

The influence of interpersonal relationships on Mary's psychological transformation: A Freudian personality dynamic in *The Secret Garden* (1911)

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Abstract: This study investigates how Mary Lennox's interactions with other characters influence the dynamics of the id, ego, and superego in Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* (1911), drawing on Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory. Previous studies on *The Secret Garden* have primarily emphasized ecocritical, pastoral, and socio-cultural perspectives, while limited attention has been paid to the role of interpersonal relationships in shaping Mary's psychological transformation through Freudian personality dynamics. Addressing this gap, the present study employs a qualitative descriptive approach using close reading to examine textual evidence related to Mary's interactions with Martha, Dickon, and Colin. The analysis was conducted systematically through textual identification, coding, categorization, and thematic interpretation based on Freud's concepts of the id, ego, and superego. The findings reveal that Mary's early behavior is predominantly driven by the id, reflected in her selfishness, impulsiveness, and emotional instability. However, continuous interactions with supportive characters gradually strengthen the ego, enabling her to balance instinctive desires with social reality. Simultaneously, the superego develops through her increasing empathy, moral awareness, and sense of responsibility toward others. The study demonstrates that personality transformation occurs through the dynamic interaction of psychic structures rather than through isolated psychological change. Ultimately, Burnett's novel illustrates how emotional growth and moral development emerge through social interaction, environmental influence, and the reconciliation of instinct, reason, and morality.

Keywords: character interaction; Freud; Mary Lennox; personality dynamics; psychoanalysis

1. Introduction

Peace and emotional well-being can be cultivated in many ways, one of which is through nature and communal spaces. The Helmsley Walled Garden in Yorkshire, England, for example, demonstrates how therapeutic horticulture fosters both physical and emotional healing by providing a calm, restorative environment ([Helmsley Walled Garden team, 2023](#)). Such examples highlight how environmental harmony contributes to human psychological health. Personality is a dynamic organization within the individual that integrates both physical and psychological systems, shaping distinct patterns of thought and behaviour ([Allport, 1961](#)). Personality is therefore not fixed but evolves through experience, habit, and interaction, contributing to both survival and growth. This dynamic process is influenced by biological, psychological, and social factors.

Genetic predispositions influence emotional regulation and vulnerability to psychopathology ([Miu & Bîlc, 2019](#)), distorted cognition can produce anxiety ([Kuru et al., 2018](#)), and parenting styles

significantly impact emotional stability across developmental stages ([Rohner & Britner, 2002](#)). Emotional conflicts, often emerge from an individual's social environment, underscoring the interconnectedness between personal psychology and external conditions ([Halperin & Tagar, 2017](#); [Van Kleef & Coté, 2018](#)). Within this framework, Freud's psychoanalytic theory conceptualizes personality as composed of three interacting components: the id, the ego, and the superego ([Freud, 1923](#)). The id represents instinctual drives, the ego mediates between desire and reality, and the superego internalizes moral and social norms. The balance among these structures determines emotional stability and behavioral control. When the equilibrium is disturbed, psychological tension and internal conflict may arise.

Based on this idea, this study examines Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* by analyzing how the interactions between Mary Lennox and other characters, including Dickon, Colin, and Martha, shape the dynamics of her id, ego, and superego. This study aims to reveal how interpersonal relationships and environmental influences contribute to Mary's psychological development and moral awareness. Previous studies on *The Secret Garden* have approached the novel from various perspectives. [Herdiana \(2019\)](#) and [Bixler \(1996\)](#) emphasize the role of nature and the secret garden as spaces of psychological and physical restoration. Meanwhile, [Price \(2001\)](#) and [Kutzer \(2000\)](#) analyze Mary's transformation within the context of Victorian gender ideology and colonial discourse, demonstrating how her character reflects social expectations of girlhood and morality. However, limited studies have specifically examined Mary Lennox's psychological transformation through Freud's psychoanalytic theory, particularly regarding the interaction of the id, ego, and superego shaped by interpersonal and environmental influences.

This study focuses on how Mary's interactions with other characters influence the balance between her instinctive, rational, and moral dimensions. Using a qualitative descriptive approach supported by close reading, the research identifies and interprets textual evidence that reveals her internal psychological conflicts and gradual development. Through this analysis, the study aims to uncover how Burnett's narrative portrays emotional healing and psychological integration as essential elements in Mary's journey toward personal growth.

2. Literature review

Psychoanalysis is the idea of human behaviour being largely determined by unconscious mental drives and processes ([Freud, 1923](#)). It emphasizes that consciousness is not always present in every situation experienced by humans that influences a person's behaviour, way of thinking, feelings and motivations. Thus, psychoanalysis provides a basis for understanding the dynamics of personality and hidden inner conflicts, including in the context of literary analysis.

Freud conceptualized the human psyche as comprising three distinct layers: the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious ([Freud, 1923](#)). Freud's view these three layers as a conscious level of human mental processes. The Conscious encompasses experiences and emotions that are actively recognized by individuals. The preconscious consists of memories and ideas that are not immediately accessible but can be retrieved when needed. The unconscious represents the most profound layer, containing impulses, desires, and internal conflicts that are repressed due to their incompatibility with prevailing social norms or moral standards.

These three components, although conceptually distinct, operate dynamically within the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious systems to regulate human behaviour. In the book *The Ego and the Id*, Freud explains that the ego functions as the centre of thought organization that connects internal drives, external demands, and the moral values embraced by individuals ([Freud, 1923](#)). Through the ego, a

person is able to adjust their natural impulses to existing social realities, showing that human behaviour is the result of a continuous negotiation between unconscious impulses and conscious control. Thus, the ego not only acts as a bridge between the internal and external worlds, but also maintains psychological balance by regulating impulses and maintaining coherence in the human personality system.

2.1 Ego

The ego constitutes a component of personality that mediates between the primitive drives of the id and the requirements of external reality. Freud asserted that the ego's role in regulating the impulsive drives of the id through rational processes, thereby enabling individuals to conform to social norms and objective reality (Freud, 1923). The ego functions according to the reality principle, postponing the gratification of instinctual needs until circumstances are appropriate and socially acceptable. This indicates that the ego acknowledges instinctual drives and seeks practical methods to satisfy them while avoiding adverse outcomes. Thus, the ego serves as a mediator, maintaining equilibrium between instinctual impulses and the moral constraints imposed by the superego.

2.2 Id

In psychoanalytic theory, the id is the deepest aspect of the personality structure that is the main source of human psychic energy. Freud described the id as the most primitive part of the human personality structure that operates based on the pleasure principle. In *The Ego and the Id*, Freud explained that the id always seeks to avoid unpleasant feelings or tensions by seeking immediate gratification of instinctual drive (Freud, 1923). The id does not consider reality or morality, but is oriented towards the satisfaction of biological and instinctual needs.

2.3 Superego

In addition to the id and ego, Freud also introduced the superego as a personality structure that plays a role in moral supervision and the internalization of social values. The superego is the result of an individual's developmental process when norms, rules, and prohibitions from parents and society are internalized. Freud explained that, the superego is formed through an individual's early experiences, especially their relationships with authority figures, and functions as a conscience that regulates behavior in accordance with morality (Freud, 1923).

2.4 The dynamics of the id, ego, and superego

The concept of personality dynamics in Freud's theory describes how the id, ego, and superego interact continuously to regulate human thoughts, emotions, and behavior. Each component represents a different function of the mind. The id represents instinctual drives and unconscious desires, the ego operates based on the reality principle, bridging internal drives and external demands, and the superego functions as a moral authority, internalizing social and parental values. As Hall explains, "the conduct of a person is determined by his dynamics. if the bulk of the energy is controlled by the ego, his behavior will be realistic. and if it is retained by the id, which is the source of all psychic energy, his action will be impulsive." (Hall, 2005). This suggests that human behavior reflects the dominant psychic system at work and that personality is governed by the constant balance of psychic energy between these structures. The dynamics of personality, therefore, reveal how the id, ego, and superego function interdependently rather than separately, each influencing and shaping the other in a process of continuous adjustment. These dynamic relationships emphasize that personality is not static but constantly evolving through the tension and balance of these internal forces.

The continuous interaction between the id, ego, and superego forms the basis for understanding personality transformation as a psychological process. Each structure plays a different but interrelated role in shaping an individual's emotional responses and behavioral adaptations. The id provides a fundamental source of psychic energy, representing the instincts and primitive desires that drive action. The ego, operating on the reality principle, translates these drives into socially acceptable expressions by negotiating with external conditions. Meanwhile, the superego integrates moral judgments and internalized values, directing behavior toward ethical and socially responsible outcomes. Transformation occurs as the ego gradually strengthens its ability to mediate between the impulsive demands of the id and the restrictive standards of the superego. Through this process, instinctual energy is redirected and refined, allowing individuals to move from selfish impulses toward balanced, empathetic, and morally conscious behavior. Therefore, personality change does not reflect the dominance of a single psychic structure, but rather the evolving harmony among the three, in which emotional growth and moral awareness emerge from the successful regulation of internal conflict.

2.5 Theoretical framework

This study employs a psychoanalytical literary criticism approach to examine the psychological development of Mary Lennox in *The Secret Garden*. Drawing on Sigmund Freud's theories, this method interprets literary works as manifestations of the unconscious, in which repressed drives and unresolved internal conflicts influence characters' thoughts and behaviours. Within this framework, analysing Mary's journey is significant as it facilitates an understanding of the internal conflicts she encounters during her process of personality transformation.

This research examines Freud's concept of personality structure, specifically the id, ego, and superego. The id refers to instinctual drives that seek immediate satisfaction. The ego mediates between these desires and external reality, while the superego embodies internalized moral values. In literary analysis, the interplay among these structures can illuminate how characters negotiate personal impulses, environmental demands, and prevailing social norms.

This framework highlights that Mary's development is shaped by her interactions with other characters. Dickon, Colin, and Martha each exert distinct influences on the formation and balance of Mary's id, ego, and superego. These interpersonal relationships are essential for understanding Mary's psychological transformation from a selfish, isolated, and angry child to an individual capable of empathy and concern for others.

Furthermore, Mary's development does not occur in isolation, but is influenced by her interactions with other characters. The presence of Dickon, Colin, and Mrs. Medlock has different effects on the formation and balance of Mary's id, ego, and superego, which continue to develop throughout the story. These interpersonal relationships are key to understanding Mary's psychological transformation from a selfish, isolated, and angry child to a person capable of showing empathy and concern for others. The aim is not only to reveal the psychological processes behind the transformation of the main character, but also to emphasize the contribution of Freud's psychoanalytic theory in enriching literary studies, particularly in interpreting the relationship between personality structure and character development.

3. Methods

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design to examine Mary Lennox's psychological transformation in Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* (1911). Qualitative research is appropriate for literary analysis because it emphasizes interpretation, contextual understanding, and

meaning construction derived from textual evidence ([Bogdan, R., & Biklen, 2017](#); [Creswell, J. W., & Poth, 2018](#); [Denzin & Lincoln, 2005](#)). The primary data source of this study is the novel *The Secret Garden* (1911), while secondary sources include books, journal articles, and scholarly references related to psychoanalytic theory and literary criticism.

The analysis was conducted systematically through four stages: identification, coding, categorization, and interpretation. First, the researcher applied close reading by repeatedly reading the novel to identify passages, dialogues, and narrative descriptions related to Mary Lennox's emotional responses and interactions with other characters. Particular attention was given to scenes involving Martha, Dickon, and Colin because these interactions significantly contribute to Mary's psychological development. Second, the identified textual evidence was coded according to Freud's psychoanalytic concepts, namely the id, ego, and superego. Dialogues and actions reflecting impulsive behaviour, emotional desire, or instinctive reactions were categorized as indicators of the id. Passages demonstrating rational judgment, adaptation to social reality, or emotional regulation were coded as manifestations of the ego. Meanwhile, expressions involving empathy, moral awareness, guilt, responsibility, or ethical consideration were categorized as representations of the superego. Third, the coded data were grouped into thematic categories based on recurring psychological patterns found in Mary's interactions with other characters. This process enabled the researcher to identify the gradual transformation of Mary's personality and the shifting balance among the id, ego, and superego. Finally, the categorized data were interpreted using Freud's psychoanalytic framework to explain how Mary's interactions with Martha, Dickon, and Colin influenced her psychological development. The findings were analysed to reveal how interpersonal relationships contribute to emotional maturity, self-regulation, and moral awareness throughout the narrative.

4. Results and discussion

4.1 The interaction of Mary and Martha

At the beginning of the novel *The Secret Garden*, Mary Lennox's interaction with Martha reveals the early stages of her psychological transformation. Martha, a servant from a working-class background, becomes the first person to challenge Mary's sense of superiority and privilege derived from her upbringing in colonial India. Their initial conversation provides insight into Mary's id dominance, her impulsive, selfish, and emotionally reactive nature, while also marking the emergence of Mary's ego as she begins to confront social reality.

This is evident when Martha innocently comments on Mary's background, assuming that she might be a native from India:

"Eh! I can see it's different," she answered almost sympathetically. 'I dare say it's because there's such a lot o' blacks there instead o' respectable white people. When I heard you was comin' from India I thought you was a black too.' Mary sat up in bed furious. 'What!' she said. 'What! You thought I was a native. You—you daughter of a pig!' ([Burnett, 1911](#)).

This passage portrays a crucial moment that exposes Mary Lennox's pride, temper, and deeply rooted sense of superiority, shaped by her colonial upbringing. When Martha innocently assumes that Mary might be "a black too" because she came from India, Mary reacts with intense anger and insults, revealing her internalized prejudice and wounded pride. Her outburst reflects not only her spoiled and arrogant nature but also her emotional fragility as a child who has lost control over her surroundings after being uprooted from India. In this confrontation, Burnett illustrates the clash between two social worlds: Martha's humble honesty and Mary's privileged arrogance. The scene marks the beginning of

Mary's exposure to a reality that challenges her assumptions about status and identity, setting the foundation for her gradual emotional and moral growth throughout the novel.

Mary's intense anger in this scene can be understood as human behavior often being driven by an unconscious desire to avoid discomfort and reduce psychological tension (Hall, 2005). In Mary's case, her outburst towards Martha is an attempt to release the emotional tension stemming from feelings of marginalization, loss, and humiliation. Insulting Martha temporarily restores her sense of control and superiority, providing temporary emotional relief even though it further distances her from others. This reaction shows Mary's tendency to respond impulsively to frustration in order to protect her fragile self-image. However, this moment of conflict also became the starting point for her inner transformation, as such encounters gradually exposed her to the emotional consequences of her actions and prepared her for the development of self-awareness and empathy that would emerge in her later interactions with other characters.

Although Mary's initial reaction to Martha exposes the dominance of her id through anger and pride, her continued interaction with Martha gradually initiates emotional growth. Over time, Martha's sincerity, patience, and humility begin to influence Mary's behavior, prompting her to reflect on her own actions. These encounters encourage the emergence of her ego, which starts to regulate her impulsive tendencies, and lay the foundation for her developing moral awareness. This gradual shift becomes evident when Mary begins to recognize and appreciate Martha's kindness, an unfamiliar experience that signals her early capacity for empathy and gratitude.

This transformation is illustrated when Mary awkwardly expresses gratitude to Martha for her kindness.

“She opened the door to go out, and then suddenly thought of something and turned back rather slowly. ‘Martha,’ she said, ‘they were your wages. It was your twopence really. Thank you.’ She said it stiffly because she was not used to thanking people or noticing that they did things for her. ‘Thank you,’ she said, and held out her hand because she did not know what else to do.” (Burnett, 1911).

This passage marks a significant moment in Mary's psychological development, reflecting the emergence of the ego and superego in her personality. Her hesitation and stiffness in expressing gratitude reveal the internal conflict between her old self, dominated by pride and entitlement, and her growing awareness of social reciprocity and kindness. The act of saying “thank you,” though simple, signifies that Mary's ego has begun mediating between her instinctual impulses (id) and the moral understanding represented by the superego. The ego enables her to act in accordance with social values rather than instinctive self-interest. Moreover, her acknowledgment of Martha's effort “it was your twopence really,” demonstrates the formation of empathy, showing that she is learning to see beyond herself.

Unlike the pleasure principle, which seeks instant gratification, the ego operates on the reality principle, directing individuals to act based on what actually exists and what is socially acceptable (Hall, 2005). By thanking Martha, Mary began to realize the reality of her new environment, where kindness and cooperation were more valuable than superiority and command. Her response reflects a shift from an urge to satisfy herself to behavior grounded in social awareness and understanding. Instead of acting to satisfy her pride, she responds to the real situation with a gesture of appreciation toward someone who has helped her. This moment shows that Mary's ego is beginning to function as a realistic mediator

between her emotions and her environment, helping her adapt to a world where mutual respect and empathy replace domination and privilege.

4.2 The interaction of Mary and Dickon

Mary's relationship with Dickon marks a turning point in her psychological development, as her interactions with him begin to awaken emotional awareness and empathy. Through Dickon's kindness, connection to nature, and nonjudgmental attitude, Mary gradually learns to express affection and care, qualities that were previously suppressed by her self-centered disposition. This stage illustrates the gradual emergence of the ego and the influence of the superego in balancing Mary's instinctual drives.

This is evident when Mary becomes emotionally attached to the secret garden and reacts with frustration and sorrow at the thought of it being neglected:

“She began to feel hot and as contrary as she had ever felt in her life. “I don't care, I don't care! Nobody has any right to take it from me when I care about it and they don't. They're letting it die, all shut in by itself,” she ended passionately, and she threw her arms over her face and burst out crying poor little Mistress Mary.” ([Burnett, 1911](#)).

At this point, Mary's words reflect a conflict between the id and ego. Her exclamation “I don't care, I don't care!” conveys the impulsive and emotional energy of the id, driven by passion and possessiveness toward the garden. However, beneath her outburst lies the developing influence of the ego, as her emotion stems not from pure self-interest but from genuine concern for something beyond herself. Her recognition that “they're letting it die” indicates an emerging sense of moral responsibility, an early sign of superego formation, influenced by Dickon's nurturing perspective toward nature.

The id is entirely non-moral, the ego strives to be moral, and the superego can become excessively moral, even to the point of cruelty ([Freud, 1923](#)). In this moment, Mary's struggle between emotional impulse and emerging self-awareness illustrates the ego's effort to regulate the intensity of her instinctual desires. Her initial reaction driven by the id, reflects pure emotion without moral consideration, but as her attachment to the garden deepens, her ego begins to intervene, urging her to act with responsibility and care. Yet, this growing moral awareness also brings tension, as her concern for the garden's neglect borders on self-punishment and guilt, showing how the superego starts to influence her sense of duty. Thus, Mary's conflicting emotions reveal the intricate balance Freud describes: her id fuels her passion, her ego channels it into purposeful action, and her emerging superego transforms it into moral conviction, even at the cost of emotional distress.

Mary's attachment to the secret garden becomes stronger, symbolizing the beginning of her emotional awakening. After her initial outburst of anger and frustration, her feelings evolve into a sense of responsibility and connection to something beyond herself. This shift is expressed when she declares:

“It's this,” she said. “It's a secret garden, and I'm the only one in the world who wants it to be alive.” ([Burnett, 1911](#)).

This quote captures a crucial moment in Mary's emotional awakening and her deepening sense of connection with the world around her. Her statement that she is “the only one in the world who wants it alive” reflects both a new sense of purpose and a growing emotional investment in something outside herself. The secret garden, once a forgotten and lifeless space, becomes a symbol of Mary's inner world, neglected, lonely, yet full of potential for renewal. Her desire to see the garden come back to

life shows the emergence of empathy and compassion, feelings she had not experienced before due to her isolation and lack of affection in her childhood. The possessive tone in her words reveals how personal this bond has become, as she identifies with the garden's hidden beauty and neglect. Through this statement, Burnett illustrates how Mary's relationship with the garden represents not only a growing bond with nature, but also a slow movement from emotional emptiness towards vitality and connection.

Mary's growing attachment to the secret garden also reflects the development of the ego, described as a complex organization of psychological processes that functions as an intermediary between the id and the outside world (Hall, 2005). Her emotional investment in the garden shows that she has begun to connect her inner feelings with the reality around her, rather than being driven solely by impulse or self-interest. The garden becomes a medium through which Mary learns to respond to her environment with awareness and purpose. Instead of reacting emotionally as she did before, she now directs her desires toward nurturing and sustaining life. This shows that her ego is beginning to function as a bridge between her inner emotional world and the external reality she inhabits, allowing her to transform instinctive feelings into meaningful actions. Through this process, Mary approaches psychological balance, demonstrating maturity in how she understands and interacts with the world beyond herself.

4.3 The interaction of Mary and Colin

Mary's interaction with Colin represents the most advanced stage of her psychological development. In contrast to her earlier impulsive and self-centred behaviour, Mary now demonstrates emotional maturity and self-control, allowing her to act as a mirror for Colin's own egocentric disposition. Their conversations reveal how Mary's balanced psyche, guided by the ego, helps regulate not only her own impulses but also influences Colin's awareness of his behaviour. Mary transformation becomes evident when she decides to walk away from Colin during one of his tantrums:

I'm going," she said. "And I won't come back!" She walked to the door and when she reached it she turned round and spoke again. "I was going to tell you all sorts of nice things," she said. "Dickon brought his fox and his rook and I was going to tell you all about them. Now I won't tell you a single thing!" (Burnett, 1911).

This quotation depicts a turning point in Mary's emotional response to Colin, revealing her growing moral awareness and self-control. When she decides to leave and withhold the story she had planned to share, her reaction is not a cruel act, but rather a form of emotional correction. She recognizes Colin's behaviour as wrong and responds in a way that teaches consequences, that unkindness leads to loss. This reflects as a moral response that arises when one feels that bad behaviour should naturally produce unpleasant results. Mary's decision to leave serves as a form of quiet moral discipline, in which she instinctively upholds this principle without the need to reprimand or argue. This action demonstrates an understanding that relationships are built on respect and kindness, and that selfishness or unkindness can disrupt emotional connections. Through this moment, Mary shows that she is learning to act with integrity and emotional wisdom, turning conflict into an opportunity for moral growth, for herself and for Colin.

Mary's reaction at this point illustrates moral function that regulates human behavior that when a person commits a moral wrong, there is an inner feeling that the wrongdoing must be followed by discomfort or certain consequences. For moral offenders, this inner voice seems to say that punishment will come in the form of something unpleasant that results from their actions (Hall, 2005). This idea is reflected in Mary's response to Colin, she does not punish him directly, but her choice to withhold her

kindness becomes a natural consequence of his unfriendliness. Her behavior demonstrates an intuitive understanding that actions have emotional consequences, and through this, she helps Colin begin to associate negative behavior with loss rather than reward. In this way, Mary unconsciously represents the moral reasoning described by [Hall \(2005\)](#), where discipline and empathy work together to guide a person's actions toward justice and emotional maturity.

Mary's encounter with Colin reveals a dramatic shift in her attitude and emotional strength. When faced with Colin's uncontrollable screaming, Mary no longer reacts with fear or passivity but instead confronts him boldly and with authority, asserting her control over the situation. This change is evident when she says:

“If you scream another scream,” she said, “I’ll scream too - and I can scream louder than you can and I’ll frighten you, I’ll frighten you!” He actually had stopped screaming because she had startled him so. The scream which had been coming almost choked him. The tears were streaming down his face and he shook all over” ([Burnett, 1911](#)).

This quotation describes the tension between authority and compassion in Mary's personality development. Her decision to confront Colin in this way was not driven by cruelty, but by an instinctive understanding that his emotional outbursts required strength rather than sympathy. By matching his energy and redirecting it back at him, Mary managed to shock Colin and break him out of his self-destructive behavior. Her words, though harsh, had a corrective purpose, they made him realize the futility of his rage and forced him to control himself. At the same time, this scene reflects Mary's growing sense of responsibility towards others that she no longer reacts impulsively but takes decisive action to help others, even if through unconventional means. Burnett uses this confrontation to reveal that emotional growth is not always expressed through gentleness, but sometimes through courage, assertiveness, and the willingness to challenge others for their own good. This marks an important stage in Mary's transformation from a spoiled and reactive child into a strong and compassionate individual, capable of guiding and influencing others.

Mary's reaction in this scene also reflects the psychological complexity that explains how a person's sense of morality can unconsciously serve instinctive gratification. Highly principled individuals can feel a sense of satisfaction when confronting or “attacking” people they consider wrong or immoral ([Hall, 2005](#)). In Mary's case, her outburst toward Colin is driven by both moral and emotional motivations. On the surface, she appears to be acting rightly, correcting Colin's unreasonable behavior and helping him control himself, but beneath the surface, Mary's sharp tone and assertiveness reveal a hidden satisfaction in claiming power and restoring order. This combination of discipline and emotional release shows that Mary's actions, while morally justified, are also driven by an instinctive pleasure in controlling a chaotic situation. Burnett subtly captures this duality, portraying Mary's moral strength not as perfect virtue, but as a dynamic blend of concern, authority, and pent-up emotions that find expression through confrontation.

5. Conclusion

This study examines Mary Lennox's psychological transformation in Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* (1911) through Freud's concepts of the id, ego, and superego. The findings reveal that Mary's interactions with Martha, Dickon, and Colin significantly influence the development of her personality. Initially dominated by the id, Mary exhibits selfishness, anger, and impulsivity. However, through social interaction and emotional experiences, her ego gradually develops, helping her regulate emotions and adapt to reality, while the superego emerges through empathy, responsibility, and moral

awareness. Additionally, Mary's transformation occurs through the dynamic interaction of psychic structures shaped by interpersonal relationships. It also contributes to psychoanalytic literary criticism by highlighting the role of social interaction in character development within *The Secret Garden*. Finally, this research suggests that future studies may explore *The Secret Garden* using alternative psychological or interdisciplinary approaches, such as attachment theory, child development theory, or trauma studies, to provide broader perspectives on Mary Lennox's emotional and psychological growth.

Author's declaration

Author contribution

Alysa Marchelin: Conceptualization, data collection, textual analysis, interpretation, manuscript drafting, and revision. **Leni Marlina:** Supervision, methodological guidance, manuscript review, editing, and validation of the research findings.

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Data availability

The data supporting the findings of this study are derived from the primary literary text, *The Secret Garden* (1911) by Frances Hodgson Burnett, and relevant secondary scholarly sources cited in the references. All data analyzed during this study are available in publicly accessible sources.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this manuscript. The authors are not affiliated with or involved in any organization or entity that has a financial or non-financial interest in the subject matter discussed in this study.

Ethical clearance

This research does not involve humans as subjects. Therefore, ethical clearance was not required for this study.

AI statement

The grammatical structure of this article was improved by using ChatGPT, and the authors have rechecked the accuracy and correctness of the generated sentences with the topic and data of this study. The data and language used in this article have been validated and verified by an English language expert, and none of the AI-generated sentences is included in this article.

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