

**“A sacred duty”: How Australian micro- and small presses
publish and promote silenced and under-represented writers –
and what their authors think about the process**

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**Part 2: Literature review on micro- and small presses
and under-represented writers**



This work is published May 2023 in conjunction with the Small Press Network (SPN). It is issued under a [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license](#).

The original research was conducted as part of a master's thesis in Communication for Social Change at the University of Queensland, submitted in November 2020. The full thesis is available on [the UQ eSpace](#). An article summarising the master's research appeared in Publishing Research Quarterly in April 2021 and is available at <https://rdcu.be/cBf5q>.

The author offers her sincere thanks to Tim Coronel, Sophie Masson and the Small Press Network for enabling this publication, and to her generous interviewees for sharing their stories. She can be contacted via www.jodiemartire.net. This work was created on unceded Jagera and Turrbal lands, in Brisbane, Australia.

Introduction to the series

Micro- and small-press publishing sits at the intersection of literature, art and politics. It is acclaimed for championing unheard voices, acting as “research and development” for new writers, styles and writing communities, and serving as a vital component in a very complex publishing ecosystem.

Australia’s book industry is very slowly coming to the realisation that it has a responsibility to publish works and authors who represent the full range of Australian lives, who express different experiences, backgrounds and knowledges. What we shouldn’t forget is that micro- and small presses (MSPs) have long been making this a reality. Perhaps instead of the industry attempting to reinvent the wheel in publishing “diversity”, it could learn from the decades-long experience of successful small presses who have routinely elevated the creations of neglected, silenced and unheard voices.

This was the purpose behind my master’s research, which I completed in 2020. I wanted to learn from experienced small presses and share their knowledge and practices with the wider Australian publishing industry. I completed my thesis on the strategies that small-press publishers use to raise and amplify the voices of traditionally excluded authors. My research also aimed to learn what authors published by small presses thought of their publishers’ performance, and to discover their suggestions for the industry. Writers of difference from many backgrounds have frequently (and fairly) lambasted their systematic and systemic exclusion from publishing, so I wanted to learn the details of their ideas around specific publishing practices—and thus offer something of a roadmap to an industry which says it is now listening to “diverse” authors. (I use “writers of difference”, or “WOD/s”, for creators, rather than “diverse authors”, following the work of Merlinda Bobis (2017).)

The two publishing houses I worked with in my project were Spinifex Press and Wild Dingo Press (WDP), which both have long histories of publishing and publicising under-represented writers. Spinifex has just celebrated 30 years in business and Wild Dingo has been operating for over a decade. I conducted nine interviews with publishers and staff of both presses and with two writers published by each press. Authors’ contributions were provided anonymously. The research was framed by appropriate ethics approvals from the University of Queensland.

In this collaboration with the Small Press Network, I am beyond delighted to share the results of my research in the knowledge that it provides a range of potential practices for the Australian publishing industry. It should be especially useful for publishers and presses who strive to increase the range, variety and volume of writers whose voices we have missed out on for too long.

Introduction to Part 2

The first instalment of this SPN publication collated the publishing strategies used by publishers and their authors' responses to them into one expansive table. You can download it from [the SPN website](#).

This is the second instalment, and offers a review of the academic and industry literature on micro- and small presses (MSPs), writers of difference (WODs), and the relationship between under-represented writers and their publishers. It also sets out the key theories I used in my research. I've updated this literature review with a few key publications which have appeared since the thesis was submitted.

Literature review

Micro- and small presses

MSPs are considered a vital part of any publishing ecosystem. They have historically had a “catalytic effect on Australian literary culture”, they enrich the nation’s representation abroad through significant foreign-rights sales, and have earned high symbolic capital through their disproportionate number of prize winners (Carey, 2019; Galligan, 2007, p. 40; Stinson, 2019; Sullivan, 2018). They are lauded for their editorial passion, commitment and belief (Thompson, 2012); their role as “the home for adventurous publishing” (Coronel, 2013, p. 28); and their status as a beloved “cultural essential” (Henderson, 1984). MSPs champion local content (Freeth, 2007) and their nimble structures allow them to experiment in a digitally transformed publishing landscape (Driscoll & Mannion, 2016). Galligan notes that smaller presses conduct “a kind of cultural research and development for the industry, and often [act] as ‘a sieve or conduit for new authors’” (Galligan, 2007, p. 40, citing Moran, 1990, p. 131), which is related to their commitment—almost universally praised—to creating publishing avenues for silenced, neglected and under-represented writers (Denholm, 1991; Harker & Farr, 2015; Marlow, 2016). In their introduction to a recent collection on the contemporary small press, editors Georgina Colby, Kaja Marcewska and Leigh Wilson (2020) note that in addition, “the small press makes visible both the multiple processes and the tensions which construct and shape the literary in the contemporary [because] small presses themselves are so keen to make visible issues around class, challenges to racism and the aims of feminist politics” (p. 6,7).

An early profile of independent Australian presses (mostly MSPs) provides a useful summary of publishers’ survival strategies (Poland, 1999b). Independent presses work at the frontier, are highly cooperative with each other and industry bodies, and select a specialist publishing niche. They take risks, publish at the quality end of the spectrum (with a focus on midlist and backlist titles, rather than new releases), and have a strong commitment to new and Indigenous writing. All of this, plus a valuation of culture over commerce, are strongly driven by the presses’ ideology and principles, which then infuse small and independent presses’ brand and marketing strategies (Michael, 2019). The driving force of a press’ principles is also highlighted in studies of Australian feminist presses (Poland, 2007; Weber, 2019), which existed for feminists to own their own media, avoid censorship and participate in social movements.

Australian MSPs have been the subject of considerable study in the last decade or so, but little or no attention has been paid to publishing motivations or *voice*¹ in relation to small-press practices. Three significant industry studies produced specific data on MSPs, but no related questions were posed (Hollier, 2008; Lee et al., 2009; Throsby et al., 2018). Several studies have explored MSPs’ relationships with specific genres: poetry, crime, romance, fantasy, sci-fi and avant-garde fiction (Carruthers, 2017; Driscoll et al., 2016; Driscoll et al., 2018; Golding, 2011; MacCarter, 2012). These, however, centred on which press publishes each genre and how many titles they issue. They

¹ *Voice* in italics refers to the formulation in Couldry (2010). See Theory below.

document an overall increase in MSPs' genre-based importance, without focusing on how creators are chosen and promoted.

Other Australian studies have focused on the mutually beneficial relationships between small publishing houses and genre communities. Wilkins (2019, p. 2) believes fantasy fans operate as a vibrant “research-and-development space for the literature [they consume]”, while Stinson (2016) examines the active “prosumer” (proactive consumer) bond between literary fiction and its readership. Both highlight methods which *voicé*-publishers could implement to drive acquisition (crowdfunding or selecting unusual genres like novellas) or promotion (innovative formats like two-ended *tête-bêche* books), but these suggestions function primarily for a press's habitual audience and may only be of limited use in disseminating *voicé* to a broader readership.

The most-relevant small-press studies have been conducted by Ramdarshan Bold (2015, 2016) in the North and Midlands of England and in the Pacific Northwest of North America, respectively. In her interviews with 15 US and Canadian MSPs, and with 12 British MSPs, Ramdarshan Bold asked whether they believed they could “help to promote and preserve regional cultures and identities” and “maintain diversity in cultural output”. Both cohorts focused on niche or regional work, placed a very high value on their relationships with authors, and actively acquired work by underrepresented creators. These publishing environments provide valuable evidence for MSPs' almost-default commitment to *voicé*: “There was an overwhelming consensus that all independent publishers—no matter where they were based and what size of company they were—played an important role in protecting and making visible non-mainstream work” (Ramdarshan Bold, 2015, p. 46). The studies don't detail specific problems or strategies related to publishing WODs, but they offer broader survival strategies: establish and maintain regional, literary and industry networks; seek opportunities in new technologies; and work actively to promote both brand and writers in social media and international circles.

One important study examined how five Australian publishers (including smaller and socially committed presses) publish writers with educational and class disadvantages (Butler, 2019). Four of the five had an explicit commitment to publishing excluded writers, yet few opportunities for mentoring, programs and prizes were offered to any except Indigenous writers. For the 40% of Australians who can't read well enough to enjoy a standard novel (p. 36), participation in publishing—and through it, the public sphere—can be impossible without employing ghostwriters or co-writers.

Publishing strategies

Limited information is available on the strategies that presses can use to promote excluded and silenced voices. The Australian Publishers Association (APA; 2020), offers one members-only webpage mostly focused on staffing. The document *80 recommendations & tools in support of bibliodiversity* was produced by the International Alliance of Independent Publishers (IAIP, n.d.-a) but its interventions are aimed at networking, legislative change around digital platforms, copyright and tariffs, and developing policy and funding models to support independent presses. It provides a useful blueprint for publishing's evolution to become “bibliodiverse”, but few concrete suggestions for individual presses.

Other analysis of publishing strategies suitable for MSPs is fragmentary and limited to specific publishing stages (Smart, 2012), primarily acquisition, editorial and staffing. Squires (2007), however, focuses on the marketing histories of commercially successful literary fiction,

specifically standard, big-budget promotions strategies (Baverstock & Bowen, 2019). Stewart (2018) analyses acquisitions by 47 independent presses in six countries (including Australia): they rejected writers who brought no uniqueness, charisma or authority to the literary field. Importantly, Stewart specifically investigates how publishers actively address publishing’s “diversity deficit” through

hosting readings specifically for BAME [Black, Asian or minority ethnic] and LGBTQIA groups, those with mental health issues, the homeless; creating screen-reader adaptable books for those with visual impairments; and publishing anthologies of poems written by deaf and disabled authors. Such practices are often costly and only made possible by State funding or private patronage. Other measures include offering paid internships to encourage those not able to work for free; inviting younger writers and more women onto editorial boards; giving talks and seminars in schools to encourage careers in publishing; curating literary events whose invitees are not the usual crowd; pushing submissions from BAME groups to the front of the ‘slush pile’, and openly inviting submissions—on the website platform—from under-represented groups. (p. 20)

The interventions Stewart describes, which play out through the publishing stages of staffing, acquisition, production and promotion, form a unique comparison for this research. Most literature on publishing strategies is directed at acquisition, and editing practice and staffing. Given publishing’s long tradition of being editorially led, a situation which remains the status quo for most MSPs, this focus is unsurprising.

A useful historical study by Poland (1999a) documents the commissioning practices of nine Australian independent presses, most of them MSPs who had published Indigenous, regional and feminist titles; it is a task which requires “risk-taking, imagination and vision and an eye for the market” (p. 110). Poland identifies the common means of acquisition as contracting authors to write on a topic, authors pitching to publishers, co-publishing, purchasing books from international publishers or “book packagers”, and the slush pile (for unsolicited manuscripts). Few independent presses found agents useful at this time. Commissioning is an “informal and fluid process” (p. 113) relying on a publisher’s networks and relationship with authors, and considering the longevity of the press’ backlist. The distinguishing feature between independent presses’ acquisition practices and those of mainstream publishers is “the adventure, drive and excitement of creating quality books” (p. 117).

Brown (2003), in her examination of the publishing culture and power behind any given acquisitions editor, remind us of publishing’s vexed gatekeeping function (Ramdarshan Bold, 2015). Beyond the methods described in Poland (1999a), Brown discusses the role of publisher’s readers (who conduct a preliminary assessment on a manuscript), publishing committees who decide on an acquisition, and the fact that certain presses “represent particular communities and cultures” (Brown, 2003, p. 150) and acquire manuscripts with them in mind.

Other scholars have concentrated on how presses make their decision to acquire a manuscript, rather than the processes enacted. Merriman (2017) examines a Fiction Board’s interpersonal dynamics as they collectively acquire stories, and notes that though no positive selection criteria could easily be defined, manuscripts/writers were routinely rejected for being egotistical, incompetent, sexually creepy, incongruous or boring. Squires (2017) interrogates editors’ ideas of

taste around the manuscripts under consideration, and found that their “[g]ut reactions were, in actuality, learned business decisions, in constant negotiation with the environment” (p. 31). She also found that editors had not updated their commissioning toolkit to the digital era, and made no reference to machine learning or algorithmic processes as a current or potential practices—even though this could potentially lead to greater diversity by bypassing the biases of the editor and the press.

This bias also comes into the discussion around who has the privilege and power to edit whom. In the Australian context, critics have carefully dissected the intrusions of white editors into the structure, story and voice of Indigenous authors (most thoroughly in Jones, 2009). Contemporary editors from Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds (Ibrahim & Lucas-Pennington, 2018; Pham, 2020) bemoan the lack of editors from non-mainstream communities, as: 1) cultural similarity between writer and editor allows for greater trust and creativity; 2) writers feel less pressure to dilute their message or change their voice to meet external requirements; and 3) more editors of difference can normalise the acceptance of more WODs in publishing. The value of cultural affinity should not be neglected, but that alone will not give an editor all the skills she needs; on the long, slow road to a representative publishing industry, one response to this is the black&write! program which trains and mentors upcoming Indigenous editors (Mar & Ang, 2015; State Library of Queensland [SLQ], 2020). One element of this editorial training will be the intricacies of line editing, and the impact micro-editorial changes have on a writer’s voice and text, as examined in Michael et al. (2020).

Writers of difference

The issue of “diversity” of Australian publishing outputs is highly contested. First, the term “diversity” has been condemned as vacated of meaning, long unable to achieve its original aim of increasing fair representation (Ahmed, 2007). Refugee-rights advocate Tania Cañas (2017, para. 1) argues that “diversity” is an “in-vogue theme” in Australia’s arts, “restricted to aesthetic presentation, rather than a meaningful, committed, resourced, long-term process of shifting existing power-dynamics”. “Diversity” sees through a “white lens [focused on] creating, curating and demanding palatable definitions of ‘diversity’ but only in relation to what this means in terms of whiteness” (para. 2); or, we could add, maleness, heterosexuality, ableness, etc. It’s no wonder that Kwaymullina (2016) recasts Australian publishing’s “diversity problem” as a “privilege problem”.

That notion of palatable diversity is lambasted by Evelyn Araluen (2020), Indigenous co-editor of *Overland* journal, in a Twitter thread about the “white-passing privileges” she had received before the age of 25, including offers of workshops, readings, prize judging, article commissions and book deals. These opportunities were “NOT good things” but “absolutely traps” (original emphasis):

To be allowed to take up so much space when I was ridiculously young and underdeveloped for it is testament to how much the industry wants the right kind of Blak voice for the job of selling Blak culture to a white monied elite.

By selecting and promoting “acceptably diverse” writers, publishing under neoliberalism can reinforce its control over difference; the creator is disadvantaged by issuing work that doesn’t do them credit; and “unacceptably diverse” writers (like dark-skinned Indigenous women or those with

high community visibility) remain neglected (Araluen, 2020). Similarly, life stories by “diverse writers” should not be demanded as their fee for entering publishing, nor framed as “opportunities” (Bartholomeusz, 2020).

Corrupted as it may have become, “diversity” is still a widely-used catch-all for differences from the mainstream that can result in silencing or exclusion. This may be marked by sex, gender identity, sexuality, “race”, ethnicity, nationality, indigeneity, (dis)ability, age, education, class, income, religion, regionality, migratory status, etc. But as Goan-Anglo-Indian writer, Michelle Cahill, asks, “why does the use of naming and labels apply only to non-White writers? ... Ultimately writers need to be respected as individuals not simply as commodities to catalogue” (in ladyredjess, 2016).

It is, or should, also include “society’s invisible contemporary lepers: young offenders, women and children split open by fist and phallus, injecting young people at risk of HIV, scare-mongered underground by ponytailed advertising wunderkinds with big budgets and small brains; the rural poor; whatever” (Rankin, 2014, p. 12). We would be hard-pressed to find such creators producing or represented in Australian writing. The selective results of the Victoria University–led First Nations and People of Colour Count (Kon-Yu & Booth, 2022) reveal that in 2018 only 3% of published titles were by First Nations authors, while 7% were by “People of Colour” authors. (See also my recent article on how “diversity” is currently measured in Australian publishing and how it could be improved [Martire, 2021].)

Writers of difference and their publishers

I have located one study that directly asks, “who is publishing diverse books best?” (Shea et al., 2018). It used data from Goodreads for the most-popular US books of 2016 and compared it to “racial identifiers” in authors’ online profiles. Of the 163 titles analysed, PRH had the highest number of “diverse” titles, followed by “self-published and independent” presses, then the remaining four of the Big Five. However, this study has serious flaws, not least because it conflates self-published books with those of independent presses, considers “diversity” as related to only an author’s ethnicity/nationality, and judges “best” as “largest number in Goodreads’ most-popular titles list”. The authors acknowledge that Goodreads’ users tend to be “white, college-educated females”, but still claim that the platform “provides a level playing field” by offering “equitable spacing on its virtual shelves” to all titles (p. 209). This assessment fails to account for the vast difference in promotional budgets between the Big Five and any independent publisher (White, 2017), at play in both the real world and online. It also doesn’t consider that the “best” diverse story may not be the most read or the crowd favourite, but the one which speaks to its own community: “an authentic story, if mentored and not stolen, if fanned to flame, if made highly visible, can have great currency for those who own it” (Rankin, 2014, p. 18).

While many excluded writers have shared their own opinions on publishing in articles or interviews, these pieces focus on “diversity”, inclusion and the author’s perceived market share—rather than specific tools or techniques which the industry could develop to benefit writers like them. In addition, little academic or industry-based work has explored writers’ perceptions. A rare example comes through Anita Heiss’ (2003) interviews with Australian indigenous authors in her book, *Dhuuluu-Yala*. Heiss breaks significant ground by gathering First Nations writers’ opinions of Australian publishing and its workings, although the writers’ reflections are not necessarily collected in tandem with their presses’. In addition, two library researchers, Booth and Narayan

(2018a, 2018b), interviewed seven young adult (YA) writers—including queer ones—about their experiences publishing and promoting their titles, distilled as lessons for schools and libraries.

The UK has been a much richer source of analysis into WODs and their publishing experiences. For the report *Common People: Breaking the Class Ceiling in UK Publishing* (Shaw, 2020), interviews were conducted with 17 emerging working-class writers as well as publishing professionals. Writers revealed the broader barriers they experienced on the path to publication; their contributions, together with those of publishing workers, were presented as high-level recommendations for government and industry—but they don't translate into day-to-day suggestions for MSPs.

Another significant report from this year, *Rethinking 'Diversity' in Publishing* (Saha & van Lente, 2020), focuses on the quality of participation of writers of colour in the UK book industry and uses a similar interview structure to this research with participants from publishers large and small, literary agencies, festivals and booksellers. They were asked about publishing writers of colour at the stages of acquisition, promotion and retail sales.

Rethinking found that the primary audience for UK publishing houses “is white and middle-class. The whole industry is essentially set up to cater for this one audience” (Saha & van Lente, 2020, p. 2). Publishers were unable to reach BAME and working-class audiences, and lacked the creativity and risk-taking needed to acquire new authors. Arguments about writing “quality” often disguised staff discomfort at working with non-mainstream voices, while comparing new titles to known ones entrenched major voices as benchmarks and restricted the space for emerging narrators. In promotion, publishing houses showed little creativity towards, awareness of or interaction with minority audiences. As publishers expected lower sales from non-mainstream authors, they consequently failed to provide sufficient resources to promote titles or authors of difference and give them an adequate chance of success. The report is damning in linking these systemic failures, the low numbers of books in print by writers of colour, and the concomitant absence of the role models need to inspire up-and-coming writers from excluded groups. As this paper sets out, many of these flaws are actively addressed by the two MSPs I investigated.

Ramdarshan Bold (2019) interviews authors of colour in her investigation into diversity in British YA. She documents a range of “micro and mega aggressions” that writers of colour have experienced at the hands of book industry players, their issues with insensitive editors, and the fact that they are simultaneously commodified as authors of “issues” books yet sense they must be better than white writers to succeed. Kean (2019) also notes that BAME authors are often “published as ‘literary’ fiction, which not only sells far less than genre fiction, but emphasises the Otherness of the writer and the world portrayed” (p. 229).

Importantly, it should not be assumed that MSPs treat their WODs any better than mainstream publishers do. A recent scandal in Australian small-press publishing spotlights the serious issue of exploitation. Literary journal *The Lifted Brow* (TLB) was regularly lauded for its commitment to non-mainstream voices and content, such as “Blak Brow: The Blak women’s edition” (2018), created entirely by First Nations creatives, and prize-winning *Pink Mountain on Locust Island* by 20-year-old Jamie Marina Lau (2018), published by its micro-press Brow Books. But early in 2020, most of TLB’s board and editors resigned following a sexual-misconduct scandal; a male editor was accused of having sex with female authors and asking them to conceal it, and the male publisher’s response was judged irresponsible (Overington, 2020; Reeson, 2020; TLB Society Inc., 2020a, 2020b).

Theory

This research holds that publishing is a prime facilitator of access to the public sphere, proposed as a space which mediates between the state and society where citizens can share opinions and debate ideas relevant to all (Habermas, 2006 [1989]). Later theorists have expanded the original concept beyond property-owning elites to include multiple non-mainstream groups. These may influence “the” public sphere or organise themselves as “counter-” or “little public spheres” that hold sway with specific communities (Fraser, 1990; Hickey-Moody, 2016). Yet we must accept the limitations of both variants in the real world: an idea’s circulation within a sphere need not impact the sphere’s participants, nor are individual spheres inherently open to dialogue with each other or with the mainstream (Dreher, 2010). We must be wary of spheres that function as echo chambers. I use this concept while acknowledging its inherent weaknesses.

Oceans of ink have been spilled over the connections between the public sphere, democracy and media (be it traditional, digital or social), but few scholars have explicitly stated the tacit assumption that publishing, also, might be related to democracy and the public sphere. Murray (2018) uses the very title of her monograph—*The Digital Literary Sphere*—to link Habermas’ idea with book-world’s modern manifestations. She also takes pains to note that Habermas himself (1991) believed that the literary sphere was a precursor to the political. Bhaskar (2013) went further, professing publishing’s centrality to any public sphere. Publishing is

at the heart of our literature and our learning, our civil society, our public spheres and political discussions. Publishing carries forward our sciences and powers our culture. Publishing isn’t a passive medium; it is a part of our lives and societies, shaping them, guiding them, sometimes even controlling them. (p. 5)

Perhaps the most-thorough analysis of this connection appears in the book arts/alternative publishing anthology, *Publishing as Artistic Practice* (Gilbert, 2016). Gilbert notes that works issued through non-traditional publishing can “lack authority in the public sphere. It is as if they didn’t exist” (p. 34).

My focus on micro- and small presses is based on my understanding that they contribute to Hawthorne’s (2014) concept of “bibliodiversity”. Parallel to biodiversity, bibliodiversity is the wealth of voices, languages, environments and cultures represented in the book industry; the greater the bibliodiversity, the more stable the publishing ecosystem—and the world at large. Framed as “cultural diversity applied to the world of the book”, it is a core principle of the IAIP (n.d.-b). It holds events, prepares resources and hosts an observatory to promote and strengthen bibliodiversity with its 750 members worldwide.

This research seeks to explore how MSPs, in practising bibliodiversity, enable the expression of silenced voices—or *voice*. Nick Couldry’s formulation (2010, p. 1) comes from communication for social change, and considers *voice* both a value and a process through which human beings “give an account of themselves and of their place in the world”. As a value, it aids expressions in support of human life, resources and organisations, opposing neoliberal political and market processes. As a process, *voice* “is an irreducible part of what it means to be human” (p. vi). *Voice* is grounded in social structures; permits reflexivity and agency; is historically embodied; requires material form; and can be undermined by rationalist beliefs. An individual’s *voice* only exists and is respected if they recognise their ideas in group decisions, which can manifest as inclusive

sustainable development or social change. It allows solidarity with subaltern perspectives and makes manifest the right to communication, underpinned by Article 19 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (Manyozo, 2016; United Nations, 1948).

Couldry (2010) also delineates a range of factors which enable *voice*. Being able to give an account of oneself is merely “a *possible* starting-point for recognizing someone as a political subject” (p. 109, original emphasis). In addition, effective *voice* needs narrative resources, where the narrative is sustained by the lived reality of the speaker; narrative strategies, which link one’s *voice* and its aims to a collective narrative; and spaces for expression, as “people need first to be *visible* before they can be recognized as having voice” (p. 130, original emphasis). Successfully disseminating *voice* also requires frames that allow “new types of exchange, new terms of mutual recognition” (p. 147): in publishing, this would imply reinventing actions by and relationships between publishers, distributors, bookshops, libraries, festivals and reviewers.

Although *voice* can be “strategic, manipulated and manipulating” (Tacchi, 2016, p. 118), as seen in the publishing scandal around Helen “Demidenko” (Simic, 2007), such cases are rare and not the focus of this research. Manyozo (2016) also enjoins care when working with those outside the mainstream: “The voices of marginalized communities are not just products that can be packaged anyhow” (p. 57).

Two other concepts help understand who does or does not have *voice*. Olson (1980) wrote of the silences of creators who are blocked from writing, whose “work [is] aborted, deferred, denied”, overshadowed, censored or “physically silenced by governments” (pp. 8–9). Worse are “the silences where the lives never came to the writing ... those whose waking hours are all struggle for existence; the barely educated; the illiterate; women” (p. 10). The second comes from Nguyen (2018), who hopes for a time when he and other Asian-Americans can attain “narrative plenitude”, and hear many voices like their own, rather than their current “economy of narrative scarcity, in which we feel deprived and must fight to tell our own stories and fight against the stories that distort or erase us” (para. 5).

Other crucial questions related to *voice* include the “politics of naming”. Before considering someone as voiceless or *voice*-less, one should ask, “Who does the naming? Who is being named? What difference does it make?” (Mamdani, 2007, p. 2). Cahill (2012) notes, for example, that neither Asian-Australians’ identities nor their lack of representation in literature make them inherently “subaltern”, although these factors may be sufficient for outsiders to judge them “marginalised” and potentially *voice*-less.

And finally, Hengen Fox (2017) makes valuable connections between publishing and social justice in his book *Reading as Collective Action*, reminding us that readers close the circuit of knowledge conceived by authors and midwived by publishers. MSPs which seek to increase *voice* do so by aiming for fairer representation in the publishing sphere, distributing their books to amplify those voices, and attempting to increase the authors’ reception and validation among readers and the community at large.

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