Queer Indigenous Studies

Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics, and Literature

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Decolonizing the Queer Native Body (and Recovering the Native Bull-Dyke)

Bringing "Sexy Back" and Out of Native Studies' Closet

Chris Finley

> Whence the Freudian endeavor (out of reaction no doubt to the great surge of racism that was contemporary with it) to ground sexuality in the law—the law of alliance, tabooed consanguinity, and the Sovereign Father, in short, to surround desire with all the trappings of the old order of power.
> —Michel Foucault[1]

Thinking about how gender reifies colonial power has begun to be an important analytic in Native studies with the publication of special issues on Native feminisms in *American Quarterly* (2008) and *Wicazo Sa Review* (2009), and the three exciting panels on Native feminisms at the 2008 Native American and Indigenous Studies Conference in Athens, Georgia.[2] While gender is not a main theoretical framework in Native studies, discussions of gender occur more frequently than do those about sexuality. In Native studies, gender is not as scary a topic as sexuality, especially discussions of Native sexualities. This reaction should be reconsidered. An important analysis of colonial power for Native studies and Native nations can be found in Michel Foucault's theories of sexuality and biopower. He argues that the modern racial state comes into being by producing "sex" as a quality of bodies and populations, which get targeted for life or death as a method of enacting state power. He says that historically this "gave rise . . . to comprehensive measures, statistical assessments, and interventions aimed at the entire social body or at groups taken as a whole. Sex was a means of access to both the life of the body and the life of the species."[3] Scholars in Native studies increasingly argue that biopower defines the colonization of Native peoples when it makes sexuality, gender, and race key arenas of the power of the settler state.[4]

Histories of biopower deeply affected Native people's relationship to the body and sexuality. Natives, and lots of other folks, like sex but are

terrified to discuss it. For many tribes, this shame around sex started in the boarding schools, and sexual shame has been passed down for generations. Throughout the imposition of colonialism in the United States, one of the methods Native communities have used to survive is adapting silence around sexuality. The silencing of sexuality in Native studies and Native communities especially applies to queer sexuality. While it does not differ from mainstream U.S. society, this attitude of silence has more intense consequences for Native peoples, because of the relationship of sexuality to colonial power. Sexuality is difficult terrain to approach in Native communities, since it brings up many ugly negative realities and colonial legacies of sexual violence. As Andrea Smith argues, sexual violence is both an ideological and a physical tool of U.S. colonialism.[5] Because of this reality, there is a high rate of sexual abuse in Native communities. Non-Native pedophiles target children in Native nations because there is little chance of perpetrators being brought to justice or caught by tribal police, since non-Natives on tribal lands are not bound to the same laws as Natives. Historically, and arguably in the present, Native women are targeted for medical sterilization. In some Native nations, tribal councils have adapted heterosexist marriage acts into their tribal government constitutions. All this proves that discussions of sexuality are happening in Native communities. Yet the relationship between colonial power and normalizing discourses of sexualities is not a part of these dialogues. Heterosexism and the structure of the nuclear family needs to be thought of as a colonial system of violence.

My goal here is to show how new and exciting work linking Native studies and queer studies can imagine more open, sex-positive, and queer-friendly discussions of sexuality in both Native communities and Native studies. This not only will benefit Native intellectualism but also will change the ways in which Native nationalisms are perceived and constructed by Native peoples, and perhaps non-Native peoples. How are queered Native bodies made into docile bodies open to subjugation by colonial and imperial powers? How does the queering of Native bodies affect Native sovereignty struggles? Can Native peoples decolonize themselves without taking colonial discourses of sexualities seriously? What might some of the results of a decolonizing revolutionary movement for Native people that challenged heteropatriarchy look like? How could a decolonizing movement that challenged biopower be constructed as a coalitional and community-building movement?

Heteropatriarchy, Biopower, and Colonial Discourse: Not So Sexy

Imagining the future of sexuality in Native studies and Native nations produces many stimulating possibilities for decolonization. One place where sexuality is discussed explicitly is in queer studies, yet this field only rarely addresses Native peoples and Native issues. The debates over the civil rights of queer peoples form one of the main topics of discussion in queer studies. Thinking about sovereignty and colonialism in relation to theory in queer studies would shift conversations of citizenship and subjectivity to rethinking the validity of the U.S. nation-state. Importantly, queer theory's critiques of heterosexism, subjectivity, and gender constructions would be very useful in the context of Native studies.

There are potential problems in intersecting queer studies with Native studies. For the most part, neither discipline has shown much interest in critically engaging the other.[6] It is my hope, along with other scholars in this collection, to change this relationship. I pursue that work here by: interrogating the queered colonial discourses that define Native people; critiquing the state for constructing Native people as nonheteronormative, since they do not conform to heteropatriarchy; and critiquing Native nation building that uses the U.S. nation-state as a model. In Native studies, discussions of sexuality, gender, and colonialism have the possibility of exposing heteronormative discourses of colonial violence directed at Native communities. Heteropatriarchy and heteronormativity should be interpreted as logics of colonialism. Native studies should analyze race, gender, and sexuality as logics of colonial power without reducing them to separate identity-based models of analysis, as argued by Andrea Smith in "Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy: Rethinking Women of Color Organizing."[7] The simple inclusion of queer people or of sexuality as topics of discussion in Native studies and Native communities is not enough to effectively detangle the web of colonialism and heteropatriarchy. Taking sexuality seriously as a logic of colonial power has the potential to further decolonize Native studies and Native communities by exposing the hidden ways that Native communities have been colonized and have internalized colonialism. As Smith has argued, colonialism is supported through the structure of heteropatriarchy, which naturalizes hierarchies.[8] Heteropatriarchy disciplines and individualizes communally held beliefs by internalizing hierarchical gendered relationships and heteronormative

attitudes toward sexuality. Colonialism needs heteropatriarchy to naturalize hierarchies and unequal gender relations. Without heteronormative ideas about sexuality and gender relationships, heteropatriarchy, and therefore colonialism, would fall apart. Yet heteropatriarchy has become so natural in many Native communities that it is internalized and institutionalized as if it were traditional. Heteropatriarchal practices in many Native communities are written into tribal law and tradition. This changes how Natives relate to one another. Native interpersonal and community relationships are affected by pressure to conform to the nuclear family and the hierarchies implicit in heteropatriarchy, which in turn, are internalized. The control of sexuality, for Native communities and Native studies, is an extension of internalized colonialism. As Foucault argues in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality,* simply talking about sex and having more deviant sex does not challenge power relations produced by sexuality. Instead, the "excitement" of sexuality discourses reifies their power.[9] Purposeful deconstruction of the logics of power rather than an explosion of identity politics will help end colonial domination for Native peoples.

Colonialism disciplines both Native people and non-Native people through sexuality. The logics governing Native bodies are the same logics governing non-Native people. Yet the logic of colonialism gives the colonizers power, while Native people are more adversely affected by these colonizing logics. The colonizers may feel bad, stressed, and repressed by self-disciplining logics of normalizing sexuality, but Native people are systematically targeted for death and erasure by these same discourses. Rayna Green discusses the intersecting logics of race, gender, and sexuality in her work to show the unequal power relationship between the colonizer and the colonized.

Green's "The Pocahontas Perplex: The Image of Indian Women in American Culture" argues that colonial discourses represent Native women as sexually available for white men's pleasure.[10] These images of Native women equate the Native female body with the conquest of land in the "New World." In other words, the conflation of the "New World" with Native women's bodies presents Native women's heterosexual desire for white male settlers as justifying conquest and the settlement of the land by non-Natives. I would like to consider this sexualization, gendering, and racialization of the land by providing a queer reading. First, the land is heterosexualized within the heteropatriarchal order through the discovery, penetration, and ownership of the land by white men.

Of course, this narrative erases the fact that Native peoples were living on and owning these lands. The conflation of Native women's bodies with racialized and sexualized narratives of the land constructs it as penetrable and open to ownership through heteropatriarchal domination. Becoming critically aware of the heterosexual construction of land while queering Native peoples would be a queer Indigenous studies approach to rethinking conquest, even as it would shift ideas of sovereignty, subjectivity, recognition, nationalism, and self-determination to include queer Indigenous readings of the land.

While I agree with Green's formulation, her focus on Native women's conflation with land erases the sexual desirability of Native men in the colonial matrix. Green states, "But the Indian woman is even more burdened by this narrow definition of a 'good Indian,' for it is she, not the males, whom white men desire sexually."[11] Here, I want to include Native men as well as Native women as having been sexualized, gendered, and racialized as penetrable within colonial and imperial discourses. In other words, it is not only Native women who are (hetero)sexually controlled by white heteropatriarchy, for Native men are feminized and queered when put in the care of a white heteropatriarchal nation-state. Importantly, heteropatriarchy is effective whether Native women are read as queer or heterosexual, because "deviant" queer Native women need to be disciplined and controlled by colonial sexual and gendered "norms." Nevertheless, heteropatriarchy is more effective if Native women are read as heterosexual, since they can fit neatly as mothers and wives into its power hierarchies. All sexualization of Native peoples constructs them as incapable of self-governance without a heteropatriarchal influence that Native peoples do not "naturally" possess.

Under the disciplining logics of colonialism, Native women need to be heterosexualized to justify conquest. The "creation" story of the U.S. nation carefully includes a Native woman named Pocahontas who chooses her love for John Smith, and later John Rolfe, over the interests of her Native family. According to these colonial logics, Native women need to be managed, because they lack control over their sexuality and therefore their bodies. Native women embody the reproductive position of receiver of the fertile white colonial heteropatriarch and the mother of the U.S. nation. Under the logics of patriarchy and white supremacy, when a Native woman reproduces with a white man the child of this union becomes a white inheritor of the land. The child, although racially half Native, through white supremacy and patriarchy becomes white,

since inheritance under patriarchy is passed on through the father. Indigeneity, unlike blackness, is erased through miscegenation with whiteness, since colonizing logic stipulates that Native people need to disappear for the settlers to inherit the land. Then as soon as the Native mother gives birth, her indigeneity must disappear and die for her offspring to inherit the land and replace her body. For this whole narrative to work, the Native woman must be heterosexual and desire to have her body sexually and reproductively conquered through her love of the white man. Her body, and therefore her land, would now be owned and managed by the settler nation.

If the Native woman were read as queer, her heterosexual desire for white settlers to invade her nation would not be for the universal truth of love, since the sexual desire for white men would not exist. The narrative of universal love covering for imperial expansion and colonial violence would be exposed and destroyed. For this narrative to work, the Native woman *must* desire white heteropatriarchy through her desire of heteronormative sex and the love of white men. With a queer Native mother, the sex with the white settler may not have been consensual. In the absence of consent and the death of the mother sans the love story, conquest is revealed as a violent process with no regard for Native life. Colonialism naturalizes the heterosexual Native woman's desire for a white man to make conquest a universal love story.

In turn, in colonial narratives Native men must be queered as sexually unavailable object choices for Native women. While Native women are necessary for the imaginary origin story for the U.S. nation, Native men are not. In fact, Native men's presence in that story is erased. They must disappear to allow the white male heteropatriarch to rule over Native women without competition from Native men. For this to occur, Native men are constructed as nonheteronormative and unable to reproduce Native peoples. Native men are read as nonheteronormative because Native men do not correctly practice heteropatriarchy and govern Native women and children. Native gender norms and family structures, which vary from tribe to tribe, do not conform to Native men having control of the public space and the nuclear family or to caring for the land correctly. In other words, in a colonial reading, Native men "allow" matriarchal structures to govern society and extended families, while Native peoples do not make as much profit off the land as the settlers would. Native men are seen as sterile members of a dying race that needs a "genetically superior" white race to save it from the "unavoidable" extinction. Native men are constructed as nonheteronormative to justify the extinction of Native people. Since it is the father that gives the child the inheritance in patriarchy, white heteropatriarchy can slip in and "save" the Natives through the management of Native women and erasure of Native men.

Through the action of colonial discourses, the bodies of Native women and men are queered and racialized as disordered, unreproductive, and therefore nonheteronormative. By making Native bodies "disappear," the colonial logic of Native nonheteronormative sexualities justifies genocide and conquest as effects of biopower. On these terms, Native people are diseased, dying, and nonheteronormative, all of which threatens the survival of the heteronormative U.S. nation-state. Native people are eliminated discursively or actually killed to save the heteronormative body politic from possible contamination by Native nonheteronormativity. Yet through death and disappearance, nonheteronormative Natives are transformed into heteronormative spirit/subjects in discourses told by the colonizer to appropriate the land and culture of Native peoples while building a heteropatriarchal nation.

Nation-Building: Native Feminist Critiques and Decolonization as Foreplay for Sexy Native Nations

Taiaiake Alfred, a Mohawk Native, offers a decolonizing challenge to Native people. He does not center his construction of indigeneity in apolitical identity politics or solely on genealogy. Instead, he wants Native people to recreate the relations between themselves and their land base. He advocates fighting colonialism through regaining the spiritual strength and integrity colonialism has stolen from Native communities (as well as the hope Native people have given away to colonialism). This is a beautiful conception of sovereignty and self-determination. Alfred writes:

> Wasáse, as I am speaking of it here, is symbolic of the social and cultural force alive among Onkwehonwe dedicated to altering the balance of political and economic power to recreate some social and physical space for freedom to re-emerge. Wasáse is an ethical and political vision, the real demonstration of our resolve to survive as Onkwehonwe and to do what we must to force the Settlers to acknowledge our existence and the integrity of our connection to the land.[12]

Alfred wants freedom for Native people that can come only from decolonizing Native communities. For him, this is a political project that involves Native communities *and* the colonizing settlers. Alfred does not discuss how colonialism impacts Native women specifically or how colonial discourses of sexuality dispossess Native people from the land and from capacity for governance. Yet his alternative construction of sovereignty can be used to include sexuality as part of politics and land management.

Jennifer Nez Denetdale is one of the few Native scholars overtly discussing the politics of sexuality, gender, and Native nationalisms in her work. Denetdale's work exposes homophobia as part of modern Native nation building. To critique masculinist discourses working within Navajo nationalism, Denetdale, along with other Native feminists, has found it necessary to critique traditionalism in Native communities. This is an important intervention, because Native peoples are often read as existing outside of homophobic discourse or as more accepting of trans and queer people in Native communities because of traditional Native ideas regarding gender and sexuality. Denetdale writes: "With the imposition of Western democratic principles, Navajo women find themselves confronted with new oppressions in the name of 'custom and tradition.'"[13] Here, tradition is invoked to justify heteropatriarchy and male leadership in the Navajo Nation (as in other Native nations) by discouraging or forbidding Native women from taking leadership roles, on account of this being constructed as untraditional. Ironically, as Denetdale points out, Navajo women are allowed to participate in the Navajo Nation beauty pageant but not to hold a position on the tribal council. Denetdale supports Native sovereignty, but she also believes Native traditions should be historicized so that traditions are not abused and used to support forms of oppression, such as antiblack racism and heteronormativity. She writes:

> While it is necessary for Native scholars to call upon the intellectual community to support and preserve Indigenous sovereignty, it is crucial that we also recognize how history has transformed traditions, and that we be critical about the ways tradition is claimed and for what purposes. In some cases, tradition has been used to disenfranchise women and to hold them to standards higher than those set for men. Tradition is not without a political context.[14]

Denetdale explains that traditionalism is used in Native communities to silence women and to disenfranchise them from possessing political power. She does not dismiss Navajo traditions when she asks critical questions about whether certain traditions emerge in a historical trajectory or how Navajo men benefit by defining traditionalism in a historical vacuum. Her critique denaturalizes heteropatriarchal traditionalism by placing it inside histories of heteropatriarchal discourse instead of outside of modern constructions of power.[15] Native nations should be self-critiquing of Native constructions of nationalisms.

Native nations' use of heteronormative citizenship standards also disallows nonheteronormative identity formations from belonging in Native nations. Denetdale discusses this matter further when she also takes on the Diné Marriage Act passed by the tribal council of the Navajo Nation, in her paper entitled, "Carving Navajo National Boundaries: Patriotism, Tradition, and the Diné Marriage Act of 2005."[16] Denetdale examines how the intersection of heteropatriarchy, militarism, and homophobia strengthened the Navajo Nation in the post–9/11 moment. She criticizes her tribe for participating in oppressive colonial nation building by trying to enforce heteronormative marriage practices on Diné people. This sort of homophobic nationalism is similar to the U.S. nation-state's use of hyped-up homophobic nationalism and militarism in this time of war. Nationalism that is dependent on the exclusion of queer people has many consequences for Native communities. Denetdale tells how some Navajo youth left the Navajo Nation to move to urban areas and to find a queer community because of the backlash against nonheteronormative Navajos. This is a loss to the Navajo Nation. As Denetdale successfully argues, Native nations that mirror the U.S nation-state by relying on homophobia and heteropatriarchy to establish national belonging and exclusion are not ideal models to further Native sovereignty. She forcefully argues, "Critically examining the connections constructed between the traditional roles of Navajo warriors and present-day Navajo soldiering for the United States, as well as the connections made between family values and recent legislation like the Diné Marriage Act, are critical to our decolonization as Native peoples."[17] Denetdale, like many other Native scholars, advocates looking for a construction of sovereignty and Native nation building other than the model of the U.S. nation-state. She does not want to reproduce the oppressive colonial methods that exclude queers, women, and black Natives. Instead, she, like Alfred, challenges us in Native studies to conceptualize a more harmonious construction of sovereignty and Native nationhood. Native people and Native studies need to understand

how discourses of colonial power operate within our communities and within our selves through sexuality, so that we may work toward alternative forms of Native nationhood and sovereignty that do not rely on heteronormativity for membership.

Centering discourses of sexualities in Native studies engages gender, sexuality, and indigeneity as enmeshed categories of analysis, since examining gender is an important part of deconstructing sexualities and exposing colonial violence. Andrea Smith writes, "The very simplified manner in which Native women's activism is theorized prevents Native women from articulating political projects that both address sexism *and* promote indigenous sovereignty. In addition, this framework does not show the complex way in which Native women organizers position themselves with respect to other coalition partners."[18] I build my ideas upon the work of Indigenous feminist theorists whose ideas and articulations of indigeneity could transform other fields of study, such as white feminist and white queer theories. The scholarly work of Indigenous feminisms centers Native women and critiques white heteropatriarchy, colonialism, sexual violence, and the U.S. nation-state model of nationalism. I want to take this a step further, as some Native feminists have done, and add the intersection of these power relations with sexuality to reveal colonizing logics and practices embedded in constructing Native peoples as hypersexual and nonheteronormative. It is time to bring "sexy back" to Native studies and quit pretending we are boring and pure and do not think or write about sex. We are alive, we are sexy, and some of us Natives are queer. Native nationalisms have the potential to be sexy (and are already sexualized), but to be sexy from a Native feminist perspective, they need to be decolonizing and critical of heteropatriarchy.

Conclusion

Critical theory of biopower exposes the colonial violence of discourse on Native nonheteronormativity being used to justify Native genocide and the "disappearance" of Native people. Deconstructing Native sexualities within a biopolitical analysis has the ability to further unlock the closet of Native studies and expose how colonial power operates in Native nations. The silence in Native studies around issues of sexuality, even heterosexuality, does not benefit the work of decolonizing Native studies or articulating it as a project of freedom for Native people. Silence around Native sexuality benefits the colonizers and erases queer Native people from their communities.[19] Putting Native studies and queer studies in dialogue creates further possibilities to decolonize Native communities. Doing so will expose colonial violence in discursive practices that construct the Native body as hypersexualized, sexually disordered, and queer while presenting Native people as incapable of governance on Native land. Centering a queer studies framework within Native studies also calls Native communities to confront heteropatriarchal practices that have resulted from internalizing sexual colonization.

In response to Justin Timberlake's song "Sexy Back," the artist Prince stated, "Sexy never left."[20] The same can be said for Native studies and Native communities, because sex is always there, but Native sexualities are just beginning to be theorized. Sexuality discourses have to be considered as methods of colonization that require deconstruction to further decolonize Native studies and Native communities. Part of the decolonizing project is recovering the relationship to a land base and reimagining the queer Native body. What does this look like? We will have to imagine this and build this together. I want to imagine that Native peoples have a new bright future full of life and the spirits of our ancestors.

Notes

1. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, *An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 150.

2. Mishuana Goeman and Jennifer Nez Denetdale, eds., "Native Feminisms: Legacies, Interventions, and Sovereignties," *Wicazo Sa Review* 24, no. 2 (2009): 9–187; Andrea Smith and J. Kehaulani Kauanui, eds., "Forum: Native Feminisms without Apology," *American Quarterly* 60, no. 2 (2008): 241–315.

3. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1 : *An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 146.

4. See, for example: Andrea Smith, "Queer Theory and Native Studies: The Heteronormativity of Settler Colonialism" (this vol.).

5. Andrea Smith, *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* (Cambridge: South End Press, 2005).

6. This is changing rapidly and some Native studies scholars are engaging queer theory and queering indigeneity. See, for example: Daniel Heath Justice and James Cox, eds. "Queering Native Literature, Indigenizing Queer Theory" *SAIL: Studies in American Indian Literature* 20, no. 1 (2008); Daniel Heath Justice, Mark Rifkin, and Bethany Schneider, eds., "Sexuality, Nationality, Indigeneity: Rethinking the State at the Intersection of Native American and Queer Studies" *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 16, no. 1–2 (2010).

7. Andrea Smith, "Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy: Rethinking Women of Color Organizing." *The Color of Violence: Incite Women of Color against Violence,* ed. INCITE Women of Color Against Violence(Boston: South End Press, 2006), 66.

8. Ibid., 72.

9. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality,* 4. I am certainly not discouraging the practice of deviant sex, which is such a broad category, anyhow.

10. Rayna Green, "The Pocahontas Perplex: The Image of Indian Women in American Culture," *Massachusetts Review* 16, no. 4 (1975).

11. Ibid., 703.

12. Taiaia Alfred, *Wasáse,* (University of Toronto Press, 2005) 19.

13. Jennifer Nez Denetdale, "Chairmen, Presidents, and Princesses: The Navajo Nation, Gender, and the Politics of Tradition," *Wicazo Sa Review* 21, no. 1 (2006): 10.

14. Ibid., 20–21.

15. Traditionalism is seen as existing outside of discourse and existing before the invention of the law. By contextualizing tradition in history and heteropatriarchy, Denetdale disrupts the narrative of traditionalism as sacred and uncorrupted by modernity.

16. Jennifer Nez Denetdale, "Carving Navajo National Boundaries: Patriotism, Tradition, and the Diné Marriage Act of 2005," *American Quarterly* 60 (2008).

17. Ibid., 289.

18. Andrea Smith, *Native Americans and the Christian Right: The Gendered Politics of Unlikely Alliances* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 108.

19. Native people, who are racialized as being dead and gone, should be aware of the psychological damage erasure causes and be mindful not to do it to other people in our communities.

20. SFGate, "Prince Takes Swipe at Timberlake," August 31, 2006, http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/blogs/dailydish/detail?blogid=7&entry_id=8455.

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Queer Theory and Native Studies

The Heteronormativity of Settler Colonialism

Andrea Smith

Native studies and queer theorist Chris Finley (this volume) challenges Native studies scholars to integrate queer theory into their work. She notes that while some scholars discuss the status of gender-non-normative peoples within precolonial Native communities, virtually no scholars engage queer theory. This absence contributes to a heteronormative framing of Native communities. "It is time to bring 'sexy back' to Native studies and quit pretending we are boring and pure and do not think or write about sex," Finley insists. "We are alive, we are sexy, and some of us Natives are queer."[1] Furthermore, she notes, while there are emerging feminist and decolonial analyses within Native studies that point to the gendered nature of colonialism, it is necessary to extend this analysis to examine how colonialism also queers Native peoples. Thus, her charge goes beyond representing queer peoples within Native studies (an important project); it also calls on *all* scholars to queer the analytics of settler colonialism. Qwo-Li Driskill further calls for the development of a "two-spirit" critique that remains in conversation with, while also critically interrogating, queer and queer of color critique.[2]

Queer theory has made a critical intervention in GLBT studies by moving past simple identity politics to interrogate the logics of heteronormativity. According to Michael Warner, the "preference for 'queer' represents, among other things, an aggressive impulse of generalization; it rejects a minoritizing logic of toleration or simple political interest-representation in favor of a more thorough resistance to regimes of the normal." Native studies, however, has frequently intersected more with GLBT studies than with queer theory in that it has tended to focus on the status of "two-spirit" peoples within Native communities.[3] While this scholarship is critically important, I argue that Native studies additionally has more to contribute to queer studies by unsettling settler colonialism. At the same time, while queer theory does focus on normalizing logics, even those engaged in queer of color critique generally neglect the normalizing logics of settler colonialism, particularly within the U.S. context.