

**DEPRESSIVE POSITION AND DEFENSE MECHANISMS OF JESS**

**AARONS IN *BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA* NOVEL**

**A GRADUATING PAPER**

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Gaining  
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I certify that this thesis is definitely my own work. I am completely responsible for the content of this thesis. Other writer's opinions or findings included in the thesis are quoted or cited in accordance with ethical standards.

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Saya menyatakan bahwa skripsi tersebut sudah dapat diajukan pada sidang Munaqasyah untuk memenuhi sebagian syarat memperoleh gelar Sarjana Sastra Inggris. Atas perhatian yang diberikan, saya ucapkan terimakasih.

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## DEPRESSIVE POSITION AND DEFENSE MECHANISM OF JESS

### AARONS IN THE NOVEL *BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA*

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#### ABSTRACT

*Bridge to Terabithia* is children novel which is written by Katherine Paterson in 1977. This novel tells about a boy in 10 years old named Jess Aarons who faces hard situations in his age such as feels anxiety, depressed, inferior, gets bullies and feels guilty over his friend's death, Leslie Burke. This novel is also show the influence fantasy of child toward defense mechanism which is used to overcome his hard situations. Based on the problem above, the researcher guesses that Jess experiences depressive position. This research is purposed to explain whether Jess experiences depressive position or not. This research uses psychoanalysis theory by Melanie Klein about Object Relation which is focus on Depressive Position and Defense Mechanism. This research uses qualitative method to analyze the data. Based on the analysis, the researcher concludes that Jess experiences Depressive Position. Jess's depressive position start with feeling anxiety coupled with feeling guilty over Leslie's death because he does not invites her goes to Washington with Miss. Edmunds. This Depressive Position is caused by external and internal factor. Internal factor comes from himself like feels loneliness and lack of attention. Whereas external factors comes out of himself like bully and loses the loved object. To solves this condition Jess uses defense mechanism: introjection, projection and splitting.

**Keywords:** *Depressive Position, Jess Character, Defense Mechanism*



**POSISI DEPRESIF DAN MEKANISME PERTAHANAN DIRI JESS  
AARONS DALAM NOVEL *BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA***

Oleh: Ika Wulaningsih

**ABSTRAK**

*Bridge to Terabithia* adalah novel anak-anak yang ditulis oleh Katherine Paterson pada tahun 1977. Novel ini bercerita tentang seorang anak laki-laki berumur 10 tahun, Jess Aarons yang mengalami situasi sulit diusiannya seperti merasa cemas, tertekan, merasa rendah, mendapat bulli dan merasa bersalah atas kematian sahabatnya. Novel ini juga menunjukkan pengaruh fantasi anak terhadap pertahanan diri yang digunakan untuk mengatasi situasi sulit mereka. Berdasarkan permasalahan tersebut peneliti menduga bahwa Jess mengalami posisi depresif. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan apakah Jess benar-benar mengalami posisi depresif atau tidak. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori Psikoanalisis dari Melanie Klein mengenai hubungan relasi objek yang fokus pada posisi depresif dan pertahanan diri. Peneliti menggunakan metode kualitatif untuk menganalisis data. Dari analisa yang didapat, peneliti menyimpulkan bahwa Jess benar-benar mengalami posisi depresif. Posisi Depresif Jess diawali dengan persaaan cemas disertai dengan rasa bersalah atas kematian Leslie karena tidak mengajaknya pergi ke Washington. Posisi depresif ini disebabkan oleh faktor internal dan eksternal. Faktor internal berasal dari dalam diri Jess yaitu berupa rasa kesepian dan kurang perhatian. Sedangkan faktor eksternal berasal dari luar dirinya yaitu berupa bulli dan kehilangan objek yang dicintai. Untuk mengatasi hal itu Jess menggunakan mekanisme pertahanan diri, yaitu interoyeksi, proyeksi, pemisahan dan identifikasi proyektif.

**Kata kunci:** *Posisi Depresif, Tokoh Jess dan Mekanisme pertahanan diri*

**MOTTO**

“MAN JADDA JADI”

“DON’ T STOP WHEN YOU’RE TIRED, STOP WHEN YOU’RE  
DONE”

“IF YOU DON’ T STAND FOR SOMETHING, YOU’LL FALL FOR  
ANYTHING”

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this graduating paper to:

My beloved father and mother, Bejo and Siti Dawiyah

My beloved brother, Setiya Budi

My beloved grandparents Kamsar and Parinah

MYSELF



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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of Study

Literature is something created from reflection of human beings. Through literature, humans can express their feelings by using any languages to create a literary work. Literature can be use as a tool to preserving culture, to give some knowledges or teach moral values to reader's spiritual experience. According to Warton and his followers, literature is customs warehouse, source book history of civilization, especially the history of rise and collapse of the chivalry spirit (Wellek and Warren, 1977 : 122).

As an element of culture, a work of literature refers to reality. The real world event can happen in the world which is created by a work of literature. By studying literary works, the reader will be able to learn life values, ideas, problems, and conflicts faced by humans whose are described in the characters of literary works. Characters in literary works can be adopted in human real life as a source of contemplation. There are various products of literary work such as film, drama, prose, lyric and etc. Abrams states that literature has been commonly used since the eighteenth century, equivalently with the Frenchbelleslettres ("fineletters"), to designate fictional and imaginative writings like poetry, prose fiction, and drama (2008:177).

In this research, the researcher chooses novel to study as one of the prose forms. The reasons why the researcher chooses novel because novel can engage the readers into their imaginative world to portray setting, character and plot. As cited in Setyaningrum's paper that novel is lengthy fictitious prose narrative portraying characters and presenting and organized series of events and setting (2012:2). Furthermore, novel with its length can make the readers anxious with the story before they read until the end. Therefore, novel is interesting to be read. Also, novel can make the reader interest to know the situation and message which can extend reader appreciation toward personal life.

Many novels portray human life that is showed by imaginative character. It is based on the problem of each character that creates phenomena in human life. As cited of Abdul Jalil graduating paper, one portrayals of life phenomena in literary works is psychological phenomena. Psychological phenomena in literature actually have similarity with the real persons because each character in literary works is given physical image and different personality (2015:2). Here psychological aspect is needed to know the character's personality. The researcher chooses psychology of literature to support the analysis and reveal the psychological aspect of the characters.

According to Wellek and Warren, there are four ways to understand the relationship between psychology and literature. First is analyzing the psychological author study as type or individual. Second is analyzing the creativity process. Third is analyzing the types and psychological rules which are applied in literary work. Fourth is analyzing the effects of reader's psychology (1990: 90). Here the researcher

chooses the third one. It is because literary works, such as novel sometimes takes story from real life. It can adopt real psychological phenomenon in life as the story in novel. *Bridge to Terabithia* novel also adopt story from Katherine's real experience about her son's psychology after the death of his friend.

*Bridge to Terabithia* novel by Katherine Paterson is chosen by the researcher to be analyzed. It tells about fascinating story of friendship. It is a heartwarming story of two children who use each other's strength to conquer and overcome many of their own weakness (L. Bryson : 1). Jess comes from poor family which has economic problems. His father expects him to be dutiful son and brother, and his own personality such as his artistic talent often seems to be less important than his ability to get the chores done. His father rarely has time for Jess. In other words, he never gives his affection for him. At school he has bullies troubles from his friends. He has a dream to be faster runner in fifth grade, but it shattered by a girl, Leslie Burke who runs faster than anyone. She is his new neighbor. Day by day Jess and Leslie make friend. Leslie often tell stories of fantasy and magic. Then, They create a secret kingdom together. Terabithia, a magical place that can be accessed by swinging old rope.

There, they rule kingdom, fight the dark master and his creatures and plot against the school bullies. Jess as a king and Leslie as a princess. One day, Miss. Edmund, Jess' music teacher invites him to national museum in Washington. Jess does not ask Leslie to accompany him. When he returns home, his father tells that Leslie has passes away that morning while trying to swing across the creek. Jess feels

anxiety and guilty for Leslie death, but his father consoles him to keep their friendship alive. Then, Jess decides to re-imagine Terabithia and build a safe bridge. He invites his sister, May Belle to enter Terabithia.

The reasons why the researcher chooses *Bridge to Terabithia* to be analyzed are because: First, *Bridge to Terabithia* is a children novel, using simple language and easy to understand. Second, story of this novel shows how the main character has a complicated feelings like anxiety, inferior, getting bullied and feel guilty of his friend's death. Third, not like other children novel, *Bridge to Terabithia* tells about fantasy of child that has influence in his personality to overcome his complicated feeling. Through character in *Bridge to Terabithia*, Katherine urges the children and readers to always open their mind, how to use their imagination to create an imaginary world by their own. She also reminds her readers that tragedy, joy, love, and grief happen to human no matter how old or young the human are (Shmoop).

Based on explanation above, the researcher interest to analyze Jess's character who has complicated feeling, because it relates to his fantasy creating fantasy land called Terabithia that influences his defense mechanism to overcome his complicated feeling. It will use psychological theory by Melanie Klein about depressive position and defense mechanisms. One of those complicated feeling is anxiety. Relate to that there is a verse about anxiety in holy Quran surah al baqarah: 38:

قُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا فَإِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنِّي هُدًى فَمَنْ تَبِعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا خَوْفَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

“Get ye down all from here; and if, as is sure, there comes to you guidance from me, whosoever follow my guidance, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve” (Yusuf Ali, 1996: 27).

Here, *khauf* means as fear or anxiety. When people in this condition, they feels uncomfortable and worry about something happen or might happen in future. relate to that in the verse above, there is a suggestion to prevent this condition occurs. That is following God’s guidance.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

Based on the background of study and the focus of study above, the researcher propose the research questions as follow:

1. If Jess Aarons experiences depressive position, how does it happen?
2. What are Jess Aaron’s defense mechanisms to overcome his depressive position in *Bridge to Terabithia* novel?

## **1.3 Objective of Study**

The objective of this research is to analyze how is Jess Aarons depressive position happen. It will analyze Jess’s feeling anxiety and guilt because of Leslie’s death and it will explain about what are defense mechanisms to overcome Jess depressive position in *Bridge to Terabithia* novel.

## **1.4 Significances of Study**

The research has two kinds of significances of study. Theoretical significance and practical significance. Theoretically, the theory of psychoanalysis is still relevant to analyse caharacter in literary works such as novel, prose, poetry film and lyrics.

Psychoanalysis, especially object relation theory by Melanie Klein is the theory which is necessary to analyze the relation of human itself with others object (mother, father etc) which stresses on intimacy and nurturing of the mother.

Practically, this research can enrich people to know more about analyzing a novel. Furthermore, this research can be a reference work for people who practice to analyses Melanie Klein's theory; the object relation theory, depressive position, and defense mechanisms.

### **1.5 Literature review**

The researcher has searching for some graduating papers relate to depressive position and defense mechanisms in the novel *Bridge to Terabithia* on the libraries and internet, but the researcher cannot find any analysis about that. Yet, The researcher find some researches that choose *Bridge to Terabithia* as the object with different analysis. There are two graduating paper and a graduating paper resume relate to *Bridge to Terabithia*.

First is Graduating paper written by Nuraeni from state Islamic University of Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta in 2010 entitled "A main character analysis on anxiety and defense mechanism in *Bridge to Terabithia* Novel". This research answers three basic questions: what are the characterization of Jess and Leslie as reflected in *Bridge to Terabithia* novel? What are Jess and Leslie's anxieties and How do Jess and Leslie apply Defense Mechanism as way to reduce their anxiety with theory of Sigmund Freud about anxiety and defense mechanism?



Second is resume of graduating paper written by Aswar Sugih Arto from state Islamic University of Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta in 2011 entitled “The Developmental stages analysis on the main character of *Bridge to Terabithia* Film”. First, this research describing the kinds of developmental stages such as behavior change and ability that experienced by the main character and also in order to understand the way of the main character overcomes his stage’s problems that he faced in each stage at *Bridge to Terabithia* film. Second is the usage of Erik Erikson’s psychosocial stages concept as the theoretical framework. Third, This research find that the main character experienced two stages psychosocial developmental that begins from late childhood “industry versus Inferiority” to the next stage of early adolescent “identity versus Role confusion”.

Third is Graduating paper written by Dwi Ambar Setyaningrum from State University of Yogyakarta in 2012 entitled “Jess Aarons’ Character changing as seen in Paterson *Bridge to Terabithia*”. This research identifies about character changing of Jess Aarons through some stages to finally pursuit maturity of life in the novel *Bridge to Terabithia* with Adolescence Psychological Development. This research provides stages of the development based on some psychological theorist, such as Jean Piaget’s theory of formal operation, Lawrence Kohlberg’s theory of principled moral development, and Erik Erikson’s theory of identity formation as enlarged by James Mercia.

Indeed, the three researches above have different theories but they have same object, *Bridge to Terabithia*. Although there are film and novel, all the story are quiet

same. Those researches are same with this research because this research take *Bridge to Terabithia* as the object, but this research has different analysis, because the researcher discuss about the depressive position and defense mechanism of Jess Aarons by applying theory of Melanie Klein.

## **1.6 Theoretical Approach**

The approaching technique is used in this research is objective approach which focuses only about the intrinsic elements of the novel. The intrinsic elements are characters, setting, plot, theme, and narrator point of view. In addition this research applies object relation theory of Melanie Klein that focuses on depressive position and defense mechanisms.

### **1.6.1 Object relation theory**

Based on Feist and Feist, Klein's basic theory derives from analyzing the infants. She was built on careful observations of young children. She stressed on importance of the first 4 to 6 months after birth. While Freud believes that it started of the first to 6 years of Life (2008:136). Klein sees that infants do not begin life with the blank mind but with an inherited predisposition to reduce anxiety. The infants' innate readiness to act that Freud also accepts this concept (Feist and Feist, 2008:140).

The researcher chooses this theory because it differs from Freud in at least three general ways. First object relations theory less emphasis on biologically and more importance on consistent patterns of interpersonal relationships. Second, object relation theory tends to be maternal, stressing the intimacy and

nurturing of the mother while Freud's rather paternalistic that emphasizes the power and control of the father. Third, object relation generally sees the humans contact and relatedness not sexual pleasure as the prime motive of human behavior (Feist and Feist, 2008: 140). Based on the explanation before, the appropriate aspect which has relation with this research is the first and third aspect about interpersonal relationship, humans contact and and relatedness.

#### **1.6.1.1 Object**

Freud says that humans have innate drives or instincts, and Klein agree about it. So, drives of course must have some objects. In object relation theory the objects can be like mother, father and etc. According to Freudian as cited in Feist and Feist book, object of the drive is any persons, part of person or thing which the aims is satisfied (2008: 138-139). Objects are all activities which are bridge between appearing of desire and its fulfillment. Because of that, the objects are not limited on things or certain condition but they also include all behaviors to achieve need satisfaction (Semiun, 2013: 266). For example, the hunger drives has breast as its object, the sex drives has a sexual organ as its object and etc.

#### **1.6.1.2 Depressive Position**

Klein sees infants engaging the conflict of their life and death insting, between good and bad. Infants naturally prefer to choose gratifying than frustrating ones (Feist and Feist, 2008:141). In their effort to choose between good and bad feelings, the infants organize their experience with positions.

Klein use “position” rather than “stage of development” to know that position alternate back and forth, they are not periods of time of developmental through a person phases. Klein purpose that these position describe normal social growth and development. There are two basic positions: paranoid-schizoid and depressive position. The researcher chooses the depressive ones.

Depressive position is the feelings of anxiety over losing a loved object coupled with a sense of guilt for wanting to destroy that object constitute (Feist an Feist, 2008:143). When Children in depressive position, the bad and good object are now the same. They reproach themselves for their previous destructive urges toward their mother, they are able to feel empathy for her. The depressive position is resolved when children fantasize that they have made reparation for their previous transgressions and when they recognize that their mother will not go away permanently but will return after each departure. When depressive position is resolved, children close the split between the good and bad mother. They are able not only to experience love from their mother, but also to display their own love for her. However, an incomplete resolution of the depressive position can result in the lack of trust, morbid mourning at the loss of a loved one and a variety of other psychic disorders” (Feist and Feist, 2008 :142-143).

## **1.6.2 Defense Mechanisms**

According to Klein defense mechanism is several psychic defense to protect the ego against the anxiety aroused by their own destructive fantasies. To control these anxieties infants use some mechanisms, such as losses, projection, splitting and projective identification (Feist and Feist, 2008:143). In doing so, first, infants fantasize something relate to external object into their mind to safe their self. Next If it does not reduces their anxiety, they reside their feeling to other person and make their perception are true. When infants still not comfort, they will split good and bad ego to get the comfort one. Then, If their anxiety reduced they will feel safe, But if the third one failed, they split an acceptable part of themselves, reside it to other and introjet it again to themselves.

### **1.6.2.1 Introjection**

According to Klein, introjection is situation that “infant fantasize taking into their body those perceptions and experiences that they have had with the external object” (Feist and Feist, 2008:143). The infant tries to introject good objects, to take them inside as a protection against anxiety. In other word, human puts something in their mind that can make them feel safe to overcome his or her anxieties.

### **1.6.2.2 Projection**

Projection is “fantasy that one’s own feelings and impulses actually reside in another person and not within one’s body. By projecting the destructive thing into the external objects, the infants can deal with their

anxiety. Projection make human believe that their own subjective opinion are true (Feist and Feist, 2008:144).

### **1.6.2.3 Splitting**

Klein said that Splitting is keeping apart incompatible impuls by managing the good and bad aspect of infants and of the external objects. Splitting can give good and bad impact. It depends on infants can deal with themselves. If splitting not extreme and rigid, it can be a positive and useful mechanism not only for infants but also for adults, But If it goes too excessive and inflexible splitting can lead to pathological repression (Feist and Feist,2008: 144).

### **1.6.2.4 Projective Identification**

It is a psychic defense mechanism that infants split of unacceptable parts of themselves, project them into another object, and finally introject them back into themselves in a changed or distord them (Klein as cited by Feist and Feist, 2008:144).

## **1.7 Methods of Research**

### **1.7.1 Type of Research**

In this research, the researcher uses a case study as the strategy of inquiry and the reseacher uses qualitative method in analyzing the major character of this novel. According to Creswell case study is qualitative strategy in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals (2009:207). Whereas qualitative method is a method as a means for



exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem and making interpretations of the meaning of the data (Cresswell, 2009:215).

### **1.7.2 Data Sources**

The researcher categorizes the data after gathering it all into the main data and secondary data. The main data is dialogues and narrations that relate to anxiety and feeling guilty of Jess in *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson. The unit of data is a sentence and narration that include action, sign and utterance of Jess. Furthermore, the secondary data taken from many sources such as theory books, hand book, journal, papers and some websites which relate to object of the research.

### **1.7.3 Data Collection Technique**

The researcher collects the data mainly from the novel itself, *Bridge to Terabithia*. The researcher uses some steps in doing the research. First, the researcher read the novel using close reading technique to know about the intrinsic elements in the story. Second, the researcher takes the data in novel and categorizes some dialogues and narrations that relate to anxiety and guilty feeling of Jess. Third, the researcher chooses Melanie Klein's psychoanalysis theory to apply in analysis.

### 1.7.4 Data Analysis Technique

The researcher uses descriptive analyses to examine the data relates to the novel *Bridge to Terabithia*. The researcher identifies the main character and his event before classify it. The researcher analyzes and explain the main data to finds the conclusion. There are four steps to be followed:

1. Identifying: the researcher identifies the data that has collected.
2. Classifying : the researcher classifies the data that deal with Jess anxiety an guilty feeling in *Bridge to Terabithia* Novel
3. Analyzing: the researcher analyzes the data using theory of Melany Klein about Depressive Position and Defense Mechanism.
4. Concluding: the researcher makes a conclusion of the research.

### 1.8 Hypothesis

The researcher hypothesizes that Jess Aarons feels depressive position. Depressive position is a condition when children feel anxiety because they lose the loved object coupled with guilty feeling because they destroy that object constitute. In *Bridge to Terabithia* novel, Jess is a loneliness child among his family. He has to face bully from his friend and he has feels anxiety and guilty because he loses his beloved friend, Leslie Burke. He feels regret because he does not invite Leslie go to Washington. The researcher guesses that he uses three defense mechanisms to overcome his depressive position such as introjection, projection and splitting.

### 1.9 Paper Organization

This paper consists of four chapters. Chapter one is introduction. It explains about background of study, research question, objective of study, significance of the study, literature review, and theoretical approach, methods of research and paper organization. Chapter two explains about the intrinsic element of *Bridge to Terabithia* novel. Chapter three discusses about the analyses of the main character of the novel. In this chapter the writer applies the object relation theory of Melanie Klein about depressive position and defense mechanisms relating to the novel. Chapter four consists of the conclusion of the research about depressive position and defense mechanisms of Jess Aarons in *Bridgeto Terabithia* novel.



## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

After analyze the hypothesis about depressive position and defense mechanisms of Jess Aarons in chapter one, the researcher wants to draw conclusion. The conclusion is written based on application of object relation theory that focus on depressive position and defense mechanism theory by Melanie Klein in *Bridge to Terabithia* novel. The researcher also gives some suggestions for the next researcher and the readers who are interested to analyze *Bridge to Terabithia* novel.

#### 4.1 Conclusion

The researcher concludes that Jess experiences Depressive position. It happens when Jess is in 10<sup>th</sup> age. It can be seen when he feels anxiety and feels guilty because of Leslie's death. The anxiety feeling of Jess are: he worries because he feels guilty of Leslie's death and he worries if Leslie will go to hell. Then, the factors of Jess depressive position can be divided into 2 types, internal and external factors. Internal factors comes from himself like feels loneliness and feel lack of attention. Whereas external factors comes from out of himself such as bully from and losses the loved object.

Jess Depressive position is resolved when he reproach himself because he does not invite Leslie go to Washington when Leslie die. Then, he make reparation with hearing Mrs. Mayer's advices and he thought that he would not forget Leslie. Defense mechanisms which is uses by Jess are introjection, projection and splitting.

## 4.2 Suggestion

The researcher believes that this research is far from perfect. This research is analysing depressive position and defense mechanism of Jess Aarons in *Bridge to Terabithia* novel. The researcher suggest for the next researcher who wants to analyse *Bridge to Terabithia* with different theories. This novel is not only talk about depressive position but also talks about fantasy of children, feminism, alienation and so on. It can be analyze by theory of representation, phantasy and fantasy and feminism. Then, Object relation theory can be another option for people who want to learn about children psychoanalysis.



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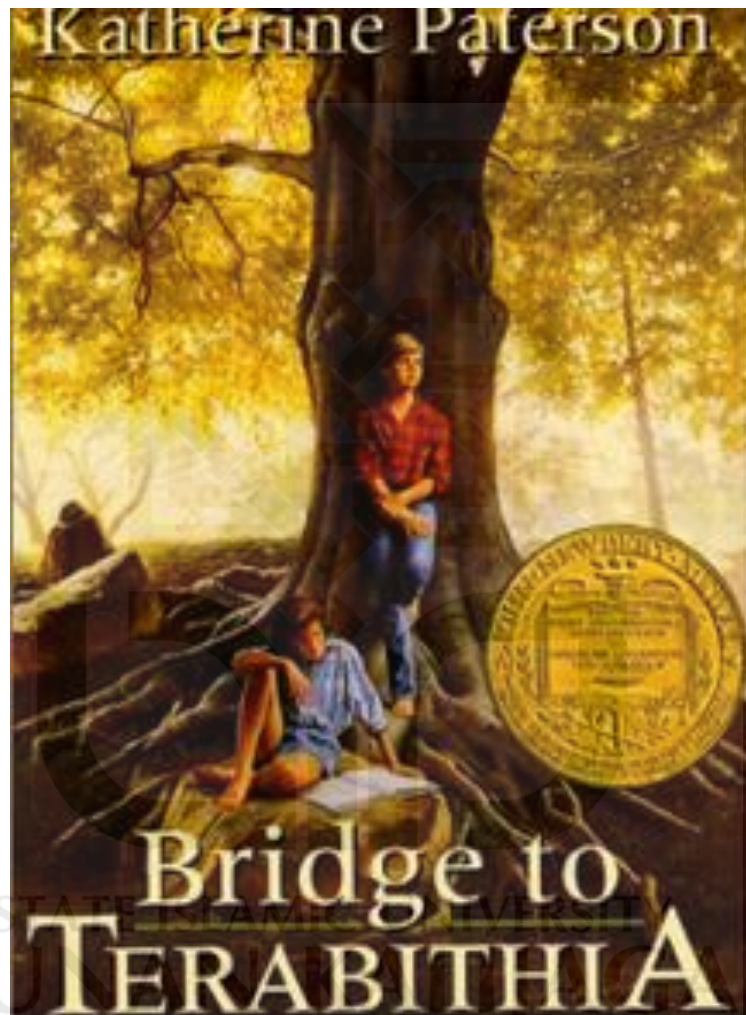
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APPENDIX

Cover Bridge to Terabithia Novel by Katherine Paterson



SU  
TERABITHIA  
YOGYAKARTA

## CURRICULUM VITAE

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### FORMAL EDUCATIONS

Pertiwi Kindergarten	1999-2000
Islamic Elementary School	2001-2007
Kepil 2 Junior High School	2008-2010
Takhasus Al-Quran High School	2011-2013
Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University	2013-2017

### INFORMAL EDUCATIONS

Al-Asyariyyah Islamic Boarding House	2011-2013
Al-Luqmaniyyah Islamic Boarding House	2013-2017

### ORGANIZATION EXPERIENCE

Leader of Hadroh in Luqmaniyyah boarding house	2016-2017
Member of IKMATAQ Yogyakarta	2013-Now
Member of boys scout Kepil 2 Junior High School	2007-2009
Member of intra-school Student Organization (OSIS) Kepil 2 Junior High School	2007-2008
Member of PMR Kepil 2 Junior High School	2007-2008

### WRITING

Depressive Position and Defense Mechanism of Jess Aarons in *Bridge to Terabithia* Novel (A graduating Paper)

### INTEREST

1. Movies
2. Singing
3. Music (*Hadroh*)
4. Listening to music
5. Traveling