

Biographies

PHILLIPA K. CHONG is a cultural sociologist who specializes in how we define and evaluate worth: this includes the value we assign to social objects (e.g., books, paintings, knowledge, opinions, etc.) and social groups (e.g., experts, artists, minority groups, etc.). To date, her empirical focus has been on book reviewers as market intermediaries in the cultural market. Her book, *Inside the Critics' Circle: Book Reviewing in Uncertain Times*, was published by Princeton University Press. In it, she explores how fiction reviewers engage in the dual project of constructing (i) the value of new novels in the absence of objective indicators of aesthetic quality; and (ii) the legitimacy of their professional judgments given the accepted subjectivity of taste. She currently works as an Associate Professor in Sociology at McMaster University in Canada. Before arriving at her current post, she earned her PhD in Sociology from the University of Toronto, and was a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Sociology at Harvard University.

JAMES F. ENGLISH is the John Welsh Centennial Professor of English, former director of the Wolf Humanities Center, and founding director of the Price Lab for Digital Humanities at the University of Pennsylvania. His main fields of teaching and research are the sociology and economics of literature, the history of literary studies as a discipline, and contemporary British fiction, film, and television. His books include *The Economy of Prestige: Prizes, Awards and Circulation of Cultural Value*, and *The Global Future of English Studies*. A volume of essays co-edited with Heather Love, *Literary Studies and Human Flourishing*, was published by Oxford UP in 2023. He is currently writing *Beauty By the Numbers*, a history of rating and ranking systems in literature and the arts.

FLORENCIA GARRAMUÑO received her PhD in Romance Languages and Literatures from Princeton University. She is Full Professor in the Humanities Department at University of San Andrés, and an independent researcher at CONICET. She published *Genealogías culturales. Argentina, Brasil y Uruguay en la novela contemporánea, 1980-1990*, *Modernidades Primitivas: tango, samba y nación*, *La experiencia opaca. Literatura y desencanto*, *Mundos en común. Ensayos sobre la inespecificidad en el arte*, and *Brasil Canibal. Entre la Bossa Nova y la extrema derecha*. Her latest book, *La vida impropia*, has recently been published by Eduvim. She has translated texts by Silviano Santiago, Ana Cristina Cesar, João Guimarães Rosa and Clarice Lispector, and Gonçalo Tavares, among others. She received the John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship in 2008 and was appointed Tinker Visiting Professor at Stanford University in 2018.

MATS JANSSON is Professor Emeritus of Comparative Literature at the University of Gothenburg. He has been a visiting scholar at St. Edmund's College, Cambridge University, and at the Scandinavian Department, UC Berkeley. He was awarded The Henrik Shück Prize for literary scholarship by the Swedish Academy in 2013. His research fields include literary criticism, lyrical modernism, reception history, and intermediality. He is the author of five monographs in Swedish and has edited and co-edited five volumes, among them *Nordic Responses: Translation, History, Literary Culture* (with Ástráður Eysteinnsson and Jakob Lothe, 2014), and most recently with Johan Gardfors and Nils Olsson *Att skriva med ljus. 13 essäer om litteratur och fotografi* (2020, Writing with light. 13 essays on literature and photography). He has translated a selection of T. S. Eliot's literary criticism into Swedish in *Om kritik* (2002, On criticism).

RICHARD JACQUEMOND graduated in Law and Sociology and then studied Arabic both in France and in Cairo. He was then appointed Director of the Translation Department of the French Cultural Mission in Egypt (1988-1995). This experience led him to write his Doctoral Thesis, which he published later as a book (English translation: *Conscience of the Nation. Writers, State and Society in Modern Egypt*, trans. by David Tresilian, Cairo: AUC Press, 2008). Since 1999, he has been teaching modern Arabic language and literature at the University of Aix-Marseille, and has held the grade of full professor since 2010. He is affiliated as a researcher with the Institut de Recherches et d'Etudes sur les mondes arabes et musulmans (IREMAM, CNRS, Aix-en-Provence), of which he was director from 2018 to 2023. He publishes his research in French, English and Arabic and is a member

of the editorial board of *Alif, Journal of Comparative Poetics* (AUC Press), *The Translator* (Routledge/Taylor and Francis) and *Arabica* (Brill). When he was still studying Arabic, Richard Jacquemond started translating modern Arabic literature, mainly Egyptian. Since then, he has published more than twenty translations, among them eight novels by leading Egyptian writer Sonallah Ibrahim. He was awarded the Ibn Khaldoun Senghor Prize for his latest translation, Iman Mersal's *Sur les traces d'Enayat Zayyat* (Arles: Actes Sud, 2021).

CHRISTOPHER ODHIAMBO JOSEPH, Professor of Literature and Applied Drama at Moi University, holds a PhD in Drama and Theatre Arts from Stellenbosch University (South Africa), an MA in Literature (Kenyatta University) and a Bachelor of Education Arts (English and Literature, Kenyatta University). He was immediate former Dean of School of Graduate Studies, Research and Innovation and has published in the fields of Literature, Applied Drama/Theatre, Popular Culture and Film. He has presented papers and keynotes on topics in Literature, Theatre and Popular Culture in conferences and seminars. A facilitator of theatre and drama workshops in Kenya and beyond. In 2007 he was awarded a two-year Mellon Research Fellowship at Wits University at the Department of African Literature and Dramatic Art Division and participated in the development and implementation of Drama for Life curriculum, and in 2013 Wits University's SPARC Distinguished Scholar Award. He was also an Alexander von Humboldt Senior Research Fellow in 2015 and 2022. Selected publications: *Bodii and Other Ghettoes Stories* (2022); *Reimagining Kenyan Cinema* (2022, co-editor); *Theatre for Development in Kenya: In Search of Appropriate Procedure and Methodology*; *African Theatre 19*; *Opera & Music Theatre* (2020, co-editor); *Orientations of Drama, Theatre and Culture* (1998); "Power to the People?"—*Patronage, Intervention and Transformation in African Performance Arts*" (2019).

DANIEL KEHLMANN was born in Munich in 1975 and lives in Berlin. His novels and plays have won numerous prizes, including the Candide Prize, the Doderer Prize, the Kleist Prize, the Thomas Mann Prize and the Per Olov Enquist Prize. In 2016/2017 he was a fellow at the New York Public Library's Cullman Center for Writers and Scholars. His bestselling novel *Die Vermessung der Welt* (*Measuring the World*) was published in 2005 and his novel *Tyll* (2017) was short-listed for the 2020 International Booker Prize.

ZOLTÁN KULCSÁR-SZABÓ received his PhD in Comparative Literature from Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) in Budapest. He is currently

Professor in the Department of Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies at ELTE. Also, he is the Director of ELTE's Doctoral School of Literary Studies. Main fields of research: lyric theory, deconstructive criticism, performativity, Hungarian and German literature of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. He has published monographs in Hungarian and co-edited several volumes, among them *Transfer and Translation* (Budapest 2002), *Signaturen des Geschehens* (Bielefeld 2014), and *Life After Literature* (Cham 2020). His most recent volume *Jeltelen felhők között* (Budapest: Ráció, 2022) deals with the history of Hungarian poetry of the last hundred years.

REBECCA KÄRDE, born 1991 in Stockholm, is a literary critic and translator writing in Swedish but living in Paris. She is a staff writer at the newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* and has written for numerous other publications, such as the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. Between 2018 and 2020, she was on the external committee for the Nobel Prize in Literature. Her criticism has received numerous awards, including the Swedish Academy's Prize for Criticism (2018) and the Axel Liffner Prize (2022). As a translator, Kärde's focus lies primarily on German literature, though she also translates from English and Latin. *Alles umsonst* (*Allt förgäves*, Albert Bonniers förlag 2022) by Walter Kempowski is her latest published translation. She holds a BA in Ancient Greek from the University of Stockholm and is currently finishing her MA in Classical and Modern Literature at the University of Heidelberg. Her translation of Saint Augustine's *Soliloquies* was published in 2025.

CAMILLE LAURENS is a French writer. A winner of the 2000 Prix Femina for *Dans ces bras-là* (*In their arms*), she has authored ten novels and autofictional works (translated into more than 30 languages), among which her latest, *Girl: A Novel*, has become a world bestseller. She has also published several essays. One of these is *Little dancer aged fourteen* — a subject to which she devoted her PhD dissertation in 2021. A graduate of humanities, she taught literature, notably in Morocco and at Science-Po Paris. From 2002 to 2022, Camille Laurens regularly chronicled literary works in newspapers, notably in "Écritures", appearing monthly in *Liberation*, and in a weekly serial in *Le Monde*. After twelve years on the jury for the Prix Femina (2007 to 2019), she has been a member of the Académie Goncourt since 2020.

MARK MCGURL is a Professor of English at Stanford University. He is the author of three books, including *The Program Era: Postwar Fiction*

and *the Rise of Creative Writing* (Harvard University Press, 2009) and, most recently, *Everything and Less: The Novel in the Age of Amazon* (Verso, 2021), which was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award for Criticism.

RONYA OTHMANN was born in Munich in 1993 and lives in Berlin. She works as a freelance author and journalist. She has received the MDR Literature Prize, the Caroline Schlegel Prize for Essay Writing, the Open Mike Poetry Prize, the Gertrud Kolmar Prize, and the Audience Award of the Ingeborg Bachmann Competition, among others. In 2018, she was on the jury of the Duhok International Film Festival in the Autonomous Region of Kurdistan, Iraq, and wrote the column “OrientExpress” on Middle East politics for the *taz* together with Cemile Sahin until August 2020. Since 2021, she has penned the column “Import Export” for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung*. Hanser recently published her debut novel *Die Sommer* (2020), for which she was awarded the Mara Cassens Prize, and the poetry collection *die verbrechen* (2021), for which she received the Orphil Debut Prize and the Düsseldorf Poetry Debut Prize. She is founding member of the aspiring PEN Berlin. Her documentary novel *Vier- und siebenzig* was published by Rowohlt in March 2024. In 2025, her book of reportage *Return to Syria: Journey to an Uncertain Country* was published.

SANDRA RICHTER is Professor of German literature at the University of Hamburg and director of the German Literature Archive Marbach, and is a recipient of the Heinz Maier-Leibnitz Prize and the Philip Leverhulme Prize. She focuses on rhetoric, poetic and aesthetics, the history of literature (the literatures) and methodology. Her publications include *Eine Weltgeschichte der deutschen Literatur*. (Munich: C. Bertelsmann, 2017), *A History of Poetics. German Scholarly Aesthetics and Poetics in International Context, 1800-1960* (2010) and a number of publications on the history of criticism.

LIONEL RUFFEL is a literary scholar, publisher, and author. Professor of Comparative Literature at Université Paris 8, he is the founding director of the creative writing program there. Among his recent projects, he has convened (together with artist Kader Attia) “Theory Now” at La Colonie in Paris, “The Publishing Sphere” at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt (Berlin), and “Radio Brouhaha” at Pompidou Center, Paris. Ruffel is the author of six books: *Le Dénouement* (2005); *Volodine post-exotique* (2007); *Brouhaha, Worlds of the Contemporary* (2016 French, 2018, English), *Trompe-la-mort* (2019), *I can’t sleep*

(2021), *Trois éveils* (2024). He is an associate publisher at Verdier Publishing House where he is responsible for the series *chaôid*.

GISÈLE SAPIRO is Professor of Sociology at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales and Research director at the Centre national de la recherche scientifique, member of Academia Europaea, silver Medal of the CNRS 2021, Humboldt Prize 2023. Her areas of interest are the sociology of literature and of translation. She is the author of *La Guerre des écrivains, 1940-1953* (1999; transl. *French Writers' War*, 2014), *La Responsabilité de l'écrivain* (2011), *La Sociologie de la littérature* (2014; Engl. *The Sociology of Literature*, 2023), *Les Ecrivains et la politique en France* (2018), *Peut-on dissocier l'œuvre de l'auteur?* (2020), *Des mots qui tuent* (2020), *Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur mondial?* (2024). She has edited several volumes on translation and also *Dictionnaire international Bourdieu* (2020).

ZERUYA SHALEV is the author of seven critically-acclaimed novels, two children's books, and a book of poetry. Many of her novels have become bestsellers around the world. Shalev was born in Kibbutz Kinneret and began writing poetry at a very young age. She has an MA in Biblical Studies, and was a literary editor at the Keter Publishing house. Throughout her career, Shalev has been awarded the Book Publisher Association's Gold and Platinum Prizes. Her second novel, *Love Life* — adapted into a film in 2008 — was included in *Der Spiegel's* "20 Best Novels in World Literature." Her third novel, *Husband and Wife* won the Corine and Amphi prize. In 2014, *The Remains of Love* won the Prix Femina Etranger and the Welt-Literature Prize, and was included in The Independent's Books of the Year in Translation. In 2019, she won the Jan Michalski Prize for her novel *Pain*. Apart from writing, Shalev has been active in "Women Wage Peace," a grassroots Israeli-Palestinian peace movement that focuses on building trust across social divides. In 2017, she was decorated as a Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres. Her fiction has been translated into twenty-eight languages.

GALIN TIHANOV is the George Steiner Professor of Comparative Literature at Queen Mary University of London. He has held visiting professorships at universities in Europe, North and South America, and Asia. He is the author of six books, including *The Birth and Death of Literary Theory: Regimes of Relevance in Russia and Beyond* (Stanford UP, 2019) which won the 2020 AATSEEL Prize for "best book in literary studies". Tihanov has been elected to the British Academy (2021) and to the Academia Europaea (2012); he is past president of

the ICLA Committee on Literary Theory and member of the Executive Board of the Institute for World Literature at Harvard University, as well as honorary scientific advisor to the Institute of Foreign Literatures, CASS, Beijing. His recent work has been on cosmopolitanism, world literature, and exile.

JUAN GABRIEL VÁSQUEZ was born in Bogotá, Colombia, in 1973. He is the author of eight works of fiction, including *The Sound of Things Falling*, winner of the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award, *Reputations*, winner of the Premio Real Academia Española, *The Shape of the Ruins*, shortlisted for the Man Booker International Prize, and *Retrospective*, winner of the Mario Vargas Llosa Biennial Award and the Prix du Meilleur Livre Étranger. His political journalism is published by newspapers all over the world, and his writings in defense of the Colombian peace process were compiled in a volume entitled *Los desacuerdos de paz* (*The Peace Disagreements*). He has translated works by Joseph Conrad and Victor Hugo, among others, into Spanish. He was made Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Minister of Culture and received the Orden Isabel la Católica from the King of Spain. In 2022 he was distinguished as an International writer by the Royal Society of Literature; in May of this year he was made a member of the Colombian Academia de la Lengua. His work has been published in 30 languages worldwide.

MAGNUS WILLIAM-OLSSON (b. 1960) is a poet, translator and critic. For many years he has run a seminar in Stockholm on criticism as a form of art and knowledge, attended by critics as well as artists of all artforms and scholars. In 2016 he founded Kritiklabbet (The Critique Lab), investigating and experimenting on how various traditions of criticism can be prolonged and developed, esthetically, technically and financially, in the “New Public Sphere”. Magnus William-Olsson has translated, among many others, Sappho, Antonio Gamoneda and Gloria Gervitz into Swedish. His own poetry is widely translated, and he is the editor of two book series. Magnus William-Olsson’s critical works is almost exclusively dedicated to poetry and poetics.

XU XI 許素細 xuxiwriter.com, is an Indonesian-Chinese novelist, fiction writer and essayist from Hong Kong who became a U. S. citizen. Author of sixteen books—five novels, nine collections of fiction and essays, one memoir and one co-authored textbook—she also edited or co-edited four anthologies of Hong Kong literature in English. Awards include the 2024 FCII’s Catherine Doctorow Innovative Fiction Prize finalist for a novel *The Milton Man*, the 2007 Man Asian

Literary Prize finalist for a novel *Habit of a Foreign Sky*, an O. Henry 2006 prize for the story “Famine”, the South China Morning Post 1992 story prize for “Blackjack”, a 1991 NYFA fiction fellowship, among others. Forthcoming is *Horizon Hong Kong: Selected Stories* (Gaudy Boy Press, New York, 2026); recent titles include *Monkey in Residence and Other Speculations* (Signal 8 U. K., 2022), *This Fish is Fowl: Essays of Being* (Nebraska 2019), *Dear Hong Kong: An Elegy for a City* (Penguin, 2017), the novel *That Man in Our Lives* (C&R, 2016), and *The Art and Craft of Asian Stories* (co-authored, Bloomsbury, 2021). She was writer-in-residence at Arizona State University, the City University of Hong Kong, the University of Iowa, among others, and directed two international MFA programs in creative writing and literary translation. Earlier, she held management positions in Asia and the U. S. at the Asian Wall Street Journal, Federal Express, Pinkerton’s. She retired from full time work in June 2025, and was the William H. P. Jenks Chair in Contemporary Letters at the College of the Holy Cross in Massachusetts and also co-founder of Authors at Large. She holds a MFA in fiction from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst (1985) and in 2024, was awarded an honorary DFA from the State University of New York. A diehard transnational, she now splits life between New York and the rest of the world. Follow her @xuxiwriter.