

of Wordsworth's statement that language should be the incarnation of thought is with a view to doctoral research.

How many dimensions are there to the concept of the Fall? **Barry Livingstone's** paper will focus on the importance of a ruined world in Tolkien's vision. It argues for the centrality of choice in Tolkien's writing, and for the religious focus of a work seemingly devoid of religious references. It also seeks to address some of the sharp divisions of opinion that *The Lord of the Rings* has always provoked.

Selected Reading

Christopher Tolkien (ed.), *The Silmarillion*, 1979.
J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*, 3 vols, 1999.
Tree and Leaf, 1964.
Charles Moseley, *J.R.R. Tolkien*, Plymouth, 1997.
Tom Shippey, *J.R.R. Tolkien Author of the Century*, 2000.

Barry Livingstone grew up in Africa before moving to Britain for postgraduate work as a Commonwealth Scholar. At the time of his retirement from teaching, he was Head of English at a secondary school. He now divides his time between Sussex and Normandy, and is currently working on a novel about the Viking presence in France.

How is the story of the Fall represented in the fiction of Elizabeth Bowen? **Dr Nicola Darwood** will discuss the varying ways in which this motif is explored in Bowen's novels. The paper will particularly examine the representation of the Fall in Bowen's last published novel, *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* (1968), a novel in which issues of innocence, sexuality, identity and knowledge are intertwined in a multifaceted construction, and which focuses on the eponymous heroine as she stumbles through life, always seeking to recreate the Eden in which she failed to live as a child.

Selected Reading

Elizabeth Bowen, *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*, Penguin Books, 1982.
'Out of a Book' in *Collected Impressions*, Longmans, Green and Co, 1950, pp. 264-269.
Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982.
David Jasper and Stephen Prickett (eds.), *The Bible and Literature: A Reader*, Blackwell, 1999.
Hermione Lee, *Elizabeth Bowen*, Vintage, 1999

Nicola Darwood was awarded her PhD for a thesis on the fiction of Elizabeth Bowen in 2007. She teaches at the University of Bedfordshire and her current research interests include 1930s literature and children's fiction. She is the author of 'Empty Boxes, Empty Spaces: Elizabeth Bowen's The Little Girls' in *Further From the Frontiers* (August 2009).

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DAY CONFERENCE

Down to Earth: The Fall in Modern Literature

Saturday 7 November 2009

The Seminar Room
Corpus Christi College
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Oxford
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Tel. (lodge) 01865 276700

Programme

- 10.00 Arrivals and coffee
 10.30 Introductions
- 10.45 **Andrew Tate**
*After the Garden:
 Re-imagining the Fall in Contemporary Fiction*
- 11.45 **Anna Walczuk**
*Metaphysical Encounters:
 The Fallen and Un-Fallen Worlds in the Poetic
 Fiction of C.S. Lewis*
- 12.30 **Jessica Fay**
Wordsworth's 'Fallen' Language
- 1.15 Lunch
- 2.00 **Barry Livingstone**
Tolkien: Legends of the Fall
- 2.45 **Nicola Darwood**
*Eviction from Eden:
 the Fiction of Elizabeth Bowen*
- 3.30 Tea
 Work in progress
 Plans
 Prayer
- 4.15 Close

Is the idea of sinless fiction an impossibility? Valentine Cunningham has argued that even the act of reading itself is 'a postlapsarian business' since it 'has always eaten of the tree of theoretical knowledge'. This allusion to the Fall of humanity in Genesis 3 exemplifies the fact that literary studies continues to collide and collude with questions of theological orthodoxy. In his paper **Dr Andrew Tate** will explore representations of the Fall in contemporary fiction. The paper will draw on a range of novels but will pay particular attention to David Maine's *Fallen* (2005), an audacious, chronologically reversed re-telling of the world's first family, beginning with an elderly Cain and concluding with the bewildered figures of Adam and Eve, newly expelled from Eden. Are such re-writings necessarily heretical and why do contemporary 'secular' novelists return to the original human transgression as a source of narrative possibility?

Selected Reading

Valentine Cunningham, *Reading After Theory*, 2002
 Alan Jacobs, *Original Sin: a Cultural History*, 2008
 David Maine, *Fallen*, 2005
 Eric Smith, *Some Versions of the Fall: The Myth of the Fall of Man in English Literature*, 1973

Dr Andrew Tate is Senior Lecturer in English and Associate Director of the Ruskin Programme at Lancaster University, where he teaches nineteenth and twentieth-century literature. He is the author of three books: *Douglas Coupland* (2007); *Contemporary Fiction and Christianity* (2008) and *The New Atheist Novel: Fiction, Philosophy and Polemic After 9/11* (2010).

Dr Anna Walczuk writes: What are the reverberations of the Fall in the entire cosmic habitat? How does the Fall affect individual existence, especially in the sphere of language, most illustrative for intelligent creatures? What would the world be like if the Fall had been averted? C.S. Lewis posits these questions in his novels of interplanetary travel which represent a blend of traditional narrative with theological treatise framed in a discourse evocative of poetry. The paper explores how C.S. Lewis, Christian thinker and imaginative writer, constructs a fictional and metaphysical perspective for the essential encounter between Fallen and Un-fallen states of Being.

Selected Reading

C.S. Lewis, *Out of the Silent Planet*, 1938
Perelandra, 1943
That Hideous Strength, 1945
 Paul L. Holmer, C.S. Lewis: *The Shape of His Faith and Thought*, Sheldon Press, 1977.
 A.N. Wilson, C.S. Lewis: *A Biography*, Collins, 1990.

Anna Walczuk, whose doctoral dissertation was on Chesterton and C.S. Lewis, is Deputy Head at the Institute of English Philology of the Jagiellonian University, Kraków, Poland. Her scholarly interests in English literature of the 20th century include the rendering of ideas in literature e.g., Europeanism, British identity, history and metaphysics; and how rhetorical devices exploit the potential of language in representing, shaping and manipulating reality. Amongst her publications is *Irony as a Mode of Perception and Principle of Ordering Reality in the Novels of Muriel Spark*, Kraków: Universitas, 2005.

Jessica Fay writes: In the light of the narrative of the Tower of Babel (Gen 11:1-9) the 'fall' of man has a parallel in the fall of language. Wordsworth is conscious that language has fallen from an original state of perfection, but how is linguistic harmony to be regained? How does Wordsworth negotiate a journey through fallen language in *The Prelude*? Why does Wordsworth seem to prefer non-linguistic communication? This paper explores Wordsworth's anxiousness about language and how he manages, in his poetry, to glimpse the paradisiacal state that has been lost.

Selected Reading

Geoffrey Hartman, 'Inscriptions and Romantic Nature Poetry' in *The Unremarkable Wordsworth*, Methuen, 1987, pp. 31-46.
 Gavin Hopps, "'Je sais bien, mais quand même...': Wordsworth's faithful scepticism," in *Romanticism and Religion from William Cowper to Wallace Stevens*, Ashgate, 2006, pp. 57-74.
 Deeanne Westbrook, *Wordsworth's Biblical Ghosts*, New York, Palgrave, 2001.
 'Wordsworth and the Bible' in Rebecca Lemon (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to the Bible in Literature*, Blackwell, 2009.

Jessica Fay is an M-level research student at the University of Liverpool, interested in Philosophy and Literature. Her dissertation on the implications

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