*Persepolis* Discussion and Connection Questions

Directions: Please make sure you look through these questions and prepare some thoughts to share with the class for each ne. Of course, try to connect all ideas to our Focus Concepts (Creativity and Identity) and to our Guiding Questions (1. How are we affected by texts in various ways? 2. In what ways is meaning constructed, negotiated, expressed, and interpreted?). Your participation in this discussion and the notes you submit will be worth 25 points.

1. In an Associated Press interview, Satrapi said, “The only thing I hope is that people will read my book and see that this abstract thing, this Axis of Evil, is made up of individuals with lives and hopes.” And in her introduction to *Persepolis*, she explains that she wrote this book to show that Iran is not only a country of “fundamentalism, fanaticism, and terrorism.” How does Satrapi go about challenging this myth? How does *Persepolis* dispel or confirm your views on Iran? In what ways does reading this book deepen your understanding and knowledge of Iran, and the current situation in Iraq?
2. How is *Persepolis*organized and structured? What has Satrapi chosen to emphasize in her childhood? How is the passage of time presented? Describe Satrapi’s drawings. How do the drawings add to the narrative of the story?
3. Describe the writer’s voice. Is it appealing? Which aspects of Marji’s character do you identify with or like the most, the least? Did your reaction to the little girl affect your reading experience?
4. “Every situation has an opportunity for laughs.” (p. 97) Give some examples of how the ordinary citizens of Iran enjoyed life despite the oppressive regime. What made you laugh? How does Satrapi add comic relief? How are these scenes relevant to the story as a whole?
5. What kinds of captivity and freedom does the author explore in *Persepolis*? What stifles or prevents people from being completely free? How do they circumvent and defy the rules imposed on them and attempt to live ordinary lives despite revolution and war? Give some examples of their small acts of rebellion.
6. “In spite of everything, kids were trying to look hip, even under risk of arrest.” (p. 112) How did they do this? What do you think you would have done had you been a child in this environment? What acts of rebellion did you do as a teen? In way ways is Satrapi just a normal kid?
7. Discuss the role and importance of religion in *Persepolis*. How does religion define certain characters in the book, and affect the way they interact with each other? Is the author making a social commentary on religion, and in particular on fundamentalism? What do you think Satrapi is saying about religion’s effect on the individual and society?
8. In what ways is *Persepolis* both telling a story and commenting on the importance of stories in our lives? What does the book suggest about how stories shape and give meaning to our experience? Discuss some of the stories in *Persepolis*—Uncle Anoosh’s story, her grandfather’s story, Niloufar’s story.