

# Marginalization and Idea of Justice as Projected in the Novel *Halfbreed: An Overview*

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## An Abstract

This article depicts the struggle of the marginalized people who were longing for their freedom in Canada. People who had a mixed blood named differently throughout the world by carrying a dreadful name called 'METIS'. As a spark from the dark Maria Campbell the protagonist of the novel *Halfbreed* raised to eradicate the life of the slavery using her pen as a sword. The dominant people subjugate them by controlling and torturing them. Poor self image, cultural violation, assimilation, marginalization, internal violence, self destruction were only seen in the life of those people. The search of identity and a desire to live an independent life made the protagonist to lose all her virginity and also originality. She and all her people desired to live an independent life which is free from all the obstacles. Though they have not given full freedom when they lived they hoped that their future generation would live an independent life. This article deals with the justice which has to be given to those kinds of people who longed to be free from marginalization.

**Keywords:** Maria Campbell, *Halfbreed*, Marginalization, loss of identity, thirst for freedom, idea of justice, violation.

This research paper analyses the novel *Halfbreed* by Maria Campbell as it is all about the half breeds. The by product of French Canadian Males and Native females are called Half-Breed. Half-breed is actually called as mixed blood. They are also called as Metis in other ways. A person of mixed blood is named differently throughout the world. They do not have legal status and this Metis came into existence since 1960. Maria Campbell the protagonist of the novel fights for her freedom and also for her identity as she was socially marginalised from her birth. The concept of marginalization plays its vital role in the life of Maria Campbell. This paper is to analyse how she was marginalised and how she fought for her freedom.

*Halfbreed* was her own autobiography novel which brings out her pain due to marginalization. She was born on April 26, 1940, near Park Valley, Saskatchewan and was a Metis author. She was the oldest of eight children. So she was supposed to take care of her siblings after her mother's death. One of the major factors that affected the history of the world is the world wars and the aftermath of world wars created many deep scars in the minds of the people. The major scar that was still being as ulcers in people's minds is

colonization. Colonization involves one nation colonizing another nation by the force or acquisition. Colonized ones are forced to follow the culture and tradition of the other, political domination and cultural will be in the peak. The result of these, the colonised ones would be condemned and marginalized. The colonization involves into the nation and these native people were severely forces to follow their rules. Assimilation also involved into the nation and the colonized once were forced to conform to the cultures and tradition of the colonizers. The by product of these colonizers and the native people are called as Halfbreed, who had no identity as they were rejected by both the colonizers and the native people.

In the beginning of the novel the author describes her people that they came from Ontario and Manitoba to Saskatchewan. They have to escape the prejudice as they are entering into the new land. Canadian Bay Company, so Halfbreed leaders and their lands gone, they had to the southern areas of Prince Albert Saskatchewan. There was no government, no law and order. They fashioned their life, soon they elected Gabriel Dumont as their president, with eight councillors. Here they lived happily, but soon, in 1870's; their threatened life was again born as how happened in Ontario and Manitoba due to the settlers and the railroad. There established the land act and, the author and the people believed that this act discriminated them.

The condition was that they have to work for three years and had to live on the land before filling a claim. They wanted assurance, from Ottawa of their rights encroached on them by using homestead law [10]. They sent many petitions to Ottawa, but as how happened in Ontario and Manitoba, Ottawa started to ignore the existence of the people.

At last, in 1884, the people believed Gabriel Dumont as he was their only hope. But the result that Riel discovered that only half-breed has complaints with no reasons and Maria Campbell belonged to Métis people. This Metis people are the marginalized people in Canada. To the white people, the Metis are meant as light coloured Indians, they are part and part white. Soon this half breeds vulgar expression for mixed blood. The Canadian Government grabbed all their lands and shown a severe way of living which lead their life to poverty. There was much diversity in cultural, physical appearance commonly. They were called as 'Road- allowance people' due to poverty and lack of houses. Campbell says that they were brave hunters and not farmers. But their lands were given to the immigrants and left as homeless.

“Being a half breed meant being poor and dirty. It meant being weak and having to drink. It meant being ugly and stupid. It meant living off white people. And giving your children to white people to look after. It meant that kids like me, had to take what kids like the Derosiers gave and none of that were good”. (34)

Marginalization played a vital role in the life of Maria from childhood. As a child she was suffering from the disease of inequality. Platforms become house for them Marginalised along the platform due to their identification. Maria was born in a home where Chee chum her Cree grandma who taught her ambient Cree rituals and legends. They were extremely discriminated and suffered by poverty. She was much disappointed in the school where she studied with the white people. She was forced to speak in English and also premised for speaking her own language. Many times she was treated lovely among the white children.

“Our first teacher was sad looking little English woman in her later forties she had never taught half-breed before and we soon realized that she didn’t like us... we had many different teachers during those years; some got the girls pregnant and had to leave; others we alcoholic; and because our school attracted everybody else’s reject. We had a constant stream of teachers. We had one good teacher, Mrs. Park, who was stern but fair. Maybe it was because she treated us as equals that I liked her and did well in school (Campbell 52).

Too much depression and extreme poverty made her to search for a new identity. She tried to escape from the poverty, by marrying a white person. But, soon, she was treated low and she broke up with that white man, and she felt herself alone in the slums of vernacular. There she faced depression, drug addiction and prostitution. Her remain significant sociological concepts through her writings: discrimination, poverty and injustice. There are many controversial between these concepts. Then she was discriminated by her own society and lost her identity. From her first husband she undergone the moment of injustice. Her life has been filled with many issues and problem, as a Half-breed.

With no hope she came out from her husband. She was turned into a prostitute for her breed. Lil got major part of her bread and Ray another man turned her as a drug mule, it was her poverty made her to fall into these bad circumstances. Chee chum her grandma taught many natives which made her to hate life and so she lift her child in convent and the slums. In Alberta she hides her terrific life to David, but David helped her and Tixie helped to overcome drug addiction. She was struggling to keep secret from David and also attempted suicide twice. All these are because of the white superiority over a poor woman.

She hated the life which she lived. Preventing herself from entering into the immoral life, she took her pen as a sword. Her pain and anger has been filled in fictional for in this book *Halfbreed* (1973), which made the world to take away at her agony.

Only hope is that one day, very soon, people will set aside their differences and come together as one. This is not because they love one another, but because they will need each other to service. Then together everyone will fight against their common enemies. Thus marginalization played a vital role in the lives of Maria Campbell and her people. The only

weapon she has taken to bring out this pain to this world is her pen and their only belief is that this condition will be changed.

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