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Amis, Banville and Self debate contemporary literature

Three of the world's most famous writers gave the public an unprecedented chance to hear their views at the end of September 2007, at the Centre for New Writing's launch event at St. Ann's Church.

Appearing at the end of his first day as the Centre's Professor of Creative Writing, Martin Amis was joined by fellow literary heavyweights Will Self and John Banville for a debate on the state, role and future of contemporary literature.

The discussion ranged from the writer's relationship with the reader (described as a love affair by Prof Amis) to the influence of contemporary political themes such as climate change, science, terror and the market state. Will Self defended modernism as an antidote to the 'chocolate box' heritage novel dominating current fiction, while his colleagues looked to shifting identities in China as a possible source of renewal for this kind of novel.

Amis's claim that the novelist's cultural authority is greater than ever, as scientific advances create a need for the novel's moral compass, was contested by the other speakers: Banville insisting that the novelist must resist the role of 'priest' while Self saw the medical profession as far more central in how we understand and respond to new science.

Self also claimed that the continued attraction of the writer's life is its apparent freedom from traditional work structures, and was unconvinced by the growth in creative writing courses, but Professor Amis was sure that his 23 year-old self could have learnt a lot from the experienced, 58 year-old version.

The event was the first of a series featuring Amis and other leading writers and commentators discussing key issues in contemporary literature - please click [here](#) for further details and book early to avoid disappointment.

- ▶ [Download](#) the debate as an mp3 file (63MB)
- ▶ [Listen online using Windows Media Player](#)
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The panel is introduced by Centre co-director Dr Ian McGuire

noise

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- ▶ Manchester meets Muldoon
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- ▶ Amis debates Literature and Terrorism
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- ▶ Centre UG named student sports writer of the year
- ▶ Crawford and Sansom reading
- ▶ New appointees show what they can do
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- ▶ Centre joins Literature Festival
- ▶ Amis, Banville and Self debate contemporary literature
- ▶ Mark Piggott's first novel accepted
- ▶ Clare Wigfall publishes debut
- ▶ John McAuliffe's poetry collection launched
- ▶ M.J. Hyland appointed
- ▶ New Research Fellows appointed
- ▶ Martin Amis joins Manchester

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