Anglophone Canadian Literature
Case study: LIFE OF PI by YANN MARTAL

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1. **Anglophone Canadian Literature**:

   It is a literature that is written in English and produced by writers from a Canadian descent. It has since its relatively recent beginnings formed itself primarily in relation to the culture of its mother country, Great Britain.

   The Canadian national culture has thus from the beginning found itself and accepted positively its belonging to the wider cultural unit of the British empire – and experienced this belonging as a defense mechanism against the imminent cultural expansion from the U.S – but on the other hand as long as it strove to find its own and independent national integrity it needed to delimitate itself against the mother country in a clear manner.

   For this reason Canadian authors have always contended to develop and accommodate the models, forms, and genres of British literature to their own particular environment in such away that would express the authentic character of Canada and the life and aesthetic experience of its people.

   As in the case of the genres of Sketch and Story Cycle, in which the English Canadian Literature defined itself as distinct from both the British and the American literatures, this use of genre of essay can be considered as a specifically Canadian contribution to the development of environmental fiction.

2. **History of English Canadian Literature**:

   Canadian Literature in English can be said to begin in the early 17th century with Jacobean poetry in Newfoundland, or in the mid 18th century with the epistolary fiction (written in a form of a series of letters) of the English garrison community in Québec. After 1776, in the Loyalist settlements of Upper Canada and the Maritimes many writers turned to political verse Satire.

   Mid-19th century autobiographies set in present day Ontario provide insight into the daily life: Susanna Moodie’s *Roughing It in the Bush* (1852), and Anna Brownell Jameson’s *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada* (1838) highlight British women’s various attitudes toward settlement. Short personal Sketches of persons and places formed the basis for much Travel writing and for short fiction that emerged as a new genre during the 19th century.

   Early National in the years leading up to confederation and during the five decades following much attention turned to literacy and political organization. Schools and Universities opened, in addition to libraries. Thus, writers
celebrated their newfound nationalism and were drawn variously to such enterprises as the Institute Canadian, the Royal Society of Canada...etc. And here, Philosophical and scientific writing flourished, encouraging thoughtful discourse across language lines. Travel (within Canada and abroad) encouraged other kinds of contact, and with it both impressionistic and raptorial writing.

By the early 20th century, many Canadian books won widespread international popularity, notably L. M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* (1968). In poetry, the confederation group (William Wilfred Campbell, Charles G.D Roberts, Frederick George Scott...etc.) produced the most important writings of the late 19th century, in which they reshaped how the lyric represented nature, winter, and the Canadian landscape.

Contemporary Canadian Literature after 1967: arguably, the best-known living Canadian writer internationally is Margaret Atwood, a prolific novelist, poet, and literary critic. Some great 20th- century Canadian authors include Margaret Laurence, and Gabrielle Roy. This group, along with Alice Munro, who has been called the best living writer of short stories in English were the first to elevate Canadian literature to the world stage. Developments in the late 20th and 21st centuries, including the North American Free Trade Agreement, the “war on Terror”, and Climate change awareness underscored global interconnectedness. While, regions and places continued to provide inspiration for contemporary fiction as in David Adams Richard's *Mercy Among the Children* (2001) stress was often laid on globalization's impact on specific locales, environmental concerns were made central in Hironi Goto's *The Kappa Child* (2001), Ruth Ozeki's *A Tale for the Time Being* (2013), and other authors share concerns about the global ramifications of overconsumption, waste disposal, and polluted water.

3. Transformation of Prose Fiction in English Canada

A. The Story of Canadian literature:

The story of the English literature in Canada may seem short if compared to the literary histories of European countries; nonetheless, it does provide fascinating episodes, surprising turns of events, and impressive narrative nuances. Even though the English Canadian literature roots reach far into the time before the European settlement, in the written form it starts humbly in the years of the culmination of Renaissance in Europe. And the novel, its grandest and most representative genre, serving traditionally as proof of a national
culture's maturation and independence, is only born another one hundred years later.

The first efforts to write “a great Canadian novel”, and texts in other genres of Prose Fiction are, not surprisingly, imitations of the genre forms established in the literary traditions of the mother country. In general, it tackled the authentic experience of the new settlers in the colony and of their impressions of the new environment.

**B. From the Sketch towards the Novel Cycle:**

The genre of the novel is one of the effective platforms of expression upon which the process of the gradual consolidation of the conscious sense of the Canadian national identity takes place, with all of its paradoxes and temporal delays. One of these paradoxes is symbolized in the story of the first Canadian writer of fiction that enjoyed success not only on the domestic Canadian scene, but gained fame and recognition in Europe as well. Thomas Chandler Halliburton (1796-1865), lawyer, politician, and keen observer of the social life in Nova Scotia, the province that was his home for most of his life during his years in England, where he was a member of house of commons for six years term. He hold rather ambivalent feelings towards his native Nova Scotia, thus he expressed his relationship towards Nova Scotia and the newly emergent Canada, in his central work originally published between the years (1835-1836) as a series of Sketches under the title “Recollections of Nova Scotia” in the Novascotian journal.

**C. Story cycle – The New Genre of Canadian National Literature:**

The story cycle stands on the verge defining a short story collection on the one hand, and a novel, or a novella on the other hand with the short story collection (in book form) it shares absence of a chronologically long-term perspective, and thus development in the horizontal sense, as well as absence of the internal transformation of the main character, and thus development on the aesthetically vertical level. At the same time, the individual parts of the story cycle typically are not dependent on their strictly identified place, but, rather, function without necessary knowledge of the surrounding textile field. In contrast from short story collection, the story cycle displays characteristics linking elements. The main character can be a companion, or the narrator, or the story cycle is focused on a group of characters inhabiting a shared place. The
particular stories take place in one historical time, generally loosely identified. Also, the shared the same narrative space which serves as a crucial feature of their existence of their own life stories.

**D. The Manawaka cycle of Margret Laurence:**

One of the most influential Canadian literary inheritors of the genre of the story cycle and contributes to the creation of the Canon of the contemporary Canadian literature is Margret Laurence (1926-1987). In her writings she was influenced by her childhood (Maritoba province of Canada) and her experience of living in Africa. So, it does seem that several years of absence from Canada during her formative years as a writer helped Laurence to acquire the necessary objectifying critical distance from her mother country and its culture, and also advanced her interests to eventually return to its environment in her central works. These gradually formed a cycle of four novels and one collection of stories, usually referred to as Manawaka Cycle according to the central framing location of the action, which is the Manitoba small town of Manawaka. The first of the works was an extensive novel *The stone angel* (1964), followed later by the novel *A jest of God* (1966) and *The Fire-dwellers* (1969) and a collection of stories *A Bird in the House*, published in 1970. The Manawaka Cycle eventually became complete by the publication of the novel *The Diviners* (1974). According to her these four novels and one collection of stories form one organically interconnected whole.

**E. Literary Genre and National Identity:**

During the time in which writers such as Laurence strive to formulate the Canadian National Identity and to add important chapters to its history in their function, the focus of the discourse of Canadian literary theory significantly shifted as well. From 1970’s it’s argumentation started to concentrate explicitly or the questions of nation, national identity and national literature as a systematic whole structured by unifying models. Many leading critics tried to identify the Canadian literary history form abstract consolidating patterns that would express the national character. Among the best -known, and also controversial theoretical studies of Canadian literature of this orientation belong mainly Margret AT wood`s *Survival* (1972), *Butterfly on Rocts: a study of themes Ang images in Canadian literature* (1970) by Douglas Godon Jones. These studies come out from an abstract assumption of one cohesive Canadian unity, which they then retrospectively create.
4. *Motifs and patterns*:

Irony is a dominant mode, litotes (the negative positive: not unappreciated) is a common speech pattern, trickster (rater than hero) and a sense of humor (understatement, parody, mimicry, satire) punctuates much serious literary work. Some commentators have interpreted Canadian tendencies toward literary indirectness politically and psychologically, finding in it a sign of national insecurity and a group of feeling of inferiority. Others argue that indirectness is a healthy demonstration of the culture’s ability to adapt an inherited tongue to its own purpose.

Major narrative patterns that occur in Canadian writing:

1. A community walls itself off from the wilderness.
2. A person leaves the Homeland, adjusts to the new world, then finds the new “homeland” to be alien.
3. A person born in Canada feels like a permanent stranger in his/her own home.
4. A person attempts to recover from the past, the secret, or suppressed life of a previous generation.
5. A woman struggles to come to terms with her own creativity and inhibitions of her cultural upbringing.

5. *Canadian authors who won international awards*

1. In 1992, Michael Ondaatje became the first Canadian to win the Booker Prize for the *English Patient*.
2. Margaret Atwood won the Booker in 2000 for the *Blind Assassin*, and Yann Martel won it in 2002 for *Life of Pi*.
3. Lawrence Hill's *Book of Negroes* won the 2008 Commonwealth writers ‘prize Overall Best Book Award.
4. Alice Munroe became the first Canadian to win the Nobel prize in literature in 2013. And also received the Man Booker International Prize in 2009.
Yann Martel Biography

- Yann Martel was born on June 25, 1963 in Salamanca, Spain, to Emile and Nicole Martel. His parents were of French-Canadian descent.
- He spent his childhood living in a variety of different countries, including Costa Rica, France, India, Iran, Mexico, Turkey, Canada, and the United States.
- Martel received a degree in philosophy from Trent University in Ontario in 1981.
- He subsequently traveled widely on his own, living in India, Iran, and Turkey.
- He worked odd jobs (Librarian, Tree planter, Dishwasher, Security guard…etc.) to survive and fund his travels.
- At the age of 27, he committed himself to writing.
- He published his first work (a collection of short stories) The Facts Behind the Helsinki Roccamatios, which was published in 1993 and won the Journey Prize.
- Self is Martel's first novel was published in 1996. It is a fictional autobiography of the first thirty years of the narrator's life.
- Unfortunately his previous literary works did not sell well.
- Then Martel traveled to India to work on a third novel. There he spent thirteen months visiting mosques, temples, churches, and zoos. Following that he spent one year reading various background texts for his novel before taking two years to write Life of Pi. Which was published in 2001 in Canada, then in 2002 in UK and US, while Martel was living in Montreal.
- It was his most successful literary work, which received numerous awards, including Canada's Hugh MacLennan Prize for Fiction in 2001 and 2002 Man Booker Prize. Life of Pi was a UK best seller from October 2002 through much of 2003 and was a US best seller from most 2003. Overall, the novel has sold over three million copies.
- In 2002 and 2003, Martel worked as a professor in the Department of comparative literature at the Free University of Berlin, Germany.
The summary:

Yan Martel delivered his novel entitled Life of Pi through three parts. The first part, Toronto and Pondicherry tackling the chapters 01-36, the second part being The Pacific Ocean covering the chapters from 37-95, and the third four chapters 96-100 forming the third part under the title of Benito Juarez Infirmary Tomatlan, Mexico. Throughout these 100 chapters we follow the journey of the protagonist Pi as he spend 227 days at the Pacific ocean, and survival with none other than a Bengal tiger.

The novel opens with an Author’s Note, in which the author explains that due to misfortunate events in his life he traveled from Canada to India for inspiration, and then he explains that he met a man in a cafés in the town Pondicherry called Francis Adirubasamy who offered to tell him a story that will restore his faith in god. the author also notes that the story will be more natural if he tells it from Pi’s own voice.

Part one: In Pondicherry or the French Riviera as it was called we meet our protagonist by the name of PICINE MOLITOR PATEL, he was named after one of the most beautiful pools in France at that time by the family friend Francis Adirubasamy or as he was called Mamaji, and he really loved the animal there. Problems started however when Piscine started school as his friends made fun of his unusual name calling him instead pissing, Piscine was so angry and he decided to take matters in his hands by changing his name to Pi though it was not an easy job but our protagonist was convinced that it only need time and repetition. Piscine’s father ran the Pondicherry Zoo, and once he taught pi and his older brother Ravi about the animals and how they are dangerous and not friendly by making them watch as the new bought tiger called Richard Parker ate a live goat in front them, an experience chattered the young boy. Pi was brought up as a Hindu, but at the course of his life he discovers both Christianity and Islam deciding to practice the three religions despite his family and the religious figures disapproval. Motivated by the India’s political strife, pi’s parents decide to move to Canada, setting sail on June 21st, 1977 in a cargo ship, along with a crew and many cages full of Zoo creatures.

Part two: A loud noises wake Pi from his slumber and he woke his brother to discover the source of the noise, Pi climb to the ship’s deck alone after his brother declined his offer he found a huge storm and that the ship Tsimtsum is at the brink of sinking, he realize the danger and tries to go back to worn his
family but alas the water is already reaching the deck. Pi not believing keep scrambling at the crew to save his family but not understanding him they throw him into the life boat, he then helps the Tiger to join him into the boat. As the storm recedes and the ship sinks, Pi finds himself with a hyena, a broken legged zebra and an orangutan named orange juice that he saved while it was floating on a banana raft and a wild tiger, all these creatures are packed into a twenty-six-foot-long lifeboat. Before long however, there was a bloodshed as the hyena killed both the injured zebra and the orangutan, and to Pi’s chock Richard Parker emerges from under the trampoline covering the half of the boat and kills the hyena. Richard Parker and Pi now are both alone in the middle of nowhere. Pi lives on the emergency rations and freshly caught sea life, he also provides for the tiger, whom he starts training.

The days pass slowly and the lifeboat’s inhabitants coexist warily, one day however as Pi temporary lost his vision because of dehydration, Pi’s boat stumbles into another survivor known in the novel as the Blind Frenchman, who tries to kill Pi but Richard Parker kills him first. Not long after the boat pulls up to a strange island, Pi and Richard Parker explore the island where they find a huge colony of meerkats; freshwater ponds, one day however as Pi was wondering on the island he finds a human teeth in a tree’s fruit, and he realizes that the island is carnivorous, Pi then gathers as many supplies for him and Richard Parker and set sail again, where he finally washes ashore Mexican beach.

**Part three:** While Pi still sad at Richard Parker for leaving without saying goodbye, two officials from the Japanese ministry of transport visit him in hospital demanding to know how the ship sunk, Pi tells the story delivered through the pages of the novel, however both men did not believe his story and demanded the truth in which pi respond to by recounting the same events changing the characters: a ravenous cook instead of the hyena, a sailor in the place of the broken legged zebra, and his mother instead of the orangutan. Both men were astonished and far liking the first story, in their final report, they commend Pi for living so long with an adult tiger.
Characters:

Piscine Molitor Patel

- Pi, Piscine Molitor Patel, is the central character in the novel and at times the only human character.

- Born and raised in India, Pi received his given name as homage to a family friend, Francis Adirubasamy, a great swimmer who spoke highly of the Piscine Molitor pool in Paris. Pi renamed himself to escape ongoing jokes about his name.

- Pi is an intelligent and likeable sixteen-year-old when he loses his family and passes into this ordeal.

- Pi is raised on the premises of his father's zoo in Pondicherry, India, until his father decided to move the entire family to Canada. Pi's life is defined by two factors. The internal factor is his lifelong interest in and dedication to religion. The external factor is the shipwreck that kills his family and strands Pi in a lifeboat with only a few animals for company.

- The novel traces Pi’s development and maturation in traditional bildungsroman or coming of age story, because Pi grows up from being so naïf and depending on his family for protection and food to being self responsible for his own guidance when he left alone on life boat with the tiger. The disaster of ship sinking, serves as the catalyst in his emotional growth. He turns to be an adult, able to save himself from Richard Parker and to fend out in the world alone and his belief helps his to stay strong all the 227 on the lifeboat.

Richard Parker

- Richard Parker is a 450-pound Bengal tiger who is trapped on the lifeboat when the Tsimtsum sinks.

- Richard Parker received his name through a clerical error; this was the name of the hunter who captured the tiger and his mother.

- He acts as submissive animal, respecting Pi’s dominance. Though he is used to zoo keepers’ training, he is not a docile house cat; he acts instinctively and has eaten the hyena and the fellow cast away. When Pi and Richard Parker wash up in the shore of Mexico, the tiger doesn’t draw
out his parting with Pi. He simply runs off into the jungle, never to be seen again.

- Though he is quite fearsome, ironically he helps Pi to stay alive on the lifeboat. When Pi succeed in taming the tiger, he gets super confident.

- In Pi’s second story, Pi is Richard Parker. He kills his mother’s murderers the hyena. Its version of himself that he invented to make the story more palatable to both himself and his audience. The brutality of his mother death and his own choking act of revenge are too much for him to deal with and he finds it easier to imagine a tiger as the killer.

- Why Richard Parker! Simply because both of Pi and Richard Parker are wild, angry, and hungry and mainly because of the traumatic experience he has when he is a child in which his father make a tiger eating alive goat in front of him and his brother.

**Mr. Santosh Patel**

- Pi’s father, Mr. Santosh Patel, is called simply "Father" throughout most of the novel. He attempts to teach his sons caution by letting them see a tiger kill a goat, and in it was his decision to change countries in search of a better life.

- He is a modern and pragmatic man who had run a hotel before opening a zoo, Mr. Patel is killed when the Tsimtsum sinks.

**Mrs. Gita Patel**

- Pi’s mother, Mrs. Gita Patel, is called simply "Mother" throughout most of the novel.

- A quiet woman who likes to read, the biggest glimpses of her character come when she and her husband must face Pi’s religious practice, and when she says good-bye to India. Mrs. Patel is killed when the Tsimtsum sinks.

- She is the human counterpart of the orangutan/ The Orange Juice that floats to lifeboat on a raft of bananas. She suffers the most, when it is attacked by hyena she fights back violently but nonetheless killed.

**Ravi Patel**
Ravi is Pi's older brother. A devoted athlete, Ravi is killed when the 
Tsimtsum sinks.

**Symbols:**

*Life of Pi* written by Yann Martel, displays the use of symbolism through «Pi»
the name itself, the color orange, pi’s relationship with Richard Parker.

1- **Pi**

Pi carries various relevant associations: it is a letter in Greek alphabet that
also contains Alpha and Omega. Terms used in the book to denote dominant
and submissive creatures.

Pi is also an irrational mathematical number, used to calculate distance in
circle often shortened to 3.14. He says “In that Greel letter that looks like a
shack with a corrugated tin roof in that elusive, irrational number with which
scientists try to understand the universe, I found refuge.” (page 24).

It is irrational because no one can make sense of it, and it has no fixed
boundaries. That’s what the book says about life. Life according to Pi is
divided into rational and irrational. Rational: things we can make sense of
through science and reason which he used in the lifeboat in order to survive,
and irrational: which is depicted through Religion. He says: “All living
things contain a measure of madness that moves them in a strange,
sometimes inexplicable ways. This madness can be saving, it is part and
parcel of the ability to adopt. Without it, no species would survive”. (page 44)

2. **The Color Orange**

The color orange in the story, symbolizes Hope and Survival. As the
Tsimtsum sinks, a Chinese crewman gives pi a life jacket with an orange
whistle, on the boat, he finds an orange lifebuoy he says: “If there hadn’t
been the lifebuoy I wouldn’t have lasted a minute” (page 117)

All these objects helped Pi survive these occurrences are a sign that Pi will
be safe.

- Orange juice, the Orangutan is also with Pi on the lifeboat. Pi
describes Orange Juice as “lovely as the virgin Mary”. (page 123)
She is associated with a pure, hopeful and genuine characteristics, since she provides an emotional support and maternal instincts to Pi.

All orange images signify Hope, Courage, Love, and Faith.

3-Richard Parker

Pi finds himself alone and lost, he should take care of himself and the tiger as well. Both of them develop a relationship and close bond through the novel. “He made a sound, a snort from his nostrils. I picked up my ear. He did it a second time, I was astonished?” (page 180)

It was as if Richard Parker was purring like a domestic house cat.

This sound reassured Pi that he was not threatening him on any way, shape or form. Although Pi fears Richard Parker, he keeps him alive and occupied all the time. He says: “If I still had the will to live, it was thanks to Richard Parker. He kept me from thinking too much about my family and my tragic circumstances.” (page 182)

Richard Parker symbolizes the animalistic characteristics and instincts of Pi’s overall personality.

His actions are based on survival causing him to act in a different way.

Pi uses the Frenchman’s body as a bait and as a source of food to eat because of starvation once Richard Parker killed him.

Pi is ashamed of his shocking behavior and miserable because of his mother’s death

Pi thinks that it is easier to believe that a tiger killed someone rather than his self.

Which means that Richard Parker is only a sign of Pi, used to symbolizes his animal like qualities.

4- The Algae Island:
One of the interpretations given to this mysterious island is religion.

People turn to religion in times of need and despair. It gives people a sense of hope and guidance. Therefore Pi come across this Island in his most time of need.
If Pi had not found the Island or found hope in his religion, he would have passed away on the lifeboat.

Even if Pi found himself in a dangerous and terrible situation like this, he trusted the Island.

**Themes**

1- The Meaning Of Life

It stands for the lessons Pi comes to get during his childhood in Pondicherry. To Pi, the essence of life lies in the simple details of his existence therefore, Pi is open to all little details of life which add richness to his daily existence as he struggles to construct a meaning of his life.

It begins with introducing Pi to science and religion. Pi is the son of a zoo keeper and this leads him to learn every single detail on the principle of animals to the point he comes to defend them. What leads Pi to question is his curiosity. However, his father develops a state of fear and convinces his son that animals are not like human beings when he feeds a live goat to Richard Parker—the tiger—before his eyes.

Concerning religion, Pi was introduced to three different religions and what really mattered for him is the belief of God regardless the fact of his practice of those religions at the same time. Also he sees religion and science two sides of one coin or as he was convinced.

Later on, and at another stage of his life he comes to believe the meaning of life can be identified in the way of one’s main belief, the desire to learn is what identifies a person, struggle or hardship brings the worst of you even if one is highly sophisticated and well civilized. Survival is highly based on your faith if you are not a fine believer then you won’t survive.

2- The Nature Of Religious Belief

A major theme in the novel.

*Life Of Pi* so far starts with an old Indian man the narrator comes to meet in Pondicherry: ‘I have a story that will make you believe in God’ (*Life of Pi*)

Pi grows in a highly diverse environment. He is influenced by three major figures who teaches him different stories about each one’s religion; Mr. Satich Kumar the atheist, Father Martin the priest and Mr. Satish Kumar the Muslim.
Motivated each time to learn about God makes him aware of the positive power of belief and that all religions share and have same foundation.

« Sometimes I got my majors mixed up. A number of my fellow religious-studies students – muddled agnostics who didn’t know which way was up, who were in the thrall of reason, that fool’s gold for the bright – reminded me of the three-toed sloth; and the three-toed sloth, such a beautiful example of the miracle of life, reminded me of God. » (chapter 1)

« He took in my line of work with a widening of the eyes and a nodding of the head. It was time to go. I had my hand up, trying to catch my waiter’s eye to get the bill. Then the elderly man said, “I have a story that will make you believe in God. » (author’s note)

Though amazed by the possibility of lacking their belief; still respects the atheist at least he believes in something and he won’t realize it until he is in dead bed. Unlike for an agnostic though a believer but doubtful and that’s what Bothers Pi.

«I can well imagine an atheist’s last words… and the deathbed leap of faith. Whereas the agnostic, if he stays true to his reasonable self, if he stays beholden to dry, yeast less factuality, might try to explain the warm light bathing him by saying, “Possibly a f-f-failing oxygenation of the b-b-brain,” and, to the very end, lack imagination and miss the better story. » ( chapter22)

Pi’s devotion to God is a prominent part in the novel, however it diminishes during his hardship.

« I was giving up. I would have given up – if a voice hadn’t made itself heard in my heart. The voice said, “I will not die. I refuse it. I will make it through this nightmare. I will beat the odds, as great as they are. I have survived so far, miraculously. Now I will turn miracle into routine. The amazing will be seen every day. I will put in all the hard work necessary. Yes, so long as God is with me, I will not die. Amen. »(chapter53)

3-Loss Of Innocence:

Before experiencing his ordeal at the pacific ocean, Pondicherry experiences preserved Pi’s innocence. It was only when he witnessed the death of the Frenchman, started eating fish and turtles and adopting Richard Parker’s acts of survival.
« I didn’t have pity to spare for long for the zebra. When your own life is threatened, your sense of empathy is blunted by a terrible, selfish hunger for survival. It was sad that it was suffering so much… but there was nothing I could do about it. I felt pity and then I moved on. This is not something I am proud of. I am sorry I was so callous about the matter. I have not forgotten that poor zebra and what it went through. Not a prayer goes by that I don’t think of it. »(chapter45)

« You may be astonished that in such a short period of time I could go from weeping over the muffled killing of a flying fish to gleefully bludgeoning to death a dorado. I could explain it by arguing that profiting from a pitiful flying fish’s navigational mistake made me shy and sorrowful, while the excitement of actively capturing a great dorado made me sanguinary and self-assured. But in point of fact the explanation lies elsewhere. It is simple and brutal: a person can get used to anything, even to killing.

4-The Will To Survive :

Much of the action of Life of Pi consists of the struggle for survival against seemingly impossible odds. Pi is stranded on a lifeboat in the middle of the Pacific for 227 days, with only an adult Bengal tiger for company, so his ordeal involves not just avoiding starvation but also protecting himself from Richard Parker. Pi is soon forced to give up his lifelong pacifism and vegetarianism, as he has to kill and eat fish and turtles. In a similar vein Orange Juice, the peaceful orangutan, becomes violent when facing the hyena, and Richard Parker submits to being tamed because Pi gives him food. In this way Martel shows the extremes that living things will go to in order to survive, sometimes fundamentally changing their natures.

« It came as an unmistakable indication to me of how low I had sunk the day I noticed, with a pinching of the heart, that I ate like an animal, that this noisy, frantic, unchewing wolfing-down of mine was exactly the way Richard Parker ate. »(chapter82)

« By the time morning came, my grim decision was taken. I preferred to set off and perish in search of my own kind than to live a lonely half-life of physical comfort and spiritual death on this murderous island. »(chapter92)

« I had to tame him. It was at that moment that I realized this necessity. It was not a question of him or me, but of him and me. We were, literally and figuratively, in the same boat. We would live – or die – together…
But there’s more to it. I will come clean. I will tell you a secret: a part of me was glad about Richard Parker. A part of me did not want Richard Parker to die at all, because if he died I would be left alone with despair, a foe even more formidable than a tiger. If I still had the will to live, it was thanks to Richard Parker… It’s the plain truth: without Richard Parker, I wouldn’t be alive today to tell you my story. »

« Lord, to think I’m a strict vegetarian. To think that when I was a child I always shuddered when I snapped open a banana because it sounded to me like the breaking of an animal’s neck. I descended to a level of savagery I never imagined possible. »

Survival after all demands giving up some of things you never thought you’d give up on according to Pi.

5-Storytelling :

The nature of storytelling itself is threaded throughout Life of Pi, as the book is told in a complex way through several layers of narration. The real author writes in the first person as a fictional author similar to Yann Martel himself, and this author retells the story he heard from the adult Pi about Pi’s younger self. At the end, in a transcript of an interview which the author provides, the young Pi then retells an alternate story of how he survived his days at sea, giving a version of events with only human survivors instead of animals.

« He took in my line of work with a widening of the eyes and a nodding of the head. It was time to go. I had my hand up, trying to catch my waiter’s eye to get the bill.
Then the elderly man said, “I have a story that will make you believe in God. »

“If you stumble at mere believability, what are you living for? Isn’t love hard to believe?... Life is hard to believe, ask any scientist. God is hard to believe, ask any believer. What is your problem with hard to believe?”

“We’re just being reasonable. ”

“So am I! I applied my reason at every moment… Nothing beats reason for keeping tigers away. But be excessively reasonable and you risk throwing out the universe with the bathwater.”

So, life of pi is a story within a story and this technique is but to create suspense and confusion. Moreover, the stories he heard of provided new understandings to Pi and this is what makes it highly important as a major theme in the novel.
**Motifs:**

1- **Dominance:** In the beginning of the journey the hyena establishes its dominance by eating both the injured zebra and the orangutan and by also chasing Pi from the life boat, the hierarchy order of the boat shifts yet again as Richard Parker emerges and eats the Hyena leaving the Bengal tiger the dominant and once again Pi as the inferior, however this all changes when Pi learns how to control his fear and starts training the tiger regaining the human dominance over the boat.

2- **Rituals:** Rituals play a significant role if not the most important one in Pi survival, surrounded by nothing but water and with a wild tiger, Pi finds solace in rituals and especially Prayers; it gave him the sense of habit, routine. Both human and animals are creatures in need of routines and habits to sustain themselves. Rituals gave structure to Pi’s daily life on the boat.

3- **Ironic:** The whole novel is ironic in a sense, since the beginning of Pi’s journey on the life boat he was surrounded by water and food, yet he still struggled with famine, he was not skilled enough to fish and plus the water was salty leaving his only source of it when it rained.

4- **The Tsimtsum:** The name of the ship comes from the kabbalist concept of Tsimtsum, where it is believed that God withdraw himself to make room for the creation of the universe. The sinking of the ship then symbolizes the withdrawal of God, so that Pi can develop as an independent creature.