

Idealism comes from those who know what it means to lack, to uplift those who are lacking. After his mother's death, Frances's son expressed that "her life was not a happy one" and that she had experienced "many sorrows the world did not know about" and felt that this would be a surprise to most. This is an assumption which, after reading *The Secret Garden*, I don't know if I would agree with. One would likely have to have experienced certain hardships in order to have had the will and understanding to overcome, or, even further, to express such understandings within their work. It is therefore my belief that this book would have been written for Frances herself, as much as for her readers.

Writing provided Frances with a space to reflect upon and articulate events which occurred throughout her life that she deemed worthy of sharing. This process could be said regarding most creative work, that writers and artists are attempting to fulfill an internal desire, driven by emotional or intellectual needs that are realised externally through their work; this, in turn, becomes the point of connection for readers. Fiction, however, is generally accompanied with an element of ambiguity; though a work may be based upon true events, authors are not as forthcoming with this proclamation. Therefore, even though an author is touching upon something very real, they remain somewhat anonymous in their expression. This anonymity extends itself to readers who are able to follow an author through these events in their own solitude.

Throughout my own reading of this book, I have found myself questioning the role of idealism in children's literature. With children becoming more and more aware of life's struggles as they age, could it be that idealism provides them with a sense of openness as an aid throughout this process? Often children will identify with characters they have read: whether it be due to a character's personality traits, the places in which a character finds themselves, or events that a character experiences within a narrative. This connection can provide comfort to a child, as they feel that there is someone out there just like them. Once a child has read a character's happy ending, they might imagine one for their own life. We may consider literature to present possibility and potential; these are words we may also use to describe children within the world at large.

But why return to these tales of childhood idealism as an adult? I've observed that idealism and nostalgia seem to go hand in hand in our return to children's books. Nostalgia can be related to the absence of something, as much as for something which was absent. We may long for and reminisce upon childhood as a result of it feeling distant, just as much we may reminisce and long for a childhood that we perhaps were not able to have. These sentiments relate to idealism too in that we may want to return to a time that we consider to have been ideal, or that we may want to connect with the innocent or unfulfilled idealism of our younger selves.