



growing up process and experience, in part, what adulthood involves: “I don’t know what I believe, Hazel, I thought being an adult meant knowing what you believe, but that has not been my experience.” **INS echoes FOS.** Filippo’s relationship with Michele allows him to feel a sense of connection to another at a time when he is kidnapped and hence disconnected from all others. He initially believes he is dead when kidnapped but when he forms a bond with Michele he sees similarities between both of them, which allows him to feel connected to the only visitor who cares for him: “You’re small... Well, I’m ten... Me too. What class are you in?... Fifth class. And you?... Me too. We’re the same!... Yes!” **Filippo’s learning more about his situation, here that he is connected to someone else even when kidnapped, matches how Hazel benefits from her relationship with her parents who similarly allow her to learn about what is to come in her future.**

Key moments in the texts also allow the audience to view relationships in further, different ways. In both of my texts key moments reveal how, despite relationships being presented as beneficial earlier in the texts, they can often encounter difficulties which those involved are aware of.

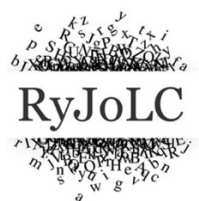
In FOS Hazel realizes her partner’s anxieties and concerns, namely that he wants to leave a meaningful imprint on the world he will soon depart due to illness. She knows that despite enjoying the relationship Augustus is also dissatisfied as it will not be long-lasting, as he will soon pass away. Ironically, this presents their relationship as extremely strong as she can realize his feelings, as she can communicate with Augustus on a deep and meaningful basis about how he views the relationship in a depressing manner: “I just want to be enough for you, but I never can be. This can never be enough for you. But this is all you get. You get me, and your family, and this world. This is your life.” **INS mirrors FOS.** Michele’s song, while cycling to Filippo, shows that he knows of the mistreatment his friend is experiencing and could face (death). The song focuses on how Filippo, at this moment, will be killed: “Ye creatures of the night,/ In love with the dark,/ Ye who do not sleep/ Until it is morning,/ Watch over the sleep/ Of this child.” Michele realizes that their relationship is ultimately controlled, at present, by the world they inhabit, which makes it difficult for them to truly enjoy each other’s company. This means that he sings about his world in depressing terms as well, so as to represent his view of it as dark and damaging: “Ye hairy spiders,/ Ye bearded bagers,/ Slimy snails and blind snakes,/ Stay far away from our children.” **Michele’s view of his relationship as limited by his world, i.e. the adults in the film, is the same as Hazel who sees that Augustus’ illness makes him think their relationship is also affected by factors beyond their control. Both texts therefore present relationships as capable of being threatened by outside elements.**

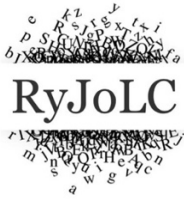
Finally, the end of texts offers another way to view relationships, as the audience can see whether they remain alive even after difficulties and obstacles encountered during the narrative. The texts on my course show this is possible in a variety of ways, hence confirming the strength of relationships.

Even though Augustus passes away in FOS, meaning that the physical relationship is short-lived, Hazel transforms it into a spiritual connection. She uses counting as a metaphor for her value of the relationship, regardless of how little time she and Augustus managed to spend together. Counting is usually continuous, representing how she does not see death as the end of her relationship with Augustus, but rather that this has just taken on a different form: “But Gus, my love, I cannot tell you how thankful I am for our little infinity. I wouldn’t trade it for the world. You gave me a forever within the numbered days, and I’m grateful.” **INS matches FOS.** Michele reunited with Filippo and, significantly, there is the suggestion at the end that

the two will no longer have their relationship threatened by the adults in their world. Whereas earlier Michele sang his depressing song which represented the death he thought was coming to Filippo now he returns to having a view one would expect of a child, where he is not scared of the world around him. This represents how he sees Michele as safe, and that their relationship can now be more successful than before, seen with the closing reference “Io non ho paura”, meaning “I am not afraid”.

As seen, when exploring texts it is possible to view relationships in a variety of ways. These include how they form, the benefits and difficulties encountered during a story as well as whether they can remain intact after such experiences.





**Heroes and villains are very different. Discuss with reference to the texts you have studied on your comparative course.**

Heroes and villains are very different, as can be seen in the texts I studied on my comparative course, I'm Not Scared (INS) and Fault in Our Stars (FOS). They differ in their approach to life, various obstacles and how they treat each other, which ultimately results in both having contrasting endings to their journeys throughout the text.

The texts on my course show one trait that a hero possesses, remaining brave and/ or doing what is right even when facing obstacles and difficulty.

In FOS Hazel shows how a hero is someone who remains brave even when all hope appears lost. This is seen with her situation in the story, where she faces dying due to being diagnosed with terminal cancer and throughout the text we are reminded of her young age, as she shows fear and worry at certain points, which shows how serious her situation is but also how she is not yet mature enough to be able to deal with this: "We walked in silence, August a half step in front of me. I was too scared to ask if I had a reason to be scared." However despite this Hazel shows how a hero does not allow such fear to overcome or control them, seen as she retains her composure even when the doctors discuss her imminent death while she is in the room: "I did not ask what constituted a long time. I'd made that mistake before." Her ability to remain calm, even when her mortality is being discussed, indicates how she can face difficulty head on despite being of an age and in a situation where many would struggle to deal with such a situation. **INS matches FOS.** Michele, unsurprisingly due to his young age, is extremely fearful and flees when viewing the unsettling sight of Filippo when the child removes the blanket and reveals his filthy pale face and dried eyelid. But he returns and soon realizes that Filippo needs to be shown care, and after connecting with the youth plans to return with food, showing knowledge that he should not be scared of his fellow child but needs to care for him in a moment of need: "You're hungry? I don't have anything to eat... If you want, I'll bring something tomorrow". **Michele is like Hazel here, as both show their youth and fear of their situation, however are able to overcome such emotions to act in a heroic manner, bravely which allows them to successfully deal with what were once troubling obstacles.**

The texts on my comparative course also show a trait that a villain possesses, not sympathizing with the situation of those around them.

In FOS Peter Van Houten shows how villainous individuals do not care about the well-being of others, as much as they suggest they are. This leads to others being fooled into believing that the villain ultimately cares for them, a hope which is swiftly dashed when the villain is forced to either care for others or admit they are not interested in some people around them. This becomes clear when Peter offers compassion to Augustus and Hazel when they talk by email. However, when they travel to meet him, which he doesn't expect, the villain tries to escape offering any support to the youngsters who have traveled a considerable distance, which is especially cold considering their situation, their imminent deaths, which one would hope Peter would take into account: "Perhaps, but I was under the misguided impression that

you were incapable of transatlantic travel. I was trying... to provide you with some comfort, I suppose, which I should have known better to attempt." **INS echoes FOS.** Throughout the text Michele's father, who is one of Filippo's kidnappers, shows little concern for his child's view of the world or a desire to protect and shelter his son from parts of life that could upset and harm him emotionally. Whereas one would expect him to tell his son there is no need to have worries or fears, so as to make sure his child is content and hence has a happy upbringing, he warns Michele of threats in the world: "It's men you should be afraid of, not monsters." **Peter is similar to the child's father in that they have the opportunity to show care for children who require and should be shown this, but instead choose not to, showing themselves to be self-centered and not at all caring about the situations of others, especially when these youths need the assistance of adults during difficult times.**

As the texts on my comparative course progress they show more details about a hero, namely how they treat others, such as showing loyalty to those around them. In FOS Augustus shows how heroic individuals are loyal to others, and continuously so, especially when situations require this. He has romantic feelings for Hazel, and upon entering a relationship with her makes it clear he will be loyal and supportive to his partner for as long as is possible. Augustus declares he will continue loving Hazel for as long as is possible, showing the loyalty and devotion that anyone in a relationship should offer to their partner, which is especially impressive as this will benefit both individuals at a time when they require support from others (while experiencing serious illness): "I'm in love with you, and I know that love is just a shout into the void, and that oblivion is inevitable, and that we're all doomed and that there will come a day when all our labor has been returned to dust, and I know the sun will swallow the only earth we'll ever have, and I am in love with you." **INS is similar to FOS.** Michele constantly offers support to Filippo, which on one level shows his care for the kidnapped child but on another also his attempt to boost his morale so as to eventually help him escape. Early in the film this involves convincing Filippo to snap out of his depression, "Little bears... Little bears?... What do you mean, little bears... If you leave the window open little bears will come in... and steal cakes, biscuits... There are no little bears here", and when this is achieved Michele can encourage the kidnapped child: "Come on, we're nearly there. Come on! You're strong... Come on, you're doing great... Good. Now jump!" The change in the way Michele speaks to Filippo represents how he constantly shows support in different ways, which allows him to improve the kidnapped's mood until he is motivated to escape. **His actions are like those of Augustus, as both attempt to create a situation where they can always benefit another person, which is especially needed in dark and difficult times.**

Finally, the heroes and villains of the text ultimately end up successful or failing as a result of their various treatment of others and journeys taken throughout the novel. In two texts we see how heroes ultimately end up remaining and progressing at the end of the story. At the close of FOS individuals show care and consideration for others, even when they are disconnected from such people. This shows how heroism remains at the end, as individuals focus on caring for others rather than escaping such responsibility when they would be able to. Hazel's father does not avoid the difficult situation of Augustus' death, and instead willingly discusses the issue with his daughter, so as to show that she should look to the positives, that she enjoyed some relationship with her partner, and should cherish such memories: "It's total bullshit," he said. "The whole thing... He was such a bright kid. It's bullshit. I hate it. But it was sure a privilege to love him, huh?" **INS is similar to FOS.** The

villain, Michele's father, comes to realize, after mistakenly shooting his son, that he should be focused on caring for those close to him rather than harming those he does not know, such as Michele: "Hey! Hey! I'm sorry. I didn't know it was you!" His attempt to reach out to Michele, having to ask the child repeatedly to acknowledge him, shows him changing his ways to now only focus on caring for his son: "Talk to me, Michele! Open your eyes! Open them for your daddy! Open! Open! Michele! Look at me! Don't be afraid!... Talk to me Michele! Talk to me!" This in part explains Michele's reaction at the close when the caption "I'm not scared" comes on screen; the child no longer has reason to be unsettled for he has found his friend and the adults in his world will presumably no longer act in such a threatening manner. **The change in Michele's father resembles Hazel's parent, in that both seek to care for their children first and foremost, acting in the way that heroes were shown to earlier in the film, focusing on the well-being of others.**

As seen in the texts on my comparative course, heroes and villains are very different. This can be seen in their outlook on life and the way they treat those around them, which ultimately leads to a certain end for them as their journey in the texts come to a close.

