



From the Editor's Thinkpad

This year, 1997, marks the 30th anniversary of *Mosaic*, and since this editorial column is one of many new features that the journal will be introducing to highlight this occasion, perhaps I should begin by providing a bit of history about the journal.

Mosaic was founded in 1967, the year of Canada's centennial, and the journal takes its name and methodological orientation from the "mosaic" concept that is or was traditionally thought to characterize the mix of cultures in this country. The original subtitle was "A Journal for the Comparative Study of Literature and Ideas," which was changed in 1979 to the present "a journal for the interdisciplinary study of literature." This change was designed partly to give the journal a more definite focus but mainly because of *Mosaic's* perception that "interdisciplinary" would become the major direction of scholarship in the future.

In the same forward-looking way, *Mosaic* has progressively tried to identify topics of particular contemporary or emergent concern, featuring essays of this kind in its regular

issues but also annually devoting an entire issue of the journal to such topics. *Mosaic's* success here has most recently been affirmed by the journal's being given the CELJ 1996 "Best Special Issue" award for *Idols of Otherness: The Rhetoric and Reality of Multiculturalism*. One of the particularly innovative features of this issue—and one which the judges in the competition singled out for special praise—was the inclusion of review-essays, each of which compares and contrasts two or more recent books on multiculturalism, and draws attention to further work that needs doing.

During the current anniversary year, *Mosaic's* special-focus issue will be *The Lure of the Androgyne*, to be followed in 1998 by what promises to be a full-scale collection of essays on "Literature and Other Arts." And then, with a view to the climactic year 2000, the journal will in 1999 be publishing a special-focus issue on "Literary Risk-Taking and the Gambling Syndrome."

Another innovative feature that *Mosaic* will be implementing during

this anniversary year is a "Reader Response" section. The twofold purpose of this section is to generate a sense of interactive scholarship and to provide the means of tracing the impact that an essay might have as it moves out into the larger domain that constitutes *Mosaic's* multi-disciplinary and global audience. Comments may be focused on any essay or issue previously published by *Mosaic*, and may range from short queries to the author to more lengthy suggestions of how an argument might be extended or strengthened. In this way, the "Reader Response" section is designed to continue the invaluable "feed-back" loop that the review process sets in motion, and by enlarging the dialogic community this section is designed to make publication the beginning rather than the end of scholarship.

"Turning 30," then, can be an exciting time, and the essays in the present issue serve well to launch this anniversary year. Taking us back to the communication problems faced by an innovative classical philosopher, Jon Stewart challenges current strictures about appropriate modes of discourse in various disciplines. Providing a new spin on the notion of the critic as parasite, Maggie Kilgour enlists cannibalism as a trope and procedure that links imperialism and critical practice. Coinciding with the film adaptation of *The Portrait of a Lady*, Patricia Johnson's use of *Middlemarch* and film theory to critique the male gaze in James's

novel, affords a provocative series of questions for viewers of this recent spectacle. Attending closely to the way that thermodynamic theories operate in Zamiatine's work, Laurence Dahan-Gaida illustrates the entropy entailed in concepts of utopia. In giving focus to a branch of cultural studies in its formative phase, Jhan Hochman directs attention to the anthropocentric arrogance that might lie behind the current "eco" trend. By architecturally conjoining Artaud's "Theater of Cruelty" and De Lillo's football novel, Z. Bart Thornton enables us better to understand the meaning and appeal of contact sports and body language. *

The next issue of *Mosaic* will be equally adventurous and challenging, and for advance notice about the essays it will feature, as well as for more information about *Mosaic's* other activities, consult our Website—<http://www.umanitoba.ca/publications/mosaic>.

— Evelyn J. Hinz