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Literary victimhood

by [Anthony Daniels](#)

Regarding victimhood and its literary cachet

On August 22, 1993, it was announced that a novel entitled *The Hand that Signed the Paper* by Helen Demidenko had won the annual Vogel Prize for a hitherto unpublished manuscript by an Australian author under the age of thirty-five. The award consisted of A\$13,500 and publication by the reputable firm of Allen and Unwin—the publishers of Bertrand Russell, among others. Her book was soon to win two further literary prizes: the 1995 Miles Franklin Prize for the best novel concerning Australian life (a previous winner having been Patrick White, the Nobel laureate), and the Gold Medal of the Australian Literature Society.

Helen Demidenko was a striking figure. She was six feet tall and had nearly waist-length blond hair that was so fair it was almost white. When she won the Vogel Prize she was only twenty-two, a recent graduate in English literature with high honors from Queensland University. She wa ...

Anthony Daniels's most recent book is *In Praise of Prejudice* (Encounter Books).

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