“An Assault on Human Nature”

Salman Rushdie opens up about censorship and freedom of speech at the opening press conference.
Freedom of Speech Under Threat, Says Rushdie

While Salman Rushdie was speaking at the opening press conference, Iranian publishers were making alternative arrangements to hold their meetings here in Frankfurt. By Olivia Snaije

The press conference for the 2015 Book Fair opened Tuesday under high security as author Salman Rushdie arrived to speak about freedom of speech. His presence at the Fair coincides with the publication of his latest novel, Two Years, Eight Months and Twenty-Eight Nights. Last week, the Iranian Ministry of Culture decided to cancel its national stand in protest at Rushdie’s appearance.

“We very much regret the Iranian Ministry of Culture’s cancellation”, said Juergen Boos, Director of the Frankfurt Book Fair. “The Frankfurt Book Fair is a place of dialogue. At the same time, we hope that this year’s cancellation is just a brief interruption in the existing conversations and that we can continue to expand on the established relationships. Nevertheless, for us, freedom of expression is non-negotiable. We must not forget that Rushdie is still being threatened with death for his work.”

BEHIND THE CONTROVERSY

In 1989, Ayatollah Khomeini, then Iran’s supreme leader, issued a fatwa calling for Rushdie’s death following the publication of his book, The Satanic Verses, which was considered to be blasphemous. That same year, the Frankfurt Book Fair decided to ban Iran until the fatwa was lifted – the Book Fair’s boycott unfortunately did not alter Rushdie’s situation, and Khomeini died without lifting the edict. In 1991, the Book Fair decided to re-admit Iran, and last year, 282 Iranian publishers came to Frankfurt displaying more than 1,100 titles.

Rushdie began his talk by saying that he had always thought the battle for freedom of speech had been won several hundred years ago in the West, and that the fact that “we have to go on fighting this battle is the result of a more recent, regrettable phenomenon.”

Freedom of speech is not only under the threat of violence, he said, but political correctness can also be a danger. Rushdie cited as an example the idea of putting “trigger warnings” on books of literature for students in the U.S. in order to signal distressing material.

Freedom of expression is a universal right, he said. “You look into human nature to see what human beings have in common. Expression and speech is fundamental to all human beings. We express ourselves through language and speech. We are a storytelling animal. Some of these stories are true; some are made up. You can see human life, itself an uncompleted narrative, surrounded by concentric circles of narrative. All these narratives are things we live within, and through these stories we understand ourselves.”

Limiting freedom of expression is not just censorship, said Rushdie, but also an “assault on human nature. It seems to me that it is not specific to one culture.”

What has changed, said Rushdie, is that “the realist novel was built on the idea that writers and readers shared the same idea of the world.” Today this is no longer true. “There are competing narratives, incompatible narratives fighting for the same space. Writers can no longer assume that there is uncontested realism. Fiction is the narrative that contests the world – it may be a weak narrative, but it is the grandest narrative of all because we put ourselves into question, we challenge ourselves … what people fear about art is that nobody owns it. It doesn’t belong to a political or religious affiliation. It is a single voice saying, ‘I see it like this, what do you think?’ It becomes dangerous to people who want to control the narrative.”

Rushdie said that the reason he was at Frankfurt today was thanks to the writers during the Enlightenment in France during the 18th century. “The point about freedom of expression is that it is universal … this is the one thing we must defend because without this freedom all other freedoms fail!”

Rushdie did not take questions and immediately left the fair following his speech.

IRANIAN PUBLISHERS ARE HERE

Meanwhile, the several hundred publishers from Iran who had spent months preparing their trip to Frankfurt were left wondering “now what?”

On Wednesday, the Iranian national stand in Hall 4.0 was being set up as usual although no books were visible. Various Iranian publishers, both independent and government-affiliated, circled around the official from the Ministry of Culture, Mohsen Amoushahi, who declined to answer questions.

“I don’t agree with the Ministry of Culture’s decision,” said Mahmoud Reza Bahmanpour, Managing Director of the independent Nazar Art Publications, who arrived in Frankfurt on Monday with his distribution manager, Hadi Taghavi.

“They could have closed for just one day to protest Rushdie’s presence, for example.”

Frankfurt is very important to Bahmanpour, who buys rights and organizes distribution of his publications by Idea Books. He and Taghavi have re-organized their schedules at the last minute and will be meeting with publishers at their various stands but out of precaution will not set up their own stand.

“There was no official information so we are in a dilemma about what to do,” cont’d on page 3 »
More Government Support for Chinese Publishing Promised

The Chinese government has pledged more support for the country’s publishing industry, according to Ji Suchen, Section Chief of industry body SAPPRT. By Roger Tagholm

Speaking at The Markets conference yesterday about the state of Chinese publishing today, she said: “The role of the press and publishing industry in national development is very high on the government’s agenda, with more government spending to come to encourage reading. The government has also issued guidelines on promoting digital transformation and the upgrading of the industry.”

The Chinese book market is worth 2,000 billion yuan, with digital accounting for 340 billion yuan. Digital contributed 17% of press and publication revenues in 2014, nearly double the 2010 figure. Online bookstores have increased by a factor of five in the same period, and their sales have quadrupled.

Looking to the future, Suchen believes the publishing industry “will rapidly extend from providing consumer services to producer services.” She added that more than 130 publisher-based media groups have been established in China and that, throughout all this rapid change, one issue remained paramount: “content of high quality – that hasn’t changed.”

Is Twitter a Book Publishing Company?

The definition of what a publisher is and does is up for grabs, and no more so than in the fast-evolving business and information publishing sector, where one German executive is predicting his company will one day employ more IT professionals than editors. By Roger Tagholm

“Is Twitter a book publishing company? I think it is. It is an open access publisher producing very short books.”

Such was the conclusion of Niels Peter Thomas, MD of Springer Fachmedien, during his wide-ranging overview of Germany’s €3.25 billion business and information sector yesterday at The Markets: Global Publishing Summit – an overview that emphasised the changing definition of what a publisher is, and what it does.

Thomas said his sector was going through a Copernican revolution with far reaching implications. “Just as a new view of the world emerged in Copernicus’ time, so the same thing is happening today in the world of business and information publishing. Back then they realized that everything did not revolve around the sun, and today we are realizing that everything does not revolve around the book.”

He believes business and information publishing may move towards a more open access model in which publishers’ roles will change:

“In this new world, search capabilities will become increasingly important. This, in turn, will change the type of content that is produced. In the past, the author wrote the text and that was the content. Now, there will be added metadata, pieces of information may have many authors, there may be community-generated content, new types of aggregation, new models.

“If open access does become more prominent, then publishers will move into additional services. They will have to ask themselves what role they play. We may even see machine-generated content in the future.”

But if the latter idea strikes horror into some people, he added that he didn’t think traditional books would die, simply that their market share would decline.

“And publishers definitely have a role to play to structure that knowledge, that content – a role as guarantors of quality. In a way they will become knowledge structuring companies,” he said.

In 2040, Thomas believes Springer Nature will employ more IT specialists than editors and that most content will be available free online (in various versions) with customers having to pay to customize it for their specific needs.
The Ten Commandments for Selling to French Publishers

By Andrew Wilkins

The French and South-East Asian markets were under scrutiny at Tuesday’s 29th Rights Directors Meeting, the annual event at Frankfurt for rights professionals.

There is an impression among some that France is a difficult market to sell into and the goal of the first half of the meeting was to help make things easier.

After a comprehensive and up-to-date overview of recovering French book industry from Éditions Plon-Perrin’s Rebecca Byers (“sales up four percent in August”), Anne Michel of Albin Michel, Moses-like, presented her ten commandments for selling to French publishers:

1. DO try to know our list (so you don't send us irrelevant titles)
2. DO give as much information as you can (including author biography and sales history)
3. DON'T try to hype the book if not necessary
4. DO send a sample translation (“30 pages is good”)
5. DO be patient and give us time (“it can take weeks or even months”)
6. DON'T underestimate the personal relationship the editor develops with the book they publish.
7. DO respect the priority option
8. DON'T believe a book taking place in France is easy to sell (a warning to all those Province memoir publishers)
9. DO believe we are interested in the singularity of your own country (17.8% of books published in France were translations in 2014, from around 40 different languages)
10. DO surprise us (big deals are not the only measure of success for French acquisitions editors, who will extract equal pleasure from snapping up an obscure title: “You can call us snobs if you wish but that’s the way we are!”).

Attendees also received updates of the European Union Prize for Literature, created to encourage translations within and outside the EU, and manful attempt from Michael Healy from the Copyright Clearance Center in the US to summarise the copyright situation in the 10 ASEAN economies (summary: much progress but still cause for concern).

Finally, the meeting turned to ASEAN markets, focusing on Thailand, Indonesia (this year’s Guest of Honour at Frankfurt), Malaysia and Vietnam, with Adam Silverman from HarperCollins Publishers in the US closing with an update on digital rights and licences.

EDITORIAL: Where Is Publishing’s Jet Pack?

By Edward Nawotka

Back in the 20th century, visions of the future included people zooming around sleek cities with their own personal jet packs. Alas, that vision has yet to be realized.

Has publishing yet seen a whizbang technology with the “wow” factor we need to propel the book itself into the future?

Innovation is a buzzword that gets thrown around a lot in publishing, but wanton use of the word has diminished it. What does publishing innovation really look like? Is it, as some would have you believe, adding perforations to coloring books? Adding live web links inside book apps? Or perhaps using 3D printing to produce book covers?

Yes, all of those new ideas are interesting in their own way, but none of them are, as many a hyperbolic startup company has over-promised, truly “ disruptive.”

What publishing really needs is the proverbial “jet pack,” the space-age innovation that will propel books and reading culture into the next era.

This year in November the Dutch Publishers Association put out a call to startups around the world to submit proposals for their “Renew the Book” project.

Under the program, five companies will be invited this November to live and work in Amsterdam for 40 days, all expenses paid, to collaborate with publishers and come up with new ideas to address how people will develop, distribute and devour books in the future. At the end of the project, one winner will be awarded 15,000 euros to implement their idea.

“It is like an extended hackathon, all expenses paid, with a big prize at the end,” Martijn David, Secretary General of the Association, told me yesterday in the Frankfurt Book Fair’s Business Club (the Fair’s own recent innovation).

The selected projects will be announced later this month. Next year, you’re guaranteed to see the winning project on display here in Frankfurt, when the Netherlands and Flanders take the spotlight as the 2016 Guest of Honor.

Maybe, just maybe, publishing will finally find its “jet pack.”
When it comes to Open Access, finding the right balance can be challenging. Balancing old business models with new. Balancing the needs of authors with those of funders and institutions. Balancing build vs. buy decisions when an OA infrastructure is still forming.

Whether you simply need a solution to collect APCs or you’re exploring new ways to serve authors throughout the research lifecycle, RightsLink® for Open Access lets you ride inside the curl.

RightsLink for Open Access can handle it all — APCs, page and color charges, submission fees, member charges, author reprints and more.

Surf’s up!
www.copyright.com/frankfurt

Please Join Us!
Open Access:
The Next Wave
The Frankfurt Book Fair
“Town Meeting”

WHEN:
Thursday, 15 October, 2015
9:00–11:00

WHERE:
Hall 4.C
Alliance Function Room

For more information, visit us:
Hall 4.2, Stand D48
www.copyright.com/frankfurt
Marc Hendrickx and Kathy Note of the Allied Authors Agency take a meeting in the Literary Agents and Scouts Center.

Wita Wanita — an Indonesian YouTube star who creates videos on sexuality, politics and society — at Indonesia’s Guest of Honor pavillion.

Nikki Kennedy, Intercontinental Literary Agency: “After years of missing people and having shortened and uncomfortable meetings at the Frankfurter Hof, I am experimenting making appointments in the LitAg and have found it to be much calmer and more efficient. Next year, I hope to make all my appointments here.”

Juliet Pickering, Blake Friedmann Agency: “It feels so old school that people still meet in hotel lobbies when we can be at the Literary Agents Center earlier and take meetings here. The hotels are traditional, but there has to be a better way.”

Bill Hanna, Acacia House Literary Agency: “I’m here with a monumental work that chronicles the rise of the idea of patriarchy and how it changed how people thought. It’s about how ideas generate events, events don’t generate ideas.”

Claribel Ortega (Combined Book Exhibit) sets up the Workman stand in Hall 6.0 on Tuesday.
L to R: Andrew Wylie (literary agent, The Wylie Agency), Markus Dohle (CEO, Penguin Random House), Dr. Frank Sambeth (CEO, Verlagsgruppe Random House), Thomas Rathnow (Publisher and Member of the Board, Verlagsgruppe Random House), Johannes Jacob (Publisher, C. Bertelsmann Verlag).

Anne Bergman-Tahon, Director General, Federation of European Publishers (Photo: Katherina Marie Köhler)

Conchita Wurst at the opening ceremony of the Frankfurt Book Fair (Photo: Katherina Marie Köhler)

Dr. Kyra Dreher, Managing Director, Sortimentierr Ausschuss, German Booksellers and Publishers Association (Photo: Katherina Marie Köhler)

Richard Nash takes a meeting on Tuesday at The Markets: Global Publishing Summit (Photo: Bernd Hartung)
Latin America’s Dynamic Publishing Scene on Display in Frankfurt

By Marifé Boix García

Latin America is still one of the most attractive book markets in the world. Its two main languages, Spanish and Portuguese, are spoken by a total of 600 million people — a group that represents a huge potential audience of readers for global publishers.

We can point Brazil, Argentina and México as the main players in the Latin American market, followed by countries such as Colombia, Chile and Peru.

Although most of the book production in these countries comes from international publishing groups like Grupo Planeta and Penguin Random House, there is an increase in smaller but active projects in literature, children’s books, comics, art books, science fiction, and increased production from university presses.

Besides the big publishing countries Brazil (see page 14), México and Argentina, the Frankfurt Book Fair is hosting more independent publishers and university presses coming from Colombia, Chile, Peru, Uruguay and Costa Rica this year. They are located in hall 5.1 (see map with stand numbers on the right).

In hall 5.0, we are happy to welcome four smaller but interesting publishers from the region as part of Frankfurt’s Invitation Program: Fernando Barrientos of El Cuer-vo (Bolivia); Karina Pino Gallardo of Tablas-Alarcos (Cuba); Susana Reyes of Indole (El Salvador); and Gustavo Paron of Dublínense (Brazil).

Marifé Boix García is VP, Business Development Southern Europe & Latin America, Frankfurt Book Fair

Adrián Puentes, Literary Agent, Chile

ON LITERARY AGENTS IN CHILE AND LATIN AMERICA:
I am the only literary agent in Chile right now. This might seem strange, but it’s a common situation in Latin America. There are very few of us here — a couple in Argentina, one in Uruguay, and me, Brazil, of course, is another business.

A GROWING GLOBAL INTEREST IN LATIN AMERICAN WRITERS:
It’s still slow, but yes, I’ve seen an increasing interest in Latin American authors. In the U.S., for example, there are wonderful new publishers, and some of them are devoted exclusively to translations ... In Europe, there is a long tradition of translations from Latin America, but we are now seeing a new boost. In Italy, for example, Latin American writers are almost a trend.

BOOKS FROM CHILE TO DISCOVER:
Among the writers, I have books from two wonderful female writers: María José Viera-Gallo and Alía Trabucco. Also, I’ve new titles from some of my illustrators, like the new series by Alberto Montt, Laura & Dino, a tender and funny account on paternity.

Omaira Rodríguez, Literary Agent, Uruguay

LITERARY AGENTS IN URUGUAY:
To the best of my knowledge, there is no other literary agent in Uruguay. It is precisely for this reason that the National Board of Culture created the program Books from Uruguay to promote our writers in the world through selling copyrights and to prepare a literary agent to represent them.

BOOKS FROM URUGUAY TO DISCOVER IN FRANKFURT:
Books from Uruguay is comprised of five fiction and four nonfiction titles. The selection process is very strict to ensure a quality catalog year after year. Among the fiction titles, we have the latest works by internationally recognized authors, such as Rafael Courtoisie’s The Novel of the Body and Fidel Savio’s The Elephant and the Ant. A Bestiary, as well as Mercedes Estramill’s Irreversible and Damian Gonzalez Bertolino’s Love’s Labours have not been translated yet. There is also a debut novel by Andrea Di Candia, Crossroads.

The four nonfiction titles deal with subjects such as Uruguay’s experience with the legalization of marijuana, Mario Benedetti’s body of work, an anthropological study of language, and a thorough review of English-language stand-up comedy.

A Strong Community of University Presses in Latin America

TOP ISSUES FOR LATIN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY PRESSES:
We are focused on optimizing distribution in many countries. We also consider it very important that our books generate debate and reflective thought. Other issues that we consider important are the role of the editor in academia, writing and literacy.

ON COLOMBIA’S GROWING GLOBAL PRESENCE:
Colombian publications have had a significant presence at international events such as the Guadalajara and Frankfurt book fairs, as well as the Bogotá Book Fair, which has seen an increasing number of foreigners visitors and has grown in global recognition.

MEETINGS IN FRANKFURT:
For me it is very important to meet and talk to members of other publishing communities to continue exploring new trends for university press publishing ... such as digital publications, circulation, distribution, production and editing experiences as well the exchange of knowledge.
MEXICO
Collective Stand: 5.1 B78
Gobierno de la Republica: 5.1 B92
Cengage Learning Latin America: 4.2 C28
Fundación Sebastian: 3.0 F105
Petra Ediciones: 3.0 F105
Ambar Diseño: 3.1 Gourmet Gallery
Flavours of Nayarit: 3.1 Gourmet Gallery

Mexico was featured as one of seven countries at The Markets: Global Publishing Summit. Read more about the event on page 2.

BRAZIL
Collective Stand: 5.1 B52
Companhia das Letras: 5.1 A28
Vale das Letras: 5.1 A31
Editora Ave-Maria: 5.0 D57
Paulinas: 5.0 C61
Paulus Brasil: 5.0 D52
Ciranda Cultural: 5.1 B30
Calis: 3.0 F107

Agents
Riff Agency: LitAg
Katia Schum Literarly Agent: LitAg
Villas-Boas & Moss Agency: LitAg

URUGUAY
Collective Stand: 5.1 A101

ARGENTINA
Collective Stand: 5.1 B116
University Presses: 5.1 B116
Adriana Hidalgo Editora: 5.1 C118
Anejo Producciones S.A.: 4.2 F92
Karla Johan: 3.1 Gourmet Gallery
Agencia Literaria Irene Barki: LitAg

In Argentina, the government is responsible for 25% of total book purchases in the country.

COSTA RICA
Uruk Editores: 5.1 A46
University Presses: 5.1 A50

COLOMBIA
Collective Stand: 5.1 B100
University Presses: 5.1 A62
Asklepios Medical Atlas: 4.2 J65
MNR Ediciones SAS: 3.1 K140
Ediciones Internacionales: 4.2 J27

Read about Colombian university presses on page 8 and indie publishers on page 10.

PERU
Collective Stand: 5.1 B130
University Presses: 5.1 B130
Universidad San Martin de Porres: 3.1 K146

CHILE
Collective Stand: 5.1 B124
Gourmet Patagonia Foundation: 3.1 K134

INVITATION PROGRAM
BOLOVIA
Editorial El Cuervo: 5.0 D166
CUBA
Casa Editorial Tablas-Alarcos: 5.0 D162
EL SALVADOR
Indole Editores-Athena Editores: 5.0 D168
BRAZIL
Editora Dublinense: 5.0 D160
Colombian Indie Publishers Are Surviving and Thriving

Interview by Hannah Johnson

Maria Paula Godoy Casabuenas, editorial coordinator for the Universidad Católica de Colombia, is here at the Frankfurt Book Fair representing independent Colombian publishers to the global publishing community.

ON INDIE SUCCESS IN COLOMBIA: I think the biggest success for Colombian independent publishers is to be able to still exist without any support from the State and the fearless competition of Spanish publishing groups. They are a wonderful group of survivors who dare to dream.

ON DISTRIBUTION CHALLENGES: Distribution is so difficult because it is a part of the industry that has not been developed and on top of that there are not enough independent bookshops, the most important places interested in supporting independent literature.

ON PASSIONATE PUBLISHERS: I want the international publishing community to know that there is more to Colombian publishing than meets the eye. What is well known from my country are just a couple of wonderful writers, but the people who are behind their success are not very well-known. It is these group of passionate readers who work for more than money, for the love of literature and of books, who make beautiful and carefully made editions possible. Those are the sort of publishers I am representing in Frankfurt this year.

COLOMBIAN BOOKS TO DISCOVER: Each of these publishing houses [I am representing] shows through its books a particular side of Colombian reality ... from indigenous voices to plots set in urban contexts, from historical novels to essays on Gabriel García Márquez work and finally, from carefully woven short stories about Colombian characters to essays on Colombian issues. I think I have a pretty solid and interesting perspective from Colombia to show to international publishers this year.

WHO SHE WANTS TO MEET: Every publisher that has an interest in Latin American literature for their catalogue like, for instance, Éditions Métailié or Rowohlt. I would like to meet these publishers ... and see if we can work together.

Maria is representing these Colombian publishers in Frankfurt:

• Taller de edición Rocca
• Ícono Editores
• Collage Editores
• Sílaba Editores
• Acracia Proyecto de investigación editorial
• Orbit trasducciones

Very Important Reasons to Visit Australia

Australian authors are selling like hotcakes—and you’re invited to visit Down Under to find out why. By Andrew Wilkins

Tonight, Australian publisher Allen & Unwin is celebrating the 10 millionth book sold by its Aussie author Kate Morton, whose fifth book The Lake House, is published next week across the major English language markets.

Morton’s novels are now sold in 33 languages across 38 countries. Meanwhile, Australian debutant Brooke Davis has seen Zeitgeist Media sell her novel Lost and Found into 29 territories so far, and counting.

Who knows what other treasures await publishers willing to explore Down Under?

Well, the country’s arts funding body invites you to find out. Since 1998, the Australia Council’s Visiting International Publishers (VIP) program has flown some 220 international editors, agents and publishers to Australia to attend key literary festivals, learn about the Australian book market and meet with local authors and publishers.

The next VIP trip will be in 16–22 May 2016 and will coincide with the popular Sydney Writers Festival.

The Australia Council is welcoming applications from publishers and agents specialising in creative writing (fiction, narrative non-fiction, poetry or children’s books).

Successful applicants will have their airfares and accommodation covered for the trip. Applicants from Asian, European and North American markets are particularly encouraged.

If this has whetted your appetite, visit the Australian stand at Hall 6.2 D99 or online at go to australia.gov.au for more information.
High-Speed Korea a Test-Bed for Edtech

A high standard of living and world’s-best internet is allowing Korea to lead the world in developing new educational tools. By Mark Piesing

On the subway you will see everyone is looking at their phones and the same is even true even in elevators, as you can get high-speed internet everywhere, says Robert Kim, CEO and co-founder of the South Korea-based company iPortfolio Inc, whose premium ebook platform Spindle Books has been chosen by Oxford University Press ELT as its strategic ebook platform.

“This shows the challenge and opportunity of doing edtech [educational technology] in South Korea, as the kids aren’t playing Candy Crush, they are consuming more sophisticated snap-size content, like webtoons.”

While Candy Crush is a made-for-Facebook puzzle game, Webtoons is a global digital platform for comics like The Gamer and Tower of the Gods that began in South Korea before going worldwide.

For Kim, examples like these show just how much his country is “digital ready” and is “the best test-bed for edtech in the world.”

With a population of just less than the UK and the 13th largest economy in the world by GDP, South Korea is widely regarded as having the fastest internet in the world. It has a high speed internet penetration that most of Europe and USA can only dream of (89%) and an equally astonishing smart-phone penetration of 83%. What’s more, the internet usage rate in the ten-to-nineteen years age range is an impossible to beat 100% – and doesn’t fall by much when it comes to younger children.

South Korea has the added advantage, Kim says, that education is highly valued. Its famously pushy tiger moms spend about $21 billion on private education – much of which is spent on English language learning.

“The hype has also gone from technology in education, and we are in a new phase of engagement called Smart Education, which is not about the technology but about the content. While the kids are disappearing from schools as South Korea has one of the lowest birth rates in the industrialised world, the amount spent is not going down. So, rather than go after market share, you have to go after wallet share, as it is about revenue per child.”

This future can be seen, he believes, in the success of the Woongjin Book Club, a relatively expensive, flat-fee subscription service which, by May 2015, had 130,000 subscribers.

In the end, Kim says, “if you are going to try something new, try it in Korea and then bring it back home.”

Used Correctly, InDesign Can Pay Dividends

InDesign is the most ubiquitous digital tool used in publishing, but most publishers aren’t taking full advantage of it. By Edward Nawotka

If I was going to offer publishers one piece of advice – one thing that would change their lives for the better – it would be to learn how to use Adobe InDesign properly,” says Toronto-based ebook developer and publishing consultant Laura Brady. “Most publishers use InDesign to create their print product and use it ineffective-ly, like a print tool, but it is much more dynamic than that. And if InDesign isn’t used efficiently, then your archive is a waste. But learning how to use it correctly will pay you dividends.”

Brady, who is making her first appearance at the Fair, notes that the tool “goes quite deep, and once you explain the efficiencies the lightbulbs go on.” The key, she says is to see it as the starting point in both the print and digital workflow. “An InDesign file that is really well thought out becomes more responsive and can go in a lot of directions at once.”

She praises Hachette for being one of the major publishers dedicated to using an entirely XML-based workflow. “They are typesetting once and exporting to digital and print at the same time.”

On this point, Brady sees herself as an evangelist helping publishers make this relatively simple tweak and helping them to think in terms of the “digital end game.”

Laura Brady is offering one-on-one consulting as part of the Frankfurt Book Fair Business Club’s “Ask the Expert” event series today from 9:30–11:00 a.m.
Brazil’s Publishing Exports Are Driven by Talent

Two years after serving as Guest of Honor in Frankfurt, some 200 Brazilian writers have been translated and published abroad. By Luís Antonio Torelli

Brazil’s talented authors, rich subjects, cultural diversity, cosmopolitan nature, and literary quality delight the whole world... and now have been consolidating the export capability of the Brazilian publishing sector. Two years following Brazil’s appearance as Guest of Honor at the Frankfurt Book Fair, our books are now widely spread across Europe and Latin America.

There are around 200 Brazilian writers whose work has been translated into multiple languages and territories, including Carlos Drummond, Chico Buarque, Clarice Lispector, Ferreira Gullar, Gilberto Freyre, Graciliano Ramos, Guimarães Rosa, João Ubaldo Ribeiro, Jorge Amado, Lygia Fagundes Telles, Machado de Assis, Márcio de Andrade, Maurício de Sousa, Milton Hatoum, Moacyr Scliar, Oswald de Andrade, Paulo Coelho, Radian Nassar, Roberto Schwarz and Rubem Fonseca.

Taken together, these “top exports” — some whom are alive and still writing and others whose legacy of originality has made them literary legends — are helping Brazilian publishing reach the world. Many of these authors and their publishing houses are a success in terms of sales and “direct marketing” of our national literature. We have seen buyers flock to our national stand at book fairs from Paris to Bologna, Guadalajara to Bogota. And it will be no different this year in Frankfurt. Those buyers who know the seriousness and professionalism of our market have developed a respect and mutual trust with our publishing industry, which itself has helped make our work even more attractive to the trade.

Much of our growing international reputation is due to the success of the Brazilian Publishers Project, which is aimed at the promotion of exports. This project was created by the Brazilian Book Chamber, together with Brazilian Trade and Investment Promotion Agency (Apex-Brasil) to support the publishing industry in showcasing Brazil’s literary talent to the world, whether by participating in international fairs, organizing missions abroad, or bringing editors and journalists to Brazil. All these efforts by the Brazilian Publishers Project have contributed in helping to make our publishing production better known abroad.

On all fronts, the export of Brazilian books and rights looks increasingly robust and — with the exchange rate moving in favor of foreign publishers — all the more attractive. And, we believe, the further potential for spreading the word about Brazil’s attractive literary talent is huge! •

Luís Antonio Torelli is the president of the Câmara Brasileira do Livro (Brazilian Book Chamber). You can visit the Brazil Collective in Hall 5.1, Stand B52.

The Creative Power of Brazil’s Indie Publishers

Interview by Hannah Johnson

Raquel Menezes is president of LIBRE, Brazil’s association of independent publishers. Here, she offers a snapshot of the indie publishing scene in Brazil.

ON BRAZIL’S INDIE PUBLISHERS: Brazil’s independent publishers nowadays are very respected in the market. Day after day, we have the chance to show our creative value because we are the ones responsible for discovering new writers and illustrators.

Unfortunately, we still have problems in terms of distribution, so we don’t have much space in the book shops. Despite the difficulty getting into the book shops, independent publishers’ titles, we are the ones who, most of time, think about the cultural issues, the bibliodiversity.

ON THE EFFECT OF A SLOWING BRAZILIAN ECONOMY: When the government stopped to buying books for the school system... it had a profoundly negative effect on the financial health of independent publishing houses.

As the book still doesn’t have a symbolic value in Brazil, in a moment of crisis, it is the first item to be cut from people’s lives. The problem is that because independent publishers already have difficulties getting into book shops, in a moment like this, doors are even more closed.

ON INTERNATIONAL INTEREST IN BRAZILIAN AUTHORS: Right now, only the most popular [Brazilian] authors are being translated, but I hope this scenario will change. Some interesting publishing companies associated with LIBRE have been doing good international business. As proof, I and other two independent publishers (34 and Apicuri) were invited to attend the Frankfurt Book Fair this year with support from the German Foreign Office. •
Spain’s Publishing Industry: Positioned to Fight for the Future

Despite media reports to the contrary, Spain’s publishing industry is robust and diverse, and investing for the future. By Antonio María Ávila

The Spanish publishing industry is worth close to six billion euros, employs over 110,000 people (authors, publishers, suppliers, booksellers, librarians, literary agents, etc.) and is refining an internationalization process begun more than 50 years ago.

Despite the discouraging scenario depicted by the media, this sector is highly competitive, showing a much lower concentration index than other markets in Europe like France, the U.K. and Germany, to mention a few. In today’s Spanish market, there is not a single publishing group that holds a dominant position. If we take into account the Herfindahl–Hirschman index, which indicates the degree of market concentration, the book market in Spain is rated at 0.35 (reasonably far from 1.00 indicating a monopoly). This index demonstrates that the structure of the sector is very competitive.

The most remarkable accomplishment of the sector as a whole is the impressive cultural pluralism it has achieved over the years. Where literature is concerned, all the different genres are well represented, ranging from commercial and popular production to the most exquisite literary production. The variety of voices is also noteworthy in the publication of social sciences. This cultural pluralism is not remarkable in terms of just content, but also in terms of translations. We are among the leading countries in Europe (along with Germany and France) in translating works from abroad.

NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Another relevant fact regarding the publishing industry in Spain is that new technologies, from their very first appearance, have been extensively used to improve the production system. Thus, the sector is more than prepared for the digital take-off.

We had to work hard on standardization, and I am proud to say that we possess one of the most cutting-edge systems in Europe. The main tools I am referring to are: Dilve (information delivery system that provides information about all books on sale), and two additional systems inspired by Dilve: Sinli (system of standardization information about the book, the main purpose of which is the exchange of commercial documents), and Librired (a tool that will enable us to have real-time information about sales and stock in the retail system).

Similar tools are used in other countries, but there they are usually in private hands (Nielsen in the U.K., Bowker in the U.S.). In Spain, on the contrary, our tools have been created by the industry and, most important of all, Dilve, Sinli and Librired will soon converge into one another, following a logical evolution that has been carefully orchestrated by the associations that created them: FGEE, FANDE, CEGAL and Cámara del Libro de Cataluña.

The creation of this ecosystem would have been totally useless if the publishers had not made great efforts to go digital. Data from 2013 shows that the production of digital books increased 123% thanks to both new digital releases and the digitization of backlist catalogs. Over 20% of new ISBNs came from digital books. In 2013, the strongest growth within Spain’s publishing sector came from the digital area, though it was a mere 8%.

Yes, the initial enthusiasm for the digital revolution has diminished. However, there are two other factors to keep in mind: 1) a study carried out by CIS (Sociological Investigation Center) showed that the diffusion of electronic devices for reading has not yet caught on in Spain; and 2) the influence of piracy is still very strong.

A PLAN TO TACKLE PIRACY AND PROMOTE READING

According to the latest study carried out by the Piracy Observatory of the Cultural Creators Coalition, 907 million euros have been lost due to 335 million illegal downloads. These figures, disheartening on their own, are even more detrimental to the business if we consider that they inhibit legal purchases and prevent consumers from developing normal digital habits. This is, in my opinion, the worst impact piracy has on the system.

The book industry requires the highest consideration both on a political and a social level. Unfortunately, in this country, we are dealing with apathy and lack of interest on both levels. Given the scenario, it is hardly surprising that the fight against piracy has proven to be unsuccessful so far.

In order to face this alarming situation, the major organizations focused around the book have joined forces to create the Asociación de las Cámaras del Libro de España and have recently launched the Integral Plan for the Promotion of Book and Reading. Among other initiatives, the plan will provide help to libraries, educational measures and fiscal support to retailers.

“Data from 2013 shows that the production of digital books increased 123% thanks to both new digital releases and the digitization of backlist catalogs.”

–Antonio María Ávila
Executive Director of the Spanish Publishers Federation

Antonio María Ávila is Executive Director of the Spanish Publishers Federation (FGEE).

A version of this article originally appeared in the literary journal Trama y Texturas and was translated from the Spanish by Valentína Morotti. You can find exhibitors from Spain in Hall 5.1.
Can Curation Help Libraries Break Away From Frontlist Dependency?

Why must library patrons wait for weeks to read the latest bestsellers when there are so many more great books to discover? Editorial by Heather McCormack

“Curation” is often a term that comes infused with snobbery, exclusion. Yes, in the publishing industry, that is what we do. But it doesn’t have to be pejorative.

Public libraries operate with a mission: to enable access to empowering information, fiction, nonfiction, fanfiction, and the like. In the 21st century, ebooks are a leading means of exchange between democracy and citizen.

If only collecting the damn things were so simple. American public libraries spend hundreds of thousands of dollars annually on adult fiction bestsellers in digital, with the largest systems acquiring upwards of 40 copies for an especially coveted title. The “holds list” for said work will number in the mid-to-high hundreds easily.

Fact: meeting popular demand is impossible.

Patrons wait, and they shouldn’t have to when publishers, large and small, offer the world in their ebook catalogs. Most vendors are content to contribute to this information bottleneck by highlighting only the most popular titles.

Right here, I could insert a tired, true, and inspirational quote about the discovery powers of libraries, but let’s skip this instead: if books are your brand, then it would serve you well to be talking about more than a fraction of what’s published. If you can develop an ability to be ahead of trends rather than right behind or in step with them, you’ve set yourself apart in a culture that’s in crisis about authority and taste.

Not every librarian has the funds or the time to take all of this advice, but most would agree that it’s too easy to fall victim to tunnel vision when collecting digital. Ebooks present a different experience than print books. Which genres and formats succeed and fall between the two need to be respected when public funds are being used. Still, risk-taking is imperative when everyone invested in reading must vie for the attention of an increasingly distracted public.

In the United States and Canada, 3M has established a blueprint of showcasing quality midlist authors alongside buzzy first-timers and the usual suspects; calling out difficult-to-locate content for children, juveniles, and young adults; designing promotions that take collection development needs into account; and exposing backlist gems beyond film and TV adaptations.

One promotion involves offering e-shorts by rising and well-known literary writers. Brevity would seem like a natural selling point for digital marketers, but slowly short stories nearly always get overlooked. Yet, we found those took off like a shot in May owing to a simple shelf and Tumblr post.

Now, at 3M, we’ve hired the savvy London-based consultancy The Literary Platform to expand on my point of view for our new United Kingdom and Australian businesses. Their lists focusing on bestsellers, trends, and awards are crucial for connecting ebooks with audiences that differ from North America’s.

It bears mentioning that 3M Cloud Library’s apps have been created expressly with passionate readers in mind and reinforce our global collection development work. In three simple steps, you’re smack dab in the story, and when you’re hungry for more, you can save favorite categories rather than search the endless, chaotic metadata depths.

Heather McCormack is the Collection Development Manager at Bibliotheca. Visit her at Hall 6.0 C27.

“Most vendors are content to contribute to this information bottleneck by highlighting only the most popular titles.”

–Heather McCormack
270,000 visitors, 7,100 exhibitors from over 100 countries and the world’s greatest intersection of ideas.

Talk with me about customised sponsoring offers and advertising services:
Frank Pauli, Director Special Formats & Cooperations, pauli@book-fair.com

Talk with me about your business goals, collaboration ideas and ideas for customised fair activities:
Stefan Nickel, Director Marketing & Communications, snickel@book-fair.com
When It Comes to Ebook Subscriptions, One Size Does Not Fit All!

Global brands may appear to dominate, but the truth is that nimble, localized digital publishing startups across Europe are winning authors’ hearts and minds. Editorial by Nathan Hull

“The publishing industry has a long history of allowing and encouraging what is right for each market in print.” But what about digital?

—Nathan Hull

Why are local publishers not afforded the same freedom to do what is most effective, most appropriate and, often, most lucrative for the author in the digital space, the way they have for decades in print?

The publishing industry has a long history of allowing and encouraging what is right for each market in print. Publishers use different jackets in different countries, books are translated, even the English language is changed between USA and UK publications. Locally preferable book sizes or paper types can be chosen, publication dates are changed, marketing campaigns are localized and special sales options and formats can be made relevant and particular to any given market. And while we’re at it, let’s change the spelling of authors’ names, too — so they work better locally. Say hello, Džews Kinnjs (as Jeff Kinney of Wimpy Kid fame is known in Latvia).

It is clear that one size does not fit all in the digital space either, yet this is the rule so often liberally applied with charming caution. That caution will, of course, continue to be the status quo, and I’m not one to hang publishers out to dry because many are starting to experiment in this space, but many still aren’t. Now will be the time to learn and gain intelligence.

If local business models are researched well and chosen judiciously, authors will earn more money, their works will reach new readers, and both publishers and authors can gain intelligence along the way to better adapt their next decisions.

Across Europe, new business models are growing rapidly, many of them involved in subscriptions. Whether it’s Germany’s Skoobe, Spain’s Rubico or Estonia’s Elisa, new businesses with new models are positively changing the face of an author’s income stream and market reach. Sure, Oyster in the United States recently shuttered, but their talent was absorbed by Google, which tells you all you need to know about the potential of the segment. And let’s not forget the example of Myspace, which had 75 million monthly uniques at its peak. To lose it was unimaginable, but it died on the vine because of its shortcomings. This didn’t mean social networks were dead. In the background, looking and learning, was Facebook.

It would be a grave oversight by agents and publishers to not pursue dialogue, gather research and then experiment in field. Stagnation should not be an option.

Much of the digital money for authors in Denmark is from Mofibo, the ebook subscription company where I work. No, it’s not a global brand. It’s not Amazon. It’s not Google. It’s not Apple. Furthermore, the revenues generated are new money and do not affect print income. With print remaining unaffected, Mofibo has transformed the share of digital book sales in Denmark from 3% to 18% in just two years.

And it gets better. Unlike other retailers, Mofibo also gives all the data back to the publishers, allowing them to learn about their readers, the readers’ habits, their environments and much more, effectively providing the publisher with a wealth of business intelligence they have never previously received from a traditional retailer.

Mofibo provides data, strong revenue, a pay-per-book model, and new readers gained from high-budget marketing campaigns and partnerships. This is a sustainable and profitable company seeing double-digit growth this year.

With further markets opening for Mofibo strategically across Europe in 2016, consider this a nudge of encouragement to embrace the new and a rewarding nod to those already reaping the rewards of how a successful subscription model works.

Nathan Hull is the Chief Business Development Officer of Mofibo, an ebook subscription platform based in Denmark.
HOT SPOTS
WHERE CONTENT MEETS TECHNOLOGY
THE DIGITAL ZONES
AT THE FRANKFURT BOOK FAIR
14-18 OCTOBER 2015

/ HOT SPOT DIGITAL INNOVATION, HALL 6.2 D 22
/ HOT SPOT EDUCATION, HALL 4.2, C 90
/ HOT SPOT PROFESSIONAL & SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION, HALL 4.2, L 101
/ HOT SPOT PUBLISHING SERVICES, HALL 4.0, J 85

COME & SEE US!

Peter Wiley Reflects on a Lifetime in Publishing

Heading into retirement, Peter Wiley reflects on his lifelong career in publishing and the monumental transition from print to digital.

By Peter Booth Wiley

“I can look back and say I had the privilege – tempered by many nail-biting experiences – to be part of the most significant transformation in the history of publishing”

–Peter Wiley

As a member of the sixth generation of Wileys to become a publisher, I like to say that I entered publishing through the birth canal. My first exposure to Wiley was as a summer intern in 1961. This was in the days of hot type, editorial mandarins (the best of whom were legends in their fields), hand-drawn illustrations (soon to be color), the eight-hour day, summer hours, no air-conditioning, and three-martini lunches. I was only nineteen. So I went to Madison Square Park in New York, ate a sandwich, and read a book.

Back then, among publishers, there was some chatter about multi-media, which meant film strips to accompany textbooks and vague references to teaching machines. Meanwhile, the great innovators of the coming computer age, such as Douglas Engelbart and J.C.R. Licklider, were building machines and networks and writing papers about sophisticated desktop computers that enhanced the work of humans by helping to solve the most complex technical problems with sophisticated visual and editorial capabilities. They envisioned access to whole libraries and enhanced collaboration across what they liked to call “the intergalactic network.” Hard to believe that less than half a century later, we can consume megabytes of knowledge at our fingertips, while on the move.

After my internship, I pursued my own career as a writer and publisher for 24 years, during which I helped launch a political review, reported for a news service, co-authored a newspaper column and two books.

In 1984, I joined the Wiley board. Having interviewed quite a few corporate big wigs as a reporter, I was surprised to land at Wiley once again in an era when new, more participatory management styles were being toyed with and digital in its proto-state was on many publishers’ minds. My first impression of Wiley’s leadership meetings was that they shared more of the atmosphere of the gatherings of student activists in the 1960s than serious corporate life twenty years later. What I understand now is that our CEO was willing to take risks on new ideas and new products – Wiley as a software company; Wiley publishing a magazine for Hewlett Packard; Wiley as a producer of training videos for software engineers – that turned out to be a decade before their time.

With MIT Press and Chapman Hall, Wiley had published important titles about computers and cybernetics as early as Norbert Wiener’s Cybernetics (1948) and Edmund C. Berkeley’s Giants Brains Or Machines that Think (1949). But it wasn’t until the experimental 1980s that Wiley, with support from an R&D Committee that included founders of the U.S. government’s Advanced Research Projects Agency Network, launched an expensive product designed to reshape the nature of our business: a video training program with interactive assessment capabilities that foreshadowed the learning management systems of more than a decade later.

The reward for this expensive undertaking and other digital adventures was near disastrous. Thankfully, over the next two and a half decades, those ideas would be refined by talented colleagues, many of them self-taught technologists backed by tech colleagues in Ealing in the UK and Korolev in Russia and by a deeply engaged board. These experiments would shape Wiley’s future as a learning company. Despite rumors that it wouldn’t survive the Eighties, Wiley went on to become a digital innovator and a global powerhouse.

I can look back and say I had the privilege – tempered by many nail-biting experiences – to be part of the most significant transformation in the history of publishing: the shift from print on paper to digital. I can look forward and say, “Look out!” In the digital world, change can come quickly and unexpectedly from a competitor about whom we currently know nothing.

I begin my retirement knowing that what authors, publishers and partners can do to help their fellow human beings to better their lives, grows by the days and weeks, not by the decades. •


Peter Booth Wiley retired as Chairman of the Board for John Wiley & Sons on October 1, 2015.
Bastei Lübbe to Target Millennials With New Mobile Platform

German publisher Bastei Lübbe has invested heavily in digital and cross-media projects. The latest plan aims to capture a young, mobile audience with serialized digital content. By Edward Nawotka

Born-digital millennial readers are a slippery bunch. Reports indicate that this generation is equally engaged in content in both print and digital formats. But one thing is clear: more readers are going to discover and read books — as well as related content — on their phones and tablets. Publishers will need to become more sophisticated in how they market and create content for mobile devices.

Based in Cologne, Germany, publisher Bastei Lübbe has been ahead of the curve in book publishing: they were among the first German publishers to enter the digital-first market for books; they launched aggressive digital publishing businesses in China, the United States, the Spanish-language world; they are increasing their digital-first market for books; they are increasingly moving into video game development. In May 2014, the publisher purchased a controlling interest in Hamburg’s Daedalic Entertainment, a video game development company which is producing a game based on Ken Follett’s Pillars of the Earth.

This has all added up to success, with the company growing to 335 employees and an annual turnover of 107.5 million euros. And next year, the company — which now dubs itself “an international media house” — plans to launch a new platform offering “quality mobile-first entertainment” aimed at millennials.

“This group already spends a lot of time reading on smartphones, dipping in and out of reading while waiting for a train, on their way to work or during short breaks. So far, only nonfiction content from sources such as news, blogs and social media suits their reading pattern, but we are set to offer them a fast-paced style of storytelling geared towards their tastes and reading habits,” says Anja Mundt, Digital Content Acquisition and Business Management Director for the company, who is working together with colleague Giuseppe Terrano on the launch. The focus, says Mundt, will be on serial content and will offer a combination of newly commissioned, acquired and existing Bastei Lübbe work.

The 60-year-old company has even moved into video game development and is producing a game based on Ken Follett’s Pillars of the Earth. This move that will likely feed the new platform, it has recently acquired German and English language rights for the young adult pirate series Storm Sisters, produced by Rovio’s books division and written by Mintie Das.

“The Bastei Lübbe stand is located in Hall 3.0, Stand C83.”

—Anja Mundt, Bastei Lübbe

“Born-digital millennial readers are a slippery bunch. Reports indicate that this generation is equally engaged in content in both print and digital formats. But one thing is clear: more readers are going to discover and read books — as well as related content — on their phones and tablets. Publishers will need to become more sophisticated in how they market and create content for mobile devices.”

—Anja Mundt, Bastei Lübbe

Mobile Publishing Events in Frankfurt

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14

ResearchPad: Mobile Publishing for Scholarly Content
11:00–11:30 a.m.
Hot Spot Professional & Scientific Information
Hall 4.2 L101

ResearchPad provides an unrivalled mobile experience for reading and discovering, customized for publishers with minimal disruption to existing processes.

How Publishers Integrate Apps Into Their Business Strategy
1:15–1:45 p.m.
Hot Spot Publishing Services
Hall 4.0 J95

This case study looks at the successful integration of digital in the business strategy of well-known French publishing group Eyrolles.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15

A Hard-DRM Alternative: Digitalmarc Security Solutions
9:00–9:30 a.m.
Hot Spot Digital Innovation
Hall 6.2 D22

This presentation will highlight all media covered by Digitalmarc and explore user-friendly alternatives to hard DRM, emphasizing anti-piracy and digital watermarking.

Create, Distribute and Monetize Your Content Digitally
2:00–2:30 p.m.
Hot Spot Digital Innovation
Hall 6.2 D22

Successfully digitize and enrich your content, cross-channel distribution, customer segmentation and acquisition, keys to monetization and business management using KPIs.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16

Gamifying Books and Content on Mobile Devices
12:30–1:00 p.m.
Hot Spot Digital Innovation
Hall 6.2 D22

Young Digital Planet, S.A. introduces Mobile Book Trail, a solution that allows you to create games and activities, track your readers and see how they interact with your book.
On Starting the 1st Armenian Literary Agency

With passion and perserverence, a small agency is working hard to develop an infrastructure for translation and a global audience for Armenian writers. By Arevik Ashkharoyan

Right before my 30th birthday, I finally decided to quit my job with the intention of starting something of my own. In Armenia, you don't deal with books to earn a good living or, really, to earn anything at all. You do it purely out of love and perhaps a naïve belief in bringing your childhood dreams of a better world to life. Today, it sounds unbelievable that only four years ago I was searching the web to find the definition of the words "literary agent."

I officially started the 1st Armenian Literary Agency in 2012 with a list of ten contemporary Armenian writers. It is unquestionably a huge responsibility to be not only the first, but also the only one in the field. At my first Frankfurt Book Fair, wearing uncomfortable high-heeled shoes and excessively formal attire, I was challenging publishers with a diverse list of novels by Aram Pachyan, Hovhannes Tekgyozyan, Gurgen Khanjyan, Hrachya Saribekyan, and others.

Now, three years later, we have over 30 Armenian writers on our list, and they represent a wide range of styles and write in an array of languages. One of our new arrivals is Gohar Markosyan-Kasper. Writing in Russian and living in Estonia, Markosyan-Kasper's extravagant and funny Penelopa — a reflection of an emancipated Audrey Hepburn — guides you on a one day tour of Armenia in the ’90s. Penelopa takes you through the dark streets of Yerevan, the capital of a newly independent Armenia, a country in a post-Soviet economic crisis involved in a regional conflict and in domestic political uprisings.

Another recent addition to our family is acclaimed Armenian screenplay and fantasy writer Harout Ghukassian, whose Book of Genius and numerous film scripts can effortlessly compete with both A Song of Ice and Fire and television episodes of Game of Thrones.

Finding a great book makes you feel like a gold miner. And even though all the praise will go to the writer, the feeling of engagement in this magic will never make you regret your efforts — irrespective of the challenges.

With my passion for all types of challenges, I could make a long list of those that have become serious obstacles in my work: the lack of a strong cultural policy, no translation support program, even the lack of literary translators that are capable of translating from Armenian into a number of languages (this, in particular, has been constraining the number of deals we could have made by now).

These challenges mobilized our efforts to create non-governmental organizations such as the Armenian Literature Foundation and the Armenian Association of Literary Translators. This also seems to be a good path toward the establishment of a civil society in our country, a society where the public is taking the initiative to reform, with the hope that the government will catch up with all the developments soon.

What we have done to date is not a long list of deals, but a result of our team’s personal devotion and love of our work. We were pleased to have Yenok’s Eye by Gurgen Khanjyan published in the U.S., and later there were two Turkish deals in cooperation with our co-agent Kalem Literary Agency in Turkey: Fleeting City by Hovhannes Tekgyozyan (2015) and The Inhabitants of Ankimyur by Armine Anda (2016) in Turkey. Just recently, we released the short story collection Robinson by Aram Pachyan in Ukraine. In 2016, we are expecting the English edition of Fleeting City from Mosaik Press in Canada and are now finalizing deals for the book with publishers in France and Italy. We were likewise thrilled to have a short story collection Robinson by Aram Pachyan in Ukraine.

It seems that now the words “Armenian literature” are no longer terra incognita for foreign publishers. Still, our ultimate goal is to fill the bookshelves of readers all over the world with books by Armenian writers. We’re one step closer to fulfilling that dream.
Passing the Torch in Indonesian Literary Life

How a friendship with the late Pramoedya Ananta Toer led to the global translation of another rising Indonesian literary star.

By Anna Soler-Pont, Pontas Literary Agency

Sometimes a literary agency can be looking for an author, and this same author can be thinking about hiring the services of that same literary agency. Then finally, one day, their paths cross. This is what happened to Jakarta-based author Eka Kurniawan and my own Barcelona-based Pontas Literary & Film Agency. We finally met each other right before the Indonesia Guest of Honor appearance at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2015.

In 2001, legendary Indonesian author Pramoedya Ananta Toer (1925–2006) became a Pontas Agency client. Representing Pram (as people used to call him) on an international level was one of the largest honors the Pontas team has ever had. We met him many times in Jakarta, Barcelona and around the world and worked with John McGlynn of the Lontar Foundation and his other translators to lobby for his Nobel Prize candidacy. Throughout the years, the agency’s personal and professional ties with Indonesia have continued, with collaborations with McGlynn, writer and film producer Richard Oh, and currently with Leila S. Chudori, whose novel Pulang is part of the Indonesian literary program during this year’s Fair.

But with this year’s Guest of Honor program, it was imperative to bring more great writing to the attention of the world, which is how we discovered Eka Kurniawan.

“After half a century, Pramoedya Ananta Toer has found a successor,” renowned Indonesia scholar Benedict Anderson said about Kurniawan, and it was a wonderful chain of connections and mutual friends that lead to the first email from Pontas agent Marina Penalva Kurniawan:

“I first heard your name from Declan Spring at New Directions, a close friend and colleague, with whom I had a memorable conversation last year at a book fair. We discussed Bolaño, Vila-Matas, Pramoedya Ananta Toer and then Beauty is a Wound, and your name came up in the conversation. Declan referred me to your editor, Barbara Epler, when I mentioned to him that we were keen to represent new Indonesian writers. “I tried to track you down, without any luck, but then my colleague at Pontas, Jessica Craig, flagged the great recent review in Kirkus for your novel and we contacted Barbara again. We were very happy to find out that you were still handling the rights of your works yourself, and that you had successfully managed to place it in the hands of some good foreign editors too!”

“Also, in a lovely and timely coincidence, Richard Oh, a dear friend of the founder and director of our agency, Anna Soler-Pont, was also recommending Pontas to get in touch with you in order to talk about the possibilities of a representation!”

Eka Kurniawan replied quickly: “It’s nice to be introduced to you. Actually, I’ve been hearing about Pontas since a few years ago when Pramoedya Ananta Toer was still with us. My first book is a non-fiction work about him, my graduate thesis turned into a book, so I knew him personally. I think he mentioned Pontas once, I don’t remember when it was exactly, but the name stuck in my head for a long time. And then Richard Oh mentioned Pontas again a few days ago, when I told him that I need a literary agent who is familiar with literary-fiction and Asian writers.”

Originally written in Bahasa Indonesia, Beauty is a Wound was published in September 2015 in English by New Directions and translation rights have already been sold into several languages (French, Japanese, Dutch, Swedish, Korean). Eka Kurniawan will attend the Frankfurt Book Fair 2015 and participate in several events as part of Indonesia’s Guest of Honor program.
The Frankfurt Book Fair App:

book-fair.com/app

- Free up-to-date fair catalogue
- Exclusive events
- Easy orientation
- Find your LinkedIn contacts at the fair!

Free download and further information

www.book-fair.com/app