

**Context**

We will begin junior year with Part I of the IB English outline: Works in Translation (WiT). The first text we will study is *The Complete Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi. Satrapi's memoir, a graphic novel told in two parts (Part 1: *The Story of a Childhood* and Part 2: *The Story of a Return*), details her life from childhood to young adulthood in the tumultuous years leading up to and immediately following the Iranian Revolution (1979) as well as her life as an exile in Austria, a "returned" Iranian, and an expatriate in France. **In preparation for our study of Satrapi's work, you will read the literary memoir, *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, by Azar Nafisi, (ISBN: 0812979303) and complete the accompanying assignments.**

**Rationale**

Nafisi's work will provide an essential framework and discourse through which we will encounter and analyze Satrapi's *The Complete Persepolis*.

**Due Date**

- Submit this assignment to turnitin.com by **Friday, August 4 by 11:59 p.m.**
- Turnitin Information:
  - **Class:** 2017-2018 English 3 IB
  - **Class ID:** 15343755
  - **Enrollment key:** wilson
- **NOTE:** Ensure *timely submission* of your assignment; late work will **NOT** be accepted.

**Assignment Directions**

- Format your document according to MLA guidelines.
- Include the appropriate section headings and *question numbers*.
- All responses to the **discussion questions** should be in complete sentences; depending on the question, 1-3 sentences should be sufficient.
- The responses to the **writing prompts** require more thoughtful observations and analysis. Aim to produce your **best** work in 2-4 paragraphs. The prompts represent different **genres** which will appear in **parenthesis**. I am interested both in the quality of your expression as well as in the technical elements (i.e, integration of quoted material, paragraph-specific transitions, punctuation, diction, etc.) of your writing.

**Pre-Reading Activity**

Nafisi refers to a great many works of literature throughout her memoir. I strongly encourage you to familiarize yourself with at least *Lolita*, *Daisy Miller*, and *Washington Square*. You do not need in-depth knowledge of these works, but a topical understanding of the plot and importance of each work will certainly contribute to your understanding and appreciation of Nafisi's memoir.

*The following assignment has been adapted, with permission, from Random House.*

**Section I: Discussion Questions**

1. Who is the Blind Censor? How does Nafisi utilize this figure to help articulate what she and her girls hope to do in their weekly workshop?
2. What is the meaning of "*poshlust*"?
3. How do the students explain Nabokov's mysterious word "*upsilamba*"? Why was the concept so intriguing to them?
4. What are the three kinds of women in *1001 Nights*? How might women in Iran relate to their problem?
5. How did Invitation to a Beheading relate to life in Iran?

### **Section I: Writing Prompt**

(*Expository*): In her explanation of the workshop, Nafisi writes not only about their literary discussions, but also about their lives in Iran. In 2-4 well-formed paragraphs, show what their lives in the Islamic Republic of Iran were like. Incorporate no less than three specific references to the text.

### **Section II: Discussion Questions**

1. Describe Nafisi's experiences abroad. How do they relate to her life in Iran? How do they contrast?
2. According to the author, what should the "best fiction do"? What do you think?
3. In Iran during this time, show trials and executions were routinely aired on television; how did Nafisi feel when she saw the arrest of the general who had been responsible for the framing and imprisonment of her own father?
4. What happened at the US embassy in Tehran in November 1979? Why was it called "the nest of spies"?
5. During the trial of *The Great Gatsby* what are Mr. Nyazi's arguments against the novel?

### **Section II: Writing Prompt**

(*Research*): Throughout this section, Nafisi alludes to major political developments. In 2-4 paragraphs, please explain the revolutionary events in Iran between the Shah's leaving (January 1979) and the beginning of the Iraq war (Summer 1980). Consult **three** academic sources (including Nafisi). At the end of your response, please include a Works Cited section (formatted properly).

### **Section III: Discussion Questions**

1. What happens during Nafisi's discussion about the veil with her student, Mr. Bahri?
2. How does Nafisi use the term "irrelevant" to describe herself?
3. Who is Mrs. Rezvan? What does she encourage Nafisi to do?
4. What happens when the female students were mocking one of the male students who had died in the war? What does Nassrin say? What does Nafisi say?
5. According to Nafisi, in what way is Catherine Sloper an unusual heroine?

### **Section III: Writing Prompt**

(*Personal Narrative*): Have you ever gone through an experience where you had to stand up for your convictions and take the punishment? Have you ever had to compromise your principles? In 2-4 well-formed paragraphs, tell the story of your ethical decision, and why you had to change your mind.

### **Section IV: Discussion Questions**

1. Explain in what way "four generations of women—my grandmother, my mother, myself, and my daughter—lived in the present but also the past" (262).
2. According to Nafisi, what is the relationship between the personal and political?
3. How does the magician challenge her when she complains to him?
4. What is the "Ordeal of Freedom" of which Nassrin speaks?
5. Before the revolution, Mahshid voluntarily wore the chador; explain her feelings about mandatory veiling.

### **Section IV: Writing Prompt**

(*Literary*): After her discussion with the magician, Nafisi admits that: "Fiction was not a panacea, but it did offer us a critical way of appraising and grasping the world—not just our world but that other world that had become the object of our desires" (282). In 2-4 paragraphs, explain this quotation in terms of what Nafisi means AND in the context of TWO other texts of your choice.

### **Ms. Wilson's Contact Information**

- Email: wilsonjen@pcsb.org
- I am also in the process of building a new website (<http://jwilsonenglish.weebly.com/>). I encourage you to familiarize yourself with the syllabus, the IB course description, and the IB assessments for 2017-2018.
- I look forward to meeting and working with each one of you!