

Melanie Ramdarshan Bold / Corinna Norrick-Rühl

The Independent Foreign Fiction Prize and Man Booker International Prize merger: Can the Man Booker association help with the three percent problem?

Keywords: Literary prizes, translated fiction, small presses, independent publishers, Independent Foreign Fiction Prize, Man Booker Prize, Man Booker International Prize, audience building, translations, three percent problem

Introduction

In 2015, it was announced that the UK's two leading international literary prizes – the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize (IFFP) and the biennial Man Booker International Prize (MBIP) – would merge to form a “super-prize” (Brown, 2015). Diana Gerald, Booktrust's chief executive, said the decision was made to “take the prize to the next level, helping to raise the profile of translated literature and reflecting the impact of the IFFP” (Booktrust, 2016).¹ Indeed, the prize money has increased to £50,000, which will be split equally between the author and the translator, in comparison to £10,000 for the IFFP and £37,500 for the MBIP (Booktrust, 2016). The new MBIP is more in line with the Man Booker Prize (MBP): it will now look at a single title, instead of a body of work; submissions will come from publishers rather than the e-council²; and it will have a panel of five judges (Man Booker, 2015).

Literary prizes, generally, boost the visibility of a title and consequent sales: winning authors, as well as those on the long- and short-list of prestigious prizes, can see a significant increase in sales of that book and, oftentimes, on their backlist. This paper will question whether this – audience-building and sales-generating – phenomenon extends to prizes for translated-foreign fiction in a marketplace where such, minority-genre, titles represent only a small percentage of annual publishing output (Norrick-Rühl and Ramdarshan Bold 2015, p. 128, cf. also Erizanu, 2016). Literary prizes, their long and short lists, and the ultimate winners offer an insight into why creative works are, or are not, well-received by various, expert, judging panels: “a pertinent view of the material and ideological conditions of the production and reception of literature and literary value” (Squires, 2004, p. 41). It is for this reason that the IFFP will serve as a means to examine the reception of translated fiction in the UK. “[W]hen it comes to fiction in translation, a climate of small ambition and meagre expectation can harden into a self-fulfilling prophecy. We need regular reminders that extraordinary books can jump all borders. That belief has always underpinned the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize”, Boyd Tonkin wrote in *The Independent* (Tonkin, 2009). This paper will explore the – audience-building and sales-generating – impact of the UK's

¹ Booktrust is the largest reading charity in the UK.

² The MBP e-council is an advisory board that is made up of over 80 former MBP and MBIP judges and winners.

most prestigious award for literature in translation, the IFFP, in particular in light of the prize's recent merger with the MBIP, and will speculate whether this it can help with the *three percent problem*. The *three percent problem* is a buzz phrase coming from the "oft-cited statistic (first established by Bowker) that only 3% of books published in the U.S. are translations." (Post, 2016). The three percent quota also applies (roughly) to the British book industry – as we will discuss in more detail below.

The value of literary prizes

Many scholars and commentators have examined literary prizes as a sales tool. For example, Guthrie states: "Winning any literary prize [...] is life-changing for authors and publishers. After Richard Russo's *Empire Falls* won the Pulitzer Prize in 2002, US sales rose 6,500% to 99,000 copies" (Guthrie, 2011, p. 170). While this paper argues that not *all* literary prizes have such a dramatic impact on an author's earnings, and career, it is clear that winning one of the more prestigious prizes can boost sales exponentially. For example, when looking at the correlation between prize-winning and sales for both the MBP and Whitbread prizes, Knight estimates that post-win sales, for both prizes, will be approximately 12 to 15 times the pre-win sales (Knight, 2008, p. 198). Sales data from Nielsen BookScan further quantifies this: for example, in the week following the 2011 MBP ceremony, 14,534 copies of *The Sense of an Ending* by Julian Barnes (published by Jonathan Cape), the winning title, were sold. This is a huge increase from the previous week, where the book sold 2,535 copies. 2011 was also the year that saw a very large sales boost for the short-listed titles (Flood, 2011). Squires determines that this economic facet is intrinsic to prizes: "At the heart of any literary award are issues of literary value, taste and judgment, of representation and gatekeeping, and the uneasy equations of artistic and commercial value" (Squires, 2013, p. 300).

In *The Economy of Prestige*, James English examines how literary prizes are "perhaps today the single most powerful instrument for conferring value on a piece of work" (English, 2009, p. 148). By applying Bourdieu's theory to the field of cultural production, English argues that "cultural capital" – i.e. the authority and recognition that a prize can bestow – is distinct from "economic capital" – i.e. the commercial success – within Bourdieu's "cultural value stock exchange" (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 137). Furthermore, English asserts that there is an uneven relationship between cultural and economic capital: on its own, commercial success does not guarantee prestige; however, the prestige granted by – and the symbolic value of – a prize, in most cases, invariably augments commercial success³. This argument would

³ Of course, the extent of this commercial success varies with each prize.

explain the proliferation of prizes aimed at under-promoted (and thus lesser known) areas of literature or authors. This includes prizes for women's fiction (the Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction), short stories (the Commonwealth Short Story Prize), debut authors (the Betty Trask Award), poetry (the T. S. Eliot Prize), and, as will be examined in more detail in this paper, translated-foreign fiction (the IFFP). The MBP stipulate that publishers, of the short-listed and winning titles, participate in publicising the prize and its nominees: this type of publicity, and the association with the MBP, does have a noticeable impact on the production and sales of these titles (Squires, 2007). While there is no fee to enter the competition, publishers are required to pay £5,000 for a shortlisted title and another £5,000 for the winning title "towards general publicity" (Man Booker, 2016). This is an interesting interplay between cultural capital and economic capital, to remain within Bourdieu's terminology.

Prize culture is not a new phenomenon: the beginnings can be chronicled back to systems of patronage and the establishment of artistic academies during the Renaissance. These systems have served a purpose of gatekeeping as authorities of cultural value. Literary prizes, English notes, continue this tradition because they "have always been of fundamental importance to the institutional machinery of cultural legitimacy and authority." (English, 2009, p. 38). Todd identified that the MBP has come to act as a "consumer's guide" in recent years (Todd, 1996, p. 71). It is no surprise, in the oversaturated UK book market, that such gatekeeping is required: more than twenty titles an hour were published, in the UK, in 2014 – more books per capita than in any other nation in the world (Flood, 2014). Therefore, prizes can help publishers and consumers to navigate the morass of new titles – as Squires (2007) notes, a mention of the win on a cover "lifts the title above the masses of other books in an extremely crowded marketplace" (Squires, 2007, p. 75). Boyd Tonkin writes in the *Independent* that prizes are more important than ever in the corporate publishing climate: "the ruthless struggle for attention – a key battleground in an epoch of information overload – intensifies year by year. Amid this clamour, prizes have a more essential role than ever. They map the landscape. They set an agenda. They guide and inspire readers. And, crucially, they level the ground. A proper judging process will allow the advocates of (say) a Tan Twan Eng to raise their voices above the corporate hubbub" (Tonkin, 2013). Jenn Ashworth, a past winner of the Betty Trask Award, also highlights the difficulties of discoverability in relation to decline of libraries and librarians, and links it to the *three percent problem*, detailed below: "More books and more people talking about books is always excellent... Maybe us British people should listen a little more than we talk and read more fiction in translation, and it is a shame we have fewer and fewer librarians to help readers navigate their way through all this glorious literary chaos and find hidden gems" (Flood, 2014).

Translations and visibility

As indicated, the buzz phrase *three percent problem* originated in the U.S. book industry and refers to the quantity of translated-foreign fiction published in the U.S. book market. It can, however, be widened to Anglo-American book markets more generally. This percentage is commonly assumed to be the proportion of translated-foreign fiction in the British and American marketplace. In comparison to other markets, such as Germany or France, three percent is very low. Some reasons usually cited for the disinclination of English-language publishers to translate and publish foreign language books are the popularity of English-language books, the lack of foreign-language proficiency in editorial departments in the Anglophone world and the high costs of translation (for more context, see our paper “Crossing the Channel”, Norrick-Rühl and Ramdarshan Bold 2016, p. 125-128).

Regarding the UK book industry, a 2012 report – based on the analysis of a sample of publications from the years 2000, 2005 and 2008 – found that translated fiction amounted to around four percent of all fiction published in the UK (Donahaye, 2010). A 2015 report by Nielsen Book, which was commissioned by the MBIP, found that sales of translated fiction had risen to five percent of print fiction sales in the UK in 2015: an increase of 96 percent since 2001. However, the study also showed that translated fiction only represented 1.5 percent of all UK publishing output and 3.5% of literary fiction published in the UK (Onwuemezi, 2016b). Though a 96 percent increase sounds very impressive, these new figures still indicate that foreign fiction in translation only makes up a minimal part of the UK book trade. Donahaye attributes the dominance of the English language to “entrenched” attitudes towards foreign literature and different languages, and a reluctance on the part of UK publishers to translate, promote, and sell the work of unknown writers, since they are commercially risky, as the main causes for the lack of translated-foreign fiction in the UK marketplace (Donahaye, 2012, p. 6).

In recent years, the term *bibliodiversity* has emerged (originally from the Spanish-speaking world), “refer[ring] primarily to the publishing sector’s capacity [...] to produce diversity” (Galliand, 2011, p. 1). This capacity is “being profoundly tested by the changes occurring in the publishing sector” and more generally by globalization (Galliand, 2011, p. 1). A lack of bibliodiversity, as visible in the British book industry regarding the low percentage of translated-foreign literature, can have serious cultural consequences. In 2003, Boyd Tonkin wrote that “successful translation [can] serve as a model of cross-cultural exchange – rooted in shared respect, aiming to delight both sides, and leaving a residue of mutual satisfaction” (Tonkin, 2003). Therefore, there are several national and international initiatives in place, which promote the publication and cultural capital of works in translation in order to reach a wider audience and thus a greater level of cross-cultural exchange.

Writer and translator Daniel Hahn argues that the statistics are unimportant: three percent of the approximately 200,000 books published per year in the UK would still amount to 6,000 books, which is more than even the most voracious reader can attempt to read annually, and “given a choice between on the one hand transforming those 3% into a market share of, say, 6%, and on the other remaining at 3% and doubling the readership for each of those fine books we’re already translating, I’d choose the latter without hesitation” (Hahn, 2012). While this point is legitimate, it is clear that more awareness of translated fiction is required in order for it to be read more widely. Some independent publishers, such as Stork Press⁴, argue that more of the, larger, mainstream publishers need to publish more translated titles. According to B. J. Epstein, “Mainstream publishers are still very much about the bottom line. They really do underestimate the public, [assuming] that British people don’t want to read about people in China or Iceland” (qtd. in Zgadzaj and Roberts, 2013). Pickford expands on this by suggesting that, “Increasing concentration and competition in the publishing world mean that mainstream U.K.-U.S. publishers are turning their backs on translation, which inevitably involves costs in terms of rights acquisition and translation fees, while the sales potential of translated titles is perceived as being limited” (Pickford, 2011, p. 225). Findings by a 2014 Literature Across Frontiers report support this argument: the majority of the, approximately, 70 publishers publishing translated fiction in the UK and Ireland, in 2014, were independent companies (LAF, 2014, p. 15). Additionally, Fiammetta Rocco, administrator of the MBIP, said that the prize organisers had seen an increase in the number of small presses concentrating on translated fiction, during the ten years that the MBIP ran. Rocco concluded, “What we are hoping is that this prize [the newly merged IFFP-MBIP] is going to encourage publishers to get more work translated and get more work published in Britain” (Shaffi, 2015). More recently, independent publishers have shown their support for European literature, following Brexit, “calling for a plurality of voices to be heard” (Onwumezi, 2016b). This paper confirms that small and independent presses, with lower marketing budgets, were more active in publishing works in translations than the larger houses, as evidenced by the IFFP award winners. Stork Press argues that there is a clear market for translated fiction because “The blogosphere and social media buzz around [translated] books is enormous, and readers of translated fiction are never afraid to evangelize about their latest discovery.” (Zgadzaj and Roberts, 2013). However, not all publishers share this view, particularly some of the more conservative, traditional publishers. In response to Philip Gwyn Jones’, from independent publisher Portobello Books, comment that he would “rather publish the best

⁴ Stork Press publish translated fiction from Central and Eastern Europe (Stork Press, 2016).

Danish novel of the year than the 38th-best English novel”, one publisher remarked “I think I’d go for the English one” (Clee, 2005).

The paucity of translated fiction publishing is a complicated and continuing issue. As outlined above, the deep-rooted attitudes of both readers and publishers toward translated literature, the lack of foreign-language skills in editorial departments, mainstream publishers’ reluctance to invest in external reviewers, and then translate and promote such, commercially risky, fiction, the oversaturation of the UK book market, and the decline in cultural attention span, all contribute to this complexity (Watson, 2015). The potential of foreign-fiction specific literary prizes to help alleviate these issues is unknown and admittedly hard to measure accurately. Although there have been many studies on prize culture, particularly focusing on the larger prizes such as the MBP, there is little research on translated-foreign fiction prizes specifically. The following two studies, which we will briefly review here, involve the investigation of prize culture in the context of translation.

Susan Pickford compares the winning titles of the Prix Goncourt – France’s oldest and most prestigious literary prize – and the translations of the MBP winners: thus examining the hegemony of the English language, and its cultural capital, through translation culture (Pickford, 2011). Pickford looks at the rise of the MBP, highlighting that the translation time, from English to French, reduces every year. Additionally, Pickford found that while mainstream publishers issued the French translations of English titles, small independent publishers or university presses usually published the English counterparts, i.e. the French titles that were translated into English. This result supports the above findings that independent publishers are more likely to publish, support, and promote works in translation. It also shows that while French publishers see the economic value of MBP winners, Anglo-American publishers do not reciprocate this attitude and these practices. In addition, it highlights that mainstream UK publishers are even overlooking prizewinning titles – from prestigious prizes like the Prix Goncourt – despite the cultural value of the Goncourt winners.

Sally-Ann Spencer investigates the impact of the Deutscher Buchpreis – which was introduced, in 2005, to promote German-language literature in its domestic and, explicitly, international markets — on the circulation of German-language titles (Spencer, 2013). Spencer postulates that the Deutscher Buchpreis’s can credit publicity and media involvement, which was enhanced through widespread support of the prize and its intentions, for its domestic success. This contradicts English’s “antiprize rhetoric” argument, where publicity is gained through scandal (English, 2009, p. 212). When looking at the impact of the prize on translated German-language fiction, Spencer remains confident that

the award has had a positive effect on sales and adoption internationally, “not least through its assertion that German-language fiction deserves international prizing” (Spencer, 2013, p. 205). Importantly, this study suggests that prizes can be used to drive awareness of fiction in new and allegedly hostile markets. As we have shown elsewhere, the translation rate of Deutscher Buchpreis-winning books into English is significantly higher than the average rate of translation into English from the German (Norrück-Rühl and Ramdarshan Bold, 2016, p. 134-135).

Translated-foreign fiction awards in the UK

It is difficult to accurately estimate the number of literary prizes in the UK due to the large number of prizes in existence, and the speed at which prizes are established and discontinued. However the 2015 *Europa Directory of Literary Awards and Prizes* provides an approximation: over 1000 awards are listed from over 70 countries, of which 84 are for works in translation (this is a reduction from the 93 prizes listed in the 2008 edition) (Leckey, 2015, Hartley and Misquitta, 2008). At the time of the publication of the 2015 directory, there were three British awards open to work in translation, compared with the much larger number of those open to English-language fiction titles. These were: i) the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize (IFFP), ii) the Man Booker International Prize (MBIP), and iii) the Oxford-Weidenfeld Translation Prize.

The IFFP’s first recipients in 1990 were Orhan Pamuk and translator Victoria Holbrook for *The White Castle* (Carcamet). The IFFP was inaugurated by the British newspaper *The Independent* and ran until 1995 and was awarded annually to the best full-length fiction title in translation, published in the UK in the previous year, by any living author. The IFFP was then on hiatus until 2001, when it was re-created with financial support from the Arts Council England. During its second iteration from 2002 onwards the management transitioned to BookTrust (from 2011). However, the award retained the founder’s name. The winning book was chosen in a three-step process: longlist (15 titles, announcement approx. mid-March), shortlist (5 titles, announcement approx. mid-April), winning title announcement (approx. mid-May). The IFFP was quite well established in the literary marketplace; so much so, in fact, that there were shadow juries among literary bloggers from 2012 onwards (Malone, 2015).

The IFFP was described in the 2015 *Europa Directory of Literary Awards and Prizes* as “the most valuable honour for translated literature (prize purse GBP 10,000, to be divided equally between author and translator), and [...] the country’s only general competition for fiction written in languages other than English” (Leckey, 2015, p. 406). This description is correct insofar that the IFFP was the only award exclusively for translated *titles* of *any* language: the

MBIP was also open to authors of *any* nationality, provided that their *oeuvre* was available in English; and only titles originally published in European languages are eligible for the Oxford-Weidenfeld Translation Prize.

From 2005 to 2015, the MBIP was awarded biennially by the Booker Prize Foundation. It followed a format similar to the Nobel Prize: the judging panel chose the nominees based on the author's body of work rather than any particular title. Thus, the prize "highlighted one writer's overall contribution to fiction on the world stage" (History of the Man Booker International Prize, 2015). Authors whose work was originally in English were eligible, just as translated authors were. The prize purse was substantial (GBP 60,000).

The Oxford-Weidenfeld Translation Prize is an annual prize that has been in operation since 1999. While it is open to all European languages, there are also similar prizes that are narrower in scope. Nine language-specific translation prizes are listed by the Society of Authors, such as the Schlegel-Tieck Prize for German Translation, which is only open to "translations into English of full length German works of literary merit and general interest" (Society of Authors) and has been awarded since 1965.⁵

Methodology

Using data from Nielsen BookScan, this paper will compare sales figures of IFFP winners between longlist, shortlist and prize announcements in order to explore the sales impact of the IFFP. The winners of the IFFP before the hiatus (1996–2001) will not be considered. This presentation will limit its analysis to the IFFP winners between 2002 and 2015. The sales figures will be based on books published before the winner was announced: it will not take into account new editions published after the announcement. The data will also be compared with MBP winners from this same period to speculate on the potential increase in visibility and sales of the new MBI winners, as a result of this new association with the established and well-regarded MBP. In light of the recent merger between the MBIP and the IFFP, this paper will also consider the potential impact of the merger for the prizewinning translated books.

As summarized by Street: "The Booker has tended to dominate the media coverage of arts prizes, and thereby sets a benchmark by which other prizes judge themselves." (Street, 2005). Publishers consider the MBP to be the "the big mother of all prizes – the one where

⁵ As is to be expected, perhaps, there is a certain overlap between the prizewinning Schlegel-Tieck books and the long- and shortlisted IFFP books. Both German-language books that have won the IFFP so far also received the Schlegel-Tieck Translation Prize: Anthea Bell received the Schlegel-Tieck Prize in 2002 for Sebald's *Austerlitz* and Susan Bernofsky was awarded the prize for her translation of Erpenbeck's *The End of Days* in 2015.

the judges read all the books”, as indie publisher Sara Hunt (Saraband Press) says⁶ (Flood, 2016a). For instance, the announcement of the MBP 2015 led to an almost 700 percent (from approx. 4,000 to 31,000 units) spike in sales for Marlon James in the period directly after the winner was announced. Additionally, Saraband’s own longlisted title – *His Bloody Project* by Graeme Macrae Burnet – “went out of stock straight away” after the longlist announcement, according to Hunt: this was also the case for the two other titles, on the longlist, that were published by small/independent presses (Flood, 2016a).

Scholars, such as Spencer and Pickford, have outlined some of the difficulties of quantifying the commercial influence of a prize. There are many other variables that could impact sales e.g. the visibility and previous commercial success of the author, the format, price, and publication date, and and the promotional activities. For instance, the timing of the award right before readers shop for summer reading material as opposed to the timing of the Nobel Prize, which coincides with Frankfurt Book Fair and is often an early Christmas present for the author’s publishers worldwide. We are convinced that the data will still prove useful as an overview of the comparable impact of the prizes. This paper will also consider the timing of the IFFP and now the MBI. The exact dates of longlist, shortlist and winner announcements have shifted over the years, but in general, the IFFP was awarded in springtime (April or May). Squires (2004) identifies the timing of the MBP as ideal for maximising sales; the announcement of the winner in October serves to promote all nominated titles at the most profitable time of the year (Squires, 2004). This paper will use the sales data to better understand how the timing of the IFFP boosted summer sales.

In her comparison between the MBP and the Prix Goncourt, Pickford identifies the MBP as having more of a “commercial construction of cultural prestige” due to its multiple stages of announcement, which allows long- and shortlisted titles to benefit from sales exposure (Pickford, 2011, p. 224). Below, we will also consider how the eligibility criteria and submissions guidelines for the IFFP may pose a financial risk to submitting publishers.

Findings

Table 1: IFFP and MBP winners (2002 – 2015)

IFFP winners				MBP winners			
Title	Author	Publisher at the	Original language:	Title	Author	Publisher at the	time of the win

⁶ Saraband Press is a very small, independent publishing company based in Glasgow, Scotland. Their profile has been raised as a result of their title *His Bloody Project* by Graeme Macrae Burnet being longlisted for the MBP 2016.

			time of the win	of translator			
2002	Austerlitz	W G Sebald	Penguin	German: Anthea Bell	Life of Pi	Yann Martel	Canongate
2003	The Visit of the Royal Physician	Per Olov Enquist	Vintage	Swedish: Tiina Nunnally	Vernon Goddard Little	DBC Pierre	Faber & Faber
2004	Soldiers of Salamis	Javier Cercas	Bloomsbury	Spanish: Anne McLean	The Line of Beauty	Alan Hollinghurst	Picador (Pan Macmillan)
2005	Windows on the World	Frédéric Beigbeder	4th Estate (Harper Collins)	French: Frank Wynne	The Sea	Banville, John	Picador (Pan Macmillan)
2006	Out Stealing Horses	Petterson, Per	Harvill Secker (Random House Group)	Norwegian; Anne Born	The Inheritance of Loss	Desai, Kiran	Hamish Hamilton Ltd (Penguin Group)
2007	The Book of Chameleons	Agualusa, Jose Eduardo	Arcadia Books	Portuguese: Daniel Hahn	The Gathering	Enright, Anne	Jonathan Cape (Random House Group)
2008	Omega Minor	Verhaeghe, Paul	Dalkey Archive Press	Dutch: Paul Verhaeghen	The White Tiger	Adiga, Aravind	Atlantic Books
2009	The Armies	Rosero, Evelio	MacLehose Press, an imprint of Quercus*	Spanish: Anne McLean	Wolf Hall	Mantel, Hilary	4th Estate (Harper Collins)
2010	Brodeck's Report	Claudel, Philippe	Quercus*	French: John Cullen	The Finkler Question	Jacobson, Howard	Bloomsbury Publishing
2011	Red April	Roncagliolo, Santiago	Atlantic Books	Spanish: Edith Grossman	The Sense of an Ending	Barnes, Julian	Jonathan Cape (Random House Group)
2012	Blooms of Darkness	Appelfeld, Aharon	Schocken Books	Hebrew: Jeffrey M.	Bring Up the Bodies	Mantel, Hilary	4th Estate (Harper Collins)

			(Random House Group)	Green			
2013	The Detour	Bakker, Gerbrand	Harvill Secker (Random House Group)	Dutch: David Colmer	The Luminaries	Catton, Eleanor	Granta
2014	The Iraqis	Blasim, Hassan	Comma Press	Arabic: Jonathan Wright	The Narrow Road to the Deep North	Flanagan, Richard	Chatto & Windus (Random House Group)
2015	The End of Days	Erpenbeck, Jenny	Portobello Books Ltd	German: Susan Bernofsky	A Brief History of Seven Killings	James, Marlon	Oneworld Publications

**Was independent (not conglomerate-owned) at the time: now owned by Hachette*

Table 1 shows that in the research sample (2002-2015), more IFFP winners were published by independent presses than the MBP winners; eight of the IFFP winners were published by independent presses compared with six MBP winners. This reinforces the finding that translated-foreign fiction is marginalised in the UK. However, the MBP had more female winners (6) than the IFFP (1), which confirms that women are, largely, missing from translated fiction (something that was also shown by the MBI 2016). Journalist Jonathan Sturgeon wrote about the shortlist of the MBI 2016, “It should be said that the shortlist, announced yesterday, is among the most impressive in world literature, although the its [sic!] gender imbalance among authors (if not translators) is still disappointing” (Sturgeon, 2016). In fact, the list does have a dominance of male writers with 4 male and 2 female. Katy Derbyshire is not surprised, saying that, “Translated novels by female writers are the palomino unicorns of the publishing world – not just unusual, but a small subset within a subset. Not only do translations make up a tiny fraction of the books brought out in the UK and US, but only about a quarter of them are by women.” (Derbyshire, 2016). At least, one can say, the translators are predominantly female (nota bene *and* Anglo-American, which is less surprising perhaps since most often, translators render foreign-language texts in their mother tongue).⁷ In general, prize culture does tend to favour male writers. For example, The Prix Goncourt, in its 113-year history, has been awarded to a male writer 90 per cent of

⁷ It is perhaps interesting to note that for three years now, booksellers have pronounced August Women in Translation Month (Onwumezi, 2016c).

the time (102 times: only 11 times to a woman) while 66% of MBP laureates are men (Horn, 2015, Abrams, 2016). It is also interesting to note that titles originally published in European languages dominate the IFFP winner-list, the most popular being: Spanish (3 winners), French (2 winners), and German (2 winners).

Submission guidelines IFFP and MBI

As indicated above, the regular Man Booker Prize requires a large cooperative promotion fee from all publishers whose titles have been longlisted and shortlisted. This is not the case according to the submission guidelines and eligibility criteria for IFFP and MBI. Using the Internet Archive/Wayback Machine, it is possible to access the submission guidelines for (some) past IFFP awards. While there was no entry fee in 2014, submitting publishers had to provide 10 bound copies of the book (IFFP, 2014). If longlisted, publishers were required to send another 10 copies, if shortlisted, further 60 copies and for the winning title, further 15 copies. In a market in which translations do not sell particularly well, a maximum of 95 “freebies” might pose a difficult decision for indie publishers whether to submit or not. In addition, according to the guidelines, BookTrust required publishers to grant a universal discount of 70 percent on any further copies of any submitted titles. In addition, the publisher was required to pay for the travel costs of the author and translator to the awards ceremony for shortlisted titles.

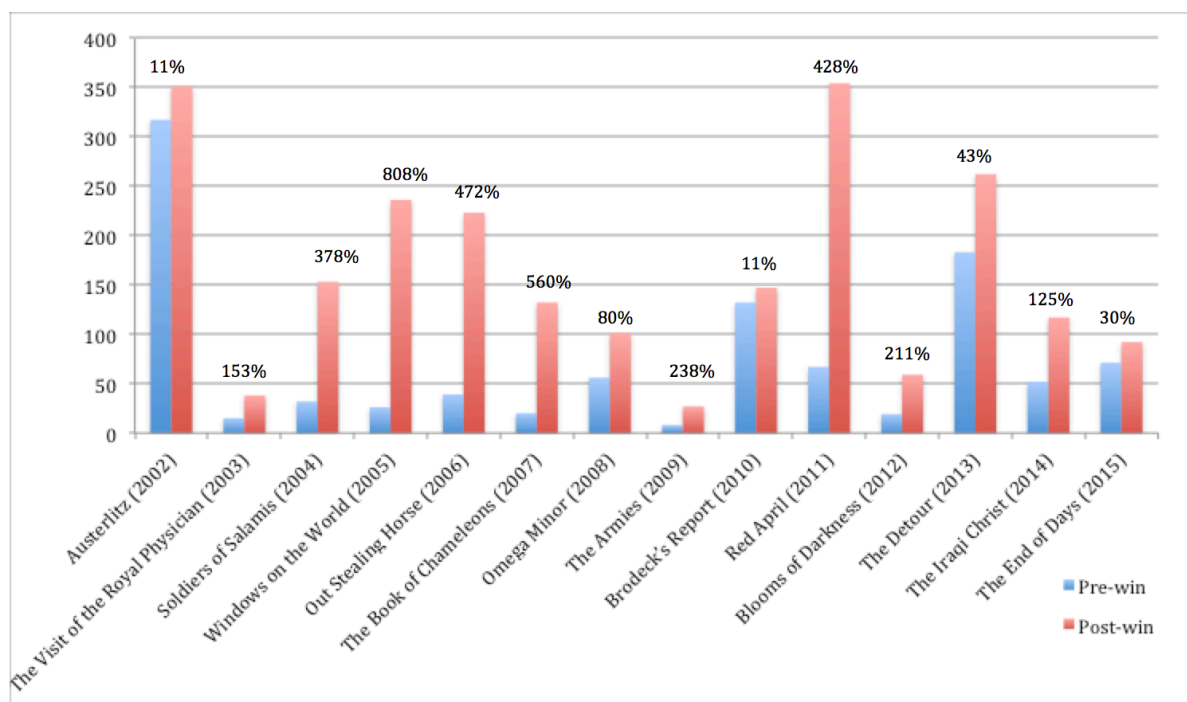
Using the sales data from Nielsen BookScan, we can get a better understanding of what these obligations may have meant for submitting publishers. If winners did indeed have to give 95 free copies to BookTrust, this means that an even larger increase in sales was necessary to make the prize profitable from a purely economic perspective, notwithstanding the increase in cultural capital for author, translator and publisher.

The MBIP is less demanding regarding its terms and conditions and reflects the changes reading habits regarding e-books and p-books. According to the 2016 submission criteria,⁸ publishers must provide eight printed copies with their entry forms (or promise to provide eight copies on request if an e-book only). All shortlisted books must be available as an e-book (rules c, i) and p-book (at least 1,000 print copies for retail sale within 10 days of shortlist announcement, rules c, ii). In addition, the publisher is required to pay for the travel costs of the author and translator to the awards ceremony for shortlisted titles. However, in comparison to the IFFP rules, the new criteria are much more aware of the financial restraints publishers, in particular indie publishers, deal with on a day-to-day basis. No

⁸ No longer available online. We are grateful to Marion Evans, Four Communications, for providing us with a PDF version of the MBIP 2016 Rules and Entry Form via e-mail on June 15, 2016.

discounts are required, and overall, only eight hard copies are requested as judges' copies. In addition, as mentioned above, all shortlisted authors and translators are awarded GBP 1,000 each.

Figure 1 shows that all winning titles see a remarkable rise in the month/period following the announcement of the win. This demonstrates the correlation between sales increase and winning the IFFP. However, the sales figures, for the IFFP winners, are actually quite low. For example, *Windows on the World* (2005) saw an 808% increase in sales after the winner was announced on 28th April 2005: sales of the book rose from 26 copies to 236 copies in the periods before and after the announcement. When compared with sales of the MBP however, it is evident that the percentage increases, and the number of unit sales, are not as large⁹. For example, nine times out of fourteen, the percentage increase is less than the MBP's lowest increase of 272% (for *Bringing up the Bodies*, 2012). However, it is important to note that for *Bringing Up The Bodies* (where the sales rose from 8701 copies to 32,356 copies sold after the winner announcement) was the second MBP win for Hilary Mantel, and the sequel to the her first MBP winning book, *Wolf Hall*, so the book had been selling steadily before the winner announcement.



⁹ For the purposes of this paper, we will use the following terminology to describe the rise in sales: 1-99% = small increase; 100-499% = substantial increase; 500-999% = large increase; 1000+% = dramatic.

Figure 1: Sales of IFFP winners in the sales period before and after the winner was announced¹⁰

In line with the previous studies, Figure 2 demonstrates remarkable sales boosts for winning MBP titles in the period following the announcement of the win, with post-win sales as high as 66,161 (hardback and paperback) copies the period directly after the announcement (for 2009 winner *Wolf Hall* by Hilary Mantel).

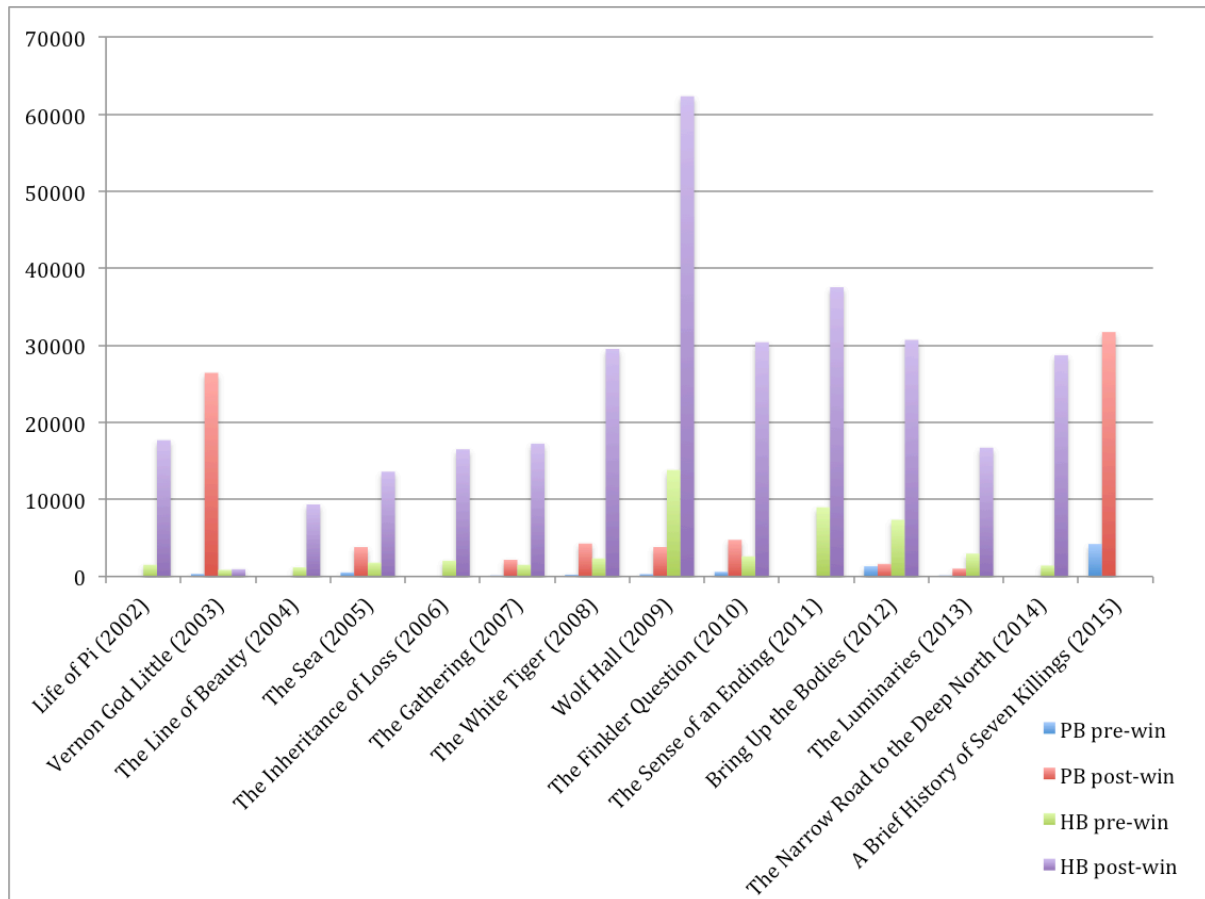


Figure 2: Sales of MBP winners in the sales period before and after the winner was announced

The disparity becomes clear in a direct comparison of the sales increases of the MBP and the IFFP, as in Figure 3, which compares the percentage increase in sales from the period prior to and following the win for each prize. Twelve times out of fourteen the MBP announcement is followed by a larger increase in sales than the IFFP. The average

¹⁰ Data obtained, and amalgamated, from Nielsen BookScan database: the findings exclude any sales from retailers not covered by the database [Accessed May-June, 2016].

percentage increase on the announcement of the MBP win is 899%, compared with an average increase of 253% for the IFFP win.

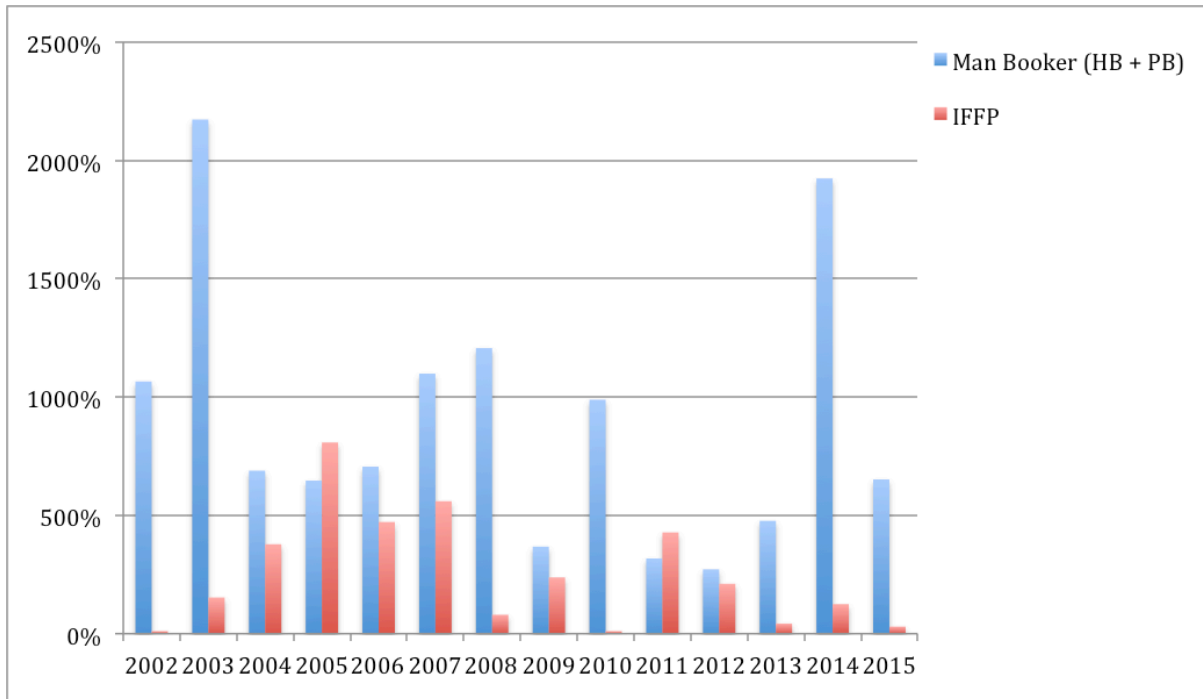


Figure 3: Percentage increase in the period pre and post win for the MBP (HB + PB combined sales) and IFFP

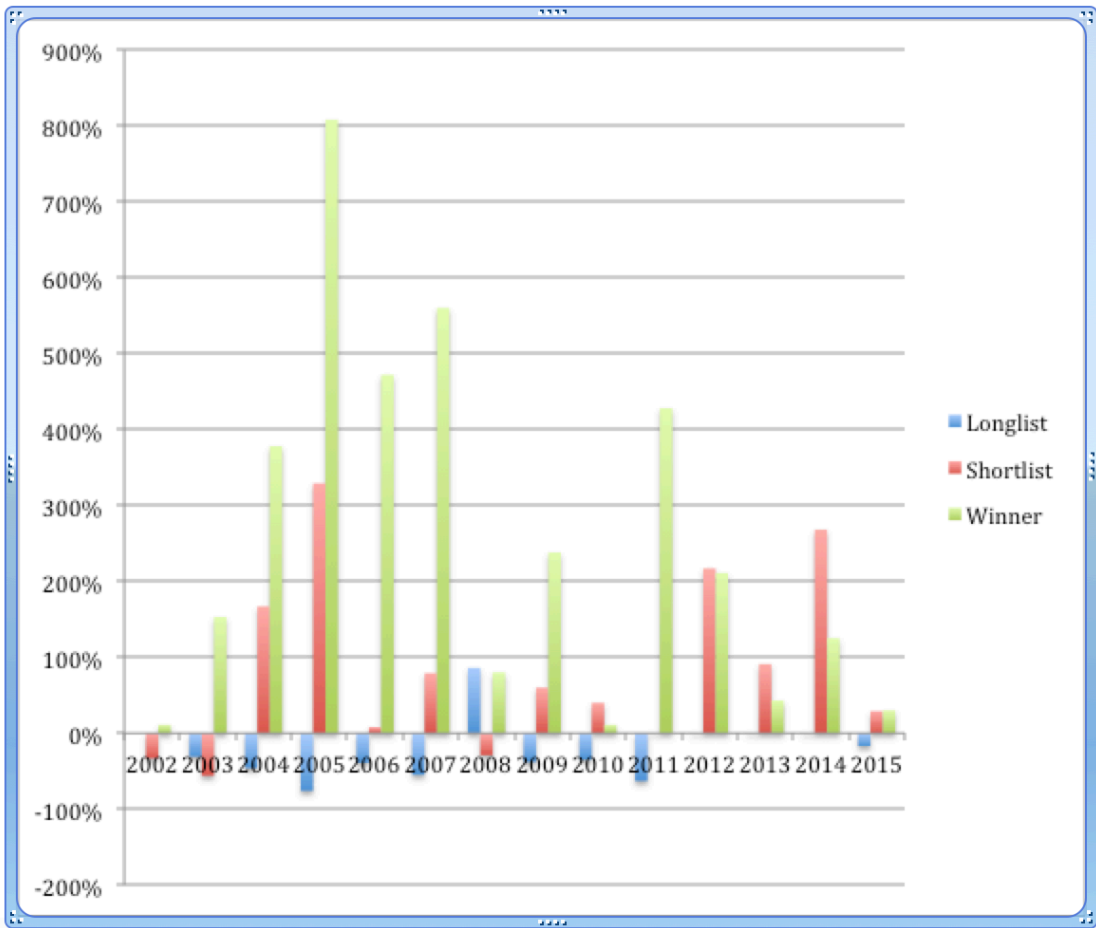


Figure 4: Effects of longlist, shortlist, and winner announcement on sales: IFFP

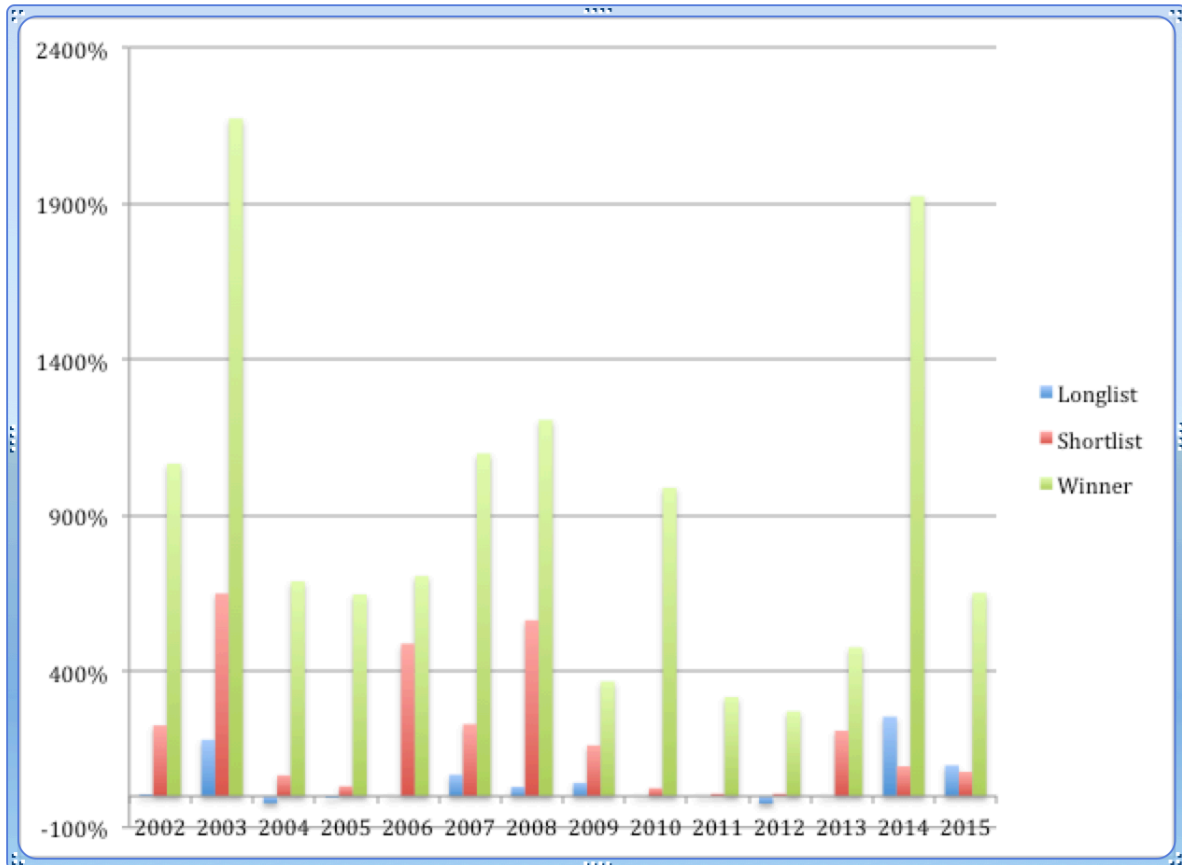


Figure 5: Effects of longlist, shortlist, and winner announcement on sales: MBP

Figure 4 and 5 show that, for both the IFFP and the MBP, the longlist announcement, for the most part, has little or no positive impact on sales for the winners. In fact, the longlist had a negative effect on sales for nine out of the fourteen IFFP winners and no impact for the remaining titles (i.e. sales in the period the longlist was announced were lower than the period before). The largest increase in sales after the longlist announcement was 86% for IFFP (*Omega Minor*, 2008) and 255% for the Man Booker winner (*The Narrow Road to the Deep North*, 2014). The shortlist, on the other hand, had, mostly, a positive impact on sales after the announcement. However, the impact was, on average, still quite small: the largest increase in sales after the shortlist was 329% for the IFFP winner (*Windows on the World*, 2005) and, a much larger 650% for the Man Booker Prize winner (*Vernon God Little*, 2003).

Another interesting observation is the duration of time from the longlist announcement to the announcement of the winner. Over time, the juries have had very different schedules to work with. In 2003 for instance, the jury had less than two months from the longlist announcement to the announcement of the winner (February 15, 2003 to April 8, 2003). Whereas the 2002, 2004, and 2005 juries had just over two months from the longlist to choose the eventual winners. In 2006, 2007, and 2008, on the other hand, the jury was granted much more

reading time: the longlists were announced in mid-to-late January, and the prizes were not awarded until the first week of May. It is safe to say that 3.5 months are a more adequate measure of time for jury members to engage meaningfully with all of the texts than two months. From 2010 onwards, the dates were fixed in a March – April – May rhythm. One could argue that this two-month period is more attractive from the point of view of marketing and media attention: a regular announcement over the course of three months improves brand recognition among members of the media and among readers. This however cannot be confirmed by the data shown above.

A final observation is regarding the format: consumers of the IFFP winners were more likely to buy paperback editions of the books whereas consumers of the MBP winners were more likely to buy hardback editions. Both a hardback and paperback edition was available for eight of the IFFP-winning titles in the year of the winner announcement: for all of these titles, the paperback editions outsold the hardback editions by a very large amount. For example, if we take the first IFFP winner where both the hardback and the paperback were available at the time of the winner announcement: the paperback of the 2003 winner *The Visit of the Royal Physician* sold 17259 units, until June 2016, in comparison to the hardback edition, which sold 892 copies. In the three periods after the winner was announced, until the 14th June 2003, 6885 copies of the paperback were sold while 56 copies of the hardback were sold. Four winning titles were available in paperback only and two winning titles were available in hardback only. However, the two hardback-only editions of the winning titles (*Omega Minor*, 2008 and *The Armies*, 2009) have not seen very large sales since their wins: *Omega Minor* has sold 1466 hardback copies of the book, until June 2016, and 623 copies of the book were sold in the three periods after the winner announcement (until July 12, 2008). *The Armies* has sold 350 hardback copies of the book, until June 2016, and 135 copies of the book were sold in the three periods after the winner announcement (until July 11, 2009). A paperback version of *The Armies* was published in 2010 and has sold almost double (649 copies) the amount of the hardback edition.

On the other hand, both hardback and paperback editions were available for thirteen of the MBP-winning titles in the year of the winner announcement. The hardback editions outsold the paperback editions by a very large amount for ten of these titles. Again, if we take the first MBP-winner where the hardback and the paperback were available at the time of the winner announcement: the hardback of the 2004 winner *The Line of Beauty* sold 42614 units, until June 2016, in comparison to the paperback edition, which sold 6419 copies. In the three periods after the winner was announced, until January 1, 2005, 30137 copies of the paperback were sold while 3422 copies of the paperback were sold. One winning title –

The Sense of an Ending (2011) – was available in hardback only, at the time of the winner announcement; however, this did not impede sales: 149558 copies have been sold, until June 2016, and 105849 copies were sold in the three periods after the winner was announced, until December 31, 2011. While we can conclude that consumers tend to favour hardback editions of the MBP-winning titles and paperback editions of the IFFP-winning titles it is unclear whether this is because of the prestige associated with the MBP, and the cultural capital of owning a hardback edition of such a prize-winning book, the fact that IFFP-winners are often lesser known authors in comparison to MBP-winners and therefore less collectable, or whether it is to do with when the winner is announced i.e. April for the IFFP Prize (in time for summer holiday reading) and October for the MBP (in time for the Christmas market): most likely it is a mixture of all of these factors. We will note, however, that the MBI 2016 winning title, as detailed below, which was announced in May 2016, sold far more copies of the paperback edition than the hardback edition, despite the association with the MBP.

Outlook and concluding remarks

The newly merged IFFP and MBI, referred to in this study as the MBI 2016, will follow the format of the IFFP and form the only UK award for translated-foreign fiction (novels and short stories) of any language. A notable change to the prize is the winner's prize purse, which will increase from £10,000 for the IFFP win to £50,000. As before this amount is to be divided equally between the author and the translator. In addition, shortlisted titles also receive a prize of £2,000, to be divided equally between the author and the translator. The chairman of the Booker Prize Foundation, Jonathan Taylor, explained this merger, saying: "One of the persistent observations of Man Booker International Prize judges has been the paucity of good literary fiction translated into English. We very much hope that this reconfiguration of the prize will encourage a greater interest and investment in translation." (Singh, 2015) The Man Booker group explicitly announced on its website that the MBI 2016 endeavours to address the three percent problems affecting translated-foreign fiction in the Anglo-American book market; "the new MBI seeks not just to reward individual authors but to encourage an ecology of translation in which publishers are emboldened to cast their nets outside the familiar waters of English-language fiction where there are rare and fabulous creatures who should be brought in." (Man Booker, 2015).

For the 2016 prize, titles eligible for submission must be published between January 1, 2015 and April 30, 2016. There is no restriction on the number of submissions per publisher ostensibly to solicit as wide a response from publishers as possible. In 2016, 155 books were submitted for the newly merged MBIP (Flood, 2016b). The winner was announced in

May 2016. The reactions to the new prize have been overwhelmingly positive. Blogger and translator Katy Derbyshire wrote, “The new Man Booker International prize is the most exciting thing to happen to literary translators since Asterix was resuscitated in 2005.” (Derbyshire, 2016) 2007 IFFP winner Daniel Hahn wrote of the new prize in *The Guardian*: “[T]he profile that the new name will bring, and the substantial prize pot, can only help to raise the profile of international writing in the UK (which, while undoubtedly improving, can still use all the help it can get).” (Hahn, 2015). Hahn identifies the benefit of this kind of prize: “Prizes that isolate translations from the mainstream (just as, say, prizes that isolate books only written by women) seem to me to have great value as long as they can usefully contribute to what one might call a kind of market engineering – helping to persuade publishers, critics or readers to value books of type X more than they currently do.” (Hahn, 2015). An article in *The Independent* quoted various supporters of the move, including senior writer Boyd Tonkin, who has long championed the IFFP: “I am delighted that, through the newly configured Man Booker International Prize, even more readers will have the chance to encounter the finest fiction from around the world.” (Clark, 2015).

Even many who were dubious about the merger were swayed by the longlist and shortlist selections in 2016. The *Irish Times* wrote, “Misgivings aside about amalgamating two important literary prizes appear to have been silenced by the newly reconstituted award’s inaugural shortlist. [...] It is an outstanding selection, and not only endorses the astute judging panel but underlines the daunting calibre of international fiction which is increasingly available to readers, thanks to the gifted literary translators currently at work. [...] With a list this good, however, the winner is almost irrelevant. The main point is obvious; international fiction in translation is an eloquent and diverse force – which sales confirm.” (Battersby, 2016)

A look at the newly merged MBI 2016 shows that the above findings correlate with this new prize: the longlist and shortlist have little or no positive impact on sales, while the winner announcement has more of a positive impact on sales. However, considering the new affiliation with the MBP, the increase in sales (200%) is substantial but not particularly large or dramatic.

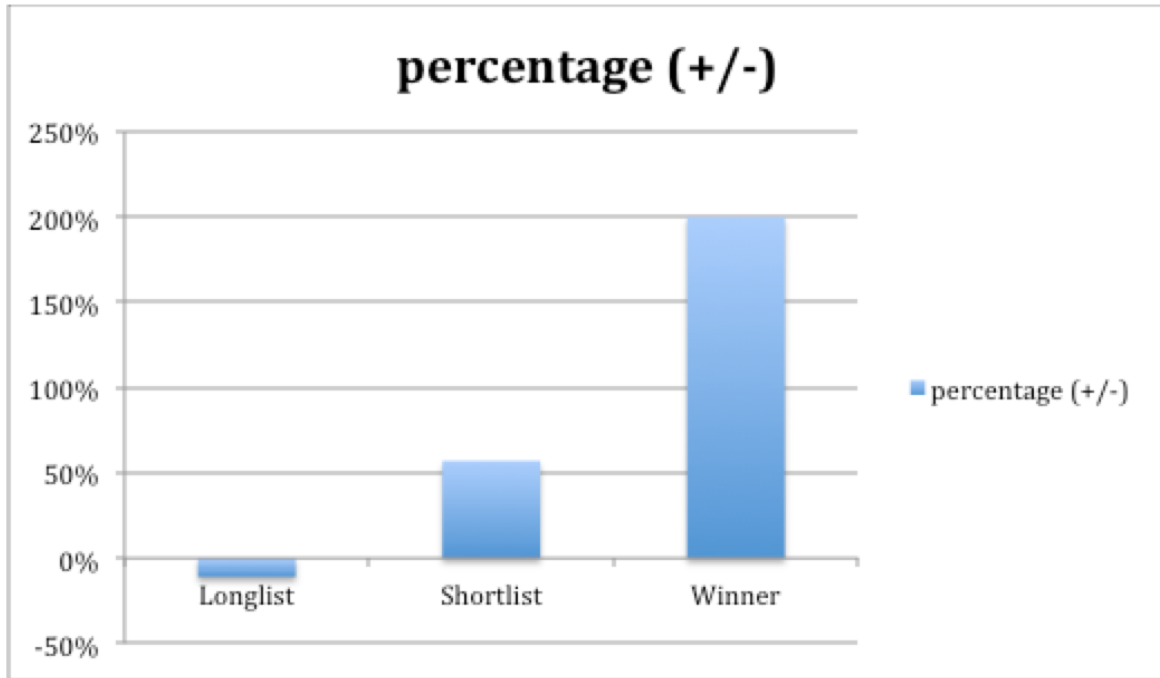


Figure 6: Effects of the longlist, shortlist, and winner announcements on sales (percentage)

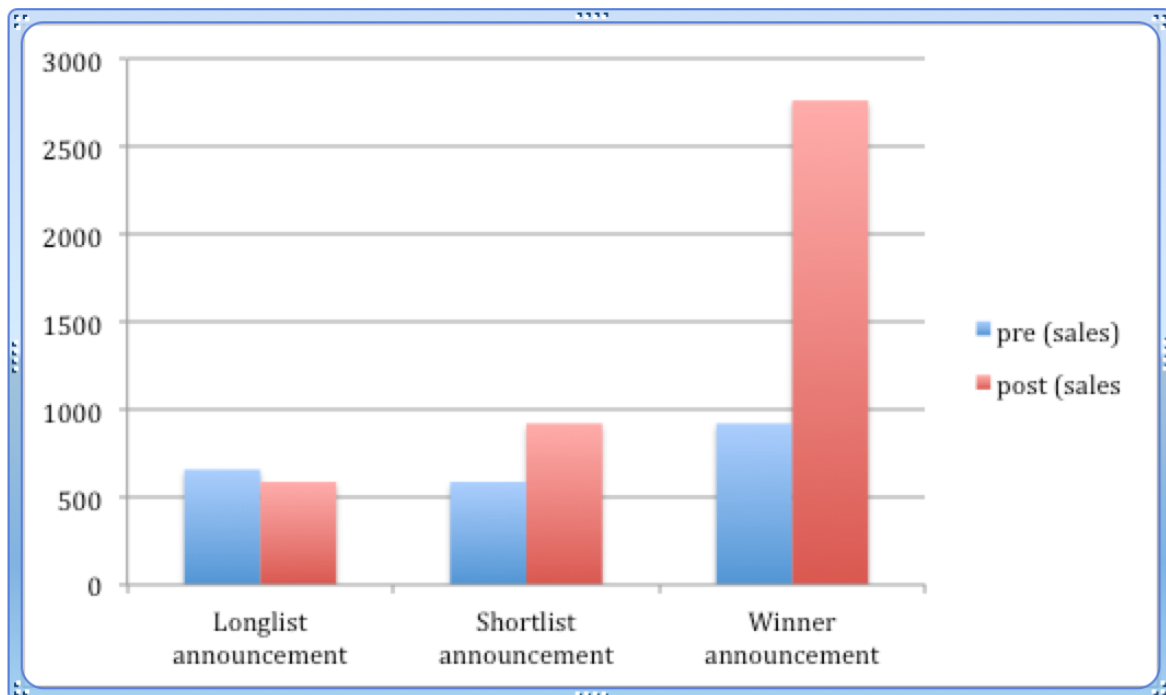


Figure 7: Effects of the longlist, shortlist, and winner announcements on sales (unit sold)

The MBI 2016 got off to a good start with much praise for the selections. Interestingly, in what can perhaps be interpreted as a gesture of continuity towards the IFFP, the shortlist included former IFFP winners. The Angolan author José Eduardo Agualusa and UK translator Daniel Hahn (2007 winners) made the shortlist with their new project *A General*

Theory of Oblivion (Harvill Secker) as well as Orhan Pamuk (inaugural 1990 IFFP winner and 2006 Nobel Laureate) with his new book *A Strangeness in My Mind* (Faber & Faber; working with a different translator than in 1990: Ekin Oklap from Turkey). The shortlist also included Elena Ferrante *The Story of the Lost Child* (Europa Editions; translated by Ann Goldstein), Korean author Han Kang's *The Vegetarian* (Portobello Books; translated by Deborah Smith), Austrian author Robert Seethaler's novel *A Whole Life* (Picador; translated by Charlotte Collins) and Chinese author Yan Lianke's *The Four Books* (Chatto & Windus; translated by Carlos Rojas). Therefore, the list features three independent publishers: Europa Editions, Faber & Faber, and Portobello Books, as well as two of the Big Five: Penguin Random House has two novels through the imprints Chatto & Windus and Harvill Secker; Pan Macmillan has one novel through imprint Picador.

For 2016, the winner was announced in May: the Korean novel *The Vegetarian*, written by Han Kang and translated by Deborah Smith. Incredibly, "Smith has only been studying Korean for seven years, but judge Dan Medin told *RN Breakfast* that such details were unimportant to the jury. 'For us the great part about this process is that we've been focused on the novel itself. In each case we don't look at that kind of extraneous detail. 'We had Nobel laureates on the longlist, we had debut novelists on the longlist. And in each case we thought, "How does this book work in English?"' (Kanowski and Carter, 2016)

However, in the *New York Review of Books*, after the announcement of the MBI 2016 winner, Tim Parks debated at length whether a translation prize can even be administered fairly, and emphasized the fact that the novel's translator had only learned Korean "pragmatically". Parks asked himself, "How can I judge a translation if I don't know the original language? [...] We can tell if a book is fluent or not, elegant or not, lucid or not, but how do we know if the original is like this? Conversely, if we can't judge the translation, how can we arrive at an opinion about the book itself? It seems poorly written, but perhaps that is just the translator. Or vice versa of course" (Parks, 2016). Parks continues, "None of the judges for the prize appear to know Korean. Nor do I. So the novel provides an excellent opportunity for asking whether we can get any separate impressions of the achievements of writer and translator" (Parks, 2016). This question ties in with challenges that literary prize practices in the international realm face from a postcolonial perspective, as Huggan has argued extensively in *The Post-Colonial Exotic* (2001). Squires has picked up on Huggan's arguments in her observations on Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (Squires, 2009, pp. 137-146). The Caine Prize (aka the "African Booker") has also provoked criticism for similar reasons (Attree, 2013), the underlying question being whether Anglo-British literary critics should and can evaluate literature from other cultural and linguistic contexts. Booker

plc, the sponsor of the Man Booker and indeed the new MBIP prize, Huggan argues, has an “inability to shake off the ghosts of its own colonial history” (Huggan, 2001, p. 117). Huggan further contends that prizes like the Booker “function [...] as mechanisms for the management of subversive political tendencies, and for the redirecting of oppositional energies into the mainstream of Western metropolitan cultural thought” (Huggan, 2001, p. 120). It will certainly be of importance to monitor the choices for MBIP winners closely to see what profile the prize develops from a postcolonial perspective. Parks goes on to show how in his opinion as an Anglophone reader of this translation, the prizewinning novel has several deficits. He disapprovingly concludes that the novel and its premise “fit[] the bill” of the judges: “it occurs to me there is a shared vision of what critics would like a work of ‘global fiction’ to be”. As the MBIP becomes more established in the field, we will see whether books that emphasise “foreignness” and “exoticism” (so-called “poverty porn”) are favoured by the judges. Once the 2016 judges decided that *The Vegetarian* was such a book, Parks argues, “all evidence of its unevenness and opportunism [were] set aside and thirty-four authoritative quotations [were] placed as guardians front and back [i.e. on the dust jacket of the book], defying the reader to disagree”. This raises an interesting question about paratexts, and how prize information, as Squires has argued, also adds another level of paratextual influence to the reading experience (Squires, 2009, pp. 75-85). A further dimension of Parks’ argument is whether the judges are explicitly or implicitly looking for literary (highbrow?) fiction and if and how genre fiction may be included. This has been the subject of controversy regarding the Man Booker Prize, the question being “What the Booker prize really excludes” (e.g. Crown 2011). This will be of heightened interest for the MBIP in particular in light of the bestselling success that Scandinavian crime fiction has in the Anglophone world. As the MBIP goes into its second year (and following), there are several possible lines of enquiry for further research. The approach taken here could be the basis for a longitudinal study of the prize, but also for a variety of more general observations on prize culture in the international, multilingual realm.

Rachel Cooke recently proclaimed in the *Guardian*, “right now translation is more important than ever – for suddenly, foreign literature seems finally to be finding its place in Britain, an island where it has previously struggled to attract substantial numbers of readers” (Cooke, 2016). It seems to be clear that independent publishers are driving this trend. Independents were over-represented among PEN Translates 2016 winners, and Samantha Schnee, chair of the PEN Writers in Translation Committee, emphasized that “It is [...] great to see independent publishers leading the field with their bold and imaginative projects” (Onwuemezi 2016a). If Cooke and English PEN are correct in the belief that “Translated fiction is undergoing a renaissance in the UK” (English PEN, 2016), it remains to be seen

what role the MBIP will play in this process. Paula Erizanu seems to think that while the MBIP and independent booksellers and publishers are important factors, but understands that UK readers must also commit: 'The International Man Booker prize has pointed to one way forward [towards reading more translations] by awarding half of its £50,000 prize to the translator for the first time this year. [...] But we can all make a conscious decision to read more translated books. Because the way things stand, the UK is not just missing out on great books, but further isolating itself from the rest of the world.' (Erizanu, 2016).

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