

## Revelations of Ethnicity and Additional Significant Ingredients in Yann Martel's *Life of Pi*

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### **Abstract:**

This research paper attempts to delineate and outline the revelations of ethnicity and additional significant ingredients in Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* (2001). In the opening of *Life of Pi*, the novelist reveals a comprehensive portrayal of the lethargy, the special style, the velocity, and the jesting. It survives by being lethargic and because of its slothfulness; it consents to algae to cultivate on its body that acts like concealment with the surrounding moss and shrubbery. *Life of Pi* is audacious, in fact, evangelical; premise locates it on a perilous, ethical high position. Devoid of displaying unequivocally the hallmarks of the modern novel – metafictional self-reference; the need to be affianced and politically 'relevant'; the need to elucidate and alert as well as simply to notify – the essential account of Pi's survival is solely laudable, intriguing, exhilarating and remarkable. The narration is an erroneously fossilized account of a tale which is, in its verbal structure and eternally fluid. In average state of affairs such self-consciousness concerning the fictitious act vigor challenge the reader, forcing him into noting the several ways and biases with which a single incident can be revealed by a writer, to question the reliability and believability of the account, to analyse the content itself as an work of art rather than what that text explores. Nevertheless in this illustration, the challenge is to avoid doing this, and consequently to be contrasting the gloomy and listlessly honest insurance brokers who cross-examine Pi at the end.

**Key Words:** booker prize winning writer, ethnicity, integrity and believability, significant ingredients

**Introduction:**

Yann Martel was born in Salamanca, Spain, in 1963, of Canadian parents who were doing graduate studies. Later they both joined the Canadian Foreign Service and he grew up in Costa Rica, France, Spain and Mexico, in addition to Canada. Martel continued to travel widely as an adult, spending time in Iran, Turkey and India, but is now based mainly in Montreal. Martel obtained a degree in Philosophy from Trent University in Ontario, then worked variously as a tree planter, dishwasher and security guard before taking up writing full-time from the age of 27. Martel's first book, *The Facts Behind the Helsinki Roccamatios*, was published in 1993 and is a collection of short stories, dealing with such themes as illness, storytelling and the history of the twentieth century; music, war and the anguish of youth; how we die; and grief, loss and the reasons we are attached to material objects. This was followed by his first novel, *Self* (1996), a tale of sexual identity, orientation and Orlando-like transformation. It is described by Charles Foran in the *Montreal Gazette* as a '... superb psychological acute observation on love, attraction and belonging ... (90)'. In 2002 Martel came to public attention when he won the Man Booker Prize for Fiction for his second novel, *Life of Pi* (2001), an epic survival story with an overarching religious theme. The novel tells the story of one Pi Patel, the son of an Indian family of zookeeper. Martel's *Life of Pi* (2001) is a fantasy adventure novel and its account is inspired by Martel's childhood friend Eleanor and her adventures in India. The protagonist Piscine "Pi" Molitor Patel, is an Indian boy from Pondicherry, reveals issues of spirituality and practicality from an early age, and survives 227 days after a shipwreck. Martel brought the idea of rituals many times. *Life of Pi* was first published by Knopf Canada in September 2001, and the UK edition won the Man Booker Prize for Fiction the following year. It was chosen for CBC Radio's *Canada Reads* 2003, where it was championed by author Nancy Lee. It won the 2003 Booker Prize, a South African novel award. Its French translation, *L'Histoire de Pi*, was also chosen in the French version of the reading competition, *Le combat des livres*. In the opening of *Life of Pi*, the novelist reveals a comprehensive portrayal of the lethargy, the special style, the velocity, and the jesting. It survives by being lethargic and because of its slothfulness; it consents to algae to cultivate on its body that acts like concealment with the surrounding moss and shrubbery. Mamaji had taught Pi how to swim. "I lay on the bench and fluttered my legs and scratched away at the sand with my hands, turning my head at every stroke to breathe. I must have looked like a child throwing a peculiar, slow-motion tantrum (106)". Pi lives in Pondicherry, India with his parents. Simultaneously, the family owns a wonderful zoo that is an abode to hundreds of animals including tigers and zebras.

Yann Martel elucidates the circumstances and the town, the zoo, and the landscape of the entire setting. He furthermore reveals the scent, perceive, and consider what Pi whiffs, perceives, and feels; internally, biologically, and within. Pi is moreover having a sacred engagement, was brought up a Hindu however reconnoiters entire categories of convictions such as Christian, and Muslim, to be baptized, identifiable a prayer rug, and praise Allah. There are countless evidences in *Life of Pi* from the persistence escort that was on the vessel. The *Life of Pi* has a twofold communication. This is not just an amusing novel nevertheless this is nowadays a survival chaperon. Pi knew that his paramount fortuitous of existence was being seen by another vessel. He debates fairly a few times, "Jesus, Mary, Muhammad and Vishnu! ... (290)" when he was either gratified or obligatory sustenance. Jesus and Mary refer to the Christian faith, Muhammad refers to the Muslim faith, and Vishnu is a Hindu God. Over all, this novel is greater to furthestmost new that we have recited. *Life of Pi* novel constructs a part of you that attempts and

aimed at exploration. *Life of Pi* reveals precisely what to do if perpetually acquire entombed in a life boat through an orangutan, hyena, and a 450 pound Bengal tiger, as its mentioned, “I turned around, stepped over the zebra and threw myself overboard” (320). This is full of revelation and curiosity, jumps out of the middle of *Life of Pi*. It's symbolic of the account of Yann Martel tells in *Life of Pi*, a significant account where he makes the implausible sound reliable. When we upset diagonally condemnations corresponding that, we know we are in the hands of a master chronicler. Yann Martel reveals the account of Piscine Molitor Patel, self-christened as Pi.

*Life of Pi* is divided into three parts. The primary one is where the protagonist, Pi, being a mature, guises back upon his youthful days. How he histrionically transformed his name to Pi when he happening to appear in secondary school, since he was weary of being erroneously. How he was a born Hindu, nonetheless as a fourteen-year-old, interacted with Christianity and Islam and happening to track all three convictions. Other part, it all goes erroneous. The vessel descends and Pi ends up with a tiger, a hyena, a zebra and an orangutan in an insignificant lifeboat. The preceding part is predominantly a dialogue amongst two foreigners. Meanwhile they want to identify what is erroneous with the vessel and Pi is the only toughie.

Pi tells the foreign investigators a terrible, realistic description of his tribulation. This is the indispensable conversation amongst Mr. Okamoto and Mr. Chiba:

[Mr. Okamoto:] “The blind Frenchman they met in the other lifeboat – didn't he admit to killing a man and a woman?”

[Mr. Chiba:] “Yes, he did.”

[Mr. Okamoto:] “The cook killed the sailor and his mother.”

[Mr. Chiba:] “Very impressive.”

[Mr. Okamoto:] “His stories match.”

[Mr. Chiba:] “So the Taiwanese sailor is the zebra, his mother is the orang-utan; the cook is...the hyena – which means he's the tiger!”

[Mr. Okamoto:] “Yes. The tiger killed the hyena – and the blind Frenchman – just as he killed the cook” (299-305).

By Mr. Okamoto and Mr. Chiba find out the vibrant elucidation of the conceivable parable. This is the tangible agreement fleshed out and made uncut. Which is sort of what faith does for a wafer of bread in the Catholic religion? Secondly, Martel more or less actually cautions against reading the book as an allegory in a number of interviews. Granted, he also says in one interview, but you can probably guess which story that is (*Guardian Interview*). The algae island might be the second weirdest part, it's an island made entirely of seaweed, full of meerkats and freshwater ponds. It gets even stranger: dead fish rise to the surface of the ponds at night and disappear by morning. It just doesn't have the hazy feel of delusion: those gaps and blurred edges. It has edges. One possibility is that the island represents some type of comfortable faith. When Pi first steps onto it he says as much: “My foot sank into the clear water and met the

rubbery resistance of something flexible but solid. I put more weight down. The illusion would not give. I put the full weight of my foot. Still I did not sink. Still I did not believe (122). What do you do when your spiritual test (a.k.a. Richard Parker) follows your every command? You leave:

By the time morning came, my grim decision was taken. I preferred to set off and perish in search of my own kind than to live a lonely half-life of physical comfort and spiritual death on this murderous island. (143)

Like all of Martel's symbols and allegories in *Life of Pi*, the island ends up being more elusive than one might think. India in mid-1970s was a tumultuous place. Gandhi's authoritarian measures were a little like saying to the opposing baseball (or cricket) team, in the novel, Gandhi's measures invade Pi's home state of Tamil Nadu (where Pondicherry is located). Gandhi severely disappoints Pi's father, who had hoped for a tolerant, new India: "The camel at the zoo was unfazed, but that straw broke Father's back" (29). The confinement actually seems to do him some spiritual good. We at Shmoop are reminded of an earlier musing of Pi's two favorite topics: religion and animals. At one point Pi says, I know zoos are no longer in people's good graces. Religion faces the same problem. Certain illusions about freedom plague them both (14).

*Life of Pi* is intended, so Martel tells us, to make the reader believe in God. This bold, apparently evangelical, premise locates it on a dangerous moral high ground. Aesthetically, the fiction which reveals a certainty by unambiguous sermonizing to a certain extent than as a expected ending drawn from the interactions and proceedings it reveals, is disappointing, even "immoral." Undeniably, Martel's proclamation is to be expected to have the contradictory consequence on his reader, provoking a strong-minded counter-reaction not to submit to a moralistic spiritual schedule. Martel discusses the autonomous preference: the aspiration to judge to a certain extent than the credence itself. He reawakens the innermost supremacy of the story as yarn and legend, as the compelling description told roughly the camp fire and handed connecting generations, considered to pass the night hours with captivating drama rather than to distribute opinionated psychoanalysis on existing civilization. The narration is an erroneously fossilized account of a tale which is, in its verbal structure and eternally fluid. In average state of affairs such self-consciousness concerning the fictitious act vigor challenge the reader, forcing him into noting the several ways and biases with which a single incident can be revealed by a writer, to question the reliability and believability of the account, to analyse the content itself as an work of art rather than what that text explores. Nevertheless in this illustration, the challenge is to avoid doing this, and consequently to be contrasting the gloomy and listlessly honest insurance brokers who cross-examine Pi at the end.

Martel takes diverse approaches of dialogue and genre, transforms their distinctiveness and blends collectively them flanked by a solitary deposit of covers. Approximating India, which is a point of rear-ender of dissimilar civilizations and creeds, and of which Pi (who derives different benefits from the three religions he follows simultaneously) is the most vivid personification, the novel holds collectively styles from poles apart of the library. In the island scene, an happening which occurs significantly immediately as the novel seems to be fetching – dare one say this about a story about a child sharing a boat with a Bengal tiger? – Repetitive and conventional, the Eden myth is reconfigured in a chilling biological reversal where trees

consume men. The expected atmosphere is liquid and malleable and Man is something nevertheless in ideal supervision or sympathetic of it, notwithstanding his audacious superciliousness. The castaway narrative exposes man in his most basic state as the descendant of monkeys, concerned with existence rather than production, his superiority one of intellect rather than technology.

The novelist discusses a comprehensive portrayal of the lethargy, the special style, the velocity, and the jesting. It survives by being lethargic and because of its slothfulness; it consents to algae to cultivate on its body that acts like concealment with the surrounding moss and shrubbery. The throw away description balances straightforward hitherto impressive things occurring (days passing, fish caught, rescue ships encountered) with ethical self-discovery. We're not sure when you jumped ship, but Martel increasingly tests the limits of his readers' faith. Maybe you grimace before you even begin and say, "A boy and a tiger in a lifeboat? Like that could ever happen." Maybe, as Pi's survival extends to an unprecedented 227 days, and he hones his skills as a shark-thrower and hawkbill connoisseur, you say, "Enough's enough. I want realism" (112). Most readers probably raise The Eyebrow of Disbelief when Pi meets another castaway on the Pacific Ocean and discovers an island made entirely of seaweed. The Japanese investigators are right there with you. They tell Pi flat out: "We don't believe your story" (99). On a theoretical level, Pi defends himself well. But the knockout punch happens when Pi tells an alternate version of his story. He retells the shipwreck, his survival, and his 227 days at sea without the animals. In their place, he puts himself, a Taiwanese sailor, his mother, and a cook. The story is horrific, even ghastly.

### Conclusion:

Thus, the beauty of the account outweighs the believability of the second? On the one hand, Martel applied power in developing the first account. The sheer volume, the proliferation of details, favors the first. On the other hand, the first story is also totally unlikely. We're not going to tell which story to believe. Martel doesn't spend much time describing Mexico or Canada. The two Japanese investigators interview Pi during his convalescence in Mexico; and the conversations between the author and an older Pi Patel take place in Toronto. These settings serve more as points of departure. Memory and storytelling, which are also vehicles of freedom, take care of the rest.

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