

***Literary Research and Canadian Literature; Strategies and Sources*, by Gabriela Natasha Reznowski. Lantham/Toronto: The Scarecrow Press (Literary Research: Strategies and Sources Series), 2011, 210 p., US \$ 39.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-8108-7768-9.**

As its title indicates, Gabriella Natasha Reznowski's book is a guide to research on Canadian literature. The premise of the book is that, given the rapidly changing research environment of today, researching Canadian literature can raise a complex set of issues, from questions over the boundaries of the field, to definitions of "Canadianness," all stemming from larger debates over the nature of Canadian national identity in general. The author starts the book by introducing the reader to the growth of the field of Canadian literature over the past fifty years, and the subsequent publication of increasing numbers of scholarly journals and specialized reference works in the area.

The volume examines both preconfederation and postconfederation writers traditionally associated with Canada, it is not limited to English-language material (although that material is dominant), and generally tries to include other special research areas, such as First Nations, francophone, Quebec, and multicultural literature.

The book is divided into ten chapters, followed by an Appendix that deals with resources in related disciplines, a bibliography and an index.

The first chapters are on the dry side. Chapter One is an introduction to the basics of online searching, and explains to the reader the science of keywords, the logic of electronic records, the use of operators, wildcard searches, and how to interpret and manipulate search results. Chapter Two lists general literary reference sources on Canadian literature. The author enumerates the most representative research guides on the

topic, general encyclopedias, as well as regional encyclopedias and companions to Canadian literature, and gives short descriptions for each of them. This chapter also includes a section on biographical dictionaries, histories and chronologies, as well as a section on individual author sources (most of which are represented by works on Margaret Atwood).

Chapter Three focuses on library catalogs. A particularly nice touch is that throughout this section, the author points out key differences between the American and Canadian cataloguing systems of the Library of Congress versus Library and Archives of Canada, a detail particularly relevant when using subject headings or key words in the search process. (“Native American Peoples” can be found listed as “Indians of North America” in the Library of Congress system, while Library and Archives of Canada uses the terms “First Nations” or “Aboriginal Peoples.”)

The following chapter surveys print and electronic bibliographies, indexes and annual reviews, going from the more general *MLAIB (Modern Language Association International Bibliography)* to very specialized special topics bibliographies.

A very rewarding chapter is Chapter Five, which covers general scholarly journals on Canadian authors and themes, as well as journals devoted to individual authors. Here Reznowski offers clear, concise descriptions for each journal, its scholarly status and reputation in the field, the type of scholarship it usually includes, the target audience, types of prizes and examples of themes for the journal’s special issues. There are special sections devoted to international journals that feature Canadian content, or interdisciplinary journals and Canadian studies journals that publish pieces on Canadian literature. The chapter is a wonderful starting point for anyone trying to get a sense of the

field of Canadian literature, to figure out which journals to check periodically in order to stay abreast of developments in the field, or for someone simply trying to decide where to submit an article for publication.

Chapter Six covers periodicals, newspapers and reviews that publish Canadian literature, from the nineteenth-century onwards. The sections trace the history of the main literary publications in Canada, their origins, audience, and place in the present. This chapter also includes sections on print indexes for select magazines and newspapers, as well as print and online resources for locating articles and reviews. This is also a particularly useful chapter for scholars interested in early Canadian literature, as it provides a good starting point for identifying writings from that time period which cannot be found in existing anthologies.

The following chapter introduces the reader to existing microform and digital collections on Canadian literature, from CIHM's *Early Canadiana Research Collections* to the various digital collections that make available online a wide variety of Canadian-content material at participating institutions. Examples of open-access digital collections include the *Canadiana Discovery Portal (Canadiana.org)*, the *Internet Archive Canada*, the *CBC Digital Archives* which features searchable video and audio clips from the CBC archives, to the relatively recent *Synergies*, a national network of Canadian universities, and its Francophone branch represented by *Érudit*. The commercial collections developed by publishers are not exclusively for Canadian content, and they include *North American Women's Drama*, *North American Women's Letters and Diaries*, *Early English Books Online*, and *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*.

After introducing the reader to the techniques of archival research, Reznowski moves on in Chapter Nine to examine web resources. This chapter opens with a disclaimer that both acknowledges the issues concerning the reliability of internet content, and the convenience of accessing information via the Web. It also offers a guideline to evaluating the value of a website and of the information available on it. Inevitably, such a chapter had to be highly selective, so Reznowski lists only three portals and three electronic text archives, as well as places, such as the *H-Canada Network*, where researchers can connect with one another and exchange information and questions on various issues. The book concludes with a research scenario (Morley Callaghan) that models the research techniques and the use of the resources listed in the previous chapters. The Appendix lists resources in related disciplines, such as Canadian history, Canadian studies, art, film and media studies, philosophy, music, religion and politics. While definitely not a page-turner, Gabriela Natasha Reznowski's book is an extremely valuable resource for any scholar who decides to approach Canadian literature or Canadian studies for the first time. It can particularly useful for beginner graduate students with an interest in Canadian literature, because in addition to specific information on Canadian content, it also offers a solid introduction to the techniques of scholarly research, and a clear guide to how to make productive use of the often dazzling array of resources available to researchers today.

*Oana Godeanu-Kenworthy
American Studies Program
Miami University, Ohio*