

# Fair News

SUNDAY

22<sup>nd</sup> International Book Fair and Literary Festival Book World Prague 15. 5. 2016

## Hints of Hope for Czech Crime Novels



On Saturday shortly after noon, the Large Theatre hosted a discussion about Czech detective writing. The large crowd attracted by the programme testified to the growing interest in Czech crime novels on the contemporary book market.

Writer and translator **MICHAELA KLEVISOVÁ**, writers and screenwriters **JOSEF KLÍMA**, **ŠTĚPÁN KOPŘIVA** and **MICHAL ŠYKORA** and actor **MIROSLAV HANUŠ** – these names are often mentioned in connection with detective writing and its TV adaptations. They are true contemporary stars of the genre. “Following the 1989 revolution, Czech detective novels failed to attract the readers’ interest. Intense foreign production flooded the market and our readers, who had to do without it for forty years, welcomed it with open arms, while domestic crime stories were sidelined,” we heard during the introduction. In recent times, however, things seem to be improving. An increasing number of authors turns to the detective genre and TV channels produce one series after another. “I started writing crime stories because I read them. I used to admire the writer P. D. James. When

*I finished reading everything she had ever written, I felt so sorry that there would be no new stories that I decided to write one myself. I sent it to the Motto publishing house and the very next day I received a call that the book would be published. That was the birth of my detective – Bergman,”* Michaela Klevisová described her break as a crime novel writer. Josef Klíma, whose works also appear in cinemas and on television screens, expressed some discontent over the fact that television has the tendency to devalue writers’ work. “We exhaust ourselves awfully on TV series in our capacity as authors. While Jo Nesbø writes a couple of books which are only then transformed into films, we write a TV series in which each part actually amounts to a book. It must contain a credible plot and a pay-off. This affects Czech crime writing quite a lot.” Štěpán Kopřiva is a newcomer to the field.

### YRSA SIGURDARDÓTTIR



Star of Nordic crime fiction Yrsa Sigurdardóttir meets Czech readers. The author’s smile seems to suggest all-round satisfaction.

What sets him apart from the other authors, among other things, is the fact that he chose not to give his main protagonist a name. “My hero is nameless and most likely will continue to be,” he disappointed his readers. Michal Šykora also treats his main characters quite harshly – in his second novel he sends them to the detective heaven. “Rather than chewing up my characters, I get rid of them.” Actor Miroslav Hanuš, popular among TV audiences as the head of the murder investigators in the Division One Cases series, also joined in the discussion. “Korejs, my character, will probably stay shelved, as the authors fear that he might become too watered down. But a brand new series is now in pre-production, which means there will be plenty of the crime genre to be enjoyed on TV screens.” The close of the discussion focused on books by all those present and it was followed by a book signing attended by many readers. It would appear that Czech detective story is generating a new wave of interest. JM

## Fixed Book Prices? Czech Utopia, Slovenian Reality!

In Slovenia a law on fixed prices was successfully passed – a feat some Czech booksellers and publishers would love to emulate.

Author and journalist **TANJA TUMA** shared with Book World visitors – most of them recruiting from book professionals – the details of how Slovenia’s fixed prices act was voted through. “First of all you need enthusiastic people who desire change, and then it is important to have a minister who supports such change. We must realise that such a law is a political rather than a commercial decision, which is why the minister of culture is responsible for it. We succeeded in bringing our ideas into life after ten years of trying – mainly because an enlightened person was selected as minister. As soon as we had a draft of the law in question to support us, things began to change,” Tanja Tuma explained. The fixed prices act was passed in 2014 and it states that the price of a book must remain the same for the

period of six months – this applies not only to printed books but also to audio books, e-books, dictionaries and textbooks. When the law came into force, a website was created where every published book must be registered with its own code and price. “This registration is obligatory, it is a part of the law and you cannot sell a book unless it has been properly registered,” Tanja Tuma adds. First reactions to the law seem positive. “This law has helped everyone – booksellers, publishers and customers. Booksellers have one thing less to worry about and can concentrate more on promoting their books and the readers are happy too. Some were afraid that they would end up paying more for their books, but soon most of them realised that the law also protects their interests.” Tanja Tuma says that as a result the whole

book market has calmed down, as small booksellers no longer have to worry that the big players could sideline them with huge discounts and can thus focus more on working with the authors. “Those of us who have experienced life behind the iron curtain are not exactly fond of rules, they feel too limiting for us, but when they are supported by serious arguments, which is the case of fixed prices, we should respect them,” Tanja Tuma concluded her interesting presentation. The ensuing discussion saw Czech publishers and booksellers debating the potential reactions of the Czech market to a similar law and the obstacles that would have to be overcome. It is a pity that there were not more of these professionals present at the venue. With this lukewarm approach we can hardly expect the passing of such law – which has helped the Slovenian book market – any time soon.

JM

# City in the Lead Role

One of the main topics of the 2016 Book World book fair was **URBAN LITERATURE**. This topic was at the centre of attention of the debate chaired by **JAN MALURA** from the Ostrava University Arts Faculty, who invited two poets – **JOSEF STRAKA** and **JOSEF HRDLIČKA** – as well as the prose writer **MILOŠ URBAN**, whose books focus on various parts of Prague from the Jewish Town (Lord Mord), through New Town (Sedmikostelí / Seven Churches) to Libeň on the outskirts (Praga piccola).

All the participants agreed that Prague is literally the ideal literary backdrop, as it offers numerous stylistic and emotional layers – magical Prague, Gothic Prague, mystical Prague or Baroque Prague. If a city is to become a literary entity, a historical identity seems to be a prerequisite. This, however, does not apply by default. Český Krumlov, for example, without a doubt possesses historical charm, and still it has not served as a backdrop to any contemporary novel. Other historical cities around the world which seem to possess similar literary attraction include Krakow, Vienna or Venice.

The image of the city often materialises in recollections of exiled authors who revisit the city of their heart in their memories. Their ties to the city seem even stronger than in the case of authors who still live and work in the city. Some writers – and this is not a unique



phenomenon – choose to set their work in a city which they never physically visited. This verges on the utopian approach.

Are authors in their texts supposed to work with the city's exact topography? Apparently they should do just that, as this helps underscore the atmosphere of the whole work. It does not mean, however, that every little trickery is forbidden – this can take the form of, for example, linking two places together by a passage which does not exist in reality.

Many works which are set in a specific city share the perspective of a pedestrian. This is because walking is the most natural means of transport in any city, during which you can observe its context in a deeper way than as a mere backdrop. This is not possible from

a tram, a coach, a bike or even a segway.

Besides city centres, suburbs or semi-suburbs also frequently appear as literary environments. The suburbs possess an intrinsic tension of the transition between the city and the open countryside. The subject of the suburb is the city's last house, its last street. Suburbs are defined by the surviving traces of something that is disappearing. Most cities around the world are growing, which is why their suburbs are disappearing, being surrounded by new business or industrial pseudo-centres.

Why are cities so popular as literary settings? Because they contain both order and vice (the devil or disorder). This is the ancient spicy tension so inherent to cities – the paradox that can enrich any work of literature. Raš

## INTO THE DEPTHS OF NORDIC HISTORY



Sjón and Kim Leine

The Saturday Book World debate with Scandinavian authors entitled Into the Depths of Nordic History proved exceptionally popular with the public. In its course, the Finnish writer **Katja Kettu**, her Icelandic colleague **Sjón** and the Danish author **Kim Leine** introduced their latest production, while at the same time revealing some details of how the books were written.

## A Foreign Look at Our Publishing Scene

Book fairs are more than just endless stacks of books on the shelves of dozens of stands, which together create long streets of books. They are also an opportunity to learn something interesting, for example how our publishing environment is seen from abroad. Precisely this topic was taken up by **ANDREW NURNBERG**, a leading British literary agent who represents in the Czech Republic numerous major British, American and other publishing houses, as well as many independent authors, including one Czech writer – **Michael Žantovský**. He came to Prague to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his Czech branch.

He began his lecture by talking about the history of the literary agent profession. Its rise to prominence began some one hundred years ago. With the emergence of literary agents authors could stop arguing with publishers about their rights and fees and could concentrate fully on their literary profession. Publishers, however, had to get used to increased pressure from the agents, which meant they did not exactly embrace their boom. Andrew Nurnberg himself started in the profession in 1977. Back in those days true literary events would appear in Czechoslovakia with a delay amounting to one entire generation. Nowadays important book achievements are published here simultaneously or shortly after their world release.

And how do the world-renowned authors who are represented by Andrew Nurnberg perceive the Czech book market? Do they actually care about whether a Czech translation of their book will be published? Most of them do, and although the Czech literary environment is slightly exotic to them, they are very much aware of its existence. The information that their book will be published in Czech usually amounts to very pleasant news and it arouses some personal interest on their part – this interest is sometimes even greater than in the case of well-established book markets such as the German one.

And what do foreign authors expect from their Czech publishers? Above all respecting the licence – timely payment of their fees. But that is not all. Authors like to see their books printed. And they are even happier when they see the book is well-promoted and that it sells well. It is certainly worth the effort to inform a foreign author through his or her literary agent about the circumstance surrounding the publication of the Czech translation of the book in question, and also about the translator and the translation itself. Every author is happy to authorise the cover of the book – it is this cover that represents the author on the foreign book market. This is, therefore, also worth a little extra effort.

The debate was concluded by a question about the foreign experiences with the market for books that have yet to be written. Where fiction is concerned, only a well-established and renowned author can sell a book he or she has not written yet. In non-fiction literature such a book can only be sold based on a clear concept – not one consisting of a couple of bullet points or a single page, but on twenty pages, ideally complete with one sample chapter. Nonetheless, buying books that have yet to be written makes sense – this applies, for example, to themes where detailed research is required.

# Sandra Brown: I Like Cowboys and Southern Men

One of the book fair's foreign stars – **Sandra Brown** – met with her readers (majority of them female) on Saturday afternoon in the Large Theatre. The author began by sharing some of her inspiration sources for the book *Deadline* recently published in the Czech Republic.

There is an institution in the United States whose task it is to entertain American soldiers on various missions around the world. An idea was born there to introduce the soldiers in Afghanistan to several American writers. Sandra was one of those asked to participate and she spent a week in the country, being transported by helicopter from one base to another. She met many soldiers who expressed their gratitude for her visit, but Sandra soon realised that in fact she should be thankful to them. She listened to many stories and she became very much interested in the topic of post-traumatic stress syndrome. From there she was just a step away from creating the character of Dawson Scott. As she confessed, in her work "ideas come with characters". A piece of dialogue or a fragment of a situation featuring a specific character, which she then develops into a full-blown novel, can serve as source of inspiration for brand new books. She draws these inspirations from various news stories, as she is obsessed with watching news channels together with her husband Michael. This might be a remnant of



her previous career in television, where she first started appearing as a weather girl and later as a reporter.

Love stories are a key ingredient in her novels. Sandra generally prefers dramatic situations and events, as they provide good material for stories, and she considers developing intimacy between two people to constitute a dramatic situation. To her relationships represent tension, especially since there are always obstacles to be overcome. Love and drama complement and support one another in her view.

This strategy seems to hold, as Sandra Brown is a global writing celebrity. She has published over sixty books, which were translated into 33 languages. Her pre-eminent Czech translator is Marie Válková, who values Brown's ability to imbue her literary narration

with transitions reminiscent of film editing. She is very skilful in setting up a situation, lightening it up and concluding it with an intense climax. Four of her books have already been adapted into films.

Fair News have asked Sandra Brown about her experiences with these film adaptations. Is she happy with the results? Does she have a say in the writing of the scripts? Sandra admitted that she had been somewhat disappointed by the final outcomes. She is not involved in the scriptwriting – this she leaves to movie professionals, whom she admires. On her latest fourth film she acted as the creative producer, which meant she had much more leverage over the final result. She confessed that she exerted her influence mainly in returning the script to the original dialogues from the book in all those instances where professional screenwriters had strayed away from them for no good reason.

At the conclusion of the event Sandra Brown was asked if she has enough time to travel and if she enjoys travelling. She likes to travel, as it is her source of literary inspiration. But she has little need to travel, because her native and home state of Texas is so special and specific, that any trip even to a neighbouring US state feels very exotic. Nonetheless, she loves Texas, its culture and its unique lifestyle. She is proud of it. As she admitted: "I love cowboys and southern men." RaŠ

## Literature on the Run or Some Specific Characteristics of Arab Literature

The debate of the British translator **ALICE GUTHRIE** with two female authors writing in Arabic was entitled *Literature on the Run*. Although it seemed to evoke that the two authors were part of the current migration wave, this was not the case. Both writers, **IMAN HUMAYDAN** from Lebanon and **RASHA ABBAS** from Syria, arrived in Europe via other routes.



Iman Humaydan, Alice Guthrie and Rasha Abbas

Rasha Abbas' debut short-story collection *Adam Hates Television* was published in 2008 in Damascus. She travelled to Europe as part of her post-graduate studies and currently lives in Berlin where she studies the German language but still has a long way to go to master it. Getting to know its basic grammar served her as inspiration for the daring collection of satirical short stories entitled *How German Was Invented* in which she deals with various aspects of contemporary German society through the eyes of a foreigner. Rasha is aware that her undertaking may prove double-edged, as some German readers might come to the conclusion that they let in people who in turn start making fun of them. Such view, however, would only confirm that the reception of Arab authors is burdened by many determining factors. Each of her texts is primarily viewed as Arab, then as written by a woman (Arab woman at that) and coming

from Syria. All these attributes would then be seen as more significant than the work itself. But Rasha's short stories are aimed chiefly at German readers. She may have written them in Arabic, but they were first published in a German translation. Only now are they being prepared for publication in Arabic, but they have to be significantly adjusted, as many things fail to transfer into the Arab world.

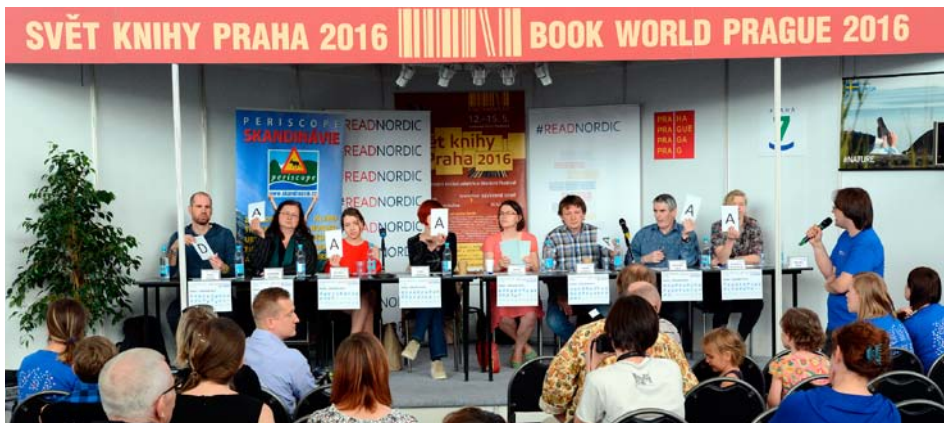
Iman Humaydan is more established in the field of literature. Her novels have already been translated into French, German, English, Italian and Dutch. She comes from Lebanon and has studied at numerous English schools from Beirut to Britain, eventually falling in love with the French language (which she had encountered for the first time). She married a Frenchman and together they now live and work in Paris. She does not consider herself to be living in exile, as she returns to Lebanon every three months and she became the

chairwoman of the Lebanese PEN in 2015. However, the cultural life in Paris has proved very important for her artistic development. Despite having settled in Paris, she still writes in Arabic and chooses Lebanese topics. In one of her novels she returns to her ancestors from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, focusing especially on the difficult role of women during the civil war, when they faced almost constant violence and the destruction of family and emotional connections. She concludes that this undignified position of women was due to the traditional system, which was omnipresent in both family and school. However, Iman Humaydan also believes that her work should be seen above all as literature, without the labels of Arab literature or literature by Arab women.

Both authors agreed that although they live and work outside of the countries of their birth, they exert even greater effort in learning about their countries' current affairs and project it into their works. They also expressed regret that in Europe there is still limited interest in literature written in Arabic, compared to, for example, Latin American or Japanese literature. This may have improved somewhat following the Arab Spring, but if European publishers want to sell their Arab literature, they must ceaselessly promote it using simplifying approaches. One of the most deeply rooted ones is that literature by Arab authors should describe contemporary Arab life only as misery. Both Rasha Abbas and Iman Humaydan refuse this view, although they understand that the over-saturated European book market requires it. RaŠ

# Nordic Reading Challenge

The #ReadNordic quiz came to a head at the Book World book fair with a gripping final round, hosting eight aficionados of Nordic writing.



The final eight competitors were Pavel Soušek, Kateřina Soudná, Lenka Jandová, Marie Musilová, Tomáš Nežádal, Bohumil Bula, Michaela Šrámková and Michal Švec. In the first round they faced twenty tricky questions that focused not only on Nordic literature itself, but also included some geography and general knowledge. Easier questions, such as

Which of the Nordic countries is not a kingdom? or What is the capital of Iceland? were followed by more difficult ones, which tested the competitors' abilities to the full. Would you know what is the name of Scandinavia's highest mountain peak, in which Nordic language "rithöfundur" means "writer", or the total number of Nobel Prizes awarded

to Norse writers? The competitors were also required to know the correct pronunciation of the name of the writer Jo Nesbø, which is mispronounced by most Czech readers. The correct answer is "you", not "yo" as some competitors had answered. The final round was followed by a "superfinal" or a clash between Tomáš Nežádal, Pavel Soušek and Bohumil Bula. They had to face ten difficult questions, such as Which circus animal becomes the member of a gang in the book The Hundred-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out the Window and Disappeared by Jonas Jonasson? Was it a horse, a lion, an elephant or a tiger? The correct answer was elephant. And would you know the answer to the following question: What type of milk does the main protagonist of Erlend Loe's book Doppler drink? Low-fat is the right answer. **Tomáš Nežádal** came out victorious from the exciting contest, winning a trip to Scandinavia. Other finalists also received their due in the form of skis, gift vouchers, a dining set, a lamp and other interesting presents from companies who conduct business with Nordic countries. The competition #ReadNordic is over and we can say it was a resounding success. JM

## The Dark Nordic Future

This year's book fair treated its visitors to the very best of Scandinavian literature. This feat could not be accomplished without a debate with representatives of the genre that is deep-rooted in the north of Europe – dystopian science fiction. The Large Theatre hosted the Danish writer **KASPAR COLLING NIELSEN** and his Finnish colleagues **JOHANNA SINISALO** and **ANTI TUOMAINEN**.

Books by these three authors predict a not so distant future in which the world is dark and torn apart by wars and catastrophes, where its inhabitants must fight hard just to survive. The stories are often set against the backdrop of contemporary Europe, which has changed beyond recognition. Do they really see our future like this? "Yes, our region is headed towards a major crisis," says Nielsen, the author of Danish Civil War 2018–2024. "Maybe very soon Europe will cease to be that rich piece of the world it is now," he adds. A similar view is shared by Antii Tuomainen, author of a novel called The Healer. "For me such a world is easy to create. All my stories have real basis. Plus there were many authors before me writing about the end of the world. I just follow in their footsteps. Another link in the chain."

When we talk about dystopian science fiction, we must acknowledge that it has under-



Johanna Sinisalo

gone an interesting transition. Many writers are turning away from books focusing chiefly on science and technologies. Instead they tend to the genre of social science-fiction, which puts greatest emphasis on social issues. "Today we already know that technological development is slowing down if not stopping altogether. This is why the tendency towards social science-fiction is understandable," Johanna Sinisalo, the author of the novel The Solar Core, says. Her countryman Tuomainen even refuses to be called a science-fiction writer. All three guests, however, believe that the direction of their work is, in many respects, up to date. "Today's world is undergoing many changes and maybe it is easier for us to understand our present by writing about what could happen in the future," Kaspar Nielsen explains.

Do they see a way of avoiding such dark future? "Many of us concentrate on solving pointless things, such as the migration crisis, without focusing on the real problems the

world is facing. The state of our climate and our economic weakness – those are the things we must focus on," Nielsen says. Sinisalo shares a similar view: "Yes, we must realise that climate change is very serious indeed and that it also plays its part in the current migration wave. But writers should not be expected to find the solutions. We are the ones who ask questions, but do not give answers." The simplest solution, however, was offered by Antii Tuomainen. "Our biggest hope is reason. I wish Europe's heads of states would use it more often!" OŠ

## DANUBE ON THE MOLDAU



The 4<sup>th</sup> annual competition Dunaj na Vltavě (Danube on the Moldau), which encourages amateur translators to rise up to some Slovak-language challenges, was won by **Hana Dvořáková**. As she said, Slovak is by far her favourite language.



Kaspar Colling Nielsen

# Asterion's Fantastic World

At the conclusion of the book fair, Book World visitors were offered a glimpse of the fictitious world of Asterion, inhabited by various heroes and dark gods. Writers **HANINA VESELÁ**, **LUCIE LUKAČOVIČOVÁ** and **KRISTINA HAIDINGEROVÁ** guided them through it in the Sci-fi & Fantasy Theatre.



Kristina Haidingerová, Lucie Lukačovičová and Hanina Veselá

Asterion is a Czech fictitious world, created at the close of the last millennium for the needs of the players of Dragon's Lair. It is set against an early modern-time backdrop, ruled, however, by swords and magic. In the sixteen years of its development it has attracted a wide following and many details were added. Fourteen modules were published to be used in conjunction with desk games, describing the rules and laws of this specific universe. There are also numerous books which deal with the heroes of the two Asterion continents. It is looked after by the Mytago publishing house, which has also brought out its latest instalment – Marellion. Hanina Veselá has contributed to the collection with her short story featuring the cheeky psionik Magnolia. Artwork for her book *Drak bere vše* (The Dragon Takes All) was created by Kristina Haidingerová, for whom it was the first encounter with the world of Asterion. "For me it was something of an experiment," says the illustrator, which is also known as author of several horror stories. Her vampire novel *Ti*

nepohřbení (The Unburied), for example, was received very favourably.

The authors also introduced the *Hry s příběhem* (Games with a Story) book series. Its objective is to acquaint the readers with various Czech game worlds. It has already published two short-story anthologies focusing on warriors (*Ocel a krev / Steel and Blood*) and thieves and assassins (*Zločin a trest / Crime and Punishment*). Now a new book is under way about druids and natural magic with the subheading *Volání divočiny* (Call of the Wilderness). This also features a short story by Lucie Lukačovičová called *Tropický kraj divů* (The Tropical Wonderland).

We should also mention the project of Asterion miniature books that fit in every pocket. So far Mytago publishers offer a miniature version of Hanina Veselá's book *Slza pro dračího pána* (A Tear for the Dragon Lord). Other two books from the *Půlčik* series will soon follow, entitled *Vločka v plamenech* (A Snowflake in Flames) and *Louskáček* (Nutcracker).

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## 2015 SFFH Academy Awards

This year's Book World saw the 21<sup>st</sup> annual awards ceremony of the Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Academy. The prize for life-long contribution to sci-fi was awarded to **Richard Podaný** and **Karel Zeman** in memoriam. **David Brin's** *Existence*, published by Triton, became the book of the year. The winners of the other categories are:

- Best sci-fi – **Jeff VanderMeer: Annihilation**
- Best fantasy and horror – **Ben Aaronovitch: Rivers of London**
- Best short story – **Petr Heteša: Psí oči** (Dog's Eyes)
- Best original Czech or Slovak book – **Pavel Renčín: Vězněná** (Incarcerated)
- Best translation – **Petr Kotrle** for his translation of the book **Annihilation**
- Best Czech graphic art – **Kateřina Bažantová** for her graphic treatment of the **Rivers of London**
- Best internet medium – **XB-1**
- Achievement of the year – **Linda Zeman-Spaleny and Ludmila Zemanová** for their monograph **Karel Zeman a jeho kouzelný svět** (Karel Zeman and His Magical World)
- Best publisher – **Argo**
- Best short-story book – **S. T. Joshi: Black Wings of Cthulhu 2**

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The prize for the achievement of the year was accepted by Karel Zeman's daughter Ludmila Zemanová.

## Ten Years of Agent JFK

It may sound incredible, but the book series featuring **Agent John Francis Kovář** has entered the tenth year of its existence and seems to be losing none of its vigour! Literary fathers of the charming traveller to parallel worlds **Jiří Walker Procházka** and **Miroslav Žamboch** came to tell us more about his adventures. Authors of some other volumes of the series – **Františka Urbenská**, **Vlado Ríša**, **Jan Kotouč** and **Libor Machala** – were also present.

Agent John Francis Kovář constitutes a series of small novels and short-story anthologies which seem to turn the laws of the small Czech fantasy market on its head. The volumes have been continually published for over a decade and readers still show avid interest. Such a success was unforeseen at the beginning. "All the publishing houses we contacted saw it as too much of a risk," W. Procházka says. "Nobody believed that an entirely Czech series could really establish itself. Everybody suggested that we rather write just one or



two novels. Only Triton publishers said they would give it a two-year trial period."

As time went on, the team of authors grew. Besides authors from the older generation, opportunity was also given to some young writers. This is yet another interesting aspect of the project, as it connects a large section of the Czech fantasy genre. In spite of the vari-

ety of its authors, the stories display remarkable consistency. Authors themselves credit this to the fact that from the beginning the characters were very well defined. When writers expand the universe of the agent's stories, they are also asked to adhere to an extensive set of rules. Some of these rules also apply to the getting rid of some of the protagonists, making sure that the series loses none of its drive.

And what are the plans for the nearest future? Work is in progress on an adventure-based series called John Francis Kovář and the Dark Gods. "I have the first volume already finished, the second one is being worked on by Jan Kotouč. If they bind together well, we will be happy to continue," Miroslav Žamboch says. "My estimate for this series would be some four or five volumes. We draw our inspiration from Karl May, but at the same time the story is much more rough and the landscape is merciless. The style we try to achieve is, when somebody hits you, it should hurt."

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# Censorship in and around Us

FITES, the Film and Television Association, met at the book fair to hold its eightieth Quarterly in the Authors Theatre. FITES Quarterlies are discussions with renowned experts who focus in detail on one chosen topic, which is of key importance to the community of film and television professionals. The topic of censorship was selected for the Book World debate.



Jan Bednář, Ivan Biel, Adam Černý, Vlastimil Venclík and Stefan Segi

Chaired by director **Ivan Biel**, the panel of pundits consisted of the theatre researcher **Vladimír Just**, Czech Television council chairman **Jan Bednář**, chairman of the Journalists' Syndicate **Adam Černý**, director **Vlastimil Venclík** and literary theoretician **Stefan Segi**. Stefan Segi mentioned that the usage of the word censorship reached its peak in the Czech language in the years 1989 and 1990. Later the word had almost disappeared and only started emerging again around the year 2002. This slightly increasing trend has been maintained ever since, which means that it is still relevant in today's reality.

The conclusion of the two-hour long discussion was that there are essentially three types of censorship. First is institutionalised censorship, which is supported by the legal system and carried out by official censors. We have had ample experience with this type of censorship from the Hapsburg monarchy, through German occupation to the communist regime, in which censorship was first represented by the Head Office of Press Supervision and, after four months of free speech in 1968, by the newly created Federal Bureau for Press and Information. Nonetheless, this type of censorship was assessed as the least devastating, because it is official and predictable. It no longer exists in today's political system.

Censorship's second incarnation is hidden. This type of censorship started appearing in western countries at the turn of the 1980s and

90s in connection with the emergence of political correctness. All of a sudden it became indecent and unacceptable to talk about certain issues in public (race discrimination, incitement to violence or suppression of freedom etc.) But does political correctness really presuppose censorship? To a certain extent yes, even though it is driven by noble motivations – most notably social responsibility. But hidden censorship has many other aspects to it. Today, for example, it is no longer possible to provide independent information from armed conflicts. War reporters are no longer free to move around contemporary warzones, which means they can only provide information from places and scenes shown to them by the soldiers. This manipulates the reporters in favour of a certain perspective of reality and its interpretation. We can also find some elements of censorship in subsidy allocations, in which inconvenient projects simply receive no support, which in many cases means they are stopped altogether. These aspects of censorship do not adhere to any rules and they cannot be brought to the court, which makes them very dangerous.

The third form of censorship is self-censorship. Nowadays it most often stems from the fear of losing one's job. Many people choose the easiest route and avoid getting into trouble. If putting too much focus on a certain topic brings problems to a public medium, other authors tend to walk away from it. This type

## VÁCLAV HAVEL'S LEGACY ALIVE AND PALPABLE

On Saturday morning two employees of the Václav Havel Library **Anna Freimanová** and **Martin Vidlák** presented the events currently taking place at the institution entrusted with looking after Havel's legacy. The topic's importance was underscored by the fact that this year we are celebrating the eighty's birthday of the late outstanding thinker, playwright, writer and politician. Anna Freimanová summarised the various book series published by the Library as well as the anthology of Havel's essays written prior to the revolution and entitled *Moc bezmocných* (*The Power of the Powerless*), which can be highly recommended especially to students. New books include Pavel Juráček's film script *Postava k podpírání* (*Joseph Kilian*), book entitled *Praha Václava Havla* (*Václav Havel's Prague*) by Zdeněk Lukeš, which maps the places in Prague connected to Havel's life, and above all the interesting publication *Gauneři z Horních Počernic* (*Horní Počernice Thugs*). The latter book brings a wealth of text and pictures documenting the world premiere of Havel's *Žebrácká opera* (*The Beggar's Opera*) put on by amateurs in the theatre hall of the U Čelíkovských Bar in Horní Počernice in 1975. Martin Vidlák talked in greater detail about the progress of the summarised edition of *Hovory v Lánech* (*The Lány Conversations*). Three books have been published so far covering the 1990 to mid-1992 period and further texts are being prepared for electronic publication. Audio version has also not been ruled out. ik

of censorship also significantly weakens the strength and the role media play in a society.

At the close of the discussion Stefan Segi said that there is one target group which society subjects to quite a lot of censorship – the children. This begins with texts selected for their spelling books, their text books, as well as television programmes with age restrictions. All this amounts to censorship, although its motivation is – in an absolute majority of cases – meaningful and justified.

Raš

## Competition for the Best Review



Awards ceremony of the secondary-school students' competition for the best review of a Nordic book was attended by some of the most prominent Scandinavian writers.



# The Remarkable World of Warcraft



The opening of the book fair's programme on Saturday belonged to the legendary Warcraft universe. In recent months Warcraft came to the centre of attention of the entire fantasy scene, as the long-awaited release of the epic movie Warcraft: First War came within sight. Czech audiences will enjoy it in June and the community of fans has high hopes that the makers will treat them to a high-quality film adaptation of the world they know so well from books and computer games.

The debate featured **LIBOR MARCHLÍK**, owner of the Fantom Print publishing house, **PETR LITOŠ**, representative of Crew, **MIKOLÁŠ TUČEK** from the TV show Re-Play and **JAKUB MERC**, editor of the magazine Pevnost. They too can hardly wait to see the film. "There is a hole on the market left by the Tolkien movies. There will be no more sequels to the Lord of the Rings, but the audiences still crave for some major fantasy blockbuster," Tuček says. "Luckily the production company called Blizzard, which stands behind the project, has already proved that it knows how to handle big projects," he adds.

A brand new book was also launched at the event, directly related to the film. The story of Warcraft: Durotan precedes the plot of the

film, and it may thus serve as a pleasant way to pass time before the film finally opens. The book is published by Fantom Print and its sales are very promising already. "It is our bestselling book," Libor Marchlík says. But there is also some controversy surrounding the work. Its storyline was already rendered by Warcraft: Rise of the Horde and it changes some of the events to correspond with upcoming movie release. So far, however, it appears that Czech readers have come to terms with the more problematic parts of the text.

But Durotan is not the only new book readers can look forward to. In June the first volume of the World of Warcraft: Chronicle will be brought out. Published by Crew in co-operation with Fantom Print it will be a unique pictorial publication, summing up the history of the world of Warcraft from its origins until the days of the Dark Portal. The work is proving very popular around the world and domestic readers will be treated to a pleasant bonus. "Our Czech translation was lauded even by the Blizzard studio itself, which gave it ninety-seven points out of one hundred. The book will be published on glossy paper, its price is set at around five hundred Czech crowns," Petr Litoš commends the Chronicle.

OŠ

## Living Here With You

Late Saturday afternoon in the Small Theatre was dedicated to a meeting of authors for whom Czech is not their first language and still they choose to publish their works in it.

**Jelena Čirič**, **Alenka Jensterie-Doležalová**, **Jorge Zuñiga Pavlov**, **Stephen Fisher** and, as a special guest, poet of Czech and Croatian origin **Adam Borzič**, have shared their views on writing in Czech in a programme hosted by **Mircea Dan Duta**. Each had a different reason why they ended up in our country, but they all have in common an affinity to the Czech language, which gradually became second nature to them. "Now I can feel Czech, which was not always the case. When I start translating my poems from my native Slovenian into Czech, I often end up creating originals – the poem changes completely, because in Czech I perceive it differently," Alenka Jensterie-Doležalová explained. "I have lived here for almost thirty years, which is more time than I have spent at home in Chile," Jorge Zuñiga Pavlov admitted and read his short piece in Czech with a pleasant accent, reflecting on the current refugee crisis, in which he paid tribute to Kafka as a visionary, who saw the things that were coming. Jelena Čirič introduced her poems in Czech and expressed her wish for the setting up of a platform of translators, since translations into and from Slovenian are a bit of a problem in the Czech Republic. The remaining authors then too read their works in Czech and were enthusiastically applauded for their achievements. JM



Alenka Jensterie-Doležalová, Stephen Fisher

## Meeting with Jostein Gaarder



On Saturday afternoon a debate was held with the world-renowned Norwegian writer, author of the bestselling *Sophie's World* and many other successful books for children and young people as well as novels for adult readers.

## Bestselling Czech Books

The biggest-selling books of the past calendar year were announced for the seventeenth time at a ceremony held in the Large Theatre of the Palace of Industry.

In the Czech Literature for Children and Young People category, *Aesop's Fables* by **Jiří Žáček** and *Adolf Born* were hailed victorious, published by Slovart, s.r.o. In the category entitled Translated Literature for Children and Young People the prize was awarded to *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Long Haul* published by CooBoo, member of the Albatros Media a.s. group. In the Phenomenon of the Year category – Colouring Books for Adults, the *Antistress Colouring Book for Adults* by **Jolana Daňková** and **Lenka Trégllová** were marked as winners, brought out by Grada Publishing, a.s. The Best Cook Book of 2015 is *Fat Tom's Quick and Tasty* by **Tomáš Kosatík**. The Professional and Popular-Science Literature for Adults was dominated by *Retro ČS 2* by **Michal Petrov**, pub-

lished by JOTA publishing house. *The book Fat Tom* by **Tomáš Kosatík** became the best-selling publication in the category Health & Lifestyle, and the Biography category was won by **Jaroslav Kmenta's Padrino Krejčíř – Gangster**. **David Lagercrantz's The Girl in the Spider's Web** triumphed in the category Translated Fiction for Adults. It was published by HOST.

Audiotéka.cz participated in awarding the prize for the most successful audiobook. The winner was *The Silkworm* read by **Petr Oliva**. *Mercedes Petr Švancara* by **Petr Švancara** and *Monika Čuhelová* received the readers' prize.

The main award, the Czech Bestseller, was won by **VLASTIMIL VONDRUŠKA'S THE HUSSITE EPOPEE II**. JM

## Buchty a loutky



A puppet-theatre performance was held for children at the exhibition grounds based on the Norwegian folk tale *East of the Sun, West of the Moon*, recorded in the mid-19th century by **Peter Christen Asbjørnsen** and **Jørgen Moe**.

## Mika Waltari and Islam

On Saturday afternoon the renowned translator and writer **MARKÉTA HEJKA-LOVÁ** offered a very interesting lecture.

She took a detailed look at the way the famous Finnish author of historical novels Mika Waltari approached the topic of Islam, placing it in a wider cultural context. The theme appears with varying emphasis in four of his books – *The Fall of Constantinople*, *The Dark Angle*, but most notably in his earlier twin novel from 1948–1949 *Blood Bath* and *Lucky Star*. Waltari himself was a practising Lutheran and as such he was not deeply interested in Islam and saw it rather as one of several religions, which, compared to the ascetic Lutheran piety, displays greater flare and splendour. While *Blood Bath* (set in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, just like the novel that follows it) deals mostly with power and religious struggles of Christian Europe, *Lucky Star* seems to start by showing some affection towards Islam. However, as the plot unfolds, the author – along with his main character – clarifies his opinions. “Islam never forces anyone to do anything – everyone is free to choose whether to have one’s head chopped off or put a turban on it.” Markéta Hejkalová’s detailed analysis shows that the work reflects the author’s opinion of the post-war era and the disenchantment with Finland’s historical development, which, following two conflicts with the Soviet Union, adopted – to a large extent – a docile leftist doctrine. In the eyes of the literary critics of the period, Waltari, the pre-war celebrity, turned into an author of adventure novels. This view had largely prevailed all the way until the pompous celebrations of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the author’s birth in 2008. His novels from the “Islamic period” show Waltari’s growing discontent with ideologies and stringent propaganda, striving to force a happy life on the “ignorant” citizen at every cost. This, too, adds to the timeless appeal of Waltari’s works. ik

## 2015 CZECH BOOK OF THE YEAR AWARD

In late afternoon on Thursday the awards ceremony was held of the two prizes presented by the Czech Book Award civic association.

**MARKÉTA BAŇKOVÁ** became the laureate of the 2015 Czech Book Award for her book *Maličkost* (A Trifle) published by Argo. The award could help the author gain access to foreign book markets. The Czech Book Readers’ Award for 2015, which readers vote for on the internet, was presented to **TOMÁŠ ŠEBEK** for his book *Mise Afghánistán* (Mission Afghanistan), published by Paseka. We congratulate both this year’s winners.

## 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Miroslav Ivanov Prizes Awarded

Book World traditionally hosts the Miroslav Ivanov Non-Fiction Literature awards ceremony. Sixteen publishers have entered 71 titles in the competition, 9 of which were in the below 39 years category and 16 in the regional competition. Selection had to be made from a large number of journalistic contributions. Several awards and bonuses were presented in the *Miroslav Ivanov regional awards* category. The main prize was presented to

**Václav Vokolek** for his book *Posvátná místa středních Čech /Sacred Places in Central Bohemia/*. In the *Miroslav Ivanov and City of Jaroměř-Josefov Prize for Non-Fiction Literature* several honorary mentions were given out. **Anton Hykisch** received the award for permanent contribution to Czech and Slovak non-fiction literature and the Non-Fiction Authors Club prize for lifelong achievement was presented to **Miroslav Kučera**. JM

## Best Maps of the Year 2015

For the eighteenth time the Czech Cartographic Society has awarded the best maps published in the previous year. The **tourist map series 1 : 40 000** from SHOCart, spol. s r.o. won in the **Atlases & Map Series** category. In the **Individual Cartographic Work** the jury selected **Šumava – Lipno 1 : 25 000** published by Geodézie On Line, spol. s r. o. and in the **Work of Cartography for Schools** category the **School Atlas of Contemporary Czech Republic** came out victorious, published by TERRA, spol. s r.o. The application **Altimetry Analyses** from the Czech Institute for Land Surveying and Registry triumphed in the category **Digital Cartographic Products**. Radek Barvíř from Palacký University Olomouc won in the **Cartographic Outcomes of Student Projects** category with his work **Implementation of 3D Printing in Creating Physical Models of Reliefs and Surfaces**.

Two special prizes were awarded, one to the Faculty of Science of the Charles University in Prague for its interesting cartographic approach to the issue of socio-spatial differentiation of the Czech Republic and Prague from the historical perspective, and one to Map-centrum, spol. s r. o. for its long-term advocacy of cartography through fairy-tale maps. ik



# Prague – City of Great Literary Past and Diverse Present



Over 30 partner organisations active in Prague's literary field have joined forces in the project entitled **PRAGUE, CITY OF LITERATURE**, which co-ordinates Prague's membership in the network of UNESCO creative cities of literature. The exhibition in the Lucerna Palace presents not only some of the project's activities and its partners but also Prague itself as a city of rich literary heritage and varied and diverse present. It is organised by the Prague Municipal library and will run until 30 May.

## Applause for Dana Kalinová



**SVĚT KNIHY PRAHA**  
**BOOK WORLD PRAGUE**  
**11.-14. 5. 2017**  
 Prague Exhibition Grounds

