

Prompt 2:

In the opening lines of “Is This Kansas” Biss uses imagery to show a complex emotional response to the town and the people in it. Biss describes a scene where “The girls were wearing nothing but white towels and high heels”. Her description of the girl's behavior blurs the line between youthful innocence and adulthood. Additionally, the metaphor comparing the girls to “flocks of white pelicans” highlights her strange appeal to the girl’s herd mentality. The metaphor suggests that Biss was intrigued by the girls, but also felt alienated within the town. The word “pelicans” connects to the girl’s outfits because pelicans are often related to nature and freedom, and the girl’s unusual outfits show the freedom people have. However, this highlights Biss’s discomfort with the rituals of the town. As Biss stood “on the sidewalk to stare”, her feeling of detachment became clear. She describes the girls as an “animated swarm” that creates a feeling of liveliness with potential chaos, which suggests that the community runs on a set of norms that she finds strange and confusing. The phrase “rituals of that town” implies that there are established behaviors and actions that are acceptable within this community. Biss struggles to understand this which is shown through her repeated emphasis of her alienation. The more time she spends within the town, the more foreign it becomes. This highlights her feelings of isolation and detachment in the town. Her repeated emphasis of her isolation evokes sympathy because it reflects the universal experience of feeling detached within a community , whether it's your school, your workplace, your friend group or even your family, it is something sad and something no one wants to feel. The phrase “sun silvering off their wings” uses imagery to create a beautiful image. The sunlight reflecting off the girls' wings represents elegance and beauty. However, there is a difference between appearance and reality. The purpose of the imagery is to highlight the fact that although the girls may appear lively and carefree, their actions and experiences lack meaningful connection.

Overall, Biss’s opening statements create a sense of uncertainty and disconnect towards the town and its people. She showed a lack of support and approval for the town and the people in it. Through Biss’s selection of words, she created images that represented the discomfort she

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felt towards the town. Additionally, her opening statement showed the ways societal rituals can cause the lack of meaningful and genuine connection.

Prompt 5:

At my reading, I will have Eula Biss, Amanda Gorman, and Arthur Miller speak about their work. They will talk about themes of resiliency.

Resiliency:

In *The Crucible*, Miller goes into detail on the significance of standing up to corruption when it compromises your personal integrity. Personal integrity is very powerful and it is crucial to stay true to yourself even when in dire circumstances. In the story, John Proctor's decision to not fabricate a confession, while knowing it would ultimately lead to his death. This decision highlights the importance of never abandoning your morals, as opposed to living with a damaged reputation. Additionally, in Eula Biss's "Is This Kansas", she explored how privilege showed the resilience needed to overcome the inequalities faced by students of color. Despite being looked down upon by people in positions of power, people had to keep fighting otherwise they would not be able to succeed. Also, in Amanda Gorman's "An Ode We Owe", she explained how the goal is not to be the generation that only tries, but is the type that leads to a society where people are driven by human conviction and creates a legacy. Then she explained how change is hard but with hope, we are brave enough to conquer it.

Questions:

To Arthur Miller:

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- In “The Crucible”, you see people face immense pressure to conform to society and most people end up conforming. How do you see this theme reflect modern issues within our society, and what lessons can we learn from these characters' mistakes?

To Amanda Gorman:

- In “An Ode We Ode”, you questioned how one is expected to do good while all this bad is happening around them. How can you inspire people with hope when most people are too afraid to defer from societal norms?

To Eula Biss:

- In “Is This Kansas”, you mentioned how during your time as a graduate student you were seen as someone whose opinion was not respected, and how defeated it made you feel. Within society, how can people whose opinions aren't respected keep motivation to work hard and thrive in society?

For All Authors:

- Each of you addresses the concept of identity in relation to community. How do you believe personal identity can influence and transform a community?

Why These Authors Should Be Together:

Eula Biss, Amanda Gorman, and Arthur Miller are united by their exploration of societal expectations and the resiliency needed for people to thrive. Each author forces readers to reflect on their roles within their communities and what we owe to each other. By bringing these authors together, it will create an opportunity for people to learn how to be resilient and keep working hard even when facing hardships.