

**NOT ALL CHILDREN ARE CREATED EQUAL:
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST CHILDREN
AS SEEN IN *MY SISTER'S KEEPER***

A GRADUATING PAPER

**Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Gaining
the Bachelor Degree in English Literature**



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A FINAL PROJECT STATEMENT

I certify that this thesis is definitely my own work. I am completely responsible for the content of this thesis. Other writer's opinions or finding included in the thesis are quoted or cited accordance with ethical standards.

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NOT ALL CHILDREN ARE CREATED EQUAL: DISCRIMINATION AGAINST CHILDREN AS SEEN IN *MY SISTER'S KEEPER*

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INTISARI

Skripsi ini berjudul Tidak Semua Anak Diciptakan Sama: Diskriminasi terhadap Anak-Anak yang terdapat dalam *My Sister's Keeper*. Penulis memilih diskriminasi terhadap anak karena beberapa hal. Pertama, karena anak-anak merupakan posisi terendah dalam segi umur di masyarakat dan mereka lemah secara fisik atau mental, sehingga diskriminasi masih sering terjadi terhadap anak-anak. Kedua, karena kurangnya kesadaran publik terhadap hak-hak mereka dan ketidaktegasan hukum terhadap hak anak-anak. Ketiga, masa kanak-kanak adalah masa yang paling berharga dan menentukan bagaimana mereka tumbuh dan akan menjadi apa di masa depan, namun orang dewasa cenderung salah bersikap dalam menghadapi anak-anak. Metode penelitian yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode kualitatif. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menjelaskan bagaimana diskriminasi terhadap anak-anak di masyarakat seperti yang terdapat dalam *My Sister's Keeper*. Teori yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah teori pragmatik dari Abrams. Hasil penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa dari 29 data, terdapat 5 kasus diskriminasi: diskriminasi dalam mendapatkan perhatian dan kasih sayang; diskriminasi terhadap hak untuk dilindungi dari kekerasan dan eksploitasi; diskriminasi dalam memberikan pendapat dan ekspresi; diskriminasi dalam bermain; dan diskriminasi dalam mendapatkan pelayanan publik. Semua bentuk diskriminasi tersebut telah mempengaruhi psikologi mereka: mereka menjadi tidak bisa bersosialisasi, kehilangan kepercayaan diri, melakukan hal-hal berbahaya, dan mengonsumsi alkohol dan narkoba.

Kata kunci: diskriminasi terhadap anak, anak-anak, hak-hak anak

NOT ALL CHILDREN ARE CREATED EQUAL: DISCRIMINATION AGAINST CHILDREN AS SEEN IN *MY SISTER'S KEEPER*

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ABSTRACT

The title of this thesis is Not All Children are Created Equal: Discrimination against Children as Seen in *My Sister's Keeper*. The writer chooses discrimination against children for some reasons. First, it is because children are the lowest position in terms of age in society and they are low physically and mentally. So it still often occurs to children. Second, it is because of the lack of public awareness of their rights and the indecisiveness of the law of children's right. Third, it is because childhood is the most valuable time that determines how they grow and what they will become in the future but adults tend to be wrong in taking actions to children. The method of this research is descriptive qualitative. The objective of this study is to explain how the discrimination against children in society as seen in *My Sister's Keeper*. The theory used in this research is Pragmatic criticism by Abrams. The result of this research concludes that from 29 data, there are 5 cases of discrimination: discrimination on getting attention and love; discrimination in the right to be protected from abuse and exploitation; discrimination in giving opinion and expression; discrimination in enjoying the time as a child and discrimination in getting public service. All those kinds of discrimination affected children's psychology: they became antisocial, lost their confident, did dangerous things, and used alcohol and drugs

Keywords: children's discriminations, children, children's rights

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

My Sister's Keeper is a story about Anna, a 13-year-old girl, who gained the rights over her own body. Anna was born to be a perfect donor to her sister, Kate, who had a rare and aggressive leukemia since she was two years old. She gave her cord blood to Kate right after she was born. When she was five, she had lymphocytes drawn from her three times over, the next time the doctors took bone marrow for a transplant, and then she had to donate granulocytes and peripheral blood stem cells. Then, her parents asked her to donate her kidney to Kate but she filed a lawsuit against her parents for medical emancipation and a chance to live like the chance of Kate's life.

In her novels, Picoult has mined the complex mysteries of daily life: love, marriage, career, family. Faced with difficult, often painful moral choices, her characters struggle to find balance in an off-kilter world fraught with danger and shattered by terrible sociological ills like domestic violence, sexual abuse, and teen suicide (<http://www.jodipicoult.com/JodiPicoult>). *My Sister's Keeper* got three awards: ALA Alex Award in 2005, ALA Teens' Top Ten in 2005 and Abraham Lincoln Award in 2006. Actually, there is a film version of *My Sister's Keeper*, but the writer chooses the novel because it contains more detail than the film. Besides, the novel is the original version of *My Sister's Keeper* story of Jody Picoult.

Novel is one of fiction's forms. It is a narrative fictional prose of considerable length and complexity, portraying characters and usually presenting a sequential organization of action and scenes. Culler (221) states that novel serves as the model by which society conceives of itself, the discourse in and through which it articulates the world more than any other literary form or any other type of writing. It means that novel contains more details and depicts social life, individual personality, relations between people and society clearly than film.

In this research, the writer analyzes the discrimination against children as seen in Jodi Picoult's novel *My Sister's Keeper*. Discrimination against children is interesting to be discussed because children are the lowest position in terms of age in society and they are low physically or mentally. So it still often occurs to children. Besides, it is interesting because of the lack of public awareness of their rights and the indecisiveness of the law of children's right. In addition, childhood is the most valuable time that determines how they grow and what they will become in the future, but adults tend to be wrong in taking actions to children. Based on those reasons, the writer believes this issue is worth to be discussed further.

Discrimination is any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, color, sex, language, religion, opinion, descent, or national or ethnic origin which discourages or prevents equal recognition, enjoyment or exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural and any other field of public life (<http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/humanrights/declaration/2.asp>).

Discrimination can be either direct or indirect. Direct discrimination is when somebody's gender, age, race, disability, religion or sexual orientation is openly used as the reason for discriminating against them. An example of this is if someone is bullied because of his/her disability. Whereas indirect discrimination occurs when the rules or regulations in place do not expressly say that someone should be treated differently but those have the effect that the person will be treated differently to the other people there. An example of this is if a school or a college has a rule that the students are only allowed to attend if they wear a specific uniform for school in which some students would not be able to wear because of their religious beliefs (<http://www.lawstuff.org.uk/the-facts/discrimination>).

Discrimination is one of the human rights violations. According to John Locke, human rights are God-given rights as natural rights (<http://plato.stanford.edu/arcives/win2012/entries/locke-political>). These rights are basic rights that must be owned by every human being regardless of age, gender, race, religion, culture or any other status. These rights cannot be given or taken away. United Nations states that human rights are all interrelated, interdependent and indivisible (www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Pages/WhatareHumanRights.aspx). In Islam, human rights are upheld as in Prophet Muhammad said in his last sermon at hajji wada': "Verily, your blood, your property and your honor are sacred and inviolable until you appear before your Lord" (Fuad, Ahmad Nur, Cekli Setya Pratiwi and Saiful Aris 6). There are also eight main rights that have been taught on the Koran: right to live (an-nisa: 92-94), right to get a job (al-baqarah: 188),

right to receive education (al-mujadilah: 11), right to freedom (ali imran: 79), right of religion's freedom (al-an'am: 108), right of opinion's freedom (al-baqarah: 164), right of property's freedom (al-baqarah 188) and equality right (al-hujurat: 13) (Fuad, Ahmad Nur, Cekli Setya Pratiwi and Saiful Aris 21-34).

Based on the explanation above, children as humans also have rights called children's rights as indicated in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child,

The child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth (Children's Right Alliance 6).

The United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child defined a child as a person under the age of 18 years (Children's Right Alliance 1). There are four general principles in The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, one of them is that all the rights must be available to all children without discrimination of any kind (Children's Right Alliance 2).

B. Scope of Study

My sister's keeper can be analyzed from both extrinsic and intrinsic aspects. So, in this research, the writer focuses on the discrimination against children as seen in *My Sister's Keeper*. As it is stated by The United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is a person under the age of 18 years. Based on the definition above, the writer focuses on Jesse, Kate and Anna.

C. Problem Statement

Based on the explanation concerning the problems under discussion above, the writer formulates the problem as follow:

1. How are the discriminations against children in society re-presented by Picoult in her *My Sister's Keeper*?

D. Objective of Study

1. To describe the discrimination against children in society as seen in *My Sister's Keeper*.

E. Significances of Study

This research has some significances of study:

1. Academic Significances

Academically, this research can be used as an academic discourse for pragmatic theory that is related to pragmatic by Abrams.

2. Practical Significances

a. For students, this research is expected to be used as an additional reference in conducting related to pragmatic theory by Abrams.

b. For other researchers, this paper can be used as a reference for those who are interested in analyzing the discrimination against children in society as seen in Jodi Picoult's works.

c. For other readers, this research can make them understand more and be aware about the discrimination against children in society.

F. Prior Researches

Prior research presents some related studies from others. The first is a thesis by Dini Herawaty from State Islamic University Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang in 2010 entitled “Psychological Dilemma of the Major Characters in Jodi Picoult’s *My Sister’s Keeper*”. This thesis focuses on how Anna’s and Sara’s id, ego and superego function in psychological dilemma. She uses psychoanalysis literary criticism. Based on her analysis, the id, ego and superego of both Anna and Sara took place in every decision they have made. Moreover, the driver of their id and the moral compass of their superego influenced them to take one action consciously of their ego in building their personality over the whole story in the novel. In addition, the conflict of the id, ego and superego also happened in their psyche. The id which is guided by pleasure principles, the ego guided by reality principles, and superego guided by morality principles have important roles in establishment of Anna’s and Sara’s psychological dilemma.

The second is a thesis by Debora Pasaribu from University of North Sumatra in 2009 entitled “Anna’s Personality through Sigmund’s Freud Theory in Jodi Picoult’s *My Sister’s Keeper*”. The thesis focuses on Anna’s personality. Based on her analysis, id within human mind tends to legally all way just to reach what it wants without seeing negative side which occurs to other things. Ego tends to stand between id and superego. It is a control to balance the strength of id’s driving and the strength of superego’s driving. Superego tends to bring the moral responsibility to the front. It pushes someone to take care of someone else than himself.

The third is a thesis by Ruri Reviani Furi from University of north Sumatra in 2012 entitled “Anna’s Sacrifices in Jodi Picoult’s Novel *My Sister’s Keeper*”. The thesis focuses on Anna’s sacrifices to keep her sister alive. She uses intrinsic theory by Wellek and Warren. Based on her analysis, it can be concluded that Anna made sacrifices without being asked whether she was willing to do it or not, no one cared about her feelings. Ultimately, though Anna had earned the right of her own body but it did not last long because of the accident that led her to death and her kidneys were taken for Kate. So, even though Anna was dead she remained as Kate’s life support.

The researches above are similar to what the writer conducts. What makes this research different is that the writer analyzes the discrimination against children as seen in *My Sister’s Keeper*.

G. Theoretical Approach

This research uses pragmatic criticism by Abrams. Pragmatic criticism views the work as something which is constructed in order to achieve certain effects on the audience (effects such as aesthetic pleasure, instruction, or special feelings), and it tends to judge the value of the work according to its success in achieving the aim (Abrams 51). In other words, pragmatic theory concerns with the relation between text and audience.

Sydney states that poetry, which was a term of literary work in early literature, is an art of imitation with end to teach and delight. It purposes to achieve certain effects in an audience. The needs of the audience become the

fertile grounds for critical distinctions and standards. In order to teach and delight, the author does not imitate “what is, had been, or shall be” but only “what may be and should be”, so that the objects of imitation become such as to guarantee the moral purpose (Abrams 15).

According to Abrams (15-16) in his *The Mirror and the Lamps*, there are four central tendencies of the pragmatic criticism. They are to conceive the work as something made in order to affect requisite responses in its reader, to consider the author from his point of view of the powers and training in order to achieve this end, to ground the classification and anatomy of poems in large part on the special effects each kind and component is most competent achieve, and to get the norms of the work art and norm of critical appraisal from audience’s needs and legitimate demands to whom the work addressed. Furthermore, considering a work as a device for affecting an audience, the typical pragmatic critic is engrossed with formulating the methods for achieving the effect desired.

Besides the pragmatic theory by Abrams, the writer also uses The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as a supporting source. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is a comprehensive, internationally binding agreement on the rights of children, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1989. It is the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history: all countries have ratified it with the exception of the United States of America and Somalia (Children’s Rights Alliance 1).

H. Method of Research

1. Type of Research

This research uses qualitative approach in which the data is analyzed by explaining descriptively. Besides, it will conducts library research and uses books and other writings as materials to get some references.

2. Source of Data

The main data of this research are taken from the dialogues and the narration in Jodi Picoult's novel *My Sister's Keeper* published by Atria Books in New York 2004. There are no supporting data in this research since the writer only uses the dialogues and narration in the novel.

3. Technique of Collecting Data

This research uses observation and documentation. The observation is done by reading the data more than twice and the documentation is done by collecting the main data and other references. The main data are classified into two categories: domestic and public service. After collecting all data, the writer defines the forms of discrimination that seen in *My Sister's Keeper*.

The writer will conducts the library research for the study. Library research is carried out primarily to find the facts from the work itself. It is also to collect supporting arguments valuable for the research. Besides the data from the library, any references from the internet source that are relevant to the subject matter are also considered as valuable data.

4. Research Data Analysis

The process of analyzing data is the most important step in the research. In this research, the writer uses descriptive qualitative method to analyze the data. According to Gary Shank, qualitative research is a form of systematic empirical enquiry into meaning. This research is governed through three steps:

- a. The main source data, *My Sister's Keeper*, is read repeatedly and comprehended deeply. Then the writer makes the list of data, selects the data that deal with the problem and excludes the data that are unnecessary. The booklet of *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* by Children's Rights Alliance becomes the reference that helps the writer to classify the data.
- b. After collecting and classifying the data, the writer applies the theory, that is pragmatic theory by Abrams. According to this theory, there are two goals in making a work: to educate and entertain. In relation to the problem statement, the writer uses the educating goal. As an escort, the writer uses *The Mirror and the Lamps* by Abrams.
- c. After describing and analyzing data, the writer infers the inter discussion to the certain conclusion

I. Thesis Organization

This paper consists of four chapters. Chapter one is the introduction that includes background of study, scope of study, problem statement, objective of study, significances of study, prior researches, theoretical approach, methods of research, and thesis organization. Chapter two is the explanation about the intrinsic aspect of *My Sister's Keeper* that describes the supporting data of the research.

Chapter three is the discussion. In this chapter, the writer discusses about the analysis of the data that has been collected. The analysis is focused on the discrimination of children in society as seen in novel *My Sister's Keeper*. Chapter four is the conclusion. This chapter answers the problem statement in short.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the writer uses the scale to emphasize the intensity of each kind of discrimination, so that it can explain how the discrimination against children in society represented in *My Sister's Keeper* clearly. Based on the analysis, the writer finds the level of discrimination happened as it is described below. The writer ranks the level of the discrimination into two levels: low and high level in which the scale of 1-5 belongs to low level and the scale of 6-10 belongs to high level.

There are seven cases of the discrimination on getting attention and love; six cases happened to Anna and one case happened to Jesse. It belongs to the low level with 5 scales since the attention and love of the parents are only focused on one child. There are five cases of the discrimination on the right to be protected from abuse and exploitation. It is divided into two types: one case of violation and four cases of exploitation. The violation that happened was physical abuse, it belongs to the low level with 5 scales since the violation did not cause severe fractures or death; the exploitation belongs to the high level with 10 scales since Anna had been exploited for thirteen years.

There are nine cases of the discrimination on giving opinion and expression; six cases happened to Anna and three cases happened to Kate. It belongs to the high level with 8 scales since the parents always forced their opinion and never listened to their children. There are three cases of the

discrimination on enjoying the time as a child. Those cases happened to Anna. The discrimination belongs to the high level with 8 scales since Anna lost her time to play and did not have any friend. There are five cases of the discrimination on public service. All cases happened to Anna. It belongs to the low level with 3 scales since Anna did not get the public service for her best interest.

From that description, the discrimination that often happened in society as seen in *My Sister's Keeper* is the discrimination on giving opinion and expression, the serious discrimination is on the right to be protected from exploitation and the most discriminated child is Anna. All kind of discriminations happened to Jesse, Kate and Anna affected their psychology; they become antisocial, lost their confidence, did dangerous things, and used alcohol and drugs. So, through the pragmatic criticism perspective, this novel warns us as the readers to treat children respectfully. Otherwise, there are consequences which may occur to them as depicted in the novel.

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