

Program

Hanse-Wissenschaftskolleg
Institute for Advanced Study

Fiction *meets* science

'WRITER – SCHOLARS – SCIENTISTS' WORKSHOPS
EXPERIMENTAL ENCOUNTERS AROUND
LITERARY DEPICTIONS OF SCIENCE

JUNE 14, 2018, 13.30 – 19.00 H

ON PIPPA GOLDSCHMIDT'S
THE THOUGHT WOMEN (TBP)

Organizers:

Anna Auguscik (University of Oldenburg),
Susan Gaines (University of Bremen),
Anton Kirchhofer (University of Oldenburg)



VolkswagenStiftung



Universität Bremen



Universität Hamburg



Venue:

Hanse-Wissenschaftskolleg
Institute for Advanced Study
Lehmkuhlenbusch 4
27753 Delmenhorst
Germany
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INFORMATION

ON *THE THOUGHT WOMEN* (TBP)

Erwin Schrödinger was an Austrian physicist who was diagnosed with tuberculosis during the hyperinflation in the early 1920s; a Nobel Prize winner in 1933, the year that Hitler seized power in Germany; and a scientist emigré after he opposed the Nazis, recanted his position and yet was found politically unreliable after the annexation of Austria in 1938. This novel tells the formative period of Schrödinger's life preceding and directly following his decisive contribution to quantum theory against the background of the radical political, economic, scientific and cultural changes in Europe of the 1920s and 1930s, and it does so by layering his identity through various narrative accounts: his journals (read in secret by his wife Anny at first and later by the Nazis), his correspondence with fellow scientists (e.g. Max Planck), his scientific writing (interspersed by his lover's letters), his psychoanalyst's report of "Wave Man", and Anny's story.

Pippa Goldschmidt is a writer and blogger based in Edinburgh. She has a PhD in astronomy and a MLitt in creative writing. She was an FMS writer-in-residence at the HWK in 2015. The research and writing of this manuscript were partly done during this fellowship.

ABOUT FICTION MEETS SCIENCE AND THE WORKSHOP SERIES

This event is part of an ongoing series of workshops, focusing on one literary author at a time, which aims to bring the scholarly projects in *Fiction Meets Science* (FMS) into a dialogue with the FMS writers as well as with scientists potentially concerned or interested in the writers' projects. Its goal is to promote or intensify exchange across the different groups, disciplines and projects in FMS, and to allow new angles to emerge from these experimental encounters between the diverse perspectives of writers, scholars and scientists.

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 a recent trend: an overall increase in the quantity of mainstream and literary fiction about science, and a shift in the ways that science is addressed in fiction. FMS is about to embark on its second three-year research phase, starting in 2018.

For more information see www.fictionmeetsscience.org

SCHEDULE

Preparation: *The Thought Women* (manuscript; pls do not distribute) by Pippa Goldschmidt, read by all participants.

Thursday, June 14, 2018

Hanse-Wissenschaftskolleg, Delmenhorst

Moderator: Anton Kirchhofer and Anna Auguscik

12.30 LIGHT LUNCH

13.30 Welcome, Introduction

13.45–14.40 Session 1 –The Writer and her Various Readers

(Initial Input: Petra Groß, physicist, Oldenburg)

- Responses to the text, observations, questions by different readers.
- Scientists and scholars in dialogue with the author and each other.
- Author's comments (particularly on processes of researching and writing, encounters with scientific practice, changes of plans and perspective etc.)

14.50–15.45 Session 2 – Textual Structures: Science in Historical Fiction

(Initial Input: Norbert Schaffeld, literary scholar, Bremen)

COFFEE BREAK

16.15–17.10 Session 3 – The Text in Context: Science and Society / Science in Nazi Europe

(Initial Input: Peter Weingart, sociologist, Stellenbosch)

17.20–18 Session 4 – The Text Pre-Publication: Speculative Reception

(Initial Input: Anna Auguscik, literary scholar, Oldenburg)

18–18.45 Concluding Round Table: Emerging Perspectives

Recap of insights and look ahead at the new perspectives that have emerged

19.00 DINNER

GENERAL WORKSHOP FORMAT

- Each workshop is centred on one literary text, whose author will be present.
- The format includes four thematic slots (roughly aligned in focus with the four project groups in FMS 1) followed by a concluding round table discussion. The opening slot will focus on responses to the text itself and a dialogue between the author and different kinds of readers (scientists, literary scholars, sociologists). It should reflect the reading experience of all present (and might include a longer or shorter reading, as well as the author's comments and remarks on experiences, decisions, motives, on interactions with scientists, on the process of researching the topic, conceptualising and writing the story).
- Participants of the workshop will have (re)read the literary text in preparation.

The workshops seek to create an experimental space where the particular research angles of the scholars (and of their various projects) are presented for direct engagement, discussion and exchange of perspectives, to the writers whose works form the objects of research, as well as to the scientists, whose respective disciplines, practices and (in some cases) whose fictional counterparts, in turn form the objects of representation.

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES WITHIN THE *FICTION MEETS SCIENCE* RESEARCH PROJECT

This workshop format makes use of the particular feature that makes FMS stand out from other, partly related projects. FMS is unique among the projects conceived across the traditional two cultures divide in that it brings together four distinct groups: novelists, scientists, literary scholars and social scientists (most similar projects involve only two or three of these groups).

The primary goal of the workshops is to promote the networking of the projects and of FMS participants. They are in no way intended to take the place of any individual FMS project. They are designed to intensify the exchange among the scholarly projects, but above all they create an experimental setting. While writers, scholars and scientists mostly tend to operate in the absence of each other, the workshops will bring them into direct exchange. By ‘exposing’ them to the presence of each other, the workshops extend an invitation to engage in a direct and differentiated multiperspectival dialogue, where each may observe and participate in the ‘reactions’ that occur when they come together, and where the various groups join an experiment in the hope that new insights and interchanges may emerge from the encounter.

The workshops are not designed as a ‘public outreach’ format. Their focus is on FMS internal exchange and networking between the various FMS components. A more public dimension might possibly evolve at some later point. If the workshops are successful, they might not only be opened to a wider circle, they might also be productive of a type of publication with contributions involving all four ‘components’ of FMS: authors, scientists, literary scholars and social scientists.