

Journeying through Resilience and Transition: Exploring Substance Abuse, Mental Health, and Well-being in Maria Campbell's *Halfbreed*

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Abstract

This research paper intensely analyses Maria's challenges as depicted in Maria Campbell's autobiographical Novel *Halfbreed*. It examines her metamorphosis from childhood to adulthood and the self-empowerment that resulted from her hardships. The article also looks at how Indigenous women have historically been marginalized and highlights Campbell's story as an example of a young Native woman's tenacity in Metis society. It also investigates the historical marginalization of Indigenous women and emphasizes Campbell's narrative as a testament to the resilience of a young Native woman within the Metis community. It centers on Maria Campbell's masterful portrayal of her journey from vulnerability to empowerment in *Halfbreed*. It provides insights into Campbell's obstacles in life and how resilience enables her to respond to them with fortitude and flexibility. It discusses how mental health influences one's thoughts, emotions, and capacity to cope with stress, highlighting its significance in fostering resilience and maintaining a sense of purpose and self-worth. The article delves into the societal implications of mental health struggles, particularly examining issues such as Xenophobia and sexism and their impact on interpersonal relationships. The article connects the protagonist's narrative with larger societal concerns, revealing the complex relationship between mental health and systemic obstacles. It also emphasizes Campbell's mission to highlight these issues and the need for societal transformation. It also provides valuable insights into the complex nature of mental well-being and its significant impact on both individuals and communities.

Keywords: Abuse, Existence, Evolution, Indigenous people, Mental Health, Resilience, Suppression, Survival.

Introduction

As Gandhiji said, Women are more fit than men to make an examination and take courageous action in non-violence. In our society, women consistently find themselves on the margins. There is a persistent need for literature that offers a more targeted and affirmative portrayal of women. Every piece of literature addresses the presence and challenges faced by women. In this article, the researcher uses Maria Campbell from the novel *Halfbreed* to examine the battles for survival and transition of a woman. As Diane Marie Child states, "A Woman is the full circle (1). Within her is the power to create, nurture, and transform." This article focuses on Maria Campbell's fight for survival and her journey into a new woman in her society and within it. The researcher is particularly interested in examining Maria Campbell's resilience, transition, mental health, and journey of Campbell. Over time, many perspectives on resilience have emerged. Earlier studies tended to

see resilience as a static quality in individuals, whereas more recent studies have taken a process-oriented approach. The researcher is inspired by the character Maria Campbell in the Novel *Halfbreed*. The main objectives of the study are to analyze how historical and systemic trauma from colonialism influences mental health and substance abuse among Indigenous peoples, as depicted in Campbell's narrative, To investigate how issues of identity and cultural displacement contribute to mental health challenges and substance use, and how Campbell's experiences reflect these broader themes, To evaluate the importance of cultural continuity and revitalization in promoting resilience and mental well-being within the narrative, highlighting specific practices that contribute to healing and, to identify and discuss the social, economic, and environmental aspects depicted in *Halfbreed* that influence mental health

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and contribute to substance abuse, contextualizing these within contemporary Indigenous experiences. Maria chronicles her transformative journey from despair to healing, in addition to bringing light on the cultural context and the plight of Indigenous communities. The Halfbreed, as a marginalized indigenous population within the dominant white culture, has significant challenges in their struggle for existence and experiences intense confrontations with the external world or the prevailing norms of society. Consequently, the group of individuals of mixed heritage faces the peril of losing their cultural and spiritual identity. The essential distinctions made by the dominant society specifically target individuals of mixed heritage, causing them to experience profound feelings of anger and despair throughout their lives.

Due to their perpetual inability to escape poverty, they are subjected to both white and governmental belittlement, which is highly severe (2). Their life is burdened by immense pressure, which extinguishes their motivation and determination. Similarly, Maria Campbell, who embodies both the identities of Halfbreed and female, has endured a greater amount of suffering, stemming from the challenging circumstances she grew up in. She possesses Maria, a halfbreed, who experienced the typical misunderstandings that often arise when one is of mixed heritage. She was deeply immersed in the perpetual tragedy of life and, at one point, even contemplated ending her life due to a lack of faith. Indeed, all the hardships she encounters can be attributed to Campbell's struggle for survival and the horrors she has endured throughout her entire life. In Maria Campbell's *Halfbreed*, the intersection of substance misuse, mental health, and well-being is poignantly explored through the lens of Indigenous experience. The protagonist's struggles with addiction often reflect deeper issues of trauma and marginalization, highlighting how historical injustices can prolong cycles of despair. Campbell illustrates how substance misuse can serve as a coping mechanism for unsolved pain, while also emphasizing the significance of cultural identity and community support in healing the problems. The narrative stresses the need for holistic approaches that address both mental health and well-being, encouraging for a return to cultural roots as a way to retrieval and empowerment. People who are psychologically,

socially, and politically out of the colony's dominant power structure in their home nation are called "subalterns." In his research on cultural hegemony, Italian Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937) first used the term "subaltern" to refer to social groups that are excluded from established structures and, hence, do not have a right to a political voice in their community. A person who holds a lesser or inferior position is called a subaltern. The late 19th and early 20th centuries saw its application in literature. Subaltern studies, among other post-colonial studies, have utilized this idea ever since researchers of subaltern studies, tried to explore the history of peasant insurgency in colonial India and are portrayed in colonial writings. Numerous researchers have observed Campbell's works from various angles. A comprehensive literature review involves more than just information retrieval; it extends beyond mere descriptive annotation of sources. Campbell in his research article titled "Indigenous Storytelling and Literary Practices", discusses how Contemporary Indigenous authors carry the legacy of their forebearers who endured Indian residential schools and colonization (3). They tell stories of collective pain, yet repeatedly recounting our trauma perpetuates harmful stereotypes. This study shifts the focus away from a deficit perspective, revealing how Indigenous writers and scholars utilize creative and cultural methods to reimagine our history and present. It delves into Indigenous literary nationalism and poetics, examining the roles of storytelling and oral tradition in various works. The research explores ethical storytelling practices informed by ancestral teachings and traditions. Canadian Indigenous writers, particularly those from British Columbia, draw inspiration from Interior Salish narratives by authors like Mourning Dove Christine, Jeannette Armstrong, Bill Cohen, Helen Haig-Brown, and Kevin Loring. This research highlights the creative and critical storytelling practices of modern Indigenous authors and scholars who are reshaping Indigenous identity and reviving cultural traditions and knowledge. The paper outlines ethical Indigenous storytelling principles rooted in methods and protocols, creating a narrative that empowers Indigenous people, fostering healing and transformation while presenting a more balanced description of Indigenous resilience and rebirth in the face of

ongoing colonialism. It also suggests future opportunities for Indigenous writers to engage in acts of decolonization through their creative and critical work.

Verna Heikkila in her article entitled "Blanket of Shame: Emotional Representation in Maria Campbell's *Halfbreed*" recounts the challenging journey of a young native woman in her life story (4). Maria Campbell documents her struggles as a Metis woman, facing racism and personal hardships. Overcoming her past, she transforms her anger into cultural and political activism, conveying her experiences of suffering, addiction, and despair. Campbell inspires faith, pride, and positive change, becoming a pivotal figure in the native movement in Alberta, fostering hope and action for a better future.

Janetta autobiography titled "Anecdotal Humour in Maria Campbell's *Halfbreed*" (1996), delves into the importance of cultural survival among the Metis, drawing from Metis folk sources to illustrate genuine experiences of being a half-breed (5). The narrative combines personal anecdotes with a vivid description of Maria Campbell's childhood struggles, life near Prince Albert National Park, and her battle with addiction and prostitution. The work covers local people, childhood memories, and the broader Metis community, portraying emotions from joy and sorrow to oppression, poverty, and dreams. It also offers insight into the perspectives of other indigenous workers.

Lundgren in the research article titled "Being a Half-breed Discourses of Race and Cultural Syncreticity in the Works of Three Metis Women Writers" expresses the discourses of Race and cultural syncretistic in *Halfbreed* (6). It also describes contemporary Canadian society and how racism is a key element in Native people's oppression. Discrimination between black and white races had been well portrayed. Campbell's autobiography illustrates the validating effects and strong sense of Metis identity. She emphasizes ethnicity rather than race. She says that racial stereotyping has a devastating impact on the Metis and other native people. "Being a Half-Breed" discourses of Race and cultural syncretistic in the works of three Metis women writers. Maya Dutt in her research article titled "Women and Autobiography: Maria Campbell's *Halfbreed* in Retrospect" recounts the *Halfbreed* community's struggle for legal recognition, highlighting their

desire for education and the establishment of residential schools, a dark chapter in Canadian history (7). Maria's experiences challenge stereotypes of Indigenous women, shedding light on their spiritual, social, political, and economic context. The narrative explores Cheechum, her grandmother, her life in a white community, and her hardships, including homelessness and addiction, eventually leading to the creation of "Halfbreed." Maria endured exploitation, racism, and sexism, mirroring the experiences of many indigenous women. Despite extreme poverty, she remained strong and resourceful, ultimately recovering and reclaiming her life which is a powerful tale of survival.

Campbell in her book entitled *Contours of a People: Metis Family, Mobility, and History* investigates Maria's life, addressing her struggles with identity and race. It discusses the challenges of researching and documenting her personal story at the community level (8). The book also explores diverse topics, geographies, and methodologies, challenging conventional Métis historiography, and highlights various contributor's presentations on themes such as identity and ambivalence. The book also adds valuable insights into Métis and Aboriginal historiography, emphasizing the significance of Canada's cultural development before its official establishment in 1867. It contrasts the works of early Canadian writers like Moodie and Parr Traill with English literature, noting the enduring presence of survival and rugged environment themes in Canadian literature. Sing and Pamela in her research article titled "Intersection of Memory, Ancestral Language, and Imagination; or, the Textual Production of Michif Voices as Cultural Weaponry" examines the 1885 revolt and the deep-rooted property rights of the Metis, in Saskatchewan which was the cause of their downfall of their execution of their leader, Louis Riel (9). This event severed relations between whites and Metis Francophones and brought shame to the Franco-Metis identity. Some Metis assimilated as French Canadians or First Nations, while others upheld their Metis identity in smaller communities. This history is a part of various writing practices within the French-heritage Metis literary practice, contextualized under the "metissage." The article also highlights historical events like the revolts of 1870 and 1885, which led to various breaks and replacements,

distressing how communities and writers related their works to their cultural and linguistic past. These explicit practices offer substitute ways to contest the supremacy of standardized language and cultural values. Existing anthologies often group First Nations and Metis writings into a single literature, but this article highlights the distinctiveness of Metis literature.

Shawna Ferris in her article titled "Working from the Vented Center: Survival sex work and urban Aboriginality in Maria Cambell's Halfbreed" analyses and argues that From the early 1970s until 2002, at least fifty-nine women, predominantly Aboriginal and street-level sex workers, disappeared from Vancouver's Downtown East Side (10). This area, labeled Canada's poorest postal code, saw little interest from Vancouver police and officials for over two decades. In February 2002, a joint RCMP-city police task force charged Port Coquitlam farmer Robert Pickton with the murder of seven of these women. Pickton has been convicted of killing six: Marnie Frey, Georgina Papin, Brenda Wolfe, Sereena Abotsway, Mona Wilson, and Andrea Joesbury. His conviction is under appeal, and if it stands, federal prosecutors will not pursue twenty additional murder charges, a decision surrounded by public controversy. Many women remain unaccounted for. The article also investigates and unfolds, similar cases of violence against poor, racialized, and street-level sex workers emerged, particularly in Western Canada. In Edmonton, a task force was formed in 2003 to investigate eighty-three cases of murdered and missing women dating back to 1982. A serial killer in Saskatoon murdered four First Nations women in the early 1990s and was suspected of killing at least three others. Winnipeg has also seen a series of disappearances and violent murders now under investigation. These cases fuel the efforts of groups combatting the social, political, and economic forces contributing to violence against sex workers in Canada. Many groups highlight the high number of First Nations women in the survival sex trade and their overrepresentation among victims of violence. However, sex worker activism in Canada remains primarily a white-led initiative. Historical colonialism explains why Indigenous women are overrepresented in the survival sex trade, and this context also sheds light on the divisions between sex worker activists: those focusing on labor rights and those emphasizing state-sanctioned racism

and colonial violence. Organizations such as the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), the Aboriginal Women's Action Network (AWAN), and others emphasize the combined effects of class bias, misogyny, and racism in the assault and murder of survival sex workers. These groups argue that Indigenous sex workers suffer and die because they are Aboriginal women facing precarious cultural status in urban contexts. They assert that prostitution inherently causes violence and advocate for its elimination, rather than merely reducing harm. For instance, in 2007, AWAN opposed the legalization of brothels in Vancouver, arguing that prostitution is inherently violent and an extension of childhood abuse experienced by many prostituted women.

Canadian Writings

The distinctive traits of Canada are reflected in the varied collection of literary works from this large and diverse country which is known as Canadian literature. Although Canadian literature has been criticized by certain reviewers for being overly focused on provincial and nationalistic themes, the core of its stories is this investigation of culture and identity. Canadian literature, which is impacted by the constantly changing socio-political landscape, aims to capture the essence of every region, from the Atlantic provinces to the Pacific coast.

The breadth of genres Canadian writers cover is astounding, ranging from Margaret Atwood's classics to Robert J. Sawyer's provocative science fiction. The work "*Announcement of Implementation of Policy of Multiculturalism with Bilingual Framework*" by Prime Minister Trudeau in 1971 marked a turning point in the development of Canadian literature. Alongside this legislation, Canada saw a change that enhanced the country's literary environment by welcoming a more comprehensive range of writers and readers. The invasion of international immigration in recent decades has further shaped Canadian literature, infusing it with new perspectives and voices. Whether written in English or French, Canadian literature often finds common ground in reflecting the country's deep-rooted connection to nature and frontier life. It is in this shared sense of place and the ceaseless pursuit of understanding what it means to be Canadian that Canadian literature continues to thrive and evolve, showcasing a nation

of storytellers who draw inspiration from the vast tapestry of their home (2).

Initially, Canadian literature didn't receive widespread recognition. Norman Levine's visit to Canada in 1958 and his work "*Interpretation of the Country*" faced considerable rejection. However, following the country's centennial year in 1957, the national government augmented funding for publishers, establishing several presses across Canada. In the late 1970s, Susan Wood, a scholar of Canadian literature specializing in science fiction, played a significant role in advancing the study of feminist science fiction, elevating the status of Canadian science fiction research. Numerous histories of Canadian literature exist and have been translated into various languages, with the majority focusing primarily on English-Canadian or French-Canadian literature, thereby addressing works in both English and French in a balanced manner.

The culture in English-speaking Canada represents a blend of British and American elements, whereas the French-speaking region combines French and American influences. Although American influence is strong, various immigrant groups have successfully conserved their cultural traditions, a stance the Canadian government supports. In early Canadian literature, noteworthy works emerged in both English and French, shaped by the cultural legacies of their respective mother countries. Nevertheless, in the early twentieth century, writers started to uncover their unique Canadian voices while using English and French as their mediums of expression.

Margaret Atwood is a prolific and well-known Canadian writer living abroad. Carol Shields, Gabrielle Roy, and Margaret Laurence are a few outstanding Canadian writers from the 20th century. In addition, Nobel Laureate Alice Munro, regarded as the most incredible living author of English-language short stories, was the first to bring Canadian literature to the attention of international audiences. Canadian literature reflected British and American writing throughout the post-war era when the country published very few novels of any literary worth annually. A reaction against this tradition, poet Leonard Cohen's Novel *Beautiful Losers* (1966) was labeled by one reviewer as "the most revolting book ever written in Canada.

Jongbloed K, Pearce ME, Pooyak work titled *The Cedar Project* scrutinizes mortality among young Indigenous people who use drugs in British Columbia. The works of Dennis C. Wendt, William E. Hartmann, and Joseph P. Gone examines substance misuse within Indigenous Communities. The work titled *Social Suffering: Indigenous peoples' Experiences of Accessing Mental Health* discusses the mental health problems and other issues in some Indigenous communities. It also examines the historical, political, economic and cultural factors that contributes to these issues during colonialism.

Author Biography

Maria Campbell, born in June 1940 in Stifle, Canada, is a versatile author, scriptwriter, editor, and essayist. She is renowned for her autobiographical work, "*Halfbreed*" (1973), which chronicles her challenges as a Metis woman in Canadian society. As the eldest of the seven siblings, she hails from northern Saskatchewan with a mix of Scottish, Indian, and French heritage. Her Metis background led to rejection by both the white and full-blooded native communities. Tragedy struck at the age of twelve when her mother passed away, forcing Maria to leave school and care for her younger siblings. At fifteen, she entered an unsuccessful marriage to prevent her siblings from being placed in an orphanage. She later found herself in Vancouver, abandoned by her husband, and turned to a life of prostitution and drug addiction. After grappling with two suicide attempts and a nervous breakdown, she sought help and ended up as an Alcoholic. It was during this challenging period that she began writing "*Halfbreed*" to cope with her anger, loneliness, and the temptation which led her to a life of addiction and prostitution. Maria Campbell has since become a dedicated advocate for the Native movement and even competed for president of the Metis community in the 1980s.

Maria Campbell's notable works and achievements include "Maria Campbell: Essays on Her Works" (2012), recognition as an Honorary Chief of the Black Lake First Nation, the Vanier Award from the Vanier Institute, the Chief Crowfoot Award from the University of Calgary's Department of Native Studies, the Officer of the Order of Canada (2008), and the Pierre Elliott Fellowship (2012).

***Halfbreed* a Subaltern Perspective**

Halfbreed is one of the revolutionary novels of the late nineteenth century. The narrative brings attention to the marginalized status of Canada's Aboriginal population, who were present in the country before the arrival of white settlers but were not officially recognized as citizens by the government. Initially residing in Ontario and Manitoba, the Halfbreeds were forced to move to places like South Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, where they established settlements in Batoche and Duke Lake. Their migration was driven by a desire to escape the biases of white Protestant settlers and a deep-seated fear that Canadian authorities would not protect their rights.

Till 1860 Saskatchewan was part of the Northwest Territories, characterized by a landscape without towns, fences, or barriers. After their defeat at Batoche in 1884, the Half breeds sought refuge near Spring River, sustaining themselves through hunting and trapping. In 1920, the threat of losing their land loomed as the government required them to demonstrate ownership within three years, or the land would be taken by land improvement authorities and not redistributed to the settlers. However, due to economic depression and a decline in the fur trade, they lacked the financial means to purchase the necessary tools, combined with the challenging terrain with rough roads and muskeg. As a result, the authorities reclaimed their homesteads, leaving Maria Campbell's ancestors homeless. Over time, they built huts along the streets, earning them the label "Road Allowance People," trapped in a cycle of poverty, addiction, and social challenges with seemingly no hope for the future.

Unlike the plight of subalterns in India, the discrimination faced by Canada's indigenous population did not reach extreme levels of untouchability or bonded labour. Notably, a mixed school for white and Halfbreed children had been established in Maria's community, where although the children maintained separate groups, they interacted through quarrels and rugby matches. Maria's marriage to a white man, though reluctantly accepted by both communities, underscores the relatively flexible societal structure compared to the rigid social hierarchy depicted in Bama's "*Karukku*." Maria's honest advocacy for the Métis perspective represents a

significant step in challenging the social stigma that has plagued their community for generations.

Methodology

The methodology section of the research is presented herein, encompassing key aspects such as the research design, data collection, data analysis, and the significance of the study.

Research Design

The research design for this study is a mixed-method approach used for the analysis of the novel *Halfbreed* by Maria Campbell. Mixed-method approach in research is a suitable method for exploring multifaceted and subjective phenomena, such as substance abuse, mental health, and well-being. Through a thorough investigation of the novel's content, characters, and themes, the study aims to trace the journey of the protagonist through resilience and transition and it also explores the mental health, and well-being experienced by the protagonist, Campbell. Mixed-method research consents to an in-depth study of individual experiences, emotions, and reactions, providing valuable insights into the life journey of a woman, her resilience, and her transition.

Theoretical Framework

Nancy Schlossberg's theoretical framework serves as the means by which the study's goals might be attained. This theory focusses on the understanding of how individuals experience and cope with change and transition. Transition theory was developed by Nancy Schlossberg, a professor emeritus of counseling psychology at the University of Maryland, the theory is based on the idea that transitions are complex and multidimensional, and that individuals experience them differently depending on their personal characteristics and situational features. The researcher has concentrated chiefly on the novel *Halfbreed*, which is viable to Transition theory. Schlossberg's transition theory comprises four major important aspects that impact how individuals experience and cope with change. The individual's situation, their personal reasons, their coping skills, and the meaning they attach to the transition. These factors interrelate with one another to determine how individuals experience and cope with transition. By applying these frameworks, the study analyzes the transition of Campbell's characters in the adaptations to change, and the

structures that supports her journey in life. Transition theory helps in mapping their growth and the broader societal implications of their experiences. Together, these theory offers a vigorous framework for understanding the complexities and nuances of Campbell's narrative.

Data Collection

The primary source of data for this research is the novel *Halfbreed* by Maria Campbell. The researcher has done a detailed textual analysis of the novel, concentrating on the life journey of the protagonist and the different phases of her life like childhood, adolescence, and youth, emotions, and transition of the protagonist, Campbell, following her abuse, prostitution, and drug addiction. Various passages, dialogues, and character communications have been examined to detect significant examples and themes related to substance abuse, mental health, and the well-being of the central character.

Data Analysis

Content analysis has been used as the main method of data analysis. The researcher has systematically examined the text to identify recurring themes, associated with Maria Campbell's journey of life. The scrutiny has intricate coding and labeling-related text sections to extract meaningful information about the process of resilience, health, mental well-being, and transition.

Limitations

Like any other research, this study has some limitations. One potential limitation is the subjective interpretation made by the researcher on the novel's content. To facilitate this, the researcher has employed an iterative technique for analysis and has incorporated a peer-review procedure to ensure comprehensiveness and impartiality. Furthermore, the relevance of the results has been restricted to the specific setting of the book and solely reflects the actual encounters of the protagonist, Maria Campbell. The study seeks to offer significant insights and provoke conversations in the path of a woman, encompassing her hardships, her evolution as an activist, and her transformation into an Aboriginal writer. The study exclusively examines the central character.

Research Significance

This research enfolds significant value in

shedding light on the process of resilience and transition of Metis community women. It also explores the substance abuse, mental health, and well-being of the protagonist Maria Campbell depicted in the novel *Halfbreed*. The study has contributed to a deeper understanding of the factors that facilitate resilience and survival. The findings have emphasized the implications for supporting real-life incidents of the Metis community, emphasizing the importance of hope, support from loved ones, and self-emancipation in therapeutic development.

Relevance of the Study and its

Contribution to the Field

This study is vital for understanding the intersectionality of various factors influencing an individual's health and well-being. Public health initiatives often aim to address not only physical health but also mental health, exploitation, and social determinants of health, such as cultural identity and societal transitions. The sequence of events probe into how individuals traverse challenges and change their lives and it is also important in understanding how people adapt to hardship and how the experiences impact their overall wellness. Understanding the psychological aspects can provide valuable insights into coping mechanisms, trauma, and resilience. Drug and alcohol use are often interconnected with mental health. Exploring these themes within the context of Campbell's autobiography sheds light on how drug addiction and abuse intersect with personal experiences, cultural identity, and social dynamics, all of which are essential in public health discourse. Maria Campbell's *Halfbreed* deals with a unique perspective on Indigenous experiences in Canada, highlighting the importance of cultural identity and heritage in health and wellness, the researcher examines how cultural factors influence health outcomes and interventions.

Plot Overview

Campbell's *Halfbreed*, provides a vivid account of the history and struggles of the Métis people in Canada. The story begins by investigating the historical upbringing of the Métis, demonstrating their impoverished state and explaining the historical factors that led to their poverty. Campbell introduces key figures like Louis Riel and sheds light on government strategies such as the Land Acts, which played an essential role in shaping the

milieu of Maria's family. The Métis, who had long back inhabited the land, faced new government regulations requiring them to work there for three years before claiming it. Initially, they resisted these measures, but the Canadian government ultimately prevailed, taking away their land. This loss led to many Métis families attempting to establish homesteads to retain some of their land rights. Campbell explored the role of religion and superstition in her upbringing in the Novel. Her experiences at a residential school, where she was prohibited from speaking Cree, are also narrated. The story follows Maria's journey as she becomes the primary caregiver for her family after her mother's death. Her family's relocation to a new community in hopes of a better life adds to her challenges. Maria's life became increasingly complex, and she took on numerous responsibilities to keep her family together, even marrying for the sake of her siblings. The narrative touches on her turbulent marriage, her struggles with racism, and, eventually, her descent into prostitution as a means of survival. Maria's battle with addiction is a recurring theme, and she experienced the harsh realities of the sex trade, drug addiction, and the lack of care for those in dire situations. Despite the hardships, the narrative takes a turn as Maria finds support, helps prisoners, and engages in activism. She returns to her roots and her community, ultimately overcoming her addictions and finding purpose through writing and advocacy.

"*Halfbreed*" offers a powerful and multifaceted account of Maria Campbell's life and the challenges faced by the Métis people in Canada, making it a captivating exploration of identity, struggle, and resilience.

The Backdrop of the Novel

Halfbreed (1973) was a revolutionary work in modern Canadian Aboriginal literature. It is a widely studied and valued text in Canadian educational institutions. The archival records expose that some aspects of Campbell's story were considered too controversial to publish, even though she wanted her narrative to be complete.

In 1940, Campbell grew up in a supportive Métis community on Crown land north of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, where Métis people lived in huts. Her autobiography, *Halfbreed*, vividly depicts her inspirational upbringing, including her life as a high-end prostitute in Vancouver, struggling with

addiction, and engrossment in the drug custom. The Novel also recounts the violence and racism experienced by Campbell, her family, and her community from both White and Indigenous populations. Campbell's story not only shares her journey but also amplifies the voice of Métis people, especially Métis women, and aims to humanize and emphasize the significance of half-breeds in Canadian history. *Halfbreed* was born out of Campbell's resentment and outrage at racism and injustice against her family and community. It can provoke the reader's humiliation and rage even though it is not a bitter or angry work.

While getting her work published, there were apprehensions about its content, and some prominent names were omitted to avoid legal issues. However, Campbell believed that somebody must do slight editing because the content, technique, and linguistic part had implications for sociologists and students studying the issues she reported. Jack McClelland, the publisher, had a positive but cautious initial reaction to Campbell's script. He documented its value and originality but felt that it needed further modification before publication. He believed that the book's lack of focus on the bridging between Campbell's struggles and her Métis identity, predominantly her drug addiction and relationship issues, might cause readers to lose sympathy for her. He also had concerns about the naming of individuals and references to an alleged rape involving the RCMP, which he believed could lead to legal distress. Campbell's life is not merely a personal one but also gives voice to the Metis as a whole, particularly to the Metis women (11).

Eventually, McClelland's criticisms led to the transformation of "*Halfbreed*" into a book addressing broader issues of discernment, scarcity, and subjugation handled by the Métis, particularly Métis women. He proposed extensive changes to the text, and if Campbell didn't agree to these changes, he prepared to pass it to another publisher. He acknowledged the outstanding material in the book and believed it could become a national bestseller with the right effort.

Maria Campbell made the revisions, and the analyses of "*Halfbreed*" by the people and academics and the responses were highly positive. The book is a significant inquiry into human emotions, and it is an important contribution to understanding Canadian societies. An investigation

into *Halfbreed's* publishing and reception history emphasizes the importance of recognizing the widespread presence of what I refer to as damage-centered reading practices. While these practices stem from a desire to comprehend injustice, they unintentionally reinforce the belief that Indigenous individuals are inherently flawed. If settlers wish to utilize *Halfbreed* as a means of self-education, they must be aware of this (12).

Maria Campbell is undoubtedly one of Canada's most dynamic contemporary novelists. Her Novel echoes her enduring struggle for survival from childhood to adulthood. Her deep concern for her community adds a profound dimension to her work, as she openly shares her experiences and challenges. Campbell's family fought for their homeland but never officially received recognition from the Canadian government. She vividly portrays her happy childhood until her mother's death, after which she became the primary caretaker for her siblings.

Like everyone, Maria needed money for survival, which drove her to enter prostitution to escape her grief. She faced massive challenges and eventually became a drug addict, permanently abused at her workplace due to her ethnicity. Financial difficulties led her back into the cycle of addiction. Maria fought tenaciously to overcome these obstacles and found inspiration and transformation through her interactions with other Aboriginal writers.

Halfbreed explores the complex historical and social settings of colonialism, forced assimilation, and intergenerational trauma, particularly in the context of Indigenous peoples in Canada.

In the historical context colonialism in Canada began with European commerce in the 16th century, leading to the establishment of settlements and the exploitation of Indigenous lands. Policies were enacted that aimed to control Indigenous populations, including treaties that were often broken or misinterpreted. The introduction of residential schools in the late 19th and throughout the 20th centuries marked a significant attempt to assimilate Indigenous children into Euro-Canadian culture. These schools aimed to expunge Indigenous languages, traditions, and identities, leading to widespread cultural loss.

The forced assimilation policies imposed by the Canadian government were designed to integrate

Indigenous peoples into conventional Canadian society, often at the cost of their cultural identities. The Indian Act of 1876 and subsequent laws restricted the rights of Indigenous peoples and aimed to eradicate their traditional ways of life. Families were often separated, and children were taken from their homes to attend residential schools, resulting in a loss of cultural continuity and a deep sense of displacement.

The social dynamics during this period were marked by racial discrimination and marginalization. Indigenous peoples faced systemic oppression, and their identities were often outlined through a colonial lens, leading to stereotypes and stigmatization. This context influenced the relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, creating divisions and misunderstandings.

The impacts of colonialism and forced assimilation have resulted in intergenerational trauma within Indigenous communities. The psychological scars of residential schools, loss of language, and disconnection from cultural practices have affected not only those who experienced these traumas directly but also their descendants. The legacy of trauma manifests in various ways, including mental health issues, substance abuse, and difficulties in forming identity.

In *Halfbreed*, Campbell traverses these aspects by intertwining personal and collective histories. Her experiences as a Métis woman highlight the struggles of identity in a colonial setting, apprehending the pain of loss and the resilience of her community. The narrative serves as both a testimony to the effects of colonialism and a reclamation of her identity, illustrating the ongoing struggle for recognition, healing, and cultural revival. Campbell's work is an emotional exploration of the lasting effects of colonialism and forced assimilation, offering a window into the resilience of Indigenous identity in the face of historical trauma.

Halfbreed is a powerful narrative that encapsulates Maria Campbell's journey from a challenging childhood to adulthood, marked by poverty, addiction, and discrimination. It also sheds light on the struggles of the Métis community, particularly Métis women.

Results and Discussion

Intersection of Violence and Social Oppression

Campbell addresses the brutality and social injustice she has experienced. She also explains the poverty in her town and how, although she had an excellent upbringing, she had to go through a difficult period when her mother passed away while giving birth. Campbell resembles the silence of Jaya in *That Long Silence*. Jaya argues with Kamat, a character in the story, and states that "A woman can never experience anger." She can only exhibit symptoms of neurosis, hysteria, and frustration" (13). Campbell decided to marry Darrel, a white man, to escape that suffering. Despite her love for him, her marriage failed, and she ended in prostitution, drug addiction, alcoholism, and attempted suicide. Maria did all of this to get away from life's hardships. Maria gained courage from her great-grandmother Cheechum.

"Great Grandma Campbell, whom I always called "Cheechum," was a niece of Gabriel Dumont...She often told me stories of the Rebellion and the Halfbreed people. We never wanted anything except to be left alone to live as we pleased" (14).

Campbell's work reshapes the experience of shame, highlighting the transformative nature of power and faith in her journey. In *Halfbreed*, she exposes the challenges faced by the Metis community in Canada, emphasizing the prevalence of racism, bitterness, and the burden of shame.

"I am not bitter. I have passed that stage. I only want to say: this is what it was like; this is what it is still like. I know that poverty is not ours alone. Your people have it too, but in those early days, you at least had dreams, you had a tomorrow" (14).

Unlocking Success Through Education

Maria Campbell said that the power of belief, success, and inspiration will change everything. Cheechum had motivated her from her childhood. Cheechum said, "You'll find yourself, and you'll find brothers and sisters. I have brothers and sisters all over the country. I no longer need my blanket to survive" (14). Her education helped her to stand alone and fight for their rights. Maria's mother died while giving birth to a child. She suffered a lot, and Maria fell into a great depression. Maria's father came and knelt beside her, saying that she had to take care of the family. "Maria, you're the oldest, and now you must help me. Mom died this

afternoon. He rested his head upon my lap and embraced me, and we remained in that comforting embrace for a prolonged period (14). Campbell often thought of her family, and one day, she asked her father if she didn't want to go to school. Then, her father taught her the importance of education for life. "Her father supported her and made her understand every aspect of her life. I often begged Daddy to let me quit school, but he would tell me that I needed education and that it was the most important thing in life" (14).

Unveiling Racial Subjugation

Maria tried to overcome all her struggles, but she was not able to do so. Due to her race, she faced many obstacles in her employment and her life. Lil introduced her to prostitution and drug addiction. When she drank heroin, she forgot the world, and she had been with many men. Then, she realized that prostitution was not the only solution to her troubles. "I'd been doing a little dope by this time, but I wasn't on to any heavy drugs, just grassland sniffing Cocaine once in a while. However, that night, I did heroin, and I forgot everything" (14). Maria, with the help of the money she earned in prostitution, planned to move to Calgary with her daughter. However, in Calgary, she struggled with financial troubles and drug addiction. She moved back to Vancouver and put her daughter back into a convent. Suddenly, one night, the words of Cheechum reflected in her mind "You can have anything you want if you want it bad enough" (14). Maria moved to Alberta to work on a ranch to stay out of trouble and to forget her past. One day, a person from Maria's native place came and enquired about her. She was terrified because of her past, and she thought that her past would affect her employment. "I'd meet one of them somewhere. That night at supper, I tried to appear calm, and once we were seated the guy asked me if I'd lived in Vancouver (14).

Maria went to work in a school to forget all her past. She had gone to work for her survival. Maria became pregnant unexpectedly, and she struggled with the choice of wearing a "Welfare blanket." In Calgary, she worked as an attendant in a small town, and she described her sufferings and explained her struggles with food, etc. 'But if you're looking for a party, there's always lots of people, you'll spend a fortune seeing that you stay blissfully drunk' (14). Maria met David and moved to Northern Alberta with him. Maria was worried

about her history, and was scared that David would come to know about her past and, it would affect her marital life with him. She was very depressed because she kept that secret from him. With Trixie's help, Maria met her people and learnt and their behaviour also she met an Aboriginal activist. During that time, Maria began to write to AA inmates at Prince Alberta Penitentiary. Then she met her father. Her father asked her why she had neither returned nor a letter to him for which she replied that there was nothing good to write. Then she walked around the house of Granie Campbell. She was not there in that old tumbled house. 'Dad asked me why I had never returned, and I had never written, and I replied that there had been nothing good to write home about. He didn't ask anything else, and I have never told him what happened' (14). Maria came out from addiction and found meaning in her life. An Aboriginal activist inspired Maria, and she educated herself on Aboriginal history (15) and was employed in a research project on Aboriginal people. Once Cheechum had told her that she would find brothers and sisters and everyone would be there for Maria, she removed her blanket, and she never wanted her blanket anymore. "Cheechum said, you'll find yourself, and you'll find brothers and sister" (14). Campbell's *Halfbreed* depicts the actual happenings of her life and the struggles which she had undergone in her life. She came out as a new woman. Campbell used a metaphor to describe the underlying meaning, and then she empowered herself. Like Campbell in the novel *Halfbreed* fights and struggles to overcome fear Samra's novel *A Good Wife Escaping The Life I Never Chose* illuminates the influence of socialization in enabling individuals to confront and overcome their most profound fear disorders. Samra's novel immediately plunges readers into a world characterized by persecution and brutality (16). Maria discussed her friend's role in writing that book. She asked her to make a happy book, but Maria said she could not register it as a happy book. She explained her father's life and also said that she began the book by explaining her father. "Mariya, make it a happy book. It couldn't have been so bad. We know we are guilty, so don't be harsh". I don't hold resentment anymore. I've moved beyond that phase. I intend to convey how things were. I know poverty is a shared experience, not unique to us. However, in the past, your community at least had

aspirations and a sense of a brighter future. 'Maria expressed her childhood life and that her life was always in the poor state... and laughter and warmth to share' (14). Bella narrates her place in the household. Of all, she was the oldest. When Maria used to cut and drag pickets, she would charge five cents per post. Despite Momma losing three infants in three years, there were seven children. Up to twenty pickets were chopped and hauled to the store, where they were sold for five cents a post.

Thriving Wellness: Fostering Health and Happiness

The way Campbell portrays life at the Alberta Hospital in Edmonton is odd (17). In the narrative, Campbell discusses her partner's suspicion of her past involvement in survivor sex work which drives Campbell into a mental crisis and leads her to the hospital. Moreover, she describes the hospital as "a gloomy, lonely place" (14). Campbell articulates the incidents in the hospital and states "They left us alone after feeding us and ensuring we didn't hurt anyone" (14). Campbell suggests that some women felt safer in the hospital and were "feigning insanity"(17) to avoid being released in a ward with "women like herself" (14). She nurtures the patients by explaining how several patients overcome their illnesses to find solidarity and support. After her stay in the hospital, Campbell said she "felt good and strong- no longer confused" (14). She has also begun to participate in Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), a group that introduces her to individuals involved in Alberta's Indigenous movement, and the Native Friendship Centre in Edmonton (17).

Campbell's *Halfbreed* describes how she later worked with men in the Prince Albert Penitentiary, her dream of opening a halfway house "where girls could come when they were in trouble" (14), and her contacts with various organizations, including the Métis Association of Alberta, the government-sponsored community development Project, and the Canadian Indian Youth Council (18). However, Campbell illustrates the horrors of mental illness in her life. When she is summoned upstairs to assist in "feeding the grannies," she explains the living circumstances of the old hospital's perpetual individuals she comments "For as long as I live, I will never get over that place or those people. There was only one large room. Grey paint covered the partitions and floor, and aged women were in various conditions few people chose to sit

on the floor and gaze blankly. Some were crying and screaming, and some were crouching as though they were scared they might be punished” (19).

The study also focuses on the ways Indigenous authors reclaim narratives and assert their identities against colonial frameworks. Works by authors like Maria Campbell, Lee Maracle, and Thomas King highlight the importance of storytelling as a means of cultural preservation and resistance. Literature is seen as a powerful tool for articulating Indigenous perspectives, histories, and contemporary issues.

In trauma studies, Indigenous literature is examined for its portrayal of historical and intergenerational trauma resulting from colonization, violence, and cultural disruption. The concept of collective trauma is often discussed, emphasizing the ongoing impacts of colonization on Indigenous communities. The work titled *Literatures, Communities, and Learning: Conversation with Indigenous writers* written by a Metis author, Aubrey Jean Hanson features the role of indigenous literature in healing communities and raising awareness in the society

Intersectional Feminist Analysis approach critically examines how gender, race, and class intersect in the lives of Indigenous women. Intersectional feminist writers highlight the unique challenges faced by Indigenous women, including the dual oppressions of colonialism and patriarchy. Works like *Halfbreed*, *The Race Track: How the Myth of Equal Opportunity Defeats Racial Justice* by Kimberle Crenshaw serve as case studies to explore themes of identity, empowerment, and resistance against systemic oppression. The interaction with *Halfbreed* in contemporary academic literature highlights its multifaceted contributions to discussions on identity, trauma, and the importance of intersectionality in understanding Indigenous experiences. It emphasizes the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to discourse the complexities of Indigenous experiences and narratives.

The research reveals a comprehensive analysis of Maria Campbell's challenges as portrayed in her autobiographical novel *Halfbreed*, with a specific focus on her journey from childhood to adulthood and the self-empowerment that emerges through her adversities. The study highlights Campbell's resilience and the role of mental health in her

transformation, illustrating how she navigates the complexities of being a Native woman within the Metis society. The key findings of the study include The journey of empowerment is vibrantly proved through the life of Indigenous woman and author Maria Campbell, whose metamorphosis from vulnerability in childhood to strength in adulthood highlights the deep impact of challenging societal marginalization. Campbell's narrative not only represents the resilience required to navigate the systemic challenges faced by Indigenous women, particularly within the Metis community, but also sheds light on the critical connection between mental well-being and personal strength. Her experiences reveal that prioritizing mental health can lead to transformative results, fostering resilience and a renewed sense of purpose. Moreover, the societal implications of her struggles, rooted in issues like xenophobia and sexism, emphasize the interrelatedness of personal and collective challenges. Eventually, Campbell's work serves as a call for societal transformation, emphasizing marginalization and mental health is essential not just for individual healing, but for the flourishing of Indigenous communities.

Conclusion

This research article is an attempt to highlight the struggles for survival and transition of a woman in *Halfbreed*. It also delves into the drug abuse, mental health, and Welfare of the character and Metis people. Maria Campbell's three important phases such as survival, recovery, and challenge are reflected in her personal experiences. Every person has both happiness and sorrow in his/ her life. It is an inherent aspect of being human. Nobody can avoid this destiny. Women must inspire themselves. Unfortunately, some women who are searching for their happiness alienate themselves from the realities of human life. The selected novel for the study emphasizes the fact that life's problems are not perpetual. One has to accept his/her conditions, and encounter struggles with an optimistic attitude. Many, like Campbell who endures for survival in this world, are often ignorant of their shared bonds. Her journey in the novel illustrates a profound transformation as she grapples with her limitations, finding new meaning and evolving into a stronger individual. *Halfbreed* intimately details the discrimination faced by Métis people in Canada, starting from Maria Campbell's tumultuous childhood. Her family's struggle for

land, her mother's tragic death, and her battles with addiction and prostitution paint a picture of her resilience. Amidst racism and personal turmoil, her friendship with Trixie becomes a momentum change, leading her to reclaim her Aboriginal heritage and become an activist. *Halfbreed* is a story of hope and survival for the women's shelter movement (20). By overcoming addiction, she realizes the purpose of life and eventually returns to her community as a confident Aboriginal writer. The memoir underscores the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal women in the sex trade, revealing themes of survival, identity, and racism central to Canadian literature. Eventually, Maria Campbell's narrative powerfully portrays her journey from shame to empowerment, proving that redemption lies in embracing one's own identity and purpose.

Abbreviations

AA : Alcoholics Anonymous, MC: Maria Campbell
 NWAC: Native Women's Association of Canada
 AWAN: Aboriginal Women's Action Network
 RCMP: Royal Canadian Mounted Police

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Author Contributions

C Sindhu: conceptualized, designed the methodology, justified the results, examined, secured resources, curated the data, and drafted the manuscript, NS Vishnu Priya: reviewed and edited the manuscript and provided supervision throughout the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The authors affirm no conflict of interest.

Ethics Approval

Ethical considerations have been paramount support in conducting the research. Since the primary data source is a fictional novel, there are no direct human participants involved. However, it is critical to approach the sensitive topic of drug abuse, and prostitution with empathy and respect. The researcher has ensured that the depiction of the journeying of a woman and her abuse and prostitution with effects in the novel is handled with care and has not been subjugated to exaggeration.

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