

# The ORF Contemporary Literature Project

## Seminar on Contemporary English Fiction, 2011

12th-13th September 2011, Perm State University

### Participants:

#### Organising directors:

- Karen Hewitt (Oxford University),
- Professor Boris Proskurnin (Perm State University).

#### From Britain:

- Dr Catherine Brown, New College, Oxford University,
- Dr Rod Mengham, Jesus College, Cambridge University,
- Dr Will May, Southampton University.

#### From Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan

Astrakhan State University; Barnaul State Pedagogical University, Belgorod State University, Birobidzhan Far Eastern Academy, Chelyabinsk State University; Chelyabinsk State Pedagogical University; Chelyabinsk Russian Academy; Cherepovets State University; Chita: Zabaikalsky State Pedagogical University; Ekaterinburg: **Ural Federal University**; Ekaterinburg: Ural State Pedagogical University; Irkutsk State Linguistic University; **Irkutsk State University**; Ivanovo State University; **Kazan State University**; Khabarovsk: Far Eastern Humanities University; Kirov: Vyatka State University of the Humanities, Kolomna Pedagogical Institute; Kostanai: Filial of Chelyabinsk State University; Krasnodar: **Kuban State University**; Krasnoyarsk: **Siberian Federal University**; Krasnoyarsk State Pedagogical University; Kursk State University; Magnitogorsk State University; Minsk Linguistic University; Moscow Pedagogical State University, Moscow City Pedagogical University; Moscow State University; Moscow: Baumann Technical University, Moscow: Russian Humanities State University; Naberezhny Chelny State Pedagogical University; Nalchik: Kabardino-Balkarian State University; Neryungri: North-East Federal University; Nizhnevartovsk State Pedagogical University; **Novgorod State University**; Novosibirsk State University; Omsk State University; Orenburg State University; Orsk Humanities University; Oryol State University; **Perm State University**; Petrozavodsk: Karelia State Pedagogical University; Pyatigorsk State Linguistic University, Rostov: **Southern Federal University**; Ryazan State University, **Samara State University**; Samara Architecture University; **Saratov State University**; Smolensk State University; St Petersburg State University, St Petersburg: Herzen State Pedagogical University; Stavropol State University; Taganrog Pedagogical Institute; Tula State Pedagogical University, **Tver State University**, Ufa: Bashkir State Pedagogical University, Ulan Ude: Buryat State University; Ulan Ude: Agricultural Academy; Vladivostok: **Far Eastern National University**, Volgograd State Pedagogical University, **Voronezh State University**; Yelets State University.

## MONDAY

10.00. – 10.35: Boris Proskurnin. Introductions, explanations, brief speeches.

10.35 – 11.30: Discussion of a selection of our novels: Karen Hewitt on one of the new novels, Grace Notes; Rod Mengham on A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters; Will May on Atonement; Catherine Brown on «Regeneration».

11.30 -11.50: COFFEE

11.50 – 12.40: Will May on ‘Music in Contemporary Fiction’.

12.-40 - 1.10 p.m.: Rod Mengham will discuss one or two contemporary poems.

1.10. – 1. 30: Footpath-5 and the Website. (Introduced by Karen Hewitt).

1.30 – 2.30: LUNCH

2.30 – 3.20: Teachers in groups to discuss the experience of teaching the novels with newcomers to the project; the British participants will move from group to group as requested.

3.20 – 4.10 p.m.: Karen will briefly discuss some new thoughts on «Black Swan Green» and then introduce our other new novel, Sebastian Faulks’ «A Week in December», followed by a discussion of «A Week in December» by Catherine Brown.

4.10 – 4.30: COFFEE

4.30 – 5.20: Seminar Exercise on «Accents, Dialects, Sociolects: How authors transcribe them and what they mean». Photocopies of extracts will be circulated.

5-20 – 6.10: Play-reading: Introduction to a play-reading by Will May followed by the reading of the play by the British panel.

6.10: Some participants will be able to collect their books and commentaries – in an order decided by the co-directors.

## TUESDAY

10.00 -10.15: Boris Proskurnin on «Teaching English Literature according to the new Standards for Higher Education».

10. 15 – 10.55: Catherine Brown on «The Unreliable Narrator»

10.55 – 11.30: Karen Hewitt on «Englishness and the case of Ulverton».

11.30 – 11.50: COFFEE

11.50 – 12.40: Seminar Exercise on «Style and Image – Distinguishing one writer from another». Photocopies of extracts will be circulated.

12.40 – 1.30: Discussion of the use of commentaries by Karen followed by comments on other novels from the Panel. If participants would like a particular point to be discussed, they can ask – by sending in questions.

1.30 – 2.30: LUNCH

2.30 – 3.20: Teachers in groups to discuss whatever seems important; the British participants will move from group to group as requested.

3.25 – 4.20: Rod Mengham on «Walking» in contemporary British fiction.

4.20 – 4.40: COFFEE

4.40 – 6.00: A Question and Answer Session. Participants will be asked to submit written questions to the panel. First question: “Why are so many of your contemporary novels written in the present tense?”

Concurrently at 4.40 for 15 minutes there will be a showing of scenes from the film «What a Carve Up!» with Catherine Brown in a room in the Philological Faculty.

7.15: Final dinner and party.

About the English participants:

**Catherine Brown** is a Lecturer in English Literature at New College, Oxford. She studied English at Cambridge, before migrating to interests in political science, art history, and Russia. She took an MSc in Russian and Post-Soviet Studies at LSE. Her PhD was on «Anna Karenina», «Daniel Deronda» and «Women in Love». This year she published «The Art of Comparison: How Novels and Critics Compare» (London: Legenda). She is working on a study of the soul in British Modernism.

**Rod Mengham** is Reader in Modern English Literature at the University of Cambridge. He is the author of books on Charles Dickens, Emily Bronte, Thomas Hardy and Henry Green, as well as of «The Descent of Language» (1993). He has edited collections of essays on contemporary fiction, and is the editor of the Equipage series of poetry pamphlets. His own poems have been published under the titles «Unsung: New and Selected Poems and Parleys and Skirmishes».

**Will May** is a Lecturer in English at the University of Southampton. Recent publications include «Stevie Smith and Authorship» (Oxford University Press, 2010) and «Postwar Literature: 1950-1990» (Longman, 2010). His current research looks at collaborations between contemporary writers and composers.