



Analysis of Character and Characterization of Main Character in Novel After (2019) By Anna Todd

Eka Syafira Ramadhani¹, Wahyu Indah Mala Rohmana²

^{1,2} Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim, Malang, Jawa Timur, Indonesia

ARTICEL INFO

Keywords:

Characterization
Character
Novel
Anna Todd

History:

Received (22 December 2023)
Revised (3 November 2023)
Accepted (11 December 2024)

ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore the characterization of the two main characters in Anna Todd's novel After (2019): Tessa Young and Hardin Scott. By utilizing data collected from the text of the novel, along with supplementary internet research, the study delves into various intrinsic elements such as character development, themes, and setting. This comprehensive analysis reveals that characterization encompasses a range of aspects, including a character's attitude, physical traits, actions, speech patterns, and perspectives on the challenges they encounter throughout the narrative. Through a detailed examination of Tessa and Hardin, the research highlights how their individual complexities and growth contribute significantly to the overarching themes of love, trust, and emotional conflict in the story. The findings underscore the importance of understanding character dynamics in literature, as these dynamics play a crucial role in shaping readers' engagement and interpretation of the narrative. Ultimately, this study provides valuable insights into how character development influences the reader's experience, showcasing the depth of Todd's work and its exploration of the intricacies of human relationships.

INTRODUCTION

Literary works are the works of someone in it there are several arts, so literary works is an image or the shadow of someone or something public (Bloom, 2011). Not just as the shadow of a literary work is a portrait in relation to a social, nature and so on, after deposition that occurs by a person author, then life happens born from social experience formed in a work literature. Literature explores the meaning of humanity, and humanity is defined by the ways in which society, the world, the universe, our imagined existence, and time and space all interact with each other (Mariana, 2023; Rahman, 2023). That literary works are created by authors or writers to be enjoyed, understood and use as a lessons by society in everyday life as experienced by the characters in the novel (Albaharat & Alfayez, 2022).

American author and screenwriter Anna Renee Todd is most known for her After series (Anna Todd, 2019). She began posting on Wattpad, a social storytelling platform. Published in 2014 by Gallery Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, the print edition of the series has been translated into multiple languages.

She gained notoriety for her *After* works. This book primarily follows Theresa Young, an innocent college student, through the highs and lows of her time at Hardin Scott (Lawolo et al., 2024).

The author chooses the novel *After* (2019) as the object of literary study in particular. The author will focus his research on how to analyze the characters and characterization as outlined in the novel *After* (2019) by Anna Todd. The following is the problem formulation that the author will outline in the form of questions: How are the character and characterizations in Anna Todd's novel "*After* (2019)?". It specifically discusses the character and characterizations seen in Anna Todd's novel "*After* (2019)". Characters are the actors who bring events in made-up stories to life so that the events can tell a story, characterization is the way author presents the actors or characters (Aini et al., 2023; Faraditha et al., 2022). Character divides into several types: Based on the reflection of the character, the typical and neutral character. Based on the development character, there are static and developing character (Maharani, 2020; Assi, 2024; Suhendra, 2019). Considering the character, particularly the standard and round character, and according to the roles that the protagonist and antagonist perform in the story (Seventilofa, 2018). Based on the aspect of role, main character and additional characters. One of the plot components that is crucial to a novel is characterization since the story cannot exist without the actor taking action (Fokkema, 2024; Suwastini et al., 2020).

The author found several previous study that were similar to the analysis to be carried out. The first article by Rafikasari (2023) entitled "the study of masculinity crisis reflected in the main character in Anna Todd's '*After*' ". From the result of the analysis, which are based on some of the evidence examined, Hardin's character as seen through Tessa's perspective is accurate. In conclusion, it is incredibly immature and unmanly of a man to do what Hardin did to get revenge for what Tessa had done earlier in order to win a pointless bet. He would not ever consider doing terrible things to Tessa in the future if he could try to approach her in a more natural way. This novel also taught women a valuable lesson about not putting your trust in men based only on their charming appearance and broken promises. Never consider doing something bad that could hurt the feeling of having a pure heart, even if one's inferiority has overcome you. If not, make an effort to focus on the positive aspects of life rather than becoming enmeshed in a negative circle.

The second article by Shelah & Marsih (2022), entitled "Defense Mechanism In The Character Of Hardin Scott Reflected In Anna Todd's *After*". From the result of analysis, Hardin's defense mechanism is rooted in his past experiences with a drunk and angry father. This unresolved conflict led to trauma and unconscious motives for the ongoing conflict. Hardin's defense mechanisms include displacement, denial, projection, isolation, reaction formation, rationalization, and identification with the aggressor (Demon & Yohanes, 2023). Displacement involves Hardin focusing on Landon, while denial involves refusing to have a good relationship with his father and believing he is a loser. The third article by Azzahra & Suhadi, 2021 entitled "Toxic Relationship In Anna Todd's Wattpad Story *After*". From the result of analysis, there are three characteristics of toxic relationship that can be found. They are the partner's egoism (selfishness),



excessive romantic jealousy, and dishonesty. The story illustrates the negative effects of a toxic relationship, which include abuse, neglect, inequality, and disrespect (Azzahra & Suhadi, 2021). Tessa is the one in the *After* story who suffers the most from a toxic relationship. Tessa experiences extreme romantic jealousy because she is aware that Hardin had a romantic relationship with Molly in the past and because of how intimate their encounter was in the café (Sutrisno, Wilar & Sukrisno, 2024). Hardin presents Tessa to his friends as a friend and states that he only wants to live with her rather than marry her, Tessa is the victim of Hardin's egotism. One of the main causes of toxic relationship is dishonesty. When Hardin lies and says he is only dating her for a bet, Tessa is extremely disappointed.

The difference with the previous research study is the thing that was analyzed, if the previous research study analyzed the masculinity crisis that occurred in the main male character, namely Hardin Scott. In this research study, we will discuss the character and characterization of the two main characters, namely Tessa Young and Hardin Scott. The aim of this research is to find out the main characters and their characterization in the novel.

METHODS

The author collects data from sources by reading novels and also analyzing research data sources to collect the important data needed. The data needed in this research are expressions, phrases, conversations and statements in the novel. This data collected from the novel itself "*After* (2019)" and using internet research to search for related data. To find the data, the author analyzes the intrinsic elements in the novel "*After* (2019)" by Anna Todd, such as characters and characterization using an objective approach, analyzing the characters and characterizations in the novel through relevant data, and the author's logical point of view. In this way, the author can analyze the character and their characterization more specifically and in detail. Other aspects of the novel can also be analyzed with an objective approach. Following the steps listed below, the author starts the analysis of the data after collecting the data and reading the information that is related to the analysis.

The author begins by identifying the issues related to the problem statements. This step lays the groundwork for a focused exploration of the novel's key components. Next, attention is given to character analysis, where the characterization of each figure is elaborated using direct quotes from the novel (Saud et al., 2022). These quotations, derived from relevant pages, include statements, narration, and extended descriptions that illuminate the characters' traits and development. Additionally, the study delves into the intricate relationships between the novel's core elements, including character, theme, characterization, and setting, as well as other intrinsic components. By examining how these elements interconnect and influence one another, the analysis establishes a comprehensive understanding of the narrative. This interconnected

study not only deepens the exploration of the novel's structure but also provides a foundation for formulating insightful conclusions and meaningful recommendations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data analysis of the novel, the authors conclude that a character's characterization includes all aspects of the character, including their attitude, physical attributes, actions, speech patterns, and perspectives on the challenges they have faced (Ifianti & Rahman, 2020). After (2019) tells the story of Tessa, an innocent girl who is just entering college life. Tessa is a good child who is very much taken care of by mother, Carol Young. On the first day Tessa moves into the college dorm, she is dropped off by her mother and boyfriend Noah. Tessa shares a room with another female student named Steph. Seeing her appearance, her mother worried that Steph would bring bad influence to Tessa.

Character and characterization

Tessa Young: Tessa is presented as naive and innocent at the beginning of the story (Sutrisno et al., 2024). She was raised in sheltered environment and, up until attending college, had a life that was mostly predictable and structured.

"My mouth falls open. "You know nothing about me, you condescending jerk! My life is nothing like that! My alcoholic dad left us when I was ten, and my mother worked her ass off to make sure I could go to college. I got my own job as soon I turned sixteen to help with bills, and I happen to like my clothes—sorry if I don't dress like a slut like all the girls around you! For someone who tries too hard to stand out and be different, you sure are judgmental about people who are different from you!" I scream and feel the tears well up in my eyes. " (page 54)

"Parties aren't really my thing. Plus I have to go to get some things for my desk and walls." I look at Hardin, who, of course, is acting as if neither of us is in the room with him. " ; "I was going to take the bus. And besides, I can't go to a party—I don't even know anyone," (page 19)

"The rest of the day is better than the morning, mostly because my mother takes me to a salon and I get my hair trimmed and some layers added into it. It still hangs down my back but with my new cut it has more volume and looks much better. Noah showers me with compliments the entire drive back to my dorm, and everything just feels right" (page 72)

Tessa prioritizes her academics and works hard to achieve academic success. She is responsible, hardworking, and she has a strong work ethic and is goal-oriented.

"All of my life has been a series of tasks in preparation for this day, my first day of college. I spent the last few years nervously anticipating this. I spent my weekends studying and preparing for this as my peers were hanging out, drinking, and doing whatever else it is teenagers do to get themselves

in trouble. That wasn't me. I was the girl who spent her nights studying crosslegged on the living room floor with my mother while she gossiped and watched hours of QVC to find new ways to improve her appearance.” (page 8)

“I get dressed, pin my hair, and put my bag over my shoulder. I'm about to leave —about fifteen minutes early, to ensure that I won't be late—when Steph's alarm goes off” (page 39)

“Have you thought about where you want to work yet?” Noah asks. “I'm not sure yet. A bookstore maybe? I wish I could find an internship or something related to publishing or writing,” I tell them, which elicits from my mother an award-winning proud smile (page 70)

Tessa is open-minded and adaptable despite her initial naivety. She is open to investigating new perspectives and experiences, which causes her to question her assumptions about relationships and life in general.

“Without meaning to, my eyes go directly to his long torso and the way the black tattoo ink stretches across his surprisingly tan skin” (page 49)

“His words hurt my feelings for some reason. Not that I care if he didn't feel what I did . . . What did I feel?” (page 63)

Her relationships with others reflect her caring and understanding nature. Tessa tries to understand the perspectives of others and is responsive to their feelings.

“He's back in my room. I just want to help you, Hardin.” I lean a little over the table to reach for his hand, but he recoils from my touch. (page 122)

“Thank you for everything.” I nod and begin sweeping up the smashed dishes (page 124)

Hardin Scott: Hardin's personality has been greatly influenced by his difficult and unstable past. His psychological scars from childhood experiences and family dynamics have contributed to his reserved and occasionally unpredictable attitude (Triaringsih et al., 2023).

“Lovely, so basically what she is saying is that Hardin is, simply, at his core, a rude person. The English boy shrugs and changes the channel with the remote in his hand.” (page 19)

“He's from London; his dad and my mom live close to the campus, but Hardin and his dad don't have a good relationship. So please don't mention any of this to him. We already don't like each other.” (page 74)

Hardin is often seen as mysterious and moody, with a tendency to cover up his feelings. Because of his reserved manner, it can be difficult for others to completely understand him.

“He's such a mystery to me; why must he always be such a jerk? But then the next thing I think of is that wall of books of his— why does he have all of them? There is no way a rude, disrespectful, tattooed jerk like Hardin could possibly enjoy those amazing works. The only thing I can picture him reading is the back of a beer bottle.” (page 33)

I walk toward Hardin and he looks up at me. His eyes are bloodshot, and his hair is hidden under a gray beanie. His eyes go wide, then darken, and I want to step back. He looks almost scary under the dim patio light. (page 121)

Despite his difficulty, Hardin has a charming and attractive side that makes people want to be around him. He has the ability to be persuasive and charming, especially when he wants to be.

“One by one they nod or smile at me. All of them seem so friendly, except Hardin, of course. A very attractive boy with olive-toned skin reaches out his hand and shakes mine. His hands are slightly cold from the drink he was holding, but his smile is warm. The light reflects off his mouth, and I think I spot a piece of metal on his tongue, but he closes his mouth too quickly for me to be sure.” (page 25)

But I can’t. I’m frozen against the wall and mesmerized by his green eyes burning into mine. “Hardin, please,” are the only words I finally find. (page 77)

His relationship and behavior are affected by his internal conflicts and mood swings. His internal conflict frequently cause him to act and make decisions irregularly.

“Hardin sits up with her still on his torso. His face is flat—not amused or embarrassed at all. He must do this type of thing all the time. He must be used to being caught in frat houses practically having sex with strange girls.” (page 27)

“Why the hell are you in my room?” an angry voice booms from behind me. I know that accent by now. Hardin. “I asked you what the hell you’re doing in my room,” he repeats, just as harshly as the first time. (page 30)

Hardin is intelligent and creative despite his hard exterior. He is passionate about literature and well-read, which connect with Tessa.

“I’m sure you aren’t able to comprehend Mr. Darcy’s appeal.” My mind goes to the massive collection of novels in Hardin’s room. They couldn’t possibly be his. Could they? (page 44)

Despite his own vulnerabilities, he shows a protective streak toward those who are important to him. Hardin’s tendency to be protective of others and his lack of emotional willingness often collide.

“Theresa,” he says so soft that I almost don’t hear him. His face is unreadable. The room starts to spin again and I grab on to the dresser next to his door. “You okay?” he asks. I nod even though I feel nauseous. “Why don’t you just sit down for a few minutes, then you can go to the bus station.” (page 55)

*He walks over to me quickly. “Are you okay? What happened?”
“It’s nothing, just a little glass,” I tell him (page 124)*

“I am sorry,” he says with an intensity that makes me look away and focus on the large tree in the backyard. He leans in close. “Did you hear me?” he asks. (page 126)

CONCLUSION

The essence of society and personal feelings are captured in literary works, which act as reflections of human experiences. This is best illustrated in Anna Todd's 2019 novel *After*, which follows the path of Tessa Young, a naive college student, as she works through the difficulties of her relationship with Hardin Scott. The book dives into the backgrounds and psychological issues of the characters while examining themes of love, trust, and personal development. Tessa's sheltered childhood stands in clear contrast to Hardin's traumatic past, which was molded by emotional scars and dysfunctional families. Their characterizations are enhanced by this dichotomy, which also draws attention to the difficulties they encounter in their developing relationship. Tessa is shown to be responsible and goal-oriented, putting her schoolwork first while still being open to new things. Her initial naivety gradually transforms as she confronts the realities of college life and relationships. In contrast, Hardin embodies a more complex persona, oscillating between charm and hostility due to his unresolved internal conflicts. His behavior often reflects a defensive mechanism rooted in past trauma, which complicates his interactions with Tessa and others around him. The dynamic between these two characters serves as a focal point for examining the impact of emotional turmoil on romantic relationships (Dewi et al., 2023).

By looking at characters through the lens of character analysis, *After* not only tells a great story but also teaches us a lot about unhealthy relationships and finding our own identities. The novel emphasizes the importance of understanding oneself and others while navigating societal expectations and emotional vulnerabilities. Ultimately, Todd's work invites readers to reflect on their own experiences with love and trust, underscoring the significance of healthy relationships in personal growth and self-discovery.

REFERENCES

- Aini, F. N. Q., Rohim, F., Syaikh, A., & Fanani, A. F. (2023). the Max Pzoras' Character Development in Karan Bajaj's the Yoga of Max's Discontent. *English Education: Journal of English Teaching and Research*, 8(2), 232-240.
- Albaharat, M., & Alfayez, M. A. (2022). The Main Character in Ahmed Kayed's Novel AL Armalah, "The Widow" and the Ways of Depicting Her. *Dirasat: Human and Social Sciences*, 49(5), 302-312.
- Assi, A. A. (2024). Character Building in the Novel (The Hedgehogs on a Hot Day). *Thi Qar Arts Journal*, 3(45), 68-68.
- Azzahra, R., & Suhadi, M. F. (2021). Toxic relationship in Anna Todd's Wattpad story after. *Journal of Language*, 3(2), 166-176.
- Bloom, H. (2011). *The anatomy of influence: Literature as a way of life*. Yale University Press.
- Demon, Y., & Yohanes, S. (2023). Character Identification in a Breastless Novel by Betty Sitorus. *Randwick International of Education and Linguistics Science Journal*, 4(1), 71-80.
- Dewi, P. K., Elhada, F. A. R., & Rohmana, W. I. M. (2023). Critical Analysis of The Romanticism of The Novel "The Fault In Our Stars" by Using Reader Response. *English Language and Literature*, 12(1), 227-232.
- Faraditha, U. A., Rezeki, Y. S., Wardah, W., Rosnija, E., & Surmiyati, S. (2022). An Analysis Of The Main Character's Personality Development In Harry Potter And The Order Of The Phoenix. *Tamaddun*, 21(2), 130-138.
- Fokkema, A. (2024). *Postmodern characters: A study of characterization in British and American postmodern fiction* (Vol. 4). Brill.
- Ifianti, T., & Rahman, A. K. (2020). Characterization analysis of the main characters of "First They Killed My Father" movie by Angelina Jolie. *Journey: Journal of English Language and Pedagogy*, 3(1), 19-25.
- Lawolo, E. S., Siadari, I. J. H., & Hutabarat, I. (2024). Hardin's Personality In Anna Todd's After. *JURNAL LITTERA: FAKULTAS SASTRA DARMA AGUNG*, 3(2), 49-59.
- Maharani, S. A. I. (2020). the Three Dimensional Aspects of the Main Character of the Great Gatsby. *International Journal of Linguistics and Discourse Analytics*, 1(2), 40-45.
- Mariana, A. (2023). Literary Psychology: Main Character Analysis of "The Feisty Fiancee" by Jessica Steele: Psikologi Sastra: Analisis Karakter Utama dalam Novel "The Feisty Fiancee" oleh Jessica Steele. *ELOQUENCE: Journal of Foreign Language*, 2(1), 204-223.



- Rafikasari, Z. (2023). The study of masculinity crisis reflected in the main character in Anna Todd's 'After'. In *Proceeding of Undergraduate Conference on Literature, Linguistic, and Cultural Studies* (Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 1-5).
- Rahman, F. (2023). *What We Talk About When We Talk About Language And Philosophy*. Deepublish.
- Saud, I. W., Jusuf, H., & Tahir, S. Z. B. (2022). The Main Character in the Novel Cover of Night by Linda Howard: Psychological Analysis. *ELOQUENCE: Journal of Foreign Language*, 1(2), 49-59.
- Seventilofa, I. G. N. O. (2018). Analysis Of Character And Characterization In The Old Man And The Sea A Novel By Ernest Hemingway. *GANEC SWARA*, 12(1), 128-131.
- Shelah, S. N., & Marsih, L. (2022). Defense Mechanism In The Character Of Hardin Scott Reflected In Anna Todd's After. In *Proceeding of Undergraduate Conference on Literature, Linguistic, and Cultural Studies* (Vol. 1).
- Suhendra, Y. T. (2019). An Analysis of Characterization of Will Traynor and Louisa Clark and the Idea of Compassionate Love in Me Before You (2016). *KLAUSA (Kajian Linguistik, Pembelajaran Bahasa, Dan Sastra)*, 3(01), 7-16.
- Sutrisno, B., Wilar, D. E., & Sukrisno, R. (2024). Toxic Relationship Experienced by Tessa Young Shown in "After" Movie: A Content Analysis and Psychological Approach. *JELL (Journal of English Language and Literature) STIBA-IEC Jakarta*, 9(02), 429-440.
- Suwastini, N. K. A., Widasuari, N. W. D., Wahyuni, L. G. E., & Visestayati, N. P. A. (2020). Lucy Pevensie's Characterizations In Cs Lewis' narnia: The Lion, The Witch, And The Wardrobe. *International Journal of Language and Literature*, 4(1), 47-55.
- Todd, A. (2019). *After: The After Series Book 1*. NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Triariningsih, L. P., Resen, I. W., & Juniarta, I. W. (2023). The Personality of The Main Character in A Novel Ugly Love. *Journal of Language and Applied Linguistics*, 4(1), 73-77.