

Joyous Discipline: Native Autonomy and Culturally Conservative Two-Spirit People [Abstract]

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The problem driving this essay is how we, as scholars, can account for the complexities of the seemingly unified elements that make up tribally specific identity held among many gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer and two-spirit (GLBTQ2) American Indians while asking them to disrupt oppressive sex and gender stabilities within the communities to which they are committed. These unified elements are the social practices, identity categories and historical depths that allow tribal peoples to know who they are and force non-Indians to know who they are not. I do not seek to problematize Native GLBTQ2 as a sexuality, sexual or gender identity. Rather, I am seeking to problematize the forms of power that come to bear on our analysis of on-the-ground identity experience; the ways we position ourselves and are positioned from uneven locations of power. Further, I seek to analyze the ways in which academic constructions of Native and GLBTQ2 identities have the potential to endorse and overinvest in certain experiences and representations.

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