

## CHAPTER THREE

### CONCLUSION

After analyzing the portrayal of Mary Lennox, the protagonist in Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden*, I would like to draw some conclusions. The story begins with Mary, a ten-year-old English girl, who lives in India with her parents. Mary is neglected emotionally by her parents since birth. She was handed over to a native nanny or Ayah and the other native servants to take care of. Her mother, who is called Mem Sahib by the natives, does not want a little girl at all and she always goes to parties. The native servants should give whatever Mary wants so that the Mem Sahib will not be disturbed by Mary's crying. Mary grows up, gets anything she desires; however, she gets no love from people around her and the people she needs the most, her parents. This fact causes her to grow up as a spoilt, unpleasant and indifferent child.

Mary's spoilt character is shown when she does not get whatever she wants, she gets angry. She also does not like to listen to others and to appreciate what she has. One day her parents and some of the servants die from cholera epidemic, while some others are fleeing from the area, leaving Mary alone

in the house. Mary must move to her uncle's place in England, called Misselthwaite Manor.

Mary's spoilt characteristic makes her an unpleasant child. She acts arbitrarily when something does not please her also when someone just wants to talk or be kind to her. Mary is also portrayed as indifferent because she lacks love and affection from anyone around her when she lives in India, especially from her parents, who are busy with their own affairs and never even go into Mary's room to see how she is doing.

However, Mary's characteristics change when she gets to know Martha Sowerby, Ben Weatherstaff and Dickon Sowerby. Mary learns many things from them. She learns to know herself better from Ben and she also learns from Martha and Dickon that she can change to be a better person. Mary is even willing to help Colin, her cousin, who is sick and spoilt, to become healthy and make his behavior better because she sees her old self in Colin before she meets Martha, Ben and Dickon. Mary becomes independent, considerate and compassionate because of the influence of her surroundings to change and her readiness to open her heart to the people who really care for her.

Apart from her changes, the garden that she carefully tends with Dickon and Colin has become the representation of her changes, as the garden has changed from a withering garden into a beautiful one and so has Mary. At the beginning, she is looking sour and also behaving unpleasantly because she keeps thinking negatively of herself and anyone around her. Mary also lacks love from the ones who she needs the most, but as she tends the garden and meets people who

sincerely love her, she does not have time for the negative thoughts, which make her healthy and happily live her life as a child.

After analyzing the characteristics of the protagonist, I conclude that the theme is “one can change to be a better person through sincere kindness and love of one’s surroundings”. Mary is able to change her negative characteristics because of the love and kindness of the people around her that have influenced her to be better.

The author succeeds to show the reader that the protagonist can become a better person and has better characteristics if she has good surroundings to support her changing. The book’s title *The Secret Garden* represents Mary’s changing as the protagonist. At first the garden almost dies; however, after Mary tends and nurtures it, it becomes full of beautiful plants. This change has also happened to Mary, who is loved and cared by Martha, Ben and Dickon. They support her to be a better person and give her affection and friendship she never knows and gets before.

I think *The Secret Garden* is worth reading and worth analyzing because the story is so interesting that the reader will think that the author is capable to make a complicated character in a child. What’s more, in my opinion, the things that happen to children like Mary and Colin may also happen to some other children in real life. The story becomes a lesson for anyone who reads this book: for children, the environment and people around them will give a really big impact for their character development.