

CHAPTER THREE

CONCLUSION

After analysing the social conflicts in Comfort Woman, I come to the conclusion that the social conflicts in this novel are very important. They deserve to be analysed because they are realistically presented; conflicts between husband and wife as well as conflicts between mothers and daughters frequently happen in real life. People who socialize may occasionally have conflicts with one another.

The conflicts between the protagonist, Akiko, and Richard Bradley, her husband, are likely to happen in real life, especially because they have different beliefs. In Christianity, there is only one God. Christian people believe that Jesus Christ himself is God. People with Shamanistic belief, however, do not believe in the almighty God; they have their own gods; “ Sansin is a mountain god, Samsin Halmoni is a birth spirit, Taesin Halmoni is a great spirit of grandmother, Yongwang is a dragon king, Sinchungdang is a guardian spirit” (<http://www.koreasociety.org/>). Since Christianity is totally different from Shaman, it is very likely for Christian people to have conflicts with Shamanists, especially when they try to convert Shamanists to Christianity. Conflicts caused by religious differences actually become a factual topic that is frequently discussed nowadays. Akiko’s conflict with her

husband concerning the umbilical cords is also realistically presented. American people are known to be more modern; they tend to believe in medical science more than superstition. For Akiko, who is a Shamanist, the umbilical cords represent something that should not be separated from the baby because she believes that such a separation will cut off their spiritual ties. On the other hand, her husband, who is more rational, thinks the separation is intended to prevent the baby from infection. It is obvious that the novelist wants to present the fact that the western way of thinking, which is more rational, cannot co-exist with the eastern way of thinking, which is regarded to be superstitious.

The novelist also presents the conflict between Akiko and her husband through two different cultures. It is undoubtedly logical for Richard to sing American songs because as a man who was born and grew up in America, he is more accustomed to western songs. Likewise, there is nothing wrong for Akiko to pacify the crying baby by singing Korean songs. Conflicts that occur between two different cultures are common in life; therefore, I think the cultural conflicts between Akiko and her husband are appropriate.

The conflicts between Akiko and Beccah, her daughter, are also mostly caused by Akiko's Shamanistic belief. As a girl who was born and grew up in the United States, Beccah represents the younger generation of immigrants. Being formally educated in the American way, she must have a very different religious

viewpoint. In spite of the fact that it is not mentioned whether she is a Christian by religion, I think like most American people, she may not be interested in Shamanistic belief, let alone practising the Shamanistic rituals.

Akiko has a conflict with Beccah about the food the latter eats. She also has a conflict with Beccah when Beccah tells her a lie about going on a study tour. These two conflicts are related to Akiko's belief in *sal*, the evil spirit that she believes in her 'religion'. It is obvious that Akiko's conflicts with Beccah are essentially caused by Akiko's Shamanistic belief.

Akiko's conflict with Beccah's schoolmates is also basically caused by Akiko's Shamanistic belief. In spite of being mocked by Beccah's schoolmates, Akiko insists on performing Shamanistic rituals which also embarrasses Beccah.

I personally believe that it does not matter for Akiko to believe in Shamanism. I think her husband should not force her to convert to Christianity because having a certain belief or religion is one of the basic human rights. Moreover, Akiko should not impose her belief on Beccah since such an action may cause conflicts.