. This indicates both a degree of qualified ambivalence in relation to the nature of particular awards and a pragmatic recognition that different awards had different possibilities in terms of garnering respect from other producers or, alternatively, affecting changes to customer purchasing practices. Jessica’s comments draw a useful distinction between awards that draw their value from their recognition on either side of the producer-customer divide, with some being more important for customer recognition and others being well respected by distillers themselves and by other prominent industry figures. As the next section will explore, such reflection on the relative merits of specific awards was common amongst interviewees and often found expression in the ambivalence about which some awards, and for several interviewees the whole practice of award giving in general, were spoken of by participants.

AWARDS AND AMBIVALENCE

Whilst all interviewees acknowledged that awards were a prominent feature of the craft spirits sector, most also expressed some form of concern or doubt relating to the processes by which they were conferred and, for some, the merits of building award-seeking into their business strategies. Such concerns are perhaps likely given the complexity of the award giving process. As Moeran (2012) notes, the act of consecration entailed in award giving is dependent on the cultural authority of the awarding organisation, of the adherence to rigorous procedures when making decisions, of selectivity in that there can only be a small number of recipients and, finally, that the organisation should identify and communicate objective differences that demarcate those receiving prizes from others who do not. This section, therefore, explores this ambivalence in order to further unpack the meaning of awards and prizes to craft gin distillers.

When asked about the importance of awards to her business, Jacqueline explained how ‘there are awards and awards, so there are some that you just get something for turning up. Not sure that’s worth the paper it’s written on’. Similarly, Eric, reflected that:

In fact quite a few of the awards are run by magazines, spirits trade magazines and so on and so [laughs] if you take out three adverts in a year you’re guaranteed to win a gold medal, sometimes (...) not all of them, of course, but I don’t think there’s many credible spirit awards...but, just sticking a label on the product with a gold medal or a silver medal on it helps.

Speaking from a position of vast experience in the food and drinks sector that had included overseeing the development of several major brands, Eric is knowledgeable about the reality of award processes and speaks with knowing cynicism in describing some awards as having ulterior motives that typically relate to selling advertising space in industry magazines. Similarly, Owen described how:

When we started, I was quite keen to make sure we had a Gold Award for our gin. How do we get international recognition for our gin? And one of the gin consultants we spoke to [suggested that] the sure fire way was to make your own award up and win it. Which is something a lot of the wine boys do.

Such comments were typical of many interviewees who appeared to estimate the value of a given award based on their own knowledge of the process by which awards are judged and distributed. Returning to Jacqueline, who rejected certain awards that lacked genuine competition as being of little worth, we see an emphasis placed on those awards based on a real and rigorous competitive assessment of the product itself. She explained that:

The ones that we value the most are the ones that we know have been blind tasted. They’re not being swayed by the packaging, or anything like that. It’s basically just down to the quality of whatever it is that you’ve put inside the bottle.

Clearly, for Jacqueline, an important feature of the award must be genuine competition meaning awards are not given out to everyone just ‘for turning up’. Instead, blind tasting, where the gin is sampled by judges from plain anonymised vessels and no reference is made to identify the particular product and its associated branding, is seen as the measure of an award where genuine competition and judgment take place based on the quality of the drink alone.

Such comments are significant in that they reveal a great deal about the way in which awards themselves are viewed by craft spirits makers but also about the wider values that distillers seek to uphold. As English observes (2009: 7), we may adopt a ‘double-edged approach’ to awards and prizes that is neither ‘strictly cynical’ nor a ‘mystified, essentially religious attitude’. Evidently, interviewees combined idealistic views about value and quality with more pragmatic considerations relating to consumer behaviour, brand recognition and market share. For example, Darren explained that:

If you are a small self-funded start-up you need to cut through as quickly as you can because you can’t do a Diageo and just buy acres of media space. Fastest ways of doing it is winning an award so it costs, you know, 100 quid to enter an award, if you get the award great, if you don’t get the award, you know, you don’t even acknowledge that you entered it. We talk about the ones that you win [and] we’ve used it as a publicity vehicle.

Darren, who had elsewhere in the interview spoken at length and in eloquent detail about the quality of his products, is here pragmatic in acknowledging the strategic role awards play for independent producers. Adopting a highly strategic approach of entering awards but only promoting success is reported as a matter of fact and widely practiced strategy. Likewise, Chris explained that Adnams, a brewery with a long history that successfully entered

the premium spirits market in 2010, were ‘a classic one’ for using awards strategically in their marketing. He said that:

Their gin won a Bronze, which is not necessarily very good (...) you won't see anyone promoting a Bronze. So they got Bronze and the very following year with the same gin they got Double Gold, best in the country, with the same competition. So the fact that that can happen can only mean one thing, it's a lottery, because something must be terribly wrong. Bronze one year and in the next year for it to be Double Gold and for them taking the cup it doesn't make sense does it?

Here, Chris positions such competitions as akin to a lottery, a concept well explored by both English (2009) and the likes of Rossman and Schilke (2014). However, unlike awards in other sectors where a novelist, artist or filmmaker would submit entirely new works for consideration in subsequent years, here it is likely that gin producers enter their core product on an annual basis. In such cases, variability of award outcome year on year is for Chris a sign of the fallibility of the process. However, some awards, such as the SIP Awards Consumer Choice Award medal for spirit brands that secure a SIP Award for two or more consecutive years, appeared to encourage repeated annual submissions and in some respects reward consistency over successive competitions. This reveals interesting questions about consistency of judgement that interviewees themselves were quick to highlight. For example, Rowena reflected that:

You can put your product in for an award one year and it gets Gold and you can put it in the next and because of a certain judge didn't like it it gets nothing so and don't really bother too much about them, its other stuff that's really enjoyable and really rewarding.

Such comments are typical of the ambivalence at the heart of interviewees' relationships to awards. Awards are seen as important, but they were also often acknowledged to be the result of processes which are at best convoluted and at worst deeply flawed.

Other interviewees also questioned the accuracy and rigour of judgement processes. Reflecting on the difficulty of finding qualified judges who can make skilled and impartial judgements (Street, 2018), both Noah and Stanley, for example, expressed doubt that teams of judges could make repeated tastings of gin and still accurately assess quality by saying, respectively, that:

I've got friends who sit on the panel and judge some of these awards and they can tell you that after 15 or 20 gins it will become a little bit slightly arbitrary who wins what.

San Francisco is a good one because it's generally blind tasted and there's a lot of competition but at the end of the gin run I bet their palettes are just on fire, maybe they could taste Ribena and say it's delightful so even amongst the Double Gold group there's some big commercial gins that I wouldn't want to be seen up against.

This critical stance is evidently a cause for concern for awarding bodies, many of which go to some length to posit, as the Great Taste Award does, that their logo on a products packaging is a ‘guarantee a product has been through a rigorous and independent judging process’.

Beyond the process of selection and judgment, many interviewees focused their concerns on the ways in which particular awards sought to monetise the process of promoting an award win through paid use of award logos and banners or purchasing paid advertising space. Indeed, Owen spoke of the latter as a matter of pragmatism, saying ‘we won a couple of awards and we've reciprocated...you know, the way these awards work [is] “we won an award, we buy a page of advertising”’. Even well respected awards were spoken of with ambivalence by interviewees who felt paying to enter and then, if successful, making further payments to use promotional materials such as award rosette stickers for their bottles geared the whole process towards those enterprises with money rather than necessarily those with the best products or processes. Noah, for example, spoke of another distiller who is known for actively pursuing, and vocally promoting, award wins for their gin. Noah expressed this concern by saying:

[He] enters everything every year. He pays for all the stickers, he kind of flashes them about but he's of the opinion that if you're going to do competitions you have to do it, you have go for lots of competitions and lots of medals, you have to shout about it, you have to pay for the advertising space, you have to get it on all your marketing material, all these little, you know, crests and stuff otherwise there's no point in doing it.

Similar to the earlier comment by Chris that ‘you won't see anyone promoting a Bronze’, Noah and others felt that awards were a commercial strategy rather than a purely a measure of quality and prestige. Likewise, Danny described in a matter-of-fact way that ‘it's hard to find a gin that hasn't got an award unless they've just started

out', and went on to acknowledge that 'we've got about 12, they're all different grades of Silver, Gold, Bronze, Outstanding'. For Danny, awards were a feature of the sector and part of the business practice of all distillers and, also, the organisations offering awards. He explained that 'you get what you pay for, a lot of the time a lot of these awards are very expensive to enter into and you'll find that not many distilleries come out with nothing'. Notably, then, entry can cost several hundred pounds *per category* with even less established competitions such as the Gin Masters charging £195 plus tax for the first category entered and £150 plus tax for each category entry thereafter.

Winning prominent prizes can bring exposure and media attention that winners do not always feel in control of or be able to respond positively too (Stout and Carey-Thomas, 2007). Owen, for example, spoke of another distiller in the region who had won a 'Best Gin in the World' prize. However, for Owen, such an accolade came with increased exposure and pressure to meet heightened expectations. Referring to this award, he said that 'there was a lot of buzz and a lot of people spoke about that. But how long will that last? Somebody's gonna win it next year and it won't be them'. In this sense, the honour bestowed by winning even the most prestigious awards could be framed as a passing phase or as an unwanted distraction from the core activity of making craft gin.

ALTERNATIVE MEASURES OF VALUE

Whilst recognising the importance of awards many interviewees also suggested other measures of value that they saw as being of equal or greater importance to them. When Rowena explained her sceptical approach to awards, quoted above, she also concluded that it is 'other stuff that's really enjoyable and really rewarding'. For instance, some interviewees spoke of valuing the opinion of specific influential individuals more than awards bestowed by judging panels who they may not know or whose judgement they might not see as rigorous or valid. This made an interesting parallel to research by Henryks et al (2016) where artisan agricultural producers spoke of the support of respected chefs being more important than the recognition of judges. Thus, Stanley could name specific drinks writers and bar managers in prestigious venues in London whose favourable opinion he would value more highly than more many awards. He said that:

I think, you know, why the critics are more important than the awards because the awards help consumers [but] the critics know that these awards fall like snow in Antarctica across the whole industry. To have something those guys who have said nice things about us who are in the industry, that's more important.

Many interviewees did express desire for approval from consumers and several invoked a hypothetical 'average' but passionate customer as providing a greater sense of fulfilment than industry awards. Rowena, for example, explained that:

It sounds very kind of philosophical to say "I just want to make people happy and have nice drinks", but it's that kind of, you know, you get a lot more gratification from handing a gin and tonic over to someone in a bar and them being, like, "that's delicious". Then you know that it's worth doing and, like I said, even with the awards and things they're great and it's lovely to be able to post on your social media and stuff but they don't really mean a whole lot because it's so subjective.

Unsolicited feedback from 'average' customers was noted by many interviewees as being particularly welcome. Social media platforms like Instagram and Twitter allowed customers to make often sincere communications to craft gin producers expressing appreciation of their products. Austin, for example, said how:

It's that unsolicited praise that I really value. It's great, when someone has had your gin and thought to email you saying "hey, I loved your gin" or has taken time to go online and write a nice review or post an image of a G&T looking stunning.

This increased prominence of avenues for consumer reviews and feedback has the potential to democratise the sector (Mellet et al., 2014), and here we see that consumer feedback is often interpreted as being genuine and falling outside the strategic game-playing involved in 'award chasing'. As in wine consumption (e.g. Bianchi, 2015), building consumer loyalty with a specific brand may be the most effective ways to secure a long-term customer base once the initial interest generated by an award win has faded. Thus, the praise of a committed and passionate consumer remained, for many interviewed, the surest indication that they were 'doing things right'. Interestingly, the Spirits International Prestige (SIP) Awards makes a point of enlisting consumers as judges and frames this as a step to reduce industry influence and better reflect the opinions of 'ordinary' consumers rather than trained yet possibly partisan 'experts'.

Another important reference for some interviewees was their own personal tastes and preferences. As the craft narrative prioritises the individual skilled and passionate maker, many distillers spoke of how they were in effect their own judge and critic. An interesting tension emerged in relation to the craft narrative that prioritises autonomy and passion over market-orientated decisions. Tellingly, Felix explained that:

We knew our gin was good because we've designed the gin to be. It was a completely selfish product, we made the gin that we thought tasted best to us (...) having done that it's very strange to win an international award, like I say, from your dining room.

Winning a major international award from their rather humble context was, for Felix, a cherished part of their story. Elsewhere in the interview, he spoke of a desire to expand overseas markets and reach what he saw as informed and passionate consumers in the USA and in countries like Japan. Further, such asides served to illustrate the diverse ways in which value can be adjudged in the craft drinks sector. Certain awards are accepted as desirable whilst other awards are merely seen as useful in terms of gaining viability and recognition from current and potential consumers. However, as noted here, success can be measured through various often everyday ways meaning that the winning of prizes and other cultural accolades by no means monopolises measures of quality in the sector.

CRAFT, CREDIBILITY AND THE 'ACCIDENTAL AWARD'

The above discussion shows that the accuracy and legitimacy of the processes by which judgements are made and awards and other accolades bestowed are of considerable interest to scholars who wish to analyse cultural value and the nature of its negotiation and contestation (Allen and Germov, 2011). Indeed, the present case is of interest precisely due to the nuanced and sometimes near contradictory views expressed by craft gin distillers when discussing the importance of awards and prizes. As English (2009: 144) has explicated, cultural prizes can involve elements framed as 'a competition to be the best' and those cast as 'a lottery to be the luckiest'. As in other fields such as literature, art and cinema, awards play a significant role in shaping debates about quality and prestige. However, unlike those fields, these awards relate to *literal* as well as *metaphorical* taste and consumers are in this sense dependent on branding, marketing and accolades such as prizes and awards to make decisions about purchases. This quality appeared to ground the more abstract verbosity of evaluation in the tangible taste of the product, with most interviewees acknowledging the importance of awards but also noting that there is 'no substitute for actually tasting the gin'.

Processes of cultural consecration play a significant role in 'establishing what counts' in any given cultural field (Childress et al., 2017) and the rituals that build up around award giving have the power to shape the field and influence its development (Anand and Jones, 2008; Anand and Watson, 2004). Thus, the way craft gin distillers communicate about the awards that they and others have received can be analysed in order to shed light upon the interplay of personal, occupational identities and established and emergent ideas about quality, value and craftsmanship. Similar to what Orth and Krška describe as 'the partial utility of selected awards' (2002: 385), interviewees all described how *some* awards were worthy of winning and that the impact of winning awards was varied and not always positive. Specific awards and certain aspects of the processes of judgement, selection and deliberation were targets of informed scepticism.

Whilst it is clear that the most trusted awards are judged in blind tastings by recognised experts, this then leaves no space for recognition of where a great deal of time, effort and resources are focused – namely in the adding of value to products through the design of logos, bottles and publication materials, and through the creation of narratives about provenance, motivation and authenticity (Thurnell-Read, 2019; 2014). During interviews, all gin makers acknowledged the importance of contexts and presentation by explaining the roles played by bottling, labelling, branding, context of consumption and the narrative of production. Herein lies a tension for makers who want their gin to be judged for an award purely based on 'the liquid in the glass' and without reference to the conditions of its production or its distribution (e.g. marketing, bottle design, and brand narrative). There was a sense, therefore, that a successful craft gin distillery was more than just a producer of a high quality spirit. Interestingly, few awards accommodated such a distinction. An exception is the *World Gin Awards* which, in having a distinction between its 'Taste Awards' and 'Design Awards', allows for both the intrinsic quality of the drink and the extrinsic factors such as branding, packaging and route to market to receive recognition.

The various tensions and ambivalences noted above when analysing craft gin distillers' attitudes and approaches to prizes and awards perhaps stem from several facets of the underpinning craft ethos. Because craft discourse emerges from critiques of rational corporate culture and mass consumption (Cope, 2014; Sennett, 2008), craft enterprises often oppose overtly corporate activity which prioritises market expansion and commercial success (Thurnell-Read, 2019). Being independent and staying 'true' to your principles is valued and becoming too popular

and, specifically, too commercially successful too quickly can radically undermine the ethos on which craft entrepreneurs base their occupational identity and market niche. A number of interviewees explained that they wanted to make gin ‘their way’ and that meant framing their work as being about passion and fascination with the craft not external measures of success such as awards and growth in market share.

One way out of this apparent contradiction between desiring awards as a measure of success and recognition yet not wanting to be seen too actively to try to appease judges and markets through strategic game-playing is what we might term the ‘accidental award’. Thus, in Felix’s comments above, making a gin because you like it that way and then receiving a major award almost inadvertently is a means for the desire for recognition to be satisfied without displaying an overt desire for or strategic chasing of awards. Such comments are of particular analytical interest as they represent a working through of the tensions between discourses of craft work which valorise intrinsic rewards of craft labour with the process of award giving which implicitly externalises value.

Research on food and drink awards has tended to focus on how such awards impact consumer purchase decisions. This paper has instead sought to explore how receiving awards for their products is bound up in craft gin distillers’ conceptions of themselves and their businesses. All interviewees showed themselves to be self-reflective and self-aware. Expressing knowledge about the awards and the motivations which underpin the processes by which they are judged and awarded appeared to be a feature of demonstrating participation within the sector. Keeping abreast of who had won which awards and, importantly, who was genuinely worthy of such accolades, was a means for individual distillers to demonstrate their individual knowledge and occupational identity as well as to act as part of a community of interest where connections are forged between distillers.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that prizes and awards were widely accepted as being of strategic significance to the craft gin businesses. Specifically, awards are of significance for new market entrants (Goodman, 2009), the majority of which were relatively newly established and saw entering and winning competitions as a necessary strategy. Yet, ambivalence and some instances of outright cynicism were common. Whilst acknowledging the importance of awards to the current health and future prospects of the enterprise, this was not conditional on an uncritical stance in relation to awards and prize giving practices in the sector. The ambiguities identified in many accounts have been approached as of analytical significance in exploring how the receiving of awards is an important indication of processes of negotiating and contesting value, success and worth within the sector. Given that information about how awards are awarded is partial and difficult to access with certainty (Frey, 2006), expressing such cynicism has here been interpreted as a useful means by which interviewees show their insider status, through accounts of sector-specific knowledge of ‘how these things work’, and as being expert and self-reflective practitioners of their own craft.

The academic interest in the topic of cultural awards stems from the point at which the promise of awards to provide a determinate fix for quality and value fails to deliver. Quality and value are inescapably subjective and prestige is relative. Across fields, there are similarities and differences, but thus far little comparison has been made between more established culture forms such as literature, poetry and modern art and those, such as craft and artisanal production, where an emphasis on quality, value and prestige cultivates a fertile ground for prize-giving and award-seeking activities. Strikingly, there are clear favoured awards to win – those that are seen as rigorous and impartial and are not established just for profit – and there is a preferred way to go about winning one that involves being true to your own ideals and the processes of your craft. Further research in this field is needed to explore how these enterprises, and the recent proliferation of food and drink sector awards associated with them, measure success in the long term and if attitudes and practices relating to award seeking change as start-up ‘craft’ enterprises become established through market expansion and development of more or less stable customer bases. Further, the focus here has been on the discursive narratives of interviewees whereas future research might track the framing and impact of award winning in this sector across a more ambitious range of media and platforms. Significantly, the analysis of how awards are perceived and spoken of by craft gin distillers has given a way in to unpacking the dynamic nature of value and prestige in this specific cultural field by showing how prizes, and the rewards and recognition they confer, contribute to the ongoing development of meaning and practice in the sector.

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Book Review

Popular Music, Digital Technology and Society

Sergio Sorcia Reyes ^{1*}

¹ *University of Exeter*, UNITED KINGDOM

*Corresponding Author: ss1017@exeter.ac.uk

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Nick Prior (2018). *Popular Music, Digital Technology and Society*. London: SAGE, 2018, vii + 224 pages.

I found myself listening to one of my favourite ever songs while writing this review. This form of musical nostalgia was triggered by Spotify's algorithm, which definitely got it right this time. I could never have imagined such a piece of technological 'wizardry' as Spotify when I was a teenager. Back then, the craft of the mixed tape and cassette exchanges were the 'hip' ways of finding and sharing both new and old music. Before the 2000s, playlists and automatic music recommendations were far beyond the imagination of avid music listeners.

Nick Prior's book is a grounded analysis of the multiple processes that brought us to this point, one where digital technology and the ubiquitous presence of the internet-based forms of technology enable ever greater intensification of the reflexive interactions between music and society. This review addresses Prior's work as well as reflecting critically on some of the key ethical, aesthetic and social implications raised by these developments.

Prior's book is structured into seven chapters which, as he suggests, can be read separately and in no particular order, as stand-alone works. The exception to this general rule is the introduction (Chapter 1), which he uses to set out and explain various key concepts i.e. 'musicking', 'mediation', 'affordance', 'assemblage', etc. deployed throughout the book. Similarly, Prior uses the introduction to critically explore a number of the classic paradigms and themes organising debates within the field. These include the relationship between the social and technology, the distinction between 'soft' and 'hard' forms of technological determinism, and utopian and dystopian forms of discourse used by scholars to interrogate the social/technological nexus.

Following on from the introduction, Chapter 2 turns to explore the ways internet-based forms of technology impact on and shape music consumption. The central focus is on the socio-technical processes involved in the shift from analogue to digital distribution, along with the intensification of connectivity and exchanges between consumers facilitated by the internet. While highly informative, nonetheless I felt more attention needed to be devoted to the controversial use of the freedom of the internet to disseminate messages of crime, violence and hate through popular music, particularly as they relate to the genres of 'drill', 'narcocorridos' and 'reggaeton' (Dávila, 2012, Hancox, 2018; Jeffries, 2011; North and Hargreaves, 2008). Digital technology is a powerful tool enabling for traditional forms of censorship and accountability to be undermined. How young people engage with these themes and narrative forms supposes new ethical, aesthetic and social implications which arguably needed to be acknowledged more.

In Chapter 3, the use of apps, laptops, and digital technology [sampling] in music production comprise key themes and the social implications of these technological shifts are unpacked and analysed. A particular focus here concerns the ways digital technology such as sampling, has enabled 'readers to become writers' (p.69). This shift is perhaps one of the most striking changes of modern cultural production and Prior undertakes the laudable task of delving into the interactions and assemblages underpinning this shift. In Chapter 4, the section dedicated to mobile listening and urban space adopts a critical stance towards current debates surrounding mobile music listening. The author does this by drawing on primary and secondary qualitative and quantitative data from users and non-users.

The data are then used to explore the notion that mobile-music listeners are actively engaging in extended acts of sociality and alternative ways of sharing music. This suggests a departure from popular narratives depicting mobile devices as isolating and privatising listeners. Instead, Prior seeks to consider the increasing social presence of alternative modes of sociality as realised through mobile music listening.

Chapter 5 explores the role of the voice and digital vocalities, which Prior explores through a range of vocal ontologies and the human/non-human interactions implicated in and used to achieve specific hybrid assemblages. Voice manipulation software and hardware, and the transformation of the human voice into digitally encoded forms, are key themes covered in this section. Chapter 6 turns to the themes of music and games, music in games, and music as games. Prior addresses the close relationship between the gaming and music industries, stressing the importance of the the gaming industry in revitalising sales of digital music. He suggests the neologism 'playsumption' (p.167), to illustrate the relevance of gaming in digital music consumption. The final chapter (Chapter 7) of the book comprises an auto-ethnographic exploration of music production, distribution and consumption. This chapter reflects critically on the implementation of a music production project as realised through multiple assemblages of production, performance and distribution. The detailed description featured throughout this chapter is grounded in the author's knowledge of and skill in producing, distributing and performing music. And it is here that the reader begins to understand the decision to adopt a user-centred perspective throughout the book. It also explains why the examples used throughout are so vividly rendered. In addition to this, the chapter identifies the methodological challenges facing researchers seeking to understand the myriad processes by which actors, human and non-human, become wrapped up and entangled in the realisation of popular music.

This book is a significant contribution to the study of popular music and technology. Putting to work a broad range of cutting-edge theoretical concepts and analytical perspectives, such as actor-network theory, music mediation and science and technology studies, the author casts a discerning light on the socio-technical processes involved in the production, distribution and consumption of a wide range of modern popular musical forms as realised in and across multiple modalities. Rather than adopting a fixed theoretical standpoint from which to broach the issues covered, Prior elects instead to address the epistemological strengths of a range of different analytical perspectives. Doing so enables him to highlight the methodological challenges implicated in the analysis of popular music. That the book is infused with applied and relevant examples and employs a clear and unfussy prose style is, I feel, important to the book's overall success. Moreover, Prior provides the reader with a wide range of insights into the "artful practices" (Garfinkel, 1967) involved in the work of DJs, crooners, sound engineers and music producers, at the same time as demonstrating the centrality of these crafts in the development of new music technologies and practices.

This book is an invaluable contribution to readers from a range of music-related backgrounds including scholars, musicians, music educators, producers and undergraduate students. Similarly, for those working in the fields of popular music, music production, music education, cultural sociology, and the sociology of music, this book comprises a timely and thought-provoking piece of scholarship.

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Book Review

Midlife Creativity and Identity: Life into Art

Gavin Maclean ^{1*}

¹ *Edinburgh Napier University, UNITED KINGDOM*

*Corresponding Author: G.Maclean@napier.ac.uk

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Philip Miles (2018). *Midlife Creativity and Identity: Life into Art*. Bingley: Emerald Publishing, 2019, 203 pages.

During most of my twenties I remember looking up to bands like *LCD Soundsystem* or *Franz Ferdinand*, largely because they were led by musicians who were older than many of their contemporaries. I always felt I would end up having *that* career in music. Seeing people working in music in the latter part of their thirties always gave me hope that I still had time to follow that path eventually. It is in this context that Philip Miles' *Midlife Creativity and Identity* presents a welcome study of the work of artists during their 'middle age'. In recent years there has been a substantial upsurge in studies surrounding cultural labour, with notable studies exploring the role of social class, gender and racialisation in cultural production. Miles contributes a necessary, engaging and comprehensive ethnographic study that explores two further under researched areas within cultural labour studies – age and the creative process itself. Organised into three themes based around different types of creative practice - music, art and literary authors – the book explores the processes, 'transformations' and 'authorial routines' central to creative practice.

Given the concern with midlife, it is unsurprising that time emerges as a key theme throughout the book. The initial section of the book details the experiences of *The Ruins*, a group of musicians bordering their fifties who write and perform within Derby, England. What is striking within this section is the 'distance from necessity' – to quote Bourdieu – within which they operate. Their recording space captures the trappings of a midlife middle-class lifestyle and operates as a space of near timelessness. As Miles recounts, the temporal limits of rehearsal room space bookings which constrain younger, aspiring bands are of little concern for *The Ruins*. On initial reading, there is a feeling that the artists' relationship with money is perhaps understated within Miles' book. Perhaps, this criticism is unfair, however. As the book proceeds, 'time' acts as the form of capital that structures the experience of the participants' creative lives. For the working-class participants who feature in Miles' study, time acts as a proxy for advantage, their late entry to these creative occupations helping to overcome feelings associated with 'imposter syndrome' as demonstrated by the case of writer Annette, or the ability to embrace risk and get out of their 'comfort zone' (p. 76), in the case of the visual artist Peter. Age, in many ways, seems to correspond with having *more* time to be creative – either through affording participants more time or through the feeling of urgency that creativity can no longer wait.

While Miles' theoretical inspiration crosses the disciplinary boundaries between sociology and the more literary end of cultural studies, the crux of the book's theoretical framework bridges the work of Raymond Williams within the broadly late modern paradigm of Bauman, Beck and Giddens. Miles' key conceptual development is to introduce the notion of the 'mezzanine', which refers to a 'place' or 'state' where artists 'go' to explore their creativity in between the routines of everyday life. Inverting late modern notions of individualisation as unmooring individuals from sites and sources of belonging, the mezzanine state is an exalted place where artists 'let go' of the ties to everyday routines that limit them. This mezzanine, taking influence from Williams' notion of 'structure of feeling', is a place of uncertainty and risk where artists are able to explore their creativity. Miles uses his concept of

the mezzanine throughout the book to organise his analysis to place an emphasis on the creative process and routines of creativity. The concerns for ‘product’ or the ‘cultural industry’ (p77) that are understated by the participants earlier in the book, represent a return to the undesirable concerns of the everyday: money, routine and convention. The participants all exemplify the contrast between the ‘mezzanine’ and their everyday routines through their work. The artist Robin, for example, considers his creativity to be the process itself - the ‘notion’ of being creative – and contrasts this with the completion of the finished object - an ‘act of forgetting’ (p95). Indeed, Robin likens letting go of the work of art to the letting go of an academic paper and ‘getting it out’. Likewise, Annette finds her enjoyment in writing in a more ‘leisure’ like time characterised by the absence of routine, which contrasts with a more rigid notion of ‘work’ time wherein writing is associated with toil. For many of the artists the joy of creativity is in exploring new ideas and taking risks, but this often contrasts with feelings of drudgery or routine associated with producing the actual output.

At times Miles’ book can be an intimidating read, such is the theoretical depth and richness of the ethnographical material and data. The switching between ethnographic material and theoretical explication can mean the reader has to do a lot of work to keep up with the narrative being told. Overall, however, the book provides an important contribution to wider cultural labour studies. There is often a tendency in studies of cultural production to focus on youth cultures or subcultural studies at the expense of exploring the later stages of life. Indeed, media and cultural studies more generally tend to be concerned with the activities of young ‘creatives’. Taking age seriously is a particular strength of this book and focussing on time allows for an implicit exploration of the intersections between age, class and gender. In this sense, Miles’ book provides a welcome antidote to the kinds of over-socialised accounts of cultural production that occupy the post-Bourdieu terrain. While the focus of the book is on the creative process, Miles certainly does “pay respect” to the object of cultural production in a way that few other studies have done previously (Banks, 2017).

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Book Review

What Is Cultural Translation?

Kyle Conway ^{1*}

¹ *Department of Communication, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, CANADA*

*Corresponding Author: kconwa2@uottawa.ca

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Sarah Maitland (2017). *What Is Cultural Translation?* London: Bloomsbury, 177 pp. £24.99 (paperback), £90.00 (cloth). ISBN 9781472526861.

Few concepts in translation studies in recent years have been as controversial as cultural translation. It is a metaphor whose appeal in a wide range of fields derives from its apparent flexibility. Whatever meaning it once had (and even that is in dispute), the term risks being emptied of it now, as scholars with conflicting interests and goals use it to mean whatever they need it to mean.

This observation is Sarah Maitland's starting point in *What Is Cultural Translation?*, a book in which she argues not only that it is possible to define the term in a substantive way, but also that it provides a lens through which we can come to see our interactions with others in a new, ethical light. She grounds her analysis, first, in the practice of translation in the conventional sense of interlinguistic reexpression, and second, in the hermeneutic theories of Paul Ricoeur and George Steiner.

For Maitland, cultural translation consists in a hermeneutic cycle of interpretation, distanciation, appropriation, transformation, and finally emancipation. With respect to the first stages, she says we must begin by moving past the red herring of authorial intention. On the one hand, in a face-to-face conversation we can know a person's intention—which for her is an aspect of psychology, a form of desire directed outward toward the world—because we can ask, “What do you mean?” On the other, when faced with a written text, we cannot. We are removed from the author in both time and space: the author's present is our past, and their surroundings are not ours. We have only the words the author has arranged in a certain order, but not the author themselves to explain that order.

In this way, an author's intention is lost to us, and *tant mieux*, as its inaccessibility frees us to interpret texts ourselves. The author chose words intended to evoke certain associations for listeners, which in turn would evoke others (and then still others...), in a chain of associations at once idiosyncratic (different listeners, having experienced different things, will arrive at their own interpretations) and intersubjective (at a minimum, some meanings must be shared or speakers would have no tools for communicating at all). But in *our* world, here and now, the chains of associations have evolved. The author's words move through them differently, opening a different world for us. As we shift our interpretive attention from the author's now-inaccessible intention to the text itself, we also shift the responsibility for interpretation from the author to ourselves as readers.

This shift takes a paradoxical form. By engaging the text on our terms, we incorporate it into our world. Of the possible worlds opened by the text, we choose one, closing the door on the others. This appropriation becomes the dialectical counterpart of the temporal and spatial distanciation that has put the author's intention out of reach. We are staking a claim and transforming the meaning the text makes: it can no longer make meaning the way the author intended and instead works through our intervention.

However, the potential for new, divergent readings remains, as other interpreters, for whom our reading is just one among others, can come along and open the text anew. Although our appropriation might appear as an act of aggression against the author (we are, after all, substituting our interpretation for theirs), our need to defend it

means, on the contrary, that it “is not so much a possession of the world around us as a *dispossession* of the certainty with which we might presume to understand” the world—or a text within it (p. 139).

The emancipatory potential of cultural translation resides in this paradoxical dispossession. Without the author’s intention to appeal to, we must defend our interpretation on its own merits, a task we can accomplish effectively only if we distance ourselves from it to see it from the perspective of others. Our reading becomes a text in its own right, whose interpretation by others we cannot control, in the same way that the authors whose work we read cannot impose their meaning on us. In a field of competing interpretations, this second distancing puts people in a position where they must examine their own ideological stance. It becomes a way to challenge oppressive ideologies. In this way, cultural translation bears an ethical charge: “To qualify as cultural translation a phenomenon of human expression in the social sphere must be shown to engage in a contemplative work of understanding addressed towards a particular substance, but it must also have as its primary objective nothing short of the transformation of human hearts and minds” (p. 53).

This is a very persuasive book and a genuine pleasure to read. Maitland moves handily between dense theory and examples drawn from contemporary popular culture (at one point, for example, quoting Bruce Springsteen and Jimmy Fallon), which illustrate the theoretical ideas. One contribution not to be overlooked is her redemptive reading of Steiner’s *After Babel*, a foundational text in translation studies when it was published in 1975 but an object of considerable critique since then. She finds in it a value that has long been neglected. Indeed, throughout the book, she has provided scholars in translation studies—and other fields—a valuable set of tools for examining a promising, if vexing, metaphor.

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