

1. (A) (i) The text I have studied is ‘Never Let Me Go’ by Kazuo Ishiguro. A key relationship that we encounter in this text is the one between Kathy and Tommy. Even though Kathy and Tommy have a tumultuous relationship, and are faced with many problems and challenges, they still successfully support one another.

This support that they provide one another can be seen in the key moment at the beginning of the text, with Tommy’s fit in the playing field. Tommy's "wild furies" are one of his defining features as a character. In the beginning of his time at Hailsham, these furies are viewed—by students and those in positions of authority—as part of his immature state. Kathy, however, seems to understand that Tommy's anguish runs deeper. The incident occurs on the playing field when Tommy is not picked to play on the team. He stands there and flails and throws his arms about, screaming in anger. Tommy, in this instance, is not just mad that he has ruined his shirt, or that he has been made a fool of in the schoolyard. Whilst the girls mock Tommy for this incident, Kathy goes to him to attempt to calm him down. Kathy senses that Tommy's fits are in some way involuntary (particularly in their physical manifestations), and that he is actually upset by the constraints of the school itself—even if Tommy himself does not understand why Hailsham is such a hard place for him to live and study. Even though Tommy strikes Kathy in this rage, she still supports him: “So I reached forward and put a hand on his arm. Afterwards, the others thought he’d meant to do it, but I was pretty sure it was unintentional. His arms were still flailing about, and he wasn’t to know I was about to put out my hand. Anyway, as he threw up his arm, he knocked my hand aside and hit the side of my face.”

1. (A) (ii)

Another text I have studied is ‘Brooklyn’ directed by John Crowley. A key relationship in this text is the one between Eilis and Tony. Both of these characters support each other even during a challenging time.

A key moment where we see Tony supporting Eilis is when Eilis’ sister Rose dies in Ireland. At the time Eilis and Tony have been courting and have been falling in love. She has got over her homesickness and is enjoying her time in New York. The news of Rose’s death comes as a devastating blow for Eilis. Her separateness and the distance from home is emphasised here as she will not be able to go to Rose’s funeral. Her mother’s phone call underlines Eilis’ grief and upset, each feeling very sad and alone. Tony supports and comforts Eilis in her grief, understanding her need to go home, but he is also fearful that she will not come back. The security of their world has been compromised; Rose’s death shows that nothing is certain. (“Tony: You want to go home I guess? Eilis Lacey: How would it be for you if I did go home? Tony: I’d be afraid. Eilis: Afraid that I wouldn’t come back? Tony: Yeah. Home is home.”) Tony then takes Eilis to Long Island, to show her the site of their future home. At this point of great sadness, Tony offers Eilis a home, a gesture that is loving, and supportive.

When Eilis says she must go home to her mother, Tony proposes, wanting to make sure that Eilis will come back to him. Once she agrees to marriage, they have sex, further developing their relationship. Tony must feel that this formal bond will ensure that Eilis returns to New York, showing the significance and importance of marriage vows in this world. Despite the romance of their relationship, he may secretly fear that once she goes home, she may not return. We are reminded that Eilis has two separate, parallel worlds to negotiate.

These loving acts of support from Tony, whilst may be there to reassure himself that she is coming home, also serve to show committed support to Eilis. By showing her the site of their new home, and proposing marriage, Tony shows Eilis that even though she feels alone at the moment, that he will always be there to support her.

(B) Relationships often contain one main emotion. The relationship between Tommy and Kathy differs greatly from the relationship between Eilis and Tony as the main emotions in both relationships are quite different. I would say the main emotion in Eilis and Tony’s relationship is enjoyment, while the main emotion in Kathy and Tommy’s relationship is empathy (acknowledging and feeling each other’s emotions). We can see these emotions being central to our characters’ relationships by exploring the beginning of the texts, an outside force that comes between the characters, and the ending of the text.

In ‘Never Let me Go’ by Kazuo Ishiguro Kathy and Tommy’s relationships is defined by empathy from the beginning. An incident occurs on the playing field when Tommy is not picked to play on the team. He stands there and flails and throws his arms about, screaming in anger. Tommy, in this instance, is not just mad that he has ruined his shirt, or that he has been made a fool of in the schoolyard. Whilst the girls mock Tommy for this incident, Kathy goes to him to attempt to calm him down. Kathy senses that Tommy's fits are in some way involuntary (particularly in their physical manifestations), and that he is actually upset by the constraints of the school itself—even if Tommy himself does not understand why Hailsham is such a hard place for him to live and study. Even though Tommy strikes Kathy in this rage, she still supports him: “So I reached forward and put a hand on his arm. Afterwards, the others thought he’d meant to do it, but I was pretty sure it was unintentional. His arms were still flailing about, and he wasn’t to know I was about to put out my hand. Anyway, as he threw up his arm, he knocked my hand aside and hit the side of my face.” Kathy sees past Tommy’s childish rage and shows empathy towards him.

Conversely, the relationship between Eilis and Tony shows enjoyment rather than empathy. In the beginning of the text, once Eilis is in New York, she struggles with homesickness, feeling sad and alone in her new job and lodging house. She says little and cries as she reads a letter from home. This is a low point for her, to have travelled so far, to feel so unhappy and alone. Eilis’ tears are a visual, emotional sign of her upset. We then see a change in our protagonist as she meets someone she enjoys spending time with. Eilis meets Tony, a young Italian man, at an Irish dance, and he walks her home. Eilis is much happier once she meets Tony. She smiles and talks more, and has fun with him. Now that she has found him, her homesickness and loneliness are no longer a problem. With Tony, she enjoys talking about her life instead of missing home. A key moment we see here is when Eilis and Tony go out for dinner and she hardly eats anything, she is so busy chatting. She is comfortable and happy with Tony. It is a very positive relationship. Eilis Lacey: [voice over] “Dear Rose, I think of you and mother every single day. I have a boyfriend. He’s sweet, he’s funny. Tony has helped me to feel that I have a life here I didn’t have before I met him.” This shows us that enjoyment is the central emotion in Tony and Eilis’s relationship.

In a dissimilar way, Kathy and Tommy have very little enjoyment in their relationship. Kathy cares for Tommy and her feelings for him grow when they reach their teenage years when their time in Hailsham is drawing to an end. However, Kathy is a naturally reserved person and is no match for her manipulative friend Ruth who decides to make Tommy her boyfriend, not because she truly cares about him, but because she likes the idea of being in a relationship. This love triangle is complicated by the fact that Ruth is Kathy's best friend. Despite their friendship, Ruth does her best to drive a wedge between Kathy and Tommy. In the cottages, Ruth is aware of the growing closeness between Kathy and Tommy so spitefully, she manipulates Kathy into agreeing that the artwork Tommy has taken such trouble to produce is no good, and then she tells Tommy this. In an equally cruel move, Ruth devastates Kathy by telling her Tommy would never consider her as a potential girlfriend because she has slept with casual boyfriends. Ruth’s determination to keep Tommy and Kathy apart pays off and Kathy applies to start her career training so she can get away from this unhappy, complicated situation. Kathy and Tommy remain empathetic towards each other throughout this meddling from Ruth but it can not be said that they get any enjoyment from their relationship.

This situation of someone coming between the couple also crops up in ‘Brooklyn’ , but things work out very differently. When Eilis’ sister Rose passes away Eilis decides she must return home to Ireland. Tony is reluctant to let her go as he is afraid that Eilis will not return: “Tony: You want to go home I guess? Eilis Lacey: How would it be for you if I did go home? Tony: I’d be afraid. Eilis: Afraid that I wouldn’t come back? Tony: Yeah. Home is home.” Once Eilis returns home, her mother is keen to keep her there, telling her to stay on for Nancy’s wedding, and mentioning her own empty days. Nancy invites Jim Farrell along on Eilis’ first night out with her old friends as a potential love interest, knowing nothing of Eilis’ marriage to Tony. Her connection with Jim Farrell and their developing relationship will further complicate Eilis’ life at home, and the decision she will have to make about returning to Brooklyn. Tony’s letter is narrated to images of Eilis and Jim laughing and spending time together. We do not see the enjoyment we had previously seen in Eilis and Tony’s relationship, and for a moment, we think this enjoyment may be gone. Eilis is involved with two men, in two different countries. The tension is increased as Eilis does not read Tony’s letter but instead goes for dinner with Jim Farrell. Eilis’ meal with Jim in the Connaught Hotel is significant as while she is with her other love interest the dynamic follows the same. The film directions make it clear that Jim cares about Eilis having a good time at their meal. However, it is Jim who does all the talking as opposed to when it was Eilis doing so with Tony, earlier, at the heart of the connection is a focus on the other. Jim, despite talking, halts himself to return to ensure Eilis is enjoying herself: “I’m sorry. I wanted to ask you a thousand things and all I’ve done is talked.” Similar to earlier, Eilis realizes his care for her and in doing so shows concern for him, here appeasing Jim that she is having a good time: “I’m glad... Really?... Yes.” The symmetry to Eilis’ connection with Tony shows the difficult situation Eilis is in, and it is hard to know what the right thing for her to do is. Eilis’ difficult choice is messy and complicated and is similar to the relationship between Kathy and Tommy as someone else has put a strain on it.

I can see empathy as being the main emotion in Kathy and Tommy’s relationship in the ending of the text also. Kathy and Tommy meet Miss Emily so they can ask about the rumour to defer. Miss Emily says that it was “something for them to dream about, a little fantasy”. Kathy is calm at this point even though this revelation “should have crushed” her. Miss Emily explains that deferrals do not exist. Tommy wonders if deferrals had been true in the past, but Miss Emily denies it. He also asks if there was ever a gallery. Miss Emily affirms the gallery and Kathy asks her why they encouraged creativity so much in all of the clones. Miss Emily explains that it was to prove to the higher authorities, on whose sponsorship Hailsham depended, that the students had souls. Kathy and Tommy are puzzled by this, but Miss Emily refers to the other institutions where children were brought up in appalling conditions and reminds them of how privileged they were at Hailsham. Before Hailsham existed, clones existed to supply medical science: “In the early days, after the war, that’s largely all you were to most people. Shadowy objects in test tubes”. Tommy and Kathy find this difficult to take but the support and empathy they show one another gives the reader some form of comfort at least. When Tommy asked Miss Emily again “so there’s definitely nothing,. No deferral, nothing like that”.” Kathy retorted, in a way to calm him down and to reassure him of her presence “Tommy, I murmured and glared at him”. This key moment shows us the empathy Kathy has for Tommy; even when their dreams of a semblance of a future together are dashed, they still have empathy for another, and can take solace in the fact that they are going through it together.

Conversely, the ending of Brooklyn is much more hopeful and optimistic for the viewer as we once again see the enjoyment in the relationship between Eilis and Tony. Eilis’ closing voice over, which begins when talking to the girl on the ship during her return journey to America, details the difficulties of emigration, how “You’ll feel so homesick that you’ll want to die, and there’s nothing you can do about it apart from endure it.” Such a comment represents the difficulties she has faced during the plot and how she would be justified to be focused on herself during such turbulent periods. However, her closing lines detail how “one day the sun will come out... And you’ll realize that this is where your life is.” Eilis refers to someone who has no connection to the past, someone who is yours alone. For Eilis, this special someone is Tony. She is joyfully reunited with him, happy to have come back to him. The film directions make it clear that Eilis and Tony have enjoyment in their relationship until the last. Eilis waits for Tony outside a shop. Tony sees her. He stops in his tracks, smiles broadly, runs across the road. For a moment he is worried about the reception he’s getting. Eilis’ expression is difficult to read, and for a moment he looks at her anxiously, but she opens her arms to him. Freeze on their embrace. The story ends happily, with Eilis and Tony thrilled to be reunited and together again, and Eilis’ life in Enniscorthy consigned to the past. She has chosen Tony and New York, and all that they represent, showing enjoyment is the central emotion in their relationship.

In conclusion, while both relationships are similar in that another person causes a strain in them, and they are also similar in the way that they can overcome this intrusion from an outside force, and remain a relationship, both are very different in the main emotion that we see. Kathy and Tommy show empathy to one another and in my opinion, this empathy is what they both have in common throughout, while Eilis and Tony truly enjoy spending time with one another and so enjoyment is the main emotion in their relationship.