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Turkish Minister of Culture and Tourism Ertuğrul Günay: Frankfurt Book Fair will be an opportunity for Turkey



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Gustave Le Clezio won the 2008 Nobel Prize in literature becoming the first French writer to win the award since 2000

Nobel Prize-winning author Orhan Pamuk joins the official opening of the Frankfurt Book Fair. He says his characters 'survive because of Turkey'
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A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT BY TODAY'S ZAMAN FOR THE FRANKFURT BOOK FAIR

OCT. 15-19, 2008 WWW.TODAYSZAMAN.COM



TURKEY IS IN FRANKFURT BOOK FAIR IN ALL ITS COLORS

MUSA İGREK İSTANBUL

In his Frankfurt travel notes, Ahmet Haşim, an influential Turkish poet of the early 20th century, writes: "These are the questions that everyone asks whoever visits Frankfurt: Did you see the old town? Did

you pay a visit to the House of Rothschild? Did you see Goethe's home?" Let us now add the following questions to the existing ones: "Did the Frankfurt Book Fair satisfy your expectations?" and "Were you happy with the activities held at the exhibition hall?" You probably understand where this is headed. The start of the

long-awaited Frankfurt Book Fair is approaching. Nearly 350 writers, interpreters and translators will participate in the world's largest book fair, where Turkey is the guest of honor. We do not know whether Haşim ever imagined such a historic journey, but this literary endeavor to Frankfurt carries a lot of expectations. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 08**



**„Türkei – Faszinierend farbig“
 vom 15. – 19. Oktober 2008
 auf der Frankfurter Buchmesse**

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From the Editor

Turkey is the Guest of Honor at this year's Frankfurt Book Fair, the world's largest trade fair for books, with a tradition spanning more than 500 years. The Turkish organizing committee has worked hard since Book Fair organizers and Turkey inked an agreement in 2006, when fair director Jürgen Boos and Attila Koc, then Turkey's minister of culture and tourism, agreed on the Guest of Honor appearance in 2008.

On the first day of the fair, both Turkey's President Abdullah Gül and Turkish Nobel Prize-winning author Orhan Pamuk will be speaking to kick off activities. The Turkish committee has prepared a host of events, from exhibitions to concerts and from seminars to cultural events, to promote Turkey and its rich and colorful history. With more than 300 writers and poets, and 800

artists and members in total, the Turkish team enjoys the backing of both the government and nongovernmental organizations. Thousands of publishers, agents, booksellers, librarians, academics, illustrators, service providers, film producers, translators, printers, professional and trade associations, institutions, artists, authors, antiquarians and software and multimedia suppliers will participate in this international fair.

Today's Zaman, Turkey's most highly circulated English-language daily newspaper, has prepared a special Today's Culture supplement for the 60th Frankfurt Book Fair as an endorsement of this very important cultural event.

Abdullah Bozkurt / Executive Editor

ELİF ŞAFAK: Şafak, a prominent novelist in Turkey, spoke to Today's Culture on her 15 years of writing journey; what literature means to her, where she sees herself in the Turkish literary scene and what feeds her writing. In her first interview after having her second child, she announced that a new novel is on the way.



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NT BOOKSTORES: NT bookstores, the biggest bookshop chain in Turkey, aims to preserve its leading position in the market, NT General Manager Şeref Zekai Kolak said, noting that NT's innovations are what keep customers coming back.

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ALBERTO MANGUEL: "The Library at Night," the latest book by Argentine-born writer-editor Alberto Manguel, in which he chronicles the history of libraries -- meshed with his own adventure as a bookworm -- has just been published in Turkish under the title "Geceleyin Kütüphane."

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ELISABETH ÖZDALGA: Professor Elisabeth Özdalga, a well-known sociologist in Turkey, has stated that those who think the headscarf issue will be resolved through persuasion alone are naïve, adding that the issue can only be addressed through a comprehensive campaign of democratization that transforms the authoritarian state into a democratic state.

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CHARLOTTE MCPHERSON: Dr. Charlotte McPherson, an American expatriate, talks about how she founded and manages an English bookstore and publishing business to provide the public, Turks and expats alike, with good, reasonably priced, original English books. Despite İstanbul's growing expat population and increasing number of book-hungry vacationers and Turks eager to practice their English skills, it can be difficult to sniff out popular books in English.



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KAYNAK KÜLTÜR A.Ş.: The book industry is getting bigger in Turkey, with new publishing companies entering the market even though Turks reportedly read less than people in other countries. Publishing group Kaynak Kültür A.Ş. has been leading the pack for four years with its 20 publishing houses, eight magazines and three audio and picture book publishing companies.

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Turkey realizes its intellectual potential, importance of business cooperation



Ümit Yaşar Gözüm (Frankfurt Book Fair National Executive Committee co-chair): Our expectation from the Frankfurt Book Fair is the expectation of the sector and the professional institutions with whom we have devised a roadmap. This implies the opening up of Turkish publishers to the international arena and their competitiveness in this space. From the perspective of Turkish writers and publishers, this event is a prestigious one as well as an impressive move of self-confidence.

In the future, Turkey will show a performance that does not fall below the standards it sets in 2008. Considering the private sector's dynamism and experience, we will see that we were not wrong with that. The position of guest of honor was granted through the preparatory work of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, which initiated the process. But within this three-year period, a fertile ground was created to cooperate with writers, publishers, translators and professional organizations. Actually, cooperation among these institutions, which did not fully know each other, has shown that there is great potential for the private sector in Turkey and that this potential should no longer remain idle. The rest took care of itself. The first thing to do after securing the position of guest of honor was to form an organizing committee. This was achieved through setting up an

institutionalized Turkish National Executive Committee. The steps taken in the field of publishing in Turkey within the last three years are comparable to the sum of the projects done in the past.

As a result of the efforts to restructure and institutionalize Turkish publishing, Turkey is currently being discussed by international intellectual circles. The public sector's efforts to provide incentives for the private sector played a great role in this. Attempts that started with the implementation of the TEDA Project in 2005 peaked when Turkey was invited as guest of honor to the world's largest book fair, the arena of professionals.

This is our first time on this stage, and we ascend it with important and breathtaking projects. We have made extensive preparations and taken action in reliance on a program whose infrastructure determines the superstructure. But I would like to bring your attention to an important point: The sphere we are talking about is the opening up of the experience. This work, whose infrastructure was set by the ministry, is at a point that requires the involvement and contribution of writers, translators and other relevant actors. Bureaucratic transactions constitute only part of the project.

It is now time for professionals to communicate. The project's expectation was not to support the translation of works by authors to other languages alone. During the bid to become a guest of honor, incentives were provided to 440 works in 35 languages and 45 countries. Of these, 110 were given to the German language. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism pays attention to reinforcing the content of the projects by the publishers. In this way, we contribute to the publication of works that complement one another.

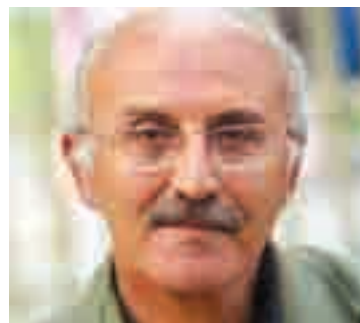
'I did not want to look like I am supporting the AK Party administration'



Ahmet Oktay: I am not attending the Frankfurt Book Fair. Above all, I cannot speak a foreign language; I do not want to be around with such a shortcoming.

Secondly, my friends Tahsin Yücel and Leyla Erbil organized an event. We announced that we will not be attending. I do not see any good in attending this fair because it has turned into a state policy and I did not want to look like a supporter of the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) government. I will not consider attending an activity controlled by any ministry. I also want to stress that the Suna İnan Kırac Foundation will have a stand [at the fair] and because it is a nongovernmental organization, I sent my books and book covers to it for exhibition.

'Turkey may benefit from the event if it acts with wisdom and calm'



Abdülkadir Budak: My personal expectation is to see this great and respected fair and breathe in the atmosphere for a few days. I will deliver a brief speech on poetry and present a few examples of my poems -- that's it. Of course, the most important thing is this: Turkey is the guest of honor this year, and national interest is involved in this endeavor. We have been complaining about Turkish literature failing to open up to the outer world, so this event is a great opportunity. So far Turkish writers have had to do all the work of translating their works into foreign languages. The state did not provide any support. With the exception of some great names, including Nazım Hikmet, Yaşar Kemal and Aziz Nesin, our writers had to assume the entire responsibility for translating their works. I am not sure of the probable success, but it seems that this is the first time the state and writers are cooperating because the state provided support to translation services this year.

What matters most is embracing this as state policy and supporting it. Additionally, the state should be able to be supportive of its writers and poets, whose literary abilities are undisputable. Otherwise nepotism and discrimination will make its way in here too. It is not completely absent either, as a quick glance at the list of writers invited to the event shows.

I have no sufficient information on whether Turkey has prepared well to use this opportunity wisely.

We will see. Of course, a boycott staged by some poets and writers is based on some legitimate reasons. But I would rather see this as an opportunity for Turkish literature to become known in the world than a state issue. I also believe that if genuine writers are not there, imposters will take to the stage. The void will be filled, anyway. I wish this would not happen, but it has. As far as I can tell, a number of great names able to represent Turkish literature were left out of this great event. I must say, I am very upset by this. Let us stage the fight we consider essential within the country, but we should not waste this great opportunity. I would say we should be there for the sake of Turkish literature and to represent high quality works.

If this opportunity is used wisely, and if relevant players act calmly and responsibly, Turkey may benefit from it. Like I said, opening up Turkish literature to the world became for the first time state policy via this fair. It is not flawless, but something was done. Mistakes are always to be expected with firsts. This is no exception. Yet I favor being optimistic -- participating publishers will have the opportunity to make special attempts to have their writers' works translated into foreign languages. Turkey's position as guest of honor will facilitate the rest. There are many instances where a number of ordinary writers were given special attention with regard to translating their works into foreign languages. Publishers have to remain calm and offer the highest quality works for translation. The ability to represent rather than to profit should be considered in such cases.

I believe that Turkish literature will be thoroughly reviewed at this event because of a recent Nobel Prize awarded to a Turkish novelist. Other works in this language will be further promoted -- as they should be.

'Germany is well prepared'



Sema Kaygusuz: I am now in Berlin after coming here upon the invitation of the Goethe Institute. As I write my impressions of Berlin, I

do not know how well Turkey is prepared for the fair, but I can say that Germans are well prepared. Journalists and literary critics are trying to understand Turkish writers. I have inferred from my contacts so far that Turkish literature is about to spread all over the world. It will have the opportunity to introduce itself, with its rich world and unique writers. We will hopefully be able to explain ourselves through an elegant presentation. But this should be an explanation directed to our literary friends rather than outsiders so that they can see us without attempting to associate us with others.

Leading Trademark, Vibrant Voices

Doğan Kitap

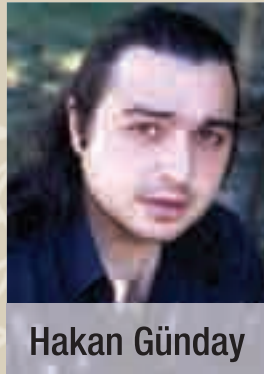
Turkey's publishing tradition



Taha Akyol



İpek Çalışlar



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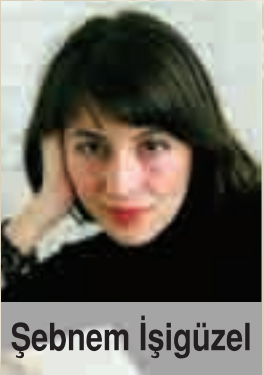
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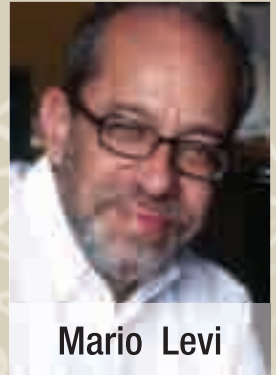
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Visit us at Frankfurt Book Fair 5.1/A956

'Turkish literature and culture are barely known in Europe'



Elif Şafak: Being guest of honor at the Frankfurt Book Fair is a great opportunity for Turkey. Despite a large Turkish population in Europe, particularly in Germany, regrettably, Turkish literature and culture are not adequately known. A lack of knowledge of Turkish literature and culture fosters prejudices about Turkey. Is there anything better than literature and art to show the rich-

ness of a country? Turkey is participating in the Frankfurt Book Fair with a number of writers, poets and publishers. I find this diversity very important. It should not be that only a few names come to the minds of Europeans when Turkish literature is mentioned; the more translated works there are, the better Turkey is introduced abroad. Moreover, these moves will reinforce the culture of criticism. We writers love seeing ourselves as different and special. But in the end, we are all products of the same place and the same period. At this point, we desperately need to have academics and critics who will evaluate our works and products within an objective framework. I have always felt this shortcoming. Everything about novelists -- except their novels -- is discussed in our country. I believe the Frankfurt Book Fair will make a significant contribution to fill this gap.

'There is no need to get angry over irrelevant reasons'



Hilmi Yavuz: We will be holding a reading session at the fair with Walter G. Andrews, who translated my book "Seasons of the Word." This is why the fair is meaningful to me; but in general, we hope that Turkey's position as guest of honor will contribute a great deal to its literature and recognition. It

has been said that extensive preparations have been made. I have some doubts, but we will see this clearly at the fair. I see the attitude of colleagues who decided not to attend the fair as breaking one's fast out of anger at the priest. This is the product of an unnecessary and ungrounded sensitivity. It seems that they suffer from an inappropriate approach by which they politicized the issue. Needless to say, I do not agree with them. This is all about their attempt to make this issue a political polemic. However, this is a great opportunity after the last six decades. It should be used well and wisely -- and hence my inability to understand the approach of those against it.

'This could be a milestone for our writers and publishers'



Enver Ercan: As a member of the National Executive Board, I have great expectations. I believe the world's leading publishers and literary agencies will pay greater attention to our writers and poets after this fair because we considered this during our preparations for the fair. We wanted Turkish literature and culture to be reflected with all of its

colors and to prove that harsh evaluations were nothing but mere prejudices and stereotypes. We can say that what we have done so far was right, considering the foreign media's attention to our work. This flatters us; the National Executive Board is inclusive of representatives from leading institutions in their fields and, by virtue of the network we cre-

ated for better communication, all are kept constantly abreast of all developments. Sometimes, working hours last all night long. As such, I am content. Turkey is the guest of honor at the most influential and largest book fair in the world this year. All eyes will be on us. We have prepared well for this. This could be a milestone for our writers and publishers.

FRANKFURT BOOK FAIR FOCUSES ON BEVY OF MEDIA

Frankfurt's annual book fair is celebrating its 60th year with a star-studded lineup of contemporary literary greats, as well as a look at the written word's jump from the printed page to the digital screen, organizers said. International best-seller Paolo Coelho, as well as Nobel laureates Guenter Grass and Orhan Pamuk are among the guests at this year's Frankfurt Book Fair that opens Oct. 14 and runs for five days. The featured nation this year is Turkey. Alongside the fair's traditional highlights on education and fighting illiteracy, this year's fair will focus on the impact of new media and electronic readers on the traditional printed literary world. Both Sony Corp. and Amazon will be presenting their electronic readers, the Reader and Kindle, respectively.

"What we are now seeing is something new," book fair direc-

tor Juergen Boos told a news conference. "It is no longer the computer that is being simulated, it is the book." Yet Boos stressed his belief that electronic books will not replace their printed cousins, but enhance them by offering new formats where sentences are combined with visual images to cater to a fresh generator of readers. "No one will replace his Goethe collection for a Kindle," Boos said, stressing that content would remain the main focus. Germany's foreign minister, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, and Turkish president Abdullah Gül are to speak at the opening of the book fair. Altogether 2,700 events are planned and some 400,000 books, films, audio books and new media will be presented. Frankfurt's fair is said to be the key event for international license managers and literary agents. **Frankfurt AP**



Frankfurt Fair
Director Juergen Boos

Benjamin Franklin Awards 2008

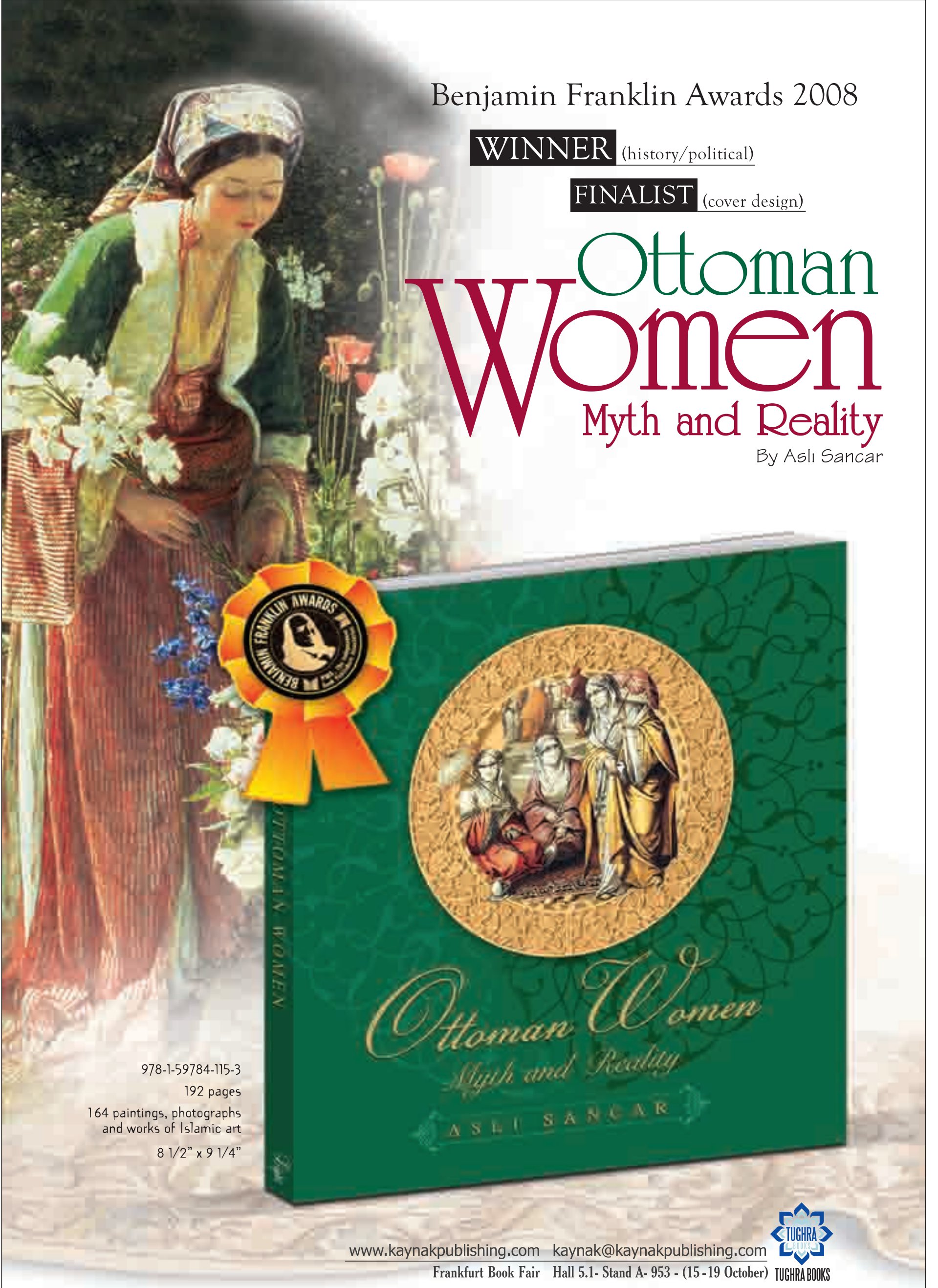
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Frankfurt Book Fair Hall 5.1- Stand A- 953 - (15-19 October) TUGHRA BOOKS



TURKEY IS IN FRANKFURT WITH ALL ITS COLORS

Turkey's preparations for its position as guest of honor at the fair started with a formal ceremony last year. An advisory board was set up by the Turkish Union of Publishers in coordination with leading writers and publishing houses. An executive board was also formed.



PHOTO: REUTERS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Turkey, which has been attending the Frankfurt Book Fair since 1999, had applied a number of times to become a guest of honor; however, its appeals had been turned down because of issues including torture and restrictions upon freedom of thought and expression. Its application was accepted last year. The gesture, made for the 60th anniversary of the fair, caused many to say, "It was worth the wait." Activities were announced; a list of writers was published. Exhibitions and other similar functions were held. Some criticized the activities, alleging that the opening program is not sufficiently glorious and that the guest of honor position is merely propaganda for the Justice and Development Party (AK Party). The Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the national planning committee were severely criticized. As the opening of the fair nears, preparations continue amid growing criticism.

In Haşim's notes, Frankfurt appears alluring. Even though the remark "Germany is a pink and large apple, but there are worms in it," erodes the magic, it is certain that we anticipate a lot from the Frankfurt Book Fair. The fair is very important to Turkey, especially because İstanbul will serve as a European Capital of Culture in 2010. Over 8,000 publishers from 11 countries will take part in the event. Publishers and literacy agencies will keep their eyes on our writers. We will test the accuracy of the statement "Worldwide recognition depends on recognition in Frankfurt."

Turkey's preparations for its position as guest of honor at the fair started with a formal ceremony last year. An advisory board was set up by the Turkish Union of Publishers in coordination with leading

writers and publishing houses. An executive board was also formed; Müge Gürsoy Sökmén from the union was picked as chair of the board, where representatives from the ministry, Press and Publications Union, Turkish Writers Union, İLESAM and Turkey PEN serve as members. The advisory board offered "Turkey in all of its colors" as the theme of the fair, saying: "When we look at our literature, architecture and art, we see that different ethnic and religious groups made contributions to the overall product. When bringing our culture to the attention of the world, we have to consider these contributions and the intertwining of ethnic identities and appreciate this diversity. We should further view our recent history and diversity as a source of richness rather than overlooking this accumulated

culture of sharing. After all, this heritage exists and flourishes on our soil. Accentuating our rich culture by emphasizing the identities within it will make the current strength of our country more visible."

'This is an event of world of publications; not of the government'

Disagreements erupted between writers and publishers and the government during fair planning, and a number of rumors were spread. Some leading names stated that they would not take part in the event, which they described as "planned by the [Justice and Development Party (AK Party)] administration." Ahmet Oktay, Leyal Erbil, Füsun Akatlı, Nezihe Meriç, Demir Özlü, Pınar Kür and Tahsin Yücel issued a written statement where they refused to participate in the Frankfurt Book Fair because they did not trust the AK Party administration and because the minister for culture and tourism and the writers' associations were not transparent enough.

Minister Ertugrul Günay, the Frankfurt Book Fair National Executive Committee, publishers' unions and relevant authorities made a counterstatement against the writers who declined the invitation, stressing that this was an event of the world of publishers rather than the government. Günay reacted to the dissident writers, saying: "More than 300 writers will participate in the fair. It is up to the writers to make the decision of whether they will represent Turkey at an international event. History will record what everybody does. They -- knowingly or unknowingly -- are eroding Turkey's image while trying to do some damage to the current political administration." Amid the discussions, Sökmén, Writers' Committee moderator Enver Ercan, Publishing Committee mod-

Frankfurt Book Fair, in numbers

- Turkey's national stand: 800 square meters
- Forum area: 2,500 square meters
- Total exhibition area devoted to Turkey: 4,060 square meters
- 250 events will be held
- 200 readings, 15 artistic activities, 10 symposia and 15 receptions to take place
- Academics, 350 writers/ translators, 320 artists, 100 publishers, 100 curators, moderators and coordinators, and 120 reporters and an official delegation will attend the fair

erator Münir Üstün and Conferences and Scholarly Meetings Committee moderator Tanıl Bora made a public announcement, noting that the Frankfurt Book Fair was an event of the world of books, not an intergovernmental or interstate organization.

A number of writers and poets including Gülten Akin, Hilmi Yavuz and Aslı Erdoğan stressed that this was a national issue, while renowned literature critic Doğan Hızlan made a call in his column in Hürriyet to the dissidents to reconsider their decision for the sake of Turkish literature.

A colorful view of Turkey

The list of participating writers shows that some controversial names have been invited, whereas some leading figures have been left out. When we asked her opinion of the fair, Buket Uzuner said she did not want to talk about an event to which she was not invited. Meanwhile, Mustafa Kutlu said he would not attend the fair in spite of being invited, adding that he would make no additional comment. Hulki Aktunç also declined an invitation to the fair and did not want to explain his reasons for not attending. Sökmen explained how the committee selected whom to invite: "The Turkey PEN writers association, the Writers' Union, BESAM, EDİSAM and İLESAM formed the Writers' Committee and jointly picked the

writers who were invited to attend. They paid particular attention to three criteria in selecting the writers: having a visible impact on Turkey's culture, having a promising career as writer and having their published works translated in foreign languages including German. The utmost attention and effort has been paid to make sure that all colors would be represented in the program."

In addition to the protesting writers, pianist Fazıl Say is also boycotting the event. Say expressed dissent because of a decision to stage the "Yunus Emre Oratorio" instead of the "Nazım Hikmet Oratorio," which he composed.

The logo representing Turkey in all of its colors was designed by Bülent Erkmen, who prepared it in Turkish, English and German.

The promotion of Turkish writers and poets depends on literary agents. This institution, which is still at its infancy in Turkey, is very common and influential in Europe and the United States. Turkey's position as guest of honor at the fair may make a contribution to the broader recognition of Turkish writers.

It looks like Turkey's long journey to Frankfurt is nearly complete. Time will tell whether the event meets expectations. Hopefully, no "worm" will come out of the big, pink apple described by Hatim because it will be a long time before Turkey has another opportunity like this.

Gül and Pamuk to open fair

Some 250 events will be held in Germany, where Turkey is the guest of honor at the Frankfurt Book Fair. The events include reading and recitation days, concerts, dance and theater shows and symposia. Another 40 cultural events, 150 panel discussions, conferences and special meetings for guests will be held in the exhibition arena. Turkey will be allowed the use of a 4,060-square-meter area of

the exhibition hall to promote its culture and literature. Turkey will be represented by a delegation of 1,000, including 100 publishers, 350 writers/translators, 320 artists, 100 curators, moderators, and coordinators, and 120 reporters. The fair will be officially opened by President Abdullah Gül of Turkey, German President Horst Köhler and Turkish Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk.



Turkish President
Abdullah Gül

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Frankfurt Book Fair
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PHOTO: SELAHATTIN SEVI

ORHAN PAMUK: CHARACTERS PULL ME ALONG IN THEIR OWN DIRECTIONS

Nobel Prize-winning author Orhan Pamuk, who just penned a new book, 'Masumiyet Müzesi' (Museum of Innocence), is gearing up to open a museum in 2010. Pamuk, who notes that he does not luxuriate in the fact that he's won a Nobel prize, says his characters 'survive because of Turkish culture and traditions, because of Turkey'

ABDULLAH KILIÇ İSTANBUL

These days Turkey is abuzz about Nobel Prize-winning author Orhan Pamuk and his new book, "Masumiyet Müzesi" (Museum of Innocence), with a first printing of 100,000 copies. Pamuk is quite pleased with the initial reactions from the press and from the first readers of this new work.

In the process of writing this new novel, Pamuk kept many of the details secret, telling readers only that he was working on something new, but not letting them know anything about the title or the subject matter. Readers familiar with Pamuk's books may have guessed that once again the setting would be that familiar triangle of İstanbul districts, Cihangir, Çukurcuma and Beyoğlu. And, of course, the matter of love is woven throughout the story.

Pamuk spoke to Today's Culture on his new novel, the development process of this work and what he will be working on next, as well as touching upon how winning the Nobel Prize affected his life and his thoughts on the Ergenekon case.

Let's begin our questions with the end of this novel. "Masumiyet Müzesi" is reminiscent of a Turkish film. These types of films

almost always have happy endings, but your new novel doesn't have such an ending.

Believe me, this was not intentional. One of my greatest pleasures is to live with a novel in process for about five to six years before thinking up its ending. When I started writing this book, I knew how it would end, but what I had to do was pull it towards that ending in a believable manner. I always check carefully the personalities and the actions of the characters in my books. But these characters have a certain autonomy of their own, and somehow many pull you along on their own. I write my books slowly; this is because -- let me see how I can describe this -- creating a character, a hero, unfolding these imaginary events, then believing in all this, and then, as you are trying to finish the novel, trying to live as though this character exists, and making sure that you really embrace and deeply understand the kind of things this character would actually do.

Some of these things come to us from our innate abilities as children to imitate; some of them come from a knowledge of literature. Until or unless you are able to successfully internalize a novel's main character in a believable manner -- and I am never able to do this very quickly -- it is very difficult to

actually start writing the novel because everyone around this character remains foreign. And if you internalize that character, you will never, in the end, have anything unbelievable happen to this character. If you believe in the character, then he or she is believable, and when your friends read it, they will think it's believable. Now, you came to the end of the book and note that "it is not a happy ending." Your question is, "Why isn't the ending happy?" There are many reasons for this. First of all, a love story that ends happily really departs from actually being a story in itself. Second of all, I was just as interested in Kemal's love for Füsün as I was in Füsün's love.

You already mentioned in the book that you "wanted to describe these events from the eyes of Kemal Bey."

But I also worked hard to see that Füsün emerged as a character. This was all so that Kemal's entire attention could be placed on Füsün. The ending to this novel is not happy, but the story of happiness contained in the book has nothing to do with its ending. It has to do with the depths of perspective he has on the world as a result of his emotions for Füsün.

The love that Kemal experiences for Füsün makes a reader think these words could only

have been written as the result of actual experience. What do you have to say about that?

This is the type of question that novelists these days always face: "Orhan, did you actually experience all these things?" I have heard this sort of question with every one of my books, but now I hear it more and more. Of course, that has a lot to do with the fact that the subject matter here is love. That is part of the attraction about a novel that concerns love: Everyone has experienced it. Still, in our country this subject is generally talked about in connection to love as experienced in other countries. Usually a poetic sort of emotion is described in relation to love, and it is said "How glorious is love," and then left there. Normally there is no sort of reason-based examination and analysis of the process of this emotion on every page, in a methodical manner. I think I may have done it for the first time, not only within Turkey, but in world literature. By analyzing all of this and using my personal experiences and conversations with others, as well as things I have read, this is how I have done this. But please, don't turn this into "Orhan Pamuk, are you in fact Kemal Bey?"

But as it is, you have already said Orhan Pamuk is contained in the character of Kemal...

Well, I suppose so. To write a novel is to be able to put yourself in the place of a character, to be able to be like him or her, but as you can see, I am a happier man than Kemal. But this also is true: The pain of life is something you can only write about after actually experiencing it, though whether I experienced it on the level that you read in this novel or not, let's not go into that subject any deeper.

Clearly the world of Orhan Pamuk's imagination is quite large...

I can say neither that, nor that this all came from experience. One day, if I ever write my memoirs, that, too, I will write carefully, sentence by sentence. Even if I have experienced some of these same things, it is not whether or not I tell you that I have; it's that I really cannot say.

Do any of your friends from the circles you lived among ever call you after reading your book to say, "Orhan, I saw myself in this character"?

I am waiting for that to happen. It has only been seven days since the book came out. There will definitely be those who say that they "saw themselves" in the book. There will no doubt be those who tell me how well I described certain jokes, mutual friends and things like that. But for seven days now, I have also not been answering my phone.

Are you uncomfortable with some of the comparisons being drawn between your novel and Turkish films?

Definitely not; there are some real comparisons after all. First of all, though, while the novel does take up some of the important themes covered in Turkish films, it does not deal with them in the same way. It deals with these subjects in a more analytic style than in Turkish films, and it actually deals with melodramatic subjects without actually becoming a melodrama. It carries out a detailed and patient analysis which no Turkish film or even any other kind of film would be able to give time to.

You thought for a decade about writing this novel. When did the idea of establishing a museum come about?

That was in concert with the book idea. Before the idea of this life story was the museum idea, but in the beginning, the museum idea was in the wrong place. I had this idea about a home in which people had lived, but in which everything remained in place just as it had been before, as though the people had dispersed after a neutron bomb or something. I wanted it to be the poor home of a middle class family. I thought it should have everything in its proper place. But in the end, we didn't do this because there were too many problems which emerged. Later, we found the house I



wound up using and turned it into the museum.

But why Çukurcuma?

I have always loved those neighborhoods. Those are the areas of İstanbul that I passed through while taking my daughter to school. Even now I still ask myself why I love it so much. Maybe because I loved that period of my life. I would take my daughter to school every morning, and then, walking through those streets, I would arrive here, at my writing study.

When will this museum open and will it be a permanent fixture?

Hopefully, it will be ready by 2010. Of course, God willing, I will turn it over to a foundation. Either I will turn it over to the Culture Ministry, or I will help it along myself; I don't know exactly, I have to consider the laws. It will be open to everyone, though.

Will the objects on display there be only those from your book?

No, it will include, as I describe in the novel, Kemal Bey's collection.

Are you planning on writing a novel that concerns the US, where you spend so much of your time?

No, the US won't be the subject of my next book, I am sure of that. I can't write something like that. I love it here, in Turkey; I am tied to here. Also, as my age advances, just one book project lasts for 10 years, and I have so many book projects right now in my mind.

Do you know what you will write after this?

I have already started, in fact. I already know the name, but it is too early to tell. Let's concern ourselves with the novel at hand though, because the time will come later to talk about the new one.

The presence of women wearing headscarves in Nişantaşı used to be greeted with surprise by many, and now we see the same thing in Bodrum. Does it appear that almost nothing has changed in 30 years?

Does this subject appear in my book?

Yes, two of the novel's characters, Mehmet and Nurcihan, become closer and plan to eventually marry. But Mehmet's mother wears the headscarf and is treated differently, even belittled, by some of the characters in the novel.

But there is every sort of person in this novel. There are religious ones, military leaders, leftists. These are not my ideas; everyone simply speaks their minds.

When you say this is contained in my book, it could be interpreted as you thinking these are actually my ideas.

No, no, I am not saying this because I think these are your views; I am just noting that you deal with this in your novel.

So you want to pull me now in a political direction? I really don't want to go into political subjects very much. I will go into these subjects only if my book has opened the door to them. But my new novel brings neither an opinion nor a reaction to the political arguments and turmoil that have been experienced in Turkey over the past few years. Let's not form any links between what I have written and things like the Ergenekon case or the [Justice and Development Party] AK Party, [Republican People's Party] CHP and "deep state" fights. Of course, as a citizen of this nation I do have some opinions on this all. While I am not willing to stray from talking about my views, I do not want to mix up characters like Kemal and Füsun from my novel with these ideas. My novel, after all, has its own sense of dignity. Actually, I wouldn't mind saying something about the political fights we are witnessing these days, so if you open up a separate section to this interview, I will talk there. The reason that my characters exist is not these fights. It is because of Turkish culture, our traditions, because of Turkey, and living here that they exist. I do not wish to belittle politics, but I definitely do not write novels in order for them to become ingredients for daily political fights, or to provide answers to daily political fights.

There can be no doubt that much in your life changed after receiving a Nobel Prize. Are you pleased with these changes?

Of course I am. But I definitely don't sit around and view myself as a Nobel-winning author, either. When I was in America, a publishing agency woke me up to tell me I had won the Nobel. My first reaction was "Alright, but my life is not going to change because of this." But I guess I was wrong, because it did change. But as for my work habits, or my ties with literature, these did not change; in fact, they only increased. At that point, I was right in the middle of this book, and I wanted to be finished with it and just see it published immediately. I trusted in this novel, and I was thinking that it would in fact be really interesting to see what would happen if people read this

one. But I never lost my habits. I have always given interviews about each of my books, and just because I received the Nobel doesn't mean I won't do that.

You are scheduled to make the opening speech at the Frankfurt Book Fair. President Abdullah Gül will also be in attendance. How does it feel to be in the same echelon as Gül?

You are again asking some very political questions. My answer is this: I do not view this business in terms of being in the same echelon as Gül, the president. And neither does he, I bet. It is completely natural that politicians would come to that book fair for the opening speech. As for being captured in the same echelon as someone, or not, I don't know -- I am not a politician. That's just not how it should be viewed.

But when you received this Nobel, the previous president did not even issue a formal statement of congratulations. Weren't you insulted by this?

No, I was not insulted, and I was not saddened. I have no need for approval from the state; it's enough that they don't throw me in prison. And at least I have succeeded at this.

Last year, when you departed from Turkey for America, there were many opinions voiced along the lines of "He received a great deal of money from the Nobel, he's making investments in America." But now we learn that you in fact narrowly escaped a serious threat.

This is what the Turkish government has told me. Before the Ergenekon case even entered the newspapers, the state's security directorate had told me of this threat.

What do you think about the Ergenekon terror organization?

I have not completely read the list of allegations in the Ergenekon case, although I did carefully read the parts that concerned me in particular. I am convinced that those men really did want to kill me. In my eyes, there is absolutely no reason that would somehow lessen the enormity of what they were planning. I was definitely convinced, from the Ergenekon allegations, that in fact some murderers, including unfortunately some retired military officers and mafia types, had organized and were in fact planning on killing me. And so, I look at those who are trying to portray the Ergenekon crimes as less than they really are with the same eye -- I am ashamed for them.





PHOTO □ AP

FRANCE'S LE CLEZIO WINS NOBEL PRIZE IN LITERATURE

France's Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clezio won the 2008 Nobel Prize in literature on Thursday for works characterized by "poetic adventure and sensual ecstasy." Le Clezio, 68, is the first French writer to win the prestigious award since Chinese-born Frenchman Gao Xingjian was honored in 2000.

The decision was in line with the Swedish Academy's recent picks of European authors. Last year's prize went to Doris Lessing of Britain.

The academy called Le Clezio an "author of new departures, poetic adventure and sensual ecstasy, explorer of a humanity beyond and below the reigning civilization." Academy Permanent Secretary Horace Engdahl said he was a writer of great diversity. "He has gone through many different phases of his development as a writer and has come to include other civilizations, other modes of living than the Western, in his writing," Engdahl said. Engdahl said Le Clezio won the prize "because he is a great prose writer and a narrator."

Asked how he thought the prize would be received in the United States, given Engdahl's recent controversial comments about American literature, he said he had no idea. "I'm not aware that there are today any anti-French sentiments in the US. And apart from that, Le Clezio, is a cosmopolitan. He lives part of the year in New Mexico," Engdahl said. "He's not a particularly French writer if you look at him from a strictly cultural point of view. So I don't think this choice will give rise to any anti-French sentiments. I would be very sad if that was the case."

Since Japanese writer Kenzaburo Oe won the award in 1994, the selections have had a distinctly European flavor. Nine of the subsequent laureates were Europeans, including last year's winner, Doris Lessing of Britain. Of the other four, one was from Turkey and the others from South Africa, China and Trinidad. All had strong ties to Europe. The last US writer to win the prize was Toni Morrison in 1993.

Le Clezio made his breakthrough as a novelist with "Desert," in 1980, a work the academy said "contains magnificent images of a lost culture in the North African desert contrasted with



PHOTO □ REUTERS

a depiction of Europe seen through the eyes of unwanted immigrants." Le Clezio also won a prize from the French Academy for the work.

The Swedish Academy said Le Clezio from early on "stood out as an ecologically engaged author, an orientation that is accentuated with the novels 'Terra Amata,' 'The Book of Flights,' 'War' and 'The Giants.'"

Le Clezio was born in Nice in 1940 and at eight the family moved to Nigeria, where his father had been a doctor during World War II. They returned to France in 1950.

His most recent works include 2007's "Ballaciner," a work the academy called a "deeply personal essay about the history of the art of film and the importance of film" in his life. His books have also included several tales for children, including 1980's "Lullaby" and "Balaabilou" in 1985.

In addition to the 10 million kronor (\$1.4 million) check, Le Clezio will also receive a gold medal and be invited to give a lecture at the academy's headquarters in Stockholm's Old Town. The Nobel Prize in literature is handed out in Stockholm on Dec. 10 -- the anniversary of Nobel's death in 1896 -- along with the awards in medicine, chemistry, physics and economics. The Nobel Peace Prize is presented in Oslo, Norway. **Stockholm AP**

Works of Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clezio

Here is a list of works in English, translated from French, by Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clezio, winner of the 2008 Nobel Prize for Literature:

- "The Interrogation" (1964)
- "Fever" (1966)
- "The Flood" (1967)
- "Terra Amata" (1969)
- "The Book of Flights: An Adventure Story" (1971)
- "War" (1973)
- "The Giants" (1975)
- "The Mexican Dream, or, The Interrupted Thought of Amerindian Civilizations" (1993)
- "The Prospector" (1993)
- "Onitsha" (1997)
- "The Round & Other Cold Hard Facts" (2002)
- "Wandering Star: A Novel" (2004)

Winners of Nobel Prize in Literature since 1990

- 2007: Doris Lessing, Britain
- 2006: Orhan Pamuk, Turkey
- 2005: Harold Pinter, Britain
- 2004: Elfriede Jelinek, Austria
- 2003: J.M. Coetzee, South Africa
- 2002: Imre Kertesz, Hungary
- 2001: V.S. Naipaul, Trinidad-born Briton
- 2000: Gao Xingjian, Chinese-born French
- 1999: Guenter Grass, Germany
- 1998: Jose Saramago, Portugal
- 1997: Dario Fo, Italy
- 1996: Wislawa Szymborska, Poland
- 1995: Seamus Heaney, Ireland
- 1994: Kenzaburo Oe, Japan
- 1993: Toni Morrison, United States
- 1992: Derek Walcott, St. Lucia
- 1991: Nadine Gordimer, South Africa
- 1990: Octavio Paz, Mexico

EXCERPTS FROM THE NOBEL LITERATURE PRIZE CITATION

Excerpts from the Swedish Academy's citation awarding the 2008 Nobel Prize in literature to French writer Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clezio:

■ The Nobel Prize in Literature for 2008 is awarded to the French writer Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clezio "author of new departures, poetic adventure and sensual ecstasy, explorer of a humanity beyond and below the reigning civilization."

■ Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clezio was born on April 13, 1940, in Nice, but both parents had strong family connections with the former French colony, Mauritius (conquered by the British in 1810). At the age of eight, Le Clezio and his family moved to Nigeria, where the father had been stationed as a doctor during World War II. During the monthlong voyage to Nigeria, he began his literary career with two books -- "Un long Voyage" and "Oradi noir," which even contained a list of "forthcoming books."

■ Even early on, Le Clezio stood out as an ecologically engaged author, an orientation that is



PHOTO: REUTERS

accentuated with the novels "Terra amata" (1967; Terra Amata, 1969), "Le livre des fuites" (1969; The Book of Flights, 1971), "La guerre" (1970; War, 1973) and "Les geants" (1973; The Giants, 1975). His definitive breakthrough as a novelist came with "Desert" (1980), for which he received a prize from the French Academy. This work contains magnificent images of a lost culture in the North African desert, contrasted with a depiction of Europe seen through the eyes of unwanted immigrants. The main character, the

Algerian guest worker Lalla, is a utopian antithesis to the ugliness and brutality of European society.

■ "L'Africain," the story of the author's father, is at once a reconstruction, a vindication, and the recollection of a boy who lived in the shadow of a stranger he was obliged to love. He remembers through the landscape: Africa tells him who he was when, at the age of eight, he experienced the family's reunion after the separation during the war years. Among Le Clezio's most recent works are "Ballaciner" (2007), a deeply personal essay about the history of the art of film and the importance of film in the author's life, from the hand-turned projectors of his childhood, the cult of cineaste trends in his teens, to his adult forays into the art of film as developed in unfamiliar parts of the world. A new work, "Ritournelle de la faim," has just been published.

■ Le Clezio has also written several books for children and youth, for example "Lullaby" (1980), "Celui qui n'avait jamais vu la mer suivi de La montagne du dieu vivant" (1982) and "Balaabilou" (1985).

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PHOTOS □ TURGUT ENGİN

ELİF ŞAFAK: LITERATURE IS A LOVE AND, LIKE EVERY LOVE, IT IS IRRATIONAL

TUĞBA KİBAR İSTANBUL

Elif Şafak, a prominent Turkish novelist, spoke to Today's Culture about her 15-year journey of writing, what literature means to her, where she sees herself in Turkish literature and what feeds her writing. In her first interview since giving birth to her second child, she announced that a new novel was on the way.

I guess you aren't going through postpartum depression this time like you experienced after your first pregnancy. Can you write?

I haven't experienced similar problems this time. Both the pregnancy and the post-pregnancy period have been much easier, calmer, softer and more peaceful this time. I think writing "Siyah Süt" ["Black Milk," her last book] has a great role in this. That book healed me. "Siyah Süt" tackles postpartum depression, but it does this with humor. Writing the book had a positive impact on me. And I have had many readers tell me that reading the book had a similar impact on their lives. As a writer, this makes me happy.

Will we have the opportunity to read a new novel from you soon, then?

Yes, Emir Zahir, my newborn baby, did not bring me a book like "Siyah Süt." Rather, he is bringing me a novel.

You wrote a playwright for TV and you are working on a script with filmmaker Osman Sinav. Will we see similar projects down the road?

Working with Osman Sinav and also writing the script of Menekşe and Halil for a television station was a very enriching experience. Cinema and literature are two areas in the world of art that can feed each other immensely. I am someone who enjoys interdiscipli-

nary work and the exchange between different forms of art. I find it very exciting and stimulating.

How do you work when writing. For instance, do you generally listen to music?

I always tune in to music while I am writing. For instance, "Araf" is a novel that was written with music from beginning to end, and the book's main characters listened to what I listened to. I designed and wrote the whole book with music. I cannot write in silence, I cannot study. At any rate, there should be music around me.

How much are you impacted by philosophy? Do you have favorite scholars?

I was influenced by philosophy, and the influence grew more in time. I enjoy reading Spinoza, Kierkegaard, Leibniz, Cioran, Hannah Arendt, Heidegger, Deleuze and Guattari.

When Elif Şafak goes out, what does she see around in the street? I mean, for instance, sometimes you are inspired by little things, sometimes you are on the lookout for inspiration. How does it work?

Literature is not separate from life. It is nourished by it. I believe that every writer should be a good reader and a good listener. What I mean by a good reader is easy: reading a book, reading a lot. What I mean from a good listener is to care for people, to listen to them and listen to their stories. A writer should not isolate himself or herself from society. I am constantly fed by this society, especially by women and women's stories. I value all of this.

You always defended that individual differences should be respected. You said you are against becoming average. So what distinguishes you, especially in Turkish literature?

I think readers can answer this question better, since the best reader of literature can compare different writers. I experienced this very clearly in the novel "Bespeşe," which I wrote together with five novelist friends. Readers have the opportunity of seeing and assessing our styles one by one. Again, my best readers know where my writing is different. There are even some readers that know my literary journey better than me. They assess better than me what kind of writing adventure I followed by reading all of my books and comparing them one by one.

It has been 14 years since you wrote your first book. Where do you see yourself in Turkish literature?

After 15 years and nine books, I look now at how writing has been working out for me, step by step, with patience. There is no other way. However, people always talk about the last book. They need to know that this is a cumulative work. I believe that writing is a mixture of passion and hard work. I mean, you need to have an irrational love, a deep passion for literature and yet at the same time you need to work hard.

You wrote "Araf" in English. What is the difference for you between writing in English and writing in Turkish?

Turkish is my native language, my passionate love. I attach great importance to Turkish and particularly to the language and culture that have grown since the Ottoman era. On the other hand, traveling among languages is an exciting experience for me as a writer. It is hard, but enriching. English has huge word power and a great vocabulary. It is rich in words, concepts and especially in nuances. However, the Turkish language's power and rhythm are com-

pletely different. English is a more arithmetical language for me, but Turkish is more emotional. You have a better chance of observing and sensing your own native language while you are traveling among other languages.

On one occasion, I remember you saying that building is sometimes destroying. It involves destruction. Can we say that this kind of destruction happens when you write your novels?

Writing a novel is not a flow that moves smoothly from beginning to end. Gabriel García Márquez, the Colombian novelist and short-story writer, says, "A good novelist is a person who can throw away most of his/her writings, who can erase them." You are writing and writing for days and weeks, then you delete, cancel, put aside, change and start all over again. This is a very wearing process. You need to be flexible.

You see Turkey as if it is like ebru (traditional Turkish paper marbling), in which all the colors are reflected. For instance, we hear different voices inside you in "Siyah Süt."

In "Siyah Süt" I shared the plurality inside me with the readers for the first time. This was not easy for me at all, because I don't write autobiographical books. With "Black Milk" I

did that for the first time. It was the right time and the right format. But I think a writer should not produce too many autobiographical books, because there is the danger that you might start repeating yourself.

We know that you are interested in Sufism. Are you inspired by other sects and religions in your novels?

I am attached to Sufism, emotionally and intellectually. When you are interested in Sufism, you learn not to distance other religions and cultures, you learn not to otherize. What matters is the core essence, which is the same everywhere. That essence is universal. It is beyond cultures and societies. It is beyond borders. All of us, all humanity, all people, we are in a search for the same meaning. We are interconnected. I am interested in bringing out those connections, both as a novelist and as someone attached to Sufism.

What does literature mean to you?

Literature is pure love. And, like every love, it is irrational, inexplicable. It comes from within. My job is to tell stories. I am in love with words, I gather stories, bring the periphery to the center, listen to the voices of women in the society and bring these into the genre of the novel. I think and perceive life through stories.

Who is Elif Şafak?

Elif Şafak was born in Strasbourg in 1971 and has lived in Spain, Jordan and the US, in addition to Turkey. She graduated from the international relations department at Middle East Technical University in Ankara. She completed a master's degree in gender and women's studies and a doctorate in political science. Her master's thesis was on Islam, women and mysticism, titled "The Deconstruction of Femininity along the Cyclical Understanding of Heterodox Dervishes in Islam." It received an award from the Social Scientists' Institute.

She has taught at Istanbul Bilgi University and, since 2002, at US universities in Boston, Michigan and Arizona. A prolific columnist and fiction writer, Şafak has published nine books: "Araf," "Siyah Süt" (Black Milk), "The Bastard of Istanbul," "Medcezir" (Ebb and Tide), "The Saint of Incipient Insanities," "The Flea Palace" (shortlisted for the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize), "The Gaze" (received the Turkish Novel Award), "Mirrors of the City" and "Pinhan" (The Sufi, won the Mevlana Prize for best work in mystical and transcendental literature).



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NT BOOKSTORES INVITE READERS TO SIT BACK AND STAY AWHILE

GÖKÇEN YÜKSEL İSTANBUL

NT bookstores, the biggest bookshop chain in Turkey, aims to preserve its leading position in the market, a top executive of the company has stated, noting that NT's innovations are what keep customers coming back.

In an interview with Today's Culture, NT General Manager Şeref Zekai Kolak stated that NT is focusing on international operations to expand its business portfolio, noting that it already operates in nine countries.

A subsidiary of Kaynak Holding, NT merged with İzmir-based Nil stores and İstanbul-based Tuna stores in 1999, after which it grew rapidly by acquiring many stationery and bookshops throughout the country. It has 75 branches in Turkey and 17 stores in nine other countries, including the US, Albania, Romania, Moldavia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

"We have a customer-oriented store policy and we treat our patrons with the utmost respect," said Kolak, who manages over 700 employees in the chain. The company's recent advertising campaign called Meeting Point with Literature was very successful in attracting new customers to NT stores. "We wanted to capitalize on the book reading habits of customers and it worked," he noted.

NT has a detailed policy for deciding on which books go on the shelves. All books that are sold by NT have to pass through a special book review committee. "Just as a good chef is sensitive about the quality of his menu in the restaurant, we also check all the products to be sold in our stores," explained Kolak. Derogatory and inflammatory materials and those that are insulting to religions or ethnicity are vetoed by the committee. In Turkey, NT carries the most titles of any bookstore.

The company also has special committees for stationery and technological products. They mainly focus on health issues for these products. "We do not sell materials that contain hazardous chemicals or carcinogenic substances," noted Kolak. Company managers hold regular meetings with school boards, district supervisors, teachers and parents to determine needs before school terms. "We take our homework very seriously," said Kolak.

"We want the shopping experience for our customers to be fun and for all the products we offer to be safe," he stated. He further explained that they have observed the trend of families who want to come and enjoy their day off at NT stores. "In the past, people used to go to bookstores just to buy a book, but now they see it as a leisure activity and a fun day for the family," he noted. "Our stores offer book signing corners, art activities, quiz shows and study sessions and



PHOTO: İSA ŞİMŞEK

seminars for patrons. We want our clients to experience the fun atmosphere we can offer," noted Kolak.

"NT stores also participate in neighborhood activities and promote social responsibility," stated Kolak. For example, during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, every store provided around 40 needy families in their local areas with hot fast-breaking meals and beverages.

On special occasions, stores hold programs, such as one to commemorate the teachings of Mevlana Rumi. "We organized programs to raise awareness of the importance of the Battle of Gallipoli and how our veterans and martyrs sacrificed their lives," noted

Kolak. The program included a graphic representation of how many bullets fell on average per square meter.

Kolak lamented the fact that such a low percentage of Turks reads on a regular basis compared to other countries of the world. "Generally, students read books. But once they enter the workforce, they read less and less." Kolak said the government, bookstores and parents need to coordinate their efforts to encourage reading in the country. In that regard, he considers the 100 Fundamental Books project developed by the Ministry of Education very important.

He emphasized that NT stores have special reading corners to encourage people to sit back and relax with a book. "You can read our books without having to actually purchase them," he noted. Kolak said he would like to see other bookstores create such corners and calls on parents and teachers to come and spend time with their kids and students in bookstores. "I think that would be a positive experience for children and encourage them to read more," he stated.

"We are launching a new project involving celebrities," he remarked, adding: "We will ask famous people what they read and their advice on reading. We are hoping they can serve as role models for our youngsters and encourage them to read books."

"NT frequently participates in book fairs in Turkey and abroad to expand its business. The company sells the most books during the fall because of the many book fairs held during this season," he said, adding that he would like to see even more book-based fairs in Turkey. "That might also have a positive impact on the book reading habits of our people."

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TURKEY TO PUT ON FULL CULTURAL SHOW AT FRANKFURT BOOK FAIR

Turkish Minister of Culture and Tourism Ertuğrul Günay says the upcoming Frankfurt Book Fair will be an extraordinary opportunity for Turkey to share its cultural wealth with the world. 'Turkey's entire cultural world will be on display at the Frankfurt Book Fair'

ALİ ASLAN KILIÇ ANKARA

As the date of the upcoming Frankfurt Book Fair approaches, Turkish Minister of Culture and Tourism Ertuğrul Günay underscores the importance of this event for Turkey. This year Turkey has been invited to the annual book fair as the guest of honor. Günay notes that Turkey will use the occasion to put on a broad cultural exhibition for all of Europe.

The Frankfurt Book Fair will officially begin on Oct. 14, with an opening speech by Turkish President Abdullah Gül in the works. Günay explains: "Traditionally there is a speech by a head of state or a literary figure at the opening of this fair. On the first day of the Frankfurt fair, both President Gül and our Nobel Prize-winning author, Orhan Pamuk, will be speaking. With the exhibitions, presentations, concerts and other activities scheduled for between Oct. 10 and 20, we will be bringing a complete cultural, artistic and literary presence to Frankfurt. There may not be another opportunity for a presentation of this scope for another 50 years or so."

Minister Günay also pointed to Turkey's attendance -- again as a guest of honor -- at the upcoming Berlin Music Festival, which will take place one week before the Frankfurt Book Fair, as evidence of an increased profile for Turkey at European cultural events. Günay says: "We are scheduled to appear before music and art lovers not only in Frankfurt, but also in Berlin and in Vienna. One week before the

book fair in Frankfurt there is a music festival in Berlin. We were invited to that and we accepted and will be there also as a guest of honor. In Berlin different musical groups will be appearing with various important artists, and this will all take place over three days, Oct. 8, 9 and 10, one week before the Frankfurt Book Fair. In addition, there is scheduled to be an exhibition and promotional meeting about the ancient ruins of Ephesus at the Museum of Natural History in Vienna. The private group Borusan has already put out a special book regarding Ephesus. This book is a very chic document of Ephesus's archeological wonders, and it will be on display."

Minister Günay answered some questions from



Today's Culture about the upcoming event:

There has been some criticism of the preparations made by Turkey in advance of the Frankfurt Book Fair. How do you view this criticism?

Yes, there has been a handful of criticism, but we have attached a great deal of importance to this book fair. We are attending Frankfurt with more than 300 writers and poets, and all together 800 artists and members. Seen as a whole, the Frankfurt Book Fair is actually a process, a special period of time, and there will be between 14 and 19 high points during that process. On Oct. 20, this special period of time will be over. During the time of the book fair, there will be special readings and poetry days going on. There is a lot of material for interesting debates. There are lots of interesting topics for argument, regarding women, Turkey's ethnic problems and problems of freedom. I would really love it if I had nothing to do but go from room to room listening in on and watching these different seminars and readings. There is really quite a rich program at hand for Frankfurt.

Were you able to visit the Frankfurt Book Fair in previous years?

I started the position I am now holding last year and at that time I headed for Frankfurt to see the book fair in its 59th year. All the nations of the world and all the publishers of the world are there. While it takes place in Germany, Turkey, as guest of honor, will actually be appearing in front of the most select representatives of the world's intel-

Women's village theater group also headed for Frankfurt

An amateur theater group made up of women from the village of Aslanköy outside of Mersin is also headed to Frankfurt as a part of the upcoming book fair. Minister Ertuğrul Günay, who went to the village of Aslanköy to see this group's work when he first heard about them, notes: "This year we invited them to the Frankfurt Book Fair. They will represent a part of our local identity. It should be a great event." Günay said there are currently three village theater groups attracting attention in Turkey, and that the women from the group heading for Frankfurt work during the day in the village's fields and gardens, and thus their work for the theater is truly something that deserves credit. He commented further: "This is a group made up of Anatolian women whose acting is completely improvisational. The fact that they work completely on their own budget and with an amateur spirit makes what they do even better. What they do on stage is to bring details from village existence to life. They portray their daily lives, some of the struggles of just getting by, even the difficulties of just getting their children to school."



PHOTO TODAY'S ZAMAN



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tuals there. From Latin America to the Far East, from South Asia to North America, everyone is there. While there is a focus on Europe, of course, you are really exhibited before the entire world.

It is a significant opportunity to be a guest of honor. How have the preparations for this gone?

It is truly a very important opportunity for Turkey to be invited as guest of honor to the Frankfurt Book Fair in a year that happens to coincide with the 60th anniversary of this event. This book fair in Frankfurt is the world's largest. There are lots of other book fairs that take place around the world, but the one in Frankfurt is not only the largest, but the most traditional one. First and foremost, we have approached this opportunity with the mentality that such a chance to present ourselves to the world probably won't arise for another half century. The preparations for the Frankfurt Book Fair are being run by the national committee that we created at the start of 2008. This committee contains representatives of every side and corner of Turkey's publishing world. The committee members are involved in work groups on these subjects. As for our ministry, we are represented by one member. In other words, it is the world of publishing that is really carrying out the entire program. They are deciding which panels, which exhibitions, which stands will be opened, which activities will be presented for the enjoyment of art and literature lovers at the book fair. This is all being done by this special committee, and this is a committee made up of the Turkish publishing world. Of course, we tried to put together the financial infrastructure for this. There is a little above 5 million euros being spent on this. We are in coordination with the publication world, and we have tried to fulfill what was asked of us.

As the ministry that put up the budget here, have you made any requests that directed the committee in any particular direction?

The only thing I have stressed from the beginning is that our many colors and cultures should not be damaged at all! Let's try to display just how it is that democracy has become institutionalized and that an atmosphere of freedom of thought has begun to take root in Turkey. I have only requested that we stay far away from modes of behavior that will dam-

age these efforts. And anyway, the members of the national committee shared these feelings of mine.

Trade fairs essentially function as open markets. For this particular trade fair, which focuses, of course, on culture and art, what are the expectations in terms of it being a sort of open market?

Yes, of course this book fair will have its own trade dimensions. We are occupied with its visual aspects, though. In other words, we want to be able to represent Turkey to the best of our ability and in a way that will appeal to people's eyes, ears and taste buds. But, of course, with 100 of our publishing houses there, there will be a trade aspect to this, too. There will be some serious trade relationships formed. Publishing houses make new agreements and contracts with one another. And there are translation agencies in attendance, too. As part of the Teda project, we will be exhibiting many of the books we have translated. But, of course, entirely new translation and publishing agreements are also initiated there. So this is really an important event that will spark significant movement in the publishing sector. We are not just taking Turkish publications and displaying them for viewing purposes. At the same time, we are sharing in a process, in a period of time that will ultimately have a great influence on the future. And publishers, writers and artists are all well aware of this.

How large will Turkey's book fair stand be?

Until last year, we always set up in an area of 1,000 square meters. This year we are appearing before the world in an area that measures nearly 4,500 square meters. In addition, we will be inviting people to come and taste our food in an area of the book fair they are calling the "Agora."

As for the Turkish world of publishing, it has taken a very positive and important step since last year. Until last year, our publishing houses attended this book fair in a less organized manner, with different groups opening up different stands. But then in 2007, there started to be more of a union, with everyone together. We really thought this was great. We insisted that, as the guest of honor of the book fair this year, we needed to attend in this manner, united. So this is really how it has happened this year. All

of our "prestige" books will be on display at this book fair. There will be books on calligraphy, books on archeology, a really rich collection of material that you could peruse for hours and not get enough of. And we will have an exhibition of the history of our literature. In touring around that particular exhibition, you will see every story of Turkish literature, from our Yahya Kemals to our Tevfik Fikrets to our Akifs -- from yesterday to today. You will be able to see all the aspects of the writing and thought of people like Nazım Hikmet, Necip Fazıl Kısakürek and Adalet Agaoglu, all gathered together in one spot.

What are some of the other planned activities on the program, outside of the book exhibitions?

Other than the book exhibitions, we will have artistic exhibitions that cover an area of more than 2,000 square meters. There will be shows of gilding, "ebru" (a traditional Turkish style of marbled water painting), calligraphy, Turkish handicrafts and other decorative arts. There will be lots of experts in these areas in attendance. So people who come to tour these exhibitions will also get a chance to see how these traditional Turkish arts are done. People will get a chance to try and do "ebru" on their own, for example. After all, the creation of these arts is interesting for us at our own exhibitions, so we think it will be even more so for European visitors. This particular area in the trade fair will be a place where visitors will get to see and be involved in the actual practical creation of a range of traditional Turkish arts.

Will there be stands devoted to Turkish music and Turkish cuisine?

Yes, before I forget to mention it, we will also have a spot for eating and drinking at this book fair. We will have a stylish offering of Turkish cuisine there. In terms of music, we have a very sparkling program. First and foremost, there will be Adnan Saygun's "Yunus Emre" oratorio, which will be used for the opening. Then, on the second day, there will be an evening program with the Kudsi Erguner and Buluz Dinler Müezzinler group. This is a group that has become quite famous in France. And, of course, there will be concert series that last for three days in a row at the Berlin Music Festival, in advance of this book fair.

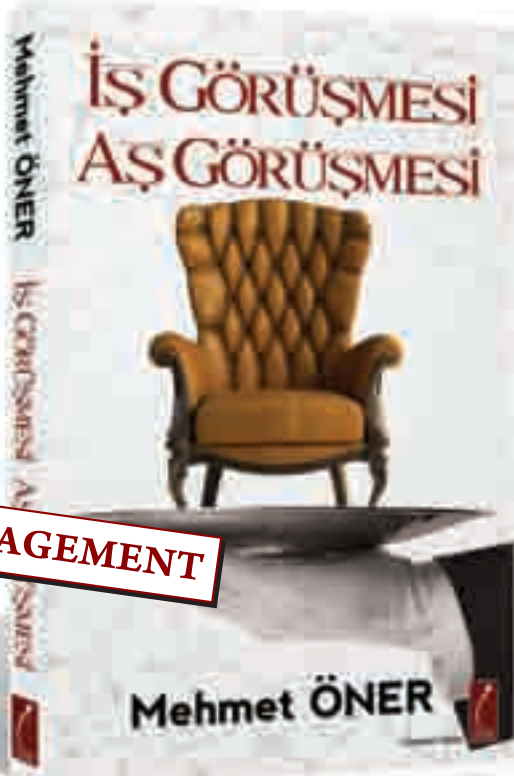


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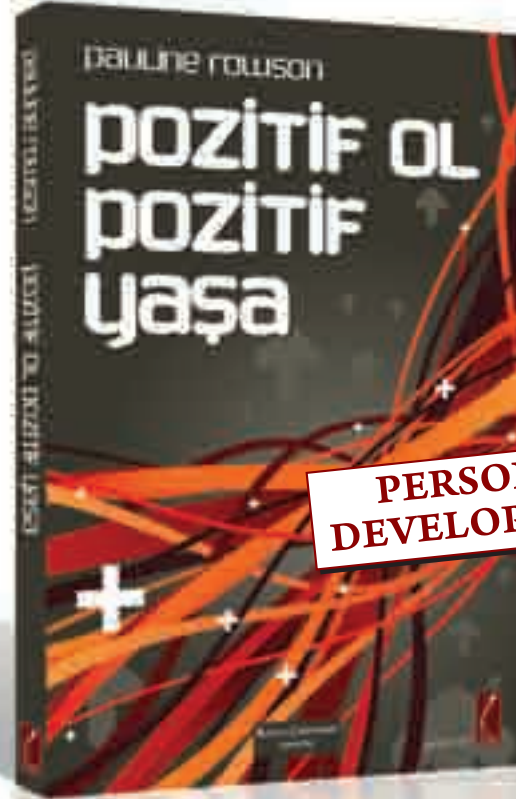
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WRITER ALBERTO MANGUEL: OUR INTELLIGENCE IS BEING THREATENED

CAN BAHADIR YÜCE WASHINGTON DC

▶ “The Library at Night,” the latest book by Argentine-born writer-editor Alberto Manguel, in which he chronicles the history of libraries -- meshed with his own adventure as a bookworm -- has just been published in Turkish under the title “Geceleyin Kütüphane.”

In this book, Manguel traces the history of humanity’s adventure of collecting knowledge, from the Library of Alexandria to the 19th century art historian Aby Warburg’s library and from the Library of Congress in Washington to the virtual library called Google. As Turkish literature prepares to come under the spotlight with next week’s launch of this year’s Frankfurt Book Fair, Manguel speaks to Today’s Culture about libraries and Turkish literature.

The chapters of your book are titled “The Library as Myth,” “The Library as Space,” “The Library as Power,” or as an island, as a workshop, as a home, etc. But how would you personally define a library with a single word?

I suppose that if I had to define a library in a single word that word would be memory. Libraries are the repositories of our collective and individual experience, a monument against oblivion.

What in your view determines the value of a library, its contents, its volumes or the rarity of its treasures?

The value of a library, like its beauty, is in the eye of its reader.

You mention in your book that “if every library is in some sense a reflection of its reader, it is also an image of that which we are not and cannot be.” Is it possible to make an acquaintance with someone through his library?

Indeed, you can get to know someone through his library. I once suggested writing the biography of an unknown reader only by consulting the books in his or her library. What we choose or don’t choose, how we use our books, how we order them, how we treat them, what traces of ourselves we keep between their pages -- I think I could draw a portrait of someone through these clues.

Like Borges, do you imagine paradise as a library, too?

I don’t believe in the afterlife. Here and now, a library is paradise enough.

You have visited many libraries. Which impressed you most?

The library that most impressed me was Aby Warburg’s reconstructed library in Hamburg. It is elliptical in shape, so as not to have any corners that would artificially create sections or thematic boundaries, and it was organized according to the casual associations made by Warburg himself -- and which changed daily; a library in the image of its reader’s mind.

By saying, “our future paperless society,” you imply electronic technology threatens libraries. What do you think about the future of libraries? Are you optimistic?

I don’t think libraries or books are, in themselves, threatened. I think our intelligence is threatened. I think that we are in the midst of a worldwide intent to render us stupid so that we will be better consumers of economic and intellectual trash, whether it be fast food, pop literature or religious claptrap. I’m optimistic in the morning, pessimistic in the afternoon.

“To complete a library.” Is this a forlorn hope for mankind?

“To complete a library” is an impossible wish



since, by definition, a library must always remain incomplete. A “complete” library is a dead library.

At the end of the book you thank a Turkish author, Enis Batur. What do you think about contemporary Turkish literature and poetry?

I was brought up on Nazım Hikmet’s poetry which, with that of Neruda and Ezra Pound, fed the imagination of my adolescence. A teacher of mine, fond of ancient narratives, introduced me to “The Book of Dede Korkut,” of which I now only remember the story of Prince Uruz taken prisoner and the strange epithets the characters use about each other, such as “Summit of my black mountain” or “Flood of my black river.” Then we read Yaşar Kemal and Orhan Kemal (I used to like the first better than the second; now, in my old age, I prefer the second to the first.) We also read the stories of Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu and terrifyingly realistic ones of Sabahattin Ali, hesitatingly

translated into Spanish. Other than Batur, in whose vast reading I find traces of my own and, of course, Orhan Pamuk, whom I started reading over a dozen years ago, I recently discovered a couple of women writers: Aslı Erdoğan, whose Brazilian adventure amused me (“La ville dont la cape est rouge”) and Latife Tekin, whose strange and haunting “Dear Shameless Death” I very much enjoyed.

You wrote “The History of Reading,” “Dictionary of Imaginary Places,” “Reading Pictures” and, in one sense, the history of libraries. What’s next?

I published this year a book on the relationship between who we think we are and the stories we tell in “The City of Words” and one on Homer, “The Iliad and the Odyssey: A Biography.” I just finished a novel, “All Men Are Liars,” which I wrote in Spanish instead of my mother tongue, English.

ADDRESSING ALL TIMES AND ALL OF HUMANITY

THE QUR'ĀN



With an introduction by
M. Fethullah Gülen

WITH ANNOTATED
INTERPRETATION IN
MODERN ENGLISH

by Ali Ünal

*Taken from extensive sources of
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of Islam is understood and interpreted
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--Bernadette Andrea, University of Texas at San Antonio

"Ali Ünal's translation is one of the best English translations of the last few decades. The language is both lucid and faithful to the original Arabic. The commentary is extremely valuable for two main reasons. The first is the degree to which it roots itself in the classical tafsir tradition, bringing to its audience the insights of centuries of classical Qur'an interpretation. The second is its focus on the spiritual teachings and implications of the verses—a focus that is far too rare in many other contemporary commentaries."

--Scott C. Alexander, Ph.D. Catholic Theological Union



PHOTOS: TARIK ÖZTÜRK

‘HEADSCARF ISSUE CAN ONLY BE RESOLVED THROUGH DEMOCRATIZATION’

‘Democratization is the core issue. The headscarf issue, the Kurdish problem and the Alevi issue are all part of a wider process. It should be noted that all of these issues are connected, while different struggles are being staged on different levels,’ says Professor Elisabeth Özdalga

EMİNE DOLMACI İSTANBUL

Professor Elisabeth Özdalga, a well-known sociologist in Turkey, has stated that those who think the headscarf issue will be resolved through persuasion alone are naïve, adding that the issue can only be addressed through a comprehensive campaign of democratization that transforms the authoritarian state into a democratic state.

The Sept. 12, 1980 coup saw the violation of many fundamental rights and freedoms, also introducing notorious practices whose effects are still visible today. The constitutional amendment to deal with the longstanding headscarf ban, first introduced by the Sept. 12 regime, was cancelled by the Constitutional Court earlier this year.

Özdalga noted that some state institutions, and not politicians, created the headscarf issue. Today’s Culture talked with Özdalga on the change in attitudes toward the headscarf issue that have occurred over time and the prospects for a resolution.

What made you think that resolution of the problem through persuasion alone is impossible?

It appears that the Sept. 12 regime had critical impacts beyond my imagination and understanding. The anti-democratic circles that aimed to take control of the state have proven to be stronger and more influential than they were first believed to be.

You are saying that the headscarf issue is connected with relations of power. If the legitimate administrations are unable to resolve this issue, as evidenced by the recent inability of the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) administration to deal with the issue, who can properly address it?

The headscarf issue is directly linked to the democratic struggle in Turkey. Here I am talking about a democratization process that covers all different groups in the broadest sense. To achieve this goal, all civilian powers and political parties should cooperate. Different political groups may hold different views; they have to be in democratic competition. But when it comes to democracy and civilianization, they have to act together. It should be noted that the Republican People’s Party (CHP) did not do its part. That is to say, it did not give its support to the democratic struggle. Quite the contrary, it opposes this struggle.

Do you think that society is divided into different camps on the headscarf issue? To put it differently, will there be chaos, as some have claimed, in universities if the headscarf ban is lifted?

I do not think there will be; I really don’t. I wrote this book [“Modern Türkiye’de Batörtüsü” (The Headscarf in Modern Turkey)] for this reason. My goal is to put emphasis on the similarities rather than differences between different groups. The main goal of my research was to

make a partial contribution to normalization.

While you were working on this study, both radical Islam and its opponents had already become more dominant and more influential. How do you view the current situation?

Islamic radicalism was not so strong, even back in the Welfare Party’s (RP) term in office. Erbakan’s style was sometimes excessive; but, in essence, he was paying attention to conducting politics in accordance with democratic rules. For this reason, removing the RP from power by relying on non-democratic means and subsequently banning it from politics was wrong. But in terms of governing the country, the RP was not as successful as the AK Party. The problems with the RP should be attributed to such issues and abilities. For instance, it was not taking relations with the EU that seriously. It was following an isolationist policy in politics. These were all marks against the RP.

Do you see the change in Turkey, as Ernest Gellner put it, a transition from popular Islam to scholastic Islam? Is there a trend in Turkey toward greater reliance on authentic sources and core values?

Yes, certainly. As people become more educated, they gain awareness on making better decisions concerning themselves. They become eager to shape their lives based on stronger and more solid foundations. At the same time, they also start questioning the founda-

The book analyzes the headscarf issue, focusing on the concepts of modernization, secularism, individual freedom, social change and authoritarian-democratic government. Özdalga summarizes her real aim in this book as: 'This study's main goal is to understand emerging polarization and if it is at all possible, to make a contribution to the solution. So, my first target is not just being analytic and descriptive, but also representing the difficulties of this suffering in this segment of the society and making them more understandable'

tions of the values they espouse. They are no longer satisfied with what they have been told. They want to gain further information and knowledge on their own. This is the case with most issues, including religious ones.

It is argued based on certain research done by sociologists, theologians and other relevant scholars that there is a certain tendency toward becoming more religious within Turkish society. Why doesn't the headscarf, as a visible sign of this tendency, meet with wider acceptance?

Not everyone is becoming more religious. It is only happening in certain circles. When religiosity becomes more visible in urban life, some are bothered by this development, as is evidenced with the headscarf. They become more vocal in their opposition. This leads to problems in relations among different groups, and these relations are complicated.

To what extent did the Islamists, particularly men, support women who were defending their right to wear the headscarf?

They extended partial support. You are aware of the fact that a lot of women carried out this struggle all by themselves, facing opposition from their families and their social environment. And they did not get sufficient support from other circles, be it secularists or feminists. This is also sad, of course.

You argue that a strong state is needed to resolve the headscarf issue. How will a strong state be able to do this through democratic means?

A strong state, by definition, is not authoritarian or repressive. A truly strong state relies on the people and its ability to meet their needs. In the long run, the

strongest state is the one that abides by democratic rules and is fully responsive to the people.

What other problems will this democratic state resolve when it adequately addresses the headscarf issue?

Democratization is the core issue. The headscarf issue, the Kurdish problem and the Alevi issue are all part of a wider process. It should be noted that all of these issues are connected while different struggles are being staged on different levels. The drafting of a new and civilian constitution and integration with the EU should also be included in this list of issues. These macro-political issues are not separate from the headscarf issue; they are all connected. I think it is necessary to see them that way in order to figure out appropriate solutions.

Do you think the headscarf issue will eventually be resolved in this country?

I wish there was no need to reprint this book a decade later. I wish this issue was in the history books. True, I was optimistic a decade ago that this issue could be resolved through peaceful and democratic means. But it looks as if that optimism was mainly due to a type of naïveté. Today, actors seeking to preserve an authoritarian and repressive state have made their intentions clearer and more visible. The Ergenekon case and other similar developments scare me. But at the same time, because they have been uncovered and the public is now aware of them, these illegal activities also raise hopes for the ongoing democratic struggle. As usual, one cannot decide whether to be an optimist or pessimist in Turkey.



BOOKSTORE OPENED BY EXPAT IN İSTANBUL FLOURISHES

EMMA WHITE ISTANBUL

Despite İstanbul's growing expat population and increasing number of book-hungry vacationers and Turks eager to practice their English skills, it can be difficult to search out some good popular books in English. One expat founded and manages an English bookstore and publishing business to provide the public, Turks and expats alike, with good, reasonably priced, original English books.

"I was an educator for 15 years," says Dr. Charlotte McPherson, founder and owner of Sera Kitapevi Kafe. "And I recognized that good English books at good prices were hard to find in Turkey. Since I am both an educationalist and a businesswoman, I recognized that there is a way to make popular English books available to the average person."

"I love living in Turkey because of its diversity and dynamism," says American-born McPherson. In addition to holding both an MA in anthropology and a DM in religion, McPherson in the past served as an instructor in ethnomusicology at Mimar Sinan University. In addition to a bookstore and café, McPherson also owns and operates a tour agency that specializes in conferences and special tours of biblical and other historical sites in Turkey.

McPherson founded her English bookstore, Greenhouse, in 1996 and in eight years it has nearly quadrupled in size. "The bookstore started with 2,000 books and now maintains approximately 75,000 in stock," she says, commenting on the growth of the store since its establishment. Greenhouse regularly



PHOTO: ÖMER ORUÇ



Charlotte McPherson

imports thousands of books from the UK. "Among children and youth, learning English is very popular," she notes. "One of the best ways to learn vocabulary and grammar in a fun and effective way is to read an original popular book in English."

McPherson recognized some gaps in the book market. There was more demand for certain genres of books than the industry provided for. To solve this problem, McPherson began publishing, and in some cases writing herself, books to fill these gaps. "We began publishing some books when we rec-

ognized that there was a need and market for certain types of books. More books in English written in an interesting and fun format are needed about Turkey and her rich history, culture and land for children and youth. Personal development books for Turks is another area that has opportunity."

Greenhouse carefully chooses what it publishes, however, and publishes between two and six new titles each year. In addition, the company works with about 12 authors and co-publishes with other publishers based in Great Britain and the US. "Usually we have a personal relationship with the author if the book is in English, and if it is a book in English to be translated, we have some sort of relationship with the publisher. People usually approach us."

In addition to scholarly papers, McPherson has also written books that have been published, including two of Greenhouse's top sellers: "Culture Smart: Turkey," a book written for foreigners with the purpose of introducing them to Turkish etiquette and customs, and "Kadın: Kimliği ve Sosyal İlişkileri" (Woman: Identity and Social Relations). Other best-sellers include "Some of My Ancestors Are Turks" a children's book written by Judy Ayyıldız and "Maksatlı Yaşam (Purpose-Driven Life)," a personal development book for Turks by Rick Warren.

Books published and sold by Greenhouse are not limited to English but include books in Turkish; publications geared for younger generations are also popular. In fact, Greenhouse often works in high schools, putting on book fairs for students.

Sera Kitapevi Kafe has two locations in Kadıköy.

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KAYNAK PUBLISHING GROUP LEADS THE PACK IN PUBLISHING BUSINESS

AYŞENUR BOZKURT İSTANBUL

The book industry is getting bigger in Turkey, with new publishing companies entering the market even though Turks reportedly read less than people of other countries. And publishing group Kaynak Kültür A.Ş. has been leading the pack for four years with its 20 publishing houses, eight magazines and three audio and picture book publishing companies.

Even if the group itself is very young, some of its subsidiaries date back 30 years. The journey started with the group's most-read magazine, *Sızıntı*, published then by the Öğretmenler Vakfı (Teachers Foundation), which renamed itself Nil Publishing in 1997. Nil was later incorporated into Kaynak Publishing, and all business operations were combined in İstanbul in 2004 under Kaynak Kültür A.Ş. (Kaynak Culture and Publishing Group), which includes 14 Turkish and six foreign publishing houses.

"The need to address the masses determined our objective of establishing a group. We thought we could draw a wide audience with various publishing houses, like a ceiling fan," says Editor-in-Chief Dr. Reşit Haylamaz, speaking to *Today's Culture*. The group's network is divided into six divisions, including religious and cultural publishing, foreign language publishing, children's books, audio and picture book publishing, a magazine group and a foreign magazine group.

The group attaches great importance to its foreign publishing unit, which releases most of its titles in one of six languages -- English, French, Spanish, Arabic, German or Russian. "We also publish in at least eight other languages, including Chinese, Japanese, Albanian and Greek, when demand justifies the cost," says Haylamaz.

Kaynak currently publishes four foreign language magazines. "Our foreign publishing fan includes not only books but also magazines in English, German, Arabic and Russian," explains

Haylamaz. "For example, the Arabic-language magazine *Hira* is very prestigious in the Arab world."

He is assertive in saying that "with this magazine we could destroy the wall of prejudice and bias between the Turkish and Arab cultures," adding, "They previously thought Turks were not religious and not even Muslim, but now this image is changing since the best and brightest intellectuals in the Arab world write for this magazine." Haylamaz also talked about the huge demand for the books they publish in Arabic. "We often get asked why we don't publish more books. The potential is great in the Arab market, and we can't keep up with the demand."

Adopting an innovative approach, the group has published many first-of-a-kind books. Kaynak released the first Chinese-Turkish dictionary as well as tourist guides in 10 languages for Topkapı Palace. "Our perspective is so broad that we could publish many Turkish books in numerous different languages, even in Dari," states Fikret Yaşar, the director of the foreign publishing department.

The books of Fethullah Gülen, a prominent Turkish Muslim scholar, or books about him, are the bestsellers now. "A book titled 'Tradition Witnessing the Modern Age,' an analysis of the Gülen movement written by Mehmet Enes Ergene and published by The Light, Inc., a US subsidiary of Kaynak Holding, this past summer was blockbuster in Turkey, according to Yaşar. "A Dialogue of Civilizations" by Dr. B. Jill Carroll, who analyzed the Gülen movement, also made the best-seller list in bookstores owned by Kaynak. The company has published the Holy Quran in many languages, with an explanation of verses by respected scholars.

Kaynak is strong in Turkish magazine publishing as well. One of the most widely circulated magazines of the group, *Sızıntı*, a culture and religion-based publication, has a monthly circulation of 700,000 worldwide. *Yeni Ümit* follows with 100,000 and *Yagmur* with 40,000.

Since the group targets all ages, they specifically

cater to children's needs. *Gonca*, with its circulation of 40,000, helps many children with educational content on how to become an ideal individual in today's world. "Children are very important for us because they are the adults of tomorrow. If we can raise a good generation, we'll have no worries about the future of the world," says Dr. Haylamaz.

Haylamaz said at least one book is published per day within the group. They employ 42 in-house editors, not including contract hires when needed. Kaynak use its own distribution system, NT stores, the largest bookstore chain in Turkey, and Gökkuşuğu bookstores to expand its market.

The group built the Kaynak Culture Center in İstanbul's Cağaloğlu district, a neighborhood that has traditionally been home to various bookstores and publishers, to attract book lovers. The center hosts an immense inventory of books, with some hard-to-find volumes. Regular discussion meetings and book signing events are held at the center. "It helps boost our sales," notes Haylamaz.

The group is also known for applying a lower price tag to the books and magazines it sells. "Our aim is to make book buying as affordable as we can for everybody," says Haylamaz. Kaynak is also very meticulous in choosing which books it will publish. "We have a highly qualified editorial team to select and screen books proposed for publication," he adds.

The group's success has been recognized by many and has earned it some prestigious international awards. "Mukaddes Emanetler" (The Sacred Trusts), which deals with the trusts and relics of the Prophet Muhammad brought to İstanbul by Yavuz Sultan Selim after the conquest of Egypt in 1516, took silver for books in the highly regarded 2005 Sappi European Printers of the Year competition. And "Ottoman Women: Myth and Reality" by Aslı Sancar won the 2008 Benjamin Franklin Award, sponsored by the Independent Book Publishers Association, in the history/political category and was named a finalist for cover design-large format.



PHOTOS □ RIDVAN YAVUZ

CULTURAL DIVERSITY ACCORDING TO DURAK ON DISPLAY IN FRANKFURT

ÜNAL ASLAN FRANKFURT

“Ebru,” a photo exhibition on cultural diversity in Anatolia by photographer Atilla Durak, is currently being showcased in Frankfurt. The collection, consisting of photographs of 44 ethnic and religious communities in Turkey, is part of a series of cultural events leading up to this year’s Frankfurt Book Fair, where Turkey is the guest of honor.

There are approximately 20,000 photographs that Durak took between 2000 and 2006 while visiting about 1,000 towns in Anatolia. Titled “Ebru: Reflections on Cultural Diversity,” the exhibition had first been put on display in New York in May 2007, then in Turkey and other countries. The exhibition is part of the Ebru Project, which aims to draw attention to Turkey’s cultural legacy and diversity through books, music, exhibitions and panel discussions. As part of the project, the “Ebru Kitabı” (Ebru Book) was published by Metis Publications; a CD featuring 21 songs, released by Kalan Music, accompanies the book. The book contains 320 photographs, with an introduction written by John Berger, while 24 individuals, including Sezen Aksu, Elif Şafak, Ara Güler, İshak Alaton, Nebahat Akkoç, Murat Belge, Tukuhi Tomasyan Zaman, Herkül Milas and Ruşen Çakır, made contributions to it.

Before the opening of the exhibition, Durak spoke to Today’s Culture about cultural diversity in Turkey. “In Turkey, we tend to use the word ‘mosaic’ to signify cultural diversity. But mosaic cannot properly represent our country. In a mosaic, pieces are separate from one another; there isn’t any interaction among pieces, and the pieces are bound together with cement,” he said, adding: “Ebru -- paper marbling -- is the best word to describe Turkey. [In ebru] different colors do not distort each other, but create harmony.”

Durak was born in Gümüşhane, a city in the north-

east of Turkey, in 1967 and graduated from Middle East Technical University (ODTÜ) in Ankara. Although he had a good job, one day he decided to quit and seek adventure. “I had worked for a company for about 10 years. It was a desk job. I was not happy with continuously dealing with money and figures. I wanted to produce something, and I was attracted to photography. My current financial status is worse than it was with my previous job, but I am happier,” he explained. Durak eventually moved to New York, where he worked at various jobs while also studying photography. In time he opened several exhibitions. In the early 1990s he visited numerous countries to take photos but was greatly disappointed when his camera was stolen just before he returned home after taking thousands of pictures in India, Pakistan and Nepal. He then returned to the US, subsequently traveling back to Turkey to take photos on cultural diversity in Anatolia.

Durak is now living in İstanbul. “My photos are like my children,” he stated, detailing the hardships he suffering while taking photos. He noted that after traveling to many countries, he decided to settle in Turkey. “Seen from the outside, Turkey is a magnificent country. It has great potential. I lived abroad for about 11 years. I have been to India, Nepal, Iran, Pakistan, Syria, Egypt, Jordan, the US, Canada, Peru, the UK, Greece and many other countries, and now I have settled in İstanbul.” Stressing the dynamism of Turkey, Durak said: “Turkey is ... full of surprises. It has great diversity and richness. People are very warm.” The photographer argues that Turkey’s globalization cannot be reversed. “Our people should visit other countries and see the world. Then they can view Turkey from a different angle,” he said.

The 86-piece exhibition is scheduled to run until Nov. 4 in Frankfurt before it travels to Leipzig and then on to Basel from Nov. 11-27.



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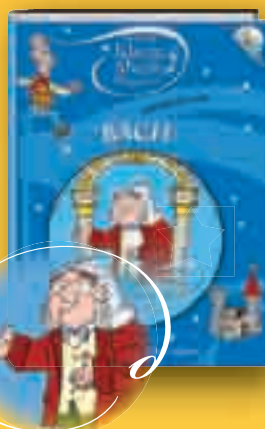


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