

**Azar Nafisi's Reading *Lolita* in Tehran:
The Trial of *The Great Gatsby*, Some Things to Think About...**

1. Why do the Islamic Revolutionaries among Nafisi's students hate *The Great Gatsby* and believe that it should be "convicted" for being immoral?
2. Why can't (or won't) the Islamicists in the class enter Fitzgerald's fictional world? Why can't (or won't) they accept the complexity of individuals or express empathy for a variety of viewpoints?
3. In reading what Mr. Nyazi has to say about *The Great Gatsby*, what insights can we get into the Islamicist world view?
4. How does Ms. Zarrin's defense of *The Great Gatsby* reveal that she does not share the Islamicists' world view? What would you say are the differences between their world view and hers?
5. Why, according to Nafisi, should we be wary of dreams, or, rather, think twice before trying to turn our dreams into realities?
6. Why does Nafisi criticize those "progressive" students in Iran who believed Westerners (the "imperialists") were a more dangerous enemy than the Islamic revolutionaries?
7. What are some of the things Jay Gatsby and the Islamic Revolutionaries have in common? Are both "romantics"? Did both subscribe to "colossal illusions"? Did both have difficulty distinguishing imagination from reality? Did both want to recreate a past that never existed? (Leading questions, yes, since the author clearly believes they shared these things, but do you think she is right? Why or why not?)
8. Why does Nafisi conclude that the values shaping Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* were the "exact opposite" of those of the Iranian Revolution?
9. Should art be used as a political weapon? Should "good art" be defined as art that advances a specific political (or revolutionary or moral) agenda? If you find yourself on one side of this argument, how might you make a case for the other side?
10. What is Nafisi's assessment of the Iranian Revolution? Might her assessment apply to other "revolutions" we have studied this semester?