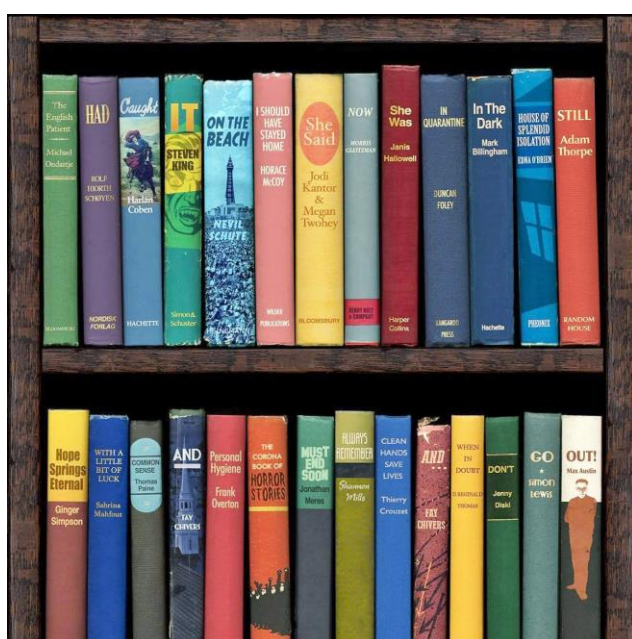**'Bookshelves in the Age of the COVID-19 Pandemic: an online conference'**

3-4 November 2020 (ONLINE via Microsoft Teams)

Organised by The Open University and supported by SHARP (The Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing)

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on all aspects of lives, but nowhere has this been more visible than in the conflation of public and private workspace. Despite our increasingly (almost exhaustively) online lives, the material book is now firmly back in focus, and not just as a backdrop to endless Zoom meetings – although even on that score, the wittily parodic and highly insightful Bookcase Credibility Twitter account, which has amassed over 77,000 followers in under two months, has given a new lease of life to social media '#shelfies'. In our quarantine confined, digitally mediated existence, we literally are what we read, and our cultural capital is now is on display to the whole world, in material form. As Amanda Hess has noted in The New York Times, the credibility bookcase is the 'quarantine's hottest accessory', and one for which there is no E-Book equivalent. In the semiotics of the pandemic, the well-curated bookcase has become a manifestation of our mental state, and perhaps for the first time during this barber-less interlude in human history, our books *are* more important than our hair. And yet, as John Quiggin points out, this newly respectable flaunting of cultural capital can entrench existing socio-economic inequalities; the personal library has always been an overt display of wealth as well as knowledge. This conference will ask speakers to critically examine this particular cultural phenomenon, brought to public attention by the pandemic.

This is the full programme for the conference. Wherever possible, North American speakers have been given evening slots (sessions 2 and 4) and UK/European/Australian and other speakers the morning slots (sessions 1 and 3). Times given as GMT for slots, with CET and EST provided.

The lobby will open 15 minutes before each session, i.e. 09.45am for morning sessions, and 16.45pm for evening sessions, to cover introductions, check for any technical issues etc All papers should be no more than 20 minutes in length, with maximum 10 minutes allowed for questions afterword; for round table panels, this will be 30 minutes in length, with maximum 15 minutes allowed for questions.

Full Conference Programme

Tuesday 3 November, Session 1 (10.00-13.00 GMT/11.00-14.00 CET/05.00-08.00 EST)

Lobby opens at 9.45am

Session 1, Panel 1	Browsing and interpreting real and virtual bookshelves Chair: Shafquat Towheed (The Open University, UK)
10.00-10.30	1. Kenna MacTavish (University of Melbourne, Australia), 'Crisis Book Browsing: Restructuring the Retail Shelf Life of Books'
10.30-11.00	2. Beth Driscoll (University of Melbourne, Australia) & Claire Squires (University of Stirling, Scotland), 'Blaire Squiscoll's Bookshelves: An Ullapoolist Intertextuality'
11.00-11.30	3. Emily Baulch (University of Queensland, Australia), 'Bookish objects on the Bookshelf'
11.30-12.00	Tea/coffee break
Session 1, Panel 2	Problematic Bookshelves Chair: Corinna Norrick-Rühl (University of Münster, Germany)
12.00-12.30	4. Chiara Bullen (University of Stirling, Scotland), 'Your Bookshelf is Problematic': Progressive and Problematic Publishing in the Age of COVID-19
12.30-13.00	5. Edmund G.C. King (The Open University, UK), 'The Dreaded … Turgenev Bro?': Bookshelves, Twitter, and Toxic Masculinity in the Age of the COVID-19 Pandemic'

Tuesday 3 November, Session 2 (17.00-20.00 GMT/18.00-21.00 CET/12.00-15.00 EST)

Lobby opens at 16.45pm

Session 2, Panel 1	Bookshelves under the public gaze Chair: Edmund G.C. King (The Open University, UK)
17.00-17.30	6. Jennifer Burek Pierce (University of Iowa, USA), 'Where the Thorn Birds roost: Reader responses on Late Night with Seth Meyers'
17.30-18.00	7. Elli Fischer (Tel Aviv University, Israel) and Dovid Bashevkin (Yeshiva University, USA), 'The Jewish Bookshelf as a Site of Self-Fashioning: Reflections on a Historical Phenomenon and the Contemporary Moment'
18.00-18.30	Tea/coffee/apéro/wine break
Session 2, Panel 2	Covers, Bindings and Spines Re-examined Chair: Corinna Norrick-Rühl (University of Münster, Germany)
18.30-19.00	8. Claire Battershill (University of Toronto, Canada), Writing with Spines: 'Shelf Isolation' and 'Sorted Books'
19.00-19.30	9. Amanda Lastoria (Simon Fraser University, Canada), 'Buying books and selling ourselves: print design as a digital mask'

| 19.30-20.00 | 10. Shira Belén Buchsbaum (School of Advanced Study, University of London, UK), 'It's About the Fwoomp When You Put It Down': Bookbinding Fanfiction and Reexamining Book Production Models' |

Wednesday 4 November, Session 3 (10.00-13.00 GMT/11.00-14.00 CET/05.00-08.00 EST)

Lobby opens at 09.45am

Session 3, Panel 1	*Work and/or Play: Pandemic Shelfies* *Chair: Corinna Norrick-Rühl (University of Münster, Germany)*
10.00-10.15	Shafquat Towheed (The Open University, UK): contribute to the READ-IT project, introducing the READ-IT chatbot, and invitation to our 'Being Human' event
10.15-10.45	11. Christina Lupton (Warwick University, UK/University of Copenhagen, Denmark) & Johanne Gormsen Schmidt (University of Copenhagen, Denmark), 'Women at work: Reading and Writing during the Danish Lockdown'
10.45-11.30	12. Natalia Kucirkova (The Open University, UK), Yasemin Allsop (University College London, UK) and Ekaterina Ryzankina (Cape Peninsula University of Technology, South Africa), 'The Shelfie phenomenon and academics: a multi-disciplinary research case study' (30 min talk/15 min questions)
11.30-12.00	Tea/coffee break
Session 3, Panel 2	*You are what you read: or are you?* *Chair: Shafquat Towheed*
12.00-12.30	13. Laura Dietz (Anglia Ruskin University, UK), 'Projection or Reflection? The Pandemic Bookshelf as a Mirror for Self-Image and Personal Identity'
12.30-13.00	14. Stevie Marsden (University of Derby, UK), "I take it you've read every book on the shelves?" Demonstrating taste, value, and class through bookshelves

Wednesday 4 November, Session 4 (17.00-20.00 GMT/18.00-21.00 CET/12.00-15.00 EST)

Lobby opens 16.45pm

Session 4, Panel 1	*Pandemic bookshelves: student views* *Chair: Edmund G.C. King (The Open University, UK)*
17.00-17.30	15. Nelleke Moser (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands), 'A Bookshelf of the world: Bringing students' books inside the classroom'
17.30-18.15	16. Ellen Barth, Chandni Ananth, Laura Ntoumanis, and Natalia Tolstopyat (University of Münster, Germany), 'Access to Bookshelves During Lockdown: A Student Roundtable discussion' Round Table (30 min talk/15 min questions)

18.15-18.30	Tea/coffee/apéro/wine break
Session 4, Panel 2	***Pandemic Bookshelves in the Digital Sphere*** *Chair: Shafquat Towheed (The Open University, UK)*
18.30-19.00	17. Simon Rosenberg (Independent Scholar), 'Representation of Physical Books and Bookish Spaces in Video Games'
19.00-19.30	18. Paizha Stoothoff (California State University, Los Angeles, USA), 'Zoom as a Digital Medium: Bookshelves in Backgrounds throughout History'
19.30-20.00	19. Leah Henrickson (Leeds University, UK), The 'Work from Home' Aesthetic: An Exhibition of Quarantine Workspaces

Abstracts and speaker biographies (organised by panel sessions)

Tuesday 3 November 2020

Session 1, Panel 1: Browsing and interpreting real and virtual bookshelves

Kenna MacTavish (University of Melbourne, Australia), 'Crisis Book Browsing: Restructuring the Retail Shelf Life of Books'

What happens when the traditional book shelving practices of physical bookstores are forced online? Within physical bookstores, the bookshelf operates as an organisational structure that rationalises the act of bookselling and helps consumers browse effectively (Rak 2012, Miller 2006). In born-digital book retail, algorithms often drive this process, functioning as organisational tools guided in part by a consumer's browsing history (Murray 2018). COVID19 has forced independent bookstores to rapidly rethink the effectiveness of how they organise and display books for consumers. Consumers who choose not to engage with born-digital book retailers, but for whom the physical bookstore's bookshelf has become an object that can no longer be browsed in-person, need new solutions. Independent bookstores have been challenged to offer new affordances—including images and representations of shelves, e-commerce structures and algorithms—to help consumers stay connected with their browsing experiences.   This paper examines three forms of browsable shelf experiences that have been developed in a time of crisis: bookstores virtually reimagining shelf experiences via Instagram, bookstores enhancing the accessibility and browsing experience of their websites, and bookstores posting unchanged images of their bookshelves to social media and asking customers to browse the books in those images. Using digital ethnography to examine these sites of crisis book browsing, and textual analysis of "COVID update" announcements, newly advertised job descriptions, and social media captions, this paper argues that COVID-19 has forced the restructure of shelf experiences in bookstores and that this will have long-term effects on book browsing into the future.

Kenna MacTavish is a PhD candidate at the University of Melbourne. Her thesis, "Organising Books: Creative and Connective Systems of Categorisation in the Twenty-First Century", explores the post-digital affordances of books, platforms, and genre systems. She is the author of a forthcoming chapter on #bookstagram for Monash University Press.

Beth Driscoll (University of Melbourne, Australia) & Claire Squires (University of Stirling, Scotland), 'Blaire Squiscoll's Bookshelves: An Ullapoolist Intertextuality'

How might the bookshelves of Blaire Squiscoll, author of the autoethnographic comic erotic thriller *The Frankfurt Kabuff*, appear to readers via a virtual interview? This performative paper offers an insight into the intertextual workings of the author. What source materials contributed to

the intellectual and narrative formation of the author, and *The Frankfurt Kabuff*? What happens when critical theory, conceptual frameworks and methodological approaches fuse with fictional accounts? This paper draws on the principles of the Situationist International. It presents and reflects on a situation—the creation of a novella, its author and their bookshelves—in order to critically interrogate the dynamics of the contemporary publishing industry. In particular, the paper engages with the bookshelf as representation of the creative process: a site where texts jostle against one another, materialise their relationship, and display their branding, size, shape & colour.

The paper relates bookshelves as performative creativity to the wider issues considered by Squiscoll's novella, which is set at the pre-eminent global business-to-buzzness book fair, the Frankfurter Buchmesse. As *The Frankfurt Kabuff* narrates, the Buchmesse grapples with its role promoting freedom of speech, diversity and inclusion, alongside its creation of international bestsellers. Like all books, *The Frankfurt Kabuff's* success in the marketplace is dependent upon genre fashion, socio-political hierarchies, demographic trends, and luck. The paper therefore reflects upon the creation, production, circulation and consumption of bestsellers via the virtual bookshelves of an imaginary author of a real book.

Associate Professor **Beth Driscoll** (Melbourne) and Professor **Claire Squires** (Stirling) are co-authors of *The Frankfurt Book Fair and Bestseller Business* (CUP, 2020) and co-edited the 'Book Commerce Book Carnival' issue of *Mémoires du Livres/Studies in Book Culture* (2020). They have published articles on contemporary publishing with *Post45* and *Angelaki* and are experts in the oeuvre of Blaire Squiscoll.

Emily Baulch (University of Queensland, Australia), 'Bookish objects on the Bookshelf'

The bookshelf, traditionally a glassed-in space reserved solely for books and used by the wealthy, has developed into a multi-functional display space. This paper focuses on 'bookish objects' on the bookshelf, such as those sporting quotes, characters or colophons, as opposed to all objects. I ask, what is the impact of these bookish objects on the way we think of books? Recent studies have examined the relationship between readers and bookish objects in #shelfies photos (Brandabur 2019, Rodger 2019); however, the relationship between books and bookish objects requires further exploration. This paper analyses photos posted on r/bookshelves, on social media site Reddit. It blends material culture (Appadurai 1986; Allen and Blair 2015) with paratextual (Genette 1997) and book marketing analysis (Squires 2007; Thompson 2010) to provide preliminary observations on the impact of contextualising books alongside bookish objects. A shelf dedicated to *Harry Potter* books and objects, complete with figurines, Hegwigs and boxsets, magnifies the visual impact of the books. The bookish objects materialise print content and increase the shelf space dedicated to a book. The repetition of emblems, characters, colophons, and typography amplifies an identifiable brand and publisher presence. Consumerist bookish objects can magnify a bookish display beyond the power of a single text, whether it be classics or genre fiction, yet they also fragment books into floating symbols and intrude on books traditional display space. The tension between books and bookish objects captures the transition of books from revered print objects to a part of the converged media landscape.

Emily Baulch is a PhD candidate at the University of Queensland, with a First Class Honours in Literary Studies from Monash University. Her current research is about the book on the bookshelf, with a particular interest in the ways that people use books for activities other than reading.

Session 1, Panel 2: Problematic Bookshelves

Chiara Bullen (University of Stirling, Scotland), 'Your Bookshelf is Problematic': Progressive and Problematic Publishing in the Age of COVID-19.

In May 2020, U.K. Minister for the Cabinet Office, Michael Gove, faced criticism and ridicule when books by Holocaust-denier David Irvine were spotted on his bookshelf by the public. Sparking discussions about reading and authorship – such as separating the 'art from the artist' and consuming works containing prejudiced narratives and/or ideals – the Twitter campaign #Bookshelfgate was launched in response. Individuals taking part proudly displayed their bookcases filled with 'problematic' authors and titles, expressing anger at the concept of a 'problematic' bookcase. The sentiment reflects The Royal Society of Literature's response to questions about author behaviours and prejudices in 2018, stating, "being good should not be conflated with good writing".

The debate about problematic authors and prejudiced works has been prominent in recent years, particularly in the wake of e-movements (such as '#MeToo') and heightened societal awareness about social inequalities and prejudices. This awareness has had a profound impact on the publishing industry and reading communities; for example, resulting in curated Goodreads bookshelves filled with 'problematic' titles, publishers' employing morality clauses to control the behaviour of their authors, and sensitivity readers to reduce prejudiced content in their titles. This talk will explore how bookshelf credibility in the age of COVID-19 has brought the conflict between 'progressive' and 'literary' symbolic capital to light within publishing and its reader communities. It will examine what it means to be a 'problematic' or 'progressive' reader, publisher, and author, and why having our bookshelves on display has heightened this conflict.

Chiara Bullen is a second-year PhD researcher at the University of Stirling. Her research explores the moral and ethical responsibilities of book publishers in the 21st century. She is on the committee for the Transatlantic Literary Women series at the University of Glasgow.

Edmund G. C. King (The Open University, UK), "The Dreaded … Turgenev Bro?": Bookshelves, Twitter, and Toxic Masculinity in the Age of the COVID-19 Pandemic

On 24 August 2020, the writer Jess McHugh posted on Twitter a list of her "Top 7 Warning Signs in a Man's Bookshelf." At the very top of her list of relationship red flags was "A Dog-eared copy of Infinite Jest." This was followed by "Too much Hemingway," "Any amount of Bukowski," "AYN. RAND," and Goethe. *Lolita* and Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* also made the cut. McHugh's tweet quickly went viral across the platform, gaining 3200 replies, 6000 retweets and 17000 likes over the next four days, as well as news coverage in a variety of venues, including the Onion *AV Club* and *The Times of India*.

Jess McHugh ✓
@MchughJess

Top 7 Warning Signs In a Man's Bookshelf:
1. A Dog-eared copy of Infinite Jest
2. Too Much Hemingway
3. Any amount of Bukowski
4. AYN. RAND.
5. Goethe
6. "Lolita is my favorite book."
7. "'Fathers and Sons' Is my favorite book."

10:48 AM · Aug 24, 2020 · Twitter Web App

McHugh's intervention was by no means a novel one, recalling as it did earlier online lists and listicles, including widely shared and discussed articles on "the bookshelves of the undateable" in *Flavorwire* and *HuffPo* in 2012. The "red flag bookshelf" meme of 2020, however, coinciding as it did with a global pandemic, a burgeoning protest movement across the United States and elsewhere, and growing online polarization, played out differently from previous iterations. Pushback and resistance from users to the original post were noticeable factors in the tweet's virality, a feature not visible to the same extent in the reception of the *Flavorwire* and *HuffPo* articles on Twitter. This paper will examine McHugh's bookshelf meme and some of the many responses—discussions, appropriations and alternative lists, and counter-lists—that it generated (not least from Goethe specialists). It will ask what this episode reveals about the relationship between reading, canonicity, and gender discourses around toxic masculinity in the early 2020s. To what extent do the specific dynamics and information design of virtual spaces like Twitter affect the way "book talk" unfolds online?

Edmund G. C. King is a Lecturer in English in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at The Open University. An historian of reading, his work has appeared in a number of venues, including *Book History*, *Yearbook of English Studies*, and *The Journal of British Studies*. He is co-editor of *Memorialising Shakespeare: Commemoration and Collective Identity, 1916–2016* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021).

Session 2, Panel 1: Bookshelves under the public gaze

Jennifer Burek Pierce (University of Iowa, USA), 'Where The Thorn Birds Roost: Reader Responses on Late Night with Seth Meyers'

While scholars focus on the ways that popular books represent cultural values, books are a backdrop for U.S. late-night television hosts who produce their shows from their homes during the Covid-19 pandemic.1 Distinctively, Late Night with Seth Meyers on NBC has used books respond to viewers and social issues alike. When Meyers released his first attic-based show on April 1, the simple set included a copy of Colleen McCullough's 1977 best-seller, The Thorn Birds, a choice that captured viewers' attention.2 "Multiplying and disappearing copies, and ... changes to ... the book jacket" followed in tandem with viewer discussion of the title on social media, which Meyers acknowledged during his show.3 In June, as protests spread after George Floyd died at the hands of Minneapolis police, a change occurred in the books on Meyers's set: The Thorn Birds disappeared and was replaced by four titles by contemporary Black authors, which have appeared

episode after episode.4 These books formed part of his response to the cultural and political conditions that were reshaping a national conversation about race. During Meyers's broadcasts from home, books went from background décor to comedic content to social commentary, forming both a dialogue with viewers and an emblem of the of the relationship between our books and our values.

Jennifer Burek Pierce is associate professor in the School of Library and Information Science at The University of Iowa, where she has a joint appointment with the Center for the Book. Her latest book, Narratives, Nerdfighters, and New Media, will be released by the University of Iowa Press in 2020. She has won research fellowships from the American Antiquarian Society; Winterthur Museum, Library, and Gardens; and most recently, the De Grummond Children's Literature Collection at the University of Southern Mississippi.

Elli Fischer (Tel Aviv University, Israel) and Dovid Bashevkin (Yeshiva University, USA), 'The Jewish Bookshelf as a Site of Self-Fashioning: Reflections on a Historical Phenomenon and the Contemporary Moment'

Public displays of personal reading material has been an important element of self-fashioning since the Renaissance. The advent of digital culture has lessened the utility of printed books as storehouses of information and thus, somewhat ironically, increased their value as means of self-fashioning and self-curation. This process took another leap forward during the COVID-19 epidemic, when otherwise private or semi-private spaces became public on ZOOM, Facebook Live, and related applications. The more the naivete of book-placement diminishes, the more we can expect to find significance in the books that are held, placed on a desk, or arranged on a shelf where they will be seen by the public. The proposed paper will look at this phenomenon as it pertains to the Jewish, and specifically rabbinic, bookshelf. Jewish books have a rich history of their own and their placement, type, and deployment in the form of citation often reflects particular orientations towards Jewish identity, thought, and theology.

The paper will be divided into two parts. The first part will address historical and theoretical elements of how one would "display" a bookshelf given technological constraints. It will also consider the potential role of COVID-19 and the ubiquity of video-conferencing in the shifting cultural role of the printed book. The second part will address concrete recent examples and analyze both what the curators of the shelves are trying to say about themselves and what various audiences actually perceive. It will include examples from rabbis, public figures, Israeli lawmakers, and others.

Dovid Bashevkin is the director of education for NCSY, the youth movement of the Orthodox Union, and an instructor at Yeshiva University, where he teaches courses on public policy, religious crisis, and rabbinic thought. He recently published Sin·a·gogue: Sin and Failure in Jewish Thought.

Elli Fischer is a translator, rabbi, and graduate student in Jewish History at Tel Aviv University. He is co-founder of HaMapah, a digital humanities project that seeks to develop tools for the quantitative analysis of rabbinic literature and the construction of rabbinic authority.

Session 2, Panel 2: Covers, Bindings and Spines re-examined

Claire Battershill (University of Toronto, Canada). 'Writing with Spines: "Shelf Isolation" and "Sorted Books"'

In 1993, the American interdisciplinary artist Nina Katchadourian began a project called "Sorted Books," which involved the thoughtful disordering of bookshelves. Katchadourian describes her process as one of perusing the books in a collection, grouping them into clusters, and then arranging the titles so that they can be "read in sequence." She intends the messages to show "that particular library's focus, idiosyncrasies, and inconsistencies." In the early part of the COVID-19 pandemic, an image became a global sensation and it brought Katchadourian's project

immediately to mind. The image came from British artist Phil Shaw, whose series of "bookshelf works" arranges real book titles on a constructed digital bookshelf. The title of his piece is "Shelf Isolation" (a title also taken up by a book recommendation series on BBC Scotland by author Damian Barr) and the image immediately became wildly popular on social media. Taken together, the spines offer a witty and hopeful take on pandemic life: "The English Patient had caught it on the beach I should have stayed home she said now she was in quarantine in the dark house of splendid isolation still hope springs eternal with a little bit of luck common sense and personal hygiene the corona book of horror stories must end soon always remember clean hands save lives and when in doubt don't go out!" Shaw's piece was so popular that it has spurred on imitators on social media (including public libraries and other institutions). In this paper, I will examine Katchadourian and Shaw's bookshelf art pieces and their imitators and will discuss the implications of creating new writings out of existing book titles. While Katchadourian's project is a 27-year-long endeavour (to date) representing an habitual artistic practice, Shaw's speaks directly to our present moment. Far from a conventional approach to bookshelf organization, these poetic arrangements of books into legible phrases with new meanings is a poignant reminder in trying times of how hopeful, joyful, poignant and creative a shelf of books, properly arranged, can be.

Claire Battershill is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Information and the Department of English at the University of Toronto.

Amanda Lastoria (Simon Fraser University, Canada), 'Buying Books and Selling Ourselves: Print Design as a Digital Mask'

The cover of a book is a mask. It shields the contents of the book, and it entices the consumer – or so the publisher and the bookseller hope. Online retailers first digitally masked the physical book with a thumbnail of the front cover. Nowadays, when the book commonly appears on a shelf in the background of a video call, its spine or front cover effectively becomes a mask that the speaker dons. @BCredibility has interpreted hundreds of assemblages of books as they have appeared in video feeds during the COVID-19 pandemic, tweeting analyses of how the books present the speaker's authority, humour and so forth. Video showing the physical book in the consumer's domestic space is an endpoint in the life cycle of print design on screen. How did we get here, to the point where covers that publishers designed to sell physical books have become digitized props that we use to sell ourselves?

In 2020 we have proliferated and amplified the ways in which we discover, acquire and use printed books online. From buying on Amazon and browsing the local library's holdings to posting #shelfies on Instagram and staging Zoom backdrops, this presentation unravels diverse on-screen representations of the book's materiality. It focuses on how specific design and production values are (not) translated from book to screen in various online environments, and what the digital masks of print design conceal and reveal about the book's physicality, its contents and its owner.

Amanda Lastoria holds North America's first PhD in Publishing (Simon Fraser University). Her dissertation uses Alice in Wonderland as a case study to interrogate how book design diversifies the text's markets and meanings. Amanda has over a decade of experience in the publishing industry and currently teaches publication design history.

Shira Belén Buchsbaum (School of Advanced Study, University of London, UK), 'It's About the Fwoomp When You Put It Down': Bookbinding Fanfiction and Reexamining Book Production Models

This paper, the concluding chapter of my MA History of the Book dissertation, discusses how the practice of bookbinding fanfiction challenges the material and practical concepts of both 'the book' and fanfiction (fic). My argument relies on interviews with 12 bookbinders who participate in Renegade Publishing, a Discord community of fic bookbinders. Their testimony on their binding

philosophy, technique, and motivation paints a complex picture of contemporary private bookbinding practices, meriting reexamination of Darnton's communication circuit.

Fanfiction is creative reader response to source texts, typically digital-born, posted and shared on website archives. The practice of printing and binding fic challenges the digital reliance of fanfiction and counters the narrative of book production as a for-profit, publicly circulated enterprise. Produced for personal use, at personal financial cost, and often as a gift for the fic author, bound fic completes what I have modeled as the fanfiction communication circuit, reciprocating author labor with gifts rather than renumeration. I argue that bookbinders' work materializes the characteristics of fan response in fandom community: gift-based, not-for-profit, and interested in affirmation and pleasure in lieu of compensation.

To the theme of this conference, many of the bookbinders began or increased their bookbinding projects during the pandemic, citing a desire for hard copies of their favorite fic as their primary motivation. Bookbinding fic suggests a volume's worth relies not on public recognition, but personal meaning. By materializing these stories from digital formats onto private bookshelves, bookbinders circumvent traditional publishing means to adapt fandom culture.

Shira Belén Buchsbaum is a student at the School of Advanced Study, University of London, completing her MA History of the Book in October 2020. She plans to attend University of Indiana, Bloomington, to pursue an MLS in 2021. More of her research can be found at sbooksbowm.tumblr.com.

Wednesday 4 November 2020

Session 3, Panel 1: Work and/or Play: Pandemic Shelfies

Christina Lupton (University of Warwick, UK/University of Copenhagen, Denmark) and Johanne Gormsen Schmidt (University of Copenhagen, Denmark), 'Women at Work: Reading and Writing during the Danish Lockdown'

The paper reflects on Danish women's fiction reading during the Spring and Summer of 2020. What did women read and when and for how long during the months when work and childcare changed so radically? As background to these sociological questions, we take our cues from recent Nordic autofiction concerned with questions of work and parenting. Like the well-known work of Karl Ove Knausgård, this fiction is invested reflexively in its own position within the gendered temporal economies of modern life. In some cases, where such fiction became the object of women's lockdown reading, it acquired another layer of reflexivity. But even without this role, autofictions such as Olga Ravn's *Mit Arbejde* (My Work) underscore the intensity with which questions of temporal access to books and reflection itself feature in current literary culture. Our Danish case study shows that lockdown brought the proximity of work, leisure, and childcare closer in a society where they are normally well separated. In this context, the role of reading as a partition between these spheres, and of novels as a way asking after their division, became more pronounced. In the next phase of our project, we'll be comparing this case study to the British one, and so the chance to compare notes at this stage would be very welcome.

Christina Lupton is professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Warwick and Director of the Institute of Modern Languages at the University of Copenhagen. She is the author of *Reading and the Making of Time in the Eighteenth-Century* and many articles covering questions of novel reading, book use, and contemporary literature. She runs the Carlsberg funded project *Lockdown Reading*, which investigates reading habits in Denmark and the UK during 2020. Her new book, *Love and the Novel: Life as a twenty-first Century Reader* is forthcoming with Profile Press.

Johanne Gormsen Schmidt has a PhD in Danish and Comparative Literature from the University of Southern Denmark and is now a postdoc in the Department of English, Germanic and Romance Studies at the University of Copenhagen. Her research is devoted to the sociology of literature, her dissertation *The Art of Insignificance. Aesthetics and Practice at the Publishing House Basilisk* investigates writers, readers, and other actors involved in making literature. Her report on the role of the Danish Arts Foundation in contemporary literary culture is soon to be published.

Natalia Kucirkova (The Open University, UK), Yasemin Allsop (University College London, UK) and Ekaterina Ryzankina (Cape Peninsula University of Technology, South Africa), 'The Shelfie phenomenon and academics: a multi-disciplinary research case study' (round table presentation and discussion)

"I paint self-portraits because I am so often alone, because I am the person I know best."

- Frida Kahlo

Self-portraits have come a long way since Kahlo's times, with current smartphone filters allowing for face-swapping with pets. Some selfies are self-less and include objects relevant to an individual, while other selfies include colourful backgrounds and signal the material worlds behind an individual. Shelfies, which focus on book shelves, can be both with and without a human face. Our multidisciplinary international research group studies shelfies with and without 'self'. Our project aims to shed light on some patterns in international shelfie-communication and its implications for visual literacy education and research. We argue that in the semiotic context of post-Covid19 communication, shelfies are a new way of signalling socio-cultural and socio-political values. Whether dynamic and presented on video calls or static and shared as photos on social media, shelfies carry messages of identity and socio-political affiliations. Our study follows a two-stages data collection: researcher self-reflection on their own shelfie practice and a cross-platform analysis of most popular shelfies on social media. We will present our findings from the first stage of the study. We have conducted six semi-structured interviews with our team members: six female academics working in the fields of education, psychology, literacy, linguistics and engineering. Through an interdisciplinary scholarly lens we have reflected on the visual, digital and material nature of our shelfie practices, our attitudes towards others' shelfies and their importance for practice in our respective disciplines.

Natalia Kucirkova (presenting) is Professor of Early Childhood Education and Development at the University of Stavanger, Norway and Professor of Reading and Children's Development at The Open University, UK. Natalia's work is concerned with social justice in children's literacy and use of technologies.

Jennifer Rowsell is Professor of Literacies and Social Innovation and Co-Deputy Head of School at the University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom. Jennifer's work is concerned with broadening notions of literacy through co-production work with youth; exploring new definitions of digital reading and writing; and applying post-structural and affect theory to literacy research methods and scholarship.

Yasemin Allsop (presenting) is a Lecturer in Education at UCL IOE in London, UK. Her research interests are mainly related to computing education and learning with digital technologies, especially in relation to metacognitive development.

Janina Wildfeuer is Assistant Professor of Language and Social Interaction at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. Janina's work is concerned with multimodal aspects of communication, i.e. the use of non-verbal, auditory or visual resources to express meaning and to reflect on identity, culture and society.

Ekaterina Rzyankina (presenting) is a Lecturer in Faculty of Engineering and Built Environments at Cape Peninsula University of Technology, in Cape Town, South Africa. Her research work is mainly related to digital literacy practices for engineering students, reading interactive e-textbooks, engagement and interaction with the digital text for engineering disciplines.

Sumin Zhao is a Lecturer in Discourse Analysis at the University of Edinburgh. Her research focuses on digital literacies of young (multilingual) children and visual social media. She has published a series of co-authored papers with Michele Zappavigna examining different forms of selfie and self practices on social media.

Session 3, Panel 2: You are what you read: or are you?

Laura Dietz (Anglia Ruskin University, UK), 'Projection or Reflection? The Pandemic Bookshelf as a Mirror for Self-Image and Personal Identity'

Pre-pandemic, the opportunity for display of one's books was a frequently cited reason for choosing print reading over e-reading. But the desired display was not always intended for others. Surveys and interviews from 2014 to 2020 confirm that for many, the most important observer of a personal bookshelf is the person to whom it belongs: a physical shelf is a means to access, commemorate, and honour a reading history and reading identity (Dietz, 2019). This makes it essential to consider bookshelves in the era of COVID-19 not only in terms of the Zoom feed, beaming a snapshot of our collections to the outside world, but also the Zoom 'self view': the digital self-portrait hovering in the corner (or commanding the centre) of our device screens. This paper will explore the phenomenon of backdrop as mirror, and compare original survey data from 2020 with pre-pandemic findings to examine curated bookshelves - including manipulated, misattributed, or appropriated bookshelves - in terms of self- as well as public image, particularly in light of the surge in digital reading (BBC News 2020a, 2020b) that renders much authentic lockdown reading effectively invisible. As U.S. lawmakers put it in a Senate Report defending reading and viewing privacy, 'the selection of books that we choose to read [is] at the core of any definition of personhood...They reflect our individuality, and they describe us as people' (Richards, 2013, p.695). This paper will further investigations of how, during COVID-19, we use bookshelves to describe ourselves to ourselves.

Laura Dietz is a Senior Lecturer in Writing and Publishing in the Cambridge School of Creative Industries at ARU. She writes novels and studies novels, publishing fiction alongside research on topics such as e-novel readership, the digital short story, online literary magazines, and the changing definition of authorship in the digital era.

Stevie Marsden (University of Derby, UK), "I take it you've read every book on the shelves?" Demonstrating taste, value, and class through bookshelves

During a video-call interview on the UK Sunday breakfast television show 'Sunday Brunch' on 12th July 2020, the comedian and writer Russell Kane was asked if he had read all of the books displayed in the expansive shelves covering the walls behind him. Kane jokingly responded that because he had a 'working class accent' it was 'good to check' that he could in fact read. He continued, saying 'there was only one way out of my estate, to read my way out, so I did'.

While made in jest, Kane's response referred to an underlying tension that the daily exposure of people's homes and bookshelves through televised video-calls during the pandemic revealed. The trend for people to be surrounded by books when featuring on television in the UK in the summer of 2020, brought to the fore debates concerning not only what books people owned, but exactly *who* owns books. Both the absence or display of books was open to scrutiny, particularly with regards to the perceived cultural and economic capital of the person sitting in front of them. Accordingly, this paper will examine how the display of personal domestic spaces during the

COVID-19 pandemic illustrated how book ownership—particularly in terms of quantity, organisation and display—remains a contentious and performative act imbued with complex representation(s) and negotiations of cultural and socio-economic capital(s). Specifically, this paper will illustrate how book ownership continues to be tied to perceptions of socio-cultural and economic distinctions of class and cultural consumption in the UK.

Stevie Marsden is a Lecturer in Publishing at the University of Derby and Tutor in Publishing at Manchester Metropolitan University. Their first monograph, *Prizing Scottish Literature: A Cultural History of the Saltire Society Literary Awards*, will be published by Anthem Press in 2021.

Session 4, Panel 1: Pandemic Bookshelves: Student views

Nelleke Moser (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands), 'A Bookshelf of the World – Bringing Students' Books inside the Classroom'

This semester, I will be teaching an online course on the material book at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Instead of using the University Library's vast collection of editions of Milton or Bunyan, as I would normally do, we will work with the materials that students find in their own homes.
Using the personal libraries of my students, we will explore how, and by whom, books are made and read in different parts of the world. Each student will choose a book that is meaningful to them, and study both the 'human presence' in the book and the 'non-human components' the book is made of. Who made the book, are there any traces that reveal the age, gender or profession of the (previous) owner, what materials were used to make the book and what is their environmental impact? The course thus combines the sociology of texts (McKenzie 1999) with the ecology of texts (Calhoun 2020). Together, students will put together an online bookshelf to display the results of their research. I would like to discuss what it means for students to share their private books in a classroom context. Will it make them feel involved, or will some students feel embarrassed, pressured or excluded? To what extent will this 'bookshelf of the world' help decolonize book history?

Nelleke Moser is Senior Lecturer in Literature and Director of the Graduate School of Humanities at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (the Netherlands). Her research focuses on the circulation of (literary) texts in manuscript after the invention of the printing press. She has published on handwritten pamphlets (Brill), miscellanies (*Huntington Library Quarterly*), and trompe l'oeil books (printnotprint.blogspot.com).

Ellen Barth (moderator), Chandni Ananth, Laura Ntoumanis, and Natalia Tolstopyat (all University of Münster, Germany), 'Access to Bookshelves during Lockdown: A Student Roundtable Discussion'

The central library of the University of Münster, Germany is adorned with two-meter-high letters that spell out GEHORCHEKEINEM: obey no one. The words are meant to serve as a reminder that critical engagement with information is essential for young scholars.1 In March 2020, Germany went into lockdown, and access to information by way of libraries and bookshelves was severely restricted— even as the summer semester went ahead online. In this roundtable discussion with past and present Book Studies students from the University of Münster, the panellists will consider the changes to and challenges of studying during lockdown, as well as the value of the material vs. virtual book(shelf). Topics to be discussed (ca. 6 minutes each plus concluding lightning round) are:

• Study practices in lockdown: How have your study practices changed due to restricted access to books and libraries (e.g. regarding reading spaces, communal study, disability and improved virtual accessibility)?

• Bookcase credibility: Have you been paying attention to the physical/virtual bookshelves of others during online classes and events? Is 'bookcase credibility' a thing among students as well?

• The evolution of a student bookshelf: How has your own bookshelf changed since the start of the lockdown to now? What influenced this (e.g. tighter budget, access to books in your reading languages, access to well-stocked libraries)?

• Lightning round: Briefly state one way the situation has affected your views on the book(shelf), Book Studies, access, or credibility?

Chandni Ananth is an M.A. student in the National and Transnational Studies program at the University of Münster. Her areas of interest include Indian Book History, translation studies and independent publishing in the 21st century.

Ellen Barth is a Research Associate in the Chair of Book Studies at the University of Münster and Executive Assistant for The Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing (SHARP). She is currently writing her dissertation on women's production of American community cookbooks from the 1950s to 1990s.

Laura Ntoumanis is an M.A. student in the National and Transnational Studies program at the University of Münster. She is currently writing her thesis on the intersection of EuroAmerican and Indigenous American book history as examined through the agents in the production of the Cherokee Phoenix newspaper of 1828.

Natalia Tolstopyat has an M.A. degree in British, American and Postcolonial Studies from the University of Münster. After working with a digital publisher in Stuttgart she returned to Münster, where she is co-chief editor of English Department's student journal. Her interests include digital reading communities, podcasting, publishing and literature.

Session 4, Panel 2: Pandemic Bookshelves in the Digital Sphere

Simon Rosenberg (Independent Scholar), 'Representation of Physical Books and Bookish Places in Video Games: "The Last of Us Part II" '

Video games are no longer merely about Italian plumbers saving a princess from a giant gorilla. For more than a decade now, video games have rivalled more traditional modes of complex narratives in storytelling, like novels and films. Big-budget games (so-called AAA games) can cost hundreds of millions of dollars in production. A big part of that expense is spent on writers and the narrative lead. Interestingly, there is no shortage of representations of physical books or bookish places (e.g. libraries, bookstores) in games. Though sometimes these elements can be seen simply as decoration, they can add insight into the story of the game. A recent example is "The Last of Us Part II" (2020), a highly anticipated, economically successful AAA game that later led to controversy among fans of the first game because of its narrative. It tells the story of two young women in a (rather fittingly) pandemic world ravaged by a parasitic fungal infection that turns people into mindless and dangerous monsters. It focusses on the themes of hate and revenge with nods to Greek mythology and classics like *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. After briefly summarising the story and explaining how it is told within the game, I will show that it uses the representation of physical books and book spaces not merely as an aesthetic backdrop within a postapocalyptic world, but rather offers an important layer to the complex narrative by using the symbolic value of the book as a material object.

Simon Rosenberg is an independent scholar focussing on book history in fifteenth, nineteenth and twenty-first century as well as book prize culture. He was research assistant at the Institute for Book Studies in Münster, Germany and later senior assistant professor at the English Department for the chair of book studies.

Paizha Stoothoff (California State University, Los Angeles, USA), 'Zoom as a Digital Medium: Bookshelves in Backgrounds throughout History'

Zoom bookshelves and their carefully (or not so carefully) curated collections are not an entirely new phenomenon. We have seen people present themselves in front of bookshelves throughout history. In 1646, Lady Anne Clifford commissioned *The Great Picture*, which includes three portraits of Lady Anne in front of books. Considering the controversy over female literacy at the time, it is no surprise that the titles reveal qualities appropriate for a woman of her age (Wheale, 1999). In *Comparative Textual Media: Transforming Humanities in the Postprint Era*, two digital humanities scholars argue that the study of text *is* the study of media (italics mine, Hayles and Pressman, 2013). Print, scroll, and electronic literature are all literature in different mediums. Similarly, I will argue that backgrounds and portraits are mediums through which we present ourselves. When we began working at home in early 2020, we experienced a paradigm-shift. Rather than adorn our offices with bookshelves, we adorned our backgrounds with them. People have begun using Zoom backgrounds to cast photos of bookshelves, including bookshelves curated by booksellers (Schwartz, P., 2020). Clearly, this is not just about books we like to read. After all, *The Great Picture* does include a copy of *Don Quixote*, which had not yet been translated into English. People in positions of power have been judging those in subjected positions based on their literacy (embodied by the bookshelf) for centuries. I will conclude by discussing what is unique about Zoom as a medium, and potential similarities to social media.

Paizha Stoothoff is the Humanities Librarian at California State University Los Angeles where she has worked for one year. She has an MLIS, as well as an MA and a BA in English. Her research interests include digital humanities and pedagogy, seventeenth century reading and society, literacy, and open access.

Leah Henrickson (University of Leeds, UK), The 'Work from Home' Aesthetic: An Exhibition of Quarantine Workspaces*

How and where are people working while in quarantine? 'The "Work from Home" Aesthetic' is an exhibition, hosted digitally on Instagram, featuring photographs of quarantine workspaces submitted by participants from around the world. This exhibition supplements the 'Bookshelves in the Age of the COVID-19 Pandemic' conference, giving individuals an opportunity to informally participate in conference proceedings. It will be publicly available before, during, and shortly after the conference on Instagram, and will be archived on the EUREAD-IT public portal for post-conference viewing. The author will produce a short descriptive and analytical writeup of the exhibition prior to the conference, submitted by 26 October 2020. Participants will be asked to submit a photograph of their quarantine workspace, with a short (maximum 50 words) accompanying textual description and/or elaboration. Photographs may be candid or curated, unedited or edited. Submissions will be anonymised, but participants will be asked to share their country of residence for digital mapping purposes. Generic hashtags will be added to posts to increase visibility and interaction. Books are anticipated to be part of many of these photos. Photos, however, are not limited to those including books. Rather, this exhibition aims to draw attention to the myriad material and digital media of interpersonal communication and self-reflection people now use, as well as how people choose to publicly portray their uses of those media. This exhibition showcases the many ways in which people engage with texts, technologies, and each other in an enforced-digital age.

Leah Henrickson is a Lecturer in Digital Media at the University of Leeds. Her research applies book history frameworks to instances of human-computer collaboration, computer-generated texts, and artificial intelligence. Follow her on Twitter @leahhenrickson.

'Bookshelves in the Age of the COVID-19 Pandemic: an online conference'

3-4 November 2020 (ONLINE via Microsoft Teams)

Organised by The Open University and supported by SHARP (The Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing)

Conference Organisers

Dr Sally Blackburn-Daniels (Sally.Blackburn-Daniels@open.ac.uk)

Dr Edmund King (Edmund.King@open.ac.uk)

Prof Corinna Norrick-Rühl (cnorrick@uni-muenster.de)

Dr Shafquat Towheed (Shafquat.Towheed@open.ac.uk)