

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1. 1. Background of the Study

We are born to become free. Some define freedom as a natural right, the human being is born with. Everyone wants to be free and independent from others. Freedom is the right to do what one wants, live where he/she wants, learn what he/she wants, chooses things in which he/she believes without ignoring or harming other rights (Frenzen 158). We cannot ignore the rights of people with whom we live in the society or in the smaller area, in the family; we cannot ignore the rights of our family member. We cannot simply do what we want and ignore others. We must take other people rights into consideration, but sometime, when someone decide to claim her or his rights to do something that is best for them, they cannot avoid the consequences of the decision, which harm other people. When a case like that appears it creates a moral dilemma toward people who made the decision.

A moral dilemma is defined as any situation in which the person making the decision experiences a conflict between the moral rightness of a decision and the quality of the results its produce (Gowans 465). Morality has something to do with our ideas regarding what is right and what is wrong and how right and wrong should be punished and rewarded (Donogan 117). Sometimes, the dilemma become worst when the person who suffers from the decision is one of the people we are close with, like our family, our parents or our sister. Some say that blood is thicker than water it is true the bond of sisterhood is not something that easily

broke but it will change if something like a conflict happens between the two sisters.

Dilemma can be classified into several types, but the most common dilemmas are double bind and moral dilemma. Double bind is a dilemma when someone (the “victim”) is placed in a “no win” situation by another. The victim feels obligated to act but either choice is incompatible with a greater truth (sometimes associated with the other person). While moral dilemma is a choice to be made will inevitably result in the chooser going against one or more of their moral instincts (Greenspan 83). Example of moral dilemma is whether to steal to feed your family.

Every day we are tested as individuals to make the right choice. How we view ourselves as individuals and how others view us are directly correlated to our moral decision making. But moral are somewhat misleading. What might be a wrong decision for one person might be solution to another. Some say that our moral decision-making comes from our upbringing of what is right or wrong. Having more positive family influences as we grow up to adults will better help us come to make the right decisions in tough situations, but, sometime in the midst of deep moral conflict the correct line of moral action is not always clear, sometimes when we are put in situations against our will and making the right decision can be difficult, so when we face a difficult situation like this we often become immensely introspective and we follow our intuition with the hopes of it guiding us towards the morally correct decision.

Issues of freedom, human rights, sisterhood, inner conflict, moral dilemma, family and others, have been taken for novels theme. Here, the thesis writer would like to do a research on a novel, since novel is one of the most favorites literary work, and one of the many novels that covers some of the themes mentioned above is *My Sister's Keeper* by Jodi Picoult. Jodi Picoult is a popular American writer. Picoult was born and raised in Nesconset on Long Island, New York. Her first story, at age 5 was "The Lobster Which Misunderstood.". Picoult studied creative writing with Mary Morris at Princeton, immediately after graduated from Princeton in 1987 she took on a series of miscellaneous jobs, from editing a textbook at publishing company to teaching eighth grade English classes. Soon after, she attended Harvard University to earn her master's degree in education. She received 2005 New England book award for her entire body of work. (http://JodiPicoult: information_and_much_more.com). So far she has written more than fourteen novels such as *The Tent Circle*, *Vanishing Acts*, and one of her popular novels is *My Sister's Keeper*. Picoult's novels tend to center on human emotion, family, and the balance of love and human relationships. Riveting plots bring light questions and issues that remain with a reader long after the last page is turned.

My Sister Keeper was written in 2004 and published in the same year by Washington Square Press. Some of the Jodi Picoult novels are Salem Falls (2001), Perfect Match (2002), Second Glance (2003), My Sister's Keeper (2004), Vanishing Acts (2005), The Tenth Circle (2006), and Nineteen Minutes (2007). In 2003 she was awarded the New England Bookseller Award for Fiction.

My Sister's Keeper is a novel revolved around family dynamic which one of the main characters has to face moral dilemma in her inner and outer conflicts created by her decision to sue her parents to be medically emancipated. It is important to discuss the moral dilemma of the main character because the main character conflict about her dilemmatic decision takes a huge portion of the novel plot.

The novel tells about Fitzgerald family, which was quite perfect on the outside but full of conflict on the inside. Anna Fitzgerald the main character in the novel is the youngest daughter in Fitzgerald family. Anna was born through genetic engineering who would be a perfect genetic match for her older sister, Kate Fitzgerald who suffers from acute promyelocytic leukemia. Thus, Anna can donate blood or whatever else is necessary to keep her older sister alive. Anna was born as a savior sister and she has always known as a "donor child". Since the day she was born until the next thirteen years, Anna undergoes several medical procedures to help keep Kate alive.

Both Anna and her older sister, Kate, love each other unconditionally. Anna donate everything that her sister needs without any complain. Time passes, Kate's kidneys are failing and she needs a new one so the doctor suggest to take one of Anna's kidneys. The mother, Sara Fitzgerald ask Anna to donate one of her kidneys for her older sister but finally Anna says no. One of the many reasons she says no is because she feels tired and wants to live independent from her older sister, she wants to be free without always connected to Kate. She hires a famous lawyer named Campbell Alexander, to represent her in the court room againts her

own parents in order to have rights of her own body. When her mother, Sara, is served with the papers for the lawsuit, she becomes furious with Anna as she cannot understand Anna's decision.

At first, when Anna decided to sue her parents she did not think about the consequences of her claim, then she begins to questioning whether she needs to continue the lawsuit or not when she realized one of the consequences she has to face if she continue the law suit is losing her sister because Kate cannot survive without Anna being an organ supporter for her, but, if Anna stop the process of suing her own parents for medical emancipation she cannot be an independent human which she always wanted and she cannot have the rights to do what is best for her and for her own body.

After realizing the consequences of her decision and when the process to have rights over her own body finally begin Anna started to feel guilty toward her sister and she also starts to doubt herself whether her decision to sue her parents is the right thing to do. Throughout the court process Anna is struggling with her moral dilemma whether or not she continue or drop the lawsuit. The character of Anna and her dilemma toward her decision can be analyzed using theory of New Criticism based on the elements of fiction which are characterization, plot, and theme. New Criticism is consider suitable for this study because the thesis writer wants to analyze how the main character and her moral dilemma portrayed in the novel. In order to reveal the main character dilemma, the thesis writer will analyze the main character conflicts and how the conflicts support the theme of the novel through the element of fiction that was mentioned earlier.

1. 2. Statement of the Problems

The thesis writer of this study would like to analyze Jodi Picoult's *My Sister's Keeper* and answer the following questions:

1. How is Anna Fitzgerald's characterization and dilemmatic decision portrayed in the story?
2. How do Anna Fitzgerald's conflicts support the theme of morality?

1. 3. The Objective of the Study

In analyzing this study there are several objectives that the writer hope to achieve. The objective of the study are try to answer the statement of the problems. The goals that supposed to be achieved are:

1. To describe the main character Anna Fitzgerald dilemmatic decision portrayed in the novel.
2. To explain the inner conflict of the main character support the theme in *My Sister's Keeper*.

1. 4. The Significance of the Study

This study is expected to contribute to the academic community of Airlngga University. This study intends to provide insights to *My Sister's Keeper* novel and provides the necessary idea on how to analyze a novel by applying the theory of New Criticism. Therefore, the study also aims to serve as reference especially for students of literature major at Airlangga University who wish to

study about novel. Furthermore, this study hopes to give understanding of the formal elements in literary text especially characterization, plot, and theme as an organic unity.

1. 5. Scope and Limitation

The thesis writer will give the scope and limitation in this study in order to make the analysis not out from the tract. The scope of this thesis are the main character's conflicts whether internal and external and also conflicts that happens in Fitzgerald family, the conflict that caused the main character decided to file the lawsuit against her parents and the consequence of the decision which creates a moral dilemma that the main character have to deal with. After the scope the thesis writer will give the limitation in this research paper. The limitations in this thesis is the main character Anna Fitzgerald.

1. 6. Theoretical Background

The thesis writer uses New Criticism theory to analyze the novel since this theory is considered to be the most suitable theory to analyze this text due to its method that only uses text to find the meaning of the text itself. New Criticism is a form of literary criticism that triumphed as the predominant critical form in the 1940s through the 1960s (Tyson 117). According to Tyson in *Critical Theory Today* New Criticism ignored biographical and historical information about an author. Instead, literature was to be interpreted based solely on the cohesiveness of the work. To a New Critic, whatever the author intended was invalid. The most

essential thing in a literary work is the analysis of the intrinsic elements which consist of theme, setting, characterization and plot. Here, to analyze the novel the thesis writer would like to focus her analysis on three aspects of the intrinsic elements, which are characterization, theme, and plot. Characterization will be examined in order to analyze Anna Fitzgerald's character in the novel, meanwhile, plot will be discussed in order to analyze the conflicts in the story and its relation with the theme in the novel.

1. 7. Method of the Study

The method in data collection is library research. The text of *My Sister's Keeper* is the primary sources of the study and the most essential part in which the data for this study comes from. The second sources, the thesis writer takes the data from the journals, articles and printed books that are related to the problems that appear in the novel. After the thesis writer takes or collecting the data, the thesis writer will use the data to study deeper about the problems in the novel.

In analyzing the data the thesis writer will use descriptive method of analysis. "The descriptive analysis is the descriptive explanation of the problems through dialogues, events and actions. This method applied based on the work itself, and supported by other information about this work," (Komaruddin 18). The process of data analysis in this study begins by observing Anna Fitzgerald's character and then examining the plot which Anna experiencing throughout the novel. By doing this the thesis writer will be able to reveal the characterization of the main character in the story. The technique necessary for analyzing the

characterization and plot will be based on New Criticism theory in Lois Tyson's Critical Theory Today.

Elements of fiction such as theme, plot, and characterization are the main object for analysis because of the aim of the study is the text itself. The analysis will begin on observing the character by paying attention to the actions and sentences that the character is using in the text in order to gain more understanding of the character. It is necessary for the thesis writer to observe the text more than once in order to get the necessary idea to support the theme. Additional important details are added by quotation and paraphrasing the dialogue of the characters from the main text as the evidence for ideas presented in this study. After making an analysis the final step is to make the general conclusion about the analysis.

1. 8. Definition of Key Terms

1. Sue: (1) to make a claim against somebody in court about something that they have said or done to harm you. (2) to formally ask for something especially in court.
2. Freedom: (1) the right to do or say what you want without anyone stopping you. (2) the state of not being prisoner or slave.
3. Conflict: A clash of actions, ideas, desires, or wills (Shaw 79).
4. Dilemma: (1). A situation in which a difficult choice has to be made between two or more alternatives, esp. equally undesirable ones. (2). A difficult situation or problem (Mason 96).

5. Moral Dilemma: ethical dilemma is a complex situation that will often involve an apparent mental conflict between moral imperatives, in which to obey (Gowans 430).