Yakama Rising

Indigenous Cultural Revitalization, Activism, and Healing

MICHELLE M. JACOB

FIRST PEOPLES
New Directions in Indigenous Studies

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA PRESS
TUCSON

2013

Introduction

Embodying Contradictions and Resisting Settler-Colonial Violence

An Ethnographic Introduction: Welcome Dance and Lessons Contained in Cultural Traditions

* * *

"There! Look," the grandmother said, nodding her head in the direction of the stage.

The woman follows the grandmother's gaze and smiles immediately. The children are dancing! On the stage are girls and boys dressed in their traditional regalia. They are so beautiful in their colorful outfits. She sees their advisor in the corner of the stage, announcing the next dance that the Wapato Indian Club dancers will perform. The woman takes in the scene and feels herself drift back in time, as a flood of memories washes over her.

In her memory, she sees a group of girls lined up in the large brick government building. There are cameras snapping photos, and it is a very crowded room. In the sea of people, she sees some familiar faces. She sees the watchful eyes of parents and the group's advisor, who expect a group of twenty girls to stand still while they wait for their introduction. She remembers trying to have proud, tall posture, as she had been taught by her auntie.

It was then that her older brother took the microphone. He was wearing the beaded vest that their auntie had made him. *Auntie is the most skilled seamstress in the entire world,* she thought to herself as she watched

her brother make his introductory remarks. He was only thirteen years old, but the handsome vest made him seem mature beyond his age, she thought, *like a real spokesman for our people.* Finally, her brother finished his introduction of the opening dance. The girl and her nineteen friends took their cue and settled into a focused, but friendly, mood as they started the Welcome Dance.

The girls follow their lead dancer into the center of the room. They dance single file as they made the carefully timed and gentle steps with their feet. They keep pace with the drum and song, timing their steps with the graceful hand motions their elders had taught them in practice sessions.

In the dance, the girl gently places her hands in front of her body, then moves her wrists, rotating her palms upward. Then she turns her torso and moves her arms to extend her hands to the right, in a dramatic but gentle welcoming gesture to the guests to "sit here." She follows the lead dancer, keeps time with the drum, and repeats the motion, alternating to the left, letting the guests know they are also welcome to "sit there." All twenty girls dance in unison, with calm and proud expressions. They know it is an honor to open the ceremony today. Their dancing starts the event, and their elders taught them that having "good hearts" would establish the right mood and spirit, so the rest of the ceremony would go well. They knew these things, and embraced the responsibility, because their elders had prepared them for it. The Wapato Indian Club performance expressed the importance of a Yakama decolonizing praxis, as the girls embodied an ancient Yakama tradition of welcoming guests to an important event.

* * *

Embodying Contradictions and Social Change: Yakama Cultural Revitalization on the Ground

This book examines Yakama cultural revitalization efforts as examples of healing the wounds of colonialism. Chapters 1, 2, and 3 each feature a case study highlighting dance, language, and food tradition revitalization, respectively; through these chapters, I introduce grassroots activists who share stories about the challenges and rewards of engaging in their community-building work. The women and men involved in the grassroots revitalization efforts recognize the importance of respecting women as culture bearers; therefore, each of the case studies is centered on

Yakama women elders' teachings. I argue that the activist work taking place is a powerful example of decolonization, and this book makes a contribution to the literature on indigenous social change by articulating a Yakama decolonizing praxis.

The dance event in the opening ethnographic narrative was a historical moment rich in meaning and contradiction. It was a celebration of the one-hundredth anniversary of Washington's statehood, an event that took place in 1989 at the grand opening of the newly built Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) building. The large government structure was built on Yakama homeland, in the city of Yakima, named after our tribe, the Yakama Nation. Dignitaries from all levels of government attended, and the local news featured the event. At the time, it was probably difficult for us, a group of girls and boys from the nearby Yakama Reservation, to grasp the deeper significance. Our dancing represented an act of resisting colonialism, as we used our bodies to contest colonial logics that render indigenous peoples vanished, silent, and conquered.

Perhaps it is a fitting irony that Indian children danced to commemorate Washington's one-hundredth anniversary. Perhaps the dance reminded state officials of their obligation to our people. After all, the officials worked for a bureaucracy that existed as a result of the genocide and destruction of Indian peoples. Perhaps the display of dancing children and the presence of so many Indian bodies reminded officials that they were on Yakama homeland. Or, perhaps the audience simply saw, in amazement, that even after over one hundred years of the violence of colonization, settlement, war, and reservation policies, Yakama children could still take center stage at an official state event and steal the show. Yakama youth showed our pride, our humanity, our culture, and we became the teachers—as we embodied the knowledge that our elders had shared with us. In this way, our young bodies became a site of rich meaning and contradiction, where young indigenous people "talked back" to the state by demonstrating resistance to over a century of settler-colonial violence imposed upon our peoples. This book's case study of the youth dance troupe, together with case studies of language revitalization and traditional foods workshops, shares a compelling story of Native peoples working for change, while holding fast to our ancient traditions.

This tension, of working for change but holding onto traditions, is inherent within decolonization struggles. I use Waziyatawin and Michael Yellow Bird's definition of decolonization, "the intelligent, calculated, and active resistance to the forces of colonialism that perpetuate the

subjugation and/or exploitation of our minds, bodies, and lands, and . . . is engaged for the ultimate purpose of overturning the colonial structure and realizing Indigenous liberation" (Wilson and Yellow Bird 2005, 5). Waziyatawin and Yellow Bird's definition provides an ideal toward which indigenous peoples are striving. Throughout the case studies in this book, I examine how decolonization efforts look "on the ground." I found that, ultimately, indigenous decolonization is about reclaiming traditions, in addition to moving forward in the complex social, political, and economic realities colonization brought to our peoples and homelands. Andrea Smith observed the dynamic approach that indigenous activists take in their decolonization efforts, stating it can be thought of as "revolution by trial and error" (Smith 2010b, 489). Negotiating the contradictions inherent in such change-making work is not always an easy process. Contemporary individuals and families negotiate the balance between pushing for change and understanding that not all peoples and institutions are ready for change. Through this uneasy process, activists seek alliances with those who support a decolonization agenda, and engage in what Smith calls, "identify[ing] possible nodal points of connection that can lead to global transformation" (Smith 2010a, 587). In the process of holding fast to traditions but working for change, activists create new methodologies to carry on traditional cultural practices. This transformative work is detailed in the case studies in chapters 1, 2, and 3, and they form the basis for what I call Yakama decolonizing praxis.

Growing up on the reservation, as an enrolled member of the Yakama Nation, I witnessed the contradictions inherent in efforts to hold fast to traditions yet work for social change. Now, as an ethnic studies professor, I examine such phenomena from a critical indigenous studies perspective, with the goal of supporting social change efforts that empower our people and protect our cultural traditions. My work to articulate a Yakama decolonizing praxis contributes to theories of indigenous social change centrally concerned with "making power" to reclaim indigenous traditions, bodies, languages, and homelands. These ongoing decolonizing efforts are needed because of the long history of struggle against settler-colonial violence that our people have endured.

Historical Background and Resisting Settler-Colonial Violence

According to tribal history, after contact with the infamous Lewis and Clark expedition in 1805 life "changed for us forever" (Yakima Indian

Nation Tribal Council 1977, 5). Our people extended friendship and welcomed the guests, as tradition requires. Ultimately the onslaught of settlers, territorial governments, and surveyors made it clear that these guests were not seeking to live peacefully among our people. Instead, they sought to take over our lands, subjugate our people and cultural ways, and colonize our institutions. When Washington Territory was formed in May 1853, Governor Isaac Stevens planned to resolve the "Indian problem" by entering into treaties with the indigenous peoples of what is now known as Washington State. Tribal historical accounts remember this time of tumultuous social change:

> Treaty plans called for lumping together these Indians living in this region. The majority of these Indians spoke dialects of the language now called Sahaptin. There were fourteen tribes and bands: the Palouse, Pisquouse, Wenatshapam, Klikatat, Klinquit, Kow-was-sayee, Li-ay-was, Skin-pah, Wish-Ham, Shyiks, Ochechotes, Kah-milt-pah, Se-ap-cat, and the Yakima.
>
> Over 3,000 Indian people and their leaders from the Yakima, Nez Perce, Umatilla, Walla Walla and Cayuse were called together in late May 1855 at Old Fort Walla Walla for the long and sometimes troubled treaty negotiations. (Yakima Indian Nation Tribal Council 1977, 9)

Ultimately, Yakama leaders were forced to sign the Treaty of 1855. Although 90 percent of Yakama homeland was ceded to the US government in this process, our Yakama leaders retained 1.2 million acres, which would be collectively held by our people and named the Yakama Reservation. Additionally, Yakama leaders fought to retain our traditional food gathering rights, and as a result we hold rights to fish, hunt, and gather in all the usual and accustomed places. Oral histories and tribal customs teach a great respect for our past leaders. In the words of Yakama leader Watson Totus, "Our hearts swell with praise for the dignity of our ancestors. We give respect to our forefathers who made our treaty. We try to walk today the path they made" (Yakima Indian Nation Tribal Council 1977, i).

Our leaders teach that, since time immemorial, Yakama peoples lived on our homeland, speaking the language provided to our people by the Creator and seeking to carry out the Original Teachings that the Creator provided. The name of our language, Ichishkíin, translates to "in this way," and elders remind younger learners that the language holds within it a powerful covenant between our people and the Creator. The language that the Creator bestowed upon us teaches us how to be; it teaches us how

to conduct ourselves "in this way." Oral histories teach that the Creator made the land, all the plants, animals, and birds, and then the people (The Consortium of Johnson O'Malley Committees of Region IV State of Washington 1974). Tribal cultural committees have conducted projects to write down our people's oral histories, translating them into English, for modern-day convenience:

> In the beginning, our Creator spoke the word and this earth was created. He spoke the word again and all living things were put on the earth. And then He said the word and we, the (Indian) people, were created and planted here on this earth.
>
> We are like the plants of this earth. Our food was put here as plants to feed us; just like when we plant a garden. That is the way our earth was in the beginning.
>
> There were salmon, deer, elk, and all kinds of birds. It is as if our bodies are the very end of this earth, still growing while our ancestors are all buried in the ground.
>
> He named everything He created. He put water on this earth. He made it flow into the rivers and lakes to water this great garden and to quench the thirst of the people, the animals, plants, birds and fish.
>
> He took the feet of the people and made them walk on this earth. He created the horse; which is like a human being. He put the horse and the people together to help one another.
>
> All of the land where we live and where our ancestors lived was created for the (Indian) people. (Yakima Indian Nation Tribal Council 1977, 4)

Such oral histories tell about a Yakama view of history, of creation, and of the relationship between our people and our lands. As the lesson conveys, the land connects us to the Creator's original intention for our people, living, learning, and thriving on our homeland. The cultural revitalization efforts I discuss in this book are examples of our people building on these traditional teachings using contemporary methodologies. New methodologies are needed because of the dramatic social change that our people have faced. With each change introduced into our community, our people have had to make decisions about how to adapt and survive. As other scholars have detailed, this adaptation process is dynamic, complex, and at times contradictory.

Margaret Field and Paul Kroskrity write about the complications involved with indigenous language survival, acknowledging that "decisions

about when to speak heritage and/or other languages in a community's linguistic repertoire and choices about whether to actively participate in language renewal efforts—or to assiduously avoid them—are prompted by *beliefs and feelings about language and discourse* that are possessed by speakers and their speech communities" (Field and Kroskrity 2009, 3–4). Such an observation calls attention to power dynamics that influence the survival of indigenous languages. As Teresa McCarty writes, "language choices are never unfettered, but rather play out within larger power regimes that structure individual agency and institutional constraints" (McCarty 2011, 9). Yakama children attending reservation schools, the growing importance of wage labor, and a general shifting of power toward the Western way of life were all evidence of the influence that the US government's assimilation policies has had on our people. Perhaps the most symbolic form of Western neocolonialism is The Dalles Dam, which was designed to destroy Celilo Falls, the most precious (and lucrative) salmon fishery for Indians in the Northwest. When the Army Corps of Engineers completed the massive Dalles Dam on March 10, 1957, the floodgates were closed, and the floodwaters buried Celilo Falls. The impact on the traditional Yakama economy was immediate and devastating, directly resulting in massive unemployment, dramatic increases in hunger and poverty, and unmeasured detriment to Yakama people's mental health and well-being (Hunn, and Selam and Family 1990; Barber 2005).

In her careful study of the social and political factors surrounding the construction of The Dalles Dam, Katrine Barber (2005) cites the numerous ways Yakama leaders protested the dam, noting in many cases how Yakama peoples provided the strongest examples of resistance. Yakama leaders paid their own expenses to travel to Washington, DC, to provide testimony against the construction of the dam. During one such visit, Watson Totus refused to give credence to the federal government's idea that a cash compensation would sufficiently reimburse Indians for the losses that the dam would impose. Totus stated that "no compensation could be made which would benefit my future generations, the people still to come" (Barber 2005, 86). Our leaders resisted the federal dam project because they foresaw how the dam would disrupt our traditional teachings and lifeways.

From an indigenous perspective, in order to care for the earth and our bodies, we must keep the traditional teachings alive. However, what happens when there is a knowledge gap? For example, when children have never touched a fresh salmon just pulled out of the river by our tribal fishermen? Or when children and adults are embarrassed to greet elders

in our indigenous language? Or when children avoid or mock cultural gatherings because they have not learned the traditional dances? It is at these times, when cultural knowledge gaps are identified, that cultural revitalization becomes crucial. During times of cultural education crisis, activists must create new structures of teaching and learning, using what Denise Nadeau and Alannah Earl Young have described as an "Indigenous Knowledges framework" that includes traditional knowledge systems and practices as well as contemporary forms of knowledge that teach about "Indigenous theory, values, and cosmology, and provid[e] an embodied connection to relations" (Nadeau and Young 2008, 122–123). Or, as Joseph Gone (2010) describes in his community psychology framework, indigenous communities must draw from both traditional (precolonial) and contemporary (postcolonial) ways of reclaiming traditions and regenerating healthy communities. Thus, when younger generations are left with gaps in their knowledge of traditional cultural practices, activists respond by finding new ways of conceptualizing cultural revitalization work as they struggle to "seize the future" (Cornell et al. 2007) to ensure cultural survival.

Soul Wound and Indigenous Knowledge Production

Worldwide, indigenous peoples are struggling to protect their traditional cultural ways in the face of rapidly expanding Western consumer culture. Along with this struggle, indigenous peoples continue to face other threats, such as poor health, high poverty, low educational attainment, high suicide rates, and high rates of substance abuse. Lack of educational attainment is particularly worrisome among Native peoples, with US census data indicating Native peoples twenty-five years and older lag behind the general US population in high school graduation rates (76.6 percent vs. 85.0 percent) and bachelor's degree attainment (13.0 percent vs. 27.9 percent) (US Census Bureau 2010). These disparities contribute to a trend of lower earning power and job access among Native peoples. Within indigenous communities, the theory of intergenerational historical trauma and the concept of the soul wound are important tools for understanding the oppression of indigenous peoples (Duran 2006; Duran and Duran 1995).

Working as a counselor among Native peoples, Eduardo Duran found that community members had unresolved grief in response to the historical traumas their people had faced. For example, genocide, warfare, traditional homeland loss, forced attendance at boarding schools, and

compulsory Christianity were all sources of grief and suffering for contemporary indigenous peoples. Duran found that indigenous peoples suffered with this grief even if they had not themselves directly experienced these forms of colonial violence. Adults whose parents were stolen by missionaries or government officials and taken to boarding schools, for example, often grieved over the violence and social disruption that occurred. Additionally, contemporary indigenous peoples experience post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms in response to historical events such as massacres of their tribal ancestors, forced treaty negotiations, cessation of tribal homelands, or removal and relocation of their tribal peoples.

Despite its popularity as an analytical tool among indigenous communities, historical trauma has been critiqued for perhaps defining indigenous peoples solely in terms of their relationship with colonizers, as Nadeau and Young (2008) articulate, and also for the lack of empirically based testing of historical trauma as a measurable concept (i.e., health scientists view historical trauma more as "folk knowledge" than a documented medical disorder, as Gone [2009] describes). However, the theoretical framework of historical trauma is still useful as a conceptual tool for understanding the long-term consequences of colonialism within contemporary indigenous communities from an indigenous perspective (as opposed to only a Western scientific perspective).

Community-based indigenous researchers continually engage the theory of historical trauma because of its strong appeal among indigenous communities themselves. Quite simply, indigenous communities engage with the theory because they find it helpful. Within this theoretical framework, the many social problems facing indigenous peoples are evidence of a traumatic response to colonial violence. As the theory explains, if the traumatic response to colonialism goes unaddressed and unresolved, then healing the soul wound will not happen. The trauma will worsen across generations. The soul wound is an important concept for decolonizing work because it accurately explains that the root cause of many social problems can be traced back to historical and ongoing forms of settler-colonial violence. Therefore, problems such as poverty, poor health, interpersonal violence, and substance abuse must be addressed within a framework that examines the long-term effects of colonialism. In so doing, scholars can actually avoid psychologizing Native peoples as "problems." In my work, I avoid the pitfalls of "stopping" the analysis at the soul wound and instead take it as an important jumping-off point to analyze the importance of developing a critical healing approach, in what I call Yakama decolonizing praxis. My analysis of Yakama cultural revitalization efforts

contributes to indigenous studies theories that recognize the importance of our communities' resilience to understand and address our own problems—that the power needed to heal our soul wounds already exists within our people and traditions.

My concern with understanding suffering and resilience complements Dian Million's work in developing a "Felt Theory" that centers indigenous affect as central to indigenous feminist knowledge production. In Million's words, "Indigenous women participated in creating new language for communities to address the real multilayered facets of their histories and concerns by insisting on the inclusion of our lived experience, rich with emotional knowledges, of what pain and grief and hope meant or mean now in our pasts and futures" (Million 2009, 54). What ties the theoretical work on soul wound and felt theory together is the commitment to honor indigenous peoples' experiences and perspectives as central to a critical decolonized inquiry.

My study reveals that Yakama cultural revitalization activists have two interconnected goals: 1) recovering traditional cultural practices, and 2) dismantling oppressive systems that harm our people, land, and culture. The case studies that follow demonstrate how this Yakama decolonizing praxis looks. Through their everyday actions in and around the Yakama Reservation, in their travels to other institutions and gatherings, activists articulate a praxis that can inform feminist and anti-racist work. By drawing from traditions to undermine settler-colonial–imposed hierarchies and reasserting the importance of spiritual relations between humans and our surroundings, Yakama cultural revitalization efforts represent a distinctive indigenous feminist approach to "making power" within our community.

To address high rates of suicide and substance abuse, for example, one cannot simply look at problems in terms of an individual deficit or even as evidence of lack of sufficient available social services (although these realities can contribute to the problems as well). Rather, healing approaches must look at health and social problems in terms of land loss, genocide, warfare, assimilation, termination, and relocation. Likewise, indigenous peoples must view healing in terms of its long-term *communal* effects. To heal oneself is to help heal ancestors' soul wounds, and to help protect future generations from soul wound suffering. This view of healing and suffering resonates well with traditional indigenous teachings that view each generation as connected to another. Intergenerational historical trauma is a well-received theory within indigenous communities today because it centers the fact that suffering and healing are connected across generations; it reaffirms an indigenous belief in connectedness. As Native

scholars note, it is difficult to imagine a contemporary indigenous health conference that does not address intergenerational historical trauma (Duran 2006; Evans-Campbell 2008). By taking up the notion of the soul wound, then, my analysis follows an important principle of decolonizing work: using indigenous communities' own ideas as central to an analysis that seeks to contribute to indigenous self-determination. This notion stands in contrast to a Western academic approach that assumes knowledge comes from "without" (or, "West is best," as Joseph Gone [2009] articulates in his critique). Linda Tuhiwai Smith points out that the strength of indigenous social movements "is to be found in the examples of how communities have mobilized locally, the grassroots development. It is at the local level that indigenous cultures and the cultures of resistance have been born and nurtured over generations. Successful initiatives have been developed by communities themselves using their own ideas and cultural practices" (Smith 2001, 110). Such perspectives start with an understanding of indigenous analyses as inherently valuable.[1]

Notably, resistance is taking place amid consistent attacks upon indigenous peoples' sovereignty, their cultural and physical existence. Brenda Child's work on understanding the boarding school experience points out that Native peoples have rich histories of resisting assimilationist policies and physical and structural violence. To do so, Native peoples draw from cultural traditions and look to their families and communities for support through emotional and cultural bonds (Child 1998).

This communal approach was important in the cases of Yakama cultural revitalization I share in this book. Faced with the daunting reality that the survival of Yakama cultural traditions were at stake, cultural revitalization activists worked together to build movements that would ensure the younger generations have access to their cultural teachings.

My study of Yakama cultural revitalization contributes to the ongoing discussion of decolonization within indigenous studies by helping to fill an important gap: I ground my analysis within specific case studies of decolonization movements taking place within a particularly underresearched community, which also happens to be the largest tribe in the Northwest. By looking at what activists are doing, documenting their history and impact, we can understand how decolonization, as a practice, helps inform our theory-building of decolonization and social change.

[1]Stuart Kirsch makes a similar argument in his work with indigenous peoples in New Guinea, arguing for the value of a "reverse anthropology" that privileges indigenous modes of analysis (Kirsch 2006).

The models of grassroots activism I outline and discuss in this book have already served our community well. But there is more work to be done. Within our own community, activists acknowledge that more people need to be involved in revitalization efforts—that the movement needs to grow stronger. Indeed, as a critical indigenous scholar, I agree that our decolonization work must continue because, ultimately, our traditions and languages will not be fully restored until global transformation abolishes the multiple forms of oppression that perpetuate the physical and cultural genocide of indigenous peoples. Beyond our Yakama community, this book will provide guidance to other peoples who seek to bring about healing social change. Today, so many communities feel a great need for healing. We will all benefit when we learn from each other, share our successes, analyze our common problems, and nurture and support the optimism and courage that serve as the foundation of our movements.

Methods

In 2010–2011, I conducted qualitative interviews with eighteen people involved in three case studies of cultural revitalization movements on the Yakama Reservation. These case studies focus on dance (Wapato Indian Club), language (Northwest Indian Language Institute), and food (Xwayamamí Ishích), respectively. I used a snowball sampling technique, starting with key personnel for each case study. As a member of the Yakama Nation and a community member active within cultural revitalization efforts, I was familiar with some of the work being done through these grassroots efforts, but I had not previously analyzed or written about this cultural revitalization work. I loosely structured interviews, asking each interviewee about their experiences, motivations, and advice for future generations (see Appendix).

In addition, I asked each interviewee if they considered themselves to be an "activist," as I was interested in whether they viewed their work as explicitly activist in nature. As Winona LaDuke points out, labels such as "activist" or "feminist" are embraced in indigenous communities depending on who is doing the defining (LaDuke 2005a). As I discuss in later chapters, elders were most accepting of an "activist" label or identity, while younger interviewees shied away from what they perceived might be a "strong" or "political" association connected with an activist label. It appeared the younger respondents' hesitation to embrace an activist title was rooted in humility, a point I discuss further in chapter 3. For example, younger people framed their work in terms of "just helping" elders, who were the *real* activists. Regardless of their political differences in embracing various labels, there was one striking similarity across all interviewees: deep concern for "Native survivance," as termed by Gerald Vizenor. Native survivance focuses on an active presence and the continuation of stories within Native communities, a point discussed in greater detail in chapter 2 (Vizenor 2008).

During the informed consent process, each participant was offered anonymity and the use of a pseudonym, but all participants chose to have their real names used in this study. Interviews, on average, were 45 minutes long, audiotaped, transcribed verbatim, coded, and analyzed for themes. All the quotes in the case studies come from these interviews unless otherwise indicated and, along with my own reflections, informed the ethnographic descriptions included in this book. The inclusion of researcher reflection is considered a strength, as researcher reflexivity is an important part of the analytical process (Jacob 2006; McGhee, Marland, and Atkinson 2007; Smith 2002).

Overview of Chapters

The Wapato Indian Club youth group was formed in the 1970s, in response to student demand that cultural teachings be present within the public school. Students urged their school counselor to help them learn the teachings. Their counselor, a Yakama woman, reached out to elders, and they began the work. Some forty years later the club is still going strong, its performances being sought by venues across the United States. This chapter shares the lessons that club alumni, elders, and club advisors learned over the course of the club's history. In chapter 1, I study how the dances themselves became an educational tool to help children embody the teachings of their elders. Focusing on one particular dance, the Swan Dance, I analyze the cultural lessons contained within the actual technique and spirit of the dance. I conclude the chapter with a Yakama-specific set of values that articulates the leadership model which underlies the work of the Wapato Indian Club.

Chapter 2 focuses on a group of activists who resist the extinction of the indigenous Yakama language, Ichishkíin. The language revitalization movement, led by a Yakama woman elder, evolved into a partnership with the University of Oregon's Northwest Indian Language Institute (NILI). In the chapter, I study the ways activists utilize a vision of social justice to

build what linguists have called a moral community. Inherent within this approach is the understanding that indigenous peoples possess a human right to learn and use their languages. In addition, contemporary educational institutions have a responsibility to respond to and protect this right. This chapter articulates the educational model that garnered successful results for these activists.

Down a bumpy dirt road in a remote area of the reservation, there is education taking place. It is advertised on Facebook and through word of mouth. Generations of Yakama families gather to learn the traditional food ways of our people. The teacher, a tribal elder, drives several hours from her home near the Columbia River to show the younger people how to wind-dry fish, a traditional way of preserving food that does not rely on electricity or artificial preservatives. This is one example of the work done within Xwayamamí Ishích (Golden Eagle's Nest), a community-based nonprofit organization dedicated to cultural revitalization on the Yakama Reservation. In chapter 3, I draw from in-depth interviews and participant observation to analyze the importance of the activists' work, paying special attention to their traditional foods workshops. I also analyze the way their work represents an important example of grassroots indigenous resistance with the potential to dismantle colonial logics. I conclude the chapter by articulating a model of education that underlies their work.

Chapter 4 discusses the larger lessons drawn from across the case studies by incorporating my work on historical trauma with the literatures of Native feminism, indigenous resurgence, and indigenous human rights. In doing so, I discuss the importance of women elder–centered indigenous social change and the emergence of a Yakama decolonizing praxis. I discuss the activists' successes, as well as their shared cautionary advice about the political tensions and contradictions involved in doing cultural revitalization work. The stakes of indigenous grassroots activism, and the unlimited potential of such work, underlie the importance of Yakama decolonizing praxis, which has three main characteristics: 1) understanding indigenous bodies as sites of critical pedagogy, 2) centering social justice praxis to build a moral community, and 3) utilizing grassroots indigenous resistance as a mechanism to dismantle colonial logics.

Chapter 5 provides an outline of the steps needed to further institutionalize the examples of Yakama decolonizing praxis revealed in the case studies. This next step is necessary in a time when all peoples need healing education in our schools and communities, as all people have inherited the legacy of colonialism. The essence of the chapter reflects a point activists made and remade during their interviews: despite their many

accomplishments, they are ordinary people just trying to do the best they can, all the while insisting that *anyone* could do cultural revitalization work. Anyone can join in the work to recover and revitalize indigenous traditions and bring about radical social change to create power within indigenous communities. This profound point, insisting that anyone can do this work, represents the spirit of the activists' work: humble, practical, strong, determined, and clever. All of the activists I interviewed urge more people to help with this work—to share ideas and grow the movement bigger and better. Chapter 5 fittingly provides recommendations for academics and indigenous community members who would like to take up the activist call articulated in this book.

These summaries provide the outline of the journey this book offers. I hope you enjoy the places, people, and the exciting forms of social change shared in the stories this book contains. I hope the narratives of the activists, the complexities they face, and the strong spirit of their work inspires you to think deeply about ways that all people can benefit from healing social change rooted in a decolonizing agenda.