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Abstract

This Master's thesis conducts an investigation into how the protagonist interacts and explores the architecture and gardens within their world. Through analysing of the protagonists from *Coraline* (2002) and Mary from *The Secret Garden* (1911), we are able to delve beneath the surface of them, as they try to explore their identity through depths of the houses that they inhabit. This thesis analyses the cause and effect of these spaces on the development of the protagonists, and how this effects their place in the world as they search for home of their own.

The Poetics of Space (1958) written by Gaston Bachelard is employed throughout the thesis to explore the aspects of the house and home in literature. There is great focus on house and home within the thesis and Bachelard is employed to enhance our understanding of the house and its place within our world. The house can be viewed as an entity at the centre of humanity's world, and through this connections are made with writers whereby the house becomes a place that represents the dynamics of the human mind. Where the protagonists explore aspects of development and identity formation with the realms of the houses that contain them.

This thesis will be presented through a psychoanalytical reading of the texts, and how this effects the behaviour of protagonists through the architecture that surrounds them. Through this type of reading, we will gain a better understanding of the protagonists state of mind as it is mirrored through the houses and the surroundings they inhabit. An psychoanalytic reading opens the doors and allows us to delve deep with the protagonist's minds to see what lurks beneath the levels of the house within their mind. This thesis analyses how the floors of the house effect the development and identity formation of the protagonists. What is it that hides within the realms of the house and deep within the unconscious that effects the protagonist's perspective of the world?

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Acknowledgements..... | |
| Abstract..... | |
| Table of Contents..... | |
| 1 Introduction..... | 1 |
| 1.0.1 Our Bodies within Space..... | 1 |
| 1.0.2 Thesis Statement..... | 2 |
| 1.0.3 Forming an Identity..... | 3 |
| 1.0.4 The Image of the House and the Home..... | 6 |
| 1.0.5 Representation of Reality..... | 8 |
| 2 Literary Cartography..... | 9 |
| 2.1 Places and Spaces within Life..... | 9 |
| 2.2 Places and Spaces within Literature..... | 13 |
| 2.3 The House as a Trope in Literature..... | 18 |
| 2.4 The Houses in <i>Coraline</i> and <i>The Secret Garden</i> | 22 |
| 3 Coraline the Explorer of Worlds..... | 27 |
| 3.1 Introduction..... | 27 |
| 3.2 The Surroundings..... | 31 |
| 3.3 The House as a Home..... | 35 |
| 3.4 Doorways to Other Worlds..... | 40 |
| 3.5 The Other World of the Other House..... | 41 |
| 3.5.1 The Other Mother..... | 42 |
| 3.5.2 The Other House..... | 46 |
| 3.5.3 The Black Cat..... | 47 |
| 3.5.4 Mirrors..... | 48 |
| 3.6 The Other House begins to Fade..... | 51 |
| 3.7. Escaping the Other House..... | 59 |
| 3.8 Conclusion - Conquering the Beast within..... | 67 |
| 4 The Secret Garden and the Power of Healing..... | 70 |
| 4.1 Introduction..... | 70 |
| 4.2 Arriving at the House..... | 74 |
| 4.3 Deciphering the House and the Moors..... | 78 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| 4.4 The Corridors and Rooms within..... | 87 |
| 4.5 The Key to Other Worlds..... | 93 |
| 4.6 The Garden..... | 96 |
| 4.7 The Transformation of Spring..... | 99 |
| 4.8 The Magic within Resurfaces..... | 104 |
| 4.9 Conclusion – The Secret Garden within us all..... | 107 |
| 5 Conclusion: Final Thoughts..... | 111 |
| Bibliography..... | 116 |

1. Introduction

[...] the human condition is often one of disorientation, where our experience of being-in-the- world frequently resembles being lost. [...] [We] may continue to uncover or invent new means of making sense of the world.

(Tally 2013: 43)

1.0.1. Our Bodies within Space

Our bodies are always in space and it surrounds us from every direction. Hence, we are always engulfed by the presence of space in our lives. We, know our way around spaces that eventually become places for us to explore, and there are many rooms within these spaces that open doors to experiences. It is helpful for writers to use space as a metaphor for the human mind, within this space the protagonists can explore themselves and begin to create an identity. It is within these concrete spaces that the writer is able to reflect the emotions and state of mind of the protagonist to the reader. According to Robert T. Tally Jr. in his book *Spatiality* (2013),

[...] space cannot be separated from the bodies in space. Following the Aristotelian definition, the term *body* here refers to anything with mass and dimensionality, and for Decartes all bodies have fundamental characteristic, spatial extension, so that what we think of *as* space is really just an extension of bodies.

(Tally 2013: 27)

As this quotes suggests, it has long been thought that space is an extension of the body, and that term body refers to something that has mass and dimensionality. Our bodies have many different characteristics, but it all comes back to being a spatial extension of the environment that surrounds the body. It can be said, therefore, that space is merely an extension of the physical body that moves around within these spaces. It is within these spaces that we find ourselves, and explore the world through that they soon become places at the heart of our world.

1.0.2. Thesis Statement

This Master's thesis will be the study of how the protagonists in two chosen novels navigate through their surroundings, and how these spaces reflect the human mind and the darkness that can lurk within us. Through the texts of *Coraline* (2002) written by Neil Gaiman and *The Secret Garden* (1911) written by Frances Hodgson Burnett, I will show that the landscape within these novels change and transform with protagonists' state of mind, but also give some insight into their identity and who they are. We will analyse these novels primarily with reference to Gaston Bachelard's *Poetics of Space* (1958), and Holly Virginia Blackford's *The Myth of Persephone in Girls' Fantasy Literature* (2012).

Through these texts, we intend to explore how the writer creates a narrative map, which is a space that represents the human mind in written form. It is through the words that the author leaves behind that the reader creates a narrative map within their mind. It is within this space created within the mind of the reader, that the words left by the author create a landscape for the reader to explore and return to at different times in their life. The narrative map created within the reader's mind is unique to each individual and may change with every reading, as new things are discovered within the words that the author has left in the novel.

These two novels have been selected for many reasons. Both texts centre around a house, and both have a strong female protagonists that the reader is able to identify with. It gives these novels a different perspective as the story is told from a girl's mindset, and the way a girl views the world will be different from that of a woman. These two novels are ninety-one years apart, so they offer the perspective of a girl from different time periods, and this adds to greater understanding of how literature with a female protagonist has changed throughout the twentieth century.

Both novels are rich and provocative works from the twentieth century that will stand the test of time. At the heart of each novel stands a house, which is a place and a space that continues to fascinate readers today. A house is a place in literature that offers many places to explore different aspects of the characters lives. We identify with this as we know what a house is and have even lived in one during some point in our lives. A house becomes a home and the centre of our worlds, that we can explore and begin to form our identity around. The idea of a home is integral to us. Finding a home not just on the outside, but on the inside as

well is important to our identity formation. Being able to find the security needed as a human being to live amongst other human beings, is vital to our existence.

In *Coraline*, the house represents the unknown that Coraline fears, but she must explore if she is to progress to the next stage of her development. In *The Secret Garden*, the house represents that hollow feeling, when emotions have been locked away. The house is sick, and needs someone to awaken it from its slumber. The relationship between the protagonist and the house that she inhabits is significant, as the house is reflection of the human mind, and it is through this that she is able to heal the space that surrounds her.

The human mind is a very complicated being, and can never be fully explored in literature. There is a lot that we must still learn about the human mind, and how it works. We can explore most of these avenues through literature because there many unexplored spaces, that we have yet to discover and identify with. It is through these spaces that the protagonists explore their identity, as does the reader through exploration of the world created by the author.

1.0.3. Forming an Identity

The human mind is a complex entity. Within it are housed many memories and feelings that make us human. Many questions come to mind when we think about what it means to be human, some of which are highlighted in Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle from *Literature Criticism and Theory* (1995). These questions are '[w]ho are we? What am I? What is an 'I'? What does it mean to say 'me'' (Bennett & Royle 1995: 129). All of these questions we have asked ourselves at some point in our lives, but most of the time these questions can not be answered. We are human beings, and our identities are constantly evolving through our experiences in the world.

This thesis will be an investigation into how the house functions as a metaphor for the process of developing an identity. It has been said that '[o]nly humans are supposed to be able to reflect on who they are and at the same time be obliged to take seriously a questioning of their own identity' (Bennett & Royle 1995: 130). As this quote suggests, the question of identity is something that human beings take seriously and it appears to be a human phenomenon, as we spent a lot of our lives reflecting on this. It is from an an early age that we begin to question our identity, and we spend the rest of our lives trying to form it. This

echoes what has been previously stated, as we are always evolving and so is our identity. Identity is something that is never fixed and is constantly changing through our experiences in life.

Through this thesis, I will explore the the forming of an identity through a psychoanalytical reading of both texts mentioned above. It can be said that

[p]syhoanalysis has changed the way in which we are obliged to think about the 'subject'. In the light of the psychoanalytic theory of the unconscious, the proposition '*cogito, ergo sum*' ('I think, therefore I am')

(Bennett & Royle 1995: 132)

becomes the focus for the protagonists. As this quote suggests, psychoanalysis has changed the way we think about the unconscious, and the role of the subject within it. Therefore, 'I think, therefore I am' is an extremely powerful idea that precedes psychoanalysis and is felt by both protagonists in the novel, as it states something about what it means to exist in this world. It is human nature to question our existence, and it is through this that we explore parts of our identity.

In both novels, the protagonists are young girls on the cusp of maturity, and both novels can be thought to be bildungromans. According to Wikipedia, a bildungroman can be thought of as a coming of age story, with a focus on the psychological development of the protagonist from the space of childhood to that of adulthood (cf. Wikipedia.org). In a bildungroman character development is an important aspect and how this helps form the identity of the protagonist. This type of literary genre usually follows the protagonist from childhood to adulthood, but in the case of the two texts it follows them from childhood to adolescence in identity formation.

This thesis will show that the house that contains the protagonists helps mould and create part of their identity. The fact that they are both young girls on the cusp of maturity, their identities are still forming and are influenced greatly by their surroundings. As previously stated, our identity is constantly changing and you are not the same person as an adult, as you are as a child. The way you view your surroundings will change as you age and according to Bachelard, the world is viewed differently through a

[...] child's eye, it is not a building, but is quite dissolved and distributed inside [...]: here one room, there another, and here a bit of corridor which, however, does not conform. Thus the whole thing is scattered about inside [...] the rooms, the stairs that descended with such ceremonious slowness [...]

(Bachelard 1958: 57)

What this quote suggests is that a house to a child is more than just a building, but a place that continues to expand. This quote creates a labyrinth feeling that we experience as a child, as we explore the corridors and rooms of the house that we have been placed in. Both houses in the novels are viewed from a child's eye and are dark and mysterious, and create a labyrinth for them to explore. We can think of identity as labyrinth and it something that we become entangled within throughout our lives. It is the labyrinth that we will never be able to escape from, and become engrossed in during childhood.

Childhood is a time of great change, a child's understanding of the world changes as she begins to leave the space of childhood, for the space of adulthood. As Bachelard states

[...] geography cannot serve as a touchstone for determining the real being of our childhood, for childhood is certainly greater than reality. In order to sense, across the years, our attachment for the house we were born in, dream is more powerful than thought.

(Bachelard 1958:16)

This quote touches upon something that is unique to childhood. Bachelard states that geography does not determine the reality of childhood because it is beyond our reality. Childhood can be viewed as something that is outside this reality that adults live, being a child means living in the realm of childhood. Also, we are born into a house that becomes part of our identity, and helps form part our identity as we explore it. Sometimes the dream is 'more powerful than thought'. Our thoughts will take us places, but the dream will take us beyond these ideas to mysterious places. And, it is through literature that we explore these places.

Our lives are full of places and spaces that give meaning to our lives. According to the Introduction in *Space & Place: Theories of identity and location* (1993),

If places are no longer the clear supports of our identity, they nonetheless play a potentially important part in the symbolic and psychical dimension of our identities. It is not spaces which ground indentifications, but places.

(Introduction 1993: xii)

As this quote suggests, places are no longer attached to the supporting of our identity, however, they do play an important aspect surrounding the symbolic and physical dynamics of our identities that exist within us. It can also be said that spaces do not ground our identities, but places access something within the human mind. A house begins as an idea, which then turns into space as it is created, and it then turns into a home where someone will live. Then, it will become and will return to the world of ideas, as the idea of home only exists within the human mind.

1.0.4. The Image of the House and Home

The figure of the house is well known presence in literature, and fascinates readers just as much today, as in other times. Bachelard asks if,

[t]ranscending our memories of all the houses in which we have found shelter, above and beyond all houses we have dreamed we lived in, can we isolate an intimate, concrete essence that would be a justification of uncommon value of all of our images of protected intimacy?

(Bachelard 1958: 3)

As this quote indicates, our memories are housed in a place where we have found shelter from the elements. These memories exist beyond the realm of the house that we live in, and will follow us through life. We can isolate these memories into concrete form, and this would justify the uncommon value of our images that remain enclosed with these doors. Within our houses are protected levels of intimacy that create memories within our minds, and in essence a part of our identity. Within the house that we choose to call home, we create new memories and this changes our identity in some ways. Each house adds something to our identity, as we explore the world from the security of its walls.

It is significant that Burnett and Gaiman chose to employ old houses to reflect the minds of their protagonists. Old houses have had many generations of people staying within their borders, and it through these elements that the history of the house comes to hold so much mystery over the protagonists, as they try to gain an understanding of their surroundings. These houses offer many things to the protagonists, and they offer the reader a chance to explore the darker elements of the self.

The house is a metaphor for the human mind and through this development of the self. It creates a quest for the protagonists, the house and its many rooms invites them to find out who they are and explore this further. It also invites them to begin searching, an exploration deep into the depths of the self. These houses have many rooms for the protagonists to explore and with these many rooms, come more questions from when they first started. These rooms with many secrets only add to the displacement that the protagonists feel, and brings us back to the question of '[w]ho are we? What am I? What is an 'I'? What does it mean to say 'me' (Bennett & Royle 1995: 129). These questions are buried deep within the houses which we choose to make our homes, and it through exploration of those places that we form some aspects of our identity.

Houses become an important part of someone's life, eventually they will become a home to them. A house becoming a home is a process that takes time as the people living within it, turn it from a space to home through decorating and the placing of items that they own around it. This will create a certain image within their mind that will remain with them always as even when they move, they retain memories from their previous homes and take those images with them to new places.

There are stark differences between the definition of a home and a house. A house can be viewed as something that is empty and lacking something, whereas a home can be defined as somewhere where we plant roots and build a life with our family. For the protagonists, they live in a house and not a home, a home is what they are searching for within the novel. A house is an actual tangible entity that can be touched and torn down. A house can be replaced with another building, but a home is an idea that lives within the mind of a person. We all live in houses of some kind, but a home is something that we long to find or even return to someday. A home is at the centre of our world, while the empty house remains on the outskirts of society.

The idea of home creates an image within the mind of the perceiver, this image will vary from culture and to every individual. Everyone has their own idea about what a home is, and how it should be constructed within the space it has been placed. Home creates many images, and '[...] we touch upon converse whose images we shall have to explore: all really inhabited space bears the essence of the notion of home' (Bachelard 1958: 5). What this quotes reveals is that we touch upon the image of home in many ways that are familiar to us. It is through these familiar associations that all space that is inhabited creates a notion of home. It is through our notion of home that we create a representation of reality.

1.0.5. Representation of Reality

All literature is a representation of reality, and mirrors society in some way. These two novels can be viewed as representation of reality, also. Each story is small part of our reality, that builds to create something unique within the world of literature. It can be said that

[t]he phrase 'representation of reality' might be used to describe the goals of both literature and cartography, provided it is understood that both fields only represent reality through figurative means. If [...] genres [...] represent reality in particular, identifiable, and distinctive ways, then one might say that literary cartography is determined, at least in part, by narrative form.

(Tally 2013:59)

As this quote suggests, representation of reality is a way to describe the purpose of literature and cartography, but both areas are only a symbolic representation of it. Representation of reality is able to describe literature in cartography form. According to Tally in "Literary Cartography: Space, Representation, and Narrative" (2008), '[l]iterary cartography [...] connects spatial representation and storytelling' (Tally 2008: 13). As this quote suggest, a literary cartography is created through connection between narrative and the space within a literary work. A literary cartography is literary map created by writer, which will be activated within the mind of the reader. A literary cartography is the entire world created by the writer and within this cartography narrative maps are created.

Literary cartography is determined by narrative form, it is the narrative created by the writer that created the narrative map for the reader and the protagonist to explore. And, it can be said that 'literary cartography is determined, [...] by narrative form', because without the narrative there would not be a literary cartography. This is very important and helps with the creation of new narrative maps, as writers draw on their own experiences and their representation of reality, which has been influenced by other writers and their narrative maps. Literary cartography can be thought of as one big narrative map, that continues to expand with every generation.

To conclude, the human mind has many corridors that exist within it. All of these corridors connect and form a house, that the protagonists must explore in order to find the themselves. It is no mistake that writers quite often use a house to represent the human mind, as it has many doorways and corridors that construct it. It through the exploration of self that the protagonists are able to move on to the next part of their development, but this can be stunted as they becomes lost within themselves and the house that they have built within their mind.

2. Literary Cartography

2.1. Places and Space within Life

It has been said that '[s]ometimes the very act of telling a story is also a process of producing a map', which helps create the story deeper within the mind of the reader (Tally 2013:46). As Tally argues, writing as an act could be considered a form of map-making as the writer has to create the area, and decide which aspects of a landscape to include or not. The writer must create the narrative of places that will be included in the narrative map. The literary cartographer, who is the writer must decide to which degree an interpretation of a place reflects any 'real' place in the world (cf. Tally 2013: 45). It is through all of these aspects that the literary cartographer carves and moulds the narrative map for the reader to experience new places and spaces.

The concepts of 'place' and 'space' are important to distinguish between, and that there are different theories as to what these concepts refer to and what their function is. According to Yi-Fu Tuan in *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (1977),

space and place are familiar words denoting common experiences. We live in space.

[...] Place is security, space is freedom: we are attached to one and long for the other.

(Tuan 1977: 3)

As this quote suggests, space and place mean different things to different people. At the centre of things, we all search for that space to expand our minds, whereas we look for that place to call home and add security to our lives. We become attached to the security of one, but in back of our minds always long for the other. Space can be thought of as more abstract and place has more of a human connection. We create places through the creation of spaces, as something that was once a space becomes a place with more human interaction (cf. Tuan 1977: 3). All places at some point in time have been somebody's idea. Through this idea they create a space and by interaction with human beings it eventually becomes a place, where humans congregate and explore the world. There would be no places without spaces.

There are many ideas about space as a concept. As Henri Lefebvre explains in *The Production of Space* (1991), the concept of 'space' is used by people in many different ways on a daily basis, without them being completely aware of what exactly is meant by it (cf. Massey 2005: 17). Space surrounds us in our daily lives and has a huge effect on how we live our lives, that in many ways we become oblivious to it. Space can be imaginary or something more tangible that can actually be touched and manoeuvred around by someone.

Space is an important aspect of being human, we take up space and move around with it and will always be surrounded by it. Doreen Massey in *For Space* (2005), argues that space was previously imagined to be a closed static place, but should be viewed as an 'open ongoing production' that the reader is allowed to enter, and will create more open spaces through this experience (cf. Massey 2005: 55). It can be said that space offers much more to humanity than just shelter from the elements, it offers a completely different perspective on the world we inhabit and sometimes forget surrounds us. In essence, space is something that already exists and we use the narrative map to make sense of it. It makes it more comprehensible in human terms, as we try to define it for ourselves through the spaces we inhabit.

The writer creates a space through their imagination and this is ignited within the imagination of the reader, as she accesses and moves around within it. According to Massey space could be thought to be an entity in continuous motion, and we should

recognise space as always [being] under construction [and] [...] always in the process of being made, It is never finished; never closed. Perhaps we could imagine space as simultaneity of stories-so-far.

(Massey 2005: 9)

As this quote suggests, there are many things to consider when considering how space functions within the human mind, but space is always under construction in some way. In our minds, we build and create unique spaces and places that we experience from our own world, but also from literature. It is possible to imagine that space is a collection of stories explored through a narrative map, that connects with reality at the same time. Space is something that can never be finished or closed, and there is always room for the creation of more spaces within the dynamics of the human mind.

Imaginary spaces must be open for the reader to explore within their mind. For spaces of the imagination to have an effect on the reader, it must be viewed

neither a container for always-already constituted identities nor a completed closure of holism. This is a space of loose ends and missing links. For the future to be open, space must be open too.

(Massey 2005:12)

As this quote suggests, space must not be something that is a predefined identity or a complete entity. Space is something that has 'loose ends and missing links' that allow it to be open to be used. Space must be open if it is to expand in the future. How someone pictures a space, is an individual experience for them. The writer's personal identity will effect how the space is implemented in the reader's mind, but the space is not a container for already constructed identities. The identity of the reader will help construct and create the space, that the writer has created through the words that they have left for the reader on the page. If the space of the narrative map is to remain open to interpretation from the reader, then it must be

open to manipulation from the reader's imagination. When we read the map that has been left by the writer, we enter a space that we can create and design from within our own experience of space.

We live in world with many geographical spaces, but such spaces also exist within the world of literature. It can be said that

[t]o the writer's literary cartography, we might add the reader's literary geography. The critical reader becomes a kind of geographer who actively interprets the literary map in such a way as to present new, sometimes hitherto unforeseen mappings.

(Tally 2013: 79)

As this quote suggests, the reader becomes a geographer who is able to perceive through their own subjectivity the road signs, that the writer has left for them on the literary map. The reader must navigate through these signs to create the imaginary world, that the writer has given to them. Hence, the reader is never a passive subject when it comes to the 'spatial messages' coming from the literature map, but actively navigates through the geography of the text as the meaning of the text may change with every reading (Tally 2013: 79).

A book can be viewed as type of geography. Through the reader the space of the book becomes visible and this 'allows [her] to recognize the degree which literary texts both operate within and help shape the geography of their worlds, and through them, of ours' (Tally 2013: 99). As this quote suggests, there is a connection between the reader and the space of the book, it helps connect to a certain degree how the literary texts intertwine between our world and the imaginary. Through the task of being a geographer, the reader is able to help mould and shape the geography of the worlds created by the writer. The reader is involved in a 'mapping project' as he navigates through the maps provided by the writer that later go on to create the geography of the imaginary world that he is trying to explore with the power of his imagination (Tally 2013: 101).

2.2. Places and Spaces within Literature

Literature functions in a way that it offers readers the opportunity to experience places that only exist within the realms of the imagination. Literature can be viewed as a type of map that the reader is free to explore. It can be said that

[i]n a manner of speaking, literature also functions as a form of mapping, offering its readers descriptions of places, situating them in kind of imaginary space, and providing points of reference by which they can orient themselves and understand the world in which they live. Or maybe literature helps readers get a sense of the worlds in which others have lived , currently live or will live in times to come.

(Tally 2013: 2)

What this quote reveals is that literature in many ways is a form of map making and it offers interpretation of places, that are places within an imaginary space. There is also a connection with the real world by which readers can adapt themselves around, and gain a better understanding of the world they inhabit. Through literature writers find a way to escape this reality. They create new spaces through their imagination and the experiences that they have in their life. Writers are usually readers as well, therefore they also enter into the experiences of others and the narrative maps created by other writers.

Libraries offer readers a place to explore the narrative maps. In the article, “Why our future depends on libraries, reading and daydreaming”, Neil Gaiman discusses the impact that libraries have had on his life, and why libraries should be kept alive. In that text, he talks about how science-fiction literature is always criticised as being escapist. He agrees that maybe it is escapist, but you entering another space for a couple of hours and then returning to your own world, does not mean that you do not take anything back from the experience. It equips you with tools, and things that you need in order to cope in this world (cf.Guardian.com). We, can also say that the literary map does exist as it comes alive within your mind; a narrative map that you can access throughout your life to escape your daily worries.

Through escapist fiction, the reader is able to access these imaginary spaces and escape their world for a short time. It allows the reader to escape the prison of daily life, and

experience new and exciting episodes in their life. Fiction can reveal other worlds, and can transport the reader to different places that they have never been before. Hence, there are no limits as to what can be achieved through the use of narrative maps created by the writer and activated by the reader to consume. Being able to escape the world through a narrative offers the reader a place to be free from her worries, in a place where she can act out her deepest fantasies in secret. Through libraries we are able to visit many different spaces and these will change with the times, as more writers add their works of fiction to the narrative map.

Our definition of space is continually changing with the times. According to Henri Lefebvre, '[n]ot so many years ago, the word "space" had a strictly geometrical meaning; the idea it evoked was simply that of an empty room' but space is so much more than that (Lefebvre 1974: 1). Space defines our world both in imagination and in reality as we travel through different spaces during our lives. Space is much more than just an empty room and adds many things to not only our world, but also to literature. There are many types of spaces, but '[w]hat about in literature? Clearly literary writers have written much of relevance, especially descriptions of places' and spaces in the worlds that they create through their experiences of the world (Lefebvre 1974: 14). As this quote indicates, the spaces created in literature are unique to the particular writer's style and form of creating worlds. So, every space created by a writer is unique and influenced by their perspective on the world.

Space is something that we create within the mind, and it can be said that we produce them there, too. It has been said that

To speak of 'producing a space' sounds bizarre, so great is the sway still held by the idea that empty space is prior to whatever end up filling it. Questions immediately arise here: what spaces? And what does it mean to speak of 'producing a space?

(Lefebvre 1974: 15)

As this quote suggests, it sounds strange to talk about 'producing a space' as it is still considered sometimes that an empty space is just something that is to be filled up by something else. However, many questions emerge around space and its function. It may sound bizarre, but we do it everyday through film and literature. We visit and explore spaces of all kinds of sizes from different origins. Finally, what does it mean to speak of 'producing a space' in literature? There are many levels to consider when creating a space within literature.

There is the actual space within the novel that the characters inhabit. The writer and the space he creates for the reader; the reader and their subjectivity, as they absorb the space created by the writer; and the protagonist as they explore the space given to them by the writer. All of these levels contribute to the creation of a literary space. One cannot work successfully without the other.

There are three axes on which a novel exists. Firstly, the writer, who writes to a reader, secondly, that of the reader who relates herself to the space that is the novel, and, finally, the protagonist who relates herself to the space within the novel. All of these axes combined create the literary landscape that is the novel, and creates a link between the writer, the text and the protagonist. We are illustrating how these are levels of being, which we find in any literary work and they help construct the imaginary spaces within the reader's mind. Space requires subjectivity and there are different subjects at play in literature. On the one hand, we have the subject of the writer who is creating an imaginary space, a literary cartography, then we have the subjectivity that is the reader, who enters this universe and tries to manoeuvre around and then we have the subjectivity that is the protagonist, who tries to understand the space she has been placed in. All of these levels create a literary work for the reader.

There are many areas that the writer creates within the novel. On the one hand, the writer is actually creating a geography within the novel. By doing so, he is also actually creating these imaginary spaces within the reader's mind. These spaces created by the writer can lead to different discoveries for the reader. For example, the Gothic space which can lead to in direction of horror or excitement. On the other hand, it can lead to the fairy tale imaginary space which can also lead to horror and excitement, but can further create some knowledge or awareness within you that dragons can be slain. We find many different stories within the spaces that writers create and within these spaces exist characters.

Writers create spaces for the reader to explore through the guise of a character, which is usually the protagonist. According to Bennett and Royle, it can be said that

[c]haracters are the life of literature: they are objects of our curiosity and fascination, affection and dislike, admiration and condemnation. Indeed, so intense is our relationship with literary characters that they often cease to be simply "objects".

Through the power of identification, through sympathy and antipathy, they become part of how we conceive ourselves, a part of who we are.

As this quote suggests, there are many emotions felt by the reader when it comes to characters, and it is through these emotions that intense relationships are built between the reader and the characters in a novel. Indeed, characters are more than just simply objects, and bring the space created within the narrative map alive within the imagination of the reader. Characters like houses become the centre of our world as we follow them through the unique space of literature. Houses are just as important because they are a part of the process of characterising a character. How they refer themselves to place/space indicates a lot about them. Characters are an important aspect of literature and it is through that we hear the voices of others.

From the great depths of literature come the great stories of others that we engross ourselves within, and through this create new spaces to inhabit within the mind. We need the stories of others to create new spaces and to explore what it means to be human, as the story of one person alone will not open many doors to answer this question. However, the stories of many opens the door to what it means to be human, and how we as humans should think about ourselves in the world.

Writers can be thought of as modern day storytellers and it is within this story making that spaces for the reader are created. In Paul Cobley's *Narrative* (2001), he states that '[h]uman beings, especially after the development of the verbal faculty, have constantly told stories, presented events and squeezed aspects of the world into narrative form' (Cobley 2001: 2). As this quote suggests, human beings have always created stories through narrative form. It can be said that narratives have a great impact on our lives and help us define ourselves as the human race. The stories that we tell make us even more human, and it is within these stories that worlds are created and enhance our understanding of our humanity. Through the narrative map, the writer must make many decisions that shape the narrative map and the story it tells. According to Tally, '[t]he writer, then, must select the particulars of a given place or story that will allow for the narrative map to be meaningful' (Tally 2013: 54). As this quote suggests, the writer must choose things from a story or a place to give the narrative map meaning for the reader. It is through these imagined places that meaning is created for the reader.

Writers create maps through their words for the reader. Many things are incorporated in this map and

[i]f writers map the real and imagined spaces of their world in various ways through literary means, then it follows that readers are also engaged in this broader mapping project. A map-reader is also a reader of a text, after all, and the reader of a literary map also envisions a space, plots a trajectory, and becomes orientated to and within the world depicted there.

(Tally 3013: 79)

As this quote suggests, through various means writers create maps of places that are both real and imaginary. The reader becomes involved in a mapping project and the reader becomes a map-reader, who creates the space within their mind and moves around the world created by the writer. It can be said that once the writer has written the narrative map, the reader becomes the map-reader that envisions the space, where a plot takes place that connects the creative world with the real world.

The writer creates a map for the reader. Within this map is a plot that adds to the geography of that world and that '[p]lotting or emplotment can already be understood as establishing a setting, setting a course, or marking features of the an imaginary landscape' (Tally 2013:49). Hence, a plot can be viewed as a type of map that outlines a plan for the reader. Within the literary cartography, there are many maps working together to create a literary landscape for the reader from the narrative map to the plot, all of these maps combine to create worlds that the reader can explore and take something away with them in their imagination.

The power of imagination is needed to finish the narrative map, so that the geographical places can exist within the mind of the reader. Through the writer's imagination and

[b]y determining the elements of the story, by choosing which elements will be prominent and which can remain in the background, and by arranging the elements in a way best suited to the intended effects that the writer or cartographer wishes the work to have upon the reader, the author is also determining what kind of narrative map this will be. Hence, the literary cartography necessarily involves a

question of genre.

(Tally 2013:54)

As this quote describes, by the writer choosing the elements and conventions within a story and then deciding what elements will stand out, and those that will remain hidden from the reader. The writer decides what shape the narrative map will take and how the geography will be described to the reader. The writer is creating parts of the narrative map, which are best suited for the effect that she wishes to evoke upon the reader. Hence, the author is defining what the narrative map will entail, what kind it shall be and the genre that all of this will exist within.

The writer always writes within the space of genre as it is also a map that the writer follows. Each genre has its own conventions that the reader is most likely aware of, and help the reader to place that piece of writing within a narrative space, known as genre. Genre can be viewed as part of the mapping, as it is similar to a map. Genre is vital in arranging information in a way that it becomes meaningful for the reader. Also, it is a way of 'projecting the world' to the reader (Tally 2013: 42) . To be a part of a certain genre means that it must contain certain criteria that are familiar and meaningful to the reader. Each genre has its own features that belong to it and to lack these features, means that this piece of literature does not belong to that particular genre. Therefore, it can be said that genre is a type of mapping as it creates a map for the reader and writer to follow, as they create new worlds to share with the world. These worlds come in many forms, and this includes the house that can be entire world for a character.

2.3. The House as a Trope in Literature

One place or space that figures a lot in literature is the house. A house is both a place and space that exists in our world. A house becomes a home when someone perceives it as one, but it can also be something that is not home. It is also a space and something that will become a home to someone. For children, a house is more of a space as they may not have developed an idea of what a home actually is, and so they explore it as a space. This space

continues to expand as they grow older, and will eventually transform from a house to a home for them.

A house is important entity in our reality and there are many theorists, who have explored this aspect. One of those theorists is Gaston Bachelard in *The Poetics of Space* (1958), and he will be referred to a lot in this thesis. Bachelard is concerned with the idea of the house as a literary trope. Bachelard states that the house is the centre of our worlds, and it is through this that from the moment we are born that we are inducted into the world of home and space. Space is something that humans need for security from the elements, but also something that we daydream about within our lives. It can be said that our perception of home influences how we perceive the world, and how we lead our lives.

A house can be viewed as having its own geography. As we explore a house, we could be viewed as the geographers of that house, even if it only exists within our imagination. Each house, created by the writer within the narrative map is different and has many floors to explore and expand. According to Bachelard (1958: 25), '[a] three-story house, which is the simplest as regards essential height, has a cellar, a ground floor and an attic' (Bachelard 1958: 25). Each floor of the house projects its own story; the cellar could be viewed as the unconscious; the attic where rationality lives; and the ground floor which connects both the attic and the cellar that creates the three-story house in the readers mind (cf. Bachelard 1958: 18-19). All of these floors add something to story and take the protagonist to different sections within the human mind.

Within a house there are many floors that connect it together and create the being that is the house. According to Bachelard, the cellar and attic are polar opposites when it comes to floors of the house. The attic is thought to be rationality, whereas the cellar is thought to be irrationality. These two opposites offer many opportunities for the writer to explore different aspects of the dynamics of the human mind, as rationality verses irrationality takes centre stage (cf. Bachelard 1958: 17). Up in the attic things appear to be more clearer and rational, but down in the cellar darkness surrounds everything as the unconscious is laid bare before the reader. The cellar

[...] is first and foremost the dark entity of the house, the one that partakes of subterranean forces. When we dream there, we are in harmony with irrationality of the depths.

(Bachelard 1958: 18)

As this quote indicates, the cellar, which is hidden beneath the depths of house, brings us closer to irrationality. It is always a dark place, where hidden forces are at work. To become trapped within the depths of the cellar could lead to madness, as we face the subterranean forces from within us.

The house is a very important trope in literature and in general, but there is also a specific house known as the Gothic house. The Gothic house has many characteristics that make it Gothic. According to Rose Lovell-Smith in "On the Gothic Beach", these

persistent features of the Gothic house: the difficulty of getting into it; its mysterious or labyrinthine extensiveness (this house is somehow bigger on the inside than the outside); and its remoteness and isolation in a lonely rural, perhaps wild and uncivilised even desolate, setting.

(Lovell-Smith 2008: 101)

As this quote suggests, there are many layers to the Gothic house that persist within the genre. Difficulty finding a way in is a typical Gothic trait, but also difficulty finding a way out is also something that runs through pages of Gothic novels. Also labyrinthine extensiveness is another Gothic trait and is present in both *Coraline* and *The Secret Garden*. And, it is quite common for the house and the inhabitants imprisoned within the Gothic manor to be isolated in some remote location, far from any sort of civilisation and we find this plight in *The Secret Garden*. The Gothic house adds to the Gothic landscape and this is how we define this particular genre, by looking at what aspects are similar throughout it. The Gothic house is a place where our fears are housed.

The Gothic house is a metaphor for the human mind, and it is through this space that the protagonists are invited into processes of development. The Gothic house with its many rooms and labyrinthine extensiveness, adds to the feeling that we are entering a space within the human mind that follows the development and state of mind of the protagonists. It is within this space that we are able to see beyond the outward appearance of the protagonists and delve further within to witness their inner most self. Their inner most self is their true self

and the reader is able to connect with the protagonists on a deeper level within the Gothic house.

The house is an important figure in Gothic literature. According to Karen Coats in “Between Horror, Humour, and Hope: Neil Gaiman and the Psychic Work of the Gothic”, *Coraline* has '[c]ertain Gothic motifs [...], including big old houses with secret spaces, doppelgängers, dream-visions, and dark tunnels, operate [...] as metaphors for unconscious depths [...]' (Coats 2008: 77). As this quote suggests there are many Gothic motifs in *Coraline* that are metaphors for the unconscious that represent things in everyday life such as houses and tunnels. These many Gothic elements create the Gothic landscape for Coraline to explore. It is within this Gothic landscape that Coraline learns many lessons and grows as an individual through her exploration of these Gothic motifs. The house at the centre of *The Secret Garden* is also a Gothic house, it presents itself as a labyrinth, which is both dark and gloomy. Mary even becomes lost within the walls of the house, but it has secrets that is hiding. The house stands tall looking over both protagonists, as they try to find an exit from labyrinth type corridors that form the house from within.

The uncanny is a common theme employed throughout literature, especially in the Gothic genre as it refers to space in the use of the *unheimliche*: *heimlich* which means unhomely: homely. According to Sigmund Freud in the *Uncanny*, '[u]nheimlich is clearly the opposite of *heimlich*, [...] and it seems obvious that something should be frightening precisely because it is unknown and unfamiliar' (Freud 1899: 124). As this quote suggests the *unheimlich* and *heimlich* are polar opposites, and it is quite clear that something that is unknown to us can be seen as frightening. The uncanny relates itself to space in a weird way because it is also an imaginary space created by the mind. When you experience the uncanny, it reminds you of something that is home but it something that is subjectivity in a sense. It has to do with something that you recognise, but at the same time do not. It can be something that is closer to home such as your doppelganger, but it can also be something that relates itself to home such as a smell that you cannot recognise.

The uncanny is employed to create an uneasy atmosphere for the reader. There are many things that the uncanny represents, but it has

to do with a sense of strangeness, mystery or eeriness. More particularly it concerns a sense of unfamiliarity which appears at the very heart of the familiar, or else a sense of familiarity which appear at the very heart of the unfamiliar.

(Bennett & Royle 1995: 35)

As this quotes suggests, the uncanny is not something that exists in the world, but it is happens when we encounter something as human beings that disrupts our perception of the world. When we have uncanny experience it is because we recognise something, but at the same we do not recognise it. There is something familiar but there is also something unfamiliar about the experience at the same, which overloads the senses. What the uncanny does to our psyche is that pushes towards it boundaries, because the uncanny is on the verge of between what we understand and rationalise and what we cannot understand and rationalise.

2.4. The Houses in *Coraline* and *The Secret Garden*

In this thesis there will be discussion about the house as literary figure, and this will be done through an investigation of two specific Gothic houses. These two houses are Coraline's house from *Coraline* and Misselthwaite manor from *The Secret Garden*. The Gothic house, which is present in the both novels is a metaphor for the human mind. Within the human mind there many corridors and dark spaces, that haven been completely forgotten with time. The Gothic house is a metaphor for the human mind and it is through exploration of the unconscious that the protagonists begin the process of development. It is deep within the labyrinthine corridors that Mary discovers the darkest secret hiding within the manor, something that she can only discover while searching for her self in the labyrinthine type corridors that circulate the manor. While Coraline travels through a dark corridor to arrive at the other house a mirror image of her own, something is familiar but unfamiliar at the same time. Both protagonists open many doors within the human mind, and discover many things about themselves.

The protagonists in both novels are greatly affected by the houses that they inhabit, and this forces them into processes of development that mirror their surroundings. In *Coraline*, the house is very old and 'it had an attic under the roof and a cellar the ground and an overgrown garden with huge old trees in it' (Gaiman 2002:3). It can be said that from the

very beginning Gaiman is trying to create a map in the readers mind through this description of the house. The reader is just as new to the house as Coraline, and joins her on her exploration of the house. Coraline needs to decipher the puzzle that is the house, as does the reader. In *The Secret Garden*, Burnett creates a world similar to Gaiman, that leaves the protagonist with a house and a garden to explore. Through these areas Burnett creates a narrative map that entangles the reader within the story, which is seen through the eyes of the protagonist Mary. The house and garden are spaces that reflect the internal conflict within Mary and this resonates deeply within the novel. Just like Coraline must decipher the house she has been placed within, so must Mary and the reader follows them as they decipher the spaces within the novel.

Space is something that surrounds us in reality, but also in the novels dealt with space can be viewed as something that surrounds Coraline and Mary, as they guide themselves through the house that contains them. According to Tally space gives the impression that it is our perception that guides us through the space and it is our perception of which connects the space and the person perceiving it. Space can be viewed as a container that changes shape by the person perceiving it, as space is subjective and is defined by the individual perceiving that particular space (cf. Tally 2013: 29). As previously stated, space can be viewed as something objective and impersonal, whereas place can be characterised by a relationship between it and human beings. Spaces and places are something that are perceived by us and brings meaning to our lives. It is through our subjectivity and interaction that spaces soon become places full of life.

A house is imagined as a concrete entity that towers above us and protects us from the elements. But, it also 'constitutes a body of images that give mankind proofs of illusions of stability' (Bachelard 1958: 17). What this quotes suggest is that under the roof of a house in that space, we often feel safe and secure from the world but what happens when these images of stability are unfounded, and the house is no longer a safe environment for the inhabitants to live? In both texts, the houses are cold and unwelcoming for the protagonist as they are both old houses, that have had many occupiers over the time of their existence. In *Coraline*, the other house becomes her enemy as she frantically faces her demons, and challenges the other mother to a game in order to win back her parents. The house in *The Secret Garden* is sick in a way after many years of neglect, the intense melancholic feeling that protrudes from the house deeply affects the protagonist.

There are many sides to house and this includes the inside and outside dimensions. It is possible to view a house as an '[o]utside and inside [that] form a dialectic of division, the obvious geometry of which blinds us as soon we bring it into play in a metaphorical domains (Bachelard 1958: 211). What this quote reveals is that there are two sides to a house, the outside and inside that create a logical division of the two sides. The inside is where the secrets are hidden and to dare to enter is at your own risk, whereas, the outside is visible to the naked eye and sets the scene of how the reader will view and explore the inside of the house. In *Coraline*, 'the house looked exactly the same from the outside' from her point of view there is no difference in the appearance of the house from the outside, it is only when she begins to look from the inside that she notices that the house is not exactly the same as home (Gaiman 2002: 25).

Coraline experiences a sense of daydreaming in the other house; she cannot define the house and where exactly she is as she goes in search of familiar faces. Yet as she continues to descend further into the unconscious, the inside and outside dynamics of the house continue to intertwine, and merge as the house continues to change with psychological state of Coraline. In *The Secret Garden*, the house is described as 'a grand big place in a gloomy way, [...] on the edge of the moor' is where it stands (Burnett 1911: 16). This description of the house before we have arrived at the manor ignites a melancholic feeling within the reader, as we gain some insight on how the house is perceived by the inhabitants living in it. The manor is a gloomy place on the edge of a moor, in literature the moors have appeared in many texts and are often perceived as a mythical and a destructive presence. In a way, the moor becomes like a character in the novel as it mirrors Mary's state of mind and effects her memory.

Memory is important to both texts as the writer creates a landscape for the characters, which are filled with memories that the characters have shared with the reader. In both texts, memory plays an important role in the protagonists' life. In *Coraline*, she struggles to hold on to her memories from the real world as she becomes lost within the other house. In *The Secret Garden*, Mary clings to the past through stories of India as she tries to decipher the puzzle of the house. Memory is a very important part when writing a story and effects the space that the protagonists have been put in and their past will affect their actions, greatly.

According to Bachelard, we see that the power of space is unimaginable, space is endless as are our memories, we record and replay thousands of memories on a daily basis. It can be said that the space between memories does not quicken our memories, but changes

them through the experiences we have in life. Memories that have been destroyed, we are unable to get back and they are lost forever. We, think of these from a linear aspect and through our unconscious, as we try to make connections between past, present and future experiences in our lives. Memories can become fixed within our minds then the sounder they become to us (cf. Bachelard 1958: 9).. Memories can become lost within the labyrinth that is memory. The house in *Coraline* becomes like a labyrinth for Coraline as she struggles to find her way out of the other house, whereas the house in *The Secret Garden* becomes a place of isolation for Mary.

The house is a concrete figure in both texts and changes with the psychological states of the protagonists. As previously stated, both house are difficult to fully describe, even with the help of the narrative map created by the writer, there are still narrative gaps hidden within the text. It can be said that '[...] the houses of memory, the house to which we return in dreams, the houses that are rich unalterable oneirism, do not fully lend themselves to description' (Bachelard 1958: 13). As this quote suggests, the house that we construct within our memory is a powerful but strange state of consciousness, that can never be fully described. The description of a house will be different to everyone as everyone will imagine the space differently, and will add in their own experience by which will create a unique interpretation of the house.

A house can also thought to be a metaphor for the self, as the protagonist goes off in search of answers to who she is, and what the future holds for her. Through exploration of the self and the consciousness awaken within the protagonist, she begins to see the world in a whole new light as she moves from the space of childhood to adolescent. In this thesis there will be a focus on the development from childhood to adolescent, this is an important aspect in both texts and overshadows the entire novel. It is through self perception that protagonist awakens something within herself, and prepares for her place in the adult world. In a child's world self perception will come first and through this an awakening will happen within her and will change how she sees the world. The house plays an important part in these novels in this process, as it offers a place for the protagonists to explore this awakening within themselves. The house awakens many things within the protagonists and invites them to begin searching for answers that will help explain, who they are. Through their corner of the world they will find many passages that will lead them to questions about their identity.

Our first house is our first universe and corner of the world. It is important for us to realise that

[...] we inhabit our vital space, in accord with all the dialectics of life, how we take root day after day, in a “corner of the world.” For our house is our corner of the world. As has often been said, it is our first universe, real cosmos in every sense of the word.
(Bachelard 1959: 4)

As this quote suggests, we are surrounded by space throughout our lives within our 'corner of the world'. Our house is if often the first place we explore and it becomes a universe that influences our sense of the world. Both *Coraline* and *The Secret Garden* are told from a child's perspective, so in essence the houses that they inhabit are their first universe for them to explore.

In *Coraline*, she has just moved a new house with her parents and she starts by exploring every inch of the house and garden, although some areas are locked or she is not allowed into them. There is always a feeling that the house is holding back something from Coraline, and she sets out to find out what it is. In *The Secret Garden*, Mary has just moved from India to England to live with her uncle, she has moved from the outside to the fatherland, which could be thought to be the centre but is then taken away from London the centre to the countryside. In the novel, the house is described as being 'six hundred years old, and it's on the edge of the moor' (Burnett 1911: 16). The house has been around longer than the people living it and has seen the start of many a new century. This house opens the doors for Mary to explore and it is through exploration of the house, the garden and the moor, that wintry spell is finally broken.

The house is '[...] the human being's first world' because when you are child a house can feel like the whole world with plenty of places for you to explore and develop (Bachelard 1958: 7). Both novels tell the story of a young girl on the cusp of maturity as she searches for answers to who she is in her new home. The reader gains access to this first world through the protagonist in each story, as she explores the map given to them by the writer. It is by no accident that Burnett and Gaiman have chosen strong girls, who are developing by exploring their new home with the reader, as we follow them and interpret their every move.

These two stories are bildungromans and in both texts, the protagonist has been placed in a house, their 'first world' to explore. The placing of the protagonists within house that reminds the reader of the human mind because it has many dark and unexplored spaces within it, that represent sections of the mind that need to be explored. Especially, Misselthwaite Manor in *The Secret Garden* with all its secret and locked rooms, all those locked doors could represent hidden desires, and repressed memories as it holds many dark secrets from over six hundred years of existence. The house represents the mind of the protagonists as we are directed to what lies within and beyond the imaginary space that they inhabit, that is filled with memories.

In *Coraline*, Gaiman uses the house as a base for the reader as he projects a world for the reader and builds on that by connecting the two worlds via a doorway. According to Tally, 'projecting the world' is the perfect way to describe 'the world of literature' as many texts create worlds that function as a narrative map for the reader. As a way of interpreting the world, authors take their ideas and experiences in life and arrange them on narrative map which adds to the readers perception of the world (cf. Tally 2013: 42). We learn from literature about the world and take this with us through our journey in life. There are many worlds created by authors that the reader can learn from, and with in these worlds are many issues that effect her in reality. Through writers projecting a world that sometimes resembles our world in many ways, creates a connection between reality and the imaginary.

3. Coraline the Explorer of Worlds

3.1. Introduction

Fairy tales are more than true: not because they tell us dragons exist, but because they tell us that they can be beaten.

(G.K. Chesterton)

Neil Gaiman published *Coraline* in 2002, after taking ten years to write his children's novel. *Coraline* was the winner of many awards and has also become an animation film with the

screenplay written by Henry Selick. In “An Eye for an I: Neil Gaiman's *Coraline* and Question for Identity”, David Rudd states that *Coraline* 'is a rich and powerful work that explores areas seen by many as inappropriate for children' (Rudd 2008: 159) . Critics such Bruno Bettelheim in *The Uses of Enchantment* (1976), state that a children should explore areas that have an effect on their lives within a safe environment. These issues include 'death, sex, ontology, evil, desire, and violence' (cf. Rudd 2008: 159). It is important for children to explore the world in which they live, even if it might be dark and scary at times.

In this chapter, the main focus will be how *Coraline* interacts with architecture and the surroundings. Through these interactions we will gain a visible insight into the state of mind of the protagonist, and this will lead us to questions about the different aspects of the self. The self is a complex entity and it is through exploration of these different areas of architecture, that *Coraline* and the reader gain a better understanding of her. All these aspects of place reflect and mirror *Coraline*'s psyche, and draw us into the deepest realms within her. It is not only *Coraline*'s interaction with places that help her explore the self, but the also her conversations that she has with her neighbours. All of these different aspects of place and conversations all add to the development of *Coraline*, and her need to find a place within the world. That is, the two houses and the gardens are a part of the narrative map that leads the imagination of the reader to questions of identity and the self.

In *Coraline*, we find a world not very different from our own reality. In the story, we are introduced to the main character of *Coraline* Jones, a young girl who has recently moved into a new house with her mother and father. The surname of Jones is very common and it really does not tell us anything about the character of *Coraline* in contrast to her first name, which reveals a lot about her as a unique protagonist. It is even commented on in the novel, when all of *Coraline*'s neighbours call her 'Caroline' instead of her actual name (Gaiman 2002: 11). Caroline is name that is more common than *Coraline* and this shows as her neighbours call her it. They reach for the common name and try to take away *Coraline*'s individuality, but her name means a lot to her and distinguishes her from all the other people named Caroline in the world.

The only character within the novel who is known by her first name is *Coraline* and as we follow her innermost feelings and thoughts, we become closer to her and we know that she is the protagonist from the title of the novel. The neighbours and *Coraline*'s parents are only known by their surnames, although we do discover the sisters' first names. The other

characters in the other house are known only as the other mother and other father, and do not have a name. This adds to the mystery surrounding the other characters because part of our identity is constructed around the name given to you. This makes it difficult for the reader to place these characters within a certain context within the novel, as the characters remain partly anonymous.

As mentioned above, Rudd states that *Coraline* explores areas that are deemed by many to be inappropriate for children. These areas include 'identity, sex, death, ontology, evil, desire and violence', all of which appear within the work of *Coraline*, although some more than others (Rudd 2008: 159). In the novel, children are presented with the character of the other mother, who is the villain of the story that tries to trick Coraline. The other mother is an evil and scary character who could be viewed as inappropriate for children, because as a society we wish to protect children and shield them from the evil present in the world.

Another aspect of *Coraline* that could be deemed to inappropriate for children is desire as we want children to have great childhood, but to accept that they cannot have everything that they want. The other mother offers Coraline everything that she could possibly desire, but at a huge price. These types of interactions have been present in fairy tales for many centuries. All of these aspects educate and inform children about the world they live in. Gaiman presents these aspects in *Coraline*, which is a safe environment for children to learn about the world safely along with their parents.

Coraline spends many hours exploring the world of the old house that has been turned into four flats, but it still remains a strange and dark place to her. Coraline's parents are always busy with their work, and this leaves her with plenty of time to explore her new surroundings. These new surroundings consist of a house and a garden, as we also find in *The Secret Garden*. As Mary finds at Misselthwaite a locked garden, Coraline discovers a locked door in the drawing room. When she opens it, '[i]t opened on to a brick wall' (Gaiman 2002: 7). Her mother tells her that it leads '[n]owhere dear', and that there is nothing of interest behind the bricked up door, but she knows that '[i]t has to go somewhere' (Gaiman 2002: 6). Coraline as the explorer of the story sets out to discover where the door leads.

It seems important to Coraline that there is something there, she is afraid of this *nothingness* that appears to be creeping into her world. Coraline's experience with the door is uncanny, as it is a door and not a door at the same time as it appears to lead somewhere but nowhere at the same time. It is both scary and odd but it fascinates Coraline and triggers her

imagination, as the door must lead somewhere. The door triggers something within Coraline, and it leads her to venture through it to the other house because she has to know that it leads somewhere.

As stated in chapter 2, the uncanny pushes our boundaries of what we can accept as real, and is on the verge of what we can understand and rationalise and what we cannot. The uncanny is the exploring of the unknown in the known. Which means for Coraline that she knows what a door is and that it usually leads somewhere, but in this instance it appears to lead nowhere. The uncanny exists on many levels and has to do with Coraline as a character. It is not uncanny in itself, but because she makes the encounter with the door uncanny as she returns to the door many times in the novel. She finds 'nothing there – just a wall, built of red bricks', but on one occasion she finds that the bricked up wall had vanished (Gaiman 2002: 8). The uncanny already affects Coraline's psyche, even before she enters the other house.

In Coraline's world, through what was once a bricked up doorway, she discovers a hallway that connects the two universes. When Coraline travels through the hallway, she leaves her reality behind and goes in search of another. The hallway connects to a mirror image of her own house. In this mirror image of her house, we find Coraline's other mother and other father. They closely resemble her parents and offer their complete love and devotion. These events could be figments of Coraline's imagination and could be just in her mind. The house appears to be the same and most of its occupants have a doppelgänger that represent different aspects of the two worlds. The discovering of this new world brings Coraline to place where she can explore herself further, but in the end will she want to explore this frightening new landscape?

Coraline looks at the world as something that she can explore. Coraline is an explorer and views the world in a way of what she can explore and what she cannot explore. There is also the question of what she wants to explore, and what she is afraid to explore within the boundaries that she is given within the house. Like any normal child Coraline cannot imagine a world to explore beyond her house and garden, as this is where she spends most of her time and where she will grow and develop. Through exploration she discovers many things about herself and the house and garden that is her world. It will be through curiosity that she will eventually leave the realms of her world, but that is another story.

3.2. The Surroundings

Coraline's journey is one that we all must take as we leave the comfort of our home for the unstable reality of the world, that can bring many surprises to our doors. In the book *Under the Bed, Creeping* (2014), Michael Howarth presents us with a psychoanalytical reading of *Coraline*. His view is that Gaiman creates a Gothic landscape for her to explore her development, and it is through this landscape that she is provided with tools to help her in the adult world. According to Howarth, through Coraline's exploration of the garden, Gaiman shows the reader that she desires to explore beyond the boundaries of her home to gain independent experiences out in the world. It also illustrates that she is first able to step beyond the landscape of her new home, which provides her with comfort and security into an unfamiliar space that presents her with new experiences that do not fit this reality. It is through her childhood curiosity that leads her to the door of the other world, and the other mother (cf. Howarth 2014: 81). Her curiosity and imagination will lead her to many strange places within the novel.

Coraline's story begins in the garden. Coraline lives in an old house and it has a garden that has become overgrown through its lack of contact with humanity, and has been left to its own devices to grow and change naturally. The overgrown garden could be thought to be a barrier that shields the inhabitants from the outside world. We do not hear of outsiders coming into the grounds, therefore the garden could be thought to shield the characters from the outside world. This is also the case in *The Secret Garden* as the house is surrounded by the moor that acts like a barrier, isolating the inhabitants from the outside world.

The garden fascinates Coraline from the very beginning. Therefore, when Coraline first arrives at the house, she 'spent her first two weeks at the house exploring the garden and grounds' (Gaiman 2002: 5). The garden represents an unexplored territory that begins her journey at the house. Coraline discovers that

[i]t was a big garden: at the very back was an old tennis court, [...] and the fence around the court had holes and the net at mostly rotted away; there was an old rose garden, filled with stunted, flyblown rose bushes; there was a rockery that was all rocks; there was a fairy ring, made of squidgy brown toadstools.

(Gaiman 2002: 4)

All these aspects about the garden are symbols of the place where Coraline starts, at the beginning of the novel. She is rather stunted at the beginning of the novel, she is terrified of growing up into her own stranger and wants to remain in realm of childhood. The fence that surrounds the the court is full of holes, and the net that has mostly rotted away that represents the days of the past as memories from the past corrode the future. It surrounds the tennis court that no one uses and creates a link back to when the house was full of life, when it was the centre of a family's world. This imagery created by Gaiman adds to the narrative map, the reader becomes the literary geographer as he explores the grounds with Coraline further.

Through this description of the grounds, Gaiman creates an image of a garden that has been left to its own devices, and has been untouched or unexplored by a human in a while. We also see this in *The Secret Garden* as Mary explores the locked garden at Misselthwaite. Coraline's garden echoes how the house has become stuck in time as they have old tennis courts 'but no one played tennis' that lives in the house now (Gaiman 2002: 4). The tennis courts represent a time past and belong to the history of the house, this brings a lot of questions to the readers about the place where Coraline has been placed. Gaiman creates a 'stunted' landscape that has become stuck in time to represent Coraline's inner struggle. She struggles to transform her imagination into something that can function within the adult world. Where she can grow and flourish into something different from her child self, and this journey starts in the garden.

A garden is a natural place, but it is also a place cultivated by human beings. If the roses are not tended to by hand, then they will grow out wrong or even become 'stunted'. The garden mirrors Coraline in many ways, and represents many different areas of the human mind that must be explored before she can move from the space of childhood to the new unconquered space of adolescence. The garden offers her a place to explore the world safely as she will still remain within sight of the house, it offers many challenges and experiences for her to further her development. If Coraline does not open her eyes, and accept growing up then she will become like the roses stranded in time never to flourish into the full bloom of adulthood.

The roses are stuck they cannot grow in this environment that time has forgotten. and so remain in a time to be forgotten along with other parts of the grounds. This is significant and it shows that Coraline has a big battle on her hands, if she is not to become permanently

debilitated like the roses. The battle inside Coraline is fierce as she is on the cusp of maturity, and will be leaving the realm of childhood for space of adolescence. This again connects with *The Secret Garden*, where the garden has been left unattended for ten years, and appears to be hidden or even dead to Mary. In both texts, the protagonists must explore and awaken a garden and, in essence, themselves. The exploration of the garden in both texts will bring both protagonists to the edge of their world, and will change the direction of their life.

Coraline explores the garden searching for the well. Within the first few pages of the novel, Coraline discovers that

[t]here was also a well. On the first day Coraline's family moved in, Miss Spink and Miss Forcible made a point of telling Coraline how dangerous the well was, and they warned her to be sure she kept away from it.

(Gaiman 2002: 4)

Of course, having been informed about the well in the true nature of childhood curiosity Coraline sets off to find it, as we also see in *The Secret Garden* with Mary when she is told not to explore the house. The well offers something for her to find and explore, it sparks her interest and also her imagination as she wonders what she will find at the bottom of it. The well is part of the unknown part of the grounds igniting the explorer within her, and foreshadowing her fascination with the door.

Coraline continues her exploration of the grounds. And, on the third day she finds the well, '[...] in an overgrown meadow beside the tennis court, behind a clump of trees – a low brick circle almost hidden in the high grass' (Gaiman 2002: 4). The well is hidden away on what sounds like the edge of the property, and at the edge of Coraline's world. As previously stated, Coraline's world consists of a house and a garden, but the well is on the edge of her world and reality. To go beyond this edge is the future world waiting for her, but as a child she cannot cross it. The edge of her world is where the boundaries are set and to go beyond them would be to leave her childhood space behind, and enter another space on the edge of the adult world. This again connects with *The Secret Garden*, as the moor represents the 'more' that the world has to offer. The well represents something new, but also something dark at the same time as to look down a well is to see only darkness, and it is within that darkness that Coraline hides her fears from the world.

The well represents a vertical version of the corridor between the two worlds, foreshadowing the journey to the other house. The well suggests the same thing as the door and it is place that you should not go, you do not want to end up trapped down a well because you won't be able get out again. It is the same thing with the door, and if you go through the door then you won't be able to get back. The well represents the nothingness that Coraline fears as it leads nowhere but into darkness.

The nothingness of the well also points forward to a passage later in the novel, where Coraline finds herself lost in the mist. Her exploration continues as the bricked up doorway returns to her thoughts. The day after discovering the bricked up door, '[...] it had stopped raining, but a thick white fog had lowered over the house' (Gaiman 2002: 11). It can be said that '[t]he real mist is the white space, the nothingness, around her' that surrounds her and makes it difficult to find her way around the grounds (Rudd 2008: 160). This impairs the vision of not only Coraline but everyone, so much so that only the grounds and the house can be seen through the mist. The mist intimidates Coraline so that '[s]he always kept in sight of the house. After about ten minutes of walking she found herself back where she started' (Gaiman 2002: 12). What this quote shows is that Coraline appears to have walked around in a circle and ends up back where she started, but she is afraid she will become lost and that is why she keeps insight of the house. There appears to be nothing beyond the garden, and this is what she dreads as she needs to know that her exploration will lead her somewhere.

There appears to be only a few places to explore and does not leave much room for growth for Coraline, and there appears to be no way to escape the isolation of the house. The mist, just like the moor, acts like a barrier cutting off the inhabitants from the rest of the world. It is important to Coraline that there is something there and not just nothing, what lies beyond the mist makes her afraid and she finds it difficult to imagine what it might look like. The mist represent the 'more' just like in *The Secret Garden*, a boundary that she will conquer when she is older. There is something 'more' beyond the mist but to a child these boundaries are put in place to keep them safe. Through childhood curiosity eventually these boundaries will be overcome, and she will see more of the world beyond the mist. Some of these boundaries exist only within the mind of Coraline and can be crossed, but because she is a child they seem larger and more challenging to her. She is afraid that beyond the mist exists nothing and that she will be nullified by it, but she will soon realise that beyond the mist exists the 'more' and, in essence, the future that all children must face.

What Coraline is seeking in the mist is to explore where exactly she has been placed within the novel as she goes off exploring. She is perhaps looking for someone to interact with and she finds this in the shape of her neighbours, who also live in the world of the house. Miss Forcible comments on the fact that

[y]ou'd have to be an explorer to find your way around in this fog. 'I'm an explorer'.
said Coraline. 'Of course you are, lovely' said Miss Forcible. Don't get lost now.

(Gaiman 2002: 12)

This interaction with Miss Forcible only adds to our view of Coraline as the explorer of this story, and even if she is not careful she might get lost. This scene in the mist brings all of the house's inhabitants together, except for Coraline's parents. We even gain some insight into the crazy old man as she 'could hardly see the old man through the mist' (Gaiman 2002: 12). The crazy old man appears in the mist and brings with him a warning message from the mice that live in the house. 'This message is this. *Don't go through the door*. Does that mean anything to you? No said Coraline' (Gaiman 2002: 12). This warning comes from the old man, who appears to be delusional but can see things more clearly than others, and the danger that the door poses to her if she should venture through it. *Coraline* can be partly viewed as a cautionary tale for children, as she has been warned several times about the danger of doing things that could be dangerous. This leads back to the question of the door and the house.

3.3. The House as a Home

The house is a prevalent figure in Gothic literature and plays a central role in the story of *Coraline*. The house in *Coraline* is an immense space for her to explore and lose herself within. According to Bachelard,

[a] house is imagined as a vertical being. It rises upward. It differentiates itself in terms of its verticality. [...] A house is imagined as a concentrated being. It appeals to to our consciousness of centrality.

As this quote reveals the house becomes a central point within our lives and it stands over us, a powerful entity that influences and appeals to our notion of centrality. A house is imagined to be many things, but it is a concrete being at the centre of our worlds. It is always there and offers a place for humans to evolve their lives around, but we also construct a house within us somewhere within our minds. The house in *Coraline* can be viewed as a metaphor for Coraline's mind. It represents the state of mind and development of her throughout the novel, and changes along with the situations and experiences that change her sense of direction in life. It also reflects the challenges that she encounters in the novel, and how they change her from within.

The house also represents Coraline's fears and anxieties as she has to face that she may lose herself within it. Her house appears to be endless and is formed with passageways, a cellar, an attic and the grounds that surrounds the property, this gives her plenty of places to explore the different aspects of her psychology. By letting the spaces within the house reflect the mind of Coraline, Gaiman suggests that in order to fight the internal demons that she possesses she must face what lurks within, and once she has faced these internal demons she can move on to the next stage of her development. It is through the exploration of these concrete spaces that Coraline learns about the world, and the people she knows within it. By exploring these spaces and in a way conquering them, she is able to discover aspects of her self that she would not have known about had she remained placed where she had been told to within the house by her parents.

A house can become the centre of a family's world. As previously stated, the house that was once built for one family has now become subdivided, as 'Coraline's family didn't own all of the house. It was too big for that. Instead they owned part' (Gaiman 2002: 3). Everything has become divided within the house and this represents modern life, as society has become even more fragmented from within. There was once one big kitchen for the entire house, but now there are many little kitchens. The kitchen, which could be thought to be the heart of the house, which has been fragmented into smaller ones, leaving the inhabitants without a main place to gather together. Although, they can congregate in their separate apartments.

There is a small passage that mentions a meal. Then 'Coraline's father stopped working and made them all dinner', but there is no mention of them sitting together as a family (Gaiman 1911: 7). Meal times appear to be a struggle for Coraline as she ' [...] was disgusted. Daddy, she said, you've made a recipe again' (Gaiman 2002: 7). She does not enjoy the meal and goes ' [...] to the freezer and got out some microwave chips and microwave mini pizza' to have for dinner (Gaiman 2002: 7). This links to Coraline's need to keep her imagination and the need to keep her individuality, as to follow a recipe is to follow instructions that have been mass created and does not show any imagination. This also reveals her childness, she will not even try the food that her father has spent some time making and shows she has a lot of growing up to do.

The lack of the use of a kitchen represents a displacement for characters as they eat together, but live in their own worlds. It is interesting that there is no mention of a kitchen in Coraline's real home, the kitchen is often presented as the heart of the house at the very centre of all that occurs within it. Coraline's real home has a centre, but characters do not use it to congregate and spend time with one another. Of course, it is possible to visit the different apartments, but the characters are still separated by bricks. We could say that Coraline goes off in search of a family she so desperately needs in the other house.

A house through the centuries represents different things to society, but in modern times, it has become a fragmented symbol. According to Blackford,

[t]he subdivided house denotes cultural change that has closed doors on the care of children, failed to produce a large family with multiple siblings, and lost its purpose as a functional domestic space.

(Blackford 2012: 212)

As this quote states, the house denotes cultural change, it is an old house that has seen many different types of people living there, as times have changed so has the culture within society. But, now the house is old and has closed its doors to those times.

There is a cultural crisis signalled by the house, in a way that there are no actual families living there except for Coraline's family, but they are fragmented. The two sisters who are like a family appear to be 'stunted' like the roses as they will never have children, so the house in the future will not see a new generation. Finally, there is the eccentric old man

who talks to mice, he also has no children and also appears to be 'stunted'. Moreover, the house signals that families are not as strong as they once were, they have become fragmented and are not able to protect children like they did in the past. However, as seen in *The Secret Garden*, families were just as fragmented at the beginning of the twentieth century as they are now, and children were often left to their own devices. It can be said that family life has not changed that much since 1911, as even today children can be ignored and neglected by their parents, even within the realms of the family house.

A house often reflects the personalities of its owners and can also reflect the moods of the owners. A home is the centre of cultural change as both interior and exterior can represent different time periods of culture. The exterior often reflects the time when the house was built, and the interior can reflect the time that the occupants live in now. Therefore, the exterior and interior represent two different perspectives on time, and reflect the past and future aspects of this world. Bringing them together into one entity in which the characters live.

A house represents a world inside and outside that influences the characters, which live within it. Coraline's home is somewhere that is divided by the past and the present of today, as inside her parents are being consumed by technology, whereas the outside is at the mercy of the garden and a time that has long since passed. Coraline's parents spend most of their time in front of a computer screen that they become consumed by technology and ignore the wonders of the garden. They live in the real world and have forgotten the wonders of exploring the world that surrounds them.

In Coraline's world everything that her real home represents is the past. According to Blackford, the house that once reflected the status of the family in society, now stands empty and lacks the purpose it once had. This one house used to be the centre of someone's world but now it has become a home to many as it has been separated into smaller apartments. The theme of isolation can be felt throughout the pages of *Coraline*, as everyone is isolated by the bricks that divide the house up. Only Coraline appears to be able to circulate around the house and explore it (cf. Blackford 2012: 213).

When Coraline goes to visit her neighbours, she enters another world which only reveals more places for to explore. Her neighbours are known as Miss Forcible and Miss Spink and they live together in one of the apartments. We are not told that much about them except that their apartment is rather dusty and they are surrounded by items from the past including black and white photographs. The sisters read Coraline's 'tea leaves [...]'. I'll read

your future. [...] You know, Caroline, [...] you are in terrible danger' (Gaiman 2002: 14). It is in the space of their apartment that the reader learns that Coraline is in danger and this changes the tone of the novel as she 'is slightly alarmed by this' (Gaiman 2002: 15). There are many warnings coming from different characters in the novel, but in true fairy tale style, she does not follow them with devastating consequences.

This is when Coraline is given a stone with a hole in it, it will become important later on in the story, as it helps Coraline connect with the real world, when she battles against the other mother. The stone is a very important thing that Gaiman creates through the narrative map and creates a connection to Coraline's real world and home, as nothing can be more real than a stone. The stone represents the more grounded aspect of her psychology, and foreshadows the future of her growing into a well grounded adult. Coraline questions what the stone is for as '[s]he held it up to the window and looked through it. 'It might help' said Miss Spink. 'They're good for bad things, sometimes' (Gaiman 2002: 15). This foreshadows Coraline's use for the stone, as Miss Spink realises that Coraline is in danger, and may need something to guide her back to reality safely. The stone is something concrete that Coraline can touch, and bring with her to other world. It is a reminder of home and will keep her grounded, revealing the truth to her through her eyes.

Coraline leaves the apartment with mixed feelings. When leaving the apartment,

[t]he mist hung like blindness around the house. She [...] stopped and looked around. In the mist, it was a ghost-world. *In danger?* Thought Coraline to herself. It sounded exciting. It didn't sound like a bad thing. Not really.

(Gaiman 2002: 16)

This quote reveals a lot about Coraline's state of mind that she is still very much a child, and does not see the danger in the world but finds it exciting. Although Coraline is excited about what the future holds for her, she still finds the house an isolating place because her parents ignore her. Also, the isolation of Coraline continues to grow as she is blinded by the mist again, and her surroundings appear to be a 'ghost-world'. This also reflects Coraline's state of mind as it indicates to reader, how Coraline is feeling on the inside. It gives her a reason to go through the door in search of someone to fill the void in her life, and this is similar to *The Secret Garden* as Mary must emerge from her isolation.

3.4. Doorways to Other Worlds

Coraline is very curious about the door and knows that it leads somewhere, she is just not sure at this point where it will lead. According to Howarth, the other world that mirrors Coraline's own reality also represents her unconsciousness. The bricked up doorway that separates the two houses is a barrier between the imagination of a child and the adult world. The brick wall represents the tough journey that children must make, as they leave the realm of the imagination for the reality of the adult world (cf. Howarth 2014: 83). The brick wall is another obstacle for Coraline to overcome as she grows and develops, she will find a way to break down this wall, which will connect the world of imagination with the adult world.

Some days after discovering the doorway, Coraline's mother takes her shopping in the nearest town for school clothes (cf. Gaiman 2002: 20). This is very significant, it is the only time that she leaves the realm of the two universes for another type of space. Coraline wants to stand out, so she 'could be the only one' and be an individual, but her mother ignores her and wants her to be the same as everyone else, by buying the school uniform that everyone wears (Gaiman 2002: 17). Coraline wants green gloves, but her mother refuses and continues choosing what she needs.

Coraline does not want to conform to societal norms. She states that she

[...] was kidnapped by aliens [...]. They came down from outer space with ray guns, but I fooled them by wearing a wig and laughing in a foreign accent, and I escaped.

(Gaiman 2002: 17)

Through this quote we see that Coraline's overactive imagination firmly keeps her within the realm of childhood, she tries to keep her childhood magic alive through the power of her imagination. This scene indicates to the reader that Coraline is looking to explore her own desires and experiences in life because she is a child. She struggles to maintain her childhood magic and is ignored by her mother, who tries to control her by choosing what she wears. It is important for children to break down this doorway slowly, Coraline is just beginning this journey and it will be tough, but she must learn to control her imagination in the adult world.

Coraline's world continues to grow, as the door takes on more of focus within her world. According to Coats, it is symbolic that directly after the trip to the shops that Coraline

discovers that the bricked up doorway has gone, and she enters the world of the other mother. It is also powerful that she discovered the bricked up doorway with her mother. This is not something Coraline can do with her mother, but must do it alone (cf. Coats 2004: 87). This signifies that this something that Coraline must do alone, as she travels from the realms of childhood to adulthood.

In order to enter the space of adulthood, we must face our fears and anxieties alone and conquer them so that we can begin the next stage of our development. Hence, '[...] it requires a great deal of thought and effort to break through all the emotional and imaginary walls that children have built around themselves' (Howarth 2014: 83). As this quote suggests, it takes a lot of thought and mental power to tear down these walls that children have created to protect themselves from the world. And, these walls need to be gently broken down as children over time gain a more profound understanding of the real world. Coraline must return to the door and walk through it so that she can begin tearing down these walls.

3.5. The Other World of the Other House

Coraline finally returns to the bricked up door. When Coraline '[...] finally [...] opened the door. It opened on to a dark hallway. The bricks had gone, as if they'd never been there. [...] Coraline went through the door' to the other house (Gaiman 2002: 20). 'Coraline walked down the corridor uneasily' and she immediately recognises where she is because 'there is something very familiar about it', yet at the same time it feels unfamiliar (Gaiman 2002: 20). Something is wrong and 'she shook her head confused', she cannot quite put her finger on what is wrong (Gaiman 2002: 20). Gaiman's use of the uncanny here ignites the story and increases the uneasy feeling that there is something wrong with this house. Although, this seems to feel like home there is something quite *unheimlich* about it because Coraline recognises where she is, but at the same time she does not.

After travelling through the dark hallway that connects the two universes, Coraline only finds more places to explore as '[s]he stared at the picture hanging on the wall: no it wasn't exactly the same' (Gaiman 2002:20). It appears to be familiar but yet is not, Gaiman uses the uncanny here to push Coraline to question what she is seeing. Coraline does question whether she is still at home or whether she ever left, as '[s]he knew where she was: she was in her own home. She hadn't left.' (Gaiman 2002: 20). Coraline appears to feel like Alice when

she falls down the rabbit hole after following the white rabbit as the other house she inhabits in that world is strange, but familiar at the same time as is Wonderland to Alice (cf. Carroll 1865).

Coraline continues to be confused by the other house. She continues to stare at the picture which shows

[...] a boy in old fashioned clothes staring at some bubbles. But now the expression on his face was different – he was looking at the bubbles as if he was planning to do something very nasty indeed to them. And there was something peculiar about his eyes.

(Gaiman 2002:20)

This picture signals to Coraline and the reader that there is something not quite right at home, it creates a feeling of unhomely that cannot be ignored. Having just arrived in the other house, we begin to question the narrative map further, as we wonder where exactly it is taking us and will we escape through to the other side. The function of the uncanny here is to explore the unknown that is the other house and it also alerts Coraline to danger, as she experiences the realm of unhomely.

3.5.1. The Other Mother

Coraline enters the other house and goes into the kitchen and finds a woman there. Coraline recognises her as someone that resembles her mother, but at the same time she does not, this only adds to her confusion. Coraline hears a voice calling her that sounds familiar and '[i]t sounded like her mother', but yet it does not (Gaiman 2002: 21). The uncanny plays a vital role here as does the Gothic, and this leads the reader to edge of what he can accept as real. In the kitchen of the other house, she comes across

[a] woman stood in the kitchen with her back to Coraline.
She looked a little like Coraline's mother. Only...
Only her skin was white as paper.
Only she was taller and thinner.

Only her fingers were too long, and they never stopped moving, and her dark-red fingernails were curved and sharp.

'Coraline?' the woman said. 'Is that you?'

And then she turned around. Her eyes were big black buttons.

(Gaiman 2002: 21)

Gaiman's entire description of the other mother is scary. There is something extremely unsettling and unnatural about the fact she has 'black buttons' for eyes, is 'white as paper', and that her fingers 'never stopped moving'. It's almost as if there is something lacking from her and this world, although, the other mother tries to hide this from Coraline.

The other mother appears to be very Medusa like in many ways. According to Greek mythology, she'[...] was a monster, [...] [who] had the face of an ugly woman with snakes instead of hair, anyone who looked into her eyes was immediately turned to stone' (greekmythology.com). What signals the Greek monster to Coraline is the snake like hair as '[h]er hair writhed and twined around her head' (Gaiman 2002: 88). The Medusa aspect of the description represents danger to Coraline and reveals the truth about the other mother to her, as Medusa like figure would scare most children and give them nightmares. We should all fear our inner Medusa living in our other house with us.

The other mother's identity confuses Coraline. The other mother states that 'I'm your other mother', like 'everyone does' have one and should know this (Gaiman 2002: 21, 22). It is scary for Coraline, this woman introduces herself as someone else, she does even try to hide this and behaves like this perfectly normal behaviour. She introduces herself as something other and does not try to conceal it, which is uncanny in itself. What makes it uncanny is that this woman looks like Coraline's mother, but she is not. It both scares and fascinates her at the same time, as she struggles to define who this person is exactly and with it herself.

The question of identity is raised here as the other mother resembles Coraline's mother, and this leads Coraline to question herself. Children's identity is often built around their parents, and when this is questioned it brings many questions to the surface this can lead them struggle to define who they are as Coraline does in this scene. Even if she does resemble her mother, Coraline knows deep down inside that she is not. We know that she is the villain of the story, as does Coraline because she is a child who has read fairy tales and recognises the danger of the other mother.

A common situation that takes place within the world of fairy tales is that the evil step-mother who can be perceived to be the villain of the story, shows no affection towards her step-daughter. This is, however, reversed in *Coraline* as the other mother does her best to convince Coraline that she has her best interest at heart and '[i]t wasn't the same without you' (Gaiman 2002: 21). It is interesting that this scene takes place in the kitchen, which as stated before it can be viewed as the centre of the house. The family in the other house paint a very different picture from Coraline's neglectful parents as

[t]hey sat at the kitchen table and Coraline's other mother brought them lunch. A huge, golden-brown roasted chicken, fried potatoes, tiny green peas. Coraline shovelled the food into her mouth. It tasted wonderful.

(Gaiman 2002: 21)

The other mother creates a meal that sparks Coraline's imagination and creativity, slowly the spider creates a web to catch the unsuspecting fly as '[s]pider webs only have to be large enough to catch flies' (Gaiman 2002: 51). This scene echoes the earlier scene in the novel, where Coraline eats dinner with her real father and mother, but we see how fragmented her real family have become. These two scenes indicate what Coraline longs for and what her reality at home in the real world is to the reader. However, it has been said that there is no such thing as a free lunch and Coraline will have to pay a high price for this. In the beginning it is like Coraline is drawing the perfect house and family, but this is not real and never will be, just like their button eyes are not real.

The eyes are the gateway to the soul. The other mother and other father have black buttons for eyes, disrupting the gateway for Coraline. In the real world, only dolls have black buttons for eyes, and they have no soul. It is difficult to tell what is real in this world. As previously stated, the other mother has created a world where nothing is real and is used to lure Coraline into a false sense of security, so that she will join them and become a soulless doll or puppet even. Therefore, the replacing of the eyes with black buttons can be viewed as a form of mind control which would cause the slave to lose her sight and perception of reality, and she would become trapped in the other world that happens to be a twisted reflection of ours.

Within this reflection, we find the other mother who is the Gothic villain. According to the “Introduction” in *The Gothic in Children's literature: Haunting the Borders*, it is quite a familiar convention in 'Gothic narratives, [that] the innocent are victims of insensitive violence. They are prey to a Gothic villain of monstrous proportions' (Introduction 2008: 11). As this quote suggests, the innocent become victims of callous violence and become the target of the Gothic villain. This connects to the novel as Coraline is an innocent child, who is left at the mercy of the other mother. If Coraline is to survive the other mother, she must be able to see beyond the resemblance and see what lurks beneath. Something lurks beneath the surface of the other mother and this becomes quite clear to Coraline from the way she is described by Gaiman, which conjures up Medusa like images in the reader's mind.

The other mother has created the perfect world for Coraline the explorer as she comments that [i]t's much more interesting than home' but something doesn't feel right as she sees a

[...] china plate on the kitchen table were a spool of black cotton and a long silver needle and, beside them two large black buttons.

I don't think so, said Coraline.

Oh but we want you to, said the other mother.

We want you to stay.

(Gaiman 2002: 32)

As this quote indicates, it is clear that the other mother and other father cannot take Coraline's eyes by force. She has to want to join them and accept the black buttons by choice. There is a question of free will here and she has to accept her place in the other world willingly. She still has a choice, and can see that she would lose part of herself if she remains with them. To remain a child forever in some aspects means not having free will as you have to follow the rules of your parents, therefore she chooses development over being stunted in the other world. Coraline has to be strong in order to resist the temptation of the other father and other mother's world as they try to trick her, so that she will join them in the other world. The other mother tries to shower Coraline with all the attention and everything she could ever ask for to get her to stay with them in the other universe, so that they can 'be together as one big family

[...]. Forever and always ' (Gaiman 2002: 33). Coraline's other family want her to join them in the other world and be apart of their twisted family.

3.5.2. The Other House

The other house resembles Coralines real house from the outside. As '[t]he house looked exactly the same from the outside', but is completely different on the inside through minute differences that Coraline picks up on very quickly (Gaiman 2002: 25). An example of this is when Coraline stares at the painting when she first arrives in the other house [20]. The house on the outside appears to be the same, but on the inside there are subtle differences that hide in plain sight for Coraline to discover, and show her that in fact she is now somewhere that is not home, but the in realm of the unheimlich.

With the house there are many things that point to it being homely. There was '[a] whole toybox filled with wonderful toys', food that 'tasted wonderful', her bedroom is '[a]n awful lot more interesting than' the one in her real house (Gaiman 2002: 22, 21, 22). All of these aspects points to the realm of the homely even with all of these aspects the other mother, who stands at the centre of the other house points to unhomely. The other mother represents it in its purist form. No matter how hard she tries to ignore the these signs they hit home for Coraline the longer she remains in the other house. These homely aspects exist to lure Coraline into a false sense of security, in a world that appears to offer her everything that she has ever desired. The other mother is unhomely, but presents herself as homely to Coraline. The whole point behind the unhomely aspects masquerading as homely is to mask the true darkness behind the world. The darkness that lurks beneath the surface of broken promises.

Coraline's world is shaken when she arrives home. After Coraline returns home to find her parents 'have vanished under mysterious circumstances', she decides to go 'back for them because they are her parents'(Gaiman 2002: 36, 41). When she returns to the other house, she finds the other mother and father waiting for her, and it feels like they have been waiting for her to return. The other mother tries to trick Coraline into thinking that her parents have abandoned her, but there is 'a tiny doubt inside her, like a maggot in an apple core' (Gaiman 2002:43). By now, Coraline doubts everything that the other mother tells her, as the magic of the other house begins to fade, and the true darkness hiding behind the other mother's spell

begins to appear as the unhomely aspects continue to indicate to Coraline that there is something wrong with this world.

This world represents everything that is wrong with our world and it represents a twisted reflection of it, it signals that Coraline has descended into the underworld. In this place she finds a place much like her own home but different in many ways. This world has a very different feel to the other world as this world is familiar, but yet it is not. But, her

underworld exploration of regression is means to development [as] [s]he might be wishing to prolong early childhood, but in the underworld she is pushed into a new role of adolescent rebellion.

(Blackford 2012: 208)

As this quote suggests, Coraline's exploration of the world has brought her to a place inside herself where she has regressed to an early stage of development. Coraline is afraid of growing up and wishes to remain in the realm of childhood, but as she explores the underworld further she is placed in a position where she must rebel and take her place in the world adolescent. The different stages in life could be thought to be different spaces that we inhabit at different times in our lives, as we grow and change with our environment. Coraline is greatly effected by her environment, but help is at hand through the black cat.

3.5.3. The Black Cat

The black cat in the other house is able to talk to Coraline, and can also travel between the worlds, freely. Gaiman employs the cat to discuss with Coraline the philosophy of the world that they inhabit at that moment. The black cat appears at the most significant parts of the novel, and helps Coraline find her way in the other world. Coraline discusses with the cat, the other mother's motives towards her and the cat also appears when the house changes into a dark entity.

The cat is Coraline's companion and is a way for Gaiman to talk to the reader freely, as cats are independent beings that are free to roam from place to place. Black cats have been persecuted in centuries passed, and are surrounded by myth and superstition, they are mysterious creatures that have been associated with witchcraft and evil. It is through this that

we associate black cats with mystery and myth, and we also see the black cat in this way as he is a mysterious being, who understands how the other world works.

Coraline questions the other mother's motives with the black Cat. She asks

[w]hy does she want me? Coraline asked the cat. Why does she want me to stay here with her? She wants something to love, I think, said the cat. Something that isn't her. She might want something to eat as well. It's hard to tell with creatures like that.

(Gaiman 2002:45)

Through this small passage we question the motives behind the other mother's actions, and we also question what type of creature she is. The black cat thinks that the other mother wants something to love and connect with that is not her, it could be said that all women deep down inside have maternal side and wish to pass on their traits to the next generation.

In *Coraline*, the black cat soon becomes a helper, and is crucial in her successful attempt to escape the clutches of the other mother. The black cat appears to Coraline in both worlds and has real eyes in both worlds. The black cat has not been seduced by the power of the other mother. The other mother attempts to keep the black cat out of the other world, but fails as the cat comments on the fact that '[t]here's ways in and ways out of places like this that even she doesn't know about' (Gaiman 2002:5). The black cat implies that there are other places similar to this house, so perhaps this other world is not the only universe that exists, and the cat can travel freely between these other worlds. It can be said that perhaps every child has an other house and an other mother that he must conquer before moving into the realm of adolescence. In order for Coraline to escape the other mother, she must see herself when she looks in the mirror and keep this image as part of her identity alive.

3.5.4. Mirrors

Mirrors play an important role in *Coraline*. As previously stated the other house appears to be a mirror image of Coraline's real house, but the closer she looks, the more the cracks in the mirror image become obvious to her. She states that '[y]ou weren't in the mirror', then the other mother tells Coraline that mirrors 'are never to be trusted', but she is a smart girl and knows that mirrors reflect what they see. Coraline's realisation that she is not at home

becomes even more real to her as she states that 'I don't want to play with you. [...] I want to go home to my real parents'. Through the power of the mirror, reality shines through for her and the reality of her situation becomes clear to her (Gaiman 2002: 52). The other house is beginning to show its real colours and the other mother's power over Coraline is starting to fade, as the young girl begins to see the truth in the mirror.

The other house no longer fools Coraline. She sees the other mother for who she really is, which is '[s]ick and evil and weird' (Gaiman 2002: 53). She even states that '[y]ou aren't my real mother', and the spell of the other house and other mother is broken (Gaiman 2002: 53). Coraline finally realises the truth that this world appears to be homely, but it is actually unhomely. This reality is a twisted version of her own. The other mother intends to teach Coraline some manners by pulling her

[...] back into the hallway and advanced upon the mirror at the end of the hall. Then she pushed the tiny key into the fabric of the mirror, and she twisted it. The mirror opened like a door, revealing a dark space behind it.

(Gaiman 2002: 54)

As this quote suggests, Coraline is left in darkness alone behind the mirror and needs to apply all her power within to keep her head clear. To be trapped alone in dark is a fear that quite often children have and Coraline is confronted head on with this one, but she is strong and finds a way to keep her emotions under control. The other mother places the 'key into the fabric of the mirror, and she twisted it', as a door opens from within the mirror (Gaiman 2002: 54). There is a connection here to bricked up doorway, as it brings Coraline to a different space within the novel. The other mother puts the key within the mirror and twists it, this indicates to the reader that the reality behind the mirror is not going to be good, and will be an even more twisted version of the house. We have entered a space that appears to be nowhere but is somewhere within the other house, as '[s]he put out her hands to touch the space in which she has been imprisoned' (Gaiman 2002: 55). Within this dark space behind the mirror, Coraline only has herself to rely on, and she must face what lurks within her, as through the power of the mirror, reality shines through.

When you look in the mirror it reflects what it sees, but in many ways it looks different as each person will perceive what they see differently. The mirror symbolises reality

for Coraline, but seeing reality from her own perspective and she will be presented with many realities there. To be trapped behind a mirror signifies that she must look beyond what is seen in the mirror, and see the truth buried deep within. Behind the mirror Coraline will be confronted with her fate, if she remains in the other house in the form of the other children who live there.

Within *Coraline*, Gaiman uses mirrors to reflect Coraline's internal struggle. Coraline finds herself somewhere completely surrounded by darkness. Suddenly, she hears a voice coming from somewhere.

Hush! And shush! Say nothing for the bedlam might be listening. [...] She felt a cold hand touch her face, fingers running over it like the gentle beat of a moth's wings. Another voice, hesitant and so faint Coraline wondered if she were imagining it, said, 'Art Thou – art thou alive?' [...] Who are you whispered Coraline. Names, names, names, said the other voice, all faraway and lost.

(Gaiman 2002: 55)

As this quote suggests, Coraline is not alone on the other side of the mirror. What she finds on the other side of the mirror is a haunting image of her fate, should she stay in the other house and accept the black buttons. The other children signify what happens when you refuse to accept growth and development, this becomes clear to Coraline and she realises that she must escape the other world. It is also apparent that she is not the first and won't be last child, as the other mother soon becomes tired of her victims, and moves on to the next. She questions the reality of her situation as she is confronted with the other children, who are a ghostly shade of what they once were. This connects to *The Secret Garden*, in the scene where Mary discovers Colin and he questions whether Mary is real or not (cf. Burnett 1911: 141).

Names again become something significant for Coraline. Her name is very important to her and enhances her individuality further to the reader. Coraline's

[...] eyes were beginning to get used to the darkness. Now Coraline saw, or imagined she saw, three shapes, each as faint and pale as a moon in the daytime. They were the shapes of children

(Gaiman 2002: 57)

Coraline is presented with the mirror image of the children that have come before her and her fate. These children have completely lost touch with who they once were, and are just a ghost existing within the mirror. Their names are long forgotten as are they, and the other mother '[...] stole our hearts, and stole our souls, and she took our lives away , and she left us here, and forgot us in the dark' (Gaiman 2002: 58). The other mother has taken everything from other children and has stripped not only their names, but their entire identity from them.

The other children have become discarded like toys by the other mother, and left behind the mirror to be forgotten. They have become the nothing that Coraline fears, and have been stripped of all their imagination. Throughout the novel there many references to nothing and the other children signify what happens when you are consumed by the nothing. They have become 'hollow' inside and there is nothing left of them in this world, as the other mother has fed on them and left them with nothing that they have become like the mist surrounding the house. (Gaiman 2002: 59).

The other children plead with Coraline to help them. They reveal that the other mother has their souls and that they cannot leave the other world without them. The children's souls are trapped within marbles that will become important later in the novel and are important factor in Coraline's escape from the house. It is significant that the souls are housed within marbles, which is a children's toy. The other children will never grow into adults and will forever be trapped in a twisted version of childhood, and their souls will be trapped within a children's toy hidden somewhere in the house never to be played with by anyone.

3.6. The Other House Begins to Fade

The longer Coraline remains in other house, the more she begins to lose herself in the other reality, as she struggles to remember what home feels like. She

crept back into the silent house, past the closed bedroom door. Beyond which the other mother and the other father... what? She wondered. Slept? Waited? And then it came to her that, should she open the bedroom door, she would find it empty, or, more precisely, that it was an empty room and it would remain empty until the exact moment that she opened the door.

In this passage, Gaiman poses the question of whether the other house truly exists, and if Coraline was to close the door then, would that world exist behind it or is it only in her mind. Coraline questions along with reader, the reality of her situation. She questions whether the other mother and other father actually exist or are they just figments of her imagination. She questions their very existence with 'what', the reader is left to wonder if this other house and its inhabitants only exist within the mind of Coraline.

After returning to save her parents, she spends the night in the other house. And, '[f]or a moment she felt utterly dislocated. She did not know where she was; she was not entirely sure who she was' (Gaiman 2002: 47). At that moment Coraline feels displaced, and she does not know who she is or even where she is. She continues to struggle to hang to her sense of selfhood. She is fading from herself in the same way that the rest of the world is beginning to fade and only the house stands, she is losing herself in the other world. She will only continue to disappear, if she does not accept the idea of growth and development. She struggles 'to remember who she was, and what her name was, and that she was even there at all' (Gaiman 2002: 47). What this quote reveals, is that after having spent the night in the other house, Coraline's sense of identity is greatly affected by the atmosphere there. She struggles to remember who she is, her name which is important factor when Coraline defines herself, and the fact that she has even entered the domain of the other house.

If you remain a child, then your life will only ever be inside the house and you will never be able venture beyond the garden. This is what is happening to her psychology, she realises intuitively that if she does accept the idea of growing then she will fade into nothing as a person. The nothingness frightens her and the blackness of the buttons is the other side of the whiteness beyond the house and is like a mist in itself, and it something that prevents you from developing and growing.

The black buttons for eyes indicate that character is a double of someone living in the real world. Coraline poses the question that perhaps the reader has been thinking about, too. Is Coraline's double living within the space of the other house? 'Was there an other Coraline? No, she decided, there wasn't. There was just her', but the reader is left to wonder could there possibly be Coraline's double walking around (Gaiman 2002: 47). There are of course many

doubles of the characters in the text, all of them have black buttons for eyes and have joined the other mother's crusade to make children her puppets.

Doppelgangers exist within the pages of *Coraline*. According to Emma Samuelsson in “A Psychological Approach to the Wicked Women in Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland* and Neil Gaiman’s *Coraline*”, a theme closely connected with the uncanny and the other mother has to be the doppelgänger or double and the notion that the double/doppelgänger could have 'similar traits, manners and thoughts' is terrifying for anyone to imagine (cf. Samuelsson 2013: 8). The doppelgänger exists within the dream world and is linked to death, as to see your doppelgänger is to bring you closer to the realm of death. This connects the other mother, who is Coraline's real mother's doppelgänger, but also Coraline's and this leads [...] to both the uncanny and the looming feeling of darkness and destruction' (Samuelsson 2013: 8). The other mother creates a world though the other house with an uncanny resemblance to the real world.

The question of whether the other house exists continues throughout the novel. The cat explains to Coraline that there is '[n]othing to find here, [...] This is just the outside, the part of the place *she* hasn't bothered to create.' 'She?' 'The one who says she's your other mother' (Gaiman 2002: 50). It is becoming more and more obvious to Coraline that the other house is not real and is the creation of the other mother. Although the other mother has created an replica world for Coraline, a world has many minute details that help create and define it. Just like, there are gaps in the narrative, there will also be gaps within the other mother's world as it would be impossible to recreate an entire world, completely. The more we notice the gaps in reality, the more we become convinced that the other house is just a figment of Coraline's imagination.

Exploration of the other house only leads Coraline to nowhere. When Coraline goes exploring in the other house, the other father comments that there is '[n]o point.' [...] 'There isn't anywhere but here. This is all she made: the house, the grounds, and the people in the house. She made it and she waited' (Gaiman 2002:49). The other mother has created the world that Coraline is standing in, but there is only so much that she has created for Coraline. If the other house is a figment of Coraline's imagination, through the guise of the other mother, then is understandable that only the house and garden exist. As she is a child and cannot imagine a world beyond the garden.

Entering the other house for Coraline is like entering the other's womb. There is no outside or anywhere else to venture, as only the other mother's world exists for Coraline to explore here. The womb is the place of origin for us all and it is place that we long to return to, but it offers no space for growth and development. The womb is place where we imagine that we felt safe and secure from the world, we long to return to this safe place, where life was much simpler for us. It is this simple but safe place, we wish to find again. Somewhere we can crawl into and forget our troubles. If Coraline stays within the womb, then she will just get smaller and smaller until there is nothing left. What she needs is to grow outwards, as she explores the world and learns from what she experiences. The other mother represents one of the biggest challenges for her, as she represents the darkest space of Coraline's imagination.

The world is beginning to fade as the patches through to reality are beginning to show.
For Coraline

[i]t was not damp, like a normal fog or mist. It was not cold and it was not warm. It felt to Coraline like she was walking into nothing . I'm an explorer thought Coraline to herself. And I need all the ways out of here that I can get. So I shall keep walking. The world she was walking through was a pale nothingness, like a blank sheet of paper or an enormous, empty white room. It had no temperature, no smell, no texture and no taste. 'It certainly isn't mist,' thought Coraline, although she did not know what it was. For a moment she wondered if she might have gone blind. But no, she could see herself plain as day. There was no ground beneath her feet, just a misty, milky whiteness.

(Gaiman 2002: 50)

As this quote reveals, the reality is beginning to shine through as the power of the other mother's world is fading, as Coraline can see the gaps in the narrative map shining through right before her eyes. The other mother has only created places she believes Coraline will visit, she does not expect the explorer within her to be stronger than the perfect world she tries to create. Coraline is also presented with the limitations of her imagination, the other mother is a figment of her imagination gone wild and nothing is real in this world, not even the mist as Coraline thinks this as she feels like she is 'walking into nothing' (Gaiman 2002: 50). The other mother's world is cracking as Gaiman creates the feeling that world is as fragile as

'blank sheet of paper' it has been created on (Gaiman 2002: 50). Coraline raises her doubts about the world as she states that it felt like '[...] she was walking through [...] a pale nothingness' (Gaiman 2002: 50). Coraline wonders if the world that the other mother created is going to vanish into a bright white light.

In this scene, Gaiman has created the feeling of 'nothingness', the true nature of the world is revealed to Coraline during her exploration of it as she enters an 'empty white room' where nothing exists and, more importantly, nothing is real (Gaiman 2002: 50). It feels as if the world is disintegrating right before Coraline's eyes, she questions whether she is going blind, '[b]ut no, she could see herself plain as day', so she knows that she exists however, '[t]here was no ground beneath her feet, just a misty, milky whiteness' (Gaiman 2002: 50). Gaiman employs the colour white a lot to describe how whitewashed and over exposed the world has become. The existence of the world is as fragile as a white 'sheet of paper' and it would not take much for this world to disintegrate into nothing (Gaiman 2002: 50).

The reference to a 'blank sheet of paper', reminds the reader of the blank sheet of paper before the writer has begun to write, which takes you back to before *Coraline* existed and it was only a blank sheet of paper (Gaiman 2002: 50). Perhaps this moment is offering Coraline a chance to rewrite her story to change its direction, as the narrative map reflects the protagonist's deepest and darkest emotions, through this being reflected in the architecture and grounds that surround her. However, as the truth behind the other mother's world is being reflected out into the open, her world is fading and so is her control over Coraline.

Coraline is seeking many things in the mist. She is going exploring but as she searches for herself through the mist, the more she becomes lost and loses parts of her identity. She loses her individuality, as she becomes just another one of other mother's children lost in the mist. This echoes the previous incident where she walks around in the mist in the actual world. Throughout the novel Coraline tries to explore where she has been placed. There appears to be a nothingness creeping into both worlds, but more so in the other world. She fears that her exploration will lead her nowhere and that she will be consumed by the nothingness. She fears being stunted by this nothingness, but at the same time she fears growth as this may lead her to places that are unfamiliar to her.

She is an explorer and she wants to explore to further her development but she fears exploration at the same time, as it may uncover things that she might rather remain hidden within. There is this conflict with her that influences her exploration of the world. Coraline

discovers through the mist that the world that the other mother has created for her has begun to fade, the stronger and more determined Coraline becomes to beat her the more faded and less world-like it becomes.

Gaiman's description of the house changes from something that is exactly like her real home to something that is much darker and threatening.

Something began to appear in front of them, something high and towering and dark.
[...] And then it took shape in the mist: a dark house, which loomed at them out of the formless whiteness.

(Gaiman 2002:51)

This description employed by Gaiman introduces the reader to the darker side of the other house, as the true form of its existence is revealed to Coraline. She even questions what she is seeing, the cat replies that is the 'house you just left' (Gaiman 2002: 51). It is through this that the reader comes to realise that the narrative map has changed, as Coraline's state of mind has changed and she is beginning to become frightened by what she sees and is becoming even more lost in the other universe. This shows that the other universe does not really work, as most things that are just a copy of the original, as Coraline questions what she sees because she no longer believes them to be real.

The Gothic landscape is changing along with Coraline's state of mind. According to Howarth, it can be said that through the eyes of Coraline and in the novel that the more the Gothic landscape presents itself as dangerous, the more frightened she becomes. However, it becomes 'less defined and pronounced', when she begins to defeat the other mother. Through Coraline retrieving the three marbles, which are keeping the souls of the other children captive, the more the Gothic landscape turns into something 'childlike and imaginary, assuming the characteristics of a painting sketch'. The forever changing landscape symbolises a growing development within Coraline (cf. Howarth 2014: 82).

Through each marble Coraline finds, it weakens the other mother and the other world. The landscape, 'which once seemed ominous and threatening, now transforms into an innocent figment of Coraline's imagination, one that has tamed and controlled with her emerging productivity' (Howarth 2014: 82). As this quote suggest, with Coraline's emerging productivity, she continues to grow in strength, as she changes from a vulnerable child into a

more a capable adolescent. With this she learns how to control her imagination and, therefore change her situation but she is still trapped in the other world.

Coraline is trapped in other world, going round in circles searching for an exit from her identity crisis. Coraline is 'trapped in repetitious time [...] and pointless circles [of] [...] activities Coraline has experienced above ground. Coraline has been cycling throughout the novel, but pointlessly (Blackford 2012: 216)'. As revealed by this quote, Coraline has descended into the underworld as she finds herself in place that is homely, but at the same time is not. She finds herself trapped in a 'repetitious time' going around in pointless circles forever to repeat the same activities, like walking in the mist. All of the tasks that Coraline is involved in throughout the novel lead back to the same place she started from.

Coraline has been travelling around in pointless circles within the novel. A circular movement is associated with the other house. With Coraline's real home there is a way out, she can explore and test boundaries. But, within the other mother's realm there is no outside on the circularity and with it no exit from the other world. As previously stated, entering the other house is like crawling into the other mother's womb, there is no exit or hope for growth within there. Therefore, the mist and circularity is the opposite of what Coraline needs, she needs to grow linear and have room for development. If Coraline remains lost within the house, she runs the risk of becoming permanently trapped there.

With each viewing of the house for Coraline, it is changing form, becoming less distinct and real, as the inside and outside dynamics of the house continue to disturb the borders of reality that haunt the pages of this novel. Coraline

[...] reached the steps on the outside of the building. Coraline had time to observe that the house itself was continuing to change, becoming less distinct and flattening out, even as she raced down the stairs. It reminded her of a photograph of a house now, not the thing itself.

(Gaiman 2002: 83)

It is interesting that when Coraline views the building from the outside it appears to be more like a shell than a home, as the space is changing along with Coraline's state of mind, the longer she remains in the other world, the more she must resist the charms of it. Although, the charm she once felt has well and truly faded, the truth about the world becomes more exposed

to Coraline. The house is losing its hold over Coraline as it is becoming less 'distinct and flattening out', it is as if the world is becoming undone due to lack of faith (Gaiman 2002: 83). The house is becoming more like a photograph, than a house really. The house becomes less threatening and more child-like the stronger that Coraline becomes.

In *Coraline*, the other house represents her deepest and darkest fears. The true nature of the space is exposed as the house morphs and changes into its darker self, and this is revealed to Coraline as she sees the house's true form through the mist. The other mother's impression is crumbling, but Coraline as the protagonist only becomes stronger as the other mother grows weaker.

Outside the world had become a formless, swirling mist with no shapes or shadows behind it, while the house itself seemed to have twisted and stretched. It appeared to Coraline that it was crouching and staring down at her, as if it were not really a house but only the idea of a house – and the person who had had the idea, she was certain, was not a good person. [...] The grey windows of the house slanted at strange angles.

(Gaiman 2002: 71)

Gaiman utilises the presentation of the house and the surrounding mist to create a misshapen face that appears to be 'crouching and staring down at' Coraline. It is clear to Coraline that the house and its inhabitants are not real, and are only the creation of the other mother. The house represents the idea of a house, a twisted interpretation of a house that haunts Coraline and the reader. Gaiman's imagery of a house that closely resembles a misshapen human-like face, which Coraline struggles to look at as the 'grey windows of the house slanted at strange angles', which could represent the eyes of the other mother as she watches Coraline from inside the house.

The space of the house continues to change. It 'had flattened out even more. It no longer looked like a photograph – more like a drawing, a crude, charcoal scribble of a house drawn on grey paper' (Gaiman 2002: 85). The more that Coraline chooses to not believe in the realm that the other mother has created, the more it begins to fade into nothing as it has gone from looking like a photograph to just like a drawing. It can be thought that is possibly

Coraline drawing, and this whole world is just figment of her imagination run wild through the guise of the other mother. Coraline must escape the other house.

3.7. Escaping the Other House

The house in *Coraline* represents the human mind and is separated into different sections to represent different parts of protagonist's mind. These parts also shows the state of mind of the protagonist and how this changes throughout the story. Whereas,

[i]n the attic, the day's experiences can always efface the fears of the night. In the cellar, darkness prevails both day and night, and even when we are carrying a candle, we see shadows dancing on the dark walls.

(Bachelard 1958:19)

As this quote indicates, the attic represents a place, where fears go to be effaced and rationalised, whereas the cellar is always surrounded by darkness that only enhances and adds to our irrational self. This connects to Coraline as she must explore the rational and irrational parts of her mind to gain a more refined and deeper understanding of who she is in the world. It is somewhere between rationality and irrationality that she will find her true self, therefore, ending her childhood identity crisis.

To continue to exist within the other world means belonging to the other mother. This '[...]' means that Coraline will be objectified and lose her identity, as illustrated by the big black buttons that the Other Mother wants to sew onto the girl's eyes' (Howarth 2014: 86). As this quote suggest, Coraline will become nothing but a mere object to the other mother and in the process lose her identity by removing her eyes the gateway to the soul, and replacing them with plastic man-made buttons. For in the other mother's world there is no room for personal development or growth, everyone has to be the same and follow the rules of that world.

The other house in *Coraline* becomes a place which inhabits her fears, so she sets out to slay her dragon, and free the hostages from the other mother. There are many levels to the plot structure in *Coraline*. It can be said that '[t]he plot structure in *Coraline* revolves not only around the Gothic landscape and its influence on the story's characters, but also around the idea of games and challenges' (Howarth 2014: 93). As this quote suggests, there is more the plot of *Coraline* than the Gothic landscape and how this influences the characters within

the novel, but a link to challenges and games that require the protagonist to think outside the box.

The black cat returns to help Coraline slay her dragon. It is the black cat that suggests to Coraline that she '[c]hallenge her. There's no guarantee she'll play fair, but her kind of thing love games and challenges' (Gaiman 2002: 45). Through the black cats suggestion, Coraline finds a non-violent way to slay the dragon that is causing conflict in her life at that moment, as the other mother attempts to hold her captive in the other world. A game can be thought to be a time where children are given the chance to challenge adults in a fun way, therefore, allowing them to learn and grow as a person. However, the game about to be played between Coraline and the other mother is a challenge that could change her world forever. Coraline has to win the game or become '[...] a possession. A tolerated pet' (Gaiman 2002: 73). She needs to mean more to her mother than being a mere possession.

When Coraline finally challenges the other mother to a game, she puts all of her eggs in one basket. She offers if she should lose, then 'I'll stay here with you for ever and I'll let you love me. I'll be the most dutiful daughter [...] And I'll let you sew your buttons into my eyes' (Gaiman 2002: 62). The other mother agrees but then asks '[a]nd if you do not lose?' 'Then you let me go. You let everyone go' (Gaiman 2002: 62). There are many types of games in the world, but Coraline and the other mother agree on an exploring game and if she wins then she wins back her parents and the souls of the children behind the mirror. Coraline sets out to save not only herself but the other children, too. She does this because she sees herself in the other children, as she could also have been seduced by the other and imprisoned behind the mirror, by freeing them Coraline releases them to progress to next stage of their life after death. The marbles take Coraline through her last journey through the Gothic landscape.

The marbles take on an important aspect within the novel, as they stand between Coraline and her freedom. Coraline must locate the marbles so that she can escape the house, we can think of Coraline has perhaps lost her marbles or even fears that if she remains in the house that she will do so. The marbles represent many things within the novel, but there is a great connection with sanity here, as Coraline risks losing herself and sanity should she have to remain in the other house. The locating of the marbles represents an acceptance within Coraline, as she begins to accept that she is growing up and will have to enter the insanity of the adult world.

The stone given to Coraline by her neighbours, offers a helping hand when she struggles to find what she is looking for. Coraline's connection with the real world is fading as she has become trapped in other world, however, [t]hrough the stone, the world was grey and colourless, like a pencil drawing' as the stone guides her towards finding what she seeks (Gaiman 2002: 66). The stone offers a connection to the real world, a space within the narrative map that Coraline is longing to return to, but also is becoming more ready to join as her psychology is changing to reflect her adolescent status.

This connection allows Coraline to put aside her fears and anxieties. Through this

she gains more confidence and becomes industrious (such as using the stone with a hole in it to find the marbles), she no longer needs to rely on childlike play and make-believe.

(Howarth 2014: 82)

As this quote indicates, Coraline is slowly moving from the space of childhood to that of an adolescent, she learns to rely on herself, and use the tools that are available in the world to her advantage. Through this she begins to grow as an individual. Coraline's identity before that scene in the novel has been constructed around her parents and the objects that she owns, but now she is able to use her own initiative to solve problems in her life, such as how to escape the other house.

In order to escape, Coraline must find her parents and the three souls of the other children, which takes her through the Gothic landscape. Coraline's search first takes her to her bedroom where all her toys are stored. Significantly, Coraline begins her journey looking for the souls in her bedroom, this can be thought of the first place a child will learn about themselves. A child's room offers a safe environment for her to grow and develop. In the other house, however, this space becomes somewhere where she must find the courage to continue with her plan of escape.

The toys in other house are alive. They

[...]had now crawled away to hide under the bed and the few toys that were left [...] were the kind of things you find at the bottom of toyboxes in the real world: forgotten objects, abandoned and unloved.

From this quote, we are given an insight into the reality of life for the toys in the other house. They are discarded, just like in the real world and create a parallel between the two houses. In a way, both houses need Coraline in order to awaken something within them that has been sleeping without the presence of a child. The toys represent every child's fantasy that they are actually come alive, and are able to interact with them on a more intimate level. This enhances the uncanny atmosphere of the novel, as the world separating the dynamics of the animate and inanimate objects becomes open. Again this connection with the uncanny reminds us that Coraline is present in the realm of the unhomely, and must escape if she is to keep her identity.

On Coraline's search for the marbles, she comes across the theatre which on her first visit had been a bright and vibrant place for her other neighbours. 'Coraline stumbled into the dark room beyond. [...] There was nothing there. The room was dark. The theatre was empty' (Gaiman 2002: 67). The nothingness is something which Coraline dreads and only finds more as it permeates the novel on many levels. Having 'stumbled in the darkroom beyond' Coraline has entered a space within the novel that represents the imagination of the past, and she has moved beyond this dark space for new a stage of her development.

There is nothing there as Coraline will have to transform her imagination into something new that she can use in the adult world, the theatre of her childhood is now empty and will have to be modified in order to fit in with her adult self. The theatre of her childhood self is a place within us, not only within Coraline but inside each one of us. It is a place where during are childhood our imagination lives and makes our world come alive, but as we grow older this place becomes empty and eventually will house our childhood memories.

Childhood is not a stage in life that ever ends. It merely changes as we learn from our experiences, they mould and shape the person we will become. The theatre is now 'derelict and abandoned' as Coraline stumbles further into the other world in her search for the marbles (Gaiman 2002: 67). The old derelict theatre could represent that time in a child's life, where they leave the space of the imaginary behind, as they no longer use childlike or make believe play anymore. When children stop putting on imaginary shows with their dolls and other inanimate objects and move beyond that part of their life for something more real. Perhaps, we all have a derelict theatre somewhere within the space of our minds, we all have had to let

go of the imaginary to embrace the real world. This whole other world, including the derelict theatre can be viewed as part of the imaginary that Coraline has created within her mind. It is a difficult time for child to let go of childhood and move forward into the space of adolescence.

Coraline again employs the power of the stone with a hole in it, to help her find the next marble. It can be said that '[t]he stone reveals the truths about Coraline's new surroundings' as the stone creates connection to reality, and brings a dose of it to the other world, which helps Coraline find the marbles (Howarth 2014: 98). Coraline must look through the stone to find the marbles, therefore, she sees her surroundings in a new light as both positive and negative aspects of the environment are highlighted.

Through the stone, Coraline locates the next marble, and '[w]hatever was glowing was being held in one of the hands of the thing on the wall' (Gaiman 2002: 68). Coraline finds the marble in the hand of something that resembles '[...] the younger versions Miss Spink and Miss Forcible, but twisted and squeezed together, like two lumps of wax that had melted together into one ghastly object' (Gaiman 2002: 69). Coraline reclaims the marble after facing a twisted version of her other neighbours. This is a terrifying experience for Coraline, as she finds people that she knows corrupted and changed by the other world. This only adds to her anxiety as she is confronted again with her possible fate, if she remains in the other house. Through her experiences in the other house, she is changing as she faces her darkest fears and anxieties about losing her identity and being twisted into something that she is not.

After escaping the theatre with two of the marbles, Coraline finds the other mother waiting for her. Coraline informs the other mother that she has two of the marbles and she replies '[t]hank you, Coraline,' [...] and her voice did not just come from her mouth. It came from the mist, and the fog, and the house, and the sky' (Gaiman 2002: 71). The other mother is connected to every aspect of this world and is watching Coraline closely, even the house appears to be '[...]crouching and staring down at her, as if it were not really a house but only the idea of a house' (Gaiman 2002: 71). The other mother appears to be returning to where she came from, and the power of the world that she created is fading, Coraline grows stronger as she locates the marbles housing the souls of the children. The other mother is slowly fading into a figment of Coraline's imagination and does not seem as real as before.

In order for Coraline to progress further, she must possess the key to the house. The other mother has the key and '[...] reached up her hand and removed a small, brass, front-door

key from her tongue' (Gaiman 2002: 73). The key comes from inside the other mother and is connected to her, and what lies inside the house also connects her which leads Coraline to the centre of the other world. Inside, '[...] there was no furniture in there, only places where furniture had once been' (Gaiman 2002: 74). The place is so silent that this surprises Coraline. She has arrived at the centre of the world, where there exists a house that the other mother appears to have forgotten.

At the centre of this world, Coraline finds an empty house, which is full of empty rooms and more nothingness that she dreads. Within these rooms, there is a lack of colour or any indication that were a part of someone's world. At the very centre of this world, there is a lack of emotion, only emptiness can be found there. Coraline wanders through the empty kitchen, bathroom, and bedroom exploring the deepest realms of this world. In this world, there is no holy grail for Coraline to find, there is nothing but nothingness and self-annihilation at the centre of this world. The closer that Coraline looks at this world, the more she realises that this world lacks an emotional centre and is only a replica of the real thing.

Gaiman takes us to the dark part of the house. Coraline's exploration of the other house, takes her to the cellar, which as previously stated can be thought to be 'the dark entity of the house, the one that partakes in subterranean forces' (Bachelard 1958: 18). As Bachelard states the cellar can be viewed as the dark past of the house, where things lurk beneath the surface of rationality, hiding in the darkness. Coraline finds a trapdoor in the cellar that goes down past the unconscious, into the darkest realm of human imagination. This is a metaphor for the human mind as within our mind, we all have a cellar where we banish things that we wish to forget. Just as we find within Coraline's mind.

Coraline continues her exploration of the house. 'Coraline put her hand into her pocket and took out the stone with the hole in it. She looked through it at the cellar but saw nothing' (Gaiman 2002: 74). The stone with the hole on it continues to guide Coraline through the other world, however, it is unable to show Coraline the truth about her environment here because she has entered a realm beyond her unconscious. Somewhere where only darkness exists and nothing else, as Coraline is told that '[t]here is nothing down here, said the pale thing, indistinctly. Nothing but dust and damp and forgetting' (Gaiman 2002: 75). This is very significant, as yet again Gaiman refers to a nothing that appears to be consuming parts of the other house.

Coraline has reached the space within the house, where things go to be forgotten and hidden. Coraline 'looked around: the thing that had once been the other father was between her and the steps up and out of the cellar' (Gaiman 2002:76). The cellar can be viewed as the irrational part of the house, where Coraline's worst nightmares are housed within the unconscious. Coraline fears nothingness. She is afraid that she will become nullified and disappear in sense, lose herself in the nothing. It is through her imagination that Coraline is able to create something out of nothing, just as she does in the shop through the aliens.

Coraline's nightmare becomes real, as she experiences her other father in a pitiful, but frightening state that no child should ever witness. When Coraline is attacked by her the other father, her worst fears are confirmed in the cellar and '[i]t was so heavy that [...] she was sure she would be trapped down in the darkness for ever' (Gaiman 2002: 74) These fears include that she might not escape from the other house, and that the other mother has complete control over almost everything in that world as no one can 'fight her' as she appears to be too strong (Gaiman 2002; 76).

In this scene, Coraline does not do the child-like thing and run away, but turns to face her fear and she '[...] put out her hand and closed it around the thing's remaining button-eye, and she tugged, as hard as she knew' removing it from the creatures face (Gaiman 2002: 77). The removal of the black button-eye symbolises that Coraline is no longer blinded to the dark side of the other house, and that she can see things more clearly than before. Coraline escapes the cellar and locks the front door as she leaves, this represents her locking away all her childhood fears and moving onto a new part of her development.

Returning to the floors of the house. As Coraline '[...] reached the top of the steps. The topmost flat had once been the attic of house, but that was long ago' (Gaiman 2002:79). According to Bachelard, 'we always go up the attic stairs, which are steeper and more primitive. For they bear the mark of ascension to a more tranquil solitude', to a place where we feel secure to rationalise the situation that we find ourselves in (Bachelard 1958: 26). What this quote indicates is that we go upstairs to attic, we find a place that is more peaceful where we can rationalise and view the world from more complete perspective. In *Coraline*, she finds herself in the attic of house, where she rationalises her fears and anxieties and comes out stronger than before. It is within the space of the attic that Coraline comes to this rational conclusion that

[t]hese things – even the thing in the cellar – were illusions, things made by the other mother in a ghastly parody of the real people and real things on the other end of the corridor. She couldn't truly make anything, decided Coraline. She could only twist and copy and distort things that already existed.

(Gaiman 2002:81)

From this quote, we learn that Coraline is able to tell between what is real and what is not, and that the other mother has created a distorted copy of the world that already existed. The other mother is also partly an illusion and Coraline is beginning to see this, too. She is able to see through the space that imprisons her, and she sees that everything that surrounds her at that exact moment is nothing more than an illusion.

The attic offers Coraline new light on her situation. Somewhere '[...]in that dark flat with the roof so low where it met the walls that Coraline could almost reach up and touch it' as if she is apart of this room and coming closer to the rational part of herself (Gaiman 2002: 81). This offers Coraline a new perspective to expand the rational part of herself, in the attic Coraline rationalises all that she has seen in the house and pushes herself to continue, although she has been quite frightened along the way. The final room is a bedroom, where we spend one third of our lives. The bedroom connects to the dream world and the unconscious, these spaces we enter while we sleep.

We see here that there are still challenges in attic that she must overcome. She hears the voice of the old man telling her '[s]tay here with us. [...] Your mother will build whole worlds for you to explore, and tear them down every night when you are done' (Gaiman 2002: 82). Coraline, however, is stronger from being able to rationalise her situation in the attic, and is able to resist the old man as she states that 'I don't *want* whatever I want. Nobody does. Not really. What kind of fun would it be if I just got everything I ever wanted? Just like that, and it didn't *mean* anything. What then?' (Gaiman 2002: 82). Coraline comes to a very grown up conclusion there and one that most people come to understand as they grow into adults. That she cannot have everything that she wants, this would leave nothing left over for the imagination. Coraline is developing through her experience in the other house and learning about herself in the process. She realises that her imagination is not something that she has to leave behind in childhood, but she can take it with her into adulthood as the world would be

empty without the power of this. She will also need her imagination to conquer the beast within.

3.8. Conclusion – Conquering the Beast within

Coraline must now face the other mother. When she returns she finds that

[o]nce inside, in her flat, or rather, in the flat that was not hers, Coraline was pleased to see that it had not transformed into the empty drawing that the rest of the house seems to have become. It had depth and shadows [...]

(Gaiman 2002: 87)

Coraline has entered the space of the other mother, where she is at her strongest and continues on her quest to make Coraline a slave. This room could represent the womb of the other mother, as she still feels in control and does not feel her power slipping. The black cat is with Coraline and is her only connection now with the outside world, he is but a fragment left of rationality, the cat represents part of the attic that is there to help Coraline rationalise the other world. They have returned to where it all started, the drawing room, as Coraline has ventured through the house which has turned into a labyrinth type of space, and she must return to where it all began to face the other mother before she can return home to the real world.

Within this moment, Coraline must secure her escape from the other world. This is the moment that 'Coraline knew. The moment of truth. The unravelling time', as the reality of her situation hits home (Gaiman 2002: 88). This is the moment when the whole story unravels and Coraline must use all her wits and understanding of this other world, in order to escape. Coraline realises that the other mother had no intention of letting her and everyone go free. Another thing springs into Coraline's mind as she realises that

[t]he other mother did not look anything at all like her real mother. She wondered how she had even been deceived into imagining a resemblance. The other mother was huge – her head almost brushed the ceiling – and very pale, the colour of a spider's belly. Her hair writhed and twined about her head, and her teeth were as sharp as knives...

(Gaiman 2002: 88)

This description of the other mother, reveals to Coraline just how unhomely the other mother is. The other mother wants to devour Coraline as Gaiman's horrifying description makes it clear to her, that the other mother always represented danger and nothing more. Coraline and the other mother continue to play the game as she has three of the marbles, but still needs to find her parents and trick the other mother into thinking that she has won the game. The other mother is tricked into opening the door to the real universe and then as 'hard as she could, she threw the black cat towards the other mother', this gives Coraline the opportunity to escape down the corridor to the real world as she does so, she grabs the snowglobe that her parents are imprisoned within (Gaiman 2002: 89).

The black key opens the doorway between worlds. In the novel, 'it also symbolises the unlocking of Coraline's mind' as she has been able to travel from the space of childhood to a new space in her life, being an adolescent (Howarth 2014: 97). As this quote suggests, Coraline has begun the process of unlocking her mind through the power of the key, and finding her way through the Gothic landscape has brought Coraline to a better understanding of herself and helped her accept that she is growing up.

When Coraline returns home to the real world, she is under the assumption that she is safe and the ordeal is over, but the hand belonging to the other mother is trapped in her reality and it is seeking the black key that Coraline has in her possession. The danger that continues to lurk 'from the fantasy world to the real world is yet another reminder that the process of identity formation never quite ends' (cf. Howarth 2014: 98). Even as we age, reminders from our childhood continue to haunt us and impact on our lives, greatly. Coraline's journey from childhood to being adolescent is a rocky one, as she has had to travel the Gothic landscape and face some of her worst fears in order to progress on to the next stage of her development.

The other mother continues to have a hold over Coraline through the key and her hand. According to Howarth, it is a reasonable assumption that the other mother, who wishes to possess the black key as she represents Coraline's 'subconscious and imagination'. This black key represents Coraline's mind being unlocked and the ideas required to help unravel identity formation, in order for her to gain a better understanding of her place in the world. The other mother wishes to keep Coraline captive by retrieving the key as having control over the doorway, means having control over Coraline's mind, 'the gateway between imagination and reality' (cf. Howarth 2014: 98). The black key and the hand represent things that are left over

from our childhood that still haunt us in adulthood, and remind us of time when we were more vulnerable. But, in order for Coraline to move onto the next phase of her life, she has to find a way to eradicate the hand that still haunts her from the other world.

Coraline traps the other mother's hand, along with key in the dark well. This symbolises Coraline isolating and putting to rest her childhood fears and anxieties as they no longer hold any sort of power over her. There is always the chance that the hand may escape from the well, but this also represents that she no longer has her fears hanging over her head. They do, however, still exist and left unchecked could return to haunt her later. However, should Coraline's fears return, she now has the tools and weapons that she discovered while wandering the Gothic landscape, that has 'enhanced Coraline's intellect and given her the ability to create logical ideas that she can put into productive action' (Howarth 2014: 99). The Gothic landscape has given Coraline the tools that she needs in order to advance to the next level of her development, and allowed her to move from the childhood space to the growing space of adolescent..

Through the Gothic landscape, Gaiman has created a world that transports the reader to new space within the narrative map. Through this, Gaiman has been able to communicate the story of Coraline and her journey from the space of childhood to the space of a productive adolescent. Coraline represents the child that we all once were, the journey we have to take through the Gothic landscape and though the house that represents our mind. Gaiman has created a space that changes with every reading as we enter Coraline's world, and follow her through some tough challenges that in many ways we all have to face at some point in our lives.

Before Coraline can move onto the next stage of her development she must say goodbye to the other children and let them go. The marbles are broken and '[w]hatever had been inside the glass spheres had gone. Coraline thought of the three children waving goodbye to her in the moonlight, waving before they crossed that silver stream' (Gaiman 2002: 101). As this quote suggests, Coraline has a moment with the other children as they wave goodbye to her and move on to somewhere beyond the other house. When Coraline sees the other children again she is in a much better place in her life, and has finally come to terms with growing up. This part of the story is significant as it shows that Coraline is ready to let go and move on to the next part of her story, she no longer needs to prolong her childhood.

The story ends with Coraline entering a new year at school, and this fits with all the changes that have taken place inside her. She now has the tools and strategies to cope with her ever changing landscape that the Gothic landscape has given her to cope with in the world. According to Howarth, for readers, Coraline stands out and reminds us that the other mother is a debilitating force but a much needed one in our ever changing development. The story of Coraline reminds us that we can defeat our inner other mother, 'if only we have the courage to explore those Gothic landscapes that lie hidden within the darkest recesses of our minds' (cf. Howarth 2014: 99). We all have inner demons that we must defeat, and through the exploration of our own Gothic landscape, we can also be like Coraline, and use the power of our imagination.

4. The Secret Garden and the Power of Healing

4.1. Introduction

Frances Hodgson Burnett published *The Secret Garden* in 1911 and it is now considered to be a children's classic novel and has been adapted onto stage as well as into many film adaptations. *The Secret Garden* has received a lot attention for over a century and is a significant work from the twentieth century. According to Christine Wilkie in "Digging up The Secret Garden: Noble Innocents or Little Savages?", *The Secret Garden* can also be read as 'paean' that connects with nature, a child is taken into 'healing and restorative relationships' that helps restore balance to the novel (cf. Wilkie 1997: 1). It restores balance to the novel that without these healing aspects would be very bleak at a time when society needed more light, as the world was gearing up for war at this time.

In *The Secret Garden*, we find a world that is reflection of our own from one hundred years ago. Times have changed as has society in many ways, but *The Secret Garden* explores issues that are still as relevant today as they were at the beginning of the twentieth century. These issues include the formation and structure of the family, and how our perception of self as a child is reflected through our relationships with our parents. When this relationship is damaged or disrupted, it can greatly affect how a child views the world and herself, as we see

in both Mary and Colin. Through a nurturing and a caring environment a child can grow, and develop into a healthy and functioning adult.

In the novel, we are introduced to the protagonist Mary Lennox, a young girl who is described as having 'a little thin face and little thin body, thin light hair and a sour expression [...] and had always been ill in one way or another' (Burnett 1911: 1). Mary is raised in India by servants because her parents were too busy living their own lives. There is a connection here with *Coraline* as the parents in both novels neglect and ignore their child, in order to fulfil their own direction in life. Mary is taken to England after her parents die in a Cholera epidemic to live with her uncle Archibald Craven, who she has never met and will remain absent throughout most of the novel. Mary's parents again abandon her through death and leave her alone in the world. In England, she is also abandoned by her uncle and is taken care of again by servants. Mary must explore the world alone and has no one to guide her through the dark times of winter to the light of spring, this she must do alone.

Burnett's writing creates a narrative map that continues to expand the longer the reader continues to read the novel. The narrative map consists of a tangled web of mazes that are constructed from a manor and the gardens that are surrounded by the moor, an everlasting presence that haunts the pages of the novel. The different aspects of the landscape represent different aspects of protagonist's mind, as we journey with her through these different aspects. The manor represents the human mind and shows how the protagonist has to explore the self in order to expand, and be able to grow as a person. It is not possible for Mary to find the key to the secret garden, without having explored the aspects of the self first. The locked garden represents the personal growth outside the self, as Mary comments that she 'is growing fatter' [...] 'and I'm growing stronger', from the power of the garden and the moor (Burnett 1911: 120). These two different aspects of space impact on the protagonist, greatly, and change her outlook on life as a whole. Through her contact with the garden and the exploration of the self through the house, we begin to see a different side to Mary, who is not sick but going stronger by the day.

In this chapter, there will be an investigation into how Mary interacts and explores the garden, the house, and the moor within the novel and how they influence her identity formation. Through these interactions we will gain an understanding into how these different areas are metaphors for the self, and through exploration of these areas the self awareness within Mary is awakened. There will be focus on how Mary explores the world she has been

placed through the seasons; winter and spring to show the the transformation that she goes through in order to get to that place of healing.

Firstly, we will look at Mary's arrival at the house and her exploration of the house and the rooms within it. Through an analysing the house and the moors as an extension of the house, we will be able to interpret Mary's state of mind and how this effects her search for her identity within its walls. Secondly, we will look at the relationship between Mary and Colin, in comparison with the house and the garden, and how they represent the feminine and masculine binary that exists within the story. Thirdly, we will analyse Mary finding the key and opening up locked garden and how this effects her development within the story, as the healing process begins.

The secret garden is a place within the novel that is filled with childhood innocence, it is also a safe place within childhood that in adulthood we long to return to. The secret garden is a symbol for a place that we all carry within ourselves. It is because it is safe there and sheltered from the reality of the world that we spend our lives searching for it. That is, how space (house and garden) and time (seasons) are both part of the narrative map that leads the imagination of the reader to questions of healing and exploration of the self.

There will also be a focus on how the garden represents the feminine aspect of power, while the house represents the masculine aspect of power. The purpose of this is to investigate the roles of masculine and feminine symbolism in the novel, as it seems that only when the feminine and the masculine aspects are reunited as one can balance return to the world of Misselthwaite. There was a time when the two aspects were united, but they were separated after the death of Mrs Craven, as Mr Craven locked the garden away.. These two aspects are based on the stereotypical views of what the masculine and feminine aspects represented in the Victorian period. Society needs both the masculine and the feminine elements in order to be whole, and to remain balanced on the inside and outside. This structure asserts that nature (the garden) is the mother, while culture is the father (the house). Inside a house, we find safety from the wind and the threatening nature outside, moreover, a house offers safety but no warmth, which is to be found in the garden.

The house is a powerful image in the novel, but sometimes all that lies behind the walls of a house is emptiness. Phyllis Bixler in "Gardens, Houses, and Nurturant Power in The Secret Garden" argues that Burnett portrays that

[...] large houses remain images of economic, primarily patriarchal, power. However, these romances also suggest that if houses are not filled with nurturant power they are essentially empty; they are not really homes

(Bixler 1991: 215)

As this quote suggests, large houses creates certain images within society of economic and patriarchal power. For a home not to be empty, it must be able to receive nurturant power, otherwise it is not really a home, but an empty shell. The nurturant power comes from the people, who live within the house and make it their home. This connects to *The Secret Garden* as the house to begin with appears to be empty and is not really a home to the inhabitants. The house offers shelter, but no warmth to the characters. The Gothic house can be thought to be an empty shell that the protagonist becomes lost within.

The Secret Garden centres around a Gothic house. The figure of the moor that surrounds the house haunts the pages of the novel enhances the Gothic atmosphere of the book. The manor that is situated on the edge of the moor, is constructed of many labyrinth type passageways that consume and disorient Mary. According to the Introduction in *The Gothic in Children's Literature: Haunting the Borders* (2008),

The Gothic [...] is often a place, very often a house, haunted by a past that remains present. As a child grows, more and more experiences, good and bad, displace into memory, forming the intricate passages where bits of his or her past get lost, only to re-emerge at unexpected times.

(Introduction 2008: 4)

As this quotes suggests, a Gothic story is often set in a house, where the past continues to burden the characters in the present. As a child develops and experiences more of the world, these memories that she forms will be placed within her memory. Which will create these passageways that her past memories will get lost within, and will resurface at an unforeseen moments. The events that take place within the novel centre round the Gothic house, which is haunted by past events that continue to affect the inhabitants. Mary's journey begins with death, and this takes her to a house in England that is consumed with sadness over the death

of the lady of the house. For Mary, the house also implicitly contains the deaths of her parents, and their ghosts haunt the pages of the novel.

The more that Mary explores the house, the more her memories become displaced and lost within the manor. Only somewhere inside the house will she find answers. The more Mary experiences the intricate passages of the manor, the more she becomes lost within herself and seeks to find a place where she can mourn the loss of her childhood innocence. The secrets of the house remain locked behind the doors of the manor, as do parts of Mary and her development. Mary's surroundings in the beginning offer no growth or development, everything appears to be trapped in a wintry type spell. Through Mary's exploration of the house, she begins to explore herself and many things about herself will be revealed to the reader.

Through Mary's arrival at the house, balance will eventually be restored to the Misselthwaite. Mary emerges with winter and in the process brings spring with her, as the once empty home begins to become a home to the characters in the space of the novel. At the start of the novel, Mary is truly lacking a home and finds herself within the empty walls of Misselthwaite manor, which she explores in order to find her home and a place in the world. According to Bixler, Burnett's portrayal of this manor owned by the Mr Craven, with hundreds of rooms which appear to be empty, the house is slowly brought back to life through the same entities that are regenerating the garden (cf. Bixler 1991: 217). However, the locked garden must wait as Mary must explore the house first.

4.2. Arriving at the House

In the novel, Mary has just moved from India to England to live with her uncle. At the beginning of the novel, Burnett incorporates many different landscapes into the novel that Mary must travel through in order to get to the house. Mary wonders as her displacement increases '[...] why she had never seemed to belong to anyone even when her mother and father were alive' (Burnett 1911: 14). These sad thoughts from a child enhance our understanding of Mary's displacement, and her confusion about where she has been placed. These thoughts emphasize how homeless and displaced Mary feels, it is basic human need to want a home and Mary is no different. According to Tally, [d]isplacement, perhaps more than a homely rootedness in place, underscores the critical importance of spatial relations in our

attempts to interpret [...] the world' (Tally 2013: 13). Through this analysis of displacement, we find that our perception of home is affected by displacement and this affects how we view and interrupt the world. Mary interprets being uprooted as a sign that 'she had never seemed to really be anyone's little girl' and her displacement in the world only increases the closer she comes to Misselthwaite (Burnett 1911: 14).

Mary travels through many many places on her journey to Misselthwaite. We, must follow the road signs provided by Burnett, as the narrative map of Mary's world expands as she comes closer to Misselthwaite. Mary wonders '[w]hat sort of place was it, what would he be like?' (Burnett 1911: 13). Mrs Medlock, who is the head housekeeper at Misselthwaite manor describes the house as being

six hundred years old, and it's on the edge of the moor, and there's near a hundred rooms in it, though most of them's shut up and locked. And there's pictures and fine old furniture and things that's been there for ages, and there's a big park round it and gardens and trees with branches trailing to the ground [...] [b]ut there's nothing else.

(Burnett 1911: 16)

The house has been around longer than the people living in it and has seen the start of many a new century. There are many locked doors, with secrets behind them of that have been forgotten by the inhabitants of the house. There is also a big park that surrounds the house cutting it off from the outside world, adding to the theme of loneliness running through the pages of *The Secret Garden* as in *Coraline*. It is stated in the novel that there is a house, the park, the moor, and 'nothing else'. Interestingly, the moor represents the 'nothing else', it is so vast and appears to be a never-ending entity that surrounds the house. 'Nothing else' seems to indicate that the moor is something that cannot be explained, and represents the nothingness that surrounds them and keeps them isolated.

This is also similar in *Coraline*, where there is only the house and the garden to explore, and a sense of nothing else beyond them. With these limited places to explore, it does not leave the protagonist far to explore and begin the process of development. This leaves the reader to wonder, if there is not something else past the borders of these imagined houses, and what would we find if the characters dared to go beyond the borders that imprison them. However, these boundaries are put into place to protect Mary and Coraline, they are both

children and require these boundaries to keep them safe. Young children are not ready to go beyond these boundaries, but as they grow and develop they will be able to cross these areas and see what is beyond them.

Mary travels to the house at night and finds '[...] a queer place' within the vastness of the overpowering moor (Burnett 1911: 16). The house is on 'the edge of the moor', creating an image that the house is on the edge of the world as if it appears out of nowhere (Burnett 1911: 16). It feels as if Mary has arrived somewhere completely isolated from time and society, there is nothing but

[...] the great expanse of dark apparently spread out before them and around them.
[...] it's just miles and miles and miles of wild land that nothing grows on [...] and nothing lives on.

(Burnett 1911: 23)

As this quote suggests, at night the moors appears to a place of pure isolation, and a wild entity where nothing appears to grow. The isolation of the moors creates an image of a space that will become a place of isolation for Mary as her '[...] cries are echoed in the house, figured as a marooned island and trapped in a "winter's tale"' (Blackford 2012: 135). In *The Secret Garden*, it does appear that the characters are trapped in a winter's tale, where they have been disconnected from the rest of the world. The moors act as a barrier from the rest of the world and the characters could be marooned on a 'desert island' somewhere, trapped within time (Burnett 1911: 265).

Even before Mary enters the grounds of Misselthwaite manor, she questions her surroundings. The reader follows Mary as she passes 'through the park gates [...] and the trees (which nearly met overhead) made it seem as if they were driving through a long dark vault' (Burnett 1911: 24). It could be thought that Mary has entered another reality because she has entered through a gateway that disconnects her from her current reality. Mary passes through 'a long dark vault', which leads her to a new house with endless rooms and passageways. The dark vault is similar to the hallway that connects the two houses in *Coraline*, it also brings Mary to another reality and disconnects her from the outside world. Mary's journey continues as

[t]hey drove out of the vault into a clear space and stopped before an immensely long but low-built house, which seemed to ramble round a stone court. [...] as she got out of the carriage she saw that one room in a corner upstairs showed a dull glow.

(Burnett 1911: 24)

As this quote reveals, Mary manages to pass through the dark vault and finds herself at an open space with an 'immensely long but low-built house' and it is as if the house is coming out of the ground. The house could seem to be appearing from within the imagination, as it appears to coming out of the ground and standing before Mary. There appears to be no one home but there is one window that 'showed a dull glow', signalling that someone knows of Mary's arrival. This glow in the window could suggest that although the house appears dead, there is still life within it.

Arriving at the house Mary passes through a doorway that takes her to a different life and world. Mary enters 'an enormous hall' that guides her to another part of the house, but the area is 'dimly lighted', so that the portraits and other things in the room become distorted. Most children have a fear of the dark and find it difficult to function when they cannot see things clearly, Mary is no different. The fact that she arrives at her new house at night and is guided through a doorway and hallway, offers some light on her state of mind as it changes from being comfortable with her surroundings to a fear of the unknown. Mary feels 'small and lost and odd' as she struggles to come to terms with her new environment (cf. Burnett 1911: 24).

Mary's new surrounding continue expand as the house takes on a labyrinth formation. She is

[...] led up a broad staircase and down a long corridor and up short flight of steps and through another corridor and another, until a door opened in a wall and she found herself in a room

(Burnett 1911: 25)

Mary is led through a confusing arrangement of corridors and staircases, and as she is brought through the house, she loses herself even more. Mary has no idea where exactly she is within the house, and this adds to the displacement she feels. She has been uprooted from the only

home she has ever known and taken to a place that is unfamiliar, and where '[...] strange things happened of which she knew nothing' (Burnett 1911: 5). At this point in the novel, Mary has just arrived at the house and the only thing she knows about her new surroundings is that it is big, dark and that she has been given a tiny space within the house.

The fact that her room is concealed within the wall reflects shows that she must become an invisible tenant. Mary is told that '[t]his room and the next are where you'll live – and you must keep to them. Don't you forget that!' (Burnett 1911: 25). She is expected to make herself invisible within the house, and this links to a Victorian attitude that children should be seen, but not heard. Mary must merge into the wall and be forgotten. Mary has very little space for growth and development as she is expected to remain within where they have placed her, but as we see with Coraline, curiosity overpowers Mary and she uses the first opportunity available to explore the inside and outside boundaries of the house.

4.3. Deciphering the House and the Moors

For children the house they live in becomes their whole world. As previously stated, Bachelard says that '[...] our house is our corner of the world. As has often been said, it is our first universe, a real cosmos in every sense of the word' (Bachelard 1958: 4). What this quote suggests is that our home often becomes the centre of our worlds. For a child it is his first universe that he will explore, and is universe with many possibilities. This is Mary's first home away from the only life she has known in India, and is a new universe for her to explore as the creation of her new life begins. The house becomes an '[i]maginary of withered nature and locked rooms' (Blackford 2012: 141). Therefore, the house for Mary becomes a puzzle that she must decipher, as she wanders from room to room looking for answers to her questions about who she is. This new universe for Mary opens many doors, but some of them also remained locked as she searches for herself within the walls of the manor.

Mary is given a small bedroom with an adjoining room within the manor to live in. According to Bachelard, '[a]ssociated with the nooks and corners of solitude [is] [...] the bedroom' (1958: 14). As this quote suggests, the bedroom is quite often connected to solitude and isolation within a house and this only isolates Mary further. Her bedroom is a concealed within '[...] a door [that] opened in a wall' and could be perceived to be a tiny nook within a house that contains endless rooms. Within Mary's tiny corner of solitude, she finds a place

that she can call her own, but it is still not hers as it belongs to the master of the house. Mary [...] had never seen a room at all like it, and thought it curious and gloomy', and she can feel the melancholic atmosphere inside the room (Burnett 1911: 26).

The gloomy feeling penetrates all aspects of the house. This connects to the description that is given to Mary when she is travelling to the house that it is 'a grand big place in a gloomy way' (Burnett 1911: 16). This description adds to Mary's overall impression of the house and this is only validated further, '[w]hen she opened her eyes in the morning' without the distortion of darkness (Burnett 1911: 26). Mary's room offers her shelter but no protection from the gloomy feeling that penetrates the house so deeply, in order to find something with more warmth, she must go beyond the small room that she has been placed in within the house.

Burnett has created a house that appears to be endless. The moors can be thought of as extension of the house and act as barrier protecting the house from outside influences. The moors represent an extension of the house by appearing to be a part of the house, as it surrounds it from every direction, and almost seems to be devouring it. The moors can be many things at once, and it all depends on how that person perceives it at that moment. In the morning Mary looks

[o]ut of a deep window she could see a great climbing stretch of land which seemed to have no trees on it, and to look rather like an endless, dull, purplish sea

(Burnet 1911: 26)

Mary questions what the moor is and how it appears to surround the house, like a sea and how it isolates the inhabitants of the house from the world.

To Mary, it gives the impression of a sea surrounding the house. Mary uses a simile to describe the sea, and what characterises it as a sea for her is that it appears to envelop the house completely in what appears to be a 'endless, dull, purplish sea' (Burnett 1911: 26). Mary compares it to the sea as she is using the limited experience she has in life because it something that she is familiar with, and has crossed over on her journey to get to the manor. She has an awareness of what the sea is and it is away of explaining to herself to what it is. It is significant because Mary has to use her imagination to define an entity that is just out of her

grasp. She must explore the moor, and through the power of her imagination will be able to define what the moor means to her.

The moor is somewhere in front of us, but it is also 'elsewhere' at the same time (Bachelard 1958: 183). According to Bachelard, the idea of 'elsewhere' is something that is vague to us,

[w]e do not see it start, and yet it always starts, the same way, that is, it flees the object nearby and right away it is far off, elsewhere, in space of elsewhere. When this elsewhere is in natural surrounding, that is, when it is not lodged in the houses of the past, it is immense'.

(Bachelard 1958: 183)

In essence, the moors are an 'elsewhere'. Within the moor things can be perceived to be near, but can also be seen to be far away that they become part of the space of 'elsewhere'. When this space is a place of natural setting and not trapped within a 'house of the past', it becomes powerful. This links to *The Secret Garden* in a way that the moor is a natural setting and when observed from outside the house, it is boundless. To view it from inside the house is to see only a part of the moor, only outside will you see that it is awesome. The characters do not see the beginning and they view the moors as an entity without a beginning, a middle, and end. And, yet the moors always has to begin somewhere as everything that exists has a beginning and an end. The moors is a natural setting when it is not trapped within the past of the house, and through it being a powerful entity, it becomes a space of 'elsewhere'.

The moor is a space which both appears to devour and flee from objects within it, it changes depending on the person perceiving it as it escapes to the space of 'elsewhere'. This space exists somewhere within the human imagination, it connects us to other spaces of 'elsewhere' such as the sea that ignite a sense of awe within the mind of the perceiver. It becomes associated with places we have experienced that become housed within our memories. That is why Mary makes a connection with the sea and the moor, as it is a entity that has captured her imagination and is something she is familiar with at the same time. The moor exists as a place 'elsewhere', it tricks our eyes and brings us to many different interpretations of what it is.

The moors is a powerful entity that enchants Mary. It immediately grab a hold of Mary's imagination as she on several occasions asks '[w]hat is that?' [...] pointing out the window' and Martha, who is the young housemaid, assigned to help Mary find her way within the manor, tells her '[t]hat's th' moor' (Burnett 1911: 26). Martha does not explain exactly what the moor is to Mary, as it difficult to find the words to describe something so powerful that exists within the power of nature and the imagination. The sublime is the imagination that is how we perceive the sublime because we use our imagination to define it. Plus, the experience of the sublime pushes our imagination to its limits. This connects to *Coraline* and the imagination, as both protagonists use their imagination to help them explore the world in which they live. It is through the power of the imagination that the moors takes on many interpretations for Mary, and changes a long with her state of mind throughout the novel.

The moors could be viewed as a sublime entity. Fred Botting states in *Gothic* (1996),

[o]bjects which evoked sublime emotions were vast, magnificent and obscure. [...] While beauty could be contained within the individual's gaze or comprehension, sublimity [...] could not be processed by a rational mind

(Botting 1996: 39)

As this quote suggests, a sublime entity evokes certain emotions upon the observer and the beauty is enclosed with the observers gaze. However, sublimity cannot be completely comprehended by a rational mind. Mary is a child so she does not see the world through rationality as children are still developing and this will come later in life. So, Mary views the moor through her eyes as a child, she finds the sublimity of the moors difficult to define. Mary turns to her imagination to try to gain an understanding of the sublimity of the moors, which also connects to her impression of the moors being like a sea. The sea is something that also evokes emotions from the person perceiving, as it is powerful entity that it is difficult to define and place within a certain context.

In the case of Mary, who has been cut off from her emotions, the moors represent something that she can neither comprehend nor understand at this point in the novel. According to Blackford,

[t]he moor is so vast an underworld to Mary that she, once within the manor and once having accepted seeds, cannot cross it, although other characters easily walk in and out of it.

(Blackford 2012: 141)

As this quote indicates, the moor becomes a vast underworld for Mary, that once she enters the manor and has accepted earth '[t]o plant seeds in – to make things grow – to see them come alive', from the master of the house, she becomes even more tied to the garden and cannot cross the boundary of the moor (Burnett 1911: 134). The moor is an underworld to Mary, because it is place that she does not understand and a place that haunts are from a far. It is also a place that she must explore, if she is to understand her world more. . To Mary, the moors appear to be an unconquered space that only grows in its vastness as Mary comments '[c]ould I get there' this emphasises Mary's confusion about her home (Burnett 1911: 69). When Mary looks out the through the window, she sees the moors through another perspective and the way she perceives the space of the moors is tainted by this. What Mary does not realise is the moor has so much more to offer that she cannot see from within the house.

When looking at how Burnett employs the use of the word moor, there is a connection with the word more. We could say that the homonyms 'more' and 'moor', show something interesting to the reader. Through this analysis of the language, the moor can be viewed as there is something more awaiting Mary out there, beyond those boundaries. The moors could represent the future, which for most people can appear to be scary and dark at times, but can also seem bright and open as well, just like the moor appears to be at different times of her development. The moor surrounds the house from every direction, and so does the more that the world has to offer.

From inside the house, Mary analyses the gardens and its place within her life. It appears that 'nothin [is] bloomin' now', something that can also be seen to be a reflection on Mary's situation, as she appears to be stuck with no room for growth and development (Burnett 1911: 37). Mary is then told that

[o]ne of th' gardens is locked up. [...] Here was another locked door that added to the hundred in the strange house. Mr Craven had it shut [...] [and] [h]e won't let no one go inside. He locked th' door an' dug a hole and buried th' key.

(Burnet 1911: 38)

Mary is already beginning to question the house as she refers to it as a 'strange house' and saying that everything within the grounds and the house itself appears to be locked. Although the moor is not locked, it gives the impression of being so as the vastness created by the moor only adds to the imprisonment of Mary further.

This scene connects with the scene in *Coraline* and the well at the start of the novel, when Coraline is told to keep away from the well as it is thought to be too dangerous for a child (cf. Gaiman 2002: 4). Similar to Coraline, Mary is not allowed and subtly told to stay away from the locked garden as it viewed as a forbidden place, and also too dangerous as the angel of the house (Mrs Craven) died there. In both scenes in the novels, the areas are forbidden for the protagonists and viewed as an area not for children. But, the first thing that both protagonists do is search for the forbidden areas that change the direction of the novels. The houses that contain them only increase their curiosity further, as they set out to explore and reveal secrets.

The house itself appears to be frozen in time. As previously stated, the house is trapped in a winter's tale as 'Mary went to the window. There were gardens and paths and big trees, but everything looked dull and wintry' (Burnett 1911: 36). This description of the house grounds strengthens the feeling that the house has become stranded within winter, as the gardens and paths are covered in a wintry coating that gives everything a dull appearance. Burnett employs the formulation of a winter's tale to emphasise how stagnant, the house and garden have become. Martha describes how the moor and the process that it undergoes during the year as '[i]t's covered wi' growin' things as smells sweet. It's fair lovely in spring an' summer when th' gorse an' broom an' heather's in flower' (Burnett 1911: 27). Through this quote, we see that winter won't last for, in spite of the house's attempt to stop time, spring will arrive on the moors. However, Mary does not understand what spring is like in England, so this really means nothing to her until she experience it for herself. Until spring reveals itself, the house will remain stagnated by winter.

Mary's life within becomes stunted by winter. She appears to enter a cycle of repetition as 'each day which passed by for Mary Lennox was exactly like the others' (Burnett 1911: 49). Mary continues in a circle completing the same tasks over and over again. The house remains pretty much unexplored as those locked doors keep Mary out, but gradually she becomes more a part of the outside world, rather than being kept indoors where nothing appears to be open. As stated in chapter 2, '[f]or the future to be open, space must be open too' (Massey 2005: 12). With nothing in the house being open, the future looks bleak for the inhabitants of the house. In order for balance to return to the house, 'space must be open'. It is through these open spaces that other spaces will emerge, and this helps expand the literary geography for the geographer, inside us all. When space is closed it stops things evolving, and keeps everything trapped in a wintry spell with no room for growth and development.

The wintry spell only increases at night, as the moors become an intense black space that appears endless and this is frightening and only adds to Mary wanting to isolate herself further. Martha is again attending to Mary's needs and says '[l]isten to th' wind wutherin' round the house' [...] 'You could bare stand up on the moor if you was out on it tonight' (Burnett 1911: 54). This intense wind represents the chaos that runs within Mary and this is reflected in the moors that surround the house. The wind adds to this scene by increasing the need for shelter from this element, as '[...] somehow it made one feel safe and warm inside' (Burnett 1911: 55). Mary has no option but to remain indoors and face what lurks within the rooms of Misselthwaite and herself.

Mary's curiosity about the mysterious house continues to grow as she wanders about the place where she has been placed within,

[b]ut as she was listening to the wind she began to listen to something else. She did not know what it was, because at first she could scarcely distinguish it from the wind itself. It was a curious sound – it seemed almost as if a child was crying somewhere. Sometimes the wind sounded rather like a child crying, but [...] Mary felt quite sure that this sound was inside the house.

(Burnett 1911: 56)

As this quote indicates, Mary hears someone crying from within the walls of the house. The cries appear to mirror the wind, and in a way Mary's internal state as her emotions begin to

awaken from within. It could be said that '[...] when Mary hears “someone crying in the house”, the cries could easily be her own lamentation' (Blackford 2012: 142). The crying that Mary hears could be her very own tears as the trauma that she has suffered overpowers her and seeps into the walls of the manor. Mary's internal state is reflected in the landscape, as in all the locked doors within the house, and this is expressed through the crying echoing through the walls in the house. Martha tries to convince Mary that the crying is coming from the moors by saying that

[n]o, [...] It's th' wind. Sometimes it sounds as if someone was lost on th' moor an' wailin' but Mary is insistent that '[i]t's in the house – down one of those long corridors.
(Burnett 1911: 56)

The crying unnerves Mary and continues to haunt her throughout journey through the house.

Somewhere inside the manor is the source of the crying, Mary must explore the internal realm of the house, in order to find herself. Mary must explore her internal conflicts and not just peer in from the outside. It is interesting here that the cries, if thought to be coming from the outside moor are interpreted as natural, whereas, if the crying comes from inside the house, the crying is interpreted as unnatural and threatening suggesting that we are always afraid of what lurks within us. Mary must explore herself in order to develop, and gain an understanding of what she must face within to begin forming an identity of her own.

When Mary arrives at the house, her development is stunted by winter, in a way that reflects her internal growth as a person. Mary has servants to look after her, but has no role model to show her how she should be as woman. At this point in the novel, before she has explored the grounds fully, she lacks an emotional understanding of who she is and this affects her outlook on life. Mary is a child and will mature into adult through time, but it takes interaction with others to grow and develop into a healthy adult. She is still trying to deal with the trauma of losing her parents and she is '[...] far away from everything she understood and which understood her' (Burnett 1911: 30). Even when in India, when everyone has died from Cholera, [n]obody thought of her, nobody wanted her', and it this is thought that still haunts Mary in England, which adds to her isolation (Burnett 1911: 5). Mary is isolated within the house, becoming displaced within her new home and surroundings. In order for Mary to grow,

she must emerge from her isolation and enter into some kind of community, so that she can begin the healing process, and this begins in the garden.

Mary begins her exploration of the grounds and this also commences her search for the self. The fact that Mary has started to explore beyond the house is a sign that the healing process has begun. After roaming around the grounds in search of the secret garden, Mary comes to conclusion that

even a disagreeable little girl may be lonely, and the big closed house and big bare moor and big bare gardens had made this one feel as there was no one left in the world but herself

(Burnett 1911: 40)

It is within this reflection that we see inside Mary's thoughts, and we see that the house, the garden and the moor are intense reflections of her state of mind and how '[...] it all seemed so empty' within her (Burnett 1911: 63). They are also a reflection of life at the house as isolation affects all of the inhabitants. Everything appears to be bare and emotionless, as if everything is stunted by the wintry conditions, Mary is trapped in the winter's tale with only herself for company.

This creates a link between when Martha is suggesting what Mary should wear outside. She comments on how Mr Craven said that 'I won't have a child dressed in black wanderin' about like a lost soul. [...] It'd make the place sadder than it is. Put some colour on her' (Burnett 1911: 31). This suggests that Mary is lost soul wandering around in the winter garden, but the adding of colour connects her to summer and foreshadows the coming of summer and eventual healing that will take place for all the characters. Mary appears to be surrounded by winter, which represents many things that include; hibernation, sleep, lack of growth and isolation. All of these aspects are present in the 'deserted garden' as everything is hidden under a blanket of winter essence (Burnett 1911: 41).

The red breasted robin leads Mary to the garden that she seeks but in many ways the garden seeks her as well. The robin creates a connection between the live side of the sleeping garden and shows Mary that although the world around appears to be dull and lifeless there is still '[...] a glimmer of light coming from beneath it' (Burnett 1911: 140). The robin, just like the black cat in *Coraline* is free to travel between worlds and could be thought of as a free

spirit. She watches him as '[h]e has flown over the wall!' [...] He has flown into the orchard – he has flown across the other wall – into the garden where there is no door!' (Burnett 1911: 47). Nature guides Mary to the garden through the shape of the robin, but she is not ready at this point to discover the full potential of the locked garden and unleash its power, she must first explore the house, which is a reflection of her internal conflict.

4.4. The Corridors and Rooms within

Within the manor there are many corridors with locked rooms. A key is a powerful tool that gives the person, who possesses it the power to lock doors and halt development. According to Bachelard, '[w]hat psychology lies behind their locks and keys! They bear within themselves a kind of esthetics of hidden' (Bachelard 1958: xxxvii) What this quote expresses is that locked doors reveal a lot about the psychology of what is hidden behind them, and the person who locked them. All the locked doors reveal a lot about not only Mary's mentality, but also about the master of the house. The locked doors represent secrets and hidden emotions that if exposed, would change the house and how the protagonist and the other inhabitants view the world. In order to pave the way for change from within the house, the doors must be unlocked and the secrets that they house exposed.

Mary appears to be locked within the house, as all the locked doors keep her confined to particular space within the house. The next day, as in *Coraline*, '[...] the rain poured down in torrents again', Mary is confined to the house and goes off exploring that space (Burnett 1911: 58). Mary finds herself in 'a long corridor and it branched into other corridors and it led her up short flights of steps which mounted to others again' (Burnett 1911: 61). Mary finds herself in a labyrinth type space as the corridors within the house take many twists and turns, which disorient Mary and the reader. This passage echoes when Mary first arrives at the house, and adds to her displacement further, as we have no idea where exactly Mary is within the house now as

[t]wo or three times she lost her way by turning down the wrong corridor and was obliged to ramble up and down [...] and [she] did not know exactly where she was.

(Burnett 1911: 65)

The Gothic manor continues to grow and expand as Mary is descending further into the unconscious, as she seeks to uncover the deepest and darkest secret hidden within the passageways of the house.

Mary's disorientation continues as she becomes lost within the passages of the house.

To her

[i]t seemed as if there was no one in all the huge, rambling house but her own small self, wandering upstairs and down, through narrow passages and wide ones, it seemed to her that no one but herself had ever walked there.[...] It was not until she climbed to second floor that she thought of turning the handle of the door.

(Burnett 1911: 62)

What this quote reveals is that Mary has become lost within herself, as she searches for answers to where she has been placed within the story. Placed within the story in a double way, both within the narrative and level of the house. Both aspects influence her as she has been placed in a story about her development, but also travels to the second story of house. Mary feels isolated and alone, and she feels like she may be the only person alive wandering around the house, that she is the only person to have walked there. Mary travels through 'narrow passages and wide ones' that represent different sections within in the mind.

Throughout her journey through the house passages, Mary has not seen another living person. The house reflects Mary's state of mind as she feels 'anxious at being left alone in the world' (Burnett 1911: 9) Mary questions why there are so many rooms reasoning that 'since so many rooms had been built, people must have lived in them, but it seemed so empty that she could not believe it true' (Burnett 1911: 63). She feels alone and isolated, and wonders at the thought that perhaps once upon a time these corridors and rooms were filled with people. These empty corridors reveal Mary's state of mind to the reader, but they also show us what Mary longs for. She longs for a home to call her own, something that she can be a part of, but she will not find this within these empty rooms and corridors.

These passages appear to never end and lead Mary round in circles. She has been wandering endlessly though the passages, but '[i]t was not until the second floor that she thought of turning the handle of the door' (Burnett 1911: 63). It is a logical thought to the turn the door handle, but Mary is still a child and children are not always considered as logical

beings. According to Bachelard, the door handle '[...] expresses the function of opening, and only a logical mind could object that it is used to close as well as to open the door' (Bachelard 1958: 73). Through this quote, we gain an understanding that the door handle functions as a way of not only opening but closing off areas, and the door handle opens the door to another perspective within the manor. When Mary finally finally realises that turning the door handle is an option to see if one of the doors opens, she finds a bedroom with '[a] broad window with leaded panes [that] looked out upon the moor [...]' and thereby provides another perspective of that world (Burnett 1911: 63). There is no escaping the moor as it surrounds the house and is the view from most of the rooms.

Within the house exist Mary's relatives. As previously stated, Mary was brought from India to live with her new guardian. Mr Craven has been more like an absent guardian, watching from afar. When Mary finally meets him, she is 'taken to a part of the house she had been before' (Burnett 1911: 131). Hence, the house can be viewed as something that goes beyond Mary as she enters further into the masculine realm of the story. Her uncle is described as 'not ugly. His face would have been handsome if it had not been so miserable' (Burnett 1911: 131). Mr Craven's state of mind is also mirrored in the house as he is as gloomy as it is, and this shows that the natural order of things at the manor has been disturbed. Gloom and melancholy have become masculine states of mind as the house has become a place of isolation without the feminine aspect. Therefore, the sadness has penetrated the house, and it has begun to turn in on itself as these aspects become masculine through lack of contact with the feminine side of the house. Through the separation of the feminine and masculine aspects, the manor has become unbalanced and slipped into a melancholic state, which affects everyone living within its walls.

Mr Craven is greatly affected by the house and it is important to remember he locked up the garden and neglected it for ten years. It appears that Mr Craven neglects most things in his life, and this includes Mary, too. Mr Craven has not only neglected the garden but the house as well, and this adds to the feeling that the house is lacking life and the magical touch of a human being that will awaken it from its deep slumber. Through this human being new life will be breathed into the house, and it will be a different place to live. It can be said that '[t]he house is a dead, imprisoning labyrinth. It is as if the house with its dark, tapestried rooms is antithetic to the garden' (Parsons 2002: 258). As this quote suggests, the house appears to be dead on the inside and is complete contrast to the garden which, even through it

appears to be dead to Mary, it is in fact alive and free as ever. The garden is a part of the moor, and this connects the moor to Mary even more as it mirrors her state of mind.

There is a connection between the weather and the moor and Mary's emotional state. This echoes a previous passage in the novel when Mary hears crying on the moors. Mary is awakened at night

by the sound of rain beating down in torrents and the wind was 'wuthering' round the corners and in chimneys of the huge old house. Mary sat up in bed and felt miserable and angry.

(Burnett 1911: 138)

Mary feels angry and miserable because she is confined in the house and again she hears a sound '[...] just like a person lost on the moor and wandering on and on crying' (Burnett 1911: 139). Significantly, she intuitively thinks that the crying comes from the moors and not from within the house. Mary goes by candle light to discover the source of the crying. The darkness that surrounds Mary only increases the novel's Gothic atmosphere, and it once again emphasises that Mary is lost within the house and has been from very moment she entered it. The candle is her only source of light, as she ventures deeper within herself in search of the source of the crying. However, if Mary is to find the community and home that she is searching for, then it can only be reached when she opens to an other.

Mary finds herself in a low-lit room somewhere inside the house. She is left '[...]wondering if she was in a real place or if she had fallen asleep again and was dreaming without knowing it' (Burnett 1911: 141). At this point in the novel and the depth within the house that Mary appears to be, she has great difficulty telling the difference between reality and the dream world, as does Coraline when she also questions the reality of her situation in the other house. Within this room Mary finally meets Colin, her cousin, who is the source behind the crying at night and '[h]e looked like a boy who had been ill, [...] he was crying' (Burnett 1911: 141). At first he questions, whether Mary is real, '[a]re you a ghost?' as he has been alone so long that he cannot trust his own eyes and again he asks '[y]ou are real aren't you?' (Burnett 1911: 141, 142). It is essential that Mary assures Colin that she is real, so that they can learn from one another and change the direction of the novel. Now, Mary has Colin, she is no longer so isolated and alone.

Mary's confusion grows as she questions Colin's place within the house. She states that

[o]h, what a queer house this is!' Mary said. 'What a queer house! Everything is a kind of secret. Rooms are locked up and gardens are locked up – and you! Have you been locked up?

(Burnett 1911: 144)

Mary comes to conclusion that they are all prisoners within the manor, and that everything is locked up, including the secrets kept behind those locked doors. The biggest secret is Colin, who has been hidden away from the world within the boundaries of the house. Colin is character that has had very little contact with the outside world. He has become extremely isolated, experiencing episodes of intense anger and paranoia at the outside world. Colin is a sickly child, who is also effected by the melancholic atmosphere within the house that he has become trapped within.

Colin is presented by Burnett as very feminine character to begin with, and lives in a world of hysteria as he cries at night from the isolation he feels. Colin's function within the novel is to represent the masculine aspect, in contrast with Mary who represents the feminine aspect. Although, they both start in the same place in the novel, abandoned by their parents and being cared for by servants, which makes them angry at the world. Colin and Mary are both lacking a maternal and paternal figure in their life and this affects them greatly. Through the power of the garden, they both find a place within themselves that changes their direction in life, as they begin explore aspects of their identity that will give them clues to who they are in the world.

Mary reveals the existence of the garden to Colin and they discuss this with one another. In a way, Colin is like the reader of the text as he learns of the garden and how it looks through Mary's description of it. Colin has never seen the garden, so he has to imagine it and create his own narrative map, in order to experience the space that Mary creates through her words. Through her words, Mary transports Colin to another place and space within his imagination, which encourages him to change his outlook and eventually he ventures out into the world to explore the real landscape for himself. Colin has concealed himself within the house to avoid people staring at him (cf. Burnett 1911: 145). The stories that Mary tells him

create a connection with the outside world, it is through these stories and the narrative maps that Mary and Colin are able to figure out some aspects of their lives.

The meeting with Colin is an important part of the novel and changes many aspects of the story. According to Linda T. Parsons in “Otherways' into the Garden: Re-Visioning the Feminine in *The Secret Garden*”, through Mary's 'increasing introspection and self-reflection. She sees truths about herself mirrored in others, and she ponders observations they make about her' (Parsons 2002: 260). As this quote indicates, Mary sees many aspects of herself in Colin, that were present at the beginning of the novel and this brings her to question her existence within the manor and how others perceive her. Mary's view on the world that she exists within is beginning to change.

The fresh air of the moors and exploring the self through the house, have begun to shape and mould her character from child into adolescent. A sign of growing up is being able to see other people's point of view, and seeing faults in your own behaviour. Mary starts to see both of these aspects and it begins to change her. It is significant that Mary meets Colin, and sees aspects of her behaviour from earlier in the novel mirrored in him. This occurs within the walls of the manor as it often reflects how Mary is feeling on the inside. Through her exploration of the self, she is increasingly becoming more self aware, and her ability to look within herself to enhance her understanding of the situation that she must face. The garden, the moor and the house all offer a place for Mary to develop her understanding of herself.

In order to breathe new life into the house, empty rooms full of painful memories have to be explored and opened up to let the magic grow and heal it from within. Nobody is even sure how many rooms there are and there could be over a thousand and

[t]here's about a hundred no one ever goes into. [...] And one rainy day I went and looked into ever so many of them. [...] I lost my way when I was coming back [...]. A hundred rooms that no one goes into [...]. It sounds almost like a secret garden

(Burnett 1911: 302)

The house is almost like a secret garden because it holds so many secrets within it. The house has also been neglected, and within the many rooms are secrets that are waiting to be explored and exposed. Mary and Colin begin to analyse the house and how big and empty it feels. Mary even comments on the fact there are all types of rooms, ready to be explored by them

together (cf. Burnett 1911: 302). All of these rooms represent different aspects of the self and it is through this exploration of the self that the Mary and Colin will learn more about themselves and further their understanding of their identity.

Colin and Mary continue to explore and find new parts of the house. In this new section of the house, '[t]hey found new corridors and corners and flights of steps' and it can be thought that it takes them to different parts of the self that they can explore (Burnett 1911: 304). They have found a new perspective within the human mind and within this section of the house are corners that conceal and hide things from them. The steps take Mary and Colin to different sections within the human mind, although, it is never made clear if they are going up or down. These new sections are where

[...] a great many of our memories are housed, and if the house is a bit elaborate, if it has a cellar and a garret, nooks and corridors, our memories have refuges are all the more clearly delineated.

(Bachelard 1958: 8)

As this quotes indicates that our memories are housed, but if the house is detailed enough it will contain many places to place our memories. Within this house exists a refuge where our memories will be more clearly defined. Through the healing from garden, Mary has to create more sections within the house to house her memories, it is within these spaces within the mind that will bring about and enhance a change from within.

4.5. The Key to Other Worlds

In both *Coraline* and *The Secret Garden*, a key plays a vital role in unlocking the mind of the protagonists. In *Coraline*, the key represents the unlocking of the door that links the imagination with reality, whereas, in *The Secret Garden*, the key represents the unlocking of emotion. Through Mary's discovering of 'the key to the garden' that has been hidden away in the earth for ten years, she is able to open a part of the house that has been cut off from humanity and left to its own devices (Burnett 1911: 75).

Keys are something that exist in most peoples' lives and they often indicate power and authority. A key is a powerful tool that '[...] closes more often than it opens [...]. And the

gesture of closing is always sharper, firmer and briefer than that of opening' (Bachelard 1958: 73). As this quote shows, a key is an important tool that is used to close and establish boundaries, but it can also open and loosen boundaries for the person, who possesses it. When we close something off it is always 'sharper and firmer', in comparison with opening something as once something is opened, it is unleashed upon the world. Initially, however, the key was used to lock the garden away from the inhabitants of this house.

A key can both open and close doorways to other parts of the human mind, it all depends on the character's state of mind whether it will open or close parts of their mind. A key, therefore, is an item that can unlock boundaries, but also can also lock those boundaries as well. In this story, the key opens new possibilities and hopes for the protagonist, as it opens the door to the garden and another realm of the protagonist's mind and '[i]t was the sweetest, most mysterious-looking place anyone could imagine' (Burnett 1911: 88). The garden opens Mary's imagination even more, and brings her to place where it can run wild.

Mary is destined to find the key and unlock the garden. On the day that Mary finds the key to the garden,

[t]he rain-storm had ended and the grey mist and clouds had been swept away in the night by the wind. [...] the far-reaching world of the moor itself looked softly blue instead of gloomy.

(Burnett 1911: 68)

The storm within Mary relates to her situation in the house, and how she feels displaced, abandoned and she '[...]went and sat on the hearth-rug, pale with rage. She did not cry, but ground her teeth' (Burnett 1911: 68). This quote shows the rage that Mary feels and how she feels so enraged that she cannot even cry. She is a lost and lonely child with no one to turn to for help.

Through the weather being clear and the moors being a reflection of how Mary is feeling internally, this shows that the storm that was brewing inside Mary has subsided, and that she is ready to find the key and explore the secret realm of the garden. The subsidence of the storm corresponds with a change in Mary's state of mind as she states ' '[l]ook at the moor. Look at the moor!', this connects Mary to the moor. It can be seen that Mary is not really referring to moor but to herself, as the moor mirrors her state of mind. The moors have

become brighter and so has Mary. Within the garden, she finds a place that brings warmth into her life and the loneliness begins to subside.

The longer that Mary continues to explore her world at Misselthwaite, the more she is waking up, 'becoming wider awake every day', as she becomes at one with the power of the garden and nature (Burnett 1911: 101). Through finding the key, Mary is transported to a life changing space in the shape of a garden within the narrative map, the garden extends the narrative map and brings the reader closer to a natural space that brings the protagonist to a healing space within herself.

Mary continues her search for the key to the garden. According to Parsons,

Mary uses sight to grow and discover [...]. Although it is the Robin who shows Mary the way into the garden, it is her power of observation that makes her entrance possible.

(Parsons 2002: 257)

As this quote suggests, even though the Robin aids her in her search for the garden, it is through her vivid observation that she discovers the key to the locked garden. When she '[...] looked at it, not really knowing why the hole was there, [...]it was an old key which looked as if it had been buried a long time' (Burnett 1911: 75). Mary has to look deep within the soil, for something that has been buried deep a long time. Buried deep within the soil of the garden, the key could have easily have been missed, but through Mary's keen observation she finds it and uses to unleash the power of the locked garden. Mary wants to find the garden because, '[i]t seemed as if it must be different from other places' and with the key she is able to unlock this different place, which transports to another realm within herself and a step closer to finding the home and community, she so desperately seeks. (Burnett 1911: 76).

Through Mary's exploration of the house and the self, something has awakened within her and shown her that if she can break down the boundaries, then things will become clearer. The finding of the key brings about many questions for Mary. She analyses her situation as she states that '[l]iving, as it were all by herself in a house with a hundred mysterious closed rooms, [...] had set her inactive brain to work and was actually awakening her imagination' (Burnett 1911: 76). Exploring the house, in essence herself, and by opening some of the doors to inspect what is beyond them, Mary through the key, has begun to unlock and search within

herself, which leads to a greater understanding of her identity. Therefore, her new environment is having a great impact on her and '[t]here is no doubt that the fresh, strong, pure air from the moor had a great deal to do with it' (Burnett 1911: 77). The moor has awoken something within her as '[...] fighting with the wind had stirred her blood, so the same things had stirred her mind', through this Mary has become a part of the moors, as has been stated before the moors reflect Mary's internal conflict (Burnett 1911: 77). Through the power of the masculine and feminine aspects of being slowly brought closer together, Mary has begun the healing process as the exploration of the moor, the garden, and the house empowers her and changes her outlook on life.

4.6. The Garden

A garden is not a singularly natural space, it is a place that is cultivated by humans. When a garden is left untouched by humanity, however, it returns to its natural form and grows in random formations, as do '[...] the leafless stems of climbing roses, which were so thick that they were matted together' (Burnett 1911: 88). The touch of a human is needed to guide the garden in a certain direction, if it is grow and develop correctly. It can be said that the whole world can be thought to a garden and that house, the moors within the story are all connected and are part of the world that Burnett has created through the narrative map.

A garden is an intermingling of different plants that function in harmony and the garden in the story, is a metaphor for community and human relationships. As previously stated, Mary must emerge from her isolation and enter into a community where she can grow emotionally. Within the garden, she finds a place where '[e]verything was strange and silent, and she seemed to be hundred of miles away from anyone, but somehow she did not feel lonely at all' (Burnett 1911: 90). The garden fills a void within Mary and opens her up to perceive the world differently.

According to Parsons, the garden and manor can both be interpreted as intertwined labyrinths that must be moved around within in order to locate the centre (cf. Parsons 2002: 258) . As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, the house represents the masculine side of power, whereas, the garden represents the feminine side. The key to the garden unlocks the feminine side of the power, whereas the masculine side of the power remains locked and cut off from the outside world. The house is lifeless, a labyrinth which traps its

inhabitants, only after Mary discovers the garden does the house begin to open Mary's imagination. The garden symbolises the feminine side of life, offering Mary a passageway to move from being a girl, who is stunted by her surroundings into a young woman, who can grow and develop into something more. Just like a flower, Mary will blossom and mature.

The garden continues to entice Mary to explore it. While exploring the garden further, Mary comes across

[...] a round door knob which had been covered by the leaves hanging over it. [...] Thick as they ivy hung, it nearly all was a loose and swinging curtain, through some had crept over the wood and iron.

(Burnett 1911: 85)

The door is covered in a curtain of ivy that conceals it from the outside world, the ivy creates another barrier concealing and protecting the garden from outside influences. Mary must travel through another door to reach the garden and this takes her to a place within herself, somewhere where she can truly find the young woman within. What Mary finds beyond the door is '[...] the sweetest, most mysterious-looking place anyone could imagine', this feminine space awakens a longing within Mary (Burnett 1911: 88). Within in it she finds a place of safety, where she can truly be herself and has [...] enough room to grow' (Burnet 1911: 91). Through the garden she will able to gain a better understanding of the world and her place within it.

The secret garden opens a door to another world that has been hidden away for ten years. As previously stated a garden is not an absolutely natural place, as it requires the hand of a human, if it is to grow correctly. This garden is untouched and Mary wonders if 'they are all quite dead' and [i]s it all a quite dead garden?' as it gives the impression of being dead to the observer (Burnett 1911: 89). Until she found the key that not only unlocked the garden, but her mind as well. According to Parsons, '[t]he house disables, discourages and hides away life. The garden stands in contrast to the house, emanating positive, life-giving power, and at the centre of the garden is Mary' (Parsons 2002: 259). As this quote suggest, the house imprisons life, whereas the garden offers the power life and Mary stands at the centre of the

garden. Through unlocking the garden, Mary reunites the feminine and masculine aspects together and eventually restores balance to Misselthwaite.

Within the grounds of Misselthwaite there are many gardens. The other gardens are a place, where we find many characters and this includes the gardener, who is '[...] personified by his surname Weatherstaff. According to Blackford, Ben Weatherstaff personifies the “wuthering” of the moor and the unpredictable weather, which can neither be tamed nor predicted' (Blackford 2012: 151). As this quote suggests, Weatherstaff represents the weather and its unpredictable formations, the weather is something that we have no control over and it will always be wild and unpredictable. The gardener has a place within the garden that is quite mythical, he represents a connection between the garden at present and the garden of the past. Weatherstaff is aware of the garden, but like everyone else has been kept at bay by Mr Craven, who has locked the power of nature away.

With the arrival of a boy, Dickon, the story turns even closer to nature. 'I'm Dickon,' the boy said. 'I know tha'rt Miss Mary.' Then Mary realized that somehow she had known at first that he was Dickon' (Burnett 1911: 110). From the moment, Mary first meets Dickon, she is drawn to his charismatic nature and knows that it is him, before he even speaks to her. Mary chooses to share the secret garden with Dickon, it is significant that she chooses to share this secret with him, having only just met him. According to Parsons, Dickon belongs to feminine realm and, therefore, is a part of nature and the garden. It is, therefore, unsurprising that Mary confides in Dickon about her secret garden (cf. Parsons 2002: 256).

Dickon is charming character and charms those that surround him, including animals. Dickon is '[...] charming rabbits and pheasants as the natives charms snakes in India' and appears to at one with nature (Burnett 1911: 110). All of these characteristics come from nature and are enhanced through Dickon, and this only increases Mary's obsession over the 'trusty lad' (Burnett 1911: 128). Dickon is a unified character and appears to have no flaws, he is similar to the black cat in *Coraline* as he appears to completely understand his surroundings. Also, while Dickon appears in human form, he is not really like a human being but could be considered more to be an '[...] animal-charmer and [is] [...] a boy animal' (Burnett 1911: 175). There are many perceptions of Dickon throughout the novel, but he is everlasting reminder about the power at being at one with nature.

Dickon follows Mary into the garden. Where he explains that the garden is 'as wick as you or me and Mary remembered that Martha had told her that 'wick' meant 'alive' or 'lively'

(Burnett 1911: 118). The locked garden that Mary has discovered and decides to tend and heal back it to back to life, opens another world for the characters to explore as the garden has been untouched for ten years. The garden is indeed alive and so begins the healing part of the novel as it breathes new life back into the walls of the manor.

4.7. The Transformation of Spring

At the start of the novel, Mary is still a child in need of someone to take care of her and find things for her to do. As the novel progresses, we begin to see a change in Mary, as she accepts her surroundings and even begins to enjoy the place that she has been placed within. With the arrival of spring, we see Mary mature and become more independent. She learns to use tools and '[...] was very much interested in the seeds and gardening tools', and this increases her productivity (Burnett 1911: 128). Through the use of tools and a growing understanding of her environment, Mary begins the healing process and begins on journey towards the feminine aspect of life. The feminine aspect of life is thought to be the more traditional Victorian values at that time, as Mary nurtures the garden back to health. From a Victorian perspective to nurture something is seen as feminine trait, and it is through this nurturing of the garden that Mary becomes closer to symbolising the feminist aspect. This also highlights the mothering aspect of her personality, as she begins to nurture not only the garden but those that surround her, too.

The transformation of the garden from appearing to be sleeping or even dead, to a visibly thriving living entity, creates a connection to Mary and Colin within the text as the garden thrusts new life into them. Bringing them back from the brink of death to '[...] glowing with life' (Burnett 1911: 337). As previously stated, through Mary's observation of others in the house and her exploration of the self, there is change occurring with her. Mary looks at herself in the mirror and notices a change in her appearance, from when she first arrived from India. 'This child looked nicer. Even Martha had seen a change in her' (Burnett 1911: 173). Mary's search of Misselthwaite has enabled her to delve deep within herself, and created a change on the inside and outside. As previously stated, the house, the garden, and the moor have all contributed to a change within Mary, and with arrival of spring that brings clarity to her world as she can finally see past the stagnation of winter.

Spring is a completely new concept for Mary and Colin. According to Blackford '[n]either Mary nor Colin has ever seen spring. Born into barren wastelands [...] they long for the regenerative force of spring' (Blackford 2002: 136). Through this quote, we see that spring is an entirely new experience for Mary and Colin. Both Mary and Colin are born into emotional wastelands, Colin was trapped with the borders of the manor and Mary was isolated in India. Both children appeared to be sickly due to the environment that they have been confined to within the novel, and this only begins to change after exposure to the garden and the rejuvenating power of spring. Through the garden, they have '[...] planted [they] [...] made it all come alive' and they are able to leave the emotional wasteland for a place where '[t]he grass is greener', where life seems brighter (Burnett 1911: 150, 177).

Mary emerges with winter and continues to grow and develop throughout this season, as she seeks the emergence of spring. The more contented Mary becomes the more this is reflected in how the moor is described by Burnett to the reader. The moor is a deep indication of how Mary feels about her situation as '[t]he moor was blue and the whole world looked as if something Magic had happened' (Burnett 1911: 176). This is a comment on how spring has finally arrived, which makes something magical happen to the moor. Earlier in the novel, Mary comments on the fact that she '[...] thought perhaps it always rained or looked dark in England', but Martha assures her that this not true and that the weather will change for the better (Burnett 1911: 69). This is a reference to the arrival of spring and how this will awaken something within Mary, and change the direction of the novel as everything will become illuminated by the power of the sun. As previously stated, Mary begins to emerge with winter and goes through a transformation during this time, but she does not fully change until the arrival of spring.

After finding the moors immersed in spring, Mary heads outside to see what effect this has had on the garden. Mary exits her room through 'a small side door which she could unbolt herself' (Burnett 1911: 176). This side door represents Mary searching for another perspective as she leaves her room from a different place, and through this is making our own path in life. She also unbolts and opens this door herself and this shows that she is becoming more independent and can see the world from another mindset. According to Parson, with the arrival of spring, the garden begins to show signs of transformation and rebirth. The garden's magic is energetic and feminine, whereas, the room in which Colin has been imprisoned is tomb-like, it stunts his growth and also affects his physical and mental well being as well. The

house as a space paralyses and conceals life within it (cf. Parsons 2002: 259). As previously stated, the garden is a space within the novel that emerges in opposition to house, offering life changing power, and at the heart of the garden is where Mary can be found (cf. Parsons 2002: 259).

The more spring is revived within the garden, the more life is strengthened within Mary's world.

When first we got in here,' he said, 'it seemed like everything was grey. [...] 'Why' she cried, 'the grey wall is changing. It is as if the green mist were creeping over it. It's almost like a green gauze veil

(Burnett 1911: 184)

The garden has changed from being a grey pessimistic to an open and life changing space, as we view the once sleeping garden with fresh new eyes through a veil of green. According to Clarissa Pinkola Estes in "Women Who Run with the Wolves: Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype", '[...] a veil turns one's sight inward, increasing mystical insight' , (Estes 1992 cited in Parsons 2002: 265). As this quote suggests, the way that someone perceives the world turns inward through a veil as the mystical insight is awakened within. The mystical insight is seeing your surroundings in a new light, and revealing magical things to the perceiver. Mary views the garden as it comes alive through a veil of existence and this allows her to look inward and see the mystical insight come alive through the power of spring.

Spring has arrived with the novel and the garden has begun to heal itself, but this healing also begins to spread to other parts of the story and characters. Mary is explaining how beautiful spring is to Colin and how it has changed the world.

You never saw anything so beautiful! It has come! I thought it had come that other morning, but it was only coming. It is here now! It has come, the Spring!

(Burnett 1911: 223)

Mary's enthusiasm for spring is spreading as Colin finds the temptation to leave his tomb-like room to venture outside. We, see that awakening within Mary is only the beginning and this

will continue to grow with the season. Spring has finally arrived and Colin can now emerge from it as he enters the space of the garden to experience spring for the first time.

The narrative map continues to grow as Colin learns more about spring and its effect on the garden from Mary and Dickon. With each day that passes Colin's obsession with the power of the garden continues to grow. The garden in a way becomes the holy grail for Colin, as he searches for answers to improve his life and wellbeing. The garden becomes a mythical presence in everyone's life, but in order for Colin to feel the full effects of the garden, like Mary and Dickon, he must experience with his own eyes. 'As each day passed passed, Colin had become more and more fixed in his feelings that the mystery surrounding the garden was one of its greatest charms' (Burnett 1911: 234). Colin has become entranced by the thought of the garden that the once 'sickly boy who believed that he was going to die', is slowly being replaced with a curious one about the world outside (Burnett 1911: 168). Through the power of the garden and through the narrative, the garden takes on a lingering presence within Colin's mind and it refuses to leave. The presence of the garden, begins the healing process for Colin as it did for Mary. Sometimes just a persistent idea, can awaken something '[...] in your mind for ever' and change your life from within (Burnett 1911: 273). So, the thought of the garden begins Colin on the path towards healing.

On Colin's way to find and experience the garden, he wonders what it will look like in springtime. Colin's experience of the outside world has been through books, that is through the space created by authors. Therefore, the narrative map will be incomplete as he has no experiences of his own and has only experienced the world through the narrative voice of an author. The reader, joins Colin in imagining the garden as we build the garden landscape within our mind, from the words that the author leaves behind. How, the reader pictures the garden will be different from Colin, but we do share the experience of how Mary describes the garden and this helps us build the garden within our minds.

The power of the garden as a space has a great impact on Colin. As he enters the space of the garden and finds the sun on his face, '[h]e looked so strange and different because a pink glow of colour had actually crept all over him – ivory face and neck and hands and all' (Burnett 1911: 243). Mary and Dickon witness a change in Colin as the once ivory face becomes a colour of pink. Colin becomes open to the healing side of the garden and this begins to creep into his very being, he becomes a part of the garden. Through the power of the

garden and all it represents within the novel, Colin '[...] shall get well' and be able to return to the feminine space many times (Burnett 1911: 243).

Having been raised without their mothers, Colin and Mary have lived without the feminine aspect in their lives, which has created a void. According to Bixler, this space is '[f]requently described as “neglected” this walled garden [...] mirrors the childhood of Mary and Colin' in many ways (Bixler 1991: 210). As this quote suggests, the locked garden reflects Mary and Colin's childhood as they have both lived within their own internal 'walled garden'. They have both been neglected by their parents and have built internal walls to shield them from this pain. These walls that they have built around themselves will need to be torn down, if they are to emerge from their isolation.

Colin experiences the power of the garden, and this creates a change within him. It can be said that 'Mary, who, by ushering in the return of spring, has lifted the curtain. Mary personifies spring and Colin wants to have it, control it, shape it' (Blackford 2012: 138). Through this analysis, we begin to view Colin in a different light, as he was once a sickly boy, who now has the strength to want to control things and make them his own. Through the healing process, Colin is becoming stronger and showing more of the masculine traits such as strength and having authority over others. He states that 'I'm your master [...] [a]nd you are to obey me. This is my garden' (Burnett 1911: 256). The stronger he grows through the influence of Mary, the more he wants to control this open feminine space and turn it into a masculine space of which he has full control. What Colin does not realise is that the garden is a space that cannot be controlled, but should be free to grow and be cherished by everyone.

The garden brings many questions to the forefront for Colin. Colin contemplates his place within the world through the quote below.

One of the strange things about living in the world is that only now and then one is quite sure one is going to live for ever and ever and ever. [...] one's heart stands out still at the strange, unchanging majesty of the rising sun – which has been happening every morning for thousands and thousands and thousands of years.

(Burnett 1911: 244)

As this quote indicates, the garden has unlocked Colin's mind and he has a new perspective about 'living in the world'. Colin finds a new strength within and marvels at the forces that

seem to have so much power of the human being such the 'rising sun' and how the sun, just like the moor will be there long after they are gone. The garden has '[filled him with power he had never know before' and Colin believes that he '[...] is going to live for ever and ever' (Burnett 1911: 255, 244). The presence of the garden and its glory, brings Colin to contemplate his place in the world. He recognises that we are only here for a short time and the sun has been here for thousand of years. The garden could also have thought to be around long before they were born and will there long after there gone. Just like the moor, the garden will continue to influence and heal future generations, if it allowed to remain open for the world to see. At this moment within the novel, the garden is still closed off and disconnected from the world, but through the power of a child will be restored to its former glory in the sun and the magic will return.

4.8. The Magic within Resurfaces

The magic of the garden is beginning to resurface and begins to touch the people, who have entered within it. It can be said tha '[...] Mary advances much farther than Colin along the path to self-discovery, thereby enhancing her power' over everyone else within the story (Parsons 2002: 260). Mary grows to symbolise and personify the garden in human form, which brings the magic back the to the manor and everywhere she happens to venture. Mary strongly believes in magic as '[i]t was magic which sent the Robin' to her and opened the door to healing (Burnett 1911: 248). At this point in the novel, the house, garden and moor are beginning to look like completely different places than at the beginning. The wintry landscape has transformed into a blossoming environment for the characters and has awoken the spring with them.

The garden is described by Mary as a magical place and this sets the tone for the rest of the novel, as the magic takes over and enchants the characters towards the process of healing. Spring has arrived within the space of the novel as

[t]he garden had reached the time when every day and every night it seemed as if Magicians were passing through it drawing loveliness out of the earth and the boughs with wands.

(Burnett 1911: 211)

This quote adds to the sense that the garden is a magical place and has opened the door for the inhabitants at Misselthwaite to grow and develop. Before the arrival of spring, it appeared that Mary, the house and the garden were all trapped in a wintry type spell that stopped development and growth, as well as keeping the characters suspended in a gloomy atmosphere. With the arrival of spring and this continuation towards summer, the house and the garden will continue to prosper and bring hope to the people living within its borders.

Something is occurring within the house and it is spreading to the other inhabitants. 'Rumours of new and curious things which were occurring [...] had, of course, filtered through the servants' hall into the stableyards and out among the gardeners' (Burnett 1911: 254). Slowly the effect of the garden is beginning to touch the other inhabitants of house, and this includes the staff that run the manor from behind closed doors. Everyone is feeling the power of this once closed and locked up garden. Earlier in the novel, Mary appears to be alone in house, apart from a few other people. With the arrival of spring more and more people are emerging from the boundaries of the manor. Even Mrs Medlock notices that because of the garden that '[t]hings are changing in this house' and comments on this to another member of staff (Burnett 1911: 235).

Within the garden, the conversation turns to magic and how it is made. Colin asks '[a]re you making magic?' and Dickon tells him that magic comes from the ground, it infuses everything around them (Burnett 1911: 258). The magic that they are referring to is nature and how this is a powerful, magical force of life that rejuvenates itself. Through the magic and power of the garden, Colin finds the strength within to finally walk and uses the power of the garden to influence his advancement. In a way, Colin makes his own magic by finding the strength and taking his first steps within the garden. Being confined within the house, left Colin emotionally and physically crippled as the house at that time offered no room for development, and only isolated its victims within it.

As previously stated, when Mary discovered the garden it appeared to be dead but then something magical happens within the wall, as life is restored through childhood innocence. What tells us that childhood innocence is the key is that the garden has been neglected for ten years, and only with the arrival of Mary who is a child, does she find the key and awaken the garden. It can be said that Mary herself is in fact the key, and through her innocence brings the garden out of its slumber. We can view magic in the world as '[...] always pushing

and drawing and making things out of nothing. Everything is made out of Magic [...]. So it must be all around us, in this garden – in all the places' (Burnett 1911: 272). This quote brings us back to the whole world being a garden and this connects everyone who lives on the planet together, as we live in one big garden. Through this garden, we find a representation of the world we live in, bringing us closer to a more natural way of existing. It can heal us from within, therefore, changing the way we perceive the world as we look through 'a green gauze veil' (Burnett 1911: 184). Just like the characters in the novel, nature awakens something within us that connects us to the garden and the world.

Mary and Colin through their journey in the garden have begun to develop a direction in life. According to Wilkie,

[...] if Mary Lennox is the type of the primitive child of the race, Colin becomes a figure of the progress of the race and the march of science. Unlike Mary, whose teacher has been nature, Colin has acquired all his experience and scientific knowledge from book learning.

(Wilkie 1997: 80)

What this quote shows is that Mary is more primitive in comparison with Colin and that her teacher has been the magic behind the garden, whereas, Colin embraces and becomes focused on science. Both of these perspectives indicate how the magic of nature can influence the development of children in different ways. Mary embraces the feminine aspect through the magic of nature, and this brings many opportunities for her to perceive the world differently through a green veil. On the other hand, Colin chooses to dedicate his life to science and the masculine aspect. These two opposing aspects bring balance back to Misselthwaite. These two children will grow into adults and the masculine and feminine aspect will become stronger within them. Nature and science are two opposites but both offer a change to explore and analyse the world. Mary and Colin will take different paths, and will see the world from a completely different perspective.

These two children, who began on the same path, one hidden and neglected in India and the other hidden and neglected in England, find each other, and change the direction of their lives. Mary represents the feminine mother aspect of the story as she becomes more like a mother to Colin, as she helps nurse him back to health through her stories of the garden.

Whereas, Colin represents the masculine father aspect of science. Through the magic of the garden, Mary saved Colin and herself from a rather cruel and isolated existence within the house. Through Mary's exploration of the self and the unconscious, she unearthed the darkest secret hidden within the manor and turned Colin's world from darkness to light. Both children feel the powerful effect of the garden, as it is slowly healing them and bringing them to different places within the world which helps them form their identity.

4.9. Conclusion – The Secret Garden within us all

What *The Secret Garden* reveals about society at the beginning of the twentieth century that it was mourning the loss of gardens, and people were becoming more trapped within the concrete bunkers they called home. The more that people moved to live in the cities, the more they became removed from the wonders of nature, and the more they became nostalgic about days past. In a way gardens became locked within the memories of people living in the cities, and became something that reminded them of days gone by when life was much simpler. The novel reveals the healing power behind a locked garden, as it spreads from a girl to eventually all the inhabitants living at Misselthwaite, including the master of the house.

In the final chapter, the narrative leaves the setting of the moors and goes off in search of Mr Craven somewhere in the world. It can be said that

[w]hile the secret garden was coming alive and two children with it, there was a man wandering [...] who for ten years had kept his mind filled with dark and heartbroken thinking.

(Burnett 1911: 323)

Mr Craven had been living in a world of torment for a decade, and had tried to escape the house through abandonment of his home and his child. What Mr Craven represents within the novel is that no matter how hard a person may try to escape their internal demons, that it will only follow you to the ends of the earth and back. Those demons are housed within and can only be healed by facing them and moving on to better things. Mr Craven must return to the garden, and face what he has been running from all this time.

A change is felt within Mr Craven from the moment that Colin enters the feminine space of the garden, and there is a connection created between the two characters. A connection that has always been there between father and son, but is awakened through Colin's entry into the garden. Mr Craven through a dream connects with Colin as he realises that '[i]n the garden! He said, wondering at himself. In the garden! But the door is locked and the key is buried deep' (Burnett 1911: 329). Through this dream about his wife and a letter from Susan Sowerby, Mr Craven is compelled to return to England and seek out his son, in the garden. The fact that the voice of his wife tells him, where he can find Colin, opens up the theory that her spirit has been present in the garden all along, and was released by Mary into the world.

Colin and Mr Craven are reunited within the garden, that has been the driving force behind the healing of Misselthwaite from the inside and outside. Now, as the story comes to an end, the garden can be revealed and '[...] it need not be a secret anymore' (Burnett 1911: 339). The garden can now be revealed to inhabitants and the healing power of the garden can expand beyond the borders of Misselthwaite According to Bixler,

[t]he book's concluding paragraphs conflate the two settings by placing the reader inside a house that is now fully open to the garden's nurturant influence, a house ready to receive a father and son who can now truly live in house as well as own it.

(Bixler 1991: 219)

As this quote suggests, the house has now become an open space that has fully absorbed the nurturant power from the garden. It is not time for the father and son to return to house that has now become a home for them to live. This connects to *The Secret Garden* when Colin and his father are viewed approaching the house by Weatherstaff, who up until now has never been present in the house as his 'duties rarely took him away from the garden' (Burnett 1911: 339). The house is now open, so more characters are present with its walls and this shows that the healing process has brought the community closer together. Weatherstaff witnesses them walking to the house, it is also revealed to Mrs Medlock that Colin can now walk and has been healed by his experiences beyond the manor.

In order to function, we need both the masculine and feminine aspect to exist together. Both the father and mother are needed to bring about balance to life. Therefore, Mr Craven's

return to Misselthwaite adds to completeness of the circle of life, and him returning to the space of the garden brings these two aspects even closer together. Now, that balance has been restored to the world of Misselthwaite, the masculine and feminine aspects can work in harmony to restore order, creating a home and a community for Colin, Mary and Mr Craven to be a part of. All three of them have been lacking a home in some way and have been searching for one. Now, the feminine and masculine aspects have been united, they can find a home within the house and the garden, which is an extension of the house.

In the concluding chapter, Burnett begins to sum up how the locked garden has affected Mary and Colin, and how it has changed them from within. Burnett states that when Mary's mind 'was full of disagreeable thoughts and sour opinions of people and her determination not to be pleased by or interested in anything', that she would remain locked within her own internal garden of torment and sickness (Burnett 1911: 322). By Mary exploring the self through the house and the garden and opening those once locked doors within and filling her mind with 'robins, and moorland [...], and with secret gardens coming alive day by day [...], there was no room left for disagreeable thoughts' which affected her well-being. Through the power of Mary and the garden, Colin was able to do the same and move to a better place for his well-being, too.

By the final chapter of the novel, the focus moves away from Mary and journeys to Colin and Mr Craven. This move by Burnett to change the focus of the novel mid way from Mary to Colin, emphasises that the power of the garden cannot be contained to just one person within the novel, but flows throughout it to other characters. It could be thought that the story of the house and garden continues beyond that of Mary or that her purpose has come to an end, as she awakened the spirit of the garden and unleashed it on inhabitants of Misselthwaite.

According to Elizabeth Lennox Keyser in "Quite contrary: Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden*"

Mary slips increasingly into the background until she disappears entirely from the final chapter. She also asserts that Colin ascends to manhood, Mary must necessarily enter the silence and submission of womanhood.

(Keyser 1983: 9, cited in Parsons 2002: 248)

As this quote suggest, Mary's role within the novel fades into the background, as Colin takes centre stage in the final chapter. Colin begins his ascension to manhood, whereas Mary must enter into obedience of womanhood. This interpretation of the ending of *The Secret Garden*, does not follow the essence of the novel as the spirit of Mary is felt entirely to the end. It is through the power of Mary and through her personification of the garden that Colin and Mr Craven are reunited. Another interpretation is to recognise 'the subversive power of the feminine, a power that undermines patriarchal domination' (Parsons 2002: 248). The second interpretation fits the novel better as once the feminine power is unleashed through Mary, there is no way of stopping it spreading to the other characters within the novel. So, the ending of the novel can be viewed in many ways, but it is up to the reader how they interpret the narrative map created by Burnett.

The secret garden in a way becomes a myth within the boundaries of Misselthwaite as everyone knows of its existence. According to Blackford,

[t]he crux of the myth, and Mary's role in it, is that she is no longer enchanting others with her stories of India and gardens. She herself becomes the story, has become myth.

(Blackford 2012: 155)

As this quote indicates is that Mary's stories may have stopped within the novel, but she has become a part of the healing myth and will be spoken about for generations by the inhabitants of Misselthwaite. For over a century now, *The Secret Garden* has been read to children and the myth of Mary continues to grow as does the narrative map of the story, as children from many generations are introduced to the adventures of Mary and her healing power from the garden that connects us all.

To conclude, what Burnett implies through the pages of *The Secret Garden* is that within us all exists are very own garden and if this is left unattended and unexplored, then we will feel empty within the world. Through Burnett's exploration of the self, through Mary and through the corridors of the house, she was able to explore the unconscious and the internal realms within. Bringing Mary and the reader, close to the darkness that lurks within the locked rooms within the manor. It takes a child to explore and unlock the darkness from within the manor

Through the power of childhood innocence balance is restored to Misselthwaite as the once locked manor becomes open again. The garden and the house become even more connected, when it revealed that the spirit of Colin's mother has been reviving the garden and the house through Mary's childhood innocence. The mother's caring nature is passed on to the next generation and with it breathes new life back into a world that once was caught in a wintry landscape, only awaiting the the power of a child to heal and transform it. The power to heal must come from within us somewhere, and it is through this power that we find those small things in life that bring us joy within the garden that we call the world.

5. Conclusion: Final Thoughts

In conclusion, *Coraline* and *The Secret Garden* offer the reader a place to explore identity formation. In both texts the house is a metaphor for the exploration of identity and finding a home to call their own. Both protagonists search not only for a home on the outside, but also a home on the inside that forms their identity. Being at home within yourself is an important aspect of being an healthy adult, when we do not feel at home with ourself this can cause problems in later life. The idea of home is an important aspect in both texts and it through this search for a home, that the protagonists explore their identity along with the reader. Our idea of home is linked to us in many ways and quite often a home is somewhere we can be ourselves. This idea of home is linked to the narrative map that the author creates, it is through this space that the house is created for the protagonist to explore.

Through the narrative map, the writer creates a geography for the reader to explore, within this landscape exists the characters within the novel. The reader becomes a geographer as she builds and creates different aspects within the landscape, that the writer has created through the narrative map. This creates a connection between the reader and writer, as the writer becomes the map creator, and the reader the map-reader, who analyses and brings the narrative map to life. All of these different layers help create the different worlds found in literature. As previously stated, it can be said that literature can be viewed as one large narrative map, as writers keeping adding to it through being influenced by others. All of these

things construct one large narrative map that only continues to expand with every new generation of writers. We are all part of the never-ending story.

Coraline is a unique story that highlights many issues facing children and adults today. These issues that we find in the novel are to do with forming an identity, and finding a home both on the inside and outside of ourselves. In *Coraline*, we find fragmented families, neglected children, and an isolated house where everybody appears to live in a world of their own. It is through exploring all of these aspects that Coraline is able start forming her own identity, as she conquers the Gothic landscape with all of these issues hiding within it.

The question of identity is at the centre of *Coraline*. Coraline must explore her world in search of that question at the heart of being human, who am I? Her journey begins in the garden that symbolises where she starts at the beginning of the novel. She must explore the unconquered territory of the garden before she can explore the house. The garden symbolises Coraline's beginning of exploring her identity and the different challenges that it presents to her. It can be said that the garden with its many overgrown and hidden parts represents parts of her identity, as she conquers them one by one. Coraline's exploration of the garden leads her back to the house and the inner self as she goes through the doorway to the other house.

The doorway that connects the two houses creates a connection between the imaginary and reality. It is not only Coraline that must walk through this doorway but all children, so that they can begin to find their place within the adult world. This doorway takes her to a place that pushes the boundaries of what she can believe as real. She finds herself in a house that closely resembles her own but is different in many ways. The other house represents Coraline's imagination gone wild and could only have been the creation of a child, who is much closer to the world of the imaginary. The other house represents the imaginary world and is on the edge of the reality. It is on this edge that we gain some insight into Coraline's fate, if she does not accept growing up. The other house is a part of the Gothic landscape that she must explore in order to solve her identity crisis she is suffering from, so that she can move on to the next stage of her development.

With the Gothic landscape we find the Gothic house in the novel. With its many rooms for the protagonist to explore, it invites her to begin searching and forming an identity. The Gothic house just like identity is a confusing place to be and it is within the walls that she becomes lost within. Identity is not something that is easy for Coraline to define and it takes time for her to explore this aspect of herself. This thesis has shown that the Gothic house is

a metaphor for the human mind and this connects with identity as we form this through our mind, so the connection between the two is strong in *Coraline*. This is why Coraline goes through the doorway, as she searches for clues to who she is in this world, and must go beyond her reality to find more.

The other house represents the imaginary world and how it possible for us to become trapped within our own hallucinations. Coraline's story reminds us that we can all defeat our other mother, our most darkest internal demons and stop them from controlling us. Through this we will find our identity, that will take us to different places in life to a place beyond the control of the other mother and the black buttons for eyes.

To conclude, *Coraline* brings the reader to a place that goes beyond the imagination to a place deep within us. Gaiman plants a house within the mind of the reader that stays with him long after the novel has been closed, and it remains within the space of the imagination echoing in the stillness of the self. By allowing the concrete spaces to mirror the mind, Gaiman seems to propose that we will find clues to our identity housed within our minds. It is through exploration of this house within that we find answers that will help us to understand and expand our identity formation

The Secret Garden deals is a powerful story about healing that highlights many issues that society still faces today. These issues that we find in the novel include: forming an identity, and finding a home and community to be a part of. In the novel, we find neglected children, isolation, death, sadness, rejuvenation, and healing. It is through exploring all of these aspects that Mary is able to start forming her own identity, as she explores the world of Misselthwaite. She is able to awaken something within herself through the exploration of the house, the moor, and the garden.

This thesis has shown that the house is a metaphor the self, and through exploration of it the protagonist begins searching for an idea of self. In *The Secret Garden*, the house is presented as intertwining labyrinth that Mary becomes lost within from the moment that she enters it. This Gothic house poses many questions for Mary as she explores and searches for answers to where she has been placed. The house is a closed space to begin with and it imprisons the inhabitants within it isolating them even from each other. Within the corridors of the house Mary finds no living being and this connects to her state of mind, and shows how she feels within herself. What this thesis has presented is that exploration of the self can be a lonely experience, but it is something that we must overcome in order to create an identity of

our own. All of these answers for Mary cannot be found within the house itself, but also can be found outside the house in the moor.

When we look deep within ourselves, we all have a moor that surrounds us that protects us from the outside world. For Mary, the moor acts as barrier protecting the house from outside influences. The moor, throughout the novel, represents Mary's emotional state and how she is feeling about her surroundings. With her being cut off from her emotions, the moor represents this aspect of her to the reader. In order for her to progress to the next stage of her development, she must reconnect with her emotions. Part of our identity is formed through our emotions and how we feel about the world, and this is no different for Mary.

Within the moor exists not only the house, but the garden as well. The garden represents that connection with nature that has been lost within the house. It stands in contrast to the house where life appears to be standing still. When Mary unlocks the garden, she unlocks the emotion that has been hidden away for ten years. This healing aspect penetrates every aspect of Misselthwaite, including the inhabitants. The garden awakens the house and, in essence, the self and brings it back to the land of the living. Through, the power of the garden, the house becomes an open space and welcomes the community back into it. The garden symbolises community and relationships, bringing the inhabitants closer together and in the process creating a home for them. Home is a place that Mary has been searching for and helps her to gain a deeper understanding of who she is from finding her place within the garden, we call the world.

To conclude, *The Secret Garden* transports the reader to a place somewhere closer to nature. Burnett creates a landscape within the mind of the reader that connects him to the world of nature. Through this landscape, Mary explores her internal and external self through the house, the moor and the garden. What Burnett seems to suggest is that in order for us to form an identity we must explore all aspects of our selves, and this includes the house which represents the internal self; the moor which connects us to our emotions; and the garden that connects us to our external self and the world of nature. It is through all these aspects that Mary gains a better understanding of herself in the world and prepares her for life beyond the moor. Through, the house and the garden being reunited balance is restored to the Mary's world and also the inhabitants.

Although these two novels come from different time periods and are almost a century apart, they share some interesting issues. This shows that even though society feels that we

have come along way since 1911, issues at the core of life remain the same. In both novels, the protagonist is searching for home to call their own this shows that this basic human need is still at the heart of our existence. A place to call your own, where you can plant roots and feel at home within yourself is an important part of your identity.

This thesis has shown that within literature the writer often employs the metaphor of a house as the human mind. It is within this house with its many rooms that the protagonist begins searching for clues to their identity. There are many types of houses within literature, but one that stands out and that is the Gothic house. With its labyrinthine type formation and many corridors within, it creates a place where the protagonist can become lost within searching for themselves. In both novels, the protagonist must find a way to escape the Gothic house and find a way to move beyond the doors within.

In *Coraline*, Coraline escapes the Gothic house by confronting the other mother and her fear of growing up. Through facing her fears and finding a way to take her imagination with her to the adult world, she is able to move to the next stage of development, therefore, ending her childhood identity crisis. Coraline finds a home within and through her acceptance of herself finds a home in the real world, too. In *The Secret Garden*, Mary become lost within the Gothic house from the moment she enters it. Mary has never really had a home, and has spent her whole life searching for a place called home. Through her exploration of Misselthwaite and the power of the garden, Mary is able to heal both on the inside and outside. Through this she is able to heal her surroundings and turn what was once an empty house into a home. Mary finds the home she has been seeking and through this forms a community that she can be a part of, and be happy.

To conclude, these two novels can be interpreted in many different ways. The focus in this thesis was on space of home and forming an identity, however, there could have been more of a focus on the home and its place within the borders of society. This thesis could have been written from a feminist perspective, and how this effects the identity formation of the two girl protagonists. It will be interesting to view literature in another hundred years time and see where the house fits into society then, the internal realms of the house keeps changing but its core value remain the same. What will the home of the future look like and how will this be presented in literature? Will the corridors with the Gothic house continue to expand and create new depths of the self to explore, and will we ever be able to find the true self hidden within the dynamics of the human mind?

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