A MAIN CHARACTERS ANALYSIS ON ANXIETY AND DEFENSE MECHANISMS IN BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA NOVEL

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A MAIN CHARACTERS ANALYSIS ON ANXIETY AND DEFENSE MECHANISMS IN *BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA* NOVEL

A Thesis
Submitted to Letters and Humanities Faculty
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for
the Degree of Strata One

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Research

Children’s literature is a part of literature as a whole. The difference between children’s literature and other literary genres lies on its audience. Other literary genres are written for people in general, particularly adult people, while Children’s literature is written for children, though in reality the real audience of children’s literature is sometimes people from various age. There are many children’s literatures that are aim for children but they are enjoyed by people of all age. Due to the target of children’s literature, the story is often simple so that it is able to be absorbed by children. However, the simplicity of it secludes the work from literary studies. According to Pickering, the simplicity of children’s literature prevents the critics from arguing.\(^1\) Moreover, it is also secluded by the academics to be analyzed by other studies. Therefore, children’s literature is almost untouchable in literary studies, except for books from some authors like Charles Dickens or Lewis Carol for the story of Alice in Wonderland.

Having concern on this, literary critics nowadays, begin to analyze children’s literature with different approaches, such as psychology, feminism, and cultural studies. These critics try to prove that children’s literature also have

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relationship to other discipline and scientific theories. One of the aims of this thesis is also to explore the relationship between children’s literature and other studies, particularly the psychology studies.

Psychology and children’s literature have a strong relation. There are many psychology theories that have become familiar with the general public. The authors of children’s literature are one of this public that consciously or not, the psychology theories have become a part of their works. Nicholas Tucker stated that ‘Yet to the extent that children’s authors are inevitably influenced by the culture within which they live, some of those psychological theories of childhood which have become widely taken up will eventually begin to work their way into their writing.’\(^2\) It means that children’s literature can hardly be separated from the psychological theory. The author of a children’s literature can easily pick any psychology theory and applied it to his/her work. It is the critics and the literature students’ task to analyze and recognize the problem in the psychological study describe in the literary work.

Bridge to Terabithia is one of many children’s literatures that can be analyzed using the psychological approach. It tells about children in their late childhood and their behavior in dealing with their problems in daily lives, mainly their interaction at home and school.

Since it was first published in 1977, it has drawn not only appraisal but also criticism. The novel won the Newberry Medal\(^3\) a year after, but it has been listed in the People for the American Way’s list challenged books for its profanity and disrespect for adults. Moreover, the story of the novel is considered not suitable for children since the novel tells about death. However, the novel never stops receiving appraisal that it has been filmed with the same title in 2007.

The story is about the friendship of two unsocial children, Jesse Aaron and Leslie Burke. Jesse is a ten-year-old boy who lives in a town named Lark Creek and Leslie has just moved to the town and lives next to Jesse’s house. The two of them become best friends because they have the same problem. They are both alienated from their environment due to their differences.

Jesse is alienated from his family, where he is the only boy from his four siblings who are all girls. His father, who is the only one at home that has the same gender, prefers to be closer to Jesse’s younger sister, May belle. Jesse loves to draw, but his hobby is not supported by his father and his friends at school. Drawing is considered as unmanly activity. He is always known to be that weird kid who has unusual hobby. Therefore, he is also alienated at school.

Leslie who is a new comer in Lark Creek doesn’t have any friends. At home, she is lonely because she is the only child and both of her parents busy

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\(^3\) The Newbery Medal is the first children’s book award in the world. It was named after John Newbery, the eighteenth-century English bookseller. It is awarded annually by the American Library Association for the most distinguished American children's book published the previous year.
with their works as writers. As a new student at school, Leslie has difficulties to adapt with other students. The way she dresses and her hobby makes her adaptation to a new environment even worse. Leslie is a tomboy, so she wears pants often instead of skirt. She also likes to run and compete with others. Her behavior is reversed with other normal girls in town, where they barely wear pants and running is considered as boys’ activity. Therefore, by this difference, she was alienated at school.

As the result of their alienation, they decide to create their own world where they can do anything without anybody object. This imaginary world is called Terabithia. Terabithia is the secret that only they know about and the only way to go there is by swinging on the rope to cross the little creek that separate their imaginary world from the real world. In Terabithia, they are the rulers. They can express whatever crosses their mind without worrying someone else’s opinion.

In the analysis, the writer is interested in analysing the main characters in Bridge to Terabithia, which are Jesse and Leslie, because from the psychological point of view, both of them do not have a normal childhood. Both of them are lonely children. Their needs to be loved and to be acknowledge both by their family and friends are neglected. In the psychoanalysis study, the unfulfilled needs that Jesse and Leslie endure in their daily lives becomes threats and challenges. These threats and challenges produce anxiety inside them.
Since anxieties create worries, fear, painful and uncomfortable feelings, they try to find a way to alter their anxiety in order to get comfortable feelings and situation. One of the ways is by creating a new world. A new world that according to them, is safer and more comfortable than in the real world. In psychoanalysis, this behavior is called defense mechanisms. Defense mechanisms are unconsciously used by someone to cope with their anxieties and to get comfort by distorting reality. The application of defense mechanisms is carried through several ways; they are repression, Identification, denial, projection, displacement, rationalization, reaction formation, behavioral withdrawal, sublimation, and fantasy. In this novel, the writer finds that the main characters apply more than one defense to help them reduce their anxieties.

From the explanation above, the writer chooses Bridge to Terabithia to be analyzed using the psychological approach. It is used to understand and to explain the behavior of the main characters in the novel. Therefore, the writer conducts a research with thesis title “A Main Characters Analysis on Anxiety and Defense Mechanisms in Bridge to Terabithia”.

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B. Focus of the Research

The focus of this research is to analyze the psychological problems of two main characters in the novel Bridge to Terabithia, Jesse Aarons and Leslie Burke. To analyze the main characters psychological problems in this novel, the writer uses the Anxiety and the Defense Mechanisms Theory in the psychoanalysis theory.

C. Research Problem

In this thesis, the writer wants to analyze and explain about these questions:
1. What are the characterization of Jesse and Leslie as reflected in Bridge to Terabithia novel?
2. What are the causes of Jesse and Leslie’s anxiety?
3. How do Jesse and Leslie apply defense mechanisms as the way to reduce their anxiety?

D. Objective of the Research

Based on the statement of the problems above, the writer has several objectives of the research as following:
1. to know the characterization of the main characters in the novel,
2. to know the causes of the main characters’ anxiety,
3. to know the main characters action in dealing with their problems in their daily lives seen from the self defense mechanism.

E. Significance of the Research

By analyzing the anxiety and the Self Defense Mechanisms that appeared in the novel Bridge to Terabithia, the writer wishes the result of this research could give advantages to the readers who are interested in the psychological study in literature. The writer also wishes that this thesis would encourage the readers, especially literature students, to analyze different kinds of literature, particularly children’s literature. Moreover, this thesis is as one way to demonstrate that children’s literature is able to be studied with other studies. The result of this research also to add the collection of researches in Adab and Humanities Faculty of UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, especially in English Letters major.

F. Methodology of the research

1. Method

In this research, the writer uses the qualitative method in which she tries to describe and reveal the anxiety and the defense mechanisms described in the novel Bridge to Terabithia by the main characters. According to Sigmund Freud, known as the father of psychoanalysis, there are three kinds of systems in one’s personality, they are the id, the ego, and the superego. The
id as the basic system of human’s personality demands for pleasure and the ego is not able to always provide what the id needs because the ego must face with the reality and the superego, the moral factors. The unfulfilled needs then become anxiety, the feelings that create discomfort and pain. The ego needs to protect itself from anxiety and therefore defenses themselves by using a mechanism which is called the Defense Mechanisms.

2. **Data Analysis**

The collected data is analyzed using the related theories or approaches, such as the Anxiety and Defense Mechanisms theory in psychoanalysis study. These theories are applied to reveal and to understand the main characters anxieties and how they suffer from anxiety. The factors that causes the main characters in the novel suffered anxiety and to reveal the characters response to their anxieties.

3. **The Instrument of the Research**

The writer uses herself as the main research instrument through reading the novel more than once; underlining the text that is related to the explanation of the psychological problem of anxiety and self defense mechanism, and classifying them into the appropriate theory.

4. **The Unit of Analysis**

The unit analysis of this research is the novel Bridge to Terabithia written by Katherine Patterson. This book was originally printed in 1977 but has been re-printed several times years later. The book that the writer used in
her research was the one which re-printed in 2008 by Harper Collins. Since it was published in 1977, the novel received critics for its story that included death in a children genre book. It was considered too heavy for a children’s literature. It was also listed in the list of Most Challenging books of Children’s Literature in USA for its profanity, disrespect for adults and satanic. However, the book received the Newberry Medal, the award for children’s literature.

G. Time and Place of Research

The research will be conducted in 2009 in Jakarta.
A. Character and Characterization

Character is one of 6 intrinsic elements in a literary work. Character plays an important role in a fiction. It was once said that there would be no fiction without character. Character is the actor, the agent of a story. Character is someone who acts, appears, or is referred to as playing a part in a literary work.\(^6\)

There are several types of character that can be seen in a literary works. They are; major and minor character, round and flat character, dynamic and static character, protagonist and antagonist character.

Characterization is the way the writer of the story describe the characters in the story. An author of a story have two kinds of techniques to characterize their characters, they are; direct and indirect characterization. Direct characterization describes the character explicitly in the story. The audience can easily notice the character’s trait because the author provides the character’s trait on the story. The indirect characterization describes the character in a story implicitly. Therefore, the audience should conclude about the character’s trait themselves.

B. Anxiety by Sigmund Freud

Before the concept of the anxiety is discussed, the explanation of the structure of the personality by Sigmund Freud is necessary. There are three major systems in the structure of personality, which are the id, the ego, and the superego. Each of them has their own function and operating systems. The basic system of the structure of personality is the id. The id operates on the pleasure principle where the id only seeks for pleasure and avoids everything that is uncomfortable. To make the id desire come true, the ego appears. The ego is the one that take the action to fulfill the id desires and needs. The ego operates on the reality principles where the ego has to face the reality to satisfy the id desires. As a person develops, the ego and the environment also develop. He learns that there are rules and norms that take place in the society. Thus, the third system of the structure of personality develops and appears which is called the superego. It is the superego that filters the actions. It decides what is right and what is wrong according to the moral standards in the society.

Therefore, the id needs and desires cannot always be provided by the ego because the ego must face with the reality and the superego. However, since the id operates on pleasure principle, it is only wants pleasure. The id will push the ego to fulfill the id needs. The ego, facing the reality and the superego, is overwhelmed by the intense tension. Therefore, anxiety arouses.

According to Freud, anxiety is as a signal to the ego that danger is coming. It warns the ego to do something to prevent the danger from doing harm to the ego. Anxiety creates pain, uncomfortable feelings that people would prefer not bear it.

Freud divides three kinds of anxiety, they are; reality anxiety, neurotic anxiety, and moral anxiety. Reality anxiety is the fear of a real danger in the real world. For example, a child fears a snake. Neurotic anxiety is the fear that the id impulses will get out of control and he will do something that will make him punished. According to Hall in *A Primer of Freudian Psychology* as quoted by Yuri in his thesis, neurotic anxiety has three forms. The first form is the kind of person who has bad thoughts about the environment that something terrible will happened. The second form is phobia. Phobia is an extensive fear of an object. The fear of the object is superior compares to the actual danger that the object may bring. The third form of neurotic anxiety is panic or near-panic reaction. Panic reaction can be functioned to channel the excessive painful neurotic anxiety by doing what the id demands, ignoring the ego and the superego. Panic reaction is an extreme reaction, but it is rarely done by someone. It is somethings that is out of someone’s usual character.

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8 *Ibid.* p. 46
11 Duan Setiawan Yuri, *The Main female Characters’ Anxiety and Their Ways in Dealing With It in Jen Rubenfeld’s The Interpretation of Murder* (Surabaya: Universitas Kristen Petra, 2009), p. 7
The third kind of anxiety is the moral anxiety. Moral anxiety is the fear of conscious.\(^{12}\) It is someone’s anxiety that comes from his/her thinking that is contrary or not proper according to the moral code of the society. People who have moral anxiety is considered to have their superegos well-developed. By those thinking, they feel guilty or shame. Moreover, the person who have moral anxiety has been punished in the past for violating the moral code and he fears that he may be punished again.

Although the three of them have different kinds of fear, they have the basis fear in the reality. The fear is originally comes from the reality which is the external world. However, when they are not able to express their fear and anxiety they use another method to overcome their anxieties.

Anxiety functions as a warn of danger. It drives people to take actions to avoid the danger. When someone fears something, his anxiety is alarmed. He afraids that it would bring harm to him. Anxiety creates worries, fear, painful and uncomfortable feelings. Before the anxiety takes a further damage to someone’s ego, the ego needs to do something to eliminate it. Therefore, if the ego cannot cope with anxiety with rational manners then the ego tries to eliminate the anxieties by applying the irrational manners. The ego tries to distort reality so that an individual can reduce their anxieties. This process is called as the defense mechanisms.

\(^{12}\) Calvin S. Hall, Lindzey Grdner and John B. Campbell (1997), \textit{loc. Cit.}
C. Defense Mechanisms

Defense mechanisms are a set of system that tries to distort the reality to cope with the anxiety.\textsuperscript{13} It is also known with the self defense mechanisms or ego defense mechanisms since it is the ego who takes the action of defending itself from anxiety. The function of defense mechanisms is to deny and distort reality which are too hard and painful to bear. It is also function to protect the ego from the overwhelming anxiety.

Freud was the first one who introduces the concept of defense mechanisms. The basic defense mechanism he introduced, was repression. He stated that anxiety led to repression. Later, Anna Freud, his daughter, classified and conceptualized the mechanisms into numbers of defenses. However, due to the thesis necessities, only five types of defense mechanisms will be explained here.

1. Denial

Denial is simply to deny an objectionable and painful reality.\textsuperscript{14} In denial a person insists that the objectionable and painful reality didn’t happened and he believes that his denial is the fact. Denial is often used by children to ward off the painful reality and make it less threatening. According to Mussen, Henry, and Kagan, a child who is in denial insists that an anxiety-arousing

situation or event is not true, and he believes that his denial is accurate.\textsuperscript{15}

Denial tries to forget or to state that an event didn’t happened.

2. **Displacement**

According to Mussen, Henry, and Kagan, displacement is the kind of defense mechanism that the uncomfortable impulses are attributed to other subject, not the true subject.\textsuperscript{16} That other subject is the thing that closest resembles the true subject or the symbolic object of the true subject. For example, a boy who upset of his dad because he cannot go to a summer camp may hit something because it is the closest resemblance to his dad’s authority. Moreover, Pressley and McCormick stated that displacement is the chanelling of anger or the anxiety to a less threatening object than the real object.\textsuperscript{17} The uncomfortable impulses are also attributed to other subject, but to a less threatening object.

3. **Sublimation**

Sublimation is a kind of defense mechanisms that channels unpleasant impulses into acceptable directions.\textsuperscript{18} Sublimation is used by ego when the ego changes the dangerous impulses from id into a desire to a more respectable action. At the beginning, Freud explains that the dangerous impulses in sublimation are sexual desires and the ego sublimes it into a more

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17} Michael Pressley and Christine B. McCormick (2007), *loc. cit.*
\textsuperscript{18} Michael Pressley and Christine B. McCormick (2007), *op. cit.* p. 140.
acceptable action socially. In the case of Michaelangelo, Freud projected that Michaelangelo changes his sexual desires into a desire to artistic discovery. However, the modern psychoanalyst states that sublimation is not only to sublime sexual desires but also other desires that are considered improper to the society.

4. **Fantasy**

Fantasy distorts anxiety by imagination. Ones imagine their unacceptable desires where it cannot be fulfilled in reality. \(^{19}\) Fantasy creates an inner world when the real world becomes too painful, difficult, or stressful. Fantasy can be used as an unconscious motivation to separate reality with fantasy. When a personal achievement cannot be achieved, one imagines his success in the area and eliminate the feeling of guilty because the personal failure. Fantasy is used by someone to help him overcome his anxieties due to his failure or his guilty feelings. Moreover, fantasy served as defense because it helps someone forget his present limitations, such as personal failure, and made him feel that things were not so bad as they appeared.

5. **Behavioral Withdrawal**

Behavioral withdrawal is the act of withdrawing from the society because someone feels that the society is a threat to him. It is a direct avoidance of a

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threatening situations or people.\textsuperscript{20} It is often occurred to children who have a poor ability to socialize. Therefore, they assume that facing with other people is a threatening situation for him.

\textsuperscript{20} Paul Henry Musen, et al. (1969), op. cit. 518
CHAPTER 3
DATA DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

This chapter would analyze the main characters’ anxiety and their defense mechanisms as the way to reduce their anxiety. The analysis on Jesse and Leslie’s anxiety is based on the type of their anxiety. From the type of their anxiety, the causes of their anxiety can be revealed. As their anxiety brings painful and uncomfortable feelings, they used defense mechanisms to reduce their anxiety.

Before the analysis of the characters’ anxiety and defense mechanisms is explained, the analysis on the main characters’ characterization will begin this chapter because it is necessary to know their traits deeply.

A. Data Description

1. The List of Main Characters’ Characterization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Corpus</th>
<th>Characterization</th>
<th>Page</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jesse Aarons</td>
<td>It made Jess ache inside to watch his dad grab the little ones to his shoulder, or lawn down and hug them.</td>
<td>envious</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jess put both arms over the paper and brought his sneaker heel crashing down on Gary Fulcher’s toe.</td>
<td>Sensitive</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jess had written about</td>
<td>unconfident</td>
<td>49</td>
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</table>
football, which he really hated, but he had enough brains to know that if he said drawing, everyone would laugh at him.

Leslie Burke

The person had jaggedy brown hair cut close to its face and wore one of the blue undershirtlike tops with faded jeans cut off above the knees. He couldn’t honestly tell whether it was a girl or a boy.

The reaction didn’t seem to bother her. She stood there in front, her eyes saying, ‘OK, friends, here I am,” in answer to their openmouthed stares….

“Yeah. I think all the schools did. Or most of them anyway.” She sighed. “I really miss it. I’m pretty good at gymnastics.”

2. The List of The Main Characters’ Anxieties

<table>
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<th>Character</th>
<th>Corpus</th>
<th>Anxiety</th>
<th>Page</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jesse Aarons</td>
<td>This was the day he was going to be champion—the best runner of the fourth and fifth grades, and he hadn’t even won his heat. There was no cheering at either end of</td>
<td>Neurotic Anxiety</td>
<td>40</td>
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the field. The rest of the boys seemed as stunned as he. The teasing would come later, he felt sure, but at least for the moment none of them were talking.

When you were the only boy who smashed between four sisters, and the older two had despised you ever since you stopped letting them dress you up….

It made Jess ache inside to watch his dad grab the little ones to his shoulder, or lawn down and hug them.

He would like to show his drawings to his dad, but he didn’t dare. When he was in first grade, he had told his dad that he wanted to be an artist when he grew up. E’d thought his dad would be pleased. He wasn’t. “What are they teaching in that damn school?” he had asked. “Bunch of old ladies turning my only son into some kind of a—” He had stopped on the word, but Jess had gotten the message. It was one you didn’t forget, even after four years.

Leslie Burke …, he could see that Leslie was surrounded by a group of girls led by Wanda Kay.
He couldn’t hear what they were saying, but he could tell by the proud way Leslie was throwing her head back that the others were making fun of her.

### 3. The List of Main Characters’ Defense Mechanisms

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<th>Character</th>
<th>Corpus</th>
<th>Defense Mechanisms</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jesse Aarons</td>
<td>Without breaking his rhythm, he climbed over the fence, scrambled across the scrap heap, thumped May Belle on the head (“Owww!”), and trotted onto the house. When they came to the stop, he grabbed May Belle’s hand and dragged her off, conscious that Leslie was right behind him. He nodded to her. “See you”. He turned toward the house. No use to run anymore this morning. Might as well milk Miss Bessie and get out of the way. Church always seemed the same. Jess could tune it out the same way he tuned out school, with his body standing up and sitting down in unison with the rest of the congregation but his mind numb and floating, not really</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Displacement</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Behavioral withdrawal</td>
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thinking or dreaming but at least free.

But crazy animals with problems—for some reason he liked to put his beasts into impossible fixes.

Between the two of them they owned the world and no enemy, Gary Fulcher, Wanda Kay Moore, Janice Avery, Jess’s own fears and insufficiencies, not any of the foes Leslie imagined attacking Terabithia, could ever really defeat them.

“No,” he said straight at May Belle. “It’s a lie. Leslie ain’t dead.”

“For the rest of that day, and until after lunch on the next, he had been ‘the fastest kid in the third, fourth, and fifth grades,’ and he only a fourth grader.”

| Leslie Burke | “We need a place,” she said, “just for us. It would be so secret that we would never tell anyone in the whole world about it.” Jess came swinging back and dragged his feet to stop. She lowered her voice almost to a whisper. “It might be a whole secret country,” she continued, “and you and I would be the ruler of it.” |
| fantasy | 58 |
Leslie liked to make stories about the giants that threatened the peace of Terabithia, but they both knew that the real giant in their lives is Janice Avery.

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B. Analysis

1. Analysis on Main Characters’ Characterization

Characterization is the way the writer of the story describe the characters in the story. An author of a story have two kinds of techniques to characterize their characters, they are; direct and indirect characterization. Direct characterization describes the character explicitly in the story. The audience can easily notice the character’s trait because the author provides the character’s trait on the story. The indirect characterization describes the character in a story implicitly. Therefore, the audience should conclude about the character’s trait themselves. Therefore, the main characters traits can be seen from their dialogues, description from the other characters, or the description from the author himself that guide the readers to understand the character through commentary and evaluation.

In Bridge to Terabithia, most of the characterization is portrayed explicitly. The author, Katherine Paterson, uses many direct characterization in describing her characters traits, thinking, and physical appearance. She gives
many evaluations to her characters thinking and act. However, Paterson also portrays her characters implicitly in some ways, which makes the writer must pay a thorough attention to her words to clarify the main characters quality.

a. Jesse Aarons, Jr.

Jesse is a ten-year-old boy who lives in a town named Lark Creek. He is the third child of 5 children and all of his siblings are girls. Jesse comes from a lower class family, so his father has to work out town and from morning until late in the evening. His mother though is a housewife, is busy caring the house and the family needs. By this situation, Jesse often feels lonely. He doesn’t have someone to play with and to share his problems.

“With his father gone from sunup until well past dark, who was there to know how he felt?” (Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 22)

From the above quotation, it is clear that Jesse feels left behind. His sisters are busy with their own businesses and his mother busy with the households. The only one he hopes for attention is his father. But, his father is busy from working.

Moreover, the fact that Jesse has two younger sisters, influence his family attention. All the attention goes to his younger sisters. Even his dad, who has the same gender, is closer to his younger sisters. He gives more attention to them than to Jesse. From this situation, Jesse often gets envy.
“It made Jess ache inside to watch his dad grab the little ones to his shoulder, or lawn down and hug them.” (Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 23)

Jesse envies his younger sisters for receiving more love and attention from his dad, whom he adores. While he has to care to himself.

Jesse is a sensitive child. He is easy to get angry by a simple provoking situation.

“Jess put both arms over the paper and brought his sneaker heel crashing down on Gary Fulcher’s toe.” (Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 33)

Here, Jesse stomp his friend’s toe, who was trying to tease him. But, instead of teasing Gary back he stomp Gary’s toe. This shows that Jesse is sensitive. He is easy to get angry.

Jesse also doesn’t have a good self-confidence. He is often withdraw himself when people is around. He doesn’t even have the courage to tell his friends what he likes or what he wants to do.

“Jess had written about football, which he really hated, but he had enough brains to know that if he said drawing, everyone would laugh at him.” (Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 49)

Here, he is afraid that his friends would laugh at him because he is different from other people. This indicates that he is unconfident.
b. Leslie Burke

Jesse also doesn’t have a good self-confidence. He is often withdraw himself when people is around. He doesn’t even have the courage to tell his friends what he likes or what he wants to do.

“Jess had written about football, which he really hated, but he had enough brains to know that if he said drawing, everyone would laugh at him.” (Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 49)

Here, he is afraid that his friends would laugh at him because he is different from other people. This indicates that he is unconfident.

“This reaction didn’t seem to bother her. She stood there in front, her eyes saying, ‘OK, friends, here I am, in answer to their openmouthed stares....” (Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 28)

This is when Leslie first come to school. All of her classmates are shocked of how Leslie dresses. She wears pants on her first day school. In Lark Creek, girls tent to wear skirts and those who wear pants are considered different. However, Leslie doesn’t care of her classmates stares and keep confident.

Moreover, Leslie is an active girl. She like to do other things beside going to school. She likes athletics. Therefore, she feels sad knowing that the Lark Creek School doesn’t have a gymnastics where she usually do her hobbies.

“Yeah. I think all the schools did. Or most of them anyway.” She sighed. “I really miss it. I’m pretty good at gymnastics.” (Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 47)
As has been discussed before, Leslie is a confident girl. It looks from the outside that she doesn’t have problems, she always put a smile on her face. Even if there is a problem, she would be able to manage it. However, there is one thing that might be her weakness, it is her difficulty in socializing with her friends at school.

Once Leslie move in to Lark Creek, she doesn’t have any friends and she doesn’t try to get one either. The only one she tries to befriend with is Jesse. She said,

“You’re the only kid in this whole durned school who’s worth shooting.” *(Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 41)*

Leslie states that Jesse is the only one she would try to befriend with. By that, she means Jesse is the only one she wants to befriend with. This is because she actually doesn’t like to move out from her previous city and that she has to go to Lark Creek School.

2. **Analysis on Main Characters’ Anxiety**

Jesse and Leslie are different from other children that are described in the novel. Both of them have different hobbies and traits from their friends. They encounters threat and problems from the two important environment, family and school. As the result from their problems at home and school, their anxiety arouse.
Their anxiety is indicated by their fears, which are their bad thought and panic reactions. On the previous explanation, there are three forms of neurotic anxiety, and two of them are bad thoughts and panic reaction.

In this part of analysis, the writer will analyze the causes of Jesse and Leslie’s anxiety. How they get anxiety and why. It will be divided based on their types of anxiety.

a. Jesse Aarons’ Neurotic Anxiety

Jesse’s neurotic anxiety comes from his fear that something bad is going to happen. It is his own inner fear that threatens him while the reality has not happened yet. As has been stated that neurotic anxiety can be recognized from bad thoughts and panic reaction. Jesse’s neurotic anxiety comes from his bad thought. He always thinks something in a negative way and that that would bring him harm.

From the previous explanation, Jesse is an unconfident boy. Because of this, no one look up to him. Jesse wants to make his parents proud of him. He also wants his friends to look up to him. In order to get social recognition from his parents, especially his dad, and his friends, his only way is to compete with his friends in a running race at school. He has won once when he was in fourth grade and that bring him the sense of high self esteem. He succeeds to get his friends look up to him, though only for some moment but that have do him good. However, his effort to get people’s recognition and his
own accomplishment now in fifth grade is fruitless. He lost in his first match and lost from a girl.

Now, how could he have his friends look up to him if he has just lost from a girl?

“This was the day he was going to be champion—the best runner of the fourth and fifth grades, and he hadn’t even won his heat. There was no cheering at either end of the field. The rest of the boys seemed as stunned as he. The teasing would come later, he felt sure, but at least for the moment none of them were talking.” (Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 40)

When Leslie outrun him in the running race, his thinking is that all children in school would tease him. He is certain that his friends would tease him. By this thinking, he suffer from neurotic anxiety.

Moreover, how could he get his father recognition if he have failed from running race? By the failure he endures, he thinks that he cannot gain his father love. His father wants him to be brave and strong, but he has lost from a girl. This bad thought from his failure brings him the feelings of unuseful, and he even mad of himself.

“He’s dad expected him to be a man. And here he was letting some girl who wasn’t even ten yet scare the liver out of him by just telling what it was like to sight-see underwater.” (Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 50)

In the above quotation, it is obvious that Jesse is ashamed of himself because he is frighten to a girl’s story. He is dissapointed of himself. He is also mad at himself because he cannot fulfill his father expectation. He feels that he is not
only fail to achieve his own ambition, but also his father expectation. The failure to do so is by means the failure to get approval from others, which means, he fails to raise his own self-esteem. Therefore, he suffer from neurotic anxiety.

b. Jesse Aarons’ Moral Anxiety

Jesse’s moral anxiety comes from the conflict between his desires and his moral values. The conflict creates guilty feelings because he feels guilty that he thinks something that is contrary to the moral code in the society. Jesse’s moral anxiety is also comes from his past in which he had done something that made him got scolded by his father and he is afraid that he would do that again and got punishment.

The first moral anxiety that will be analyzed comes from Jesse desire to get more love and attention from his family. As has been explained before, Jesse is a lonely child. He is the only boy from his four siblings who are all girls. Therefore, he doesn’t have friend to play with or to share his problems with at home.

“When you were the only boy who smashed between four sisters, and the older two had despised you ever since you stopped letting them dress you up…. ” *(Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 2)*

Although, his older sisters always make fun of him when he was even younger, but from the quotation above Jesse misses those days when all the
attention goes to him. His sisters stop giving attention for him since Jesse grows older.

Although he has grown older, he still wants to get the attention as before, especially from his father since he is the one who has the same gender as Jesse. However, his father is busy from working and so it is difficult even to meet him.

“With his father gone from sunup until well past dark, who was there to know how he felt?” (Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 22)

From the above quotation, Jesse wants to share his daily lives at school or home with someone. But, there are no one at home who would listen to him. His hope lies on his father who is the only one who has the same gender as he is. But again he has to be disappointed because his father is busy.

Moreover, his father prefers to be closer to Jesse’s younger sisters, May Belle. His father often shows his affection on his little sisters. He is considered to have grown enough to get more attention from his father.

“It made Jess ache inside to watch his dad grab the little ones to his shoulder, or lawn down and hug them.” (Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 23)

In the above quotation, it is obvious that Jesse envies his younger sister, May Belle, for getting more love and affection from his dad. Meanwhile, Jesse’s needs to be loved by his family is ignored. He is hunger for love and affection from his father, but he knows that he has grown bigger and that he
has two younger sisters who need more love and affection from his father. However, his moral values tell him that his sisters are the ones who need more love and affection, and he as the older brother won’t need more attention as before. By this conflict between his own desires and his moral values, Jesse suffers from moral anxiety.

Jesse’s moral anxiety also comes from his past incident in which he got scolded and got punishment from his father and his teacher at school for doing something that he likes.

Jesse’s hobby is drawing. However, drawing in his family and the society is considered as disreputed activity. Jesse lives in Lark Creek, a small town near Washington. It still holds a conventional views and codes. When Jesse told him then that he wants to be an artist, his father is upset.

“He would like to show his drawings to his dad, but he didn’t dare. When he was in first grade, he had told his dad that he wanted to be an artist when he grew up. E’d thought his dad would be pleased. He wasn’t. “What are they teaching in that damn school?” he had asked. “Bunch of old ladies turning my only son into some kind of a—” He had stopped on the word, but Jess had gotten the message. It was one you didn’t forget, even after four years.” (Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 16)

In the above quotation, Jesse still remembers the incident. His father blames the school and the teachers for not teaching his son good lessons. By that incident, Jesse tries not to bring the issue again in front of his father. He tries not to provoke his father anger anymore because he fears that his
father will not love him anymore. He fears that if he brings the issue again he would make his father angry. Therefore, he reduce his desire to draw. His memory about his unpleasant past and his fears about getting scolded again is the proof that he suffer from moral anxiety.

Aside from the loneliness feelings that Jesse endure, the death of Leslie also brings anxiety to Jesse. Leslie is his only friend and the only one he believes. Leslie’s death is a threat that indicates that Jesse would never have the chance to be loved and to belong to someone again. He is afraid that he would be lonely again and no one would play with him again. His fear makes him anxious.

Jesse’s moral anxiety can also be seen from the guilty feelings he has for Leslie. When he finds out that Leslie has died, he feels guilty because he doesn’t ask Leslie to go with him and Miss Edmunds. He, for that moment is being selfish and he forgets his friendship with Leslie. This makes Jesse feels even more guilty.

c. Leslie Burke’s Neurotic Anxiety

Leslie’s neurotic anxiety can be seen from her needs that cannot be fulfilled. Neurotic anxiety is the anxiety that come from the conflict between the id and ego. It means that Leslie’s id wants something that cannot be gratified by her ego.

Aside from the perfect life Leslie has been through, there is one thing that she is lacking. She doesn’t receive enough love from her parents. Her
parents are busy as writers. Whereas she needs to be loved by her parents. Her parents weren’t always there for her.

The fact that she has difficulties in socializing with others also gives her the feeling of anxiety. In her new school, she wants to be accepted and have friends. However, in the reality her classmates often makes fun of her because of her differences.

“…, he could see that Leslie was surrounded by a group of girls led by Wanda Kay. He couldn’t hear what they were saying, but he could tell by the proud way Leslie was throwing her head back that the others were making fun of her.” (Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 52 – 53)

The quotation above happens when Leslie says that she doesn’t have a television. Everybody in Lark Creek has a television and the children are familiar with television. Therefore, they feel odd that there is someone that cannot watch tv because she doesn’t have one.

As a new student, Leslie wants to make friends and to belong to a group of friend. But her needs cannot meet with the reality. At home, she is also doesn’t get the love she needs from her parents because they rarely at home. Therefore she has neurotic anxiety.

3. **Analysis on Main Characters’ Defense Mechanisms**

As has been explained before, Jesse and Leslie’s anxiety bring them painful and uncomfortable feelings. Therefore, their ego needs to do something to
reduce their anxiety. Jesse and Leslie use the mechanisms of defense to defend their ego from the overwhelming feeling the anxiety have caused them.

a. Displacement

Jesse’s first attempt to reduce his anxiety that is described in the story is displacement. The definition of displacement is as the channeling of anger or the anxiety to a less threatening object than the real object. May Belle, Jesse’s younger sister have several times become the victim of Jesse’s anger and anxiety. He uses May Belle’s sincerity and loyalty that follows him wherever he goes for his defense. He thinks that May Belle is less threatening than other people who have confronted him, his parents, his friends, and even himself. Moreover, May Belle reminds Jesse of his father love and affection since May Belle receives more love from his father. May Belle is also closer to his father than to him.

“When they came to the stop, he grabbed May Belle’s hand and dragged her off, conscious that Leslie was right behind him.” (Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 42)

When Jesse loses the running race he has practiced so hard from Leslie, he is mad from himself who cannot do his task very well. Moreover, the fact that the person who defeats him is a girl, makes him feels more upset. Having so angry and anxious to himself and Leslie but could not expresses it directly to Leslie and to admit to himself that he is not fast runner, he expresses his anger by treating May Belle harm. He knows that may belle cannot get him back.
The climax of Jesse’s anxiety is when he finds out that Leslie is dead, he even hits May Belle on her face. He is so angry of the fact that he could not meet and play with Leslie again, but he doesn’t know how to express his feelings and anger. When he meets May Belle he hits her, because all of this time May belle has always been a dearing sister to him and would bring no harm to him.

b. Sublimation

The displacements that were directed to a higher cultural achievement are called sublimation. Sublimation is a kind of defense mechanisms that channeling unpleasant impulses into acceptable directions. Jesse’s sublimation is in running. As has been discussed earlier, Jesse has a low self-esteem, he is an unconfident boy. Therefore, he needs to achieve something to be accepted to the society, to gain his self-esteem and confidence. One of the ways to be accepted and to get people’s respect is by running.

Running is considered a respectable activity for boys at the Lark Creek School, it is even considered as the most prestigious activity at the school. If a student wins the running race, he would be respected by all the students in the school.

“For the rest of that day, and until after lunch on the next, he had been ‘the fastest kid in the third, fourth, and fifth grades,’ and he only a fourth grader.” (Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 5)
This is when Jesse was a fourth grader and he won the running race. Every students at school looked up to him.

c. Behavioral Withdrawal

The next defense mechanisms that Jesse uses is behavioral withdrawal. Behavioral withdrawal is the act of withdrawing from the society because someone feels that the society is a threat to him. Jesse feels that the society is a threat to him. He always avoids the crowd and whenever he has to involve in a society gathering, he even withdraws himself. He even admits that he always tries to avoid everybody around him wherever he is.

When Jesse first meets Leslie, Leslie wants to talk further to Jesse, but he ignores her.

“He nodded to her. ‘See you’. He turned toward the house. No use to run anymore this morning. Might as well milk Miss Bessie and get out of the way.” (Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 27)

In the above quotation, Jesse is going to practice running again that morning. But when he meets Leslie, he cancels his running practice and decides to do other thing to get away from Leslie. He doesn’t feel comfortable with Leslie, because he just met Leslie and he thinks that Leslie is a stranger and that he doesn’t know much of her.

Jesse withdraws himself everytime he meets new people or even when there are a lot of people around him. He deosn’t feel comfortable with other people around him whether it is at school or even at church.
“Church always seemed the same. Jess could tune it out the same way he tuned out school, with his body standing up and sitting down in unison with the rest of the congregation but his mind numb and floating, not really thinking or dreaming but at least free.” (Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 125)

He admits that while he is around with other people, he keeps his mind away from them. Therefore, though his body is presence but his mind and attention is somewhere else wandering. He finds that it is difficult just to be with someone else, the feeling of low self esteem toward other people make him uncomfortable and worried.

d. Denial

When Jesse hears the news about Leslie death, he doesn’t believe it. He calls everybody that tells him that Leslie is dead a liar, even his own father. The news is so shocking and terrifying for Jesse. He feels angry and sad. This feeling bothers him so much that he doesn’t want to believe the news. He denies the news.

“‘No,’ he said straight at May Belle. ‘It’s a lie. Leslie ain’t dead.’ He turned around and ran out the door, letting the screen bang sharply against the house. He ran down the gravel to the main road and then started running….” (Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 156)

He also denies the reality by running. He doesn’t want the news to be the reality because it hurts him. Therefore, he runs from the reality because by running he feels that the reality won’t come near him and that it won’t be reality. He doesn’t want to face the painful reality. He wants to believe that
Leslie is not dead because having the fact that Leslie is dead is so painful for him.

“He ran until he was stumbling but he kept on, afraid to stop. Knowing somehow that running was the only thing that could Leslie from being dead. It was up to him. He had to keep going.” (Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 156)

Leslie is his only friend who have been so kind and understanding and fun to him. Leslie makes his boring life into an exciting one. She is the person who have satisfied his belongingness and love need. Therefore, the feeling and the thinking of losing her and not being able to see and play with her again bother him so much.

Moreover, his anxiety which comes from the guilty feeling toward Leslie about going to the Museum with Ms. Edmunds also encourages him to deny the news. He feels that it is his fault not to take her with him and Miss Edmunds to go to the museum. The thinking of going alone with Ms. Edmunds is exciting Jesse, so he doesn’t want Leslie to come with them. However, it has caused Leslie’s death. Therefore, he feels that Leslie’s death is because of him.

“And apologize. It had been so dumb of him not to ask if Leslie could go, too. He and Leslie and Miss Edmunds could have a wonderful day—different, of course, from the day he and Miss Edmunds had had….” (Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 159-160)
Moreover, he even reserved his feeling and the thought of his anxiety because of the news. At that night, when he wakes up of a bad dream, he denies that Leslie has died. He realizes that someone has told him that Leslie has died but he thinks that it was only a bad dream. He tries to think that Leslie would be playing with him again in the next morning.

“If he got up now and went down to the old Perkins place and knocked on the door, Leslie would come to open it,…”

(Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 159)

He keeps telling himself that Leslie isn’t dead and believe that she isn’t dead. He tries to comfort himself by ensuring himself that Leslie is still alive. He reduces his anxiety by distorting the reality.

e. Fantasy

Jesse fantasizes a lot in the story. First, he fantasizes along with Leslie that they have a kingdom. A kingdom that they both ruled, they are the king and the queen of the kingdom. The imaginary kingdom is called Terabithia. In Terabithia, they fantasize that no one could ever defeat them. Certainly, this imagination is reversed to that in the reality where they are ruled by the grown ups, such as their parents and their teacher, even Jesse’s sisters. They are told what to do and how to behave and they mustn’t ignore it. Moreover, they often lost to their friends at school and that they are sometimes get bullying from the older children.

“Between the two of them they owned the world and no enemy, Gary Fulcher, Wanda Kay Moore, Janice Avery,
Jess’s own fears and insufficiencies, not any of the foes Leslie imagined attacking Terabithia, could ever really defeat them.” (Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 61)

In Terabithia, they are the king and the queen. They hold the power and no one can beat them. This means that they want to forget their unuseful feeling, where they cannot gain people’s approval and acknowledgement. Especially Jesse who wants to satisfy his self-esteem need. He cannot gain it in the real world, so he imagines that he has the power and gets people’s approval.

For Jesse, he is not only have fantasy in Terabithia but also through his hobby, drawing. He likes to draw animals and makes them funny. The animal he draws is not some ordinary one. He likes to draw beasts in a funny way.

“But crazy animals with problems—for some reason he liked to put his beasts into impossible fixes.” (Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 16)

What he didn’t realize is that he is actually trying to make the beasts that are normally frightening, into something that is less frightening and funny that he could laugh at. The beasts that he draws are actually representing what he sees in the adults and his senior and friends in school who always pick on him. At least by this way he could reduce his fear and anxiety for adults and the people that he fear of.

“Jess drew the way some people drink whiskey. The peace would start at the top of his muddled brain and seep down through his tired and tensed-up body.” (Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 14)
Once, he even imagines his strict teacher, Mrs. Myers, that is feared by the students, in a funny imagination of his. By imagining his strict teacher that he fears, he finds that the person that he fears and brings him anxiety every time he face her are less threatening and less frightening.

In Leslie’s case, fantasy is like her habits. She fantasizes everything that she meets and finds. She is the one who had the idea about having a world only for her and Jesse.

“We need a place,” she said, “just for us. It would be so secret that we would never tell anyone in the whole world about it.” Jess came swinging back and dragged his feet to stop. She lowered her voice almost to a whisper. “It might be a whole secret country,” she continued, “and you and I would be the ruler of it.” *(Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 58)*

She finds that living in the real world is so tough and boring. She doesn’t like the reality because she realizes that people, especially her friends at school, cannot receive her uniqueness and difference. She admits that she doesn’t like her new environment. To be in a new society and friends gives her the feeling of anxiety because she cannot adapt well with the new environment. She finds it hard to get to socialize with other people because other people cannot accept her difference. She also wants to discard her loneliness of not having friends at school and always alone at home.

By fantasy, Jesse and Leslie try to reduce their anxiety in order to get comfortable feelings and situation. Since in the reality, they cannot do what they want and they don’t get what they need. Jesse cannot do what he likes the
most. He is told not to draw by his parents and teachers. Moreover, Jesse and Leslie don’t get the affection and love from their families and friends. That is why they create Terabithia and they feel comfortable in it. They get their love from the people of Terabithia whom they imagine love and respect them. They can also express their intentions and what they like freely and without anyone object. Moreover, they don’t have to fear anybody or anything in Terabithia.
A. Conclusion

After analyzing the two main characters in novel Bridge to Terabithia about their anxiety and defense mechanisms, the writer finally arrives to conclusion. From the analysis, the writer finds that the two main characters which are Jesse Aarons Jr. and Leslie Burke are suffer from anxiety. Their anxiety can be classified into two types of anxiety, which are neurotic anxiety and moral anxiety. From the analysis of their types of anxiety, the causes of their anxiety are revealed. Since anxiety brings painful and uncomfortable feelings, Jesse and Leslie try to distort their anxiety by defense mechanisms.

The first main character, Jesse Aarons, has two kinds of anxiety, they are neurotic anxiety and moral anxiety. His neurotic anxiety can be identified from his bad thoughts and panic reaction. It comes from his fear that something bad is going to happen. It is his own inner fear that threatens him while the reality has not happened yet. He always thinks something in a negative way and that that would bring him harm.

Jesse’s moral anxiety comes from the conflict between his desires and his moral values. The conflict creates guilty feelings because he feels guilty that he thinks something that is contrary to the moral code in the society. Jesse’s moral anxiety is also comes from his past in which he had done something that made
him got scolded by his father and he is afraid that he would do that again and got punishment.

These anxiety create painful feelings. Therefore, Jesse needs to distort his anxiety in order to avoid the painful feelings by using the defense mechanisms. Jesse uses four kinds of mechanisms, they are; displacement, behavioral withdrawal, fantasy, denial, and sublimation.

Another main character is Leslie Burke. Leslie has neurotic anxiety. Leslie’s neurotic anxiety can be seen from her needs that cannot be fulfilled. Neurotic anxiety is the anxiety that come from the conflict between the id and ego. It means that Leslie’s id wants something that cannot be gratified by her ego.

As a new student in Lark Creek School, Leslie wants to make friends and to belong to a group of friends. But her needs cannot meet with the reality. At home, she is also doesn’t get the love she needs from her parents because they rarely at home. Therefore she has neurotic anxiety.

In order to distort her anxiety, she uses fantasy as her defense mechanism. She tries to ignore and forget her painful feelings by imagining a new world. A new world that could accept her for who she is. She needs to runaway from the problems she faces in her daily lives and Terabithia is the answer for it.

B. Suggestion

Bridge to Terabithia is a children’s literature, but it holds many different aspects in the story that is interesting to be analysed. This thesis only analyzes
from the psychological aspect, whereas many other aspects that can be applied in analyzing the novel. One of the aspects that is interesting to be analyzed is the meaning of the bridge in the story since the bridge itself is not mentioned or described until the last chapter of the novel.

The writer uses the anxiety and defense mechanisms theory to understand the factors that causes the main characters in the novel suffered anxiety and to reveal the characters response to their anxieties. In order to comprehend the story, the writer suggest the readers to read the novel more than once.
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ABSTRACT


This thesis contains deep analysis on 2 main characters of novel Bridge to Terabithia, Jesse Aarons Jr. and Leslie Burke. The main characters are analyzed carefully and accurately using the theory of Anxiety and Defense Mechanisms in psychoanalytical study. These theories are applied to reveal and to understand the factors that causes the main characters in the novel have anxiety and to reveal the characters’ defense mechanisms as a way to reduce their anxieties.

In the analysis, the writer tries to find out the causes of Jesse and Leslie’s anxiety by classifying their anxiety. By classifying their anxiety into three types, reality anxiety, neurotic anxiety, and moral anxiety, the causes of their anxiety can be revealed. Finally, the writer finds that Jesse has neurotic and moral anxiety and Leslie has neurotic anxiety. Their anxiety creates painful feelings. Therefore, in order to reduce their anxiety, they use defense mechanisms. Jesse uses five kinds of mechanisms, they are; displacement, behavioral withdrawal, fantasy, denial, and sublimation. While Leslie only uses fantasy.
APPROVEMENT

A MAIN CHARACTERS ANALYSIS ON ANXIETY AND DEFENSE MECHANISMS IN BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA NOVEL

A Thesis

Submitted to Letters and Humanities Faculty
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Strata One

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LEGALIZATION

The thesis entitled “A Main Characters Analysis on Anxiety and Defense Mechanisms in Bridge to Terabithia Novel” has been defended before the Letters and Humanities Faculty’s Examination Committee on November 30, 2009. The thesis has already been accepted as a partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Strata One.

Jakarta, 2010

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of the universities or other institute of higher learning, except where the acknowledgement has been made in the text.

Jakarta, 2010
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

First of all, the writer would like to thank Allah SWT for all His favor and guidance in completing this thesis. All praises belong to Him, the Creator of living things from being nothing to existence. Many salutation and benediction be unto the noblest of the prophet and messenger, Muhammad SAW.

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Finally, the writer realizes that this thesis is far from being perfect and hopes that this thesis can be used as well as possible.

Jakarta, 2010

The Writer
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Bridge to Terabithia is a children’s literature about the friendship of two lonely children, Jesse Aaron and Leslie Burke. Jesse is a ten-year-old boy who lives in a town named Lark Creek and Leslie has just moved to the town and lives next to Jesse’s house. The two of them become best friends because they have the same problem. They are both alienated from their environment due to their differences.

Jesse is alienated from his family, where he is the only boy from his four siblings who are all girls. His father, who is the only one at home that has the same gender, prefers to be closer to Jesse’s younger sister, May belle. That also makes his relationship with May belle become bad. He never accommodate his sister.

Jesse loves to draw, but his hobby is not supported by his father and his friends at school because drawing is considered as unmanly activity. He is always known to be that weird kid who has unusual hobby. Because of this, he has difficulties in socializing with his friends. He feels that no one understand what he thinks or what he feels. Therefore, he refuse to befriend with his classmates. He refuse to talk to them because he feels that they would not understand him. The only one he believes and he could talk to is Miss Edmunds, his music teacher. Miss Edmunds has different taste of clothing with the other women in Lark Creek. It makes her different and the people also misunderstood her and pulling away from her. Miss Edmunds also likes Jesse’s drawing unlike everybody else. She thinks that
Jesse is gifted. Therefore, Jesse thinks that Miss Edmunds is the only one that could understand him.

Leslie who is a new comer in Lark Creek doesn’t have any friends. At home, she is lonely because she is the only child and both of her parents busy with their works as writers. As a new student at school, Leslie has difficulties to adapt with other students. The way she dresses and her hobby makes her adaptation to a new environment even worse. Leslie is a tomboy, so she wears pants often instead of skirt. She also likes to run and compete with others. Her behavior is reversed with other normal girls in town, where they barely wear pants and running is considered as boys’ activity. Therefore, by this difference, she was alienated at school.

As the result of their alienation, they decide to create their own world where they can do anything without anybody object. This imaginary world is called Terabithia. Terabithia is a secret kingdom that only they know about. They set the kingdom in a forest near their home and there is only one way to go there, which is by swinging on the rope to cross the little creek that separate their imaginary world from the real world. In Terabithia, they are the rulers. They can express whatever crosses their mind without worrying someone else’s opinion. In Terabithia, they imagine that they are loved and admired by the people of Terabithia.

This fantasy goes on for a while along with their real life in the real world with its ups and down. They would go to Terabithia almost everyday after the school time is over. Almost all of their activity after school is done in their kingdom and they would go home late in the evening.
One day, Miss Edmunds asks Jesse to go to a museum and Jesse says yes. It is like a dream for Jesse because he goes with his teacher that he adores. He doesn’t think to take Leslie too because he wants to go alone with Miss Edmunds. It is a fun trip. However, when he comes home, the bad news comes. Leslie died from trying to cross the creek by swinging on the rope. Instead of landing to the other side of the creek, Leslie falls down to the creek and her head hits the stone.

After Leslie’s death, their imagination kingdom are abandoned. Jesse feels that everything is fun when Leslie is around. Everything is fantasy. He also feels that Leslie’s death is his fault because he didn’t ask Leslie to come with him to the museum with Miss Edmunds. The guilty feelings make him anxious.

At first he cannot accept Leslie’s death but by his teacher and his father advice, he finally can accept it. After that, his behavior changes. His relationship with his sister also becomes good. Finally, he builds a bridge that connect the real world from the imagination world. After the rope break, Terabithia is deserted. No one goes there. But now, Jesse brings the new ruler to the kingdom. It is May Belle.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Research

Psychology and children’s literature have a strong relation. There are many psychology theories that have become familiar with the general public. Therefore, the readers are often able to recognize the psychological problems in children’s literature or literature in general. It is because the authors of children’s literature are one of these public that consciously or not, the psychology theories have become a part of their works.

Bridge to Terabithia is one of many children’s literatures that can be analyzed using the psychological theory. It tells about children in their late childhood and their behavior in dealing with their problems in daily lives, mainly their interaction at home and school.

The two main characters in Bridge to Terabithia, Jesse Aarons, Jr. and Leslie Burke, create an imaginary world called Terabithia. By creating a new world they try to do what they cannot do and get what they cannot get in the real world. They also try to forget their problems in their homes and school. Here, the writer recognizes that they are trying to defend themselves from their anxiety due to their problems. Therefore, they use defense mechanisms in order to reduce their anxiety. The writer also finds that the main characters use more than one defense mechanisms to help them reduce their anxiety.

B. Research question

- What are the characterization of the main characters as reflected in the Bridge to Terabithia novel?
- What are the causes of Jesse and Leslie’s anxiety?
- How do Jesse and Leslie apply defense mechanisms as the way to reduce their anxiety?
C. Objective of the research

- to know the characterization of the main characters in the novel,
- to know the causes of the main characters’ anxiety,
- to know the main characters action in dealing with their problems in their daily lives seen from the self defense mechanism.

D. Method of the research

In this research, the writer uses the qualitative method in which she tries to describe and reveal the causes of anxiety based on the types of anxiety and the defense mechanisms described in the novel Bridge to Terabithia by the main characters. Therefore, the writer use the Anxiety and Defense Mechanisms theory in psychoanalysis study.

The unit analysis of this research is the novel Bridge to Terabithia written by Katherine Patterson. This book was originally printed in 1977 but has been re-printed several times years later. The book that the writer used in her research was the one which re-printed in 2008 by Harper Collins.

CHAPTER 2
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A. Character and Characterization

Character is one of 6 intrinsic elements in a literary work. Character plays an important role in a fiction. There are several types of character that can be seen in a literary works. They are; major and minor character, round and flat character, dynamic and static character, protagonist and antagonist character.

Characterization is the way the writer of the story describe the characters in the story. An author of a story have two kinds of techniques to characterize their characters, they are; direct and indirect characterization. Direct characterization describes the character explicitly in the story. The audience can easily notice the character’s trait because the author provides the character’s trait on the story. The
indirect characterization describes the character in a story implicitly. Therefore, the audience should conclude about the character’s trait themselves.

B. Anxiety by Sigmund Freud

According to Freud, anxiety is as a signal to the ego that danger is coming.\(^1\) It warns the ego to do something to prevent the danger from doing harm to the ego. Anxiety creates pain, uncomfortable feelings that people would prefer not bear it.

Freud divides three kinds of anxiety, they are; reality anxiety, neurotic anxiety, and moral anxiety. Reality anxiety is the fear of a real danger in the real world.\(^2\) For example, a child fears a snake. Neurotic anxiety is the fear that the id impulses will get out of control and he will do something that will make him punished.\(^3\) According to Hall in *A Primer of Freudian Psychology* as quoted by Yuri in his thesis, neurotic anxiety has three forms.\(^4\) The first form is the kind of person who has bad thoughts about the environment that something terrible will happen. The second form is phobia. Phobia is an extensive fear of an object. The fear of the object is superior compares to the actual danger that the object may bring. The third form of neurotic anxiety is panic or near-panic reaction. Panic reaction can be functioned to channel the excessive painful neurotic anxiety by doing what the id demands, ignoring the ego and the superego. Panic reaction is an extreme reaction, but it is rarely done by someone. It is somethings that is out of someone’s usual character.

The third kind of anxiety is the moral anxiety. Moral anxiety is the fear of conscious.\(^5\) It is someone’s anxiety that comes from his/her thinking that is contrary or not proper according to the moral code of the society. People who have moral anxiety is considered to have their superegos well-developed. By those thinking, they feel guilty or shame. Moreover, the person who have moral anxiety has been punished in the past for violating the moral code and he fears that he may be punished again.

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1 *Ibid.* p. 46
4 Duan Setiawan Yuri, *The Main female Characters’ Anxiety and Their Ways in Dealing With It in Jen Rubenfeld’s The Interpretation of Murder* (Surabaya: Universitas Kristen Petra, 2009), p. 7
5 Calvin S. Hall, Lindzey Grdner and John B. Campbell (1997), *loc. Cit.*
C. Defense Mechanisms

Defense mechanisms are a set of system that tries to distort the reality in order to cope with anxiety. It is also known with the self defense mechanisms or ego defense mechanisms since it is the ego who takes the action of defending itself from anxiety. The function of defense mechanisms is to deny and distort reality which are too hard and painful to bear. It is also function to protect the ego from the overwhelming anxiety.

This thesis only analyze five kinds of defense, they are:

1. **Denial**: Denial is simply to deny an objectionable and painful reality. In denial a person insists that the objectionable and painful reality didn’t happened and he believes that his denial is the fact. Denial is often used by children to ward off the painful reality and make it less threatening.

2. **Displacement**: Displacement is the kind of defense mechanism that the uncomfortable impulses are attributed to other subject, not the true subject. That other subject is the thing that closest resembles the true subject or the symbolic object of the true subject.

3. **Sublimation**: Sublimation is a kind of defense mechanisms that channels unpleasant impulses into acceptable directions. Sublimation is used by ego when the ego changes the dangerous impulses from id into a desire to a more respectable action.

4. **Fantasy**: Fantasy distorts anxiety by imagination. Ones imagine their unacceptable desires where it cannot be fulfilled in reality. Fantasy creates an inner world when the real world becomes too painful, difficult, or stressful. Fantasy can be used as an unconscious motivation to separate reality with fantasy.

5. **Behavioral withdrawal**: Behavioral withdrawal is the act of withdrawing from the society because someone feels that the society is a threat to him. It is a direct avoidance of a threatening situations or people.

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7 Ibid.


A. Analysis on Main Characters’ Characterization

1. Jesse Aarons, Jr.

Jesse is a ten-year-old boy who lives in a town named Lark Creek. He is the third child of 5 children and all of his siblings are girls. Jesse comes from a lower class family, so his father has to work out town and from morning until late in the evening. His mother though is a housewife, is busy caring the house and the family needs. By this situation, Jesse often feels lonely. He doesn’t have someone to play with and to share his problems.

“With his father gone from sunup until well past dark, who was there to know how he felt?” (Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 22)

Moreover, the fact that Jesse has two younger sisters, influence his family attention. All the attention goes to his younger sisters. Even his dad, who has the same gender, is closer to his younger sisters. He gives more attention to them than to Jesse. From this situation, Jesse often gets envy.

Jesse is a sensitive child. He is easy to get angry by a simple provoking situation.

“Jess put both arms over the paper and brought his sneaker heel crashing down on Gary Fulcher’s toe.” (Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 33)

Here, Jesse stomp his friend’s toe, who was trying to tease him. But, instead of teasing Gary back he stomp Gary’s toe. This shows that Jesse is sensitive. He is easy to get angry.

Jesse also doesn’t have a good self-confidence. He is often withdraw himself when people is around. He doesn’t even have the courage to tell his friends what he likes or what he wants to do. Here, he is afraid that his friends
would laugh at him because he is different from other people. This indicates that he is unconfident.

2. Leslie Burke

Jesse also doesn’t have a good self-confidence. He is often withdraw himself when people is around. He doesn’t even have the courage to tell his friends what he likes or what he wants to do.

“Jess had written about football, which he really hated, but he had enough brains to know that if he said drawing, everyone would laugh at him.” (Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 49)

Here, he is afraid that his friends would laugh at him because he is different from other people. This indicates that he is unconfident.

Moreover, Leslie is an active girl. She like to do other things beside going to school. She likes athletics. Therefore, she feels sad knowing that the Lark Creek School doesn’t have a gymnastics where she usually do her hobbies.

As has been discussed before, Leslie is a confident girl. It looks from the outside that she doesn’t have problems, she always put a smile on her face. Even if there is a problem, she would be able to manage it. However, there is one thing that might be her weakness, it is her difficulty in socializing with her friends at school.

B. Analysis on Main Characters’ Anxiety

1. Jesse Aarons’ Neurotic Anxiety

Jesse’s neurotic anxiety comes from his fear that something bad is going to happen. It is his own inner fear that threatens him while the reality has not happened yet. As has been stated that neurotic anxiety can be recognized from bad thoughts and panic reaction. Jesse’s neurotic anxiety comes from his bad thought. He always thinks something in a negative way and that that would bring him harm.

From the previous explanation, Jesse is an unconfident boy. Because of this, no one look up to him. Jesse wants to make his parents proud of him. He also wants his friends to look up to him. In order to get social recognition from his
parents, especially his dad, and his friends, his only way is to compete with his friends in a running race at school. He has won once when he was in fourth grade and that bring him the sense of high self esteem. He succeeds to get his friends look up to him, though only for some moment but that have do him good. However, his effort to get people’s recognition and his own accomplishment now in fifth grade is fruitless. He lost in his first match and lost from a girl.

2. Jesse Aarons’ Moral Anxiety

Jesse’s moral anxiety comes from the conflict between his desires and his moral values. The conflict creates guilty feelings because he feels guilty that he thinks something that is contrary to the moral code in the society. Jesse’s moral anxiety is also comes from his past in which he had done something that made him got scolded by his father and he is afraid that he would do that again and got punishment.

The first moral anxiety that will be analyzed comes from Jesse desire to get more love and attention from his family. As has been explained before, Jesse is a lonely child. He is the only boy from his four siblings who are all girls. Therefore, he doesn’t have friend to play with or to share his problems with at home.

Jesse envies his younger sister, May Belle, for getting more love and affection from his dad. Meanwhile, Jesse’s needs to be loved by his family is ignored. He is hunger for love and affection from his father, but he knows that he has grown bigger and that he has two younger sisters who need more love and affection from his father. However, he knows that he has grown bigger and that he has younger sisters. His moral values tell him that his sisters are the ones who need more love and affection, and he as the older brother won’t need more attention as before. By this conflict between his own desires and his moral values, Jesse suffers from moral anxiety.

Jesse’s moral anxiety also comes from his past incident in which he got scolded and got punishment from his father and his teacher at school for doing something that he likes.

Jesse’s hobby is drawing. However, drawing in his family and the society is considered as disreputed activity. Jesse lives in Lark Creek, a small town near
washington. It still holds a conventional views and codes. When Jesse told him then that he wants to be an artist, his father is upset.

Aside from the loneliness feelings that Jesse endure, the death of Leslie also brings anxiety to Jesse. Leslie is his only friend and the only one he believes. Leslie’s death is a threat that indicates that Jesse would never have the chance to be loved and to belong to someone again. He is afraid that he would be lonely again and no one would play with him again. His fear makes him anxious.

3. Leslie Burke’s Neurotic Anxiety

Leslie’s neurotic anxiety can be seen from her needs that cannot be fulfilled. Neurotic anxiety is the anxiety that come from the conflict between the id and ego. It means that Leslie’s id wants something that cannot be gratified by her ego.

Aside from the perfect life Leslie has been through, there is one thing that she is lacking. She doesn’t receive enough love from her parents. Her parents are busy as writers. Whereas she needs to be loved by her parents. Her parents weren’t always there for her.

The fact that she has difficulties in socializing with others also gives her the feeling of anxiety. In her new school, she wants to be accepted and have friends. However, in the reality her classmates often makes fun of her because of her differences.

“…, he could see that Leslie was surrounded by a group of girls led by Wanda Kay. He couldn’t hear what they were saying, but he could tell by the proud way Leslie was throwing her head back that the others were making fun of her.” (Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 52 – 53)

C. Analysis on Main Characters’ Defense Mechanisms

1. Displacement

Jesse’s first attempt to reduce his anxiety that is described in the story is displacement. The definition of displacement is as the channeling of anger or the anxiety to a less threatening object than the real object. May Belle, Jesse’s younger sister have several times become the victim of Jesse’s anger and anxiety.
He uses May Belle’s sincerity and loyalty that follows him wherever he goes for his defense. He thinks that May Belle is less threatening than other people who have confronted him, his parents, his friends, and even himself. Moreover, May Belle reminds Jesse of his father love and affection since May Belle receives more love from his father. May Belle is also closer to his father than to him.

“When they came to the stop, he grabbed May Belle’s hand and dragged her off, conscious that Leslie was right behind him.”

(*Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 42*)

When Jesse loses the running race he has practiced so hard from Leslie, he is mad from himself who cannot do his task very well. Moreover, the fact that the person who defeats him is a girl, makes him feel more upset. Having so angry and anxious to himself and Leslie but could not expresses it directly to Leslie and to admit to himself that he is not fast runner, he expresses his anger by treating May Belle harm. He knows that may belle cannot get him back.

2. **Sublimation**

The displacements that were directed to a higher cultural achievement are called sublimation. Sublimation is a kind of defense mechanisms that channeling unpleasant impulses into acceptable directions. Jesse’s sublimation is in running. As has been discussed earlier, Jesse has a low self-esteem, he is an unconfident boy. Therefore, he needs to achieve something to be accepted to the society, to gain his self-esteem and confidence. One of the ways to be accepted and to get people’s respect is by running.

Running is considered a respectable activity for boys at the Lark Creek School, it is even considered as the most prestigious activity at the school. If a student wins the running race, he would be respected by all the students in the school.

3. **Behavioral Withdrawal**

The next defense mechanisms that Jesse uses is behavioral withdrawal. Behavioral withdrawal is the act of withdrawing from the society because someone feels that the society is a threat to him. Jesse feels that the society is a
threat to him. He always avoids the crowd and whenever he has to involve in a society gathering, he even withdraws himself. He even admits that he always tries to avoid everybody around him wherever he is.

When Jesse first meets Leslie, Leslie wants to talk further to Jesse, but he ignores her.

“He nodded to her. ‘See you’. He turned toward the house. No use to run anymore this morning. Might as well milk Miss Bessie and get out of the way.” (Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 27)

In the above quotation, Jesse is going to practice running again that morning. But when he meets Leslie, he cancels his running practice and decides to do other thing to get away from Leslie. He doesn’t feel comfortable with Leslie, because he just met Leslie and he thinks that Leslie is a stranger and that he doesn’t know much of her.

Jesse withdraws himself everytime he meets new people or even when there are a lot of people around him. He doesn’t feel comfortable with other people around him whether it is at school or even at church.

4. Denial

When Jesse hears the news about Leslie death, he doesn’t believe it. He calls everybody that tells him that Leslie is dead a liar, even his own father. The news is so shocking and terrifying for Jesse. He feels angry and sad. This feeling bothers him so much that he doesn’t want to believe the news. He denies the news.

“‘No,’ he said straight at May Belle. ‘It’s a lie. Leslie ain’t dead.’ He turned around and ran out the door, letting the screen bang sharply against the house. He ran down the gravel to the main road and then started running….” (Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 156)
He also denies the reality by running. He doesn’t want the news to be the reality because it hurts him. Therefore, he runs from the reality because by running he feels that the reality won’t come near him and that it won’t be reality. He doesn’t want to face the painful reality. He wants to believe that Leslie is not dead because having the fact that Leslie is dead is so painful for him.

5. Fantasy

Jesse fantasizes a lot in the story. First, he fantasizes along with Leslie that they have a kingdom. A kingdom that they both ruled, they are the king and the queen of the kingdom. The imaginary kingdom is called Terabithia. In Terabithia, they fantasize that no one could ever defeat them. Certainly, this imagination is reversed to that in the reality where they are ruled by the grown ups, such as their parents and their teacher, even Jesse’s sisters. They are told what to do and how to behave and they mustn’t ignore it. Moreover, they often lost to their friends at school and that they are sometimes get bullying from the older children.

“Between the two of them they owned the world and no enemy, Gary Fulcher, Wanda Kay Moore, Janice Avery, Jess’s own fears and insufficiencies, not any of the foes Leslie imagined attacking Terabithia, could ever really defeat them.” (Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 61)

In Terabithia, they are the king and the queen. They hold the power and no one can beat them. This means that they want to forget their unuseful feeling, where they cannot gain people’s approval and acknowledgement. Especially Jesse who wants to satisfy his self-esteem need. He cannot gain it in the real world, so he imagines that he has the power and gets people’s approval.

For Jesse, he is not only have fantasy in Terabithia but also through his hobby, drawing. He likes to draw animals and makes them funny. The animal he draws is not some ordinary one. He likes to draw beasts in a funny way.

“But crazy animals with problems—for some reason he liked to put his beasts into impossible fixes.” (Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 16)
In Leslie’s case, fantasy is like her habits. She fantasizes everything that she meets and finds. She is the one who had the idea about having a world only for her and Jesse.

“We need a place,” she said, “just for us. It would be so secret that we would never tell anyone in the whole world about it.”

Jess came swinging back and dragged his feet to stop. She lowered her voice almost to a whisper. “It might be a whole secret country,” she continued, “and you and I would be the ruler of it.” *(Bridge to Terabithia, 2008, 58)*

She finds that living in the real world is so tough and boring. She doesn’t like the reality because she realizes that people, especially her friends at school, cannot receive her uniqueness and difference. She admits that she doesn’t like her new environment. To be in a new society and friends gives her the feeling of anxiety because she cannot adapt well with the new environment. She finds it hard to get to socialize with other people because other people cannot accept her difference. She also wants to discard her loneliness of not having friends at school and always alone at home.

By fantasy, Jesse and Leslie try to reduce their anxiety in order to get comfortable feelings and situation. Since in the reality, they cannot do what they want and they don’t get what they need. Jesse cannot do what he likes the most. He is told not to draw by his parents and teachers. Moreover, Jesse and Leslie don’t get the affection and love from their families and friends. That is why they create Terabithia and they feel comfortable in it. They get their love from the people of Terabithia whom they imagine love and respect them. They can also express their intentions and what they like freely and without anyone object. Moreover, they don’t have to fear anybody or anything in Terabithia.
CHAPTER 4
CONCLUSION

After analyzing the two main characters in novel Bridge to Terabithia about their anxiety and defense mechanisms, the writer finally arrives to conclusion. From the analysis, the writer finds that the two main characters which are Jesse Aarons Jr. and Leslie Burke are suffer from anxiety. Their anxiety can be classified into two types of anxiety, which are neurotic anxiety and moral anxiety. From the analysis of their types of anxiety, the causes of their anxiety are revealed. Since anxiety brings painful and uncomfortable feelings, Jesse and Leslie try to distort their anxiety by defense mechanisms.

The first main character, Jesse Aarons, has two kinds of anxiety, they are neurotic anxiety and moral anxiety. His neurotic anxiety can be identified from his bad thoughts and panic reaction. It comes from his fear that something bad is going to happen. Jesse’s moral anxiety comes from the conflict between his desires and his moral values. The conflict creates guilty feelings because he feels guilty that he thinks something that is contrary to the moral code in the society.

Another main character is Leslie Burke. Leslie has neurotic anxiety. Leslie’s neurotic anxiety can be seen from her needs that cannot be fulfilled. Neurotic anxiety is the anxiety that come from the conflict between the id and ego. It means that Leslie’s id wants something that cannot be gratified by her ego.

As a new student in Lark Creek School, Leslie wants to make friends and to belong to a group of friend. But her needs cannot meet with the reality. At home, she is also doesn’t get the love she needs from her parents because they rarely at home. Therefore she has neurotic anxiety.

In order to distort her anxiety, Jesse and Leslie use defense mechanism. Jesse uses five kinds of mechanisms, they are; displacement, behavioral withdrawal, fantasy, denial, and sublimation. While Leslie only uses fantasy.
THESIS SYNOPSIS

A Main Characters Analysis on Anxiety and Defense Mechanisms in ‘Bridge to Terabithia’ Novel

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