



BOOK REVIEW OF LIFE OF PI BY YANN MARTEL

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Motto and Dedication

“As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them”

-John F. Kennedy

“In the end, the love you take is equal to the love you make”.

-Paul McCartney

This final project is dedicated to my beloved mother.

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Abstract

This book review is written to find the strength and the weakness in *Life of Pi* which is written by Yann Martel. “The Book Review of Life of Pi” is focusing on the content of the novel finding the strength and the weakness. The strengths are the plot and the main character named Pi, the weakness is the end of the novel. The plot conveys how the author describes all situations in this novel clearly and the main character shares readers about how to face the world and Pi shares lots of values in his life as a tough boy. The weakness is the end of the novel, Martel does not give an explanation about why Richard dumps Pi without saying goodbye at all. This novel conveys about anything that people think. A novel does not deliver any knowledge of life, but in this novel I read many valuable words.

Key Words :Book Review, Strength, Weakness, Life of Pi, Plot, Main Character and The End of The Novel.

Chapter I

Introduction

This book review is designed to find the weakness and the strength in *Life of Pi* novel. *Life of Pi* is a novel which establishes lots of rewards from the readers. In the essence of narration, the main purpose of the book review is to discuss the content of the book, to provide analysis of what the readers have read. The last things that the reviewer should undertake through their own research are to discuss the theme, to assess the literature work and to provide an opinion of the novel.

A novel entitled *Life of Pi* is written by Yann Martel, it was published in 2001. This novel is well-known as the inspiring novel, its story delivers readers from just the words to the meaning in every word. *Life of Pi* is divided into two aspects of strength, they are plot and main character. I only find one weakness in this novel, it is the end of story. This novel is conveying readers about the struggle of life, it is proven when Pi Patel can face the huge storm and conquer the tiger named Richard Parker. Pi Patel is a major character who has a great spirit. Pi grows up and gets lots of lessons about the knowledge of life. Pi is a talented boy, when he was junior high school student, he knew about science and comprehended about the mathematic.

Pi's life is so interesting to be known, from the beginning to the ending, he tells readers about his character as a young man who always gets many handicaps and he always escapes from the handicaps. The climax appears when he got a ship

accident then his family decided to move from India to Canada. In the middle ocean his ship is crushed by a huge storm. The climax is in the boat, he is accompanied by a tiger named Richard Parker, Richard teaches Pi about how to face the adventure and make the knowledge as a tool to face lots of obstacles in the middle ocean, Pi transforms Richard Parker from an adversary to a friend.

This book review explores two major aspects. First, the strengths consist of the plot and the main character. Second, the weakness consists of the ending. The points that will be examined here are the strength and weakness of this novel when viewed in terms of characters, plot and storyline.

1.2 Biography of Yann Martel

This is a short biography about the writer named Yann Martel, he gets awards from many readers because of his marvelous literature works. Yann Martel (born 1963) is a well-known writer for the Man Booker Prize-Winning, world class bestseller appeared in more than 50 territories.

There is not only Life of Pi, but also lots of novels which become the best seller novel in around the world. They have sold more than 12 million copies worldwide and spent more than a year on the New York Bestseller list. It was taken to the screen by Ang Lee. He is also the writer of the novels Beatrice and Virgil. He has the collection of stories, they are “The Facts Behind” and “Helsinki”.

He is a magnificent author, he writes some fiction novels, he never stops writing till the end of his life. Many appreciations are useless when he got nothing from what he had written. Yann only need a purity soul when he must write something. He has an inspiration from the Hindu's life and Moslem's life then he thinks someone may wear three religions in the same time and Yann represents those in Pi's life.

Yann believes that every literature work has a soul then it can deliver to readers about the novel's messages. Some messages possibly get lost because all readers do not comprehend with the meaning in every word which can describe anything about the book. For that reason, he wants to attract the readers more enthusiastic. He thinks that if every writer or author has a pride in their works so that their works will get a pride and a satisfaction.

Yann Martel establishes his first work, *The Facts Behind the Helsinki Roccamatios* and *Other Stories*, a collection of four short stories, in 1993. It granted warm critical reception, although it did not sell well. His first novel, *Self*, was established three years later, to more mixed reviews, and to similarly small sales. It is a fictional autobiography of the first thirty years of the narrator's life and includes two spontaneous gender changes.

He would never be looser man and given up after these two disappointments, Martel went to India to work on a third novel and figure out where his life was headed. He swiftly recognizes the novel he was working on was going nowhere, but then he comprehended something he had read about years before, and the idea for *Life of Pi* came to him.

Life of Pi was established in 2011 to warm, although somewhat mixed, critical reception, and, along with winning the Man Booker Prize, became an international best-seller. Many critics praised the book's ability to suspend disbelief even as it tells an amazingly fantastical tale. Those that had problems with the book most often referred to what they saw as Martel's heavy-handedness with the issue of belief in God, which they considered to underestimate both literature and religion. Other critics, however, praised Martel's handling of the potentially controversial religious material.

At the height of the book's popularity, there was a short-lived scandal involving an accusation of plagiarism. Martel has acknowledged that he thought of the premise after reading a review of the English translation of Moacyr Scliar's *Max and the Cats*; the Brazilian press accused Martel of cribbing that book. The similarities between the books, however, are few, and nothing came of the charges.

Martel is currently based in Montreal, although he frequently lives internationally. In 2002 and 2003, Martel worked as a professor in the Department of Comparative Literature at the Free University of Berlin, Germany.

Chapter II

The Summary of The Life of Pi Novel

The story begins when Pi was a young student He has a unique name then at one time his teacher called “Pissing”, his classmate feels Pi’s name “Pissing” is a weird name, he gets the name because he always pees in everywhere. When he was a junior high school student, he walked in front of his classmates to tell who he was and said everything about his name

His family gets a crisis, his economy condition is not good then his father has to sell their animals to foreign country named Canada, they must do that to fulfill their needs. Pi rejects his father’s order because he wants to stay in India for long time, he thinks that India is his hometown so he will stay and spend his life there. Eventually, his family moves to Canada and the climax begins there.

Pi gets a ship accident, a huge storm crushes his ship in the middle ocean and his ship loses control and gets down. Pi feels little bit shock when he sees a huge storm come over him and finally the storm is really a big problem for him when a thousand liter of water crush his ship then it gets totally shattered. Pi tries to help himself. Fortunately, there is a boat becomes his savior. The boat helps him from the huge wavy water. The accident is so weird when a boat is lodged by a tiger, an orangutan, a heyna, a zebra and a mouse. Richard allows Pi’s order then Pi conquer a

tigernamed Richard Parker, he wants Richard to be his friend and tries to get through together in the blue ocean.

Pi eats everything that can be eaten. There are some biscuits, fresh meats and fish, all of foods are necessary to him. On the other side, Pi must give some feeds to Richard then he gets an idea by finishing some ocean fish. They get some foods from fish's meats, Pi keeps trying to make Richard in a good condition. In the middle voyage, Richard and Pi find an island which is settled by "Markaeet"

Markaeet are a mammal, they have a couple of wide ears and bright eyes. Pi thinks the island is safe for him until he finds the death of ocean fish. Pi just feels curious about why the mammals in a hole are death and he never stops thinking about that. Tomorrow, Pi has decided to go away from the island and Richard follows him to get in the boat.

A huge storm comes again to them and finally his boat gets shattered. He does not realize that he is pulled by wavy water, he is dragged in the near of costal area. Pi wakes up and finds himself in the inhabitant area. A couple of eyes are so faint when he sees his friend named Richard and the tiger suddenly goes away to the jungle. The accident makes Pi is so sad, he is only wondering why his friend lefts him and does not say goodbye at all.

From the beginning to the ending in this novel, I find some missing parts in this story, the missing parts are about who are those animals? and are they animals or

not? I believe it is about the representation of those animals in the boat. A tiger is represented by Pi, an orangutan is represented by Pi's mother, a hyena is represented by a chef and Pi is represented by God.

Furthermore, Yann Martel tries to write and establish two books: a collection of short stories titled *The Facts Behind the Helsinki Roccamatios* in 1993 and a novel about gender confusion called *Self* in 1996. Two books sold just significantly well, further frustrating the writer. In order to collect his thoughts and refresh his creativity, he went to India, he spent his time in bustling Bombay. Nevertheless, the busy and crowded city only furthered Martel's feelings of seclusion and dissolution. He then decided to move on to Matheran, a section nearby Bombay but without that city's overcrowded population. In this beautiful hill station overlooking the city, Martel came revisiting an idea he had not determined in some time, the premise he had unwittingly created when reading Updike's review in the New York Times Review of Books.

He created the thought and the idea even further away from Max and the Cats. While Sciar's novel was an expanded his fear, Martel spread out his story as a sophisticated, heroic, and secretive meditation on zoology and theology. Pi Patel would be the son of a zookeeper. During an ocean trip from India to Canada, the ship sinks and Pi finds himself stranded on a lifeboat with such unlikely shipmates as a zebra, a hyena, and a Bengal tiger named Richard Parker then Richard became his friend in the boat.

The resulting novel, *Life of Pi*, became the best seller novel for which Martel had been lengthening. Selling well over a million copies and receiving the accolades of Book Magazine, Publisher's Weekly, Library Journal, and, yes, the New York Times Review of Books, *Life of Pi* has been established in over 40 countries and territories, in over 30 languages.

Chapter III

Review of The Novel

III.1 The strengths of the Novel

Every novel has a different point of view, it comes from the first person or the second person as the reader and reviewer, a novel has two strengths to convey what the novel wants to readers comprehend with the meaning in there, the strengths of this novel consist of the plot and the main character named Pi Patel.

III.1.1 Plot

This novel uses the flash-back plot where Pi as the main character repeats the accident in the boat and gives any reason for that accident from the beginning to the ending. This plot is so strong to tell the readers about what the correlation between one chapter to the other chapters.

“ This plot conveys about what will the story happen after turning back from the previous chapter, I just put the clearly words in every sentence in this story.” (Martel, 2011 : 23)

The flash - back plot in this novel utilizes as the tool which bounds every chapter in this novel. I am so excited to know more about the author's perception about how to share the plot in every part and chapter. How Yann directly introduces to the readers about the three major religions in the world, they are Islam, Christian and Hindu. Two major aspects in this novel are faith and science, they blend each

other. Martel tries to elaborate faith and science into a fiction story which has much values, two religion's perspectives in the world.

The plot in this novel is not a flash back common plot. In every part of the novel, the author tries to deliver every message in every word in this novel. The beginning and the climax come over together when both of them are appeared by the author. The author tries to make a complete explanation in every part especially in the middle part.

III.1.2 Main Character

The main character named Pi is a curious boy, he does not feel satisfy yet when he gets nothing from what he supposes to know. He learns everything like mathematic, physic and social science. He does love counting, memorizing and reviewing anything that he is and will be doing it.

Every part in all the world is inspiring him then makes a bad thing which comes to him becomes a good thing. In Pondicherry, his biology teacher defies his Hindu faith in God, making him realizes about the positive power of belief, a tough guy named Pi thinks everything which around him is positive then he tries to dump all negative perspectives. Pi tries to practice the three religions in the same and different time, he thinks that if he is able to dominate the three religions so he will recognizes God more.

“I must say a word about fear. It is life’s only true opponent. Only fear can defeat life. It is a clever, treacherous adversary, how well I know. It has no decency, respects no law or convention, shows no mercy. It goes for your spot, which it finds with unnerving ease. It begins in your mind, always... so you must fight hard to express it. You must fight hard to shine the light of word upon it. Because if you do not, if your fear becomes a wordless darkness that you avoid, perhaps even *ménage à trois* to forget, you open yourself to further attacks of fear because you never truly fought the opponent who defeated you.” (Martel, 2011 : 25)

At the point, however, he realizes that the fact he is still alive means that God is with him, he has been given a miracle. This quote gives him a strength, he decides to fight everything that he wants to defeat. A huge storm is not a matter, Pi just believes that he can defeat that.

III.2 The Weakness of the Novel

III.2.1 The End of Story

The ending starts when Pi’s live boat got lancing. Pi and Richard do not know anything about this accident, they just remember that there is so big wave comes over them. It is just like of boat’s crush. Pi wanders blindly and he immediately faints in the ocean. He realizes that he is in the coastal sea

The ending in this novel is little bit confusing. I believe some parts are missed by Martel, it is according to reader’s perspective. After getting a horrible accident then Pi does not get anything about the ending. The big question is why Richard Parker just goes away and dumps him just like that without saying goodbye to Pi.

They just look each other then I think that it is making this ending becomes little bit confusing.

The climax is too short and as a reviewer I do not find the sight of Pi's adventure, Pi do not tell about what he has been through in the sea and what happen there after seeing the huge storm. Pi does not convey and mention his other adventures at sea but it would be easy to erase away some of the fantastical elements in favor of more grounded situations. He searches an island but comprehending that living is more than just eating and existing. His mind begins blow up then he eventually think again and again about what will happen after miserable think that he has been through. He is deciding to take his opportunities at sea instead of wasting away in apathy on a beach eating meerkats all alone. Pi does not recognize on the more grounded human story throughout the revelation that he was alone on the lifeboat.

“Richard just fades out, his eyes is so empty even he did not recognize me at all. He did not comprehend with what we have been through after many accidents happened. I even forget that on the previous way we are making friend and more than that we are family.” (Martel, 2011 : 67)

This ending is just like gone, as a reader and reviewer, I do not get the point about Richard Parker just goes away and dumps Pi just like he does not recognize him at all, the reason for that act is nothing. Pi just tells that he is just like loser when he did not get his big effort to achieve his success throughout face the a lot of obstacles.

It blows away without conveying that the remainder of this article will fulfill with point of major spoiler for *Life of Pi*. The end of the story does not want to be spoiled about either, turn away now. For anyone who hasn't read *Life of Pi* and isn't concerned about having the ending spoiled, Pi's adventure exposures in a Mexican hospital bed where he is interviewed by a pair of Japanese Ministry of Transport officials. The breakthrough point appear when The agents tell Pi that his story which includes multiple animal companions and a carnivorous island. The story is too unbelievable for them to report, so Pi tells them a distinctive version of the story: one that paints a much darker and emotionally disturbing variation of events. After both stories have been shared, Pi leaves it up to the viewer (or reader) to decide which version they "prefer."

Personal "preference" has larger thematic meaning, when viewed in the context of the overarching story; however, before we analyze the ending in greater detail, we're going to briefly lay out the two versions of Pi's story.

Chapter IV

Conclusion

The valuable things appear in this novel are the plot and the main character, both of them are designed to attract readers more. The strengths are the plot and the main character named Pi, the weakness is the ending. The plot conveys about how the author describes all situations in this novel clearly and the main character shares readers about how to face the world and Pi shares lots of values in his life as a tough boy.

The weakness is the ending, Martel does not give an explanation about why Richard dumps Pi without saying goodbye at all. From the end of the story, there are many questions appeared by the readers, as a reader and reviewer, this story is not finding yet its strong point to make sure the readers about what the implicit messages that can deliver to the readers and reviewer.

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