

Questions on Meet the President by Zadie Smith:

1. What are the most important characteristics - social, environmental or ecological and technological - of the future Smith imagines in Meet the President? What might the story imply about how this future came to be?
2. What might be the significance and effect of Smith's choice of geographical setting? of the characters' references to real places in, and real features of, that setting? How are characters characterized, in part, by their relationship to (this) place?
3. How would you describe what happens to Bill Peek over the course of the story? Does he change or learn something new? How and why so, or not?
4. Consider the ages of Maud, Aggie and Bill. What do their ages and experiences suggest about this society? About children and technology?
5. What do you think the Program is? How is it connected to Bill's school, the Pathways Global Institute?
6. What do you think about the stages of development as defined by the Pathways Global Institute and Bill's desire to meet those stages?
7. We are told Maud was a prostitute, but she is only twelve years old. Similarly, Bill imagines having sex with a nine year old Aggie. What do you think is going on with sexuality in this story? Bill asserts that "more than a few Pathways boys of his acquaintance wouldn't hesitate to take her [Aggie] under the next boardwalk and put a finger inside her. And the rest." What does this suggest about the boys in Pathways?