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**PSYCHOLOGICAL IMAGE OF THE CHARACTER MARY LENNOX IN  
FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT’S “THE SECRET GARDEN”<sup>24</sup>****Adilova Fotimakhon Mukhamad Anasovna***Senior Teacher of  
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Tashkent, Uzbekistan**E-mail: [adilovafotima2@gmail.com](mailto:adilovafotima2@gmail.com)**ORCID ID: 0009-0002-3658-7846***ABSTRACT**

The protagonist of Frances Hodgson Burnett’s “The Secret Garden” (1911), Mary Lennox, is the subject of this article’s psychological analysis, which focuses on her shift from emotional detachment to empathy and self-awareness. The issue raised is the underappreciated psychological aspect of Burnett’s works in Edwardian children’s literature, where moral instruction frequently took precedence over personal experience. The study’s objectives are to define the creative processes by which Burnett depicts individuation and healing and to examine Mary’s psychological development as an illustration of early literary psychologism. Determining the phases of Mary’s emotional development, analyzing the garden’s symbolism, and analyzing how character, place, and nature interact as means of self-discovery are some research assignments. Hermeneutic approach and contextual analysis are applied as main methods. The findings show that Burnett presents a child’s rehabilitation as both moral and psychological rebirth by externalizing Mary’s inner transformation using spatial metaphors, natural images, and interactive interactions. In conclusion, “The Secret Garden” offers a timeless example of emotional resilience, empathy, and self-integration in children’s literature by fusing Edwardian moral ideals with an advanced psychological reality.

**KEYWORDS**

Psychology,  
childhood, Mary Lennox,  
trauma, transformation,  
Burnett, Edwardian  
fiction, individuation,  
emotional growth.

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## FRANSIS HODJSON BERNETTNING “SIRLI BOG” ASARIDAGI MERI LENNOKS OBRAZINING PSIXOLOGIK TASVIRI

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### ANNOTATSIYA

Frensis Xojson Bernetning 1911-yilda yozilgan “Sirli bog” asarining bosh qahramoni Meri Lennoks ushbu maqolaning psixologik tahlil mavzusidir. Maqolada uning hissiy befarqlikdan empatiya va o‘zini anglashga o‘tish jarayoniga alohida tahlil etilgan. Shuningdek, maqolada Edvard davri bolalar adabiyotida Bernet asarlarining psixologik jihati yetarlicha baholanmaganligi, ko‘pincha axloqiy ta’lim shaxsiy tajribadan ustun qo‘yilganligi masalasi ko‘tariladi. Tadqiqotning maqsadi Bernetning shaxsiyat o‘shini tasvirlaydigan ijodiy jarayonlarni aniqlash hamda Meri psixologik taraqqiyotini dastlabki adabiy psixologizmning namunasi sifatida o‘rganishdan iborat. Tadqiqot vazifalari orasida Merining hissiy rivojlanish bosqichlarini aniqlash, bog‘ning ramziy ma’nosini tahlil qilish, shuningdek, o‘zlikni anglash vositasi sifatida xarakter, joy va tabiatning o‘zaro ta’sirini o‘rganish kabilar o‘rin olgan. Asosiy yondashuv sifatida germenektivik yondashuv va kontekstual tahlil qo‘llaniladi. Natijalar shuni ko‘rsatadiki, Bernet bolaning rivojlanishi ham axloqiy, ham psixologik qayta tug‘ilish sifatida tasvirlaydi, bunda Merining ichki o‘zgarishini fazoviy metaforalar, tabiiy obrazlar va o‘zaro munosabatlar orqali namoyon etadi. Yakunida, “Sirli bog” bolalar adabiyotida Edvard davrining axloqiy ideallarini ilg‘or psixologik voqelik bilan uyg‘unlashtirish orqali hissiy bardoshlilik, hamdardlik va ichki o‘zlikni anglashning abadiy namunasini sifatida asoslanadi.

### KALIT SO‘ZLAR

Psixologiya, bolalik, Meri Lennoks, travma, o‘zgarish, Bernet, Edvard davri, individuatsiya, hissiy o‘sh.

**ПСИХОЛОГИЗМ В ОБРАЗЕ ГЕРОИНИ МЭРИ ЛЕННОКС В РОМАНЕ  
ФРЭНСИС ХОДЖСОН БЁРНЕТТ “ТАИНСТВЕННЫЙ САД”****Адилова Фотимахон Мухамад Анасовна***старший преподаватель,**Узбекский государственный**университет мировых языков**Ташкент, Узбекистан**E-mail: [adilovafotima2@gmail.com](mailto:adilovafotima2@gmail.com)**ORCID ID:0009-0002-3658-7846***АННОТАЦИЯ**

Объектом анализа в данной статье является психология главной героини романа Фрэнсис Ходжсон Бёрнетт «Таинственный сад» (1911) Мэри Леннокс, которая проходит путь от эмоциональной отстранённости к эмпатии и самосознанию. Актуальность обращения к данной проблеме обусловлена недооценкой психологического аспекта произведений Бёрнетт среди исследователей эдвардианской детской литературы, где моральное наставление зачастую преобладало над личным опытом. Цели исследования заключаются в определении творческих приёмов, с помощью которых Бёрнетт изображает процесс становления личности, а также в изучении психологического развития Мэри как примера раннего литературного психологизма. Основные исследовательские задачи включают определение этапов эмоционального становления Мэри, анализ символики сада, изучение пространства и природы как средств самопознания. В качестве основных методов в работе использованы герменевтический подход и контекстуальный анализ. Результаты исследования показывают, что Бёрнетт представляет развитие ребёнка как нравственное и психологическое возрождение, прибегая для показа внутренней трансформации Мэри к использованию пространственных метафор, природных образов и изображению изменяющихся взаимоотношений. В заключение роман «Таинственный сад», сочетающий эдвардианские моральные ценности с развитой психологической глубиной, определяется как непреходящий образец передачи с помощью художественных средств эмоциональной устойчивости, эмпатии и самоинтеграции в детской литературе.

**КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА**

Психология, детство, Мэри Леннокс, травма, трансформация, Бёрнетт, эдвардианская литература, индивидуализация, эмоциональный рост.

## INTRODUCTION

The “Secret Garden” by Frances Hodgson Burnett holds a special position in the Edwardian canon as a children’s book with nuanced psychological depth. Mary Lennox, the main character, experiences a metamorphosis that reflects both moral instruction and emotional recovery. Mary’s journey symbolizes a psychological and figurative “return to life,” as she transforms from a cold-blooded, irritable kid of colonial India into a kind, uplifting character. “The Secret Garden” presents a symbolic reconciliation between self and environment, as noted by Foster and Simons (Foster & Simons, 1995, 176). The study’s topicality stems from the increasing scholarly interest in the psychological aspects of children’s literature, namely in the ways that Edwardian narratives mirror evolving ideas about childhood, trauma, and healing. “The Secret Garden” is frequently reassessed in modern literary criticism as a work that addresses early psychological realism and the healing power of nature rather than only as a moral or didactic tale. Offering a targeted psychological interpretation of Mary Lennox as a changing awareness rather than a static moral figure is what makes the study novel. This essay adds to the larger conversation about how early twentieth-century literature internalized the idea of child development and self-healing by following her internal conflicts and slow emotional awakening. The study’s objective is to investigate Mary Lennox’s inner psychology in Frances Hodgson Burnett’s “The Secret Garden” via the prisms of psychological healing, self-discovery, and emotional transformation.

The main objectives are:

- To analyze the stages of Mary’s emotional and psychological development throughout the novel.
- To identify how Burnett uses narrative techniques, symbolism, and environment to externalize Mary’s inner state.
- To interpret Mary’s transformation in the context of Edwardian attitudes toward childhood and psychological health.
- To connect Burnett’s portrayal of the child’s psyche with broader literary and

cultural discourses on healing and identity.

In Uzbek literary studies, the psychological portrayal of characters has long been a central focus, explored across various genres and periods. Foundational works such as Xolmurodov (1991) and Qurunov (1992) investigate the mechanisms of character psychologism in prominent national narratives, while Umurov (2007) offers a broader theoretical framework for artistic psychologism in the Uzbek novel tradition. More recent research, including Botirova (2020), Qobilova (2020), Ko‘chimov (2021), and Boboqolov (2022), continues this trajectory by analyzing the representation of inner states, moral conflict, and individual consciousness in contemporary prose. Taken together, these studies demonstrate a sustained scholarly interest in how writers depict the complexities of human psychology, providing a methodological foundation for examining similar processes in English literature, including Burnett’s portrayal of child characters. This study focuses on Mary’s inner psychology as it manifests in her behaviors, thoughts, and feelings. The study tracks her development via pivotal moments that reveal the interaction of loneliness, rage, curiosity, and love using textual analysis and psychological interpretation. Thus, the introduction establishes the context for a thorough examination of Burnett’s psychological creativity by presenting the study’s topicality, innovation, aim, and aims.

## **METHODS**

The analysis takes an interdisciplinary method that combines narrative psychology with psychoanalytic interpretation, which draws from Jungian and Freudian viewpoints. Selected passages from the text are used to analyze Mary’s character, each of which represents a phase of her mental awakening. Scholarly interpretations and comparative findings in Edwardian literature support contextual reading. The main approach is a close reading of Burnett’s work with a focus on emotional subtext and narrative viewpoint. Every quote from the book is examined in relation to its psychological function, which includes the projection of trauma, defensive mechanism, emotional awakening, and individuation process.

## RESULTS

Mary's emotional distance is clear from the first few pages. She was a young girl "*who had never cared much for anyone,*" according to Burnett. (Burnett F., 2007, 10). The statement "*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*" (Burnett F., 2007, 10) shows her inability to form attachment bonds. According to Meredith (Meredith M., 2005, 34), Such disengagement is a hallmark of early narcissistic withdrawal, which is typical of children who have been neglected. Her recollection that "*her father and mother had never talked to her about anything in particular*" (Burnett F., 2007, 18) highlights the lack of emotional contact, a gap that influences her eventual animosity and conceit. In Jungian terms, this marks a *shadowed psyche*, where the ego has not yet integrated empathy or self-awareness (Meredith M., 2005, 41).

When Mary arrives at Misselthwaite Manor, she feels a little bit of anxiety. She "*was not at all a timid child... but she felt that there was no knowing what might happen in a house with a hundred rooms*" (Burnett F., 2007, 20). This extract shows the inner contrast of her outer courage and inner insecurity. Her declaration "*I don't like it*" (Burnett F., 2007, 27) accompanied by a physical gesture "*pinching her lips*" functions as a somatic expression of resistance. Jenkins (Jenkins R., 2011, 432) interprets such bodily gestures as the narrative's means of externalizing psychological conflict.

Mary's move from India to Yorkshire symbolizes both loss and rebirth. Her observation that "*the native servants she had been used to in India were not in the least like this*" (Burnett F., 2007, 31) reveals her colonial consciousness and the beginnings of cross-cultural adaptation. Toth (Toth G., 2003, 123) argues that Burnett's child characters internalize imperial structures of privilege that must be unlearned for psychological growth.

The garden's discovery acts as a turning point. The sentence "*She could not*

*help thinking about the garden which no one had been into for ten years*” (Burnett F., 2007, 42) marks the awakening of curiosity as a substitute for repression. As she begins to walk and breathe in open air, “*she was stirring her slow blood and making herself stronger by fighting with the wind*” (Burnett F., 2007, 55), the physical exertion parallels the activation of her dormant psyche. Borgmeier (Borgmeier R., 2012, 18) interprets the garden as a sacred enclosure where transformation and self-integration occur.

Mary’s affection toward Martha’s family, especially the mother, indicates her growing capacity for empathy: “*Mary was most attracted by the mother and Dickon. When Martha told stories of what ‘mother’ said or did they always sounded comfortable*” (Burnett F., 2007, 66). This emotional comfort contrasts sharply with her earlier loneliness. Lundin (Burnett F., 2007, 216) emphasizes that in Burnett’s fiction, domesticity becomes the medium of healing. Her independent act “*She made up her mind to go and find ...herself*” (Burnett F., 2007, 67) shows emerging autonomy and curiosity. This cognitive shift from passivity to initiative is crucial to her individuation process.

In India, Mary’s dependence on servants suppressed her self-agency: “*She had always been attended by her Ayah... Now she was followed by nobody and was learning to dress herself*” (Burnett F., 2007, 68). The shift from servitude to self-action represents psychological maturation. Koppes (Koppes P., 1978, 200) notes that Burnett frames independence as both moral and therapeutic growth.

The same independence turns into resilience when Mary copes with loneliness: “*She went out into the garden as quickly as possible... and ran round and round the fountain ten times*” (Burnett F., 2007, 79). Movement replaces isolation; her body expresses vitality before her mind fully comprehends it.

Mary’s recognition of *Magic* marks her spiritual reawakening: “*Mary Lennox had heard a great deal about Magic... she always said that what happened almost at that moment was Magic*” (Burnett F., 2007, 95). McCarthy (McCathy M., 2010, 5) interprets Burnett’s “*Magic*” as a metaphysical metaphor for the unconscious

forces of healing and imagination. This conceptual turn allows Mary to reinterpret experience through wonder rather than resistance.

By the final stages, Mary's determination and empathy converge: "*Mary was an odd, determined little person, and now she had something interesting to be determined about*" (Burnett F., 2007, 112). The sense of purpose replaces narcissistic isolation. Yet vulnerability remains: "*Her thin hands clutched each other... she felt miserable... she felt as if she went red and then pale*" (Burnett F., 2007, 125) revealing that growth includes awareness of emotional pain. Darcy (Darcy J., 2009, 83) situates Mary's transformation within the Edwardian ideal of moral education through self-discipline and sympathy. Burnett's portrayal transcends mere moralism, showing genuine psychological individuation.

## DISCUSSION

It is possible to interpret Mary Lennox's psychological development as a microcosm of Edwardian changes in the portrayal of children. Burnett presents a more nuanced and psychologically complex picture of childhood by emphasizing inner struggle, repression, and emotional rebirth, whereas early children's literature frequently focused on obedience, moral instruction, and the development of virtue. As Horne and Sanders (Horne J., 2011, 34) observe, "*The Secret Garden*" turns the child inward, toward psychological exploration, reflecting a literary preoccupation with the inner life of the child that was increasingly recognized during the Edwardian period.

The garden itself serves as a potent metaphor for mental growth. Burnett externalizes inner processes in concrete, symbolic forms: engagement with nature promotes spiritual regeneration, movement through the garden reflects moral and physical strengthening, and curiosity becomes a conduit for emotional stirring. Mary's transition from repression to self-expression is symbolized by the contrast between contained, locked rooms and open, growing landscapes. Through the use of doors, secret keys, and the hidden garden, Mary simultaneously navigates psychological barriers, facing fear, loneliness, and self-doubt, signifying both the

potential and obstacles of self-discovery (Borgmeier R., 2012, 18).

The novel's psychological depth is further enhanced by Burnett's narrative method. Her restricted omniscient point of view alternates between interior and outside viewpoints, giving readers close access to Mary's feelings, ideas, and moral growth while also placing her in a vibrant, externalized environment. Moral allegory and psychological realism can coexist harmoniously because of the interaction between internal reflection and external description. In this way, the garden becomes a mirror of the mind as well as a site of physical cultivation. Jungian interpretations later emphasize this idea, viewing the garden as a symbolic area of individuation and self-integration (Meredith M., 2005, 34).

The novel also foresees gendered ramifications in self-definition and emotional development. The conventional passivity imposed on young female protagonists in Victorian and early Edwardian literature is resisted by Mary's voyage. Jenkins (Jenkins R., 2011, 440) argues that Mary's struggle for autonomy reflects an early feminist consciousness: She actively pursues knowledge, questions limitations, and builds deep connections on her own terms. Initially muted by patriarchal conventions and imperial structures, her voice eventually finds expression through relationships with other people, especially Dickon and the healing mother figures she meets. Burnett's understanding that psychological development is socially embedded rather than solitary is highlighted by this relational dimension.

Mary's metamorphosis also serves as an example of how trauma and recovery may coexist. A sense of psychic fragmentation is evoked by her early self-centeredness, cultural dislocation, and emotional deprivation. The book presents healing as an embodied, multisensory process: gardening, spending time in nature, and helping others all serve as catalysts for moral and emotional development. This shows that Burnett anticipated contemporary ideas of holistic childhood development by acknowledging that psychological health includes both affective and physical dimensions.

Lastly, the novel's handling of wonder, imagination, and "magic" highlights how the conscious and unconscious minds interact during emotional development. A psychological mechanism that fosters hope, creativity, and agency is reflected in Mary's view of the garden as magical and her conviction that she can bring about change there. Burnett's comprehensive knowledge of childhood as a time of active meaning-making as well as instruction is revealed through such symbolic involvement with the environment. This idea is consistent with modern readings of children's literature as psychologically formative (Darcy J., 2009, 83).

In summary, Mary Lennox is portrayed in Burnett's work as a psychologically complex kid whose internal development is closely linked to relational, geographical, and symbolic experiences. The book creates a model of childhood growth that is still influential and exemplary by fusing psychological insight, moral allegory, and inventive storytelling. Mary's metamorphosis reflects greater Edwardian cultural worries about children's inner lives and well-being and demonstrates the potential for moral development, self-discovery, and perseverance in literature.

### **CONCLUSION**

Mary Lennox's psychology in "The Secret Garden" is a multi-layered process of self-discovery rather than a straight line from melancholy to happiness. Burnett paints a picture of a neglected child's psyche that is mended by interaction with nature, compassion, and creativity. The novel's capacity to depict inward metamorphosis through tangible, sensory experience is what gives it its enduring impact. Burnett developed a style of psychological realism that affected later children's stories by combining psychoanalytic, moral, and symbolic elements. The inherent human ability for rejuvenation is reflected in Mary's journey from seclusion to integration; this lesson is just as applicable to contemporary readers as it was to viewers in the Edwardian era.

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