

Interview with Tommy

Aubrey Chiu
Butler University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.butler.edu/the-mall>

Recommended Citation

Chiu, Aubrey (2018) "Interview with Tommy," *The Mall*: Vol. 2 , Article 28.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.butler.edu/the-mall/vol2/iss1/28>

This Essay is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ Butler University. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Mall by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ Butler University. For more information, please contact omacisaa@butler.edu.

Interview with Tommy

Aubrey Chiu

Boom! The heavy wooden door shut behind me as I walked into the room, illuminated by the lights on the stage. As I continued towards the stage I saw there were two chairs seated across from one another. A couple weeks before leaving the cottages, Keffers gave me a letter he received. The message was quite vague. I was told I was to have an interview in an office building located in Norfolk. I don't quite understand why I didn't question it much, but I decided to go. I believed it was possibly part of the process of becoming a donor. The closing of the door must have caught the attention of the older lady approaching me. "Hello, are you Tommy?"

I gave her a quizzical look before I replied, "Yes." I could see now she was dressed in a suit, a maroon blazer and a matching pencil skirt, attached to the blazer I saw a mic with wires connecting to a tiny black box clipped to the top of the skirt. "Are you interviewing me?"

"Indeed I am. Oh my, I forgot to mention, my name is Diana Williams." She put out her hand for me to shake. "Why don't we take a seat?" I followed her up onto the stage and took a seat across from her. I glanced around and noticed people coming out from behind the stage and large lenses pointed at us. "I work for a news network and I'm doing a story on donors, as a way for others to remember your existence."

"What do you mean remem-" she cut me off before I could continue.

"You know," I still didn't know, "to remember your kind. By the way, this isn't a live interview, you can be honest with me. Do you need any water or anything before starting? As a forewarning, I'm going to be asking some personal questions, we would really like to get to know you." Why would she need to know me? This situation reminded me of my time back in Hailsham when students had to be creative as to make masterpieces. Maybe this could have something to do with revealing my soul as Miss Emily once mentioned (Ishiguro 175). I told her I was good and then someone came over and handed me a mic like Diana's. The man behind the camera gave Diana a thumbs-up and she nodded. "Tommy, let's start with some basic questions. Where are you from?"

"I am from Hailsham, and I currently reside in the Cottages." When I said Hailsham her

eyes widened a bit. Why is everyone so intrigued by Hailsham? That was still something I couldn't wrap my head around.

"Hailsham? Can you tell me more about that? Like friendships, setting, what they made you do?" Diana was really prying for information.

"Friendships?" I laughed a bit thinking of time when I was in one of my tantrums and Kath tried to get my attention to tell me about my shirt (Ishiguro 11). When I get back from the Cottages I will be sure to tell Kath about all this.

"Ah that smile must mean you have someone special." The comment caught me off guard. Even though I was in a relationship with Ruth, Kath always seemed to be on my mind. To avoid further questioning and confusion, I attempted to go with a more general description.

"Well I made two friends, Kathy and Ruth, who I am still good friends with. Back at Hailsham I used to play football too, but that didn't really come in handy," I hesitated to continue on about creativity, but Diana gave me a nod to continue on, "artistic talent is what really mattered at Hailsham." I looked up at Diana to see a curious look spread across her face. I knew I should have continued, but I've only felt comfortable and inclined to talk with Kath about such deep topics. I kept my gaze concentrated on the ground. After a minute of silence Diana spoke up with a more sympathetic tone.

"Tommy, I am here to report on the life of donors. What do you want people to know about your life? How do you want people to remember you? If you were to lose your life tomorrow, what story of your life do you have to tell? We can take a break after this." Diana appeared to have some knowledge that I didn't know about. This seemed to occur often, always left in the dark to theorize things myself.

"I was marginalized for my inability to be artistic, which bothered me for quite some time till I met a guardian that told me it was alright to not be artistic. For the most part that kept my tantrums away for the rest of the time I was at Hailsham." I didn't want to tell her that Miss Lucy apologized, and told me I still had to time to be creative before leaving for the cottages. "Diana, if I were to die tomorrow," I smiled before answering "tell Kath I love her."

With that Diana signaled the cameraman it was time for a break.

I sat in my seat startled. Did I really just say I love Kath out loud? I suppose I did, but

there was Ruth. I mean since Kath has been preparing to leave, Ruth and I have been drifting apart but that was natural, right? We were both going to be carers soon anyways. “Tommy are you well? Why don’t you go to the bathroom, we can start up again whenever you are ready.” As I wandered to the bathroom I questioned why I even began a relationship with Ruth. Why didn’t Kath do anything about it? Why didn’t I do anything about it? Though it seems I already knew the answer, friendship. Kath valued her relationship with Ruth, if Kath and I were to be together, their friendship would break. I wouldn’t want to see a somber Kath, that would break my heart.

Walking back towards the stage I thought back to when Diana mentioned “remembering my kind.” What could she have meant? My kind? I thought for a moment more before coming to a conclusion: clones.

I got back to the stage and told Diana I was ready to start up again. I cut her off before she had the chance to open her mouth, “Why are you trying to remember my kind?” Her tone was harsh as she answered, “Tommy I thought I answered this earlier?”

“No, I mean why do you want to remember us, remember clones.” She nodded her head as if she was formulating what to say next.

“Ahh,” I could see a sense of relief come over her, “So you have an understanding of what you are. Then why haven’t you done anything?”

“What do you mean done anything? What is there to do?” I realized she didn’t know if I knew what I was. Though it seems this understanding had allowed for her to ask more questions, and I wasn’t sure if I was ready for it or not.

“Tommy, have you ever considered escaping?”

“Escaping from what?”

“Your situation. You mentioned you were from Hailsham and now you are residing in the place you call the Cottages. Why are you still there?”

“I haven’t got my schedule for training as a carer yet.”

She laughed a bit in confusion before continuing “So you leave the Cottages to become a carer, then what is the next phase of your life.”

“I become a donor.”

“Then what does it mean to be a donor?” I couldn’t tell if she understood the term or was

just trying to get me to talk, but I continued to answer.

“To be a donor means you donate your organs.”

She smiled as if she wanted me to say that, “You know if you were to donate your organs you could die. If you are staring directly at death, why not run? What are you still doing?” I finally understood. Well why haven’t I done anything? She was right. I should have attempted to run, but here I am floating through life. I remembered the time when I went looking for Ruth’s possible, and when we realized that Rodney didn’t actually find Ruth’s possible she was so disappointed, but she had a point. If people knew we were clones we would have been treated differently.

“There’s no way society would accept us. I don’t even know what it takes to function in one.” At Hailsham we did some role play to prepare us on types of people we would meet outside of the school. I’m not sure if that would be sufficient enough. There is still so much I feel that I don’t know. “Everything is futile Diana. Maybe not for you or your kind, but for us clones, even before our birth our lives were planned. Why fight destiny?” I saw a look of sadness appear over Diana’s face, as if she was reflecting on something I said.

“The future isn’t set. Events that occur now can change the future.” Her look of sadness was replaced by what appeared to be irritation. “How long have you known you were going to be a donor?”

“We were always told we were going to be donors.”

“Yet you never thought about rebelling?”

“While that does sound enticing it takes more than one person to rebel, and students at Hailsham weren’t raised that way.” I remember those horror stories told around the students, whether they were true or not I didn’t realize that it was a way for Hailsham to discourage students from wondering about the world beyond and in fact, have fear of it. Even if I were to attempt to rebel I don’t think anyone, but potentially Kath, would join me. “Death is not something we fear. In the end, we are all going to die, so why resist it? Diana, you too are going to die. The difference between you and me is the way in which we live.”

Diana sighed shaking her head in defeat. I don’t think I gave her the answers she was looking for. “Tommy thanks for coming in today. I’m sorry that those like me are not accepting

of you. Hopefully there will come a day where clones like yourself can be a part of society.” She smiled at me then looked over at the cameraman signaling to stop filming. I gazed at the exit wondering how different life would be if I wasn’t born a clone.