1. General Reference

(Se) Raconter des histoires. Histoire et histoires dans les littératures francophones du Canada, ed. Lucie Hotte, Sudbury, Prise de Parole, 688 pp., contains articles from over 30 researchers from a wide variety of disciplines including lit., history, and sociology, whose aim is to highlight the diversity of French-Canadian storytelling in terms of plot, theme and style as well as its relationship to both the national project and personal narrative. The work of an impressive range of writers is examined in this text, among whom the most familiar are perhaps Antonine Maillet, Elise Turcotte, and Herménégilde Chiasson. Histoire littéraire des femmes. Cas et enjeux, ed. Chantal Savoie, Quebec, Nota Bene, 339 pp., presents us with a consideration of Quebec literary history from an alternative perspective by focusing on the often overlooked role of women writers and their important contribution to national literary production in Quebec. The book examines the ways in which women writers were, in the past, constrained in their writing, in terms of the material that they were allowed to cover, the fact that they were forced to adopt pseudonyms in order to have their work published and, as was the case for Germaine Guèvremont and Rina Lasnier, the text cites, denied the success that their writing merited at the time of its publication. Traditional Quebec literary history is depicted as essentially a history of exclusion with regard to women writers, and the aim of this text is to address such failings. La Vie littéraire au Québec, tome VI (1919–1933). Le Nationaliste, l’individualiste et le marchand, ed. Denis Saint-Jacques and Lucie Robert, Quebec, Laval U.P., 764 pp., is a comprehensive reference text for those interested in Quebec literary output between the two world wars. The volume covers almost all genres (poetry, the novel, theatre, the essay, the short story, periodicals, radio, travel writing, biographies, and children’s lit.) and offers not only detailed analyses of the texts themselves but also a consideration of the political and societal context at the time of their publication and the reception of the various texts. In particular, this volume is interested in examining the challenges posed by emerging writers to the old model of regionalism which dominated literary activity in Quebec at this time. As the title of the texts indicates, literary output in Quebec between the wars is considered from the perspectives of multiple readers: editors; publishers; individuals; promoters; literary associations; and libraries.

Simon Harel, Attention écrivains méchants, Quebec, Laval U.P., 192 pp., is a theoretical essay examining the subject of violence in lit., with respect to actual acts and forms of violence and their impact as well as the concept of the violent writer. Of particular interest to scholars of French-Canadian lit. is the treatment of the writing of Catherine Mavrikakis. Remous, ressacs et dérivations autour de la troisième vague féministe, ed. Merédès Baillargeon, Montreal, Remue-Ménage, 228 pp., is another theoretical text which is useful for researchers working in the domain of French-Canadian women’s writing (or women’s writing in general) and feminist literary theory. The overall focus of this text is the range of issues animating contemporary feminist or third-wave feminist scholarship and how feminism has evolved and is responding to new and unfamiliar obstacles. Dictionnaire des œuvres littéraires du Québec (1986–1990), ed. Aurélien Boivin, Montreal, Fides, 1151 pp., is the eighth instalment in the project founded by Maurice
Lemire in 1971 and hosted by the CRILCQ which aims to trace the trajectory of Quebec lit. from its origins to the present day. This volume contains over 800 articles from more than 300 contributors and covers all genres of Quebec lit. published between 1986 and 1990 inclusive. It also includes a substantial introduction to the period in question, as well as a rich bibliography of important critical studies from this time frame. Les Aléas de l’utopie canadienne: figures et représentations dans la littérature et le cinéma, ed. Marie-Lyne Piccione and Bernadette Rigal-Cellard, Bordeaux U.P., 300 pp., discusses different representations of utopia and utopian discourses across the ages, from the era of New France to the Quiet Revolution and beyond, and their interplay with ideas of national identity in Canada and Quebec. Texts and films in both English and Fr. are analysed, as well as Canadian-born writers and migrant writers in Canada. Of particular interest to scholars of French-Canadian film and lit. is the attention accorded in this study to Gabrielle Roy, Michel Tremblay, Antonine Maillet, Marie-Claire Blais, Dany Lafferrière, Marco Micone, and Denys Arcand. Plaidoyer pour l’enseignement d’une littérature nationale. La littérature québécoise!, ed. Arlette Pilote, Anjou, fides, 72 pp., is a useful reference text for teachers and lecturers of Quebec lit. as it presents a number of very convincing reasons for a more systematic and widespread teaching of Quebec lit. in schools in Quebec, and emphasizes the importance of literature for the survival of national identity.

Piotr Sadkowski, Récits odysséens. Le Thème du retour d’exil dans l’écriture migrante au Québec et en France, Toruń, Nicolas Copernic U.P., posits exile as part of the human condition and is interested in the link between fragmented identity and creativity. S. takes as his subject matter both real and imagined journeys to the homeland and discusses the impact of ‘failed returns’, that is to say when the migrant subject realizes that he/she longer belongs to his/her country of origin. With regard to French-Canadian lit., important migrant writers who are examined in this text are Marie-Célie Agnant, Dany Lafferrière, and Régine Robin. Victor-Laurent Tremblay, Être ou ne pas être un homme. La masculinité dans le roman québécois, Ottawa, David, 532 pp., reads the novel in Quebec through the prism of masculinity and patriarchy. In particular, the text focuses on masculinity as a heterogeneous and fluid concept as opposed to a monolithic and innate state of being. Using the themes of patriotism, war, sport, nationalism and the father/son relationship to structure his interpretation, T. traces both the evolution of masculinity and its interaction with culture and society. Martin Jalbert, Le Sursis littéraire. Politique de Gauvreau, Miron Aquin, Montreal U.P., 210 pp., considers the relationship between politics and lit. with specific focus on the writings of Claude Gauvreau, Gaston Miron, and Hubert Aquin, but without taking recourse in the cliché of the writer as a political spokesperson with responsibilities towards a particular community.

K. D. Ertl, ‘Le Roman québécois contemporain face à la mondialisation. 2005–2011’, DF, 17:23–37, reflects on current trends in Quebec lit. such as pluri/multi/transcultural writing as well as the position of Quebec lit. within a world literature in French. L. Saint-Martin, ‘Bastards, Legitimacy and New Families in Contemporary Quebec Fiction’, American Review of Canadian Studies, 41.2:125–37, looks at how contemporary Quebec writers have turned traditional family paradigms upside down, in particular by challenging the patriarchal concept of the father as head of the household and by inscribing a whole range of alternative family structures into their writing. A. Hayward, ‘Littérature et politique au Québec pendant la première moitié du vingtième siècle’, CanL, 209:68–88, presents an overview of various Québécois writers and their role in the development of modernism in Quebec literature. Topics discussed include the renewed interest in nationalism in 1900, modernism and communism, the development of regionalism after 1920 and the political orientation of a number of French-Canadian writers.