

## CHAPTER THREE

### CONCLUSION

After analyzing the portrayal of Lily Melissa Owens of Sue Monk Kidd's *The Secret Life of Bees*, I would like to draw some conclusions. After Lily's characteristics develop in a positive way, she becomes a better person at the end of the story.

Lily's development is influenced by the absence and the existence of guidance, acceptance and encouragement in her community. In the novel, there are two communities that Lily lives with. The first one is the community in Sylvan, South Carolina, consisting of her father, Terrence Ray Owens, and her peers in school. The second one is the community in Tiburon, South Carolina, where Lily lives after she runs away from her house in Sylvan. The community in Tiburon is an African-American community, consisting of August Boatwright, the Daughters of Mary and Zachary Lincoln Taylor.

Lily does not get guidance, acceptance and encouragement from her father and her peers. Without the guidance on human's imperfection, Lily becomes a naïve person who cannot accept and understand her mother's imperfection. Lily also

becomes a remorseful person who does not know how to overcome her regret for being the cause of her mother's death.

Lily never gets acceptance from her father and her peers in school. Without acceptance from them, Lily cannot acknowledge her own value which makes her become an insecure person. She shows insecurity about her looks and about being herself in the community.

Moreover, Lily does not get encouragement to stand for herself, especially when she is treated inconsiderately by her father. As a result, she becomes a compliant person. She is being compliant not only toward her father's abuses at home but also to the bullying that she receives from her peers.

In Tiburon, Lily gets acquainted with a new community, consists of August, the Daughters of Mary and Zach. Lily receives guidance from August about human's imperfection and about uselessness of regret so that she becomes wiser about her view on her mother's imperfection and on dealing with her regret. Lily finally decides to forgive her mother for leaving her in the past and forgive herself for being the cause of her mother's death.

Lily also gets acceptance from the Daughters of Mary and Zach. They value Lily as a part of their lives. Acknowledging her value in others' lives, Lily gets confidence on herself so that she becomes secure about both her appearance and about being herself in the community.

In addition, Lily gets encouragement from August to stand up for herself when she is treated inconsiderately by others. Therefore, she becomes in compliant. The fact that she is able to make her own choice and also ready to face the consequence, shows that she becomes in compliant. Guidance, acceptance and

encouragement that Lily receives from August, the Daughters of Mary and Zach have made Lily's characteristics able to develop in a positive way.

Through the portrayal of Lily and her development, I conclude that Kidd wants to show the reader not only the importance of guidance, acceptance and encouragement to develop one's characteristics but also role of community in building one's characteristics. Community is important in one's development in consideration that humans are social creatures who live in a community and interact regularly with each other. They learn about life mostly from their communities, especially for young people like the protagonist who does not have much experience in life and still rely on other people in shaping her perspectives. This is why community has an important role in building one's characteristics.

Both communities in the novel consist of parents and peers. Parents do not necessarily have to be biological father and mother. They can be elder people who are capable of being a parental figure for someone. From the protagonist's both communities, I find that Kidd considers parents and peers as people who have the most influence in shaping young people's characteristic. Parents should be role model for their children. Good communication is also needed so that parents are able to guide and encourage their children as August does to Lily. Peers also have important role in shaping people's behavior. Most of young people spend their time with their peers while they are outside their home. Lily learns about how she has to act when she is together with her peers in order to get acceptance from them. From the novel, I get that peers have to respect each other's differences so that each person is able to act the way he or she is.