

### 3. CONCLUSION

#### 3.1. Concluding Thoughts

This creative work explores the potential of using attachment theory to build a helpful storybook series for children facing loss. By looking at how children act when they feel unsafe, the project tries to show that these reactions are a normal part of processing a broken bond. I used characters like Wira and Clara to illustrate how a child might move from being angry to finding a new sense of peace. This approach does not claim to prove scientific facts but instead offers a creative way to understand a child's heart. It provides a possible narrative path for families to follow when they are dealing with the pain of separation. Ultimately, the work aims to bridge the gap between complex psychological ideas and a child's everyday reality.

The work directly answers the two statements of the problem by thoroughly demonstrating the nature of the child's struggle and the mechanism of their support. The first problem, concerning the effects of loss, is answered by the protagonists who vividly portray anger (Wira, Mei Lin, Liana) and denial (Clara, Ryan) as active resistance, followed universally by withdrawal as they grapple with permanence. The second problem, concerning how they find support, is answered by the explicit application of the caregiver's functional role as both a safe haven and a secure base. This dual application through comforting distress first, and then encouraging exploration shows precisely how external support is internalized, guiding the child out of despair and into the resolution. This clear structure provides a complete theoretical and narrative response to the research questions established at the outset of the thesis.

Finally, the resolution of the series illustrates a possible pathway for forming a "continuing bond" from the second purpose of the creative work (POCW), which serves as the healthy and forward-looking alternative to emotional detachment. The narratives consistently conclude with the child engaging in a new activity or using a new object, such as the symbolic star flower or the paper airplane, to maintain a transformed and internalized relationship with what was lost. This key achievement confirms the thesis's argument that acceptance is reached not by severing the attachment, but by carrying the love forward into the present and future (Clabburn et al., 2019). The integration of magical realism acts as the perfect container for this abstract psychological concept, making the invisible bond visible and manageable.

### **3.2. Lessons Learned**

One of the primary challenges I faced during the development of this thesis was the difficulty of translating complex psychological theories into simple, authentic child dialogue. I had to be very careful not to make the characters sound like they were reading from a textbook when they were expressing their pain. It was hard to find the right words for Wira's anger or Mei Lin's withdrawal that felt natural for a seven or eight-year-old child. I spent a lot of time revising the scripts to ensure that the "protest" phase felt like a real child's reaction rather than a clinical description of behavior. This process taught me that the most powerful emotional truths are often found in the simplest sentences. Balancing the scientific ideas with the needs of creative storytelling required constant adjustment and empathy for the child's perspective.

Another significant lesson involved the craft of using magical realism as a tool for emotional truth without letting the magic "fix" the reality of the loss. I struggled to ensure that the magical elements, like the star flower or the jasmine scent, did not act as a "cheat" to make the sadness go away instantly. It was important that the magic only served as a container for the child's feelings, helping them process the permanence of the loss rather than reversing it. I had to learn how to keep the magic subtle and grounded in the everyday setting of the Indonesian countryside. This restraint was necessary to maintain the emotional honesty required to depict a child's grieving process accurately. Finding this balance was a major hurdle in ensuring the stories remained relatable and therapeutic.

The final creative lesson was learning how to pace the characters' growth so that the resolution felt earned rather than forced. In early drafts, I found myself trying to "heal" the characters too quickly because I wanted them to be happy again. However, I realized that for the story to be helpful, it must respect the time it takes for a child to move through the phases of despair. I had to practice patience in my writing, allowing the characters to sit in their stillness and withdrawal before introducing the "secure base" of the caregiver. This taught me that the "safe haven" of comfort must be fully established before the plot can move toward a new activity or ritual. Respecting the slow rhythm of emotional change was essential to making the stories feel true to a child's lived experience.

### **3.3. Future Plans**

My immediate plan is to finalize the production of the picture book series so it can be shared with the community. I will focus on working with an illustrator to ensure the art captures the warm and familiar feeling from the countryside of Indonesia. These final versions will be designed as

high-quality digital files that can be easily accessed by anyone who needs them. My goal is to release these stories as open-source resources to ensure that money is never a barrier for a family seeking emotional support. By making the work available online, I hope to reach the widest possible audience of parents, teachers, and children. This crucial first step positions the thesis product as a professional, community-ready resource rather than a purely academic document.

In addition, I plan to explore different formats for the stories, such as audiobook versions with calming sounds and music. Audiobooks would make the stories more inclusive for children who have trouble reading or those who have visual impairments. I will also look for partnerships with local publishers like Gramedia or Mizan, who often have imprints focused on children's mental health, to see if a physical print run is possible. Having physical copies in places like hospital waiting rooms or child welfare agencies would be a great way to provide support to those with limited digital access. These partnerships would help the project grow beyond its original scope and provide long-term utility for the community. I believe that by expanding into multimedia, the message that "nothing lasts forever, but love remains" can reach even more hearts.

### **3.4. Suggestion/Recommendations**

For future researchers interested in the niche of children's literature, I strongly recommend incorporating an exploration of peer support as a primary mechanism for healing within their narrative models. While this thesis utilized the caregiver as the central support figure, developmental psychology acknowledges that peers become increasingly important attachment figures as children age. Future creative projects could investigate how friendship dynamics, like the one hinted at in Ryan's story, can function as a "horizontal" attachment bond that provides unique forms of validation and support during times of loss. Researching how children co-regulate each other in the absence of adults could lead to a new category of therapeutic stories that empower children to support one another. This research direction would expand the utility of therapeutic narratives beyond the adult-child relationship, validating the natural resilience found in peer bonds.

I also recommend that future creators experiment with interactive media formats beyond the traditional static picture book to enhance the "reorganization" process. Developing narratives into interactive apps or simple digital games could provide children with a more agentic role in the rituals of healing, allowing them to virtually plant a seed, fold a paper airplane, or curate a memory box within the story world. This interactivity could deepen the child's engagement with the concept of "continuing bonds" by allowing them to actively practice the behaviors that lead to resolution. Future research could compare the efficacy of these interactive formats against traditional reading to see which modality best supports emotional processing. This recommendation acknowledges the

changing landscape of children's media and suggests harnessing technology to create more immersive therapeutic tools.

Furthermore, I recommend that projects explicitly integrate a phased field testing and empirical validation strategy to provide concrete evidence of the stories' therapeutic value. Future researchers should collaborate with child psychologists to run small focus groups, measuring how children and parents interpret the metaphors and emotional content of the narratives. Gathering this professional feedback would be invaluable for refining the narrative language and structural elements to maximize clarity and therapeutic effectiveness before widespread dissemination. This emphasis on validation would strengthen the academic standing of the creative field, ensuring that books designed to support mental health are proven to achieve their intended therapeutic outcomes. This methodological rigor is essential for advancing the creation of evidence-based therapeutic literature.