

# Principles to Sort By: Surveillance and Policing in David Adams Richards's *Principles to Live By*

THOMAS HALFORD

**H**ERB WYILE WAS DEEPLY INVESTED in Canada's Atlantic provinces, not as an isolated and sealed-off region, but as a place always undergoing an exchange with the rest of the world. One author whom he continually returned to was David Adams Richards. Wyile's evaluations of Richards's later novels were not always positive, but Wyile clearly respected Richards and saw immense value in his work. In *Anne of Tim Hortons: Globalization and the Reshaping of Atlantic-Canadian Literature*, Wyile writes that,

Although *Anne of Tim Hortons* occupies itself for the most part with the generation of writers who have followed in Richards's wake, his fictional world reflects many of the concerns articulated in the following chapters. He is, in a way, the book's éminence grise. At the same time, Richards hovers at the edges of this book somewhat uneasily. He has been vocal in emphasizing the primacy of moral and spiritual concerns in his writing, and, indeed, his work does not fit that readily with the kinds of political, social, and economic considerations driving this study, nor is Richards particularly receptive to the interpretation of his work in these terms. (6)

Wyile's disenchantment with Richards's writing was complicated. Essentially, however, "Firing the Regional Can(n)on: Liberal Pluralism, Social Agency, and David Adams Richards's Miramichi Trilogy," which Wyile wrote with Chris Armstrong, criticizes Richards for turning to a didacticism that puts him "in danger of being lumped in with the contemporary neo-conservatives clamoring for the dismantling of the welfare state and generating a backlash against a demonized, progressive political correctness" (15). Indeed, Armstrong and Wyile's critique of Richards's later novels sparked one of the most lively debates in Atlantic-Canadian scholarship.<sup>1</sup> One goal of this essay is to reconcile the work