L'ouvrage contient 38 illustrations dont 15 en couleurs reproduisant des reliures, des enluminures, bois gravés et pages de texte. L'auteure fait d'ailleurs appel à l'indulgence des lecteurs pour la mauvaise qualité de certaines reproductions. En effet, il est regrettable que les reproductions de reliures soient souvent trop floues pour y percevoir les détails des plaques.

Est-ce que tout cet appareil savant justifie une édition du catalogue ? Je réponds par l'affirmative. La version imprimée contient, en plus des notices proprement dites et des index, 128 pages de texte qui, par son érudition transposée dans une langue dépouillée et agréable, sa précision et ses éléments d'histoire du livre, est en fait plus qu'un simple catalogue mais une histoire du livre en Haute-Normandie aux XVᵉ et XVIᵉ siècles.

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The announcement of this book in the University of Toronto Press catalogue immediately piqued my interest as I at long last was turning my attention to the impact that Canadians have had on medical publishing in the United States. Mount’s study far exceeded expectations – so much so that even before reading it closely for review here, I incorporated key aspects of his argument and his evidence into both my own research and my teaching in book history. The book has already received the 2006 Gabrielle Roy Prize from the Association for Canadian and Quebec Literature, and its author, Nick Mount, gave a keynote lecture at the 2006 meeting of the Bibliographical Society of Canada.

What makes Mount’s study of the late 19th-century period “when Canadian literature moved to New York” so noteworthy is the import of his argument for an entire field of literary study: that the first communities of professional Canadian writers and their markets developed in the publishing centre of the North American continent, New York. Such a deceptively simple observation, yet delivered with such laser precision it corrects a tendency toward nationalistic
blindness of earlier scholars in Canadian literature. Mount deftly and respectfully demonstrates the point by recovering hitherto missing pieces from our literary history about the stateside work of two groups of Canadian expatriates: long-recognized Canadian authors like Bliss Carman, Charles G.D. Roberts, and Ernest Thompson Seton; and long unrecognized Canadians like Palmer Cox and Arthur E. McFarlane. His evidence derives from both historical and literary sources, among them census statistics for the largest exodus of Canadians in our history; contemporaneous accounts of Canadians working in the United States; published letters and other reminiscences of Canadian authors; and, of course, the publications themselves. Mount argues that the work of Canadian authors in New York not only fit a tradition of continental discourse but that it also reflected – if not led – an anti-modern movement.

As the catchy title suggests, Mount’s study is wittily and succinctly written. It is ponderous in neither style nor length, and it opens as all good writing and good history should, with a staccato sentence and an intriguing story – this one about a body – that sets scene and tone for the rest of the book. In its allusions to pop culture, the writing resonates with a contemporary global psyche; in its depiction of an earlier Canada, it resonates with current trends outside central Canada. The (mainly centralist) view of critics that Canadians leave to pursue fame, for example, is offset by the pragmatic view of Canadian authors themselves that could just as easily apply to Atlantic Canadians across all times and workers: they go where there is work. Admittedly, not all readers might appreciate that Mount’s style transcends the glib: “if, in Eliot’s day, you were interested in becoming a modern poet, you should have known better than to write poems about how happy daffodils made you feel.” Funny, if you, like me, don’t like Wordsworth; but this light touch does not appear so frequently as to intrude on the serious study at hand.

This is one of those rare studies, then, that bears re-reading, reflection, and reference for new work in its primary field of transnational literature. Indeed, by revealing what was obvious all along to those who cared to see and comprehend, Mount has probably done something revolutionary in Canadian literary studies. That discussion is beyond the scope of this review, however. Here, suffice it to say that for book historians, When Canadian Literature Moved to New York deepens our understanding of authorship and periodical publishing from about 1880 to the First World War. Authorship is defined broadly to embrace those who wrote, and sometimes who
pioneered, genres not normally accepted into a literary canon owing to their weak aesthetic merit: comic books (Palmer Cox and his wildly successful "Brownies"), crime fiction (Arthur Stringer and his *The Wire Tappers*), adventure novels (Harvey O'Higgins and his *The Smoke-Eaters*), investigative journalism (McFarlane and his articles on arson and fire insurance), metaphysical works (Charles Brodie Patterson and his *New Thought Essays*, on a movement similar to our "New Age"), nature and outdoor publications (apart from Seton, Edwyn Sandys and his articles for the magazine *Outing*), and humour (Peter McArthur and his paragraphs for innumerable high-profile magazines). In all, Mount discusses about two dozen authors according to their different emphases as agents of modernism, leaders of antimodernism, and the new Romantics. He addresses the industry of periodical publishing for a North American readership, with its insatiable need for copy, which fuelled, in turn, the widespread use of the paragraph filler. This may sound banal, but it is far from it: someone had to write this stuff, and as Mount shows, it was not just Canadians who rose to the challenge – it was specifically a coterie of talented Canadians, some of them related to each other, who lived, worked, and socialized together in New York. By writing for a living, they represent the early professionalization of the Canadian author. In addition, someone had to edit, illustrate, and otherwise manage this material – and Mount unveils the Canadian network that undertook this range of work for the publishing industry. His identification of salaries and other remuneration attests to the reasons for emigration while offering context for future scholarship on specialized periodicals.

*When Canadian Literature Moved to New York* thus explores a much wider literature than might be traditionally understood by the term. It also pertains to specific historical periods for Americans, roughly the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era. Unfortunately, the catchy title may be opaque to all those who would profit from reading the book, including those south of the border. Mount's points about regionalism, nationalism, shared continental heritage, and Canadian/American understanding of identity, especially distinguished from the "Old World," deserve further analysis by both nationalities. Yet ironically, his own book might fall into the very continental divide of North American literary history that he maintains "obscured significant transnational influences and connections." Its inclusion in the Studies in Book and Print Culture series of the University of Toronto Press might help to raise it, but it would have helped if the
press brought the series into line with convention by identifying both the series editor (Leslie Howsam) and other books in the series.

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« Raconter une vie, est-ce seulement possible ? », s’interroge d’entrée de jeu Robert Vigneault dans la présentation de l’ouvrage collectif Approches de la biographie au Québec qu’il a intitulée « Le beau rêve biographique ». N’est-il pas illusoire de supposer qu’on puisse reconstituer la vie d’un individu – surtout sa « vie intérieure » –, à laquelle tous les documents ou témoignages disponibles ne donnent que partiellement accès ? À la fin de la biographie qu’il a consacrée à Gabrielle Roy, parue en 1996, François Ricard répondait à cette question en rappelant qu’« on a beau dépouiller toutes les archives, interroger tous les témoins, lire tout ce qui a été écrit sur un être, il manque toujours quelque chose, et ce quelque chose, en particulier s’il s’agit d’un artiste, ne peut être que l’essentiel » (Gabrielle Roy, une vie, Borial, 1996, p. 520). Vigneault, lui, conclut que la biographie constitue un rêve qui « fait écho à notre désir de survie ».

Les neuf études qui forment le recueil sont regroupées en deux parties. La première partie, « La biographie : entre l’histoire et la littérature », propose cinq textes qui tracent un historique de la biographie au Québec et en analysent quelques réalisations parmi les plus convaincantes, tout en insistant sur certains traits génériques et formels qui la caractérisent. Lucie Robert souligne notamment la présence d’un brouillage entre la vérité et la fiction dans le récit biographique, l’un des éléments apparus au fil des transformations successives qu’a subies le genre depuis le XIXe siècle. Par ailleurs, chez un Victor Livy-Beaulieu, par exemple, on ne retrouverait plus les traces du genre canonique de la biographie, mais plutôt une forme hybride, à mi-chemin entre la biographie et le roman, comme le constate Marcel Olscamp.

La seconde partie, « L’atelier du biographe », présente quatre textes de biographes qui témoignent de leur pratique et de leur conception du genre. Loin d’être perçue comme une finalité par les praticiens