**In *The Complete Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi, how does the symbol of the veil highlight tension between religiously fundamental Iranian culture and secular western culture?**

In *The Complete Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi, the author narrates her autobiography through a series of graphical anecdotes. From her memories of a religiously fundamental Iranian regime to her experiences in a liberal Austria, Satrapi illustrates the significant chapters of her life frame by frame. One of the most notable transitions in Satrapi’s life occurs when, after entering repeated conflict over cultural conformation with her teachers in Iran, her parents send her off to Vienna to pursue a secular education. When Satrapi tries to assimilate in Austria, she instead feels like she is drawing a veil over her past – distancing herself from both her Iranian origins and her newfound western identity. In *The Complete Persepolis*, the symbol of the veil highlights physical and ideological differences between religiously fundamental Iranian culture and secular western culture, which perpetuate tension and nonconformance for individuals exposed to both cultures.

The symbol of the veil accentuates contrast between the accepted dress and behavioral expectations of fundamentalist and secular cultures, highlighting tensions regarding physical attire between the east and the west. [FEELS BETTER WITHOUT VEIL]

Additionally, the recurring symbol of the veil highlights ideological tension between the cultures of Iran and the secular west by juxtaposing differences in beliefs and values. [BELIEF MINDSET VALUES]

Furthermore, because the veil serves not only as a reminder of divisive cultural differences, but also as a symbol of oppression, it perpetuates dissent for individuals trapped between eastern laws and western ideals. [VEIL AS SYMBOL OF POWER]

In conclusion, In *The Complete Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi, the veil symbolizes \_\_\_\_ and highlights \_\_\_\_ by doing/utilizing/signifying \_\_\_\_. This culture on the surface is heavily influenced by regulations imposed by the government – but when the restrictions in Iran have become strict, the people developed a new form of life behind the walls to gratify themselves. This nocturnal behavior has also come to characterize differences between the cultures in *Persepolis* as Satrapi places emphasis on the means she and her friends use to have fun in Iran and in Vienna – demonstrating a dual-faced culture present in Iran but not in Vienna. Hence, by looking at Satrapi’s portrayal of her life and her experiences in these quite polar societies, inferences are drawn about what makes these cultures different and what impact they have on the people.

Evidence:

* First chapter is titled The Veil (Satrapi 3) “It became obligatory to wear the veil”
* After the Iranian cultural revolution, Satrapi exclaims “we found ourselves veiled and separated from our friends” (Satrapi 4)
* “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” (Satrapi 6)
  + Torn between different cultural tensions at a young age
  + Visual demonstrates her split between a modern, technical, western-based life and her religious beliefs on the inside
* Satrapi’s mom upon hearing fundamentalist advancements: “Soon they’re going to force us to wear the veil and you, you’ll have to trade your car for a camel! God, what a backward policy!” (Satrapi 73)
  + Facial expressions exemplify comical tone of the comment – Satrapi looks sad, mom is depressed, dad looks questioning
* “[Two fundamentalist bastards] insulted me. They said that… if I didn’t want [to be raped], I should wear the veil…” (Satrapi 74)
  + Iranian fundamentalist culture ties religious concepts to the veil
* “In no time, the way people dressed became an ideological sign… You showed your opposition to the regime by letting a few strands of hair show” (Satrapi 75)
  + Veil as ideological symbol as well
  + “Last year she was wearing a miniskirt, showing off her beefy thighs… and now madame is wearing a chador” (Satrapi 75)
* “I think that the reason why we were so rebellious was that our generation had known secular schools…” (Satrapi 98)
* “Well-behaved? So they can hit themselves twice a day? …So they can be covered from head to toe? …So that they can be forbidden to play like the kids they are?” (Satrapi 98)
  + Group opposition to veil
  + Veil as symbol of oppression by Iranian regime
* When Satrapi buys tapes of Kim Wilde, she is stopped by two Guardians of the Revolution and questioned for her westernized attire. She is also called out for wearing her veil improperly. “Lower your scarf, you little whore!” (Satrapi 133)
  + The veil is again tied with misdemeanor in the eyes of the revolution
* “Its going to be cool to go to school without a veil, to not have to beat oneself every day for the war martyrs…” (Satrapi 156)
  + Upon arriving in secular Vienna, Satrapi alludes to a sense of freedom
* At her first party in Vienna, Marjane founds her surroundings alien and unfitting for her. “What do you expect, I came from a traditionalist country” (Satrapi 185)
  + Veil is also implicitly a symbol from a traditionalist country
* “As if I natural deformity wasn’t enough, I tried a few new haircuts” (Satrapi 190)
  + Hair is a physical aspect that is held to more importance in the West
* “The harder I tried to assimilate, the more I had the feeling that I was distancing myself from my culture, betraying my parents and my origins, that I was playing a game by somebody else’s rules” (Satrapi 193)
* “I had abandoned my punk look. I no longer wanted to be marginal” (Satrapi 199)
* Satrapi’s mom: “How good it feels to walk without a veil on my head” (Satrapi 203)
  + White hair – timelessness of freedom
* “I again put on my veil… and so much for my individual and social liberties… I needed so badly to go home” (Satrapi 245)
  + Family > culture?
  + Facial expression is sad and reminiscing. Mirror = self reflection
* “From the moment I arrived at [Tehran], I immediately felt the repressive air of my country… Please fix your veil, my sister!” (Satrapi 246)
* “When something is forbidden, it takes on a disproportionate importance” (Satrapi 259)
  + Veil as symbol of rebellion/expression
* “Underneath their outward appearance of being modern women, my friends were real traditionalists” (Satrapi 270)
  + Question of outward vs inner appearances; does veil tell full story?
* When applying to art school: “I reproduced [Michelangelo’s La Pieta] by putting a black chador on Mary’s head…” (Satrapi 281)
  + Veil as symbol of patriotism – held dear to those of home country
* “No [I did not wear the veil in Austria]… if women’s hair posed so many problems, God would certainly have made us bald” (Satrapi 284)
  + Demonstrates Satrapi’s ideology
* “Year by year, women were winning an eighth of an inch of hair and losing an eighth of an inch of veil” (Satrapi 293)
  + Symbol of progress in Iranian culture, struggle against the regime
* When designing school uniforms, she makes the head-scarf shorter (Satrapi 298)
* If a woman leaves her house asking herself “is my veil in place?”, she no longer asks herself “where is my freedom of speech? Where is my freedom of thought?” (Satrapi 302)
  + A tool used by the regime, symbol of control
* “You cannot enter with just a scarf, you must be wearing a hooded head-scarf” (Satrapi 331)
  + Repression, symbol of order, of law, insurmountable

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