

THE English

Studies *BOOK*

An Introduction to Language, Literature and Culture

SECOND EDITION

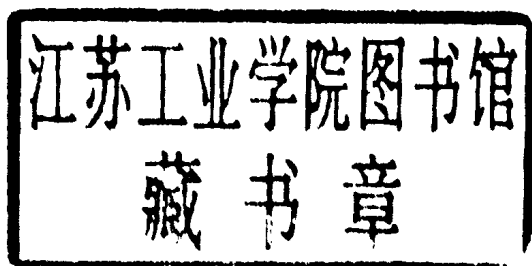
ROB POPE

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and culture

Second edition

Rob Pope



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This one's still for you guys.

For Bronwen, Sophie, Ivan and Sasha

With love from Dad.

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

One of the pleasanter challenges posed by this second edition is that there are even more people to thank than first time round. In fact, I could quite happily fill a dozen pages just saying who those people are and how they have helped. It's a bit like the conundrum faced by the hapless narrator of Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*: the longer he takes writing his 'life', the more life there is to write about; and so it goes on. I am particularly indebted to the hundreds of lecturers and thousands of students who have had a hand or a say in what has gone into the making of this book; though they should in no way be held responsible for how it has all come out. The core of this activity has been at Oxford Brookes University. But it has been constantly enriched by experiences elsewhere. All this makes for some hefty acknowledgements, I'm afraid – though hopefully for a robust book, too.

First and foremost, then, I would like to thank all those students at Oxford Brookes University (formerly Oxford Polytechnic) who have read, discussed, written about, and sometimes re-written texts with me over the years. I am especially thinking of those who have taken various versions of: Language, Literature, Discourse I, II and III; Texts, Problems and Approaches; Changing Stories; Comedy, Creativity and Critique, and Critical Issues ('The Synoptic'); also those on the MA programme in English Language, Literature & Culture and the option in Changing Literature. Singling out colleagues is always inadequate and sometimes invidious. A lot of what goes on is team work. But I shall take this opportunity to celebrate two former, long-standing colleagues who in various ways have had a profound influence on what I teach and how. One is Archie Burnett, now at Boston University. It was with him that I first hacked out and then honed down much of this material for courses we taught jointly. He knows this stuff inside out and back to front, not least because that was usually the state in which I first presented it to him. The other person is Paul O'Flinn, who died suddenly and unexpectedly a year ago. For me, as for many others within and beyond Brookes, Paul will continue to be a model of all that a sensitive, principled and deeply decent human being can be. He was, unassumingly and almost incidentally, an inspiring teacher and a truly radical scholar.

Thanks are also due to a wide range of other people and organisations. Again it proves impossible to mention everyone by name, so I hope the shorthand references to 'colleagues at' and 'members of' will be taken in good part. *You all know who you are!* Thank you to . . .

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Meanwhile, as an external examiner at various institutions, I continue to be fascinated by the many ways in which 'English' can be reconfigured. Thanks for this and much else to: Josephine Guy, Peter Stockwell, John McRae and colleagues teaching the MA in English Studies at the University of Nottingham; Tim Parke, George Xydopoulos, Sharon Monteith, Nahem Yousaf and all those with whom I worked on the University of Hertfordshire 'Linguistics with Literature' BA degree at IST Athens; and Tony Lopez, Paul Lawley, Robin Peel, Mary Reeves, Rachel Christofides, Liz Farr and colleagues teaching the undergraduate programme in 'English with Creative Writing' at the University of Plymouth.

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