"... And We Are Still Here": From Berdache to Two-Spirit People

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INTRODUCTION

When we gathered people together for two invitational conferences on "Revisiting the 'North American Berdache' Empirically and Theoretically," our aim was to create a dialogue between indigenous/Native people and academics who had written about them. The conferences, funded by the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, provided the start of collaborative work that took place over the course of five years and resulted in publication of our edited book, Two-Spirit People: Native American Gender Identity, Sexuality, and Spirituality. One of the most important outcomes of the five-year conversation among participants was the realization that the term berdache was no longer acceptable as a catch-all for Native American (indigenous peoples of the United States of America) and First Nations (indigenous peoples of Canada) gender and sexual behaviors. The Native participants concluded that the term was insulting and part of the colonial discourse that continues to be used by select scholars who appropriate indigenous people's lives in various ways. Native people were talking about this issue long before non-Native academics noticed.

The most active resistance to using berdache for sexual and gender diversity in North American aboriginal communities occurred at the Third Annual Native American Gay and Lesbian Gathering, where attendees decided to change the name of their future gatherings to The International Two-Spirit Gathering. At the center of our investigation into the terms we use is a shared determination to reintegrate the word berdache into our respective writings, but using it clearly and precisely in its original meaning: "kept boy" or "male".

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prostitute." In this paper, we explain our rationale for integrating the use of berdache into our writings about two-spirit people, explore how the self-naming and academic research issues can be accommodated collaboratively, and draw some conclusions about past and future research into Native American sexualities and gender diversity.

REDEFINING BERDACHE WITHIN THE CONTEMPORARY TWO SPIRIT MOVEMENT

The Contemporary Two-Spirit Movement

The two-spirit movement in the United States grew out of the Native American Gay and Lesbian movement, which held its first international gathering in Minneapolis in 1988. In Winnipeg, Manitoba, in the summer of 1990, those who attended the third annual gathering focused on finding a new term for Native sexualities and gender diversity. After considerable discussion, the term two-spirit was chosen, which refers to a wide variety of Native American and First Nations roles and identities past and present. The term is not intended to mark a new category of gender. Instead two-spirit is an indigenously defined pan-Native North American term that bridges Native concepts of gender diversity and sexualities with those of Western cultures. Two-spirit roles and identities are also referred to as gay, lesbian, transvestite, transsexual, transgender, drag queens, and butches, as well as winkte, nådleeh, and other appropriate tribal terms. This interesting synchrony helps to solve some self-identity problems that Native Americans and First Nations two-spirit people have faced, thus allowing those who live in both urban and rural areas, but not necessarily on reservations, the opportunity to use only one unambiguous term—two-spirit—for their gender identity.

The word two-spirit will not work in all areas. It is suited more to Natives who live in large multiethnic urban environments; those who live in rural or reservation areas have their own terms to identify non-heterosexual people in their communities. Two-spirit is a cultural and social Native term, not a religious one. Some traditional people will not utilize the term two-spirit to refer to anything associated with religious spiritual events. The term spirit has a different meaning than is intended by this label, and furthermore the meaning varies from tribe to tribe. A person who identifies as two-spirit off the reservation will not necessarily be seen or identified as a two-spirit person at home (on the reservation), but will be identified by the term that is used within the community. However, with the increasing disappearance of Native languages today, that term could be gay, lesbian, homosexual, and so forth, which is not surprising, since English is the lingua franca in the pan-Indian world of the 1990s.

Revisiting and Redefining Berdache

Anthropologists and others have used berdache as a catch-all phrase for homosexuality, hermaphroditism, transvestitism (ceremonial as well as in daily wear),
and transgenderism, as well as for notions of gender diversity encoded in multiple gender systems found within Native American and First Nations cultures since the 1500s. It is still used in this way by some old-fashioned scholars. Trexler’s thoroughly documented work in this area also discusses incidences of “the religious berdache,” whose behaviors included instances of religious pederasty in addition to priestly transvestic sexual performance by male priests whose “[... ‘clothes’ they assumed [wore] were the skin of a woman ... a sacrificed woman’s flayed skin to replicate visually [an Aztec] goddess.” In no instance does Trexler note a female-bodied person referred to as a berdache. The first person to deal directly with Native North American “female berdaches” was Blackwood. In her thesis, she says Kroeber and most other observers defined berdache as men who adopted women’s dress, work and status. Although there were a number of women who adopted the male role, the term is associated with the male berdache.... The confusion surrounding the use of the term, as well as its etymology, prompted the adoption in this work of the term cross-gender for the female role, first used by Carrier for both the male and female role.

Detailed historiographies of the term berdache are contained in the pre-1990 writings by Jacobs, Callender and Kochems, Williams, and gay American Indians. The earliest published use of the term appears in the Jesuit Relations, where Jesuit priests condemned such individuals. Williams summarizes the etymology of the word as follows:

The word originally came from the Persian bardaj [barah], and via the Arabs [bardaj] spread to the Italian language as bardasso [berdasia], and to the Spanish as bardaxa or bardaje [bardaja] by the beginning of the sixteenth century. About the same time the word appeared in French as bardache. [...] refers to the passive homosexual partner (alternative spellings from Jacobs and elsewhere have been inserted in brackets). The term has also been translated as “kept boy” or “male prostitute.” The Oxford English Dictionary cross-references “berdache” to “catamite,” which is translated as “a boy kept for unnatural purposes.” With this etymology, it should come as no surprise that some contemporary Native Americans and First Nations people have come to consider the term berdache derogatory and insulting to the image and identity of gay, lesbian, transgender, and other two-spirit people.

The French term bardache gets transliterated to berdache by later writers who enter it into the anthropological literature. There are also instances of the word being spelled as follows: broadashe, bundosh and bowdash, berdach, berdash, bredache, bredaches, bardash, berdèches, bird-ash, birdashes, bardaje, among others (this list comes largely from Will Roscoe’s 1993 compilation “Frontier Terms for Two-Spirits”; see also Williams, Roscoe, and contemporary dictionaries). Regardless of its spelling, the word berdache has been
used in anthropological writings not to imply that the individuals so labeled were kept boys or male prostitutes, but to refer to what the writers perceived to be transvestitism, homosexuality, hermaphrodisim, and transgenderism as institutions viewed positively in Native American and First Nations cultures.25

It is worth noting that when used in most anthropological writings, berdache was primarily presented as a positively sanctioned institution within traditional Native American and First Nations cultures. Those writings presented pictures of a pan-Native North American gender or sex category that was allegedly supported in Native communities, in some cases even revered. This image of a universal Native category has been taught in introductory and advanced college courses since well before the beginning of the gay studies movement in the United States. As Ralph Bolton found in his survey of textbooks, it is a staple in most introductory anthropology, sociology, psychology, and sexology textbooks.26

If only the myth were true! Recent work by Lang27 and Trexler28 documents the opposite case for many tribes: people called berdaches by anthropologists were not uniformly revered nor uniformly reviled. Some had important cultural roles and were honored; others were ridiculed and shamed. The word, in its lack of specificity, confounds traditional gender and sexual diversity, lumping all together in a category coded social/sexual deviance by Westerners, but romanticized as a normative “other” in postcolonial discourse for Native Americans only. The next step, of course, is to code all Native Americans (and First Nations) peoples as socially deviant (for further information on this process see Brown29). Many who experienced homophobia on their reservation left, moving to urban centers where they could make connections with people of comparable gender and sexual identities if not of the same racial, ethnic, and class identities. Some of the earlier writings held out false hope to those who had become “lost gay urban Indians”30—Native Americans who did not want to live the “white urban gay life” but sometimes felt they had no choice if they were to live true to their full persona.31 The stories circulating in the urban gay communities of the 1970s and 1980s held up berdache as an icon for people of all races32 to hold onto in their desperate desire to obtain acceptance and respect. For some Native gays and lesbians, these stories held a promise of acceptance or even revered status if only their tribe would return to traditional cultural ways. A non-Native writer explains:

It now appears that the 1980’s and 1990’s overwhelmingly positive, almost deifying interpretations of the highly respected role that gender variants played in Native America are problematic because these interpretations themselves were constructed through various powerful filters—historic and cultural. Gay writers may have overstated their ethnographic point. The Navajo case is particularly important because it has been used as a primary ethnographic example of where the role of the nádleeh, or male-bodied individual who performs the role of a woman, is one of the most highly venerated in North America.33

The fact is that only in some instances were two-spirit people recognized with a specific linguistic marker; and even rarer (as in Navajo communities of
the past), were such people honored, accepted, and raised to be the way they are.\textsuperscript{34} The same holds true for other contemporary two-spirit people.

**IMAGES OF GENDERS AND SEXUALITIES**

As we begin to unpack the great diversity of genders in Native North America and the ways in which sexuality informs performance of gender roles, we are drawn back to the original definition of *berdache*. Our research shows that there are indeed individuals today appropriately called *berdache* by researchers. We refer specifically to feminine boys and young males living on reservations and in urban places, both in Native and non-Native communities, who are passive sexual consorts of heterosexual and homosexual adult men. The emphasis in these relationships is sex.

In contrast, in Native communities that teach children that the gendered persona is more important than the sexed body, feminine boys and young males will be raised to perform as women in the society.\textsuperscript{35} As they mature and begin to assume public roles associated with their sexual status, they may appear to the outsider more like "male-to-female transgender" people than homosexual males, because the emphasis of the actor is on performance of gender roles.\textsuperscript{36} Thus, young male-bodied persons may be culturally supported through adolescence until they mature into male-bodied transgendered adults who could be homosexual, bisexual, or heterosexual in sex performance, erotic response, and/or enduring relationships. Furthermore, in fulfilling gender role performances, the transgender adult may be more transvestic than transgender, if his/her own gender identity is situated in a temporary category used only when fulfilling the public role.\textsuperscript{37} On the other hand, a male-bodied individual raised as a woman (who would be expected to dress accordingly)\textsuperscript{38} will be encouraged to accommodate the full range of womanly roles, including engaging in a sexual relationship with men; one might consider this a homosexual relationship were it not in fact a heterosexual relationship between a woman (who happens to be male-bodied) and a man (who is also male-bodied).\textsuperscript{39} By using the concept of gender as an analytic category, we extend our understanding of human erotic and sexual bonding beyond essentialist (natural) approaches to sex acts which emphasize genital couplings, especially male-male homosexuality.\textsuperscript{40}

As Hawkesworth observes, Developing conceptual distinctions that differentiate sex, sexuality, sexual identity, gender identity, gender role, and gender-role identity can enable feminist scholars to deploy gender as an analytic device, engaging questions that confound the natural attitude and thereby contribute to progressive feminist politics.\textsuperscript{41}

However, attempting to confound the uses of essentialism requires avoiding crucial pitfalls, particularly those associated with race and ethnicity, which tend to disappear in conversations about gender categories—even when discussing two-spirit people.
On some reservations, feminine boys are used sexually by married men. In studies of male juvenile prostitutes in Seattle, Washington, it is primarily heterosexual adult males who seek out boys for passive anal and oral sex. In both Seattle and on reservations, such behavior is negatively sanctioned. It is not glamorous; it is not romantic; it is "sex for survival." These boys (aged nine to seventeen) are *berdaches* in the literal, original meaning of the word: boys used for sexual purposes. The married "heterosexual" men on reservations who engage in sex with boys retain their heterosexual status; they are never considered to be bisexual or homosexual. In some urban gay settings, these men are commonly called "Men who have Sex with Men (MSMs)."

Unlike the term *berdache*, which has been used as the grab bag of Native American and First Nations gender and sexual diversity, *two-spirit* reflects the range of sexuality and gender identity derived from spiritual contemplation of one's place on this earth, this contemplation shored up by the teachings from parents and elders about how to live as a two-spirit person. On some reservations there is still a cultural script, though much less defined than what Parsons found in the 1920s, which allows parents and elders to teach feminine boys that they can embody womanly traits without shame. They also learn that they can become adult male-bodied persons with social roles and occupations associated with women. Additionally, in some of these same communities, masculine girls are generally allowed to avoid the reproductive requirements of their community. As teenagers and adult women, unless they find others like themselves and want to stay on the reservation, they tend to stay alone. If they do find another similar female-bodied person, the two may live together, forming an enduring relationship of mutual support, caring, and affective expression.

With the experiences or expectations described above, some transgender children grow up with a strong sense of self-worth and fully participate in their communities. Others who do not feel comfortable, most likely because they did not have positive reinforcement of their potential transgender persona, go to urban areas where they join other gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender people in making a new community. On the reservation, a feminine man may continue to associate with women's roles, though in recent years this is found less and less in everyday life. For example, on the Navajo Reservation there are very few roles left for *nadleeh*, even though there are at least six *nadleeh* who are able to fulfill the ceremonial duties of a male-bodied woman for specific religious events. The scarcity of traditional *nadleeh* to fulfill ceremonial roles may lead, as Hollimon notes for the Yokuts, to women being substituted in the roles. The absence of recognizable and specifically trained transgender people has led to erasure of the traditional transgender roles and the institutionalization of intense homophobia on reservations, as gay and lesbian homosexuality came to be the focus of social attention, marked as social deviance imported from the white world. Our work is intended to stop the spread of homophobia and to facilitate the reintegration of two-spirit people (regardless of gender identity and sexuality) into various Native cultures.
WHAT'S IN A NAME, ANYWAY?

In 1993, Doyle Robertson read the following at the 1993 American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting:

I am not, nor do I want to be, the stereotype of a cross-dressing, man/woman, sexually anal-passive individual best suited to sewing, beading, and carrying in wood for the fire on which to cook supper. I am Dakota.
I am Scottish.
I am loved.
I am different.
I am a pizza man.
I am a digger of the sacred stone.
I am a faggot.
I am special.
I am winkte.
I am two-spirit.
I am Doyle.

As with others who demand the right to self-name, Robertson demonstrates resistance to being named or characterized by a specific offensive word.

Our research is, in part, about people's need and right to name themselves and to take positions vis-à-vis social scientific investigations of their lives. The term two-spirit originally was intended to facilitate a linguistic distancing of Native American and First Nations gays and lesbians from non-Native gays and lesbians. As time passed and the use of two-spirit gained wider acceptance, new definitions were acquired. The current use of the term is meant to bring clarity to the range of gender diversity within and across Native American tribes and First Nations, and incorporates Western notions of sexualities and gender identities.

Our research is intended to help us understand and contribute to the expanding conversations about the many ways in which people establish their gendered selves at various points during their lifetime. We are interested in how sexuality is related to gender, but more importantly in how people affectively relate their gendered selves to others. This includes the work roles that people identify with, the relational partnerships they establish, the domestic and extra-domestic responsibilities they fulfill within their cultures, and how they imagine themselves overall. We are more interested in the contemporary statements that people make about themselves than in the historical renderings that missionaries, travelers, and others have made about alleged ancestors of modern peoples. Some of those working with us in this endeavor take different stances in their writing. Some emphasize terminology, classifications, and categories of gender; others focus on personhood, spirituality, and contextualization within their societies. Goulet combines these approaches. Some address homophobia and its effect on the actualization of the full range of being a person in society. We all know someone who desires to be the revered person described by Jacobs, Callender and...
Kochems,53 Blackwood,54 Williams,55 and Lang,56 and others when they write about the kind of social status once held by winkte, (Lakota), nádleeh (Navajo), kwídó, (Tewa), tainna wa’ippe (Shoshone), dubuds (Paiute), lhamana (Zuni), and others of times past who were not called words which mean “woman” or “man” in their respective societies. Some people come from traditions in which so much power is associated with and evoked by using a categorical term—for instance, nádleeh, medicine man, clown—that it is inappropriate to use the term out of cultural context.57 “Another example is the Siouan term ‘heyoka’ which refers to a contrary, which is not the same as a ‘winkte.’”58 On the other hand, people searching for a meaningful label that ties them to their traditions may use some historically appropriate term to validate their experiences as culturally relevant.59 Furthermore, it may be necessary to reject all association with historical terms and use another culture’s gender categories; for example, an urban Navajo may find it more respectful of his or her tradition to define himself or herself as a gay male or a lesbian than to define as a nádleehi. Or this person may seek an intermediary way by rejecting both gay and lesbian and the traditional term by choosing the label two-spirit.

WHAT’S LOST? WHAT’S LEFT? MOVING FROM PAST TO FUTURE AND NATIVE (PAN-INDIAN) SELF-NAMING

In 1990s American popular culture, gender bending, gender blending, and gender changing has increasingly become part of the public landscape. Through the media—in stories ranging from those about the movie The Adventures of Priscilla: Queen of the Desert, a film depicting the adventures of a male-to-female transgender person who travels to Australia’s Outback with two male professional drag queens or transvestites,60 to those about gay rights and anti-homosexual movements—the general public watched and engaged in discussions of that experimental moment, as people stretched and pushed the boundaries of gender markers and categories. A body of literature now exists, in large part stimulated by the politics of location, to which lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and other scholars have brought their search for scientific understanding of sexual and gender diversity.61 The studies extend beyond psychological and sociological normative studies of years past to encompass the vast complexity of human desire, eroticism, and self-definitions of personhood. Self-naming is part of this process. It should come as no surprise that Native Americans and First Nations people have engaged in conversations about these matters for a long time, although their contributions to the academic discourses have been largely invisible and, when found, are usually framed by non-Indian or white writers who have appropriated them: “The assumption that everything begins and ends with the white version of reality has everything to do with suppression ... [of] an Indian viewpoint.”62

In 1992, as a result of our respective experiences in working with Native Americans, we began exploring the differences between our understanding of the life experiences of two-spirit friends and the way their lives had been characterized in anthropological, historical, sociological, and sexology writings. Many of these writings, including the most recent ethnohistorical studies,63
are based on European and Euramerican historical accounts of individuals, statuses, and roles that were alive and functioning decades ago, one hundred years ago, and sometimes even three hundred years ago. In the past, tribal cultures and gender traditions were different than they are now, and the scholar’s gaze was framed by Western intellectual and clerical-philosophical colonial worldviews. We agreed with two-spirit friends that for too long discussions of Native American and First Nations gender diversity and sexuality had taken place without benefit of shared discourse with Native Americans and First Nations people, in spite of the fact that there had been growing activism as well as research and publications on this topic since the 1980s.

In Native North America, there were and still are cultures in which more than two gender categories are marked, and one can find more than one hundred years of Western academic writing on this subject. By the mid-1990s studies of Native American and First Nations gender diversity and sexuality became situated squarely within larger academic and public interests. Paula Gunn Allen, for example, argues that there have always been homosexuals (gays and lesbians) within American Indian societies. She also refers to the terms which designate third- and fourth-gender people within select tribes. Subsequently, Roscoe published a list of purported Native terms for berdaches based on his extensive search of writings from the early colonial periods to the middle of the twentieth century (1500s to 1940s). “Berdache was never used in any Native communities!... I get irate when I hear Native Americans use the Sword to describe themselves. The berduche [sic] concept is not of Native cultures. It gives no meaning to our histories.” The original tribal terms for individuals who live multiple gendered lives, fulfill both women’s and men’s social roles, engage in cross-sex dressing with or without also engaging in cross-sex behavior, are largely lost on reservations today. Some terms have survived in everyday use, such as the Navajo nádleeh or the Dakota winkte. But even these terms, as well as others such as the Tewa kwídó, have only recently been rediscovered and claimed by young gay and lesbian youth on reservations. These terms are generally understood to function only as labels; many are used without an understanding of their larger historical and cultural meanings. The roles of individuals living in transgender or multiple gender statuses varied between and within tribes over time and circumstance. For example, multiple gendered male-bodied people of the Tewa world, kwí-sen, are men empowered with maternal characteristics and as principle elders of the community assume the care of the people (their “children”). Kwí-sen (woman+man) are “sacred mothers” in their communities; their specialized duties are not public nor are they for public discussion. At specific ceremonial times (closed to non-Tewa people), they will appear in the plaza to conduct appropriate calendrical rituals. On the other hand, there are individuals whose lives approximate those of the previously described berdaches: young men who are sexual consorts of heterosexual men. Kwídó is a colloquial Tewa term used to refer to both gay males and berdache youth, but most young people prefer to use gay or lesbian or no term at all for their personal/sexual identity. Just as at Navajo Nation, where the term two-spirit is seldom used (in deference to gay, lesbian, or nádleeh), the Tewa people do not refer to themselves as two-spirit people on the reservation.
One reason for the careful use of terminology both on and off the reservation is the high incidence of homophobia in North America.

Homophobia was taught to us as a component of Western education and religion. We were presented with an entirely new set of taboos, which did not correspond to our own models and which focused on sexual behavior rather than the intricate roles Two-Spirit people played. As a result of this misrepresentation, our nations no longer accepted us as they once had. Many Native Americans had to come to terms with their sexuality in urban settings, separate from our cultures. We had to "come out" in the Western world. But the journey into the mainstream left many of us lonesome for our homes.70

Hope for personal self-determination arises in individual and collective recognition that by the act of self-naming—in this case choosing Two-Spirit—"[we] distance ourselves from colonial words like berdache."71 As Alvin Josephy, Jr. writes,

Indians have played a large role by asserting themselves more strongly than ever before in interpreting to the rest of the world their own heritage and cultures and in relating their own histories. As partners of non-Indian scholars, modern day Native American writers, artists, scientists, teachers, tradition-keepers, and tribal cultural leaders have often joined to illuminate Indian perspectives of the past, making known and understandable much that whites, on their own, had not grasped, and on the whole providing a far greater measure of objectivity and truth to the telling of the Indian’s story.72

Looking from the past toward the future, and using the model established by the Navajo Nation (and at Zuni, Hopi and other reservations),73 formal collaborative endeavors may help shape the outcome and directions of the continued academic interest in Native American and First Nations people. Hopefully, many more Native students will become interested in these academic pursuits because, overwhelmingly, writings on these subjects continue to be dominated by non-Natives.

CONCLUSION

Our work is about the many ways in which people write their own lives, their gendered selves (multigendered or single-gendered). We are less interested in how sexuality is related to gender than in how enduring relationships and formal affective bonding take place within and across gender categories. As stated above, the new studies by scholars fluent in the language of original sources written about Native American sexuality74 reveal a much more complex picture of the place of berdaches and two-spirit people in contact and current colonial periods. Investigating the lives of two-spirit people in the contemporary world while engaging that new scholarship helps to foreground the details of that complexity.
Some additional issues raised in our work result from the conflicts inherent in conducting anthropology in Native American and First Nations communities today. Some of the dilemmas this work confronts include: the right of outsiders to name Native people; the right of outsiders to tell everything they see when working in Native American and First Nations communities; and the emerging legal problems associated with the appropriation of intellectual property. In this last regard, ethnographers are facing new problems when taking indigenous knowledge without informed consent and without full remuneration, attribution, and rights of ownership to the information. Other problems arise from differences in academic, community, or individual research and methodology, whether one is conducting applied or action research with a community or an agency. In academia, the "new ethnography" as well as the various forms of the "New Indian History" foreground "the question of Indian voice" weighed against the challenge of "whether or not Indian people own their own past or if it is part of a more general human currency." A blending of voices may be the only way to reduce the confusions facing health care practitioners and social service workers in both reservation and urban locales, whether concerned with HIV/AIDS prevention, alcohol and drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, suicide, or other crises.

Other issues arise from the time frames of our research. Historical studies of Native American and First Nations sexualities and gender diversity were framed by the research paradigms of that time and do not generally allow for empirical or theoretical fit with contemporary Native American and First Nations lives. This issue is made clear by the observation that Jacobs and Farrer have known elder men who appeared to live the "traditional berdache" roles, as described by Martin and Voorhies (1975:84-107), Allen (1986), Williams (1986), and Gay American Indians (1988), on their respective reservations. But, [they] also both know young men (boys) who have suffered grievously at the hands and words of people on their reservations, including relatives. In both instances, however, the boys' aunt and mother (respectively) have protected their sons and tried to help them through the stages of ritual development. Homophobia stands firmly in the way for these boys. Did the elders [they] knew in the 1970's and 80's go through the terrors of homophobia when they were boys? Were they "feminine" boys? "girlish" boys? Or androgynous? How were they socialized to assume an accepted, sometimes revered status in their communities?

We do not have empirical answers to these questions. However, we suspect intuitively that it is the absence of formal transmission of traditional knowledge about two-spirit people that has led to increased incidences of homophobia on reservations with cultures that traditionally used multiple gender categories and roles. The research continues as we seek to separate legend, mythology, and the experiences of Native American and First Nations people living today.
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Although she could not participate in the development of this particular paper, our work with Dr. Sabine Lang during the course of six years continues to inform our understanding of the issues we describe herein. We remain grateful for shared collaborative experiences, opportunities, research, and wisdom.

NOTES


5. My life involves gender changes. For example, I consider myself, and am considered by traditional Navajo people within the Navajo Nation, as a nádleeh, especially when I am dancing in the Night Way Chant during the winter seasons. I maintain this specific gender identity and status throughout the ceremonial period. At the conclusion of the ceremony, and when I return to Seattle, that identity is replaced with an urban “gay” identity. I readjust myself to my surrounding environments and continue on with my life as a person. Now and then, when I am on other (non-Navajo) reservations, I identify, and more importantly am identified as, a two-spirit person (WT).


8. Trexler, op.cit., 105.


15. Williams, op. cit.


17. Written in the 1700s; English translation and editing by Reuben Gold Thwaites, The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents (New York: Pageant, 1959).


23. Williams, op. cit.


28. Trexler, op. cit.
29. Brown, op. cit. In 1998 further efforts to demonize Native American tribes in the United States take the form of language being used by supporters of Senator Slade Gorton’s call for the end to tribal sovereignty; see, for example, Lynda V. Mapes, “Backlash for Tribal Immunity,” *Seattle Times*, April 5, 1998, B1, B2, and various “Letters to the Editor” of the same date.
31. For revealing life histories that deal with this specific issue, see Little Thunder, op. cit.; Red Earth, op. cit.; Robertson, op. cit.; and Clyde Hall, “You Anthropologists Be Sure You Get Your Words Right,” in *Two-Spirit People: Native American Gender Identity, Sexuality, and Spirituality*, 272–275.
32. For example, we know of several gay Native American organizations and one support group for non-Native transsexuals and transvestites who called themselves the “Berdache Society.” For further information, see Anne Bolin, *In Search of Eve: Transsexual Rites of Passage* (New York: Bergin and Garvey, 1988), xi, 2, et passim.
34. For an important study of evidence of horrific persecution of berdaches, see Trexler, op. cit.
37. See for example: (1) Hollimon’s discussion of Yokut buriers, where the literature indicates that *tono’cim* range from being male-bodied people who feel a “calling” to assume this role, to women with children who inherit their roles as undertakers through their mother’s lineage and who may pass their title to daughters (ibid., 179); (2) discussions about the various identities and roles Wewha held during her/his lifetime (Arnold Pilling, “Cross-Dressing and Shamanism Among Selected Western North American Tribes,” in *Two-Spirit People: Native American Gender Identity, Sexuality and Spirituality*, 69–99; Will Roscoe, “The Zuni-Man Woman,” *Outlook* 4 (1988): 56–67; (3) Ortiz’s mention of Pueblo men’s transvestic ridicule of women and Pueblo women’s transvestic ridicule of men in public ceremonials. Alfonso Ortiz, *The Tewa World: Space, Time, Being, and Becoming in a Pueblo Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 169–170n; and (4) Parsons description of a Tewa ceremony in which
[w]omen dress as men, and men as women, some of them making up as pregnant women, and these sing, "some of these boys made me pregnant." The men in masquerade do women's work, fetching water, baking bread outdoors in the oven on street or roof, and carrying dinner to the dancers. The masqueraders with cloths in their hands to clean the ovens go from door to door and sing, "I am scared, let's run away!" People give them bread. "You are lazy. You don't bring us wood, you don't hunt deer, you bring nothing to us," men say to the women. In the dance, women sing for the men, taunting songs referring to such things as earrings of cotton, full of lice. Other women carry a basket of bread on their head and say, "My pare (elder brother or sister) is dancing and I throw this bread." They throw other things too, "corn, dishes, everything." According to Santa Clara tale, [this ceremony] was danced after the return of the warrior women bring back scalps.... The ceremony is for fertility, to have a good year in crops, children, horses, and cattle.


38. "If beyond [a dual sexual division of labor], should a man take women's work, he is expected to wear women's clothes and conform in general to women's ways. Mannish women do not become transvestites. I have known only two: Nancy of Zuni, who like a male transvestite is an expert builder of fireplaces and dances kachina, and Mrs. Chavez of Isleta who is an independent traveler and trader and a member of the war society" (ibid., 38n.). See Pilling, op. cit., 73–74, for an alternative view of Nancy.


43. We are not referring to all intergenerational male-to-male relationships, but only to exploitative pedophilia, which falls in the legal domain of child abuse: the "children" are not of legal sexual consent age. We are also not describing or referring to relationships that teenage boys have with older men as they are discovering and testing their homosexuality; that is the subject of another paper.


46. Hollimon, op. cit., 179.


51. For example, Jacobs, 1997, op. cit.; and Robertson, op. cit.


55. Williams, op. cit.


59. Herdt, op. cit.

60. Since Priscilla, Patrick Swayze played the lead drag queen in To Wong Fu, Thanks for Everything, Julie Neumar, Robin Williams played the “butch” partner in a gay couple in Bird Cage (a successful remake of the highly acclaimed La Cage aux Folles), and the sitcom Ellen began exploring various aspects of lesbian life through its main character, played by comedian Ellen Degeneres. In addition, M. Butterflies (the widely heralded story of an Asian male-bodied transgender person long married to a British diplomat who did not realize his wife was not female-bodied), had several years run on Broadway, receiving laudatory reviews comparable to those enjoyed by the light opera, Madame Butterfly. All of these new works have been critically reviewed in cultural studies literature as evidence of a society pushing the border of fixed gender categories, irrespective of sexuality.

61. In our work, we use the term gender to refer specifically to cultural rules, ideologies, and expected behaviors for individuals of diverse phenotypes and psychosocial characteristics. Gender identities refers to peoples’ own locations within a range of gender identity possibilities defined by their respective cultures. We restrict our use of sex to biological phenotypes and to sexual behaviors; we use sexualities for the range of sex behaviors called homosexuality, heterosexuality, bisexuality, trisexuality, and others. Sexual and gender diversity refers to the range of possible sexualities and genders marked (linguistically and otherwise) within and across diverse cultures.


63. For example, Lang, 1990, op. cit., and 1998, op. cit.; Trexler, op. cit; and Roscoe, 1998, op. cit.


70. Thomas, 1996, op. cit.

71. Thomas, ibid.


74. For example, Lang 1990, 1998, op. cit; Trexler, op. cit.
