My Sister’s Keeper

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In the film, *My Sister’s Keeper*, ethics and morality are the central themes which are presented in layered texts and contextual settings. These two also enjoy a significant niche as topics of discourse in the domains of philosophy. The focus of the narrative revolves around the ethics and morality of the lawyers, the Fitzgerald family, and the hospital staff. Tensions playing out in the family as a result of practicing different codes of ethics mainly comprise the plot of the film and in this paper, deeper attention would be paid to the entire idea of feminine morality and the greater good.

My Sister’s Keeper is a story that poses many questions: what should be the line when it comes to choices? What determines whether a decision is right or wrong? What should be the end of family sacrifice, love, and moral obligations? Is it moral to create a child so that his organs and vital body parts can be donated to another child or his / her ailing sibling?

In the movie, the protagonist, Anna, sues her parents, Sarah and Brian because they primarily forced her to take medical decisions that did not involve her consent. Anna’s elder sister, Kate battled with Leukemia for most of her life and after all the family members tested negative for a bone marrow transplant match for Kate, a genetically matched embryo was created and implanted into Sarah’s womb, which resulted in Anna’s birth. In a short span of 13 years, Anna has already gone through multiple injuries and bore numerous needle pricks in repeated attempts of blood donation to her sister. Anna and Kate’s parents displayed extra-ordinary concern for their elder daughter and in this process, the emotions and desires of Anna went into the backdrop. Years passed and continual suffering at the hands of doctors and physicians led Anna to sue her parents with the help of a lawyer Campbell Alexander. The story concludes with Anna dying in a road crash while her organs are transplanted to Kate.

The first example which indicates an ethical issue is the existence of Anna. She was borne based on the idea of a savior sibling which is highly questionable as far as ethics are concerned. Does the primary question interrogate whether it is ethical for a doctor to suggest genetically engineered reproduction in an attempt to save another’s life? In the film, Anna’s parents nearly maltreated the genetic diagnosis and the process of preimplantation. They conceived a child so that it could only serve to be a donor. This shows that the initial intentions were crammed with devaluating and lowering the quality of life of Anna. According to the ethics of care, no one can doubt the intentions of parents, but one should also think about the emotional traumas and contradicting pressures faced by the savior siblings (Michailidou, 2019). This film catalyzes this debate with much rigor and makes the audiences think about the inherent nature of ethics and morality in medicine and how it changes with time and circumstances. One of the central objects of heated debates is the controversy of using science and the medical advancement of creating a ‘designer baby’, which implies that physical traits of the baby are selected by the parents. The creation of Anna was intended by Sara and Brian to save Kate. The categorical imperative advocated by Kant clearly maintains that it is totally wrong to use a person as a means to an end (Walker, 2017). The movie reflects upon the different actions of Sara and Brian and there are many ways to gauge the righteousness of their actions.

The second example comprises the rights of the savior sibling in the movie, Anna. As it turns out, Anna sues her parents and claims that she has been denied rights on her body. Early in the movie, Anna hires an attorney as her entire existence is used as a means to an end. It is this state of affairs when towards the end, the court trial reveals that Kate persuaded Anna to seek legal emancipation. This instance indicates feminine morality exhibited by Kate as she didn’t want to get in the way of Anna’s desires and life ambitions. Theorists, David Hume and Jeremy Bentham, maintain that human beings do everything in order to maximize their pleasure but Kate’s action directs the readers and audience towards feminine morality (Raz, 2017). By keeping Kate’s secret, Anna faces a lot of backlash specifically from her mother but this is the true affirmation of Anna’s virtuosity. In the eyes of the reader, Anna becomes a martyr and even after winning the case against her parents, Anna dies on her way to the hospital where Kate is still admitted. Anna did not want to sacrifice her body when she was alive but she was sacrificed all the same.

The third example which fully points towards utilitarianism is Kate’s choice to accept the fatality of her disease and die. Any believer of utilitarianism would assert that Anna should not be concerned with further medical procedures of Kate because Kate wants to die. As almost all the characters in the movie wanted Kate to be happy, therefore, a utilitarian can probe into the underlying wishes and desires of Kate. As the plot unfolded, Kate also said that she believes Anna’s death was her fault. To preserve every living memory of Anna, Kate works as a dance teacher and feels that Anna is a part of her.

# References

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