Lee Maracle considers writing as an act of survival and resistance. It breathes a fresh life in the polluted world and all her works emphasize the need for the Native Canadians to recuperate the rudiments of history from the devastating effects of colonialism. Her writings have successfully resisted the forces that destroyed the Native lives and made the Native history invisible. Her works *Sojourner’s Truth, Bobby Lee, I am Woman* and *Daughters Are Forever* have asserted her identity as a Native Woman and demystified all the concocted images of Native Canadian Woman. In the collection of short stories *Sojourner’s Truth* Lee Maracle emphatically registers her dissent to be part of the encompassing European modes of narrative. She differentiates and distances herself from the European modes of story telling and successfully articulates her struggle for identity: “Always I clung to the principles of oratory. Each story is layered with unresolved human dilemmas. Each story requires the engaged imagination of the reader” (*Sojourner’s Truth*.11). The claim of Lee Maracle becomes paradoxical and by the very act of publishing the book she negates with the basic nature of oratory. She refuses to orally narrate the stories but believes in writing down realizing the Derridian notion that writing is the site of change. She believes in reaching the greater community and world via the print media. Deeply conscious of the paradoxical situation, Lee Maracle realizes that there is no escape from the construed history. To her Colonisation in an incomprehensible experience from which a nation and community cannot wake
up from the nightmare condition. Her attempts to stick to Native modes of
narrative identity, native identity cannot be taken for granted as simplistic
attempts of craving for past or hankering after a pure Native identity. Lee
Maracle cuts the difference from the Native way of recollecting the glorious past
to subvert the colonial assumption that the Native cultures were in primitive
status before the dawn of colonialism. To her the journey in life is always
forward but not backward. Her concern is occupied with the future than the past.
She is reluctant to declare the death of Europe and return to the Native modes of
living and writing is the dire necessity. To her every form and act of writing is a
cultural and social negotiation with the past. It is a process to move beyond the
invisible vision of Europe to declare the identity of her community. Without
rejecting the European modes of writing, she creates a fresh Native furnace: “In
the course of writing these stories I tried very hard to integrate two mediums:
oral and European story: our sense of metaphor, our use of it with traditional
European metaphor and story form” (Sojourner Truth. 11). She executes the
Native modes of storytelling and narration for different contexts. She felt the
necessity of providing a ‘set guide’ to the listeners. Hence, is the justification for
providing a map to the sojourner in Sojourner’s Truth in the form of preface “
You become the Trickester”.

It is pertinent to observe that there is a serious contention between the
spoken word and the written word in contemporary critical understanding and
the transition from the oral transmission of knowledge to the written alphabetical
order is always debated. Maracle’s Sojourner’s Truth captures this and dissolves
the incomprehensibility in understanding: “Dedicated to all those Native people who find themselves staring at a blank white sheet and struggle hard to talk to it (Maracle. 5). She explicitly makes every one to understand the intricate path involved in writing her ‘self’ and her world. The post enlightenment situation in Europe has presented this as binary juxtaposition and implicitly conveyed that the written word is superior to the spoken word. But this stands in contrast to the Native situation where the spoken word is truth and preferred to the written word. Lee Maracle often expressed her discomfort about the reductive and lifeless ant like nature of the letters on a blank page: “I resisted publishing for a long time… how can one squeeze one’s loved ones, small onto the pages of a three dimensional rectangle, empty of their form, minus their favourite colors and the rhythm of the music that moves them” (I am Woman). Lee Maracle choose to put her thought in the written form and puts into form the principles of oratory, undermining the European modes of thinking.

The European concept of author as a dictator and the creator who single handedly creates the text is completely subverted by Lee Maracle. For her writing is the life and action of the community. It is never a private enterprise. Subscribing to this perception, she collaborates with other Native writers who are willing to share their life stories to fill the canvass of writing. Her books are considered as multi coloured quilts woven out of the borrowed fabric of the lives of Natives. She becomes the custodian of the lives recorded and narrated. I am Woman is a compendium of Lee’s experiences as a Native woman and is interwoven with excerpts from other Native lives: “Some of the stories were
from women and children who have walked in and out of my life” (*I am Woman*, 4). On the similar line *Sojourner’s Truth* acknowledges all the Natives living or dead, who rendered the stories of their lives. In one of the stories ‘worm’ Lee collaborates in narrating the life of three year old son. The imagination of the child is beyond the comprehension. Maracle conducts a very intimate conversation with the child to narrate his story in a language “partly mine, partly his” (*Sojourner’s Truth*, 40). The story carries two voices. They exist simultaneously at a narrative level. One is of the mother concerned who observes her son and another of a young boy who struggles to come to terms with a painful moment in his life. This is the shared attempt in narrating the story. Lee captures the attempt of the child to use a typical language to infuse freshness in looking at an unfamiliar world. The vision of the child is not blurred or jaded like an young man. Victor Shlovosky’s ‘defamiliarisation’ is realized in the language of the child for the simple fact that the world is not so familiar to the child. The child encounters the world for the first time and it looks pretty for the child. But the child is dismayed at the fact “…how cum big people don’t likeum?” (41). This stands out to be the best experimental short story, in which Lee keeps child as the co author. This becomes the representative of all her works which proves that the act of writing is a collaborative effort and is a synthesis of multiple voices.

Lee Maracle considers reading/listening is a creative process similar to writing. As a writer she claims no patent over her works. If her work is transmitted in an unchanged form, she considers that as a failure. For her the act
of reading and writing are the simultaneous reflections of thought process. As a voracious reader of the life stories of Natives, she is involved in the serious act of writing. She if of the firm view: “In my memory, no two people ever told the same story in exactly the same way… It would be sad if this written version came to represent the last word in the story; hence, I caution you to read it and reimagine it” (*I am Woman*. 133). She sets the pre condition to read her books and invites the reader into a participatory mode. The union of the reader and the writer materializes the story. She ensures the liberty to the reader to recreate their stories after reading her stories. It makes the meaning to her and to her life situations. In the Native narrative modes, the story is not given to the reader in a well packaged form in the chronological order. Contrarily the reader has to wrestle with the story and draw out his own conclusions. The traditional European modes of narration in their usual way underestimate the imaginative capacity of the reader: “Not much is left to the intelligence in the European stories either. The answer to the question posed lies within the lines of the story” (*Sojourner’s Truth*. 12). In contrast, the Native narratology invites the active participation of the reader and unravels the intricacies in narration. Native stories keep the active reader alive and allows the story run within the lives of the people. They keep the reader as the centre of the drama of life and make him the trickster of social transformation: “At the same time, the reader must remain central to the working out of the drama of life presented. As listener/reader, you become a trickster, the architect of great social transformation at whatever level you choose” (*Sojourner’s Truth*. 13). For the readers who are oriented in
realist narratives, the stories of Lee Maracle act as a sort of disorientation. Like her life and the lives of Native people, Maracle writes about the incomprehensibility of the contemporary cultural paradigms. These stories settle the disputes of the author and she proves to be clueless about the answers and the Native cultural paradoxes. She refuses to be omnipotent and superior. In the short story ‘Too Much to Explain’, we witness the tense meeting between two lovers in a restaurant. One of the young native girl is traumatised by the memories of her past: “a childhood yo-yoing between lonely foster homes and a mental ward” (Sojourner’s Truth. 119). She is driven to the verge of mental breakdown, haunted by the incidents of mother’s suicide and father’s drunken rage. Her lunatic condition alienates her lover from her life. He gets exhausted and tired of emotional excesses and blurts out: “I’m not a fucking therapist” (118). But he makes aborted attempts to rebuild the relationship. The story do not end with a dialogue between the two characters. The girl observes stoic silence and refuses to articulate her angst. With the realization, she drives herself out of her lover’s life: “It was all too much to explain. How does one begin to unravel the accumulation of thousands of years of entrapment to a man bent on repairing the dents she occasionally made in the machinery of the trap” (120). Through these stories, Lee Maracle distorts the general illusion that death leads to experience the ultimate truth. The protagonists in the stories experience a sigh of relief through death and it proves to be blinding and unsettling: “In death true is not dressed in the deceptive clothes of mortal flesh. Hell is seeing the lie in all your excuses” (Sojourner Truth. 121). This collection stories
ensures no single truth, it sets us on a journey to pursue unsettled personal quests.

The writings of Lee Maracle are part of her activism against the devastating impact of colonialism on Native cultures across the globe. Writing is one of the ways through which Maracle rebuilds the Native communities across Canada. Justifying this she observes in *I Am Woman*: “Exhaustion overtakes the oppressed, resistance seems useless; finally implosion occurs and systems which existed for thousands of years break down. The breakdown occurred during my life time and continues to this day” (10). She strongly resists the act of colonizing the mind and revitalizes the people suffering from internal colonization. She constantly attempts to motivate them and picks up the broken thread of their lives, realizing that liberation is not simple. The spirit of resistance that begins with rudimentary fragmented available historical evidences connects her to rebuild an identity for herself and for the Natives. In this process, Maracle do not depend on the available grim aspects of native life. She tries her best to capture the spots of colour to light up the lives of Natives. The sense of humour she holds, enlightens even the depressing and sad moments in the lives of the Natives. Another story ‘Who’s Political Here?’ displays her cynicism. The protagonist struggles to sustain the family over burdened with her two young kinds. She withstands the advances of her useless husband’s friend. She prevails over the situation with the sense of humour: “You look beautiful when you laugh … You know you’re cute when you are mad” (31). Maracle
describes the interaction in a humorous way, highlighting the wisdom and the
stoic endurance that the Native woman carry in their lives.

Writing for a specific audience, Lee considers writing an opportunity to
develop intimate discussion with her own people. She makes everyone to
understand the Native Canadian experience. She advises the European readers to
sink with and find the reflection of their lives in the content of her books: “If
you do not find yourself spoken to it is not because I intend rudeness— you just
don’t concern me now” (I Am Woman. 10). This obviously shows her shift from
the hatredness of the oppressive colonial system that erased the Native culture
and the family to a deep concern for one’s own people. Instead of registering the
justified anger against the dominant forces, she undertakes an inward journey to
indulge in introspective analysis of her own life and the lives of other members
of the Native communities. Her mental maturation from self destructive
hatredness and anger to a matured perception of love and the concern for the
community is evident in the autobiographical account of the early years of life
in Bobby Lee. This autobiography traces the evolution of her life from the
political consciousness and the awakening of the need to understand and
articulate her identity as a Native Canadian woman. Bobby Lee ends with Lee’s
realization that her animosity against the system is transformed from oneself to
one’s own people. Her realization begins with her and her own people. She
decides to recuperate the broken fragments of her life and participates in the
process of rebuilding and reinventing herself. Bobby Lee concludes with the
beginning of Lee’s change from violence to caring and from anger to healing.
This transformation is also reflected in *I Am Woman* & *Sojourner’s Truth*. Lee remembers her initial stages in her life when rebellion and rage overpowered her to abuse her children. She found no constructive outlet and indulged in perpetrating violence on her children:

My beautiful daughters who were so fortunate I did not spend more time with them, because violence-puglistic…violence was on the surface of my own being…It had everything to do with racism and self hate. I thought I hated white people I did not love my own (Bobby Lee. 229).

For Lee the gendered identity is a discovery. It is a realization which requires a meticulous exploration. Her awareness of identity as a woman and bonding with the larger community of woman contribute seminally to self healing process in *I Am Woman*. It carries the compilation of the explorations and examines the debilitating impact of colonialism. The self healing process is crucial in Native culture and is pertinent to the experiences of Native Canadian women:

Until March 1982, feminism, indeed womanhood itself, was meaningless to me. Racist ideology defined womanhood for the Native woman as non-existent, therefore neither the women’s question nor the European rebel response held any meaning for me (*I Am Woman*. 15).

Lee asserts her gender identity and rebels against the erasure of womanhood. The Native woman is shown to be existing at the last rung of the existing hierarchy. She is at the receiving end of the extreme violence from the
colonizers and also from the Native men. Native woman has her own specific battle to wage which is differentiated from the mainstream woman’s and Native man’s struggle. Lee describes the Native woman’s struggle as: “On this table of lateral violence sits the violence of men and women against children and the violence of men towards women. The ‘healing movement’ spearheaded by women is the struggle to clear this table of violence” (I Am Woman. 9).

Lee observes that mainstream Feminism is reductive towards accommodating the perspectives of Native woman. She has expressed discomfort with classified notions and labels. But often she is invited by white women only to speak on specifically on the Native women and their problems: “Should I venture out on my own and deal with women as a whole and not in a segregated native fashion” (I Am Woman 18). According to her when labels like ‘self’ and ‘the other’ are considered as ethnic or indigenous, it might end up in a process of stereotyping or reducing Natives to a group of people. This is perceived to be the exercise of power tactics to exclude the Natives in the hierarchy. The danger of choosing the label makes one’s identity simplistic and static and becomes a complex reality to be engaged. In the short story ‘Lee On Spiritual Experience’, Maracle bask on the glory of her own physical beauty: “the contours of my cheek bones, the shape of my mouth and large eyes I can’t stop feeling glad that these people think me lovely” (Sojourner Truth. 112). This story unabashedly celebrates the physicality of being and attacks the stereotypes of the Natives. In Lee’s perception and depiction, her identity
becomes a complex dynamic process and escapes from being defined in a simple way.

Lee’s association with mainstream Canadian feminist movement do not deter her from being engaged with Native Canadian movement. In the short story ‘Eunice’, she explores the strategies she has to adopt and the negotiations to make as a Native Canadian woman activist. She observed that as a writer to interact with various communities on the theme ‘the politics of International Feminism’ is a constructive and stimulating experience. She felt that as woman writer she shared many commonalities but deplored the scarcity of space specially for Native woman writers to discuss various issues: “For most male writers the Austin or some other bar suffices, but as yet no one has devised the sort of coffee house with kitchen table atmosphere to suit women writers intellectual needs “ (Sojourner’s Truth. 56). Most of the writers have managed to maintain equipoise between domesticity and writers responsibility. Yet times, they managed desperately between ‘wiping noses’ and ‘writing poems’. To many of the women writers, writing is the site of change and it was won after a long struggle and much effort. In the short story to one of the questions ‘Were you ever encouraged to write?, she gives the emphatic reply ‘No’. Lee says: “Women are never encouraged to write. We drift into the clothes out various types of discouragement wore. I divorced my first husband over it” (Sojourner’s Truth 58). For Lee ‘Writing’ was never a matter of choice. She wrote because of the dire necessity. To her ‘Writing’ is a ceremony and an act of healing through which she preserved her sanity. It is through her writing she spoke to her people
and experiences a rejuvenation. It is through the short stories, poetic remembrance and fanciful flights into memories, She could see the experience between what she was and what she wanted to be: “I had picked up arrogant voice of Europe not as a language but as a way of being… I had felt so inept in resisting the dehumanizing process that urbanization is a racist society meant for us “ (Bobby Lee 229). It is the writing that makes her human in the inhuman world. Writing is not the disjunctive form of action to her. She writes with power and energy to recuperate the lost history of the Natives.

Lee Maracle strongly believed that the internal lives of the Natives are strongly colonized. She is of the firm view that there are number of brave Native women who are internally struggling to rebuild the families drawing inspiration from the enriched Native culture. She recognizes the struggles of the Natives struggling to recreate political institutions and governing systems of the past. Considering the paradoxical situation in which Natives are placed, She depends on the Native consciousness: “We are saddled with the responsibility for alerting these conditions and rebuilding our nations” (x-XI). She proposes the discontinuation from the paralyzing colonial bondage. All the Native characters in her works share a spirit of resistance and rebellion. Marianne of Sundogs shows her rebellion by participating in the famous Run for Peace. To her the act of rewriting history requires rebellion. In the essay The Rebel, she claims: “To most of the elite, rewriting their history is equal to dignified betrayal… Only rebellion, the spiritual cleansing of the bad blood that separates her from her womanhood, can appease the rebel. But they need not know that they could win”
This is substantiated in the novel *Sundogs*. The novel discusses the famous Meech Lake Accord and its consequences on the survival of Native cultures. It depicts the struggle of young first Nations family for love and solidarity in the context of consternation caused across Canada with the Meech Lake Accord. As per the accord, Quebec is given the status of distinct society and was to be included in the Canadian constitution on 23rd June 1990. A unanimous consent was prepared for debate to introduce the accord without the usual two days notice. All the natives felt the betrayal by the accord.

Marianne, the protagonist of the novel, is presented as the indifferent individual. She fails to understand the reasons for her mother’s anger that her private quarrels are concerned with the Natives in general. She fails to understand why her mother is so sad about the people she had never met. It is towards the premier displayed by the former’s vehement quarrels in the T.V. She is in complete knowledge of Meech Lake issue and the common feelings of Native community. But it is conveyed that hers is a purely academic interest devoid of any personal involvement. She felt that such issues are private matters of elders. Through the intense introspection of Marianne, Maracle effectively supports the ideals of Elijah Harper and conveys how the general Native Community was effected. Marianne fails to value the worth of Natives, inspite of her living among the worthy Natives. She was considered ignorant in Native customs and culture due to her western education. She is considered to be the intruder into the Native world of her Mother and Auntie. It is only with the help of an outsider Elijah, she relates herself to the Native culture. The untimely death of her niece,
Dorry and the traditional Native ceremony that she was given, brings in the realization in Marianne that she was alienated from Native tradition and culture:

“There are too many volumes of instruction missing in my life... An entire context is missing. My whole cultural origins are absent... I am about to enter the funeral place of my niece as a foreigner, one of them, a white person” (144).

Marianne becomes intensely aware of this gap and in a way holds her people responsible. She had always learnt English and never faced a problem in communication in the School. Now she realizes: “Not having my languages was good for me at school, in their world, but it kept alienated from my family” (146). She feels deceived for having kept away from the world of Native wisdom and thought that European education could never provide. She painfully realizes the ‘theirness’ (144) in the very communication of the family. She is given the choice of choosing between the two cultures. Experiencing the feasibility of the choice, she decides to live in the Native culture. She declares her intention to join the peace run and resolves with satisfaction “some sort of profound perception of Truth” (148). It is through the experience of this character, Lee Maracle rewrites some of the historical events of the Native world. Marianne joins the run for peace with three distinctive motives. First, her joining the great political event conveys and assures herself that she has found the lost faith. Secondly, the physical participation is a contribution to a native cause and its ensures a clear future and holds peace to life. It fills her with the affection that she lacked so far. It makes her to proclaim her family and the Native world with a sense of pride. Through the perception of Marianne,
Maracle describes the passion experienced by all the Natives during the great run:

The runners are all at the ready. Drummers sing old songs from the back of a large pick up... The first man in front... The ladies seems ancient and young at the same time. Each is alone with their thoughts... Spider weaves its web inside my soul. .. the simplicity of their love, the greatness of it spins a web of ancient power in places inside me I have never tread (169-172).

Thus, Marianne along with the runners experiences the cultural and spiritual transformation. One of the important features of the novel is its celebration of the mundane. The ideals of Elijah Harper effect the entire Native community and the social non entity like Marianne. The image of the grass presented by Pete and Monty, becomes the significant feather. The natives are compared with the small blades of grass which could be easily trampled by white population. But the awareness will not allow the history to repeat itself.

Lee Maracle argues for toppling the imperialist order in the interest of everyone and argues that the literary contribution of Native writers also heal the whites from the cultural chaos. She fosters a meaningful cultural exchange aspiring for powerful inter racial alliances. She welcomes the white readers to follow her fiction and to create their own interpretations. She forewarns that the readers of white ancestry may project mainstream bias and stereotypes onto the texts. She cautions the white readers to act against the mainstream bias and stereotypes onto the texts. Expressing her concern over cultural appropriation,
she condemns ‘cognitive imperialism’. Marie Battiste, a Mi’kmaq expert on the protection of Indigenous heritages of the world, coined the term ‘cognitive imperialism’ that designates the hierarchical and patrimonial monologue decided by Eurocentrism. She points to the overall lack of appropriate sensitive criticism by Euro Canadian scholars. There is also little effort from the mainstream critics to connect the writings of Maracle with the history of the Natives. They tend to assess the quality of Maracle’s fiction from the vantage point of Eurocentric theories instead of trying to understand the influence of Native culture. Maracle views this as a ‘normative criticism’ as the viable means of maintaining the status quo which invalidates the mainstream conventions. She is of the view that these scholars should be aware of the self questioning and genuine knowledge of the Native cultures. She encourages the Euro Canadian scholars to learn about Aboriginal cultures and perspectives. In many of her essays and talks, she conceptualises this idea through metaphor of a bridge or a mountain with mainstream Canadians on one side and herself on the other. This presupposes Maracle’s perception that different communities need each other’s truths in order to realize a deeper sense of truth to live as humans and in people’s relationships with every other living being. In this way, Maracle invites the mainstream readers to use their possible discomfort as an opportunity for learning about the Natives/Indigenous.

Lee Maracle’s *Daughters Are Forever* is a penultimate novel. It focuses on the cultural and social development of Native daughters. It centres primarily on Marilyn’s journey towards recovery, reconciliation and self awareness both
as an abused child and mother. Few Native writers have incorporated this theme as a concern of the fictional works though it was inflicted by Canadian child welfare system. Although, it is a complex, mature and cleverly written novel, Maracle has not received the required critical attention. Maracle resists many preconceptions about Native social dysfunction. The general perception is that Natives are maladjusted modern society. The cultural stereotypes imposed on Natives such as the violent drunk or drug-addicted Native; the ‘squaw’ prostitute, the ‘lazy Indian’ on welfare; the unnatural mother who neglects her children are dismantled by Lee Maracle. In Daughters Are Forever confronts these perceptions by ascribing to the colonial process which has created epidemic rates of mental and social health problems. She focuses on Native family dysfunction and underlines its origins in a long history of disempowerment and cultural destruction. The protagonist Marilyn, a Sto:lo social worker, attempts to identify the links between personal and social Native traumas on the one hand and patterns of collective victimization by federal institution on the other hand. This propels her to militate against the abduction of Aboriginal children by psychological and social toll of Indian policy as a major cause of dysfunctional Aboriginal parenting. Through the protagonist’s parallel personal and political quests, Maracle demonstrates the struggle against mainstream victimization.

Marilyn, takes on the case of Elsie Jones. She is dismayed by the fact that the Canadian Welfare agency reduces human tragedies and sorrow to files, objective evidence and court decisions. The reasons are investigated
superficially and transformed into few consoling sentences. In particular cases Marilyn believes that “Someone has broken (her) and later learns from a vision that she was molested as a child” (67-68). She realizes that Canadian Welfare institutions handles children like objects to control and displace them at their will. This condescending attitude is epitomized by the apprehensions. These created apprehensions on the social nature of the Natives legitimized the measures of controlling the children. The handbook observed by the Government social workers clearly states: “First take photographs; make copious notes; speak to the parent (...) assess whether or not the child was in danger; collect clean clothes (...) then roundup the children. Mindlessly, sightlessly, the worker and her photographer carried out their jobs in accordance with the dictates of their procedural training” (45). This excerpt focalizes Marilyn’s point of view. Aware of the fact that Elsie neglected little James, Theresa and Marsha, Maracle is of the view that the Government social services are threat to parenting and to Children’s mental health. The Government believes that kidnapping the children is the only solution to serious family dysfunction. The dynamics of power and domination within the Canadian society are balanced by the involvement of the institutions into the personal lives of the people. Maracle draws parallel post traumatic flash back narrations between Marilyn and her mother Elsie and other Indigenous women who fail to care their children. The apprehension of Elsie’s neglected children reflects even Marilyn’s daughter Catherine in similar circumstances. Her daughter’s appalling situation echoes perfectly Marily’s state in her early motherhood years. Similarly, Elsie’s
‘hysteria at her trail is reminiscent of Marilyn’s uncontrollable rage when she lost Catherine. Marilyn identifies herself with Elsie to a large extent and partly understands the powerlessness and guilt that she must be feeling. She realizes that Elsie’s case sheds light on her own behavior and patterns of denial as she finally admits the neglect of her children. Elsie becomes a mirror character for her inspite of the differences in age, cultural origins and personal history. Marilyn develops a personal stake and implicit bond in helping Elsie change her life style in such a way that her two little children can be returned to her. By counseling and questioning her, Marilyn hopes to explain her own unfathomable pain that made her to ill treat and neglect her two daughters. The protagonist’s journey unfolds at personal and professional level. On the personal front, she tries to indulge in introspective analysis to assess the fallacies in her life. On the professional side, she tries to refine her methods for counseling Elsie and other mother’s in danger of losing their children for the sake of welfare. Moreover, she tries to include activist dimension and believes that the pattern of dysfunctional parenting exists in many Native communities. This brings her to the realization in struggling with the epidemic of child neglect and the abuse by the Native Canadian mothers. She understands that the reasons for the maternal failure are rooted in the historical, social and political factors. Marilyn knew that Elsie’s condition had taken over one hundred years to create the historic conditions to assure the social security for the Native families. Marilyn encounters obstacles from the board of her agency when she tries to convince them to take Elsie’s children for welfare. The Govt. institutions have vested interest in blaming the
victim rather than violating Aboriginal human rights. For Marilyn, it is significant to replace Native Canadians in their historical contexts as disregard will only confirm the stereotypes about Natives as culturally and emotionally flawed.

As the mouthpiece of Maracle, Marilyn is aware that Elsie’s treatment by the welfare agency and the court bears the ideological imprint of government policies created from the nineteenth century onwards to control Native people’s behaviors and position within Canadian society. The views of Marilyn underlie Elsie’s familial tragedy allude to the Indian Act, first passed in 1876 which defines Natives social, institutional and ethno racial status. Based on the construction of Natives as culturally, morally and socially defective, it contained several policies that imposed European life styles and Christian religions on Native people. In practice, this Act has heaped countless regulations and prohibitions on Native populations and justified their displacement, disempowerment and destruction of the cultures. This form of ‘institutionalized racism’ (Henry et al 131) reduced them to a segregated and precarious life on reserves and caused unspeakable social sufferings whose consequences endure to this day (Francis 203-05). This systematic oppression especially disempowered Native women in many ways. It is the immense diversity found in the lives of Native women that made pre conquest nations to consider them as sacred and celebrated for power to make life. Paula Gunn Allen the Pueblo theoretician and Native American writer observed that these Native populations were ‘Mother-Right Peoples’, which promoted the idea that the primary potency
in the Universe was female’ (26). It is pertinent to observe that in most North American nations, Women were the centre of power and life. They were the name givers, law makers, land owners, healers and spiritual leaders. The Oran knowledge is the prime indication that they were warriors. During the pre-colonial times and until the influx of the Europeans, women held high positions in the North American cultures. They were considered as the core of the well-being and organization of their Nations. They are also the keepers of language and culture. It is for these historical reasons, the colonial powers have sought to dismantle the settler governments to fulfill the agenda of cultural annihilation. Anderson in A Recognition of Being has observed that the tribal cultures are with gynocratic nature: “If the gynocratic nature of the tribal system was destroyed, the institutions, traditions and social and spiritual health of the communities would follow” (69-71). Anderson is of the view that in Canada, the Indian Act institutionalized the patriarchal devaluation of the women through their dissociation from their traditional roles. The local gynocratic practices were dismantled in contradiction with the imposed European political systems and laws. The Native identity of the children derived from the women and the Indian status was imposed on the male head of the household by the colonial system. Insidiously, the colonial culture curtailed the economic and commercial power of the Native women only to make them dependents on the families and the purchased goods. To conceal the cultural war of Native annihilation, colonialism has blamed the victims with the labels of laziness, slovenliness and were accused of poor house keeping. Natives were subjected to oppression and
denial of access to their own resources and confinement in unsanitary shacks. All the works of Maracle, specially *Daughters Are Forever* document the adverse impact of Indian Act on the lives of Native women and children during different periods of colonial times.

Lee Maracle considers Indian Act and other discriminatory policies as reflections of broader socio cultural problems. To her, racism and sexism are ingrained in European and American ideology. They pervade and are perpetuated by Western institutions under the veil of democratic pluralism. It is a phenomenon addressed by Henry et al as ‘democratic racism’ (19). Maracle considers racism as systematic institutionalized social phenomena and a mere reflections of societal structures. Antonio Gramsci’s concept of ‘common sense’, ‘hegemonic’ finds resonance in Maracle’s definition of white ideology. She argued that the institutional forms of nationalism work hand in hand with the exploitative hierarchal order dominated by white masculine society. Western colonial order is a white patriarchy based on the emotionality of patriarchal racism. This is known as ‘culturecide’ or ‘deculturation’ equivalent to cultural genocide. This designates the process that has been purposely introduced and results into the decline and demise of culture without resulting in the physical destruction of its bearers. In this perception the dynamics of race cannot be dissociated from the gender. For Maracle, racism, sexism and classism interlock and intersect in more practical ways in the lives of Aboriginal women (*Woman*. 16-22). Native/ Aboriginal women undergo multiple marginalization as colonized ‘others’ and also as generally impoverished segment of the Canadian
population. This is a specific form of dehumanization uncommon to Aboriginal men and white women. For Maracle, the implicit social hierarchies of Canadian society construct white men as prototypical humans, white woman as inferior to them, then Native men as even more worthless and Native woman as occupying the bottom of the social ladder. As per the hierarchical order of the patriarchy beneath the Native men comes the Native woman and Native woman are not even fit to be referred as women. Henry Frances, Carol Tator, Winston Mattis and Tim Rees in *The Colour of Democracy: Racism in Canadian Society* (2000) observe that the Native Canadian Woman face endemic abuse and harassment and it is evident in inferior average income they receive when compared to Native men (138). Maracle reaffirms that this kind of victimization manifests the larger dehumanization of Native peoples: “the denial of Native Womanhood is the reduction of the whole people to a subhuman level. Animals beget animals” (*Woman*.17). This anti Indigenous form of gendered racism reinforces the racist denigration of Native woman both at the ideological level and at the more concrete level of policy making (*Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women*. 7). This implicit influence of gendered racial stereotyping is evident in Elsie’s treatment by welfare and in court. These two govt. institutions treat Elsie as a culprit and fail to treat her as a human being. She is judged as a one dimensional character, as a dirty squaw devoid of intelligence and agency. She is bestowed with indignity as she struggles with alcoholism in the status of single mother. Her living is decided and confirmed by the concocted popular images of Native mothers. The popular images of
single mothers received as ‘welfare mothers’ are a burden and moral threat to the society and these overshadow the complete absence of Native fathers, leaving the single mothers as responsible for the guilty of negligence. On this lines of this argument, the Doris Marshall institute schematizes these negative judgements on Natives women as follows:

If Native women are constructed as ‘easy squaws’ and are locked into this imagery through the behavior of individuals, they will continue to be rendered worthless in public institutions such as courtrooms or hospitals. If we treat Native women as eary or drunken squaws in the court system, we feed negative stereotypes that will further enable individuals to abuse Native females and so on. Negative Native female images are part of a vicious cycle that deeply influences the lives of contemporary Native women

(Anderson, Recognition 112).

It is from this perspective, the court refuses to consider Elsie’s poverty, social isolation and obvious lack of self esteem that result from the Native status of Native women. The approach of the government institutions criminalises the social status and freezes all the available natural resources. For instance, Marilyn is not granted permission for short term psychological therapy and counseling to prevent the compulsions of suicide. These oppressive dynamics are reinforced by the western institutions of justice that function on the foundations of Eurocentric and patriarchal principles. Judge Stuart states that Western justice expects offenders like Elsie to gain control over her life
miraculously without understanding the personal and financial problems. The failure of the individual closes the doors on further rehabilitations and justice systems. It is at this backdrop of cultural colonialism, the decision of the court creates a new cycle pain, resentment and crippling guilt. Elsie requires recognition, separated from her traditional Anishnaabe culture. She aspires for the recognition of her personal and cultural grief. Without the possibility of name and recognition, she becomes a victim of anonymous identity. She fails to overcome the sense of defeat. She aspires for reconnecting herself and her children with Anishnaabe culture and values. Marilyn realizes that the welfare of the Native children bears the legacy of assimilationist policies from the Indian Act. This Act has legitimized the large scale abduction of Native children to residential schools. The provisions of the Indian Act were blind towards addressing the origins of the Native families. Indeed, this schooling system has fostered a collective trauma. For Maracle, the retraumatization of devastated communities is more deliberate than the subtly practiced assimilationist policy. She believed strongly that there is power in naming and identifying social problems lies at the root of solving them. So, one has to necessarily speak about the link between the residential schools and the child welfare in forcing the govt. to acknowledge the damage that all the institutions of Govt. have brought on Native/Aboriginal communities. The Absolute right of the Native communities to rear their children has to be protected and it cannot violated in the name of civilizing mission.
As a part of the series of amendments made to the Indian, the govt. of Canada, the federal residential school system was created. From the mid 1870 onwards, it forced Native parents to send their children to special boarding schools run by Christian churches (NAWAC. ‘Violations’. 17-18). Their avowed goal was to ‘eradicate all that was Indian (‘violations’) by imposing Christianity, English and Western civilization and education. As a result, the Native children were completely isolated from their families and were forbidden to speak their language and were socially and psychologically distanced from their culture and history. According to the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, many of the forms of discipline are nothing but the practices of mental, physical and sexual tortures. Further, it has placed the Native children in the oscillating positions who could not fit in either world. The Native children were illtreated for speaking their language and were equally deprived of proper command over English. Lee Maracle has codified the complex situation of the Native children as ‘crippled two tongues’. This policy could invite only debilitating effect on the whole of Native population. Separation of the Native children from the families created only loss of traditional ways of being on the land and parenting skills. The Native children were denied of Native sense of morality. This forceful cultural appropriation has created inter generational chain of abuse and violence that seriously affected the survivors.

In Daughters Are Forever, Marilyn sees direct link between the residential schools and new mass kidnappings of Indigenous children by Child welfare. Elsie’s lack of self worth and nurturing abilities result from residential
schooling. Marilyn is aware that the beginning of the ‘child welfare era’ coincided with the violations of the Native treaties and phasing out of the residential schools: “the very moment they shut down the residential schools, the government went on a child raiding spree” (56). The transgenerational trauma and collective demoralization inflated by the residential schools became an excuse to place Native/Aboriginal children under the custody of white strangers and rulers. Suzanne Fournier and Ernie Crey in *Stolen from Our Embrace: The Abduction of First Nations Children and the Restoration of Aboriginal Communities* (1998) had exposed the meticulous attempt of the Canadian government to ‘white wash’ the Native Children. For Marilyn this attempt to sever the bonds between parents and children and the cultural warfare amounts to ‘Terrorism on Native Children’. Maracle addresses this as ‘scoop up phenomenon’ in her foreword to the novel. In one of her lectures she forewarns the dismantling of Native families: “without our women raising our children all the work of your generation will be dead by the next” (197). Several observers have underlined the fact Natives have lost vital segments of its population and suffered from a loss of continuity of families and history. Marilyn has observed that Euro Canadian have been practicing adoption and foster parents have not bothered to make adopted Native children as part of the Native family structure. These transracial adoptions thrust into the Native family structures have thrived on the similar dynamics of psychological abuse, exploitation and molestation. They functioned and provoked only as microcosms of colonisations. Beatrice Culleton’s *In Search of April Raintree, In the Shadow of Evil* (2000), Drew
Hayden Taylor’s *Someday* (199) & *Only Drunks and Children Tell the Truth* (2004) depicted the history of Native children placed in white foster families to the best possible extent.

Marilyn as a mothpiece of Lee Maracle, understands the impact of institutionalized violence and cultural genocide on the Natives. Analyzing the symptoms of Elysie and contrasting them with her own, she understands the dialectical patterns of cultural and psychological collective traumas. Marilyn understands that the Native society drew up as the result of the interplay of colonial policies and family history. Marilyn concludes that the damage to Native societies was done extremely in intimate ways tainting the Native experience.

Lee Maracle is of the view that cultural dismemberment is intensely personal experience. In the absence of our own cultures, one naturally develops uncaring and valueless culture. Elsie’s emotional distance makes Marilyn realise for the first time the cultural loss caused by the residential schools in the lives of Native children. This analysis brings in the motto of second wave feminism which centred the discursive practices on the notion that personal is political. For the Natives, racism is not an ideology but a real and practical part of their lives. They can never escape the influence of colonialism but the personal decisions of the Natives to empower themselves become the historical acts of resisting colonialism. Maracle makes her protagonist to explore the possibility of personal to influence the political. The protagonist resists the influence of federal and provisional institutions in distorting the Native social
function. Maracle succeeds in presenting Native individuals as complex human beings who are constantly involved in subverting the Native stereotypical cultural paradigms. Through the potential women characters Maracle conveys that the traumas and mental disorders of many Native Canadians cannot be understood through the mainstream psychology. The narration of *Daughters Are Forever* repeatedly conveys that the standard western psychotherapies utterly fail to decipher the Native social problems. The western tendency of isolating the individual psychology from the socio historical context obviously evinces the disregard for Native culture. The European perspective goes to the extent of depicting the Natives as reactionaries to cultural loss and systemic oppression. Marilyn’s explorations to understand the resistance of Natives to the social, cultural and psychological crisis unravels the genetic links between collective and individual traumas. Her attempts also reveal the existence of intergenerational traumas caused by cultural genocide. The mythological aspects of narration of the theme in *Daughters Are Forever* emphasize the concept of transgenerational transmission through the character of ‘still woman’. She is Marilyn’s scared ancestor who handed down her mental narration to her female descendants. Maracle succeeds in developing an appropriate cultural psychological theory on the social, familial, individual and cultural narrative layers. She adopts several psychological and psycho analytical principles to Native Canadian cultural context. She brings in the notion of ‘trauma’ and equivalent concepts for the spectroscopic clinical analysis.
In the process of questioning the child welfare practices applied to Native families, Marilyn develops knowledge that her counseling model is also part of the practices of Welfare agency. The power that she holds as counselor prevents her from establishing meaningful communication with the client. She realizes the Elsie defers with her considering that she is also like another white woman. The gestures and the interrogative connotations of Elsie gives an understanding that she confronts a threatening teacher like a school girl. The attitude of Marilyn disempowers and terrorizes Elsie. Marilyn realizes that she will be unable to build trust with Elsie as long as she follows her psychology. She decides to throw the textbook therapeutic approach to have a chance of bond with her. Marilyn’s relationship with Elsie is strongly hierarchical. Her frustration suggests that Elsie’s therapy is doomed from the start by the implication of Western psychology in colonial social control. Eduardo Duran and Bonnie Duran in *Native American Postcolonial Psychology* (1995) decry the mainstream diagnostic tools for their personalization and pathologization of the effects of the colonial process on Native clients. Marilyn’s manual follow the European–American construction of the self. They fail to account for Elsie’s symptoms and meaning in Anishnaade cultural context. Ironically Marilyn’s memories of her chronically depressed mother, Anne, help her infinitely more than her therapeutic textbooks, as Elsie shares the same ‘dead’ ‘lifeless eyes’.

Maralce tries to prove Euro American psychotherapies are discordant with most tribal ethno-psychologies. They fail terribly to understand the nature of distress, disorder, the meaning of personhood, social relations, spirituality and treatment
in relation to Native cultures. The consequence of these divergences result into socially unacceptable and pathological methods executed by European cultures. Maracle is particular in making the European culture recognize ‘unconscious tribal memory’ or ‘blood memory’. She deciphers that a set of memories of ancestors and one’s ‘essence’ is inscribed in one’s physical being from birth onwards. Joseph P. Gone in the essay “American Indian Mental Health Service Deliver: Persistent Challenges and Future Prospects” gives the analysis that western medicine views are dependent on understanding materialistic explanations but the Native traditional healing requires a sacred cosmology (Culturally Diverse Mental Health: The Challenges of Research and Resistance. 203). In the Native tradition healing is dependent on the powerful activities of other than human persons whose motivations and actions remain largely inscrutable to human beings. The lack of cultural relativism threatens the healing of Native patients, where the consecrated forms of knowledge are primarily western. This phenomenon is already made evident in Maracle’s Bobbi Lee. Frantz Fanon in Black Skin White Masks has argued that the European nuclear family prepares their children to subscribe to patriarchal authority. One has to perceive that the structure of the family amplifies the structure of the nation. Militarization in a country results in resurgence of the dominance of masculinity. The child emerges from the shadow of parents with the same values and principles. Analyzing the formation of Creole mind in the French Caribbean families, Fanon argues that Children in the colonized societies are raised with core values. The exposure of the children to white cultural products creates a
psychic conflict in young Creoles. The children are torn between the loyalty to their families and the nationality of the colonial nation. This implies to the Native children to the complete extent. The mainstream psychology proves to be inappropriate in resocialising the Native middle class into the prescribed social roles. The invisible ‘cultural proselytization’ becomes a futile exercise and further creates a social distress.

Maracle’s *Daughters Are Forever* poses a methodological quandary towards western ethnopsychology at two levels. At one level Marilyn struggles to find healing strategies that are culturally appropriate to Elsie and herself. For the Non-Native readers, the novel creates the challenge in understanding the dilemma of the protagonist. It also oscillates in situating the plot in its cultural, social and historical context. But Maracle does not reject mainstream psychotherapies completely. Her goal lies not in toppling the social sciences but in initiating internal transformation. In this sense, Marilyn’s struggle with psychology in *Daughters Are Forever* is similar to Maracle’s use of sociology in her theoretical and fictional works. The protagonist and narrator Marianne in *Sundogs* carries this discipline and decries the sociological attitudes as mainly designed confirmistic white male scholars. She is dissatisfied with the sociology classes aimed to consider the emotions of the part of human society. The teaching of sociology is full of theoretical grandstanding and it terribly fails to inculcate the abilities to withstand the social and psychological problems. Marianne’s deep yearning to understand her people’s lives and situations results into knowing the process of colonialism. Through the thoughts and actions of
the protagonist Maralce implies that the genuine knowledge cannot be derived solely from books and abstract theories. It has to be related to real life human beings with all the nuances of their social and personal relations. Marilyn in *Daughters Are Forever* is also scared to delve into the meaning of her visions. She considers the western education as the vocabulary of hallucinations and psychosis. She refuses to look into the moments and concepts predetermined by the Western intellectuals as insanity, delusional and schizophrenia.

In *Daughters Are Forever* Maracle has adopted a sociological framework. She has considered sociology essential to understand the dynamics of racism, patriarchy and colonialism in Western society. In *Daughters Are Forever* psychology is used as a server to the theme and as a literary device as sociology is used in *Sundogs*. Applying the Western modes of sociology and psychology is harmful to the social and cultural existence of Natives. Maracle unveils the chronic colonial treatment of the Natives to expose the cultural and psychological destruction of Native Canadians. She employs cross cultural model that incorporates the Aboriginal cosmologies and constructions of the mind. The narrator in *Daughters Are Forever* uses the insights of psychoanalysis and psychiatry such as ‘shell-schocked’ (120) and ‘post traumatic stress syndrome’ (135). She also inserts Native traumas in terms of ‘chronic grief’ and ‘chronic spiritual hunger’ (27). This Native vocabulary has evoked cross cultural therapies. Marilyn’s decision to seek treatment at a centre treats Native patient from this cultural perspective.
Maracle’s investigation of the psychological roots of Native social ills makes it clear that the traumas of colonized individuals are largely byproducts of collective traumas. The large scale kidnappings of Native children should be viewed as repeated collective traumas that effected Canadian Natives in general. Sociologist Kai Erikson has defined individual trauma as a blow to the psyche that breaks through one’s defenses and collective trauma as a blow to the basic tissues of social life that damages the relationship and impairs the prevailing sense of communality. The collective trauma works insidiously into the awareness of the Natives that work collectively. But it is gradual destruction of the community to prevent cultural transmission. Neil J. Smelser in the essay ‘Psychological Trauma and Cultural Trauma’ emphasizes that the term ‘trauma’ suffers from ‘conceptual muddiness’ (Cultural Trauma & Collective Identity. Ed. Jeffreu C. Alexander. Ron Eyerman, Bernard Giesen, 2004. 31-59). It is on these lines one can conceive that invasions of Turtle Island, the imposition of foreign regime, the disruption and the ban on many Native traditions inflicted massive destruction to very social fabric and sense of community. So the cross cultural psychological model integrates Native psychic cultures and one has to take into consideration the collective trauma on diverse Aboriginal/Native cultures. But it is pertinent to observe that Maracle’s Coast/Salish Western theory of collective trauma differs from orthodox western models. For theorists of ‘cultural trauma’ this socio cultural traumatisation is an inherently mediated process. For them it is socially constructed category rather than objective quality. Jeffery C. Alexander in the essay ‘Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma’
says that the real life phenomenon automatically creates collective trauma but the Natives/Aborigines derives collective trauma from a complex system of socio cultural representation. This finds resonance in the argument of Lee Maracle that for Native generations to generations the shame of defeat accumulates in the consciousness of the Natives until the cultural defeat wins the psychological legitimacy. All in all the cultural chaos results into nervous breakdown. This conveys a nuanced picture of European evil incarnation versus the innocence of Natives. The radical division of binary juxtaposition paves the way for the creation of ‘Vanishing Indian’ stereotype. The narration of Lee Maracle indicate that these are tools to understand her view of Native Collective traumas. Eduardo Duran and Bonnie Duran in *Native American Postcolonial Psychology* (1995) propose the theory of ‘sound wind’ to substantiate this in the Native cultural situation. In their effort to find a cross cultural psychological model they coined this term that encompasses the specific colonial sufferings of the Natives and their sociohistorical context. The soul wound is viewed as a multilayered trauma that permeates the Native American psyche. This is largely relevant to the Natives of America and Canada. The initial loss of relationships and their peers in the Native world is compounded by the lack of proper bereavement and the general process of grief. The narrator in *Daughters Are Forever* stresses the aftermath of the first carnage: “The grasses and stones and may be even the humans could have grieved and recovered, but it didn’t end there” (21). The collective soul with all encompassing quality Indigenous holistic worldviews demarcates from other forms of collective trauma. The
complete Native awareness is the essence of the fabric of the soul and it is from the essence of the dreams of mythology and culture emerge. In another way, the tremendous suffering of the Natives is manifested in the collective soul wound inflicted by colonization. In fact, Duran and Duran developed the notion ‘intergenerational PTSD’ from the research on Holocaust survivors. The dynamics of Jewish experience are similar to Native/Aboriginal experiences with the crucial exception that the world has refused to accept the holocaust of the Natives/Aboriginals across the world. The children of the holocaust survivors and the parents who had participated in war are highly traumatized persons who develop dysfunctional behavior, who are yet to complete the process of healing.

Lee Maracle’s *Daughters Are Forever* considers the dynamics of perpetuation of trauma from the socio cultural perspectives. In the case of Native woman, the voice of motherhood faces the severe threat across the globe. The Native children get used to emotional spiritual starvation. From this perspective, the history of the Native women’s lineage can be viewed as synecdoche process. The children of the Native women are branded as emotional unresponsiveness and it is particularly perceived as the response of female descendants. In the case of Marilyn, the death of her father works as a catalyst for the development of intergenerational post traumatic symptoms. When Anne confines herself to bitterness and grief, the child practices Ann’s Stillness. The shell shocked silence becomes the normal life situation to mother and daughter. They experience spiritual non response and the spiritual numbness hardens their
skin throughout their lives. This results into all pervasive psychosomatic ailments and bodily blocks. Anne and Marilyn find stagnation in life and they get imprisoned in ‘Do not move’ block. The disconnection from the body manifests itself in Marilyn’s chronic inability and the inability of representation. The apparent emotionlessness covers Marilyn’s covers the constant inner panic of Marilyn. Though Marilyn is socially engaged character in the novel, her apathetic situation ironically mirrors the situation of residential school survivors. Marilyn calls this syndrome of acute collective demoralization as ‘residential school hangover’. This is another form of intergenerational collective trauma caused by endless strings of prohibitions and welfare systems. Colonialism has nurtured the welfare system as the spiritual legacy of residential schooling. Being part of this system, Marilyn encounters the opposition from her own people. She raises the social consciousness of the Natives. She instills courage and self assurance in the face of colonial authority. Infact, Marilyn herself is the victim of colonial impact on residential schools despite her public school background. She recollects her journey of education from the school and her chronic lonely feelings: “from childhood right through her marriage” (185). The absence of younger generations in the layers of supplementary indicates all pervasive silence and emptiness. The social experiment with residential school system has brought out the sense of guilt and futility to the whole Native communities in upbringing their children. The novel fails to explicitly state whether Marilyn’s parents went to the residential schools or not. In another understanding, Marilyn herself is a child survivor of the residential schools and
her social position is similar to Jewish children whose parents were the victims of concentration camps. The children were also affected by the manifestations of Marilyn. The colonized Native populations react to the hopelessness by internalizing the dynamics of oppressor in reclaiming power. This is perceived as the caricature of the power derived from Native American culture. This lack of self worth turns the individual against the external object. Marilyn’s transforms the internal hatred into alcoholism and suicidal thoughts when she is deserted by her husband. Her painful outbursts against her daughters illustrate the fact that the domestic violence in Native cultures can be interpreted as exhibiting the anger towards some helpless and as a remainder to the constant perpetrators. Paradoxically, Marilyn is driven by her shame to more brutality. Marilyn’s shriek voice was hated by herself. While shrieking, she was determined to follow through licking: “I promise to be Good, Mommy, please don’t hit me” (102). The uncontrollable nature of her age at Cat’s begging and Lindy’s fear emphasizes that she cannot stand seeing her own terror and loneliness reflected in the girls. Marilyn expresses self hatred through the maltreatment of her ‘flesh and blood’ which echoed with her childhood. The beating scene is juxtaposed with the memory of her stepfather Earl throwing her eldest brother Bobbie against the walls. Marilyn even hears the boy plead in Lindy’s voice: “I promise to be good, Daddy. I promise to be good, Mommy, Don’t hit me, I’ll be good” (101). The image of the child struggling to ‘be good’ so as to stop a parent’s abuse or neglect links of many generations and places is effectively carried out in the first part of the novel. Marilyn herself comes to
the realization that she made war on her daughters because she needed someone to punish. It is identifying a target less elusive than a whole system of oppression. In this context, the settler system works as a mechanism of self perpetuation thriving on the crux of Native cultures. The incomprehensibility of the predicament of colonialism is the way that influences the Native cultures. Colonialism thrives and sustains its legacy as a personal process. Maracle develops a cross cultural and sociological model to account for the dynamics of internal colonization that are ignored by the mainstream perspectives. This enables Maracle to investigate the ways in which Native collective trauma affects individuals. It permeates the whole communities and is meticulously handed down for several centuries. Maracle adapts and subverts Western psychology to reflect a holistic worldview. In this perception, the traumatic experiences of Natives across the globe effects the systems in their entirety. It also influences the environment and beings that surround the act of self assertion and brutality in all its spiritual and emotional manifestations. In the light of this perception, the depiction of Sto:lo social worker’s dilemma is viewed as a metafictional representation. This speaks for the ability of Maracle to develop a culturally appropriate theory. Maracle’s attempts to resituate the psychology in a socio historical context and reinsertion of the human and spiritual is an overtly dispassionate effort to consolidate the Native literatures. However, the critics are puzzled by the velocity of Maracle’s unveiling of the collective psyche as productive. In Daughters Are Forever she describes the universe completely effected by the collective massive cultural trauma.
Daughters Are Forever is considered as a form of recovery writing. It depicts the daunting saga of destruction, pain and murder. The healing journey of Marilyn stresses the possibility of victim turned perpetrators to reclaim their agency and integrity. Though, she abuses her daughters, she is depicted as a generous woman with genuine social commitment. Her physical and psychological survival is from the clutches of stark poverty, racism and severe trauma. Her survival testifies her courage and inner strength. The novel presents the abusers and exploiters in a nuanced way as ordinary people with a spiritual sickness. They are not categorized on the basis of neurosis and psychoses. The theme particularly examines the interconnected notions of personal and cultural resilience. The theme of healing that flows as underlined statement emphasizes the necessity for Native individuals and communities to confront the social and cultural traumas beyond the psychology of grievance. Acceptance of the catastrophe of the colonial past as an integral to colonial and personal collective recovery enables one to reinvent the future learning from the past inglorious history that cannot be undone.

In treating the Native patients with a history of trauma and self-destruction, they quote Nietzsche as saying that there is nothing worse than suffering without meaning. For most of the Natives deriving meaning of life from the catastrophic incidents comes at the basic level. In Daughters Are Forever Marilyn believes that ‘there is power in naming’. This underlines the thematic content of the novel. In the context of the denial of knowledge to the Natives in the residential schools, unfurling the internal degrading cultural
stereotypes and the ramifications of collective sufferings become powerful subversive mechanisms. Marilyn’s fragmentary knowledge becomes a solution. Condemning the Natives into the perpetual trap of violence and keeping the Aboriginal dysfunctional is the interest of the colonizer. In the poem ‘Hatred’, Maracle argues: “Blinded by the niceties and polite liberality/ we can’t see our enemy/so, we’ll just have to kill each other”.

In this sense, Maracle makes exposes the cultural harm done by residential schools and welfare services. For many theoreticians who have elucidated the Native culture such as Ron Eyerman and TaiaiKe Alfred, this is where the artistic creation lies for colonized populations. Eyeryman argues that intellectual movement plays a crucial role in churning out a meaning from the struggles of the Natives. For him it is the intellectual movement that mediates between the cultural and political spheres that create modern society voicing out their own ideas and interests. But it is understood a new narrative foundation and narratology is essential to render the centuries and centuries of cultural exploitation and trauma. Most of the Native writers and artists contribute for the creation of ‘memory work’ for creating ‘metanarrative’ in the construction of self, ethnicity and history that brings cohesion to the Native communities. This perception of Native artists as social mediators is congruent with the Lee Maracle. Her work has codified the forcefully silenced historical traumas and it is an attempt to achieve ideological changes. The observation of Kanien’Kehaka (Mohawk) political scientist Alfred that the idea of an ‘indigenous intelligentsia’ of writers, philosophers, teachers and artists is very traditional and empowering.
According to him Indigenous societies traditionally had strict qualifications and rituals for teachers and wisdom keepers. In this frame work the works of the Native writers, musicians, painters and filmmakers are considered as the cultural and political task of reaffirmation, re-creation and revitalization. For many Native writers crating the art constitutes another facet of the anti colonial resistance. Since the cultural expressions were suppressed through the residential school, the creative process becomes central in reclaiming the past history. Maracle explicitly uses the Fiction and Poetry for empowering the self and the cathartic potential of her work empowers every person. Maracle writes to recover from the perpetual violence of racism and enables her characters grow through challenges and self questioning. An ideal reader learns experiences Native wisdom and culture and undergoes the process of transformation. Marilyn in *Daughters Are Forever* is viewed as a role model character. She preserves the tremendous spirit of recovery withstanding the pain of the palatable past.

**Marilyn’s Quest for Self – Rediscovery:**

The character of Marilyn is known for rediscovering herself. But she never seems to realize the past through her efforts. She consistently evades and sabotages her own efforts that confront her past mistakes and challenges herself. Her childhood seems to have been a nightmare and it raises only painful memories. This pattern of avoidance and repression reflects the perception of Maracle. For Maracle, the most painful is not the trauma of perception but the process of recovery and working through. She says to the white interviewer that
social pain and healing is not a significant process: “For you to become a racist was painless. For you to unbecome and become something new is going to be excruciating…the unbecoming is very very difficult and very painful. But it’s healing and there is no other way to heal” (169-70). Marilyn subscribes to the ideology of escapism. She escapes from herself and from most of the memories, knowing well that she cannot runaway forever. She realizes that her attitude will not improve the relationship with her daughters. Her disquieting visions and posttraumatic flashbacks are: “the chaotic images that, when examined will point her to the road of transformation” (39). Her symptoms coincide with what Crey calls “Indian Sick’. In Native societies, you are described as ‘Indian sick’ when spiritual forces are at work. To understand these forces, one is expected to return to the spiritual teachers. The Native elders believe that the voices and spirits are similar to the normal diagnosis and suffering. This evinces the inadequacy of psychopathological categories. Marilyn recovers from the sedimented impact of colonialism. She is neither schizophrenic nor insane. She needs to listen to the content of her visions deriving meaning from her past. It is only by transcending the pain she surpasses herself to reach celestial state of being- a deeper and genuine self.

**Confrontation and Renewal**

The novel depicts Marilyn’s daughters challenging her child rearing techniques considering her love and concern for the daughters. Marilyn thinks that her erratic behavior has ‘demolished the arc of the bridge their relationship had been standing on’ (227). The confrontation between Marilyn and her daughters turn
out to be cathartic episode. Maracle depicts the confrontation through the episode of snakes: “The can of baby snakes opened up. The snakes crawled in every direction, wriggling, hurrying away from Marilyn, threatening to escape before she could name them”. The metaphor of the snake evokes toxicity and abuse at a superficial level and acquires a positive meaning throughout the novel. It explicitly indicates the lateral violence and crippling doubts in the life of Marilyn. The baby snakes stand for the traumas and fears that resurface and are alleviated when her daughters criticize. Marilyn’s views are depicted as crawling reptiles. Lindy and Cat, despite their attempts to help Marilyn to come out of her shameful memories are construed as subverting the expectations of the readers. They are clearly worried and wishes to have a conversation that liberates the three of them from ‘two-and-a-quarter’ decades of communication breakdown and the missed opportunities for cordial understanding. The small crisis serves as a necessary trigger for the reconciliation of mother and daughters. Marilyn wishes to apologize to her daughters but fails to muster the courage to bring up the issue of cordial relationship. She symbolically admits the past misdeeds and shows her intent to develop a healthier relationship with her daughters. She realizes that she has always felt the love for her daughters (234) that she failed to express inappropriately. The comparison of affection and food make her understand that her ‘spiritual cannibalism’ of her daughters stems from her hunger …for herself and ‘to express love to them in the way she felt it’ (234). This analogy brings her realization that she will not need to vampirize her children and will develop only balanced relationship with them.
Marilyn’s personal growth and her daughters’ ability to comprehend the circumstances in which Natives live invite the possible interpretations in the novel. Marilyn’s ability to ‘bounce back’ originates from her positive early memories of her parents and siblings. In Native culture, everlasting love was always given to the children. The narration in the novel suggests that all Native children are born with ‘the body memory of origin’, the cultural and ancestral memory that knows about love and about the ‘original promise’ that pushes people to build families (26-27). As a sort of cultural resilience, Marilyn’s cells are repeatedly described as longing to regenerate and express her inner truth. Interpreting the aspect of Native survival Plains Cree artist and former adoptee George Littlechild observes: “the soul cannot be robbed unless we allow it. There is always innate genetic material that couldn’t be damaged; it’s passed down and remains deep within us. That’s why as a group of people we’ve survived” (qtd. In Fournier and Crey 114). This exemplifies the interdependence of personal and collective resilience in Daughters Are Forever. Catherine and Lindy remain to be unaffected by Marilyn’s symptoms of abnormal stillness. The daughters are described as impish, dynamic and assertive which conveys the positive attitude of relying on each other. The substitute mother, Dolly is considered as healer and seer. She acts as a shield of support mechanism for instilling resilience. Although the novel reveals about herself to little extent, she hands over her own culture and further helps them to love Marilyn. This makes the readers to speculate that Dolly recontextualises Marilyn’s behavior. Dolly works as the most powerful healing and unifying factor between Marilyn and her
daughters. The very fact that Lindy and Cat decide to disclose Dolly’s existence to their mother proves their confidence and trust reposed in her. The end of the novel weaves different threads of Marilyn’s initiation. She is shown walking towards Dolly’s house arm in arm with her daughters. Her willingness to learn the elderly woman’s understanding of culture and politics is succinctly depicted towards the end of the novel. The river becomes significant like the Fraser, from whose original name, “Sto:lo” (river), the name of her nation derives. The novel ends with more appropriate return to the roots. Marilyn even remembers a traditional story that Ta’ah once told her and concludes with the line “sometimes to go forward you have to go back to the beginning” (250). This reinforces the idea that Dolly’s house will be the symbol of beginning for Marilyn and her daughters. Marilyn grows to her original self. The baby that Catherine bears will be probably the representative of first generation. As Marilyn became the victim of accumulated intergenerational traumas, the new baby ushers the new beginning healing the ancient wounds of victimization. This proves the success of the treatment process of medicine people on which the ancient wisdom comfortably rests. The resilience and vivaciousness of Cat and Lindy influences the recovery of Marilyn. They heal the silent women with whom they are unconsciously connected. This connection of female lineage becomes the possible interpretation of the title of the novel. ‘Daughters Are Forever’ suggests that Marilyn can count on Cat and Lindy’s unstinted and unconditional support. This substantiates the truth that she has achieved reconciliation both as the mother and a daughter.
Daughters Are Forever is a travesty for the reader to explore the socio-cultural issues of ethnicity and Nativity. The novel tackles large number of interrelated issues from colonialism to institutional practices to family life to one’s relationship with the issues of the Nature and culture. It invites the reader to experience a forceful reflection of the past history and culture. The brutality of Canadian history and the Western history as part of colonialism is unfurled to the reader. The unresolved dilemmas on the issues of self, community, politics and relationships are closed to the best possible extent. The conclusion of the novel conveys the fact that recovery and self definition are always an incomplete process before the culmination. It is on this line the journey of Marilyn for healing process remains incomplete. The novel invites the participation of the readers to continue Marilyn’s personal and social struggle in their own lives: “If you’re frustrated with this ending, then do something about it in the concrete world”. The conclusion conveys that Marilyn and her daughters will find peace with themselves and each other. It leaves much to be done to make Native Canadian communities more sovereign effective. The conclusion is considered to be realistic as it displays the loose ends that exist in the real world. The theme of the novel demonstrates the fact that it is individual maturation that makes the social empowerment possible. It also poses a question to the readers to what extent have decolonized themselves. The social responsibility stands at the core of the novel. In a world effected by lack of accountability and a pattern of unconcern towards the earth and nature, Maracle substantiates the fact that someone’s problem is everyone’s problem. In Bobbi Lee Maracle states the fact
that Canada cannot liberate itself from its own destructive ideology unless it gives up the exploitation of Aboriginals/Natives. Frantz Fanon’s observation about “the explicit reality of feeling oneself responsible for one’s fellowman” (89) remain topical and inflates the theme of the novel inviting a better critical understanding. It is understood that the traditional Native knowledge conveys the fact that we as humans are all responsible for our words and actions and need mutual care in our relationships. Eventually Daughters Are Forever raises the question of how collective and familial traumas can be perpetuated in unseen ways for several centuries. This pattern of collective trauma exists in numerous places and cultures. Particularly, this reflects the long European history of wars, invasions and massacres from which diverse populations are healed. It is at this juncture, Maracle strikes oneness with humanity that gets obscured by violence, pain and history. This is the greatest responsibility executed by Maracle in restoring the relationships with broken cultures and fragmented fellow human beings.

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