

Reading *Persepolis* this week, I found myself drawn to the intertextual lens. This week in my senior English course, we are beginning a unit reading Chinua Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart*. We watched Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's TED Talk "The Danger of a Single Story" and will be reading *Things Fall Apart* through that lens. At the beginning of this unit, I had my students list the things they knew about Africa. Much of it fit the definition of a "single story": desert, poverty, disease, etc. *Persepolis* reminded me of this theme and *Things Fall Apart* through its role in shedding a fuller light on life in Iran, something most Westerners probably know little about.

*Things Fall Apart* was written in English and *Persepolis* was first written in French. Although English is the official language of Nigeria, Achebe has confirmed that his intended audience was Westerners, and the decision to publish *Persepolis* in French is evidence that Satrapi had similar intentions. Another intertextual connection is in the Botshon & Plastas (2009) article in this week's readings: "Writing about her experience teaching *Persepolis* at SUNY Albany, Janell Hobson concludes that *Persepolis* functions well as a counternarrative to dominant Western notions about gender and the Middle East (103)" (p. 2). I found *Persepolis* to be a compelling and illuminating read, a piece that did not shy away from the flaws of Iranian life but also depicted the true nuances and realities there. My story of what the Middle East was and is like was certainly challenged by reading this text.

Any reader of *Persepolis* could benefit from viewing Adichie's TED Talk and considering this graphic novel and *Things Fall Apart* through the lens Adichie presents. Although it was just coincidence that this was our week to read *Persepolis* and the week I started

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teaching *Things Fall Apart*, having this idea of eliminating the single story in mind certainly deepened and enriched my readings for our course.