
by

Gillian Dunks

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Abstract

From 1925 to 1962, the Ryerson Press published 200 short, artisanally printed books of poetry by emerging and established Canadian authors. Series editor Lorne Pierce introduced the series alongside other nationalistic projects in the 1920s in order to foster the development of an avowedly Canadian literature. Pierce initially included established Confederation poets in the series, such as Charles G.D. Roberts, and popular late-romantic poets Marjorie Pickthall and Audrey Alexandra Brown. In response to shifting literary trends in the 1940s, Pierce also included the work of modernists such as Anne Marriott, Louis Dudek, and Al Purdy.

Following Pierre Bourdieu, I read the Ryerson series as a sub-field of literary production that encapsulates broader trends in the Canadian literary field in the first half of the twentieth century. The struggle between late-romantic and modernist producers to determine literary legitimacy within the series constitutes the history of the field in this period. Pierce’s decision to orient the series towards modernist innovation during the Second World War was due to late romantics’ loss of their dominant cultural position as a result of shifting literary tastes. Modernist poets gained high cultural capital in both the Ryerson series and the broader field of Canadian literary production because of their appeal to an audience of male academics whose approval ensured their legitimacy. Late-romantic poets, by contrast, lost cultural capital due to their inability to captivate an audience of academic “tastemakers” and, in some instances, due to their gender, as editors frequently framed female poets as opposed to emerging modernism to dismiss their work.

My examination of Pierce’s editorial policies and the poetry in the series will re-contextualize a now-canonical Canadian modernism in relation to concurrent literary trends and will assert the importance of the chap-book genre for both late-romantic and modernist poets struggling to determine the shape of Canada’s poetry in the early to mid-twentieth century.
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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to Kurtis MacKay, my mother, and my father for their love, support, and good sense of humor.
1. Introduction

1.1 Argument Summary

In recent years, critics have attempted to complicate traditional understandings of Canadian modernism. Projects like Editing Modernism in Canada encourage the recovery of oft-ignored texts from the first half of the twentieth century and the construction of a critical apparatus with which to understand these texts. However, to consider the poetry of this period as solely “modernist” is to misread the field of Canadian literary production at this time, obscuring the struggle between late-romantic poets--writers emulating the aesthetic and thematic preoccupations of the Confederation poets--and the emerging experimental poets now classified as modernists. The struggle between these groups to determine the dominant mode of literary production characterizes the field in this period and is encapsulated in the critically neglected Ryerson Poetry Chap-book\(^1\) series.

From 1925 to 1962, the Ryerson Press (the trade division of the United Church of Canada’s Publishing House) published 200 short, artisanally printed books of poetry by emerging and established Canadian authors.\(^2\) During this period, the Ryerson Chap-books were one of the main venues for poets seeking to publish new work (Parker 170). Series editor Lorne Pierce introduced the series alongside other nationalistic projects in the 1920s in order to foster the development of an avowedly Canadian literature. Pierce initially sought to include established Confederation poets including Charles G.D. Roberts (who wrote the first book in the series) and popular late-romantic poets Marjorie Pickthall and Audrey Alexandra Brown to give legitimacy to the series, yet his nationalistic fervor also led him to include the work of previously unpublished poets. Pierce’s enthusiasm for the propagation of Canadian literature led him to publish work that was sometimes derivative or poor quality, and he was criticized at the time for allowing any writer to publish a

\(^1\) I choose to employ the hyphenated spelling of “chap-book” utilized by the Ryerson Press in this period, as opposed to the twenty-first century spelling “chapbook.”

\(^2\) See Appendix A for Frank Flemington’s list of Ryerson Chap-books up to 1960.
chap-book, provided he or she was a citizen. Eighty chap-books were produced in the early years of the series between 1925 and 1938; most were inspired by the stylistic and thematic preoccupations of the Confederation poets—that is, made use of metrical, rhymed poetic forms and derived inspiration from British Romantic and Victorian poets in order to portray nationalistic subjects like the Canadian landscape. However, as modernist work gained cultural capital in the 1940s, Pierce began to include modernist writers within the series in order to restore its legitimacy by keeping abreast of current literary trends. During and following the Second World War, Pierce published chap-books by modernists Anne Marriott, Louis Dudek, and Al Purdy. Following the Second World War, Pierce continued to include works by late-romantic poets in the series, but he encouraged them to emulate the culturally dominant stylistic and thematic concerns of the modernists.

“Reading the Field of Canadian Poetry in the Era of Modernity: The Ryerson Poetry Chap-book Series, 1925-1962” provides a literary history of the Ryerson Poetry Chap-books, focusing on the struggle between late-romantic and modernist poets to determine literary legitimacy within both the series and the larger field of Canadian literary production in this period. Pierce’s decision to orient the series towards modernist innovation during the Second World War was due to late romantics’ loss of their dominant cultural position as a result of shifting literary tastes. Pierre Bourdieu’s conception of the literary field outlined in “The Field of Cultural Production” shapes my understanding of the transition from late-romantic to modernist poetry in the Ryerson Poetry Chap-book series. For Bourdieu, fields of cultural production are characterized by struggles between producers to determine dominant modes of production (100). A producer’s ability to gain legitimacy—the ability to determine the dominant mode of literary production—is affected by the cultural capital he or she is able to accrue (105). Ultimately, modernist poets gained high cultural capital in both the Ryerson series and the broader field of Canadian literary production because of their appeal to an audience of academics whose approval ensured their legitimacy. Late-romantic
poets, by contrast, gained legitimation from other romantic cultural producers, but lost cultural capital due to their inability to captivate an audience of academic “tastemakers,” and in some instances, due to their gender, as editors frequently framed female poets as opposed to emerging modernism in order to dismiss their work. My thesis highlights the effect that these shifts in the literary field had on Pierce, whose editorial policies in relation to the series serve as an index of shifting literary trends in Canada and whose approval of a poet’s work served as a form of legitimation for both late-romantic and modernist poets.

The first chapter of this thesis examines the inception of the Ryerson Poetry Chap-book series, which began with the return of Charles G.D. Roberts to Canada from New York in 1925. Pierce’s inclusion of established Confederation poets and emerging late-romantic poets who shared the aesthetics of the Confederation poets displays his desire to align the press with literary works that had accrued high cultural capital in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, the Confederation poets and their late-romantic disciples began to lose cultural capital with the onset of literary modernism, as evinced through the reception of Audrey Alexandra Brown.

The second chapter charts Pierce’s inclusion of modernist practitioners within the Ryerson Chap-book series during the Second World War in response to changing literary trends in Canada. Early evidence of Pierce’s turn to modernism can be seen in the publication of *Unit of Five*, a Ryerson anthology of modernist poets published in 1944. Modernism in the series begins earlier, with the publication of Anne Marriott’s early chap-books in the 1940s. Marriott gained high cultural capital for her modernist verse, but when she began to produce radio broadcasts and publish magazine verse for a more popular audience, she lost cultural capital in the eyes of other modernist producers and academic critics, which ultimately resulted in her diminished poetic output after the 1940s. By contrast, late-romantic writers in the 1940s were encouraged to adopt a more difficult, modernist style—the work of Eugenie Perry serves as an example of Pierce editorial shift towards...
modernism in this period. The production and reception of Perry and Marriott’s chap-books reveals the dominant position modernist work gained within the literary field at large in the 1940s.

My conclusion will address the survival of the Ryerson series in the twenty-first century. The Toronto-based small press, Ronald P. Frye and Company, has been re-issuing the Ryerson Chap-book series since September 2009. While some writers within the Ryerson poetry series did not retain their high cultural capital, the series as a whole did. Reading the Ryerson Poetry Chap-books reveals the struggle that characterized the Canadian literary field in the first half of the twentieth century and a critically neglected print genre in which this struggle took place.

1.2 Defining the Chap-book

The term “chap-book” originates from the tradition of British print ephemera in the sixteenth century. From the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, chap-books, the popular pamphlets of the poor, were sold uncut and unstitched by traveling peddlers, or “chapmen” (Shepard 26). Printed on flimsy, poor-quality paper, and often including recycled woodcuts, the chap-book was an alternative to the book itself, which many in England could not afford at the time. Within the Canadian print tradition, the chap-book takes on largely different significance—that is, it is not wholly aligned with the tradition of print ephemera. As Carole Gerson and Jacques Michon explain, the heyday of print ephemera in Canada was between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when periodical and newspaper publication dominated the Canadian market (*History of the Book in Canada* 3:3). As posters and newspapers were popular formats in the early era of Canadian print, the chap-book did not come into being until the early twentieth century. When it did, not only was the book itself gaining popularity, but other print genres such as the little magazine were as well, which has resulted in critical confusion regarding the definition of this unique print genre.

The chap-book and little magazine share one broad similarity from the 1920s to 1960s: both are restricted cultural productions that tend to be anti-commercial. However, elements of the chap-
book’s production, format, and content differentiate it from the little magazine in the Canadian modernist period. Distinguishing traits of the chap-book include artistic or aesthetic elements from the fine print or Arts-and-Crafts tradition, its limited number of pages and diminutive size, and its author-financed production. In fact, many poets used the chap-book as a means of preserving poetry originally published in little magazines in a more durable format. As such, chap-books straddle a boundary between the world of somewhat ephemeral little magazines and books themselves. Further, while many little magazines were produced under the strictures of a cohesive editorial manifesto (see, for instance, First Statement or Preview), chap-book series (notably, the Ryerson series) often lacked such guidelines and contained poetic works from different traditions.

From the early to mid-twentieth century in Canada, several small and large presses produced chap-book series. The Ryerson Poetry Chap-books are distinct within the field of Canadian chap-book production for their Arts-and-Crafts inspired artisanal aesthetic, including their unique cover illustrations by J.E.H. MacDonald and his son Thoreau MacDonald. Nonetheless, the Ryerson chap-books share certain distinguishing traits with contemporaneous chap-book publications that help define the genre: their diminutive page size, limited number of pages, limited print runs, and focus on the publication of poetry solely. Overall, chap-book series, many of which are still unexamined in the present era, preserve records of shifting artisanal and literary aesthetics in the first half of the twentieth century that must be examined in order to fully contextualize literary modernism.

1.3 Historical Contexts: The Confederation Poets and Modernism

The Confederation poets, so named because of their birth in the decade of Canada’s confederation (the 1860s), were active between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Bentley, The Confederation Group of Canadian Poets 4). Although as many as twelve poets have come to be associated with the group, including Pauline Johnson, in 1893 six male poets formed its

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3 See Appendix A for a brief summary of other chap-book series.
nucleus (Bentley 9). Most prominent among these poets were Charles G.D. Roberts, Bliss Carman, Archibald Lampman, and Duncan Campbell Scott. The group was formed around the promotional efforts of Roberts, and dissolved shortly after his decision to move to New York in 1897, although many of these poets still remained active (Bentley 13). Members of the group did not label themselves “Confederation poets”—the term was applied retroactively, when the work of group members was mobilized for nationalistic purposes. The Confederation poets achieved widespread acclaim in Canada and the United States and derived inspiration from shared sources, including the work of British Romantics John Keats, William Wordsworth, and Percy Bysshe Shelley, and Victorian writers Alfred Tennyson, Matthew Arnold, Thomas Carlyle, and Algernon Charles Swinburne (Bentley 20). Further influences included American transcendentalists, such as Ralph Emerson and Walt Whitman, and the “pantheism” found in poetry of British Romantic poets and, later, Canadian intellectuals and artists like Lawren Harris (Bentley 22). Practically, the work of Confederation poets emulated the metrical, rhymed poetic forms of British and American predecessors, but focused on a uniquely Canadian landscape. The Confederation poets’ success spawned a generation of poetic “disciples”—these writers, hereafter referred to as “late-romantic” Canadian poets, wrote well into the mid-twentieth century.

In the early twentieth century in Canada, Confederation poet Charles G.D. Roberts was the most famous Canadian poet. Yet by 1931, Roberts noted the impact of a new school of writers in Canada: the “modernists.” In his 1931 essay on Canadian modernism, Roberts, representative of “old” Confederation-era poetry in Canada, reacted to the disdain with which many young modernist practitioners treated his own work. “Modernism,” wrote Roberts, “has gone by different names in different periods, but always it has been [. . .] a reaction of the younger creators against the too long dominance of their older predecessors [. . .] [the older predecessors’] form comes to be regarded as the only proper medium of expression [. . .] Then comes the reaction—which, for a generation, is
modernism” (“A Note on Modernism” 19-20). Much of Roberts’ essay attempts to downplay the extent of the Canadian modernists’ “revolt” against tradition, concluding that modernist writers, like their predecessors, “are altogether preoccupied with beauty” (25). Roberts sought to link the work of a new generation of “reactionary” writers to the work he and his contemporaries produced, yet these literary strains were disparate.

Several Canadian literary historians, including Laura Moss, Cynthia Sugars, and Ken Norris, date the rise of Canadian modernism to 1925, when A.J.M. Smith and F.R. Scott launched a little magazine, *The McGill Fortnightly Review*, in order to foster the development of a poetry that was not derivative of the Confederation poets, but influenced by international literary trends—specifically, the imagist movement in England and the free-verse poetry of T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound (Norris 4). Another key modernist working independent of the McGill School was Dorothy Livesay, who published a volume of experimental poetry, *Green Pitcher*, in 1928. Modernist practitioners such as Smith believed that Canadian poetry must “be the result of the impingement of modern conditions upon the personality and temperament of the poet” (“Contemporary Poetry” 31). “Modern conditions” included the First and Second World Wars, the economic Depression of the 1930s, and the postwar economic boom in Canada. These modern conditions should, according to Smith, result in poetry that is “objective, impersonal, and in a sense timeless and absolute” (“A Rejected Preface” xxx). Ken Norris refers to Smith’s desire for a new poetry as a desire for “new potentialities of [poetic] form and diction” (7), some of which included free verse form, symbolism, and an unadorned, direct diction. Emerging modernists frequently conceived of themselves in opposition to the aesthetic and thematic preoccupations of their Confederation-era predecessors.

Modernism, like the label “Confederation poets,” is a retroactively applied critical term. Current scholarship tends to emphasize modernist formal innovation in the early twentieth century at the expense of other literary trends, including late romanticism, and without sufficient regard for
the literary-historical milieu from which both movements emerged. Providing a literary history of modernism’s emergence alongside late romanticism will be a step towards rectifying this oversight.

1.4 Theoretical Contexts: Bourdieu’s Field Theory

To write the literary history of the Ryerson Poetry Chap-book series, I rely upon two archives: the Anne Marriott papers, held in UBC’s Special Collections Library; and the Lorne and Edith Pierce Collection of Canadian Manuscripts in Queen’s University Archives. In addition, I apply several key terms developed by Pierre Bourdieu to the series to evaluate the structural relations of producers within it, including the concepts of “field,” “capital,” and “legitimacy.”

Pierre Bourdieu, a French social philosopher active in the last half of the twentieth century, developed the concept of “field” in dealing with phenomena he encountered in the social world, particularly in the realms of media, painting, and economics (Grenfell 4). “Field theory,” central to his descriptions of cultural life, attempts to describe “the social space in which interactions, transactions and events [occur]” (Thomson 67). When applied to literature, Bourdieu’s conception of “field” acknowledges the ways in which literary texts are multiply situated—that is, inseparable from the cultural and social conditions in which they were formed and in which they were judged as valuable. Further, field theory acknowledges the role of authors as producers and the ways in which culture is created by their competitive struggles. Cultural fields are created by struggles between producers desiring to determine the primacy of certain works—in “The Production of Belief,” Bourdieu notes that the history of a field “is the continuous creation of the battle between those who have made their names [...] and those who cannot make their own names without relegating to the past the established figures” (289). Culture is a kind of “game,” as Bourdieu acknowledges in *Distinction*, that is closely linked to the “field of power,” or struggles for dominance between social classes (12). Although fields are often viewed temporally—that is, as a period defined by one dominant group of producers, as in the “modernist” era—the struggle between producers to gain the
legitimacy necessary to determining dominant modes of production is what creates a field of opposing yet interconnected forces.

Constructing the Ryerson Poetry Chap-books as a field requires that the series be read in light of the struggle between late-romantic and modernist producers within it, whose various attempts at gaining “legitimacy” characterize this temporal period. Gaining “legitimacy” refers to gaining a monopoly over the field and other producers within it, thus determining the greater legitimacy of certain modes of production. When describing the literary field of production, Bourdieu noted that a producer’s ability to gain legitimacy was affected by the capital they possessed—what Patricia Thomson defines as processes within and products of the field (69). Forms of capital include economic capital (monetary assets), cultural capital (aesthetic preferences), social capital (affiliations and networks), and symbolic capital (things which stand for all other forms) (Thomson 69). An analysis of the Ryerson Poetry Chap-books reveals that modernist poets who eventually gained legitimacy, or dominance, within the sub-field of the Ryerson series and the broader field of Canadian literature possessed high cultural capital—that is, the approval of tastemakers such as Pierce himself (who was also a producer in the field) as well as academics. By contrast, late-romantic writers possessed social capital in the form of connections to other groups of poets and, in many instances, Confederation-era mentors, yet these social connections proved less valuable in the mid-twentieth century because of the rise of the Canadian academy and the institutionalization of the field of Canadian literature.

Reading the Ryerson Poetry Chap-books as a field requires that the series be understood as a unique set of social interactions. As a result, not all of Bourdieu’s parameters governing “legitimacy” in the field of literary production can be applied. For example, Bourdieu notes that one principle of hierarchization within a field of cultural production is the “heteronomous” principle—that is, artistic works that appeal to the taste of the dominant class, or unspecified “masses,” will
generate high economic capital for a producer but low “cultural capital” (99). However, the
Ryerson Poetry Chap-books were not a commercial success, hence, to speak of them as appealing to
a mass Canadian audience or generating large amounts of economic capital for poets is inaccurate.
Most Ryerson Chap-books were printed in runs of 250 to 500 copies and were financed by their
authors as opposed to by the press. Most chap-book poets never recuperated the money they paid to
see their work in print, and most chap-books were printed only once. Pierce was aware of the
limited audience for Canadian poetry prior to producing the series, though. As such, his creation of
the series must be read as evidence of his literary nationalism.

Different modes of “legitimacy” govern the Ryerson series, then. In many instances, the
success of a chap-book poet depended upon his or her ability to gain legitimation from three main
audiences: academic audiences, other producers (who were often reviewers or editors), and
prominent social authorities (for example, the Prime Minister). Overall, academic audiences and
print genres associated with academic critics, such as the anthology, became crucial to the success
of chap-book poets, as these (often male) critics possessed access to prestigious print outlets
necessary to ensuring the survival of a poet’s work.

Despite brief references to it in the third volume of the History of the Book in Canada series,
the literary history of the Ryerson Poetry Chap-books has not yet been recovered. My examination
of Pierce’s editorial policies and the work produced in the Ryerson Poetry Chap-book series will
provide insight into the importance of the chap-book genre for both late-romantic and modernist
poets struggling to determine the shape of Canada’s poetry in the early to mid-twentieth century.
2. Late Romanticism, 1926-1946

2.1 Lorne Pierce’s Literary Nationalism, Late Romanticism, and the Series’ Early Years

In June 1920, the Methodist Book and Publishing House hired Lorne Pierce, a minister and literary scholar, as “Literary Critic and Advisor” for their trade division, the Ryerson Press (Friskney, “Towards a Canadian Cultural Mecca” 259, 263). Pierce was chosen for the role as a result of his literary expertise; in 1920, he impressed members of the Methodist Church at their annual conference by presenting a portion of his doctoral dissertation on Russian Literature (Dickinson 36). By 1922, Pierce had become “Book Editor and Literary Advisor.” Pierce became one of the era’s most influential publishers and editors due to his nationalistic fervor, which had a profound impact on Ryerson’s lists in the decades following his appointment as editor. Pierce, who was fond of literary series, introduced several Canadiana series in order to support Canadian writers and inculcate Canadian cultural competencies in the reading public. The Ryerson Poetry Chap-book series was one of the most successful and long lasting of his endeavours.

Sandra Campbell, Pierce’s biographer, notes that Pierce’s experiences as a traveling minister in the rural prairies and his Methodism influenced his nationalism. Pierce’s experiences in the “multicultural mosaic” of Canada led him to believe that literature had to be “a force for patriotic indoctrination and cohesion in a rapidly expanding and diverse economy” (“Nationalism, Morality, and Gender” 138). Pierce conceived of Canada, distinct as its inhabitants were, as a potentially unified whole. For example, Pierce recognized, as early as 1922, the “bicultural reality of the nation,” and advocated for French and English Canadians’ mutual recognition of one another’s cultural accomplishments (Our Canadian Literature 124-25, qtd. in “Nationalism, Morality, and Gender” 138). In addition, Pierce’s Methodism encouraged him to exalt the “ideal in words and art” for the benefit of both the individual and society (“Nationalism, Morality, and Gender” 138). Pierce envisioned literature as the handmaiden of national unification in Canada following the First World
War, a tool that encouraged diverse citizens to reflect upon the idealized beauty of Canada, and, thus, taught them to be patriotic. Pierce’s “Canada” was a slightly utopic nation of distinct yet patriotic citizens. Recognizing that “Canada” might mean different things to different citizens, Pierce sought to instill similar, idealized representations of the nation in citizens through literature.

Pierce’s editorial activities were also framed by his desire to make the press “the cultural mecca of Canada,” a sentiment he expressed in a diary entry in July 1920 (qtd. in Campbell, “Nationalism, Morality, and Gender” 137). Pierce’s role as editor gave him the ability to bestow high cultural capital upon worthy writers, yet he, too, was a producer in the field of Canadian literature, hoping to gain cultural capital for the press. Pierce needed to position the press he was responsible for favorably in relation to other competing presses, including Macmillan of Canada and McClelland & Stewart. Pierce’s Canadiana series would accomplish the dual goals of performing cultural work Pierce felt was necessary for the development of the nation and helping the Ryerson Press achieve dominance in the field of Canadian literature.

If, as Pierre Bourdieu notes, the capacity to appreciate art directly correlates to one’s possession of particular cultural competencies (Distinction 2), Pierce’s textbooks and critical anthologies, produced between 1923 and 1930, can be read as his attempt to build Canadian cultural competency in young readers. For example, Pierce attempted to inculcate Canadian patriotism in young readers through the Treasury Readers series for students in grades 1 to 6, and the Canadian Books of Prose and Verse for grades 7 to 12 in 1929 (“Nationalism, Morality, and Gender” 142). Textbooks like the Readers were a commercial success—in fact, profits from textbook sales often buoyed up the press’s other literary endeavours (“Real Discoverers” 175). Pierce also attempted to build Canadian cultural competency in academic critics and university students through the Makers of Canadian Literature series. The Makers series, an ambitious undertaking but commercial failure, was an attempt to publish critical volumes about Canadian writers that would combine “biography
with a selection and critique of the author’s work” (“Nationalism, Morality, and Gender” 139). Pierce planned for the series to run to at least forty volumes. However, the Ryerson Press was constrained by finances, and only thirteen of the planned forty volumes materialized (“Nationalism, Morality, and Gender” 139).4

The Ryerson Poetry Chap-book series, introduced in 1925, was one of Pierce’s most successful and long-lasting series. The inception of the Ryerson Chap-books began, in part, with Pierce’s exposure to the Group of Seven in the early 1920s, a collective of Canadian landscape painters who were influential following the First World War. Campbell claims that Pierce’s exposure to the Group of Seven sharpened his desire to promote another group he viewed as key to an evolving Canadian nationalism: the Confederation poets (“Real Discoverers” 177). Influenced primarily by British Romantic and Victorian poets, the Confederation poets had achieved commercial success and garnered critical acclaim in both Canada and the United States (Bentley 18-22). Pierce believed that the work of the Confederation poets would give Canadians “a literary sense of their landscape in a manner analogous to the canvases of the Group of Seven” (Campbell qtd. in Speller, “Arthur Steven at the Ryerson Press” 8). If Pierce’s elementary, secondary, and post-secondary textbooks attempted to instruct Canadian readers about the social and cultural history of their nation, the Ryerson Poetry Chap-books would inspire nationalistic sentiment through increasing awareness of key literary figures in Canada—the Confederation poets—and through representations of an idealized Canadian natural landscape found in their poetry.

When Pierce decided to launch a series of Canadian Poetry chap-books in 1925, he selected a Confederation poet to give distinction to the series: Charles G.D. Roberts (1860-1943). At the time, Roberts was the most famous Canadian poet and was lauded for his nature poetry and animal stories. In the Oxford Companion to Canada Literature, George Parker notes that Roberts was

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4 The last Makers volume appeared in 1941.
particularly renowned for his representations of the Maritime provinces, specifically New Brunswick (1007). Roberts’ literary renderings of the Canadian landscape appealed to Pierce’s desire to inculcate nationalistic sentiment in the Canadian reading public; his stature as an internationally acclaimed poet also gave legitimacy to Pierce’s latest series. Roberts was an ideal choice for Pierce, yet Roberts’ nationalism was not as overt as Pierce’s. Although Roberts advocated in patriotic poems like “Canada” (1890) for Canadian citizens to conceive of themselves as distinct from England, Roberts’ poetry was not always reducible to simplistic nationalistic sentiment. For example, Roberts’ acclaimed poem “Tantramar Revisited,” published in his second collection in 1886 (In Divers Tones), points to the illusory nature of the idealized New Brunswick landscape, locating the “Tantramar” of the speaker’s childhood within his or her imagination as opposed to the realm of observable reality. Roberts’ “Canada,” like the landscape of the Tantramar Marshes, is made more explicitly a “darling illusion” here than Pierce’s.

Ironically, Roberts, the “Father of Canadian Literature,” had been away from the country for 28 years following his move to New York in 1897 (Bentley 13). Roberts’ move is testament to the marginal state of Canadian literary publishing at the time. Although much of Roberts’ work thematized Canadian subjects, commercial success was not to be found in Canada itself, where restrictive copyright laws had reduced most presses to agency publishers (wholesalers of imported British and American books) (MacLaren, Dominion and Agency 5). Roberts, like other Canadian writers, recognized that success at home was dependent on his ability to secure international publishers.

In the spring of 1924, Pierce had been corresponding with Roberts’ son, Lloyd, about an upcoming Makers critical volume on his father (Lloyd Roberts, letter to Lorne Pierce, 14 Feb. 1924). At this time, Charles G.D. Roberts planned to return to Canada for a lecture tour beginning

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5 For further information on this phenomenon, see Nick Mount’s monograph When Canadian Literature Moved to New York.
in the spring of 1925, and Lloyd contacted Pierce immediately, suggesting that the Press might be interested in publishing a new volume of his poetry (Lloyd Roberts, letter to Lorne Pierce, 6 Nov. 1924). Pierce was interested, but not in publishing a new volume; instead, Pierce desired to print a chap-book of Roberts’ work, in part because of a previous trip Pierce had taken to Vancouver earlier in the year. While there, Pierce had visited the Vancouver Poetry Society (VPS), a group founded by Ernest Fewster in 1916 and associated in its early years with late-romantic poetry. The society had produced the first chap-book in Canada in October 1925 (A Book of Days 22). The first VPS chap-book was inspired by the Arts-and-Crafts chap-books produced in England by Claud Lovat Fraser. Made by a local photographer, Charles Bradbury, the chap-book incorporated elements of fine print, including hand-made paper, antique type, and woodcuts (A Book of Days 22). Although the VPS had planned to create a chap-book series, this series never materialized. Nonetheless, the VPS chap-book impressed Pierce greatly, and he desired to create a similar series (Hurley 22).

Pierce’s attempt to publish a chap-book to coincide with Roberts’ reading tour was quickly plagued by copyright difficulties—Roberts’ American publisher, the Boston-based L.C. Page & Co., sent Pierce a letter in June 1925, claiming that Roberts “assigned to us [. . .] all his right, title, and interest, of every nature, in all countries, in each and every book of his, published by us,” accompanied by a threatening list of short fiction and poetry volumes they had published (Lewis C. Page, letter to Ryerson Press, 27 Jun. 1925). As a result, Pierce chose to reprint eight poems from Roberts’s New Poems, a volume that had been published in London after Roberts’ break with Page. These eight poems formed the first Ryerson chap-book, The Sweet O’ The Year, which was published in November 1925 (MacLaren, “Significant Little Offerings” 10-11).

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7 This chap-book, entitled Three Poems, contained poetry from Ernest Fewster, Bromley Coleman, and A.M. Stephen. See images from it in Appendix B.
Pierce’s decision to open the series with the work of Sir Charles G.D. Roberts set a precedent for one type of work that would be included throughout the entirety of the series: late-romantic poetry. Roberts and other prominent Confederation poets had achieved international recognition for the type of work exemplified in Roberts’s “Hill Top Songs,” a poem similar to his early poetic descriptions of the Maritime provinces, and included in his first chap-book, *The Sweet O’ The Year:*

> When the lights come out in the cottages  
> Along the shores at eve,  
> And across the darkening water  
> The last pale shadows leave;  
>
> And up from the rock-ridged pasture slopes  
> The sheep-bell tinklings steal,  
> And the folds are shut, and the shepherds  
> Turn to their quiet meal;  
>
> And even here, on the unfenced height,  
> No journeying wind goes by,  
> But the earth-sweet smells, and the home-sweet sounds,  
> Mount, like prayer, to the sky,

> Then from the door of my opened heart,  
> Old blindness and pride are driven,  
> Till I know how high is the humble,  
> The dear earth how close to heaven (4-5)

Roberts portrays nature as a vehicle for the soul’s purification. Contemplation of nature, as in the work of William Wordsworth, brings the poet into closer relationship with the divine. Here, though, Roberts’ representation of nature differs from Wordsworth’s—many of Wordsworth’s early representations of nature are colored by his enthusiasm for pantheism, or his belief that the divine is present in every aspect of the natural world (Wu 414). For Roberts, contemplation of the natural world is a means of purifying the Christian spirit, not a means of accessing the sublime. Roberts’ poem, which emphasized meditations upon nature as a gateway to Christian virtue, was the type of late-romantic poetry Pierce desired to celebrate in the series. Such poetry would uplift the minds of
Canadian citizens, making them more appreciative of their environment and attuned to their moral obligations to God and country.

The dominance that the Confederation poets had already achieved within the field of Canadian poetry meant that, in its early years in particular, the series attracted emerging poets who were interested in expanding upon the themes and formal preoccupations of their predecessors. Although poets A.J.M. Smith (1902-1980) and F.R. Scott (1899-1985) launched the modernist magazine *The McGill Fortnightly Review* in November 1925, precisely when Roberts’s first chap-book appeared (Norris 2), Pierce’s decision to reprint the work of a late-romantic poet like Roberts signaled, initially, the general qualities desirable in a Ryerson chap-book poetry: a concern with the romanticized Canadian landscape, Christian virtue, and the rhymed, metrical poetry exemplified by both British and Victorian poets, including Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, and Tennyson.

Additionally, Roberts and another Confederation poet, Duncan Campbell Scott, affected some of Pierce’s editorial decisions regarding early inclusions in the series. As dominant producers within the field of Canadian poetry, Roberts and Scott exercised their authority by encouraging Pierce to reproduce late-romantic poetry similar to their own. Pierce, eager to position the series favorably within the field, often took this advice.

For example, the Ryerson Chap-book Series published not only the work of Roberts, but also the work of several of his relatives upon his suggestion. On November 2, 1925, Roberts wrote to Pierce, encouraging him to produce a volume of his brother Theodore’s poetry (Charles G.D. Roberts, letter to Lorne Pierce, 2 Nov. 1925). Pierce, in turn, contacted Theodore Goodridge Roberts about submitting a manuscript of poems for a possible chap-book on January 25, 1926. On February 3, 1926, Theodore Goodridge Roberts responded to Pierce’s request, sending along a manuscript that Pierce pared down to the sixteen-page *The Lost Shipmate* (1926). Theodore Goodridge Roberts was, at the time, primarily known for his fiction and articles in periodicals
(Seaman, *Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature* 1010-1011). *The Lost Shipmate*, Goodridge’s first poetry collection, reflects some of the thematic concerns Andrew Seaman notes in his fiction, including “South Seas adventures,” “Backwoods adventures,” and “Historical Romances,” and is often rhymed and metrically consistent (1011). Like Charles G.D. Roberts’ work, Goodridge’s poetry is primarily late romantic, though less technically proficient than his Confederation-era contemporaries. Charles G.D. Roberts also encouraged Pierce to publish the work of his teenaged niece, Dorothy Gostwick Roberts, in December 1925 (MacLaren, “Significant Little Offerings” 19). Subsequently, Pierce published Gostwick Roberts’s *Songs for Swift Feet* in 1927. The Ryerson chap-book was twenty-one-year-old Gostwick’s first collection; much of the poetry in it is best classified as “light verse”—that is, rhymed, metrically consistent, short verses about sentimental subjects, including romantic love. Gostwick Roberts’ chap-book also contains some nature poetry that is derivative of the style of her Confederation-era predecessors. Gostwick Roberts’ verse, which places little emphasis on the spiritual ecstasies afforded by meditation on the natural world, may not have merited inclusion in the series without her uncle’s recommendation.

Confederation poets also had a role in determining which authors and chap-books were excluded from the series—for example, the work of the son of the celebrated poet Archibald Lampman. Archibald Lampman, a noted Confederation poet, had achieved high cultural capital primarily because of his early nature poetry, which was influenced by the romanticism of William Wordsworth (Pollock, *Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature* 616-17). Other legacies of Lampman’s include his interest in challenging metrical forms and his vivid “pictorial” poetry about the Canadian landscape (Pollock 617). However, Archibald Lampman died in 1899, and Duncan Campbell Scott, his friend and literary executor, was engaged in producing separate volumes of his work. Pierce, attempting to represent the best work by emerging Canadian poets, expressed a desire to include some poems by Archibald Lampman’s son, Archibald junior, to Duncan Campbell Scott
on January 14, 1926. The poetry of Archibald junior was a logical inclusion for Pierce—
incorporating the lauded Lampman name within the Ryerson Chap-book list would have lent
prestige and distinction to the series. However, Duncan Campbell Scott admonished Pierce’s
attempt: “[Archibald junior] asked me to make a selection of what I considered the best for
inclusion in your chap-book series [. . .] I can only say that I think he is making a very great mistake
to attempt publication, and I think you must summon up your courage to prevent it” (D.C. Scott,
letter to Lorne Pierce, 15 Jan. 1926). Attached to Scott’s letter was a copy of the letter he had
previously sent to Archibald junior in November 1925, in which he suggested, “unless you could
show very decided talent, and in a style that was not derivative from your father, I think you should
hesitate to publish at all” (D.C. Scott, letter to Archibald Lampman, 12 Nov. 1925). Accordingly,
no chap-book from Archibald Lampman’s son appeared in the series.

Although it is clear that Pierce desired to include and be responsive to the Confederation
poets within the series, he frequently sought to include other writers he felt had accrued high
cultural capital: popular late-romantic writers. For example, Pierce produced a posthumous chap-
book of Marjorie Pickthall’s work. Pickthall (1883-1922) had achieved wide recognition in Canada
beginning in 1898 for her late-romantic short fiction and poetry (Gerson et. al, “Marjorie
Pickthall”). Pickthall’s poetry was largely concerned with representations of “ideal beauty” and
dream worlds, and less with the Canadian landscape (S.R. MacGillivray, Oxford Companion to
Canadian Literature 920). Literary critic E.K. Brown wrote that, within the field of Canadian
poetry, Pickthall became “the object of a cult [. . .] [lauded for her] perception of beauty” (On
Canadian Poetry 64-65). After her death, Lorne Pierce gained access to her papers from living
relatives and wrote her biography (A Book of Remembrance, 1925). Pierce was a great fan of
Pickthall’s poetry; he viewed her as “an exemplar of purity and refinement, a challenge to bad
artists dealing in cheap sentimentality [. . .] her contact with nature purified her spirit, cleansed it of
all morbidity” (qtd. in Campbell, “A Girl in a Book” 5). Pierce also edited a volume of Pickthall’s selected poems in 1931; his preference for the type of late-romantic poetry she produced resulted in a posthumous chap-book, *The Naiad and Five Other Poems* (1931). Although Marjorie Pickthall was of a younger generation than the Confederation poets and did not address the Canadian landscape per se, Pierce chose to include her work because of the distinction it would give the Ryerson Poetry Chap-books. Ultimately, Pierce’s editorial decisions set the literary precedent for the Ryerson series in the early 1920s; a format for the series followed soon afterward and would impact the cultural capital many emerging late-romantic poets were able to accrue.

### 2.2 Format of the Series

Perhaps as a result of the financial losses the *Makers* series incurred, the model Pierce developed for the Ryerson Chap-book series minimized potential losses for the press. Authors interested in publishing a chap-book paid a lump sum to cover printing costs and agreed to manage the distribution of their volume. This format coalesced soon after the publication of Roberts’ chap-book and remained relatively unchanged for the duration of the series. Although this format made the Ryerson Poetry Chap-books the most financially sustainable of Pierce’s nationalistic endeavors, it also limited the ability of chap-book poets to accrue high cultural capital for their work.

As demonstrated in the preceding section, Pierce solicited chap-books from several authors whom he felt merited inclusion in the series. However, most emerging authors contacted Pierce directly in order to publish a chap-book. If authors could afford to cover the cost of printing a chap-book, they frequently were included in the series. Pierce did oversee all inclusions in the series and occasionally helped chap-book poets make selections for publication. Aside from this, Pierce’s editorial role was limited; there is little evidence of Pierce copy editing chap-book poems or making suggestions as to the improvement of specific lines. As Pierce’s official role was as “Book Editor and Literary Advisor” to the press, other editors may have done such tasks.
Chap-books were produced in runs of 250 to 500; writers frequently paid between $60 to $70 to cover production costs. For example, UBC Professor of Classics Geoffrey Riddehough, author of the eighth chap-book (The Prophet’s Man, 1926), paid $70 for 250 copies of his twelve-page chap-book (MacLaren, “Significant Little Offerings” 24). An Ontario journalist, Kathryn Munro, author of the fiftieth chap-book (Under the Maple, 1930), paid $62.50 to cover the cost of printing 250 chap-books (Kathryn Munro, letter to Lorne Pierce, 2 Oct. 1930). Authors would receive six free author’s copies of their work, a 10% royalty on the list price of each chap-book sold, and the ability to purchase extra copies of their volume at cost. Chap-books sold for a retail price of $0.50 to $1.00, depending on their size. By 1946, staff in Ryerson’s production department recognized that chap-books would not bring writers significant royalties. In response, Ryerson began to offer authors thirty free copies of their chap-book as opposed to royalties (Frank Flemington, letter to Eugenie M. Perry, 17 Dec. 1946). Once a chap-book was published, Ryerson held copyright on all poems within it, which enabled the press to reproduce these poems in more lucrative school anthologies (Dickinson 47). In some instances, though, Lorne Pierce would transfer copyright back to chap-book authors once their work was out of print.8

The chap-books were produced inexpensively. All Ryerson Chap-books were printed in house, as Ryerson was under contractual obligation to use the facilities of the Methodist Book and Publishing House, which reduced printing costs. In addition, Frank Flemington noted in 1960 that the chap-books were 8 5/8” by 5 1/4”, wire stitched (stapled), and never more than 32 pages long (Lorne Pierce: A Bibliography). Pierce desired to incorporate elements of fine print into the series as well in order to build a reputation for Canadian bookmaking. As such, he commissioned Group of Seven artist J.E.H. MacDonald to design an image that would be recycled on the cover of each chap-book until 1955: a woodland scene featuring tumbling flora and fauna, set against the

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backdrop of a lone mountain and starry night sky—emblematic of the rugged, beautiful Canadian landscape. The colour of each chap-book cover varied, but Flemington noted that all chap-books were bound in “Georgian” paper, or cardstock (Lorne Pierce: A Bibliography). Although J.E.H. MacDonald and other Group of Seven artists were at the forefront of artistic innovation in the early twentieth century, the cover Pierce commissioned, like much of the poetry in Roberts’ first chap-book, emphasized the somewhat retrograde notion that the natural world was the sole subject of poetic meditation. For Pierce, the Ryerson Poetry Chap-books were to be exemplars of the beautiful; reflections upon beauty, in both the cover and content of the series, would stimulate patriotic pride.

Pierce initially envisioned a broad reading public for the chap-books—all “lovers of poetry.” This was an ambitious goal at the time, given that inexpensive reprints of American and British books dominated the Canadian book market. Evidence of Pierce’s conception of a reading public can be found on the back page of the third chap-book, Kathryn Munro’s Forfeit and Other Poems (1926), where Pierce included a note:

The Ryerson Press believes that lovers of poetry care more for poetry of high quality than for costly bindings. Furthermore, we believe that the cause of Canadian poetry can best be served by enabling the author to reach his audience. Finally, a chap-book necessitates careful discrimination by the poet, and hence the presentation of small and choice selections. These chap-books will present significant little offerings by our older and younger poets.

(Back Cover)

Pierce intended for the chap-books to achieve high cultural capital in Canada and the United States. However, the model that the Ryerson Press adopted for the promotion and distribution of the chap-books severely inhibited the ability of the chap-books to do so. By and large, chap-book poets throughout the duration of the series signed on to promote their own chap-books within the Canadian market and to contact retailers who may have been interested in purchasing copies. This was largely because the Ryerson Press did not have a basic distribution list for the chap-books, a

9 See Appendix C for an image of the early series’ cover (Charles G.D. Roberts’ The Sweet O’ The Year, 1925).
fact that becomes evident in Pierce’s correspondence with Ernest Fewster, president of the Vancouver Poetry Society and author of a Ryerson chap-book (*Litany Before the Dawn of Fire*, 1942). Writing to Pierce in September 1944, Fewster wrote, “I have been thinking over your statement that you had so far been unable to get a mailing list for your series of Chap Books [. . .] Why don’t you get some interested amateur to take over the sale of the Chap Book distribution for the experience of it[?]” (Ernest Fewster, letter to Lorne Pierce, 29 Sep. 1944). Fewster also encouraged Pierce to hire a traveling salesperson to sell the chap-books to retailers (Ernest Fewster, letter to Lorne Pierce, 29 Sep. 1944). The Ryerson Press, evidently, had no staff members devoted to compiling lists of Canadian retailers and libraries, and no traveling salespeople at all. Eugenie Perry, author of two Ryerson chap-books (*Hearing a Far Call*, 1942; *Song in the Silence*, 1947), acknowledged a larger problem in 1944—a lack of library support for Canadian books (Eugenie Perry, letter to Lorne Pierce, 28 May 1944). As George Parker notes, Canadian libraries in the first half of the twentieth century tended to purchase large quantities of inexpensive American reprints instead (“The Sale of the Ryerson Press” 47). As the Ryerson Poetry Chap-books were not distributed to public and academic libraries, the access that emerging and established scholars had to them was limited. An academic audience was an important one to cultivate, though, as academic critics had the ability to preserve poetry for posterity in university anthologies and had the interpretive skills necessary to locate and legitimate emerging writers in relation to canonical literature. The Press’s inability to distribute chap-books to Canadian libraries chap-book authors couldn’t access limited the cultural capital emerging poets were able to accrue.

Many chap-book authors contacted retailers themselves, arranging for Ryerson to ship chap-books to those interested in purchasing copies. As such, most chap-book authors arranged for the sale of their chap-books at their local bookstores; for example, Dorothy Gostwick Roberts, Charles G.D. Roberts’ niece, arranged for the distribution of her first chap-book, *Songs For Swift Feet*
(1927), to all the bookstores in her hometown of Fredericton, New Brunswick (Gostwick Roberts, letter to Lorne Pierce, 16 Dec.). Another common strategy chap-book authors employed was to distribute their volumes to their friends or to literary societies they belonged to, such as Canadian Authors’ Association branches or groups like the Vancouver Poetry Society. In terms of distribution to reviewers, the Ryerson Press did distribute some chap-books to Canadian periodicals, especially following the Second World War, but in the first two decades of the series’ publication, coordinating the distribution of review copies frequently fell to chap-book authors. Unlike most other publishing endeavors in Canada at the time, in which a press would endeavor to produce, promote, and distribute a volume, success in the Ryerson series meant that chap-book poets had to fill many roles that staff members at a press usually would with little promise of financial remuneration. For chap-book poets who were employed elsewhere, managing the national distribution of their volumes was exceptionally difficult.

Initially, Pierce attempted to arrange an American distributor for the chap-book series—the Philadelphia-based Macrae Smith Company. Such a strategy was not uncommon for publishers at the time, as an American distributor would help share the costs of disseminating literary works to retailers. In addition, gaining access to the more lucrative American book market would have enabled chap-book authors to accrue higher cultural and economic capital. As Eli MacLaren notes, though, the American distribution plan failed quickly; Kathryn Munro, author of the third chap-book in the series, *Forfeit and Other Poems* (1926), had a relative attempt to contact the Macrae Smith company about her chap-book (“Significant Little Offerings” 24). Macrae Smith claimed, however, to have no knowledge of Munro’s chap-book (Kathryn Munro, letter to Blanche Hume, 26 Apr. 1926). By MacLaren’s estimation, Pierce’s plan to partner with Macrae Smith ended in 1927, as the seventeenth chap-book in the series, Alexander Louis Fraser’s *By Cobequid Bay*, is the last to note Macrae Smith as a co-distributor (“Significant Little Offerings” 24).
Although it is difficult to make generalizations about the reception of a series as large as the Ryerson Poetry Chap-books and the type of audience it may have appealed to, the series tended to be favourably reviewed in Canadian periodicals associated with literary traditionalism and appealed to other late-romantic Canadian poets. For example, Canadian Poetry, a periodical established by the Canadian Authors’ Association, faithfully reviewed most chap-books. As most reviews in Canadian Poetry were written by members of the Association, most of whom had published a Ryerson chap-book, comments on the series tended to be positive.\textsuperscript{10} Canadian Bookman also reviewed chap-books frequently and so did some regional newspapers. For example, in the June 1938 issue of Canadian Poetry, the Ryerson Press reprinted a positive review of the series from the Vancouver Sun: “The [series] has proved itself the stalwart friend of the minor poets” (Back Cover). A Ryerson advertisement in the sixth issue of Contemporary Verse also quoted a review from Canadian Forum that recognized the series as a “real Canadian public service” (Inside Cover).

By contrast, many periodicals associated with modernist innovation tended not to review the series at all, particularly as late-romantic poetry lost cultural capital in the 1940s: Contemporary Verse frequently acknowledged receiving copies of Ryerson chap-books but rarely reviewed them. Smith and Scott’s magazines did not review the series at all, and Northern Review did very infrequently. Alan Crawley, editor of Contemporary Verse, expressed his thoughts on the series privately in 1939 to Doris Ferne, who had been involved in the establishment of Contemporary Verse: “these Ryerson Chapbooks have been rather a thorn in the side of the newspapers and reviewers and they dislike doing much with them, I expect the “girls” who have written the others [. . .] take sadly and vituperatively to any serious criticism” (Alan Crawley, letter to Doris Ferne, qtd. in Irvine, Editing Modernity 285). Crawley’s comments are indicative of the attitude many modernist writers had towards the late-romantic writers who dominated the series prior to the

\textsuperscript{10} One broad criticism levelled against the series occurred in the December 1948 issue of the periodical, in which the cover was criticized by Geoffrey Vivien (35).
Second World War. Late-romantic writers were often “feminized” by critics; their poetry was dismissed as insipid and dated, not worthy of serious critical analysis. Modernist writers did not wholly determine poetic legitimation in the 1920s and 1930s; still, many chap-books in the early years of the series did not receive critical attention from reviewers who were not late-romantic writers. This was due, in part, to problems of distribution and printing, yet may also have been because many early chap-book poets were not well-known and produced first volumes in the series that were somewhat derivative of the poetry of their Confederation-era predecessors. As such, gaining legitimation from bastions of literary traditionalism, including Charles G.D. Roberts and Bliss Carman, became a strategy many emerging late-romantic writers employed in order to orient themselves within both the Ryerson series and the field of Canadian literature.

2.3 Emerging Late-Romantics and the Threat of Modernism

Pierce’s inclusion of dominant Confederation-era and late-romantic writers in the series was motivated by his desire to foster patriotism in Canadian readers and to position Ryerson as an important literary publisher. Simultaneously, though, the field of Canadian literature was shifting as a result of the emergence of a group of experimental poets in Montreal at the time. The poets in this school, described as the “McGill School,” marked their entrance into the field by asserting their difference from the late-romantic poets who dominated the Canadian literary market. Key modernists at the time included A.J.M. Smith and F.R. Scott, whose little magazines *The McGill Fortnightly Review* (1925-1927) and *Canadian Mercury* (1928-1929) advocated poetry akin to the work of prominent international modernists, including W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot, and Ezra Pound.

Bourdieu notes, “initiating a new [artistic or literary] epoch means winning recognition [. . .] of one’s difference from other producers” (“The Field of Cultural Production” 108). Such self-

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11 Although Smith and Scott are generally recognized as key “modernists” in this temporal period, others associated with *The McGill Fortnightly Review* and *Canadian Mercury* include A.P.R. Coulborn, A.B. Latham, Leon Edel, and Leo Kennedy (Gnarowski viii).
positioning is required of producers desiring to shift perceptions of literary legitimacy; it also incites a series of actions and reactions from other producers within the field (“The Field of Cultural Production” 107). Modernists like A.J.M. Smith and F.R. Scott asserted their difference from late-romantic poets through editorials in their little magazines and in their anthology New Provinces (c. 1936). A.J.M. Smith created a preface for the volume. This was initially rejected,¹² but does outline the stance of the McGill School towards many of the late-romantic writers: “[T]he bulk of Canadian verse is romantic in conception and conventional in form [. . .] its rhythms are definite, mechanically correct, and obvious; its rhymes are commonplace” (xxvii). Instead, Smith advocates for poetry influenced by the work of modernist imagists; exemplary poetry of this sort would be “objective, impersonal, and in a sense timeless and absolute” (xxx). McGill School poets did continue to write about nature, but de-romanticized it; they were nationalistic, but their nationalism was influenced by cosmopolitanism. Thus, the McGill School poets re-assessed and revised nature and nationalism in Canadian poetry through the lens of international literary modernism.

Poets of the McGill School were not widely lauded until the years following the Second World War. Nonetheless, their presence in the Canadian literary field in the 1920s signalled an impending shift in literary trends. As such, many emerging late-romantic poets developed a strategy in order to gain cultural capital—an appeal to an established literary or social figure for legitimation, which frequently resulted in a chap-book introduction. The chap-book introduction was mutually advantageous for both established literary figures and emerging chap-book poets. For established literary figures, such introductions enabled them to assert the continued importance of late-romantic poetry and to respond to experimental modernist work. For emerging poets, a chap-book introduction from an established literary figure would situate them in relation to dominant Canadian literary traditions, thus encouraging positive reception.

¹² Smith’s preface was eventually published in the twenty-fourth issue of Canadian Literature (1965), in his volume Towards a View of Canadian Letters (1973), and in a reprint of New Provinces in 1976 (U of Toronto P).
This trend emerged in the fourth chap-book in the series—Constance Davies-Woodrow’s *The Captive Gypsy* (1926). Woodrow’s chap-book, filled with carefully structured, rhymed poetry about the beauty of gardens and the pleasures of the home, was her first published collection. Charles G.D. Roberts wrote an introduction for Davies-Woodrow, in which he claimed:

> Among the qualities to be looked for in all poetry those of sincerity, simplicity and candour always make a particular appeal to me. Equally essential, according to my own artistic faith, are music in phrase and cadence, the quest of beauty in both thought and form, and conscientious workmanship. These qualities seem to me to characterize, in no small measure, the poems here gathered; and they make the little book a refreshing protest against the defiance of sound technique, the mistaking of violence for strength and of ugliness for originality, which mark so much of our contemporary verse. Authentic emotions, expressed with such brave directness, yet with a grace so persuasive, should carry these brief lyrics into the hearts of many readers. —“Ernestcliffe,” Toronto. Easter, 1926. (1)

Here, Roberts mobilizes Woodrow’s verse, expressive of late-romantic conventions such as the musical (metrical) phrase and the beauty of the commonplace, against the threat of ugliness present in “contemporary, [modernist] verse” (1). The qualities Roberts praises are, in effect, the qualities that the Confederation poets were noted for—including, particularly, their fine “workmanship” or technical excellence (Bentley 5). Although the introduction was a popular strategy chap-book authors used to differentiate themselves from other producers, legitimation could also be attained from prominent social figures, as Lilian Leveridge’s correspondence demonstrates.

Lilian Leveridge, author of three Ryerson chap-books (*A Breath of the Woods*, 1926; *The Blossom Trail*, 1932; and *Lyrics and Sonnets*, 1939) was another late-romantic poet who attempted to gain legitimaecy within the series by appealing to established literary figures. Although none of Leveridge’s chap-books contains an introduction, her correspondence with Pierce early in 1926 reveals her desire to include one in her first chap-book:

> Some weeks ago Mrs. [Constance Davies-] Woodrow showed me the Foreword that [Charles G.D. Roberts] had written for her book, and it occurred to me that if Bliss Carman would do a similar favor [sic] for me it would add very much to the attractiveness and success of my book. He is my favourite Canadian poet. (Leveridge, letter to Lorne Pierce, 6 Jan. 1926)
Leveridge, a member of the Canadian Authors’ Association, would have been in contact with Constance Davies-Woodrow at the time. Like Davies-Woodrow, Leveridge was not yet a well-known Canadian poet—a positive introduction from a Confederation poet would have helped Leveridge distinguish her work from the scores of other chap-book authors writing in a similar vein. Leveridge was also an astute reader of the Canadian literary market; Bliss Carman, at this time, had eclipsed Charles G.D. Roberts in popularity. Although many poems in Leveridge’s first chap-book show evidence of Carman’s influence, no introduction was written.

Leveridge’s next chap-book, *The Blossom Trail*, appeared in 1932 to little fanfare. This thirty-page collection of reprinted magazine verse did not sell well—of the 250 copies printed, less than half sold. In December 1938, Leveridge wrote to Pierce, expressing regret that she would not be able to afford to pay Ryerson for the remaining 150 unsold copies (Leveridge, letter to Lorne Pierce, 19 Dec. 1938). Nonetheless, in 1939, Leveridge printed another chap-book of similar poetry, *Lyrics and Sonnets*. Leveridge’s continued adherence to the strictures of the English sonnet and other closed forms, and her preoccupation with lyric representations of nature, began to appear “fussy” and dull in 1939, a period when the first modernist chap-book appeared in the series (Anne Marriott’s *The Wind Our Enemy*). Perhaps recognizing her own loss of legitimacy within the Ryerson series, Leveridge sent a copy of *Lyrics and Sonnets* to John Buchan, Lord Tweedsmuir, then Governor General of Canada, accomplished novelist, and instigator of the prestigious (though at the time, unpaid) Governor General’s Awards for literature in 1937. Leveridge sent Pierce a copy of Lord Tweedsmuir’s response:

Thank you very much for the gift of your new book of poems [. . .] I have been reading them with great pleasure and interest. I especially like your bird poems. I am an enthusiastic bird lover [. . .] In these days, when there is so much unmelodious journalism which calls itself poetry, it is pleasant to find someone who sticks to the old classical tradition of rhythm and melody. (John Buchan, letter to Lilian Leveridge, 14 Jul. 1939)
Leveridge recycled a familiar strategy in order to gain legitimacy within the series: an appeal to an established literary figure, whose seal of approval may have helped her gain increased legitimacy within the eyes of her publisher. Nonetheless, the October 1939 issue of *Canadian Poetry* magazine reviewed her latest chap-book negatively, claiming that her volume “breathes nature adoration [. . .] the flaws are largely those of convention, the acceptance of the routed [sic] mood and the facile phrase” (46-47). Although little information survives regarding the sales of Leveridge’s final chap-book, if the above review is any indication, it did not fare well.

As has been demonstrated above, the emergence of modernist innovation in the early twentieth century had a profound impact upon the field of Canadian literature in this period. Emerging late-romantic writers attempted to position themselves within what they perceived to be the dominant literary trend in Canada—late romanticism—by appealing to social and literary authorities whose legitimation may have helped position them within a respected canon initiated by the British Romantics. What Davies-Woodrow and Leveridge did not realize, though, was that even Confederation poets like Roberts and Carman had begun to lose cultural capital following the onset of literary modernism.

2.4 Late Romantic Devaluation: Audrey Alexandra Brown

In 1939, the Ryerson Press published Anne Marriott’s free-verse chap-book *The Wind Our Enemy* to great critical fanfare. Unlike much of the closed-form late-romantic verse produced in the early decades of the series, Marriott’s poetry, influenced by her reading of modernists T.S. Eliot and James Joyce, used an unadorned diction; instead of idealized landscapes, Marriott described the horrors of drought on the Canadian prairies during the Depression. Marriott’s first chap-book generated widespread praise from other poets and academic critics, and galvanized Pierce in his decision to orient the series towards modernism. Pierce’s decision was also prompted by the inability of late-romantic poets to maintain high cultural capital during the 1940s. Audrey
Alexandra Brown is one example—Brown was a popular late-romantic poet whom Pierce sought to include in the Ryerson series in the 1930s, yet who lost cultural capital in the 1940s, following the publication of her Ryerson chap-book, due to her inability to keep up with shifting literary trends.

Audrey Alexandra Brown (1904-1998) was a very popular poet. Born and raised in Nanaimo, BC, she is described in the *Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature* as “the last important representative of romantic poetry in Canada, deeply indebted to the English Romantic poets, especially Keats” (Staines 89). Brown’s frequent fixation on themes of chivalric romance locates her also within the Victorian medievalist tradition—specifically, the work of Alfred Tennyson. Brown’s work was very popular—Campbell notes that her first volume, *A Dryad in Nanaimo*, published in 1931 by MacMillan, sold 1,605 copies, which was a remarkable sales figure for a book released during the Depression (“Nationalism, Morality, and Gender” 159). Brown was impoverished, physically weak, geographically isolated, and dependent on male editors and academics to help her manage her literary career throughout her life, yet she accrued high cultural capital amongst conservative Canadian readers who Trehearne notes “[yearned for] cultural continuity,” particularly during the First and Second World War (*Canadian Poetry* 187). Brown also represents the tendency of male editors and critics in the first half of the twentieth century to “feminize” late-romantic poetry in particular. Brown was consistently portrayed as representative of “maidenly virtues of refinement, purity and delicacy—qualities antithetical to the perceived sexual frankness and cynicism [. . .] of poetic modernism” (Campbell, “Nationalism, Morality, and Gender” 149). Although Lorne Pierce did not represent Brown this way, by the mid-1940s, her critical “feminization” resulted in decreased cultural capital, as academic critics increasingly lionized a masculinized modernism.

Pelham Edgar, a professor of English at the University of Toronto, first discovered Brown in 1928. Edgar was not Brown’s professor; as Brown’s first volume was published in 1931, it is likely
that Edgar first came across her poetry in a newspaper or periodical.\textsuperscript{13} Edgar became Brown’s liaison with her Toronto publishers, and Brown gave him a great deal of power over her work, even allowing him to select all the poems for her first manuscript (Campbell, “Nationalism, Morality, and Gender” 148). Pelham Edgar, like other critics in the early twentieth century, frequently portrayed Brown as an exemplar of stereotypically “maidenly” virtues, especially in introductions to her volumes (notably, the 1934 edition of \textit{A Dryad in Nanaimo}). However, Campbell notes that by the late 1930s, “it had become evident to Edgar and others that Brown’s poetry was not going to develop as they had hoped to challenge modernism as a means of a more romantic, traditional mode” (“Nationalism, Morality, and Gender” 149). By 1944, as modernist work became dominant within the field of Canadian poetry, sales of Brown’s volume \textit{Challenge to Time and Death} dropped to 473 copies (Campbell, “Nationalism, Morality, and Gender” 159).

Some of Brown’s decline in sales and decreased capital in Edgar’s eyes may have had to do with her inability to reconcile a late-romantic style increasingly perceived as dated with the social upheavals of the 1940s, including the Second World War. In a 1934 reprint of her first volume, \textit{A Dryad in Nanaimo}, Edgar celebrated Brown for her “feeling for beauty that is deepened and made significant by a […] sense of humanity’s capacity to suffer and enjoy” (viii). Edgar celebrated Brown’s work for her masterly transmission of human sentiment—the most appropriate sentiment to convey being an individual’s perception of beauty. As Edgar’s comments indicate, he valued Brown’s work for her ability to revitalize traditional poetic modes yet also make these traditional modes applicable to contemporary human suffering. Much of Brown’s early work, though, was fanciful; the titular poem of Brown’s first volume, for example, details the death of a mythical “Dryad” residing in Brown’s hometown, Nanaimo. Brown’s next volume, \textit{Tree of Resurrection}

\textsuperscript{13} According to SFU’s \textit{Early Women Writers} online encyclopedia, periodicals and newspapers Brown frequently contributed to include \textit{Canadian Forum, Dalhousie Review, Nanaimo Free Press, Nanaimo Times, Saturday Night, Vancouver Province, Vancouver Sun, Victoria Colonist,} and the \textit{Winnipeg Free Press}. 
(1937), displayed the same tendency towards abstraction and mythology, as in the poem “The Mermaid,” a narrative poem detailing a sailor succumbing to the siren-call of this mythic creature (97-103). Although Brown’s later volumes were to address more timely issues, particularly the departure of soldiers during the Second World War and the fall of the Third Reich (as in several poems from Challenge to Time and Death, 1943), Edgar had evidently tired of Brown’s preoccupation with mythic figures from antiquity and decreased his involvement in her literary affairs. Further, Brown’s critical “feminization” made her work easy for academic critics concerned with fostering literary modernism during the years of the Second World War to dismiss. E.K. Brown, for example, criticized Brown’s lack of “originality” in his 1943 monograph On Canadian Poetry, devoting less than a sentence to chronicling her achievements in the 1930s.

Given Brown’s early success in the 1930s, though, she was a natural choice for the Ryerson Poetry Chap-books in its early years. Her poetry, frequently reproduced in many Canadian newspapers, was lauded by members of the general populace and by academic writers with traditional literary tastes. Further, the Ryerson Poetry Chap-books had a strong tradition of publishing the work of female writers—for example, the third chap-book in the series, Forfeit and Other Poems (1926), was published by a female writer, Kathryn Munro. In addition, between 1925 and 1946, female poets produced more than half of all chap-books in the series. Pierce contacted Brown in the fall of 1930, requesting that she submit a manuscript of verse to be published in the series. As Brown was contractually obligated to Macmillan, though, she refused (Brown, letter to Lorne Pierce, 29 Nov. 1930). Despite Brown’s diminished cultural capital in the 1940s, Pierce still produced her long poem “V-E Day” as a Ryerson chap-book in 1946 when she offered it to him. “V-E Day” was a new, more timely poem by Brown, one she claimed from the beginning was “unfortunate”: “I began it on the twelfth of May a year ago [. . .] I finished it last Dominion Day, but of course it is now too late for publication (Brown, letter to Lorne Pierce, 3 Aug. 1946). “V-E
“V-E Day” is a reference to “Victory in Europe” Day, a public holiday on May 8, 1945 in Commonwealth countries to celebrate the end of the Second World War. As the original “V-E Day” had long since passed, Brown felt that her poem was no longer relevant. Nonetheless Pierce, who had wanted to include Brown in the series nearly from its inception, leapt at the chance to produce her chap-book. Pierce planned to use Brown’s timely poem for his personal Christmas greeting card and asked Thoreau MacDonald, son of the famed Group of Seven artist J.E.H. MacDonald, to produce a distinct cover for the volume (Brown, letter to Lorne Pierce, 1946). Brown was not required to pay for the cost of printing her work—no archival correspondence between Pierce and Brown suggests that she enclosed cheques to cover the cost of printing the chap-book. As Brown’s chap-book was only three pages long, though, it may have been less of a risk for the press to take on, particularly during the economic boom following the Second World War.

“V-E Day” seems a strange choice for a Christmas greeting card. The narrative poem is an imagined dialogue between a “three-days’-dead” Jewish artist and a victorious messenger reporting the fall of the Third Reich. The poem, like most of Brown’s poetry, is metrically and rhythmically structured: individual lines alternate between pentameter and trimeter, and units of meaning are linked through rhymed couplets, as in the excerpt below:

The flushed messenger not impatiently
Answered him, “Victory!
The mighty Reich is fallen, and they who stood
To shore its pillars up, lie in their blood:
The citadel of power and pride and lust
Is dust, is stones and dust.”

Faintly the stiff lips said,
“Because I was a Jew I am three days dead:
Look, if you are strong-stomached, on my back
Where the red turned blue is turning black;
Look, if you have a heart to look unshamed,
Upon this hand they maimed
Because it could mould clay and chisel stone
Into the like of living flesh and bone. (1)
As the “peace of God” settles over the land, the freed souls of victims like the Jewish artisan leave their bodies and rise “up-up-into the white / eternity of light” (2). Although Brown’s poem manages to redeem the horrors of war through the invocation of Christian symbolism, “V-E Day” is also macabre, fixated on the scarred flesh of a mysteriously re-animated corpse.

Brown’s poem was re-printed in several Ottawa and Saskatoon papers, and Pelham Edgar, most gratifyingly, mailed Brown newspaper reprints from the volume he had no involvement in producing (Brown, letter to Lorne Pierce, 18 Nov. 1946). Brown’s latest chap-book also received favourable commentary from Prime Minister Mackenzie King (Brown, letter to Lorne Pierce, 18 Nov. 1946). However, Canadian Poetry and most other modernist little magazines did not review the chap-book at all. Although Pierce fervently believed in Brown’s poetic prowess and the Prime Minister lauded Brown’s work, her lack of positive reviews is testament to her critical devaluation following the Second World War. Brown’s chap-book featured the anachronisms of expression and sentimentality of content deplored by critics and evidently no longer popular with the Canadian public. As modernist work increasingly came to occupy a dominant position within the Canadian literary field during and after the Second World War, work like Brown’s was displaced within the hierarchy of poetry production.

Macmillan published Brown’s final volume, All Fool’s Day, in 1948. Prior to its publication, J.M. Gray, an editor at Macmillan, forwarded Pierce a copy of Brown’s manuscript divided in three parts: poems that should be rejected “in her own interest”; poems that would make a good book; and poems that might be included with revision (J.M. Gray, letter to Lorne Pierce, 26 Sep. 1947). Gray notes, “Brown has had a lot of bad or indifferent press, and over a period of time it has done her a good deal of harm” (J.M. Gray, letter to Lorne Pierce, 26 Sep. 1947). When the

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14 So, too, did the Royal Society of Canada when they awarded Brown the Lorne Pierce Medal in 1944, a prize for literary excellence created by Pierce in 1924.
volume was released, Brown wrote to Pierce angrily that a reviewer at the *Vancouver Sun* who desired to review the book was told her review should not exceed a paragraph. Brown’s local paper, the *Victoria Colonist*, did not review her final volume at all (Brown, letter to Lorne Pierce, 1 Jan. 1949). Brown’s frustration at her own critical devaluation is revealing:

> I knew I had greatly lost ground but I did not realize I’d become a nonentity [. . .] I knew what you meant in saying it might be necessary to begin to build all over again. There is nothing left of the old edifice [. . .] the one thing I’m not sure about is—is it possible to build again or is one fatally hampered by the ruins? They say that nothing is so dead as a dead love. But a dead enthusiasm is deader. (Brown, letter to Lorne Pierce, 1 Jan. 1949)

Pierce’s decision to orient the Ryerson Chap-book series towards modernist work beginning in 1939 was largely influenced by the critical devaluation of the late-romantic writers like Audrey Alexandra Brown whom he had once been enthusiastic about. Brown’s lack of positive reviews, for both her chap-book and final volume, forced Pierce to acknowledge that the tastes of the audience who mattered most for poetry—that is, the academics whose anthologies could make or break a literary reputation and other poet-reviewers—were no longer interested in writers like Brown, whose reputation was tainted by her early critical “feminization.” Campbell notes that in 1955, when writing to the secretary of the Canadian Writers’ Foundation, Pierce shirked his patronage of Brown: “Audrey Brown was [. . .] a protégé of Pelham [Edgar’s]…she soared up into the blue, and we all thought she was headed for immortal things. But her style of lyric, like Carman’s, is dated, while her preoccupations with death and such is tiresome” (“A Girl in a Book” 150). Although the work of late-romantic writers continued to appear in the series following the 1940s, it became the exception, not the rule. During the Second World War, and in the years following, the Ryerson Chap-book series would become the main venue through which Pierce would accommodate modernist practitioners.
3. Modernism in the Ryerson Poetry Chap-books

3.1 Transitions in the 1940s

Early evidence of Pierce’s disavowal of late-romantic writers in the early 1940s can be seen in the letters he exchanged with Sir Charles G.D. Roberts during this period. Roberts had exerted significant influence over Pierce’s editorial decisions in the early years of the series and still proposed chap-books for many of the poets he mentored. Pierce, who was forced to limit the Ryerson lists due to paper shortages during the Second World War, was increasingly less receptive of work by emerging late-romantic writers whom he felt would no longer appeal to the limited audience of critics and poets who read the Ryerson series. For example, Pierce rejected a manuscript entitled Songs of an Irish Colleen by one of Roberts’ protégées, Frances Hanson. By way of explanation, Pierce wrote to Roberts, “as you know, I have been a sort of lyrical wild man insofar as the publication of Canadian poetry has been concerned, and this in spite of the far from musical noises that have emerged from our accountancy department, but for the time being I am afraid we shall have to slow down” (Lorne Pierce, letter to Charles G.D. Roberts, 20 Oct. 1941). By 1945, Pierce had become much more unabashed in his rejection of specific types of late-romantic work. George Whalley, author of a Ryerson chap-book entitled Poems, 1939-1944 (1946), wrote to Pierce in the summer of 1945, “you mention an arbitrary restriction upon religious and patriotic verse for the Ryerson Poetry Chap-books. I was not aware that any of my verse came under either of these narrow (though admirable) classifications” (George Whalley, letter to Lorne Pierce, 12 Jul. 1945). Whalley’s chap-book was published, but Pierce’s intentions were clear: late-romantic work dedicated to chronicling sublime encounters (whether it be with the natural world or the Judeo-Christian God), were being phased out, as was patriotic war verse.

15 See box 11, file 1, item 91 in the Lorne Pierce Collection, and box 14, file 7, item 54. These letters, written by Pierce in 1944 and 1947, respectively, make reference to paper shortages and subsequently inflated paper prices that made the production of chap-books increasingly difficult.
Pierce’s turn to modernism is reflected in the format of the chap-books as well. In the spring of 1942, Ernest Fewster, founder and president of the Vancouver Poetry Society and author of a Ryerson chap-book, *Litany Before the Dawn of Fire* (1942), criticized the standard cover of the series. Fewster’s chap-book bore the woodland scene J.E.H. MacDonald had created in 1925. Fewster, rejecting the cover’s “ornate” appearance, wrote of the mountains in the background of the illustration, “does MacDonald drink, or did he think them up for himself [. . .] if God made the everlasting Hills on that pattern he must have been a bit beany at the time” (Ernest Fewster, letter to Lorne Pierce, 5 Feb. 1942). The covers of the early chap-books had come to be associated with saccharine elements of late-romantic poetry: religious fervor, nature-worship, and a general “fussiness” of style. Ironically, Fewster’s own chap-book is filled with the stylistic embellishments and anachronisms repudiated by modernist poets. Nonetheless, Pierce took Fewster’s criticism seriously and contacted Thoreau MacDonald, son of J.E.H. MacDonald, soon after receiving Fewster’s letter about modifying the cover illustration and Ryerson colophon. In May 1942, Pierce wrote, “we want something that we can use on a title-page [. . .] I hope you will adhere to the monogram “R.P.” and not put one of your symbolic animals or birds under the tree” (Lorne Pierce, letter to Thoreau MacDonald, 18 May 1942). Thoreau did modify his father’s original design by the end of 1942, yet Thoreau maintained the woodland scene. Thoreau’s modified cover design was used even when the chap-books began to be bound in stiff boards in 1953. The cover, much like the late-romantic poetry of this era, continued to attract criticism—in a review of several Ryerson chap-books in *Canadian Poetry* in December 1948, Geoffrey Vivien notes, “[the cover design] is altogether a thing of the Carman-Lampman mode. When the poetry inside has moved on from this period [. . .] the effect is rather like having Mendels[s]ohn’s [1823] Midsummer Night’s Dream Overture precede O’Neill’s [modernist 1940 play] “the Iceman Cometh” (35). Finally, in 1950,
Thoreau’s cover design was replaced with an unadorned cover featuring only the title of the work in a plain, serif font.\(^{17}\) Whereas the MacDonal’s’ covers were associated with outmoded late-romantic work, the unadorned cover was associated with “new” modernist work. For example, when some chap-books in 1951 were published with the new unadorned cover, Anne Marriott, reviewing them in *Contemporary Verse*, noted that the new cover “[gave] an external promise of something fresh, contemporary and definite, some new note of poetry sounded and stated with significance” (No. 34, 18). As controversies surrounding the series’ cover indicate, late-romantic work was losing significant cultural capital from the 1940s on.

### 3.2 New Poetic Forms, New Print Genres: The Modernist Anthology and the Ryerson Press

The ascendance of modernism in Canada coincided with the ascendance of the anthology, a print genre that preserved key works of Canadian poets for posterity. Anthologies, often used in university classrooms, enabled poets to reach academic audiences whose approval gave legitimacy. Bourdieu notes that the realm of academics is a state-guaranteed hub that helps sanction the “taste of the dominant” (“The Field of Cultural Production” 105). As Bourdieu suggests, academic critics and anthologies are closely linked to the construction of literary canons. As a result, many modernist writers seeking to gain legitimacy within the realm of Canadian poetry became contributors to anthologies. In the hands of male academics, the anthology also became a tool to displace female poets from the Canadian literary canon. The Ryerson Press mobilized the anthology in 1944 to support emerging modernist writers; as such, it is worth examining in some detail.

Macmillan published *New Provinces*, the first modernist poetry anthology in Canada, in 1936. The tradition of systemic gender discrimination is evident in *New Provinces*—the anthology contained the work of six male poets: Robert Finch, Leo Kennedy, A.M. Klein, E.J. Pratt, F.R. Scott, and A.J.M. Smith. Scott and Smith, the editors, chose to exclude the work of Dorothy

\(^{17}\) See Appendix C for an image of the updated cover in 1950 (Geoffrey Drayton’s *Three Meridians*, 1950).
Livesay, who had begun writing experimental modernist poetry in the early 1920s. Although Smith suggested to Scott on two separate occasions that Livesay’s work be included in *New Provinces*, Scott refused, claiming that Livesay’s work would appear in a second, more “political” anthology in the future (Kelly, “Politics, Gender, and New Provinces” 57). This second anthology, however, was never to materialize—when *New Provinces* sold roughly 100 copies, the project was deemed a commercial failure and plans for a second anthology were scuttled. Biases about the work of female poets, then, are key to the history of the modernist anthology. Being female and being “political” detracted from a writer’s ability to gain legitimacy, as male editors like Scott tended to associate female poets like Livesay with either late-romanticism or social realism—modes that were assumed to be antithetical to modernism and could quickly be dismissed.

The Ryerson Press’s own modernist anthology, *Unit of Five* (1944), was one of Pierce’s many attempts to incorporate modernist writers into Ryerson’s lists and a response to modernist little magazines and *New Provinces*. Although Ryerson Press’ anthology was, like *New Provinces*, a commercial failure, it did generate positive critical attention from several male academics. Unlike *New Provinces*, *Unit of Five* did include the work of one female writer—P.K. Page. Other writers included Louis Dudek, Ronald Hambleton, Raymond Souster, and James Wreford. *Unit of Five* was, in part, Pierce’s response to *Canadian Mercury*, a little magazine that contained the work of poets “under thirty” (Norris 9). Similarly, *Unit of Five* contained the work of writers under the age of thirty (Foreword). Most of the poetry in this collection—excluding James Wreford’s—is in free verse and employs colloquial diction.

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18 See, for example, *Green Pitcher*, Livesay’s first published collection (1928 by Macmillan of Canada). Livesay’s collection was inspired by the transatlantic Imagist movement.

19 Peggy Kelly’s “Anthologies and the Canonization Process” surveys 48 English-Canadian professional and academic anthologies published between 1920 and 1950. In this period, Kelly notes that only 18 percent of work in academic-professional anthologies was by female writers, whereas 67 percent of the work in association anthologies was by women (1)—she reads these statistics as evidence of gender discrimination in Canada (1).
As *Unit of Five* was one of Pierce’s first forays into poetic modernism, it provoked a strong reaction from late-romantic writers who sensed a shift in Pierce’s editorial preferences. Describing the reception of new writers whose work initiates a shift in dominant modes of literary production, Bourdieu notes, “by endeavoring to impose new modes of thought and expression, out of key with the prevailing modes of thought [. . .] [newcomers are] bound to disconcert the orthodoxy by their ‘obscurity’ and ‘pointlessness’” (“The Field of Cultural Production” 108). Many reviews of *Unit of Five* were written by chap-book authors or late-romantic critics who had previously occupied a dominant literary position. Their public and private reviews of this anthology characterize the emerging modernists in this anthology precisely as Bourdieu describes. For example, Elsie Pomeroy, a teacher and critic who had written several monographs on Charles G.D. Roberts, wrote dismissively of *Unit of Five* to Pierce: “I simply can’t take the stuff seriously [. . .] in my opinion it is obscure and reeks of affectation (Elsie Pomeroy, letter to Lorne Pierce, 28 Jan. 1945). Similarly, another reviewer in *Canadian Poetry* tropes the poets in *Unit of Five* as bestial: “they aspire to speak on behalf of the Canadian masses, yet their utterances, on those rare occasions when they are intelligible, are a petulant juvenile snarling against the world of our time. A true modern [. . .] can grasp and express the essential nobility of the common man; but with the first four [. . .] man is just something to sneer at and be angry over (36). *Canadian Poetry*, the mouthpiece of the Canadian Authors’ Association, was a magazine that frequently represented work from the “old school” of poets that Smith and Scott sought to displace from literary dominance. As the above excerpt suggests, many late-romantic writers reacted to their own repudiation and increasing irrelevance. Their insistence upon upholding representations of “beauty” and “nobility” is a bid for the poetry of an idealized past in the face of changing literary modes.

Pierce’s own thoughts about the “new school” of poets were mixed. Writing to Dorothy Livesay following the publication of *Unit of Five*, Pierce noted,
We were not impressed with the greatness of the book but we felt that this was what the world of the war had done to this generation of poets. Something rather dreadful has happened to our young writers and we submitted this not because we believed in it or thought it great art but as a document—a social document, if you will—of the time [. . .] They are very young and very annoying and unripe, perhaps, but at any rate we submitted this book for what it is worth, not as a portent but as a sign for it had already taken place. (Lorne Pierce, letter to Dorothy Livesay, 25 Apr. 1945)

Pierce, unlike Smith and Scott, was not an early patron of modernist writers, but he was able to accurately identify shifts in the literary field. His inclusion of modernist writers on Ryerson’s lists was undertaken in order to give the press legitimacy within the larger field of Canadian literature.

Many male editors, poets, and academics responded positively to the anthology. Prior to the publication of *Unit of Five*, E.K. Brown encouraged Lorne Pierce to publish the work of Raymond Souster, who he claimed “expresses [feeling] in a form new to us,” but in a chap-book as opposed to a full volume (E.K. Brown, letter to Lorne Pierce, 14 Oct. 1943). Souster’s work appeared subsequently in Ryerson’s first modernist anthology and in a chap-book in 1951. In January 1945, Pierce began correspondence with A.J.M. Smith about yet another anthology Smith hoped to bring out, entitled *Best Canadian Verse of 1944-1945*. Although plans to publish this anthology would never come to fruition, Pierce hoped it would be physically similar to *Unit of Five*, (Lorne Pierce, letter to A.J.M. Smith, 15 Jan. 1945). Smith replied, “my own opinion is that [*Unit of Five*] is a very valuable experiment; it contains some intense and successful poems in the modern manner that deserve to be preserved, and it cannot fail to have a beneficial effect on Canadian letters” (A.J.M. Smith, letter to Lorne Pierce, 25 Jan. 1945). Pierce’s correspondence with writers like Smith identifies the anthology as a print genre that would become increasingly important for poets attempting to gain legitimacy within the field. Nonetheless, many modernist poets at the time did publish at least one chap-book in the Ryerson series, in part because Pierce’s incorporation of modernism within the series began earlier than his publication of a modernist anthology. The first
modernist chap-book, Anne Marriott’s *The Wind Our Enemy*, appeared in 1939 and will be discussed in greater detail below.

### 3.3 Anne Marriott, Modernism, and the Ryerson Chap-books

Anne Marriott’s *The Wind Our Enemy* (1939) was the first chap-book in free verse form to receive commendation not only from late-romantic producers, but also from modernist producers and academic critics. Although Marriott published two chap-books following *The Wind Our Enemy* and a volume of poems with Ryerson, none of these works matched *The Wind’s* success. Following the 1940s, Marriott’s poetic output declined significantly as a result of the negative reception of her final Ryerson volume and her commitment to writing radio plays and film scripts. Marriott began to publish collections again in the 1970s, but she had, by this point, lost much of the cultural capital she had accrued from her modernist verse of the 1940s. An analysis of the production and reception of Marriott’s chap-books posits that Marriott’s decrease in cultural capital is due to her desire to gain legitimation from the “mass” Canadian audience as opposed to the elite audience of poets and critics that her modernist poetry appealed to. Thus, Marriott’s literary history reveals the cultural dominance of poetic modernism following the 1940s, which is reflected in the series.

Anne Marriott was born in Victoria, BC, in 1913. Throughout her life, Marriott was to produce work for many radio and print outlets, including non-commercial and commercial magazines, chap-books, books, newspapers, and CBC radio; she was also a member of various literary groups, including the Victoria branch of the Canadian Authors Association (Irvine 90) As Marriott’s work was diverse, her Ryerson Poetry Chap-books can hardly be taken as complete evidence of her *oeuvre*.\(^\text{20}\) Nonetheless, Marriott’s Ryerson chap-books display some of the diversity that characterized her creative output overall.

\(^{20}\) For example, Irvine notes that between 1934 and 1945, Marriott published over 200 poems in periodicals (a number which was to decline between 1945 and the mid-1950s, when Marriott published only 27 poems in periodicals) (*Editing Modernity* 93).
Prior to 1939, Marriott primarily published verse in magazines. In 1936, Charles G.D. Roberts commended her for five poems she had sent him which typify much of her early poetry (Charles G.D. Roberts, letter to Anne Marriott, 31 Aug. 1936). These five poems, four of which were published in Marriott’s third chap-book Salt Marsh (1942), are similar to the late-romantic work published in early chap-books in the series. “Before Love,” for example, is a carefully structured English sonnet, and “The Swan” makes use of end-rhyme. “River Mouth” and “Tide Spell” feature consistent internal rhyme and are structured around images of a non-specified shoreline. Despite this early commendation from Roberts, Marriott’s poetic breakthrough occurred in 1939 when she shared The Wind Our Enemy, a modernist poem, at a Victoria CAA meeting.

*The Wind Our Enemy* is a ten-part poem about the grim realities of drought in the Canadian prairies during the Depression. Marriott wrote the poem following a trip to visit relatives in Saskatchewan in 1937 (Anne Marriott, address to Esquimalt High, 28 Feb. 1962). *The Wind* combines elements of jarring social realism with modernist form—the poem is in free verse, experiments with polyvocality, and is structured around images of a Canadian “waste land” akin to the waste land depicted in T.S. Eliot’s famous long poem. Although various prairie citizens plead with God for rain, their crops and animals continue to die in hostile drought conditions. The poem concludes, as Eliot’s *The Waste Land* does, upon the failure of religious master narratives to reconcile the trauma of twentieth-century life:

Wind
in a lonely laughterless shrill game
with broken wash-boiler, bucket without
a handle, Russian thistle, throwing up
sections of soil.

God, will it never rain again? What about
those clouds out west? No, that’s just dust, as thick
and stifling now as winter underwear.
No rain, no crop, no feed, no faith, only
wind. (7)
In these final lines, wind becomes linked to a hollowing out of social and cultural meaning and the failure of religious metanarratives to redeem or make sensible the grim realities of the Depression.

Irvine notes that *The Wind* was published because of key members in the Victoria CAA group (*Editing Modernity* 95). Doris Ferne, the group’s convener in 1938, gave a reading of the poem which Dorothy Livesay’s father, J.F.B. Livesay, heard and enjoyed (*Editing Modernity* 95). Subsequently, Livesay’s father, the general manager of the Canadian Press, gave a copy of the poem to Pierce and negotiated with him for its publication (*Editing Modernity* 95). In December 1938, Pierce confirmed that he would like to publish *The Wind* as a Ryerson chap-book (Anne Marriott, letter to Lorne Pierce, 20 Dec. 1938). Marriott proved a conscientious writer—in addition to managing the distribution of her chap-books (Anne Marriott, letter to Norma MacRostie, 3 Apr. 1939), she ensured that review copies of her first chap-book were given to important Canadian magazines (Anne Marriott, letter to Norma MacRostie, 29 Dec. 1939). Marriott also recognized the importance of receiving literary awards, and requested that Pierce submit *The Wind Our Enemy* for the Governor General’s Award, and the King’s Prize poetry contest (Anne Marriott, letter to Norma MacRostie, 30 May 1939).

Marriott’s self-promotional efforts were not unrewarded. Some of her earliest and most supportive reviewers were members of the Victoria branch of the CAA, including Doris Ferne and Dorothy Livesay. Livesay wrote a favorable review of Marriott’s chap-book in the *Victoria Daily Times* (Anne Marriott, letter to Norma MacRostie, 24 Feb. 1939) and also lauded the poem in the April-May 1939 issue of *Canadian Bookman* as a “genuine expression of experience, related to the way people live and struggle in Canada” (“An Open Letter to Sir Charles G.D. Roberts” 35). Doris Ferne reviewed it favourably in a local United Church publication, *The Western Recorder* (Anne Marriott, letter to Norma MacRostie, 3 Apr. 1939). A review of the chap-book also appeared in the
July 1939 issue of *Canadian Poetry*, which described Marriott’s poem as “a remarkable piece of vivid writing, packed with rugged metaphor, fierce and tumultuous” (44). Marilyn Rose notes that *The Wind* also attracted letters of support from established poets E.J. Pratt and Charles G.D. Roberts (“The Literary Archive” 240).

Academic critics interested in modernism also lauded Marriott’s first chap-book. W.E. Collin, an English professor at the University of Western Ontario who wrote a critical book on English-Canadian modernist writers in 1936, *The White Savannahs*, wrote a review of *The Wind* in the April 1941 issue of *Poetry* magazine. Collin’s review, “Drought on the Prairies,” acclaims Marriott’s choice of subject and situates her work within the tradition of international literary modernism represented by the work of T.S. Eliot and artistic “impressionism” (54). Collin’s review is one of the most thorough treatments of Marriott’s work; nonetheless, it does display evidence of his critical bias against female poets. For example, Collin claims, “[the] power of suggestion is impaired when too many pictures compress themselves into one line [. . .] the female mind may continue an image after its poetic strength is exhausted” (56). The “female” poetic mind is the only attribute Collin finds to critique in *The Wind*, and this female mind displays unruly tendencies towards the decorative that must be reined in to create a forceful, “strong” modernist work. Collin’s review suggests the predisposition of a primarily male academic audience towards an idealized, masculine modernism. Despite this, Collin’s late review of the poem must be read as testament to the significant cultural capital Marriott had accrued as a result of her foray into modernist verse. *The Wind* was quickly anthologized in several academic and professional anthologies, including *Twentieth Century Verse* (Clarke Irwin, 1945) and A.J.M. Smith’s *Book of Canadian Poetry* (1943). A.J.M. Smith’s anthology, a popular college textbook, was pivotal to the formation of the “taste of younger poets” (Edel, *Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature* 1077).

Marriott had become a Ryerson chap-book author possessed of more cultural capital than
her predecessors in the series; her meteoric rise to critical acclaim did not result, though, in widespread social recognition. The Ryerson series, unlike other print genres like novels, did not appeal to mass taste. Poetry chap-books were a restricted cultural production; the limited initial print run of *The Wind* (250 copies) ensured that Marriott would only be able to gain legitimacy within the small field of Canadian poetry production. Marriott was anxious about this; writing to Norma MacRostie, a staff member at Ryerson, in the fall of 1939, Marriott noted that her chap-book had only sold 125 copies, and asked, “is this good, bad, or indifferent for the first half-year of a chapbook’s existence?” (Anne Marriott, letter to Norma MacRostie, 19 Oct. 1939). An opportunity to reach a wider audience soon presented itself--Margaret Kennedy, a journalist and writer of radio dramas from Winnipeg--contacted Anne Marriott about adapting *The Wind* for radio (Margaret Kennedy, letter to Anne Marriott, 14 Dec. 1939). As Kennedy had a firm deadline for her next radio play and Ryerson held copyright on Marriott’s poem, Marriott declined Kennedy’s first offer (Anne Marriott, letter to Margaret Kennedy, 21 Dec. 1939). Nonetheless, this initial contact gave rise to a longstanding professional relationship between Marriott and Kennedy, who produced several radio plays together.21

Following Marriott’s early success with *The Wind*, she turned her attention to writing radio plays with Margaret Kennedy and a musical collaborator, composer Barbara Pentland. In Marriott’s papers in the University of British Columbia’s archives, a transcript of a PTA Radio broadcast she gave in 1942 further illuminates her interest in this genre. Speaking of radio, Marriott notes, “in radio, the writer of poetry is present with a marvelous new medium of making his work take on vitality, and of presenting it to an audience of a size that no book of poetry would be very likely to reach” (PTA Broadcast 1942). As Marriott’s above comments demonstrate, she sought to access a

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21 *The Wind* was eventually broadcast as a radio play. Kennedy and Marriott broached the topic with Ryerson again in 1950, at which point Pierce granted full permission for the poem to be adapted for radio (Lorne Pierce, letter to Anne Marriott, 19 Jan. 1950). *The Wind*, eleven years after its initial publication, was finally broadcast as a radio drama over CBC on September 20, 1950 (Anne Marriott, letter to Margaret Kennedy, 13 Sep. 1950).
broader audience than the limited one the Ryerson Poetry Chap-books appealed to. Marriott was not alone; Brook Houglum notes in “This is Poetry,” that many second-generation American modernist poets did likewise, including Louis Zukofsky, Lorine Niedecker, Ruth Lechlitner, Kenneth Rexroth, and Archibald MacLeish (all born in the early twentieth century) (11). Many of these second-generation modernists continued to derive inspiration from their high modernist predecessors, including Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, and Gertrude Stein, yet they were raised in a different cultural milieu and desired to address social and political issues in a way earlier modernisms did not (12). Radio, which had superseded even newspapers and magazines as the dominant mode of mass communication from the early 1920s on, affected the writing strategies and poetic modes these modernists employed in order to do so (Houglum 7). In light of this tradition within literary modernism, Marriott’s trajectory from a poetics of emulation of first-generation modernists to a poetics inspired and revitalized by radio as a means of mass communication can be read as innovative. Marriott’s desire to expand her audience through radio is not antithetical to modernist innovation, but her decision to cultivate a “mass” audience through radio in an era during which Canadian critics were interested in emulating the elitism of high modernism meant that her cultural capital was to diminish following The Wind Our Enemy.

One of Marriott’s first radio productions was Payload, a documentary drama written with Kennedy about the bush pilots who flew supplies to Northern Canadian mining camps. Marriott began work on Payload in the summer of 1940; it was broadcast over CBC on November 8, 1940 (Marriott, letter to Norma MacRostie, 4 Jun.). Payload was a polyvocal drama featuring musical interludes; Marriott wrote verse choruses for the production (Marriott, letter to Norma MacRostie, 4 Jun.). Simultaneously, Marriott was working on a second Ryerson chap-book; in September 1940, Marriott sent Pierce a collection of verse that had been compiled from her magazine publications under the title Salt Marsh (Marriott, letter to Lorne Pierce, 14 Sep. 1940). However, the magazine
verse Marriott sent to Pierce—which was short, sometimes rhymed, and occasionally centered on singular objects of natural beauty, such as flowers and red currants—was a departure from her foray into social realism and modernist form. As a result, publication of Salt Marsh was delayed for two years. Marriott sent Pierce multiple new poems during this period, struggling to replicate the success of The Wind. One of the manuscripts Marriott sent to Pierce was the chorus she had composed for Payload—this became the content of her second chap-book, Calling Adventurers!, which was published in 1941 (Marriott, letter to Lorne Pierce, 7 Dec. 1940). Unlike Marriott’s magazine verse, the chorus from Payload was in free verse, and, like The Wind, documented aspects of social struggle in Canada during the 1940s. As a result, Pierce confirmed at the end of 1940 that he would publish the chorus as an eight-page chap-book immediately, and Salt Marsh in the fall of 1941 (Marriott, letter to Lorne Pierce, 2 Jan. 1941)

In May 1942, Pierce received advance notice from the CAA that Marriott had won the Governor General’s award for poetry in 1941 for her chap-book, Calling Adventurers! (C.F. Gaskell, letter to Lorne Pierce, 11 May 1942). This was the first Ryerson chap-book to win a Governor General’s Award. The award, however, included no funds and was administered by the Canadian Authors’ Association, a group known for their preference for traditional literary modes. The award increased Marriott’s cultural capital in the eyes of both her publisher and other late-romantic producers, but it did not result in the same academic lionization that The Wind had sparked. Calling Adventurers! was not included in any academic or professional anthologies, nor was it lauded for its use of experimental modernist techniques. Even positive reviews of Marriott’s second chap-book, such as the one by Verna Loveday Harden in the April 1941 issue of Canadian Poetry, contrasted Calling Adventurers! with The Wind (56). Marriott’s second chap-book was similar in many ways to her first—it focused on the gritty realities of life in a particular regional setting, and displays many of the same stylistic elements of The Wind. The only significant
difference between the two chap-books that might account for their differing reception is the circumstances of their production. *The Wind* was a poem published in a chap-book, for a limited audience, whereas *Calling Adventurers!* was cobbled together from a collaborative dramatic broadcast designed to entertain a mass audience. One reason, then, why Marriott’s cultural capital began to decline following the publication of her second chap-book is because of her decision to produce work in a genre that appealed to mass taste as opposed to elite taste.

Pierce delayed publication of Marriott’s third chap-book, *Salt Marsh*, until two years after her initial manuscript had been submitted. Between 1941 and 1942, Marriott sent Pierce many poems to include—by April 1942, when Marriott sent several works originally published in the 1936 issue of *Canadian Poetry* magazine, the manuscript of *Salt Marsh* had swelled to forty-two pages (Anne Marriott, letter to Lorne Pierce, 3 Apr. 1942). Ultimately, Pierce made final selections for Marriott’s chap-book upon her encouragement and chose to include four of the nature poems that Charles G.D. Roberts had praised in 1936 and much of Marriott’s previously published magazine verse (Anne Marriott, letter to Frank Flemington, 16 May 1942). Marriott’s inclusion of her early magazine verse suggests that she had very little new “modernist” work to submit. As such, Pierce selected what he perceived to be the best poems from Marriott’s magazine verse.

For the limited audience of the Ryerson Poetry Chap-books, Marriott’s third volume was a departure from the highly regionalized, experimental long poems she had previously published in the series. In many ways, though, the poetry in *Salt Marsh* is a truer reflection of Marriott’s oeuvre. Although some poems, notably “Night Travellers,” “Traffic Light,” and “Prairie Graveyard,” return to the themes and stylistic tendencies of Marriott’s first two chap-books, many of the poems in this chap-book can best be classified as “late-romantic” verse. “Before Love,” one of the poems Charles

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22 The production of *Payload* was also fraught by the strained relationships between Marriott, Kennedy, and Pentland. Marriott and Pentland suspected that Kennedy had been withholding their share of payment for the re-broadcast of the radio drama over the Australia Broadcasting Corporation network in 1943 (see Anne Marriott Papers, box 8).
G.D. Roberts favored in 1936, demonstrates Marriott’s technical proficiency when working within a closed form:

I am entangled in a web of dreams,
Cloying and soft, that twine me endlessly;
I am adrift on sluggish misty streams,
Waters too sweet that never reach the sea.
I am imprisoned in a shadowed maze
Where heavy perfumes sink through dying air;
A drowsy wanderer down the soon-lost days,
Finding no mark nor pathway anywhere.
Time is so swift, my hampered feet so slow,
What if the hour grows late while I am here?
Pale thick-stemmed vines impede me as I go,
I am afraid, but know not what I fear.
Oh, my beloved, come and set me free
In the wide spaces of reality. (10)

“Before Love” is an English sonnet that links romantic love to clarity of thought. Unlike the poetry in Marriott’s previous chap-books, the dramatic situation of this sonnet is slightly abstract, but as an exercise in iambic pentameter and rhyme, it is commendable.

The publication of *Salt Marsh* coincided with Marriott’s loss of cultural capital. Marriott’s decision to submit manuscripts comprised of her magazine verse precluded her from receiving the high critical commendation that her experiments in modernist verse had received. Notably, even academic critics who lauded late-romantic poetry, including E.K. Brown (whose critical volume *On Canadian Poetry* singled out Archibald Lampman and Duncan Campbell Scott, Confederation poets, as some of the best writers in Canada), were critical of her latest chap-book. In *On Canadian Poetry*, Brown had already consigned Marriott to the position of “failed” experimental poet: “[Marriott is] a younger writer, coming too late to feel the full impact of metaphysical verse or of Eliot’s earlier manner [. . .] In a third chap-book, *Salt Marsh*, most of the best qualities in *The Wind Our Enemy* reappear; but Miss Marriott has still to take any important step beyond her first achievement” (85). Brown’s skepticism regarding Marriott’s ability to duplicate *The Wind is*
because he believes her work had always been derivative of modernists like Eliot. Brown failed to acknowledge, though, that Marriott’s work in radio may have been a new iteration of modernist experimentation. The most scathing review of Salt Marsh was from Dorothy Livesay, who had previously hailed Marriott’s work as foremost in the vanguard of Canadian social realism. In the June 1943 issue of Contemporary Verse, Livesay critiqued Marriott for allowing “adolescent verse” to be published in her latest volume (13), and suggested, “perhaps it is time for us to look for younger, more masculine work—even though it spring up east of the Rockies” (14). Livesay’s claim that a “masculine” modernism is to be found in the East is reflective of a broader trend in the field of Canadian literary criticism at the time, which associated modernist verse with the virility of male writers.

Five hundred copies of Salt Marsh were printed, yet by November 11, 1943, only 116 copies had been sold, and 40 had been given away for promotional and review purposes (Lorne Pierce, letter to Anne Marriott, 11 Nov. 1943). Low sales were not unusual for Ryerson chap-books, but Pierce informed Marriott that her third chap-book did not do as well as the press had hoped (Lorne Pierce, letter to Anne Marriott, 11 Nov. 1943). Nonetheless, Pierce had great faith in Marriott’s ability to produce modernist verse and in April 1944, asked her to submit a new manuscript of poems for publication in a volume Pierce hoped to submit for the Governor General’s Awards (Lorne Pierce, letter to Anne Marriott, 3 Apr. 1944). Marriott responded affirmatively, asking Pierce if he would consider reprinting The Wind Our Enemy, and confessing that “since Salt Marsh came out, I haven’t written very much poetry—radio plays seem to have used up all my creative energy” (Anne Marriott, letter to Lorne Pierce, 17 Apr. 1944). Marriott’s request to reprint The Wind suggests her dearth of new “modernist” material that might have restored her reputation within the field of Canadian literature. Pierce allowed it (Lorne Pierce, letter to Anne Marriott, 24 Apr. 1944), and in May of that year, Marriott submitted a manuscript entitled Sandstone, which
contained most of the short poems from *Salt Marsh*, and an unrevised copy of *The Wind Our Enemy* (Anne Marriott, letter to Lorne Pierce, 2 Jun. 1944). Pierce, in turn, tried to encourage Marriott to reproduce the kind of modernist work she had produced in her first chap-book: “I like your new stuff since *Salt Marsh* but I still go back to the early work, *The Wind Our Enemy* [. . .] Wherever your touch people you are superb [. . .] I have gorged on nature poetry for so long that these things of yours dealing with people give me a real thrill” (Lorne Pierce, letter to Anne Marriott, 2 Jun. 1944).

*Sandstone*, Marriott’s final Ryerson volume, was released in 1945. The book was 42 pages long; 21 pages were reprinted from Marriott’s previous chap-books. Although one reviewer in the December 1945 issue of *Canadian Poetry* lauded Marriott’s new collection as the most significant volume to be produced in the decade (35-36), John Sutherland,²³ the modernist poet and critic associated with little magazines *First Statement* and *The Northern Review*, published a scathing review of Marriott’s latest volume in the inaugural issue of *The Northern Review*. Sutherland claims Marriott “adopts a difficult modern style to express the philosophy of lady writers of the C.A.A.” (49). The “lady” writers of the CAA had been troped before by another modernist writer—F.R. Scott satirized them in his poem “The Canadian Authors Meet,” wherein they were described as worshippers of Confederation poets. Marriott’s decision to reprint late-romantic magazine verse excluded her from a dominant position within the field of Canadian poetry. Her subsequent decision to focus on radio plays for mass audiences in the 1950s meant that she had little time left to write the type of modernist verse that had become dominant, and to recover lost cultural capital. In March 1945, Marriott also departed from Victoria for Ottawa, where she channeled her creative efforts into

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²³ Sutherland’s negative review would have been particularly hurtful, as Marriott’s correspondence with Pierce suggests that he knew Marriott personally. Sutherland was the president of the Victoria branch of the CAA in 1942. After Marriott won the Governor General’s Award in 1942, she wrote to Pierce that Sutherland presented her with a “medal” in October, which she was not able to accept in person at the banquet in Montreal. Here, Marriott is presumably referring to the dinner given for recipients of the award, which Sutherland must have accepted on her behalf (Anne Marriott, letter to Lorne Pierce, 13 October 1942, LPP, box 30, file 3, item 58).
writing for the National Film Board (*Editing Modernity* 93).

Following *Sandstone*, Marriott did not publish another volume of verse for twenty-six years. 24 Although *The Wind* was anthologized frequently during the 1940s, and again in the 1970s, Marriott’s non-modernist creative work received little critical attention. Marriott’s exclusion was in part because of her inability to write new modernist verse, but her exclusion must be understood as part of a larger systemic problem in Canadian literature at the time: the exclusion of female writers from an increasingly masculinized, modernist canon. Carole Gerson notes in “The Canon Between the Wars” that “women’s writing was expected to conform to a romantic/sentimental/domestic model. Those who followed suit [. . .] were then easily dismissed [. . .] while those who engaged modernist methods were seldom taken as seriously as their male counterparts and have been consistently under-represented in the canon” (55). Some evidence of Marriott’s exclusion by male critics remains; for example, on the strength of Sutherland’s assessment, Raymond Souster excluded Marriott from a modernist anthology he planned to publish with Ryerson in 1947 25 (Souster, letter to Lorne Pierce, 9 Mar. 1947). Marriott felt her exclusion keenly; numerous letters in her papers in UBC’s archives testify to her canonical marginalization and subsequent discouragement. In 1966, Marriott summarized her creative trajectory in response to a high school student: “I don’t write poetry any more, or hardly any more [. . .] it seemed to peter out as I grew older. *The Wind* was the high point of it” (Marriott, letter to student, 27 Apr. 1966).

Marriott’s cultural capital has increased in the last decade because of the critical work of scholars like Carole Gerson and Dean Irvine, who are engaged in re-situating the work of female writers in relation to canonical modernism. Marriott has begun to re-appear in new academic

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24 Dean Irvine attributes this in part to the demise of *Contemporary Verse* in 1952-53, the little magazine which had published much of Marriott’s poetry, and whose producers had supported and encouraged Marriott during the 1930s and 40s (*Editing Modernity* 91).

25 Pierce chose not to publish Souster’s anthology because John Sutherland published a similar anthology entitled *Other Canadians* in 1946 and due to difficulties with the printing department (Pierce, letter to Raymond Souster, 11 Nov. 1947).
anthologies, including Brian Trehearne’s *Canadian Poetry: 1920-1960* (2010), although Trehearne chose to reprint *The Wind Our Enemy* and two of Marriott’s short “modernist” poems from *Salt Marsh*. In many ways, current scholarship still seeks to read the first half of the twentieth century for signs of nascent modernism, often at the expense of multifaceted poets like Marriott whose work bridges a gap between late-romantic and modernist aesthetic trends. Ryerson chap-books from poets like Anne Marriott must be read alongside now-canonical modernist poets such as F.R. Scott and A.J.M. Smith in order to evaluate the expense of modernism’s canonical ascendance, which is written in the histories of neglected chap-book poets. Another neglected chap-book poet whose work provides further insight into the ascendance of modernism during the 1940s is Eugenie Perry. Perry’s work, like Marriott’s, is both late-romantic and modernist; her correspondence with Pierce is a record of his shifting editorial strategies following his incorporation of modernism in the series during the Second World War.

### 3.3 Late Romantics in the 1940s: M. Eugenie Perry

Eugenie Perry (1881-1958) spent much of her life in Western Canada and was able to pursue a literary career due to an inheritance from her father (Gerson et al. “M. Eugenie Perry”). Perry initially struggled to publish work, but eventually produced one short story collection, several children’s plays, and five volumes of poetry--two of which were Ryerson Poetry Chap-books (*Hearing a Far Call* [1942] and *Song in the Silence* [1947]).26 Perry was a contemporary of Anne Marriott’s, as both were members of the Victoria CAA branch in the 1930s, yet Perry, unlike Marriott, did not accrue high cultural capital at any point in her career. This was primarily because Perry attempted to write both late-romantic and modernist verse simultaneously, without sufficient dedication to the latter. Perry’s chap-books demonstrate an important aspect of Pierce’s editorial

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26 Other works from Perry include *The Girl in the Silk Dress and Other Stories* (1931), *Hero in Ermine and Other Poems* (1939), *Two Hundred and Fifty Thousand Strong: A Survey of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Organizations in Canada* (1943), *Canteen* (1944), and *Green Timbers and Other Poems* (1955)
policy: Pierce’s turn to modernism in the 1940s did not result in his outright repudiation of *all* late-romantic writers; rather, Pierce sought to train late-romantic writers to write a new kind of poetry.

Perry’s first Ryerson chap-book, *Hearing a Far Call*, was published in 1942. The twelve-page chap-book is a sequence of narrative poems detailing the failed romance of Doro-Lynd, an aspiring artist, and her lover, Michael. Perry’s chap-book, much like Audrey Alexandra Brown’s *V-E Day* (1946), indulges in some of the stylistic excesses of late-romanticism that modernist A.J.M. Smith critiques in “A Rejected Preface,” that is, “definite, mechanically correct [. . .] obvious [lyrics] [. . .] and commonplace [rhymes] (xxvii). Perry’s verse is decorous, yet in the final pages of the chap-book, she engages a very modern theme—anti-Semitism during the Second World War. In the final pages, Doro-Lynd watches as her Jewish husband is shot and then reflects upon the experience of being a displaced person in Europe: “[I tried] not to mind / Stale clothes, the reek of bodies in the crowded train--/ They pushed us in, they herded us like beasts” (12). Perry’s first chap-book straddles a boundary between late-romanticism and modernity; it is an attempt to process the trauma of modernity through a familiar literary mode that made this suffering intelligible.

Perry’s first chap-book was positively reviewed by other Ryerson poets—in the August 1943 edition of *Canadian Poetry*, Verna Loveday Harden, a Ryerson chap-book author, wrote that Perry’s volume “is a distinguished and mature piece of work, rich in drama, in lyric beauty, and in human understanding” (37). Another reviewer from *Saturday Night* noted that “the theme is old, but the treatment has many qualities of originality [. . .] its best quality is in its sharp, vivid description” (qtd. in Ryerson promo flyer 3). Despite positive reviews from Canadian magazines noted for their support of traditional writers, in April 1944 Pierce informed Perry that of the 250 copies printed of her chap-book, only 132 had been sold (Lorne Pierce, letter to Eugenie Perry, 26 Apr. 1944). Sales should not be taken as an indicator of a Ryerson poet’s cultural capital, but Pierce, increasingly aware of the diminished cultural capital of late-romantic poets and the difficulty of selling chap-
books, rejected Perry’s next manuscript of war verse on account of its subject matter and late-romantic style.

Perry sent *Canteen*, a manuscript of war poems, to Pierce in 1944. Pierce replied, “I think you will be well advised to publish *Canteen* in an inexpensive format locally. It is outside of the range of our own interests. War verse, I am sorry to say [. . .] we cannot sell” (Lorne Pierce, letter to Eugenie Perry, 20 June 1944). Publishing chap-books that were commercial failures was a long-established tradition within the series by the 1940s, though. The reason for Pierce’s rejection of Perry’s manuscript becomes clearer in later correspondence—Pierce wanted to publish modernist verse instead. In July 1934, Perry sent Piece a new poem for consideration, entitled “Old Shoe”:

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Lie there, old shoe,
Tossed on a heap of rubble,
Stemming from what high source,
Warm bronze for your colour,
Trailing a fragrant clue;
Now, frittered by the wind’s course;
Spent as a clay-pipe bubble,
A child blew (Eugenie Perry, letter to Lorne Pierce, 30 Jul. 1944)
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Perry’s poem contains two more stanzas, both of which are impressionistic renderings reminiscent of Van Gogh’s painting *A Pair of Shoes* (1886). “Old Shoe” signals a new direction for Perry’s poetry—although the poem makes use of rhyme, its concrete diction, shortened lines, and focus on a single image link it to the tenets of post-impressionist poetic Imagism outlined by Ezra Pound, which emphasize “direct treatment of the thing,” whether this thing is a subjective experience or an object, and the employment of an uncluttered, sparse style (“Imagisme” 94).

Pierce responded enthusiastically to Perry’s foray into modernist territory, claiming, “I like poems that deal with people or things people touch, and therefore dedicate. I am tired of Nature and landscape except as a background for something human. I hope to see this poem in print” (Lorne Pierce, letter to Eugenie Perry, 11 Aug. 1944). Pierce’s rejection of nature poetry did not amount to
a rejection of late-romantic style overall, as he continued to produce chap-books from late-romantic writers well into the final years of the series. Pierce did, however, encourage late-romantic writers to focus on concrete, observable, human experiences as opposed to an abstract, idealized nature.

Writing to Perry later in 1944, Pierce noted,

> The tendency in verse today is toward ultra-modern, hard-bitten, and realistic. I think perhaps it will have a salutary effect, for the Canadian artist in both words and paint is reluctant to look into the faces of the people about him. For the time being, as beginners, what we say and what we paint is very apt to be strident, because of our lack of skill in understanding the human heart [. . .] as a people we are still very young and astonishingly crude. Our biceps are trained enormously, but we lack in sensibility. (Lorne Pierce, letter to Eugenie Perry, 19 Dec. 1944)

Implicit in Pierce’s insistence upon direct treatment of “the faces” of people is a devaluation of work that is not grounded in concrete detail. Perry, in turn, recognized the importance of aligning herself with modernism in order to gain legitimacy in Pierce’s eyes. In April 1945, Perry wrote of her own forays into modernist verse and her reading of Ryerson’s first modernist anthology: “I recently brought Unit of Five home from the library. I cannot say I liked it particularly [. . .] but it does illustrate what you said about ‘looking into the faces of the people about him’ [. . .] I have made my first appearance in Alan Crawley’s very ‘modern’ magazine Contemporary Verse, with an experimental piece [. . .] I understand [this issue] has a long review of Unit of Five [sic], which I shall be interested in seeing” (Eugenie Perry, letter to Lorne Pierce, 1 Apr. 1945).

When Pierce agreed to publish Perry’s next collection of verse as a chap-book in 1947 (Song in the Silence), Perry included a long lyric sequence detailing the romance between a boy and girl, but also several short poems focused on concrete objects, including “Tanager,” her first publication in Contemporary Verse. “Tanager,” like “Old Shoe,” does not treat the Canadian landscape as a vehicle for the sublime, but focuses on qualitative details, as in the lines, “swiftly the gold-jerkin, black wing tanager dips [. . .] / Spirals for way, then is off on wing-wise fathoming” (14).
In May 1947, Perry reported that she had received some positive feedback about her foray into “modern” verse. Mrs. Alberta Scouten, a member of the Edmonton CAA branch, expressed pleasure in Perry’s “picture words” (Eugenie Perry, letter to Lorne Pierce, 25 May 1947). Perry also informed Pierce that Floris Clark McLaren, a reviewer at *Contemporary Verse*, praised Perry’s succinct experimental verse and discouraged her from writing long narrative poems (Eugenie Perry, letter to Lorne Pierce, 25 May 1947). Despite several positive letters from other chap-book poets, by June, Perry had received very few critical reviews of her work. A note from Ryerson’s advertising department informed Perry of the promotional efforts made for her latest work:

As soon as the chap-book appeared, the publication notice went out to 350 booksellers, 27 libraries, the Canadian Authors’ Association, American Library Association, Wilson Cumulative Index, and others, making a total of 416 [. . .] on March 6th, the review copies went out [. . .] We have, so far, received only one review, that of *The Victoria Colonist*. (Advertising Manager, letter to Eugenie Perry, 5 Jun. 1947)

The *Victoria Colonist*, Perry’s local paper, gave her very little increased cultural capital. In June, Perry’s latest chap-book was reviewed in *Canadian Poetry*, but not positively. This review noted “at times exoticism of detail and a ‘jewell’d style’ draw attention from the thought or from the fresher imagery [. . .] [the] symbolism and imagery [are] at times a little forced or derivative” (44).

Perry’s foray into modernism was largely motivated by her desire to “carve out a niche for herself” in the contested spaces of Canadian literature (Perry, letter to Lorne Pierce, 7 Mar. 1947). Although Perry’s natural inclination was towards the decorous style that characterized much late-romantic verse, she recognized that modernist verse had accrued high cultural capital in the 1940s and attempted to work within this vein. However, in order to accrue high cultural capital, Perry’s work also needed to gain legitimation from the academy and other modernist producers. Although Floris McLaren lauded Perry’s chap-book, she chose not to review it, forwarding it instead to Alan Crawley (then editor of *Contemporary Verse*), who also chose not to review it. The dearth of
reviews Perry received was because of her decision to produce both late-romantic and experimental work simultaneously—Perry’s experimental work, confined to the final pages of her last chap-book, was overshadowed by her continued adherence to modes perceived as dated. Ultimately, poets like Perry appeared less frequently in the series following the 1940s.

3.5 Modernism in the Series following the Second World War

Between 1946 and 1960, Pierce published 81 more chap-books in the Ryerson series. As noted above, some of these chap-books were by late-romantic poets, and by poets attempting to reconcile late romanticism and literary modernism. Nonetheless, the larger trend in the latter half of the series was towards modernism. Pierce encouraged many poets to turn their attention away from nature and towards “people,” and solicited work from now-canonical modernists. As a result, much of the poetry in the final years of the series is in free verse, and deviates from the “maple leaf” nature poetry produced by the Confederation poets and their disciples. *The Varsity Chap-book* and *The McGill Chap-book* (1959) represent Pierce’s turn to a specifically Eastern and academically-oriented modernism.

In the final years of his employment at Ryerson—which also coincided with the final years of the Ryerson series—Pierce recognized the cultural capital that the “McGill Group” had accrued. When John Robert Colombo, a graduate student from the University of Toronto and owner of the small Hawkshead Press, approached Pierce about producing a Ryerson chap-book that Conan Tobias suggests would “survey the Toronto [poetry] scene” in 1959, Pierce agreed, but suggested that the chap-book be published alongside a chap-book of representative Montreal poets (“Slim Curiosity” par. 10-11). Pierce’s decision to focus on poets who were academic scholars or students and poets from Eastern Canada reflects a trend that continues to define Canadian modernist studies to this day: a focus upon Eastern Canadian “modernisms,” and upon the academic origins of literary modernism. *The McGill Chapbook* (1959) and *Varsity Chapbook* (1959) were the first chap-book
anthologies in the series; Pierce allowed Colombo’s designer at Hawkshead Press, Harold Kurschenska, to create a more “contemporary” cover for these two chap-books (Tobias par.13). Kurschenska chose plain beige cover stock for the chap-books, and included a new colophon on the front page (a lone pine tree, which was Ryerson’s emblem). Kurschenska printed the chap-books in dark green ink, and save for a small decorative leaf on each page, the McGill and Varsity chap-books were unadorned.27

Tobias notes that Colombo contacted Leslie L. Kaye, a McGill Arts graduate, about preparing a representative chap-book of McGill poets. Colombo and Kaye made selections for their chap-books from the creative work of current students and noteworthy alumni. Each wrote a short preface--Leslie Kaye’s posits one reason as to why McGill students tend to produce excellent poetry: “McGill continues its long association with poetry written in Canada. There is no factor that might explain this association [. . .] but one contributing factor might be its location. Montreal is one of the few cities in North America that has not succeeded in completely replacing individual personality with the bland middle-class ‘success’ personality” (1). Kaye’s preface asserts one of the binaries which Bourdieu claims structures the field of artistic production—that is, innovative literary work that will not appeal to a mass audience gains cultural capital because it appears to be produced independent of its producer’s economic needs and because of its own innate worth (“The Field of Cultural Production” 99). Kaye’s insistence that Montreal poets produce good work because they do not succumb to the materialism that characterizes middle-class citizens echoes some of the elitism that has come to be associated with American and British “high modernism.” Implicit in Kaye’s comments on middle-class citizens is a critique of the poetry that would appeal to them—that is, the late-romantic poetry that had achieved popularity in the early twentieth century. Such posturing, particularly against a kind of late-romantic “straw man,” links these chap-

books to the early self-conception of the founders of the original McGill movement, A.J.M. Smith and F.R. Scott.

The McGill and Varsity chap-books contain the work of over 25 poets. Many of the poets in these chap-books would gain enormous cultural capital and canonical status in following years, including Leonard Cohen, Phyllis Webb, and James Reaney. Most of the poems in both volumes are in free verse, and the McGill chap-book is the first in the Ryerson series to include a poem written in French (Lillian Stern’s “The Second Coming”—a nod to Yeats’s poem of the same name). Both chap-books also feature the work of non-canonical modernists, including Daryl Hine, Francis Wheeler, and E.A. Lacey, many of whom had published work in undergraduate journals at their respective universities, and who had won university prizes for their work. The McGill and Varsity volumes demonstrate the increasing importance of academic sanction, particularly for experimental poets whose work did not appeal to most literary producers at the time, or to the Canadian public in general, whose interest in the Ryerson series had always been negligible.

Overall, Pierce’s encouragement of Ryerson authors to turn away from nature poetry and towards poetry centered in social life was a response to shifting literary trends in Canada. However, Pierce’s inclusion of modernist poets from the Second World War onwards also reveals him to be a creator of cultural capital, participating in the devaluation of late-romantic poetry and the ascendance of modernist poetry. The labor of individuals like Pierce must continue to be acknowledged if we are to move towards a better understanding of twentieth-century Canadian literature.

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28 See Leslie L. Kaye’s note at the back of the McGill Chap-book—one of the principles for selecting McGill poets seems to have been first publication in McGill’s undergraduate literary magazine, Forge. Many also won the Chester MacNaughton prize for creative writing.
4. Conclusion

4.1 The Ryerson Press, 1960-1970

The Ryerson Poetry Chap-books were one of Lorne Pierce’s most long-lasting nationalist endeavours, and endured despite significant financial pressures that the Ryerson Press often faced between 1925 and 1962. Despite the series’ lacklustre conclusion, which will be discussed in greater detail below, the Ryerson Poetry Chap-books preserve an important record of Pierce’s and the Ryerson Press’s commitment to Canadian literature. Pierce’s nationalism shaped the literary history of the Chap-book series; his early inclusion of Confederation poets and popular late-romantic poets can be attributed to this, as can his attempt to include modernist writers who had accrued high cultural capital within the series during the Second World War. The Ryerson Poetry Chap-books yield one of the richest records of diverse producers within the Canadian literary field in the twentieth century; they also provide insight into critical biases that structured the field, including the tendency of academic critics to lionize “masculine” modernism at the expense of late-romantic, “feminized” poetry. The Ryerson Poetry Chap-books were important to the emergence of Canadian poetry in the first half of the twentieth century, and they are important for twenty-first century Canadianist critics articulating Canada’s diverse literary history. The conclusion of the series provides further insight into the financial pressures that plagued Canadian publishers in the twentieth century and the ways in which these pressures shaped the field of Canadian literature.

Lorne Pierce retired from the Ryerson Press in 1960; by 1962, the Ryerson Poetry Chap-books had been discontinued. Conan Tobias argues that the *Varsity* and *McGill* chap-books, chap-book anthologies produced in 1959 that contained the work of emerging modernist poets from McGill University and the University of Toronto, were the last Pierce worked on before his retirement in 1960 (“Slim Curiosity” 1). Frank Flemington’s bibliography of Ryerson’s publications under Pierce, *Lorne Pierce: A Bibliography* (1960), lists four chap-books published in 1960, following the
Varsity and McGill volumes: It Is All Around (Douglas Lochead); Skirmish With Fact (Michael Collie); For the Infinite (William Conklin); and The Spellbound Horses (Paul West). However, at least six more chap-books in the series were produced, the last of which was in 1962 (James Reaney’s Twelve Letters to a Small Town). It is difficult to ascertain which of these chap-books Pierce may have worked on, yet it is clear that the series continued after Pierce’s retirement for at least two more years. Tobias claims that Pierce’s successor, John Webster Grant (who served as Editor-in-Chief from 1960-1963), was encouraged to let the series “end” (1), a claim confirmed by the diminished number of chap-books produced following 1960 and the cessation of the series in 1962. The final chap-books produced in 1960 conformed to the appearance of the hard-cover chap-books that had begun to appear in 1955—each chap-book bore an unadorned cover, save for the title of the work, the author’s name, and the series colophon (a pine tree). These chap-books sold at a retail price of $1 and required little input from the press’s designers. The final chap-book, James Reaney’s Twelve Letters to a Small Town, is testament to the diminished resources the press was willing to contribute to the series—Reaney’s chap-book was printed in England by a British printer, Hazell Watson & Viney, and differed from the format of preceding chap-books. Although Reaney’s chap-book is included within the series, its design and production by a British printer is indicative of Grant’s lack of interest in devoting limited editorial and design resources to the continuation of the series.

The dissolution of the Ryerson series in 1962 was largely a result of Pierce’s retirement in 1960; the series had been one of many projects Pierce instigated in order to foster the growth of Canadian literature and print, yet the Canadian publishing industry was fraught with problems that made such endeavours increasingly difficult to sustain. George Parker’s excellent summary of the sale of the

29 These chap-books include Mary Matheson’s Autumn Affluence (1960), Fred Swayze’s In The Egyptian Gallery (1960), Myrtle Reynolds Adams’ To Any Spring (1960), Mary Elizabeth Bayer’s The Silver Swan: An Epithalamion (1960), Milton Acorn’s The Brain’s the Target (1960), and James Reaney’s Twelve Letters to a Small Town (1962).

30 See Appendix C for images of James Reaney’s Twelve Letters to a Small Town (1962).
Ryerson Press pinpoints several systemic problems that led to the sale of Ryerson in 1970 and contributed to the conclusion of the chap-book series: American wholesalers and printers undercutting Canadian publishers’ prices; Canadian publishers’ inability to break into international markets; financial mismanagement; poor distribution practices; and a lack of support from the federal government (“The Sale of the Ryerson Press” 10). Additionally, stiff competition from other Canadian presses like McClelland & Stewart inhibited Ryerson’s ability to cater to the needs of a growing reading public.

Following Pierce’s retirement, the Ryerson Press and United Church of Canada made a number of poor financial decisions that led Ryerson to report financial losses of $572,855 in 1968 and $626,066 in 1969 (Parker 9). Key among these poor financial decisions was the United Church’s decision to purchase a $600,000 web-fed letter press which was beneficial for their own publications but not for the Ryerson Press’s printing needs (Parker 23). As Ryerson was contractually obligated to use the United Church’s printing facilities, they were unable to seek competitive printing bids elsewhere (Parker 23). In addition, competition from British and American subsidiaries severely undercut the press’s ability to sell trade and educational texts to Canadian libraries, schools, and bookstores. For example, of the estimated $222 million worth of books consumed by Canadians in 1969, 65% were imported, and these imported books accounted for 80% of library purchases and 92% of university bookstore purchases (Parker 47). Canadian presses in general also struggled to distribute original Canadian books to international markets due to numerous restrictive copyright laws (MacLaren, *Dominion and Agency* 5). In addition to international competitors, the Ryerson Press faced significant competition from McClelland & Stewart, a Canadian press that launched a popular, inexpensive series of Canadian paperbacks, the *New Canadian Library* series, in 1958 that continues to this day (Friskney, *New Canadian Library* 3). The *New Canadian Library* series signalled a change in Canadian literary publishing; Ryerson’s
fine-print volumes and limited-edition chap-books could not serve the needs of the growing
Canadian academy as adequately as McClelland & Stewart’s inexpensive paperback reprints could.
Facing both internal and external problems, and unable to keep managers on staff following
Pierce’s retirement, the United Church confirmed the sale of the Ryerson Press to McGraw-Hill, a
textbook publisher eager to take over Ryerson’s annual $1.75 million textbook business, on
December 1, 1970 (Parker 21).

Despite the dissolution of the Ryerson Press and critical neglect of the series in the twenty-first
century, the series has not entirely disappeared from view: the R.P. Frye & Co. has been reprinting
select volumes from the Ryerson Poetry Chap-book series since 2009. The reprinting of the series is
an important phase in its life cycle, as the R.P. Frye & Co. reprints have ensured the continued
survival and transmission of the Ryerson series to a new audience. The reprints are also testament to
the high cultural capital that the chap-book genre has attained since the mid-twentieth century.

4.2 Survival in the Twenty-First Century: The R. P. Frye & Co. Reprints

The R.P. Frye & Co. press was established in 1979 and originally specialized in university
textbooks; in the early 2000s, the press began to publish poetry (“About” par. 1). The R.P. Frye &
Co. acts as publisher of new literary texts and printer of older texts. Buoyed by profits from
secondary and post-secondary textbook sales, the R.P. Frye & Co. reproduces out-of-print and out-
of-copyright literary works from the first half of the twentieth century with covers designed by
emerging Canadian artists, including Aimee Clark, Andrea John, and Amy Funk.

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31 A series of general managers were hired to staunch the flood of financial losses, following Pierce’s retirement, including Ernest Scott, Campbell Hughes, and Gavin Clark, but none managed to succeed (Parker 9).
32 The sale of the Ryerson Press prompted a time of national soul-searching, as Parker points out (22). In 1972, Secretary of State Gerard Pelletier created a desk to monitor the Canadian publishing industry, and Statistics Canada began compiling figures about the industry (Parker 48). As well, the Ontario provincial government created several programs to support struggling presses, including the loan guarantee/interest subsidy program administered by the Ontario Development Corporation, and the Canadian Book Publishing Development Program (Parker 48-49).
The R.P. Frye & Co. began reprinting the Ryerson Poetry Chap-book series in September 2009. To date, approximately 75 of the original 200 chap-books have been re-produced, although not in chronological order. For example, the first 25 chap-books reprinted include the first in the series, Roberts’ *The Sweet O’ The Year* (1925), and chap-book number 178, John Heath’s *Aphrodite* (1958). Selected chap-books by Confederation poets, lesser-known late-romantic poets, and non-canonical modernists have all been reprinted. It is difficult to ascertain the editorial motives behind such varied selections, but it appears the R.P. Frye & Co. has attempted to reprint chap-books from a representative number of emerging and established poets.

The format of the reprints differs greatly from original Ryerson chap-books. The R.P. Frye & Co.’s online catalogue entry for the reprinted chap-books summarizes their format as follows:

As with the originals, each volume will be limited to a run size of 250 copies, hand numbered for authenticity. In keeping with Lorne Pierce’s original vision each volume will feature specially selected artwork from a range of established and emerging artists. This reprint series will feature a survey of early twenty-first century young Canadian artists paired with the original poetry.

With artwork printed on brilliant white Classic Laid Paper and poetry printed on a smooth natural colored interior, the books are beautiful to behold. Finally this once rare experience is offered again to the public. Sized slightly larger than pocket-size, the chapbooks merit time well spent coursing through their pages. (“Back Catalog, Ryerson Poetry Chapbooks” par. 1 and 2)

The R.P. Frye & Co. reprints emphasize the materiality of the volumes more than their actual content. Despite this emphasis, there are errors in the R.P. Frye & Co.’s conception of the original series’ format: original chap-books were produced in print runs of 250-500, not 250, and original Ryerson chap-books were not numbered by hand. Finally, the reprint series is re-set in a new font, Fournier, and each page features considerably more white space than the original chap-books.33

Nonetheless, the R.P. Frye & Co. reprints are not wholly dissimilar from the original series. Each chap-book has a retail price of $14.95, which is less expensive than a regular softcover poetry

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volume in Canada. The Ryerson Poetry Chap-books, originally, were priced from $0.50-$1.00, which was also less expensive than an average poetry volume at the time. Further, the reprint series does not alter the original order or content of poems in the Ryerson chap-books, apart from correcting typographical errors in the original volumes.\(^{34}\) Most importantly, the R.P. Frye & Co. reprints support emerging Canadian artists, just as Pierce originally did in commissioning J.E.H. and Thoreau MacDonald to design the cover and colophon of the chap-book series.

The R.P. Frye & Co. reprints are also testament to a twenty-first century impulse towards fine print in the era of digitization. The R.P. Frye & Co. website emphasizes the materiality of the chap-books themselves; the reprint series is not noted for the quality of the poetry preserved within it, but because the chap-books are “beautiful to behold” (“Back Catalog, Ryerson Poetry Chapbooks” par. 2). Other small Canadian presses are similarly devoted to fine print, and have found the chap-book to be a print genre well-suited to experimentation with binding, size, hand-lettering, and illustration. Mother Tongue Publishing, for example, is a small press on Salt Spring Island in British Columbia that produces limited edition, letter-pressed\(^ {35}\) chap-books and broadsides from established authors from British Columbia, including P.K. Page, Lorna Crozier, and Robert Kroetsch (“History at Mother Tongue Publishing” par. 1, 3). Gaspereau Press, located in Kentville, Nova Scotia, also produces limited-edition letter-press chap-books from established Canadian poets, which is one of their many efforts to “reinstate the importance of the book as a physical object” and develop a reputation for Canadian bookmaking (“About Gaspereau Press” par. 1, 4). Increasingly, the chap-book as a print genre has also gained legitimation from professional associations—for example, the Phoenix Community Works Foundation has administered an annual chap-book award since 1986 in Canada, the bpNichol Chapbook Poetry Award (“bpNichol Poetry

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\(^{34}\) For example, one of Roberts’ original poems, “The Unknown City” (from *The Sweet O’ The Year*, 1925) contained a typographical error that is corrected in the R.P. Frye & Co.’s reprint.

\(^{35}\) Letterpress printing is a form of relief printing which refers to the process of printing from an inked raised surface when the paper is pressed directly on the surface. In current letterpress printing, “flexible printing plates are employed, usually made of vinyl or rubber” (*Printing Ink Manual*, qtd. in *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Polymers* 572).
Chapbook Award” par. 1). It would be a mistake to consider the twenty-first century preoccupation with the chap-book format as a new phenomenon, though, as the Ryerson Poetry Chap-book series proves. Rather, the chap-book was and is popular amongst emerging and established poets and presses because it is a small-format print genre, the production of which entails little financial risk for publishers and because it is a restricted artistic production that suits the elitism of experimental poetry. Additionally, the chap-book provides Canadian small presses with a means of asserting a Canadian reputation for fine print. Most importantly, the twenty-first century chap-book is a nostalgic commodity, a bid for the preservation of human craftsmanship in an era of digitized, mechanized production that threatens to elide the contribution of human producers. The R.P. Frye & Co. reprints are part of a trend towards fine print in the field of Canadian literary production in the twenty-first century. They are also evidence of Pierce’s legacy as a literary producer—the R.P. Frye & Co. website does not note the valuable contributions of Ryerson poets to the literary canon (although they certainly did make important contributions), but the importance of preserving Pierce’s “original vision” for the series. If individual Ryerson chap-books did not necessarily accrue high cultural capital, the series as a nationalistic endeavor did.

4.3 Conclusion: Framing the Ryerson Poetry Chap-book Series

The Ryerson Poetry Chap-book series remains absent from current critical evaluations of the Canadian literary field in the first half of the twentieth century, perhaps because the diversity of poetry within it and the difficulties of locating the somewhat ephemeral chap-books in academic libraries and bookstores continue to frustrate attempts to make claims about the nature of poetry within the series. In this thesis, I have provided some of the necessary groundwork for beginning scholarly recovery of both the oft-ignored chap-book and the poetry in the Ryerson series, yet there are many stories left to tell. The Ryerson Poetry Chap-books are worthy of examination because they provide contextual information about the beginnings of modernism in Canadian literature,
which is framed by a struggle between late-romantic and modernist producers to gain a dominant position within the field. The Ryerson series also provides insight into the ways in which large Canadian presses, such as the Ryerson Press, and influential literary figures, like Lorne Pierce, attempted to orient themselves within shifting literary trends in the era of modernity. Pierce’s inclusion of modernist poetry within the Ryerson Poetry Chap-book series helped the Ryerson Press gain cultural capital and further legitimized modernist work within the field of Canadian literature.

Pierce’s affirmation of modernist work during the Second World War places him ahead of a cultural trajectory towards modernism that Jody Berland identifies in her article “Nationalism and the Modernist Legacy: Dialogues with Innis.” Following the Massey-Lévesque Commission’s Report in 1951, modernism was mobilized for nationalistic purposes due to a perceived need for an autonomous Canadian culture that was also responsive to international artistic movements (Berland 22). Berland’s article provides one possible explanation for current academic preoccupations with modernist literature--Canadian modernism emerges from the literary-historical milieu of the twentieth century as a movement accorded high cultural capital in its own era, and hence a worthy object of critical analysis. The existence of an autonomous, unique Canadian literature is no longer doubted, yet Berland, commenting upon the canonical dominance of modernist work, asks, “where are the artistic responses that were not taken up, not celebrated in the nation’s museums, commemorated as new tradition, thrown open to (state subsidized) experimentation and delight?” (24). To this I add, in what locations or print genres does one find such artistic responses? The Ryerson Poetry Chap-books present one answer to this question, as they preserve the work of Confederation, late-romantic, and modernist poets from the first half of the twentieth century in an under-examined print genre. Ultimately, it is to chap-books that scholars must look in order to complicate and enrich traditional understandings of Canadian poetry in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.
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LPP: Lorne Pierce Papers. A. Arch. 2001a. Queen’s University Archives, Kingston.


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Appendices

Appendix A: Ryerson Series List and Summary of Concurrent Chap-book Series

1. The following series list is derived from Frank Flemington’s *Lorne Pierce: A Bibliography* (1960).

**1925**

1. *The Sweet O’ The Year*, Charles G.D. Roberts  
2. *Companionship and the Crowd*, W.H.F. Tenny

**1926**

3. *Forfeit and Other Poems*, Kathryn Munro  
5. *The Ear Trumpet*, Annie Charlotte Dalton  
6. *A Vale in Luxor*, W.V. Newson  
7. *The Lost Shipmate*, Theodore Goodridge Roberts  
9. *A Pool of Stars*, Lionel Stevenson  
10. *Spring in Savary*, Alice Brewer  
11. *Songs*, John Hanlon  
12. *Sheepfold*, Leo Cox  

**1927**

14. *Vagrant*, Frederick B. Watt  
16. *Other Songs*, John Hanlon  
17. *By Cobequid Bay*, Alexander Louis Fraser  
18. *A Breath of the Woods*, Lilian Leveridge  
19. *Ecstasy and Other Poems*, Elaine Catley  
20. *The Cry of Insurgent Youth*, Guy Mason  
22. *Twelve Poems*, Esme Isles-Brown  
23. *Songs For Swift Feet*, Gostwick Roberts  
25. *Destiny and Other Poems*, Mary Matheson

**1928:**

26. *Twenty and After*, Nathaniel A. Benson  
27. *The Poet Confides*, H.T.J. Coleman  
29. *The Battle of St. Julien*, Kate Colquhoun
30. Spendthrifts, Guy Mason
31. The Tide of Love, Thomas O’ Hagan
32. Cockle Shell and Sandal Shoon, H.T.J. Coleman
33. Late Poems and New Villanelles, S. Frances Harrison (Seranus)
34. Fragments of Fantasy, Nelda MacKinnon Sage
35. Fowls O’ The Air, William P. McKenzie

1929

36. Cosmic Oratory, “Regis”
37. The Viking’s Bride, Winnifred Stevens
38. The Blue-Walled Valley, M.P. Judge
39. XII Poems, F. Elsie Laurence
40. The Immigrants, Mary Elizabeth Colman
41. The Fountain, H.L. Huxtable
42. In My Garden, Jean Kilby Rorison
43. The Arbutus Tree, John Hosie
44. Magic Hill, Mary Matheson

1930

45. Montserrat and Other Poems, W.E. Collin
46. The Auld Folk, William P. McKenzie
47. Bittersweet, Elsie Woodley
48. Outward Bound, Edith Henderson
49. The Wanderer and Other Poems, Nathaniel A. Benson
50. Under the Maple, Kathryn Munro
51. Tao, Alfred Goldsworth Bailey
52. The Naiad and Five Other Poems, Marjorie Pickthall

1931

53. The Way to Fairyland, May P. Judge
54. Pennies On My Palm, Mary Ellen Guise
55. Argosies at Dawn, Aubrey Dean Hughes

1932

56. The Rose of the Sea, Lionel Stevenson
57. The Blossom Trail, Lilian Leveridge
58. The Coquihalla Wreck, F.C. Whitehouse
59. The Wind In the Field, Leo Cox
60. Rhyme and Rhythm, Sister Maura
61. Twenty Sonnets, Muriel Miller Humphrey
62. The Emigrant’s Stone, Clara Hopper
63. Earthbound, Audrey Silcox
64. Rich Man, Poor Man, E.H. Burr
65. **Uncertain Glory**, Regina Shoolman

**1933**

66. **The Saint John and Other Poems**, G.F. Clarke
67. **From The Wine-Press**, M.C. Mackinnon

**1934**

68. **Songs of the West and Other Poems**, Marion E. Moodie
69. **Harvest of Dreams**, Frances Ebbs Canavan

**1935**

70. **The Thousand Islands**, Agnes Maule Machar
71. **Wayside Grasses**, Peggy Pearce

**1936**

72. **Odd Measures**, William Thow
73. **Blind Fiddler**, J.E. McDougall

**1937**

74. **More Odd Measures**, William Thow
75. **River Without End**, Leo Cox
76. **Stars Before the Wind**, C.F. Boyle
77. **Songs**, Helena Coleman

**1938**

78. **Sonnets and Sequences**, Michael T. Casey
79. **Viper’s Bugloss**, John Smalacombe

**1939**

80. **The Wind Our Enemy**, Anne Marriott
81. **Reward and Other Poems**, Isobel McFadden
82. **Lyrics and Sonnets**, Lilian Leveridge
83. **Music of Earth**, Bliss Carman
84. **Excuse For Futility**, C.F. Boyle
85. **Fancy Free**, Carol Coates
86. **Poet and Salesman**, William Thow

**1940**

87. **Discovery**, A.S. Bourinot
88. *Pioneers and Other Poems*, H. Glynn-Ward

1941

89. *Calling Adventurers!*, Anne Marriott
90. *Out of the Dusk*, Mary Matheson
91. *Twelve Poems*, Nathan Ralph
92. *The Artisan*, Sara Carsley
93. *Ebb Tide*, Doris Ferne
94. *The Singing Gypsy*, Mollie Morant
95. *At Summer’s End*, Amelia Wensley

1942

96. *Litany Before the Dawn of Fire*, Ernest Fewster
97. *Seedtime and Harvest*, Barbara Villy Cormack
98. *Spirit of Israel*, H. Edelstein
99. *For This Freedom, Too*, M. E. Colman
100. *Salt Marsh*, Anne Marriott

1943

102. *Hearing A Far Call*, M.E. Perry
103. *Journey Into Yesterday*, Irene Chapman Benson

1944

104. *Rearguard and Other Poems*, Elsie Fry Laurence
105. *Legend and Other Poems*, Gwendolyn Merrin
106. *Sonnets For Youth*, Frank Oliver Call
107. *They Shall Build Anew*, Austin Campbell
108. *Rhythm Poems*, Sister Maura

1945

109. *Songs of the Western Islands*, Hermia Harris Fraser
110. *And In the Time Of Harvest*, Monica Roberts Chalmers
111. *Sea-Woman and Other Poems*, Eileen Cameron Henry
112. *Moths After Midnight*, Vere Jameson
113. *When I Turn Home*, Dorothy Howard

1946

114. *Frosty Moon and Other Poems*, Margot Osborn
115. *Voyageur and Other Poems*, R.E. Rashley
117. *Merry-Go-Round*, Marjorie Freeman Campbell
118. *When This Tide Ebbs*, Verna Loveday Harden
119. *Cavalcade*, Norah Godfrey
120. *V-E Day*, Audrey Alexandra Brown
121. *The Flower In the Dusk*, Doris Hedges
122. *The Dying General and Other Poems*, Goodridge MacDonald

1947

123. *Song in the Silence*, M. Eugenie Perry
125. *Crisis*, Doris Hedges
126. *As the River Runs*, Dorothy Howard
127. *Songs from Then and Now*, Ruby Nichols

1948

128. *Mid-Winter Thaw*, Lenore Pratt
129. *Figure in the Rain*, Genevieve Bartole
130. *The Bitter Fruit*, Margaret E. Couly
131. *Myssium*, Albert Norman Levine
132. *Not Without Beauty*, John A.B. McLeish
133. *New York Nocturnes*, Arthur Stringer

1949

134. *High on a Hill*, Marjorie Freeman Campbell
135. *Last Mathematician*, Hyman Edelstein
136. *Scrub Oak*, Thomas Saunders
137. *Canadian Cadences*, John Murray Gibbon

1950

138. *Beggar Makes Music*, Goodridge MacDonald
139. *Tanager Feather*, Kathryn Munro
140. *Treasures of the Snow*, Arthur Bourinot
141. *Three Meridians*, Geoffrey Drayton
142. *The Flute and Other Poems*, Katherine Hale
143. *Call My People Home*, Dorothy Livesay

1951

144. *Silver Shadows*, Theresa E. Thomson
145. *East Coast*, Elizabeth Brewster
146. *City Hall Street*, Raymond Souster
1952

147. *The Searching Image*, Louis Dudek
148. *It Was a Plane*, Tom Farley
149. *Mint and Willow*, Ruth Cleaves Hazelton
150. *Viewpoint*, Myra Lazechko-Haas
151. *Portrait and Other Poems*, R.E. Rashley

1953

152. *On Friendship*, W. Sherwood Fox

1954

155. *Tom Thomson and Other Poems*, A.S. Bourinot

1955

156. *Queens and Others*, Ida Sutherland Groom
157. *Pressed on Sand*, Alfred W. Purdy
158. *Compass Reading and Others*, Goodridge MacDonald
159. *Silver Light*, Theresa E. and Don W. Thomson
161. *Mobiles*, Thecla Bradshaw
162. *Remember Together*, Myrtle Reynold Adams

1956

163. *Centaur of the Wind*, Marion Kathleen Henry
164. *The Haloed Tree*, Fred Cogswell
165. *Orphan and Other Poems*, Freda Newton Bunner
166. *Symphony*, Ruby Nichols
167. *Birch Light*, Lenore Pratt

1957

168. *The Testament of Cresseid*, Fred Cogswell
169. *The Arrow-Maker’s Daughter*, Hermia Harris Fraser
170. *Recent Poems*, Goodridge MacDonald
171. *Myth and Monument*, Theresa E. and Don W. Thomson
172. *Through the Glass*, Darkly, Joan Finnigan
173. *Of Diverse Things*, Mary Elizabeth Bayer
174. *Roads and Other Poems*, Elizabeth Brewster
175. *Dazzle*, Dorothy Roberts
176. *Samson in Hades*, Ella Julia Reynolds
1958
177. *Morning on My Street*, Myrtle Reynolds Adams
178. *Aphrodite*, John Heath
179. *Something of a Young World’s Dying*, Thomas Saunders
180. *And See Penelope Plain*, Fred Swayze

1959
181. *Faces of Love*, Mary Elizabeth Bayer
182. *Poems*, M.J. Collie
183. *In Her Mind Carrying*, Verna Loveday Harden
185. *River & Realm*, Theresa E. and Don W. Thomson
186. *The Crafte So Longe to Learne*, Alfred Purdy
188. *Poems*, Florence Wyle

1960
189. *The Varsity Chapbook*, Ed. by John Colombo
190. *The McGill Chapbook*, Ed. by Leslie L. Kaye
191. *It Is All Around*, Douglas Lochead
192. *Skirmish with Fact*, Michael Collie
193. *For the Infinite*, William Conklin
194. *The Spellbound Horses*, Paul West
2. Summary of Concurrent Chap-book Series

Lorne Pierce was not the only publisher committed to producing original Canadian literary work in the early twentieth century. Hugh Eayrs of Macmillan of Canada and John McClelland of McClelland & Stuart, for example, pledged support for Canadian authors. As well, the Ryerson Chap-book Series was not the only chap-book series in this era, although it was certainly the most well known.

The Graphic Publishers created their imprint, Ru-Mi-Lou books, which produced twelve titles between 1928 and 1932, in response to a growing sense of Canadian nationalism. Graphic, a small Ottawa-based press with a devotion to what Jody Mason terms “antimodernist nationalism” (97) published only Canadian works that were manufactured in Canada—a handicap at the time, given that many larger presses remained solvent only because of their out-of-country manufacturing contracts (Mason 99). Graphic appropriated an aboriginal symbol (the thunderbird) in order to establish an authentically Canadian product at the expense of what Mason terms the “erasure of aboriginal subjects” (103). Some noteworthy titles in the series include “Copyright in Canada in 1930: A Report of the Copyright Committee of the Canadian Authors Association”—a pamphlet-like, inexpensively produced chap-book—and the book “Funny Fables of Fundy,” which was a children’s poetry collection by Grace Helen Mowat (1928), John James MacDonald’s “Poems and Essays,” (1928), and a novel by Amy Carr, entitled The Swinging Pendulum (1928). Again, this series is of note because of its commitment to fine bookmaking in Canada, and because of the 1930 Canadian Copyright chap-book, which was a response to the Canadian Copyright Act in 1924. The Canadian Copyright chap-book is evidence of the potential of the chap-book to disseminate not only poetry, but politically engaged material that may not have been published by a large commercial press.
The Indian File Book Series, although not ‘chap-books’ proper, are worth mention because they are, as Randall Speller notes, a reaction by McClelland and Stewart to the Ryerson Chap-book series (“Frank Newfeld” 4). Nine volumes of poetry were produced between 1948 and 1958 and were an attempt by editor-in-chief Sybil Hutchinson to “revive the company’s reputation as a publisher of attractive books [and to] reflect the growing interest in Canadian books and original publishing” (“Frank Newfeld” 4). The designer of the series, Paul Arthur, accomplished the latter by incorporating motifs from the West Coast and Plains Indians into the patterned paperboards and dust jackets of the nine volumes of poetry in the series (“Frank Newfeld” 4). Printed on quality paper and using Bodoni and Perpetua typeface, the series was intended to convey, as Speller notes, the appearance of a “distinctive Canadian product” (“Frank Newfeld” 4). Overall, the elements of fine print present in these books—their good-quality paper, decorative dust jackets, fine binding, and typography—link them, like the Ryerson series, to the growing importance of Canadian print in relation to Canadian nationalism. Still, despite the fact that work by experimental poets P.K. Page and Phyllis Webb appeared in the series, modernist Leonard Cohen observed in 1960 that the Indian File series was “not a parade at all but a depressingly well-camouflaged retreat” (“Frank Newfeld” 4). As the series overall was never updated to meet changing poetic tastes, Jack McClelland nixed the project when he became president of McClelland and Stewart in 1960, as he desired to focus on “experimental” poetry (“Frank Newfeld” 5).

The Carillon Poetry Chap-book Series produced six titles between 1941 and 1959 by lesser-known, late-romantic poets Alexander Louis Fraser and Dora P. Fortner. Sisters Hilda and Laura Ridley created the Crucible Press, which produced Crucible magazine and the Carillon series. Irvine notes that Hilda and Laura, both poets and editors, were “nationalist in their choice of Canadian subjects and conservative in their use of conventional closed forms” (Editing Modernity 207). Irvine notes that Hilda Ridley, founder of the magazine, was previously an editor at
Canadian Magazine and a staff member at Saturday Night (208). As such, she intended for Crucible and Crucible Press to be decidedly anti-commercial--a reaction to the mass-circulating magazines she had been employed at previously. Although the Ridleys’ inaugural edition of Crucible in March 1932 declared their progressive modernism, the magazine (and, by extension, its imprint), which ran until May 1943, was rejected by John Sutherland and a host of post-war, emergent modernists who criticized it for its conservative publications and its adoption of a “commercial” magazine design (Irvine 209-10). The chap-books themselves featured unadorned covers bound in brightly-colored cover stock. No decorative fleurons adorned the pages, although occasionally photographs of chap-book authors appeared on the first page. The Carillon Chap-books were an attempt by a small press to support the work of emerging Canadian writers during the Second World War. As such, the critical devaluation of the work of Carillon writers who do not fall under the auspices of modernism serves as yet another example of a Canadian cultural narrative obscured by the ascendance of modernism.

The New Writers Chap-book Series was published in 1945 by John Sutherland—the small-press pioneer associated with First Statement and Northern Review—and launched seven titles between 1945 and the early 1950s, including work from several key Canadian modernists: Louis Dudek, Irving Layton, and Raymond Souster (McKnight 312). The New Writers Series produced work by canonical ‘modernists’ such as Irving Layton (1945), Patrick Anderson (1945), Miriam Waddington (1945), Anne Wilkinson (1951), and Kay Smith (1951). Nonetheless, McKnight claims that Dudek, Layton, and Souster became impatient with Sutherland’s “conservative editorial views” and, in 1952, launched their own press, Contact Press, as a reaction (312).

Contact Press created the McGill Poetry Series, an influential series that ran well into the sixties, and published poetry books and chap-books concerned with advancing experimental techniques. David McKnight notes that Contact Press, which drew upon British and American
modernist models and aesthetics, eventually set the stage for the “New Wave Canadian poets [in] 1967” (312). Many works in the series are more properly “books” than chap-books—printed in England, and illustrated by a variety of contemporary artists, these books do not claim an artisanal aesthetic, rather, their aggressive typography and illustrations mirror some of the experimental content of the poems themselves. Although the series editor for the volumes was Louis Dudek, book four in the series (Sylvia Barnard’s *The Timeless Forest*) lists an editorial committee of eight women and only one man. The series, with its strict editorial vision, can be much more closely aligned with a little magazine. Its enduring legacy is that it “published Leonard Cohen's first book, *Let Us Compare Mythologies*, and early work by a number of young poets from Montreal” (Dudek 1). Hence, the McGill series is important in that it, too, espouses a form of Canadian nationalism, but nationalism preoccupied with advancing modernist male writers.

Finally, several chap-book anthologies were produced on an annual basis by literary societies across the country. These chap-book anthologies were a way of preserving and disseminating noteworthy poems from society members. Key examples include chap-books by various groups in the Canadian Authors Association, and chap-books produced by the Vancouver Poetry Society. Grant Hurley summarizes the production of the Vancouver Poetry Society’s first chap-book, produced in October, 1925 by a local printer (“Reading the Lyric West” 23). The VPS chap-book was inspired by chap-books from British artist and publisher Claud Lovat Fraser, contained thirteen woodcuts, and was printed by Vancouver photographer Charles Bradbury on handmade paper (29-30). The VPS chap-book exemplifies both the nascent tradition of Canadian fine print and the desire of Canadian poets to extend their reading public and, thus, gain further cultural legitimacy (Hurley 30). While many writers in Canadian authors’ associations or clubs published poetry in little magazines, chap-book anthologies were less ephemeral than little magazines, and allowed them to distribute their work to wider audiences. Although little
information remains as to the price, distribution, and reception of these chap-books, several survive in Canadian libraries today, and are lasting testament to the importance of the chap-book genre in relation to the preservation and dissemination of original Canadian literary content.
Appendix B: V.P.S. Chap-book (1925)

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Appendix C: Ryerson Poetry Chap-book Covers

Images 1-18 are reproduced with permission from the Rare Books and Special Collections Library, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC.

1. Cover of Charles G.D. Roberts *The Sweet O’ The Year* (1925)
The Sweet o' the Year

AND OTHER POEMS

By Charles G. D. Roberts

The Sweet O' the Year

THE UPLAND hills are green again;
The river runs serene again;
All down the miles
Of orchard aisles
The pink-lip blooms are seen again;
To garden close
And dooryard plot
Come back the rose
And bergamot.
THE RYERSON POETRY CHAP-BOOKS
Lorne Pierce—Editor

¶ The Ryerson Press believes that lovers of poetry care more for poetry of high quality than for costly bindings.

¶ Furthermore, we believe that the cause of Canadian poetry can best be served by enabling the author more frequently to reach his audience.

¶ Finally, a chap-book necessitates careful discrimination by the poet, and hence the presentation of small and choice selections.

¶ These chap-books will present significant little offerings by our older and younger poets.

THE SWEET O' THE YEAR
By Charles G. D. Roberts
OTHERS IN PREPARATION
4. Cover of M.E. Colman’s *For This Freedom Too* (1942)
For This Freedom Too

By Mary Elizabeth Colman

"A professor of the University of Leyden has been sent to a concentration camp for protesting the dismissal of a Jewish colleague."—Premier of Holland over B.B.C.

"I had no choice, Merta, for I am too old to fight with corporeal arms.

Freedom is such a precious thing. 
There is no other good I hold so dear, 
nor would you have it any other wise.

Freedom to investigate, to live in peace and to enjoy the fruits of science and of toil; freedom to meet my friends, free discussion, criticism; freedom in short to live as it becomes a man: these freedoms of the flesh are stars in the night that is our life.

But there may come to any man in this travail of the world that brings to birth in blood a better way of life a time when he must choose between such tatters of these freedoms as transient tyrants may allow and eternal freedom's very self: such was the choice I had to make.
TO THE POETS OF THE CARIBBEAN

Beware those lips hibiscus-stained
With blood of her too-potent love;
Fevered their touch, like desert suns,
Yet thirsting where their lips make drought.

No less her priesthood than her love
Forswear. The moon of madness has
Set seal upon her acolyte,
And lipped his words with idiot froth.

Approach as to a throne, bend knee,
Pay hooded compliment, perhaps
Receive, in token of caprice,
A flower, gaudily inscribed.

OLD BLACK BEGGAR

Her age none but her god could know.
The years had thrown long shadows in her brain,
Patterned in timeless disarray.
For some their only immortality to speak,
Unhonoured, through her dotard's tongue—
Their wisdom like familiar sounds
That seem a part of silence.
The moon, they said, had shone upon her face
And made it crooked. Her feet were bare,
Dark and rheumatic like mahoganies,
And on her breast forever the tarnished crucifix.
10. Front Cover of James Reaney’s *Twelve Letters to a Small Town* (1962)