A STUDY OF SYMBOLS IN SUE MONK KIDD'S

*THE SECRET LIFE OF BEES*

A SARJANA PENDIDIKAN THESIS

Presented as Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
to Obtain the Sarjana Pendidikan Degree
in English Language Education

By
Theresia Riya Vernalita Herwanti
Student Number : 101214169

ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM
DEPARTEMENT OF LANGUAGE AND ARTS EDUCATION
FACULTY OF TEACHERS TRAINING AND EDUCATION
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A S r j a n a  P e n d i d i k a n  T h e s i s  o n

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By
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January 9, 2015
A Sarjana Pendidikan Thesis on

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Defended before the Board of Examiners
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Faculty of Teachers Training and Education
Sanata Dharma University
Dean

Rohandi, Ph.D.
THIS THESIS IS DEDICATED TO:

JESUS CHRIST
MY BELOVED FATHER AND MOTHER
MY DEAREST SISTER AND BROTHERS
MY LOVELY BOYFRIEND
MY BEST FRIEND
AND MYSELF

....even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.

(1 Corinthians 10:33)
STATEMENT OF WORK’S ORIGINALITY

I honestly declare that this paper, which I have written, does not contain the work or parts of the work of other people, except those cited in the quotations and the references, as a scientific paper should.

Yogyakarta, 22 January 2015

The writer,

Theresia Riya Vernalita Herwanti
101214169
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Theresia Riya Vernalita Herwanti
ABSTRACT


Sue Monk Kidd’s The Secret Life of Bees is a novel that tells about the life struggle of an adolescent girl, Lily Melissa Owens, in finding the truth of her mother’s death and finding true love in a family. The novel is completed by the epigraphs about bees that are related with human characters. The novel also conveys some symbols which help to deliver the theme.

There are two research problems in this study: (1) What are the symbols in Sue Monk Kidd’s The Secret Life of Bees? (2) What are the meanings of the symbols in Sue Monk Kidd’s The Secret Life of Bees?

The researcher applied library research as the method of the study. It is used to answer the research problems in the study. The primary source of the study was The Secret Life of Bees. The secondary sources were all journals, internet sources, and books which are related with the study. The formalist approach and the theory of symbols were used as the basis of the study.

There are two major symbols found in the novel. The first one is bees. The symbols of bees appear from the epigraphs and also within the story. The bees which appear in epigraphs symbolize motherly character, love and sincerity through August’s character and also as the representative of queen bee. It shows about the ability of August in spreading love and being a mother with sincerity. Bees in the epigraphs also symbolize community works through August’s family, Lily and Zack’s character as the representative of honeybees. It shows how the traits of honeybees also appear in the characters by drawing the life cycle of honeybees in the characters. Bees which appear within the story symbolize Deborah. It shows how the presence of Deborah guides Lily in finding the truth and the true love. Bees which appear within the story also symbolize blessing since it has a role as the “real” insect and influences the character’s life. The second one is Black Madonna which symbolizes enlightenment and magnetic power. It is because the role of Black Madonna as a sign for Lily’s journey and also creates the spirit of character’s life. Symbols in the novel represent the special meaning from the content of the story. Symbols also become clear emphasis in conveying the theme of the novel.

The Secret Life of Bees can also be analyzed by using socio-cultural theory since race discrimination happens in the story. The novel conveys some values within the novel which are relevant to the reality. They are about crisis of mother and children development and also about life skills and spiritual education.

Keywords: symbols, epigraph, theme, The Secret Life of Bees
ABSTRAK


Ada dua rumusan masalah dalam penelitian ini: (1) Apakah simbol yang ada di dalam The Secret Life of Bees? (2) Apakah arti dari simbol-simbol yang ada ada pada The Secret Life of Bees karya Sue Monk Kidd?


Simbol pada novel menggambarkan arti istimewa dari isi cerita. Simbol juga menjadi penenkan yang jelas untuk menyampaikan tema pada novel.


Kata kunci: symbol, epigraph, theme, The Secret Life of Bees.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of five parts. They are background of the study, problem formulation, objective of the study, benefits of the study, and definition of terms. Background of the study explains how the literature exists in this work, the information of the novel, and the reason why the researcher chooses this novel as the subject of the research. The problem formulation presents the problems that are analyzed in the novel. The objective of the study describes the aims of the study. The benefits of the study emphasize on how study can be beneficial for the reader and the next researcher. The definition of terms clarifies the concepts and terms used to avoid misunderstanding.

A. Background of the Study

There are some definitions that define what literature is. The first definition comes from Roberts and Jacobs (1987). They state that "technically, anything spoken or written may be called literature" (p. 1). However, anything spoken and written does not mean things that we expect as literary work. Roberts and Jacobs (1987) emphasize that literary work can interest, entertain, stimulate, broaden, or ennoble us. For example, we cannot judge that memos or announcements are literary works, although they can be in spoken and written forms. It is also supported by Roberts and Jacobs (1987) that state “literary works invite our emotional and intellectual involvement and response” (p. 1). Literature,
according to Roberts and Jacobs (1987) "helps us grow, both personally and intellectually" (p.2). Literature connects us to a lot of cultural contexts, even from societies that have never been known before. According to Roberts and Jacobs (1987), see that "great literature can shape our goals and values by helping us clarify our own identities, both positively, through identification with the admirable in human life, and negatively, through rejection of the sinister" (p. 2). It means that literature also can help us to differentiate the good and the bad one in our life. It also can affect our emotions to have the feelings of hope, fear, sympathy, regret, and interest. In reading literature, Roberts and Jacobs (1987) state "when you read, you depend only on your own effort and imagination" (p. 2). It means that there are no elements that support us to illustrate our reading. The elements here refer to actors, settings, photographic or musical techniques which support our visualization of the writer's idea. However, people can enjoy reading that great works of literature. It is convinced by Roberts and Jacobs (1987) that people can enjoy the reading because they cannot define goals and ideals easily.

According to Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedia of Literature (1995), literature is "writing in prose or verse; especially, writings having excellence of form or expression and presenting ideas of permanent or universal interest" (p. 686). According Roberts and Jacobs (1967), based on the genres, literature is classified into some parts. They classify imaginative literature into three parts. There are prose fiction, poetry, and drama. Roberts and Jacobs (1987), in varying degrees, "all the genres are dramatic and imaginative: they have at least some degree of action or are based in part on a dramatic situation" (p.3). Imaginative
literature can be in a form of textbooks, historical and biographical works, or new articles. It relates to the truths of human life or base upon situations that may never happen. Roberts and Jacobs (1987) also emphasize “the truth of literature is true to life and human nature, not necessarily to the world of historical and scientific facts.” (p.3). Novel is one form of prose fiction or narrative fiction.

Sue Monk Kidd's *The Secret Life of Bees* is part of literature in a form of prose fiction or narrative fiction. The writer creates the story based on her imagination and also her life experience. For example, in this novel the writer imagines about Lily's character. Here, she also puts her experience when she was child. She tells to the reader that Lily wants to go to charm school. Charm school here is part of Kidd's dream because at that time charm school was like a ticket to get popularity. Honeybees that live in a bedroom also part of her life experience because it also happens in her life. Therefore, from her experience as a young girl at that time, she tries to combine her experience with her imagination. Roberts and Jacobs (1987) see that prose fiction or narrative fiction "generally focus on one or a few major characters who undergo some kind of change as they meet other characters or deal with problems or difficulties in their lives" (p.3). It happens in Sue Monk Kidd’s *The Secret Life of Bees*. The story shows how Lily as the main character faces all her problems. She has to live with her father who has a high temperament. Not only that, she also struggles in finding the truth of her mother's death.

*The Secret Life of Bees* is the first novel of Sue Monk Kidd. She reaches a good achievement because her first novel stays more than one hundred weeks on
the New York Times bestseller list. It is sold more than four million copies. *The Secret Life of Bees* also has some achievements. It is chosen as the 2004 Book Sense Paperback Book of the Year and Good Morning America's "Read This" Book Club pick. Another evidence that *The Secret Life of Bees* was written by a talented writer is the Literature of Life award presented by The American Place Theatre to Sue Monk Kidd. *The Secret Life of Bees* tells about the struggle of an adolescent, Lily Melissa Owens. She struggles in finding the truth of her mother's death. In the other hand the author also wants to emphasize about the power of women around her who are struggling in facing life and spreading love. She shows the importance of woman’s role and the power of woman to make her and the people around her live their life. The author also tries to serve something different in this novel. She can create unique package by the appearance of "bees" as epigraph in every chapter. She draws “bees” as character that gives particular value and also represents another character.

*The Secret Life of Bees* is worth studying because: (1) the story can be included as a motivational story, (2) the characters and the conflicts make the reader curious, (3) the story is inspiring a lot especially for woman, (4) the novel represents of two different cultures.

The study of symbols in Sue Monk Kidd's *The Secret Life of Bees* is quite challenging. The author gives some clues by using the characteristics of bees, but the whole cycle of the story is played by human characters. It means the author has a special purpose in delivering her story. One of the ways is by presenting symbols. Symbol can be interpreted differently. The interpretation between the
author and readers can be different, but it is allowed. It is in line with Roberts and Jacobs (1987), when we read the story then it depends on our own effort and imagination. For example, rainbow can be interpreted as a symbol of the happiness after sadness, but it is also possible if the readers have different interpretations on the meaning of rainbow.

Therefore, studying symbols in The Secret Life of Bees become more challenging, like digging out the mystery of the story. This study intends to identify the symbols of Sue Monk Kidd’s The Secret Life of Bees and reveal the meanings of the symbols in relation with the theme. In reading The Secret Life of Bees as one of literary works, the subjectivity of the reader can also be explored freely. The studying of symbol is also intended to build deeper understanding from the object of the study.

B. Problem Formulation

The research problems are formulated as follows:

1. What are the symbols related to the theme in Sue Monk Kidd's The Secret Life of Bees?
2. What are the meanings of the symbols in Sue Monk Kidd's The Secret Life of Bees?
C. Objective of the Study

This study aims to reveal the symbols in Sue Monk Kidd's *The Secret Life of Bees* and also to find the meaning of each symbol in Sue Monk Kidd's *The Secret Life of Bees*.

D. Benefits of the Study

There are some benefits in studying symbols of Sue Monk Kidd's *The Secret Life of Bees*. The first one is for the future researcher. This study can be one of the references to the future research. The second one is for the readers. The readers can criticize the study and relate with their life experience. The third one is for *Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris (PBI)* students in Sanata Dharma University. They can also learn how to interpret symbol and relate with their life. This study can also be the material in reading class as reflective reading. The teacher candidate and student can reflect from the story.

E. Definition of Terms

In this section, some key terms are defined to clarify the concepts and used to avoid misunderstanding.

**Symbol**

In this study, Williams and Addison (2004) define symbol as "something that is itself and also stands for something else" (p. 539). According to *Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedia of Literature* (1995), symbol is "something that stands for or suggests something else by reason of relationship, association,
convention, or accidental resemblance; especially, a visible sign of something invisible” (p. 1085). In this study, I analyze the symbols related to the theme. I also complete this study not only by finding the definition of symbol but also by analyzing the types of symbol, the function of symbol and also the way to interpret the symbol.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter consists of a review of related studies, review of related theory and theoretical framework. I review all the studies which had been analyzed before. Then I continue with some theories which are related with the study in the review of related theory. For the last, I explain how to elaborate the theories for analyzing the novel.

A. Review of Related Studies

In the following studies on The Secret Life of Bees, I review two selected studies. The first study was conducted by Ike Wahyuningsih (2008) from English Language Education Study Program. The study entitled The Influence of Minor Characters on Lily’s Personality Development in Sue Monk Kidd’s The Secret Life of Bees. The study aimed to see how Lily’s personality develops as a result of minor characteristic influence. She used library study as the method of study. She also applied criticism, theories of characters and characterization, critical approach, personality development, and adolescence to complete her study. The analysis showed August and Zach as the minor characters on influencing Lily’s personality. Lily became mature enough to process her guilty feeling, anger, and confusion. She implemented the study as reading material in Extensive Reading Class.
The research conducted by Benedicta Novena Sheila Putri (2010) from English Letters Department was similar to the first study conducted by Wahyuningsih. The study entitled The Influence of Environment on Lily’s Personality Development in Sue Monk Kidd’s *The Secret Life of Bees*. The study aimed to know the improvement of Lily’s personality by analyzing the characteristic of Lily Melissa Owens, characteristic of minor characters, improvement of Lily’s character after getting the influence of minor characters. She applied library study. She also used characters and characterization theory, and psychoanalytic theory. The analysis showed that T. Ray, August, Rosaleen, and Zach as minor characters influence Lily’s personality. Not only that, the analysis also showed the change of Lily’s personality. Lily became extrovert person, more confident, and also calm in facing her problem.

B. Review of Related Theory

There are some theories and approach for guiding the study. The theory of formalist approach guides the study to identify the symbol. The theory of symbol completes to find the symbol and define the meaning of each symbol.

1. Theory of Formalist Approach

According to Guerin (2011), in the formalist approach we have to be alert to “form”. The understanding of “form” here is not only at the structure but also some clues in recognizing of “form”. He emphasizes appreciating form then we have to start from the sensitivity to the words of the text and also all the denotative, connotative values, and implications. The study begins from seeing on
the words and the meaning to looking for structural relationship. Guerin (2011) explains the following:

Form becomes much more than sentence patterns; it becomes the relationship of stanzas in a poem, or interplay of an octave and a sestet in a sonnet. It becomes the tone or mood that the text builds, and possibly the shifting and alternating moods. It becomes the sequence of plot elements, even episodes in a narrative, or the text juxtaposition of scenes in a play. (p.74)

The form here has larger sense than as sentence pattern only. In a narrative, form becomes a part in the episodes. He says that form “become the relationship between the teller of the narrative and the hearer, possibly the ambiguity of the teller’s version of the story” (p. 75). However, the important sense here is the reader’s response of the structure of the text. He also explains that the reader’s response here means the meaning is found in reader’s imaginative interaction with what is presented by the author. Guerin (2011), formalist also distinguishes between the organic and merely external form. It is also supported with his statement that symbol may remain within the work, as it were; but it is the nature of symbol with extensional possibilities. It has the purpose to open out the meaning beyond the art of objective itself.

Based on Klarer (1999), formalism emphasizes on the intrinsic aspects of a literary work that makes itself different from older traditions. It ignores some points that usually can be analyzed in some other views. It does not look at historical, sociological, biographical, or physiological dimension of literary discourse.
2. Theory of Symbol
   
a. Definition of Symbol

   There are some definitions about symbol. According to Roberts and Jacobs (1987), symbol is "one of modes in literary expression that arranged to reach the meaning" (p. 279). They mention in some types of literature, a symbol usually can be in a form of "a person, thing, place, action, situation, or even thought" (p.279). They also describe that "in literature a symbol pulls or draws together (1) a specific thing (2) ideas, values, persons, or ways of life, in a direct relationship that otherwise would not be apparent" (p.279). Again, according to Roberts and Jacob (1987), the definition of symbol is defined as "a symbol might also be regarded as a substitute for the elements being signified, much as the flag stands for the ideals of the nation" (p.279). The symbol has its reality or meaning that function at the normal level of story's reality. Guerin (2004) says that symbol is a way of using something integral to the work to reach beyond the work and engage the world value outside the work. It might be an incident that takes on meaning, such as the apparent happenstance of events in a naturalistic writer like Thomas Hardy; it might be conventional object or device-a crux, a color, a tree-that becomes symbolic of meanings within and without the poem, story, or play (p.106). According to Kennedy and Gioia (2007), symbol is an object that delivers beyond the literal meaning but the appearance is not bold and blunt.

   Based on Abrams and Harpham (2012), in the broadest sense, a symbol "is anything which signifies something else; in this sense all words are symbols" (p. 393). He realizes that in discussing literature, "symbol is applied only to a word or
phrase that signifies an object or event which in its turn signifies something, or suggests a range of reference, beyond itself” (p. 394).

b. **Characteristic of Symbol**

The characteristic of symbol is important in recognizing something as a symbol. Kennedy and Gioia (1999) mention how we recognize an object as a symbol in a literary work. They say “Fortunately, the storyteller often gives the symbol particular emphasis.” (p. 219). The storyteller puts an object in any particular position, moment or situation. For example, the writer puts the symbol as a part of a title. Not only that, the writer also puts the object repeatedly in some important events.

According to Stanton (1965), symbols have three usual effects in a literary work which depends on how it is used. First, a symbol that appears in an important moment emphasizes the significance of that moment itself. Second, a symbol that repeats in several times shows us the consistency element in the story. Third, a symbol that repeats in varying contexts can help clarifying the theme. He says “The same symbol may function in those all three ways” (p.32). He also mentions some clue in seeing something as a symbol. Stanton (1965) said, “The usual clues that a detail is symbolic is that it is conspicuous for some reason other than its factual importance” (p. 32). He gives an example that it may be conspicuous because it repeats or resembles a certain or other details. In the other hand, details may be conspicuous if they contrast one another.

Kennedy and Gioia (2007) inform the way we tell a particular object in a literary work.
If an object appears time and again or is tied inextricably to the story’s events, it’s likely to suggest something beyond itself. When an object, an action, or a place has emotional or intellectual power beyond its literal importance then it is a genuine symbol” to recognize the existence of the symbol. In addition “symbols in fiction are not generally abstract terms such as love or truth, but are likely to be perceptible objects or worded descriptions that cause us to imagine them”(p.230)

They tell that we have to pay attention if an object appears repeatedly in some events. They emphasize that symbol is not always in a form of abstracts term, but it can be in a form of object that becomes a role in imagining them and encouraging our emotional more than the literal meaning.

c. Types of Symbol

Edgar (2009) divides the kind of symbol into two types. First is cultural symbol. It is mentioned as a universal symbol. Cultural symbol elaborates the ideas and emotions between the reader and the writer to be the result of their social and cultural heritage. It means that an object or an event has invested with associations, such as flags or religious objects. He explains more "When using these symbols, a writer does not have to take the time to invest the objects or people with symbolic resonance within the story; she or he can simply assume that the reader knows what the symbol represents" (p. 280). The second types of symbol may be termed as a private symbol. It is also mentioned as authorial or contextual symbol. This type of symbol gets the symbolic meaning from the context of the specific work of fiction not from the historical, cultural, or the religious ground. What we need here is to make decision based on our judgment of its total significance. Then, to determine something as a symbol or not, we have to make a decision based on our judgment of its total meaning.
Almost similar to Edgar (2009), Arp and Johnson (2009) emphasize the types of symbol that happen in a literary work. First, a symbol will fit so naturally into the literal context that their symbolic value will not at first be apparent except to the most perceptive reader. It means that the symbol can be noticed easily by the reader. Second, a symbol with a less realistic surface—they will be so central and so obvious that they will demand symbolical interpretation if it is to the yield significant meaning. Then the presence of symbol should be analyzed by personal interpretation.

d. The Ways of Interpreting the Symbol

Actually, we can consider some ways in finding and interpreting symbol. Arp and Johnson (2009) say "Reader should always be alert for symbolic meaning but should observe the cautions" (p. 289). Therefore, they add some cautions here. The first one is the story should add the clue and the detail of something to be taken symbolically. They explain that “Symbols nearly always signal their existence by emphasis, repetition, or position” (p. 290). It means that we have to consider about that signals to decide whether or not it is a symbol. The second one is the meaning of a literary symbol should be supported by the context of the story. Therefore, the symbol cannot have the meaning out from the story. In the other hand, it is supported by its relation to other references within the story. The third one is the object must suggest more than its literal meaning. Then, the last one is a symbol may have more than one meaning.

In interpreting the meaning, Guerin (2011) emphasizes that there is no symbol which has an absolute meaning. It is caused by the freedom of the reader
in interpreting the meaning by their own ability. Roberts and Jacobs (1987) say, "if it appears to be a major importance, you can claim it has symbolic value as long as you can show its scope and sustained reference beyond itself" (p. 281). They add, "Objects and description that are not universally recognized as symbols can be developed as symbols only within an individual work" (p. 280).

e. **Function of Symbol**

Stanton (1965) says that symbol can be used as a picture or the illustration of reality in literature. It is line with his statement that emphasizes concrete symbol with the factual details can evoke ideas and emotions in the reader's mind.

According to Arp and Johnson (2009), symbol becomes one of the tools for writers to compress the meaning. The writers need to say as much as possible, but the symbol becomes one of tools to make what the writers say become more effective. Most of talented writers can compress the meaning by selecting words and details carefully to maximize the effectiveness.

Then, symbol can be used in varying degrees. Varying degree here means the ability of giving different sense from one meaning into the other meaning. Still, according to Arp and Johnson (2009), symbol is "a way to depart from the strict adherence to factual language and representation of the kind a journalist uses, for instance, in writing a newspaper story" (p. 284). They also emphasize that by modifying and the enhancing of story with the realistic even reality, it can be more meaningful, increase the emotional and also reach the larger meaning.

Kennedy and Gioia (2007) explain the reason why the writers have to symbolize. They mention that one advantage of the symbol is “is so compact, and
yet so fully laden” (p. 218). They emphasize more that symbols say more fully and memorably than could be said, perhaps, in a long essay on the subject.

C. **Theoretical Framework**

The study begins with answering the research questions. First, the question is about the symbols in Sue Monk Kidd’s *The Secret Life of Bees*. Second, the question is about the significance of the symbols.

The formalist approach emphasizes in identifying symbols from content of the text. As termed from Guerin and Klarer, this study focuses on the intrinsic and the element of the novel. The theories which are termed from Roberts and Jacobs, Guerin, Kennedy and Gioia, Abrams and Harpam tell consist of the definition of symbols consistently. It is used to identify the object which appears as the symbol and decide whether or not it is a symbol. The theories from Kennedy and Gioia, and Stanton which deliver about some characteristic of the symbol strengthen in deciding the object as the symbol. Edgar, Arp and Jhonson deliver about the types of the symbol. It used to analyze how the author puts the object as the symbol in the novel. It strengthens the ways in identifying object which appears as a symbol. The ways of interpreting the symbol is important in this study. The theory from Arp and Johnson, Guerin, and Roberts and Jacobs explain about how to interpret the meaning of each symbol which appears in this study. The theories which deliver about the function of the symbol also strengthen how the study brings the benefit for the reader. The theories are explained from Stanton, Arp and Johnson, and Kennedy and Gioia.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Methodology is a tool to achieve the objective of the study. This chapter consists of four parts. First, object of the study which tells about the issue to be discussed. Second, approach of the study which is used in the study. Third, method of the study explains the steps in conducting the study.

A. Object of the Study

The object of the study is a novel entitled *The Secret Life of Bees*. *The Secret Life of Bees* was first published in the United States of America by Viking Penguin, a member of Penguin Putnam Inc. 2002. The novel consists of fourteen chapters in 549 pages.

*The Secret Life of Bees* spent more than one hundred weeks on the New York Times bestseller list. The novel also has sold more than four million copies. It was chosen as the 2004 Book Sense Paperback Book of the Year and Good Morning America's "Read This!" Book Club pick, and was recipient of the inaugural Literature of Life Award presented by The American Place Theatre. Sue Monk Kidd is also the author of several acclaimed memoirs and the recipient of numerous literary awards, including Poets and Writers award.

The novel tells about the life journey and the struggle of Lily Owens as an adolescence in finding the truth of her mother's death. Lily Owens as the main character on the story draws as a curious, smart, and critical person. She grows up...
as a beautiful young girl that lives with her father and her housekeeper. Actually, Lily realizes about the unusual situation in her life cycle. What she really needs is a role of a mother because her father cannot cover it well. That is why she struggles to find the truth of her mother’s death. She only has a blurred-memory about the fighting of her parents and a shot when she was four years old. On the other hand, Lily also has some signs the truth and the answer of what her life needs.

As the story unfolds, she decides to go away from her house with her housekeeper while she brings her mother’s equipments. In the middle of their journey, Lily looks for some bottles of honey that have a logo. The logo is Black Madonna. She asks who produce this honey because that logo is like a sign from her mother's equipment. After she gets the information, she goes to the producers and asks her to live in her house for a while. After Lily finds the house and meets the producer, she is allowed to live in that family. The family is very kind-hearted. She lives with May, August and June. Lily learns so many things there. She finds the figure of mother from August, May, and June. Actually, what Lily needs is there. She finds the truth of her mother and loves from a mother role. Her emotion is up and down because she has to receive all the fact that she is a child who shot her mother at that time. August is the key of that truth because her role as Deborah’s nanny who has a close relation. Not only that, the struggle of Lily still going on. She has to face T. Ray, who finally knows about her new place. Suddenly, T. Ray knows where Lily lives. T. Ray forbids Lily to live with those
three black-skinned women. He forces Lily to back home. However, at the end of the story Lily may live in Pink House. She gets what she needs there.

B. Approach of the Study

In this study I use the formalist approach in analyzing the object of this study. The using of formalist approach is the most suitable one in identifying the symbols in Sue Monk Kidd’s *The Secret Life of Bees*. Guerin (2011) states that formalist abandons historical and biographical information. He says that “formalist focuses on the text as a discrete object” (p.121). It also looks for the relationship of form in a literary work. This approach also allows the reader’s imagination in interpreting the meaning as the interaction of between the reader’s view and what the writer presents. Therefore, the formalist approach is the most suitable approach since it focuses on the text and the interpretation of the reader’s view.

C. Method of the Study

In this study, I applied library research to conduct the study. Gorge (2008) states that library research involves identifying and locating sources. The identifying and the sources here mean the expert opinion on a research question. Therefore, I also used some sources to complete this research. The sources were classified into primary source and secondary source. The primary source here is the novel entitled *The Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kidd. The primary source was main base for the researcher needs. The secondary source here is some books
and articles that are related with the study. The secondary source supported the first primary source to make the study more convincing.

There are some steps in library study. The first step started with reading the novel. I read the novel repeatedly because it helps a lot in understanding and imagining the story. After that I continued with choosing the topic. I was interested in collecting the words, expressions, sentences, things, signs and also the phenomena that happened in the story. Then, I decided to do brainstorming before I formulated down research questions.

The second step was to read information from related references. It helped to find the theory of literature that is suitable with the study. The information from articles, books, dictionaries and also encyclopedia that are related with the study gathered to support the explanation of symbol.

Reading and analyzing the novel were the third step in the research. Reading carefully was important thing to clarify and accurate the data with the study. Finding the theory became crucial because in that part the theory could answer the problem formulation or not. The theory should be relevant to answer the research problems.

The last step was to summarize all the findings in the conclusion. All explanations served with description. It was caused by the study that used the formalist approach so that the study was a qualitative study.
CHAPTER IV
ANALYSIS

This chapter consists of two parts. First is the identification of the symbols which appear in Sue Monk Kidd’s *The Secret Life of Bees*. The identification of symbol is completed by some theories which connect with the definition of symbol, characteristic of symbol and types of symbol. Second is about the meanings of the symbols related to the theme in Sue Monk Kidd’s *The Secret Life of Bees*. It is also completed by some of the theories which connect with interpreting the symbol, and the function of symbol. The analysis is also supported by the reasonable interpretation and evidence whether they give special strength from *The Secret Life of Bees* in the analysis.

A. **Identification of the Symbols**

There are two symbols that are related to the theme in Sue Monk Kidd’s *The Secret Life of Bees*. The first symbol is bees. The second symbol is Black Madonna.

1. **Bees as the Symbols**

   The bees appear in the novel as symbols because of these following reasons. First, bees appear repeatedly throughout the novel. In Sue Monk Kidd’s *The Secret Life of Bees*, bees appear as some epigraphs in every chapter of the story. According to Cambridge Dictionary, epigraph is “a saying or a part of a poem, play or book put at the beginning of writing to give the reader some idea of
what the piece is about”. The epigraphs here become series of words which contain particular values. The use of bees in every chapter means the author has a special intention when using bees in delivering the story. It is in line with Guerin (2011) that the form becomes part of episodes in a narrative. The author uses the character of bees, but the story tells about human life. The author tells about the characteristic of bees in epigraphs. The epigraph opens each chapter and tells a certain character and life cycle. This shows that the author has a certain purpose in using the epigraph.

Second, the bees appear in a particular emphasis. As mentioned previously, Kennedy and Gioia (1999) state that “fortunately, the storyteller often gives the symbol particular emphasis.” (p.219). It means that the storyteller or the author is able to put an object as a symbol by presenting it in any particular part or incident in the novel. In *The Secret Life of Bees*, the author puts bees as part of the title. It means that the author has a specific purpose in emphasizing bees as the title in *The Secret Life of Bees*. Bees also appear in a particular moment especially when Lily has a particular feeling or thought.

The bees came the summer of 1964, the summer I turned fourteen and my life went spinning off into a whole new orbit, and I mean whole new orbit. Looking back on it now, I want to say the bees were sent to me. I want to say they showed up like the angel Gabriel appearing to the Virgin Mary, setting evensin motion I could never have guessed. I know it is presumptuous to compare my small life to hers, but I have reason to believe she wouldn’t mind; I will get to that. Right now it’s enough to say that despite everything that happened that summer, I remain tender toward the bees. (p.21-22)

That feeling and thought come up when Lily grows up as adolescence. The bees appear when Lily is fourteen years old. The author really has intention in using
bees when Lily has the ability to respond the presence of bees as a sign. That sign becomes the beginning of Lily’s journey in finding the truth of mother’s death.

Third, bees have more than its literal meaning. The presence of bees as the title and epigraphs also represent that bees come up to show more than its literal meaning. However, bees also take a part in the cycle of the story as the “real bees”.

August kept 48 hives strewn through the woods around the pink house, and another 280 were parcelled out on various farms, in river yards and upland swamps. The farmers loved her bees, thanks to all the pollinating they did, how they made watermelons redder and the cucumbers bigger. They would have welcomed her bees for free, but August paid every one of them with five gallons of honey. (p.172-173)

The epigraph tells that August as one of characters in the novel also have the “real bees”. It shows that “real bees” also take a part in the life cycle of the character. As the insects, the “real bees” come up and show that it has more than its literal meaning because it affect the character’s life.

2. Black Madonna as a Symbol

The using of Black Madonna in the novel can be identified as one of symbols in The Secret Life of Bees. The Black Madonna does not only stand for as an image of the Mother of Jesus, but also has a special meaning around character’s life. The following explanations are the reasons why Black Madonna is a symbol.

First, Black Madonna appears repeatedly throughout the novel. As the figure of motherly character, Black Madonna is admirable character. Black Madonna appears repeatedly in some events that relate with the characters’ life.
The author also has special intention in employing Black Madonna in the novel. It shows in the influence of Black Madonna in Lily and August’s family life.

Second, Black Madonna appears in particular moments. In this part, the using of Black Madonna as a sign for Lily as the main character also has a particular emphasis. The sign appears as the picture which Lily gets from Deborah and also as the label in the Black Madonna honey jar. Black Madonna honey is the honey which is made by August. Lily learns from that clue until she can meet with August. The picture of Black Madonna brings Lily to her new life and hope.

B. The Meaning of Bees and Black Madonna as the Symbols

There are some interpretations of the meaning of the symbols in Sue Monk Kidd’s *The Secret Life of Bees*. First is about the meaning of bees which appears in the epigraphs. Second is about the meaning of bees which appears inside the story. Third is about the meaning of Black Madonna. However, the literal meaning of bees and Black Madonna are important to be the base of understanding of bees and Black Madonna. According to Encarta Webster College Dictionary, bee is “any of numerous hymenopterous insects (superfamily Apoidea) that differ from the related wasps especially in the heavier hairier body and in having sucking as well as chewing mouthparts, that feed on pollen and nectar, and that store both and often also honey” (p.123). According to Psychics Universe article, bee is honey producer. It is a truly industrious creature. However, the bees in *The Secret Life of Bees* appear as symbol and convey the
meaning more than its literal meaning. The following part is the meaning of bees as the symbol in *The Secret Life of Bees*.

1. **The Meaning of Bees in the epigraphs**

   There are two kinds of bees in the epigraphs. The first is about queen of bees. The second is about honeybees.

   a. **Queen of Bees**

      First, queen of bees symbolizes a motherly character. It is in line with Arp and Johnson (2009) who emphasize that interpreting a symbol is considered nearly the signal in emphasis, repetition, and position. In this section, the author connects the epigraph with the story and also the character in each chapter. The queen of bees contains a signal from the author as emphasis, repetition, and position. Therefore, the queen of bees also refers to August’s character.

      According to O’Reilly (2010), a good mother is altruistic, patient, selfless, and happily devoted to nurturing her children without complain. From that understanding, the treats also represent August’s character. She is altruistic since she wants to do something for Lily. The following epigraph is about queen of bees’ trait which can connect with August’s character.

      The queen must produce some substance that attracts the workers and that can be obtained from her only by direct contact. This substance evidently stimulates the normal working behavior in the hive. This chemical messenger has been called “queen substance”. Experiments have shown that the bees obtain it directly from the body of the queen. (p.187).

      In interpreting the symbol, Arp and Johnson (2009) also explain that the meaning of literary symbol should be supported by the context of the story. The epigraph which shows about one of queen of bees’ characteristic can be related
with the context of the story. The epigraph also represents the ability of August in having that kind of “queen substance”.

August had brought in chairs and arranged them in a semicircle facing the wooden statue of Mary. When we were at seated, she lit the candle and June played the cello. We said the Hail Mary together, Queenie and Violet moving strings of wooden beads through their fingers. August stood up and said she was glad me and Rosaleen were with them; then she opened a Bible and read, “And Mary said… Behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things…. He hath scattered the proud… He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.” Laying the Bible in her chair, she said, “It’s been a while since we’ve told the story of Our Lady of Chains, and since we have visitors who’ve never heard the story of our statue, I thought we’d tell it again” One thing I was starting to understand was that August loved to tell a good story. (p.195-196)

August invites Lily to pray together and to share the story from the Bible. Lily never had that kind of activity in her house. August introduces the new situation for Lily and suggests peacefulness in around her. Lily can also feel it and know August more closely. That is how August looks like a real mother. Her motherly character can win Lily’s heart. August realizes that building a close relation is a good beginning to do something good, especially for Lilly. In the other hand, August also has a good ability in doing direct contact with Lily. The direct contact here means physical touch that can influence the emotional relation. August also gives full attention to Lily just like to her own daughter. Lily can also feel that kind of “queen substance“ from August’s direct contact, “You should have seen how August fused over me the rest of evening. You want some root beer, Lily? How about a feather pillow? Here, swallow this spoon of honey.” (p.205). It also shows the motherly character that appears in August’s character. She knows her position and what she should do. The motherly character which
appears in August’s character also appears when she can be the best supporter for Lily.

August stepped closer. She kept the pressure steady against my hand. “All those times your father treated you mean, Our Lady was the voice in you that said, ‘No, I will not bow down to his. I am Lily Melissa Owens, I will not bow down.’ Whether you could hear this voice or not, she was in three saying it.” “When you are ensure of yourself,” she said, “when you start pulling back into doubt an small living, she’s the one inside saying ‘Get up from there and live like the glorious girl you are.’ She is the power inside you, you understand?” Her hands stayed where they were but released their pressure. “And whatever it is that keeps widening your heart, that’s Mary, too, not only the power inside you but the love. And when you get down to it, Lily, that’s the only purpose grand enough for a human life Not just to love—but to persist love.” (p.498-499).

From the quotation above, August tries to hold Lily’s hands as the symbol of giving the peacefulness. She gives the spirit for Lily through sharing her experience and belief in Mother Mary. By giving the spirit for Lily, the motherly character from August’s character becomes more real. The motherly character of August also influences Lily’s life even among the struggle of Lily in facing her burden in her age. August also helps Lily to find her peacefulness. The name of August which means the name of month of summer before spring also represents in August character. The warmness of August also strengthens her motherly character. The motherly character of August also can be more real since Lily feels the presence of August has a big role in her life. She gets what she needs from August which can substitute Deborah’s role as a mother.

The author also tries to show the influence of queen’s trait in honeybees’ life from the epigraph. The author tells that “a queenless colony is a pitiful and melancholy community; there may be a mournful wail or lament from within….” Without intervention, the colony will die. But introduce a new queen and the most
extravagant change takes place.” (p.479). It shows that without a queen, honeybees cannot live. It also draws the importance of a queen’s character in honeybees’ life. The character here can be inferred as motherly character. The quotation below is the evidence of Lily’s reality which shows the importance of mother’s role in Lily’s life.

I watched my reflection not only in the mirror, but in store windows and across the television when it wasn’t like my mother’s but basically a nest of cowlicks, and it worried me that I didn’t have much of chin. I kept thinking I’d grow one the same the same time my breasts came though, what you would call Sophia Loren eyes, but still, even the boys who wore their hair in ducktails dripping with Vitals and carried combs in their shirt pockets didn’t seem attracted to me, and they were considered hard up. Matters below my neck had shaped up, not that I could show off that part. (p.34)

That epigraph is also related with Lily’s life. It starts with Lily’s feeling and thought when she is growing older. She feels that her life is incomplete without a mother’s role in her life. The author shows that Lily grows as an ordinary and plain girl with her beauty. What Lily needs here is guidance from a mother who always takes care and motivates her to be confident. Not only about the physical, Lily also needs a mother’s role to guide her sexual growth.

The oddest things caused me to miss her. Like training bras. Who was I going to ask about that? And who but my mother could’ve understood the magnitude of driving me to junior cheerleader tryouts? I can tell you for certain T-Ray didn’t grasp it. But you know when I missed her the most? The day I was twelve and woke up with the rose-petal stain on my panties. I was so proud of that flower and didn’t have a soul to show it. (p.41)

It shows that a mother’s role is very important especially in a young girl’s life. In that case, the figure of a mother is very important because mother can explain further about sexual education for her daughter. Those evidences lead us to take a look at motherly character in August personality.
After Lily meets August, Lily’s life is really changed. It is also because of the motherly character of August. Lily said, “Look at me. I dived into one absurd thing after another, and here I am in the pink house. I woke up wonder everyday.” (p.518). It is how Lily feels after she decided to live with August. At the beginning, Lily grows as an adolescent girl who has not any guidance from the right person. She feels more alive after she fulfills her needs. Lily says that “I have more than mothers than any eight girls of the street.” (p.522). The relation between August and Lily is very clear. A motherly character that appears from August’s character influences Lily’s life a lot.

Second, queen also draws the ability of spreading love and sincerity. Therefore, the queen of bees which refers to August also symbolizes about love and sincerity. The understanding of love:

Love is patient, love is kind. It does envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres (Holy Bible, 1 Corinthians 13:4-8).

In addition, Macmillan Dictionary notes that sincerity means an honest way of behaving you really mean what you say or do willingly. Those two understandings, the queen of bees which refers to August means love and sincerity since August’s character really appears just like the two understandings, especially for Lily’s life. She can treat Lily like her own daughter and do so many good deeds. Again, August’s character takes a part in the changes of Lily’s character. It is showed from the quotation below.

We walked back to the large room with all the machines. She led me to a column of white boxes stacked one on top of the other. “These are called
supers,” she said, setting one on the floor in front of me and removing the lid. “That’s the uncapper over there, where we take the wax off the comb. Then it goes through the wax melter over here. This is spinner. Go on up there and look in. It separates out the honey. Takes out the bad stuff, leaves in the good. I’ve always thought how nice it would be to have spinners like this for human beings. Just toss them in and let the spinner do its work”. She turned off the motor and humming stopped with a series of ticking sounds. Bending over the brown tube leading from the spinner, she said, “From here it goes into the baffle tank. That’s honey gate, where we fill the buckets. You’ll get the hang of it.” (p. 146-147)

From that evidence, love and sincerity are manifested in August’s action. She is not self-seeking. As the best honey producer in her town, she can share her knowledge and her ability to Lily. She leads Lily to the new experience because she realizes that one day additional skill is very important for her. It means that August also wants to improve Lily’s ability. She cares about Lily’s future. She leads Lily patiently.

b. Honeybees

Honeybees in epigraphs symbolize communal works. It represents through Lily and also the family of August. The communal works here means situation, relation, and relation in a community. One of epigraphs explains that “a honeybee is just over a centimeter long and weighs only about sixty milligrams; nevertheless, she can fly with a load heavier than herself.” (p.446). It is connected with the story which shows about the ability of Lily in facing her reality. The hardest thing that she should receive is about knowing the fact that her mother leaves her for a while after having a dispute with T. Ray. Not only that, she also has to know that the shooter of her mother is herself. It is an accident when her mother comes back to their house and tries to pick her up. However the author also shows Lily as a strong girl just like the honeybees in the epigraphs. She can
control her emotion in the end, “I looked down the picture, then closed my eyes. I figured May must’ve made it to heaven and explained to my mother about the sign I wanted. The one that would let me know I was loved.” (p.478). She can control her emotion well. She let her day and journey flow by stretching it all to God.

Then, the honeybees which symbolize the communal works also represent through May’s character. Based on one of the epigraphs, *The Secret Life of Bees* shows that:

A bee’s life is short. During spring and summer—the most strenuous periods of foraging—a worker bee, as a rule, does not live more than four or five weeks. Threatened by all kinds of dangers during their foraging flights, many workers die before they have reached even that age. (p.333).

Although the bee has so many positive strengths in its life, it also has limitation. This epigraph is representing May’s story. May is the youngest sister of August who dies in a river.

I saw Rosaleen standing ankle deep in the river, her whole body shaking. August knelt down in the water and shoved the stone off May’s chest. Grabbing May by the shoulders, she pulled her up. Her body made an awful sucking sound as it broke the surface. Her head rolled back, and I saw that her mouth was partially open and her teeth were rimmed with mud. River reeds clung to her hair braids. I looked away. I knew then. May was dead. (p.340-341)

From the evidence above, every person has their own time to die. Sometimes death becomes a part of life reality that is difficult to be accepted. Even, may happen to young people. There are two similar things here. First, the epigraph tells that bee’s life is short. Second, as the youngest sister, May’s life is short too. Those situations conclude the existence of mortality in communal works.
Honeybees which symbolize communal works also appear in the Pink House family. One of the epigraphs tells:

Honeybees are social insects and live in colonies. Each colony is family unit, comprising a single, egg-laying female or queen and her many sterile daughters called workers. The workers cooperate in the food-gathering, nest building and rearing the offspring. Males are reared only at the times of year when their presence is required.” (p.129).

The epigraph shows the relation and the character of bees in a community. It also represents the situation and the relation in Pink House. Pink House is a house of August’s family. The relation and the situation is almost the same as the bees description in the epigraph above. August has a role to in coordinating the business. However, she also always takes a part in takeover while the others prepare all the necessity n their house. Male’s role is also rare. The Pink House only consists of women, August, June, May Lily and Rosaleen. Then, all the activities are dominated by women’s role.

In short, this section emphasizes the ability of facing reality, the existence of mortality, and also the relation of the community. That emphasis draws the traits, situations, and relations of honeybees and also the member of Pink House. They have those all the similarities. It concludes the symbol of communal works from that community.
2. The Meaning of Bees inside the Story

Bees which appear in some particular incidents can be divided into two parts. First, bees symbolize Deborah. Second, bees symbolize God’s blessing.

a. Deborah

The presence of Deborah also becomes a special sign for Lily. The sign here has a role in bringing Lily into the new life and finding the truth of her mother death. It also leads Lily’s thought and feeling about what should she do next. In this section, the writer shows the role of “bees” not only as an insect which produces honey, but she also wants to show that bees can be sign for certain character in particular moment.

I thought about the bees that had come to my room at night, how they’d been part of it all. And the voice I’d heard the day before, saying, Lily Melissa Owens, your jar is open, speaking as plain and clear as the woman in navy speaking to her daughter. (p.125)

Lily feels that the sign will lead her to the truth of her mother death. The bees are really the presence of Deborah as a special sign for Lily because only her who can see the presence of the bees. Lily recognizes that the bees give a new atmosphere in her life. Actually, Lily also recognizes that the “speaking” of the bees is like a speaking from a mother to her daughter. Lily also always waits for the time when the bees come around her. The similarity between the bees and Deborah is that they ignore T. Ray. It happens before Deborah tried to leave T. Ray from their home. The following quote proves how Deborah ignores T. Ray.

The sound swelled in the dark till the entire room was pulsating, till the air itself became alive and mated with bees. They lapped around my body, making me the perfect center of a whirlwind cloud. I could not hear myself think for all the bees hum. Still, the sight was a true spectacle. Suddenly I couldn’t stand not showing it off to somebody, even if the only person
around was T. Ray. And if he happened to get stung by a couple of hundred bees, well, I was sorry. I slid from the covers and dashed through the bees for the door. I woke him by touching his arm with one finger, softly at first, then harder and harder until till I was jabbing into his flesh, marveling at how hard it was. T. Ray bolted from the bed, wearing nothing but his underwear. I dragged him toward my room, him shouting how this better be good, how the house damn well better be on fire, and Snout barking like we were on a dove shoot. “Bees” I shouted.”There’s a swarm of bees in my room” But when we got there, they’d vanished back into the wall like they knew he was coming, like they didn’t want to waste their flying stunts on him. (p.26)

From that moment, the author really emphasizes that the presence of bees as Deborah is only for Lily. It is also convinced by the similarity between her presence at that moment and the feeling of Deborah before her death. Those are the reason why when Lily tries to show the presence of bees to T. Ray and suddenly the bees go away. The presence of Deborah also takes a role as a sign for Lily in leading her life journey. The sign becomes a part of the mystery of Lily’s new life and the Lily’s journey in finding her mother death. Lily also recognizes that the presence of bees is like a strong sign for her.

You could say I’d never had a true religious moment, the kind where you know yourself spoken to by a voice that seems other than yourself, spoken to so genuinely you see he words shining on trees and clouds. But I had such a moment right then, standing in my own ordinary room. I heard a voice say, Lily Melissa Owens, your jar is open (p.87).

In that context, Lily’s jar means the house of Lily. It means that Lily is like the bees that have to go away from her “jar”. That voice represents Deborah’s command for Lily. She commands to Lily to leave her “jar” because it is like a great beginning in finding what she needs.

The following evidence also shows the characteristic of a mother in Deborah’s personality which represents as the bees.
That night I looked at the jar of bees on my dresser. The poor creatures perched on the bottom barely moving, obviously pining away for light. I remembered then the way they’d slipped from the cracks in my walls and flown for the sheer joy of it. I thought about the way my mother had built trails of graham-cracker crumbs and marshmallow to lure roaches from the house rather than step on them. I doubt she would’ve approved of keeping bees in a jar. I unscrewed the lid and set it aside.

“You can go”, I said.

But the bees remained there, like planes on a runway not knowing they’d been cleared for takeoff. They crawled on their stalk legs around the curved perimeters of the glass as if the world had shrunk to that jar. I tapped the glass, even laid the jar on its side, but those crazy bees stayed put (p.65).

At that moment, Lily wants to keep the bees in a jar. She thinks that one day T. Ray should believe that the bees really appear. When she remembers about her mother who never tortured animal, she wants to let the bees free. However, the “bees” stays there although Lily tries to shake the jar to make the “bees” come out. It draws what Deborah feels at that time. Actually, she did not want to leave Lily from her house. It shows Deborah’s personality which is a good mother who always wants to stay beside her child.

b. God’s blessing

The bees which appear within the story also symbolize God’s blessing. According to Oxford Dictionary, blessing means “God’s help and protection” (p. 150). The author has a special purpose in using bees to influence the character’s life. The presence of bees as the real insect here represents the help and protection from God to the characters.

We lived for honey. We swallowed a spoonful in the morning to wake us up and one at night to put us to sleep. We took it every meal to calm the mind, give us stamina, and prevent fatal disease. We swabbed ourselves in to disinfect cuts or heal chapped lips. It went in our baths, our skin cream, our raspberry tea and biscuits. Nothing was safe from honey. In one week
my skinny arm and legs began to plump out and the frizz in my hair turned to silken waves. August said honey was the ambrosia of the gods and the shampoo of the goddesses. (p.157-158)

In *The Secret Life of Bees*, August explains to Lily how bees can be the important thing for human. She tells that honey and human cannot be apart. Honey brings so many benefits for human especially to fulfill body’s necessity. August uses the honey for taking care of her skin and also keeping her health. The benefit of honey can be represents of the blessing that is received by the characters. It is caused by the ability of honey in protecting and caring for human life. On the other hand, August’s family also gets the income from producing honey.

The blessing that appears from bees also influences August’s life. She can fulfill their necessity from producing honey. Whereas, being a honey producer is like a special gift from God. Being a beekeeper is a big gift from God. August said “Big Mama liked to tell everybody that women made the best beekeepers, cause they have special ability built into them to love creatures that sting.” (p. 257). August realizes it and she is so grateful to be beekeeper. August also tells that “When Big Mama died, she left all this property to me, June, and May. I’ve been here keeping bees nearly eighteen years now.” (p.259). Being a successful beekeeper and taking care of all the equipments mean August can response the blessing in her life. The blessing appears among August’s life. She can fulfill and stay alive from honey.

The importance of symbol in *The Secret Life of Bees* shows from the role of bees and the meaning of bees as symbol. The first function of symbol is to
illustrate the reality. It is supported by Stanton (1965) that emphasizes “symbol can be used as picture or the illustration of reality” (p.31). In *The Secret Life of Bees*, the author also wants to use symbol as a way to facilitate the reader in illustrating the story with reality. The symbol of bees has so many roles in the story, but the author also has the purpose behind that symbol. Based on Arp and Johnson (2009) that symbol can be one of resources to compress the word. Actually, the author wants to deliver so many values by using symbol. She uses bees as the tool to deliver her broad meaning. The word “bees” is also categorized as a symbol that has the function in varying degree. As mentioned before, varying degree means the ability of giving different sense from one meaning into the other meaning. It also exists in *The Secret Life of Bees*. The word bees also creates the meaning more than its literal meaning. So that, the varying degree of bees in *The Secret Life of Bees* here is the author succeeds in presenting bees more than its literal meaning. The word “bees” is also classified as a private symbol. The bees can be classified as private symbol since the author has special purpose by using bees as the symbols in the novel. Therefore, the reader also needs more effort to understand the meaning of bees in the novel.

In short, the bees in Sue Monk Kidd’s *The Secret Life of Bees* symbolize motherly character, love and sincerity, the communal works, Deborah, and also God’s blessing. According to Abrams and Harpham (2012) tell that symbol is anything which signifies something else. From that theory, the appearance of symbols in the novel really conveys the meaning.
3. **The Meaning of Black Madonna as a Symbol**

The understanding of Black Madonna in general comes from the symbol in Catholic. In this case, Black Madonna is Saint Mary which is depicted as black-skinned. In some cultures, Black Madonna is called in different way. For example, Black Madonna is also called as *Bunda Maria* in Indonesian, *Ibu Maria* or *Dewi Maria* in Javanese. In this novel, Black Madonna represents Mother Mary of Breznichar in Bohemia. Black Madonna also appears not only as a sign of Jesus’ Mother. It is in line with Collins English Dictionary (2003), Virgin Mary is “the Mother of Jesus”. However, she has a special role and special meaning then appears as one of symbols in *The Secret Life of Bees*. Then, the special meanings of Black Madonna are identified as follows:

First, Black Madonna symbolizes enlightenment. According to Oxford Dictionary (2005), enlightenment is “the process of understanding something or making somebody understand it” (p. 507). From that understanding, the role of Black Madonna that symbolizes enlightenment especially for Lily is very clear here. At the beginning, the picture of Black Madonna is a picture from Lily’s mother to Lily. The picture is also completed with the hand writing of a town, Tiburon, South Carolina. The picture also has the similarity with the label of honey jar that is used by August as the honey producer. The enlightenment that appears from Black Madonna’s role is the process to make Lily learn and understand that sign as a part of her life journey.

The end-all mystery inside the bag was a small wooden picture of Mary, the mother of Jesus. I recognized her even though her skin was black, only a shade lighter than Rosaleen’s. It looked to me like somebody had cut the black Mary’s picture from a book, glued it into a sanded piece of wood.
about two inches across, and varnished it. On the back an unknown hand had written “Triburon, S.C.” (p.42)

Lily believes that picture has a particular meaning for her life journey. The Black Madonna is the enlightenment which brings Lily to a new hope and life. Lily also feels that she has to do something to understand the meaning of the picture.

Now and then I’d go out there and dig up the box. I would lie on the ground with trees folded over me, wearing her gloves, smiling photograph. I would study “Tiburon, S.C.” on the back of the black Mary picture, the funny slant of the littering, and wonder that sort of place it was. I’d look it up on the map once, and it wasn’t more than two hours away. Had my mother been there and bought this picture? I always promised myself one day, when I was grown-up enough, I would take the bus over there. I wanted to go everyplace she had ever been.(p.43).

The Black Madonna also gives a strong enlightenment for Lily in finding the truth about her mother. It is also supported with the situation that she cannot believe in T.Ray who always tells that her mother never loves her and leave her. The enlightenment which appears from Black Madonna forms a big strength to go to her house, leaving T. Ray and find the truth of her mother’s death. The enlightenment for Lily also becomes stronger since it has a clue. Lily tells that “What I needed was a sign. I needed a voice speaking to me like I’d heard yesterday in my room saying, Lily Melissa Owens, your jar is open. I’ll take nine steps and look up. Whatever my eyes light on, that’s my sign.” (p.199).

The author also tries to emphasize that the Black Madonna is not a usual picture. She puts the emphasis that Black Madonna is really a sign for Lily through the similarity of the picture of Black Madonna from her mother and also the picture of Black Madonna in the label of the honey jar.
I was speculating how one day, years from now, I would send the store a dollar in an envelope to cover it, spelling out how guilt had dominated every moment of my life, when I found myself looking a picture of the black Mary. I do not mean a picture of just any black Mary. I mean the identical, very same, exact one as my mother’s. She started at me from the labels of dozen jars of honey. BLACK MADONNA HONEY, they said. (p.124)

It is really a precious sign for Lily because from that label she tries to identify the producer and place. From that picture, Lily can understand that the sign from her mother is connected with sign in labels of dozen jars of honey.

Second, in Sue Monk Kidd’s *The Secret Life of Bees*, Black Madonna also symbolizes magnetic power. It shows through the presence of Black Madonna that influencing the characters’ life. There are some reasons why Black Madonna becomes a magnetic power and the source of spirit for the character. In Sue Monk Kidd’s *The Secret Life of Bees*, Lily shows that she admires the Black Madonna. The author also tries to provide the description of Black Madonna through Lily’s feeling and thought.

She was black as she could be, twisted like driftwood from being out in the weather, her face a map of all the storms and journeys she’d been through. Her right arm was raised, as if she was pointing the way, except her fingers were closed in a fist. It gave her a serious look, like she could straighten you out if necessary. She was a mix of mighty and humble all in one. I didn’t know what to think, but what I felt was magnetic and so big it ached like the moon had entered my chest and field it up. The lips on the statue had a beautiful, bossy half smile, the sight of which caused me to move both my hands up to my throat. Everything about that smile said, Lily Owens, I know you down to the core. (p. 135-136)

The quotation above emphasizes that Lily feels that the Black Madonna is magnetic. The sculpture of Black Madonna affects her soul. It has a magnetic power to attract Lily’s feeling and thought. In Sue Monk Kidd’s *The Secret Life of
Bees, the author shows the details of Black Madonna’s physical appearance and how Lily can recognize the sculpture more easily. In this novel, the author also shows Black Madonna’s role really influence the emotion of the character.

Just like Lily, Black Madonna’s magnetic power also appears in August’s life. August is very interested in the story Our Lady of Chain. The story tells about the quote of verse in Holy Bible and it represents the Black Madonna.

And Mary said… Behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things… He hath scattered the proud… He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and exalted them of low degree. He hath sent empty away. (p.142)

August is interested in Black Madonna because of her strength and kindness. It is showed from August’s interest in sharing a good story.

One day, a slave named Obadiah was loading bricks onto a boat that would sail down the Ashley River, when he saw something washed up on the bank. Coming closer, he saw it was the wooden figure of a woman. Her body was growing out of a block of wood, a black woman with her arm lifted out and her fist balled up. Obadiah pulled the figure out of the water, she went on and struggled to set her upright. Then he rescue. To send them consolation. To send them freedom. Obadiah knew the Lord had sent this figure but he didn’t know who she was. He knelt down in the marsh mud before her and heard her voice speak plain as day in his heart. She said ‘It’s all right. I’m here. I’ll be taking care of you now’ Now, the oldest of the slaves was a woman named Pearl. She walked with a stick, and when she spoke, everyone listened. She got to her feet and said, ‘This here is the mother of Jesus. Everyone knew the other of Jesus was named Mary, and that she’d seen suffering of every kind. That she was strong and constant and had a mother’s heart. And here she was, sent to them on the same waters that knew everything they suffered. (p.197-200)

That quotation is about a part of the story of Lady of Chain. August is very interested in the figure of Mary because of the strong belief. August tells the story repeatedly in some events. Because of the kindness and the strength of Black Madonna, Lily also feels that Black Madonna is a figure of the truth mother who
can spread hope and new spirit for everyone. It is showed from Lily’s thought, “I think she was telling me, I know you’ve run away-everybody gets the urge to do that sometime-but sooner or later you’ll want to go home. Just ask Mary for help.” (p.171). That statement is one of the evidence that Lily has strong belief in Black Madonna.

Fix me, please fix me. Help me know what to do. Forgive me. Is my mother all right up there with God? Don’t let them fin us. If they find us, don’t let them take me back. If they find us, keep Rosaleen from being killed. Let June love me. Let T. Ray love me. Help me stop lying. Make the world better. Take the meanness out of people’s hearts. I live in a hive of darkness, and you are my mother. You are my mother of thousands. (p.291)

Those evidences strengthen how Black Madonna influences in character’s life. They find a source of the spirit from Black Madonna when she remember that Black Madonna will send them rescue, consolation, and freedom. It also can be evidence that Black Madonna is very inspiring and touching in every soul. That is why she asks and prays to Black Madonna because she believes on her. Those situations also show that the magnetic power appear from the character and belief from Black Madonna.

In short, Black Madonna has the power of interesting from her role, her story, and also her physical appearance. In the other hand, Lily and August also has self-motivation by their nature as religious person which bring them in having a strong belief with Black Madonna. So that, the magnetic power is very clear here.

In this section, Black Madonna is categorized as private symbol. It is because the specific works of Black Madonna in the story. The emphasis of the
symbol interpretation of Black Madonna is not only as a Mother of Jesus, but it signifies the other level of meaning.

The meaning of Black Madonna as one of symbols in *The Secret Life of Bees* shows the existence in varying degree of the meaning itself. The presence of Black Madonna becomes more meaningful since it conveys more than its literal meaning. Black Madonna here has more than the figure of Mary, but Black Madonna takes a part in every cycle of character’s life. She has a magnetic power to attract the character of the story. She also has meaningful role and increase the emotional of the reader. The presence of Black Madonna as one of symbols also gives deeper understanding of the story from any perspectives.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, SUGGESTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter consists of three parts. They are conclusions, implications, and suggestions. First, the conclusions summarize about the finding of this study. Second, the implications show the relationship between finding of the study and educational issues in general. Third, the suggestions are provided to the future researcher in connection with the finding of the study.

A. Conclusions

The study concludes two points related to the research questions. The first point is the two symbols in Sue Monk Kidd’s *The Secret Life of Bees*. Those symbols are bees and Black Madonna. Bees are considered as a symbol since they appear repeatedly throughout the novel, appear in a particular emphasis, and have more than one literal meaning. Bees convey some meanings. Bees are the symbol of motherly character, love, and sincerity. Depicted from the epigraphs, bees symbolize communal works. Furthermore, bees appear in some particular incidents within the story that symbolize Deborah and blessings. In addition, Black Madonna becomes a symbol since it appears repeatedly throughout the novel and appears in particular moments too. Black Madonna conveys some meanings. First, Black Madonna symbolizes enlightenment. Second, Black Madonna symbolizes the magnetic power for the character.
Then, the second point is the interpretation of symbols which appear in *The Secret Life of Bees* helps in conveying theme. The theme of *The Secret Life of Bees* is about the power of women in facing life and their ability in spreading love and sincerity. It is supported with the symbols which appear in the novel. Symbols which represent motherly character, love and sincerity, enlightenment and magnetic power show the ability and the sense of women. Then, communal works and God blessing show the situation around the women and gift in her life cycle. Therefore, the theme of the novel can be concluded as the power of women in facing life and spreading love.

**B. Suggestions**

*The Secret Life of Bees* is written by a talented author. Therefore, Sue Monk Kidd succeeds to achieve *The Secret Life of Bees* as one of The New York Times Best Sellers. As mentioned before, the novel tells about the struggle of an adolescent namely Lily in finding the truth of her mother’s death and about the power of women among her who are struggle in facing life and spreading love. It shows the importance of women’s role and the power of women to make her and the people around her live their life. However, I focus on symbols that dominate in the novel and the meaning from each symbol. In addition, the novel can be analyzed from another point of view. The novel can be analyzed by using socio-cultural theory. Furthermore, the theory can be used to analyze the race discrimination that happens in the story. That topic is interesting because nowadays, racial discrimination still exists in some areas, including Indonesia. In
general, this study is not only able to be a reflective reading material but also to foster tolerance among people in multicultural society. In general, this study will contribute on the growth of people who respect on the existence of variety. Briefly, ideas can contribute a good change for Indonesia.

C. Implications

There are two implications between the analysis of this study and the situation in our environment nowadays. First is about crisis of mother and child relationship. Second is about life skills and spiritual education.

1. Crisis of Mother and Child Relationship

Lily’s situation is one of the examples of crisis and child relationship. The situation affects Lily’s personality. She grows up without the presence of a mother. In this case, Lily’s mother died when she was child. However, the crisis of mother and child relationship nowadays also happens in different case. This crisis can be explained with two causes. The first reason comes up from the mother’s side and the second reason comes up from the children side.

From the mother side, crisis of a parenting between children and mother is caused by time allocation between mother’s job in her office and family attention. Nowadays, man and woman have same rights. It means there are no gap which differentiate their position. Therefore, career woman is very common especially in some big cities. She can spend her whole time in her office. Sometimes, she does not realize that in some particular needs, the role of mother cannot be changed
with a man. Satisfaction of getting the income for the necessity also can be the reason why woman also makes the priority in her career.

On the other hand, same crisis also happens in the village. There are so many children who have to grow up without the guidance of their mother. It is because her mother leaves them to work abroad to fulfill their necessity. Even, there are so many cases about the mysterious disappearing of the worker and the violence which attack them. Therefore, almost all children have to face the reality without their mother forever.

From children side, the crisis of parenting is caused by the children time in spending with their own activity. Sometimes, the increasing of technology is not able to make a good communication between parents and children. They only use it as a media in operating their favorite application. The children become busier with their gadget. Therefore, there are so many cases that show the children who do not respect their parents especially their mother until they do violence to their mother. The children do not realize the importance role of their mother in guiding them to be a success person.

The presence of the mother role should be realized by the mother herself and the children. What Lily experiences in the novel shows us how she is missing the role mother in her life. She fells incompleteness in facing their life without the presence of a mother. Some of children and mother have no chance in togetherness because of difficult situation. Therefore, appreciating every chance in mother and children is very important. Mother should realize that the children need is not only about money but also about quality of relation and keep in touch
with the children. It does not mean that career is a forbidden thing for a woman. The emphasis here is about the priority and time allocation. Children also should be grateful if they still have a chance for having a mother role in their life. Respecting and caring the mother also can be one way to be grateful of their mother’s presence in their life. The harmonious relation between mother and children also can minimize the negative deed.

Then, keeping warm relation between the teacher or parents to the students or children also can solve the crisis. Motivation becomes a good starting point to do something good. Parents or teacher should be a good motivator for students or children improvement. In the past, there is a gap between teachers and students or parents and children. Nowadays, what students or children need is a close relationship and motivate all the good deeds.

Just like what August does with Lily, “I spent my time in the honey house with August.” (p.158). August teaches Lily how to produce honey. They can spend time together and develop their togetherness in learning process. August also can be a role of teacher who can be a good motivator. August shows her effort in producing honey with the best quality. August also says to Lily, “You can’t be a true beekeeper without getting stung.” (p.297). August becomes a wise person when Lily feels down. She gives spirit for Lily that to reach something we have to do something harder even it is pain. In addition, August also gives the compliment for Lily when she has done something in a good ending, “I caught on so fast she said I was a marvel. Those were her very words: Lily, you are a marvel.” (p.158). It shows that August become a good motivator for Lily by
showing her compliment. Compliment is also important to make the students develop their confidence. Therefore, August also tries to motivate Lily if she loves what she does then she can finish perfectly, “Didn’t you tell me this past week one of the things you loved was bees and honey? Now, it that’s so, you’ll be a fine beekeeper. Actually, you can be bad a something, Lily, but if you love doing it, that will be enough.” (p.297) August motivates Lily when she learns how to be a good beekeeper. It shows that August has a good way to encourage Lily’s confidence.

Storytelling also can be the ways of sharing knowledge and experience and also delivering the suggestion or advice. Then, the suggestion can be received well by having a warm relation. Storytelling can also be one of the ways in building a warm relation. August is interested in delivering valuable story to everyone. That way can create a warm and close relationship. Lily is very interested in listening to every story from August. The storytelling also makes Lily to reflect the value from each story which can support her self-improvement. She can also catch the spirit that appears from the storytelling and finds the new strength.

2. Life Skills and Spiritual Education

One of the ways to develop the quality of human sources is education. Education is more than giving and explaining new knowledge for every person. *The Secret Life of Bees* also has some emphasis in some particular incidents which focuses on the development of human quality.
First is about skills improvement. Poverty still becomes a nightmare for everyone. Then, competition and independence are increasingly to avoid the poverty and to take the higher social class. Therefore, every person should realize about the importance of skills improvement. Kadence International announces their research about the trend of side-job and the influence in increasing social class. The data result shows 29% from total inhabitant in some big cities have a side-job. It means that young generation should be prepared not only for improving their knowledge but also from their skills. It caused by people needs to fulfill their secondary and third necessity. In The Secret Life of Bees also shows us the importance of skills improvement without decrease the quality of their close relation. It is shown through Augusts’ lesson. She can improve her skill as a honey producer until she can be the best producer in her hometown. From that skill she can also fulfill her sisters’ necessity. August gives a new experience for Lily in producing honey, “You’ll work with Zack and me, making the honey, doing whatever needs doing” (P.146). As a success producer, August has the willingness to share her knowledge to Lily. Actually, August realizes that it will be very important to Lily’s skilled-provisions in the future. August supports Lily’s dream to be a teacher and also guides her to improve another skill.

Second is about spiritual base, the emphasis of the power of God. Every person has to realize the presence of God in every detail of their life. It will help a lot to every person in facing life cycle even in the hardest one. Day by day, spiritual needs cannot take the same portion with secular needs. They only work without looking at God’s role in their life. It is caused by the minimum ability of
being grateful. In the other hand, spiritual base also can be one of causes from war. It is also connected in politics and another universal need. This kind of mindsets should be changed.

Indonesia consists of so many religions, but the spiritual of God in universal should be emphasized from the beginning of education stages. From that background, there are so many ways in praising God. I can be one of spirit in realizing the presence of God. In the novel, the author shows us how August can be the coordinator of The Daughters of Mary, a prayer group. August is a good prayer. She has a high-belief especially with Mary. She always spreads some stories about Mary. Mary also can be the source of August’s strength for her life. She always remains people around her to pray and to give the strength from Mary. It shows that behind her success there is a strong belief from her spiritual base.

The reality of young generation nowadays is very dangerous. There are so many cases that draw the crisis of morality. For example, the increasing of doing violence, killing, suicide, and so on. Whereas, one of ways in guiding morality is by strengthening spirituality. Education that is improving student as the participant in spiritual activity should be conducted. From that participation, they can realize the presence of God in every moment. Even until they will feel a pray not only as their needs but also as their duty. Hopefully, students will realize the importance of spirituality in their life. They also can have good personality by having strong spiritual base.
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(retrieved on December 24, 2014)

APPENDICES
Appendix A

Summary of Sue Monk Kidd’s *The Secret Life of Bees*

It is 1964 in Sylvan, South Carolina, and Lily Melissa Owens, a fourteen-year-old white girl, lives on a peach farm with her father, T. Ray, who is both neglectful and abusive. Lying in bed in her room at night, Lily is often visited by bees that seem to be at home with her. Lily holds a terrible and guilty secret: She believes she shot and killed her mother, Deborah, when Lily was four years old. Her vague memory of that day — when her parents were arguing and she picked up and shot the gun that her mother had dropped — continues to haunt her, and she yearns to know more about her mother.

When T. Ray leaves temporarily to work on his workers' payroll, Lily sneaks away, carrying with her a bag of things her mother, Deborah, had left earlier, including a photo of a black Mary, mother of Jesus. Lily manages to free Rosaleen, and they hitchhike to Tilburon, South Carolina, because Deborah had written that town on the back of the picture in Lily's bag. Lily hopes it's a clue to help her find out about her mother. Once they reach Tilburon, Lily sees the exact
same picture of Mary on honey jars at a small grocery store. After inquiring about the label, Lily finds it belongs to a local black family of sisters — called the Boatrights — who are beekeepers. Lily and Rosaleen (Lily’s housekeeper) go to the bright pink Boatright house outside of town and are welcomed and taken in. Lily lies about their earlier life and hopes to stay long enough to find out whether her mother was ever there.

August Boatright and her sisters, May and June, have a lucrative honey business on twenty-eight acres of land. June is suspicious of and distant from Lily, and May seems slow and emotional. They also meet Neil, June's boyfriend of many years, who wants to marry June but keeps getting rejected. The other sister, May, is oversensitive to pain, and when she gets upset she must write down the sorrowful thing on a paper and stick it in a crack at her "wailing wall," a wall of stones on the farm. This behavior seems to be connected to the suicide of June's twin sister, April, years earlier. As time passes, Lily helps August with the beekeeping, and Rosaleen keeps an eye on May in the house. Lily is given a room in the "honey house," where she can sort out her feelings. She increasingly likes August but is afraid to tell her the truth about her previous life, for fear that August will reject her. Meanwhile, she develops a crush on Zach, a black teenage worker who helps with the bees.

Lily and Rosaleen become increasingly comfortable in this amazing community of sisters. A group of women called the Daughters of Mary also come to the house, because they all practice a form of homemade religion. It is partly Catholic, including reciting the rosary, and partly a product of slavery. The group
displays a wooden ship's statue of a black Mary. The Daughters pray to her, believing she can give them power and lead them to unchain themselves from various social barriers. Lily and Rosaleen join them, and soon Lily realizes the women do not see her as white. The society of women helps August, June, and May encourage Lily to believe in herself and feel loved. But still she cannot tell August the story of her family or earlier life.

Lily becomes increasingly close to Zach and on a trip to work on the bee hives, she feels the first stirrings of sexual awakening. They share their hopes and dreams: Lily's of wanting to become a writer and Zach's of becoming a lawyer. Sensing Lily's lack of self-confidence, Zach gives Lily a journal to record her stories. They go to town and take honey to the law office of a white lawyer who is helping Zach. While Lily is alone in the office, she impulsively calls her father, demanding to know if he even knows her favorite color. He is angry and threatens to find and beat her.

One day, Lily walks into the kitchen and sees May doing something she remembers what her mother, Deborah, is doing. She confronts May and discovers she knew Lily's mother. Totally shaken, Lily doesn't know what to make of this new information. She decides to face August about it, but before she can, Zach takes her into Tilburon — which is restless because of rumors about a racial confrontation — again to buy parts for his car. The two park the truck at the same time that a group of African-American boys near the truck throw a bottle at a white man. Zach is arrested with the group, and a terrified Lily makes her way back to the Boatright house. They don't want May to know about Zach's arrest.
because she is so fragile. But Zach calls the house and May answers the phone, finding out about his circumstances. Leaving the house by herself, she commits suicide by drowning in the nearby river.

The next few days are taken up with a period of mourning and the funeral. Zach is released from jail on the testimony of an eyewitness. A celebration of the Mary statue ensues for two days, and during a walk, Zach and Lily kiss and he promises that, despite their races, they will be together some day. Neil and June set a date to be married after May left a note reminding June that life goes by too quickly to throw their love away.

Once the mourning and celebration are over, Lily waits in August's room to tell her the true story of her family. Surprisingly, she discovers that August already knows who she is. August reveals that she worked as a housekeeper and nanny years earlier for Deborah's family. She explains the story of Deborah's marriage to T. Ray and how, after she had Lily, she suffered a nervous breakdown and came to stay with August for a few months, leaving Lily behind. Her picture of T. Ray's love for Deborah and his loss is a viewpoint Lily had never considered before. August says Deborah was arranging for a divorce and a trip back to get Lily so they would live together in Tilburon. Lily explains to August that she accidentally killed her mother, and that she is unlovable. But August begs her to forgive her mother for not being perfect and forgive herself for an action she didn't understand.

Lily spends the next few days angry and bitter about her mother leaving her to go to August's. She nearly destroys the honey house with her grief and rage.
But as she thinks about August's words, she begins to acknowledge that her mother loved her and came back for her. August gives Lily some of Deborah's belongings, including a photo of Deborah feeding a baby Lily, which Lily takes as the sign of her mother's love, for which she has waited most of her life.

T. Ray shows up at the Boatright house, having traced Lily's call from the lawyer's office. He and Lily have a terrible argument, and T. Ray hits and kicks her. But Lily is able to call him "Daddy" and get him to realize she is not her mother. His pride was wounded when Deborah left, and he has taken his anger out on Lily ever since. August convinces him to let Lily stay with her and, as he leaves, Lily asks him if she truly did kill her mother. He replies, "Yes," but that she didn't mean to, an extraordinary admission.

That fall, Lily goes to school with Zach at the white high school and learns to love herself living with this community of strong, independent women. Through these experiences, Lily has learned to trust her own instincts and matures into a young lady who believes in herself.

Adapted from:
Appendix B

Biography of Sue Monk Kidd

Sue Monk Kidd was born on August 12, 1948. She grew up in Sylvester, a town in southwest Georgia where her family had lived for two centuries, on the same plot of land where her great-great-grandparents had lived. The stories her father invented for her as a child and the encouragement of her English teachers fueled her desire to become a writer, yet her uncertainty about her future as a writer, combined with the “cultural climate of the South in 1966,” prompted her to pursue a nursing career instead. She graduated from Texas Christian University in 1970 and spent the next decade working as a registered nurse and college nursing instructor. Also during that time, she met and married her husband, Sanford “Sandy” Kidd, and together they had two children, Bob and Ann.

Sue Monk Kidd was just shy of her thirtieth birthday when she finally turned again toward a writing career. She wanted to write fiction, and she enrolled in writing classes at a local college. Unexpectedly, her innate gift for writing
nonfiction surfaced when a personal essay written for a class appeared in Guideposts Magazine and was later featured in Reader’s Digest. Thus her freelancing career began.

Kidd gained recognition quickly. She became a contributing editor at Guideposts, and throughout these formative writing years she published numerous articles in Guideposts and in various journals and newspapers. It was also during this time that she discovered the writings of Thomas Merton and C.G. Jung, whose work she cites as having a deep impact upon her spiritual life and writing. Her first two books, God’s Joyful Surprise (1988) and When the Heart Waits (1990), were spiritual memoirs depicting her introduction to contemplative Christian spirituality and her subsequent spiritual transformation.

In her early forties, Kidd’s spiritual journey led her in an unanticipated direction: toward the “sacred feminine.” The Dance of the Dissident Daughter (1996), her third and most evocative spiritual memoir, chronicles her path to “feminist enlightenment.”

Despite the success and acclaim she enjoyed writing spiritual nonfiction, Kidd’s desire to write fiction begged to be fulfilled. Refusing to give in to her fear of failure, she immersed herself in the process of writing fiction by taking a graduate writing course and attending various writers’ conferences. Soon the author accumulated several awards for her short fiction, giving her the confidence she needed to begin writing her first novel, The Secret Life of Bees, in 1997. Lily Owens’ story has touched and inspired readers since its release in 2002. Kidd tells a compelling tale of Owens’ determination to find the mother she never knew and
her coming of age, both physically and spiritually, in the house of the beekeeping Boatwright sisters during the height of the Civil Rights movement in South Carolina.

While Kidd has said that *The Secret Life of Bees* is largely a product of her imagination, elements of the author’s life are interwoven into the story, such as the bees living in the bedroom walls, the hair rollers fashioned out of grape juice cans, and Kidd’s relationship with the sacred feminine. The novel spent over two years on the *New York Times* bestseller list, has been published in over twenty languages, and is being taught in high school and college classrooms across the country.

Kidd’s second novel, *The Mermaid’s Chair* (2005), won the Quill Award for General Fiction. Also set in South Carolina, it is the story of Jessie Sullivan, a married woman in her early forties who falls in love with a monk and finds herself torn between her husband and her soul mate, unsure if the mythical power of the mermaid chair is the cause.

In 2006, a collection of Kidd’s early inspirational writings titled *Firstlights* immediately landed on the *New York Times* extended bestseller list. As of late 2008 there were more than 200,000 copies in print.

Kidd has been awarded numerous distinctions for both her nonfiction and her fiction, including the 2004 BookSense Book of the Year in paperback for *The Secret Life of Bees*. She is on the board of advisors for Poets & Writers, Inc., and she is the Writer in Residence at The Sophia Institute in South Carolina. She currently resides near Charleston, South Carolina, with Sandy Kidd and her black
lab, Lily. Sue Monk Kidd is certain that she will someday write another memoir because she “still [has] a need to create a narrative of my life. To keep writing it until I see how it turns out.”

Taken from:
http://www.gradesaver.com/author/sue-monk-kidd