



Friday, April 29, 2016, 8pm
Zellerbach Hall

Berkeley Talks

Co-presented by Cal Performances and UC Berkeley

Jonathan Franzen



In Conversation with Chancellor Nicholas B. Dirks

Cal Performances' 2015–2016 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

BERKELEY TALKS is a new series of conversations that brings together international thought leaders, public scholars, creators, and innovators to examine the distinctive issues of our time. These luminaries will engage in dialogue at the sometimes surprising nexus between their area of expertise and the University's core mission, celebrating the Chancellor's vision of a vibrant, engaged, and forward-looking campus culture.

When *The Corrections* was published in 2001, **Jonathan Franzen** was probably better known for his nonfiction than for his two earlier novels—*The Twenty-Seventh City* (1988) and *Strong Motion* (1992). In an essay he had written for *Harper's* in 1996, Franzen lamented the declining cultural authority of the American novel and described his personal search for reasons to persist as a fiction writer. "The novelist has more and more to say to readers who have less and less time to read," he wrote. "Where to find the energy to engage with a culture in crisis when the crisis consists in the impossibility of engaging with the culture?"

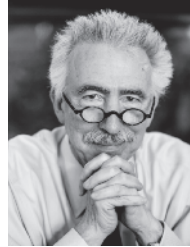
Five years later, Franzen became fully engaged with his culture. *The Corrections* became an enormous international bestseller, with translations in 35 languages, American hardcover sales of nearly one million copies, and nominations for nearly every major book prize in the country (the novel would go on to win the National Book Award that year).

When Franzen's next novel, *Freedom*, was published in 2010, the author was featured on the cover of *Time* magazine—only the second time in the past decade that a living writer has been so honored. The book debuted at the top of the bestseller lists, won the John Gardner Prize for fiction and the Heartland Prize, and was a finalist for National Book Critics Circle Award and the Los Angeles Times Book Prize.

Franzen's short stories and nonfiction, including political journalism, have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The Best American Essays*, *The New York Times*, and *The Guardian*, and a collection of his essays, *Farther Away*, appeared in 2012. Franzen's most recent nonfiction book is *The Kraus Project*, in which he translates and annotates essays by the satirist Karl Kraus.

A former Fulbright scholar and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Franzen was born in Western Springs, Illinois, in 1959. He grew up in a suburb of St. Louis and

graduated from Swarthmore College in 1981. His most recent novel, *Purity*, was published in September 2015 by Farrar, Straus and Giroux.



Nicholas B. Dirks became the 10th chancellor of the University of California, Berkeley, on June 1, 2013. An internationally renowned historian and anthropologist, he is a leader in higher education and is well-known for his commitment to and advocacy for accessible, high-quality undergraduate education in the liberal arts and sciences, to the globalization of the university, and to innovation across the disciplines as well as in applied and basic fields.

Before coming to Berkeley, he was the executive vice president for the arts and sciences and dean of the faculty at Columbia University, where, in addition to his work on behalf of undergraduate programs, he improved and diversified the faculty, putting special emphasis on interdisciplinary and international initiatives. The Franz Boas Professor of Anthropology and History, Chancellor Dirks joined Columbia in 1997 as chair of the anthropology department. Prior to his appointment at Columbia, he was a professor of history and anthropology at the University of Michigan for 10 years, before which he taught Asian history and civilization at the California Institute of Technology.

Chancellor Dirks has held numerous fellowships and scholarships and received several scholarly honors, including a MacArthur Foundation residential fellowship at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, a Guggenheim fellowship, and the Lionel Trilling Award for his book *Castes of Mind*. He serves on numerous national and international bodies, as adviser or member of the board, and is a fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations.