Editorial

Whereas questions of race, class and gender may be uppermost in the minds of many late twentieth-century scholars and critics, in the early modern period tradition and belief were the predominant preoccupations, in practical terms, custom and Christianity were inextricably intertwined within the changing culture of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. An awareness of these past concerns motivates each of the seven articles in this issue, articles which re-examine literary and historical texts, not as past mirrors in which we might speculate upon our own particular preoccupations, but as sources of a more anthropological and spiritual history. Rowland Wymer reconsiders Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, finding as much evidence for reflections on the origins of Britain than projections onto the New World, the 'colonial' reading of a number of latter day critics. Erica Fudge looks to the New World itself, to the Christian baptism of a native, American Indian – Pocahontas – identifying the ways in which human desires may be justified in terms of Christian belief. David Webb's reading of damnation in *Doctor Faustus* similarly recognises a struggle between conflicting views in a society still reforming and reshaping its religion, arguing that in Marlowe's play we are presented with a tantalising unveiling of damnation which is never quite laid bare. Tracey Hill continues an investigation begun earlier in *Critical Survey*, pursuing an argument concerning the language of propaganda into the sphere of religion and the representation of truth. Mary Phillips parallels spaces of physical suffering and spiritual salvation – the torture chamber and the confessional box – finding within these dark enclosures remarkable similarities, not least in relation to the female condition. Marcus Nevitt challenges the popular notion that women of extreme religious sects in the civil war period were breaking down patriarchal barriers; in his close reading of extracts from the writings of Fifth Monarchist women, Mary Cary and Anna Trapnel, he highlights instead the ways in which these women worked within that customary enclosure. And finally, Christina Moss pursues a similar argument in the case of Mary Ward

(founder of a Jesuit order for women), a woman who worked dutifully to stretch the boundaries which traditionally controlled and contained female activity, to effectively disrupt the discourse of patriarchal authority, whilst yet remaining within the limits of the seventeenth-century Catholic church.

In this issue I have deliberately included essays from scholars who are at different stages of their academic careers, from established writers and teachers to those still engaged in post-graduate research, thus creating an opportunity for new, as well as more experienced, voices to be heard, voices which continue to expound the journal's editorial policy as a 'dialogue between those engaged in the fields of literary and cultural studies'. Additionally, the poems included in this issue are very much in keeping with the early modern focus. In this I should like to express my gratitude to our Poetry Editor – John Lucas – for selecting such an interesting and imaginative selection of contemporary poems, poems which provide past echoes and reflections from a very immediate present.

CAROL BANKS

Carol Banks now replaces Andrew Murphy as Early Modern Editor. Thanks are due to Andrew for his services to the Journal, first as Assistant Editor, then as Early Modern Editor, between 1994 and 1998.