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**An Icarus/Daedalus Dynamic: The Construction of the
Father and of Autobiographical Truth in Alison
Bechdel's *Fun Home***

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Abstract

In Alison Bechdel's highly acclaimed autobiographic novel *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* (2006), the reader witnesses the author's attempt to make sense of her father's death by relating it to both her coming out weeks before his death, and to his closeted homosexuality.

Although considerable critical efforts have been devoted to examining the role of archival elements in *Fun Home*, few studies have focused on the exploitation of some of the most paradigmatic characters and plots of Western literature to structure the course of the narrative. Therefore, I will argue that Bechdel utilizes literary characters and plots not simply to reinterpret elements of her own biography, but to reconstruct vital gaps resulting from her father's act of concealing his homosexual identity.

Thus, I intend to explore Bechdel's use of fictional elements as a narrative backbone to *Fun Home*, as well as the reasons behind it. It is my contention that the author uses literary elements as an instrument to extract meaning out of the fragmented events of her father's life to which she had access. Following this line of reasoning, I expose how this reconstructive use of fiction contributes to the narrator's recovery from the profound trauma caused by her father's death.

In addition, this dissertation discloses the ways in which Bechdel herself employs this type of resource to challenge the notion of autobiographical truth within *Fun Home*—and by extension, within the genre of the memoir.

Keywords: *Fun Home*, Alison Bechdel, graphic novel, memoir, , LGBTQI+, narrative strategies, intertextuality

0. Introduction

Means of artistic expression such as the graphic novel are enjoying a newly gained popularity, partly arising from our contemporary emphasis on the visual. “Comics are enjoying a newfound respectability right now” because “comic books are what novels used to be—an accessible, vernacular form with mass appeal.” (McGrath cited in Chute, 2010: 1). This idea can, very clearly, also be applied to the genre of the graphic novel, which is one of the formats in which comics can be produced. Indeed, graphic novels have flourished in the past few decades and are attracting the attention of not only the mainstream audience, but also of the academia.

Alison Bechdel’s *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*¹ is a major volume in this trend. Published in 2006, this graphic memoir² was included in the *New York Times*’ Best Seller list for two weeks and was named 2006 Best Book of The Year by *Time* magazine. It was also conferred countless awards, including a Lambda Book Award.³ A musical adaptation of *Fun Home* was produced in 2015, receiving widespread public acclaim. Not only has Bechdel’s memoir been popular amongst the mainstream readership, it has also attracted considerable critical attention and has been studied from quite an extensive range of perspectives. Perhaps most notably, the text has been approached from the field of comics criticism.

¹ The irony behind the title is twofold: ‘Fun Home’ was the name given to the Bechdels’ family business: their Funeral House. The title is also sardonic inasmuch as, due to the tension permeating Bechdel’s family relationships, their household was everything but ‘fun’.

² Although the terms autobiography and memoir overlap in certain aspects, *Fun Home* will be here referred to as the latter. According to Fetherling “a memoir is more tightly focused, more daring in construction, and (its author hopes) more penetrating.” (Fetherling, 2010: vii)

³ For a comprehensive list of the awards granted to *Fun Home*, please refer to: <http://dykestowatchoutfor.com/news>.

Several studies within this field have focused on the formal aspects of *Fun Home*, that is, its graphic elements and its inscription within the comics genre. The use of the graphic novel form and its inherent qualities (e.g. the cartoonist's embodiment of people through the act of drawing them) have been read as an effort from Bechdel to claim artistic authority in order to represent her and her father's story (Lemberg, 2008). Similarly, Rohy (2010) and Tison (2015) have explored the role of the graphic archival elements present in the text, such as photographs, newspaper articles, excerpts from Bechdel's own childhood diary, etc. According to Tison, Bechdel employs photographs, which she herself reproduced by hand, to "graphically offer her dead father an identity and an integrity whose lack may have played a part in his suicide" (Tison, 2015: 360). Rohy (2010), on her part, focuses on the proliferation of archival elements within *Fun Home*, relating it to queer modes of exploration of the past.

The most comprehensive study of *Fun Home*, however, is, undoubtedly, the one included Hillary Chute's *Graphic Women: Life Narrative and Contemporary Comics* (2010), a monographic study in which she analyses Bechdel's and other four women artists' autographic novels from a feminist point of view, and explores the use of the comics genre in depicting trauma and nonfiction. *Graphic Women* devotes its fifth chapter to approaching the central preoccupation of Bechdel's memoir, namely, her troubled relationship with her father. More specifically, Chute explores the way in which loss is counteracted through creation and recuperation, enacted through Bechdel's embodiment of her father through cartooning:

Focusing on the most particular aspects of the Bechdel family, *Fun Home* recuperates an archive of family documents—which Bechdel laboriously re-creates in her own hand—in order to seek out the specificities of a man who felt abstract to his daughter, and also to propose the embodiment of the cartoonist's link to the past (and hence to her father). (Chute, 2010: 175).

Although, as we have seen, the proliferation of archival elements has not gone unnoticed, none of the existing studies have aimed to explore how the numerous intertextual literary allusions help structure *Fun Home*. In the scarce mentions of these elements, researchers have simply tended to consider the use of intertextuality as the lens through which Bechdel interprets her family history (Chute, 2010) or as an element in the memoir's narrative mode (Tison, 2015).

Consequently, the aim of this dissertation is to examine in more depth the implications of the narrative technique by which Bechdel articulates her relationship with her father, as well as his identity itself, through literary allusions. To do so, in the first part I will attempt to reveal how literary and fictional references are used to construct the identity of Bruce Bechdel, a man his daughter never managed to know completely. Moreover, it will be suggested that these elements make up a critical part of the text itself, because they signal one of the main concerns in *Fun Home*—the trauma that Alison⁴ has undergone after the death of her father. Indeed, it will be argued that the creation of the memoir and its reconstruction of the father serve as means of recovering from her loss, which she initially could not rationalize and logically explain.

In the second part of this study, I will discuss the implications that the narrative mechanism exercises upon the format of the memoir, considering traditional preconceptions about self-writing. There has never been complete consensus about the definition of autobiographical genres such as the memoir, but it is indisputable that there are certain culturally determined principles which readers expect these types of texts to fulfil, such as their basis on factual truth. How we understand the truth has been questioned in Postmodern autobiographical works, and *Fun Home* is a paramount

⁴ For the sake of clarity, Alison Bechdel's autographic avatar within *Fun Home* will be referred to as 'Alison'. The author herself will be addressed by her last name, 'Bechdel'.

example. Therefore, the aim of the second part of this study will be to analyse how the intertextual mechanism of recovery, which takes up the first part of this dissertation, furthers *Fun Home*'s status as a text in which conventional notions of truth in self-writing are challenged.

1. Constructing the Father in *Fun Home*

The presence of intertextuality in *Fun Home* has not gone completely unnoticed by its main critics. Most researchers agree that literary and fictional references are an integral part of the text, inasmuch as they are the basis upon which Bechdel's narration is built. According to Tison, intertextual references are employed to make up the recursive mode of narration in *Fun Home*, by which certain events in the narration are "repeated, re-examined and reinterpreted" (2015: 346). Nevertheless, there has never been an attempt to explore the characteristics of this intertextual narrative mechanism, let alone its relevance in the construction of the father's figure in Bechdel's memoir.

Therefore, in this section I will attempt to describe how Bechdel uses this narrative device to, as I argue, construct a solid image of her deceased father so as to make up for the vital gaps resulting from both his death and his closeted sexuality. To that end, I will uncover both the graphic and the purely textual intertextual references through which Bechdel (re-)constructs her father's identity and history, so as to discern the motives behind his death. It is not possible to refer to every single one of the instances in which such literary references are employed due to the limited scope of the present dissertation. Thus, I will be focusing on three main episodes in which intertextuality is exploited. Specifically, an examination of the literary allusions which are present in the first and third chapters of the memoir, entitled "Old Father, Old Artificer" and "That Old Catastrophe" respectively, will be carried out.

In *Fun Home*, Bruce Bechdel apparently commits suicide only a few weeks after two crucial events: Alison's coming out to the family as a lesbian, and his own coming out to Alison as gay. Because of the timing of his demise, Alison is haunted by a sense of guilt on the one hand, and by the impossibility of knowing with certainty whether his death was a suicide, on the other. Indeed, in the final chapter of the graphic novel, entitled

“The Antihero’s Journey”, Alison and Bruce are closer than ever to finally resolving the tension that had been generated between them and that had marked their relationship, in which, as Bechdel puts it, one was the inversion of the other (Bechdel, 2006: 98). Because of his premature and unexpected death, however, Alison did not have the chance to be fully acquainted with her father’s identity while he was alive, considering she only got closer to him a short time before his death, and not even satisfactorily at that point. In effect, “the coherence, the shape, of his life and person are riddled with unsurmountable gaps” (Chute, 2010: 205), at least from Alison’s—and, arguably, her family’s—point of view.

To make up for this loss and uncertainty, Bechdel conceives this memoir as a text “functioning as once as biography and autobiography” (Chute, 2006: 1013), which serves as a means of reconciliation with the figure of her father and of healing from the trauma caused by his death. In it, she explores past events in her own and her father’s life, attempting to imbue them with meaning so as to, subsequently, be able to come to terms with her bereavement. There is an essential challenge, however, to this seemingly simple recount of events. The author cannot advance a clear idea of her father, because she never had access to his identity while he was alive, and their relationship was one marked by silences and absences. It is at this point, then, that the narrative mechanism consisting of references to literature and works of fiction comes into play.

Fiction and literature are, certainly, the fundamental backbone of *Fun Home*. The seven chapters of the graphic memoir are entitled after a literary reference in every case, and the author alludes to dozens of literary works and characters within the narration. This strategy acts, however, not only as a mere exercise of decorative intertextuality. On the contrary, literature and fictional characters are systematically alluded to because they played a fundamental role in both Bruce’s and Alison’s lives. For Bruce specifically,

literature was not merely a passion or a profession, but also a means of seducing his young high-school students and thus fostering and channelling desire. Literature was, all in all, an integral part of his identity, and Bechdel is well aware of that. Thus, she uses her father's main interest to construct a solid image of him through a narrative mechanism, both textual and visual, which is formulated through intertextual references.

This narrative strategy is introduced to us in *Fun Home*'s very first chapter, "Old Father, Old Artificer". In it, Bechdel presents their father-daughter relationship as being articulated by an Icarus-Daedalus dynamic. Contrary to the traditional associations of this myth, though, it is Bruce, the father, who is initially linked to Icarus rather than Daedalus, as it is he "who was to plummet from the sky" (4, figure 1). Bechdel then moves on to complement her definition by also equating him with Daedalus (6, figure 2), by reason of his artistic inclinations and his obsession with artifice (used here in both its senses: deception and handicraft).

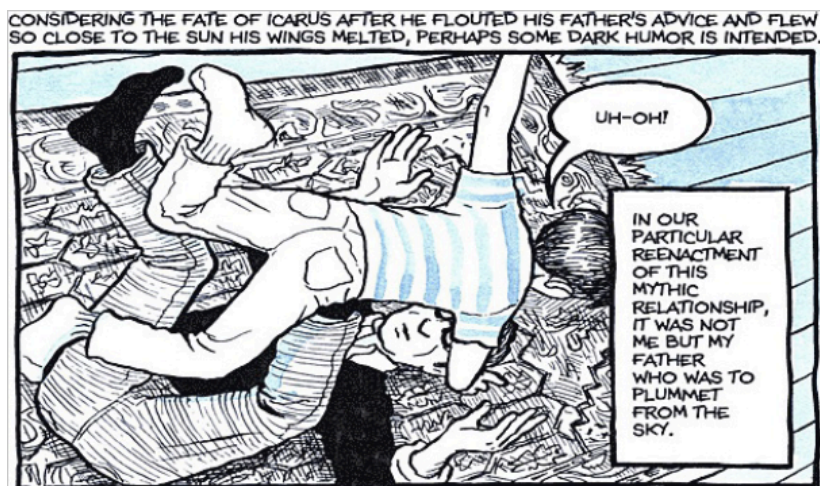


Figure 1. Bruce Bechdel as Icarus



Figure 2. Bruce Bechdel as Daedalus

Thus, through the identification of the father with these mythological figures, Bechdel is able to substantiate his death in two main ways. On the one hand, by equating him to Daedalus, she signals how Bruce's obsession for keeping an immaculate façade (channelled through his aesthetic endeavours of remodelling and decorating the house, for instance), will prevent him from fully embracing his gay identity. On the other, the identification of Bruce with Icarus entails that, partly because of what he veils with his devotion to appearances (i.e. his homosexuality), he is inevitably linked with death.

Bruce's impending demise is also signalled by yet another recurring intertextual connection: that to Fitzgerald's emblematic character, Jay Gatsby. *The Great Gatsby*

(1925) is first referred to in an episode of *Fun Home*'s third chapter, "That Old Catastrophe", in which Bruce recommends the text to one of his students who, as Bechdel seems to infer, her father perceives as sexually promising. Afterward, the author details her father's devotion to Fitzgerald's writing and his identification with the novelist, and adds that "Gatsby's self-willed metamorphosis from farm boy to prince was in many ways identical to [her] father's" (63).

In that manner, she explicitly connects Bruce to Gatsby, a character with whom he shares plenty. Both are obsessed with material goods and with aesthetics in order to keep appearances: "Gatsby's pristine books and [her] father's worn ones signify the same thing—the preference of fiction to reality" (85). Most importantly, however, their preoccupation with material reality proves to be ineffective, as they both are inescapably linked to death. Therefore, in associating Bruce to Gatsby, Bechdel reiterates the idea of her father as an artificer, whose obsession with the material as a means of preserving a façade will result in his demise.



Figure 3. Bruce as Gatsby

Bechdel does not employ the narrative mechanism which is presently being analysed simply to describe her father, but also his actions and events in a life which, like

his true personality and identity, were an enigma to her. Particularly, there is a tendency within *Fun Home* to relate events concerning Bruce's bond with Bechdel's mother, Helen Bechdel, through the lens of intertextuality. Curiously enough, it is not only her father whom she depicts through literature and fiction, but also her mother⁵. Indeed, Bechdel herself affirms that "[her] parents"—not only Bruce—"were most real to [her] in fictional terms" (67). This is best exemplified in the honeymoon episode included in chapter 3, "That Old Catastrophe", wherein the author deals with her parents' relationship.

In this section of the memoir, Bechdel claims that her mother "stepped right out of Henry James—a vigorous American idealist ensnared by degenerate continental forces" (66). About four pages later, she equates both her parents with fictional figures in a most straightforward manner. Firstly, the author suggests that her parents' relationship "played out in a similar way" to William Shakespeare's *Taming of The Shrew* (c. 1590), in which "the willful Katherine's spirit is broken by the mercenary, domineering Petruchio" (69).

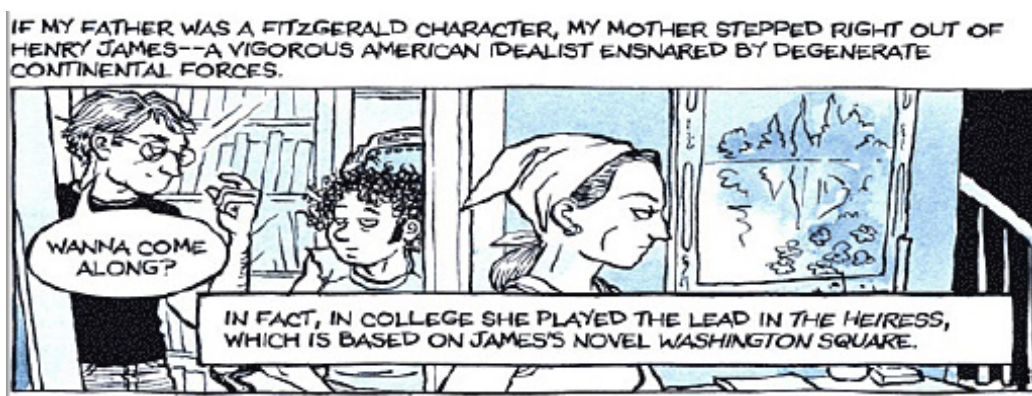


Figure 4 Helen Bechdel as a Henry James' Character

Secondly, and perhaps more explicitly, Bechdel juxtaposes images of her parents' honeymoon in Germany with a description of the plot of Henry James' *The Portrait of a*

⁵ In 2012, Bechdel published *Are You My Mother?: A Comic Drama*, a companion memoir to *Fun Home* in which she explores her relationship with her mother, Helen Bechdel, through the lens of psychoanalysis.

Lady (1881) which, according to her, “runs more than a little parallel to their early days together” (71). “Exploit[ing] the differences of autographic inscription in the art of cartooning” (Watson, 2008: 27), Bechdel composes these scenes in such a way that the images of her parents’ arguments seem to literally illustrate the plot of James’ novel. Hence, her mother graphically becomes “too-good-for-her-own-good” Isabel Archer, full of “youthful hopes”, while Bruce becomes Gilbert Osmond, a “dissipated, and penniless art collector”—and, might I add, adulterer—for whom she will “end up ‘ground in the very mill of the conventional’ ” (72).



Figure 5: Helen Bechdel as Isabel Archer

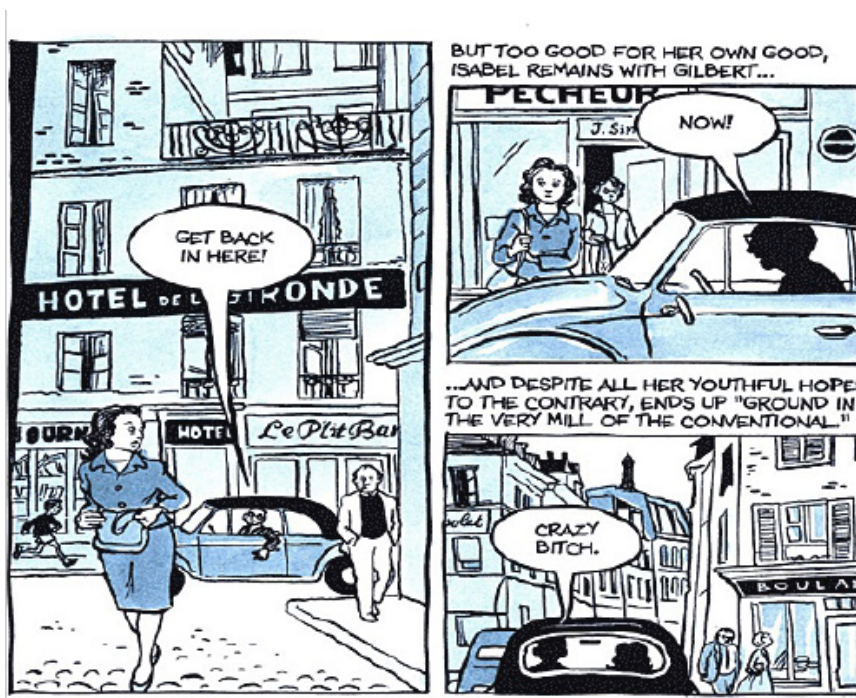


Figure 6: Helen Bechdel as Isabel Archer

That the narrative mechanism constituted by fiction is employed to depict her parents' marriage is not fortuitous. Ultimately—though probably based on mutual admiration—their marriage was a fiction maintained simply to disguise Bruce's homosexual identity in a time in which it would not have been socially accepted. Bechdel's mother was, in a way, complicit in Bruce's closeting, and that resulted in unhappiness for both parties. It appears, however, that, in Bechdel's view, her father was to blame for this misery. Thus, in this episode, Bruce's role in his marriage is constructed in a manner which conforms the author's view of the alleged causes of his suicide. Indeed, he is presented as a troubled man, tyrannical and dismissive of Bechdel's mother (who is, in this case, victimized), perhaps as a result of the sexual repression that would seemingly lead him to kill himself.

So far, we have analysed how Bechdel constructs the figure of her father through a narrative mechanism employing fiction and literature as its articulating elements. The

claim that “[autobiography] offers the possibility of alleviating the dangers and anxieties of fragmentation” (Anderson, 2010: 5) is thus readily made evident in *Fun Home*. Indeed, Bechdel gathers the fragmented information she possesses about Bruce’s identity and life and reformulates them through intertextuality to construct a solid narrative. Through this artifice, “*Fun Home* does not stitch up the gap at its center— Bruce Bechdel’s death—so much as give substance to loss” (Chute, 2010: 206).

For Eric Santner, “the work of mourning is a process of elaborating and integrating the reality of loss or traumatic shock by remembering and repeating it in symbolically and dialogically mediated doses; it is a process of translating, troping, and figuring loss” (1992: 144), and this process is precisely what is being enacted in *Fun Home*. Through her intertextual construction of Bruce, Bechdel is “figuring loss” to recover from trauma, “performing an act of creative mourning for her dead father” (Watson, 2008: 48). In effect, as Tison puts it:

Part of what Alison Bechdel achieves with the writing and drawing of *Fun Home* is a change in her status with regards to her father: she is not only able to see now, she can also recreate hidden elements of his biography; the uncomprehending witness has become an artist bearing witness to her father’s life and death, a life which would otherwise have been largely silenced (2015: 362).

In the final chapter of *Fun Home*, “The Antihero’s Journey”, the narrative comes full circle and reproduces the initial correspondence of Alison and Bruce to Icarus and Daedalus. This time, however, Bechdel’s fall into her father’s arms metaphorically represents her birth as an artist and her reconciliation with the fact of his demise. All of it has been accomplished through the ‘Daedalian’ task of creating *Fun Home*, a narrative and graphic re-working of Bruce Bechdel and his life and death.

2. The Problematic Construction of Autobiographical Truth

Despite their diverging approaches, most studies devoted to *Fun Home* have identified a common characteristic of the text as a memoir: its self-reflexivity. In his essay dealing with the history of autobiographical narratives, Yagoda affirms that “autobiography, more than any other genre, trades on its authenticity and credibility” (2009: 100). With the advent of Postmodernism and its deriving psychological and literary theories, however, this claim has been questioned. As a result, in our contemporary literary climate, “autobiography has been branded a ‘difficult’ genre” (Douglas, 2010: 22) because there is an “implicit conflict” in its practice, resulting from the combination of “postmodern skepticism regarding memory” and “the autobiographical market forces demanding authenticity” (Douglas, 2010: 38).

Consequently, in 20th and 21st century discussions of autobiographical writing “one of the key issues of contention” has been “the fallibility of memory and the troubled nature of ‘truth’” (Yagoda, 2009: 111). This tension concerning the basis of autobiography as a genre and the notion of truth within it are clearly palpable in Alison Bechdel’s *Fun Home*. The text has been described as a “memoir about memoirs, memory, and acts of storytelling, at all times an ironic and self-conscious life narrative” (Watson, 2008: 27), because the author persistently refers to her interested and deliberate choices of representation. A paramount instance of this is Bechdel’s own acceptance that she is rejecting the possible connection of the timing of her father’s death to that of F. Scott Fitzgerald’s (curiously, they both died at the same age) just because “that would only confirm that his death was not [her] fault” and she is “reluctant to let go of that last, tenuous bond” (86).

Throughout the narrative, the author consistently alludes to the subjective nature of what she is presenting, thus raising in the reader the awareness of her writing as an

action, as biased storytelling. For instance, Bechdel—quite remarkably—admits that “there is no proof, actually, that [her] father killed himself” (27) and that his death might have just been an accident. These claims about the unreliability of the narrative are replicated time and again throughout the memoir, in which she constantly presents episodes related to her father through a language of doubt and supposition. In effect, Bechdel builds the narrative in such self-aware, self-conscious manner that the validity and factual basis of the events she is depicting and narrating is systematically undermined.

This self-awareness can be interpreted as an implicit critique of the traditional conception of autobiographical texts as conveyors of factual truth about the life of a given individual. This claim is readily made evident if we consider the episodes concerning the diary kept by Alison following—curiously enough—her father’s suggestion. In the fifth chapter of *Fun Home*, young Alison is suffering from Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, and begins to doubt whether her experiences are grounded in reality, or whether they are a product of her imagination; she mistrusts, furthermore, the very language she uses, and thus adds a circumscript symbol over her entries to signal the unreliability of what she has therein narrated. Despite the humorous undertone of some of these scenes, this episode is not merely incidental or anecdotic: as Rohy points out, “the published memoir shares with the diary simultaneous impulses to inscription and defacement, assertion of meaning and infinite doubt” (2010: 353). In other words, Bechdel’s exposure of her epistemological doubts and criticism of the reliability of the diary—by definition an autobiographical endeavour—reverberate throughout the text and can be applied to *Fun Home* as whole.

The episode of the diary has been consistently presented by critics as evidence of *Fun Home*’s ‘self-awareness’ and implicit criticism to autobiography as a genre. What has not been detected, however, is how the narrative mechanism analysed in the

previous section adds to the memoir's self-reflexivity and to Bechdel's questioning of the solidity of the text. Thus, I will now proceed to expose how the intertextual device through which Bechdel constructs her father furthers *Fun Home*'s implicit recognition of the memoir genre as fallible and its dispute of the notion of autobiographical truth.

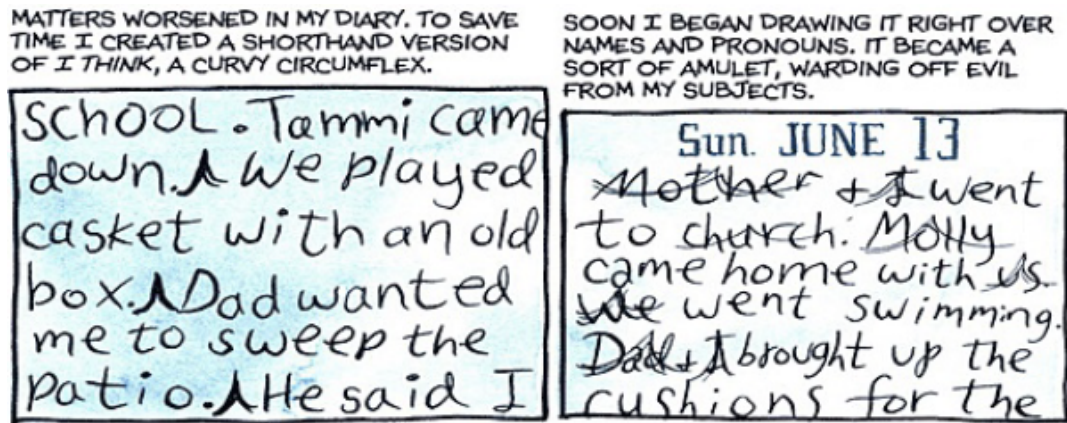


Figure 7: Young Alison's Diary

Dealing with self-writing and memory, Douglas holds that “to write about childhood the author must remember and reconstruct something of his or her experiences of childhood into narrative” (2010: 21). That is, autobiographical writing does not simply involve presenting a given set of memories, but also interweaving them in such a way that a coherent narration may result. *Fun Home* manifestly testifies to this idea, especially if we focus on the construction of the father.

Bechdel's idea of her father was never a solid one. Her perception of him was limited because, essentially, she spent her early years witnessing her father's performance of heteronormativity. As a result, there is no integrity to the memories of him she possesses. For Bechdel, Bruce—whose “stock in trade was the suspension of the imaginary in the real” (65)—constitutes a mystery. Indeed, the author herself claims that she cannot fully address Bruce's identity because, as she states in the fifth chapter of *Fun*

Home, “however convincing they might be, you can’t lay hands on a fictional character” (84).

Therefore, Bechdel opts for appropriating Bruce’s fascination for the fictional, for “seeing himself in various characters” (63), and constructs his image through the intertextual narrative mechanism I analysed in the first part of this dissertation. The author herself attests this idea when she asserts that “maybe [she is] trying to render [her] senseless personal loss meaningful by linking it to a more coherent narrative”, in this case, through literature. In that manner, “*Fun Home* makes artifice and authenticity change places—not only in the realm of the visual but also in language, where fabrication becomes real and truth depends on fiction” (Rohy, 2010: 349). Instead of presenting loose fragments of her father’s life, the author projects a series of literary tropes and characters onto his person, so as to be able to construct a consistent image of him. By employing this artifice, Bechdel is inevitably blurring the boundaries between fact and fiction, in defiance of traditional expectations of truth within autobiographies.

It is not the intention of this dissertation to contest the validity of *Fun Home*’s narration. As a matter of fact, it seems that, by deciding to portray Bruce Bechdel through the lens of fiction, the author has finally managed to extract a personal truth from the fragments of Bruce’s life she was acquainted with, as I argued in the previous section. What she achieves by employing the intertextual mechanism, then, is to challenge the traditional idea of autobiographical truth as based on ‘real’ facts. For Bechdel, I argue, truth has more to do with one’s own perception of reality and events. Indeed, she herself referred to the subjectivity of her account in an interview, in which she stated that “the sole dramatic incident in the book is that [her] dad dies” and that “everything else is just this extremely convoluted introspection about it all” (in Chute, 2006: 1008). Moreover,

there is never a claim to absolute truth in *Fun Home*, not even that of her father's (homo)sexuality.

In *Fun Home*'s last chapter, Bechdel concedes that her father's erotic truth (i.e. his sexuality) "is a rather sweeping concept" and that "[she] shouldn't pretend to know what [her] father was" (230), even though she bases the whole argumentation of the memoir on the discovery of his secret identity. In other words, the author herself admits that truth escapes her, it is impossible to grasp. However, through the act of composing this autobiography and embodying the father, granting him substance, she is able to perceive her own sense of truth. Indeed, through the intertextual approach to Bruce's life, the author manages to counteract her senseless bereavement by presenting his death as an imminent result of his attempt to disguise his alleged homosexuality through a detailed artificial façade based on aesthetic appearances.

In his semi-autobiographical novel *The Things They Carried* (1990), American author Tim O'Brien argues that "story-truth is truer sometimes than happening truth" (179). That is, mere facts cannot completely and accurately capture the essence of a story, let alone transmit an experience undergone by the individual. In this respect, then, the fictional reworking of events or, in Bechdel's case, memory fragments, can more effectively attest to her and her father's truth than any transparent enumeration of 'factual' certainties.

3. Conclusions

This dissertation has dealt with a narrative mechanism in Alison Bechdel's memoir *Fun Home* which had previously been overlooked: that of intertextuality. More specifically, it has considered the use of literary references as a means for the author to construct a solid idea of her deceased father, Bruce Bechdel, which she could not access during his life. By using intertextuality in depicting her father's identity and events in his life, Bechdel is able to compensate for the gaps caused by his closeting of his homosexual identity and, principally, his premature death. Consequently, she is able to reconcile with the father figure by artistically reconstructing him. This reworking of her father's identity allows her, additionally, to come to terms with her bereavement by making sense of Bruce's otherwise unreasonable death

In the second segment, I have discussed the implications that the intertextual narrative mechanism has considering its inscription in an autobiographical text such as *Fun Home*. Traditional conceptions of self-writing predicate that the fundamental characteristic of these texts is their factual basis, their alleged rendering of truth. However, in the literary climate of Post-Modern times, such a statement has been put to question in narratives such as the one presented here. Indeed, by complementing her critique towards the referentiality of language with a construction of Bruce Bechdel based on fictional allusions, Bechdel is challenging the traditional idea of autobiographical truth. As a matter of fact, the very existence of an absolute truth is questioned through the self-reflexive quality of *Fun Home*, by which the author constantly reminds us of the subjective nature of what is therein being presented. Instead of it being based on 'actual' events, then, Bechdel conceives of truth as something personal and subjective, though always inherently valid.

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