University of Birmingham

Professor Valerie Rumbold MA, PhD

Chair in English Literature

Department of English Literature (/schools/edacs/departments/english/index.aspx)

Contact details

Telephone **+44 (0)121 414 5692 (tel:+44 121 414 5692)**

Email **v.rumbold@bham.ac.uk (mailto:v.rumbold@bham.ac.uk)**

Arts Building
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 2TT
UK

About

My main enthusiasm is for eighteenth-century poetry and satire, particularly the work of Alexander Pope and Jonathan Swift, and I have a special interest in textual editing, having produced, over the last few years, editions of Pope's *Dunciad* and of hoaxes and parodies by Swift. I also enjoy teaching a wide range of English literature in a variety of our undergraduate and postgraduate modules and programmes.

Qualifications

- MA (Oxford)
- PGCE (Oxford)
- PhD (Cambridge)

Biography

Educated at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, and Jesus College, Cambridge, I held posts at Jesus College, Cambridge; St Hilda's College, Oxford; the University of Wales, Bangor before coming to the University of Birmingham in 1998.

Teaching

I teach the final-year option 'Gossip, Scandal and Celebrity', in which we explore a wide variety of published and unpublished writings, both familiar and lesser-known, that illustrate the way in which images of authors, public figures and contemporary issues were constructed for eighteenth-century readers. As well as reading well-known authors like Pope and Swift, students enjoy using the online resource *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* to trace such lesser-known works as pamphlets attacking Pope and Swift, poems on events in the royal family, and essays addressing contemporary controversies.

I am also part of the team that runs the second-year modules 'Epic Ambitions' and 'Stories of the Novel', and I contribute to the teaching of first-year English literature.

At postgraduate level I convene the module team for 'Writing Revolutions 2', part of the **MA in English Literature (/postgraduate/courses/taught/english/english-literature.aspx)** . This focuses on the period 1660-1832, and my personal contributions reflect my long-standing interest in the implications of the world of print as it developed in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

Postgraduate supervision

I am particularly interested in supervising students who want to work on eighteenth-century poetry and satire, and on issues of editing and textual transmission.

Research

My research originally took its rise from a long-term enthusiasm for the poetry of Alexander Pope. Having written a PhD dissertation on attitudes to the medieval inheritance in Pope's work, in 1989 I contributed to the growing interest in women and literature with my study *Women's Place in Pope's World* (Cambridge University Press), which was awarded the Rose Mary Crawshay Prize by the British Academy.

My focus then turned to issues of textual editing, and in 1999 I published an edition of the climactic work of Pope's career, the complex and challenging *Dunciad in Four Books* of 1743 (Longman Annotated Texts). Since then I have collaborated on the multi-volume *The Poems of Alexander Pope* for the Longman Annotated English Poets series, and in 2007 I published Volume 3, containing *The Dunciad. A Heroic Poem* (1728) and *The Dunciad Variorum* (1729).

In 2013 I published volume II of The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Jonathan Swift, and took on the role of a general editor of the edition. My volume, *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock Treatises: Polite Conversation, Directions to Servants and Other Works,* also includes the Bickerstaff Papers and writings on language and manners.

I have also published articles on women writers of the eighteenth century such as Judith Cowper and Mary Leapor, and on wider issues arising from Pope's career, including the relations between literature and music and between Pope and his poetic predecessors.

Research groups

I am Director of the Centre for Literary Editing and the Materiality of the Text.

Other activities

- I am a member of the British Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, and of the editorial boards of Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies, Eighteenth-Century Fiction, and Eighteenth-Century Life.

- I am Research Lead for the School of English, Drama, and American and Canadian Studies.

Conferences

- 2013, 'Niche Books', in a panel on the editing of Swift at the annual conference of the British Society for Eighteenth Century Studies'
- 2010 'The Reason of this Preference': Sleeping, Flowing and Freezing in Pope's *Dunciad*, **Warton Lecture at the British Academy (http://www.britac.ac.uk/events/2010/warton/)**
- 2009 Annotating *Polite Conversation*, at the University of Glasgow conference 'Editing the Eighteenth Century'
- 2008 'Burying the Fanatic Partridge', at "Politics and Letters in Eighteenth-Century England and Ireland', a symposium at the Huntington Library, California
- 2007 'Roger Lonsdale's Anthologies', in a panel in celebration of the career of Roger Lonsdale at the annual conference of the British Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies
- 2007 '"Two Nymphs in One Couplet": Pope and the Blount Sisters' at a public celebration of 40 years' opening to the public of the sisters' former home at Mapledurham.
- 2006 **In our Time discussion on Alexander Pope (http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0038x97)** , Radio 4
- 2006 'The Title of *Polite Conversation'*, at the Muenster Swift Symposium
- 2005 'Rethinking Warburton', in a panel on Warburton at the annual conference of the British Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies
- 2003 Hand in Hand to Posterity', a paper on Swift and Pope read by invitation at the symposium 'Swift's Politics', held at St Patrick's Deanery, Dublin, to mark the anniversary of his death
- 2003 '"Some more able Hand": *Folly* (1727) and Pope's *Dunciads*', read by invitation to the English Research Seminar at University College, London
- 2001 'Reading the *Tatler* in 1710: Periodicals and Sociability in the Early Eighteenth Century', read by invitation to the Spalding Gentlemen's Society
- 2000 'Scriblerus and Bentley in *The Dunciad in Four Books'*, read at 'Martinus Revived: Scriblerian Satire and its Significance', at the Institute for English Studies, University of London

Publications

- *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock Treatises: Polite Conversation, Directions to Servants and Other Works*, Cambridge Edition of the Works of Jonathan Swift, vol. II (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2013)
- 'Burying the fanatic Partridge: Swift's Holy Week hoax', in *Politics and Literature in the Age of Swift: English and Irish Perspectives*, edited by Claude Rawson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)
- 'Locating Swift's Parody: The Title of *Polite Conversation*' in *Reading Swift: Papers from the Fifth Muenster Symposium on Jonathan Swift* , ed. Hermann Real (Wilhelm Fink, Munich, 2008), pp. 255-272.
- *The Poems of Alexander Pope* , vol 3: *The Dunciad* (1728) & *The Dunciad Variorum* (1729), Longman Annotated English Poets (Harlow : Pearson Longman, 2007)
- "Alexander Pope, *The Rape of the Lock* and "Eloisa to Abelard", in *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Poetry*, edited by Christine Gerrard (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 157-69
- 'Fitzgerald's *Folly* and Pope's *Dunciads*', jointly written with Thomas McGeary, *Review of English Studies*, New Series 56 (2005), No.226, pp.577-610 '
- Milton's Epic and Pope's Satyr-Play', *Milton Quarterly*, 38 (2004), pp.138-62
- 'Plotting Parallel Lives: Alexander Pope's "A Parallel of the Characters of Mr. Dryden and Mr. Pope"', in *John Dryden (1631-1700): His Politics, His Plays, and His Poets*, edited by Claude Rawson and Aaron Santesso (London: University of Delaware Press, 2004), pp.235-62.
- Chapters 9 ('Mary Leapor') and 11 ('Rank, Community and Audience: The Social Range of Women's Poetry') in *Punk to Poetess: Women and Poetry, 1660-1750*, edited by Sarah Prescott and David E. Shuttleton (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. 2003), pp.88-95, 121-39.
- 'Cut the Caterwauling: Women Writers (not) in Pope's *Dunciads', in Review of English Studies,* New Series, Vol. 52, No. 208 (2001), pp.524-39.
- 'Alexander Pope, the *Dunciads'*, in *A Companion to Literature from Milton to Blake*, edited by David Womersley (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), pp. 291-300.
- 'Ideology and Opportunism: The Role of Handel in Pope's *The Dunciad in Four Books', in 'More Solid Learning': New Perspectives on Alexander Pope's Dunciad*, edited by Catherine Ingrassia and Claudia N. Thomas (Lewisburg PA: Bucknell University Press, 2000), pp.62-80.

© University of Birmingham 2014