Theoretical elaboration

Persepolis: a synoptic elaboration of the story's adaptation as graphic novel and animated film

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Abstract

This thesis deals with the process of adapting *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi (2003) as a graphic novel into a two-dimensional animation film. Additionally, this thesis concentrates on substantive changes that Satrapi, as writer and co-director of *Persepolis*, had to make to realize the modification of the story. Furthermore, this elaboration examines the role of visual effects and sound design in the animation film and its influence on the audience's perception.

Motivation

Whenever I watch *Persepolis*, I'm overwhelmed with a very strange mixture of feelings. On the one hand, it saddens me very deeply. The reason for this saddening feeling is that I see many parallels between the protagonist and myself. Experiencing shaping political influences and Islamic propaganda as a child, leaving Iran alone as a minor as my parents had raised me in a way that sooner or later I would be punished by the Islamic republic for my attitudes, struggling for adaptation in a Western society, experiencing severe depression because of the self-imposed exile and the sad moments of saying goodbye are just some of the many aspects I had to face just like the protagonist of Persepolis. In the course of my life in Germany, I have been asked over and over why I left my country. After all, Iran has not been directly involved in any war for a while, and it is not really as poor as the other countries in the region. And it is a ''republic'', at least by name, they say. Every time I'm asked, I wish I could watch Persepolis with them again and again.

On the other hand, *Persepolis* makes me feel also happy. It gives me the feeling that I'm not just an exception. There is a book and even an award-winning animation film about people like me. It reminds me every single time that I'm one of now over eight million Iranians who have to live in a diaspora. These eight million people have probably had the same very good reason for leaving the country: a ruthless theocratic fundamentalist regime. Persepolis reminds me that I'm not alone, even if I might feel so, far away from my family. I want to comprehend more of Satrapi's touching story, at a time when, once again, Iranians have raised their voices against the Islamic republic and shout ''Woman – Life – Freedom!''. This happiness that this movement evokes is my motivation to write this synopsis.

1. Introduction

A comic strip that is adapted for the big screen takes on a new meaning that is intended for viewers rather than readers. A comparative analysis of a section of Marjane Satrapi's comic strip *Persepolis*, which was turned into a movie in 2007 by the writer and filmmaker Vincent Paronnaud, attempts to demonstrate how the technical process of filming and the change of medium alter the comic strip's creative potential. Though their communicative structures are distinct, comic strips and films both serve as potent imagination-stirring mediums. The way the piece changes is supposed to be revealed, demonstrating the extent to which the two mediums ask us to interpret language and signals in order to give form to two pieces that combine two distinct stylistic philosophies. It is interesting to note that Marjane Satrapi co-wrote and co-directed the movie *Persepolis*, which gives us opportunities to observe how the author intended to translate the illustrations into animation. Satrapi retells her own creation, and she does so in a manner that pays tribute to the graphic novel while also obviously employing the opportunities presented by a new medium. Marjane is not a conventional heroine. She is outspoken, trustworthy, sympathetic, and candid about the uncertainty she faced as a child. With amazing success, the movie brings her to the big screen while retaining a big portion of her personality, wit, and nuance. *Persepolis* is notable for its ability to use this strong character to tell a political story. It tells the tale of a political and social revolution in Iran. At the same time, comics succeed because of the vast range of possibilities that arise when perception is opened to the imagination. Since Satrapi relies primarily on sharp contrast and lively drawings of schematics and constructions, she doesn't employ shadow or dimension very much. Therefore, the goal of expanding these images across roughly three hundred pages is to free reality from its confines and push it into the imaginary worlds of the mind. The reader must be encouraged to continue reading by the visuality's constant surprise and renewal of discovery. This is not to claim that Satrapi's writing lacks immersion or that her story doesn't have a decisive internal logic; rather, it is to state that her illustrations are inspired by the text's tendency to balance the past and present, the particular and the general, and distance (Gauquiè, 2009).

The graphic novel has a specified visualization, but a director adapting a text must set their own visions in a distinct, albeit secondary, architecture. This makes the transfer from graphic novel to film more seamless. This is a transition that requires very little giving up. However, I believe that there is a certain magic that is created between the pages of a graphic novel when two frames are juxtaposed in a way that mimics the way a scene is assembled in the mind, with pauses for memory, reference, and unintentional classification. The logic of film narrative must maintain a certain feeling of progression, much like that of biography, with the idea that something new will always come up (Nabizzadeh, 2018).

1.1 Summary

People grow up in different ways, affected by many different things as they grow and mature. During this process of adolescence, people change their perspectives and ideals. Marjane Satrapi presents the topic of coming of age in her graphic novel *The Complete Persepolis*, which takes place in Iran during the revolution in the late 1970s and beyond. In Satrapi's memoir, a Middle Eastern girl who grows old finds that her surrounding changes her as the country that she was born in goes through an insecure violent period. With the rise of numerous transformations, Marji's family must learn how to adjust to the changing times.

The film begins at Orly airport in Paris where Marjane is unable to catch a flight to Iran. A flashback demonstrates how she, while smoking a cigarette, recalls her childhood days in 1979 in Teheran when she was a nine-year-old girl full of fantasies and ambitions. The present-day scenes are done in colour while the historic narratives are visualized in black and white. As the demonstrations against the US-ally monarchy in Iran go on Marji ponders if her family has a valid explanation to support her uncle Anoosh who is a communist. Anoosh is a character whom Marji looks up to and admires. In the animation, the story starts before the Islamic revolution, when Marji, the protagonist is 6 years old. She has a certain awareness of her identity, even though very childish. "At the age of six, I was already sure I was the last prophet." (Satrapi, 2003. p.6). She has an exact vision of her aim, which is to not discriminate against people on the basis of class: "I wanted to be a prophet because our maid did not eat with us" (Satrapi, 2003. p.6). She sees god as her friend, guiding her and helping her cope with her ideas. Marjane Satrapi demonstrates the details and complexities of the conflict the protagonist has to go through during her journey of adolescence. Her childhood is full of occasions where her family members act against the ruling kingdom of Mohammadreza Shah. The film is very precise in demonstrating that the fundamental inconsistencies of society result in many well-positioned intellectuals being pushed into revolting against the prevailing system. Such conditions make these people realize the contradictions in Iranian society and this realisation makes them look for building a new set of circumstances within their surroundings (Religion in

Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* Bartleby.com). The hopes of Marji's family fall apart when the elections are won by Islamic Fundamentalists who eventually alter their homeland into a restrictive state and force women to obey their dress code. Anoosh, Marji's uncle, is arrested and executed for his communist beliefs and being highly baffled she gives up on her ambitions and attempts to adapt to the newly imposed realities of the fanatical Islamic regime. There are certain occasions of maltreatment that leave Marji's family hopeless, such as the refusal of the hospital authorities to allow a terminally ill patient to be sent abroad for treatment, which later causes his death (Satrapi, 2003.p. 125). While the war is going on, the Iraqis bomb the neighbourhood Marji lives in. The bomb does not hit her house; however, it hits her neighbour's home. Marji asks her mother whether the neighbours were home or not, but her questions are deliberately ignored. As Marji and her mother walk out, she catches sight of her neighbour's favourite bracelet and says: "No scream in the world could have relieved my suffering and anger." (Satrapi, 2003.p. 142). The realization that her friend has been killed must be terrifying for a young girl. Under these circumstances, the family, like many other Iranians, opt to live their life by actions like giving secret parties to get some pleasure out of life or drinking alcohol which the government has prohibited (Satrapi, 2003.p. 106).

As Marji grows older, she refuses to accept the imposed restrictions and starts indulging in Western habits such as illegally buying heavy metal music and Western outfits in the black market, which also have been banned by the authorities. As an adult Marji does not care about the headscarf and believes that women should cover their hair only if they want to. After she once again openly criticizes the government's executions in front of her religion teacher, her parents decide to send her to study in a French school in Vienna. In Austria, Marji feels extremely isolated and surrounded by superficial people who annoy her a great deal because they make her feel shameful about being an Iranian. In Vienna her habits deteriorate and she starts smoking cannabis. Her so-called Iranian shame continues in a heated relationship with a smart local, Markus, which ends when she finds him to be cheating on her. She begins to suffer from deep depression and after a period of homelessness eventually develops severe bronchitis (Satrapi, 2003.p. 244).

Finally, Marji is allowed by her parents to return to Iran and aims at beginning a new life as the war with Iraq is now over and things appear to be brighter in her homeland. But this is not the case as she finds that the people in her country are now more traumatized than ever due to the inhumanities of the Islamic regime, such as mass executions for unwanted political points of view and trivial religious absurdities that made life unbearable especially for women. To get along with such conditions, Marjane uses bizarre tactics such as falsely implicating a man by teasing her, so that she does not get arrested by morality police for wearing make-up.

Further, she marries her boyfriend, Reza, against the will of her family. In the end her marriage fails and her emotional situation in Iran becomes even worse after a party she attends is invaded by the so-called morality police and a friend of hers, Nima, dies while trying to run away (Satrapi, 2003.p. 311). Marjane speaks out against public morality and double standards at the university forum which makes her family decide that she better leave the country again to prevent getting arrested as a political rebel. Marjane decides to do so but she pays a high price as her grandmother dies soon after she leaves. With the last flashback of the movie coming back to the present day, Marjane is not able to return to Iran anymore and she puts up with her destiny in being comfortable despite the self-imposed exile.

1.2 Creative strategy

Satrapi uses her experience in her graphic novels to show what her experience in Iran as a child has been. She does not claim at any point to be telling the entire story of the Islamic revolution. She is simply introducing a new perspective that up to that point had not been seen in Western countries. The concept of “making the hidden visible” allows the reader to understand the Islamic revolution in a way that has not been seen before (Chute, 2008).

The strategic use of graphic novels demonstrates her experience first-hand. The graphic novels take away any belief that you may have had about the Islamic revolution as the reader has the images right in front of them and there is no way for it to be misinterpreted.

Satrapi's graphic memoir concentrates mainly on the loss of innocence of Marji, which she illustrates by using several techniques such as changing the sizes of the figures and the contrast of shades as well as the use of details she includes in her drawings or the lack of them, respectively. Satrapi's drawings are more than bare illustrations; they are drawn by this technique for a reason (Brandt, 2008). Throughout the graphic novels the size of figures changes in order to underline the importance or maturity of the characters. In the early chapters of the memoir, Marji is illustrated as a small girl, noticeably much smaller than her parents and all the other adults around her. Even if Marji is an odd child talking about Fidel Castro, very aware of the situation surrounding her and a lot smarter or more conscious than other children of her age, she is still childish. At the beginning of the graphic novel, Marji is more often shown in white, but as the story goes on, she begins to lose the white clothes, just as she loses her innocence. But her innocence is not only represented by the figure size or the colour of clothing. The way she illustrates violence at the beginning of the book is completely different from what she imagines as the story goes on. Since her parents are revolutionaries, she hears stories and she listens to the news, therefore she knows a lot about the situation around her. Afterall, her naïve perception and her lack of experience falsify and in a way censor the truth. The first panel on page 40 depicts the massacre of Black Friday. Marji, being a child, simply cannot imagine what a massacre looks like. She illustrates the dead bodies in surprisingly neat rows, with no signs of blood or injuries. There is another example in the first panel of page 52. Her parents have a discussion about the death and amputation of a friend of theirs. Marji, who has been paying attention to the whole conversation, pictures his death. The man is illustrated as neatly as the people depicted in the Black Friday Massacre. The limbs are separated from the body, which is empty, with no blood or organs visible.

Marjane Satrapi offers a clear perspective of a young lady coming of age after the revolution in Iran. Her message concentrates on the circumstances that dominate the revolution though they are visualized from an unusual perspective. Satrapi exposes the dreadful cruelty that political prisoners experienced during the process of the Islamic revolution. It is obvious that Marjane Satrapi strives strongly to focus on the subject, but her choice of words and graphical images are structured from a childish perspective. When revealing the savage torture occurrences, she tries to insert infant

emotions and thoughts. For example, a prisoner of revolution is tortured with a hot iron; such memories resonate with the protagonist's recollections of her mother using the iron (Satrapi, 2003.p. 51). The outcomes of such actions magnify the cruelty of the torturing techniques used by the regime (Satrapi, 2003. p.51). Consequently, the child's perspective on the issues tends to be quite appealing to the reader's emotions. Satrapi choses animation and in particular the tracing technique over a live-action movie (Chute, 2008).

Tracing is a handmade two-dimensional technique. In this procedure, once the illustrators have drawn the handmade depictions and the assistants have finalized them, the tracing crew brings the drawings to life, by adding depth and working with the precise thinness of the lines (Chute, 2008). This technique used by Satrapi and Paronnaud is crucial to uphold the authenticity of the emotion within the narrative. As Satrapi says,'' with live action, it would have turned into a story of people living in a distant land who don't look like us. At best, it would have been an exotic story, and at worst, a 'Third-World' story. The novels have been a worldwide success because the drawings are abstract, black-and-white. I think this helped everybody to relate to it, whether in China, Israel, Chile, or Korea, it's a universal story. Persepolis has dreamlike moments, the drawings help us to maintain consistency, and the black-and-white (I'm always afraid color may turn out to be vulgar) also helped in this respect, as did the abstraction of the setting and location ''(Hetherington, 2007).

This issue of history and the illustration of the past are made more dramatic by the use of the traditional tracing technique. Satrapi mentions that in *Persepolis* all imperfect handmade illustrations come to life by classical techniques (Accomando, 2008). The significance of employing this technique in her film in particular causes a more emotional reaction to the characters. Satrapi says, all the drawings done by pencil are then traced. Tracing is a very important step because the characters' expressions are crucial. If we have a close-up of the eyes, for example, the lines have to be perfectly neat, especially for a dramatic scene; otherwise, the emotion is lost (Tully, 2013). This emotional impact of the tracing technique makes us sympathize with the characters as they put up with the Islamic Revolution and the following Iraq war.

The animation's simplistic appearance has been the best way of telling a story that has plenty of significant occurrences and issues. Words are used very briefly and the illustrations and colour are kept simple to narrate a compact story in a short time. The simplicity and the directness turn out to be advantages of the animation. Satrapi has commented that the film was made with conventional hand-drawn individual animated picture drawings instead of graphics on the computer because computer-generated graphics look faultless. This provides the understanding that humans are not perfect either which is reflected by the hand-drawn lines in the animations in the true spirit of reflecting their souls.

The employment of animation implies the acceptance of the impossibility of perfect representation of such traumatic events. In other words, it becomes a meaningful tool for dealing with problematic subjects in Satrapi's life. The contents that Satrapi aims to explore are often 'grey' and not black-and-white. This allows spare room for the viewer to self-interpret the complex emotion that Satrapi tries to express. Although it can be counter-argued that animation lacks a particular element of realism, it immerses the viewer in narrative and aesthetic art (Chaney, 2011).

In this way, the employment of animation offers a medium where memory, dream, and fantasy can all become inseparable, without the obstacle of realism. Satrapi's black-and-white palette uses the juxtaposition of light and dark in her film. The contrast portrays the basic emotions and experiences of each character within the film, emphasizing their central motivations. The achromatic silhouettes represent the lives of sorrow that the Iranians lived, while the bright lights aim to signify the sense of hope they felt as they held on to the nostalgia of freedom. For instance, when Marjane learns that her uncle Anoosh has been re-arrested by the regime troops, she is depicted in front of a texture-less background with no depth at all. The contours of her black hair and clothing contrast within the frame as her figure is seen hovering through an empty, black void. Even though this image is a childlike animation, it visualizes the sense of deep isolation Marji feels towards the Islamic revolution. Furthermore, dark frames are used during the scene of a bombing taking place in Iran. The dark shadows of the stairs combined with the black empty screen during the bombing cause a sense of fear and mystery within the viewer. This is employed many

times throughout the film, most remarkably when visualizing the absurd dream that the Islamic Republic's government sold to young men embarking off to the war. Satrapi is able to, once again, draw a parallel between the young men of Iran fighting in the Iraqi war (often promised the "key to paradise"), provoking the viewers to ask themselves if these young men's lives are any less valuable than the young American lives in wars. In this way, Satrapi uses the means of universalization to appeal to both Iranian and Western viewers.

Black and white could also be interpreted as a metaphor for the way a child sees the world. A child only knows good or evil, right or wrong, black or white, but would not be able to see the shades of grey between black and white. Another important factor is the way pictures leave very little room for interpretation. Had it been just a novel, people and situations can be interpreted and imagined in various ways. With a graphic novel, this is obviously not the case. Satrapi has turned it into a work of art by using the contradictions present in the life of a young girl and by taking Iran as an example of a country that is thrown back by revolution. She illustrates a world that is full of love but imprisoned within walls and has brought people from both oppressed and oppressive countries much closer. Satrapi claims on this subject that all people have to be considered as humans otherwise nothing will happen when they are bombarded and killed (Ghadishah, 2008). She says that several people keep getting killed in Iran daily, yet no homage is paid to them, not even by a symbolic minute of silence. In effect, this black-and-white animation film depicts the people of Iran in a more realistic way than the several documentaries and articles that tend to portray them as fanatics. Viewers can suppose that despite the strict code of regulations in the country, people continue to celebrate life in different ways, even if it means getting into trouble for wearing lipstick or losing their lives for attending parties.

The use of the flashback in the animation underlines how the present moment is always interlaced with the past, emphasizing one of the features of traumatic memory: that the traumatic past repeatedly encroaches upon the present (Andrew, 2003). Reflections on the past also work through a nostalgic perspective, as past and present melt into each other but never without an awareness of futurity. The four short sequences depicting adult Marjane in Paris' Orly airport, visualized in the present time and in colour, live in the shade of her narrative of the past. In classic flashback

shots, the screen fades or dissolves to reveal the past in memory, but the flashback technique in *Persepolis* is employed in a considerably different way: the principal narrative develops almost wholly through flashbacks with the present time occurring in the form of sharply separated depiction through the narrative retelling of the past. In this film, the past scenes provide not only a background for the narrative in the present, but the past literally invades the present. For example, the first transition to the flashback mode in the film begins with Marji's 10-year-old self-bounding into the frame occupied by the coloured grown up Marjane in Orly.

The next flashback takes place at Tehran airport with the 14-year-old Marji saying goodbye to her parents as she leaves for a new life in Austria. Her parents embrace her and smile encouragingly, but Marji makes the mistake of turning back for a final glance only to see her mother faint in her father's arms. The image of her concerned parents is swallowed by the darkness of the screen. The backward glance, then, is a threatening one: the nostalgic person who looks back and becomes mired in the past risks not to be able to move. But in the animation, Marji's nostalgic look at the past endangers her ability to move forward. Depicted in the transitional room of Orly's lounge, she becomes a spectator of her past, observing patiently as images of her past conquer the screen. Throughout the film, the Marji of the past succeeds in taking over the Marji of the present, shown in different places at the airport, looking lost and overwhelmed. Therefore, the animation submits a nostalgic longing for a very precise, pre-revolutionary past. The sense of total loss and deep craving for a past, pre-revolutionary Iran alongside the rejection of present-day Iran fuels the nostalgic impulse in the film. The audience is left to mourn what is permanently gone: a cultivated, 'civilized', and very European world belonging to Marji's parents. Infused with a nostalgic desire for another, better time, the film has difficulty escaping its own flashback-based structure of nostalgia. The film's final scene in which Marji is finally able to move forward by leaving the airport and returning to her diasporic life in Paris needs a breaking away from the flashback mode in which longing for the past becomes a form of pathology. Thus, while the main part of the film has difficulties with the effects of nostalgic desire, it ends with a more positive interpretation of nostalgia which understands the backward glance as inflected with a healthy conscience of the present and the future.

1.3 The (political) message

Diasporic Iranians can deeply resonate with *Persepolis* as a whole, but more specifically relate to Marjan's personal effort for meaning in a binary world of culture. Furthermore, the animation draws a deep parallel between Marjan's struggle with her surroundings and the journey of the whole people of Iran in a society of intensely rooted political conflict. Even though a good portion of the graphic novel's subjects and events are only based on Marjan's personal identity, it must be mentioned that a wide variety of the sub-themes follow the socio-political conditions in the Islamic republic, such as women's issues, social constructs, and Western intervention.

Satrapi's memoir is interlaced with the events taking place during the Islamic Revolution of 1979. During this period, the king of Persia, Mohammadreza Shah, was ousted and eventually substituted by an Islamist regime. Consequently, many Iranians who supported the Shah were forced into exile or left their homeland. In the graphic novel, Satrapi narrates her experiences under the revolution, which contains stories of torture, bombing, and violent deaths of family members and close friends. However, such circumstances are visualized through the perspective of a young girl who also has to live through the quick social changes that followed the Islamic revolution. Living conditions that previously had been almost free, a pro-western country turned into a fundamentalist religious republic. For instance, Satrapi describes that now she had to wear a veil, learn religious and government propaganda in school, and encounter Iran's moral enforcement police.

The word *Persepolis* literally means the ancient capital of the Persian empire. (The Persian Empire was established by Cyrus the Great and was famous at the time for its strong tenure). As Alexander the Great took over Persepolis, the Persians were left barren and their empire in ruins. It is remarkable, that Satrapi chose the title *Persepolis* as an equivalent to the events that happened during the Islamic revolution. The ruthless change of regime combined with the inhumane and lethal tortures that many Iranians felt at the time are both paralleled in the film. In both cases, before the war Iran and Persia can be considered as prosperous and free-spirited. Satrapi intended to show how religious dictatorship can dangerously damage a nation that has once been

so reputable. During Satrapi's narration, it is evident that the political tensions can affect nearly all interpersonal levels of Iranians in the course of the Islamic revolution. This is obvious in the way the Islamic revolution shapes the path of Marjane's life, from her personal relationships to her drive for life. At last, the powerful state before the war was a symbol of the utopia that the Iranians thought they were going to have. For many Iranians, the revolution was meant to be an event that altered their state for the better: to free them from the restrictions of a kingdom like Pahlavi's. However, this was clearly not what happened.

1.4 Coming of age

Aging strengthens the need for certain values and opinions, as well as the requirement of differentiating oneself from others, as a person's identity is developing. In practice, some people understand other people, and some disregard them. In most cases, many opt to stay in their comfort zone, away from the confrontation zone, and yet prevail in fulfilling the demands of detachment. Usually, a person's stance remains subtle, but when steered by significant religious, political, and intellectual movements, the standpoint becomes stronger and the reactions harsher. *Persepolis* depicts Satrapi's college years in Vienna where she faces the challenges of a child far away from her parents (Satrapi, 2003.p.45). The story also revolves around her return which causes her conflicting emotions and finally her self-imposed exile from her beloved nation. The graphic novel is a portrayal of girlhood and teenage years at once conversant and outrageous; a young girl's life involved with the history of her nation that is yet occupied with the universal trials and joys of growing up.

Satrapi describes her childhood as characterized by considerable political circumstances that were evident in the country. Years of political turmoil led to the deaths of thousands of people and the destruction of social structures. Besides, at the beginning of the story, Satrapi is depicted as a child with images of the glorious past combined with the modern reality of a society in a transition phase. In addition, Satrapi simplistically views things even though the image of the past is still vivid in her. However, as a child, she failed to understand the essence of limitations imposed by different genders, social classes, and religious beliefs. As a result, childhood innocence

is gradually becoming extinct against the backdrop of political instability when her consciousness questions the repressive style used by the authority to control its subjects. In short, Marjane Satrapi depicts the difficulty of children brought up in a conflict zone or a country undergoing political transition. Furthermore, it outlines the problems of adaptation, repression, homelessness, loneliness, and discrimination that face the victims of war. In the novel, Satrapi provides an unwavering portrayal of the problems experienced by the foreigners forced into exile by the political temperatures in their homeland.

1.5 A feminist standpoint

Marjane Satrapi has mentioned in interviews that she does not advocate feminism; rather, she sees herself as a humanist (Ghadishah, 2008). However, her graphic novel memoir has several themes at its core that convey feminist ideals. Through the graphic novel, Marjane frequently conveys her dissatisfaction with the Islamic Republic's harsh regulations on women. She also grows up with strong female relationships in her family; these women help shape Marjane into the woman she is today, a woman who won't endure inequality. Marjane has two effective female role models: her mother, Taji, and her grandmother. Both women are straightforward, independent, and progressive. They encourage Marjane to be herself and to never lose touch with the individual she is. When her mother sends Marjane away from Iran, she assures her: "I know how I brought you up. Above all, I trust your education" (Satrapi, 2003. p.147). Taji doesn't want her daughter to live in such a tyrannical time. When veils become compulsory, Marjane's mother wishes to take her to an opposition demonstration: "She should start learning to defend her rights as a woman right now!" (Satrapi, 2003. p.76) Growing up with such strong female role models, Marjane learns to communicate her opinion and always stand by her views. She has been taught to stand up for herself as a woman and thus has been introduced to a feminist perspective on life. In *Persepolis*, the Islamic State makes the wearing of veils obligatory, under the argument that it is a symbol of both Iranian culture and Islamic religious law. While Marjane bears the hijab as part of her life, she stands against the doctrine it symbolizes. When the Islamic republic begins to enforce stricter dress codes, Marjane sees that the veil is a form of restraining the

female population, a form of suppression. Marjane does not accept the double standard that grants Iranian men more liberty: "You don't hesitate to comment on us, but our brothers present here all shapes and sizes of haircuts and clothes. Sometimes, they wear clothes so tight that we can see everything" (Satrapi, 2003. p.299). Since Satrapi retells her life, she essentially offers a very modern perspective on the issues of feminism in the book. Marjane wants to be an educated and independent woman. Therefore, she has gained a lot of appreciation and moral support from her parents who request her to start protecting the fundamental rights of women (Satrapi, 2003. p.179). Satrapi provides a feminist stance since she has experienced the importance of her contribution to the Iranian culture. Since Iran has become a fundamentalist nation with strict Islamic regulations, Satrapi has become a rebellious personality and has been concerned about her safety, especially in an autocratic regime (Bartleby.com).

2. A childhood in Iran

2.1 The mandatory law of hijab

Iranian women have been fighting for freedom for many decades, and the recent protests in Iran are part of that fight. Iranian women began resisting the state's dress code as early as 1979. Shortly after Ayatollah Khomeini became the leader of the Islamic Republic, he said that women had to wear a hijab to work. Shortly after Khomeini spoke in March 1979, Iranian women went out onto the streets to protest because they were not being allowed to make their own choices. The people were protesting (Bazoobandi, S. 2022). Over the years, there has been a fight in Iran to change the law about wearing hijab. The word hijab means to cover in Arabic. In the last 90 years, two different types of laws with different beliefs have been used to try to control how women dress and cover their hair and body (Maranlou, 2022). The *Shah* wanted to make Iran a modern country like Turkey, and part of this was to change how Iranian women dressed. Between 1941 and 1979, there was no rule about what women had to wear, but many still chose to wear headscarves. Some did this to show they were against the king, while others did it because they didn't have much

freedom in their families. The 1979 Islamic revolution made it a law for women to wear the hijab. From April 1983, all Iranian women had to wear hijab (Maranlou, 2022). Over time, the Islamic government has created more rules and restrictions to make sure everyone follows the hijab laws. In the 1990s, people who broke the law started getting punished. They could go to jail or have to pay money as a punishment. The new rule says that if women don't follow the Islamic dress code, they will have to go to classes about Islam instead of paying fines or going to jail (Maranlou, 2022). "The police chief in Tehran said that women will not be taken to jail or have cases filed against them anymore," according to reports from local media (Maranlou, 2022). Women must sign a form promising not to break the hijab rules again. They also have to attend classes to learn about Islamic values. But, even in Tehran, women who keep breaking the clothing rules can still get into trouble with the law. Enforcers like the morality police can interpret the law differently and punish women in different ways because the law is not very clear (Bazoobandi, 2022) Iran's laws come from many sources such as the constitution, government rules, customs, and Islamic beliefs. The hijab law forces women to cover their bodies in public, which takes away their freedom. It has an impact on everything in Iran's daily life. For instance, it makes men and women be kept separate and stops women from showing their hair on TV or in movies. In the past few decades, women's groups in Iran have worked hard to change this law. Every day, they challenge the state's idea of "appropriate clothing" by choosing their own clothes, makeup, and how they walk out of their homes. Every time they go out in public, they stand up against a law that discriminates against them and tries to control their personal choices. By doing so, they can get in trouble and go to jail or have to pay money. Although the government has passed laws making it a crime not to wear a hijab, women have been strong and impressive in standing up for their rights. The slogan "Women – Life – Freedom" represents the ongoing effort to achieve fairness, equality for women and the freedom to make choices (Khorrami, 2022). In Iran, the hijab is not just a religious covering, but also a symbol of politics. Iranian women have been fighting for the right to choose for many years. This fight could bring about good changes and a chance to make long-awaited reforms.

2.2 The Iran-Iraq war

Since the Ottoman–Persian Wars of the 16th and 17th centuries, Iran (known as "Persia" prior to 1935) and the Ottomans fought over Iraq (then recognised as Mesopotamia) and full command of the Shatt al-Arab till the signing of the Treaty of Zuhab in 1639, which installed the ultimate borders between the two countries. The Shatt al-Arab was once viewed a necessary channel for each states' oil exports, and in 1937, Iran and the newly impartial Iraq signed a treaty to settle the dispute. In April 1969, Iran abrogated the 1937 treaty over the Shatt al-Arab river, and as such ceased paying tolls to Iraq when its ships used the waterway. The Shah justified his go by arguing that nearly all river borders around the world ran along the thalweg and claiming that because most of the ships that used the waterway have been Iranian, the 1937 treaty was unfair to Iran. Iran's abrogation of the treaty marked the opening of a duration of acute Iraqi Iranian tension that was once to ultimate till the 1975 Algiers Agreement (Wikipedia). In the 1975 Algiers Agreement, Iraq made territorial concessions in exchange for normalized relations. In return for Iraq recognizing that the frontier on the waterway ran along the complete thalweg, Iran ended its support of Iraq's Kurdish guerrillas. Iraqis saw the Algiers Agreement as humiliating. Tensions between Iraq and Iran were fuelled through Iran's Islamic revolution and its look of being a Pan-Islamic force in contrast to Iraq's Arab nationalism. Despite Iraq's desires of regaining the Shatt al-Arab, the Iraqi government initially welcomed Iran's Revolution, which overthrew Iran's Shah, considered frequently as an enemy. The Iranian Revolution of 1978–79 put the 1975 agreements into questionable standing. Border clashes began taking place from time to time whilst signs and symptoms of Iranian interference in Iraq had been expressed. Leaders of Iran's Islamic republic indicated their wish to "export" the revolution's thought of Islamic governance guided by Shiʿi clergy (Wikipedia). Ruhollah Khomeini, the ideological architect of the revolution, had already located a target market for his ideas in Iraq when he was residing there for the duration of his exile. In April 1980 the deputy prime minister of Iraq, Tariq Aziz, survived an assassination attempt carried out by Iraqi Shiʿis sympathetic to the Iranian Revolution. Shortly after the success of the revolution, the

then-new chief Ruhollah Khomeini started calling for Islamic revolutions throughout the Muslim world, including Iran's Arab neighbour Iraq, the one giant state apart from Iran in the Gulf, with a Shia Muslim majority population. The war started with Iraq's invasion of Iran in an attempt of Iraq's dictator Saddam Hussein to take advantage of the perceived post-revolutionary chaos and military weakness as well as the Revolution's unpopularity with Western governments. In September 1980 the Iraqi army cautiously advanced alongside a wide the front into Khūzestān, taking Iran by means of surprise. Iraq's troops captured the city of Khorramshahr, however failed to take the important oil-refining centre of Ābādān. By December 1980 the Iraqi offensive had bogged down about 80–120 km internal Iran after meeting all at once robust Iranian resistance. In the following months Iraqi forces were compelled to yield ground, and in September Iranian forces pushed the Iraqis again across Iran's Kārūn River. The Iraqis used weapons of mass destruction, most extraordinarily mustard gas, towards Iranian soldiers. In July 1982, with Iraq thrown on the defensive, Iran invaded Iraq and conducted endless offensives in a bid to overcome territory and capture cities, such as Basra. The war continued till 1988 when the Iraqi navy defeated the Iranian forces inside Iraq and pushed the last Iranian troops back across the border. The war was accompanied by a long record of border disputes and was triggered by fears that the Iranian Revolution in 1979 might inspire insurgency amongst Iraq's long-suppressed Shi'i majority. Although Iraq hoped to take advantage of Iran's progressive chaos and attacked without a formal warning, it made only partial progress into Iran and was once shortly repelled. Iran regained sincerely all lost territory via June 1982. A quantity of proxy forces participated in the war, most notably the Iranian People's Mujahedin of Iran siding with Ba'athist Iraq and Iraqi Kurdish militias of the Kurdistan Democratic Party and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan siding with Iran—all suffering a most important blow with the aid of the cease of the conflict. The conflict ended with United Nations Security Council Resolution 598, a UN-brokered ceasefire established by both sides. The last prisoners of warfare were exchanged in 2003. The combat had been one of the most negative conflicts of the late twentieth century. The total number of fighters on each side is unclear, however both countries had been totally mobilized and most men of navy age had been under arms.

The number of casualties was significant even if uncertain. Estimates of total casualties vary from 1,000,000 to twice that number. The number of casualties on both sides could be 500,000, with Iran suffering the greatest losses. It is estimated that between 50,000 and 100,000 Kurds were killed by using Iraqi forces at some point of the series of campaigns code-named Anfāl (Arabic: “Spoils”) that took place in 1988. In August 1990, while Iraq was once preoccupied with its invasion of Kuwait (see Persian Gulf War), Iraq and Iran restored diplomatic relations, and Iraq agreed to Iranian terms for the contract of the war: the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from occupied Iranian territory, division of sovereignty over the Shaṭṭ Al-ʿArab waterway, and a prisoner-of-war exchange (Britannica, 2023).

3. *Persepolis* and it’s public reception

3.1 The international reaction

L'Association first released *Persepolis* as a four-book series, one volume each year, from 2000 to 2003. In 2003, *Pantheon Books* released volumes 1 and 2 with new cover art in a single English translation. The release of *Persepolis* 2 followed in 2004. Persepolis has garnered multiple accolades, including the 2001 *Angoulême Coup de Coeur* and a spot on *Time*'s list of the "Best Comics of 2003." The book was turned into a critically acclaimed movie in 2007; it won the *Cannes Film Festival* Jury Prize and was nominated for Best Animated Feature at the 80th *Academy Awards* (Wikipedia). The film, however, is as criticized by Muslim state officials as it is celebrated by critics in the West. The Islamic Republic’s *Farabi Cinema Foundation* wrote a letter to coordinators of the *Cannes Film Festival* condemning their involvement of *Persepolis* in the festival (Schnelle, 2007). They objected that the film misrepresents ‘the glorious’ dimensions of the Islamic Revolution in Iran; thus, the principal issue, for the Islamic Republic’s government, was the film’s interpretation of the Islamic Revolution’s history. Although the *Cannes Festival* ignored the requests of the *Farabi Foundation*

to bar the film from screening, the *Bangkok International Film Festival* yielded to the pressure imposed by the Iranian Embassy in Thailand and pulled off the film from its festival. On October 7, 2011, the Maghrebi private television channel *Nessma* broadcast the movie *Persepolis*. The animation was dubbed in Tunisian dialect, in order to reach the entire North African population (Zeghal, 2013). It was followed by a debate between four Tunisian intellectuals who discussed the movie in connection with the events taking place in Tunisia at that time. The discussion was presented with the following question: "Will Tunisia be the next Iran?" *Persepolis* was the ideal setting for this debate since it presented a critical view of the period of the Shah, whose dictatorship was by the attendants compared to Ben Ali's. It also dealt with false hopes for democracy that the early coalition between the Islamists and the left had created in Iran before the complete takeover by the Mullahs. *Nessma* was obviously trying to draw a parallel between the Iranian revolution of 1979 and the Tunisian political transition of 2011. The participants around the table were all from the same agenda, the so-called modernist trend, and no representative of the Islamist movement was there. They all confidently predicted Tunisia in contrast with the Iranian model, underlining that modernism was so strong in Tunisian society that it could only be victorious. ''Social networks such as Twitter and Facebook, as well as Tunisian, French, and international news media announced afterward that around "300 Salafis" had attempted to storm the offices of the television station and to attack its director, condemning scenes involving sex and alcohol in the movie, as well as a couple of sequences where God is depicted in human form''(Zeghal, 2013). Contradictory reports later claimed that the number of 300 protesters had been inflated and that the crowd did not consist of "Salafi" protestors exclusively. In May 2012, Nabil Karoui, owner of the *Nessma* TV network, was fined for screening *Persepolis* on Tunisian television. He was charged with disrupting 'public morals' and triggering social disorder (Zeghal, 2013).

3.2 A banned book in Islamic republic

The Iranian constitution, which was drafted before the Islamic Revolution of 1979, states that "the press is free to express their opinion, unless it is against the foundation of Islam or rights of the people, and the law will explain the details." This provision does not entirely recognize the right to freedom of expression. (Article 24, Islamic Republic of Iran Constitution). Examples of such an act include rejecting the core principles of religion, encouraging Islamic moral decay, inciting unrest against the Islamic Republic, endorsing the ideologies of criminal and terrorist organizations; creating an environment where national values are being lost to the culture and civilization of western or eastern colonizing systems; inciting conflicts between the various ethnic or religious groups or causing issues with the unity of the society and the nation. [The 1988 Guidelines for Book Publication, issued by the Islamic Republic of Iran's Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution]] The Islamic Republic's Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance has banned or censored numerous publications since 1979; however, since the Ahmadinezhad regime came to power in 2005, the government has only acknowledged that it is filtering works with prior constraint.

In Iran, if you don't comply, you risk being arrested, barred from creating more films, having your future films exhibited in fewer places, prohibited from doing press interviews, and even prohibited from traveling abroad. Jafar Panahi, the globally recognized Iranian director, was one such example. After being accused of "carrying out propaganda against the system," he was sentenced to six years in prison in December 2010 and prohibited from producing any films, creating any screenplays, visiting other countries, and conducting interviews for twenty years (Jagernauth, 2010). As a result, the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance holds considerable governmental and judicial authority. The Islamic Republic has a long history of controlling and censoring movies, but despite this, Iranian national cinema has become a valuable product and has even gained recognition abroad in film festivals. First and foremost, before beginning a film's production, directors must get a permission slip (Jahid, 2012). A finished screenplay must be submitted as part of the procedure to The Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance's examination commission.

The screenplay is examined by the members of Ershad institution to make sure that it adheres to Islamic theology and culture. The commission members have the authority to demand for specific sequences to be changed or removed entirely if they determine that something is objectionable. The film can begin production if Ershad grants permission, but control doesn't stop there. Following production, the film is examined by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance to ensure that all requirements are adhered to. In the same vein, Ershad institution has the authority to add, alter, or delete sequences or portions. Filmmaker Abdolreza Kahani claims, "Many films are prohibited at this point. This prohibition also extends outside of Iran (Ershad, 2009).'' This implies that Iranians are not permitted to show a restricted movie overseas. Islamic Republic's authorities occasionally approve films, but they forbid their screening abroad (Ershad, 2009).

Islamic republic has not allowed the graphic novel to be published there, condemned the film version of *Persepolis*, just the day after it won the jury's price. Mehdi Kalhor, cultural advisor of the former hardliner President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, released a statement to the Islamic republic state's press calling the film ''anti-Iranian'' and accusing it of trying to ''sabotage Iranian culture'' to all Iranians (Satrapi, accepting her Cannes prize, dedicating it to '' all Iranians around the world'') (Chute, 2008).

Kalhor later alleged, '' the Cannes Film Festival, in an unconventional and unsuitable act, has chosen a movie about Iran that has presented an unrealistic picture of the achievements and results of the glorious Islamic revolution in some of its parts'' (Chute, 2008). Since the graphic novel didn't receive the permission to be published and the animation of *Persepolis* has been banned from being screened in Iranian cinemas, it is unfortunately not possible to have a valid evaluation about *Persepolis'* reception in Islamic republic of Iran and among Iranians themselves.

3.3 Writer's Intention

The graphic novel has offered Satrapi greater freedom of expression. As a reader, one understands that Iran has a variety of people and a diversity of thoughts. Ultimately, this contributes to the measures that seek to overcome the stereotypical manner of thinking about Iran in other countries, especially Western nations. It raises the

consciousness of the audience concerning the essence of a certain period in history and voices the similar experiences of most Iranians living abroad. The graphic novel presents the harsh truth that exists in Iran. It is a painful reality that presents the reader with a truthful perspective about the misery and mistreatments that coexist with the Islamic revolution. In addition, the graphic novel introduces readers to contentious topics and their influence on society. It is apparent that a large part of the novel deals with religious issues and asks crucial questions regarding the religious values within the Islamic Republic's society. The book offers an insightful reflection of the current Iranian society that appears to be defined entirely by the events of 1979 when the Islamic regime overthrew the then-ruling Pahlavi Kingdom. *Persepolis* delivers a perspective of the circumstances encountered by women in Iran. Difficulties that are largely defined by the socio-cultural approach implemented after the revolution. In general, the novel offers a realistic representation of life in Iran before and after the revolution, and its influence on social structures.

''The world is not divided between East and West. You are American, I am Iranian. We don't know each other, but we talk, and we understand each other perfectly. The difference between you and your government is much bigger than the difference between you and me. And the difference between me and my government is much bigger than the difference between me and you. And our governments are very much the same. ''

Satrapi

In interviews with ABC News and Asia society (Ghadishah, 2008), Marjane Satrapi discussed her intentions behind the creation of the graphic novel graphic novel and the following film adaptation. One of her main motivations for this work is based on the ambition to repair the countless ''misjudgments'' that have dominated the international perspective on Iran and its population. Satrapi had many times told her life story, forced by the need to address these misrepresentations. In 1999, after four years of absence from Iran, she felt she had gained the necessary emotional distance and a reduction in anger to articulate her narrative. She intended to bring a deeply personal and humanistic dimension to the way Iranians have been seen by the rest of

the world. She was faithful in her unwillingness to allow Iranians to be reduced to abstract concepts. The global characterization of Iran as part of the "axis of evil" or of Iranians as extremists and terrorists was completely unacceptable to her. Satrapi's objective is based on the assumption that art should reveal a humane perspective, underlining the daily lives of ordinary people rather than propagating clichés (Ghadishah, 2008). The title of the book "Persepolis" was thoughtfully chosen to strengthen the historical perspective, which is necessary to understand today's Iran. By using the name of the ancient capital of Persia, Satrapi accentuates the country's rich history, opposing the childish belief, that Iran was established in 1979 (Ghadishah, 2008). When she was asked by the *ABC* Interviewer about her preference among the graphic novel and the film version in terms of conveying her message, Satrapi admitted that while creating the book was a single experience that she enjoyed, working on the film with a diverse team of 90 people from different nationalities was even more satisfying. The cooperative procedure of creating animation was evidence that people from different ethnicities could empathize with and comprehend a narration like *Persepolis*, offering hope for a more humane and peaceful future.

Using animation as a medium for the film was not just a simple decision but a reflection of Satrapi's creative expression. Both illustration and writing were complementary to her process of creation, making it possible for her to make use of her sense of humor while addressing serious and tough subjects (Accomando, 2008). The visual and textual narratives were essential to her artistic identity. In the transition from comic to film, the choice of animation was deliberate. Satrapi and Vincent Paronnaud recognized the danger of simplifying the adaptation process and were committed to creating a cinematic language that would preserve the story's universal appeal. Animation turned up as the ideal decision due to its abstraction to set up a vast range of viewers to relate to the narrative.

4. The Synopsis

4.1 Development of analysis strategy

There is an endless debate between book enthusiasts and movie fans about the question which medium is better capable of a more effective narration than the other one. There is probably no good answer to it. Feelings shown on a screen have a closeness to the feelings of the audience that are crucial to making a connection between the characters and viewers. Body language, facial expressions, and dialogue affect the audience. The facial expressions and gestures of the actors are projected on the screen, onto the eyes of audiences watching in a cinema, who in the best-case scenario feel the same as the characters. Observing another human being's laughter will generally bring a similar reaction, and projected emotions in a movie theatre are no different.

Since animations do not always use dialogues to describe the events in a sequence, perception, and its interpretations are mainly up to the individuals. A movie cannot always try to depict and delve into as much detail as a book can, but in terms of visualization, films have a clear advantage. Both mediums have their respective elements that work in their favor that simply the other does not have. A film has the visuals, audio, and human connection that a book physically cannot create. On the other hand, books have time and can allow the reader to expand on closer details and give precise information about characters that couldn't possibly be created in one and a half hours of film. It is only up to the individuals to decide which they prefer, as both book and movie have their individual qualities. There is no clear winner here and there may never be since it is a matter of preference.

Obviously, there is the problem of time limitations which is surely a factor in why parts of the narrative needed to be omitted in the film adaptation. However, this was not the sole reason. The main parts, the main body of the story, comprise her adolescence, her early college years, her emigration to Europe, and finally her failed marriage. Most of the subjects which had an influence on her were kept. The type of information left out simply added more depth to the story and incorporated more subjects. In a movie

with limited time, however, taking on more than one theme is an unaffordable luxury, which eventually could lead to the distraction from the main subject.

Consequently, my main thesis of this synopsis is explained in the following phrases:

The sort of excluded information and the characterizations in the animated version of the *Persepolis* create the impression that the movie's genre is mainly political. The graphic novel, on the other hand, has more of a coming-of-age story of the protagonist and autobiographical characteristics. Satrapi wrote *Persepolis* about her childhood and how the Islamic Revolution and the Iran–Iraq war had affected her life. The graphic novel is a story that tells the reader about what situations Marji had to deal with in Iran and how it affected the person she became. The book pictured Satrapi's childish point of view in a way that gives the right amount of detail to tell the story in a unique manner, it shows just how crucial an impact the war had on her and the citizens. Lastly, the graphic novel creates more of a sense of her personal emotion than the motion picture does. The book goes into a lot more detail about the events than the film adaption does. The animation regards details on the outside circumstances of the characters; the book, however, pays more attention to smaller specific aspects that make the story livelier through Marji's eyes.

4.2 The graphic novel and the animation:

4.2.1 The beginning

In the movie version of *Persepolis*, it is just within the first ten minutes of the animation that we get quite a lot of information about Iran's contemporary history, from the fall of the last king of the Qajar dynasty to the rise of Reza Shah, a former soldier who with British interference in exchange for petrol became the leader of Iran. As a reaction to Marji saying ''The king has been chosen by God'', Ebi, the father of the protagonist, gives Marji and thus of course also the audience a sort of crash course in Persian history in the last century (Paronnaud.V& Satrapi. M. 2007. Persepolis[film]. Rigault.X.& Robert. M. A[producers]. Diaphana Distribution. (00:06:00-00:07:39). Ebi finishes his explanation by describing the then-current king, Mohammadreza Shah, as even ten times worse than his father. In contrast to the graphic novel, all this

information is given at once. The timing of Ebi's narration of Iran's history at the very beginning of the movie and telling it just once shifts the audience's attention entirely towards Iranian political history, leaving the audience with the impression that this information is a must-know in order to be able to comprehend the following events. This impression allows the audience to understand *Persepolis* should probably be a political movie.

As mentioned above, the graphic novel takes another approach or rather a different start to the plot. This political-historical information is narrated in the first four chapters, which are escorted by many other interesting details about Marji. Besides Iranian political history, the reader already witnesses her first dialogue with God (Satrapi, 2003.p.8). This dialogue indicates personal information about the protagonist, who as a child is a religious character. As opposed to the movie version, Marji's first dialogue with God takes place after the discussion of crucial political subjects such as Ebi's historical explanation, dark scenes of political demonstrations and the fall of the Shah's statue (00:13:00-00:13:28). Furthermore, compared to the movie, the reader gets to know the protagonist a lot better before the crash course begins. Simultaneously with an introduction into Persian contemporary history, the reader is informed about little Marji's enthusiasm for books and gets detailed characteristics of her grandfather, his deeds and his life as an ailing communist prisoner as well as the feelings of Marji's mother toward these events. Lastly, the very first panel of the graphic novel is another indication in favor of this story, which gives the reader the impression that this book is not solely a political one (Satrapi, 2003.p. 3). In this panel, one can see Marji sitting with an unhappy emanata next to her classmates. The way the fully veiled girls are shown, with their arms crossed and their faces mostly sad, in addition to the sentence in the caption '' You don't see me'', even though we do see her or at least part of her arm and her veil, is an indication of a loss of individuality. This illustration at the very beginning of the graphic novel gives the reader the first hint that this book will be about herself and her personal life in Iran rather than about the Iranian political situation. In the case of the graphic novel, it is crucial to know Iran and its history, but most likely for just one simple reason: to be able to understand Marji and her path in life, since it is inseparable from fundamentalist Iranian politics.

Mehri the maid

The side story about her adopted older sister who also happened to be their maid is completely excluded in the animated version. For example, the part of the plot showing her sister, Mehri, is used to convey the subject of Marji's battle against social classes. There is a whole chapter in the graphic novel, ''The Letter'', that is almost fully dedicated to Mehri the maid (Satrapi, 2003.p.33). This chapter is crucial to understanding Marji's personal motivation for class warfare. At the beginning of ''The Letter'' we get to know about the attendance of Marji and her mother at an illegal book signing by a Kurdish writer called Darvishian. As Satrapi explains in the caption of the panel, Darvishian, Marji's then-favorite author, writes about the sad but true life stories of poverty-stricken people, which happen touch Marji deeply (Satrapi, 2003. P. 33). Shortly after the reader begins to get to know more about Mehri, Marji's adoptive sister, who comes from an extremely poor family in a rural area with ''14 or 15'' children. Mehri has a very good relationship with Marji and even sees her as her own sister since they have been growing up and playing together at their parents' house (Satrapi, 2003.p. 35). Mehri needs Marji to help her write love letters to a neighbour's son as she is illiterate. This fact builds up another personal strong connection between these two. After a while, when the neighbour's son is informed by Ebi that she is just a maid and not his real daughter, their romantic pen pal relationship collapses. Ebi argues that their love is simply impossible, as Mehri and the neighbour's son both belong to different social classes (Satrapi, 2003.p. 37). This event saddens Marji so deeply that it makes her attend a political demonstration together with Mehri (Satrapi, 2003. P.38). This personal side story is very important to understand Marji's motivation for class struggle and her awareness of these kinds of social class differences, to a child who is barely ten years old.

As mentioned above, this very personal event is completely left out of the film. The fact that the maid has not been allowed to eat with the family is just briefly mentioned at the beginning of the movie, as Marji explains to her grandmother what the main rules of her religion are. For the audience of the animation this very personal quality is simply missing and thus it is difficult to understand a ten-year-old's motivation to

rise up against class differences in society as it is only summed up by a surprisingly short subordinate clause.

The Godzilla movie

Since the animation was another chance to re-narrate the original story, certain aspects are present in the film but not in the book. For instance, the scene in which Marjane and her grandmother watch the film Godzilla in a cinema is not present in the book. In this scene, her grandmother expresses her dislike of the movie and makes a degrading remark about Japanese culture and movies (00:35:45-00:35:55). This scene is useful for the movie since it shows how people from an outside culture can misunderstand other cultures or just simply reject them – the very same topic that Marjane had to experience in Austria. As Satrapi was forced to omit certain aspects of different subjects to build on dramatics, the writer was able to focus on just one and create new scenes to support it. This is exactly what happens in this scene. In the graphic novel, Marji rejects both aspects of her culture, but refuses to fully renounce her culture in Europe. No matter where she is, even if she goes through a process of change and presents herself slightly differently, she remains true to her own self and stands for what she believes to be right. It is interesting to see how the solidity of her character across different countries is reflected in the solidity of the subject within both mediums. Although the film and the graphic novel both present the story slightly differently, the topic of Marjane rejecting conformity is present throughout both. In each case, they use both the limitations and the perks of their respective medium to convey the same theme. The graphic novel uses the luxury of separating the story into two books and adding loads of detailed information about Marji's struggles to understand and adapt herself to Western culture. Since it was not simply possible to contain all the details in the animated version, Satrapi took the Godzilla's scene and her grandmother's degrading comment on Godzilla as a sort of metaphor to emphasize on difficulties of comprehension of foreign cultures.

4.2.2 Marjane's life in Austria

A very big portion of the story of Marjane's life in Austria has been extremely shortened in the animated version of *Persepolis*. The time limitation of the movie version is obviously the main reason for this undetailed depiction of her journey in Europe as a teenager. As mentioned in chapter 4.1, this radical summarization of the protagonist's life not only lends a different category to the movie compared to the graphic novel, but it also gains the audience's attention to the Iranian political situation. This shift of attention in the plot, caused by the animation, leaves the viewer with the impression that Marjane's failed adaption to Austrian society is primarily because of her sense of guilt due to the war going on in Iran. The graphic novel, on the other hand, contains many different events that the reader gets to know as other significant explanations about her solitude in Vienna. Her different living situations within her four years in Austria are among those details left out in the movie. In advance, I would like to mention an important caption in the graphic novel, which is mentioned before Marjane's emigration. While she is crying alone in her bed, Marjane is ''pretty sure'' that her parents won't join her in Austria in a few months, even though this is what her parents tell her (Satrapi, 2003.p.149). This crucial caption gives the reader information that one could easily anticipate, that her immigration is predestined to fail due to personal reasons. This important side information is not only omitted in the animation, but also the different places and the reasons why she has to move from one place to another are radically summarized into less than one minute (00:47:00-00:47:50). In the movie version, we do not even get to meet Zozo. Zozo is Taji's best friend and apart from the easiness of receiving a visa for Austria the second reason why Marjane's parents opt to send her to Austria. During Marjane's stay with her, the reader learns about Zozo's unwelcoming attitude toward Marjane. Additionally, the reader is informed about Zozo's unhealthy relationship with her husband, Houshang, and their continuous arguments at their home, which Marjane has not at all been used to at her parents' house (Satrapi, 2003.p 159). Shirin, Zozo's daughter, who is the same age as Marjane, seems to be very ''inane'' and superficial to the protagonist (Satrapi, 2003.p .158). All this information is excluded in the animation, even though it is very important to understand Marjane's state of mind

and her start of a new life in Europe. In this manner, the reader realizes that Marjane is happy about leaving Zozo's family, something which is shown differently in the animation (Satrapi, 2003.p. 160).

In the graphic novel, as she arrives in the Christian boarding house, the reader gets to know about Lucia. Lucia, Marjane's very first friend and roommate in Vienna, is demonstrated very shortly in a single scene of the animation as she uses the loud hairdryer and speaks German with a strong Austrian accent (00:42:46-00:43:05). In the graphic novel, Lucia plays an important role in understanding Marjane and her longing for a real family. In the chapter ''Tyrol'', which is completely excluded from the animation, Lucia decides to rescue sad Marjane from a lonely Christmas and they pay a visit to her parents in Tyrol. Even though Marjane is perplexed about cultural differences in rural Austria, the reader learns about Marjane's serious craving for a family. On the last page of this chapter (Satrapi, 2003.p. 174). Marjane is depicted as overjoyed on Christmas Eve as she is surrounded by the other attendants and admits that she enjoys the many visits from Lucia's aunts and uncles. She even refers to Lucia as her sister and writes in the caption: '' I had a new set of parents''.

Another omitted part of the story, which is central to my thesis is Taji's visit to Austria. As mentioned in the paragraph above, it is Marjane who suffers under this deep need for closeness to her parents. In the graphic novel, this need seems to be very powerful and more compelling to understand the protagonist's failure of independence and her unsuccessful adaption in Austria in comparison to the animation. In the chapter ''The Horse'', which is also almost completely excluded from the animation, we learn about Taji's visit and its consequent effect on Marjane. The joy of her mother's imminent arrival makes Marjane try to look proper again (Satrapi, 2003.p. 202). Nineteen months after leaving Iran it is Taji who comes to visit her daughter for a short time in Vienna. During Taji's stay, Marjane fancies once again physical closeness to her mother and enjoys ''the heavenly food'' prepared by her mother (Satrapi 2003.p. 208). Also, she appreciates the chance to speak to Taji in her native language, since there is no necessity for explaining her own culture. Except on one occasion, these two do not really discuss politics and Iran's war situation (Satrapi, 2003.p. 205). The narrative is

solely concentrated on Marjane's feelings and her happiness because of Taji's visit. This point becomes even more evident when Satrapi writes in a caption: ''Ever since I'd seen my mother, I didn't need anyone.'' (Satrapi, 2003.p. 210) Marjane's friendships in Austria are another elementary aspect that the graphic novel focuses more deeply on than the film version. These friendships and their influences on Marjane are crucial for her course of adolescence, side characters and their personal qualities that affect Marjane's life in Austria and are responsible for her future standpoints. Her first close friends from Vienna's French school are introduced just very shortly in the animation almost without any characteristics of them (00:44:15-00:44:22). Julie is probably one of the most influential characters to Marjane. She is a French girl, four years older than the protagonist, who lives with her mother. In fact, Marjane gets shelter at Julie's home after she is expelled by the nuns from the boarding home. In another excluded chapter in the graphic novel ''The Pill'', the author informs us once again about her personal struggles with her adaption to Western cultures, without anything being mentioned about the contemporary political situation in Iran. Julie, who is so different from Marjane, can even be interpreted as a symbol of a cultural shock to the protagonist; Julie dates more than only one man at a time, sometimes even men who are much older than her. She talks about her big behind as a consequence of taking contraceptives (Satrapi, 2003.p. 184). In general, her openness about sexuality surprises Marjane on different occasions. She even comments on the sexual life of her mother, who has a platonic relationship, which is interpreted by Julie as the main reason for her being so annoying since she has no regular sex anymore (Satrapi, 2003.p. 185). When Julie's mother leaves them alone for a business trip, Julie plans to have a party at her place. During this party Marjane draws a comparison between Iranian and Austrian parties, underlining the fact that she has a hard time understanding her new surrounding culture. On page 187, a scene of the party is illustrated through one single big panel, accompanied by Marjane's confused glance in the reader's direction. Julie's interaction with her mother is something that confuses Marjane even more. She simply does not really understand how Julie can act so impolitely to her mother and consequently feel ''indignant'', as parents are somehow ''sacred'' in her *own* culture (Satrapi, 2003.p. 182). "The Pill" as a chapter is significant to understand Marjane's personal struggles

in the process of adaption since she originates from a very traditionalist culture. Julie's effect on Marjane becomes even more clear as the story goes on, for instance in the scene where Marjane is visited by a big group of her family when she returns to Iran. At this point, Marjane opens up with the other young women about her various relationships in Europe. Her opinion about sex and that its quality depends on with whom one has it with is so frank and self-confident that it astonishes her friends (01:05:15-01:05:25). A similar kind of behaviour is illustrated on page 305. It stuns all of Marjane's classmates that she admits openly to regularly take the pill as she sleeps with her boyfriend. In the graphic novel, Julie has not only an influence on Marjane's character. She is one of the first to open up and do Marjane's hair. In other words, even Marjane's appearance and the way she dresses changes after she has lived at Julie's (Satrapi, 2003.p. 192). In the graphic novel Julie's role is crucial in order to have a better understanding of Marjane's personality and the person she has become. This becomes evident when we compare the way Satrapi illustrates Marjane in the graphic memoir and the animation in the scene of '' I`m Iranian and proud of it'' (00:51:22-00:51:44) or in the chapter '' The Vegetable'' on page 199. As one can see in the two pictures below, the Marjane in the animation on the right side looks almost like a small Marji, but grown-up and with long hair and relatively like the way she looks throughout the movie. On the left side, one can see Marjane from the graphic memoir, with short and gelled hair. (Satrapi, 2003.p. 198)

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(00:51:40)

Another influential friend in Marjane's life is certainly Momo. Like many other side characters in the graphic memoir, Momo's role is cut short in the animation. The

nihilist punk-looking young man is in fact the person who is able to motivate Marjane to dedicate her spare time to studying Western authors and ideologists and their pieces of work in her lonely holidays. Momo does so by teasing Marjane with the following quote: ''You don't even know Bakunin'' (Satrapi, 2003.p. 175). Momo, a rather odd human being with an uncommon look and strange greeting rituals and the first person to ever kiss Marjane, can be seen as another personal indication of Marjane's struggles of integration. He is just so different from the other friends that Marjane has had in her home. Momo's influence on Marjane as a nihilistic person alongside Ingrid, a girl from a rural area of Vienna, is undeniable. Marjane gets to meet Ingrid at her place at a so-called ''anarchist party'' (Satrapi, 2003.p. 214). At first, thrilled Marjane imagines what the party might be like. It reminds her of ''the commitment and battles'' of her childhood, an expression of a deep personal feeling. This caption on page 211 underlines how strong her personal craving for home is, without a word about the political situation in Iran. But as she arrives there, she is deeply disappointed by the so-called ''anarchists'', since they are playing hide-and-seek, eating sausages and consuming drugs (Satrapi, 2003.p. 213). Ingrid, who is much older than Marjane and is not even once mentioned in the movie, can also be seen as responsible for Marjane's drug addiction in Austria. As Satrapi states in a caption in the chapter '' Hide and Seek'' on page 220: ''With her, I spent my time either meditating or tripping''. Her drug addiction, which is also not mentioned directly in the animation, is surely one of Marjane's personal reasons for finding it hard to get along with her new surroundings, which is visualized differently in the animation. In the graphic memoir, Marjane has a deep personal sense of guilt, but the politics of her homeland don't really concern her. For example, in the first panel of page 196, we observe Marjane switching TV channels, as soon as she sees news about Iran on TV.

Her drug addiction and her subsequent drug dealing can be interpreted as huge struggles and her weak state of mind in the process of integration into Western culture. Both aspects aren't really directly mentioned in the animation and the audience just gets to see some hints of them. The fact that Marjane ''wasn't making anything'' by drug dealing and only doing it as a ''favor'' (Satrapi, 2003.p.226), led Marjane to try out other jobs such as babysitting, selling newspapers, and a job at a

café. All these efforts and so-called favors are further efforts mentioned by the author to emphasize the personal dimensions of the protagonist and her difficulties in Austria, while they are all excluded in the animation.

The various romantic relationships with her different partners are also another meaningful portion of the story as it has been radically shortened. These affairs are significant in the graphic novel to understand the protagonist and her emotions. Beginning with the story of Enrique the first man to whom Marjane has felt affection for. This story once again is relevant for the reader to empathize with the young Marjane. Through this story the reader is able to learn about Marjane's extremely low self-confidence (Satrapi, 2003.p. 215). Shortly after, the reader gets to know Jean-Paul, who is the first man to ask Marjane out. However, during their meeting it becomes evident that Jean-Paul is not really interested in Marjane. He is meeting Marjane because he needs her help in mathematics (Satrapi 2003.p. 219), something which saddens Marjane so deeply that she drowns in negative feelings and low self-esteem. These two characters are entirely left out of the animation so that the audience experiences fewer personal dimensions than the reader of the graphic novel. Even the details of the story of Markus, Marjane's ''first great love'', are intensely summarized. Their whole story from the beginning until the separation lasts less than two minutes in the movie (00:53:30-00:55:10). In the graphic memoir, the reader learns that their romantic relationship starts getting cold when Marjane is not happy about Markus' relatively passive approach to Austrian rightist political changes in the 80s (Satrapi, 2003.p. 231). The graphic memoir pays more attention to this event since their failed love is the main reason for Marjane leaving her room in Vienna and becoming consequently homeless. Shortly after leaving her room at Frau Doctor Heller's house, she even considers coming back to her place or taking shelter at Zozo's or Ingrid's for a while (Satrapi, 2003.p. 241), a consideration that indicates the feeling that she hasn't given up yet on living in Austria. But it is again her sense of guilt that prevents her from doing so. Her two months' journey of homelessness, her intense ''shame at not having become someone, …. the shame of having becoming a mediocre nihilist'' (Satrapi, 2003.p.246), and her carelessness about her health condition despite the diagnosis of acute bronchitis, are central deep feelings of Marjane which have

been either omitted or cut short in the animation. Additionally, in the movie version, Marjane asks the doctor if she can have a call, immediately after saying that she comes from Iran (00:59:50-01:00:00), whereas in the graphic memoir it is in fact her parents who manage to get Marjane on the phone at Zozo's place (Satrapi, 2003.p. 245). This small change of plot in the animation makes the audience consider that the main reason for her return to Iran is her homesickness. Thus, one could claim that in the animation, Markus' role and his impact on Marjane's homelessness is considerably reduced. Marjane's romantic dependence on Markus and the importance of their mutual love affair have been personally very shaping to her, as Satrapi states in a panel on page 239: '' I had no one but him. I wanted him to be at once my boyfriend, my father, my mother, my twin.'' This is a very intimate expression for describing Markus, thus its exclusion in the animated version leads to an artwork that is consequently much less personal than the graphic memoir.

4.2.3 Marjane's return to Iran

There are several details in the graphic memoir that help the reader to have a better comprehension of Marjane's failed return to her home. Like other omitted points in the animation such as topics in the protagonist's childhood and her immigration, these pieces of information are significant to lend a biographical aura to the graphic novel. Probably the most important feature of this issue is Marjane's lack of desire to meet friends. The very first indication is visualized on page 252, as Marjane does not want to have a chat on the telephone with her childhood best friend, Pouneh. She even tells her mother: '' Please don't tell anyone that I'm back, I don't want to see people.''

In the chapter ''The Joke'', when she receives visits from her old friends, she is undoubtedly shocked about her friends' mentality and states in a caption: '' I felt terribly alone'' (Satrapi, 2003.p.261). After this disappointment caused by her friends' mindsets she decides to meet Kia. Kia is a character who is visualized just within a single scene in the movie as he moves forward into the camera in his wheelchair (01:06:34-01:06:39). Kia, who used to play a torture game with Marji at the beginning of the story, has been forced to fight at the front of the Iraq war and consequently lost his left arm and his leg. At the beginning of the meeting, Marjane is completely

concerned by the situation she is in and does not even dare to look at Kia's amputee body (Satrapi, 2003.p. 264). Despite his disability, Kia is depicted as a positive human being who jokes about his physical limitations. The fact that Kia is an outgoing person somehow rescues the awkward moments. This reunion gives Marjane a life lesson as she states in the last caption of page 268: ''That day I learned something essential: we can only feel sorry for ourselves when our misfortunes are still supportable…'' Kia as an old friend and his very touching behaviour and its shaping effect on Marjane as well as the way she feels throughout this visit is something extremely personal about the protagonist which has been almost completely omitted in the animation as Kia there is shown with an almost neutral facial expression during a five-second scene. Marjane's depressive state of mind is another aspect that is emphasized more in the graphic memoir. In the animation her sense of solitude during the skiing vacation with her friends and her several appointments with different psychologists are narrated in a very brief manner. Here, her attempt to commit suicide by taking an overdose of medication is not even mentioned directly. There is only a short indication of her suicide attempt as God tells her that her time hasn't come yet. This indication takes place as Marjane finds herself in a trance-like scene where pills are raining over the frame (01:08:20-01:09:40). In the animation this scene is visualized by God sitting right in front of Karl Max, which lends another political aura to the film version. Whereas in the graphic novel, as Marjane's parents leave her for a trip, the reader gets to know about her two failed suicide attempts and her intoxication caused by overdoses of the medication (Satrapi, 2003.p. 274). Instead of mentioning this personal side information, Satrapi chose to visualize the more political events in history, such as her confrontation with the so-called morality police, when Marjane has been wearing lipstick (01:13:40-01:14:07). Furthermore, Satrapi decided to add a scene that is not included in the graphic memoir: the moment of a bet with her friends in the car, when Marjane takes off her hijab prompting her friends to scream out loud (01:11:33-01:11:50). Considering this action of Marjane as obvious civil disobedience gives the animation for the audience a further political nuance.

Another basic aspect of the story of Marjane's failed return home is her unsuccessful marriage. Even the narration of Marjane and her husband getting to know each other

is different than in the graphic novel. In the animation, her marriage is narrated alongside many other absurd political events, making it look in the best-case scenario as just as important as Iran's political situation. In the graphic memoir, however, we get to know more details about her husband. Page 281 is in fact completely dedicated to demonstrating the basic differences between this couple. In the graphic memoir we learn about many personal qualities of this relationship and the decisions of the couple. The most important one is their common decision to participate in the national exam in order to be able to study arts at university together (Satrapi, 2003.p. 282). Leaving out this kind of personal side information and instead opting for certain scenes such as conflicts with morality police or the absurd scene of the anatomy class where the students must draw a woman in Chador as a substitute to a nude model are active decisions taken by the directors, which bring out content-wise almost absolute different qualities to the animation.

4.2.4 Visual interplays and sound design

The black and white palette in the animated version of *Persepolis* is not just a choice of aesthetics, but it helped also the creative team in terms of storytelling. As mentioned before, young Marji is depicted in white. But as the story continues and the protagonist loses her innocence we start seeing her in dark clothes. There is a similar phenomenon visualized in the movie. All the antagonists, or in other words, all characters or even objects that Marjane simply cannot bear are also visualized in black. For instance, all adult morality officers wear black uniforms and have dense black beards and hair, except for the minor soldiers who escort Marji's family to their home in order to have a look if they hide any alcohol at their place (00:31:10-00:32:00). They are visualized in white because they are not even 15 years old and are in a way still innocent.

Another example is the veil. Throughout the movie all the veils are depicted in black to emphasize the protagonist's feelings toward the mandatory hijab. The women from the morality police who are depicted in a snake-like fashion (00:27:25-00:27:50) as well as the nuns from the Christian boarding home are illustrated in black, probably because the directors want to stress the protagonist's dislike of religious fanatics. In

certain moments, even the black clothes of nuns and the female morality police officers surround Marjane completely to emphasize this feeling (00:46:55-00:46:59).
In the movie the same strategy is used by shot transitions. With fades and other kinds of transitions deeper meanings can be transmitted between each frame. With the help of sound design and soundtrack as individual features of the movie this expression of meaning is strengthened. For example, by using dissolves over certain shots the audience can draw a direct comparison of two following images to extract a meaning rather than being limited to juxtapositions, which graphic novels are limited to in terms of transition. In the graphic novel, the reader must actively imagine what occurs between two pictures. And this is exactly the case with *Persepolis*. The creative team of this animation has used dissolves very cleverly to express the events and their influence on Marjane's feelings. One prominent example of this kind of dissolves, which occurs frequently, are the background pictures which are either black or fade into complete dark whenever something negative occurs. Almost all of the sequences of demonstrations, the first intro to Persian contemporary history by Ebi at the beginning of the movie, Nilofar's or any other scenes of executions, the scenes of Marjane's homelessness, the sequences where Uncle Anoosh gives the audience a sort of explanations about the chaotic transition's period after the Islamic revolution and uncle Taher's funeral scene are examples of this strategy. Darkness is the colour of negativity and indeed this feature of colour is used to convey the gloomy events that occurred in the Islamic republic. Perhaps one of the most touching of these dark scenes in the animation is the moment when Marjane gets to see her neighbour's hand and bracelet buried under the ruins (00:38:20-00:38:36). All of a sudden, after spotting her hand all the surrounding ruin vanishes and we get to see only the hand and a complete depthless background. This scene is accompanied by a minimalistic but immersive sound that underlines the protagonist's feeling of seeing her former playmate being buried in ruins. The graphic novel is simply not able to evoke this deep feeling for its readers due to its limitations. This method is not only used to spotlight the dark times in Iran in the '80s, but it is also used to get a better idea of Marjane's feelings. For example, in the moment when Marjane understands that Markus is cheating on her, one can see that the whole scenario, except Markus himself, is shown in dark colour to underline the protagonist's huge disappointment. Markus is depicted

all in white to demonstrate the protagonist's romantic feelings toward him (00:54:54-00:55:10).

This technique is also prominently used the other way around: with the screen fading into white. For instance, as Marjane's grandmother tells her that she is proud of her after she has told her about the objections to the religiously fanatic lecture at the convocation the screen fades completely white (01:17:30-01:17:41). A prominent example of an intensely bright scene and its interplay with soundtrack is the scene where Marjane and her childhood friends play the torture game (00:11:40-00:12:37). Even though Marjane and her playmates have a rather devilish idea of playing torture, this sequence is illustrated mainly in white. White is used here to emphasize children's innocence. This sequence is accompanied by a flute melody which is played three times throughout the game scene. This childlike and in a way happy melody is played as the children want to pop out Ramin's eyes with nails since his father has killed over ''one million'' people with his bare hands. This absurd intention of the children accompanied by this jubilant melody reminds the audience that they are only children, even though they are highly politicized and able to express very aggressive words. This interplay of sound and picture creates the impression that deep down they don't really want to hurt Ramin and that they will probably play together again the day after. This absurdity is well exposed by the means of the bright colour of the scene, the jubilant melody, and of course the evil will of children. After Marjane's mother catches the children playing the torture game and threatens her daughter to nail her to the wall by her ears again all the bright settings of the sequence turn black as the young protagonist feels intimidated (00:12:40-00:12:45). In the movie white, being obviously the colour opposite to black, is used to convey Marjane's positive feelings. For example, her denim jacket with the slogan ''Punk is not dead'' is distinctively depicted in white. In the animation this jacket is even more prominent because it builds up an eye-catching contrast with the blackness of her veil, stressing the fact how individual the protagonist must have felt to be just wearing this jacket.

To compensate for the story losses the film version makes use of typical features of its medium and employs sound and editing to further express the topic of rejecting a certain society. With the help of sound and music the audience can become more empathetic with a situation. One example is her appreciation of punk music, which

was prohibited in the Islamic Republic as a clear symbol of Western decadence. The graphic novel is restricted to only dialogues and the side story about posters and how Marjane's parents managed to smuggle the posters into Iran convey this (page 128), but the film is capable of adding music to demonstrate the discrepancy between her strict, conservative country and her loud music tastes. A prominent example of this employment of sound design is the heavy metal soundtrack which is played just after Marjane's discussion with her religion teacher (00:38:50-00:39:12). This sound goes on, as we see in the next dissolve that Ebi is informed about the discussion on the phone by the school director while Marjane listens to the track on her cassette player. This considerably rough soundtrack, being played just after she contradicts her religion teacher and teacher's propagandist statements, is elementary to provide comprehension of the protagonist's rebellious nature. A similar implementation of heavy metal and its loud but unique vocals is used to accentuate on war's deadly nature. Once again, on an almost completely black background we get to see tanks and military air forces shooting, accompanied by a harsh-sounding track (00:28:24-00:28:49). This loudness and roughness of this soundtrack adds another layer of significance to war's deadliness, something that a graphic novel is simply not capable of. The utilization of the heavy metal sound is implemented once again, but actually for another purpose. The scene in Vienna, when Marjane and her friends attend a subcultural heavy metal concert, is fundamental to understanding the protagonist's lostness in her new surroundings (00:44:44-00:45:10). This extremely loud soundtrack, being played just right after a soothing violin melody, underlines cultural differences to which the protagonists has been opposed to. Furthermore, it accentuates Marji's new struggles and her solitude as the background again fades completely black and the loud music becomes almost silent so that one can only see little Marji dancing in a depthless darkness.

Silence is another component that has been deliberately employed to deliver the tragic layers of *Persepolis'* story. The silence after Marji's phone call with her parents is a very long-lasting one that entirely accentuates her sense of loneliness in the Christian boarding home (00:46:07-00:46:28). This silence is in a way so loud that it manages to give the audience in Marji's the possibility to empathize with the protagonist in a much better way compared to the graphic novel.

The key scene, where the audience sees an unarmed minor in the war running into the tanks and then being blown away is another relevant example (00:29:08-00:29:14). Seconds after the blow-up one can see only the hovering plastic key as an object on a fully black background. The silence which is used here as a means of sound design is crucial to transfer the extreme tragic reality of the war. This silence ensures that all of the audience's attention is attracted to the key and in particular to the brainwashed minors who are taken to the front. This use of sound design in this scene gives enough auditive space to the audience to reflect on the awful and heart-breaking events happening at the time. For the audience, this silence provokes in some way the question if these minors are any different from the ones in any Western society. This is a challenging question for Satrapi, who throughout the story tries to draw a parallel between Iranian and Western societies.

As mentioned in chapter 4.2.3, due to time limitations the animation does not have a deep focus on the protagonist's state of mind and feelings compared to the graphic novel. But the animation's creative team conducted have come up with an innovative idea as a compensation for these losses. The Eye of the Tiger track sung by Mastroianni, the voice actress of adult Marjane, is a very short but striking solution to address the protagonist's rebound from depression (01:09:42-01:10:49). As the love story with Marjane's future spouse, Reza, and their joint beginning to study arts at Teheran's university is cut short or in an altered way this short track is capable of counterbalancing these characteristic deficits. The protagonist performs this song as an expression of her recovery from deep depression and her suicide attempt. Her strong accent and the amateur way she performs the song accompanied by rather absurd scenes such as removing her leg's hair and a scene where Marjane and her classmates, all veiled, sing this survival song is an ironic expression of the protagonist's comeback from despair. She rises up, she is back on the streets once again and she simply accepts that she neither belongs to the then-new fundamentalist Iranian culture nor to the Western one. This track is able to replace all the details about the protagonist's recovery, instead of stretching the animation's length for additional minutes. This might alter the audience's attention toward side information of the main plot in the animation version. Another scene in terms of storytelling where sound design as a means is superior to the graphic novel is the scene at the party and the

following escape of the young male party attendants (01:23:05-01:25:16). At the beginning of the scene we have a constant switch between the party music and the sounds of the car. The dissolves between the happy faces at the party and dark pictures of cars already indicate an apprehension that something awful is about to happen. After the music of the party has paused and the so-called morality police officers interrupt the party a slow and melancholic violin melody starts. When the officers become aware of a sound at the staircase, Oliver Bernet, the sound designer of *Persepolis*, adds a very slow booming beat to the violin melody. As the escape begins the rhythmic but repellent beat becomes more dominant. Moments later, as Nima falls down from the roof of the building and consequently dies the melancholic violin melody vanishes and the audience only gets to hear the worrying beat. Once again, the whole screen fades into black and the dominant continuous echoing beat confirms Nima's death in a way. This is a stunning utilization of sound design to express a tragic event, without any single employment of monologue, dialogue, or a narrating voice.

In the animation the musical composition of *Persepolis* by Olivier Bernet also has a huge influence on the audience in terms of evoking the protagonist's sense of nostalgia. Bernet as sound designer and composer of *Persepolis* has made use of the Sitar, one of the main music instruments in Persian traditional music, to underline Marji's overwhelming nostalgia. This occurs both the first and the second time when Marjane leaves Iran. The first time little Marji says goodbye to her parents at Mehrabad airport the melancholic and haunting Sitar melody starts and continues even until after her mother faints in her father's arms (00:41:10-00:41:59). This use of traditional instruments by Bernet is crucial to create compassion in audiences and ends just after the whole screen turns black as an accentuation of the protagonist's extremely dark feelings about leaving her home country. The exact same use of sitar is employed for the second time as grown-up Marjane leaves Iran again (01:26:37-01:27:45). This time the sitar melody begins already as Marjane pays a visit to the anonymous grave of Uncle Anoosh at Evin prison and goes on until she bids farewell to her family. Interestingly, both of these sequences are followed by coloured scenes, which of course exist only in the animation. The whole narrative of the animation takes place by means of coloured nostalgic flashbacks of the protagonist, leaving the

audience with the impression that the whole story is being narrated by the present Marjane in Orly airport. The graphic novel on the other hand has as mentioned before a totally different approach in terms of storytelling.

5. Outcome

The multiple international awards, that the animation has won are one of the indications that Persepolis turned out to be a very successful film. There are some aspects or choices of the creative team which help us to understand this success. Compared to *Spiderman* or many other graphic novels, *Persepolis'* filmic adaption is very different from the others. The decision to create an animation based on the comic was crucial. Probably, a live-action movie would never be capable of re-narrating *Persepolis'* story from the perspective of a child as convincingly as the animation has been able to. The story being told from the childish perspective of Marjane is certainly one of the main aspects which make the animation so unique. This feature of the movie is accompanied by the documentary character of the story, which is an uncommon combination. Additionally, keeping the black-and-white palette of the graphic novel has helped the creative team build a stronger connection between the audience and the plot. The function of this two-colour palette with their symbolic meanings is crucial for the audience to have a better comprehension of the protagonist's different surroundings from a childish point of view. Having a style of animation that is so different from what audiences are used to also helps to underline that here we observe a world that was, in many dimensions, much different from the Western world. The oversimplified technic of animation that has been employed functions well with the story being told from the perspective of a child. Little Marji in the story cannot totally grasp all the details of what has been going on during the revolution and having a less detailed style of animation certainly helps to emphasize this. This simple-looking visualization of *Persepolis* is significant to stress tragic circumstances that are depicted in the movie instead of distracting the audiences with visuals of a colourful modern 3D animation, as Satrapi states in an Interview:

'' We made this animation in black and white because we have really different layers of narration. So going from one narration to the other one, without falling into vulgarity, this black and white style helped us to have different narrations and keeping a coherence of style.'' (Acocmando, 2008)

Nevertheless, it is simply impossible to give a correct verdict about whether the graphic novel or the animation have a better way of narrating the story than the other one. As mentioned in the synopsis, both mediums possess their individual qualities, thus they simply deliver different qualities for their followers. The readers devote their time to graphic novels in order to learn about every single aspect, characteristic, and detail of the story or the protagonist. The readers spend even more time observing every illustration or naturally try to imagine what happens between every single one of them, an aspect which helps the reader to empathize even more with the characters. Obviously, movies cannot make use of this luxury due to their time limitations. Therefore, they must take advantage of sound design and dissolves. The sound design of Persepolis, just like the animation, has a simplistic style. This aspect of sound design has been crucial to help the audience to understand the protagonist's state of mind and feelings such as her nostalgia and sense of guilt. This feature is also strengthened by the backgrounds of depictions fading either completely white or black. This technic has been used multiple times in the animation to lend a more touching perception to the audience. Additionally, since the creators of the animation have been able to concentrate only on a few topics they have opted for certain scenes or have even created new ones to support them. The Godzilla scene and the torture game played by Marjane and her friends are probably the most prominent examples. The type of details of the story that are excluded mainly concern information about the protagonist of the story. This omitted information lends the movie a more political aura, whereas in the graphic novel the whole story concentrates on the protagonist and how her feelings depend on her different living situations. As mentioned in chapter 3.2, one of Satrapi's main intentions in creating *Persepolis* was to show her audience that Iranians are not religious fanatics such as the Iranian government or the image that the Western media present about them. In this case, excluding personal information about the protagonist is an important decision because Satrapi tries to show an alternative perception of Iran and its population. Therefore, it can be claimed that the transition of the story from a graphic memoir into a political animation has been a successful adaption.

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7.Declaration of independency

Hereby, I confirm that I have independently and only with certain sources written this bachelor's thesis with the following title:
'Persepolis: a synoptic elaboration in the adaption of the story as a graphic novel and animation.'
I have pointed out all passages that I have taken word for word from literature or other sources, such as internet sites, as quotations with the relevant source references.