

GET ON THE BANDWAGON AND JOIN THE AATF BOOK CLUB!

So many of us get bogged down with the nitty gritty of lesson planning, grading papers, etc. that we forget to nourish our minds and our souls. One of the great attractions that brought us to be French teachers was a love of culture and literature. We want our students to make reading an important part of their education and we also need to continue to make reading a lifelong pleasure. Being able to discuss a work with colleagues, and exchange ideas will encourage us to go back to the source of our fascination with French culture and language. We will have Book Discussion groups on the suggested Quebec works on Myrna's list at the AATF Convention in Quebec City in July. You may want to hold Chapter meetings around a discussion of these works as well.

I have chosen Gabrielle Roy's *Cet été qui chantait** as the first work to encounter. One can say that Roy is the *grande dame des lettres québécoises*. She was the first Canadian to win the coveted Femina Prize. What better way to approach the literature of Quebec than to know her work? Roy is easy to read and easy to teach. She writes in a simple and pure style, and yet her work expresses deeply philosophical thoughts that provide food for reflection. Most of her works consist of a series of chapters that can be read independently but which are organically linked to form an artistic whole. This work can be taught at all levels.

Why not order *Cet été qui chantait* in honor of the New Year as a resolution to keep our intellects fresh and our lives more enjoyable? Here are some questions on this work for reflection:

How are the Quebec countryside and Quebec life reflected in this work?

What are some of the philosophical thoughts expressed, such as in the Chapters *La Nuit des lucioles*, *l'Enfant morte*, and *Les Frères-arbres*, or others?

What are some of the symbols and images that add to the poetic beauty of this work? Think of these and others: the wooden swing; the railroad; M. Émile's *gaffe*, water, fireflies, birds....

How does Roy create the settings of this work? Reveal the passages that show her love of nature. How does she use the play of light and sound?

What role does the narrator play in this work? Is she really Roy herself?

Bonne lecture à tous et à toutes!

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*For an analysis of this work, see the following sources:

Myrna Delson-Karan, "Ode à la terre et à
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la vie: *Cet été qui chantait* de Gabrielle Roy," *The French Review*, Vol. 71, No. 6 (May, 1998), 961-970. (This article can be found on the AATF Web site.)

Jean-Ethier Blais, "Comme si la terre elle-même écrivait son histoire," *Le Devoir*, November 11, 1972, p. 16.

You may purchase this book from Exportlivre: [order@exportlivre.com]. Just mention you are an AATF member to get a 10% discount. Contact persons: Colette Dupuis and Thomas Déri: Tel. (450) 671-3888; Fax: (450) 671-2121.