

THE ANALYSIS OF THE FRIENDSHIP IN JOHN LE CARRÉ'S AGENT RUNNING IN THE FIELD

by Muhammad Taufiq Gani Putra

Submission date: 23-Jul-2025 08:16AM (UTC+0700)

Submission ID: 2719236726

File name: Ilmu_Budaya_1611900028_M_Taufiq_Gani_Putra.docx (58.59K)

Word count: 2283

Character count: 11358

THE ANALYSIS OF THE FRIENDSHIP IN JOHN LE CARRÉ'S *AGENT RUNNING IN THE FIELD*

Muhammad Taufiq Gani Putra^{*1}, Adeline Grace M.Litaay²

¹⁵
Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

This thesis discusses the types of friendship that are shown in John le Carré's *Agent Running in the Field* and how the friendships impacting the lives of the main characters, Nat and Ed. The thesis analysis uses the theory of friendship by Aristotles discussed in Lorraine Smith Pangle's *Aristotle and the Philosophy of Friendship* as the theoretical review, with thematic approach as the analysis model, ecstrinsic research approach using moral approach, and qualitative research design. According to the thesis findings, there are two types of friendships in *Agent Running in the Field* that fits Lorraine Smith Pangle's interperatation of Aristotles's theory of friendship: friendship of pleasure and friendship of virtue. As for the impact of Nat and Ed's friendships to their lifes, Nat starts to have doubts over his government who he has served for years, and he got interrogated and scapegoated after MI6 finds Ed handing over intellegence to a Russian spy, before being coerced to either turn Ed in to prison or make him a double agent who serves Britain more. For Ed, he become less guarded, he meet Florence through Nat, who eventually become his fiance, and he is able to unknowingly escape from his fate of being imprisoned or becoming a double age¹. The study's limitation is that of the potrayal of friendship in John le Carré's *Agent Running in the Field* and the impacts of friendship between Nat and Ed in John le Carré's *Agent Running in the Field* on their lives. The study concludes in what are the types of friendship depicted in in John le Carré's *Agent Running in the Field*, and how it affecting the lives of the two friends.

Article history:

Keyword:

Espionage, Friendship,
Loyalty, Marriage, Politics,
Patriotism.

INTRODUCTION

Friendship is a relationship of mutual affection between people that is above "acquaintance" or an "association", which, according to Lydia Denworth (2020), is not only important to a person's spirit and mental health, but even critical to their physical and emotional well-being. Friendship has also been discussed in many topics like psychology, sociology and more, as exemplified in *The Friendship Analysis in the Novel "The Kite Runner"* by Khaled Hosseini by Arifuddin (2010) and *Friendship Between George and Lennie in Steinbeck's of Mice and Men* by Yulianti Intri (2009). It has also been discussed and shown in many literary works. One of the things these studies havent done is using a novel titled *Agent Running in the Field* by John le Carre as the main source, where the frienships are between two adult men.

*CONTACT: m.taufiqganiputra@gmail.com

Copyright ©2025 The Authors.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

² *Agent Running in the Field* is a 2019 novel by a British writer John le Carré, who was well known for his writing², fiction and non-fiction, about espionage. The novel follows Nathaniel – shortened to Nat, a 47-year-old British intelligence agent, who is approaching the end of his career with MI6. One day, a man named Ed visits a badminton club Nat is a regular in looking for a challenge, which Nat reciprocate, and eventually become friends with each other. However, Ed's actions put Nat in hot water, and now he must choose to turn Ed in or turn him into a spy.

This study is focusing on the impact of the friendship has on the two main characters' lives, from the shifting of opinions from a friend's influence to the decision to choose between friend or other things like job security or family, and it is shown through solving the study's problem statements; what are the types of friendship shown in *Agent Running in the Field* according to Lorraine Smith Pangle's interpretation of Aristotle's theory of friendship, and how said friendships affecting Nat and Ed's lives.

METHOD

This study uses Aristotle's theory of friendship as described by Lorraine Smith Pangle's⁴ *Aristotle and the Philosophy of Friendship* (2002) as the theoretical review, where there are three types of friendships: friendship of utility, where the bonds of friendships are formed out of each other's necessity, friendship of pleasure, where the friendship is formed because the two or more people are having fun with one another, and friendship of virtue, where the friendship are made because the companions finds a significant similarities with one another, such as cultural identities, political beliefs, and moral values.

This study uses Moral & Humanistic extrinsic approach, which, according to T.M. Scanlon's *What We Owe to Each Other* (1998), is about discovering and using extrinsic elements in a literature by viewing it as a means to explore human nature and moral values, and Qualitative research design, where the data used are non-numerical.

The data source for this research is the *Agent Running in The Field* novel, with the data in question being the quoted paragraphs within the novel, which then collected using a personal laptop.

The data is first collected by reading the novel to identify and select it for the analysis, where the data then being interpreted using the Moral & Humanistic approach to draw the correct conclusions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The Portrayal of Friendship in John le Carré's *Agent Running in the Field*

Using Lorraine Smith Pangle's interpretation of Aristotle's theory of friendship, there are two types of friendship depicted in the *Agent Running in The Field* novel, the friendship of pleasure and the friendship of virtue.

¹ *Friendship of Pleasure in John le Carré's Agent Running in the Field*

For the friendship of pleasure, Nat's friendship with Ed begins with Ed challenging him for a badminton match. When they play for the first time, Nat realizes how evenly matched he is with Ed, something he hasn't experienced in a long while (Carré, 2019: 57). The two then spend their time drinking ale at the badminton club's bar.

¹ *Friendship of Virtue in John le Carré's Agent Running in the Field*

There are two depictions for the friendship of virtue in the novel.

On one side, Ed is a very guarded and closed off individual due to his passion and zealotry over the current day politics, rendering him friendless before meeting Nat, due to how people often get exhausted or dismissive in such topics. It was only after Ed discovers Nat's opinion over the political topics he is passionate about that he starts to open up to Nat (Carré, 2019:66-67).

On the other side, Nat's friendship of pleasure slowly turns into friendship of virtue as he gets to know Ed as a person. He even sees parallels between Steff, his daughter, and Ed in personality and way of seeing life (Carré, 2019: 65).

¹ *The Impact of Friendship in John le Carré's Agent Running in the Field*

²
From the story of *Agent Running in the field*, the friendship between Nat and Ed has an effect on their lives, for better or worse.

On Nat's end, while his political opinion are almost the same as Ed, he didn't like to openly support it due to being an MI6 agent, but it has slowly eroded from exposure to Ed's passionate opinion over Brexit. Later on, when Nat surveilling a Russian agent with his MI6 team, they find that Ed is handing over secret intelligence to them. This causes Nat to be interrogated by MI6 and MI, who turns out to be Ed's true boss, over his friendship with Ed and who Ed is as a person, as someone who is close to him. This culminates in them giving Nat ultimatum – find Ed and either apprehend him for treason, or turn him into a double agent who is loyal to Britain, something Nat is good at (Carré, 2019:256-257).

On Ed's side, having a friend in Nat has managed to have Ed loosen up and becoming less tense in life. He also met Florence, Nat's junior, during one of their badminton session when he asks Nat to have that session be Double as he's bringing his sister because she wants to play with him, who eventually becomes his fiancée (Carré, 2019:283-284). Ed's friendship with Nat is also why Nat chooses to pick neither of his superior's order and, instead, getting Ed and Florence off Britain to ensure that the government can't get to him.

Discussion

The Portrayal of Friendship in John le Carré's *Agent Running in the Field*

Friendship of Pleasure in John le Carré's *Agent Running in the Field*

The first match between Nat and Ed, and the subsequent bar visit is considered friendship of pleasure, as the narration, which is written in Nat's point of view, mentions how he find Ed an exciting individual to have around.

Friendship of Virtue in John le Carré's *Agent Running in the Field*

For Ed, he is a closed-off individual whose passion and opinions for politics has render him friendless due to being fed up with the topic, to the point that Nat is his first friend ever, and that is not before warning him of his strong political beliefs, which has driven people away from him before, and not afraid to pack up and leave if Nat is disagree with it. This point can be considered enforced case for friendship of virtue, as Ed wont be Nat's friend unless Nat supports his political opinions.

For Nat, he thinks Ed as a young man who has traits he consider rare in recent generation – stubborn defiance of one's opinion regardless how others views them because of it, and that he shares many traits with Steff, Nat's daughter, who is just as strong-head and defiant as Ed, and later become much more relaxed and less tense after finding love in their respective fiancées.

The Impact of Friendship in John le Carré's *Agent Running in the Field*

For Nat, his friendship with Ed has resulted in a relatively negative net gain, as he got into trouble when MI6 watches Ed handing over secret intellegences to a Russian spy they keep surveillance on, questioning if Ed knows his secret identity as a MI6 agent and use their friendship to gain access of the classified informations, or even if Nat trained him to be a spy, as it is his specialty skill to train people to be double agent.

For Ed, his friendship with Nat has turn his life for the better, as not only he end up in a relationship with Florence, Nat's junior spy who he brings to their badminton session with Ed's sister under the guise of a co-worker, he also becomes less tense and guarded after having a friend in Nat. It is also thanks to Nat, Florence, and Nat's wife, Prue, did he manages to escape from MI6 by getting him and Florence off Britain.

CONCLUSION

In *Agent Running in the Field*, there are two types of friendships as defined by Aristotle's theory of friendship in Lorraine Smith Pangle's *Aristotle and the philosophy of friendship*, friendship of pleasure, as shown when Nat enjoying Ed's companionship as they plays badminton together and drinking ale in the bar as they talks about current politics, and friendship of virtue, where Nat befriend Ed because he sees him as a great person and resembles his daughter in personality and mindset, while Ed befriend Nat because he agrees with his political opinion, something that renders him hard to find friends before.

As for the impact of friendship, Nat's life gone quite worse from his friendship with Ed, as his political opinion shifts to be more radical than he previously does thanks to Ed's

feverish opinions for topics like Brexit and Donald Trump, and that he is interrogated and accused as an accomplice by his MI6 superiors when his team caught Ed on video and audio recordings handing over classified papers to a Russian spy they keeping a track of.

Meanwhile, Ed's friendship with Nat has been good fr him, as not only Ed gradually becomes a much more optimistic person after he befriend Nat, but also after meeting and eventually in a relationship with Florence, who he meet during one of his badminton session with Nat.

Author Information

Muhammad Taufiq Gani Putra, college student of Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya, has interest in fiction literatures, and email: m.taufiqganiputra@gmail.com. ¹⁶
Adeline Grace Marianne Litaay, Assistant Professor and Dean of Fakultas Ilmu Budaya in Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya, and e-mail: adelinegrace@untag-sby.ac.id .

References

- ³ Arifuddin. (2010). *The friendship analysis in the novel "The Kite Runner" by Khaled Hosseini*. [Undergraduate thesis, Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin Makassar].
- ¹⁴ Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*. SAGE Publications Ltd.
- ⁵ Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (1998). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods* (5th ed.). Allyn and Bacon.
- ¹¹ Carré, J. le. (2019). *Agent running in the field*. Viking Books.
- Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Sage Publications.
- ⁸ Denworth, L. (2020). *Friendship: The evolution, biology, and extraordinary power of life's fundamental bond*. W. W. Norton & Company.
- Dietrich, J. Jr. (1953). *Introduction to theory of literature*. Norton & Co.
- ⁷ Franco, M. G. (2022). *Platonic: How the science of attachment can help you make –and keep– friends*. G.P. Putnam's Sons.
- Intri, Y. (2009). *Friendship between George and Lennie in Steinbeck's Of Mice and Men*. [Undergraduate thesis, Hasanuddin University].
- ⁹ Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Pangle, L. S. (2002). *Aristotle and the philosophy of friendship*. Cambridge University Press.

Pramesti, T., & Litaay, A. G. M. (2023). *A study on Elizabeth Bennet's clothes in young adult literature Prada and Prejudice and Prom and Prejudice*. Konsorsium UNTAG Se-Indonesia, 5(1).

Scanlon, T. M. (1998). *What we owe to each other*. Cambridge University Press.

THE ANALYSIS OF THE FRIENDSHIP IN JOHN LE CARRÉ'S AGENT RUNNING IN THE FIELD

ORIGINALITY REPORT

16%

SIMILARITY INDEX

11%

INTERNET SOURCES

6%

PUBLICATIONS

10%

STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	Submitted to Vrije Universiteit Brussel Student Paper	4%
2	en.wikipedia.org Internet Source	1%
3	primary.ejournal.unri.ac.id Internet Source	1%
4	James J. Winchester. "Chapter 4 Friendship", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2025 Publication	1%
5	aquila.usm.edu Internet Source	1%
6	jurnal.publikasi-untagcirebon.ac.id Internet Source	1%
7	www.psychologytoday.com Internet Source	1%
8	Submitted to University of Derby Student Paper	1%
9	ijlter.org Internet Source	1%
10	jolcc.org Internet Source	1%
11	conservancy.umn.edu Internet Source	1%

12	link.springer.com Internet Source	1 %
13	Submitted to Carroll College Student Paper	1 %
14	pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov Internet Source	1 %
15	jurnal.unmer.ac.id Internet Source	<1 %
16	jurnal.untag-sby.ac.id Internet Source	<1 %
17	bradscholars.brad.ac.uk Internet Source	<1 %

Exclude quotes Off
Exclude bibliography Off

Exclude matches Off