

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: VIDEO INTERVIEW WITH LISA BIRD-WILSON

“On Enacting Your Power”: Lisa Bird-Wilson on writing “Delivery”

Read, Listen, Tell: Indigenous Stories from Turtle Island (pp. 180-186)

Interviewer: Sophie McCall

<https://vimeo.com/314301484>

Outline of Video Interview

0:00 - 2:35	Lisa Bird-Wilson reads from “Delivery” (pp. 180-181)
2:36 - 3:12	Lisa Bird-Wilson (introduction)
3:13 - 4:35	“Writing to Affect Readers”
4:36 - 6:15	“On Enacting Your Power”
6:16 - 6:47	“Turning Off Your Self-Editor”
6:48 - 8:34	The Editing Process and “Delivery”
8:35 - 9:53	Writing “The Red Files”
9:54 - 11:00	“On Writing Short Stories”

Summary

Lisa Bird-Wilson is a Métis and Nêhiyaw (Cree) author who was born and raised in Saskatchewan. She is the CEO of the Gabriel Dumont Institute, a Métis educational organization, and her award-winning work—including fiction, non-fiction, and poetry—has been widely published, as well as featured in periodicals and anthologies across Canada. In this interview, she discusses *Delivery*, her writing and editing processes, and how her experience of being adopted out as part of the Sixties Scoop has influenced her work.

Questions to Consider While Listening

1. The Sixties Scoop saw a huge number of Indigenous children, including Bird-Wilson, “scooped” from their families without consent from their parents or band. Many of these children were placed with white middle-class Canadian families.

What does Bird-Wilson say about the role of writing and reading Indigenous literature in helping her to process the consequences of that experience?

2. In Bird-Wilson's reading of *Delivery*, Ruth Ann notices the yellow of Ray's eyes, but sees it as a "character flaw" instead of "the ill health it likely represented" (2:04). What do you think this observation reveals about the relationship between Ruth Ann and Ray? How does this image challenge the reader's own assumptions or expectations about these characters?
3. Bird-Wilson recalls how, when the TRC came through Saskatoon, she was able to access archival photos of residential school students, but found the children in these photos were unnamed (9:43). What does she say this anonymity reveals about the residential school system? Does anonymity in this context protect the privacy of individuals, or are there other more troubling connotations?
4. Bird-Wilson says that one of the challenges in writing is to "turn off your self-editor" (6:16). Why is this an important step in her writing? What are the techniques she uses to accomplish this task? Do you also struggle with "turning off your self-editor?" Why or why not?