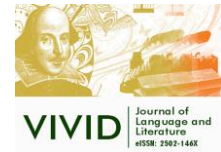




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Literature

Nature's Role Toward Mental And Physical Healing Reflected On *The Secret Garden* By Frances Hodgson Burnett: An Ecocritical Reading

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A B S T R A C T

This research aims to show the ability of nature to heal mental and physical of children that shown on *The Secret Garden* written by Frances Hodgson Burnett. The relation of nature and human in this novel are captured on the characters experience the transformation from illness to wellness when interact to the nature in the garden. We might should realize that the main function of literature is not only to entertain but also to teach us how important nature to human. In this case the writer uses qualitative methods and applies eco-criticism to explain how close the relation between nature and human. It means that human and nonhuman have benefited each other and it reflects on how nature or space can be the media of mental and physical healing, and healing power of nature is portrayed in this novel. The writer focuses on: 1) the relation between nature and human, 2) Nature as a media of mental and physical healing to the children depict on the novel interact with space and experience the goodness of nature.

INTRODUCTION

In a long time ago the beauty in literature has appeared. The aesthetic of literature is the most important element of literary work to deliver the idea but in the proper way. Literature is a universal expression of human beings and it brings the value of the university. Then not only to entertain the reader, but literature also portrayed the thoughts and expression of human and it usually brings the value, a good influence and knowledge to the reader. Lamarque (2008:6) in his article mention that aesthetic characterization also has implications for how the work appear, what impact it has, what is salient in it, what merits aesthetic attention. People should realize that is something precious value on literary work. Frances Hodgson Burnett in her novel entitled *The Secret Garden* lift up the universal values concerning the human relation with

nature and how nature became the media of healing the mental and physical of children that reflect on her novel.

Nature is everything that is not artificial by human and exists without human intervention. The existence of nature is derived from the god and many people also believe that nature has a big power. Like Pollini mention in his journal that environment is socially constructed, but nature is not socially constructed (Pollini, 2013:39). Nature known as the most helpful element of human life, it's fulfilling human needs from nutrition intake, serve a place to shelter, and any human needed. However, not only those, nature also have the special power of healing the mental and physical of human.

The space like a garden, forest and wilderness are example of a place that really near to the nature. The power of nature makes us became free human and forget about the problem's life. Indirectly nature can cure all the illness of the human. Not only directly to nature, but from literary work also can give influence to the reader after reading through the description of nature on illustration of the author. Somehow the reader will find the serenity and it will relax in psychologically and mentally of people.

Based on the researcher mention above, the first thing the researcher sees that human problem in their life is they face and struggle the sickness. But with take the goodness of nature, it can be the media of the mental and physical healing. The values of healing power of nature can be seen through the characters experience the transformation from illness to wellness when interact to the nature in the garden.

As described above, this studies trying to give and persuade the reader of the goodness the literary work. It's not only to entertain, but also contained many values. And the other side's this study trying to: first; reveal the relationship of nature and human, the second is explaining that nature as a media of mental and physical healing of children that shown on *The Secret Garden*.

THEORY AND METHODS

In conducting the research the writer using library research that is by reading the books. Because this research is the objective research so it is very important to read intensively, with the purpose is to get the better understanding when collecting the data. However, this research is not only concern with the context in the inside of the object of the research, but also concern with the other fact on this issue that brings from the novel. So, the reading session of the text and find the main data on the issue is the first stage to clarification. Through reading the novel *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett, international journal and also other books that related to this study it also support this research. References related to the context of the relation of children's health and the natural environment, as capture on the novel *The Secret Garden*.

To analyze the power of healing from nature to the mental and physical of the children that reflected on *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett, this research is guided with some environmental value in eco-criticism. Burnett capture natural beauty and the harmony of humanity and nature also impact the goodness to human. The main focus of this research is to give the reader the new perspective of the relation human and nature that are so close, so from

this research is also to prove there is the better value of nature that capture on the characters experience the transformation from illness to wellness in *The Secret Garden*.

To strengthen the topic it is very important to classify the data and refill the most proper data that will brings in this research. However, the perspective of the theory that will present also becomes one of the elements to strengthen this research. And the proper theory and approach that is expressed about the relation of the environment and human in the literary works is Eco-criticism.

Eco-criticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. The earth is becoming the centered of this approach to literary studies. Cheryl Glotfelty states eco-criticism takes as its subject the interconnections between nature and culture, specifically the cultural artifacts of language and literature. (Glotfelty Fromm, 1996)

Levin mentions about the works of Ecocritics that can be divided in two “critical camps”. The first is it consists of “realists” who promote the “return to nature” as a means of healing our modern/ postmodern alienation. The other camp is of “social constructionists” who see that nature as “a discursive strategy” and are suspicious of “its alleged healing properties.” (Levin, 175:2012). From Levin mention in his books, we see that literature which using eco-critics not only portrayed the appearance of nature but it learns how nature is useful to the human beings. The main aim of this eco-critic study is using literary work as the reminder to the reader to return to nature because nature itself has benefited us in many aspects of our life.

So to get the better understanding about how the relation between natures are benefits to the human and brings the goodness which can be as a healer of mental and physical of children that depict on *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett, the researcher needs the books and international journal about eco-criticisms and also the other supporting idea and fact about nature towards people.

DISCUSSION

Nature’s Role toward Mental and Physical Healing Reflected on *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett: an Ecocritical Reading

The relationship of humans and nature that capture on *The Secret Garden*

The relation of humans and nature are so close. The existence of nature, making human can’t deny that human beings can’t avoid the nature. It is because of human is part of nature itself. Human beings depend on nature which provides everything needed. Human needs to fulfill all the necessities are shaped and motivate human to find the invention as well as the demands of nature that provides its limitations. That’s why human and nature cannot be separated because it’s had the close relation as a whole. In *The Secret Garden* also represented the relation between human and nature. What happen on those two children in the novel, it’s because of the figure of nature that has close relation between them.

The basic instinct of children is to do the activities like playing and do some stuff on the outside of the house. It’s able to stimulate the work of a child’s brain and also help them be healthier, productive and active. The best place for children to play is in the place that surrounded with every element of nature. It’s good when children play around and explore what’s in the

environment. However, it also provides educational facilities by exploring the natural surroundings. The important element that nature brings to the children is making them feel so pleasure, joy and feeling the happiness. We are told that the children enjoy being in the garden: “They ran from one part of the garden to another and found so many wonders that they were obliged to remind themselves that they must whisper or speak low.” (93)

The Secret Garden focuses on the relation between nature and children, how the children interact to the nature and also bring the goodness to the character that Burnett depicts on her novel. There is one of activities that people can get involved in the nature and it also becomes one habit or culture in every place on the world. Because not only uses for human needs, but also brings the therapeutic essence, then it makes human feeling peace and calm when it does. The activity is the *gardening*; it is the physical exercise that has many positive effects on the children. And it was enjoyable and fun thing to children do. As like Burnett state in her novel, “Mistress Mary worked in her garden until it was time to go to her middy dinner...She had been actually happy all the time; and dozens and dozens of the tiny....(97-98)”. After Mary moved to the Yorkshire she becomes more active and always doing the outside activities like gardening, playing ropes and knows many people around her. The good environment in Yorkshire is really helping her get her new personality.

I like the way Burnett represent the nature, garden, moor and all the figure of nature on *The Secret Garden*. While many people may perhaps that the description of nature and the beauty of the garden is useless aspect or wasting time, but different with Burnett, she stressed that there was something she wanted to convey to nature and its relationship with humans. Maybe many readers only see the description of nature at *The Secret Garden* as a setting and show the beauty of literary works, but there is more than that. Human nature relations are very close and have enormous benefits and that is explained in the Burnett’s novel.

The last is the main relationship that Burnett presents to her novel *The Secret Garden* is the reciprocal relationship or mutual relationship between nature and humans, which mean that a relationship between two people or something is benefiting each other or give similar thing to one another. In Burnett novel, the reciprocal relationship is between the nature and children. They are equally beneficial to each other by helping to heal and make them more alive. “If I have seeds, and can make flower grow the garden won’t be dead at all-it will come alive” said Mary (102). When Mary found the secret garden, she saw that the garden is almost dying, but Mary decided to heal and restore the beauty of the garden. However, not only the nature or the garden is healed, but the soul of the child is indirect and slowly cured by the gardening activities in nature. “While the secret garden was coming alive and two children were coming alive with it.”(339) the mutual relationship between the garden and Mary and the other child is prove that the relationship of nature and human is really close.

Nature as a media of mental and physical healing to the children depict on *The Secret Garden*

Burnett on her novel *The Secret Garden* is raise the issue about environmental which nature as the biggest role and influence toward the mental and physical healing of children. In this novel reflects the concern of Burnett on the issue of nature and how the sustainability of our world. Through *The Secret Garden*, Burnett as someone who appreciates nature shed all her thought

in a masterpiece that she hopes it will make her reader to open their eyes and realize that nature has a very close relationship with humans and can heal the mental and physical of children that reflected in *The Secret Garden*.

The concept of space in *The Secret Garden* is not only representing the setting of this novel, but also as the biggest influence to the transformation of two young characters. Nature can be used as the media of healing the mental and physical of children. Somehow, nature has the magical power of healing, through all the elements of nature such as wind, plants, animals, and all the wild things that is served by nature.

The garden is one of the closest depictions of nature in human environment. And garden is the biggest influence to the healing mental and physical of children. It's really helping if parent letting their children play around in the outside of the room because it make children have a curiosity to explore around them. The children can get to know and learn about nature, plants and animals and indirectly there have the power of nature is taking charge. With the physical exercise on the outside of the house it's makes children more agile and energetic. The spirit is the main capital to nourish children and it makes it stronger than just playing in the house. There is some magic that nature brings and it depicts in Colin words in the Burnett's novel, "if I go everyday to the garden. There is Magic in there-good magic, you know Mary. I am sure there is" (281)

Not only garden that regarded as the healing place or as the media to healing the mental and physical of children, but also the wind and moor which describe in the novel as the media of healing. Like in Burnett depict on her novel:

"That's fresh air," she said. "Lie on your back and draw in long breaths of it. That's what Dickon does when he's lying on the moor. He says he feels it in his veins and it makes him strong and he feel as if he could live forever and ever. Breathe it and breathe it"(235)

I agree and I believe that the wind or fresh air can impact people and especially for the children to be refreshed and it's really healthy for our mind and it can heal our mental indirectly.

Through the transformation of two young characters on *The Secret Garden*, Mary and Colin in this novel we can see the intention of Burnett want to show the ability of nature as the media of healing mental and physical of children. And it portrayed on before and after those two young characters in this novel gets involved in the nature thing. As in plot describe Mary and Colin at the beginning known as the children who sick and also have a bad temper. After they go to the garden, playing around and feel the goodness and the magic in nature, they transform to be the healthy, active and happy child. As like Burnett wrote in her novel, "Colin was getting well-getting well. The garden was doing it. No one must let him remember about having humps and dying"(273). Burnett shows that the children are really happy and they forget about the sickness because of the garden. The happiness of Mary and Colin is reflect that their mentality are cured and their physical also getting better because of the magical power of the nature. "The Magic in the garden has made me stand up and know I am going to alive to be a man" (287). Their physical transformation is not changed if they're not in the garden. Because the garden, the wind and all the element of nature is becoming the media for the children to be healthier and happier and it reflected on *The Secret Garden*.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, in this research want to show there is the close relationship between nature and children that reflect on *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett. The nature served a place to play and all physical exercise, to explore their curiosities, to educate, and built the spirit of a child, so that's why human and nature is really close. However, the most important in this novel is the secret garden itself. The garden used as one of the media of mental and physical healing because it turns two sickly children into more healthy and happy. The garden and all the element of nature that also helping is becomes the concept of space that not only as the setting in this story, but also as the biggest role to the transformation of both children.

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