

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of The Research

Narratives in human's life is not "just a story". Narratives come in many forms, fiction or non-fiction, an experience or a conversation between two humans. The narratives we have become a foundation of decision making in facing the future. Whether they are a good or bad stories and experience that happened in one's life, it becomes a benchmark. There are reasons why many parents teach their kids using fairy tales, fables or even biography, they give children a basic reason, premises and moral as a foundation in decision makings.

There are so many stories exist side by side in our life, in fact they are unlimited in number. Human has to choose which one is the good story and which one is bad. These stories become meaningful and will affect their lives, as Walter Fisher says in his essay *Narration as A Human communication paradigm: The Case of Public Moral Argument* in a quotation from MacIntyre.

In theme, if not in every detail, narrative, then, is meaningful for persons in particular or in general, accross communities as well as cultures, accross time and place. Narratives enable us to understand the actions of others "because we all live out narratives in our lives and because we understand our own lives in terms of narratives" (MacIntyre) (8)

Since every story and literature have a mission to deliver meaning, this force Human has to analyze it, seeking its unique pattern and comes to the meaning.

The meaning itself gives impact to the human life and make them put the narratives to their own lives. The narratives affect the lives directly or indirectly. Yann Martel's *life of Pi* is one of the proof that shows the impact of narratives to the reality.

Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* is a story about a man named Piscine Molitor Patel also can be called Pi. People who heard Pi's story claimed that his story will make the hearer to believe in god. This novel shows Pi's interests in god. He met so many beliefs during his life: Atheism, Hinduism, Christian and Islam. As his interests grow bigger he begins to follow the three religions above.

The novel itself divided into three parts. The first part mainly tells about Pi interactions with some religions and beliefs, his train of thoughts, and also a brief history on how Pi becomes a multi-religion person. The second part is mainly about Pi's survival story surviving the harsh of Pacific ocean in a lifeboat with a hyena, a wounded zebra, an orangutan, and also a 450-pound Royal Bengal tiger.

The third part is about Pi's interrogation with two Japanese men working as investigator in Maritime Department in the Japanese Ministry of Transport to investigate the cause of the sinking of *Tsimsum*, the cargo ship where Pi has been. This part is also highlighted by the second version of Pi's survival story without the animals included.

The writer chooses to analyze this novel because of several reasons. The first one, the novel itself is a huge success. *Life of Pi* won Man Booker Prize for Fiction in 2002 one year after the novel was published. In 2003 *Life of Pi* won

Boeke Prize, and in 2004 it won Asian-Pacific American Award for Best Adult Fiction for years 2001-2003. Also, according to *Nationalpost*, Yann Martel himself got an appreciation letter from Barrack Obama, the president of the United States of America.

The second reason is that *Life of Pi* shows the power of fiction that will make people change perspective of something, in this case, the writer focuses on how the novel describes beliefs with the stories given.

This novel has two versions of endings which is also categorized as an open ending. The writer, who is also a reader is forced to choose the ending on our own. As Walter Fisher's theory about *Narrative Paradigm* says that:

As stories competing with other stories constituted by good reasons, as being rational when they satisfy the demands of narrative probability and narrative fidelity, and as inevitably moral inducements. (Fisher, *Narration as Human Communication Paradigm: The Case of Public Moral Argument*, 2).

The power of storytelling and narratives are highlighted in this novel. The endings become a field to a Human to choose on what to believe between the stories. Yann Martel as Pi, made this two versions of stories as an analogy in choosing beliefs, which one is true, and which one is fake. Since belief, if it is being connected to Walter Fisher's *Narrative Paradigm*, is a result of a process of narrative-consuming. The ending of this novel force the reader to choose the story to believe. The source to chew is the narratives, and the tool is some good reasoning.

The Narrative Paradigm broadens up people's perspective of narratives. As a student of English Literature, the writer sees that the novel *Life of Pi* itself is a perfect medium to deliver the importance of narratives in Walter Fisher's Narrative Paradigm and vice versa. The writer also purposely aim to the reader of this research to broaden the knowledge that the narratives are really not "just a story". Built upon the reasoning above, the writer decided to choose Walter Fisher's *Narrative Paradigm* as a tool to interpret this novel, in highlighting the interaction between Humans and narratives. Because humans—consciously or unconsciously, are always affected by the narratives.

Based on the reason above, the writer wants to complete the research in analyzing Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* titled "**Beliefs as Narratives in Yann Martel's *Life of Pi*: Walter Fisher's Narrative Paradigm**".

1.2. Identification of Problem

The writer assumed that through this novel, Yann Martel tries to give description of beliefs and decision making in the analogy of god given by Pi with his two versions of stories and their relation to the beginning statement of the novel. Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* has a beginning statement, which is "The story that will make you believe in god". At the end of the story, Yann Martel gives us two versions of stories and make it as an analogy of God, then ask the reader indirectly "which one is the good story". Compared to the beginning statement of this novel, the ending seems not persuasive. It also shows how the power of the

additional story affects the meaning of the whole story, and make it become ambiguous. Through this novel, Yann Martel tried to show people the influence of Narratives in human's belief. Therefore, the writer wants to focus the research on the belief description from the analogy given by Yann Martel, according to Walter Fisher's Narrative Paradigm.

1.3. The Scope of The Research

In order to make the analysis clearer, the writer focuses the analysis on the interpretation of Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* as belief as narratives. The interpretation will be based on:

1. Pi's early stories of encountering beliefs and religions in his multi-religion personality.
2. The analysis of Pi's analogy of God by comparing the different aspects on the two versions of survival stories.

1.4. The Objectives of The Research

This study is aimed to examine how beliefs are described as Narratives in Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* according to Walter Fisher's Narrative Paradigm. The writer also wants to increase the number of research concerned with *Life of Pi* and Narrative Paradigm. And also with the research, the writer as an English Literature student, wants to enhance the awareness of narratives amongst the public.

1.5. The Review of Previous Studies

To strengthen the analysis of the research, references from previous studies will be used as a source. The first one is a journal by Florence Stratton entitled *“Hollow at The Core”*: *Deconstructing Yann Martel’s Life of Pi* (2004). Stratton’s journal is posted in a journal compiler website called *Studies in Canadian Literature* in volume 29, number 2. This journal compares the two versions of the Pi’s survival story and deconstructing the premise the novel gives: “the story that will make you believe in god”. This journal also discovers Pi’s culinary activities that can be related as sadism and also cruelty based on the connection between the two survival stories. This journal provides an in-depth comparison between the two versions of Pi’s survival story. However, the journal did not relate the two stories of Pi as an analogy of god, which is lead to Belief.

In conducting the research the writer uses the journal to help in comparing Pi’s two stories, but in the perspective of *Narrative Paradigm* of Walter Fisher’s and providing the connection to analogy of god that Martel gives in the novel.

The next source of works that will be used is a journal by Ruta Slapkauskaite titled *Investigating Intertextuality in Yann Martel’s Life of Pi* from a collection of Journal entitled *Dialogues with Traditions in Canadian Literatures* compiled in 2005. The journal tells mainly about the description of religion in the novel *Life of Pi*. The journal also analyzes Pi’s perspective on seeing the religions, and also mentioning the interrelationships among religions. Ruta also analyze the intertextuality of *Life of Pi* with several works, but mainly with *The Old Man and*

The Sea in terms of analyzing the religions mentioned in both novel. And it also mentions of the binary opposition of rationality versus irrationality and also sacral and secular.

The writer found that these works can help while conducting the research in order to analyze the religion mentioned in *Life of Pi* and connecting it into beliefs. The things that Ruta's journal didn't have in the upcoming research is how the beliefs connected to narratives and the analogy of god given in Pi's two survival stories. This journal really helps the writer in analyzing the religions mentioned in *Life of Pi*.

From the elaboration of the previous works above, both of the works have a belief-related analysis mentioned. Florence's works focused on deconstruction, while Ruta's works focused mainly on intertextuality. What makes it distinct to the writer's works is the relation of Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* to the narratives based on Walter Fisher's Narrative Paradigm, and how the narratives become influential.

The Narrative Paradigm as a background theory in analyzing *Life of Pi* will show the relation between belief and narratives, based on the character's thought process and history, and also based on analogy of god in Pi's two survival stories which involving the *narrative probability* and *narrative fidelity* in human's decision making process as a *homo Narran*.

1.6. Theoretical Framework

To analyze the work, there are several sources that will be used. Mainly, the writer will use The Narrative Paradigm theory by Walter Fisher.

To define “belief”, according to *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, the term “belief” to refer to the attitude we have, roughly, whenever we take something to be the case or regard it as true. According to *Encyclopedia Britannica*, David Hume define belief as “a significant component in the process of causal inference.”

Based on this definition, it is clearly said that people choose belief based on their own reasoning, which also means that different people have different perspective and estimation on how they see their belief. It is based on reasoning, it also means that in choosing the belief it also depends on the information of the person has obtained beforehand.

Because of the writer chooses a novel as the object of the research, the writer needs to define what is the definition of novel itself. According to Abrams in his book *A Glossary of Literary Terms* novel is “a great variety of writings that have in common only the attribute of being extended works of fiction written in prose.” And according to *Encyclopedia Britannica*, novel is “an invented prose narrative of considerable length and a certain complexity that deals imaginatively with human experience, usually through a connected sequence of events involving a group of persons in specific setting.” With these definitions, *Life of Pi* is categorized as a novel.

The main theory that the writer uses in conducting the research is The Narrative Paradigm by Walter Fisher. The Narrative Paradigm Theory was proposed by Walter Fisher in 1984 in his paper entitled *Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm: The Case of Public Moral Argument*. The paper then developed into a book called *Human Communication as Narration: Toward a Philosophy of Reason, Value, and Action* in 1987.

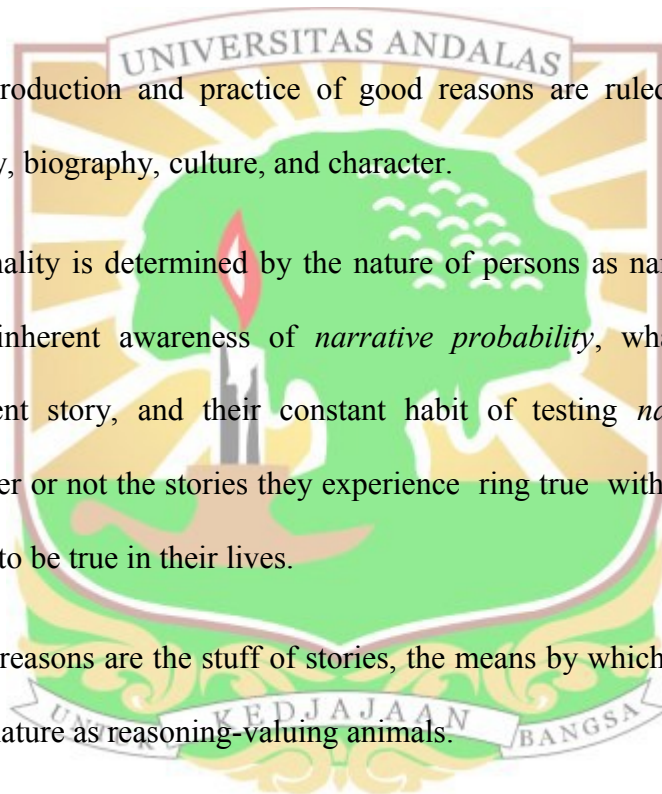
The Narrative Paradigm, according to Walter Fisher, believes that narratives take an important part in human lives. It believes that human taking decisions by reasoning the stories that appear around them and then took it as a part of their lives.

As will be seen, the narrative paradigm insists that human communication should be viewed as historical as well situational, as stories competing with other stories constituted by good reasons, as being rational when they satisfy the demands of narrative probability and narrative fidelity, and as inevitably moral inducements. (Fisher, *Narration as Human Communication Paradigm: The Case of Public Moral Argument*, 2)

In his paper Walter Fisher also describes his thought about narratives in his essay, that Narrative is about the action that has sequence, meaning and can be interpret (2). And also he describes that paradigm is a representation designed to formalize the structure of a component of experience and to direct understanding and inquiry into the nature and function of the experience. (2). It can be concluded that the narrative paradigm as a theoretical framework that calls people to view events through narration.

Later in his essay, Walter Fisher mentioned that there are five presuppositions that undergird The Narrative Paradigm (64-65):

1. Humans are essentially storyteller
2. The paradigmatic mode of human decision making and communication is “good reasons,” which vary in form among situations, genres, and media of communication.
3. The production and practice of good reasons are ruled by matters of history, biography, culture, and character.
4. Rationality is determined by the nature of persons as narrative beings—their inherent awareness of *narrative probability*, what constitutes a coherent story, and their constant habit of testing *narrative fidelity*, whether or not the stories they experience ring true with the stories they know to be true in their lives.
5. Good reasons are the stuff of stories, the means by which humans realize their nature as reasoning-valuing animals.



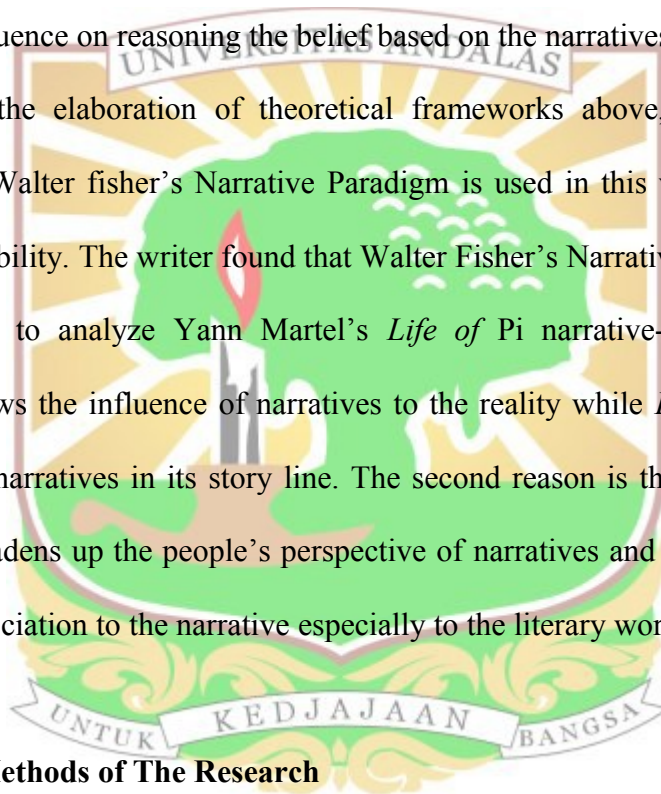
Walter Fisher also introduce a term which calls human as *homo narrans*. He explains that human are essentially storytellers that make decisions on the basis of good reasons.

“The idea of human beings as storytellers posits the generic form of all symbol composition. It holds that symbols are created and communicated ultimately as stories meant to give order to establish ways of living in common, in intellectual and spiritual

communities in which there is confirmation for the story that constitutes one's life." (63)

From the explanation above, Fisher clearly said that human make sense of their lives by telling or receiving stories, and it affects their lives by judging the stories based on good reasoning. Fisher also explains that stories are symbolic actions which are linked to experience and value and create social reality. On the other hand, because belief itself is based on a reasoning, human as *homo Narran* hold a big influence on reasoning the belief based on the narratives.

From the elaboration of theoretical frameworks above, there are two reasons why Walter fisher's Narrative Paradigm is used in this works. The first reason is suitability. The writer found that Walter Fisher's Narrative Paradigm is a proper choice to analyze Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* narrative-wise. Narrative Paradigm shows the influence of narratives to the reality while *Life of Pi* shows the power of narratives in its story line. The second reason is that the Narrative Paradigm broadens up the people's perspective of narratives and also can rise up people's appreciation to the narrative especially to the literary works.



1.7. The Methods of The Research

In conducting the research, there are some steps to be followed. First is collecting the data. There are two kinds of data used in conducting this research, which is the first, the primary data, that taken from the literary works itself: *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel. And the secondary data are taken from literary theory books and article related to this study. These data is collected by reading the books, articles, theses and browsing the internet.

The next step is analyzing the data. The referential method will be used to identify the description of beliefs in Yann Martel's *Life of Pi*, which in this case, beliefs as Narratives. It will apply the theory of Narrative Paradigm by Walter Fisher.

The third step is presenting the result of the research. In presenting the result of the research, the descriptive method will be applied, which is the qualitative research. Qualitative research is a descriptive research which is the data is collected in words rather than in numbers.

