

EXCERPTS FROM REVIEWS OF AND ARTICLES ON *PERSEPOLIS* (the film)

I. Mimi Turner, "LFF Hails 'Persepolis' Duo," *Hollywood Reporter—International Edition*, Nov. 2, 2007, Vol. 400, Issue 57, p. 12

"*Persepolis*" helmers Marjane Satrapi and Vincent Paronnaud received the Sutherland Trophy at the closing-night gala of the 51st annual Times BFI London Film Festival on Thursday at London's Odeon Cinema in Leicester Square.

The animated adaptation of Satrapi's graphic novel, which gives a girl's-eye view of Iran's Islamic revolution, was recognized as the "most imaginative first feature" screened during the two-week festival. The jury described "*Persepolis*" as "an astonishing and courageous film, which captures a universal story with real style and is irreverent, fresh, witty and also heartbreaking."

II. Adam Markovitz, "The Complete Persepolis," *Entertainment Weekly*, Issue 973, Jan. 11, 2008, p. 75.

How true are these movies to the books on which they're based?

In co-adapting her autobiographical comics about coming of age during Iran's Islamic revolution, Satrapi left out some unsavory details: a suicide attempt, a stint as a pot dealer. But most of the book's plot (and its bittersweet wit) leaps from page to screen unscathed. Fidelity-o-meter +++++

III. Nisha Gopalan, "The Life Story ('Persepolis')," *Entertainment Weekly*, Issue 963, Nov. 9, 2007, p. 65.

It may take place during Iran's Islamic revolution, but the big-screen adaptation of writer-artist Marjane Satrapi's 2003 graphic novel *Persepolis* has the makings of any kick-ass comic-book movie. Its superhero: a justice-seeking, wisecracking young girl. Her disguise: a mysterious sable veil. The nemesis: a dude who goes by the moniker of...the Ayatollah!

Nixing offers to turn her acclaimed illustrated memoir into a TV series or a big-budget Hollywood movie, Satrapi chose to codirect an animated film, making certain her bittersweet life story wouldn't be turned into an unrelatable Third World costume drama. "I'm [not only] representing lots of Iranian people," she told EW when the book was published, meaning that after 9/11, folks worldwide were counting their blessings — and their civil liberties. "I'm even representing lots of American people."

In the subtitled film, a precocious girl grows up in Tehran during the 70s and '80s, when the Shah was overthrown by radical Muslims led by the Ayatollah Khomeini. The fallout? Females had to don veils, schools became vessels for propaganda, and some of the Satrapis' loved ones were executed. "All this injustice...[made] me extremely angry," said Satrapi, who now lives in Paris. "The only way to escape...was to laugh." In the movie, her fretful mom (voiced by Catherine Deneuve) and plucky grandma (Danielle Darrieux) look on as the goofy, rebellious Marjane (Chiara Mastroianni) obsesses over boys and secretly indulges in Western offerings like, oh, Survivor's "Eye of the Tiger," A firecracker social commentary, *Persepolis* shared the Jury Prize at Cannes and has already sparked Oscar talk. Let's see Spider-Man swing that.

IV. Richard Mowe, "Persepolis," *Boxoffice*, Vol. 144, Issue 1, Jan. 2008, p. 46-7.

Anyone with lurking suspicions that animation is purely for kids should have those preconceived ideas totally overturned by Marjane Satrapi and Vincent Paronnaud's *Persepolis*, which won the shared jury prize at the Cannes Film Festival....

Drawn on a wide-ranging canvas, *Persepolis* was three years in the making. The draftsmanship is exquisite, using both color and monochrome. The voices have been astutely chosen. Besides Darrieux, Catherine

Deneuve and Chiara Mastroianni echo their real-life roles as mother and daughter, while Simon Abkarian plays Marjane's father. By turns lyrical, serious, funny and acerbic, *Persepolis* raises the bar for animation and illustrates the true power of storytelling in illuminating the world and its conflicts.

V. Lisa Nesselson, "Persepolis," *Variety*, Vol. 407, Issue 2, May 28, 2007, pp.25-6.

Narrative, which starts in 1978 and continues into the 1990s, could have been just another coming-of-age tale, but Satrapi and Paronnaud navigate their sharp melding of form and content with assurance. Result zips along with considerable humor, much of it self-deprecating, interspersed with darker material.

Animation perfectly translates Satrapi's deceptively simple black-and-white drawings. Much like Art Spiegelman's anthropomorphic cats and mice vis-a-vis the history of the Shoah in "Maus," Satrapi's expressive, pared-down style lends itself to the pleasures of everyday life as well as the horrors of war and state repression. Original books used only stark black-and-white: shades of gray and evocative backgrounds are added for the screen, along with subtle patches of color in select settings.

Made entirely in France, the three-year project required the skills of Gaul's last working animation tracers (armed with felt-tip pens) and looks terrific on a budget of \$8.1 million.

VI. Kong Ritthdee, "Fest Shelves 'Persepolis,'" *Daily Variety Gotham*, June 27, 2007, p. 9.

Bowing to pressure from Iran, the Bangkok Film Festival has dropped its opening-night pic, Cannes prize-winning animated movie "Persepolis."

"It is a good movie in artistic terms, but we have to consider other issues that might arise here," said Chattan Kunjara Na Ayutthaya of Tourism Authority of Thailand, which runs the fest.

Nixing of the Cannes jury prize co-winner leaves fest without an opener weeks before its July 19 start.

VII. Lewis Beale, "Persepolis," *Film Journal International*, Vol. 110, Issue 12, Dec. 2007, p. 66.

It's practically an epic tale, filled with almost every kind of emotion--from irony to terror--you can possibly imagine. Yet what really makes it work is not just Satrapi's brutal honesty, but her simple, highly evocative drawing style. Working with top French animator Vincent Paronnaud, the author has created the motion picture equivalent of her black-and-white panels, which practically shimmer when projected onto the screen. This stark palette is particularly effective during sequences of war and brutality, but every scene is suffused with a highly original graphic sense. *Persepolis* simply doesn't look like any other animated film you've ever seen before, and that's all to the good.

Ultimately, Satrapi's story is the best of all possible worlds: an intimate tale set against a broad historical canvas, told in an engaging artistic manner. Because of this, there is simply no reason why *Persepolis* couldn't click with audiences of all tastes and ages. It is that universal, and that good.

VIII. Ramin Zahed, "Postcards from a Revolution," *Animation*, Feb. 2008, Vol. 22, Issue 2, pp. 12-4

If you were to come up with an unlikely subject matter for an animated feature, you couldn't do better than pitch an autobiographical tale about a precocious young girl's experiences growing up in Iran during the 1979 Islamic Revolution. To make the odds even smaller, you could throw in the fact that the toon is black-and-white, hand-drawn by a small team at a French studio (2.4.7 Films in Paris) and doesn't have one single wisecracking animal sidekick! That's why it's such great news for true animation fans that Marjane Satrapi's beautiful graphic novel *Persepolis* has become such a perfect movie...

A fearless woman who loves to sprinkle her responses with sparks of humor and effortless charm, Satrapi told *The New York Times* last year that she doesn't consider herself a feminist but more of a humanist. When

confronted with questions about the role of women in Islamic countries, she said, "It's a problem for women no matter the religion or the society ... If in Muslim countries they try to cover the women, in America they try to make them look like a piece of meat!"...

After Satrapi's graphic novel became a huge global sensation, the Paris-based artist got bombarded with all kinds of wild propositions to adapt her work for other media. She laughs when she remembers how one producer wanted her to rework her book as a live-action series along the lines of *Beverly Hills 90210*. "They wanted to have Iranian characters who acted like Brenda and Dylan on that show!"...

... she's excited about the fact that her movie was chosen to represent France in the Oscars this year. "I remember how amazing it was to be picked for the Cannes Film Festival," she notes. She says she was so nervous that her mother gave her anti-anxiety pills before the screening. "Here is our movie, which is animated, it's in black and white, it's very unsexy, and they pick this movie. It's unreal. It tells us that in Europe, they're now recognizing the immigrant experience. This has always been the case in America. It's obvious that you come from somewhere else in the U.S., but in Europe, it's now a reflection that you can be European and come from another place."

And how does she feel about becoming the poster child of repressed artists all over the world? "What is interesting to me is that anywhere we show the movie, the reaction is the same. I've always said that my story is humanistic. It goes beyond Iran. Even people who don't live in repressed societies relate to the story of one family. It's about celebrating things that we all have in common."

IX. Ali Jaafair, "Iran Decries Prize....," *Daily Variety Gotham*, May 30, 2007, p. 38.

Iranian officials have protested the Cannes Film Festival's decision to award the jury prize to Marjane Satrapi's "Persepolis."...

Islamaophobia in Western drama started in France, and producing and highlighting the anti-Itanian film 'Persepolis' in Cannes falls in line with Islamophobia." said Mehdi Kalhor. a cultural adviser to Iranian prexy Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Aii Akbiir Velayati. tormer foreign minister and adviser to Ayatollah Aii Khatiienei, said the French-produced film is another example of U.S. attempts to "encourage forces opposed to the authorities in any way possible."

X. Anna Smith, "Persepolis," *BBC*, April 22, 2008, http://www.bbc.co.uk/films/2008/04/21/persepolis_2008_review.shtml

... The predominantly black-and-white animation is used to amusing effect as Satrapi gently pokes fun at her youthful exuberance and innocence, making serious political points easy to swallow. The lack of sense of direction is the film's only let-down.

Despite dealing with adult themes such as interrogation, imprisonment, drugs and sexual awakenings, there's a delightfully childlike element to Persepolis. Initially, much of the action is seen through the bright but naive eyes of the young Marjane, a playful, feisty child who's quick to judge - a trait that is frequently funny....

Satrapi is also very observant when it comes to gender relations, humorously describing her early fumbles with male students with a cunning eye for detail. Such scenes should help young women, in particular, relate to a film that might sound off-puttingly serious in principle. It's a very personal film, and therefore far from definitive when it comes to its political message. But it's an engaging and accessible story of a very eventful life.

XI. Anthony Lane, "The Current Cinema: Settling Scores, *The New Yorker*, Dec. 24, 2007, http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/cinema/2007/12/24/071224crici_cinema_lane?currentPage=1.

The film is largely in black-and-white, yet the result, far from seeming gloomy, has the pertness and the simplicity of a cutout. I found it, if anything, too simple. The faces are no more than tapered ovals, which

makes some of the characters hard to distinguish, and I was left with the nagging, if ungallant, impression that I had been flipping through a wipe-clean board book entitled “Miffy and Friends Play with Islamic Fundamentalism.” There is no denying the boldness of “Persepolis,” both in design and in moral complaint, but there must surely be moments, in Marjane’s life as in ours, that cry out for cross-hatching and the grown-up grayness of doubt.

XII. Richard Corliss and Mary Corliss, “Persepolis Finds Love in the Afternoon,” *Time Magazine*, May 23, 2007, <http://www.time.com/time/arts/article/0,8599,1624714,00.html>.

A funny, sometimes dark, always affecting story of surviving the worst through a sense of humor

XIII. David Edelstein, “It’s Gusher!” *New York Magazine*, Dec. 14, 2007, <http://nymag.com/movies/reviews/42087>.

Persepolis is an exhilarating reminder of what animation can do that other media can’t. Not the computer-generated, multidimensional animation that now dominates Hollywood: With zillion-dollar budgets and batteries of gag writers and armies of artists and programmers, even wonderful CGI movies—say, Brad Bird’s *The Incredibles* and *Ratatouille*—lack the personal touch. *Persepolis*, from the graphic novels of Marjane Satrapi, feels as if it had jumped right from the page to the screen. And since the novels feel as if they had jumped right from Satrapi’s head to the page, the immediacy is startling.

Jon Davies, “A Polite Way of Being Desperate: An Interview with Marjane Satrapi,” *Cineaction*, 2008, Issue 75, pp58-61
Jon Davies, “A Polite Way of Being Desperate: An Interview with Marjane Satrapi,” *Cineaction*, 2008, Issue 75, pp. 58-61.

Persepolis is the darkly humorous adaptation of Paris-based Marjane Satrapi's candid graphic novels about her coming of age in Iran and in Austria. Directed by Satrapi and fellow comics artist Vincent Paronnaud, the film is one of the most ambitious and successful attempts at conveying through animation the Interplay between past and present, fantasy and reality, and perhaps most of all, the author's inner life and the wider social and political conflicts unfolding around her. *Persepolis* is the darkly humorous adaptation of Paris-based Marjane Satrapi's candid graphic novels about her coming of age in Iran and in Austria. Directed by Satrapi and fellow comics artist Vincent Paronnaud, the film is one of the most ambitious and successful attempts at conveying through animation the Interplay between past and present, fantasy and reality, and perhaps most of all, the author's inner life and the wider social and political conflicts unfolding around her.

While *Persepolis* is trenchantly critical of all social and political injustice - and perhaps even more so, stupidity, apathy and cruelty—it is always first and foremost about Marjane....The film is so moving because of Marjane, and the contrast It develops between her rebellious, fanciful and very open mind and the obscene terrors and laws of the world outside is as stark as the rift between her family home —where one is free to shed the constricting veil—and the heavily monitored and guarded city streets.

As a salve, the film mines black comedy from the most tragic situations, particularly as the hard times depicted bring out the worst in people. Early in the film the casual commonplaceness of horror is conveyed as Marjane and the neighborhood kids cavalierly play "torture" and scheme to tear a boy's eyes out for his father's rumored involvement in the Shah's secret police. (This also neatly summarizes how easily hearsay and scapegoating can whip the populace into a bloodthirsty frenzy.) Other scenes—particularly those of young Marjane spending time with her uncle in and out of prison—are almost unspeakably sad. In this case it is because *Persepolis* itself fulfills Uncle Anoush's wishes that his story of the good fight be told because the "family memory must live on." The directors also heavy-heartedly capture the bitter ironies of history: how everyone suddenly boasted of being revolutionaries *after* the Shah had fallen; and the struggle to keep one's integrity when forced to lie and cheat just to stay alive. Thankfully, Marjane's grandmother (Danielle Darrieux)—an elegant, staunch woman who perfumes her brassiere with jasmine—acts as Marjane's conscience, and her loving, endlessly empathetic parents (Catherine Deneuve and Simon Abkarian) are hugely supportive as well. The combination of the voice actors with the boldly drawn characters brings these real-world people to life with more poignancy and pathos than live-action cinema ever could.