

## **JESSE'S PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE NOVEL *MY SISTER KEEPER* BY JODI PICOULT (2004)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research identified about the stages of Jesse's psychosocial development and the kind of factors that changed Jesse as a dynamic character. The method used descriptive qualitative, where the researcher described the stages of psychosocial development views of Jesse character and then tried to find out about the familial conflict that occurred on him. First was early childhood, Jesse was two years old and his personality still good. Second was play age. In this stage, Jesse changed his personality, because of the different treatment by his parents that he was yelled by his parents. Third was school age, Jesse was five until eleven years old. He did some rebellion to get attention from his parents, for example; revoked his teeth by using a fork and tried to suicide. Fourth was adolescent, it was the climax of Jesse's character, between the age of twelve to eighteen years old; Jesse performed some bad behaviors or risky behaviors. He did smoking, consuming drugs, stealing, and having obsession with fire. He did all of them, because he depressed with many conflict in his family. In the last stage was middle adulthood, Jesse was taken care again by his parents.

**Keywords:** character, psychosocial, psychosocial development, familial conflict

### **ABSTRAK**

*Penelitian ini mengidentifikasi tahap dari perkembangan psikososial Jesse dan jenis dari faktor yang mengubah jesse menjadi karakter dinamik. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskripsi kualitatif, dimana peneliti mendeskripsikan tahap dari perkembangan psikologi Jesse dan mencoba mencari masalah yang mengganggu. Pertama adalah tahap anak usia dini, Jesse berumur 2 tahun dan psikologinya tetap baik. Kedua adalah tahap bermain. Pada tahap ini Jesse mengubah personalitinya, karena perubahan perlakuan yang diberikan orangtuanya yang membentakinya. Ketiga adalah tahap sekolah, Jesse berumur 5 sampai 11 tahun. Jesse melakukan banyak pemberontakan untuk mendapat perhatian dari orangtuanya, contohnya; ia mencabut giginya menggunakan garpu. Keempat adalah tahap remaja, ini adalah puncak dari permasalahan Jesse diumur 12 -18 tahun. Jesse menunjukkan beberapa kesalahan dan kerusakan dirinya. Dia merokok, mengonsumsi narkoba, mencuri dan terobsesi dengan api. Ia melakukan itu semua, karena ia depresi dengan semua masalah dalam keluarganya. Pada tahap terakhir Jesse kembali diberi perhatian oleh orangtuanya.*

**Kata Kunci :** karakter, psikososial, perkembangan psikososial, masalah keluarga

## A. INTRODUCTION

*My Sisters Keeper* was one of wonderful novels that succeeded to impress readers not only in the US, but also all over the world. *My Sisters Keeper* was written by an American author named Jodi Picoult on February 1, 2004. The story was delivered in fiction, but how the writer depicted the story was quite similar to the real life. It told about a story of a family with three children, they were; Jesse, Kate and Anna. Jesse was the first child in the family. Jesse got less attention and always be forgotten, because his parents paid attention fully to Kate. Kate was the second child in the family and she had all attention, because she was having leukemia. The third child was Anna. In the story, Anna was purposely born to help Kate. Anna was donating her bone marrow to Kate, because Anna had similar genetic with Kate. Anna created by IVF program to help Kate still alive. The intriguing conflict of Fitzgerald family was described of how the characters were depicted. The researcher had interest with the development of story line in the novel *My Sisters Keeper*, because of the problem that the family had to deal with, those three children faced different conflict in their life especially one named Jesse. He was one character of Fitzgerald child that was interested to be analyzed. He was exclusive because his characterization changed through the line of the story.

After reading this novel with the intriguing conflict, the researcher thought that this novel was worth to be investigated further. There were three main reasons why this novel interested to be explored; first was the story behind *My Sisters Keeper*. Second was the story described a familial conflict and third was *My Sisters Keeper* as the bestselling novel.

This study used the stages of psychosocial development as the theoretical framework to analyze Jodi Picoult's novel. Based on the aforementioned reasons, the research chose Jesse's character as subject to be analyzed; because the researcher knew although he was a side character, but he also played a significant role as a main character in the novel. He was a dynamic character, because his personality always changed overtime. He had a lovely family in the beginning, so his psychosocial was still good and after his sister had leukemia illness, he got less attention and it continued when his parents had another child for helping his sister. His family became a quite perfect family; Jesse almost being forgotten. He always felt awful, neglected and ignored, so his psychosocial changed him to be a bad child and he did not care about his life such as; driving car with high speed, consuming drugs and alcohol, becoming a thief, and having obsession with fire. In the end of the story, his parent realized about their children was important so they gave more attention to him.

From the research background, there were two questions that also need to be analyzed. First, how are the stages of Jesse's psychosocial development? And then, what kind of factors that changed Jesse to a dynamic character? And the researcher decided two purposes of this research. First was identifying the stages of Jesse's psychosocial development in the novel *My Sister Keeper*. Second was explaining the kind of factor that changed Jesse as a dynamic character.

## **B. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1. Erik Erikson**

Erikson is a Freudian ego-psychosocial, the means that he accepted Freud's ideas as basically correct; the ego is an important thing in a process of human development. Erikson used many society and culture-oriented than most Freudians. Erikson has eight stages of psychosocial development which formulated into psychosocial development theory. The eight stages of Erikson are followed by infancy, early childhood, play age, school age, adolescence, young adult, adulthood and maturity.

The researcher chooses Erik Erikson's theory, because the theory has more specific theory of psychosocial development. The theory was compatible with the issue that researcher brought about identity crisis which happened in Jesse's character. The researcher chooses Jesse as subject in this research, because the researcher thought even though he was not a main character in the novel *My Sisters Keeper*, but Jesse played a significant role in the story; for example the impact of his parents treatment that gradually changed along with the problem that his family had and the researcher thought this problem was also needed to be analyzed.

#### **a. Infant**

This stage started from age birth to 1 ½ years old. In this age, the baby started from birth to walking. The baby activity are sleeping, crying and eating. This stage also called the Oral-sensory; because the baby always put everything into her or his mouth. In this case, mother as a significant relation is an important figure of infant's psychosocial development. The mother gives attention and love to their child. The result of this stage is the feeling trust versus mistrust. If this stage is well passed, the baby will grow up with feels trust. Otherwise, if this stage failed, the baby will grow up with feels mistrust. The baby effect can be seen that the world is a place full of disappointment and frustration.

#### **b. Early Childhood**

This stage consisted of age 1 ½ until 3 years old. In this age, the child learns skill for herself or himself. The child learns how to walk, eat and speak. This stage also calls the anal-sensory, because the child learns the first skill, for example toilet training. In this case, parent is a significant relation of early childhood. The psychosocial result feels autonomy versus shame and doubt. In this stage, the child learns about self-esteem and autonomy in development of the ability control parts of the body and begins to understand about right and wrong. In this stage, the child braves to say "no". If a parent can resolve this stage, the child can get willpower and self-control. Otherwise, if the child failed in this stage the effect are shame, doubt and loss of confidence.

#### **c. Play Age**

This stage started from age 3 to 5 years old. The child begins to explore her or his mind and play. In this age called golden age, because the child will develop a good memory that can be remembered for a lifetime. The psychosocial result is feeling initiative versus guilt. The child develops her psychosocial (initiative), for example the child usually occupies adult life in games such as; cooking, working, and driving and etc. Family is a significant relation of play age. If this stage failed the child will guilty feeling.

**d. School Age**

This stage started from age 5 to 12 years old. This stage is called latency, because the child will show physical growth without the development of significant mental aspects. The psychosocial result is the feeling industry versus shame and inferiority. In this stage, the child learns the new skill of industry; such as diligence of study, activity, skill and etc. the child developed his or her social context. If this stage fails, the bad effect is incompetence and inferiority. In this case, school and social environment is a significant relation of school age.

**e. Adolescence**

This stage started from age 12 to 18 years old. This stage is also called puberty stage. The psychosocial result was identity versus role confusion. In this stage, a person tried to find her or his identity, fight in social interaction, and moral issue. If this stage fails the effect is a person can be confused. The psychosocial development is philosophy of life. In this stage, a person thinks idealistic and free of conflict. In this case, significant relations are peers, groups and parents must control her or his child.

**f. Young Adulthood**

This stage started from age 18 to 40 years old. In this stage, the basic virtue is affiliation and love. In this case, lover, friend and work connection were a significant relation of young adulthood. The psychosocial result is intimacy versus isolation. The relations are feeling happy and satisfy, in specific about love and friendship. If this stage fails, a person will isolate him or herself.

**g. Middle adulthood**

This stage started from age of 40 until 65 years old. In this case, the basic virtues are production and care. In this case, children and community are a significant relation of middle adulthood. The psychosocial results are generativity versus self absorption or stagnation. The basic virtues are shaping the character and establishing a stable environment. This stage calls generality, because the power are attention from other people and give something society. While a person begins to go out from her or his house. In this stage person must to know about a purpose of his or her life. If this stage fails a person gets self-absorption personality.

**h. Maturity**

This stage is on the age of 65+ years old. The basic virtue in this stage is wisdom. In this case, society and the world are significant relation of psychosocial development. The results of this stage are integrities versus despair. If stages one until seven are succeed, a person gets her or his integrity. But if this stage fails, a person got despair. To sum up, the researcher is using Erikson's theory to analysis the data of this research. The researcher chooses Erik H Erikson's theory, because the researcher used Jesse character as subject to analysis. The character always changed the stages overtime from early childhood until young adult. Erikson's model of psychosocial development was a very significant and meaningful concept to analyze Jesse character. Erikson's developed Freudians' ego of psychoanalysis more clearly. Erikson focused on the adaptive and creative characteristic of the ego, and expanding the notion of the stages of personality development to include the entire lifespan. The psychosocial development always

involved of child rebellion as the primary conflict that changed a character in the story. This research also used the types of rebellion as a factor that influenced Jesse changed his personality as a dynamic character.

## **2. The Types of Rebellion by Arnett**

The researcher used theory of rebellion as factor that changed Jesse in the stages of psychosocial development. It was a theory of rebellion by Jeffrey Jensen Arnett. He explained about the reasons of child's rebellion, especially in the stages of adolescent. Adolescent is a period of heightened of storm and stress. The theory is divided in three keys element that changed a child personality; conflict with parents, mood disruptions and risk behavior (Arnett 319).

### **a. Conflict with Parents**

First, is conflict with parent. In the family, child and parents always have a problem. "A child had a tendency to become rebellious and to resist adult authority" (Arnett 319). In particular, adolescent is a time of conflict with parents is especially high. Conflict between parents and child, when a child experiences a depress mood. The conflict is substantially responsible for perception that child has a difficult time that made him or her stress. The child must receive more attention by parents.

### **b. Mood Disruption**

Second is mood disruption. In this case, child tends to be more volatile emotionally than either child. "Child tried to experience more extreme of mood and more swing of mood from one extreme to others" (Arnett 320). A child also experiences more frequent episodes of depressed mood.

### **c. Risk Behavior**

Third is risk behavior. Adolescent have higher rates of reckless, norm-breaking and antisocial behavior then other child. "Adolescent were more likely to cause disruption of the social order and to engage in behavior that carries the potential for harm to them self and the people around them" (Arnett 321). Risk behavior is the low rebellion than mood disruption and conflict with parents.

In all types of rebellions, some evident was supported a modified storm and stress view that took into account individual different and cultural variations. Jesse was fulfilled of the types of rebellion by Arnett. There were conflict with parents, mood disruption and risk behavior.

## **C. RESEARCH METHODS**

### **1. Research Design**

To classify this research, the researcher used two kinds of the research methods. There were qualitative research and narrative research. The first one is qualitative research. This research used qualitative methods, because this research investigated the words in the novel *My Sisters Keeper*. The second one is narrative research. This study aimed to help people understanding the social world in they lived and why things happened in that way.

## 2. Data and Source of Data

The research used some data such as; words, phrase, clause, sentences and paragraphs in the novel *My Sisters Keeper* that could be seen and identified about the stages of psychosocial development by Erick H Erikson and the kind of factor that changed Jesse to a dynamic character by Arnett.

## 3. Data Collection

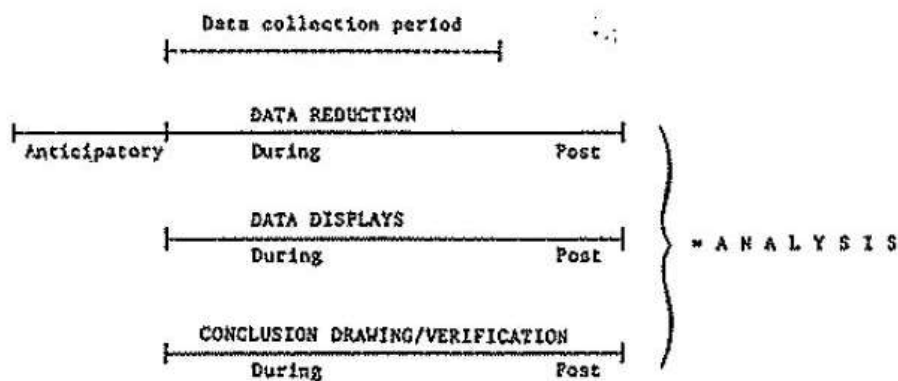
Data collection was conducted by library research, because this research took the document without a record. Library research used some books and other references to support this research. The researcher used some book that related in the theory such as; the anatomy of prose fiction, childhood and society by Erikson and general of psychology. *My Sisters Keeper* novel was taken as the data in this research, the researcher also took translated version of the novel *My Sisters Keeper* to make easy in understanding the story.

## 4. Validity Data

The researcher chooses data triangulation to making this research valid. It was data triangulation that being used to analyze a novel entitles *My Sisters Keeper* by Jody Picoult. This novel was officially published in 2004.

## 5. Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, the researcher made the list of data to collect necessary data to be analyzed in this research. There were three parts to collect data based on Miles and Huberman; data reduction, data display and drawing conclusion.



The first step was reduction. The researcher were selected, focused, simplified and abstracted the raw data. The researcher collected the data of some narrations, dialogues, monologues and the words that explained of action from a character named Jesse, all of the data were selected to be more focus and specific. These data were prepared to answer the research problems about Jesse psychosocial development and factor that changed him to a dynamic character. Second step was displaying the data. The researcher organized some information and mapped the data that are related about a theory psychological development by Erik H Erikson and the kind factor that changed



him to a dynamic character by Arnett. Third step was drawing conclusion, make a decision of data formed after considering the relevant data and evidence.

## 6. Procedure of Data Analysis

The procedure of data analysis followed these steps; first was choose the main source of the research that was the novel *My Sister Keeper* by Jodi Picoult. Second was read the novel *My Sister Keeper* and decided the main issues about psychosocial development and rebellion. Third was deciding Jesse as subject to analysis the main issues. Fourth was taking some theories of psychosocial development by Erik H Erikson and the factors that changed Jesse to a dynamic character by Arnett to get more specific analysis. Fifth was doing library research from journals, articles, dictionaries and literary works. Sixth was undertaking library research by collecting and comprehending the reference which was related in this research in order to gain a better understanding about the issue. Seventh was taking the list of data to collect the necessary data that can be analyzed in this research. Eight was selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming of the raw data. Ninth was displaying the data which collecting, organizing, informing, and mapping the data. Tenth was drawing conclusion to make a decision of data forming after considering the relevant data and evidences.

### D. ANALYSIS

#### 1. Jesse's Stages of Psychological Development

##### a. Early Childhood

As a child, Jesse was surrounded by a loving family. Jesse's psychosocial development seemed to be a normal child, because he always got attention and took care very well by his mother. It can be seen in the data below;

“There is Kate with hair and Kate all bald; **one of Kate as baby sitting on Jesse's lap; one of my mother holding each of them on the edge of a pool.** There are picture of me, too, but not many. I go from infant to about ten years old in one fell swoop” \_Anna p.130

In the data, Jesse had a lovely sister named Kate that she was two years younger than him. In the photo, his sister was slept on Jesse's lap, when she was a baby. It can be concluded that Jesse had a good relation with his sister. In other photo, Jesse and his sister was held by his mother in the swimming pool. Jesse was getting warm response from his mother. In this case, Jesse had a very loving mother named Sara. As another child, he had a great family, because he got a very careful attention by his mother.

##### b. Play Age

Jesse changed his personality, because the problems happened between Jesse and his parents. The problems involved him to fail in this stage. There were one data that explained why Jesse changed his personality development in this age;

“This is happening to us because **I yelled at Jesse last week, yesterday, moments ago.** This is happening because I did not buy Kate the M & Ms she wanted at the grocery store. \_Sara p.29”

In this stage, it was a time to child for playing. As a four years old child, Jesse was yelled by his mother. It happened, because his mother did not buy the game that his sister wanted in the grocery store. In this case, he was yelled by his mother, because his mother vented her emotional to him. Jesse had bad effect of psychosocial development, because his mother gave bad treatment to him. In this age, Jesse had great hurt, because his mother yelled him many times.

### c. School Age

Jesse was neglected every time by his parent, he grow up as a depressed child. He felt alone, because of his parents did not give him attention as before. It can be seen in the data below;

“I would up that day at the middle of an intersection, smack under the traffic light, with taxis honking and a car swerving off to the left and a pair of cops running to keep me from getting killed. At the police station, when my dad came to get me, he asked what the hell I would be thinking.”

**“I had not been thinking, actually. I was just trying to get to a place where I would be noticed.”** \_Jesse p.247

The data explained that Jesse was being desperate. He walked out a few hours from his house in Upper Darby to the middle of downtown providence. He walked through the business district and people passed right by him. He continued to walk by a long wall of mirrored glass on the side of building, where he could see himself, but no matter how many faces that he made in a long time, none of people around him said anything. Finally he walked in the middle of an intersection, smacked under the traffic light to get a place where he would be noticed. In this case, he was forgotten child in his family, so he kept doing the wrong things to get attention of another people.

### d. Adolescent

The last stage, Anna was not the only one that knew about Jesse trouble, but his father also knew about Jesse’s problem. It can be seen in the data below;

“I take the carving utensils and slice into the roast beef just as Jesse sloughs into the kitchen. We allow him to live over the garage, but he is required to eat with us; it is part of bargain .**His eyes are devil-red; his clothes are ringed with sweet smoke.**”

“I wonder what it say about me, that I am actually thrilled **I can identify pot running through his systems, as opposed to some of the others-Ecstasy, heroin and God knows what else-which leave less of a trace**”.  
\_Brian

“Not all of us enjoy Eau de stoned,” Kate mutters p. 38 \_Brian p.38

In chapter four, Brian told about Jesse entered the kitchen. Brian said that he allowed Jesse to live over garage, but Jesse must eat with us. It was a part of a bargain. The data explained about Jesse was eighteen years old, he became a smoker. His parents knew all about Jesse, but they were not being attentive about it, because they were not having a time to him.



## e. Young Adulthood

Stage of Jesse's psychosocial development was young adulthood; He was twenty-four years old. The basic virtue was affiliation and lovely family. The psychosocial result was intimacy. As a child was taking care again by his parents, Jesse changed to become a good person again. It can be seen in the statement below;

“I wonder if she was at **Jesse's graduation from the police academy, if she knows that he won a citation from the mayor last year for his role in a drug bust.**” \_Kate p.422

The data told by Kate about Jesse changed his personality. In this stage, Jesse passed well again. Jesse became a proud child in his family. He graduated from the police academy. He got a citation from the mayor, because of his role in a drug bust. In this case, Jesse had a significant relation with work connection. It can be seen in the data, when Jesse worked as a policeman and got a citation from the mayor.

## 2. Types of Rebellion

### a. Conflict with parents

One of the potential child behaviors would do in their rebellion, it was conflict with parents. In the play age, Jesse was four years old. He felt that his father gave different treatment between him and his sister (Kate). It can be explained in the data below;

“All done”, Kate announces a few nights later at dinner. Her plate is still full; she has not touched her beans or her meat loaf. She dances off to the living room to play.

“Me too.” Jesse pushes back from the table. “Can I excused?”

Brian spears another mouthful with his fork, “not until you finish everything green.”

“I hate beans.”

“They are not crazy about, either,”

Jesse looks at Kate's plate. “She gets to be finished. **That is not Fair.**” p.68

From the conversation, it was a dinner of Fitzgerald family; there were his parents, Kate and Jesse in the kitchen. As the first child, Jesse changed his personality, because of some problems that he got in his family. The familial conflict began to him, because his parents paid attention fully to his sister. It could be seen, when his sister finished eating without touch anything on her plate and continued to dance in the living room. Jesse followed what his sister did; he finished the dinner with some beans on his plate. Jesse said that he did not like beans, but his father still forced him eat them up.

The data told about the conversation between Jesse and his father. He began to argue with his father. In otherwise, Jesse had the opposite argument with his father. His father acted emotional to Jesse. In the end of the conversation, he was angry with his father and said that his father did not fair. It was one data of the conflict conversations with his father.

### b. Mood Disruption

In the data, Jesse depressed, because Kate had severe illness that it was getting worse. He could not accept the fact that her sister would die. It can be seen in the data below;

“I hurry out of Kate’s room and far enough down the hall where I would not disturb her, and then **I lift my first and punch a hole in the trick white wall** and still this is not enough.” \_Jesse P. 326

In the hospital, Jesse looked his sister condition, the condition was not good. Jesse was upset about it; he went out from the room and vented his emotional in the white wall. It was classified of Jesse’s mood disruption. It could be seen when his sister condition did not good in hospital. He stressed and tried to punch a hole in the trick white wall. The data could be classified in mood disruption, because Jesse vented his emotional to the wall in the hospital.

### **c. Risk Behavior**

Adolescent stages were the climax stage of Jesse’s rebellion and almost risk behavior. Jesse’s risk behavior not only knew by Anna, but his father also knew about it that could be described in the data below;

“His eyes are devil-red; his clothes are ringed with sweet smoke. wonder what it say about me, that I am actually thrilled I can identify pot running through his systems, as opposed to some of the others- Ecstasy, heroin and God knows what else-which leave less of a trace.” \_Brian p. 38

It was a data in chapter five. His father explained about Jesse’s risk behavior. He said that he knew about Jesse was smoking, because his eyes was red which smell of smoke in his clothes. Jesse also consumed drugs (Ecstasy, heroin and etc), but he did not do anything.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

The researcher drew a conclusion from the analysis of psychosocial development and the factor that changed Jesse to be a dynamic character. First, the researcher found that five stages of Jesse’s psychosocial development. Jesse always changed his personality in every stage. The stages were influenced of the treatment that his parents gave to him. And then, some rebellion behaviors of Jesse toward each character in the novel *My Sisters Keeper* had important roles in the factor that always changed Jesse’s personality. Finally, Jesse’s rebellion made his parents realize that was important to get attention with their child.

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