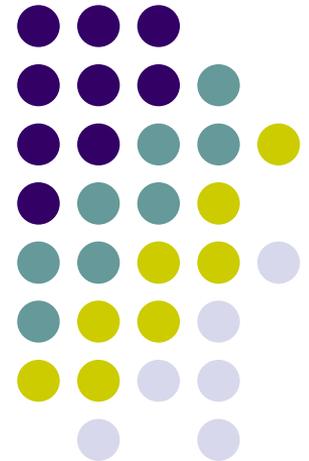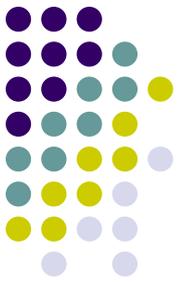# **Persepolis**

Considerations When
Reading a Graphic Novel

Figures

- Faces
  - Portrait – depicts an actual person
  - Iconic – represent an idea or group of people
  - They can be dramatic when placed against a detailed backdrop; a bright face stands out
  - Open blank – drawn without much expression or detail; invites the audience to imagine what the character is feeling without telling them
- Hands/Feet positioning can express what is happening.
  - Hands raised with palms out suggest surprise
  - Wringing of hands suggest obsequiousness or discomfort
  - Hands over mouth depict fear, shame, or shyness
 - Turned in feet may denote embarrassment

Text
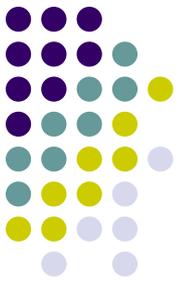
- Captions – boxes containing a variety of text elements, including scene-setting and description
- Speech balloons – enclose dialogue and come from a specific speaker's mouth; they vary in size, shape, and layout and can alternate to depict a conversation
  - External dialogue – speech between characters
  - Internal dialogue – enclosed by a balloon that has a series of dots or bubbles going up to it
- Special-effects lettering – method of drawing attention to text; it often highlights onomatopoeia and reinforces the impact of words such as *bang* or *wow*
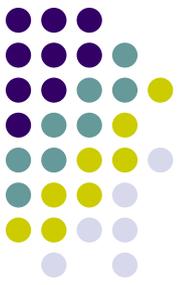
Layout
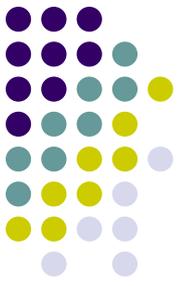
- Panel – a distinct segment of the comic, containing a combination of image and text in endless variety
    - Spatial arrangement allows an immediate juxtaposition of the present and the past
    - Transitions are instantaneous and direct but the exact timing of the reader's experience is determined by focus and reading speed.
- Frame – the lines and borders that contain the panels
- Gutter – the space between framed panels
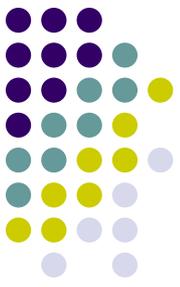
More Layout

- Bleed – an image that extends to and/or beyond the edge of the page

- Foreground – the panel closest to the viewer

- Midground – allows centering of image by using natural resting place for vision.
  - The artist deliberately decides to place the image where a viewer would be most likely to look first.
  - Placing an image off-center or near the top or bottom can be used to create visual tension but using the midground permits the artist to create a more readily accepted image.

Even More Layout

- Background – provides additional, subtextual information for the reader
- Graphic weight – describes the way some images draw the eye more than others, creating a definite focus using color and shading in various ways including:
  - Light and dark shades; dark-toned images or high-contrast images draw the eye more than light or low-contrast images do
  - A pattern or repeated series of marks
 - Colors that are more brilliant or deeper than others on the page

Page 3
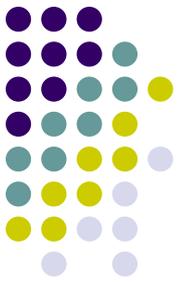
- How do the frames and gutters match the mood?

- Where do gutters begin to change? Why?

- How many panels? How are panels the same? How are they different?

- What do you learn from the captions?
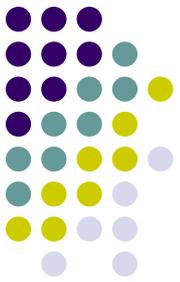
- Look at the second panel where the author is sitting with a group of little girls all wearing veils. The caption reveals that we can see only a little bit of the author's arm.

- What is the significance of this caption to the other captions on this page?

- What is the author foreshadowing?
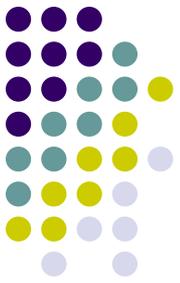
- Look at third panel that shows a number of people protesting.

- How does this panel compare to the others?

- What does darkness symbolize?