

## Editorial

THERE is pleasure, excitement and a certain apprehension in planning and launching a new journal. The University of Calgary invited your present editor to establish *Ariel* and edit the journal for its first three years. The time has gone very quickly and very pleasantly; this is the last editorial from the founding editor, who will be succeeded in January 1973 by Professor George Wing. Inevitably an editor gets help in the early stages of a journal's inception and growth, and it is fitting to pay tribute here to the vision of Professor Brian Wilson who was Dean of Arts and Science in the University of Calgary at the time *Ariel* was founded. He and Professor Earl Guy, then Chairman of the English department, as well as many of their colleagues, were concerned that the journal should function efficiently and effectively: and all of us benefited greatly from the sage advice of Mr A. S. Maney whose experience in printing and distributing academic journals was generously placed at our disposal. We have also had admirable support from our advertisers, largely English, Scottish, and Irish publishers. But all the work of contributors, editor and associate editors, advisers, and printers would be in vain if you, the readers, did not support the journal: and this you have done and continue to do, in a most heartening fashion, so that your founding editor can hand on a good, steadily increasing circulation to his successor and friend.

One of the most interesting aspects of editing *Ariel* has been that so much poetry is submitted for consideration. There has been little enough room for it in a critical journal — though we have been able to include in two special numbers work by modern Irish and Scottish poets, through the generous grants made by the Irish Cultural Affairs Committee and the Scottish Arts Council towards the cost of printing extra pages and paying modest fees to the poets whose work was specially commissioned for these numbers. Poetry is normally 'filling' in a critical journal and the space available for it depends upon how the length of the prose articles works out. It has been necessary to return very

many good poems because we have had no space to spare for them — though this situation may be improved in the future.

Another thought which comes to mind at the end of a period of editing — eight years editing *A Review of English Literature*, followed by three editing *Ariel* — is that, of the criticism submitted which has been rejected (most of our published essays have been commissioned), much has had a joyless, laboured air about it, an odour of the sanctimoniousness which accompanies the careerism of the critic rather than of the sanctity of criticism which extends the reader's appreciation of literature. In part, this may result from the expansion of universities throughout the world and of the market for criticism. In this connexion the recently published second edition of A. D. Hope's *Collected Poems* has much to say to us, for in that witty and ironic Australian poet's *awvre* there is now included the fifth book of his *Dunciad Minor*, in which the Goddess Dulness presides over the funeral games of the hero to which she has summoned the leading critics of the day. The prize offered is for the invention of a critical machine more absurd than any of its rivals. Hope successfully flays some of the household Gods of criticism of recent years, largely those flourishing in the nineteen-fifties — though, as he remarks, critical works famous and controversial in their day are now often buried under the outpouring of another twenty years of critical ingenuity. The better critics of the fifties were ingenious; the lesser critics are often guilty of misplaced ingenuity — as bad in its way as a misplaced word in a sentence. But many contemporary critics seem blissfully unaware of the likely effect of their prose on readers.

Criticism should be literature in itself: enjoyable to read, pleasurable for specialist and general reader alike. There is, quite simply, too much dull academic criticism today — some of it lacks not only ingenuity but misplaced ingenuity. The best kind of criticism returns us to the texts of literature imaginatively and interestingly and stimulatingly, creating in us renewed pleasure, insight, enthusiasm and enjoyment.

A.N.J.