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Article abstract

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SHAME AND DISAVOWING QUEER REALITY:
AN AUTOTHEORETICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract: Stigma has been defined as a spoiled identity, a branding that sets a person outside the norm, with potential to elicit feelings of shame. The authors recount firsthand experiences of having felt shame in connection with their queer identities and the disavowal this provoked, until such time as they met serendipitously as researchers with related interests and began sharing memories of being queer in a cis-heteronormative

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Figure 1.
Avowing the Obsidian Mirror [Drawing on paper], (Forrest)
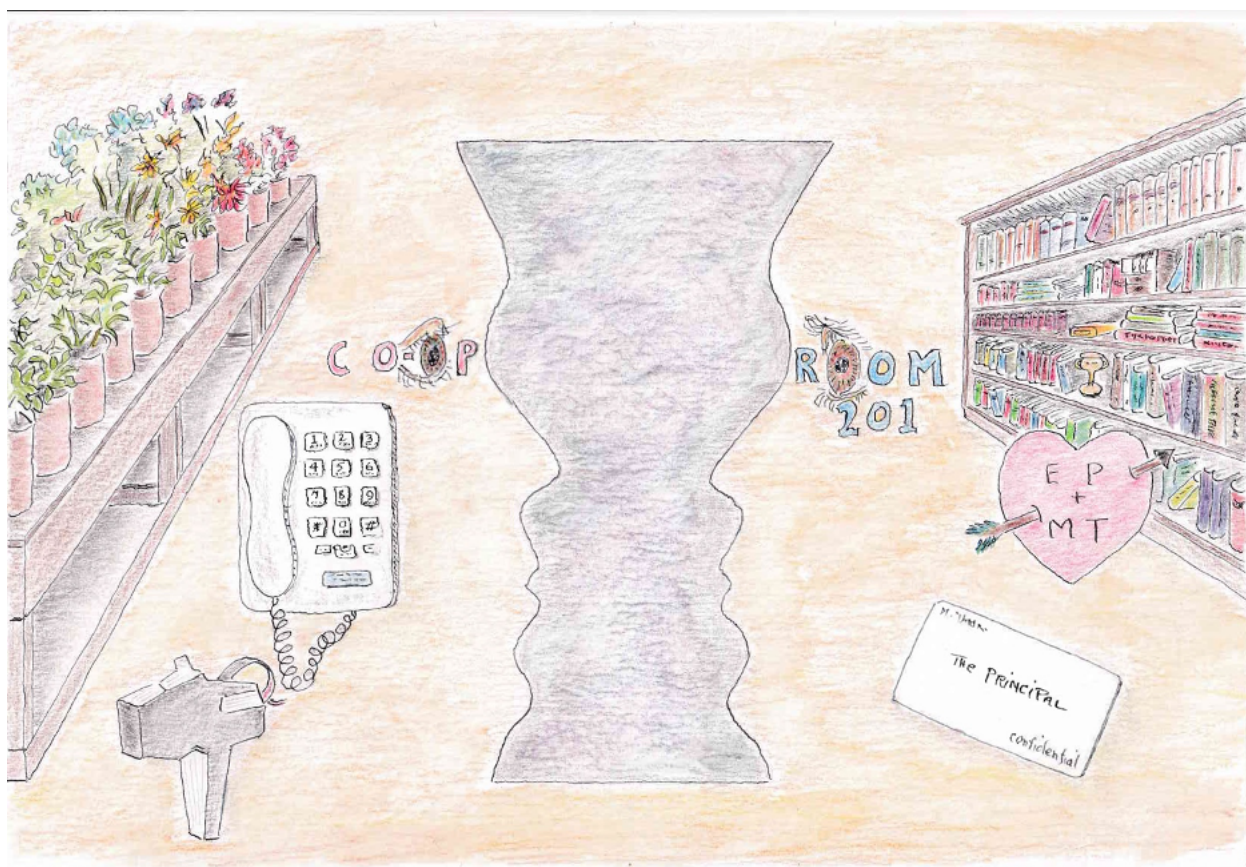
Introduction

Asked, "For whom do you write?" avant-garde poet, performer, Surrealist photographer, and self-described queer freak Claude Cahun replied, "It is more that I write, or want to write, *against* myself" (Cahun, 1930/2008, p. 207)[1] In citing this response, Cahun's commentator François Leperlier (Cahun, 1930/2008, afterword by Leperlier, p. 207) distinguished two different senses of writing against oneself: opposing oneself, one's history, image, "all the burdens that you'd like to get rid of;" and, "moving in closely *against* yourself, your own rebellion, your interior motivation, taking a position right in front of your 'magic mirror', the ideal self that you long to embrace." Leperlier believed there is power in this "double-sided approach" because it can touch the reader deeply, without pretense or "cheating" and because of the ambivalence in "being for and against oneself, other than and more than self." We agree with Leperlier and in this essay attempt to show why. We write *against* ourselves by avowing shame-inducing situations from our past. We, then, look into our magic mirrors to examine disavowal in

these stories and why confronting the shame induced by these incidents has social value.

The double-sided approach we take is both conceptual and methodological in that we illustrate two fictionalized personal stories in terms of queer theory and the concepts of shame and disavowal using the stories and cartoon images as codifications, in the Freirean sense[2], analysing them in terms of repudiating our past and chasing an ideal, be it a way of life or a way of representing that life and breaking with the certainty of prior interpretations. Combining diverse forms—story, analysis, imagery—as a way of theorizing, we find methodological justification for this approach in the work of Lauren Fournier (2021) who defined *autotheory* as a way of writing long performed by women, and by avant-garde and conceptual artists, that "points to modes of working that integrate the personal and the conceptual, the theoretical and the autobiographical, the creative and the critical, in ways attuned to interdisciplinary, feminist histories" (p. 7).

As the scholar-researchers, the artists, and the subjects of this inquiry into our personal experiences, mutual trust and the soundness of our stories have been key to our collaboration. From the moment we met at an online workshop on queer comic memoirs, our affiliation and the trust that makes it a generative discovery space have developed in concert with our non-judgemental sharing of painful memories. The fact that we both inhabit queer identities likely contributes to the trust between us, despite practising different disciplines and being at different stages in our careers. Epistemologically, our auto/biographical stories are sound research in that each is "presented in such a way that readers can form their own assessment of its soundness. As in all research the story the researcher tells has itself to be shown to be trustworthy"[3] (Griffiths & MacLeod, 2008, p. 136).

We begin with simple line drawings and fictionalized stories drawn from our own experiences, leaving it to the reader to work out whose story is whose, a fact deducible from author names but irrelevant to the function of the stories for analysis, extrapolation, and interpretation. Nonetheless, as this essay is about disavowal and coming to terms with the shame that provoked and exacerbated it, we chose to make the genesis of the stories clear from the start and avow them as our own.

Disavowing Reality's Challenge

Figure 2.
Writing on the Wall [Line drawings on paper], (Forrest)

Writing on the Wall

Thinking back to my first years of teaching high school, one episode sticks out and still makes me feel queasy. It was the end of June, a Friday afternoon before the last days of wishing everyone well for the summer. My students had written their final exam and I was packing up those papers, about to head home and do some marking, when I wondered if my friend Ellen was finished yet. If so, we could head out together. Kids' voices echoed down the back staircase—laughing and carrying on, doors slamming behind them, full of the long-awaited joys of an endless summer.

The hall was empty, as were the other classrooms. Even the cleaning staff were elsewhere, likely preparing the gym for convocation. I could see at a distance that Ellen's door was ajar and as I approached I heard voices. "She'll be giving extra help to a panicked student before Monday's exam," I thought. Then I spotted something beside her classroom door—a big heart, scratched into the paint, the age-old adolescent symbol for so-and-so loves so-and-so. I imagined the principal hopping mad, were he to see it before convocation, and I hoped one of the maintenance folks would take it off first. Then I read the initials. They were ours, mine and Ellen's. My stomach sank as I rushed back to my room, collected my things and left as quickly as I could.

This was small-town Canada in the 1980s. Same-sex relationships might be tolerated, but only if the straight majority were not forced to acknowledge them. I didn't want Ellen and me to become the notorious ones up at the school and disrupt that hypocritical silence. As I sat nervously in my apartment, knowing Ellen would call when she got home, I wasn't sure what to do. I was the newcomer in this close-knit community. She had been there for several years, was respected by all the staff, and knew plenty of folks in town. There was no way I wanted Ellen's career to suffer a scandal but I knew that if I told her about the graffiti she would insist on us braving it out together, despite her having more to lose than I had.

In the space of a very tense hour, I decided to resign my position, move back to the city, carry on into graduate studies, and do substitute teaching in the Fall. That's what I did and to my knowledge Ellen never saw the offensive writing on the wall. Did I do the right thing? I will always live with that uncertainty. Making this unilateral decision was disrespectful to her, I knew, but I felt confident we could carry on our discreet relationship more successfully were I to move on and allow Ellen to maintain the community esteem she enjoyed to that point. At the time, it seemed like the right thing to do. Recalling the incident all these years later and writing about it, makes me question my motives back then. Was it partly cowardice that made me pack and run and why have I never asked myself this before?

In analysing the role of shame in the lives of those who have had shame imposed upon them because of who they are, Kathryn Bond Stockton (2006) wrote:

If we would have a feel for the shame in play for those who wear these signs, queer and black, we may need to pull on the possibly unfathomable roots of these debasements. These long roots are sunk in a social field of values and are simultaneously lied about, cherished, spurned, held in secret, or sacrificed for, in public view. (p. 23)

Writing on the Wall is a story about avoiding the public view, ostensibly to protect another but, eventually understood as a means to evade what it may have meant for the narrator, Mary, to also become the grist of gossip mills, the brunt of homophobic innuendo, or worse. The families of the protagonist and her partner, though seemingly accepting of what was portrayed as friendship, may have suspected the relationship was more. Like their daughters, however, they may have preferred not to avow their suspicions, opting instead to cloak the reality of the relationship in a kind of open secrecy. For Mary, and as she had assumed for Ellen, living in a limbo of tacit acceptance was preferable to the risk of naming the same-sex relationship, thereby giving themselves over to what Stockton (2006) called "sacrificial destruction," which, as she put it, operates by "casting oneself outside oneself … so as to break not just with one's reality but also with one's 'individuality'" (p. 47).[4] To have a feel for the shame at play for Mary, one needs to pull on the "possibly unfathomable roots" (p. 23) of shame which may be mired in contradictory motives, emotions, affects, hopes, and pretences all hidden in plain view. This vexed social field of values is not for the faint of heart.[5]

In *The Epistemology of Resistance*, an analysis of the meta-blindness involved in failing to see one's own insensitivity to marginalized ways of knowing and being, José Medina (2013) applied Charles Mills' (2007) notion of "managing the memories" as a strategy that protects White ignorance from recognizing its complicity in perpetrating epistemic injustices (as cited in Medina, 2013, p. 295). Mills (2007) attempted to pin down a concept of non-contingent ignorance in which White racial domination and its effects plays a key role. Although drawing parallels across the social and political contexts of differently oppressed peoples is, at best, a tentative process and, at worst, one that can create new universalizing, reductive concepts, we risk adapting Mills' concept for application to our stories. Straight ignorance, then, would imply a non-contingent form of meta-blindness in which heterosexist domination and its ramifications play a crucial role. Medina (2013) pointed out that epistemic injustice stemming from *White*—in our stories *straight*—ignorance takes many forms, such as unequal access to and involvement in knowledge practices, being marginalized from interpretive regimes dominant in public discourse, and undermining the legitimacy of certain kinds of testimony.

The story *Writing on the Wall* ends with the narrator wondering why she remained certain for so long that the way she had remembered the event was the whole story. Had she conveniently memorialized as noble the act of resigning her job? Did her internalized straight ignorance prevent her from imagining other interpretive frameworks for the incident, and from seeking the input or testimony of her partner who was equally implicated in the supposedly offensive image? Who was she really protecting? Perhaps she had managed this memory for so long, limiting its interpretive possibilities, to protect

herself and, if so, from what? Same-sex relationships in Canada had been removed from the criminal code and sanctioned in law[6] more than a decade before Mary revisited the story with new questions. Why had she not been drawn to rethink it before now? Perhaps, because, though laws change and attitudes begin to follow suit, the stigma attached to being queer and being othered on account of it is not easily left behind. Link and Phelan (2001) provided an overview of definitions of stigma noting that many authors use the term to indicate that a person is outside the norms of society, associated with an undesirable characteristic, or carries "a mark of disgrace" (p. 364). The term *stigma* is from the Greek word for a mark made upon the skin by burning with a hot iron (rarely, by cutting or pricking), a token of infamy or subjection; a brand (Oxford University Press, n.d.). Link and Phelan drew on the influential work of sociologist Erving Goffman (1963) in which he suggested stigma occurs when one's disqualification from society leads to a "spoiled identity" (p. 3). A stigmatized person is "reduced in our minds from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one" (p. 3).

Acknowledging the observation by Goffman (1963) that stigma can be seen as the relationship between an attribute and a stereotype, Link and Phelan (2001) extended his concept of stigma to include discrimination. This focuses research on the social processes of exclusion and on those who discriminate instead of on undesirable traits or attributes attributed to an individual based on stereotypes. The authors noted that the work of Goffman has been fundamental to understanding stigma. Such a lens is helpful when exploring issues of homophobia or transphobia as it shifts the narrative from the sexuality or gender of an individual to the way values, beliefs, and practices of sexuality and gender are understood within society. Take the terms *homophobia* and *internalized homophobia* for example.

Homophobia is the irrational fear, aversion, and hatred of straight people towards queer people and may take the form of discriminatory laws and employment policies, anti-gay rhetoric, hostile environments, violence, and hate crimes (Aguinaldo, 2008; Herrick et al., 2011).Internalized homophobia is a term to explain how queer people supposedly experience self-hatred and guilt about being gay (Aguinaldo, 2008; Isacco et al., 2012). Both of these terms impose a psychological and individualistic interpretation whereby the focus is on the people involved instead of on boarder social structures. The homophobic oppressor who fears and hates gay people is commonly framed as mentally unstable by deviating from egalitarian social norms, and the gay person who has internalized homophobia is seen as psychologically damaged with a negative self-image (Aguinaldo, 2008; Isacco et al., 2012). As Jeffrey Aguinaldo (2008) stated, these concepts focus "our attention toward the dark workings of the mind" (p. 93), and not on the structures within society that create a system that privileges and normalizes being straight. Adrienne Rich (1980) pointed out that "[h]eterosexuality has been both forcibly and subliminally imposed on women" (p. 632). This observation prompted her to coin the phrase *compulsory heterosexuality* which she identified as a societal bias "through which lesbian experience is perceived on a scale ranging from deviant to abhorrent, or simply rendered invisible" (p. 632). Her point can be applied to any relationship that exists outside the "ideology of heterosexual romance" that is, as

Rich noted, continually reinforced from childhood through "fairy tales, television, advertising, popular songs, [and] wedding pageantry" (p. 645).[7]

Living with and internalizing the stigma of being queer can result in self-vitiating attitudes and behaviours such as believing the debasing opinions that one imagines others hold to be true. The pathetic irony of this self-vitiating pattern of thought is that the queer person may, in effect, be protecting their straight ignorance by perpetuating their own disavowal of any challenge to the homophobic context in which they live and, as a consequence, the belief that they are inextricably consigned to outsider status. Thus, one becomes complicit in "the exclusionary processes of remembering and forgetting," a kind of "collective amnesia" (Mills, 2007, p. 29), that sustains compulsory heterosexuality and protects what we are calling the internalized straight ignorance of the stigmatized person. Such may well have been Mary's attitude leading to her precipitous action, taken without consulting her partner, and rationalized as the best and only solution. In effect, Mary acted from a position of closed-mindedness, a state wherein "one's mental processing remains systematically closed to certain phenomena, experiences, and perspectives, come what may" (Medina, 2013, p. 34). Being closed to other possible interpretations of, and challenges to, her predicament made disavowing the shame she felt almost inevitable.

Figure 3.

On the Outskirts [Line drawings on paper], (Forrest)

On the Outskirts

I was out of breath when I finally arrived at the storefront having walked across our small town to begin my very first job. The garden centre was on the outskirts of town where the feed mill and the carpet factory were—the more industrial part of the town, I

suppose, but perhaps that is an overstatement on the industry of the town. It was the area to which farmers from the surrounding areas would come for supplies and where factory workers would come for their long shifts. My new job was with the local Co-Op food and country store in the garden centre across the parking lot in a separate, greenhouse building. The manager had called unexpectedly earlier that day and offered me the summer job I had applied for several weeks before through career services. I was a first-year horticulture student and thought working for a garden centre would be the first step in my career as a horticulturist. I was feeling nervously excited that they hired me based only on the resume I had submitted and a brief phone call. Standing in front of the store, overheated from the walk across town, I tucked in my shirt, hoping to make a good impression.

I walked inside and timidly asked the first person I saw where to find the garden centre manager. I was directed to the man behind the front counter. Wearing the typical blue shirt with the Co-Op logo, Mr. Smith greeted me indifferently, or, perhaps, I was too nervous to notice any warmth or friendliness. When I am nervous I tend to focus only on my inner monologue. All details leave my mind. I followed him around the centre as he told me about the job and what my duties would be—stacking bags of compost, moving products and restocking shelves, sticking sale stickers on the clearance items. I remember thinking it would be the most fun to use the little sticker gun and I was right. I spent my shift hauling and moving large bags of compost to the front of the store, restocking shelves of fertilizers, pesticides, and other farming essentials, but the most fun was that little sticker gun. I loved the sound of the gun as I strategically placed the bright orange stickers on each item. Click, click, click. I don't really know why, but using it made me feel important, like a professional. I thought I was productive, I thought I was polite (perhaps not the most outgoing person as I am shy by nature), courteous, and a good worker who did what was asked of him to the best of his abilities. At the end of my shift, Mr. Smith said they would call me to arrange my next shift and schedule. I thought it would be a good summer working there. I walked home feeling good.

Mr. Smith didn't call. I never heard back from him or anyone else at the garden centre. My only thought was that I must have seemed too gay for the country general store. Perhaps my flamboyant ways—the way I held my body, the way I moved, the way I talked—would not be appreciated amid the typical conversations of farmers and townsfolk who frequented the store. Perhaps the manager saw this in me and decided to cut his losses and save himself the snide comments about the "fruity" boy working at his store. My brain wouldn't allow me to see any other reason for the silence that screamed from the telephone day after day as I waited to be called for my next shift. I spent that summer unemployed. I got a job in the fall at the donut shop. I also spent the summer embarrassed and feeling ashamed about never being called back. I didn't even tell my closest friends in the horticulture program that I had spent one day working there. I lied to my mother, telling her that they called and said they were overstaffed and didn't need me. I never told anyone about the real reason I believed I didn't get a second shift. In fact, I spent the summer pretending that day never happened when, in truth, it was always a weight I carried within me.

Returning to Stockton (2006, p. 23) on the "long roots" of shame being "sunk in a social field of values" that are "simultaneously lied about, cherished, spurned, held in secret, or sacrificed for, in public view," we can see how the narrator of this story, Patrick, had pinned his hopes on landing this first job in the hub of activity in his small community. Growing up queer in a traditional community where paid work had only two faces for a young man—the land or the factory—Patrick was set up for this run-in with what he took for granted to be a microaggression in the public world of work. He assumed that how he presented as other was obvious and was the reason Mr. Smith did not call back as promised; so, he did not call the store to inquire for fear of facing worse. Ironically, remaining stalwart and keeping the humiliating experience to himself exemplifies one of the stereotypically macho tendencies Patrick felt he lacked, a shortcoming he assumed outed him as gay. His fear of the social field of values he assumed were at play left him alone and isolated with none of the social capital that comes with automatic acceptance into the heterosexual small-town context he called home or into a gay subgroup one might encounter in an urban setting. This left Patrick in what Stockton (2006) called a *communal void* which turns his "self-humiliation into a social solitude" (p. 49).

One might speculate that, like Mary, Patrick's attitude was also one of being closed-minded in that, from what is described above, he was closed to the possibility that the store manager may simply have forgotten to call, lost his phone number, or been too busy to follow up. Prior experience and fear of being seen to be queer may have closed Patrick's mind to "certain phenomena, experiences, and perspectives" (Medina, 2013, p. 34), such as there being a perfectly logical and relatively benign reason for the manager's silence. Writing on the role of disavowal in cases of closed-mindedness, Chris Higgins (2009) said that, "[w]hat is disavowed is not the piece of reality that challenges my belief, but its challenge. The idea is accepted but trivialized or compartmentalized" (p. 48). To avow something is to declare it assuredly, openly, bluntly, and without shame. It derives from the Latin word *advocare*, to summon (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Conversely, to disavow is to deny responsibility for, repudiate, refuse to acknowledge or accept (Oxford University Press, n.d.). In both stories, the protagonists do not directly disavow being queer, having not been confronted overtly with a question regarding sexual orientation; that is, there is no summoning to account for the situation. What each protagonist disavowed at the time and continued to disavow until the process of writing and theorizing about the incident years later, is the possibility that there may have been something at work in the incidents *other than* homophobia. This amounted to disavowing the possibility of offering any challenge to the reality of homophobia that they assumed motivated the actions of others. By disavowing any other possibilities, each protagonist foreclosed on their own capacity to challenge their immediate interpretation of the given circumstances.

From Magic Mirror to Obsidian Mirror

In Freirean terms, the preceding images and stories of disavowal can be referred to as codifications. Paulo Freire (1974) defined *coding* as the representation of an

"concrete existential situation" (p. 96) such that it helps to break down reality, typically seen as "dense, impenetrable, and enveloping," (p. 95) by requiring movement from concrete to abstract, part to whole returning to parts again, while recognizing the situation or object as one in which one might find oneself. Done well, the dialectical movement of decoding leads to "the supersedence of the abstraction *by* the critical perception of the concrete, which has already ceased to be a dense, impenetrable reality" (p. 96). Freire's pedagogy is rooted in taking people at what he called the "point of emergence" and helping them move from naïve consciousness—that which superimposes itself on reality—to critical consciousness—that which is integrated with reality, representing "things and facts as they exist empirically, in their causal and circumstantial correlations" (Freire, 1998, pp. 82–83). His methodology is designed to facilitate people's "intervention in the historical process" (p. 83).

Bringing Freire's theory of consciousness-raising (*conscientizaçāo*) into this article that draws on feminist and queer theory raises the spectre of sexism evident in the work of this Latin American educator. Antiracist feminist educators charged him with taking a "kind of imperial and totalizing stance of knowing and 'speaking for' those who are to be educated into truth" (as cited in Weiler, 2001, p. 72). Kathleen Weiler (2001) claimed Freire's concept of the oppressed is offered as a general category that does not take the subtleties of difference into account and that, in his early works, he plays on the trope of the heroic revolutionary who is imagined as a male existing in the public sphere, which discounts the world of personal relationships and everyday life common to many women. Although Freire (1993) took seriously many feminist critiques by attempting to respond appropriately and calling his own work feminist because of its focus on human freedom and self-reflexivity, he failed to provide any examples of what he meant by feminism (Weiler, 2001). Despite these critiques, Weiler described her own rereading of Freire as a way of approaching his work that "addresses both its power and its limitations" (p. 84).

Queer theorists respond to the influence of critical pedagogy, as manifest in the work of Freire, offering similar and different critiques. Francisco Ramallo (2020) considered that Freire's "immaculate legacy" (p. 118) was over but did not underestimate his having inspired "an emancipatory and subversive discourse for the reinvention of the world" (p. 103). He suggested approaching Freire by way of the concept of decomposition as "a process of constant regeneration and becoming, which is never definitive or true" (p. 107) and aligned this approach with that of other queer theories of pedagogy, such as Eve Sedgwick's (2003) "art for letting go" (p. 8), and Jack Halberstam's (2011) "low theory" as way out of "traps and blind alleys" which are "common in binary formations" (p. 108). Ramallo acknowledged a debt to Judith Butler's (1993/2011) influential destabilizing of the modern subject, opening it up to "constantly changing subjectivities" (Ramallo, 2020, p. 109), and Rosi Braidotti's (2002) reaction against an autonomous subject by positing a nomadic one "distinguished by a structural non-adherence to models, rules and roles" (Ramallo, 2020, p. 110).

Freire's legacy is both strong and contested, which is why it serves our purposes in writing against ourselves. bell hooks (1994) said it best in an interview with herself.

She chose to ask questions as herself (Gloria Watkins), posing them to her voice as a writer (bell hooks) because it offered her an intimacy and familiarity, impossible in the essay form, to "share the sweetness" (p. 45) and solidarity she felt with Freire. Fully aware of the sexism in Freire's work, yet referring to him as a challenging teacher, hooks described how she was questioning the politics of domination at the time of her first encounter with *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and with him in person: "He made me think deeply about the construction of an identity in resistance" (p. 46). Clearly, seeing Freire's "phallocentric paradigm of liberation," in effect, linking freedom and patriarchal manhood as one and the same, hooks said, "I never wish to see a critique of this blind spot overshadow anyone's … capacity to learn from his insights" (p. 49). This statement became her revolutionary mantra: "We cannot enter the struggle as objects in order later to become subjects" (Freire as cited in hooks 1994, p. 46). Having interrupted our taken-for-granted interpretations of our own queer histories, we now see ourselves as subjects of these storylines, rather than as objects of marginalization.[8]

By rewriting our stories, unique and yet similar when decoded, we have intervened in our past, not in the naïve sense of changing what happened by imposing a predetermined, correct answer—an impossibility—but, rather, in Leperlier's (Cahun, 1930/2008, afterword by Leperlier) dual sense of *writing against* ourselves. In effect, opposing our own burdensome stories as well as getting in close against ourselves, our rebellion or lack of it, and our motivations at the time, we move back and forth between the concrete details of the situation and the conceptual abstractions of theory. This Freirean-like dialectical process has helped us to develop a consciousness critical of our long-time, fixed readings of these stories and our certainty regarding how and why things transpired as we assumed they did. This had effected a magic mirroring of events, to use Leperlier's term. Like Cahun, in Leperlier's interpretation, we had previously managed our memories in front of a magic mirror that saw only the ideal selves we longed to embrace. Patrick saw himself as the quintessential victim of homophobia, wanting to fit into a heteronormativity only reflected to him on the outskirts. Mary chose what she believed to be the ideal and only course available by resigning to protect her closeted existence; whereas, the writing on the wall held more in store than what was reflected in her magic mirror. Describing the process of consciousness-raising, or *conscientização*, Freire (1974) pointed to the implicit doubt one harbours regarding the effects of becoming critical: "It is better for the victim of injustice not to recognize themselves as such" because to do so is to sacrifice security, which is preferable to "the risks of liberty" (p. 20). Thus, "[f]ear of freedom, of which its possessor is not necessarily aware, makes him [sic] see ghosts" (p. 20).

Each four-panel cartoon reduces a story to the critical moments of emotional anticipation. For Patrick, these moments include excitement at being called in to what he hopes will be his first real job and his mother's encouragement, trepidation at being told that he will work the day on a trial basis, self-confidence feeling professional using the sticker gun, and disappointed resignation at not hearing back and being afraid to call and find out the worst. Whereas, Mary, a working professional, feels satisfaction and relief as the school year closes, excitement looking forward to starting the holidays with her partner, shock and fear seeing what she takes to be homophobic graffiti outing them

as lesbian teachers, and confusion turning to grim acceptance as she writes the letter that changes the trajectory of both their lives. Patrick and Mary each do an extreme emotional reversal and then carry their disavowals forward with no apparent recourse other than to try and forget, a task they did not succeed in doing given that the events were managed for so long, calcified in memory.

The image, *Avowing the Obsidian Mirror*, at the beginning of this article, renders the story-length and four-panel cartoon codifications into a single gestalt; something made of many parts that is somehow more than or different from the combination of its parts (Oxford University Press, n.d.). We placed it there so that the reader can take it in as a whole before reading about how it relates to the themes of shame and disavowal, the stories, and their analyses. Our presumption is that each reader will have their own impression of the possible meanings of the image, which may or may not be similar to how we, the authors, understand the inter-connections among the parts of the image, the stories, and potential interpretations emergent from our analysis. These fluctuating meanings foreclose on the likelihood of certainty as readers question and reformulate their immediate impressions upon reading the article. This is, in effect, a dialectical process whereby current understandings are brought to bear on what may otherwise have seemed to be an impenetrable reality. Thus, management of memory—a "socially orchestrated, exclusionary processes of remembering and forgetting" (Mills, 2007, as cited in Medina, 2013, p. 295) in order to sustain ignorance—is re-purposed to reclaim and reconstruct memories of stigma and the shame it evokes, thereby making shame productive as Stockton (2006) contended it can be.[9] Medina's (2013) claim that oppressed subjects have more resources than their oppressors to undo socially generated illusions may be rendered ineffectual, however, by disavowing difference, as we saw in the stories of Patrick and Mary. Conversely, the potential for resistance drawn from the "richer (or more heterogeneous) experiential life" (Medina, 2013, p. 46) of oppressed subjects can be turned to good use if they expose the hegemonic reality that animates the shame they take to be their own.

In 1995, in an attempt to think outside some of the "broad assumptions that shape the heuristic habits and positing procedures of theory … when it offers any account of human beings or cultures,"[10] Sedgwick and Frank (1995, p. 496) turned to psychologist Silvan Tomkins' phenomenology of emotions for his heterosexist-resistant understanding of affect and his insights on shame. Drawing from his own close observations of an infant in 1955, Tomkins (1963) claimed that expressions of shame in the infant were evident as early as seven months, before the child could have had any concept of prohibition (as cited in Sedgwick & Frank 1995). He contended that one's investment of mental or emotional energy in shame is what enables or disables one's interest in the world because shame inhibits interest and/or enjoyment. This inhibition only incompletely reduces further exploration or self exposure, however. To theorize the distance that opens up when one's situation makes one feel shame that disables one's interest or enjoyment, Sedgwick and Frank (1995) drew from Anthony Wilden's (1972) speculation that all communication involves switching across boundaries thereby creating a figure-ground distinction. Returning to the affect theory of Tomkins, they point out that shame, along with disgust and contempt, is "activated by drawing a boundary

line or barrier. … [t]hat is, shame involves a gestalt; shame is the duck to interest's (or enjoyment's) rabbit" (p. 520). Sedgwick and Frank (1995) added that "unlike contempt or disgust, shame is characterized by its failure ever to renounce its object cathexis, its relation to the desire for pleasure, as well as the need to avoid pain" (p. 521). We take this to imply that the investment of mental and emotional energy evoked by being stigmatized and shamed never detaches itself from the site or situation associated with the evocation of shame. This suggests a strong likelihood that the emotional impact of each of our stories of disavowal would stay with us and, decades later, still have power to evoke painful feelings despite the fact that our social holdings have shifted dramatically in the intervening years.[11]

Being stopped short in one's relation with the world, the felt shame of being stigmatized requires one to rely on a repertoire of beliefs, assumptions, and prior knowledge, both propositional and operational. For example, Mary and Patrick knew from experience that they lived in a heterosexist society. They also knew how to keep a low profile in order not to be the targets of homophobia. Being stigmatized allows one to see oneself as if from the outside, a perspective from which to build a theory, such as what happens when discrimination occurs or appears to occur. As we saw from Higgins' (2009) understanding of disavowal, one does not renounce the reality itself but the challenge to one's immediate, visceral assumptions about what an incident means and what it represents. Patrick and Mary were certain they were victims of homophobia; no other options were explored, which allowed for the incomplete reduction of mental and emotional energy attaching to their sense that the situation was shameful. Thus, the figure-ground relation between the one stigmatized and the situation giving rise to it is prolonged, an unfortunate circumstance if disavowal remains, but a potentially productive one should one come to avow possible challenges to the reality of feeling stigmatized, which is what we have attempted to do in this article. Avowal clouds the magic mirroring of an ideal self that one clings to by disavowing challenges to alternative interpretations. One may instantiate oneself as victim particularly if heterosexist attitudes have been internalized, a condition relatively impossible to avoid growing up in a cis-heterosexist society. That the imagined or posited self might take on different aspects through de- and re-coding of events shows that such re-coding has the potential to reveal motives and rationales in a different light. Thus, we see that within the realm of affect, feeling shame and, in response, consciously avowing challenges to it is a series of moves similar to the dialectical movement enroute to critical consciousness. As Freire (1974) put it, "[t]he radical, committed to human liberation, does not become the prisoner of a 'circle of certainty' within which he [sic] also imprisons reality. On the contrary, the more radical he is, the more fully he enters into reality so that, knowing it better, he can better transform it" (p. 23).

María Lugones (as cited in Di Pietro et al., 2019) used the obsidian mirror as a metaphor to describe how being racialized and resisting it "provoke a doubling that makes for plural realities" (p. 283). Obsidian is hard, glass-like volcanic rock that takes a brilliant polish. It was used as mirrors by ancient Mexicans for the purposes of divination.[12] Lugones pointed out that the smoky depths of obsidian does not reflect "symmetry in opposition" (282)[13] as does a typical mirror. For Lugones, the lesbian-

feminist philosopher who theorized the coloniality of gender (Smith 2020), the absence of a clear reflection of her face in an obsidian mirror appropriately represents how she sees herself. "I know that I cannot search for my ancestors looking into the obsidian mirror as I am not Mesoamerican or a Chicana shaman. I see my face as devoid of knowledge of my ancestry" (as cited in Di Pietro et al., 2019, p. 283). Reflecting on whom she considered to be her own people, Lugones said that "the only people I can think of as my own are transitionals, liminals, border-dwellers, 'world'-travelers, beings in the middle of either/or" (as cited in Smith 2020, para. 14).

Influenced by Lugones, we allude to the obsidian mirror in our codified image, *Avowing the Obsidian Mirror* (Figure 1), by using a muted, somewhat murky interior between the profiles of the Rubin's vase that occupies the central space.[14] To the left and right of the profiles representing Patrick and Mary are objects integral to their stories: telephone, sticker gun, plants, books, cupid heart, and letter to the principal. Once the stories are read, one is likely able to decode Figure 1. The objects symbolizing the emotional trajectory of each story are arranged behind the gaze of each profile, suggesting they exist in the past. Patrick and Mary are depicted looking into the obsidian space. This can be interpreted as a sign of community in that we, the authors, only came to avow these painful episodes through sharing them with each other and discussing possible meanings. The obsidian space, seen simultaneously behind the figures and within the vase shape, suggests the fluctuating nature of the process of avowing stigma and the shame it evokes. One does not leave such an experience behind. Memory can be re-codified, however, to allow for continual re-interpretation going forward. The smoky depths of the obsidian mirror render new reflections under different light. As with Lugones, we represent ourselves as protagonists in an on-going story of being "in the middle of either/or" (Lugone as cited in Smith, 2020, para. 14), a queer/alternating affective reality.

Attending Openly: Occluding Purity Politics

How definitive interpretations of any example of human expression are formed and become instantiated as better or lesser than is not only a political and empirical question, but also an aesthetic one. Standards of taste and propriety derive from and are bound by cultural norms, such as compulsory heterosexuality and its conventional practices, with the power to induce shame in those stigmatized for not complying with accepted criteria for performative excellence. Censure of the one stigmatized for non-compliance to the norm is a phenomenon with a genealogy as long as human history. Stockton's (2006) point that shame has "possibly unfathomable roots" (p. 23) is supported by the etymology of the word. It has retained the same denotation throughout its history in English and back to the Germanic with scholars believing it was derived from *hame* or covering, covering oneself being a natural expression of shame (Oxford University Press, n.d.).

In our stories, something shows up unexpectedly, something troubling, disconcerting, upsetting; something shameful that each of us had disavowed for years until we decided to codify our memories on paper. These queer recollections lingered

and were reformulated because we finally chose to openly and willingly attend to that which had been discarded or buried yet persisted in memory. It was in a queer memoir comic workshop that we first met, decided to work together, and shared our stories. Initially we did not include graphics in our narratives, but sensed there was a significant connection between disavowing the past and disavowing the act of drawing. As Alexis Shotwell (2016) pointed out, we are enculturated into a politics of purity rooted in classification practices that are "key to colonialism" (p. 25). Sorting categories led to the sorting of people in ways we know today as racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, ageism and other classificatory ills. As Shotwell said, although "bureaucratic violence may be difficult to perceive as violence, practices of classification have been coproduced with practices of colonialism" (p. 25). She noted, however, that these practices are not without weakness:

> The metaphysics of purity is necessarily a fragile fiction, a conceit under constant but disavowed threat - to affirm a commitment to purity is in one move to glance at the entanglement and coconsition, the impurity, of everything and to pretend that things are separate and unconnected. (p. 16)

So as not to be misconstrued, Shotwell (2016) clarified that "[t]o be against purity is … not to be for pollution, harm, sickness, or premature death. It is to be against the rhetorical or conceptual attempt to delineate and delimit the world into something separable, disentangled, and homogeneous" (p. 15). Academic institutional practices are a vital part of this process, disavowing vehemently challenges to standardized rhetorical practices, a move which, as Shotwell (2016) suggested, alludes to the everything-else excluded from such practices. Exceptions to classificatory purity in the academy now exist, thanks in large part to the cross-, inter- and intra-disciplinary work in women's and gender studies, but these initially revolutionary challenges now tend to take the form of separate and distinctly organized bodies such as specialized program areas, academic journals, and conferences.[15] One such niche area of research is inquiry using artistic representation in ways that assume art practices have value as human expression distinct and unique from the power of expository prose to theorize, draw conclusions, and suggest implications.

As for the drawings included here, they are rudimentary and not likely to be considered *good* technically, not fitting neatly within accepted standards of cartoon or comic art. Yet, we include them, not only to illustrate our memories of shame and disavowal and Freire's consciousness-raising methodology using codifications, but also to challenge our tendency to disavow our own drawing as having value. This was due, in part, to our hesitancy and embarrassment over our fledgling efforts at graphic narrative. We have come to realize, however, that the simplicity and technical weaknesses of the images are what constitute their uniqueness; their capacity to embody drawing styles we now avow as ours alone. Our written narratives and the graphic depictions are connected; our abilities to write and to draw come from a similar source, have an entangled history, and deserve to support each other as Shotwell (2016) suggested, and not be hived off into *good* and *bad*, *expert* and *amateur*, or

whatever other classifications have been imposed on and imbibed by us for maintaining a dubious "theoretical purity" (Shotwell, 2016, p. 27).[16]

Phillip felt very uncomfortable trying to make his hand create what was in his mind. Revisiting painful memories in this way was like putting his shame to paper, something to be avoided, as his inner voice laughed at the rudimentary stick figures. Michelle was surprised and unsettled, viewing her comics again when the manuscript came back from the reviewers. With the distance of time, her critical eye viewed them as childlike and over-worked. This feeling of embarrassment is imbricated in the "unfathomable roots" (Stockton, 2006, p. 23) of shame. The comics pedagogy of Barry (2020) was helpful, however, in assuaging our concerns: "In the same way you don't have to like the way your liver looks for it to be able to function, you don't have to like the way your drawings look for them to start to work" (n.p.).[17]

Figure 4a.
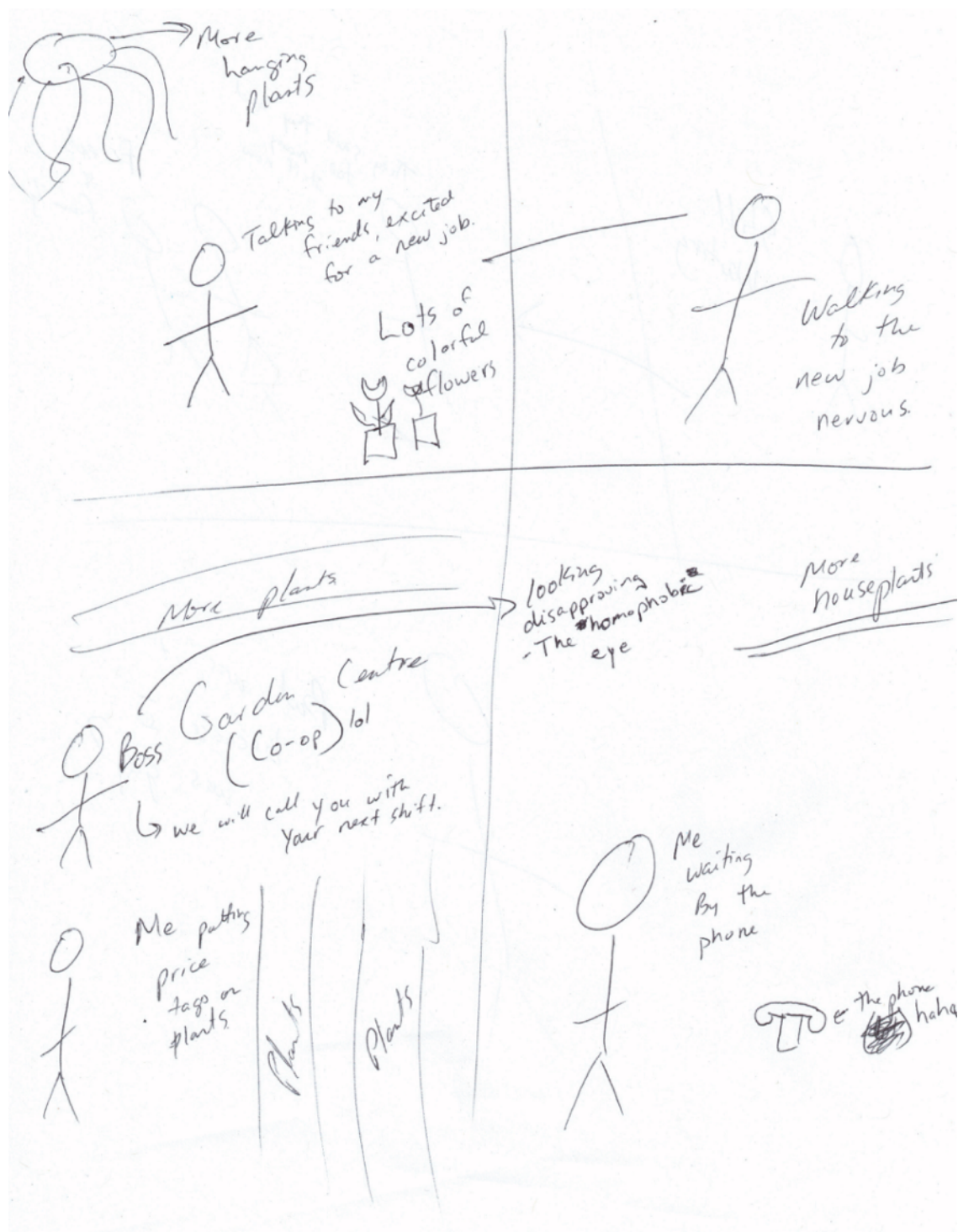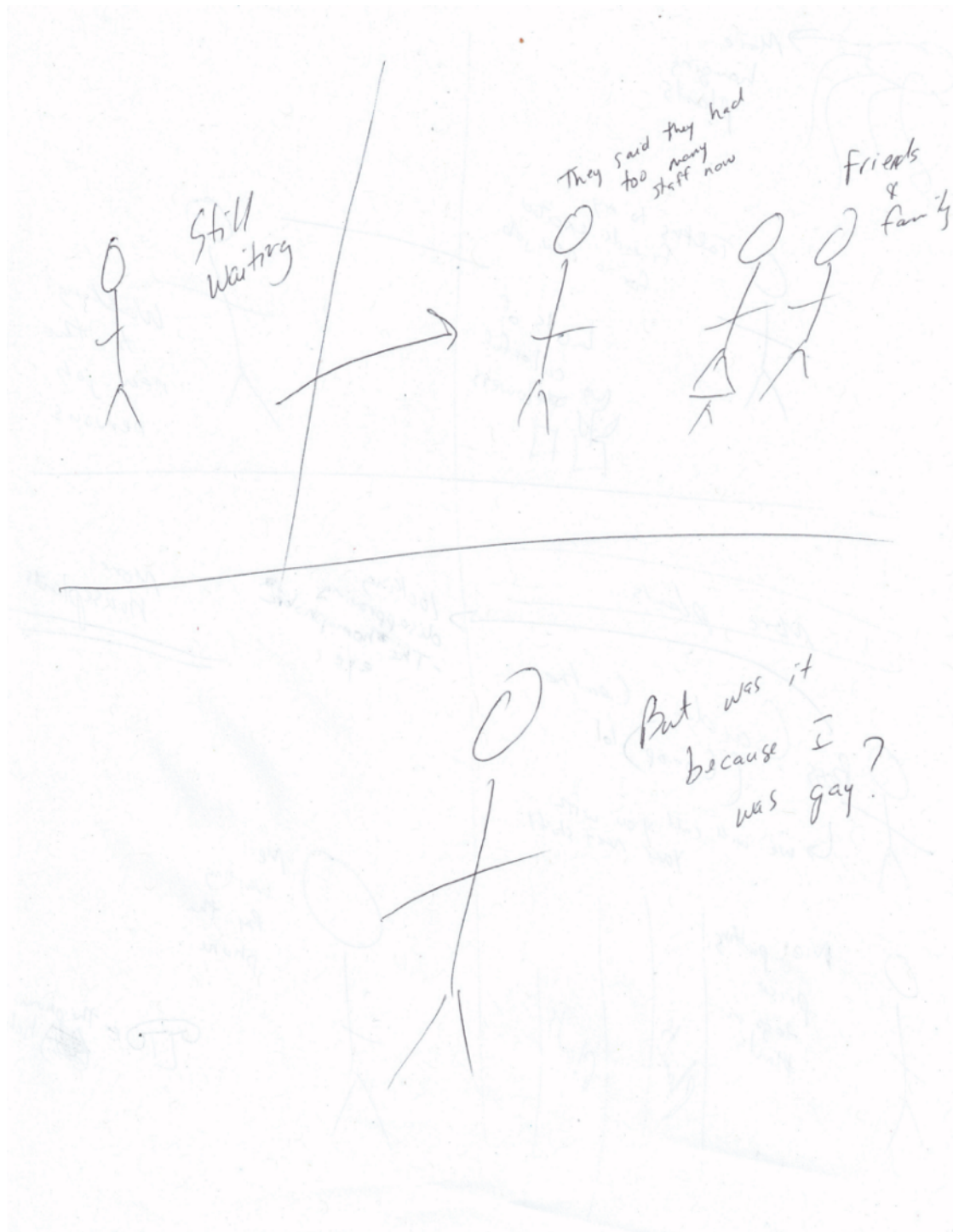Storyboard for On the Outskirts [Drawing on paper], (Joy)

Figure 4b.
Storyboard for On the Outskirts [Drawing on paper], (Joy)

Discovering Ivan Brunetti's (2011) approach to making comics, which is open to anyone regardless of drawing proficiency, we began to appreciate the simple stick figure from which Brunetti developed his cartooning vocabulary. Phillip used stick figures to create the original storyboard from which Michelle drew the four-panel comic. Brunetti's work led us to Lynda Barry (2014/2020, 2020), inspired by Brunetti, and for whom "the text does not enshrine or sanctify itself–either as a life narrative or as a work of art–but attempts to inspire the responsive, dialogic creation of narrative through its form" (Chute, 2010, p. 113). Barry's work is exemplary of what Classon Frangos (2021, p. 2) called "norm-critical pedagogy" (*normkritik*), an approach taken by feminist comics artists in Sweden in which the medium of comics is used as tool for critique. Influenced by the intersectional approach of queer pedagogy to the critique of heteronormativity, *normkritik* has been used in anti-oppressive education in Sweden since the 2010s. Kirtley et al. (2020) claimed that comics pedagogy is "another way of thinking through ideas," and "a different sort of interaction with the text" (p. 13). Drawing on the work of Charles Hatfield (2009), Frangos (2021) pointed out that the very unfixability of comics, existing between the genres of literature and popular culture, makes them especially "suited to challenging conventional categories or dominant norms of representation" (p. 3).

Brunetti (2011) had no interest in determinations of good or bad in reference to his cartooning. As he said, "if what you create is honest, it will be compelling. Whether or not it is truly good will be decided long after you are dead. But if you hedge your bets, compromise, prevaricate … you are lost" (p. 74). With this encouragement we believe our drawings have worth because they are part and parcel of the stories we feel compelled to tell about pain that cannot be vanquished, only avowed and accepted as part of who we have become. "Something has to be at stake" said Brunetti, "a part of you has to die and be reborn into your work. … In the end, all we can do is try our best. We are none of us perfect" (p. 74). With our graphic forms of representation we strove to realize what Barry (2014/2020) referred to as "open attention" (p. 22). She described it as a "certain state of mind" that occurs when one is "not thinking about liking or not liking what is taking shape, and it isn't thinking about us either, yet something shows up" (p. 22). For anyone who used to draw as a child then stopped and now assumes they cannot draw, Barry's words are restorative: "There is something beautiful in the lines made by people who stopped drawing a long time ago" (p. 26). She described the thrill of lines seeming to take shape "out of your control" and how some students, dismayed by their childlike images, are ashamed and destroy them (p. 31). Barry views them differently. "There is an aliveness in these drawings that can't be faked, and when I look at them, that aliveness seems to come into me. I'm glad to see and feel them" (p. 31).

Returning to Phillip's storyboard (Figures. 4a, 4b), one sees two self-deprecating comments: the *lol* (laugh out loud) in panel 1, and the *ha ha* in panel 4. When the storyboard was created it was intended only to be shared with Michelle; and yet, Phillip's impulse to disavow its living qualities still seeped through. As Barry (2014/2020) said, when someone *learns* how to draw, to render, the aliveness of the line is the first thing to go and "it's what some artists spend their whole lives trying to get back" (p. 32). The quality of line in Phillip's stick figures are his alone; no one else can reproduce those lines with that same touch and energy; the similarity of style across the stick

figures marks them as rendered by the same human hand. Barry's pedagogical project is to bring drawing back into someone's life, which, she claimed, is different from teaching them to draw. "I'm interested in using the drawing that is already there–is still there in spite of everything" (p. 38).

By encouraging her university students to rediscover drawing in their lives, Barry resisted Shotwell's (2016) concept of classificatory purity by not being locked into pre-existing notions of good and bad, and by appreciating and bringing into the foreground the endless wealth of human difference that is always there but too infrequently valued in a world that prizes separation over the messy confluence of difference. Resisting the politics of purity means "staying with the trouble we're in" and orienting ourselves toward "the contingent proliferation of ways of being we cannot predict, toward surprise" (Shotwell, 2016, p. 203). Barry's (2014/2020) pedagogy embodied this attitude of continual surprise at the efforts of her students. She stated that "images are not what anyone thinks about them" (p. 126). The profundity of her insights seem obvious once stated and yet, they cut to the quick of deeply entrenched biases and dispositions that can cause one to disavow self-challenge and shore up a capacity to repudiate even those realities one seeks to un/discover. The dialectical movement toward critical consciousness cannot succeed if it cannot move the self to avow the entrenched fears, assumptions, and predispositions that lead to denial of what hides in plain view.

Conclusion

We are not suggesting, as Leperlier did about Cahun's (1930/2008) *Disavowals*, that this article shows how "life itself can become a work of art" (p. 215). Our undertaking here is modest by comparison to that of Cahun. It began with Michelle's four-panel cartoon of disavowing queerness, which brought us together to recover stories and feelings attached to them that we had never shared with anyone. Working everything out as we went along—how to lay out images (e.g., two up, two down, or four side-by-side); simplify syntax in text bubbles; order story events for impact and economy of means; convey gayness without being cliché; word each story for readability and soundness—helped us get to know each other and learn how best to proceed sensitively when digging deeper into discomfort-inducing details, even as reading queer theory pushed us continually to revisit painful remembrances.[18] Our process demonstrates that one can draw out personal accounts of living with the weight of shame-inducing experience and re-imagine the past such that shame itself can be turned to create generative ways of managing memory. In reference to the fictional texts she analysed,[19] Stockton (2006 said, [t]he intricacies of beautiful shame, beloved shame, have surfaced and insisted themselves in this study" (p. 205). We began this study knowing that disavowing queer reality had imposed subtle, unexamined influences on us, which we approached cautiously, perhaps fearfully, not knowing where our writing might lead. At first, we assumed the cartoons, with which our reminiscences together began, were only another way of representing the gist of the experiences depicted in the fictional cases. As our analyses of our own stories unfolded, they opened up possible readings inspired by the drawings which were enriched, in turn, by the subtleties that emerged through interpreting our narratives of shame through

feminist and queer theory. This Freirean dialectical process of self-recognition, provoked by trying to understand how shame and disavowal affected us, and ranging autotheoretically across story, image, and concepts, plays out in the pervasive politics of purity. The need to fit oneself neatly into predetermined categories, socially and personally imposed, strains how we see ourselves and how we want others to see us. As Jos de Mul (1996) put it, "[t]he close connection between representation and disavowal, and the fact that these activities extend themselves to the boundaries of our thinking, makes them exceptionally difficult to 'master'" (p. 108). Even something as seemingly benign as needing to draw a cartoon to meet an internalized standard of perfection demonstrates what Stockton (2006) claimed, that shame is a "highly indispensable informant for queer theoretical work … pointing us to an archive of depictions that force a range of valuable questions on [this] field" (p. 24). Each tangled history of shame and disavowal has intricacies worth studying. As Sedgwick (1993) stated: "The forms taken by shame are not distinct 'toxic' parts of a group or individual identity that can be excised … they are instead integral to and residual in the processes by which identity itself is formed" (p. 13).

Cahun (1930/2008) began *Disavowals* in a way that suggested a troubled relationship to the self, a person not considering herself good enough yet trapped within an interior monologue that inevitably captivates: "In front. I imprison myself. I make myself blind. What does it matter to me, Passer-by, if I provide you with a mirror to see yourself in, albeit a distorting mirror and signed by my own hand?" (p. 25). If the self presents as a mirror reflecting the world back to itself, Cahun blinded herself to the world by inviting others to see themselves in her magic mirror as a recognizable self. Self-as-mirror rebuffs attempts to see past a satisfying surface that presents others with what they already know. Disavowing the mercurial, obsidian image of a self seen as shameful by societal standards serves to internalize a stigmatized, discounted identity as one's own. Stories of queer shame speak not only to members of marginalized categories. Shame and the disavowal involved in coming, or failing to come, to terms with it are part of being fallible, of learning from who we are who we are capable of becoming. "I enjoy looking at what's underneath the crossed-out bits of my soul. Ill intentions have been revised there, become dormant; others have materialised in their place" (Cahun, 1930/2008, p. 6).

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ENDNOTES

[1] Reported by François Leperlier in *Afterword to Claude Cahun* (1930/2008, p. 207). Leperlier cites *Commune*, no. 4, December 1933.

[2] Decoding the image involves movement from the abstract to the concrete, a process requiring that "the Subject recognize himself [sic] in the object (the coded concrete existential situation) and recognize the object as a situation in which he finds himself, together with other Subjects" (Freire, 1974, p. 96).

[3] Griffiths and MacLeod (2008, p. 136). The authors use "auto/biography" as a convenient term for grouping a range of personal narratives such as life-studies, life-writing, life history, narrative analysis, and the representation of lives. They give a robust account of the qualities comprising what they call "epistemologically-sound research" when using personal story (pp. 135–136). We are indebted to the reviewer who suggested we ought to speak to the ethical complexities of being artists/researchers and researched.

[4] Here Stockton (2006) draws form Bataille's *Theory of Religion* (1992) in which he claims that the function of sacrifice is to destroy real ties by drawing "the victim out of the world of utility" (p. 43).

[5] For a full-length play about a lesbian teacher being outed by a student, see Hellman (1934/1960).

[6] Homosexuality was decriminalized in Canada in 1969. (See *The Canadian Encyclopedia.ca.* Retrieved September 20, 2022, from https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/the-1969-amendment-and-the-de-criminalization-of-homosexuality). Same-sex marriage was sanctioned across Canada between 2003 and 2005 as each province and territory enacted it into law within it's own legislative assembly. (See *Canadian Encyclopedia.* Retrieved September 28, 2022, from https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/same-sex-marriage-in-canada).

[7] See Forrest and Joy (2021) for the story of a ten-year-old girl pressured to play a bride in a school pageant, her discomfort in complying with everyone's expectations, and her retrospective analysis of the incident as an adult coming to terms with not fitting the heteronormative archetype imposed on her in childhood.

[8] This section on the contested legacy of Paulo Freire in feminist and queer theory was added thanks to the reviewer who suggested that more context was needed.

[9] Stockton (2006) acknowledges her debt to Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1990, 1995) on queer theory, and to Randall Kennedy (2002) in Black studies for her research on "valuable, generative, beautiful shame" inside the "crossing of 'black' and 'queer'" (p. 22).

[10] Sedgwick and Frank (1995) take up the concept and phenomenon of shame in order to short-circuit the habits of thought Michel Foucault grouped together under the repressive hypothesis. (See Sedgwick & Frank (1995, pp. 500, 501 fn. 3.)

[11] Both authors/protagonists, Michelle and Phillip, are now openly lesbian and gay, respectively, in a society in which same-sex relationships have been sanctioned by law.

[12] According to Schweig (1941), obsidian is "a compact pyrite, or marcasite, capable of a very brilliant polish and still used for ornaments, because it looks like white bright steel but never rusts, a very suitable stone for a mirror. Similarly, mirrors of obsidian were extensively employed by the ancient Mexicans, who quarried the stone called 'itzli' at the Cerro de la Navajas or ' Hill of Knives ' near Timapan" (p. 259). According to the British Museum, obsidian is a volcanic glass. (Retrieved July 31, 2022, from https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/john-dees-spirit-mirror) The *Oxford English Dictionary* describes obsidian as "[a] hard, dark, glass-like volcanic rock which is formed by the rapid solidification of (usually acidic) lava without crystallization and shows a conchoidal fracture; volcanic glass." (Retrieved July 31, 2022, from https://www.oed.com/search/dictionary/?scope=Entries&q=obsidian)

[13] Lugones refers specifically to the Andean mirror, a tradition of mirror framing using flowers and designs painted on the reverse of pieces of glass that are inlaid on wood. Opposite doubles are part of the "ancient heritage of symbolic dualism in the ideologies, world visions, and social structures of Andean people" (See Hélène Bernier Department of Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Retrieved July 30, 2022, from https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/dual/hd_dual.htm)

[14] Rubin's vase (a.k.a. Rubin face or Figure-Ground Vase) is a development of Danish psychologist Edgar Rubin introduced in 1915 in his two-volume work, *Synsoplevede Figurer* (*Visual Figures*). Rubin's figure-ground distinction influenced Gestalt psychologists who were interested in the capacity of the brain to operate wholistically and in parallel. (See New World Encyclopedia. Retrieved August 1, 2022, at https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/rubin_vase#cite_note-1)

[15] Take, for example, *Art/Research International: A Transdisciplinary Journal* which is "dedicated to exploring and advancing art as and/or within the research process across disciplines and internationally" (Retrieved September 20,2022, from https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/ari/)

[16] Michelle reports a lifetime of believing that if only she took the right art classes and religiously did the exercises her ability to draw would satisfy her ideal of what good drawing looks like. She traces this belief to a Saturday art class at age 5 or 6. Wanting to draw cartoon characters from tv and the funny papers, something her father excelled at without benefit from any instruction, she was shamed by the misguided art teacher who told her that drawing cartoons was *not art*. Phillip had no particular inclination to draw but, in the research and writing of this article, tried his hand at stick figures to give graphic shape to his disavowal story.

[17] We are grateful for the reviewer's suggestion to be more specific about the embodied nature of drawing and its connections to shame.

[18] It is worth noting that we appreciate how our meeting and subsequent collaboration came to us like an unexpected gift during the pandemic lockdown. For more on how that experience helped us inquire into the isolation of being an "outsider-within" (Collins, 1986, p. 13), see Forrest and Joy (2021). Our thanks go out to the reviewer who asked for more description of our own process making artistic decisions regarding stories of such a sensitive nature.

[19] For example, Toni Morrison's *Sula* (1977/1999) and *Beloved* (1988/2004), Haynes's *Far From Heaven* (2002), and [given name] Finchers's *Fight Club* (1999).