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Homonalism from the Colonial Margins

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CHAPTER EIGHT

Indigenizing the Gay Agenda: Notes on Cultural Relativism and Homonationalism from the Colonial Margins

Jeffrey McNeil-Seymour (Secwepemc/English)

Introduction: Colonized Imaginations

The limited but ever-expanding corpus of knowledge circling indigeneity, sexuality, and gender (pre- and post-contact) coupled with identity politics as imposed through the use of language of the rich diaspora of the modern queer movement, presents a unique opportunity for new gay agendas. A gay agenda that is reclaimed from the religious right presents itself as a prime opportunity to trouble dominant national and queer imaginaries on multiple levels. Gender and sexuality are experienced alongside race, class, geography, and history. In this chapter, I dwell in these intersections in search of those moments of mutually respectful “ally-ship.”

Our collective imaginations have been colonized, regulating our ability to imagine ourselves and “others” through words such as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, Two-Spirit, fag, tranny, homo, dyke, First Nation, Aboriginal, Indian, and Apple. Some of these imposed identities have been only recently constructed. Barely 200 years old, these terms dominate how identity can be articulated and experienced. Why are these the available terms? Whose interest do they serve (Wilchins, 2004)? And key to this discussion, what does it mean for deploying a reclaimed gay agenda? Does it include fair and accurate ethnic representation? Is there space for experiences of selfhood beyond and between these terms and labels? And how do they intersect to shape experiences of marginalization?

To begin, let’s reflect on the ways that Lake Babine First Nation member Jenna Talackova’s candidacy for the Miss Universe Pageant was supported by queer human-rights groups and played out in the media. Questions about the “authenticity” of her gender challenged

pageant organizers. At the same time that she was given permission to proceed, her identity as an Aboriginal person was barely talked about. So I wonder, is she more dangerous as Indigenous *and* transgendered? Race in this equation, as it most often is, was relegated to the margins. Why was Lake Babine First Nation overlooked during her human-rights resistance in her blonde, fair-skinned privilege? And ultimately, why was her passport held up to verify her gender (and identity) and not her Indian Status card (Transgender woman allowed back into Miss Universe, 2012)? Her gendered body on display in the pageant trumped her raced body. Her interpretation of what it takes to be a beauty queen by today's standard (fair skinned and blonde) reinforces racial hierarchies from which Aboriginal women's resistance now emerges. Even though her victory asserts space and place for modern queer resistance's diaspora of gender and social activities, it does little for indigeneity.

The realities of intergenerational trauma and the very measurable affects/effects of the legacies of an ongoing colonial project continue to be lived in many Indigenous communities across Turtle Island (North America). As a result, we need to be wary of the power relations embedded in, and exercised through, multiple discursive excursions that reflect incompatible linguistic choices and worldviews. While any discussions and action about a "post"-colonial experience around decolonization or reconciliation might still be far off, perhaps this is where the traditional role of Two-Spirit as mediator has a role to play in an attempt to facilitate a confluence of post-colonial and queer identity discourse.

As a mode of study in which intersectionality is inherent, Two-Spirit studies represent a nuanced lens through which to analyze interactions between and among diverse sexual orientations, genders, and cultures (Tatonetti, 2010). When our Indigenous identities intersect with our gendered and sexual selves, Settler exclusions are compounded. Queer negotiations shy away from the fact that we have shared experiences, and as Tuhkanen (2011) posits, a queer hybridization with certain strands of post-colonial writing emerges. Queer hybridization must burgeon a reconstituted gay agenda and be circumspect with its use.

In order to attempt to weave notions of solidarity, it's imperative for Indigenous peoples to learn Settler languages, and vice versa. These contemporary attempts at negotiations run amuck when ideas of identity, nationhood, and place become personalized and internalized. The knot tightens quickly around notions of identity and selfhood as we (the Indigenous) find ourselves in a place of the nameless. So many of us find our identity in homogenizing Settler terms such as "Aboriginal," "First Nation," "Indian," or "Metis," which are entrenched in Canadian legal discourses that attempt to define us. As such, we are stigmatized by reinforced subjectivities and have had minimized opportunity to participate in how our identity and personhood are realized. Identity politics in Indigenous communities are now moving toward the use of our traditional nation names. As a result, those who don't fall into the correct measure of Indianness (as defined and measured by Settler determinations) are denied the privilege of inclusion through self-identification. Our colonized imagination limits our abilities to imagine ourselves and "others."

On Space and Place

Kim Anderson (2000) notes that in both Western and Indigenous frameworks, Native women have historically been equated with the land. The Euro-constructed image of Native women, therefore, mirrors Western attitudes toward the Earth. Sadly, this relationship has typically developed within the context of control, conquest, possession, and exploitation, and death. In order to gauge our internal health, we simply need to look to the ecological environment. Following this same logic, we can gauge the health of all Canadian women by looking at the neoliberal and capitalistic attack on the very ecological systems that sustain us nationally and globally, or with a quick glance at Wally Oppal's Murdered and Missing Women Inquiry ("Vancouver police," 2011).

However, Peter Mason (1997) shares Richard Trexler's historiographical research and the invasion of Panama where Vasco Nunez de Balboa's discovery of Indigenous gender-fluid biological men resulted in the men's murder. Panama was not an isolated incident. Two-Spirit persons suffered equally and continue to haunt spaces of dispossession, exploitation, and death. This is colonialism's other hidden legacy. Two-

Spirit people are vital to our tribal communities. Further, Two-Spirit asserts ceremonial and spiritual communities, traditions, and relationships with medicine (and the land) as central in constituting various identities, marking itself as distinct from dominant constructions of GLBTQ identities (Driskill, 2010). This is a perfect example of how radical a new gay agenda needs to be when rewriting our national imaginary into one that is poignant, united, and awake.

Geographies

The call is thus for conversations toward solidarity at the intersections of queer geographies and gay and lesbian spaces on the grounds that Two-Spirit embodies a gendered, sexual, and racialized position. Catherine Nash (2010) calls for the need to pull apart what we mean by LGBTQ spaces and identities to get at the more particular, historical, and transformative operations of intersections with subjective compilations of sexed, racialized, and classed identities that are political, economic, and social processes. Nash also highlights the fact that gay and lesbian villages currently support successful conservative and assimilationist "gay and lesbian" politics. Are these gay and lesbian villages also able to nurture Indigenous youth, allowing them to view larger Canadian centers as queer-safe havens that embrace all aspects of their Indigenous identity?

Lisa Tattonetti's examination of Indigenous films that attempt to explore the intersections of gender, sexuality, and indigeneity emphasizes an implicit positing of sexuality as White, the reservation as straight, and the Two-Spirit identity as tenuous and unsustainable. She gives attention to how such depictions reinscribe a gay imaginary based on Settler paradigms in which the characters are forced to choose community or sexuality, remain invisible, or "come out" (Tattonetti, 2010). Tattonetti's insight correlates with my research in Tk'emlúps te Secwepemc'ulw (Kamloops, British Columbia) where participants talk about how their experiences of navigating expressions of selfhood leave them not entirely accepted in community (homophobia), nameless (denied cultural location through language), forced to choose a gay, lesbian, bisexual identity, or remain silent (and single). This is further compounded by acknowledgement of not being "Indian" enough to be on reserve, not being "White" enough

off it, accounts of racism experienced within the queer community of Kamloops, and of course, classism. These navigations, histories, and experiences of persons included in the Indigenous/Queer diaspora of Secwepemc'ulw, as well as the rest of the territories in so-called British Columbia (the majority of land claims have yet to be settled), have potential for being smoothed over and purposefully denied.

Colonialism in Canada is a cultural project. Colonial values, ideologies, and interests are embedded in social, economic, and political institutions. They create the baseline of common sense and "normal." In this formation, the categories of Indian and White are mutually exclusive and oppositional as Euro-Canadian cultural superiority, material privileges, and political authority are taken as unquestioned truths (Furniss, 1999). Looking to Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore's (2012) "Why Are Faggots So Afraid of Faggots?: Flaming Challenges to Masculinity, Objectification, and the Desire to Conform" to queer this approach, we are challenged to consider how Euro-homocentric Canadian cultural superiority, material privileges (gay culture's aesthetics), and political authority (any queer discursive resistance) are undoubtedly taken as completely hegemonic truths. Arguably, this has had huge impacts on how our landscapes are now written internationally. Dominant conversations about Indianness taking place in Canada where Settler claims to the land depend on the ongoing obliteration of Indigenous presence reveals a double whammy of sorts for Two-Spirit people (Lawrence, 2004).

A re-visioned gay agenda cannot endorse a space where equality (for some), tolerance (for some), and justice (for some), can reign. There are, if we seek them out, opportunities for solidarity in our efforts to deny absorption into Settler heteronormativity (Smith, 2010) and to reimagine through new gay agendas what the terms are in the spaces we have come to inhabit. Much like how reserve systems are colonial technologies meant to divide and conquer, and for surveillance (Harris, 2002), so too can gay and lesbian villages be read as such; they too are now grounded nodes and living communities.

Kinsmen and Gentile's "Canadian War on Queers"

When taking into consideration the issue of language and identity politics, as well as space and place, queer discursive resistance has

reached an impasse in its effort to raise consciousness. As a discussion, an idea, and in particular, as activism, the focus of queer resistance has been in the area of confronting, problematizing, and destabilizing Euro-heteropatriarchal notions of power that are reproduced and regulated through the use of language. As the subjugated and nameless confront various topics, it is clear, at least from my perspective, that reproductions and regulation of queer identity and the impacts and impositions this has had on Indigenous communities in so-called British Columbia are still occurring and passing by without much, if any, interrogation at all. I have responsibility as a product of miscegenation, as a member of multiple communities, and as a student, to bring confluence to Indigenous and Settler politics and the intersections of gender and sexuality. Yet it is hard to draw attention to these moments in a good way when falling into the discursive gaps, as all I can see are multiple missed opportunities to build solid foundations. The moments to which I refer are the continued use of language that perpetuates "Othering" through the use of references that locate "us" and "them" dialectical thinking, and moments where persons use the term "White." The idea of becoming one's ally should compel queer and Indigenous sites of resistance to discuss what this means and on whose terms ally-ship is entered consensually. As Hall (2006) notes,

The question of whether a discourse is true or false is less important than whether it is effective in practice. When it is effective—organizing and regulating relations of power (say, between the West and the Rest)—it is called a "regime of truth." (p. 169)

Reading *The Canadian War on Queers* (Kinsman & Gentile, 2011) through a Two-Spirit lens, we see missed opportunities abound. With words such as "surveillance" of queer communities and "informants" within those communities coupled with common practices for national security against Muslims, Arabs, and "other" racialized peoples, this book seems to miss the mark of a discussion with decolonization. Queer Canadian discursive and historical resistance has been realized on the backs of those "other racialized people" who have been violently victimized—a prime example of how often our uncomfortable similarities and differences are overlooked when there is any hint of the necropolitical history of Turtle Island. For instance, Scott

Morgensen shares, colonists interpreted diverse practices of gender and sexuality as signs of a general primitivity among Native peoples. Over time, they produced a colonial necropolitics that framed Native peoples as queer populations marked for death (Morgensen, 2010). Necropolitics has yet to be scrubbed out of the Western psyche, and has arguably taken on new forms as I observe them in *The Canadian War on Queers*.

Kinsmen and Gentiles indicate that respectable middle-class queers are coming to be invested in the defense of national security, even against other queers. As Kinsman and Gentile indicate, they are supporting campaigns against sex-trade workers, people living in poverty, and those identified as Arab or Muslim. I argue that these middle-class queers and their embracing of the national security state asserts a politic of homonormativity. Queer human-rights campaigns, which champion the rights of queers of all racialized categories, run the risk of reading as homonationalist and get messy and confusing in the intersections with middle-class queers' dialectic asserting "us" and "them," and the continued subjugation of Indigenous identities/communities.

Modern sexuality arose in the United States (and Canada) amid a colonialization in which agents and beneficiaries of sexual colonization became subjects of Settler sexuality. Settlement and its naturalization then conditioned the emergence of modern queer formations, including their inheritance and sustaining of colonial biopolitics in the form of Settler homonationalism (Morgensen, 2010). Morgensen's assertion is a clear articulation of regulating power and ensuring firm entrenchment in the maintenance of homonationalism within imaginaries of queer discursive resistance's "regime of truth." A re-visioned gay agenda must be entirely clear on who has access to what the terms of its appeal are as it is threatened by the use of "us" and "them" that is perpetuated by dominant discursive productions. If we are not clear, the imaginative capacities will be colonized and the project itself risks turning from one of social justice activism to a participatory agent in the ongoing colonization of the "thems."

Margaret Denike's reading of Jasbir Puar's *Terrorist Assemblages* shares how Puar challenges those of us engaged in human-rights theory and advocacy for sexual minorities to a serious consideration

of what it is that enables such advocacy to be effective in the first instance, and what the effectiveness of such campaigns means for the repositioning of LGBT subjects in mainstream economies (Denike, 2010). To reposition LGBTQ subjectivities, what is it that enables this assertion to be effective in its deployment in neoliberal and capitalistic economies? Numerous Indigenous communities across Turtle Island are fighting for the very survival of their nations. As viewed through ancestral ties to the very lands upon which liberated queers across Turtle Island now experience, when will liberation inspire queers to start giving back? Dorothy Christian (Secwepemc) draws from our Secwepemc teachings, linking Settler relations and the environment, and points out that we should take only what we need and must give back (Christian, 2011). Sunera Thobani's (2007) exploration of the triad of power as written into Canada's Multicultural Act, places White power above immigrants' (as Others) whose power is therefore only slightly greater than that of Indigenous persons. The project of tolerance through multiculturalism therefore reproduces "others'" identity as colonizer and regulates the pursuit of subjective struggles for full citizenship. Queer(ed) persons of color must remember to articulate and recognize this positioning and privilege in their troubling of dominant discursive productions. Paul Kershaw (2011) shares that he encounters many Canadians who do not consider truth and reconciliation a priority because they believe that residential schools are a part of the past and therefore have no significance for the present. Combined with ideas about homonationalism, it appears, then, that creating space, identity, and justice through a new gay agenda, may not be an easy process.

Whiteness and the New Gay Agenda

In our effort toward a New Gay Agenda, we must be wary in the intersections of Indigenous and Settler personhood, as human beings, and bring an end to continuing to compartmentalize each other, especially when speaking to "Whiteness." As Indigenous and queer advocates, we should be wary of the harmful homogenizing effects of identifying or positioning anyone as White, Aboriginal, Indian, gay, lesbian, or even, Two-Spirit; looks can be deceiving. In my view, Kinsmen and Gentile (2011) unwittingly do so when they reference

the "White" protestor. When "White" is used to reference Caucasian people, it reinforces the dialectic of "us" and "them" and alienates our potential allies in our efforts. Equating the experience of the "White" protestor with "Indigenous resistance" reinforces the margins from which we (Indigenous persons) are emerging. Our choice of words has power and so we must also remain vigilant and set the example for what alliances between Indigenous and queer activisms deem to be poignant and inclusive language in our continued struggle to be recognized on our own terms in community and in Canada. Indigenous activisms are keen to highlight the diversity of hundreds of nations on Turtle Island pre- and post-contact in response to words such as "Aboriginal" and "First Nation"; those of us engaged in activisms also should not tolerate the use of "White" to describe "other" ethnically diverse peoples, either. When we (Indigenous and queer) discuss issues of "Whiteness," we are specifically discussing privilege. To ensure sincerity and respect in our efforts to build relationships, we must avoid homogenization of these issues.

The Canadian War on Queers recognizes the investment of middle-class queers in the national security state. Although not comparable, it is suggested that the Indigenous and "White" protestor have shared similar levels of violence. How, then, can a new gay agenda challenge, disrupt, and confront well-established historical and present violence and exclusions that are deeply rooted in colonial and Indigenous imaginations and are visible in my research in Tk'emlúps te Secwepemc'ulw? A new agenda must remain on point even as issues of race, space, and the hegemonic structures are embedded within our language and imaginations; otherwise we risk re-entrenching power over others, not ally-ship.

Consensual Ally-Ship

In solidarity, we are supposedly transformed, and we move far beyond the boundaries of all nation-states and fundamentalisms. However, this repositioning is not transformation; it is only a mutation of power. Consider Anne Bishop's interrogation of power relations and her solution of "power-with," which is described as moving into a position of power standing beside or behind the equity-seeking individual (Bishop, 2002). This means one stands with the subjugated

and speaks on their behalf only when asked to do so by them, never taking up the position of "other."

Consensual ally-ship occurs only after reaching consensus on what is on the agenda and what terms are therefore acceptable. Those on the queer resistance front sometimes forget that. Like contemporary queer resistance, we (Indigenous) can no longer afford to just be tolerated as equity seeking, nor relegated to the margins within the acronym. LGBTQ human rights have imagined the primitive (Francis, 2011) and appropriated our accepted spaces of gender and sexual fluidity (Williams, 1986; Feinberg, 1996). This justificative of contemporary queer discursive resistance's use of primitive acceptance can be read as a vein of queer sovereignty.

Taiaiake Alfred's (Mohawk) interrogation of the use of the word "sovereignty" as a goal for Indigenous politics reveals it as an exclusionary concept rooted in adversarial and coercive Western notions of power, and that acceptance of "Aboriginal rights" in the context of state sovereignty represents the culmination of White society's efforts to assimilate Indigenous peoples (Alfred, 2006). Can the same be said through Indigenous acceptance of western constructions of gendered and sexual identity politics? How does a new gay agenda support Indigenous sexual sovereignty? The focus in *The Canadian War on Queers* is to destabilize how sexuality and gender deviance was/is within a defense of heterosexual hegemony, and national securities' textual mediation in campaigns against queers and its continuation in the current war on terror (Kinsman & Gentile, 2011). Indigenous resistance converges with Kinsman and Gentile in confronting Conservative Canadian government's surveillance agenda, budget cuts to oppositional agency, and their labeling of protestors and Native groups as potential terrorist threats. We must be very clear that solidarity recognizes Indigenous presence, a point that, in my view, Kinsman and Gentile left in the margins.

Tuhkanen (2011) eloquently repositions Gloria Anzaldua as a queer theorist exploring the missed opportunities of the intersections of post-colonial and queer theory. Anzaldua maps these tensions along axes of queer versus lesbian feminist projects, scholarship versus creative writing, the ivory tower versus *el barrio*—which, for the purposes of this chapter, I would expand to include the ivory tower versus queer

identity, spaces and places, and Indian reservations/traditional territories. Tuhkanen's exploration of queer hybridity revealed that academic readers didn't have much to say about this logic, because as seen through the lenses of the dominant paradigm, Anzaldúa's assumptions seem naïve, pre-critical, or simply incomprehensible and incompatible (Tuhkanen, 2011). Denike challenges us to consider how this should color the way we formulate, engage with, and respond to ongoing human-rights campaigns; and how success in queer rights, decriminalization, constitutionalisation of gender equality, domestication and normalization of queer families, "pride" and queer aesthetics all now have a new relationship with citizenship (Denike, 2010). Conjointly, Rita Wong shared insight into the "what ifs?" of having learned various Indigenous languages of Canada as well as French, and how she felt her capacity for building the culture of peace that we want would be even stronger if it were gifted by the attunements and sensitivities that each language offers (Wong, 2011). A Secwepemctsin word that has been suggested to me to closely mirror Two-Spirit responsibility is known as *Yucamin'min*, meaning "protectors of the Earth and protectors of the people." The role of *Yucamin'min* seems a good place to start in a call for queer hybridization: protect the Earth and protect the people. We must always be aware of the implications of remaining silent within intellectually and politically-destructive colonial spaces. This also remains true for the language we choose for queer hybridity's deployment of a gay agenda and in its departure from intersections with homonationalism. As Two-Spirit, queer, Settler, Indigenous, activists, visionaries, and so on, we all use verbal and nonverbal languages that transcend dominant constructions, so let's ensure that the language of a new gay agenda is one that nurtures spaces of peace and mutual understanding. In this newfound mutual understanding, may we endure in consensual ally-ship to assist our battles in the eradication of systemic and normalized violence that our composite communities continue to face.

"Coming in" to Space and Place: Homonationalism and the White Savior

The issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in British Columbia is polarized as a women's and Aboriginal issue. However,

we must also not ignore or silence the fact that young boys and men continue to go missing, as well as Two-Spirit persons such as Faye Paquette and Karrie Bone, both from Prince George. They remain in the shadows; Aboriginal populations remain marked for death.

Spatial analysis asserts when individuals enter into a space that society deems "degenerate," they lose entitlement to personhood and therefore acts of violence become normalized (Razack, 2002), a reality of which Indigenous and queers are keenly aware. Violence has many forms. Through a new gay agenda, the queer political project can make amends for lateral violence and its continued role in the regulation of identity. Consensual ally-ship is key. To think about queer becomings, then, is to carve out a space for contesting the appeal of essentialism, however strategic, fostered by gay and lesbian identity politics (McCallum & Tuhkanen, 2011). However, we must also reflect on the departures and arrivals with Two-Spirit coming in. In the circles I run in, our teachings indicate that Indigenous persons mature or move into adulthood well into their 30s. This is problematic as Settler temporal and spatial definitions of "youth" differ from Secwepemc people's ways of knowing. We go through seven transformations in our lifetime: the womb, baby, child, puberty, young adult, adult, and Elder. Thus, many of us, and particularly Indigenous LGBTQ and/or Two-Spirit persons in Tk'emlúps, are stuck in a sort of limbo at this time because we are further derailed from community roles, responsibility, and tradition while being subject to the "coming-out" narrative's rite of passage into "othered" queer ranks.

As noted by Chong-Suk Han (2007), queer coming of age is about being an individual and declaring one's individuality to others. Imagine the implications of this on communal living and how "coming out" pulls the Indigenous community apart even further. When we choose to locate ourselves first as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or trans, then second as Indigenous, we are choosing to accept Western identities that are adversarial and incompatible with Indigenous ways of knowing gender and sexuality; as I have pointed out, this leaves many youth with no access to culturally-safe and appropriate understanding through their own languages or with links to Indigenous community, marking another success of the colonial project.

Queering the colonial landscape is poignant, as Two-Spirit persons are and have been confronted by gatekeepers of knowledge in our reserve communities asserting we "never existed." However, the hegemonic foundations imposed through Settler and Indigenous pedagogies of fear are disintegrating with the deployment of Two-Spirit studies. For instance, Dr. Alexandria Wilson, a self-identified Two-Spirit (as described in Genovese, 2011), says that Two-Spirit is about coming into self, coming into community, and stepping into one's community role. This interplay is grounded in language but it is also what is at stake in the critical reframings of queer becomings (McCallum & Tuhkanen, 2011) and Two-Spirit coming-ins. With the large body of work that exists on Aboriginal determinants of health, child welfare, education, and so on, there is a silencing of the deeper Hidden Legacy framed only as heteronormative when it comes to these data sets. Further, decolonizing gender and sexuality in Tk'emlúps reveal that some lives are still relegated to the margins.

Marie Wadden shares Elder Dr. Marjorie Hodgson's (Carrier) perspective of healing as being not only an Aboriginal issue: "it is a Canadian issue and...if we want to heal, we need to get interested in other Canadians" (Wadden, 2008, p. 17). Hodgson's critical observation and call to action is a perfect example that highlights one of many intersecting concerns in Canada in an effort toward reconciliation and our collective responsibility in solidarity through a new gay agenda. For those of us (Two-Spirit) who are now moving into spaces past intergenerational trauma, it is evident that we are carrying the weight and the inescapable responsibility to clear spaces for healthy new generations. Indigeneity requires strong working relationships with our Settler family whose own intergenerational trauma we have yet to address. We (the Indigenous) must therefore take into consideration that we are not the only ones suffering as imagination remains colonized. We form a symbiotic relationship. What happens to one happens to the other, and so our resistance is a battle for the health of our internal environment, as well as a battle for the health of Mother Earth as we unleash imaginings of a new gay agenda. We (Indigenous and queer as warriors) must practice teachings of healing (a true warrior is a healer) as we rivet the attention of colonized imaginations. We must give a discourse of peace, respect, compassion, strength,

wisdom, humbleness, and love. We all wear the burden of hidden legacies on Turtle Island as long as normativity is imposed, conversations are silenced, and apathy reigns.

I was informed by imagery of the gay male standard of beauty and found myself haunting spaces of tokenism and exotified status. Chasing such unobtainable ideals was harmful in a way that jeopardized my very personhood and health. During moments of feeling the pressure to "come out," I was confused by the "something" that was missing. Dominant Settler and queer culture demanded my conformity through my exotified status, while insisting that my sexuality remain fixed. Instead of "coming out," my healing and learning journey through Indigenous scholarship and activism has since "brought me in" to desirable spaces of self. Sitting in talking circles with peers or interviews with my brilliant research participants in my community of Tk'emlúps te Secwepemc reveals shared and similar experiences of multilayered traumas as we all acknowledge the effects of a lack of Two-Spirit recognition and ceremony in our daily lives on/off reserve and territory.

Squarely placed on all of our shoulders *together* is a responsibility to enter into consensual ally-ship when confronting hegemony and destabilizing norms. Multiple discursive formations, both written and spoken, aid in the regulation of violence, subjectivity, and colonialism; words, therefore, have massive amounts of power. Through queer hybridity and accepting the responsibility of *Yucamin'min* in support of Indigenous sites of resistance, a new gay agenda has an opportunity to reimagine a culture of peace in Canada, possibly even setting a global standard. A departure of this magnitude forged by a new gay agenda from discursive colonization has the ability to harness lasting healing effects on the internal/external environments for everyone. We must celebrate our unique qualities in a way that bourgeons solidarity through queer hybridity, because at present, we have bigger fish to fry.

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