

## Bernhard Schlink *Thoughts on Writing*

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## Bernhard Schlink *Gedanken über das Schreiben*

*Diogenes*

»A tiny element of truth will suffice, as long as it does not profess to be more than it is.« In his Heidelberg Poetics Readings *Thoughts on Writing* (May–June 2010) the author Bernhard Schlink considered what moves him about the writing process, and which maxims hold most relevance for him. He takes his listeners along on the search for the rules, which guide his writing through the past, love and home. He gives answers to critical questions, both those, which he asks himself, and those posed by others. Is literature bound to truth? Are there particular obligations which literature about the Holocaust has to fulfil? Do protagonists who commit monstrous crimes have to be portrayed as monsters? Does an author love the characters he writes about? This title contains both self exploration and open discussion, impressive and informative for everyone interested in Bernhard Schlink as an author and in how good stories come into being.

## Book factsheet

Contemporary Literature  
96 pages  
11.6 × 18.4 cm  
June 2011

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### Movie adaptations

#### 2011: *Das Wochenende*

Director: Nina Grosse  
Cast: Katja Riemann, Sebastian Koch, Barbara Auer

#### 2009: *The Reader*

Director: Stephen Daldry  
Screenplay: David Hare  
Cast: Kate Winslet, Ralph Fiennes, David Kross,  
Bruno Ganz, Karoline Herfurth, Volker Bruch,  
Hannah Herzprung und Alexandra Maria Lara

#### 2008: *The Other Man*

Director: Richard Eyre  
Screenplay: Richard Eyre  
Cast: Liam Neeson, Laura Linney und Antonio  
Banderas

#### 1991: *Der Tod kam als Freund*

Director: Nico Hoffmann  
Cast: Martin Benrath, Hannelore Elsner, Heino  
Ferch, Marianne Hoppe

### Awards

- 2024 Spanische Übersetzung von *Die Enkelin* mit dem ›Premio de las Librerías de Navarra‹ ausgezeichnet
- 2014 ›Pak Kyong-ni Prize‹ der südkoreanischen Kulturstiftung Toji für sein schriftstellerisches Schaffen
- 2003 ›Bundesverdienstkreuz 1. Klasse‹ für *Der Vorleser*
- 2002 ›Preis des German-British Forum‹ für sein Gesamtwerk
- 2001 Finnischer Literaturpreis ›Eeva Joenpelto-Preis‹ der Gemeinde Lohja
- 2001 Ernennung zum ›Chevalier dans l'Ordre de la Légion d'Honneur‹
- 2000 ›Ehrengabe‹ der Heinrich-Heine-Gesellschaft in Düsseldorf
- 2000 ›Sonderkulturpreis‹ der japanischen Tageszeitung *Mainichi Shinbun*, der jedes Jahr an einen japanischen Buchbestseller vergeben wird, für *Der Vorleser*
- 2000 ›Evangelischer Buchpreis‹ des Deutschen Verbandes Evangelischer Bucharbeiter für *Der Vorleser*
- 1999 Erstmals verliehener ›WELT-Literaturpreis‹ für sein literarisches Schaffen
- 1997 ›Grinzane-Cavour-Preis‹ (Italien) für *Der Vorleser*



Bernhard Schlink, born in 1944, was a Professor of Public Law and Legal Philosophy and a former judge at the Constitutional Court of North Rhine-Westphalia. His first novel, *Self's Justice*, was published in 1987; his 1995 novel *The Reader*, translated into more than fifty languages and adapted by Stephen Daldry into a film starring Kate Winslet, established his worldwide renown. He has been awarded with national and international prizes like the German ›Bundesverdienstkreuz (Order of Merit) 1st Class‹, the French ›Chevalier dans l'Ordre de la Legion d'Honneur‹ and the Italian ›Grinzane Cavour Prize‹. His latest novel is *The Late Life*.

### Awards (cont'd)

- 1997 ›Prix Laure Bataillon‹ (Frankreich) für *Der Vorleser* (Auszeichnung für den Autor sowie für den Übersetzer Bernard Lortholary)
- 1997 ›Hans-Fallada-Preis‹ der Stadt Neumünster für *Der Vorleser*
- 1993 ›Deutscher Krimi-Preis‹ des Bochumer Krimi Archivs für *Selbs Betrug*
- 1989 Autorenpreis deutschsprachige Kriminalliteratur ›Der Glauser‹ für *Die gordische Schleife*

### Praise

Bernhard Schlink

›Schlink has won his huge popular following by bringing to bear a penetrating intelligence about the psyche of his characters and an empathy for their dilemmas. Professor Schlink may be an expert on the letter of the law, but writer Schlink is an intrepid explorer of the much trickier terrain of the human heart.« – Andrew Nagorski / Newsweek, London

›[Schlink] writes instructive tales that adeptly raise difficult questions and propose appealing answers.« – New York Times Book Review

›The German novelist Bernhard Schlink is pretty much second to none when it comes to storytelling.« – Helmut Atteneder / Oberösterreichische Nachrichten, Linz

›Schlink knows the depths of the human soul all too well. The writer and judge proves with each of his books that he knows how to transform German history into literature.« – ZeitPunkt, Leipzig

›One of the most successful and versatile German writers of our time.« – Volker Hage / Der Spiegel, Hamburg

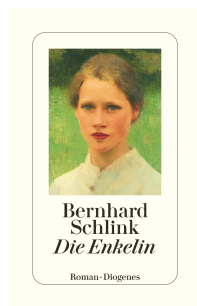
›The truly masterly aspect of Schlink's prose is its intelligence – an intelligence that is firmly rooted in common sense.« – Welt am Sonntag, Hamburg



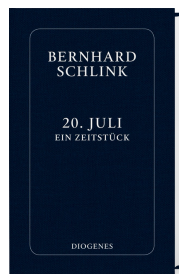
*Justice*  
208 pages  
2026



*The Late Life*  
240 pages  
2024  
**Bestseller**



*The Granddaughter*  
368 pages  
2021  
**Award winner**  
**Bestseller**



*The 20th of July*  
96 pages  
2021



*Colours of Farewell*  
240 pages  
2020  
**Bestseller**



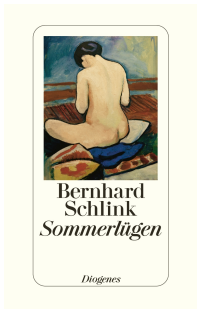
*Olga*  
320 pages  
2018  
**Bestseller**



*Explorations*  
288 pages  
2015



*The Woman on the Stairs*  
256 pages  
2014  
**Bestseller**



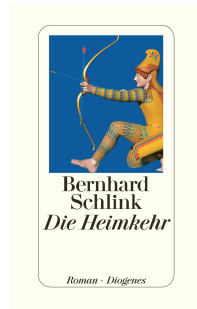
Summer Lies  
288 pages  
2010  
🏆 Bestseller



The Weekend  
240 pages  
2008  
🎬 Movie Adaptation  
🏆 Bestseller



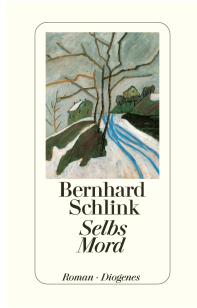
Guilt of the Past  
192 pages  
2007



The Homecoming  
384 pages  
2006  
🏆 Bestseller



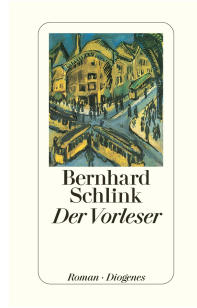
Verifications  
368 pages  
2005



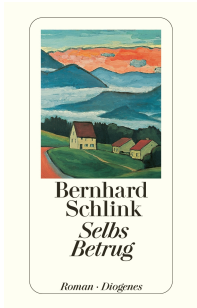
Self's Murder  
272 pages  
2001



Flights of Love  
320 pages  
2000  
🎬 Movie Adaptation



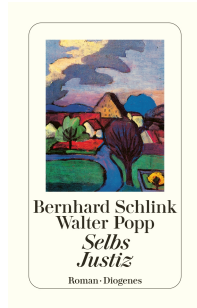
The Reader  
208 pages  
1995  
🏆 Award winner  
🎬 Movie Adaptation  
🏆 Bestseller



Self's Deception  
304 pages  
1992  
🏆 Award winner



The Gordian Knot  
272 pages  
1988  
🏆 Award winner



Self's Punishment  
352 pages  
1987  
🎬 Movie Adaptation