

Editorial

It is with a feeling of genuine pleasure, highlighted by a touch of relief, that we present the inaugural issue of *LittéRéalité*. The 'birthing'--as Victorian gentility might phrase it--of a literary review occurs not without its share of complications. The idea for a journal such as *LittéRéalité* arose in part from a perceived need to provide a bilingual forum for critical and creative writing in French Literature and, in turn, to respond to such a need. It is our hope that the present periodical will go some distance toward filling that function. That literature and literary criticism must play a pivotal role in the cultural portfolio of the enlightened person is an axiom which imposes itself with quiet urgency upon each generation. Ours is no different in this respect and indeed our day may be an age in which the voice of literature repeats its eternal refrain more and more faintly, increasingly lost in a chorus of alien and competing claims. If *LittéRéalité* succeeds in providing a modest impetus to a renewed literary and critical dialogue, then its appearance on the academic scene will represent a positive moment in our common literary journey.

The darker side of the recent controversy stirred up by the publication of Salmon Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* itself contains implicitly a promising chord that is worth noting. In an age in which one may be excused for discerning a clear erosion of literary and literate tradition, surely the fact that the novelist's art and vision are able to command emotions of great power signals, albeit disturbingly, the eternal potency of literature. For this reason, it is important to reaffirm our belief that to engage in literary analysis and to endeavour to foster the growth and commitment to literature are an eminently humanising activity. We perceive a certain measure of sadness in the reality that the republic of letters must incessantly jostle for elbow-room in the market place. A little sad, too, the fact that it succeeds best when it takes upon itself the colours, the pragmatic values and the restrictions on the imagination that constitute the coin of that same market place.

The problems linked with the framework of a bilingual Canada, too, offer another area germane to our goals. Often the sad spectacle of the linguistic confrontation between the two great founding groups in this nation appears more like an uneasy peace than the work of two peoples bent on a common goal. This might be otherwise. The expression of those two cultures and the

presence within these national boundaries of two great languages, with their concomitant literary and cultural traditions, are surely a cause for great rejoicing. The mutual nourishing of these two cultures through the dynamic of a shared literary life is an activity which ought to engage us wholly. This is so because it is precisely in this common undertaking that we state ourselves and in the subsequent unfolding of what is most profound within ourselves we hold and maintain our being as a people. *LittéRéalité*, we believe, may well be able to contribute to such an undertaking. If it constitutes a modest gesture which serves to counterbalance the insidious drift into linguistic isolation, then this review will have achieved at least part of its aim.

The vigour and quality of a literary journal derive in part from its ability to evoke critical reaction and commentary from among its readers. In this respect, we hope that this inaugural number will be the only issue which contains no letters from our readers. Whether your observations touch on articles that have previously appeared in the pages of *LittéRéalité*, or whether they address our goals or the success or failure of our enterprise, such opinions will form an essential component of this periodical. We invite our readership, then, with what may appear unseemly encouragement, to share their reactions with *LittéRéalité*.

By way of conclusion, we wish to express our great appreciation to our present subscribers for their faith in future possibilities. To the various constituencies of York University we extend the same note of appreciation for their financial support. These include the Faculty of Arts, the Département d'études françaises (Keele Campus), Glendon College and Atkinson College. Without their generous assistance, particularly in the earliest stages of our venture, life would have been much more difficult. A word finally to those critical scholars and poets who have entrusted their work to these pages: we are confident that your commitment to *LittéRéalité*, symbolised by your submissions, will prove fruitful and enriching both to yourselves and to our readers.

Peter McConkey
Co-editor