

**Shedding Light on the Scientist: Character and Quantum Theory in *Properties of Light***  
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Published in 2000, Rebecca Goldstein's *Properties of Light* is a novel that has been praised for its compelling use of quantum theory. A key structural component is a plot featuring a critique of the Copenhagen Interpretation of quantum mechanics with a gothic love story narrated by a ghost. This paper reads *Properties of Light* in the context of other novels about quantum physics as well as Goldstein's other writings in order to examine the way its narrative strategies – including focalization through a scientist character – allow for a self-reflexive exploration of the theories put forth in the novel, often using analogies of light.

This talk will also analyze the various scientist characters in *Properties of Light* in the context of other novels of its genre, namely through a triangle of desire between three physicists: the main character who specializes in mathematics, Justin Childs, the quantum physicist Samuel Mallach, and his daughter and lay-physicist Dana. Results of this analysis will address the question of whether scientist characters serve particular functions in contemporary novels about quantum physics.

Bio:

Natalie Roxburgh is a research fellow at the University of Oldenburg in Germany for the Bremen-based research group Fiction Meets Science.