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Christine Brooke-Rose
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The novelist and critic Christine Brooke-Rose reflects on her own fictional craft and turns her well-developed analytic abilities on other writers fictional and critical, from Hawthorne and Pound to Bloom and Derrida, in an attempt to investigate those difficult border zones between the 'invented' and the 'real'. The result is an extended meditation, in a highly personal idiom, on the creative act and its relation to modern theoretical writing and thinking. Like her fiction, Professor Brooke-Rose's criticism is self-consciously experimental, trying out and discarding ideas, adopting others. Her linguistic prowess, her uncommon role as a recognized writer of fiction *and* theory, and the relevance of her work to the feminist and other modern movements, all contribute to the interest of this unusual sequence of essays.

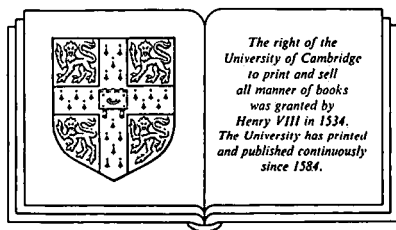
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CHRISTINE BROOKE-ROSE



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Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xi
Part I. Theories as stories	
1. Stories, theories and things	3
2. Whatever happened to narratology?	16
3. Id is, is id?	28
Part II. Stories and style	
4. A for but: Hawthorne's 'The Custom-House'	47
5. Ill locutions	63
6. Ill logics of irony	81
7. Ill wit and sick tragedy	103
8. Cheng Ming Chi'I'd	123
9. Notes on the metre of Auden's <i>The Age of Anxiety</i>	143
Part III. Theories of stories	
10. Fiction, figment, feign	157
11. Which way did they go? Thataways	167
12. Palimpsest history	181
13. Illusions of parody	191
14. Illusions of anti-realism	204
15. A womb of one's own?	223

Cambridge University Press
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Frontmatter
[More information](#)

viii

CONTENTS

Part IV. Things?

16. Woman as semiotic object	237
17. Illiterations	250
18. Ill wit and good humour	265
19. An allegory of aesthetics	275
<i>References</i>	285
<i>Index</i>	299

Preface

This book is about both literary theory and creativity; that is, it mostly contains chapters that were originally asked of me as critic and teacher, but also a few that were asked of me as critic and novelist (1, 3, 10, 11, 18, see Acknowledgements below). I believe they are deeply connected, and have considerably reworked most of them as well as added to them to bring this out, and make a coherent, continuous book.

Novelists are usually indifferent theorists, and possibly this is true of me. Occasionally they are better theorists than novelists. Either way the novelist can often throw an aura of doubt or humour or particular perception upon theory. The book (and particularly Chapter 1, more personal than the rest) is in fact about this connection, about how the critic and teacher reads also as writer and how the novelist writes also as theorist, aware of a fundamental inseparability of elements that critics and teachers have to separate, even rejoice in separating, pin-pointing, for the purpose of this or that type of analysis, though some try to refound them into large universal systems which the novelist knows can only hold in a precarious suspension of disbelief: as with poems and stories, as with ideal definitions of form and formal definitions of ideas, as with statements of position, confessions, autobiographies, greater aims, interpretations, glimmerings of overall themes. All are protean, capturable for brief moments in language, but already changed even into their opposites another brief moment later. That is the excitement, not unique since it is part of the human condition, but more intensely experienced in the critical and creative activities than in the more unreflexive routines of daily life.

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Chapter 4 in *Word and Image* 3/2, April–June 1987, 143–55.

Chapter 5 in *Narrative in Culture – The Uses of Storytelling in the Sciences, Philosophy and Literature*, ed. Christopher Nash, London, Methuen, 1990, pp. 154–71.

Chapter 6 in *New Essays on the Red Badge of Courage*, ed. Lee Clark Mitchell, Cambridge University Press 1986, pp. 129–46.

Chapter 7 in *Alternative Hardy*, ed. Lance St John Butler, London, Macmillan 1989, pp. 26–48.

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Chapter 16 in *Poetics Today* 6/1–2, 1985, 9–20 and in *The Female Body in Western Culture*, ed. Susan Suleiman, Harvard University Press 1986, pp. 305–16.

Chapter 17 (title and a few pages only, since this was an opening address at which I had been asked to read from my works as well) in *Comparative Criticism* 10, 121–38.

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[More information](#)

xii

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18 were the most rehandled for the book.