Olga Tokarczuk Opens the Fair

Winner of the recently announced 2018 Nobel Prize in Literature, Polish writer Olga Tokarczuk opens the 2019 Frankfurter Buchmesse alongside WIPO director general Francis Gurry.

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From the Editor:
Welcome to Frankfurt 2019 as Books ‘Burst Their Covers’

In agenda-setting commentary from Frankfurter Buchmesse’s director at the opening press conference of the 2019 fair on Tuesday, Juergen Boos quoted French symbolist Stéphane Mallarmé: “Everything in the world exists only to be put into a book.” And in an interview with Publishing Perspectives after that news conference, keynote speaker Francis Gurry, chief of the Geneva-based World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), said, “That book has burst its covers.”

The way, then, has been prepared for today’s (Wednesday) centerpiece event, the 2 p.m. CEO Talk with Netflix International Originals’ Kelly Luegenbiehl, whose films and series routinely premiere at the same hour on the same day—in 190 countries.

As Boos and Gurry had demonstrated, the stunning speed of global digital distribution now is racing headlong into conflict with what the newly minted 2018 Nobel Prize in Literature laureate Olga Tokarczuk movingly described as the creative imperative: “Literature is so slow,” she said through an interpreter. “I sometimes ask myself whether it’s even possible to describe this world.”

All is not bleak, just urgent. The outgoing Borsenverein chief Heinrich Riethmüller reported that nonfiction books in Germany are seeing a boost in sales of 9.6 percent this year. “The mood in the industry is good,” he told us.

And in our interview with WIPO’s Gurry about his new AI initiative, the questions of 2019’s Frankfurt posed by Tokarczuk and Boos—and by Netflix’s Luegenbiehl (see our Thursday Show Diary)—couldn’t be clearer: Will digital opportunity overwhelm books? Or can the industry learn to protect its IP and ride these tech waves in a churning sea of content?

Porter Anderson
Editor-in-Chief

Event Highlights: Wednesday, October 16

**Frankfurt EDU Conference**
9:30 a.m. — 3:30 p.m.
Congress Center, Level 2, Rooms Spektrum and Conclusio

Under this year’s theme of “Diversity – New Learning Concepts for Heterogeneous Societies,” Frankfurt EDU conference speakers will discuss the need for new learning concepts to address the increasing diversity in today’s classrooms and societies.

**Publishing Perspectives Talks:**
Publishing and the Climate Crisis
10:30 a.m. — 11:30 a.m.
International Stage, Hall 5.1 A128

Hear an agent, an author, a translator, and an editor present books about climate and the environment. Speakers will discuss the growing trend of climate books and the book industry’s role in addressing the global climate crisis.

**Matchmaking with Taiwanese Publishers of Comics and Graphic Novels**
11:00 a.m. — 12:00 p.m.
Taiwan Stand, Hall 3.0 H45

Meet face-to-face with Taiwanese publishers of comics and graphic novels to build professional networks and discuss rights. This session is specially planned for publishers of comics and graphic novels to share their beautiful images and stories.

**Presentation of NORLA’s 2019 Translator’s Award**
2:45 – 3:00 p.m.
Main Stage, Guest of Honor Pavilion

NORLA - Norwegian Literature Abroad annually awards a prize valued at 20,000 Norwegian kroner to a talented young translator who has contributed significantly to the translation of Norwegian literature into foreign languages.

**Finnland Cool & Happy**
4:00 – 6:00 p.m.
Frankfurt Pavilion, Agora

Five years ago, Finland was the guest of honor at Frankfurt Book Fair under the slogan FINNLAND. COOL. This year organizers are revisiting Frankfurt to say hello to friends from 2014 and to show what has happened Finnish literature since then.

**Presenters**

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Three Amazing Books by the Legendary Japanese Business Leader Kazuo Inamori!

**kokoro**
- The Mind.

- “Kokoro” means “mind” in Japanese. Everything begins and ends with the mind.

- 150,000 copies sold in 2 months in Japan!

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- The most important issue for humankind.

- Over 5 million copies sold, with 14 languages licensed.

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- Thoughts and ideas regarding the work ethic and life principles for all walks of life.

- Over 180,000 copies sold!

From the publisher of Marie Kondo’s *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*, Sunmark titles are spreading from Japan to all over the world!

**Before the Coffee Gets Cold**

- by Toshikazu Kawaguchi

- Could an ordinary Japanese coffee shop become a time machine where miracles occur and lives are changed?

- 850,000 copies sold in Japan!

- UK edition published in September!

**Zero Training**

- by Tomomi Ishimura

- Japanese supersecrets to regain your body’s Zero Position, lose weight, and reverse aging!

- 860,000 copies sold in Japan!

- English manuscript available!

**Never Mind, If You Cannot Do It...**

- Encyclopedia of creatures that lost something during evolution

- by Penguin Airplane Factory

- “Don’t you know the hippopotamus gave up sweating?” Penta, the boy penguin, introduces us to some wonderful creatures and the features they lost in evolution.

- 50,000 copies sold in 1 month in Japan!

**See you at Frankfurt Book Fair 2019 Hall 6.0 B120**
Books On Offer in the Festhalle: LitAg Rights Buzz

Olivia Snaije

The Literary Agents & Scouts Centre (LitAg), located this year in the historic Festhalle near the Fair’s entrance, on Tuesday morning was filling up with agents and publishers. Agents were happy with their new location, but some publishers were late to appointments not having realized the LitAg had moved. The Publisher’s Rights Corner this year is one floor up in a separate room.

HarperCollins

The HarperCollins team from New York—which includes Carolyn Bodkin, Catherine Barbosa Ross, Janice Suguitan and Kate Falkoff—has a number of titles they’ll be selling, but two of the biggest are memoirs by Demi Moore and Debbie Harry. Demi Moore’s Inside Out, co-written with Ariel Levy, was released September 24th and hit No. 1 on the New York Times nonfiction bestseller list in its first week.

Deals with Hungary, Russia, and Bulgaria have closed, and there have been offers in multiple territories. Debbie Harry’s Face It, published October 1st released this week in Germany with Heyne Verlag, and has sold to Planeta in Spain.

“Since it was an embargoed book this is the first week we’re going live with it,” said Carolyn Bodkin.

Also in non-fiction, HarperCollins is selling Love Yourself Like Your Life Depends On It by Kamal Ravikant, on the transformative power of self-love. Originally a self-published book that sold 300,000 copies, the HarperCollins edition is a revised edition. It has sold in Germany, the Netherlands, Brazil, Spain, Japan, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia.

In commercial women’s fiction HarperCollins points out the “new, talented voice” of Liv Constantine, (the pen name of sisters Lynne and Valerie Constantine) and the debut thriller, The Last Mrs. Parrish.

The Italian Literary Agency

The Italian Literary Agency is still riding high on the success of Antonio Scardalì’s M, the Son of the Century, which won the Strega Prize last July. The agency is in Frankfurt with a debut novel, L’Esercizio (The Exercise) by Claudia Petrucci, sold at auction in Italy, to be published with La Nave di Teseo in early 2020 as a lead title. It’s described as a dramatic psychological thriller that is also a love story.

The agency is also selling Andrea Tarabbia’s novel, Madrigale Senza Suono (Soundless Madrigal), which was published by Bollati Boringhieri and won the 2019 Campiello prize. Set in the 16th century, it recounts the true story of Carlo Gesualdo, a nobleman who wrote madrigals but also murdered his wife who was betraying him.

Back in contemporary Naples, film director and author Roberto Andò’s forthcoming Il Bambino Nascosto, (The Hidden Child) is about a friendship that develops between a tormented man and a young boy fleeing the Neapolitan mafia.

Japan UNI Agency

At the Japan UNI Agency, Takeshi Oyama and Izumi Yoshioka are selling Fumio Sasaki’s Goodbye Things, the New Japanese Minimalism, which has been published by Norton. It’s a philosophical, deeper way of thinking about simplifying your life, said Oyama.

Musician, poet, and novelist Durian Sukagawa’s new book The Shinguku Cat is already selling well in Asian countries. It’s the story of a tiny street in Tokyo’s Shinguku neighborhood where a mysterious young woman works as a fortune teller in a bar. She is often accompanied by a cat who comes and goes in the bar. One day the fortune teller disappears. One of Sukagawa’s former books, Tokyo Delicacies, was adapted for film and presented at the Cannes Film Festival in 2015.

Copenhagen Literary Agency

Monica Gram at the Copenhagen Literary Agency is selling Icelandic crime author Ragnar Jónasson’s White Death, the sequel to his Hulda series, about a female detective.

Also in fiction, Gram represents Danish author Anne-Sophie Lund-Sørenson whose Happy Hour, the last book in her trilogy set in the underbelly of Denmark, is just out. TV and film rights have been optioned.

In non-fiction, journalist Tom Buk-Swienty had access to Danish author Karen Blixen’s letters and a diary just released a year and half ago. The result is The Lioness, Karen Blixen in Africa, an account of Karen Blixen’s life that is able to delve far deeper into her personal evolution. Rights have been sold to Penguin Verlag in Germany, Gaia Editions in France, and Ediciones del Viento in Spain. Nordisk Film is developing The Lioness as a feature film. •
Don’t Miss Sessions

Located at the Academic & Business Information Stage (Hall 4.2 N101)

The EU Digital Single Market Copyright Directive: Licensing in the Digital Age
Wednesday 16 October, 11:30 to 12:00

Projekt DEAL and the Anatomy of a Transformative Agreement for Open Access Publishing
Wednesday 16 October, 14:00 to 14:30

Subscriptions, Rights & Open Access: The Future of Transformative Agreements
Wednesday 16 October, 14:30 to 15:00

Better Data is Better Publishing (and Better Science, Too)
Thursday 17 October, 9:30 to 10:00

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Norway’s ‘Grounded’ Yet ‘Ephemeral’ Pavilion

By Roger Tagholm

With its sculptural tables whose sweeps and curves represent the poetry of the Norwegian landscape, its giant photographs of the country’s forests, and its giant mirrored walls, this year’s pavilion from Guest of Honor Norway is a bold and imaginative journey through the country’s literature and land.

There are 23 tables, each with its own sculpture representing a Norwegian poem. One table has a grand arch and is called “the mountain held its breath,” others are like storm-tossed trees from the country’s north.

A competition to find the best pavilion design was held across the country with the winning contract going to Oslo’s Manthey Kula and LCLA Office. Beate Holmebakk from the Kula office said that the idea was to depict literature as “a space and a landscape,” with each table “both abstract and playfully narrative.”

Each table’s design was inspired by poems published over the period of a year by the Guest of Honor site www.norway2019.com under the heading “Poems of the Week.”

The designers were keen to feature books in the pavilion, but one of the most popular tables was an intriguing art installation by “smell researcher and artist” Sissel Tolaas and the publisher of the eponymous Norwegian publisher Erling Kagge. This consists of a table of what look like stainless steel pepper-pots, each of which contain an intriguing smell.

Each pepper-pot sits on a title card, so there is “God, newly cooked,” “Summer pigs in a field,” “Mother getting dressed for party, Saturday evening,” and the poetic “The first kiss, she had gloss lips with fruity peach flavour, probably 1975.”

What it all means is left to the viewer, but the table is always surrounded by groups of people, smiling, smelling, and wondering.

Speaking about all the tables, Holmebakk said: “We wanted the bottoms of the tables to be solid, like the grounding books give you, but wanted the top to be more ephemeral, like the kind of space we all inhabit when we open a book.”

The pavilion also includes an intriguing sculpture called “Witzenstein’s boat,” which is just that—a damaged wooden hulk behind which is a photograph of the philosopher rowing the boat on which the sculpture is based. There is a typically enigmatic quote from him: “My boat is in the world, but the fact that is my boat is no — it is not anywhere.”

Once again, what this all means it left to the observer too.

Interestingly, this year, part of the pavilion is to go on tour. The 23 tables have been donated to German booksellers, which means that these sweeping sculptures may yet find a permanent home in one of the country’s bookshops.

Frankfurt Rights Meeting: Focus on China

By Roger Tagholm

China’s book market continues to grow, delegates heard at the 33rd Frankfurt Rights Meeting. The figures, presented by research body Beijing OpenBook, are breath-taking. It says that for the first half of 2019, its print book market showed a growth rate of 10.2 percent compared with 2018, with the bulk of the growth coming from online sales, which showed a growth rate of 24.19 percent for the first half of this year.

In a whistle-stop tour of the market by OpenBook’s CEO and vice chairperson Yaping Jiang, the details came thick and fast. She noted that Amazon China has now officially terminated its print book business and that audio was up 42.9 percent in 2018, while growth in ebooks in the same year was up a modest 3.7 percent.

Children’s books are by far the largest sector with 27.3 percent of the market, closely followed by social sciences with 25.57 percent.

Interestingly, she said that while works in translation are still popular, it has shown a slight decline, with works by Chinese authors growing in popularity. She also noted that were fewer new titles in the first half of 2019, down 6.22 percent on the first half of 2018. “Chinese publishers are concentrating on quality rather than quantity,” she said.

Wuping Zhao, deputy chief editor and vice president of Shanghai Publishing House, continued the deluge of figures. There are 585 state-owned publishing houses and more than 10,000 private publishers.

Public domain books are extremely popular with EB White’s Charlotte’s Web selling more than one million copies last year.

Among the most popular foreign writers are Kite Runner author Khaled Hosseini and the Japanese thriller writer Keigo Higashino. Despite the growth in online sales, as opposed to bricks and mortar, mentioned by Jiang, Zhao noted that there are still in incredible 225,000 physical bookstores across the country. “Whether you choose to work via a sub-agent or work directly with Chinese publishing partners, this is a market worth investigating—and visiting China will help you build relationships.”

Guangyu (Tracy) Liu, director, department of rights and international cooperation for China Renmin University Press, tackled academic publishing. She said that there were surprisingly few university presses—around 107 she thinks—and had some advice on reaching out to them. “Most major Chinese universities are profit sensitive, so the influence of your author, the size of print-runs and editions, the other foreign rights you have sold are all good references that will be needed.”

Echoing Zhao’s comments on relationships, she concluded: “Relationships and friendships are important in Chinese culture. Of course, it is business, but if you have a genuine interest in learning more about Chinese people and culture, most Chinese people can sense your good will and will reciprocate with warm friendship and good business.”
Practice Problems

1. Your teacher lined up 6 pieces of poop in a row and started to kick them one by one. 3 pieces of poop have already been kicked. How many pieces of poop have not yet been kicked?

2. You are going to the park with 7 pieces of poop in the basket of your bicycle. You dropped 6 pieces of poop along the way. How many pieces of poop are left remaining in the basket?

3. 9 people are supporting a huge piece of poop that is about to topple over. However 6 people have now run away. How many people are left remaining?

Review Problems

1. You were given 8 poop bugs. You gave 3 of them away to your friend. How many poop bugs do you have left?

2. You put 9 poop bugs in an aquarium and went to sleep. When you woke up in the morning, 5 poop bugs had run away and disappeared. How many poop bugs are left in the aquarium?

3. You have lined up pieces of the poop bug's poop on a table. 2 pieces of the poop bug's poop fell to the floor. How many pieces of the poop bug's poop remain left on the table?

The professor attempted to cut through 13 hard boulders with the poop katana. He was only able to cut through 2 of them.

1. Draw the same number of ×s through the boulders, as the number of boulders the Professor was able to cut through.

2. How many boulders were the Professor not able to cut through?

What is The Poop Workbook?


“The Poop Workbook” combines the two together in a new “study workbook” which fuses “pool” x “learning.” Since its release in March 2017, “The Poop Workbook Series” has become a massive hit. It has sold a total of 5 million copies, where 2 in every 3 elementary school children in Japan own a copy.
The Politics of Translation: ‘Arabic Literatures in Europe’

Olivia Snaije

Over several days before the Frankfurt Book Fair opened, the independent KfW Stiftung held a short stories masterclass in the city of Frankfurt, in cooperation with the Goethe-Institut in Cairo, for young Arab writers. A closing conference in cooperation with Commonwealth Writers took place on “The Politics of Translation, Arabic Literatures in Europe.”

Eleven writers (one Syrian writer was not granted a visa) attended and explored writing techniques, guided by Palestinian author Adania Shibli, while Lynn Gaspard, publisher of Saqi Books in London, discussed the publishing industry. Egyptian author Alaa Al Aswany arrived on the last day to talk to the young writers and participate in a conversation moderated by Daniel Medin of the Center for Writers & Translators at the American University in Paris.

Translator of Arabic to English Elisabeth Jaquette, German editor Piero Salabé (Hanser Verlag), Adania Shibli, and Lynn Gaspard discussed Arabic literatures and the politics of translation.

There is an interventionist style in the UK, France, Germany, and the US when it comes to editing a translation, said Gaspard, who explained that most Arab publishers don’t edit much. “[Lebanese author] Elias Khoury says he looks forward to being translated into English because that’s when he’s edited.”

Piero Salabé who edits foreign literature at Hanser Verlag said that because he can’t read the original text in Arabic, editing is not a given.

“You have to work with the translator to solve questions and contradictions. When something doesn’t work it’s usually because there’s an error in the translation or something is opaque in the original manuscript.” If a manuscript is good, said Salabé “there shouldn’t need to be many changes.”

Adania Shibli—whose latest book, Minor Detail was translated by Elisabeth Jaquette and will be published in 2020 (Fitzcarraldo/New Directions)—said her editors don’t interfere much with her work.

“I tend to be a heavy editor myself … What is unsaid and not written is as important,” she said

So how does one translate what is unsaid?

“I believe in the collaborative effort between the editor, translator, and writer,” said Jaquette. “In the silences based on politics, cultural background, and language, you can assume the reader will fill in the blanks, but with a different readership it can mean different things, and there might need to be a shift.”

As far as the boundaries of language go, Adania Shibli said, “as readers of Arabic, we don’t grow up only reading Arabic literature. Translation is essential to us. And these translations sometimes push the boundaries of the Arabic language. It’s not about the literal translation but the transformation of one’s Arabic from reading these translations from other languages.”

Arabic-to-English translations in particular have changed over the past 20 years, said Jaquette. Translators used to be students of Arabic, and Arabic literature was usually published by university presses. “Today there’s a new generation of Arabic translators more interested in literature.”

And what of the outlook for Arabic literatures in translation?

Salabé said he had hoped there would be more interest Arabic literature in Germany given the presence of Islamic and Arabic culture and refugees, but “it remains a challenge … If the passion is there when you translate, as a publisher you have to promote [the book] with equal passion. Any place can be the center of the world when literature is universal … I’m optimistic.”

This year’s German Book Prize, one of the highest recognitions of German-language fiction, goes to Bosnian-German writer Saša Stanišić for his novel, Herkunft (Origins), published by Luchterhand / Random House Germany in March.

In announcing the winner on Monday evening, October 14, the German Book Prize jury said about the book and Stanišić, “With great humour, he counters the narratives of historical misrepresentation with his own stories.”

The publisher describes Herkunft with a quote from Stanišić himself: “It is a book about language, moonlighting, youth and many summers. The summer when my grandfather had fled across many borders to Germany.”

The summer when I fled across many borders and which was very like the summer when Angela Merkel opened the borders and which was very like the summer when I fled across many borders to Germany.”

This is the second time Stanišić has received attention from the German Book Prize. His debut novel, Wie der Soldat das Grammophon repariert (How the Soldier Repairs the Gramophone) was shortlisted for the 2006 prize. This semi-autobiographical novel of the Bosnian war became a bestseller in Germany and has been translated into 31 languages.

According to Random House Germany, foreign rights to Herkunft had already been sold to China (Horizon), Croatia (Fraktura), France (Stock), Italy (Keller), and Korea (EunHaeng NaMu) before the prize announcement was made.
Ilze Micule at the Latvian stand. Hall 5.0 B79 hands out book fair survival kits, including earplugs to “treat yourself to a moment of silence.” (Image: Johannes Minkus)


37 and counting! Travel publisher John Beaufoy has notched up 37 Frankfurts, 11 of them with his eponymous house John Beaufoy Publishing. “There is still a market for physical books,” he says proudly. (Image: Roger Tagholm)

At the Rabén & Sjögren stand, Sofia Hahr and Åsa Bergman show their best Pippi poses (Image: Johannes Minkus)

The Frankfurt Pavilion hosted a full crowd at Tuesday’s opening press conference, featuring WIPO general director Francis Cerry and Nobel Prize winner Olga Tokarczuk, alongside Frankfurter Buchmesse director Juergen Boos and Heinrich Riehmoller, chairman of the board of the Börsenverein des deutschen Buchhandels (Image: Johannes Minkus)
Dr. Ali Bin Tamim: Encouraging Translation of Arabic Literature and Academic Writing

Leading the recently announced Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Authority, Dr. Ali Bin Tamim wants to provide more incentives for publishers to learn about and translate Arabic literature.

“We believe that a focus on timeless globalized values in creative works is a factor that can play a significant role in bringing Arab literature to the international literary scene.”

Dr. Ali Bin Tamim

By Porter Anderson

In the effort to see contemporary Arabic literature properly recognized and introduced to a larger world readership, Dr. Ali Bin Tamim is one of the most widely appreciated. Since 2011, he has served as secretary general of the Sheikh Zayed Book Award. And Bin Tamim also chairs the very new Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Authority, just approved by the emirate’s executive council in July.

According to state information released to the media, the new authority Bin Tamim leads puts into place something like a European language academy, responsible for "developing strategic plans to advance the use of Arabic and publish scientific studies.

"The authority will also act as a research center to support Arabic speakers [and] support translation from and to Arabic, and will issue and publish books translated from multiple foreign languages into Arabic."

The plans for the new authority follow the work of the Sheikh Zayed Book Award, which annually awards some US$1.9 million in prize money and offers translation funding for the winners of its children’s and literature categories.

The award was created in 2006 to commemorate the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, founding president of the UAE and ruler of Abu Dhabi.

This month, the first phase has begun in book evaluations for the 2020 Zayed awards, and longlists are anticipated for November.

Publishing Perspectives had a chance to put several questions to Bin Tamim about the rising international interest in Arabic literature and the Arab world’s book industry.

Publishing Perspectives: Help us define the challenges in getting Arabic content into the international publishing industry’s markets.

Is it possible to say that the biggest problem is political? Or are there aspects of the Arab world’s publishing industries that complicate the issue?

Dr. Ali Bin Tamim: There are multiple factors, apart from politics, that impact the Arab publishing industry’s reach to the international scene.

From our interaction with Arab authors and writers, we see that not many of them view their works in a globalized perspective, and not many of them aim in their works to reach the larger international audience.

While political tension may impact the flow of its works, its influence is focused on short-lived subjects and issues that touch on current events. Hence we believe that a focus on timeless globalized values in creative works is a factor that can play a significant role in bringing Arab literature to the international literary scene.

And there are quite a lot of bright examples in Arab literature that have reached a globalized status by building on cross-cultural values, such as the works of Gibran Khalil Gibran, Taha Hussein, Najiub Mahfouz, and even the historical creative works like 1,001 Nights, The Epistle of Forgiveness by Abu L-Ala’ Al-Ma’arri, and Hayy ibn Yaqzan by Ibn Tufail.

Another factor is academic books’ reach. While some efforts are made in translating Arabic academic works for foreign students—such as the American University in Cairo and New York University’s initiative in Abu Dhabi—this could be viewed as an under-utilized route that can raise the awareness and appeal of prime creative works in Arabic literature to the larger international base of audiences.

ABT: The orientalism movement has definitely helped immensely to break long-standing misconceptions and stereotypes about Arabic culture and literature, and many have sensed this among academic and cultural entities.

And yet what remains as the real issue is a lack of enough support and investment in creative works that bring together Eastern and Western cultures, to support a common, globalized set of values.

So this underlines a dire need to support more translation initiatives; adopt an intellectual strategy driven jointly by public and private sectors; find solid channels of communication with international cultural and literary bodies; establish creative clubs to bring together authors and writers from all backgrounds; reassess our choices of translated works; and adopt a wider perspective of nationalism in culture and literature that fits with a globalized perspective of creative works.

This article is sponsored by the Sheikh Zayed Book Award.
WIPO’s Francis Gurry Opens an AI Initiative: ‘Technology Should Not Be the Master’

By Porter Anderson

When it comes to high-level views of what international publishing faces today, few people have anything close to the purview of Francis Gurry, for 11 years now the World Intellectual Property Organization director general.

Hearing Frankfurter Buchmesse president and CEO Juergen Boos at the fair’s opening press conference talk about the accelerating “transition from the analog to the digital and now to the networked, data-driven age,” Gurry is ready with apt eloquence about the effect on so many professionals in the creative industries.

“The term ‘Industrial Revolution,’” he says, “wasn’t socialized until 100 years later. We don’t have that luxury of time to absorb what’s happening to us. And we’re losing our memory. Before we can absorb one thing, we’ve moved on to the next. So we don’t have the memory as a society of what’s happened.

“If you think of the digital evolution, you can’t remember the technologies you’ve been using” as one replaces the other. “So we don’t know the social impact” of successive changes, in culture or in the creative and intellectual businesses.

“We’re now living in a world in which tech is determining the possibilities. Tech is saying, ‘We can do it, so let’s do it.’ And I’m not sure that’s right. Technology should not be the master, but the servant.”

Where this is taking him, though, is to what might finally be the broadest possible context of need for change for publishing and near-by creative fields. “The most pressing thing institutionally is that the idea of multilateralism—the idea of multinational cooperation—is under attack. But also the form of multinational cooperation is under attack. The form was created in a completely different world’ of slowly evolving debate and policy.

“And we’re all finding ourselves unraveling the consequences of tech.” While that might be right, we can’t move at Old World speed when the landscape is racing by.

This is why, Gurry says, he’s pleased with how quickly the member-state consultations have gone on an entirely new initiative that WIPO, under his direction, is about to reveal in a white paper Gurry hopes can be available early next month.

At issue is artificial intelligence, because AI could well be the most daunting test of intellectual property’s protection, the end run of the new digital paradigm for which the disruption so far has been only a prelude.

When content is being created by something other than a human rationale, how do we know whose intellectual property it really is? WIPO’s initial position paper in early November will open up the topic to comments—to any and all who would like to participate—and those comments then will be presented with full transparency. A revised paper that takes the commentary into account will then form the basis for “a more structured conversation.”

In the end, Gurry predicts, we’re going to see a world in which a kind of “copyright layer” exists atop and around the world of intellectual property, something that can accommodate and interpret the realities of wide distribution at the most extravagant speeds and fragmentation and yet find a meaningful way to represent ownership and rights.

If the European Union meanwhile, he reasons, keeps developing its approaches to the issues of a kind of data-level inventory, it could, he says, end up in a pace-setting position that could give the US market trouble.

“The existing intellectual property structure came out of that Industrial Revolution,” he says. “It’s basically mass production that created the idea that it’s not the product but the process that manufactured it.”

And if the content itself is to be superseded by the digital dynamics to come, “there’s got to be a layer, a layer of data rights” that will exist as an envelope of value around a deeply transformed creative industrial complex. •
Croation Publisher Fraktura Plans Big Print Run for Igor Štiks’ Latest Novel, ‘W’

Štiks’ previous works have been translated into 15 languages. Fraktura publisher Seid Serdarević has high hopes for this new novel, a murder mystery and political reflection in one complex story.

“If you observe the heated debates in the British parliament today, or the discord between EU member states, you might get an idea of what we lived through before the war.”

Igor Štiks

The breakup of Yugoslavia and the devastating violence that followed has been a fertile subject for writers from the Balkan states and has produced powerful literature.

In mid-October, the Croatian publishing house Fraktura will release a new novel by one of the region’s most interesting authors, Igor Štiks. W is, as described by its author, an action-packed novel that recounts an important European story with twists and turns that can be read on many levels.

As Štiks’ publisher Seid Serdarević describes W, “Historic tragedies are mixed with humor and erotic passion. The novel vividly brings to life the period between the early 1960s and today with all its contradictions, disasters, and hopes.”

As in his previous novels, Štiks again examines the political events that took place in Yugoslavia and after its breakup.

Reflections of Recent History

Štiks is a Sarajevo-born writer who fled to Croatia during the war and currently lives in Belgrade. His work positions him for many as an embodiment of the question of identity and politics in the region. Štiks’ PhD dissertation and subsequent research at the University of Edinburgh focused on the evolution of citizenship in the former Yugoslavia and the post-Yugoslav states since 1918.

And as he describes it, what the Balkan states have been through in recent history reflects many of the problems that Europe and the world at large are grappling with today.

“Socialist Yugoslavia faced questions to which there were no straightforward and easy answers,” Štiks says. “If you observe the heated debates in the British parliament today, ‘he says, ‘or the discord between EU member states, you might get an idea of what we lived through before the war. Violence is always just beneath the surface.”

Štiks’ prize-winning 2006 novel Elijahovu Stolicu has been translated into 15 languages and published by Amazon Crossing in an English translation by Ellen Elias-Bursac in 2017 as The Judgment of Richard Richter. In the book, a World War II diary reveals a confession that leads the character Richter to war-torn Sarajevo.

His 2001 debut novel, A Castle in Romagna—published in English by Amazon Crossing in 2018 in a translation by Russell Scott Valentino and Tomislav Kuzmanović—alters between Renaissance Italy and Tito’s Yugoslavia, as history ultimately repeats itself.

Štiks says he sketched out the structure for his new novel, W, in 2006, but it took him another 10 years to write, during which time he lived in Paris, Chicago, Edinburgh, and Belgrade “taking stock of our contemporary predicament.”

The seed for the novel was planted in 2001, when Štiks had recently arrived in Paris for his studies 

just after the Genoa G8 summit and the police murder of the young anarchist Carlo Giuliani, and just a few days after September 11. The experiences of the Balkan wars in the 1990s were still fresh.

“I asked myself how on Earth the war happened in the former Yugoslavia, what on Earth is happening in this world, and what can we do now to change it? This is how a long research [project] in utopian and revolutionary movements, actors, events, and personal destinies throughout the 20th century started.”

Croatian Authors and Translation

The publishing house Fraktura’s first print run for Štiks’ W will be for 2,000 copies, twice the usual print run in Croatia, with its population of just over 4 million.

Any book that sells more than 1,000 copies is considered a bestseller, says publisher Serdarević.

He says that despite the lack of an official program to promote Croatian literature to foreign publishers, he believes that the impact of Croatian authors abroad is satisfactory.

“There’s a whole string of authors whose works are translated across the world,” Serdarević says, “which shows the vitality of the literary scene.”

“And these are authors from many generations who write poetry and prose. Among the more widely translated authors, I’d mention Daša Drndić, Miljenko Jergović, Olja Savčević Ivancević, Robert Perišić, Igor Štiks, Dubravka Ugrešić, Slavenka Drakulic, and also poets such as Marko Pogačar.”

“There’s a great interest in regional authors, as well, among whom I’d like to point out Dragan Velikić and young Lana Bastašić. I anticipate that the forthcoming appearance of Slovenia as the guest of honor country at the 2022 Frankfurt Book Fair will spark an even greater interest in the literature of south Slavic countries.”

Find Fraktura at the Frankfurt Book Fair: Hall 5.0 A24
In Australia’s Growing Children’s and YA Sector, Nonfiction Is Trending

By Andrea Hanke

It’s a good time to be a children’s publisher in Australia, according to figures on the Australian children’s and YA market coming from Nielsen Book.

Having grown significantly over the past decade—the children’s and young adult sector has the largest volume share of the of Nielsen’s 10 territories—the sector in Australia remains in steady growth, up 3 percent in value this year compared with the same period last year.

The main growth is in preschool, picture books, and children’s and YA nonfiction.

There’s no doubt this growth has been reflected in a flourishing children’s book publishing scene. In recent years, independent publishers including Scribe, Affirm, and Wakefield Press have launched dedicated children’s imprints, while children’s specialist Berbay has announced plans to double its list in 2020.

When Scribe launched its Scribble imprint in 2016, publisher Miriam Rosenbloom, a former book designer, said she was guided by “books that speak to children today, rather than their parents,” with a strong focus on design.

Since Scribble’s launch, the imprint has released more than 20 titles—mostly local with some international buy-ins—including the runaway picture-book bestseller and Australian Book Industry Award winner All the Ways To Be Smart by Davina Bell and illustrator Alison Colpoys. This year, Scribble also won the Bologna “BOP” Prize for Best Children’s Publisher in the Oceania region.

Almost 70,000 copies of All the Ways To Be Smart have been printed in Australia, the UK, and North America. Translation rights have sold into eight additional territories.

Rosenbloom says she believes the book—which reimagines how we evaluate success—has struck a chord at a time when expectations for children are high and standardized testing is commonplace.

“All the Ways To Be Smart reassures children that there isn’t just one way to be smart, and that their different skills, talents and interests are valuable,” she says. She jokes that the eye-catching green cover may have also helped. “We were warned that green book picture books never sell, but maybe actually people were starved for them.”

Fellow independent publisher Pantera Press has a small but highly successful children’s and YA list, using a grassroots approach to launch and build its authors. It’s paid off for YA author Lynette Noni, with more than 100,000 copies sold in her fantasy series The Medoran Chronicles and dystopian novel Whisper.

The publisher is also expanding into children’s nonfiction with You Can Change the World by Lucy Bell, a practical guide that empowers kids to make a difference, which attracted rights interest ahead of Frankfurt.

“We’re seeing that this age group is very motivated to engage with the world in a positive manner and they want to make it a better place,” says Pantera COO Lucy Barrett. •

Sponsored by the Australian Publishers Association, Hall 6.2 A56.

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Nitasha Devasar: ‘Indian Publishing Has a Vital Role To Play’

Leading the Association of Publishers in India, Devasar wants the global industry to recognize the value India contributes to the book business.

By Porter Anderson

Nitasha Devasar, the managing director at Taylor & Francis India, is in a particularly good position to lead the Association of Publishers in India (API), not least because of the publication a year ago of her book Publishers on Publishing: Inside India’s Book Business. And as the Frankfurter Buchmesse kicks off, Devasar’s message is that the Indian publishing industry is more important to the global content business than many people give it credit for.

“The Indian publishing industry is now the second-largest English-language market in the world,” Devasar says in an interview with Publishing Perspectives, “and continues to grow at a healthy pace of almost 19 percent. Arguably, India doesn’t fare this high in any other positive indices and yet, neither its key stakeholders nor government policies recognize and support the value India contributes to the book business. These things are vital to our health going forward.

Second, we need consistent advocacy and awareness-building in key stakeholder groups, even within our industry. These things are vital to our health going forward.

The API has been working on both aspects with mixed results and for all Indian publishing, whether local or international players in India, to gain from the great macro trends for growth in education, research, and the market. And to continue to grow, this is vital.

PP: Can you point to other trends and issues today in Indian publishing?

ND: Indian publishing has always been characterized by a multiplicity of seemingly contradictory trends, and this has been both a cause for disruption and survival.

The industry and its output have always spoken in many voices as different segments faced varied markets within India. The past few years have been tough as many of these markets and margins have been squeezed further. Add in recent policy and tax changes, more government participation in what’s read and taught, to the enduring issues of piracy, patchy government funding, segmented supply chain, and low copyright awareness.

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Agent Stephanie Barrouillet: Nonfiction Leads the Global Children's Book Scene

Publishers in many countries are finding success with nonfiction children's books that tackle everything from environmental stewardship to illustrated explanations of complex concepts.

With all their travel and meetings, literary agents are often among the first to observe emerging book industry trends. When Publishing Perspectives asked literary agent Stephanie Barrouillet where she sees trends in children's books pointing this year, she told us, “During recent business trips in Europe, the States, and Asia, I noticed what a strong interest there is in illustrated nonfiction.

“Publishers around the world are actively looking and originating children's books that convey information in a different and innovative way. While there's still interest in the traditional educational books that we grew up with, nonfiction books today are informative but also entertaining, packed with fun facts and highly illustrated and designed.”

A good example of this, she says, is Das Liebesleben der Tiere (The Love Life of Animals) by Katharina von der Gathen and Anke Kuhl, published by Klett Kinderbuch Verlag, about animals’ love lives and families.

Another favorite is on architecture, How Does a Bridge Work? by Roman Belyaev from Moscow-based publishing house Samokat.

Barrouillet also mentions space and the universe as a trend, represented by books like Impossível (Impossible) by Catarina Sobral from Portuguese publisher Orfeu Negro, and Where Does the Moon Rise? by Jung Chang-hoon and illustrator Jang Ho, from Woongjin Thinkbig in South Korea—in the latter title, the moon cycle becomes part of the bedtime story ritual.

“Across most markets,” Barrouillet says, “publishers are looking for books that offer some sort of tool or useful information for children's development.

“The picture book becomes a vector to explain complex concepts such as economics, biology, politics, and to instill key values in a simple and accessible way at an earlier age. Cases in point are Save It! and Spend It! by Cinders McLeod (Penguin Random House) that introduce money concepts.

“There’s also Eleição dos bichos (Animals’ Elections) by André Rodrigues, Larissa Ribeiro, Paula Desgualdo, and Pedro Markun (Companhias das Letras, Brazil) that introduces children to the election process.”

Barrouillet says that books about the environment and recycling are especially popular internationally, and on Wednesday, she joins our Publishing Perspectives Talk on “Publishing and the Climate” (10:30 a.m., Hall 5.1, A128), where she'll talk about Plastics, Past, Present, and Future, a Korean book by Eu-ju Kim and Ji-won Lee from Woongjin Thinkbig.

“Another title we have on recycling,” Barrouillet says, “is Zero Waste by Sima Ozkan and Zeynep Ozataly

By Porter Anderson

“The picture book becomes a vector to explain complex concepts such as economics, biology, politics, and to instill key values in a simple and accessible way.”

Stephanie Barrouillet
Hiroshi Sogo of Kinokuniya Goes to Frankfurt

How’s bookselling in Japan and other countries? With 107 bookstores worldwide, Kinokuniya’s director of import and distribution, Hiroshi Sogo, gives us his international insights.

By Roger Tagholm

Hiroshi Sogo is the director of import and distribution for the Japanese bookselling chain Kinokuniya, and at the Frankfurter Buchmesse, the company will have its stand this year in Hall 4.J.BG.

The company has been in a rapid expansion in several parts of the world, and we opened our exchange with Sogo by asking how its retail locations in international locations are doing so far.

**Publishing Perspectives:**
What are your opening plans, both in Japan and internationally?

**Hiroshi Sogo:** One in Nagoya, Japan later this year and two in the USA—one just opened in Portland in Oregon, and the other is to open soon in Katy, Texas [just west of Houston]. We plan to open one in Abu Dhabi in March 2020. We’re always looking at opportunities both in Japan and overseas.

**PP:** How are your international stores doing?

**HS:** In the United States, operations have been exceptionally strong for the past 18 months or so. Southeast Asia, especially Singapore and Malaysia, are under strong competition against Amazon/The Book Depository. We’re holding up well, but definitely cannot be at ease.

Bangkok is fine. Dubai and Sydney are stable. Taiwan’s economy as a whole seems not to be helping the retail industry at present.

**PP:** How is the market in Japan at the moment?

**HS:** Tough as ever. A long decline since 1997 hasn’t hit the bottom as yet. Total sales have declined to half of what they were in 1996.

**Digital vs. Print: Especially Good for Manga**

**PP:** What’s the balance between digital and print in Japan?

**HS:** Digital is around 14 percent and print 86 percent. Basically, print continues to decline while digital grows.

Around 90 percent of digital is represented by comic and manga content. There was rampant piracy of manga content until March 2018 when the government finally passed seminal legislation and the police started to crack down.

That helped the industry to regain what had been lost for many years, and helped digital manga sales for some of the major publishers, such as Shuei-sha and Kadokawa. It’s estimated that the total loss collectively inflicted by piracy is 300 billion yen (US$2.78 billion).

**PP:** How is your ebook service Kinoppy doing?

**HS:** Kinoppy is doing fine with positive growth, albeit being pretty small compared to other ebook services such as Kindle and specialist manga sites run by publishers.

For academic markets, we launched our own Japanese content ebook platform called KinoDen last year. For public libraries, we have a digital library service called LibriE. These two services are fast developing and penetrating each market segment in Japan.

**PP:** Are fixed prices under pressure in Japan?

**HS:** It would not be right if I said no. Pressure on pricing in general is being felt more strongly than before, while a large section of the working population is feeling worse off as their wages haven’t been increasing enough to negate inflation.

Furthermore, the consumption tax is due to increase from 8 to 10 percent on October 1, which will be a huge blow to the entire retail and service sector.

Retail price maintenance (RPM) will stay for the foreseeable future in Japan, but retailers are competing by offering extra benefits such as points or mileage and/or vouchers.

**PP:** Why do you think Japan takes a different view from the US with regard to fixed prices?

**HS:** Historically, the mechanism has been regarded as one of the more civilized, inclusive government policies. It goes back to the era when Japan was rebuilding the country after the war. Recovery of social coherency and infrastructure was the priority.

While ordinary commodities were exchanged in free markets, the government (and I could be wrong but the Allied Occupation Forces as well) thought that information carried by publications such as newspapers, books, and magazines should be available to all citizens at the same price wherever they were.

When Japan went into a fast economic development drive in the 1960s and 1970s, fixed pricing made a lot of sense. Publishers and booksellers didn’t have to compete on price. There was a strong appetite for news, knowledge, learning, and entertainment. I suspect that there was hardly a soul who had any negative perception against fixed prices up until recently when a new type of Western capitalism started seeping into the social fabric of the country.

**PP:** What are your thoughts about the future of physical bookshops?

**HS:** I believe that physical bookshops will never die, partly because physical, printed books will never completely disappear.

Digital may continue to grow, but tactile reading will not leave human behavior entirely.

Books will have stronger constituencies, where people are willing to support physical bookshops because they value the physicality of books, the curation, the serendipitous experience, the conversations, and recommendations over your favorites.


**PP:** And what do you like about Frankfurt?

**HS:** The buzz and adrenaline goes up as Day One opens. After three days or so, you start feeling wiser than you were last week.
ASEAN Forum Returns to Frankfurt’s Hall 4.0

By Porter Anderson

With the good news being that Southeast Asian publishing is growing—especially in terms of the educational sector and the buying of rights from overseas industries—one of the key points of discussion for publishers from this region right now is on strategies for selling more foreign rights.

Returning for a second year at the Frankfurter Buchmesse, the ASEAN Forum stage program is presented by the Quezon City–based Rex Group of Companies, in coordination with the ASEAN Publishers Association. The Rex Group is particularly well known for its work in the “Whole Child” program in the Philippines, concentrating on contemporary learning challenges and developments.

Set in Hall 4.0 C36, the program opens at noon on Wednesday, October 16, with a live interview of Rex Group chief Dominador Buhain on his purview of where the region’s strongest progress has been made and what the key challenges ahead will be.

Here are some highlights of the stage program (Hall 4.0 C36), which runs through Sunday, October 20.

The Philippines: It’s not all about the USA
1 – 2:00 p.m., October 16
In a market swamped with books from the United States, what is being done to enhance the significance of local content?

Textbook Publishing: Opportunities for International Publishers K-12
2 – 3 p.m., October 16
Textbook publishing is the most successful publishing sector in all the Southeast Asian countries. How is the government involved in it? And how can international publishers enter this interesting market segment?

The Rights Trade within Southeast Asia
11 a.m. – 12 p.m., October 17
Much of Southeast Asia’s rights business is done with countries from the West. But what about the rights market within the region’s eleven different languages?

Publishing and Governments
10 – 11 a.m., October 18
In educational publishing, the government plays a vital role in supporting the industry in many Southeast Asian countries. Is this sufficient?

The Question of Reading Habits
11 a.m. – 12 p.m., October 18
This panel looks at society, reading habits, and the unique initiatives now being undertaken in Southeast Asia to bolster the reading habits.

Women Writers in Southeast Asia
11 a.m. – 12 p.m., October 19
What does it mean to be a female writer in the countries of Southeast Asia? What are the challenges?

From One Archipelago to Another
1 – 2 p.m., October 19
The island question is a big one for Philippines and Indonesia. How does this feature influence the works of writers in both of these countries?

Love in the (Southeast Asian) City
2 – 3 p.m., October 20
Romance is a staple of fiction writing. Is this also true in Southeast Asia? What elements of fiction entice readers—especially women readers who purchase the largest percentage of books?

ASEAN Forum Returns to Frankfurt’s Hall 4.0

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Nicolas Roche: BIEF’s Expanding Global Network

Almost two years into his tenure as head of France’s international publishing outreach program, Nicolas Roche is expanding international connections for French publishers.

By Olivia Snaije

Nicolas Roche, France’s ambassador for the book industry, in November will have been at the head of the Bureau international de l'édition française (BIEF) for two years. At the time, he told Pauline Leduc at Livres Hebdo that there was a drawing by the French illustrator Voutch that described his work ethic: a couple is having a drink on a balcony looking out at a starry sky. One says to the other, “This is nice, but couldn’t it be even better?”

At least 14 book fairs later, Roche has held meetings with Russian, Turkish, British, Polish, and Dutch publishers, and he has made scouting trips with French publishers to discover the publishing markets in Greece and the Czech Republic. He’s also had a series of meetings with French and Arab publishers, hosted in Paris.

Not long before the Frankfurter Buchmesse, Roche returned from India, which is to be the guest of honor market at Livre Paris in 2020.

‘Where Publishers Can Expand Their Networks’

Since Roche arrived at BIEF—which observes its 150th anniversary in 2022—he has been implementing changes aimed to boost the mission of the BIEF: showcasing French publishing at international book fairs; providing white papers on international book markets for BIEF members; and helping French publishers network with book industry professionals around the world.

One of the BIEF’s principal outreach efforts is to assist publishers in selling rights in foreign territories, and concerted efforts are made to help French publishers get a foot in the door in the American market, says Roche. This means running the BIEF’s collective stand for French publishers at 14 book fairs and trade shows in locations including Taipei, Shanghai, Seoul, Guadalajara, Bologna, and Frankfurt, as well as in London, where Brexit-related protests at French ports delayed the collective display’s set-up in March.

Roche has made stand prices more attractive for smaller publishers, and says he’ll be increasing the size of the BIEF stand in Shanghai and Bologna.

He says he’s also intent on developing the number of professional meetings the BIEF organizes outside the confines of fairs so that relationships between publishers have time to develop. He stresses that he wants to include all divisions within publishing houses, not just editorial.

In June, French and British publishers and editors met in London for two days as a follow-up to Bologna and participated in roundtable events before holding one-on-one meetings.

“It’s important to provide a different environment where information and publishing trends can fuse, and where publishers can expand their networks,” Roche says. “Building relationships takes time, and we help publishers go faster.”

Overtures Overseas

Roche has begun taking groups of publishers on trips to specific countries to discover new markets. “We speak to publishers and suggest certain markets,” he says, “giving them an idea of economic and political factors, and they make suggestions as well.”

This year, a group traveled to Romania and will soon return to strengthen the contacts that were made there.

Between 17 and 19 percent of books published in France are translated from other languages, and Roche says he’d like to increase programs and fellowships for translators from various countries, similar to the literary translation Goldschmidt program already in place for Franco-German translators. That program encourages translators, among other things, to pitch titles to publishers for potential translation.

BIEF also keeps an eye on foreign bookshops abroad. Last summer the Syndicat de la Librairie Française, the booksellers’ union, held their biennial meeting in Marseille, and Roche invited booksellers from French bookshops in Brazil, the Ivory Coast, Australia, and other markets to participate, meeting with publishers and distributors.

“I’d like French-language booksellers who are geographically far away to be able to know what’s happening here in France.”

Nicolas Roche

Notes on BIEF’s Membership

The BIEF membership comprises 280 publishers, both large and small, majors and independents.

The number of BIEF board members was increased in March, so that all segments of publishing are represented.

New members include Antoine Gallimard; Benoît Pollet (Dargaud); Marion Glénat-Corveller (Glénat); Gilles Haëri (Albin Michel); Philippe Robinet (Calmann-Lévy); and independent publisher Sabine Wespieser, while Véra Michalski was reelected as president.

There’s also a new director, Alice Tassel, at the French Publishers’ Agency in New York, the BIEF’s arm in the United States.

Find BIEF at the Frankfurt Book Fair: Hall 5.1 E17

Publishing Perspectives / Frankfurt Book Fair 2019
Meet Frankfurt’s Invitation Program Publishers

The Frankfurter Buchmesse Invitation Program ensures that publishers working in developing book markets are able to attend the fair. Meet two of the twenty publishers here.

Anton Kurnia, Baca Publishing House, Indonesia

Tell us what you do:
I have 20 years experience in the publishing industry as a writer, translator, editor, and publisher.

I joined Serambi, a prominent Indonesian publisher that published the bestselling *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown and has published the Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk’s novels in Indonesian translations since 2007. I resigned in 2016 as editor-in-chief and founded my own independent publisher, Baca.

About your market:
Indonesia was Frankfurt’s guest of honor in 2015 and market focus country at the London Book Fair this year. Those have been good moments for us to improve our book industry.

In Indonesia, the book publishing industry is growing. The sales are going well, especially in fiction and children’s books. Our challenge is how to reach the world market. We should sell more books by Indonesian authors to other countries. We must translate more books into another languages.

Roh-Suan Tung, Balestier Press, Singapore

Tell us what you do:
I'm the publisher of Balestier Press, an independent publisher dedicated to publishing hidden gems of contemporary world literature, including oral literature and picture books. Founded in 2015 and based in Singapore and London, Balestier Press collaborates with writers, translators, and illustrators in many parts of the world, and focuses on Asian, Pacific, and African literature.

We believe that the beauty of literature, stories, and thoughts can connect different cultures and people across borders.

This year, we are starting a new book series called “Hearing Others’ Voices.” This is a trans-cultural and trans-disciplinary series to engage readers in recent advances in thought, unaccountably overlooked areas of the world, and key issues of today.

About your market:
I feel that we are living in a remarkable time of publishing. With the Internet, many resources are available free to read, and we can publish our writings freely through social media. Our publishing house is looking for new content not otherwise available. Content is still the king. And we look for new ways to present or package it, and to bring good content across borders.

Plans for Frankfurt:
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CCC’s Roy Kaufman: What Book Publishers Need to Know About the EU’s Copyright Directive

The European Union’s new copyright directive is controversial for media platforms, but CCC’s Roy Kaufman says books don’t figure heavily in the directive’s regulations.

By Porter Anderson

European ministers gave their final approval to the Digital Single Market framework’s controversial copyright directive in mid-April. Member-states of the European Union now have two years to comply with the directive, “transposing” it, as it’s called, to their specific markets’ needs, and placing it into their national laws.

The book publishing industry in Europe, on the whole, has seen the copyright directive as a boon, rather than as a negative event, not least because it allows member-states the chance to direct copyright collection agencies to distribute copyright revenues to both publishers as well as to authors—something that was practiced in some parts of the EU but not codified in its laws until now.

We start our exchange with Copyright Clearance Center’s managing director for business development and government relations Roy Kaufman by asking what the purpose of the Digital Single Market’s copyright directive is.

Roy Kaufman: In the words of the European Parliament, “The directive aims to ensure that the longstanding rights and obligations of copyright law also apply to the Internet.”

Essentially, the EU felt that it was time to update and harmonize copyright law across member-states for the digital age.

This is important, as different rules about the application of copyright in various member-states, especially in an online environment, were hampering the free flow of goods and services in the EU.

Publishing Perspectives: What provisions should matter most to book publishing?

RK: If I were a publisher, the two things I’d be most concerned with are Articles 16 and 20.

Article 16 clarifies an issue in EU law, allowing for publishers to receive a share of collecting society revenues. While publishers have received shares for many years, recent cases have called into question whether EU law requires that money be paid only to authors. By providing that member-states “may” give the publishers a share, it’s incumbent on local publishers to ensure that their countries’ laws actually allow publishers to receive it.

The other provision I’d worry about is Article 20—the “contract adjustment mechanism”—which on its face allows authors to renegotiate agreements that turn out to be “disproportionately low.”

Book publishing, like much of the media business, tends to operate on what I call a “hits business model.” By that I mean, while many books by new authors are published each year, most of them lose money, a few do fine, and one or two become break-out bestsellers, and those fund the ongoing business. Today, the successful breakout author is rewarded with royalties under the original contract, of course has more power to strike a better bargain on subsequent titles with a publisher who will pay more, given the proven track record and better ability to predict success.

Under Article 20, a successful author will have a right to renegotiate the original arrangement after the fact, and this will reduce the ability of publishers to take more risks.

PP: Where do book publishers fit within the priorities?

RK: [In the directive text,] The word “book” appears once, in the commentary around Article 16. And since Article 16 makes remuneration to publishers optional, I’d say it’s safe to infer that the EU didn’t think much about books at all.

That doesn’t mean books aren’t affected. They are. There was just too little consideration of the application of the copyright directive to the book industry.

PP: The directive essentially sets out that certain tech platforms shall be liable for copyright infringement under a certain set of conditions, for example when copyright-protected material is posted on their services by users who don’t hold the rights to the content. The tech companies have generally been fighting against the copyright directive’s requirements on this. Do you think it will “break the Internet?”

RK: No, it’s more likely to save the Internet. By imposing obligations on platforms to respect copyrights and enable creators to just possibly earn a living, the Digital Single Market copyright directive may save platforms from themselves.

The platforms need others to create content for them to make money; if content creators’ copyrights are ignored, pretty soon content will start to diminish, if not in quantity than at least in quality and that will diminish the value of the platforms too.

PP: What happens next?

RK: The copyright directive is not self-enforcing. It needs to be transposed into national law over the next two years. Each member-state is supposed to “transpose” the directive into its own law, and EU practice expects that the member-states won’t make substantive changes to the directive’s own language.

However, this is one directive that—it’s already clear—will probably see a lot of the member-states make a lot of inconsistent changes, with unforeseeable results.

Once that’s finished, I’d expect a fair amount of litigation to get underway. The first suit has already been filed against the EU itself in the European Court of Justice by the government of Poland.

PP: What should rights holders do to make the most of the directive?

RK: As a book publisher, I’d get involved in local implementation on the issues mentioned above, with particular focus on Articles 16 and 20. I’d do this directly and through my local publishers association.

I don’t think the EU spent much time on the needs of book publishers. This can, however, be corrected at the local level.

Related event in Frankfurt:

The EU Digital Single Market Copyright Directive: Licensing in the Digital Age

When: 11:30-12:00 on Wed, 16 October

Where: Academic & Business Information Stage, Hall 4.2 N101

Speakers:
- Ms. Elizabeth Crossick (RELX Group)
- Mr. Roy Kaufman (Copyright Clearance Center)
- Mr. Carlo Scollo Lavizzari (Lenz Caemmerer)
- Mr. Mark Seeley (SciPubLaw)
Amazon Crossing Unveils New Arctic Tern Logo

Ahead of Amazon Crossing’s 10th anniversary publishing translations into English—and other languages—the Seattle giant reveals its new logo in Frankfurt.

By Porter Anderson

In a Frankfurter Buchmesse Show Daily Exclusive, Publishing Perspectives is the first to reveal the new Amazon Crossing logos that are being presented today (Wednesday, October 16) at noon on the Amazon Publishing Stage (Hall 3.0 B47).

The occasion is the upcoming 10th anniversary of Amazon Crossing, which has spent its first decade becoming the largest translation house in operation.

“In our 10 years,” says the imprint’s editorial director, Gabriella Page-Fort, “we’ve translated more than 400 books into English by authors from 42 countries in 26 languages.” And that doesn’t even include the editions that Amazon Crossing has published in languages other than English.

Page-Fort will lead the session at 12 p.m. today, introducing to the audience—everyone is welcome—the all-new logos you see here, one for the main Amazon Crossing imprint and one for the Amazon Crossing Kids imprint just announced in January to start creating translations aimed at younger readers.

As Page-Fort will explain to her audience today, the bird you see in these new logos is an arctic tern.

“The Arctic tern is the bird with the largest migration pattern,” Page-Fort tells Publishing Perspectives. “It travels over every continent on Earth. And we thought that was perfect. It really carries the metaphor” for a wide-ranging translation imprint.

“You know, you don’t see these birds,” she says, pointing out that they look something like a common seagull. “But they see everything.”

In the decade of work Page-Fort looks back on now, she points out that one interesting bit of migration—may the tern forgive us—occurred for the imprint has been toward the translation of nonfiction.

Originally working only on fiction, the imprint, has just released this month one of its biggest nonfiction titles to date, The Man Who Played With Fire: Stieg Larsson’s Lost Files and the Hunt for an Assassin. Written by Jan Stocklassa and translated by Tara F. Chace, the book was acquired from Judith Toth at the Nordin Agency in February by the Amazon Crossing team.

It tells the story of how, 10 years after Larsson’s 2004 death at age 50, Stocklassa, a journalist, gained exclusive access to Larsson’s private archive, uncovering an unknown project by the late author of The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo. Larsson had been engaged in extensive research and investigation into the unsolved assassination of the Swedish prime minister Olof Palme in 1986. Truly an international hit, the book has sold into at least 28 languages and territories. Amazon Crossing is producing its English translation in Australia, Canada, the States, and the UK.

“We knew how much readers really like true crime,” Page-Fort says, “so from a marketing perspective, we felt like this project was one in which we could have the broadest reach and support,” with the Amazon retail engine behind it.

“So in 2020, of our nonfiction releases, one I’m most excited about is called A Drop of Midnight, a memoir by the Swedish hip-hop artist Jason Diakité—AKA Timbuktu—and translated by Rachel Willson-Broyles.

“The book really helps you understand our narrative [today] of migration and integration, and of how we become multicultural within different sorts of established cultures.”

Coming in November, Johary Ravaloson’s Return to the Enchanted Island in Allison M. Charette’s translation is the Malagasy origin myth, Page-Fort says, that tells of tears filling the deepest lake, the first central body of water. In Ravaloson’s story, a young man is sent from the island to Paris where the weight of his name—that of mythology’s first man—and the expectations of his privileged life are too much for him. And coming near March, another story of young adulthood, The Girl in the Tree by Turkish author Sebnem Isigizel and translated by Mark David Wyers is a fable of “political madness” and violence. A young woman climbs a tree in Istanbul’s Gülhane Park to escape the hostility overtaking life on the ground below.

This is a book and author represented by familiar Frankfurt-going literary agent Nermin Mollaoglu of Istanbul, and Page-Fort says, “There’s something about her voice, the protagonist, that’s really fresh and young. And she feels really present, there’s no narrative distance, you know, a very intimate narrator” not unlike the voice, she says, of Holden Caulfield in JD Salinger’s The Catcher in the Rye.

Page-Fort will have more details today for those who can make it to the stand for her presentation of translations to come the takeoff of that new Amazon Crossing Arctic tern across the borders of language and culture: flights of literature in the offing. •
Patricia Cornwell’s New Series Looks to the Stars

Known for her ability to blend thrilling stories with detailed forensic facts, bestselling author Patricia Cornwell is turning her attention to a new frontier in her ‘Captain Chase’ series: space.

By Porter Anderson

You don’t expect an author with more than 100 million copies of her books sold into 36 languages and 120 countries to tell you that she’s out on a limb. But Patricia Cornwell tells Publishing Perspectives in an interview from London that one of "the challenges I did not anticipate" in writing her new novel Quantum (releasing this October) was a lack of the structure that has effectively served her through at least 29 New York Times bestsellers, starting in 1990 with Postmortem.

With her long-running main character, medical forensic examiner Dr. Kay Scarpetta, “I had an in-built formula called a procedural,” Cornwell says. “And in the course of that, you might get a huge dose” of storytelling energy “from a forensic fire investigation. But I don’t have a procedure for this,” she says, referring to her new series. “This is going to have to segue more into the world of spying and dealing with the enemy that can harm you remotely, someone you can’t see, not the guy crawling through your window.”

Cornwell is boldly going, if you will, into space. And with Spin, the second book in her new series set for an August 2020 release, “We’re going to be launching people,” she says, in a new world of storytelling in which “the whole chemistry had to change. I had a lot of time to spend on that, trying to figure out how you tell the story when it’s not a murder mystery and is never going to be.”

If anything, a murderer might look pretty good by the time she gets deep into her new series. “Because in this world of technology she’s capturing with the help of the space-industry advisors she’s spent two years with, one wrong move “can result not only in fatalities but mass fatalities. If you hijack a rocket and send it in the wrong direction, you could kill thousands of people.” And when “you’re not dealing with the psychopath, the serial killer, the jealous stalker, you basically aren’t going to have neat tidy endings.”

In making this change in her writing trajectory, Cornwell has returned to Amazon Publishing’s Thomas & Mercer imprint she first worked with in March 2017 on her nonfiction Ripper: The Secret Life of Walter Sickert. She liked the experience of working with editorial director Grace Doyle, with the marketing power of Amazon’s retail capacities, and with the Kindle in Motion tech that’s applied to her ebook editions.

In her new Captain Chase series—Quantum is the first title in the series—Cornwell has created a new “heroine for the 21st century,” as Doyle describes Capt. Calli Chase, a NASA physicist, pilot, and aspiring astronaut, one whose twin sister Carme is a decorated military officer, also with her eyes on space travel but potentially getting into the dark side with a recent disappearance that sends Capt. Chase into the tunnels below Langley Research after a terrifying flash forward to a crisis in space.

One of the most grounding elements of Cornwell’s new novel is her understanding of the very human nature of how space exploration is made. Her insider familiarity with the space program has helped her develop her characters. “Calli and Carme grew up on a farm. Their parents worked for NASA, but they were simple people,” and you get this in flashbacks to the twins’ home life.

“A lot of those people who work at NASA and especially in Virginia,” where she started her writing career 30 years ago as a journalist and medical examiner officer in Richmond, she says, “I had to joke, I said they all look like ZZ Top. I see people walking down the halls at Langley Research with blue hair, overalls, and beards down to their waists. And they’re geniuses. And that in itself is a lesson about how we judge people in ways we shouldn’t.”

But don’t expect this new Cornwell work to stay at ground level. Give her a chance, and the author starts talking origin stories and the importance of a space program that the United States has let drift too long in its hearts and imaginations. She wants you looking up and out. Even if “ancient astronauts” appeal to you, she won’t let you stay there for long.

“If somebody left or colonized another planet” to create what we know as our lives on Earth, “shouldn’t we be thinking about doing the same thing? You think Earth is going to last forever? Not the way we’re treating it, it won’t. So I think everybody needs to believe in space because space believes in us.”

Cornwell didn’t stop at NASA. She did research at the Sierra Nevada Corporation, an electronic systems provider and systems integrator specializing in microsatellites, telemedicine, and commercial orbital transportation services. And she went to Blue Origin, Jeff Bezos’ aerospace and sub-orbital services company in Kent, Washington.

For decades, she tells us, referring to her Kay Scarpetta books, “I took people into the forensics lab, I took them down into documentation, I spent a lot of years showing you what you’re not: you’re not a serial killer. That’s not what we’re put here to be. And you’re not a highly intelligent person put here simply to clean up messes that weren’t necessary to be done with.”

“How about we think higher now? If you believe in the things I do, and you believe in space, and you believe in electromagnetic energy, then you have to start wondering what we’re really made of. All of this is esoteric and complicated, but it’s important. I want people to think about something that makes them better.”

Quantum, she says, “is a bit of a prelude. It’s going to lead up to what I would call a kind of origin story when we find out who this woman is, and her twin, and what they’ve been put on Earth to do. There’s been a plan afoot since they were born. You’re going to find out about that later.”

“I’m doing this because I think it needs to be done,” Patricia Cornwell says. “To put a face on space.”
What’s on the Minds of UK Publishers This Year?

David Stevens, Co-founder, Knights Of

“Representation is what’s important. The numbers add up—as publishers look for new readers, we’re ignoring underserved audiences. A third of the children in the UK are BAME [black, Asian, and minority ethnic], with only 4 per cent of books on UK shelves in 2018 reportedly reflecting that audience.

“It’s not as simple as publishing creatives of color. [We also have to] ensure that the teams creating and selling the books are as diverse as possible.

“Without constant hiring of editors, sales people, marketing people, as well as librarians and booksellers at all levels, there’s small chance of long-term representation.” •

Juliet Mabey, Publisher, Oneworld

“Publishers are living in challenging times, with a difficult retail environment facing booksellers, and almost unlimited streaming TV offering tremendous competition for readers’ time.

“So publishers need to put their best thinking into every aspect of their publications, from commissioning the strongest stories to investing in the highest quality design and production, and really focusing attention on marketing and publicity, including innovative ebook promotions.

“Fiction here and in the United States represents particular challenges, as in Oneworld we have heavily trimmed our fiction list to focus on a smaller number of authors and novels, while at the same time investing much more heavily in all areas of promotion. On the nonfiction side, we’re focusing very much on high-quality narrative nonfiction that speaks to our times.” •

Stefan Tobler, Publisher, And Other Stories

“We all need to put a lot of thinking into how to be successful businesses that aren’t part of the climate change problem. As Greta Thunberg memorably said, climate change is a challenge that is both the simplest to understand—i.e. we need to kill our carbon dioxide output as a species—but also most complex to sort out, because of how we live.

“And if it’s complex for individuals, how much more so for companies with responsibilities and agreements in place with so many people.

“Given the complexity, it feels important for all of us, big and small, to involve our authors, staff, freelancers, and readers—and in our case, our subscribers—in discussions about our choices, in order to be part of change within the industry while not defaulting on our responsibilities to those we work with and for.

“At And Other Stories we’re piloting a carbon-free alternative to touring: semi-digital events with authors beamed in to audiences—Golden Dorset Books, Edinburgh and Off the Shelf festival, Sheffield this autumn—and from the Caribbean and the United States. We’re also canvassing our team, our authors, and other partners to see what they think we should do about flights.

“It’s a tough question for us, as we publish as much in the States as in the UK, and many of our authors live in neither of those countries. But it’s time for us all to challenge ourselves and change old habits.” •

Sara Hunt, Publisher, Saraband

“Now more than ever, our best thinking has to focus even harder on how we get great writing—compelling voices, outstanding storytellers, new ideas—into the hands of readers, in whatever formats and by whatever means. It sounds so simple, doesn’t it, but it gets more difficult.

“There are so many distractions right now: Brexit, obviously, with its attendant nightmares—price hikes, supply-chain disruption, time-wasting paperwork, leaving aside the wider issues.

“This translates as needing to sell more copies to meet the original budgeting, on tighter resources, to a stressed population, in order to celebrate and reward authors.

“But we also face a deepening of the perennial thorns in our collective sides: problems on the high street, the ever-tightening grip of seriously powerful global players on the Internet, decreasing review space, perceived devaluation of books, and the added threat of a destabilized economy and belt-tightening.

“We can at least offer relatively low-cost escapism into immersive books. Every cloud!

“Getting good books noticed—and sold—is an ever-more challenging task for small publishers. Without deep pockets, we have to rely on an alchemy of the right books at the right time, imaginative marketing, prize recognition, reviews in the right places, a heck of a lot of hard work, word of mouth from enthusiastic readers, and an element of sheer luck. Every time we start doing well in a particular genre, that genre will quickly become more competitive.” •

Adam Freudenheim, Publisher, Pushkin Press

“Among the biggest challenges for small, independent publishers—and perhaps for the industry as a whole—is the increasing winner-takes-all nature of the industry.

“The books that work sell more than ever before, but the flip side of that is that those that don’t make it to the bestseller lists are often selling fewer copies than ever before.

“And for those of us interested in original writing, the increased number of books by celebrities—broadly defined—is rather depressing and seems to take up a lot of oxygen in the market.

“I think publishers have to work harder than ever to reach readers and booksellers directly in order to champion original work—especially by unknown debut writers—and we need our authors to work with us to do this, as well.” •

Stephen Page, CEO, Faber & Faber

“Publishers continue to succeed by finding or creating the very best books or IP they can, and publishing the work brilliantly. Having great books remains the center for Faber, and the heart of our recent success.

“Of course, you have to be very skilled and energetic in many other ways, not least in design, consumer marketing, and usage of data.

“In the age of screens and the arriving technology of voice-driven discovery, publishers also need to become clearer about their own brands, on where their power lies, and make that the center of their opportunity.” •

Sam Jordison, Co-director Galley Beggar Press

“As always, publishers’ best thinking should be directed at editorial, and finding and helping to produce the best possible books.” •

— Interviews by Roger Tagholm
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