

Так открываются, паря
Поверх плетней, где быть домам бы,
Внезапные, как вздох, моря.
Так будут начинаться ямбы.

Борис Пастернак

With her narrative enthusiasm, her sense of humour, her ethical and aesthetic judgement and sensitivity", and her personal, passionate attitude, Fiona Björling is an inspiring researcher, lecturer and conversationalist. Her intellectual energy and verbal skill can reveal previously hidden horizons; she inspires her listeners to call conventional ideas into question and to suggest interesting nuances to what, at first glance, seems to be perfectly obvious. These academic qualifications have enabled Fiona Björling to create a fruitful seminar atmosphere for the study of Slavonic languages and literatures in Lund, an atmosphere which focuses on the shared enjoyment of intellectual challenges rather than on academic bickering and self-assertion.

Fiona Björling grew up in a doctor's family in the London area. After leaving school, she enrolled as one of the first students at the University of Sussex, which was then a small, new university characterized by a stimulating atmosphere and a pioneering spirit. In 1966, Fiona earned a degree with Russian as her major subject, after spending the last year of her studies at the University of (then) Leningrad, where, among other things, she prepared her degree project on Belyj's *Petersburg*. She also met her future husband Peter there at the student dormitory on Vasiljevskij ostrov. She quickly made herself at home in Uppsala, gave birth to Emelie and Tobias and began her studies for a doctor's degree in Stockholm under the

aegis of Professor Nils-Åke Nilsson. Fiona's doctoral dissertation of 1973 contains meticulous readings of three poems from 'Stolbcy' by Nikolaj Zabolockij. She was then invited to teach and do research for two years at Yale University in the US.

Fiona has been working in Lund since 1975, i.e. for 34 years. That year she was employed as a research fellow at the then Department of Slavonic Languages and became the first scholar with a literary orientation at a department that, so far, had almost entirely devoted itself to doing research on and teaching languages. She was appointed docent in 1978 and professor in 2000. In addition, she temporarily acted as professor and deputy head of the department. Fiona had been invited to be visiting professor at Åbo Academy during 1977 and 1978, and was also offered the post as permanent professor there but did not accept it for family reasons. In 1979, she was also invited to be visiting professor at the UCLA Department of Slavic Languages in Los Angeles.

At the very beginning of her career she managed to place Slavonic studies in Lund on the map of literary scholarship. She did so with her research on the Russian avant-garde in the 1920s and 1930s, notably the works of Boris Pasternak, which was internationally published and discussed at many seminars and conferences in the Nordic countries and elsewhere. Her analysis of his poem 'My sister Life', for example, was of epoch-making importance, as was her analysis of aspect and narrative perspective in Olesa's 'Liompa'. Here, the tools of poetic and narrative effect are considered from the perspective of the specific possibilities offered by the Russian language. Fiona has subsequently continued to analyze Russian poetry and prose during her entire career. Her study of the novelist Jurij Trifonov's narrative technique, for example, attracted a great deal of attention.

During the years 1982-92, Fiona became increasingly engaged in social issues, first in the context of the 1980 nuclear power referendum and subsequently as a municipal politician in Lund and as a politician active in the national arena for the Green Party of Sweden, for example as their spokesperson in 1988-90, when she was on leave from the department. She used her intellectual acumen to

develop the Green ideology, and her ability to capture audiences made her an excellent debater. Her travels all over the country helped her experience Sweden from a new perspective.

More than once, the new family members Alexander and Katarina accompanied her on election tours with samba rhythms. In the 1980s, the family also began to explore the Swedish mountains during numerous summer hikes, especially in Lapland, as well as skiing in the Grövelsjö mountains. In addition to the sea and the mountains of Pembrokeshire, Wales, this is where Fiona has found her energy and inspiration. She also continued to develop her interest in music, in particular by singing — anything from jazz to sacral music, lately in the choir at St Hans church in Lund.

Fiona's experience of political life had given her an insight into social issues and a sense of leadership that greatly benefited the department. After participating in and commenting on social development herself as an intellectual, she returned to the department in 1992. She then became the leader of the research project 'The Intelligentsia as Creators of Social Values in Russia and Poland during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', which proceeded in the 1990s with financial support from the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation. Fiona organized an international network of scholars around this topic, and the Department of Slavonic Languages at Lund became the hub of a number of stimulating conferences.

She has also returned to Pasternak, exploring his authorship from this novel perspective and discussing his role in the Soviet society. Fiona's scholarly interests have recently expanded significantly. In her latest works, she focuses on the narrative art of film and how this may differ from that of literature, a topic that she has lectured on in, for example, Tallinn in 2005 within the framework of the project 'Cultural Studies in a Post-Soviet Context'. In 2008, 'adaptation' has been the theme of a multidisciplinary lecture series initiated within the Centre for Languages and Literature by Fiona and Film Studies scholars. As a rule, the more serious parts of Fiona's many colloquia have been followed by cheerful conversations over dinner in her hospitable home in the Kobjer neighbourhood of Lund!

Initially, Fiona was responsible for all instruction in Russian literature, which has gone through a considerable development thanks to her enthusiasm. She became known as a stimulating teacher with a compelling presence and good contact with her students. She also lectured on Russian literature to people with no knowledge of Russian. She was an important driving force when the department oriented itself towards cultural history and social life in Eastern and Central Europe. Fiona contributed by teaching Russian cultural history, and she worked actively at establishing the cultural history of Eastern and Central Europe as a separate discipline in PhD studies in Lund.

As an academic leader and teacher and an engaged citizen and parent, Fiona has been an important model for her colleagues and, in particular, for her doctoral students. Her wide competence and her intellectual mobility and cogency have allowed her to give her doctoral students great freedom in choosing their topics, and dissertations on both Russian and Czech literature and Russian cultural history have been produced under her aegis.

Now that Fiona will be 65, we — her colleagues, friends and family - would like to pay her tribute with this festschrift. In their different ways, the articles in it are related to her areas of interest and emphasize her intellectual curiosity and broad expertise. They are tokens of our great appreciation of Fiona as a researcher, a teacher and a human being.

Peter Björling

Karin Sarsenov

Johanna Lindblad

Miloslava Slavičková

Terho Paulsson

Barbara Törnquist-Plewa

Lund, 2009- 01-18

Selected works by Fiona Björling

- 'Stolbcy' by Nikolaj Zabolockij. *Analyses*. (=Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis Stockholm Slavic Studies 8), Stockholm 1973.
- Aspects of Poetic Syntax. Analysis of the Poem "Sestramoja - žizn' i segodnja v razlive" by Boris Pasternak. *Boris Pasternak. Essays*, ed. Nils Åke Nilsson, Stockholm 1976, 162-179.
- On the Question of Inversion in Russian Poetry. *Litteraria* (=Slavica Lundensia 5), red. L'ubomír Ďurovič, Lund 1977, 7-84.
- Ofort* by Nikolaj Zabolockij. The Poem and the Title. *Scando-Slavica* 23, Copenhagen 1977,7-84.
- Textual Coherency in Pasternak's Early Poetry. *Lunds Contributions to the Eighth International Congress of Slavists in Zagreb — Ljubljana* (= Slavica Lundensia 6), red. L'ubomír Ďurovič, Lund 1978,117-130.
- The Uses and Abuses of Syntax in Russian Modernist Poetry. *The Russian Avantgarde II*, (=Russian Literature VIII-VT), eds N.Å.Nilsson & Jan van Eng, Amsterdam 1980, 499-551.
- Verbal Aspect and Narrative Perspective in Oleša's *Liompa*.. *Russian Literature IX*, eds N.Å.Nilsson & Jan van Eng, Amsterdam 1981, 133-162.
- The Uses of the Present and Future Tenses in Pasternak's *Vozdušnye puti*. *The Slavic Verb. An anthology Presented to Hans Christian Sörensen 16th December 1981*, eds Per Jacobsen et al, Copenhagen 1981,14-24.
- Child Perspective: Tradition and Experiment. An Analysis of "Detstvo Ljuvers" by Boris Pasternak. *Studies in Russian 20th Century Prose* (= Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis. Stockholm Studies in Russian Literature 14), ed. Nils Åke Nilsson, Stockholm 1982,130-155.
- Child Narrator and Adult Author: The Narrative Dichotomy in Karel Polaček's *Bylo nás pět.*, *Scando-Slavica* 29, Copenhagen 1983, 5-19.
- Crossing Cultural Borders. Theme and Narrative Mode in Alexandr Kliment's *Nuda v Čechách*. *Slavica Lubomiro Durovic Sexagenario Dedicata* (=Slavica Lundensia 10), Lund 1986, 47-69.
- Morality as History: An Analysis of Jurij Trifonov's Novel *Starik, Text and Context*. *Essays to Honour Nils Åke Nilsson*, Stockholm 1987,157-169.

- Yuri Trifonov's *The House on the Embankment*-. Fiction or Autobiography? *Autobiographical Statements in Twentieth-Century Russian Literature*, ed. Jane Gary Harris, Princeton 1990,172-192.
- Science from an Ecological or Human-Ecological Point of View. *Responsibility of Contemporary Science and Intelligentsia* (=Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. Academic Conferences, Vol. LXV. Department and Language and Literature. Book 11), Belgrade 1992,119-126.
- Who is the We of the Intelligentsia in Central and Eastern Europe? *Intelligentsia in the Interim. Recent Experiences from Central and Eastern Europe* (=Slavica Lundensia 14), ed. Fiona Björling, Lund 1995, 7-17.
- Modernity and Postmodernity as Relevant Concepts for Describing Russian Culture. *Modernism i postmodernism v ruskoj literature i kul'ture* (=Slavica Helsingiensia 16), red. P. Pesonen et al, Helsinki 1996,13-26.
- Dostoevskij's Outburst of Wounded Patriotism — Prejudice or Perspicacity? On the First Visit to Europe as presented in *Winter Notes on Summer Impression. Reciprocal Images: Russian Culture in the Mirror of Travellers' Accounts* (= Culture and History 14), ed. Peter Ulf Møller, Copenhagen 1997, 74-92.
- Art as spirituality in modern Russia, *Problemy granicy v kulture* (= Studia Russica Helsingiensia et Tartuensia VI), ed. L. Kiseleva, Tartu 1998, 53-68.
- Exhausted Stereotypes: Representations of Russia in Andrej Nekrasov's *Love is as Strong as Death, Through a Glass Darkly. Kultural representations in the dialogue between Central, Eastern and Western Europe* (=Slavica Lundensia 19), ed. Fiona Björling, Lund 1999, 91-111.
- "Whether 'tis noble in the mind..." Pasternak i npravstvennaja dilemma postrevoljucionnoj inteligencii. *Russkaja intelligentsia i ypadnyj intellektualism: istorija i tipologija*, (=Rossiya/Russia 2 (10)), ed. B.A.Uspenskij, 1999, 95-103.
- Boris Godunov: Interpretations of Pushkin's and Musorgskij's Boris with the Help of Bakhtin's Concept of Cultural Dialogue. *Komparatyvistika šiandien: teorija ir praktika. Comparative Literature today: Theory and Practice. Tarptautinė mokslinė konferenčija-diskusija. Scientific Conference-Discussion*. Vilnius 2000, 75-79.
- "The Complicated Mix of the Private and the Public": Pasternak's Obituary for Mayakovsky in *Safe Conduct Part Three. Severnyj sbornik. Proceedings of the NorFA Network in Russian Literature 1995-2000*, ed. Peter Alberg Jensen & Ingunn Lunde, Stockholm 2000, 255-266.

Blind leaps of passion and other strategies to outwit inevitability: on Pasternak and the legacy from the turn of the 19th to the 20th century. *On the Verge. Russian Thought Between the Nineteenth and the Twentieth Centuries* (=Slavica Lundensia 21), ed. Alexander Pereswetoff-Morath, Lund 2001,131-149.

Ideology, Poetry and the Philosophy of Language. Bukharin, Pasternak and Bakhtin in 1934-35. *Lotmanovsky sbornik* 3, ed. L.N.Kiselova, R.G.Lejbov, T.N.Frajman, Moskva 2004, 708-716.

When the Rim Is Better Than the Book: Elen Klimov's *Farewell* and Valentin Rasputin's *Farewell to Matyora*. *Russian Literature on the Silver Screen (II)* (=Russian Studies in literature,vol.40, no.3), Armonk,NY (M.E.Sharp) 2004, 64-78.

As Time Goes By ... Tentative Notes on Present Tense Narration in Contemporary Fiction. A Comparison with Narration in Film. *Telling Forms. 30 essays in honour of Peter Alberg Jensen* (=Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis. Stockholm Studies in Russian Literature 37), red. Karin Grek & Susanna Witt, Stockholm 2004,17-36.

Introduction. A short history of the Lund Intelligentsia project. *Words, Deeds and Values. The Intelligentsia in Russia and Poland during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (=Slavica Lundensia 22), ed. Fiona Björling & Alexander Pereswetoff-Morath, Lund 2005, XIII-XXVI.

Speeding in Time. Philosophy and Metaphor in a Presentation of Okhran-naia gramota Part One, 6. *Hostage of Eternity*. An International Conference on Boris Pasternak (=Stanford Slavic Studies 31), Stanford 2006.

Mistrusting the Past. Andrei Nekrasov's Documentary Composition *Disbelief (Nedoverie)*. *The Poetics of Memory in Post-Totalitarian Narration*. (=CFE Conference Papers Series No.3), ed. Johanna Lindbladh, Lund 2008,111-120.

Recensioner

Kvinnen i russisk litteratur. En artikkelsamling, red. Marit Björkeng Nielsen og Geir Kjetsaa, *Tidskrift för Litteraturvetenskap* 1,1980, 57-59.

Barbara Lönnquist, *Xlebnikov and Carneval*. An Analysis of the Poem 'Poet'. Stockholm 1979 (=Acta Stockholmiensis, Stockholm Studies in Russian Literature 9). *Svantevit V/1* 1980,183-188.

Review of Andrej Nekrasov, *Love and Other Nightmares*. ARTMARGINS [Contemporary Central and East European Visual Culture, <http://artmargins.com/>], 2001.

Repentance. By Josephine Woli & Denise J. Youngblood. *Bed and Sofa*. By Julian Graffy. *The Mirror*. By Natasha Synessiois, *Mirror, Modern Language Review, MLR* 98, 4. 2003, 1068-1069.

Review of Andrej Nekrasov. *Disbilief*. *KinoKultura* July 2005.

<http://www.kinokultura.com/reviews/R7-05nedoverie.html>

Film review: Georgii Shengeliia "Flash-ka" (2006), *KinoKultura* 2007.

Film review: Ivan Vyrypaev, *Euphoria* (2006), *KinoKultura* 2007.

Review: Kira Muratova by Jane A. Taubman (KINOfiles Filmmakers' Companions) London and New York: Tauris 2005, Modern Humanities Research Association, 2007.

Redaktörskap

Medredaktör:

Slavica Lubomiro Durovic Sexagenario Dedicata (=Slavica Lundensia Lund 1986.

Text and Context. Essays to Honour Nils Åke Nilsson. Stockholm 1987.

Festschrift Lubomir Durovič Zum 65. Geburtstag (=Wiener Slawistischer Almanach 25/26), Wien 1990.

Inbjuden redaktör:

Intelligentsia in the Interim. Recent Experiences from Central and Eastern Europe (=Slavica Lundensia 14), Lund 1995.

Through a Glass Darkly. Kultural representations in the dialogue between Central, Eastern and Western Europe. (= Slavica Lundensia 19), Lund 1999.

On the Verge. Russian thought between the Nineteenth and the Twentieth Centuries. (=Slavica Lundensia 21), Lund 2005.

Words, Deeds and Values. The Intelligentsia in Russia and Poland during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (=Slavica Lundensia 22), Lund 2005.

Forskningsprojekt

Intelligentsian som skapare av samhällsvärderingar i Ryssland och Polen under 1800- och 1900-talen (projektledare).