

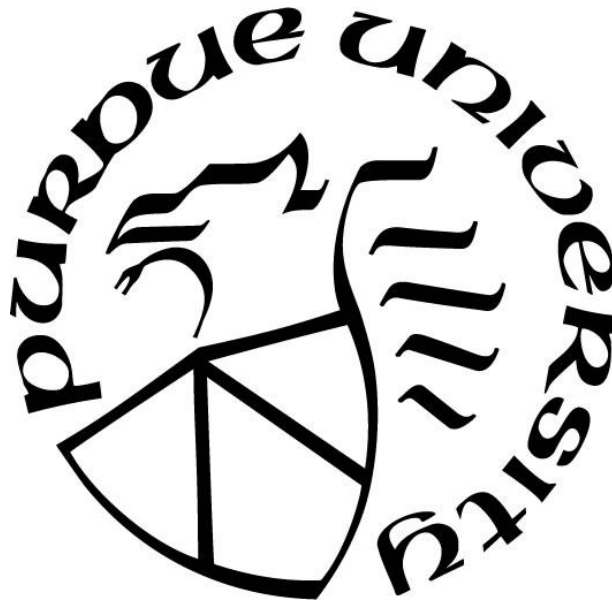
**RESURRECTION FLOWERS AND INDIGENOUS
ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE:
SACRED ECOLOGY, COLONIAL CAPITALISM, AND YAKAMA
FEMINISM AS PRESERVATION ETHIC**

by
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*This project is dedicated to Jade Elise, without whom I would have never made it here, and
whom without I – as well as the world – am at a terrible loss.*

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ABSTRACT

In *Resurrection Flowers and Indigenous Ecological Knowledge* Kaden C. Milliren seeks to evaluate and analyze differences in perspectives and perceptions of the environment between Western and Indigenous worldviews and, consequentially, the different attitudes and ways-of-being with the world that emerge as a result. In so doing, Milliren discusses the sacredness of local landscape for Indigenous peoples and the role its spiritually-significant elements impact an entire cosmology. These important elements of sacred local ecologies are socially, materially, and symbolically rhetorical, ascribing meaning onto all elements of worldview from faith to ceremony, oratory to cultural tradition, physical sustenance to ancestral connection. In feedback and feedforward loops, these aspects of cosmology continue to ascribe meaning onto one another, affecting and being affected by each other, continually weaving together meaning and, therefore, rhetorical mattering.

In this case study Milliren discusses the sacredness of the landscape of Southcentral Washington State, the land of the Yakama Nation, an affiliation of 14 bands and tribes indigenous to the area. Central to the physical ecology, as well as the ecology of life for the Indigenous population, is the salmon, a food source significant to all areas of Yakama life and central to Yakama spirituality, oral tradition, ceremony, and nourishment. Tracing the impact of colonial capitalism beginning in the 19th century, Milliren discusses diminished salmon populations and its impact on the local landscape as well as the Yakama way of life. Additionally, he discusses the Yakama Nation's response to colonial violence through acts of culturally-situated events aimed at maintaining Yakama tradition and improving its peoples' cultural and physical health. Coining the term *resurrection flowers* Milliren analyzes the ways the government has utilized the salmon for monetary gain at the expense of Indigenous populations, and how Indigenous activists have fought to preserve the salmon population and resurrect cultural tradition through revitalized acts of decolonial cultural practices.

INTRODUCTION

Wápaas are traditional carrying bags weaved together by Yakama women. They transport various items – food, art, supplies. They are made by weaving together jute, adding yarn for a variety of color. Tighter weaving, firmer and more structural *wápaas* are proud signs of a talented weaver. According to traditional oratory, a young girl who had been ostracized by her community was taught the ways of weaving *wápaas* by a cedar tree who took pity on her. According to the story, if you can dip your *wápaas* in the river and no water drips out once you have removed it you have accomplished your goal.

Wápaas vary in size and shape, from tall and narrow like a quiver, to short and wide like *kíwkiwlaas*, or drums. They are colorful pieces of art. They are also utility tools whose size and shape are determined by their intended application. The weaving of *wápaas* is a tradition carried on by Yakama women that is bound up in an entire ecology of life. The bags are infused with culture, tradition, spirituality, and the sacred landscape. They are made from jute or bear-grass, plants native to the local environment. They are part of a rich oratory and by dipping the bags into the river, weavers are further tethered to the life source that has sustained their people for generations. Weaving *wápaas* connects people with their ancestors who once did the same. Using the bags for carrying and transporting items is an embodiment of tradition. The *wápaas*, then, transport not only the items of the carrier, they also hold within their empty space Yakama's entire ecology of life, both material and symbolic: culture, tradition, landscape, ceremony, and spirituality.



Figure 1 Here are images of two *wápaas*. Traditional *wápaas* were weaved explicitly with jute, creating strong bags used for carrying a multitude of items. The bag on the right has been weaved with additional materials to make more colorful and vibrant, but also with handles for practicality and functionality. By maintaining the weaving traditions of their ancestors, Yakama women not only weave together these beautiful *wápaas*, but also the threads of the past, present, and future.

In the preface to *Sacred Ecology* Fikret Berkes comments that there is “a growing line of thought ... that we are moving in the millennium toward different ways of seeing, perceiving, and doing, with a broader knowledge base than that allowed by modernist Western science” (xii). An ecologist by training, Berkes’s work is concerned with environmental studies, but the turn from narrow Western epistemologies to new ways of knowing is not unique to those studying the ecology. Anthropologists (Ingold, Ram), sociologists (Latour, Woolgar), and rhetoricians (Rickert, Boyle), among others, have also turned to alternative ways of knowing, seeking to blur lines of bifurcation that separate, and in turn hierarchize, subject from object and human from non. Scholarship of this nature seeks to undo the divide between the sciences and humanities—a revisiting of ancient epistemologies throughout which notions of the sacred permeates—placing the social, cultural, and relative into scientific inquiry and methodology.

My project aims to carry on this kind of work. While studying the culture of the people Indigenous to the area on which I was raised, I consider important natural resources of the Yakama Nation, their perspective of the sacred land of Central and Southern Washington, the history of colonial capitalism in the area and its ongoing effects on the Yakama people, and historic and contemporary culturally-embedded acts of resistance by the community's members, particularly its women.

Much discourse concerning climate change concerns itself with urgent global issues and wholesale responses to slow the adverse effects industry continues to wreak on the environment. That work is necessary and valuable. However, a focus on localized communities and ecologies is also necessary for any serious goals of cultural and environmental restoration. Yakama member and scholar Michelle Jacob writes, "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" (*Yakama Rising*, 14). Such is the exigence of this project: to contribute to a larger discourse concerning climate and cultural genocide by providing detailed, localized discussion about a single community and the ecological, sociopolitical, and cultural challenges it faces with dignity.

This project includes three chapters, each discussing Yakama culture, worldview, and embodied action in response to different moments in time and challenges faced. As with this introduction, each chapter opens with a brief narrative aimed at introducing a major theme throughout its respective chapter.

In chapter 1 "Yakama Nation and Sacred Ecology" I open with a narrative of an experience from my undergraduate studies at Heritage University, a school of about 1200 students, built on the Eastern fringe of the Yakama Nation Reservation. The narrative introduces the concepts of reciprocity, connection, and responsibility, each an important element of Yakama's Indigenous Ecological Knowledge (IEK) and overall worldview. In the chapter I introduce the concept of sacred ecology, what Berkes defines as, "the unity of human and environment" and begin to reveal Yakama's unique ecological perspectives and cosmology.

Throughout the chapter, I discuss the cultural, spiritual, and ecological importance of salmon to the Yakama people through the topics of their oral tradition and ceremony. Ultimately the chapter serves to argue for salmon's material and symbolic significance for the

local Indigenous communities, contending that its abundance is integral to sustain Yakama's social, cultural, economic, and physical health, as well as the ability to engage in traditions that connect them to their ancestors as well as the sacred landscape.

In chapter 2 I open with a narrative of Gingko Bioworks, a company that is resurrecting extinct plants using gene coding and selling their aromas for huge profits to be used in European perfumes. I use the narrative to introduce the term "resurrection flowers," a metaphorical topos I created to refer to a form of ongoing colonial capitalism in which government or industry revitalizes a resource completely or nearly diminished, by its own efforts, for the sake of monetary gain. A famous example of a resurrection flower is Mt. Rushmore, a once-sacred mountain for the Lakota Sioux that was desecrated, sculpted into the faces of colonizers, and has brought billions of dollars to the US government since its creation.

Throughout the chapter, I discuss the adverse impacts the introduction of Western structures of economy and power has had on the Yakama people's cultural, physical, spiritual, and socioeconomic health. The construction of dams along the Columbia River ecology has resulted in incredibly diminished salmon populations and the destruction of historically important fishing sites. With the diminished salmon population comes a diminished opportunity to engage in traditional cultural practices such as the First Salmon ceremony. As a result, the younger generations fail to speak the traditional language at the rate of older generations. Because of how central salmon is to every facet of Yakama's culture and cosmology, the depletion of it as a resource has resulted in a cultural sadness and decreased engagement in cultural practices, resulting in a community less attached to its history, ancestors, and sacred landscape.

In chapter 3, I open with a narrative about Smohalla, a 19th century psychagogic spiritual leader and formalizer of the Seven Drums religion, an extant Indigenous religion practiced throughout the Columbia and Yakima Valleys. I open with Smohalla's story to introduce traditional Yakama embodied acts of resistance to colonialism.

Throughout this chapter I discuss proactive revitalization efforts led by women of the Yakama Nation. By involving community members, particularly youth, in traditional cultural practices, Yakama feminism preserves a cultural identity and works to restore cultural ubiquity within the community through 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’” (*Yakama Rising*, 10). By conserving natural resources and revitalizing cultural practices and knowledge, Yakama feminism embodies rhetorics of resistance in cultivating a preservation ethic. In his book *Lines*, Tim Ingold writes:

in this zone of entanglement ... there are no insides or outsides, only openings and ways through. An ecology of life, in short, must be one of threads and traces ... its subject of inquiry must consist not of the relations between organisms and their external environments but of the relations among their severally enmeshed ways of life. Ecology, in short, is the study of the life of lines. (103).

This project aims to find those lines – those threads – and watch them weave themselves together, through, and between one another. In foregrounding Indigenous scholarship, Yakama scholarship when possible, I hope you enjoy the weaving and the colorful *wápaas* that emerge as a result.

CHAPTER ONE

YAKAMA NATION AND SACRED ECOLOGY: INDIGENOUS CULTURE AND THE LOCAL LANDSCAPE

We have to go out and fish -- that's our life -- it'll always be our life ... we want to be able to go to the water and get our salmon like our creator directs us through our songs. - Lavina Washines, Chair of Yakama Tribe 2006-2008

As a junior at Heritage University in 2016 I took a course on culturally responsive pedagogy. As a student double majoring in English and education the course was a requirement. As an imminent educator the course felt interesting and of vital importance; it marked the beginning of my training as an educator where I would be taught to meet my students halfway, to consider the various sets of knowledge, experiences, and beliefs my students brought into the classroom, to cultivate a classroom atmosphere that supported and reflected that diversity, and to—hopefully—differentiate curriculum, instruction, and assessment accordingly.

One of the major assignments for the course was to put together a presentation (in whichever medium we preferred) on our own personal culture and the experiences through which it was developed. Each Thursday 2-4 students presented to the class. On one such Thursday the instructor of the course and member of the Yakama Nation, led us away from our usual classroom and out to the center of the small campus, where a tipi had recently been erected.

We entered the tipi and were met by a guest, a male Yakama member dressed in traditional regalia. Per our instructor's request, we sat in a circle with the guest at its head, opposite the tipi's entrance. She explained that the man would be singing us a song based on a poem he had written; it was traditional to engage in song prior to sharing and storytelling. Upon introducing himself and describing the inspiration behind the song, the man began to sing. The song began subtle, but progressively built in volume and enthusiasm. His voice bellowed, accompanied by a small rattling instrument he shook in his hand to keep rhythm.

As the man sang, our instructor distributed artifacts integral to her own personal culture and to the culture of the Yakama people. As we listened to the man's song, we passed around the artifacts, slowly learning more about our instructor and her culture. Once the song was over, those of us presenting, passed along our own artifacts as cultural-material objects of representation. It happened to be my week to share. As I nervously spoke to the class they passed

around a series of books my grandmother had made while I was growing up, each of them a small scrapbook masterpiece full of photos showing various activities that took place over the course of a calendar year: I could be seen playing little league baseball, swimming at summer camp, napping after thanksgiving dinner.

Once the presentations were over, we exited the tipi. It was much darker and colder than it had been when we entered, and I was surprised at how sharp the air felt upon stepping outside the tipi. We made our way back to the classroom in the dwindling light to collect our bags and computers. Along the walk my instructor told me that she enjoyed what I had to share, and that she especially liked how the books showed my growth, hobbies, family, and values. I collected my items and on the walk to my car I felt something different than I usually felt after class: reciprocity and connection.

Opening his third edition of *Sacred Ecology* Fikret Berkes writes that, “[w]e live in a world densely populated by humans in close communication with one another over the surface of the earth. More and more, the world looks like a single society ... But in fact, human society consists of a great many groups,” going on to list as disparate groups of people as “the city dwellers of New York, rice farmers of India, and aboriginal hunters of northern Canada” (1). It may seem obvious and trite to point out that, across the surface of Earth’s 24 million square miles of habitable land, upon which nearly eight billion people reside, the human population is, indeed, not entirely homogenous, but rather quite diverse. However, Berkes’s intent here is not to be informative or platitudinous, but rather to gesture toward a truth more robust and worthwhile: cultural differences don’t simply appear at random. A people and their culture don’t come prepackaged together, but instead emerge dynamically over years of material and symbolic happenings, changes, and developments. Part of this dynamic and malleable culture is a perception of the environment and, accordingly, a people’s role in—and space within—that environment.

Naturally, a people’s relationship to a local environment shapes attitudes toward and relationships with the natural resources that make up its ecology. The Indian rice farmer laboring through flooded rice fields in Punjab will have cultivated a vastly different environmental perspective than the New York city dweller who, “surrounded by the built landscape,” must

travel through the loud, busy streets of Manhattan for a stroll through Central Park to feel close to nature (Berkes, 2).

The juxtaposition of these images nicely illustrates the comparative environmental perspectives between western and nonwestern cultures. Indigenous ecological knowledge views the environment as much more integrated, animated, and didactic than the static, mechanic, and dispassionate views often attributed to Descartes and other western thinkers. Indigenous ecological knowledge, while not to be monolithed, is more akin to new materialist perspectives that regard matter as vibrant and pulsating with rhetorical-cultural meaning. Eduardo Kahn's anthropological work in Ecuador's Upper Amazon, for example, traces out complex ecologies of human, animal, and land, arguing that "that which lies 'beyond' the human also sustains us and makes us the beings we are and might become" (*How Forests Think*, 221). Sacred ecology bounds together Indigenous ecological knowledge and new materialism as a way of "recovering the sense of astonishment banished from official science," and as a way of approaching "the unity of human and environment," with efforts of reappraising our role with both local and global environs and making sense of/with an urgently damaged ecological world (Ingold, 9; Berkes, 12).

Indigenous Ecological Knowledge and Yakama Sacred Ecology

I opened this chapter with the narrative of my experience sharing in the tipi because it helps to introduce two important elements of Indigenous Ecological Knowledge (IEK)ⁱ: connection and reciprocity. Gilio-Whitaker writes, "The Indigenous world is a world of relationships built on reciprocity, respect, and responsibility, not just between humans but also extending to their entire natural world" (138). For IEK, everything natural is connected not only in a scientific respect, but also in a deeply spiritual way. As an example Robin Wall Kimmerer explains that, "trees in a forest are often interconnected by subterranean networks of mycorrhizae, fungal strands that inhabit tree roots," creating a symbiotic kinship that allows fungi to exchange carbohydrates for nutrients in the soil, thereby strengthening both parties as well as the local ecosystem at large. by creating homes and food for local fauna (Wall Kimmerer, 20).

Local human populations benefit from the corresponding abundance and variety of healthy wildlife for hunting. However, with these entanglements comes a responsibility "that

flows between human and earth,” (5) to take care of the earth, to respect the food that nourishes their bodies, and to conserve by not exploiting any resource to the point of endangerment. A people’s worldview and culture are inexorably connected through a web of relations, at the center of which is the local landscape and the affordances it provides in terms of resources, topography, and biology. Through these relations emerge unique and vigorous cultural stemmings that can be traced out and observed in art, ceremony, storytelling, and food-based practices. The environment, then, is constantly affecting and being affected by the cultural practices it has helped to spawn. Berkes says of this:

Indigenous knowledge systems are characterized by embeddedness of knowledge in the cultural milieu; boundedness of local knowledge in space and time; the importance of community; lack of separation between nature and culture, and between subject and object; commitment or attachment to the local environment as a unique and irreplaceable place. (10-11)

Robin Wall Kimmerer, botanist and citizen of the Potawatomi Nation, studies the medical and educational elements of ecosystems, as well as the role of place for identity construction and understanding: “to our people, it was everything: identity, the connection to our ancestors, the home of our nonhuman kinfolk, our pharmacy, our library, the source of all that sustained us” (17). Because of this dynamic connectedness, Indigenous ecological knowledge suggests not only a dissolving of binaries between human and nonhuman, but also a perspective of temporality not necessarily linear, but rather as cosmologically connected to all times both preceding and following a given moment. Furthermore, Indigenous scholars contend that differences in spatial-temporal orientations between Indigenous peoples and the West have resulted in vastly different environmental attitudes, as well as notions of the sacred which—for IEK—are each part of the same undulating body of water.

In his book *The Metaphysics of Modern Existence* Vine Deloria Jr argues that The West’s orientation toward time, as its primary organizing principle (with space being second), resulted in a cultural paradigm wherein existence was placed into temporal taxonomies (past, present, future) and was measured in terms of progress. Discussing Newton’s famous model of the universe as a giant self-operating clock, Deloria says, “Picturing the world as a secular machine, devoid of religious overtones yet created by a benign watchmaker who enjoyed human efforts to discern universal secrets meant the enthronement of Newtonian views in Western society” (34). Consequently, he argues, the West developed an objective, mechanistic Newtonian-Cartesian

attitude toward the environment and that non-Indigenous sacred sites were viewed as such not for any reason inherent to place, but rather because of event and historical significance.

Indigenous orientation, rather, favors alignment toward space, which “emphasizes human linkages with place, and all the elements of that place, spanning time. These connections are reflected by and infused in all aspects of Native life, including identity, culture, and ceremonial cycles” (Gilio-Whitaker, 139). Time, then, is not a force through which things change, but is permeates through the sacred ground of the landscape. Such a perspective of space and time engenders an ethic of care and conservation in which citizens are both indebted to ancestors and responsible to future generations for ecological sustainability. Dina Gilio-Whitaker of the Confederated Colville Tribes writes:

cultures and identities are linked to their original places in ways that define them; they are reflected in language, place names, and cosmology ... In Indigenous worldviews, there is no separation between people and land, between people and other life forms, or between people and their ancestors whose bones are infused in the land they inhabit and whose spirits permeate place. (27)

The very landscape that I saw as I exited the tipi is the environment that helped shape the Yakama culture and way of life.

Placed at the Eastern fringe of the Yakama Nation Reservation, Heritage University is a quaint and pleasant campus. On the opposite side of the idle highway to the north of the campus are rows upon rows of hop fields, held erect by circular Douglas Fir polls. With over 200 days of annual sunshine and a slow, meandering river that works both as fertilizer and irrigator, 75 percent of the nation’s hops are grown in the Yakima Valley. A short drive along the Yakima River will lead you over Manashtash Ridge, the peak of which offers unobstructed views of the Columbia Hills—infinite and inexorable—as well as the Stuart Mountain Range. To the west is the Cascade Mountain Range, of which Mt. Adams, known as *Pahto* in local tradition, a culturally important mountain and the namesake of the university’s literary journal, *Pahto’s Shadow*, stands tall and proud.



Figure 2 The image shows the Yakima Valley, a field of hops in the foreground and the Columbia Hills in the background. This constructs an interesting representation of the meeting of cultures and the adaptability of the landscape. The Yakima Valley is one of the most prolific produce growing regions in the country, perhaps most notably for its apples and cherries. However, with the advent of colonial imposition, the landscape was forced to adapt. The surge of hops throughout the region is a great example of not only the landscape's ability to adapt to adverse circumstances, but also of the people indigenous to the area.

In her book *Yakama Rising* Michelle Jacob, Yakama Nation citizen and professor of education studies at the University of Oregon, points out that Ichishkíikin translates to “in this way,” explaining that, “[t]he language that the Creator bestowed upon us teaches us how to be; it teaches us how to conduct ourselves ‘in this way’” (7-8). Jacob’s assertion that language is instructive in terms of how a people should live and conduct their lives intimates language’s creative and inventive capacities. To live “in this way” is to conduct life in accordance with a worldview that is both shaped by and shapes the language itself. This ongoing process of rhetorical mattering is both reflexive and productive. Language, then, inscribes culture and meaning through embodied action and a spiritual worldview. Ichishkíikin is co-produced through relationships between the Yakama people, the landscape, and a worldview, and in turn reinforces and develops that cultural milieu to remind its people to live “in this way” through storytelling, ceremony, and tradition.

In what follows is a closer look at Yakama cosmology through three significant cultural dimensions: oratory, ceremony, and tradition. These brief case studies provide additional insight into the sacred ecology of south and central Washington as well as Yakama's unique IEK of their land. Each section also highlights core ecological values of reciprocity and connection, while also portraying the deep veneration and respect for salmon, a prominent and invaluable resource of the local ecology, that the Yakama have maintained for generations.

Oratory

As with most Indigenous peoples, the Yakama have a strong tradition of storytelling and oratory. The stories help make sense of worldviews, topographical landscapes, environmental change, spirituality, and human non-human relations. They often explain unique cultural traditions, expressions, and activities, and while they may offer alternative narratives to what science tells us is possible, they cannot be divorced from an IEK because they animate and reinforce the values, ethics, and meanings of which that very knowledge is comprised.

In this way the landscape transcends simply its material ontology and extends into the symbolic. Brosius writes that, "[t]he landscape is more than simply a reservoir of detailed ecological knowledge ... it is also a repository for the memory of past events, and thus a vast mnemonic representation of social relationships and of society" (148). Conversely, history and culture extend outward from their respective places in collective memory and are distilled directly into the physical landscape. A common Yakama phrase goes, "without my past, I have no future," a statement about the interrelations of the history of a people rather than any individual person (Jim, *Wisdom of the Elders*). In the same way that this expression promotes temporal fluidity, the spaces that separate story from environment become porous, allowing for a flowing back and forth like the confluence of the Columbia River Estuary and the Pacific Ocean.

A brief look at the traditional story of *Pahto* illustrates these interrelations and shows how culture and ecology are co-constructed via storytelling. The story goes that *Pahto* was one of Sun's five wives, all of whom were mountains. Because Sun travels East to West, Sun visited *Pahto* third amongst his wives each day. Jealous, *Pahto* destroyed the heads of *Whakshum* and *Plash-Plash*, the two wives that Sun would visit first each day. Once these mountains were flattened Sun could not visit them and so it was *Pahto* that received the first visit

each morning. *Pahto* was pleased at this, but her joy quickly turned to jealousy and bitterness once more. *Pahto* became jealous of the mountains to the south of the Columbia River and began to steal their resources:

She went down there and brought back all their grizzly bears, black bears, elk, deer, pine nuts, huckleberries, roots, and herbs. From the rivers and creeks she took the salmon and trout and put them in the streams which flowed down her sides. She planted the berries and the pine nuts and the roots all around her. She turned loose the elk, deer, and bears. That is why there are plenty on Mount Adams today (Gatheringthestories.org, “A Mount Adams Story”).



Figure 3 Image displays a view the landscape from Manashtash Ridge, North of the Yakama Reservation and just outside modern-day Ellensburg, WA. The view shows the Yakima Valley in the foreground and the Cascade Mountain Range, of which Mt. Adams (*Pahto*) is a member. According to Yakama oratory these mountains were among the first beings created by The Creator and are integral to Yakama spirituality and storytelling.

Wyeast the mountain *Pahto* had stolen from asked for half of what she had taken as a friendly exchange so that they could be equally plentiful with salmon, plants, and animals. When she refused a battle ensued and Wyeast knocked flat her head. Instead of taking everything back, Wyeast kept the original details of the exchange and left *Pahto* with half of all she had taken, so that both sides of the river could flourish. Eventually *Pahto* was forgiven for her

transgressions. Her head was restored, and she was given new instructions for how to care for what she had and how to treat the rest of the mountains and the landscape around her with respect and reverence.

Bound together in *Pahto*'s story are important aspects of spirituality, history, and ecological virtue. The story offers an explanation for flatter mountains, such as Mt. St. Helens, as well as a narrative accounting for the wildlife present within and on each side of the Columbia River and its surrounding ecologies. This historical narrative is intertwined with a religion that teaches an ethics of care and animates the natural elements of the landscape, water, sky, and nonhuman animals.

What's more is the way these elements all become entangled within a robust, localized environmental philosophy. Each element informs the others to create a narrative reflective of an entire worldview with aims both to entertain and to morally edify. The story of *Pahto* is, in some ways, a cautionary tale of greed, jealousy, and a failure to find kinship with those amongst you. The story warns of the abject failure and repercussions of living life without reciprocity and reverence for all living things. *Pahto* fails to see the misgivings of her jealousy and is punished, but all is ultimately set right because of *Wyeast*'s generosity and insistence on equality, connection, and reciprocity. *Pahto*'s story is ultimately a story about conservation, sharing, and taking care of/for each other, each being a part of an environmental *arete* that contribute to the *ethos* of a Yakama IEK.

Origin stories are integral to understanding a people's worldview. Origin stories represent spiritual beginnings and elucidate specific environmental attitudes and perspectives a people might have. They are therefore essential in understanding a people's ecological knowledge and the nuances of the sacredness of the land to which they are indigenous. Robin Wall Kimmerer writes, "Like Creation stories everywhere, cosmologies are a source of identity and orientation to the world. They tell us who we are. We are inevitably shaped by them no matter how distant they may be from our consciousness" (7). The Yakama origin story offers additional credence to the symbiotic relationship between the people and the land, as well as to the reliance for physical and cultural sustenance the Yakama have on salmon and other nonhuman animals:

the animals understand you. They had vowed when the Creator said, 'I'm going to make human beings here now, but I need someone to help sustain their life, their bodies, their hearts. And I'm asking you, the First People, if you will help take care of them, which will mean giving your bodies, your life, to them.' And the

first to speak up was the fish, the Salmon. The next was the Deer, then the Elk, then the food out of the ground, and then the berries. And that's why in our feast we set the food in that order. ("Yakama Wisdom and Worldview," Jim)

William R. Carmack writes that "[t]he oratory of a people reflects the major issues which concern them and the values which govern their decisions" (Vanderwerth, vii). Many great oral speeches and stories have been made in response to troubled and precarious moments wherein Indigenous people's lives and ways of life were threatened by white settlement, imperialism, and colonialism. Origin stories such as the one told above by Elder Russell Jim, however, demonstrate the "spiritual interdependence to the sacredness of Mother Earth" (*Principles of Environmental Justice*) that governs and guides Yakama's ecological knowledge, spirituality, and worldview. Relations between humans, landscape, and nonhuman animals is an evolved dialectic of sustainability wherein each individual member offers itself up willingly, in some capacity, in exchange for the conservation and preservation of the whole. This is not solely a perspective held by Indigenous people and has been observed as ecological phenomenon wherein the healthy development of one member within a system results in the development of each of its individual members and the entire system.

In her discussion of the mass fruiting of pecan trees along the Canadian River throughout Central Oklahoma, Robin Wall Kimmerer likens the puzzling scientific phenomenon to attitudes of reciprocity and mutual growth present in much Indigenous cosmology:

If one tree fruits, they all fruit – there are no soloists. Not one tree in a grove, but the whole grove; not one grove in the forest, but every grove; all across the county and all across the state. The trees act not as individuals, but somehow as a collective. Exactly how they do this, we don't yet know. But what we see is the power of unity. What happens to one happens to us all. We can starve together or feast together. All flourishing is mutual. (15)

Although not entirely scientifically understood, something about the deep interconnectedness of the trees affords the collective forests across the state mutual health, growth, and fruiting.

Because "in Indigenous worldviews, there is no separation between people and land, between people and other lifeforms (Gilio-Whitaker, 138) the development of a people would result in the mutual nourishment of the lands and the nonhuman animals and, in return, cycles back through to the humans, and so forth. To care for one part of the ecology is to care for the entire ecology, and therefore all is sacred. A 1977 translation of the Yakama origin story more explicitly demonstrates the deep roots of interconnection and, in turn, interdependence:

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 ...

All of the land where we live and our ancestors lived was created for the (Indian) people. (Yakima Indian National Tribal Council)

The oral traditions of the Yakama people are reflective of a worldview and cosmology that champions the ethics of reciprocity, respect, connection, and interdependence. Whether told in traditional language or in translated English, Yakama storytelling is a historically embedded cultural practice that reminds its members to live “in this way.” However, oratory is only one element of IEK and worldview. Eugene Hunn writes, “it is not possible to divorce the ecological aspects of a tradition from the religious, the aesthetic, or the social” (14). Yakama Cosmology also inscribes rhetorical meaning through embodied participation in ceremonial practices through dance, music, and food-based customs.

Ceremony

As with any Indigenous group, the Yakama have culturally important traditions and ceremonial practices. These traditions are deeply connected to their cosmology and as such are informed by their IEK which promotes deep respect and care for all living things. For the Yakama people, it is integral to continue engaging in cultural practices in order to preserve tradition, as well as to live in accordance with a Yakama cosmology: “The earth cannot hear you if you do not speak to the earth with your native tongues, through the foods and medicines” (Bull, *Wisdom of the Elders*). Important traditions that embody the Yakama ecological knowledge of reciprocity, connection, and mutual respect include first foods ceremonies, religious practices, and the exchanging of gifts, all of which include music and dance. Most important among these traditions, culturally as well as ecologically, is the First Salmon ceremony.

According to the Yakama origin story, when The Creator created humans He asked all other living things to offer a gift to help ensure their survival. The first to come forward was Salmon, who offered his flesh to feed the people. Next came Water, promising to provide a home for the salmon. As such, salmon is revered and respected amongst the Yakama, who have forever been determined to respect and conserve them. One way the Yakama have embodied this ethic is through the First Salmon ceremony, a tradition practiced widely among Indigenous groups across the Pacific Northwest.

The First Salmon ceremony, an important act of conservation reflecting the local IEK and worldview, is an essential cultural celebration as well as an effective environmental practice. Culturally, the ceremony creates an opportunity for communities to gather and engage in traditional embodiments of song, dance, and food. Ecologically, the practice conserves the salmon population and ensures that communities all across the river environment will gain access to an appropriate bounty of the fish, thereby affording all communities to gather, celebrate, sing, dance, pray, eat, and honor the salmon and The Creator.

The practice begins when salmon initiate their run back upriver from the Pacific Ocean. Historically, individual tribes would have designated watchers and runners. The watchers would observe and track the salmon as they began their final trip home to spawn, and the runners would communicate the information with other tribal communities upriver. A ritual leader would confer with the watchers and, based on their qualitative assessment that enough spawners had made their way far enough upriver, declare fishery open. However, no fish caught could be consumed until the entire community gathered in a longhouse to engage in the First Salmon feast (Berkes).

The practice of the First Salmon ceremony is one that is deeply imbedded in IEK and Yakama cosmology. It also has profoundly beneficial environmental impacts as a conservation ethic, which Johannes defines as the “awareness of one’s ability to deplete or otherwise damage natural resources, coupled with a commitment to reduce or eliminate the problem” (qtd. In Berkes). Whether the 14 tribes that would come to collectively be known as the Yakama Nation knew that salmon depletion was possible isn’t entirely clear, but commitment to ecological respect and spiritual connection to their sacred landscape effectively sustained a harmonious river ecology and way of life that would be strongly maintained until white settlement and the concomitant introduction of colonial capitalism and American governance

that led to the construction of river dams and the establishment of commercial fishing that would all but deplete the salmon population (Ulrich).

There has been skepticism from some that a visual qualitative assessment could be as effective as contemporary methods of tracking salmon population. However, recent studies have indicated that not only could these Indigenous technologies track salmon accurately, they also did so more naturally than current methods:

the current management does something very similar but uses more intrusive techniques to force salmon through a human-made opening ... The tribal biologists did use biological techniques themselves ... But many of them thought that the traditional qualitative assessment and the use of the First Salmon ceremony for management purposes were perfectly feasible. (Berkes, 196)

Following the First Salmon ceremony comes the First Salmon feast, a celebration which seeks to honor the salmon through traditional acts of cultural and spiritual devotions. The feast is a tradition born from the Seven Drums religion, formalized by psychagogic spiritual leader Smohalla in the 19th century, and weaves a sacred temporal-spatial skein between religion, history, and ecology (Trafzer and Beach).

Leading up to the feast, members of the religion meet in a longhouse, dressed in traditional regalia, and engage in song and dance to honor the salmon for the gift of their meat. The first salmon of the season is brought out and a small portion is provided to each person in the longhouse so that they can share in the act of honoring the fish. Preserving such practices “continues to guide tribal people and connect them with the Creator and the gifts He has given them. It also connects followers to the land and to the culture practiced by their ancestors.” While songs continue to be sung, servers deliver the food. “The young men serve the ‘brothers’ of salmon, deer, and other meats. The young women serve the ‘sisters’ of the huckleberries, roots, and breads” (Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission). The feast is a culinary representation of the sacred landscape, including local meats, berries, and bread, with the primary emphasis placed on the most important element of them all, the salmon.

Following the feast, bones from the First Salmon are returned to the carcass and the fish is placed back in the river from which it was caught, to finish its life cycle and reciprocate the gift of its offering. The rhetorical act of return is an affective acknowledgement of, and response to, the sacred landscape. It represents an understanding of place and belonging and the preservation of sacred rite:

From our sacred waters comes the salmon. They arrive for us, given by our Creator ... We return the first sacred salmon to the water as we have during the past. We must protect what is ours, we must protect the ecology, for the salmon will return to us as long as we keep the sacred waters clean and healthy. (WCLSlibraries, 2:50 – 3:31)

Salmon is integral to the Yakama's physical, cultural, and spiritual sustenance. Its existence and abundance are both materially and symbolically important, not only to the landscape, but to local Indigenous populations as well. Through oratory members of the Yakama Nation can honor the salmon while also engaging in ancient tradition. Through dance and song members are reminded to live life "in this way," in the same way as their ancestors and in the same way as their future progeny. Through embodied acts of tradition and ceremony via first foods celebrations, Yakama members pay tribute to salmon and to their sacred ecology. The First Salmon ceremony helps to maintain a stable and healthy ecology, and the First Salmon feast gives thanks to the food that willingly sustains their bodies. Returning the First Salmon to the river completes the cycle and returns the salmon to its rightful home. The ecology reverberates. Through its vibrant threadings, members of the Yakama Nation connect with history. They connect with their ancestors. Traditional Yakama IEK ravel together language, tradition, ceremony, religion, oratory, nourishment, health, worldview, and happiness. At the very core of that IEK is the salmon.

Yakama and salmon are not simply two distinct elements of a place, but rather strands of thread, weaving together an entire way of life. Chapter 2 displays how the health of a people and their culture can be damaged when one of those threads becomes frayed and weaving is made more difficult. Tim Ingold writes of this entanglement that, "there are no insides or outsides. Only openings and ways through. An ecology of life ... and its subject of inquiry must consist not of the relations *between* organisms and their external environments, but of the relations *along* their severally enmeshed ways of life" (*Lines*, 103). Discussed in the following chapter, the introduction of Western settlement, values, and socioeconomic structures complicates these relations with inimical and unilateral attempts at cultural, physical, spiritual, and ecological unweaving.

CHAPTER TWO RESURRECTION FLOWERS: COLONIAL CAPITALISM AND WHITE SETTLEMENT IN YAKAMA TERRITORY

To be born American Indian today is to have survived a holocaust of very particular kind, one whose evidence is everywhere, all the time. - Dina Gilio-Whitaker

More than one hundred years ago Gerrit Wilder, son of an American shipping magnate in Hawaii and grandson of an English American missionary, made his way through the mountainous Hawaiian terrain in search of flowers. Pausing for a moment to wipe the sweat from his brow, he took a deep breath, retrieved a small notepad from his bag, and studied the notes he had taken on Maui's Mountain Hibiscus. An amateur botanist, Wilder had been in search of the enigmatic flower for more than a year. Its mystique intrigued him, as it had not been spotted in quite some time; he had begun to wonder whether it any longer existed.

After gaining his breath and continuing his journey Wilder was lucky enough to stumble upon a single flower, shaded pink and purple by the sunset, sticking out amongst the greenery of the Hawaiian mountains. Retrieving the notepad from his bag once more he cross-referenced the notes from the flower's most recent sighting. He compared the sketch in the notepad with the physical flower before him and smiled, restraining his visceral joy. Pleased with his finding he bent toward the ground, plucked from the ground the final flower of its kind before placing it in his bag and journeying away (Jacobsen, 32).

Now, 107 years later, Ginkgo Bioworks has discovered dead archived flowers of extinct plants in the herbariums of prestigious private universities such as Harvard. Among these flowers is the Hibiscadelphus Wilderanus, also known as the Maui Mountain Hibiscus.

Ginkgo Bioworks has assembled a massive team of experts in areas ranging from botany to genetics to scent specialists to study this flower - among other also-extinct flowers - to assess its DNA, splice that DNA into scent genes, develop algorithms to predict up to 1,700-letter gene sequences in order to create sesquiterpene synthases (SQS's), enzymes that "stitch together most good floral scent molecules," (Jacobsen, 36), and break these letter combinations into precise 50-letter chunks in order to, of all things, create a tropical perfume that to sell to Givaudan Flavours and Fragrances, a Swiss perfumery and cosmetics company and the world's largest fragrance corporation (Givaudan.com).

In this chapter I present a few prominent, contemporary perspectives of historical and ongoing settler colonial capitalism to arrive at a robust and nuanced definition of *resurrection flowers*, a metaphorical term coined here to discuss unique and cultural-economic forms of ongoing colonial capitalism. Next, a deeper look into settler colonialism in a specifically Yakama context, analyzing the historic and contemporary acts of cultural violence enacted upon the local Indigenous peoples by Western expansion. Salmon, which are culturally and spiritually important to the Indigenous peoples of the Columbia River, provides the lens through which to trace the acts and effects of white settlement throughout the area.

Throughout the chapter I discuss the adverse impacts the introduction of Western structures of economy and power has had on the Yakama people's cultural, physical, spiritual, and socioeconomic health. The construction of dams along the Columbia River ecology has resulted in incredibly diminished salmon populations and the destruction of culturally and historically important fishing sites. The near-depletion of salmon populations in the Columbia River ecology represents more than merely a diminished natural resource, but rather extends into every facet of Yakama cosmology and worldview, posing cultural, spiritual, ecological, and ceremonial challenges for members wishing to live in attunement with ancestral tradition, ultimately leading to limited opportunity to participate in sacred rites and, consequently, corporeal damage to the landscape as well as the physical health of Yakama Nation members.

Coupling Anne Bonds and Joshua Inwood's notion of colonialism that "situates white supremacy not as an artifact of history or as an extreme position, but rather as the foundation for the continuous unfolding of practices of race and racism in settler states" (715) with Gilio-Whitaker's assertion that, "In Indigenous worldviews, there is no separation between people and land, between people and other life forms, or between people and their ancestors," (27) this chapter seeks to demonstrate that even seemingly mild acts of colonialism – particularly when sacred Indigenous landscapes are involved – has damaging, far-reaching effects.

Colonial Capitalism and Resurrection Flowers

The notion of colonial capitalism as an ideological and socioeconomic political tool is one that hinges on the belief that colonialism and capitalism cannot be separated, that they are

intrinsically linked, co-productive (co-destructive), and that the pursuit of economic gain by industry, corporation, and government relies on the continued oppression of black, brown, and socioeconomically disenfranchised communities.

A proliferation of dams constructed in the twentieth century has led to dwindling salmon populations and a lack of access to an appropriate amount of salmon for the Yakama people wishing to sustain desired levels of salmon intake. Coupled with neo-capitalist economies on the Yakama reservation, this phenomenon has contributed to a Yakama population struggling with poverty, diabetes, and other adverse social, cultural, and physical conditions.

This situation, however is not unique. Sites of conflict between Indigenous peoples and settler capitalism can be traced back to the emergence of white settlers in the late 15th century, and the environment is often the casualty of such moments of conflict. Wall Kimmerer attributes this to opposing worldviews regarding the perception of human's role in the environment:

In the settler mind, land was property, real estate, capital, or natural resources. But to our people, it was everything: identity, the connection to our ancestors, the home of our nonhuman kinfolk, our pharmacy, our library, the source of all that sustained us. Our lands were where our responsibility to the world was enacted, sacred ground. It belonged to itself; it was a gift, not a commodity, so it could never be bought or sold. (Wall Kimmerer, 17)

Anna Tsing reinforces these ideas in her book *The Mushroom at the End of the World*. Tracing global connections of hegemony, capitalism, culture, and colonialism, Tsing poses important questions regarding colonial capitalism's propensity to create through destruction, to receive by stripping away. She claims that the "Anthropocene timeline begins not with our species but rather with the advent of modern capitalism, which has directed long distance destruction of landscapes and ecologies" (21).

In *As Long as Grass Grows*, Gilio-Whitaker traces historical and contemporary sites of environmental injustice, arguing that so long as colonial capitalism is ongoing in its current form, challenges to environmental injustice will continue to be distributive and exacerbating, as opposed to restorative. According to her, some of the challenges for Native people's facing colonial capitalism include the ability to: "maintain traditional lifeways and ancestral places: sustainability of homelands, subsistence lifestyles, cultural and ancestral (sacred sites), and environmentally-related health-care issues, including reproductive health and food insecurity"

(30). Any ongoing or future project focused on environmental injustice must also account for the sets of relations that make up a cultural well-being.

So what is the difference between popular conceptions of colonial capitalism and *resurrection flowers*? Gilio-Whitaker logics that “if settler colonialism is environmental injustice ... settler colonialism is a genocidal structure,” so what does a metaphor like *resurrection flowers* contribute to the discourse of settler colonial capitalism as “environmental disruption and structurally based cultural genocide?” (52). The term aims not to offer any holistic or overarching definition or shift in focus, but rather to create a slightly new way, a topos for analyzing and discussing unique forms of colonial violence that both destroys and creates, unilaterally to the detriment of Indigenous populations and to the benefit neo capitalist structures of industry and government.

Resurrection Flowers denotes specific acts of ecocide in which some part of a sacred landscape is desecrated, destroyed, or exploited to the point of extinction or near-depletion and then reintroduced in a new format to the economic benefit of capitalist structures in part responsible for its initial exploitation. Common examples of these include the fracking of oil, such as with the notorious Dakota Access Pipeline, in sacred land throughout oil-rich areas across the country. Another famous example includes the desecration of the Six Grandfathers to sculpt Mt. Rushmore.

The Six Grandfathers is a spiritually and culturally significant mountain for the Lakota Sioux, and was part of a route that Lakota leader Black Elk took on a spiritual journey that culminated in Black Elk Peak (Neihardt). In 1927, the US government desecrated the sacred mountain by commissioning the sculpting of Mt. Rushmore, which as an annual economic gain of nearly \$200 million from travel tourism (National Park Service). Not only has this been traumatic for the Indigenous peoples in the area, but the economy garnered by the popularity of the landmark does very little to atone for the transgressions that led to its creation, the money instead staying within the federal government, thereby perpetuating and funding continued colonialism, while also – unironically and unabashedly – serving as a material manifestation of the core principle it represents: destruction in the name of creation.

Inherent in *resurrection flowers* is the rejection of Indigenous ideals of human as part of an ecology, maintaining, rather, a Newtonian-Cartesian view of human as master of the environment. Justified by these philosophical conceits, also inherent to *resurrection flowers* is a

failure/refusal to recognize culpability or wrongdoing. In his discussion of Gerrit Wilder and Maui's Mountain Hibiscus, Jacobsen lauds the impressive scientific achievement of the team at Gingko Bioworks, but never offers any Indigenous or decolonial perspective. Never is there any discussion of what it might mean to have part of an ecology removed, or whether the teams at Gingko and/or Givaudan bear any reparational responsibility to Maui's Indigenous population. Similarly, as part of their mission statement, the National Park Service says that they "care for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage."

Through the quickest rhetorical analysis of this statement emerges a few very obvious questions: *who 'saved' these places? And from whom or what? And whose 'heritage' is being experienced here? Whose is being rejected or ignored?* *Resurrection flowers* not only exploit natural resources for economic gain, they effectively reject Indigenous worldviews and deny Indigenous peoples' efforts toward living in self-determining, culturally embedded, subsistent lifestyles attuned with ancestral tradition and a sacred landscape.

Michelle Jacob and Christopher Anderson have created an image that displays the colonial progression that has led to "[c]ontemporary challenges to Yakama cultural revitalization," which begins with 'settler colonialism,' which includes limited access to traditional foods, transitions to 'patriarchy,' which results in the realization of Indigenous adoption of Western hierarchies that place humans separate from and superior to land and animals. The final stage, the challenge the Yakama nation currently faces, is 'white supremacy.' In an era of white supremacy, the Yakama face the ubiquity of Western junkfood, coupled with the "continued erosion of traditional Yakama social and economic systems" that continue to place the Indigenous population at greater risk for diabetes and poverty (*Yakama Rising*, 95).

The sections that follow detail the history of settler colonial capitalism in Yakama territory, beginning with the arrival of Lewis and Clark in the early 19th century up to contemporary times, displaying how continued settlement along the Columbia River has resulted in diminished populations and, as a result, a community that is – relative to early generations – culturally, ecologically, physically, and economically impoverished.

'Early White Settlement and the Dams that Damned the Salmon' traces the history of settlement along the Columbia River up through the mid twentieth century; in this section I discuss how the introduction of a capitalist economic system, the signing of treaties, the

destruction of important Yakama fishing sites, and the construction of massive dams all along the Columbia River resulted in a changed ecology that forced the Yakama to begin assimilating to Western ways of life.

In ‘White Supremacy and its Contemporary Manifestations’ I unravel the ongoing effects that living in a Westernized, capitalist structure has on the Yakama as individuals and as a people, contending that restricted access to traditional foods (and therefore tradition itself), and a concomitant reliance on cheap processed foods placed strategically throughout the reservation, has led to an exacerbated malnourishment of culture, tradition, and physical health. Together, these sections aim to highlight the importance of salmon to the Yakama people and how, when restricted, has far-reaching cultural effects that have denied the Yakama people a fair opportunity to practice traditional IEK and exist in attunement with their ancestral cosmology.

Early White Settlement and the Dams that Damned the Salmon

In 1805 life changed forever for the Indigenous peoples of Washington State. Lewis and Clark arrived that year, marking the beginning of settler colonialism in the Pacific Northwest, and while it was the first contact these tribal nations had had with white settlers, rumors of their imminent arrival had already spread westward. The arrival of the expedition was not a surprise, nor was it met with hostility. Rather, the tribes met the expedition with the welcomed friendship, as tradition mandated. Nonetheless, the decades that followed witnessed massive change to the detriment of the Indigenous groups in the area, and in the spring of 1855 leaders from 14 local tribes and bands were called together by the US government for a meeting that would result in tumultuous social and ecological 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, Piquouse, Wenatshapam, Klikatat, Klinquit, Kow-was-sayee, Li-ay-was, Skin-pah, Wis-Ham, Shyiks, Ochechotes, Kah-milt-pah, Se-ap-cat, and the Yakima. Over 3,000 Indian people and their leaders from the Yakima, Nex 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 National Tribal Council. 1977)

Ultimately, Yakama leaders were forced to sign a treaty, ceding all but 1.2 million acres – a mere ten percent of their homeland – and distilling all 14 bands and tribes onto the same plot of land, collectively adopting the title of Yakama Nation. As the land continued to be settled European Americans moving west at the promise of a better life, attitudes of expansion and of exploiting the area’s natural resources continued to grow:

As the century progressed, a consensus emerged on the need to exploit and manipulate water for economic gain. A stunning cultural transformation was taking place, a shift in people’s very perception of nature. By the latter part of the nineteenth century, it was commonly assumed, even expected, that water should be tapped, controlled, and dominated in the name of progress – a view clearly reflected in the law. (Steinberg, 16)



Figure 4 Image on the left displays Washington State’s river system. At the bottom of the state is the Columbia River. Following the river and its tributaries one can see the way the 14 bands and tribes that would come to make up the Yakama Nation would have lived and fished throughout the river ecologies prior to colonial imposition. Image on the right shows the original land occupied by these same bands and tribes in contrast with the comparative meager space of the reservation to which they were relegated. Lack of access to these fishing sites resulted in challenges to live in attunement with cultural tradition.

As settler colonialism, and its concomitant overuse of natural resources such as water, the ecology began to change and so did the tribal relations with it. History reporter Roberta Ulrich comments that “when white men first arrived on the Columbia River, they described salmon so numerous a person could walk across the river on their wriggling backs.” However, throughout the mid 19th and early 20th centuries, via introduction of competitive commercial fishing and canning (most notably Hudson’s Bay Company), forced compression of Indigenous populations onto small plots of land, the construction of roads along the river, blasting rocks to make way for navigation, the creation of portage roads by white entrepreneurs, and the development of Union Pacific’s link to the transcontinental railroad stretching through to Portland—all of which

contributed to the collective desecration of the landscape—the river ecology was vastly changed and dozens of important tribal fishing sites were destroyed and abandoned. Still, despite these tumultuous shifts in the environment and in the way humans existed within it, sustaining a way of life along the river remained tenable up through the first half of the twentieth century: “in the 1930’s, after decades of white’s use of fish wheels, fish traps, gill nets, and ocean purse seines, the number of salmon the Columbia had dropped. But there still seemed to be plenty for everyone” (urlich, 5). With the proliferation of dams along the Columbia River and its estuaries came more severe and inexorable damage to the local ecology and Indigenous ways of being with the land.

On September 28, 1937 President Franklin D. Roosevelt set into motion a string of events that would ultimately result in the destruction of dozens of tribal fishing sites and diminishing salmon populations. Pushing the button that started the Bonneville Dam was a continuation of a policy of progress that undermined Indigenous ways of life that had been maintained for thousands of years prior to settler colonialism. It resulted in the destruction of sacred ecologies, and was a matter of conflict prior to its initiation.

Tribal members knew that the construction of dams would result in ecological devastation and fought for their rights to preserve the river as it was. However, the government saw things differently and viewed the construction of dams and the harboring of its energy as a symbol of progress and the advancement of American preeminence. Indigenous worldview experiences the world primarily through lens of space and therefore saw human obtrusion of the sacred river to be a transgression of responsibility and natural law. Settlers saw the world through a more traditional Western optic of time and, accordingly, material and economic progress. The construction of the dams were a reflection and product of modernity; they represented hierarchy, order, control over nature, and the undying pursuit of unilateral progression and the superiority of man. In *Moral Blindness: The Loss of Sensitivity in Liquid Modernity* Zygmunt Bauman famously remarks, “The updated version of Descartes’s Cogito is ‘I am seen, therefore I am’—and that the more people who see me, the more I am.” The proliferation of dams was a way to harbor energy and exploit the river for money, but it was also a symbolic action; it was a way of showing dominance and therefore being seen as dominant. For salmon people, however, many of whom “were still following their ancient patterns of life based on the

migration of the fish and eels and ripening of berries” (Urlich, 11) the mass construction of dams along the river represented material and symbolic devastation:

But while dams were contributing to American prosperity ... their net effect in Indian country has historically been disastrous, particularly throughout the twentieth century. Those impacts range from population displacement to environmental disruption so extreme that subsistence livelihoods were eliminated, which in turn has reflected in negative health outcomes for tribal communities and ongoing trauma. (Gilio-Whitaker, 60)

Most notable among dam-caused destruction is the drowning of Celilo Falls in 1957. On March 10, 1957 the Dalles Dam closed its steel walls as thousands of viewers watched on as the water levels began to rise. Within minutes Celilo Falls, a fishing community with historically and culturally important tribal fishing sites, was submerged in water, no longer visible. Many cheered on the dam as a symbol of forward-facing progress, “but for the Native Americans whose ancestors had fished there for thousands of years, there was sadness and an uncertain future ... The dams also helped to devastate the salmon runs, but awareness of the full effects of such environmental impacts was decades away” (Caldbeck, “Celilo Falls disappears in hours after the Dalles Dam floodgates are closed on March 10, 1957). Recent technology has created ways of tracing back into history and tracking the development of the diminished salmon populations from precolonial to contemporary times.

Statistics from hatcheries along the Columbia River demonstrate just how devastating the combination of dams and commercial fishing has been to the salmon population. In 2015 the annual number of salmon spawning was just over half a million, already less than five percent of the precolonial population. In 2017 the number dropped to fewer than one hundred thousand, the estimated population for 2019 hovering just over seventy thousand (Thompson). There simply isn’t enough salmon to promote the sustenance of the Yakama people, but this is not the only issue surrounding the salmon population.

The salmon, now being raised like livestock, have a very low quality of life. This effects the quality of the salmon meat and, given the Yakama’s relation to the fish, a cultural sadness among tribal members. Indeed, while the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) boasts that 90 percent of all salmon caught in the Columbia River comes from hatcheries, it fails to take into account the various cultural concerns a statistic like this carries with it. Ted Strong, a Yakama tribal member, says of the phenomenon: “the salmon were created

for a purpose. They were created here to enjoy their life and their existence. They were created here to serve mankind. Today, with the development of the Columbia River, the salmon do not enjoy their life” (qtd in Montag et al).

Yakama tribal member Michelle Jacob writes that the “spirits of people and our foods are interconnected,” and as such it is important to respect the foods and the environment from which they came as part of an ecology that sustains human (ways of) life. She continues: [Respecting] foods as spiritual beings who can carry energy and intention is an important part of a Yakama health ecological view. Thus, the food system must be attentive to energy, reciprocity, and the ... relations that depend on food gathering, preparation, transport, and consumption” (*Yakama Rising*, 97-98). The issue with the current salmon population, then, is twofold: 1) with progressively depleted annual runs it is not populous enough to sustain all tribal members for physical and cultural sustenance, and 2) with the salmon as individuals perceived as unhappy, the cultural view is that they cannot offer themselves to humans as their cosmology requires. The interconnection the Yakama and their ecology—and thus their entire way of life—has been disrupted. The reciprocity and responsibility with the land has been divided and thus, for many, notions of the sacred have been dissolved.

A “continued erosion of traditional Yakama social economic systems” is part of what Jacob and Andersen include as a major element of white supremacy. Intrinsic to any oppression over an Indigenous community is tactical actions of environmental injustice that not only attack ecologies, but work to dismantle an entire web of life:

Injustice ... involves one society robbing another society of its capacities to experience the world as a place of collective life that its members feel responsible for maintaining ... Settler colonial societies seek to inscribe their own homelands over indigenous homelands, thereby erasing the history, lived experiences, social reality, and possibilities of a future of indigenous peoples ... settler colonialism can be interpreted as a form of environmental injustice that wrongfully interferes with and erases the socioecological contexts required for indigenous populations to experience the world as a place infused with responsibilities to humans, nonhumans, and ecosystems. (Whyte, “Indigenous Experience, Environmental Justice, and Settler Colonialism)

Through acts of colonialism and ecocide settler colonial capitalism has had inexorable and untenable consequences on the Columbia River ecology, and thus on the lives of the local Indigenous populations that are reciprocally bound to the river and its surrounding environs. The introduction of capitalism as an economic structure terminated a complex and thriving intertribal

trade economy and that worked to the mutual benefit of the tribes involved, an economic shakeup that imposed unfamiliar structures of exchange and led to tribal impoverishment. Forcing native youth into colonial boarding camps forced young Yakama members to assimilate by cutting their hair and adopting English as their primary language. The proliferation of dams across the Columbia River led to the destruction of many tribal fishing sites and, along with the commercial fishing industry, all but depleted the salmon population and altered the river ecology forever. Consequentially, Yakama members were unable to engage in traditional ceremonies such as the First Salmon ceremony and the First Salmon feast. It cannot be refuted that, on the whole, the settlement of European Americans and the thrust of modernity in the Pacific Northwest changed native relationships with the land and, as a result, an entire way of life dating back further than any written history. The impacts of this history, however, are not history. Continued white supremacy in the region is fluid and continual. The consequences of this history continue to impact the cultural, physical, and spiritual health of the Yakama people.

White Supremacy and its Current Manifestations

The introduction of capitalist economic structures coupled with devastating ecological change in Yakama territory continues to adversely impact the local Indigenous population in holistic and far-reaching ways. The dynamics of the region, however, are understudied and consequently relatively little is known of the Yakama people outside the area, much of the scholarship involving the history and tradition being done by Yakama tribal members:

The sudden loss of salmon-based economies and spiritual traditions was a seismic shock to the cultures and psyches of people who collectively call themselves Salmon People. But because the history of the Columbia Plateau is one of the least-studied regions of the US, narratives of the ‘genius’ of human innovation and technology in the region still dominate, and ancient Indigenous regional history continues as a footnote in mainstream historic narratives. (Gilio-Whitaker, 62)

The introduction of new economic structures supplanted robust and complex trading traditions and consequently placed Indigenous peoples at an economic and social disadvantage. Additionally, the opening of the Dalles Dam led to the destruction of Celilo Falls, a sacred fishing site and a historically important trading site for tribes living on either side of the Columbia River to exchange goods. The “Federal Government's decision to build the dam

disregarded the ancient fishing grounds and the W'yam people's opposition” (Yakamanation-nsn.gov).

The destruction of Celilo Falls and its ongoing impact on the Yakama people is indicative of the material-symbolic effects settler colonialism and ecological tumult continue to have on a people; materially, the destruction of Celilo Falls meant the end to a traditional trading economy and the transition into a capitalist economic structure antithetical to Yakama worldview and in which they were immediately and disproportionately disadvantaged. Symbolically, the drowning of the sacred fishing site represents the stronghold of Western presence in the region and the narrowing of culture and tradition experienced and practiced by younger generations. Any ongoing or future project focused on environmental-cultural injustice must also account for the sets of relations that make up a material-symbolic cultural well-being.

In their study of climate change and the well-being of the Yakama nation, Montag et al place cultural elements at the core of tribal well-being. They define cultural elements, in part, as “the dynamic tangible and intangible processes, interactions, and aspects of a communal society that shares common values, beliefs, and spiritual constructs and practices towards their relationship with the land; traditional cultural activities and way of life” (387). In so doing they have created a sort of topoi of material and immaterial commonplaces of Yakama cultural welfare. The material and the symbolic, of course, are co-producing and interdependent. Culture inscribes meaning onto the material, and material augments and reinforces culture by offering matter that sustains cultural practice. When weaved together like the jute of traditional *wápaas* the result is an ecological worldview that reminds its people to live “in this way.”

Part of the same ecosystem, the salmon nourish while the Yakama people give the salmon purpose. Just as Robin Wall Kimmerer discusses the ways Indigenous peoples have long since learned from plant life, the Yakama people learned from and lived with salmon for centuries. This is made clear through an examination of salmon’s role in the Yakama communal life. The gathering of salmon, in fact, is central to traditional Yakama knowledge sharing. Montag et al write:

The gathering of first foods is taught through traditional knowledge and native language and is celebrated with first food ceremonies and celebrations. Participation in first foods gathering and celebration helps to create stronger family and individual well-being while the sharing of food promotes tribal community well-being. These occur through a community of individuals

participating in shared values and beliefs. The entire process as a whole contributes to YN tribal well-being. (390)

It maintains, then, that access to traditional foods (most important of which being salmon) is integral to a sustained Yakama Nation tribal well-being. Without access to appropriate amounts of salmon tribal members as a whole are less inclined to engage in cultural-sustaining practices such as the First Salmon ceremony and the First Salmon feast. Kyle Powys Whyte skews together a direct correlation between environmental injustice and its role the phenomenon of culture dwindling, writing that it “cuts at the fabric of systems of responsibilities that connect [nonhuman] people to humans, nonhumans, and ecosystems. Environmental injustice can be seen as an affront to peoples’ capacities to experience themselves in the world as having responsibilities for the upkeep, or continuance, of their societies” (Whyte, 12.36).

Yakama Elder Russell Jim iterates the importance of continued engagement with these systems of responsibilities for a people to attune itself with Yakama cosmology and worldview. In an interview with Brian Bull he says, “The earth cannot hear you if you do not speak to the earth with your native tongues, through the foods and medicine” (*Wisdom of the Elders*). Blocking Indigenous access to traditional food sources is an act of environmental injustice that affects a people’s way of life by denying opportunity to engage in traditional practices and diminishing their relationship with their local, sacred ecology. Often this change occurs so fast and unpredictably that the colonized community is unable to stop or slow the effects and, consequently, an entire worldview is seismically shifted for sustained periods of time. Kyle Powys Whyte writes that environmental justice “can be seen as occurring when these systems of responsibilities are interfered with or erased by another society in ways that are too rapid for indigenous peoples to adapt to without facing significant harms they would not have ordinarily faced” (12.38). For the Yakama Nation these harms include poverty, reduced reciprocity with the local landscape, lack of access to traditional food sources, and spiritual diminishment, all of which can be traced directly back to the increasingly diminished salmon populations in the Columbia River ecology.

According to the Columbia River Inter-tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC) prior to white settlement making its way to the Pacific Northwest the Columbia River system saw a spawning of 10-16 million salmon annually. Prior to white settlement there was a bounty of salmon

through which the Yakama and other local tribes sustained themselves and their own cultural practices. However, through a proliferation of dams, fish hatcheries, and pollution to the Columbia River—primarily a result of the Hanford Nuclear Testing Facility upstream of Yakama Nation Reservation land—these numbers are nowhere near their once-great peak, and the numbers continue to shrink drastically. As a result, participation in first foods ceremonies—and thus cultural knowledge and a sustained tribal well-being—has become less common amongst the younger generations (Montag, et al). Furthermore, there is a cultural perception that because of their unnatural breeding, diminished populations, and exposure to pollution and radiation, that the salmon are unhappy and thereby unable to offer themselves to their people, an integral aspect of Yakama cosmology that promotes continued interdependence and reciprocal relations between all living things. In a Yakama worldview, a healthy salmon offering itself is not only the origin of human existence, but also the essential first stage of an ecological cycle that sustains life, culture, and ancestral connection.

Ingold discusses a similar phenomenon in regard to the worldview of the Cree hunting caribou: “the animal offers itself up, quite intentionally and in a spirit of goodwill or even love towards the hunter ... In this light, killing appears not as a termination of life but as an act that is critical to its regeneration” (13). Viewing disparate parts of the material-cultural ecology as relational reinforces the reciprocity of an Indigenous worldview and its distinction from the anthropocentric perception of the environment as associated with the west. As a result of the severe lack of salmon available for cultural practices and ceremonies, the use of Yakama’s native language has seen a concomitant drop over the years. According to the most recent census, fewer than two percent of Yakama members ages five and older speak the native language at home (Henson). Not only does this mean that fewer members of the younger generation are able to fully engage in cultural practices and traditions, it’s a trend that indicates bleak prospects of improvement in future generations. Limited access to traditional language means fewer reminders of how to live “in this way.”

The presence of ongoing colonial capitalism is responsible for more than just the depletion of traditional sources of cultural sustenance, wisdom, and tradition; it has also supplanted traditional Indigenous ways of living with particularly unhealthy westernized customs through a neo-colonial context. Local white business owners have taken advantage of the economic poverty and lack of traditional food sources that the Yakama have recently

experienced, opening up unhealthy fast food restaurants all over the Yakama reservation. Reliant on quick and easy food resources, the Yakama spend their money at these businesses, at once funding colonizers and depleting their own cultural and physical health. These health concerns disproportionately affect the economically impoverished, thereby creating a cycle in which the poor are continuously engaging with unhealthy practices that carries over into perpetuity. Michelle Jacob's study substantiates these claims. She writes: "health disparities tend to have an intergenerational effect, and poorer families tend to experience these health burdens at even higher rates" ("Claiming Health and Culture as Human Rights: Yakama Feminism in Daily Practice," 372).

Jacob cites lack of gas money for constant trips to the grocery store as a perpetuating factor, noting that many Yakama nation members stock up on items, such as junk food, that have longer shelf life. For Kuokkanen, these adverse health conditions are a direct result of continued settler colonial capitalism: "If we understand colonialism as expropriation of Indigenous peoples' territories and resources and assimilation and disciplining indigenous bodies, globalization could be defined as more direct exploitation of dispensable bodies for profit" (218).

While white business owners continue to profit from the exploitation of Yakama Nation members who rely on access to quick and affordable food, the local and federal government rake in immense profits from the economy circulating through the commercial and sport fishing industries. Salmon spawn in hatcheries and are then released into the rivers, far less often making their full cycle of life into the Pacific Ocean before returning to spawn naturally as they did prior to the advent of the dams. This has major effects on local ecology and economy. According to the WDFW, the fishing in Washington is 5 billion-dollar annual industry. Each year hundreds of millions of these dollars fund federal and state government agencies, with very little if any filtering into economically support the members of the Yakama Nation. And so, a loop is set into place: low salmon populations result in insufficient amounts to sustain the Yakama cultural practices while the state and federal government continue to profit off a massive fishing industry. As a result of lower-socioeconomic status, tribal members then rely on fast food that funds outside business owners while having adverse impacts on their health and engagement with cultural and culinary practices of their ancestors. As a result of the dams and the fish hatcheries that followed, settlers become more bloated with capital while the local Indigenous population

becomes less-cohesive culturally, less-advantaged socioeconomically, and less-healthy physically.

Final Thoughts

Since time immemorial the Yakama people have lived in a complex, robust, and reciprocal relationship with their sacred land. Salmon have always been integral to their culture, spirituality, and physical health. However, “since westernization and assimilation have encroached upon the reservation, kinship relations, language use, traditional food practices, and other Yakama cultural traditions have been eroded” (*Yakama Rising*, 87). While Indigenous peoples in the area continue to suffer the consequences of ongoing colonial capitalism, the wealth of the government and fishing industries continues to grow.

The fishing industry in Washington state can be viewed as a prime example of a resurrection flower, a material artifact of colonial capitalism in which government or private industry commodify the re-emergence of natural resources/Indigenous land that had previously been destroyed or desecrated through their exploitation. While many might shrug their shoulders at something as seemingly trivial as dwindling salmon populations, the impact has been felt seriously by members of the Yakama Nation.

As a result of diminished salmon populations, the Yakama people have limited access to the cultural and nutritional nourishment that their ancestries had for generations, and in response have been unable to engage in first-foods celebrations. Reliance on saturated fast foods due to socioeconomic status, the Yakama people as whole have not only become poorer culturally, but also physically. Through fish hatcheries the state government has created a multi-billion dollar industry after nearly wiping out the population through the construction of dams in the twentieth century. Despite these impressive profits, the state has done little to atone for its sins against local Indigenous peoples.

In response to these adverse sociocultural conditions, proactive movements have emerged in recent years. As I will discuss in chapter three, Yakama feminism is a unique and localized social movement led by Yakama women. Seeking to break away from colonial conditions, Yakama feminism reinvigorates the embodiment of traditional Yakama practice as a set of culturally-embedded, self-determining acts of decolonial resistance founded upon Indigenous Ecological Knowledge and Yakama epistemology.

CHAPTER THREE

YAKAMA FEMINISM AS PRESERVATION ETHIC

We prevail with dignity and integrity much better than a lot of people in this country, as few as we are, in fact. Russell Jim, Yakama Elder

On October 16, 1805 the Lewis and Clark expedition arrived at the confluence of the Columbia and Snake Rivers. The tribes that would come to make up the Yakama Nation with the treaty of 1855 had been told about this day. Rumors of white travelers had made their way west as tribes who had already come in contact with the expedition traded goods with the Indians of the Columbia Plateau. Prophecy had told of a day when a new kind of man would arrive, a strange man who would bring “great change and wealth, but also chaos and destruction” (Neskahi). In the diminishing light of the afternoon, 200 Indians formed a half circle around the members of the expedition, each playing his own drum, dancing and singing. The movement of the bodies and the singing of the voices and the drumming of the drums were a prayer, for they knew great change was now upon them.

The years that followed were turbulent and Smohalla, a member of the Sahaptin tribe sometime between 1815 and 1820, witnessed much cultural, economic, and environmental change occurring rapidly around him and his people. Growing up he witnessed the seismic shifts that came with white settlement and Western modernity; railroad tracks cut through the landscape, poisoning the air with smoke. Commerical fishing ships began taking huge hauls of fish from the rivers. Traditional trade between tribes was damaged. The advent of boarding schools saw children being taken from their homes and forced to assimilate in material and symbolic ways: the cutting of hair and the forced adoption of the English language.

When he came of age Smohalla went on a vision quest, wherein he meditated in the wilderness and sought the advice of his ancestors, of the land, and of the Creator. While on his vision quest, he had a dream wherein he approached the spiritual realm, where he was told it was not yet his time to join, but to return to his people and revitalize the Wanapum faith and life practices. He returned from his journey and began delivering his message: that he had been visited by the Creator and that he was shown the way of Waashani, a way of peace that would restore and formalize the local Indigenous faith and philosophy.

Travelling and speaking the way of Waashani, he became known as Smohalla, the Dreamer, a strong speaker and spiritual leader. His messages were clear and resonant: certain people belonged to certain places, the division of land is an affront to the Creator, and the Indian must not assimilate to the ways of the settlers but should preserve the traditions of their ancestors.

Smohalla was famous for his belief that no Indian should cut their braids, saying that, “men who work cannot dream, and wisdom comes to us in dreams” (Neskahi). Smohalla gained a following whose efforts contributed to religious formalization and the development of what has become known as Washat, Seven Drums, or the Longhouse Religion. Through their messages and practices, Smohalla and his followers resisted assimilation and colonial capitalism. Practicing these spiritual acts was a form of embodied protest through means of cultural self-determination. The Washat faith, which permeates with tradition and ancestral knowledge, continues to be practiced on Sundays across the Pacific Northwest. After his death in the late 19th century, Smohalla was succeeded by his son Youyoni and then his nephew Puck Hyah Toot, who carried it into the 20th century.

Through the rise and propagation of colonial capitalism and the erosion of traditional cultural practices and beliefs, Indigenous activism began in the early-to-mid 19th century with the Marshall Trilogy, the first three cases involving Indigenous people by the US Supreme Court. The cases include *Johnson v. M'Intosh*, which established the doctrine of discovery, *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* which denied the Cherokee's claim to being an independent nation, and *Worcester v. Georgia* which granted the US government the supremacy of dealing with Indigenous groups as they saw fit. Momentum for Indigenous activism grew throughout the twentieth century activist groups such as the Society of American Indians (SAI) activism leading to the bestowal of American citizenship on American Indians, a still-controversial decision but a win for the activist group,¹ nonetheless. This history of Native activism, coupled with Indigenous women's roles as cultural bearers, has resulted in unique forms of Indigenous feminism through which moments of resistance and protest result in the preservation of traditional attunements with culture, spirituality, and cosmology. Indigenous feminism, however, is intrinsically different than its Western counterpart.

Due to historically and culturally embedded histories and vastly different social roles, Western and Indigenous feminist identities are vastly different. Consequently, their goals and methodologies have differed historically as well. In this chapter I aim to briefly illustrate the differences between traditionally-conceived American feminism and Indigenous feminism through first, second, and third stage feminism in order to provide a theoretical-historical background for discussing Yakama feminism and its current efforts at preserving culture and tradition through actions that revitalize food-based practices, the Sahaptin language, and colonial resistance through embodied ritual.

In the following section “Feminisms Refracted” I provide a brief historical account of Indigenous women’s precolonial roles, and the Indigenous feminist developments occurring alongside those of American feminism more broadly. This provides the foundation for discussing Indigenous Knowledge Frameworks and the roles women are playing today in the section after. In “Contemporary Yakama Feminism” I discuss acts of colonial resistance and cultural preservation spearheaded by Yakama women, including what Michell Jacob describes as “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’” (*Yakama Rising*, 10). By conserving natural resources and revitalizing cultural practices and knowledge, Yakama feminism embodies rhetorics of resistance in cultivating a preservation ethic.

Feminisms Refracted

Historically, Indigenous women and European women have existed in vastly different social roles. Traditionally, women throughout Europe didn’t spend much time in the public sphere. They were often regarded only fit for domestic life, meant to serve their household, without much control over their own bodies or social aspirations. Indigenous women, however, had very different lives. Indigenous women were seen as different from, but equal to, men. Traditionally they had different roles than men, but their work was considered as important as that of their male counterparts. Indigenous communities were rarely patriarchal. Instead women were perceived as a part of an ecosystem in which all living things were considered to be equal, sacred, and integral to a holistic well-being. Given these historical-social differences it should be

no surprise that responses to, roles within, and attitudes toward significant feminist movements between Indigenous and non-Indigenous women have—and continue to be—very different.

While feminist figures of the West can be traced back as far as Greek antiquity with women such as Aspasia and Christine de Pisan, feminism gained real momentum in the 19th and 20th centuries with the Suffragettes and other first wave feminist activist groups fighting for women's voting rights. Indigenous women, men, and other accepted genders were part of an ecology of life in which members lived symbiotically with one another, as well as the landscape. As such, women in Indigenous cultures had, for generations, already enjoyed the rights and self-determining opportunities that so much American feminist activism sought throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

The history of settler feminism is well-known. Less well-known, however, is how much of this early feminism, and its major activists, was influenced through observing native cultures and the role women had within them. Gilio-Whitaker writes:

studying the writings of some of the earliest recognized founders of the feminist movement, such as Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Matilda Joselyn Gage ... they were influenced by Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) cultures with whom they were neighbors in the Northeast. These settler women observed that Haudenosaunee women were free from constrictive, torturous clothing, were farmers, played sports, owned property, and were free from rape and other violence. They were not property of men ... were highly respected in their societies, and a Clan Mother society guided much of the governance ... by choosing and overseeing the male chiefs. (113)

The Haudenosaunee were admired by these early feminists, whom they wrote about with frequency. They viewed the confederated tribes as representing a more just, free, and equal society. Indeed, Minnie Myrtle writes:

A people like the Iroquois who had a government, established offices, a system of religion eminently pure and spiritual, a code of honor and laws of hospitality excelling those of all other nations, should be considered something better than savage, or utterly barbarous. And from their mythology if nothing else, it is evident that they were destitute neither of genius nor of poetry. (qtd in Wagner, 16-17)

Ironically—or perhaps fittingly—as first wave feminism found its successes, namely in white women's right to vote, Indigenous women's rights were being withered away by the ongoing encroachment of patriarchy, capitalism, and forced assimilation. However, roles within their respective communities continued to reflect their deeply-ingrained cultural roles. While

American governance continued to be male-dominated, relegating women to tertiary role, Indigenous women worked alongside Indigenous men throughout the Progressive Era. Women helped helm progressive and forward-moving organizations such as SAI, which was led by teacher, writer, and political activist Zitkála-Sá from 1923 until her death in 1938. The group was responsible for much progress throughout the thirties, including the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 which limited government control over native groups, allowing for more culturally-entangled opportunities for self-governance and self-determinism.

However, as Western ways of life increasingly dominated the country, Indigenous activism witnessed a notable shift toward androcentrism. The Red Power Movement of the 1960's and 70's resulted in a proliferation of reclaiming activism, considered militant by the mainstream media and government, propagated primarily by men. Simultaneous to the second wave of feminism that saw women focused on issues of equality, discrimination, and the personal, native women were grappling with the residual results of patriarchal colonialism. In response their relegated position within their own civil rights movement, a host of Indigenous women, led by native activist Janet McCloud, created the Women of All Red Nations (WARN), a feminist movement based on historical aspects of women Indigenous tradition.

Janet McCloud was a member of the Tulalip Tribes of Washington, a group of confederated tribes on Washington State's pacific coastline. Like Indians of the Columbia Plateau, her people were also salmon people, harvesting off the coast of Washington 40 miles north of Seattle. As a response to the diminishing salmon populations discussed throughout chapter two, McCloud founded the Survival of American Indians Association (SAIA), an activist group who protested ongoing capital colonialism via a series of fish-ins, what would later come to be known as the Fish Wars, throughout the 1960's and 1970's. Met with threats, government intervention, and ultimately arrest, McCloud's and SAIA's efforts ultimately resulted in the Boldt Decision, a Washington State Supreme Court ruling that reaffirmed Washington State Indians' role as co-managers of the salmon, allowing tribes to harvest fish in accordance with the rights granted by treaties.

McCloud's activist success was deeply-rooted in tribal tradition and spirituality. Upon the initial arrest of her husband for fish-in protests, McCloud relinquished the catholic faith she had been raised under and turned toward the traditional spirituality that would guide her activism for decades: "she couldn't rely on the white man's religion; it was hurting her. That's when she saw

the vision: She was looking out at Mount Rainier, and she saw all the faces of the great chiefs” (Lewis). McCloud spent the rest of her life fighting for Indigenous rights around the globe, urging prisons to adopt native spiritual and cultural practices for native inmates.

Under McCloud’s leadership WARN seized secret files, detailing acts of eugenics-via-private-sterilization of Indigenous throughout the prior decades. The WARN study confirmed that nearly 42 percent of Native American women were unknowingly sterilized in an official government program targeting socioeconomically disadvantaged women of color. WARN evolved into a movement aimed at health rights and equality for Native American women. Inspired and influenced by WARN and McCloud, other Indigenous feminist groups were formed, notably the Indian Women’s Circle (IWC) and the Indigenous Women’s Network (IWN). For her Indigenous feminist activism, McCloud is often colloquially referred to as the Rosa Parks of the American Indian Movement (Indian Country Today).

The emergence of third wave feminism arose in the 1990’s, with feminists focusing on the perceived failures of the previous wave—namely its favoring of the experiences of middle-class white women. During this time women began to think about the intersectionality of their identities, a term introduced by Kimberle Crenshaw in her paper “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex.” Feminism couldn’t be successful if it focused solely on gender. Third wave feminism called for more nuanced discussions of a person’s identity: gender, race, socioeconomic status, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and religion, among other factors.

Janet McCloud and other native feminists had already been doing some of this work as early as the 1960’s and 1970’s, as they focused the intersections of gender, indigeneity, socioeconomic status, and health status. With the advent of the internet, mass organizing became much easier, and Indigenous women domestically and internationally formed movements focused on environmental-cultural issues such as climate change and environmental injustice:

women were conspicuously at the forefront of those movements and organizations ... in 2004 a group of thirteen international Indigenous women came together from communities as diverse as the Dakotas, the Alaska and Tundra, Oaxaca, Tibet, and Nepal, to form an ‘alliance of prayer, education and healing for our Mother Earth, all Her inhabitants, all the children, and for the next seven generations to come. (Gilio-Whitaker, 119)

Indigenous feminist activism was directed at matters of the environment because of how intrinsically the environment is part of an intersectional Indigenous identity. The environment is

part of an Indigenous worldview, and without a focus on the sacred landscape that make up a people's cultural and spiritual identity, good feminism cannot be practiced.

Wilson and Yellow Bird write that, "indigenous decolonization is about reclaiming traditions, in addition to moving forward in the complex social, political, and economic realities that colonization brought to our people and homelands" (5). This is reflected by the landscape as discussed at the beginning of chapter one. The land of Southern and Central Washington state is sacred to the Yakama people who have always wished to live in harmony with each other and the elements of the land. But with settlers came changes to their ways of life as well as to the local environment. Just as the ecology and the Yakama people have responded to these tumultuous changes as evidenced by the prolific growing of the non-native hops in the region, Yakama feminism must strive for decoloniality in the face of, and inescapability of, colonial capitalist structures that remain antithetical to their ancestral cosmology. Michelle Jacob writes that this tension "of working for change but holding onto traditions, is inherent within decolonization struggles (*Yakama Rising*, 5).

These feminisms, then, don't just exist, but rather emerge through a series of contradictions and cultural exigencies. To resist ongoing colonialism, one must keep one foot squarely within it, while the other transcends its oppressive borders. To achieve collective progress and cultural development, a community must do so, at least partly, under colonial structures diametrically opposed to traditional perceptions of environment, economy, education, temporality, epistemology, and spirituality. These feminisms are, by nature, adaptive and amenable to change, rooted in cultural soil, but in response to colonial transgression and cultural-ecological disturbance and desecration. Jacob writes:

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 ... as Joseph Gone (2010) describes in his community psychology framework, indigenous communities must draw from both tradition (precolonial) and contemporary (postcolonial) ways of reclaiming traditions and regenerating healthy communities. (*Yakama Rising*, 10)

Clearly Indigenous feminism is part of, as well as a response to, a web of sociopolitical factors that include social, cultural, and ecological concerns not only to conserve (resources) but also to preserve a worldview and its manifestations in cultural awareness, embodied ceremony, traditional foods, and overall cosmology, throughout which topophilia and a sense of place

permeate. For the Yakama people this, of course, emphasizes the essential role of salmon, river ecology, and their sacred role in environment and worldview. When bound together a preservation ethic emerges, out of which—animated by the activism of traditional cultural bearers—Yakama feminism is born.

Contemporary Yakama Feminism

Yakama feminism has emerged through the development and influence of Indigenous feminisms. Attuning itself with its Indigenous Ecological Knowledge (IEK) Yakama feminism emphasizes all aspects of its ecological worldview. Working to preserve through resource conservation and cultural revitalization efforts, Yakama women have established and headed events that aim to reinvigorate Indigenous worldview and orient a people toward their ancestral cosmology. With these efforts in mind, Yakama feminism promotes the practice of important spiritual and cultural practices such as first food celebrations, embodied rituals through dance and song, and a reinvigorated relationship with the local environment. Bound together in the cultural milieu of the Yakama people, these elements cannot be separated—rather they are interdependent and inscribe meaning onto one another. Central to each of these aims is the salmon and the Sahaptin language, material and symbolic reflections of and contributors to Yakama epistemology and worldview.

In the literature she developed to study and discuss Indigenous feminism, Rauna Kuokkanen places the right to self-determination as the most essential factor of Indigenous feminist rights. Using this definition, Michelle Jacob asserts that “the economic, political, and social reality of the reservation reflects an environment in which Yakama people are denied universal human rights of political self-determination” (“Claiming Health and Culture as Human Rights: Yakama Feminism in Daily Practice,” 367). Montag et al describe Indigenous cultural well-being as “the dynamic tangible and intangible processes, interactions, and aspects of a communal society that shares common values, beliefs, and spiritual constructs and practices towards their relationship with the land; traditional cultural activities and way of life” (387). For the Yakama people this means engaging in cultural-sustaining practices that connect them with each other, the land, sacred elements of the environment, and traditional ceremonies that orient them toward an ancestral past. Paying tribute to salmon through first food ceremonies,

speaking the Sahaptin tongue, and engaging in embodied ceremony through dance, song, and religious praise are all integral elements to the Yakama's cultural well-being.

In response to the disparities created through generations of settler colonialism, forced assimilation, and cultural depletion, coupled with Montag et al's definition of tribal well-being, Yakama women have taken it upon themselves to become activists promoting a community-oriented cultural self-determinism. Summing up Ackerman's discussion of Yakama women's history of activism, as well as their current contributions given the contemporary exigencies discussed in the previous chapter of this project, Jacob asserts that:

Yakama feminism as a woman-centered movement ... applies our traditional cultural teachings to empower women for the purposes of caring for our people ... Yakama women have a long history of being powerful gendered subjects; it is central to our traditional culture and contemporary experiences. The manner in which Yakama women advocate for rights to health and culture is an important and necessary new direction in feminist human rights advocacy. (365)

The Yakama women embody these feminisms in many ways. Two that I would like to discuss here are 1) creating inter-community events that work to promote physical activities and educational, culturally-situated food consumption practices and 2) resisting the soda craze prominent on the reservation, thereby eschewing proponents of the new-capitalist structure responsible for the situations Yakama people find themselves in today while re-introducing cultural norms and practices to younger generations.

One of the most pressing concerns for socially active Yakama tribal members is the loss of tradition and culture. These losses, of course, are intrinsically connected to settler colonialism and the depletion and desecration of a sacred landscape and its resources, namely salmon. In an interview with Michelle Jacob a Yakama Elder named Virginia recalled a time before traditional ways of life were shattered, expressing concern for the future health of the tribe:

I'm afraid the language is dying. And the culture is dying with it ... And I don't know of what the future of this tribe will be. We need to put some self-esteem into our male people you know, that they need to look at what's happening to our tribe. Be more aware of it ... And I see all these addictions; that isn't part of our culture ... I guess because I was raised the old way, that I faced a lot of hardships with my tribe, with my family, where I know that there are times when we didn't have enough money to do certain things, but you know we always had our cultural ways, (*Yakama Rising*, 111)

Virginia's discussion of the tribe's cultural well-being offers two starkly different Yakama tribes, one pre and one post colonialism. Her concerns are both material and symbolic; she worries about the loss of cultural pride, tradition, and the perhaps imminent death of her mother tongue; she also makes some observations about more physical/material issues concerning addiction, poverty, and the physical health of her people. She illustrates two starkly diametric Yakama people, one pre and one postcolonialism, and the root of her concerns resonate with the goals, methods, and theoretical foundations of Yakama feminism.

The material and immaterial cannot be bifurcated or separated. Rather, they weave together making one another, as well as the entire thread, stronger through their interlacing. To address issues concerning the physical health of the tribe Yakama feminism seeks to reinvigorate its cultural elements. Strengthening cultural elements requires focusing on the physical health of the people. It is understood by its proponents that Indigenous feminist activism is only complete when it ravel together the material with the symbolic, the spiritual with the corporeal, the human with the non. Just as how Smohalla, the Dreamer practiced Waashani to resist cultural encroachment from early white settlers, contemporary Yakama feminism seeks to counter colonialism in its current forms through cultural preservation. Each way, of course, carries with it its own set of contradictions.

Yakama women have created community events with the purpose of resisting colonial practices and ideologies, reclaiming cultural traditions, constructing opportunities for community participation, and acting to perpetuate Indigenous community-knowledge-building. Intriguing examples of this "resist-reclaim-construct-act process" can be discussed through an examination of Xwayamamí Ishích (Golden Eagle's Nest), a grassroots foundation created by Yakama elders to teach Yakama youth traditional food knowledges and practices such as preserving salmon, and through community-engagement events such as the track meets that Yakama women have constructed for the sake of their people's cultural and physical sustenance (Kuokkanen).

Having extensively studied Yakama feminism and efforts of decolonization, Michelle Jacob maintains two primary and interconnected goals: "1) recovering traditional cultural practices, and 2) dismantling oppressive systems that harm our people, land and culture" (*Yakama Rising*, 12). These goals are intrinsically enmeshed, as the recovery and engagement with traditional cultural practices embodies rhetorics of protest and resistance that undermine

oppressive, colonial ideologies that seek assimilation and cultural depletion. Xwayamamí Ishích, a “community-based nonprofit organization dedicated to cultural revitalization on the Yakama Reservation” (16) embodies resistance-via-preservation through its educational and culturally-oriented food centric community engagement.

Xwayamamí Ishích is a women-led, grassroots, nonprofit, feminist organization with goals of Yakama cultural revitalization by offering traditional food workshops on the Yakama Reservation. A major goal of the organization is to work with youth in order to promote cultural practices and the tradition of knowledge exchange and the passing down of wisdom. Because of Indigenous worldview that sees all living things connected—physically, spiritually, and temporally—a major influence comes from the Prophecy of the Seven Generations. The Seven Generations Philosophy is an important and widespread Indigenous philosophy that incorporates elements of IEK and environmental-cultural philosophies of interconnection, and reciprocity, with the primary goal being one of intergenerational knowledge exchange and the preservation of the culture and ecology for the next seven generations. The prophecy reads: “in our every deliberation we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations” (University of Oklahoma) and as such is inherently dedicated to the exchange of cultural knowledge, tradition, and values that guide Xwayamamí Ishích in their mission.

Xwayamamí Ishích adheres to the values of the Seven Generations philosophy by offering food-gathering and preserving workshops that bring elders and youth together. Pedagogically, these sessions rely on traditional Yakama epistemology and education practices infused in their ancestral cosmology and worldview: “teachings take place through storytelling, teaching by example, and learning through repetition”(Yakama Rising, 83). Through these educational moments other elements of the Yakama culture are revitalized, namely language. Greg Sutterli, member of the Xwayamamí Ishích as well as others, comments that, “I just really wanted to work with the language, and a lot that had to do with my elder ... Virginia Beavert,” an elder whose community engagement reinvigorates cultural tradition.

A popular workshop the organization operates is a salmon wind-drying workshop. Wind-drying the salmon is ancient and culturally-embedded practice of preserving the fish. Through these workshops elders transmit traditional knowledge to the youth who, via this transmission, engage in cultural tradition and develop an ancestral epistemology. Not only this, but the cultural

exchange connects the younger generations to other important parts of a Yakama ecology of life.

Greg Sutterlinct says of the motivation of these events:

We had a wind drying workshop and we probably could've found some people our age to do it, but there are some elders out there who have been doing this type of stuff for a long time ... they know more than just how to wind-dry the salmon. They know stories about it. They can tell you about how it used to be a long time ago when everybody did it ... I think it's important to involve the elders because they have the stories and the teachings.

Through the practice of wind-drying, younger Yakama tribal members engage in traditional acts that ravel together all aspects of their culture: through intergenerational knowledge exchange members of the project practice traditional wisdom sharing practices that emphasize reciprocity among tribal members and mutual respect between elders and the youth. By working intimately with the salmon members of the project augment their close relationship with the sacred fish, honoring it and giving it purpose. Through the educational process of the wind-drying, elders share history and traditional teachings with the youth, thereby connecting them with cultural oral traditions and the ways of their ancestors. By engaging in an ancient preserving technique that predates colonialism and capitalism, elders and youth collaborate to dismantle colonial logics through traditional practice. In preserving the salmon together, members of the project also preserve an entire worldview that sees no distinction between its physical, environmental, cultural, and spiritual elements.

Xwayamamí Ishích is one of many organizations and projects that Yakame tribal members—and especially Yakama women—have enacted in recent years. Efforts for cultural preservation and decolonization take many forms and are often community-oriented. One such example includes track meets that Yakama women have organized, aiming to benefit both the cultural and physical health of the members of the Yakama nation.

Beginning in 2006 Yakama women (including Michelle Jacob) began an annual track meet that brings in over 1,000 Yakama tribal members annually. At these track meets there are plenty of opportunities for tribal members to learn about their culture and engage in healthy activities that reinforce Indigenous ways of being. As an example, by attending the track meet where fresh and local food is being produced, the Yakama people are resisting the unhealthy fast food chains that act as a microcosm for neo-colonial practices. Not only this, but by providing traditional food sources and promoting Yakama recipes (which are distributed at the event)

Yakama feminism works to participate in reclaiming Yakama heritage. Jacob writes that “our work helps resist the neo-colonial processes of unhealthy living that contribute to the poor health outcomes our people face” (374).

Additionally, the event constructs opportunities for knowledge-building and community-building. At these events there are signs and classes through which Yakama members, particularly young children, can learn about healthier lifestyles. By partnering with the Tribal Diabetes Program, the event draws upon Indigenous research and knowledge in an effort toward self-determination. That is, the knowledge being spread at these events is by Yakama, of Yakama, and for Yakama. Jacob writes that “all around the track there are signs with important diabetes prevention and management information. Lap walkers read and comment on the sign at each track meet. It is a unique educational event that promotes physical and social well-being among our people” (374).

Furthermore, there are many prizes at these events that help promote healthy and culturally-situated practices. To emphasize participation rather than competition, prizes are given to all participants, promoting a symposium or ‘making with’ each other. These prizes include fresh fruit, vegetables, coupons for local Indigenous-grown produce, and even salmon. These prizes are often accompanied by traditional recipes, thereby reinforcing community, heritage, history, and health. For Jacob, these community events are “a form of feminist activism to reclaim our people’s health” (374). Wall Kimmerer writes that, “ceremony is how we ‘remember to remember’ ... its value is both material and spiritual” (5), a sentiment that resonates with the experience of the Yakama at these events. A new ceremony itself, the track meet introduces the lived experiences and practices of Yakama ancestry, thereby recreating relations temporally, spiritually, and physically.

Finally, participants at these events are encouraged to join future sites of resistance such as those that fight against the heavy soda consumption prevalent on the reservation. These events work to fight the “fallacy of truth” that the soda companies promote, positing that because of low soda prices in such an impoverished area soda companies encourage heavy soda consumption and discourage (economically and socially) the consumption of healthier, sustaining liquids such as water. Additionally, these sites of resistance promote Indigenous wisdom and philosophies that view water as a sacred resource, thereby reinforcing traditional and cultural wisdoms. Michelle Jacob writes that “by working towards a soda-free lifestyle women are

embodying social change that can help return our people to a path of good health” and that Yakama women are “beginning to resist the unhealthy forces of the global capitalist food supply by reclaiming Native women’s traditional roles of power over our food supply and leadership within the community” (377). As such Yakama women, not unlike Indigenous women across the country, are taking active roles in carefully and importantly resisting western capitalist hegemony to reclaim identity and move toward traditional and culturally-situated, self-determining ways of being.

In *Yakama Rising* Michelle Jacob writes that, “respecting foods as spiritual beings who can carry energy and intention is an important part of a Yakama health ecological view. Thus, the food system must be attentive to energy, reciprocity, and the profoundly complex set of relations that depend on food gathering, preparation, transport, and consumption” (97-98). By providing the Yakama community with story, culturally-significant foods and recipes, and by incentivizing physical exercise, these events strengthen the corporal, spiritual, and cultural health of the Yakama people, preserving tradition by re-introducing culturally-important foods and decolonizing through the admonishment of unhealthy foods representative of colonial capitalism ubiquitous within the reservation.

WEAVING: A CONCLUSION

Dina Gilio-Whitaker writes of Native societies that, “[w]omen have always been valued storytellers in their communities, keepers of culture and defenders of their lands ... often sharing political power and leadership roles [with men]. It is the same today, but not without alteration, loss and reclamation” (111). The final sentence of this brief quote encapsulates the integral arguments of these three chapters. Chapter one implicitly discusses alteration, or rather, life and landscape prior to their alteration. Chapter two examines—ecologically as well culturally—via diminishing populations of salmon and the corresponding cultural, spiritual, and corporeal erosion of the Yakama people. Chapter three traces moments of reclamation via Yakama feminism influenced by traditional culture and Yakama ecological knowledge.

The sacred landscape of the Yakama people inscribes meaning onto the many elements of the Yakama culture which, in turn, applies additional meaning to the physical landscape. The notion of “alteration” implies a state of normalcy, which the tribes of the Columbia Plateau enjoyed for millennia prior to white settlement. Integral to this sacred normalcy is the Yakama origin story in which The Creator created the salmon and the river to nourish its people culturally, spiritually, and physically. The significance of the salmon—and of the sacred land at large—can be seen in ancient traditions such as the First Salmon run and the First Salmon feast, in art—including song, dance, and oratory, and in spiritual practices, such as returning the salmon to the river following the First Salmon feast. The salmon nourished every facet of a Yakama worldview, reinforcing ancestral cosmology, until mass alteration travelled westward with white settlement of the 19th and 20th centuries.

It had been prophesied that the arrival of a new kind of man would signal seismic change in wealth and, ultimately, in chaos and destruction. The arrival of the Lewis and Clark expedition in 1805 represented this very change, and while the expedition and tribes had no major conflict, the consequences of modernity and Western expansion were inevitable. With this change, came much loss for the Indians of the Columbia Plateau. Railroads cut through the landscape, desecrating significant parts of the sacred ecology. The coupling of commercial fishing and the construction of dams led to the destruction of culturally-important tribal fishing sites and the near depletion of the river’s salmon population. Hatchery fish have steadily augmented those numbers, but as a result of an unnatural life the salmon are perceived as less happy and therefore

unable to willfully offer themselves to the Yakama people, thereby cutting at the fiber of their spirituality and connection to the landscape.

Damage to the salmon population has adversely affected tribal members' ability to participate in culturally and spiritually sustaining rituals such as the First Salmon run and the First Salmon feast. Consequently, many tribal members, particularly those of younger generations, have limited access to opportunities to practice the mother tongue, the language that teaches them to live life "in this way," the way of their ancestors and the way of tradition. Furthermore, ongoing colonial capitalism has led to socioeconomic structures that place tribal members at a social-economic-cultural-corporeal disadvantage. The proliferation of white-owned fast food restaurants and limited access to healthy, culturally-sustaining foods, has resulted in a community of Indigenous people who—at large—are less healthy physically, culturally, and spiritually than their ancestors. The amalgam of these factors means a community that has become malnourished spiritually, physically, and culturally. Culturally-embedded acts of resistance and activism are necessary for the revitalization of a disadvantaged Indigenous nation.

Reclamation and preservation can only be done effectively through culturally-affirming acts of self-determinism. Indigenous feminism arose as a response to colonial capitalism and the tectonic shifts it has had on Indigenous communities, both domestically and globally. Indigenous communities have traditionally been matrifocal and/or matrilineal. The introduction of colonialism and Western values into the Americas encroached upon Indigenous societies in which women were regarded as an integral and equal contributor. Settlers introduced the very notion of hierarchy into native communities, at the expense of their cultural well-being.

Indigenous feminism is rooted in contradiction, and grows from cultural notions of reciprocity, responsibility, and interconnection. Indigenous feminism, by its nature, is intrinsically focused on place and the people who belong there. It seeks to resist through preservation the same way that Indigenous Ecological Knowledge aims to live in harmony with all living things, not to dominate or control, but rather to achieve symbiosis, health, and equality.

Yakama feminism is especially concerned with the reintroduction of culturally-sustaining foods and their associated rituals and ceremonies. With the food also comes immaterial spiritual and cultural significance. The philosophy of Yakama feminism is that

by reintroducing the material (first foods, embodied traditions) the symbolic (language, connection to sacred landscape/faith) will be revitalized to the mutual health of a people and their landscape. Yakama feminist activists have worked to achieve these goals through multiple methods.

The Sacred Run Foundation has revitalized cultural tradition by practicing the First Salmon run, a historically and cultural important act that conserves and honors the salmon. Xwayamamí Ishích, a nonprofit, grassroots organization organizes culturally-sustaining events like the wind-drying project discussed in chapter three. Through these events traditional Elder-to-youth knowledge exchange occurs, and, consequently, the transmission of ancient teachings. Other Yakama women, including Michelle Jacob, have created events like track meets which achieve their goals of decolonization, cultural revitalization, and decolonization via exercise and promoting traditional foods and eschewing unhealthy, fatty foods ubiquitous throughout the reservation. These sites of Yakama feminist activism ravel together important aspects of the local culture, decolonizing through acts of cultural preservation that revitalize the community's connection to the sacred landscape, its relationship to the Sahaptin language which reminds them to live in attunement with traditional and historical Yakama cosmology.

Yakama cosmology is much like the traditional *wápaas* that many Yakama women still make, each element being a single thread of jute. No element can be separated from the others and still maintain its integrity. Each thread—culture, ceremony, tradition, environmental attitude, ancestry, spirituality, health—is woven with, alongside, and throughout one another. They are entangled, inextricably. Like with anything else, *wápaas* can be damaged. Threads can fray. Holes can be punctured. If not airtight, one might leak water when dipped into the river. Still, they carry within them things integral for survival. They carry within them berries or clothes, art or meat or water or herbs or bells or books. They carry within them ancestral tradition and hope, culture and history and earth and dreams and memory. Within them they hold life. They can become damaged, but they can always be repaired—it's the weaving that matters.

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