

Education and Identity: A Look at Persepolis

In the book *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi, we see how a school can change from a place of "learning" to a place of "rules." Before the Islamic Revolution in Iran, Marji went to a secular school where she learned in both French and Farsi. However, after the revolution, her school life changed completely. This story is important because it shows how the government uses education to control what young people think and how they act.

Changes in the Classroom

The first big change Marji experiences is segregation. The government separated boys and girls, even though they had studied together for years. They also forced all the girls to wear a veil, or hijab. In the book, the students don't really understand why; they even play with their veils like toys. This shows that the government was trying to force adult religious ideas onto children who just wanted to be themselves.

The "Golden Key" and Social Class

One of the saddest parts of the book is about the "Golden Keys." In schools for poor families, teachers gave young boys plastic keys painted gold. They told the boys that if they died in the war, these keys would open the doors to heaven. This is a powerful example of indoctrination. While Marji's family was educated and taught her to ask questions, the poor "village" kids were taught to be soldiers. This shows that in a revolution, the school system often treats children from different social classes very differently.

Connection to Current Affairs

The themes in *Persepolis* are still very relevant today. For example, in Afghanistan, the Taliban has banned girls from attending high school and university. Just like in Marji's story, the government is using education—or the lack of it—to control women's lives and limit their futures.

Furthermore, we see debates in many countries today about what books should be allowed in school libraries. When a government or a small group of people decides what students can and cannot read, it mirrors the "book scrubbing" seen in Persepolis. Both then and now, the goal is often to stop students from thinking for themselves.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Persepolis shows that schools are more than just buildings; they are symbols of a country's freedom. Marji's struggle to stay true to herself while her teachers told her what to believe is a struggle many students still face today. Education should be a "key" to a better life through knowledge, not a "key" to a war or a way to take away a person's identity.