

Psychological Analysis of Children Traumatic Loss by the Main Character in the Novel *Bridge to Terabithia*

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the psychological impact of traumatic loss experienced by the main character, Jess Aarons, in the novel. The research employs a literary psychology approach by applying Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's five stages of grief, namely denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. The primary data are derived from the narrative and dialogues in the novel that depict Jess's emotional experiences following the death of his close friend, Leslie Burke. The findings indicate that Jess undergoes all five stages of grief. These stages reflect the emotional dynamics of a child in coping with profound loss. Furthermore, the study reveals that Jess is able to endure and achieve psychological recovery through the process of acceptance, while also utilizing imagination as a means of self-healing. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of childhood trauma in literary works and demonstrates how fiction can function both as a reflection of psychological experiences and as a medium for emotional healing among young readers.

Keywords: *Bridge to Terabithia*, *Five Stages of Grief*, *Psychology*, *Traumatic Loss*.

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INTRODUCTION

Literature and psychology maintain a dynamic and reciprocal relationship, as both disciplines contribute to a deeper understanding of human emotions, cognition, and behavior. Through imaginative expression, literature offers meaningful insights into the human psyche, (Shahnaz, 2023). In this context, (Dar, 2022) argues that literary psychology enables authors to construct convincing characters by articulating their feelings, moods, emotions, and thoughts, all of which shape their psychological experiences.

Psychology itself is concerned with the scientific study of the mind and behavior, encompassing aspects such as emotions, personality, brain processes, and human development, (Mohanta, 2023). Within literary studies, the primary aim of literary psychology is to examine the relationship between psychological dimensions in a text and the meanings they produce. This objective is achieved through close reading that considers the perspectives of the author, the characters, and the readers. Consequently, literary psychology serves as an effective framework for understanding how the complexity of human nature is represented in literary works.

Viewed through the lens of adolescence, literature frequently explores emotional struggles, identity formation, and the search for belonging, offering not only engaging narratives but also reflective spaces through which readers can better understand their own developmental experiences, (Floriani et al., 2025). In this regard, *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson portrays how the close bond between Jesse Aarons and Leslie Burke functions both as a refuge from everyday challenges and as the context for profound loss. This study examines the psychological consequences of this traumatic event on Jesse's development, while also considering its broader implications for understanding traumatic loss in children. Traumatic loss refers to the experience of losing a loved one under distressing or unexpected circumstances, (Boelen, 2020). Such loss is often associated with prolonged

trauma-related symptoms and extended grief reactions, including intrusive thoughts, intense longing for the deceased, and difficulties in accepting the loss. Moreover, individuals who experience significant loss may develop feelings of guilt, responsibility, and a tendency to reassess their religious beliefs (Barlé et al., 2017). In the context of childhood, traumatic loss encompasses experiences in which a child endures the death of a parent, family member, friend, or other deeply distressing events.

According to (Alkhodairy, 2024), within literary studies, the theme of loss is frequently employed to depict a character's process of coping with pain and trauma. *Bridge to Terabithia* holds a significant place in children's literature due to its nuanced portrayal of friendship and bereavement. The novel narrates the story of two children who construct an imaginative world as a means of confronting the complexities of reality. This study, which focuses on the psychological impact of loss on the protagonist, is particularly relevant, as the trauma experienced by Jess reflects a universal human condition encountered by individuals across different contexts. As noted by (Herman, 1992), traumatic loss can exert a profound psychological impact regardless of an individual's age or background.

This study aims to examine the role of traumatic loss in shaping the main character in *Bridge to Terabithia* from a psychological perspective. It employs the five stages of grief theory proposed by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, which posits that individuals experiencing loss typically progress through stages of denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Through this framework, the study analyzes how the main character navigates these stages in response to traumatic loss.

Several prior studies on the novel serve as important references for this research. For instance, "The Unfulfilled Needs and the Effects of the Unfulfillment in Katherine Paterson's *Bridge to Terabithia*" by (Setianingtyas, 2014) this research has two objectives; they are to investigate the unfulfilled needs of Jesse and to analyze the effects of those unfulfillment needs. This research uses psychological approach since it is the most suitable approach to investigate the character's feelings or thoughts. In addition, Hierarchy of Needs theory by Abraham H. Maslow is applied to direct the analyses process. The result shows that Jesse needs of safety, love and belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization are not fulfilled and it makes Jesse feel insecure, threatened, lonely, unloved, and unconfident; get self-doubt and disrespect himself; and do not have any achievements. In contrast, the present study differs both theoretically and analytically, as it adopts Kübler-Ross's model of grief to specifically investigate the psychological impact of traumatic loss on the main character.

Second, "The Identification of Character Education on Jesse Aarons' Characterization in *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson" by (Dewi et al., 2021) this study applies the interactive model of qualitative data analysis by (Miles et al., 2014). Through Jesse Aarons' characterization, it is found out that he possessed 29 characters and 25 of them belong to the values proposed by Kemendikbud (2016). Those values are religious, peace-loving, tolerant, wise, nature-loving, nationalist, self-sacrificing, achiever, patriotic, disciplined, independent, hardworking, tough, creative, courageous, mutual-cooperative, democratic, nonviolent, solidarity, voluntary, integrity, honest, loyal, fair, and responsible.

In contrast, the present study differs both theoretically and analytically, as it adopts Kübler-Ross's model of grief to specifically investigate the psychological impact of traumatic loss on the main character. Despite the novel's prominence, scholarly attention to the psychological effects of trauma experienced by Jess remains limited. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap while contributing to the fields of education and child psychology. A deeper understanding of how trauma is represented in literature may assist educators, parents, and psychologists in developing greater sensitivity toward children's experiences of loss.

Additionally, this research underscores the potential of literary works to support children coping with trauma by offering fictional models that can serve as emotional references. As noted by (Kysil, 2021), fiction particularly fairy tales and adventure narratives can function as an effective pedagogical tool for helping children navigate psychological challenges. By presenting characters who overcome adversity, literature provides symbolic

resources that enable children to better understand and regulate their emotions. Consequently, engagement with literary narratives may indirectly facilitate the healing process in children who have experienced trauma. A universal reality is revealed by (Kübler-Ross, 1972) groundbreaking study on the five phases of grief: grief extends beyond the boundaries of terminal or chronic illness to include individuals who grieve the loss of a loved one. As a result, literary psychology illuminates the common experiences that mold our emotional landscapes in addition to expanding our knowledge of the human psyche, (Sugara et al., 2024). According to (Pane & Komala, 2024), loss is a common human experience that can be brought on by a number of things, including death, losing one's work, relationship problems, or other unforeseen circumstances.

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross gathered the stages that people who experience loss may go through with an emphasis towards human behavior. The Five Stages of Grief is the name given to these five phases. These phases, which are (1) Denial, (2) Anger, (3) Negotiation (Bargaining), (4) Depression, and (5) Acceptance, are also referred to as DABDA. According to Kübler-Ross, not all bereaved people go through all the phases, and they are not necessarily in that order. But according to Kübler-Ross, a person going through grieving will go through at least two of the five phases. Before passing the last level, some people will alternatively and frequently go through a number of stages.

In her book *On Death and Dying*, Elizabeth Kubler Ross originally presented the stages of mourning model, which outlines a process for people who are grieving the loss of a loved one, a tragedy, or a terrible sickness diagnosis. This book emerged from Kübler-Ross's interest in how patients cope with death. She conducted direct interviews with over 200 patients facing terminal illness, and from there she developed the psychological model now known as the Five Stages of Grief. These phases are not limited to those who suffer from the sadness of a fatal illness; they can also happen to those who suffer from divorce, the loss of a loved one or a career, among other things. Elisabeth Kubler Ross divides the behavior of someone experiencing grief into five stages, namely:

Denial and Isolation

Denial is the initial stage experienced by someone who is grieving, where the individual finds it difficult to accept the reality that death has actually occurred. At this stage, they may say things like, "No, this can't be happening to me," or, "This can't be real." At this point, people struggle to accept the truth of the diagnosis or loss. As a coping strategy for the agonizing pain, they may unconsciously deny reality and experience emotional turmoil or numbness. When they experience emotions gradually rather than all at once, denial helps facilitate the process. In addition to denial, someone suffering from a terminal illness will usually isolate themselves as a result of their condition. Isolation is a condition in which the patient distances themselves emotionally from others or feels misunderstood by those around them. Self-isolation is an act of disbelief in the tragedy that has befallen them or those around them.

Anger

After overcoming the denial stage, people often experience intense anger. This anger can be directed at God, others, or even oneself. "Why did this have to happen to me?" is a common question. This stage expresses one's feelings of injustice and frustration with current circumstances.

Bargaining

At this stage, people attempt to change the situation by negotiating, either with a higher authority or with themselves. They believe that they can stop or reduce the loss if they take certain actions. This could be a request for more time or a hope that things will improve.

Depression

Sadness and hopelessness arise as the person begins to face the reality of the loss. Deep sadness, lack of interest in daily activities, and a sense of emptiness are characteristic of this phase. This can be a very serious phase that lasts for a long period of time.

Acceptance

This is the final stage, where people learn to live with their new condition and begin to accept the reality of the loss. People begin to look for ways to move on and adjust to the changes that have occurred, although grief may still be present. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross created the five-stage theory of loss, a psychological model that explains the emotional journey a person takes when confronted with loss, whether it be the death of a loved one, a terminal illness diagnosis, or other painful experiences, (Qayumah, 2019).

METHOD

This research used a qualitative approach with a descriptive analysis method. This approach was chosen because the study aimed to analyze the emotional experience of the main character, Jess Aarons, in dealing with traumatic loss in the novel *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson. Descriptive analysis was used to describe and interpret how Jess's traumatic experience was portrayed in the novel based on relevant psychological theories. In collecting the data, the researcher used a psychological analysis approach with the five stages of grief theory by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross.

The primary data of this research is taken from the novel *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson as the main object of research. The novel was published in 1977 by Thomas Crowell. The novel is divided into 13 chapters and consists of 180 pages. The chapters are used by researcher to conduct this research is from 11 until 13. The data analyzed are narratives, dialogues, and descriptions related to the five stages of grief in the main character. The secondary data sources in the form of books and articles related to how trauma and emotions are represented in novels for children can be referenced, especially those that relate children's literature to the psychological development.

The data in this study were collected through several steps. First, the novel *The Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson was read carefully to understand the story. Then, sentences and dialogues related to the five stages of grief based on Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's theory were marked and classified. The researcher also reviewed relevant journals, articles, and other sources to support the study. Finally, the selected data were identified and organized according to the research problem.

The data in this study were analyzed using the interactive model of (Miles & Huberman 2014), which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. First, the collected data from *Bridge to Terabithia* were simplified and selected based on the research objectives. Next, the data were presented in matrix and descriptive forms. Finally, conclusions were drawn from the analyzed data to explain the psychological aspects of the novel.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis of Jess Aarons' character, it was found that the denial stage in Elisabeth Kübler-Ross' Five Stages of Grief theory was manifested through verbal denial, logical reasoning, and symbolic behavior. The second stage in the grieving process, anger, was manifested by Jess Aarons' character through verbal aggression (anger toward Leslie), physical aggression, internal frustration, and emotional outbursts. The third stage, bargaining, as found in this study, shows that Jess Aarons manifests bargaining through forms of regret, assumptions, and alternative imaginations about the events that have occurred. In the fourth stage, depression, the findings of this study show that Jess Aarons' depression is manifested through apathy, loss of interest in the things he loves, excessive crying, loneliness, and feelings of worthlessness. In the fifth stage, acceptance, the findings in this study show that Jess Aarons manifested acceptance through positive reflection on Leslie, courage to face fears, and openness to build new relationships while still valuing past memories.

Denial

In *Bridge to Terabithia*, Jess initially refuses to believe that Leslie has died. When he first hears the tragic news from his father, he experiences shock and confusion. His mind struggled

to comprehend the reality of Leslie's death, and instinctively he rejected it, choosing to believe it was just a mistake.

"No," he said, finding his voice. Leslie wouldn't drown. She could swim real good." (p. 146)

No," he said, finding his voice. "Leslie wouldn't drown. She could swim real good." is a clear form of the denial stage in Jess Aarons' grieving process. He has not been able to accept Leslie's death as reality, and chooses to believe in possibilities that defy the facts.

It is also supporting in the other sentence which also shows that there is denial done by the main character.

"No!" Jess was yelling now. "I don't believe you. You're lying to me!" (p. 147)

Jess's statements in this excerpt reflect a spontaneous and emotional response to the news of the death of Leslie, his closest friend. The words "I don't believe you" and "You're lying to me!" signify a denial of reality, which is the main feature of the denial stage in Kübler-Ross' theory.

Knowing somehow that running was the only thing that could keep Leslie from being dead. It was up to him. He had to keep going. (p. 147)

In emotional confusion and panic, he escapes physically by running, because he irrationally believes that by continuing to run, he can keep the reality of Leslie's death from becoming real.

4 Anger

Jess begins to process Leslie's death; his feelings turn to anger. Jess feels angry at the world, at the people around him, and even at Leslie. Jess's anger is part of his attempt to make sense of this loss. This stage illustrates Jess's struggle to accept the sudden and tragic loss of his closest friend.

You think it's so great to die and make everyone cry and carry on. Well, it ain't. (p. 159)

This quote is spoken by Jess when he is at the height of his emotional outburst after Leslie's death. The sentence contains anger directed towards Leslie, even after her death. Jess felt that Leslie's death not only left a wound, but also disturbed and hurt the living people including himself. Anger is often the earliest and most explosive way of responding to grief. Children like Jess are not always able to express grief by crying or brooding, but instead through expressions of anger either at others, at themselves, or at the person who has died. These emotions not only portray anger, but also show the depth of loss that the character is experiencing.

If they'd cared at all for Leslie, they would have never brought her to this rotten place. He had to hold tightly to his hands for fear he might sock Bill in the face. (p. 160)

This quote shows that Jess is experiencing a very strong emotion of anger, which is directed at Leslie's parents, specifically at Bill Burke, Leslie's father. The anger arises because Jess feels that Leslie's funeral place is not worthy or appropriate for who Leslie really is, and he believes that if her parents really cared, they would not have taken Leslie to that place. The phrase "this rotten place" expresses an emotional rejection of the situation and the location of the funeral, which to Jess feels inappropriate. This emotion escalates to the point where he has to physically restrain himself from hitting Bill, which shows an overwhelming and almost uncontrollable intensity of anger.

Bargaining

Bargaining is the patient's attempt to gain more time or a better outcome by making promises to God, fate, or supernatural forces. According to Kübler-Ross, the bargaining stage often involves thinking about how things could have turned out differently. Individuals try to find ways to "undo" the loss or think of other possibilities that could have saved the deceased or delayed their death. Jess's thoughts show a desire to change the past. This is a common psychological mechanism in dealing with loss, where individuals feel that something could have been done to prevent the tragedy. Jess shows signs of this stage when he imagines different scenarios in which Leslie might have survived.

It had been so dumb of him not to ask if Leslie could go, too. He and Leslie and Miss Edmunds could have had a wonderful day. (p. 150)

This quote shows how Jess starts replaying the events in his mind and imagining alternative scenarios. He blames himself for not taking Leslie along on the trip to the museum with Miss Edmunds. In his mind, if only Leslie had come along, then the tragedy wouldn't have happened.

If it could be entered across a branch instead of swung into. (p. 167)

The sentence is part of Jess's bargaining process, where he looks for alternative scenarios that could prevent Leslie from dying. In the context of the novel, Jess thinks that if only Leslie could get into Terabithia through a tree branch (which is safer) and didn't need to use the rope swing as usual, then the accident wouldn't have happened.

The key word here is "if" which is characteristic of the bargaining phase. In this phase, a person tries to "negotiate with reality", often in the form of regret or imagining alternatives to the tragic events that have already occurred. In the excerpt, Jess imagines a safer ideal situation for Leslie, in an attempt to control something that has already happened even though he realizes that it cannot be changed. Children like Jess tend to use symbolic logic and fantasy to make sense of difficult situations. Jess, who is used to entering the world of Terabithia, now tries to imagine a safer "alternative path", as if it could erase the tragic events.

Depression

Kübler-Ross emphasizes that depression is an important and necessary part of the process of accepting death. In this stage, the best support is not empty consolation, but sincere presence and loving acceptance. The depression phase is characterized by deep sadness and withdrawal from normal activities. When Jess realized that Leslie was truly gone, he began to feel deep sadness. He lost interest in daily activities and felt that the world was no longer the same. Jess experienced this when he truly felt the loss of Leslie, not just in his thoughts but also in his feelings. He struggled to find meaning in life without Leslie and experienced extraordinary sadness.

He screamed something without words and flung the papers and paints into the dirty brown water. (p. 162)

The quote reflects the depressive stage in Jess' grieving process. He feels broken, has lost the meaning of life, and no longer cares about the things that used to be a part of him. This is the peak of Jess's emotional downfall, when grief has completely seeped into his consciousness and taken away his zest for life. This depicts a silent yet intense emotional outburst, where Jess not only feels lost, but also loses meaning in the things he used to love, especially painting. Throwing paper and paint into the muddy water is a symbolic act of despair, frustration, and loss of interest in life and oneself.

"I don't care. I don't care." He was crying now, crying so hard he could barely breathe. (p. 163)

This quote shows the total emotional breakdown that Jess is experiencing. The phrase "I don't care" is repeated twice, indicating that he is in a state of despair, emptiness, and loss of meaning towards anything. His crying was so intense that it was difficult to breathe, indicating that he was no longer able to withstand the emotional pressure that had accumulated since Leslie's death.

Leslie, I'm just a dumb dodo, and you know it. What am I supposed to do? (p. 168)

In this sentence, Jess expresses a deep sense of inferiority, helplessness, and loss of direction in life after Leslie's departure. By referring to himself as "just a dumb dodo", he devalues himself, as if he has no value without Leslie. The line "What am I supposed to do?" reflects his existential confusion and sense of loss of meaning in life. Jess not only lost his best friend, but also lost the direction and emotional grip he had in Leslie.

Jess shows a drastic decrease in self-esteem, he speaks to Leslie as if Leslie is still there, which is an expression of deep longing and loneliness. The sentence shows a loss of direction and hope, Jess does not know what to do, because Leslie's presence has been a source of enthusiasm and inspiration for him. In a literary context, depression is often depicted through inner monologues or symbolic dialogues with people who have passed away. In this case, Jess is not speaking to another person, but to the imaginary figure of Leslie, which is typical of someone caught up in a deep sense of loss.

Acceptance

According to Kübler-Ross, the acceptance stage is when individuals begin to accept reality and move on with their lives. The acceptance stage is a peaceful state in which the patient accepts death as part of life, without anger or regret. This is not a form of despair, but an inner victory over previous fear and turmoil. Jess does not forget Leslie, but he is no longer trapped in deep sadness. He remembers Leslie in a healthier way and builds bridges to honor his friend.

It was Leslie who had taken him from the cow pasture into Terabithia and turned him into a king. He had thought that was it. Wasn't king the best you could be? (p. 177)

In this excerpt, Jess is reflecting on Leslie's role in his life, no longer with anger, regret, or denial, but with meaningful acceptance. He recognizes that Leslie is the one who has changed his life, taking him from an ordinary life to the empowering imaginary world of Terabithia, where he is "king". The line "Wasn't king the best you could be?" signifies that Jess is beginning to understand the emotional and spiritual legacy Leslie left behind. He no longer mourns Leslie's death with devastation, but sees it as part of his personal growth. This is the essence of the acceptance stage of the grieving process, integrating the loss into the life narrative and finding meaning in it. Jess remembers Leslie without anger or paralyzing grief, but with respect and gratitude. He begins to realize the positive impact Leslie had on his life, rather than just focusing on her passing. He no longer denies or regrets Leslie's death, but accepts that the experience shaped who he is today.

It is also supporting in the other sentence which also shows that there is acceptance done by the main character.

As for the terrors ahead - for he did not fool himself that they were all behind him - well, you just have to stand up to your fear and not let it squeeze you white. Right, Leslie? (p. 178)

In the quote, Jess shows the realization that sadness and fear will not stop coming, but he is ready to face them. The phrase "you just have to stand up to your fear and not let it squeeze you white" reflects the new spirit he gained after going through tough emotional stages. He no longer runs away from reality, but instead chooses to stand up to the challenges ahead. The statement "Right, Leslie?" becomes a healthy form of inner communication no longer as a form of denial or despair, but as a way to honor and carry Leslie's spirit with him, as the journey of life continues.

Jess recognizes that there will still be difficulties in the future, and that it is part of life. He chose not to be afraid anymore, showing emotional growth. He speaks to Leslie not in sadness, but with strength and respect. Jess' attitude shows that he has managed to process his emotions in a healthy way. He no longer focuses on the loss of Leslie, but on how he can live with the legacy of values and courage that Leslie once taught him. The quote shows a calm emotional climax, Jess as a character has completed his grief journey and now looks to the future with a more mature and hopeful attitude. Leslie now lives on in his not physically, but through the courage and love she left behind.

Based on the findings above, the discussion of the research is grounded in the Five Stages of Grief theory proposed by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross in *On Death and Dying*, which conceptualizes grief as a dynamic process encompassing denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. The findings demonstrate that these stages are not experienced in a rigid sequence but rather emerge in fluid and overlapping ways, shaped by individual, developmental, and socio-cultural factors. Within the narrative of *Bridge to Terabithia*, Jess Aarons' responses to loss reflect this non-linear progression, revealing how children negotiate complex emotional states through both internal reflection and observable behavior.

The analysis shows that while all five stages are present, they differ in intensity and duration. Denial and anger appear as initial reactions, with denial functioning as a temporary psychological defense and anger manifesting as both internalized guilt and outward frustration. The bargaining stage is relatively brief and introspective, whereas depression emerges as the most prolonged and critical phase, marking the deepest point of emotional disruption. During this stage, Jess experiences a profound sense of emptiness, loss of motivation, and social withdrawal, indicating the severe psychological impact of traumatic

loss. These findings support Kübler-Ross's assertion that depression often represents the turning point in the grieving process, where individuals begin to confront the full reality of loss.

Furthermore, the discussion highlights that children experience and express trauma differently from adults. Due to their limited emotional and cognitive development, children often communicate grief through behavior, imagination, and indirect emotional expression rather than verbal articulation. Jess's actions such as withdrawal, emotional outbursts, and engagement with the imaginary world of Terabithia illustrate how imaginative spaces can function as coping mechanisms. This aligns with broader psychological perspectives suggesting that symbolic and creative outlets play a crucial role in helping children process trauma and regulate emotions. In this context, Terabithia operates not merely as an escape, but as a transformative space that facilitates emotional processing and gradual acceptance.

Finally, the findings emphasize the importance of social support in the recovery process and highlight the transformative potential of trauma. Jess's movement toward acceptance is significantly influenced by the presence of supportive figures, such as family members and teachers, as well as by meaningful actions that symbolize emotional growth. His eventual ability to revisit Terabithia and share it with his sister reflects a shift from avoidance to acceptance, indicating psychological resilience and maturation. Compared to previous studies that focus on adult characters or formalist approaches, this research contributes a distinct perspective by examining childhood grief and emphasizing the role of imagination as a coping strategy. Thus, the study underscores that traumatic loss, while deeply disruptive, can also serve as a catalyst for emotional development when supported by both internal and external resources.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this research indicate that Jess Aarons undergoes all five stages of grief; denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance in response to the traumatic loss of Leslie Burke. These stages are experienced in a non-linear progression, with varying intensity and duration. The denial stage is reflected in Jess's refusal to accept the reality of Leslie's death, while anger emerges through expressions of injustice and blame. The bargaining stage is characterized by imagined alternative scenarios, followed by depression as the lowest emotional phase, marked by withdrawal, helplessness, and diminished interest in previously enjoyed activities. The final stage, acceptance, is demonstrated through Jess's ability to acknowledge reality, preserve positive memories of Leslie, and symbolically continue her legacy through the reconstruction of Terabithia. In conclusion, the research demonstrates that Jess experiences a significant emotional transformation, leading to increased psychological resilience and emotional maturity. The findings suggest that, despite the complexity of childhood trauma, children possess the capacity to process profound loss in nuanced and meaningful ways. Furthermore, the study confirms the applicability of Kübler-Ross's theoretical framework in analyzing psychological dynamics within literary texts, particularly in the context of childhood grief, while underscoring the role of imagination and emotional attachment as essential mechanisms in the healing process. This research shows that children's literature can be used as a medium to introduce and discuss complex emotional and psychological issues in a way that is relatable to children. This research can be used as an initial foundation to develop further studies related to psychological representation in children's literature. Future researchers are advised to explore other psychological dimensions, such as coping mechanisms or the influence of the social environment on trauma recovery, either by using different psychological theories or interdisciplinary approaches.

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