

## The 100th Issue

ONE HUNDRED ISSUES ago, in 1970, with editors on both sides of the Atlantic—at the University of Calgary and the University of Leeds—the first issue of *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature* appeared. This occasion was not so much a birth as a metamorphosis: *ARIEL* evolved from *A Review of English Literature*, a journal that existed from 1960 to 1967. The editor of this precursor of *ARIEL*, Norman “Derry” Jeffares, had introduced Commonwealth Literature as a legitimate academic field to the U.K. (at Leeds) and was instrumental in forming the Association of Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies. He wanted the new quarterly to broaden its scope to include the enormous range of writings in English beyond the U.K. and the U.S. Jeffares’s first editorial announced that the journal welcomed “discussion not only of English Literature in the older meaning of the term but of literature written in English throughout the world.”

The list of articles in this first issue shows this policy in effect. In addition to studies of Lawrence’s *Sons and Lovers*, the Bible as literature, Coleridge’s “Kubla Khan” and Austen’s *Persuasion*, and Conrad and Anatole France, there are two pieces on Morley Callaghan’s novels and Wilson Harris’s *Guiana Quartet*, and a work in progress by Wilson Harris. Of the thirty-one articles in the four issues of Volume 1, five are on writings outside the traditional scope. The accent in these early issues no doubt is on British literature but as subsequent volumes demonstrate Jeffares and succeeding editors—George Wing [1973-76], James Black [1977-79], and Ian Adam [1980-89]—clearly kept an eye on the “I” of the journal’s acronymic title.

Since the mid-1980s, *ARIEL* has become even more *international* in scope and emphasis. 100 issues ago, Jeffares saw the new literature as an extension of English literature of the U.K., which “provided a storehouse of language and imagery, phrase and concept” on which the new writings “drew heavily.” If this were true then, today the new literatures (it is only right to adopt the plural number), now that the imperial cultural lid has been removed, are going each its own way, though retaining many affinities with each other. *ARIEL* reflects—and perhaps even effects—these tendencies. Though a large proportion of the articles now published in *ARIEL* is on the new literatures in English (whether known as International English Literature, New Literatures in English, World Literature in English, Commonwealth Literature, Anglophone Literature, or Postcolonial Literature), the journal does not ignore articles on the literature in English of the U.K. and the U.S. though as a rule they are considered for publication only when they have intertextual, cultural, historical, or theoretical ties with the new literatures. Recent issues have carried articles with such intertextual themes as the imperial paradox in Sara Jeannette Duncan and Rudyard Kipling and on language and voice in Robert Antoni and James Joyce. The theses of articles on Henry Louis Gates Jr.’s theory of the signifying monkey or on female sexuality in Willa Cather or on Welsh writings in English or on the politics in Seamus Heaney are relevant to minority, gender, and postcolonial writings within and without the U.K. and the U.S.

*ARIEL*’s international reach is demonstrated not just in the various literatures it addresses but also in its range of contributors from all parts of the world who write easily across literatures and cultures. In the pages of *ARIEL*, a West Indian examines the discourse of dispossession in Jean Rhys’s *Wide Sargasso Sea* and the Anglo Saxon “The Wife’s Lament” while a German compares Canadian and Australian indigenous literatures; a Canadian relates Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* and Günter Grass’s *The Tin Drum*, while an American yokes together Watergate, Muriel Spark, and Bakhtin. Such literary and cultural reticulation is fascinating and its sociopolitical significance is itself a matter of lively debate in *ARIEL*.

In 1973, *ARIEL* began supplementing its review articles and listings in "Books Received" with a separate book reviews section. The studies we review, like the articles we publish, are on the various literatures in English, with emphasis on the new literatures. Because of limitations of space, we are forced to restrict ourselves to critical and scholarly texts. Recently, however, we have adopted a policy of carrying review articles on clusters of creative writing texts that will serve to alert readers to current trends in particular literatures or in international literature at large. The number of critical and theoretical publications on international English literature has increased substantially. Accordingly, to keep readers abreast of what is happening in our rapidly expanding field, we enlarged our reviews section three years ago and will continue to do so as the situation warrants.

*ARIEL* is primarily a critical journal but since its inception it has allocated a number of pages to poems and translations (and the occasional short story or play, in special issues) by writers from all over the world. Because of our limited space we often have to reject, reluctantly, fine pieces which we trust eventually do appear in other publications.

In a literary climate where it would seem that concepts are warring for power, *ARIEL* has become international in scope without finding it necessary or obligatory to adopt doctrinal or advocational editorial policies. But this has not kept it from entering the critical and theoretical frays and from accommodating the various approaches in its pages. We have juxtaposed articles that respond to novels antithetically as sociocultural "case studies" and as formal creations detached from sociocultural implications. In a single issue readers can turn from an article that approaches the English language as an agent of imperialism to one that points up its aesthetic value, or from one that uncovers ideological commitments to one that adheres to self-referential semiotic principles, or from one that locates the centre of "postcolonial" literature in the imperial-colonial binary to one that discovers it in the complex and elusive personal determinants of the individual's psyche. Pluralistic in its policy, *ARIEL* is willing to accept that novels can be sociological case studies or that the author is dead, but for the time being it draws

the line at the assumption that the *text* is dead. The titles of our recent special issues demonstrate the range if not the nature of our coverage: *Nadine Gordimer* (1988), *Post-Colonialism and Post-Modernism* (1989), *The Literature of Travel* (1990), *Commonwealth Drama* (1991-92), *New Voices in Caribbean Literature* (1993), and *Contemporary North American Native Writings* (1994). In January 1995, to mark the beginning of our 26th year, we are publishing a special issue on *Postcolonialism and its Discontents*. It will offer, we anticipate, a review of literary postcolonialism and speculate on the future of this important component of contemporary literature. If the next 25 years of postcolonial literature and language studies (or whatever name we eventually settle on) follow the pattern of the preceding 25 years, it will be another lively and rewarding period for the field and for the next 100 issues of *ARIEL*.

To sustain continuous quarterly publication of 100 issues over a span of 25 years requires support and assistance from many individuals. It would be a pleasure for me to name names but the list would go on and on. Such a list would have to include all the members of the past and present editorial committees, editorial boards, and international advisory boards, all the co-editors of special issues, all the editorial assistants, secretarial and business associates, copyeditors, proofreaders, printers, and distributors, all our contributors the world over whose articles, reviews, and creative writings assure the journal's prominence in its field, all our colleagues who give unstintingly of their time to assess submissions, and our hundreds of subscribers and readers in more than fifty countries around the world. And the list must have as well the names of two very notable institutions, whose invaluable financial support has kept the journal going: the English Department and the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Calgary, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. To all these individuals and institutions, we would like to express our deep appreciation and we trust that they will continue to work with us to keep the journal at the forefront of International English studies for the next 100 issues and longer.

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