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Preface
Préface

David H. Jory and Charles Stewart-Robertson

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Preface

In December of 1765 the Scottish philosopher, Thomas Reid, began his long labour of love towards what he regarded as a proper 'Culture of the human Mind.' Although the subject had not been entirely neglected, either in his own career or in letters generally, it was time, he believed, to set it upon strong and lasting foundations. From the outset, it would be necessary to enunciate the very principle on which man's relation to nature must rest. A characteristically human principle, it must serve as the first principle of culture or the last of man's otherwise brutish condition. Typically, it would rest upon a distinction. Having remarked that 'at first' the human soul has 'no manifest Superiority to the Soul of a Brute,' Reid seizes the initiative:

> I have said these things in general to shew that although we should find reason to conclude, that man without any kind of Culture would hardly appear to be of a Nature superior to many brutes, yet it will by no means follow from this, That Nature itself has not made a Specifick distinction between Men and Brutes. For when we are capable of acquiring by means of Culture many noble Powers which the brutes are not capable of acquiring by the same Means, this shews an original and Specifick difference between the brute and the Man, no less than if those Powers had been born with us in their full perfection. (Birkwood Collection, Aberdeen, ms. 2131/4/I/31)

Clearly, the ties binding as well as separating man and nature will be of a complex order of things.

Apart from its historical interest, as adding yet another colourful fragment to the eighteenth-century mosaic on man and nature, this connection may serve also as an appropriate starting-point for this fourth volume in the series entitled, *Man and Nature/L'Homme et la Nature*. It

is at least one of the mandates of an editor of a volume in this series, first launched at the University of Western Ontario in 1982, that he (or in this case, they) should offer a record of the proceedings, *les actes*, of one of the annual meetings of the Canadian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies. A 'record' of this sort is obviously a selective affair which, among other things, fulfils a second mandate, sc. that of furnishing both scholarly and original insights into the interdisciplinary field of eighteenth-century research and inquiry. But it is selective also in recounting only that part of the story which the essays in the present volume represent and which, the most masterful of plans notwithstanding, they chance to tell. One might reasonably ask, of course, whether any other aspect of the proceedings, which took place in Saint John, New Brunswick, during October, 1983, ought to find its way into these pages. To this we beg to answer in the affirmative and, in the brief course of this Preface, we hope to explain our intentions as fully and clearly as any editors may.

The meetings of the Canadian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies for the year 1983 were, in fact, something of a hybrid species. For only the second time in its history, the Canadian body was at that time grafted on to the Atlantic Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, to produce a 'Joint Congress' of the two scholarly associations. Having long tasted of the fruits of that grafting, the editors are more than sensible of the fact that, in the strictest sense, *Man and Nature IV* represents the 'proceedings' not of one society alone, the Canadian, but of two societies jointly and, we might add, most amicably bonded in frank debate and lively discussion.

> nec longum tempus, et ingens exiit ad caelum ramis felicibus arbos miraturque novas frondes et non sua poma (*Georgica*, II, 80-82).

What has been recaptured, therefore, might be said to be of singular as well as of intellectual moment.

The singularity does not quite end there, however, as our opening allusion to the Glasgow lectures of Thomas Reid might already have suggested. Virtually concurrent with the Joint Congress of the Canadian and Atlantic Societies, there took place at the University of New Brunswick in Saint John yet another unique gathering, this time of members of the Reid Editorial Board, a body of international scholars committed to the editing and publication of Reid's hitherto unpublished manuscripts. Out of this latter conference arose the opportunity which led to three of the papers which are included in this volume being read before the assembled members of the two eighteenth-century societies. These pieces reflect the

broad interests of an interdisciplinary forum, of course, rather than the narrower concerns of an editorial project. Nevertheless, the unique advantages flowing from the sheer contiguity of events during that period could scarcely be lost on the editors.

Neither could two of the concerns which fairly dominated the Joint Congress, both in its plenary sessions and in its workshops (*les ateliers*). To issues arising out of recent research into the history of medicine were added various approaches to the role of jurisprudential thinking in eighteenth-century life and letters. Both areas, we believe, are well represented in this volume.

What we have offered as a sort of counterweight to the medical and jurisprudential discussions will, we hope, equally nourish and delight. The range of scholarly investigation now stretches in many and diverse directions: from France under revolution and English society in social ferment to religious writings in America and colonial settlements and their administrators in Canada; from art or literary history, on the one hand, to military or material history, on the other. Such is the spectrum of eighteenth-century studies, easily recognizable to all who have either attended or can now enjoy the arm-chair luxury of such proceedings.

If we have been able to convey something of the excitement of this manifold experience, and to share a portion at least of the rich fruits of that Joint Congress of 1983, our editorial labours will have been that much lighter. Even as we would express our appreciation to the individual contributors for their patience and generosity of spirit, so we would invite their readers to savour now the numerous delights of this feast of learning.

An editor's final task is always a humbling one. If the board at which the reader eats is at any point stained with typographical or other errors or omissions, the fault must lie entirely at the hands of those two clumsy waiters, the editors.

David H Jory and Charles Stewart-Robertson

Préface

En décembre 1765 le philosophe écossais Thomas Reid a entamé sa longue relation amoureuse avec les essais qui devaient aboutir à l'authentique 'Culture of the human Mind.' Quoique ce sujet n'ait pas été tout à fait négligé, ni dans ses ouvrages précédents, ni dans la littérature en général, il était temps, croyait Reid, de l'asseoir sur des fondations solides et durables. Il convenait d'énoncer dès le début le principe même sur lequel doit être basé le rapport de l'homme et de la nature. Ce principe, typiquement humain, devait servir de base à la culture, base sans laquelle la condition humaine ne serait qu'animale. Il devait être basé sur une distinction. Ayant remarqué qu'à l'origine l'âme n'a pas de supériorité évidente sur l'âme de la Brute, Reid saisit l'initiative:

> I have said these things in general to shew that although we should find reason to conclude, that man without any kind of Culture would hardly appear to be of a Nature superior to many brutes, yet it will by no means follow from this, That Nature itself has not made a Specifick distinction between Men and Brutes. For when we are capable of acquiring by means of Culture many noble Powers which the brutes are not capable of acquiring by the same Means, this shews an original and Specifick difference between the brute and the Man, no less than if those Powers had been born with us in their full perfection. (Birkwood Collection, Aberdeen, ms. 2131/4/I/31)

Evidemment les liens qui rattachent l'homme et la nature, et qui les distinguent, procèdent d'un ordre complexe des choses.

En plus de son intérêt historique — nouvelle petite pierre de couleur ajoutée à la mosaïque 18e de l'homme et de la nature — cette association peut servir de point de départ à ce quatrième volume de la série intitulée *Man and Nature/L'Homme et la Nature*. Un des devoirs qui incombent à

l'éditeur d'un volume de cette série est de recueillir les contributions qui composeront les actes — ou 'proceedings' — d'une des réunions annuelles de la Société canadienne d'étude du 18e siècle. Ces actes sont évidemment sélectifs et ont aussi un devoir: fournir des vues à la fois savantes et originales dans le domaine interdisciplinaire des recherches sur le dix-huitième siècle. Mais il sont sélectifs également en ce qu'ils ne racontent que la partie de l'histoire représentée par les essais de ce volume. Expliquons-en les origines.

La réunion de la Société canadienne d'étude du 18e siècle qui s'est déroulée à Saint-John au Nouveau-Brunswick en octobre 1983 a été en quelque sorte une espèce hybride. Pour la deuxième fois seulement, la Société canadienne a été à cette occasion greffée sur la Société atlantique d'étude du 18e siècle pour produire un 'Congrès conjoint' des deux sociétés savantes. Ayant longuement goûté des fruits de cette greffe, les éditeurs sont très sensibles au fait qu'à proprement parler *L'Homme et la Nature IV* présente les actes non pas d'une seule société — la canadienne — mais conjointement de deux sociétés dont les liens se sont tissés de la façon la plus amicale au cours de francs débats et de discussions animées.

> nec longum tempus, et ingens exiit ad caelum ramis felicibus arbos miraturque novas frondes et non sua poma (*Georgica*, II, 80-82).

Comme la première citation ci-dessus le suggère, ce Congrès conjoint est original à un autre titre. En effet, se déroulait presque au même moment sur le campus de Saint-John de l'University of New Brunswick une autre réunion unique, celle cette fois des membres du Reid Editorial Board, un groupe international de chercheurs qui se consacrent à l'édition et la publication des manuscrits de Thomas Reid jusqu'ici inédits. Cette conjonction unique a permis le développement d'un des centres d'intérêt du Congrès conjoint et de ce volume. Les trois communications sur Reid qu'on y trouve conviennent à un forum interdisciplinaire, bien entendu, et ne se concernent nullement de questions techniques d'édition.

Le Congrès conjoint s'est construit autour de deux autres centres d'intérêt, dont ce volume se fait l'écho: des recherches sur l'histoire de la médecine, et diverses approches portant sur le rôle de la pensée en matière de jurisprudence dans la vie et les lettres au dix-huitième siècle.

Ce que nous offrons en guise de contrepoids aux discussions médicales et de jurisprudence sera, espérons-le, à la fois nourriture et délice. Le champ des recherches s'étend de tous côtés dans sa riche diversité: de la France sous la révolution et de la société anglaise en pleine mutation sociale, aux écrits religieux en Amérique et aux colonies canadiennes ain-

si qu'à leurs responsables; de l'histoire de l'art ou de la littérature, d'un côté, à l'histoire militaire ou matérielle, de l'autre.

Si nous sommes parvenus à vous faire sentir quelques-unes des joies de la riche expérience que fut ce congrès, nous serions largement payés de nos peines. Nous tenons à exprimer notre reconnaissance envers chacun de nos collaborateurs pour leur patience et leur amabilité, et nous invitons le lecteur à savourer les charmes de cette fête du savoir.

Il convient également qu'un éditeur fasse preuve d'humilité. Et si ce festin est entaché de quelques négligences, oublis ou erreurs variées, la faute en incombera, bien entendu, aux éditeurs, ces maladroits!

David H Jory et Charles Stewart-Robertson