

LITERATURE GUIDE

READ • LISTEN • TELL



**“Goodbye, Snauq” and Other Works
by Lee Maracle**

Literature guide created by
Robyn Roukema

"Goodbye, Snauq" and Other Works by Lee Maracle

Read, Listen, Tell: Indigenous Stories from Turtle Island (pp. 109-121)

I am a gifted word artist. When I recite a poem, people are moved. When I tell a story, people are moved. When I read a story, people are moved. That makes me a dramatic, spoken, and written word artist.

—Lee Maracle, *My Conversations with Canadians* (143)

INTRODUCTION

Lee Maracle's political narratives, poetry, fiction, and orature seek social change—and ask the reader to themselves engage in a process of social change. For her, the power of writing is intimately linked to the power of transformative political activism. Born in North Vancouver in 1950, Maracle is a mother of four and a grandmother of four. She is the granddaughter of Chief Dan George (Tsleil-Waututh) and a descendant of Mary Agnes Capilano. Maracle is part of the Stó:lō nation and currently resides in Toronto, where she teaches at the University of Toronto. Her literature has been published internationally and she is an award-winning writer, poet, orator, storyteller, and political activist.

Maracle does not consider herself just a writer. In fact, she says she was an orator first: "Just as I was raised on story, I brought my children up on story. We work with story....I am an orator. Salish oratory is about thinking, and the story is there to remind us or key up our thoughts" (*My Conversations with Canadians* 40). To Maracle, stories are helpers, guiding the reader to live in a decent way, to be changed, and above all to take action. Maracle views knowledge as a pathway to social change. She came to view knowledge in this light by necessity. She says, "I came by my knowledge through a great need for change. I needed to change. I was so fucked up" (*I Am Woman* 132). Many of her characters go through a journey toward growth and healing, and Maracle urges her readers to do the same.



Mrs. Mary "Lay-hu-lette" Capilano

Maracle writes both fiction and nonfiction, often blurring the two. In *My Conversations with Canadians*, Maracle says, "I knew a great deal more about our culture than others did, but I did not have the right to brag about that, so I wrote stories. Fiction. Fiction is powerful truth" (82). It is clear that Maracle aims to tell the truth, even to testify, with her stories, whether they are considered fiction or nonfiction. She questions the assumption of a sharp opposition between

fiction and nonfiction. When discussing her autobiographical novel, *Bobbi Lee*, Maracle writes, “Usually, when one writes of oneself it is called non-fiction – I dis-believe that. Hindsight is always slightly fictitious. The events that shaped my life are written down here. They happened. They taught me those great lessons that alter the course of your life. They moved me” (*I Am Woman* 4). For Maracle, the truth of the past holds power. She calls on Canadians, specifically teachers, to stop ignoring past and present injustices. She notes, “If I forget my past, ignore our ancient ways, only violence will quiet the scream inside me” (*I Am Woman*, 109).

An important goal of Maracle’s writing and activism is decolonization. She insists that Canada has made little to no progress in decolonization. She refers to the systemic racism and sexism that lie at the foundations of this country. In her first book, *Sundogs*, the narrator analyzes the ways in



Looking west across False Creek from 7th Avenue and Birch Street, ca. 1890

which people interact with one another on the street: “White men dodge and duck each other and their own women. Men of colour duck and dodge white men and women of colour duck and dodge everyone. It is the hierarchy of things” (89). Here, she presents a microcosm of Canada in which a hierarchy of race and gender shapes everyday actions and encounters. The racism of colonialism has caused internalized racism and self-hatred within Indigenous

communities. Through her stories, we repeatedly see the effects of an ongoing, violent colonialism. Maracle writes of the impact of this hatred within her own self: “I had been so busy hating white men that I had almost killed myself. It was all so ridiculously simple – just love your own” (*I Am Woman* 64). She is suggesting that she has treated herself, and the kin around her, with hate and anger when she needed love. This is true of many of her characters.

For Maracle, “Decolonization will require the repatriation of that knowledge [of Native culture] by Native people themselves” (*I Am Woman* 118). Her characters often undertake a journey toward discovery of self, community, family, and culture. Along the way, they find healing and hope. At the same time, Maracle avoids fetishizing a rigid notion of tradition or a static notion of a homeland. She writes:

We don’t have to ‘go back to the land’. We never left it. We are not reptiles nor amphibians that lived in the sea and wish to go back to the land.... Such thinking is promoted by those who wish to throw the movement into reverse. Along with mistaken notions of land, comes the distortion of traditionalism. We are and always have been culturally Cree, Salish, Nis’ga’a and so forth. One does not lose culture. It is not an object. Culture changes, ... is a living thing. (*I Am Woman* 140-41)

She recognizes that the diversity of Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island continues to grow and change. To speak of Indigenous people only in the traditional sense stagnates them in the past, and imprisons them within a colonial idea of identity.

Maracle makes it clear that decolonizing cannot solely focus on race; it must also engage with sex and gender. She speaks out against queerphobia, and writes two-spirit people into her novels, breaking down heteronormativity and gender binaries. Maracle is also a powerful feminist. For Maracle feminist acts are decolonial acts, and feminist activism is not separate from Indigenous activism. She discusses the intersectionality that exists between race and gender, as well as the impact of colonization on all genders on Turtle Island. In *I Am Woman*, Maracle describes how she has witnessed sexism within Indigenous communities from a young age: “I...had to fight over and over for my womanness. After thirteen short years, I learned the world hated women and that ‘squaws’ were not qualified even as women” (*I Am Woman* 68). Her novels reject this idea by bringing thriving, sensual, complex Indigenous women onto the page.

Due to the intersections between race and gender, Maracle believes that Indigenous women and women of colour need to stand together to speak out against sexism, racism, and violence against women. She writes often about solidarity with other women of colour. Writing in a heated moment in the 1980s, she states: “If I am against colonialism in particular, then I must also be against colonialism in general. This means that I resist the threat of invasion of El Salvador by the lunatic regime of Ronald Reagan and that I support the boycott of South Africa” (*I Am Woman* 160). To this day, Maracle continues to emphasize the connections between anti-imperial, anti-colonial, and feminist struggles across the globe.

Above all Maracle’s writing is driven by political activism and a desire for change. She writes: “Much of my writing has a political bent; even my poetry and novels.... Even when I don’t intend to be political, the direction I come from makes my work *sound* political” (*My Conversations with Canadians* 21). In all of her work she emphasizes the power of speaking up and speaking out, in whatever form is possible. As Marilyn’s grandmother in *Daughters are Forever* urges: “Speak, child, from the heart, from the mind, from the body, from the spirit. Speak, and speak from your essential self, your most ridiculous self, but speak” (172).

Below are short, classroom-friendly summaries of a selection of Maracle’s works, with significant quotations, summaries of notable critical articles, and discussion questions.





Burrard's Inlet, 1868 (Lost Lagoon)

Squamish dwellings on the shore of Coal Harbour, 1868

BOBBI LEE: INDIAN REBEL (1990)

Summary

Bobbi Lee is an autobiographical narrative, and was first published in 1975 under the editor's name, Donald Barnett. In 1990, Maracle republished the same work, this time with Barnett as editor, and Maracle as author, and with a dedication, prologue, and epilogue written by her. As McCall discusses, these introductory texts reframe the story in ways that illuminate Maracle's contestation of ongoing systemic racism and her participation in Indigenous people's struggles for rights and equality. *Bobbi Lee* prompts the reader to realize that while the text is autobiographical, it is certainly also political, and calls readers to decolonizing action.

Barnett's influence in the project is complicated. Maracle acknowledges that his voice is heard throughout, but the story is hers. His presence also limits the stories Maracle includes. Maracle describes her relationships with white people at the time as tenuous and volatile. She writes: "I respected Don, at the time I almost liked him, but not quite. I didn't, couldn't tell him everything" (19).

In *My Conversations with Canadians*, Maracle writes, "Not many realize that [*Bobbi Lee* began as] an oral project—that it was tape recorded, transcribed, and edited" (54) by Donald Barnett in a class. While there are multiple voices, Maracle's voice is clearly heard throughout, in a different way than in her fiction. The stories dance and play, merging with one another, spinning stories in an interconnected web, interjecting details, repeating and reversing, and then

	<p>advancing again. Most of the time the language and sentence structure are closer to speaking than writing.</p> <p>This novel tells of Bobbi Lee’s journey of growth through family dynamics, puberty, relationships, racism, sexism, politics, and activism. The joyful, sometimes tumultuous life experiences described in <i>Bobbi Lee</i> ultimately reaffirm love for herself, her partner, and her children. Within that love—often expressed while “sitting at the kitchen table,” a recurring image in Maracle’s work—Bobbi Lee/Maracle continues to struggle against racism and colonialism. This is why, in the end, <i>Bobbi Lee</i> is “about why we must talk” (11). Still today, this book is a call to action.</p>
Through-lines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing is an act of resistance. Further, in reading, readers are called to decolonizing action. • Stories like Bobbi Lee’s are why we must address the systemic racism against Indigenous peoples in Canada.
Significant Quotes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The most difficult thing for women who have had a hard time as children to accept is the full bloom of kind and gentle love from a man who you know would be so good for you” (233). • “So long as the lives of white Canadians are riddled with racism they can never sit at our kitchen tables and reminisce about all the struggles, the trials we have been through together and laugh.... I have bent my back to this plough for some decades now. It is Canada’s turn.... We have worked hard enough for you” (241).
Secondary Reading	<p>Beard, Laura J. “The Life of Bobbi Lee Is about Why We Must Talk.” <i>Acts of Narrative Resistance</i>, University of Virginia Press, 2009, pp. 121-138.</p> <p>Examines Bobbi Lee as testimonial fiction and as “narrative resistance” (135), emphasizing the Indigenous fight against colonialism and racism, and the fight for sovereignty.</p> <p>“To make a claim that Native women’s autobiography is not (or should not be) political is another attempt to silence the (political and activist) voices of Native peoples” (122).</p> <p>McCall, Sophie. “A Life Has Only One Author’: Twice-Told Aboriginal Life Narratives.” <i>Canadian Literature</i>, vol. 172, no. 172, 2002, pp. 70-90.</p> <p>A discussion on how “told-to” narratives change when they are re-told and re-framed. Relevant to Don Burnett’s influence on the telling of Bobbi Lee and on the telling reframing in the newer (1990) edition.</p>

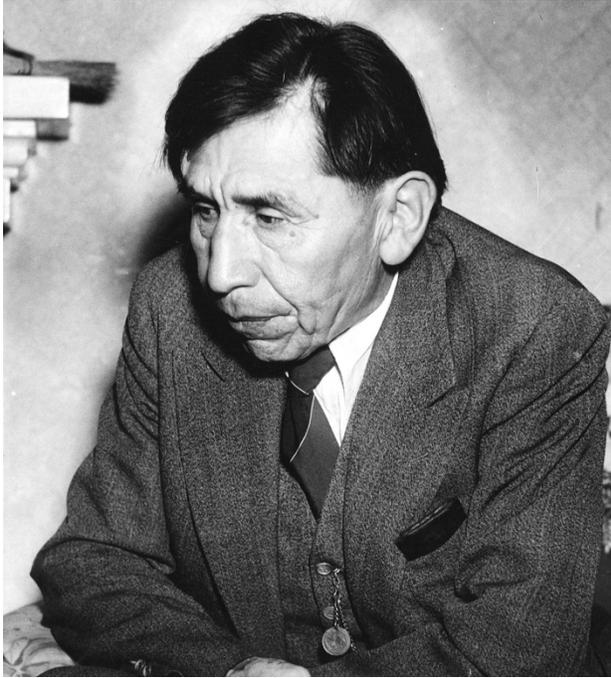
	<p>“By retelling [her] life stories, Maracle... transform[s] the genre modes of testimonial, report and ethnographic life history to suit [her] own goals” (86).</p> <p>Warley, Linda. “Reviewing Past and Future: Postcolonial Canadian Autobiography and Lee Maracle’s Bobbi Lee, Indian Rebel.” <i>Essays on Canadian Writing</i>, vol. 60, no. 60, 1996, pp. 59-77.</p> <p>An examination of Bobbi Lee as “postcolonial” literature.</p> <p>“Maracle’s autobiography...is specifically aimed at exposing and opposing settler colonial rule. [It] makes visible a subject in the process of decolonizing herself over an extended period of time. It also challenges readers, regardless of the constituency to which they belong, to be part of the broader political project of decolonizing the nation” (60).</p>
<p>Discussion Questions</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In what ways does Bobbi Lee read like orature? Find specific examples. 2. Trace Bobbi Lee’s political growth and analyze how she went from actively trying not to think or do anything, to thinking and reading and reacting to the big issues on Turtle Island. Discuss the political ideologies she comes across, such as Marxism, feminism, anti-colonialism, and anti-imperialism. 3. What are the differences between Bobbi Lee’s first and more recent romantic relationships? What do these differences tell the reader about her growth? 4. In the prologue, Maracle remarks, “There are two voices in the pages of this book, mine and Donald Barnett’s” (19). Analyze the impact of both voices, noting how Donald Barnett’s voice is palpable through the story. 5. Research the political action discussed in these books, such as: The Oka Crisis, the Mohawk blockade of 1968, protests against North Vancouver Judge Mahon, or Native Alliance for Red Power (NARP). 6. In the chapter “Red Power,” Bobbi Lee meets members of the Native Alliance for Red Power (NARP) and becomes deeply involved with the organization as an activist. In chapter 14, “Confronting White Chauvinism,” one of the members, Gordie, is asked to leave the group. Why do you think he is asked to leave? Do you think this is the right decision? Why or why not? 7. When discussing this novel, Linda Warley refers to a “postcolonial context.” Does “the life of Bobbi Lee” suggest that a “postcolonial context” exists in Canada?

I Am Woman (1988)

<p>Summary</p>	<p><i>I Am Woman</i> is Maracle’s most direct contribution to feminist writing, including essays, stories, and poems. Maracle describes the book as “a journey” (x) into the makings and breakings of colonialism. It is an Indigenous woman’s look into questions asked by young girls and grandmothers alike. Maracle</p>
-----------------------	---

	<p>foregrounds “the voices and stories of our grandmothers, the dispossessed, the lost and confused, the dead rebels, the hopeful energetic youth” in order to contribute to the “collective search for a path to re-gain our humanity” (x).</p> <p>Maracle writes that she has taken stories from her own life, the lives of those she knows, and her imagination. The stories contribute to discourses on politics, racism, sexism, life, and love. The book focuses on relationships and politics, specifically in the context of political movements of the 1960s. Maracle writes: “The preceding words provide the context of my personal examination of the power politics movement of the ‘60’s. I am familiar with the events because I was very much a part of that movement....What follows are my conclusions and a summation of the situation that Urban Natives found themselves in” (132). She does not follow a chronological timeline of events and opinions; rather, she references these political movements and ideas throughout.</p> <p>Right away the title is a nod to Sojourner Truth’s famous phrase, “Ain’t I a woman?” Maracle criticizes the white feminist movement in many of her works, demanding that white feminists “move over” and make space for Indigenous women and women of colour. This is a through-line in all of her works, from <i>I Am Woman</i> (1988) to <i>My Conversations with Canadians</i> (2017). She urges Indigenous women and women of colour to unite, pointing out that their pasts and futures are inherently linked.</p> <p>Maracle resolutely challenges the commonly held idea that to “add” Indigenous art and culture “into” Canadian educational systems and other national institutions is to reconcile the past. Maracle takes offense at this idea because to include fragments of Indigenous cultures into colonized Canada without “the understanding of [the] laws and the philosophy that underlies the law, is to reduce [Indigenous peoples and their cultures] to a joke” (114). It is another colonial act of arrogance, ignorance, and appropriation.</p>
<p>Through-lines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maracle insists that her readers recognize the significant intersectionality between race and gender. Only by acknowledging this intersectionality can the walls of racism and sexism be challenged and broken down. She emphasizes the importance of Indigenous women and women of colour working together, and white women “moving over.” • Settler Canadians need to seek to understand more about Indigenous cultures in order to battle systemic and individual racism.
<p>Significant Quotes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I represent the future of the women in North America, just as any other woman does. That white women only want to hear from me as a Native and not as a voice in the women’s movement is their loss. Embodied in my truth is the brilliance of hundreds of Native women who faced the worst that Canada had to offer and dealt with it. Embodied in my brilliance is the great sea of knowledge that it took

	<p>to overcome the paralysis of a colonized mind. I did not come to this clearing alone. Hundreds walked alongside me. Black, Asian and Native women whose tide of knowledge was bestowed upon me, are the key to every Canadian’s emancipation” (183).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “For women to love man, she must first love herself” (71). • “Love is a thing of the spirit. Let us carefully nurture it with patience, tenderness and encouragement and not shame each other with violence” (168). • “It is nearly impossible for Native men to cherish the femininity of Native women. He has grown up in a world in which there is no such thing as dark-skinned femininity. There is only dark-skinned sensuality” (71). • “Before you [Canadians] ask me to erase [my grandmother], please reduce yourself to a shadow. Then, we will at least be equal. At base zero, I am willing to negotiate a whole new culture, if you like. Otherwise, keep your offensive words locked in your narrow mind” (106). • “You call on me to forget the past and be like you. You know not what you ask. If I forget my past, ignore your ancient ways, only violence will quiet the scream inside me....The price of denying my grandmother is neglecting my children” (109-10).
<p>Secondary Reading</p>	<p>Grant, Agnes. “Contemporary Native Women’s Voices in Literature.” <i>Canadian Literature</i>, no. 124-125, 1990, pp. 124–132.</p> <p>Review of <i>I Am Woman</i> within a feminist effort to define and promote Indigenous Literature.</p> <p>“The book is a journey of exploration, and like any journey is uneven. Style and content vary. But it grips the reader with its energy and determination. Maracle writes forcefully, angrily, passionately, sadly, and poignantly” (130).</p>
<p>Discussion Questions</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is Maracle’s perspective on appropriation? How can one avoid appropriating culture? 2. According to Maracle, how do race and gender intersect? Provide specific examples from the text. 3. What does Maracle say about love? 4. What does Maracle say about shame and its relationship to love? How does shame bring violence to the characters and/or narrator? 5. How does Maracle portray Indigenous women and women of colour standing together? Why is this solidarity important in Maracle’s work?



August Jack Khahtsahlano, 1941



August Jack Khahtsahlano, 1946

SUNDOGS (1992)

Summary

Set in the east end of Vancouver, *Sundogs* tells the story of a family in a year of turmoil through the perspective of a young woman, Marianne, who is learning who she is and who she wants to become. Maracle situates the story of the family within two social/political contexts. The first is the history of Khatsalano’s village in what is now False Creek in Vancouver, focusing on land rights and the injustice done to Khatsalano and his people. The second context revolves around Elijah Harper, the Meech Lake Accord, and the standoff at Kanehsatake, also known as the Oka Crisis. Against these backdrops the novel tells the story about family, politics, and falling in love.

The plot of the novel focuses on twenty-year-old Marianne, who goes on a journey of self-discovery. Along the way she realizes that both her mother’s anger toward the government and her sister’s passionate feminism are justified and logical. In the political world, Elijah Harper’s act of saying “No” to Canadian constitutional reform while ignoring Indigenous rights inspires her to say “No” to injustices within her own life. Marianne comes to the painful realization that while her siblings know the language of her father, she knows neither of her parents’ Indigenous languages. Her eyes are opened to the fact that “an entire context is missing” in her life, her “whole cultural origins are absent” (144). She decides to learn. Through this reclaimed love and growing understanding of her culture, Marianne becomes an activist herself, joining the Okanagan Peace Run to Oka.

	<p>Part of Marianne’s growth is learning how to love and be loved. We read of Mark and Marianne’s budding romance—a love story that is beautiful and turbulent, poignant and erotic, and always political. Here Maracle illustrates the high stakes in combatting sexism, and especially the shame that Europeans associate with sex and female sexuality.</p>
<p>Through-lines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the relationship between Mark and Marianne, Maracle demonstrates that systemic racism and sexism have created self-hate within some Indigenous men, which they project onto Indigenous women. This results in damaged, abusive relationships. • Maracle’s novel further demonstrates how Indigenous female bodies have been both sexualized and shamed. Maracle suggests that for women to deny their sexual self is an acceptance of a culturally biased sense of shame. • Maracle’s writing continually underlines the intersectionality of race and gender, and demonstrates the connections across struggles for social justice by Indigenous women and women of colour. Language and culture are significant tools for Indigenous and racialized women to use through the healing process.
<p>Significant Quotes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I have lived twenty years on this earth making faces at my mother’s sense of justice and I live in terror of my sister’s womanly consciousness and you stand there Elijah and affirm everything I know is dangerous to think, feel, or believe” (77). • “His eyes wrap me in their gaze; they call me. My blood betrays me. It pumps out desire into veins mixed with rage and terror. Desire blankets every other emotion. Ancient passion, the memory of creation awakens. My thighs tense, then quiver” (107). • “I need my Momma’s language. I tell her so. I need to know that all of creation’s children are equal from the snow flea to the whale; we are all just children of the earth. I have to know that small things make up the vastness of the universe, that love is built day by day, moment by moment with great effort on behalf of the collective whole. I know it’s her language. I want to know these things not just in my mind but in my heart. I want them to govern my emotions, my spirit and conduct” (210). • “How does this affect our hearts? The steady encroachment, how does this affect our perception of each other? When we walk down the street and recognize or refuse to recognize each other, how much of what we feel is enmeshed in the orchestrated symphony of colonial conquest? How much of what we forgive and don’t forgive in each other is laced to the external images of our race?” (155)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Love becomes hate. The hate swells, we cut it out and love dies. Neglect looks all right after a while. Insensitivity becomes normal” (155). • “Erase yourself or consent to shame. That is the sociology of being Native and woman in Canada. It is the result of besiegement, encroachment, small neglect, impoverishment, and mass death....My mother’s response ‘love one another’ was simple but in the face of colonial colossus it looks insane” (161).
<p>Secondary Reading</p>	<p>Lew, Janey. “A Politics of Meeting: Reading Intersectional Indigenous Feminist Praxis in Lee Maracle's <i>Sojourners and Sundogs</i>.” <i>Frontiers (Boulder)</i>, vol. 38, no. 1, 2017, pp. 225–259.</p> <p>Explores the relationship between racialized, Asian, and Indigenous peoples within the context of Maracle’s collection of short stories and <i>Sundogs</i>.</p> <p>“Maracle situates her anti-imperialist, anti-racist feminist perspective transnationally, referencing examples, situations, events, ideas and discourse that cross, exceed, and resist national borders imposed by colonization” (225).</p>
<p>Discussion Questions</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How does Maracle portray men (particularly the character Rudy) as having internalized the oppression, racism, and sexism of settler-colonial society in ways that have damaged their relationships and their sense of self-worth? 2. Who is Elijah Harper? Why were his actions politically significant? How did his actions impact Marianne’s life? 3. What possible path toward healing does Maracle present in this novel? 4. What does Maracle say about love and identity through Marianne’s relationship with Mark?

RAVENSONG (1993)

<p>Summary</p>	<p>The story is about Stacey crossing the bridge and attending university in white town. Things happen during the summer she was to leave. Stacey is a full participant in her life. She is a Sto:lo woman. Anything that happens in her village is her life (<i>My Conversations with Canadians</i> 142).</p> <p><i>Ravensong</i> tells a story of a teenager, Stacey, navigating between two worlds – the white world where she attends school, and her Salish home village. It is also a story of two societies fractured by disease. Stacey’s small community is ravaged by influenza, while the “white town” on the other side of the river is contaminated with racism, sexism, disconnection, and waste—“a throw-away world” (33), as Stacey puts it. Stacey, though very connected to her community, stands in the middle due to her Western education.</p>
-----------------------	---

	<p>On the surface, this novel is about the spread of Influenza through a Salish village. On a deeper level, the novel is about the multiple sicknesses that result from oppression, injustice, and the abuse of power. Indeed it was Raven who deliberately caused the flu epidemic: “Raven was convinced that this catastrophe she planned to execute would finally wake the people up, drive them to white town to fix the mess over there” (14). By bringing about change, Raven attempts to heal the more fundamental illnesses —sometimes with unexpected or unwanted results. “Change is a serious business,” the narrator states. “Humans call it catastrophe. Just birth, Raven crowed” (14). Still, Raven wants to bridge the gap (pun intended) between the two societies that hold so much disdain for each other. Her purpose is not to reassert a colonial narrative, in which the Salish people receive Western medicine as a “gift”; rather, her goal is for the Salish people to help heal the European society on the other side of the river. She sees that “these people are heading for the kind of catastrophe we may not survive. You, Cedar...will be the first to perish” (44). Through this, Maracle points to the imminent effects of climate change. Raven knows something needs to change and that “death is transformative” (85), so her plan involves destruction and death through the flu.</p> <p>By the end, we see Stacey transformed as Raven desired. She finds herself with both “Too much raven” (114) and “[t]oo much heart and too much clarity” (127). The two societies, however, do not heal the break between them. The “White town” does nothing to help the flu outbreak and neither society communicates with each other. In response, Stacey sets out to heal them all.</p> <p>In the epilogue, the healing Raven seeks is not found. The two towns remain sick. Maracle does not end with a “happily ever after”; rather, she points to the importance of struggle, and the work involved in contesting systemic racism and sexism that pull people and communities apart.</p>
<p>Through-lines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maracle’s novel clearly illustrates that colonization continues to thrive on Turtle Island. • The novel suggests that healing a colonized country will come through mutual knowledge and respect of cultures.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maracle suggests the most powerful diseases plaguing Canadian and Indigenous youth are mental illness and suicide. • Maracle connects these diseases to environmental disease and destruction. She suggests that the healing of humans is intimately connected to the healing of the Earth.
Significant Quotes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “What had been the customary gratification of human need had brought death among the villagers. Never again would wolf women serve men in quite the same way” (10). • “The world needs a combined wisdom, not just one knowledge or another, but all knowledge should be joined. Human oneness, that’s our way” (67). • “Epidemic after epidemic had not birthed the shame Raven had hoped for among the people of white town, so the villagers remained staunch in their silence” (191). • ““We will never escape sickness until we learn how it is we are to live with these people. We will always die until the mystery of their being is altered...[Stacey] would go forth, and collect the magic words of white town and bring them home” (192).
Secondary Reading	<p>Leggatt, Judith. “Raven's Plague: Pollution and Disease in Lee Maracle's ‘Ravensong.’” <i>Mosaic (Winnipeg)</i>, vol. 33, no. 4, 2000, pp. 163–178.</p> <p>Approaches <i>Ravensong</i> from the perspective of biological diseases. Leggatt discusses the potential of renewal through disease.</p> <p>“To remain static is akin to death. Therefore, the plague brought by Raven wipes clean the old and allows for new growth and the elimination of stagnation” (166).</p>
Discussion Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why does Raven send the flu into the Salish village? Do you think this could be an effective decolonizing tool? Explain. 2. What illness is “white town” afflicted with? How is this portrayed in the novel? 3. What is the role of Cedar in the novel? 4. What is the narrative impact of opening the novel with a narrative of initial colonial contact? 5. This book was written in 1993. Analyze Raven’s concerns about the Earth within our modern-day context, including a consideration of the 2018 United Nations Climate Change report. 6. What is the role of the epilogue in this story? What message does Maracle send through this ending?

<p>Federal Court of Canada Trial Division</p>		<p>Section de première instance de la Cour fédérale du Canada</p> <p>T-1636-81 T-956-93 T-3150-92</p>
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;"> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">FEDERAL COURT OF CANADA COUR FÉDÉRALE DU CANADA</p> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">MAY 16 2001 MAY</p> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">DAVID A. JOSEPH REGISTRY OFFICER - FONCTIONNAIRE DU GREFFE</p> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">VANCOUVER, B.C. 1052</p> </div>	<p>Neutral Citation : 2001 FCT 480</p> <p style="text-align: center;">FINAL REASONS FOR JUDGMENT</p>	
		<p>COURT FILE No. T-1636-81</p>
<p>BETWEEN:</p>	<p>JOE MATHIAS, on his own behalf and on behalf of all other members of the Squamish Indian Band and the SQUAMISH INDIAN BAND</p>	
<p>AND:</p>	<p>HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN</p>	
<p>AND:</p>	<p>PLAINTIFFS and DEFENDANTS by COUNTERCLAIM</p> <p style="text-align: right;">DEFENDANT</p>	

Mathias v. The Queen 2001 FCT 480 / This reproduction is a copy of an official work that is published by the Government of Canada and has not been produced in affiliation with, or with the endorsement of the Government of Canada.

“GOODBYE, SNAUC” (2004)

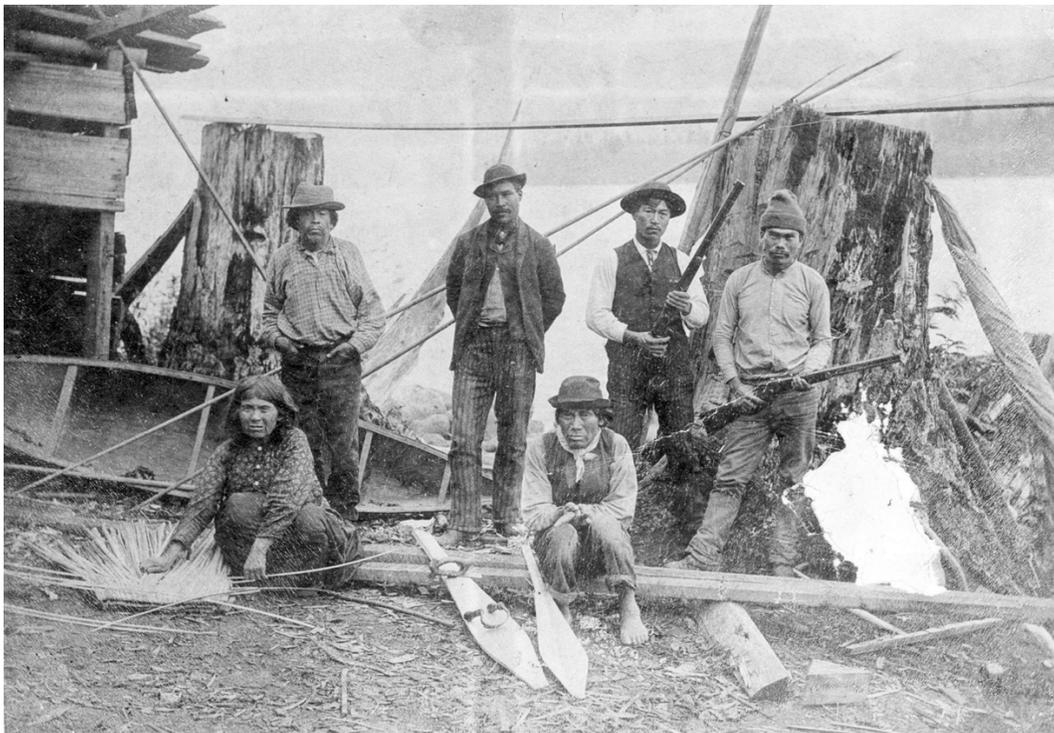
Summary

“Goodbye, Snauc” is a short story that, while blending fact and fiction, tells readers of a Squamish/Stó:lō woman mourning the loss of the traditional gathering site, Snauc, which is modern day False Creek. The unnamed narrator takes us through the history of Snauc starting with the present: the resolution of a decades-long land claim for a settlement of \$92 million in exchange for the extinguishment of any further claim to the land. The narrator resolves to “say goodbye” to Snauc and accept the settlement chosen by the elected leaders and members of the Squamish Nation.

Within this present context, the narrator takes us into the past through her memories of her grandfather, Khahtsahlano. We learn that Snauc used to be a sand bar rich in marine and plant life, and shared by three different nations, the Squamish, Tsleil Waututh, and Musqueam peoples. In 1869 it became a reserve, and in 1913 government officials sold the land without informing the residents. The residents were forced to leave and their houses were burnt to the ground. The narrator conjures reminiscences of her great-grandfather, Khahtsahlanogh, and his son, Khahtsahlano. We read of Swanamia, Khahtsahlano’s wife, weaving sweaters, even as the colonizers slowly eradicated the dogs and goats that

	<p>provided the wool. It is the story of the settler invasion of Snauq, turning this natural “supermarket” into a poisoned wasteland where almost nothing grows and the water is not safe to use. The Indigenous peoples were “outnumbered and pressured to leave. B.C. was so white then. So many places were forbidden to Indians, dogs, Blacks, Jews, and Chinamen” (117). It is this context in which Maracle leads readers to walk alongside the narrator and her students to say goodbye to Snauq.</p> <p>The story ends with hope. The students have helped ease the pain, their presence having supported the narrator to say goodbye to Snauq, and the narrator admits her dream to live in False Creek one day. Even further, as McCall points out, the story is “an example of ‘winning’ the recognition of Indigenous rights and title at the same moment of losing claim to it. None of the Indigenous nations that shared Snauq has ceded their land to the crown; yet none can continue to occupy and use the land” (13). In this way, Maracle “[exposes] the silence and denial that perpetuate Canada as a settler colonial state” (17). In this solemn hope and this ceremony of goodbye, the story ends with a bright shining sun, a blue sky, and once again, a kitchen table, where the protagonist and the students will share a meal.</p>
<p>Through-lines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity construction is complex and is related to family, history, and language. • Land claims and ownership are still a prevalent part of the interactions between the Canadian government and Indigenous nations all over Turtle Island. The land on which Vancouver was built has never been ceded. • Reconciliation cannot be achieved without substantive action in recognizing unceded territories and justly resolving ongoing land disputes.
<p>Significant Quotes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “From the shadows Khahtsahlano emerged, eyes dead blind and yet still twinkling, calling out, ‘Sweetheart, they were so hungry, so thirsty that they drank up almost the whole of Snauq with their dredging machines. They built mills at Yaletown and piled up garbage at the edges of our old supermarket – Snauq. False Creek was so dirty that eventually even the white mans [sic] became concerned” (112). • “This is an immigrant country” (113). • “We were reserved and called immigrants, children in the eyes of the law, wards of the government to be treated the same as the infirm or the insane” (114). • “Canadians have to face that they are still classically colonized” (119).

<p>Secondary Reading</p>	<p>McCall, Sophie. “Land, Memory, and the Struggle for Indigenous Rights: Lee Maracle's 'Goodbye, Snauc'.” <i>Canadian Literature</i>, vol. 230-231, no. 230-231, 2016, pp. 178-195.</p> <p>Discussion of “Goodbye Snauc” within the context of recognition and reconciliation politics, in that it “reimagines the nature of Indigenous rights and how they are to be enacted” (15).</p> <p>“The story ultimately asks the reader to reconsider how to define land title by highlighting the role of song, language, craft, and the interconnections between beings in expressing embodied forms of sovereignty” (16).</p>
<p>Discussion Questions</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why is the \$92 million settlement of the land claim a colonial offer? 2. Explain the irony of this quote: “There are fifteen thousand non-Indigenous people living at Snauc, and we have never granted ourselves the right to remove people from homes” (120). 3. Since the time that Maracle wrote this story, the Squamish Nation have resolved to develop the lands at Snauc to build a “highly sustainable, mixed-use project of primarily purpose-built rental housing that will benefit the Squamish Nation for generations to come.” Peruse the website which describes the proposal: https://senakw.com/#Gallery. Is this an example of reconciliation in action? What does the narrator mean when she says: “We can only negotiate the best real estate deal possible” (119)?



Group near Jericho Charlie's home on Kitsilano Indian Reserve (Snauc), 1891

MY CONVERSATIONS WITH CANADIANS (2017)

Summary

Lee Maracle often refers to the kitchen table as the setting for important conversations, including those about culture, race, and politics. She opens the first chapter of *My Conversations with Canadians* by writing, “You are always sitting just out of reach of my kitchen table; you occupy a large space in my mind, and so I thought I would like to have a conversation with you” (7). And this she does. Her book reads like a conversation, and she addresses many questions that she has been asked over time.

Maracle’s answers are insightful and likely quite helpful to Canadians who are seeking to become allies with Maracle and Indigenous peoples. She begins by pointing out several observations about settler Canadians:

- Canadians love causes, but not causes at home, and are not actually quick to take action against injustice in their backyard.
- Canadians love to talk about Indigenous peoples, but not to them.
- When they do speak about Indigenous peoples, settler Canadians often use words like, “Our Natives,” or “Our Indigenous people.” This language of ownership is distinctly colonial.
- Canada has controlled Indigenous peoples for over 150 years and has not relinquished that control yet. The current police force and judicial system take the place of Indian Agents and the Indian Act. This is well supported by statistics from courts and prisons Canada-wide.
- Canadians are not innocent, and colonialism is not over. Canadian society is “racial, colonial, and patriarchal to the core” (50).
- Canada’s policies directed towards Indigenous people, such as the Indian Act, are shaped by genocide.

While these observations are not new or obscure, they are not acknowledged by most Canadians. By beginning her book this way, Maracle awakens her readers with a dose of reality. Throughout the book, she expands on these insights. She tells some of the history of colonization, residential schools, and the rampant racism that still exists today and their impact on Indigenous identities and sense of self-worth.

Maracle urges Canadians to accept and remedy a “simple truth: you don’t know much about us” (67). In order to become allies, Canadians must “commit to the continued growth and transformation” (78) of Indigenous Nations on Turtle Island and must listen to Indigenous people’s perspectives on how to end racism, sexism, and colonialism.

	<p>She further insists that White men must give up the “Knower’s Chair” more often. “They are always trying to educate me” (77), she writes, even when it comes to colonialism, sexism, and racism.</p> <p>Maracle demonstrates how urgently needed these conversations are. To paraphrase Bobbi Lee, Maracle’s autobiographical persona in <i>Bobbi Lee, Indian Rebel</i>, the life of Lee Maracle is “why we must talk.”</p>
Through-lines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is time for settler Canadians to listen, learn, and step up to action. To do anything less is to perpetuate colonization. Settler Canadians must acknowledge residential schools as genocide and the fact that colonialism is not over.
Significant Quotes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Patriarchy is a systemic invasion and must be repelled as unjust” (45). • “I would like to live among thinking, non-racist human beings” (49). • “The question ‘What can we [white settler Canadians] do to help?’ implies that we [Indigenous people] are responsible for achieving some monumental task we are not up to and so the offer of help is generous. It infers that we had some hand in how things turned out for us. Racism and colonialism and patriarchy are Canadian social formations, nor Indigenous ones. We are not the only ones responsible for their undoing” (49). • “It is imperative to say no to earth rape: no to Kinder Morgan is worth all the money you can muster” (51-2). • “Do something about us, with us, and for us” (64). • “We do not get to elect our own government. You elect our government. We elect a band council that is beholden to your government” (85). • “Canada still murders Indigenous women four times as often as any other race of women in this country” (96).
Discussion Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. According to Maracle, what will it take for decolonization to truly occur? 2. How does Maracle view human responsibility to the environment? 3. What would true self-determination and self-governance look like for Turtle Island Nations according to Maracle? 4. Maracle points out that Salish people (and other Indigenous Nations) are traditionally “gender-complementary societies.” In contrast, colonial society maintains a separate and unequal chasm between genders. Her goal as an Indigenous feminist is to restore the world to a gender-complementary way of living. What does Maracle say would constitute this gender-complementary society?

SOURCES

- Beard, Laura J. "The life of Bobbi Lee is about Why We Must Talk': Testimonial Literature as a Call to Action." *Acts of Narrative Resistance Women's Autobiographical Writings in the Americas*. University of Virginia Press, 2009.
- Dadey, Bruce. "Dialogue with Raven: Bakhtinian Theory and Lee Maracle's *Ravensong*." *Studies in Canadian Literature / Etudes en littérature canadienne* [Online], vol. 28, no. 1 2003, accessed 11 Mar, 2019
- Fachinger, Petra. "Intersections of Diaspora and Indigeneity: The Standoff at Kahnesatake in Lee Maracle's *Sundogs* and Tessa McWatt's *Out of My Skin*." *Canadian Literature*, vol. 220, 2014, pp. 74-91.
- Farca, Paula Anca. "Traveling through Memory and Imagination in *Daughters are Forever* by Lee Maracle." *Identity in Place: Contemporary Indigenous Fiction by Women Writers in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand*, 2011. <https://doi-org.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/10.3726/978-1-4539-0158-8>. Accessed 11 Mar, 2019.
- Grant, A. (1990). "Contemporary Native Women's Voices in Literature." *Canadian Literature*, vol 124-125, 1990, pp. 124-132.
- Jackson, Elizabeth. "Magic Moments": Temporal Modelling and the Call for Responsibility in Lee Maracle's *Daughters are Forever*." *Studies in Canadian Literature / Etudes en littérature canadienne* [Online], vol. 38, no. 1, 2013, Accessed 11 Mar. 2019
- Leggatt, Judith. "Raven's Plague: Pollution and Disease in Lee Maracle's 'Ravensong.'" *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal*, vol. 33, no. 4, 2000, pp. 163-178.
- Lew, Janey. "A Politics of Meeting: Reading Intersectional Indigenous Feminist Praxis in Lee Maracle's *Sojourners and Sundogs*." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, vol. 38, no. 1, 2017, pp. 225 - 259.
- Maracle, Lee. *Bent Box*. Theytus Books. 2000.
- *Bobbi Lee, Indian Rebel*. Women's Press, 1990.
- *Daughters are Forever*. Polestar Books, 2002.
- *First Wives Club: Coast Salish Style*. Theytus Books, 2010.
- "Goodbye, Snauc." *Read, Listen, Tell: Indigenous Stories from Turtle Island*. Edited by Sophie McCall et al. Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2017, pp. 109 - 121.
- *I Am Woman*. Write-On Press Publishers Ltd., 1988.
- *My Conversations with Canadians*. Book *hug, 2017.
- *Oratory : Coming to Theory*. 1990.
- *Ravensong*. Press Gang Publishers, 1993.
- *Sojourner's Truth & Other Stories*. Press Gang Publishers, 1990.
- *Sundogs*. Theytus Books Ltd., 1992.
- *Talking to the Diaspora*. ARP Books, 2015.

-- *Will's Garden*. Theytus Books, 2008.

McCall, Sophie. "A Life Has Only One Author': Twice-Told Aboriginal Life Narratives." *Canadian Literature*, vol. 172, 2002, pp. 70-90.

---. "Land, Memory, and the Struggle for Indigenous Rights: Lee Maracle's 'Goodbye, Snauq.'" In *Indigenous Literature and the Arts of Community*. Edited by Sam McKegney and Sarah Henzi. Special Issue of *Canadian Literature* 230/230 (2017): 178-195.

Warley, Linda. "Reviewing Past and Future: Postcolonial Canadian Autobiography and Lee Maracle's *Bobbi Lee, Indian Rebel*." *Essays on Canadian Writing*, vol. 60, 1996, pp. 59-77.