

THESIS VOLUME 2

**JUST DESERTS: RECOGNISING THE DAVITT AWARDS
AND AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S CRIME WRITING**

An exegesis submitted as part of a thesis for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in Creative Writing at the University of Adelaide

Thesis title:

'Just Deserts: Reading, Writing and Rewarding Australian Women's Crime Fiction'

The thesis comprises:

Volume 1: Original novel, 'Angel Port'

Volume 2: Accompanying exegesis, 'Just Deserts: Recognising the Davitt Awards and Australian Women's Crime Writing'

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JUST DESERTS

To my mother Molly Veronica Byrne (nee McGavisk)

As the first Labor woman elected to parliament in South Australia, she is a trailblazer.

As a person dedicated to the betterment of the lives of others, she is an inspiration.

As a mother and grandmother, she is unsurpassed.

And in memory of my father Sylvester Aris Byrne

A loving father, a trade unionist committed to ensuring the rights of workers, and a host to all who came to his
doorstep.

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THESIS ABSTRACT

This thesis combines an original novel 'Angel Port' and an exegesis on the Davitt Awards. 'Angel Port' is a contemporary literary comic crime novel, named for a fictional seaside town in which the protagonist Nathan Newland must choose between transformation and retreat when confronted with the local secrets. The exegesis offers original research into the establishment, development and impact of the Davitt Awards, Sisters in Crime Australia's crime-writing awards for books by Australian women. The novel and exegesis are loosely linked through the exploration of the idea of just deserts, both good and ill.

THESIS DECLARATION

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint award of this degree.

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Jessie Byrne

24 June 2019

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No thesis is written in isolation.

I wish to acknowledge Sisters in Crime Australia for its generous support for this project. Its members have provided their time and archival material so generously. A special thanks goes to National Co-convenor Carmel Shute for her support, enthusiasm and welcome.

To all those who gave up their time to be interviewed for this exegesis, I express my gratitude. The work would have been far less rich without your insights and memories.

I am grateful to my first supervisor Dr Phillip Edmonds for making this project possible and providing the early assistance to get it on track.

To my wonderful, long-haul supervisor, Dr Rosslyn Prosser, I cannot thank you enough for your critical mind, incisive comments and endless empathy. It is a privilege to now call you friend.

I acknowledge the University of Adelaide, for its acceptance and support of my candidature, in particular the provision of the very vital scholarship, extensive academic resources, world-class teaching, and a network of inspiring academic and postgraduate colleagues.

I thank my family for being there for the winding road of research, writing, despair and achievement.

And most of all, my special love and gratitude go to my partner Mike Ockerby. With every cup of quarter-strength, skinny flat white he brought to my desk he also brought his unwavering belief and support.

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CHAPTER 1: THE INCITING INCIDENT: INTRODUCTION

I didn't set out to write a crime novel for this doctoral project. This is not because I devalue crime fiction. As a child I devoured Enid Blyton's Secret Seven mysteries and solved domestic crimes with Trixie Belden, girl detective. As an adult, I am a reader of crime fiction and thrillers, from anywhere, of almost any sub-genre, and by anyone. Late nights I watch Nordic noir, relishing all those sets in which someone forgot to switch on the lights. My other, almost-finished novel, *Shuffle*, is a traditional story of detection, with a politically satirical twist.

Despite this, I was writing a novel which I saw as a work of literary fiction (which I also read). 'Angel Port' is a story about a man, white, middle-class, smug, unchallenged and apathetic, who is taken out of his comfort zone and – perhaps for the first time – has to make some hard moral choices.

It therefore came as a complete surprise when my former academic supervisor suggested I change my exegesis topic from an examination of the theme of seachange in Australian literature to a topic more closely aligned with crime fiction. Crime fiction? 'Angel Port' is crime fiction? Once the initial surprise had passed I felt the first inklings of excitement. A new case to solve – and one in keeping with my general reading and viewing experience.

As these things transpire, the 'crime' suggestion changed not only the direction of my exegesis but also influenced the redrafting (and re-redrafting) of my novel, not to make it a crime novel *per se* but with the conscious employment of crime techniques to increase the tension and mystery within the narrative. It also got me thinking about plot, crime plots in particular, and crime tropes: inciting incident (nearly always a crime, very often a murder), clues, tension, pace, threat, red herrings, false leads, bogus suspects, failed solutions, hiatus, climax, denouement, and resolution (the crime solved and the perpetrator brought to justice). These are not elements of crime fiction alone, but a number of them have a special place in the crime genre (see for instance Day; Disher "Writing Crime Fiction"; Priestman).

For the exegesis there was an altogether different thrill of the chase. The research into seachange was tough-going. The idea of researching crime fiction was, by contrast, liberating. Given my own interests I decided to pursue research on Australian crime writing by women. Thanks to the generous leads of crime writer PD (Philippa) Martin I found my way into the backstreets of Balaclava in Melbourne and to the book-lined home of Carmel Shute, national co-convenor of Sisters in Crime Australia (the Sisters or SinC). Shute, a founding member of the Sisters, is also manager of the organisation's two awards for Australian women crime writers: the Scarlet Stiletto Awards, an annual short story award for unpublished manuscripts, and the Davitt Awards (the Davitts), an annual award for books, both fiction and non-fiction, published in the previous calendar year. Both the Sisters and the awards were new to me. Further investigation indicated they were also relatively unrecognised within academic research with little examination beyond passing references by scholars such as Stephen Knight and Lucy Sussex.

My most exciting discovery, however, has been to find that writing a novel – crime or otherwise – is itself a process of detection, of ratiocination. Ditto for writing an exegesis. I have been the detective – think Byrne's Plodding Detective Agency – unravelling a complex series of problems and clues to arrive at a resolution. There have been dead-ends, false leads, sloppy reasoning, poor technique and tea-binged days and nights (in the beverage department, more Miss Marple than Cliff Hardy) to solve the case.

Or make that cases plural. The process of simultaneously undertaking a creative endeavour and an academic piece of work is akin to weaving together a plot and a sub-plot, keeping them separate yet seamless, allowing them to influence the warp and weft of each other, making two pieces that should –

if constructed correctly – adorn a body of work in complementary fashion. Think trench coat and fedora. Or twinset and pearls, if these are more your style.

MULTIPLE SUSPECTS (THE CREATIVE WORK AND THE EXEGESIS)

This exegesis wears the mantle of a crime plot, much in the same way as my novel 'Angel Port' does, although both digress. Neither adheres fully to its own conventions. They are only loosely linked. Both explore the nature of just deserts, of receiving reward or punishment that is deserved (arising from the Old French *deservir*) (Oxford Dictionaries). They do so in very different ways.

'ANGEL PORT'

'Angel Port' is a contemporary novel, named for a fictional seaside town on the Victorian west coast. Angel Port becomes the home of Nathan Newland, a Melbourne business development officer who is made redundant and takes a job below his payscale at a regional university. The novel explores his transformation (and resistance to transformation) as he comes up against the secrets and demands of the town.

Nathan Newland entered my life out of desperation, tiredness and encumbrance (mine, not his). I was more than halfway through my novel 'Shuffle'. The complex plotting and multiple viewpoints of 'Shuffle' were proving difficult for someone working fulltime with primary-aged children. It was out of this struggle that 'Angel Port' was conceived – a single main protagonist, a story that moves forward in time, and a beginning, middle and end. My original idea was to explore redundancy (something in my own recent experience) and the pressures put on ordinary Australians by the increased disintegration and casualisation of the workforce.

The story shifted away from this premise almost immediately. In my original opening scene I was met with a Victorian coastal town like so many in which I had vacationed. It was captivating. It had all the emotions associated with discovery, newness and mysteries. Behind the shop signs and the memorial park, the town had stories to tell. These stories felt more pressing than the work-based narrative I had envisaged. And they felt freer, less bound. I had been pushed from the confines of bureaucracy and, now tasting the salty air, had no heart for returning to the air-conditioning. It seemed inevitable that the social commentary on work was punched aside by a more character-driven yarn and by my deeply held concerns with issues of gender and feminism derived from early life-changing reading, such as Dale Spender, Suzanne Franzway and Marian Sawer, and my experiences as a woman in various government bureaucracies (Spender; Franzway, Court and Connell; Sawer and Simms).

The mysteries revealed themselves as crimes, legal and otherwise. The writing continued to be 'literary' with an emphasis on language and character. 'Angel Port' stands then in the traditions of literary and comic crime, alongside works by writers such as Kate Atkinson, Ian McEwan, Jane Harper, JK Rowling (writing as Robert Galbraith), John Banville (writing as Benjamin Black) and Peter Temple (see for example Flood; J. Harper *The Dry*; Temple *Truth*; Maitland "Why Crime?"). Like Heather Rose's 2006 Davitt Award for the Best Adult Novel for *The Butterfly Man*, 'Angel Port' demonstrates how crime can be at the heart of a work of literary fiction that explores issues of the human condition such as redemption, guilt and the power of secrets without seeking to wholly uncover the truth (Rose *The Butterfly Man*; Maitland "Why Crime?").

The novel's characters and humour are, I believe, quintessentially Australian, as is the landscape. In addition to its references to Aussie rules football, it paints a picture of modern-day Australia in which there is an unequal distribution of power and agency. Yet it offers hope – agency can be grasped, only it may be at the cost of other values. It may also require an engagement with those around us with whom we wish to disengage.

'Angel Port' is offered as an original contribution to the discipline of Creative Writing in Australia.

THE EXEGESIS

Similarly, this exegesis is a melding of different forms, bringing together personal reflection, data analysis, textual analysis, interviews and archival research.

It offers original research through an examination of the establishment, development and impact of the Davitt Awards, crime-writing awards for books by Australian women.

This research is timely. In 2018, the awards came of age, celebrating their eighteenth year. The awards were established by Sisters in Crime Australia in 2001 to recognise women crime writers in Australia. They are open to books published in the previous calendar year and in 2018 sought nominations in six categories. In their 18-year history, the awards have attracted 893 nominations for crime books published by women. In 2018 a record 101 books were nominated from 94 writers.

In Chapter 2 I examine the establishment and ongoing transformation of the awards. The Davitt Awards have established an important place in Australia's crime-writing community since their launch in 2001. A steady growth in the number of entries in each year, especially in adult fiction, and an expansion of awards categories indicate that Australian women's crime writing is increasingly robust. Specific awards for writers of young adult and children's fiction recognise that women dominate in these areas. The awards' constant transformation not only reflect policy changes and negotiations within Sisters in Crime but also external changes in the publishing industry and in the publishing of crime in particular.

In Chapter 3 I explore the impact of the Davitt Awards. I argue that, while the awards have been the subject of very little academic focus, they have provided important encouragement and support to women writers. The awards' impact on publishing decisions, review numbers and other awards such as the Ned Kelly crime-writing awards – is less clear. Without diminishing the value of the awards, I conclude that two other factors may have had a greater impact on women's crime writing in Australia: Sisters in Crime's Scarlet Stiletto Awards short story competition and the community and framework that the Sisters have provided across all their activities since their establishment in 1991.

Chapters 2 and 3 are based on a more concise paper entitled 'The Davitt Awards: Making Space for Australia's Women Crime Writers' which I delivered to the Australian Association of Writing Programs' Peripheral Visions conference held in Perth on 29 November 2018 (Byrne "Making Space").

In chapter 4 I examine one aspect of the Davitts' impact in more depth, arguing the case for their influence on the masculinist nature of the crime genre itself. I provide a comparative analysis of the winners of the Ned Kelly Awards Best Fiction winners and the Davitt Awards Best Adult Novel winners in relation to the protagonists' gender, occupation and their family status. I conclude that the Davitts have provided spaces for less masculine crime fiction. The wounding of masculinity, however, is non-fatal, with the persistence of masculinist tropes in both the Ned Kelly and Davitt adult fiction winners. Chapter 4 was, with minor alteration, published in *Writing from Below* in 2018 as an article entitled 'The Davitt Awards: Have They Wounded the Masculinity of Australian Crime Fiction?' (Byrne "Wounded").

In the conclusion, chapter 5, I reflect on the anxiety of writing in the academy and of creating a two-tracked thesis in which the creative work and the exegesis can better be described as unrelated outlaws (to use a term coined by Nigel Krauth than as an interrelated project (Krauth "Evolution"). I offer recommendations for further research.

VARIOUS LEADS (METHODOLOGY)

Like any half-decent gumshoe, I have employed a variety of techniques in my methodology for this exegesis, some hardboiled and others cosy, more personal. This exegesis combines a range of academic and literary techniques: first-person reflection, data collection and evaluation, personal

interviews, primary-source (including archival) collation and analysis, secondary-source analysis, and literary review.

In doing so, I acknowledge the uncertainty and anxiety experienced by those engaged with developing a creative arts exegesis and the ongoing debate around its style, length, relationship to theory, relationship to the creative work, and even its significance and value (Brien "Problem"; Brien et al.; Franks "Learning"). Nevertheless, I have wrestled with the possibilities of heterogeneity or, as Paul Williams describes it, the "myriad possibilities of the form of the exegesis, [able to be] dictated by the nature of the artefact itself" (2016, cited in Franks "Learning" 3).

HITTING THE HARD PAVEMENTS (PRIMARY RESEARCH)

A variety of primary-research techniques inform this exegesis.

INTERVIEWS

For this exegesis, I draw on personal interviews I conducted between August 2017 and June 2018 with nine individuals associated with the Davitt Awards or with crime fiction in Australia. See Appendix 1 for interview details. My sincere thanks goes to all those who gave me their time and reflections during these interviews.

In determining a list for interview, I approached Carmel Shute, as the manager of the Davitt Awards, for an interview. To construct a list of interviewees I also asked her to recommend names of those involved in the awards. She did this and also provided an email introduction to potential interviewees. I followed up separately with personal email requests and subsequently interviewed those who responded either by phone or in person.

I commenced with a list of common questions for each interview but varied these in two ways: by responding to answers from interviewees and by taking into consideration the interviewee's role in relation to the awards. Interviews were recorded. Follow-up questions and responses were conducted by email. Interviewees were given the opportunity to review the material from their individual interviews prior to finalisation of the exegesis. Where requested, changes were made. All included material has received the approval of the interviewee in question.

ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTS

This paper uses primary-source material from the archives of Sisters in Crime Australia, such as media releases, meeting notes, planning documents and internal communications. This includes a vast amount of material, dating back to 1991, much of it available only in hard-copy form and most of it not previously analysed for research purposes. I wish to sincerely thank Carmel Shute and Sisters in Crime for providing me with access to this material.

DATA RETRIEVAL AND ANALYSIS

Quantitative analyses of the Davitt Awards and the Ned Kelly Awards inform the analysis within this exegesis. The data was gathered from both primary and secondary sources. The analysis is entirely my own.

BACK AT THE GRITTY DESK (SECONDARY RESEARCH)

I undertook a review of the literature on crime fiction, with specific focus on Australian crime fiction, Australian women crime writers, Sisters in Crime Australia and the Davitt Awards. This review demonstrates the relatively recent growth of academic interest in crime fiction, dating predominantly from the 1980s. The literature on Australian crime fiction and on Australian female crime writers is limited, with relatively few researchers active in the field, with Stephen Knight, Lucy Sussex, Rachael Weaver, Ken Gelder and Rachel Franks among them.

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Literature on Sisters in Crime Australia and the Davitt Awards is virtually absent, often no more than as footnotes to the success of certain texts within the awards. Much of the secondary references on the organisation and the awards is drawn from media articles and reviews, including online sources.

In addition, I reviewed the recent debate on the role of the exegesis in creative arts postgraduate programs, drawing mainly from the Australian experience in relation to creative writing doctoral programs.

This paper does not offer a separate literature review, locating the literature throughout the text as relevant.

SUCCESSFUL RATIOCINATION? (CONCLUSION)

So, how did I solve the cases? Down what mean streets did they lead me? And were the criminals brought to justice? Please continue.

CHAPTER 2: PERPETRATORS AND ACCOMPLICES: A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DAVITT AWARDS

It was a dark and stormy night in 1991 when a group of five women – at the behest of Carmel Shute, then ABC broadcaster – braved the Melbourne elements to discuss women and crime writing in Australia. From this meeting of the 'Famous Five', Sisters in Crime Australia, a largely Melbourne-based, not-for-profit organisation, was formed with the aim of recognising and promoting crime writing by Australian women (Shute "Modus 2002" 2; Shute "Modus 2001" 1).

Ten years later in 2001 the Sisters established the Davitt Awards to recognise books by Australian women crime writers. In the words of Lindy Cameron, crime writer, Clan Destine Press publisher and national co-convenor of the Sisters (Cameron 1):

In the lead-up to the [Sisters' 2001] SheKilda convention, Sisters in Crime Australia had the bright idea (we had lots!) of a new crime-writing award – the Davitt – to be awarded for the best crime novel by an Australian woman published in book form in Australia in the previous year. It was an idea that had been percolating for around a year because we thought that proper recognition of published Australian women crime writers was long overdue.

The new award was named after Ellen Davitt who, in 1865, published Australia's first mystery novel *Force and Fraud* in serial form in *The Australian Journal* and who, according to Stephen Knight, 'has a real claim to being the first female crime novelist' (Knight *Australian Crime* 3; Davitt).

In 2018, the Davitts celebrated their eighteenth year. It is therefore timely to examine their establishment, development and impact.

ESTABLISHMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF THE AWARDS

Sisters in Crime Australia (Sisters or SinC) was formed with feminist intention (Shute "Interview 2017"). Its aims are to give women a forum to discuss women's crime writing, provide support to authors, and persuade publishers to publish Australian women writers. The organisation does this through a variety of activities, including circulating information, holding events, organizing and publishing reviews of women's writing, and managing the Scarlet Stiletto Awards, a short story competition for crime-fiction short stories by Australian women (Shute "Interview 2017").

Establishing the Davitt Awards, although not part of the original plan in 1991, represented a continuation of Sisters in Crime's overall aims to recognise and promote Australia's women crime writers. Low publishing rates, resulting from neglect by local publishers, had discouraged the organisation from launching the award earlier (Shute "Interview 2017"). But by 2001 things had changed (Shute "Judging" 1):

...in 1994 Sisters in Crime established the Scarlet Stiletto Award National Short Story Competition to encourage crime writing by women. At that stage, there were so few crime novels by women being published in Australia that there was little point in such an award... Thankfully, that has changed though Australian women crime writers still lack the recognition accorded to their male peers.

The Davitts' launch was timed with the Sisters' tenth anniversary at their SheKilda conference held in October 2001 in the seaside Melbourne suburb of St Kilda.

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The Davitt Awards are open to crime books published in the previous calendar year by Australian women (SinC "Entries 2018"). There is no money associated with the award. Entry is free and winners are provided with hand-carved wooden trophies that display the winning books' covers under perspex (SinC "Entries 2018"). Sponsorship is sought for the awards, and has been variously provided by Booktopia, the Victoria Police Museum and the Swinburne University of Technology.

Until 2017, the Davitt Awards were managed on a purely voluntary basis, predominantly by Sisters in Crime's national co-convenor and secretary, Carmel Shute, with the assistance of other convenors. A nominal amount is now paid to her to cover (in part) time dedicated to managing and marketing the awards (Shute in Shute and Cameron).

The Davitts aim to achieve higher rates of publication by women crime writers, increased promotional budgets, more reviews of women's writing and boosts to sales of women's books (Cameron 2). They also aim to 'help writers to keep going', to encourage women directly and indirectly to stick with the genre (Horwood).

But the 'bright idea' to establish the awards was initially one of reaction. The idea originated with Carmel Shute, who felt that women didn't 'get a look in with the Neds', i.e. the Ned Kelly Awards for Australian crime writing, and to counter what the Sisters saw as the enduringly 'blokey' nature of the Ned Kelly Awards (Shute in Shute and Cameron; Sussex).

The Sisters had a point regarding the failure of recognition for women in the Ned Kelly Awards. The Ned Kelly Awards had been established six years prior to the establishment of the Davitts, in 1995, to recognise crime fiction and true-crime writing. Open to Australian authors (or those with a residency in Australia) for works published in the previous 12 months, the Ned Kelly Awards have been managed by the Australian Crime Writers' Association (ACWA) (ACWA "Guidelines"). The only woman to appear in the list of Ned Kelly winners in the first five years was Marele Day in 1997 for her non-fiction book *How to Write Crime* (Cameron 2).

At first glance, the year 2001 appeared to be a turnaround for greater gender balance in the Ned Kelly Awards: two of the five awards went to women – Estelle Black in the True Crime category with *Broken Lives* and Lindy Cameron in the Readers Vote for *Bleeding Hearts* (ACWA "Past Winners"). However the subsequent Ned Kelly Awards winners' lists tell a different story. Of the 79 awards across all Ned Kelly Awards categories from 1995 to 2018, just under one third have gone to women: 25 to women compared to 54 for men (ACWA "Past Winners"; Byrne "Making Space"), as shown in Table 1 and Figure 1.

Table 1: Ned Kelly Award Winners, All Categories, by Gender, 1995-2018

Ned Kelly Award Winners, All Categories, by Gender, 1995-2018		
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
<i>Male</i>	54	68
<i>Female</i>	25	32
TOTAL	79	100

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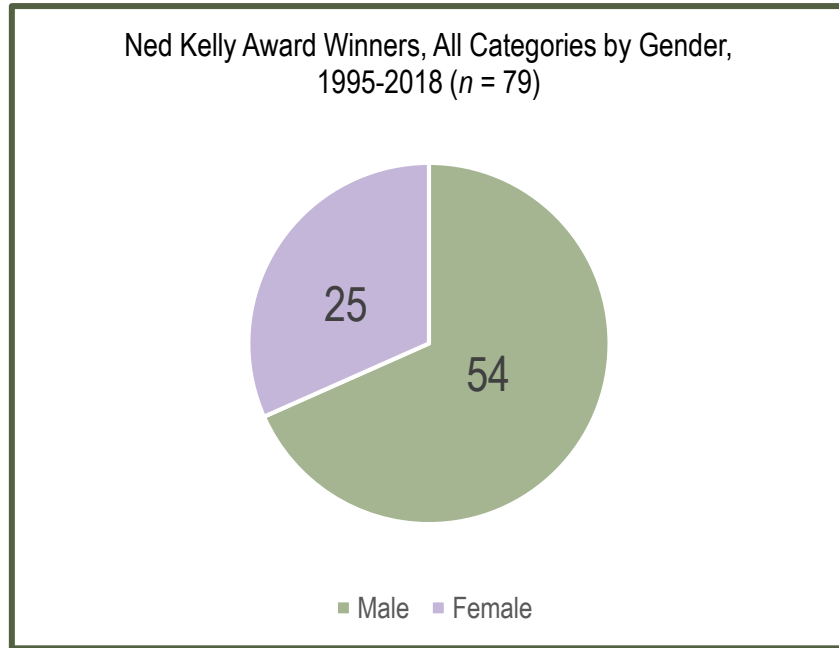


Figure 1: Ned Kelly Award Winners, All Categories, by Gender, 1995-2018

Across the 22 years in which the Ned Kelly Awards have been awarded (there were no awards in 1996 and 1998), all-male winners lists were awarded in four years (18 per cent) and majority-male winners lists in another 14 years (64 per cent). Men have therefore dominated winners lists for 18 (82 per cent) out of 22 years. There were equal numbers of men and women in one year only (2007). Women won the majority of awards in only three years (14 per cent) (2002, 2015 and 2018) (ACWA "Past Winners"). See Table 2 and Figure 2.

Table 2: Gender Balance of Ned Kelly Winners Lists by Year, 1995-2018

Gender Balance of Ned Kelly Winners Lists by Year, 1995-2018		
	<i>Number years</i>	<i>Per cent years</i>
<i>All male</i>	4	18
<i>Male majority</i>	14	64
<i>Equal gender</i>	1	4
<i>Female majority</i>	3	14
<i>All female</i>	0	0
TOTAL	22	100

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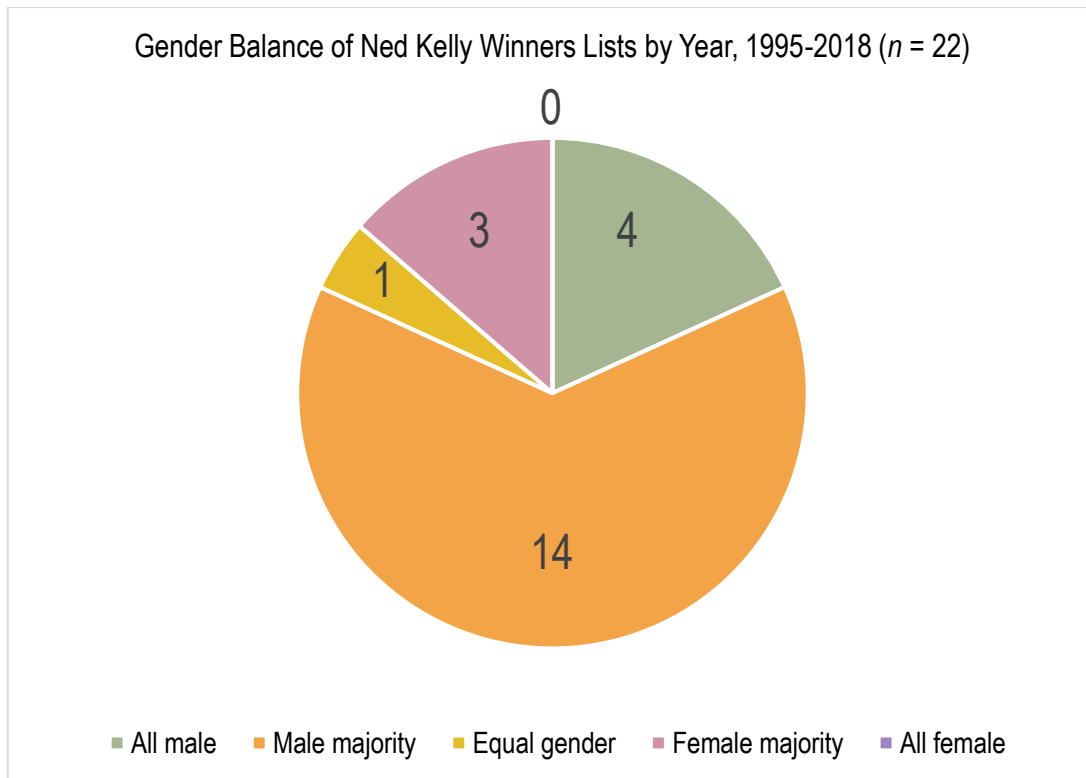


Figure 2: Gender Balance of Ned Kelly Winners Lists by Year, 1995-2018

This disparity is particularly strong in two categories: the Best Fiction award and the Lifetime Achievement award. Women comprise only four (15 per cent) of the 26 Best Fiction winners (note the presence of joint winners in some years) and only five (29 per cent) of the 17 people receiving Lifetime Achievement awards. In the True Crime category, women have had more success, making up 10 (40 per cent) of the 25 award winners (ACWA "Past Winners").

ONGOING TRANSFORMATION OF THE AWARDS

The Davitt Awards have transformed over their 18-year history, receiving 893 nominations over the period across all categories. This transformation reflects both the expansion in the number of women publishing in crime over the period and the policy changes and endeavours associated with the awards themselves.

The growth has been significant. In the first year, 2001, only seven entries were received for the award's single category: the Best Adult Novel. By 2018 the number of entries had risen to 101, submitted by 94 writers across six categories. See Table 3 and Figure 3.

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Table 3: Davitt Awards: Total Entries, 2001-2018

Davitt Awards: Total Entries, 2001-2018	
Year	Total entries
2001	7
2002	20
2003	21
2004	20
2005	21
2006	34
2007	38
2008	41
2009	39
2010	40
2011	53
2012	49
2013	61
2014	76
2015	96
2016	77
2017	99
2018	101

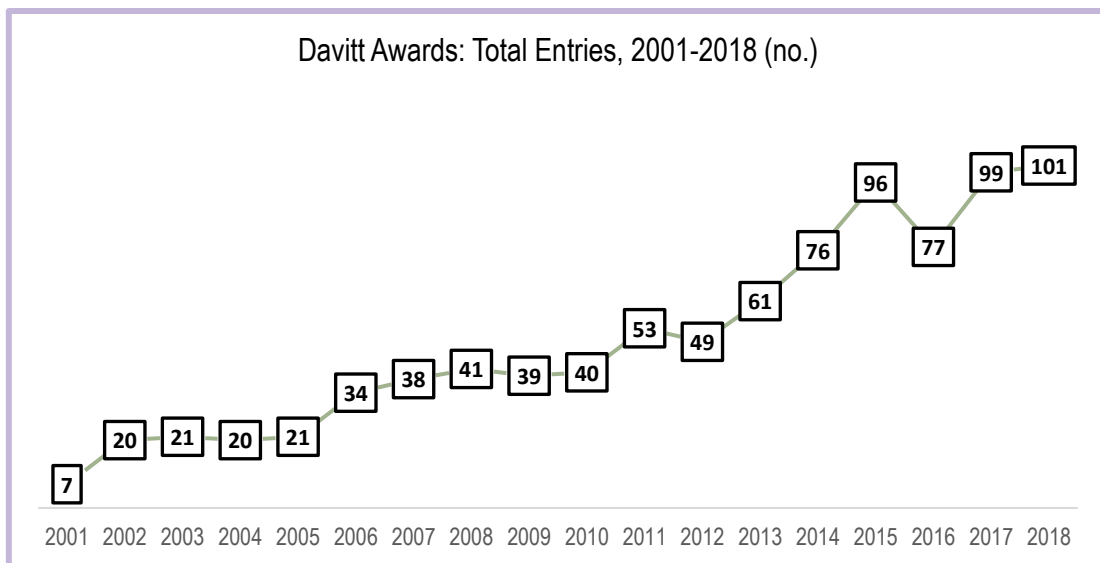


Figure 3: Davitt Awards: Total Entries, 2001-2018

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The transformation and growth across the awards' 18 years reflects four internal factors: proactive work by Sisters in Crime to identify books and encourage their nomination, a steady increase in the longlists for adult fiction books, the introduction of new award categories, and the acceptance of self-published books and ebooks. Additionally, the awards introduced shortlists in 2012 to reflect growing numbers and to align with other literary awards.

These factors have operated within the broader context of a growth in demand for crime books, both fiction and non-fiction (Jackson 14), and a pattern of 'steadily growing output of crime fiction with, in recent years, an increasing number, even a majority, of the writers being women' (Knight *Australian Crime* 11).

ACTIVE IDENTIFICATION AND PURSUIT OF ELIGIBLE BOOKS

Sisters in Crime Australia takes a proactive approach in seeking nominations for the Davitt Awards. In addition to general calls for nominations, including through web marketing, media releases and direct approaches to the media, the organisation actively seeks to identify all eligible books published in the previous year. This tradition started in the award's first year, in which the Sisters researched the titles published in 2000 and sent their list to publishers to solicit nominations (Shute "Judging" 1). Each year a list of books continues to be compiled by organisational members and actively pursued by Shute as the awards manager. Shute is a self-confessed 'terrier to get publishers to submit books'. Despite this, 'every so often we miss a book' (Shute "Interview 2017").

GROWTH OF BEST ADULT NOVEL LONGLISTS

The Best Adult Novel award is the only award to have been offered in every year of the Davitt Awards. Nominations in the category have risen tenfold from seven in 2001 to 71 in 2018. Nomination numbers across the entire Davitt Awards in part reflect this rise. In every year, nominations for the Best Adult Novel account for the single highest number of entries of any category, accounting for between 42 and 71 per cent of all nominations across the 17 years from 2002, as demonstrated in Table 4 and Figure 4.

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Table 4: Davitt Awards Longlists, Total Nominations and Best Adult Novel Nominations, 2001-2018

Davitt Awards Longlists, Total Nominations and Best Adult Novel Nominations, 2001-2018			
	<i>Total entries (no.)</i>	<i>Best Adult Novel (no.)</i>	<i>Best Adult Novel as % of total</i>
2001	7	7	100
2002	20	11	55
2003	21	15	71
2004	20	13	65
2005	21	15	71
2006	34	18	53
2007	38	16	42
2008	41	26	63
2009	39	20	51
2010	40	21	53
2011	53	25	47
2012	49	22	45
2013	61	37	61
2014	76	40	53
2015	96	44	46
2016	77	46	60
2017	99	63	64
2018	101	71	70

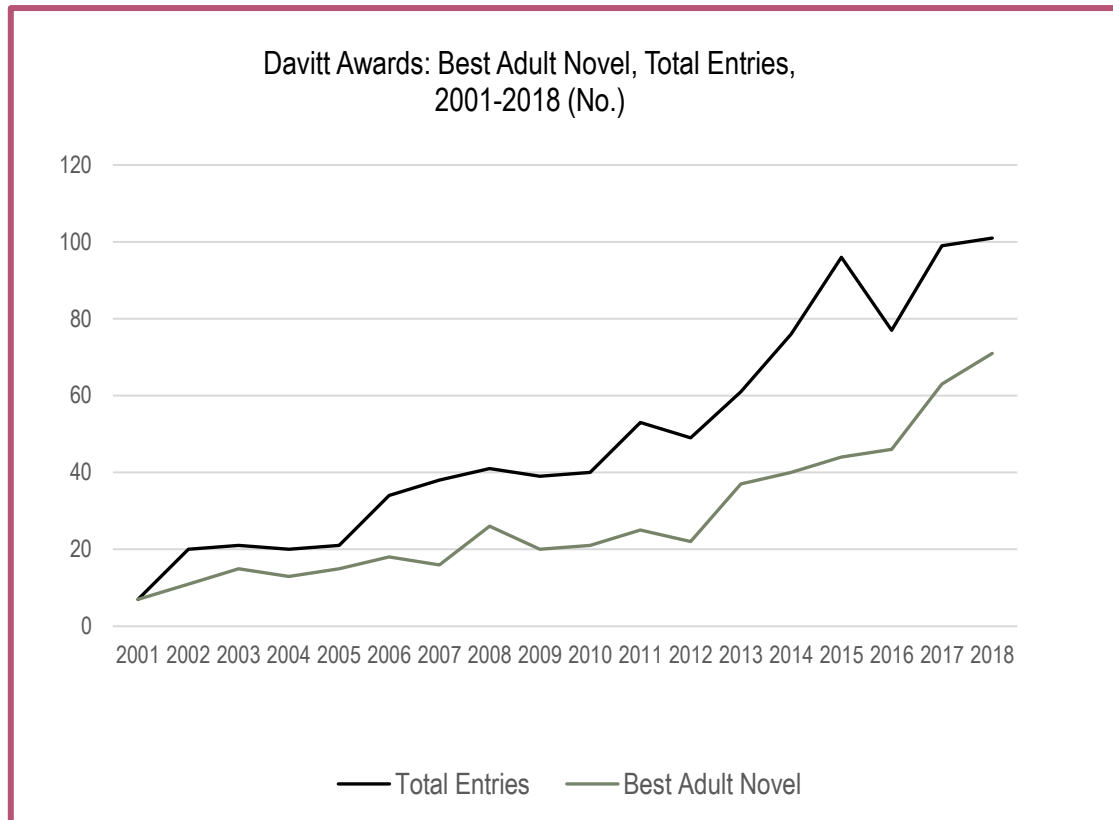


Figure 4: Davitt Awards: Best Adult Novel, Total Entries, 2001-2018

The growth in adult novel nominations reflects, in the main, the rise in the number of Australian women writing and publishing crime fiction. In 1991, when Sisters in Crime Australia was established, the number of Australian women crime writers who had been published could be counted ‘on one hand’, according to Cameron (Cameron 1). By the time the Davitt was launched a decade later in October 2001, the numbers had risen to the point where a book award was a viable option. By 2018, 66 authors – and 71 books – were nominated for the Best Adult Novel award, representing a significant growth in publication numbers (SinC "Getting Away").

INTRODUCTION OF NEW AWARD CATEGORIES

From one award category in 2001, the Davitts expanded to six book awards by 2014 (SinC "New Award" 15). In 2018, the six current book award categories were Best Adult Novel, Best Young Adult Novel, Best Children’s Novel, Best Non-fiction Book, Best Debut Book (any category) and the Readers’ Choice (any category and voted by current members of Sisters in Crime Australia) (SinC "Davitt Awards"). A full list of the winners for the awards across every category from 2001 to 2018 can be found in Appendix 2.

An inaugural Lifetime Achievement Award was offered in 2013, to author Kerry Greenwood, but has not been awarded since (SinC "13th Davitt"; Shute "Re: Oops"). It was introduced to acknowledge the work of members with a long history of contribution to Australian crime writing but who would not necessarily win individual awards. There is no formal nomination process for the award, with judges determining who may be eligible. There is no prize money associated with the award (*Books+Publishing* "2013 Davitt"). In 2016, the judging panel decided to add a one-off award for that year, a Special Judges’ Award, due to the high number of ‘wonderful books’ that had been nominated (Vikki Petraitis in SinC "16th Davitt"). The awardee was JM Peace’s debut adult novel *A Time to Run*, part of her Constable Sammi Willis series (Peace).

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Although overall nomination numbers have seen steady growth, spikes in entry numbers have occurred each time a new award category was introduced – either in that year or with a year’s delay.

Changes in the award categories awards from 2001 to 2018 are provided in Figure 5.

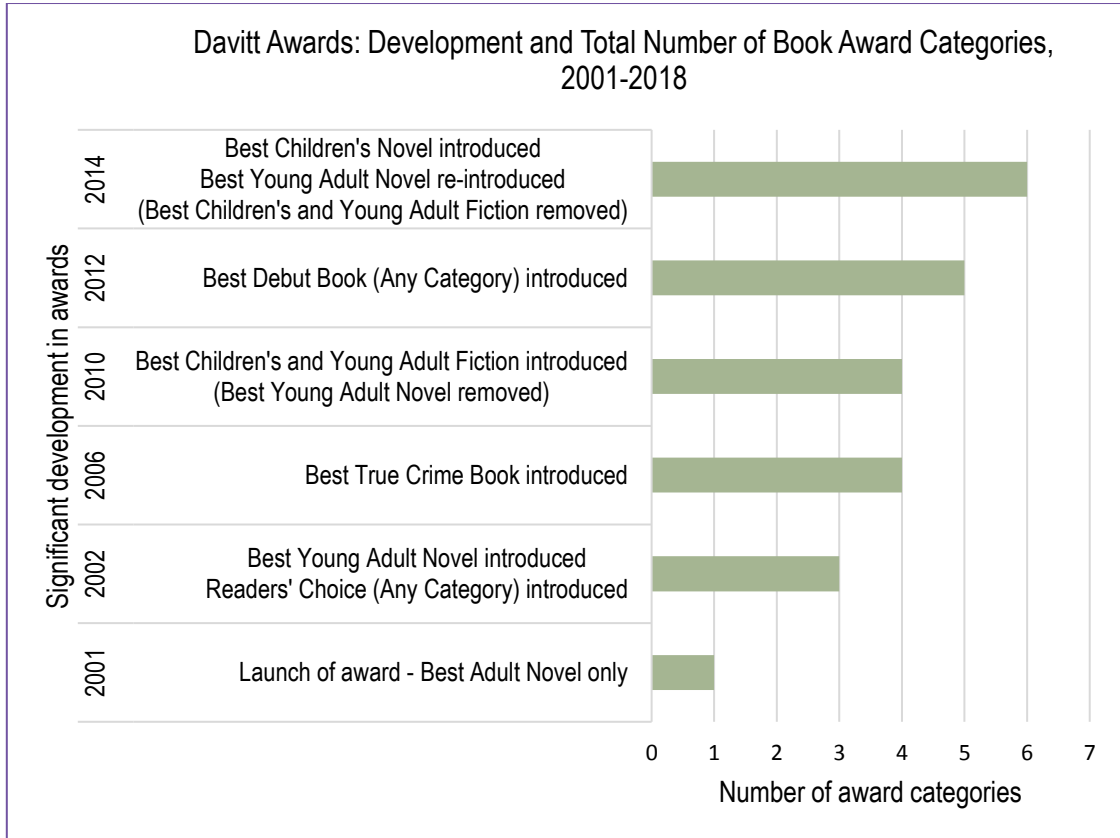


Figure 5: Davitt Awards: Development and Total Number of Book Award Categories, 2001-2018

Table 5 provides details of developments in award categories and the associated growth in nominations over the same period.

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Table 5: Davitt Awards: Development of Awards, 2001-2018

Davitt Awards: Development of Awards, 2001-2018			
<i>Year</i>	<i>Changes</i>	<i>Number of categories</i>	<i>Total entries</i>
2001	Launch of award	1	7
2002	Best Young Adult Novel introduced Readers' Choice introduced ¹	3	20 ⁴
2003		3	21
2004		3	20
2005		3	21
2006	Best True Crime Book introduced	4	34 ⁴
2007		4	38
2008		4	41
2009		4	39
2010	Best Children's and Young Adult Fiction introduced (Young Adult category removed)	4	40
2011		4	53 ⁴
2012	Best Debut Book (Any Category) introduced ¹ Shortlists introduced	5	49
2013	Lifetime Achievement Award introduced, 2013 only ²	6	61
2014	Best Children's Novel introduced Best Young Adult Novel re-introduced (Best Children's and Young Adult Fiction category removed) First ebook shortlisted	6	76 ⁴
2015	Best True Crime Book renamed Best Non-Fiction Book	6	96 ⁴
2016	Judges' Special Award awarded, 2016 only ^{1,3}	7	77
2017		6	99
2018	Self-published books admitted First self-published book shortlisted	6	101

1 No separate nominations accepted for Best Debut Book, Readers' Choice or Judges' Special Award

2 Lifetime Achievement Award provided only in this year, ie 2013

3 Judges' Special Award offered only in this year, ie 2016

4 Spike in entries

New categories having the most significant effect on overall nomination numbers include young adult fiction and children's fiction, with non-fiction providing an initial boost and then remaining steady.

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BEST YOUNG ADULT AND CHILDREN'S FICTION

The young adult and children's fiction awards have undergone constant change throughout the Davitts' history, with the Best Young Adult Novel award introduced in 2002, the category collapsed into a Best Children's and Young Adult Fiction Award in 2010, and the joint award split into separate children's and young adult awards in 2014.

The separation of the children's and young adult awards into separate categories in 2014 was at the behest of Goldie Alexander, a children's author (Shute "Interview 2018"). According to Davitts judge Jacqui Horwood, the introduction of the separate children's fiction award reflected the growing number of eligible children's books as well as concerns over the issues associated with comparing children's and young adult literature (cited in SinC "Promiscuous Hybridity" 2):

In the past children's books have had to compete with Young Adult books which has not been entirely equitable. And really there's never been the number of children's books to justify a separate award. This year was different with 13 in contention and so much quality writing in evidence.

The introduction of the Best Young Adult Novel award in 2002 resulted in a spike in total nominations, from seven in the previous year to a total of 20, nine of which were in the young adult category. The young adult numbers have remained relatively steady over the award's history, ranging from six to 14 nominated books per year.

The inclusion of children's fiction in 2010 (as part of the Children's and Young Adult Fiction award) saw a spike in overall Davitt nominations in the following year, 2011. In that year, 23 young adult and children's books were placed on the longlist out of a total 53 nominations across all categories, representing 44 per cent of all nominations.


A spike in children's and young adult nominations was recorded in both 2014 and 2015, partly as a result of multiple children's serial books being entered. In a number of years, multiple books by one author have been nominated in the children's category. In 2015, for example, when children's entries leapt to 20, seven of the books were by series authors such as Eileen O'Hely (two Kitten Kaboodle Mission books) and Sally Rippin (five Billie B Mystery books) (SinC "A Record" 4).

See Table 6 and Figures 6 and 7 on young adult and children's fiction nominations.

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Table 6: Davitt Awards: Best Young Adult and Children's Novel Entries, 2001-2018

Davitt Awards: Best Young Adult and Children's Novel Entries, 2001-2018 (No.)					
<i>Year</i>	<i>Total Entries</i>	<i>Best Young Adult Novel</i>	<i>Best Children's Novel</i>	<i>Children's and Young Adult Fiction</i>	<i>Total Young Adult and Children's</i>
2001	7				
2002	20	9			9
2003	21	6			6
2004	20	7			7
2005	21	6			6
2006	34	7			7
2007	38	11			11
2008	41	5			5
2009	39	8			8
2010	40			10	10
2011	53			23	23
2012	49			18	18
2013	61			13	13
2014	76	12	13		25
2015	96	14	20		34
2016	77	9	8		17
2017	99	11	11		22
2018	101	8	14		22

 = Not offered in this year

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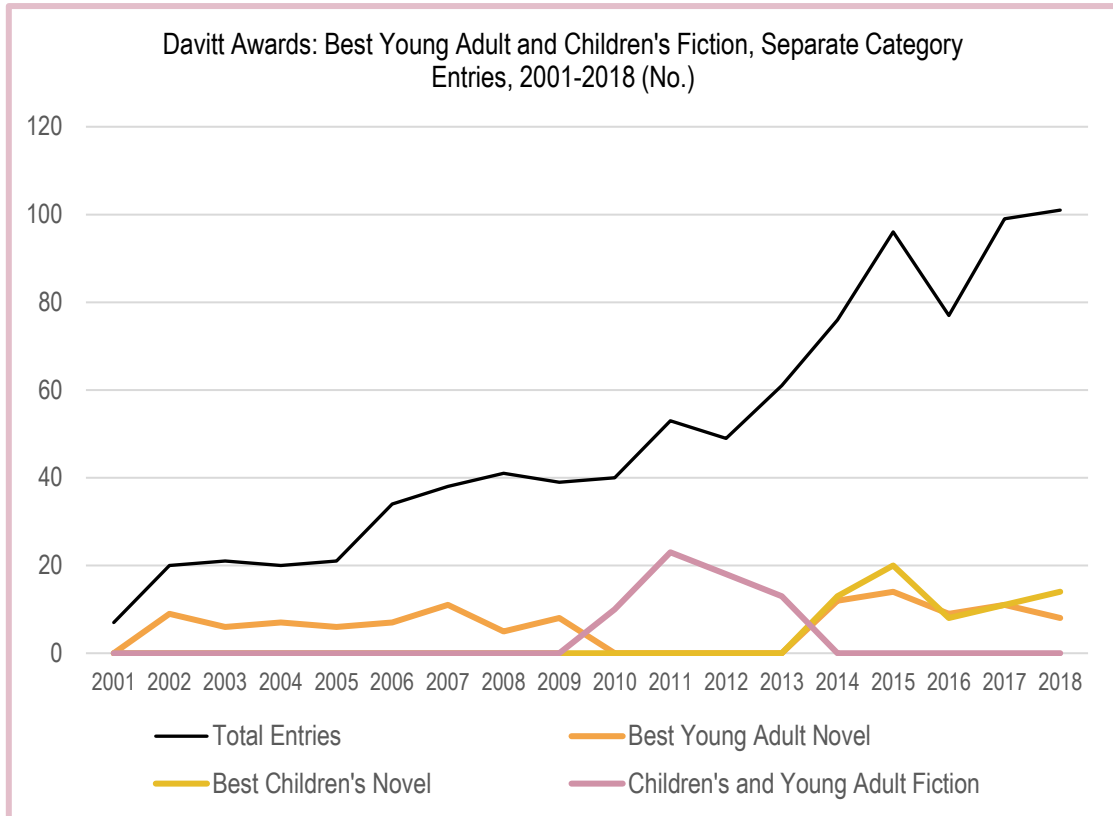


Figure 6: Davitt Awards: Best Young Adult and Children's Fiction, Separate Category Entries, 2001-2018

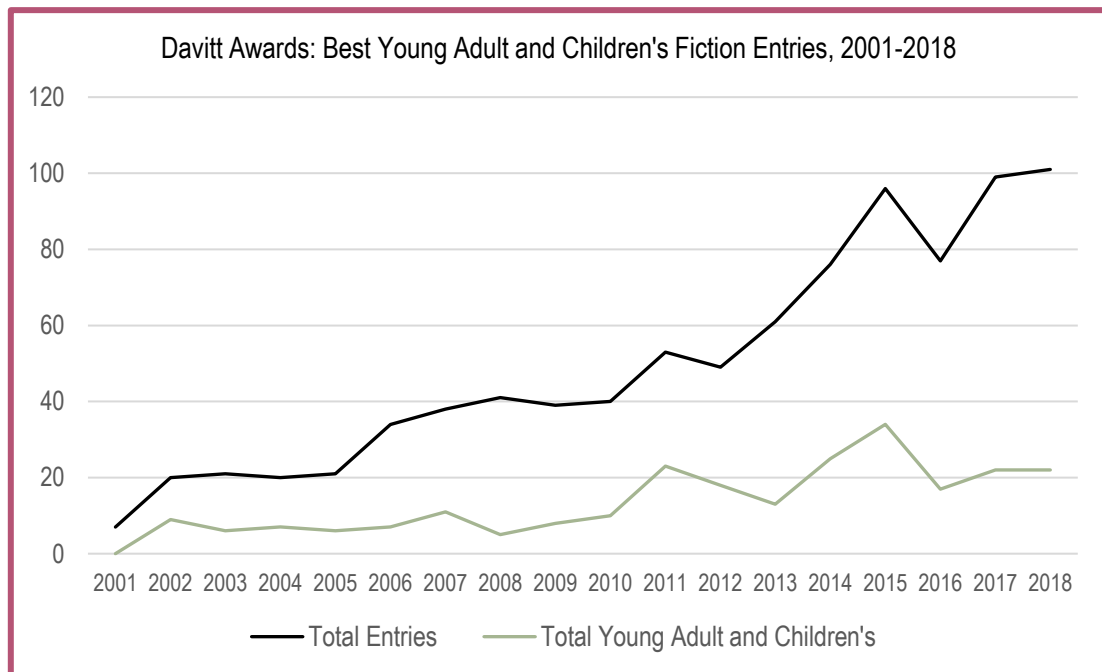


Figure 7: Davitt Awards: Best Young Adult and Children's Fiction Entries, 2001-2018

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BEST NON-FICTION

The Best True Crime Book award was introduced in 2006 and was renamed the Best Non-fiction Crime Book in 2015. Introduction of the category saw total Davitt entries leap to 34 books in 2006, compared with 21 the previous year, with nine true crime books contributing to the increase.

With the exception of 2015, when 18 books were nominated in the category, the number of entries has remained relatively low and varied each year from eight to 14. Apart from when first introduced, true crime and non-fiction books have contributed little to the overall growth in Davitt nominations. See Table 7 and Figure 8.

Table 7: Davitt Awards: Best True Crime/Non-fiction Book Entries, 2001-2018

Davitt Awards: Best True Crime/Non-fiction Book Entries, 2001-2018		
<i>Year</i>	<i>Total Entries</i>	<i>Best True Crime Book (Non-fiction from 2015)</i>
2001	7	
2002	20	
2003	21	
2004	20	
2005	21	
2006	34	9
2007	38	11
2008	41	10
2009	39	11
2010	40	9
2011	53	4
2012	49	9
2013	61	11
2014	76	11
2015	96	18
2016	77	14
2017	99	14
2018	101	8

= Not offered in this year

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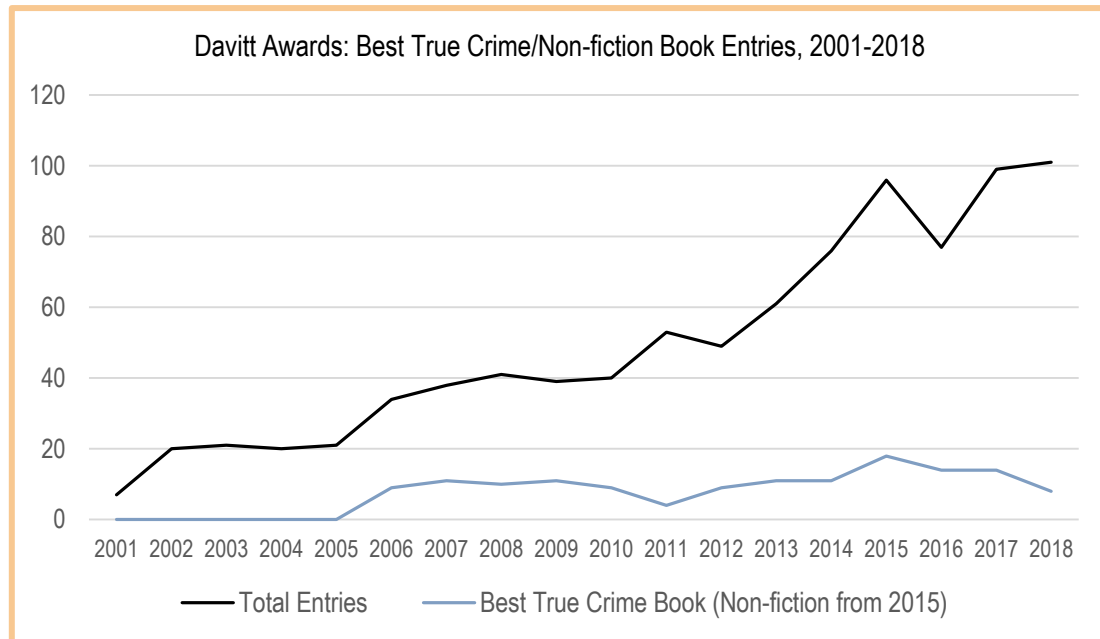


Figure 8: Davitt Awards: Best True Crime/Non-fiction Book Entries, 2001-2018

READERS' CHOICE

The Readers' Choice award was introduced in 2002. Sisters in Crime decided in that year that 'it was important that members (as opposed to judges) should have a chance decide on the best books', in keeping with the organisation's membership-based approach (Shute "Re: Davitt Awards"). The winner is selected by a vote of Sisters in Crime Australia members (currently around 500 across Australia), voting for one book from all nominated books across all categories. No books are entered specifically for this category, excepting the Scarlet Stiletto short story collections, which are published by the organisation and contain winning stories from the organisation's Scarlet Stiletto annual crime story competition (SinC "2012 Readers Choice"). Hard-copy voting via mail has been replaced by online voting (Lobb).

BEST DEBUT BOOK

The Best Debut Book award was introduced in 2012 in recognition of the 'range of exciting new authors' who were writing crime, according to the judges' report of that year (SinC "12th Davitt" 6). Sisters in Crime's aim was to encourage these new writers, and in particular emerging writers, through public recognition (SinC "12th Davitt" 6; Shute "Re: Davitt Awards").

Books are not entered under this category, but are identified from books nominated from all other categories (with the exception of the Scarlet Stiletto short story editions, published by Sisters in Crime) (SinC "2012 Davitts Shortlist" 1). In 2016, the large number of shortlisted books was attributed to the significant number of excellent debut books (Horwood cited in SinC "Long Shortlist" 1). This suggested that women writers, both new and established in other genres, were entering the crime space as published authors.

ACCEPTANCE OF SELF-PUBLISHED BOOKS AND E-BOOKS

Self-published books were originally accepted into the awards but were made ineligible in 2012. Following external lobbying and internal debate, Sisters in Crime reinstated self-published books in 2018. In the 2018 awards, 19 books (around one in five) were self-published, with Ellie Marney's self-published *No Limits* becoming the first self-published book to be shortlisted, receiving an honourable mention for Best Young Adult Novel (SinC "18th Davitt").

In Cameron's account (Shute and Cameron):

The biggest change we're having this year [2018] is that we're allowing self-published books in... Because, the thing is, about self-published books – as a small publisher I was one of the ones who pointed out to other convenors that it was time because sometimes just because a book is self-published doesn't mean that it is less than any other book. It just means that that person could not get an agent or could not get a publisher to pay attention to them at the right time.

Cameron has described the 'bad hair day' factor in publishing: an editor gets a bad haircut that day and a book comes in about a hairdresser, so the book hits the slush pile. Cameron says that the variables in having a book published do not necessarily reflect its quality – the reasons may include timing, market trends and the editor's own experiences (Shute and Cameron). Jacqui Horwood, chief judge in 2018, agreed that the Davitts needed to support good writing that could not find publishers (in SinC "Getting Away" 2): 'A lot of good crime writing can be found in self-published books. Self-published books can't simply be dismissed any more as [mere] vanity publishing.' In relation to concerns on quality, Cameron's view is that books that have simply been 'whacked up on Amazon' without editorial work will be quickly discounted in the judging process (Shute and Cameron).

Sisters in Crime also acknowledged that some authors chose to self-publish in order to retain control of their work and to maximise earnings (Horwood in SinC "Getting Away" 2). In addition, the introduction of self-published books reflected shifts in the publishing world over the past few decades, including structural changes in industry ownership, the rise of ebooks and online publishing, and the acceptance of self-published books by other literary prizes, such as the NSW Premier's Literary Awards, the Commonwealth Book Prize in Australia and the Irish National Book Prize (Horwood in SinC "Getting Away" 2).

Ebooks were not originally accepted into the award as these were considered inaccessible to the general public (SinC "Searching" 1). This view appears to have lagged behind the growing body of evidence and broadening debate on the rise of ebooks and epubublishing in relation to popular as well as academic literature (see for example Anderson and Pham; Malik). By 2014, according to judge Tanya King-Carmichael, the rise in the number of ebooks had been noted and were thus accepted into the awards. In that same year, the first ebook was shortlisted, Ilsa Evans' adult novel *Nefarious Doings: A Nell Forrest Mystery*, published by Momentum Press, Pan Macmillan Australia's digital-only imprint (King-Carmichael in SinC "Shortlist 14th Davitts" 2).

INTRODUCTION OF SHORTLISTS

The steady growth in nominated books contributed to a decision to introduce shortlists in 2012, with the number having risen to 49 in that year (Shute "Re: Quick Question"). A second reason was, according to 2012 head judge Tanya King-Carmichael, to bring the Davitts 'in line with other prestigious literary awards' (speech in SinC "12th Davitt" 7).

The numbers of books within shortlists has been fluid, with no fixed guidelines and shortlist numbers a matter of negotiation between judges, depending on factors such as quality and the number of books in each award category. Davitts judge in 2015, 2016 and 2017 and former Sisters' treasurer and committee member, Maggie Baron, said that shortlisting could be like 'arm wrestling'. Her view, as both an author and a judge, was that 'It didn't matter if we had twenty books on the shortlist over each of the five categories [as] it's probably better for the business, better for writers'. She affirmed the importance of being shortlisted for authors as long as the work 'reached a certain threshold of competency, completeness ... we didn't have to cut or be tight' (Baron and Crabtree).

In 2016, awards judge Jacqui Horwood attributed the generous shortlists to the high standard of writing as well as the large number of outstanding debut books. In her words, 'The crime writing sorority is bursting with new and exciting authors with so many different takes on the genre' (SinC "Long Shortlist").

CONCLUSION

The Davitt Awards have established an important place in Australia's crime-writing community since their launch in 2001.

A steady growth in the number of entries in each year, especially in adult fiction, and an expansion of awards categories indicate that Australian women's crime writing is increasingly robust. It also reflects the vigorous pursuit of eligible entries by Sisters in Crime Australia and the rise in the number of crime books published by women during the period. Specific awards for books of young adult and children's fiction recognise that women dominate in these areas.

The awards' constant transformation not only reflect policy changes and negotiations within Sisters in Crime but also external changes in the publishing industry and in the publishing of crime in particular. It has also arisen from the Sisters' foundational principle of supporting and encouraging crime writing by women, such as in the expansion of categories and the high numbers in some years of books in the shortlists.

But have the Davitt Awards achieved their aims and what is their impact more broadly? These questions are explored in chapters 3 and 4.

CHAPTER 3: THE SPOILS OF CRIME: IMPACT OF THE DAVITT AWARDS

The winner of the inaugural Davitt Award, Caroline Shaw, was ecstatic about her win: 'Some people say awards are a bad thing, that writers are not in competition and we shouldn't act as though we are. I've said it myself. Well, bugger that!' (Shaw "Acceptance"). Shaw was speaking on the acceptance of her 2001 award for *Eye to Eye*, the first in her Lenny Aaron private eye series (Shaw *Eye to Eye*).

Shaw wasn't talking about the money. While the Stella Prize, a literary award celebrating Australian women's writing, offers \$50,000 to the winner – and therefore the freedom to live and work as a writer for a period – the Davitts offer a wooden and perspex trophy (The Stella Prize; SinC "18th Davitt"). Given that the average Australian writer earns only \$12,900 per year from their writing (Zwar, Throsby and Longden *Authors' Income*), the trophy is nice for the parlour but not so useful for the larder.

What, then, is the value of the Davitt Award to writers?

VALIDATION AND CONFIDENCE FOR WRITERS

Through the testimony of winners it is clear that the most immediate impact is recognition and confidence-building. With these comes validation. Winning the 2013 Best Adult Novel for *Mad Men, Bad Girls and the Guerilla Knitters Institute*, Maggie Groff said it was brilliant to have won: 'It was, and is, fantastic. And it's validation that I can do this writing lark. As many of you know, the lonely one in the study with her elbow on the desk and a faraway look in her eyes is never quite sure about that part of the deal' (Groff; cited in SinC "13th Davitt" 15).

For emerging writers, the validation has particular value. Best Debut Book winner in 2015, Christine Bongers, said on winning with her first young adult crime book *Intruder* (SinC "15th Davitt" 25): 'With *Intruder* and a Davitt under my belt, I can legitimately call myself as a crime writer. I'm almost 60,000 words into the next one, my first adult crime novel, *The Lonely Dead*, so bouquets to you, my Sisters in Crime, thanks for welcoming me into the fold'. Winning the Best Adult Novel award with her debut novel *Resurrection Bay* in 2016, Emma Viskic spoke of the loneliness she felt as a new writer (cited in SinC "16th Davitt" 20-21):

...the feeling of standing alone in a quagmire. But, towards the end, something amazing happened – I lifted my head and saw that there were people who wanted to help. Women who wanted to help... The latest figures show that although women write over 70 per cent of the books published in Australia, we still receive less than half the reviews in the press. Awards like the Davitts, and organisations like Sisters in Crime, are crucial in redressing this imbalance.

The awards are also highly valued by writers of children's and young adult crime fiction. A 2015 survey of the Australian publishing sector found that women make up 87 per cent of children's authors (and 67 per cent of all authors) (Zwar, Throsby and Longden *Australian Authors* 3). These authors have not been recognised in the Ned Kelly Awards and have been marginalised in other major awards, such as the Miles Franklin Award. Winner of the 2014 Best Children's Novel, Jen Storer, praised the Davitts for the children-specific award because '[w]riting for children is commonly regarded as a lesser art and routinely marginalised' and the award 'helps to raise the profile of children's literature and to validate the contribution, commitment and talent of Australian children's authors' (cited in SinC "14th Davitt" 6). It is worth noting that a 2015 survey of the Australian publishing sector found that women made up 87 per cent of children's authors and 67 per cent of all authors (Zwar et al *Australian Authors* 3).

Similarly, young adult fiction has received little recognition in the Ned Kelly Awards, with only one young adult book winning the award – JC Burke's *Pig Boy* (2012) – winning the Best Fiction Award across the 24-year Ned Kelly Awards' history (Burke; ACWA "Past Winners"). Author Ellie Marney, winner of the

2015 Young Adult Fiction award for *Every Word* (from the *Every* series), noted on acceptance of her award the difficulties facing young adult writers in Australia, including setbacks such as funding cuts to the Australia Council. She acknowledged the fillip provided by her Davitt win (SinC "14th Davitt" 18).

IMPACTS ON THE GENRE

Although not stated aims of the Davitt Awards, improvement in the quality of crime writing by Australian women and broadening the crime genre appear to be important spin-offs of the awards. Chapter 4 examines how the Davitts have impacted on aspects of the masculine nature of the genre.

QUALITY OF THE WRITING

According to Shute, 'the standard of the writing has skyrocketed. It is just so good now. So now it is of global quality' (Shute and Cameron). This rise in quality was acknowledged by judges as early as 2003 (Shute "Modus 2003" 1) and confirmed in subsequent years. Jane Sullivan, both judge and literary critic, tracks this improvement. As a judge in 2003, she admitted that in addition to some excellent books she had 'to plough through some dull, clichéd or incoherent writing' (Sullivan "Hey, Sister"). By 2018 she observed (Sullivan "Interview"): 'There has been this increase, very large increase, in the number of books coming out by women and I would argue that the standard generally has risen too and that we're getting some terrific books now that perhaps that were more rarities, say, ten years ago'.

The direct impact of the Davitts on the quality of crime books by women cannot be measured. Multiple factors clearly contribute to the excellence or otherwise of both the writing and the published work, as acknowledged by the Sisters' co-convenor Sue Turnbull (cited in Shute "2005 Davitts" 6):

Part of the reason [for this improvement] is that new writers are getting more nurturing and support, not just from groups like Sisters in Crime but by writers' centres, publishers and government programs. It is clear that support from other writers and workshopping of material through writers' centres and mentoring programs was an important step for fledgling crime writers mastering their craft.

The context of the awards is, of course, broader than this. In terms of support for writers, there are online courses, tertiary courses, mentoring programs, prizes, fellowships, workshops, public events, reading groups and manuscript assessments, opportunities that have grown significantly in the last two decades, not least through technology and tertiary courses in creative writing. This is in addition to the overall growth of crime books published by women.

It is nevertheless clear that the awards both recognise and actively promote improvements in quality. In each year, the judges make public statements on the standards of writing, editing and publication, and provide broad guidance on lifting quality. They are also quick to point out where entries do not make the grade. In 2005, for example, the judges criticised publishers for the poor standard of covers on a number of books (Shute "2005 Davitts" 6). In 2007, the judges noted a 'significant number' of books that 'could have benefited from workshopping, more thoughtful editing and perhaps even feedback from sympathetic and experienced crime readers'. They expressed disappointment that many publishers failed to provide this level of feedback or review (SinC "Crime Books Pass"). The 2009 judges praised the high quality of young adult books while lamenting the standard of true crime entries, many of which were 'little more than a rehash of newspaper articles' (SinC "2009 Davitt" 6, 7).

The Davitts' judges and organisers have noted the ongoing improvement in the quality of children's books. In 2014, for example, they acknowledged the quality of children's mystery books and the 'imaginative and enthralling novels' for children and young adults written by a new generation of authors (Horwood and Turnbull cited in Sisters in Crime Australia "14th Davitt" 3, 6). By 2015, all categories had seen improvement. In that year the judges noted the high standards of research and writing in the non-fiction category and the improving standards in young adult fiction (SinC "15th Davitt"

15). The judges reaffirmed these higher standards in 2016 (SinC "Long Shortlist" 1) and in 2017 commended the quality of the children's, young adult and non-fiction books (SinC "17th Davitt" 8).

BROADENING THE CRIME GENRE

The Davitt Awards accept a range of books that do not strictly fit the definition of crime fiction. In calling for entries for the 2019 awards, as an example, awards judge Jacqui Horwood stated, 'Crime is such a broad church. Whether your books are littered with gore or recipes, set in the mean streets of Melbourne or the dusty roads of the outback, there is a place for everyone' (SinC "Entries"). Lucy Sussex claims that, while the Ned Kelly Awards are more likely to recognise traditional crime fiction such as private eye books and police procedurals, the Davitts encompass a broader range of books, including psychological thrillers (Sussex).

Sisters in Crime national co-convenor, Sue Turnbull, makes reference to 'the number of books submitted for the Davitt Awards which do not easily fit within the genre of crime fiction'. She cites as an example the 2007 highly recommended book *Shifting Fog* by Kate Morton, which would sit 'more comfortably within the romance/family melodrama/historical novel category' than within any crime sub-genre (in SinC "Crime Books Pass"). Jane Sullivan, reflecting on her time as a judge, speaks of 'entries which weren't strictly crime novels at all but had a crime in them somewhere. It was really comparing apples and oranges and rocks from rice...but it was pleasing and encouraging that so many different books are being written' (Sullivan "Interview").

Authors themselves often express surprise that their books have been nominated for the award. Liane Moriarty, winner of the 2015 Davitt for Best Adult Novel for *Big Little Lies*, says, "It was a surprise to find out that my sixth novel *Big Little Lies* had turned out to be a crime novel... it certainly never occurred to me that I would ever write a crime novel" (cited in SinC "Announcing 15th Davitts" 1). Similarly for Heather Rose and her 2006 adult fiction winner, *The Butterfly Man*. Rose says her publishers took a while to decide whether the book was sufficiently 'crime' to be entered. She also understands the judges debated over whether the book sat within the genre, although there was crime at its heart (Rose "Interview"). Children's author Lollie Barr, highly commended for the 2015 Davitt for Best Children's Novel award, was also surprised her book was eligible: "I hadn't considered *Stunt Boy* a crime book per se, until I was nominated for this award. But it opens with a terrible crime! Someone had sabotaged Stunt's dad's motorbike at the Stoked Circus and now he was lying in a coma" (in SinC "15th Davitt" 12).

This breadth of eligibility is not always easy on the judges, as Sullivan points out (Sullivan "Interview"):

You have to compare totally different sort of books. And it was tricky, it was difficult. Usually the thrillers have a slight edge because they're more obviously crime, but that doesn't necessarily mean they are going to win. So it is a difficult thing to do. Obviously what you're hoping for is a beautifully written classic thriller... You didn't always get it.

PUBLIC AND INDUSTRY RECOGNITION

All stages of the awards process provide opportunity for promotion of Australian women's crime writing, from calls for entries to announcement of winners.

The longlists, shortlists and winners' lists provide particular focus on books and writers. Longlists are publicised through media releases to mainstream and specialised periodicals (see for example SinC "Getting Away"). There is also exposure on the Sisters in Crime website (see for example SinC "Davitt Awards"). The announcement of shortlists and of winners, also through media releases and web copy, provides further recognition and exposure, of value to both individual writers and to the publishing business more generally, according to former Davitts judge and Sisters' treasurer Maggie Baron (see for example SinC "Long Shortlist"; Baron and Crabtree). The Davitts Awards ceremony, an annual

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event to announce the winners, provides exposure to a limited audience for all nominated books but in particular for shortlisted and winning books. The ceremony guest list usually includes Sisters in Crime members, writers, publishers and sponsors (see for example SinC "16th Davitt").

MAINSTREAM MEDIA ATTENTION

The Davitt Awards receive media attention in national and local media outlets, such as the book review sections of major dailies including *The Age*, *The Herald Sun* and *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Shute "Invitation to Enter"; see for example Steger). Media interest arises from the Sisters' press releases but also from direct contact with journalists and writers (Sullivan "Interview"). Articles focus in the main on category winners, often including interviews with authors.

Regional and local newspapers and radio feature articles on local winners and winning books (see for example *Melbourne Observer*; *Riverine Herald*). In the category of non-fiction, where journalists predominate as authors, the stables in which the journalists work frequently publish articles featuring their own writers (see for example *Women's Weekly*).

INDUSTRY RECOGNITION AND PROMOTION

Publisher responsiveness indicates that the award is now better recognised within the publishing industry (Shute in Shute and Cameron):

In the old days you'd have to beg and plead and harangue the publishers to enter. But now they contact you at the beginning of the year and say, 'When are the Davitts opening?' This year [2018], in particular, comparatively speaking, it was relatively easy to organise over a hundred books to go to six judges.

Shortlisting and wins within the awards are used by publishers to promote writers as 'award winning'. Awards are consistently mentioned in online marketing on publishers' websites. See for example references to Leigh Redhead on the Allen & Unwin website and to Sulari Gentill's *A Decline in Prophets* on the Pantera Press website (Allen & Unwin; Pantera Press). Publishers also increasingly recognise winning authors and books on social media. For example, see Echo Publishing's tweet on Emma Viskic's 2018 adult novel win for *And Fire Came Down* and Pan Macmillan Australia's tweet on Jane Harper's Readers' Choice win for *Force of Nature* in the same year (see in McDuling).

The awards also allow publishers and authors to print award medallions to stick on the cover of shortlisted or winning books – or to add award details to reprints of books. This is certainly an aim of the awards (Shute "Are You Coming"). Sisters in Crime does not provide the stickers for use by publishers (Shute and Cameron). However, the uptake of these options has been limited, in part due to the tight marketing and promotions budgets of both large and small publishers (with obvious exceptions, like those provided for authors such as Jane Harper (Pan Macmillan Australia) and Liane Moriarty (Penguin Books), and in part due to small print runs due the limited Australian market (Turnbull in SinC "18th Davitt" 5). Where republication does occur, the Davitt win may not be included. A reprint of Jane Harper's *The Dry*, for example, includes insignia for other more prestigious wins, including the 2017 Australian Book of the Year (Fiction) and the 2017 UK Crime Writers' Association Gold Dagger (Crime Novel), but not the Davitt (J. Harper "The Dry: Jane Harper").

Authors' recognition of the award was low early on but has grown (Shute in Shute and Cameron): 'The authors really take notice of it in a way they didn't used to when it was first set up, which is totally understandable because we didn't have any runs on the board.' Following success, authors consistently use their achievement for self-promotion, most commonly on websites, in other social media such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, and to publicise book tours and launches – having the opportunity to call themselves 'award-winning authors' (see for example Morwood "Carolyn Morwood: Crime Writer"; Viskic). The 2006 Best Adult Novel winner, Heather Rose, said she regarded winning the Davitt as an important and welcome achievement, but its real impact came when she won the Stella

Prize in 2017 for *The Museum of Modern Love* (a work of literary fiction). Then, the true value was that she could claim she was 'a multi-award winner' (Rose "Interview").

Broader industry recognition of the awards and of women's crime writing is evident in specialised trade publications, online sites and bookshop newsletters such as *Books+Publishing*, Booktopia, Crimespace, Write On, Readings (a Melbourne bookshop) and *Publishers Weekly* (see for example *Books+Publishing* "Davitt Awards 2017"; McDuling). Writers' centres publicise and celebrate the awards, authors and books as do industry bodies such as Reading Australia, a body created by the Copyright Agency (see for example Queensland Writers Centre; Reading Australia). In addition, library sites pick up news of the awards and publish this to their members, with some potential spin-off in sales to libraries and recommendations to readers by librarians (ALIA).

There is little evidence at this stage to conclude that the Davitts have achieved greater success for women in other literary awards, including the Ned Kelly Awards. In speaking of the greater success in recent Miles Franklin Awards, former Stella Prize executive director Aviva Tuffield said, "We do like to take some credit although we can't prove any causality" (cited in Dore). Sisters in Crime might well like to argue the same. And they may well have a case. Women have won three of the last seven Ned Kelly Awards for the Best Crime Novel and were awarded two of the three Ned Kelly category awards in 2018. Significantly, in 2016 the Ned Kelly Lifetime Achievement Award was awarded by a unanimous committee decision to Carmel Shute (Crabtree in Baron and Crabtree). However, without further investigation no link between the Davitts and the rise in female winners of the Ned Kelly Awards can be established. This offers opportunity for further research.

PUBLICATION AND SALES

The Sisters argue that Australian publishers have historically shown a lack of support for local crime writers, both in terms of publication and marketing budgets (Beard). Shute attributes this to cultural cringe, arguing that Australian publishing houses preferred to promote overseas writers rather accepting the risks inherent in publishing local writers (cited in Van 6).

The Sisters claim some success in turning around publisher attitudes. In 2003, in light of the growth in Davitt entries, they suggested that publishers were starting to acknowledge there was a local market for local women crime writers (Shute "Modus 2003" 1). Successes cited include Kathryn Fox, Janet Goodall and Leigh Redhead who had signed with mainstream publishers (Shute "Modus 2004", 1). The Sisters have continued to mount this argument during the awards' 18-year history, stating in 2015 for example: "The Davitts have persuaded Australian publishers to risk publishing crime books by Australian women, instead of just importing the latest blockbusters. It's a gamble that has well and truly paid off" (Horwood cited in SinC "Shortlist for 15th Davitts" 2). In 2018, Lindy Cameron made the claim even more robustly (cited in On):

Back in 2001, Kerry Greenwood joked that Australian publishers only published women crime writers to keep them a secret... But we persisted and since then hundreds of fictional characters have walked the mean streets, traipsed the paddocks and fought the good fight while being relentlessly stalked by an organisation dedicated to uncovering and promoting the truth. And the truth is Aussie women crime writers have been smashing the genre since the get-go.'

While there has been a rise in the number of women published in the genre since 2000 (Knight *Australian Crime* 11), there is no clear evidence that the Davitts have increased either the publication or sales of books by Australian women crime writers – although anecdotally some authors see the link. Young adult novel winner for *Evil Genius* (number one in her Genius series), Catherine Jinks, felt that her 2006 win would have positive spin-offs in terms of sales (in SinC "16th Davitt" 4): 'I rushed to tell [my US publisher Harcourt] that *Evil Genius* can now be described as an "award-winning novel". That always looks good on a press release. And I'm grateful to Sisters in Crime for the perfect timing of this

announcement, because Americans seem to love awards'. However, Gabrielle Lord, joint winner of the 2003 Best Adult Novel for *Baby Did a Bad, Bad Thing*, is one author who does not equate winning with sales (in Van 6). Claims around greater publisher interest appear to be somewhat at odds with the re-inclusion of self-published books in the Davitts Awards in 2018 which was predicated on the view that many good writers and good books were still not finding traditional publishers. Any impact on publication or sales offers the opportunity for further research.

A COMMUNITY AND FRAMEWORK OF SUPPORT

Perhaps the real strength of the Davitt Awards is their existence within the overall framework of support, of a community of interest, provided by Sisters in Crime Australia over 28 years of largely volunteer work. The Sisters have, in the words of Stephen Knight, 'encouraged and publicised women crime writers, with remarkable success' (Knight *Australian Crime* 201). The success of the Davitts is intertwined with the broader activities and ethos of the organisation, namely its social aspects, its skills development and networking events, its promotion of writers and writing, and its long-term commitment to authors and Australian crime-writing by women, as attested to by observers and crime writers themselves (Sullivan "Interview").

The organisation's methods of operation and activities are rooted in feminism (Shute "Interview 2017"), associated with the collectives of the 1970s and more recent structured feminist organisations, typified by consensual and participatory decision-making, empowerment, democratic structures, debate, education and skills development, mutual support, and a political agenda to advance the rights of women (Bordt 133-34; Ferree and Martin 5). It is an organisation that both sustains women and is sustained by them (Ferree and Martin 4).

Co-convenor Lindy Cameron recognises the role of the broader activities of the Sisters (Shute and Cameron):

I think Sisters in Crime had an impact on [quality], not specifically the Davitts. I think the Davitts is our way of recognising that change. If it's had any effect on the quality of writing, it's everything else that we've done as an organisation, in encouraging it, in promoting it, in lifting where we can the standard, in having authors up there with a fabulous book to talk about, so that a potential author in the audience reads that books and goes, 'Wow, that's what I want to be like' or 'I want to be better than that person'.

For Carmel Shute, a quintessential part of the Sisters' work are the regular events that 'develop the intellectual discussion of what crime writing is, what it can do, what it should be saying, what is it saying, what readers want... [this] trains up the writers' (Shute and Cameron).

Members confirm the impact of the opportunities provided by the organisation such as conferences like the SheKilda events and seminars with criminal justice experts such as lawyers, judges and forensic scientists (Liz Porter cited in SinC "12th Davitt"). Kerry Greenwood, on winning the Lifetime Achievement Award in 2013, emphasised the role of Sisters in Crime in supporting new and established talent (in SinC "Women Making Waves" 3):

Without the support of Sisters in Crime, who truly are sisters in the sense that Sisterhood is Powerful, many female crime writers would not have been encouraged to continue and we would have missed out on many fine books. Not to mention those who have got their start by venting their fury in the Scarlet Stiletto crime writing awards.

Both members and writers affirm the role of the Stiletto in writer development. Since their establishment in 1994, a total of 3,471 stories have been entered into the competition, indicating a significant number of women writing crime over the 25 years. The awards have been the springboard for the publication of numerous crime authors in book form and for furthering authors' careers. Twenty-

four winners, in various categories, have subsequently had novels published (SinC "Scarlet Stiletto"). Children's author Ellie Marney claimed the Sisters had given her first break as a writer, through the Scarlet Stiletto (cited in SinC "14th Davitt" 18). Cate Kennedy, known for fiction other than crime, is a two-time winner of the Stiletto. These wins, in her words, 'set me on a path which hasn't petered out yet' (in Savage). The impact of the Stiletto offers a significant subject for further research.

Importantly, this broader framework of support has occurred within the context of the joint pleasure of 'a community who enjoy crime, have a good old dinner and a yack' (Sullivan "Interview") and who foster a culture of encouragement and support. Shivaun Plozza, winner of the 2017 Best Young Adult Novel for the novel *Frankie*, described Sisters in Crime as a 'supportive, proactive and progressive organisation' (in SinC "17th Davitt" 15). In a similar observation, YA Erskine, on accepting the Readers' Choice Award in 2012, said (SinC "12th Davitt"):

I, like many other writers, was kind of floating out in the wilderness – such is the nature of writing – very much a solitary occupation. But then I was introduced to these guys and soon found a wonderful network of people who are always there to entertain, critique, support and mentor. They do such an amazing job – particularly in coordinating events such as this which allow the solitary writer an avenue to connect with other like-minded people...

Then emerging writer Malla Nunn, 2009 Best Adult Novel winner for *A Beautiful Place to Die*, put it simply – the support from Sisters in Crime made her 'maiden journey into the world of crime fiction an absolute joy' (cited in SinC "2009 Davitt" 15).

CONCLUSION

It is clear that the Davitt Awards have provided greater recognition and increased opportunities for promotion for Australian women crime writers through media, industry and public attention. While the direct impact of the awards on quality cannot be measured, judges of the award have demonstrated a commitment to quality writing. The acceptance of a range of entries into the awards suggests a broad and broadening conception of the crime genre. Further research is required to examine any direct impact the Davitts Awards have had on publishers' decisions to publish women, on reviewers to review them, and on the Ned Kelly Awards to recognise them.

The awards' achievements sit within the framework of a community which actively creates opportunities for writers – and others interested in crime writing – to develop skills, network, promote their work and receive recognition and validation, as writers themselves attest. Sulari Gentill, author of the Rowland Sinclair series, said on receiving the 2012 Best Adult Novel award, "To receive any literary award is gratifying, but when the award is the Davitt – for which writers would not only kill, but in fact must kill in order to be eligible – it is a truly extraordinary honour" (*ArtsHub*).

But the final word must go to RA Spratt who, in accepting her 2016 Davitt for the Best Children's Novel for *Under Suspicion*, held up her wooden and perspex Davitts trophy and declared to the gathering at the annual Davitt Awards dinner (cited in SinC "16th Davitt" 15-16):

...the main reason I'm so happy to finally have won an award, an actual physical award that I can hold in my hand, is that it is such a lovely *blunt instrument*. And no-one can appreciate more than the women (and token men) here tonight in this room, the potential of a *really interesting blunt instrument*.

CHAPTER 4: WOUNDING MASCULINITY IN AUSTRALIAN CRIME FICTION: INFLUENCE OF THE DAVITT AWARDS

Crime fiction, it has been argued, is one of the most masculine of literary genres, vehemently masculine according to leading women crime writers such as Sara Paretsky and Patricia Cornwell (Bradford 825). This masculinity is evident in, among other things, the depiction of the genre's lead characters. In the words of American crime writer Raymond Chandler (cited in Porter 97):

Down these mean streets a man must go who is not himself mean, who is neither tarnished nor afraid. The detective in this kind of story must be such a man. He is the hero, he is everything. He must be a complete man and a common man and yet an unusual man. He must be, to use a rather weathered phrase, a man of honour...

Chandler's man of the mean streets has been a mainstay of crime fiction since the emergence of American hardboiled crime fiction in the 1930s (Bradford 128). The often solo male detective, however, pre-dates the depiction of Chandler's detective. The earliest detective novels, from the mid-nineteenth century, source much of their inspiration from the 1842 establishment of London's Metropolitan Police Force. Their protagonists were typically modelled on the officers employed in this new male-only enclave (Kayman 44), although some female detectives emerged in literature before they were appointed in real life as police officers or lawyers (Gouthro 35).

The centrality of the detective has persisted in modern crime fiction in the form of the 'crime solver' (often referred to generically as the 'detective'). He is most often a man (despite the presence of notable female heroes such as Agatha Christie's Miss Marple, Sara Paretsky's V I Warshawski, Sue Grafton's Kinsey Millhone, and Australian Jennifer Rowe's Tessa Vance, to name just a few). The crime solver comes in a variety of guises – detective, police officer, private eye (PI), lawyer, forensic scientist, psychological profiler, or amateur sleuth. Despite the crime solver's many vocations, he or she has one main purpose: to undertake, as the novel's "principle agent of coherence", the process of detection, that is, to solve the crime (Kayman 44).

In its most traditional form, then, crime fiction is driven largely by plot, such as the three-part structure of crime-detection-solution, the clue-puzzle narrative, or the pre- and post-crime revelations of commission and detection (Knight "The Golden Age" 77; Maitland "Why Crime?" 13). Red herrings, false leads and fake culprits are a critical part of the mix. While character development occurs, as in exemplars such as Peter Temple's *Truth* (the first crime novel to win the Miles Franklin Award) (Temple *Truth*), it is rarely allowed to detract from the genre's essential requirements to solve the central puzzle and, more often than not, mete out justice.

A less frequent but persistent sub-genre in Australian crime fiction is the 'criminal saga' in which the criminal is the central character. These novels arise from the Australian readiness to valorise the criminal (Knight *Continent of Mystery* 49-50). (The title of the Ned Kelly Awards, named for one of Australia's most notorious and arguably beloved bushrangers, is a case in point.) While there may be some exploration of character, the resolution of the crime is rarely the central aim of these stories. Instead, it is the planning and commission of crime and the evasion of justice that drive the narratives, such as in Garry Disher's Wyatt series and Peter Doyle's Billy Glasheen novels (Disher *Wyatt*; Doyle *Amaze Your Friends*; Doyle *Get Rich Quick*).

For both the crime solver and the criminal a commitment to solution or escape requires singleness and single-mindedness. Expertise lies in "solitary brilliance" (Priestman 5). The protagonist must be driven and must be free to pursue resolution without distraction. Personal life is rarely central to the story. It is more often a brief stopover in an understocked home and a quick shag with whichever sassy, long-legged blonde (or tall and handsome brunette) is part of the latest relational dysfunction. Encumbrance

by family, children or live-in partners is not the norm. Home and personal life are wayside stops in a narrative driven by external action. Family relations and domestic life are disruptions to ratiocination (reasoning to solve the crime) and the heroic nature of the chase and the chaser (Schutt 59, 64). Cynthia Crossen notes (Crossen):

There's no occupation more quintessentially macho than that of private detective. The classic male detective is a hard-bitten loner who fires words like small-calibre bullets. He has an infuriating (and admirable) disregard for what people think of him. He almost never flashes back to intimate moments with his mommy, and he never ever dithers over what to wear to nail a perp. He doesn't actually like killing, but if he has to, he has to. He certainly never acts like a baby about it.

As for family ties, so for the softer emotions. Sympathy and sentiment are at best distractions and are at worst weaknesses. Reason and aggression save the day. The interior life of the protagonist is of interest only insofar as it drives the story – it is rarely a matter for concern in and of itself.

Crime fiction in its most traditional form is therefore the triumph of reason over emotion, solitariness over relationship, externality over interiority, and aggression and toughness over softness. It is the triumph of dominant masculinity over femininity, other masculinities and other gendered identities. It exemplifies Raewyn Connell's hegemonic masculinity, that is of a pattern of gender practice and relations that – if not normative – creates dominance over women and impacts on both culture and personality (Connell 71). It is a masculinity which embodies 'the currently most honoured way of being a man' (Connell and Messerschmidt 832). It is exemplified by Australian crime fiction heroes such as Peter Corris's hard-drinking, tough-guy, relationship-incompetent Cliff Hardy and Peter Doyle's scamming, drug-taking Billy Glasheen, both protagonists in Ned Kelly award-winning books (Corris; Doyle *Amaze Your Friends*).

The aim of *Sisters in Crime* in establishing the Davitts was to create recognition for female crime writers – not explicitly to change this very masculine nature of the genre itself. However, an examination of the Davitts' winning adult novels suggests that the Davitts have also produced an important side effect— they have contributed to the wounding of the masculinity of crime fiction and made spaces for a more diverse range of protagonists. In arguing this, I will compare three aspects of the Ned Kelly Best Fiction and the Davitt Best Adult Novel protagonists: their gender, their occupation, and their family status.

GENDER OF CRIME FICTION PROTAGONISTS

The Ned Kelly Awards' Best Fiction protagonists are overwhelmingly male. Of the 25 winning books from 1995 to 2017, all feature male protagonists. Of these, 22 (88 per cent) have only male protagonists, 19 (76 per cent) of these featuring solo males and three (12 per cent) in joint male partnerships. Only three of the 25 novels (12 per cent) feature female protagonists and these must share the pages with their male counterparts. There are no all-female teams and no solo females.

Across the 25 novels there are a total of 32 protagonists. Of these, 29 (91 per cent) are male and three (9 per cent) are female. A breakdown of the gender of the protagonists and their status as superior characters or otherwise in the Ned Kelly Best Adult Novel awards is shown in Figures 9 and 10.

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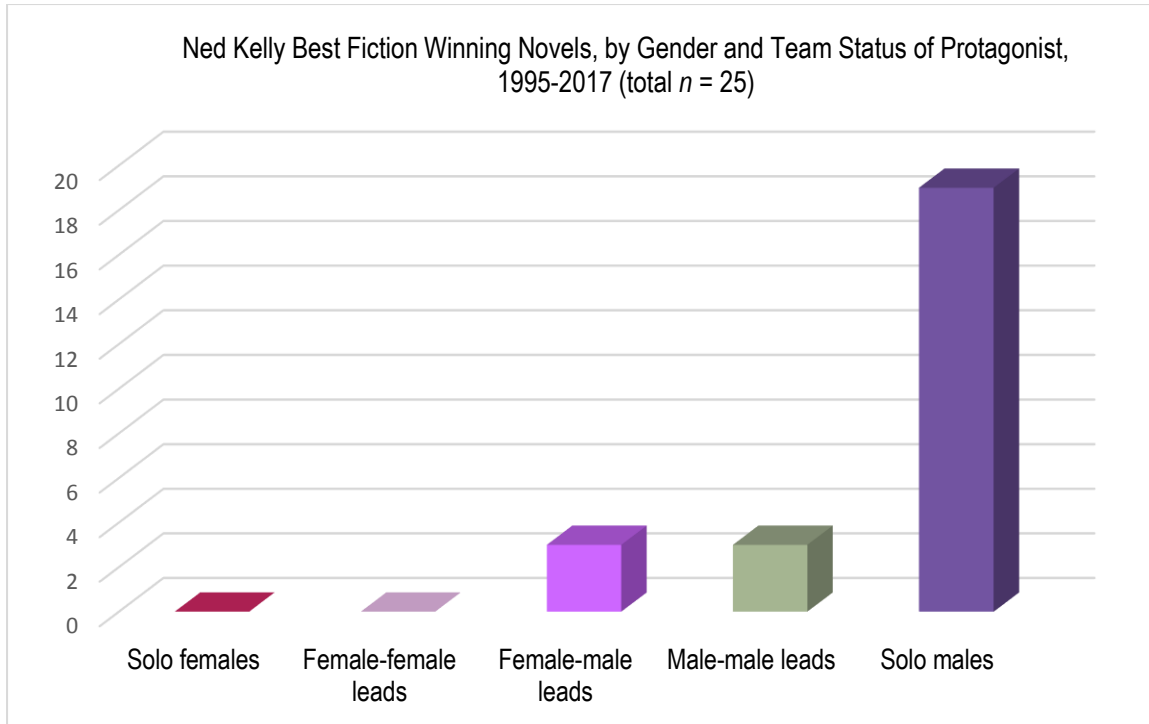


Figure 9: Ned Kelly Best Fiction Winning Novels, by Gender and Team Status of Protagonist, 1995-2017

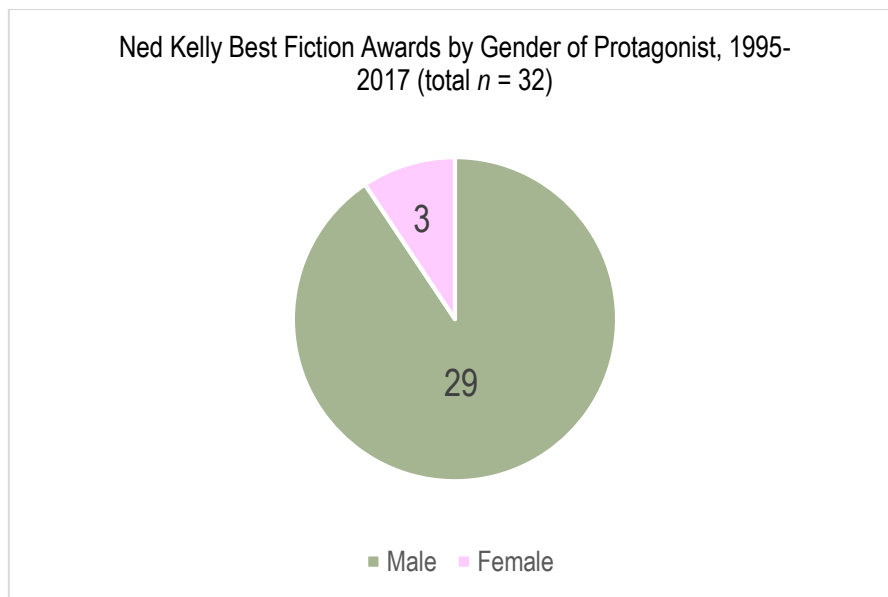


Figure 10: Ned Kelly Best Fiction Awards by Gender of Protagonist, 1995-2017

The three books featuring female protagonists are spread over the awards' history: Barry Maitland's 1996 winner *The Malcontenta*, Garry Disher's 2007 winner *Chain of Evidence*, and Candice Fox's 2015 winner *Eden* (in which there is one female and two male protagonists). Maitland's Kathy Kolla and Disher's Ellen Destry are police officers whose partners are male officers of more senior rank. Despite their lower rank, they have agency within the narrative. It is Kolla's determination to solve a suspicious death in *The Malcontenta* that drives the narrative (Maitland *The Malcontenta*). In *Chain of Evidence*, Destry finds herself leading an investigation into a missing child while her boss Hal Challis is in South Australia waiting for his father to die (Disher *Chain of Evidence*). Only Fox's police officer Eden Archer

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is equal in both rank (with her detective partner, Frank Bennett) and agency within the narrative. The story moves between Archer, Bennett and Archer's criminal father Hades. Each offers a critical part of a complex puzzle of disappearances, child abuse and sexual predation (C. Fox).

While there is a strong association between an award that is dominated by men and books that are dominated by male protagonists, a direct correlation cannot be drawn from author to character. Two of the three books written by women have male protagonists: Gabrielle Lord's 2002 winner *Death Delights* and J C Burke's 2012 winner *Pig Boy* (Lord *Death Delights*; Burke). Similarly, two of the female protagonists were written by men (Maitland and Disher). What is consistent, however, is the seniority of male police officers over their female subordinates.

The Davitts' Best Adult Novel winners show a more distributed gender pattern in relation to their protagonists. Of the 18 winning novels from 2001 to 2017, 12 (67 per cent) have female protagonists, with ten (56 per cent) having only female protagonists (solo and more than one) and two (11 per cent) with joint female and male leads. Eight (45 per cent) of the winners have male protagonists, with one third (six) featuring solo males. There are no all-male partnerships.

Twenty-four protagonists exist across the 18 winning novels. Of these, 16 (67 per cent) are women and eight (33 per cent) are men. The gender breakdown of protagonists among the Davitt Awards Best Adult Novel winners is shown in Figures 11 and 12.

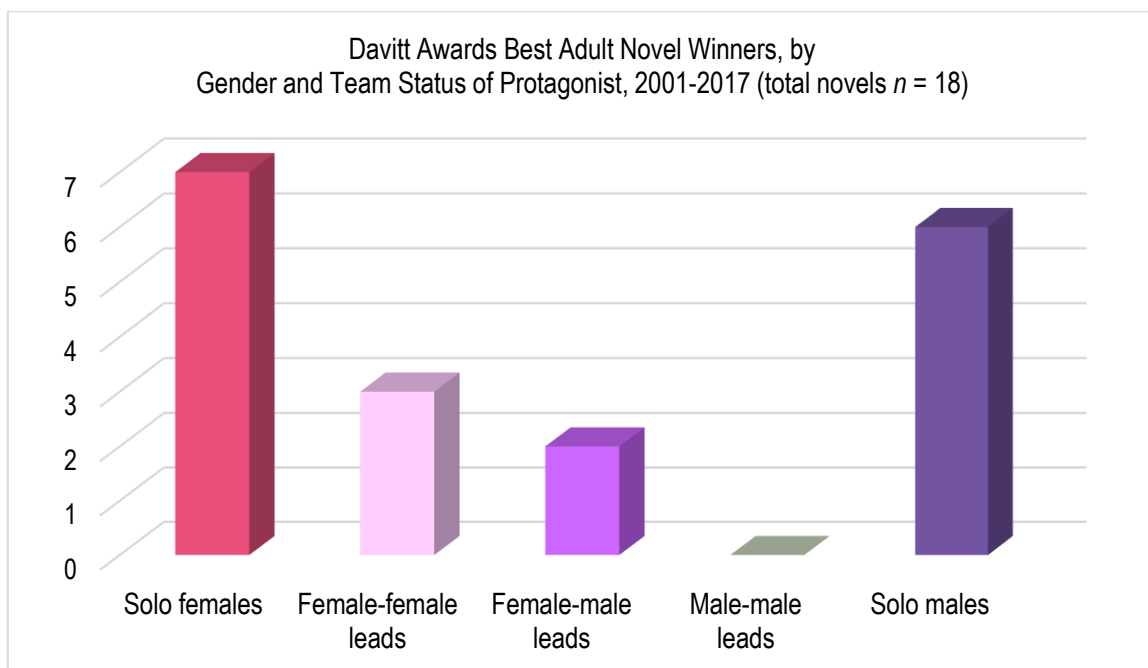


Figure 11: Davitt Awards Best Adult Novel Winners, by Gender and Team Status of Protagonist, 2001-2017

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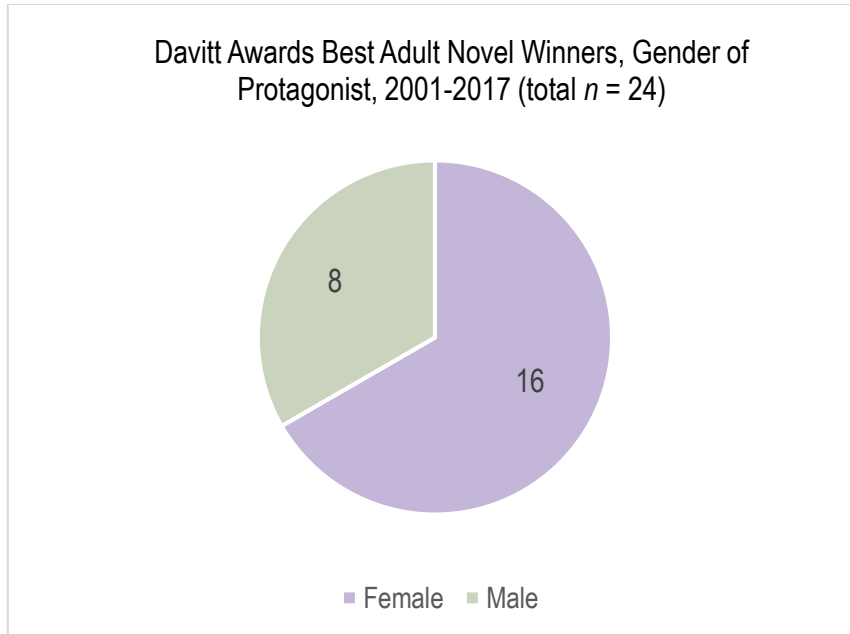


Figure 12: Davitt Awards Best Adult Novel Winners, Gender of Protagonist, 2001-2017

As the comparison in Table 8 and figure 13 demonstrates, the Davitts exhibit a significant shift to the inclusion of female protagonists (with females in the majority) and a greater gender balance overall.

Table 8: Ned Kelly Best Fiction and Davitt Awards Best Adult Novel Winners, by Gender of Protagonist

Ned Kelly Best Fiction Winners (1995-2017) and Davitt Awards Best Adult Novel Winners (2001-2017), by Gender of Protagonist (No.)		
Gender	Davitts	Ned Kelly
Solo females	7	0
Female-female teams	3	0
Female-male teams	2	3
Male-male leads	0	3
Solo males	6	19
TOTAL	18	25

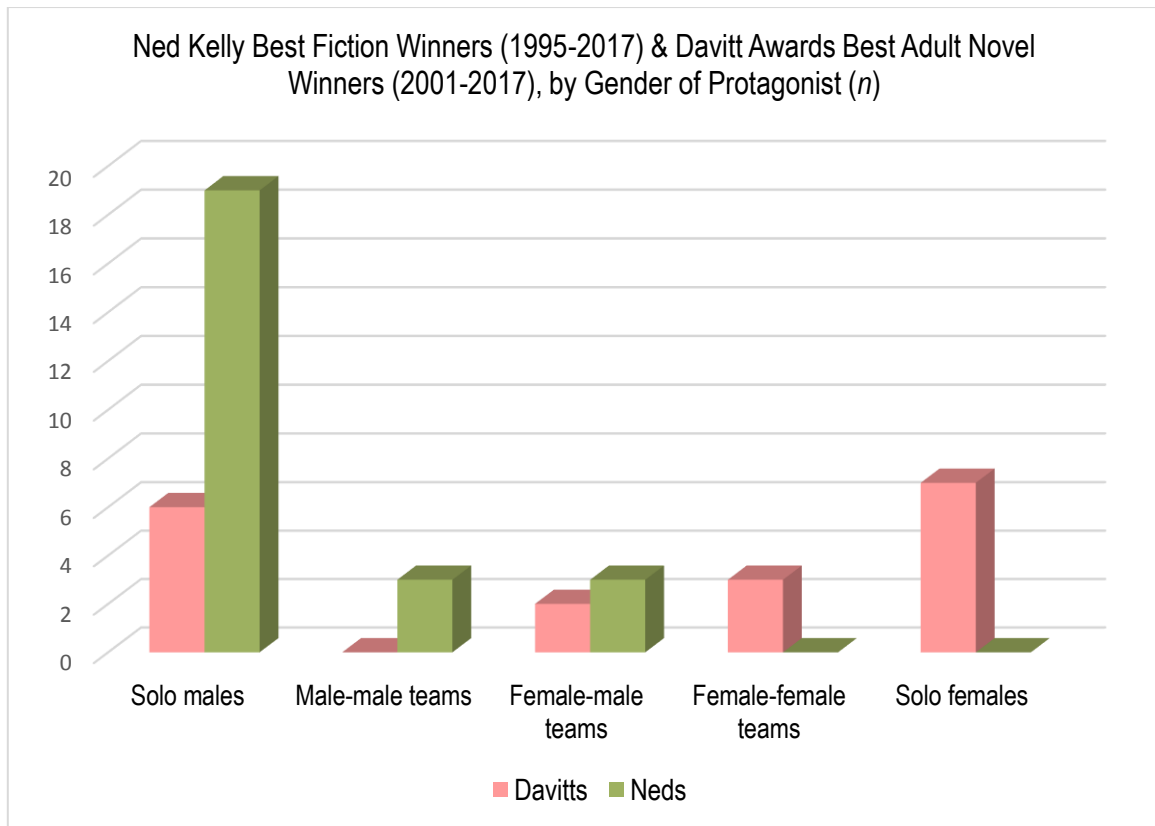


Figure 13: Ned Kelly Best Fiction and Davitts Best Adult Novel Winners, by Gender of Protagonist

At the same time, the more traditional motif of the solitary protagonist persists within the Davitts, with 13 of the 18 winning novels featuring solo protagonists. Women protagonists take on this solo role in seven (39 per cent) of the novels, such as in Caroline Shaw's 2001 winner *Eye to Eye*, Gabrielle Lord's 2003 winner *Baby Did a Bad, Bad Thing*, and Katherine Howell's 2011 winner *Cold Justice* (Shaw *Eye to Eye*; Lord *Baby Did a Bad Bad Thing*; Howell *Cold Justice*). The Ned Kelly Awards, by contrast, recognise no solo females.

Of the two Davitts' books with mixed gender lead characters, only Alex Palmer's 2003 joint winner *Blood Redemption* features a police team. The book follows an investigation by a junior female, Detective Constable Grace Riordan, and her senior partner, Detective Inspector Paul Harrigan (Palmer). By contrast, Janette Turner Hospital's 2004 winning novel, *Due Preparations for the Plague*, steps outside the detective genre. Its two leading characters, housepainter Lowell Hawthorne and university student Samantha Raleigh, share equal stage in this terrorism sub-genre (Hospital).

The all-female-protagonist books, Kathryn Fox's 2005 winner *Malicious Intent*, Katherine Howell's 2008 winner *Frantic* and Liane Moriarty's 2015 winner *Big Little Lies*, do not establish a work-based hierarchy: the lead characters come from separate workplaces and professions (K. Fox; Howell *Frantic*; Moriarty). *Big Little Lies* explores a different sort of hierarchy through the experiences of one of the novel's three protagonists, Jane. A single mother and poorer than the middle-class families in the coastal New South Wales town in which the novel is set, she is made to keenly feel the pinch of social, school-ground and class hierarchy (Moriarty).

GENDER, OCCUPATION AND THE PROTAGONIST

The 32 protagonists of the Ned Kelly Best Fiction winners are almost exclusively drawn from the criminal justice system, with 24 (75 per cent) working in law enforcement (16 as police officers, four as criminological experts, and four as private eyes). A further six (19 per cent) come from the other side of the criminal justice fence, ie. they are criminals. All the criminals are male. The three female protagonists are police officers. In total, 30 (94 per cent) of the 32 protagonists are from one side or the other of the criminal justice system.

The two remaining protagonists within the 'Other' category are Shane Maloney's hero Murray Whelan, a Victorian Labor Party adviser and later member of parliament (1997 winner *The Brush-off*), and J C Burke's teenage hero, the pig shooter Damon Styles (2012 winner *Pig Boy*). Whelan assumes the traditional role of amateur (and bumbling) sleuth, but does so in the cause of his beloved party (Maloney *The Brush-Off*). Only Styles is not a solver of crimes. He is a youth caught up in the abuses of home life and the violence of adults, and stands accused of a crime he did not commit (Burke).

The professional status of the Ned Kelly protagonists, broken down by gender, is shown in Figure 14.

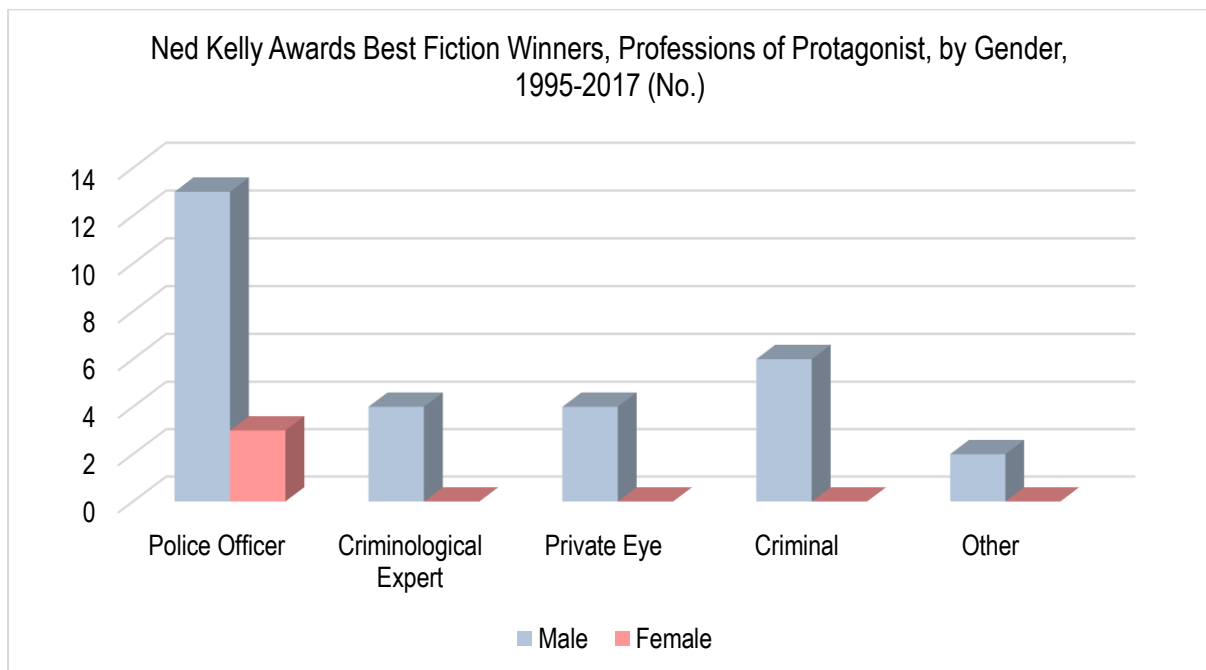


Figure 14: Ned Kelly Best Fiction Winners, Professions of Protagonist, by Gender, 1995-2017

The protagonists of the Davitts' Best Adult Novel winners exhibit a much more diverse range of occupations, with an almost even split between those from within the criminal justice system and those from outside. Of the total 24 protagonists, 13 (54 per cent) are from within the criminal justice system (seven police officers, two criminological experts, and four private eyes). None are criminals. Eleven (46 per cent) are from the 'Other' category. Female and male protagonists are distributed across all the categories.

The 'Other' group encompasses a range of occupations, including, for the female characters, a professional cricketer, a paramedic, a journalist, a horse trainer, a university student, a part-time designer and mother, a part-time accountant and mother, and a fulltime mother and, for the male characters, an artist, a housepainter, and a man of mystery. As Sue Turnbull, a former national convener of Sisters in Crime, claims, "When the Davitt awards were inaugurated 14 years ago, the

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heroes of women's crime books were often PIs. Now they're as likely to be cafe owners, yarn-bombers, financial investigators or forensic physicians" (Sisters in Crime Australia "Promiscuous Hybridity"). The professional status of the Davitt protagonists, broken down by gender, is demonstrated in Figure 15.

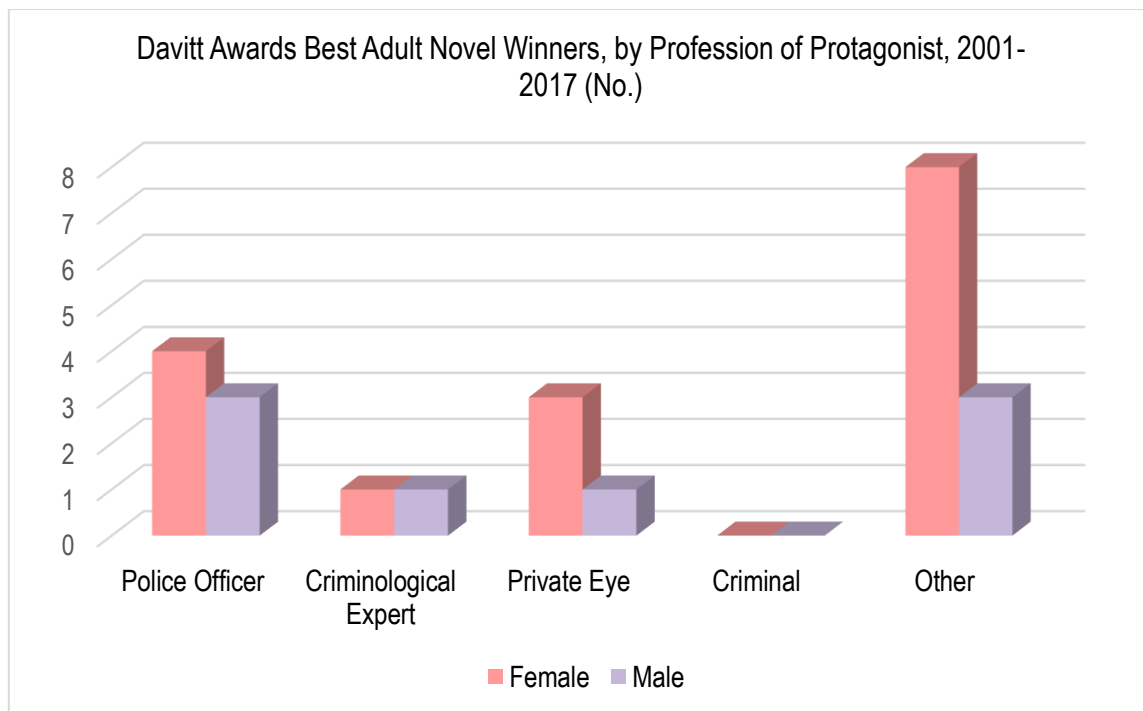


Figure 15: Davitt Awards Best Novel Winners, by Profession of Protagonist, 2001-2017

In keeping with the puzzle format of the crime genre, a number of these 'Other' characters perform the role of amateur sleuth, including cricketer Marlo Shaw (Carolyn Morwood's 2002 winner *A Simple Death*), gentleman artist Rowland Sinclair (Sulari Gentill's 2012 winner *A Decline in Prophets*), freelance journalist Scout Davis (Maggie Groff's 2013 winner *Mad Men, Bad Girls and the Guerrilla Knitters Institute*), and paramedic Sophie Phillips (*Frantic*) (Morwood *A Simple Death*; Gentill; Groff; Howell *Frantic*). Phillips is also the victim of crime: her husband has been shot and her son kidnapped. It is this that sets her on the path of finding the perpetrators, a quest that is neither a professional duty nor an interesting pastime (Howell *Frantic*).

As a victim she is not alone among the Davitts' protagonists. The two leads in *Due Preparations for the Plague* are brought together as victims of the hijacking of a Paris to New York flight (Hospital). In *Big Little Lies*, mother (and non-practising lawyer) Celeste is the victim of domestic violence while her friend, part-time accountant Jane, is the subject not of a criminal act but of ridicule and sexual misuse (Moriarty).

Only in Honey Brown's thriller *Dark Horse* is the protagonist, horse trainer Sarah Lehman, also the perpetrator of the central crime. In a moment of extreme mental disturbance she kills her unfaithful husband, from whom she's separated, when he takes from her the one thing she has left, her beloved horse Tansy. It is an act she blanks from her memory. Brown does not valorise Lehman as a criminal, as in the criminal saga tradition, but explores the links between mental health, truth and the justice system (Brown).

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As Table 9 indicates, while the Ned Kelly protagonists are firmly entrenched in the criminal justice system, the Davitts' protagonists come from all walks of life, including those that make space for parenthood.

Table 9: Ned Kelly Best Fiction and Davitt Best Adult Novel Winners, by Profession of Protagonist

Ned Kelly Best Fiction Winners (1995-2017) and Davitt Awards Best Adult Novel Winners (2001-2017), by Profession of Protagonist (No.)		
<i>Profession</i>	<i>Davitts</i>	<i>Ned Kelly</i>
<i>Police officer</i>	7	16
<i>Criminological expert</i>	2	4
<i>Private eye</i>	4	4
<i>Criminal</i>	0	6
<i>Other</i>	11	2
TOTAL	24	32

The real-world criminal justice system is a sector dominated by men, both in terms of enforcement and criminality (AIC "Composition"; "Age and Gender"). In 2017, for example, only 22 per cent of sworn officers in the Australian Federal Police were women (Allen and Sibthorpe). At 30 June 2016, of the 38,839 people incarcerated in adult corrective facilities across Australia, 92 per cent were men (ABS). Given this and the early roots of the detective novel, it is perhaps unsurprising that male protagonists dominate within the classic detective or crime-solver genre. By contrast, the Davitts' broader range of occupations makes space for protagonists who are outside the justice system, whether they be women or men.

GENDER, FAMILY STATUS AND THE PROTAGONIST

There are any number of permutations of what constitutes 'family'. For the purpose of this paper, which seeks to examine the unencumbered nature of the crime-fiction protagonist, I have established four broad categories of family status: single (including divorced, separated and widowed), partnered, partnered with children, and non-partnered with children (single or formerly partnered). Within each of these there are of course nuances, various legal entities and the changing dynamics of family life.

Of the 32 Ned Kelly protagonists, 26 (81 per cent) are single, including all of the three females. Four are partnered with children (two with partnerships under stress) and two are non-partnered with children. Among the single men, three have former partners who are part of the narrative, to varying degrees. For example, for Detective Inspector Daniel Clement, the lead character of Dave Warner's 2016 winner *Before it Breaks*, the story springs from Clement's decision to follow his estranged wife to Broome so he can retain contact with his daughter Phoebe (Warner). The family status of Ned Kelly protagonists is shown in Figure 16.

JUST DESERTS

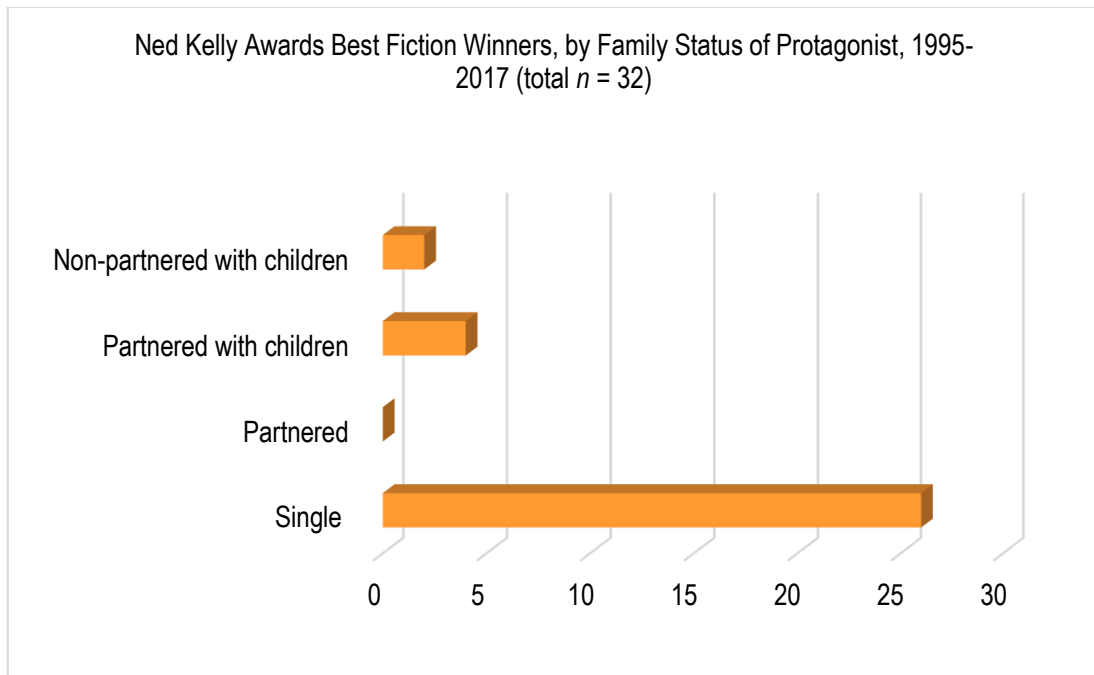


Figure 16: Ned Kelly Best Fiction Winners, by Family Status of Total Protagonists, 1995-2017

Of the 24 Davitts' protagonists, 18 (75 per cent) are single, four with former partners identified within the narrative. Three of the women are partnered with children and one is non-partnered with children. One woman and one man each have a partner. See Figure 17.

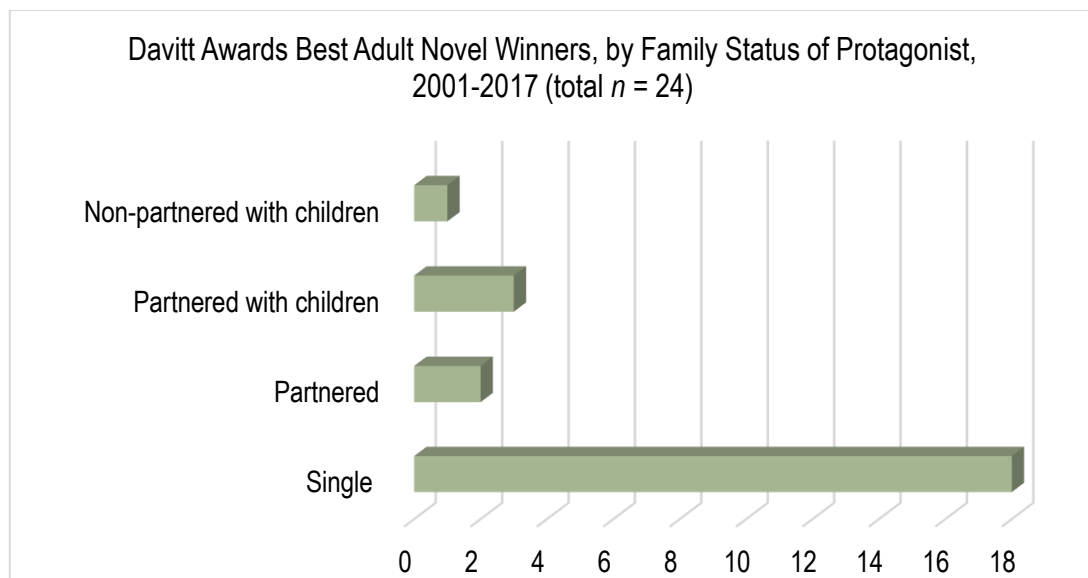


Figure 17: Davitt Awards Best Adult Novel Winners, by Family Status of Protagonist, 2001-2017

In Table 10 it becomes clear that, in relation to singleness, the Davitts' protagonists show a similar pattern to the Ned Kelly protagonists. Overwhelmingly, the lead characters are single and are free to pursue the crime puzzle.

Table 10: Ned Kelly Best Fiction and Davitts Best Adult Novel Winners, by Family Status of Protagonist

Table 10: Ned Kelly Best Fiction Winners (1995-2017) & Davitt Awards Best Adult Novel Winners (2001-2017), by Family Status of Protagonist (No.)		
	<i>Davitts</i>	<i>Ned Kelly</i>
<i>Single</i>	18	26
<i>Partnered</i>	2	0
<i>Partnered with children</i>	3	4
<i>Non-partnered with children</i>	1	2
TOTAL	24	32

For both the Ned Kelly and Davitt Awards, where children and families do exist (including those who are estranged), these are most often used as one of two plot mechanisms: to spur the protagonists into the story with little thought for the consequences or to act as targets of the increasing level of threat which is a mainstay of crime fiction. In this latter role, they are the ante that is upped.

Peter Temple's Jack Irish, for example, is flung into the world of bag-carrying and horserace-fixing following the brutal murder of his wife. (Temple won the Ned Kelly Award in 2001 and 2003 for two of his Jack Irish series novels, *Dead Point* and *White Dog* respectively (Temple *Dead Point*; Temple *White Dog*)). To protect the living, Katherine Howell's Sophie Phillips, normally a law-abiding paramedic, stalks the streets of Sydney and commits her own crimes in a desperate bid to find her abducted ten-month-old son (Howell *Frantic*). Heather Rose's Henry Kennedy in the Davitts' 2006 winner *The Butterfly Man* also must do everything to protect his partner Lili and her family. Yet the greatest threat to the ones he loves and their idyllic life on the slopes of Mount Wellington may be the secrets of his own past associated with the murder of Lord Lucan's nanny in London in 1974 (Rose *The Butterfly Man*).

FEMALE PROTAGONISTS DOING GENDER

The female protagonists of the Davitt adult fiction novels display a range of gender qualities, from the more traditionally feminine to the more traditionally masculine. They also demonstrate a breadth of social and emotional complexity in texts ranging from the domestic, relational and work-balance concerns more associated with 'women's literature' to what Deb Crabtree describes as 'some pretty tough, out-there, kick-arse writing from women' (Crabtree in Baron and Crabtree), the latter more often present in classic forms of the genre, such as private eye or police procedural novels.

The three lead characters of Moriarty's *Big Little Lies*, for example, exemplify more customary feminine qualities. The novel is not a classic whodunnit, even though a murder sits at its centre. It falls within the category of what I term 'mummy lit', ie it is built around school runs, baking disasters, step-families, husband travails, work-life balance and, importantly, female friendship. Madeline, Celeste and Jane live glossy, ordinary lives revolving around these concerns with family and children at the very centre. They are not hardboiled, hard-talking women, perhaps because this story sits outside the classic crime genre. Instead, they are party to the secrets of domestic and sexual violence hidden behind the veneer of middle Australia (Moriarty).

JUST DESERTS

Groff's Scout Davis, protagonist of *Mad Men*, *Bad Girls* and *the Guerrilla Knitters Institute*, is an investigative journalist whose formal assignment – investigating a cult – puts her in physical danger. Davis is the both-and protagonist, combining masculine and feminine attributes. She shows the resilience, toughness and persistence of the traditional generic detective that may include, but goes beyond, what Patricia Bruckmann calls talking trash and kicking butt (Bruckmann 161). Davis creates alliances to solve her central case, yet her mission is essentially solitary. She is sexually unfaithful, falling into bed with her partner's friend, the delectable local copper Rafe Kelly. At the same time, Davis is juggling support for her family, solving a mystery for her teacher sister, and providing a home for her nephew. Her most significant other is her cat Chairman Meow. And she partakes in the more traditionally feminine pastime of knitting, albeit in a secret group that yarn bombs local Byron Bay sites in the dead of night (Groff) .

Katherine Howell's Detective Ella Marconi, protagonist of *Frantic* and *Cold Justice*, displays the more classic hallmarks of fictional male detectives. According to Howell, Marconi is a character created unambiguously to fit into the genre. Howell felt that her original protagonist, a paramedic, could not carry the story, 'particularly when I wanted to write a series. A crime-solving paramedic? Pshaw! ... Then I hit upon the idea of having *two* central characters, one a paramedic, the other a police detective' (Howell "Frantic"). Marconi uncovers crimes through dogged, single-minded effort. She equates romantic love with control (Howell *Cold Justice* 208). Family is an obstruction to work (Howell *Frantic* 26):

Perhaps if Ella took a desk job in Traffic or in the courts she'd have time for a family. What her mother couldn't grasp was that Ella was happy with her life. She didn't need a man to make her feel complete. She had no desire for children. Going to work each morning, or night, or whenever her pager went off, and doing the job she'd looked forward to her whole life was plenty.

By assuming traditional masculine behaviour, Marconi operates relatively comfortably within the conservative police procedural sub-genre which enforces hierarchical gender roles. Within the narrative itself this allows her to succeed but also ensures she is a target of work-based sex discrimination.

Fox's *Eden*, interestingly a Ned Kelly rather than a Davitt winner, serves up a protagonist who steps even further away from the feminine. Detective Eden Archer is both emotionally complex and distant. Her partnership with Detective Frank Bennett doesn't run on trust, as Bennett explains, 'I liked to fool myself sometimes that Eden had a heart ... that she would at least have trouble killing me. Most of the time I wasn't so sure' (C. Fox 21). Bennett is right to be concerned. Archer breaks into the houses of sex-crime offenders to wreak violent justice on what she terms her 'night-time playmates'. It is not simply justice she seeks, but also satisfaction of her 'cravings' (C. Fox 61). She typifies an extreme version of the hard-boiled protagonist, one who moves outside the limitations of the justice system, but who also demonstrates sociopathic tendencies such as lack of conscience and minimal affect.

WOMEN WRITING AND READING WOMEN

This spectrum of feminine and masculine characteristics among female protagonists reflects a number of influences: the history of the genre, the fluid, genre-bending nature of crime fiction written by women, and social change, particularly the movement of women into the broader world of work. It also reflects the desires and experiences of women writers and readers.

Protagonists displaying more traditional feminine characteristics and life situations are likely to reflect the real lives of women, so that writer and reader alike can identify with their experiences – if not always with the crimes that are central to the narrative. These characters are a reaction against the emotionally stunted masculinist gum shoe (Sally Munt cited in Cole 137). They combine both the mundane and the mythical, escape and identification. Writer and reader identification is likely to be higher and the dangers and challenges – although unlikely – are not completely outside the realm of possibility. This hero is both the same as the reader and different. For the writer there is the opportunity to write what she knows and, in so doing, transform the genre.

More masculine protagonists drive plots that speed down the highway of ratiocination with few detours into personal life. For the female writer and reader, these protagonists are emblematic of escape. They have the 'masculine competence' that says it is possible to 'achieve some degree of mastery in a hostile world' (Horsley *Noir* 67). The protagonists' lives may be so unlikely as to be outside the realm of real experience – and hardly desirable given the dangers they pose – but they deliver fast-paced suspense, the demise of the bad guy, and the establishment of order out of chaos. For writers, the more masculine protagonist has the added value of appealing to both female and male crime readers.

Importantly, female protagonists across the spectrum appeal to women because they demonstrate agency. According to US crime writer JM Redman, these "women can be strong, they can be active, they can be assertive, they can be angry", which is empowering for both reader and writer (cited in Cole 25). In other words, women not only have role models that stand outside the stereotypes of domesticity and pliability, they also have power, often hard won. Women may be victims but they also have agency for good or ill as perpetrators and crime solvers. They do not have to rely on the dashing male hero to pull them from the train tracks. Another woman will do it for them or they will use their own teeth to break free from their bonds moments before the locomotive hits.

WOMEN WRITING MEN

While women writers have spearheaded the rise in female protagonists in crime fiction, as this study shows, they continue to write male protagonists in significant numbers. According to Jane Sullivan, there is a tradition of women writing convincingly in the male voice. She cites Emma Viskic, author of *Resurrection Bay*, who 'has a male hero, a guy who's deaf. She writes with a lot of understanding of the male psyche. I would not be surprised to find that a man had written those books of hers' (Sullivan "Interview"). Conversely, male writers overwhelmingly confine themselves to male protagonists or to lower status females who share the stage with males. The persistence of male protagonists reduces female agency in the genre, both for writer and reader. It suggests that men are both the keepers of justice and the perpetrators of crime, reinforcing the role of women as victims or subordinate partners.

Although tentative, some initial suggestions can be made about the ongoing appeal of male protagonists for women writers and readers. While women protagonists have existed within the crime genre from its early days (Bradford 12), the inclusion of women in policing (and the world of work more generally) has been slower, with men continuing to dominate in crime-related work. As far as fiction mirrors fact, the predominance of male protagonists in detective fiction should therefore not be surprising. The trend may also represent the triumph of the American hardboiled tradition over the more sedate Golden Age English tradition, especially with the dominance of film and television which

requires rapid-fire and often violent visuals and plots (with the notable exception of some BBC productions). In addition, despite the creation of Nancy Drew girl detective in 1930 and the arrival of the female private eye in the 1970s and 1980s (Cole 24), women writers continue to reproduce the male crime heroes they have encountered in the books of male writers. Women writers and readers may also shy away from female protagonists undertaking the violent, corrupt and frequently unethical behaviour, what Cathy Cole describes as the duality of the crime protagonist's psyche as both hero and villain, that characterises so many male protagonists (with notable exceptions like Fox's Archer) (Cole 127). Moreover, it is not unreasonable to assume that women writers are aware of the gender bias of male readers in predominantly selecting books written by men and with male protagonists (see Tuffield). This explains the use by a number of women crime writers of initials or male nom de plumes, such as PD James, PD Martin and Robert Galbraith. Women wanting to maximise the opportunity for both publication and sales may feel the pressure to write male leads.

An exploration of women writing men and of men not writing women within the crime genre provides an opportunity for further research.

OLD AND NEW CRIME

Crime fiction is rarely defined; even those texts dedicated to its analysis fail to provide a definition. According to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, crime fiction is nothing more complicated than 'fiction that has crime as its *central* theme' [my emphasis]. Crime itself is defined as 'an action or omission which constitutes an offence and is punishable by law' (English Oxford Living Dictionaries). As to sub-genres, there are many—thriller, cosy, supernatural, mystery, spy, detective, noir, hardboiled, whodunnit, historical, and police procedural, to name a few (Scaggs; Bradford; Priestman; Plain; Horsley *Twentieth-Century Crime*; Horsley *Noir*).

John Frow argues that genre is fluid and subject to renewal through specialisation or new combinations (Frow 71). Crime fiction's sub-genres overlap and transmute and combine with other genres. Within the Australian context, Graeme Blundell maps the changes to the genre over the past twenty years, arguing it has moved from a genre largely written for entertainment, for example, to one with a strong emphasis on social commentary (Blundell) (paras. 9, 10). Martin Priestman may therefore argue with some degree of accuracy that, despite a concentration on the lone (usually male) detective, "the attempt to apply rigid single-hero whodunnit rules to this genre is becoming increasingly futile" (Priestman 5).

Priestman's view, however, is not borne out by an examination of the winners of the Ned Kelly Best Fiction awards. Overwhelmingly, the winning novels are written by men about men, who work alone and are exemplars of the criminal justice system. While the single-hero whodunnit dominates the Ned Kelly Awards' fiction winners list, the criminal saga—again led by solo males—is a significant sub-genre. The single exception in this list is Burke's *Pig Boy* and its young hero, who struggles to find his place in the world. Perhaps coincidentally, *Pig Boy* is one of only three books penned by a woman and is the only young adult novel to be awarded the Best Fiction prize (Burke).

The Davitts paint a somewhat different picture. Here the Best Adult Novel protagonists, written entirely by women, are most often women and are drawn equally from the criminal justice system and other occupations. Yet they continue to be mostly single, typically unencumbered by the distractions of marital fights or school lunches. The detective sub-genre continues to dominate, yet four of the 18 books—*Due Preparations for the Plague*, *The Butterfly Man*, *Dark Horse* and *Big Little Lies*—are exemplars of other sub-genres (terrorism, mystery, thriller, and mummy-lit-meets-crime or domestic noir respectively) (Hospital; Rose *The Butterfly Man*; Brown; Moriarty). As such, they offer a broader range of lead characters than the Ned Kelly winners: characters with different motivations and preoccupations and characters who can as easily be women as they can be men.

JUST DESERTS

This is not to claim that the Davitt Awards have singlehandedly disrupted the genre of Australian adult crime fiction, nor even that they have made a major contribution to changes in the genre. The awards exist within a historical context that has seen, over the last two hundred years at least, the rise of women's literacy, a growth in the number of female authors, a growth in the number of women writing crime fiction, and the rise of women as the greatest readers of crime fiction – both in Australia and internationally (Bode 89; Franks "Gendering the Genre" 57; Zwar, Throsby and Longden *Australian Authors* 2). Moreover, we have also seen the ongoing development of fiction targeted at female audiences, such as chick lit (Kennedy; Farkas). In addition, as Frow has suggested, new literary combinations have emerged, that merge the crime genre with other genres (see for example Temple's *The Broken Shore*, Hospital's *Due Preparations for the Plague* and Marianne Delacourt's 2010 Davitts winner *Sharp Shooter*), creating sub-genres such as domestic noir and eco crime fiction (Temple *The Broken Shore*; Hospital; Delacourt; Franks, Gulddal and Rolls 4; Beyer 5-6).

What can be claimed is that the Davitt Awards have provided recognition to female crime fiction writers. In so doing, they have awarded public value to forms of Australian crime fiction that have, for the most part, failed to receive recognition by both the Ned Kelly Awards and, in the near past, by publishers, reviewers and the mainstream media (Morris; SinC "Entries for the Davitts").

Speaking on crime fiction at the Davitt Awards dinner in 2003, Val McDermid made the claim that "it is the women who are showing genuine innovation at this point in the genre's history" (SinC "Announcing the Winners"). An analysis of the Ned Kelly Awards' Best Fiction winners and the Davitt Awards' Best Adult Novel winners suggests that McDermid is partially correct. The Davitt Awards have played a role in helping wound the masculinity of Australian crime fiction. The wound, however, is non-fatal. It remains too early to lay the lilies on the casket.

CHAPTER 5: RATIOCINATION AND RESOLUTION: CONCLUSION

THE CASE OF THE TWO-TRACKED DOCTORATE

Nigel Krauth states that 'facts can be eclipsed by fiction' and the 'world is a symphony of facts: fiction is another symphony of facts, though with a different melody – hopefully more explanatory, more remarkable, more accessible, more enlightening, more delightful a melody' (Krauth "Fact" 121, 22). His claim might as easily apply to the difference between the exegesis and the creative work, both in their production and reading.

Despite the metamorphosis of the creative writing doctorate and claims about the acceptance of the creative work as research in and of itself (Krauth "Evolution"; Krauth and Nash), the inherent tension in undertaking a doctorate requiring both a creative work and an exegesis remains. The form of the creative writing doctorate continues to be contested (Brien et al. 4). Hence, it has been variously defined and described by candidates, their supervisors and their examiners as they attempt to create, guide and evaluate its two elements within an academic framework. Although clarity may not have come, the debate has resulted in a raft of pleasing and occasionally helpful metaphors.

The thesis, defined as the creative work and accompanying critical component, has been described as a dichotomous or hybrid model in which the two elements are disconnected (Brien et al. 11). It has been called a parallel process (Brien et al. 8), suggesting two elements travelling in the same direction but never meeting. The exegesis may even be an outlaw, not linked in any way to the creative work but led by concerns outside of creative practice such as the future of the creative writing discipline (Krauth "Evolution").

In other accounts the two doctoral components are more connected. They have 'dual orientation', in which the exegesis explores both the external context of the creative work (such as its place within the discipline) and the internal creative processes of the author (Hamilton and Jaaniste cited in Brien et al. 11). For my home university (University of Adelaide):

The exegesis should contain a description of the form and presentation of the artistic practice which constitutes the remainder of the thesis and among other things an analytical commentary and consideration of the work in the broader framework of the discipline and/or repertory. It should demonstrate a mastery of conceptual and scholarly skills associated with higher degree candidature.

In this formulation, the exegesis itself becomes a duality (of interior and exterior) within a duality – a duality squared, if you like. Or, the creative and critical works are 'two forms that intertwine: complementing, not competing; depending on, not contrasting with' (Franks "Learning"). They are 'two halves as a single whole' (Franks "Learning"). They are 'uneasy bedfellows' and an 'eclectic melange' of tone and style (Kroll). They are a plait; they are dialoguing parties; they are a blend, a collage, a woven object, a mother and child joined by umbilical cord (Krauth "Evolution"; Krauth and Nash 1).

Or they may be one in the same thing, in which the creative is the critical and the critical the creative, as Jesper Gulddal and Alistair Rolls propose in their analysis of detective fiction and detective criticism. They argue against a dichotomy of production (the practice) and reception (exemplified in the final product) and posit a partnership between production and reception that can be better described as 'a relationship of interdependence'. This relationship allows for the meeting of critical and creative practice, allowing criticism to be creative and creativity to be critical, even self-critical (Gulddal and Rolls 8, 3). Creative practice therefore is itself a form of academic discourse (Williams; Krauth and Nash) and the process of creative writing is research (Brien "Creative Practice" 56). The practice may incorporate both 'during-event' research, locating 'its discourse, its knowledge and its understanding in the act and

actions of writing creatively', and 'post-event' research in which critical examination takes place after the creative practice (G. Harper 161).

No wonder, as Donna Lee Brien suggests, anxiety is the experience of so many creative-writing doctoral candidates.

WHICH CLIENT?

So, what of my own uneasy bedfellows? It requires very little investigative skill to discern that 'Angel Port' stands in separation from my research into the Davitt Awards. In the introduction to this exegesis I referred to the development of the creative and critical works as akin to weaving a plot and sub-plot into two complementary pieces of the one outfit. In my own case I was hopeful, but mistaken. The two in no way combine to form an example of haute couture or even of pleasing op-shop happenstance.

There are of course points of intersection between 'Angel Port' and the exegetical research. The novel does include crime. It is written by an Australian woman. It has a feminist sensibility, critically examining the exploitation of women. 'Angel Port' demonstrates some of the classic tropes of the crime genre: suspense, mystery, good and bad guys, dodgy police officers, violence and a quest – albeit not foregrounded – for the truth. In keeping with the masculinist nature of the genre, the protagonist Nathan Newland is a male loner with a limited emotional life and a history of unsuccessful relationships. While he has a son, he is rarely in contact with him. In terms of its rural setting, its small-town conspiracies and its theme of violence against women, 'Angel Port' sits alongside books such as Peter Temple's *The Broken Shore*, Garry Disher's *Bitter Wash Road* and Jock Serong's *Quota*, all books by Australian male crime writers (and all books I discovered through my research when I was 18 months into my own writing) (Temple *The Broken Shore*; Temple *Truth*; Disher *Bitter Wash Road*; Serong). It also has the humour and on occasion the satirical tone associated with Shane Maloney's Murray Whelan crime series (see for example Maloney *The Brush-Off*; Maloney *Nice Try*). See Appendix 3 for a project bibliography for works that were read in association with and influenced the development of 'Angel Port'.

So far so little.

On reflection, I suggest that the relationship between my creative work and my exegesis is that of outlaws (fitting for literary crime fiction), each with their own motive and each with their own paths to resolution.

Writing in the academy I feared my unrelated outlaws were inadequate. I returned again and again to the more general expectation that the creative and critical works should speak to each other, that they should demonstrate more than a glancing connection called 'crime fiction'. I considered the option of asserting that the critical research undertaken for my exegesis, including into the crime genre and Australian crime fiction, influenced my creative practice and vice versa. In some small way this would be true, but it would be overstating the case in order to establish an interdependence between the creative and critical that for the large part did not exist.

Mandy Brett, editor at Text Publishing, states that the purpose of writing is to 'express meaning' and the purpose of editing is 'to ensure that the words and symbols achieve what they need to achieve and do not get in their own way'. As an editor, she tries 'to ride the shape of the book'. In practice, the role of editor is a little more complicated. Brett describes it as 'schizoid' and a 'bipolar occupation', in part because the editor must not read for pleasure (the act is instead 'mean, carping, joyless') while simultaneously reading for pleasure, as a reader would (Brett).

A PhD candidature in creative writing could be described as 'bipolar squared'. The candidate is writer, editor and reader. While these roles are always required within creative writing practice, within the

academy they take on extra complexity. The reading audiences expand – academic managers and supervisor (the host institution), examiner (the academy), potential publisher (commerce) and the ultimate reader (the public). The purposes are multiple – personal satisfaction and achievement, academic success, professional academic opportunities, academic publication, commercial publication and public recognition.

These inherent tensions in the thesis and the ongoing contestation of its form and value had a greater influence on my creative practice – and, indeed, on my critical practice within this exegesis – than any other element, including my research, the networks I established with writers, or the skills I developed through teaching, learning and directed reading. Writing in the academy as a doctoral candidate has been the single greatest external influence on my practice.

In obvious ways, writing within the academy has been an extraordinary privilege. For the first time, after a lifetime of both writing and scribbling, I was awarded time and money to write stories. The scholarship and acceptance into the program offered validation that allowed me to use the term ‘writer’ (or at least, ‘hopeful writer’) to describe myself. I met and learned from others with similar interests, concerns and ambitions. Sessional teaching in creative writing proved a surprising and fulfilling side benefit. And the intelligence and guidance of my academic supervisor can never be overestimated

And yet, the many and competing audiences, purposes and practices of the creative writing thesis have created anxiety. The variation between creative arts doctoral programs across Australia in relation to requirements, standards and examination has added to my confusion (see Webb, Brien and Burr). My reading on the creative arts doctorate suggested that the most important readers of both the novel and the exegesis were the examiners (Brien et al. 12). For the novel, this led to more confusion. What hats would the examiners be wearing when they read the creative work? Were they general readers, examiners, scholars, gatekeepers or lovers (or haters) of crime fiction, literary crime or comic crime? ‘Angel Port’ as a novel is by definition an ‘original contribution’ to the field, but could it be considered ‘significant’, as required in some doctoral programs? For the thesis, were outlaw products sufficiently cohesive for joint examination?

THE HIGH ROAD OR THE LOW MEAN STREETS?

These questions and anxieties were compounded rather than alleviated by my research into crime fiction. I became aware of the deep and ongoing scholarly debate about the relative merits of literary and genre fiction. If my novel was crime, as had been suggested, would it receive academic approval as it stood and, if not, how could I tailor the language and narrative to ensure success? Was I now bound to consciously model the novel on the crime genre to demonstrate I knew about the tropes and forms?

Mary P Freier notes that ‘[c]rime fiction is still not consistently considered worthy of the same level of attention as literature deemed to be of a higher quality’ (Freier 190). As a form of popular fiction it has for the most part been allocated the status of lowbrow literature. Until recent decades, ‘snobbishness’ has hampered its acceptance as a subject for critical research and for university (and school) curricula (Franks “Learning”). Crime fiction continues to be devalued in sections of the academy, seen as nothing more than a formula in which literary elements such as characterisation, language, originality, individuality, setting, exploration of the human condition, and intellectual and emotional honesty are subsumed to plot (Gelder 40; Maitland “Why Crime?” 10; Franks “Learning”). Language is a means to an end, rather than of value in itself. Story is a series of predictable tropes and plot points designed to

appeal to the commercial market. Character development is not considered an essential quality and protagonists are known less for their humanity than their methodologies of crime-solving (Kayman 44).

As a form of popular fiction, crime fiction is essentially about industry rather than high culture. It is entertainment, a cheap and transient thrill (Gelder 1, 14-15). Its popularity and availability are the source of its devaluation (Franks "Learning"). Crime fiction's literary merit and longevity are therefore deficient if not altogether absent (Gelder 20). It may even be viewed as diseased: "crime novels are housed in their own section in many bookshops, separated from literary novels much as you'd keep a child with measles away from the rest of the class" (Cathy Cole 2004: 116, cited in Franks "Learning").

This is certainly how it is treated by the more literary of the literary awards. It was not until 2010, for example, that a 'crime novel', Peter Temple's *Truth*, won the Miles Franklin Literary Award. To date, it is the only crime novel to have won the award. Temple's win was sufficiently surprising that the UK press asked if, against all odds, a crime book could at last win The Man Booker Prize (Flood). Former Man Booker Prize judge John Sutherland remained adamant this would never happen. He likened entering a crime novel in the Man Booker to "putting a donkey into the Grand National" (Flood). Morag Fraser, a Miles Franklin judge, has said that crime fiction will not in the main be considered for literary prizes, as crime writers "do not work language hard enough, and they do not think originally and with sufficient depth and imagination" (Flood).

In summary, my research revealed that for some within the academy and the literary community crime fiction is no more than a walk along the muck-filled mean streets of lowbrow language, worn tropes and paper-thin characters. It has little place on the high road where sweeping views of civilisation result in rich language, perspective and critique, and characters capable of deep breaths, emotions and thought.

However, I also learned to my relief that there has been greater acceptance of genre fiction within the academy. From the beginning of the millennium detective fiction had become 'a legitimate area of study for academic scholars', with a rise in opportunities to present and conferences and print in journals (Freier 189; Knight *Australian Crime*). In Australia, we see for example scholarly discussion in the October 2016 *TEXT* special issue 37, 'Crime Fiction and the Creative/Critical Nexus', (Franks, Guldall and Rolls). In addition, there has been an expansion in the number of crime-writing postgraduate projects, including by established crime authors such as Leigh Redhead and Carolyn Beasley (Redhead; Beasley).

Discovering the growing acceptance of crime fiction within the academy was freeing in one sense, but being labelled was also restrictive. It became difficult not to judge the narrative against this standard. Yet 'Angel Port' is, in my view, more akin to literary or comic crime. It also digresses from standard tropes. While the story has elements of suspense, mystery and even the Gothic, it does not follow standard paths of ratiocination. Its protagonist is not pursuing the truth. Nathan Newland abhors the mean streets. He wishes to have nothing to do with the secrets around him and flees back to Melbourne, only to be reeled in by the presence of his son and the smooth-talking real estate agent McG. By character, Nathan Newland also resides outside mainstream, masculinist crime fiction. He is neither tough nor dogged. He is, if anything, an ordinary Australian man from the comfortable professional class. He is the suburban man.

Compared with my creative work, I felt on safer ground with my exegesis. 'Just Deserts' travels more comfortably along the traditional high road. It provides an original contribution to the discipline of Creative Writing through its examination of previously untouched areas of academic investigation: Sisters in Crime Australia, the Davitt Awards and – to a smaller degree – the Ned Kelly Awards. The

academic literature on these is miniscule. Stephen Knight's extensive examinations of Australian crime fiction provide some historical record of Sisters in Crime and the awards, but provide little historical or critical analysis of these (Knight *Continent of Mystery*; Knight *Australian Crime* 7, 31, 200-01, 12). Other academic texts on these subjects could not, despite extensive searching, be found. The research is an original contribution through its primary research of archival documents made available for the first time by Sisters in Crime Australia as well as the interviews conducted with a range of women associated with the Davitt Awards, including managers, judges, authors and critics. It also delivers an original contribution through its collation, analysis and presentation of data relating to both the Davitt Awards and the Ned Kelly Awards.

'Just Deserts' is thus an original contribution, not only to the discipline of Creative Writing but also to women's history and women's literary history within Australia.

CASE NOTES

In light of this discussion I proffer a thesis that undertakes two separate tasks: a creative work, the novel 'Angel Port', and an exegesis which explores the Davitt Awards. To have created a more fused kind of thesis would have required me to abandon my research into the Davitt Awards. This would have been a loss. The awards and their host organisation, Sisters in Crime Australia, have received little attention in academic or literary studies and therefore offer a significant field for research.

Through my endeavours I have discovered further areas for future, original research:

1. exploration of the impact of the Davitt Awards on the Ned Kelly Awards, including through interviews with judges of the Ned Kelly Awards
2. exploration of the impact of the Davitt Awards on publishers, publishing decisions and sales in relation to Australian women crime writers, including through interviews with agents, publishers and authors
3. analysis of the history and impact of the Scarlet Stiletto Awards, through interviews and documentary (including archival) research
4. examination of the history, role and impact of Sisters in Crime Australia
5. a case study of the judging of a literary prize, drawing on interviews and documentation from my research
6. further textual analysis of the masculinist tropes, language and values of crime writing in relation to crime fiction and the Davitt and Ned Kelly Awards
7. exploration of women writing men and of men not writing women within the crime genre.

CLOSING THE CURRENT CASE

In retrospect, both 'Angel Port' and the exegesis have a major theme in common – they both explore the nature of just deserts, one for the bad perpetrated, the other for the good promoted.

While the perpetrators of crimes against women in 'Angel Port' receive their just deserts in more typical – if at times Gothic – vigilante ways, Sisters in Crime Australia and the Davitt Awards will I hope receive their due through the pages of this exegesis. Despite little public knowledge of either the organisation or the awards, they have made and continue to make a significant contribution to crime writing by women in Australia and have done so, as Stephen Knight points out, with remarkable success' (Knight *Australian Crime* 201).

The case is therefore made that both Sisters in Crime Australia and the Davitt Awards should get their own just deserts – recognition in the nation's literary landscape.

JUST DESERTS

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED BY JESSIE BYRNE, AUGUST 2017 TO JUNE 2018

The list of nine interviews detailed in this appendix were conducted by Jessie Byrne as part of her research for her PhD thesis in Creative Writing at the University of Adelaide. The interviews inform her examination of the history, development and impact of the Davitt Awards, managed by Sisters in Crime Australia. The nine interviews were conducted in person or by phone from August 2017 to June 2018. Ethics approval to conduct these interviews was provided by the University of Adelaide (approval number H-2018-003).

INTERVIEW LIST

Dr Lucy Sussex, Melbourne Vic, 29 August 2017

- Davitt Awards judge 2001, 2003-04; Victorian Premiers' Literary Award judge; James Tiptree, Jr Literary Award judge; Ellen Davitt scholar; Ditmar Award winner (various: 1989, 1997, 2002, 2004); Aurealis Award winner (Best Fantasy Short Story: 1998); Bertram Chandler Award (Outstanding Achievement in Australian Science Fiction: 2003); researcher, reviewer, editor, writer (including of crime, speculative, children's and young adult fiction)

Jacqui Horwood, North Melbourne Vic, 29 August 2017

- Davitt Awards judge (including chief judge) 2010-18; Sisters in Crime member; Scarlet Stiletto Awards winner (2003, 2016); Australian Crime Writers Association committee member; writer, library officer and former police staffer

Carmel Shute, Balaclava Vic, 20 April 2018

- Sisters in Crime founding member and National Co-convenor (1991-present); manager of Davitt Awards and Scarlet Stiletto Awards; public relations director

Jane Sullivan, North Brighton Vic, 20 April 2018

- Davitt Awards judge 2003, 2005-08, 2011, 2018; Australian Human Rights Award for Journalism winner (inaugural); writer, literary reviewer and columnist, journalist

Maggie Baron and Deb Crabtree, Melbourne Vic, 23 April 2018

- Baron – Davitts Awards judge 2015-17; Sisters in Crime Australia inaugural President (2015) and Treasurer (years); crime writer, environmental manager and former forensic scientist
- Crabtree – Davitts Awards judge 2015-17; Australian Crime Writers Association committee member; Ned Kelly Awards judge; bookseller at Readings Carlton, reviewer and writer

Prof Sue Turnbull, Melbourne/Wollongong (phone interview), 23 April 2018

- Davitt Awards judge 2001, 2007-10; Sisters in Crime National Co-convenor; Victorian Premier's Literary Awards judge; Age Book of the Year judge; Ned Kelly Awards judge; reviewer, academic and literary columnist

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Carmel Shute and Lindy Cameron, Balaclava Vic, 24 April 2018

- Cameron – Davitt Awards winner (Readers' Choice 2002, 2004, 2008); Sisters in Crime National Co-convenor; Ned Kelly Award winner (Readers' Vote 2001); Clan Destine Press publisher; crime, speculative and YA writer

Heather Rose, phone, Adelaide to Hobart, 21 June 2018

- Davitt Award winner (Best Adult Novel 2006); Stella Prize winner (2017); writer (including children's fiction) and advertising consultant

JUST DESERTS

APPENDIX 2: COMPLETE DAVITT AWARD WINNERS, ALL CATEGORIES, 2001-2018

Davitt Award Winners, All Categories, 2001-2018							
Winners	Best Adult Novel	Best Young Adult Novel	Best Children's Novel	Children's and Young Adult Fiction	Best True Crime Book	Best Debut Book (Any Category)	Readers' Choice
2001	Caroline Shaw, <i>Eye to Eye</i>		x	x	x	x	
2002	Carolyn Morwood, <i>A Simple Death</i>	Kerry Greenwood, <i>The Three-Pronged Dagger</i>	x	x	x	x	Lindy Cameron, <i>Bleeding Hearts</i>
2003	Gabrielle Lord, <i>Baby Did a Bad, Bad Thing</i> Alex Palmer, <i>Blood Redemption</i>	Natalie Prior, <i>Fireworks and Darkness</i>	x	x	x	x	Cathy Cole, <i>Skin Deep</i>
2004	Janette Turner Hospital, <i>Due Preparations for the Plague</i>	Ruth Starkey, <i>Muck-Up Day</i>	x	x	x	x	Lindy Cameron, <i>Thicker Than Water</i>
2005	Kathryn Fox, <i>Malicious Intent</i>	Joanna Baker, <i>Devastation Road</i>	x	x	x	x	Leigh Redhead, <i>Peepshow</i>
2006	Heather Rose, <i>The Butterfly Man</i>	Catherine Jinks, <i>Evil Genius</i>	x	x	Robin Bowles, <i>Dead Centre</i>	x	Leigh Redhead, <i>Rubdown</i> Kerry Greenwood, <i>Heavenly Pleasures</i>
2007	Sydney Bauer, <i>Undertow</i>	Jaclyn Moriarty, <i>The Betrayal of Bindy Mackenzie</i>	x	x	Karen Kissane, <i>Silent Death: The Killing of Julie Ramage (j)</i>	x	Karen Kissane, <i>Silent Death: The Killing of Julie Ramage</i>

JUST DESERTS

							Kerry Greenwood, <i>Devil's Food</i>
2008	Katherine Howell, <i>Frantic</i>	Mandy Sayer, <i>The Night Has a Thousand Eyes</i>	x	x	Janet Fife-Yeomans, <i>Killing Jodie: How Australia's Most Elusive Murderer Was Brought to Justice (j)</i>	x	Lindy Cameron (ed), <i>Scarlet Stiletto – The First Cut</i>
2009	Malla Nunn, <i>A Beautiful Place to Die</i>	Catherine Jinks, <i>Genius Squad</i>	x	x	Chloe Hooper, <i>The Tall Man: Death and Life on Palm Island</i>	x	Katherine Howell, <i>The Darkest Hour</i>
2010	Marianne Delacourt, <i>Sharp Shooter</i>	x	x	Justine Larbalestier, <i>Liar</i>	Candace Sutton and Ellen Connolly, <i>Ladykiller (j/j)</i>	x	Kerry Greenwood, <i>Forbidden Fruit</i>
2011	Katherine Howell, <i>Cold Justice</i>	x	x	Penny Matthews, <i>A Girl Like Me</i>	Colleen Egan, <i>Murderer No More: Andrew Mallard and the Epic Fight that Proved his Innocence(j)</i>	x	PM Newton, <i>The Old School</i>
2012	Sulari Gentill, <i>A Decline in Prophets</i>	x	x	Meg McKinlay, <i>Surface Tension</i>	Liz Porter, <i>Cold Case Files: Past Crimes Solved by New Forensic Science</i>	Jaye Ford, <i>Beyond Fear</i>	Jaye Ford, <i>Beyond Fear</i> YA Erskine, <i>The Brotherhood</i>
2013	Maggie Groff, <i>Mad Men, Bad Girls and the Guerilla Knitters Institute</i>	x	x	Jennifer Walsh, <i>The Tunnels of Tarcoola</i>	Pamela Burton, <i>The Waterlow Killings: A Portrait of a Family Tragedy</i>	Maggie Groff, <i>Mad Men, Bad Girls and the Guerilla Knitters Institute</i>	Kerry Greenwood, <i>Tamam Shud: The Somerton Man</i>
2014	Honey Brown, <i>Dark Horse</i>	Karen Foxlee, <i>The Midnight Dress</i>	Jen Storer, <i>Truly Tan: Spooked!</i>	x	Anna Krien, <i>Night Games: Sex, Power and Sport</i>	Hannah Kent, <i>Burial Rites</i>	Hannah Kent, <i>Burial Rites</i>

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2015	Liane Moriarty, <i>Big Little Lies</i>	Ellie Marney, <i>Every Word</i>	Judith Rossell, <i>Withering-by-Sea</i>	x	Caroline Overington, <i>Last Woman Hanged</i> (j)	Christine Bongers, <i>Intruder</i>	Sandi Wallace, <i>Tell Me Why</i>
2016	Emma Viskic, <i>Resurrection Bay</i>	Fleur Ferris, <i>Risk</i>	RA Spratt, <i>Friday Barnes 2: Under Suspicion</i>	x	Alecia Simmonds, <i>Wild Man</i> (j)	Emma Viskic, <i>Resurrection Bay</i> Fleur Ferris, <i>Risk</i>	Emma Viskic, <i>Resurrection Bay</i>
2017	Jane Harper, <i>The Dry</i>	Shivaun Plozza, <i>Frankie</i>	Judith Rossell, <i>Wormwood Mire: A Stella Montgomery Intrigue</i>	x	Megan Norris, <i>Look What You Made Me Do: Fathers Who Kill</i> (j)	Cath Ferla, <i>Ghost Girls</i>	Jane Harper, <i>The Dry</i>
2018	Emma Viskic, <i>And Fire Came Down</i>	Vikki Wakefield, <i>Ballad of A Mad Girl</i>	Allison Rushby, <i>The Turnkey</i>	x	Gabriella Coslovich, <i>Whiteley on Trial</i> (j)	Sarah Bailey, <i>The Dark Lake</i>	Jane Harper, <i>Force of Nature</i>

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