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## Preface

In writing close to the other of the other, I can only choose to maintain a self-reflexively critical relationship towards the material, a relationship that defines both the subject written and the writing subject, undoing the I while asking, “what do I want wanting to *know* you or me?”

—TRINH T. MINH-HA, *Woman, Native, Other*

THIS BOOK MAKES THREE CENTRAL CLAIMS at the intersections of queer, Native, and settler colonial studies and related fields. First, in the United States, modern queer cultures and politics have taken form as normatively white, multiracial, and non-Native projects compatible with a white settler society. Although queer hegemonies may be disrupted by challenging whiteness or nationalism, that alone may not fully disturb their conditioning by settler colonialism, which aims to amalgamate subjects in a settler society as “non-Native” inheritors, and *not* challengers of the colonization of Native peoples on occupied Native lands. Second, within broad transnational alliances (focused here in the United States), Native queer and Two-Spirit activists directly denaturalize settler colonialism and disrupt its conditioning of queer projects by asserting Native queer modernities. By repudiating heteropatriarchy as a colonial project, recalling subjugated Native knowledges, and forming alliances that trouble settler sovereignty and pursue decolonization, Native queer and Two-Spirit activists have created critical theories and movements to which all people can respond. Third, settler colonialism and its conditioning of modern sexuality produce an intimate relationship between non-Native and Native queer modernities that I interpret as conversations. Non-Native and Native queer politics formed by telling different kinds of stories about the meaning of

indigeneity to queer people, which entered them into power-laden conversations that nevertheless remained open to creative transformation.

Native and non-Native queer politics formed their relationship in the spaces between them produced by settler colonialism. Settler societies create spaces that are at once material and symbolic, as Sherene Razack argues, an insight I extend by interpreting them as intimately relational.<sup>1</sup> Such spaces appear in specific places: Indigenous lands, whether sustained by collective claims of Indigenous sovereignty, stolen and possessed by settlers, or traversed and contested by Natives and non-Natives within settler society. In these places, interchanges of Native and non-Native people locate them in power-laden spaces of relationship, which this book interprets for queer Natives and non-Natives as conversations. My account takes particular inspiration from Katie King's account of debates in feminist theory as "conversations in U.S. women's movements."<sup>2</sup> King explained feminist debates over difference not as interruptions of feminist politics, as some Western feminists have claimed, but as formations worthy of study as contentious, border-crossing deliberations. Asking how "feminist objects of knowledge . . . are made and materialized over time in political production," King investigated in regard to any object the

histories of its production over time, the contests for meanings within which it is embedded, the political contours that are the circumstances out of which it is fabricated, and the resources and costs of its making, contesting, and stabilizations. (xvi)

King contextualized this work as the study of "conversations," or "units of political agency in action in theoretical discourse," which she distinguished from "'debates' as political contour from theoretical contents." Examining not only "formal writing or circulating manuscripts" but also "oratory, group production, private oralities, [and] publications," King asked how historical deliberations as conversations produced the objects and subjects of U.S. women's movements (56). This response to the racial and national contestation of feminism recognized conflict as productive to feminist thought and as deserving of study. King's account suggests at once a theory of feminist knowledge production and a method for engaging it. The analytic category "conversations" invokes intersubjective social activity, as would be made apparent by ethnography, oral history, or archival or literary study of texts written and circulated for deliberation. But King's work engages such evidence from within a genealogy of discursive registers that link or split varied claims and contexts. Several implications for theory and

method follow. Thinking in these terms invites one to read narratives as relating across differences that become meaningful in the contested spaces of conversation. In turn, interpreting claims in conversation will reveal failures of recognition—as people speak past one another, or in mutual ignorance—as well as moments of confrontation, as evidence of interrelationship. Finally, as discursive fields that are multiple, contradictory, and actively contested, conversations center the incitement by power relations of creative possibilities.

King's model informs my account of the formation of queer knowledges even as I extend it to address Native and settler colonial studies. King theorized how feminist claims across differences of social location and geography become interreferential in a U.S. context. My work examines and then displaces the settler state by interpreting U.S. queer politics across the national differences of Native peoples and sovereignties. Here, "conversations" indexes interactions among non-Native and Native queers not within or as "U.S." queer movements but as distinct queer projects within the transnational relationships formed by Native and non-Native people in a settler society. Indigenous feminist thought is helpful in modeling the interpretation of knowledge production under such conditions. For instance, Andrea Smith's "intellectual ethnography" of Native feminists portrays activists as theorists who challenge settler colonialism from within "unlikely alliances," where transnational ties among Native people and with non-Natives work to defend Native nations and pursue decolonization on Indigenous feminist terms.<sup>3</sup> My engagements with activist dialogues across the national differences of queer Natives and non-Natives is a feminist and trans-allied effort to disturb the centrality of white cisgender gay men—a location that could describe me—as hegemonic subjects in the definition of queer modernities on settler colonial terms.<sup>4</sup> To some degree, my work responded in this way to models of feminist reflection on questions of "home," such as white antiracist feminist accounts of whiteness, or the responses by feminist ethnographers to anthropology's coloniality that led Kamala Visweswaran to call for "homework" as a condition of fieldwork.<sup>5</sup> Yet my research confronts a problem that self-reflection cannot contain: contested spaces of knowledge production where interlocutors' competing claims tell more in their differences with one another than any single narrative can tell alone. In response, I learned from feminist scholars who examine politicized knowledge production as its situated participant, and thence as potential subjects of critique as well as interlocutors in modeling change.<sup>6</sup> My intent is to explain the historical formation of

Native and non-Native queer politics, in alliance with Indigenous, feminist, queer, trans, and Two-Spirit critiques that already displace the settler colonial processes I examine.<sup>7</sup>

The Introduction explains my theoretical analysis of settler colonialism conditioning the formation of Native and non-Native queer modernities in conversation. It draws from and advances Native, critical race, feminist, and queer studies by centering Indigenous feminist and queer thought and Native queer and Two-Spirit activism.

Part I, “Genealogies,” examines the historical precedents and diachronic registers of conversation that condition the movements examined in this book. Chapter 1, “The Biopolitics of Settler Sexuality and Queer Modernities,” explores how “settler sexuality” queers Native peoples to attempt their elimination compatibly with asserting racialized heteropatriarchal control over subject people of color placed on Native lands. The queering of white settlers then depends on the existence of a settler colonialism that conditions both heteronormative and queer gender and sexual politics on stolen land, which Native queer and Two-Spirit activists resist. Chapter 2, “Conversations on Berdache: Anthropology, Counterculturism, Two-Spirit Organizing,” then examines how twentieth-century examinations of berdache formed key contexts where non-Native and Native queer subjects and politics formed in relationship.

Part II, “Movements,” traces how these genealogies are manifested in historical and ethnographic cases of late-twentieth-century non-Native and Native queer politics. The chapters trace three qualities of modern non-Native queer projects—the pursuit of cultural authenticity, ancient roots, and global purview—inspired by Native American indigeneity or challenged by Native queer and Two-Spirit people. Chapter 3, “Authentic Culture and Sexual Rights: Contesting Citizenship in the Settler State,” traces how desires for cultural authenticity linked queer politics in the United States to what Elizabeth Povinelli has called “liberal settler multiculturalism” while being challenged by multiracial and transnational queer alliances led by Two-Spirit activists. Chapter 4, “Ancient Roots through Settled Land: Imagining Indigeneity and Place Among Radical Faeries,” examines how non-Native gay counterculturists pursued multiple desires for queer indigeneity that, while contested by antiracist critique, confronted their settler formation only in relationship to Native gay and Two-Spirit men. Chapter 5, “Global Desires and Transnational Solidarity: Negotiating Indigeneity among the Worlds of Queer Politics,” explains the globalism of U.S. queer modernities as effects of settler colonialism by tracing how homonationalism and white

settler queer primitivism may link within white queer politics and diasporic queer of color critiques until resituated by the transnationalism of Two-Spirit organizing.

Chapter 6, “‘Together We Are Stronger’: Decolonizing Gender and Sexuality in Transnational Native AIDS Organizing,” explains how Native activist critiques of heteropatriarchy in Native communities, settler states, and global arenas mark the settler colonial biopolitics of health governance and incite global Indigenous alliances for decolonization. The Epilogue returns to the implications Native queer and Two-Spirit activisms carry for queer non-Natives and all people to critically transform settler colonialism.





## *Abbreviations*

AAA	American Anthropological Association
AICH	American Indian Community House
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AIGL	American Indian Gays and Lesbians
AIM	American Indian Movement
APA	American Psychiatric Association
AQA	Association for Queer Anthropology
ARGOH	Anthropological Research Group on Homosexuality
BDSM	bondage and discipline, sadism and masochism
BLW	Black Leather Wings
CAAN	Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network
FACT	Faeries of All Colors Together
GAA	Gay Activists Alliance
GAI	Gay American Indians
GLBTQ	gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender/queer
GLF	Gay Liberation Front
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
HRC	Human Rights Campaign
IAC	International AIDS Conference
IDUs	intravenous drug users
IHS	Indian Health Service
MACT	Men of All Colors Together
MSM	men who have sex with men
NAISA	Native American and Indigenous Studies Association
NASTAD	National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors
NCPC	Naraya Cultural Preservation Council
NE2SS	North-East Two-Spirit Society
NGLTF	National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

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NGO	nongovernmental organization
NGTF	National Gay Task Force
NIH	National Institutes of Health
NNAAPC	National Native American AIDS Prevention Center
OCAP	Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession
PRI	Partido Revolucionario Institucional
PSDN	Pacific Sexual Diversity Network
S/M	sadomasochism
SOLGA	Society of Lesbian and Gay Anthropologists
UN	United Nations
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

## *Introduction*

WE ARE CAUGHT UP IN ONE ANOTHER, we who live in settler societies, and our interrelationships inform all that these societies touch. Native people live in relation to all non-Natives in the context of the power relations of settler colonialism, though they never lose inherent claims to sovereignty as Indigenous peoples. Non-Natives live in relation to Native people—whether or not they know this, whether or not they recognize that Indigenous peoples exist—as though Native lands, societies, or cultures were theirs to inherit, control, or enjoy. Settler societies engender a normative relationality between the designations “Native” and “settler” that imbues histories of intermingling, interdependence, or the attempted erasure of indigeneity as a marker of national difference. The distinction between “Native” and “settler” informs all power in settler societies and their relations with societies worldwide.<sup>1</sup>

This book examines how settler colonial power relations among Native and non-Native people define the status “queer.” It argues that modern queer subjects, cultures, and politics have developed among Natives and non-Natives in linked, yet distinct, ways. The imposition of colonial heteropatriarchy relegates Native people and all non-Native people of color to queered statuses as racialized populations amid colonial efforts to eliminate Native nationality and settle Native lands. Modern sexuality comes into existence when the heteropatriarchal advancement of white settlers appears to vanquish sexual primitivity, which white settlers nevertheless adopt as their own history. When modern sexuality queers white settlers, their effort to reclaim a place within settler society produces white and non-Native queer politics for recognition by the state. Yet memories and practices of discrepant sexual cultures among Indigenous peoples and peoples of color persistently trouble the white settler logics of sexual modernity. For instance, Native modes of kinship, embodiment, and desire such as those today called

“Two-Spirit” produce Native queer modernities that denaturalize settler colonialism. The comparative studies in this book show settler colonialism as the context in which non-Native and Native people produce modern queer subjects, cultures, and politics.

A methodological shift in Native studies heralded by such scholars as Linda Tuhiwai Smith and Robert Warrior theorizes settler colonialism by tracing the “intellectual histories” (Warrior) and methods of Native peoples practicing survival, resistance, and decolonization.<sup>2</sup> Scholarship in settler colonial studies must support this turn, as when Patrick Wolfe theorizes settler colonialism as “a structure, not an event” that calls for a sustained denaturalizing critique.<sup>3</sup> Andrea Smith calls on Native studies to refuse its “ethnographic entrapment” in the description of Native cultures and instead become an interdisciplinary site for explaining and transforming a world defined by settler colonialism.<sup>4</sup> She promotes this shift by invoking queer theory, which displaced the description of sexual minorities in gay/lesbian studies by theorizing heteronormativity as a power relation that conditions all subjects and social life.<sup>5</sup> Scholars at the intersections of Native and queer studies have responded to these calls by demonstrating that each field is intrinsic to the other.<sup>6</sup> Smith explains that “the heteronormativity of settler colonialism” has subjected Native and non-Native people to settler colonial rule and regimes of modern sexuality. In this context, “queer” statuses accrue to nonheteronormative identities—such as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or queer—after colonial heteropatriarchy first redefines embodiment, desire, and kinship to eliminate Native culture, control racialized populations, and secure, in Sherene Razack’s term, a “white settler society.” In this book, *queer* will refer to statuses produced by the heteropatriarchal power of white supremacist settler colonialism. My analysis joins critics of homonormativity in arguing that all “queer” statuses are not equivalent.<sup>7</sup> Jasbir Puar critiques “homonationalism” as the process whereby whiteness and imperialism create U.S. queer subjects as “regulatory” over peoples queered by U.S. rule.<sup>8</sup> I resituate Puar’s account to argue that in a white settler society, queer politics produces a *settler* homonationalism that will persist unless settler colonialism is challenged directly as a condition of queer modernities.<sup>9</sup> Native and queer studies must regard settler colonialism as a key condition of modern sexuality on stolen land, and use this analysis to explain the power of settler colonialism among Native and non-Native people.

This book investigates how settler colonialism produces what I call “non-Native queer modernities,” in which modern queers appear definitively not Native—separated from, yet in perpetual (negative) relationship to, the

original peoples of the lands where they live. The phrase suggests a settler colonial logic that disappears indigeneity so it can be recalled by modern *non-Natives* as a relationship to Native culture and land that might reconcile them to inheriting conquest.<sup>10</sup> Thus, “non-Native” signifies not a racial or ethnic identity but a location within settler colonialism. Non-Native queer modernities naturalize settler colonialism when they confront queer differences as racial or diasporic in a manner that sustains Native disappearance. If queer subjects align with whiteness or homonationalism, their settler colonial roots may seem clear. But even multiracial and transnational queer critiques of racism and imperialism can erase Native people and naturalize settler colonialism in ways that indirectly or directly define queer modernity as not Native. This book examines “Native queer modernities” as projects that formed historically precisely to displace the settler colonial logics that sustain “non-Native queer modernities.”

Native queer cultures and politics critique colonial heteropatriarchy by asserting Indigenous methods of national survival, traditional renewal, and decolonization, including within Two-Spirit identity. My analysis of the distinctions among non-Native and Native queer modernities invokes the critical models of queer of color, queer diasporic, and queer/migration critiques and women of color and transnational feminisms as they interact with Native queer and Two-Spirit critiques. My analysis is that of a white queer critic within multiracial, normatively white, and non-Native queer spaces, whose settler colonial conditions I denaturalize in response to Native queer critics who are pursuing Indigenous decolonization.

While confronting the seeming intractability of settler colonial power relations, this book shows how subjects acted creatively to transform them. It affirms the Foucauldian insight, highlighted by Judith Butler, that power is the very condition of agentive action—a transformative context for its repetition and potential destabilization.<sup>11</sup> The reproduction of norms and their critique require close reading to ascertain which forms of creativity might produce decolonizing ends. I am not suggesting that non-Native and Native queer modernities share the same origin, for only Native queer modernities recall a life unconditioned by settler colonialism and their relationship formed precisely by negotiating discrepancies. Feminist ethnographer Anna Tsing theorizes the creative effects of discrepancies encountering power-laden relationship in the form of “friction,” as when global hegemonies engage local situations to elicit heated exchanges along unexpected routes of interpretation and negotiation.<sup>12</sup> I examine the settler colonial power relations conditioning non-Native and Native queer modernities as

a frictional space producing contrasting yet interdependent accounts in the form of “conversations.” Here I invoke Katie King’s mapping of debates in U.S. women’s movements over differences of gender, race, and nation as discursive spaces existing within a power-laden interrelationship, which she called “conversations.”<sup>13</sup> I interpret non-Native and Native queer modernities as forming within the intimate relationships of conversation, in which their friction produced a multiplicity of narratives for textual and ethnographic interpretation, while mapping genealogies wherein their differences became interreferential amid the persistent and transforming power of settler colonialism. Queer subjects in a settler colonial situation become caught up in one another from within the creative and constrained spaces of conversations and the power relations they produce and negotiate. This book critically engages those conversations to clarify histories and incite change.

## **Conversations on Queerness, Indigeneity, and Settlement**

### **Citational Tactics: *Another Mother Tongue* and *Living the Spirit***

Closely reading articulations among white and Native narratives of queer modernity maps their relational, yet ultimately divergent, locations on Native lands and in settler society. During the 1980s, Native and white lesbian and gay writers in the United States produced deeply interreferential texts, as demonstrated by the San Francisco organization Gay American Indians (GAI)—the first group of its kind in the United States, formed in 1975—and white lesbian writer Judy Grahn. Although GAI’s membership came from across North America, its focus was to serve Native people in the San Francisco Bay Area, where Grahn also resided. Their work situated their distinct liberations within a Native or white settler relationship to queer locations on Native land and in a settler society.

Judy Grahn’s award-winning book *Another Mother Tongue: Gay Words, Gay Worlds* (1984) narrated U.S. lesbian and gay history as a colonial desire of non-Natives for a sense of place on Native land.<sup>14</sup> Grahn cited recent research, notably accounts of Native American history reprinted in Jonathan Katz’s *Gay American History* (1976), and she also took inspiration from accounts of a primal gay spirituality, as described in Arthur Evans’s *Witchcraft and the Gay Counterculture* (1978). Grahn argued that by respecting gender and sexual diversity, Native American societies and other ancient or Indigenous peoples traditionally recognized a primal truth shared by all gay men and lesbians, a claim backed for her by anthropological and colonial accounts of berdache. She implicitly, and at times directly, addresses her

readers as non-Natives identified with Euro-American culture—for lack of a clearer description, white people—who look to ancient or Indigenous cultures for inspiration. Such claims were not original with Grahn, though she focused on lesbians rather than gay men, as Arthur Evans had done in *Witchcraft and the Gay Counterculture*, and explained their oppression through a lesbian-feminist analysis of heteropatriarchy. She sought to shift lesbians and gay men from narratives of perversion to identification as a subjugated people seeking liberation. She describes white U.S. gay men and lesbians as needing Native cultural authenticity to learn to speak in their own “mother tongue.” Yet, as her title indicates, that tongue remains “another” when modern non-Natives adopt Indigenous identifications in their pursuit of liberation.

Grahn’s concept of an Indigenous nature for lesbians and gay men appears as a subtext when she juxtaposes her narrative to italicized passages addressing her first lover, Von (Yvonne). Here Grahn appears to fulfill an old love whose survival in an earlier era would have been eased by the knowledge she now has. We learn that in 1959, Von brought the eighteen-year-old Grahn out into a lesbian relationship when they were living in rural towns in eastern New Mexico. Grahn explains to Von what she sees as a universal gay pattern strongly linked to berdache. She recalls a sense of an absent history defining her life and Von’s in a region now, ironically, marked by proximity to the histories that will save them:

We had no idea of the gay customs barely suppressed or still functioning in the Indian cultures around us, Von, as we grew up each in her isolated small Anglo town. By the time we were eighteen, we were cut off from our own Euro-American people by their hostility toward the very essence of our lives, our Gayness . . . We felt and acted rejected, alienated, and thoroughly “queer.” I know that if we could have known anything about the Navajo nadle, of the Bo-the of the Crow, of the Hwame women of the Pima, so much of our alienation and terror would have left us. We could have understood our own behavior, or specialness, as a gift as well as a burden and as an asset to our society as well as its apparent nemesis. We could have played the American game of cowboys and Indians with a brand-new twist.<sup>15</sup>

Grahn argues that Native histories of acceptance oppose efforts by white people to “queer” their own. But she also identifies whites as settlers, having inherited from a history of wars a proximity and contrast to “the Indian cultures around us.” Positing an Indigenous embrace for queer exiles from a white settler society lets her imagine switching allegiances to play “Indians” against her own people. Philip Deloria, in *Playing Indian*, explains

that white Americans associate marginality and resistance with the Indian as an internal antagonist to settler society, which then lets them impersonate indigeneity when they launch social critiques that reconcile them to settler society. Grahn admits that the Native histories she seeks remain “barely suppressed or still functioning” in the very Native communities near her hometown. Yet her story displaces that intimacy with occupation by investing in emptied Native land as a past and present home. She wishes that she and Von had known of Native “gay roles”:

we might have recognized more personal reasons for the deep attraction we both felt for the ancient Indian cultures everywhere present in the Southwest. You and I often went out into the deserts and mesas to walk arroyos near abandoned stone villages, peering into vine-filled underground kivas amber with October light, turning over the fine-ground sand potsherds left from hundreds of years ago. We did not particularly collect anything. We just went there to feel the oldness of the places, to think about what might have been. We felt at home there, as “at home” as we felt anywhere. We took comfort in this feeling.<sup>16</sup>

The desires for Native roots Grahn voices here later sparked the intellectual journeys of her book—where, Renée Bergland’s work suggests, the Indian recurs as a ghost defining and motivating the narration of a settler subject.<sup>17</sup> Yet Grahn also names her youthful desires as queer—or, more precisely, queered in the sense of estranged from her “own Euro-American people.” She defends a universal “Gayness,” but her first sense of belonging to indigeneity arose not from that knowledge but from the “thoroughly ‘queer’” experience of being exiled from white settler society and then taking comfort in imagining her own indigenized emplacement. White settler heteropatriarchy creates queers who resolve their exile through land-based relationships to disappeared Native people. Grahn’s liberatory vision of a global and transhistorical Indigenous “Gayness” offers a more deeply *queer* relationship to inheriting white settler colonialism on Native lands. Her book narrates Native peoples as part of a disappeared past that white settlers inherit, and that grants queer exiles solace and a means for them to come “home.”

Grahn’s deferral of Native people from her narrative of a modern queer present is interrupted at a crucial moment more than halfway through the book. In a widely cited passage, she responds to the existence of Native gay and lesbian activists:



The day I saw a poster declaring the existence of an organization of Gay American Indians, I put my face into my hands and sobbed with relief. A huge burden, the burden of isolation and of being defined only by one's enemies, left me on that enlightening day. I understood then that being Gay is a universal quality, like cooking, like decorating the body, like singing, like predicting the weather. Moreover, after learning about the social positions and special offices fulfilled by Indians whose tribes once picked them for the task of naming, healing, prediction, leadership, and teaching precisely because they displayed characteristics we call gay, I knew that Gayness goes far beyond simple sexual/emotional activity. What Americans call Gayness not only has distinct cultural characteristics, its participants have long held positions of social power in history and ritual among people all over the globe.<sup>18</sup>

Like her story of growing up next to, yet apart from, Native peoples, Grahn's affirmation of Native activists is mediated by their distance. Without her having had any prior interaction with Gay American Indians, reading the poster simultaneously triggers and authorizes the desires she describes in her book. If the mere "existence of an organization of Gay American Indians" can launch her chain of associations, then Grahn seems to be primed to make Native peoples facilitate cathartic healing for her life as a white lesbian settler on Native land. While the chronology in this passage must be read against the one in her letters to Von, the passage suggests that she views Native gay and lesbian organizing as something apart from her own. Thus, rather than projecting indigeneity as something far off in space or time, only to be drawn upon to liberate white settlers, Grahn *only* meets Native people in the *same* temporal and spatial horizons of her queered life within relational locations defined by settler colonialism.

Members of Gay American Indians told quite different stories about, and *for*, Native people, yet they also ultimately adapted Grahn's narrative to their own ends. After the formation of GAI, cofounders Barbara Cameron (Lakota) and Randy Burns (Paiute) received invitations to explain their work to non-Native gays and lesbians. In a 1976 interview in the *Advocate* (reprinted in *Gay American History*), Cameron and Burns call GAI a support group for Native lesbians and gay men, which Cameron describes as "first and foremost a group for *each other*." Cameron also says, "I really align myself with Indians first and gay people second."<sup>19</sup> The group's leaders describe their desire to educate Native people and to ensure that, as Cameron puts it, "Indians know that there *are* gay Indians, both sexes" (Katz, 334). As Burns explains:

In the Indian community, we are trying to realign ourselves with the tram-pled traditions of our people. Gay people were respected parts of the tribes. Some were artists and medicine people. So we supply speakers from the group to appear at Indian gatherings. Sometimes we are booed or jeered, but it doesn't last long. (Ibid., 333)

Cameron and Burns present GAI's aim as only secondarily to educate non-Natives. In this interview, they do not divulge information about historical gender roles in Native societies, and non-Natives are not invited to identify with Native histories. But they do urge readers of the *Advocate* to recognize the value of Native lesbians and gays organizing with one another and within Native communities as signs that they are resisting the power of settler colonialism and racism, which condition the sexism and homophobia they face.

The GAI History Project was begun in 1984 to record Native histories of gender and sexual diversity and members' own lives and produced the landmark collection *Living the Spirit: A Gay American Indian Anthology* (1988).<sup>20</sup> Contributors described these histories in various national contexts, and encouraged pantribal identities that could cross and link these contexts. No contributor argued that Native gays and lesbians represent the original nature of all sexual minorities, or that Native histories also belong to non-Natives. Rather, Midnight Sun (Anishnaabe) and Maurice Kenney (Mohawk) affirm themes in the memoirs of Clyde M. Hall (Shoshone-Bannock), Erna Pahe (Navajo), and others: histories of gender and sexual diversity in particular nations can be reaffirmed by their members, while pantribal activism can link them for mutual inspiration.<sup>21</sup> Hall argues that "if traditions have been lost," they "need to be researched and revived" to support "groups and societies for gay Indians" that, like "the contemporary pow-wow," can form a "modern Indian tradition" meeting needs among Native people today.<sup>22</sup> Burns presents these insights as GAI's having created an urban network reminiscent of Renya Ramirez's account of "Native hubs." In her reading, San Francisco Bay Area American Indian communities defined home as a site of movement for Native people traversing settler colonial diasporas, where they reasserted national identities while also forming broader solidarities.<sup>23</sup> Burns explains that many GAI members "had never lived in cities" and that "our dream was to return someday to our reservations and help our people—and many of us have returned." In the city, GAI "re-created the kinship ties of the traditional Indian family" as an "extended family for gay Indians," meant for "not only those of us who

live in the San Francisco Bay area, but for our many family and friends who regularly visit from other areas.”<sup>24</sup> He argues that the diverse knowledge that GAI assembled about Native traditions let members identify as “Indian, yet contemporary and pantribal” (5).

*Living the Spirit* presents its contributors as mobile subjects who remain linked to tradition and peoplehood. Images by Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie (Seminole-Muscogee-Dine) portray Native people—marked as women, yet open to more gendered readings—wearing traditional regalia in or near urbanized landscapes. In “Hin-mut-toe-ta-li-ka-tsut (Thunder Clouds Going over Mountains),” a Native woman in traditional dress sits astride a horse grazing against a backdrop of rolling hills that stretch to the horizon, while intercut by a crowded freeway. Among many possible readings, I mark the narrowed background motion of cars articulating the subject’s glance behind and the horse’s potential movement into a broad landscape to suggest prior and sustained mobility against the time-space of colonial modernity. Tsinhnahjinnie disrupts the tradition/modernity split by portraying Native women asserting subjectivity by linking modern mobility to a sustained relationship to national culture. Whether traditions are landed behind or before them, or right where they now stand, the woman and horse mark a capacity to remain linked to them while traversing incompletely settled lands near, but not within, the routes of colonial discipline. A relationship of travel to ancestral emplacement also opens the book’s second section, “Gay American Indians Today.” Here, Hall begins a commentary on Native gay men by invoking the Shoshone-Bannock reservation where he lives. He says that while this land “is a harsh place . . . of temperature extremes and a difficult life,” after many travels he chose to return to where he had been raised by his grandmother as one of “the ‘old peoples’ children’ . . . having been taught the knowledge, traditions, songs, and life-ways of the tribe.” Here where his people long have lived,

there is something that exists for an Indian person nowhere else: the sense of belonging, of family and of the land. You are not only a person, alone, but an extension of a family and a group of people, a ‘tribe,’ that has existed before the written word.<sup>25</sup>

Hall is “not saying that we should all go ‘back to the blanket’ or return to the reservation. But somehow, there should be a blending of the old with the new,” so “gay Indians today” can realize “respect” for themselves and one another in “a resurgence of that old pride and knowledge of place”

(104). If for Hall, place is an ancestral and tribal location, he and other contributors also name it as the place of Native gay community, as a border-crossing activity that recalls the many landed traditions of Native nations wherever Native gay people may go.

Given the era when *Living the Spirit* appeared—in the wake of Grahn’s work and other studies of the berdache—the contributions are notable for not affirming white queer desires to claim Indigenous sexual or spiritual nature. One potential link to them appears in the introductory poem by Paula Gunn Allen (Laguna), “Some Like Indians Endure.” This poem resonates with *Another Mother Tongue* and the San Francisco lesbian-feminist communities in which Allen and Grahn participated, even as it invokes lesbian collectivity to enable a theory of Native lesbian resistance.<sup>26</sup> The poem invites the reader to understand “dykes” as having lived and suffered like “Indians,” in that they “used to live as tribes” and were “massacred,” but “always came back.”<sup>27</sup> As in *The Sacred Hoop*, Allen adapts qualities of a white lesbian-feminist story of matriarchal roots to link ancient Europe to the Americas as Indigenous sites opposed to heteropatriarchy, so as to affirm the traditional respect and power accorded to women and lesbians among Native people. I agree with Jace Weaver and Lisa Tattonetti in reading Allen as affirming a decolonizing positionality for Native women and lesbians that refuses colonial appropriation.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, given that indigenizing lesbians opens the book in a way that white lesbians or other non-Natives could connect to their own lives, it bears noting that the book’s subsequent contributions do not repeat the poem’s theme and, at times, markedly displace it, as when Chrystos (Menominee) offers a scathing dismissal of cultural appropriation in her poem “Today Was a Bad Day like TB.”<sup>29</sup> Allen’s poem might be better read as addressing a Native audience, as the book suggests, in that it asserts that Native lesbians and gays have belonged to their nations throughout the past and that they endure today because their nationality (Indian) and gender and sexuality (dyke) are inseparable.

Nevertheless, *Living the Spirit* forms a strong association with white queer desires by adapting them to its self-determining project. The first hardcover edition reprints as its frontispiece and on the back cover Grahn’s entire statement beginning “The day I saw a poster declaring the existence of an organization of Gay American Indians . . .” Bookending *Living the Spirit* in this way may seem to invite reading the text and GAI as consonant with Grahn’s desires, or as meant to satisfy them. However, given that the contributors do not discuss the quotation, it appears instead as one possible point of entry

into a distinctive text. St. Martin's Press originally advertised the book for sale to the very gay and lesbian readers prepped to consume Native culture as representing their roots. GAI hired as the book's coordinating editor Will Roscoe, whose analyses of Native histories reflected his responsible relationship to GAI in this book and to the Zuni nation in his *The Zuni Man-Woman* (1991). Yet Roscoe later wrote texts on queer spirituality that invited non-Native queer people to adopt Native culture as part of their own spiritual nature.<sup>30</sup> Decisions by St. Martin's Press or by Roscoe to market *Living the Spirit* to gay and lesbian non-Natives might explain why Grahn's words were featured. But I am more interested in their potential resonance with the book's contributors, who appear to engage with them, even if not explicitly. When GAI was new, the non-Natives who paid it most heed—Roscoe, Katz, Grahn—were white people acting within long histories of adapting Native culture to gay and lesbian liberation. Insofar as GAI members engaged them, it showed their ability to adapt non-Native desires to their own ends. To repeat, both GAI and *Living the Spirit* addressed Native queer people by highlighting historical ties to Native traditions so that they might transform their own and their peoples' subjugation to colonial heteropatriarchy from within a transnational Native movement that remained distinct from non-Native queer politics. *Living the Spirit* was the first book to quote Grahn to a Native queer audience. Thus, the words of a prominent lesbian writer could be seen to affirm the impact of Gay American Indians on gay and lesbian politics, reinforcing the value of the group's telling its story in its *own* words.

Grahn's words also could be adapted to GAI's own goals. Cameron and Burns defended Native gays and lesbians to *Native* communities by arguing that their societies (to quote Grahn) "once picked them for the task of naming, healing, prediction, leadership, and teaching because they displayed characteristics" that Native people in Western terms now "call gay." Although Grahn was addressing non-Natives, her words, in this context, have the different effect of inviting solidarity among Native peoples in opposing colonial heteropatriarchy. Most importantly, no contributors address her claim that Native traditions bequeath to non-Native gay men and lesbians "positions of social power in history and ritual among people all over the globe" because "Gay is a universal quality." If Allen potentially intimates such a story, even she does not invite its extrapolations, but locates non-Native lesbians in solidarity with Native peoples. For Grahn, non-Natives already embody a queer indigeneity that can liberate queer settlers on Native lands. Native activists may adapt this language to claim forms of historical and contemporary leadership in their nations while forging transnational alliances

for decolonization. As meanings that shift across distinct yet relational locations in a settler society, these readings indicate that non-Native and Native queer modernities arise diversely within the power-laden intimacies of conversation.

### **Relational Locations: Ethnography and History of Queer Politics**

This book explains narrative relationships among queer subjects by situating them within ethnographic and historical accounts of U.S. queer politics. My involvement in northern California queer movements in the 1980s and 1990s produced an initial ethnographic study of them. That work grew into a broader historical account of U.S. queer politics as non-Native by comparison to the histories of Native queer politics documented by Native activists. This research path responded to anticolonial, transnational, and Indigenous feminist criticism, which, as a scholar in women's and gender studies, I apply to queer anthropology to transform its colonial legacies.

A persistent form of storytelling about indigeneity in late-twentieth-century U.S. gender/sexual politics sparked my inquiry into its conditions and effects. As that politics shifted among lesbian/gay and LGBT coalitions, radical queer politics that challenged homonormativity, and the adoption of *queer* as an "umbrella" term for minority rights, I recurrently heard participants tell that Native American societies historically honored people like themselves with social esteem and spiritual gifts. This story promised them a sexual nature, an authentic culture, or both simultaneously, while enabling them to claim forms of cultural belonging through ancient roots. While the terms in the story shifted once berdache was displaced by Two-Spirit, cisgender gay men remained central within them, as if they were also descriptive of women and trans people; and stories centering trans people reframed similar sources to different ends. Historians might reference these stories to Walter Williams's *The Spirit and the Flesh* (1986) or Leslie Feinberg's *Transgender Warriors* (1996), but I encountered them in classrooms, bookstores, political activism, theater productions, and friendship networks that preceded publication of these books. Whether people agreed or disagreed with these stories, their recurrence kept the question of Native history central to the determination of queer truths.

My research began in the mid-1990s as an ethnography of how such storytelling in U.S. queer politics articulated multiracial communities and antiracist activism. I engaged social networks already linked to my life in northern California and nationally by asking how stories about indigeneity formed utopian narratives that attempted to unify queer communities

across their differences. I noted the tension between a promise in such stories to heal racism and the evidence that racism persisted among their narrators. Although I sought at the time to pursue an antiracist queer account of colonial discourse in solidarity with queer of color activists, it soon became clear that the stories I examined exceeded this scope and also required a targeting of queer antiracism. In the 1990s, queers of color and their white antiracist queer allies critiqued queer movements that represented their “community” as a multiracial and global yet unitary group—notably when those movements sought to “include” a “diversity” within otherwise white middle-class spaces. Antiracist activists challenged queer racism, economic inequality, and imperialism by critiquing how white middle-class queers linked their liberation to acceptance within their own racialized class and state. But such efforts were stymied when queer movement leaders agreed with critics to oppose inequalities by arguing that their work had already bridged them: with a queer *culture* linking queers to one another more than to any other group; with a queer *history* linking all queers across time; or within a queer *world* on a global scale. These claims readily invoked as key evidence Native American history and extrapolated it onto Indigenous peoples worldwide. Yet if activists ever criticized such claims as being “racist,” they failed to comprehend fully what they confronted: for, invoking Native roots for queer culture and history already presented a means to mediate racism; and if critics sought to address racism by working for “inclusion” of queers of color, that could help to diversify the very politics where those stories still circulated.

This book aims to answer this conundrum, by shifting my ethnography of queer spaces where I lived to studying their formation in relation to the spaces they elided: those formed by Native queer and Two-Spirit activists. My shift was driven by a recognition that I, the narrators of the aforementioned stories, and the antiracist movement that sought to disrupt them all were positioned in relation to Native queer people as non-Native. In retrospect, it became clear to me that both the queer “racism” and “antiracism” I had known arose from a *non-Native* relationship to imagining indigeneity. Yet I first encountered them within the milieu of a settler society, which presumes and naturalizes Native people’s absence or disappearance. Non-Native writers such as Williams and Feinberg popularized Two-Spirit people’s voices even as Two-Spirit activists were mobilizing in cities like San Francisco, Toronto, and New York and in rural Native communities, all of which made Native queer people seem ubiquitous in late-twentieth-century queer politics. Yet this was happening within settler societies, where queer

movements functioned without the participation of Native people even though many members felt they were entitled to narrate Native history as their own. During the 1990s, I met different stories only by moving *outside* normatively white queer politics to attend to Native queer activist space, including women of color feminist spaces where Native queer women provided leadership. Here I heard very different stories from Native narrators. Many claimed a relationship to traditions of gender and sexual diversity in their nations, which some extended to include all Native queer people. Others argued that however inspiring tradition might be, their Native queer identities today were most important. These claims were not exclusive but interlinked. Amid their differences, I heard Native narrators express a desire to join with and lead their peoples in a collective struggle for decolonization.<sup>31</sup> Throughout the 1990s, Native queer people were defining their lives autonomously, practicing—to borrow Audra Simpson’s phrase—an “ethnographic refusal” of non-Native anthropological or queer inquiry. My research responded to this politicization of anthropological knowledge by what might be called an “ethnographic repudiation” of white queer ethnography of Native people. In its place, I pursued ethnographic and historical study of the *non*-Native queer spaces where I lived and I increasingly responded directly to Native queer activist critiques.

The project thus became comparative of non-Native and Native queer politics once it was repositioned, politically and methodologically, in relationship to Native queer and Two-Spirit activists. I traced historical ties between non-Native and Native queer politics in literature by Native activists now housed in libraries and archives. I requested and received critical engagement from Native queer activists across the United States and Canada, and they interviewed me about my work. Much of the literature I cited had received little or no attention in earlier writing by non-Natives, despite its importance in the historical growth of Native queer and Two-Spirit activism. I thus became a non-Native critic who was engaging Native activists against colonial methodologies that would frame the Native activist texts I discuss as “discoveries” by a non-Native scholar. Instead, I cite Native queer activist texts as a distinctive body of critical theory to which queer non-Natives already were intellectually and politically accountable, and to which my now-comparative and historical study of non-Native queer politics offered a response. The material in this book in fact *triangulates* two readings—my own and those shared by Native queer and Two-Spirit activists—to critically examine non-Native queer politics, even as my reading remains responsible to Native activists.



My approach decidedly departs from the gay and lesbian anthropology of berdache—not to separate from its history, but to traverse it with a critical difference. During the late twentieth century, gay and lesbian anthropologists revisited prior work on berdache or conducted new research with the intention of affirming Native gender and sexual diversity. Yet that work also served to advance their own non-Native gender and sexual politics, and reinforced their anthropological authority to determine Native truth while leaving their desire for it unexamined. By investigating the non-Native and, most centrally, white queer subjects that produced and consumed berdache, I displace the distancing effects of classic anthropology with critical insider research of constituencies in which I am already located. I then cite Native queer and Two-Spirit people as critical theorists of their own lives who require no anthropological translation and whose claims still retain the power to interrupt it. My project thus engages anthropology by interpreting the effects of anthropological knowledge in queer cultures and politics. Certain qualities of ethnography are important to it, such as its recurrent return to the social geography of the San Francisco Bay Area that produced intertwined histories of Native and gender/sexual politics.<sup>32</sup> I evaluate the anthropology of berdache as a legacy of the Society of Lesbian and Gay Anthropologists (SOLGA), which provided crucial support to my work, and is now known as the Association for Queer Anthropology (AQA), committed to studying sexuality and gender in context of studies of race, class, nationality, colonization, and globalization. AQA is accommodating an interdisciplinary approach in anthropology that regards queerness less as an object of representation and more as an action to be taken on the field. *Queering* anthropology may denaturalize and destabilize disciplinary norms, which this book contributes to by *unsettling* anthropology's settler colonial formation and holding it accountable to the interdisciplinary and political work of decolonizing queer knowledge production.

I agree with anthropologists who question colonial desires for Native history, as, for instance, in Towle and Morgan's critique of the "third gender" concept in U.S. transgender politics or Sue-Ellen Jacobs's response to Two-Spirit criticism of gay and lesbian anthropology.<sup>33</sup> But my work differs by not suggesting that such desires will be resolved by producing a better anthropology of Native culture. I focus not on Native or non-Native people but on the genealogies of settler colonialism that produce non-Native and Native queer modernities in relationship. I examine non-Native tales of Native truth—anthropological or popular, romantic or objectivist, colonial or anticolonial—as claims conditioned by the persistent power of settler

colonialism. I compare them to Native narratives that address non-Natives without beginning or ending in non-Native logics. The interrelated quality of these narratives becomes apparent even as the capacity of non-Native narratives to contain Native truth is displaced. Narrating non-Native and Native queer projects in conversation thus inspires a new theory of settler colonialism and resistance to its power.

### **Theorizing Settler Colonialism and Queer Modernities**

Theories of settler colonialism in Native studies and Indigenous feminist and queer critique inspire my argument that modern sexuality produces non-Natives in relation to Native people in the multiracial space of a white settler society. I hold queer theories particularly accountable to the study of settler colonialism, in response to the critical implications of Native queer modernities modeled by Native queer and Two-Spirit activisms.

Settlers naturalize their presence on Native land as rightful, final occupants so that the question of conquest can appear to be “settled.” Naturalization addresses settlers’ “illegitimacy”—at times, their “central dilemma,” in Amy den Ouden’s words—by asserting their presence on settled land as incontestable.<sup>34</sup> Settler colonialism is naturalized whenever conquest or displacement of Native peoples is ignored or appears necessary or complete, and whenever subjects are defined by settler desires to possess Native land, history, or culture. Settler colonialism thus must be denaturalized not only in social and political spaces but also in definitions and experiences of subjectivity. By more fully understanding its naturalization, critiques may destabilize it within settler societies and all spaces that those societies inform.

I explain settler colonialism’s naturalization by evaluating proposals of Native disappearance and settler replacement. Patrick Wolfe defines settler colonialism along “the logic of elimination,” which seeks the erasure of Native peoples to facilitate their replacement by settlers.<sup>35</sup> Recognizing that genocide studies after Raphael Lemkin correlates genocide to extermination, Wolfe argues that genocidal practices are among the techniques that may serve the logic of elimination. He notes that settlers may pursue the elimination of Native peoples by trying not to destroy but to produce life, through the amalgamation of Native peoples into settler society and the narrowing or erasure of claims on Native nationality. For instance, blood quantum and other racial and colonial methods for determining Native identity enact narratives of “dilution,” anticipating Native people’s disappearance, and define self-identified Native people and people of mixed Indigenous heritage as “non-Native.”<sup>36</sup> Many Native studies scholars use “geno-

cide” precisely to name this array of destructive and productive practices. I affirm such usage even as I appreciate Wolfe’s use of the term, which in its breadth also references a method by settlers to replace Native people by naturalizing their own proliferation. Jean O’Brien explains how settlers founded colonial New England in narratives of the inevitable disappearance of Native people, in an extenuated, conflictual, and incomplete process that persists even as New England Native peoples continue to resist erasure today.<sup>37</sup> Dale Turner evaluates the erasure of Native peoples within Canadian “White Paper liberalism,” in which regressive Native identity is contrasted to the progressive individuality and modern freedoms conferred by attempts to re-create Native peoples as citizens of the settler state.<sup>38</sup> Native studies scholars expose these ruses of settler colonialism’s logic of elimination by arguing the integrity and renewal of Indigenous governance and Indigenous relationships to land, language, and peoplehood, as these trace “intellectual histories” (in Robert Warrior’s term) that displace settler authority while affirming Native modernities as creative assertions of survival and resistance.<sup>39</sup>

Philip Deloria and Renée Bergland point out that when white settlers in the United States proclaim civilization’s advance, they also confirm their (il)legitimacy by resituating the Native peoples they (seem to) supplant as part of their own histories and inner lives. Bergland examines the appearance of Native people as ghosts of inspiration within narratives of white settler lives and society. Deloria traces how white settlers adapt indigeneity’s putative opposition to civilization through “Indian impersonation,” which performs opposition to settler rule as well as the authority to claim it for themselves as settler subjects. In both accounts, settlers supplant *and* incorporate indigeneity to attain settler subjectivity. Racialized by white supremacy, these acts appear civilizational—vanquishing Native adversaries mirrors calls to civilized people to control primitive drives. Yet they are also nostalgic for an indigeneity that modern people must transcend, even while incorporating it as part of their history. In a settler society, then, the very demand upon settlers to replace Natives simultaneously incites white settler desires to be intimate with the Native authenticity that their modernity presumably replaces. Indigeneity’s civilizational replacement thus is complementary to the settler pursuit of primitivism. Impersonating indigeneity and believing in colonial modernity are noncontradictory acts, given that settlers preserve Native authenticity as a history they must possess in order to transcend. If Indian impersonation seems to be an appropriation of Native culture, Deloria and Bergland argue that white settlers

in fact perform an indigeneity they imagine from their desires to belong to stolen land. Nostalgic quests for roots that modern nationals transcend also defined the growth of modern European nationalism more generally; but in settler societies, this path articulated the difference of Native peoples whom settlers must supplant, incorporate, and transcend in order to become modern subjects of a settler nation.<sup>40</sup> Thus, settler colonialism is naturalized not only in Native people's seeming "disappearance" from a modern, settled landscape, but also in indigeneity's recurrent appearance within and *as* settler subjectivity. Whether erasing or performing indigeneity, omitting or celebrating it, settlers practice settlement by turning Native land and culture into an inheritance granting them knowledge and ownership of *themselves*. If settlement thereby presumes Native authenticity's disappearance, it does *not* follow that Native people are absent from representation. James Cox observes that narratives encoded by Native disappearance mark the presence of indigeneity, in that the persistence of Native peoples surviving and resisting colonization remains outside the frame, inspiring settler narratives to deny their existence and reinforce their erasure.<sup>41</sup> Deloria, Bergland, and Cox thus show that within the racial and national frame of white settler colonialism, settlers and Natives are produced in relation to each other when the former arise *as settlers*, naturalizing an emplacement produced through their own and others' displacement by narrating Native elimination.

These analyses explain white-supremacist settler colonialism once we recognize that a normative relation of "Natives" to "settlers" articulates a multiracial and transnational settler society and the locations within it of non-Native peoples of color. Histories of white settler colonialism and its logic of elimination in the Americas and the Pacific must theorize its coproduction with the transatlantic slave trade and the African diaspora, franchise colonialism in Asia and Africa, and global migrations of indentured labor, all of which inform the globalization of European capital and empire.<sup>42</sup> This context suggests that the relationality of "settler" to "Native" in a white settler society has the effect of excluding non-Native people of color from the civilizational modernity that white settlers seek when they appear to eliminate Native peoples only to elide the subjugation of non-Native people of color on stolen land. In the United States, African diasporic peoples, migrant Asian, Latin American, African, and Middle Eastern laborers, and conquered Chicano/a and Latino/a peoples are located distinctly from the settler status inherited by representatives of Anglo whiteness—even if they

might accede to that status if the interpretation of their racialization changes. For instance, the relationality of “Native” and “settler” invokes intimacies among Native and African diasporic peoples in opposition to and in complicity with settlement: as Native peoples rejected, or practiced, African enslavement; as free blacks participated in settler conquest or joined Natives in resisting; and as Native and black peoples had to debate their ancestral relationships in relation to the hegemony of a white-supremacist color line. Yet, while conditioned by these complex histories, solidarity and kinship ties among Native and black peoples have not been erased as a potential site for challenging white-supremacist settler colonialism.<sup>43</sup>

Scholars debate the degree of accountability of white people or people of color for the status and power of “settlers” in relation to Native peoples in white settler societies. Bonita Lawrence and Haunani-Kay Trask have called on non-Native people of color in white settler societies to ask themselves how their histories of racial subjugation and antiracist resistance might be compatible with settler colonial elimination of Native peoples and their sovereignty.<sup>44</sup> Nandita Sharma and Cynthia Wright respond to Lawrence by citing colonial and postcolonial studies on the colonization of diasporic peoples of color and the perpetuation of racism and genocide by postcolonial nationalism, and propose that colonial legacies can be disrupted by cosmopolitan subjects forming multiracial, transnational “commons” in the local and global spaces they now inhabit.<sup>45</sup> Sharma and Wright transpose critiques of the imperial nation-state and postcolonial cultural nationalism onto Indigenous peoples and settler societies without sufficiently considering literature on Indigenous decolonization, which disturbs the colonial modern state-form and presents alternative forms of nationality that displace colonial, racist, and heteropatriarchal domination.<sup>46</sup> They also do not address how diasporic scholars of color and white antiracist allies are accountable to the struggles of Native nations, including how a white settler academy empowers them to argue that non-Natives are not settlers or that Native people should not defend their nations. Nevertheless, I agree with them that to say that all non-Natives are settlers may fail to explain how settler colonialism conditions non-Natives by “race” or migrant/immigrant status, while stymieing efforts to link Native, diaspora, and critical race studies in defending Native decolonization.<sup>47</sup> I find most compelling the self-reflective assertions by non-Native people of color of their status, role, or power as settlers—as when Asian American allies of the Hawaiian sovereignty movement critique participation by Asians in U.S. settler colonization

of Hawai'i, or when diasporic Palestinians voice solidarity with Indigenous Americans who also ally with Palestinians in struggle against Israeli settlement of Palestinian lands.<sup>48</sup> More such analysis is needed within diaspora and critical race studies to displace accounts of colonization and resistance that normalize whiteness. White radicals often fail to note the racial specificity of their settler colonial inheritance. If they project their experience into theorizing the responsibility of non-Natives to demonstrate Indigenous solidarity, they may *reproduce* white supremacy by not considering how people of color negotiate settler colonialism—perhaps within Indigenous solidarity that white people will not share.

My project shifts questions of status—such as “Who is the settler?”—to ask instead how subjects are produced by social processes: “Who, under what conditions, inherits the power to represent or enact settler colonialism?” It thus responds to political demands that subjects who inherit the power of settler colonialism challenge their inheritance, which I do by investigating and clarifying the genealogies through which such subjects might arise. For instance, white-supremacist settler colonialism distinguishes “Native” from “settler” so as to naturalize whiteness in teleologies of modernity, civilization, and citizenship that predict Indigenous elimination and settler replacement. White subjects may appear—if their locations by nation, class, gender, sexuality, and disability can be made to match—as the settlers differentiated from the Natives whose lands and histories they inherit. Yet this definition is troubled immediately by the logic of elimination’s having operated precisely via amalgamation. Lawrence and Malinda Maynor Lowery explain that the Native identities of mixed-blood Native people are invalidated by their racialization as white or black through the policing of Native status and the redrawing of the color line.<sup>49</sup> Maria Saldaña-Portillo further explains how mixed Indigenous ancestry is produced by national projects of *mestizaje* to replace specific Indigenous identifications or land claims, and that whether conforming to white supremacy or indigenizing mestizos/as such projects can remain in tension with Native communities that retain a traditional collective identity.<sup>50</sup> In light of these complexities, we cannot assume that all who are forcibly aligned with whiteness, blackness, or *mestizaje* are “non-Native,” even though their lives may be meaningfully defined by a lived difference from Native nationality and collectivity.

The logic of elimination defines “Native” as an ever-disappearing location that includes or excludes Native people as this benefits conquest. To presume an absolute distinction of “Native” from “non-Native” invariably misses this historically porous definition. At the same time, even subjects

structurally opposed by racism may recognizably share status as non-Native in relation to the difference of indigeneity in a settler society. Racialization under white supremacy will grant non-Natives distinct, often mutually exclusive, abilities to represent or enact settler colonial power. But all non-Natives still will differ in their experiences of settler colonialism from the experiences of Native peoples.<sup>51</sup>

The logic of elimination defines a normative relationality of “Native” to “settler” precisely by positioning non-Native people of color *outside* a power relation that all defined as Native are made to *inhabit*. Native people become *marked* within the power relation that purportedly *eliminates* them, in direct relation to how non-Native people of color are *absented* from the very power relation *producing* them as racialized populations in a white settler society on “emptied” land. My reading of white settler colonization triangulates normative statuses assigned to whiteness, indigeneity, and non-Native peoples of color, while noting how histories of amalgamation, mixed heritage, and *mestizaje* cross their putative borders. I then explain distinctions among Natives and non-Natives by referring to the work of sovereign Native nations and their members within alliance politics. Native nations are defining and defending sovereign distinctions from non-Native peoples and societies by producing innovative theories of alliance: to bridge differences of status defining membership; to embrace differences in the community such as “race,” gender, and sexuality; to link varied nations transnationally; and to connect their national or transnational work with allied non-Natives. The alliances emerging in Native activism are pursuing, as Andrea Smith notes, “unlikely” routes to ensure survival and defend sovereignty, as modeled for Smith by Indigenous women activists.<sup>52</sup> I focus on such alliance work as theorized and practiced by Native queer, Two-Spirit, and HIV/AIDS activists, which Qwo-Li Driskill and Chris Finley argue is needed both to bridge the diversity of Native queer/Two-Spirit communities and to realign their communities and nations in struggle against heteropatriarchy.<sup>53</sup> Formation of such alliances in Native politics does not presume that those it joins across differences are wholly distinct. For instance, activist responses to the Arizona anti-immigrant law SB1070 deepened alliances of Tohono O’odham and Chicano/a activists in ways that respected the national integrity of O’odham people and lands, facilitated Indigenous identification among Chicano/a activists, and recognized that racial profiling of “illegal immigrants” targeted all people with Indigenous features. As a result, Tohono O’odham and Chicano/a solidarity with migrants emerged through negotiating distinct, yet linked, Indigenous heritage.<sup>54</sup> When my

analysis addresses the difference of Native nationality as it troubles settler society and refracts the lives of non-Natives, I intend not to police the boundaries of Native identity, but rather to focus on accounts by Native people that demonstrate how their lives are interdependent and bridge the differences imposed by colonial exclusion and domination. The national and transnational models of alliance by Native queer and Two-Spirit people emerge as projects to which all non-Native queers can be accountable, in contrast to settler colonial desires for a relationship to indigeneity outside of a situated politics of alliance.

In sum, in a multiracial, transnational white settler society, the relation of “Native” to “settler” articulates distinctions of Native from non-Native, but *these two comparisons are neither identical nor parallel*. The teleological binary Native/settler is perpetually complicated by the *nonbinary* relations of diverse non-Natives and Native peoples across commonalities and differences. Nevertheless, no degree of complication in either comparison removes the meaningful difference indigeneity continues to make in a settler society, as in Native sovereignty struggles and national and transnational Native alliances. If settlers ever do learn who they are, they will recognize themselves at the least as those who are meant to *replace*. Native disappearance haunts settler subjectivity and illuminates all cultures and politics in a settler society. Regardless of whether non-Natives think they inherit the power of settler colonialism, all can ask how it produces them in roles that may sustain it and its naturalization.

### Queering Colonial Relationalities

Interdisciplinary theory of settler colonialism rarely entertains the degree of complexity I invite while defying the naturalization of settlement by centering Native people. Among theories that address European settler colonialism by emphasizing relations with Native peoples, one long in circulation is Mary Louise Pratt’s “contact zone” indicating a power-laden space of cultural creativity in colonial situations.<sup>55</sup> Pratt’s innovation was to shift colonial studies from narrating imperial power and Native subjection to focus on their relational formation, while highlighting the critical agency of Native peoples and contacts in which Natives influenced colonists while colonists relied on Natives for self-definition. While Pratt acknowledged the diverse racialization of colonial situations, her term often is used to reference “Native/settler” relations without explaining the multiracial scope of settler societies. Nevertheless, any reflection of white settler logics in the



term—the *appearance* that a relation of disappearing “Natives” to civilizational white “settlers” defines social life—is precisely what makes “contact zone” useful to my reading of the settler histories of modern sexuality.

Inspired by Indigenous feminist and queer critiques of sexual colonization, and with the United States as my context, I argue that modern sexuality arises in white settler society as a “contact zone,” defined by attempting to replace Native kinship, embodiment, and desire with the hegemony of “settler sexuality,” or the heteropatriarchal sexual modernity exemplary of white settler civilization. I adapt Foucault’s history of sexuality by reading “modern sexuality” as the array of discourses, procedures, and institutions that arose in metropolitan and colonial societies to distinguish and link primitive and civilized gender and sexuality, while defining racial, national, gendered, and sexual subjects and populations in biopolitical relationship. I analyze the subjection of Native societies to colonial heteropatriarchy as a proving ground for the biopolitics of settler colonialism, which defines modern sexuality as “contact” between queered indigeneity and its transcendence by settler sexuality. My approach affirms the work of Saidya Hartman, Allan Punzalan Isaac, Eithne Luibhéid, and other scholars in examining the formation of modern sexuality as settler sexuality in the United States amid the terrorizing racial and heteropatriarchal regulation of diasporic and colonized African, Asian, Latin American, and Arab and Middle Eastern peoples, including mestizo/a Latin Americans racialized in an Anglo context beyond normative whiteness or authentic indigeneity.<sup>56</sup> Mindful of this array of intersections, I focus on the sexual colonization of Native peoples as a key site through which settler colonialism conditions the diversely racialized subjects produced within queer modernities.

Indigenous feminist theorists explain settler colonialism *as* sexual colonization. Andrea Smith theorizes it as sexual violence, through which the conquest of land and bodies advances heteropatriarchal rule over Native peoples and establishes it throughout settler society.<sup>57</sup> Kim Anderson, Bonita Lawrence, and Chris Finley, among others, explain heteropatriarchy as a genocidal method for isolating, dispersing, and eliminating Native peoples, including through internalization as a norm of discipline and violence in Native communities.<sup>58</sup> Indigenous feminist theorists and women’s movements invite decolonization by challenging heteropatriarchy as a colonial legacy; some also note that colonial violence targets persons marked by gender or sexual diversity so as to queer Indigenous *peoples* to colonial heteropatriarchal rule. Their work informs Indigenous queer critiques and

allied work in queer studies.<sup>59</sup> Deborah Miranda explains Spanish conquest in California as defined by the “extermination of the *joyas*,” a process Finley links to the genocidal effects of colonial biopower, which Mark Rifkin investigates in U.S. state efforts to produce Native peoples as heteronormative private-property owning citizens of a settler nation.<sup>60</sup> Qwo-Li Driskill focuses Indigenous queer critiques through an “erotics of sovereignty” to answer the violences of heteropatriarchal colonization with the body-based and collective work of decolonization.<sup>61</sup> Forty years of Native queer and Two-Spirit organizing in the United States and Canada anticipated and pursued these insights by recalling memories of Indigenous embodiment, desire, and kinship that challenge the heteropatriarchal logics of settler modernity. Anguksuar Richard LaFortune, cofounder of American Indian Gays and Lesbians (Minneapolis) and the International Two-Spirit Gathering, recognizes Two-Spirit organizing as a “movement,” while saying that “what is happening, actually, is that we are remembering who we are and that our identities can no longer be used as a weapon against us.”<sup>62</sup> Native queer and Two-Spirit activists negotiating colonial discourses join Indigenous queer and feminist scholars in critiquing heteropatriarchy as crucial to struggle for decolonization.

Andrea Smith and Qwo-Li Driskill argue that queer theory reproduces the violences of settler colonialism unless these are examined as conditions of the social worlds in which its practitioners live.<sup>63</sup> Smith and Driskill join queer of color, queer diasporic, and queer/migration critiques in regarding all queer formations as conditioned by colonization, racialization, diaspora, and globalization. But they also demonstrate how theories of queer temporality, racialization, and diaspora must shift to address settler colonialism. If settler colonialism is produced by processes of elimination and replacement and by teleologies of modernity and civilization, it immediately invites theory of temporality. Smith goes beyond Lee Edelman’s theory of queer temporality displacing heteronormative futurity in the image of the queer child—one José Esteban Muñoz evaluates as “always already white”—to assert that

an indigenous critique must question the logic of “no future” in the context of genocide, where Native people have already been determined by settler colonialism to have no future. If the goal of queerness is to challenge the reproduction of the social order, then the Native child may already be queered.<sup>64</sup>

Indigenous feminist and queer critics explain that by queering Native *peoples* as threats whose conquest will establish colonial heteropatriarchy,

canceling the future of the Native child produces the future of white settler society as genocide. Yet Smith notes that to recall what was queered within Native society itself constitute a queer critique of heteropatriarchy.

Smith and Driskill also question antiracist and diasporic queer theories that erase Native peoples. If queer and diaspora theories valorize dislocation, Smith argues, then Native peoples will appear excessively local or national and, hence, insufficiently queer. Smith answers Gayatri Gopinath's assertion that "queerness is to heterosexuality as diaspora is to the nation" by asking if "perhaps we can understand Indigenous nationhood as already queered."<sup>65</sup> Driskill argues that "Two-Spirit critiques" locate Native queer and Two-Spirit people "as productive, if not central, to nationalist, decolonial agendas . . . not [as] an assimilationist move but a move against the colonial powers that have attempted to dissolve or restrain Native sovereignties."<sup>66</sup> According to Driskill, Native queer and Two-Spirit people do not accommodate and reinforce heteronormative nations, as occurs along the "autological" mode of settler citizenship critiqued by Elizabeth Povinelli, or the postcolonial nationalisms disrupted by diasporic queer critics.<sup>67</sup> Rather, from Driskill's "erotics of sovereignty" to the Two-Spirit and Native HIV/AIDS activism recounted in this book, Native queers lead their peoples in reimagining modes of embodiment, desire, and collectivity that defy their queered encounters with settler colonialism. Their redefinitions of nationality are informed by Smith's account of Native feminists whose "models of nationhood . . . do not have the heteronormative, patriarchal, nuclear family as their building block," but produce national belonging that, "rather than a commitment to national chauvinism and insularity," performs creative solidarities and "unlikely alliances" in pursuit of Indigenous decolonization.<sup>68</sup>

Following Indigenous feminist and queer critics, I understand *queer* to be a location constituted by white-supremacist settler colonialism that will be unascertainable until this condition is explained. My argument is less "intersectional" than genealogical, in that nothing in the history of white-supremacist settler colonialism or the globalization of European capital and empire that it facilitates is separable from what is perceived as "queer." But a stronger implication is epistemological: eliding such analyses will leave queer studies empty of meaning. The problem is not that white, class-privileged, national inheritors of settler colonialism have been central to queer accounts. The problem is that all conclusions drawn from such accounts fail to explain not only all who are excluded from them but also all who are *included*: because the only possible explanation of queerness under

white-supremacist settler colonialism is one that also interrogates that condition. Queer studies must examine settler colonialism as a condition of its own work. A queer critique of location, temporality, or belonging that naturalizes its relationship to settler colonialism no longer will be considered transgressive. Native queer appeals to national traditions or liberation, in turn, no longer will be considered normative if their effect is to denaturalize settler heteropatriarchy and homonationalism while investing Native decolonization in feminist and queer social change. All this follows once settler colonialism and Indigenous decolonization become a focus of queer studies.

My account recognizes in Native queer and Two-Spirit projects a *discrepancy* in relation to settler colonial biopolitics and the “contact zone” of settler sexuality. Native queer and Two-Spirit people recall languages, memories, and relations that exceed colonial epistemic authority, and their relationship to these formations answers the queered conditions of Native people under settler rule. Their projects thus disrupt the temporality of settler colonialism, which predicts indigeneity’s erasure by positing authenticity as a past split from a progressive present. Native queer and Two-Spirit people perform instead the queer temporality of Native modernity, wherein tradition is precisely not primordial but an articulation of memory and survival with life in a settler colonial situation. I recognize Native queer modernities arising discrepantly from non-Native queer modernities precisely when they engage in power-laden conversation. In so doing, Native queer people may act as Chela Sandoval theorized for U.S./Third World feminists, who traversed and displaced the boundaries of modernist social movements in a *differential* oppositional consciousness.<sup>69</sup> Or, they may practice what Muñoz named for queers of color as *disidentification* from the totalizing binary of opposition or assimilation by working “on and in” power to expose and disrupt its effects.<sup>70</sup> Women of color feminism and queer of color critique resonate with Indigenous queer critiques when their objects and claims are recognized as conditioned by the settler colonial power that Native queer and Two-Spirit activists displace.

By way of response, this book examines how non-Natives formed modern queer identities, cultures, and politics in the United States while participating in a white settler society. I explain variation among non-Native queer projects by their degree of consonance with white-supremacist settler colonial power, which establishes the heteronormative binary sex/gender systems on Native land. My account both affirms and extends that of scholars of homonormativity and homonationalism. Locating homonationalism within a critique of settler colonialism suggests that this phenomenon

is unlikely to describe the alignments of only *some* queers with neoliberal or imperial power. All queer modernities under white-supremacist settler colonialism respond to its power, the very power Native queer and Two-Spirit critiques continue to contest. Several implications follow.

Queer critics must not be satisfied once they identify homonationalist defenders of civilization as if this means that their work is done—indeed, as if antiracism, anti-imperialism, or anticolonialism are not routes to the practice of homonationalism. In a white settler society, seeking homonationalist alignment with the settler state creates non-Native queer modernities as normatively white appeals to settler citizenship. Read strictly within the normatively white and non-Native frame of white settler colonialism, modern queers *are* homonationalists. Here, homonationalist aspirations will traverse the normative routes of settler citizenship, by aspiring to civilizational modernity, but also by incorporating and transcending the primitivity that settlers definitively supplant *and* recall. American and Native studies show that settler citizens in the United States are at once civilizationalists and primitivists. In this context, homonationalism will define modern queers within quests to achieve settler citizenship; and civilizationalist and primitivist practices will derive from and express homonationalism. Thus, while queer scholars today must continue to target white-supremacist and imperialist forms of homonationalism, the problem this book addresses is somewhat different. For some time, I have been preoccupied with the settler colonial and homonationalist implications of queer projects produced within the horizons of liberal multicultural logics of inclusion, equity, and democracy, and their interdependence with radicalisms pursuing anti-oppression, structural change, and revolution. I am especially concerned by any suggestion that queer radicalism initiates queer modernities that queer liberalism only secondarily normalize for a heteropatriarchal society. Queer radicalisms and liberalism arise interdependently within white-supremacist settler colonialism and perform settler homonationalism when they traverse primitivist *and* civilizationalist trajectories of queer liberation.

Although my arguments are specific to the racial and national contexts of the United States, they are applicable to other white settler societies. Yet the U.S. context remains key because of the global hegemony asserted by U.S. queer projects. Settler colonialism is part of all power projected by the United States as “domestic” or global acts. Therefore, the distinctly “non-Native” and settler form of U.S. queer modernities can sustain wherever U.S. queer subjects, cultures, or politics go. I join ethnographers of transnational sexualities in being skeptical that U.S. queer formations overwrite

local or national creativity among queer people worldwide.<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, scholars of queer globalization should ask how the settler colonial formation of U.S. queer modernities articulates across borders. If modern queers become settlers in the United States, then this path to queer modernity may create queers as settlers even if they travel, or appear elsewhere. I propose all of these implications without attempting to write “outside” the colonial conditions I critique. White queer critics are called to undertake a critique of settler colonialism—by Indigenous feminist and queer critiques, and the critique of settler colonialism in Native studies—and that is what this book endeavors to do.

Nevertheless, this book examines non-Native and Native queer modernities not so much to critique non-Native queers as colonial but to ask why and how diverse non-Native *and* Native queer people arise within intimately relational and power-laden conversations, with effects that as often as not blur easy distinctions of “colonial” from “anticolonial.” The book explains non-Native queer modernities as forming within the friction of conversations with discrepant Native queer modernities denaturalizing settler colonialism. Neither chosen nor denied, these conversations are not utopian; but they nevertheless form creative zones of contact and transformation whose outcomes are not preordained. Interreferential moments in conversation show that the meaning of non-Native or Native queer subjectivity appeared by engaging relational claims. Apparently close ties nevertheless led to communicating in divergent registers, even as distant projects cited similar registers, with often distinct effects. I examine these effects by oscillating between synchronic and diachronic contexts and local and mobile spatializations. My genealogical readings hinge on narrative spaces—testimonies, newsletters, books, research reports, visual media; community centers, performances, rural camps, and public activism—near which I was located in my historical and ethnographic research. I examine “communities” as inexplicable except within the relations of culture and power marked by genealogy. My effort to mediate multiple voices in interlinked accounts is also a contribution to their dialogue. Thus, in the end, more than a study *of* conversation, this book *is* a kind of conversation, as well as an effort to transform those in which it arose and that it examines.