

## Significance of Friendship Breakups Represented in Film

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After an age of lockdown, social distancing, and experiencing new levels of physical separation, I experienced a new appreciation for human connection that I once took for granted. This appreciation led me to propose a research project on human interconnectivity shown through platonic intimacy. The importance of having friends carves its way into the human psyche. In the early stages of childhood, society imprints the importance of having friends. A pressure to share the human experience with peers. A want for a confidant during the formative years of adolescence. The peace of having a bond of camaraderie during times of accomplishment and downfall, accompanied by the consistencies and changes of life. This internalized pressure established the significance of platonic intimacy. An intimacy overshadowed by romantic narratives shown in film and television.

What happens to a person when a significant friendship ends? I examined representations of friendship breakups, explicitly focusing on character analysis, individual subplots, and narrative arc represented in *The Banshees of Inisherin* (Martin McDonagh, 2022), *Frances Ha* (Noah Baumbach, 2013), and *Close* (Lukas Dhont, 2023). The research led me to note three shared themes throughout the films:

- 1) Notable plot points where a character expressed support for their friend's joys and achievements, establishing why the audience should invest in the relationship shown on screen.
- 2) Moments when the characters found comfort in each other, revealing individual support structures to the audience.
- 3) A pivotal shift quantified by *points of separation* between the friends, disclosing reasons for separation to the audience.

Analyzing these behaviors within movies allowed me to form a case study that reflects human behavior conducted off-screen in daily interactions, how differences in expectations, definitions of boundaries, and the power of vulnerability and open communication affect the trajectory of platonic relationships. The fellowship granted me time and resources to form a conducive base to further my research during the academic year. I will continue to build a thesis comparing how individual versus communal boundaries lead to emotional incongruence in friendship behaviors, emphasizing a needed adjustment surrounding the language of platonic intimacy mimicking romantic frameworks. An analysis of how different kinships intersect among other cultures opening a door to relationship anarchies.

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