**CHAPTER V****Conclusion and Suggestion**

This final chapter presents the conclusion drawn from the findings and discussion in the previous chapters, as well as suggestions for future study or readers interested in the topic.

**5.1 Conclusion**

In literary works, identity is a complex concept. There are two main types of identity: fixed and fluid identity. Fixed identity refers to characteristics that are considered inherent, such as race, biological sex, or place of birth. On the other hand, fluid identity is influenced by things such as social interactions, repetitive behaviors, cultural norms, and environment. Thus, this study examined the idea that identity is fluid; it constantly changes based on how people act and interact with one another in social and physical environments.

Mary Lennox from Frances Hodgson Burnett's novel *The Secret Garden* is an example of the idea of identity changing over time. After a cholera epidemic swept through colonial India and killed Mary's parents and servants, she was moved to live at Misselthwaite Manor in England. This forced relocation changed many aspects of her physical and social environment. Having lost the framework of privilege that once defined her, Mary had to change, adapt, and interact with her new environment, both socially and ecologically. This transformation began to change who she was.

The first finding of this study shows how Mary's initial identity was shaped by the things she repeatedly did in her initial setting that was affected by the colonial environment. Her traits, such as physical weakness, emotional coldness, and selfishness, are the result of socially conditioned performativity. This aligns with Judith Butler's theory, which posits that identity is not a permanent essence but rather a complex of performative actions shaped by social conditions and norms.

The second finding states that Mary's transformation began when she interacted with nature, especially the secret garden. Greg Garrard depicts Mary's nurturing process with the garden as a form of dwelling. Dwelling is illustrated by Greg Garrard in that the location is more than just a backdrop; it is also a place to live. Mary recovered physically and mentally through this process of gardening. Her identity changed because she interacted with nature in a meaningful way on a regular basis.

The third finding emphasizes that Mary’s identity construction is not solely social or ecological, but it is intertwined. She acts in ways that demonstrate care and empathy, and she does these things in a place that supports and nurtures her. Therefore, the garden plays a significant role in her growth, as its various elements intertwine with hers. Identity is not only performed but also situated, allowing the role to vary. Ultimately, Mary's identity is shaped by her performative behavior and her relationship with nature. The secret garden is not just a metaphor for growth; it is also an element of identity.

**5.2 Suggestion**

Based on the study conducted by the writer, several suggestions can be drawn for both general readers and future researchers:

To the Readers

This study recommends to all the readers, especially those interested in literature, consider literary characters not as fixed representations of identity, but as individuals whose identities evolve based on their environments and repeated behaviors. As illustrated through the character of Mary Lennox, a child’s identity can be greatly affected by ongoing social performance and ecological surroundings. Furthermore, readers are encouraged to reflect on how place, environment, and performance work collectively to construct an identity and how this concept may be applicable to real-life situations involving childhood development and growth.

For Further Study

This study focused on Mary Lennox—one of the characters in *The Secret Garden* and employed both performativity and ecocriticism to do so. Future study could build on this by considering characters in the same novel—Colin and Dickon, or by examining how identity is constructed in different works of literature.