



مجلة
بحوث الشرق الأوسط
مجلة علمية مُدكَّمة
(مُعتمدة) شهرياً

العدد مائة واحد عشر
(مايو 2025)

السنة الخمسون
تأسست عام 1974

يصدرها
مركز بحوث
الشرق الأوسط

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الرؤية

السعي لتحقيق الريادة في النشر العلمي المتميز في المحتوى والمضمون والتأثير والمرجعية في مجالات منطقة الشرق الأوسط وأقطاره .

الرسالة

نشر البحوث العلمية الأصيلة والرصينة والمبتكرة في مجالات الشرق الأوسط وأقطاره في مجالات اختصاص المجلة وفق المعايير والقواعد المهنية العالمية المعمول بها في المجالات المُحكَّمة دولياً.

الأهداف

- نشر البحوث العلمية الأصيلة والرصينة والمبتكرة .
- إتاحة المجال أمام العلماء والباحثين في مجالات اختصاص المجلة في التاريخ والجغرافيا والسياسة والاقتصاد والاجتماع والقانون وعلم النفس واللغة العربية وآدابها واللغة الانجليزية وآدابها ، على المستوى المحلى والإقليمي والعالمي لنشر بحوثهم وإنتاجهم العلمي .
- نشر أبحاث كبار الأساتذة وأبحاث الترقية للسادة الأساتذة المساعدين والسادة المدرسين بمختلف الجامعات المصرية والعربية والأجنبية .
- تشجيع ونشر مختلف البحوث المتعلقة بالدراسات المستقبلية والشرق الأوسط وأقطاره .
- الإسهام في تنمية مجتمع المعرفة في مجالات اختصاص المجلة من خلال نشر البحوث العلمية الرصينة والتميزة .



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شروط النشر بالمجلة

- تُعنى المجلة بنشر البحوث المهمة بمجالات العلوم الإنسانية والأدبية ؛
- يعتمد النشر على رأي اثنين من المحكمين المتخصصين ويتم التحكيم إلكترونياً ؛
- تقبل البحوث باللغة العربية أو بإحدى اللغات الأجنبية، وترسل إلى موقع المجلة على بنك المعرفة المصري ويرفق مع البحث ملف بيانات الباحث يحتوي على عنوان البحث باللغتين العربية والإنجليزية واسم الباحث والتايتل والانتماء المؤسسي باللغتين العربية والإنجليزية، ورقم واتساب، وإيميل الباحث الذي تم التسجيل به على موقع المجلة ؛
- يشار إلى أن الهوامش والمراجع في نهاية البحث وليست أسفل الصفحة ؛
- يكتب الباحث ملخص باللغة العربية واللغة الإنجليزية للبحث صفحة واحدة فقط لكل ملخص ؛
- بالنسبة للبحث باللغة العربية يكتب على برنامج "word" ونمط الخط باللغة العربية "Simplified Arabic" وحجم الخط 14 ولا يزيد عدد الأسطر في الصفحة الواحدة عن 25 سطر والهوامش والمراجع خط Simplified Arabic حجم الخط 12 ؛
- بالنسبة للبحث باللغة الإنجليزية يكتب على برنامج word ونمط الخط Times New Roman وحجم الخط 13 ولا يزيد عدد الأسطر عن 25 سطر في الصفحة الواحدة والهوامش والمراجع خط Times New Roman حجم الخط 11 ؛
- (Paper) مقياس الورق (B5) 17.6 × 25 سم، (Margins) الهوامش 2.3 سم يمينًا ويسارًا، 2 سم أعلى وأسفل الصفحة، ليصبح مقياس البحث فعلي (الكلام) 21×13 سم. (Layout) والنسق: (Header) الرأس 1.25 سم، (Footer) تنبيل 2.5 سم ؛
- مواصفات الفقرة للبحث: بداية الفقرة First Line = 1.27 سم، قبل النص = 0.00، بعد النص = 0.00، تباعد قبل الفقرة = 6pt) تباعد بعد الفقرة = (Opt)، تباعد الفقرات (مفرد single) ؛
- مواصفات الفقرة للهوامش والمراجع: يوضع الرقم بين قوسين هلامي مثل: (1)، بداية الفقرة Hanging = 0.6 سم، قبل النص = 0.00، بعد النص = 0.00، تباعد قبل الفقرة = 0.00، تباعد بعد الفقرة = 0.00، تباعد الفقرات (مفرد single) ؛
- الجداول والأشكال: يتم وضع الجداول والأشكال إما في صفحات منفصلة أو وسط النص وفقًا لرؤية الباحث، على أن يكون عرض الجدول أو الشكل لا يزيد عن 13.5 سم بأي حال من الأحوال ؛
- يتم التحقق من صحة الإملاء على مسئولية الباحث لتفادي الأخطاء في المصطلحات الفنية ؛
- مدة التحكيم 15 يوم على الأكثر، مدة تعديل البحث بعد التحكيم 15 يوم على الأكثر ؛
- يخضع تسلسل نشر البحوث في أعداد المجلة حسب ما تراه هيئة التحرير من ضرورات علمية وفنية ؛
- المجلة غير ملزمة بإعادة البحوث إلى أصحابها سواء نشرت أم لم تنشر ؛
- تعبر البحوث عن آراء أصحابها وليس عن رأي رئيس التحرير وهيئة التحرير ؛
- رسوم التحكيم للمصريين 650 جنيه، ولغير المصريين 155 دولار ؛
- رسوم النشر لصفحة الواحدة للمصريين 25 جنيه، وغير المصريين 12 دولار ؛
- الباحث المصري يمدد الرسوم بالجنيه المصري (بالفيزا) بمقر المركز (المقيم بالقاهرة)، أو على حساب حكومي رقم: (9/450/80772/8) بنك مصر (المقيم خارج القاهرة) ؛
- الباحث غير المصري يسدد الرسوم بالدولار على حساب حكومي رقم: (EG71000100010000004082175917) (البنك العربي الأفريقي) ؛
- استلام إفادة قبول نشر البحث في خلال 15 يوم من تاريخ سداد رسوم النشر مع ضرورة رفع إيصالات السداد على موقع المجلة ؛
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يسر مركز بحوث الشرق الأوسط والدراسات المستقبلية صدور عدد مائة وأحد عشر- مايو 2025 من مجلة المركز "مجلة بحوث الشرق الأوسط". هذه المجلة العريقة التي مر على صدورها حوالي 50 عامًا في خدمة البحث العلمي، ويصدر هذا العدد وهو يحمل بين دافتيه عدة دراسات متخصصة: (دراسات قانونية، دراسات اللغة العربية، دراسات اجتماعية، دراسات اقتصادية، دراسات لغوية) ويعد البحث العلمي Scientific Research حجر الزاوية والركيزة الأساسية في الارتقاء بالمجتمعات لكي تكون في مصاف الدول المتقدمة؛ ولذا تعتبر الجامعات أن البحث العلمي من أهم أولوياتها لكي تقود مسيرة التطوير والتحديث عن طريق البحث العلمي في المجالات كافة.

كما تهدف مجلة بحوث الشرق الأوسط إلى نشر البحوث العلمية الرصينة والمبتكرة في مختلف مجالات الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية واللغات التي تخدم المعرفة الإنسانية، والمجلة تطبق معايير النشر العلمي المعتمدة من بنك المعرفة المصري وأكاديمية البحث العلمي، مما جعل الباحثين يتسابقون من كافة الجامعات المصرية ومن الجامعات العربية للنشر في المجلة.

وتحرص المجلة على انتقاء الأبحاث العلمية الجادة والرصينة والمبتكرة للنشر في المجلة كإضافة للمكتبة العلمية وتكون دائماً في مقدمة المجالات العلمية المماثلة.

ولذا نعد بالاستمرارية من أجل مزيد من الإبداع والتميز العلمي.

والله من وراء القصد

رئيس التحرير

د. حاتم العبد

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**Mind Presentation in Graphic Narrative: A Re-
contextualization of Narrative**

Theory in Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*

**سبر أفوار العقل في السرد الرسومي: إعادة صياغة السرد في رواية
"برسيبوليس" لمارجين ساترابي**

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المستخلص:

يعكس التشكيل الأكاديمي الناشئ لفن القصص المصورة تأثير التحالفات مع تخصصات أخرى مثل دراسات النوع الاجتماعي، وما بعد الاستعمار، والماركسية، والسير الذاتية، مما يؤكد على الطبيعة متعددة التخصصات لهذا الوسيط السردى. ومع اكتساب الروايات المصورة الاعتراف كأدوات تواصل قوية، يزداد اهتمام الباحثين بدراستها. وفقاً لذلك، أصبحت دراسة السرد المصور كسرد متعدد الوسائط محور اهتمام الباحثين في السرديات المعاصرة (ما بعد الكلاسيكية). تبحث هذه الورقة في الخصائص الخاصة بوسيط السرد المصور كتقنيات سردية معاد صياغتها لاستكشاف أبعاد المعنى في مذكرات مارجان ساتراي الذاتية - بيرسيبوليس: قصة طفولة (2003). تحاول الدراسة إثبات أن تعقيد الوسيط السردى المصور، الذي يجمع بين الأنماط اللفظية والبصرية في السرد، يمكن القارئ من استكشاف طبقات أعمق من المعنى التي قد لا تكون واضحة في السرد اللفظي التقليدي. تتيح هذه الطريقة استكشافاً أعمق لدقائق الرواية المصورة وفروقها الدقيقة الخفية. يُظهر التحليل القيمة الأدبية للروايات المصورة ويتحدى وجهات النظر التي تقلل من إمكاناتها وأهميتها في الأدب. تسترشد الدراسة بأعمال منظرين بارزين ساهموا في دراسة السرد المصور، مثل ويل آيزنر (1917-2005)، وسكوت ماكلود (1960)، وهيلاري تشوت (1976). توفر رؤاهم حول الخصائص الخاصة بوسيط الروايات المصورة أساساً قوياً لحجة هذه الورقة، مما يثبت أن الروايات المصورة تمتلك لغة بصرية-لفظية متميزة للتعبير عن الأفكار والسرد.



The emerging academic canon of graphic fiction reflects the influence of alliances with other disciplines like gender, post-colonial, Marxist and autobiographical studies to further prove the interdisciplinarity of this medium of narrative. As graphic novels gain recognition as powerful communication tools, researchers are increasingly drawn to studying them. Accordingly, the study of graphic narrative as a multimodal Narrative becomes the primal concern of scholars of contemporary (post-classical) narratology. This paper examines the medium-specific features of graphic narrative as re-contextualized narrative techniques to explore dimensions of meaning in Marjane Satrapi's autobiographical memoir – *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood* (2003). The study attempts to prove that the complexity of the graphic medium of narrative that combines the verbal and visual modes of narration enables the reader to explore more layers of meaning that wouldn't be clear in a traditional verbal narrative. This method allows for a deeper exploration of the graphic novel's intricacies and hidden nuances. The analysis demonstrates the literary value of graphic novels and challenges perspectives that undermine their potential and significance in literature. The study is guided by the works of prominent theorists who contributed to graphic narrative such as Will Eisner (1917–2005), Scott McCloud (1960), and Hillary Chute (1976). Their insights into the medium-specific features of graphic novels provide a strong foundation for this paper's argument, proving graphic novels to possess a distinct visual-verbal language for expressing ideas and narratives.

Keywords:

Graphic narrative – intermediality – medium-specific features – academic disciplines – contemporary narratology

In “Introduction: Graphic Narrative, Hillary Chute and Marianne De Koven state that “graphic narrative offers an intricately layered narrative language – the language of comics – that comprises the verbal, the visual, and the way these two representational modes interact on a page” (*Modern Fiction Studies* 767). The modern graphic novel is still young and evolving as an artistic genre. It is only in the last decades that U.S. scholars of graphic narrative began to feel confident enough to move on to larger theoretical issues. As a merge of both verbal and visual discourse, graphic narratives can be situated in a larger class of multimodal narratives, or stories that exploit more than one semiotic channel to evoke a narrative world. The study of graphic narrative, accordingly, becomes the ultimate concern of scholars of contemporary narratology and, in particular, transmedial narratology which is considered “a framework for studying narrative across media where scholars focus on how the constraints and affordances associated with particular media may affect the design and interpretation of narratives” (Gardner & Herman 5). In *Narrative Across Media: The Languages of Storytelling* (2004), Marie-Laure Ryan argues that graphic narrative has often been portrayed as lacking “the code, the grammar, and the syntactic rules necessary to articulate specific meanings” (10). In semiotic terms, however, it is the code, grammar, and syntax of the modern graphic narrative that tie it to its multimodal medium. They also navigate the conventions of its visual language and demonstrate its fundamental nature as a narrative text. The importance of studying graphic narrative is further stressed by Jan Baetens as she states, “[t]he graphic narrative case is...an excellent illustration of the cultural and



historical embeddedness of any storytelling practice” (“Stories and Storytelling in the Era of Graphic Narrative”³³).

Being of primal concern to narratological research makes graphic narrative a cross-disciplinary area of inquiry, suggesting challenges and possibilities of development. As a different medium of narrative complexity that combines both visual and verbal modes of narration, it requires a re-contextualization of narrative theory since it poses challenges to existing models of story. One of the main challenges encountered in graphic narrative is studying mind presentation of characters in a medium that has very limited types of speech categories, hence requiring a re-contextualization of narrative theory. It is worth noting that the study of graphic narrative is no longer limited to its formal definition and historical development. It started to reveal more academic depth by claiming alliances with well-known ideological vistas of research in prose narratives such as autobiography, gender, and postcolonial studies. One of the emerging academic canons of graphic narrative that reflects the influence of these alliances is Marjane Satrapi’s autobiographical graphic memoir – *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*. Hillary Chute further elaborates on these alliances with academic disciplines when she states, “[t]he field of graphic narrative brings certain key constellations to the table: hybridity and autobiography, theorizing trauma in connection to the visual, textuality that takes the body seriously. I claim graphic

narratives, as they exhibit these interests, “feminist”” (*Graphic Women: Life Narrative And Contemporary Comics* 15).

In fact, recent narrative theory began to show an increasing interest in the study of mind presentation and consciousness. A central issue to these studies is the mediating mind of characters which is considered essential for all narrative understanding. This study is, therefore, basically concerned with the protagonist’s mind presentation in this autobiographical memoir where the viewer is engaged with a less verbal, yet more visual mode of narration and, accordingly, becomes involved in a dynamic relation with images that show minds in action. The study also stresses the importance of distinctive medium-specific features in graphic narrative and examines how they imply a specific visual ontology and different ways of interpreting the story world revealing the mind-thoughts of the narrator and how she perceived the intercultural encounters in Iran. These features include, but are not limited to, style, emanata, frames and panels, braiding and iconic solidarity, filmic techniques, though balloons and reported thoughts. Moreover, the size of the panel frame or its elimination is examined as an indicator of time condensation or expansion in graphic narrative. This is in addition to its direct relation with the degree of focalization as well as the focalized entity and, in turn, giving access to characters’ minds in graphic narrative.

The paper also highlights the necessity of studying ‘aspectuality’, which is defined in graphic narrative as “the inclusive perception of focalization, where both the perceptual as well as the cognitive processing of focalizers are considered”



(Palmer 212). The study, therefore, explains why graphic narrative becomes the primal concern of contemporary narratology maintaining its depth, interdisciplinarity, and its narrative medium of complexity that embeds layers of meaning that might not be found in a traditional verbal narrative. The importance of the study partly lies in its being “a compelling case study for the transnational potential of comics” due to its unique and unconventional narrative form that is characterized by its “in-betweenness and precarious belonging, coupled with its reliance on visual rather than linguistic means of narration” (Grob 197). Moreover, the study of mind presentation in graphic narrative allows readers to suggest more ways of narrative analysis other than that of the verbal mode of narration. This helps readers to explore as well as evaluate how speech category approaches can work across narrative media. This is in addition to the fact that the viewer’s engagement with the medium of graphic narrative is a more dynamic one since its verbal and visual modes of narration better show characters’ minds in action. In this respect, this multi-dimensional study entails first providing a brief account of the graphic narrative, followed by a contextual background of Satrapi’s *Persepolis* and how it is in alliance with other academic disciplines.

The American cartoonist William Erwin Eisner (1917 – 2005) introduced the term “graphic novel” into the broader cultural language of the humanities and arts with the publication of the first modern graphic novel - *A Contract with God* (1978).

Eisner is known for his great contribution and innovation to the development of what he calls “sequential art” (Todd 8). He helped in concretizing the form by establishing standards for this form known later as the medium-specific features of graphic narrative. Being a relatively young and artistic genre, it is still continuously “assessed through direct comparison with Eisner’s work” (Todd 8). This Eisner award was, therefore, given to recognize achievements in the comics/graphic medium. In “Sequential Art, Graphic Novels and Comics”, Brian Kelley elaborates on Eisner’s concept of sequential art maintaining that it “tells a story through multiple panels, the placement of panels is as significant as the placement and use of words” (3). Monika Schmitz-Emans provides an account of Will Eisner’s contribution to graphic narrative and how it creates image sequences in order to tell stories. She states in this respect that Eisner considers art dedicating itself “to the creation or retelling of stories, and these stories resemble each other at all times and in all cultures” (386). In fact, graphic novels manage to violate the stereotypical image of being mere picture books of no literary values. According to Pam Watts, “[t]heir new status opens avenues for more educators to realize that these texts can be taught using nearly the same approaches as any other book, fiction or non” (“Why Graphic Narrative?” 38). In his *Comics & Sequential Art*, Will Eisner further confirms the importance of studying graphic narrative. He, therefore, argues that the graphic novel is a “montage of both word and image, and the reader is thus required to exercise both visual and verbal interpretive skills” (8).



Since the contextual background of writing this autobiographical memoir is of utmost importance to prove the alliance of graphic narrative with academic disciplines, providing a brief account of the sociopolitical conditions helps to prove this argument. The period of Islamic Revolution in Iran began in 1979 as the political situation gets worse, the Shah and his family find themselves trapped in exile. Later, the religious leader - Ayatollah Khomeini - returns from exile to take control of Iran and has been declared Supreme leader of the newly founded Islamic Republic of Iran, a theocratic republic based on Islam. Iran starts to witness new phenomena such as the renewal of school texts, the inexplicably intense piety of the neighbors, the advent of Hezbollah, the revolutionary committees and enforcing the wearing of the veil against their will. Fundamentalist believers began to organize painful events such as the takeover of the American embassy and rounding up and executing former revolutionaries. There was chaos because of the new Islamic Republic of Iran, and the Iranian were divided in factions. Then, Iraq invaded Iran and the Iranian Iraqi war began. Iranian fundamentalists also use the war effort to further eliminate domestic opposition to the new regime, and there is increase of power for Hezbollah, severely restricting travel in and out of Iran, and streamlining education to the new religious doctrine.

In the wake of events as the Arab Spring and the Green Movement in Iran, the genre of graphic narrative became much more pre-dominant as it employs literature and imagery to

present these historical events differently. *Persepolis: The Story of Childhood* is Marjane Satrapi's graphic memoir of growing up in Iran during the Islamic revolution. In this black-and-white graphic memoir, Satrapi tells her story in Tehran from ages six to fourteen witnessing the overthrow of the Shah's regime, the triumph of the Islamic revolution, and the devastating war effects with Iraq. According to Hillary Chute, *Persepolis*, as a graphic narrative, unconventionally portrays complex narratives of trauma highlighting issues of "unspeakability, invisibility, and inaudibility that have tended to characterize recent trauma theory – as well as a censorship-driven culture at large" ("The Texture of Retracing in Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*" 160). As the intelligent and outspoken only child of devout Marxists and the great granddaughter of one of Iran's last emperors, Marjane witnesses a childhood that is inextricably linked to her country's history. In other words, Iran's everyday life and the perplexing inconsistencies between private and public life are vividly depicted in Satrapi's *Persepolis*. In this respect, *Persepolis* serves as both a narrative about maturing and a reminder of the human cost of political repression and conflict. In *Graphic Women* (2010), Hillary Chute reflects on Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* as she states:

Marjane Satrapi's account of her youth in Tehran, *Persepolis*, along with work by a range of American authors, exemplifies how graphic narrative envisions an everyday reality of girls' and women's lives, picturing what is often placed outside of public discourse. Unsettling fixed subjectivity, these texts present life narratives with doubled narration that visually



and verbally represents the self, often in conflicting registers and different temporalities. (16)

In an interview with Marjane Satrapi's entitled "Why I wrote *Persepolis*", she maintained that she chose this genre of narrative to tell her unique story of the challenge of life she faced in post-revolutionary Iran. In rationalizing her choice of this genre of narrative, she adds:

People always ask me, "Why didn't you write a book?" But that's what *Persepolis* is. To me, a book is pages within a cover that are related to the same thing. Graphic novels are not traditional literature, but that doesn't mean they are second-rate. Images are a way of writing. When you have the talent to be able to write and draw, it seems a shame to choose only one. I think it's better to do both. (11)

In an interview with Robert Root, Satrapi asserted the importance of graphic narrative as a type of literature she perceives as "the only media in the whole world that you can use the image plus the writing and plus the imagination and plus be active while reading it" (159). As stated above, studying this pictorial narrative entails familiarity with its medium specific features, that function as narrative techniques in any traditional narrative, and how they could be used as tools of analysis to explore other dimensions of meaning that might not be clear in

narratives written in the verbal mode of narration. The importance of examining this graphic novel lies in its “apparent visual simplicity coupled with emotional and political complexity” (*Graphic Women* 127).

Though the black and white style of cartooning is criticized as naïve representing the ‘minimal’ style of drawing, Satrapi’s black and white style of drawing is very mature, emblematic and highly expressive. In fact, Marjane intends to draw *Persepolis I* in black and white to put the reader in the same picture, same situation, and sense of alienation, oppression, depression, and frustration that dominate her childhood and the Iranian society as a whole. Therefore, this means that she illustrates it in black and white to call attention to the depth of the trauma, as Dallacqua argues that Black and White is "a language to communicate tension and tragedy" (16). In other words, the novel depicts Satrapi's life in black and white and ups and down, and black is the dominant color of the novel to express the dark sense of oppression doubly experienced in the novel by a woman who is a colonized being as well. This makes the graphic narrative in alliance with postcolonial and feminist disciplines. McCloud maintains that through "black and white, the ideas behind the art are communicated more directly. Meaning transcends form. Art approaches language" (192). Ann Cvetkovich argues that “the use of black and white in *Persepolis* demonstrates "testimony's power to provide forms of truth that are emotional rather than factual" (114). Satrapi justifies her use of black and white as she argues, “I write a lot about the Middle East, so I write about violence. Violence today has become so



normal, so banal – that is to say everybody thinks it’s normal. But it’s not normal. To draw it and put it in color – the color of flesh and the red of blood, and so forth – reduced it by making it realistic” (qtd. in Chute “The Texture of Retracing” 99).

There are panels that are extremely black symbolizing grief, death and hopelessness. They represent traumatized history, unforgettable pain and the coercive unknown Islamic fundamentalist regime as in the panel below – Figure 1.1 - where the dominant color is black standing for the unknown and coercive Islamic fundamentalist regime. Though the white color of the protester’s shirt stands for hope, knowledge, and resistance, the dominant color is still black standing for the unknown and probably hopeless future awaiting them back then.



Figure 1.1 (*Persepolis* 5)

Later on, the black color dominance becomes more intense in the catastrophic cinema fire where film viewers were locked from the outside before the fire and people were prevented from rescuing them by the Islamists who were in black and look in control and entire authority due to the bottom-up camera angle shot used in drawing the panel to increase the sense of fear and threat as shown below:



Figure 1.2 (*Persepolis* 14)

This was followed by a panel reflecting Marj's mind in action as perceiving the massacre of the dead bodies as an indefinite number of sacred-faced ghosts opening their mouths as if calling for rescue in a large dark panel reflecting the intense grief on the death of innocent souls as seen in figure 1.3 below:



Figure 1.3 (*Persepolis* 45)

As illustrated above, the reader is given full access to a six-year old focalizer whose perception of the massacre is seen in using the white colors in imagining the dead bodies as innocent souls, and seeing their only exist to the world of the afterlife. It is ironic that they are drawn heading hopelessly towards the exit door as they are locked from the outside. Meanwhile, the exit door invites the reader to believe that death becomes a refuge to those innocent souls.

As the autobiographical memoir is meant to be voiced by Marji when she was six years old, the use of black and white style of drawing would be the most suitable visual mode of narration as the narrative is perceived from the point of view of an innocent child who doesn't know except these colors that represent for her the good vs. the bad or the right vs. the wrong.

In other words, all the political turmoil was beyond her grasp as a young child, always leaving her in an overwhelming state of confusion and perplexity. This is illustrated many times in the novel, showing Marji incapable of grasping the current situation, and using the black color to stand either for the bad, the inexplicable or the unknown as seen in figure 1.4 below:



Figure1.4 (*Persepolis* 32)

It is worth noting also that the black and white drawing style gives access to Marj's mind of a split identity of a child who doesn't know to which culture she should belong. She was raised in a Marxist secular family, and she is forced by the new Islamic fundamentalist regime to wear the veil and forget about all her family's beliefs. The graphic genre proves its alliance with feminist and postcolonial academic disciplines when Margi's mind was shown in action many times reflecting her split identity and her wish to get rid of the black color that represents the unknown oppressive Islamic fundamentalist regime acting as a colonizer in many parts of the novel. The



following panel (Figure 1.5) best represents Marj's dilemma of the split identity and double consciousness from her own point of view as a child reflecting feminist and postcolonial dimensions of oppressing her as a girl and as Iranian:



Figure 1.5 (*Persepolis* 6)

The combination of the visual and verbal modes of narration in the above panel gives the reader complete access to Marj's mind who feels torn apart between her origin as a daughter of devout Marxists who are very modern and avant-garde as she thinks and her obligation to wear the veil by an unknown coercive regime. The panel also reflects her familiarity with her origin as illustrated in her knowledge of science as opposed to her very little knowledge of Islam as only confined to

the veil. It is also worth noting that the use of black and white in drawing is “an artistic choice quite typical of the avant-garde” to whom Marji belongs as she states in the above panel (Ben Lazreg & Reynolds-Chikuma 760). The association of the black with the oppressive fundamentalist regime that results in Marji’s split identity is best delivered from a child’s point of view in the panel below (Figure 1.6), where she is portrayed as half-black and half-white, as she states that she needs a bath. From the point of view of a child, the bath will remove the dark/black color and clean her up and, in turn, help her out get rid of the split identity and the dark coercive regime:



Figure 1.6 (*Persepolis* 25)

In this respect, Marji’s and the Iranian people’s suffering, grief, inexplicable political upheavals, dictatorship, oppression and split identity are best re-contextualized by the black and white drawing style used by the author/illustrator. In some parts of the narrative, Satrapi uses entirely black and blank panels to express extreme grief, traumatized memories and unbearable pain which no words could ever express. This is best illustrated in showcasing the intense grief experienced by Marji when she



knew about the death of her friend due to the bombing of her house during the Iran-Iraq war. The psychological wound and the trauma were indescribable, and Satrapi used the below blank and black panel to best express them:



Figure 1.7 (*Persepolis* 142)

Another important medium-specific feature of graphic narrative is the concept of braiding that creates iconic solidarity, showcasing alliance with feminist, Marxist and postcolonial ideologies in the examined graphic narrative and revealing the mind and the unconscious thoughts of the character. In other words, braiding as a medium specific feature of graphic narrative works as an “interactive device” in this unconventional form of narrative (Horstkotte & Pedri 350). The part-whole interaction in

graphic narrative is a medium-specific feature known as ‘braiding’. Only in a series does a single panel gain meaning; yet it is always a part of several sequences of various durations, resulting in diverse degrees of braiding. The sequential order in verbal narrative is re-contextualized in graphic narrative as iconic solidarity of co-present images. Accordingly, braiding functions as coherence markers in a traditional narrative reflecting the relationship between panels and how they complement each other resulting in an iconic solidarity of meaning showcasing feminist, Marxist, and postcolonial dimensions. The braiding of the very first two panels in the novel best exemplifies the unrealized oppression of the ten-year-old Marji and her colleagues undergo, proving it to be a typical feminist approach of suffering and oppression by imposing the veil upon young girls at the school:

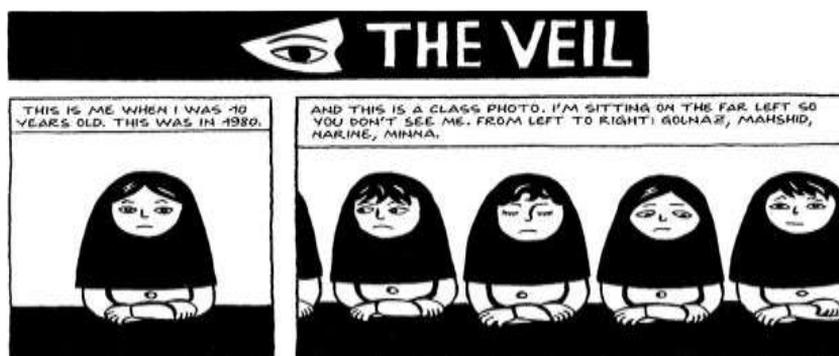


Figure 1.8 (*Persepolis 3*)

The first panel reflects Marji’s oppression of being forced to wear the veil, and her helplessness towards the coercive fundamentalist regime. This panel is followed by a larger one expanding Marji’s individual experience into a communal one as it reflects her colleagues who are replicas of her, undergoing the



same oppression with sad, hopeless, or fearful looks. It is noticeable that though the girls are identical in outer appearance, their looks are different, yet, put together, they convey the psychological response to the oppressive Islamic fundamentalist regime back then. The second panel also reveals part of Marji's body (her left hand only), indicating the similarity of experience, the split identity, and suggesting Marji's deep Leftist/Marxist values as she sits "on the far left" as she states. The reader is invited to believe that the greatest impact of the Islamic fundamentalist regime lies in its being in sharp contrast to the Leftist/Marxist one.

Braiding of panels entails a study of a very significant medium specific feature of pivotal importance in the graphic novel known as 'the frame'. Frames can be used to show the complexity that multimodality introduces to the building of such a narrative world in graphic narrative. According to Horstkotte and Pedri, the frames' "size, shape, color, and position in – or outside panels are just some of the elements that contribute toward the unique ways in which a graphic narrative draws its readers into the storyworld" (32). Straight-edged frames are, generally, used in Satrapi's *Persepolis* to indicate realism – a medium specific feature that signifies the credibility of Marji's and the Iranian people's traumatic experience. They are also used to validate Marj's mind in action, her thoughts and beliefs, proving their alliance with other academic disciplines, proving the interdisciplinarity of this medium of narrative. An example of

this is well-illustrated in her perception of God as very similar to Karl Marx with the exception that the latter has curlier hair as seen in panel below:



Figure 1.9 (*Persepolis* 13)

The straight-edged frame above invites the reader to have a direct access to Marj’s mind as a daughter of devoted Marxist family – a reality that is frequently disturbed by the coercive fundamentalist Islamic regime. According to Silke Horstkotte, “discordant or missing frames (i.e. the incongruent appearance of unframed panels in a dominantly framed context) are used to self-consciously mark flashbacks, dreams, hallucinations, or other forms of subjective representation from the perspective of one of the characters” (“Zooming In and Out: Panels, Frames, Sequences” 39). This is illustrated in the following frameless panel where a photographer is taking pictures of different forms of oppression. This is a flashback reflecting Marj’s subjective point of view, indicating the unknown number of oppressed people as seen in the figure below:



Figure 1.10 (*Persepolis* 29)

In her article “Vision and Precarity in Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*”, Golnar Nabizadeh describes what she called a "frame of recognition". She argues, “comics offer what I call here a "frame of recognition" for the subjects they portray. By "frame of recognition," I mean first the physical frame - usually in the form of a line - that encloses images and words in comics, and second, the way that these frames are figuratively deployed to redress overdetermined narratives of marginalized subjectivities, including women's lives" (153). In some parts of the narrative, Satrapi removes the frames, putting the images in one panel with no frame. This is illustrated in the figure below to signify the indefinite number of tortured people, the inhumane acts practiced against them and how they are socially dead:



Figure 1.11 (*Persepolis* 51)

As stated above, it is important to take ‘aspectuality’ into consideration while analyzing graphic narrative. In other words, the inclusive conception of focalization, where both the perceptual as well as the cognitive processing of focalizers are considered is of pivotal importance. In graphic narrative, metaphor and symbolism are re-contextualized to indicate aspectuality and, in turn, reveal characters’ thoughts and minds in action. A particular noteworthy instance of this technique occurs in a panel sequence in which the Satrapi family engages in a political discussion about the situation in Iran after the Shah’s leaving the country. This is manifested in a highly figurative language embedded in the snake frame in Satrapi’s *Persepolis* as seen in the figure below:

Figure 1.12 (*Persepolis* 43)

It is evident that the above visual frame contrasts completely with the mother's assertion that the Shah (the devil in the speech balloon) has left. In fact, it is ironic indicating that the devil is still there & envelops the family's entire existence. The snake frame may also be read as expressing the political situation in Iran reflecting the perspective of the more mature narrating-I rather than the young experiencing-I. The snake could also be expressive of Marjane's struggles to understand the complexity of the situation and her questioning of her parents' interpretation. That Marjane – the experiencing I – takes up an aspectual point of view in the parental discussion she overhears is suggested by her tense facial expressions seen in her frowning angry look as she furrows her brows, puts her arms on her waist while her parents seem relaxed and serene. This indicates her inability to grasp the danger surrounding them. Despite the uncertain attribution of the snake symbol, its aspectuality is indicative of a focalization that is irreducible to optical perspectivation because

it necessarily includes cognitive elements. It is also noteworthy that Satrapi used a type of frames known as the blacked-out frame. The figure 1.7 above is an example of a blacked-out frame representing a moment of first-hand witnessing to the effects of the war and the death of Marji's friend from an Iraqi bombing. This blacked-out frame was used once by Satrapi in her *Persepolis*. According to Hillary Chute, Satrapi "chooses to not visually elaborate what Marji sees". In her opinion, "[t]his formal disruption is an example of comics' purchase on pointing up the common-place of trauma's unrepresentability" (*Graphic Women* 146). In this respect, frames, as a medium specific feature of graphic narrative, prove to be of significant alliance with different academic disciplines, reflecting the mind in action as well.

Time condensation and expansion - acceleration and deceleration respectively in verbal narrative - can be shown in graphic storytelling through images without resorting to words. Time expansion – also known as deceleration or stretch in narratological terms – is re-contextualized in the graphic narrative in more than one form. It could be seen in the enlargement the size of the panel, the elimination of the panel frame, or providing massive details. An example of a panel providing massive details indicating deceleration in verbal narrative is seen in the panel reflecting the destruction of the house of Marj's friend as seen in the figure below:



Figure 1.13 (*Persepolis* 142)

The image of the destroyed building of Marji's neighbor is drawn with massive details – not on the characters, but on the building. The readers take time examining the details of the image. In this respect, the image slows down time and intensifies the feeling of sadness, bitterness and grief. In her attempt to re-contextualize speeding up the narrative – acceleration in narratological terms – Satrapi juxtaposes images in order to illustrate the unforgettable portrait of daily life in Iran that contrasts with the power of hope in such desperate times. She speeds up the narrative to do so, demanding full attention from the reader to grasp the sharp contrast drawn between the sense of grief resulting from the panel that reflects the numerous martyrs, followed by an inexplicable sense of joy experienced by Marji and her colleagues in the party that invites the reader to see it as a

form of resistance or a defense mechanism of denial of the current political turmoil as seen in the figure below:



Figure 1.14 (*Persepolis* 102)

According to McCloud, this kind of panels shows “transitions featuring . . . Action to Action progressions” (70). The reader is expected to move his/her eyes so quickly from one panel to the following one, observing this sharp contrast. The acceleration in the above panel, accordingly, proves its alliance with psychoanalytical post-colonialism, revealing Marj’s mind in action as well. It is also worth noting that the size of the panels is in accordance with the duration of the situation. In other words, the large panels are meant to illustrate a long duration of time. This is clearly manifested when Satrapi showcases the “2500 years of tyranny and submission” (*Persepolis* 11) that Iran witnessed in a large and wide panel that takes a whole page reflecting the history of Iran as shown in the figure below:

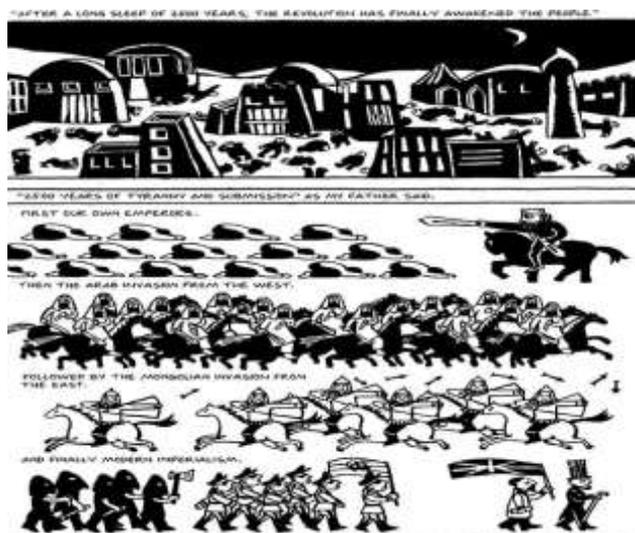


Figure 1.15 (*Persepolis* 11)

In this respect, the long span of time that takes pages in a traditional narrative is re-contextualized in graphic narrative as a large and wide panel including minute details of drawings to indicate this long period of time.

In relating the panel size to the perspectival angle, more access is given to the focalizer's mind and thoughts – Marji. This relates the graphic narrative to film studies with a special reference to the camera angle shot. In “Zooming In and Out: Panels. Frames, Sequence”, Horstkotte argues that “the choice of panel size and perspectival angle may be described productively by using the terminology of film studies...[such as] close-ups, panoramic shots, and birds' eye views” (32). In this respect, a perspectival angle of a panel opens up different

interpretative possibilities. The close-up camera angle shot reflected in the below panel closely reveals the great shock underwent by Marji whose mouth is wide open saying “WHAT?”:



Figure 1.16 (*Persepolis* 67)

The verbal mode of narration along with the close-up perspectival angle add to the intense shock experienced by Marji, inviting the reader to have more access to her fear and anticipation of the death of Uncle Anoosh like the others who disappeared and were reported to be on long trips. This perspectival angle ensures the reader of Marji’s ability to relate to Uncle Anoosh’s fate. This best illustrates the necessity of studying the concept of aspectuality as stated above. Marji’s point of view as a young child gives the reader access to her mind when she expresses her admiration of her father’s superb knowledge. The perspectival high (bottom-up) angle is in line with how she thinks highly of her father’s political knowledge as illustrated in the figure below:



Figure 1.17 (*Persepolis* 43)

The confident look on the father's face adds to Marj's high belief in his political knowledge and makes him a credible source of knowledge for her.

The thought balloons, emanata and reported thought are very significant medium specific features of the graphic narrative that give access to the focalizer's mind and how she perceives things from her own point of view. The thought balloons in graphic narrative are the re-contextualization of the stream of consciousness technique or the omniscient narrator in a traditional verbal discourse. The state of mind confusion that Marji underwent as a child who is incapable of grasping many

overwhelming political thoughts is reflected in a thought balloon below showcasing her perplexity and confusion:

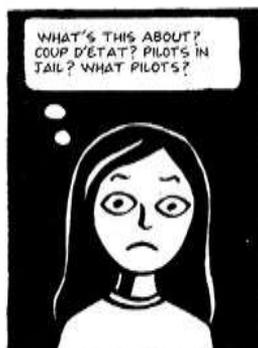


Figure 1.18 (*Persepolis* 82)

It is evident that her facial expressions add to the state of confusion and incomprehensibility she is undergoing. In this sense, integrating inner speech and thought within the graphic image indicates the emphasis or other qualities of the thoughts with the minimum number of words. Emanata is another medium-specific feature of the graphic novel that represents what is going on in the character's mind. These are either texts or icons such as a question mark to indicate confusion, *Zzz* to indicate sleeping, a light bulb to suggest an idea or dots to signify the inability to express the thoughts. To best express the deep grief the Iranians are experiencing, the reply of the mother to Marji came as a few dots implying inability to explain the trauma of being insulted by the Islamic fundamentalists that people like her should be pushed to the wall and fucked and then thrown in the garbage. As the trauma belongs to the indescribable, it can't be expressed in words and were replaced by dots as shown in the panel below:



Figure 1.19 (*Persepolis* 74)

This is equivalent to the meaningful ellipsis in traditional verbal narrative, indicating an alliance with the postcolonial academic discipline.

Concerning reported thought in the graphic narrative, it usually belongs to the margins of the image, functioning as a narrator in a traditional verbal discourse. In fact, reported thought contributes to the narrator's concern with the state of another person's mind. Readers, accordingly, get direct access to the focalizer's mind who, in turn, claims access to other characters' minds acting like an omniscient narrator as seen in the figure below:

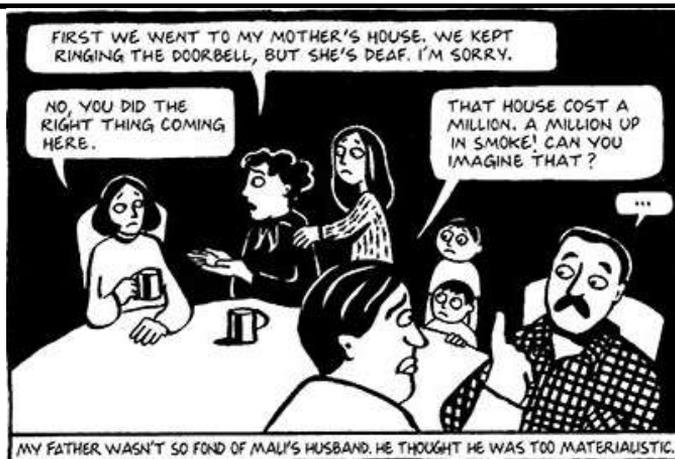


Figure 1.20 (*Persepolis* 90)

Though Marj's father didn't reply to the question, and Satrapi marked his reply as three dots – an icon of emanata – as explained above, Marji claims access to her father's mind rationalizing his silence. This reported speech reflects Marji as an omniscient narrator who has direct access to people's minds.

To conclude, the study proves that the intermediality of graphic narrative, as a form of narrative that uniquely combines the visual and the verbal modes of narration, generates more possible meanings than the traditional verbal discourse and is also in alliance with different academic disciplines like the feminist, the postcolonial and the Marxist as illustrated above. The interplay of images and text simplifies complex ideas, making them more accessible and allowing for greater flexibility in interpreting meaning. In this respect, graphic novels emerge as a powerful tool for communication, and can be established as a significant literary medium, capable of constructing profound meaning. The study also highlights the importance of examining



the act of showing as a form of thinking and graphic caricature (pose, gesture, angle) as a form of perception – known as aspectuality – to enhance the study of mind presentation in graphic narrative. Additionally, insights into focalization strategies in graphic narratives can be informed by research on narration in film and theatre. In this sense, the multi-layered communication in graphic narratives continually challenges readers' interpretive decisions, necessitating a sophisticated hermeneutics that remains an evolving focus within comics studies.

Examining how the medium-specific features of graphic narrative including the drawing style, braiding, iconic solidarity, speech thoughts, emanata, reported thought, panels and frames along with the perspectival angles function like re-contextualized narrative techniques that help explore social, political and psychological dimensions, giving an access to the narrator's mind in different phases of her growing from age six to fourteen, and, in turn, to a more mature comprehension of the political turmoil in Iran back then. The visual mode of narration further sharpens the contrast between the secular Marxist family where Marji was raised and the oppressive Islamic fundamentalist regime that acts tyrannically and coercively to those who don't abide by their rules. Writing more research papers on graphic narrative, especially graphic novels from and about the Middle East, these medium-specific features can be better understood, appreciated on a larger scale and proved to be in close alliance

with academic disciplines. This growing body of work has the potential to elevate their status, leading to greater recognition, acceptance, and respect within literary circles.



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