



## CONQUERING OBSTACLES IN THE EYE OF THE SHEEP (2014) NOVEL BY SOFIE LAGUNA

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### ABSTRACT

Skripsi ini merupakan kajian dari Novel *The Eye of The Sheep* (2014) karya Sofie Laguna. Permasalahan yang diangkat dalam kajian ini adalah sejauh mana protagonis merefleksikan usahanya untuk menakhluukkan kesulitan-kesulitan yang muncul dalam hidupnya. Tujuan dari kajian ini adalah untuk menemukan sejauh mana kontribusi elemen fiksi (karakter, seting, dan plot/ konflik) membantu untuk mengetahui usaha yang dilakukan protagonis untuk menakhluukkan kesulitan-kesulitan yang muncul dalam hidupnya. Pengkajian karya ini berdasarkan *text-based* dan *context based interpretation* yang berkaitan dengan konsep Sigmund Freud tentang *drive theory*. Hasil kajian menemukan protagonist mampu menghadapi permasalahan hidupnya dengan cara bersosialisasi dan mandiri.

Kata kunci: *conquer, obstacles, life instinct, death instinct, socializing, being independent.*

### A. INTRODUCTION

Obstacles are common and they normally occur within our life journeys. Although their occurrence is not expected, obstacles that we face in life makes our lives become not only challenging and more interesting but also more meaningful. They challenge us to keep trying to do our best to achieve what we have been dreaming of and looking for.

According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2016), an obstacle is something that makes a task difficult to be fulfilled. An obstacle is then also called a barrier, an impediment or a stumbling block which stands in the way to blockage people in accomplishing what they want to achieve. Those who are brave to face and then overcome the obstacles are aware that they are to make more efforts and to have bigger determination. As I have mentioned earlier, to some people, obstacles are understood as aspects that cannot be avoided along the way of fulfilling a task. This means that those people already anticipate how they must face the obstacles. As a result, some people are prepared to push themselves

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to their limit because they perceive the obstacles as the impulse to motivate them to do harder and better in order to conquer, defeat or overcome their problems. So, instead of delaying or stopping them from moving forward in accomplishing their tasks, the obstacles prompt them to take real actions for achieving success.

In this study conquering obstacles refers to the protagonist's effort in dealing with the problems he faced in his life. He has to take an action to defeat the obstacles by managing some strategies. The first strategy is trying to socialize and make friends with others. For a young person with the Asperger syndrome, this is certainly not an easy effort to do. Secondly, the protagonist does his best to become independent by, for example, doing his daily activities by himself. His independence gradually trains him to have a great courage to take a big trip in search of his lost father.

First, he begins to accept his condition as a kid with Asperger Syndrome. He starts out to have the awareness about his own condition and leads off to accept help from others by communicating with them and speaks his mind to them. It helps others understand him and offers him a hand to do a good change with his life. Besides, he starts to be open minded, by accepting others' opinion and accept their suggestion to find his father, the only family member he has left. Being socialize is one of his ways to defeat his difficulties.

Second, being independent is his way to train himself to stand up on his own. He needs to do the entire things by himself, it need bravery to start all the actions that he need to do when he used to be dependent on his mother. The bravery took him to take a journey to find his father. He has to take a long trip alone, where he has no idea about the place he is up to. In addition, being alone makes him become a brave person and starts to take care of himself by his own.

There are two articles that have given contribution and inspiration in analyzing this novel. First, the work entitled *Analysis of The Portrayal of the Protagonist of Jodi Picoult's House Rules* written by Indri Swedy (2015) shows how the novel is analyzed using the formalism approach and library research. Swedy in this case compares a character with an AS syndrome with the characters in *The House Rules* novel written by Jodi Picoult. She founds that the protagonist is viewed by his environments as a rigid, insensitive, aggressive and obsessive person. She argues that AS is an interesting topic to be analyzed and she wants to reveal the purpose of the author to create the character. The result of this study is that the author are successful in portraying the character with AS by giving the reader clear description of the characteristic of Asperger Syndrome by using multi-perspective point of views to explain the characters' feeling and thoughts about his surroundings.

Another analysis is *A study of Life and Death Instinct in Paulo Coelho's Veronika Decides to Die (2014)* written by MachmudYunus and colleague. They focused on how the protagonist lost her motivation of life by using Freud's psychoanalysis theory, *eros*, and *Thanatos*. The character finds her life too perfect

and yet so boring. She wants to know how it feels like to fall in love and feel sorrow. This condition leads her to commit suicide, yet then she realized that love can bring the happiness and sadness altogether at the same time. The result of this study is there is a correlation between life and death instinct that occurred to the characters.

This study is going to reveal the *conquering obstacles* which refers to the protagonist efforts to overcome his obstacles of life. It is related to the concept of *drive theory*, by Sigmund Freud. According to Freud (1989) people are driven by two conflicting central desires. They are the death and life instincts. Death instinct is the force that makes living creatures strives for inorganic state. For Freud, the death drive is the main goal of human beings and every person has an unconscious wish to die. While life instincts are something that leads human in basic survival, pleasure, and reproduction. Both life instinct and death instinct is occurred to the protagonist.

## **B. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The analysis of novel *The Eye of The Sheep* is done through text and context-based interpretation. It is done by analyzing some part of fictional devices, such as; character, plot (conflicts) and setting. Character and conflicts are used to reveal the efforts that done by the protagonist by analyzing the effects of conflicts to him. Then the setting deals with the situation, condition and atmosphere. It gives contribution in process of analysis by giving help in revealing the meaning. These elements are analyzed based on the concept drive theory by Sigmund Freud.

## **C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This section reveals the *conquering obstacles* by analyzing the fictional devices such as character, plot (conflict) and setting. *The protagonist, a 12-year-old a young male with Asperger Syndrome, shows that he struggles hard to conquer his obstacles of life by himself. It is shown from his effort to stand up from his mourning by overcoming his obstacles of life. He starts being socializing and independent.*

### **1. Socializing**

Socializing is one of the protagonist's strategies to conquer his obstacles. The act of socializing can be seen from the changes of his attitude to his own condition. He begins to accept his condition as Aspergers. However, he has the awareness to overcome his obstacles by beginning to open up himself and starting out to socialize with others. He starts to be an open minded person. Through socialize he is able to explore a new thing in his life, which makes his life different and new.

Dealing with this condition arouses his awareness so he needs to stand up. It appears in the following quotation:

It was my mother's writing; I knew the round ups and the leaning downs, the I's with hardly dot, and the thin u's. It was as if I was looking at a code from another country so far away you couldn't find it on the atlas

That night I didn't zip myself into the suitcase. There wouldn't be room for all the feelings coming from my pores. I needed *space*; I had *glad*, I had *want*, I had *maybe*, I had *mum* and *dad*. (p.134)

The text above shows that the protagonist has the awareness about his condition and the willingness to change. He realizes his own condition and finds something which increases his self- motivation. The setting here refers to the enthusiastic feeling of the protagonist. It motivates him to make a change by leaving his comfort zone. He understands that nobody can help him but his only self. This condition guides him to be self-motivated and confident to change and defeat his obstacles. The awareness of the protagonist can be seen in his utterance, “.. I didn't zip myself into the suitcase” this utterance shows that he has made changes by leaving his comfort zone and it emphasizes his willingness to change as he utters “*I needed space*.” This utterance shows that he has realized his condition and his awareness gives him a strong commitment to change. He realizes that he needs time and mind to focus on his own problems. This condition gives him the motivation to stand up, be a brave person and start a new life.

The protagonist has opened up himself to socialize and he begins to speak up his mind to others. The act of socialization also can be seen in the following quotation below:

‘Yes,’ I said. ‘Yes.’  
They both turned to me.  
He can talk said Liam.  
.....  
Liam look at me in surprise. ‘You really can talk.’  
‘Yes, he really can,’ said Deirdre.  
‘Why he didn't before?’  
‘He didn't have a reason before.’  
‘He does now, don't you Flick? You got to go find your old man.’  
‘Don't pressure him Liam.’  
‘He's got an old man. He has to go and find him.’  
(p. 138)

The text above shows that he sets about to socialize with his peers. He begins to shares about himself to them. This action shows that he has socialized and changed his life. Through socialized, he gets the idea of how to solve his problems, his peers give him the courage and hope that he can change his life to be better. The setting is the tense atmosphere that brings conflict among them. It triggers the internal conflict, which push him to think and make decision. The utterance, “*Don't pressure him Liam*”, shows that they have the different ideas, and it automatically gives impact to the protagonist. He

might be confused and perplexed about his direction, but he didn't. He is certainly consistent with his decision to find his father, as he agrees with the idea to find his father. It shows that he is confident and sure about his decision. He has something which motivates him to continue his life. As stated in the quotation, "*He does now, don't you Flick?*". This utterance shows that at this point he has the reason which triggers him to survive. It gives him the strengths to fight and defeat all his obstacles, by trying to do something he never did before.

Another quotation which depicts the willingness of the protagonist to socialize can be seen in the following text below:

It was Sunday morning and we had just finished breakfast. Anne White was tidying with Deirdre.  
'Come with me' said Liam. "You're the decoy.'  
'What's a decoy?' I asked him.  
'Something for Jake to talk while I do the deed.'  
'What deed?'  
'Stealing the money, Flick, remember? Jack's got plenty. The government pay him for looking after us. [...]  
'Okay,' I said. 'Jimmy the decoy.'  
That's right, but, Jim, you can't talk. You're not going to talk to him, are you? He can't know that you talk.'  
'Okay, Liam, okay. Jimmy the decoy who doesn't talk.' Liam grinned. 'Funnyman Flick,' he said.(p. 144)

The text above depicts how the protagonist is capable to adapt in a new environment and makes new friends, which means he has the ability to socialize. The setting refers to the comfortable nuance. He feels comfortable with the people and the environment. It can be seen that he is willing to do anything that his friend asks him for. Through the quotation above it can be seen that he has made friends. He feels relaxed, calm and comfort which makes him easier to adapt and communicate with them. From the text it can be seen that he is a sociable person, he has the ability to cooperate with his peers and plan something which is a difficult task for a child like him. He never complains and refuses towards anyone. He finds comfort, secure and welcome in this environment, it makes him able to socialize and fit in.

Briefly, the setting gives crucial impact to the protagonist, it builds his mood and gives him courage to be a brave person. He is capable to make decisions through the conflicts which occurs to him. The conflicts that he experience trigger him to make up his mind and make a decision. This leads him to be able to socialize with others, without worries. The dominant setting here is the condition of the character. The tense condition that he experience trigger him to have internal conflict. It pushes him to think and make decisions. He has started over his life in the foster house. He meets and learn new thing. The conflicts pushed him becomes confident and self-motivated to continue his life. Socialize is the way to conquer the obstacles in his life.

## 2. Being Independent

Being independent is the second action done by the protagonist to conquer his obstacles. Being independent means he is able to take care himself. In this case, it includes his capability to making decision and the bravery to take a long trip journey alone. All of these are new for him, as he used to be dependent on his mother. It makes these actions need a lot of efforts for the protagonist to achieve his success. Being independent is more than just understand the task but he needs to know how to handle it and make another options and pick the best. He needs to be brave to accept the risk of it.

He is confronted with many options in his life, where he has to choose one of them. These options make him in confusion. In order to conquer it, he needs to make decision. It appears in the following quotation:

People were rushing past carrying bags and suitcase, holding hands with their children, saying goodbye and hello, knowing which bus to take them to point paradise.  
'You okay, lad? You look lost.' A man in a green suit looked down at me. His cap leaned forward over his face, making shade for his eyes and nose.

'Point Paradise' I said.

'Point Paradise...hmmm. 'He led me to the ticket counter. (p.151)

The setting refers to the tense condition that occurs to the protagonist. He feels confused. The situation is strange for him. He never felt it before. This confusion leads pushes him to think fast and comprehend the situation. It shows that he meets obstacles in order to achieve his goals. He feels confused, yet at the same time he is excited to start his journey. It motivates him to be brave to face the obstacles. The obstacles train him to be an independent person. It can be seen from the quotation that he is capable to comprehend the situation, and willing to talk with strangers and asks for help. The utterance "*Point Paradise*" shows that he is capable to control himself not to overwhelmed by the situation which might triggers his symptoms. It proved that he makes big effort to overcome his syndrome by staying calm even he is panicked. This condition shows that he trying to be an independent person.

Another quotation that supports the idea of being independent can be seen in the following quotation:

‘You’re not on your own, aren’t you?’ the woman asked. I nodded yes. (p.155)

‘Wh...wh...where’s your mother?’ he asked. ‘Where is Paula?’

She couldn’t ... she couldn’t ... I told him.

He frowned. ‘What?’

‘She couldn’t, she couldn’t....My words were jamming at the toll gates. She couldn’t, she couldn’t....

‘Jimmy, what? She couldn’t what?’

.....

The only thing to flow was whisky. It rushed thinly through him, faster than blood, more effective. He shook his head as if he was trying to clear something from it, to make space for what I told him. (p.157)

The text above shows that he begins to conquer his obstacles by doing something new with his life. Take a long trip journey is new for him. In order to do that he need to face his fears. He has to be brave to communicate with stranger. The setting refers to the exciting and tense atmosphere. He feels happy that he find his father. Yet, he suppressed when he have to explain about his mother. It recalls his bad memories. It gives him the difficulties to explain it. His limitation blocks his ability to arrange the words. However, his strong commitment to conquer pushes him to tries his best. He keeps trying even it’s difficult for him.

In short, being independent is one of his ways, to conquer his obstacles. In order to achieve his goals, he has to struggle a lot. In addition, he has the difficulties with his syndrome. It makes him have to put excessive efforts to achieve his goals. Fortunately, he is able to manage it and success in his mission to find his father.

#### **D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

The novel *The Eye of The Sheep* (2014) by Sofie Laguna reveals how the protagonist conquer his obstacles of life. The issue of conquering obstacles is exposed through text-based and context-based interpretation by focusing on fictional devices such as character, setting and conflicts. The protagonist action shows that he is capable to conquer his obstacles by socializing and being independent. The setting of protagonist’s condition and situation shows the willingness and his commitment to change his life. This enthusiastic feeling create the positives moves even in the process to achieve it he has

struggles a lot and face the obstacles that put him down. Thus, the conflicts trained him to be an independent person and gives the inspirations to others for survive in life.

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