

A representação da mulher na história em quadrinho Persépolis (2007)

The representation of women in the comic book Persepolis (2007)

Resumo

O artigo aborda a temática da mulher islâmica e seu retrato em sua cultura com base na história em quadrinho Persépolis (2007) de Marjane Satrapi. A personagem conta sua trajetória de vida como uma menina que teve a liberdade retirada por um regime fundamentalista, além de presenciar a morte de pessoas queridas, a guerra entre Irã e Iraque, a mudança de país para fugir da opressão e abuso contra as mulheres, o encontro com outra cultura e a tentativa de descobrir a si mesma no caminho. É possível ver a rebelião do povo Iraniano em busca de sua liberdade, a criação de uma jovem menina sendo formada com consciência de classe, o quadrinho tenta quebrar os paradigmas da visão errada que outros povos têm do Irã.

Abstract

The article addresses the theme of Islamic women and their portrayal in their culture based on the comic book Persepolis (2007) by Marjane Satrapi. The character tells her life story as a girl who had her freedom taken away by a fundamentalist regime, in addition to witnessing the death of loved ones, the war between Iran and Iraq, changing countries to escape oppression and abuse against women, the encounter with another culture and the attempt to discover oneself along the way. It is possible to see the rebellion of the Iranian people in search of their freedom, the creation of a young girl being formed with class consciousness, the comic tries to break the paradigms of the wrong view that other people have of Iran.

Palavras-chave: Persépolis; Histórias em quadrinho; Mulher islâmica.

Keywords: Persepolis; Comics; Islamic woman.

Introduction

The comic book Persepolis is an account of Marjane Satrapi's life story, created with the aim of raising awareness about the internal wars that the Iranian people have gone through over the years. Iran, being in a well-located geographical area, attracted invaders such as Alexander

the Great, neighboring Arab countries, Turks, Mongols and in the future, looking for oil, Great Britain.

Marjane tries to show another view of the Iranian people, a perspective from within the country that is constantly associated with fundamentalism, fanaticism and terrorism and the people's struggle for freedom, against oppressive regimes that killed many Iranians and the search for remembrance of those who lost their lives in war and in prison defending his freedom.

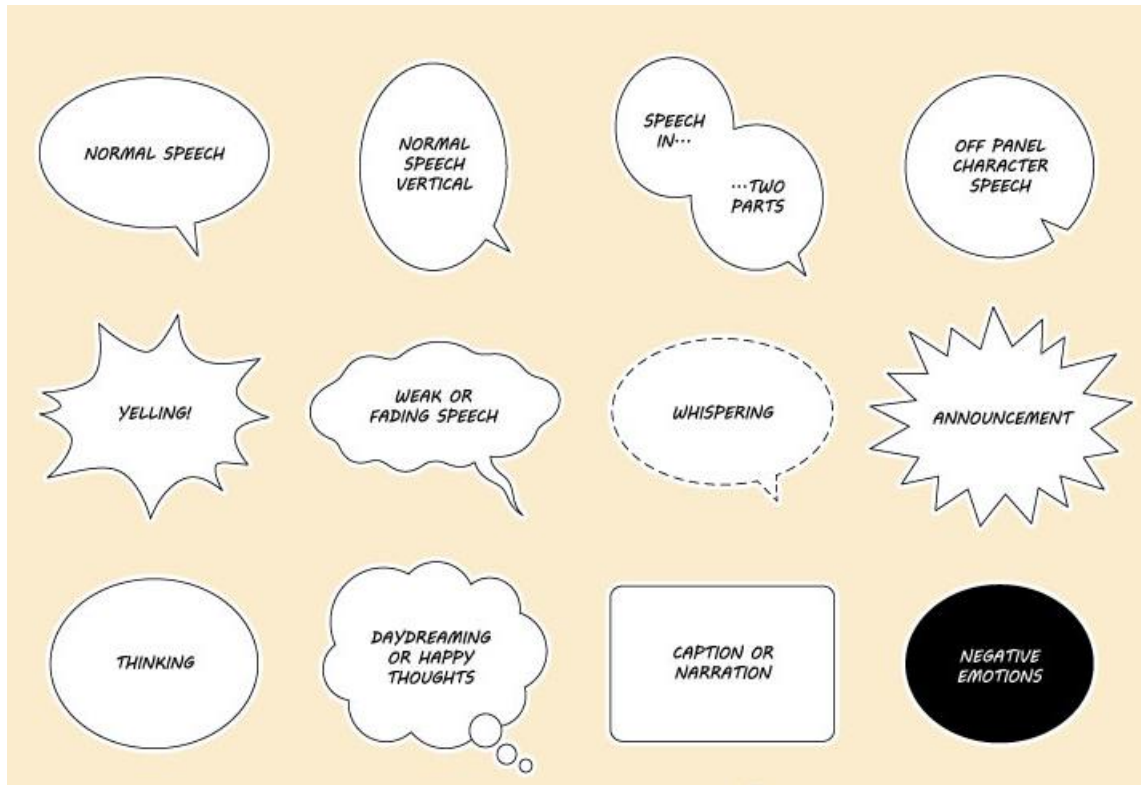
The comic consists of images of Marjane as a child, teenager and adult, and her family. In his games and his fertile imagination when talking to God every night, in addition to seeing and mentioning other great revolutionary names and philosophers such as Che Guevara, Fidel Castro, Trotsky, Marx and Descartes are some names that appear and they are great influences in your life, as they are names that contributed in some way to their people or worldwide. The pages are composed of frames of images and balloons of thoughts and speeches, the character is ironic and humorous, trying to tell his story in a less dense way, but showing the punishment of prisoners who were considered rebels, the death of acquaintances and the revolt of the people against the regime.

It is possible to see the relationship between women and religion, the oppression that society faced against religious and political fundamentalism, families who lost their homes, young friends who fled to other countries in search of a life away from war. Marjane ends up running away at the age of fourteen on her parents' orders and having to live in a completely different country, face prejudice, the new culture, her relationship with new people, being expelled from the house she lived in, personal problems and his relationship with his country of birth.

Elements of comic books and sequential art

Sequential Arts is a mix texts with visuals. In relation to comic books, they have several elements such as balloons, emanatas, lettering and shots. According to cartoonist Will Eisner (2005), visual narrative that uses a sequence of images can be considered a comic book. In addition, another cartoonist Scott McCloud says that through comics can have a huge number of images and ideas, the comic books present a plethora of unlimited connections between the messages and the visuality.

The balloons are speech acts. There are several types such as balloons to express speech, thought, shout, whisper, love, and idea. In addition to these examples, there are many other forms of expression in comics, with diverse ways to express different feelings and actions.



Anime Outline, 2024.

Graphic storytelling - a generic description of any storytelling that uses pictures to convey ideas. Films and stories fall into the category of graphic narratives.

Narrator - the writer or person who controls the narrative.

Comics - the printed arrangement of art and balloons in sequence, particularly as done in comic books.

Sequential art - a series of images arranged in sequence.

In the elements that contain the comic we have the balloons that contain the dialogues spoken by the characters in the story. They come in different shapes and sizes to indicate different types of speech. Inside comics contain sound effects are visual representations of sound, such as "pow" or "boom", and help to enhance the action in the story.



Layout is the way panels are arranged on a page known as layout, which can affect the pace and flow of the story and can be used to create dramatic effects. Captions are blocks of text that provide additional information about the story or characters. They can be used to describe a scene or provide background information.

Art Style refers to the way images are drawn and colored. Distinctive styles can be used to create different moods or convey different emotions. These styles can change according to the model of comics worked like Cartoon, Charge, Strip, Webtoon and Oriental Comics (manhwa, manhwas, and manga).

Comics are a unique form of storytelling that combine visual and textual elements to create a rich and engaging storytelling experience. Over the years, it has become extraordinarily popular with young people and adults alike, creating several generations of readers, who have reserved the word about comics all over the world.

According to Eisner (1989), sequential art is an element that sews fabrics, the first elements mentioned are the writer and the artist, where both are linked to each other's ideas. In the application of "writing" he warns about the possible identity conflict between the writer and the artist, who working separately can lead to conflicts.

He talks about how the "word" and the art are inseparable because depending on the theme addressed in the comic, it can lead to a lack of meaning if it does not contain either the "word" or the art.

In the work of applying the "word" he illustrates with a comic of a fugitive, having a version with writing and another without writing, we can observe that the text in the comic can change the meaning or even the intention of the work, being able to affect the humor. Other elements present are "story and image", "story development", "omission of text", "addition of text/art".

“In view of this interdependence there is no choice (in fairness to the art from itself) but to recognize the primacy of the writing. In doing so, however, one must then immediately acknowledge that in a perfect (or pure) configuration the writer and the artist should be embodied in the same person. The writing (or the writer) must be in control to the very end.” (EISNER, 1989)

Sequential art is, then, a method applied to comic books, with an essential purpose for reproduction, where it is important to observe the aesthetics and techniques applied, where mastery of drawing and writing becomes indispensable, using different tools to tell its story and the writer needs to possess diverse knowledge to create an art form that combines diverse elements within itself.

Women in Islamic culture

Islamic culture is much discussed outside the scope of culture, and it is often remembered how women are treated and represented within the Islamic community. When talking about this representation, we must consider that Islamic culture is not unique, but rather varied in its forms of interpretation. Women who come from within this culture have two ways of fighting, against the text that tries to justify discrimination against them and the fight against xenophobia against Islamists and Muslims.

According to Kharroub (2015), we can notice several controversies in the reading of the Quran, in this matter we can see five elements and evidence that show that the Quran was read according to the needs of its time, in addition to men implying elements that "stated" the obligatory submission of women to men. The struggle of Muslim and Islamic women to combat the misogynistic view of Islamists based on their interpretation of themselves, trying to combat oppression and maintain their faith, since being a woman and fighting for their rights does not make them less of a believer in their faith.

Still according to Kharroub (2015) men of their times interpret the Quran, far from the time we live in and marked by patriarchal society. Islamic laws are based first on the Quran, then on the Sunnah, the word of the prophet and when the Quran and the Sunnah are not sufficient to define *ijtihad*. *Ijtihad* is the interpretation that complements the law according to the community, according to its customs. Muslims are free to choose the best interpretation for their community. Based on these words, the laws were understood in the way that was predominant at the time, marking this patriarchy, oppressing, and stealing women's rights. This

struggle stands out due to the current reinterpretation of the Quran. Because it was interpreted in ancient times, where women were oppressed, they ask for this to change, without questioning their faith, because what they want is to be recognized as equal and respected.

"The concept of patriarchy has been used in international feminist literature to mean the power relations between men and women. Women are subordinate to men in the patriarchal system. The combination with Marxist theory occurs to build a material basis for these power relations. At this point, Hartmann (1981, p.1-42) speaks of the partnership between the capitalist system and patriarchy, noting, however, that the incorporation of patriarchal relations of domination into the capitalist system has resulted in an unhappy marriage between feminism and Marxism, since economic relations always constitute the main factor of explanation." (Aguiar, 2011)

The reading of ijtiḥād by men allowed them the freedom to create a society based on their interests and maintain it to this day as they protect their interests and rights, their words, over women, denying them their rights.

Kharroub (2015) says that there is a non-patriarchal reading of the Quran, which shows that in the beginning there was equality between all humans. God created human, male and female, and despite the differences between humans such as race and gender, they were all equal, only being differentiated by their moral choices and piety. All genders were created from the same soul and called each other's guardians in a relationship of cooperation, never domination. However, some verses seem to have their faces, having an opening for another interpretation and encouraging male dominance. In verse 34th in Surat al-Nisa' is where the words are commonly interpreted in another way, where it is possible throughout the verse to understand in two diverse ways, but what prevailed was what gave power to men in the patriarchal hierarchical vision. The Quran describes something of a specific situation from a different time, but describes that women have complete freedom to reject any male action.

The example presented is just one among different examples that can be presented under patriarchal dominance that are contested by Islamic feminist women, while Arab and Muslim laws and codes restrict women from their freedom and rights, interpreting in a way that women have that being submissive to men, having a husband, not being able to divorce, being forced to accept polygamy, not marrying a non-Muslim, these ways of interpreting the Quran are based on male domination and that try in any way to have support in texts religious.

The context of the Quran matters, as it changes according to time and the needs of the people, its interpretation was influenced by history and geopolitical context, many need to be understood according to the time in which it was passing. Another example that is cited several times to affirm male superiority in Islam is Surat al-Baqara 282, where it takes place in a justice process and it is said that if there are not two men to testify, it is necessary to have one man and two women. This verse is another element to say that the woman is inferior to the man because her word is worth less than his, but if it is possible to read it another way, at the time it was written, the woman had no knowledge about commercial matters, so this verse cannot be taken into account to say that men are superior to women, since the Prophet Umar ibin Khattab placed a woman to manage a market in Medina, these elements present in the Quran are small things that are counted and controlled by the patriarchy through its own way of reading and above all for control.

The verses of the Quran are read according to the context in which it was revealed, as it talks about the social conditions in which the people were going through, they are elements of their times and contexts, but they need to be read as a whole, not just cutting verses. The schools of thought of Islamic jurisprudence, formed by Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, Hanbali and Ja'fari, were considered by Muslim countries, where they agree with the basic principles of Islamic law, in which the reading changes with time and place, it must serve the public interest, not cause harm and can be discarded if its cause disappears. At this point, it is reinforced that what was previously revealed is not necessarily applied today, as interpretations change according to time and place.

The rights of Muslim women are possible to be achieved, Islamic philosophy is always open to change as they must serve public interests, which include women, and rationality, where that law is no longer necessary and ceases to exist. In this way, women's rights can be achieved through these methods and forms.

Change for women must start from within Islam, as Muslim women have an active role in re-reading the Quran and revealing the prejudices that are directed at women and have been implanted in the interpretation of the Quran. To begin change, it is necessary that the religious environment begins to get rid of these prejudices that have existed for several centuries. Muslim women are religious and do not see the Western feminist perspective in a good light, so these previous approaches are necessary so that change comes from within the Islamic sphere, so that they do not necessarily have to follow some model predicted by the West, as they are not models to be followed, not everything happens in a specific way and without variations, which is why

it is important that Muslim women continue to fight their struggles in the most appropriate way for their religion, to be able to understand other women who are not yet on the path of liberation from the chains that hold their rights and freedoms.

Persépolis is a complete comic of elements that are referenced in the article by Kharroub (2015) and how the society lived in Persépolis got there, we can see these characteristics of the female struggle, how women were constantly facing the patriarchy system, and which opens an expansion to the vision of several women who lived and live this system. Marjane recounts in detail her life in Iran (and after), seeing the entire war between the population affect her entire scope of experience, interrupting several lives, oppressing not only women by the patriarchy, but all the people who fought against the political regime.

Persepolis and the Islamic woman

In the comic analyzed, Persepolis by Marjane Satrapi, the author recounts her experience living during and after the Islamic Revolution, where she saw women losing their rights and freedoms in society and being oppressed within the culture they valued so much.

The Iranian revolution occurred in 1979 when Iran stopped being a pro-Western autocratic monarchy, with Mohammad Reza Pahlevi as the Shah (equivalent to a king) and became a theocratic Islamic republic under the command of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Khomeini brought a Shia Islamic theocracy into government, reigniting a centuries-old people's struggle between the Shia and Sunni people. This division of Shiite and Sunni was due to the succession of the prophet Muhammad, as the Shiites argued that Muhammad's successor should come from their lineage, being a relative or a direct successor of the prophet, thus designating Ali, Muhammad's cousin, and husband of his daughter Fátima. The Sunnis, on the other hand, argued that the successor should be chosen by a council of community members. Medina leaders held a meeting and chose Abu Bakr, Muhammad's father-in-law.

Therefore, the 1979 revolution transformed the Shiite and Sunni people into a power struggle between the Iranians and the Saudis for dominance in the Middle East. Khomeini led the Shiite revolution but led the Sunnis to have a more extremist reaction, resulting in the creation of Al Qaeda and the Islamic State. During this government, the prohibition of various elements that were considered westernized such as makeup, films, music and even skirts began, from then on, the obligation to wear the veil and the use of physical punishments arose.

Marjane reports the difficulties she went through being a woman in her culture, when she was still a child, she had to hide so she could have freedom. Her parents were considered rebels and fought for the freedom of their country, but in a hidden way as the rebels were killed and unfortunately Marjane lost an uncle during the war (as well as other loved ones).

In Marjane's community, women were oppressed and forced to hide in their hijab, and as a child she was forced to follow women, as not even young girls were free. Her parents spared her from the obligations imposed by the government and always taught her to impose herself without attracting attention from conservatives and to avoid problems that could happen living in Iran.

We can observe in Satrapi's work historical moments and the vision of a child who suffered with the Islamic Revolution and the entire war that was fought between people. Marjane lost loved ones, lost her home, in a way lost her life to the regime that forced her to live in a socially oppressed way, just for the pleasure of those who were running the government and the patriarchy, which as seen previously was and still He is the one who commands everything.

Marjane's family fought against the dictatorship, fighting against capitalism and the oppression of its people, going to demonstrations, and always teaching Marjane about class consciousness. As a child she still observed her friends and what her family had, and her school friends did not. At a certain point, during the installation of the regime, she is forced to wear the hijab and go to an all-girls school, she observes the struggle of women, the concern of her parents when raising a girl in the regime in which they lived, the oppression she would suffer and were looking for a better way to take care of their daughter.

Marjane enters an internal conflict when her parents send her to Vienna to escape the oppressive regime. In another country, she experiences the cultural clash between East and West, observing people's different behavior and her strangeness in relation to them as well as their strangeness to her. Her life was a true rollercoaster of emotion and knowledge, at the age of fourteen she went to live in a country with a culture and politics different from the one she had known, before the age of ten, when the regime began, she was a free child and found herself imprisoned and oppressed by government men, her classmates were instructed to start wearing the hijab and they didn't understand why they had to wear it, at first they used it as a joke, until they were threatened with punishment. Everything Marjane liked was banned, things from the West were banned and even the music she listened to was no longer allowed, not publicly,

everything was done in secret, the posters that her father brought were in secret so that they wouldn't be punished for it, the Connection with the West was severed, trying to avoid any "influence" on the population, which could lead them to lives far from religion.

More religiously fervent women screamed for the obligation of the hijab, while others screamed for their freedom, for their rights to be who they are and not have to hide because of the patriarchy, because of the fundamentalist regime. Marjane did not know what to say or think about the hijab because she was a child who was born with religion, she was religious and at the same time her family was modern and advanced, fighting for everyone's civil rights.



Satrapi, 2007.

Marjane at the beginning of *Persepolis* comments on being a religious child, who was born with religion, and we can notice the theme about the clash between religion, faith, and women's fight for their rights, she was still a child when she questioned herself about this. Women are questioned about their faith if they do not fulfill the obligations that the patriarchy, the government made up of men, demands. Marjane argues that women should have the freedom to choose whether to wear the hijab, as a woman should not be banned from wearing the hijab nor should she be forced to wear it. In some cases, Islamic women are prohibited from wearing their veil, but just like the obligation to wear it, the prohibition is equivalent to the same element of wanting to order what a woman should or should not wear. According to what was analyzed by Kharroub (2015), there is no obligation to wear this clothing, but as mentioned in the comic it is said that the sun's rays that hit the strands of hair excite men, demonstrating once again that women She cannot wear what she wants because of male desire, always thinking about how she will be seen on the street by a man. We know that no matter what a woman is wearing, there will always be a danger to her personal safety, many women are harassed every day around the world, no matter what a woman is wearing, her appearance or age, a woman is

never safe anywhere. Therefore, any speech about short clothes (which is the most common thing we see) should not be taken into consideration because several cases that we can see in the media of women being harassed are not because of short clothes, which is yet another way of discrediting women but rather the non-existent character of the criminal who commits these nefarious acts.



Satrapi, 2007.

It is possible to see in a page of the comic where Marjane's mother was attacked in the street, it shook her, left her mentally shaken for days, after that the veil was officially made mandatory, where they used a terrible speech about the shine of the hair of women excites men. The women began to hide; they were forced to do this. On the streets of Iran there were soldiers and a group of women whose job was to analyze the way women who were walking through the streets were wearing their veils, if they were not covering their hair properly or even wearing a different brooch, they were taken to trial, running the risk of being flogged for not complying with what the government demanded. Marjane was sometimes arrested in these places, on other occasions she ran away and on other occasions she tried to disguise herself by complaining to the soldiers so that they wouldn't notice some element of her clothing.



Satrapi, 2007.

We can observe that when the Islamic revolution began it affected everyone, but especially women and the reading of the Quran needs to be mentioned again so that we can observe that patriarchy is installed at the root of society with its false verses, readings that have as the main motivation the neglect of civil rights. During the war, several human rights were violated, not only of women but also of men, who were tortured for not following laws imposed by the regime, as well as children, which is explicit in Marjane's story, children being treated as if they were women, forced to hide because of man's desire.



Satrapi, 2007.

Over the years, Islamic women have sought out their rights and today they still fight to be respected and treated equally in the society in which they live. On the internet we can follow the movements of these women's struggles. In 2022, CNN Brazil wrote an article about the women's revolt in Kerman. we were able to follow the protests in the city of Kerman, Iran, where a woman died after being arrested for improper use of the hijab. A woman, without a hijab, cut her hair in front of thousands of people and several cameras pointed at her, causing a huge uproar among conservatives who saw the scene, both those who were present and those who saw images/videos on the internet.

Scenes of Islamic feminist women grow more and more and relate more to religious issues and wanting to move away from political oppression, these women constantly seek to reread the Quran, the holy book of Islam, in the way it is presented, with gender equality. In

different Islamic and Muslim communities, they seek this equality, the right based on their faith, without conservative oppression. We, as people from the West, must support the causes of these women, just as we daily fight against patriarchy on "our side", which, even though it is the same type of fight, is still very different from one situation to another. The Islamic feminism group is growing more and more and there are women who do not like the westernized term, but other women claim to be Islamic feminist women, who are still believers in their faith and fight for their freedom in different ways that are constantly deprived.

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