

## Canadian Literature at Home and Abroad International Contexts of W.D. Lighthall's *Songs of the Great Dominion* (1889) and Robert Weaver's *Canadian Short Stories*(1960)

Carole Gerson

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# Canadian Literature at Home and Abroad: International Contexts of W.D. Lighthall's *Songs of the Great Dominion* (1889) and Robert Weaver's *Canadian Short Stories* (1960)

CAROLE GERSON

THE RECENTLY PUBLISHED COLLECTION of essays, *Anthologizing Canadian Literature: Theoretical and Critical Perspectives* (2015), enhances editor Robert Lecker's groundbreaking book, *Keepers of the Code: English-Canadian Literary Anthologies and the Representation of Nation* (2013), with in-depth studies by other scholars who address the significance of anthologies in Canadian literary studies by focusing on the contents, editing, production, reception, and/or cultural contexts of specific examples of the genre. Supporting this aspect of Canada's literary history is the impressive enumerative bibliography of English-Canadian literary anthologies, issued by Lecker in 1997 with the assistance of Colin Hill and Peter Lipert, that lists more than two thousand English-Canadian literary anthologies published from 1837 to 1997. In these endeavours, scholars have concentrated on the Canadian contexts of Canadian literary anthologies, exemplified in Janet Friskney's chapter on the publishing history of this genre, which analyzes the 94.5% of Lecker's bibliographic entries that were issued in Canada (184). Missing from all of this fine scholarship is attention to the role of off-shore producers of several important national anthologies that owe their existence to the international reach of British publishers. This essay argues that the full story of Canadian literary anthologies requires recognition of non-Canadian instances of their production, best understood in relation to the aims of each volume's publishing house and the goals of its editor. In two key instances, collections of literature from the sister colonies/dominions of Australia and New Zealand inspired Canadian editors to prepare milestone volumes within series

issued by British publishing houses during important eras of national self-definition: the last decades of the nineteenth century and the period following the Second World War.

The first instance began in the 1880s when the English publisher Walter Scott initiated his Canterbury Poets series. Produced in London, this series generated foundational colonial anthologies that quickly became cornerstones of the literary histories of Australia and Canada: Douglas Sladen's *A Century of Australian Song* (1888) and W.D. Lighthall's *Songs of the Great Dominion: Voices from the Forests and Waters, the Settlements and Cities of Canada* (1889). The second instance belongs to the 1950s when Oxford University Press's World's Classics series issued Robert Weaver's *Canadian Short Stories*, which emulated earlier volumes of *Australian Short Stories* and *New Zealand Short Stories*. In her 1992 analysis of Victorian publishers' series, Leslie Howsam points out that, despite the remarkable volume of books issued in this format, these "sustained literary ventures" (5) have received little discrete attention from scholars of book history. Hence, it is scarcely surprising that neither of the two British series relevant to the production of landmark Canadian literary anthologies is addressed in the essays on the culture of publishers' series recently edited by John Spiers in two volumes that open doors onto a wide-ranging and slippery aspect of international book history.

Anyone who has compiled a literary anthology well knows that each such project creates its own story of production, replete with numerous headaches as well as some triumphs. As many critics have demonstrated, literary anthologies should always be regarded as constructs reflecting the times, places, and cultural contexts of their production rather than as enduring collections of hard-edged gems whose value remains uncontested. In addition to contextual circumstances, the tastes of individual editors are significant; as Carl F. Klinck astutely observed, "An anthology, as Emerson said of an institution, is often 'the lengthened shadow of one man'" (238). Given the domination of nationalism in constructing narratives of literary history, it is tempting to assess anthologies whose titles refer to specific geopolitical regions primarily in light of national paradigms, as in Lecker's *Keepers of the Code*, which analyzes the discourses of nationhood created by English-Canadian literary anthologies from 1864 to 2010. This article takes a different tack by addressing the multiple external contexts that shaped two significant

anthologies at the time that they were prepared, including the program of the publishing house that produced the book and the agenda of the editor who assembled the manuscript.

### Walter Scott's Series and Canada

In this vein, we should not read Lighthall's *Songs of the Great Dominion* as a failed effort to collect the best Canadian poetry in a fashion that points to innovative poets of the future (the sensibility that underlies Lecker's analysis of Lighthall's antimodernism in *Keepers*, 42-57), when Lighthall was working with a very different set of terms and expectations. Lecker uses the adverbs "ironically" (40) and "unusually" (57) to describe the publication of Lighthall's book outside Canada, yet given the publishing conditions of the late nineteenth century, it is not at all surprising that Canada's major post-Confederation poetry anthology was a foreign product. Today it is tempting to disparage literary efforts that celebrated Canada as the eldest daughter of the British Empire; however, to understand the nature of Lighthall's effort, it is important to recognize that the volume was prepared by a patriotic Canadian for production and distribution by a British publisher in order to proclaim the validity of Canada's literary culture to an international imperial audience, a point well developed in D.M.R. Bentley's chapter "The Poetry of the Canoe: William Douw Lighthall's *Songs of the Great Dominion*" in *Anthologizing Canadian Literature*.<sup>1</sup>

A prominent Montreal lawyer and man of letters, William Douw Lighthall (1857-1954) wanted his readers to be fully aware of this imperial context, noting in his introduction that his effort was inspired by "[t]hat other Colonial poetic literature, presented in the Australian volume in this series" (xxiii). He later explained that

In the spring of 1888 I saw in the window of [Montreal bookseller] A.E. Picken<sup>2</sup> a Canterbury Poets volume entitled "Australian Ballads & Rhymes." Being interested in our own poets, I bought it and read it & was much pleased. On thinking over the subject I came to the conclusion that we could do as well in Canada, & fired with this patriotic idea, wrote the publishers offering to compile the volume. They soon accepted.<sup>3</sup>

The story of the publisher involved in this venture, who thus far has had little visibility in Canada's book history, illustrates the inter-

section of the literary production of a former colony with the publishing practices of the imperial centre. This Walter Scott was born in 1826 and did not write poetry or novels.<sup>4</sup> After a successful career as a builder and businessman in Newcastle, he took over the failing Tyne Publishing Company in 1882 and revived the firm by specializing in series during the 1880s and 1890s, a period when this form of publishing skyrocketed (Howsam 5). Following the example of established English publishers, Scott began with reprints of popular classics, followed by the “Canterbury Poets,” which commenced in 1884, “issuing one volume each month at one shilling” (Turner, “Camelot” 31). Under the direction of editor William Sharp, the Canterbury series of small volumes eventually accumulated 113 titles, many of them reprints of major English and American poets, as well as some translations such as Goethe’s *Faust* and a *Greek Anthology*. Alongside the Canterbury series, Scott issued the larger and more prestigious Windsor series of poetry anthologies. The two series were handsomely designed and attractively priced; in several instances, including the anthologies of Australian and Canadian verse, simultaneous production in both the Canterbury series and the Windsor series was planned. This dual approach worked well with Sladen’s anthologies, which both appeared in 1888. The first, *Australian Ballads and Rhymes*,<sup>5</sup> is in the small Canterbury format: 300 pages in 16vo (14 x 10 centimetres or 5¼ x 4 inches), a size that “sits like a small pet in your hand,” in Lecker’s words (*Keepers* 40). It was followed a few months later by *A Century of Australian Song*,<sup>6</sup> described on the verso of the title page as “an enlarged Edition of ‘Australian Ballads and Rhymes.’” In the larger Windsor octavo format, with many more poems and poets in its 583 pages, *A Century of Australian Song* measures 19 x 13 centimetres or 7.5 x 5 inches, the same size as *Songs of the Great Dominion*.

When Lighthall approached Scott about a Canadian volume, only the smaller Australian volume had appeared. He quickly learned that a Canadian contribution to Scott’s series had already been suggested by Charles G.D. Roberts. In the throes of editing another Canterbury volume, *Poems of Wild Life*, Roberts was delighted to shift the national project onto Lighthall’s shoulders. His published letters indicate that cultivating Lighthall’s goodwill enabled Roberts to get out of a commitment that no longer interested him while also justifying his later requests to Lighthall for support in his various applications for academic

posts, none of which came through. Bentley shows in his analysis of what he describes as “arguably the most editorially vexed and problematic anthology in the history of Canadian literature” (80) that after Roberts withdrew from the responsibility of assembling *Songs of the Great Dominion*, he continually sought to influence Lighthall’s literary values and choices of authors (80-83).

*Poems of Wild Life*, published in 1888, offers insight into Roberts’s mindset at the time and raises pertinent questions about what his Canadian volume might have looked like had he pursued the national project. For this little volume, he selected the works of twenty-eight poets: fourteen Americans, six Canadians, five Scots, two Englishmen, and one Swede. Just two are women: Agnes Maule Machar from Canada and American poet Louise Imogen Guiney. Included are two poets with whom Roberts was particularly interested in currying favour: William Sharp, his editor at the Scott publishing house, and Edmund Clarence Stedman, in whose books Roberts would soon appear.<sup>7</sup> Roberts defined the literature of “wild life” not as the stories of wild animals or the nature poems and sonnets for which he is best known today but as white interpretations of the contact zones of the United States, Canada, Australia, India, Arabia, Central America, and South Africa. In the words of his introduction, “I have concerned myself in the main with that characteristically modern verse which is kindled where the outposts of an elaborate and highly self-conscious civilisation come into contact with crude humanity and primitive nature” (ix). The latter are represented by a cast of “others” distinguished by their humble outdoor occupations or exotic ethnicities; they include American cowboys, Canadian lumbermen, Australian bushmen and stock drivers, Aboriginal North Americans and their “legends,” Gaelic minstrels, characters in Norse legends, an “African chief,” a Malaysian sweetheart, and exotic Muslims. Roberts’s own contributions are “The Quelling of the Moose,” described as “A Melicite Legend,” and “How the Mohawks Set Out for Medoctec,” two poems that now rest in obscurity. Just five<sup>8</sup> of the volume’s fifty-four poems speak to the kind of personal engagement with nature that would become the hallmark of Canada’s Confederation Poets, the most notable being Walt Whitman’s “Song of the Redwood Tree.” In their discussions of *Songs of the Great Dominion*, Bentley (82, 102) and Lecker (*Keepers* 57) both cite Roberts’s 1888 letter to Lighthall calling for poetry that is “like much of the best English

& American work, *cosmopolitan*" (*Collected* 84), to imply that *Songs of the Great Dominion* would likely have been more aesthetically pleasing if it had remained in the hands of Roberts. However, Roberts's other anthology of the time indicates that his notion of "cosmopolitanism" differed vastly from that of A.J.M Smith when he used the term as a criterion for Canadian modernism many decades later.

On 19 June 1888, Sharp sent Lighthall a long, detailed letter of acceptance that described a pair of Canadian volumes similar to the two Australian books. They would bring Lighthall almost no payment: "I am glad that you wish to do it as a labour of love, and to do Canada credit." Pleading stiff competition and the desire to keep prices low, Sharp stated that "the usual honorarium is £5." However, because the Canadian project "would be in two formats, one somewhat more extensive than the other, I am empowered to offer you the sum of Seven Pounds for the 'Windsor' vol plus Three Pounds for the trouble of rearrangement for the C.P. vol — in all £10/0/0." Sharp proposed that the small Canterbury volume be titled "Canadian Minstrelsy" and the larger Windsor volume be titled "Songs and Poems of the Great Dominion." He stipulated that there be "no French poems in the body of the book" and that the poems were to be chosen for "variety, representativeness, and quality"; "the more *distinctive* the book is in its local colour the better." He explained the relationship between the two series as follows:

The Windsor is a series of some twelve books of a specially noteworthy character, the cream of the C.P. series, as it were. They are crown 8vo volumes, handsomely bound in dark cloth, printed on antique paper, of about 450 pages each. . . . As a rule, the Windsor book follows the Canterbury, but not invariably. In your instance I understand that my publisher intends to proceed with the *Windsor* first. This will cause you less trouble.

Using the Windsor proofs, Lighthall was to prepare the smaller second book by "strick[ing] out sufficient matter to reduce the volume to Canterbury Poets size (about 300 pp, exclusive of Intro and appendix)."<sup>9</sup>

Once the project was accepted, Lighthall had very little time to complete it. As he later explained,

I then sent out a circular (July 2) and began. The book was wanted for September, so . . . I put it together in great haste, most of the

work being done in a three weeks' vacation. . . . The assertive style [of the introduction] was gauged from that of Douglas Sladen in "Australian Ballads."<sup>10</sup>

Despite the tight timeline, Lighthall amassed a great deal of material as Canada's "poetical authors" responded quickly to his invitation to submit selections of their work that were "*distinctive of Canada*, drawn from its scenery, life, races, history, feelings, &c. — the canoe, forest, toboggan, settlements, North-West, and so forth," in the words of his circular. The goal was "to make up a book *thoroughly representative of, and to be a credit to, Canada, in England, and throughout the world.*" As well, Lighthall requested that his correspondents "suggest or send any work of others."<sup>11</sup> From the letters preserved in his archive at McGill University, it is evident that the speed with which this endeavour networked Canada's anglophone literary community inspired his subsequent founding of the Society of Canadian Literature in 1889, whose first meeting was supported by more than fifty members in Montreal alone.<sup>12</sup>

On 20 September 1888, Lighthall sent the final manuscript to Sharp, describing it as "a little rough" but "plain for printers purposes."<sup>13</sup> Yet he continued to mail additional material to London, generating severe reprimands as what was to have been 450 pages mushroomed to about 800, and Sharp angrily reduced the manuscript "in strict accordance with poetic value."<sup>14</sup> This production history accounts for the raggedness of the biographical notes in *Songs of the Great Dominion*: they are out of alphabetical order, inconsistent in detail and length, and often lack references to the pages on which an author's poems appear. A note remains for one poet whose verse has vanished (Katharine L. MacPherson), and no information appears for another contributor (H.R.A. Pocock<sup>15</sup>). Given the extent of Sharp's editorial interventions, the book's final collection of 163 poems by 56 poets, inclusive as it now seems, represents a considerable reduction of Lighthall's encyclopedic effort. We do not know whether discrepancies between some poets' offerings in their correspondence and the book's final selection are due to Lighthall's taste or to Sharp's editorial scalpel; in his introduction, Lighthall shifted responsibility for the cuts onto Sharp (xxxvi-vii).

Pauline Johnson was probably the most significant of the poets whose representation appears to have been affected by conflicts between Lighthall and Sharp. On her way to becoming Canada's major



Aboriginal author of the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, she was delighted to have been approached and sent Lighthall copies of “the poems I consider my best and are most of them Canadian in tone and color.” Johnson directed his attention to “‘In the Shadows,’ which I consider my best poem on canoeing, a sport I am very fond of — ‘The Cry from an Indian Wife’ — written at the time of the N.W. Rebellion — ‘At the Ferry’ and ‘Joe.’” Her letter of 30 August 1888 continues: “The Indian piece I know you will give attention to on account of my nationality, and if you would care for a poem on the ‘Indian Death Cry’ kindly let me know as I have it at the Publishers now — it will be ready on Saturday next.”<sup>16</sup> Lighthall’s biographical note in *Songs of the Great Dominion* makes much of Johnson’s Native identity, a point later developed at great length in Theodore Watts-Dunton’s review of the volume in *Athenaeum*, even though the published volume contains only “In the Shadows” and “At the Ferry,” neither of which directly concerns Johnson’s Mohawk heritage. We can speculate about the fate of “A Cry from an Indian Wife”: was it discarded by Lighthall, perhaps for raising provocative questions about the English-Canadian presence in the west, or by Sharp for not conforming to his notions of poetic value?<sup>17</sup> The latter seems to be more likely; without specific reference to Johnson, to whom he would soon become a patron and an advisor,<sup>18</sup> Lighthall later regretted his volume’s lack of “native material.” This expression probably referred to Europeans’ use of North American references in general but could also have implied Indigenous content, given his variable use of the word *native* in his introduction and notes (*Songs* 25, 35, 38, 509, 514, 522): “In selecting I tried to be as liberal & catholic as possible: Sometimes a writer very deficient in one set of qualities was chosen on account of a share of others. The quality found rarest was *any* degree of original adaptation of native material. To depart from European standards seems to have required specially strong minds at first.”<sup>19</sup>

Production problems with the Windsor version of *Songs of the Great Dominion*, finally published in June 1889 (Roberts, *Collected* 109), presumably account for the delay of its small companion volume in the Canterbury series, now titled *Canadian Poems and Lays*, which did not appear until July 1893. In the interim, Sharp forbade Lighthall to make any changes to the contents of this volume, even though the years 1888-93 saw tremendous innovation among Canada’s younger poets. It

would be left to another editor, J.E. Wetherell, to present their work in his anthology *Later Canadian Poems* (1893). Restricted to works written after 1880, this volume highlights George Frederick Cameron, W.W. Campbell, Bliss Carman, Archibald Lampman, Charles G.D. Roberts, D.C. Scott, and F.G. Scott, with a supplement containing poems by women writers (Pauline Johnson, S.F. Harrison, Agnes Maule Machar, Ethelwyn Wetherald, Isabella Valancy Crawford, and Sara Jeannette Duncan).<sup>20</sup>

Lighthall later stated that *Songs of the Great Dominion* “has had the largest sale of any Canadian publication.”<sup>21</sup> This claim complicates the issue of audience: for whom was it originally intended, and who actually bought it? According to Roberts, it was “*primarily . . . for the English market — the 8vo in particular*” (*Collected* 81). This understanding is supported by Lighthall’s introduction, largely addressed to British readers:

The Literature of this daughter-nation in the West, as distilled by its poets, ought to be interesting to Englishmen. That other Colonial poetic literature, presented in the Australian volume of this series, has shown that there can be a signal attractiveness in such a picture of a fresh world. On the part of Canada, the semi-tropical Australian surroundings are matched in beauty by a Northern atmosphere of objects which make vivid contrasts with them; her native races were the noblest of savage tribes; while the Imperial and National feelings, developing in two such different hemispheres, are instructive in their divergences and similarities. The romantic life of each Colony also has a special flavour, — Australian rhyme is a poetry of the *horse*; Canadian, of the *canoe*. (*Songs* xxiii)

Yet the extensive involvement of the Canadian literary community in preparing *Songs of the Great Dominion* was instrumental in building the Canadian market. Local distribution was in the hands of William Drysdale, a Montreal bookseller and publisher known for a list dominated by works of history, science, and religion, who also issued Lighthall’s novel *The Young Seigneur* (1888). Drysdale solicited buyers in advance with an order form that described *Songs of the Great Dominion*, priced at \$1.25, as “The Most Representative and Best Collection of Canadian Poetry Ever Published,” which “should be in the hands of every book lover worthy of the name.” The form referred to the purchaser as a “sub-

scriber,”<sup>22</sup> reflecting the common Canadian practice of issuing literary books through subscription publishing, though such was not the case with this volume, for which Drysdale was acting as the Canadian seller of a book produced in England.

Further complicating the publishing history of *Songs of the Great Dominion* are versions that bear Canadian imprints. Most evident today is a volume dated 1892 and retitled *Canadian Songs and Poems*, some copies of which have “W.J. Gage, Toronto” added to the title page beneath the line identifying Walter Scott as the London publisher. Some copies of this title reproduce the original dark blue cover with only a change in title, whereas others are elegantly bound in printed cloth.<sup>23</sup> Notwithstanding the new title, the poetic content of all these volumes is identical to *Songs of the Great Dominion*; the reduced page count of some copies results from the omission of Lighthall’s biographical appendices. Nothing about an arrangement with Gage can be found in Lighthall’s papers; however, the appearance of these volumes is consistent with Gage’s ongoing distribution of at least a dozen Scott literary titles in 1888 and 1889, including selections of Chaucer, Emerson, Landor, Southey, and Poe. By April 1889, the arrangement between Scott and Gage had consolidated to the point where Gage was officially named as Scott’s sole North American distributor.<sup>24</sup> Additional complexities entered the production narrative of Lighthall’s anthologies when several Canadian names replaced that of Scott on the title page of *Canadian Poems and Lays*. In 1894, as Toronto bookseller Charles Musson embarked on his new career as a publisher, he issued Lighthall’s smaller anthology with a completely reset title page that omits all mention of Scott. Similarly, in 1903, the name of Montreal merchant William Scroggie appeared as the sole publisher of a recent reprint of this book by Scott in England. The altered title pages of these volumes nicely illustrate Eli MacLaren’s caution that during this period “The imprint may name only the printer or the regional distributor, leaving the real publisher unidentified” (103). The full story of these Canadian “editions” awaits discovery.<sup>25</sup>

In addition to provoking the preparation of Lighthall’s anthologies, Sladen’s volumes had some influence on Lighthall’s contents. In line with the focus on presenting the English public with “A SELECTION OF POEMS INSPIRED BY LIFE AND SCENERY IN AUSTRALIA” (Sladen, *Century* 3), Lighthall adopted his inclusiveness, not wanting

to omit any aspect of Canadian experience that had received poetic treatment. Lighthall's introduction echoed Sladen's rhetoric of masculinity and empire, stressing heroic history, Anglo-Saxon virility, the value of the outdoors, and the future prosperity of the colony. However, Lighthall did not emulate Sladen's arrangement of the poems. Born and educated in England, Sladen went to Australia upon being appointed a professor of history at the University of Sydney in 1879. He began his literary project shortly after his arrival and followed the convention of arranging the poets alphabetically; his book also includes a scholarly appendix of "Materials for a Bibliography of Australasian Poetry" (*Century* 569-76). His introduction focuses largely on individual writers, discussing their literary value and describing problems with obtaining permissions, saying little about their treatment of Australian life. Lighthall, on the other hand, was a Canadian-born enthusiast, not a scholar (self-described as "a friend & advocate" of poets, not their "judge"<sup>26</sup>), and he chose a thematic arrangement of nine sections to stress a national story. Whereas Sladen validated Australia by identifying how its writers connected with the British literary tradition, Lighthall validated Canada by stressing its unique features within an imperial framework. Opening with sections on "The Imperial Spirit" and "The New Nationality," his volume then turns to Canada's social complexity with poems about "The Indian" (section 3) and French Canada (section 4, "The Voyageur and the Habitant"). They are followed by sections on "Settlement Life," "Sports and Free Life," and "The Spirit of Canadian History." The concluding sections focus on "Places" and "Seasons," with many recent poems by younger writers on their way to canonical status as the Confederation Poets group. When contrasted with the dry rigour of Sladen's structure, Lighthall's arrangement can be appreciated for its spatial and chronological design, concluding with poems about the immediacy of place and climate that were becoming the hallmarks of Lampman, Campbell, and Roberts.

A comparison of the covers of the two Windsor volumes, whose designs were approved by their editors, also yields major conceptual differences. For the front of his book, Sladen selected "An Australian Burial" depicting a dramatic scene with dingoes howling beneath an elevated wrapped corpse, presumably Aboriginal.<sup>27</sup> In contrast, his book's spine is decorated with lush tropical vegetation. Together, these images connote the relative exoticism of Australia within the framework of

larger Britain. Lighthall, on the other hand, chose a highly symbolic composition for his front cover. Emblems of Canada's natural wealth (beaver, buffalo, water, and grassland) entwine with symbols of political harmony — the British lion and the French fleur-de-lys — dominated by the national maple leaf. While this image symbolically unites French and English, the spine shows a tomahawk ribbon-bound to a peace pipe, representing the reconciliation of Europeans and Natives.

### OUP's World's Classics and Canada

Following the appearance of Lighthall's volumes, several Canadian literary anthologies from the first two-thirds of the twentieth century involved foreign publishers. The best known is A.J.M. Smith's *The Book of Canadian Poetry*, issued in 1943 by the University of Chicago Press, with which Smith had made connections while living and teaching in the United States. Other titles were produced by British or American commercial firms that became involved in the Canadian textbook market, such as Dent's publication of A.M. Stephen's *The Voice of Canada: Canadian Prose and Poetry for Schools* (London, 1926, 1927, 1928) and Dutton's publication of Donald Dickie's *Canadian School Plays* (New York, 1931). The firm of William Collins, based in London with an active branch office in Toronto, was also an occasional producer of Canadian anthologies, notably *A Pocketful of Canada* (1942, 1948), about which I have previously written,<sup>28</sup> and its successor, William Toye's *A Book of Canada* (1962, 1968). The latter appeared in a series of anthologies based upon locations in the British Commonwealth, beginning with *A Book of Scotland* (1950) and concluding with *A Book of India* (1965).<sup>29</sup> Collins's Canadian volumes are more general than literary, containing informative articles and photographs as well as short stories and poems. These examples illustrate Friskney's observation that "Foreign-based publishers that engaged in publishing Canadian literary anthologies in English are . . . most notable for the typically one-off nature of their investments" (184).

Penguin UK stands apart for its production of ten anthologies of English-Canadian literature between the 1940s and 1980s, most of them editions of Ralph Gustafson's *Penguin Book of Canadian Verse*. First issued in 1942 as *Anthology of Canadian Poetry*, this little book of 123 pages began as a one-off venture to create "a lightweight and

weighty anthology of Canadian poetry for distribution to the Canadian armed services; something for the knapsacks,” with sixty thousand copies printed for the troops (Gustafson 74). The second edition of Gustafson’s pocket-sized anthology, doubled in size and bearing the enduring title of *The Penguin Book of Canadian Verse*, was incorporated into the Penguin Poets series, which had begun in 1941 and would run to 150 volumes by 1973. This first Canadian contribution appeared in 1958 as number D 46, within the Commonwealth context established by its predecessors, *The Penguin Book of Australian Verse* (D 40) and *The Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse* (D 45).<sup>30</sup>

In contrast to the addition of the Canadian Penguin anthologies to their publisher’s international series long after their creation, stands *Canadian Short Stories*, the sole Canadian contribution to Oxford University Press’s World’s Classics series.<sup>31</sup> A mainstay of OUP since 1905, this series acquired new collections of Commonwealth writing for international distribution after the Second World War. These OUP volumes resemble Scott’s Canterbury volumes in their pocket-sized dimensions, a format that signals the mass middle-brow audience to which they were aimed, with contents that “combined education with respectability, the wide horizons of world literature with the conservatism of the English middle class family” (Hammond 99). Collections of European stories entered the World’s Classics in the 1920s, translated from Polish, Russian, Czech, Spanish, French, and German. A few glimpses of imperial terrain appeared in *Short Stories from the South Seas* (1928, No. 322) and *Stories of Africa* (1930, No. 359), but the settler colonies remained absent until 1949, the year that the London Declaration formally established the British Commonwealth.

Australia’s prominence in OUP’s series began with reprints of two popular nineteenth-century novels: Rolf Boldrewood’s *Robbery under Arms* (1949, No. 510) and Marcus Clarke’s *For the Term of His Natural Life* (1952, No. 527). These exciting narratives framed the first volume of *Australian Short Stories* (1951, No. 225) and were followed by collections of non-fiction: *Sources of Australian History* (1957, No. 558) and *Australian Explorers* (1958, No. 559). Last was *Australian Short Stories, Second Series* (1963, No. 598). New Zealand was represented by *New Zealand Short Stories* (1953, No. 534), with a second series in 1966 (No. 613). Canada appeared just once in OUP’s World’s Classics, with *Canadian Short Stories* (1960, No. 573). I will leave it to an Australian

book historian to explain the number of titles from Australia, while I turn to the lone Canadian volume. As with Lighthall's first anthology, this book, edited by Robert Weaver, quickly acquired canonical status in Canada.

Like Lighthall, Weaver was inspired by a volume from Australia (Stover 419) and came to the project with a distinct agenda, albeit his cause was modernism rather than imperialism. Weaver (1921-2008) enjoyed a lifelong career as a program organizer with CBC Radio, where he significantly advanced the profiles of new literary writers by giving them air time and paying for their work. In 1952, he expanded into print with an edited collection of stories that had been broadcast between 1946 and 1951, also titled *Canadian Short Stories*,<sup>32</sup> published by the Toronto office of OUP. The decision to introduce a Canadian volume into the World's Classics series was motivated by a desire to reach a broader audience with an expanded and updated selection of stories and to exploit the cultural capital of the World's Classics brand at a time when Canadian literary publishing was at low ebb (Panofsky 19). Weaver's second *Canadian Short Stories* anthology of 1960 retained five stories and six authors from the first anthology of 1952, adding several earlier works as well as more recent writers, some of whom, such as Alice Munro, Mavis Gallant, and Mordecai Richler, were on the way to lasting renown. Although the first anthology was arranged to provide a "rough cross-section of the most interesting stories we have received" (Weaver and James vii), the editors in London permitted no leeway with the ordering of material in the World's Classics volume. Whereas the Australian and New Zealand collections of stories are loosely chronological with regard to their subject matter, London required the Canadian volume to be arranged by the birth dates of the authors (Stover 426). This decision ignored publication dates and jarred the narrative of modernism that governed Weaver's selection. Hence, because Ethel Wilson was born in 1888, her 1952 story "Mrs. Golightly and the First Convention" disconcertingly appears between "The Marine Excursion of the Knights of Pythias" (1912) by Stephen Leacock (born in 1869) and "Mist-Green Oats" (1923) by Raymond Knister (born in 1899) rather than with other stories of the 1950s.

The modernist focus of the Canadian World's Classics volume differs substantially from the narratives of chronological development that shape its Australian and New Zealand counterparts. The latter present

early material chosen for its sociohistorical and geographical representations, in genres that include documentary writing and journalistic snippets. Weaver rejected this model. Opining that “few short stories of much literary consequence were published in Canada before the First World War,” he “tried to avoid including fiction for historical or sociological reasons that I do not much admire on literary grounds” (xiii). Instead, his selections are characterized by mid-twentieth-century literary realism: most of the twenty-six stories recount painful experiences involving death, loss, or madness and conclude with modernist irony. Four humorous stories provide occasional relief, and three translated stories by francophone writers acknowledge Canada’s dual European heritage. Clever Scots, impoverished Irish Catholics, and dying Native people reflect ethnic stereotypes. The cover of this anthology, a modernist image of a wagon driver whipping a horse, likewise deviates from the images on the covers of the Australian and New Zealand volumes; the latter depict open landscapes that connote place, whereas the Canadian cover connotes style.

Because the first Australian and New Zealand short-story anthologies contained much early material, both were updated in the 1960s with second World’s Classics volumes focused on recent writing. Such was not the case with the Canadian volume, which essentially served as a stepping stone for both Weaver and OUP Canada, which came under the direction of William Toye in 1962. Rising cultural nationalism yielded stronger Canadian sales than the predicted six thousand copies, and the World’s Classics volume sold well, but Weaver was unable to interest OUP in a subsequent collection. In a 1974 letter to Toye, he recalled that more than ten years earlier, when he had visited the London office of OUP to propose a second Canadian anthology for the World’s Classics series, he “was given a polite brushoff and was told then that the book had sold 14,000 copies and no need was seen for a sequel.” Weaver added that “An educated guess, I think, would be that the book has sold more than 50,000 copies.”<sup>33</sup>

The title was turned over to the Canadian branch of OUP in 1965, where it was reprinted in a new “Oxford in Canada Paperback series” (Stover 431); by 1984, a further 73,000 copies had sold, according to Toye (Everard 83).<sup>34</sup> Over the next three decades, Weaver and Toye would continue to assemble collections of Canadian short stories for both general readers and university classrooms, with the fifth volume



(they use the term “series”) of *Canadian Short Stories* appearing in 1991. Weaver also edited the *The Oxford Book of Canadian Short Stories in English* (1986) followed by the *The New Oxford Book of Canadian Short Stories in English* (1995).

\* \* \*

The stories of Lighthall’s and Weaver’s internationally produced Canadian anthologies reveal complex relationships with the British series in which they appeared. In one of the few efforts to corral the unruly field of publishers’ series, John Spiers describes series publishing as niche publishing (1: 3); despite their chronological separation of some seven decades, the two cases that I have discussed show how a particular British niche could be remade into a distinctive Canadian niche when an individual Canadian editor exploited the prestige associated with the British publisher and took advantage of an opportunity to reach an international readership. Although anthologies from Australia were instrumental in inspiring the development of their Canadian counterparts, Canadian editors displayed considerable independence in deviating from these models in order to pursue their own conceptions of how their anthologies ought to represent their country’s literature, resulting in landmark volumes usually addressed within an entirely national context. Researching the transnational aspects of Canadian literary enterprises can prove to be daunting, and scholars are grateful to Nick Mount and Eli MacLaren for filling in part of the picture with their analyses of the attraction and impact of the United States. As well, many Canadian authors and editors have operated within an environment larger than North America, spanning the global range of the British Empire/Commonwealth.<sup>35</sup> Pursuing the perspective of authors and editors who looked overseas for opportunities and validation reminds us that, from the earliest colonial times to the present, Canadian culture has always been situated within the complexities of larger international contexts.

#### AUTHOR’S NOTE

I would like to thank the two reviewers of this essay for their constructive comments and helpful suggestions, and Dr. Richard Virr, Head of Rare Books and Special Collections at McGill University, for his continuing assistance. An earlier version was presented at the 2013 conference of the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing (SHARP).

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> My thanks to Dr. Bentley for showing me this article before it was published and for our subsequent email conversation.

<sup>2</sup> Lighthall's poem "Eben Picken, Bookseller," included in W.W. Campbell's *The Oxford Book of Canadian Verse* (1913), praises Picken for putting intellectual and literary interests before profit.

<sup>3</sup> Lighthall's later handwritten note, undated, is inside the proofs of *Songs of the Great Dominion*, Lighthall Papers, Rare Books and Special Collections, McGill University (hereafter Lighthall Papers). Richard Virr, head of Special Collections, suggested that Lighthall might have written it in 1912, when he donated his papers to McGill.

<sup>4</sup> See Turner, "Walter Scott"; and Turner, *Walter Scott*.

<sup>5</sup> Published 25 Jan. 1888 (Turner, *Walter Scott* 127).

<sup>6</sup> Advertised in May 1888 (Turner, *Walter Scott* 131).

<sup>7</sup> Roberts is praised in the revised edition of Stedman's *Victorian Poets* as the "foremost" of "a few rising British Canadian poets" (469), and he dominates the Canadian poets included in the first volume of Stedman's *Victorian Anthology*.

<sup>8</sup> Gilder, "The Voice of the Pine"; Guiney, "The Wild Ride"; Thompson, "The Death of the Wild Heron" and "The Fawn"; Whitman, "Song of the Redwood Tree."

<sup>9</sup> Sharp to Lighthall, 19 June 1888, Lighthall Papers, box 1, file 1-3.

<sup>10</sup> Lighthall's note inside the proofs of *Songs of the Great Dominion*, Lighthall Papers.

<sup>11</sup> A copy of his circular is in Lighthall Papers, box 1, file 1-3. Many of these correspondents are recognized in the "Note of Thanks" (*Songs* 464-65).

<sup>12</sup> See Wright (79-83); a copy of the membership list is in Lighthall Papers, box 3, file 3-11.

<sup>13</sup> Lighthall to Sharp, 20 Sept. 1888, Lighthall Papers, box 1, file 1-3.

<sup>14</sup> Sharp to Lighthall, 22 Nov. 1888, Lighthall Papers, box 1, file 1-3.

<sup>15</sup> Roberts included Pocock in *Poems of Wild Life*, describing him as "[a] young Englishman in the Canadian North-West" (235).

<sup>16</sup> Johnson to Lighthall, 30 Aug. 1888, Lighthall Papers, box 1, file 1-3.

<sup>17</sup> Not knowing about Sharp's role in selecting the final contents of *Songs of the Great Dominion*, critics tend to fault Lighthall for the omission of "A Cry from an Indian Wife." For example, see Gray 147; and Verwaayen 37.

<sup>18</sup> See Strong-Boag and Gerson 109-10, 118-19.

<sup>19</sup> Lighthall's note inside the proofs of *Songs of the Great Dominion*, Lighthall Papers. For the shorter Canterbury volume, *Canadian Poems and Lays*, Johnson's canoeing poem, "In the Shadows," was deleted in favour of "At the Ferry," which contains less reference to Native culture.

<sup>20</sup> See Gerson, "Some Notes."

<sup>21</sup> Lighthall's note inside the proofs of *Songs of the Great Dominion*, Lighthall Papers.

<sup>22</sup> Drysdale's flyer is in Lighthall Papers, box 2, file 2-19; for the subscription publishing of Dewart's anthology, see Friskney 19.

<sup>23</sup> Clues to the publishing history of this volume might be lurking in its material production. Identical copies of the Gage edition with patterned cloth on their covers and flowered endpapers are in Special Collections at the Simon Fraser University Library (PR 9057 L494 1892) and the Canadiana Collection of the Pratt Library at Victoria University, University of Toronto (PR 9195.8 C36). A copy of the Gage edition with the same flowered endpapers but bound in differently patterned cloth is in Special Collections at the University of British Columbia (PS 8289 C363 1892). Also at SFU is a copy of *Canadian Poems and Lays* (Lighthall's smaller anthology, issued in 1893, PR 9057 L49 1893b) that has the same

flowered endpapers and an external binding styled like that of the Gage edition of *Songs of the Great Dominion*, yet it cites only Scott as the publisher.

<sup>24</sup> *Publishers Weekly* 13 Apr. 1889: 880; 27 Apr. 1889: 900. Although there is no mention of Gage's arrangement with Scott in the firm's anniversary pamphlet (W.J. Gage and Company), the practice of serving as an agent for other publishers is consistent with the pamphlet's description of the company's business in the late 1870s as embracing "that of publishers, wholesale book sellers, bookbinders, and manufacturing stationers" (n. pag.). Scott's titles distributed by Gage can be found in Turner, *Walter Scott* 131-89, or by a search of WorldCat on "Gage" and "Walter Scott."

<sup>25</sup> The Gage version of *Canadian Poems and Lays*, held by Library and Archives Canada and digitized for Early Canadiana Online (ECO), is not cited in Turner, *Walter Scott*; a copy of the Scroggie version is in Rare Books and Special Collections, McGill University. My thanks to Penney Clark, Janet Friskney, Eli MacLaren, George Parker, and Richard Virr for assisting with this enquiry.

<sup>26</sup> Lighthall's note inside the proofs of *Songs of the Great Dominion*, Lighthall Papers.

<sup>27</sup> This image might have been selected to illustrate "Trucanani's Dirge," by Alpha Crucis, the fourth poem in the book (39-43).

<sup>28</sup> See Gerson, "Design."

<sup>29</sup> The series includes *A Book of Scotland* (1950), *A Book of Wales* (1953), *A Book of England* (1958), *A Book of Ireland* (1959), *A Book of London* (1961), *A Book of Australia* (1961), *A Book of Canada* (1962), *A Book of New Zealand* (1964), and *A Book of India* (1965).

<sup>30</sup> Penguin First Editions, <http://www.penguinfirsteditions.com/index.php?cat=mainD2>, accessed 29 Jan. 2016. For more about this book and Gustafson's anthologies, see Lecker, *Keepers* 157-64.

<sup>31</sup> I am grateful to Lise Jaillant for sending me some bibliographical lists of Oxford's World's Classics.

<sup>32</sup> Canadians have been unimaginative in titling anthologies of stories; the title *Canadian Short Stories* was first used by Raymond Knister in 1928.

<sup>33</sup> Weaver to Toye, 3 June 1974, Weaver Fonds, LAC, MG 31-D162.

<sup>34</sup> These sales figures were given directly to Mark Everard by William Toye (Everard 113n4).

<sup>35</sup> See Gerson, "Writers."

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