

The ORF Contemporary Literature Project

Seminar on Contemporary English Fiction, 2013

Programme

Participants:

Co-directors:

Karen Hewitt (Oxford University)

Professor Boris Proskurnin (Perm State University)

From Britain:

Dr Andrew Blades (Oxford University)

Dr Will May (Southampton University)

Adam Thorpe (Novelist and Poet)

From Russia and Belarus

Participants from:

Arkhangelsk Northern Arctic Federal University; **Barnaul** Altai Pedagogical University, **Belgorod** State University, **Birobidzhan** Far Eastern Academy, **Blagoveshchensk** Pedagogical University; **Bryansk** State University; **Chelyabinsk** State University; Chelyabinsk State Pedagogical University; Chelyabinsk Russian Academy of Education; Chelyabinsk Institute of Management; **Cherepovets** State University; **Chita**: Zabaikalsky State Pedagogical University; **Ekaterinburg**: **Ural Federal University**; Ekaterinburg: Ural State Pedagogical University; **Irkutsk** State Linguistic University; **Irkutsk State University**; Irkutsk Eastern Siberian Academy of Education; **Ivanovo** State University; **Kazan Federal University**; **Khabarovsk**: Far Eastern Humanities University; **Kirov**: Vyatka State University, **Kolomna** Institute for the Humanities; **Krasnoyarsk**: **Siberian Federal University**; Krasnoyarsk State Pedagogical University; **Kursk** State University; **Magnitogorsk** State University; **Minsk** Linguistic University; Belarus State University; **Moscow** State University, Moscow City Pedagogical University; Moscow Pedagogical State University; Moscow: Baumann Technical University, Moscow: Russian Humanities University; **Naberezhny Chelny** State Pedagogical University; **Neryungri**: North-Eastern Federal University; **Nizhnevartovsk** State Pedagogical University; **Nizhny Novgorod** Higher School of Economics; **Novgorod State University**; **Novosibirsk** State University; **Omsk** State University; **Orenburg** State University; **Orsk** Humanities University; **Perm State University**; **Petrozavodsk State University**; **Pyatigorsk** State Linguistic University, **Pskov** State University; **Rostov-on-Don**: **Southern Federal University**; **Ryazan** State University, **Samara State University**; **Saratov State University**; **Smolensk** State University; **St Petersburg** State University; St Petersburg: Herzen Russian Pedagogical University; **Stavropol** North Caucasian State University; **Taganrog** Pedagogical Institute; **Tula** Pedagogical University, **Tver State University**, **Ulan Ude**: Buryat State University; **Vladivostok**: **Far Eastern National University**, **Volgograd** Pedagogical University, **Vologda** Pedagogical University; **Voronezh State University**; **Yakutsk** North Eastern Federal University; **Yaroslavl State University**; **Yelets** State University.

(62 universities, 96 participants in total).

Of these, two are completely new, another four are new to this seminar, and three have, in one way or another, returned to the fold.

PROGRAMME

TUESDAY, 10th September

10.00 – 10.30 Opening session. The Rector of Perm State University.
Brief welcome and introduction by Boris Proskurnin.

10.30 – 11.30 Short talks on some of our novels: Karen Hewitt on the new novel, *Whirligig*; Andrew Blades on *White Teeth* and *The Taxi Driver's Daughter*, Will May on *Regeneration* and *Black Swan Green*; Adam Thorpe on *Morality Play*.

11.30 – 11.50 COFFEE

11.50 – 12.40 Will May will talk on 'Art in Contemporary British Fiction'

12.40 – 12.50 p.m. Questions and discussion on the talk

12.50 – 1.30. Karen Hewitt will report on the Evaluation Exercise on the success of the books in the project, and discuss issues of E-books.

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 – 4.20 Workshops on four topics: Andrew Blades on 'Discussing Drama with examples'; Adam Thorpe on 'How to read *Ulverton*'; Will May on Allusion in Fiction; Karen Hewitt on 'Effects of First Person narrative'. (See note)

4.20 – 4.40 COFFEE

4.40 – 5.15 Boris Proskurnin: a talk on 'Contemporary Challenges to the Russian Canon of English Literature', with discussion.

5.15 – 5.40 Karen will introduce the new play in our list: *Stuff Happens*, followed by advice from British speakers on how to teach drama.

5.40 – 6.15 Play-reading: Introduction to *Testing the Echo* by David Edgar. This will be followed by extracts from the play read by the British participants.

WEDNESDAY, 11th September

9.00 – 9.50 Adam Thorpe on *Ulverton* and his other novels.

10.50 – 10.20 *Footpath* – a debate and several requests! (Karen and Boris)

10.20 – 11.00 Short talks: Andrew on *What A Carve Up!*, Will on *Nice Work*, Adam on *Waterland*, Karen on *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*

11.00 – 11.20 COFFEE

11.20–12.10 Andrew Blades: ‘Contemporary Fiction in a socio-political context’

12.10 – 1.15 Seminar exercise on analysing dialogue. Photocopied extracts will be distributed the previous day.

1.15 – 2.15 LUNCH

2.15 – 3.15 Workshops on Andrew Blades on ‘Narrative Openings and what they tell us’; Adam Thorpe on ‘How to read *Ulverton*’; Will May on Allusion in Fiction; Karen Hewitt on ‘Reading Poetry with a group’.

3.15 – 4.00 Karen Hewitt: a talk on More thoughts about History and Fiction

4.00 – 4.20 COFFEE

4.20 – 4.50 How to read and teach novels – a collection of useful tips.

4.50 – 5.30 A Question and Answer Session. Participants can submit spoken or written questions to the British panel.

5.00 – 6.00 *From 5 pm. participants each university will fetch their books*

7.15 Final dinner and party

About the English participants:

Will May is a Senior 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). He has published articles on Jonathan Coe, Rachel Cusk, and Zadie Smith.

Adam Thorpe was brought up in India, Cameroon and England. He has written ten novels, two collections of short stories, six books of poetry and has recently produced translations of *Madame Bovary* and *Therese Raquin*. His first novel, *Ulverton* (1992) is now a Vintage Classic. He is a regular contributor to the *Times Literary Supplement* and *The Guardian*.

Andrew Blades is a Lecturer in English at St Peter's College, Oxford. He teaches nineteenth and twentieth-century literature, and is the author of *Twentieth Century American Literature* (Longman, 2011). He is currently researching the work of the Anglo-American poet Thom Gunn.

List of Books in the Project

1 Graham Swift *Waterland* (1983);

2 Hilary Mantel *An Experiment in Love* (1995)

- 3 Julian Barnes *A History of the World in 10 and a Half Chapters* (1989);
- 4 Jonathan Coe *What a Carve Up!* (1994);
- 5 David Lodge *Nice Work* (1988);
- 6 Pat Barker *Regeneration* (1991)
- 7 Michael Frayn *Headlong* (1999);
- 8 Ian McEwan *Atonement* (2001);
- 9 Nick Hornby *About a Boy* (1998);
- 10 Esther Freud *The Sea House* (2003)
- 11 Zadie Smith *White Teeth* (2000);
- 12 Penelope Lively *The House in Norham Gardens* (1974
- 13 Jill Dawson *Magpie* (1998) (Out of print)
- 14 Beryl Bainbridge *Master Georgie* (1998)
- 15 Barry Unsworth *Morality Play* (1995) (Currently out of print)
- 16 David Mitchell *Black Swan Green* (2006)
- 17 Julia Darling *The Taxi Driver's Daughter* (2003)
- 18 Adam Thorpe *Ulverton* (1992)
- 19 Ruth Rendell *Portobello* (2008)
- 20 Bernard MacLaverty *Grace Notes* (1997)
- 21 Sebastian Faulks *A Week in December* (2009)
- 22 Magnus Macintyre *Whirligig* (2013)
- 23 David Hare *Stuff Happens* (2004)