

Foreword

During the course of this, our eleventh year of publication, the Editorial Board of MOSAIC took time to review our profession to be "a Journal for the Comparative Study of Literature and Ideas." Doubts have arisen from time to time as to whether we are really being true to this vocation, doubts shared by the editor himself on occasion. The truth of the matter is that ours is no easy function to define; still less so to fulfill. There is always the temptation to drift too much towards literature, for many excellent articles have to be rejected on the grounds that they belong more properly to the pages of a journal of literary criticism than in a publication with aspirations such as ours. On the other hand, it continues to be a matter of regret to the editor that the number of essays offered which accord with those aspirations remains small, and — presumably because scholars are not yet accustomed to writing in this way — relatively undistinguished. These difficulties the Editorial Board carefully took into account, and re-affirmed that MOSAIC should continue, to the best of its ability, to be concerned with the inter-relationship of literature and ideas, in the conviction that this Journal has not been entirely unsuccessful in its self-appointed task of providing a forum for inter-disciplinary debate. It must be clear to all concerned though, that for MOSAIC to be faithful to its calling, more scholars must take the opportunities here offered of expressing ideas which transcend the artificial barriers we have erected across the field of learning. It is not easy, nor perhaps even politic, especially for the young scholar, to venture beyond the narrow confines of his main professional interest these days. Yet perhaps it has never before been so necessary that some braver hearts should do so, and in these days when so many of us are in danger of being suffocated amidst the intestines of our own over-specialisation. MOSAIC offers relief: but only more and better cross-fertilizing articles coming in each month will allow the journal to fulfill its appointed task. Let those who have ears to hear with hear: and write.

As our readers are well aware, it has long been our policy to publish each year two general issues, in which the articles deal with a wide variety of subjects, and two special issues, in each of which the essays concern themselves with the relationship between a particular idea (or group of ideas) and literature. The present issue is concerned with the Canadian novel (or rather, the novel in Canada) in its formative years since the end of the Second World War. Few would deny that there has emerged during those years that which could hardly have been said to exist before the war: the idea of a Canadian novel. Some of course would want to suggest that there have emerged two separate ideas almost in complete isolation from each other: of the Anglo-Canadian novel and of the Franco-Canadian novel. It is a matter of some regret that no essay has been presented for this issue comparing the separate developments of these two ideas; such a study ought to be made, and anybody who cares to attempt it will find a ready acceptance of his work by MOSAIC.

It is also somewhat regrettable that the *roman canadien* is so little noticed here; the editor can only invite though, he cannot compel. He can announce the topic of a special issue, but after that, its development is largely determined by the submissions he receives. Sometimes these spread themselves evenly over the proposed topic; but more often they group themselves unevenly around certain favoured *loci* — and the reader will quickly discover that this is precisely what has happened in the present issue. This is not entirely without value, for it is a clear indicator of which novels and novelists were attracting attention in 1977-78; experience teaches us that the pattern demonstrated here is an unstable one, different alike from what it would have been ten years ago, and from what it will be ten years hence. Some readers will also regret that the essays have not dealt directly with the obvious questions of whether there really is such a thing as a distinctively Canadian novel, and if so, what are its marks. I would suggest that a number of the articles presented here do concern themselves indirectly with these questions, and that the discerning reader will discover some answers to them; whether or not those answers will suffice is up to the reader to decide for himself. MOSAIC is a forum, and it is of the nature of a forum to engage all those who pass by in the endless debate. At all events, the present issue is commended to the reader in the hope that he will find here something of interest, something provocative, and something of value.

In preparation for publication at a date to be announced is a special issue on *Liturgy and Literature*. There has been a favourable response to the initial request for ideas and submissions; a number of studies have already been promised of ways in which the liturgy (i.e. the eucharist and its satellite offices) has influenced and informed literature over the last seven centuries. As this issue is still at a relatively early stage in the production process, there is still time for those who have anything to contribute to declare themselves. The editor will gladly enter into correspondence with anybody who has an idea to discuss, and he will even more readily receive a completed manuscript. The deadline for submissions to this issue is 15 September, 1978.

Also in preparation, but at a much earlier stage in the process, is a special issue on Irish Literature. Suggestions and submissions for this issue are already being received; anybody wishing to contribute either is asked to write to the editor as soon as possible.

Continuing our practice of using the work of local artists to leaven the reading lump of MOSAIC, this issue contains some itaglio and lithographic prints by the Winnipeg artist Mary Sprague, also well known locally for her imaginative ceramics. She has recently exhibited her work at the Thomas Gallery here in Winnipeg and at the Glenbow Gallery in Calgary.

In conclusion, the editor would like to acknowledge his debt, and the Journal's, to the many people who give their services freely, and without whom MOSAIC could not survive: to the advisers, both on and off the Advisory Board, who so patiently answer the editor's many requests for advice; to the Chairman and Members of the Editorial Board; to the readers upon whose judgement the editor so often relies; to the contributors (especially to the ones who have received a disappointing answer, and from whom we always hope to hear again,) and above all, to the people who actually buy and read the journal. To all of these people, an enormous debt of gratitude is due, and acknowledged.