TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Gender Representation in Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden*

A thesis submitted to the Central Department of English in the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in English

By

Jhak Bahadur Rana

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

July 2011

Tribhuvan University

Central Department of English

University Campus, Kirtipur, Kathmandu

Letter of Recommendation

I certify that Mr. Jhak Bahadur Rana has completed his thesis entitled "Gender Representation in Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden*" under my supervision. He carried out his research from December 2010 to July 2011. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voice.

_____

Mahesh Paudyal

Supervisor

Date: ……

Tribhuvan University

Central Department of English

Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled "Gender Representation in Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Jhak Bahadur Rana, has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

Members of Research Committee:

_____ _____

Internal Examiner

_____ _____

External Examiner

_____ _____

Head

Central Department of English

_____ Date: _____

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Mr. Mahesh Paudyal, for his kind support, advice, patient counsel and valuable constructive suggestion. This thesis would hardly have witnessed the form it enjoys at present without his vision, guidance and dignified suggestions and continuous encouragement during the thesis work.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Ammaraj Joshi, Head of the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, for the approval of this thesis in its present form. I am also grateful to my respected teacher Mr. Pushpa Acharya and all the teachers of center Department of English for providing me valuable suggestions in developing the topic of the thesis and encouraging me to face the accompanying difficulties.

I am also grateful to my friends Kumar, Arjun, Arim, Padam, Tika, Laxman, Bhaktasha, Nabraj and Bhim Prasad Sharma for their continuous encouragement and kind help. My special thanks go to my friend Debendra Thapa, and my brother Kul Bahadur Rana for their help and inspiration.

My deepest gratitude goes to my parents Mr. Janga Bahadur Rana and Mrs. Remsara Rana and my family members especially my brother Singh Bahadur Rana, for their endless support, love, care, advice, mental support and for providing me with the resources I needed to get through my graduate studies.

July 2011 **Jhak Bahadur Rana**

Abstract

This research on *The Secret Garden* digs out the subversion of gender roles through the characterization of Mary, Colin, Dickon and Ben Weatherstaff. Mary and Colin are two characters who transform with the development of the novel. Mary is ugly, rude, ignored and unsocialized in the beginning but she transforms herself into a socialized, beautiful and likeable girl through her inborn nature of strong, independent and curious individual at the end. She is absent in the last chapter because she does not want to bow down before the hands of patriarchy. Mary doesn't join hands with Colin and Archibald to be independent and free from patriarchal hegemony. Similarly, Colin also transforms himself into a likeable boy from weak, crippled and hysteric. On the other hand, Dickon and Ben Weatherstaff remain static throughout the novel. These two characters subvert the traditional roles of mothering. They play crucial roles to transform Mary and Colin by providing proper guidance, advices and suggestions. They do not reveal any dominant male characteristics; rather they exhibit feminine roles of nurturing, caring, nourishing and protective mother.

Table of Contents

Page no.

I. *The Secret Garden*: an Appreciation of Frances Hodgson Burnett

Frances Eliza Hodgson Burnett was born on Cheetham Hill Road in Manchester, England, in 1849. She was the third of five children by Eliza Boond and Edwin Hodgson, "both of whom came from solid Lancashire families" (Gerzina 12). Frances had an innate talent and passion for writing and storytelling. "She kept all her young friends amused by making up episodic stories…she loved an audience" (Gerzina 20). When Frances was in her early teens, Hodgson family decided to move the family to Knoxville, Tennessee. "At the age of eighteen, Frances attempted to supplement the family's income with her writing" (Parsons 250). Her first pieces, entitled *Hearts and Diamonds* and *Miss Carruthers' Engagement* were published in June 1868 and October 1868 respectively, in the *Godey's Lady's Magazine* under the pseudonym, 'The Second.' She continued to support her family writing five or six stories each month, for ten dollars a piece. Burnett wrote "a considerable number of love stories using the popular Cinderella formula—an attractive young woman wins the affection of a man whose sophistication, wealth, or social class is superior to hers" (Bixler 20).

In her second group of published stories, Frances showed "female protagonists learning to fulfill social expectations for a woman, especially a wife and mother," and her next several stories portrayed "the dark side of the convention of romantic attachments across class lines" (Bixler 20-1). Frances got married to Swan Burnett in 1873. In 1876, she published her first official novel, *That Lass 'O Lowries*. Frances and Swan moved to Washington D.C. that same year, where Swan was struggling with his ophthalmology practice. In this period, she was working on four novels--including *Haworth* (1879), *A Fair Barbarian* (1881), *Through One Administration* (1883), and *Sara Crewe* (1888). Her best-selling novels are *Esmeralda* (1881) and

Little Lord Fauntleroy (1886). In 1890, Frances was consumed with overwhelming grief when her eldest son Lionel died of tuberculosis. Her works written during this time, *Giovanni and the Other* (a collection of short stories), *In the Closed Room* (a two part book), and *The White People* (a book dedicated to Lionel), convey this grief. Returning to Washington in 1893, Frances wrote a new book *The One I Knew the Best of All*, a story of her own life to age 18.

After her son Lionel's death, her marital life became worse. She became ill again. This time, more than the "nervous exhaustion from which she had suffered earlier," her illness was her heart, with "palpitations, shortness of breath and extremely painful chest seizures" (Gerzina 194). Gossip surrounded Frances about a possible extra-marital affair until Frances and Swan finally divorced in 1898. In 1900, Frances asserted she was "dragged, threatened and blackmailed" into her second marriage to Stephen Townsend, "an aspiring actor who had also served as her business manager" (Gerzina 218). Unfortunately, this marriage was again unsuccessful and they divorced only two years later in 1902. Despite Frances's personal and physical challenges, she continued to write prolifically for the next two decades. She moved back to America and in 1908 bought a home in the Plandome area of Manhasset, Long Island. It was there that she enjoyed success with works such as *The Lost Prince* (1915), *Robin* (1922), and *The Head of the House of Coombe* (1922). Of course, her most successful work written there was *The Secret Garden* (1911). In the years between 1877 and 1925, Frances published approximately 59 books and wrote 13 plays. Frances died on the morning of October 29th, 1924 in Plandome with her sister and son Vivian by her side. Her work influenced such writers as D. H. Lawrence and T. S. Eliot, and it continues to be wide-read and praised throughout the world.

Clearly, Frances's life influenced her work on many levels. Among other things, her son's death, and her own battle with illnesses found their way into her art through the psychological and physical illnesses confronted and resolved by some of her characters. In life, she tried to maintain both her family and professional life despite all her struggles. In fact, the most admirable in her work is its positive spirit, especially *The Secret Garden*.

The Secret Garden centers around the female protagonist Mary Lennox, a ten year old girl who goes to live at Misselthwaite Manor in England, which is owned by her enigmatic uncle, Mr. Archibald Craven. Her parents and ayah died of cholera in India when Mary was only a young girl. She was handed over to a caretaker named Mrs. Medlock, who was also the caretaker of Misselthwaite Manor. Upon arriving at Misselthwaite Manor, located in London, Mary goes through a character transformation as she interacts with the people living in the house. Mary discovers more and more about her surroundings such as the Yorkshire moors while she is at Misselthwaite Manor.

One day she discovers the secret garden of the title, it was special because it was here where Mr. Archibald Craven's wife had died and he had it locked up and the key hidden because of this tragedy. Mary was not supposed to have discovered it because Mr. Craven did not want anyone to go in there after his wife died. Mary finds that she can only trust the secret of the garden to Dickon, another boy about her age who loved to play in the moors, and Colin, Mr. Craven's son, who is confined to one room at Misselthwaite Manor and who never leaves it for fear of dying. Throughout most of the novel Mr. Craven refuses to see her or his son because they remind him of his dead wife and the family he once had. It is not until the end of the novel that Mary

is able to finally meet her uncle and reveal her secret of the forgotten and prohibited garden to everyone.

This research focuses specifically on the construction and representation of femininity (both girlhood and womanhood) in one of the books by Frances Hodgson Burnett. Burnett wrote novels and plays in both England and the United States but what she is best known for is her children's books. Among those books, this research particularly focuses on *The Secret Garden* (1911). It specifically examines the mechanisms through which this novel teaches children lessons about appropriate and inappropriate female gender roles. It is hoped that this analysis contributes to informing discussions about these representational processes in children's literature.

The novel under consideration "has been published in various editions, including multi-title volumes, anthologies and collections, and has been translated into different languages including Portuguese and Spanish" (Bixler 99). It should also be noted that *The Secret Garden* has been adapted into motion pictures and plays, which offers prospective users of these texts additional resources to develop students' English-language abilities.

The book selected for the analysis has remained popular amongst readers over the years and has reached millions of readers across the globe. According to *The Dictionary of Literary Biography*, *The Secret Garden* was voted "one of the nation's 100 best loved novels by the British Public as part of the BBC's 'The Big Read' in 2003 (100). It is hoped, this text is relevant because of its continued popularity amongst children not only then but also at the present time.

Focusing on the works of Frances Hodgson Burnett has to do with who she was as an author. She was a nineteenth century novelist and playwright. Burnett's impact and influence on the genre of children's literature has been established by

Bixler, who argues that *The Secret Garden* paved the way for other children's classics of the era including, Lewis Carol's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Peter Pan* and *Cinderella*. Another critic, Anne Thwaite has noted:

> Since Frances Hodgson Burnett's death, her one of the major children's *The Secret Garden*, have never been out of print. *The Secret Garden* has real children in a real story. It has steadily established itself as one of the few real classics of children's literature. (1)

Burnett won prestigious prizes for her works in both Europe and the United States and is remembered as one of the most respectable contemporary writers of her time. She was not only a respected children's writer, biographer and educator but also a well-known literary female who poured her own life experiences into her work. She wrote prolifically during the Victorian Era, a time with "an underpaid workforce consisting of adults and children living in wretched poverty and where millions of workers lived in slums or in vacated old decaying upper class houses" (Weston 2). Burnett reflected and negotiated the gender struggles faced by women and women writers during the Victorian Era; her books reflect the tensions and contradictions of this period in their settings and plots. Victorian feminists complained about unequal distribution of power between men and women and the roles that they played in society. In the 1880s, literature was an outlet through which authors constructed a reality that sharply contrasted with the reality of their time.

One trend of feminist criticism of children's literature has been to reclaim and regard women authors who have been traditionally undervalued. In *Girls, Boys, Books, Toys,* Beverly Lyon Clark adds, "In children's literature there have been lost traditions-not just children's literature itself but also children's literature by women". Frances Hodgson Burnett falls under this category since most of the authors of classic

nineteenth-century children's literature are men (3). For this reason, the research focuses on a female writer and examines how her writing defines femininity in the Victorian Era and issues definitions of female gender roles for contemporary young readers. According to Judith Lorber, "most people find it hard to believe that gender is constantly created and recreated out of human interaction, out of social life, and are the texture and order of that social life" (113). She also notes that "resistance and rebellion are the forces that manage to alter gender norms and push the limits of established gender roles" (115).

The critical analysis of the female gender roles and stereotypes constructed in Burnett's one of the novels discusses the extent to which she adopted, adapted and/or resisted acceptable notions of femininity in the Victorian Era. Furthermore, this examination of how this text is read and interpreted by a contemporary young reader sheds light on the discussion about the changing character of gender roles and identities. It is convincing that notions of gender "acceptability" or "unacceptability" in literature not only reflect the social world but also alter it. As Hilary Lips contends, "there is no single stereotype of femininity (or masculinity): these constructs are specific to time and place and are continually being reworked and their boundaries renegotiated" (5).

In the analysis of gender representations in Frances Hodgson Burnett's children's novel, this research focuses specifically on the representation of femininity for three reasons. First, the book under study is addressed primarily at a girl readership. Secondly, "numerous studies have been conducted on children's books that reveal that males always outnumber females by a significant proportion and that males are most likely to be portrayed as positive, active and competent, while females are more likely to be portrayed as negative, passive, and incompetent". Thirdly, Patty

Cambell believes that “there is certain discrimination towards works whose content is female-based. Works whose content is male based is more often than not praised and not rejected as opposed to the female based content found in many works” (577). Aiming to address these omissions in the scholarship on children’s literature, this research has chosen to focus exclusively on the representation of girls. It is also hoped that this thesis will contribute to validating the study of girls and women in children’s literature and offers educators a resource for gender re-education.

It is hypothesized that the female representation in the literary texts as in tradition is dismantled and growing women empowerment is depicted in *The Secret Garden*. The central character Mary Lennox gradually transforms herself from a naïve, innocent and ignorant individual to a courageous, valorous and challenging girl. The stereotyped gender roles are subverted in *The Secret Garden*. For example, Mary is so obstinate that governesses would not stay long enough to teach her, and she teaches herself to read simply because she wants to learn. When Mr. Craven wants to arrange for a governess for her she begs him to wait so that she can play outdoors and get stronger. Nature and, by association, the female principle become Mary’s teachers.

The Secret Garden has received criticism as well as acclaim. A common complaint is that it “stereotypes female roles and positions women as subservient and subjugated to men” (Gunther 65). Silver suggests that the garden itself is problematic to a feminist reading because it represents an enclosed, domestic space, and Mary learns traditional female values within it. Another common criticism is that while “Mary is initially the dynamic force, her role diminishes, and the focus switches to Colin” (Knoepflmacher 95). Elizabeth Lennox Keyser feels that Mary “slips increasingly into the background until she disappears entirely from the final chapter”

(9). She also asserts that as Colin ascends to manhood, Mary must necessarily enter the silence and submission of womanhood. This research counters the above criticism with an interpretation that recognizes the subversive power of the feminine, a power that undermines patriarchal domination. *The Secret Garden* has been read for issues of sexuality and liberation (Wilkie, 1997), the pragmatics of language within linguistic theory (Morgan, 1989), its representation of nature (Darcy, 1995), class politics in colonial society (Phillips, 1993), and to demonstrate a therapeutic process (Almond, 1990).

After considering these interpretations, it gives a space to the different level of interpretation, a hidden story, of which had not previously been aware. This analysis of *The Secret Garden* reveals a celebration of the feminine and the subversion of patriarchal society within the narrative.

The above mentioned critics have interpreted this text from the light of gender sexuality, social norms, sexist point of view, the pragmatics of language, colonial view, power politics and social hierarchy but none of them has directed their critical eyes from the perspective of re-evaluating the gender representation. So, this research tries to analyze this text from the vector of critiquing the gender representation.

The prime objective of the study is to show the depiction of a girl in the light of gender representation. With the minute observation of the character Mary Lennox, this research aims at deconstructing the patriarchal evaluation of women as mere object for men. Moreover, the study also aims at establishing the importance of female character in the reunion of a family and their role to make males responsible and dutiful.

This research mainly emphasizes to engage in a gendered literary analysis of the representation of femininity (womanhood and girlhood) in *The secret Garden,* one

of the novels by Frances Hodgson Burnett. The most significant part of the study entails doing a critical reading of this text, informed by gender theories, in order to examine the various ways in which the author proposes definitions of “appropriate” and “inappropriate” female roles, and the extent to which these definitions amount to stereotypical or non-stereotypical, conformist or nonconformist characterizations of women and girls.

This research seeks to contribute to the literature on the representation of gender roles, and femininity in particular. This project legitimizes the scholarly study of gender that seeks to understand and explain the various forces that shape gender identities. It focuses on a woman writer and on the representation of girls, giving voice to women, who have not yet received a fair share of attention in academic writing.

The Secret Garden portrays the development and empowerment of women in the present world despite the constraints of patriarchal society. However, number of critics have worked on this book from different perspectives i.e. sex versus gender, feminist literary and cultural analysis, various gender theories, psychological reading, etc. producing critical tradition of multiple veins and values.

Sex is not the same as gender but the terms are intricately related. This relationship has been studied by many disciplines, theorists and researchers who have attempted to define the limits of each concept. Psychologist and Women’s Studies professor Hillary Lips explains that:

> Sex is associated with biology, and the biological distinction between *male* and *female l*eads human beings to shape gender in the culture that they live in. In other words, what you are labeled as at birth, whether

> boy or girl, is not developed into something gendered until it is functioning within a given society. (1)

This development takes place within the frame of "sex stereotypes", defined by Lips as socially shared beliefs that certain qualities can be assigned to individuals based on their membership in the female or male half of the human race. Therefore, human beings often tend to divide and categorize males and females into discrete groups, constructing them as complete opposites in society. Anything that does not fall under the criteria that make males male and females female is considered to be wrong and unacceptable. When we tend to frown upon certain things that males or females do because we do not consider them appropriate for a male or a female we are stereotyping human beings into certain molds and structures provided by our culture and society. For Lips, then, gender is the term used for the expectations held by societies with respect to feminine and masculine roles. Gender stereotypes are based on certain personality traits and can be descriptive: describing what the typical woman and man are like; or prescriptive: saying what women and men should be like. Lips adds that gender stereotypes are multifaceted insofar as people hold variable sets of stereotypes about different "types" of males and females instead of affirming a single "typical" male and female.

Reflecting on the process through which gender is socially constructed, sociologist Judith Lorber notes that:

> It is not a fixed category but an ever-evolving product of culture and society. Gender is something everyone "does" without thinking about it or being conscious about its implications; it is such a naturalized part of everyday life that unless someone or something breaks our expectations, it tends to go unnoticed. (113)

She believes that gender operates at three levels: as a process, as a stratification system and as a structure. “Gender is a process because it creates distinguishable social statuses for the assignments of rights and responsibilities to women and men” (115); “it is a stratification system because in most cultural contexts gender ranks men above women” (116); and “it is a structure because it divides work in both domestic and public spheres and organizes sexual and emotional life for people according to their sex” (117).

Gender communication scholar Julia Woods is also concerned with how sex and gender are imbricated in social and communicative practices. She notes that:

> There is a tendency to think and speak about sex and gender in essentialist terms, as if there were a stable distinct essence that is “woman” and some stable, distinct essence that is “man”. When people essentialize, they have the tendency to reduce something or someone to certain characteristics assumed to be essential to its/his/her nature. (180)

In Wood’s view, gender is socially and psychologically constructed and can be altered more easily than sex. Her observation about the flexible and variable nature of gender opens a space for the critical consideration of gender representations in literature (as well as in other arts). It compels us to assess the ways in which nonstereotypical or nonessential gender images may contribute to transforming the stratification system and structure identified by Lorber.

All three authors agree that people often tend to equate sex and gender; the critical study of gender representations in literature is one way to increase gender awareness by demarcating the boundaries that separate nature from culture and exposing the constructed nature of gender stereotypes.

According to Donald Hall, feminist literary and cultural analysis is grounded on the recognition that:

> Language, institutions, and social power structures have reflected patriarchal interests throughout much of history; this has had a profound impact on women's ability to express themselves and the quality of their daily lives. Yet at the same time, women have resisted and subverted patriarchal oppression in a variety of ways. This combination of patriarchal oppression and women's resistance to it is apparent in many literary and other cultural texts. (202)

In efforts to understand this tension, feminists resort to various gender theories. As Hall adds:

> For traditional feminists, the most important way to resist patriarchy is to challenge laws and other institutional barriers to women's equality. For post-structuralist feminists, man/woman is a hierarchical binary that may be challenged through intense critical scrutiny. This may include an exploration of prelinguistic experiences of essential femininity or attention to gender as performance. (201)

According to her, best way to resist patriarchy and hierarchical binary is to challenge values and norms constructed by patriarchy. As theorist, Judith Butler (1990) puts it in her book *Gender Trouble*; "Genders can be neither true nor false, neither real nor apparent, neither original nor derive genders can also be rendered thoroughly and radically incredible" (201). This quote implies that gender can vary for different scholars and that it is a highly interesting and intriguing topic.

In her book *Gender Trouble*, Butler claims that gender performance is not voluntary. Butler also questions the biological concept of binary sex. In *The Second*

Sex, de Beauvoir famously claims that ‘One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman’. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine’. Commenting on de Beauvoir’s statement towards the end of the first chapter of *Gender Trouble*, Butler writes:

> If there is something right in Beauvoir’s claim that ‘one is not born, but rather becomes a woman’, it follows that woman itself is a term in process, a becoming, a constructing that cannot rightfully be said to originate or to end. As an ongoing discursive practice, it is open to intervention and resignification. Even when gender seems to congeal into the most reified forms, the ‘congealing’ is itself an insistent and insidious practice, sustained and regulated by various social means. It is, for Beauvoir, never possible finally to become a woman, as if there were a telos that governs the process of acculturation and construction. (33)

Gender Trouble describes how gender ‘congeals’ or solidifies into a form that makes it appear to have been there all along, and both Butler and de Beauvoir assert that gender is a process which has neither origin nor end, so that it is something that we ‘do’ rather than ‘are’. In her early article, ‘Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex’*, Butler declares that ‘all gender is, by definition, unnatural’ before she proceeds to unprise sex and gender from what many would assume to be their inevitable connection to each other. Butler departs from the common assumption that sex, gender and sexuality exist in relation to each other, so that if, for example, one is biologically female, one is expected to display ‘feminine’ traits and (in a

heteronormative world, i.e. a world in which heterosexuality is deemed to be the norm) to desire men. Instead Butler claims that gender is 'unnatural', so that there is no necessary relationship between one's body and one's gender. In that case, it will be possible to have a designated 'female' body and not to display traits generally considered 'feminine'. In other words, one may be a 'masculine' female or a 'feminine' male. In the first chapter of *Gender Trouble*, Butler develops this idea by arguing that "sex by definition, will be shown to have been gender all along" (46).

If we accept that gender is constructed and that it is not in any way 'naturally' or inevitably connected to sex, then the distinction between sex and gender comes to seem increasingly unstable. In that case, gender is radically independent of sex, 'a free-floating artifice' (49) as Butler puts it, raising the question as to whether 'sex' is as culturally constructed as gender; indeed, perhaps sex was always already gender, so that "the sex/gender distinction is actually not a distinction at all" (49). Butler dispenses with the idea that either gender or sex is an 'abiding substance' by arguing that a heterosexual, heterosexist culture establishes the coherence of those categories in order to perpetuate and maintain what the feminist poet and critic Adrienne Rich has called 'compulsory heterosexuality' – the dominant order in which men and women are required or even forced to be heterosexual. Butler claims that gender identities that do not conform to the system of 'compulsory and naturalized heterosexuality' expose how gender norms are socially instituted and maintained (49).

As an example, she cites Herculine Barbin, a nineteenth-century hermaphrodite who is uncategorizable within the terms of a heterosexual gender binary which assumes a simple correlation between sex and gender and divides people neatly into male/female, masculine/feminine. The twentieth-century English edition of Barbin's journals (Barbin, 1980) is introduced by Foucault and, although Butler

departs from Foucault's account of Herculine's experience in significant ways, she nonetheless affirms that the sexual heterogeneity that is literally embodied by Herculine constitutes an implicit critique of what Butler calls "the metaphysics of substance and the identitarian categories of sex" (49).

The significance of gender in children's literature has been established by a plurality of scholars who, like scholar Elizabeth Dutro, regard the world of "children's books as a highly gendered one" (376). Dutro notes how the mere design of the book raises gender questions: the cover of children's books will entice a boy or a girl based on the color or the characters it contains, and this will be what girls and boys will use to decide whether the book is for "them" (376). In addition, Singh Manjari adds that:

> Gender bias exists in the content, language and illustration of a large number of children's books. This bias may be seen in the extent to which gender is represented as the main character in children's books and how that gender is depicted. (20)

Manjari agrees and argues that, "the manner in which genders are represented in children's literature impacts children's attitudes and perceptions of gender-appropriate behavior in society" (25). The growing body of research into issues of gender representations in children's literature may respond to the perceived importance of such representation for children's social and psychological development. Sharyl Bender notes:

> Gender development is a critical part of the earliest and most important learning experience of a young child. Children's books are especially useful indicators of societal norms, which include gender roles and expectations. (2)

More often than not, it seems that the types of gender representations in children's books are negative. As Sue Wharton notes:

> There is a consensus among those studying the portrayal and construction of gender in books for children that many such books are and have been sexist. Books categorized as sexist may represent more males than females, offer stereotypical images of males and females, and treat a masculine perspective on experience as the social norm. (1)

For all the reasons mentioned above, it is important to analyze the content of children's books from themes to characters to determine where gender is specifically found and how it is transmitted to the readers.

"What is a woman?" is the principal question posed by Simone de Beauvoir in her book, *The Second Sex*, that is widely seen as (one of) the most important starting points of all Feminist inquiry in the Twentieth Century. To answer this, she begins by noting that the biological and social sciences no longer admit the existence of unchangeably fixed entities that determine given characteristics. In other words, there is no pre-given essence or unchanging, universal definition of femininity. Woman is not men's own self but she is man's Other. She is different from man; not same as man. The act of defining oneself is different for woman and man. "When a woman tries to define herself, she starts by saying 'I am a woman,' revealing the fundamental asymmetry between the terms "masculine" and 'feminine.' 'Woman is riveted [fastened with a rivet] into a lopsided [with one side lower, smaller, etc. than the other; unevenly balance) relationship with man: he is the One, she is the Other" (49).

Man "represents both the positive and the neutral, as is indicated by the common use of man to designate human beings in general; whereas woman represents only the negative, defined by limiting criteria, without reciprocity" (15). Woman is

defined by her Woman's ovaries, her uterus, "imprison her in her subjectivity" (43). Man's anatomy does not impinge in the same way upon his conception of his own subjectivity: he "thinks of his body as a direct and normal connection with the world, which he believes he apprehends objectively, whereas he regards the body of woman as a hindrance, a prison, weighed down by everything peculiar to it" (43).

In short, De Beauvoir writes, humanity is “male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being" (45). This poses a problem for women. How can woman step outside this dialectic and envisage herself and the world in ways not constrained or dictated by male perceptions of women? She writes:

> Every individual, concerned to justify his existence feels that his existence involves an undefined need to transcend himself, to engage in freely chosen projects. . . . [W]hat particularly signalizes the situation of woman is that she--a free and autonomous being like all creatures--nevertheless finds herself living in a world where men compel her to assume the status of the Other. . . The drama of woman lies in this conflict between the fundamental aspirations of every subject--who always regards the self as the essential--and the compulsions of a situation in which she is the inessential. (55-6)

The Second Sex identifies patriarchy as the fundamental structure against which woman is defined, referring to it (patriarchy) as “the slavery of half of humanity, together with the whole system of hypocrisy that it implies.” For her, “woman is not born but made” (281). This idea is called social constructionism as mentioned earlier. Opposite to patriarchy’s assumptions, women are not even born with a maternal instinct. An instinct is something all members of a species have as part of their natural

biological makeup, whereas not all women want to have children or feel comfortable being mothers. Yet patriarchy tells them that they are unfulfilled as women if they don't have children, and there is a great deal of pressure brought to bear upon women in order to recruit them for motherhood. Woman is always seen in relation to what she is not. Her destiny is inevitably determined by physiological, psychological, or economic forces. She has been deprived of full membership in the human race.

On the basis of above mentioned feminists and gender theorists, I have targeted my project to gender representation in Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden.* Though this text has been analyzed from different perspective but none is oriented to approach it from the spectrum of gender perspective. It depicts changing scenario of the women of the Victorian Era. Upon arriving at Misselthwaite Manor, located in London, Mary goes through a character transformation as she interacts with the people living in the house. It is also a way of breaking socially enforced silence rather than submitting to it. It is precisely Colin's return to the manor that is Mary's final liberation rather than her defeat. This research has borrowed theoretical concepts to analyze the gender representation with the ideas of Sue Wharton, Sharyl Bender, Singh Manjari, Donald Hall, Julia Woods, Hilary Lips, Simone de Beauvoir, etc. in general and Judith Butler and Judith Lorber in particular.

Although the gender representation is the global issue, this research has to be limited in the particular text. This study is to focus only gender representation on Frances Hodgson Burnett's novel *The Secret Garden* rather than a comprehensive analysis of feminist theories. This study is an analysis of the girl with gendered mind, as considered by Elizabeth Dutro, and theories and sex and gender formation remains the primary tool of analysis. Although the major objective of the study is to deconstruct the gender representation, a comprehensive analysis of Burnett's *The*

Secret Garden lies outside this project due to the nature of research (library research), available time and resources. Only focusing on femininity in one of the novels of Burnett is a limitation because the concept of masculinity has not been analyzed in depth. Only the feminist point of view has been documented leaving the masculine point of view in the dark.

This analysis of gender representations in Frances Hodgson Burnett's book can be expanded to include a full research on masculinity. It is hoped that analyzing on this standpoint will bring to light other important concepts behind gender representations and gender stereotypes that could help further develop gender education in general.

II. Analyses of Gender Roles in Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden*

Stereotyped gender roles are subverted in *The Secret Garden*. The most obviously traditional characteristics are those that deal with the rational male and the intuitive female. Yet while the roles are conventional, the value ascribed to them is inverted. Colin has a passion for science and athletics, while Mary loves storytelling and patiently watching plants sprout and bloom. These are the traditional male/female, rational/intuitive, active/ passive binaries that position males as superior to females, but their connotations are reversed in *The Secret Garden*. Colin, on the other hand, has gotten his experience and knowledge from books he read during his seclusion. Mary's education and knowledge are more beneficial to her than Colin's more traditional, positivist education is to him. As Mary begins her work in the garden it is through instinct rather than instruction. She knows intuitively what the garden needs. While tending it, she "gives in to it and respects its patterns of growth by not planting a 'tidy' garden" (Silver 196). Mary's intuition and imagination enable her to begin and complete her quest to awaken the garden, Colin, and herself.

Colin's condition within his room subverts the stereotypical role of women during the nineteenth century. Colin exhibits "chronic invalidism and hysteria," and he must be "socialized out of this negative femininity" (Foster and Simons 184). He is neglected and ignored by his father. When Mary asks "What were you crying for?" Colin replies:

> Because I couldn't go to sleep either and my head ached. I should have been afraid you would see me. I won't let people see me and talk me over. I am like this always, ill and having to lie down. My father won't let people talk me over either. The servants are not allowed to speak

> about me. If I live I may be a hunchback, but I shan't live. My father hates to think I may be like him. (103)

Here, Colin reveals his inability to cope up with the society. His inability restricts him to stay inside the room. He neither talks with the people nor does his father allow people to talk with him. This shows Colin's pathetic life and confinement inside the room. As a sociologist, Judith Lorber views, "gender is not a fixed category but an ever-evolving product of culture and society" (113). It is a social construction and it creates distinguishable social statuses for the assignments of rights and responsibilities to men and women. Here too, Colin is bred up in a pathetic condition. Biologically, he is a boy but his upbringing makes him weak and dependent like a stereotypical girl. A common reaction of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century women within patriarchal culture was to suffer from "hysterics" and to become "chronic invalids"; a customary and viable way to escape from life was to retreat into ill health. But here, Colin, a male exhibits such symptoms. He uses self-induced maladies, as did they. He exploits his perceived illness in order to manipulate others and to attract attention to himself. His is confined within the room and is given the stereotypical female role.

On the other hand, Mary does not exhibit the accepted qualities of young girls under patriarchal rule but rather characteristics of strong, independent women. Following excerpt from the text reveals her bold and masculine nature.

> Mary had liked to look at her mother from a distance and she had thought her very pretty, but as she knew very little of her she could scarcely have been expected to love her or to miss her very much when she was gone. She did not miss her at all, in fact, and as she was a self-

> absorbed child she gave her entire thought to herself, as she had always done. (10)

Mary knows that she has left none to care for her; neither Ayah nor her parents. But she is not repentant rather she thinks herself. She has lost everything but she doesn't show her grief and feelings as the stereotypical girls do. Mary's resistance to feminine role is similar as Donald Hall's idea, "to resist patriarchy is to challenge laws and other institutional barriers to women's equality" (201). Mary here is self- observed. Because of her unorthodox upbringing, her behavior and activities, she has developed initiative and qualities of leadership that enable her to make decisions and follow them through:

> She walked through the station to the railway carriage with her head up and trying to keep as far away from her as she could, because she did not want to seem to belong to her. It would have made her angry to think people imagined she was her little girl. (14)

It clearly shows from the third person narrative that Mary doesn't want people to think she is protected by someone. She reveals her individual identity which is against the traditional female nature of dependent, passive and obedient. It is precisely because of her disobedience of male edicts that she discovers the garden as well as the source of the mysterious, nighttime crying.

Gender theorist Judith Butler quotes in her book *Gender Trouble*, "gender is 'unnatural', so that there is no necessary relationship between one's body and one's gender; one may be a 'masculine' female or a 'feminine' male" (46). She views that a male can play a feminine role and a female can play a masculine role in accordance with the environment and circumstances. In the novel too, Mary's bluntness, obstinance, initiative, and contrariness are empowering. She shows the masculine

qualities of contrariness, bold, and determined character. She even exhibits curiosity to know about Mr. Archibald Craven's hatred towards the garden and not allowing anyone to enter:

> She was curious about it and wanted to see what it was like. Why had Mr. Archibald Craven buried the key? If he had liked his wife so much why did he hate her garden? She wondered if she should ever see him, but she knew that if she did she should not like him, and he would not like her, and that she should only stand and stare at him and say nothing, though she should be wanting dreadfully to ask him why he had done such a queer thing. (32-3)

This shows Mary's eagerness to know the things and is curious to discover the secret of the garden which has been locked for ten years. She wants to know the reason why this garden is locked. In the traditional gender roles, curiosity is the male quality and here, Mary does have it. There has identified two aspects of Mary's contrariness: one that she overcomes and one that is enabling. When she arrives at Misselthwaite her contrariness is a result of irritability and disinterest. It is through the power of the garden that she overcomes this contrariness. Mary maintains contrariness based on "emotional honesty and reliance on [her] own judgment". It also enumerates several ways Mary differs from the accepted notions of the feminine at the time. She is independent and defiant, delights in books rather than dolls, and thrives on exercise and the outdoors rather than in enclosed domestic spaces.

The construction of motherhood in the garden also subverts stereotypes. Burnett creates a realm in which both men and women mother. Gruff, surely Ben Weatherstaff is an example of this. Following excerpt shows how Ben looks after the garden:

> I come over th' wall. Th' rheumatics held me back th' last two year. She was so fond of it--she was! An' she was such a pretty young thing. She says to me once, `Ben,' says she laughin', `if ever I'm ill or if I go away you must take care of my roses.' When she did go away th' orders was no one was ever to come nigh. But I come, with grumpy obstinacy. Over th' wall I come--until th' rheumatics stopped me--an' I did a bit o' work once a year. She'd gave her order first. (184)

It is Ben who befriends the robin and cares for it after it is abandoned. It is also Ben who keeps the garden alive, periodically tending it after it is locked. Although his physical weaknesses and restrictions from Craven, he has obediently done his duty to look after the garden in the absence of Lilias. He has maintained the role of protective mother than to a dominant male. There is other character Dickon, who also plays the role of mother and gives necessary guidance to Mary and Colin.

In the same way, Dickon's personal strength and security is also a result of his bonding with a nurturing mother, and he is contrasted with Mary and Colin who lack mothering. He extends his mother's presence by giving Mary and Colin her advice, telling stories about her, and bringing them food she has prepared. Dickon himself is presented as a mother figure throughout the novel. He is closely associated with seeds, has a miraculous ability to make things grow, and has rescued and been mother to the fox, the crow, and the lamb. Mary and Martha's conversation makes clear about Dickon. "Martha," Mary said, "what are those white roots that look like onions?" Martha answers:

> They're bulbs. Lots o' spring flowers grow from 'em. Th' very little ones are snowdrops an' crocuses an' th' big ones are narcissuses an' jonquils and daffydowndillys. Th' biggest of all is lilies an' purple

> flags. Eh! they are nice. Dickon's got a whole lot of 'em planted in our bit o' garden. Our Dickon can make a flower grow out of a brick walk. (68)

Dickon teaches Mary how to mother by growing and tending plants rather than through more traditional methods. “He told her what they looked like when they were flowers, he told her how to plant them, and watch them, and feed and water them” (82). “Burnett associates Dickon with pregnancy and birth, further underscoring the novel’s argument that motherhood is not an essentially female activity but a human one” (Silver 196). His mastery over the garden can be seen in this excerpt; "There's lilies o' th, valley here already; I saw 'em. They'll have growed too close an' we'll have to separate 'em, but there's plenty. Th' other ones takes two years to bloom from seed, but I can bring you some bits o’ plants from our cottage garden” (89). Furthermore, mothering is not presented as controlling but allows natural development to occur. Susan Sowerby expects her sons and her daughters to run and play on the moor to encourage their growth and health. She also tells Mr. Craven that Mary needs to play outdoors and get stronger before he engages a governess for her.

Further, an insight on how the female characters in the novel are characterized by Frances Hodgson Burnett seems to be pertinent here. The female characters analyzed here are physical and psychological. The analysis is done for both the major and minor female characters as well as the adult and children female characters of the novel. The major female characters in the novel are: Mary Lennox, the protagonist; Mrs. Medlock, the housekeeper at Misselthwaite Manor; and Martha, Mary’s maid. The minor characters are: Mem Sahib (Mrs. Lennox) Mary’s mother; Ayah, Mary’s first caretaker in India; and Mrs. Crawford, a woman who took Mary in for a short period of time right after Mary became an orphan.

The physical characteristics of the only female child in the novel, who also happens to be the protagonist, are not, in conventional terms, “positive”. Mary is described as: “the most disagreeable-looking child ever seen. She has a little thin face and a little thin body, thin light hair and a sour expression. Her hair was yellow, and her face is yellow too, because she was born in India and has always been ill in one way or another” (5). “Poor little thin, sallow, ugly Mary- she almost looked pretty for a moment” (40). Later in the novel, when Mary is playing outside with a robin, Burnett adds in a pitiful tone: Mary steps out of the expected model of obedient, pretty, nice, girlhood, to be the complete opposite. She keeps secrets as children shouldn’t. She doesn’t look like most girls of her age. This is the first description of Mary at the beginning of the novel when her character is introduced: “She was the most disagreeable looking child ever seen” (5). The other characters of the novel have similar negative reactions to how Mary looks and acts. Mrs. Medlock for example had this to say about Mary when she first met her: “My word! She’s such a plain piece of goods! And we’d heard her mother was a beauty. She hasn’t handed much of it down, has she, ma’am?” (13) The English clergyman’s wife who took care of Mary when she became an orphan said this about Mary: “She is such a plain child, the children call her ‘Mistress Mary Quite Contrary’ and though it’s naughty of them, one can’t help understanding it” (12). The characters voice established notions of beautiful femininity and express the importance of physical beauty for women and girls.

In her article “A Bit of Earth: Sexuality and the Representation of Childhood in Text and Screen Versions of *The Secret Garden”*, Mary Messenger Davies believes that, “Frances Hodgson Burnett was aware of contemporary psychological and educational theories and incorporated them into her book” (49). Also, Mary Jeanette Moran states in her article, “Nancy’s Ancestors: The Mystery of Imaginative Female

Power in *The Secret Garden* and *A Little Princess"*, that, "*The Secret Garden* has received the greater share of attention as a novel more psychologically complex than Burnett's other books for girls" (34). It seems like Frances Hodgson Burnett wanted Mary's physical characteristics to reflect her psychological characteristics. Burnett squarely correlated physical and psychological traits in the case of Mary. Her physical attractiveness at the beginning of the novel matches Mary's personality traits which are described as: tyrannical, selfish, spoiled, rude and insulting. The interesting thing about Mary is that both her physical and her psychological state changed from the beginning of the novel to the end. The prior descriptions were used to describe Mary at the beginning of the novel but towards the end of the novel, these descriptions change to more positive ones both physically and psychologically. For example, Ben Weatherstaff, the gardener at Misselthwaite Manor, has a brief conversation with Mary about how he has seen the physical change in Mary since she's been living there and Mary responds in agreement to his comment:

> Tha's a bit fatter than tha' was an'tha's not quite so yeller. Tha' looked like a young plucked crow when tha' first came into this garden. Thinks I to myself I never set eyes on an uglier, sourer faced young' un'. Mary was not vain and as she had never thought much of her looks she was not greatly disturbed. I know I'm fatter, she said. My stockings are getting tighter. They used to make wrinkles. (75)

As we shall see, Mary's transformation in the novel is tied into her chances for self fulfillment. Ben Weatherstaff's appreciation to Mary clearly shows Mary's physical changes and socialization in the garden. She has been turned into a loving and strong girl at the end.

On the other hand, the physical description of Mary's mother is positive but these attributes are not matched by her psychological characteristics. Mrs. Lennox is initially described by Burnett as: "…a great beauty who cared only to go to parties and amuse herself with gay people" (5). Later in the novel, Burnett elaborates on Mrs. Lennox physical attributes: "She was such a tall, slim, pretty person and wore such lovely clothes. Her hair was like curly silk and had a delicate little nose which seemed to be disdaining things, and she had large laughing eyes. All her clothes were thin and floating, and Mary said they were 'full of lace'" (7). Despite the positive "physical" description, Mrs. Lennox was psychologically described as unfit for motherhood: she "had not wanted a little girl at all, and when Mary was born she handed her over to the care of an Ayah, who was made to understand that if she wished to please Mem Sahib (Mrs. Lennox) she must keep the child out of sight as much as possible" (5). In this characterization, Burnett seems to suggest that beauty and frivolity make women unfit as mothers.

On the contrary, Mrs. Medlock, the Manor's caretaker, is physically described in the following terms: "She was a stout woman, with very red cheeks and sharp black eyes. She wore a very purple dress, a black silk mantle with jet fringe on it and a black bonnet with purple velvet flowers which stuck up and trembled as she moved her head" (13). The adjectives used to describe her personality are 'serious' and 'authoritarian' based on the fact that Mrs. Medlock imposes restrictions on Mary's movement in Misselthwaite Manor and thus is in charge of and control's Mary's behavior. Burnett's message here is that women who possess the physical traits that Mrs. Medlock possesses are mostly known as authoritarian and serious in her society. Sharp, rigid female looks are thus associated with authoritative, perhaps manly, behavior.

On the other hand, Burnett characterizes Martha as: “a round, rosy, good-natured looking creature, but she had a sturdy way which made Mistress Mary wonder if she might not even slap back - if the person who slapped her was only a little girl” (23). The adjectives that best describe Martha’s psychological characteristics are cheerful, stern, outspoken, kind, generous and humble. We see her psychological characteristics mostly shown through her behavior and interactions with Mary. Martha treats Mary more like a daughter than as someone she is supposed to serve and attend. Martha gave Mary a skipping rope one day as a present so that Mary could go outside and get some exercise with it and so Mary could entertain herself. Furthermore, Martha informs Mary of her surroundings and guides her to use her mind to think about what Martha tells her. Martha also teaches Mary lessons about the world outside the Manor: She encourages Mary to eat all her meals and not waste food because there are other less fortunate children who wish they could be as well fed as Mary. Burnett’s implied message about femininity is that women should be motherly and should teach others the ways of life.

Ayah and Mrs. Crawford, the last two minor adult characters mentioned earlier, are not physically described by Burnett in the novel. The only psychological characteristics that are described for Ayah are that she was scared of Mary, submissive and oppressed. This is also seen through her interaction with Mary and Mary’s family in India. Mrs. Crawford’s psychological traits are that she really is not very fond of Mary but she is a motherly person to her children. Burnett says in the novel that Mrs. Crawford “tried to be kind to Mary, but Mary only turned her face away when Mrs. Crawford attempted to kiss her, and held herself stiffly when Mrs. Crawford patted her shoulder” (12).

Similarly, only few male characters analyzed on the basis of physical and their roles they play in the novel. Some of the main male characters presented in the novel *The Secret Garden* are Colin Craven, Dickon Sowerby, Ben Weatherstaff, and Archibald Craven.

Colin is presented as sickly and foul child. He was born shortly after the death of his mother, and his father could not bear to look at him because of his resemblance to her. It is feared that he will grow to be a hunchback like his father, and he has been treated as an invalid since his birth. Colin's childhood has been entirely bedridden. Colin is extremely imperious and gloomy; in the beginning, he is certain he is going to die. By novel's end, however, he too will have undergone a transformation: he will have become a vigorous optimist. Colin himself hates to be looked at, because he despises the pity and morbid fascination he inspires. He refuses to leave the manor house, and spends all his time shut up in his grand gloomy room. He has “a sharp, delicate face the color of ivory, grey eyes and black lashes all round them and also a lot of hair which tumbled over his forehead in heavy locks” (102).

Colin shut himself up in his room and thought only of his fears and weakness ...he was a hysterical half-crazy little hypochondriac who knew nothing of the sunshine and the spring and also did not know that he could get well and could stand upon his feet if he tried to do it. In a conversation with Mary he says; “I don't want to be moved out of it. It tires me too much” (103). He becomes passive and weak because he not provided suitable environment and care for his breeding. Psychologist Hillary Lips views, “gender is the term used for the expectations held by societies with respect to feminine and masculine roles” (1). She further says that gender stereotypes are based on certain personality traits and can be descriptive and prescriptive. It creates inequality in the society. Here, Colin is made weak by the

society, culture and environment and he cannot play the expected roles. He has been hidden away from the world's view until Mary accidently discovers him one night. He, like the garden, has essentially been uncared for except for the basics of food, water, and medicine. His existence is severely lacking in love, affection, and any kind of creative outlet. Once Mary enters his life, she tends to Colin like she does the garden, applying everything she learns, hoping to transform him into a happy, healthy, and curious child. But at the end of the novel, he is transformed; he insists "I'm well! I'm well! I shall live forever and ever and ever!" (218).

On the other hand, Dickon is alternately described as "a common moor boy" and "a Yorkshire angel"; he is both. He is described as looking like the god Pan (the god of ...): he has "rosy cheeks, rough curly hair, wide smiling mouth and blue eyes precisely the same color as the sky over the moor; he even carries a set of pan-pipes" (79-80). Like Pan, he has the power to charm both animals and people: all the creatures which come close to him are instantly tamed, and he counts a fox, a crow, and two wild squirrels among his pets. His power to tame creatures works on Colin and Mary as well, and is one of the central causes of their wondrous transformations. He therefore is presented as having an uncannily close relationship with the wilderness and with wild things. He tells Mary that "Sometimes I think perhaps I'm a bird, or a fox, or a squirrel or even a beetle, an' I don't know it." (82) Throughout the novel, Mary and Colin perceive Dickon as thrillingly strange and exotic: like the Indian natives, he speaks a different language (his Yorkshire dialect). Mary describes him as "beautiful," and as "a Yorkshire angel": Dickon is, in some measure, is the representative of divine nature. He, as much as the secret garden, is the agent of both Colin and Mary's transformations. He himself, being already ideal, does not change at all.

Similarly, Ben Weatherstaff is a gruff elderly gardener who is only permitted to stay at Misselthwaite because he was a favorite of the late Mistress Craven. He has “red old eyes, weather-wrinkle eyes, gnarled hands and is a Yorkshire moor man” (179). He introduces Mary to the robin redbreast, and helps the children keep the secret of the garden. Ben himself clandestinely tended the garden during the ten years in which it was locked, out of love and loyalty for the Mistress Craven. He is an obedient and static through the novel. When Colin asks help for his scientific discovery, he honestly says “Aye, aye, sir! If you keep doing it every day as regularly as soldiers go through drill, we shall see what will happen and find out if the experiment succeeds” (192). Here, he is supportive and sincere to Colin. Although he is rather rough, Ben's essential kindness is fundamental to his character.

On the contrary, the most difficult character to gauge is Archibald Craven, Colin’s father and Mary’s uncle. Throughout the novel he is absent and his identity is revealed only through other characters; Pitcher, Mrs. Medlock, Martha and Ben Weatherstaff. In conversation with Mary, Martha says, "Mr. Craven had it shut when his wife died so sudden. He won't let no one go inside. It was her garden. He locked th' door an’ dug a hole and buried th’ key” (30). His healing has been excruciatingly slow, as he continues to mourn his wife’s death after ten years. He refuses to let in any reminders or remembrances and his only solace is escape through travel. He, perhaps out of all the characters, needs the deepest emotional healing. He suffers from a crooked spine and general ill health. He has been in a crushing depression ever since the death of his wife, ten years before the novel begins. Archibald spends most of his time abroad, since he wants to see neither his house nor his son, Colin, because these remind him of his late wife. At novel's end, he undergoes a change of heart after his wife comes to him in a dream. When he reads letter from Susan Sowerby, he changes

his mind and says, "Perhaps I have been all wrong for ten years," he said to himself. "Ten years is a long time. It may be too late to do anything--quite too late. What have I been thinking of!" Master Craven comes to embrace his son when he realizes that this latter is in perfect health. He says, "Take me into the garden, my boy, and tell me all about it" (237). He is really amazed to see him in sound health. He wants to know about the drastic change appeared in his son.

Moreover, the types of supports that the female characters seek and obtain in the novel are analyzed. The various kinds of support come from the women themselves or, in some cases, also from the male characters of the novel.

The female characters of *The Secret Garden* not only find companionship and support among themselves but also in some of the male characters. Mary Lennox and Martha find companionship and support in each other. Their friendship is interesting because of the difference in their social classes. Martha buys Mary a present, a skipping rope, that Martha feels will be good for Mary's health. Here we see how Martha cares for Mary. Mary feels then that she needs to be nice to Martha and she has become rather fond of her. Mary changes towards Martha at this point by thanking her for the skipping rope and it is interesting to note that thanking people who did things for her is not something that Mary is used to doing. Mary also begins to show an interest in Martha's family life. This shows that Mary is drawn to Martha and would like to get to know her better.

Mary Lennox also finds companionship and support with Dickon, Ben Weatherstaff and Colin who are male characters. This is interesting because Burnett states that "Mary knew nothing about boys" (80). When Mary first meets Colin and Dickon, she makes them keep the garden a secret therefore establishing a bond with them. Also, she seems to want to help Colin leave the room where he spends all of his

time. Colin in return likes Mary because she is a distraction from him thinking of being ill and dying. Mary visits Colin in his room everyday and talks to him. However, Mary and Colin's relationship is unsentimental. The relationship that Mary and Colin have with each other can't help but be sentimental because there are a lot of feelings involved. Colin, for example, throws a tantrum in chapter seventeen of the novel and Mary is called in to sooth and calms him down.

Mary at first seems to be harsh and uncompassionate towards Colin saying things like, "I hate you!" (142) but after Colin stops crying and throwing a fit, Mary and him are nice to each other. She whispers to Colin, "Would you like me to sing you that song I learned from my Ayah?" (146). In response, Colin replies "put out his hand a little towards Mary, and I am glad to say that, her own tantrum having passed, she was softened to and met him half-way with her hand, so that it was a sort of making up" (145). Mary thus managed to make Colin feel better and reestablish their bond at least in part because she was willing to adopt a motherly role towards him.

Dickon is another source of support for Mary. She likes him because he works with her outdoors in the moors and explores them with her. He could play music and was a very active child. It sounded as if he liked her and was not the least afraid she would not like him. Dickon possessed qualities and characteristics that Mary was drawn to and since they both had things in common despite the fact that they were not of the same sex. This indicates that Frances Hodgson Burnett feels that traits and interests that embody both males and females or in this case, boys and girls, include physical work and play and a sense of adventure and a curiosity for the unknown. All these traits can be said to be possessed by both Dickon and Mary.

Ben Weatherstaff is Mary's direct connection to the garden as he works out in the moors and knows a lot about the property itself. Burnett states that, "he did not

object to her as strongly as he had at first. Perhaps he was secretly rather flattered by her evident desire for his elderly company" (75). The bond between Mary and Ben Weatherstaff is established by Mary's curiosity with all things pertaining to the moors and the gardens themselves. Ben is Mary's valid source of information when it comes to her desire for knowledge about her surroundings both from the past and present time since Ben has been a worker at the moors for a long time. Mary does not hesitate to ask Ben questions about the moor and the garden and he seems to be pleased that he can provide her with answers she is looking for. Therefore, it seems that in general terms, Burnett is in favor of women having sources of support between themselves and amongst men.

In *The Secret Garden*, Mary Lennox is the only female character who went through a significant transformation and attained self-fulfillment but only to a certain extent. Only few female characters (especially Mary) find self-fulfillment because of the male characters in the novel and the limitations or restrictions that they place upon them. In what follows this research will analyze how Mary Lennox (the female main character) find self-fulfillment, why the other female characters don't and what roles the male characters of the novel play in these dynamics.

Mary Lennox goes through the most extreme transformation and self-fulfillment process of any of the female characters found in the novel. In the last chapter of *The Secret Garden* the following excerpt supports the thought that Mary goes through a transformation and eventually does find self- fulfillment. The following quote best describes how Mary changes herself in the novel:

> So long as Mistress Mary's mind was full of disagreeable thoughts about her dislikes and sour opinions of people and her determination not to be pleased by or interested in anything, she was a yellow-faced,

> sickly, bored and wretched child. Circumstances, however, were very kind to her, though she was not at all aware of it. When her mind gratefully filled itself with robins, and moorland cottages crowded with children, with queer crabbed old gardeners and common little Yorkshire housemaids, with spring time and with secret gardens coming alive day by day, and also with a moor boy and his "creatures," there was no room left for the disagreeable thoughts which affected her life and her digestion and made her yellow and tired. (225-26)

Mary's self-fulfillment process, however, is described by Burnett as fortuitous, giving the impression that Mary does not become an agent of her own self fulfillment because it is all due to the "circumstances" that are placed before her. Only Mary Lennox thrives in the text, all other female characters tend to stay the same or fade away into the background to be forgotten. Mary Lennox's character thrives because of the evolution or change that she keeps making throughout the text both physically and psychologically not because she puts it in her mind to do so. Even though Burnett makes Mary seem as if she were a character that possesses characteristics not common to her gender and therefore makes her different from other females of the novel, statements like the one made above about Mary's self fulfillment show a type of representation found in women of the Victorian Era, not being able to completely free herself from stereotypical roles.

The restrictions that are placed on the female characters within the novel are done so by the male characters and these limitations do not allow some of the female characters to find self-fulfillment completely. Mrs. Medlock and Martha are always following orders and doing what they are told as to not upset Mr. Craven, the man that establishes patriarchal rule over them. Mr. Pitcher, who is Mr. Craven's right hand,

imposed his authoritarian figure over Mrs. Medlock when he sternly says to her: “You are to take Mary to her room. Mr. Craven doesn’t want to see her” (21). Her reaction to his demand is very submissive because she does not question or hesitate in doing just what Mr. Pitcher has asked her to do. In fact she makes the comment, “Very well Mr. Pitcher… so long as I know what’s expected of me, I can manage” (22). Mr. Pitcher feels he has to remind Mrs. Medlock of what is expected of her and he responds, “What’s expected of you Mrs. Medlock is that you make sure he is not disturbed and that he doesn’t see what he doesn’t want to see” (22). This obvious suppression done by a male character to a female character was exactly what was common for men to do to women in the Victorian Era, the time period in which Frances Hodgson Burnett wrote.

Mary Lennox’s restrictions are imposed on her by Mrs. Medlock. This type of restriction is still very authoritarian like because Mrs. Medlock is an adult while Mary is only a child at the beginning of the novel. Mary is restricted physically to only being allowed to visit or go to certain areas, rooms or corridors of Misselthwaite Manor by orders of Mr. Craven; Mrs. Medlock says this to Mary the very first day Mary arrives at Misselthwaite Manor: “This room and the next are where you’ll live-and you must keep to them. Don’t you forget that!” (22) “You’ll be told what rooms you can go into and what rooms you’re to keep out of. There’s garden enough. But when you.re in the house don’t go wandering and poking about. Mr. Craven won’t have it” (17). Soon after Mary spends sometime living at Misselthwaite Manor, Mrs. Medlock again has to remind Mary of the rules by saying, “You stay where you’re told to stay or you will find yourself locked up” (50). Also, the secret garden located on the outside premises of Misselthwaite Manor is closed off to everyone including Mary. This reveals the patriarchal hegemony, as Simon de Beauvoir views “woman is

not born but made" (281). Women are inferior, dependent and passive because of the patriarchal attitude, dialect and the society.

All these restrictions do not stop Mary to find out the secret of the garden. She is silence in the final chapter to remain independent from the patriarchal domination. She does not join hands with Craven and Colin because they have started to increase their presence over the garden. If she had joined with them, she would be the victim of patriarchy. So, her silence in the last chapter is her celebration of female identity.

This novel *The Secret Garden* gives its own definitions based on the female characters and the roles they play. This research analyzes these definitions in order to determine whether or not they are based on stereotypical female representations.

The following quotes in the text show the way the characters react to Mary's behavior drawing from the fact that their beliefs are that she is not acting appropriately for a girl. When Mary was living under the custody of the English clergyman and his family, one of his sons has a conversation with Mary which clearly establishes his belief on what is one of the characteristics that girls don't possess, passing a judgment on all girls based on Mary's response or reaction to his comment. The clergyman's son, Basil, tells Mary: "You are going to your uncle. His name is Archibald Craven." "I don't know anything about him," snapped Mary. "I know you don't," Basil answered. "You don't know anything, girls never do" (12). The conclusion behind the little boy's comment about Mary not knowing anything about her uncle is simply justifiable in his eyes because Mary is a girl, therefore, all girls don't know anything. As Singh Manjari opines, "gender bias exists in the content, attitude, behavior and language" (20), here too, the male character Basil is bias in his attitude and perception. A girl not knowing anything is an appropriate characteristic

of femininity according to the male character Basil and it is a stereotypical trait for women.

Another example of how the female characters are supposed to act in the novel and which are reflected by the mindset that the characters possess about appropriate behaviors of femininity is when Martha asks Mary about typical things a female should know how to do Martha's first impression of Mary is seen in what she says with this reaction: "That's not the way for a young lady to talk" (25). Also, she asks Mary the following questions upon meeting her, which implies that Mary should be able to do the things Martha asks if she can do, still Mary answers with a "no". Martha asks Mary, "Can tha' knit? ...Can tha' sew?" (45). Martha's assumptions that Mary should know how to knit and sew because she is a girl, are stereotypical female factors having their basis in the Victorian Era. Here Mary is perceived through the patriarchal lens and is made her inappropriate in the society. When Martha asks her 'can tha' read?' Mary answers 'yes'. This shows that she is the girl with own stand and traditional female position is blurred. These all assumed roles are social construct as sociologist Judith Lorber contends, "gender is something everyone 'does' without thinking about it or being conscious about its implications; it is such a naturalized part of everyday life that unless someone or something breaks our expectations, it tends to go unnoticed" (113). In the novel too, Martha is brought up in such culture that she unknowingly and automatically internalizes the patriarchal assumption.

Similarly, for males and females in the novel, women have to look and act a certain way in order for them to be considered feminine or to be able to carry the title of girl or women. In the case of Mary, the way that she is supposed to look and act like is a big focus on the part of both the male and female characters of the novel. The male and female characters of the novel believe that appropriate behavior's associated

with femininity are “not knowing anything” and being able to do things such as knit or sew which are, typical female domestic activities. The appropriate standards of femininity having to do with physical beauty are not being “plain looking”. In other words, girls should dress elaborately with lace and frocks and should be vibrant and full of life. All of which Mary does not possess therefore she does not identify with the appropriate standards of beauty and behavior that the characters of the novel feel she should identify with.

On the other hand, the fact that Burnett chose to have a female protagonist that broke way from societal expectations of female appearance and beauty might be an indication of her own transgression of Victorian female codes. Burnett might be negotiating gender expectations where she agrees in that females should possess certain stereotypical female characteristics drawing from her time period, but there are also certain characteristics associated with females that she does not agree with. Her gender expectations seem to agree with her society in some aspects but not in all aspects and reflecting back on the novel *The Secret Garden* and the main character, Mary, Burnett seems to disagree with her society in that beauty is and should be a stereotypical female trait.

There are many patterns that emerge from analyzing the novel in terms of the female characteristics, female sources of support, and female chances of self-fulfillment and definitions of appropriate femininity. In terms of physical and psychological female traits, the novel doesn’t uniformly connect the two unattractive characteristics. Beauty is generally defined as pretty, lovely, lacy clothes, curly silky hair large laughing eyes, and beautiful skin. Beauty is regarded as a positive attribute even though there is a protagonist in the novel that is considered ugly, which is a negative attribute. The psychological characteristics that are valued for girls are

obedient, cheerful, kind, generous and humble. The psychological characteristics that are valued for women are very similar to the psychological characteristics that are valued for girls but also adding the characteristic of being motherly. Usually, it is found that if the female character has a positive physical trait, she would lack a positive psychological trait and vice versa.

When it comes to the female characters finding sources of support in the novel, they either find it amongst themselves, amongst male characters or amongst both female and male characters. The self-fulfillment aspect of the female characters in the novel also reveals some sort of pattern. The female characters rarely found self-fulfillment; when they do, it is because of circumstances placed upon them and not because they are singularly capable of altering their realities. They are either described as stereotypical or they either act in a stereotypical way. Burnett defines appropriate femininity using the women of her society as models who possess all of the qualities stated above. Burnett herself possesses some of the qualities of appropriate femininity such as being motherly towards her son but most of the other qualities she herself broke away from. For example, just being a woman writer of the Victorian Era and working in this type of profession is something that is not very common for females to do and therefore not seen as positive behavior in women. This novel *The Secret Garden* is the result of her love for her elder son, Lionel. When she lost her son, she started to meditate lonely in the garden and it was her dedication to her son.

The garden stands as a world apart from the patriarchal manor, and it is inhabited by the spirit of Lilias Craven. It is a locus of female authority where class and gender lines are blurred. The garden is fertile, simultaneously enclosed and free, and “the female value system that operates within the womb-like seclusion of the

garden can be seen as analogous to the power of the mother". When Mary tells Colin the secret of the garden, she gives him the "possibility of life which replaces his secret about the probability of death", and he begins to recover. After Colin has spent some time in the womb of the garden he announces, "I'm well! I'm well" and "I shall live forever and ever and ever!" (218). It is spring, and signs of regeneration and renewal abound. The magic at work in the garden is dynamic and feminine. Colin's room within the house is also womb-like, yet it is stifling rather than nurturing, and Colin has become both physically and emotionally crippled within it. The house disables, discourages, and hides away life. The garden stands in contrast to the house, emanating positive, life-giving power, and at the center of the garden is Mary.

Mary advances much farther than Colin along the path to self-discovery, thereby enhancing her power. Mary's journey begins during the cholera epidemic when she experiences a symbolic death and rebirth. Despite wailing and other frightening sounds, Mary falls into a deep sleep. "Sleep . . . symbolizes creation and renewal. Sleep is a symbol of rebirth" (Estes 148). When she awakens, the first living thing she sees is a little snake, which is "the symbol of life throwing off the past and continuing to live". Mary is about to embark on a journey through which she will throw off patriarchal rule and live by embracing the feminine. Then Mary hears men's footsteps. The image is one of being cloistered within colonial society as the men enter the compound, proceed into the bungalow, and finally enter the nursery, in the center of which stands Mary. It is significant that the man who discovers Mary is moved to tears by the plight of a forgotten child. This episode represents Mary's removal from colonial society and the beginning of her journey toward the feminine garden. When she arrives at Misselthwaite Manor she is in her infancy: totally self-

absorbed and unable even to dress herself. Martha guides her through this stage, bringing her ever closer to the garden and the realization of her potential and her goal.

This novel *The Secret Garden* is rich in feminine symbolism, and the emphasis of the interpretation is that the feminine is honored in the story. When one looks behind the Christian Virgin, one can see the influence of earlier Goddesses who contributed to her image, primarily Cybele, Aphrodite, and Artemis. Greek Goddesses associated with flowers include Chloris, the goddess of flowers, Artemis, Demeter, and her daughter Persephone. “Roses were symbolically associated with and used in ceremonies to honor the Roman Cybele and Venus, the Greek Aphrodite, and the Christian Virgin Mary” (Pollack 97). It is significant that roses figure so prominently in the garden and in Mary’s growing awareness. The healing properties of roses are particularly relevant to Mary’s and Colin’s physical conditions. Tonics made from roses are attributed with the potential to “revitalize the blood and energize the metabolism and will forces” as well as “overcome apathy, resignation, or paralysis of the will” (Kaminski 84). Similarly, the robin, which is prominent in the story, is a “symbol of fertility and regeneration in pagan ritual” (Wilkie 80). Goddess references, roses, and robins are a link back through time connecting the garden to the feminine, divine energy that dwells within and animates it.

The most powerful image of the Virgin is created by Mrs. Sowerby’s entrance into the garden. She enters unannounced and is framed “with the ivy behind her, the sunlight . . . dappling her long blue cloak (220): blue, the color of the Virgin. Furthermore, she intercedes on Mary’s behalf with Mr. Craven as the Virgin intercedes with the Father. Although she is associated specifically with the Virgin Mary, she “evokes a considerably older mythic type, the Corn-mother of primitive ritual who represents fertility incarnate and who guarantees the harvest” (Roxburgh

127). She is the life force in the cottage that bursts with children, and she is symbolic of fertility and of humankind in harmony with nature. She is benevolent: a font of knowledge, sustenance, and nurturance.

Her son, Dickon, is an embodiment of pagan ideology symbolizing Pan or a vegetation god, yet he exhibits qualities that have strong female connotations: mothering, protection, tenderness, and nurturance (Foster and Simons 189). Mary views Dickon as a sort of wood fairy, and he seems to be a part of nature, as nature seems to be a part of him. Dickon brings seeds to Mary and helps her plant them, thus connecting him to the life-death-life cycle. Seeds are symbolic of the endless cycle of life, embraced by those who recognize the body of the Goddess. “To have the seed means to have the key to life . . . This embodies the Life and Death mother in her most ancient and principled form” (Estes 30). Dickon is an agent of nature and, as such, the feminine and the cycle of life.

In addition, Susan Sowerby confirms and affirms the children’s belief in “magic” by saying, “It goes on makin’ worlds by th’ million—worlds like us. Never thee stop believin’ in th’ Big Good Thing and knowin’ th’ world’s full of it—an’ call it what tha’ likes” (223). In a similar vein, Stone states that “many of the names used in diverse areas were simply various titles of the Great Goddess” (22). “The wild essence that inhabits nature has been called by many names and crisscrosses all nations down through the centuries” (Estes 25). The children know they are in the midst of something magical and mystical and that there are powers and forces they cannot name. The interpretation is that Susan Sowerby knows that this force has many names as the all-embracing, all-encompassing feminine divine rather than as a patriarchal God.

The garden itself is symbolic of Eden, complete with Lilias "fall." But instead of being cast out of the garden, Lilias remains as its spirit. She was, indeed, its creator. Bawden (1988) criticized the narrative because Lilias waited such a long time to come to Archibald in a dream and instigate his return. She was there all the time, in the garden and in the portrait in Colin's bedroom, but the men were too self-consumed to sense her presence, and they refused to see what was manifest before them. Beyond symbolizing Eden, the garden symbolizes the feminine. It is repeatedly described with imagery that suggests the female body: "hidden locks, tangles of roses, tendrils of ivy, budding plants, and blooming flowers" (Almond 491), and the female genitalia, "a hidden place that must be opened up and planted" (493). As spring advances and the garden is restored to life, Mary says, "It's almost like a green gauze veil" (132). Estes (1992/1995) has discussed the symbolism of being veiled. A woman's veil ensures privacy and safeguards one's mysterious nature. Most important to my reading, a veil turns one's sight inward, increasing mystical insight. In *The Body of the Goddess* (1997), Pollack contends that the earth is the body of the Goddess. Therefore, one would see her in the garden if one knew how to look.

Moreover, the feminine is presented as a healing force that supplants Christianity in the garden. This creates a "significant opposition between the male establishment and the ability of women to deconstruct that order and to invest it with new meaning" (Foster and Simons 188). Mary, Dickon, and Colin engage in ritualistic planting reminiscent of ancient fertility rites. Each day, the children enact ritual in a mystic circle under the canopy of the trees, calling on magic to heal them and make them well. Within this context, the garden is not only the site of life. It is also the site of death. There is Lilias' death, the abandonment and apparent death of the garden itself, and the yearly death caused by the seasonal changes. The garden, then, is not

associated with a death that signals finality, but rather with a death that is the harbinger of new life. The garden connects directly to the inexorable cycle of life and death. In a garden "one is moving with rather than against the inhalations and the exhalations of greater wild Nature" (Estes 96). Recognition of the divine feminine involves an acknowledgment of the dichotomous nature of life. Life does not exist without death, light does not exist without darkness, and happiness does not exist without sorrow.

This interpretation is based on the fact that Colin is symbolically expelled from the garden, and Mary stays in its realm. In the concluding chapters, Colin is inimical to nature, expounding about Western science and logic. Burnett names Colin as "the Athlete, the Lecturer, and the Scientific Discoverer" (238). Mary, on the other hand, has aligned herself with the forces of nature. It is Colin's time in the garden that has healed him and made him "fit to inherit the title and paternal status of his father" (Phillips 180). It is precisely Colin's return to the manor that is Mary's final liberation rather than her defeat.

Let us consider the circumstances under which Colin and Archibald are reunited. Colin participated and reigned supreme in the feminine society in the garden. It "provided a place where he could recover unwatched and unencumbered" (Roxburgh 129). It has provided a locus for his gestation. He has recovered, and in competitive, masculine fashion engages in a race with Mary and Dickon.

> The feet ran faster and faster—they were nearing the garden door—there was quick strong young breathing and a wild outbreak of laughing shouts which could not be contained—and the door in the wall was flung wide open, the sheet of ivy swinging back, and a boy

> burst through it at full speed and, without seeing the outsider, dashed almost into his arms. (236)

The vision evoked by this passage is decidedly symbolic of birth. Colin is born of the maternal into the paternal. In a rush he is cast out of his mother's body and into the presence of his father. Through this birth, Colin is expelled from the garden to reenter the patriarchal realm. Although Colin appropriated the garden during his recuperation, he feels that he no longer needs it. He leaves the garden behind and returns to what is perceived to be the power center. Patriarchy would contend that he has moved "on" or "up," but my feminist interpretation leads me to perceive that he has been moved "out."

Thus, the crucial interpretation of this scene is the fact that Colin and Archibald are reunited outside the garden, and Mary and Dickon are conspicuously absent. They do not join Colin as subalterns in the masculine realm but remain in the garden embracing the feminine. As Foster and Simons criticize the fact that Mary is absent from the closing tableau "where Colin and Archibald Craven, heads held high, stride across the lawn in a demonstration of male bonding that excludes female participation" (189). It is surprising why she would want to join them. Given that Mary is contrary and precocious, that she is anything but submissive, and that she has been nurtured, mentored, and influenced by strong women and men imbued with feminine energy, it would be unlikely and uncharacteristic, not to mention unsatisfactory, for her to submit at this point. Mary is situated in the real locus of power, and it would be an abdication indeed for her to join Archibald and Colin. The ending of the novel is an affirmation of the power of the feminine, and Mary has chosen to stay in the locus of generative and feminine energy.

III. Digging up *The Secret Garden*

The textual analysis of the novel *The Secret Garden* leads to the conclusion that the characterizations of main characters like Mary, Colin, Dickon and Ben Weatherstaff subvert traditional gender roles in the novel. Mary is presented as a bold, curious, authoritative, independent and strong character. She is able to cope up with the changing time and scenario. She presents herself strongly throughout the novel. When she finds herself alone in the house in India she does not cry; rather she tries to console herself. She does not explicitly regret the loss of her father and mother. She even expects that she is going to nice people, who would be polite to her and give her own way as her Ayah and other native servants have done.

Similarly, while going to Misselthwaite Manor with Mrs. Medlock in the train, she does not want herself to reveal that she is protected by someone. She dislikes thinking people she is her little girl. So, she keeps her as far away from her as she could. Likewise, her curiosity to know about the secret garden helps to keep the garden alive and happiness in the manor. She further likes to read books instead of learning sewing and knitting. This helps her to dig out the mystery of the garden and develop leadership qualities. In the final chapter, she is absent because she does not want to bow down before the hands of patriarchy. Not celebrating the union between Archibald Craven and his son Colin in the final chapter also helps to present her as an independent girl. Her strong, bold, authoritative and curious nature leads her to celebrate freedom and independent identity.

Along with Mary, there are other characters whose roles help to blur the traditional gender roles. Colin is one of them and is hysteric. He is confined in the house and he does not even want to go out. He is not given proper care a child should have. He is treated like a physically challenged child from his birth though he is

normal. His role is like that of the traditional woman, who faces patriarchal domination throughout her life span. His condition has made him weak, passive and dependent instead of making him strong, active and socialized. Though he is transformed and presented as a dominant male in the end of the novel, in the beginning, he is presented as a hysteric, dependent and crippled which makes him weak, neglected and rude child.

Moreover, other characters whose roles help to subvert the traditional gender roles are Dickon and Ben Weatherstaff. Both are given the roles of nourishing mother. Though these two characters are males, they do not show any masculine dominancy rather they pursue the qualities of protective mother. Dickon helps them in protection, tenderness, and nurture to nature and especially to Mary. He knows how to plant saplings and necessary conditions for their growth. He brings seeds and helps Mary to plant in the garden. He even tells Mary about nurturing and caring of the garden. He provides necessary guidance to Colin and Mary as a mother does.

Similarly, Ben Weatherstaff also plays the role of mothering. He keeps the garden alive in the absence of Lilias. He is sincere and honest for her advice to look after the garden. Though he is too weak and old to work in the garden and has different internal or external obstacles, he still manages to look after the garden in his old age. He also provides necessary guidance and advices to Mary and Colin which help them to transform into loving and caring children. These analyses of characters help to argue that the novel subverts the overall traditional gender roles in general and the gender equations of the Victorian Era in particular.

Works Cited

Almond, Barbara. "*The Secret Garden*: A Therapeutic Metaphor." *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* 45 (1990): 477-94.

Barbin, Herculine. *Herculine Barbin: Being the Recently Discovered Journals of a Nineteenth-century French Hermaphrodite*. Trans. Richard McDougall. Brighton: The Harvester Press Ltd., 1980.

Bawden, Nina. "Returning to *The Secret Garden.*" *Children's Literature in Education* 19 (1988): 165–69.

Beauvoir, Simone De. *The Second Sex*. Translated and ed. by H.M. Parshley. New York: Vantage Books, 1989.

Bender, Sharyl and Mary Alyce. "Gender Stereotypes in Children's Books: Their Prevalence and Influence on Cognitive and Affective Development." *Gender and Education* 11 (1990): 185-93.

Bixler, Koppes Phyllis. "Tradition and the Individual Talent of Frances Hodgson Burnett: A Generic Analysis of *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, *A Little Princess* and *The Secret Garden*." *Children's Literature: An International Journal, Annual of the Modern Language Association Seminar on Children's Literature* 7 (1978): 191-207.

- - -. *Dictionary of Literary Biography: American Writers for Children before 1900*. Boston: Gale, 1985.

Butler, Judith. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*. New York: Routledge, 1993.

- - -. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Campbell, Joseph. *The Power of Myth.* Ed. Betty Sue Flowers. New York: Anchor. 1991.

Campbell, Patty. "Sexism and the World of Children's Books." *The Horn Book Magazine* 69 (1993): 577-81.

Clark, Beverly Lyon. *Girls, Boys, Books, Toys*. Ed. Margaret R. Higonnet. Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999.

Darcy, Jane. "Wild Creatures: The Representation of Nature in *The Wind in the Willows* and *The Secret Garden.*" *The Lion and the Unicorn* 19 (1995): 211-22.

Davies, Marie Messenger. "A Bit of Earth: Sexuality and the Representation of Childhood in Text and Screen Versions of *The Secret Garden." Velvet Trap Light* 48 (2001): 48-58.

Dutro, Elizabeth. "But that's a Girls' Book! Exploring Gender Boundaries in Children's Reading Practices." *Reading Teacher* 55 (2001): 376-85.

Estes, Clarissa Pinkola. *Women Who Run with the Wolves: Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1995.

Foster, Shirley, and Judy Simons. "Frances Hodgson Burnett: *The Secret Garden*" in *What Katy Read: Feminist Re-Readings of 'Classic' Stories for Girls.* Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1995: 172-91.

Gerzina, Holbrook Gretchen. *Frances Hodgson Burnett: The Unexpected Life of the Author of The Secret Garden.* NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004.

Gunther, Adrian. "*The Secret Garden* Revisited." *Children's Literature in Education* 25 (1994): 159-68.

Hall, Donald. *Literary and Cultural Theory*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001.

Kaminski, Patricia. *Flowers that Heal: How to Use Flower Essences*. Dublin: Newleaf, 1998.

Keyser, Elizabeth Lennox. “Quite Contrary: Frances Hodgson Burnett’s *The Secret Garden.*” *Children’s Literature* 11 (1983): 1-13.

Knoepflmacher, U. C. “Little Girls Without their Curls: Female Aggression in Victorian Children’s Literature.” *Children’s Literature* 11 (1983): 14-31.

Lips, Hillary. *Sex and Gender: An Introduction*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005.

Lorber, Judith. *Paradoxes of Gender*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994.

Manjari, Singh. "Gender Issues in Children’s Literature." *Eric Digest* (1998): 1-7.

Moran, Mary Jeanette. “Nancy’s Ancestors: The Mystery of Imaginative Female Power in *The Secret Garden* and *A Little Princess*.” *Mystery in Children’s Literature: From the Rational to the Supernatural* (2001): 32-45.

Morgan, Argiro L. “Reading between the Lines of Dialogue in Children’s Books: Using the Pragmatics of Language.” *Children’s Literature in Education* 20 (1989): 227-37.

Parsons, Linda. “Otherways into the Garden: Re-Visioning the Feminine into the Secret Garden.” *Children’s Literature in Education: An International Quarterly* 33 (2002): 247-68.

Phillips, Jerry. “The Mem Sahib, the Worthy, the Rajah and his Minions: Some Reflections on the Class Politics of *The Secret Garden*.” *The Lion and the Unicorn* 17 (1993): 168-94.

Pollack, Rachel. *The Body of the Goddess: Sacred Wisdom in Myth, Landscape, and Culture*. Dorset: Element, 1997.

Roxburgh, Stephen D. “Our first World: Form and Meaning in *The Secret Garden*.” *Children’s Literature in Education* 10 (1979): 120-30.

Sharyl, Bender. "Gender Stereotypes in Children's Books: Their Prevalence and Influence on Cognitive and Affective Development." *Gender and Education* 11 (1990): 185-93.

Silver, Anna Krugovoy. "Domesticating Bronte's Moors: Motherhood in *The Secret Garden*." *The Lion and the Unicorn* 21.2 (1997): 193-203.

Stone, Merlin. *When God Was a Woman*. San Diego: Harcourt, Brace, & Co., 1976.

Thwaite, Ann. "Waiting for the Party: The Life of Frances Hodgson Burnett." Boston: Nonpariel, 1991.

Weston, T. Pauline. "Victorian Society." *Fashion-Era.com.* (2006): 1-6.

Wharton, Sue. "Invisible Females, Incapable Males: Gender Construction in a Children's Reading Scheme."*Language Education* 19 (2005): 1-15.

Wilkie, Christine. "Digging up *The Secret Garden*: Noble Innocents or Little Savages?" *Children's Literature in Education* 28 (1997): 73-83.

Wood, Julia. *Gendered Lives: Communication, Gender and Culture*. California: Wadsworth, 2004.