

REVIEW OF**JOCELYNE L. THOMPSON, PETER F. McNALLY, TONY TREMBLAY,
*BIBLIOGRAPHY OF NEW BRUNSWICK BIBLIOGRAPHIES: AND ACCOMPANYING
ESSAYS. KENTVILLE, NOVA SCOTIA: GASPÉREAU PRESS, 2020.*****Peter Thompson**

Jocelyne L. Thompson's *Bibliography of New Brunswick Bibliographies* is the first volume in the New Brunswick Bibliography Series. Connected to the broader New Brunswickana project, the book is part of an emerging effort to record New Brunswick's cultural artifacts. Thompson's book is modest in length and meticulously organized. It provides a useful annotated list of publications, a Preface by Thompson (Director of Collections, UNB Libraries), and two accompanying essays, "New Brunswick's Contribution to the World of Knowledge: Collecting and Organizing the Published Record" by Peter F. McNally (Professor Emeritus, McGill University, and current director of the History of McGill project), and "Operationalizing Cultural Work in New Brunswick: From Theory to Practice" by Tony Tremblay (Professor of English, St. Thomas University). These essays were first delivered as keynotes at the 2018 and 2019 New Brunswick bibliography symposiums; having them published in this volume thus captures the energy of those gatherings and highlights some of the key issues that emerged from them. Characteristic of anything produced by Gaspereau Press, the book itself is beautifully designed. In fact, the highly tactile experience of flipping through it highlights a question that arose for me immediately: why does the *Bibliography of New Brunswick Bibliographies* exist only as a printed book and not also as a searchable online database?

Thompson is refreshingly forthright on this point in the Preface. While she concedes that an online database has advantages, including unlimited space, Thompson maintains that a print version forces someone who compiles a bibliography to be selective; moreover, it has a certain prestige that is appealing to potential contributors. I would argue, however, that this choice speaks to a larger aim that is implicit in the project itself and that is explicit in the essays, especially Tremblay's: creating a physical book (especially one that happens to be as attractive as this one) advances the goal of preserving New Brunswick's cultural heritage and treating it as important and worthy of study. As McNally and Tremblay point out, there is a serious dearth of existing scholarship on New Brunswick, and the New Brunswickana project, the New Brunswick Bibliography Series, and this volume, are key steps in rectifying this situation.

Holding this book in my hands and reading about the care that went into conceptualizing it went a long way toward convincing me of the importance of not just the volume itself, but the larger cultural project to which it belongs. In this way, the Preface and the two accompanying essays make this a unique and valuable contribution, even before one considers the bibliography itself. The Preface and McNally's essay lay out detailed and clear principles for putting together bibliographies and the importance of this vital yet often overlooked part of the research enterprise, calling our attention to the art of organizing information in a world in which we are overrun by it. Tremblay's at times incendiary essay is a plea for the relevance of what Northrop Frye called "strategic localism" and the need for cultural workers in New Brunswick to present the province in ways that counter narratives about stagnation and downturn. Tremblay implores his colleagues to seize "opportunities...for our province to

rise from its old status as the acted-upon to become something more complex, dynamic, and positively endowed” (44).

One weakness of the volume, which the Preface addresses directly, is that it covers primarily New Brunswick bibliographies published in English. Thompson makes the case that the best course of action is for separate bibliographies published in English and French to gesture to one another; however, given the amount of institutional support and attention to detail that went into this book, I think making an effort to reflect New Brunswick’s bilingual nature would strengthen the overall project. With that one mild criticism out of the way, I want to reiterate that *Bibliography of New Brunswick Bibliographies* is a highly useful research tool and, perhaps more importantly, a model for responding productively and diligently to the urgent challenge of documenting and preserving the culture of New Brunswick.

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