

Hanse-Wissenschaftskolleg
Institute for Advanced Study

Fiction ∫ *science* MEETS

Writers, Scholars, Scientists: Experimental
Encounters with Literary Depictions of Science VII

ACCIDENTALS BY SUSAN M GAINES

21 JULY 2021, 14:00 – 17:30 (UTC+2)

Organizers:

Anton Kirchhofer (University of Oldenburg), Susan M. Gaines
(University of Bremen)



VolkswagenStiftung



Universität Bremen



CARL
VON
OSSIEZKY
universität OLDENBURG

Venue:

Hanse-Wissenschaftskolleg
Institute for Advanced Study
Lehmkuhlenbusch 4
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Germany
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Program

ABOUT *ACCIDENTALS*

When Gabriel's mother repatriates to her native Uruguay after thirty years in California, he takes a break from his uninspiring job to accompany her. A birdwatcher since childhood, Gabe is as intrigued by the unfamiliar birds on his squabbling family's ranch as he is by crumbling, politics-obsessed Montevideo. But as he gets caught up in the national election, falls in love with the wrong woman, and stumbles upon a new species of bird, Gabe finds himself transformed from observer to main character in his mother's transnational saga. A story of loss and discovery that challenges our notions of family and explores the way that science, with all its uncertainties, illuminates the natural world, *Accidentals* reveals the long generational shadows of political and environmental violence.

Susan M. Gaines (<http://susanmgaines.com>) is the author of the novel *Carbon Dreams* and the non-fiction book *Echoes of Life*, as well as numerous short stories and essays in literary journals and anthology. She came to Germany as a HWK Fellow in 2002 and has held a post as writer in residence and served on the FMS Directors Team at the University of Bremen since initiating the program in 2011.

FICTION MEETS SCIENCE (FMS) (www.fictionmeetsscience.org)

Inspired by the early 21st-century increase in mainstream and literary fiction about science, FMS is a research and writers' fellowship program that brings together sociologists, literary scholars, novelists, and scientists to examine the literary and social ramifications of contemporary narrative renditions of science in creative media.

EXPERIMENTAL ENCOUNTERS WORKSHOP SERIES

Focusing on a mutual reading of individual science novels by the FMS writers in residence, Experimental Encounters Workshops are designed to generate an intensified cross-disciplinary dialogue and new perspectives on science in society and creative narratives. Participants include members of the FMS network of sociologists, literary and cultural studies scholars, scientists from various fields, creative writers, and invited guests.

PROGRAM

Preparation: all participants read *Accidentals* in advance of the workshop. In deference to the virtual format, we have shortened the program. We'll open for immediate questions and comments after the inputs, but save our wide-ranging readers' responses and exchanges until after we've heard all inputs. *In difference to past Experimental Encounters workshops, the substantive exchange of ideas will take place in the final discussion*

Wednesday, July 21

Virtual platform hosted by Hanse-Wissenschaftskolleg

Moderators: Anton Kirchhofer and Dorothe Poggel

14:00 Introduction (Anton Kirchhofer)

14:10–14:45 Background: the writing process and the science

Genesis, Research, and Challenges

(Susan Gaines, novelist and writer in residence, Universität Bremen)

Rare Birds and Citizen Science

(Mark Hauber, Professor of ornithology, University of Illinois

Urbana-Champaign)

Questions & Comments

14.45–15.20 Literary Perspectives: Scientist Characters, Plots and Narrative Strategies

Knowing the Past, Imagining the Future

(Anna Auguscik, Lecturer in English & American Studies, Univ. of Oldenburg)

Species Extinction and the Novel in the Anthropocene: Northern, Southern, and Migrant Perspectives on Conservationism

(Karsten Levihn-Kutzler, Post-doctoral researcher in Anglophone literature & cultural studies, Universität Oldenburg)

Questions & Comments

15:20–15:50 COFFEE BREAK

15:50–16:25 Societal Contexts

TBA

(Sina Farzin, Professor of Sociology & Sociological Theory, Bundeswehr Universität München)

Interspecies Symbiosis and Reciprocity: a Sociological Perspective

(Fabian Hempel, doctoral candidate in sociology, Universität

Bremen)

Questions & Comments

16:25–17:30 Discussion: Readers' Responses, Other Perspectives, Author, Scientist, Scholar Exchanges

All Participants