Feminine Resilience: Indigenous Women of British Columbia, 1850-1900

From the years 1850 to 1900 in British Columbia, the social landscape drastically changed following the arrival of European colonists and missionaries; and this included the status of women, whether they were of an Indigenous or a white background. Before European settlers arrived in the province, the geographic area that now comprises the interior of British Columbia was dominated by First Nations who organized their societies matrilineally, meaning that kinship was passed down the line of women. As an influx of settlers arrived in the area, the practice of colonialism created an environment where women were subordinate to men, regardless of whether they were Indigenous or of a European settler background. All women were placed in lesser social and political roles, while also having to maintain households and carry out duties such as raising children. The image of the obedient Indigenous woman was forged in colonial era North America, and this perception of Indigenous women as perfect targets of European male colonizers caused these women to suffer a loss in social status resulting in isolation, as well as sexual exploitation. This paper will look at secondary works by historians and scholars that explore the differences between the experiences of Indigenous and white women in this period, as well as primary sources written by Indigenous women in order to better understand the firsthand experiences of women in British Columbia and the observations they made. Overall, we will find that Indigenous women were increasingly marginalized after the arrival of European settlers in British Columbia, but they made strong, rebellious efforts to resist the violent scourge of colonization and to maintain their autonomy as much as possible. Indigenous women, despite their undeserved suffering and subjugation, chose to persevere and contribute positively to their culture – these women rose above.

The methodology of researching the subject of Indigenous women in the second half of the 19th century began with the inspiration of the work of Adele Perry, which was encountered in

a course taught by Dr. Nicolas May at Simon Fraser University. Perry's work on the gender imbalances that resulted from colonial development in 19th century British Columbia was of particular interest. Further scholarship was found through searches of specific terms related to the topic in the Simon Fraser University Library search engine and Google Scholar. The collection of literature focused specifically on the experiences of Indigenous women in 19th century British Columbia, and subsequently, more information about the experiences of white Europeans who arrived in the region at that time was encountered. This paper examines the experiences of Indigenous and European women in late 19th century British Columbia, and how they were treated quite differently. The goal is to synthesize and condense some of the scholarship in order to show how Indigenous women were treated in this particular era and geographic setting.

In order to better understand the changing landscape of British Columbia in the 19th century and how it affected women of varied backgrounds, we will first look at the work of historian Adele Perry. Perry, a professor of history and women's and gender studies at the University of Manitoba, wrote about the "skewed demography" of nineteenth-century British Columbia and how men outnumbered women nearly three-to-one in an article titled "Oh I'm Just Sick of the Faces of Men". In this piece, Perry's argument hinges on gender imbalance, which combined with colonial race politics "To increase white women's opportunities for heterosexual contact while restricting their social options outside the heterosexual nexus".[1] Perry's analysis examines gender imbalance in northwestern Canada in the nineteenth century, looking at the "scarcity model," which centered on the "idea that women's experience improves commensurate

[1] Adele Perry, "Oh I'm Just Sick of the Faces of Men": Gender Imbalance, Race, Sexuality, and Sociability in Nineteenth-Century British Columbia," *BC Studies* 105-106 (Spring/Summer 1995): 27 – 28, accessed March 28, 2022, https://doi-org.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/10.14288/bcs.v0i105/106.969.

with their rarity."[2] This scarcity model is based on supply and demand. The other model Perry presented was that of the "volcano theory," of male sexuality, which assumes the existence of "a fixed quantity (always unspecified) of male sexual energy which, if not funneled into monogamous, same-race heterosexual relationships, will burst forth in a variety of "deviant behaviors".[3] The implication of the volcano theory being that if a large number of men are present, they will act out with these behaviors if and when "white women were scarce…by utilizing and permitting a thriving and open flesh trade…and by forming relationships with First Nations women."[4] This startling assertion left women at the whim of the urges of men – likely placing them in danger of sexual assault and other unpleasant occurrences. The volcano theory was propped up by the idea of a "non-aboriginal demographic imbalance" and men who were deprived of their typical objects of desire (white women), and historians suggested that white men responded to this deprivation in one of three ways: "by utilizing and permitting a thriving and open flesh trade, by becoming radicals, and by forming relationships with First Nations women".[5] The imbalanced demographics of 19th century British Columbia were due to increasing arrivals of white colonizer men, and this had a net negative effect on aboriginal women, as they were subjugated to having to exchange sex with these men, or serve them in relationships that may not have been entirely voluntary.

Additionally, as far as social relationships between white and non-white women in this time period, Indigenous or mixed-descent women were often not acknowledged by white colonist women. As Perry described it, white women engaged with "a loneliness premised on white supremacy and culturally specific modes of sociability which white women were either

[2] Perry, "Oh I'm Just Sick of the Faces of Men," 28.
[3] Perry, "Oh I'm Just Sick of the Faces of Men": 29.
[4] Perry, "Oh I'm Just Sick of the Faces of Men": 29-30.
[5] Perry, "Oh I'm Just Sick of the Faces of Men": 29-30.

unwilling or unable to bridge".[6] The result was self-imposed isolation in which many white women newly arrived to British Columbia simply not did not acknowledge women of a lesser social status, with First Nations women being excluded. Therefore, First Nations women in this period were viewed as sufficient by white colonist men for sexual or romantic relationships in the absence of white women, and they were also discounted by white colonist women as social equals. Leanne Simpson discussed the treatment of Indigenous women by white women who arrived in colonized areas, mentioning how the teaching at Methodist missions was performed by white women.[7] Simpson notes that "white women were the ideal, and missions were out to quietly destroy [Indigenous] nationhood by erasing, strong powerful" women who performed activities like fishing and hunting to support their family and community.[8] Simpson discusses how white women "were out to destroy our agency, self- determination, body sovereignty, and freedom and to contain us under the colonial heteropatriarchy within which they lived and used to have power over us," and how their actions were "sexual and gendered violence as a tool of genocide and a as a tool of dispossession."[9] As was touched on earlier, Indigenous women were often used by white men in sexual relationships, but this later changed: "initially, in the absence of white women, colonizers positioned and used Indigenous women for sexual gratification. By the mid-nineteenth century, the colonizers positioned all the sexual autonomy (and the autonomy in general) of Indigenous women to be illicit— especially if it occurred "in public," the domain of white men."[10] Indigenous women were therefore later punished for exhibiting behavior that was taken advantage of in the earlier colonial period. As Simpson explains, "the more

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[6] Perry, "Oh I'm Just Sick of the Faces of Men": 41.

[7] Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, "The Sovereignty of Indigenous Peoples' Bodies," in *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance,* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 97.

[8] Simpson, 96-97.

[9] Simpson, 97.

[10] Simpson, 107.

Indigenous women exercised their body sovereignty, the more we were targeted as "squaws" and "savages," subjected to violence and criminalized."[11] In nearly every way, the treatment of First Nations women when European settlers arrived in British Columbia was demeaning and discouraging, and part of a larger picture of systematic genocide.

As mentioned briefly above, the perceptions of the sexuality of Indigenous women was another factor that contributed to their subjugation. Jean Barman discusses concepts of gender, power and race in her article, "Taming Aboriginal Sexuality." The journal article opens with an anecdote from the author attending a sexual assault trial in 1996 in which a Catholic bishop was charged with rape and/or assault of four Indigenous women, with Barman describing his defense as inferring "they had made him do it. They had dragged him down and led him astray".[12] Barman's article later examined the concept of how certain biases and assumptions about Indigenous women were popularized by the perspectives of men: "the assumption that men and male perspectives equate with all persons and perspectives is so accepted that it does not even have to be declared".[13] The histories of Aboriginal people being told by white male explorers, traders, missionaries, and others often led to inaccurate depictions of Indigenous women, and as Barman remarks, "misperceptions of Indian women were rampant because they were held up to the patriarchal model".[14] Sexuality was a major point of conflict in British Columbia in the period of 1850 to 1900, with Aboriginal women being the focal point of colonizers' reforming efforts. As a new ruling class, European colonizers subscribed to the view of the "inherent moral supremacy of men," and Indigenous women unwittingly became a target of these men.[15] White

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[11] Simpson, 107.

[12] Jean Barman, "Taming Aboriginal Sexuality: Gender, Power, and Race in British Columbia, 1850-1900," *BC Studies* no. 115/116 (Autumn/Winter 1997/98): 237, accessed March 28, 2022, https://doi.org/10.14288/bcs.v0i115/6.1735.

[13] Barman, "Taming Aboriginal Sexuality," 238.

[14] Barman, "Taming Aboriginal Sexuality," 239.

[15] Barman, "Taming Aboriginal Sexuality," 239.

women were viewed as "pure," while Aboriginal women were often used for sexual gratification by settler men during conquests, and "if unspoken…it was generally accepted that, so long as colonial women were absent, Indigenous women could be used to satisfy what were perceived to be natural needs".[16] Essentially, the environment created by the arrival of European colonizers to British Columbia was one in which Indigenous people, especially women, were placed in a socially inferior role, and colonial elites, or those who wielded power via their seizing of land and resources, did not hesitate to take advantage of them, especially sexually. Not only did Aboriginal women face condemnation by white European settlers for their perceived seductive powers, but they were also used for the gratification of the same men, who simultaneously saw them as objects to use. This frustrating view of Aboriginal women by European colonist men was a result of social stratification that developed with the arrival of colonizers in British Columbia. Subsequently, a look at how Indigenous women came to be viewed as morally inferior by colonizers in North America will illuminate how these women came to occupy a perceived role of servitude for white men.

An analysis of sexuality and the power that women were perceived to possess in the 19th-century colonial frontier is necessary to better understand how and why the image of the obedient Indigenous woman came to exist, and why Indigenous women in British Columbia were expected to serve in sexual roles. Jo-Anne Fiske, a professor of Women and Gender Studies formerly of the University of Northern British Columbia, examines how the mythology of women such as Pocahontas created dichotomous categories of what she deems "princess" and "squaw".[17] Presumptions made about Indigenous women by white colonizers with regard to their sexuality and spirituality forced them into a subservient, victim role. There was also an

[16] Barman, "Taming Aboriginal Sexuality," 240.

[17] Jo-Anne Fiske, "Pocahontas's Granddaughters: Spiritual Transition and Tradition of Carrier Women of British Columbia," *Ethnohistory* 43, no. 4 (Fall 1996): 663, accessed March 27, 2022, https://doi.org/10.2307/483250.

irony in the idea of supposedly Christian colonizers choosing to do immoral things to Indigenous women, and "female sexuality was…appropriated by the colonizers in myriad conflicting images that reflected back to the colonizers their assumed moral superiority even while they violated the principles of that morality in their treatment of colonized women".[18] Indigenous women were beholden to a binary, and they were either viewed as the glorified "princess," such as the mythological view of Pocahontas, or as a "squaw," to be readily denigrated.[19] The romantic imagery of Pocahontas, who became a folk history figure, is based on her supposed autonomous choice to "reject the savagery of her people for the love of a frontiersman," John Rolfe.[20] Fiske presented the story of Pocahontas as a precursor to the experiences of Carrier women in central British Columbia, referring to the women as "metaphorical granddaughters of the Pocahontas problematic," and who felt their spirituality and sexuality were changed via colonial influence.[21] As a setting, mid to late 19th-century British Columbia was a new colonial frontier in which groups of people from opposing backgrounds encountered one another and experienced "moral clashes and contests that expose the immorality of the colonizer and the struggles of the colonized to assert a new moral accountability".[22] The introduction of residential schools by European settlers in British Columbia starting in 1867 was a means of establishing an institution that attempted to mold Indigenous students into obedient citizens, but their legacy became sexual, physical and mental abuse, while also serving as sites of "spiritual refashioning".[23] The arrival of European settlers to areas occupied by the Carrier people introduced Catholicism, and priests established a hierarchy of power that relied on religious laws, such as the Ten

[18] Fiske, "Pocahontas's Granddaughters," 663.
[19] Fiske, "Pocahontas's Granddaughters," 663.
[20] Fiske, "Pocahontas's Granddaughters," 664.
[21] Fiske, "Pocahontas's Granddaughters," 664.
[22] Fiske, "Pocahontas's Granddaughters," 665.
[23] Fiske, "Pocahontas's Granddaughters," 665.

Commandments, and inflicted punishments for adultery and fornication. Carrier women suffered the brunt of these punishments, as women were "perceived as having a lesser degree of moral restraint than men," and their personal lives became more restrained.[24] Instead of Pocahontas, the Carrier tribe had their own symbol of proud Aboriginal womanhood to admire, a saint figure named Rose. Rose was upheld as the ideal representation of an Indigenous woman, with devotion and compassion for others among her positive traits. According to Fiske, "Rose represents a refiguring of gender on the moral frontier, for the image of saint displaces the received metaphor of female aboriginal identity: Pocahontas, the iconographic representative of sexuality and virtue".[25] This perception of a figure like Pocahontas, who was essentially martyred when she married John Rolfe, and as Fiske described it, "transformed from sexualized savage to asexual lady," and the efforts made to present an acceptable figure of female morality among the Carrier people in the form of Rose, were indicative of a need to submit to colonial religious figures.[26] Carrier women, much like Pocahontas, were expected to convert to Catholicism and become obedient to patriarchal leadership. These demands for Indigenous women to obey European settlers became efforts to try to stifle what was believed to be threats of Aboriginal sexuality and independence.

A discussion of how the status of both aboriginal and white women changed in 19th -century British Columbia is incomplete without looking at the state of the family in this period. Family was used both as a target and tool by Christian missionaries in the northern Pacific Coast when they encountered aboriginal people. Family meant different things to aboriginal people and Christian missionaries. Specifically, the actions of Protestant missionaries who encountered Tsimshian people combined "notions of the family as the foundation of Christian society with the

[24] Fiske, "Pocahontas's Granddaughters," 668.
[25] Fiske, "Pocahontas's Granddaughters," 670.
[26] Fiske, "Pocahontas's Granddaughters," 672.

contemporary vision of it as a refuge from the influences of industrial capitalism and secularism, missionaries to British Columbia attempted to remake the Aboriginal family according to Western ideals".[27] Tsimshian ideas about family were connected to "social status, to property and resource rights, and even to power itself," while Euro-Canadian and Indigenous missionaries working together challenged these ideas about family in attempts to get Tsimshian peoples to proselytize.[28] The concept of the family unit was contested, and Christian missionaries tried to alter marriage customs and also introduced a patrilineal naming system. All of these developments contributed to the marginalization of Indigenous women. At the same time, white women were celebrated and propped up as "an appropriate response to British Columbia's social quagmire…they were thought to bring the qualities of gentility, morality and piety that were so routinely connected with white women".[29] Aboriginal women, as discussed previously, were viewed as immoral and overtly sexual, which was not ideal for the colonist vision of a moral, upstanding society. The solution was to try to attract white women to British Columbia for the purpose of building families with white men. As historian Adele Perry explains, "white women…were crucial in the effort to discourage sex and marriage between white men and First Nations women," even though sexual relationships between white men and Indigenous women were a key component of the trade society in the area.[30] The Victorian ideals of gender and race discouraged race mixing, and became part of the mission of colonist and religious leaders to prevent white men from having children with or marrying First Nations women. A letter from a

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[27] Susan Neylan, "Contested Family: Navigating Kin and Culture in Protestant Missions to the Tsimshian, 1857-1896," In *Households of Faith: Family, Gender and Community in Canada, 1760-1969*. Edited by Nancy Christie (McGill: Queen's University Press, 2001), 167.
[28] Neylan, "Contested Family: Navigating Kin and Culture in Protestant Missions to the Tsimshian, 1857-1896," 164.
[29] Adele Perry, "Fair Ones of a Purer Caste": White Women and Colonialism in the Nineteenth-Century British Columbia," *Feminist Studies* 23 no. 3 (1997): 505, accessed March 28, 2022, . https://doi.org/10.2307/3178383.
[30] Perry, "Fair Ones of a Purer Caste": White Women and Colonialism in the Nineteenth-Century British Columbia," 505.

supporter of these actions explained that white men had to "assert our own superiority…and let them feel themselves to be what they really are – less than civilized and far worse than savage".[31] The encouragement of white men to marry and have children with white women was yet another dehumanizing moment for aboriginal women, and white men who married First Nations women were viewed as uncivilized. Yet again, aboriginal women were condemned for essentially existing, while their white counterparts were seen as virtuous and ideal partners for colonist men. We have established the difficulties faced by First Nations women in 19th century British Columbia, and we will now look at how aboriginal women fought to preserve their traditions and culture despite the unfortunate reality of the disadvantaged legal and social environment they lived in.

Following the passage of the Indian Act, which was created by the Canadian government in 1876, Indigenous women were subjected even further to the arrangement of men being heads of household and de facto leaders, with women having to remain as dependents on their husbands. Specifically, the Indian Act placed restrictions on what women could possess, and the legislation "denied women the right to possess land and marital property—only widows could possess land under the reserve system. However, a widow could not inherit her husband's personal property upon his death—everything, including the family house, legally went to his children."[32] In 1884, a modification was added that would allow men to leave their estate to their wives, but there was a stipulation that the wife could only receive the estate if an Indian agent "determined she was of 'good moral character.'"[33] This requirement remained in the Indian Act

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[31] Perry, "Fair Ones of a Purer Caste": White Women and Colonialism in the Nineteenth-Century British Columbia," 505-506.
[32] University of British Columbia, "Marginalization of Aboriginal Women," *First Nations Studies Program*, 2009, http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/marginalization_of_aboriginal_women/#:~:text=The%20Indian%20Act%20denied%20women,legally%20went%20to%20his%20children
[33] University of British Columbia, "Marginalization of Aboriginal Women."

through 1951. Stripping Indigenous women of their rights to housing or any recourse to help them in the event of their marriage ending was one example of how the Indian Act dehumanized them. Further, the traditionally matrilineal structure of Indigenous families was interrupted, and kinship systems were forcibly reconfigured over time, with the Indian Act being one of the guiding factors. Beginning in 1851, these matrilineal descent practices were changed, and at this time, "the government decided that to be an Indian, one had to be an Indian male, be the child of an Indian male, or be married to an Indian male. Under this system, a woman depended on her relationship with a man to determine whether or not she was an Indian."[34] Furthermore, the law stated that Indigenous women who married a non-Indigenous man would lose their status as an Indigenous person, and lose the right to live on a reserve, the right to inherit property, and the right to be buried alongside her ancestors.[35] The Indian Act was abused as a means of stripping Indigenous women not only of their rights, but of their dignity. The effects of the Indian Act on rights to land and property, as well as to Indigenous benefits were akin to forced displacement and power restructuring that would have effects for centuries to come.

We previously outlined some of the reasons why Indigenous women faced difficulties in 19th century British Columbia, and now we will look more closely at how Indigenous women fought to uphold and preserve their culture. Few Indigenous women in the nineteenth century wrote about their experiences, as Indigenous culture was largely reliant on oral records. Accordingly, the texts that survive offer a rare and potentially valuable window into the lives of Indigenous women in mid to late nineteenth-century British Columbia. One Indigenous woman who wrote about her life and her people was Mali Quelqueltalko (hereafter referred to as Quelqueltalko), a member of the Nlaka'pamux tribe in the interior of British Columbia.

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[34] University of British Columbia, "Marginalization of Aboriginal Women."
[35] University of British Columbia, "Marginalization of Aboriginal Women."

Quelqueltalko wrote an article for a publication titled *All Hollows in the West,* which was a collection of articles by Nlaka'pamux women whose lives had changed markedly when Simon Fraser arrived in their communities and "they became subject to the process of colonization – advanced by gold miners, railway builders, missionaries, and immigrant settlers – with their racism and colonial ethnocentricity".[36] Quelqueltalko was born in 1875 in the small community of Spuzzum into a prominent Nlaka'pamux family. When colonizers arrived in their homeland, Quelqueltalko's family purposely converted to Anglicanism in an effort "to be heard in the colonial world," and remain politically active in the community.[37] Quelqueltalko moved to Yale to attend the All Hallows school in 1885, and at the same time, the Fraser Canyon was invaded by miners arriving in search of gold. Much like other Indigenous women, Nlaka'pamux women became easy targets for these men, as victims of rape and other criminal acts. Quelqueltalko's writings documented her time at the school and made observations regarding the interactions of Indigenous people with white people. In a piece dated December 18, 1890, Quelqueltalko wrote about the Sisters who taught Indigenous children at the school, humorously pointing out that it was difficult for the Sisters to tell Indigenous people apart from one another:

> Now I have thought of another thing that is interesting. There are two old Indian men here, and the white people think they are exactly alike, but they are no relation to each other. Three years ago, they were baptized, and George, the Indian interpreter, and one of the Sisters were witnesses. The old men were called by new names; one was Thomas and one was David. When they came out of the Church, somehow, they got mixed up, and Sister and George did not agree which was Thomas and which was David.[38]

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[36] Jennifer Iredale, "Mali Quelqueltalko: The Writings of a Nineteenth-Century Nlaka'pamux Woman," *BC Studies* 203 (Autumn 2019): 86, accessed March 29, 2022, https://doi.org/10.14288/bcs.v203i203.191480.
[37] Iredale, "Mali Quelqueltalko: The Writings of a Nineteenth-Century Nlaka'pamux Woman," 90.
[38] Iredale, "Mali Quelqueltalko: The Writings of a Nineteenth-Century Nlaka'pamux Woman," 95.

Even though Quelqueltalko only learned to speak English at age twelve, she was able to write that piece at sixteen, clearly confident in her identity as an Indigenous woman, and displaying rebellion in the face of colonization.

As she grew older and more educated, Quelqueltalko took on Western tastes in culture, enjoying Shakespearean plays and other works of literature. In one way, Quelqueltalko was becoming more knowledgeable, but in another way, she was also somewhat cooperating with the colonial powers that had invaded her homeland. Due to Quelqueltalko's presence in the mission setting, she was able to take advantage of "opportunities to exercise power and influence that were challenged or restricted in other social milieu".[39] Quelqueltalko's writings may be viewed as a form of rebellion in which she uses the power of language to command respect for her Nlaka'pamux people. Quelqueltalko's firsthand accounts of her life in increasingly colonized British Columbia "may be read as the voice of an Indigenous woman speaking out on behalf of Indigenous culture and rights".[40] Quelqueltalko also wrote in defense of sacred Indigenous practices such as the potlatch - a traditional gathering ceremony that can mark births, deaths, marriages, and where chiefs pass down their power to their successors - which was increasingly becoming scarce as white settlers attempted to stifle the voices and culture of Indigenous people. Quelqueltalko wrote of the tradition of the potlatch and her hopefulness that the colonists would see their value: "you cannot understand unless you see, and the Indians would be so glad, and there would be a chance to teach them more to be good Indians and Christians too, and not what they often feel, that to be Christians they must leave off being Indians and try to be like white people, giving up even what is harmless in their old customs."[41] Quelqueltalko's fierceness in defending the potlatch, especially after it was outlawed in Canada by the Indian Act in 1885, was

[39] Iredale, "Mali Quelqueltalko: The Writings of a Nineteenth-Century Nlaka'pamux Woman," 99.
[40] Iredale, "Mali Quelqueltalko: The Writings of a Nineteenth-Century Nlaka'pamux Woman," 99.
[41] Iredale, "Mali Quelqueltalko: The Writings of a Nineteenth-Century Nlaka'pamux Woman," 102.

a way of fighting back against oppression. Quelqueltalko defended the practices and beliefs of First Nations people, essentially acting as an ambassador to the white Christians who dared to try to silence them. Quelqueltalko was the first published Indigenous female writer in the western Canadian region – a feat that spoke to her ability to "accommodate the Christian, Western and racist sensibilities of her readers".[42] Historian Jennifer Iredale concluded that Quelqueltalko's writing "adopted and adapted a colonist convention to present a compelling case for Indigenous traditions and society,"[43] and through her work, we see how some Indigenous women chose to persevere in their identity while also being forced to live alongside a white colonist population.

A number of conflicts took place between European settlers and Indigenous people, some cultural and some erupting into overt violence, contributing to a precarious state of gender relations in 19th-century British Columbia. The arrival of European settlers to British Columbia in the mid to late 19th century caused several shifts in the social, political, and economic environment. One of these was the emphasis on patriarchal leadership, which was in opposition to the matrilineal model followed by most First Nations people in the new colony. Conflicts that emerged between European colonizers and Indigenous people in North America were based in racism and the stereotyped perceptions of First Nations people being immoral or impure. Indigenous women ultimately suffered as a result of the shifting social composition of British Columbia in the colonial era: they were used for purposes of sexual service by male European colonizers and placed in a subjugated role with the passage of the Indian Act. Ultimately, these women sacrificed their bodies to colonialism, sometimes in an effort to survive on their own lands. This is significant because according to Audra Simpson (mentioned by Leanne Simpson in her book *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance*) the

[42] Iredale, "Mali Quelqueltalko: The Writings of a Nineteenth-Century Nlaka'pamux Woman," 107.
[43] Iredale, "Mali Quelqueltalko: The Writings of a Nineteenth-Century Nlaka'pamux Woman," 107.

bodies of Indigenous women are "legal targets for death, disappearance, and elimination because we are signifiers of a political order that is a direct threat to the political legitimacy of settlement."[44] By either taking control of or damaging these bodies, colonial settlers attempt to apply control beginning at the individual level and moving upward.

In the mid-19th century, the image of the obedient Indigenous woman was what most white colonizers expected to encounter. However, some Indigenous women rebelled against this expectation in their behaviors. These efforts to both capture and preserve Indigenous thinking and traditions were a form of rebellion, especially in how they aimed to circumvent the influence of white Christian traditions – the efforts to put Indigenous stories into written form, rather than keeping them in traditional oral forms, was a necessary concession to make in order to ensure their survival. These actions were certainly bold to undertake in latter 19th-century British Columbia, which was being overtaken by new European settler arrivals and white Christian missionaries at a breakneck pace. Although the fate of many Indigenous women in this region was to become subservient to these colonizers, either in the form of sexual and/or romantic dalliances, or in domestic work positions, their efforts to preserve their identity and culture should not be discounted. We saw this effort made by Quelqueltalko of the Nlaka'pamux in her writings. The pride of Indigenous women during the second half of the nineteenth century in British Columbia outlasted the difficulty of their lives - the fact that Indigenous women are studied to this day and their writings still exist illustrates the strength of their resilience.

[44] Simpson, 115.

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