

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the two novels, I conclude that there are some similarities and differences that can be found in the novels. Both Pei, the protagonist in Gail Tsukiyama's Women of the Silk, and Lily, the protagonist in Lisa See's Snow Flower and the Secret Fan, live in the Chinese culture and society. Lily and Pei are daughters of poor Chinese families. In both novels, daughters in Chinese families are not considered as precious as sons are.

Daughters have to leave their natal family to live with the husbands. As a result, daughters seem to be just visitors in their natal family. Daughters are considered a burden to the family in both novels. Pei's parents think Pei is too curious and it will make it difficult for them if they have a curious daughter. It is better for the Chinese parents to have an obedient daughter than a curious one like Pei. Thus, she is sold by her father to the silk factory; on the other hand, Lily is sacrificed to have her feet bound as her asset to marry a rich man. There is another similarity, that is, obedience. Lily does not complain about her parents' decision for her, because she knows that she is expected to do everything her parents say. But their characteristics

of being obedient develop in different ways.

Lily is submissive because she gives respect to the parents. Her submissiveness refers to the Chinese society and tradition. Pei is obedient because she has no power as a female at that time. Pei's obedience changes when she gets older and interacts with her friends who are independent women at the silk factory, as their thoughts are more modern than those of the women outside the factory.

Regarding the difference between Lily's and Pei's characteristics, Lily's characteristics mostly change after she marries. Her status gives her a better position to make some decisions. It makes Lily arrogant and ambitious. However, Pei's characteristics change after she lives in the silk factory, because of the influence of most of her friends in the silk factory. Her curiosity also makes her become critical. She cannot accept everything easily; she always asks about things until she gets a satisfactory explanation.

I think in her novel Snow Flower and the Secret Fan Lisa See wants to convey that one cannot leave family rules and cultural traditions behind, although one has a better position in the family. One's social status cannot change the traditions and culture. In this novel, Lily is an example of this case. Even though her social status changes to be better, she still has to change her characteristics and behavior to be suitable for her new position, and submit to her family and culture.

On the other hand, Gail Tsukiyama shows in Women of the Silk that Pei, as the protagonist of this novel, at first has experienced pressure from her family to control her behavior and her characteristics to be 'proper; according to the family's mindset. Next, she moves to the working women's society and there her

characteristics improve because she chooses to be free. Tsukiyama wants to convey that although the society can insist on changing someone's characteristics in accordance with the norms, as happened with Pei here, it depends on the person's choice. The way Lily changes to have her freedom is only by having a better position and by behaving according to the standards of her status. On the other hand, Pei does not the other way round because she was not taught to act properly but as the way she is, but the society teach her to decide her own decision to be free or not from the rules.

I find and conclude from the two novels that society influences human characteristics. Nowadays, what happened to Lily and Pei still happens and the pressure from family and society still form one's characteristics. I find that the purpose of both the authors is to show that society has a big part in influencing someone's characteristic. Lily cannot go against her family and society. Lily sees that nobody in her life chooses to go against the rules and tradition, but they all follow the norms. I learn from this novel that there are two different choices in our lives. A person can be stuck in the culture and take a better position to survive in it, or a person can free herself from it and not rely anymore on the society's norms. Besides that after reading and analyzing the novels, I also believe that women need an appreciation and avowal from the society so they can live better and be equal to men.