Perspective Taking & Persepolis
When I was very young, I had a recurrent daydream that the whole world was just a show put on for my benefit, that unless I was present to see things, they just ceased to exist.
LATER in life, I found OTHERS who had SIMILAR daydreams as children. None of us ever really BELIEVED these theories, but we had all been FASCINATED by the fact that they could not be DISPROVED!

EVEN today, as I write and draw this panel, I have NO GUARANTEE that ANYTHING exists outside of what my FIVE SENSES report to me.*

I’VE NEVER BEEN TO MOROCCO, but I TAKE IT ON FAITH that there IS a MOROCCO! I’VE NEVER SEEN THE EARTH FROM SPACE firsthand, yet I trust that the EARTH is ROUND.

I’VE NEVER BEEN IN THE HOUSE across the street, yet I assume it has an INTERIOR. Yet you assume that IT ISN’T just some big MOVIE set?

IN this panel, you can’t even see my LEGS, yet you assume that they’re THERE.

EVEN though they’re NOT!

AS INFANTS, we’re UNABLE to commit that act of faith. If we can’t SEE IT, HEAR IT, SMELL IT, TASTE IT or TOUCH IT, IT ISN’T THERE!

THE game "PEEK-A-BOO" plays on this idea. Gradually, we all learn that even though the SIGHT of MOMMY comes and goes, MOMMY REMAINS.

Yet our SENSES can only REVEAL a world that is FRAGMENTED and INCOMPLETE.

Even the most WIDELY TRAVELLED mind can only see so much of the world in the course of a LIFE.

Our PERCEPTION of "REALITY" is an act of FAITH, based on mere FRAGMENTS.
ISSUES IN CLOSURE

In our daily lives, we often commit closure, mentally completing that which is incomplete based on past experience.

Closure can take many forms. Some simple, some complex.

Sometimes, a mere shape or outline is enough to trigger closure.

The mental process described in Chapter Two, whereby these lines become a face could be considered closure.

In recognizing and relating to other people, we all depend heavily on our learned ability of closure.

Every time we see a photograph reproduced in a newspaper or magazine, we commit closure.

Our eyes take in the fragmented, black-and-white image of the "half-tone" patterns.

And our minds transform it into the "reality.

---Of the photograph!
THIS IS ME WHEN I WAS 10 YEARS OLD. THIS WAS IN 1980.
SEE THAT SPACE BETWEEN THE PANELS? THAT'S WHAT COMICS AFICIONADOS HAVE NAMED "THE GUTTER!"

AND DESPITE ITS UNCEREMONIOUS TITLE, THE GUTTER PLAYS HOST TO MUCH OF THE MAGIC AND MYSTERY THAT ARE AT THE VERY HEART OF COMICS!

COMICS PANELS FRACTURE BOTH TIME AND SPACE, OFFERING A JAGGED, STACCATO RHYTHM OF UNCONNECTED MOMENTS.

BUT CLOSURE ALLOWS US TO CONNECT THESE MOMENTS AND MENTALLY CONSTRUCT A CONTINUOUS, UNIFIED REALITY.

HERE IN THE LIMBO OF THE GUTTER, HUMAN IMAGINATION TAKES TWO SEPARATE IMAGES AND TRANSFORMS THEM INTO A SINGLE IDEA.

IF VISUAL ICONOGRAPHY IS THE VOCABULARY OF COMICS, CLOSURE IS ITS GRAMMAR.

AND SINCE OUR DEFINITION OF COMICS HINGES ON THE ARRANGEMENT OF ELEMENTS--

--THEN, IN A VERY REAL SENSE, COMICS IS CLOSURE!
This is me when I was 10 years old. This was in 1980.

And this is a class photo. I’m sitting on the far left so you don’t see me. From left to right: GOLNAZ, MAHSHID, NARINE, MINNA.
Step inside a point of view:

In the page you are working with:

- What do the characters (and the author) perceive and feel?
- What might they know about or believe?
- What might they care about?

*What evidence do you have for your response? What information is missing?*
THE VEIL

THIS IS ME WHEN I WAS 10 YEARS OLD. THIS WAS IN 1980.

AND THIS IS A CLASS PHOTO. I'M SITTING ON THE FAR LEFT SO YOU DON'T SEE ME. FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: GOLNAZ, MAHSOD, NARINE, MIRNA.

IN 1979 A REVOLUTION TOOK PLACE. IT WAS LATER CALLED "THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION".

THEN CAME 1980: THE YEAR IT BECAME OBLIGATORY TO WEAR THE VEIL AT SCHOOL.

WE DIDN'T REALLY LIKE TO WEAR THE VEIL, ESPECIALLY SINCE WE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHY WE HAD TO.

IT'S TOO HOT OUT!

EXECUTION IN THE NAME OF FREEDOM.

GIVE ME MY VEIL BACK!

EXECUTION IN THE NAME OF DARKNESS.

YOU'LL WALK TO YOUR FEET!

GOOD RIDE!
And also because the year before, in 1979, we were in a French non-religious school.

Where boys and girls were together.

And then suddenly in 1980...

All bilingual schools must be closed down.

They are symbols of capitalism.

Of decadence.

We found ourselves veiled and separated from our friends.

This is called a "Cultural Revolution."

And that was that...
EVERYWHERE IN THE STREETS THERE WERE DEMONSTRATIONS FOR AND AGAINST THE VEIL.

AT ONE OF THE DEMONSTRATIONS, A GERMAN JOURNALIST TOOK A PHOTO OF MY MOTHER.

I WAS REALLY PROUD OF HER. HER PHOTO WAS PUBLISHED IN ALL THE EUROPEAN NEWSPAPERS.

AND EVEN IN THE MAGAZINE IN IRAN, MY MOTHER WAS REALLY SCARED.

SHE DYED HER HAIR, AND WORE DARK GLASSES FOR A LONG TIME.
I really didn’t know what to think about the veil. Deep down I was very religious but as a family we were very modern and avant-garde.

I was born with religion.

At the age of six I was already sure I was the last prophet. This was a few years before the revolution.

Before me there had been a few others:

O’Celestial Right!

I am the last prophet.

A woman?

I wanted to be a prophet.

Because our maid did not eat with us.

Because my father had a Cadillac.

And, above all, because my grandmother’s knees always ached.

Come here, Mary! Help me to stand up.

Don’t worry. Soon you won’t have any more pain. You’ll see.
LIKE ALL MY PREDECESSORS
I HAD MY HOLY BOOK.

THE FIRST THREE RULES CAME FROM ZARATHUSTRA. HE WAS
THE FIRST PROPHET IN MY COUNTRY BEFORE THE ARAB INVASION.

YOU MUST BASE EVERYTHING ON
THESE THREE RULES:
BEHAVE WELL,
SPEAK WELL,
ACT WELL.

I ALSO WANTED US TO CELEBRATE THE TRADITIONAL
ZARATHUSTRIAN HOLIDAYS, LIKE THE FIRE CEREMONY.

BEFORE THE PERSIAN NEW YEAR, NOWRUZ,
on March 21st, the first day of spring.

ONLY MY GRANDMOTHER KNEW ABOUT MY BOOK.

RULE NUMBER SIX: EVERYBODY SHOULD HAVE A CAR.

RULE NUMBER SEVEN: ALL MAIDS SHOULD
EAT AT THE TABLE WITH THE OTHERS.

RULE NUMBER EIGHT: NO OLD PERSON
SHOULD HAVE TO SUFFER.

IN THAT CASE,
I’LL BE YOUR FIRST DISCIPLE.

REALLY?

BUT THEN HOW WILL YOU ARRANGE
FOR OLD PEOPLE NOT TO SUFFER?

IT WILL SIMPLY BE FORBIDDEN.
Every night I had a big discussion with God.

God, give me some more time. I am not quite ready yet.

Yes, you are. Celestial light, you are my choice. My last and my best choice.

Except for my grandmother, I was obviously the only one who believed in myself.

What do you want to be when you grow up?

I'll be a prophet.

Haha! Haha! Haha!

She's crazy.

My parents were called in by the teacher.

Your child is disturbed. She wants to become a prophet.

What about it?

Doesn't this worry you?

No! Not at all!
Nonetheless, my parents were puzzled.

So tell me, my only child, what do you want to be when you grow up?

I want to be a doctor.

That's fine, my love. That's fine.

I felt guilty towards God.

You want to be a doctor? I thought that...

No, no, I will be a prophet but they mustn't know.

I wanted to be justice, love and the wrath of God all in one.