



The Kinds Of Characters Portrayed In *Friendship* Film

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Abstract

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This study analyses the types of characters depicted in the 2024 film Friendship, directed by Andrew DeYoung, through the lens of E.M. Forster's character classification theory, specifically the distinction between flat and round characters. Using a qualitative content analysis approach, this research explores how these characters are constructed and developed throughout the film, as well as how they contribute to the emotional and thematic depth of the narrative. The film Friendship presents a dark yet psychologically rich exploration of modern masculinity, male loneliness, and emotional repression. The research findings indicate that the characters Craig Waterman and Austin Carmichael are round characters, exhibiting emotional complexity, inner conflict, and character development. On the other hand, Tami Waterman, Steven Waterman, and Tony are flat characters, remaining emotionally static and serving specific narrative purposes without significant transformation. This analysis highlights how character depth shapes viewers' understanding of social and psychological themes, particularly in contemporary cinematic narratives.

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INTRODUCTION

Literature is the art of written and spoken word; stories, poems, plays, and essays that capture human experience in its infinite variety. In these days of literature, there are many ways of expressing ideas through literature. Literature is not a stable entity; it is a constantly shifting set of cultural practices that evolve in response to social and historical contexts (Eagleton, 1983). This current study will take the object of study in film literature. Film is a visual art form that captures time and space, telling stories through a unique language of images and sounds (Sarris, 1962). Films can indeed be considered literary works because they share many fundamental qualities with traditional literature, enabling them to convey complex narratives and explore deep themes. Similar to literature, films have several elements in common when it comes to creating a story, one of which is characters.

Characters are the core of narrative fiction. They are figures, both realistic and symbolic; through which authors explore themes, conflicts, and human experiences. From ancient epics to modern novels, characters have evolved in complexity and function, serving as both agents of plot and reflections of society, psychology, and ideology. Furthermore, this current study will focus on finding the kinds of characters portrayed in *Friendship* film.

Friendship film release in 2024, is a daring, unorthodox film that transforms cringe-driven humor into a haunting character study. It invites audiences to rethink the pursuit of friendship, especially in adulthood, through disturbing yet blackly comic encounters. The film explores the edge of awkward comedy while presenting an honest depiction of emotional vulnerability and the isolation often experienced by men. It challenges traditional expectations of male friendship, suppressed emotions, and the midlife "nice guy" persona. The story starts by a wrongly delivered package serves as the starting point for Craig and Austin's relationship. Craving companionship, Craig becomes overly attached to Austin's easygoing demeanor. Their initial bonding, through drinks and spontaneous outings; gradually escalates into fixation, crossed personal boundaries, and emotional unraveling. The story reaches its peak in a tense and unsettling clash that ultimately leaves Craig alone and mentally unstable.

From this film, the current study will analyse and find the kinds of characters in the film through E.M. Forster *Aspect of the Novel* which dividing the characters into two types; simple (flat) characters and complex (round) characters. E.M. Forster introduced the terms flat characters and round characters to distinguish the level of complexity and depth of character portrayal in novels. This distinction helps readers and critics analyze how realistic or dynamic a character is, as well as how that character functions in a story.

METHODOLOGY

This current study will analyze the kinds of characters in the 2024 film *Friendship*, directed by Andrew DeYoung. This analysis is based on E.M. Forster's theory of character types, specifically the distinction between flat characters and round characters as described in his classic work *Aspects of the Novel* (1927). This framework is particularly useful in evaluating how characters function within a narrative and how their portrayal contributes to thematic depth and audience engagement.

Flat Characters

Forster defines flat characters as those constructed around a single idea or quality, remaining static and predictable throughout the narrative. Taking example from the novel of Charles Dickens entitled *David Copperfield* where the flat character is Mrs. Micawber. It can be seen by the sentence "I never will desert Mr. Micawber" Mrs. Micawber is a portrayal of flat character as this kind of character only shown one side of her.

Round Characters

In his book, Forster mention that round characters are dynamic, psychologically complex, and capable of change and development. One of the example of round characters is Elizabeth Bennet by how she is refuse Mr. Darcy proposal and confronts Mr. Darcy about his pride and her prejudice. Then, change to starts to reassess Mr. Darcy and her own feelings. It is showing the capable of Elizabeth Bennet to change and developed.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative content analysis approach to examine the portrayal of character types in the film *Friendship* (2024), directed by Andrew

DeYoung. This study is based on E.M. Forster's character classification theory, specifically the distinction between flat and round characters, as explained in his critical work *Aspects of the Novel* (1927). Forster's theory serves as the primary analytical lens for identifying and interpreting the nature, depth, and transformation of the main characters in the film.

This current study process involves several key stages. First, the data collection phase on primary textual sources, more especially, the feature film *Friendship* (2024). This film was selected because of its extensive use of internal development and psychological depths.

For the data analysis, this current study uses a combination of textual and characters approaches. In order to find the types of the characters, the first step is to closely examine each character. Semakin dalam mengenal karakterisasi di dalam film lalu akan dianalisis menggunakan types of characters dari Forster. For this current study, the descriptive qualitative approach has several benefits, especially its ability to reveal complex meanings in literary works. Despite the method's inherent subjectivity, However, Forster's theory makes it easier to understand the character construction in the film *Friendship*, which reflects deeper social and emotional truths, particularly in relation to masculinity, intimacy, and personal identity in a contemporary context.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

There are four characters in the film *Friendship*. These characters are Craig Waterman, Tami Waterman, Austin Carmichael, and Steven Waterman. In this analysis, the categories of each character were determined based on their actions as depicted in the story. Through E.M. Forster's theory, the character categories found in the film *Friends* are clearly evident: complex characters who change as the story progresses and simple characters who always show one side of their personality.

Flat Characters

In E.M. Forster's *Aspects of the Novel*, he states that flat characters are characters who do not undergo any personality changes. They are characters who only show one side of themselves and are easy to remember. The flat characters in the film *Friendship* are Tami Waterman, Steven Waterman, and Tony.

a) Tami Waterman

Tami : I've been cancer-free for 12 months. But, um you know, I still just live with the terror that it's gonna comeback.

Craig : It's not coming back.

Tami : He always says that, but, you know, I just have a lot of anxiety. Focusing on

my bussiness really helps. um.. (she's laughing) My friend Devin makes me laugh hard.

Craig : Devin?

Tami : Yeah, my ex. The firefighter. um, rekindling that friendship has.. it's really helped me.

In the film *Friendship*, the character Tami Waterman is portrayed as the wife of the main character, Craig Waterman. She and her husband have a son, Steven Waterman. In this film, Tami is undergoing cancer treatment and feels that she has lost her close connection with her husband. However, upon analysis, Tami remains a flat character in this film; her personality does not undergo much change. Throughout the story, she continues to feel disconnected from her husband. At the beginning of the film, Tami is portrayed as a cancer patient who is in recovery and emotionally distant from Craig. She is polite, functional, and supportive, but only to a certain extent. His role remains limited to being a practical moral compass. He remains in one emotional register: controlled, cold, and corrective. We don't know much about his inner thoughts, fears, or life history beyond his illness. He serves as a mirror for Craig's dysfunction in the storyline, rather than as an independently developed character.

b) Steven Waterman

Craig : That guy on that pig was flying. What the hell? That was crazy.

**suddenly throw up*

Steven : God! I told you those mushrooms were poisonous, Dad. I told you.

Craig : Fuck.

In *Friendship*, Steven is a supporting character whose role supports the theme of the story thematically but lacks in character development. When Craig tries to spend time with Steven, it is evident from the scene where his father suddenly vomits after eating wild mushrooms, causing Steven to react with disgust at the sight of his father. Instead of helping his father, Steven leaves him alone. Steven is portrayed as emotionally distant from Craig. He shows no emotional variation; he always appears indifferent, annoyed, or apathetic toward his father. This makes him emotionally monotonous, a characteristic of a flat character. He did not grow closer to his father, nor did he change his opinion or reveal any new layers. He remained static; his perception of Craig and his own behavior remained the same throughout.

Round Characters

In Forster book he is mentioning that round characters display a wide range of emotions, have conflicting motivations, and undergo growth or change throughout the story. Round characters often face internal conflicts. These conflicts are not only external (what happens to them), but also internal (how they feel, doubt, or change). In this film, the round characters was portrayed by Craig Waterman and Austin Carmichael.

a) Craig Waterman

Craig : This has turned into a little bit of a free of all. Uh, if you wanna talk... uh,

please get on the chair and you can form a line here by the dips and spreads. Okay?

You know what? We should maybe even kick it up a notch. Let's kick up a notch,

huh? How about a parade? Wouldn't that be fun? A parade for Tammy. Come on

folks!

*Craig walk through the people in the room to go outside while make a trumpet sound. He reached the front door of the house and looking back.

Craig : Come on, everybody! Fucking little rats.

In the context of the above data, Craig Waterman is giving a speech about Tammy's return to their home. However, while he was speaking, the guests present were not particularly interested in what Craig was saying. This can be seen from Craig's line, 'a little bit of a free-for-all,' which means that the guests were also talking while Craig was giving his speech. After that, Craig tried to liven up the atmosphere by forming a line of people while singing, but no one followed him. Craig's personality is not simple or based on a single trait; it consists of various conflicting traits, such as feeling socially anxious and uncomfortable around other people, yet he desperately wants to be liked and admired. It can be seen by his line "We should maybe even kick it up a notch." From this line Craig trying to be a person who can lift up the atmosphere in the room.

Craig also displays outbursts of anger, usually quietly or internally, showing that he is not only awkward, but also deeply troubled. "Fucking little rats." Through this line, Craig expresses his anger because no one is following him in singing along, causing him to use profanity. Round characters, according to Forster, have depth—meaning they experience contradictions. Craig is not just "awkward" or "lonely"; he is filled with complex motivations that create emotional tension.

b) Austin Carmichael

Craig : Whoa. You look awesome!

Austin : Oh, thank you. Uh.. look, uh, Craig. We had a couple of really nice hangs, but I think

it the best that we go our separate ways.

Craig : Is it 'cause of the sliding glass door? I told you I'd pay for it buddy.

Austin : No, friday night was really strange for me and the guys and I don't wish to continue

this friendship at the moment.

Craig : You made me feel too free. You all accepted me way too fast. You can't do that.

People need rules.

At first glance, Austin is a flat stereotype: the confident neighbour, the effortlessly cool weather presenter, and the musician with the perfect smile. Austin Invite Craig to hang out, give him sincere compliments, and be open with him. It can be seen by Austin's line "We had a couple of really nice hangs" which means that both of them already hang out for several times. However, as the film progresses, Austin's personality begin to shown hints of emotional depth. This moment reveals when When Craig became too intense or clingy, Austin began to distance himself, both emotionally and physically. The line "I don't wish to continue this friendship at the moment." This means that Austin feels uncomfortable and experiences emotional boundaries, as well as an unwillingness to deal with conflict directly. He does not openly reject Craig, but instead avoids him. This subtle change in behaviour shows that Austin is responding to emotional pressure, which indicates the complexity of his inner life and character.

CONCLUSION

This study examines characterisation in the 2024 film *Friendship*, using E.M. Forster's theory of flat and round characters as the main analytical framework. This study is based on the understanding that films, like literature, can serve as a medium for deep narrative exploration, with characters as the main vehicle for emotional, psychological, and thematic expression. The unique narrative structure and psychological focus in *Friendship* make it an interesting subject for character analysis. Each character is analysed based on their behaviour, dialogue, and development (or lack thereof) throughout the story.

These findings indicate that Craig Waterman and Austin Carmichael are complex characters, as they exhibit emotional complexity, internal conflict, and behavioural change. Craig, in particular, represents the psychological depth of the film, undergoing a transformation that reflects personal collapse and vulnerability. Austin, although more controlled, exhibits emotional tension and boundary setting that transcend simple or one-dimensional portrayals. On the other hand, Tami Waterman and Steven Waterman play flat characters. They are emotionally consistent, static, and defined by their single roles in the narrative. Tami remains a practical but distant wife, and Steven an uninvolved son. All of this serves to mirror or contrast with Craig's complexity.

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