

# Words on the Move II

An Afternoon of Readings and Discussion  
With Timberlake Wertenbaker, Catherine Grant,  
Valentina Castagna  
Introduction by Marina Warner

June 17 2017 2-6.30pm

Keynes Library, School of Arts and Humanities,  
Birkbeck College, 43 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PD



Cildo Meireles, '*Babel*' (2001)

The workshop "Words on the Move II" will reflect on current developments in broadcasting literary works and explore contemporary approaches to acoustic media, particularly by women and about women. Invited speakers will talk about oral and sound experimentation in performance and drama, written or adapted for radio or new digital platforms. The workshop will also ask, 'Can developments in the use of voice, 'spoken word' events, and the broadcasting of literary works inform the creative writing workshop as a collaborative and participatory space?'

### **Key Note Speakers:**

Timberlake Wertenbaker, Playwright, adaptor, translator.

Dr Valentina Castagna (Associate Research Fellow, Birkbeck; University of Palermo)

Dr Catherine Grant (University of Sussex; Professor of Digital Media and Screen Studies at Birkbeck College, from Sept. 1 2017)

*Words on the Move I* (November 1, 2016) focussed on poetry in performance, in connection with the international project *Stories in Transit* (2016-ongoing), and the work of the [Watadd Research Network](#), to nourish storytelling and other forms of expression in refugee communities. A full list of speakers and research questions is [available at this link](#). This second event in the series 'Words on the Move' is also associated with *Stories in Transit* and the work of the [Watadd Research Network](#), and is addressed to scholars and lecturers interested in these themes, students from MA and PhD in English and Creative Writing from the School of Arts and Humanities of Birkbeck, as well as interested members of the public.

### **Programme**

2.00 Introduction - Marina Warner

2.30 Timberlake Wertenbaker, 'Breaking the Sound Barrier: radio and the imagination'

3.30 Valentina Castagna, '"The snake under the sand": Unearthing buried voices in Selma Dabbagh's radio play *The Brick*.'

4.30 Break

5.00 Catherine Grant, '"The Dreaming Child" on the Move to the Radio: From Karen Blixen through Harold Pinter to Joanna Hogg'

An examination of the adaptation relay between Karen Blixen/Isak Dinesen's short story "the Dreaming Child" (1942), Harold Pinter's unrealised screen play adaptation of this work (1997/2000), and the recently produced radio version of these works adapted and directed by celebrated British filmmaker Joanna Hogg for BBC Radio 4's Unmade Movies series (2015).

5.30 -6.30 Q&A

The workshop is supported by the School of the Arts and Humanities, Birkbeck; the Contemporary Poetics Research Centre, Birkbeck; and the British Comparative Literature Association (BCLA)

## Biographies

**Timberlake Wertenbaker** is a playwright, translator, and active campaigner for literature and freedom of expression. With a striking combination of poetic imagination and activist conscience, she has revisioned myths about figures such as Hecuba, Antigone, Elektra from Greek tragedy, and Philomel from Ovidian myth.

Her many award-winning works for stage include *Our Country's Good* and *Jefferson's Garden*. She has created many dramatic works for radio: 'Dianeira', a response/rewrite of Sophocles's *Women of Trachis* (Radio 3) and the 'playlet' *What Is the Custom of Your Grief?* for the R4 series *From Fact to Fiction*; she has also undertaken major adaptations, of A.S. Byatt's *Possession* for *Woman's Hour*, and Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, and last year, also for Radio 4, the acclaimed version of Elena Ferrante's bestselling novel of female friendship, *My Brilliant Friend*; she is continuing work on the next volumes of the cycle. Her new drama, *Winter Hill*, with Cathy Tyson, was recently playing at the Octagon, Bolton.

**Catherine Grant** currently lectures in film studies at the University of Sussex, where she researches matters of intertextuality, adaptation and authorship, and creative, critical and audiovisual forms of remediation. In September 2017, she will take up the post of Professor in Digital Media and Screen Studies at Birkbeck, University of London.

**Valentina Castagna** is a Lecturer of English Literature at the University of Palermo, Italy. She is currently an Associate Research Fellow at Birkbeck College, University of London. She has published books and articles in the field of Women's and Gender Studies, on popular genres and rewriting. She is the author of *Corpi a pezzi. Eretiche e sante secondo Michèle Roberts* (Ferrara, Tufani, 2007), *Shape-Shifting Tales. Michèle Roberts's Monstrous Women* (Peter Lang, 2010), and of *Re-Reading Margery Kempe in the 21st Century* (Peter Lang, 2011). She has edited and translated the Italian editions of Marina Warner's radio play *Birgit's Cell* (*La cella di Brìgit*, Palermo, Quattrosoli, 2010) and stories and radio plays included in the same author's collection *"Natural Limits" and Other Stories/"Limiti Naturali" e altre storie* (Napoli, Liguori, 2014).

**Marina Warner** writes fiction and cultural history. Her books include *From the Beast to the Blonde* (1994) and *Stranger Magic: Charmed States and The Arabian Nights* (2011). Her essays on art will be collected in *Forms of Enchantment* (forthcoming Thames & Hudson). In 2015, she was awarded the Holberg Prize in the Arts and Humanities. She is Professor of English and Creative Writing at Birkbeck College, a Fellow of the British Academy and President-Elect of the Royal Society of Literature.

