1. Nominee: Nominee: Su Tong / 苏童 Juror: Wang Yao / 王尧

I nominate Su Tong / 苏童（1963—）for the 2027 Newman Prize for Chinese Literature. The Newman Prize for Chinese Literature recognizes Chinese-language writers whose works offer profound explorations of the human condition, with literary excellence as its sole criterion. By this standard, Su Tong, one of the most accomplished contemporary Chinese writers, is a compelling candidate for this distinguished award. Since the New Era of Chinese literature began, Su Tong has established himself as one of the most distinctive and enduring voices in contemporary Chinese fiction and prose. Having emerged from the avant-garde literary movement yet never confined by a single literary label or aesthetic mode, he has spent over four decades refining his narrative techniques and expanding the boundaries of fiction. He also composes essays demonstrating an exceptional sensitivity to the lyrical potential of the Chinese language. Through sophisticated linguistic craftsmanship, incisive insight into human nature, and an imaginative engagement with the landscapes and histories of southern China, Su Tong has constructed a literary universe rooted in the lived experience of contemporary China while remaining fully accessible to readerships across world literature.

Su Tong, born Tong Zhonggui in Suzhou, Jiangsu Province in 1963, traces his ancestral roots to Yangzhong, Jiangsu. He studied in the Department of Chinese Language and Literature at Beijing Normal University, where he enrolled in 1980 and graduated in 1984. After graduation, he moved to Nanjing. He previously served as an editor for the literary journal *Zhongshan* and as a professional writer affiliated with the Jiangsu Provincial Writers' Association, joining the Chinese Writers Association in 1990. Currently a professor at Beijing Normal University, he has held positions as Vice Chairman of the Jiangsu Provincial Writers' Association and a member of the Presidium of the National Committee of the Chinese Writers Association. He has also served as a writer-in-residence and participated in literary exchanges and residencies at institutions including the International Writing Center of Beijing Normal University, the University of Hong Kong, and Nanyang Technological University. Su Tong began publishing works in the early 1980s, and has since written extensively across genres, including novels, novellas, short stories, essays and prose. His landmark works include *Wives and Concubines*, *Flight in 1934*, *Opium Family*, *Rouge*, *Rice*, *My Life as Emperor*, *Binu and the Great Wall*, *The Boat to Redemption*, *The Sparrow's Trap*, *Fine Weather*, and *Remembering the Mulberry Garden*. His essay collections feature *Selected Prose by Su Tong* and *An Eight-Hundred-Mile Hometown*. He has received numerous prestigious literary honors: the Zhuang Zhongwen Literature Prize, the Hundred Flowers Award from *Fiction Monthly*, the Lu Xun Literature Prize, the Chinese Literature Media Award, the Man Asian Literary Prize, and the Mao Dun Literature Prize. His short story "Water Caltrop" won the 5th Lu Xun Literature Prize; *The Boat to Redemption* won the 3rd Man Asian Literary Prize; and *The Sparrow's Trap* was awarded the 9th Mao Dun Literature Prize. In 2011, Su Tong was longlisted for the Man Booker International Prize, a testament to sustained international critical attention to his oeuvre.

Su Tong occupies a central position in contemporary Chinese literature as a core representative of avant-garde fiction. In 1987, *Remembering the Mulberry Garden* inaugurated his renowned "Chinese Toon Tree Street" series, while *Flight in 1934* marked the launch of his "Maple Poplar Hometown" sequence. Works such as *Opium Family* and *Wives and Concubines* soon established him as a pivotal figure in the transformation of Chinese fiction in the late 1980s. One of Su Tong's most vital literary contributions lies in reinterpreting the interplay between history and human nature through a highly personalized narrative aesthetic. Rather than framing the lives of feudal clans as merely a critique of outdated social structures, *Wives and Concubines* lays bare how individuals inflict harm on one another

amid institutional constraints, insatiable desire and the instinct for survival—filtered through Songlian's perceptions, the mutual surveillance between women, and power struggles within claustrophobic domestic spaces. Adapted by Zhang Yimou into the internationally acclaimed film *Raise the Red Lantern*, the novel garnered widespread recognition at major international film festivals and was nominated for an Academy Award, making Su Tong among the earliest contemporary Chinese novelists to gain global renown.

Rice and *My Life as Emperor* employ allegorical modes of storytelling to dissect desire, power, hunger and fate. *The Boat to Redemption* embeds the history of the Cultural Revolution within a symbolic framework of river versus shore, boat versus land, identity versus exile, capturing how the political era exerts a devastating impact on individual lives and laying bare the moral complexity of human beings trapped in humiliation, cowardice and the urge for self-preservation. Returning to Chinese Toon Tree Street, *The Sparrow's Trap* weaves intersecting perspectives of three characters—Baorun, Liusheng and Miss Bai—to explore the cyclical dynamics of sin and punishment, injury and redemption, craving and destiny, demonstrating Su Tong's mature command of full-length novel structure. Su Tong never stagnates within a fixed stylistic mold. Entering the new century, he recognized that the label of "Su Tong's signature style" risked becoming a limitation on his artistic development, yet refused to abandon his innate artistic temperament. From the stark realism of *Why the Snake Flies* to the mythic retelling of ancient Chinese legend in *Binu and the Great Wall*, and the rebalanced treatment of history, reality, allegory and everyday ethics in *The Boat to Redemption*, *The Sparrow's Trap* and *Fine Weather*, Su Tong continuously calibrates the tension between artistic evolution and core creative essence. His writing proves that canonical status for a seasoned writer stems not merely from crafting a recognizable style, but from perpetually renewing it; not only from telling distinctly Chinese stories, but from elevating specific Chinese lived experience to universal meditations on humanity.

Su Tong is equally distinguished as an essayist. The allure of his fiction does not rely on fast-paced plotting, but on meticulous atmosphere-building, restrained emotional expression and refined linguistic texture. He endows ordinary characters with hidden suffering, reveals the hidden weight of fate over mundane daily life, and transforms marginalized, voiceless and wounded figures displaced by China's modernization into powerfully aesthetic literary representations. This lyrical sensibility is inherently essayistic; his novels draw their core grace from the essence of prose writing. In his essays, his signature Southern Chinese lyrical vision reaches a particularly concentrated expression, cementing his place among the most notable contemporary Chinese prose writers, with multiple pieces selected for middle school Chinese textbooks. Marked by plain, lucid language, delicate observation and resilient sentiment, his essays illuminate larger questions through intimate anecdotes, remaining deeply rooted in lived experience. Between the lines linger profound affection and philosophical reflection on hometown, childhood, street life and ordinary humanity, forming a uniquely distinctive aesthetic voice. Su Tong's essays constitute an outstanding contribution to contemporary Chinese prose composition.

His recollections of hometown and childhood evoke the misty, watery landscapes of the Jiangnan region, articulating layered emotions toward the passage of time and the transformation of native land. Works including *The Bridge in Northern Town*, *North Bureau of Suzhou*, *Moments from Childhood* and *Sickbed at Nine* employ imagery of hometown streets, old residences and bridges as cultural metaphors for Jiangnan. Su Tong excels at depicting street-level society and everyday people, exemplified by *Rain and Tiles* and *Ode to the Bicycle*. Through granular portrayals of urban street scenes and the joys and sorrows of common folk, he captures the quiet beauty of Jiangnan regional life and its authentic texture. Reflections on life and familial bonds constitute another defining feature of his prose, seen in

The Secret of the River and *I Never Dare to Boast of a Happy Childhood*, written in tender, uncluttered prose.

Su Tong's published essay collections include *Searching for the Lamp Cord*, *Beauties on Paper*, *The Secret of the River*, *Catching Sunlight*, *Live Without Haste*, *Open-Air Cinema* and *Selected Prose by Su Tong*. I specifically recommend his essay collection *An Eight-Hundred-Mile Hometown*, published by Phoenix Literature and Art Publishing House in December 2018. Divided into three sections—*The Secret of the River*, *An Eight-Hundred-Mile Hometown* and *The Passion for Fiction*—this volume curates Su Tong's most representative prose works.

I nominate Su Tong for the Newman Prize for Chinese Literature precisely because his body of work embodies the award's dual emphasis on literary merit and the human condition. Rooted in the regional experience of South China, his writing transcends geographical boundaries; departing from histories, clans, alleyways, childhood and women's fates, it ultimately arrives at universal inquiries into human nature. Su Tong's literary achievements belong firmly to contemporary Chinese literature, and have become an essential portal for global readers to understand Chinese experience and the spiritual predicaments of modern humanity. Given his sustained and prolific creative output, mature and unparalleled aesthetic style, as well as extensive overseas translation, dissemination and scholarly research surrounding his work, Su Tong possesses the literary achievements and global significance to stand as a nominee for the Newman Prize for Chinese Literature.

关于推荐苏童参评美国纽曼华语文学奖的报告

王尧（中国苏州大学）

美国纽曼华语文学奖强调以文学成就为依据，奖励能够深切呈现“人的处境”的中文写作者。基于这一标准，我郑重推荐中国当代作家苏童参评该奖。苏童是新时期以来中国文学中极具持续创造力、艺术辨识度和国际传播力的小说家和散文家之一。他的写作从先锋文学出发，却并未被某一文学潮流所限定，在四十余年的创作中不断调整叙事方式，拓展小说边界，创作充满汉语之美的散文，以成熟的语言艺术、复杂的人性洞察和独特的南方想象，建构出一个既属于中国当代经验、又能够进入世界文学阅读视野的文学世界。

苏童，原名童忠贵，1963 年生于江苏苏州，祖籍江苏扬中。1980 年考入北京师范大学中文系，1984 年毕业后到南京工作，曾任《钟山》杂志编辑、江苏省作家协会专业作家，1990 年加入中国作家协会。现为北京师范大学教授，曾任江苏省作家协会副主席、中国作家协会全国委员会主席团委员，并曾在北京师范大学国际写作中心、香港大学、南洋理工大学等机构任驻校作家或开展文学交流。苏童自 20 世纪 80 年代初开始发表作品，创作涵盖长篇小说、中篇小说、短篇小说、散文随笔等多种体裁，代表作包括《妻妾成群》《一九三四年的逃亡》《罂粟之家》《红粉》《米》《我的帝王生涯》《碧奴》《河岸》《黄雀记》《好天气》《桑园留念》以及散文集《苏童散文》《八百里故乡》等。他曾获庄重文文学奖、《小说月报》百花奖、鲁迅文学奖、华语文学传媒大奖、英仕曼亚洲文学奖、茅盾文学奖等重要奖项。其中，短篇小说《茨菰》获第五届鲁迅文学奖，长篇小说《河岸》获第三届英仕曼亚洲文学奖，《黄雀记》获第九届茅盾文学奖。2011 年，苏童曾入围布克国际文学奖，显示出其创作在国际范围内已获得持续关注。

苏童最早以先锋小说的重要代表身份进入中国当代文学史。1987 年，《桑园留念》开启了“香椿树街”系列，《一九三四年的逃亡》成为“枫杨树故乡”系列的起点。此后，《罂粟之家》《妻妾成群》等作品使他迅速成为 20 世纪 80 年代末中国小说转型中的关键人物。苏童小说最突出的贡献之一，是以高度个人化的叙述美学重新处理历史与人性的关系。《妻妾成群》并不把旧式家族生活写成简单的封建控诉，而是通过颂莲的感受、女性之间的彼此观看和幽闭空间中的权力运作，揭示人如何在制度、欲望和生存本能中彼此伤害。这部作品后来被张艺谋改编为电影《大红灯笼高高挂》，在国际电影节和奥斯卡评奖中产生广泛影响，也使苏童成为较早进入海外视野的中国当代作家之一。《米》《我的帝王生涯》以寓言化方式处理欲望、权力、饥饿和命运；《河岸》则把“文革”历史置于河与岸、船与陆地、身份与放逐的象征结构中，写出政治时代对个体生命的挤压，也写出人在屈辱、怯懦和自我保存中的复杂性。《黄雀记》重回香椿树街，通过保润、柳生、白小姐三个人物的交错视角，讲述罪与罚、伤害与救赎、欲望与命运的循环关系，显示出苏童在长篇结构上的成熟探索。更为可贵的是，苏童并不是一个停留在既有风格中的作家。新世纪以后，他一方面意识到早期“苏童制造”的标签可能成为写作的牢笼，另一方面又没有轻易放弃自己最深处的艺术天性。从《蛇为什么会飞》对当下现实的逼近，到《碧奴》对中国古老神话的重述，再到《河岸》《黄雀记》《好天气》对历史、现实、寓言和日常伦理的重新平衡，苏童始终在“变”与“不变”之间寻找尺度。他的写作证明，一个成熟作家的经典性，不只在于形成风格，更在于能够不断更新风格；不只在于讲述中国故事，更在于使具体的中国经验获得关于人的普遍意义。

苏童同样是一位优秀的散文家。他的小说魅力并不依靠强情节推进，而在于精确的气氛营造、节制的情感控制和敏锐的语言质感。他能够把极普通的人物写出隐秘的疼痛，把日常生活写出命运的阴影，也把中国现代化进程中的边缘人、失语者和受损者，转化为具有审美强度的文学形象。这一特质正散文式的，他的小说可以说脱胎与散文之美。而他的散文把他的南方书写也发挥到极致，成为当代最具个人性的散文家之一，多篇作品入选中学语文教材。苏童的散文以质朴简白、细腻柔韧见长，常以小见大，贴近生活，字里行间流露出对故乡、童年、市井生活及平凡人间的深情与哲思，个人情怀弥漫在字里行间，显示出独特的美学风格。可以说，苏童散文对当代汉语写作的贡献是突出的。

苏童对故乡与童年的回忆，写出江南日常的烟雨苍茫，抒发对岁月流逝、故乡变迁的复杂情感。如《城北的桥》《苏州北局》《童年的一些事》《九岁的病榻》）等，故乡的街道、旧屋、桥梁等意象成为江南的文化隐喻。苏童善于书写市井生活与平凡人物，如《雨和瓦》《自行车之歌》等。通过对街头巷尾的市井百态、小人物的悲欢离合的细腻刻画，展现了江南地域的平凡之美和生活的真实质感。对生活的感悟与亲情书写是苏童散文的另一特色，如《河流的秘密》《我从来不敢夸耀童年的幸福》等，文字温馨、干净。

苏童结集出版的散文集有《寻找灯绳》、《纸上的美女》、《河流的秘密》、《捕捉阳光》、《活着，不着急切》、《露天电影》和《苏童散文》等。我向评委会推荐的是苏童散文集《八百米故乡》，江苏凤凰文艺出版社 2018 年 12 月出版。此书共分为散辑，第一辑“河流的秘密”，第二辑“八百米的故乡”，第三辑“虚构的热情”，遴选了苏童的散文代表作。

我推荐苏童参评美国纽曼华语文学奖，正是因为他的创作能够充分回应这一奖项关于“文学性”与“人的处境”的双重要求。他的作品从中国南方的地方经验出发，却并不局限于地方；

从历史、家族、街巷、童年和女性命运出发，却最终抵达关于人性的普遍追问。苏童的文学成就既属于中国当代文学，也已经成为世界读者理解中国经验、理解现代人的精神处境的重要入口。基于其持续而丰厚的创作实绩、成熟而独特的美学风格、广泛而深入的海外传播与研究影响，我认为苏童完全具备成为美国纽曼华语文学奖候选人的充分理由。

章程

纽曼华语文学奖由美国俄克拉荷马大学美 中关系研究所设立，每两年颁发一次，旨 在表彰对华语写作做出杰出贡献的文学作 品（含小说、散文、诗歌和戏剧）及其作者。纽曼奖以文学价值为唯一的衡量标准， 不论是成就卓越的名家或是后起之秀，任 何在世的坚持用华语写作的作者都有被推 荐的资格。

由知名专家组成的国际评委会通过透明的投票程序提名候选人并遴选出获奖者。获奖者将被授予 10,000 美元和奖匾一幅，并应邀到俄克拉荷马大学参与发奖仪式和学术活动。纽曼奖得益于纽曼夫妇的慷慨赞助，特此鸣谢。

Charter

The Newman Prize for Chinese Literature is awarded biennially in recognition of outstanding achievement in prose or poetry that best captures the human condition, and is conferred solely on the basis of literary merit. Any living author writing in Chinese is eligible, and the Prize may serve to crown a lifetime’s achievement or to direct attention to a developing body of work.

An international jury of distinguished experts will both nominate the candidates and select the winner, based on a transparent voting process. The winner will receive USD10,000 and a commemorative plaque, and will be invited to the University of Oklahoma to attend the award ceremony. The Prize honors Harold J. and Ruth Newman, whose generous endowment for a chair at the University of Oklahoma enabled the creation of the OU Institute for US-China Issues.