

**UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE SANTA CATARINA
PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO EM INGLÊS: ESTUDOS
LINGUÍSTICOS E LITERÁRIOS**

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**“I’LL TELL YOU A STORY THAT WILL MAKE YOU
BELIEVE” IN NARRATIVES:
THE ROLE OF METAFICTION IN THE NOVEL AND IN THE
FILM *LIFE OF PI***

Dissertação submetida ao Programa de
Pós Graduação em Inglês: Estudos
Linguísticos e Literários da
Universidade Federal de Santa
Catarina para a obtenção do Grau de
mestre em Inglês

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Florianópolis

2015

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Bronislawski, Patricia

?I?ll tell you a story that will make you believe? in narratives : The role of metafiction in the novel and in the film Life of Pi / Patricia Bronislawski ; orientadora, Anelise Reich Corseuil ; coorientador, Maria Teresa Collares . - Florianópolis, SC, 2015.

86 p.

Dissertação (mestrado) - Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Centro de Comunicação e Expressão. Programa de Pós-Graduação em Inglês: Estudos Linguísticos e Literários.

Inclui referências

1. Inglês: Estudos Linguísticos e Literários. 2. Metaficção. 3. Adaptação cinematográfica. I. Reich Corseuil, Anelise. II. Collares, Maria Teresa. III. Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina. Programa de Pós-Graduação em Inglês: Estudos Linguísticos e Literários. IV. Título.

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BELIEVE' IN NARRATIVES: THE ROLE OF METAFICTION
IN THE NOVEL AND THE FILM LIFE OF PI**

Esta Dissertação foi julgada adequada para obtenção do Título de “mestre”, e aprovada em sua forma final pelo Programa de Pós Graduação em Inglês: Estudos Linguísticos e Literários.

Florianópolis, 27 de fevereiro de 2015.

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Acknowledgments

“You say grace before meals. All right. But I say grace before the concert and the opera, and grace before the play and pantomime, and grace before I open a book, and grace before sketching, painting, swimming, fencing, boxing, walking, playing, dancing and grace before I dip the pen in the ink.”
(G. K. Chesterton)

I join Chesterton before acknowledging those who helped me during my Master’s to say graces: thanks God for your infinite love, for always guiding me and for sending me to Florianópolis. Thanks for giving me Mary to point me the right path. Totus Tuus ego sum.

I thank my adviser Anelise for all the valuable comments on my work, for the academic and non-academic lessons and for all the help and support. My co-adviser Maria Teresa for the references, for the kind e-mails and important meetings and conversations. Maria Lucia, Eliana, José Roberto and Magali for all the precious lessons at your courses. To Magali, Maria Lúcia and Maria Célia for kindly accepting to read my thesis. Luciana Baretta and Neide Pinheiro, for stimulating me to keep on studying and researching. My PPGI colleagues for everything, especially for the fun moments outside the Academic Environment. I also want to thank my parents, Carlos and Nanci, and my sister Thais for the unconditional support. Thank you for understanding my absences, for the visits when I needed the most and for all the jokes with Richard Parker. Tarcisio for reviewing my writing, for encouraging me and never letting me give up. My second family, all the “Luquinhas”, both from Floripa and Guarapuava, who encouraged me to dream and believe. Thanks for all the prayers, the sharing and the love. Keep dreaming! All my friends who, even living far away from here, are always close. If I were to name everyone, I would sure miss someone and that would be unfair. And last, but not least, CNPq for the financial support.

"We need storytelling. Otherwise, life just goes on and on, like the number Pi"

(Ang Lee)

RESUMO

Recentes estudos propõem que adaptações cinematográficas sejam entendidas como fonte de criação, os quais refletem contextos e interpretações diferentes do texto em que são baseadas. Nessa dissertação, propõe-se uma análise comparativa do romance *Life of Pi* (2001), de Yann Martel e do filme homônimo dirigido por Ang Lee (2012). A análise tem como objetivo identificar a presença e o modo em que a metaficção é construída no romance e no filme, e quais são alguns significados produzidos por ela em ambos os textos, tanto o literário quanto o fílmico. A concepção de metaficção se baseia nas definições de Linda Hutcheon e Patricia Waugh. Por metaficção, entende-se a ficção consciente de si, que expõe o processo de escrita ao leitor e o convida a ter um papel ativo na construção do significado. Após uma análise comparativa dos dois textos, conclui-se que a metaficção está presente em ambos, tanto tematicamente como estruturalmente. As reflexões sobre narrativas apresentadas pelos personagens, o uso de vários níveis narrativos e de intertextualidade revelam diferentes usos da metaficção em ambos. A diferença mais importante entre o romance e o filme *Life of Pi* está no uso dos níveis narrativos. Enquanto o romance possui um “autor” sem nome que apresenta a história aos leitores, o filme possui um diretor implícito que deixa pistas de qual versão da história de Pi é “real” no contexto da narrativa. Essa diferença dá ao romance um final aberto, em que o leitor deve escolher qual versão da história ele acredita, enquanto o filme possui uma resolução para essa questão. O filme, então, pode ser entendido como um testemunho, uma narrativa de trauma de um sobrevivente de um naufrágio e da experiência de migração, enquanto o livro não apresenta uma decisão em relação às versões da história, deixando o leitor aberto a qualquer possibilidade.

Palavras-chave: adaptação. metaficção, trauma, testemunho.

Nº. de páginas: 86

Nº de palavras: 22.330

ABSTRACT

Recent studies propose that Film Adaptations should be understood as sources of creation, which also reflect a different context and interpretation from the text upon which they were based. In this thesis, I propose a comparative analysis of the novel *Life of Pi* (2001), by Yann Martel, and the homonymous film directed by Ang Lee (2012). The analysis has the objective of identifying the presence and the way in which metafiction is constructed in the novel and in the film, and what are some of the meanings produced by it in both texts, the filmic and the literary. The concept of metafiction was based on the definitions by Linda Hutcheon and Patricia Waugh. It is understood as the self-conscious fictional text, which exposes the writing process to the readers and invites them to have an active role in the construction of meaning. In the comparative analyses of the two texts, I have proved that metafiction is present in the two texts, both thematically and structurally. The reflections of the characters on narrative itself as well as the use of different narrative levels and intertextual references reveal different uses of metanarrative in both film and novel. The most important difference between the novel and the film *Life of Pi* is in their uses of different narrative levels. While the novel has an unnamed 'author' who presents the story to the readers, the film has an implicit director who leaves 'clues' of which version of Pi's story is "real" in the context of the narrative. This difference gives to the novel an open end, facing which the readers must choose which version of the story they believe in, while the film presents a resolution to this question. The film, thus, can be understood as a testimony narrative, a narrative of the trauma of a survivor from a shipwreck and from the experience of migration, while the novel does not decide for one of the versions of the story, enabling a more inconclusive reading.

Key-Words: adaptation, metafiction, trauma, testimony.

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1. SPARK OF LIFE: AN INTRODUCTION

In the morning that the 85th Academy Awards nominees were announced, Zoë Triska affirmed in the online version of Huffington Post that 2013 was “clearly a great year for book adaptations”. Considering only the category of Best Picture, more than half of the Oscar nominations were film adaptations (five in nine). One of the nominees was *Life of Pi*, directed by Ang Lee, which was based on the homonymous novel written by Yann Martel. Even though the novel opens space for a film version of the same narrative, it was once considered impossible to be adapted due to the technical difficulties. Martel himself declared in an interview quoted by Christine Kerney in an online review of the film that *Life of Pi* “was cinematic in my mind but I never thought I would actually see it on the screen, that it would be too complicated to do”. *Life of Pi* won 4 Oscars in 2013: Best Direction, Best Cinematography, Best Visual Effects, and Best Original Score.

Ang Lee, *Life of Pi*'s director, is called by Richard Corliss a “cosmopolitan chameleon” as he directs films with different themes. He moves from the Chinese genre of wuxia¹ in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* to the adventure in the adaptation of *Hulk*, passing by Woodstock in *Taking Woodstock* and Jane Austen's rural England in *Sense and Sensibility*, and travels through different countries and cultures with elegance and easiness. These different genres and topics reflect Lee's personal multicultural background: he was born in Taiwan, but is considered one of the great American directors. Lee's films present what Whitney Dilley calls a “startling array of genres and approaches to the topic of cultural identity in an increasingly globalized world” (45). Corliss adds an important characteristic in all Lee's films: “Lee doesn't look for heroes or villains; he finds enough shades of courage and compromise in every heavy heart”. Among the 14 films directed by him, at least 8 are adaptations from novels or comics.

The novel *Life of Pi* was written by the Canadian author Yann Martel and was first published in 2001. Martel is a Canadian author born in Spain, who publishes in English but has French as his first language.

¹. *Wuxia* is a traditional Chinese genre in cinema and literature with the use of martial arts in a fantasy world as the main characteristic. Further information on Ang Lee's wuxia film *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* can be read in Devin Gordon's and in Rong Cai's articles: Cai, Rong. “Gender Imaginations in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and the *Wuxia* World”. *Positions* 13:2: East Asia Cultures Critique, 2005 Fall, 441-71; Gordon, Devin. “It's the Year of the Dragon: With 'Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon,' director Ang Lee takes the leap of his career”. *Newsweek* Dec 4, 2000, 60.

The multicultural context of Martel is present in the multicultural Pi, who is an Indian boy immigrating to Canada and whose religious life reflects a multicultural perception of it. He is born a Hindu, but decides to be Catholic and Muslim – as the imam says in the novel, two “foreign religions” (68). As the majority of Indians are Hindu, and Christianity and Muslim were only introduced later by the colonizers, a political point is inserted in Pi’s choice of religion. The choice of mixing the three different religions is also an allegory of multiculturalism².

The narrative story of the film *Life of Pi* is similar to the novel, but the very choice of adapting a literary text implies an act of interpretation. Metafiction is an important issue in the novel, as Pi’s comments discuss: narratives may be hard to believe, so they need a suspension of disbelief from the audience (297), the dichotomy between reality and invention (302), fiction and reality (x) and the elements of storytelling (xi). Besides the direct references to the production of narrative itself, metafiction is present in the very structure of the novel, in the different narrative levels, and in the intertextual references, which reveal the text as a construction. The primary concern of this research is if and how metafiction is created in the novel and in the film *Life of Pi*. Besides that, I explore some of the different meanings that the metafictional devices produce in them. My hypothesis is that metafiction is created differently in the film and in the novel, mainly because of the framing narrative. This structural difference may produce different meanings in them. In the novel, an unnamed ‘author’ presents Pi’s story, while in the film, the same character (the ‘author’) is only listening to Pi’s story, and the narrative is framed by the image-maker. The concepts of metafiction, narrative levels and image-maker used in this discussion are part of the theoretical framework presented in this chapter. In this Introduction, I also present the Context of Investigation

² In the Canadian context, Ian Angus argues that multiculturalism is a term which, in his words, can be used in several ways. It may be employed to describe a *sociological fact* in the sense that, as a result of immigration, the population is composed of a multitude of diverse ethnic groups. It may be used to refer to *government policy*, particularly the federal Multiculturalism Act of 1988, but also the various provincial acts and federal and provincial policies. In addition, it may be applied to a *social ideal* that expresses how English Canada ought to conduct itself. (139)

By multiculturalism, I refer to the meaning described by him as the first aspect of multiculturalism: the recognition of the different ethnic groups which compose the population. Multiculturalism is an issue in *Life of Pi* that deserves a more detailed analysis, including the different aspects not considered in this thesis. As the focus of this research is metafiction, I suggest a discussion of multiculturalism and *Life of Pi* for further research.

and a Review of the Literature regarding three major aspects which will guide the analysis: Film Adaptation, Narratology and Metafiction.

1.1. CONTEXT OF INVESTIGATION AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In spite of the novel's relatively recent publication (2001) and the film's recent production (2012), both works have been extensively reviewed. Some critics read the texts from an intertextual perspective. As Francine Fialkoff and Florence Stratton discuss, Yann Martel's novel was accused of being a plagiarized version of the novel *Max and the Cats*, by the Brazilian author Moacyr Scliar. The texts bear some resemblances, such as the shipwreck of the main characters, and their survival in the Pacific Ocean with a large feline. In both texts, the character has to fish in order to feed the animal as he tries to train the tiger, Richard Parker, until the moment they are rescued. Both novels, Scliar's and Martel's have three different sections, one about the main character's childhood and his contact with big cats (Max with his father's fur shop and Pi with his father's zoo), a second one which is about the traveling through the Pacific Ocean and the shipwreck; and a concluding one, which is the one that shows major differences between the two novels – Scliar's novel focuses on Nazism while Martel's novel focuses on the tenuous relation between fiction and reality. In the interview "Conversation: Life of Pi", conducted by Ray Suarez, Martel affirmed that he had only read a review of Scliar's book, and that he used the same idea of a human with an animal in a small space, which, according to him, is presented in other books and films previous to Scliar's novel.

Martel refers to Scliar's work in the "Author's Note", in which there is an acknowledgment to Moacyr Scliar for the "spark of life" (XII) that *Max and the Cats* gave to the genesis of *Life of Pi*. According to Martel, the reason why he keeps the reference to Scliar within such a short and unclear sentence is that he wants to blur the distinction of fact and fiction even in the author's note. He argues in the same interview with Suarez: "[...] since I want to blur that division, I didn't want to outright say, 'By the way, I borrowed this premise from this novel,' because that would make it more difficult for me to make the reader suspend his or her disbelief. So that's why I just tipped my hat by saying, 'and the spark of life to Mr. Scliar'".

The 2013 Brazilian edition of *Max and the Cats* includes an introductory note by Moacyr Scliar named "A controvérsia sobre *Max e*

os *Felinos* e *Life of Pi*”, in which he responds to the issue of plagiarism. Scliar explains how he discovered *Life of Pi* only after it won the Pulitzer Booker Prize, and how the media portrayed the relationship between both novels. According to him, Martel’s novel is “well written and original” (15), and, even though they used the same premise, their ideas and associations are different³. Scliar discusses intertextuality and inspiration, arguing that no ideas are completely original, and questioning the very notion of plagiarism (14).

Still concerning the criticism of *Life of Pi*, some critics have foregrounded the novel’s and the film’s relation with a postcolonial context. Considering that the greatest violence of colonization is to constitute the colonized (in Gaiatri Spivak’s terms, the subaltern) as the Other, Spivak questions: “Can the subaltern speak?” (24). Leela Ghandi uses Spivak’s question to posit the following: postcolonialism “has come to represent a confusing and often unpleasant babel of subaltern voices” (3). Postcolonialism revisits the past questioning the colonization process, the relationship between colonizers and colonized and the silence imposed on the colonized. Still according to Ghandi, “postcolonialism can be seen as a theoretical resistance to the mystifying amnesia of the colonial aftermath” (4). When proposing a postcolonial reading of *The Tempest*, by William Shakespeare, Francis Barker and Peter Hulme emphasize the importance of recognizing the political aspect that the texts may acquire on their present use. They suggest that texts perform different meanings in different contexts, and that all of them generate or legitimate power. According to them,

Instead of *having* meaning, statements should be seen as *performative* of meaning; not as possessing some portable and ‘universal’ content but, rather, as instrumental in the organization and legitimation of power-relations—which of course involves, as one of its components, control over the constitution of meaning. (200)

³Original text: “Depois de muito debate sobre o assunto o livro de Martel finalmente chegou-me às mãos. Li-o sem rancor; ao contrário, achei o texto bem-escrito e original. Ali estava minha ideia, mas era com curiosidade que eu seguia a história; queria ver que rumo tomaria sua narrativa – boa narrativa, alíás, dotada de humor e imaginação. Ficou claro que nossas visões da ideia eram completamente diferentes. As associações que eu fiz são diferentes das que Martel faz” (16).

A postcolonial reading of a text, such as the novel or the film *Life of Pi*, should investigate how the power relations produce meaning not only when they were produced, but also by the time they are read/watched. In her article “Memória, história e adaptação em *As Aventuras de Pi*: a sobrevivência através do ato de narrar”⁴, Corseuil foregrounds the idea that Pi’s name and the character of the French cooker can be seen as a postcolonial reading or allegory of the historical relationship between France and Pondicherry. Piscine Molitor Patel is named after a French swimming pool, a few years after Pondicherry became independent from France, due to the glamour of France and its influence on its colonies. On the other hand, the French cooker in the ship in which Pi travels to Canada is an ironic subversion of the process of colonization: while the French cooker is the cannibal, thus inverting the role of the civilized colonizer, the colonized Indian is portrayed as the civilized.

Concerning the harsh processes of colonization, Mary Louise Pratt also identifies the tension in the power relations connected to colonization in her book *Imperial Eyes: travel writing and transculturation*. In her analysis of travel writings from 1750 to 1980, Pratt explores how they represent the relation between Europe and the Colonies. According to her:

While the imperial metropolis tends to understand itself as determining the periphery (in the emanating glow of the civilizing mission or the cash flow of development, for example), it habitually blinds itself to the ways in which the periphery determines the metropolis—beginning, perhaps, with the latter’s obsessive need to present and re-present its peripheries and its others continually to itself. Travel writing, among other institutions, is heavily organized in the service of that imperative. So, one might add, is much of European literary history. (6)

Considering that *Life of Pi* was written as a novel self-aware of its own discursive constructions, one can question if Martel’s reference to travel narratives can be seen as an appropriation or as a conscious criticism of it. A discussion about the connection between metafiction

⁴ Paper presented at II Congresso Internacional do PPH LETRAS, UNESP, São José do Rio Preto, 2013.

and the structures of the novel form in *Life of Pi*, with a further discussion on its implications within the narrative, is presented on Chapter 1.

In the novel, Pi presents two different version of the story of his shipwreck, depending on whom he is telling the story to and on his purpose. Rebecca Duncan studied the novel based on the theory of trauma. For Duncan, the first version of the story is created by Pi to recount what was a traumatic event. According to her, “Martel engages with, yet radically reshapes, the survivor narrative, using metafictional and self-reflexive dimensions to suggest that a survivor must not only survive the crisis, but also come to terms with the consequences of having survived” (166). The existence of these two versions of the story and the metafictional dimensions generate different discussions both concerning the themes raised in the story and its structure.

Differently from Duncan, Stewart Cole argues that the novel leaves the question of which story is the true one unresolved. He argues that there is a “distinction between the unresolvable question of the story’s truth and the more subjective question of its aesthetic value” (23). Cole has analyzed religion and metanarrative in the novel, arguing that both religious belief and storytelling need a ‘suspension of disbelief’ using Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s terms. By “suspension of disbelief” he means that we have to accept some facts that are presented as truth in order to enter the world of fiction or religion – which appears as a theme in the novel (25). Thus, in many ways, Martel could be suggesting that all discourses are on the same level, which makes the distinction between fact and fiction more complex.

In the novel *Life of Pi*, storytelling is a major issue and I argue that its reflection on narratives can also be perceived structurally. One of the novel’s narrative instances is a character who identifies himself as the author. Throughout the novel, the presence of this unnamed ‘author’⁵ can be directly noticed in a few different chapters in which the resource of italics is used. Even though the unnamed ‘author’ says in the author’s note that he is telling Pi’s story through Pi’s perspective, it is not possible to conclude who is actually narrating the story. The self-aware commentary in the author’s note, the use of different narrative levels and the use of italics in some chapters are some of the ways in

⁵ The character who identifies himself as the author should not be confused with Yann Martel, the Real Autor. To make this distinction clear in the text, I use ‘author’ to refer to the fictional unnamed character and author to refer to the real person producing the text.

which *Life of Pi* presents self-awareness concerning the narrative structure. This self-awareness characterizes the novel as metafiction.

I follow Linda Hutcheon's definition of metafiction as a self-reflexive form. In her own words, metafiction is the production of "fiction that includes within itself commentary on its own narrative and/or linguistic identity" (*Narcissistic Narratives* 1). As discussed above, the novel's structure, with its various narrative levels, narrators and emphasis on storytelling can help to illustrate its metafictional aspects.

The film *Life of Pi* is also metafictional, with storytelling as one of the major themes and with the use of different narrative levels. The 'author' also appears in the homonymous film, listening to Pi's story, but not re-telling it. This difference in his role in the novel and in the film has influences both in the narrative structure and in the interpretation of the story. To the mediation of the 'author' it is added the mediation of the implied director, whose presence can be noticed in some film sequences. His mediation seems to guide the audience to conclude that the second version⁶ of Pi's narrative is the true one. Metafiction is, thus, created differently in the film and in the novel. The difference in the construction of the metafiction, mainly in the framing narratives, produces completely different meanings in both. This analysis is not meant to classify one as better than the other, but to verify how the context of production and the construction of metafiction influence the understanding of the narrative.

Intertextuality is an important metafictional device, as it reminds that the text is a construction, admitting its existence as a construct. According to Hutcheon, "Metafiction parodies and imitates as a way to a new form which is just as serious and valid, as a synthesis, as the form it dialectically attempts to surpass" (*Narcissistic Narratives* 25). In *Life of Pi*, intertextuality, both from texts mentioned explicitly and from texts implied in the narrative, was analyzed by Ruta Slapkauskaitė, Florence Stratton and Anelise Reich Corseuil (*Memória ...*).

Based on the concepts of paratextuality and metatextuality as defined by Gerard Genette, Slapkauskaitė discusses the use of intertextuality as a strategy to problematize the relationship between history and fiction in self-aware fictional texts (140). She discusses the novel's intertextuality with religion, which is the novel's philosophical

⁶ By first version of the story I refer to the version that Pi tells first, which includes the hyena, the zebra, the orangutan and the tiger. The second version is the one in which the cook kills Pi's mother and Pi kills the cook.

framework. She also makes a reference to Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (which foreshadows Pi's shipwreck) and Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* (both can be compared in the symbolic relationship between man and nature). Slaupkauskite argues that Pi's narrative is foregrounded by the existential framework implied in the intertextuality with Defoe and Hemingway. According to her, more than referencing these narratives, *Life of Pi* "problematizes the points of their intersections as well as their relationship to religious intertexts incorporated in the novel" (147).

Stratton analyses the novel as a deconstructive project as she associates intertextuality with the novel's power "to liberate humanity with a belief in the transforming power of story" (19). Realism in the form of a heavy reliance in causal explanation is used in the narrative with deconstructive purposes (9). She points out the intertextuality existent in Matel's use of the name Richard Parker as it refers to *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*, from Edgar Allan Poe, and Parker's characteristics to William Blake's *The Tyger*, and acknowledges the intertextual references of the novel *Life of Pi* to Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. The reference to Poe's narrative, which contains murder and a shipwreck and to other two historical Richard Parkers reinforces the power of the second version of the story (12) since, as Stratton reminds us, the intertextual references contained in the name Richard Parker are not available to the Japanese characters, who have only heard the two versions of the story and conclude that the first one is the better one. Still according to Stratton, Martel could be compared to Conrad in the way that Martel handles identity "through the technique of doubling. As Kurtz is to Marlow, so the cook is to Pi: his alter ego or hidden or repressed self" (14). Both characters Pi and Marlow are influenced by an environment that leads them to darkness, Kurtz and the cook are portrayed as savages- with savagery mainly represented by cannibalism.

Corseuil regards the intertextual connection not only to the novels *Robson Crusoe*, *Moby Dick* and *The adventures of Arthur Gordon Pym*, but also to the travel narratives as a genre (*Memória...* 13). According to her, travel narratives and *Life of Pi* have in common the use of different narrative levels. By using the same structure of a travel narrative from a metafictional perspective, *Life of Pi* invites the reader to assume a conscious role of the constructs involved in the text itself. According to Hutcheon, in metafiction, "[t]he reader must accept responsibility for the act of decoding, the act of reading. Disturbed, defied, forced out of his

complacency, he must self-consciously establish new codes in order to come to terms with new literary phenomena” (*Narcissistic...* 39).

In the film *Life of Pi*, Pi reads three different books – *The Mysterious Island*, by Jules Verne, *The Stranger*, by Albert Camus and a book containing the novel *Notes from Underground*, the short stories *White Nights* and *The Dream of a Ridiculous Man*, and excerpts from *The House of the Dead*, by Fyodor Dostoyevsky. These explicit references present intertextual layers of meanings as the title of the various books appears as predictions to events in Pi’s story or to express his feelings. As a child he reads the fantastic story of *The Mysterious Island* and afterwards he finds refuge as an adult in a mysterious island in the Pacific Ocean. When he is told he is going to move to Canada, he is reading a book by Dostoyevsky. He then appears reading *The Stranger*, predicting his situation of a newcomer in Canada. As the film is very recent, no academic work was conducted analyzing these references which foreshadow the film narrative. As they are different from the references in the novel, they add a different interpretation to Pi’s story.

In *Life of Pi*, most of the names are meaningful in the narrative. The name of the main character Piscine, for instance, reflects the dominance of the French culture over India, exposing the colonial relation between these Nations. It also refers to the character’s ability to swim, learnt from Mamaji, which would later be fundamental for his survival at the Ocean. Piscine was an object of laughter due to his name until the moment when he decides to adopt the nickname of Pi, after the mathematical number. In Martel’s narrative, Pi tells “in that elusive, irrational number with which scientists try to understand the universe, I found refuge”. This quote relates the character’s nickname to his quest for understanding the universe, which is a theme of the novel. Intertextual references in the names associated with Pi also point to the narrative as a construction. Richard Parker, as another example, is a reference to the novel *The Adventures of Arthur Gordon Pym*, by Poe, which is strongly connected to the issue of cannibals

1.2. FILM ADAPTATION

Film adaptation is as old as the history of cinema itself; however, for a long time, most of the studies were just critical reviews based on a negative critique of the differences between ‘original’ and ‘adapted’ text, which considered the ‘original’ text (novel) untouchable. According to Robert Stam, more than listing the differences between

them, Film Adaptation studies are concerned with the meanings produced by the differences of the medium and different contexts of production (4). In the specific analysis here proposed, adaptation as a theoretical field allows a comparative analysis of Yann Martel's and Ang Lee's work without considering one as a copy of the other.

In Film Adaptation theory, George Bluestone was one of the first scholars to reject notions of films as being a copy of the literary text on which they were based. Before describing the specificities and differences between literature and cinema, Bluestone defines film adaptation as "two ways of seeing" (1). In literature, which is a word-based medium, images are formed through the imagination, in a "mental seeing" (1). In films, the images are presented to the audience, whose sensorial organs are conducted to a "perceptual sight." (1) Besides the moving images, films have different tropes as editing and sound, which influence in narrative meaning. This important distinction between these media is a contribution to understand not only the limits of film but also the limits of literature, debunking the idea that either one is superior to the other.

From Bluestone's definition of film adaptation, different discussions were raised, but his distinction between the media remains important. On the one hand, in the novel *Life of Pi* some chapters are mainly descriptive, and have an important function in the written text to guide the reader's imagination. In Chapter 6, for instance, the 'author' presents a description of Pi: "He's an excellent cook. His overheated house is always smelling of something delicious. His spice rack looks like an apothecary's shop" (24). This description, along with the descriptions in the other nine chapters in italics, create an imaginary sensorial environment for the reader with elements connected to his narrative, which may make the reader suspend his disbelief in some of the narrative events. In a film, these elements would be part of the setting, and their importance in the narrative would be different. On the other hand, the film *Life of Pi* presents some sequences in which the addition of the cinematic elements produces meaning in a way that a written text would not be capable of reproducing. The sequence in which Pi is staring at a glowing whale under the moonlight – a whale that comes out of the water and drops his food and water into the Ocean – is created by a composition of 3D images and sound, resources that are not easily transcribed to words.

Brian McFarlane distinguishes two different kinds of adaptation: "transfer" and "adaptation proper" (23). The former is attributed to the

films in which the director decides to maintain the elements of narrative and adapts only the elements of enunciation (medium specific). In the latter, the director provides the audience a different experience, with his own stamp, which can go from a difference in chronological order to the addition of different elements in the story world. According to McFarlane, the definition of what kind of adaptation the film aims to be should guide the criticism, and "... would at least preclude the critical reflex that takes a film to task for not being something it does not aim to be" (22). Considering McFarlane's classification, Lee's adaptation of *Life of Pi* can be classified as a "transfer", due to the similarities between the novel story and the film story. This classification, however, is limited as it does not consider that every adaptation implies an interpretation. The analysis presented in Chapters 1 and 2 demonstrates how the same story, narrated in different media by two different authors, also evince different meanings.

Robert Stam proposes a new approach to film adaptation based on Michael Bakhtin⁷ and George Genette⁸, since he sees adaptation as an intertextual process, as texts are always surrounded by other texts in an intertextual relation. A film adaptation of a novel, thus, is not seen as a translation or a transfer, but as a new text with explicit or implied intertextual relations to other literary texts (25). This process of intertextuality adds meanings to both the film and novel. While literature tells the story in the written form, film both tells and shows with multitrack narration, using image, soundtrack, dialogues, voice-over and voice-off narration, among other cinematic resources (35). Cinema is defined both as a "synesthetic" and "synthetic" art: "synesthetic" in the sense that it generates sensorial responses, and "synthetic" in that it synthesizes other forms of art, as painting, theater and literature, and uses them in its own language.

In *A Theory of Adaptation*, Linda Hutcheon affirms that adaptations should not be seen as shadowed by another text, in a comparative sense. She argues that an adapted text is not just a reproduction of one text from one medium to another. Adaptation is, firstly, an interpretation, even if it presents "repetition, but repetition

⁷. Stam uses Bakhtin's concept of "dialogism" to overcome the debate concerning fidelity of the adapted text. Stam defines Bakhtin's dialogism as "the infinite and open-ended possibilities generated by all the discursive practices of a culture" (27) which "help to transcend the aporias of 'fidelity' and of a dyadic source/adaptation model which excludes not only all sorts of supplementary texts but also the dialogical response of the reader/spectator" (27)

⁸. Stam applies the five categories of transtextuality (intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, architectuality and hypertextuality) as defined by Genette to film analysis.

without replication” (*A Theory* ... 7). Even though both texts are connected intertextually (causing a sense of “repetition”), the adapted text has its own singularities, and thus cannot be seen as just a copy of the original. According to her, the word adaptation is used in two different perspectives: to mean the product, which is the transposition from a medium to another, and to the process, with the implications of “taking possession of another’s story, and filtering it, in a sense, through one’s sensibility, interests and talents” (*A Theory* ... 18). The definition and the study of adaptation should consider both meanings.

For the analysis of *Life of Pi*, Hutcheon’s perspective on film adaptation will be used to compare the novel and the film *Life of Pi*. According to her, “When we call a work an adaptation, we openly announce its overt relationship to another work or works. (...) This is why adaptation studies are so often comparative studies” (*A Theory* ... 7). Comparing both does not mean affirming that one is dependent on the other – on the contrary, it means recognizing the intertextuality in both texts, and analyzing their construction based on their own codes and context of production.

1.2. NARRATOLOGY

Narratives always have a narrator (a teller) – either a narrating voice or the cinematic apparatus, which functions as a system of narration. According to Seymour Chatman, “every narrative is by definition narrated – that is, narratively presented – and that narration, narrative presentation, entails and agent even when the agent bears no sign of human personality” (115). When considering non-literary narratives, as videogames and comics, the narrator may not be as explicit as in literature, but as a narrative form it also implies that someone or something is presenting/telling the story. Gerard Genette defines the narrator as “not only the person who carries out or submits to the action but also the person (the same one or another) who reports it, and, if need be, all those people who participate, even though passively in this narrating activity” (*Narrative Discourse* 213).

In *Life of Pi*, both novel and film, the mediation of the narrator is important in the understanding of the narrative. In the novel, the affirmation of the ‘author’ that he is telling the story through Pi’s voice makes the existence of a narrator clear to the readers. In the film, however, the narration in some sequences is not attributed to the

characters. The last sequence, for instance, in which the young Pi smiling to the camera fades out and Richard Parker fades in and goes to the forest has the narrative instance known as image-maker as a narrator.

In film, Seymour Chatman and Sarah Kozloff argue that there is always a narrating instance. Kozloff argues that “[b]ecause narrative films are narrative, someone must be narrating” (44). “Someone”, according to her, is not only a character, which assumes the position of narrator, but it is a composition of “many elements, including musical scoring, sound effects, editing, lighting, and so on, through which the cinematic text is narrated” (44). Kozloff names this composition “image-maker”, which is the narrative instance responsible for all choices made in the process of film production. Everything in a film - images, sound, editing, voice-over narration - is conditioned by the image-maker.

For Wayne Booth, there is always an author’s “second self” providing information to the narrator. This “second self” is the implied author, who guides any reading of texts, and always affects the reader’s evaluations, even when it is not in an explicit way. Unlike the real author, which is a real person, the implied author is a narrative instance. The implied author should not be confused with the real author, since, according to Booth, it is impossible to access the real author’s expression, only what is manifested in the text (75). It is important to emphasize that the implied author presents the story through the narrator, but he does not have voice. According to Chatman, he is a “silent source of information” (85). As a “silent source”, the implied author says nothing, but its voice can be read between lines. This distinction between narrator and implied author is important in narratives with unreliable narration, in which the reader perceives that the narrator tells a story differently from what is given by the implied author.

Chatman still argues for an implied director. As in many literary texts that have no single author, but a group of authors, as the *Bible*, Chatman argues that the unifying agent in them can be called the implied author (91). The same happens in film: as there is no single author of a film, but a group of directors, editors, actors, technicians, etc, who are all influential in the authorial process, the unifying narrative agent responsible for the film production is called the implied director.

The distinction between real author and implied author raises another narrative instance: the career-author. When the implied authors

from a same real author have common characteristics, people analyze the work based on the narrative characteristics of them, and not on the biographical information about the author. According to Chatman, “what is relevant to narratology (as opposed to other kinds of literary study) is not the history of the real author’s career but rather the necessary constraint on possible contents and styles implicit in his or her signature on the text” (88). The definition of career-author enables to verify some features in Yann Martel’s or Ang Lee’s work which are implicit by their names. Indeed, Martel makes use in his novels of writers as characters and animals as metaphors for trauma situation, such as in *Beatrice and Virgil*. The themes of territory and identity, and the representation of character’s inner feelings are characteristics of Ang Lee’s films.

If the narrator is the teller, the one “who speaks” using the information given by the implied author, there is another narrative instance “who sees” called by Genette “point of view” (*Narrative Discourse* 162). Genette uses the term “focalization” instead of “point of view” as he considers the latter too ambiguous. He identifies different situations of focalization: internal, when the story is presented through one or several character’s perspective, external, without focusing on any character or zero focalization, as in classical narrative. Chatman problematizes the use of the word point of view as it has different applications, and can be used either for narrators or characters. He divides the term in four different categories, considering the narrative instance which presents the perception: (1) slant: the attitudes perceived in the narrator’s report; (2) filter: the mental attitudes of the characters; (3) center: perception of a character of paramount importance; (4) interest-focus: a character of secondary importance which generates identification from the public. In cinema, point of view follows the same definition, and should not be confused with the technical term point of view shot. This classification is important in a narrative as *Life of Pi* since Pi is a center character in the whole narrative, but in some events there is a slant focalizing the narrative. In some chapters of the novel, for instance, the story is mediated by the ‘author’ as a slant. This also happens in the film when the image-maker acts as a mediator.

In relation to voice, Genette also discusses the term embedded narratives, or, as he defines, narratives with different levels. The use of embedded stories is not a new practice – in *Narrative Discourse*, Gerard Genette identifies its use in classical narratives as in the *Odyssey* and *Thousand and One Nights*. Narrative levels can be understood by

Genette's definition: "any event a narrative recounts is at a diegetic level immediately higher than the level at which the narrating act producing this narrative is placed." (228) Genette defines three narrative levels: extradiegetic, intradiegetic and metadiegetic. These three terms correspond to relative situations, since a narrative may present more than three levels.

The narrator of the first narrative level is the extradiegetic narrator, who narrates a story about an intradiegetic character. The intradiegetic character may also be a narrator (intradiegetic narrator) of a story about a metadiegetic character. In *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, Genette reminds that the extradiegetic level, defined as the primary one, is not necessarily the most important thematically (90). In *Narrative Discourse Revised*, Genette uses an image which helps to understand different narrative levels (Figure 1):

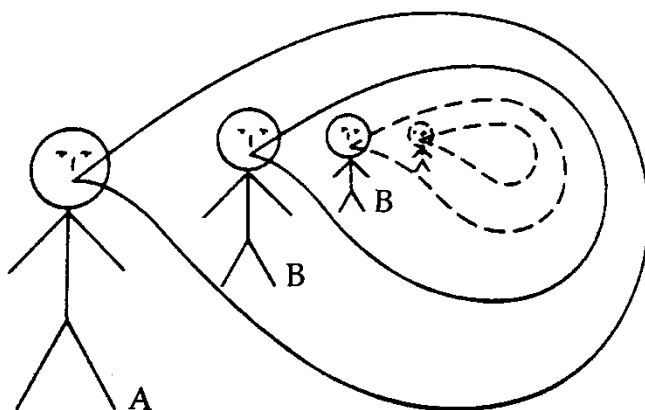


Figure 1. Genette's narrative levels⁹

In Figure 1, the extradiegetic narrator A tells a story about an intradiegetic character B. The intradiegetic character B tells another story about himself, but as a metadiegetic character B. In these two levels, the characters are the same (B) but with different narrative functions. The metadiegetic character B may tell another story, in a process of narrative levels which can go *ad infinitum*. Kozloff explains that when studying film narrative levels

⁹. Quoted from Genette's *Narrative Discourse Revisited* 86.

[o]ne's expectation about, and experience of, a narrator hinge upon his or her position. Frame narrators are conventionally given the greatest authority and allowed the greatest freedoms; contrarily, we are more likely to be skeptical about the veracity or impartiality of narrators when we see them in the act of narrating and can judge their stories against material openly presented by an overarching image-maker. (49)

In the novel *Life of Pi*, if the “author” is considered the narrator of the 100 chapters, eight different narrators are telling stories through the narrative. Based on Genette's representation, the narrative may be graphically presented as follows:

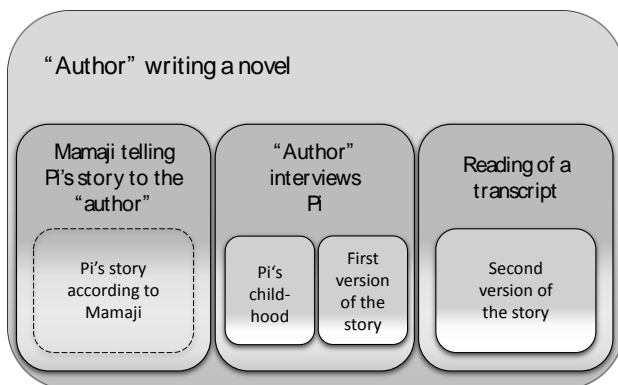


Figure 2. Narrative levels in the novel *Life of Pi*

The extradiegetic narrator is the ‘author’, who writes a novel. He is the framing narrator, who expresses himself in the chapters in italics and in the Author’s note. He briefly mentions his first contact with Pi’s story told by Ma maji. This narrative level is presented with dashes since the readers do not have access to Mamaji’s version of the story. The ‘author’ also narrates his meetings with the character Pi. The intradiegetic narrator Pi narrates two different stories of himself: one about his childhood and his family’s decision to move to Canada, and another about his shipwreck with the animals. The ‘author’ also presents the transcription of the interview with the Japanese who work for the insurance company. The transcript contains a second version of Pi’s story. All these mediations of the story imply a different voice and

perspective. As it is not possible to conclude if the actual narrator of the entire novel is the “author”, this structure may be questioned, showing the complexity of the narrative structure of the novel. A deeper analysis of the novel structure connected to metafiction is presented in Chapter 1 of this thesis.

The film seems to present a different embedded structure: the ‘author’ does not write Pi’s story, he listens to it while Pi narrates it. In the framing narrative, there is the image-maker showing some clues on which story is the true one. The mediation of the story and the narrators in some levels seem to be different in the film from the novel. This thesis analyses these differences and the meanings produced by them in the narrative.

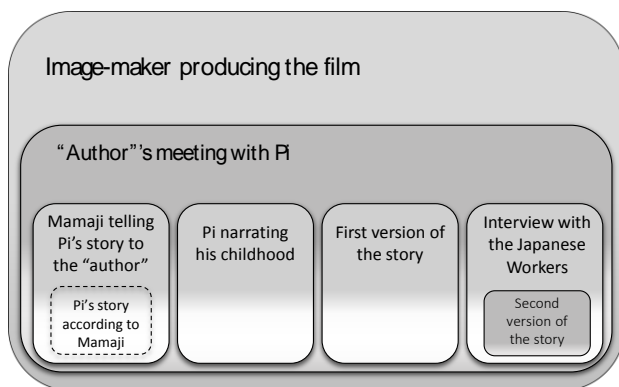


Figure 3. Narrative levels in the film *Life of Pi*

The image-maker, a framing narrator, shows the meeting between Pi and the ‘author’. The ‘author’ is not narrating their meetings; he is only a character. In the meetings, the ‘author’ also tells that he heard the story from Mamaji, without Mamaji’s direct version of the story. Pi as an intradiegetic narrator narrates his childhood, the first version of the story and his interview with the Japanese. Contained in his interview with the Japanese, there is the second version of the shipwreck story, this time narrated by Pi and not presented on a transcript as in the novel. These slight differences are meaningful, since each narrative level which is added implies a different narrator, whose point of view influences on the narrative.

In the film, the audience is invited to listen to Pi’s story together with the ‘author’, interpreting it as it is being told. The audience has the same information of the ‘author’, but from the outside of the diegesis.

According to Kozloff, “These narratees in the frame story serve as audience surrogates, reacting to the story, but we viewers are given even more opportunity to judge, since, unlike the fictional listeners, we are outside the diegesis, invisible and superior to the narrating character, eavesdropping” (50). This thesis proposes that the image-maker gives the audience some visual clues on which we can decide on Pi’s true story. A more detailed analysis of these clues in the film is presented on Chapter 2.

1.4. METAFICTION

According to Theodor Adorno, the traditional novel, which is a literary form characteristic of the bourgeois age, is based on realism, aiming at representing reality. Even in fantastic novels, the elements of fantasy suggest reality, and “attempt to present their content in such a way that the suggestion of reality emanates from them” (30). Adorno uses a comparison between the novel and a three-walled stage of theater to explain this illusion: when the narrator of the novel tells the story, he is raising the curtains of a theater, inviting the reader to watch a play in which he is a passive spectator (33). For Adorno, the passiveness of the reader is losing strength in the contemporary novel, which changes the aesthetic distance between narrative and the reader. “In the traditional novel, distance was fixed. Now it varies, like the angle of the camera in film: sometimes the reader is left outside, and sometimes he is led by the commentary onto the stage, backstage, into the prop room” (34). These changes, which are evident in metafictional texts, are described by Patricia Waugh as “(...) fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality. (2)

Metafiction is discussed by Linda Hutcheon in *Narcissitic Narratives: The Metafictional Paradox*, as fiction about fiction, in which the text is self-aware, and the process of writing becomes “part of the shared pleasure of reading” (*Narcissitic Narratives* 20). It is known that all language is representative, but “In metafiction, (...) this fact is made explicit and (...) the reader lives in a world in which he is forced to admit as fictional” (*Narcissitic Narratives* 7). In this opposition she defines the metafictional paradox: the text is self-aware and self-reflexive, and thus narcissistic, and at the same time it is oriented towards the reader, which has to engage as a co-author of the fictional world. In Hutcheon’s words, “The text’s own paradox is that it is both

narcissistically self-reflexive and yet focused outward, oriented toward the reader” (7).

Hutcheon revisits the myth of Narcissus proposing an allegorical reading of it, with two different main points. Her connection between the novel and Narcissus is not an attempt to criticize novels as self-centered, as the name of her book *Narcissistic Narratives* may seem to suggest. Firstly, according to her reading, Narcissus, as the novel form, has always been self-aware, but in the presence of a mirror he becomes also self-reflexive. In the novel, self-reflexiveness may appear in mirrors as the structure of *mise en abyme*, but also in any form in which the reader is called attention to the storytelling process, recognizing it as fictional. Secondly, “The Death of the Novel” argued by literary critics is connected by Hutcheon to the myth. In the myth, when Narcissus falls in the water, his presence remains as the homonymous flower. In the same way, the novel, according to her, only changed its form¹⁰. “(...) the form has just slipped into another world, in a very similar shape and attitude. Something new, or rather something old resurrected, has appeared in the old traditional place” (16)

Hutcheon analyzes the shift from the focus on the product, i.e., the story, to the focus on the imaginative process (storytelling) which can be seen in metanarratives. (*Narcissistic Narratives* 3). She distinguishes two different modes in which metafiction can be presented: the diegetic and the linguistic. In the diegetic mode, a self-reflection is presented inside the diegesis, as a theme in the story, while in the linguistic, the self-reflection is presented in the use of the linguistic code. Within these modes, one can assume two different forms: overt form, in which the self-reflection is explicit, or covert form, in which this process is internalized. *Life of Pi* presents a reflection about storytelling as one of its themes, so, according to this classification, it can be seen as an overt diegetic metanarrative.

Patricia Waugh sees metafiction as a contemporary trend, even though reflections over the narratives within the narratives are older than that. She argues that metafiction “explore[s] a theory of fiction through the practice of writing fiction” (2). By doing so, these texts break the illusion of a transparent representation and question the mediation of reality. The aim of metafiction is to explore the paradox between “the construction of a fictional illusion (as in traditional realism) and the laying bare of that illusion.” (6) According to her, this

¹⁰ A more detailed discussion on the novel form is presented on Chapter 1.

paradox influences not only on the understanding of narratives, but also the understanding of the “world as a construction.” (9)

Waugh traces a scale of metafictional practices, ranging from the questioning of fiction in everyday context to the radical questioning of representation. She defines four acts in this scale. In Act I, considered the “most minimal form”, metafictional discussion appears as a theme in the story. Act II commonly presents characters who are aware of their condition of being trapped in a script produced by the author. In Act III, the author marks his presence in the narrative and the novel “becomes the story of writing as much as the writing of story” (137). Act IV, the last one, is the most radical, presenting word games which give no stable reference to the reader (as a narrator or a point of view). Considering this classification, *Life of Pi* may be an example of the third act of the scale, with an author who tells the reader in the author’s note that he is the one writing the story, even if he uses Pi’s voice. In this case, there is a blur in the borders of the fictional context of the narrative and the figure of the author. According to Waugh, in Act III

[v]ery often the Real Author steps into the fictional world, crosses the ontological divide. Instead of integrating the ‘fictional’ with the ‘real’ as in traditional omniscient narrative, he or she splits them apart by commenting not on the *content* of the story but on the act of narration itself, on the *construction* of the story. (131)

Even though she uses the words “Real Author”, we should not understand this as the real person, but as a fictional instance, a character who assumes the name of the real author. The presence of this narrative instance questions the borders between “real” and “fictional”, and questions the conventions in the narrative structure.

In metafiction, the godlike status of the author is broken, inviting the reader to be a co-author, together with the narrator and the characters. By breaking the illusion of mimesis, the narrative shows its self-awareness. According to Waugh,

[b]y breaking the conventions that separate authors from implied authors from narrators from implied readers from readers, the novel reminds us (who are ‘we’?) that ‘authors’ do not simply

‘invent’ novels. ‘Authors’ work through linguistic, artistic and cultural conventions” (134).

Besides the questioning of the borders separating authors, implied authors, characters, reader and implied reader, another structural resource commonly used in metafiction is the embedded stories, as discussed by Genette. Narratives with different narrative levels are studied by Brian McHale as Chinese-box worlds, or babushka Russian dolls. This strategy is commonly used in metafiction as it “ha[s] the effect of interrupting and complicating the ontological “horizon” of the fiction, multiplying its worlds, and laying bare the process of world-construction.” (112). The complexity of the horizon of fiction asks the reader to be aware of the narrative structure, and participate more actively in the construction of meaning.

In metafiction, the narrative structure is as important as the story. Corseuil discusses metanarratives, arguing that intermingling narratives are enhanced by the use of *mise-en-abyme*, which is a structural device. Her analysis focuses on how the film *The Kiss of the Spider Woman* uses metafictional devices to question the borders between “fact” and “reality”. Her conclusions can be applied to most metafictional texts, which use the narrative structure to foreground metafiction.

Considering the theoretical issues raised in this Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2 present analyses of *Life of Pi* regarding how metafiction is presented in both the novel and the film, respectively. In Chapter 1, a narrative analysis of the novel focuses on the *Author’s Note*, the main appearance of the framing narrator, with brief mentions to other excerpts from the other chapters. In Chapter 2, different aspects of the film are explored to show how metafiction is created in it. An analysis of the sequence in which the tiger Richard Parker looks undersea enables to verify how the image-maker gives clues on Pi’s real story. The last chapter presents some conclusions and final remarks concerning the discussions raised.

A comparative analysis of the novel and the film *Life of Pi* is an academic contribution to different fields of study, among them Film Studies, Film Adaptation Studies and Narrative Studies. Considering the importance of Film Studies and Film Adaptation for Adaptation studies carried out at PGI, this thesis is significant for its reflection about narratives, mainly meta-narratives. It is also an academic contribution to a story which was once popularly considered “unadaptable” but which became popular in its film version.

2. CHAPTER 1: YANN MARTEL'S *LIFE OF PI*

In this chapter, I analyze the novel written by Martel aiming at investigating how metafiction is present in it, and the meanings produced by it. For the analysis of the novel, it is proposed a discussion on how the narrative is structured, its open end and the intertextual layers of the story, always considering the implications of them within the narrative and in the context in which the text was produced. To conclude this chapter, an analysis of the “Author’s Note” is presented.

Life of Pi is described in the book cover from the 2002 edition as a novel. Although it is a well-known genre, the definition of novel is somehow problematized. Novel, as a literary genre, appeared after the romance, and those two forms of fiction have their differences. According to Northrop Frye, while the romance presents the “idealizing of heroism and purity” novels “should be the parody of the romance and its ideals” (34). Donaldo Schüller includes in the definition of novel the emphasis on individual conflicts and the daily life, as opposed to earlier forms of literary writing which focused on heroic actions (6).

According to Maurice Shroder, “[t]he novel records the passage from a state of ignorance which is bliss to a mature recognition of the actual way of the world” (14). That definition can be applied to Pi, who passes from a state of innocence in his childhood to a state of maturity caused by his struggle for survival and his contact with tough realities as violence, cannibalism and trauma. Still according to Shroder, novels tend to present characters who seek for the truth and whose journey only ends when they decide to abandon illusion and face reality. Although *Life of Pi* leaves the question of which of Pi’s version of the story is true – the one in which Pi is a hero who survives from different almost-impossible events with wild animals as a tiger and an hyena, and the other one in which he is indeed called to face the “reality” of the tough events, Pi has to face the contradictions between imagination and reality.

Some critics connect the exhaustion of the realism with the novel, declaring the death of the novel as a literary genre. Patricia Waugh revisits this discussion to affirm that the novel is only changing, and that metafiction is part of it. According to her,

[m]etafictional deconstruction has not only provided novelists and their readers with a better understanding of the fundamental structures of narrative; it has also offered extremely accurate

models for understanding the contemporary experience of the world as a construction, an artifice, a web of interdependent semiotic systems. (46)

The discussion on the novel form and its use evokes a discussion on postmodernist art, and how it is related to older art forms. Postmodernism and postmodernity are widely discussed by different theoreticians, but for this thesis I focused on the definitions by Frederick Jameson and Linda Hutcheon. Postmodernism is seen differently by them, and the discussions raised by them add to the discussion on metafiction.

In his article “Postmodernism, or the cultural logic of late capitalism”, Jameson aims not at a stylistic description of postmodernism, but at a periodizing hypothesis (53). He describes dominant characteristics of postmodernity, which according to him are: depthlessness, weakening of historicity, a new type of emotional tone, connection with new technologies, among others. According to Jameson, in postmodernism, parody gives place to pastiche, which, in his words, is an “imitation of a peculiar or unique, idiosyncratic style”, but “it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without any of parody's ulterior motives” (65). Jameson's perspective is that fragments of the older known art styles are being used to compose the current art as a quilt. Pastiche, thus, empties out criticism, which was present in older forms of art and shows that postmodernist art lacks depth.

Jameson uses the terms postmodernism and postmodernity indistinguishably. On the other hand, Hutcheon differentiates postmodernity, as a historical period, from postmodernism, as the cultural practices (24). Hutcheon's definition of postmodernism is connected to

a questioning of what reality can mean and how we can come to know it. It is not that representation now dominates or effaces the referent, but rather that it now selfconsciously acknowledges its existence as representation - that is, as interpreting (indeed as creating) its referent, not as offering direct and immediate access to it. (*Politics* 32)

In postmodernism, thus, representation is used to problematize representation. Metafiction, which uses narratives to problematize the process of narrating, is an example of postmodernist fiction. Concerning the references to the past, mainly in parody, she argues that "this parodic reprise of the past of art is not nostalgic; it is always critical" (*Politics* 89). Even pastiche, which according to Jameson is emptied out of depthness, is seen by her as political, as in her words postmodernist art uses representations that "are anything but neutral, however 'aestheticized' they may appear to be in their parodic selfreflexivity". (3)

Considering these two opposed opinions, it is important to relate the metafictional analysis of both novel and film with the discussions raised by Jameson and Hutcheon. Based on this discussion on postmodernist art, it is important to analyze if *Life of Pi* uses the genre of the novel and representation to problematize the naturalistic view of narratives as a given value, as suggested by Hutcheon, or if it is a pastiche which lacks depth, as seen by Jameson.

The novel *Life of Pi* has 100 chapters, a fact that is mentioned by one of the characters in a self-aware commentary. After telling how he survived from a shipwreck, Pi questions: "For example – I wonder – could you tell my jumbled story in exactly one hundred chapters, not one more, not one less?" (285). In this chapter, it is not possible to conclude who is the "you" Pi is referring to. It could be a reference to the readers – and in this case, the novel is self-aware, recognizing itself as a written story – or to the 'author', meaning thus that the whole story is narrated by the author, working as a filter to Pi's narrative. Both possibilities call attention to the act of narrating and indicate that the conception of the novel, even in the diegetic world, is self-aware, as it is presented to the readers metafictionally.

The novel is divided in three different parts: "Toronto and Pondicherry" in which the character Pi narrates his childhood, his relation to zoology and religion and the decision to move to Canada; "The Pacific Ocean" in which he narrates the first version of how he survived in his journey to Canada; and "Benito Juárez Infirmary, Tomatlán, Mexico", which presents a transcription of the interview between the Japanese officers from the Insurance company and Pi, who tells a second version of the story. From this structure, it can be seen that Pi's travel is not only from India to Canada, but from a state of innocence and discovery to a more mature discussion on storytelling, survival and recovery of traumatic events, as the novel suggests.

Life of Pi is a composition of different writing styles, ranging from description, dialogues, to journal entries, transcription of interviews and reports. In his essay “Mixed and uniform prose styles in the novel” Leonard Lutwack analyzes novels which have various prose styles. According to him, “[b]eing itself a compound of genres, each with a more fixed character than the novel and each having a different stylistic potential, the novel has always offered opportunities for a mixture of styles” (211). Lutwack also connects the presence of different writing styles to the attitudes generated in the readers:

A mixture of styles has the effect of making the reader pass through a succession of contradictory and ambiguous attitudes; it offers no sure stylistic norm by which the reader may orient himself permanently to the fiction and to the point of view of the author. He is conditioned to expect to change his position of witness as the style changes. (219)

The first version of the story told by Pi, which includes the tiger Richard Parker and other zoo animals is told in the second part of the story, correspondent to the longer part of the text. It is composed by different writing genres (from a journal to a list of materials and tools). Florence Stratton (2004) points out the deconstructivist project of the novel, which, according to her, uses detailed descriptions of the character Pi and his actions (as in realist narratives) to enhance the dichotomy between fact and fiction. According to Stratton, “by fusing mundane ordinary details with an “incredible” story, Martel is able to give formal expression to the reason-imagination, fact-fiction debate which is at the centre of his novel.” (STRATTON 2004, p.10) For instance, chapter 52 of the novel presents a list of the materials available for Pi on the Ocean, making the story resemble a manual on how to survive from a shipreck in the Pacif Ocean with a tiger using the resources available on a survival boat. The strategic use of genres that are normally related to representing factual accounts of reality to narrate a very fantasy-like version of the story calls the readers to suspend their disbelief in the unlikely, and to accept Pi’s narrative as a possibility among others.

On the other hand, the second version of the story (the one with cannibalism and murder) is presented very briefly (08 pages, which is very few when compared to 283 pages of the first version). It is narrated

in a conversation between Pi and two Japanese officers that was later transcribed and was the source of a report to the Security Company. The readers only acknowledge it through the transcription of the interview, and its reliability can be questioned. If it is a transcription, one should ask: who transcribed it? With which purpose? How can one know if there were no gestures or expressions in the dialogue used by the characters to change the meanings of what they said? After telling the first version of the story, Pi is asked by the Japanese officers to tell another story, “what really happened” (302), “words that do not contradict reality” (302), “a story that won’t surprise you” (302). He says:

“Give me a minute please.”
 “Of course. **I think we’re finally getting somewhere. Let’s hope he speaks some sense.**¹¹”
 [Long silence]
 “Here’s another story.”
 “Good.” (303)

Without a description of Pi’s expressions, it is not possible to conclude if the long silence was used by him to control his emotions, to remember what really happened or to create a new version of the story.

Considering these structural differences between the two versions of the story, it is possible to verify that the structure of the narrative is used in *Life of Pi* to create the irresolution proposed in the story. The first version, which is more unlikely, is presented in narrative styles connected to report of facts, while the second, seeming more realistic, can be questioned. The irresolution in this case is also connected to metafiction, as it calls readers to have an active role in the construction of the narrative. The narrative not only gives the readers the choice of which version of the story is the true one, but also calls attention to the fact that they are facing a construction (as metafiction by definition does).

As it was briefly described in the Introduction, metafiction can also be connected to Genette’s narrative levels. The novel *Life of Pi*

¹¹ Considering the importance of the graphic elements in the novel, quotation marks and sentences written in bold were maintained in the same format presented by the novel. As the chapter is supposed to be a transcript of an interview, all the character’s lines are presented between quotation marks. The sentences in bold were, according to the ‘author’, “spoken in Japanese, which I [the unnamed ‘author’] had translated” (290).

presents different narrative levels. The main story is told by Pi in its first version in the Second Part of the novel – he is not only the main character in this narrative level, but also the narrator and the filter. All the events are presented by him from his own perspective, and the readers are asked to recognize this mediation due to self-reflexive commentary and the framing narrative. The second version is presented by means of a recorded interview given by Pi to the Japanese officers from an insurance company after his survival. It is told by Pi as a narrator only when the Japanese officers demand another version of the story, one that would not include so many fantastic elements. The different narrative levels present different versions of the same story, giving voice to different discourses and positions. The existence of one framing narrative, which encompasses all the others, direct the reading of all these discourses. Even with the presence of Pi's voice, Mamaji's voice and so on, they are all limited by the 'author', and it is unclear in the narrative to which extent he is narrating the character's adventure and when he is inserting his own perspective of the events.

The framing narrative is related to the writing of the novel, with the 'author' interviewing Pi and wondering about the best way to narrate his complex story. This narrative level is presented in the Author's Note and in other 10 italicized chapters, marking graphically the presence of the fictional instance of the 'author' as a narrator. In these different chapters, he describes his meetings with Pi, Pi's house, family and habits. These chapters again call the readers to recognize the process of writing and remind them that the story is fictional, at the same time that the 'author' tries implicitly to convince the readers that Pi is real, as they narrate their meetings. In opposition to the recognition of the story as a construction, these italicized chapters direct the reader to accept the first version of the story as a possible one in the world of the novel, even being very unlikely to happen in the real world. One example of the way in which these chapters are used as a strategy to direct the readers to suspend their disbelief is the description of the animal characters, mainly Richard Parker. They are described firstly with expressions which can be used either for animals or humans, and only later, when the readers have formed their image of the character, they are identified as animals. In chapter 33, for instance, Richard Parker is presented to the audience. In its first description, Richard Parker is not referred to as a tiger, but only as a blurred figure in a black and white photo. The exact words of its description are

I'm amazed. I look closely, trying to extract personality from appearance. Unfortunately, it's black and white again and a little out of focus. A photo taken in better days, casually, Richard Parker is looking away. He doesn't even realize that his picture is being taken. (87)

After this description, the 'author' describes other pictures, and Richard Parker is not mentioned again. In this fragment, it is not possible to conclude who Richard Parker is, and, considering its name, the readers possibly imagine it as a human being, not an animal. The readers only acknowledge who Richard Parker is on chapter 37, after the shipwreck. Pi narrates that Richard Parker swam towards the boat – at first, Pi was glad with the idea of having its company, but as soon as he realizes that it is a tiger, he believes he was going mad to think about it. The first description of Richard Parker as a tiger, presented in this chapter, is:

Ravi was right. Truly I was to be the next goat. I had a wet, trembling, half-drowned, heaving and coughing three-year-old adult Bengal tiger in my lifeboat. Richard Parker rose unsteadily to his feet on the tarpaulin, eyes blazing as they met mine, ears laid tight to his head, all weapons drawn. His head was the size and colour of the lifebuoy, with teeth. (99)

By describing the character in an ambiguous way, which leads the readers to believe that he is human at first to later realize he is a tiger, Martel enhances the open end of the narrative. The same formulation happens with the description of Orange Juice: it is described first as mother, than its name is mentioned and she is described as an orangutan. In this way, the introduction of the characters to the readers anticipate the question on whether they are real animals and the first version of the story is true or they are representing real people, as a form of allegory, and the second version of the story is true.

Even with these fragments that seem to reinforce the second version of the story, it is not possible to conclude which version of Pi's story is the true one. In the interview with the Japanese workers, Pi uses the argument that meerkat bones were found in the boat, which would prove that at least some part of his story was true. The Japanese, however, argue that the bones could be from any small animals, to later

recognize that Pi might be using a valid story considering the bones as a proof: “All right, Mr. Patel! You win. We cannot explain the presence of meerkat bones, if that is what they are, in the lifeboat have no proof they were meerkat bones” (301). Arguments for and against both versions of the story are spread throughout the novel, creating the undecidability which calls the readers to choose which version of the story they prefer. Undecidability is one metafictional aspect in *Life of Pi* which calls the reader to acknowledge the novel as fiction. Other aspects, as intertextuality, also create metafiction in Martel’s novel.

2.1. INTERTEXTUALITY AND METAFICTION

One of the techniques that can be used in metafiction is intertextuality, as it is explored by Linda Hutcheon. In her *Narcissistic Narratives*, she uses the example of Fowles to explain the functioning of intertextuality in metafictional writing. When Fowles mentions different authors, or uses styles that are implicitly connected to other texts, he explicitly calls the readers to recognize the creative process. According to Hutcheon, “not only will Fowles make the reader ‘see’, but he will reveal to him the mechanisms of vision-creating. He will let him see through the spectacles of books in order to let him see more and see differently” (59). The use of explicit or implicit intertextuality, thus, shows that no text is original, leading the readers to acknowledge them as constructions.

When discussing intertextuality, Gerard Genette’s distinguishes five types of transtextual relationships: intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, hypertextuality and architextuality (*Palimpsests* 1). The first one, intertextuality, is the actual presence of one text inside the other, as a citation or quote (1). Less explicit than what he calls intertextuality, paratextuality is related to the paratext, i.e., all the written material related to text properly as book cover, epigraph, notes, etc (3). The third kind of relationship is metatextuality, which is the connection between texts in which one does not necessarily mention the other, also described by him as a “commentary” (4). Hypertextuality is the relationship between one text, called hypertext, with a text anterior to it, from which it derived, called hypotext (5). This kind of intertextuality is found on adaptations, in which a hypotext is source to an adapted text, the hypertext. The last category, and more abstract, architextuality, is connected to the taxonomy of the text. All five categories are very important, but considering the objectives of the

present study, the present discussion will focus on the categories of intertextuality, metatextuality and hypertextuality. In *Life of Pi*, these categories are present in different chapters, and reflect the self-awareness of the text.

In chapter 26, Pi asks his mother to be baptized and to have a prayer rug, and, to distract him from this idea, she suggests him different readings from Robert Louis Stevenson, Conan Doyle, R. K. Narayan, and Daniel Defoe's *Robson Crusoe* (73). This intertextual reference to these authors is meaningful in the context of the story, as they are very important novelists, and each text has a different connection to the story of *Life of Pi*. One of the most famous novels by Stevenson is *The Treasure Island*, which narrates adventures overseas, with a clear connection to Pi's adventure. Defoe's *Crusoe* is a more explicit anticipation of some events in the narrative of *Life of Pi*, as it narrates how Robson Crusoe survives in a strange land after a shipwreck. As Alpana Sharma Knippling affirms, Narayan is considered the "first Indian novelist in English to secure international recognition" (172). According to the same author, Narayan writes in a very intense political context, but his writings are most about daily events. Doyle is famous for his detective stories, in which the reader is asked to connect different clues to solve a difficult problem – as the reader of Pi's novel is asked to follow the clues in the narrative to understand and choose each version of Pi's story is true. The reference to these four novelists has no direct interference in the diegesis, but when they are read intertextually they expose to the readers that they are facing a construction.

Another important intertextual reference can be found in the name of the character Richard Parker. Florence Stratton emphasizes how important names are in the novel *Life of Pi*, as they anticipate events and reveal very meaningful information. Richard Parker is a reference to Edgar Alan Poe's character in the novel *The Adventures of Arthur Gordon Pym* – Poe's Parker is a French sailor, the first man to suggest cannibalism as a way to survive in a journey in which Pym and his fellows are lost in the sea. This reference to another story not only anticipates the issue of cannibalism that will be presented only in the last part of Martel's novel, but also can be used as an argument for the second version of the story.

In *Life of Pi*, most of the names are meaningful in the narrative. The name of the main character Piscine, for instance, reflects the dominance of the French culture over India, exposing the colonial relation between these Nations. It also refers to the character's ability to swim, learnt from Mamaji, which would later be fundamental for his

survival at the Ocean. Piscine was an object of laughter due to his name until the moment when he decides to adopt the nickname of Pi, after the mathematical number. In Martel's narrative, Pi tells "in that elusive, irrational number with which scientists try to understand the universe, I found refuge". This quote relates the character's nickname to his quest for understanding the universe, which is a theme of the novel. Intertextual references in the names associated with Pi also point to the narrative as a construction.

As Religion is a main theme in the narrative, intertextual reference to different religious books can be found throughout the narrative, as the Bible, the Quran and also to kabbalah, as pointed out by Rita Slaupkauskite. Intertextuality with religious texts can be found even in the name of the ship, *Tsimtsum*, which, according to Florence Stratton is not only a reference to Pi's theses in the story but also the name of a concept developed by the Jewish Isaac Luria. It is "a Hebrew word which means God's contraction or withdrawal into self in order to make room for the physical universe" (14). By this concept, it can be seen that names again are used in the narrative to convey meaning. Pi's shipwreck with different animals can also be read as an intertextual connection to the story of Noah and the Ark. For the Christians, Noah was called by God to build an Ark and to fill it with two animals from each species to save them from the diluvium. Pi, on its turn, has to struggle to survive with a few animals, and the biblical reference to fertility and hope is substituted by violence and death (either the killing of animals or cannibalism).

Life of Pi also presents a clear intertextuality with the genre of travel narratives, not only due to its theme of immigration but also from its structure and the postcolonial discussion which can be raised based on the narrative. Considering the importance of this discussion, a deeper look should be made concerning the intertextuality with travel narratives and the issue of post-colonialism.

2.2. TRAVEL NARRATIVES, UNRESOLVED END AND METAFICTION

Even though *Life of Pi* is a novel, which identifies itself as fictional writing, it has close connections to the genre of travel writing. It is not easy to define travel narratives as a single genre, as it assumed different characteristics depending on the time they were written and their authors. According to William H. Sherman, "The style and the tone

of texts could vary widely and their organization always seemed prone to reproduce the haphazard nature of the travel they described” (30). Travel narratives had a fundamental importance in the Age of Discovery, when they were used to narrate the discoveries and report the news from different places. Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs still emphasized how they reflected the theoretical background of the time in which they were written: “it was in effect travel writing which provided the vehicle for the conveyance of the new information which laid the foundations for the scientific and philosophical revolutions of the seventeenth century” (4).

The context of the narratives, however, is not an impartial report of new places, but it reflects and legitimizes power relations. In *Imperial Eyes*, Mary Louis Pratt analyses different travel narratives focusing on the various perspectives from which the encounters between cultures were narrated. Pratt uses the term “contact zone” to describe the places in which people from different geographic and historical contexts unite and the relationship established by them as they are constituted in and within their relation with each other (6).

Considering Sandra Nitrini’s article “Viagens reais, viagens literárias”, it can be seen that there is a great change in the way in which travel narratives reflect the colonial perspective. According to her, in the 16th Century, a time in which most of places were being colonized by European Countries, travel narratives had the main objective of describing new places and peoples. Even though this was affirmed to be the objective, these descriptions were never neutral, as they revealed the perspective of the colonizers about the colonized. Often the descriptions were biased, and, when not, they presented the colonizer’s perspective on the Other.

From the twentieth century on, the narrative focuses more on the subjective experience of the narrator, placing the traveler at the center of the narrative. In her words, “their purpose is not anymore to present an universe more or less new and unknown, but to present the echoes of this universe in the individuality that travels and observes” (52)¹². Contemporary travel narratives still present the traveller’s perspective on the Other, but the subjective perspective calls the readers to be aware that they are not transparent portraits of some place and society, but narratives. However, in spite of these changes, Nitrini still emphasizes

¹² Original text: “seu propósito não é mais apresentar um universo mais ou menos novo e desconhecido, mas o de dar conta dos ecos deste universo na individualidade que viaja e observa”. My translation.

the ways travels are narrated and their main purpose, as they continue to reflect power relations.

Peter Hulme connects the genre of travel writing with the novel. According to him, “the relationship between the genres remains close and often troubling. Many readers still hope for a literal trustfulness from travel writing that they would not expect to find in the novel, though each form has long drawn on the conventions of the other” (6). *Life of Pi* borrows some characteristics from travel narratives that should be explored. Pi not only travels to an unknown place, but has to deal with his own beliefs and subjective perspectives while he gets lost in the ocean, between the place in which he grew up in and a new place. It is not only a journey between India and Canada, but an encounter between the innocence of the childhood and the maturity of arriving as an immigrant in a different country, between a French colony to a British colony, each one with a different colonial perspective. In the “contact zone”, the Pacific Ocean, Pi builds his own subjectivity and identity.

In the interview with the Japanese officers from the insurance company, Pi tells the Japanese how he survived with a tiger in the Pacific Ocean. When the veracity of his story is questioned by the Japanese, Pi asks if they want another version of the story, “a story without animals that will explain the sinking of the *Tsimtsum*” (303). After this demand, Pi silences, and tells the second version.

The novel *Life of Pi* does not present a final conclusion to whether the first or the second version of the story should be taken as Pi’s real story. Pi’s silence before presenting the second version can be read either as if he had some time to create a new version of the story or as if he had taken his breath to remember things as they happened so as to tell them, even with all the pain associated with the events. Assuming one or the other as the truth implies different meanings, not only within the diegetic world, but also for the possible readings of the novel. Open ended stories are commonly found in postmodernist literature, and can be also seen as a metafictional strategy to call the attention of the readers to the fact that the narrative overly presents itself as fiction. It is the undecidability of the narrative that makes it possible to read Pi’s story as either a fantastic adventure with a reflection on the power of fascination generated by the telling of stories or as a narrative of trauma, with a possible postcolonial reading. These two possibilities deserve a detailed analysis.

Considering the first version of the story as the true one would imply in believing that Pi could survive with a tiger for 227 days in the middle of the ocean. Based on Stewart Cole analysis, such reading implies a suspension of disbelief, as readers have to suspend their incredulity in the unlikely to enter in the fictional world. For Cole, it is exactly the fact that the story is unlikely to happen in the real life that shows the readers that it is safe to experience it as it will not affect their real lives. Assuming this reading as the true version of the story implies considering *Life of Pi* a reflection on the power of narratives, that is on their power to suspend disbelief.

The second version of the story is a more believable narrative that can be approached from a psychological perspective. Janet Walker analyzes how traumatic events – those which are almost impossible to tell – are narrated. She mentions how most of the events are normally filled with fictional content, not because the narrator wants to hide some information, but because sometimes fictionalizing them unconsciously is the only way to overcome the trauma. The reading of Pi's story as a trauma narrative is possible if the second version of the story is seen as the true one. As this reading is more evident in the film, it will be more deeply discussed in Chapter 2.

The open end in Pi's narrative is characteristic of postmodernism. Even with textual clues which can be used to direct both readings, it is not possible to establish which one is true in the diegesis. With the metafictional discussion, this determination is not as important as the reflection on the possibilities of the narrative. As Stuart Cole clarifies, the reader is asked to choose which story he prefers – and not the real one, moving the question from the search of the truth to aesthetic or ethical preference. In this case, undecidability both enables different readings, thus, multiplying the number of issues that can be discussed in the narrative depending on the side the reader chooses to adopt, and empties out the narrative of a stable referent, which would enable one to adopt a critical view of the alleged separation between fact and fiction. The openness of the narrative can also be connected to metafiction, as it calls the reader to have an active attitude towards the texts.

As it can be seen, in the novel *Life of Pi* Martel uses different strategies to construct metafiction. In order to present a more detailed textual analysis of some of these strategies, one chapter of the novel should be focused on this discussion. As a way to sum up all of these strategies, I present an analysis of the "Author's Note".

2.3. “AUTHOR’S NOTE”

One of the chapters of *Life of Pi* in which metafiction is more clearly present is the “Author’s note”, previous to Pi’s narrative. By the title of the chapter, it is expected that the text presents an introduction or reflection of the real author and its narrative, as well as on the context in which the text was produced. Using Genette’s classification, the notes could be read as a paratext which may add information to the narrative or guide the reader through it. This “Author’s note” however, is different from most of the novels in that it clearly blurs the distinction between Martel, as the writer, and the fictional ‘author’, also blurring the border between real and fictional events. It is a chapter in which there is a discussion on the narrative structure of the novel, thus, presenting a metafictional commentary about the process of writing and acknowledging both real and fictional people.

The author’s note begins with a confession of the author about his anguish for not being able to write what was his first idea, a novel located in Portugal. He decides to go to India, where he meets the character Francis Adirubasamy (also known by the nickname Mamaji), who tells him Pi’s story and suggests him to write it. Metafiction is present here in the sense that one fictional character is the one that is giving information to the self-called ‘author’ who explicitly blurs the distinction between fiction and reality, pointing to the writing as a construction. When the ‘author’ and Mamaji are talking, the ‘author’ writes “He told me his story. All the while I took notes” (xi). From these notes, he establishes the “elements of the story” (xi): the main character, the setting, the voice and the point of view. After listening to Mamaji’s narrative, he concludes “It seemed natural that Mr. Patel’s story should be told mostly in the first person – in his voice and through his eyes. But any inaccuracies or mistakes are mine” (xii). By naming the elements of the narrative structure, then, the process of writing is exposed to the reader. This aspect is not only present in the “Author’s note” but also in the italicized chapters in which the ‘author’ voice is present.

Some quotes on the chapter are very interesting as reflections on narrative and reality, and mirror the metafictional discussion that Pi presents in the last part of the narrative with the Japanese officers. When describing how he would turn Portugal into fiction, the ‘author’ rhetorically questions “That’s what fiction is about, isn’t it, the selective transforming of reality?” (viii). In these quotes, the dichotomy fiction x reality, which is a recurrent theme in the narrative, is first presented to

the readers. After the “Author’s note” the slippery boundary between fact and fiction is questioned in most of the novel’s chapters, opening space to the final question raised by Pi related to which version of his story is the best one, and to the open end concerning the “true” one.

The last paragraph presents a list of acknowledgments – some of the names are fictional, and are characters of the story being told – as Pi Patel, Mamaji and the Japanese officers from the insurance company – and some are real persons and institutions, as the Canada Council for the Arts and Moacyr Scliar. Mixing real names with fictional names again brings into question the border between fact and fiction.

The “Author’s note”, a chapter which is considered previous to Pi’s narrative, presents all the different ways in which metafiction is present in *Life of Pi*. From the thematic discussion on narratives present on the dichotomy fantasy x reality to the presentation of the structural elements of the novel as main character, narrative voice and point of view, metafiction is presented as a guide to read Martel’s novel. These elements, both thematic and structural, can be seen in the next one hundred chapters, as it was discussed previously in this chapter. In the novel *Life of Pi* the different metafictional elements expose the process of writing (as metafiction by definition does) and present narratives as construction. With the novel’s open end, the reader is asked to have an active role in the construction of the meaning.

3. CHAPTER 2: ANG LEE'S *LIFE OF PI*

In Chapter I, I discuss how metafiction is present in the film *Life of Pi*, and the meanings produced by it. Considering that a film adaptation should be seen as an independent work, some of the issues here analyzed differ from those discussed in the previous chapter. First, I present some of the technical and structural aspects of the film in which metafiction may be identified, then I present an analysis of the scene in which Richard Parker is looking undersea, which is a key sequence to understand the implied director's role in the resolution of the story, and, finally, I discuss intertextuality and trauma.

The film *Life of Pi*, directed by Ang Lee and produced by the 20th Century Fox, was released in 2012, after two years of production. According to the DVD's extras, the main actor, Suraj Sharm, had no previous experiences in acting, and he had to learn not only how to act, but also how to swim, in an intensive physical training. A tank was built in an abandoned airport in Taiwan to produce the Ocean scenes, which were later completed with digital visual effects. The soundtrack was created by Mychael Danna, who used oriental sounds with a classic orchestra. The film was nominated for eleven categories of the Oscar, and won four Oscars: best director, best cinematography, visual effects and original music.

Considered a hard film to produce due to its technical difficulties, *Life of Pi* relies heavily on CGI (Computer Generated Images), either to create the animal characters that interact with the character Pi or to create the movements of the sea and the storms. CGI was not only used as a resource to produce the images, which seemed impossible to be shot without the aid of computers, but also to make it "extraordinary", as said by the film editor Tim Squyres in the DVD extras. He argues that "People don't go to movies to see something ordinary. And the question was just how extraordinary to make it". According to the DVD extras, throughout the shooting of the film a real tiger was used to produce 23 shots of the character Richard Parker, which is a very low number compared to the number of shots in the final version with Richard Parker. According to *Life of Pi's* website, Suraj Sharm (the actor who plays the young Pi) was never acting with a real tiger. There are some moments in which the scenes of the CGI tiger can be easily taken by a scene with shooting from a real tiger, but in some movements, Richard Parker acts in a non-natural way. One example of the former is when Pi throws a mouse in the direction of Richard Parker. The tiger reacts by getting the mouse with its claws and eats it. In this sequence, Richard

Parker moves more like a man than like a tiger, exposing the narrative as a process of representation.

The film was produced in 3D, which, according to the editor Tim Squyres, makes it an “immersive experience” as declared in the DVD extras. Scott Higgins, however, points out that there is a paradox concerning the immersion proposed by 3D cinema. Even with the emergence provided by the 3D images, “the price paid is an acute awareness of the frame as a boundary, and of cinema’s artifice in general” (197). It is important to notice that watching a 3D film is usually more expensive at a movie theater than watching a 2D film. When someone chooses to watch a 3D rather than a 2D, they expect a different experience. It is not hard to notice that 3D is becoming increasingly popular, and a new film aesthetic is being developed to explore at the maximum this resource.

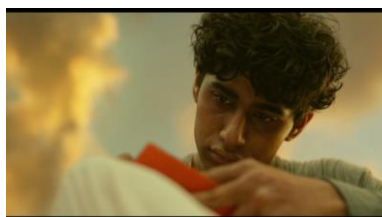
In *Life of Pi*, the experience of watching the 3D film version, as opposed to watching it in 2D, is a key element, which adds to the objective of having the audience to experience the extraordinary. Also, the mise-en-scene and the cinematography contribute to the immersion created by the film. According to the visual effects supervisor Bill Westenhofer, in the DVD’s extras, “Ang [Lee] shot this, unlike most action films, with really long takes because he wanted you to really appreciate what Pi was experiencing at a given time”. With the use of 3D, the interaction of the audience with the film story increases in some sequences in which objects fly towards the camera, generating an impression that objects are coming out of the screen.

The sequence in which Pi and Richard Parker are attacked by flying fishes is a key moment for one’s feeling of an immersive experience generated by the use of 3D. In this sequence, fishes fly towards Richard Parker and Pi, and sometimes towards the camera. With the use of 3D glasses, the audience may have the impression that those fishes are flying off screen in their direction. A point of view shot of Pi’s perspective adds to this feeling as it also enables the audience to experience what would it feel like to be present on the episode.

Besides the experience of 3D, in the sequence of the flying fishes there is also a difference in the film aspect ratio from the other sequences of the film. From the standard 1.85:1 (Figure 4a), it goes to a wider ratio commonly used in Cinema Scope¹³ (Figure 4b), and goes

¹³ Scope, or CinemaScope, is a film format introduced in 1953 which, according to David Bordwell, had prestige during five years and lost its popularity. Its wider ratio was a revolution

back to the standard in the end of the sequence. To the press, as quoted by Jason Shawhan in a review for the Nashville Scene, Lee declared “I felt that ‘Scope was the only way to see this [flying fish] scene” and he concluded saying that “I think that’s a great tool in 3D filmmaking”. The shift of the aspect ratio enables the use of the black spaces to explore the resource of 3D. Some of the fish invade the margins, the black spaces between the filmed and the projection space, increasing the unusual aspect of the scene.



(a)



(b)



(c)

Figure 4. (a) Film ratio in *Life of Pi*: 1.85:1 (b) Film ratio in the Flying Fish sequence. (c) Another different film ratio in the reference to the book cover.

There is another sequence showing the sea animals below Pi’s raft in which the ratio changes, but this time to a narrower screen (Figure 4c). This sequence presents Pi from a bird’s eye shot with different sea animals moving below him, which is also a reference to one of the Canadian book covers from the 2002 edition of Martel’s novel. This change may turn the audience aware of the specific features of cinema, as film ratio, camera angles, and the creative use of cinematic apparatus. This difference in the ratio, even being very brief, calls the audience to recognize the narrative as a construction, as happens in

artistically, but not very successful commercially, as it demanded creative techniques to deal with its distorted size. For more information, see Bordwell, David. "The Modern Miracle You See Without Glasses." *Poetics of Cinema*. New York: Routledge, 2008. 281-325.

metafiction. However, in film, one can argue that such apparatus also helps one to become even more immersed in the diegesis and the physical sensations created by it.

As it was already discussed in the introductory chapter, the film *Life of Pi* presents different narrative levels. Mamaji's narrative, Pi's childhood, the first and the second versions of the story are narrated by Pi to the unnamed 'author', during their meetings. The role of the 'author', in the film, is to listen to all these narratives, as a source to his future publication. Differently from the novel, the 'author' is not retelling Pi's story, but listening to it. Pi narrates his own story, but all the images are presented to the audience by the narrative element of the image-maker, who adds an interpretation to Pi's story. Even though Pi asks the 'author' to choose which version of the story he prefers, the image-maker presents some clues to the audience to inform which one is the "true" one. An analysis of the aesthetics of the film and of some sequences indicate the implied message of the image-maker.

In the film, the two different versions of Pi story (the one with the animals and the one with cannibalism) are reflected in the mise-en-scene and in the cinematography. Mise-en-scene is defined by Bordwell and Thompson as "the director's control over what appears in the film frame" (112). The elements of mise-en-scene listed by them are settings, costumes and make up, lighting and staging. Still regarding to the shot, elements of cinematography are defined as how the scene is filmed, covering the photographic aspects, the framing and duration of the shot. The link between the shots is made by editing. By editing, hours of recorded material can be removed, and different connections between shots can be established. Sound track is another important element in film, which, according to David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, "shape how we perceive and interpret the image" (265). The elements of film style used in *Life of Pi* emphasize the dichotomy between the fantastic world of animals x the violent world of cannibalism, which is created by the plot.

In *Life of Pi*, the first version of the story corresponds to the longest part of the film, with more than one hour of narrative. More than presenting a beautiful landscape, the mise-en-scene and cinematography in this fragment, together with the soundtrack, suggests that it is connected to fantasy. Most of the scenes are very colorful, with recurrent moments in which the sky is reflected on the still water, blurring the limits between sky and ocean (Figure 5a). The soundtrack mixes classical music with oriental tones, giving the feeling of

adventure and hope. By contrast, the second version of the story is narrated in a very different way.

The second version of Pi's story, which is told in the end of the movie and is presented in a scene located at the hospital, lasts five minutes and is composed by 7 shots. Contrasting with the fantasy-like scenes of the first version of the story, the film style used in this sequence emphasizes the cruelty of what is being told (Figure 5b). The sequence is composed of long shots of a monologue in which the character tells his story, with no visual representation of the story told. The only camera movement in this sequence is a zoom on Pi's face, which only presents his reactions to the story, and with no other camera movements to distract the audience from his voice.



(a)



(b)

Figure 5. Differences in the aesthetics of the first (a) and second (b) versions of the story

Comparing and contrasting the two versions of the story, it is possible to see that their aesthetics reinforces the plot. The first version, an epic survival of a boy with a Bengal tiger, is presented in fantasy-like landscapes and epic music. The second version, which presents the story as a raw version of men's crudest feelings, has no special effects, and it is not as colorful as the first one. As it happens in the novel, in the end Pi asks which story does the 'author' prefer, and not which one is the true one, demanding a response concerning aesthetic preference and not the truth. The real events concerning Pi's shipreck, however, can be implied by analyzing clues left by the image-maker, as it can be demonstrated in the analysis of the sequence in which Richard Parker looks at the water, and which is further reinforced by the last scene of the film.

3.1. IMAGE-MAKER'S CLUES

One of the most important sequences in the film *Life of Pi* is the one in which the camera presents Richard Parker looking at different elements undersea. It is a night sequence that begins with Pi expressing his exhaustion after a long period adrift. Pi is lying down on the boat and Richard Parker looks at the sea. Pi asks Richard Parker “What are you looking at? Talk to me. Tell me what you see”. After questioning what Richard Parker was seeing, Pi also looks at the water. Richard Parker’s face reflected on the water is focused (Figure 6), and a zoom on his face shows that everything that will be presented is associated with his optical perspective; that is, what Parker is seeing under the water. The sequence continues with different elements as sea animals swimming to the center of the screen, disappearing and giving space to the other elements. The camera moves towards the bottom of the Ocean, where the ship Tsimtsum is revealed.



Figure 6. Richard Parker’s face reflected on the water in the beginning of the sequence

Richard Parker’s sight reveals first sea animals: a fish school and a shark. A squid and a whale swim towards the center of the scene, and the squid holds the whale. In their fight, the whale is transformed in different zoo animals as a giraffe, a hypo, and an alligator (Figure 7). These animals show that Richard Parker is not only observing the sea and its animals, but also revealing his memories, as all those animals were present in Pi father’s Zoo.



Figure 7. The whale gives place to different zoo animals

The Zoo animals swim away and a light appears in the center of the screen. The light reveals a large snaggletooth fish, which also swims away. When the fish leaves, different small fishes, jellyfishes, fire and bubbles compound a picture which is alike a starry sky. The different bubbles form figures which are related to the plot: a lotus flower (Figure 8a), and Pi Mother's face (Figure 8b). These images show that Richard Parker's vision of the sea is subjective and closely associated with Pi's childhood. There are different ways of portraying a lotus flower, but that particular one is the one used by Pi's mother in his childhood (Figure 9a and b). This is an evidence that Richard Parker's memories are Pi's memories: his subjectivity is created by Pi. In the particular scene in which Pi's mother draws the lotus flower, Richard Parker was not present. Considering that, it can be argued that Richard Parker is Pi's alter ego.

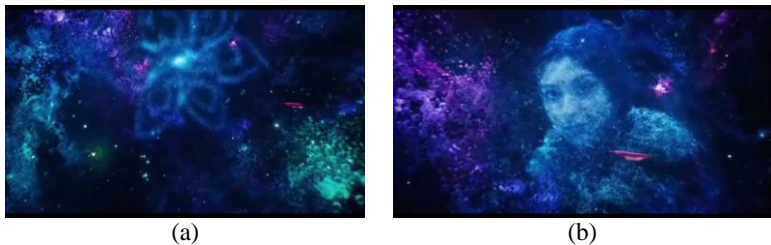


Figure 8. Bubbles form a lotus flower (a) and Pi Mother's face (b)



Figure 9. In Pi's childhood, the lotus flower drawn by Pi's Mother (a) and her face (b), very similar to the figures formed by the bubbles.

With a fast zoom into Pi Mother's forehead, the ship *Tsimtsum* is shown in the bottom of the Ocean, where Pi's Mother stands, together with his family and the zoo animals. The sequence quickly returns to Pi's face, showing him in a very close perspective to Richard Parker's perspective, as it was in the beginning of the sequence (Figure 10).



Figure 10. Pi in the same position as Richard Parker depicted in Figure 6

The sequence ends with a shot in which the boat appears as a very small figure in the center of a starry sky, which is also reflected in the water. In this shot, it is not possible to distinguish the sky from the sea, and it seems that the boat is floating in the sky. The lack of limits between sky and sea is a theme recurrent in the film, increasing the sense of solitude and the infinitude of the sea. Pi, after all these memories shown through Richard Parker's perspective, says "Words are all I have to hang on to". This is a metafictional reference to the power that narratives have of expressing a traumatic event. Trauma and testimony literature will be more deeply explored in the end of this chapter.

The conclusion that Richard Parker is Pi's alter ego reinforces the second version of the story, in which the cook kills the sailor and Pi's

mother, and Pi kills the cook. This reinforcement is presented by the framing narrator that, in this case, is not Pi, but the implied director. Pi, as a narrator, presents the two different versions of the story and leaves them with an open end, with an indication to his listener to choose which version of the story he does prefer.

The last sequence of the film further reinforces the idea that Richard Parker is Pi's alter ego. After the reading of the final report of the insurance company to the writer, Pi meets his wife and children, introducing them to the 'author'. With a fade in, the young Pi appears smiling with the Ocean on the background. When Pi fades out, Richard Parker fades in the screen, and the Ocean is replaced by the Mexican forest. Richard Parker enters into the forest and the image fades to black, ending the film. Through this very brief sequence, it is possible to imply that the image maker shows that Pi and Richard Parker are both the same person, but when Pi acts Richard Parker is not present and vice-versa. Pi's smile, and his further ordinary life is only possible because Richard Parker and everything it represents is left behind in the Mexican Jungle. Considering that the film presents the second version of the story as the true one, and the first version is a story created by Pi, it is possible to understand as a testimony contained in a narrative of Trauma.

3.2. TRAUMA

Literature of Trauma, according to Márcio Seligmann-Silva, has been questioning the limits between "reality" and literature (47). As analyzed by Seligmann-Silva, the report of traumatic events, such as the Holocaust, shows both a tentative of making meaning of 'reality' through language and the insufficiency of language concerning the facts. Using Sigmund Freud's definition of traumatic experience, Seligmann-Silva defines testimony as the resistance to comprehend these experiences (48)¹⁴. Often, the person who was submitted to a traumatic event repeats the violent scene, trying to give form to what happened through language.

Seligmann-Silva's work is more concerned with collective traumatic events as the Holocaust, as a way to avoid its forgetfulness. As some reports of the survivals of the events sometimes differ from

¹⁴ Original text: "Os exemplos de eventos traumáticos são batalhas e acidentes: o testemunho seria a narração não tanto desses fatos violentos, mas da resistência à compreensão dos mesmos". (Seligmann-Silva 48)

each other (they are also filled with non-factual narratives to fill in blanks in memories), they run the risk of being seen as untrue. By analyzing *Life of Pi* as an allegory, one can see Pi's report from an allegorical way: as the trauma of many immigrants who left India looking for new opportunities in America. Many historical atrocities happened along the colonizing process, which cannot be completely narrated – and most times are silenced. Together with the subjective story of the loss of their parents, Pi joins the larger number of immigrants who lost their birth nations, and left behind their home, culture and sometimes even language. As Pi does in the narrative, immigrants faced different challenges in the way to the new country and had to adapt when arrived to their destinies. Most of them lost their belongings, their friends and family, as it happened to Pi, and their stories should not be forgotten.

Still concerning testimony, Janet Walker's works with different films about incest can be enlightening for an understanding of Pi's report. Working with a visual medium as Cinema is interesting in this case, as it opens up “the possibility of absolute and even retrospective visual confirmation of what in real life would be mediated by memory and by our imperfect access to facts from the past” (Walker 48)¹⁵. As in the film *Life of Pi*, there is no access to the events which actually happened in Pi's past, but only to his version of the events, as it can be noticed that the visual elements of the first version of Pi's story is mediated by him.

To consider that memory mediates a testimony implies in the consideration that a wrong memory about a detail does not necessarily mean that the whole report is false. Walker points out that sometimes the post-traumatic stress may affect memory, and that one of the common reactions to trauma is fantasy (60). Considering that, Pi's first version of the story may not be an invention created to impress the “writer”, but as a tentative to make sense of violence and cannibalism experienced by Pi in the Ocean. Incapable of reproducing all the fear and anxiety associated with his survival, together with the pain related to the death of his family and to the experience of killing a man, Pi recurs to fantasy.

¹⁵ Original text: “a possibilidade da confirmação visual absoluta e mesmo retrospectiva daquilo que na vida real seria mediado pela memória e pelo nosso acesso imperfeito aos fatos do passado”. (Walker 56).

The clues to understand which story really happened to Pi are not given by him, but by the image-maker, the framing narrator of the film. To consider the major role played by the image-maker and the different narrative levels, which also foreground the metafictional in the structure of the narrative, is fundamental to understand the narratives of Pi as a whole, rather than separated possibilities of reading *Life of Pi*. Considering this, the different narrative levels not only indicate the solution to Pi's narrative, but also expose it to the readers as a construction.

3.3. INTERTEXTUALITY

Besides the narrative levels, other elements are used to generate metafiction in the film *Life of Pi*, such as intertextuality. As it was discussed in the novel *Life of Pi*, intertextuality is connected with metafiction, and may appear in the text in different forms. Genette's categories of intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, hypertextuality and architextuality are also present in the film *Life of Pi*, and add important meanings to the film. Studying the adaptation of a novel to a film is already a study of hypertextuality, as it is a study of one hypertext to a hypotext.

As it was mentioned in the Introduction, Pi reads three books in the film, which are different from the titles named in the novel. The three books are *The Mysterious Island*, by Jules Verne; a compound of *Notes from Underground*, short stories *White Nights* and *The Dream of a Ridiculous Man*, and excerpts from *The House of the Dead*; and *The Stranger*, by Albert Camus. The novel *Life of Pi* also have intertextual relations with these texts, but their titles are not mentioned as it happens in the film. All of these authors are well-known worldwide, and the intertextual relations with their writings is meaningful to the story. It is interesting to notice that in the film, even though Pi speaks English as his first language, he reads these three books in French. This fact enhances the colonial power of France in India, remembering that colonialism is not only concerned with political and economic power, but also with cultural dominance.

The first novel that Pi is reading is Verne's *The Mysterious Island*, an adventure novel published in 1874 about a group of men who, escaping in a balloon from the American Civil War, find themselves in a strange island. They survive due to Smith's knowledge on engineering, and are rescued by a ship. The character Capitan Nemo, one of the major characters in the story, reveals himself as a lost Indian Prince. Pi

reads *The Mysterious Island* when he is a child. The name of the novel and the survival on a strange island mirror the adventures that Pi faces as an adult in the carnivorous island.

The second book which Pi reads is a compound of *Notes from Underground*, the short stories *White Nights* and *The Dream of a Ridiculous Man*, and excerpts from *The House of the Dead*, by Fyodor Dostoyevsky. Pi reads this book after seeing Richard Parker eating a goat in front of him, a shocking scene after which, according to him, “The world lost some of its enchantment”. As the anonymous narrator of *Notes from Underground*, Pi becomes deluded with the world around him. As this sequence is previous to the decision of moving to Canada, Dostoyevsky’s *White Nights* can also be read intertextually with the film *Life of Pi* in the sense that both Pi and unnamed character from *White Nights* have to say good-bye to their beloved one, knowing that they will not meet again.

A few seconds later, still in the sequence that shows the effects of goat’s death, Pi is reading *The Stranger*, by Albert Camus. The intertextual relation between these two different narratives supports the existence of a very tough story. In *The Stranger*, the main character Meursault acknowledges the death of his mother and expresses no emotions towards it. After that, Meursault kills a man in a fight and the lack of emotions in his reactions towards his death is used as a proof of his guilt. In both novels, the main characters kill someone after the death of their mother – Pi kills the cook and Meursault kills a man – but their reactions are different. While Meursault expresses no feelings and no regrets, Pi tells the Japanese officers that he remembers every day the deaths of his mother and of the cook.

Similar to the novel *Life of Pi*, intertextuality with different religious texts is also present throughout the homonymous film, both in the dialogues between Pi and the “writer” and in the visual elements of the film. These references are concerned with the three different religions embraced by Pi: Christianity, Hinduism and Islamism. In the dialogues, there are references to the Bible, the Coran and different Hindu gods, as there are visual references to Christian symbols, such as the Cross, Hindu traditions as the ceremony with the candles and the gods in Pi’s childhood. Surrounded by this religious context, Pi refuses to choose one religion and continues to search for God in all the different religions.

The carnivorous island, which is a mysterious oasis in which Pi has a chance of drinking potable water, eating well and resting could be

seen as an intertextual reference to the Hindu religion. The format of the island, a human body laying down (Figure 11a), is a reference to the Hindu god Vishnu (Figure 11b). In the sequence in Pi's childhood in which the young Pi looks at a religious ceremony, the adult Pi describes in voice-over his connection to the Hindu religion and how the gods and goddess were his superheroes, as "Vishnu sleeps, floating on the Shoreless Cosmic Ocean, and we are the stuff of his dreams". According to BBC's article "Vishnu", Vishnu is often represented laying down over a snake, called Sesha. Vishnu, for the Hindu tradition, is "the preserver and protector of the universe. His role is to return to the earth in troubled times and restore the balance of good and evil". There are also references to Vishnu in the sequence in the mountains, in which a mountain shaped as a human figure laying down appears in the background (Figure 11c) and in the sequence in which Pi kills the first dourado, when he thanks Vishnu for coming in the form of a fish to save them.

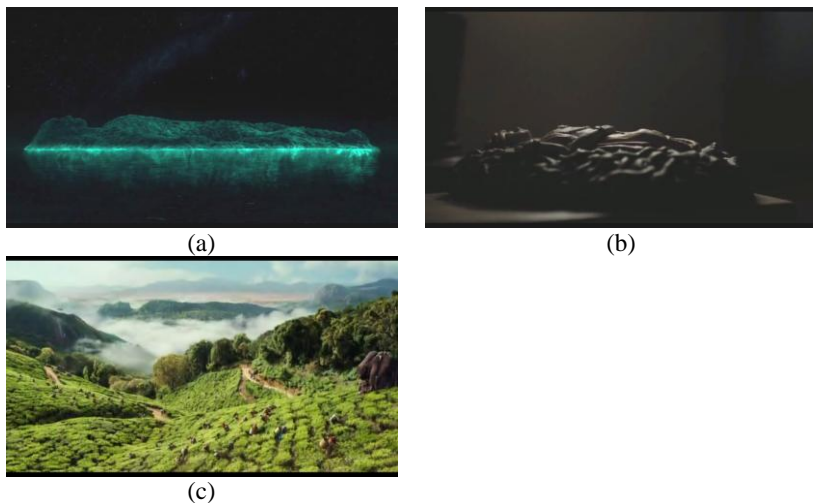


Figure 11. (a) Human-shaped island; (b) statue of Vishnu; (c) Human-shaped mountain

Another intertextual reference is the novel *Moby Dick*, written by Herman Melville, which is made clear in the night sequence in which Pi loses most of his canned water and food. When Pi is fascinated with the life undersea, a huge white whale emerges to the surface, causing an agitation in the water (Figure 12). *Moby Dick* is a novel in which

Ishmael narrates Capitan Ahab's obsessive search for the white whale Moby Dick. Moby Dick is portrayed by Ahab as the incarnation of Evil, as it was responsible for many of his losts – his leg, his mind and in the end of the novel, his life. It is an allegorical novel with different interpretations – one of them understands the search for Moby Dick as the search for God and for the meaning of life. Seen in this way, both Pi and Ishmael embark on a journey which makes them reflect on their existence, on their spirituality and on the meaning of their lives.



Figure 12. A whale approaches Pi in the night sequence in a reference to Moby Dick

As it was previously discussed, intertextuality is an element used to expose the text as a process, as it is dependent and derived from a large number of references. In the same way that the image-maker leaves “clues” to the audience concerning which of Pi’s version of the story is true, intertextual references are marks to show the audience that all texts are constructions, breaking the illusion of an original and transparent text. Exposing the influences and references, thus, not only adds meanings to the narrative, but also show the audience the self-awareness of the texts.

As it was discussed in this chapter, it can be seen that metafiction is present in the film *Life of Pi* in different instances, which are in some cases different from the novel due to the narrative structure of the film and the novel. Comparing and contrasting them enables to verify the meanings produced by these differences. In the next chapter, I propose to compare and contrast the novel and the film *Life of Pi* in order to verify how the similarities and the differences in the construction of metafiction produce similar or different meanings in them.

4. FINAL REMARKS AND CONCLUSION

The main objective of my thesis was to verify if metafiction is present both in the novel and in the film *Life of Pi*. I proposed an analysis of the presence of metafiction in both works and what were the meanings constructed by them. Chapters 1 and 2 aimed to verify if and how metafiction was present in the narratives of *Life of Pi* and to illustrate its use in different sequences in the novel and in the film separately. In this chapter, I propose a comparative analysis of the novel and the film, highlighting the metafictional aspects in them (considering their similarities and differences). Comparing and contrasting these works has enabled me to understand the relation between them, and how they can bring different readings to the same story: the narrative of PI. I will also further elaborate on some of the findings in my analysis of both texts.

The first way in which metafiction is presented in the novel and in the film *Life of Pi* is the theme of Pi's narrative, and the diegetic discussion of the importance of narratives, which is present in both. Thematically, metafiction appears in the discussions about storytelling when Pi presents a second version of his story, both in the novel and in the film, to the Japanese officers and leave the answer to which of the stories they prefer on to them. By doing that, PI exposes his story as a construction as he calls attention to the process of narrating. The dialogue between Pi and the Japanese officers is very important to introduce narrative as a theme in the story, as it reveals to the readers/audiences the innumerable ways in which events could be narrated, as they depend on the narrator and his/her main objective with the narrative.

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 of this thesis, there are differences in the ways in which metafiction is dealt with in the novel and in the film. In the film, possibly due to time constraints, the sequence at the hospital is shorter than in the novel. In the novel, besides telling the second version of the story, Pi engages in a discussion on the veracity of his narrative, arguing that even if his story is hard to believe, it does not mean it is not true. As Pi argues in the novel "If you stumble about believability, what are you living for? Love is hard to believe, ask any lover. Life is hard to believe, ask any scientist. God is hard to believe, ask any believer. What is your problem with hard to believe?" (297). Pi's argument does not concern only his story, but all narratives in general, mainly fantastic narratives. In order to read any fictional text, the readers must accept that even if some events are hard to believe,

they must accept them in order to enter into the fictional world, and suspend their disbelief.

The process of writing as a construct is exposed in the novel since its beginning already in the “Author’s Note” until the conclusion of the novel, which is given by a character entitled the ‘author’. By discussing the genesis of the narrative and the elements which he is using to tell Pi’s story, as main character, voice and point of view in the “Author’s note”, the novel unmasks the process of writing to the readers. Furthermore, the italicized chapters, which narrate the meetings between Pi and the ‘author’, point out the circumstances in which the ‘author’ affirms that the story was written. It is important to recall that the story written by the ‘author’ is not the novel *Life of Pi*, but it is a narrative inside the novel, in a Chinese Box structure generated by the different narrative levels. There is no correspondence of these metafictional elements in the film, as in the film the ‘author’ only listens to the story, - he is not writing it or re-telling it. It is implied in the film that he is going to write about the story, but his position in the film as listener is different from the mediation of the ‘author’ in the novel.

Intertextuality, which is one of the common elements used in metafictional texts, exposed both the novel and the film as constructions. By presenting intertextual references, both novel and film disclosed the fact that no text is completely original, but that texts are constructed based on references to previous texts and narrative styles. Considering Stam’s and Hutcheon’s definition of adaptation, the film and the novel *Life of Pi* can also be studied as two different narratives with an intertextual relationship. The text “based upon the novel by Yann Martel” in the film and the images from the film in the recent editions of the novel expose this intertextual reference, and also bring to light the process of production of the narratives – in this case, mainly of production of film adaptations. Considering the discussion on Film Adaptation, it is possible to see that considering an adaptation in the intertextual relationship between texts is very positive. The relationship between the film and the text implies not only the ‘adapted’ text is influenced by the ‘original’ text, but that the intertextual relationship increases popularity for both, as it happens with the film and the novel *Life of Pi*.

More than listing intertextual references in the novel and in the film, it is important to acknowledge the meanings that they add to the story in both texts. Firstly, the intertextual reference to Moacyr Scliar exposes the sources of the main ideas of the novel and show that the

narrative is not a completely original story, but a construction, a product of different references. This reference, however, is very controversial, as it can be considered as plagiarism. Even though Martel recognizes the connection between his novel and Scliar and even cites him in the “Author’s Note”, it is not clear how Martel used Scliar’s main ideas as inspiration for his work. The citation in the “Author’s Note” and the discussion generated by the media make the intertextual (hypertextual in Genette’s classification) relationship between *Max and the Cats* and *Life of Pi* clear.

Intertextual relations with different religious texts are also very important in the narrative, adding to the spiritual background to the story. All the religious references are used to fulfill Pi’s promise that his story will make the ‘author’ believe in God. These references are not only linked to the main books of the three largest religions in the world – Christianity, Islam and Hindu – but also to different religious terms and symbols. The story has an intertextual reference to the Christian narrative of Noah, in which Noah survives with two animals from each species in the Ark. In the film setting, there are visual references to the Hindu goddess Vishnu, thus, maintaining the religious background throughout the narrative.

The visual reference to Moby Dick in the sequence in which Pi loses his food and potable water also evokes the quest for a response for the existence, as the novel *Moby Dick* also foregrounds a spiritual quest. While in *Moby Dick* the Capitan Ahab looks for the whale after losing his leg, Ishmael looks for answers to his existential questions. Ishmael’s narrative reveal a search for truth in religion and in life, and the quest for the whale can be read as an allegory of the quest for the meaning of existence. In the same way Pi looks for answers to his existential questions in religion – in his case, in Christianity, Islamism and Hinduism – beginning in his childhood and continuing in his journey on the Pacific Ocean.

In the novel *Life of Pi*, intertextuality expands various possibilities of reading it, as they expose the narrative styles and the references that compose the novel. The intertextuality *Life of Pi* exposes with the genres of travel narrative and the novel reinforces that texts are always derived from other texts. As discussed in Chapter I, Martel’s novel presents literary references to canonical novels of world literature as well as to Indian Literature. The three books which Pi reads in the film are different from those of the novel, and they add an important meaning to the narrative. They mirror some events in Pi’s story, as the death of the mother in the intertextuality with *The Stranger* and the

cannibal island in the reference to *The Mysterious Island*. All these references are important to understand the meaning of the whole story, and can be considered a metafictional strategy to expose the text as a construction of different references.

Metafiction is also present in the narrative structure of both texts, in terms of the narrative levels and the various narrations and in the narrative styles in the novel and in the film. The different writing genres in the novel, as the transcript of the interview, Pi's journal and a report can be considered a metafictional strategy. The use of genres such as reports and interviews, which are normally connected to report of factual events, help to create the unresolved end proposed by Pi and to blur the boundaries between fact and fiction. As it is not Pi who narrated the interview or writes the final report, it can be assumed that it is not Pi's memory which mediates them, but the 'author'. The different narrators of these chapters help to create the undecidability of the story. The different narrative genres in the novel also show it as a construction, a product generated in the process of writing.

Regarding the two versions of the story told by Pi, the novel *Life of Pi* uses different narrative styles to convey different meanings. As it was discussed on Chapter 2, the detailed descriptions of Pi's actions and elements, and the narration presented as a journal add an impression of realism to the version of the story with the animals, which seems to be more fantastic. On the other hand, the second version of the story, with a more believable plot is presented to the readers as a transcription of an interview, with no reference to the character's actions, expressions and the tones used in the dialogues, and no references to who transcribed the audio. Considering that, it is possible to see that in the novel, the narrative structure also presents the narrative as a construction, enhancing the metafictional discussion proposed by the story.

In the film, the mise-en-scene and the cinematography also help to build the two different versions of the story, and expose them as a narrative construction. The colorful mise-en-scene, the music and the camera movements used in the first version of the story help to create the sense of fantasy present in the first version of the story. Helping the audience to suspend their disbelief in the possibility of a boy surviving for 227 days with a Bengal Tiger, the audience is invited to merge with the story, as a sensorial experience. The predominance of white in the setting in which the second version is told, and the fact that the second version of the story is only told but not shown give a completely different tone to Pi's second narrative, thus, reinforcing the sense that it

is the more likely version of the story. These differences between the filmic versions reinforce the connection between the filmic aesthetic resources and metafiction, as they indicate that the narrative is a construction.

Together with the aesthetics generated by the *mise-en-scène* and cinematography, the special effects and the use of 3D have influences on the narrative. These two resources create the possibility of the audience to “experience” the “extraordinary”, as aimed by the film editor Tim Squires. When people decide to watch a movie in 3D rather than 2D (and often pay more for that), they look for a different experience, which is possibly connected to the immersion enabled by 3D. In this sense, 3D presents a paradoxical relation to metafiction: at the same time it enables the “experience” of immersion, which is opposed to metafiction (as metafiction is connected to recognizing fiction as fiction), it calls the audience to be aware of the codes involved in the construction of narratives, as the use of 3D glasses and other devices expose the cinematic apparatus.

Structurally, the different narrative levels expose the story as a construction. However, as I have demonstrated in Chapters 1 and 2, even though both texts present various narrative structures, their different narratives produce two different stories. As it was exposed in Figures 2 and 3 in the Introduction, both narratives of *Life of Pi* use the structure of a story within a story to tell Pi’s journey. The indetermination of the narrator of the novel’s first version of the story (Pi or the “author”) enable different understandings of the narrative structure, and makes it difficult to illustrate the narrative structure of the novel as it is possible with the film. The first version of the story about how Pi survived and Pi’s childhood are narrated by an adult Pi in the film. While in the film the second version is also narrated by Pi in one of the meetings between Pi and the ‘author’, in the novel it is presented as a transcript of an interview.

The difference in the number of narrative levels in the novel and in the film *Life of Pi* is connected to the undecidability/resolution of Pi’s narrative. The framing narrative, which in the novel is narrated by the ‘author’, in the film is narrated by an image-maker. This difference also has an important meaning to the story in the film, since the image-maker gives cinematic clues on which version of Pi’s story is the true one, defining one as the true as opposed to the novel. By directing the audience’s interpretation of the story, the framing narrative uses cinematic codes of narration to suggest an answer to the open end which is proposed by Pi.

In the novel, the narrative's open end gives space to different interpretations. Pi presents the second version of the story as an alternative "without animals", which would be best fit for the report written by the Japanese, but at the same time he presents arguments against the second version of the story. When the Japanese question his first version, Pi argues that meerkat bones were found in the lifeboat, which would confirm the story of the carnivorous island told in his first version. There is also some parts of the second narrative which do not correspond exactly to the first version, as the hyena, which would have to be both the cook and the blind Frenchman. In the novel, a picture of Richard Parker is presented by Pi to the 'author' as an argument for the first version of the story, but no conclusive argument could be used to affirm that one or the other is the true one. This undecidability leaves the choice of which story is the true one to the readers.

Depending on the interpretation chosen by the reader, different critical approaches can be used to approach the narrative. If the story is analyzed considering that both versions are constructions from Pi's imagination, and that there is no way to reveal which is the true version, the narrative foregrounds metafictional aspects of it: its structure, the process of writing and the alleged opposition between fiction and reality. If the first version is seen as a story created to replace what the second story presents as truth, it can be considered a testimony from a survival of a traumatic event and it may be studied from the perspective of trauma. As discussed in Chapter 1, this reading allows one to explore sociological and historical contexts such as postcolonialism, as Pi's journey to a new country, his descriptions of Pondicherry, his name after a French swimming pool, and other important aspects of the story. It should be emphasized, thus, that the conclusion of which version of the story is the true one is not as important to the narrative of the novel as the discussion about narratives. The existence of the two versions remind the readers that fiction is always a construct, and that stories can be told in different ways, using different perspectives, considering the different contexts and purposes.

The film also can be seen through these different critical approaches, but in a different way, as it presents a resolution to Pi's question. The first story, in this case, is a way to represent the traumatic event of the shipwreck – so it is a testimony from a survival of 227 days in the Pacific Ocean. It can be seen psychologically as a mechanism developed by Pi to narrate the trauma to which he was submitted – Fantasy, thus, is the best way to represent what could not be told by him

since his memories of murder and cannibalism were too tough to be told. Even if Pi could narrate the second version of the story, the possibility of being judged by the choices made in times of pressure could justify his decision of telling the first version of the story first rather than the second one. Trauma can also be seen in the collective event of the immigration of Indians to Canada, and all the traditions and the past they got to leave behind.

The incapacity of language to represent reality is a theme present in Pi's discussion with the Japanese, both in the film and the novel, and is one of the issues discussed in testimony literature. Pi says in the novel in a line that was reproduced in the film that none of the two stories he tells explains what happened to the ship, in both stories, many people die and he suffers. Even though he tries to narrate his experiences, it is not possible to retell them exactly how they were, as it happens with all memories. As memory is always limited and biased, it can be adapted even unconsciously, and there is no way to separate what really happened to the personal interpretation of the facts.

As it was shown in the analyses, metafiction is present both in the film and in the novel, both in similar and in different ways. Considering the discussion on postmodernism raised by Jameson and Hutcheon which was discussed on Chapter 2, it is possible to verify that *Life of Pi* is an example of postmodernist art. Different from Jameson's perspective, which connects postmodernist art with lack of criticism, it is possible to see that all the referents used in Pi's story are somehow political and critical, either in the film or in the novel. *Life of Pi*, as all metafictional texts, uses the narrative structure and the theme of narrative construction to raise discussions about narratives, similar to what Hutcheon defines as postmodernist art (which uses representation to discuss representation).

As it was verified in the analysis on chapters 2 and 3, the main difference between the novel and the film *Life of Pi* is related to the conclusion presented by the image-maker concerning which version of Pi's story should be considered as the true one in the film opposed to the open end proposed by the novel. Both of them are critical and political, and raise the same discussions, but their focus is different: while the film focuses on the trauma, the novel focuses on the narrative.

The film, presenting a testimony calls for a reading based on memory and trauma, making us reflect on how stories are mediated by memory. By presenting the fantastic version of the story as a creation opposed to the second version that is signed at as the true one, the narrative expresses the need of fiction to tell events. Fantasy, in this

case, is more than imaginative writing: it uses creativity and imagination to allegorically express feelings and situations that are too painful to be expressed otherwise. Facing a traumatic event, some silence, while others, as Pi, try to express it symbolically and allegorically.

Even though the novel does not present a conclusive end, its open end allow us to reflect on the cultural and literary codes we use to narrate, thus, problematizing stable meanings and mimetic views of literature and the arts. Martel recuperates the genre of the novel and uses it in a self-reflexive mode, as suggested by Hutcheon, to problematize the naturalistic view of narratives as a given value.

Considering these different perspectives, it is not possible to say that one is better or superior than the other. Both novel and film *Life of Pi* present deep reflections on narrative, representation, “reality” and fiction, human nature and religion, even with slight different points of view. While Martel focuses on the self-reflexive writing, Lee shows how we remain on history by retelling our personal narratives. Both show the construct involved in the arts; thus, demystifying its alleged truth.

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ANEXO

Ang Lee's *Life of Pi* was produced by: ¹⁶

Kevin Richard Buxbaum	...	associate producer (as Kevin Buxbaum)
Jean-Christophe Castelli	...	associate producer
William M. Connor	...	associate producer
Dean Georgaris	...	executive producer
Ang Lee	...	producer
David Lee	...	co-producer
Michael J. Malone	...	associate producer
Gil Netter	...	producer
Tabrez Noorani	...	line producer: India
Jesse Prupas	...	line producer: Montreal
Pravesh Sahni	...	associate producer: India
David Womark	...	producer
Mychael Danna	...	music
Claudio Miranda	...	director of photography
Tim Squyres	...	film editing

¹⁶ Source: Internet Movie Database. The list presented in this appendix includes the crew members more connected to the analysis of this thesis. A complete list can be found on: <<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0454876/fullcredits/>>. Access on Apr 22, 2015.

Avy Kaufman	...	casting
David Gropman	...	Production design
Al Hobbs	...	Art direction
Dan Webster	...	Supervising art director
Robert Boulos	...	production manager: Montreal
Leo Chen	...	unit production manager: Taiwan
Didier Communaux	...	unit manager: Montreal
Sandrine Gros d'Aillon	...	production manager: Montreal
Kaushik Guha	...	unit manager: India
Marc A. Hammer	...	production supervisor: Taiwan
Stéphane Jacques	...	assistant production manager: Montreal
Steven Kaminsky	...	post-production supervisor
Sanjay Kumar	...	unit production manager: India
Denise Lin	...	assistant unit production manager: Taiwan
Nicky Luca	...	assistant unit manager: Montreal
Michael J. Malone	...	unit production manager
Peter Measroch	...	additional post-production supervisor: Montreal
Rajeev Mehra	...	production manager: Munnar, India
Sharon Miller	...	production supervisor: Taiwan

Simon Paquin	...	assistant unit manager: Montreal
Daniel Ross	...	unit manager: Montreal
Alexis Wiscomb	...	additional post-production supervisor: New York
Mike Yang	...	post-production manager: Taiwan
Jason Pomerantz	...	production manager (IMAX version) (uncredited)
Benjamin J. Reesing	...	post-production manager (uncredited)

Cast:

Suraj Sharma	...	Pi Patel
Irfan Khan	...	Adult Pi Patel
Ayush Tandon	...	Pi Patel (11-12 Years)
Gautam Belur	...	Pi Patel (5 Years)
Adil Hussain	...	Santosh Patel
Tabu	...	Gita Patel
Ayaan Khan	...	Ravi Patel (7 Years)
Mohd. Abbas Khaleeli	...	Ravi Patel (13-14 Years)
Vibish Sivakumar	...	Ravi Patel (18-19 Years)
Rafe Spall	...	Writer
G�rard Depardieu	...	Cook
James Saito	...	Older Insurance Investigator
Jun Naito	...	Younger Insurance Investigator
Andrea Di Stefano	...	Priest

Shravanthi Sainath	...	Anandi
Elie Alouf	...	Mamaji
Padmini Ramachandran	...	Dance Master
T.M. Karthik	...	Science Teacher
Amarendran Ramanan	...	Indian History Teacher
Hari Mina Bala	...	Librarian
Bo-Chieh Wang	...	Buddhist Sailor
I-Chen Ko	...	Tsimtsum Captain (as Yi-Cheng Ko)
Chien-Wei Huang	...	Sailor (as Jian-Wei Huang)
Ravi Natesan	...	Selvam
Mythili Prakash	...	Pi's Wife
Raj Patel	...	Pi's Son
Hadiqa Hamid	...	Pi's Daughter
Iswar Srikumar	...	Muslim Worshipper