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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | WRIT 1506 | Stroupe  **LIFE**  Born in 1969, Marjane Satrapi was the only child of Westernized Iranian parents; her father was an engineer and her mother a clothing designer. She grew up in Tehrān, where she attended the Lycée Français.  After the Iranian Revolution of 1979, her family’s Western way of life drew the attention of Iranian authorities, and by 1984 her parents had decided to send her to Austria to attend school.  A failed relationship there exacerbated her sense of alienation and contributed to a downward spiral that left her homeless and using drugs. She returned to Tehrān at age 19, studied art, and, after a short-lived marriage, moved back to Europe in 1993. In France she earned a degree in art, and by the mid-1990s she was living permanently in Paris.  Satrapi published the books *Persepolis 1* (2000) and *Persepolis 2* (2001) in France; they were combined as *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood* when translated into English in 2003.  ***“[I]f people are given the chance to experience life in more than one country, they will hate a little less. It’s not a miracle potion, but little by little you can solve problems in the ‘basement’ of a country, not on the surface”***  ***– Marjane Satrapi, “Why I Wrote***  ***Persepolis”***  In *Persepolis* she used a stripped-down visual style that shows the influence of German Expressionism to tell the story of her childhood in Tehrān. It is a story that Western readers found at once familiar—a restive adolescent who loves Nike shoes and rock music—and foreign.  Sometimes described as a graphic memoir, *Persepolis* melds the format of a graphic novel with a prose memoir. Satrapi adapted her book as a film, also called *Persepolis* (2007), which was nominated for an Academy Award for best animated feature.  **SATRAPI ON THE WRITING OF *PERSEPOLIS***  “Forgiveness is a good thing because you cannot go on living your life being angry, because then you become like the people you hate. And that is exactly what is happening in the world that we live in. And so [writing *Persepolis*] wasn’t so much a matter of autobiography, because normally an autobiography is a book that you write because you hate your family and your friends and you don’t know how to say it to them, so you write a book and let them read it themselves…**.**  [But] I didn’t have any other way to write about my story. I could not suddenly say, ‘Oh, this is an analysis of what happened in the’70s and the ’80s and the ’90s in Iran,’ because I am not a historian and I’m not a politician. I’m a person who was born in a certain place, in a certain time, and I can be unsure about everything, but I am not unsure of what I have lived. I know it.  And [so] it was very personal—a very small thing, which was important. As soon as you start to talk about a nation, what is a nation? I mean, are all British people the same? ….So I had to create [*Perspolis*] from a very personal point of view.”    Establishing herself as a writer in her hometown, in 1964 she gained recognition for her essay “Notes on Camp.” She published four novels and nine works of non-fiction, and directed four feature-length films. She died in 2004 in New York City.  **KEY IDEAS IN ONG’S *ORALITY AND LITERACY***  How the psychologies of sight and sound differ  Consciousness  Writing as a technology  Language and its influence on self and society  Media in history  How knowing the ancient world helps us understand the present and future | **Marjane Satrapi**  **QUESTIONS**  — Read the two quotations below. How does Satrapi’s *Persepolis* address and counteract simplistic, Western ideas about Iranians or Middle Easterners while at the same time resisting traditional ideologies and politics of her native country?  — In *Understanding Comics*, Scott McCloud points out that the sequential panels of a comic book or graphic novel transform temporal relationships and events into spatial ones. What are some examples of Satrapi using panels to tell her story and express her ideas spatially (in space on the page) in addition to temporally (in time)?  ⎯ How do we decide if Satrapi’s vision of self, society, art, and history is essentially Romantic, Realist, Aesthetic, Modernist, or Postmodernist? What could asking and perhaps deciding lead us see or understand about the book?  Persepolis*…does not offer a romanticized vision of individual sensibility. Nor does it offer a monologic presentation of Iranian woman as victim of Iranian religious patriarchy. While recording the events of the Islamic Revolution accurately, and emphasizing the curtailment of women’s rights, there is no luxury for lament or nostalgia. There is also a conscious attempt to include diversity of classes and religions in the presentation of Iranians. There is a sense of a broad canvass sweep rather than a small circle of Iranian women who are readers of western fiction. In some unique ways therefore, the form of* Persepolis *enables it to be malleable enough to escape some of the controversial quagmires that more traditional autobiographies can fall into. (4-5)*  *- Lopamudra Basu,* Nebula*, 2007*  **PERSEPOLIS & WESTERN AUDIENCES**  “Satrapi literally as well as figuratively draws out the ways in which the transition from childhood to adulthood becomes a transformational moment overdetermined by narratives of development that set gendered roles, define class distinctions, articulate racial demarcations, inscribe religious differences, and establish parameters around sexual exploration.  In countering such scripts, *Persepolis* addresses the hegemonic power of United States’ economic and cultural imperialism through narratives and representations that undermine mythologies of Western progressivism and that complicate the simplistic scripts Westerners have assigned to the region labeled ‘the Middle East.’" (952)  - Theresa M. Tensuan, “Comic Visions and Revisions in the  Work of Lynda Barry and Marjane Satrapi,” *Modern Fiction*  *Studies*, 2006 | |  |  | |

