



## **What's Going on Down Under?**

### **Part 2: Portrayals of Culture in Award-Winning Australian Young Adult Literature**

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#### **Abstract**

Books published in Australia are strong choices for youth collections in other English-speaking countries because of the shared language and the use of different vocabulary and cultural expressions, enlisting readers to think critically about meaning and context. This article is the second in a two-part series exploring portrayals of culture in two popular Australian young adult literature awards: the Children's Book Council of Australia's (CBCA) Book of the Year: Older Readers, chosen by adults, and the Centre for Youth Literature's Gold Inky Awards, chosen by young adults. Using a critical content analysis approach, the research examined the twenty-four winners from 2007 to 2018 for depictions of nine cultural constructs including class, disability, gender, immigration, Indigenous Australians, language, the LGBTQIA community, race/ethnicity/nationality, and religion. Findings suggest that class is an ever-present cultural element in the titles, especially in the CBCA award winners, and issues of class privilege and disadvantage are linked to other constructs, notably gender, immigration, language, and race/ethnicity/nationality. While two titles portrayed Indigenous Australians authentically, this construct was the least represented in the sample and reflects a gap in the awards and Australian youth publishing overall, as noted by other researchers. These titles offer an alternative perspective to issues affecting young adults on a global level such as immigration, racism, and sexism.

## Introduction

Australia has a rich history of literary tradition much like the United States and other English-speaking countries, and the print book continues to flourish in the digital age despite ominous predictions to the contrary.<sup>i</sup> The *Sydney Morning Herald* reports that print book sales have risen since the global financial crisis due to thriving small publishers and independent booksellers, with figures especially promising in the youth sector.<sup>ii</sup> From 2015 to 2016, almost one-third of book sales in Australia were children's books.<sup>iii</sup> A youth favorite year after year is the Treehouse Books series by Australians Andy Griffiths and Terry Denton, starting with *The 13-Storey Treehouse* in 2011 and reaching to eight volumes with *The 104-Storey Treehouse* in 2019. The series has claimed the top book sales overall across the past few years as well.<sup>iv</sup> Further, the #LoveOzYA movement started in 2015 to tag and celebrate some of the great Australian young adult literature being published today.<sup>v</sup> However, while holding its ground domestically, Australian youth publishing is not much present in the American youth book market for a few different reasons. First, there is power in numbers, and one of the main differences between Australia and the United States is the population. While the landmass of Australia is about the same as the forty-eight continental states, Australia's total population of 24.9 million people is less than 10% of that of the United States with its approximately 328.4 million people.<sup>vi</sup> This difference in population is also reflected in the publishing market, with American young adult literature reaching across the Pacific and saturating the Australian market, but the reverse not happening.<sup>vii</sup> Further is the issue of publishers "Americanizing" a book from outside the United States so American readers can better understand the story and vocabulary.<sup>viii</sup> These changes are often subtle but take out the cultural nuances that make the books Australian or otherwise. They also do not allow American readers the chance to experience the book and story in its true form and figure out for themselves in context that, for example, "lollies" means candy and "Maccas" is referring to McDonald's. Such changes only serve to make Americans more culturally insular than they already are with less access to international pop culture than their foreign counterparts. Seeking out literature for children and young adults originally published in other English-speaking countries like Australia is a great way for librarians and educators working with youth to experience something original and enjoyable while bridging cultural gaps.

In the first article of this two-part series exploring portrayals of culture in Australian young adult literature, readers were introduced to two important youth awards: the Children's

Book Council of Australia's (CBCA) Book of the Year: Older Readers chosen by a panel of adults; and the Centre for Youth Literature's Gold Inky Award selected by the teen audience themselves.<sup>ix</sup> Both of these literature awards are important in school and public library collections across Australia. Started in 1946, the CBCA Book of the Year Awards are given to authors and illustrators across levels including awards for Older Readers, Younger Readers, Early Childhood Readers, Picture Books, and Information Books. The CBCAs are a more traditional literature award like the American Library Association's John Newbery Medal and the Randolph Caldecott Medal, and are selected based on literary merit by a panel of three adult judges. In the beginning of each year, the CBCA releases their Notables Lists of eighteen titles for each award followed a month or so later by Short Lists of six titles. Then in August, with much celebration and activity across the country, the winners and two honor titles are announced to kick off Book Week.<sup>x</sup> In 2007 the Centre for Youth Literature at the State Library of Victoria started the Gold and Silver Inky Awards on the Inside a Dog website, which is named for the famous Grouch Marx quote.<sup>xi</sup> ("Outside of a dog, a book is a man's best friend. Inside of a dog, it's too dark to read.") The Gold Inky Award is for Australian fiction and the Silver Inky Award is for international fiction. In the beginning of each year, the Long List of ten titles is chosen by a teen panel of former Inky judges.<sup>xii</sup> Also, during this time, young adults (twelve to eighteen years old) living in Australia apply to be on the panel of judges for that year to select the Short List titles. The application process is rigorous, with applicants submitting a video or written application in the first round and then having an interview in the second round. It is a great honor and responsibility to be on the Inky Awards panel, and the young adults are expected to read all twenty books from the two Long Lists, participate in online discussions with other panel members, and be a "champion for the Inky Awards," promoting the books and voting online, at their school and at public events.<sup>xiii</sup> The Centre for Youth Literature staff mentor the panel members throughout this process. In July the Short Lists of five titles are announced and online voting for the winners opens; any young adult twelve to nineteen years old from anywhere can vote. The Gold and Silver Inky winners are announced in September. The main difference between the CBCAs and the Inkys is the selection process, with the CBCAs being chosen by a panel of three adult judges and the Inky Awards ultimately chosen by the young adult readers themselves.

## Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to analyze the representations of culture within both the CBCA Book of the Year: Older Readers and the Gold Inky Awards presented since the inception of the Inky Awards in 2007 until 2018. Since these two awards have very different judging processes, I was interested to see how the portrayals of culture in the winning books compared with one another. Using a broad definition of culture that other researchers have used in similar studies investigating culture in youth literature, I examined nine constructs, including class, disability, gender, immigration, Indigenous Australians, language, the LGBTQIA community, race/ethnicity/nationality, and religion.<sup>xiv</sup> The research questions were as follows:

1. What are the general characteristics of the winners of the Gold Inky Awards and the CBCA Book of the Year: Older Readers from the last twelve years?
2. How does this sample of the twenty-four Inky and CBCA winners depict these nine cultural constructs?
3. What are the differences between these depictions within the award-winning books chosen by teens (Inkys) and adults (CBCAs)?

This article focuses exclusively on the remaining six constructs from the second research question, including class, immigration, Indigenous Australians, language, race/ethnicity/nationality, and religion, and it also explores more deeply the differences between the awards and resulting implications. (See the first article addressing the first research question about general characteristics of the sample and the second research question concentrating on the three constructs of disability, gender, and the LGBTQIA community.)<sup>xv</sup>

## Literature Review

### *Diversity in Young Adult Publishing*

The issues of lack of diversity and authentic representation in youth literature have been explored through the years from Nancy Larrick's foundational study on "The All-White World of Children's Books" in 1965 to Rudine Sims Bishop's call in 1990 for the need to publish books that act as "mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors" for young readers.<sup>xvi</sup> In more recent years, the We Need Diverse Books (WNDB) movement, which started in the United States in 2014, has been a strong advocate for diversity within the youth publishing industry with their campaign and mission to "[put] more books featuring diverse characters into the hands of all children."<sup>xvii</sup>

Around the same time, young adult author Corinne Duyvis created the hashtag #ownvoices to help capture titles written about a particular marginalized group by an author personally representing that group.<sup>xviii</sup> This tag ensures a certain level of authenticity because often books about diverse groups of people are written by people from outside of that culture and thus may not present that group as authentically as an insider would. Since 1985, the Cooperative Children’s Book Center has kept annual statistics of “Children’s Books by and about People of Color” coming into their library, and these findings suggests that while “books *about* people of color” are increasing, there is still a dearth of “books *by* people of color” (e.g., a book written about an African American character by an African American author rather than a white author).<sup>xix</sup>

Similar issues with diversity exist in Australian youth publishing as well and affect the way readers see themselves and others different from them.<sup>xx</sup> Booth and Narayan created a database of Australian young adult literature published from 1966 to 2016 classifying those novels defined under the #ownvoices definition, and they found that only 30 of the total published 1,359 young adult titles could be classified as #ownvoices novels.<sup>xxi</sup> The researchers contacted the identified (and living) #ownvoices authors from “traditionally marginalized or unacknowledged communities” and conducted interviews discussing their experiences in the publishing industry.<sup>xxii</sup> The authors used language from some of these global movements like WNDB and #ownvoices to describe their past experiences as young readers searching unsuccessfully for reflections of themselves in books and their present experiences as authors struggling to have their voices heard and shared with young readers like themselves. These researchers concluded that there is a strong need for greater diversity in young adult literature in Australia and more opportunities available for #ownvoices authors to get into writing and publishing to share their experiences. Indigenous Australian author, illustrator, and law professor Ambelin Kwaymullina, from the Palyku people of the Pilbara region of Western Australia, reflects on a conversation she had with Australian publishers who expressed they do not receive manuscripts from Indigenous writers.<sup>xxiii</sup> Kwaymullina says this issue “is not a diversity problem,” but “a privilege problem,” created and “maintained by a set of structures and attitudes that consistently privilege one set of voices over another.”<sup>xxiv</sup> She notes that “the existing inequity of opportunity being what it is (especially for Indigenous writers who are most

disadvantaged) means that more is required” from publishers, libraries, booksellers, and others involved in this space to knock down these barriers.<sup>xxv</sup>

### *Culture in Youth Literature*

While a wide search for studies directly researching culture in young adult literature did not identify anything from Australia, other researchers in children’s and young adult literature have investigated the aspects of culture, individually and together, under study in this article. The results from many of these studies of young adult books reflect the marginalization of minority and non-dominant cultures in the real world (i.e., not a white Anglo Protestant heterosexual, able-bodied, non-immigrant male from an upper-middle-class background.) The UK’s Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) analyzed 9,115 children’s books published in the UK in 2017 and found that only 391 books (4%) had a character from a Black or minority ethnic background.<sup>xxvi</sup> Further, this character was the main character in just 1% of these books.<sup>xxvii</sup> Toliver studied this lack of diversity within the publishing industry, focusing specifically on the dearth within science fiction and fantasy, imploring publishers to include portrayals of strong Black females in this genre for the young Black girls reading it.<sup>xxviii</sup> Davis had similar findings through an investigation of speculative fiction titles reviewed in the *School Library Journal* and *Voice for Youth Advocates* from 2010 to 2015.<sup>xxix</sup> Davis notes that less than 10% of the 2,994 reviewed titles included racially or ethnically diverse protagonists.<sup>xxx</sup> Irwin and Moeller studied disability in the thirty graphic novels on YALSA’s “Great Graphic Novels for Teens List” in 2008 and found negative stereotypes associated with people with disabilities.<sup>xxxi</sup> Their follow-up study on the *New York Times Graphic Books Best Seller List* from 2009 had similar findings, concluding that these recommended novels did “not provide realistic representations of people with disabilities.”<sup>xxxii</sup> That being said, Moeller and Becnel looked at the depictions of race in YALSA’s “Great Graphic Novels for Teens List” in 2015 and found a “higher-than-expected number” of characters identified as “people of color”; however, in connection to the #ownvoices debate, the majority of authors and illustrators from this sample were white.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

Further, research on culture suggests literature for young adults can be culturally insular and focus solely on one aspect of a character’s culture. Simmons found fewer female characters in her study of YALSA’s “Top Ten Great Graphic Novels for Teens” lists from 2007 to 2013 and minimal diversity within those female characters in terms of disability and race.<sup>xxxiv</sup>

Researchers investigating LGBTQ+ issues in young adult novels from the past decade also note a lack of intersectionality of cultural constructs in their sample.<sup>xxxv</sup> That is, most characters were described and represented by their sexual orientation or gender identity and not the other important elements that make up who they are. Such inauthentic portrayals do not reflect the unique combination of sociocultural identities that children and young adults experience in others as well as themselves.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

Conversely, in the inaugural issue of *Research on Diversity in Youth Literature*, researchers answered the call to the theme: “#Ownvoices Scholars Respond to ‘Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors,’” referencing Sims Bishop’s well-renowned metaphor.<sup>xxxvii</sup> In this issue, Durand and Jiménez-García present findings from a study reviewing thirty-eight books by #ownvoices authors and found a multitude of nuanced cultural identities portrayed and explored in the novels and related to the cultural constructs in the present study.<sup>xxxviii</sup> Characters in the novels presented dynamic and multifaceted cultural identities with some constructs at odds with elements of the others, such as sexuality, religion, and ethnicity.<sup>xxxix</sup> It is clear from their findings that #ownvoices authors were able to create authentic and genuine depictions of diversity.

## Methods

This study used critical content analysis to investigate elements of culture with the award-winning young adult titles. Other scholars have noted the utility of this method in examining culture within youth titles and the flexibility it affords researchers in framing the study and research questions.<sup>xl</sup> The present study’s methods replicate those used by Forest, Kimmel, and Garrison in studying Mildred L. Batchelder Award-winning books in the US context.<sup>xli</sup> First, I created a database of the CBCA Book of the Year: Older Readers and the Gold Inky Award titles from 2007 to 2018. I chose 2007 as this was the year the Inkys first start being awarded. This database included the Long and Notable Lists, Short Lists, Honors, and Winners for each award to identify title overlaps. Of these 414 total titles across the twelve-year sample, 61 titles overlap the lists and years, showing up in any one of the three levels of lists. While none of the winning titles have won both awards, there is some overlap with winning authors. On the CBCA list, Sonya Hartnett and Claire Zorn show up twice and Fiona Wood three times; Wood’s third title was cowritten with two Inky-winning authors. Those two authors are Cath Crowley and

Simmons Howell, who cross over with their one Inky title and the CBCA title cowritten with Wood, the 2018 winner *Take Three Girls*. After that, I collected and read all twenty-four winning books, noting bibliographical and descriptive information including genre, format, setting, and age and gender of protagonists. (See Appendix A for the full list of books with descriptions and Appendix B for bibliographical information.)

In my investigation of culture in the books, I noted the presence of nine cultural constructs: class, disability, gender, immigration, Indigenous Australians, language, the LGBTQIA community, race/ethnicity/nationality, and religion. These nine constructs are important elements of culture identified in previous research and mirror the diversity of experiences identified by We Need Diverse Books (WNDB), “a grassroots organization of children’s book lovers” with the vision of “a world in which all children can see themselves in the pages of a book.”<sup>xliii</sup> WNDB defines diversity as “experiences, including (but not limited to) LGBTQIA, Native, people of color, gender diversity, people with disabilities, and ethnic, cultural, and religious minorities.”<sup>xliii</sup> Because race, ethnicity, and nationality are closely related and often referenced interchangeably depending on context, my co-researchers and I originally used them together as one code in this methodology.<sup>xliiv</sup> Further, as immigration laws change and borders blur and move because of war and other politics, nationality becomes a more fluid idea. Originally, I noted Indigenous Australians in the race/ethnicity/nationality construct, however, later decided to create a separate code to more narrowly focus on issues concerning Indigenous Australians. Identifying the experiences and treatment of Indigenous Australians in this set of young adult titles is critical considering the historical and contemporary context of Australia and its Indigenous communities.

While reading each of the books, I took down page numbers and direct quotes revealing critical incidents of the cultural constructs. A critical incident in this study is defined as an important situation or reference to some aspect of the cultural constructs that communicates a message or makes a statement about that cultural group.<sup>xliv</sup> Critical incidents can be blatantly obvious, such as a character making a statement about social class when she calls rowing “another rich kid’s sport,” or they can be more subtle.<sup>xlvi</sup> For example, class is often revealed through descriptions of housing and education, as with Jack from *Town* describing the run-down houses in his neighborhood and how a university education could help him become an architect to create more visually appealing homes.<sup>xlvii</sup> Critical incidents like these are notable in prompting



valuable discussions with young adult readers about class markers and societal issues related to class that often go silent.<sup>xlviii</sup> Each critical incident is noted once from when the statement starts until the end of the sentence or discussion so they could span one phrase, sentence, or even an entire paragraph. However, one passage coded as a critical incident could include more than one cultural construct. For example, in *Jarvis 24*, Mark and his friends are approached by a group of thugs calling them “Rich pricks” and “Dykes” in the same sentence, which was coded for both class and LGBTQIA issues.<sup>xlix</sup>

An important consideration for researchers investigating elements of culture is the recognition and awareness of their own cultural positions and what they bring into the study based on their own unique experiences. Patton notes while it is impossible to be completely objective, identifying and understanding these cultural frames and experiences, in particular in the data analysis process, helps to mitigate bias and strengthen analysis.<sup>1</sup> My experience with co-researchers using this method previously lent insight into how to manage these issues.<sup>ii</sup> That being said, it is a limitation that I worked independently on this research in collecting and analyzing the data.

After reading all of the books and noting the quotes, I separated them by cultural construct and reread through these data using an inductive analysis approach to allow themes to emerge naturally. I also took note of the frequencies of each construct and within which award they were appearing. While identifying these frequencies does not reveal the nuances and implications associated with the actual content of the quotes, the numbers do convey a presence (or absence) of these cultural constructs. This method was also used by Taylor in his study of gender stereotypes in children’s books.<sup>lii</sup>

## Findings

The findings discussion addresses the six remaining cultural constructs under study in this article and then tackles the question of difference between the awards. In presenting the findings discussion, first we consider the frequency of critical incidents and number of book titles for each cultural construct displayed in Table 1 and shown by each award and overall in the columns with the highest and lowest constructs bolded for each.

**Table 1. Frequency of Critical Incidents and Number of Books with Critical Incidents**

Cultural Construct	CBCAs ( <i>n</i> = 12)	Inkys ( <i>n</i> = 12)	Total ( <i>n</i> = 24)
Class	113/12	58/9	171/21
Disability	40/10	100/10	140/20
Gender	<b>134/9</b>	<b>105/11</b>	<b>239/20</b>
Immigration	25/4	26/5	51/9
Indigenous Australians	<b>9/2</b>	<b>10/3</b>	<b>19/5</b>
Language	21/7	22/9	43/15
LGBTQIA	33/6	17/6	50/12
Race/Ethnicity/Nationality	46/10	57/10	103/20
Religion	11/8	35/8	46/16
Overall Total	432	430	862

The awards measured almost the same exact number of critical incidents in the overall totals of the last row in the table. Across both the Inkys and CBCAs, gender and Indigenous Australians were the highest and lowest noted constructs, respectively. The following discussion focuses on the six remaining constructs from the second research question, including class, immigration, Indigenous Australians, language, race/ethnicity/nationality, and religion.

### *Class*

Class is an important construct, noted in the sample as the second most overall and within the most books at twenty-one titles. It is also the second most frequent construct for the CBCAs, after gender, at 113 critical incidents and featured in all twelve CBCA-winning titles. It is included less frequently in the Inkys at 58 times across nine of the books. In this sample, class was defined in the stories in terms of material items, clothing, and appearance (e.g., jewelry, name brands, haircuts, tan, orthodontics), the ability to take holidays (vacations), jobs, education, homes and neighborhoods, hobbies (e.g., sports, technology), and even food (especially coffee, which is very important in Australia café culture). A good education leading into a good job is frequently described as a way of bumping up classes, as exemplified in *Cloudwish* by “scholarship girl” *Vân Uoc*, who would otherwise not be able to afford going to the rich private school she attends. The other kids at the school know this and often tease *her* about it. *Vân Uoc* also feels a constant pressure to be perfect and not mess up this opportunity that could bring her family out of government commission housing to a nice suburb and a real home with a real

garden like where her school friends live. Class is noted by far the most in *Cloudwish* than any other book with 32 critical incidents recorded.

Characters were often described in the stories in terms of their class, with supporting characters or bullies illustrated as the rich upper class, who often looked down upon the main characters of a lower class. Henry from 2017 Inky winner *Words in Deep Blue* considers his ex-girlfriend Amy's new beau Greg, using class throughout his description:

I take a good look at Greg Smith. He's handsome; he's well-dressed; he wouldn't have had to borrow the last hundred dollars from his girlfriend to buy his round-the-world ticket or run a tab he'll never pay for at the bar. No doubt he's paid for Amy's drink, straight up, with cash. He's going to university. He's studying law. He has a life plan to go with his white teeth.<sup>liii</sup>

His comment notes job, education, appearance, and clothing as markers of class. Henry's family runs a secondhand bookstore with a rich history and a loyal customer base, but it is not able to sustain the family financially and closes down during the course of the story. Fiona Wood's three novels on the list—*Wildlife*, *Cloudwish*, and *Take Three Girls*, co-written with Cath Crowley and Simmone Howell—follow a similar pattern of “rich mean girls” dressed in expensive clothes and attending an elite private school. In *Take Three Girls*, it becomes a big issue for protagonist Ady, a reluctant member of the rich mean girl group, as her family loses their class status when her addict father squanders their money and has to go to rehab. Tash, the leader of the mean girl group, comes to Ady's house for the first time after her father has finally accepted help and takes notice of Ady's mother doing the gardening instead of Robert, their gardener. Ady's mother tells Tash the family can no longer afford a gardener or a housekeeper. Ady watches Tash: “Tash's eyes are gossip saucers. She looks at me with pitying and loathing, the only response she knows to a ‘coming down in the world’ story.”<sup>liiv</sup> Ady's change in class status means a change in her social status at school, but she does not seem to mind this because she has made new friends as part of a school project. Throughout these titles, class is explicitly and implicitly related to the other cultural constructs as well, which are described in more detail throughout the findings discussion.

### *Immigration*

Immigration measured 51 passages from nine books and was almost evenly split between the awards with 25 passages in four of the CBCA-winning books and 26 passages in five of the

Inky-winning books. Immigration takes on two forms in this sample of books, reflecting the realities of immigration throughout the world, with immigrants making the decision to leave their homeland on their own or being forced to leave due to political, economic, or social factors. Eight books, five CBCAs and three Inkys, feature characters who are immigrants (forced or not) or helping newly arrived immigrants. The five CBCA winners and one of the Inky winners address refugee issues. In *Cloudwish*, Vân Uoc's parents escaped Vietnam by boat over twenty years ago and found political asylum in Australia. Throughout the book, Vân Uoc laments the differences with how refugees were treated back then versus now while also discovering some of the terrible hardships her parents experienced on the boat. In *The Midnight Zoo*, three recently orphaned siblings face hardships while living in an abandoned zoo during World War II in Czechoslovakia, dodging bombs, fleeing the Nazis, and trying to find enough food for themselves and the caged animals. They describe the scene:

There were many refugees travelling the roads, some driving carts or pushing them, others on coughing tractors or in open cars, some riding squeaky bikes or trudging horses, others stumbling along on their feet. Some were injured, some seemed numbed, all were troubled and aggrieved. In its destructive push across the country, the war had taken from these luckless souls the mainstays of their lives, their homes, and work and neighbourhoods, their intentions for a future.<sup>lv</sup>

The Palestinian characters in *Where the Streets Had a Name* know all too well these difficulties as they have also been forced out of their homes and pushed out of their lands for three generations due to the Israeli occupation, which keeps growing and expanding. Hayaat's grandmother tells the story of when she and her family left their home in Jerusalem in 1948, forced out by the military: "We took what we could carry on our backs. It never occurred to us that we would not return. We locked the doors. Imagine that. . . ."<sup>lvi</sup> They lived in a refugee camp and did not return until 1967 to find a Jewish family living in their home who had also lost everything including loved ones in a Nazi concentration camp. Although this story is set many years later, the thirteen-year-old protagonist Hayaat can relate to her grandmother's experience as her family's home and olive orchard were also taken. And although she and her family of seven live in a small two-bedroom flat of their own, a refugee camp still exists near her home. The author, Randa Abdel-Fattah, comes from a Palestinian family who immigrated to Australia, and she is sharing the story of her family in this book.

In *Town* Malith, a newly arrived immigrant from Sudan, narrates a chapter about his experiences in Australia. He notes that “some of the people do not like us in this town,” because they think the refugees are stealing their jobs and food, but Malith does not believe this is true. His sister is working “at the place where the chickens are killed,” a job that no one else wants to do.<sup>lvii</sup> The animosity from the locals confuses Malith, who feels like this country and its opportunities seem big enough for everyone to share.

While it is not clear if they are refugees or have chosen to move to Australia, the family in the short story entitled “No Other Country” in *Tales from Outer Suburbia*, created by the talented Australian author and illustrator Shaun Tan, is having a hard time adjusting to life in their new home and earning enough money to support themselves, as well as dealing with the intense heat. They find a hidden room in their home that makes them feel much better: “It was just like being back in their home country” with its beautiful Mediterranean architecture and landscape.<sup>lviii</sup> On his website, Tan notes that inspirations for this story come from the Italian immigrants in his hometown of Perth in Western Australia, and he reflects on how they might have felt in his sunburned homeland.<sup>lix</sup>

In a few of these books, there are also references to people helping refugees, such as in *Town*, where narrator Hattie notes her mayor mother working late as the council is meeting to discuss “the fresh bunch of Africans to arrive next month,” like Malith and his family from an earlier chapter of the book.<sup>lx</sup> Rose’s teacher mom and lawyer dad in *Rose by Any Other Name* also help new immigrants with legal issues and learning English, even giving them a place to stay in their home until they can find proper housing.<sup>lxi</sup>

### *Indigenous Australians*

As noted previously, the least-noted construct overall in the sample addressed Indigenous Australians and issues affecting Indigenous Australians. There were five books out of the twenty-four books total mentioning anything related to Indigenous Australians, three Inkys and two CBCAs. Three of those books included passing mentions, with the main character in *My Life as an Alphabet* asking his rich uncle Brian to donate money to “improve health outcome[s] in remote indigenous communities”; references to Aboriginal “Dreamtime creatures” in *The Ghost’s Child*; and a character from *Town* describing how he and his coworkers are no longer

allowed in the small, remote mining town where he works in Western Australia because of their getting “into fights with the Abos.”<sup>lxii</sup>

The other two books include more focus on Indigenous culture and issues. The 2010 Inky winner *Stolen* is set in a very remote area of Western Australia in the Great Sandy Desert, where kidnapper Ty grew up and holds protagonist Gem captive. He tells her that “the local Aborigines,” “the blackfellas,” are “the proper owners of this place.”<sup>lxiii</sup> They taught him about the land, how to live with it, how to respect it, and the stories of creation and life that go along with it. He tells a few of these stories throughout the book like the constellation of “the sisters” and a tree with “the spirit of the dingo,” and he also uses Australian Aboriginal dot art to cover his body and connect to nature in one scene.<sup>lxiv</sup>

The fifth title, 2017 CBCA winner *One Would Think the Deep*, is the only book with Indigenous Australian characters. Sam’s new friend Ruby was adopted, and while her adoptive mother claims she is from India or Bangladesh, her birth certificate notes an Indigenous community in the northern state of Queensland. Her Indigenous heritage is corroborated by Aunt Violet, a local Indigenous woman, who encourages Ruby to seek out her birthplace. Ruby is scared of the consequences of finding out that she truly is black, afraid of potential racism in her small coastal community. “You know what people round here call that Violet woman? ‘That Abo.’ What do you think they’re gonna call me? And you reckon I’m gonna keep my job [at the chicken shop] when I’m ‘that Abo chick, that black bitch?’”<sup>lxv</sup> While Ruby’s is a side story in this book, it is still an interesting addition to the overall plot and hints at a history of racism and colonialism similar to that of other English-speaking countries.

### *Language*

Language was also not a highly present construct in this set of books and was noted 21 times in seven CBCA titles and 22 times in nine Inky titles. Two themes arose from the mentions and use of languages other than English in these books. First, European languages, mostly French, are often noted or used in some exotic and sophisticated way, such as in *My Life as an Alphabet* when Candice tries to speak French and cook up a New Orleans–style meal to please her depressed mother. In four of these books, three Inkys and one CBCA winner, the characters speak multiple languages, although not always fluently as some are from families who have immigrated before their generation like Vân Uoc’s Vietnamese parents in *Cloudwish*, Billy’s

Greek YiaYia in *The First Third*, and newly arrived immigrants like Malith and his family, who are just learning English in the novel *Town*. Malith notes how being able to understand English will mean they can buy the higher-quality canned food from the grocery store, which does not include a picture on the label like the cheaper, tasteless version.

Two books deal more deeply with language: 2016 CBCA winner *Cloudwish* and 2009 Inky winner *Where the Streets Had a Name*. In *Cloudwish*, Vân Uoc often acts as interpreter for her parents, especially her mother, who in her twenty years living in Australia has only been able to learn “Survival English.”<sup>lxvi</sup> While Vân Uoc notes this as her “trump card” when dealing with school-related matters because she can sway her mother’s interpretation of certain things, she also mourns the fact that she and her mother will always have “an irreconcilable cultural split” due to their language barrier.<sup>lxvii</sup> Obviously, language sits closely with immigration in this book, but it is intimately related to class as well, such as when Vân Uoc notes her parents’ lack of English when discussing the families of other kids at the upscale private school she attends by scholarship. The other story, *Where the Streets Had a Name*, is one of the only books in this sample to be set outside of Australia, in Palestine on the West Bank and in the city of Jerusalem. The glossary at the beginning of the book prepares the reader for a variety of Arabic words used throughout the story. Hebrew and English, or “London” as character Samy calls it, are also used in the book.<sup>lxviii</sup> As the characters navigate the occupation of Palestine and the continued upheaval of Palestinians’ homes and lands, language invokes fear (Hebrew), curiosity (English), and pride (Arabic). The main protagonist, Hayaat, describes a scene while waiting for a bus with a group of Palestinians when they hear someone approaching who is speaking Hebrew.

We can’t tell whether the people speaking Hebrew are soldiers ready with their guns and fatigues to set up a flying checkpoint and interrogate us. The only Israelis we know are the ones who give us orders. Who map out our lives every day, controlling where we go, whom we see, and when we move.<sup>lxix</sup>

The reader can almost feel the fear and anxiety as they wait to find out the group’s fate. The two Hebrew speakers turn out to be Israeli Americans from a human rights group who speak fluent Arabic, English, and Hebrew, and who can move around the area much more freely than the Palestinians.

## *Race, Ethnicity, and Nationality*

The category combining critical incidents of race, ethnicity, and nationality was the fourth highest noted in the data: 103 times across twenty books. There was not much difference between the awards here, with ten CBCAs and ten Inkys measuring 46 and 57 coded passages, respectively. The main themes associated with this construct are similar to issues with language and relate to privilege, stereotypes and exoticism, and discrimination.

Privilege is described covertly and overtly in the sample. In some novels, white characters acknowledge their places of privilege in terms of their education in elite private schools and living in extravagant homes in wealthy suburbs, and they describe these aspects of their class as if they have it because of their race. At a party with Rose's new love interest in *Rose by Any Other Name*, Nat sums it up as he "gestures at everyone in the room. 'We all went to private schools. We're all white and Anglo and basically from rich backgrounds.'"<sup>lxx</sup> Fiona Wood, author or coauthor of three books in this sample, brings up issues of privilege in her stories in overt, contrived ways. *Wildlife* and *Take Three Girls* are told from the perspective of white female protagonists very aware of their elite class status based in part on their race. But her third novel on the list, *Cloudwish*, is different as it is told from the perspective of a second-generation Vietnamese Australian immigrant attending a prestigious private school on a scholarship and trying to fit in with the elite crowd. Vân Uoc frequently mentions the difference between her and her classmates in terms of race and also class. She addresses the same bigger issue of the media, noting "the always all-white dominance of every beauty advertisement and fashion magazine around, except if there was an ethnic Othering erotic/exotic angle, then sure, cast Asian."<sup>lxxi</sup> In *Cloudwish*, Vân Uoc is constantly remarking about her differences as "the povvo Asian chick."<sup>lxxii</sup> There are other Asians in her school, "but unlike Vân Uoc, they were from backgrounds of privilege: corporate expats' kids, or second- or third-generation locals," not from "hardworking, first-generation-immigrant, barely-English-speaking Vietnamese Australian parents" like herself.<sup>lxxiii</sup> The focus on her insecurities here reflects how the multiple facets of her sociocultural identity work together to build (or not) social capital and create platforms of privilege and disadvantage. They even dictate what she chooses to eat, where, and when:

Peaches were not something she would venture to eat in public. One more inhibition of the kid from another planet. She dreaded being inadvertently loud, messy, or unmannerly. She'd seen a table of whities looking askance at her own



family happily slurping up bowls of noodles once, and had never quite got over the disapproval you could innocently attract just by eating your dinner.<sup>lxxiv</sup>

Vân Uoc expresses this high level of stress at being different because of her race throughout the novel, making it feel a bit contrived and didactic at times.

Stereotypes of different races, ethnicities, and nationalities are covertly presented in some of the novels. In *My Life as an Alphabet*, protagonist Candice writes to an American pen pal, Denille from New York, recognizing that most of what she knows about America is from watching TV, which shows Americans as “shallow and obsessed with image,” and from the negative perceptions of her father, who describes “Americans as arrogant and can’t name the countries to the south and north of them.”<sup>lxxv</sup> Other stereotypes include protagonist Marc in *Jarvis 24* who insinuates that his Italian friend Carlo is from a mob family, and Gem from *Notes from the Teenage Underground* who remarks that if she and her friends were European, they “wouldn’t even have to shave.”<sup>lxxvi</sup> The French are also treated with a stereotypical exoticism throughout some of the novels in terms of language, fashion, and cuisine, but Gretchen, protagonist Sam’s love interest in *One Would Think the Deep*, disagrees when she reflects on the time her family lived there:

Like France is cool, but it’s not everything Australians think it is. . . . [T]here are French bogans.<sup>lxxvii</sup> . . . They wear tracksuits made out of that parachute material stuff, with like these gross Adidas slide things on their feet. And the bogan French women have mullets.<sup>lxxviii</sup>

Author Will Kostakis cheekily addresses Greek stereotypes with food in the opening of 2014 Inky winner *The First Third*, set during an Easter meal in YiaYia’s hospital room after she just had a heart attack. Protagonist Billy looks around at his family and thinks, “We were in our own little ethnic bubble. You could practically hear the metallic twangs of the bouzouki. There was too much food. There was *always* too much food. . . . ‘[D]on’t you think we are perpetuating some dangerous stereotypes here?’”<sup>lxxix</sup> Being of Greek descent himself, Kostakis is able to bring in these cultural nuances throughout the novel in an authentic and witty manner the reader can appreciate and enjoy.

As well as being addressed in *Cloudwish*, discrimination is also tackled in two of the books set outside of Australia. In 2011 CBCA winner *The Midnight Zoo*, two young brothers and their baby sister witness the murder of their family and gypsy caravan and face discrimination as they search for a safe haven:

The children were used to being called names—despising the Rom was a timeless amusement of the *gadje*. Andrej had once asked his father why this was so, and his father explained, “People jeer at those who are different from themselves—those who look different or think differently, or live in different ways. They do it because difference is a frightening thing—sometimes an enviable thing.”<sup>lxxx</sup>

In addition to standing out in the language construct, 2009 Inky winner *Where the Streets Had a Name* also emerged here as having strong themes of race, ethnicity, and nationality related to discrimination. This code is intimately connected to language, immigration, and religion and affects characters’ class and their freedom to physically move around. In the story, Hayaat’s older sister is marrying an Israeli Arab, but since she is a Palestinian from the West Bank, the pair must get married and live across the border because she is not allowed to enter the area where his family lives, not “even if it’s only for her wedding.”<sup>lxxxii</sup>

### *Religion*

With an overall frequency of 46 critical incidents, religion is mentioned more in the Inkys (35 times) than the CBCAs (11 times), but it is noted in eight books for each award. Most of these sixteen books hold one to two mentions of religion, such as a reference to a biblical character like the Leviathan or praying to God in a time of hopelessness as Gem does when she escapes her captor Ty and searches for water in the desert in *Stolen*. AIDAN—the artificial intelligence system in the only science fiction novel on this list, 2016 Inky winner *Illuminae*—makes a remark about the various religions of humankind:

I find it curious that human beings draw some measure of comfort from the invocation of deific nomenclature in times of stress. By comparison, it does nothing for me. . . . Almighty Vishnu . . . Merciful Allah . . . Great and Beneficent Yahweh . . . no nothing. . . . How is it human beings draw such solace from these names, where there is no evidence to support said deities’ existence?<sup>lxxxii</sup>

Seventeen of the 35 passages for the Inkys come from the 2009 Inky winner *Where the Streets Had a Name* described previously that deals with the Israeli occupation of Palestine and the religious implications that come from people practicing Christianity, Islam, and Judaism who are living side by side in the same ancient land. The main characters know too well the violence that comes with this, Hayaat with permanent scars across her face from a street bombing where

she lost her friend Maysaa; and her best friend, Samy, who lives with his aunt and uncle since his mother was killed and his father jailed by the Israelis. Despite this strong, serious theme, hope rings throughout the story within the hearts of the people. Hayaat's grandmother wisely notes to her granddaughter that "laughter sounds the same, whether it shakes its way out of a Jew or a Palestinian."<sup>lxxxiii</sup> A bus driver shares this feeling with his passengers: "I don't care if you pray in a synagogue or shave your hair for Buddha. Anybody who wants peace and pays their fare is welcome on my service."<sup>lxxxiv</sup>

Again, *Illuminae* is one of the most unique books in this sample for a number of reasons, including being the only science fiction text, set in the year 2575 in space, and presented in a mixed dossier format of a wide variety of media. However, its treatment of religion is also notable in this group of award-winning titles. During an intergalactic battle between two clashing mega-corporations, many people are killed and an announcement is made about an interdenominational memorial service to honor the fallen. There is also a long list of the casualties' names from which the reader can deduce includes a wide variety of religious and ethnic backgrounds. In another instance from the book, farewell messages come through from people on a ship infected with a deadly virus. One parent reads to her partner:

. . . make sure the kids grow up knowing their heritage. I know it's not your thing, but I want my sisters to take them to temple and make sure they know the stories, celebrate the holidays. Please make sure they recite the Kaddish for me. . .  
.<sup>lxxxv</sup>

These quotes show a wide inclusion of various types of religion.

### *Differences Between the Awards*

When I first set out to begin this study and discussed with colleagues knowledgeable about both awards, we all thought that I would find the teen-chosen Inkys to be much more diverse and open-minded than the adult-chosen CBCAs. However, this is not what the data shows; these patterns of difference do not exist. The CBCAs are judged on literary merit, and thus the winning books are more traditional in their treatment of certain topics and in their format than the Inky award winners. For example, the Inkys included more diverse formats, such as the science fiction *Illuminae*. In terms of topics, ability and mental health issues were much more visible and openly addressed in the Inkys while class was much more frequently noted and discussed in the CBCAs. However, the focus on class may be related to one author: Fiona Wood's three novels on the list

make up over half (61) of the total (113) critical incidents recorded for class. That being said, the prevalence and treatment of the construct of gender was quite similar across both awards, discussed in more depth in my first article about this study.<sup>lxxxvi</sup>

## Discussion

Interesting themes related to these cultural constructs emerge from the data and stories. First, the inclusion and absence of Indigenous voices and issues is notable, with just two books authentically addressing Indigenous Australia in some way. In *One Would Think the Deep*, author Claire Zorn cites “consultation and detailed guidance” from the Woolyungah Indigenous Centre at the University of Wollongong in creating the stories of the only two Indigenous characters in this sample, Ruby and Aunty Violet.<sup>lxxxvii</sup> Also, while not a big theme of *Stolen*, it is notable Lucy Christopher chose to include the stories, art, and culture of the Indigenous Australians from this area in her novel. As a non-Indigenous person researching this topic, it was important for me to find out what others were saying about the treatment of Indigenous culture in *Stolen*. Nothing turned up in journals or published reviews, but reviews from readers praised it as an enjoyable and authentic element to the story and unique from other Australian books. In a review on Goodreads, an Indigenous student described how she found *Stolen* in her school library, loved the book, and was “pleasantly surprised” to see the presentation of “Aboriginal customs and culture in a respectful and interesting manner.”<sup>lxxxviii</sup>

Passages in the three other titles coded for Indigenous Australians were small passing mentions, but their presence and connotations still say something about the treatment of Indigenous issues in this sample of books. In *My Life as an Alphabet*, it is considerate that Candice is donating money to an Indigenous community in need, but to have that be the only mention serves to further marginalize Indigenous Australians and put them in a lower class, needing help from white people. Further, the term “Abo” used in *Town* is racially derogatory to Indigenous Australians; it is similar to using “nigger” in the American context.<sup>lxxxix</sup> Readers hear the hurt that Ruby, from *One Would Think the Deep*, displays when she uses this “cringe term” while imagining what her community will call her if she confirms her Indigenous heritage.<sup>xc</sup> These representations may be authentic and in context to what is happening in the respective books, but the lack of discussion around them continues the pattern of marginalization and repeats aloud the histories of colonialism. It is possible that there is more inclusion of Indigenous

issues in the Short and Long Lists for these awards, although previous research of the CBCAs from 2016 has not found this.<sup>xci</sup> Nonetheless, such small representation of Indigenous Australians in this sample of award-winning Australian books needs to be addressed if these sets of books are truly meant to represent Australia. The “privilege problem” noted earlier by Kwaymullina is apparent in this sample.<sup>xcii</sup>

The challenge of balancing tokenism and didacticism with authentic discussion and representation of issues related to these sociocultural constructs is evident in this sample of books for young adults. Analysis of some of the coded passages from this research reveal didactic or tokenistic portrayals of the constructs, specifically in the novels written or cowritten by Fiona Wood. These three titles (*Take Three Girls*, *Cloudwish*, and *Wildlife*) together measured 217 coded constructs, approximately one-quarter of the total 862 found overall. *Cloudwish* was criticized by a Vietnamese American reviewer from *Kirkus Reviews* as including tokenistic portrayals of difference and getting some Vietnamese cultural references wrong.<sup>xciii</sup> Widdersheim and McCleary note that “tokenism relies upon essentializing and othering in order to be politically correct through a system of inclusion.”<sup>xciv</sup> Considering Wood’s overwhelming presence on the CBCA list and in the data collected for this research, it is important to note these criticisms and think about what it means when an author writes about a group outside of their own cultural background (i.e., not an #ownvoices perspective). While it is critical that the discussions are present, their inclusion must be genuine and true to the nature of the constructs and the represented communities. This is especially important for young adults transitioning into adulthood and all of the responsibilities that come with that. Nonetheless, the circumstances presented in a book should offer unique opportunities for discussions with young adults about what they think and what they would do in a similar situation. Research from Ramdarshan Bold and Philips with young adults from the UK in the Adolescent Identities project gives strong support for the value of such discussions and the role young adult literature can play in supporting activism.<sup>xcv</sup>

### *Limitations*

These findings should be considered in light of their limitations. First, it is possible that titles included on the Long and Short Lists may contain different depictions of culture than the winners investigated here. While the winners may be the titles most likely to be highlighted and

marketed by publishers and librarians, the titles on the other lists get exposure as well, especially for the Inky Awards since the young adult voters choose the winners from the five titles on the Short Lists. Further, the findings presented here examined the sample as a whole and for each award, but they do not speak for individual novels themselves. Every novel will not tackle every construct and nor should they. Some novels on this list focused more on one construct than another and thus recorded more coded passages for that construct. For example, *Paper Crane Don't Fly* deals almost exclusively with disability and mental health issues as the main character is terminally ill and enjoying the company of his family and friends in his final days.<sup>xcvi</sup> At the same time, some of the limitations of this study provide leads into areas for future research.

### *Future Research*

The data collected in this study bring up further areas of research on culture in young adult literature. First, findings warranting more attention in this sample are the interactions among the cultural constructs, since often one passage contained multiple cultural markers, dependent and connected to one another. As found in previous research similar to this study, class is intimately related to other constructs, most notably race/ethnicity/nationality, immigration status, language, and also gender.<sup>xcvii</sup> For example, Vân Uoc in *Cloudwish* often discusses her race, immigration status, class, and home language all in one sentence, disparaging herself and praising her rich white Anglo classmates. Understanding these interactions more deeply using data from the titles could spark timely and relevant discussions with young adults about important issues in their world. Another area to research is the frequency of codes and constructs across the specific novels themselves. Some novels revealed more codes than others, so a potential opportunity for future research would be an exploration at this level. Also, investigating the novels across publication years reflecting on the diverse social and political contexts from 2006 to 2017 may be a significant addition to these findings.

### **Conclusion**

This study sought to examine the depictions of culture within winning books from two young adult literature awards important in the Australian context and published from 2006 to 2017. In reviewing these twenty-four titles, it is clear that the 2015 #LoveOzYA movement stemmed from a solid foundation of high-quality young adult literature in Australia.<sup>xcviii</sup> At the same time,

it is also clear that this foundation is not good enough yet, and important Australian voices, like those of Indigenous Australians, are not being included in the big award winners for Australian young adult literature or possibly in the Australian young adult publishing industry at all. In the US context, the cultural homogeneity of award lists like the Newbery and Caldecott Awards led in part to the creation of more culturally specific awards like the Coretta Scott King Award in 1970 for African Americans, the Pura Belpré Award in 1996 for Latinx Americans, and the Stonewall Book Awards in 1971 related to the gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered experience.<sup>xcix</sup> As African American author Andrea Davis Pinkney notes, awards like these are the “gateway to progress.”<sup>c</sup> The recent creation of the Daisy Utemorra Award given to unpublished manuscripts “of junior and YA fiction, including graphic novels, by an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander writer” is a step in the right direction.<sup>ci</sup>

Despite these issues, the CBCA Book of the Year: Older Readers and Gold Inky Awards are tools for collection development for librarians and educators sharing literature with English-speaking young adults. Because they are written in English, they give American youth a chance to experience a culture outside their own borders that is still linguistically accessible. Further, they offer a view into Australian perspectives on problems also grappled with in other societies, such as issues of class and privilege, immigration, racism, the treatment of Indigenous peoples and people with disabilities, sexism, classism, elitism, and homophobia. American youth deserve the opportunity to engage with Australian young adult literature as it was intended and as Australian youth do when reading titles published from the United States.

**Appendix A. CBCA Book of the Year: Older Readers and Inky Gold Award Winners, 2007–  
2018**

Year	Award	Title	Author(s)	Genre	Setting	Plot	Top Cultural Connections
2018	CBCA	<i>Take Three Girls</i>	Cath Crowley,* Simmons Howell,* and Fiona Wood*	Contemporary realism	Melbourne, Australia	Three different girls at the same private boarding school become unlikely friends and help each other through serious issues with family, love, and bullying.	Gender, Class
	Inky	<i>Paper Cranes Don't Fly</i>	Peter Vu	Contemporary realism	Melbourne, Australia	This memoir is the story of Adam's life, mostly his final days as he goes between the hospital and his home, always surrounded by people he loves and who love him.	Disability
2017	CBCA	<i>One Would Think the Deep</i>	Claire Zorn*	Contemporary realism	Sydney coastal suburbs, Australia	After the sudden death of his mother, Sam uses surfing as an outlet to find his way and mend past pains with his estranged family.	Gender, Indigenous Australians
	Inky	<i>Words in Deep Blue</i>	Cath Crowley*	Contemporary realism	Melbourne, Australia	The death of a sibling and closure of a family business throw old friends Rachel and Henry together.	Class, LGBTQIA



2016	CBCA	<i>Cloudwish</i>	Fiona Wood*	Contemporary realism	Melbourne, Australia	The daughter of Vietnamese immigrants, first-generation Australian Vân Uoc feels the pressure of school and home as she tries to fit into the rich private school she attends on scholarship.	Class, Immigration
	Inky	<i>Illuminae</i>	Amie Kaufman and Jay Kristoff	Science fiction	Space, the year 2575	After an evil corporation attacks a mining planet, the perils continue as Kady and Ezra deal with an enemy ship chasing them and a deadly virus killing everyone. (First installment of a trilogy.)	Religion, Gender
2015	CBCA	<i>The Protected</i>	Claire Zorn*	Contemporary realism	Sydney suburbs, Australia	Hannah finally opens up to a psychologist about the incessant bullying she endured at school until the death of her sister in a car accident caused by their father.	Disability, Class, Gender, LGBTQIA
	Inky	<i>The Intern</i>	Gabrielle Tozer	Contemporary realism	Urban Australia	New university student Josie dreams of becoming a journalist and lands an intern job with a high-profile fashion magazine, but struggles with city life and leaving her mother and sister.	Gender, Class
2014	CBCA	<i>Wildlife</i>	Fiona Wood*	Contemporary realism	Melbourne, Australia	The lives of Lou and Sibylla intertwine during	Gender, Disability, Class

						outdoor education camp, where students board for a school term.	
	Inky	<i>The First Third</i>	Will Kostakis	Contemporary realism	Sydney suburbs, Australia	After the death of his YiaYia, Bill tries to pull his family together like she always did.	Race/Ethnicity/ Nationality, Disability, Gender
2013	CBCA	<i>Sea Hearts</i>	Margo Lanagan	Magical realism	Place uncertain, in the past	Seals are transformed into beautiful women by the town witch, enchanting the men and haunting Rollrock Island.	Gender, Class
	Inky	<i>My Life as an Alphabet</i>	Barry Jonsberg	Contemporary realism	Brisbane suburbs, Australia	After the death of her baby sister to SIDS, her mother's fight with breast cancer, and her father's business failure, Candice struggles to help her family heal.	Disability, Class
2012	CBCA	<i>The Dead I Know</i>	Scot Gardner	Contemporary realism	Coastal suburbs, Australia	Aaron tries to find peace working in a funeral home while dealing with his grandmother's dementia and the murder-suicide of his parents from his childhood.	Disability, Class
	Inky	<i>Shift</i>	Em Bailey	Contemporary realism	Coastal suburbs, Australia	When new girl Miranda moves to town and begins taking over the identity of her friends, Olive must fight for herself and overcome her own mental demons.	Disability, Gender

2011	CBCA	<i>The Midnight Zoo</i>	Sonya Hartnett*	Historical fiction (magical realism)	Czech Republic, WWII	After their Romanian gypsy clan is violently massacred by Nazi soldiers, two boys and their baby sister stumble upon a forgotten zoo, where they befriend the talking animals and try to figure out how to free them.	Race/Ethnicity/ Nationality, Class
	Inky	<i>Silvermay</i>	James Moloney	Fantasy	Medieval kingdom Athlane	In this medieval fantasy, Silvermay tries to help Tamlyn hide his baby brother, Lucien, from their evil wizard father and the prophecy that Lucien will end humanity. (First book in a series.)	Gender, Class
2010	CBCA	<i>Jarvis 24</i>	David Metzenthén	Contemporary realism	Melbourne, Australia	Marc Jarvis is obsessed with girls and rugby, but learns a whole lot more about life during his first work experience, where he loses his boss and becomes close with a coworker who is gay.	LGBTQIA, Gender
	Inky	<i>Stolen: A Letter to My Captor</i>	Lucy Christopher	Contemporary realism	Great Sandy Desert, Australia	Gemma is kidnapped from the Bangkok airport and taken to a remote area of the Australian outback by Ty, who has been planning the kidnapping for six years, when he first met Gemma	Indigenous Australians, Race/Ethnicity/ Nationality

						in a London park.	
2009	CBCA	<i>Where the Streets Had a Name</i>	Randa Abdel-Fattah	Contemporary realism	West Bank and Jerusalem	Set against the violent Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Hayaat and her best friend Samy sneak into Jerusalem from the West Bank to bring back some soil from her grandmother's village before she dies.	Race/Ethnicity/ Nationality, Religion
	Inky	<i>Tales from Outer Suburbia</i>	Shaun Tan	Magical realism	Australia suburbs (likely)	This collection of short stories uses imagination and creativity to bring mystery and intrigue to some of the daily routines at home and in these diverse suburbs.	Language, Immigration, Race/Ethnicity/ Nationality
2008	CBCA	<i>The Ghost's Child</i>	Sonya Hartnett*	Magical realism	Place uncertain, in the past	An older woman reflects on her life, love, traveling, and the small magical things one catches when they look for it while her would-be child patiently listens and waits to take her to death.	Class, Gender
	Inky	<i>Town</i>	James Roy	Contemporary realism	Regional Australia	Thirteen short stories are told over one year in the same small town by thirteen young adults experiencing life's ups and downs in different ways depending on their backgrounds.	Class, Gender
2007	CBCA	<i>Rose by Any</i>	Maureen	Contemporary	Melbourne,	Rose deals with the	Class, Gender

		<i>Other Name</i>	McCarthy	realism	Australia	traumatic events of the year after she finishes high school, which saw her “perfect” family separate due to her father’s infidelity, a near-death surfing accident, and her first serious relationship with the father of her best friend.	
	Inky	<i>Notes from the Teenage Underground</i>	Simmons Howell*	Contemporary realism	Melbourne, Australia	As self-proclaimed feminist Gem finishes Year 11, she is dealing with typical teen issues like her virginity, fitting into her social circle, and what she will do after high school, when she unexpectedly meets her estranged father for the first time.	Gender, Class

\*Authors who have won more than one year or award.

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