

Tribhuvan University

Gender and Racial Trauma in Kidd's *The Secret Life of Bees*

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In the Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
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By

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Letter of Recommendation

Sapana B.K has completed her thesis entitled “Gender and Racial Trauma in Kidd’s *The Secret Life of Bees*” under my supervision. She carried out her research from June, 2015 to April, 2016. I hereby recommend her thesis to be submitted for viva voce.

Badri Prasad Acharya

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Gender and Racial Trauma in Kidd’s *The Secret Life of Bees*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Sapana B.K has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Internal Supervisor

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Abstract

This thesis examines Sue Monk Kidd's *The Secret Life of Bees* in order to explore the implications of trauma on middleclass female Lily's and other minor characters and gender performance. The trauma that women encounter within the novel occurs within the domestic sphere and is results of the accident. This thesis interrogates women's experiences within the domestic sphere, ultimately reflecting trauma. The novel tells the story of a motherless fourteen year-old Lily Owens, who has been raised by a cruel father, desperately searches for clues to unlock her mother's past. Kidd's novel reveals the incredible power of black women, particularly a group of beekeeping sisters and black Mary, to create a safe haven where Lily can examine her fragmented life and develop psychologically, finally becoming a self-actualized young lady. Drawing upon the notion of Jenny Edkin's, Kali Tal and Jeffrey C. Alexander, this thesis excels the issues of cultural trauma. Finally, Lily is able to negate limitation created by gender and racial domination and finds solace in the interactions and gains strength in her independence.

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