

## Justin's Sample

Marjane Satrapi's memoir, *Persepolis*, serves as a very powerful story in its graphic novel form. Satrapi describes her problems in life in Iran from the ages of six to fourteen through only black and white comics, which makes this stark memoir much more powerful and invigorating. But why black and white only?

### 1. Zoom Out

Justin begins with a characterization of the work as a whole.

### 2. Zoom In

Justin describes specific scenes to construct his point.

### 3. Consider the Source

Justin shows an awareness of the author and context of the work.

### 4. Consider Ambiguities

Justin is willing to entertain multiple possible meanings.

### 5. Summarize

Justin rounds out his discussion by summing up the reasons for Satrapi's use of black and white.

On page five in *Persepolis*, the top frame shows two groups of women shouting at each other. On the left, the veiled women are dressed in black, whereas on the right, the veil-less women are dressed in white. This image shows how opposite things were for Satrapi in this time period. The black indicates compliance to the war, while the white indicates freedom and rebellion. One source, Patricia Storage (2005), suggests that the alternation between black frames to white frames indicates much uncertainty during this time period in Iran. Life is so sporadic that no one knows what is coming next.

But another idea as to why Satrapi used the black and white color scheme is that it seems very childlike. She wrote this memoir in 2000, so she had the option to go back and try to relive this time period as a child. This is possibly why she decided to use black and white because it gives her a way to re-experience her childhood. In early frames, Satrapi shows herself in white (as a child) and her parents in black. Her white wardrobe reaffirms this childish spirit because she wants to help. Satrapi seems to [use] only black and white as a way to prove that a child can do a lot.

Either way, the use of black and white is ironic because something of the magnitude of a war is never as simple as black and white. Satrapi is truly a genius for using black and white in order to passionately describe to the reader what life was like for her in Iran—less colorful and more true.

## Work Cited

Storage, P. *A double life in black and white* (2005, April 7). Retrieved January 30, 2008, from [http://www.donkeys-party.com/pdfs/satrapi\\_and\\_moaveni.pdf](http://www.donkeys-party.com/pdfs/satrapi_and_moaveni.pdf)