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Whose Play Scripts Are Being Published? A Diversity Audit of One Library's Collection in Conversation with the Broader Play Publishing World

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### Author

Stone, Scott M

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# **Whose Play Scripts are Being Published? A Diversity Audit of one Library's Collection in Conversation with the Broader Play Publishing World**

## **ABSTRACT**

*This study is a diversity audit of play script orders during FY2011 and FY2019 to determine if University of California, Irvine Libraries' orders had shifted to reflect the increased demand for diverse playwrights. The audit also examined the larger publishing landscape for play scripts during these specific years to determine if plays by diverse playwrights were being published and available for acquisition. The audit demonstrates that both the play script orders and publishing landscape have greatly diversified; however, further work needs to be done to continue diversifying local acquisitions with what is being published, so that library collections of play scripts reflect the university and country's demographics.*

*Keywords: diversity audit; collection development; play scripts; drama; publishing trends; author demographics*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Drama faculty and students regularly read a variety of plays for pedagogical purposes, to prepare for auditions, and for personal enjoyment. Some have specific plays that they want to read, but based on many research consultations and personal conversations, many just want to read a swath of plays that fit certain criteria. Over the past decade working as an academic performing arts librarian and the sole selector for play scripts for University of California, Irvine (UCI)

Libraries, the author has noticed a marked shift in this criteria from categories like “award winning plays” or “plays professionally produced at local theatres” to “plays by female playwrights” or “plays by LGBTQ+ African American playwrights.” Discussions with faculty and students indicated some of the reasons for their reading shifts were due to the “50/50 in 2020 Initiative.” This grassroots movement, sponsored by the League of Professional Theatre Women, actively promotes gender equity on the professional American stage, with a goal of half of all professional theatrical productions being written by a female playwright by the year 2020.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, the author had begun to consciously create a more inclusive collection thanks in part to having participated in diversity-related professional development, such as taking the *Library Journal* month-long asynchronous class “Evaluating, Auditing, and Diversifying Your Collections,” as well as actively participating in a local, unofficial librarian discussion group at UCI centered on this topic. This meant that plays were purchased not only based on the playwright’s name recognition, where the play had been produced, awards, and similar factors, but also taking into account thematic content and playwright demographics that represented a wide array of backgrounds and views. As a result of heightened personal awareness and a student body that more actively cares about diversity, equity and inclusion, the author decided it was time to perform a diversity audit of play script that had been acquired by the UCI Libraries.

The audit sought to address three questions:

1. What are the demographics of the playwrights of the plays acquired by UCI Libraries?

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<sup>1</sup> 50/50 in 2020 was initially created by Susan Jones in 2009 as a way to stop talking about the issue of gender parity in theatre, and instead to pledge actual changes. An excellent overview of the discussion and actions leading up to this movement’s start can be found in: Jenny Lyn Bader, “A Brief History of the Gender Parity Movement in Theatre” Howlround Theatre Commons, 4 March 2017, <https://howlround.com/brief-history-gender-parity-movement-theatre>.

2. Have these demographics changed from FY2011 to FY2019?

3. How demographically representative are the plays acquired by UCI Libraries of the plays published each fiscal year (i.e., those actually available for libraries to purchase)?

### **BACKGROUND**

The University of California, Irvine is a R1 university with over 36,000 students. According to the “University Facts” page, it is a Hispanic-serving institutions, meaning that “fully one-quarter of [its] undergraduate student body identify as Latino and that half of all students receive financial aid,” and it is also designated as an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving school. The largest ethnic group on campus is Asian and Pacific Islander (35.1%), with Hispanic (22.5%), International (19.1%), White, non-Hispanic (15.7%), Black (3.3%), American Indian/Alaskan native (0.5%), and Unknown (3.8%) making up the remainder of the student body. The Department of Drama, located in the Claire Trevor School of the Arts, offers Bachelor, Master, and Doctoral programs. In the 2017/18 academic year there were 251 students enrolled in the department. While the Bachelor program presents a well-rounded liberal arts education that includes scholarly-focused classes (e.g., theatre history), the vast majority of these students and all of the Masters students are practitioner-focused; only the PhD program is explicitly defined as a scholarly research-focused degree.

The UCI Libraries hold approximately 3.9 million physical volumes, with access to many more electronic resources. It is difficult to determine exactly how many play scripts are held in the collection since they are interfiled with other literature, literary criticism, poetry, and similar materials; however, a rough estimate based on items from publishers specializing in plays, and

accounting for larger university presses releasing new editions of classic works, is approximately 6,000 play scripts. All play scripts are firm ordered, and are primarily selected by the Research Librarian for Performing Arts with occasional input from faculty and graduate students.

Play scripts are published by many different publishers, both scholarly and trade, but the majority come from trade publishers that specialize in this type of material. The largest companies, like Dramatists, Oberon, and Samuel French, generally publish around 100 each year, and most other publishers have a significantly smaller output. According to a search run on the book ordering platform GOBI, there were approximately 600 different play scripts written by a single playwright (i.e., not including plays published in multi-author anthologies) published during FY2019.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***Diversity Audits of Collections in Academic Libraries***

Jenny Lynne Semenza, Regina Koury, and Sandra Shropshrie (2017) performed a comprehensive literature review on diversity in academic libraries. They concluded that the literature recognizes the need to explore diversity and inclusion through the framework of library collections but “there were only a handful of publications on these topics” (Semenza, Koury, and Shropshrie, 90). Probably the most frequently cited piece of literature is Matthew P. Ciszek and Courtney L. Young’s article (2010) that discusses various possible approaches to performing diversity audits in large research collections. They mention several standard approaches like comparison to standard lists and creating diversity statements in collection development policies; however, their most unique contribution is the focus of diversity codes entered into order records

at Pennsylvania State University. Much of the rest of the literature, like this paper, focus on auditing smaller niche collections—whether in a large research library or smaller academic collection.

Maureen J. Delaney-Lehman's article (1996) on assessing diversity in library collections highlights the inherent difficulty of performing this task, as the Lake Superior State University library had to create their own standardized bibliography of core diverse resources before they could even perform an audit of locally held resources. While this article is now more than 20 years old, the problem still exists. One practical response to creating standard lists of diverse resources comes from Romany Manuell et al. (2019) at the Monash University Library. In addition to their own research, the staff at this Art, Design, and Architecture Library reached out to faculty for recommendations of favorite books by diverse authors. This list was then used to purchase new materials for the collection.

Other librarians have examined the diversity of non-monographic collections, like primary sources in special collections, electronic resources, and periodicals. Alice Cruz (2019) takes a slightly different look at collecting diverse materials as one part of her broader paper looking at diversity in academic libraries. She highlights several libraries such as the University of Mississippi that are intentionally collecting diverse primary sources in their special collections and archives.

Only one article specifically focuses on electronic resources. Marie Kennedy et al. (2018) at Loyola Marymount University attempted to assess the diversity of their electronic resources. Their limited study relied on library student workers performing searches on predetermined diversity-related keywords to assess the diversity and inclusivity of the databases' content. Susan

A Vega García (2000) performed a comprehensive audit of ARL institutions that held African American and U.S. Latino periodical subscriptions and discovered that African American periodicals were indexed and collected much more comprehensively than U.S. Latino periodicals. This suggests that there is a greater focus on making African American-centered literature more discoverable than for Latino literature.

### *Diversity Audits of Collections in Public Libraries*

While not necessarily specific to the academic library environment, there have been several articles about diversity audits of young adult and children's collections. Annabelle Mortensen (2019) aptly describes a diversity audit of children's literature and their programming at the Skokie (IL) Public Library. Virginia Kay Williams and Nancy Deyoe (2014) performed an even more comprehensive audit of American public, school, and academic libraries collecting diverse youth materials. They used standard bibliographies and checked OCLC holdings, and determined that more than one-third of public libraries with a budget over \$100,000 did not meet minimum representation levels in their youth collections.

### *Audits of Drama Library Collections*

Only one article has been written about assessing drama collections—and that was done almost 30 years ago. Marina Snow (1990) assessed the “core” theatre and costume books (i.e., those classified in PN and GT, and not those scattered throughout the rest of the collection) at California State University, Sacramento by using the National Shelflist Count. This assessment was done for collection comprehension and did not mention diversity or inclusion.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Advanced search functions in GOBI were used to create the lists of plays studied in this audit. Initially, lists were created using a date limiter of items that had been profiled during each FY (i.e., 7/1/2010-6/30/2011 and 7/1/2018-6/30/2019) and were assigned the literary type “playscript.” The full bibliographic records were then exported to an Excel spreadsheet for further data cleanup and limits.

Only plays by a single author that were published during the years under consideration (i.e., 2010, 2011, 2018, and 2019) were kept in the pool. This eliminated plays previously published but had been reprinted or offered electronically for the first time during this time period. It did not weed out plays that had been previously published by one publisher but then republished by another, which occurs regularly enough that selectors need to be wary of this when collecting plays. Duplicates of the same title were removed, which prevented the same titles from being counted twice (or more) due to being simultaneously published in multiple formats (e.g., paper and electronic). Finally, only plays from the nine most prolific trade publishers were kept in the study. This primarily weeded out plays published by scholarly presses, which tend to publish new editions of classic plays with modern translations and/or commentary.

However, this excluded publishers that either do not primarily publish plays, that have extremely small outputs, or that do not work with GOBI (most notably Broadway Play Publishing and Playscripts, Inc.). Despite this limitation, GOBI was used because it allows limiting searches to just “playscripts.” Worldcat, which would provide a more comprehensive view of plays published in a given time span, does not provide any tools to distinguish plays from other books (i.e., literature, poetry, criticism, etc.) since there are no distinct MARC fields



or LCSH that are consistently applied to play scripts. The nine publishers included in this study were: Bloomsbury/Methuen (counted as a single entity in this study because Bloomsbury publishes their play scripts under the Methuen name according to their website), Dramatic, Dramatists, Faber and Faber, Nick Hern, Oberon, Samuel French, Talonbooks, and Theatre Communications Group. Consequently, after all limitations of titles had occurred, the FY2011 list held 385 titles (49.4% of the 779 items in the original list) and the FY2019 list held 446 titles (25.2% of the 1770 items in the original list) for a total of 831 plays. This much reduced percentage of plays in FY2019 compared to FY2011 is due to the fact that many older plays were republished electronically in FY2019 and were therefore not counted as new publications for the purpose of this study.

With the list of plays compiled, the author researched the demographic information for the playwright of each play and input this information into a Google spreadsheet. Information captured included the playwright's gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and nationality. Before describing this portion of the methodology, it is important to understand the limitations and potential pitfalls with collecting demographic data. Many of these demographic facets are difficult to accurately capture if they are not self-identified. Therefore, assumptions were sometimes made based on available information to either categorize playwrights into certain demographic areas or to leave some demographics unknown for that playwright. This issue was extensively studied and discussed by Tyler H. McCormick et al. (2017) in a demographic study that examined how people categorized others solely by looking at an image. Almost 83% of images were correctly classified for ethnicity. While this is not perfect, they found it to be acceptable for using the data for further analysis.

In this play script diversity audit, perhaps the most commonly occurring assumption was categorizing a playwright as heterosexual if they had a partner of the opposite sex, unless there was definitive information indicating they were otherwise. While this assumption will not always be accurate and contributes to bisexual erasure, it was still used since statistically it should be correct the vast majority of the time. The other main assumption that occurred was assigning playwrights to be “white” solely based on their appearance in publicity pictures. This was deemed necessary as many people of color will self-identify their racial identity; however, most non-Hispanic, white people do not identify their ethnicity in biographical materials. After making these assumption, any demographic that the author did not feel confident about categorizing was marked as “unknown.”

Frequently consulted resources included the playwrights’ own websites, playwrights’ pages on publishers’ sites, Wikipedia, New Play Exchange, and interviews. Gender was determined by pronouns used in official biographies. Sexual orientation<sup>2</sup> was primarily determined by statements of playwright’s personal partnerships on their personal sites and in interviews. Ethnicity was primarily determined by racial categorizations in Wikipedia and New Play Exchange in conjunction with examination of pictures and place of birth. Nationality was determined by place of birth and statements of citizenship.

## RESULTS

### *Gender*

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<sup>2</sup> While “transgender” is a gender identity and not sexual orientation, due to how commonly it is grouped together with non-heterosexual orientation [e.g., LGBTQ+] the author chose to likewise continue this grouping.

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Overall, of the 831 total plays studied, 525 (63.2%) were written by male playwrights, 304 (36.6%) were written by female playwrights, and 2 (0.2%) were written by playwrights of an unknown gender. Closer examination of the plays published by year shows that there was a distinct change in the gender of published playwrights from FY2011 to FY2019. In FY2011, 274 (71.2%) of the plays were written by male playwrights, whereas only 111 (28.8%) were written by female playwrights. In FY2019, this markedly shifted to 251 (56.3%) of the plays being written by men and 193 (43.3%) of the plays written by women.

[Insert Table 1 near here]

Of the plays collected by UCI, there were 104 items purchased from those published in FY2011 and 112 purchased from FY2019. In FY2011, 38.5% of the plays were written by female playwrights, and 45.5% of the same category were purchased from the FY2019 offerings. Overall, female playwrights wrote 42.1% of the purchased plays, 56.9% by male playwrights, and 0.9% by playwrights of unknown gender.

### *Ethnicity*

White playwrights wrote 706 (84.9%) of the plays published during these two years. Another 103 (12.4%) were written by playwrights of color (defined as anyone not of white, non-Hispanic ethnicity), and 22 (2.6%) were written by playwrights of an unknown ethnicity. The number of published plays written by playwrights of color more than doubled from FY2011 to FY2019. In FY2011 only 33 (8.6%) of the plays were written by playwrights of color; however, in FY2019, 70 (15.7%) of the plays were written by playwrights of color.

[Insert Table 2 near here]

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Of the plays written by playwrights of color, 50 (48.5%) were written by Black playwrights, 29 (28.2%) by playwrights of Asian/Pacific Islander ethnicity, 12 (11.7%) were written by Latinx playwrights, 10 (9.7%) by multi-ethnic playwrights, and 2 (1.9%) by Indigenous playwrights. Each individual ethnic group almost doubled exactly in size from FY2011 to FY2019—Asian/Pacific Islander plays went from 10 to 19, Black playwrights from 17 to 33, Latinx from 4 to 8—with the exceptions of multi-ethnic playwrights that went from 1 to 9 and Indigenous that remained at 1 for each year.

[Insert Table 3 near here]

For UCI, white playwrights wrote 88.5% of the purchased plays in FY2011 but only 65.2% of the FY2019 plays. Other than 2.7% of the FY2019 plays written by playwrights of unknown ethnicities, all others (32.1%) were written by playwrights of color. Reflective of which plays were available to purchase, in both years separately and overall, plays by Black playwrights were the largest sub-section of collected playwrights of color, followed by Asian/Pacific Islander, Latinx, multi-ethnic, and then Indigenous playwrights.

### *Sexual orientation*

Sexual orientation was the most difficult demographic to determine—336 (40.4%) plays were written by playwrights of unknown sexual orientation. For the remaining 495 plays, 378 (76.4%) were written by heterosexual playwrights and 117 (23.6%) by LGBTQ+ playwrights. This demographic stayed fairly consistent for the plays written by playwrights whose demographic is known between studied years, as 199 (77.7%) and 179 (74.9%) were written by heterosexual

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playwrights in FY2011 and FY2019 respectively. Similarly, 57 (22.3%) and 60 (25.1%) were written by LGBTQ+ playwrights in FY2011 and FY2019.

[Insert Table 4 near here]

Heterosexual playwrights wrote 55.8% of the FY2011 plays, 19.2% by LGBTQ+ playwrights, and 25% by playwrights with unknown sexual orientations purchased by UCI. For FY2019, heterosexual playwrights wrote 39.3%, LGBTQ+ wrote 16.1%, and 44.6% by playwrights with unknown sexual orientations.

### *Publisher analysis*

The publishers are all either based in North America (Canada and the United States) or in England. The North American publishers—Dramatic, Dramatists, Samuel French, Talonbooks, and Theatre Communications Group—generally published plays by playwrights from North America. In FY2011, 83.9% of their plays (177 of 223) were written by North American playwrights, 8.5% (19 of 223) were written by British playwrights, and 7.6% (17 of 223) were written by playwrights from other countries. The British publishers—Bloomsbury/Methuen, Faber and Faber, Nick Hern, and Oberon—generally published plays by British playwrights. In FY2011, 71.0% of their plays (115 of 162) were written by British playwrights, 9.9% (16 of 162) were written by North American playwrights, and 19.1% (31 of 162) by playwrights from other countries. In FY2019, the British publishers had a similar breakdown of playwright nationality; however, the North American publishers increased the number of British and other foreign playwrights, and therefore consequently decreased the number of North American playwrights.

[Insert Table 5 near here]

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The author was curious to see if any particular trends would emerge when examining the playwright demographics in correlation to the publisher. With the exception of Dramatic and Talonbooks, a larger percentage of the publishers' output was written by female playwrights in FY2019 than in FY2011. Most remarkably, Nick Hern's output had a massive shift from 11 plays (30.6% of that year's output) by female playwrights in FY2011 to 55 (64.0%) in FY2019—quintupling the number of plays written by women! In FY2019, Theatre Communications Group published plays equally by gender, and Oberon was close with 45.5% by female playwrights. Overall, Nick Hern led the way with 54.1% of all plays written by females, followed by Theatre Communications Group (46.2%) and Dramatic (41.7%). On the less diverse side, only 14.3% of all the plays published by Talonbooks were written by female playwrights and only 18.8% by Bloomsbury/Methuen.

[Insert Table 6 near here]

Talonbooks published the largest percentage of plays by playwrights of color (38.1%), with 50% of their FY2019 output by this group. The only other publisher with more than 15% of their total output by playwrights of color was Theatre Communications Group (34.6%). However, Samuel French (19.7%), Dramatic (16.7%), and Oberon (15.5%) all had more than 15% when solely considering their FY2019 publications. The publishers with the smallest percentage of total output written by playwrights of color were Faber and Faber (3.9%) and Bloomsbury/Methuen (5%).

The majority of publishers were fairly consistent in the percentage of plays published by LGBTQ+ playwrights. Dramatists led the way with 20.8% of all plays by this group of playwrights, and all other publishers had between 10-15% of their total play output. When only

looking at the subgroup of plays written by publishers of a known sexual orientation, Dramatists still led the pack with 30.6% (26 of 85). For this same subgroup of plays, most of the rest of the publishers were in the low-to-mid 20 percents; however, both Faber and Faber (15.8%; 6 of 38) and Theatre Communications Group (8.3%; 2 of 24) fell behind the other publishers.

## DISCUSSION

The demographics of the playwrights who have been published, and consequently the plays purchased at UCI, have changed over the course of the past decade. Almost 75% more female playwrights were published in FY2019 than in FY2011. The number of plays written and published by playwrights of color has more than doubled (112% increase); however, the number of plays by LGBTQ+ playwrights has only seen a 5.3% modest increase. This move towards diversifying the plays available through these major play publishers is certainly a positive move forward, but do these demographics mirror the population at large and the population of the theatre world?

Progress has certainly been made, but playwright gender parity has not yet been achieved by American trade publishers who focus on play scripts. According to the official United States Census Bureau 2018 census estimate, 50.8% of the population is female. The number of female playwrights increased to 48.2% of all studied plays in FY2019—a significant change from 28.8% just eight years earlier in FY2011. While this is still below the national estimated female population, it is extremely close to gender parity. However, this percentage dips when only looking at publishers based in the United States (Dramatic, Dramatists, Samuel French, and Theatre Communications Group) and that are more likely to publish American playwrights. Only 39.1% (150 of 384) of the all the plays studied by these publishers were written by female

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playwrights. However, these American publishers did increase their percentage from 36.3% (77 of 212) in FY2011 to 41.9% (72 of 172) in FY 2019.

There was a large increase in the number of playwrights of color that were published (8.6% in FY2011 to 15.7% in FY2019). However, with almost 40% of the United States' population being people of color, this doesn't nearly mirror the actual population—18.3% is Latinx, 13.4% is Black, 6.1% is Asian/Pacific Islander, 2.7% is multi-ethnic, and 1.3% is Indigenous. That being said, a large step forward did occur specifically by American publishers. These publishers moved from only 9.0% (19 of 212) of their FY2011 plays being written by playwrights of color to 20.3% (35 of 172) of their FY2019 plays.

Sexual orientation is the one area where the distribution of published plays exceeds the national estimated population of LGBTQ+ individuals. According to Gallup polls, in 2017, 4.5% of the American population identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (Newport, n.d.). As previously stated, 23.6% of plays written by playwrights of a known sexual orientation were written by LGBTQ+ individuals. Even assuming that all unknown playwrights were heterosexual—which is highly unlikely—15.9% of all plays published by American publishers were written by LGBTQ+ playwrights. This is significantly higher than the general population of the United States. Interestingly the number of playwrights with unknown sexual orientation increased from FY2011 to FY2019. Perhaps this is because playwrights are now less likely to share personal information in their professional materials, or perhaps this is because many of the playwrights published in FY2019 are earlier in their careers and have not had as many opportunities to be interviewed and share this information about themselves?



The data has confirmed that the published plays are not representative of the general American population, but are they representative of the professional drama world? Membership of the Dramatists Guild of America, the professional association for playwrights and other dramatic writers, was 43.7% female in 2017 (Jordan, n.d.). This is actually fairly close to the percentage of plays published by trade publishers based in the United States. Unfortunately, data for member ethnicity or sexual orientation is not available.

It is possible part of the difficulty in purchasing plays for library collections that are more inclusive is the reliance on major trade publishers. While all items marked as literary type “playscript” by GOBI were reviewed, it is possible that major publishers—such as those studied here—have been privileged for purchase by the author more than lesser known publishers who might be publishing plays by more diverse playwrights. According to a diversity survey of major American publishers conducted by Lee & Low Books, 79% of the employees in the publisher industry is white. This lack of diversity in the publishing field itself is a strong contender why “the majority of books look...predominantly white” (Low, 26 January 2016). Although the Lee & Low survey did not encompass any of the trade publishers studied here, one might assume they have similar employee demographics. When examining these publishers more closely, only three—Faber and Faber, Talonbooks, and Theatre Communications Group—have public statements related to diversity and inclusion, even though all of the publishers made strides forward to publish plays by a wider range of diverse playwrights in at least one demographic area.

What does all of this mean for collecting plays in the UCI Libraries? The numbers indicate that plays added to the collection in FY2019 had more diverse playwrights than those

the plays added in FY2011. This was heartening—and expected—since the author has consciously been selecting plays for the past several years that would be more inclusive.

Allowing oneself to celebrate small victories, the author was particularly thrilled at the very large increase in plays by playwrights of color (from 11.5% in FY2011 to 32.1% in FY2019) and the more modest increase in female playwrights (38.5% in FY2011 to 45.5% in FY2019). However, it was startlingly to see how small a number of the plays (4.9% or 41 of 832) were by Asian/Pacific Islander and Latinx playwrights combined.

Does a librarian have a responsibility to create a collection that reflects their local population? Public libraries try to purchase materials in non-English languages to meet the needs of local non-English speakers. Academic libraries should likewise attempt to purchase materials that are written by people that reflect the diversity of their community. Since UCI's student population is 57.6% Asian American and Latinx, this study demonstrates that it might not be possible to purchase plays by playwrights of these ethnicities by major play publishers in adequate numbers to reflect local diversity. Consequently, additional effort is required to identify, purchase, and make these plays available and to better enrich the collection. Some methods to identify potential purchases include: follow professional theatre companies that actively promote and commission plays by playwrights of these ethnicities,<sup>3</sup> read posts on professional theatre sites that tend to regularly include subjects related to diversity and inclusion,<sup>4</sup> and become more familiar with niche publishers or bookstores that specialize in

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<sup>3</sup> Such as Ma-Yi Theatre Company in New York City, East West Players in Los Angeles, Borderlands Theater in Tucson, and El Teatro Campesino in San Juan Bautista, California.

<sup>4</sup> Such as Howlround Theatre Commons, 50 Playwrights Project, and Asian American Theatre Review.

publishing and selling materials by playwrights of a particular background.<sup>5</sup> Like many things worth doing right, this will take time and effort that might be difficult to find in a librarian's already full schedule.

This audit was a very clear lesson that collection development needs to be done consciously and with great care in order to create a local collection that actually reflects the local population, and that selectors probably will need to go outside of standard acquisition channels (i.e., GOBI) to identify and procure items to do so. Moving forward it will be important to continue to collect demographic data so it moves from being a “project” into just part of the normal workflow, as suggested by Ciszek and Young (2010, 159). Not only should the selector's mindset be focused on creating an inclusive collection, but they should have the data—not just gut feelings—to regularly check themselves. As seen in this audit, even though the author did create a more inclusive collection, having data to actively examine earlier in the process would have illuminated the gaps in Latinx and Asian American playwrights.

## CONCLUSION

Demographic data for the playwrights of hundreds of plays was collected to perform a diversity audit of the plays collected by the UCI Libraries and how this fit into what plays were actually being published by major trade publishers and being made available for purchase. This data clearly shows that plays published in FY2019 were much more diverse and inclusive than those published in FY2011. This statement holds especially true for female playwrights, who wrote almost half of the plays published this past year. Published LGBTQ+ playwrights are more

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<sup>5</sup> Such as NoPassport Press [focused on Latinx and female authors], AsianAmericanBooks.com [focused on books by or about Asian Americans], and Latin American Book Stores [focused on books from and about Latin America].

represented than would be expected based on estimates of the general population. Progress towards the amount of published playwrights of color more accurately mirroring national demographics occurred, but there is significant work that still needs to be done—and it should be done faster. Even though the national population of people of color is growing faster than white, non-Hispanic people, if the amount of published plays by playwrights of color were to grow at the same rate as the past ten years it would take nearly 20 more years for this number to mirror the current demographic.

Many studies have limitations, and this one certainly does too. Even though many of these demographics were not self-reported, the author feels confident that they most likely reflect the studied playwrights. If more information were available, it would be interesting to examine other aspects of diversity such as (dis)ability, neurodiversity, and socioeconomic status as they relate to published playwrights. Additionally, this study only focused on the publishers that publish the majority of new plays each year. A more comprehensive study should include other publishers that have more specialized focuses. It also does not take into account plays that were published in anthologies, an important publishing modality particularly for new playwrights without established reputations.

While it was excellent to see the increase in the number of plays by female playwrights and playwrights of color both being published and made available in the UCI Libraries' collection, the author also wanted to ensure that these plays were discoverable by interested users. Traditional RDA cataloging using LCSH generally does not help users discover playwrights' demographics, hence the regular questions by students looking to discover plays from authors of diverse background. Moving outside of the confines of the library catalog, the

author created a website (<https://tagpacker.com/user/uci.drama.library> ) so students could benefit from the data collected during this study to discover many plays and become more well-rounded artists. This site, created on the freely available resource Tagpacker, allows “tags” to be added to bookmarks; in this case, “tags” of playwrights’ demographics, cast information, play synopsis, play themes, etc. that are combined with the play’s permanent URL in the UCI Libraries’ catalog. As just one example of this site’s use, students could quickly find plays by an African American female playwright that includes four female cast members. While it currently only includes plays added to the library from July 1, 2017, it will be regularly updated as more plays are added to the collection, and to include plays purchased in previous years.

Even though the published plays are not as diverse as one might want them to be, the author hopes that this paper will help other librarians and those interested in creating inclusive library play script collections, and more inclusive collections period, be more aware and make more informed decisions. If we purchase diverse plays then publishers will see markets for them exists, and will hopefully continue to publish them at an even greater rate.

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Table 1. Playwrights' gender

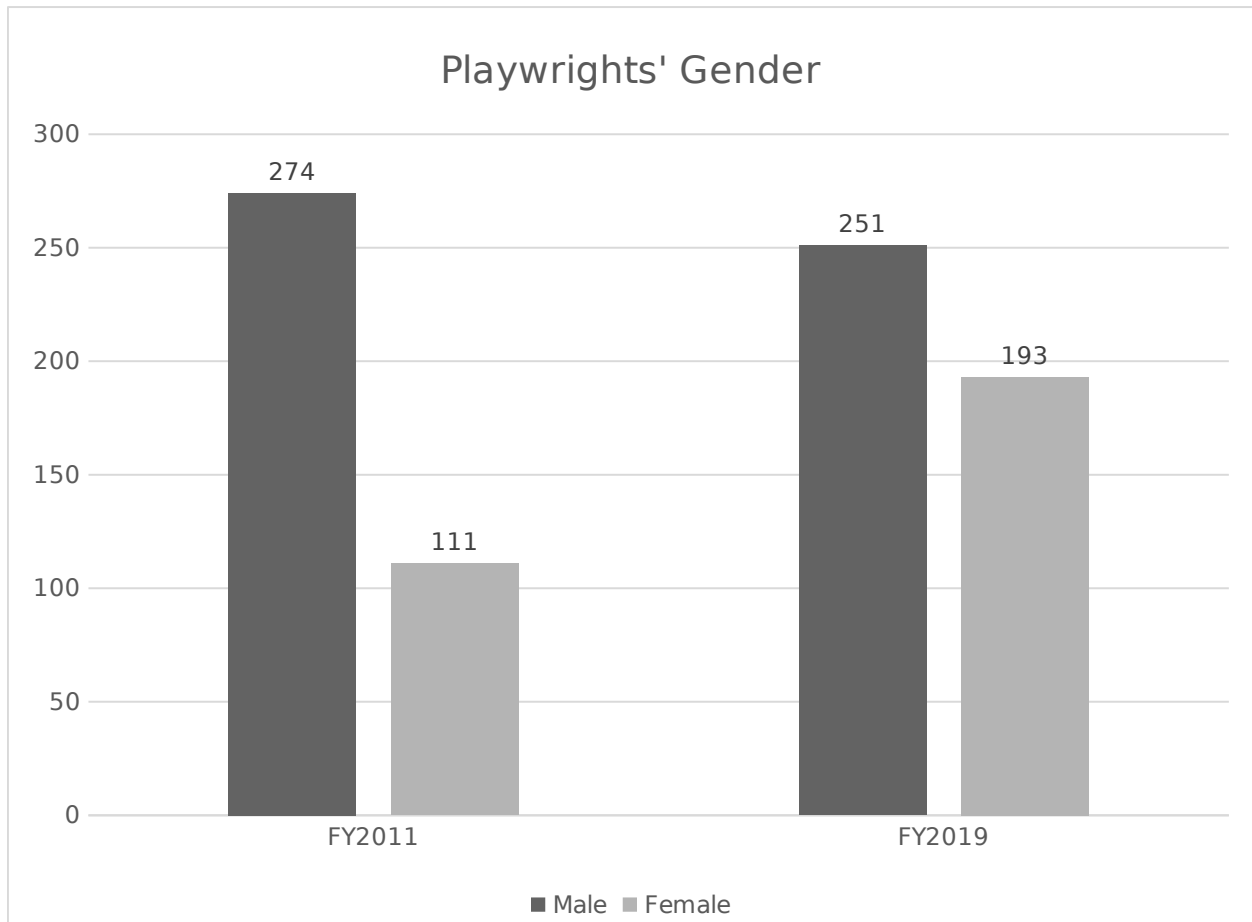




Table 2. Playwrights' ethnicity

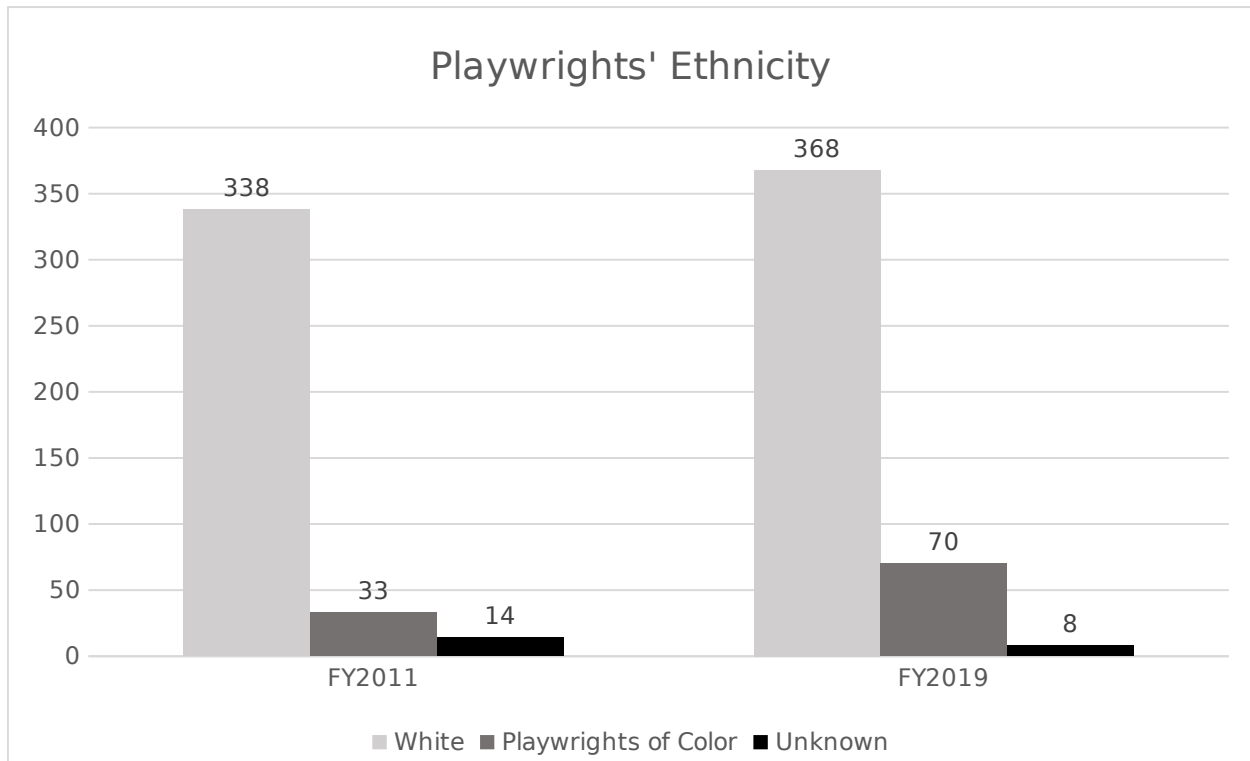


Table 3. Playwrights of Color

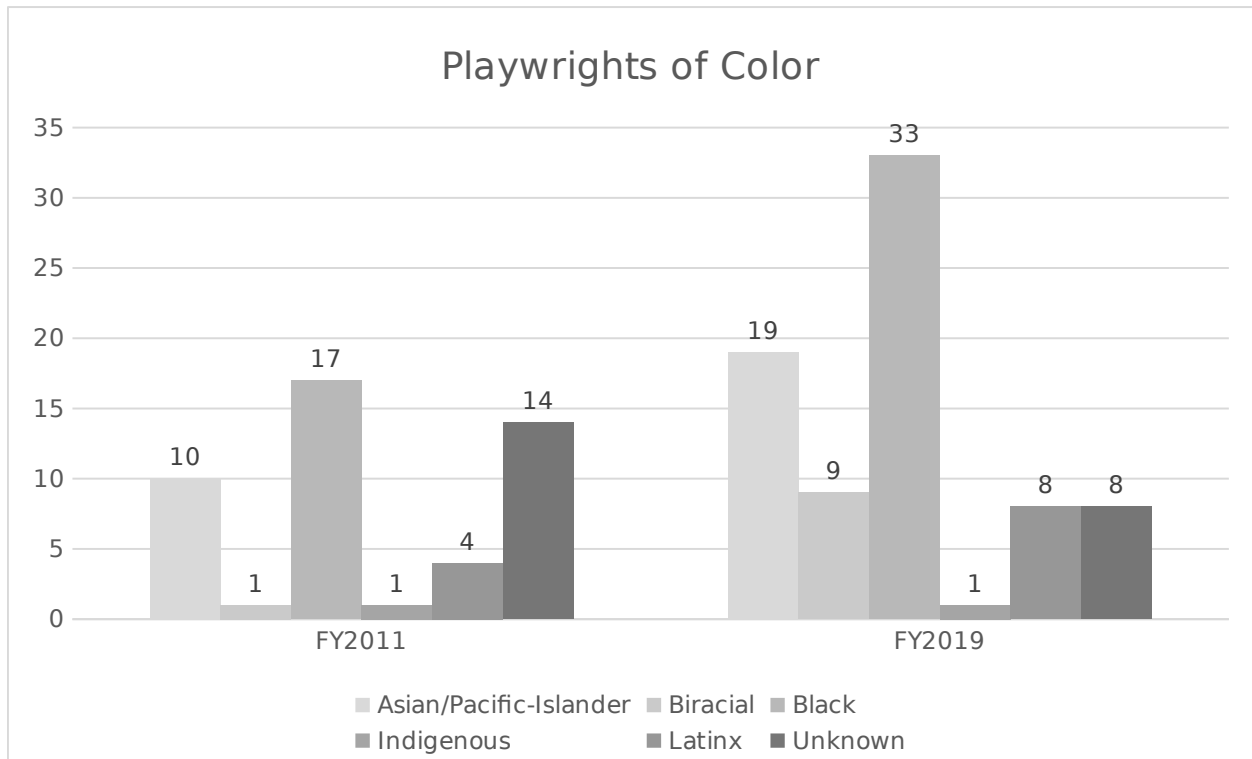


Table 4. Playwrights' Sexual Orientation

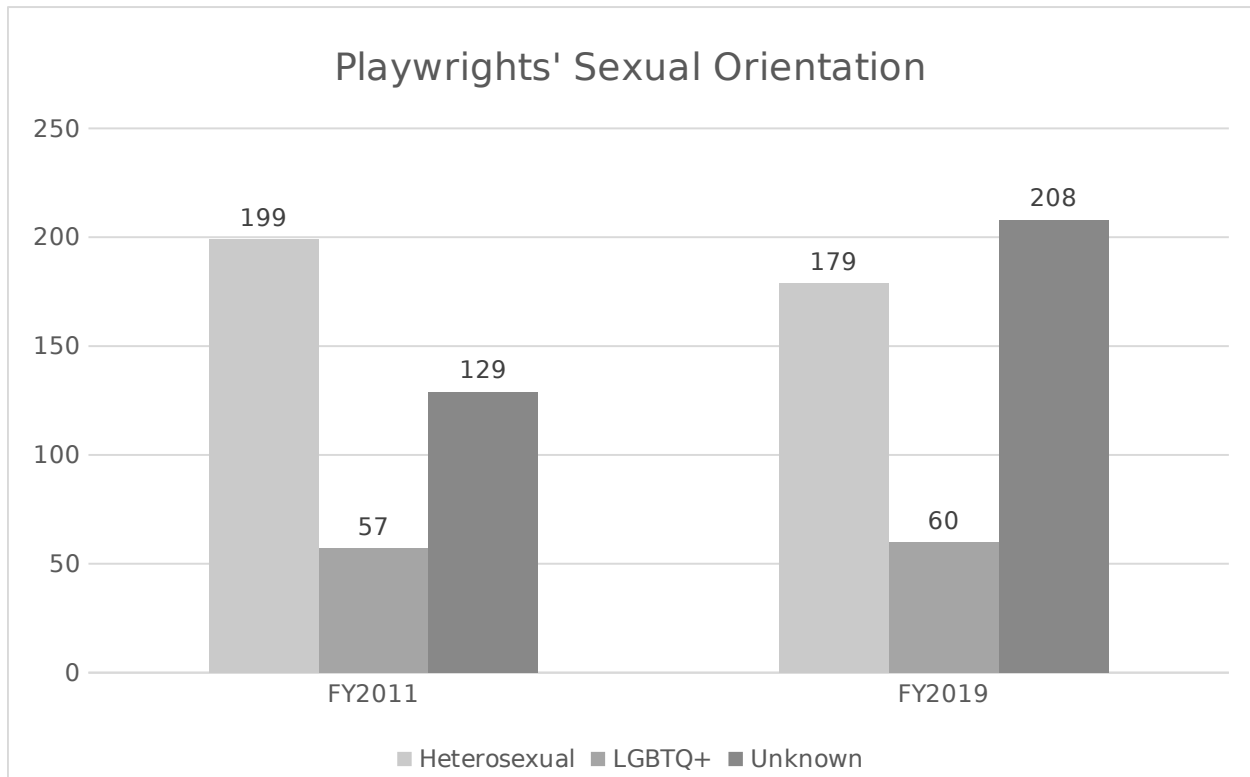


Table 5. Playwrights' Nationality

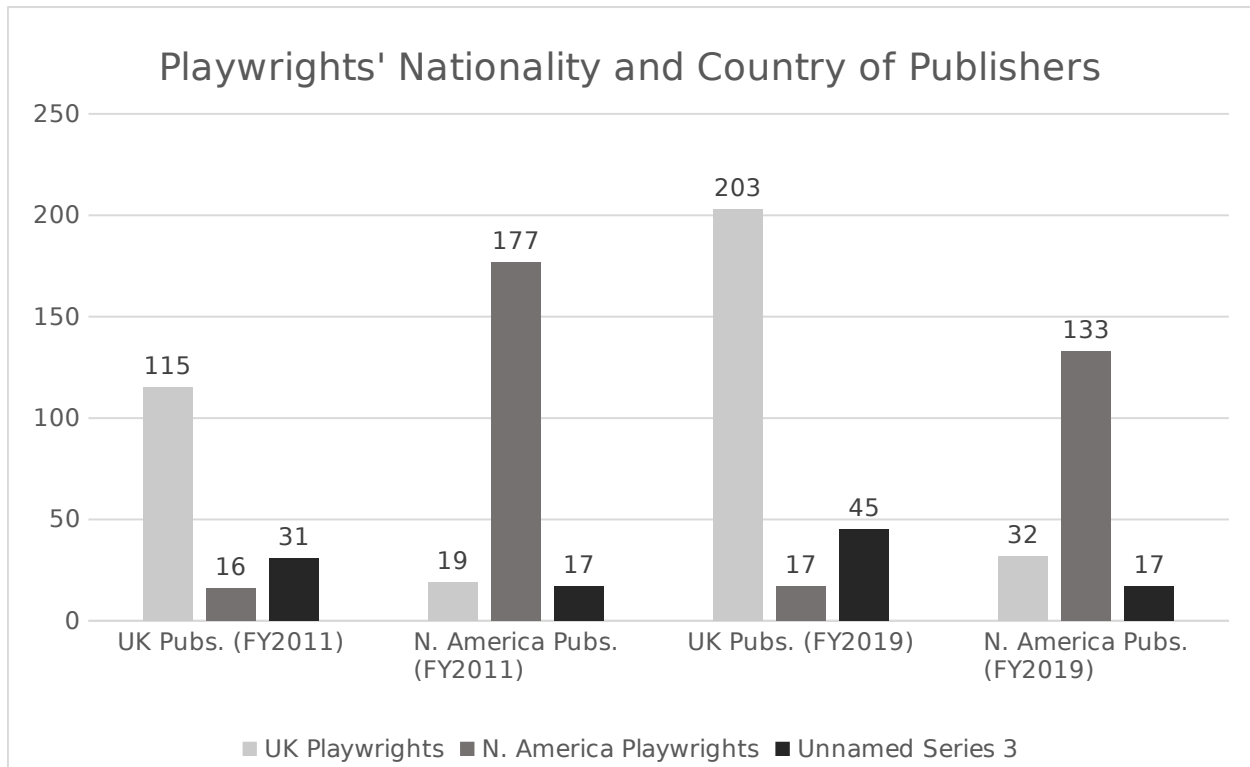


Table 6. Playwrights' Gender by Publisher

