The great eighteenth-century French thinker Denis Diderot (1713–84) once compared himself to a weathervane, by which he meant that his mind was in constant motion. In an extraordinarily diverse career he produced novels, plays, art criticism, works of philosophy and poetics; he also reflected on music and opera. Perhaps most famously, he ensured the publication of the Encyclopédie, which has often been credited with hastening the onset of the French Revolution. Known as one of the three greatest philosophes of the Enlightenment, Diderot rejected the Christian ideas in which he had been raised. Instead, he became an atheist and a determinist. His radical questioning of received ideas and established religion led to a brief imprisonment; for that reason, no doubt, some of his subsequent works were written for posterity. This collection of essays celebrates the life and work of this extraordinary figure as we approach the tercentenary of his birth.

James Fowler teaches French at the University of Kent. He has written extensively on the eighteenth-century French novel and French philosophy. His publications include Voicing Desire: Family and Sexuality in Diderot’s Narrative (2000) and The Libertine’s Nemesis: The Prude in ‘Clarissa’ and the ‘roman libertin’ (2011).
NEW ESSAYS ON DIDEROT

EDITED BY
JAMES FOWLER
In memory of John Lough
## Contents

**Notes on contributors**  \hspace{3em} page ix  
**Acknowledgements**  \hspace{3em} xiii  
**List of abbreviations**  \hspace{3em} xiv  

**Introduction**  
*James Fowler*

### PART I: DIDEROT THE PHILOSOPHE

1. Diderot and the ancients  
   *Russell Goulbourne*  
   \hspace{3em} 13

2. Diderot’s earlier philosophical writings  
   *Marian Hobson*  
   \hspace{3em} 31

3. The *Encyclopédie*: innovation and legacy  
   *Daniel Brewer*  
   \hspace{3em} 47

4. Diderot, Rousseau and the art of craft  
   *Angelica Goodden*  
   \hspace{3em} 59

5. Diderot’s anti-colonialism: a problematic notion  
   *Anthony Strugnell*  
   \hspace{3em} 74

6. Diderot’s letters to Sophie Volland  
   *Pierre Saint-Amand*  
   \hspace{3em} 86

### PART II: NOVELS

7. *Les Bijoux indiscrets*: transition or translation?  
   *Anne Denys-Tunney*  
   \hspace{3em} 101
## Contents

8  *Jacques le fataliste et son maître: finding myself in the work of another*  
   **Joseph Breines**  
   113

9  *La Religieuse: Diderot’s ‘Richardsonian’ novel*  
   **James Fowler**  
   127

**PART III: DIALOGUES**  

10  *Eyes wide shut: Le Rêve de d’Alembert*  
    **Kate E. Tunstall**  
    141

11  *Logics of the human in the *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville**  
    **Andrew Curran**  
    158

**PART IV: PLAYS AND DRAMATIC THEORY**  

12  *Diderot and Olympe de Gouges convert the tyrant and transform the family*  
    **Carol L. Sherman**  
    175

13  *Diderot and Destouches: Le Philosophe marié in *Est-il bon? Est-il méchant?***  
    **Derek Connon**  
    187

**PART V: MUSIC, PERFORMANCE, AESTHETICS**  

14  *Diderot’s voice(s): music and reform, from the Querelle des Bouffons to *Le Neveu de Rameau***  
    **Mark Darlow**  
    203

15  *Diderot and the aesthetics of the libretto*  
    **Béatrice Didier**  
    220

16  *Ekphrasis and related issues in Diderot’s Salons*  
    **Tom Baldwin**  
    234

*Select bibliography*  
*Index*  

248  
260
Notes on contributors

Tom Baldwin  teaches French at the University of Kent. His interests include aesthetics and ekphrasis from the eighteenth century to the present. He is author of *The Material Object in the Work of Marcel Proust* (2005) and co-editor, with James Fowler and Shane Weller, of *The Flesh in the Text* (2007). He has recently completed a study entitled *The Picture as Spectre in Diderot, Proust, and Deleuze* (2011).

Joseph Breines  studied for his Ph.D. in French Literature at Yale University. His topic was the French novel and philosophy (Diderot, Zola, Sartre). He currently teaches at Boston College. He has published on Diderot and Zola.


Derek Connon  is Professor of French at the College of Arts and Humanities of Swansea University. His varied research interests are originally rooted in eighteenth-century French theatre, especially Diderot’s plays and dramatic theory. His many publications include *Innovation and Renewal: A Study of the Theatrical Works of Diderot* (1989) and *Diderot’s Endgames* (2002).

Andrew Curran  is Professor at the Romance Languages and Literatures Department of Wesleyan University. He has wide-ranging interests in the field of eighteenth-century literature, culture and thought and his publications include *Sublime Disorder: Physical Monstrosity in Diderot’s Universe* (2001). His new book, *The Anatomy of Blackness: Science and Slavery in an Age of Enlightenment*, is forthcoming.
x Notes on contributors

Mark Darlow is Senior Lecturer in French at the University of Cambridge, and Fellow of Christ’s College. He has published Nicolas-Étienne Framery and Lyric Theatre in Eighteenth-Century France (2003), edited Revolutionary Culture: Continuity and Change (2006), and co-edited The Discursive Culture: Action and Reaction, Text and Intertext (2007). His study of the Paris Opéra in the Revolution is forthcoming, and he is currently co-editor of Laya’s L’Ami des lois. He also has a book-length project underway on the concept of chiaroscuro in eighteenth-century theatre, spoken and lyric.

Anne Deneys-Tunney is Professor of French at New York University, Chercheur associé at the CNRS, Paris, and Directrice d’Études Associée at the Maison des Sciences de l’Homme, Paris. She has written extensively on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French writers and philosophers, including Marivaux, Rousseau, Laclos, Diderot and the Idéologues Volney and Destutt de Tracy, and on Epicureanism during the Enlightenment. Her publications include Écritures du corps, de Descartes à Laclos (1992) and Un autre Jean-Jacques Rousseau, le paradoxe de la technique (2010). She is co-editor, with Pierre-François Moreau, of L’Épicurisme des Lumières (2003), and, with Hélène Cussac and Catriona Seth, of Les Discours du corps au xviii e siècle (2009).

Béatrice Didier is Professor Emerita at the École Normale Supérieure, Paris. Her extremely wide-ranging research interests extend to French literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the relationship between literature and music. She has written many books, including La Musique des Lumières (1985), Alphabet et raison: le paradoxe des dictionnaires au XVIIIe siècle (1996) and Diderot dramaturge du vivant (2001).

James Fowler teaches French at the University of Kent. He has written extensively on the eighteenth-century French novel and French philosophy, especially on Crébillon fils, Diderot, Laclos and the marquis de Sade. His publications include Voicing Desire: Family and Sexuality in Diderot’s Narrative (2000) and The Libertine’s Nemesis: The Prude in ’Clarissa’ and the ’roman libertin’ (2011). He is currently working on the ways in which French writers and thinkers of the eighteenth century reacted to Richardson’s novels. He is co-editor, with Tom Baldwin and Shane Weller, of The Flesh in the Text (2007).

Angelica Goodden is University Lecturer in French and Fellow of St Hilda’s College, Oxford. Her main research interests are in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century French literature (especially Diderot, Rousseau

**Russell Goulbourne** is Professor of Early Modern French Literature in the School of Modern Languages and Cultures at the University of Leeds. He has published widely on a broad range of subjects and French authors drawn from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and is interested in the reception of classical antiquity in France throughout this period. His publications include *Voltaire Comic Dramatist* (2006) and numerous critical editions of Voltaire’s works for the ongoing edition of the *Œuvres complètes*.

**Marian Hobson** is Professorial Research Fellow at Queen Mary University of London. A Fellow of the British Academy, she has published extensively on eighteenth-century French art, literature and philosophy, and on Jacques Derrida (*Jacques Derrida: Opening Lines*, 1998). She is author of *The Object of Art: The Theory of Illusion in Eighteenth-Century France* (1982); with Simon Harvey she has co-edited a new edition of *Diderot’s Lettre sur les aveugles* and *Lettre sur les sourds et muets* (2000); and she is producing a new edition of *Diderot’s Le Neveu de Rameau*. *Diderot and Rousseau: Networks of Enlightenment*, a selection of her articles, edited with an introduction by Kate Tunstall and Caroline Warman, is to be published in 2011.


**Carol L. Sherman** is Professor Emerita at the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures of the University of North Carolina at Chapel

**Anthony Strugnell** is Emeritus Reader in the Department of Modern Languages at the University of Hull and director of a critical edition of Raynal’s *Histoire des deux Indes* for the Centre International d’Étude du xviiié Siècle, the first volume of which, together with the Atlas, has just appeared. He has written extensively on eighteenth-century French literature and thought, with particular emphasis on Diderot’s collaboration on the *Histoire*. His publications include *Diderot’s Politics: A Study of the Evolution of Diderot’s Political Thought after the ‘Encyclopédie’* (1973). He co-edited, with Peter France, the bicentennial tribute *Diderot: Les Dernières Années, 1770–84* (1985), and, with Frédéric Ogée, *Diderot and European Culture* (2006).

**Kate E. Tunstall**, University Lecturer in French and Fellow of Worcester College, University of Oxford, has published widely on eighteenth-century and Enlightenment writing, as well as on the relations between literature and the visual. She is also Programme Director of the Besterman Centre for the Enlightenment. With Caroline Warman and Thierry Belleguic, she organised the major conference ‘Celebrating Diderot Studies’, held in 2009 at the Maison Française, Oxford. Her book *Blindness and Enlightenment. Diderot’s ‘Lettre sur les aveugles’: An Essay with a New Translation* is forthcoming.
Acknowledgements

The collective thanks of the contributors, and especially the editor, are due to Linda Bree and her team at Cambridge University Press. Julian Preece, Peter Read and Laurence Goldstein provided warm encouragement. Philip Robinson and Mark Darlow offered expert musicological advice on my translation of Chapter 15. Ana de Medeiros provided judicious comments on Chapter 9, and a great deal of moral support. Finally, Milly helped me to structure my work schedule. From the outset, the contributors have displayed a spirit of cooperation that has ensured the steady progress of the volume.
### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SVEC</strong></td>
<td><em>Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>