

OXFORD RUSSIA FUND

SEMINAR ON CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH FICTION, 2019

Perm State University, 10th -11th September 2018

Participants:

Co-directors: Karen Hewitt (University of Oxford)

Professor Boris Proskurnin (Perm State University)

From Britain:

Professor Jane Rogers, Novelist and short story writer

Dr Nicholas Bentley (University of Keele)

Vanessa Gebbie, Novelist and short story writer

From Russia, Belarus and Donetsk

Participants from **Arkhangelsk:** Northern Arctic Federal University; **Barnaul:** Altai Pedagogical University; Altai State University; **Belgorod** State University, **Birobidzhan** Pre-Amur State University, **Blagoveshchensk** State Pedagogical University; **Cheboksary:** Chuvash State University; **Chelyabinsk:** Chelyabinsk State University; Chelyabinsk Institute of Management; **Chita:** Zabaikalsky State University; **Donetsk** National University; **Ekaterinburg:** Ural Federal University; Ural State Pedagogical University; **Gomel (Belarus)** State University; **Irkutsk:** Irkutsk State University; Business Centre of the State University; **Ivanovo** State University; **Izhevsk:** Udmurt State University; **Kemerovo** State University; **Khabarovsk:** Pacific State National University; **Kolomna:** State Social and Humanities University; **Krasnoyarsk:** Siberian Federal University; Krasnoyarsk State Pedagogical University; **Kurgan** State University, **Kursk** State University; **Miass** filial of Chelyabinsk State University; **Minsk (Belarus):** Minsk State Linguistic University; Belarus State University; **Moscow:** Moscow State University; Moscow City Pedagogical University; Moscow Pedagogical State University; Russian Humanities University; **Naberezhny Chelny** Pedagogical University; **Neryungri:** North Eastern Federal University: Technical Institute; **Nizhny Novgorod:** Higher School of Economics; **Novosibirsk:** State University; Economics and Management University; **Orenburg** State University; **Orsk** Humanities and Technological Institute; **Penza:** Penza State University; **Perm:** Perm State University; Perm Humanities and Pedagogical University; **Petrozavodsk** State University; **Pskov** State University; **Rostov-on-Don:** Southern Federal University; **Saransk:** Mordovia State University; **Saratov** State University; **Sevastopol** State University; **Simferopol:** Crimea Federal University; **Smolensk** State University; **St Petersburg:** Herzen Russian State Pedagogical University; **Tambov** State University; **Tomsk** State University; **Tula** State University, **Tver** State University, **Ufa:** Bashkir State Pedagogical University; **Vladivostok:** Far Eastern Federal University, **Volgograd:** State Pedagogical University, Volgograd Institute of Management; **Yaroslavl** State University; **Yelets** State University.

(61 universities; 100 participants).

The Oxford Russia Fund wishes to thank the Rector and staff of Perm State University who continue to support this seminar. The Directors would like to thank, in particular, Lyudmila Kadzhaya for arranging all the accommodation for participants, and for ensuring much of the smooth running of the programme.

PROGRAMME TUESDAY 11th September

All Sessions will be in the University Council Hall on the 4th floor of Korpus 1 **except** the Workshops and Teachers' discussions which will be in different buildings.

9.00 Registration. Payment for travel. Please bring your tickets.

9.45 All teachers to be present so that we can arrange workshops.

10.00. – 10.30. The Rector of Perm State University will open the Seminar, followed by an introduction by Boris Proskurnin and a discussion of the book supply by Professor Proskurnin and Karen Hewitt.

10.30 – 11.15 Short talks: Jane Rogers on *Grace Notes*, Nick Bentley on *Atonement*, Vanessa Gebbie on *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime*, Karen Hewitt on *Hitting Trees with Sticks*, Nick Bentley on *A History of the World...*, Vanessa Gebbie on *Waterland*.

11.15-11.25 A talk about *Footpath* – especially *Footpath-13*

11.25 -11.45 COFFEE

11.45 – 12.35 Jane Rogers: *Images of women in Contemporary Women's Writing*

12.35 – 12.45 Questions and discussion on Jane's talk

12.45 – 1.20. New Question to all: Which novel or play would *you* put in the list which is, so far, not there. Our speakers will choose theirs in not more than 6 minutes each, and some Russian teachers will follow.

1.20 Information about groups after lunch.

1.25 -2.15 LUNCH (A short lunch. Please be back in time for the discussions)

2.20 – 3.10 In Korpus 1 and Korpus 8, 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. All teachers will be expected to take part in this.

3.15 to 4.15 In Korpus 1 and Korpus 8. Workshops on four topics: Jane Rogers *Writing the future: Looking at examples*; Nick Bentley *Rewriting of the Second World War*; Vanessa Gebbie *Writing your own fiction (in Russian)*; Karen Hewitt: *How do we know what the author means?*

4.20 – 4.40 COFFEE (In Korpus 1)

4.40 – 5-30 Nick Bentley *Youth Cultures in Recent British Fiction*.

5.30 – 5.40 Questions about Nick's talk.

5.40 - 6.15 Thoughts about drama followed by a Play-reading: Extracts from a contemporary play, introduced and performed by the British participants.

6.15 *Some universities to collect books. To be discussed*

WEDNESDAY 12th September

8.30 a.m. Payments to any teachers who were not paid on Tuesday. *Note earlier time.*

9.00 - 9.50 Vanessa Gebbie *On The Art of Convincing*

9.50-10.00 Questions and discussion on Vanessa's talk.

10.00-10.40 Short talks: Karen Hewitt on *King Charles III*, Jane Rogers on *Ulverton*, Nick Bentley on *White Teeth*, Vanessa Gebbie on *Regeneration*, Karen Hewitt on *Morality Play*, Jane Rogers on *An Experiment in Love*.

10.40 – 11.00 'An idea that worked in our class.' Individual teachers tell us of successful discussions about individual novels and plays or successful methods for engaging the students in exploration of the text.

11.00 – 11. 20 COFFEE

11.20–12.25 Seminar exercise on *What does the first page tell us?* Photocopied extracts will be distributed the previous day.

12.25 – 1.15. Discussions of individual poems selected by the British team with photocopies

1.15 to 2.15 LUNCH

2.15 - 3.05 Karen Hewitt *Happy endings, sad endings, falsifying and tidying up.*

3.05-3.15 Questions and discussion on this talk.

3.15 to 4.15 In Korpus 1 and Korpus 8. Workshops on four topics: Jane Rogers *Analysing Short Stories in Class*; Nick Bentley *Realism, modernism and postmodernism in Zadie Smith's 'NW'*; Vanessa Gebbie *The successes and failures of Rendell's 'Portobello'*; Karen Hewitt *Fiction playing with time*.

4.20 – 4.40 **COFFEE**

4.40 – 5.40 A Question and Answer Session on 'Aspects of British Literature today'.

Participants can submit spoken or written questions to the British panel.

5.00 – 6.00 *From 5 pm. participants from each university will be called in order (an order to be decided by the co-directors!) to fetch their books and commentaries.*

7.15 Final dinner and party *We hope everyone will be able to come to the Dinner, but if your travel plans make this impossible, please let us know beforehand – and not later than Tuesday morning.*

About our Speakers

Professor Jane Rogers has written ten novels, ranging from contemporary to historical to science fiction, and has won numerous prizes for her work. She adapted her own novel *Mr Wroe's Virgins* into an award-winning BBC drama series. She also writes short stories and radio drama. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, and her work has been translated into 7 languages. She has taught writing to a wide range of students, and is Professor Emerita of Writing at Sheffield Hallam University.

Her new dystopia *Body Tourists* will be published Nov 2019. www.janerogers.info

Nick Bentley is Senior Lecturer in English literature at Keele University, UK. He is author of *Contemporary British Fiction: A Reader's Guide to the Essential Criticism* (2018); *Martin Amis* (2015); *Contemporary British Fiction* (2008); *Radical Fictions: The English Novel in the 1950s* (2007); and co-editor of *The 2000s: A Decade of Contemporary British Fiction* (2015), and *Teenage Dreams: Youth Subcultures in Fiction, Film and Other Media* (Palgrave, 2018). He is currently writing a monograph entitled *Making a Scene: Youth Subcultures in Postwar and Contemporary Fiction* (Palgrave).

Vanessa Gebbie has won awards for fiction and poetry. She is author of a novel, *The Coward's Tale*, and five collections of shorter fictions including *Words from a Glass Bubble*, *Storm Warning*, and *Nothing to Worry About*. She is commissioning and contributing editor of *Short Circuit: Guide to the Art of the Short Story*, which is recommended reading on many creative writing courses in the UK and beyond. She also has two poetry books - *The Half-Life of Fathers* (a TLS best pamphlet of 2012) and *Memorandum: Poems for the Fallen*, which was published to coincide with the Battle of the Somme centenary. She is finishing a second novel and she teaches widely.

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)
- 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)
- 24 David Edgar *Testing the Echo* (2008)
- 25 John Lanchester *Capital* (2013)
- 26 Mark Haddon *The Curious Incident of the Dog ...*(2004)
- 27 Emma Healey *Elizabeth is Missing* (2014)
- 28 Rachel Joyce *A Snow Garden and other stories* (2015)
- 29 Mike Bartlett *King Charles III* (2014)
- 30 Jane Rogers *Hitting Trees with Sticks* (2012)