

EngWr 482—Essay #3

Assigned texts:

Bechdel, Alison. *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*. Mariner, 2006.

Braid, Donald. "Personal Narrative and Experiential Meaning." *Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 109, no. 431, 1996, pp. 5 – 30. JSTOR.

Gough, Kathleen. "The Origin of Family." *Journal of Marriage and Family*, vol. 33, no. 4, Nov 1971, pp. 760 – 771. JSTOR.

McCloud, Scott. "Chapter 2: The Vocabulary of Comics." *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. HarperPerennial, 1993, pp. 24 – 57.

Sheridan, Alan, translator. "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytical Experience." By Jacques Lacan. *Critical Theory Since 1965*, edited by Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle. Florida State U P, 1986, pp. 734 – 738.

"Our identities," according to Scott McCloud, "belong **permanently** to the **conceptual** world. They can't be **seen, heard, smelled, touched** or **tasted**. They're merely **ideas**, and **everything else**—at the start—belongs to the **sensual world**, the world **outside** of us" (40).

Assignment:

In a 1500 to 2000 word (perhaps expository) essay, reflect upon your experiences while reading Alison Bechdel's text; analyze the push and pull of her narrative for "the insurrectionary power of the speech act" (Butler "Preface" 12). How and to what extent is Bechdel successful in making her story ours? Look at how she tells her story: how she creates context, how she reveals her experiences, how she structures the sequence of events and their transitions—how, in other words, she builds closure for the reader. Then, reflect upon the "crisis in ontology" (Butler "Preface" 3) that both Bechdel and the reader might be said to have experienced.

For this essay, you will of course need to reference Bechdel's text, but you should also make liberal use of Braid's and McCloud's essays in defining the context of your discussion. You must also reference *either* Gough or Lacan in your paper—these two authors may help you find a focus. Finally, you will need to reference at least one author from each of the previous two assignments. The key here, as always, is to use other authors' ideas in developing your own. Do NOT change context—focus on analyzing Bechdel's text, and use the other authors' ideas to talk about Bechdel and your reading experience.

As usual, I expect your paper to demonstrate proper MLA formatting.

Works Cited

Butler, Judith. "Preface (1999)." *Gender Trouble*, 2nd ed. Routledge, 1990, pp. vii – xxviii.

McCloud, Scott. "Chapter 2: The Vocabulary of Comics." *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. HarperPerennial, 1993, pp. 24 – 57.