

Global issues in *Persepolis*: a micro-analysis activity

Field of inquiry	Specific global issue Zoom in on a specific global issue related to your assigned field of inquiry	Extract/lines/link to source text	Authorial choices used to present the global issue List 3–5 and include a brief analysis of each
Culture, identity and community	Cultural identity in relation to self-worth	The Vegetable, page 199	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Text size: The fact that the phrase 'I am Iranian and proud of it!' is larger and bolder than the previous text makes it immediately noticeable to the reader. It also gives some indication of the tone in which she delivers the statement. Additionally, the fact that it is not confined to a speech bubble displays how the words sounded in that situation. 2. Emanata: The depiction of tears streaming behind her (more exaggerated and visible than in real life) gives the impression of a heightened emotional response to what she has just heard and said. 3. Negative space: The dark surrounding the character represents her dark feeling of being solitary as she is focused on her thoughts rather than what is going on around her. This indicates the relative importance of her thoughts compared to her surroundings. 4. Hyperbole: On this page we are able to see that when Marjane says 'I wanted to die.' she does not mean this and it's not

			<p>something that we are to take literally. Furthermore, she is quite emotional in this panel and we can see this from the language that's depicted.</p>
Beliefs, values and education	Education disparity (how poor education impacts beliefs and values)	The Veil, page 4	<p>1. Speech bubble: this indicates the words a particular character is actually speaking. This provides us with a clear viewpoint of the character's political beliefs. The fact that this speech is directly heard by the audience (or other characters) shows us that these words have become their education, especially since the speech mentions education and it is given to children who are in education.</p> <p>2. Caption: These are used in almost every panel to portray the narrator's perspective and thoughts. The captions show the passing of time as being a whole year but the fact that the panels are so close shows us that the narrator lived this as a whirlwind experience. She felt how drastic the beliefs were and how it only took a year for them to infiltrate completely in her education system.</p> <p>A specific caption that we think best represents this global issue is: 'We found ourselves veiled and separated from our friends'. The phrase 'we found ourselves' symbolizes the shock and unexpectedness of these drastic changes to society and education systems. Also, the fact that it mentions 'friends' and not any specific gender or social group means that it affected many people</p>

			<p>regardless of their gender or social standing.</p> <p>3. Background to foreground transitions: Between panel 4 and 5 there is a shift in perspective where the man in the centre but relatively far back from the audience's view is brought to the forefront so that his facial features can be seen. His eyes are facing downwards, eyebrows turned down in anger, wrinkles in the middle of his forehead. Although all are drawn in a realistic fashion, the resulting product is a frown marring his face. This creates a tense and intimidating atmosphere.</p>
Politics, power and justice	Lack of freedom as a result of a theocratic government	The Key, page 98	<p>1. Speech bubble (pointer): The speech bubble emphasizes the volume/tone of what the speaker is saying. In this page the interaction between the teacher and the parents is an argument. Stichomythia is used in this scene also to emphasize the tension between the teacher and parents. This stichomythia is further emphasized by the jagged pointer lines leading to the speech bubbles.</p> <p>2. Border: The use of borders highlights the juxtaposition of the parents' opinions and the teachers' opinion on the children's education. Specifically, through the distinct separation, the reader realizes that there is diametric opposition between the parents and the teacher as to their beliefs.</p>

			<p>*Also, the concept of dialogue is created through the use of borders on this page.</p> <p>The teacher mentions the ‘law’ when rejecting all the parents’ accusations on the teachers’ action to suspend their children → Teachers’ opinion symbolically represents the government’s opinion – this might further indicate that the parents are in direct opposition with the government.</p> <p>3. Gutter: A gutter is also used between panels to showcase the diametric opposition between parents and teacher, or personal freedoms vs theocratic law. The space between panels and tiers makes it seem as if the two belief values are mutually exclusive and cannot be reconciled under any circumstances. The theocratic government has taken away freedoms of the parents, freedom of choice which they desperately want. They are, however, helpless in their struggle as they can do nothing but complain about the theocratic rule.</p> <p>4. Caption: In the first panel, top tier, a caption is placed to link back to a previous experience. The caption references the secular and bilingual school that Marji attended as a younger child and how that influenced her. The mention of the past freedom experienced by Marji juxtaposes the now oppressive and non-secular school run by the government, which is what the parents are against. The current theocratic government denies freedoms such as choice of</p>
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			<p>school and choice of secularism; this lack of freedom is noted in the parents' argument with the teacher, who represents the law and theocratic system.</p>
<p>Art, creativity and the imagination</p>	<p>Censorship of self-expression through art</p>	<p>The End, page 336</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Symbolism: Bob Dylan poster in the background of the first panel – this is a symbol of Western culture (as well as the specific ideals which he addressed, including peace, self-expression and equality) and therefore a form of self-expression by the artists. In the safety of their office, they are not affected by the cultural restrictions of the fundamentalist government, enabling them to have a poster of Bob Dylan – effectively, this shows that the cartoonists' office is a haven for them to express themselves, including through art (as Bob Dylan is an artist – but also because they are able to express themselves through their art outside of the authority of the fundamentalist government – otherwise they would be forced to take the poster down). 2. Juxtaposition of panels: The first incidence of juxtaposition of the panels is between the first panel of the page and the two directly below it in the second tier (which fit into the size of the top panel). The former shows Marji and her colleagues in a safe work environment (where she notes her feeling of safety and contentment in the caption, 'everything was going well'. She is also able to work alongside male colleagues, showing that the environment is less socially restrictive). This is starkly juxtaposed by the latter two panels, which show the cartoonist's persecution

			<p>in a particularly brutal manner – he has simply disappeared. Subsequently, this demonstrates that while Marji has been allowed to feel safe in her work environment as an illustrator, this happiness is quickly eroding (informing her ultimate decision to leave Iran). Meanwhile, the middle panel of the middle tier shows a group of people speculating as to the fate of a particular persecuted journalist, towards the beginning of the fundamentalist regime’s consolidation of power over artists. This is juxtaposed by the panel in the third tier, directly below this, where Marji’s colleague explains that another colleague, Behzad Radi, has also been arrested – ‘all because of this’ – a political cartoon. This illustrates the progression of the community’s understanding of political persecution of artists.</p> <p>3. Religious icons: Satirized images in the second and final panels directly demonstrate the errors illustrators have made to result in their persecution. This is made clear through the use of icons to represent religious figures (in the second panel, this consists of someone with a beard and turban, calling to mind the figure of a mullah; in the final panel, this is a beard). Through the representation of beards, in particular, the idea of political persecution is presented, because it is for this reason that the cartoonist of the latter panel is presented (through the religious crime of idolatry). It is also ironic that the illustrator of the first image is persecuted by the fundamentalist regime specifically because he accuses it of political persecution (giving the label of</p>
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			<p>‘assassin’ to a religious mullah – a symbol of the regime). This irony further emphasizes the idea of religious persecution to the audience.</p> <p>4. Use of silhouettes: The use of silhouettes in the third panel indicate the covert, clandestine and ominous nature of the cartoonist’s disappearance. Just as the audience cannot see either person’s features, they cannot determine the cartoonist’s fate. As well as the shadowy nature of his appearance, the darkness also represents the cartoonist’s likely death. Similarly, the silhouettes in the next panel provide anonymity to those speculating about the cartoonist’s fate – emphasizing the clandestine nature of their discussions about him, and subsequently their fear of being overheard by a representative or collaborator for the fundamentalist regime. This demonstrates the atmosphere of terror and authoritarianism experienced by the population of Iran. The small size of the speech bubbles physically suggests that they are whispering to further this effect, while the large number of speech bubbles advances the idea of the total lack of knowledge about the cartoonist’s enforced disappearance – as Satrapi writes, ‘Everyone had his own theory.’ This focus on the nature of the enforced disappearance is another reminder of political persecution.</p> <p>5. Captions: The caption in the last panel references the arrest of Behzad Radi. Satrapi’s use of simplistic language as an explanation</p>
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			to the reason behind the arrest of Behzad Radi is a stark contrast to the visual depictions taken from the magazine, providing a sense of ridiculousness, or incongruity, to the situation.
Science, technology and the environment	<p>The destructive power of scientific advancement</p> <p>Scientific and technological advancements led to developments in destructive military technologies, e.g. bombs, missiles, fighter jets</p>	The Shabbat, page 142	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The graphic weight of the final panel emphasizes the text, makes it more <i>poignant</i>, eyes drawn to the final panel, the darkness of the panel reflects the indignation and anger of the protagonist at the bombing of her neighbour's house. • Lack of text in penultimate panel draws attention to Marji's face and allows reader to fully analyse her expression and sadness without the distraction of any accompanying text. • Moment-to-moment transition (panels 3–4) allows reader to fully experience the emotions running through Marjane's head and the close-ups of her face emphasize her horror and desolation. Transitions from horror to Marji attempting to cover her eyes to protect herself from the atrocity and horrifying events occurring, hand in front of mouth depicting Marjane's disbelief. • Sheer size of the destruction in the foreground of the first panel, contrasted with how small Marji and her mother are: the author unabashedly puts ruins of the bombed house in the foreground of the panel, juxtaposed with the size of humans, symbolic because it represents how the value of human life has been diminished compared to the violence and destruction of war. • The symbolism of the turquoise bracelet: the turquoise bracelet of Marji's neighbour revealing itself in the ruins of their home (as emphasized by the lines coming out of it), which potentially was

			still attached to the arm of her neighbour, highlights the tragedy and the loss of innocent human life due to the needless destruction of war, caused by the development of explosive devices (technological development).
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