

**CONQUERING OBSTACLES IN *THE EYE OF THE SHEEP* NOVEL BY  
SOFIE LAGUNA**

*Submitted as a Partial of Requirement to Achieve Strata 1 (S1) degree*



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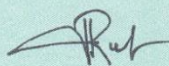
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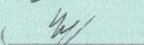
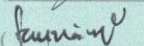
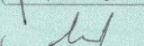

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## ABSTRAK

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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 menakhlukkan 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 menakhlukkan 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.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstrak	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Table of Contents	iii
Chapter I	
1.1 Background .....	1
1.1.1 Conquering Obstacles .....	6
1.1.2 Sofie Laguna.....	7
1.1.3 The Eye of The Sheep .....	10
1.2 Problem of Study.....	11
1.3 Purpose of Study .....	11
1.4 Previous Study .....	12
1.5 Theoretical Framework.....	13
1.6 Methodology .....	18
Chapter II	
2.1 Socializing .....	19
2.2 Being Independent .....	26
Chapter III	
Conclusion .....	37
Bibliography .....	40

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

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.

Obstacles bring impacts to our lives; for some people they can be the sources of motivation to challenge their own abilities while others may want to avoid them because they do not have enough courage as well as willingness to spend many efforts to fulfill their goals. It is common that the obstacles that come along the way of achieving or accomplishing a task have caused some people to become stressful or depressed. It is not impossible that this condition may also lead some people to commit suicide because they cannot bear the tension. Yet, interestingly, for some people, the obstacles are viewed as the catalysts or the impulses for them to do their best in order to achieve the goals or the purposes they have set in their lives.

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 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.

There are many kinds of obstacles in life. Having disability is one of them. There are two kinds of disabilities; they are temporary and long life disability. Temporary disability is a condition that can be cured and the term is temporary. While long life disability is something that will last for the rest of the life of its sufferer. Such as, the Neurodevelopmental Disorders. According to Andrew & Colleague (2009) it is a kind of disability which is associated primarily with the functioning of the neurological system and brain. Examples of Neurodevelopmental Disorders in children includes attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism, Asperger syndrome, learning disabilities, intellectual disability, conduct disorders, cerebral palsy, and impairments in vision and hearing. These individual differences lie in the areas of intellectual ability, personality, and special interest. According to

Dr.Marshack (2016), Asperger Syndrome (AS) is the term applied to high functioning end of what is known as the spectrum of pervasive developmental disorders (PDDs) or the Autism spectrum. PDDs are a group of conditions that involve delay in the development of many basic skills most notably the ability to socialize with others, to communicate, and to use imagination. It brings impact to the sufferers' behavior, memory and personality. According to Baron-Cohen (1995) classic autism and AS both share three core diagnostic features: difficulties in social development, difficulties in communication development, and unusually strong, narrow interests and repetitive behaviors.

People with AS experience delay in the development of their communications and motoric skills. Communication ability in this case includes the ability to understand the atmosphere of direct conversation. People with AS have difficulty to express their emotion and feelings, while people around them are unable to understand their feelings. During conversations they are unable to interact with their interlocutors such as looking them in the eye. As the motoric skill delay the ability of the sufferer to control their body to stay still, they are prompted to keep moving round and round with no reason.

People with AS need special attention and affection especially from their closely relatives or family members. Family is the only thing that can be trusted by people with AS since they are afraid of changes and meeting new people. This makes them depend on their parents in every aspects of life.

Therefore, the contribution or role of the family is crucial for their development. Unfortunately, not all parents have the understanding of how to handle *Aspie* or the people with this syndrome. As a result, the children with AS is often left without proper treatment from their parents. The absence of treatment from parents push the *Aspie* to struggle by themselves. This left the AS sufferers to fight and deal with their syndrome and also their surrounding including the problems that happen in their family on their own.

The only way for *the Aspies* to succeed in their lives is to conquer the obstacle itself. According to Oxford Dictionary (2016), the word to conquer means an action to deal with or successfully fight against a problem or unreasonable fear. In order to conquer, people with AS must take an action to defeat their syndromes and the problems of life they encounter. Conquering an obstacle is not an easy thing to do it. The Aspergers for example, must make great efforts to do it. It is very likely that during the process of conquering the obstacles, they face great difficulties. However, determined sufferers of AS will usually keep on struggling in order to survive and achieve the aims they have set to accomplish in their lives.

Asperger Syndrome is not a disease, it is kind of brain disturbance experienced by an individual. Experts argue that this condition can be abolished if the sufferers have strong determination and commitment to conquer the syndromes. Jeremy Samson is one of the examples of the Aspergers who succeeded in conquering the Asperger syndromes in his life. He now becomes a personal trainer in Melbourne Australia. Growing up as

an Asperger was not an easy way for him to continue his life. He had to struggle more than any other kids during his childhood. It was difficult for him to make friends and adapt with others. He got bullied in school. This made school become the toughest part of his life. Yet, his parents were able to help him get through his syndrome by training him to practice sport every night in order to give him more confidence to face the bullying thrown at him at school by his peers. All the bullies that he had experienced motivated him even more to gain strength. Practicing sport, Samson eventually grew stronger and fitter. This led him to become a personal trainer of those who suffer from AS. His very first client prompted Samson to help an *Aspie* child to improve his motoric skills. Now Samson is known in Australia as a personal trainer especially for autism and Aspergers.

This study analyzes the efforts that a person makes to conquer obstacles known as the Asperger syndrome. This is the way the person is aware he can defeat his weakness as someone with the Asperger syndromes. The sufferer realizes that his limited condition will not change for the better if he does not stand up by himself and make changes with their own efforts. This can be done by first taking into account how the sufferers learn to understand his or her condition and then learn to accept it. Next is starting to make a plan for the changes by finding ways to defeat all the barriers, that is by, for examples, beginning to interact with people other than his family members. This effort will help the *Aspies* to obtain new perception about the people

around them and hence, teach them to become open minded and open hearted to accept the changes.

The issue of conquering an obstacle is portrayed in the novel *The Eye of the Sheep* written by Sofie Laguna. The novel is interesting to be analyzed since it portrays the tragic and complicated life of a child who suffers from Asperger Syndrome. This syndrome causes a delay in the development of the child's basic skills. As a result, it also causes him difficulties to join and get immersed with the communities he lives within. Interestingly, the efforts to conquer the obstacles have to be done without the presence of the parents of the main young protagonist. Thus, the protagonist conquers the obstacles by socializing with the communities that surround his life and being independent.

### **1.1.1 Conquering obstacles**

There are two terms in this study. They are conquering and obstacles. Conquering derives from the word to conquer. According to Merriam-Webster (2016) to conquer means an action to gain control of a problem or difficulty through great effort. It refers to the action of someone to defeat his/her limitation through great efforts. In others words, it refers to gaining control or mastering over something or someone or winning by overcoming obstacle or opposition.

The second word is obstacles. According to Merriam-Webster (2016) obstacles are derived from the singular noun, an obstacle. It is something that makes the task difficult to be carried out. It refers to something that interferes

with or prevents action or progress. An obstacle is something, material or nonmaterial, that stands in the way of the literal or figurative process.

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.

### **1.1.2 Sofie Laguna**

Sofie Laguna is an Australian actor, writer, and playwright. She was born in Sydney in 1968. According to Laguna's personal site stated that she originally studied to be a lawyer in University of New South Wales, but she moved to Melbourne to get a training to become an actor at the Victorian College of the Arts. She worked for a number of times as an actor while completing her diploma in Professional Writing and Editing at The Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. Now, she works as an author and playwright, writing for both adults and children.

Laguna used to play in the theater for children, performing for them as an actor and storyteller. She found it interesting to write a story about children and for children. Some of her works are; *My Yellow Blanky* (2002), *Too Loud Lily* (2003), *Bad Buster* (2003), *Surviving Aunt Marsha* (2003), *On*



*Our Way to the Beach* (2004), *Big Ned' Bushwalk* (2005), *Bird and Sugar Boy* (2006), *Stephen's Music* (2007), *One Foot Wrong* (2008), *Our Australian Girl; Grace* (2011), *Where are You Banana* (2014), and *The Eye of the Sheep* (2014).

Since Laguna writes many books for children she has received many achievements from her works. Most of her children books are selected in Children's Book Council of Australia as Notable Australian Book such as *My Yellow Blanky* (2003), *Bad Buster* (2004), *Big Ned's Bushwalk* (2006), *Stephen's Music* (2008), and *Where are You Banana* (2014). Her children book *Too Loud Lily* received Oppenheim Best Book Award in 2005. In 2007 her book *Bird and Sugar Book* was chosen as *Book of The Year For Young Readers*. Her book for adults *One Foot Wrong* was also long-listed for Miles Franklin Award and shortlisted for Prime Minister Literary Award 2009. In 2014 Laguna published her second novel for adults entitled *The Eye of the Sheep*. It has been long-listed for the 2016 IMPAC Dublin International Literary Award and was shortlisted for the 2015 Stella Prize and The 2015 Voss Literary Award. It also became a winner of Miles Franklin Award 2015 for the category of fiction.

There are some comments from people and the media about Laguna's writings. Camilla Nelson (2014) views her writings as fresh stories amidst the Australian literature that has long been fulfilled with the so many themes around national identities and history. The topic that Laguna exposes is seen as a new thing in Australia's Literature which is one of the main reasons

why they have won several awards. The Stella Prize (Is a major literary award that celebrates Australian women's writing and an organization that champions cultural change) also state in their site that:

*Sofie Laguna is an extraordinary storyteller, as she demonstrates in both of her novels. Her unique strength lies in creating characters with voices that sing from the page. She is an author who refuses to shy away from (and is perhaps drawn to) the darkness in people, but this is tempered by her ability to articulate other, lighter parts of their characters as well. (The Stella Prize site for school program, 2015)*

According to the quotation above Laguna is the writer who can see and reveal the world in another perception and enlighten the readers to understand the reality from another perspective. Laguna's work is undoubtedly beautiful articulation. She likes to investigate life and the world and demonstrates it in entertaining and delightful ways with children as the main focus of all her writings. She symbolizes children as the point of being human. They are described as being lovely and heavenly creatures and those who can see straight into the heart of the matter.

Laguna informs Catriona Menzies-Pike during an interview (Sydney review of Books, 2015) that she has always been interested in investigating the life of human being with their particular environments. She argues that the characters that she invents in her writing are lovely, heavenly, and the important thing is to have feelings of love and care for other people. She asks the readers to see the phenomenon of life in two-sided ways.

### **1.1.3 *The Eye of the Sheep***

*The Eye of the Sheep* (2014), is a novel written by Sofie Laguna which reveals how a person with Asperger Syndrome conquers an obstacle in his life. Conquering an obstacle refers to an act by a person who suffers from Asperger syndrome to defeat his disability or obstacle. This is represented by the young male protagonist, Jimmy Flick. He was born with Asperger Syndrome, whereas people hardly can understand his own uniqueness. The only person who can manage him is his mother, while his father does not know how to take care of him. His world starts become upside down when his mother died and his father was gone.

At the beginning, he lost his ways and he keep silent; he has no idea of how to take care of himself as he used to become very dependent on his mother. He has experienced terrible things in his life such as having an alcoholic and abusive father. His Asperger syndrome makes him even more difficult for him to understand others. Through the help of his new friends at the foster house then he realizes that he needs to take an action to stand up by his own. In this analysis, there are two actions carried out by the protagonist to show how he conquers his disability. There are two actions done by the protagonist to conquer the obstacles he faced in life, such as to get himself socialize with other people and then to become independent.

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.

Then, 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.

## **1.2 Problem of the study**

This study focuses on the efforts done by the protagonist to conquer the obstacles he faces in his life. There are two research questions that give the contribution to revealing the issue. They are:

- 1.How far does the protagonist in the novel *The Eye of the Sheep* (2014) show his efforts to conquer the obstacles he faces in his life?
- 2.To what extent do character, setting and plot (conflict) support the issue about the efforts made to conquer the obstacles?

## **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The aim of this study is to show the ways the protagonist conquers the obstacles he faces in his life. This study is aimed to investigate to what extent

do the character, setting and plot in the novel *The Eye of the Sheep* support the issue of conquering the obstacles he faces in his life.

#### **1.4 Previous Study**

The analysis about *The Eye of The Sheep* novel that focuses on conquering obstacles has not been found yet. However, 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) and the second is *A study of Life and Death Instinct in Paulo Coelho's Veronika Decides to Die (2014)* written by MachmudYunus and colleague.

*Analysis of The Portrayal of the Protagonist of Jodi Picoult's House Rules* 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.

Second is a journal written by MachmudYunus and colleagues (2014) entitled *A study of Life and Death Instinct in Paulo Coelho's Veronika Decides to Die*. 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.

Both of studies above give contribution and inspiration to the topic conquering obstacles. The first study helps the writer to find ways to explore how the main protagonist of the story survives his life amidst the sufferings he experiences as a person with the Asperger syndrome. The second study outlines the correlation between life and death instinct and motivation to survive in life, which is also the kind of obstacles faced by the protagonist. It gives the author's the inspiration of how to explore the topic of conquering obstacles. This study is focused on the efforts of the protagonist to conquer his disability and the difficulties in his life by using Freud's psychoanalysis theory of life and death instincts.

### **1.5 Theoretical Framework**

Conquering obstacles in this analysis are related to Freud's psychoanalysis drive theory, (*Eros*) and death (*Thanatos*) instincts. 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. According to Freud in *Beyond the pleasure Principle* (1989), the principle idea of the death instinct tends to be a self-destruction which is outwardly performed by melancholy or mourning. Death drive pushes people to do self destruction such as suicides; they argue that it will release them from pain and struggle that they had been through. In addition Boeree (2006) states that life can be a painful and exhausting process, while death promises release from the struggle. People who are driven by their pain of life will find life is not interesting. They will lose their motivation to take an action, even sometimes unconsciously when they have the motive to survive life instinct will turn them back and give them the purpose of life. In this novel, it is represented by the protagonist, at the beginning he losing the motivation of life after the absence of his parents, and then with help from his friends in the foster house it makes him realizes that he needs to make a change in his life.

However, life instincts are something that leads human in basic survival, pleasure, and reproduction. According to Freud, this instinct perpetuates the life of an individual, by motivating him or her to seek food and water, and the life of the species, by motivating them to continue their life. This instinct forcing human to keep motivated to conquer their obstacles and find the way out of their problems. It is instinctively happening, their willingness to live leads them to do anything to reach and achieve their success. Life instinct is

identified as self-preservative because it secures the survival of a species through procreation; on the other hand it is controlled by its desire to return to its original state, namely the reuniting of the germ cells (Freud, 1989). It is consolidated that both life and death instinct are related to each other.

The basic survival is existing in human life. It just needs something to push it to the surface. As Carl Gustav Jung stated in his *Psychological Types* (1921), “Instinct can never be rooted out from an individual by any arbitrary measures;” it shows that unconsciously instinct guide a person in survive. The results they survived or not depend on their commitment. Basically humans still possesses most of ancestor’s instinct, yet the background knowledge of the individual makes it different. The attitude, values and knowledge controlled the primeval instinct.

When the obstacles in life are getting harder for humans to handle, they might fall into the death drive which put them in a desperate situation, and it will turn around if they found the motivation of life. Since the life instinct will work if there is something to achieve. In this analysis, it happened to the protagonist, at first he falls into the depression and unconsciously commits suicide after the losing of his mother, but lately, he realizes his motivation of life with a bit of helping from his friends, they push him to conquer the obstacles of his life.

In this analysis, conquering obstacles is about taking great efforts to overcome the difficulties of life. The protagonist is aware that he needs to overcome his disability and start over his life. He is aware of his difficulties

and tries to conquer his obstacles by making some changes in life. Although the condition that was faced by the protagonist is tremendously painful, however, it pushes him to make changes in his life. He can rearrange and start over his life to get the happiness in life. The protagonist has the awareness to change, as stated by Bridges (1986), people are pressured towards change, but management does not allow for people to experience and live the process of change. There are three points which stated by Bridges in his theory of change, letting go, re-patterning and making a new beginning. All these steps are coincidentally happening to the protagonist. The circumstance and condition that the character had been through giving him encouragement to make a change.

The analysis of this novel is supported by text and context-based interpretation. According to Guerin (2005) context – based interpretation is the approach that based on the analysis and interpretation of the text itself and context-based interpretation is the approach that based on the circumstances of culture, history political, and social. It means that the meaning of the novel is found by correlating among some element of fictional devices, such as characters, plot (conflict) and setting and the meaning of circumstances.

The character is the important element to reveal the meaning of this novel. Corner (2009) says that a character may be defined as a verbal representation of a human being. In literary works, the characters help the reader to understand and catch the meaning of the works. The way to analyze the character is taking a focus into character's action, thoughts, conversations, and

the reaction toward conflicts and circumstances. In this analysis, the character is a child who suffers from Asperger syndrome who lost his mother and his father is missing. He has to stand by himself, which makes him difficult to adapt to this circumstance. Since it is new for him, and the spectrum that he suffers makes it even more difficult. He has to take a great effort to conquer his obstacle to make a change in his life.

Another fictional device in order to analyze this novel is the conflict. Robert (1999) stated that the conflict is confronting forces inter-characters, character with themselves, and character with society and its environment which cause doubt arouse curiosity, create tension, and produce interest. The internal conflict is a conflict which faced by the character with himself. On the other hand, external conflict is a conflict that is faced by the characters deal with another character or the environment. In conquering obstacles, the character deals with the both of conflicts. The internal one deals inside of himself and his ways to conquer his obstacle from the spectrum that he suffers and the dysfunctional of his family. The external conflict occurs between the character and his environment, such as school and losing the family members which provoke the characters to have internal conflict.

The last important element that plays the crucial part is setting. According to Klarer (2004), setting term includes the location, historical period, and social surrounding in which action of the text develops. Setting contributes to the development of character's mindset and perspective. In this novel, the character is surrounded by tragic, painful and traumatic experienced which

pushed him to make a change to his life by conquering all the obstacles of his life.

### **1.6 Methodology**

The analysis of novel *The Eye of The Sheep* is done through text and context-based interpretation. It is done by analyzing some parts of fictional devices, such as characters, plot (conflicts) and setting. Characters and conflicts are used to evoke the ways to conquer obstacles by analyzing character's reactions toward the conflict. Then, the setting deals with the circumstances and atmosphere. It gives the contribution to the process of analysis by giving help in revealing the meaning. Plot and conflicts in this novel play important roles to reveals meanings. These elements are analyzed based on how people with Asperger conquering the obstacles he faces in life.