CONCLUSION

The three Métis litterateures Lee Maracle, Maria Campbell and Beatrice Culleton show their commitment towards their community by presenting realistically the condition of the Natives, especially the Native women in the White dominated Canada. Writing for these writers is a political necessity wherein, with great dexterity, detail and sensitivity, they expose the politics of power practised by the White hegemony which keeps the Natives on the periphery of the Canadian society. Their writings dwell in particular on the politics of colonization and racism. Gender bias, prevalent in the White as well as the Native community is also a recurrent theme in their writings.

These women writers choose female protagonists to highlight the Native issues and to portray the Native women’s plight with intense empathy and sensitivity. They depict the Native culture by focusing on the Native homes. Maria Campbell (in Half-Breed) and Lee Maracle (in Sundogs) expose the myth created by the Whites that the Native homes are full of cruelty and savagery, that the Native children and women are victims of domestic violence and that the Native males are brutal beings who ill-treat their own spouses and children. These two narratives particularly concentrate on the joyous and warm childhood and family solidarity, despite abject poverty among the Natives.

These writers quite candidly reveal the imperialistic tendency of the Whites which places the Natives on a marginal position in their own land. The welfare policy adopted by the Whites for ‘the welfare’ of the Natives is a pretence, a sham. The so-called socially concerned White politicians exploit the Natives to fulfil their
own ambitions and materialistic needs (*Half-Breed*). Their concern for the Natives is pseudo concern and their conduct for the benefit of the Natives is just an affectation. These callous politicians even cut the welfare money during the epidemics when the Natives need it the most (*Sundogs*). In the name of welfare the Whites take away the Native children from their own parents (*April Raintree*). They basically first deprive the Natives of their due and then pretend to provide them with those very basic necessities, so as to create a permanent scar in the psychology of the young Natives as well as to establish their supremacy. As such these callow Natives feel confused at not being able to fulfill their own essential needs in their own natural environment. These narratives also depict the totally selfish and capitalist practices of the Whites who even exploit their own White labour class to earn more money and power (*I Am Woman* and *Sojourner's Truth*).

Racism is an important component of the colonial process. Even in the supposedly impartial education system, the White pedagogues ridicule the Native children. Racial prejudice has even corrupted the innocence of the White children who instead of befriending the Native children, insult and humiliate the Native bairns. This malice has not even escaped the White writers and intellectuals (‘Eunice’ in *Sojourner’s Truth*), who either ask the Native writers to make the ‘necessary’ changes in the writings or are not ready to publish the articles. The Whites are so prejudiced about not accepting the Natives that even if one of the Natives marries a White, the indifference and coldness of the White spouse humiliates and shatters the Native (Maria Campbell *Half-Breed* and April in *April Raintree*). In fact, the “us-them paradigm” is quite strongly present in the entire corpus of these Native women’s
writings wherein "us" i.e. the Natives are subjected to the exploitative practices of "them," i.e. the Whites, and the Natives try hard to cope with their exploitation.

These writings, emerging from the personal experiences, project the repercussions of the White influence. The White education has created a confusion among the young Natives. They are neither able to identify themselves with their own communities nor are they able to associate with the Whites. The division and chaos in their psyche and behaviour has made the vulnerable Natives adopt the ways of the Whites. Under the influence of the Whites, these Natives have become self-centred and like the Whites are willing to exploit and oppress their own fellow beings for their personal benefits as well as to remain attached to the Whites.

The division among themselves and the White apathy and non-chalance has contaminated the sacred culture of the Natives. With the adoption of White ways there has been an erosion of the Native mores and customs. Inebriation as a product of the White insouciance and insensitivity has given a serious blow to the image of the Natives. The celebrations which saw the family togetherness are now replaced with the children, youngsters and elders partying separately. The habit of alcohol has even made many a young girls prostitutes. Besides, with less job-opportunities and insensitivity of their own men, these women with low self-esteem find themselves incapable of any other way of livelihood.

The culture which respected and revered women now has got blemished. Unable to accept their secondary status in the country, anything less than perfect from their wife and children makes the Native men extremely violent. They have also started subjecting their women to mental, emotional and physical abuse. The women
writers discussed here quite grievously lament the adverse effects of the White culture upon the Native men which ultimately leads to agony and suffering for the Native women.

However, these writers do not project all men as monsters. Rather almost all the female protagonists of the discussed works derive strength and courage from the meaningful relationship with men. These men not only initiate them into the world of politics, make them aware of their selves, but also revere their intelligence, integrity and womanhood. Dennis in Bobbi Lee, Mark in Sundogs, Roger in April Raintree and David in Half-Breed foster the respective women's will to do something for the well being of the family as well as the society. These men quite like their women, firmly believe in the blossoming of the community and the growth of culture only by giving women their due respect and freedom.

Though Lee Maracle, Maria Campbell and Beatrice Culleton share a common ground in projecting the above-mentioned issues, yet there are also characteristic differences of mood, tone and presentation. Maracle and Campbell's works are either autobiographical or first person narratives. These two writers project only their personal experiences in their works whereas Culleton's writing is not exactly an autobiographical one. Though it arises out of Culleton's personal experiences yet it is presented as fiction with quite a few fictitious episodes as well. Nevertheless, the way this book is presented gives it a kind of immediacy an autobiographical narrative has. Secondly, for Maria Campbell and Beatrice Culleton being Métis and being Indian are two different identities though the problems shared by them are the same whereas for Maracle being Indian includes being Métis. Thirdly, Maracle and Campbell's narratives concentrate on the Native oppression by the Whites while
Culleton’s work also shows a few White people in the positive light (MacAdams family in *April Raintree*) who are willing to help the Natives and treat them as equals.

Finally, these authors project the father-figure differently, arising out of their respective experiences. In *Bobbi Lee: Indian Rebel* the father behaves quite irresponsibly and is cruel towards his own children, in *April Raintree* the father is a weakling, a defeated man in front of the Whites, whereas, in *Half-Breed* the father is the central figure around whom Maria’s childhood revolves. In fact, from him Maria learns and understands the philosophy of life. It can, thus, be stated that these narratives are not only the sagas of sorrows and suffering but also of celebration of the Native self.

Maracle’s writings, from *Bobbi Lee: Indian Rebel* which is an amateur piece of writing to *Ravensong* which is not only politically gripping but also aesthetically potent, reveal her evolution as a writer. Culleton’s *April Raintree* too is an artistically intense and mature work which exhibits author’s full control over language, mood and tone of the narrative. Even Maria Campbell’s narrative which is a plain narration of events in her life, makes an effective, and absorbing and enthralling reading. These aesthetically powerful writers, besides presenting the chronicles of the Native sufferings, share a very strong similar viewpoint—the Native retrieval from the White oppression. In these female dominated texts, some of the vulnerable Native women break down under the odds, like Cheryl in *April Raintree* who commits suicide or Rusty (*I Am Woman*) but majority of them are able to reclaim their Native selves. They derive strength and vitality from their cultural heritage and the Native spirituality as transferred to them by their mothers, grandmothers and aunts. These elderly women help these writers evolve their worldview. It is their spiritual strength,
and their faith and pride in their own heritage, which make these women face the devastating circumstances and emerge out as confident figures. And writing about their own selves becomes a potential way of healing their own agonised selves. "For each of the writers discussed in this study, autobiographical testimony" proves "to be a powerful tool in the process of reconstructing the beleaguered subject and remembering the self shattered by traumatic experience."1

The grandmothers with their broad, clear and lenient outlook amalgamate flawlessly the Native spirituality with the Native everyday struggle. It is their encouragement which makes these women writers realize the worth of being aware of the Native issues. It is only when they develop affinity with the Native cause and the larger Native community and assert themselves politically, that they are able to retrieve and regain their Native selves.

From the belief in the self, for these novelists, arises the hope for humanity. Their optimism surfaces out of their own unique Native courage, determination and the Native bonding. The writings propound a vision of a humane Canada devoid of racial discrimination and gender bias. The presentation of the Native womanhood as projected by these writers is quite relevant to the women of other parts of the world as well. They basically uphold human values. They wish to extend the anticipated and much desired peace and harmony in Canada to the women of all the nations wherein women derive strength from within instead of looking for anchors outside. These women writers envisage a world where mutual respect and dignity between genders and races, would ensure the upliftment of culture and society. The lessons emerging from the margins are no doubt valuable for the centre.
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