

Authors

Dr. Mita Banerjee is Professor and Chair of American Studies at the Obama Institute for Transnational American Studies at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany. She is the author of seven monographs, in which she explores the way in which literary and cultural texts might contribute to addressing some of the major challenges of our time, from climate change to refugee crises, aging societies and digitalisation. She has been especially fascinated by how the humanities may be in dialogue with the life sciences. Her recent book, *Centenarians' Autobiographies*, published with De Gruyter in 2024, investigates the relationship between life writing narratives and the medical paradigm of "Successful Aging."

Dr. Christoph Bläsi is Professor for book studies at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany. Current fields of research include reading (surveying, categorisation of positive effects, etc.), AI in publishing and business aspects of educational media, his teaching covers aspects of book business and management as well as digital publishing.

Michaela Castellanos is a Ph.D. candidate in English at Mid-Sweden University. Anchored in American Studies, she enjoys researching and collaborating across disciplinary boundaries. In her doctoral dissertation, she analyses literature and film in which cetaceans (whales, dolphins, and porpoises) are prominently featured from ecocritical and animal studies perspectives.

Dr. Jennifer Cattermole is Associate Professor in Music at the University of Otago, New Zealand. She recently completed a book about the origins and development of Māori and Moriori musical instruments titled *Echoes from Hawaiki*, with the support of a prestigious Royal Society of New Zealand's Marsden grant. Her other research interests include music policy and politics, community music-making, and the role of music in reflecting and constructing place and identity.

Dr. Dieter Dörr is Professor Emeritus of Public Law, International and European Law, Media Law at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany. He was Director of the Mainz Media Institute, Director of the Institute for European Media Law (EMR) in Saarbrücken, Member of the Advisory Panel on Media Diversity of the Council of Europe and a part-time judge at the Higher Regional Court of Koblenz. He has published extensively on national and international media law and international law (legal status and right to self-determination of indigenous peoples).

Dr. Anton Escher is Professor for Cultural Geography at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany. His research interests are North Africa and the Middle East, the field of migration, migrant narratives, historic towns, indigenous people, and film geography.

Dr. Alistair Fox is Professor Emeritus at the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand, who specialises in English Tudor literature and history, New Zealand literature and cinema studies, and contemporary literary and film theory.

Witi Ihimaera was the first Māori to write a novel, *Tangi*, in 1973. He celebrated 50 years as one of the world's leading indigenous writers and thinkers by participating in the celebrations at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz attendant on his sixth book, *The Whale Rider* (1987), later made into the internationally acclaimed feature film in 2002. He continues to participate steadily in many creative disciplines as a teacher, essayist and lecturer as well as writer, and has an impressive body of fiction, film, theatre and television to his credit.

Wolfgang Jäger is a teacher at a secondary school in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. His fields of research are children's and young adult media and their didactics, democracy education, and digitisation in education.

Dr. Angela Kölling is currently Professor of Anglophone Studies at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany. Her research interests include Oceanian literature and cultural studies of the digital realm (terra nullius 4.0, digital natives, Pacific Islands in the metaverse). Her work appeared in international journals, such as *Imaginations: Journal of Cross-Cultural Image Studies*, *English Text Construction*, and *The Journal of New Zealand and Pacific Studies*.

Dr. Karyn Paringatai (Ngāti Porou) is Professor in Māori Studies at Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka – University of Otago, Dunedin, Aotearoa New Zealand. Her research interests are varied but centre on the application of Māori cultural knowledge within a diverse range of subject areas. She is a descendant of Paikea and often sings about his exploits whenever the occasion arises.

Dr. Julia Sander is Professor of contemporary German literature specialising in reading and literature education at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany. Her fields of research are children's and young adult media and their didactics, critical literacy, and reading promotion in all-day schools.

Dr. Susan Sandretto is Professor of Education in *Te Kura Ākau Taitoka* [College of Education], *Ōtākou Whakaihū Waka* [University of Otago], Ōtepoti [Dunedin], Aotearoa New Zealand. Her fields of research are critical literacy, critical multiliteracies, and education policy. She contributes to undergraduate and postgraduate education in education studies and initial teacher education.

Dr. Thomas Tütken is a geochemist and paleontologist. He researches and teaches as a professor at the Institute of Geosciences at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany. In his research, he uses isotope analyses of fossil teeth to reconstruct the diet, environmental and climatic conditions, as well as the paleobiology and mobility of extinct vertebrates.

Dr. Anke Vogel is a research and teaching associate in the Book Studies Department at the Gutenberg Institute for World Literature and Written Media at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany. Her research and teaching interests include book market research (digital transformation, communication, sustainability), reading and readers research and children's and young adult book studies.

Dr. Svenja Völkel is Senior Researcher at the Department of English and Linguistics of the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany. Her fields of research include linguistic anthropology, language typology, and cognitive linguistics with a regional focus on Oceania, particularly Polynesia, where she has conducted intensive field research since 2001. For the project, she spent about two months in New Zealand – at the University of Otago in Dunedin and in Auckland.

Dr. Bettina Wild is Lehrkraft für besondere Aufgaben at the German Department of the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany. Her fields of research are children's and young adult literature and their didactics and literary learning.

