Gender Portrayals and Gender Expectations in Chris Ware’s Building Stories

INSPIRATIONS:

**Untitled (Medici Princess)**
c. 1948 (150 Kb); Construction, 17 5/8 x 11 1/8 x 4 3/8 in; Private collection

**Untitled (Bebe Marie)**
Early 1940’s (200 Kb); Construction, 5/16 x 5 1/4 in; The Museum of Modern Art, New York

**Tilly Losch**
c. 1935 (100 Kb); Construction, 10 x 9 1/4 x 2 1/8 in; Collection Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Bergman, Chicago

**Defense d’Afficher Object**
1939 (140 Kb); Construction, 8 15/16 x 13 15/16 x 2 1/8 in; Collection Denise and Andrew Saul

WOMEN IN BOXES: JOSEPH CORNELL
MARCEL DUCHAMP:
From or by Marcel Duchamp or Rose Sélavy (The Box in a Valise) c.1943

"Its title refers to the fact that a number of these works had been signed by Duchamp’s female alter ego, Rrose Sélavy. The box unfolds like an intricate puzzle, revealing the thematic links between works made over more than three decades." (http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/duchamp-from-or-by-marcel-duchamp-or-rose-selavy-the-box-in-a-valise-l02092)
WHY A FEMALE CHARACTER?

Capturing the female spirit/the female experience. Breaking gender stereotypes?

Male Author: Ability to understand X Being influenced by Societal Portrayals/Expectations

WHAT IS HER NAME??

Color Scheme

Symbols

- The Cat
- Flushing the Tampon

Experience

- Career vs. Family
- Abortion
- Body Image Issues

Emotions

- Loneliness and Depression
- Love and Hope
- Self-doubt

Relationships

- Motherhood
- Self-Appreciation
- Romantic Relationships
Chris Ware: The Author

"I saw somebody waiting for a bus, a girl who had a prosthetic leg and she was compelling as a person. It stuck with me and I ended up doing a strip about not her, but, I guess, my memory of her. I suppose we all feel like we’re inadequate in some way, and there’s no reason why you can’t empathise with anyone, regardless of their circumstances."

• How much has his life influenced the main character’s?
  o Did not grow up with a father. Met him when he was an adult.
  o This affected Jimmy Corrigan: Semi-autobiographical.
  o Female representations in his life?

"Ware grew up the single son of a single mother in Omaha, Nebraska. At school, he was "A real nerd. I kept to myself, afraid of being punched in the hallway in between classes, waiting for my male body to arrive, and it never really quite did." Sigh. "It’s a story that most cartoonists can tell, I think. We’re endemically nostalgic people who turn our lives over and over and over again trying to figure out how we went wrong and fix things or control them, make sense of things." Another sigh. "I don’t know.""

Meeting his father: Jimmy’s father gets in touch, and they meet, excruciatingly awkwardly; five years later, his real father, who did not read the strip, coincidentally did get in touch, and they did meet, even more awkwardly, "a pair of regretful men."

• Is Chris Ware’s mother the version of the character that does give birth to her baby with her boyfriend, and then gets abandoned?

WHO ARE YOU ANALYZING?
*Crawling in the skin of a stranger woman. The events of the story are filtered through the main character’s imagination. The main character is filtered through Chris Ware’s imagination.

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1 Kelly, Stuart. "Chris Ware: 'There is a magic when you read an image that moves in your mind'”. Interview with Chris Ware. The Guardian. October 2013.
2 Kelly, Stuart. "Chris Ware: 'There is a magic when you read an image that moves in your mind'”. Interview with Chris Ware. The Guardian. October 2013.