

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CONCLUSION

Having analyzed the social conflicts in The Bonesetter's Daughter and Meridian, I would like to draw my conclusion. Although both pairs of mother and daughter in the two novels come from different background, I can see that the social conflicts happen to both pairs. The causes of the conflicts might be different and the resolutions to their conflicts also vary but nonetheless, clashes between mothers and daughters happen to both the Chinese and African American pairs.

In The Bonesetter's Daughter, one of the social conflicts that happens between Ruth and Luling is about Ruth's diary. She hides her diary, because she does not want her mother to know she does activities which are the opposite of the Chinese values that she grows up with. In the Chinese culture a daughter is supposed to obey her mother although the mother is "old fashioned" and what she says does not suit the daughter's will. It is contradictory to the social conflict in Meridian, which is about Meridian's sexual relationship. As a black American teenager, Meridian seems to be more outspoken in expressing her disagreement towards her mother's opinion. She does not need a diary with secret codes to pour out her feelings but she can openly speak to her mother about what she wants.

Another prominent conflict in The Bonesetter's Daughter is when Ruth as a teenager wants to rebel against her mother by learning to smoke. This conflict is not resolved clearly, because Ruth and her mother do not talk to each other. Moreover, Ruth acts cowardly by hiding her cigarettes from her mother. It is contradictory to the social conflict in Meridian, when Meridian begins to join the Civil Rights Movement. This conflict is resolved clearly, because Meridian and her mother argue with each other. As a daughter, Meridian dares to voice her opinion, although her mother is against Meridian's idea to join the movement.

Although some conflicts seem to be contradictory, there are similarities between the social conflicts in The Bonesetter's Daughter and Meridian. Both pairs have a conflict about the daughter's social life. In The Bonesetter's Daughter Luling forbids Ruth to befriend a girl named Teresa, because she considers this girl will bring bad influence towards her daughter. It is similar with the social conflict in Meridian in which Mrs. Hill forbids Meridian to befriend with Delores Jones, an old playmate of Meridian's who is also a movement worker, for the same reason.

Both Ruth and Meridian like their friends so much. Yet, in the end they are separated with their friends. However, the conflicts are resolved differently. Ruth keeps away from Teresa because her mother forces her; on the other hand, Meridian is separated from Delores when she accepts the scholarship. Anyway, both of them break their friendships and lose contact with their friends.

Another similarity is the conflict about the priority in life. In The Bonesetter's Daughter Ruth is busy with her job but her mother does not like it. It

is because Luling considers that the family means so much. In Chinese culture, although the daughter is already married, they must stick to their family. While in Meridian, Mrs. Hill objects to Meridian's taking the scholarship to Saxon College. She disagrees with her daughter, because she thinks that Meridian should not abandon her son. Mrs. Hill wants to emphasize that the family is more important than her education.

Although Luling and Mrs. Hill come from different cultures, but their idea about family issues is the same. As mothers, they want to remind their daughters that family is the most important thing. Yet, their children have different priorities. Ruth is busy with her career, while Meridian wants to continue her education.

In my opinion, the social conflicts depicted in the two novels are realistic and can happen in our daily life. I can see from both pairs of mothers and daughters, that their conflicts are familiar in real life. As mothers, Luling and Mrs. Hill want to do the best for their children. However, their good intentions are sometimes rejected by the daughters. Thus, as children they rebel against their mothers to show their anger. I believe the key to solve this kind of conflicts is good communication between the parents and their children. If the mothers and daughters can speak openly to each other and show mutual respect and understanding, I think most of the conflicts can be solved satisfactorily.