

## Preface / Acknowledgements

The 1987 conference of the Canadian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies took place on three sunny days, 15-17 October, on the campus of the University of British Columbia. The theme of the meeting, 'Liberty and Libertinage,' looked forward to the great bicentennial of 1989, an event that has strongly oriented research and colloquia around the continent during the past few years. But the organizers wished to explore a slightly different approach to the theme of political revolution. Inspired in part by the 1987 bicentennial of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, the 'libertinage' half of the title was meant to suggest the connections between political change and the more general revolution of moral, religious, and social standards. The interest was in the long-term upheaval of structures and attitudes which occurred throughout the century, the slow fuse which kindled the conflagration of 1789, and had already profoundly changed European thought.

The essays collected in this volume, therefore, are a record of revolutionary change – or at least the yearning for that change – in the life and thought of the eighteenth century. They represent a conference of great breadth and quality which produced a number of fine publications besides the work included here. Our own task as editors, as we saw it, was to reflect the vigorous inter-disciplinary character of the meeting and of the society. Another important goal took care of itself: these essays provide clear evidence of the continuing health and intellectual strength of the Canadian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies.

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