
MATERNAL DEPRIVATION AND SPIRITUAL RESILIENCE IN *THE SECRET LIFE OF BEES*: A PSYCHOANALYTIC PERSPECTIVE THROUGH ATTACHMENT THEORY

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ABSTRACT

Maternal care plays a critical role in shaping the emotional and psychological development of human being's early life. The absence of maternal care, can lead to long-term challenges, including emotional dysregulation, low self-esteem, and difficulty forming secure attachments. Maternal deprivation refers to the lack of adequate maternal care and emotional support during a child's early developmental stages. This research examines the effects of maternal deprivation and the development of psychological resilience as portrayed in Sue Monk Kidd's novel *The Secret Life of Bees*. Through John Bowlby's Attachment Theory, the research explores how early maternal absence impacts the protagonist, Lily Owens, and her emotional development. The analysis highlights how maternal deprivation manifests through Lily's struggles with self-worth, trust issues, and emotional regulation. Despite these challenges, the novel also presents a narrative of resilience, as Lily finds surrogate maternal figures and healing through meaningful connections. The concept of psychological resilience, examined through the lens of trauma psychology, illustrates how Lily's adaptive coping mechanisms help mitigate the adverse effects of maternal loss. The research integrates psychoanalytic literary criticism to analyze how the symbolic maternal figures in the novel support Lily's journey toward healing. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the psychological implications of maternal deprivation and the role of resilience in overcoming early childhood trauma, offering valuable insights for both literary and psychoanalytic studies.

1. INTRODUCTION

Early human life plays a significant role in their development, with maternal care having a major influence. Maternal care plays an important role not only in the physical development of children but also in creating children who have healthy emotions and psychology. This is as explained by Bowlby (1982) in his Attachment Theory. Bowlby (1982) explains how maternal care provides facilities to give children a sense of secure relationships in socializing with other humans by having good emotions, self-esteem, and social function. In addition to the psychological realm, Shonkoff & Phillips (2000) also explain that consistent interaction between mother and child will also provide good stimulation in brain development, especially in dealing with stress and social cognition. On the other hand, when a child does not have



enough maternal care, the child will have emotional instability, experience attachment issues, and difficulty in forming relationships in the future (Beckett et al., 2010; Zeanah et al., 2009).

The link between maternal deprivation and child development has long been associated. However, recent research does not only show negative impacts because of the potential for resilience as a child's defense mechanism. Resilience is an individual's ability to adapt positively in the face of difficulties. According to Masten (2001), resilience for children with maternal deprivation can be formed from alternative caregiving relationships, supportive social environments, and personal coping. Walker et al. (2011) explain that substitute caregivers and interventions such as the Care for Child Development program can potentially reduce maternal deprivation's impact by providing opportunities for the growth of emotional stability and good social relationships. This resilience mechanism is explained by Luthar et al. (2000), which shows that humans can cope with bad life events.

The Secret Life of Bees by Sue Monk Kidd is one of the novels that describes how a child finally has a resilience mechanism after experiencing maternal deprivation. Lily Owen, the main character in this novel, is a child who experiences maternal deprivation and is made worse by how she has an abusive father figure. With her parents, who do not show affection, she has wounds that make her yearn for a warm relationship. The story progresses with a surrogate mother figure who heals Lily's wounds, Rosaleen and August Boatwright. With a warm relationship with Rosaleen and August Boatwright, Lily's emotional wounds slowly heal so that Lily can grow well. The good relationship between Lily, Rosaleen and August Boatwright reduces the negative impact of Lily's lack of maternal care and builds self-acceptance and resilience.

Based on this phenomenon, this study analyzes the relationship between the lack of a mother figure and the resilience shown in The Secret Life of Bees's novel. This analysis is conducted by analyzing the main character's journey, Lily, using Bowlby's Attachment Theory and other psychological approaches. Furthermore, this study also explains the path to resilience in dealing with trauma due to the lack of a mother figure by analyzing Lily's relationship with a substitute caregiver. Moreover, the end of this study will show how the novel The Secret Life of Bees proves that the lack of a mother figure is not a permanent obstacle for someone to gain well-being. However, instead, that obstacle becomes an experience that can later foster emotional strength and independence.

The interdisciplinary approach used in this study contributes to a better understanding of the psychological processes that individuals may use to cope with maternal loss. The purpose of this study is to provide a critical discussion of parenting, attachment, and resilience. In addition, this study also has another goal, namely to reveal how, even in adversity, the human psyche can rebuild connections, grow emotionally, and find identity.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Critical examination of maternal deprivation has shown a significant impact on early childhood development. Attachment Theory, outlined by John Bowlby, explains how the absence or loss of a mother figure early in life has long-term psychological impacts, such as the inability to



regulate emotions, attachment issues, and difficulties in interpersonal relationships. Bowlby's research (1951) entitled *Maternal Care and Mental Health* emphasises that early interactions during the care period are important in forming a child's emotional security and social skills.

Bowlby's work was further expanded upon by Mary Ainsworth's study of the Strange Situation. Ainsworth here explains how early parenting influences attachment styles. Her research revealed that consistent and responsive caregiving fosters secure attachment, while inconsistent or absent care often leads to avoidant, ambivalent, or disorganized attachment patterns (Ainsworth et al., 1978).

Based on the existing modern study, maternal deprivation is shown as a phenomenon that can become more widespread even when someone has entered adulthood. This even leads to poor mental health, such as causing anxiety and depression. For example, a longitudinal study by Beckett et al. (2010) investigated the developmental outcomes of children raised in institutional care, finding that maternal deprivation negatively impacted emotional development but could be mitigated by subsequent caregiving relationships.

Psychological resilience, defined as the ability to recover from adversity, plays a critical role in mitigating the effects of maternal deprivation. Masten (2001) describes resilience as "ordinary magic," emphasizing the importance of everyday processes such as supportive relationships, problem-solving skills, and self-regulation in fostering recovery. Resilience research highlights that while early adversity can have lasting effects, the presence of a nurturing environment and positive relationships can significantly enhance an individual's capacity to adapt and thrive.

Werner and Smith's longitudinal study on at-risk children (Werner & Smith, 1982) revealed that resilient individuals often find strength in surrogate caregiving relationships, personal goals, and community support. Werner and Smith explained what was found by Cicchetti & Rogosch (1997), which showed that there was emotional control and strong attachment to be protective in children who had bad experiences early in their lives.

Literary works here aim to be a medium that shows how a person's psychology is shown in literary characters, especially about resilience, trauma, and recovery, with the complex psychological concepts depicted in literary works. This is as shown by Caruth (1996) in her work entitled *Unclaimed Experience*, which shows how individuals can use literary works to re-describe their experiences. This is also done by LaCapra (2001), who analyzes how literary works can be expressed to understand and deal with historical and individual trauma, emphasising cathartic and therapeutic aspects.

Material deprivation in real life is depicted in Sue Monk Kidd's novel entitled *The Secret Life of Bees*. This novel tells the journey of Lily Owens who experienced the beginning of her life with a mother figure until she finally had a surrogate mother figure who took care of her and ended with Lily finally having resilience. Several previous studies have analyzed the novel with the focus of their research on the resilience case of how Lily finally met the healer and the identity of her good relationship with the surrogate mother figure, Rosaleen and August Boatwright. How previous research with research explaining that literary works are a safe medium to show complex psychological experiences shows a mutually supportive relationship.



Based on what has been explained previously, both previous research and literary works show that psychology and literature see surrogate caregivers as a solution to maternal deprivation. This is also explained by Dozier et al. (2001), which shows that when a child has a surrogate mother.

Surrogate care emerges as a major theme in psychology and literature, offering a solution to maternal deprivation. Dozier et al. (2001) study on the foster care system revealed that consistent and loving surrogate care can significantly improve a child's emotional outcomes. In *The Secret Life of Bees*, Lily's emotional healing is facilitated by her relationship with the Boatwright sisters, who give her a sense of security and love that she lacks in her biological family.

The Secret Life of Bees can be shown as a novel that describes how surrogate mothers can fulfil the role of a lost biological mother figure. This study uses this novel to explain further how the attachment of a secure bond with a caregiver - biological or other caregivers - is very important for healthy child development.

3. METHODOLOGY

The main object used in this study is the novel *The Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kidd. Qualitative methods are used in this study to analyze and interpret stories, characters, and symbolic elements that show or relate to maternal deprivation and resilience. The researcher feels that qualitative research methods are the most appropriate methods to use in this study because they relate to understanding a subjective meaning shown in a text. This is by what Grossoehme (2014) explained that qualitative research is appropriate when used to analyze meaning in a text, especially if it is related to psychological and thematic research.

The qualitative approach used in this study analyzes how maternal deprivation is depicted from Lily's experience and how Lily shows resilience through her relationship with her surrogate mother and her personal growth. Bowlby's Attachment Theory and other psychoanalytic approaches are also used to critically analyze Lily's psychological development and behaviour. With that, the main focus of this study is on analyzing how Lily overcomes the psychological wounds she experiences when she loses her mother figure and how Lily builds emotional resilience with the role of a surrogate mother figure.

As with other qualitative research, researchers play an important role in this study because they are the main research instrument. The researcher here collects, analyzes, and interprets data. Geddis-Regan et al. (2022) explain that researchers in qualitative research are important figures because, in interpreting data, the researcher's insights and perspectives are the main determinants. Meanwhile, the data used in this study are divided into primary and secondary data. The primary data from this study are events, direct quotes, and character descriptions in the novel *The Secret Life of Bees*. Secondary data from this study from various sources such as journals, articles, and academic books related to maternal deprivation, resilience, and literary analysis provide additional information and theoretical support needed in this study. This study has several stages in data collection and analysis. The first stage is to read and reread the novel to identify the main themes and events that indicate the main themes. The second stage is when the researcher identifies and groups textual evidence related to



maternal deprivation and resilience from the novel. The third stage is to analyze data using Bowlby's theory and psychoanalysis. The final stage is to present the analysis results in a thematic explanation accompanied by textual evidence from the novel and academic references to support the findings statement.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The discussion of maternal deprivation and psychological resilience in the novel *The Secret Life of Bees* is presented in this sub-chapter. Lily Owens, the main focus of this study, is analyzed for her psychological struggle after losing her mother figure, which makes her look for a mother figure. Lily's condition of experiencing maternal deprivation makes her emotionally unstable, has low self-esteem, and makes it difficult to build stable relationships, showing a relationship with Bowlby's theory Attachment Theory, especially regarding the long-term impact of maternal deprivation. With the relationship with Rosaleen and the Boatwright sisters, especially August, Lily begins to find stability and better emotional management and resilience with the help of the role of a surrogate mother. On the other hand, the Black Madonna also has a significant impact on Lily, especially in strengthening the role of spirituality in overcoming trauma with the maternal power of the Black Madonna. The end of the discussion in this sub-chapter will explain how alternative parenting relationships with surrogate mothers, beliefs, and emotional support can help reduce the impact of maternal deprivation experienced by Lily. In addition, the discussion of this study will also explain how Lily's journey finally leads to healing, self-acceptance, and psychological resilience.

4.1 Maternal Deprivation in Sue Monk Kidd's *The Secret Life of Bees*

This chapter discuss maternal deprivation experienced by Lily. The absence of maternal care that makes Lily struggle emotionally and psychologically is analyzed using the Attachment Theory and Deprivation Framework suggested by Bowlby. Materna deprivation is divided into two main categories: emotional neglect and the search for a maternal figure.

4.1.1 Emotional Neglect

The characteristics of maternal deprivation are shown by the absence of emotional attention and the absence of a warm relationship between mother and child for years, thus forming children with psychological stress and feelings of insecurity (Bowlby, 1982). According to Beckett et al. (2010), children whose emotions are ignored by their mothers early in their lives eventually have problems later in life such as self-esteem, emotional regulation, and building safe relationships. This is as explained by Shonkoff & Phillips (2000) that when a child feels abandoned, he will build harmful coping mechanisms, such as blaming himself and withdrawing emotionally. Research by Zeanah et al. (2009) also shows that early maternal deprivation significantly contributes to individual development in forming children who can have safe, lasting, and trusting relationships. Lily, who experienced emotional neglect after the absence of a mother figure after her mother's death, made her have chaos in her emotions and psychology.



"I worried constantly that I was the reason she left, that I had done something terrible without knowing what it was." (Kidd, 2002, p. 17)

The quote above shows how Lily blames herself and shows that she feels worthless. This feeling arises from the long-term impact of the absence of a mother figure in Lily's early life. She perceives herself as unlovable and responsible for her mother's absence, reinforcing her deep-seated insecurity. The loss of maternal love leads Lily to seek validation from external sources particularly through surrogate maternal figures, According to Bowlby (1982), children who fail to form a secure attachment in early life often develop a heightened sense of guilt and internalized shame. further exacerbating their emotional struggles. These feelings of inadequacy and longing are commonly seen in individuals who have experienced disrupted caregiver bonds (Luthar et al., 2000).

Similarly, Rosaleen, Lily's caregiver, attempts to provide emotional support, but her role is limited due to the racial and social constraints of the 1960s. Cultural and racial factors can influence the accessibility and effectiveness of surrogate caregiving relationships, as systemic barriers often limit emotional support for marginalized individuals (Sue & Sue, 2016). The following excerpt highlights Lily's realization of Rosaleen's limitations:

"Rosaleen had taken care of me the best she could, but she wasn't my mother." (Kidd, 2002, p. 26)

Despite Rosaleen's presence, Lily continues to yearn for maternal love, illustrating how emotional neglect fosters a persistent void that cannot be easily filled. Based on research by Zeanah et al. (2009) shows that children who experience maternal deprivation often seek affection from others. Although getting substitute affection, the relationship cannot wholly replace the affection the biological mother gave. This maternal deprivation has a significant and long-term psychological impact where children will have difficulty having trust when having relationships with others, have bad emotional stress, and increase the possibility of individuals experiencing depression and anxiety (Masten, 2001; Werner & Smith, 1982).

Lily's longing for her mother figure that has not been resolved makes her try to find out her mother's past in the hope that her mother's past can be a healer for the wound of her mother's absence and can form a feeling of having a mother figure in Lily's life. Caruth (1996) explains that an individual's journey shows a more profound psychological need to resolve the trauma that the individual has. Lily's search for a mother figure in the novel *The Secret Life of Bees* is related to Pargament's findings (1997), which explain that alternative relationships and attachments can give rise to spiritual and emotional resilience. In this case, Lily shows how her relationship with August Boatwright and the Black Madonna has an impact on her psychology and spirituality. The help Lily received from her good relationship with August Boatwright and the Black Madonna is shown by how Lily finally began to heal from her psychological wounds and began to accept herself. In addition, having a strong female role model and a supportive community also helped Lily to be resilient. This is related to what was explained by Ungar (2004) and Walker et al. (2011), who explained that someone can reduce emotional neglect's



impact in early life by having a female role model and a community that supports the individual in healing.

The experience of not having a mother figure significantly impacted Lily's psychological formation. Despite experiencing difficulties, Lily also gained resilience skills and coping strategies, which could help her to reduce the negative impact of the absence of a mother figure and emotional neglect in her childhood. These resilience skills and coping strategies come with the role of a substitute mother figure who provides strength from the spiritual and emotional relationships that Lily and the women around her have. With a good relationship, Lily finally built self-esteem and a sense of security. In addition, Lily also shows that even though she did not have a mother figure, which made her experience wounds, it could be overcome with a good relationship and self-discovery.

4.1.2 The Search for Maternal Figures

The search for a mother figure that makes Lily desperate is shown in how she travels to Tiburon, South Carolina. Lily's meeting with The Boatwright sisters—August, June, and May—is a bright spot because with August's emergence as Lily's principal surrogate mother, she can feel the warmth of a mother figure, even though it is a surrogate mother. A surrogate mother figure is important because according to Luthar et al. (2000) a surrogate mother figure can play a role in fostering resilience in children who experience maternal deprivation. By finding a nurturing environment with the Boatwright sisters, Lily begins to heal from the emotional neglect of her past. Lily's relationship with August is pivotal in her emotional healing, as seen in the following passage:

“You gotta imagine what’s never been and make it real. It’s the only way.” (Kidd, 2002, p. 140)

August's nurturing guidance helps Lily reconstruct her identity and self-worth. Unlike T. Ray, Lily's abusive father, August provides the unconditional love and acceptance that Lily has been missing. Research supports that consistent, positive caregiving relationships can help counteract early emotional neglect and facilitate attachment security (Beckett et al., 2010; Bowlby, 1982). August's influence enables Lily to develop emotional resilience and a sense of belonging, reinforcing Bowlby's theory that alternative attachment figures can mitigate the negative effects of maternal deprivation

May Boatwright also plays a crucial role in Lily's healing. Although May struggles with her own psychological burdens, her sensitivity and empathy provide Lily with a sense of familial connection. The following excerpt underscores this bond:

“She put my hand against her chest and said, ‘This is where it all comes from.’” (Kidd, 2002, p. 158)

May's act symbolizes the transmission of emotional strength and resilience. By placing Lily's hand over her heart, May not only offers comfort but also imparts a lesson on emotional



connection and shared grief. Shonkoff & Phillips (2000) explained that substitute caregivers who show empathy will help children who are in the process of recovering from trauma gain emotional stability. May and August's relationship with Lily provides help to overcome the lack of a mother's role in Lily's life, which can help her overcome the emotional deficiencies she experiences.

Another character from *Boatwright* is June. June initially did not have a close relationship with Lily, but in the end, she contributed to Lily's development. June was initially reluctant to accept Lily, emphasising Lily's struggle to accept herself. However, this gradually changed after June, and Lily's relationship became warm and open. June finally gave Lily support as a family. This stage shows how children who do not have a mother figure at an early age try to trust and build bonds with others (Werner & Smith, 1982). With the role of the Boatwright Sisters, Lily was helped to establish emotional resilience. As explained by Masten (2001) and Ungar (2004), the role of the environment has a positive impact on reducing individual difficulties in their childhood.

In addition to the Boatwright Sisters, Black Madonna has a positive relationship with Lily. Black Madonna's relationship with Lily shows how Lily seeks guidance from a mother. Black Madonna is a figure glorified by the Boatwright Sisters and gives Lily comfort and a sense of spiritual belonging. Pargament (1997) explained that a spiritual framework can be a coping mechanism for individuals experiencing psychological stress. The psychological stress felt by Lily is the feeling of the absence of a mother that makes her insecure and reject a binding relationship. Here, the Black Madonna becomes solace by being present as a maternal figure who facilitates healing, which complements the emotional support of the Boatwright Sisters.

This discussion shows that Lily's journey is a transformative journey of alternative parenting relationships that can help Lily overcome the absence of her biological mother in her life. By entering the positive environment of the Boatwright family, Lily learns how to overcome her trauma and begins to love herself. What Lily experienced is in line with the research of Walker et al. (2011), which explains that substitute attachments and meaningful relationships can help individuals gain strength and become resilient. With parenting guidance from August, emotional empathy from May, and growing support from June, Lily can heal and become resilient with substitute attachments and meaningful relationships.

4.2 Spiritual Resilience in Sue Monk Kidd's *The Secret Life of Bees*

The discussion of how the mother's shortcomings can foster spiritual resilience in Lily is explained in this sub-chapter. Spiritual resilience is analyzed through faith as a coping mechanism and the Black Madonna as a symbol of empowerment.

4.2.1 Faith as a Coping Mechanism

Faith serves as a psychological buffer against trauma, providing individuals with hope and meaning in adversity (Pargament, 1997). Research suggests that spiritual beliefs and religious practices offer a structured means of emotional regulation, fostering resilience in individuals who have experienced significant loss (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Faith provides a cognitive framework that helps individuals reframe negative experiences, reducing stress and enhancing



emotional stability (Masten, 2001; Pargament, 1997). In *The Secret Life of Bees*, Lily's introduction to the religious rituals of the Boatwright sisters instills in her a sense of belonging and purpose, demonstrating the transformative power of faith. The following quotation illustrates Lily's emotional refuge in faith:

“When I looked at the Black Madonna, I saw myself—someone who had suffered and survived.” (Kidd, 2002, p. 212)

The Black Madonna becomes a mirror of Lily's struggles, symbolizing resilience and divine love. By identifying with the Black Madonna, Lily gains a renewed sense of strength and self-worth. Studies indicate that spirituality can serve as a protective factor against psychological distress, helping individuals navigate grief and emotional pain (Pargament, 1997; Werner & Smith, 1982). Religious and spiritual coping strategies, including prayer, meditation, and sacred symbols, have been shown to help trauma survivors reframe their suffering into personal growth (Walker et al., 2011). Lily's sadness and feelings of worthlessness were cured by Lily's belief in the Black Madonna. With this belief, Lily finally began to change by redefining her identity and not being fixated on her feelings of not having a mother figure.

This is supported by the role of August Boatwright, who has a maternal side by teaching to strengthen faith during healing. The teachings given by August encouraged Lily to see spirituality as a personal journey and not as a form of rigid belief. The rituals performed by the Boatwright Sisters, which were dedicated to the Black Madonna, provided Lily with an environment that allowed her to find solace while still being in the realm of spirituality. This is explained by (Walker et al., 2011), who explained how social practices can increase emotional resilience by fostering feelings of inner peace and stability. Lily's faith provides emotional protection and functions as self-empowerment, guiding her to accept herself and become independent.

Another aspect of faith that plays an important role in Lily's healing is the communal aspect. The Daughters of Mary, a group of women who worship the Black Madonna, welcome Lily and provide a sense of support from a family. Lily's emotional emptiness from her mother's absence is healed by this communal worship, supported by Ungar (2004), who explains that social spirituality contributes to psychological well-being. Luthar et al. (2000) also explain that religious practices carried out in groups can increase feelings of connection and social support that help individuals gain psychological resilience. Lily's involvement with The Daughters of Mary makes her learn to rely on faith not only as an abstract belief but as a source of comfort and active guidance for her psychology.

In addition to providing support, the faith of Lily also heals trauma from the past and finds healing in the future. The symbolism of the Black Madonna, depicted as a caring, strong and loving mother, gives Lily the mother figure she longs for. Pargament (1997) and Werner & Smith (1982) explained that spiritual representation could function as a compensatory attachment figure, and in this case, Lily, who experienced maternal deprivation, was greatly helped by spiritual representation. This is because, with the feeling of getting the mother she longed for, Lily began to experience transformation and accept herself.



4.2.2 The Black Madonna as a Symbol of Empowerment

The Black Madonna who guides Lily symbolizes the divine femininity and the strength of a mother whose presence Lily greatly desires. This is further supported by how the devotion of the Boatwright Sisters to the Madonna made Lily increasingly understand that a mother's love cannot only be found in biological relationships but also outside of biological ties. Pargament (1997) and Werner & Smith (1982) support that symbolic maternal figures can provide emotional stability and a sense of belonging, especially for individuals who do not have a mother figure early in life. With the presence of the Black Madonna in Lily's life, she gradually begins to have a sense of security by seeking external validity. This is shown in the quote below:

“She was the mother I’d never had, the one who understood everything.” (Kidd, 2002, p. 256)

The quote above shows that Lily began to realize and became a turning point in her psychological journey. Previously, she tried to seek validation from her late mother, which she could not get because her mother had died. With the presence of the Black Madonna, Lily began to find a new source of meaning for her desire for a mother figure. This shift aligns with Pargament's concept of spiritual transformation, where individuals find new sources of meaning and resilience through faith (Pargament, 1997). Shonkoff & Phillips (2000) explain that research in trauma psychology shows that when individuals can develop greater emotional resilience and coping mechanisms with spirituality.

Lily's spirituality is further strengthened by the wise figure of August, where he builds the symbolism of the Black Madonna. This is shown in the quote below:

“We are all called to mother ourselves.” (Kidd, 2002, p. 275)

The statement above is an indicator of the final stage of Lily's healing, where she begins to accept herself and have emotions that should be more stable. From the spiritual guidance she received, Lily began to build her resilience. According to Luthar et al. (2000), resilience is often fostered through alternative caregiving relationships and personal development, both at the heart of Lily's transformation. The nurturing environment August and the Boatwright sisters created helped Lily build her emotional independence. The role of The Black Madonna is also huge in building shared empowerment for the Daughters of Mary. This is because the Black Madonna is a strength for women who have endured hardship and strengthen each other together. This is related to what Walker et al. (2011) explained how the spiritual group environment can increase feelings of support and solidity. That is why Lily considers the Black Madonna not only as motherly love but also as a source of personal understanding, which helps her value herself and be resilient. Ungar (2004) explains that embracing a spiritual figure, as Lily did, can build self-esteem and resilience.

The role of the Black Madonna has gone beyond Lily's psychological healing. This is because the Black Madonna has become a symbol of female strength and spiritual guidance.



The Black Madonna, throughout history, has been associated with protection, wisdom, and resilience, qualities that Lily internalized as she grew up. According to Pargament (1997), the act of praying and seeking solace in the Black Madonna allowed Lily to reclaim her emotional health, which had been robbed of her by her mother's absence. According to Masten (2001), Lily's spiritual resilience can be an adaptive mechanism that allows Lily and others to overcome adversity.

Through Lily's journey, she demonstrates the power of faith and a symbolic mother figure who can overcome the trauma of maternal deprivation. The Black Madonna becomes more than just a religious icon because she becomes a helper in Lily's emotional and psychological growth. Through this spiritual connection, Lily resolves her past wounds and can affirm that maternal love and strength can be found in many forms outside of the traditional family structure. Lily's experiences reinforce broader psychological theories of resilience, which suggest that individuals can find healing through spiritual and communal support (Masten, 2001; Pargament, 1997).

5. CONCLUSION

The impact of maternal deprivation on emotional and psychological development and the resilience mechanisms that enable individuals to cope with the trauma of maternal deprivation are the main topics of this study. Findings from this study indicate that maternal care plays a significant role in emotional and psychological development (Bowlby, 1982; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). When a child does not receive good maternal care, he or she will experience emotional instability, difficulty in forming relationships, and long-term psychological distress (Rutter et al., 2010; Zeanah et al., 2005). However, resilience can also counterbalance, allowing individuals to find security through substitute caregivers, supportive communities, or personal coping mechanisms (Luthar et al., 2000; Masten, 2001).

The *Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kidd is one of the literary works that demonstrates this psychological dynamic as demonstrated by Lily Owens. Lily Owens lost her mother, which caused her to struggle with emotional isolation, but she developed resilience through the nurturing relationship she formed with a surrogate mother figure. Kidd's story relates to attachment theory and the framework of psychological resilience, namely how alternative caregiving can reduce the impact of maternal absence.

This research becomes important because it contributes to the discourse of childhood adversity, resilience, and alternative caregiving structures. By conducting research that uses literary works as data using psychological analysis theory, this study offers how maternal absence affects humans, which is even depicted in literary works. The findings in this study provide important perspectives for psychologists, educators, and caregivers in understanding and supporting individuals who have experienced early maternal loss. In addition, this study also paves the way for further exploration of the role of literature in describing and informing psychological phenomena that can later be used to deepen our understanding of human emotional development.



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