

Hanse-Wissenschaftskolleg
Institute for Advanced Study

Fiction MEETS *Science*

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

We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves
by Karen Joy Fowler

Tuesday, 26 November, 2024
15:15 – 19:00 (UTC+1); Format: hybrid

Organizers:
Susan M. Gaines, Anton Kirchhofer

Gefördert durch/ Funded by:



Universität
Bremen



Program

Venue:

Hanse-Wissenschaftskolleg
Institute for Advanced Study

Lehmkuhlenbusch 4
27753 Delmenhorst
Tel: +49 4221 9160-100
www.hanse-ias.de

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About *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* (2014)

We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves won the PEN/Faulkner Award and was short-listed for the Booker Prize, the Warwick Prize, and the Nebula Award for science fiction. Barbara Kingsolver aptly summarizes the novel's historical underpinnings in her *New York Times* review: The plot turns on a volatile moment in behavioral psychology, the late 1970s, when Skinnerian dogmatists were duking it out with proponents of a more nuanced, evolutionary grasp of animal behavior. Primate subjects were prized for the ways they resembled humans in mirror-identity tests, language acquisition and more, but could still be dispatched as property at the end of the experimental day. Meanwhile, a fledgling animal rights movement was starting to count the bodies.

About the Author

Karen Joy Fowler is the author of five novels, a novella, and five short story collections. Her most recent novel, *Booth*, was longlisted for the Booker Prize. Her 2004 novel, *The Jane Austen Book Club*, was a New York Times bestseller and Notable Book, as well as the basis for the 2007 movie. Her 2001 novel, *Sister Noon*, was a finalist for the PEN/Faulkner Award, and her debut novel, *Sarah Canary*, was a New York Times Notable Book, won the Commonwealth Medal, and was listed for the Irish Times International Fiction Prize and the Bay Area Book Reviewers Prize. Fowler's short story collections *Black Glass* and *What I Didn't See* both won the World Fantasy Award.

Fowler is the president of the Clarion Foundation and has extensive experience teaching in creative writing workshops and university programs. She holds a Master's degree in political science.

Fiction Meets Science (FMS) www.fictionmeetsscience.org

Inspired by the early 21st-century increase in 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

In focusing on a mutual reading of individual works by FMS writers in residence, the Experimental Encounters Workshops facilitate cross-disciplinary dialogue and generate new understandings of creative narratives and science in society. Participants include members of the FMS network of sociologists, literary and cultural studies scholars, scientists from various fields, creative writers, and invited guests.

Tuesday, 26 November, 2024

- 15:15 – 15:30 **Welcome, Introduction**
Dr. Dorothe Poggel, Anton Kirchhofer
- 15:30 – 16:20 **Background: the Writing and the Science**
Karen Fowler, author
Questions

Prof. Simone Pika, ethologist and primatologist,
Comparative BioCognition, Institute of Cognitive Science,
Osnabrück University
Questions
- 16:20 – 16:45 **Literary Perspectives**
PD Dr. Natalie Roxburgh, literary scholar, Institute of English and
American Studies, University of Hamburg
Questions
- 16:45 – 17.15 *COFFEE BREAK*
- 17:15 – 17:40 *Prof. Laura Otis, literary scholar, English Department, Emory University*
Questions
- 17:40 – 18:05 **Societal Contexts**
Fabian Hempel, sociologist, Ph. D. candidate, University of Bremen
Questions
- 18:05 – 19:00 **Author-Scientist-Scholar-Discussion**
All participants
- 19:00 *DINNER AT THE HWK BISTRO*

Participants

1. Dr. Anna Auguscik, literary and cultural Studies, Institute for English and American Studies, University of Oldenburg
2. PD Dr. Julia Boll, literary studies, British Studies, University of Konstanz (online)
3. Prof. Dorothea Brückner, biology, bee research, University of Bremen
4. Karen Fowler, creative writing, FMS-HWK writer in residence, Santa Cruz CA
5. Susan M. Gaines, creative writing, (marine science, geochemistry), FMS-HWK author liaison
6. Dr. Pippa Goldschmidt, creative writing, astronomy
7. Fabian Hempel, sociology, Ph.D. candidate, University of Bremen, and research fellow, QUEST Center, Berlin Institute of Health at Charité Universitätsmedizin
8. Prof. Anton Kirchhofer, literary and cultural studies, Institute for English and American Studies, University of Oldenburg
9. Prof. Laura Otis, literary and cultural studies, (cognitive science, history of science, creative writing) English Department, Emory University
10. Prof. Simone Pika, ethology and primatology, Comparative BioCognition, Institute of Cognitive Science, Osnabrück University (online)
11. PD Dr. Natalie Roxburgh, literary studies, Institute of English and American Studies, University of Hamburg
12. Prof. Norbert Schaffeld, literary studies, English-Speaking Cultures Department, University of Bremen
13. Prof. Uwe Schimank, sociology, SOCIUM Research Center on Inequality and Social Policy, University of Bremen
14. PD Dr. Tobias Schlechtriemen, sociology, Institut für Soziologie, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg; HWK Fellow
15. PD Dr. Timur Sevincer, psychology, Leuphana Universität Lüneburg, HWK Fellow
16. Prof. em. Peter Weingart, sociology, University of Bielefeld
17. Prof. Martin Willis, literary studies, School of English, Communication and Philosophy, Cardiff University (online)
18. Prof. Julia Wurr, Literary and Cultural Studies, Institute for English and American Studies, University of Oldenburg