



60 Years of Queer and Trans Activism and Care

An Undergraduate
Archival Research
and Verbatim
Theatre
Project

featuring: Mitzi Badlis - Julia Chapman - Chika Duru - Giovanna El Warrak - Mia Jakobsen - Jialu Lulu Li - Jiaying Cherise Pan -

Anya Shen - Shakira Willems - Vivian Wang

Cover Image

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The cover image references the activism of Black Lives Matter Toronto at the 2016 Toronto Trans March. For more information about this and related actions, see: www.blacklivesmatter.ca/proud

Ten Moments of Queer and Trans of Activism and Care in Canada
An Undergraduate Research Project (2022-2023)

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Introduction

For over a decade now, LGBTQ and queer of colour researchers have been writing about the dominance of White and middle-class perspectives in LGBTQ research and have called for new research into histories of Queer, Trans, Black, Indigenous, People of Colour (QTBIPOC) activism and care to (1) challenge the dominance of White middle-class perspectives in LGBTQ archival research, and (2) better understand ongoing oppression and systemic violence perpetrated against queer and trans BIPOC communities today.

While practices of activism are not always associated with the practice of care - perhaps because ideas of care have generally been rooted in cis-heteronormative understandings that centre the nuclear family as a place to seek care (Malatino, 2020) - research into queer and trans activism has often featured practices of care. For example, recent research by Bishop Owis, a recent graduate from the University of Toronto and currently a post-doctoral fellow at the University of British Columbia, has shown how queer and trans activism by teachers is fueled by webs of care. Webs of care provide people with a way to find care without shame or judgement and are a response to the realities of gendered, raced and classed dynamics that are embedded within our communities (Owis, 2022; Owis and Goldstein 2021).

Owis' connection of activism to care, provided this project with a key focus: the undergraduate research team would research ten moments of queer and trans activism that were rooted in an ethic of community care. In doing so, the team would demonstrate the importance and power of care in creating moments of resistance and mobilization throughout LGBTQ history. As Owis has argued, care practices work to ensure survival (Malatino, 2020); enhance joy (Noddings, 2013), and have paved the way for queer thrival (Greteman, 2016).

The first goal of this one-year research project was to teach a team of ten undergraduate students how to conduct historical archival research on queer and trans moments of activism and care that have challenged heteronormativity, cis-normativity and racism¹. The second goal was to

¹ "Heteronormativity" describes beliefs and practices which assume heterosexuality to be the only natural, normal, and acceptable sexual orientation. "Cis-normativity" describes beliefs and practices which assume a cisgender identity is the only natural, normal, and acceptable gender

teach the students how to share these moments of activism and care by writing a verbatim theatre monologue based on their research. The result of their work is this collection of ten verbatim monologues that share moments of Canadian queer and trans activism that include letter writing and mentoring by trans activist Rupert Raj, the youth activism work undertaken by Two Spirit Activist Alec Butler, Vanessa Russell's teaching activism in a high school program designed for LGBTQ high school students and Alan Li's leadership in an early Pride Parade that started in Toronto's Chinatown.

The team of undergraduate students who participated in the research project identified as QTBIPOC themselves and as allies and worked to answer the following research question: *What moments of QTBIPOC and allied activism and care between 1970 and the present have challenged heteronormativity, cis-normativity and racism in Canada.* They framed their research through an intersectional lens that examined the intersections of heteronormativity and cis-normativity with other forms of structural discrimination such as anti-Asian racism, anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism and settler colonialism. A description of the team's research activities is included as an appendix after the presentation of all ten monologues.

The significance of this project comes with the intentional focus of uncovering QTBIPOC moments of care and activism within and outside the LGBTQ liberation movement and the intentional recruitment and training of QTBIPOC undergraduate students. Providing opportunities for QTBIPOC students to learn how to research and tell stories of QTBIPOC and allied moments of activism and care makes space for students to witness and tell stories from histories which shed light on their own contemporary experiences of oppression and activism. The ten monologues presented here share histories of QTBIPOC care and activism within the LGBTQ liberation movement that are significant to the next generation of QTBIPOC researchers. They are histories that contribute to knowledge on contemporary systematic racism, heteronormativity and cis-normativity.

The assembly of the team's ten monologues into this PDF provides students, high school teachers, university course instructors, and community educators with a set of research-based LGBTQ curriculum materials. The monologues can be read aloud and used to promote

identity. A person who identifies as cisgender is a person whose gender identity is the same as their sex assigned at birth. A person who identifies as transgender is a person whose gender identity is not the same as their sex assigned at birth.

discussion of historical and contemporary examples of intersectional discrimination against LGBTQ people and moments of activism that have challenged heteronormativity, cis-normativity, racism, classism, and settler colonialism.

Jenny, Mitzi and I hope readers will enjoy reading each of the ten monologues and will learn something new about queer and trans activism and care in Canada.

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Ten Moments of Queer and Trans of Activism and Care in Canada

The Monologues

Part One: Community

The first set of monologues focus on what it means to be in community with others—to resist, to protect, and to seek change together. The monologues explore the ways in which one’s queer identity is complicated by intersections with racial and ethnic identities. The activists featured in this section are: Alec Butler (a Two-Spirit, non-binary, and intersex scholar, elder, writer, and filmmaker), Richard Fung (a gay Chinese, Trinidadian, Canadian, video-oriented artist and writer), and Alan Li (a gay Chinese immigrant, physician, community organizer, and human rights activist). Each of these activists made the conscious choice to be visible, to be openly political for the sake of their communities.

Alec Butler: Liberation of our People

Alec Butler is a Two-Spirit, Non-binary, Intersex activist and an award-winning playwright, author and filmmaker and Elder. Butler is a scholar in Indigenous Studies and Sexual Diversity Studies at the University of Toronto. Their research centres on Two-Spirit Queer Indigenous Literatures, Cultures, Communities and Politics. They are of Indigenous (Mi'kmaq) and Settler (French/Irish) descent originally from Unama'ki (Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia).

“Liberation of our People” focuses on Alec Butler's experience of being born queer as well as their involvement in and of the history of queer liberation movement in terms of their involvement and what they’ve learned.

Shakira Willems chose to write about Butler’s activism to highlight the importance of including Indigenous peoples in the discussion of queer activism and care. Often Indigenous peoples go unrepresented and aren’t brought into many conversations. Willems wanted to highlight Indigenous presence in queer activism. Queer identity has always existed amongst Indigenous peoples, she says, and it’s important to acknowledge this. Alec Butler’s words express their experience of what it’s like to be queer.

Liberation of our People

“To the forces that tried to erase me, silence me, growing up. Dismissed me, telling me my ideas weren’t important, ya know... my existence was an offence to them in some ways. So, I had a lot to deal with, to battle with. Intersex kids did not have a support system. I found an inspiration from every little gay-queer thing I could find. I felt despised as a kid, for being who I was.

I believe that the class struggle and homosexuality, our sexual freedom and our economic freedom, our economic liberation and social liberation are all connected. I don’t think my idea or how I feel about queer liberation has changed since Stonewall. Back then to me it wasn’t about economic justice, social justice, sexual freedom, and personal freedom but that has never wavered in my articulation of queer liberation, in my work. Even the first play I wrote called Shake Down. Our roots are in the grassroots, are in the marginalized who have come together and organize themselves like they did in Stonewall.

I’ve lost friends to AIDS/HIV in the late 80s, that had a really terrific effect on my art and my spirituality and my feeling of the place in the world. It made me even more determined to be an activist. This led to a conversation I had with friends that went to the meeting in Winnipeg where the term “Two-Spirit” came out in 1989, this was a subliminal moment. It had a politic to it too. I became interested in Indigenous sovereignty and fighting for the land. Honouring the word that demanded for validation, our voices to be heard, our people to be seen.

I try to talk about these things in my work. Queer liberation is about breaking down the walls in our personal and private lives because capitalism is a system that has brainwashed us, making us keep everything personal and separate. Capitalism wants us to be silent, to shut up and not talk about these things that are so important to us, keep us alienated. I think it’s important to be out and visible as queer person. As a person who identifies as intersex, trans and Two Spirit I feel like my interest and my heart is in resistance. It’s important to resist and not assimilate. To inspire people is to inspire living life. That is the gift I offer through my work, a window into our world and the strength to move forward, as strong, and proud, BIPOC queer folks.” ...Miikwech.

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Richard Fung: Bullers and Bachelors

Richard Fung's work as an activist is that of an artist. He is a video-oriented artist and writer; he was born in Trinidad in 1954 and immigrated to Toronto via Ireland in 1973. His works connect to topics such as the role of the "Asian male in gay pornography to colonialism, immigration, racism, homophobia, AIDS, justice in Israel/Palestine, and his own family history" (Fung, 2021). Fung's work encompasses films which have been broadcast in Canada, the United States, and Trinidad and Tobago. In addition, he has published numerous essays and received awards in both Canada and the United States. This exploration of his work focuses on the mid 1990s to early 2000s where Fung's political engagement and work is particularly, as he says, "grounded in [his] contradictory experience as gay, Chinese, Trinidadian, Canadian, a video maker, middle-class, and so on." (Fung, 2002) Richard Fung is currently Professor Emeritus in the Faculty of Art at the Ontario College of Art and Design University (OCAD University).

In the early 2000s after receiving a research-creation grant from the Canada Council for the Arts to study the relationship between nationalism and homophobia in Canada and Trinidad and Tobago, Richard Fung attended a solo exhibition by Trinidadian visual artist Christopher Cozier. This exhibition had such an impact on Fung he created his documentary *Uncomfortable: The Art of Christopher Cozier* (2005). This monologue imagines a conversation between Richard Fung and Christopher Cozier. As a content warning the monologue examines the use of the term "Buller" which is a homophobic slur for gay men.

Buller is a derogatory word for gay men which references anal sex and specifies sodomy. Fung states that "buller" is sharp and poisonous and that in his youth he lived in "terror that the word would be shot [his] way" (Fung, 2005). Julia Chapman feels Fung's language surrounding his experience is extremely powerful. Although she cannot share in his experience as a gay Asian man, as a Trinidadian, Chapman recognizes the sharp pain and fear of the cutting language.

Bullers and Bachelors

I don't like documentaries about artists. I find the mediating lens puts me at a distance from the artwork, and explication by the artist doesn't enlighten me. However, I am intrigued that the critique of homophobia in building the xenophobic nationalist project would come from an artist I knew not to be gay. When I attended your solo exhibition at Caribbean Contemporary Arts (CCA7) on my last research trip, I was accosted by the word "bullers" written on the old-fashioned, stand-up blackboard that formed part of the installation.

Buller is a derogatory term for gay man, though it and its verb form, to bull, both have traces of a pre-identarian sexuality. It refers specifically to anal sex and is closer to sodomite in meaning. Buller was part of a litany of attributes that delineated "them" from "us." It was squarely in the "them" column. The implied subject of the utterance is a particular form of "Trini" nationalism, a subject position well known in the modern Trinidadian political landscape. The installation's social commentary is both wry and cutting, in the best calypso tradition. And it bears the burden of representation that weighs upon any images of a place like Trinidad and Tobago. My work is after all grounded in my contradictory experience as gay, Chinese, Trinidadian, Canadian as video maker, middle class and so on. It is especially difficult, the racism of general society filters into the gay community while the sexism and homophobia of ethnic communities creates constant isolation. In Trinidad, in my youth I lived in terror that the word would be shot my way. "Buller" is sharp and poisonous, and it is yet to be tamed and re-appropriated by Trinidadian queer folk.

As a Chinese man in Canada, the history of the infantilization of Chinese men as bachelors into non-men yet endows them with the sexual threat of men devoid of socially sanctioned sexual release. An asexual wimpiness and a degenerate sexual depravity follows the identity. This is my contradictory experience.

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Alan Li: The Minority Within the Minority

An immigrant from Hong Kong, Alan Li is a gay physician, community organizer, and human rights activist who has been a prominent contributing member of Gay Asians Toronto (GAT) since 1981 and is spearheading activism work for HIV/AIDS as well as queer, racialized, and other marginalized communities in Toronto. Within GAT, Alan Li organized their CelebrAsian events, the GAT's biannual HIV/AIDS fundraisers, and also contributed to the people of colour workshops that provided spaces of collaboration between the GAT and other queer of colour activist groups in Toronto. Additionally, on top of being a physician at the Regent Park Community Health Centre, Li is active in HIV/AIDS ongoing research and has been involved with the AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT), the Asian Community AIDS Services (ACAS), the Gay Asian AIDS Project (GAAP), and other initiatives of HIV/AIDS activism in Toronto.

The monologue, *The Minority Within the Minority*, showcases a pivotal cultural moment for the queer Asian community—Alan Li's keynote speech at Grange Park during the 1982 Toronto Pride Parade, the first and only Pride that went through Chinatown, Toronto on June 27, 1982. Through his monologue, Alan Li advocates for intersectional minority communities—including intersectional, racialized, BIPOC queer and trans communities—that undergo historical and ongoing targeted and layered marginalization within the very sociopolitical communities that they are also members of. Hugely drawn from Li's autobiographical chapters in *Any other way: How Toronto got queer and Marvellous grounds: Queer of colour histories of Toronto*, the monologue in Li's point of view offers insight to the emotions, challenges, and experiences of the very real, human, and inherently political embodiment of intersectional queer and Asian existence. Consequently, the monologue utilizes Li's perspective to emphasize the need for collective solidarity that bridges the boundaries between different political and marginalized communities towards collective social justice.

Embodied in her own intersectional identity, the author, Vivian Wang, aims to highlight Alan Li's intersectional activist work through his 1982 Toronto Pride keynote speech as it resists the Orientalist narratives, elimination, and colonial violence imposed on communities that they are a part of. Not only does the 1982 Toronto Pride represent a watershed cultural event in queer and trans Toronto history that celebrated Asian and other racialized communities within the broader queer and trans community of Toronto, the centring of the event in Toronto's Chinatown symbolized how the spatialization of BIPOC ethnic communities associated with Orientalist narratives of homophobia can also act as spaces of queerness and transness. Wang chose this moment of activism because it confronts the colonialist agenda of siloed marginalized communities and works towards critical solidarity activism and collective futures.

The Minority Within the Minority

*Content Warning: This play speaks about homophobia, Orientalism, and racism.

(ALAN LI speaks to the audience from centre stage in front of the background photo on the screen)

On June 27, 1982, over twenty gay Asians led the Pride parade through Chinatown. It was the first and only time the parade went through that neighbourhood, and the only time the gay Asian community was accorded leadership status in Pride's long history.

When I was initially asked to be keynote speaker, I was very scared, scared about the exposure it would involve, scared of the unconditional self-disclosure. But then, I became angry with the straight world and with myself for accepting their guidelines for oppression. I got really mad about all those times that I tried to pass for straight, repeated a heterosexual joke, changed the "hes" into "shes" when I talked with my straight friends about my love life, and put away all my gay magazines and books when a straight friend came to stay for a visit.

The social is political. Visibility of the gay Asian community through the social space and cultural activism of Pride would be a very valuable opportunity. So, I give the speech right now with an unimaginable sense of liberation and pride, for myself, for my community. I am here today not only as a gay man but also as an Asian man. And, as an Asian, I have an additional battle in the fight for my own liberation and for the liberation of the Asian community. As gays, we have to fight for our rights in the straight society; but Asian gays, like Black gays, Jewish gays, sexual minorities, the [disabled] among us, and every other minority within the minority, have other battles to face as well.

Because the Canadian society as a whole is divided along racial lines and cultural differences, as gay Asians we have to face a triple source of rejection: rejection as Asian in the white community, rejection as gays in the Asian community, and rejection as Asian gays in the white gay community. Additional minority status within the gay community keeps some minority groups in a subordinate position and can serve to reinforce feelings of isolation within

the larger gay community. This problem is particularly harmful in the gay community because if we are divided, we won't be strong enough to fight our battles together.

I hope, by actively participating and channeling all our energies into positive action, we will continue to be seen, to be heard, and to grow as one strong and united [queer] community, proud to be who we are.

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Part Two: Resistance

The second set of monologues share the theme of resistance, particularly in the form of combatting oppressive policies in institutions. The activists featured in this section are Delwin Vriend (a gay Canadian teacher), Michelle Douglas (a lesbian human rights activist and former officer in the Canadian Armed Forces), and Rupert Raj (a Canadian transgender man and the founder of the Metamorphosis Medical Research Foundation). The monologues feature individual acts of resistance against the systematic oppression of LGBTQ+ people in Canada—triumphs that deserve to be celebrated. But resistance is not glorious. These monologues instead centre on the great personal costs experienced by these activists.

Delwin Vriend: Vriend v. Alberta

Delwin Vriend is a Canadian teacher who was at the center of a landmark provincial and federal legal case, *Vriend v. Alberta*, concerning the inclusion of sexual orientation as a protected human right in Canada. In 1992, Delwin Vriend was fired from his job due to his sexual orientation. This incident led him to file a Human Rights Commission complaint and a lawsuit against the Government of Alberta for non-protection of human rights. After 3 court hearings and almost 7 years, he won the *Vriend v. Alberta* case at the Supreme Court of Canada in 1998.

The verbatim monologue is derived from an interview that Delwin Vriend had with Donna McElligott of CBC Radio. In the interview, Vriend talks about his emotions and the experiences that he had during his journey from getting fired from his job due to his sexual orientation to finally winning the *Vriend v. Alberta* case and arriving at the Canadian Supreme Court decision in 1998. The interview is titled "Human Rights in Alberta: A Conversation with Delwin Vriend" and was hosted by the Chumir Foundation for Ethics in Leadership, in Calgary, Alberta.

Vriend v. Alberta was a landmark Supreme Court case that made discrimination based on sexual orientation illegal across Canada. Chika Duru chose this research topic because she wanted to find a way to merge her academic interests in the Canadian legal system and her interest in Canadian Queer history. This case set a very important precedent for how sexuality is defined in the eyes of Canadian law, and she felt that it was a moment in history that needed to be celebrated more.

Vriend v. Alberta

Setting:

Delwin is giving a talk at a Human Rights Convention in Calgary, Alberta. The convention is run by the Sheldon Chumir Foundation for Ethics in Leadership.

Character:

DELWIN VRIEND: A white gay man, 52 years old in 2018, Albertan

DELWIN

Uh, yeah. April 2, 2018, marked the 20th Anniversary of the landmark Supreme Court decision *Vriend v. Alberta*, which made discrimination based on sexual orientation illegal across Canada. Yeah. 20 years. Yeah. Um, time flies. Um, When you think of a legal case, you often think of the person that's involved being up on the stand and giving testimony and, um, being, being, uh, cross-examined and so on. In this case, none of that happened. Okay, to confess. I was not involved in preparing the cases. I was not involved in, uh, arguing the cases. I was not, I didn't even have to be in the courtrooms.

I did go to the courthouse. Uh, because, well, of course, the media expected me to be there, and I ended up being basically the, um, the media face for the case, the poster child for this case. I always hated that. That phrase, that poster boy or poster child is like, uh, didn't like that. Um, it was difficult. It's not me. I'm not someone who loves being in the public light. It was very stressful. Um, I would often not answer my phone. My phone would ring off the hook sometimes, especially if something came up about sexual orientation. Especially about the *Vriend v. Alberta* ruling, I would have hundreds of phone calls and I would just, that would, uh, I would crawl into my bed and crawl up into a ball and, and just wish that phone would stop ringing.

In many ways, we won the case, even more in the media, than we did in the courts but I think one of the personal tolls was a social toll. It was probably one of the reasons, in fact, it was one of the reasons that I left Edmonton, that I left Alberta, that I left Canada, um, since the

decision nowhere quite feels like home. Because of my presence in the media, so many people thought they knew me, where they only knew this image that the media painted of me and that we were painting of me. I mean, this was the boy next door, um, he got fired for being gay. He's this perfect, you know, perfect person. He's not real. I needed to get out of that, out of Alberta.

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Michelle Douglas: My fight against the Canadian Armed Forces

Michelle D. Douglas is a human rights activist who served as an officer in the Canadian Armed Forces from 1986 to 1989. She was one of the first women to join the Special Investigation Unit (SIU), a civilian law enforcement agency that investigates criminal activity in the military. However, the SIU was also known for investigating cases of homosexuality within the military. Since the beginning of the “LGBT Purge” in 1950, these cases have been met with harsh persecution. Even though Michelle Douglas identifies as a lesbian, she took the position in the SIU and decided to hide her sexual orientation from her peers. But, it was not long until she began to be investigated. Michelle not only had to endure weeks of psychological abuse but also got dismissed because of her sexuality. To overcome all of these injustices, she files a landmark case against the military’s anti-LGBTQ+ policies. Michelle Douglas’ legal battle made the Federal Court of Canada decide that homosexual individuals could not be barred from the military.

From the 1950s to the mid-1990s, the Canadian federal government systematically discriminated against LGBT members of the Canadian Armed forces, the RCMP, and the federal public service and maintained an official policy to identify and remove LGBT people from service. The monologue attempts to dive deep into Michelle’s perspective regarding the oppression of LGBT people within the military. It uses Michelle’s own words to describe what she went through during her time as an officer. The monologue details the collective trauma and hurt that LGBT members of the military experienced as well as Michelle’s refusal to stand for that discrimination.

Giovanna El-Warrak chose this moment of activism because it uncovers an almost unknown part of our military history. Michelle Douglas incited a policy reform that directly combatted homophobia at an institutional level. Her efforts highlight how the legal sector can be a powerful tool in changing structural prejudice within institutions.

My fight against the Canadian Armed Forces

Setting:

Michelle Douglas is doing a recorded interview at her office for the LGBT Purge Fund YouTube channel. It is the present day, in Ottawa.

Character:

MICHELLE DOUGLAS: LGBT activist.

MICHELLE

I am happy to have this opportunity to share my story to this amazing community we have created at our LGBT Purge Fund project. If you identify yourself with my story, I just wanted you to know that you're not alone and you're heard. Please do not hesitate to contact me or anyone in the organization so we are able to provide any support you might need. Ok, so let's get started.

When I joined the military, I finished at the top of my class. To acknowledge how I've been doing in that training; the military posted me to a unit known as the Special Investigations Unit. The Special Investigations Unit was tasked with investigating the most serious forms of crime in the military. They were also tasked with investigating allegations of homosexuality. My career advancement HR people were posting me to acknowledge how I was doing. And on the other hand, I was soon to realize I was also under investigation by the SIU because of my sexual orientation. It's a hard position to get posted to a unit that you know is going to be looking at you. My boss called me one day and told me to gather my things. He said we were flying from Toronto where I was posted to Ottawa to conduct an investigation. We went to the Toronto airport in the undercover SIU car, we cut close to the airport, but then my boss turned into a hotel strip by the airport, and he just said "Follow me. There are some people I need you to talk to." He took me to the eighth floor of what was then the Constellation Hotel and he left me at the threshold of that door on the eighth floor.

The door opened, there were 2 military police officers in civilian clothes, and he just said, “Go with them”. I went inside and I knew I was in the big BIG trouble, and I had a pretty good idea of why. I was in that particular interrogation for two days in the hotel room. It was...it was pretty awful, and I remember a lot about this day. It’s a time that stayed with me. They talked to me about my loyalty to my country, which is deep and assured, and not in doubt in any way. I was prepared to give my life for Canada, but the fact that I’m gay seems to negate all of that in their mind. It’s a bizarre idea for me. But they demanded I tell them my sexual orientation, that I clarify the nature of my relationship with this other person, and I lied about it all. I didn’t want to get kicked out of the military. They asked me to name names, they asked me to take a polygraph test. I said no. But after I left that hotel room, I became subjected to much more intense interrogation many more times. Sometimes in hotel rooms, sometimes just really cruel behavior in my workplace by my boss. And it was unrelenting, and I was breaking, I was a young person.

They were so cruel, and the pressure and the stress. The reduction of you as a person. You know it’s something that stays with you. So, I started my journey to take on a fight against the Canadian Armed Forces. To seek legal justice and to try to end the ridiculous, discriminatory, and damaging policy that shamed homosexuals. That shamed people just like me and was so, so profoundly wrong. This battle would bring the Canadian Armed Forces into Court and require them to explain why they were doing what they were doing and to justify it. Just as we were going towards a three trial in the Federal Court of Canada, they said they wanted to settle. Because there was no way they could justify it. It’s just not justifiable. And it was certainly not justifiable in the context of Canada’s Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

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Rupert Raj: 'Your Brother,' David

Rupert Raj is a transgender man who provided critical support to and for other trans men through his easily accessible publications and letters. Essentially serving as an information broker between the medical/psychological community and the transgender community, his writings shared vital transgender research, literature, and expertise from across the globe. Raj's activism allowed trans individuals to feel confident and safer.

"Your 'brother,' David" takes place in Rupert Raj's apartment in Toronto in early 1985 as he finds out that his good friend David Liebman has passed away. Memories of David (as captured by his letters) and letters from family and friends reveal how Raj's work impacted David's life. The monologue thus illustrates how Raj's written activism nurtured the trans community as a whole.

Mia Jakobsen was drawn to research Rupert Raj because they found his extensive writings and publications extremely inspirational and was shocked that they were not more well-known in queer Canadian history. They wanted to learn more about trans history in Canada and examine archival silences while employing our research group's aim of decolonial scholarship.

Your 'brother,' David

Setting:

This monologue takes place in Rupert Raj's apartment in Toronto, in early 1985. When David appears, it is a memory of him in Florida in 1984.

Characters:

DAVID LIEBMAN: 18-years old. Transgender. He was a member of Rupert's organization, the Metamorphosis Medical Research Foundation (MMRF). He took his life due to depression. He was a good friend of Rupert's and regularly wrote to him.

RUPERT RAJ: 33-years old. Transgender. He is Canadian, of Indian and Polish descent. In addition to MMRF, he runs Metamorphosis: a newsletter for other transgender people.

)The year is 1985. RUPERT RAJ takes 4 letters from his mailbox outside his door and walks into his apartment in Toronto. He sits down at his coffee table and starts to read the first letter he's received out loud – it's from David's mother.)

RUPERT

My son David died on December 22nd, 1984, of an overdose of anti-depressant medication. He could no longer heal the pain of his life and I was a helpless spectator to his inconsolable grief. Rupert, thank you for reaching out to David. Your friendship meant a great deal to him. He admired and respected you and your work. Florence.

(RUPERT is in shock at his table. He walks over to his desk nearby (with his mail in hand) and opens up a drawer. He scrounges around a pile of papers looking for something and manages to find a letter. He sits on the ground next to his desk. RUPERT opens the letter, and as he does, DAVID LIEBMAN walks in and takes a seat at the coffee table. This is a memory of David a year prior in Florida, captured by his letters. The lighting on David's side of the stage is slightly dimmer to show he is in the past. DAVID starts to

handwrite a letter. RUPERT looks fondly at the table and at David.)

DAVID

Dear Rupert, thank you so much for your letter and for all of your valuable help. I really appreciate it. My move to St. Petersburg has been okay so far... I see a new psychiatrist on the 24th. My old psychiatrist came up with one here in Florida, but if he doesn't work out, I'll have your list to refer to. How are things in Toronto going for you? If you have the time, would you please check and see if you can find the address of the groups of TS's that have a session in St. Petersburg. It would be nice to have a friend like myself in the same state as I am. Sincerely, David (your 'brother').

(RUPERT smiles a bit and scrounges around looking for more papers. Rupert finds one and looks to DAVID as David starts writing another letter.)

DAVID

Dear Rupert, I'm friends with a trans man who's never read an issue of Metamorphosis, so he asked for me to send him one of the issues to get a sample. I'm sure he'll enjoy your newsletter, and maybe he'll even want to become a part in it. Also, there's a gay hotline number that I got from my doctor. I'm hoping that I will make some friends with more TS and gay people. Your 'brother,' David.

(RUPERT gains courage to open another of his mail-letters. He reads the second letter – it's from a mutual friend.)

RUPERT

(Skimming the letter to find the important parts) Dear Rupert... I had to read the news over and over... I couldn't believe it... Such an occurrence makes me realize how fragile the border line between survival and defeat is; between prospering and deteriorating. The line is so fragile that it's frightening... defeat can happen to anyone – anyone of us Rupert. David is dead and it's a terrible, terrible thing. Khalil.

(RUPERT is overwhelmed with emotion and scrounges around the papers again. He finds several. DAVID writes one to Rupert, who smiles in memory.)

DAVID

Dear Rupert, I'm seeing a psychiatrist there (not just because I'm trans) because I have a chemical depression problem which requires anti-depressant medication. My being trans does not bother him or else I would not have given you his name – I've attached it below.

RUPERT breathes and decides to open the third mail-letter. This is from another mutual friend.

RUPERT

Pat talked with David's sister, and she said he seemed upset because he had not been born perfect. I've heard that therapy after surgery is as important as it is before surgery. He was 18 years old Rupert. What a loss. Sincerely, Lee.

(RUPERT looks to David again and DAVID writes another letter.)

DAVID

(Almost done a letter) Oh! I almost forgot! Pat L. Battles—who is also a trans man in Florida—and I are planning to get together and meet for the first time after the holidays. He said he found out about me through you. – Good work!

(RUPERT gains courage yet again to open the last mail-letter. This is from David's sister.)

RUPERT

My brother was a beautiful person – too beautiful for the ugliness of the world. I'm grateful to you for your help. I'm glad there are transsexuals who do make it. I just wish people weren't so judgmental and cruel. Maura.

(RUPERT looks to David one last time and DAVID finishes his letter.)

DAVID

Take care Rupert, and thanks again for all your help. It would be nice to get together with you sometime. A future date is fine with me too. Who knows, maybe I'll even have you over at my very own house. I'd enjoy showing you around. Your 'brother,' David.

(DAVID leaves the coffee table – he briefly touches Rupert’s shoulder, before leaving Rupert sitting there alone in his grief.)

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Part Three: Youth

The third set of monologues focus on the theme of youth, giving voice to queer young people and the issues that matter to them. Most of the monologues in this section are written from the perspectives of anonymous or fictional students weighing in on queer issues like coming out, struggling to find community, and gender-neutral public bathrooms. The known activists in this section are Vanessa Russell (a white lesbian researcher and educator at the TDSB) and j wallace skelton (an educator, researcher, youth and social worker, and artist in Ontario). They address the change that must be enacted in order to protect and uplift queer youth, especially in schools.

Mr. Anonymous: Gender-Inclusive Washrooms

Mr. Anonymous is a third-year UofT student. Mr. Anonymous identifies himself as transmasculine. At the time we did the interview Mr. Anonymous was trying to be more confident in public and make more friends from the 2SLGBTQ+ community.

In the monologue Gender-Inclusive Washrooms, Mr. Anonymous shared his views on gender-neutral public bathroom access issues. He discusses the mobility and emotional concerns people would face when they wanted to use gender-neutral public bathrooms. This monologue will give us a view of queer and trans youth's need for accessible gender-inclusive washrooms and the considerations of whether to choose to use them.

Jialu "Lulu" Li chose to talk to Mr. Anonymous about gender-inclusive washrooms because she found that many queer and trans youth have faced the issue of access to gender-inclusive washrooms in their daily lives. Li thinks that informing people about the views of queer and trans youth on the gender-inclusive washrooms access issue will help promote gender equality. In the monologue Mr. Anonymous expresses his views on multiple aspects of gender-inclusive washrooms access issues in the interview.

Gender-Inclusive Washrooms

Setting:

Mr. Anonymous is being interviewed through audio messages, and is speaking to his friend Lulu. It is January 13th, 2023, in Toronto.

Character:

MR. ANONYMOUS: Third-year student at the University of Toronto, identifies as transmasculine.

MR. ANONYMOUS

I think there are barriers to accessing gender-neutral public bathrooms, because a lot of them are just not easily accessible and for some they are completely inaccessible. I'll find that I have to go all the way to like the basement, or like, to the 4th floor or something like that. If there's a disabled person, I really don't think that they can access these easily because of, like, stairs, or like, any other mobility issues. ...

I also think that there is just maybe like an emotional or psychological issue as well. Because, um, I feel like using the bathroom in a public space is still very much like a social marker of your identity. You can kind of make out what someone identifies as, depending on the bathroom that they use, or like, use that against them basically. I think there's also a sort of accessibility issue when it comes to that. ...

If there were equal numbers of non-binary and binary bathrooms in all the public spaces? I think that in theory it's a very good idea. ... It would be better than having only binary washrooms, but I really don't know if it would be a practical or safe choice? Some people could feel that it's a little uncomfortable or unsafe. For example, like anyone who isn't out yet publicly. And I really don't think that the government or any sort of, like big corporations would support this sort of concept, even though we'd like it to. I think that there would be a lot of public backlash about it, especially considering there's already, Um, a lot of, you know like transphobia, for example. So it makes me wonder if it would really be like a better or safer choice for the queer community.

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Rebecca: Not Coming Out

Rebecca is one of the queer Asian youth that Ruthann Lee interviewed for her thesis on queer Asian youth experiences with 'coming out'. At the time of the interview Rebecca identified as an Asian lesbian student from the Toronto area. In her interviews Rebecca describes her complicated feelings around the notion of 'coming out' and explores the conflict she experiences between her two identities as queer and Asian.

The monologue draws from Ruthann Lee's 2003 thesis "*Coming Out*" as *queer Asian youth in Canada: Examining cultural narratives of identity and community*. The titular character, Rebecca, is one of the queer Asian youth Ruthann interviewed. Rebecca's words provide insight into how the notion of 'coming out' is complicated by cultural differences. Rebecca also describes her experience at the 519, a community centre in Toronto's gay district, which provides support services, resources, and volunteer programming to the LGBTQ+ community.

Cherise Pan chose to highlight this interview with Rebecca because it disrupts norms and expectations of queer experiences and queer culture. The monologue challenges the supposed necessity of coming out and argues that sharing a queer identity is not enough to foster community and relationships between people.

Rebecca

Setting:

Rebecca is being interviewed by Ruthann Lee. The time was in 2003, in Toronto.

Character:

REBECCA: Asian queer youth, lesbian.

REBECCA

I don't know who I am. I know I'm a lesbian, but I need to "come out" to become one. I hate the term coming out in mainstream queer groups. I felt like, how unfair this world was, that you even had to come out. Why can't you just be a lesbian or gay or whatever? Why couldn't I in grade four give a Valentine's to a girl, right? So I hate that term. People like me need to "come out." Do people come out as being straight? No, no one does it and that's why I hate it—I hate the fact that I had to come out. Why couldn't I just gradually date a girl? I didn't have to come out saying, "Mom? I'm going to date boys." ... Coming out is like choosing either black or white, but I'm more than that. You can't use the binary/dichotomy to identify me. Why must I split myself through coming out? Then, without "coming out", who actually am I?

I tried to find myself with those mainstream queer groups. I tried to fit in, but it was just too ... it made me feel like there was something wrong with me. There's like six people there and it's not a very social place where you can just be yourself. You're given this topic of being queer, how it is to be queer but it's really like, that's not all who I am, you know? I'm a person who I am. I believe that a lot of people, a lot of young kids who dress a certain way hang out at these certain places just 'cause they're trying to be queer, it's—you are—you know? They are different from me. ... It's just like putting a circle into a bunch of squares and triangles [to] see if there's anything [we] have in common. It doesn't work like that. So it shouldn't totally change who you are and I feel like these community centers are just pinpointing these attributes to us.

I don't think it was beneficial. I didn't go there anymore. I just went once and it just made me feel very awkward. I felt excluded by them, and I felt I belong to no where. I'm a dandelion with no place to root, a bird with no branch to rest.

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Vanessa Russell: A Refuge for Queer Youth

Vanessa Russell is a white, lesbian educator, researcher, and activist based in Ontario. Between 1997 and 2000, she was a teacher and coordinator of the Triangle Program. She worked alongside other teachers to create a curriculum which fulfilled OSSD requirements while also meeting the unique needs of their students. Since then, she has worked as an equity consultant and teacher for the TDSB and contributed to queer research in education through the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

This verbatim monologue celebrates the long-standing efforts of queer educators and community members who contributed to the founding and maintenance of the Triangle Program, Canada's only high school program for LGBTQ+ students. The Triangle Program was created in Toronto in 1995 in response to the homophobia and transphobia that made schools unsafe for queer youth. It functions as a safe, positive, and queer space for LGBTQ+ youth. The monologue draws from the Triangle Program's 10-year anniversary publication and takes place during an imagined celebration of their efforts.

Mitzi Badlis chose to highlight Vanessa Russell's reflection in her monologue because it best exemplified the necessity of the Triangle Program in the protection and support of queer youth in Toronto. This monologue draws attention to the failure of educators, of the education system as a whole, to challenge and address homophobia and transphobia in schools. The sheer love and care for the well-being of queer youth that is evident in the monologue serves as a call to action for educators to rethink their own practices, to be the teachers that queer students deserve. As an aspiring educator, she felt that it was important to shed light on the Triangle Program and the struggles and successes experienced by the hard-working individuals who put everything they had into giving queer youth a safe space to learn without fear. It's been nearly 30 years since the program was founded and while there has been some progress in Canada's education system, there is so much work left to do to represent, support, and uplift queer students.

A Refuge for Queer Youth

Setting:

Vanessa is presenting a speech at the 10-year anniversary celebration of the Triangle Program at the Metropolitan Community Church of Toronto in 2005.

Character:

VANESSA RUSSELL: White lesbian educator, equity consultant, and researcher at the Toronto District School Board.

VANESSA

Two years after opening its doors to students, I had the honour and privilege of teaching at Triangle. I was its full-time teacher and coordinator from 1997-2000. It wasn't easy being an out lesbian teacher in a homophobic system, but it was rewarding.

While working with these queer students, my thinking and my heart were pushed in ways I never thought possible. Our wonderful staff team worked in their classrooms until 11:30 at night helping students heal, find accommodation, food, and a love of learning. We were role models, janitors, guidance counselors, cooks, and fundraisers. Where does that happen other than Triangle?

My classroom experiences and relationships with students were rare and precious and they profoundly altered the course of my professional life. One year, a thirteen-year old gay student on the heels of completing grade 8 came to our doorstep. He was traumatized and hardly spoke at all but it was clear that he wanted to register. I was astonished when this student had no recollection of ever learning negative and positive numbers. His experiences with harassment began precisely at the time he would have been learning integers. He just stopped learning.

Students stop learning when they are harassed, excluded, and brutalized. At the very least, as educators, we should all want our students to be capable of learning. Triangle was envisioned for precisely this reason. We wanted our students to have a different and positive school

experience. Sadly, the reality is that most schools are not supportive, safe, or positive places for queer youth. Many of the students who find themselves at Triangle have been the most poorly served by our education system. It is outrageous that in the late 90's, parents, administrators, and teachers did not protect these kids. It is our responsibility to ensure that students are included and valued in classrooms and schools.

The same student who arrived on our doorstep so beaten down, left our program feeling pretty good about himself. I recall him looking at his reflection in a storefront window while out on a field trip and saying, "I'm pretty damn cute. And smart too". He went on to complete his OSSD and a college program.

When these youth get the support that is rightfully theirs, their courage, creativity, intelligence, resilience, and strength surfaces. Until the system can ensure that all schools are safe and enriching to all students, Triangle will continue to be a necessary refuge for queer youth.

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j wallace skelton: The Way You Are and Breaking Things

j wallace skelton is an educator, researcher, youth and social worker, and artist based in Ontario. Between 2005-2012, j worked in partnership with the Halton District School Board (HDSB) and the Halton Organization for Pride and Education (HOPE) to develop frameworks that better recognize and support trans and gender-independent students in suburban Ontario. By implementing GSA initiatives, advocating for the necessity of gender-neutral bathrooms, and penning administrative procedures for protecting gender identity and expression in schools, j's activism consistently aims to shift school cultures and implement positive trans visibility in classrooms. j's work emphasizes full collaboration with trans students and community members, as well as arts and literacy-based methods of activism.

This monologue is written from the point of view of a former student and collaborator with j wallace skelton. While this is a fictional character, the words spoken in this monologue are comprised of direct quotes from real school surveys, student testimonials, stage directions in S. Bear Bergman's *Clearly Marked*, and skelton's own writing in "Trans in Class." The character is based on the student volunteer present at the rehearsal for the "Making the Change" conference. The speaker directly addresses the audience in present day, Toronto. Events transpired and comments made from June 2007 to September 2009 are conflated into one year for this monologue. "Making the Change" took place in real-life in 2008.

Anya Shen wrote this monologue while reflecting on her own high school experience in Calgary, Alberta. She realized that students' understanding of trans issues and their capacity to support gender diversity in our schools was often painfully inadequate. As someone who wishes to become a teacher and has a passion for the power of the arts in community-building, she found j wallace skelton's work incredibly important and captivating. She sincerely hopes that these moments in j's activism can inspire future teachers to support students in supporting one another in our spaces of education.

The Way You Are, and Breaking Things

I was in my senior year of high school in Halton, Ontario, in 2008. In June, only one Halton high school had a GSA. In September, my friend started leaving the school to go to this store that had a single-stall bathroom. Gender-neutral bathrooms weren't an option at our school then. We were worried they were going to drop out. The teachers said they would consult an administrator for advice, but they didn't have the answers either.

In December, j wallace skelton from the Halton Organization for Pride and Education put on the "Making the Change" conference for 7th-12th graders in the area. I had worked with j previously, so I was present at the tech rehearsal. For the keynote presentation, j invited S. Bear Bergman to perform his solo theatre piece, *Clearly Marked*. When students arrive, they would be directed to a table with large blank labels and markers on it. Instructions on the table read: Label Yourself: Write What You Are. My job was to find label-less audience members and encourage them to participate. The show was about being born the way you are, and breaking things. It was going to be great.

Then the planning committee suddenly realized that the word "transgender" was going to be said repeatedly from the stage, and all hell broke loose. The committee started making phone calls. j started making phone calls. The committee said the show could not be performed as it was "not appropriate."

When I worked with j in January [earlier' that year, we surveyed students about their experience with trans students. "How utterly disgusting"—that was something someone could say to my friend. Speaking of appropriate. So I talked to the committee. I said, "We hear language worse than this in an afterschool special any day of the week—at least let them hear something appropriate."

(Pause.)

The show went on. At the end, Bergman asked any boy who has ever cried, any girl who has ever been told she is too angry, anyone who has ever felt constrained by gender roles, to stand up, and he skipped through the audience waving his wand and said, “Transgender, transgender, transgender.” Everyone stood up, cheering. They were all moved. Not a single parent complained.

I’d like to think that, after that day, our school staff confronted their fear of being openly seen advocating for trans people, that supporting their students would impact their careers. Our communities are more ready than we think, and our students are finding ways to continue this fight.

I’ll leave you with this. Do you know that feeling in a high school drama class where you step into the light and speak the truth and you know everything is going to work out because your audience is saying “I see you, I have your back” and you believe it? Now imagine it’s not drama class, it’s your whole world. I see you. I have your back. I believe you. And I do. Always, always, and always.

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Ten Moments of Queer and Trans of Activism and Care in Canada Biographies of the Research Team

Research Team Leaders

Tara Goldstein

Tara Goldstein is a Professor in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and was the Vice Principal of New College at the University of Toronto from 2020-2023. Tara's current teaching and research program focuses on gender, sexuality and schooling, archival research and verbatim theatre. The findings from her recent research project *The Experiences of LGBTQ Families in Ontario Schools* funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council from 2016-2020 are shared on her website www.lgbtqfamiliespeakout.ca and in her books *Teaching Gender and Sexuality at School: Letters to Teachers* (Routledge/Taylor and Francis, 2019) and *Our Children are Your Students: LGBTQ Students Speak Out* (Myers Education Press, 2021), winner of a 2022 CHOICE Outstanding Academic Title Award and 2023 Society of Professors of Education Outstanding Book Award.

Jenny Salisbury

Jenny Salisbury is the Co-Artistic Director of Gailey Road Productions and a postdoctoral research fellow at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education where she is working with Tara Goldstein as a dramaturge on a verbatim theatre project called *60 Years of Queer and Trans Activism*. Jenny is also a theatre director and arts-based researcher who specializes in new play development. For over 20 years, Jenny has worked with playwrights, actors, and theatre ensembles to create new plays with a rich emotional tapestry, and a strong justice ethic, rooted in physical theatre traditions. Jenny's PhD thesis (2021) examined the relationship between community-engaged theatre and its audiences, and she is currently a director of the Centre for Spectatorship and Audience Research, an international research community dedicated to producing new research on theatre spectatorship.

Undergraduate Team Members

Mitzi Badlis

Mitzi Badlis (she/her) is a bisexual woman and a Filipino-Canadian pursuing an undergraduate degree at the University of Toronto. She is currently in her third year and is studying English, Sociology, and Education and Society, with the intent to become a teacher. Her research interests revolve around diversifying, decolonizing, and queering academic and educational spaces. As Professor Tara Goldstein's 2023 UTEA research assistant, she is continuing to develop her understanding, passion, and radical love for queer activism and care.

Julia Chapman

Julia Chapman is currently entering her fourth year at the University of Toronto in Political Science and English. Chapman's research interests center on intersectionality and decolonial practices. Her monologue, "Bullers and Bachelors" was presented at the February 2023, Festival of Original Theatre held at the University of Toronto.

Chika Duru

Chika Duru is an undergraduate student/researcher (Class of 2024) studying Criminology and Woman and Gender Studies at the University of Toronto. While she is an Irish native, she enjoys pursuing academic topics that blend the studies of gender and sexuality and the role that lens plays in all facets of Canadian daily life, including the legal.

Giovanna El-Warrak

Giovanna El Warrak is a Political Science undergraduate at the University of Toronto. She is passionate about research, specifically within the scope of activism and care. Giovanna is also part of a research group that studies social movements in Latin America.

Mia Jakobsen

Mia Jakobsen (she/they) is going into her third year at the University of Toronto, studying Book and Media Studies, Sexual Diversity Studies, and Digital Humanities. Originally from

Singapore, she is now based in Vancouver, British Columbia and Toronto, Ontario. Mia is an aspiring librarian and archivist, with a passion for queer history and social justice.

Jialu (Lulu) Li

Lulu is a third-year student studying at the University of Toronto majoring in Sexual Diversity Studies and Critical Studies In Equity and Solidarity. She is a cisgender-pansexual woman. According to her own live experiences, she hopes she can do something to support the 2SLGBTQ+ community like she got support from this lovely community. She hopes this booklet will help readers know more about the 2SLGBTQ+ community and work together to reduce the prejudice and discrimination faced by 2SLGBTQ+ people.

Cherise Jiaying Pan

Cherise is a University of Toronto undergraduate student in her fourth year of study. She is majoring in Socio-Cultural Anthropology and Human Geography. She is interested in LGBTQ+ activism in mainland China and wants to learn more about LGBTQ+ people's experiences across international lines.

Shakira Willems

Shakira Willems (she/they) is a Black and Indigenous activist and identifies as Two-Spirit and Lesbian. They are experienced in community engagement and Indigenous affairs consultation in the broader public sector and provide a unique approach to Indigenous affairs engagement with knowledge of the key issues related to Indigenous affairs and a working fluency in Anishinaabemowin. Shakira is a Scholar in Indigenous Studies and Political Science at the University of Toronto, with an interest in working on Indigenous politics in the future. Their research and interest centres on Indigenous spirituality in Indigenous politics and the role of Indigenous decolonization and self-determination in contemporary Indigenous politics. They aim to further examine the ways in which Indigenous spirituality can lead to sustainable Indigenous self-determination and decolonization within Indigenous politics, enabling reconciliation and connection to Indigenous cultures and language revitalization.

Anya Shen

Anya Shen (she/her) is a fourth-year undergraduate student at the University of Toronto pursuing a double major in Literature and Critical Theory and Economics, with a minor in English. She is working towards a career in public education and has a deep interest in equity practices in teaching. Writes prose and poetry on the side.

Vivian Wang

Vivian Wang is a queer, gender non-conforming, Asian femme in their fourth year of undergraduate studies at the University of Toronto studying Critical Studies in Equity and Solidarity Studies as well as Psychology. They aspire to work in the future towards creating more accessible and deinstitutional mental health spaces and services for marginalized communities, including QTBIPOC, low income, youth, femme, migrant, sex worker, and mad/disabled communities. She is currently presenting in academic conferences—such as the Trans, Disability, and Sapphic Knowledges Conference at the University of Toronto and the Congress Conference at York University—to highlight voices of communities—such as queer and trans, Asian communities—that has previously been undervalued and obstructed within discourse, institutions, and spaces of academia and professionalism.

Ten Moments of Queer and Trans of Activism and Care in Canada

Appendix: The Team's Research Activities

Tara Goldstein

Recruitment of undergraduate student researchers

Tara Goldstein and Jenny Salisbury recruited the team of undergraduate students through the University of Toronto's Research Opportunity Project (ROP) program which provides undergraduate students with academic credit for their work on a university research team. The intentional recruitment and training of QTBIPOC and allied undergraduate students through the ROP program made space for students to witness and tell stories from histories which are significant to them because they shed light on their own contemporary experiences of oppression, activism and care.

While the deliberate recruitment of QTBIPOC undergraduate students was a priority, straight BIPOC and queer White allies who applied to work on the project were also asked to join the team. Our allied team members both contributed to and benefited from learning to research and share QTBIPOC histories of activism and care. The students engaged in three stages of research training.

Stage 1: Archival research training and practice

During the 2022-2023 academic year, the ten-member student team received ten weeks of intensive research training in archival research to uncover histories of QTBIPOC activism and care. In addition to reading materials such as the CUNY Mina Lees Library's (2022) Archival Research Guide, the students participated in three online workshops with University of Toronto History Professor Elsbeth Brown, Co-Founder of The ArQuives; Raegan Swanson, Archival researcher and Executive Director of The ArQuives, d'bi.young anitafrika, theatre artist and arts-based researcher.

Located in Toronto, the ArQuives is the largest independent LGBTQ2+ Archives in the world and the only Archives in Canada with a national scope. Its mandate is to "preserve, organize and give public access to information and materials in any medium by and about LGBTQ2+ people, primarily produced in or concerning Canada" (<https://arquives.ca/>). Research at The ArQuives, can be undertaken digitally and in-person in The ArQuives physical space. Professor Brown

introduced the research team to the ArQuives collection of materials and showed them how to look for materials on the ArQuives database.

The second workshop facilitated by Reagan Swanson focused on the topic of working with Indigenous archival material in the ArQuives. To prepare for the workshop the research team read two important documents:

1. The Steering Committee on Canada's Archives (2022). Response to the Report of the Truthy and Reconciliation Commission Taskforce and
2. The Steering Committee on Canada's Archives (2022). Reconciliation Framework: The Response to the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Taskforce.

Stage 2: Data collection and Analysis

In stage 2 of the training program, each student researcher chose a moment of activism and care to study and designed a research question to answer. Then they followed the steps below to design and conduct their archival research projects.

1. Choose a moment of activism that interests you and develop a research question to answer with archival research.
2. Think about the kinds of sources that will be helpful to answer that question.
3. Visit the repositories and collections in the ArQuives either digitally or in-person.
4. Find sources that help you answer your research question.
5. Write out the answer to your research question in the form of a historical narrative or story (Adapted from CUNY Mina Lees Library 2022).

Stage 3: Verbatim monologue writing and monologue arrangement

After the students answered their research questions in the form of a historical narrative or story, research team leader Jenny Salisbury conducted a verbatim monologue workshop to demonstrate how the research team might share their research findings in the form of a verbatim monologue.

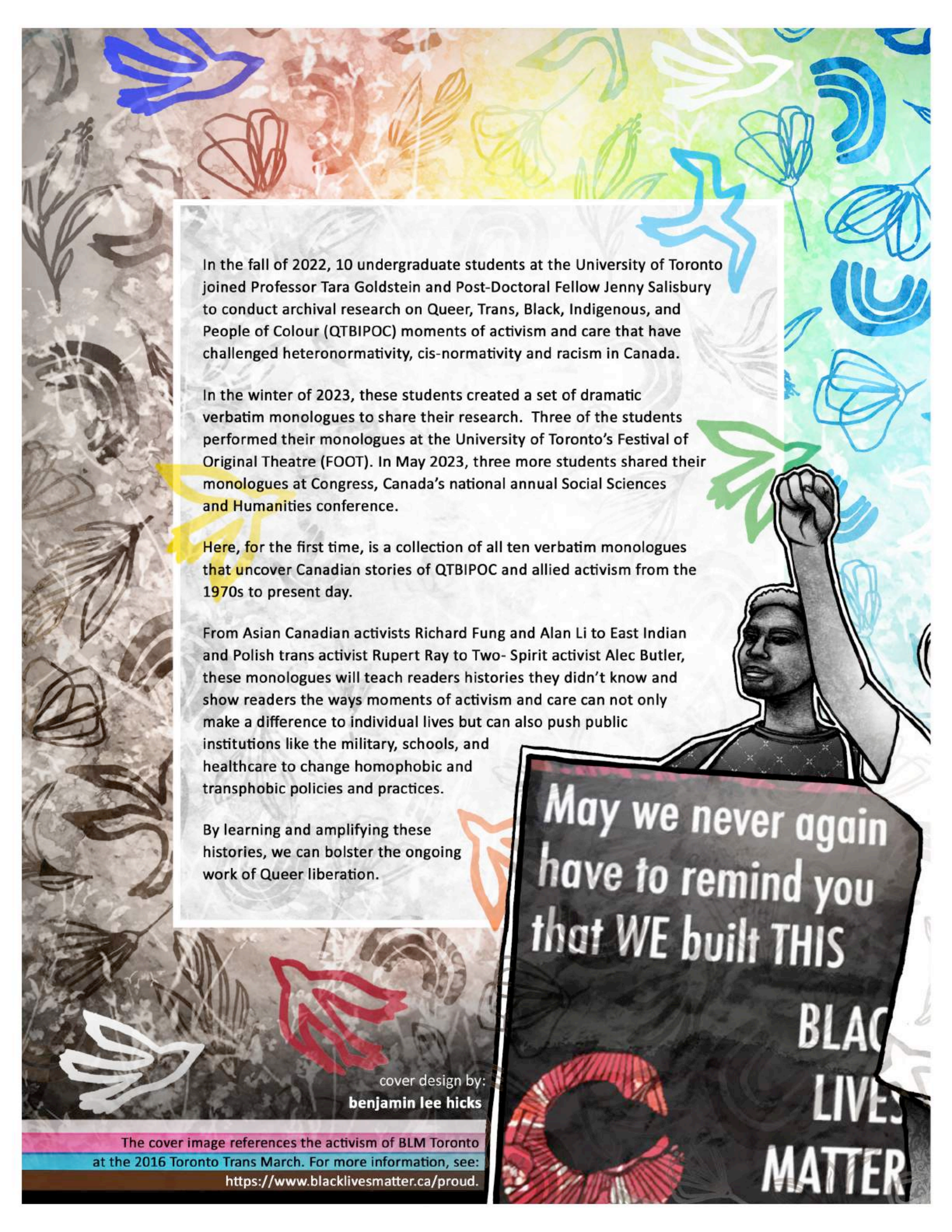
Each team member wrote one verbatim monologue that shared the findings of their archival research. First drafts of each monologue were shared with the team and each team member

received feedback on their first draft. When each team member's monologue had been revised and polished, the team members worked in groups of three to arrange their three plays into a larger play script. Each group of three presented their arrangement and explained how their arrangement of each scene layered the meaning of the previous scene and the next scene. The entire team discussed the possibilities of each arrangement, learning the skill of developing a larger playscript from a set of monologues.

As a final step, the team created a playscript that included all 10 monologues into one script.

References

CUNY Graduate Centre Mina Rees Library (2022). Archival Research Guide. New York: City University of New York (CUNY). <https://libguides.gc.cuny.edu/archivalresearch/research-process> Downloaded January 18, 2022



In the fall of 2022, 10 undergraduate students at the University of Toronto joined Professor Tara Goldstein and Post-Doctoral Fellow Jenny Salisbury to conduct archival research on Queer, Trans, Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (QTBIPOC) moments of activism and care that have challenged heteronormativity, cis-normativity and racism in Canada.

In the winter of 2023, these students created a set of dramatic verbatim monologues to share their research. Three of the students performed their monologues at the University of Toronto's Festival of Original Theatre (FOOT). In May 2023, three more students shared their monologues at Congress, Canada's national annual Social Sciences and Humanities conference.

Here, for the first time, is a collection of all ten verbatim monologues that uncover Canadian stories of QTBIPOC and allied activism from the 1970s to present day.

From Asian Canadian activists Richard Fung and Alan Li to East Indian and Polish trans activist Rupert Ray to Two-Spirit activist Alec Butler, these monologues will teach readers histories they didn't know and show readers the ways moments of activism and care can not only make a difference to individual lives but can also push public institutions like the military, schools, and healthcare to change homophobic and transphobic policies and practices.

By learning and amplifying these histories, we can bolster the ongoing work of Queer liberation.

cover design by:
benjamin lee hicks

The cover image references the activism of BLM Toronto at the 2016 Toronto Trans March. For more information, see: <https://www.blacklivesmatter.ca/proud>.

May we never again
have to remind you
that WE built THIS

BLACK
LIVES
MATTER