



**At IBPA, A Free Speech Debate
Recorded April 8, 2017
Publishing University (IBPA 2017 Conference)**

With

- **Patrick Maloney, Wise Ink**
- **Jessica Salens, Coralstone Press**
- **Brooke Warner, SheWrites Press**

BOLE: The way we put the panel together is I have a meeting with the board of directors and I ask them, what do you think we should talk about – as kind of a little brainstorming session. So I met with the board, and we were talking about what might make sense for an interesting panel. And we always start with topical. We always say, well, what's going on right now? What might our membership want to talk about as a community?

There's so much floating around right now about free speech and intellectual freedom, and we think this is a conversation that it would be helpful to have here at Publishing University with people who care about these two things very much. I also think it's a conversation that we can have as a community, because this is such a respectful space and you guys know how to do that well. So we wanted to bring that up.

My hope is that we can all get a sense of how indie publishers can continue to lead in this space, because it's not my feeling that indie publishers do not lead or we need to figure this out. I think indie publishers have always been leading in the case of free speech and intellectual freedom, and you've always been bringing new voices forward. That's basically been your job and mandate. We kind of got away from the other side of things.

So I want to talk about – well, we're going to talk about whatever we talk about. It's going to be whatever it is. But I think that shift is really interesting to discuss, like what's happening now currently and what that might mean for us as we move forward. So Chris, panel moderator?

KENNEALLY: Angela. I'm over here.



BOLE: OK. And why are you over there?

KENNEALLY: Well, it's a paradigm shift.

BOLE: OK. (laughter)

KENNEALLY: So you want to ask me what a paradigm shift is, and I'll tell you guys.

BOLE: Oh, sorry. My line is what is a paradigm shift?

KENNEALLY: All right. (laughter) Well, in 1962, Thomas Kuhn published *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Kuhn studied the history and philosophy of science, and he concluded that science did not progress on a straight line of accumulating new knowledge, but that it undergoes periodic revolutions. These are what he called paradigm shifts. New paradigms emerge after a period of crisis in science, when theories fail to describe what scientists observe about the natural world. For example, a century ago, the Einstein paradigm replaced the established Newtonian paradigm from the 17th century.

All of us today are living in such a period of crisis. But the revolution is not a scientific one. It is a technological revolution first, as well as a social revolution and a media revolution, too. Of course, I'm speaking of the digital transformation of almost everything. The World Wide Web is the flashpoint, and devices like smartphones and laptops and platforms like Amazon and Facebook provide the artillery and the battlefields.

A paradigm shift is underway in our own way of life and has not yet settled entirely on a new set of rules. What are the roles independent publishers and authors should play at this moment and in shaping the future? What are the responsibilities of independent publishers and authors? What should be our collective response? In times of crisis, communities become divided, and heightened concerns for the future are common. When it's far too easy to substitute fake news for facts, when the bad argument is victorious over the good one, then authors and publishers rightly focus on the impact to free speech and intellectual freedom.

As Steve Jobs said, you can't connect the dots looking forward. You can only connect them looking backwards. So you have to trust that the dots will somewhere or somehow connect in your future. You have to trust in something – your gut, your destiny, life, karma, whatever.



As the moderator for this special and important discussion over the next hour, I have to trust that the dots will somehow connect. I have to trust in something – or rather, someone – to do that. And I’ve decided to put my trust in this audience, among the members of the IBPA.

So we’re flipping the model right now. Forgive me, Angela, if I’m not starting with the panel and ending with audience questions. Today, I’m opening with audience questions. Not everybody in the world has great answers, but everyone has at least a few great questions. When it comes to the roles and responsibilities of independent publishers and authors in disturbing, disruptive times, what do you not know, audience, that we could help you find the answer to? What questions do you have for which we can form together potential responses? So I want to begin, and I’m going to turn to my left here and welcome Ebonye. Ebonye, nice to see you.

WILKINS: Nice to see you, too.

KENNEALLY: So what’s your question? What are your concerns as part of this discussion right now? Tell us a bit about the kind of work you do. You’re the president of August Rose Press, but I understand you’re a freelance journalist as well.

WILKINS: I am a freelance writer. So as an editor and a writer, I’m always wondering, how do I protect the intellectual property that I produce and how do I help protect the intellectual property of the people that I edit and that I write for, because right now there are so many opportunities for our work to be taken away from us or our work to be misconstrued. And how do we remain vigilant in making sure that we keep what we own, we keep what we create?

KENNEALLY: So you’re concerned as well about potential for distortion – that you could publish something that someone could pick up and twist somehow or make a part of their own argument, and you would feel like you had been robbed or somehow violated, even. Is that what you’re thinking about?

WILKINS: That a little bit, and the fact that a lot of people are just rampantly stealing work and not suffering any repercussions for it.



KENNEALLY: When you put things online, the other thing that everybody worries about, whether they're publishers or authors or not, is privacy. Do you worry about not only the ownership of your work but kind of the right to remain unidentified and so forth? Do you worry about privacy?

WILKINS: I do worry about privacy a little bit, because especially since writing and editing and publishing is our work, our future earnings are tied to what we produce. And if it's leaked or if it's taken away from you before you can actually reel it in and make sure that it's the right thing to produce or to publish, then that could damage your future earnings. That could damage your credibility. It can damage a lot of things.

KENNEALLY: So if I hear you, the question you're asking is how can I protect myself from having my material taken from me but also misrepresented? That's what you're worried about – misrepresentation and misappropriation as well.

WILKINS: Right.

KENNEALLY: OK, thank you. And Philip Hinkson (sp?) is from Portland. I wonder what's on your mind – what's the question you have about publishing at this particular moment?

M: Well, I have lots of questions about publishing. I'm first time – I'm new to this. But the question I have, I guess just in a more societal way, is do we have any real news at this point? Did we ever have it? Has this manipulation that we're seeing always been going on, and is it just now that it's so, hopefully, painfully obvious to most of us? You know, where do we turn for an honest voice?

KENNEALLY: Well, it's funny you ask about that, because – I mean, what is the history of this? I suppose you'd have to ask the ancient Greeks. They had demagogues (laughter) 2,500 years ago, and they worried about the very same issues then.

You're concerned, I think, about manipulation. I think we all would be. And I think that kind of keys in on what Ebonye was talking about – the potential when we're publishers and authors to see our own work construed in ways that we had no intention it should be, to see it used against us, to see other people publishing when we're trying to – I'm going to assume the best for everybody here – when we're trying to publish authentic material, to see it out there in competition with material that, frankly, is inauthentic.



M: Yeah. Yeah, I agree.

KENNEALLY: So put it in a question. With the concern about the manipulation, what would you like to see an IBPA – what do you want to hear from our panel that would make you feel better about that?

M: Boy, I don't know that there's any great answer to that. I think it's more of a bigger societal issue. You go on your own Facebook, and it's just a battle on there. Nobody seems to be giving each other any respect. There doesn't seem to be an acceptance of a difference of opinion, which often comes from a different experience. And so I just think we need to somehow, probably individually – I don't know if we do it as a group or individually – but I think we have to fight back against that.

KENNEALLY: Well, you've got somebody who agrees with you. Tim Berners-Lee, who is the creator of the World Wide Web – he just spoke a few weeks ago at an anniversary event. He submitted the proposal at CERN on a certain day in March – I forget the exact one. The funny thing about that – and you can look online, you'll see the PDF – he had the proposal all nicely typed out, and he sent it to his boss. And his boss wrote over the top, vague but exciting. (laughter) And here we are today.

What Tim Berners-Lee – it's still pretty vague but really exciting in ways that nobody imagined – but what he talked about was his concern that the Web was meant for him in its initial conception as a place to go for information, but that what he is concerned about – and he has something, I think it's called the Web Foundation, which is trying to do research around these algorithms that push us in places that we have no intention really to go in the first place, but they want us to go there so they can begin to show us news, show us information that will persuade us to sign up to their argument. So the conversations that we're seeing online on Facebook sometimes can be so strident not because the world is, but because those algorithms or other people who've designed them are pushing us in that direction. So Philip, thank you for that.

I want to get out to ask what other questions are on people's minds. Why are you here this morning is a good question. We have somebody over there. OK. Welcome. And your name is Lisa Alexia (sp?). And you're with Donnelly Sunrise Publications (sp?). So that's based in Alaska?



F: Yes.

KENNEALLY: What's your question?

F: How do we respond individually and collectively thinking about the risk for what's called strategic lawsuits against public participation? If you have a voice that is controversial that's speaking up against a corporate interest, how do we think about those risks and respond to them without silencing voices peremptorily – without self-censoring ourselves?

KENNEALLY: So strategic lawsuits against participation – I think they call those SLAPP suits. OK.

F: Right. You guys all know that.

KENNEALLY: OK. What you're saying is that there are legal ways – there's the First Amendment, which is supposed to protect us all and allow for free speech, but there are other legal ways that are outside the First Amendment that potentially could block voices, shut down voices.

F: Right. Yes. I think we've certainly seen that in the last six, nine months – that there have been not even necessarily corporate SLAPPs, but other sorts of we're going to arrest this person or we're going to sue this person. It acts as a dampening on journalistic freedom. It acts as a dampening on what people are going to choose to publish.

Personally, one of the goals coming here is to learn about what are the legal resources and the insurance and all that. But I think it's a broader question. I think the climate that we're in is tending towards, OK, if we stir the pot, we know there's a risk. We know there's a risk from somebody who has a lot more money than I do, if I'm speaking up about my backyard.

KENNEALLY: Well, it's in a way unfortunate, because that kind of idea of shutting down conversation happens in all kinds of ways. I'm an ex-journalist. I like to say I'm a First Amendment firster kind of person, right? I really believe you can never have too much freedom of expression. There are some who discuss it, and they say the Web has opened it up to too many people, that it was better back in the day



when it was just a few guys in the editorial room of *The New York Times* deciding what was going to be published the next day. I don't see it that way at all.

And these SLAPP suits, it's an echo of something which – an incident that people may have read about at Middlebury College about a month ago, where a very controversial author was there to speak and was to have an interview, I think, with a professor. And protestors showed up and basically shouted this author down and prevented him from speaking, and then there was a scuffle. And Middlebury, which prides itself on being an open community, really had to go through a period of self-examination and breast-beating and saying well, you know, we're better than that. I guess it seems to me, aren't we better than that? My question is how come we can't just let people have their opinion anymore? Why do we need to have a SLAPP lawsuit?

F: (laughter) I'm not sure I understand your question.

KENNEALLY: What I'm saying is that's what you're asking. You want to be part of a conversation rather than be afraid that you're going to be shut down from that conversation.

F: Yes. I live in a very conservative state, and I guess I've seen enough to be concerned about how speaking up about your backyard and your legitimate concerns may be responded to from a corporate point of view.

KENNEALLY: OK. I wonder if anybody has an opinion or a question that speaks specifically to independent authors. We were talking about the way the Web has transformed publishing and media. It has opened up opportunity for everybody in this room that probably wouldn't have been the case – wouldn't certainly have been so easy only maybe 10, 15, 20 years ago. So that's an important change. Do independent authors and publishers have something special to contribute to this conversation, to these concerns? And we'll go to, I think, one of our scholarship winners. Yeah? And your name is Abby (sp?)?

F: My name is Abby –

KENNEALLY: Tell us where you're from.

F: (multiple conversations; inaudible) My concern –



KENNEALLY: So where are you from?

F: Skagit in Washington State. My concern has to deal – when we back up, we’ve learned to read and write in sound bites – in bites that fit into the computer. And we’ve lost our analytical ability. So my concern is that we have to make sure that we write in a way that allows people to think, that we don’t feed them information – in anything that we write, that we give them different ways and different routes to come to their own conclusion, because we’ve lost that ability. We’ve lost it from school. And if we don’t give them that, then we are ruining ourselves.

So we really have to have another – Thomas Friedman wrote the book *Thank You for Being Late* and *Acceleration*. I just wrote a whole essay on it, because it took me four months to read it. I could only read 10 pages at a time because it was so dense, and it really made me think. And it saddened me that with all our greatness, we have diminished our ability to think.

I think it’s all of us as independent writers and publishers to allow, to create that ability that every story we write, every essay we write, everything that we do speaks to not a one-way thought, so that if we’re writing an essay to get a point across, that we show it in a way that reaches the heart and it reaches the mind and it makes that person act differently. So it’s partly our responsibility as well to change that dynamic of acceleration so that we accelerate learning and thinking critically.

KENNEALLY: So it sounds to me – if I could put it this way, Abby – that you’re talking about going beyond knee-jerk reactions, right? You’re sort of – how come everything seems to be a knee-jerk reaction?

F: Everything is a knee-jerk reaction, so that if you disagree with somebody, you shut them out instead of getting into – you know, I have family that voted one way, and they’re not speaking to one another. But if I go and I talk about health care and I talk about their specific issue when they had cancer and how this happened and I go through it and I say isn’t it great that, etc. – and then I just pause. I don’t have to say anything else. I don’t say that next line to zing against what they want. I just want them to have understanding.

So I think that we are shutting out people who disagree with us. And we create that wall by provocative talk, provocative this, and so there’s no negotiation, there’s no collaboration. We’ve even lost that in our inability in the Congress – we no longer talk and discuss. It’s one way or the other. And we’ve gone to extremes – and so



that I think that we really have to – because everybody – there’s always different sides to every view. No answer has multiple layers in it. So that we have to give ourselves – as writers and publishers, we have to give that. It’s our job to do it. That’s why I’m going to spend the next 24 years or 30 years of my life doing that. That’s just the choice that I think we all need to make.

KENNEALLY: Well, I’m guilty of that myself, because whenever I’m having a conversation at work and somebody’s talking about some big plans, I always say put it on a bumper sticker, put it on a bumper sticker. There’s something for that. There’s something to be said for that, because you want to be able to keep things short and sweet. But sometimes the sound bite is really just a vacuous way of discussing things, when what we really need is the time to elaborate and to give people a clear idea of what we’re thinking.

F: My husband’s a yes-no man – yes or no, Abby. That’s all he wants. And I say sometimes there’s something in between. So I said this is the rule. I can give you a yes now, but we’ll talk about it in depth later. Then we make that list. We actually have a list of in-depth – because he needs a yes or a no. So I think that if there’s a conversation that you want a bumper sticker, you can say later on can we discuss that bumper sticker? I mean, there’s a way to do it that doesn’t shut people off.

KENNEALLY: OK. Do we have another question here from the audience? OK, one more. Tell us who you are.

F: I’m Jennifer Fiechtner (sp?). I’m with Innovations Press. And I work in early childhood education.

KENNEALLY: Is Innovations Press an educational publisher?

F: Yes.

KENNEALLY: And where are you based?

F: Houston.

KENNEALLY: OK. So as you’ve been listening, what’s the question you have?

F: My question is how we, as authors and publishers, can amplify and protect marginalized voices in this environment, where we have these whole communities



that are being squashed. Their voices are not being heard. So those of us who have a seat at the table, who have a platform – how can we make sure that the voices that are being talked over are getting their space?

KENNEALLY: And is that an effort that – is that something Innovations is trying to see happen? What do you do to make sure that those voices are heard?

F: Well, because I write teacher materials and we develop materials for little children and teachers of little children, we talk a lot about teachers being aware of home culture, about supporting second language acquisition, about supporting multiple structures of families and how that can go a long way in creating a safe space for children to learn.

So I'm curious in how we, as a community, can do that in our own arenas. In my wheelhouse, we do that with children and tolerant spaces and doing things like making sure we have lots of representation of different kinds of people and those kinds of things. But in the wider world, I think we need to amplify voices that are not mainstream and be careful that we're not talking over them.

KENNEALLY: Well, right. I guess the point there, too, is that the respect that's needed to have the kind of conversations people are hoping we can have really starts at an early age. It's going to be important to create a culture that's going to have this kind of conversation, even in kindergarten, it sounds like.

F: Right. Each of us in our own particular professional fields – we are all here from really different places – how can we support an environment where everybody's voice is valued, and particularly the ones who are not getting the floor time they deserve are amplified, even if that means that we ourselves are sitting down?

KENNEALLY: Well, some people have been sitting down, but I'm going to ask them to step up. They're already up there. (laughter) They took the stage just behind my back, as it were. Let me grab my notes. But I want to introduce who we have to speak with us further about this to take some of those questions and maybe have some questions of their own.

We have Patrick Maloney from Wise Ink Publishing. Patrick is an editor and production manager for Wise Ink Creative Publishing, a Minneapolis-based creative publishing agency for authors. Patrick's worked with winners and finalists of the Man Booker Prize, the Minnesota Book Awards, and the National Book



Critics Circle Award. He also heads the ordering committee for Boneshaker Books, a progressive nonprofit bookstore in Minneapolis.

Then in the middle there is Jessica Salans. Jessica, welcome. Jessica is an activist and storyteller originally from the Bay Area. At San Jose State University, she cofounded Spotlight Stage Company and, upon graduating, worked with Marin Shakespeare Festival, San Francisco Shakespeare Festival.

SALANS: Sorry, what's pertinent to this is that I'm with Coralstone Press. We do –

KENNEALLY: I'm going to get to that.

SALANS: We do narrative storytelling for children.

KENNEALLY: Right. OK, so she's also a principal of Coralstone Press, which is narrative storytelling for children.

And then on the end – somebody we've seen speak earlier at Publishing University is Brooke Warner with She Writes Press. Brooke, welcome back.

So as I join you up on the stage there, I want to start with Patrick, because I think you have an interesting perspective there. You work as a publisher, but you've also got some skin in the game on the bookseller side of things. We've been hearing about keeping the conversation at a respectful level, making sure that marginalized voices are heard. What's your own take right now on the state of freedom of speech? Do you think things are good? Are they suffering? What's your mood at the moment?

MALONEY: Sure. Yeah. This panel in part is about free speech, and a lot of people have brought up concerns over the state of free speech in this current political climate. I think that free speech is at an all-time high. This is one of the best times for free speech in the history of the country with all the ways that we have of getting our voices across, of amplifying our messages. I think that a lot of people now are confusing free speech with something else. For example, if I say something that you disagree with, you can say something about that. You can talk over me. You can do whatever you want with your mouth or with your pen. I'm not free from retaliation. So one of the horse – not the horse in the room, the elephant in the room when it comes to free speech –



KENNEALLY: The gorilla maybe. Who knows what it is? (laughter)

MALONEY: Well, it's not that big. It's more like a horse –

KENNEALLY: It's big. It's big.

MALONEY: – I think is this Milo controversy. So for those who don't know –

KENNEALLY: Let's fill everybody in, sure.

MALONEY: There's a right-wing provocateur – that's French. (laughter) He's very controversial and he recently got a book deal with Simon & Schuster. People were very upset. People were like, Simon & Schuster, stop publishing –

KENNEALLY: Can I interrupt, because people won't – not everybody's going to be familiar. So Milo Yiannopoulos is not just a provocateur. There's plenty of those to go around. But he was such a provocateur that at one point, he was banned from Twitter, which I think takes a lot of work. OK? That was only one instance of just the level of provocation that this particular provocateur engaged in. So Milo seems to enjoy starting fights and also particularly targeting people that seem to be the kinds of targets, unfortunately, that we see too often on the Web. Anyway, so that's just a bit of a background on there. And he got the book deal with Simon & Schuster.

MALONEY: Right. He got a book deal. People were very upset. But then there was another side that said, well, this is free speech. Don't be upset with Simon & Schuster for sharing a diversity of ideas. And then Milo said something that was too outrageous, and then Simon & Schuster cancelled the book deal. Then people were like, oh, well, you're taking away this free speech from Milo.

I disagree with all of that. I think that Simon & Schuster is a business. Freedom of speech means the government can't come after you. It doesn't mean that Twitter can't ban you. Twitter is not a public government-run forum. It's a private organization. If you ban someone from Twitter, you're not infringing on their free speech. Just like if you don't give or take away a book deal, there's no issue with freedom of speech there. Freedom of speech just protects you from the government.



KENNEALLY: Right. Well, Brooke, I know you've got a thought on that particular controversy as well. And you've seen there's an argument – a published argument, a defense, I suppose you could call it – that the editor at Simon & Schuster made. It's along the lines of what Patrick was saying. But you seem to think it's not a very strong argument, at least as articulated by the Simon & Schuster editor. Tell us why.

WARNER: Yeah. Well, it's interesting, and it's a long piece that you all can look up online to see Simon & Schuster's defense, which I did think was very weak, which then – the fact that once Milo made some sort of positive reference to child pornography, they were happy to pull the contract. I think they were already looking for a reason to pull the contract, and that was just the next thing that he did that made them decide to do it.

The problem is that I see it as rewarding bad behavior, and I think that's a cultural trend. We're certainly seeing it all the way up the political chain. When there's no consequence, I think it just fans the flames and makes people like Milo feel like, oh, great, the more provocative I am, I'll get a book deal.

I was very pleased when Roxane Gay, who's also a Simon & Schuster author, pulled her book from Simon & Schuster as an act of protest, because I think that that is very courageous. For people to take a stand and to have a stake in something and to say I disagree so strongly that I don't want to publish with this publisher anymore – so there's all kinds of stuff going on in response to Milo's book deal, but I thought that was one of the most powerful responses that I saw, and I really commend her.

MALONEY: And I think that the tieback to us here in this room as independent booksellers is that Simon & Schuster is a giant publisher. They're driven by profit. That's one of the things that separates us from Simon & Schuster is that we're all obviously thinking about the bottom line, but – well, no, but Simon & Schuster will do whatever they can to make a dollar. Not all of us are like that. Not all of us in this room would publish a book by Milo, even if it would have made us a little bit more scratch, right? While we are always thinking about the bottom line, we can, as independent publishers, be motivated by something else also in addition to that. I know that it can seem, sometimes when you're struggling, that the only thing that matters is making a dollar. But I know a lot of the publishers in this room also have a mission in addition to that.



Brooke works at a press that just publishes women, right? That's important to Brooke. Maybe Brooke could make an extra dollar publishing a man at some point, maybe it made sense, but that's not part of the mission. And we're able to have those missions in a way that a giant corporate publisher is not.

KENNEALLY: Well, it's a great point, Patrick. And it's about – you're saying beyond profit – there's something beyond the bottom line here. There's this notion of integrity that independent – and there's this real foundation there in that very word independent, that integrity is critical to what independent publishers, independent authors are trying to do. Jessica Salans, what about that? As a publisher, as an author, as an activist, integrity is critical and who you give voice to is a choice that's going to reflect on you as well.

SALANS: Yeah. I guess I'd like to go back to something – what the audience said and what you said at the beginning. I really do think that, yes, technology has taken off and we're in a digital world, but I think right now what we're facing is a moral paradigm shift, where we have the opportunity because of what's happened on such a global and societal scale – is to say is this the kind of society we want to be? Is this the kind of person I want to be? Is this the kind of artist, businessperson that I want to be? So I think we have a real opportunity facing us in the calamity to say what are my core values as an individual, as an author, as a publisher? Where do I find integrity? Where is my authenticity?

I really loved what Abby said and what the woman in the back said who works with the education publishing group, which is that we can make such a difference in our locality with what we do in our community. We can recognize our own privilege and where we stand in the world. And then we can dismantle some of our own oppressive views and feelings. So whenever we find ourselves saying, oh, well I don't agree with what that person's saying, where can we turn back to ourselves and say where is that in me that I can have a moral shift and have a little bit more room for compassion and generosity? Where in my own work can I move and work from those tenets that I so strongly believe in? Because then other people will see that integrity and want to emulate it. So I think we have a real opportunity here.

KENNEALLY: Right. Patrick, you're leaning in. You want to add to that?

MALONEY: Sure. Yeah, and I think that there are a lot of ways that if we're turning in and looking at ourselves and what's important to us, that there are a lot of different



ways we can address the issues that are important to us. For some people that's diversity. If we're a press and we're concerned about diversity, obviously the thing to do would be to work hard to publish more diverse authors, to give that platform there, etc. Maybe set up – if you're a hybrid publisher, maybe you can work with a nonprofit to offer a cut on your prices for a marginalized voice or something.

If you are a publisher that's concerned about the rollback of the EPA, you can plant a tree for every book you publish. It's like a dollar a tree. It's pretty expensive. But that's something – you could plant a 200th of a tree for every book you publish. You can just look inside and find out what's important to you. And there are different ways to get that across. Some of that is in what you publish, but then there are other dimensions to it – who you hire, the things that you give back to the community, etc.

KENNEALLY: Right. Brooke Warner, your catchword I like a lot, which is greenlight yourself – but even as you greenlight yourself, even as you work on self-expression, it's also important to greenlight others, right? Talk about that.

WARNER: (laughter) Right. I think that's a lot of what I am interested in. You can create an environment in which you're greenlighting others, but those people still have to take the mantle and greenlight themselves. That said, I don't think that anyone can greenlight themselves without people in their lives who are greenlighting them, who are their champions and are saying take this, run with it, you're important enough. I think that there's a huge question about legitimacy and where do people look for legitimacy. I work with authors to try to see that the legitimacy is not something that someone else can necessarily bestow on you, but that you have to find it inside yourself.

But these questions, when we're talking about inclusivity – and I'm very interested in that question of whose voices get to be heard, because as the publishing models are changing, my own included – I'm obviously a champion of hybrid publishing and I'm a hybrid publisher myself, but I brought this up in our small conversation yesterday. Because it's a pay-to-play model, there are people who cannot afford it. Therefore it begs this question of who gets to be published. If the big houses are saying the only people who get to get published are the people who have author platforms and celebrity platforms, and in our models we're saying the only people who get to get published are the people who pay for it, we do – I believe in what we're saying up here – this moral responsibility to therefore find other ways to get marginalized voices out.



KENNEALLY: Right. Well, we did hear about the importance of starting young. Jessica Salans, as you mentioned, you're with Coralstone Press, which has a different take on the children's book and children's storytelling that I think touches on these points, because it's recognizing that even children have the ability to take on really tough conversations, to really see things in a way that's not just a kind of candy-coated fairytale view, that they need to hear as early as possible in their lives complicated stories, moral stories, and so forth. Tell us more about the thinking behind what goes on at Coralstone Press.

SALANS: Thank you. Yeah, and that goes back to a point that an audience member made about analytical thinking. When we produce our stories, we're questioning, what are we serving our children, and how can we best serve them? Where can we reach them at their full potential? Because children are so smart.

And specifically our two flagship titles – *The Good Dog* and *The Good Dog and the Bad Cat* – deal with stories that allow children to question at what point in their lives do they claim their own authority, and when is it OK to break the rules? And I think in our society right now – especially someone mentioned also so much fake news – we really have to use our own analytical skills coming from that moral space to say what is true, what isn't true, what rings true for me as well?

Children are our future, and I think we need to invest heavily in them, and we also – right now there's a lot of helicopter parenting. But instead of doing that, where can we really be guides for them and ask them a lot of questions? Because it's important to give them stories that have high-stakes fictional situations so that they know how to deal with it when they see that in the real world. When they see real evil and villainy in the real world, they've been presented with fictional stories that have already addressed that.

KENNEALLY: Right. And one of the things that you already mentioned, Jessica – and I want to see whether Patrick and Brooke have a view on it – is challenging our own assumptions, something that it's difficult for anybody to do, but especially important, it seems to me, in publishing, where you're not just expressing your own view, but you're giving a platform, giving opportunity for others to do so, too. It's human nature that for many of us, we publish what we know, we publish people we know, we publish ideas that we already are pretty familiar with. How do you feel about that, Patrick? Is there any way you can suggest to sort of go beyond that, or is that OK even?



MALONEY: Well, as a publisher, we are a promoter and a propagator of ideas. And we cannot – you know, it’s impossible for us to be unbiased, because all of us in here have things that we would publish and things that we absolutely would not publish.

So one thing that we can do as publishers is be a conduit for conversation. One way that we can do that is by putting more focus on book clubs. We all know that book clubs make – they’re one of the best marketing tools we have – getting a bunch of people to read a book. But in my life, I know the book clubs that I’m a part of – that’s where I have the most conversation and the most long-form discussions. So if we’re publishing something that we’re particularly proud of and we want people to talk about it, one actionable thing we can do is make sure that we’re targeting book clubs better.

KENNEALLY: OK. Brooke Warner, what about that conundrum of publishing – whatever kind of publishing you do. And you worked, prior to being at She Writes Press, with Seal Press, which has a distinguished line of books by women authors, feminist authors. But any type of publisher, we acquire books by people we know, we publish books on topics that we’re comfortable with. How do you feel about that? Is it something that you need to challenge yourself on, or is it just that this is my assignment, this is my self-assignment, this is my mission, and it’s OK to just publish the books that I like?

WARNER: Right. That’s an interesting question, because I kind of think I fall on both sides, in the sense that when I was working at Seal, we had a mission. We were publishing women. The books had an underlying feminist value to them in some way, shape, or form. Within that context, we absolutely had to push ourselves to acquire books that were not only a certain kind of book. We had to look at who are other feminist voices. We were conscientious about publishing women of color. That required stretching ourselves, because it is easy to just take what is coming your way and not to look outside of a bigger box. So certainly I think that’s important.

One of the things that I think is really important about independent publishing is that independent publishers are looking at this landscape and saying, wow, these voices are not being heard. So the story of the *Goodnight Stories for Rebel Girls*, which is back at the (inaudible) table – those women – I actually sat on a panel with one of the authors last weekend at BinderCon. It’s a great story that they have, because what they saw was that the kinds of women who were being celebrated by



traditional mainstream presses were not necessarily the kinds of women they wanted to hear about. They really wanted to open up. So you should go check out the book. It's actually quite amazing.

They had a Kickstarter campaign, and they wanted to raise \$40,000, and they raised almost \$700,000. The book is awesome. It's here on display. So what I loved about that is that these women said I want a book that tells these stories of rebel girls who are not just the ones celebrated by American history books. They're international. They're women of color. They're all kinds of women. So they had no interest whatsoever in taking their book to the mainstream publishers, and they have no interest whatsoever in doing mainstream distribution. They're keeping it all to themselves and going for it.

I think that's pretty exciting. It's indicative of what we can do when we have a really good idea and when we want to think a little bit bigger than what is presented to us from the mainstream publishing culture.

KENNEALLY: OK. Well, when we were preparing for this conversation, I asked the panel about some books that were influential in their lives that propelled them forward to be publishers, to be authors themselves. Jessica, you gave me a surprising answer, because among the variety of books that you mentioned, some of them we would all sort of expect to be on the list, you also added *Harry Potter*, which I don't know if that seems like an expected answer in this kind of conversation. But you said specifically about Dumbledore's Army.

SALANS: Yeah. We've all read *Harry Potter*, right? I'm a millennial. I'm 28. So I grew up on the *Harry Potter* books. As far as the resistance goes against our current national government, millennials are armed, because we grew up reading about Harry forming Dumbledore's Army. Again, that's about organizing, right? And that's what the woman in the back said as well is get into your municipality and find the voices that you connect with.

Also, exactly what Brooke said – we do have to self-educate, because we have to get outside of our boxes. So while we're being introspective, we also have to be reading diverse voices and getting a little uncomfortable and bringing new people to the table so that we can have those really hard conversations, because that makes us better as individuals, too. But yeah, I think *Harry Potter* is at the core of (multiple conversations; inaudible) –



KENNEALLY: Well, you are hardly alone. No less than students at the Kennedy School of Government have taken inspiration from Dumbledore's Army, and they've organized their own kind of school within a school with that very theme. And it's time for me to get outside of my box. I want to go back to the audience. But Patrick, I'll give you the last question from the stage here, which is about the book that mattered to you. We're going to throw out a name that probably not everyone's familiar with. Slavoj Zizek – he's a Marxist philosopher. Brooke is nodding her head.

WARNER: I'm impressed.

KENNEALLY: Score. I had to go look it up myself. And why pick, among authors like Toni Morrison, another favorite of yours, and Zadie Smith – why pick Slavoj Zizek? What was he trying to say?

MALONEY: So we were on a call, and I was working from home, and I looked at my bookshelf. It was the first book I saw. But I think that there is a point with that that can tie back into a couple things that we've been talking about. Zizek talks a lot about ideology, and that's what we believe are our core values – everything that makes us up and how that is expressed in every single thing we do.

One of the audience members talked about did we ever not have biased or fake news, right? There's no way you can write a news story with no bias. It's impossible. The words you use, the way you phrase it, the note you end on – all of that is always going to have some type of bias. We're seeing it more extreme now because these voices are able to start from just a blog and end up with a million hits. So we're seeing more of it. But it's always been that way.

And I think that as publishers and authors, we should – you know, if we have beliefs, we should be making sure that our work reflects those beliefs. And sometimes that's more subtle – like the bias can be in the difference between *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*. They both mostly report objective facts, but the way that they present them is going to be different.

So we talked about *Harry Potter* and feminism. And if you look at – yeah, J.K. Rowling, she's a feminist. And one thing she believes is that there can be strong women that can be important, right? So you see that in her book. If you look deeper, though, J.K. Rowling believes that the stories of women can be just as important as the stories of men. Women can effect change and whatnot. If you



read *Harry Potter*, two-thirds, three-quarters of the characters are men. The vast majority of characters are men if you just run down the list. So in that way, maybe she's working against her own agenda.

So I think, if we have something that we believe, we need to look deeply into what we're writing and see how it reflects that – and deeply into what we're publishing, because I know a lot of us, as publishers, we don't have the opportunity to read all the way through every book we publish. It's tough sometimes, right? Sometimes the editor's the only one who does it. So we sometimes – if we have a goal and we have a mission and we have a message, we need to look deep into what we're saying and make sure that we are putting that forward even in the most subtle of terms.

KENNEALLY: All right. Well, we're going to come back again to the audience for one or two more comments or questions or thoughts. I'm looking for a hand from anybody. Back there? OK.

F: Just a note on feminism – I think we're in third-wave feminism, which is incredibly intersectional, that addresses socioeconomic as well as the global world that we're facing. So it doesn't necessarily mean women over men. It's how can we find the equality between everyone?

F: We're in post-wave feminism (laughter) officially.

MALONEY: I'm in the fifth wave. I don't know about you guys. (laughter)

KENNEALLY: All right. Well, I'm back here with Elizabeth Mays, who's director of marketing with Pressbooks. What's your question or comment?

MAYS: I actually have a question about how you deal with the actual physical threats toward freedom of speech, especially as a feminist publisher and publishing feminist and other marginalized voices.

KENNEALLY: So this isn't just an intellectual discussion I think is what you're saying. This is potentially a matter of physical harm as well?

MAYS: Well, right. I guess I'm specifically referencing things like the trolling incidents we've heard so much about toward women authors, journalists, etc.



WARNER: Right. I personally have not had physical threats, but I absolutely have been trolled and had people who loved to explain to me what I don't know. I love that. That is pretty prevalent. And if you're going to be a voice out there of resistance in any way – I write a lot online about women and women writers and just kind of women's issues as they pertain to writing and publishing. But I have a lot of authors who have in fact been threatened physically, and it's terrifying. It really is.

One of the authors who inspired me is Jessica Valenti, and I worked with her on a number of books at Seal Press. She's an outspoken feminist – sort of the Gloria Steinem of my generation. She and I have talked a lot about how she deals with that. Her family has been threatened. It's a really, really tough space to be in. And it's unfortunate. I think it's only getting worse. On Twitter, it's particularly bad. There's been a lot of conversations about what Twitter and Facebook's responsibilities are. To Chris's point, it has to be pretty darn bad to get banned from Twitter. And people are anonymous.

So it's a frightening culture. I don't think there is an answer, except to say that for people like Jessica, it's not going to make her stop, because what they of course want is for you to shut up. I think that's the exact opposite stance we have to take. You know, if you're getting people, whether it's explaining to you that you don't know what you're talking about or that you should die, you simply – you double down.

KENNEALLY: Right. This is a conversation that I bet is going to continue throughout the day and throughout the rest of the conference, but we have time for one more comment or question, if there is one, from the audience. Sure. Tell us your name and where you're from.

HOBART: My name is Hobie Hobart. I'm with Dunn+Associates Design. And I was listening to the comments and thinking about – I'm sorry, I don't remember her name, but the young woman who was shot, and now she's speaking out –

M: Malala.

HOBART: Malala, yeah.

KENNEALLY: Oh, you're talking about the young woman in Afghanistan?



HOBART: Yes. And she is fearless. This is making me emotional. But without her speaking, nothing will change. We have to say what we want to say.

(applause)

KENNEALLY: I'm going to end here. Thank you (inaudible). Thank you. I want to thank everybody in the room. And I'll leave it at that. OK? Take care.

(applause)

END OF FILE