Planes, Trains, and Oppression

A study between pages from Persepolis and Maus

1. In the two circles are different symbols of oppression. The man in Persepolis embodies the oppressive ideals being acted out. The flag in Maus shows a symbol that represents its ideals.

2. Both large panels use multiple layers; Persepolis with at least 5 and Maus with 5 or more. These layers create a sense of depth in the panel.

3. Between the two panels, the reader’s eyes are moved in different directions. In Persepolis, the reader starts at Marjane and through her line of sight, the reader moves down to her parents. This adds to the feeling of sadness. In Maus, the reader starts with the mice and follows their line of sight upwards to the flag. This gives a feeling of being awe-struck.

4a. These sharp lines indicate a window that serves as a physical barrier between Marjane and her family.

5a. The wide eyes and raised eyebrows show a sense of shock.

5b. The big eyes and high eyebrows express shock and excitement. Hints of fear are indicated by the small lines under the eyes.

6a. The sharp and simple lines for the borders focus the reader’s attention on the content within the panels.

6b. Maus’ panels are ragged and cluttered. The reader is not only made to focus on the inside of the panel, but also the outside.

7a. The text boxes in the panels are pushed to the edges. In fact, they’re not really needed to deliver the emotional impact of the story.

7b. Here, the text boxes float well within the panel. They’re necessary to the story; giving the reader historical context.