

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: VIDEO INTERVIEW WITH LEE MARACLE

“How We Work with Story”: Lee Maracle on writing “Goodbye, Snauq”

Read, Listen, Tell: Indigenous Stories from Turtle Island (pp. 111-121)

Interviewer: Gabrielle L’Hirondelle Hill

<https://vimeo.com/304964553>

Outline of Video Interview

0:00 - 2:50	Lee Maracle reads from "Goodbye, Snauq" (p. 111)
2:51 - 3:34	“The Stories Come From the Land”
3:35 - 5:06	“Remembering Snauq”
5:07 - 6:46	“What teachings about the land does the history of Snauq have for us?”
6:47 - 8:15	The Setting of the University in "Goodbye, Snauq"
8:16 - 9:24	“On Reconnecting to Land and Knowledge”
9:25 - 11:10	“Writing with Purpose”
11:11 - 13:25	“What was your relationship to Khahtsahlano?”
13:26 - 16:21	“What would you like readers to take away from this story?”

Summary

Lee Maracle was born in 1950 and grew up on Vancouver's North Shore. She is a member of the Stó:lō First Nation and is of Tsleil Waututh ancestry. Maracle is a mother and grandmother. Maracle is a recognized award-winning author, professor, and activist. She is known as one of the first Indigenous authors in Canada to publish works of fiction, and wrote many classics of Indigenous literature in poetry, fiction and non-fiction.

“Goodbye, Snauq,” Lee Maracle’s contribution to *Read, Listen, Tell: Indigenous Stories from Turtle Island*, is a moving and thoughtful piece in which the narrator reflects on the historic displacement of Coast Salish people from Snauq, or False Creek, in what is now Vancouver, Canada. Maracle is related to Khahtsahlano, of the Squamish Nation, who lived at Snauq and experienced the forced displacement first hand. Maracle’s interview sheds light on her work as well as her process as an author, in blending fiction, history, and her relations.

Questions to Consider While Listening

1. In the interview, Maracle states: “Snauq means *garden*, and we caretake these gardens by not interfering in the reproductive authority and power of the plants, and the animals, and the mollusks and what-not that live there, the fishes. Of course that changed when they removed Khahtsahlano and his villagers” (04:42). How does Maracle explain that Snauq came to be known as a “garden” or “supermarket” to the local Indigenous nations?
 - a. If you live in the lower mainland of Vancouver, what do you think of when someone mentions “False Creek” today? What do your visualizations and Maracle’s explanation of this traditional territory have in common? How are they different?
2. “It took about six hundred pages of documents to get this story. You have no idea how much research you have to do to get a short little story. Because you just give it a flavour, but you’ve got to get the whole banquet to get the flavour” (05:28). Using the text “Goodbye, Snauq,” can you find inferences and subtle nods to historical events or issues that Maracle may have researched to add to “the flavour” of the story?
3. “You have to be responsive to the natural world” (06:45). What does Maracle mean by this? What knowledge and practices of “being responsive to the natural world” does she reference throughout the interview?
4. Though Maracle loves to learn and create, she equates her university experience with a “sterilization process” (07:02). Where does this feeling come from? What methods or contexts does she believe are more conducive to learning?
5. Maracle discusses “disconnections” and “divisions” Indigenous people have faced. She provides some historic examples, such as:
 - a. “[Snauq] was used as a toxic waste dump” (04:54)
 - b. “our culture, our songs, our dances, our ceremonies, even our story-telling were banned” (05:06)
 - c. “the border divided us” (08:58)
 - d. “the pass system divided us” (9:01)
 - e. “residential school divided us” (09:04)

What do you know about these historic injustices imposed on Indigenous communities in British Columbia and Canada? What impact do they continue to have today?

6. Maracle argues that her writing serves three functions or purposes. What are these? Why does she feel compelled to write and share her knowledge?

7. Maracle discusses the memories of August Jack Khahtsahlano she formed as a child and as a young woman (11:11-13:25). How does she describe their relationship?
8. What did "Goodbye, Snauq" spark in different communities of readers? How does Maracle explain that the story turned into action?
9. Maracle concludes by saying, "If someone reads it ["Goodbye, Snauq"] I want them to ask: what does this mean to me and how do I work with it?" (16:21) What work do you think this story accomplishes? How will you work with it?