

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH

Literary work is something that usually describes a thing that is full of meaning. With the existence of literary works, someone can also shed its life experience through literary works. There's Yiyun Li, a writer who described her life story about her love of life and her suicidal son who's named Nikolai, through a novel entitled *Where Reasons End*.

Yiyun Li is a Chinese-American writer. Her short stories and novels have won several awards and distinctions, including the PEN/Hemingway Award and Guardian First Book Award for *A Thousand Years of Good Prayers*. She is presently an editor of the Brooklyn-based literary magazine *A Public Space*.

Yiyun Li grew up in Beijing, China and moved to the United States in 1996. She received an MFA from Iowa Writers' Workshop and an MFA in creative nonfiction writing from the University of Iowa. Her stories and essays have been published in *The New Yorker*, *The Paris Review*, and elsewhere. She has received a Whiting Writers' Award and was awarded a Lannan Foundation residency in Marfa, TX. Her debut collection, *A Thousand Years of Good Prayers*, won the Frank O'Connor International Short Story Award, PEN/Hemingway Award, Guardian First Book Award, and California Book Award for first fiction. She was recently selected as one of *Granta's* 21 Best of Young American Novelists. She lives in Oakland, California with her husband and their two sons, and teaches at the University of California, Davis.

"Where Reasons End" is an imagined conversation between a mother and her 16-year-old son after his suicide. The aching feelings of grief at the

center of this novel are made all the more intense knowing that the author herself lost a child to suicide. Yet their dialogue isn't necessarily about why he ended his life and it's not even about directly memorializing his life; it's more exchange about the nature of being and the way language gives structure to relationships. This tone isn't surprising given Yiyun Li's recent memoir "Dear Friend, from My Life I Write to You in Your Life" where the author discusses her own depression and suicide attempts. Like in her autobiographical writing, Li doesn't cut to the heart of emotion but shades in its edges so you feel the bleeding heart of the matter more profoundly. The more their conversation persists the flimsier language feels: "None of the words, I thought, would release me from the void left by him." As sobering and serious as all this seems, this mother and son make a perfect balance. When the mother's musing becomes too lofty the son quickly and humorously brings her back to reality. In this way, Li captures a beautiful dynamic that persists even after the son's death.

Midway through this novel the son (referred to as Nikolai even though that's not his real name) describes his insurmountable feelings of inner conflict: "I've found a perfect enemy in myself." Realizing how her son ultimately defeated himself, the mother dearly wishes he'd directed that hatred at her instead.

Li doesn't try to explain the magical thinking that allows this conversation to continue, but simply presents it. The significance comes not from the fact of it but the circular logic which means it will always continue: "I'm muddleheaded, I thought, because I could go on thinking but would not reach any clarity: Which between hope and fear, had made life unliveable for him?" There's a belief in the power of language which transcends the tragedy of the mother's circumstance and though it may feel ultimately futile she continues to connect with him through this dialogue.

Yiyun Li writes, “I had but one delusion, which I held onto with all my willpower: we once gave Nikolai a life of flesh and blood; and I'm doing it over again, this time by words.”

In writing this book, Yiyun Li was inspired by a line from Proust’s *Remembrance of Things Past* “Ideas come to us as the successors to griefs, and griefs, at the moment when they change into ideas, lose some part of their power to injure the heart; the transformation itself, even, for an instant, releases suddenly a little joy.”

## **B. BOOK REVIEW**

The writer use other journals to make this research. Because what the writer research is a novel, then the writer read more journals from books and the internet. As a supporter of other theoretical foundations, the writer also use Albertine Minderop’s books such as “Psikologi Sastra” and “Metode Karakterisasi Studi Fiksi” which aim to find out the psychological side in the novel *Where Reasons End*.

## **C. IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM**

In accordance with the background of the problems above, the problem is identified based on reaction formation and fantasy in Yiyun Li’s Novel *Where Reasons End* that is reflected in the story.

## **D. LIMITATION OF THE PROBLEM**

According to the identification of the problems above, the problems of this research are the reaction formation and fantasy in Yiyun Li’s Novel *Where Reasons End*. The applied concepts are through intrinsic approaches, such as showing method, characterization, plot, and setting, as well as an extrinsic approach.

## **E. FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEM**

Based on the limitation of the problems above, the problems in this research can be formulated accordingly to prove The Reflection of Reaction Formation and Fantasy on Mother Character in Yiyun Li’s Novel *Where*

*Reasons End*, which become the assumption of this research. Therefore, the problems in this research are formulated as follows:

1. What are the characterization and indirect methods (showing) in the novel *Where Reasons End*?
2. What are the plot and setting support the theme in the novel *Where Reasons End*?
3. What are the reaction formation and fantasy can be used as a support in the psychology of literature in the novel *Where Reasons End*?
4. What are the theme used answer all the research studied?

#### **F. OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH**

Based on the formulation of the problem above, the objective of this research is to prove The Reflection of Reaction Formation and Fantasy on Mother Character in Yiyun Li's Novel *Where Reasons End*. In order to achieve that objective, the steps which are supposed to be done in this research are as follows:

1. To analyze the characterization and indirect methods (showing) that can be used to study the characters.
2. To analyze the plot and setting can support the theme.
3. To analyze the reaction formation and fantasy can be used as a support in the psychology of literature.
4. To prove that my assumption about this novel is The Reflection of Reaction Formation and Fantasy on Mother Character in Yiyun Li's Novel *Where Reasons End*.

#### **G. METHODS OF THE RESEARCH**

Based on theoretical framework, the writer use the research method with a variety of qualitative, type of literature research, analysis by using collecting data which are in the form of novel entitled *Where Reasons End* as

a primary source and supported by a number of aspects related to the theory, concept, and definition to appropriate as a secondary source.

## **H. BENEFIT OF THE RESEARCH**

Based on the things above, this research is expected to be useful for those who are interested in deepening knowledge about Yiyun Li's novel *Where Reasons End*. This research might be useful for those who are interested in the analysis of literary works using the concepts that the writer used for this research. This research is useful because it is done through a new perspective.

## **I. SYSTEMATIC ORGANIZATION OF THE RESEARCH**

In accordance to the title of the research above, the order of the presentation is written as follows:

CHAPTER I : It consists of background of the research, identification of the problem, limitation of the problem, formulation of the problem, objective of the research, methods of the research, benefit of the research, systematic organization of the research.

CHAPTER II : It consists of intrinsic and extrinsic approaches. Intrinsic approach includes characterization (showing methods), setting and plot. The applied extrinsic approach is psychological approach which includes reaction formation and fantasy.

CHAPTER III: It consists of characterization of the characters, plot, and settings of the novel. The concepts above must appear in the number of sub-chapters.

CHAPTER IV: It consists of a brief explanation of this chapter's content, analysis of the reflection of reaction formation and fantasy, characters, setting and plot. The concepts above must appear in the number of sub-chapters.

CHAPTER V : It consists of an evaluation from the previous chapters and the conclusion.

