

CHAPTER 5

Cross-Dancing as Culturally Restorative Practice

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If decolonization is about creating spaces for Indigenous peoples and valuing their diverse gifts (Awásis, 2012), as an Indigenous person, a member of the Secwépemc Nation, I view inclusion of this chapter in this volume as poignant and timely. Social workers and other helping professionals need to be knowledgeable regarding the continua of sexuality and gender expression, and their intersections with race and class, regardless of their own locations with respect to these issues. This volume attempts to address the learning needs of straight people, assuming these may be different from those of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified, queer, and Two-Spirit (LGBTQTS) people. The overall approach is similar to that taken in books dealing with racism for white people. Recognizing its inherent intersectionality (Tatonetti, 2010), Alex Wilson (2008) describes the Two-Spirit identity as encompassing all aspects of who Indigenous peoples are, including our culture, sexuality, gender, spirituality, community, and relationship to the land. My concern is that the use of the term *Two-Spirit* creates the impression that sexuality and gender identities are understood in the same way across the many First Nations.

At one end of the spectrum, Two-Spirit, as it is located within the LGBTQTS acronym, symbolizes equal treatment and access. As we move further away from the acronym as a destination, however, we arrive in spaces and places of dislocation, exclusion, rejection, and death (Brotman,

Ryan, Jalbert, & Rowe, 2002). The Two-Spirit concept has a wide range of meanings and interpretations across Turtle Island (North America). At present, there is a movement to reclaim respected places for Two-Spirit people in communities, through the use of analogous Indigenous words to articulate our roles, responsibilities, and experiences on our own terms. In my opinion, *Two-Spirit* has been colonized in the sense that it is often used as "just a way" to identify LGBT Aboriginal people. It is important to remember that, as noted above, the term refers to various aspects of identity, not only sexuality and gender. Two-Spirit people are faced with challenges on two counts, the first being the limited (but expanding) resources for Two-Spirit persons and those working with other Aboriginal persons in rural/urban communities; the second being hetero and homosexual hegemony (both within and outside of Aboriginal communities), as evidenced by the stories of my research participants found below.

I use the term *Two-Spirit* in this chapter because of its widespread use in current discourse and the fact that some Aboriginal people do identify with this terminology. For some, *Two-Spirit* can provide language for First Nations lacking terms that address diversity in sexuality and/or gender identity and/or expression. The term may not resonate with others as well as terms that more closely align with their gender and sexual experience and identity, such as *transgender* and *lesbian*, *gay* and *bisexual*. Ultimately, as I argue below, I am sensitive to others self-identifying with their own Indigenous-based identity that may or may not include Two-Spirit.

This chapter begins with an introduction to pow-wows and cross-dancing as culturally restorative practice. I then identify challenges attached to present articulations of Two-Spirit and decolonization using the lens of cross-dancing. Next I share findings of a study I conducted in British Columbia that explores experiences of LGBTQTS Aboriginal residents, revealing first-hand experiences of colonization and the challenges associated with terminology use. I then look at the indelible effect the media have on self-identified Aboriginal LGBTQTS people and their lack of positive representation therein, and

subsequently interrogate the resulting power imbalances. The chapter includes recommendations for social workers and social work educators, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal.

Pow-Wows, Social Work, and Visibility

Pow-wows are socio-cultural gatherings of Indigenous nations that are imbued with spiritual and cosmological significance to Indigenous persons across Turtle Island. Pow-wows are also spaces for dance competitions between men and women. They are celebratory spaces for fun and laughter. A cross-dance (or switch-dance in some nations) is a pow-wow special (a dance held in honour of age, marriage, and other lifespan markers) in which dancers swap regalia. For example, women don grass-dancing regalia usually worn by men, and men don women's fancy dancing regalia.

While visiting a small rural pow-wow in British Columbia, I witnessed my first cross-dance and noticed that, although some in attendance were uncomfortable, the majority were visibly engaged and enjoying themselves, cheering on the dancers. I observed a trans Two-Spirit woman who did not swap regalia—nobody was excluded; everyone was welcomed, accepted, and encouraged. As a person who has participated in predominantly heteropatriarchal pow-wows, this moment was restorative from my experience, as there was a trans Two-Spirit woman troubling and problematizing the norms of gender performativity, but it also signified the restorative capacities such representation in the arena can have for not only Aboriginal youth, but the entire community.

Challenges faced by Aboriginal peoples, such as family violence, addiction, high rates of children in child welfare care, missing and murdered women, disproportionate incarceration of adults, gangs, and trauma related to residential schools, to name but a few, have been repeatedly reinforced in the imaginations of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal social work students nationwide. Social work has attempted to address its participation in the subjugation of Turtle Island (Baskin, 2011) through

adopting cross-cultural/anti-racist/anti-oppressive/decolonizing practice and other social justice approaches. However, these initiatives have been criticized as reproducing and maintaining the colonial present. Bell hooks (2004) reminds us of the danger of the academic industrial complex and being taught in a culture of domination by those who dominate. In contrast, pow-wows are important places of socialization with powerful cultural influences. Two-Spirit people who have experienced them do not find anything similar in Western LGBTQ communities, as there are no recognizable spaces to practise culture within the dominant LGBTQ community, resulting in a cultural divide between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people with same-sex sexual orientation and transgender identities.

Taking an intersectional approach to social work and understanding the lives of LGBTQTS people is an attempt to work toward social justice and peace. However, considering the necropolitical history of Turtle Island (Morgensen, 2010), I would caution that by using terms such as *Two-Spirit* in social work practice and education, social workers can unwittingly reinforce homonormative hegemony (Kinsmen & Gentile, 2011). The risk is that in employing this terminology as a simple categorization of Indigenous LGBT people for their own convenience and based on their perspectives, social workers fail to recognize the complexity of Indigenous experiences of gender and sexuality. Engaging *Two-Spirit* as it has evolved privileges Western concepts over Indigenous understandings and can be read as a successful colonial technology: divide and conquer, surveillance (Harris, 2002), or, as I suggest, sexual colonization.

Cross-Dancing as Culturally Restorative Practice

Estelle Sinard (2009) shares from her Anishinaabe worldview that culturally restorative child welfare practice was developed out of attachment theory and indigenized through a conceptual framework based in the cultural teachings of her nation. Her model is structured as a circle

of protection (individual, family, community, world); it is defined by the specific roles and responsibilities of members within their nation, which contribute to secure cultural attachment. The model is based on recognition of the cultural developmental milestones of a nation, with the goal of full integration of these concepts into an individual's identity. Cross-dancing as a culturally restorative practice (although not necessarily taken up in all First Nations), then, is about troubling heteropatriarchy embedded in Aboriginal communities and locating the specific roles and responsibilities for Two-Spirit members of a nation. It is an opportunity for Indigenous people experiencing their sexuality or gender identity or expression as outside the norm to see, observe, and experience an accepting space. As part of culturally restorative practice, social workers could make Indigenous clients aware that cross-dancing is performed at pow-wows for some nations.

To think about cross-dancing as culturally restorative practice, I draw attention to three pieces of work. Qwo-Li Driskill (2010) argues that the concept of Two-Spirit draws on Native traditions as precedents for understanding gender and sexuality, and asserts that Two-Spirit people are vital to tribal communities. Further, Driskill holds that the Two-Spirit identity concept incorporates recognition of relationships with ceremonial and spiritual communities and traditions, as well as with medicine and the land, marking it as distinct from dominant constructions of GLBTQ identities. With regard to sexuality and gender, Tafoya (1997) states that if one takes the line between male and female, or gay and straight, and bends it into a circle, theoretically, there are an infinite number of gender and sexual identities that may shift for an individual over time and location. This line of thinking erases margins and creates space for those who do not identify with any of the fixed constructs included in the LGBT acronym. Robinson and Watt (2001) suggest that the terms *gay* and *straight* do not have the same meaning in an Aboriginal context as in non-Aboriginal contexts because they represent elements of experience that fluctuate and influence each other, as opposed to representing polar opposites.

Indigenous and settler imaginations have been shaped by hetero/homo-centric, hegemonic notions of gender and sexuality, and have therefore been colonized. Traditional knowledge matters in the modern world; the works of Driskill (2010), Tafoya (1997), and Robinson and Watt (2001) create space for cultural remembrance; although not used by all Indigenous populations, the use of terms such as *LGBTQ* is particularly impactful, as it overrides Aboriginal ways of knowing.

"Ta7us k sllepen-c xeteqs re7 Secwepmc-k." — "Don't Forget You're Secwepmc First"

The construct Two-Spirit may be used to acknowledge the specific roles, responsibilities, and contributions of members of a First Nation who express their gender and sexuality in ways other than the male/female and straight/gay binaries within the Indigenous context. The title of this section is a reminder from Secwepmc Elders shared with me by my friend Carl Archie. Following that principle, I humbly suggest to my Two-Spirit relations that they can reclaim their Indigenous identities by taking up their traditional roles and responsibilities within their communities, giving them precedence over their gender and sexual identities. Consider a Secwepmc word referring to Two-Spirit roles and responsibilities: *yucamin'min* means "protect the Earth and protect the people." *Yucamin'min* is an opportunity for all people to nurture solidarity with each other and the land, through the actions of Two-Spirit people carrying out their roles and responsibilities. Secwepmc teachings instruct people how to live in harmony with nature and with one another (Coffey, Goldstrom, Gottfriedson, Matthew, & Walton, 1990) assuming the gender binary. I have yet to receive teachings of stories that contain evidence of more than one gender. However, a morphological figure central in our creation stories is the "trickster" *Ske'lep* (Coyote), who is understood to be between the two genders. *Ske'lep*, in some stories, shape-shifts into either gender, sometimes for the purpose of seduction. I interpret this to mean we have the responsibility, if not

the expectation, to move fluidly between the two roles and beyond, and to help where and when we are needed.

GLBT/Two-Spirit Voices: A Study

These teachings inspired me to undertake a study¹ that would provide an opportunity for Aboriginal self-identified GLBT/Two-Spirit persons who are visitors in or Indigenous to the Secwépemc'ulw (the name of the territory where the study was conducted) to express their understandings of identity, gender, and sexuality. I hoped to trouble binaries and homophobia through this research, while also interrupting the hegemonic dominant constructions of LGBTQTS.

Methods

I interviewed 15 individuals between the ages of 18 and 54 (five women and 10 men), 11 of whom self-identified as LGB and four as Two-Spirit. Participants were recruited using snowball sampling; all were from nations in the interior of British Columbia. As the work began, I learned the importance of following the correct protocol and asking the right questions. As I was raised off-reserve, I did not know these. It took three years of being observed for how I contributed to community to be given the word analogous to *Two-Spirit* in the Secwépemc language. Some questions addressed were how participants identified themselves, where they learned the terms for their identity, whether the term *Two-Spirit* represented their experiences, and what was needed in community to better their experience. The recurring themes revealed complex intersections of exclusion and sexual identity confusion, racism, homo/transphobia, and classism.

Experiences Related to Identity

Participants described experiencing exclusion and a lack of safety in relation to both their sexual and Aboriginal identities on-reserve and in non-reserve settings. With respect to being open about sexuality

on-reserve, one person commented, "... it ends up destroying you in the end." Several participants knew friends who were conflicted about their sexual identity and were involved in substance abuse and self-harm, such as cutting; some had even taken their own lives. The majority of participants themselves had had substance use issues in the past, some to such a degree that residential treatment was necessary.

Off-reserve, participants also experienced a lack of safety. They stated that the local LGBT youth group was not a safe space for Aboriginal people. For example, a participant shared an experience of racism through identity enforcement by a white lesbian who asserted, "You aren't Two-Spirit, you're a lesbian." This experience took power away from the participant during a sensitive time of her identity formation by dismissing her Aboriginal identity as inconsistent with being lesbian. This comment suggested identifying as lesbian or gay in the queer community provides a better opportunity for social inclusion than identifying as Two-Spirit. In contrast, participants felt lesbian-identified persons experience greater social acceptance on-reserve.

Challenges of Identifying as Indigenous and a Sexual Minority

Some participants recognized that "something" was missing when they identified as gay or lesbian: they didn't experience their Indigenous selves through these lenses; there was a loss of cultural connection. Other participants perceived strong ties between their LGB identities and their Native identities without embracing the "traditional" framing of Two-Spirit.

Some of the research participants experienced disconnection from community and family when they "came out." For the Indigenous person, coming out, while empowering, also asserts individuality, distancing them from the Indigenous community through embracing a queer (settler) identity. There is also a Secwépemc belief that we are born with just one spirit. Thus, in the interior of British Columbia, some First Nations people are reluctant to embrace the construct of Two-Spirit, reasoning that the term itself is offensive, as it implies that one

embodies "two spirits," suggesting a loftier status than members of the rest of the community.

Impacts of Residential Schools

Homophobia, transphobia, and heteropatriarchy (Simpson, 2012) are now commonplace and problematic in reserve communities, another legacy of heteronormative (Smith, 2010) framings of our communities. In part, this negative climate is seen as a legacy of the residential schools. One reason suggested for resistance to accepting LGBT and Two-Spirit people on reserves is that pedophilia and homosexuality are conflated, as a result of the multiple traumas experienced by survivors of residential schools. One of the younger participant's insight into the issue was, "[residential school survivors] were taught [being homosexual] was wrong. It's not a lifestyle choice, we were born this way, it's how our body is wired. If it's so wrong, why did the Creator make us this way?" A participant who was a residential school survivor wouldn't talk about the experience in detail, but corroborated the residual colonial impacts of residential schools, such as rewriting Indigenous ways of knowing gender and sexuality.

One of the most haunting stories I was gifted from a study participant was of a little girl in a residential school who enjoyed the company of her sisters until it was discovered at puberty that she was endowed with a penis. The nuns quickly cut off her hair and moved her to the boys' dormitory. Unfortunately, this truth was the only fragment of her story my participant knew. The complete story has been forgotten forever, but it demonstrates the ways residential schools extinguished Indigenous understandings of gender and sexuality, an omission further compounded by the omission of this reality from the truth and reconciliation discourse (Regan, 2010; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2012). Even though there were also calls for Elders to take the lead in establishing Two-Spirit acceptance in community, some participants perceived that the "spiritual" or "traditional" people were another barrier to community participation, perhaps in part due to residential

school experience. If the truth about residential schools is contingent to reconciliation, so too then is restoring Two-Spirit roles, responsibilities, and experiences on our own terms.

Participants' Recommendations

A number of changes that could contribute to recognition of LGBT/TS people as respected members of First Nations were suggested. There was a consensus on the need for more visibility of Aboriginal LGBT people at events both on- and off-reserve. For instance, the desire for a pride parade, as well as eventually hosting the International Two-Spirit Gathering, was expressed. The traditional places of Two-Spirit peoples could be made visible in ceremonies or in pow-wow specials such as cross-dancing. Cross-dancing as culturally restorative practice could assist with dialoguing about roles and responsibilities. It could create space for acceptance consistent with the physical, psychological, spiritual, and cultural identity development milestones, thus providing opportunities for secure cultural attachment in ways that are recognizable and respected—in essence, to “come in” to community (Wilson, 2008). It could counter norms in dominant LGBT communities of having to “choose” or having to “come out.” Alex Wilson (2008) indigenizes the hegemonic queer coming of age, “coming out,” with the concept of “coming in.” Coming in, however, asserts and reaffirms one's place in Indigenous communities. A place to begin such changes would be community education around Two-Spirit and LGBTQ peoples.

When participants discussed reserve spaces, there was consensus that “There should be services and places for young kids to talk, more openness and welcoming of Two-Spirit community members.” The reserve health service was identified as a place where such resources could be located. Inclusion of knowledge regarding sexual and gender diversity in sex education was also recommended. The need to teach appropriate terminology and knowledge regarding Two-Spirit roles was identified. One way suggested to achieve this was the development of opportunities for mentorship.

Media as a Colonial Technology

Considering the interpellation that has occurred, as evidenced by my research participants, what also needs to be considered is the powerful impact of modern technology, advertising platforms, film, and social media in particular. It is important that social work have an understanding of the assimilationist and co-opting impacts such media outlets have. Ezra Redeagle Whitman (2012, p. 89) reflects on and ultimately rejects the term *Two-Spirit*:

Inside, a voice tells me to retain some sort of integrity, to try, try again and resist the obscure pressure to succumb to generalized norms of gender and sexual identity as they have been molded from both my Native upbringing and the remarkable control of white gay culture.

Whitman speaks of shared experience and internalized conflict when it comes to negotiating the subjectivity of Indigenous and settler impositions. The continued struggle for social justice would therefore seem a good place to start when acknowledging the relationships between LGBTQTS politics and indigeneity.

On the surface, LGBTQTS appears to be inclusive, but when viewed across various social media and advertising platforms, the acronym reinforces the margins of gender and sexuality, and smooths away the lines of class and race (Gross, 2001). LGBTQTS media and advertising, therefore, assert a politic of homonormativity and homonationalism (Morgensen, 2010). An example of co-optation was identified by Daniel Francis (2011) in *The Imaginary Indian*, which notes that Chief Pontiac's image was usurped by General Motors. Pontiac, having led successful campaigns protecting the land and his people, became a symbol of that (settler) civilization in which his image was used to push an economic agenda to sell cars.

Advertising platforms and social media undeniably play a huge role in how our children and youth come to know self and each other. The gatekeepers of both heterosexual and LGBTQ discursive formations that manufacture white lesbian, gay, and straight desires through these platforms support sexual colonization. We have to ask, where do Two-Spirit people observe positive examples that mirror our image, our skin, our diversity? What are the impacts on identity formation when landscapes (such as gay and lesbian villages) have been rewritten with settler narratives imagined into them (Chamberlin, 2003)?

When it comes to the heteronormative (Smith, 2010) framing of our community spaces, which unknowingly dismisses and silences Two-Spirit experiences, there is a lack of positive or well written sexuality and gender fluid role models or examples for Indigenous youth to look up to through Indigenous media and film (Tatonetti, 2011). It is a point shared and problematized by Tsu'tina filmmaker Beric Manywounds:

The absence of queer Indigenous youth visibility in cinema troubles and motivates me. I remember how much life and excitement and validation and inspiration the films in my youth gave me, and yet they were laced with problems in that they never represented an image/opinion/comment on the real root things pertaining to my own identity, verifying in cinema culture, the erasure and oppression of Two-Spiritedness in the colonial world. Today I walked down Vancity streets to the café to do my writing, and reflect with fondness and sadness, the moments of romance and sensuality and breakthrough, as well as the isolation, self non-existence, and immobilization in my "gay" youth that were indeed the moments that great films are usually made of. As that (gay) part of my life comes to a close for the opening of a new chapter, I am left with a residual and sincere pursuit of creating on screen cinema images that hold more of the truths that we as Two-Spirits would more relate

and understand, and that would shed light and begin discourse about what our paths forward are. I'm really excited to do the work, and help set the weird record (not) straight that "gay" was not a social defect that arrived with the "Whiteman." (Personal communication, January 12, 2013)

For instance, if we take a look at relationships and sexualities in dating services, as well as the current gay marriage equality human rights campaign in some countries, as manufactured through advertising and media hegemonic depictions of white gay culture, why not imagery of trans-identified or racialized queer persons of colour and other-gendered relationships? These examples reveal the maintenance of how gay stays white and what kind of white it stays (Berube, 2001). A contemporary version of LGB social justice and its successful campaign around the marriage debate is noteworthy here, due to a recent moment when the gay marriage agenda appropriated the Imaginary Indian. For instance, two recent memes (short, often politicized sayings or statements that get posted and shared on social media sites) to consider are "Gay marriage, ha! Back in my day we just called it marriage" (memegenerator.net/instance/29105214), and the following:

Christian leaders, stand on our soil and claim: gay marriage has never occurred here. Over 130 tribes in every region of North America performed millions of same sex marriages for hundreds of years. Their statements are both hateful and ignorant. Your "homosexual" was our "Two-Spirit" people ... We considered them sacred. (nsaney.blogspot.ca/2012/10/two-spirit-people-we-considered-them.html)

These postings represent blatant co-optation of an historical Indigenous cultural concept that is simply non-translatable to meet the needs of the white LGBT pro-marriage agenda. Although these memes

were well intentioned, to suggest that contemporary understanding of terms like *gay*, *homosexual*, and *same-sex* were understood in the same way as how “over 130 tribes” (a rather arbitrary number to arrive at) understood their Two-Spirit people, erases the complexities and responsibilities of the relationships to community, spirituality, and the land. It suggests that each linguistically analogous word that is tribally unique and still used to describe space for sexually and gender fluid Indigenous persons is the same as LGBTQTS. These memes fall short in that they overshadow present “Two-Spirit” activisms, maintain that our accepted spaces are in the past, and, like the use of Pontiac’s image, indigeneity has once again become a face for the justification of contemporary gay marriage’s dominant international imagery. This is not acceptable. I have yet to witness major LGBTQ organizations and foundations coming out to support Aboriginal/Native American/Inuit/Métis struggles for basic human/Aboriginal rights to be recognized on the lands settlers have come to prosper in.

In a similar vein, Allan Berube (2001) makes an excellent point with his critique of the 1993 American senate hearings on gays in the US military, where gay white men were recast in the roles of African American civil rights leaders. Berube (2001) argues,

The extended race analogy compensates for this weightlessness by first invoking the moral authority of the civil rights movement (while erasing its actual history), and then transferring that unearned moral authority to a white gay movement, without giving anything back. (p. 244)

It is important to recognize these gaps in various queer and Indigenous modern technology, film, advertising platforms, and social media. Their ensuing interpellation is detrimental to Two-Spirit people. Appropriation is a very real problem, as the above memes found their way onto Indigenous and non-Indigenous Facebook walls, I observed

with very little question or debate. These examples are connected to how LGBT is positioned in front of Aboriginal (as I've outlined above) and is a caution for social work practice to consider power and assimilation through sexuality and (cis)genderism. Furthermore, Indigenous media and social action platforms could reconcile the situation by acknowledging spaces beyond the binary that exist on Turtle Island, especially during discussions of violence against *all* women and *all* masculinities, and ultimately Aboriginal rights, title, and nationhood. There is urgency in the development of culturally restorative practice through media to assist Two-Spirit youth as recognized by Manywounds (2013), to (re)imagine ourselves into the present.

Recommendations for Social Work

It is essential that schools of social work place more emphasis on finding confluence with Indigenous epistemology and research methods, or risk the continued production of colonized minds. It is important to note here the reminder from Margaret Kovach (2010) that while decolonizing perspectives are important and useful, they are centred in settler discourses, whereas Indigenous paradigms are centred in Indigenous knowledges. In using social justice/anti-oppressive/anti-racist/decolonizing paradigms in social work practice with Indigenous peoples, social workers could unknowingly be (1) imposing Western understandings of gender and sexuality and (2) excluding people due to the wide range of meanings and interpretations in and around the concept of Two-Spirit itself.

It is time to start imagining beyond strict LGBTQTS constructs. Indigenous social work requires an Indigenous-led, culturally restorative practice and strong allies for Two-Spirits. Cross-dancing as culturally restorative practice can counter the multiple issues as presented in this chapter through supporting Indigenous persons, whether rural or urban. Restorative practice is about reconnection: reconnection to culture, spirituality, identity, community, and the land. Indigenous

relationships to the land are important for us to note, as they are connected to our bodies. There is no blanket approach to practice with Aboriginal peoples. We must consider cultural safety (Brascoupe & Waters, 2009) for sexually and gender fluid Indigenous persons who find themselves outside of dominant definitions of LGBTQTS by limiting their self-expression or incorrectly reproducing and regulating Two-Spirit identity.

Conclusion

In reflecting on the younger participants' experience in a LGBT youth group, it was evident they saw no semblance of self through participating in it. We should be careful with the language we use and the invocation of Indigenous culture. Although I still come back to how to create a space for non-Indigenous practitioners to utilize and incorporate our tools (including that of modern technology) in service to Indigenous populations, appropriation and, above all else, harm are of the utmost concern. When and how will these opportunities manifest, and what is it going to take for this line of thought to be realized?

Cross-dancing as a culturally restorative practice is about visibility. It is an effort toward engaging with the acronym and thinking of practice in terms of social justice, fairness, equality (O'Brien, 2011), and equity. What does practice look like and how do we avoid erasing the complexities of those imagined to be included under the LGBTQTS umbrella? I would like to caution students of social work on the grounds that we're perpetually and sometimes effervescently seeking social justice and solidarity through multiple approaches to sites of practice. Simard (2009) brings up a crucial point in turning theory into practice: the absence of leadership by the Indigenous Nation could prove disrespectful in relation to the goal of culturally restorative practice, which is nationhood empowerment. Nationhood empowerment can only occur when everyone has been invited back into the circle; this means that cross-dancing as culturally restorative practice is but one piece in the effort

to empower Two-Spirit people via roles and responsibilities. At present, there is an overwhelming need for mentors and role models, as well as positive media representation of Two-Spirit peoples, to achieve nationhood empowerment across all of Turtle Island. It is my opinion that cross-dancing as culturally restorative practice is a necessary *modus operandi* to further inspire interruptions of heteropatriarchy in Indigenous communities, as well as homonormativity across Turtle Island. In this way, we can have multiple tools to engage the restorative capacities of embracing diversity in our communities, as well as create opportunity for expanding nationhood empowerment via Indigenous approaches to social work.

Note

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Exhibit: National Inquiry into Missing and
Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Location/Phase: Parts 11/111 - Iqaluit

Witness: Jeffrey McNeil-Seymour

Submitted by: Christa Big Canoe

Add'l info: P02-03P01P0301

Date: SEP 12 2018

Initials

I/D

Entered

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