Il faut également mentionner les qualités évidentes du logiciel d’édition électronique, Lodel, sous lequel sont développées la plateforme Médias 19 et l’entièreté de son contenu. Par exemple, en tête de chacun des articles de Presse, prostitution, bas-fonds (1830–1930), on trouve des renvois aux journalistes et aux journaux cités dans l’article en question. Il est ainsi possible de consulter rapidement les autres articles publiés sur Médias 19 qui traitent également de ces journaux et journalistes. On retrouve aussi sur la plateforme des notices biographiques sur les journalistes du XIXe siècle, ainsi qu’une section de journaux numérisés afin de consulter les sources auxquelles font référence les articles scientifiques. Pour cela, mais aussi en raison des angles multiples empruntés par les contributeurs afin d’étudier la relation entre la presse, la prostitution et les bas-fonds, la lecture de l’ouvrage dirigé par Guillaume Pinson s’avère enrichissante et stimulante pour quiconque s’intéresse à la presse et à l’histoire des représentations.

NICOLAS GAILLE
Université Laval


Robert Lecker appears to be deeply troubled about his contribution to Canadian literary studies and Canadian culture in general. The Greenshields Professor of English at McGill University, Lecker has not only been teaching Canadian literature for decades, but was also the co-founder (and long-time co-editor) of the journal *Essays on Canadian Writing,* and of ECW Press, which he notes has “published hundreds of books about Canadian literature” (276). Yet, Lecker seems to fear that all this work is somehow compromised because of the inevitable taint of nationalism.

In *Keepers of the Code,* Lecker examines nearly two hundred anthologies of Canadian literature in English between 1837 (John Simpson’s *Canadian Forget Me Not for MDCCXXXVII*) and 2010 (Brian Trehearne’s *Canadian Poetry, 1920–1960*). His main thesis is that the editors of these collections “share a complex code that translates their literary nationalism into archetypes, symbols, and metaphors
that appear again and again in anthologies of English-Canadian literature” (3). Indeed, he posits, these “archetypal wanderers looking for a new place to call home” are “the keepers of the code” (4). Lecker himself is one of the elect, having edited the anthology Open Country: Canadian Literature in English in 2007. But he presumably does not share critical elements of this tradition, which used to be infused with religion but is now saturated with mimeticism, which he contends is just another form of nationalism.

Given the number of anthologies that Lecker covers, he obviously cannot appraise all of them in detail. Moreover, when he does examine an anthology, he has a tendency to rely on the biographical fallacy, which is curious for someone who condemns the proclivity of contemporary Canadian critics to privilege “the biographical and the thematic over the formal and the stylistic” (203). For example, in his surprisingly combative treatment of A.J.M. Smith’s 1943 Book of Canadian Poetry, he concludes that Smith’s self-declared cosmopolitanism simply reflects the fact that he is “an expatriate” who has been teaching in the United States for years. “In many ways,” maintains Lecker, “Smith’s anthology is about him” (171). Then, while examining Giuse Rimanelli and Roberto Ruberto’s 1966 Modern Canadian Stories, he suggests that Rimanelli does not explore how the approaching Canadian centennial “was altering Canadians’ sense of their country” possibly “because Rimanelli was not Canadian, nor had he been living in Canada for very long” (208, 209). Finally, in his discussion of Russell Brown and Donna Bennett’s 1982 Anthology of Canadian Literature in English, he asserts that the reason Brown and Bennett underscore the centrality of “the idea of community” in Canadian literature is that they are “Americans who have come to Canada in search of a new order” (271, 272). Even if there are elements of truth in this analysis, one cannot help but get the feeling that it is reductive. It almost certainly could not be proved textually.

There are other problematic aspects to Keepers of the Code. As befits a postmodernist, Lecker stresses how the literary canon – both in Canada and elsewhere – has become plural since the 1960s. But the reality is that unlike its religious counterpart, the literary canon has always been fluid. Thus the postmodern challenge to the canon is not nearly the breakthrough that Lecker would like it to be, something that is conspicuously illustrated by the sheer number of literary anthologies extant. Or, to phrase it differently, a religion with such a plethora of holy books cannot be that monistic a faith. Furthermore, the ability of the anthologists of Canadian literature to keep the code
is seriously challenged by the fact that Canadian literature has never been the unchallenged literature in Canadian schools, at any level. Indeed, one question that Lecker never raises in his book is why, notwithstanding the substantial cultural apparatus that he documents in his comprehensive study, and despite its international acclaim, Canadian literature remains so marginal in the country’s high schools, colleges, and universities. That question might have shed some light on the reason Canadian literary anthologists have been compelled to use nationalism to sell their collections. One likely answer could be that it is because the first group that they have to persuade of the merit of their field is other academics at their own institutions.

Another peculiar aspect of *Keepers of the Code* is Lecker’s aversion to mimeticism, which he ultimately conflates with nationalism. In his introduction, Lecker states that an “answer to the question ‘Where is nationalism hiding in Canadian literature?’ is that it is not hiding; it has only been displaced into realism” (5). This antipathy toward mimesis seems perplexing for an anthologist and student of national literary anthologies. After all, while one may understand his skepticism about both the nation and mimetic literature, one wishes that Lecker would elucidate how non-representational texts can ever evoke a specific geo-cultural space like Canada. Even more germane, the notion that Canadian literary realism necessarily reflects nationalism is extremely problematic when one considers recent Canadian texts, such as Margaret Atwood’s MaddAddam series, much of Douglas Coupland’s output, and the so-called Free Trade Fiction, all of which are overwhelmingly realistic but which hardly advertise their Canadian origins. But then, most novels by Atwood, Coupland, and others are not discussed in Lecker’s book, since they are not usually included in anthologies. The general absence of novels raises even more questions about both the function and the cultural value of anthologies of national literatures, particularly in terms of the national “code” they purportedly represent. Considering the popularity of the novel over the last century and its close identification with the nation, any national body of writing that largely excludes the novel would seem to suffer from serious limitations.

ALBERT BRAZ

*University of Alberta*