



Building Utopia

JOHN HUMPHREY CENTRE
for **PEACE** and **HUMAN RIGHTS**



**RIGHTING
RELATIONS**



INTRODUCTION & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A massive thank you to everyone involved with the Gender and Sexually Expansive Change Lab in any capacity from its inception through its iterations, including the ever-evolving goals and stages, for your contributions and participation to whichever effect added to and influenced this body of work. To those who submitted pieces, may you feel not only [accurately] amplified but seen and validated, and it is our hope that this presentation of your masterpieces reflects the proper and true form you intended and put in.

We'd especially like to acknowledge the brilliance, hard work and stewardship of kēr, who not only named this zine but also researched and authored the text for each narrative theme. Also, a huge thank you to the core team at Righting Relations who have worked together over the past two years to build a beautiful team of folks and helped shepherd us through a movement of felicity and fondness: anakwudwabisayquay, Mirtha Rivera, Wen Chan, kēr, Lisa Odle and Renée Vaugois. Thank you all for your vision and commitment to these salient efforts.

We dedicate this zine, Building Utopia, to Love and the Lands on which we are all beyond so blest to call Home. May this literary journey nourish you and, during these uncertain times, remind you that we are out there, that you are not alone and that if you can dream it, we're your Construction Crew™.

This zine represents a historied, multi-year undertaking from the inception of a small Working Group to the multigenerational Stories of the Prairies sessions, culminating in the weekend of December 2nd to 5th of 2022, where the Gender and Sexually Expansive Righting Relations Change Lab met for a gathering in Treaty One territory at [Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre](#)[📍] in Manitoba. The cabin we congregated at was beautiful and cozy, bar none. It was a weekend full of joy, gorgeous people and energy. For many, this was the first such a gathering they'd attended since the pandemic; for some their first ever. The need for frequent, safe, and intentional queer spaces was apparent and emphasized throughout the weekend.

We engaged in ceremony and circle and brainstormed queer-centred operating principles for Righting Relations. We told stories verbally and visually and engaged in popular theatre. We spent hours crafting and creating collages and zine pages. We shared a few tears, sang loudly, danced flamboyantly, and laughed merrily. Most importantly, it was a space that allowed for queer kinship, creativity, and unapologetic jubilation to blossom.

We worked collectively to build this zine which captured our reflections, thoughts, and questions. We are excited to share this special project, which is dear and near to our hearts, with you.

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BUILDING UTOPIA PLAYLIST


Some songs we sang and danced to. Click the song you want to listen to, or view the playlist on Spotify!

1. [This Is Me - Demi Lovato](#)
2. [Yoga - Janelle Monàe](#)
3. [G.B.A - Xavier Rudd](#)
4. [Fallin' - Alicia Keys](#)
5. [Beautiful Noise - Neil Diamond](#)
6. [Wannabe - Spice Girls](#)
7. [Girl On Fire - Alicia Keys](#)
8. [When You Find the One - Melissa Etheridge](#)
9. [Power of Love - Céline Dion](#)
10. [Don't Let Go - En Vogue](#)
11. [Pynk - Janelle Monàe](#)
12. [You're Makin' Me High - Toni Braxton](#)
13. [Cold Hearted - Paula Abdul](#)
14. [That's the Way Love Goes - Janet Jackson](#)
15. [Venus Fly - Janelle Monàe & Grimes](#)
16. [Skyscraper - Demi Lovato](#)
17. [Water Under the Bridge - Adele](#)
18. [Bidi Bidi Bom Bom - Selena](#)
19. [Virgo's Groove - Beyonce](#)
20. [As the World Caves In - Matt Maltese](#)
21. [Heated - Beyonce](#)

Scan or click this Spotify code to get direct access to the playlist



MULTIMEDIA RESOURCES

Resources to listen, watch, and learn from! Click the box or scan the QR code! Look for the  icon for resources throughout the zine!



PODCAST 



ALOK on Unruly Beauty
For the Wild

PODCAST 



ALOK: Urgent Need for Compassion
Man Enough

PODCAST 




ROOTS 4 CHANGE

PODCAST 



Ideas with Nahlah Ayed

WATCH 



Gender is a Scam

RESOURCE 



QueerCore - History

RESOURCE 



QTBIPOC History
Reference

RESOURCE 



QueerCore Zine & Queer
Punk Movement

Restoring the Sacred and Beautiful Diverse Expressions of Love

Queer-Centered Operating Principles for Righting Relations

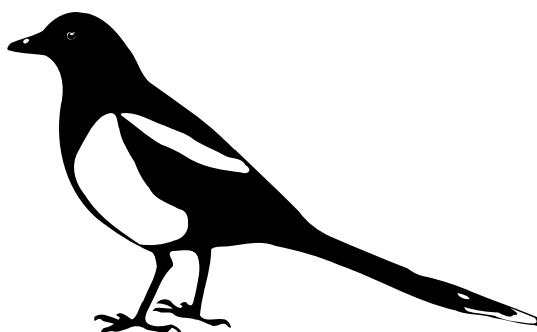
Operating Principles are fluid and overlapping, meaning they are guidelines for how we work and where we position ourselves in our work.

As Righting Relations:

- We honour the sacredness and power of 2Spirit/Indigi/Queerness+, grounding in ceremonies. Acknowledging 2Spirit/Indigi/Queerness+ and the splendour of the Earth and Lands, we link it to our identities, recognizing their interconnectedness.
- We aim to dismantle the colonial impacts within Indigenous communities that result in the institutional exclusion of members of these communities.
- We seek Global Indigenous Knowledges.
- We honour the Indigenous Peoples on whose Lands we live on as guests and settlers, acknowledging their Sacred Laws and learning from them. When offered, we will welcome their ways of doing and knowing and keep them safe in our spaces.
- We acknowledge our Ancestors who were displaced and dispossessed, gave their lives, suffered, fought and lived with joy; without them, we would not be here. We enjoy the fruits of their sowing and work for the generations yet to come.
- We embrace all ways of being and create belonging for each person, as belovedness is a birthright. We work to balance self-expression with collective unity. Flamboyance is fêted.
- We champion body sovereignty, recognizing that we have agency and choice over our bodies and lives. We strive to be aware of definitions and seek the balance between embracing them and letting them go.
- We recognize that many systems of oppression are at play and support all forms of self and community care using a harm reduction approach.

Queer-Centered Operating Principles for Righting Relations

- We work to embody accountability. We grow from calling each other in with dignity intact. We leave room for pain, anger and struggle as it surfaces, mindful of collective needs as well. We strive for attunement and answerability within ourselves, understanding that internal feelings have external impacts and implications.
- We prioritize the needs of those with intersectional identities who are the most targeted by all forms of oppression; interpersonal, institutional, ideological and systemic. We work to uncover and undo our privilege[s] and raze the systems that uphold them.
- We recognize that colourism and featurism have the most vulnerable folks targeted by the lens of the colonizer's eyes, and that these systems also exist within our communities, as we are not immune to colonialism which teaches us to devalue deviations from whiteness.
- Protection of 2Spirit/Indigi/Queerness+ identities and dignity are paramount to education. We prioritize 2Spirit/Indigi/Queerness+ visibility, representation, histories and cultures.
- Humour, joy and laughter are an essential part of our work. We relate, connecting using art, music, popular theatre and food.
- We admit multiple truths and ways of teaching and learning.
- We commit to "loving each other queerly" in all its breadth and richness, rooted in its intrinsically platonic nature.
- We centre the tenets of popular education as our foundational principles: we strive to meet people where they are at whilst bringing in the wisdom of the collective and facilitating shared leadership.
- We seek to interrupt colonial narratives and intentionally step outside the colonial mindset to reimagine love and explore pleasure as an act of resistance.



*The Beauty of
Diverse
Expressions
of Love*



The Beauty of Diverse Expressions of Love

Love is an innate primal emotion; as an inalienable natural instinct, human beings gravitate towards it almost by default. Love is not merely just an emotion but a biological process. We exist to love and be loved. When we love and are loved back, we fulfil needs we may not know we have – love facilitates acceptance and inclusion, and perhaps, it might only be through the absence of love that we recognize the gaping hole of such an important building block of our existence. Love is a vehicle through which we overcome difficult times.

Whilst love is a human universal, it is not experienced or expressed in the same way everywhere; many cultures and regions manifest it in different ways. There are as many forms of love as there are cultures, ethnicities and regions. In Western cultures, cisheteroromantic monogamous love is the dominant and considered ideal. Pre-contact, Indigenous cultures around the world shared in myriad forms of love; while those cultures were then colonised, displaced and dispossessed, against all odds, those forms of love have persisted. Today, those that were lost are going through processes of reclamation – in several parts of Africa, it is not uncommon to see men walking with hands held or embracing each other fondly; however, within the Black Diaspora, this is taboo. Black People within the Diaspora have thus been working on redefining Black Masculinity to allow Black men to experience affection and softness that's so decisive to their well-being.

In many Indigenous cultures, love just existed; it needn't be labelled, it was communal, and everyone was a relation. Love was undefined as it was merely a part of everything – the language was love and everyone could communicate in it with fluency. People just showed up for each other in everyday life, filling in any gaps. In Western cultures, non-cisheteroromantic love is de-centred in the best of circumstances; and attacked, muted and suppressed in the worst of circumstances. Love is a spectrum that cannot be bottled into a one-size-fits-all; it exists outside of gender and sexuality. It is deep and transformational, intimate, free and open. It is the twinkle in the eye at the meeting of the souls; it is cleaning someone's house when they're going through a rough patch. At its core, love is hearts connecting and spirits conversing; it is nourishing one another's being.

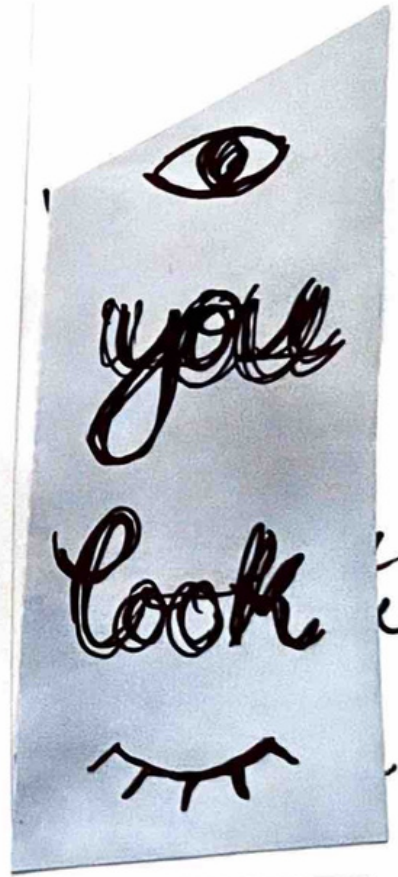


DARLING



even more beautiful than last year."

7 Röder



9/8

Our Joy

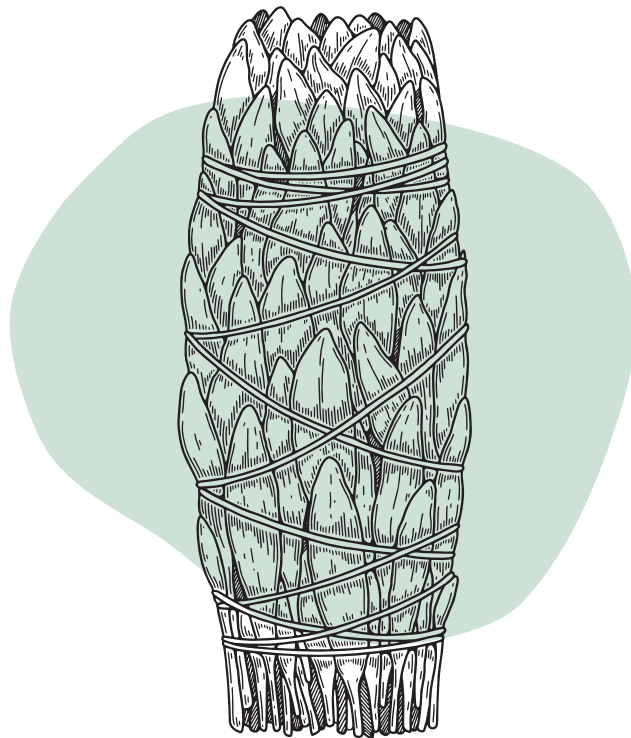
Is powerful
Is beautiful
Is painful
Is love
Is resolution
Is a celebration
Is the water
Is the wind
Is the land
Is the fire
Is our strength
Is infinite
Is past, present, future
Is a challenge
Is a call
Is a song
Our joy shines with a thousand
colours, iridescent.

Our joy is the magpies, our
heads grow back.
It is a commitment.
It is rich, luxurious,
generous.
It replenishes and nourishes.
Our joy is a deep belly
laugh, an exuberant
connection, and it is grief so
deep it shakes your soul.
Our joy is the sweat when
we dance, the sigh of a full
stomach.
It fuels our need to protect
and ignite change
Our joy is queer
Our joy will not be
diminished
Our joy is a community

Ally



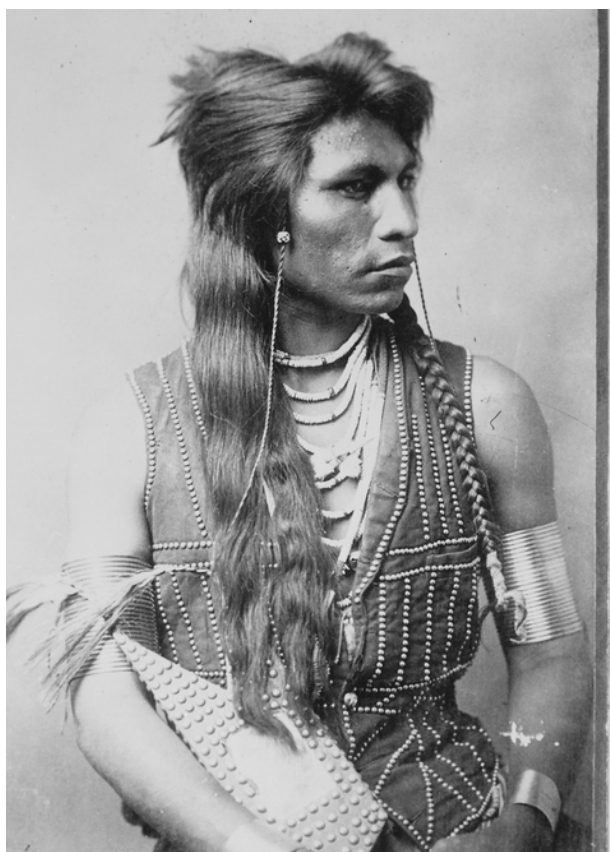
Restoring the Sacred



Restoring the Sacred

Indigenous cultures have, since the beginning of time, held gender and sexually expansive people as pivotal to their communities. They were perceived to be blessed; as knowledge keepers, healers, teachers, carers, protectors, prophets, guides, leaders etc. As persons who demonstrated the wealth of human existence, they were often viewed as the conduits to the Ancestral and Spiritual realms; they were seen to walk in worlds other than the physical.

Rabbit Tail of Shoshone was a Two Spirit scout whose hairstyle was worn one side down and the other side tied up, representing both male and female. Osh-Tisch, who also went by Bate of the Crow People, lived as a female during peacetime as a healer and shaman and who also fought dressed as a male warrior, e.g. during the Battle of the Rosebud.



Photograph of Rabbit Tail of Shoshone: Two Spirit scout whose hairstyle was worn one side down and the other side tied up, representing both male and female.



Photo of Osh-Tisch with friend Magpie.

Restoring the Sacred

We' Wha Zuni was a Two Spirit Woman who went to Washington DC as a representative of her people, she was a healer, craftswoman/weaver and child caretaker.



Photos of We' Wha Zuni, who was a Two Spirit Woman. She was a healer, craftswoman/weaver and child caretaker.

Bíawacheeitchish, also known as Woman Chief born to the ᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭ (adapted as A'aninin, Aaniiih, or Haaninin) which means "White Clay People," who was captured and adopted by the Apsáalooke (Crow) nation when she was ten where she became a bacheeítche (chief) and warrior of the Apsáalooke people. At an early age she showed an inclination and interest towards traditionally male pursuits. She became one of the Apsáalooke's most significant leaders, joining the Council of Chiefs as the third ranking member.

Hasteen Klah was a Navajo medicine man and master weaver. The Navajos believed that Hasteen Klah was honoured by the Gods and was expected to master both the female role of weaving and the male role of medicine man. Hasteen Klah mastered eight different Navajo spiritual ceremonies while the typical medicine person only mastered two. Additionally, Hasteen Klah pioneered Sandpainting, an often spiritual style of Navajo weaving, many of the rugs Hasteen created are hanging in museums.

Restoring the Sacred



Photo of Hasteen Klah, who was a Navajo medicine man and master weaver.

Babaylan (also Balian or Katalonan, among many other names) are shamans that have existed since pre-colonial times within the various ethnic groups of the Philippine islands. These shamans specialise in communicating, appeasing, or harnessing the spirits of the dead and the spirits of nature. Their ranks were matriarchal, consisting of both cis and trans women plus feminised men (asog or bayok).

In today's world, we are likely letting an unimaginable amount of gifts go to waste because the people who have them are othered in society. For us to progress and move forward, it is imperative that we recognise the humanity of these marginalised peoples. Through that, they will be able to explore the wells of infinite resources that are their endless pools of blessings, skills and talents which may, in turn, be shared for all our betterment.



Ang Babaylan 1996, painted by Rosendo Aguilar.



Nagsisindi ako ng isang kandila
Lakapati, sana maparinggan niyo ako
Nagaalay ako ng dasal
Gusto ko kayong mahanap at makilala
Mapagaralaan at mamamdaman ko sana ang
kabaitan at kabutihan niyo
Gusto ko ng mahanap ko ang sarili ko sa inyo
Gusto kong maunlad ang aking pagkakaalam sa
sarili ko na walang limitasyon
Sana tuloy-tuloy ang apoy ng kandila ko
Nawawalan ako ng gana sa paglaban
Nais kong makauwi para mahanap kita ulit

— Tagalog —

Nagsisindi ako ng isang kandila
Lakapati, sana maparinggan niyo ako
Nagaalay ako ng dasal
Gusto ko kayong mahanap at makilala
Mapagaralan at mamamdaman ko sana and kabaitan
at kabutihan niyo
Gusto kong makang ko and sarili ko sa inyo
Gusto kong maunlad and aking pagkakaalam sa sarili
ko na walang limitasyon
Sana tuloy-tulog and apoy ng kandila ko
Nawawalan ako ng gana sa paglaban
Nais kong makauwi para mahanap kita ulit

I'm lighting a single candle
Lakapati, I hope you are listening to me
I'm offering a prayer
I want to find you and get to know you
I want to learn and feel your kindness and
generosity
I want to find myself by knowing you
I want to expand what I know of myself without
limits
I hope this fire keeps burning
Sometimes I lose the sight to continue the fight
I yearn to reach home to find you again

— English —

I'm lighting a single candle
Lakapati, I hope you are listening to me
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and generosity
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Lakapati is a pre-colonial Filipino deity of agriculture and fertility. They were described as androgynous, intersex, or transgender. According to stories, she/they was one of the kindest deities and was beloved amongst the people.

Since the colonization of the Philippines by Spain, Spanish colonizers brought catholicism to Filipinos and indoctrinated the country. Slowly, our learnings and knowledge of our pre-colonial deities were erased. As a result, modern/contemporary Filipinos and those in the diaspora have become disconnected to our Queer roots and ancestry. It's our responsibility to reclaim these stories and knowledge.

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— History —



History and Impact of Oppression



History and Impact of Oppression

Cisheteropatriarchy is a white supremacist capitalist colonial project that was propagated by force. It was carefully constructed to violently displace and dispossess peoples, thus stripping them of access to their history and roots. Those that did not fall to their knees for this hegemony were promptly felled as these foreign powers had no regard for life; slaughter, spiritual warfare and Christian indoctrination ensued, and the erasure of Indigenous identities began. The policing of gender and sexuality does not exist in a vacuum; it is a primary act of colonisation with historical implications — the length and breadth of history, knowledge and medicine that was lost remains unfathomable.

In North America, stolen children were forcefully enrolled into residential schools (some of which remained open until the 1990s), where they were abused physically, mentally and spiritually. Many died, and the survivors emerged alive in body only. At these prison schools, binary enforcement to assimilate to white society was the "training," and Two Spirit children were targeted. Competition and scarcity mindsets for survival were taught, eroding thousands of years of communal existence, and ceremonial knowledge where Two Spirit People held reverence was demonised.



Balboa's Dogs Killing Fifty Two-Spirit People.

Painting of the story of Captain Vasco Núñez de Balboa, the Spanish conquistador who, in 1513, during the course of his journeys, discovered a group of Indigenous men in Panama who had engaged in homosexual relations. Taking the men to a nearby mountain clearing, Balboa had the men stripped naked, then set his dogs on them, allowing the animals to tear the men to shreds. Various chronicles of the Spanish conquest of the Americas provide accounts of homosexuality among several of the Indigenous peoples inhabiting the region -- an element which, together with others, served to provide "moral" justification for the genocide which marked the conquest.

History and Impact of Oppression

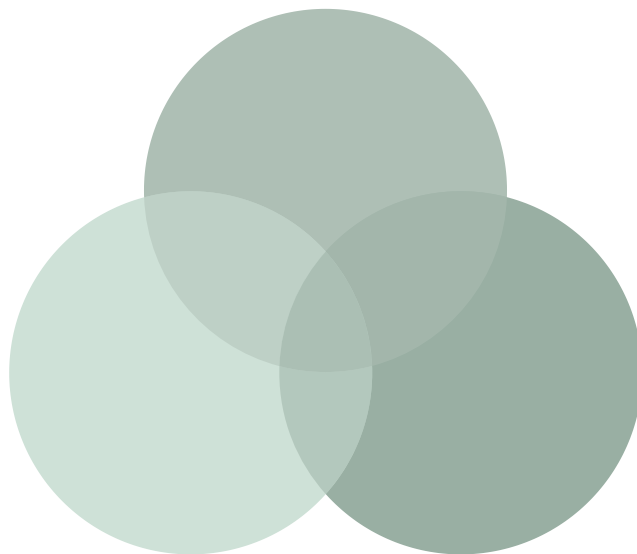
In certain Ancient Arabic societies from the Peninsula to Coastal East Africa, ["\[k\]huntha" \(intersex people\) were legally recognized.](#) Additionally, within Arabic-speaking coastal societies, most commonly in the current states of the United Arab Emirates, Oman and the former Sultanate of Zanzibar, [k]hanith[i] (plural: ma[k]hanith[i] and [k]hunuth[a] / [k]huntha) has traditionally been the term for people whose gender and sexual expression exists outside of cisheteronormative imaginations, but became stigmatised and used pejoratively through a process of colonial interpretation that sought to apply a Eurocentric, cisheterosexist model to an identity that is far more complex. This is part of a long-standing history of colonial violence inflicted on gender and sexually expansive people as part of British colonial oppression, a deliberate reduction and erasure of a spectrum of non-cisgender bodies found across cultures disrupted by British Imperialism, including in Pakistan (hijra), the Kenyan coast (shoga), and Iran (dojense). The brutal legacy of this indoctrination of Indigenous peoples persists in countless examples of violence against gender and sexually expansive folks across the Global South, such as in the manipulation and abduction of [Eden Knight,](#) a trans woman from Saudi Arabia who [died by suicide after being subjected to a forced detransition](#) at the hands of her parents, with the financial support of American businesspeople and a Saudi lawyer.

In Africa and the Caribbean, as Christianity was used to conquer those regions, colonial-era laws remain on the books and continue to be used by current governments to attack gender and sexually expansive people. In recent history, the evangelical Christofascist right wing from Canada and the [United States](#) the fanatical fundamentalist evangelical right-wing, have [invested in a global movement of violence against gender and sexual minorities in the Global South](#) in places like [Uganda,](#) Ghana and the Philippines.

Many indoctrinated Indigenous Peoples don't know their history and forget that diversity in nature is where the power is. Original worldviews hold gender and sexually expansive people in high regard. Throughout all the historical and present-day oppression, gender and sexually expansive people endure; Two Spirit Medicine and original languages survive and are being reclaimed. Lots of Indigenous People remember and are seeking their original worldviews. This will take work and a long time. If we continue to build the world we wished we had when we were in need, then the circle of life continues, and the generations after us build better on top of it and so forth; we're but a drop in the rain of progress.



*Gender and
Sexuality and
the
Intersection of
Race*



Gender and Sexuality and the Intersection of Race

Due to the colonial project, much of how we experience and perceive gender and sexuality today comes from a purely white lens. People who were not white were not considered human and were thus stripped of their gender and sexuality. Gender as we know and experience it, i.e. the cisnormative structured, rigid binary whose defaultness is imposed on us, is a construct and function of white supremacy.

The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) – a national non-profit Indigenous organisation representing the political voice of Indigenous women throughout Canada created to overcome sex-based discrimination - says in the [Trafficking of Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada](#):[↗]

Indigenous women are disproportionately affected by racialized violence in Canada through exposure to both historic and ongoing gendered discrimination. Canada's colonial legacy has forced Indigenous women and girls into dangerous and precarious social and economic conditions, which in turn has made them more vulnerable to different kinds of violence. Since early colonisation in North America, Indigenous women have been positioned by Western ideology as inherently violable and less valuable than non-Indigenous, non-racialized bodies. During early colonial contact, this directly disrupted the gendered social configurations of communities, as women's authority was dismissed in early economic and political interactions between colonisers and Indigenous peoples. The cultural understanding of Indigenous women as sexual, unworthy, and therefore violable was subsequently enshrined into law. The complexities of how patriarchy, racial violence, and the colonial compulsion to assert white supremacy compound to produce violence against Indigenous women have been well-documented. As Indigenous women have been stating for decades, and which the Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls indicated, the cultural understanding of Indigenous women as inherently sexual, and therefore violable, has tangible, real-life implications for Indigenous women's lived experiences of violence.

**Scratch a transphobe,
find a racist;
find a sexist misogynist;
find a fascist;
FIND A NAZI**

Gender and Sexuality and the Intersection of Race

In "[The Ungendering of Black Women](#)," Clara Pritchett explores:

Throughout history, white supremacists and segregationists have ungendered Black women for political and social gains. Desexualisation was one way this occurred, a method of which was commoditization of their reproductive capacity. The Virginia Law written in 1819, Partus Sequitur Ventrem, literally translated to, "that which is brought forth follows the belly (womb)," made it so the offspring of slaves would also have enslaved status even if the father was white or even the owner himself. This incentivized slave owners to sexually assault and rape female slaves to ensure the future of their workforce. In this same period, Black women were not able to marry.

Marriage, as a legally binding contract, would have given slaves recognition under the law and therefore implied humanity and citizenship, neither of which were economically or politically valuable to those in power. One of the fundamental markers of gender performance for women was marrying a man and taking care of a home, especially in the Antebellum South, and Black women did not have the option to do so.

After emancipation, women were still excluded from cultural norms surrounding gender. In the aftermath of the Civil War, Reconstruction, and Redemption, unprecedented numbers of lynchings occurred across the country. One of the most common reasons given for lynchings was being accused of raping or assaulting a white woman. Mobs and vigilante groups ran rampage for the stated reason of protecting their women even when the relationship was consensual or did not exist at all. White women were also not required to testify in cases of rape or assault for the stated reason of protecting their fragile, emotional selves. The need to protect their sexual purity was a defining characteristic of their womanhood. Black women did not have this same level of legal protection. Additionally, while there was no longer a monetary incentive for raping Black women, rape still persisted. Rape was a tool of terror used by the Ku Klux Klan and other white vigilante terrorist groups. Rape of Black women not only occurred as a show of public terror, but in private spaces.

Gender and Sexuality and the Intersection of Race

Many Black women worked as domestic servants or otherwise in the homes of white people because they were legally bound to and were subject to sexual advances by their employers. Even though these occurrences were common, the legal system did not recognize them or afford the victims representation. Black women were rarely granted a trial, and when they were they were confronted with insurmountable obstacles. One example of an obstacle is the implicit ideas around Black women's inherent promiscuity. In 1918, the Florida Supreme Court ruled that, in statutory rape cases, rape could only happen if the person had not previously had sex. The ruling also discusses that most white women are moral, meaning they have not previously had sex, and most black women were immoral, so Black women could not legally be raped. They did not have the legal protections created for maintaining the purity of women, but Black women were not "true women" in the eyes of the law.

The period of mass lynching was also the rise of Jim Crow segregation. Segregation in public facilities showed in black and white how culturally normative gender did not include Black women. Bathrooms were the most obvious example of this. A photo from this time period shows three sets of public bathrooms labelled: "Men," "Ladies," and "Colored." A separation between white men and white women was inherently necessary it seems in subscribing to the cultural norms around gender, but a separation between Black men and Black women was not. Consequences of the ungendering of Black women and the stereotypes surrounding it still remain today. One example of this is evidence of bias of juries in rape cases. Conviction happens much more frequently in cases of Black men charged with raping a white woman than in cases of white or Black men charged with raping a Black woman. The main cause of this is the same ideas around Black women's promiscuity.

Another example of how these stereotypes manifest in the present day is the expunging of the childhood of Black girls. A report written by the Georgetown Law School people perceive Black girls as less innocent than their white counterparts. People believed they required less protection and nurturing and that they know more about adult topics, especially sex. These assumptions, similar to those made of Black women one hundred years ago, have consequences in the educational and criminal justice systems. In both systems, Black girls receive harsher punishments compared to their white counterparts for identical offences. The ungendering of Black women has had dire consequences to the lives of Black women from slavery to the present day. While gendered stereotypes and performance roles have had horrendous consequences for women of all races, exclusion from them has also attributed to struggle.

Gender and Sexuality and the Intersection of Race

It is through understanding the "[Harmful and Stigmatizing](#)"[☞] history of bathroom laws that the NAACP has been involved in the defense of transgender rights, filing [amicus](#)[☞] curiae on cases arguing bathroom bans "Invoke the Kind of False Stereotypes that Were Once Used to Justify Racially Segregated Restrooms" echoing historical precedences like, "Swimming Pools and Interracial Marriage," going further to say, 'Physical-Restriction Rules Are Not Justified by the Dubious Guise of Protecting Some Individuals from Discomfort as "Safety" Concerns.'

[To guarantee that procreation meant profit, American legislators — who were all white men — made the rape of Black women a 'legitimate use of property.'](#)[☞] This is a topic that's been studied and written on widely chiefly by Black women in and out of academia who continue to push for the literature to accurately account and elucidate these occurrences because this history has coloured and continues to colour how Black girls and women are seen and treated to date.

In *Policing Black Lives: State Violence In Canada From Slavery To The Present*, Robyn Maynard explicates not only Canada's historical anti-Blackness but also the gendered nature of the construction of criminality. Black girls and women were sexualised for existing in public, were labelled prostitutes, and experienced high rates of [wrongful] incarceration as well as the illegal deportation of generational citizens by birth, a phenomenon that has been documented from at least the 19th century. The legacy of this violence affects the modern landscape in a myriad of ways, including border control. Rosemary Sadler, in her article, "Anti-Black Racism in Canada", describes the unique but interconnected history of anti-Black racism in Canada compared to that in the United States, noting that "[In Canada] Just being of a darker hue has been connected to being a slave. Being a slave is connected to being inferior. Being enslaved meant taking orders, not giving them; it meant being policed, not policing oneself; it meant being ignorant because one was denied the opportunity to be educated; it meant bearing children for whomever sowed them... it meant socializing another's definition and perceptions of you, your beauty and your traditions."

To this day masculinisation of Black women remains, as demonstrated by the [trans]misogynoir that Michelle Obama, Serena Williams, Leslie Jones, Caster Semenya, Christine Mboma, Francine Niyonsaba etc., endured and continue to; Black girls are also systemically adultified including being sexualised, being perceived as, "[less innocent and more adult-like than their white peers, especially in the age range of 5–14](#)"[☞] (in the UK, data analysed between [2017 and 2022](#)[☞] found that Black girls, i.e. children and teenagers were three times

more likely to go through invasive strip-search by the Met police in which their intimate parts were exposed, at a disproportionate rate of almost half of those searched, with a similar rate for less invasive searches, juxtaposed with a 22.3% Black girl population in the city.)

The historical treatment of Black femininity all the way from chattel slavery stemmed a Black-specific [purity culture](#) that still exists today but whose subversion continues to bide.

In the same way that colonised women were stripped of their femininity, colonised men were assigned brutes and savages. Today this is seen through the pervasiveness of negative masculinity, which leads to intracommunity lateral violence; this affects cis women and trans women and other gender and sexual minorities.

In white supremacy, gender and sexuality can be entirely and wholly stripped off a person through dehumanising them. These tactics are still being used today, and we should use our knowledge of history and race to continue the good fight.

Screenshots of tweets that exemplify the masculinisation of Black women.

\$10,000 to the first person who finds me a picture of Michelle Obama pregnant



My coworker, a white woman, asked another coworker, a black woman to help her open a jar.
She opens up the jar, and this white bitch says “wow, I swear all black women are half man, you opened it so easily”
Everyone just fell dead silent

6:29 PM · Feb 11, 2023 · 4.2M Views

7,467 Retweets 2,123 Quotes 85K Likes 2,402 Bookmarks





Material Conditions



Material Conditions

Due to the historical alienation, oppression and othering of gender and sexually expansive people, there is a higher rate of poverty that compounds with factors like ethnicity and race, adding layers of oppression and struggle against the odds. With no access to school or healthcare and sometimes having been chased from home by family, they have to resort to survival sex work which can be dangerous because of Johns and police violence, not to mention the increased added risk of sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections (STBBIs). Access to employment and housing, even for those with a little bit of privilege, is still hard, and harassment is rife. Gender and sexually expansive people experience marginalisation when attempting to access basic needs and services, having an effect on them and their quality of life. For gender and sexually expansive people in isolated northern reserves, they have even fewer opportunities as the dominant society has claimed the resources and land – additionally, they have no access to gender and sexually expansive community. When people's material conditions are addressed, they're able to engage in activities that improve their lives, like going to school and accessing poverty eradication programmes. To address material living conditions, there must be safe shelters with privacy and warmth, food, autonomy and dignity.

Austerity politics = Economic violence



Wealth redistribution is harm reduction.

Feeling Good



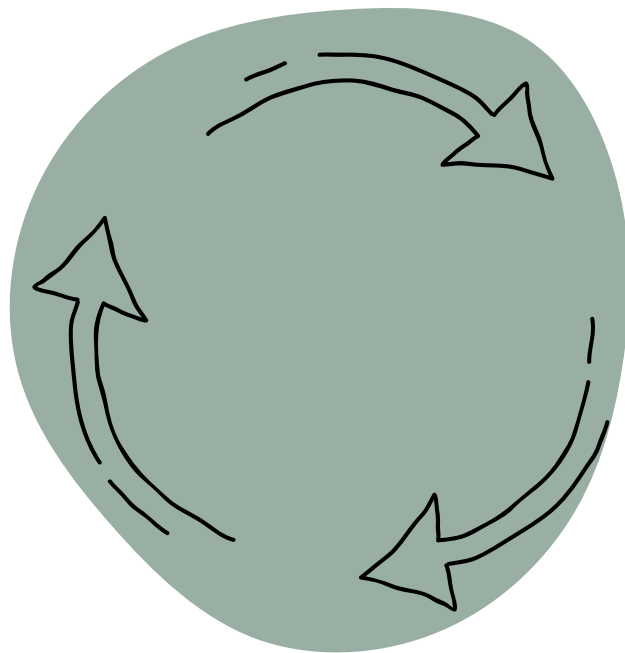
CURIOUSITY
HUMILITY
HEARTLED





Violence (Including Lateral)

*How Homomisia
and Transmisia
are Taught*



Violence (Including Lateral): How Homomisia and Transmisia are Taught

Due to colonial interruption, many Indigenous Peoples across the globe lost access to their roots, and through this, the respect and reverence of gender and sexually diverse persons disappeared. It is widely documented that Indigenous Peoples lived in communal prosperity with gender and sexually diverse peoples, which disgusted the colonisers who set forth to forcefully re-educate these communities against their own traditions. Today, many Indigenous Peoples are reclaiming their history, but it is difficult to unlearn what's been forced on you for multiple generations. Experts and theorists analyse that it takes one generational disruption to upend tradition,[↗] and this has been happening for hundreds of years. The intolerance that's foreign to Indigenous Peoples has led to intracommunity gender- and sexually-based violence: homomisia and transmisia - hatred of gender and sexually expansive people - are tools of white supremacy. The scarcity mindset of Western ideologies promotes disdain for anyone that's different, and the unique violence that this has created strips our communities of our colourful blessings.

Colonial indoctrination has led families that would traditionally embrace and exalt gender and sexually diverse members to mistreat, shun and chase them away; this is continuing to fracture our family units. Many gender and sexually expansive people testify that their families were their first abusers under the guise of evangelical guidance.

In the Western world, christofascists - having lost the homomisia battle - are turning to transmisia as the next battleground whilst also creating new angles to circle back on homomisia: the Gender Criticals, trans-exclusionary radical feminist (TERFs) and evangelicals are uniting in the UK, USA and Canada. Similarly, [aggressive] evangelism is exporting their brand of homomisia and transmisia to the Global South where, whilst the situation before wasn't perfect, they have now cultivated hatred and intolerance that never existed before, an ire unique to christofascists.

If there's a [known] bigot sitting at a dinner table with ten other people breaking bread, we have a table with eleven bigots. We are the sum of who we associate with.

In 1890, a new crime was introduced: gross indecency between male persons.

In 1953, that crime was extended to women.

Homosexuality remained a crime in Canada until 1969, and anyone caught in violation risked being sent to jail.

we wonder why
people don't feel
they belong

our history of
criminalization
manifests in our
daily spaces; a
culture of shame
and fear.



• Teaching about human sexuality, consent and representation is a missing piece of the puzzle. "In the absence of teaching about that we are continuing to send a message of you are not seen, you are not heard, and you do not matter. And then that is what allows people to continue to perpetuate indecent acts against people."

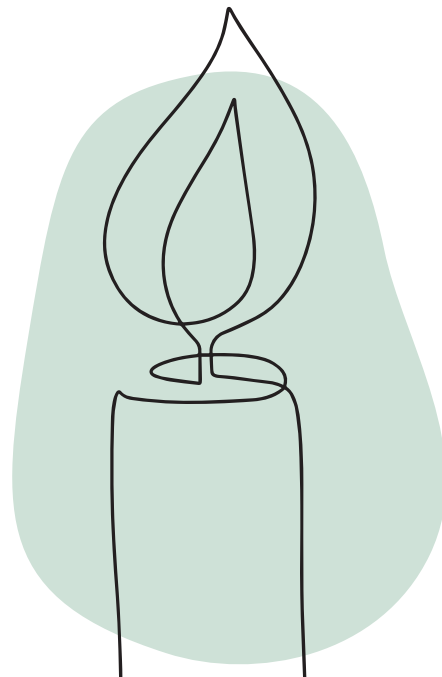
BODY POLITICS



DID YOU KNOW?

1965 – Everett George Klippert, a mechanic from the Northwest Territories, was the last person in Canada to be imprisoned because of his homosexuality. He was arrested for gross indecency. The outcry prompted by that arrest was one of the triggers that started the movement to decriminalize homosexuality.

Guilt and Grief



Guilt and Grief

Within the validation of self, i.e. one's being and existence, there's a process of grief. Over the years, millions have been lost to medical neglect, government and police violence, and other gender- and sexually-based violence; there exists a guilt to survival and a grief of all the lost loved ones and relations, even when we didn't know the people directly, we feel their absence.

Sometimes the grief is about what was lost in the path to your authentic you, lost opportunities, familial abandonment, etc. In other situations, after experiencing life as your true self, you grieve where you would have been if you'd come to terms with the self that was calling sooner.



The San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus demonstrating impact of AIDS on the choir, 1993. The singers in white represent the remaining living members of the original choir, while those in black represent those lost to AIDS.

*ACT UP Demonstrators Protest And Take Over The FDA Headquarters:
Members of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) stage a die-in closing the Federal Drug Administration building. Their signs read slogans: "Never Had A Chance;" "Victim of FDA Red Tape;" "I Got The Placebo;" "Killed By The System;" "Women Are Dying;" "I Died For The Sins Of The FDA." This historically significant demonstration, the largest since the Vietnam War, was held outside the FDA headquarters in Rockville, Maryland on October 11, 1988. (Photo by Peter Ansin)*

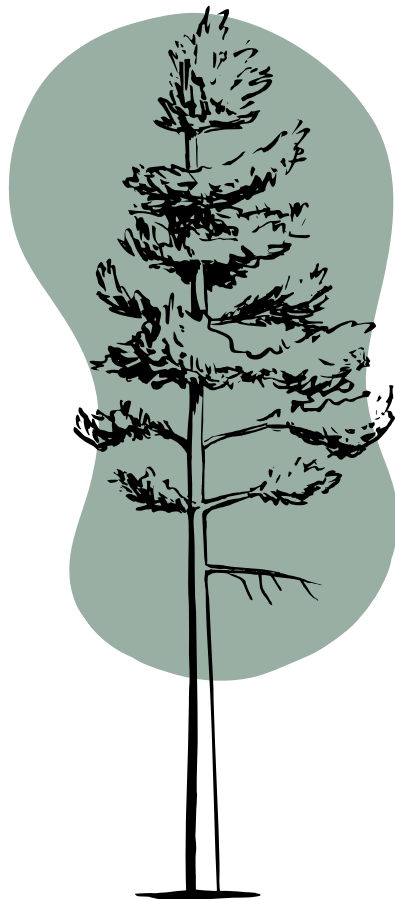


 LISTEN 



Station Eleven
Monologue

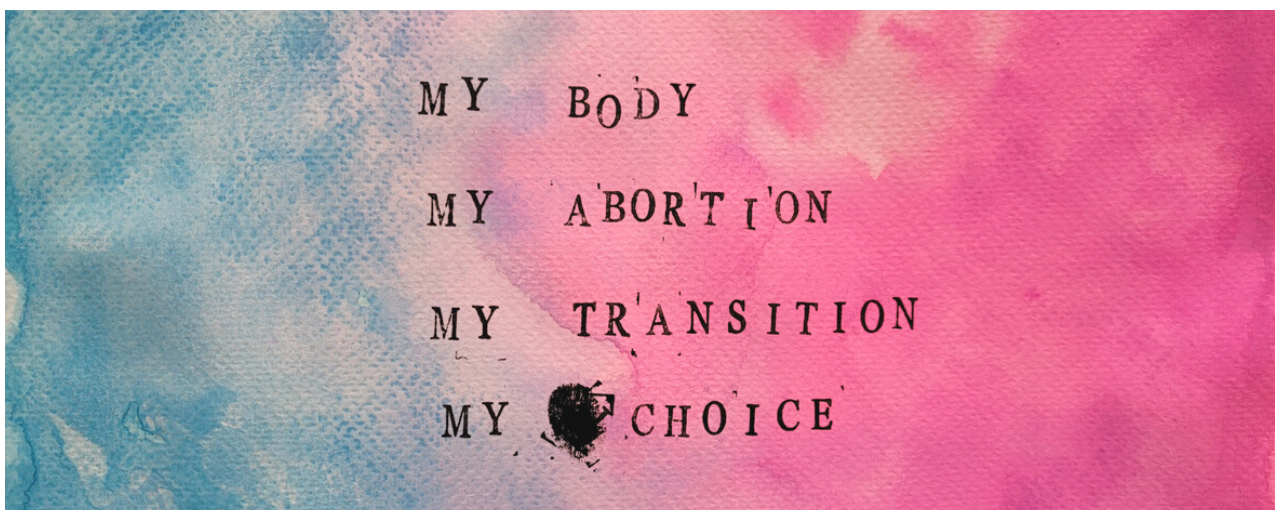
Sovereignty



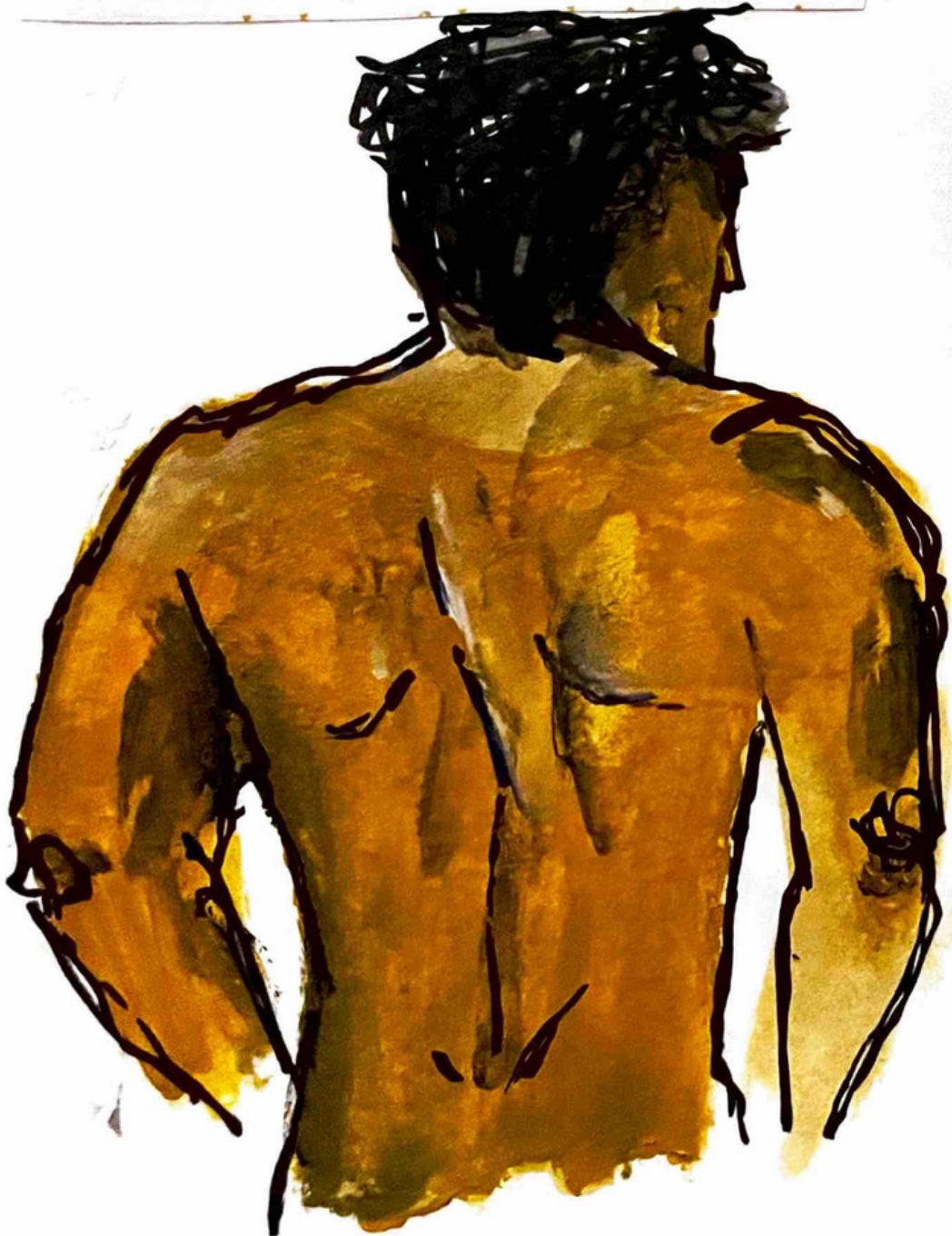
Sovereignty

Autonomy, self-determination and sovereignty are essential aspects of our existence; it is our sacrosanct right to assert ourselves and stand firm in our legitimacy of self within and beyond the realm[s] of the State. Personal Sovereignty goes in tandem with Indigenous Sovereignty. As Sovereign beings, we are the building blocks of our organisations and communities; as such, our thoughts, opinions, and actions not only matter but reverberate. Recognizing Indigenous, Individual, Collective, and Community Sovereignty is key praxis and politic.

Our bodies, gender and sexuality are sovereign to us. Determining our own lives and communities together, in good relations, without interference from outside forces, is our right. Healthcare is a significant place where we exercise our Sovereignty: through informed consent, we decide what's suitable for us, be it access to PrEP or PEP or transitioning or abortion, all of which should be available on demand. Gender and sexually expansive folks are often denied the right to make choices about themselves and their lives. People's decision-making abilities and calls to judgment should be trusted as each of us has the right to make decisions about our own bodies and what is good for us, including short or long-term effects. There has been a [decades-long, cross-generational, and well-funded megaproject](#) [↗] mis- and disinformation campaign designed to deliberately stoke the rise in visible fascistic anti-bodily autonomy sentiments with the sole aim of steering policy, and we are [duty driven to protect](#) [↗] those younger than us and yet to be born as they're the prime targets of [violent] enforcement and right-wing radicalisation. The drivers of regression fueled by religious dogma are resource-rich and extremely organised, galvanised by hate at seeing these hard-fought rights of birth gradually be granted and have purposed to [rollback each and every one](#) [↗] of them with the sole aim of [leaving us worse off than we began.](#) [↗]

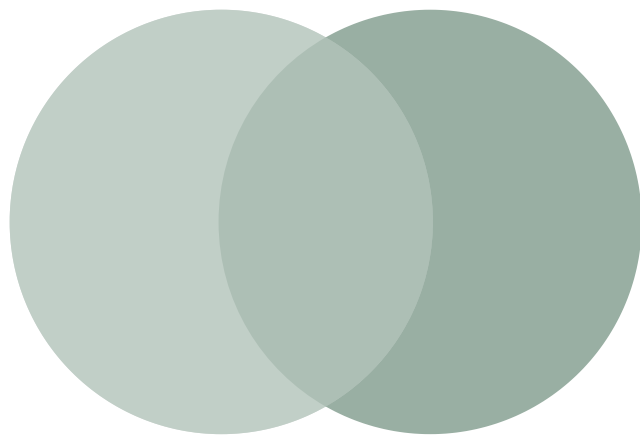


“Submit to me as soon as possible



*Breaking the
Binary*

*Language and
Pronouns*



Breaking the Binary / Language and Pronouns

Gender is a spectrum which human language may not fully encompass. It is also a journey and one that's continuous. Whilst people can be self-assured and self-possessed in their gender, it is important to be affirmed. When we affirm people, we show that we care for them and love them enough to respect who they are, even if we may not necessarily understand it. Our preconceived notions of what gender is and what package it comes in needn't exist. We can't attempt to fit people into boxes when the boxes don't exist. Dissolve the boxes in your head, welcome people as they are and meet them where they are at and as they are.

It is pertinent to note that whilst pronouns sometimes do indicate gender, not all scenarios are congruent to this. It is exigent that we dismantle the binary "either/or" concept of the status quo, which may not only start in but is sometimes maintained by our heads.



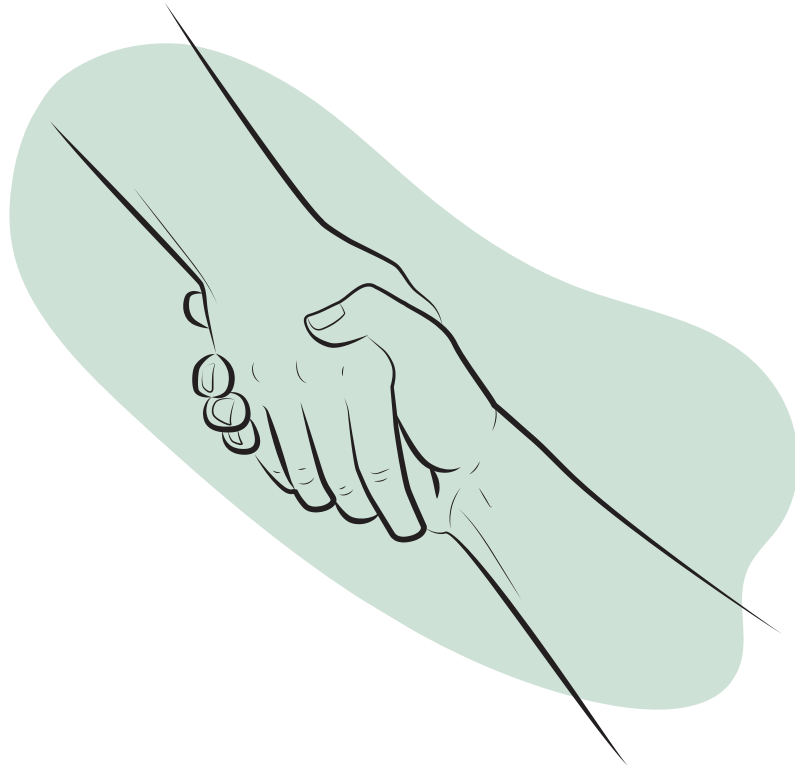
Everyone engages in gender-affirming actions, including receiving gender-affirming care.

Everybody desires, seeks, and wants to be affirmed in their gender.





Community and Resistance



Community and Resistance

A pillar of gender and sexually expansive peoples is community; they have been central to securing each other's well-being for years. During the AIDS crisis, community was where care could be found when the powers that be had abandoned and marginalised folks. Care teams became ménage in the AIDS movement, and the phenomenon of found family had been a staple in the community for generations before this. Community was also where resistance was found: they organised protests and die-ins to get governments to work. Previously, the community had come together to protest criminalisation and police harassment; nowadays, we enjoy freedoms because of their fight, but the descent to regression is a slippery slope, so we must continue to fight.

It is crucial to continue organising, and since tactics and techniques used to strip us of rights are cyclical, let us build intergenerational communities. Elders are a wealth of resources and can impress upon us and pass to us the knowledge on ways of life. In community, we are all teachers and learners, as the relationships are symbiotic. Cross-generational community building like pen pal programming, tea time, etc., where youth and elders come together forms solid bonds and improves health and well-being.

Within these spaces, it is a must that we also make it welcoming to families, parents and children alike; during these times that right-wing fascists are labelling us "groomers" for creating a safe world for children, we should double, triple, quadruple, quintuple down in our cause. Children are the future, and making a world where they're normal makes it easier for them to simply just exist.

Black Feminism gave us Reproductive Justice, both of which are indivisible from the gender and sexually expansive fight!



MUSIC



You're Not Alone by
Allison Russell

RESOURCE



Queering the Map

The Merchant and the Camel

A classic AfroArabic tale tells of a merchant travelling between cities who stopped to rest for the night. He tethered his camel to the outside of his tent, foddering and watering it and proceeding into his tent for the evening. As he was nodding off, his camel pushed its head inside the tent; the merchant was shocked, but the breath from its nostrils warmed the tent in the desert cold, so he went back to dozing. Sometime later, the trader was jolted awake by the camel nudging its upper body into the tent. The merchant was perturbed, but the camel's neck gave off more warmth, which he enjoyed, so he returned to bed feeling toasty. Deep in slumber, the merchant was startled awake by a thud and a chill in the air; he looked up to see the camel, his wares still strapped to it, striding into the night with his tent on its back.



This ancient fable warns that seemingly innocuous acts of compromising one's principles and values in the name of comfort and assumed mutuality have repercussions, even with the best intentions; they creep further, eating at our ethics, a detrimental price to pay. As individuals and society, we must be conscious and deliberate with our choices, as our decisions have material impacts and manifestations. To display magnanimity towards discriminatory, or even questionable, attitudes is to guarantee the growth and reign of iniquity.

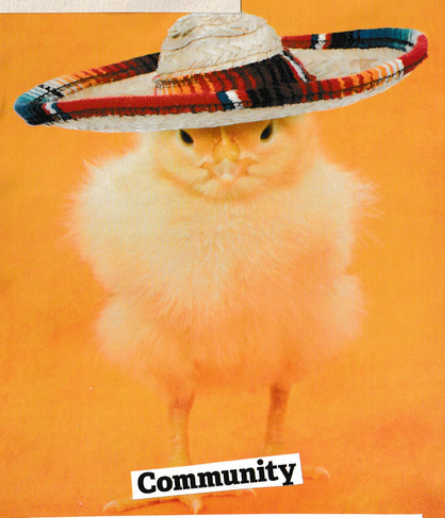


Create Queer Joy

NEIGHBOURHOODS

FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

COME HOME WITH ME



Community Lies in the Making

It's a joyous endeavour

The good neighbour policy makes happy relationships and provides a pleasant interlude on washing day.

kind of people they will grow into depends on all of us. What





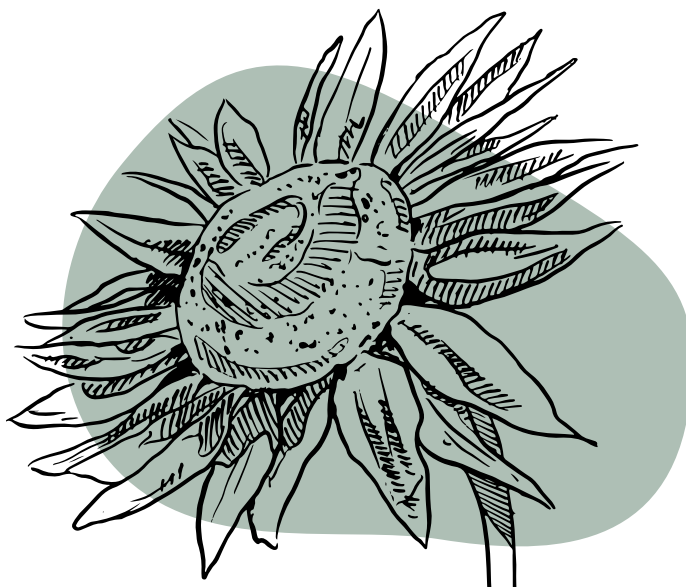


Sex



Sex

Sex is a focal part of the human experience that can be a beautiful act of joy. People engage in sexual activity for a number of reasons, from recreational to work. Access to sex education and sexual healthcare is a right. Sex is an entirely normal thing that shouldn't be shameful or stigmatised in the best of situations or subject to authoritarian controls and regulations in the worst of situations; language, i.e. how we speak and write, greatly informs these cultural fronts and movements of regression or progress. Comprehensive sex education that has a positive lens and covers consent is essential. Sex education in school is the first step in sexual health: it removes the cloak and gives people the language to name their parts and experiences. When we normalise sex, people also have the ability to talk frankly with medical personnel and receive accurate medical service. Low barrier testing for STBBI is a standard that needs to continue to be adopted, plus the universal accessibility and availability of PrEP and PEP.



"The fish rots from the head toward the tail."

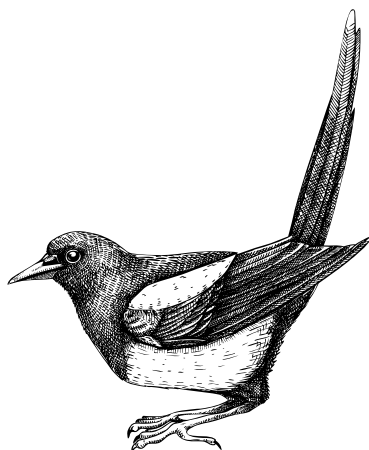
[Proverb]

It is the moral imperative of leadership, from political to organisational, to be steadfast with intent in protecting inclusion, never capitulating, even and especially in the face of the ever-mounting backlash of unpopularity as the tides turn to intolerance; the buck stops at the top, as that is where culture is set and fostered.





MUSINGS
&
POEMS



FLAMBOYANCE 101

EMBODY IT.

One Existence. Why not? TAKE UP SPACE

make your life the most decedent.

maximize the sweetness of your life.

Walk into every room like it could be the very last time. Laugh & Cackle.

Dance like you have something to prove to every version of yourself that ever existed.

Walk like the clouds have laid out a red carpet for you. NO APOLOGIES.

Get the best dressed up.

Use that makeup.

"you can't work a room you can't ~~don't~~ read."

Amazing shoes are a must!

Be prepared for onlookers.

OWN IT. "Yes I'm here."

"flamboyance does not compete. it enhances."

"YES, I BELONG. You can't make me believe

Be ready to give a show, to people who think you don't belong. ^{otherwise,} ^{→ know when to end the bit.} ^{find yourself}

Hair flips always!

If it seems too much, do more.

^amentor & play.

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Know when to end the bit.

Hair flips always!

If it seems too much, do more.

Find yourself a mentor and play.

"You can't work a room you can't read."

"Flamboyance does not compete. It enhances."

When did we get to have a say as a person, when did we get to have more energy to fight the fight? ①

Resistance is when we don't follow directions, don't follow as a dancer.

I want to lead that's my right lead you & me in the path to the heart.

A heart is where life is nurtured, where the energy is given in every pulse of my veins, sending life, sending messages from the ancestor to stand up & defy the hand

When did we get to have a say as a person. When did we get to have more energy to fight the fight?

Resistance is when we don't follow directions, don't follow as a dancer.

I want to lead that's my right. Lead you and me in the path to the heart.

A heart is where life is nurtured, where the energy is given in every pulse of my views. Sending life, sending messages from the ancestor to stand up and defy the hand

that causes harm. ②
The sounds that come out of hateful beings & make me a thing, a disposable presence.

My life as it is from the beginning is much more than existing, is awareness of what is & what is not. Love on the other hand it has to be learnt, it's not a given is what works in harmony with me.

I am the source of many things some are not of your liking but I am not here to please

that causes harm.

The sounds that come out of hateful beings and make me a thing, a disposable presence.

My life as it is from the beginning is much more than existing, is awareness of what is and what is not.

Love on the either hand it has to be learnt, it's not a given; is what works in harmony with me.

I am the source of many things. Some are not of your liking but I am not here to please

anyone but me. Knowing how to
be & not do to be accepted, (3)
learning to have a balance
feed my spirit, my mind
my body & so I can share
with many what I have found
Being real is more likely, because
being normal is being complacent
of the oppressor.

I had to learn, I still am learning
that I am me, I am love with
all my flowers, with all my rage
with all my rage.

I am not big on words but I say
what I need in my own way
MR

anyone but me. Knowing how to
be and not to be accepted,
learning to have a balance, feed
my spirit, my mind, my body and
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that I am me, I am love with all my
flowers, with all my, with all my
rage.

I am not big on words but I say
what I need in my own way.

The sun was shining & it went
away, it's the source for me
(4) I can shine & be fabulous or
I can have a storm in my eyes.
Water is life & water is healing
so take my tears, take the
thunder of my voice because
I will not die. MR

The sun was shining and it went
away, it's the source for me. I
can shine and be fabulous or i
can have a storm in my eyes.
Water is life and water is healing
so take my tears, take the
thunder of my voice because I
will not die.



I wish I could explain, share or gift the glimpses of my Indigenous worldview. Anishinaabe worldview with values of love, respect and acceptance for all life with a necessary place for all that is above all practical, humorous and collective based. Inherently it is a queer and/or feminist worldview. So much so that there is and/or was no need for these words or concepts. There was no question. Disability Justice too. Ways of life. When a people understood their dependance on Earth, the divinity of the lands and natural variety laid and made before us for all things including plant, animal, water and start Nations. One simply can't oppress very much. It doesn't make sense. Very low tolerance for it. One seems stupid, no very universe in the oppression of another. Even be given a foolish nick name; in this way will be defined hardly. Even a blade of grass has rights, I can't comprehend it. But I've had glimpses. There is beauty out there.

@SexEdEnca ü

Once held tightly behind chest walls
hearts existing outside our bodies
we watch them beat.
Every moment ~~we~~ holding space / falling apart
pulling together. cry, laugh. cry more.
and repeat.

~~Foraging~~ Foraging, we gather kin, our family.
filling our lives with kinds of love
once lacked

When we taste this sweet, wild Feast
Together with our folks
There's no turning back

Weaving, binding our visions together
spinning story, hopes and dreams
a glittering Thread.

Screaming our anguish and weeping
for the pains of ~~this~~ cruelty
and choose one another instead

Diverging from the straight narrow path
colour leached, joy & life
sucked from earth.

Choosing to colour and shape ~~our~~ worlds
our worlds anew
we begin to know our worth

We sing our joys and hopes aloud
with an exuberant passion
that spans generations

Heaving earth below us and

singing down cherished ^{stories}
we find the wisdom ^{of}

Our queer spawn, the dearest ^{loves}
are the treaty we make
between what's been
and what could be.

Important to have sex
education in schools.
Also other
anti-oppressive

Once held tightly behind chest
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Hearts existing outside our
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We watch them beat.

Every moment holding
space/falling apart
Pulling together. Cry, laugh, cry
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Our queer spawn, the
dearest loves are the treaty
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And what could be.

[@SexEdErica](#)

// Growing up the heavy curtains never blocking queerness kept me quite isolated from awareness and ^{thus} acceptance. My cousin came out as lesbian when I was in early school and I saw how family spoke of her and how it fractured her connection to + support from family. It became pretty clear that to pronounce or identify with queerness would have significant consequences + impact on wellness, connection, safety + basic human security. // As I have grown any "acceptable" spaces of gaiety were for entertainment. It is ironic that that which society rejects becomes a spectre of me + ~~curious~~

lifting the veil
of darkness

is

revolutionary
+ radical.

It is hard

work

that goes against
the grain and challenges
people to the core

as it is that which
has been deeply
rejected in each psyche.
+ collectively'

Society is in awe but
yet rejects it. Represses it,
expels it. Push it out
of sight + out of mind.
Only to be a source of
amusement. //

To be centre
Quickness

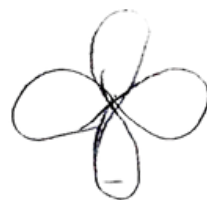
connection
liberation
joy

pleasure
love
freedom
collective care

holders

Fetshized
Commodified

controlled
isolated



Heavy Curtains Unveiling

Growing up the heavy curtains blocking queerness kept me quite isolated from awareness and thus acceptance. My cousin came out as lesbian when I was in early school and I saw how family spoke of her and how it fractured her connection to and support from family. It became pretty clear that to pronounce or identify with queerness would have significant consequences and impact on wellness, connection, safety and basic human security.

As I have grown, any “acceptable” spaces of gaiety were for entertainment. It is ironic that that which society rejects becomes a spectre of awe. Society is in awe of queerness but yet rejects it. Represses it, expels it. Push it out of sight and out of mind; only to be a source of amusement.

Lifting the veil of darkness is revolutionary and radical. It is hard work that goes against the grain and challenges people to the core as it is that which has been deeply rejected in each psyche and collectively.

To Centre Queerness:

- Connection
- Liberation
- Joy
- Pleasure
- Love
- Freedom
- Collective care

Push Against:

- Fetishization
- Commodification
- Control
- Isolation

I often think about what it really means to be queer. I don't consider myself queer because I feel I'm not "queer enough to be queer." I mean I "pass" or appear to "fit into" our heteronormative society. I decided to marry a guy and most people assume I'm a girl. So as a result, I have much privilege as I fit into "the boxes" But that is neither entirely authentic nor does it incorporate all of me.

I see myself as fluid so like water my gender identity and sexuality flow. I'm not quite this nor quite that but still not in a box. And this fluidity, although often invisible, allows me room to breathe, to authentically be me. Inside I feel I am at edges of many margins and mostly aim to fly under the radar, go unnoticed. I realize that many people don't have such privilege. Don't get me wrong I can be loud and I can express myself if pushed or speak out when needed, but if I have my way, I prefer to interact in the most chill laidback fashion. I do realize that some of this comes from not feeling I had other ways of being growing up. There was neither room to be different nor explore what wasn't socially prescribed in a very small conservative community. I recall subconsciously trying to avoid being a target of violence.

As a result, I wish better for today's young people. I wish better for everyone actually and that has led me to work in the areas of emotional wellbeing and sexuality education. Foundationally, knowing who we are and embracing all of our parts are so essential to our wellbeing. I want youth to see and celebrate the spectrums of our being. I dream of a world that embraces the diversity among us and allows all to explore the many facets of ourselves in the most joyful loving way.

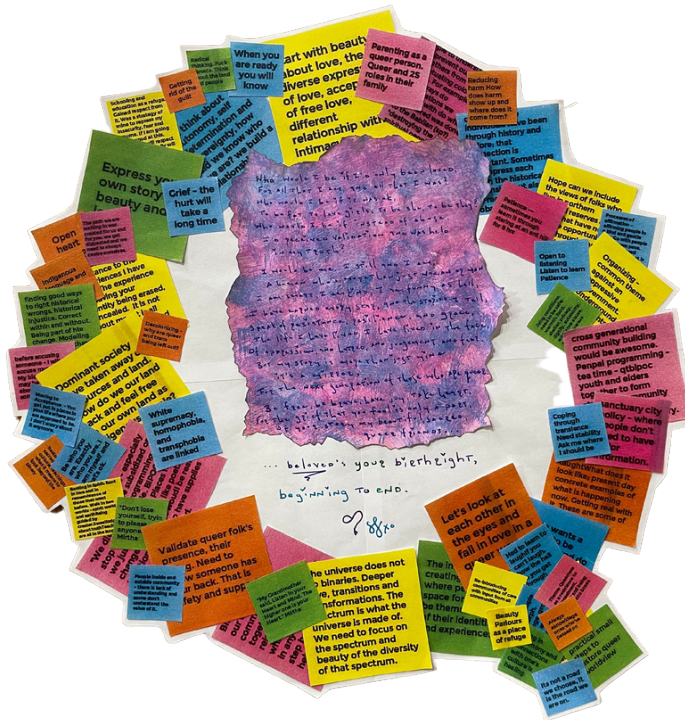
Who would I be if I'd only been loved,
For all that I am, and all that I was?
Who would I be if it was ok,
To be fat, to love girls, to be shy, to be they?
Who would I be if instead of abuse,
I'd received validation and was held
in my truth?

I would be me. I still and I am,
A human who's more than just words or pain
I am smart, I am kind, I am funny as hell,
I have earned every scar, and the stories I tell,
Speak of resistance, resilience, and grace,
The life I have lived I have lived in the face,
Of oppression, and hatred, and judgement, and fear.
But my story is more than just pain
It's a miracle.

For the next generation of those who are queer.
Be free, be brave, have joy, take heart.
For the grief that you feel is only a part,
Of your story my beautiful, sacred,
queer friends...

... beloved's your birthright,
beginning to end.

28x10



Who would I be if I'd only been loved,
 For all that I am, and all that I was?
 Who would I be if it was ok,
 To be fat, to love girls, to be she, to be they?
 Who would I be if instead of abuse,
 I received validation and was held in my truth?

I would be me. I still and I am,
 A human who's more than just woman or man.
 I am smart, I am kind, I am funny as hell,
 I have earned every scar, and the stories I tell,
 Speak of resistance, resilience, and grace,
 The life that I've lived I have lived in the face,
 Of oppression, and hatred, and judgment, and fear,
 But my story is more than just mine, it's a mirror,
 For the next generation of those who are queer.

Be free, be brave, have joy, take heart,
 For the grief that you feel is only a part,
 Of your story my beautiful, sacred, queer friends,
 Beloved's your birthingright, beginning to end.

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