

**IB English IV HL Y2: *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi**

Summer Reading Assignment: build/complete IB HL Essay and build IB Individual Oral.

**IB HL Essay:**

Continue to explore your approved line of inquiry by analyzing your chosen text. A completed HL Essay should be 1, 200 – 1, 500 words. For your summer reading assignment, complete at least 1, 000 words. Your response must provide your assertion/address to line of inquiry/thesis, integrated evidence from your chosen text, appropriate in-text citations, and strong literary analysis. (Your response should also be double-spacing, Times New Roman, 12-point font, should use proper, formal academic language, and include word count at the end.) This assignment will be **due on August 16, 2021.** \*Remember, several resources and assignments were provided year one to assist with this endeavor.

**IB Individual Oral:**

Utilizing your summer reading, *Persepolis*, annotate the text exploring at least two global issues/themes you see present. Annotations can take the form of notes in a spiral, post-it notes on the text, notes via a Word Document, notes written within your purchased text etc... Annotations of you exploring chosen global issues throughout the entire text will be asked to be **submitted August 16, 2021.**

Along with your annotations, you will need to find at least 3 pages throughout *Persepolis* that you felt overall captured a true representation of your chosen global issue/theme seen within the text. (Chosen pages do not need to be consecutive and can be taken from anywhere throughout the text. For example, you can take an excerpt from pg. 2, one from pg. 27, and one from pg. 50.) Once you have chosen your three examples/three excerpts/3 pages, comment as to HOW your chosen excerpt highlights/comments on the global issue/theme; try to find at least one point per page that are being raised about the global issue and discuss in at least three sentences or more. \*Remember, several resources and assignments were provided year one to assist with this endeavor.

**EXAMPLES Provided Below:**

**IB HL Essay:**

Line of inquiry: In the show *House*, how does the fictional character, James Wilson, retain his static identity?

**The static nature of James Wilson in *House***

*House* is one of the most iconic TV series among the drama genre; it managed to garner

much critical acclaim and a very devoted, cult-like fan base. The TV series took the viewers

through eight seasons, each marked by powerful drama between characters, several antagonists, political commentary of the most varied nature and, of course, dark humor. House has a dynamic storyline; the lead character is constantly forced to repeal the wrath of various adversaries, and each episode features a unique and unexpected medical intrigue. Among this ever-changing environment and storyline, one character manages to remain unchanged throughout the series: Dr. James Wilson. Wilson retains his impersonal, compassionate, selfless and loyal nature throughout the eight seasons of the series. Though far from being a flat character, Wilson is static in terms of his goals, feelings and unquestioned loyalty to House's well-being. This essay seeks to explore the manner in which Wilson retains his identity throughout the entire series.

The core aspect that one needs to delve into is that of "identity"; in the strict sense of the word, Wilson's identity is relayed to the audience in a very resume-like manner. The viewer pointedly finds out Wilson's religious affiliation. "A lot of Jews have non-Jewish relatives, and most of us don't keep kosher" (S01E01), he reveals, without his religion ever being used as part of the plot in any way and his academic background revealed to us thanks to him wearing a "Graduated from McGill University" sweater (S02E19). Even his name is made known to the audience only incidentally, halfway through the first episode. This austere manner of presenting this content to the audience with Wilson's biographical background provides stability and a certain degree of artistic immovability. His academic background, religious affiliation or family ties never come up during the series; this is worth looking at in light of other characters' biographies. Chase, a colleague of Wilson's, is constantly modulated based on his millionaire father's erratic behavior. House, the 50 year-old lead character, is very much still caught up in

feuds he had back in college. Wilson's identity, however, never comes back to influence his behavior or to change the audience's impression of him. Providing the audience with stable and minimal information about Wilson's basic identity helps preserve Wilson's ever-static nature.

Identity, however, ought to be looked at from a broader perspective. Wilson is not just a good oncologist from a middle-class Jewish background; he is also a husband, a friend, a former adult films actor, an important director of the hospital, a lover, a widower, a wanted fugitive and a cynical man. While Wilson certainly is all of those things, his character simply fails to live up to the standard of being anything other than House's nemesis. At some point in the first season, the audience is told that Wilson is an active member of his hospital's board of directors. Wilson is only ever shown in his capacity as a director once. "You can't make my vote void by making me stand in the hallway", Wilson says, in the context of a contentious, administrative tone (S01E18). That is the extent to which his influence on the board is ever invoked throughout the series, despite other characters with similar directorial appointments being at the forefront of administrative intrigue systematically throughout the series. Wilson's core professional identity remains static, despite the occasional plot developments that place Wilson in lateral contexts; the audience cannot help but visualize him strictly as a doctor.

Furthermore, Wilson's previous encounters with law enforcement turn out to have led him to being a wanted fugitive for almost two decades. "James Evan Wilson, there's an arrest warrant out in your name" (S01E18), a police officer tells, before primarily House proceeds to present the reasons as to why Wilson was arrested once upon a time. Wilson rarely plays a central role whenever his own life is a subject of discussion. For instance, in the scene imagery where Wilson's arrest is being presented to the audience, the camera hardly focuses on Wilson;

other minor characters and rich décor receive more airtime in that particular scene, despite the entire scene being about Wilson. The character is physically isolated from matters pertaining to him; perhaps ironically, the scenes focusing on Wilson's own life are the scenes where Wilson receives the least amount of camera work. This helps preserve Wilson's immaculate image of the well-dressed and well-meaning doctor.

Additionally, it is fair to say that Wilson receives a good amount of light mockery from (almost exclusively) House. This mockery, however, only helps to consolidate Wilson's image as a professional, compassionate individual. House's jokes about Wilson certainly aim to upset (and perhaps demean) him, but the unintended effect of these jokes is to simply further Wilson's core identity. "Wilson's so good, people thank him for telling them that they're dying", House tells, in the context of describing Wilson to a stranger (S01E21). This conveys just how compassionate Wilson can get; most jokes about Wilson aim to mock his goodness. On another occasion, Wilson's co-worker mocks him for being "too much of a good boy" (S06E17). Wilson disagrees and agrees to steal a dollar to prove he's capable of being devious. However, when it comes to actually doing it, Wilson backs out and immediately returns the dollar to the cashier he stole it from, all while a panicked and uncomfortable Wilson is showed on camera. Even mockery serves the purpose of constantly reminding the audience just how upstanding and righteous Wilson is.

The scenarios themselves appear to be designed exactly for the purpose of minimizing Wilson's ability to take control of his own storyline. One of Wilson's girlfriends, Amber,

tragically dies in an automobile accident. House attempts to reconstruct the circumstances of the accident, while Wilson tries to criticize the feasibility of reconstructing the accident involving his own girlfriend. "Wilson is done talking now" (S04E14), one of House's co-workers says, and then proceeding to carry on with total disregard of Wilson's earlier observations. On another occasion, Wilson is devastated to find out that his wife had been cheating on him. "Turns out you were right. She was having an affair" (S02E14), Wilson tells House, in the context of Wilson announcing his separation from his wife (a fact House previously speculated on). Even scenes whose purpose is to focus on aspects of Wilson's personal life are monopolized by either other characters who take the lead or House's earlier aphorisms, which somehow always end up targeting Wilson. By placing distance between Wilson, himself, and his personal life, the creators of the show have managed to retain Wilson's relative independence from matters concerning his own life.

Wilson has a professional life of his own too; his medical cases and patients are regularly presented to the audience and are part of the script. However, his medical cases are never presented autonomously; his patients somehow always become intertwined with House or other controversies related to the main character. The audience simply has no time to pay close attention to Wilson's modus operandi. On one occasion, Wilson's oncology patient (in remission) and personal friend, Tucker, comes in with severe respiratory issues. Wilson makes the diagnosis without looking at Tucker, but at Tucker's girlfriend. He notices that she has herpes; Wilson concludes that Tucker must have caught herpes from her, causing him respiratory issues. "I just had a House moment", Wilson says in awe (S06E10). He personally sets aside his professional wisdom by reminding the audience of House's genius, but his facial expression certainly shows internal satisfaction. "Draw some blood. He has cancer", House

intervenes, followed by Wilson deciding to conduct further medical tests (S06E10). House turns out to have been ultimately right about the diagnostic. The whole episode carries on focusing on House's intuitions being confirmed step by step by House's medical team, despite Tucker being Wilson's patient and friend. The one occasion where Wilson would have had the chance to shine is yet again overshadowed by House. By systematically placing Wilson in a position of professional inferiority in relation to other nominally equal colleagues, the audience is always reminded of Wilson's subservient and pacifying nature.

A good part of this essay focused not on Wilson's lines, but on what other characters said or did in connection to Wilson. This certainly rings true to Wilson's fundamental nature: his warm-hearted spirit rests not on making himself feel good, but by making others feel good in his own detriment. Wilson never snaps at others cutting him off, belittling him or demeaning him. He only tried this once, at House's supposed funeral. He lashes out. "House was an ass. He mocked his dwindling friends. He betrayed everyone who cared about him" (S08E22), Wilson says in his "eulogy" for House, before being interrupted by an SMS containing one of House's catchphrases, "shut up you idiot". Wilson's facial expression fades from one of anger to his regular Wilson self; needless to say, the eulogy stops. Not even in the very last episode of the TV series did Wilson have the chance to speak out his mind freely, unabashed about the impact of his words.

Wilson's character is never held to low standards; it is merely kept to the same standards the audience expected from him since the very first episode. The audience is never presented with an unjust or unprofessional Wilson, but an immaculate Wilson that stands in sharp contrast with the lead character's outer behavior.

Word Count: 1,500

## IB Individual Oral:

ONE TIME THIS BLOCK SUPERVISOR STARTED SCREAMING ON US:



HE TOOK THEM APART - BUT SENT THEM SOON BACK.

IT WAS 8 OR 9 OF US. EACH HAD TO SPEAK A FEW WORDS.



I SPOKE ONLY ENGLISH TO HIM: FOR POLISH, I HAD A GOOD ENGLISH

YES, I GAVE PRIVATE LESSONS OF ENGLISH WHEN I LIVED THEN IN CZESTOCHOWA.

YOU MANAGED TO GET THE BERLITZ BOOKS HERE! YOU STUDIED ALREADY TO CONJUGATE VERBS?



LISTEN - THERE ARE TOO MANY PRISONERS HERE. THE SS WILL LINE YOU ALL UP TOMORROW. ... BE SURE TO STAND ON THE FAR LEFT.

**Point & Commentary:** The characters are forced to survive by learning to be resourceful at the concentration camps. Resourcefulness is depicted through physical items Vladek keeps or acquires, as well as through Vladek's skills. The above excerpt presents a flashback to the audience as Vladek explains to Art how he was able to exploit his work constantly through undertaking the role of a translator. His resourcefulness proves successful as Vladek survives another day once the Polish Kapo approves of his skills and gives him a warning to "stand on the far left" tomorrow. Vladek's recount is just one example that symbolizes the impact of warfare and how Vladek quickly learned that to survive one must be resourceful.