



Building Interdisciplinary Bridges Across Cultures

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Abstract

This presentation shares my work as exemplified by a collective biography of the Norwegian 19th century author Amalie Skram and the group of artists and intellectuals she was associated with. This work is to be published as a book, an interactive web site, an educational program for high school students as well as a theatre production in Norway in the fall of 2016. I will use this project as a starting point for a discussion of what a combination of intuitive and scientific means of examination and expression can accomplish in a digital era of endless choice and advanced research tools. When all information is accessible in an instant, it begs the question: What does it all mean? How does one put things into perspective? Information without meaning and perspective is lifeless. But meaning and perspective is not something that science alone can offer. My point of departure will be "The Two Cultures" addressed by P.D. Snow in 1959, and the thesis that intellectual life of western society is split in two: Science and soul/Reason and faith/Empirical observation and imaginative intuition. This is a split which Amalie Skram and other artists of my study experienced profoundly. In my work, I have used means and methods from both science and art to transform their struggle into a mirror which we can use to glimpse ourselves as we struggle with the very same split in our own times.

Bio

I am an associate professor of The University College of Southeast Norway. My field is creative non fiction. I am also the author of five novels, two of which has been translated into English: *Oceans of Time*, 2004 and *Agnes and Molly*, 2008, four children's books and four non-fiction books on literary topics (Ibsen, creative writing). I am currently finishing a multimodal project on the Norwegian 19th century writer Amalie Skram and her times, the so called Golden Age of Scandinavian art and literature in the 1880s and -90s, including artist such as Edvard Munch, Knut Hamsun, Henrik Ibsen and August Strindberg. The project includes an interactive web site, a theatre production, an educational program for high school students, as well as the originally planned book. The project is to be published in Norway the fall of 2016.