



Vidhyayana - ISSN 2454-8596

An International Multidisciplinary Peer-Reviewed E-Journal

www.vidhyayanaejournal.org

Indexed in: ROAD & Google Scholar

**An analysis of the Relationship of Humans and Animals in Yann
Martel's *Life of Pi*.**

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Abstract:

This study attempts to investigate the relationship between humans and animals, as well as how humans view the natural environment, marine life, and animal kingdom in Yann Martel's *Life of Pi*. This research examines how the storyteller Pi, aware of and unintentionally exploits his subjective, loving, and compassionate impulses in the process of comprehending and evaluating the animal kingdom, animal instinct, inherent violence, and violence itself. As far as Pi is concerned, the tiger won't attack him until he gives it food. Animals are generally thought to behave viciously and beastly out of instinct. It's also said that because it's hard to predict what ferocious and hideous creatures would do when they're hungry, people should avoid them. However, Yann Martel's novel *Life of Pi* explores the complex and symbiotic relationship between humans and animals in the face of adversity. This research paper delves into the intricate interplay between human and animal characters, examining how Martel uses this relationship to convey profound themes of survival, spirituality, and the blurred lines between the human and animal worlds. Through a close analysis of the characters and their interactions, this paper explores the symbolic significance of animals in the narrative, shedding light on the profound lessons Martel imparts about the nature of humanity and our connections with the animal kingdom.

Keywords: Humane, Animal, Relationship, Hunger, Knowledge, Spirituality

Introduction:

The investigation of the bond between people and animals in literary narratives goes beyond the simple depiction of animals and their interactions with people. It turns into a deep prism through which writers explore the core of humanity, analyzing our most basic desires, complex emotions, and spiritual inclinations. A monument to this inquiry is Yann Martel's masterpiece, *Life of Pi*, which tells a gripping story that explores the symbiotic link between humans and the animal kingdom in addition to capturing the battle for existence.

A little Indian kid named Piscine Molitor Patel, together with a Bengal tiger named Richard Parker, a zebra, a hyena, and an orangutan, were lost in a lifeboat in the Pacific Ocean. This is the tale told in the 2001 book *Life of Pi*. These individuals' lives are deeply entwined in the story, which challenges preconceived notions about both the animal and human realms and blurs the boundaries between them. With his skill in telling stories, Martel is able to explore deeper philosophical issues about the essence of life, the



complexities of spirituality, and the moral compass that directs human action. An in-depth examination of *Life of Pi's* fundamental theme the relationship between humans and animals—offers a singular chance to separate the layers of spiritual allegory, survival instincts, and symbolism entwined throughout the story. The goal of this research paper is to analyze the complex relationships between people and animals in the setting of Martel's masterpiece through a critical examination of the work. We will learn about the psychological effects of these interactions on the characters, the symbolic meaning of animals, and the wider implications for our comprehension of the moral and spiritual aspects of human-animal relationships via careful investigation.

Human-Animal Bond and Survival

The relationship between Pi and Richard Parker is the most important aspect of the story. Pi's best ally and deadliest foe is Richard Parker, a fearsome tiger who also happens to be Pi's closest buddy. Their connection is strong and lively. As they spend more time together on the cramped lifeboat, they develop a mutual dependence on one another. The very first step in the development of their connection is based on a shared fear. According to Pi, one's only actual adversary in life is their own fear.

In chapter 56, the narrator says: “I must say a word about fear. It is life’s only true opponent. Only fear can defeat life.” (*Life of Pi*, 161). Again he says: “I looked at Richard Parker. My panic was gone. My fear was dominated. Survival was at hand.” These lines provide conclusive evidence that a relationship may become more intimate when fear is present. In a similar vein, religion identifies an additional facet of the emotion of terror. The dread that places all other worries in proper perspective. It's not a dread that will paralyze you, but rather a fear that makes you appreciative. Apprehension leading to an increased desire for comprehension, which ultimately results in an improved connection. The Bible says —The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. (Proverbs 9: 10). Until a man’s heart is in a right relationship with God, he is unable to have the wisdom that comes from heaven.

Spirituality and Animality

On the other hand, the relationship that exists between Pi and God is one that deserves praise as well. Pi's devotion to God is demonstrated by the fact that he follows not one but three unique faiths. Pi's chance encounter with Father Martin, in which the priest relates the story of Jesus and Christ's love, took place. Later on, Pi developed a strong faith in God, which is mostly credited with enabling him to survive the 227-



days journey at sea. He had a firm and unwavering faith in the existence of God. The Bible says that he prayed four times a day. And the constant awareness of God's nearness was what enabled him to persevere through the challenges that he encountered on his voyage across the ocean. He praised God, Vishnu, and Allah in addition to Christ for his survival. He also thanked Christ for his sacrifice. During the entirety of the journey, Pi maintained communication with God. On his journey across the ocean, God and Richard Parker were his traveling companions. Pi discovers God at the intersection between his religious beliefs and the natural world. He narrates: —

As quickly as it had appeared, the bolt vanished the spray of hot water had not finished landing upon us and already it was gone. The punished swell returned to black and rolled on indifferently. I was dazed, thunderstruck-nearly in the true sense of the word. But not afraid. [...] To Richard Parker I shouted, _stop your trembling! This is a miracle. This is an outbreak of divinity. (*Life of Pi*, 233)

Yann Martel does an excellent job of capturing Pi's compulsion to tell others about God. Pi was bothered by the lack of religious texts on the life boat. He says —

The first time I came upon a Bible in the bedside table of a hotel room in Canada, I burst into tears. I send a contribution to the Gideons the very next day, with a note urging them to spread the range of their activity to all places where worn and weary travelers might lay down their heads, not just to hotel rooms, and that they should leave not only Bibles, but other sacred writings as well (*Life of Pi*, 208)

Pi makes an effort to lift himself beyond his resentment, misery, and exhaustion by expressing gratitude to God for creating the world. He refers to Richard Parker as "God's Cat," the lifeboat as "God's ark," and the sky as "God's ear," despite the fact that he is aware that Richard Parker poses a continual threat. Above all else, the awareness of God's presence continues to serve as a beacon of hope within his soul.



Ecological Elements:

The study of the interactions that exist between various kinds of living things and the environments in which they find themselves is known as ecology. To stay alive, all living things must rely not just on their environment but also on one another. Pi is the only source of sustenance for Richard Parker, who cannot provide for himself. As a result, their relationship becomes something of a trade-off. As the plot develops, Pi realizes that in order to survive, he must learn to link himself to the tiger, but he eventually comes to the realization that animals are also an important part of their environments. As time passes, he demonstrates that he has a healthy relationship with nature by gradually becoming responsible for the tiger's well-being. Pi entertained a number of ideas on how he may murder Parker, including throwing him overboard from the lifeboat, using the six morphine syringes to overdose him, using any and all of the weapons at his disposal to assault him, choking and poisoning him, and engaging in a battle of attrition. However, he was unable to put an end to the tiger in that manner. As a result, he came to the conclusion that he would just subdue the tiger. Therefore, he made the decision to finally domesticate the tiger. Because his father was a zookeeper, he inherited his father's knowledge of animal behavior. Pi slowly came to the conclusion that animals do, in fact, have feelings.

On the other side, Richard Parker began to display some friendly signs by emitting a sound from his nostrils that sounded like "prusten." This event brought about a full transformation in Pi's life, as well as a shift in his perspective about the animal kingdom. After that, Pi made some progress in comprehending and accepting Richard Parker as his collaborator. He was all set to have a fruitful connection with Parker. The most accurate expression of this is found in "the very same person who scared me witness to begin with was the very same person who brought me peace" (*Life of Pi*, 162). To Pi, Parker appeared to be a housecat, and he was prepared to bring the wild cat under his control. Pi's thinking is given a renewed sense of optimism for his own survival by the interdependency of both of them being on the same boat. He places a high importance on being accommodating to Richard Parker.

Interdependence:

Although the concept of interdependence has a positive ring to it, the reality is that at some point in their lives, humans will glance about and realize that they are completely alone, that they do not have any support or assistance or anybody around who can raise them up, encourage them, or collaborate with them.



And they become acutely aware of their own insignificance and shortcomings. It is very evident that *Life of Pi* justifies the same since Pi, the protagonist, experiences a calamity while traveling lonely on a lifeboat all by himself without any backup or assistance. Pi broke down in tears, called his parents, and prayed to God for the strength and bravery to face his fears. He says: "Mother, my tender guardian angel of wisdom, where are you? And you father, my loving worrywart? And Ravi, dazzling hero of my childhood? Vishnu preserve me, Allah protect me, Christ save me, I can't bear it!" (*Life of Pi*, 98) Pi's thought swung wildly. He was transfixed by pain, weeping silently with his mouth opened and hands at his head. In chapter 39, Pi says: "

I was alone and orphaned, in the middle of the pacific, hanging on to an oar, an adult tiger in front of me, sharks beneath me, a storm raging about me. Had I considered my prospects in the light of reason, I surely would have given up and let go of the oar, hoping that I might drown before being eaten. But I don't recall that I had a single thought during those first minutes of relative safety. I didn't even notice daybreak. I held on to the oar, I just held on, God only knows why. (*Life of Pi*, 107)

Finally, Pi realized how God gave a ferocious tiger as his companion. The concept of spiritual conversation, also known as metanoia, is central to Christian theology. This concept is often discussed in regard to man's place in the natural world. A shift in one's way of life can also be referred to as a metanoia when discussing works of literature. Iris Murdoch discusses the concept of metanoia in her book "Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals." She believes that one enters a state of metanoia when they become aware of the living environment, and that cultivating compassion is the result of giving such attention to the living environment. Pi, who is portrayed by Yann Martel, is a character that becomes aware of the struggles that are happening around him, where he adjusts to the environment, and survives amongst the perilous seas along with the fierce tiger. In addition to this, he alters the way he lives as a direct result of his growing friendship with Richard Parker. Pi expressed his gratitude to Richard Parker by bidding him farewell at the end of the book, saying "farewell, Richard Parker, farewell." God bless you and keep you.(LP 286)

Conclusion:

The novel *Life of Pi* explains the concept of relationship which is a part of ecotheology. Pi experiences himself with Richard Parker and God in both the concepts. He experienced his life on a lifeboat like an end game in chess. Pi's relationship with Richard Parker was pure and miraculous. He remained



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alive day after day and week after week without Parker's attack in the life boat. He says: "I love you! Truly I do. I love you, Richard Parker. Don't give up Richard Parker, don't give up. I'll get you to land, I promise, I promise!" (Life of Pi, 236). Finally Pi thanked Parker for saving his life throughout the voyage. On the outset, the novel confirms Pi's relationship with Parker and also portrays the fact that all living beings are dependent on both nature and each other for their survival. This research paper offers a comprehensive exploration of the intricate relationship between humans and animals in Yann Martel's *Life of Pi*. By delving into the symbolic representation of animals, the psychological impact of this relationship on the protagonist, and the spiritual and ethical dimensions of human-animal interactions, the paper provides valuable insights into the profound themes addressed in the novel.



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