CHAPTER IV

THE NOVELS OF LEE MARACLE:

THE SUBALTERN WOMAN SPEAKS
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While *I Am Woman* is semi-autobiographical and documentary, *Bobbi Lee, Indian Rebel* is autobiographical and postcolonial. *I Am Woman* describes the growth of the author amidst various social issues such as centre/margin boundaries which are broken and are rewritten in a counter-discursive ways. The text also touches the postcolonial boundary of anti-imperialist solidarity. In this vein, Maracle expresses her debt to Native people, Palestinians, Chil­eans, Black Canadians, and African - American people, to writers such as Jeannette Armstrong, Frantz Fanon, and Malcolm X for their inspiration and guidance. Maracle mimicks capitalist language by using parody, irony, paral­lax, and imitation. Her aim is to integrate oratory and European story.

*Bobbi Lee, Indian Rebel* was originally published in 1950, but Women's Press republished the text in 1990 with a foreword by Jeannette Armstrong. It also incorporates significant new material that frames and comments on the original 1950 text. It is primarily a narrative of Native resistance to settler au­thority in Canada.

Both the texts make use of the values and oratory of Maracle’s Gran­nies, the natural prose inherent in oral history and the tradition of teaching through the use of story with poetic visions. Both the autobiographies blur the boundaries between traditional fiction/autobiography and theory. Shirley Neuman’s “life-writing” genre (4) is the right term to describe this kind of Ab-
original autobiography. The first part of this chapter discusses the text *I Am Woman*.

**LEE MARACLE'S *I AM WOMAN* (1988)**

Maracle's *I Am Woman* (1988) is an autobiography of eighteen chapters on different topics. They seem to be short essays on both personal and communal issues. The main issues discussed are racism, Native law and politics, Native history, the question of women, Native solidarity movements, neocolonialism, on Marxism and communism, Native education, the role of grandmothers and ancestors in transmitting the knowledge of the past to the new generation, and the internal "self" of Maracle. In describing all these, Maracle does not appear to follow any generic code of ethics since it is self-published and unedited. Maracle disrupts conventions and chronology in the narrative. This narrative has a heterogeneous and hybridized form.

*I Am Woman* is a book of prose and poetry written for Native people. Without claiming animosity toward non-Natives, the book tells the story of one woman's search for the truth of oppression. She says that her book "addresses the Native people in desperate circumstances, who need to recover the broken threads of their lives. While describing the process of writing this book, Maracle says that she, scribbled on paper and brown bags and gathered stories, which she says come from "the people of my passion". Racism has become part and parcel of the lives of the Native people. Among the many features of Native literary production, the importance of elders plays a signifi-
cant role. Maracle's poem "Creation" acknowledges the vital family ties:

I know nothing

Of great mysteries

know less of creation

I do know

that the farther backward

in time that I travel

the more grandmothers

and the farther forward

the more grandchildren

I am obligated to both. (Maracle, IAW 8-9)

Elders, such as grandmothers, family chiefs and grandfathers, and their storytelling traditions mould the character of the Native offspring. The phrase "I Am Woman" is liberating for Maracle. Before 1961, the "woman" question did not exist for Native women. It was Campbell and Culleton who brought the degraded condition of Native women to the world. Campbell in Half-breed says: "I was skin and bones with running sores all over my body. I was bruised and battered from the beatings I got from trapper and whoever else felt like beating me". (Campbell 124)
According to Maracle, Indian women were objects of "sexual release for White males whose appetites were too gross for their own women" (Maracle 1988: 18). However, she does not place all the blame on non-Native men. She asks:

How many times do you hear from our own brothers; Indian women don't whine and cry around, nag or complain. At least not "real" or "true" Indian women. Embodied in that kind of language is the negation of our femininity- the denial of our womanhood. (Maracle, IAW 20)

The effect this denial had on her was that she was convinced that love and compassion were "inventions" of White folks; Indians never loved, wept, laughed, or fought (20). In her book, she comes to the understanding, that

The denial of Native womanhood is the reduction of the whole people to a subhuman level. Animals of patriarchy demand that beneath Native man comes the female Native. The dictates of racism are thus that Native men are beneath women and Native females are not fit to be referred to as women. (Maracle, IAW 20)

Maracle says that this book is a journey of exploration, an uneven journey with energy and determination. Maracle writes forcefully, angrily, pas-
sionately, sadly, and poignantly. The final proclamation in the novel, after personal loss and anger, is that Maracle is "Woman"; she equates "being" with being sensuous, beautiful, strong, brilliant, passionate, and loving. It is an achievement for a Native writer communicate to a non-Native. The difficulty that Native voices experience in being heard and being taken seriously is best expressed by Maracle in the following poem:

It is hard not to protest
not to address can American Europe
when you are not just surrounded,
but buried beneath the urban giant;
reduced to a muffled voice
by the twang and clang of machines.
It is hard not to cry out to those
next you 'come together ... push up
on the giant ... bite his heals'
It is easier to cry out to the unseen,
deaf ears above for help.
(Maracle, IAW 11)

In a sense, Native literature such as this is a form of 'protest literature' against European and American colonialism.
Storytelling is the vital thread for Maracle's description of her "life writing". Truth-telling along with storytelling is a hybrid mode of Native narrative. Truth plays a major role in the "self-writing genre" of indigenous autobiographies. Maracle says:

It is the practice of writers to fictionalise reality and prostitute the product of their licentious fantasies. "Artistic license", they call it ... I have taken both the stories of my life, the stories of other's lives and some pure fabrications of my imagination and rewritten them as my own. (Maracle, IAW 45)

Maracle's autobiography is a genre by itself. Though the story is not overblown, Maracle makes use of the elements of fiction, fantasy, fabrication; and imagination. She has rewritten them with her real-life experiences. The fantasy of her life-story is not distorted; the facts remain factual. The facts have an emotional, spiritual, and visual perspective. Maracle "dis-believes" in 'non-fiction;' which means that she writes of herself. She believes in the faithful and factual presentation of life experiences in the mode of autobiographical writing.

Maracle firmly asserts that her voice in the book is for those who need to hear some truth. She talks about the "private truth", the truth of Native life. Truth telling is a form of recovery of the broken threads of Native lives. Native life in Canada is weighed down by the tonnage of oppressive dirt that colonialism has heaped upon them. She says:
"Unlike the miners, the dirt is heaped upon us deliberately and no one is terribly interested in removing the load of dirt - including ourselves" (Maracle, IAW 12). Maracle writes the tragedy of their lives and the truth of their imagination. "The truth is that few miners caught in a shaft ever dig themselves out" (13). Maracle quotes an adage which says that everything starts with the self, by itself. The burden is a collective one: the burden of gender oppression, colonial history, racism, and pain. Maracle's life is salvage from the enslavement of Native women through various threads of oppression. For these reasons, the autobiography hybridizes storytelling and truth-telling to create a hybrid mode of Native autobiography.

The role of the grandmothers in moulding Native young person is a predominant factor in any Native life-writing book. The grandmother is a symbol of love, Native healing and spiritual therapy. The grandmother is a composite of a number of old Native women. Their lives are a composite of the reality of their history and present existence. She says, "Their feelings are my own. Their teachings are ancient and as closely accounted for as I can remember" (5). She also advises "if you live right, the grandmothers will take care of you, if you live wrong, they will forsake you" (5). Grandmothers are storytellers and truth-tellers. They represent the whole Native community and are a symbol of "collective ethos" of Native life.

Maracle's struggle to regain herself from the recent colonial history and its enslavement is a collective and plural struggle. For Maracle, being a "woman" is a struggle in Native society. The feminism of 1982 was meaningless to her. Even womanhood was denied to the Native women. Racist ideol-
ogy had defined womanhood for the Native woman as "non-existent", and the denial of her own womanhood was a crime. Before 1961, Native women were "wards of the government", "children in the eyes of the law". Native self-government and Native land questions were the hot issues. The Native women question did not even exist. Maracle says:

Native women do not even like the words 'women's liberation' and even now it burns my back. How could I resist the reduction of women to sex objects I ... we have been the object of the kind of sexual release of White males whose appetites are too gross for their own delicate woman. (18)

Maracle strongly condemns the reduction of Native women to sexual objects, the negation of femininity and the denial of womanhood. She questions the way noting women accept their obligations to men the same way that a horse or an ox accepts the yoke and bridle. The denial of Native womanhood is the reduction of the whole people to a subhuman level; patriarchy and social hierarchy reduce Native women to the lowest strata. Maracle at the end of the chapter 'I Am Woman' notes that Wounded knee must be the last time that they erased the people from the world of the living. She invites all Native people to blossom and be beautiful and productive.

"Racism is of recent, patriarchy is old", says Maracle in the third chapter "Isn't Love A Given". She claims that colonisation for Native women was the absence of beauty -- the negation of sexuality. Sex becomes one more of the horrors of enslavement. Alcoholism, violence, and suicide destroy the Native
people. Native life has become schizophrenic. Especially the women have been transformed into vessels of biological release for men.

The teachings of Maracle's ancestors and grandmother heal the sickened spirit and she abhors the misinterpretations of self-proclaimed "spiritual leader" who are called charlatans and caricatures of the Native past. Maracle finds sense of spirituality in the urban "traditional movement" of the 60s and 70s. The teachings of the foremothers are the disciplined laws of the present Native youths. Their teachings have instilled a sense of self and importance in the community.

Native tradition lies in the unwritten natural laws of the ancestors of the Native community. Native elders' concern for land and their relationship with and dependence on the land are the important lessons which teach that land or homeland is the source of life. According to the Native leaders, to destroy life without necessity is a crime. To destroy natural life is to court disaster. What is against the Native law is to destroy natural resources and the production of junk in the interest of profit. Native people feel that they are the caretakers of this land, and their collective burden is to protect the homeland. As an eco-feminist, Maracle strongly condemns the law against nature. Native people's affinity with the land is an obligation to history. The elders left their laws of the land as birthrights of each Native human being. Settler society has alienated the Native people from their land and destroyed their history.

Maracle links Native laws and politics with Native tradition. Native tradition is an amalgamation of various Native minds, such as the elders of the Okanagan,
Gitksan - wet 'suwet' en, and the Lubicon people, who base their politics on their own history and their own law. The European colonisation has imprisoned the Native mind with their ideology, impeded their understanding of the past, and blinded them to the future.

Maracle pleads with the mainstream translators to be true to the Native language in bringing out the words and meanings of the Native elder society. The voice of the trammelled and the dispossessed Native people is the final proclamation of Native liberation. The White people, in the disguise of their culture and law, clothe the Native ancestors' old laws. This is a mockery, and the new Native generation will not adhere to this false notion of culture. Traditionalism has become a new coat to cloak the settler culture's hidden agenda. As Maracle says, "we were not a political people, we were a spiritual people" (47). European culture legalizes Native oppression both socially and politically, but Native people have inherent power to resist it with their linguistic and ancestral energy. Segregating Native people in the modern names of "humanity" and "civilization" and misinterpreting Native "history" are the immediate dangers for the Native community. Native people are now no longer interested in parroting the racist formulators' views on sociology and cultural anthropology in the name of "spirituality!" The best way to rejuvenate Native life is to learn the Native language without an attraction towards the mainstream translation of Native cultural life.

Maracle often refers to the split life of the Metis/Indians in the Canadian Native society. It is a schizophrenic existence due to racism and psychological
segregation. Racism is again a by-product of colonialism. Maracle says "our life is lived out schizophrenically" (24). She feels the pain of being Native and of being split. "We are not an integrated people" (88), reveals Maracle, and while describing the growth of a child, she says, "In my granny's kitchen, the sweet smells and gentle words soothed the aches and pains of a schizophrenic existence" (89). Both the biologically interbred Metis race and the socially segregated Native people are schizophrenic. Maracle frankly accepts the people's "disintegration". She declares: "All Europe thought us integrated. We knew we were disintegrated" (96).

Maracle's main focus in the book is to rethink and rewrite the Native history and recover it from the distortion and depredation of hegemonic authority. Native land, history, language, and culture are as old as the earth. Maracle quotes David Campbell's song:

30 thousand years ago
Guess who found Kanata?
No, not Columbus
Thought he'd reached India
It was a little brown man
With an arrow and a bow..." (99).

Not only "brown men", grandmothers, chiefs, elders, and Native healers were the torch bearers of Native history. Though Maracle says 'I am less concerned about your distortion of my history than, your inability to hand on to your own' (99),
she never fails to bring out the contribution made by Native women healers to the history of Canada. It was the women healers who organized and protested the production and importation of sugar to their country almost 500 years ago. But they were poisoned for heresy by the Church. Incidents like this do not find a place in the history of Canada. The red man was vanquished and consigned to a kind of “living purgatory” (90) because he did not apply a cultural force which “is the mid-wife of historical change” (90). Native people are as indebted to the lands as they are to their history.

Maracle in the chapter “Heartless Teachers” vehemently opposes the European idea that the Natives were cannibals. She negotiates a whole new culture for Natives and degrades the White “narrow-minded” culture. European ways are genocidal, confined, and culturally prohibitory, but the Native ways are humane, broad minded, and culturally amalgamative. The White teachers and the textbooks framed by them utter false views of Native culture and history. She says: “Until our separate history is recognized and our need for self-determination satisfied, we are not equal” (103). Maracle is against the teaching of European views of Native children. Europe has been considered a model for learning and emulating respect by debasing Native people’s national roots. The White children fail to learn about Native heroes such as Khatsalano, Coquitlam, Capilano, or the much lauded statesman and self-taught constitutional lawyer, Andrew Paull. Native people were not “Cannibals”, and they never attended European institutions. Andrew Paull was self-
taught because Native men were not permitted to attend law school without renouncing their status as Natives. Maracle quotes an incident of 1974:

Who will teach Europeans that in 1974, an Inuit boy searched the frozen arctic for edible lichens, carefully shared every morsel with a European man, who so cynical about life that the hoarded and hid from this child food, he had found on the plane. He watched him trudge through the frozen snow, braving the wind and cold, until starvation and weakness overcame him and he died. Still, he shared not a morsel of his food. Who will teach your children that the European was never tried for his criminal negligence because of a legal imperfection that has never been rectified? (104)

Maracle in the above incident brings to light the hypocrisy and the rude individualism of a European man and lauds the Inuit boy who mastered humanity and is “a living testimony to the real strength and words” (105). Maracle also refers to the treachery against Native people at Wounded Knee. One hundred years ago, General Custer ordered the death of every man, woman, child, and dog at Wounded Knee. It was a cultural discrimination attempted by the White against the Natives.

Maracle attacks the mainstream education as “the ideological nonsense European Culture” (113). She advocates establishing separate schools for Native children with Native content infused into the curriculum. She says
the Canadian school system is a "dismal failure" (114). Native history should be included in the frame of the curriculum. Maracle condemns the racist background of White education. She declares: "The society we live in is racist. Naturally, the education we receive is racist. Our students are the victims of this racism" (117). Maracle prefers to have a balanced system of education comprising the history of settler society and a critical examination of Native society. Education is the basis for Native people's cultural transformation and development. True education based on the positive history of both cultures, will free the Native people. Native culture has not been lost. The information available through the process of education has been "expropriated", and "consigned to deadwood leaves in libraries" (118). The essence of Native culture still lives in the hearts and minds of Native folks. According to Maracle "the expropriation of the accumulated knowledge of Native people is a legacy of colonization. De-colonization will require the repatriation of that knowledge by Native people themselves" (118).

The proper understanding of Native systems, particularly linguistic, scientific, and medicinal will free the Natives from charges of primitivism.

The chapter "The Rebel" in *I Am Woman* has an affinity with *Slash's* hero Thomas Kelasket in an agitative vein against the hegemonic subalternisation of the Native people in Canada. Maracle's 'Rebel' is an embodiment of political and cultural emancipation and a symbol of physical, cultural, and political force. She fights against the unequal laws and injustice in
Canadian society. The primary aims of the coloniser seem to be creating a sense of loss of nationhood, a sense of powerlessness, and the legal and cultural victimization among the colonized. In the history of colonization, Native people have an oppressed history and have resisted it. The best examples are in the Stein Valley, on the Queen Charlotte Islands, and on Meares Island. Native people are opposed to the destruction of their homelands. The Okanagan as a tribal group helped to effect a moratorium on uranium mining, and the Gitksan - wut, suweten are opposed to massive logging as the means to employment in their homeland. The major challenge of Maracle in this chapter is to make the settler society understand that she has a history. The rebel's aim here is to make Native history and to "re-write history". As she says:

To most of the elite, the re-writing of our history is equal to dignified betrayal. To the rebel it is the altering of her condition that will re-write her life onto the pages of a new history. Only rebellion, the spiritual cleansing of the bad blood that separates her from her womanhood can appease the rebel. But we need to know that we can win. (121)

Maracle narrates her people's history with a history of resistance. She led the 1964 Red Power Movement, the 1973 Wounded Knee Siege, and the Amerindian Movement's articulation for the Siege. The American Indian Movement began as a street patrol and was fashioned after the Black Panther
Party in much the same way as other Native militant groups. In this context, Maracle explains the binarism of the colonizer and the colonised. She argues:

In our world today there are only two points of view: the view of the colonized and the view of those who would effect liberation. The colonizer is not a rebel ... The logic of the colonizer for the last five centuries has been and continues to be 'how can I turn this to my advantage'. The logic of the colonized is 'how can we turn this around so that we can regain our lost sense of humanity. (129)

Though the binary oppositionality was very much present in the Native organisations, "the American Indian Movement brought a strange sort of corruption and immorality to Native militant youth" (Maracle 137). She is also of the view that sexism, "racism's younger brother;" was inherent in the character of the American Indian Movement. In the chapter entitled "Another Side of Me," Maracle expresses her views on Marxism, dogmatism, communism, Christianity, Native healing, Native spirituality, and the grandmothers' role in Native medicinal healing. Maracle is very much critical of Marxism and communism because he believes that racism, sexism and dogmatism dominate the ideologies. Dogmatism was the first enemy of Marxism. "Marx, himself, was beset with arrogance and racial supremacist attitudes. That does not negate his sense of history nor his science of revolution" (39) says Maracle. The White Marxists, communists, and would-be leftists were tainted with racism. Maracle
blames the communists themselves and denies that only the adherents had flaws. Marxism is founded on the expropriated knowledge and principles of old Native societies. They were handed to Marx in distorted fashion. His research was hindered by the bias of the Church. Native Marxists made use of the principles to alter history.

While the White's notion of land was mistaken so was their notion of Native traditionalism. Native culture is a living thing; Colonialism paved the way for the cultural innovation of the Natives. Maracle asserts that cultural imperialism is the alteration of the colonized people's cultural expression, Culture is a "mirror of a people's way of life" (9). But Native culture has been misinterpreted and misrepresented by the English translation. The Native "ceremonies" of spiritual leaders were much more than the English "ceremony". Maracle finds communists to be "self-avowed atheists" (142). The principles of communism regarding religion are simple. Everyone has the right to worship and to oppose worship peacefully. No one has the right to use religion to exploit others. Communists do not budge on the question of persecution for the purpose of exploitation. According to Maracle, "the philosophy of my ancestors lines up quite tidily with the philosophy of communism" (143). She remarks:

End the unequal and oppressive relations between European and Third World Nations. End the violent competition between nations of exploiters-peace. End the rape and plunder of the earth and its treasures in the interests of profit. (145)
Native spirituality, spirit, and the words of grandmothers are more powerful than the ideologies. Maracle says "I hear my grandmothers speak" (145). "Indian doctoring" (147) is the harnessing of spiritual energy. Native medicines have spiritual healing power.

Maracle tries to achieve solidarity with the other similarly oppressed people around the world. She conveys her debt as follows:

... to a myriad of Native people, Palestinians, Chileans, Filipinos, Eritreans, Ethiopians, El Salvadorans, Anti-apartheid activists and Black Canadians and American people who broadened my thinking and opened my eyes to the world of struggle and the joyous anticipation of a new humanity that is being worked out in their countries. (iv)

Maracle's struggle for Native equality in Canada is the outcome of intellectual support for the oppressed people, supporters of the liberation movements, and even movements held abroad. Extending her support, Maracle refers to how:

.. Birmingham, the burning of Watts and the Prince Rupert riots shook European North America naked of its silk gown of apathy: before Vietnam and the slaughter of Mexican students, emboldened Native people in Canada to pick up the broken thread of their lives. (95)
Liberation movements of the world, European hegemonic imposition on subaltern people, and the awakening of the depressed communities ennable the spirit of writers like Maracle to fight for equality. She invariably refers to Blacks (9,90), "Afro-Americans" (90), Lorde (163), Martin Luther King (98), and Frantz Fanon in her book.

Maracle in "Pork Chops and Apple Sauce" throws more light on Native solidarity movements. She says, "I have more in common with an African ex-slave than my Mayan cousins of Guatemala" (159). Maracle is against the colonialism of oppressed people all over the world. She extends her solidarity to the El Salvadorans and the South Africans. But now the solidarity with the movements remains disunited like the peace movement and the ecology movement. Native Canadians find equality now with the Blacks in America. Solidarity with the Blacks has become a vital part of Native's survival. In "Women's Movement", Maracle finds universality in the women's movements of the world. "We are part of a global movement of women in the world, struggling for emancipation", (181) declares Maracle. She agrees that Audre Lorde is the representative of women's movement in North America. She struggles for the unity between oppressed women and men. Maracle discusses the spirit of neocolonialism of Can-America in the chapter "The 50s". While European colonialism already exists, the cruelty of neo-colonialism is a modern technological burden for the Native people of Canada and other Third World colonies. Maracle in "Pork Chops and Apple Sauce" attacks North American's consumption of more food than it produces. It does not produce much, and it is not the center
of the universe. The businessmen who prosper in New York, Toronto, Vancouver, or Montreal extract the raw material from Native homes and lands. Native people lose their original wealth, and their history is reduced to one of ritual, song, and dance. They plunder the earth and the graves of Native ancestors. "Europe has been the historic beast" (155), says Maracle. Europeans in Can-America took Native's entire homeland and gave them a welfare cheque. Describing her spirit for community against neo-colonial exploitation, Maracle longs for....

I am a hungry woman. I hunger for my homeland, ailing and sick, that, it is. Ka-Nata, 'spirit of community'. I hunger for an end to the robbery and hunger for the spirit of community to envelope my home again. ... I am a pagan woman with a deep and stubborn sense of justice and a hungry spirit. (155-156)

European and Can Americans pillaged Africa for black labour and Asia for the skills and knowledge necessary to transform the world. Black people paid for this country with blood, sweat, and tears. "Neo-colonialism is the highest stage of capitalism" (136) says Maracle. Neo-colonialism perpetuates not just economic but also political and cultural domination. In many respects, neocolonialism is more powerful and efficient in maintaining oppression and control than old-style colonialism.
Neo-colonialism, the step-sister of old imperialism, is more subtle and better camouflaged but more exploitative and destructive of the material and spiritual riches. Howard Adams, a Metis critic, discusses the relation between the internal colonies and the external Third World colonies in light of neo-colonialism. He lists four major components of colonization:

In Canada, Indian, Metis, and Inuit communities constitute internal colonies. Internal colonies are based on four major components of colonization. The first is the method of entry ... second, the colonizer destroys the political organization, culture and economy of the aboriginal nation ... Third, the imperial power develops a special colonial government and legal order which oppresses and subjugates the indigenous people ... The final component is racism, where by the indigenous population is considered inferior due to biological characteristics ... As a result of the above conditions internal colonies are parallel to external Third World colonies. (158)

Canada was a colony of European imperialism which emerged with institutions and structures of racism and colonization that are very similar to most African and Asian colonies. Adams suggests that the internally-colonized people, such as Metis and Indians, and their problems must be viewed from a critical Third World perspective.
In Bakhtin's term, Maracle, "re-accentuates" Native life by re-writing the conventions of representing the Native. Through her autobiographical "I", Maracle narrates herself as a political representative of women and of Metis. The text seems to ground the re-visionary historiography in a struggle for decolonization. Maracle refers to the important Native struggles, such as the American Indian Movements, uranium mining (120), and Meares Island in the Queen Charlotte Islands (120), and proposes strategies of de-colonization: "re-writing history", which is not "betrayal" as it seems to the "elite" but is the rebel altering her conditions, "re-writing her life onto the pages of a new history" (121). As Godard observes:

The text is presented as first-person narration, the textual marker of oral narration, this is not presentation, but representation. For the text is a compilation of stories, a miscellany: although they give the illusion of truth, the anecdotes are fictional. (211)

The "rebel" in Maracle forces her to self-reflexively frame her narrative to represent Native community. By disrupting the dominant codes, Maracle hybridizes the Native contents with storytelling strategies. Maracle's self-representation in the title "I Am Woman" is a communal empowerment of all Metis women.

In Maracle's words, the chapter "The Rebel" in I Am Woman (1988) is "all about the inside of me. It is all about my insight. I hardly think it fair to lay bare my insights to my colleagues and withhold the truth from myself" (131). It is semi autobiographical since she says "I have taken both the stories of my life, the stories of others' lives (3).
The earlier text *Bobbi Lee, Indian Rebel* (1975) was edited and republished by Women's Press with the same title in 1990. It touches upon the postcolonial autobiographical boundaries and issues though Maracle did not claim as it is. There is a fusion of oral and written modes in this book. This book is spoken and then edited into written form. Maracle asserts that “the life of Bobbi Lee is about why we must talk” (11).

*Bobbi Lee* narrates Maracle's childhood and family details more than *I am Woman*. Both texts go beyond canonical aesthetics of autobiography and reject the quest narrative of traditional autobiography but come closer to the range and trends of the "life-writing genres" a term coined by Shirely Neuman. He says about Quebecois woman autobiographers:

In writing they have variously named "fiction - theorique" (Brossard), autobiographic (Gagnon), or fictionalysis (Marlatt), they have aimed to deconstruct "fictions" by which women have represented in culture and to produce instead a writing that, "conscious of itself as fiction' offers a new angle on the 'real', one that looks from inside rather than outside (in the difference between woman is subject and woman as object" in Marlatt's words. (4-5)

Maracle's "insights" and "hindsights" testify to the above views on Quebecois women's life-writing. Native women autobiographers also have similar cultural and political issues to Quebecois women writers.
Neuman's terms could be employed to interpret the autobiographies of Maracle. *Bobbi Lee, Indian Rebel* was dictated by Maracle in 1972 into a tape recorder as part of a project on life-writing undertaken by various members of the Marxist political group to which she belonged. Two of her associates, Don Barnett and Rick Sterling, transcribed her words and reduced and edited the eighty hours of tape and three inches of manuscript (interview) into a slim volume with the title *Bobbi Lee, Indian Rebel: Struggles of a Native Canadian Woman*. It was published in 1975 by the Liberation Support Movement Information Center as part of its "Life Histories from the Revolution Series". The text has reached only a limited audience and went out of print like many Native literary productions. Maracle planned to write a second volume but never completed it. The reprinted edition of *Bobbi Lee* has a foreword by the Okanagan writer Jeannette Armstrong, as well as an opening essay, a prologue, and an epilogue written by Maracle herself.

The newly edited *Bobbi Lee* situates the life story of a particular Native woman in relation to the suffering of the colonization of Aboriginal people by a Euro Canadian settler society. According to Linda Warley:

Maracle's autobiography, I want to suggest, can be read as postcolonial writing in that it is specifically aimed at exposing and opposing settler colonial rule. This autobiography makes visible a subject in the process of decolonising herself over an extended period of time ... To utter the term "postcolonial" in relation to a
Native text is to evoke the vigorous debate concerning the appropriateness ... clearly from the perspective of Aboriginal people, the colonial period is not over, for they have won neither political nor economic independence. (61)

The term postcolonialism has been used in many ways by critics and theorists of literature, history, political science, economics, feminism, women studies, etc. It has also been used for describing the process of decolonization of the erstwhile colonies under European domination and control, as also for now independent countries and cultures. Some people have used it to describe the internal colonization of the African Americans and of the aboriginals of U.S.A., Canada, Australia, etc. The term has also been used metaphorically to describe the conditions of women and other marginalised groups like the Dalits, lesbians, homosexuals, etc.

Particularly in Canada, the state continues to administrate their lives through the Indian Act and the Department of Indian Affairs. Jean Chretien's Liberal government made an election promise to abolish the Department of Indian Affairs and the Indian Act as a step toward recognising Aboriginal peoples' inherent right to self government. To date, this has not become a reality. Many treaty promises, including rights over land and resources, have not been honoured. Aboriginal people continue to be disadvantaged by systemic racism. Indeed, the social problems that plague their communities -- poverty, unemployment, substance abuse, violence, and suicide -- can be directly related to their colonization.
In response to the question "How can Native writing be considered post-colonial?", Thomas King argues that post-colonialism assumes that "the struggle between guardian and ward is the catalyst of Native literary production (12), post colonialism tends to obscure the long tradition of Native oral storytelling from which contemporary writing draws, a tradition that not only predates the colonial encounter but survives in spite of it" (12). Maracle herself views postcolonial theory and its related critical practices with suspicion. In an essay entitled "The 'post-colonial' Imagination", Maracle acknowledges that because "in the real world, colonialism is our condition", academic work on post-colonialism and literature is necessary (13). She insists, however, that Native writing is itself colonized by academic practices: "our words, our sense and use of language are not judged by the standards set by the poetry and stories we create.... They are judged by the standards set by others" (13). Maracle is not without hope. She imagines a future "dreamspace" (13) where an arc joins Native and non-Native communities, but she refuses to accept the implication that just because something called postcolonial literary studies now exists, the decolonization of Canadian culture will necessarily follow. Maracle would perhaps agree with Anne Me Clintock who suggests that post colonialism is "prematurely celebratory" (87). Emma La Roque comments in her preface to Writing the Circle: Native Women of Canada that

Reading postcolonial theoretical works, such as Albert Memmi's The Colonizer and the Colonized, can illuminate the situation of Native people in Canada (xx). Actually, much of Native writing, whether
blunt or subtle, is protest literature in that it speaks to the processes of our colonization: dispossession, objectification, marginalization, and that constant struggle for cultural survival expressed in the movement for structural and psychological self-determination. (xviii)

The original version of *Bobbi Lee* focuses on Maracle's early experiences of racism and sexism and how they eventually led her to become involved in political groups such as the Native Alliance for Red Power (NARP) and the Liberation Support Movement (LSM). Though Penny Petrone remarks that the subject matter is "ugly and uncomfortable" (118), she accepts the text as "a first person account of the first twenty terrible years in the life of Lee Maracle" (117). The LSM leader, Barnett, found in Maracle a Marxist ideology that needed to have an "oppressed" subject whom the revolution could save, a subjugated woman, an exploited member of the under class, a victim. The autobiographical "I" of the original text is partly shaped by this discourse of victimization. Describing the stories and the tone of the narrative in the early chapters, Warley says:

The events that are awarded textual prominence are those that emphasize Maracle's everyday battles. Stories of her father's neglect and abuse of the family, her encounters with racism both at school and on the job, her time spent drifting and hanging out with prostitutes, alcoholics, and drug addicts in Toronto, as well as her own problems with drug and alcohol abuse - these are the stories
that constitute and set the tone of the narrative, especially in the early chapters. Her story is interesting partly because it is sensationalized (67).

Linda Warley, writing in the context of the Oka crisis, brings post-colonial theory to bear on a discussion of Lee Maracle's changing self awareness and self representation in her 1975 and 1990 editions of *Bobbi Lee, Indian Rebel* and asks urgent questions about what this autobiography can teach us at a critical moment in the relation between Aboriginals and the other people of Canada. Describing the Oka crisis, Maracle says that the land is scarred and language is battered (7) and that Canadian deployment of the Army at Oka disturbed the peace of the Aboriginal people. Native people believe life is sacred, but the White people destroy the home lands and trivialize the Native life at Oka. Jeannette Armstrong in the "foreword" says "In the movement of the life story of *Bobbi Lee*, what unfolds is the story of many Natives during those times" (15).

The chapters entitled "Turbulent Childhood" and "Early Rebellion" describe Maracle's early childhood and racism at school:

I got to be that I was ostracized by all the White kids except for Donna and Glenn, And because I wouldn't Kowtow, bow and scrape or be their scapegoat, I got into a lot of fights and was beaten up more than any kid I knew. (50)
Native children, the school are treated as second class citizens, and the issue of racism at school is a predominant issue in the autobiographies of all these Native women writers. Maracle's "ostracization" by all the White students is the revelation of White supremacy even at the root of Native culture in Canada. Howard Adams, a Metis critic, says that state racism is the mainstream ideology to subordinate the Native people:

Indians, Metis, and Inuit grow up on the fringes of a bourgeois class system, but state racism still has a profound effect on our collective consciousness. The White supremacist ideology banishes us to a subordinate situation, and we are surrounded by repressive beliefs. Racism contributes greatly to our oppression as Aboriginals are bombarded by debasing stereotypes. ... The nation's racist ideology can cause us to hate ourselves as intensely as bigots and racists hate us ... The education system, including universities, is Whitening the Aboriginal consciousness. (43)

Educational institutions and the media infect Aboriginal students with petty bourgeois concepts. Media insensitively alter the Aboriginal consciousness. Colonizing the minds of the Native children even at school is the new type of neo-colonialism in Canada.

Like *I Am Woman*, *Bobbi Lee* is structured with short essays on about fourteen different topics. "Childhood", "Home", "Hippie Life-style", "Red power", 

"Fishing Rights", and "White Chauvinism" are some of the titles. The "Epilogue" at the end of the text comprises ten captions on "Discover Libraries", "With Child", "Think Indian", "Child Martial Conflict", "Youth Implosion", "Sexism", "China", "Memory", and "Divorce-Remarriage". While the text opens with Lee Maracle's short essay entitled "Oka peace camp September, 9, 1990", the foreword is written by Jeannette Armstrong. Then come a 'Dedication', to Don Barnett and a 'prologue' written by Maracle herself. A casual reader may be surprised at the framework of the text. There is no code of formal structure; the lay art at the text questions the mainstream construction of a novel. According to Warley:

For autobiographers who belong to marginalized groups ... do not enjoy social power, the act of remembering and inscribing their individual past lives might function as a way of affirming cultural survival and facilitating political self-determination. A Native autobiographer, such as Maracle, remembers and narrates her life story in order to explore and come to terms with the systemic and structural roots of her oppression, as well as her experience of it. (64)

The main source of ideas for Native authors is their own memory or personal experiences. The author makes use of this storehouse to write a personal narrative or autobiography. Every Native person's experience is a book in itself. Expressing one's own experiences and life is a determination against the White oppression, and for these reasons, "writing autobiography then, can be an act of both personal and communal empowerment" (Warley 65). As
Alice Nannup, an Australian Aboriginal writer, asserts, "if settler colonies such as (Australia and Canada) are ever to become truly decolonized places, then life stories of Aboriginal people must be available and should form part of education curricula" (qtd in Trees and Mudrooroo 264).

Aboriginal life stories challenge official or documented history, which has tended to ignore, denigrate, or distort the perspectives and experiences of Aboriginal people. They are a valuable cultural archives in that they present a different source for, and representation of, "truth". Truth becomes fiction in these autobiographies as in postmodern fictional narratives. The concept of reality as fiction has already been theoretically formulated by the sociological contributions of Peter L. Berger and Thomas Gluckmann. According to Berger and Gluckmann, 'reality' is not something that is simply given but is 'manufactured' (1971 : 8). The notion of reality as constructed and explored through textual self-reference has been firmly embedded in the postmodern novel. Edward Said remarks “that texts are not worldly, to some degree they are events, and, even when appear to deny it, they are nevertheless a part of the social world, human life, and of course, the historical moments in which they are located and interpreted" (225). Autobiographies of Native people record more truths, and experiences than other narratives. Maracle's Bobbi Lee is a different one because of editorial intervention which brought many changes in the republished text. In an interview with Hartmut Lutz, Maracle reveals that some events did not happen as they are presented in the book. Furthermore,
the language was changed to suit European aesthetic standards. Maracle states:

"I wanted to redo the whole thing, more in the voice I actually spoke in. There were moments of almost poetry in the spoken version, in the transcription. But it would have made what they call uneven narrative in English. So the editors made the decision to make it all even throughout." (Maracle, Interview 170)

In her dedicatory note, Maracle reveals that Don Barnett did all the linguistic work, and only the information was Maracle's own. But Maracle does not agree with the editorial intervention. In the chapter entitled "Involved with Life Again", Maracle describes her journeys to Vancouver and Toronto. Coming to Port Veille, a small town with rural atmosphere, Maracle started reading some of the slave narratives of Black Americans. She read Malcolm X Speaks and accepts that Malcolm was a practical man and practiced what preached. Maracle describes: "I read Malcolm's autobiography too. His ability to express himself really impressed me, but it also made me aware that my own vocabulary had dwindled" (123).

In the endeavour to achieve Native solidarity, Maracle is against racism all over the world. She does not like racist labelling of people. She abhors White people saying: "Black people they called "niggers", Italians were "wops" and Indians were always "squaws" or "red skins" (93).
In the chapter "Red Power", Maracle refers to Howard Adams, a half-breed from Saskatoon University of Saskatchewan. It is he who started a militant mass organisation called the Saskatchewan Native Action Committee (SNAC), which was involved in school boycotts, demonstrations, and so on. He was also a Red Power advocate. "Fish-In!” is a chapter portraying the Indian fishing rights. Here, too, Maracle refers to Fanon's *Black Skin White Mask* (141) and the Riel Rebellion (143); Maracle's primary aim here is to integrate Native organisations to uplift the Native struggle in Canada. One of the most important books she studies is Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*. In Fanon's work, Maracle finds a plausible explanation for her experiences as a Native person in Canada. Here, finally, is a theory that makes sense to her:

Mainly what interested me was the thinking of Fanon - particularly his ideas on Native / settler relations and the connections between colonialism and neo-colonialism. My reading was piecemeal, a little of this, a little of that, and (1) couldn't relate Indian politics to the rather vague understanding I had about imperialism ...I felt that Fanon was right and could follow some of his logic, but there were still so many things I was confused about. And though I'd started thinking and doing some serious reading, I wasn't at all sure I wanted to become a political person. (194)

Though the final comment is ironic, Maracle exhibits the ability to theorize her own situation. She is able to look back over her life, ask questions,
and begin the difficult process of seeing through and coming to terms with the forces, including colonialism and sexism, that shape her subjectivity.

Maracle lists a multifarious collection of different authors who have influenced her and her struggle. Some of them are Mao, Trotsky, Mao Tse Tung, Marx, Lenin, Engels, Dickens, Zola, Balzac, Jane Austen, Melville, Chekov, and M.L. King Jr. Maracle says "I am still inspired by the Chinese people" (227). Yet another incident which affected Maracle is the Shapesville (209), a massacre, in which thousands of South African Blacks who were peacefully protesting laws in mid-fifties were shot Down. Maracle says, "Somehow we were all connected" (209), which is the best example of Native people's anti-imperialist solidarity with the people of the Third World.

Maracle describes the 1975 autobiography as an "ancient manuscript" (199) written by a "bent" (200) child. But she states in the epilogue that these are "the final pages I will ever write about Bobbi" (201). As Warley says: "The construction of the text itself, where the two "I's" that represent her at different historical moments meet and enter into dialogue suggests that the autobiographical process of decolonisation" (70). The republished version of *Bobbi Lee* has got rid of patriarchal domination. In the words of Warley, "in the second text, Maracle represents herself not as a fringe participant in domestic or political groups but as a woman embedded in the matrices of various constituencies and communities" (71).
Maracle is a writer who wishes to have solidarity with all people including non-Natives. She comments that Native people have to "come out of our house, out of our village, out of our self-imposed era of segregation ... and into the White communities" ("Coming" 74).