

**MAXIMIZING THE COMPETENCE IN THE NOVEL *OUT OF MY MIND*  
(2010) BY SHARON M. DRAPER**

**THESIS**

*Submitted as Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements  
to Obtain Strata I (S1) Degree*



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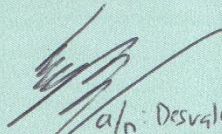
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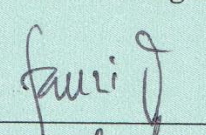
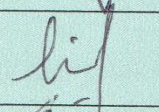
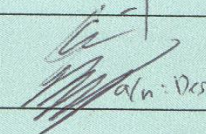
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## ABSTRACT

**Safitri, Indri Mariska. 2019. “Maximizing the Competence Novel *Out of My Mind* (2010) by Sharon M. Draper”. Thesis. Universitas Negeri Padang.**

**Advisor: Dr. Kurnia Ningsih, M.A**

This article analyzes about the novel *Out of My Mind* (2010) by Sharon M. Draper. The problem of this analysis is how far the novel exposes about the issue of maximizing the competence. The purpose of the analysis is to find out how the main character maximize her competence to reach the equality to normal people. This analysis involves the the fictional devices such as character, plot (conflict), and setting to reveal the issue of maximizing the competence. This analysis deals with the psychoanalysis theory by Freud and the concept of self-awareness by Crisp-Turner. The result of this analysis shows that the main character are able to maximize her competence by two ways: participating in competition and social life.

**Key words:** maximizing, competence, self-awareness

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Problem

People naturally have the eagerness to show themselves in public, either they were born with physical defect or not. People who are born with no physical defect will have easier ways to obtain the trust of the people; show themselves in public; perform their ability, and expose their identity. However, people who are born with physical defect will face the harder ways to make people believe that they have the ability. They need to do extra struggles and have more challenges to maximize their competence, such as in studying and socializing. Maximizing the competence is the way to get the self-actualization, in order to get the education and chance like other people. The competence can be done by gaining the knowledge so that they have the ability to participate in competition and the social life.

Maximizing the competence is the manifestation of the self-awareness. According to Merriam-Webster dictionary (2018), *maximizing* means to increase (something) as much as possible. Someone can maximize their competence when they are aware of the potency in themselves. Indeed, the support of the society is needed to grow the self-confidence of the people with physical defect. The smallest and the most essential society is family. The role of the family is very



important to make these people realize of their own ability which then make them to become great people.

There are many people who were born with physical defect, however they give huge contribution to the world. They are taking a part in science, sport, art, and many other fields. They show that they have the ability to become great people by maximizing their capability and optimizing what they have. These people have the desire to live their life and they have the instinct to live. In real life, those kinds of people exist.

Nick Vujicic, an Australian motivator who was born with tetra-amelia syndrome, a rare disorder (called phocomelia) characterized by the absence of arms and legs. However, he maximizes his potency and shows the world that he can be a writer and motivator. The other example is Stephen Hawking, he is one of the most well-known physicists in the world. He got many achievements though he was diagnosed with ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis) at 21. he only speaks with the assistance of a computer and has been a full time powerchair-user since the 1980's. Another example of successful disabled-person is Hellen Keller. She is an activist, writer and lecturer from America. She was born deaf and blind. Her story was famously portrayed in the play and film. She has wrote 12 books which have been published.

The story about the successful disabled people also can be found in the literary works. Those kinds of people have been inspiring other people to write the novel, poem, and other literary works. One of the literary work is the novel *Out of My Mind* (2010) by Sharon M. Draper.

This study analyzes the issue of maximizing the competence which refers to the action of young girl with Cerebral Palsy. She has the unique ways to



maximize her competence which is interesting to be discussed. Her strong commitment plays the big role in conquering the challenges of getting the equality and being accepted by society. Through the main character, the novel makes people realize that the people with physical defect actually have gigantic power lies in themselves which needs to be explored.

## **1.2 Cerebral Palsy**

Cerebral Palsy (CP) is a group permanent movement disorders that appear in nearly childhood. This disorder makes someone has problem in moving and speaking due to stiff muscles or weak muscle. According to Merriam-Webster dictionary (2018), Cerebral Palsy is a disability resulting from damage to the brain before, during, or shortly after birth and outwardly manifested by muscular incoordination and speech disturbance. While according to Jones in his journal *Cerbral Palsy: Introduction and Diagnosis* (2006), Cerebral Palsy (CP) is defined as a static, nonprogressive disorder caused by brain insult or injury during pregnancy or after birth. He also stated that Cerebral Palsy is not a disease. It is actually a term used to describe a range of condition that typically cause physical impairment. Clearly, Cerebral Palsy is a disorder that disables people to move and speak which is brought since the birth, while the brain grows normally. Someone who has cerebral palsy needs special education program.

Moreover, Jones stated in *Cerbral Palsy: Introduction and Diagnosis* (2006), cerebral palsy is permanent. The injury and damage to the brain cannot be healed. The brain does not heal as other parts of the body. Because of this, the Cerebral

Palsy itself will not change for better or worse during a person's lifetime. Briefly, the people with Cerebral Palsy need the support of the society, especially family for their lifetime, so that they can maximize their competence.

### **1.3 Maximizing the Competence**

There are 2 words need to be explained in this study: *maximizing* and *competence*. According to Merriam-Webster (2018) *maximizing* means to increase (something) as much as possible. While *competence* is defined as the ability to do something well.

In this analysis, *maximizing the competence* refers to the actions done by a character, an eleven years old girl with physical defect to reach the equality with normal people. The character is maximizing her competence in two ways: by participating in competition and in social life.

### **1.4 A Brief Description of Author's Biography**

Sharon Mills Draper was born in Cleveland, Ohio, August 21, 1948. She is a daughter of Victor D. Mills (a hotel manager) and Catherine (an administrative assistant). She is the eldest of three children in her family. She married Larry E. Draper (an educator) and has 4 children: Wendy, Damon, Crystal, Cory. In an interview Draper explained that she was surrounded by books since she was little. She credits her parents for introducing her to the world of book. Her mother used to read stories, poems, fairytales, and nursery rhymes to Draper and her siblings



from the time they were very young. She has loved the literary works of Langston Hughes, Robert Frost, and Shakespeare since fifth grade. Draper attended Pepperdine University as a National Merit scholar, majoring in English. Upon graduation in 1971, she returned to Ohio where she married and assumed a teaching position in the Cincinnati Public Schools. Her many years teaching public school has given her some definite ideas on the reading habits of teens.

Draper has written few novels, they are *Tears of a Tiger* (1994), *Forged by Fire* (1997), *Romiette and Julio* (1999), *Jazzimagination* (1999), *Darkness before Dawn* (2001), *Double Dutch* (2002), *The Battle of Jericho* (2003), *Copper Sun* (2006), *November Blues* (2007), *Fire from the Rock* (2007), *Sassy: Little Sister Is Not My Name* (2009), and *Just Another Hero* (2009), and *Out of My Mind* (2010).

Draper has got many achievements and awards. Her first prize, Ebony Literary Contest was in 1991, for short story *One Small Torch*. In 2004, Draper received her third Coretta Scott King Award for *The Battle of Jericho* (2003), Best Book for Young Adults designation, ALA, Best Books designation, Midwest regional winner, National Council of Negro Women Excellence in Teaching Award (1996), Ohio Governor's Educational Leadership Award (1996), NAACP Image Award nomination, and Ohioana Award for Young Adult Literature. Her other novel which got Coretta Scott King Award is *Copper Sun* (2006) in 2007.

In an interview, she said that she tends to write the novels for young adults cause of her profession as a teacher. It can be seen from the novels that she has written. According to an essayist St. James in *Guide to Young-Adult Writers*:

"Draper's works address the problems African Americans face in a predominantly white society, specifically stereotyping of black males. They also examine the dynamics of African American families and communities. Her fiction is energetic and intense, as characters become self aware and attain emotional growth. She often creates mystery plots as a means for characters to be introspective and explore their identities. She sets her books in Cincinnati where she lives and teaches, suggesting a familiarity with her characters and community that enhances their realism." (Encyclopedia.com, 2006).

As an Africa-American, she tends to write the novels which characterized by Blacks and people who have self-awareness. Her experience as a teacher also gives the important contribution in writing the novels for young adult.

### **1.5 *Out of My Mind* (2010)**

The novel *Out of My Mind* (2010), written by Sharon M. Draper, reflects the issue of maximizing the competence. Maximizing the competence in this analysis refers to the action done by a character, Melody Brooks, an eleven years old girl who was diagnosed with cerebral palsy to use all of her efforts in order to reach the equality with normal people. Cerebral palsy is a disease that causes someone have problem in moving and speaking. The character is an elementary school student who studies in normal school but in different class which is aimed for special students who need it. She is brilliant, however her mind is stuck in her stiff body. She is the smartest student in her school. Her brilliant is proven by participating in a Whiz Kid competition which is shown in TV and she won it. She also has a positive thinking that she does not hate her classmates though they give her discouragement and bully her. She proves that she deserves to join the class and make friends with the other classmates. The character is maximizing her competence in two ways: by participating in competition and in social life.



The character maximizes her competence by participating in competition. She does all of her efforts to convince the teacher to register her name in that competition. She fills her mind with the commitment that she can do it although she is dragged down and underestimated. She studies every night with her neighbor. She is trying hard to win the competition.

The character maximizes her competence by participating in social life. She has self-confidence. She participates in class actively. She makes friends. She behaves friendly to her friends and does not even hate the people who underestimate her.

## **1.6 Problem of the Study**

Maximizing the competence emerged as an important issue in novel *Out of My Mind* (2010) by Sharon M. Draper. Therefore, there are some research questions that give contribution to reveal the issue of maximizing the competence in this novel. Those are:

1. How far does the protagonist in novel *Out of My Mind* (2010) expose the issue about maximizing the competence?

2. To what extend do setting and plot (conflict) in novel *Out of My Mind* (2010) contribute in revealing the issue of maximizing the competence?

## **1.7 Purpose of the Study**

This study is aimed to seek how far the novel *Out of My Mind* (2010) by Sharon M. Draper exposed maximizing the competence. Hereafter, it is conducted to figure out the role of the main character, setting, and plot in the novel revealing the issue of maximizing the competence.

## 1.8 Previous Study

The analysis of *Out of My Mind* (2010) by Sharon M. Draper focuses on analyzing about maximizing the competence. At least there are two articles that analyze about the same novel. These two articles give contribution and inspiration in analyzing this novel. First, the article entitled *Children's Literature Book Talk: Out of My Mind by Sharon M. Draper* (2013) by A. E. Butler, a Children's Librarian in Muhlenberg Library. Second, the article written by Micola Magdalena, entitled *Out of My Mind Symbols, Allegory and Motifs* (2018).

The first article focused on analyzing the point of view and main character of the novel *Out of My Mind* (2010). *Out of My Mind* creates a succinct portrait of life from Melody's point of view. Butler writes that the author of the novel does not present the protagonist in a way that evokes pity, though there are some emotional moments. The result of the analysis is that the defect of the main character is only physically, not mentally. There is an amazing power that lies in people with 'disability'.

Another article entitled *Out of My Mind Symbols, Allegory and Motifs* (2018) by Micola Magdalena. This work focused on analyzing the symbol, allegory and the motif to reveal the novel *Out of My Mind* (2018) by Sharon M. Draper. Magdalena divides her works in three subtopics. First, protective mother, the analysis shows how important the role of the family in growing the confidence of a disabled child. Second, ignoring the disabled, this article show that there are many people still do not realize that disabled people actually have power in



themselves. The last one is symbol for the helplessness, the disabled people are treated in a special manner. The result of the analysis is the society tends to treat the disabled-people differently. This distinction only makes it harder for the disabled children to be able to act like normal children in a normal environment.

Both of the studies above give contribution and inspiration to the topic maximizing the competence to reveal the novel *Out of My Mind* (2010) by Sharon M. Draper. Unlike the previous studies, this study adds setting and plot beside the character to reveal the issue of maximizing the competence.

## **1.9 Theoretical Framework**

The analysis of the novel deals with the concept of the life instinct and self-awareness. The concept of the life instinct in this analysis is related to the psychoanalysis theory developed by Sigmund Freud in Solomon's journal *Eros-Thanatos: A Modification of Freudian Instinct Theory in the Light of Torah Teaching* (1974). Freud's basic thoughts retain a strong hold on the shaping of views regarding the theory of the human mind. His theory is psychopathologies that results in mental illness within the human mind is about human desires. Moreover, Solomon states that human desires are related to human instincts. Those instincts are divided into two kinds of instincts which are life instinct (Eros) and death instinct (Thanatos). Furthermore, Solomon (1974) states:

“Conceived as demands by the body upon the mind, the instinct were eventually grouped by Freud under two rubrics, life and death. The former he named, in the philosophic tradition, *Eros*, for the Greek god of love. Though he never formally gave a name to the death instinct, other writers have dubbed it *Thanatos*, for the Greek mythological personification of death” (page 90)

The quotation above, explains that the instinct are divided into two: life instinct (*Eros*) and death instinct (*Thanatos*). *Eros* is related to love, cooperation, and other prosocial actions. While *Thanatos* is the opposite of *Eros*, it is more primitive, it is expressed as aggression and violence.

Moreover, life instinct (*Eros*) is associated with positive emotions of love and social behaviour, cooperation, collaboration, and other behaviour that support harmonious societies. Life instinct thus appears as basic needs for health, safety, and through sexual drives. It seeks both to preserve and to create life. While *Thanatos* is associated with negative emotions such as fear, hate, and anger which lead to anti-social acts from bullying even to murder as projection of the death drive.

The protagonist in this analysis is a young disabled girl who has good life instincts. Although she is a disabled person, she has positive emotion. It can be seen through the way she reacts to her friends who bully her. Her social behaviour can be seen through her effort to make friends, communicate in her own way, and become friendly to all people despite of her limitation. She struggles to create a harmonious life for herself. In order to get a harmonious life, she needs to have self-awareness.

Self-awareness also plays the important role in creating the good life instinct (*eros*). According to Crisp and Turner (2010), self-awareness is a psychological state in which people aware of their traits, feelings, and behaviour. Self-awareness also can be defined as the realization of oneself as an individual

entity. They add that self-awareness as a state of radical self-honesty regarding by human values, priorities, and identities. It is needed to increase human self-actualization.

People who have self-awareness will be able to choose the best choice for their life. People who develop self-awareness will be more realize of themselves as human being. It gives human clear perceptions of their personality including strengths, weaknesses, thoughts, beliefs, motivations, and emotions. By developing the self-awareness, people will know their ability and the potency that lies in themselves. In this analysis, the protagonist has the self-awareness. She is aware about her ability. Through participating the competition, she shows that she is not different from others. She has self-confidence and potency to compete. She wants to prove that she only has disability physically, but not mentally.

The analysis of this novel is supported by text and context based interpretation. Text based interpretation is done by exposing the fictional devices of the text itself. Guerin (2005:64) says that this approach focuses on the analysis and the interpretation of the text itself. Meanwhile, context based interpretation means that the analysis of the novel is not only focused on the text itself, but also involved the phenomenon that really happens in the real world. The most influential movement is literally history which is divided literary phenomenon into its period, describes the text and examines their mutual influence.

The process of analyzing the novel uses fictional devices. The first fictional devices is the analysis of the character in novel *Out f My Mind* (2010) that become the crucial thing in revealing the topic. Abrams (2009:420) says

characters are the persons represented in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the reader as possessing particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities by inferences from what the persons say and their distinctive ways of saying it- and from what they do-the action. The characters are portrayed through speech, description, and commentary. Meanwhile, according to Corner (2009:79) character may defined as verbal representation of human being. In literary works, the characters help reader to understand and catch the meaning of the works. The principal of the characters are not enough about the good side and bad side. In addition, reading about characters in literature, look beyond circumstance and appearance, and determine what these things show about character. In this novel, the character shows the strong commitment and self-confidence. She maximizes her competence through participating in competition and in social life.

The second device which is used in this analysis is plot. Plot is sequence of events for the things that happen in the story. Guerin (2005:8) states that plot is conflict. There are two kinds of conflicts. They are internal conflict which occurs within a character and external conflict which occurs between two or more characters or a character and environment. In this analysis, the main character faces internal and external conflicts. The internal conflict happens since she realizes that she has disability that makes her different from others. While the external conflict emerges when her friends and teacher are difficult to accept her as the normal person. She is treated differently. The conflicts give contribution in identifying and examining the analysis about maximizing the competence.



The last device is setting. Setting is not only about time and place taken in the story. It is also strongly related to situation, condition, and atmosphere or mood, which refers to an enveloping or presenting emotional texture within a character. According to Barnet and Cain (2003:135) setting includes not only the physical surrounding but a point or several points in time. The background against which we see the characters and the happening may be specified. It probably is part of the story's meaning, perhaps providing an ironic contrast or perhaps exerting an influence on the characters. Endriga (2003:85) says that setting has a way of drawing the reader into a piece of literature while facilitating understanding of the characters and their actions. In this analysis, the settings refers to the situation of being bullied, however the character releases the conflict by showing her knowledge and ability. Most of her friends do not accept her in a normal class. She does her best to be accepted in it by showing her knowledge in class. She convinces her teacher to register her name in a competition. This is the important way to analyze the maximizing the competence.

### **1.10 Methodology**

The analysis of the novel *Out of My Mind* (2010) by Sharon M. Draper is done through text and context-based interpretation. It is done by analyzing some parts of fictional devices, such as characters, plot (conflict), and setting. Character and setting are used to show the way to maximize the competence by analyzing character's reaction towards the conflict. Then, the setting deals with the circumstances and atmosphere. It gives contribution in process of analysis by

giving help in revealing the meaning. This analysis dealing with the psychological theory by Sigmund Freud. It gives contribution in process of analysis by giving help in revealing the meaning.