

From Isolation to Transformation: Exploring Bibliotherapy in Burnett's *The Secret Garden*

Ms. Abejeyaa S. S.

Research Scholar (Full Time),

The Gandhigram Rural Institute (DTBU).

ABSTRACT

More than a classic children's novel of revitalisation, Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* is a proto-therapeutic text that anticipates modern bibliotherapy. The garden is a space of transfiguration, trauma, illness, and isolation, giving way to growth, strength, and relational healing. Even as Mary Lennox and Colin Craven move through childhood in comfortable homes, they carry the psychic wounds of loss and abandonment. Their recoveries, through their narratives of own gradual, transformative immersion in the garden, dramatise how literature functions as a therapeutic encounter. 'Reading' the cycles of death and rebirth in the garden becomes a metaphor for working through the psychic processes of readers. Burnett does not merely imagine reading as a passive source of healing, but as a narrative of cultivation, seeking life in barren fields of language. He models literature as a living prescription, where narrative and empathy bind fractured subjectivities. The text challenges to see bibliotherapy not as a supplement to psychology, but as a re-visioning of how stories themselves heal.

Keywords: Bibliotherapy, Healing, Resilience, Childhood psychology, Nature, Therapy.
