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From Discomfort to Enlightenment: An Interview with Lee Maracle

MARGERY FEE AND SNEJA GUNEW

IN THE INTERVIEW BELOW, allusions to story and orality recur. Maracle remarks that she wants "to make new memories" for her people as a "backward and forward visionary": that is, as someone who connects the generations. She began writing young, encouraged by her family. Also significant was the example of Malcolm Lowry, her neighbour when she was a child: he "used to have us tell stories to him, and he would tell stories to us, and he would tell us that he was a writer, which I didn't know what that was at the time." To be a storyteller nowadays is to read and to write: to be literate. Thus, the First Nations intellectual must confront the whole system by which literacy is produced and to attempt to rework language from a non-Western perspective — in Maracle's case "to transform the language to suit the Salish sensibility" or, as Maracle puts it later in the interview, "master this language and turn it to account to make it work for us."

Rejecting the constructed distinction between orality and literacy that consigns one set of human beings to the primitive and another to the modern makes it easier to understand Maracle's concept of orality. For Maracle, as she makes clear in *Oratory: Coming to Theory*, writing and oratory should not be separate: "What is the point of presenting the human condition in a language separate from the human experience: passion, emotion and character. . . . We all strive to be orators. An orator is simply someone who has come to grips with the human condition, humanity's relationship to creation, and the need for a human direction that will guarantee the peaceful co-existence of human beings with all things under creation" (11). Oratory is language that conveys "passion, emotion and character," whether spoken or written down. According to Maracle, the language of the academy, of theory, of Western reason, modernity, and literacy consists of words stripped of these qualities: "Academicians waste a great deal of effort deleting character, plot and story from theoretical arguments" (7). In an epilogue to the 1990 reprint of her early autobiographical book, *Bobbie Lee: Indian Rebel*, originally published in 1975, she writes that ". . . I began to think about how I had erased T'a'ah [her great-grandmother] from my heart, left her out of my book, how I had breathed the ideology and aspirations of Europe into my soul. I thought about how the words I uttered were loyal to my own but the emotional meaning, the character of them, was so painfully European" (228). In other words, *Bobbie Lee* (taped and edited by Don Burnett) failed as a work of memory or oratory, although it did give an account of an important period in Aboriginal history in North America and in Maracle's life. However, its voice was not her own, and its words were bare. Maracle writes that, for First Nations people, "language is sacred. Words represent the accumulated knowledge, the progression of thought of many people" (7). In her subsequent autobiographical work, *I Am Woman*, in its mix of poetry, art, photography, essay, and story, she moved toward words and a form that suited her better.

Understanding words is understanding how to feel and to live, and this understanding cannot be faked. In *Daughters Are Forever*, the Native social worker Marilyn talks with an alcoholic mother, Elsie, whose children have been apprehended. Elsie asks Marilyn what she has to do to get her kids back: "Elsie had figured out who held the key to her children's return, but the rest of the temporary court order's language was foreign to her, escaped her. Elsie's inability to derive a picture, a pattern of action based on the words contained in the order had moved her to challenge Marilyn" (83). Marilyn realizes that she can't tell Elsie what to do and say to get her children back, because she knows that any faked insight, any "cheating start on the whole process" (85), would mean that Elsie might get her children back before she is ready to mother them properly. This novel is filled with insight into the horrible power of what Marilyn calls "Dumb catchphrases of defeat" (108) and the immense struggle that it takes to write and talk oneself out of believing them. T'a'ah, the great-grandmother in this novel too, says,

> Ah, Woman. It is one of the few words of the whiteman's language that does not assault the spirit with the jagged edges of its sound. The word woman sounds so much sweeter to the ear than lady. This language has so many nasty sounds in it. The good part is white men never did

wholeheartedly settle on the names they gave life's beings. So they gave them many names. The trick is to choose carefully the names you use. (185)

For Marilyn, who, as a struggling young mother, beat her two daughters repeatedly, the trick is to find the words that will allow her to connect with them properly. If she is to help Elsie, she must first help herself. The trick is to find the words that allow emotions to move out into the world, where they enable intimate connections with others. Jo-Ann Thom writes of Maracle that "some readers might argue that Maracle's writing is too confrontational for comfort. Comfort, however, is not her point. Readers willing to allow themselves to be Raven will find that transformation through narrative can move them from discomfort to enlightenment" (166).

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MARGERY: This is Margery Fee. Sneja Gunew and I are talking to Lee Maracle on Lake Simcoe on the 15th of July 2000. What we're really talking to people about is their intellectual formation. That is the first question. Sometimes the only question we ask is "How did you get to where you are right now, and what experiences formed you intellectually through your lifetime?" You can start as early as you like and mention anything you want.

LEE: I have a memory that goes back before I'm two.

MARGERY: That's good. That'll be the record. George Elliott Clarke[1] only goes back to kindergarten.

LEE: When I was born in 1950, there were still seventeen elders in our community in their nineties that were in my home area before white people came. Colonization is new in British Columbia and Moodyville,[2] which . . . began in, I think, 1835, [which] is not far from where my great-grandmother's from, but she didn't actually see any white people until she was fourteen. From then on, they suffered a number of epidemics and a number of major catastrophes. The land changed. The forest was logged out or burnt, and burning of forest where I come from is like killing all the buffalo. That had already happened on the prairies pretty much. The buffalo were on the way out, and our people experienced a tremendous

amount of death, starvation, epidemics, crushing, crushing death. In *Ravensong*, the numbers that are articulated at the end of the book are my family numbers from 1835 to 1954. There were about fifteen thousand of us then. There is probably three thousand now of the Squamish people in the North Shore. Most of our people are in Washington state. My great-grandmother [T'a'ah] also endured the outlaw of her language, her medicine, her capacity for taking care of the family. She is the sole survivor of seventeen brothers and sisters, so she began our whole lineage again from 1835 to 1923. That period took everyone, her peers, away. That means the Wolf clan almost died. We are Wolf, and we play a very specific role in our community. We're the backward and forward visionaries for people. We're the pack cutters. We're the ones that help people adjust to whatever change occurs. She died when I was nine. I spent a great deal of time with her. My mother worked; I didn't see my mother much. As a matter of fact, I saw her in the evening at eight o'clock just before I went to sleep. She worked from four o'clock in the morning until about eight at night. She had a craft business at a time when companies were telling people not to buy Indian crafts. There was also a time when people were discouraged . . . from buying Indian fish. We were also outlawed from catching fish to eat.[3] Also, unions in my home province were starting to keep "Chinamen" and "Indians" out of the forest. So, from 1905 to about 1968, when the human rights legislation came into being,[4] we had a terrible time. I experienced personal hunger myself. But intellectually how that informs me is I don't want to be governed by those memories; I want to make new memories. And as a Wolf visionary, as a woman of the Wolf clan, as a keeper of Wolf story, and as a mythmaker, I began to write, and my family actually encouraged that development. So that's what informs me. I have heard all the original stories of our people at least once. I had an amazing memory as a child. If I read a book, I could recite it to you till I was about twenty-three.

MARGERY: Then what? Twenty-three?

LEE: My memory became selective after that. I achieved what's called significant memory[5] in our language.

MARGERY: So you didn't remember just any old thing.

LEE: Not just any old thing. It doesn't matter what Opie's uncle wore [laughs].[6] But there are significant things. But in the beginning we're taught to just remember, to be rememberers, to remember things. And we are fed in a way that encourages us to remember, fed emotionally, spiritually, intellectually, physically — lots of fish oil. I still have my bottle of fish oil.

MARGERY: Oh, good [laughs].

LEE: I still have a pretty sharp memory.

MARGERY: That's what it does. I'll have to get some.

LEE: Yeah, if you're fish eaters, it works. You can have too much fish oil if your source of oil is vegetation originally. Everybody to their own. I also had the good fortune of being a neighbour of Malcolm Lowry,[7] who wrote *Under the Volcano*, and he used to have us tell stories to him, and he would tell stories to us, and he would tell us that he was a writer, which I didn't know what that was at the time. But I was his neighbour twice. He was part of our community. He lived in a houseboat next to our reserve, and then he moved away, and so did we. We all moved to Lynn Valley. We didn't know each other was moving to Lynn Valley, but I rediscovered him when I was thirteen living in the valley, and I knew he was a writer then. I didn't know he was a famous writer. . . .

MARGERY: I've been to where he — in Dollarton?[8] — it's now, of course, all fancy houses.

LEE: Well, our reserve is within the fancy houses in the park. We used to visit him, we used to go to the park quite often before it was a park. It was just Cates's boat lodge, barge. They were barge makers — the Cates family.[9] So that informs me somewhat. The idea of publishing I suppose comes from that source. That it was possible to live in a boathouse and be a writer. I lived in a boat shed, so. I also discovered libraries when I was thirteen. We don't have libraries in Native communities; I don't know if you know that. They say it's because we're isolated, but we're isolated deliberately as well.

MARGERY: Carnegie isn't giving you the money to build a nice library.[10]

LEE: No, the government had a very deliberate plan to eliminate Indians, and it still pretty much carries out that plan — eliminate us culturally and intellectually in every way possible. Even in the recent Native studies programs that they have in university, we study what they did to us, we don't study us.

MARGERY: Which is harder to do, of course.

LEE: Well, it's not any more difficult than studying English.

MARGERY: No, no.

LEE: You just get a curriculum together.

MARGERY: Well, I mean it's tougher to get the university to see it.

LEE: Well, certainly. Especially when that's not the plan. The plan is for us to know them, not to know ourselves. That's always been the plan, and it still is. We're to integrate, yeah? And now there's very few of us left, I think, that have any kind of a foundation in the culture, in the knowledge. Most of our knowledge was expropriated and distorted, bowdlerized, and then sold back to us in transformed form. That's anthropology, and we had to purchase it. We had to purchase our own knowledge. And I think that's true for indigenous people everywhere in the world. It's a result of colonization — you only have one knowledge system left in the world; in fact, it's the Western knowledge system, and I think we've all, in some way or another, acquiesced to it. I try to keep myself as free from it as possible. And I suppose that's the second thing that informs me, . . . to find a way to alter the language to suit my own Salish sensibility. It has created somewhat of a controversy literarily for me, not of big difficulty because people like reading me. It doesn't really matter what English professors say about me, as long as people continue to like reading what I have to say. But it took about twenty years to find a way to transform the language to suit the Salish sensibility.[11] I don't even say Salish language; it's just a sensibility that you can achieve because you can't translate our languages into anything but poetry really.

MARGERY: So you feel you've over that twenty-year period, how, what you did or —

LEE: The structure of the language had to change, and it's poetic and oral depending on what the subject is. The language changes with the subject. These are story-telling rules for us. I'm really careful about humour; it has to have a social content, it has to be transformative. A raven is a transformer, not a mere trickster. I think calling Raven a trickster is demeaning, personally. Raven's primarily [a] sociological spark or catalyst for sociological transformation. He's an educator and a harbinger of change, and so humour has to facilitate that. So I'm careful about how humour is used in story, and I'm also careful not to have a story without humour. There has to be humour to open up the person to the subject of change, the possibility of change. You have to be open. Humour opens people up. I think we had a very mature sense of humour at one time. Seattle's a very good example.[12] He's a relative. What he said, you do not spin the web of life, in our language that's hilarious. Because, really, that's what you'd say to a child, only he's talking to the president, who's obviously not more than a child in his eyes. It's as close as we can come to saying, "What are you, some kind of a nut?"

MARGERY: So let's just keep going from fourteen or wherever you want. To talk about maybe people or events past that time?

LEE: That's what informs me intellectually, really nothing else.

MARGERY: So that you felt you had that when you were that age?

LEE: I had it before I was nine. Whatever comes from my writing comes from those first nine years. I know the condition our people endured. I knew that history when I was nine. Nothing much has changed except that our people are trying to rise above it and move away from it and come away from the death path. We aren't yet successful because now we have tons of physical health problems that arise out of that same history. We've endured a holocaust. And it was not an unintentional holocaust. It took place over a much longer period of time because I think we fiercely resisted that holocaust, but nonetheless it is one. And that informs me. The only reason that I write is to bring about a change of heart. But I wanted to do that when I was five, when I first endured racial discrimination. I would like to change that person's mind and heart about the way they see me, about the way they feel about me. But I had no

power then, and I have power now. It's called a pen. Or in this case a computer, yeah?

SNEJA: Did you feel, or do you feel now, over the years that you've, that there are other supporters, or that there are other people doing similar —

LEE: Oh, yeah. I think I've succeeded in doing that. I've brought emotionality to writing, I've brought emotionality to politics. I've brought emotionality to sociology, I've brought spirituality to all of those things that literary critics say is not literary, and I managed to do it in a literary manner. I brought change to the language; I brought change to perception. I don't think this country can get away with its daunting attacks on us as easily as it did in the 1950s. In the '50s, seventeen of my teachers died in a single breath because we weren't allowed to go to the particular hospitals unless there were no white people in those hospitals. If it was empty, we could go there. And doctors wouldn't come into our communities because they were afraid of us, and that was okay, so we all died, our babies and our teachers, our elders. That can't happen now, it can't happen now, and if it did we'd slap a lawsuit on them, and we'd win, and we're winning. There's many things that we're winning. We now have Matthew Coon Come,[13] who stopped the biggest project in the history of this country in the north. All he did was talk to environmentalists. I think those environmentalists read; I think they understand us, and I think I made a major contribution to that. There are sixty thousand people in this country that diligently read my work.

MARGERY: So, when you write, do you think of those people as a kind of audience, or did you think of them when you started writing?

LEE: I thought of the whole country as my audience, the whole world as my audience. That the whole world and the whole country doesn't read me is not my problem [laughs]. But I think of everybody as my audience. I write to be read in the year 2525, you know. I write forever. When I lay a word down on that page, some tree had to perish, and that tree is my relative, and I believe that.

MARGERY: So you better make the word good.

LEE: Words are sacred, just like that tree. I took a life so that this book could exist. So everybody is my audience and all of their ancestors. And I know that some day they're going to say that I represent First Nations thinking in the last century and very likely this one. I know. I know that I had the most amazing teachers, I had an amazing beginning, and I have an amazing mind. I inherited that from my line of mothers, and I know that. And that I have a huge caring for the direction that humanity's currently travelling in, I care about that direction. And my writing serves that. Serves to alter that direction. All we've got to do is make an about-face and turn this wheel the other way. It's not just us that's heading for destruction, you know? The world is a terrible place right now, but it's also a wonderful place (knock on wood) because there's so many people coming forward trying to alter the direction and the course we're currently on, and it's only terrible for human beings. The Earth will survive; she knows how to take care of herself. But we may not.

MARGERY: So sometimes you think — pah — you know, we don't deserve it.

LEE: Well, humanity has died out a few times in my history, I don't know about yours — most of us drowned in a flood once because we were naughty [laughter].[14]

SNEJA: Do you find First Nations people in other cultures of interest? Have you found inspiration?

LEE: Oh, yes, I have had some amazing opportunities to work with other First Nations. I've worked with the Mohawks rewriting in English their origin story because they weren't happy with the translation that others had done despite the fact that they were also Mohawk. And they weren't happy because they felt that the English they were given wasn't appropriate. We were handed English from largely ministers, and they did mistranslate many of our phrases and words. Just an example, in my language we say *hay* čx^{w} q̓ə, *səy̓em̓*, and they translate that as "thank God."[15] But Seattle clearly says that God never came to us, we didn't have a God, we don't have a monotheistic framework — we're it. I stand between my infinite grandchildren and my infinite grandmothers. The farther . . . backward in time I go, the more grandmothers I have. The

farther forward, the more grandchildren. And I am obligated to that whole lineage: this lineage holds up the spirit of all things — trees, flora, fauna, human. That's what that word means. And it's likewise the same in their language when they were translated. They have fifteen different words for *he* and *she* because they don't have *he* and *she* in the language. But, you know, some priests translate that this must be *he* because they're talking about power and control and governments — so it's got to be a *he*, and in fact we're matriarchal, it's got to be a *she* if there is such a pronoun. So we had tremendous mistranslation. What we had to do is go from how the story feels when they hear it in the language, what it means to them, some of the linguistics surrounding the language, and then have a look at the English that was already mapped out for them in the 1830s and what those words actually mean, and then recraft the story. And so I learned a great deal about the beliefs of the Shawnee Aboriginal band,[16] their attitude, their spirituality, their emotionality, and their thinking. And I had the same opportunity with the Ojibwa people, who asked me to help them translate their law from the language to English and to their English, to legal English, and I learned a great deal from Anishnaabes[17] in the north.

MARGERY: So when you do these translations, these are for internal use?

LEE: Yes.

MARGERY: These are for some projects that people have. I saw the book you did, I think with Jeannette Armstrong, *We Get Our Living like Milk from the Land*,[18] which I hadn't known about until recently. So are those the only three you've done, or do you do —

LEE: Yes, those are the three I've done.

MARGERY: Not to say that —

LEE: I'd be happy to do more, but I haven't been asked to do more.

MARGERY: You should put up a little, a little shingle, you know. I found that very interesting. You've worked with Jeannette Armstrong; can you talk about those kinds of associations with individuals?

LEE: Yeah, we were berry picking one day, and we decided to start the writing school [laughter]. We've done a lot of work. I've been to their [the Okanagan] ceremonies too. I have a personal relationship with Jeannette. I guess it began in '85 or '86 when we were invited to go up to the north in Terrace, British Columbia, to a women's conference and do a reading. I was working on *I Am Woman*, and I just had a couple of pieces done for it, and she had just completed *Slash*, which is a novel. I'm in that novel, my house is in that novel, she researched me [laughs]. The Pandora house is my house, and Marty is a composite of myself and two other Native women — I don't know the other two.

MARGERY: You couldn't extract it from her?

LEE: I didn't ask [laughter].

MARGERY: She didn't want to tell you, you wouldn't find out, so.

LEE: She probably would be happy to tell me, but I didn't ask it. It's not the sort of conversation that came up; I just heard her reading about my house, and, well, she had to tell me that I was in it, I'm in it. So that was our first meeting, and we were so terrified to do a reading that we were holding hands, we were kids, even though we weren't little kids.

SNEJA: Was that the Telling It conference?

LEE: No, this was a conference of Native women and white women in Terrace. Telling It was out in Vancouver at Simon Fraser (Harbourfront). I believe it was '90 or '91, I'm not sure.[19]

LEE: There was a whole lot more speakers at that conference than there was at this one. We were the only two.

SNEJA: Yes, it came across as a very negative experience for you.

LEE: Yeah, it wasn't the conference. Perhaps it wasn't clearly explained? That building is one of our canoe stops and was one of the first losses that we endured as Squamish people, and it is now a school for essentially white people. It is a landmark for us, a landmark loss, one of our first losses. And it is directly south of Khahtsahlano's village.[20] Khahtsahlano is one of the greatest human

beings I have ever had the opportunity and privilege to know.[21] And he kept colonization of his community in False Creek at bay until 1927, when the last epidemic ripped through the community and took most of his men away because, I don't know if you know this, . . . Salish women don't take care of men during an epidemic.[22] Men are dispensable, but women are not. So they take care of the women. One night he finally went to sleep after digging for ninety days pretty solid. And he collapsed at — I think — he was fifty-seven. And in the night, they came and got the women and children and him, put them on a barge, and shipped them out to sea. And the community that I come from went in their canoes and dragged him ashore with his women and gave them a home. And that's how they got False Creek, which is now one of the richest pieces of real estate on this continent. So that stop is directly south of his home. That's the harrowing experience, and knowing that no one here knows this, even the elders that were there, the elder women that were there were unaware. *Opening Doors* was written [see Marlatt and Itter], and it was written by Daphne Marlatt, who's one of the participants in that conference, one of the organizers of that conference. And we were left out of that book, and it takes place in 1913 in that village, but we are not there. I remember my brother watching that show. He's not a literate man. He wouldn't have watched it if my daughter hadn't been the stage manager for it, but she was, and he says, "Well, it says that everybody's in this show, and everybody isn't. Where's Khahtsahlano? Where's the thousand people that died in 1913 and 1917? Where are they?" He was very upset.

MARGERY: So that was a television show?

LEE: No, it's a play.[23]

MARGERY: It's a play. I didn't know.

LEE: Jeannette and myself are always at the same point in coming from different cultural backgrounds. She's Okanagan, and I'm Squamish, and that makes our, the ramparts to story [see Maracle, "Ramparts"], a little bit different. But we both believe that we must be able to deliver the culture in English as well as in our own language, that it will take time to recover our languages. And I'm not sure that we'll actually be successful at that, so my whole orientation is to take in a story that's a traditional story or a ceremony that's a

traditional ceremony, like Family Reconciliation and Clearing the Path (that's a ceremony), taking that and creating story from it, like a mythmaker, create new myths out of the old myths, directly from the old myths. And that journey is both our journeys, we both have that journey as our core belief, as a central belief, and a push. It motivates us to relook at story, to discuss story, to discuss story I think on the level that I remember our elders discussing story, and I remember hearing it, and I remember the things they said about stories of ours and how they work and the context they work in. I also believe that those who taped stories of ours in the 1840s to the 1920s, even right into the 1950s, were talking to people who knew very little English because English was not taught to us, not even when we went to school. We were denied access to any language. We weren't allowed to speak our own language, and we weren't taught English. All we were taught is to pray and to cook and clean and grow food for whoever. And that created what my great-grandmother called a whole couple of generations of crippled two tongues, not speaking the language and not speaking English. So my whole journey is to master this language and turn it to account to make it work for us. And I think that Jeannette does much the same work in her everyday life and in her writing.

NOTES

[1] Clarke (1960–) is a seventh-generation Canadian of African American and Mi'kmaq heritage who was also interviewed for the SSHRCC project Diaspora, Indigeneity, Ethnicity, which entailed interviewing minority public intellectuals who are also literary writers. Clarke is a professor of English at the University of Toronto and writes poems, plays, operas, and screenplays. He has won numerous literary awards, including the 2001 Governor General's Literary Award for Poetry in English for *Execution Poems*.

[2] In 1864, Sewell Moody purchased a lumber mill on the north side of Burrard Inlet. Moodyville was built around the mill and boasted a library and the first installed electric-light generators north of San Francisco. The town went downhill after the completion in 1887 of the terminal of the transcontinental railway south of Burrard Inlet, around which downtown Vancouver developed. Moodyville disappeared from the map: North Vancouver now stands in its place.

[3] See Harris; Newell; and Obomsawin.

[4] The British Columbia Human Rights Act was passed in 1969.

[5] In the preface to *My Home As I Remember*, which Maracle edited, she writes, "Memory is significant. We are who we are by what we remember and what we do not" (1).

[6] Opie was a character on the *Andy Griffiths Show* (1960–68), a sitcom set in Mayberry, North Carolina, that focused on a widower, the town sheriff, and his young son, Opie.

[7] Born in England in 1909, Lowry was educated at Cambridge University. He spent many years travelling and living in Paris, New York, Mexico, and Los Angeles. He moved to Vancouver in 1939 and continued to work on drafts of his most famous work, *Under the Volcano* (1947), which he had begun in Mexico.

[8] Dollarton was home to Lowry and his wife, Margerie, in the 1940s and 1950s. Dollarton was a small village on Indian Arm, an inlet east of Vancouver Harbour, where squatters were able to build small shacks or houses on the waterfront. It is now part of Deep Cove, a wealthy neighbourhood of waterfront properties.

[9] The family has been prominent in the tugboat and shipyard business on Vancouver's North Shore since the mid-nineteenth century. Charles H. Cates arrived in Canada in 1885, became a tugboat pioneer, and founded C.H. Cates and Sons in 1913. He was said to be well versed in the ways and languages of many First Nations communities. Cates Park in Deep Cove is named for the Cates family and is a short distance from the Dollarton area.

[10] Andrew Carnegie was a Scottish-born American philanthropist and industrialist who donated funds to build many libraries across Canada and the United States from the early 1900s on. The Carnegie Corporation was founded in 1911 to promote the "advancement and diffusion of knowledge and understanding" and still provides grants today. See <www.carnegie.org>.

[11] The Squamish language is a Salishan language; the peoples who speak languages in this family are a widespread and diverse group. Coast Salish peoples are linked by water, settled on watersheds on both sides of the Strait of Georgia, the Strait of Juan de Fuca, around Puget Sound, and up the Fraser Valley.

[12] The general area of Seattle, Washington, was named for Seattle, chief of the Duwamish and Suquamish people. He is famous for a speech delivered in 1854, in which he is reported to have said, "Man did not weave the web of life — he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself."

[13] Coon Come was elected grand chief of the Cree of northern Quebec and was national chief of the Assembly of First Nations from 2000 to 2003. Maracle refers here to his opposition to the Great Whale River Project, part of the larger James Bay hydroelectic project promoted by Quebec. He is a global activist, defining, articulating, and fighting in rela-

tion to issues facing First Nations people in Canada, including issues of land, environment, and human rights. For more information, see his website at <www.matthewcooncome.ca>.

[14] A flood came and swept many away, and their canoes ended up on distant mountains. One of many versions of this story can be found in Hill-Tout.

[15] This is the equivalent of "Thank you, honoured one."

[16] Tecumseh (1768–1813) was one of the most famous historical Shawnee leaders, dying on the British side at the Battle of the Thames. With him died hopes of a united Native resistance to settler encroachment. Most Shawnee now live in Oklahoma, where they were removed from their traditional territories, mainly in what is now Ohio and Pennsylvania.

[17] The United Anishnaabeg Council is made up of eight First Nations from Chippewa, Mississauga, and Pottawatami: Alderville, Beausoleil, Curve Lake, Georgines Island, Hiawatha, Mnjikaning, Moose Deer Point, and Scugog Island.

[18] This book was coedited by Maracle and Armstrong and published in Penticton by Theytus Books in 1993–94. Armstrong lives on the Okanagan Reserve near Penticton. She is currently the director of the En'owkin Cultural Centre, also near Penticton. She writes nonfiction, criticism, novels, and poetry. Her novels include *Slash* and *Whispering in the Shadows*, and her poetry has been collected in *Bent Box*.

[19] The Telling It conference was held in Vancouver in 1988. The conference was designed as a nonacademic, community-based conference to showcase the writing of women who are marginalized in different ways. For more information, see *Telling It*. This book, edited by the Telling It Book Collective, includes conference proceedings and the discussions that were generated by the conference.

[20] Kitsilano Point, now the site of the Vancouver museum and planetarium, was originally a Squamish reserve called Khahtsahlano (spelling varies) after one of its chiefs. In 1905, the name was anglicized to Kitsilano. In 1913, the residents were coerced into leaving. In June 2000, the Squamish Nation received $92.5 million in compensation for this and other lands taken illegally from them. See <www.squamish.net> for more information. See also Maracle, "Goodbye."

[21] Khahtsahlano, also known as Augustus Jack, was born in Snauq (a village on this point where the Burrard Bridge now ends) about 1877. See Matthews.

[22] See Kelm; and Maracle, *Ravensong*.

[23] The play was never published. Donna Spencer recalls having directed it in fall 1986 or early 1987 at the Firehall Theatre.

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