A.S. 2019-2020

CLASS: 5 LSCA

**NORMAL PEOPLE**

**by Sally Rooney**

**PURPOSE**: to single out what Connell, the main protagonist of the novel, wants from Marianne and to draw considerations about the way he relates to her. It is a way to find out the nature of men’s expectations in a relationship, and later on to compare them with women’s expectations. This will help knowing more about human relationship.

**MANAGEMENT**: Cooperative

STEP 1: personal reading of the novel

STEP 2: division on task according to the table below

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **NAME AND SURNAME** | **PAGES COVERED** |
| Benincasa Federica | p.1 - 19 |
| Benvenuto Georgie | p. 20 - 31 |
| Casotto Nicole | p. 31 - 44 |
| Corazza Ilaria | p. 45 - 57 |
| De Simone Chiara | p. 58 - 81 |
| Dri Sofia | p. 82 - 93 |
| Giorda Elena | p. 94 - 106 |
| Hafiane Nada | p. 107 - 119 |
| Iordache Andrada | p. 120 - 135 |
| Montagner Lisa | p. 136 - 152 |
| Peruzzi Arianna | p. 153 - 170 |
| Plett Sara | p. 170 - 184 |
| Santoro Alice | p. 185 - 199 |
| Sassi Rachele | p. 200 - 222 |
| Tuniz Giorgia | p. 223 - 241 |
| Voltolina Mara | p. 242 - 266 |

STEP 3: identify sentences, expressions, phrases, dialogue exchanges that are connected to task

STEP 4: analysis and critical interpretation of meanings or hidden meanings

STEP 5: reaching a shared conclusion

**DATA COLLECTED:**

Considering Connell’s and Marianne’s interactions, Connell’s body language and his inner thoughts in the novel, the reader can draw considerations about the way he relates to Marianne. The considerations we single out in any chapter are the following:

**JANUARY 2011 (Benincasa Federica)**

***p.2:*** *" he presses his hands down slightly further into his pockets, as if trying to store his entire body in his pocket all at one"*

**COMMENT**: the Connell's gesture makes the reader understand that he uses body language to communicate his feelings. He doesn't feel at his ease and he searches for protection inside his pockets.

***p.3:*** *"He dreads being left alone with her like this, but also find himself fantasising about things he could say to impress her"*

**COMMENT**: Connell shows his insecurity and he depends on Marianne's judgment. He wants to be appreciated from her and he tries to show the best part of himself.

***p.3-4:*** *"God, you're not having an affair with her, are you? "*

*"Obviously not. Do you think it's funny joking about that?"*

**COMMENT**: Connell doesn't know if he is attracted to miss Neary. This is one of his weak point and Marianne's question annoys him. He's afraid that Marianne may doubt him.

***p.5:*** *"I mean, you don't think I'm playing into it when she acts like that, do you?"*

**COMMENT**: Connell needs to be reassured by Marianne because he is afraid others people may make fun of him.

***p.5:****"Why does everyone else think I fancy her, then?"*

**COMMENT**: Connell wants hear that Marianne realized he isn't like others think but she knows his real personality.

***p.6-7:****"When he talks to Marianne he has a sense of total privacy between them. He could tell her anything about himself, even weird things, and she would never repeat them, he knows that. Being alone with her is like opening a door away from normal life and then closing it behind him"*

**COMMENT**: Connell considers Marianne a safe place where he can be himself. He is used to pretending with his schoolmates to not ruin his reputation. Marianne hasn't friends and Connell knows his secrets are safe.

***p.8:****"He turns to look over his shoulder but finds he cannot actually look Marianne in the eye, so he addresses himself to the floor instead"*

**COMMENT**: Connell is so influenced by the presence of his mother Lorainne that he can't look Marianne in the eye. He has established a intimate relationship with Marianne who doesn't share it with anyone.

**FEBRUARY 2011 (Benincasa Federica)**

***p.13:*** *"About feeling a bit imprisoned in the school, I do see that”*

**COMMENT**: Connell doesn't share the Marianne's overstate reaction to Mr Kerrigan's reproach but he understands Marianne's condition. He considers the school a prison because he lives the same situation: he feels trapped by the judgment of others.

***p.13-14:****"You act different in class, you're not really like that"*

**COMMENT**: Connell underlines that Marianne has different personalities depending on the context and place where she is. In this way Connell makes Marianne understand that he is aware of their special relationship that Marianne has not established with anyone.

***p.15:****"You know you were saying the other day that you like me, he said. In the kitchen you said it, when we were talking about school."*

*"Yeah."*

*"Did you mean like as a friend, or what?"*

**COMMENT**: Connell wants to be reassured about Marianne's feelings.

*"I'm kind of confused about what I feel, he added. I think it would be awkward in school if anything happened with us"*

**COMMENT**: Connell is full of insecurities and he wants to be sure that Marianne wouldn't tell anything about them at school.

***p.18:****"Boldly she asked if he was going to kiss her again. He said: what do you think?"*

**COMMENT**: Connell wants always know what is the Marianne's point of view because, in this way, he understands her intentions and he doesn't risk to wrong.

**MARCH 2011 (Benvenuto Georgie)**

***p. 20:*** *"He's put down Law in Galway, but now he thinks that he might change it, because, as Marianne has pointed out, he has no interest in Law."*

**COMMENT:** Connell is insecure and he isn't autonomous to take a decision alone; he seeks help and advice from Marianne.

***p. 21:*** *"With Marianne it was different, because everything was between them only, even awkward or difficult things. He could do or say anything he wanted with her and no one would ever find out. It gave him a vertiginous, lightheaded feeling to think about it."*

*"He was thinking about what a secretive, independent-minded person Marianne was, that she could come over to his house and let him have sex with her, and she felt no need to tell anyone about it. She just let things happen, like nothing meant anything to her. "*

**COMMENT:** Connell asks Marianne to keep their relationship secret from his friends so that he can feel free to be himself without having to worry about others' judgments.

***p. 22:*** *"In school on Monday he had to avoid looking at Marianne or interacting with her in any way. He carried the secret around like something large and hot, like an overfull tray of hot drinks that he had to carry everywhere and never spill."*

**COMMENT:** Connell had to avoid Marianne so nobody could suspect their relationship. He was afraid of not being able to keep the secret, unlike Marianne who could behave as if nothing had happened.

***p. 23:*** *"After he talked to Rob he told himself it was over, he'd just had sex with her once to see what it was like, and he wouldn't see her again. [...] He found himself fantasising about her in class that afternoon, at the back of Maths, or when they were supposed to be playing rounders.”*

**COMMENT:** Connell wanted to convince himself that the relationship with Marianne was not a real relationship. With this thought Connell underlines his fear of being judged by his friends and classmates. Furthermore Connell searches for physical contact with Marianne because he is sexually attracted to her.

**APRIL 2011 (Casotto Nicole)**

***p.35:*** *His expression didn’t change but his hands moved around under her jumper to show her was listening.*

**COMMENT:** Connell is physical and sexually attracted by Marianne and he tries to go along with her to make her feel safe and protect.

***p. 36****: “I thought you liked me*”

**COMMENT:** Connell tells Marianne his thought to be accommodated and to hear what he wants from her.

***p. 38:*** *“He’s watching her. He’s just looking at her and saying nothing”*

**COMMENT:** Connell wants to have Marianne’s attention and looks for Marianne’s confirmation to assure himself.

***p. 38:*** *Connell moves towards Marianne almost imperceptibly and their arms touch*

**COMMENT:** Another time Connell tries to have a contact with Marianne even if they’re in public.

***p. 41****: “We were all laughing at the time” says Rachel*

*“That’s not true” says Connell*

**COMMENT:** Connell reveals his protective instinct showing her that she has his approval and she can trust him.

***p. 41:*** *Connell puts his his hands in his pockets as if to prevent himself touching her by accident*

**COMMENT:** Connell does not want a contact with her when he’s in public for fear of his peers’ judgements. He uses body language to communicate his feelings and his insecurities.

***p. 43:*** *“What do you mean? Everyone likes you. And unlike almost people you’re actually a nice person” He makes a facial expression she can’t interpret*

**COMMENT:** Connell, through body language and expression, expresses his disapproval towards Marianne’s claim, thinking she said it ironically.

***p. 44****: “I would never hurt you, okay?”*

*“I love you”*

**COMMENT:** Connell wants to have Marianne’s attention and tries to protect her after domestic violence that she’s forced to suffer by her father and brother;

**APRIL 2011 (Corazza Ilaria)**

***p. 47: “****Connell texted Marianne: fg in government, fucks sake. she texted back: The party of Franco. He had to look up what that meant”.*

**COMMENT**: Connell always needs Marianne’s approval because he is insecure and tentative since they belong to different social classes. In addition, he used the poll’s pretext to text her because he wants Marianne presence in his life.

***p. 47:*** *“The other night Marianne told him that she thought he’d turned out well as a person. She said he was nice, and that everyone liked him. He found himself thinking about that a lot. It was a pleasant thing to have in his thought.”*

**COMMENT**: the phrase reported highlights the importance of Marianne’s thoughts for Connell who need his qualities are repeated and underlined and the importance to be well appreciated by Marianne (which is his purpose).

***p. 48:*** *“The**other night Marianne told him this thing about her family” “Connell started telling her that he loved her. she was crying and everything and he just said it without thinking. Was it true? He didn’t know enough to know that. “*

*“ It wasn’t the first time he’d had the urge to tell Marianne that he loved her”*

**COMMENT:** the extract underlines Connell is insecure, tentative and that he always searches for confirmations, indeed he thinks about what he has said.

***p. 49:*** *“He noticed how long it took her to say anything in response, and how her pause had bothered him, as if she might not say it back, and when she did say it felt better, but maybe that meant nothing.”*

**COMMENT:** here it is clear Connell’s need to know what Marianne feels about him. It comes to surface Connell’s insecurity, his necessity to be approved and not to have say something the other person not share. Moreover, he wants Marianne says she loves his to be secure about her feelings, to be sure he does not feel something she does not agree.

**AUGUST 2011 (De Simone Chiara)**

***p. 60:*** *"Yeah, he says, no bother"*

**COMMENT** It is clear Connell wants to talk to Marianne, since they haven't spoken for months. He wants to understand the reason why she dropped school and started to ignoring him. The expression *"no bother"* shows he doesn't want to show he wants to talk with her, he makes it appear to Alan as he doesn't really care either way because he still doesn't want people to know Marianne and he were in a relationship.

***p. 61:*** *"He told her it wasn't 'romantic', and that he and Rachel were just friends."*

**COMMENT** The way he describes the relationship between him and Rachel implies he would rather go to the Debts with a friend pretending there is more between them, than with Marianne because of the way people think about her. It shows insecurity, embarrassment and it is used like an excuse.

***p. 61:*** *"No. When would I even have time?"*

**COMMENT** Connell tries to avoid having a serious conversation with Marianne by hiding behind jokes. He is not able to admit he hurt her and the reason why he did it. How he is dealing with it shows cowardice.

***p. 61:*** *"He didn't say anything."*

**COMMENT** It is clear he hurt and humiliate her. He feels ashamed but at the same time he is too selfish to change what he has done. He is too afraid about what people might think of him. He is scared to become as she is, namely a marginalised without friends.

**NOVEMBER 2011 (De Simone Chiara)**

***p. 72*:** *"Oh, right, says Connell. Hi."*

**COMMENT**: Connell is scared Marianne might do something to embarrass him, after the way they ended their relationship. He would not deal with it: he was already in a place he didn't know anybody and she seemed quite popular. If she said something bad about him, his reputation would be ruined forever. He is sceptical.

***p. 72:*** *"When did you take up smoking?"*

**COMMENT** Even if they just met for the first time after a while. Connell still cares about her, so when he sees her smoking he immediately asks her about it.

***p. 74:*** *"He couldn't summon up the energy to act normal. At lunch he sat in the same place as always, eating sad mouthfuls of food, not listening to his friends when they spoke. Sometimes he wouldn't notice even when they called his name, and they would have to throw something at him or clip him on the head to get his attention. [...] Then he'd remember what had happened, and wake up feeling so depressed he couldn't move a single muscle in his body."*

**COMMENT** Marianne was his reference point, his way to feel confident. She knew the real him and she liked him. Now he didn't have anyone to turn to and he knew he hurt her. After she left school and him, he gave up on himself, he couldn't keep himself from falling apart. He tried to hide his insecurities by drinking or having anxious sex, making his situation worse instead of reaching a solution. He was not brave enough to face his mistakes and try to solve them, because it would imply admitting to everybody they were in a relationship. He had never had to make the first move or say sorry, because every girl would have been happy to be with him no matter what. He had always had everything he wanted without fighting for it. Therefore he didn't even know where to start to get her back. At this point he depended on her, and it drove him crazy knowing he couldn't have her anymore.

***p. 80*:** *"I thought I was bad going out with Rachel Moran, he says. Your boyfriend's a Holocaust denier."*

**COMMENT** Connell takes advantage of the nice atmosphere between him and Marianne to admit he made a mistake going out with Rachel and to judge her boyfriend. The way he says it seems innocent at first sight but hides a bitter and malicious meaning.

***p. 88:*** *"I hope he's really good in bed, Marianne."*

**COMMENT** Connell considers saying it because of his insecurities. He needs to know if Gareth is better than him, and if yes in what ways. He feels quite possessive towards her as if he is the only one she can sleep with.

**FEBRUARY 2012 (Dri Sofia)**

***p.88:*** *“Anyway, I’m sorry, says Marianne again. [...] Okay. But it was disrespectful of our friendship. I didn’t realise you were close with her, he says. I meant my friendship with you.He looks around at her. She tightens her arms around her knees and tucks her chin into her shoulders.”*

**COMMENT:** The exchange of dialogue reported shows Connell’s need of reassurance about his friendship with Marianne. He pretends to understand that Marianne is referring to the friendship with Teresa, but he actually knows that she is referring to the friendship with him. Moreover, Connell’s body language conveys the idea that he understands that Marianne cares about their friendship (but also about something else like a relationship). Therefore, the extract is relevant because expresses from both, Connell and Marianne, the interest to keep their friendship stable and their commitment to each other.

***p.88:*** *“People here are such snob. Even if they liked me I honestly wouldn’t want to be friends with them. He put his glass down and looked at Marianne. That’s why it’s easy for you, by the way, he said. Because you’re from a rich family, that’s why people like you. She frowned and nodded, and then Connell started laughing. I’m messing with you, he said. Their eyes met. She wanted to laugh, but she didn’t know if the joke was on her.”*

**COMMENT**: In the extract reported there are several points to take into consideration in order to better understand the way the two protagonists relate to each other.

From Marianne’s body language (she frowned and nodded) the intelligent reader can understand that she doesn’t approve what Connell is saying. Connell, is stating that people don’t take him into account because he comes from a family that is not as wealthy as hers. Marianne’s reaction is also visible by the fact that she doesn’t provide an answer, as she usually does. As a matter of fact, Connell perceives to have overstated and in order to remediate, he expresses irony through his body language (Connell started laughing). Marianne feels judged by Connell, therefore she doesn’t laugh even if she wanted.

The extract provided is significant because makes the reader understand that Connell is not able to assume his responsibility about his interaction with others, he accuses people not to take him into account because of his economic condition.

***p. 90-91****: “They lay in her bed looking up at the ceiling and talking. Until then they had always avoided discussing what had happened between them the year before, but that night Connell said: Do your friends know about us?*

*Marianne paused. What about us? she said eventually.*

*What happened in school and all that.*

*No, I don’t think so. Maybe they’ve picked up on something but I never told them.*

*For a few seconds Connell said nothing. She was attuned to his silence in the darkness.*

*Would you be embarrassed if they found out? he said*

*In some ways, yeah.*

*He turned over then, so he wasn’t looking up at the ceiling anymore but facing her. Why? he said.*

*Because it was humiliating.*

*You mean like, the way I treated you.*

*Well, yeah, she said. And just the fact that I put up with it.*

*Carefully he felt for her hand under the quilt and she let him hold it. A shiver ran long her jaw and she tried to make her voice sound light and humorous.*

*Did you ever think about asking me to the Debs? she said.*

*It’s such a stupid thing but I’m curious whether you thought about it.*

*To be honest, no. I wish I did.*

*She nodded. She continued looking up at the black ceiling, swallowing, worried that he could make out her expression.*

*Would you have said yes? he asked.*

*She nodded again. She tried to roll her eyes at herself but it felt ugly and self-pitying rather than funny.”*

**COMMENT:** In the present exchange of dialogue, it comes to light the secret nature of Marianne and Connell’s relationship. Marianne states that if people would know about their relationship she would feel ashamed because she thinks the fact that Connell asked her to keep it secret was humiliating and in the same way she did not have the courage to rebel to his request. Connell’s expression “You mean like, the way I treated you.” is very significant because it is supposed to be a question but it doesn’t present the question mark. Connell’s attitude suggests to the intelligent reader that he is aware he committed a mistake asking Marianne to keep their relationship secret. It was an egoistic action with the aim to safeguard his popularity in College. Connell’s body language (Carefully he felt for her hand under the quilt and she let him hold it) suggests a form of forgiveness towards Marianne who seems to accept it because she lets him hold his hand. In the same way, Marianne needs some reassurance from Connell and this is suggested when she asks him if he had thought to invite her at the party. Connell’s answer conveys his regret against the fact he didn’t invite her. After that, Marianne doesn’t provide an answer but her body language (She nodded. She continued looking up at the black ceiling, swallowing, worried that he could make out her expression.) expresses that she is upset by this fact. The third person narrator talking by Marianne’s point of view conveys that she is ashamed of herself because she hoped that Connell invited her and she also would have accepted his invite.

**APRIL 2012 (Giorda Elena)**

**P. 98** *"He smiled at the ceiling. You just have to repress all that stuff, Marianne. That's what I do."*

**COMMENT:** He has feelings for her but pretends not to and tries to cover it up joking around.

**P. 102** *"He smiled, he inhaled through his mouth. Kind of depends on what you would want to do, he said."*

**COMMENT:** He doesn't answer directly. He wants to reassure without taking any risk.

**P. 105** *"She had been sad before, after the film, but now she was happy. It was in Connell's power to make her happy. It was something he could just give to her."*

**COMMENT:** He feels he has the responsibility to make her happy. He understands the emotional power he has over her and how much her mood depends on him.

**P. 105-106** *"He has a terrible sense all of a sudden that he could hit her face, very hard even, and she would just sit there and let him. The idea frightens him so badly that he pulls his chair back and stands up."*

**COMMENT:** He really cares about her. He is frightened by the idea of someone hit her face and is frustrated because she would let that happen. He shows his frustration by standing up.

**JULY 2012 (Hafiane Nada)**

**P.110** *“Connell takes both the plastic bags in his arms and cock in his head towards the door. Come on he said.”*

**COMMENT:** He Limits the use of language to simulate false indifference.

**P.111** *“Lorraine gets out.Connel glances at Marianne in the rear-view mirror and says:Here,get in the front,will you?I’m not a taxi driver”*

**COMMENT:** He expresses his need to feel close to her with irony.

**P.111** *“Lorrain opens the boot and Connell twists around in his seat. Leave the bags,he says. I’ll bring them in when I’m back.”*

**COMMENT:** Connell shows his urgent need to stay alone with Marianne.

**P.111** *“How are the things,anyway? he says”*

**COMMENT:** He wants to find out if she missed him and how his absence has affected her daily life.

**P.112** *“No,I’ve been working in the Bistro. Actually your mom was in the other night with her,uh. Her boyfriend or whatever it is.”*

**COMMENT:** Connell wants to show her that he cares about her and what comes back to her.

**P.112** *“When Connel went home for Reading Week in the spring,he asked Marianne if she would send him naked pictures of herself. I’ll delete them whenever you want obviously,he said”*

**COMMENT:** He wants to show her that she can trust him and that her desires come first.

**P.112** *“And I’ve never actually asked for any before,but sometimes you do get sent them.”*

**COMMENT:** He wants to make her feel wanted and the only one he's interested in.

**P.113** *“And you’re with this guy Jamie now,aren’t you he says. So I hear.”*

**COMMENT:** He wants to show her that he is informed and interested in her life.

**P.113** *“I actually beat him in a game of pool once. You probably don’t remember.”*

**COMMENT:**Connell draws comparisons between him and Jamie, focusing on himself positively.

**P.113** *“Connell nods and adds: He always liked you.”*

**COMMENT:** Connell underlines that Marianne had chosen him before in the near past.

**P.114** *“Sophie got up onto Connell’s shoulders for the second match[...]Sophie looked over at her then. No need to worry,Marianne,she called.*

*[...] She’s not worried,he says”*

**COMMENT:**Connell expresses the awareness of belonging to Marianne's soul and body.

**P.116 *“****You don’t reply to my messages very much”*

**COMMENT:** Connell expresses his need to keep in touch with her.

**P.117** *“I thought you would at least text me if you were coming home,he says.”*

**COMMENT:**  Connell is insecure and he needs to be sure to have a relevant position in Marianne's life.

**SEPTEMBER 2012 (Iordache Andrada)**

*"Don't worry about it, she says. What was the protest? It wasn't abortion or anything, was it?"*

*He feels ashamed now that it didn't notice. No, I don't think so, he says. The household tax or something.*

**COMMENT:** Connell feels shame for not noticing the protest. That is why he and Marianne have a relationship based on deep discourses, they are both very intelligent. They are attracted to each other first of all by their mental connection. Therefore Connel is afraid she loses interest and esteem in him.

***p. 123****: “It looks like I won't be able to pay rent up here this summer. [...] Her face hardened without displaying any particular emotion. Oh, she said. you'll be going home, then. He rubbed at his breast bone then, feeling short of breath. looks like it, yeah, he said.”*

**COMMENT:** In the present extract, Connell informs Marianne he is broken and cannot pay the rent. The intelligent reader can feel the effort he makes to tell it because he says it like light-heartedly. it is clear that the sentence hides insecurity. Overmore Marianne seems careless so Connell reacts with body language: he rubs his breast bone sign that he feels uncomfortable and then answers her disinterestedly. Actually, Connell wants to tell Marianne he wants to live with her, but he is afraid of showing his feelings.

**JANUARY 2013 (Montagner Lisa)**

***p. 140*** *"I wonder if there is any way I could meet up with you… "*

**COMMENT:** Connell wants Marianne to help him.

***p. 143*** *"I know, I saw myself in the mirror. But I'm okay actually, I just need to get cleaned up."*

**COMMENT:** Connell tries to convince Marianne he is okay even if he is in a bad situation. He is trying to look strong and powerful in front of Marianne.

***p. 144*** *"Sorry for calling you, it's the only number I knew off the top of my head"*

**COMMENT:** Connell apologizes for calling Marianne up and wants her to know she was the first one to cross his mind.

***p. 145*** *"Maybe I'll just go back out and get punched in the face again"*

***p. 148****"You could have a different boyfriend, you know?"*

**COMMENT:** Connell expresses his disappointment to Marianne about Jamie because he is jealous of Jamie.

***p.149*** *"do you love him?"*

**COMMENT:** Connell makes Marianne doubt about Jamie because he doesn't trust him and he wants to be at place.

**JULY 2013 (Peruzzi Arianna, Plett Sara)**

***p.156*** *“Time softens out while he types, feeling slow and dilated while actually passing very rapidly”*

**COMMENT:** When Connell writes emails to Marianne, he feels relaxed and the time does not seem to pass.

***p.156*** *“He couldn’t explain aloud what he finds so absorbing about him emails to Marianne, but he doesn’t feel that it’s trivial”*

**COMMENT:** Connell and Marianne are linked by a sense of belonging when they exchange continuous emails;

***p.158*** *“When he heard Marianne’s name he looked around to see her”*

**COMMENT:** Connell seems to have Marienne close by even hearing her name on delivery of the scholarship.

***p.161*** *“ he feels a sort of enjoyably painful sensation in his throat”*

**COMMENT:** when Connell sees Marianne he feels a profound sense of pleasure.

***p.162*** *“He expressed himself more in terms of identification, his sense of rooting for her and suffering with her when suffers, his ability to perceive and sympathise with her motivations.”*

**COMMENT:** There is empathy between Connell and Marianne in suffering, in solidarity and pleasure.

***p.163*** “*Jamie has been a continual object of loathing and derision for Connell since he became Marianne’s boyfriend.”*

**COMMENT:** Connell feels an annoying jealousy when Marianne starts dating another boyfriend.

***p.165*** “*They were lying in bed, Connell had his arm around her.*

*“She still laughing . He stroked his hand over her belly, grinning to himself because he was making her laugh.”*

**COMMENT:** When Connell and Marianne are in bed together they embrace and smile, they find themselves without worries and without conditionings.

***p.168*** *“She’s my friend, alright? Don’t be talking about her like that.”*

**COMMENT:** Connell feels annoyed when Helen criticizes Marianne's behavior.

***p.170*** *“He was sad for Marianne after that, sad that nothing in her life had ever truly seemed healthy, and sad that he’d had to turn away from her.”*

**COMMENT:** an intelligent reader could note the sense of sadness that Connell feels towards Marianne for the fact that he has moved away from her and for her life.

***p. 173:*** *“I guess we’re from very different background, class-wise.”*

**COMMENT:** the sentence reported is said by Connell during a conversation with Marianne about the scholarship. The verb “guess” suggests a confirmation, indeed, as in the rest of the novel, he is always looking for Marianne’s confirmation because he is insecure and she is the only point of reference he has.

***p. 174:*** *“ I just feel weird about all this, he said. I feel weird wearing black tie and saying things in Latin. You know at the dinner last night, those people serving us, they were students. They’re working to put themselves through college while we sit there eating the free food they put in front of us. Is that not horrible?*

**COMMENT:** after making some considerations aloud, with the last question, Connell wants to know Marianne’s opinion about the students working to make money. It means he is curious about her thoughts and interested in her way of thinking. In addition, he is searching for her approval, because he wants her to have the same thoughts of him about the situation.

***p. 175:*** *“ I don’t know. I should have known coming to Trinity that it would be like this. I’m just looking at all this scholarship stuff thinking, Jesus, what would other people in school say?”*

**COMMENT:** here, the first sentence puts into focus Connell’s inability to have an opinion about the situation. After that, he makes considerations aloud and at least he asks Marianne what she thinks. In particular, the last question underlines his fear of other people’s judgement since he asks her explicitly about other people’s thoughts.

***p. 178:*** *“Connell turns the handle and comes inside. Alright? he says.”*

**COMMENT:** by saying “Alright?” he wants to make himself sure everything is ok. Therefore, this underlines his preoccupation and his sense of protection towards Marianne.

***p. 178:*** *“Connell steps in between them, glass crunches under his shoe, and he grabs Marianne by her upper arms. [...] Come here, he says, Marianne.”*

**COMMENT:** from the action of grabbing Mariane by her upper arms and the words “Come here”, the intelligent reader can understand Connell wants to reassure her and make her feel protected when she argues with Jamie. Indeed, he is very protective over Marianne because she is one of the most relevant people in his life and the only point of reference, and therefore he instinctively wants to do everything in order to make her feel good in each situation.

***p. 179:*** *“Marianne leans against a slim silver tree trunk and Connell puts his arms around her.”*

***p. 181:*** *“Lots of people love you, Marianne. Okay? Your family and friends love you.”*

**COMMENT:** both the extracts underlines Connell’s willing to reassure Marianne, to protect her, to show her that he cares about her and to make her feel loved by hugging her in the first extract and by saying that people love her in the second one.

***p. 180:*** *“Can I stay in your room tonight? she says. I’ll sleep on the floor.*

*The bed is massive, he says, don’t worry about it.*

**COMMENT:** Connell is saying implicitly she can sleep with him in the same bed, always giving her a sense of protection. It underlines another time he is willing to do anything to make her feel at ease.

***p. 181:*** *“After a time he hears her say something he can’t make out. I didn’t hear that, he says.”*

***p. 182:*** *“What did she say that for? he says. [...] What did she say? he asks. As in, how did she react?*

**COMMENT:** at page 181, since he could not hear her, he is implicitly telling Marianne to repeat what she said, asking for clarifications and explanations. On the other side, at page 182, he is explicitly asking her explanations about what happened. Therefore, in both the extracts she is showing his curiosity and his preoccupation about what she says.

**DECEMBER 2013 (Santoro Alice)**

***p.186:*** *“I do feel like a pretty different person now than I was then but maybe I don’t seem that different, I don’t know.”*

**COMMENT:** While in the very first part of the statement Connel says he feels different, emphasizing the verb both the particle “do”, in the second he doubts about his statement and searches approbation. He doesn’t look sure about himself.

***p.186: “****But whatever, I’m not pushing the boyfriend thing, I just hope you have confirmed he’s not a psychopath. You don’t always have a good radar on that.”*

**COMMENT:** Connel doesn’t want to take pasosition about Marianne’s new friend and encourages her to doubt him.

**MARCH 2014 (Sassi Rachele)**

**p. 212** *“He had just wanted to be normal, to conceal the parts of himself that he found shameful and confusing. It was Marianne who had shown him other things were possible.*

**p. 214** *“How I act with her is my normal personality” he said.*

**COMMENT:** Connell doesn’t feel at ease with his friends or classmates. He manages to express himself totally only with Marianne.

**JULY 2014 (Tuniz Giorgia)**

***p. 223:*** *“ I can run you home at half-time, he says. [...] Am I in your way? she says. No, not at all. You just seem sleepy. Can I have some of your Coke? He hands her the glass and she sits up to drink it, feeling like a baby. [...] You’re thirsty, he says. There’s more downstairs in the fridge if you want some.”*

**COMMENT:** In this part of the test Connell seems to be worried about Marianne’s conditions of enjoying the night together. He wants her to feel comfortable so,after seeing her quite sleepy, he’s just proposed to run her back home so that she could rest. He seems like feeling unsure and anxious about her being bored but at the same time, when he proposed her to go home, he probably deeped hope her to say no because undoubtedly he needs her presence in his life but he is afraid of showing it clearly. After, when she asks him for some Coke, he served her with his glass. From the point of view of Marianne, the narrator let the reader understand that she felt like a baby who needs to be feed and it underlines that he has an high regard for her but he also seems like performing as a parent who takes care of his child. This is also highlighted by the fact that he proposes her something more to drink if she was thirstier.

***p. 224:*** *“Where did you disappear to last night? she says. Oh. I don’t know, I was in the smoking area for a bit. Did you end up kissing that girl? No, he says.”*

**COMMENT:** here Connell wants to reassure Marianne about have kissed another girl. It just seems like he wants her to know that he is not interested in other girls who are not her but it is not clearly said because he is not really able to express his feelings using words.

***p. 224:*** *“He’s working in the college library this summer, but he’s visited Carricklea every weekend since she got home. [...] Last month she told him he shouldn’t feel obliged to visit her if he doesn’t feel like it, and he replied tonelessly: Well, it’s really the only thing I have to look forward to.”*

**COMMENT:** He wants her to know that he really wants to see her every week and he is not annoyed or like obliged to come from Dublin for her. Since Connell is not very good at express his feelings with words, he does it with small gestures which apparently seem insignificant or predictable, but they mean a lot for him.

***p. 228:*** *“You know I love you. He didn’t say anything else. She said she loved him too and he nodded and continued driving as if nothing at all had happened, which is a way it hadn’t.”*

**COMMENT:** When Connell said to Marianne he loved her, he did not simply said “I love you” but he said *“You know* I love you” like he wanted to remind her of his feelings but at the same time probably he does not want to seem too serious not to burden the moment.

***p. 235:*** *“He reaches for her hand and she gives it to him without thinking. For a second he holds it, his thumb moving over her knuckles. Then he lifts her hand to his mouth and kissed it. [...] He puts his hands on her lips and she lets him kiss her open mouth.[...] She is an abyss that he can reach into, an empty space for him to fill.”*

**COMMENT:** In this part of the novel it is shown how Connell, trying to express his feelings, he uses his body rather than his words. Through his body language the reader can clearly understand that there is a really strong sexual attraction between them.

**JULY 2014 (Voltolina Mara)**

***p. 244*** *"​I didn't have a job when I had you, says Lorraine.*

*[...] And do you regret it? he says. I know you are going to try and spare my feelings now, but honestly. Do you think you could have had a better life if you didn't have a kid?“*

**COMMENT**:​ Connell is talking to her mum about a girl he knows who is pregnant and he wonders if her mum would have had a better life without a kid. Connell is afraid to be the one who spoiled his mother's life.

***p. 247*** "​*He would lie down and die for her at any minute, which is the only things he knows about himself that makes him feel like a worthwhile person"*

**COMMENT: ​**Connell knows that he can't help Marianne who doesn't want any help and that nothing good has ever come from their relationship but he would still do everything for her and in his opinion it's the only thing that makes him worthy.

***p. 248*** *"​So it's over, and they're just nothing? What would it even mean, to be nothing to her?"*

**COMMENT**: ​Connell is afraid by the thought to be nothing to her when their relationship is over. She couldn't ever be nothing to him, every look would mean something. He wanted to die but he would like to stay in Marianne’s memory.

***p.251*** *"​Connell, his sight even blurrier now, can't tell whether Alan is angry or frightened.*

*I need to talk to you, Connell says.*

*His vision is swimming so severely that he notice he has to keep a hand on the door to stay upright.*

*I didn't do anything, says Alan.*

*Connell walks towards Alan until Alan is standing with his back against the banister. He seems smaller now, and scared. [...]*

*If you ever touch Marianne again, I'll kill you, he says. Okay? That's all. Say one bad thing to her ever again and I'll come back here myself and kill you, that's it."*

**COMMENT: ​**when Connell realises that Marianne’s brother, Alan, hit Marianne and broke her nose, his protective instinct pushes him to face Alan and to threaten him. Connell’s body language shows that he is very angry.

***p. 252****: "​it's good you called me. Okay? Look at me for a second. No one is going to hurt you like that again.*

*She looks at him above the veil of white tissue, and in a rush he feels his power over her again, the openness in her eyes.*

Everything's going to be alright, he says. Trust me. I love you, I'm not going to let anything like that happening to you again."

**COMMENT:** ​Marianne is scared and she is sorry because she called Connell but he reassures her, he'll protect her, she won't be hit again.

**FEBRUARY 2015**

***p. 261*** *"​At midnight when they all cheered Happy New Year, Connell took Marianne into his arms and kissed her. She could feel, like a physical pressure on the skin, that the others were watching them. Maybe people hadn't really believed it until then, or else a morbid fascination still lingered over something that had once be scandalous."*

**COMMENT:** ​Connell now doesn't matter what their schoolmates thinks about his relationship with Marianne. He shows his love on front of them.

***p. 264*** *"​I'm sorry I didn't tell you, ok? he says. Sometimes I feel embarrassed telling you stuff like that because it just seems stupid. To be honest, I still look up to you a lot, I don't want you to think of me as, u don't know. Deluded"*

**COMMENT:​** Marianne is angry because Connell didn't say her about the New York MFA but he told Sadie. She thinks he doesn't trust her but Connell didn't say it to her because he didn't think that they would offered him a place and also because he still considered Marianne better than him and he didn't want to be considered as a loser.

***p. 264*** *​"I thought you wanted to stay here next year.*

*I can stay, and you can go, she says it's just a Hear. I think you should do it. [...]*

*I'd miss you too much, he says. I'd be sick, honestly.*

*At first, but it would get better.[...]*

*To be honest, I don't know what to do, he says. Say you want me to stay and I will"*

**COMMENT: ​**Connell doesn't want to go to New York because he doesn't want to leave Marianne, he loves her too much. But Marianne says him to go, it is the better thing for him and for his career. Connell wants her to say him to stay with her instead of going to New York but she doesn't, quite the opposite she says him to leave.

**SUMMING UP:**

Considering Connell,s and Marianne’s interactions, Connell’s body language and his inner thoughts, the reader can understand that:

1. He is afraid of her judgement: he does not want Marianne to consider him like the others guys or a disillusioned person. Indeed, he needs to be sure to have a relevant position in Marianne's life. His attitude underlines his insecurity and the fear of what other people think about him;
2. He underlines many times his fear of other people’s judgement when he speaks to Marianne. Indeed, he wants to keep their relationship secret during high school, so that he can feel free to be himself without having to worry about other guys’ judgments. On the contrary, he deeply needs Marianne’s presence in his life, even if he is afraid of showing it clearly.
3. He always looks for Marianne’s confirmation and approval to reassure himself;
4. He also looks for the certainty she returns the same feelings and the certainty she wants only him;
5. He wants to know her point of view about each situation. It follows that Connell is insecure and he is not autonomous to take a decision alone, indeed he searches for help and advice from Marianne;
6. He shows that he cares about her, making her understand she has his support and she can trust him;
7. He wants to make her feel wanted, the only one he's interested in ad the only person who crosses his mind;
8. He wants to make her feel loved and protected from Jamie and Lukas and in particular form the domestic violence she has to suffer, because he hates the idea of letting someone hit her;
9. He shows her that he is curious and interested in her life, asking her explanations of what she says;
10. He is aware of his emotional power over her: he knows how to make her feel happy;
11. He sometimes does not show his feelings, he pretends not to have them, because he is afraid of them. In addition, he is often not able to express his feelings using words, so the best he can do is using body language;
12. He searches for physical contact with Marianne because he is sexually attracted to her;
13. He shows jealousy towards her boyfriends at Trinity College and he compares them with him, focusing positively to himself. It underlines another time his willing to protect her.