

# Passing: Herb Wyile and the Future of Atlantic-Canadian Literary Criticism

ALEXANDER MACLEOD, PETER THOMPSON, AND PAUL CHAFE

IT IS DIFFICULT TO DESCRIBE, let alone accurately summarize or fairly evaluate, Herb Wyile's lifelong contribution to the study of Canadian literature. Where should we begin? What matters most? Do we start with the "Big" books, the award-winning, oft-cited monographs with the clever titles that everyone seems to love? Is Herb Wyile to be remembered, primarily, as the "seriously funny" critic who wrote *Anne of Tim Hortons: Globalization and the Reshaping of Atlantic-Canadian Literature* (2011)? Or is he to be considered as the slightly more traditional scholar, the wise commentator who gave us *Speculative Fictions: Contemporary Canadian Novelists and the Writing of History* (2002)? Perhaps he was most valuable as an insightful interviewer, the person who knew how to ask the right question at the right time, a great synthesizer, who brought together all those different voices for *Speaking in the Past Tense: Canadian Novelists on Writing Historical Fiction* (2007)? Are these the books we need to know? Do they make the cut? Will we have to read them if we are going to pass our comprehensive exams?

The answer to these questions is: probably yes. If you are a student of Canadian literature, and if you really do want to learn more about the ebbs and flows of decades' worth of historiographic metafiction in our country's writing, then — probably yes — you are going to have to put in the time and get familiar with "the Wyile." It really is going to be on the test. The same goes for all the Newfoundlanders and the Maritimers, or anybody else who might be interested in trying to come to terms with the region's unsteady relationship with globalization and neoliberalism. These people, most likely, already know Herb — his abiding presence was difficult to miss in Atlantic Canada Studies — but if they haven't read his work yet, then they are going to. He comes to all of us, eventually.

Unlikely as it may have seemed when he was drinking three pots of coffee a day and hustling hard to actually begin his career, by the

time he'd reached the end of it, Herb Wyile had become kind of like Beyoncé: so well-known within his field that he could get by with just one name. First or last, it really did not matter. If a new "Herb" article dropped, you could be sure that people were going to read it and talk about it. This did not happen because his colleagues were dutifully forced to pay attention to him. Quite the opposite. Herb's arguments were influential in the most basic and the most helpful ways. They mattered because they changed the way we think about the subjects that are most important to us. This continues to be the case. Herb Wyile's work is simply practical. It is useful, not just for academics, but also for general readers, or for any individual who might be searching for the right words, for new explanations that more accurately and more effectively describe the relationship between our literature, our history, our geography, and our economy.

For Atlantic Canadians, especially, Herb's work was intimately familiar and instantly recognizable. Simultaneously local and global, as soon as you read it, you knew you were in the presence of a scholar who not only thought deeply about the challenges facing the region, but also cared deeply about these issues. Herb was not a neutral observer of the political, racial, economic, cultural, and ecological imbalances at work in this part of the world. He saw these forces operating around him every day and, in some way, they powered his writing. *Anne of Tim Hortons*, *Speculative Fictions*, and *Speaking in the Past Tense* are all marked by this kind of concern: Herb's signature combination of dark humour, righteous anger, disciplined intellect, and profound compassion. It's no surprise that Tom Waits was his favourite singer.

Perhaps, though, the big books don't really tell the whole story. It could be argued that Herb's shorter, but more focused writings — those dozens and dozens of peer-reviewed essays he produced — were actually more important in the long run, more influential. Maybe Professor Wyile did his best work here, in this genre — the tight twenty-pager — where every sentence counts and there is never any room for filler. Inside those confines, Herb could really show off his almost unparalleled ability to elegantly deliver a complex and completely original thesis while always backing it up with meticulous research that never felt obtrusive or overdone. The quality of the writing in these pieces is remarkable. As we all know, anything that reads this easily is mightily difficult to write, and it was obvious that Herb spent a lot of time smoothing out his sen-

tences and putting his paragraphs together in just the right way. Perhaps 2006's "As for Me and Me Arse: Strategic Regionalism and the Home Place in Lynn Coady's *Strange Heaven*" is his masterpiece. That essay praised the liberating possibilities of a "subversive self-consciousness" (85) — the core element of all the best Atlantic-Canadian comedy — and it pulled together so many of Herb's longstanding concerns about Folk culture, tradition, tourism, and contemporary globalization. The wise protagonist of Coady's novel is a seemingly apathetic seventeen-year-old girl named Bridget Murphy. There is a lot going on in her life. Bridget has recently delivered a baby in Halifax and is then forced to give the child up for adoption. After an extended stay in the psychiatric ward of the Izaak Walton Killam hospital, she has returned home, back to the "strange heaven" of her family. The character is caught in a web of powerful social forces that all intersect in the parking lot behind a donut shop in Port Hawkesbury. Perhaps Bridget is the key figure in Herb's work. Years later, she would become his iconic "Anne of Tim Hortons," but she made her first appearance here in this essay, where Wylie immediately recognized her and gave proper attention to the ominous "foreclosing of possibilities" in her life (89).

Or perhaps we need to go even further back and just keep re-reading "Firing the Regional Can(n)on: Liberal Pluralism, Social Agency and David Adams Richards's *Miramichi Trilogy*." This piece, originally published in 1997, was co-written by Herb and his long-time friend and colleague Christopher Armstrong. Controversial at the time, yet perhaps even more relevant today than it was then, Armstrong and Wylie used this essay to explicitly call out the "politics of spatial divisions and cultural difference" (1) in Canadian literature. They warned us, twenty years before the Trump presidency, to be wary of underestimating the kind of social fissures that Richards's fiction was exploring. There were great chasms in Canadian society, they argued — "a confrontation of the socially empowered and the socially marginalized" (10) — that could not be bridged or soothed by the easy but usually empty promises of liberal pluralism. Canada was becoming brutally "stratified particularly in terms of region and class" (17), and the obvious shift in Richards's writing, as well as the corresponding change in its critical reception, was a warning sign.

Herb's work as a joint author on this essay should lead us to reflect on all the other major collaborations he took part in during his career.

Certainly, he took pride in being a good team player. In his personal life, Herb was a passionate lover of sports, a devoted Canadiens fan, and a real competitor who laced them up several times a week to play for the various soccer and hockey clubs he belonged to. Legend says that he was also one of the finest softball players to ever swing a bat in the UNB grad student league.

Maybe it's here, in his joint projects, where the true Herb Wyile emerges. It has to be significant that he usually preferred to work as a co-editor rather than as the sole decision maker in any major book project. Even in the beginning, during that long interval when he spent more than ten years moving from one sessional contract to the next and the competition between other people working at the same level was fierce, Herb was always more interested in sharing credit rather than making a name for himself. The 1998 essay collection, *A Sense of Place: Re-evaluating Regionalism in Canadian and American Writing*, was edited by a team of four and, a decade later, *Surf's Up: The Rising Tide of Atlantic Canadian Literature*, was, again, the shared labour of Herb and his friend, Jeanette Lynes.

Herb also played essential behind-the-scenes roles in our country's most important scholarly journals. For many years, he was a member of the editorial board of *Canadian Literature*, and from 2013 on, he, along with another one of his best friends, Cynthia Sugars, edited the pages of this journal. He organized reading tours and author interviews and panel sessions and round tables, even whole full-service conferences. Every few years, he would commit his energies to a different Raddall Symposium at Acadia, and every few years, that meeting would redefine the entire field. Herb Wyile really did sweat the small stuff. He paid attention to the details, and he seemed to understand, as some never do, that scholarly work, like all other work, needs a good functioning infrastructure if it is going to operate at its best. Though this kind of work is often unglamorous and rarely gets the kind of attention it deserves, it has to be done, and Herb — with only the occasional flare up of resentment — was usually ready and willing to do his part. A fierce union representative, he walked the picket line at Acadia, and he was a loyal member of ACCUTE and he fought for better working conditions for all faculty. He served on the SSHRC juries and he wrote hundreds of letters of reference and anonymous reader reports. If you are a scholar of Canadian literature and you published anything in the last twenty

years, then it is likely that somewhere along the way, whether you know it or not, Herb Wyile helped you out in some way.

Because he was simultaneously so prolific and so supportive of others, it's hard to know if Herb made his most important contributions on the page or behind it. Those two parts of his career were so intimately intertwined that they became almost inseparable. This is especially true in the Atlantic-Canadian context where Herb's work was often not only *what* we talked about, but also *how* we talked about it. A truly interdisciplinary scholar, he was one of the first critics of the region's literature to strike up real productive working relationships with colleagues in history and political science and sociology and economics. The editors of interdisciplinary journals like *Acadiensis* and *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies*, along with *The University of Toronto Quarterly*, all viewed him as an essential contributor and reviewer.

As a caring mentor and role model, Herb helped many developing scholars find their way into the profession. At an ACCUTE session held in his honour at the 2017 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences at Ryerson, dozens of people from all stages of their careers told stories about the many special ways that Herb had assisted them. Some of these were major contributions — perhaps he was an external examiner for a PhD thesis, or he helped them land a job or a promotion, or he volunteered to edit a whole book manuscript — but most of the time, people recalled the smaller gestures — he sent an encouraging email when someone was at a low point, or he was genuinely happy to see them at a conference, or he just listened on the other end of the phone when they needed him. His colleagues from across the country went on like this for almost two hours. Many different voices sending the same message: “He was, for sure, a great academic,” they said, “but he mattered to me most as my friend.”

In 2017, a different kind of Raddall Symposium was held at Acadia University. For the first time in a long time Herb Wyile was not there, physically. But he was certainly present. The symposium tried to follow his example and though, as you'll see, the quality of the work was astounding, the participants were encouraged not to take themselves too seriously. Instead of a formal concluding banquet, a big barbecue was held beside a field in a Wolfville park. For a couple of hours, Herb's collaborators from all aspects of his life — his colleagues and his family and all his friends from the hockey and soccer teams — came together

to celebrate all the good things he'd brought into their lives. An elite team of Atlantic Canada's best writers — George Elliott Clarke and Lisa Moore and Sue Goyette and Edward Riche — gathered around. Blue and Red frisbees with Herb's face printed on them flew over our heads as the sun set. And then that was it. Eventually everybody had to pack up and go home to begin their routines again.

It was difficult to miss the symbolism of this moment. We had reached a turning point. Something important — a life we all cared about — had ended, but perhaps a different kind of beginning was also coming. This issue of *Studies in Canadian Literature/Études en littérature canadienne* tries to capture that tricky feeling of transition, looking back at the same time as we look forward.

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Just a few years earlier — in the same stuffy room in the Beveridge Arts Centre at Acadia University — *Anne of Tim Hortons* had hit the 2013 Raddall Symposium like the hottest toy at Christmas time. Everybody was eager to cite it, and at every session, there would be a different presenter getting up to start their paper with some variation of “As Herb Wylie argues. . . .” Eventually, Andrea Schwenke Wylie got frustrated with this, wheeled around, and glared at Herb, who was sitting at the back of the room grinning and shrugging his shoulders.

*Anne of Tim Hortons* has had a wide impact on Atlantic-Canadian literary criticism and set the tone for the current generation of critics in this field — many of whom are represented in this issue — who continue to grapple with questions about the commodification of regional identity, the impact of globalization and neoliberalism on both the literature of the region and the cultural infrastructure that sustains it, and the way in which changes in our understanding of constructions of gender, work, and connection to place informs literature and culture. The essays included in this issue provide promising directions for new research in the field of Atlantic-Canadian literary criticism and build fruitfully on the questions raised by the work of Wylie and others.

This volume comes exactly ten years after *Studies in Canadian Literature's* last special issue on Atlantic-Canadian literature, edited by Wylie and Lynes in 2008. In their introductory essay, Wylie and Lynes point to two issues that are worth revisiting here. The first is a question that has garnered little attention in critical treatments of East

Coast literature, even though it represents a fundamental reshaping of the field: the choice of critics to label their object of study “Atlantic-Canadian literature” instead of splitting it between “Maritime literature” and “Newfoundland literature.” In 2008, this label was relatively new, as many of the key studies in the region’s literary criticism — for example, Janice Kulyk Keefer’s *Under Eastern Eyes: A Critical Reading of Maritime Literature* (1987), Gwendolyn Davies’s *Studies in Maritime Literary History 1760-1930* (1991), Wolfgang Hochbruck and James Taylor’s *Down East: Critical Essays on Maritime Canadian Writing* (1996), David Creelman’s *Setting in the East: Maritime Realist Fiction* (2003), and Patrick O’Flaherty’s *The Rock Observed: Studies in the Literature of Newfoundland* (1979) — had worked from the idea that the Maritimes and Newfoundland represented two distinct literary traditions and had divided them up accordingly. This began to change with the publication of Danielle Fuller’s *Writing the Everyday: Women’s Textual Communities in Atlantic Canada* in 2004 and by the time *Anne of Tim Hortons* appeared in 2011, the term “Atlantic-Canadian literature” had gained common usage.

The shift to “Atlantic-Canadian literature” almost certainly has something to do with a desire to capture the energy of Newfoundland’s literary and cultural renaissance, but part of the impetus for this shift also comes out of the influence of regional scholarship on tourism and the commodification of culture that gained prominence in the late 1990s and early 2000s. During this period, scholars such as Ian McKay and James Overton examined the way in which certain regional identities came to be commodified, providing a bridge between the concerns of the literary and cultural criticism of the Maritimes and Newfoundland. While Creelman and others pointed to historical differences between the three Maritime provinces and Newfoundland, this body of work laid the foundation for understanding that an exoticized and commodified culture is a key part of the cultural experience of both Newfoundland and the three Maritime provinces. Key texts in history and political economy, including Thom Workman’s *Social Torment: Globalization in Atlantic Canada* (2003), made the case that the four provinces of Atlantic Canada experienced other impacts of globalization in similar ways, including a shift to precarious forms of work, an emphasis on risky resource-extraction projects, the flight of capital, and outmigration.

As Wylie and Lynes point out, it is important to recognize that this change has an impact on the field that goes far beyond simply expanding its geographical scope: the terms “Maritime literature” and “Atlantic-Canadian literature” have significantly different connotations, and it is essential to understand why this shift has taken place and to critically interrogate whether or not it is productive. Wylie and Lynes proceed with caution on this score, acknowledging the work of David Creelman, who in *Setting in the East* makes a compelling case for the history of the Maritimes and Newfoundland being sufficiently distinct as to make lumping their literary traditions together inappropriate. In spite of this caveat, Wylie and Lynes argue that “there is much to be gained by viewing contemporary writing in the Maritimes and Newfoundland together, particularly because of the shared experiences of the four Atlantic provinces” (9). The key change here is that there is a shift from the focus on the historical experience of dislocation and social upheaval (what Creelman calls “the memory — or the reconstructed memory — of an idyllic/lost continuity” [11]), characteristic of Kulyk Keefer, Davies, and Creelman, and the focus on the impact of history and the landscape in Newfoundland that we see in texts like *The Rock Observed*, to debates about how we define the concept “region” in contemporary literary criticism.

Informed heavily by work in spatial identity theory, especially that of Henri Lefebvre, David Jordan, Doreen Massey, and others, contemporary Atlantic-Canadian literary criticism begins with the premise that the region is itself a social construction, that there are multiple competing regional cultures, and that space is produced rather than something that exists in the background as a setting for human action. This development has had a wide impact on the field, as many critics employ this approach to explore the intersection of certain regional identities and tourism, the way in which regional culture comes to be commoditized in a globalized economy, and the representation of mobility and dislocation in contemporary literature. At this point, most articles and conference presentations in Atlantic-Canadian literary criticism begin with the observation that region is a slippery concept and that political and economic forces play an important role in shaping the way we define it. As we see in the articles included in this collection and in the work of others such as Shoshannah Ganz, Douglas Ivison, Jody Mason, Susanne Marshall, Danielle Fuller, Tony Tremblay, Thomas Hodd, and Jennifer



Andrews, this development has led critics to productively examine constructions of gender, urban space, memory, tradition, neoliberal economics, resource extraction, and the impact of Canada's federal system on marginal regions.

The second issue that Wyile and Lynes identify in their introduction is a concern about the volume of literary criticism in the region, pointing out that the twenty-first century explosion of writing in Atlantic Canada has yet to result in a major upswing in responses to that writing. Since 2008, we have seen steady but unspectacular growth in Atlantic-Canadian literary criticism, including Tony Tremblay's *David Adams Richards of the Miramichi* (2010), Wyile's *Anne of Tim Hortons* (2011), Jennifer Delisle's *The Newfoundland Diaspora: Mapping the Literature of Outmigration* (2013), Rachel Bryant's *The Homing Place: Indigenous and Settler Legacies of the Atlantic* (2017), and a number of important articles and collections. As the strong essays in this issue indicate, the field is in a good position to build on this expansion and we hope that the next decade will be even more productive than the one that *Anne of Tim Hortons* kicked off.

This incremental growth notwithstanding, it is worth mentioning some of the blindspots that continue to persist in the study of Atlantic-Canadian literature. There is more work that needs to be done, for example, on Indigenous writing, on issues related to race and racism, and on projects that compare Atlantic Canada with other regions and other countries. Atlantic-Canadian literary criticism also has significant gaps in critical approaches to gender (including masculinity) and sexuality and still needs to find theoretical models that lean less heavily on Ian McKay's *The Quest of the Folk*. There is also a lack of work on understanding the conditions that have given rise to the renaissance in Atlantic-Canadian literature; there is no book or even authoritative article, for example, on the role of the "Burning Rock Collective" in jolting Newfoundland literature; no article on the way in which authors such as Lynn Coady, Edward Riche, Joel Thomas Hynes, and others have moved between literature and other forms of media such as television series; and little about the way in which the literature of the region has been consumed and adjudicated both inside and outside of Atlantic Canada.

Perhaps the biggest consequence of the explosion of writing from Atlantic Canada and the rush by critics from the region to respond to it, however, is an overwhelming focus on contemporary literature.

Since the publication of *Setting in the East*, the signature monographs and articles in the field have almost exclusively focused on contemporary literature. In some cases, critics have gone back to the early work of authors such as David Adams Richards, but there has been no sustained study of the region's literary history on the scale of Creelman's or Davies's work. Analyzing the trajectory of Atlantic-Canadian writing seems even more pressing today, as it is essential to understanding the tropes to which contemporary writers are responding and ensuring that claims about some of the received ideas about writing from the region — that it is nostalgic, that it featured normative ideas about gender, that it contributed to establishing the folk paradigm — are grounded in evidence rather than assumptions. In keeping with this, if the field has settled on “Atlantic-Canadian literature” as its preferred label, then studies that examine the way in which the Maritimes and Newfoundland fit together (or fail to fit together) from a historical perspective would be especially welcome.

The publication of this special issue on Atlantic-Canadian literature also provides an opportunity to think about the practical challenges facing the field going forward. Perhaps the most gratifying thing about this issue is the strong representation by emerging scholars: the essays included here are evidence of a generational shift taking place in the field, one that promises to expand the range of questions scholars of Atlantic-Canadian literature pose and that shows glimpses of addressing many of the questions and blindspots we flagged above. At the same time, it is important to recognize that the field is in danger of losing momentum at this crucial moment, partially because of the loss of Herb Wyile and his unparalleled dedication to the formal and informal parts of building a field of study, but also partially because of a lukewarm commitment to the study of Atlantic-Canadian literature at the institutional level in the region. The field continues to grow, as papers appear in journals, the contingent of lit-types at the Atlantic Canada Studies conference gets bigger, and the literature we respond to stays too compelling to ignore, but the field needs a renewed commitment to things like organizing conferences, mentoring graduate students, and lobbying institutions to hire in the area in order to stay relevant and expand.

Nine of the eleven essays collected here are extensions of conference papers presented at the tenth Thomas H. Raddall Symposium dedicated to Herb Wyile. And much like those three days of scholarly discussions, poetry readings, and softball in July of 2017, these essays replicate as best they can the experience of attending a scholarly conference with Herb. There are contributions by long-time friends and colleagues who, like Herb, have become established workers in the field of Atlantic-Canadian literature studies. There are newer friends and younger colleagues for whom Herb's work, *Anne of Tim Hortons* in particular, has become a lodestar toward which their writing gravitates. There are contributions from graduate students, some of whom have not met Herb but who engage with his work. And there is a strong contribution from Herb's family — Herb rarely attended a conference alone; his wife, Andrea Schwenke Wyile, often delivered papers, chaired panels, or, as in the instance of the ninth Raddall Symposium, actually organized and ran the conference. In this issue of *Studies in Canadian Literature*, as at the conference dedicated to her father, Hannah Wyile provides an essay that not only embodies but also extends and enlivens the Wyilean insight and scholarly rigour of *Anne of Tim Hortons*. These essays capture the communal and contradictory voices one would so often hear when attending a conference with Herb. The house that Herb helped build contains many rooms, is sometimes divided against itself, but the doors are open, welcome guests keep arriving, and the conversation never lulls.

To begin with the essays from long-time friends, one of the highlights of recent conferences focused on Atlantic Canada and Atlantic-Canadian literature has been the insightful and seamless co-presentation of papers by Cynthia Sugars and Paul Keen. "‘Extravagance, Tea, and Trumpery’: Irony and Education in Thomas McCulloch's *Stepsure Letters*" is a vital contribution to this discussion on Wyile, connecting as it does many of his ideas to texts that would normally fall outside of his usual purview of twentieth-century literature. As the authors themselves assert, "What is perhaps most interesting is that McCulloch's work anticipated the very phenomenon identified by Herb Wyile almost two hundred years later. As Wyile puts it, 'the Atlantic Canada of today is very much caught up in the profound economic, political, cultural, and social shifts' of the neoliberal era. 'Rather than a haven from the consumerism, corporatization, and global competition that characterize

our current milieu, Atlantic Canada has been palpably affected by these very trends.” Sugars and Keen compare McCulloch’s *The Mephibosheth Stepsure Letters*, published originally throughout the early 1820s in the *Acadian Recorder*, a Halifax newspaper, with his *The Nature and Uses of a Liberal Education Illustrated*, a lecture he delivered at the Pictou Academy in 1819, to comprehend and coalesce two seemingly contradictory sides of a writer, namely the cash-conscious, conservative author of the first piece and the more liberal speaker of the latter. Eying perhaps the tribalism and divisiveness of contemporary politics, Sugars and Keen note that, as the author of these two pieces, McCulloch belonged in both worlds, and, most important, “his example helped to bridge the gap between these worlds.” Moreover, McCulloch proves that the critically-distant, subversive, and ironic response to depictions of the Atlantic-Canadian “folk” found in works of contemporary authors like Edward Riche and Lynn Coady is a tradition almost as old and as influential as the “folk” itself: “the power of both satirical humour and education to foster . . . critical awareness offered the hope of harnessing commerce’s benefits while countering its greatest dangers.”

A stalwart contributor to conferences and collections on Atlantic-Canadian literature, Christopher J. Armstrong continues his collaboration with Wyle in his astute “‘The Lines We Drive On’: Automobility in the Road Narratives of Donald Shebib and Alistair MacLeod.” Starting from Wyle’s assertion that for much of Atlantic Canada “mobility rather than stability . . . has long been a central socioeconomic fact of life,” especially so in this era of “increasingly mobile, globalized time,” and that in much of that region’s fiction, “mobility is depicted as compelled by necessity and as coming at a cost,” Armstrong motors through various depictions of “automobility” in Shebib’s 1970 film *Goin’ Down the Road* and several of MacLeod’s short stories involving “road trips.” “Cars signify wealth, modernity and the city,” Armstrong claims, “[cars] are linked to a frenetic North American mobility, to intrusive tourists and other forms of commerce.” Cars propel insiders out and drive outsiders in and are conversely expressions of “absolute freedom” but also harbingers of “frenzy and risk.” For Armstrong, “lives are transformed through the systems of automobility” and regional literature is always shot through with other spaces; frantically mobile and transformative for all its presentations and preservations of “home.”

It is no small testament to Herb’s influence that the two essays in

this collection not grown from conference papers delivered at the tenth Raddall Symposium still speak specifically to concerns that propel Wyile's work. Both Caitlin Charman's "It Seems to Bust Your Balls': Coal Nostalgia, Masculinity, and Energy History in Alistair MacLeod's Short Fiction" and Caroline Rae's "Altering Subjectivities: Place and the Posthuman in Michael Crummey's *Sweetland*" mention Wyile's work only once, but the focus and purpose of these essays prove how his theories and tactics have become de rigueur when approaching Atlantic-Canadian literature. In "[b]uilding upon Frederick Buell's assumption that 'energy history is in fact entwined with changing cultural conceptions and representations of psyche, body, society, and environment,'" Charman could just as easily be building upon one of the central preoccupations of Wyile's *Anne of Tim Hortons*: "in the contemporary writing of Atlantic Canada work and the broader economic conditions in which it takes place are a principal preoccupation, and that preoccupation says much about the region's position — historically, nationally, and globally" (*Anne* 31). Like Wyile, Charman is interested in MacLeod's protagonists' troubled relationship with labour — how the job can signify both dependency and independence and how the shifting nature of work gives rise to a peculiar nostalgia "filled with ambivalence"; a nostalgia for labour that damaged but also defined the self; a nostalgia for a way of work and of being that literally as well as figuratively digs MacLeod's protagonists and narrators into the land that is their home: "MacLeod's fiction laments not just the loss of a certain kind of traditional, masculine, working-class labour, but also the loss of the miner's working-class body. Moreover, these anxieties about the changing male body are tied to fears about the disappearance of regional identity. The 'white collar' male body in MacLeod's fiction therefore functions metonymically, symbolizing the threat of male Cape Bretoners being absorbed into the Canadian body and losing both economic independence and regional masculine identity."

Rae's examination of how Gothic tropes and "Gothic interventions" force Crummey's protagonist, Moses Sweetland, to question his sanity and his selfhood while trying to survive in his abandoned community of Chance Cove, echo Wyile's examination of one of Crummey's earlier novels in "Beothuk Gothic: Michael Crummey's *River Thieves*." Both Moses in *Sweetland* and the fictionalized version of John Peyton in *River Thieves* fancy themselves, through love and through labour, the

rightful inheritors of their respective corners of Newfoundland, and are thoroughly unhinged by the realization that the land by which they identify themselves is indifferent to their claims of ownership. Rae's examination of this uncanny moment in *Sweetland* points to the possibility of a human existence outside the Anthropocenic, economy-driven need to own a space: "The loss of Sweetland, both the man and the island, through the metaphorical engulfment by the ocean signals not a moment of loss or negative affect but a keen awareness of how overcoming such fixed subjectivities — primarily in relation to place — is necessary in the face of these social, ecological, and cultural issues. Through the materializing of both man and island into the ocean, new material formations are constructed. This is a liberating experience that can help us to reposition ourselves in relationship to the environment and the non-human."

In "Principles to Sort By: Surveillance and Policing in David Adams Richards's *Principles to Live By*," Thomas Halford proposes to "respectfully carry on with Wyile's scholarship" by using one of Herb's final essays, "'The best stories . . . we've known the end from the beginning': Lisa Moore's *Caught* and the Rise of the Surveillance Society," as a starting point for his own examination of "how surveillance influences the personal identities and the autonomy of RCMP officers" in Richards's narrative. Believing that "literary fiction is rich territory for ethical considerations as a counterpoint to transcendental truths traditionally sought by philosophy," Halford reads *Principles to Live By* as a sort of case study that "helps readers to consider the lives of those who surveil, to openly engage with their worldview, and to observe how their ways-of-seeing might be internalized." For all the literary and philosophical references, Halford's examination seems to be influenced primarily by a theory from physics, the observer effect, which claims that the very act of observing changes the subject or phenomenon being observed. Halford discusses how people monitor or modify their conduct when they perceive the possibility of being observed by police and state, but he also discusses how the police conduct themselves under the constant scrutinizing gaze of media and the public. For Halford, the act of writing is a form of surveillance, recording even as it alters the narratives people tell themselves about persons, places, and power.

In "'The Currency That Is Reconciliation Discourse in Canada': Contesting Neoliberal Reconciliation," Hannah Wyile extends and

expands the focus of one of the chapters in her father's *Anne of Tim Hortons* to consider further the works of Indigenous, Black, and women writers and remind readers that the form of Atlantic-Canadian neoliberalism discussed by Herb not only occurs in a place marked by colonialism, but in many ways empowers and enlivens this colonialism in the present. For Hannah, "it is key to engage critically with both the logics of neoliberalism and the logics of reconciliation, and how they interact with each other and with colonial histories, in contemporary efforts to reform relationships between Indigenous and settler peoples in Canada," and she contributes to the conversation through her insightful examination of the work of Mi'kmaw spoken word poet and former Poet Laureate of the city of Halifax, Rebecca Thomas. For Hannah, Thomas's rhythmic and dynamic performances convey a concern often expressed in her father's essays, that "neoliberalism encourages the displacement of environmental concerns by economic ones." Thomas's poetry also privileges community and interconnectedness — notions that contradict the dominant neoliberal narratives of special interest and individualism. "[I]n addition to being a physical space and a legal-political apparatus, Canada is also a narrative," Hannah reminds readers, "and . . . stories can change direction." Thomas's performance poetry presents another narrative path and proves that reconciliation means more than incorporating into the neoliberalist narrative voices that have been excluded — it means recognizing that some voices speak another truth and existence.

Hannah Wyle was one of several graduate students who presented insightful and challenging papers at the tenth Raddall Symposium. Witnessing these presentations, then reading the extended versions of those papers collected here, one is reminded of comments expressed by Wyle and Lynes in the special issue of *Studies in Canadian Literature* growing from the *seventh* Raddall Symposium held in October 2004: "The scholarly papers . . . were marked by a theoretical sophistication and a frequently combative tone that are sustained and sharpened in the essays contained in this collection" ("Surf's Up!" 15). In that issue of *SCL* and in *Anne of Tim Hortons*, Herb reflects on the 2004 conference as a watershed moment for the study of Atlantic-Canadian literature, coming as it did in the immediate wake of the publication of seminal texts like Creelman's *Setting in the East: Maritime Realist Fiction*, Fuller's *Writing the Everyday: Women's Textual Communities in Atlantic Canada*, and Lawrence Mathews's guest-edited special issue of *Essays on Canadian*

*Writing* (2004) dedicated to the literature of Newfoundland. It was wonderful to witness at a conference honouring Herb Wyile that this wave of literature and criticism is still rolling, perhaps even gaining in intensity as these young and emerging scholars join the surge. The second half of this collection is comprised entirely of essays written by graduate students at the very beginning of their promising careers.

Billy Johnson offers a welcome analysis of the poetry of Rita Joe that examines in particular the importance of the outlets through which she first published her writing: “the publication of Joe’s work by alternative print periodicals and small regional presses was integrally tied to her poetic project of contesting colonial history and fostering a renewal of Mi’kmaq cultural expression.” So much of what has been written about Atlantic-Canadian literature, including most of Wyile’s work, takes its cue from Ian McKay’s *The Quest of the Folk* and writes against the tropes of simplistic, idyllic Maritimers and Newfoundlanders often imposed upon the region by outside observers, yet Johnson’s piece examines how these battles over identity politics are waged within the region: “Joe’s early work with *The Micmac News* and, in particular, her monthly column ‘Here and There in Eskasoni,’ demonstrate both her willingness to critique the Canadian government for injustices committed against Canada’s Indigenous peoples, and the paper’s willingness to publish those critiques.” Johnson believes that work such as Joe’s published across various media both contests and creates community: “Working with small regional presses afforded degrees of collaboration and autonomy Joe would not have found as an emerging writer working with a larger commercial press” and enabled her to hone a contrarian voice while conversely fostering a community to speak with it.

In “Spectres of Pictou County: Regional Hauntings in Leo McKay Jr.’s *Twenty-Six*,” Bethany Daigle conducts a reading ideally suited for a collection dedicated to Herb Wyile: “By focusing on the deindustrialization of Albion Mines, the high levels of unemployment, and the nostalgic desperation of various characters before and after the explosion, *Twenty-Six* portrays the Westray mine disaster as a direct result of regional economic disparities.” As Rae does in her analysis of *Sweetland*, Daigle employs notions of the Gothic and the uncanny to examine the devastating and disconcerting loss of self that infects a people following the disappearance of an industry through which they identify themselves: “In short, they exhibit a spectrality that results not from a



lack of heritage, or ghosts, but from a lack of visible, obtainable, and potential employment and capital.” One of the more interesting aspects of Daigle’s reading of McKay’s fictionalization of the Westray Mine disaster that killed twenty-six miners is that in the uncanny, uncertain space following the accident, women find a space of agency in a community defined previously by masculine tropes of the hard-working, hard-living, hard-done-by man’s physical labour. Channelling *Anne of Tim Hortons* and *The Quest of the Folk*, Daigle’s essay examines how the pains and confusions brought on by a “changing global marketplace” can lead to a new space of becoming that is still somehow “home.”

The most memorable and provocative paper read at the tenth Raddall Symposium was delivered by a Masters student from Saint Mary’s University. In her daring but disciplined essay, “All Cunt and No *Conscience*’: Examining Female Sexuality and Representations of Misogyny in George Elliott Clarke’s *The Motorcyclist*” Hanna Nicholls examines what she believes to be a serious problem within Clarke’s body of work and the considerable collection of criticism written about it: “In Clarke’s descriptions of women, their femininity and womanhood is always the first thing readers learn about them, but in critical considerations, their gender and the ‘trouble’ they experience because of it is disregarded in favour of the marginalization they experience due to their race and/or socioeconomic disenfranchisement. . . . Clarke’s representation, or image, of women, femininity and female sexuality is rooted in heteronormative and misogynistic representations. His women rarely represent alternatives outside of the stereotypical ‘good versus bad’ feminine dichotomy, and they are given few opportunities to explore their agency without suffering the consequences outlined by patriarchal governance.” Keeping in mind that the misogynistic protagonist, Carl, does not necessarily define *The Motorcyclist* or its author as misogynist, Nicholls notes that while Clarke may appear to invite his readers to be critical of Carl, the author never develops a female character or voice to challenge Carl’s patriarchal views of women and female sexuality. Claiming that “there are ample opportunities throughout the novel to depict the complex and varying nature of women’s experiences, femininity, sexuality and agency, but we are never shown these depictions,” Nicholls concludes that this is not a lamentable lack in *The Motorcyclist* but a misogyny that “we as readers need to refuse.”

Gemma Marr’s “I Picture Two Men Intertwined in a Double Helix’:

Denaturalizing the Heteronormative in Jessica Grant's *Come, Thou Tortoise*" provides the twin service of introducing a new voice to the scholarly conversation on Atlantic-Canadian literature and analyzing a woefully under-examined novel. For Marr, *Come, Thou Tortoise* is a decidedly, but decidedly different, 'St. John's novel,' that "purposefully interrogates the strongholds of the traditional family through a re-articulation of urban space, writing a St. John's-made-strange to revise and re-orient the family to include queer relations." Keeping a respectful eye on the existing literature and criticism, Marr still bemoans the fact that "critical attention to sexuality in works written or set in Newfoundland and Labrador . . . is almost nonexistent," but she hopes that *Come, Thou Tortoise* and her reading of it will serve as "springboard[s] for readings of sexuality and the family in the literature of the wider Atlantic region." Marr's essay is indeed an important contribution to and continuation of Herb Wyile's project to examine literature that moves the depictions of Atlantic Canadians beyond that of "simple, content, unreflective fisherfolk," as it examines Grant's St. John's as a space of endless evolution and continuing creativity.

A fitting final essay to this collection dedicated to Herb Wyile and his work, Mandy Rowsell's "Kenneth J. Harvey's *The Town That Forgot How to Breathe*: Gender in the Twenty-First-Century Newfoundland Novel," conducts an arguably Wyilean reading of a novel that so obviously "oppose[s] what Herb Wyile argues is the most predominant trend in contemporary fiction from Atlantic Canada . . . : the 'veritable explosion of writers' in the past two decades for whom 'the stereotypes by which the region is framed have presented a substantial challenge.'" Rowsell's is a discerning reading of Harvey's rather on-the-nose ghost story in which the disappearing labour and lifestyle of the Newfoundland fishery is manifested symbolically by haunting and by the members of a fishing community experiencing a sudden inability to breathe and thereby live in this changing world. Rowsell is critical of Harvey's conclusion in which the citizens of Bareneed, Newfoundland, return to life by returning to a pre-twentieth century lifestyle devoid of electricity and other modern conveniences: "Ultimately, this way of thinking promotes a romantic ideology in which technological, economic, and political changes are viewed as negative and not progressive. One problem with a text that makes such an argument is its inability to picture a realistic future." Novels like *The Town That Forgot How to*

*Breathe* or Emma Hooper's Giller-Prize-longlisted *Our Homesick Songs* (2018) that seem to depict Newfoundlanders as unable to exist outside their past prove that the debates and discussions that drove Herb's work are still relevant and controversial. Essays like Rowsell's and the other ten collected here prove that our conversation with Herb Wyile is not over.

This collection concludes with personal reflective pieces from Herb's friends, colleagues, and students. Herb's work is extensive and important and it occupies a large space in the field of Atlantic Canada studies, but Herb was always eager to support and promote other scholars and hear other voices. The essay from former students Emily Cann, Davita DesRoches, Molly Labenski, Amy Parkes, and Mercedes Peters shows appreciation for a teacher who loved his area of study and loved introducing it to young scholars. The essays from colleagues David Creelman, Kit Dobson, and Paul Chafe remember Herb as not just a great scholar but as a great man who knew that literature could create debate and discussion but more importantly could foster community and friendship. The development of this community of critics was important to Herb. In the introduction he co-wrote with Jeannette Lynes in 2008 for the special issue of *SCL*, "Surf's Up! The Rising Tide of Atlantic-Canadian Literature," Herb notes, "If Atlantic-Canadian literature can be said to be in the best shape it has been in for a long time (perhaps ever), the same cannot be said for the critical response to that literature — at least not yet." While Herb's early departure may mean we will never be in "the best shape," the books and articles and reviews he has completed and inspired since making that statement, the essays that are collected in this issue, and the continued interactions with his texts, prove that the field is healthy, robust, and inching ever closer to fighting form.

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