

Editorial

WITH THE EXCEPTION OF Rick Bowers's essay, the articles in this special issue are adapted from papers presented at the 25th annual meeting of the Northeast American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, held in cooperation with the Atlantic Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies. With the assistance of Jane Curran of the Atlantic Society, I had the pleasure of hosting this meeting, which took place in Halifax on 1–4 November 2001. I would like to thank the officers of both societies as well as the conference sponsors, Dalhousie University and the University of King's College, for their assistance and support.

The theme of the conference was "Eighteenth-Century Speculations," a title I have retained for this special issue. Like many a conference theme, ours was designed to be broadly encompassing so as to appeal to the diverse interests of society members. Thus the two groupings of essays in this issue reflect the conference's principal emphases. The first grouping provides a sampling of the kind of scholarship society members regularly pursue: biographical exhumations such as B. Eugene McCarthy's account of Thomas Gray's father, literary studies such as Wulf Koepke's discussion of Jean Paul's *Flegeljahre*, and historical research such as Martha F. Bowden's overview of the roles available to women within the Church of England. Though not presented at the conference, Rick Bowers's essay, on the actor George Frederick Cooke, has been included since it fits well with the tenor and approach of the other papers in this grouping.

The essays in the second grouping bear at least indirectly upon the conference theme in that they deal either with speculative thinking or with representations of speculating in property and commerce. Roderick Nicholls's timely meditation on Voltaire's attempts to define fanaticism is an example of the former, while the latter category includes Nancy Johnson's fine study of how America served as a symbol of financial promise or disappointment within "Jacobin" novels of the 1790s.

As I will soon be retiring from my position as associate editor, I would like to record my thanks to Ronald Huebert, Robert Martin, Jennifer Lambert and our several editorial assistants for having made my tenure at the *Review* so agreeable and rewarding.

Trevor Ross