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## ***Persepolis: The Depiction of Childhood and Maturity Journeys Through Visual and Verbal Analysis***

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### **Abstract**

Marjane Satrapi's autobiographical series *Persepolis* is a set of comics written originally in the French language; and it recounts her life journey from childhood to early adulthood in Iran and Austria during and after the Islamic Revolution. The narrative is written in the form of graphic novel which is a sort of comics that combines both words and images. The Islamic Revolution was a critical moment in the history of Iran, overwhelmed every Iranian citizen, and ended up transforming the country from monarchal to Islamic governance. In the light of this upheaval, Marjane Satrapi visualizes her childhood and maturity through her graphic novel *Persepolis*. She utilizes the story to be her platform to open up about her

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challenges to break constraints that are imposed upon her as a woman in this newly shaped society and to call for reform and mercy for war victims. The current study aims at studying the figure of Marjane, the heroine of the story, her perceptions of certain events, her reactions in various moments and how she manages to save herself from all the obstacles that surround her . It will analyze the hidden lessons delivered by this narrative in the light of visual and verbal frames. The researcher attempts to answer how one may act in such hostile environment? what are the significance of writing autobiographical novel in the light of historical context? And how the form of graphic novel helps the author to deliver her message?

**Keywords:** Graphic Novel, Iranian Islamic Revolution, Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis*, Visualization

برسيبوليس: تصوير رحلة الطفولة والنضج من خلال التحليل المرئي واللفظي

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#### المستخلص

سلسلة السيرة الذاتية لمرجان ساتراي هي مجموعة من القصص المصورة المكتوبة في الأصل باللغة الفرنسية ، وهي تروي رحلة حياتها من الطفولة إلى سن الرشد المبكر في إيران والنمسا أثناء وبعد الثورة الإسلامية. تمت كتابة الرواية كرواية مصورة ، وهي نوع من الكتابة المصورة التي تجمع بين الكلمات والصور . والمعروف أن الثورة الإسلامية كانت لحظة حاسمة في تاريخ إيران ، طغت على كل مواطن إيراني ، وانتهت بتحويل البلاد من الحكم الملكي إلى الحكم الإسلامي. في ضوء هذه الاضطرابات توثق مرجان ساتراي طفولتها ونضجها من خلال روايتها المصورة برسيبوليس. إذ استخدمت مرجان ساتراي روايتها؛ لتكون منبرها للتحدث عن تحدياتها، فضلا عن كسر القيود المفروضة عليها كأمراة في هذا المجتمع الحديث التشكيل. اعتمادًا على نظرية التصوير ، وتهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى دراسة شخصية مرجان ، بطلة القصة ، وتصوراتها لأحداث معينة ، وردود أفعالها في لحظات مختلفة. سيقوم بتحليل الدروس المخفية التي تقدمها هذه السردية في ضوء الإطارات المرئية.

**الكلمات الدالة:** الرواية المصورة، الثورة الإسلامية، مرجان ساتراي، بيرسيبوليس، التصوير.

## **1. Introduction**

*Persepolis* is an autobiographical narrative composed by Iranian novelist Marjane Satrapi that chronicles her life from childhood to early adulthood in Iran and Austria during and after the Islamic Revolution. Satrapi derives the novel's title from the name of the ancient capital of the Persian Empire. Based on the life of Marjane Satrapi, the story is created as a graphic novel. "which is a sort of writing that combines words and images. Graphic novels are compilations of serially released comics that have been clustered all together and produced in the form of the graphic novel (Murray,2017). The term "graphic novel" was coined by Will Eisner in his work *A Contract with God* in 1987 (Monnin, 2010). The phrase "graphic novel" often means "image-text" (Adams, 1956).

*Persepolis* is a set of comics full of visual images that render it a graphic novel. The name "comic" first came into existence from the "funny pages" that appeared in newspapers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In the 1930s, the modern-format of comic book was born in the United States and these comic strips initially published as independent entities. Around the same time in the UK, those comics began to be released as whole books rather than individual issues. During that period in which, the humor genre began to lose a place to action, crime, and fantasy works. These factors coalesced to produce the superhero genre, which quickly became the most popular in the United States, while in Britain, subjects of war, sport, and science fiction were the most well-liked (Murray, 2017). Comics appear to be less complicated than printed texts. Because they contain visuals, thus everyone can keep up with what is going on with their site right away (Kukkonen, 2013). These visual elements are alive with possible significations, taking on meanings that go beyond what they would merely symbolize in ordinary life (Petersen, 2011).

The dictionary defines the term visualization as "mental image." In the domains of technological graphics and engineering, it refers to something considerably more detailed, it focuses on making detailed information more understandable by showing it in a visual style (Gallagher, 1995). Professionals trace back the thought of utilizing a computer to display data in a graphical to the beginnings of computers. Sutherland explained many of the essential principles in the computer graphics area in his Ph.D. thesis (1963). This textbook has been primarily considered the first to identify computer graphics as a separate technological field. The term "visualization" first came to prominence in a 1987 National Science Foundation as an essential introductory step to scientific visualization. Then in the years that followed, visualization flourished, and it began to be used in a variety of sectors, such as medical tomography and satellite imagery. Today, the advancement of 3D graphical technologies is considered a step further toward assisting visualization in becoming part of a more dynamic analytical strategy (Gallagher, 1995).

The visualization process began hundreds years ago , or maybe millions of years if we count cave drawings as instances of man's endeavors to impart mental images to his companions. However, the contemporary period of visualization is distinct in terms of its speed and reach. Nowadays, we are overwhelmed with visual images; it is part of our life. We can make use of them in almost everything; no news or weather programs are complete without statistical graphs, they also form part of our financial system (Wright, 2007). Visualization has become an inseparable part of human daily life, it can be part of scientific, mathematical, geographical, marketing, architecture, artistic, literary, and educational fields. Scientists, theorists, artists and scholars utilize graphics to make their work more accessible, more vivid, and more solid.

Over time, graphic novels began to embrace different subjects to satisfy the general taste, in particular those that are concerned with politics; for this reason, authors shift their attention to social and political issues, using their works as a means to present critical views and crucial topics. Some of these number one works include Keiji Nakazawa's *Barefoot Gen*, Joe Sacco's *Palestine*, W. G. Sebald's *Emigrants*, Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, and Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*. For those graphic books that had been created after World War II, notably in the previous thirty years. Their publishing time marked the birth of comics, which have been directed to adult readers. Each of the authors picked defies popular perceptions of the events they describe; they use autobiographical methods to support their narratives with the truth as they saw it. Autobiographical works provide visual and written descriptions of some of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's most tragic occurrences (Adams, 1956).

Indeed, Satrapi portrays her story in the same way, as a social and political reflection on Iran during the Islamic revolution and the Iraq-Iran conflict. Satrapi paints a picture of life in Iran, including the severe situations and tribulations that its residents face. Through this novel, she handles many key themes such as social restrictions, false idealism, feminist issues, war destructions, family dynamics, loss of faith, exile, west vs. east cultures, and freedom.

Critics and readers praise Satrapi's depiction of her early experiences for providing a unique glimpse into an almost unknown and inaccessible way of life in Iran. Many critics argue that what distinguishes the novel is its focus on the political and cultural situations in Iran, as well as Satrapi's family's difficulties to cope with the pressures around them. Additionally, the author's talent to use both words and visuals to convey the common difficulties of ordinary people living in extraordinary circumstances raises the book to a higher level (Schroeder, 2010).

Because they blend personal and historical tales, Iranian expatriate women's autobiographies have become very frequent. The memoir form offers access to a previously restricted domain of Iranian culture. It enables its female authors to violate and surpass taboo territory as a symbolic kind of self-disclosure. These authors portray Iran at a critical point in its history, as the country moves from monarchy to Islamic rule. They talk openly about their personal experiences as a result of being forced to choose between their yearning for independence and the new regime's insistence on adopting an Islamic way of life. These memoirs help to uncover Iranian women's hidden voices, challenge inherited patriarchal traditions and erase the common link between Islam and Muslims with terrorists and extremists (Derbel, 2017).

Freedom of expression was one of the first benefits of Khomeini's revolution. Speeches, rights, and independence that have been previously repressed by the Shah were made public. However, a new form of persecution quickly emerged; individuals who had remained in the region and were either supporters of the Shah's regime or opposed the revolution were either slain or captured. Compared to the one that was overthrown, the revolutionary Islamic rule was brutal. A religious dictatorship has taken the role of an authoritarian regime (Priborkin, 2019). Khomeini ordered that all women, regardless of their religious faith or ethnicity, must wear a headscarf. Thousands of women from all over Iran came out to oppose the bill on March 8<sup>th</sup> 1979, International Women's Day (BBC,2019). The state claimed the authority to decide what kind of jobs women may do, what subjects they will teach, how they should clothe and act publicly, and how they should interact with males. Not only that, the state forbade birth control and urged women to have more children. Most legislation concerning women's rights, notably the personal and family laws enacted by the previous administration, were canceled. They were persuaded and compelled to retire from government posts, and they were removed from positions of authority. Division of sexes had been enforced; if they witness any woman in a public place with a male, she may be detained by revolutionary groups or morality police and asked to give evidence she was with her spouse, father, or sibling (Esfandiari, 1997). These are only a handful of the unfair treatment that Iranian women have experienced. All of these heinous events are represented in Satrapi's *Persepolis*, in which she employs graphics to construct a real-time portrayal of what is going on and the struggles she must face.

This paper aims to study Marjane's character to uncover the difficulties of growing up in a chaotic period, and depicting the negative consequences of living in oppressive environment. Moreover, it investigates her perceptions of various events and her behaviors in certain situations. Therefore the study demonstrates how one may act in such tough situations to save himself, specifically if it is a woman? How using an autobiographical account in the form of graphics aids the author's efforts to write social commentary? And what is the value of writing historical and social commentary?

## **2. Analysis**

The plot of the novel is told by the protagonist Marjane, who begins recounting her story in her childhood. She is a seven-year-old girl who lives at home with her parents in Iran. She lives a peaceful, stable life until her country descends into turmoil. At this point, Iranian citizens start up a revolution against the Shah in order to change the political structure, and they eventually achieve success. "In 1979 a revolution took place it was later called The Islamic Revolution" (Satrapi, 2000, P.3). Before these terrible things happen, Marjane paints a fantastic picture of herself when she speaks about her childhood; she is that dreamy, nutty, and carefree child "Teacher: what do you want to be when you grow up? Marjane; I'll be a prophet." (p. 8) ) She is a little girl with high ambitions (Booker, 2010).

She talks to God privately every night before going to sleep, sharing with him everything she has in her mind, her hopes, emotions, and fears. This hints at the kind of person she will become as she gets older, a mindful and bright individual with an unshakeable personality: "Every night I had a big discussion with God." (p. 8)

As the following figure one shows Marjane's parents are the primary cause of her early brilliance; they shape her personality via knowledge and excellent guidance. Growing up in such a cultured, liberated family is a blessing. This distinguishes Marjane from her peers, because being a young girl with this level of intelligence and wit is highly impressive. This privilege is held to be the foundation of her young personality, the feminist and bold Marjane:



*Figure 1. The Bicycle (Satrapi, 2000. p.12)*

On the other hand, Marjane's uncle Anoosh has had the most impact on her. He arrives to Iran after the revolution, and Marjane has never met him before. She has been fascinated by him and his stories since the beginning. Every night before she goes to bed, he tells her a variety of tales, and she excitedly listens and never wants him to end “And I had a hero in my family... Naturally I loved him immediately” (P. 54). Marjane is the kind of a girl who always seeks to enlighten her mind by listening to grownups' stories; for this reason she is highly enthralled by Anoosh's. The influence of her family and Anoosh make her better equipped to face the future. However, Marjane's joy is short-lived as Anoosh is sentenced to prison and is only allowed one final visitation, which he wants to be with Marjane. She has a very emotional farewell visit with Anoosh, and he gives her a memento—a handmade swan—as a present "Here I made you another Bread-Swan. It's the uncle of the first one." (p. 69). This swan symbolizes the last lovely things in Marjane's life: innocence, joy, and warmth, all of which will be taken from her forever.

Following this encounter, Anoosh is hanged, and Marjane's life becomes increasingly complicated; everything begins to collapse. Marjane is upset, and her sadness has

overpowered her since the person she has lost is truly valuable; she has lost her actual hero. This creates a great emptiness inside her, a void she will try to fill for almost half of her life.

The first signs of the revolution begin to appear; everything is messy in Marjan's life and Iranian's life. Women, including young girls, are required to wear veils, and boys and girls attend separate schools "Then came 1980: The year it became obligatory to wear the veil at school" (p. 3). Their colleges are all closed, and the system of education and what is taught in school at all stages are outdated "Everything to be revised to ensure that our children are not led astray from the true path of Islam. That's why we are closing all the universities for a while" (p. 3). These rigid actions anticipate Iran's future; the new regime will alter all elements of life in the country, making life in Iran far more harsh. Adams (2008) states that these first few pages draw a dramatic contrast between the previous secular society and the new fundamentalist regime that had replaced it.

The government outlawed anything they deemed improper, including partying, smoking, and drinking; in general, the government outlawed having joy. Being a 12-year-old girl during this time is difficult for Marjane because she just wants to live her life as any other 12-year-old would. As a result, she begins to formulate a strategy of resistance to the government's oppression, and society as a whole has started. As figure two denotes, Marjane begins her impotent fight by smoking, which allows her to feel as though she has a free, private zone. This marks the fact that any extreme action has its backlash; since free will is the most valuable blessing in any person's life and because his free choice is what distinguishes him as a human being with his distinct personality. For this reason; Marjane through the whole novel fights for her freedom.



*Figure 2. The Cigarette (Satrapi, 2000, P. 117)*

Bit by bit, the new, untamed, strong-willed, and self-reliant Marjane emerges, the one who will fight for her freedom at all costs and refuses to accept anything against her will. As a result, Marjane chooses to have fun in her way, which leads her to engage in recurring disputes with members of her society who believe that wearing bright clothes or enjoying western music is something outrageous. In the third illustration, when Satrapi visualizes these women who call themselves guardians of the revolution scold Marji for wearing improper clothes. Heimermann & Tullis (2017) imply that Satrapi intends to imply that this behavior is ideological rather than religious.

Satrapi demonstrates that patriarchy is not limited to males; women may be patriarchal, this kind of women whose minds are programmed to be objectified by men and by the conventions of their society, and live their lives to meet the expectations of their society. This proves that women must educate one another about their rights before asking the world to grant them the demands they desire. When actress Emma Watson, who is also a feminist activist, has interviewed Satrapi, she brings up this exact problem:

Also, I believe that we place a lot of responsibility on males because of their nastiness, but women have a hand with it. Who is responsible for raising children in a patriarchal society? The women are to blame. They are the ones who say things like, "You know, my girl, you have to be attractive." All rights belong to you, my son," and so forth. I've met patriarchal women and feminist guys, so I don't believe it's a gender issue. It's all about intelligence ( Nast, 2016).



*Figure 3. Kim Wilde (Satrapi, 2000. P. 133)*

Figure four indicates that, Marjan's boldness and audacity make her parents concerned for her safety because being a strong-headed woman in Iran at that time was not something good, and things will end up with her in an awful way. For this reason, they decide to send her abroad to Austria, "Your mother and I have decided to send you to Austria" (p. 147). They want to ensure their daughter's safety outside of this dangerous environment (Nabizadeh, 2019). This demonstrates her parents' great sacrifice, as they choose to stay away from their only daughter rather than watching her get hurt because they know deep down Marjane will never stop causing herself problems, because she is their creation. They shaped her to be powerful, knowledgeable, always stand up for herself, never give up doing what she believes and never allowing anybody or anything to tear her apart:





Figure 4. The Dowry (Satrapi, 2000.p. 145)

This decision marks a pivotal moment in Marjan's life; she will go on her exile trip away from her parents. "During her time in Vienna, she will face heartbreak, bigotry, and physical and mental instability, putting her goals to the test (Nabizadeh, 2019, P.95). She will, however, evolve, have new experiences, meet new people, and learn various lessons that will shape her character.

The second part of the story opens with a discussion of Marjan's arrival in Austria; a new phase in Marjan's life is beginning. Everything in Austria appears to be new to her; she is enchanted by the simplest things that are inaccessible in her home country: "It had been four years since I'd seen such a well-stocked store." (Satrapi, 2004, p. 6). She finds herself in this interesting location where she may hang out wherever she likes, listen to music, stroll out without a veil, and, most essential, is not constrained by any rules.

In this conversation, illustrated in figure five, people think she is a weird girl; she looks like a person who has lived in a cave all of her life or an alien who has just landed from space. She seems clueless about what everyday life looks like:



*Figure 5. The Soup (Satrapi, 2004.p. 2)*

This portrays the damage caused by wars, as well as how a terrible ruling system fails to provide its people with the most basic rights, such as the ability to live a decent life. At the time when those western civilizations are accused of being a "symbol of decadence" (Satrapi, 2000), they offer all of life's necessities to their inhabitants, including safety, freedom, and a good standard of living. At a time when western nations are progressing via science and technology, these so-called religious administrations are moving backward, because all they care for is imposing their power and leading their people to wars and death like scapegoats. This situation signifies, as Mohammadi (2016) suggests, that Satrapi is effectively striving to distinguish between the Iranian identity and the Iranian government. She strives to draw attention to the differences between the personal and public sectors of life in Iran, where the public is strictly dominated by government.

In the beginning, Marjane has a hard time trying to fit in; she feels lonely and depressed because everything has changed for her. As a result, she decides to educate herself so that she can recognize everything around her and be a part of the community in which she lives, in order to better understand them and, in turn, to be accepted by them. Unfortunately, she goes too far and becomes a drug smuggler "This is how, for love, I began my career as a drug dealer. Hadn't I followed my mother's advice? To give the best of myself I was a no longer simple junkie, but my school official dealer" (Satrapi, 2004,p. 68). This demonstrates the impact of the individual's circle or the environment; whether they are surrounded by excellent or terrible company, they will turn out to be exactly like them. Marjane appears unconcerned about her surroundings; all that important to her is to feel like she belongs somewhere and to be released from her isolation. She needs someone or something to align herself with; she does not even admit that she is Iranian "I should say that at the time Iran was the epitome of evil and to be Iranian was a heavy burden to bear." (p. 41).

This loneliness is accompanied by emotions of regret for fleeing the war, as well as humiliation and betrayal for rejecting her culture and becoming more Western (Malek, 2006). In her Friends' eyes, she wants to be the cool, funky girl, not a girl who comes from a place full of a bunch of savages. This reflects the notion of generalization. When

people live in an area full of wars and run by extremist systems, they will be looked at as barbaric, and primitive; these ideas are spread thanks to the media; it makes people observe the surface image, it does not give them an authentic image of what happening there, it does not show that those people are mere victims obliged to live according to the regulations of their rulers fearing for their lives.

In the following visual image six, Satrapi attempts to portray the miserable life her heroin has in exile. The graphic depicts her inability to overcome the feeling of loneliness and longing for her home and her parents' emotional support. She uses love to make up for her loneliness and homesickness, but even love frustrates her. This highlights the value of family and demonstrates that a person's actual home is where his loved ones reside; it makes no difference where this place is, even if it is a battleground:



*Figure 6. The Veil (Satrapi, 2004.p. 79)*

As a result, her inner suffering manifests itself physically, and she spends her time walking through the streets till she drops: " I spent more than two months on the streets in the middle of winter, I got sick, I started to cough a little, my cough became continuous, until I spit blood, and ended up." ( p. 86). After the betrayal of her boyfriend, Marji feels alienated not only by her partner, but also by Western-European culture where she lives (Klapcsik, 2016). The significant of narrating all these details about the journey of her exile, Satrapi is trying to help those exiled Iranians to be better understood by their host communities (Malek, 2006).

After spending time in the hospital, Marjane decides to return to Iran. However, nothing changes. When she returns home, she sees that the names of war martyrs have been strewn around her town "Many had changed names, they were now called martyr what's his name avenue or martyr something-or-other street. I felt though I were walking through cemetery" (p. 97). Everything becomes intolerable for her, and even her former friends begin to see her as an outsider, and completely strange: "To them, I had become a decadent western woman" (p. 116). Then; she becomes even more secluded, unable to contact even with her own family. Klapcsik (2016) mentions that this sense of loss stems from her constant movement between different cultures.

She feels dumped and rootles with no one to embrace her and no place to welcome her. She develops depression as a consequence and therefore decides to commit suicide to end the misery. This is evidence of the distorted mind of depressed people who went through traumatic events in their lives, which led them to be unfit for social and daily functions. Figure seven depicts her endeavor to end her life, yet, she fails, so she takes it as a message from God to give herself another chance; maybe there are better things he plans for her are yet to come:



*Figure 7. The Skiing (Satrapi, 2004.p. 119)*

Then she begins to work on herself in order to revive the old, powerful, unstoppable Marjane. She applies to the School of Arts and begins dating a nice man. “My parents never knew the reason of my metamorphosis. My new approach to life delighted them to the point of their buying me a car by way of encouragement” (p. 122). Because she is out of options, she instead, decides to go with the flow and refit again with her community. She finds new acquaintances, enjoy secret parties every night and eventually marries her boyfriend Reza. The last decision she regrets immediately :



*Figure 8. The Wedding (Satrapi, 2004. p 163)*

Their decision to marry is a quick one, taken by a young couple in order to be able to meet whenever they want, as it is unlawful to hang out together in public unless they are relatives. “It must be said that during this period young couples who showed themselves in public running risk” (p. 134). Noticing figure eight, it is evident that Marjane is not the type of typical lady whose sole ambition in life is to marry any random guy, have kids, and live a domestic life; she likes to be the educated, hardworking, and free-spirited woman who has her own life. She realizes after marriage that she does not love her spouse and that all of her previous sentiments for him were naive feelings of a young girl attempting to fill a vacuum inside her.

Furthermore, if she attempts to fit in with her culture, they make it difficult for her; because she is used to expressing herself rather than repressing it, and expressing oneself is considered blasphemy where she lives. “So miss Satrapi always saying what you think... it is good! You are honest, but you are lost.” (p. 144). As illustration nine portrays, it seems like Marjane cannot keep on living under such tyranny, she is not only dealing with the government’s oppression but also with the people’s hypocrisy.



*Figure 9. The Socks (Satrapi, 2004. p 149)*

Bad things begin to accumulate; first, she witnesses the death of her friend while enjoying a party together, which is, something forbidden for them, then her miserable marriage life “After one month of marriage, we set up separate bedrooms.”(p. 165). Everything around her is getting on her nerves, and then she decides to stop this chaotic

life, “I can’t take it anymore, I want to leave this country” (p. 183). Now she is in the middle of a point where she feels losing her true self.

To get things back on track, she decides to divorce, which is a difficult decision at first because divorce is not common in such a conservative atmosphere “I know your family is open-minded but everyone else will judge you” (p. 178). Yet, figures 10 and 11 reflect how her mother and grandmother are always here for her; with their wise guidance and emotional support, she can go one with her resolution. This means that Marjane’s power comes from the two most incredible women in her life, her grandma and her mother. This proves how Satrapi tries to bring into focus the idea of women supporting women.



*Figure 10. The End (Satrapi, 2004. P. 179)*



*Figure 11. The Wedding (Satrapi, 2004. P. 163)*

As a result, she ultimately departs, choosing independence above being with her beloved parents in order to reestablish order in her life, because she knows she cannot be anything in her homeland, she cannot be productive, and she cannot achieve her ambitions.:

Not having been able to build anything in my own country, I preferred to leave it once again. I went to France for the first time in June 1994 to take a test to enter the School of Decorative Arts in Strasbourg. I was accepted, then I had to go back to Iran to exchange my tourist visa for a student visa (p. 185).

Marjane begins to rebuild order in her life after leaving Iran. She enters college, then becomes a well-known author, and writes her own account in *Persepolis*. Booker (2010) states that she would not have been able to make this comic in her own country, but being in Paris presented her with the ideal working atmosphere.

The message she wants to deliver to her readers is to fight for their dreams, to stand up for themselves against those who want to oppress them, to improve their lives for the better even if they live in the worst places ever and to make every hard experience a source of power for them, in order to push them forward. Satrapi explains: The only one who stands in the way of your freedom is you. Nobody has the power to take away your liberty. After all, I have lived under a dictatorship. I am pretty aware of what I am talking about. I was born and raised under a dictatorship. Everything was prohibited. But this could not stop my mind from working, and they did not succeed in turning me into a moron; they could not get into my head no matter how hard they tried. We should not allow the restriction to be enforced on us ( Nast, 2016).

Furthermore, Satrapi addresses her female readers, encouraging them to stand up against those who devalue and stigmatize them. She is asking them to leave any place where they are viewed as an object that must be covered and kept at home, rather than being considered as human beings with minds and full potential, she is telling them to be at a place where they are appreciated, heard and valued. Derbal (2017) states that *Persepolis* reveals to the outer world the viewpoint of the female protagonist and concentrates on topics concerning the female body, life, and marriage in the aftermath of the Islamic Revolution. The novel does not merely depict Iran's historical and social reality but it delivers a sharp criticism of women's mistreatment.

Satrapi has provided her readers with vibrant imagery and a detailed storyline of her life journey via the usage of graphic novels. This strategy allows her readers to feel more connected to the character, especially those who have experienced similar situations. "Her use of graphic novels to portray autobiographical stories with political dimension renders her messages particularly relatable and touching, while also drawing attention to the graphic novel genre (Marjane Satrapi Biography, 2006). Each single symbol exists in the graphics, such as Marjan's books, the swan, the cigarettes, the veil, war destruction, the airport and her haircut, each one of them is tied to a specific period in Marjane's life. Even the white and black colors are employed to show how Marjan's life is full of miserable, scary and dark situations, yet, at the opposite, there is the light of her life which is presented by her family and by the strong well that attains her the freedom she longs to "Freedom had a price" (p. 187). Moreover, her simple structure of the graphics and the lack of colors encourage the readers to focus on the story messages not just the art. Satrapi wants to raise attention to trauma and war, which

makes the graphics function as a medium for conveying tension and tragedy (Dallacqua, 2015).

As memoirs have a strong connection to the truth (Schroeder, 2010). When Satrapi makes use of memoirs, she conveys an authentic view about the suffering of the Iranians to the whole world, and defies some of the common misconceptions about the Iranian individuals, with stressing on a social and political reform. Beaty and Woo (2016) mention that Satrapi herself becomes a public figure on issues concerning Iran and on the integration of Muslim populations in France

## **Conclusion**

Being an artist of graphic designs, Satrapi can sketch a masterpiece through her work of art. *Persepolis* is a humanistic commentary in which the writer conveys the struggles of an entire nation and keeps the memory of innocent people who passed away due to wars and wrong ruling policies. Satrapi's intent is not to victimize herself, but to give a lesson to the readers, if they cannot help themselves to stand on their feet, no one will do. She is highly keen to present her readers with the importance of survival and insisting on living in freedom no matter what it may cost, complaining and mourning oneself will never get them anywhere. The graphics give up its secrets and hidden messages with giving the reader feelings of attachment to the story and the characters' experiences as well as the joy generated while reading the novel. By presenting this novel Satrapi stands in the position of an advocate who calls for the rights of oppressed women, and war victims, with stressing on defying the westerns' negative perception of Middle East individuals. The novel deals with multiple themes related to feminism, war, exile, order and disorder, surviving, acting out and working through and postmodernist notions, which renders it to be worthy of further scholarly investigation.

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