

The Character Of Piscine Molitor “Pi” Patel In The *Life Of Pi*

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Abstrak

Skripsi ini membahas tentang karakter seseorang dalam kehidupan nyata oleh sang penulis yang ditulis dalam sebuah novel. Karakter merupakan salah satu aspek penting dalam novel karena dapat membangun keseluruhan bagian menjadi kesatuan cerita yang menarik. Jurnal ilmiah yang berjudul “The Characterization of Piscine Molitor “Pi” Patel in the Life of Pi” ini untuk mengetahui 3 aspek dalam karakter tokoh utama yang ditemukan dalam novel tersebut dan mengetahui alur cerita yang ditulis oleh sang penulis tersebut.

Sumber data yang digunakan dalam skripsi ini adalah novel dimana menggunakan penelitian kepustakaan data yang dikumpulkan dengan sering membaca novel, mengambil catatan pada laporan dan informasi tertentu kemudian mengklasifikasi data tersebut untuk mendapatkan data yang sesuai. Sementara untuk menganalisa permasalahan yang muncul dengan mengaplikasikan metode kualitatif dimana membedah permasalahan dengan menjelaskan dan menggambarkan hasil analisis dalam bentuk kata dan kalimat yang menggunakan kajian teori dari Kenney (1966) dalam buku yang berjudul How to Analyze Fiction dan Morner and Rausch (1998) dalam buku yang berjudul NTC’s Dictionary of Literary Terms.

Kata Kunci : karakter, tokoh utama, alur cerita.

1. Background of the Study

Characters are actors in a literary work. The existence of the character is important in a story, because the purpose of reading a story is to see how plot works, find out what happens, and equally compelling reason to follow the fortunes of the character. A good character must be human like, which means that the character must reflect the conduction of human.

The main character, Piscine Molitor “Pi” Patel is presented as a young man who survives a harrowing shipwreck. Pi is a very captivating character to be discussed; because this character has unique character for example has variety religions because

his parents never forbade Pi to learn and be bound by any one religion. The novel tells about a young boy who lives on a boat lifeboat along a tiger, and stuck in the vastness of the Pacific Ocean. The tiger is a wise leader who can speak and preach Pi all the time about morality, God and also philosophy of life. This study will tell about the development of Pi's character in order to survive and his relation with the tiger.

2. Problems of the Study

1. What are the characters of Piscine Molitor "Pi" Patel in *Life of Pi*?
2. How is the plot of the story in the *Life of Pi*?

3. Aim of the Study

This study has several aims; they are:

1. To find out the characters of Pi's character in terms of physiological, psychological, and sociological aspects of Piscine Molitor "Pi" Patel in the *Life of Pi*.
2. To find out of the plot the story in *Life of Pi*.

4. Research Method

Methodology is the system of methods and principles of doing something, for example, teaching or carrying out research. The methodology that are used in this research are divided into three points, namely, data source, method and technique of collecting data, and also method and technique of analyzing data.

4.1 Data Source

The data of this study were taken from the novel *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel which was published in 2001. The novel won some awards in 2002 – 2004, and won the Asian / Pacific American for Literature for Best Adult Fiction 2001-2003. The novel was adapted into a theatrical feature film directed by Ang Lee's theater in 2012 with a screenplay by David Magee.

4.2 Method and Technique of Collecting Data

The data of this study were collected through library research. The technique of collecting data was reading the novel frequently and intensively to understand the content of the novel, especially about aspects that made up the character, methods characterization used by the author and also the plot of the story, taking note on certain statements and information that can answer the problems and then organizing or classifying them in order to find out which one is appropriate to the need of the study.

4.3 Method and Technique of Analyzing Data

The technique of analyzing data is the process to find and arrange the data systematically, by classifying into several categories and analyzing them in accordance with the theories in order to come to the conclusion, which hopefully responds well to the problems raised in this study. The qualitative method was used in the data analysis, meaning that this study explains and describes the result of analysis in the form of words and sentences.

5. Analysis

From the analysis of the psychological dimension of Piscine Molitor Patel's character, it can be concluded that Pi is described as a small, slim man, and has pleasing coffee-colored complexion, dark hair, dark eyes, and expressive face. Suddenly getting blind, he suffered excruciating pain. His festering eyes cannot see anything but dark. He also felt weak, dry mouth and pale, swollen feet and hands, and his skin burned. The eyesight of Pi recovered after he cried for two days. And a few days later, Pi gathers his strength back, relax and heal on the island to provide foods that are considered by Pi. Pi healthy again like before, as can be seen from the quotation below:

“He’s a small, slim man – no more than five foot five. Dark hair, dark eyes. Hair graying at the temples. Can’t be older than forty. Pleasing coffee-coloured complexion. Mild fall weather, yet puts on a big winter parka with fur-lined hood for the walk to the diner. Expressive face.” (chapter 2, page 9).

“I had so little strength I could no longer stand. My lips were hard and cranked. My mouth was dry and pasty, coated with a glutinous saliva as foul to taste as it was to smell. My skin was burnt. My shriveled muscles ached. My limbs,

especially my feet, were swollen and a constant source of pain.” (chapter 90, page 324-325).

“Crying as I had done did my eyes some good. **The small window at the top left of my vision opened a crack.** I rinsed my eyes with sea water. With every rinsing, the window opened further. **My vision came back within two days.**” (chapter 91, page 342).

“My skin healed. My pain and aches left me.” (chapter 92, page 362).

From the psychological aspect, Pi is someone who is clever, modern thoughtful, religious and has conscience, respecting others, happy, curious, genius, but sometimes feels upset, embarrassed, frustrated, disillusioned, concerned, worried, fear, confused, and desperate especially when he is in the lifeboat with some animals, as can be seen from the quotation below:

“I was a very good student, if I may say so myself. I was tops at St. Michael’s Collage four years in a row. I got every possible students award from Department of Zoology.” (chapter 1, page 6).

“I couldn’t bear to have yet another French speaker guffawing at my name, so when the man on the phone asked, “Can I ‘ave your name?” I said, “I am who I am.” Half an hour later two pizzas arrived for “Ian Hoolian”. (chapter 5 page 26).

“My Roman soldier stood in the schoolyard one morning when I was twelve. I had just arrived. **He saw me and a flash of evil genius lit up his dull mind.** He raised his arm, pointed at me and shouted, It’s *Pissing* Patel!”

In the second everyone was laughing. It fell away as we filed into the class. **I walked in last, wearing my crown of thorns.** (chapter 5 page 26).

“I loved every minute of it. It was a thrill to be on the ship.” (chapter 38, page 131).

“I felt shock. I felt a great emptiness within me, which then filled with silence, my chest hurt with pain and the fear for days afterwards.” (chapter 38, page 132).

“It was when I looked up at a lifeboat on the bridge castle that I started to worry.” (chapter 38, page 135).

“One of the men interrupted me by thrusting a life jacket into my arms and shouting something in Chinese. I noticed an orange whistle dangling from the life jacket. The men were nodding vigorously at me. When they took hold of me and lifted me in their strong arms, **I thought nothing of it.** I thought that were helping me. I was so full of trust in them that I felt grateful as they carried me in the air. **Only when they threw me overboard did I begin to have doubts.**” (chapter 38, page 137-138).

“I began to wait. **My thoughts swung wildly. I was either fixed on practical details of immediate survival or transfixed by pain, weeping silently, my mouth open and my hands at my head.**” (chapter 41, page 146).

“Tears flowing down my cheeks, I egged myself on until I heard a cracking sound and I no longer felt any life fighting in my hands. I pulled back the folds of the blanket. The flying fish was dead. It was split open and bloody no one side of its head, at the level of the gills.” (chapter 61, page 245).

“By the next morning I had lost all fear of death, and I resolved to die.”(chapter 90, page 325).

From the sociological dimension analysis of Piscine Molitor Patel’s character, it can be concluded that Pi is a person that comes from family who was the owner and take care of a zoo in the Pondicherry city; he has higher education, who after high school went to university to take a baccalaureate degree in two areas at once. Pi was ranked top for four years at St. Michael's College and received an award in the Department of Zoology. He is married to Meena Patel and has two children: a boy named Nikhil and girl named Usha, as can be seen from the quotation below:

“After one year of high school, I attended the University of Toronto and took a double-major Bachelor’s degree. My major were religious studies and zoology. My fourth-years thesis for religious studies concerned certain aspects of the cosmogony theory of Isaac Luria, the great sixteenth-century Kabbalist from Safed. My zoology thesis was a functional analysis of thyroid gland of the three-toed sloth.” (chapter 1, page 3)

“I love Canada. I miss the heat of India, the food, the house of lizard on the walls, the musical on the silver screen the cows wandering the streets, the crows cawing, even talk of cricket matches, **but I love Canada.** Anyway, I have nothing to go home to in Pondicherry”. (chapter 1, page 7)”

“... The Pondicherry Zoo was the source of some pleasure and many headaches for Mr. Santosh Patel, founder, owner, director, head of a staff of fifty-three and my father” (chapter 4, page 17)

“He was a business, pronounced, busynessman in his case, a hardworking, earthbound professional, more concerned with inbreeding among the lions than any over-arching moral or existential scheme.”(chapter 23, page 87)

“He’s married. I am bent down, taking my shoes off, when I hear him say, **“I would like to you to meet my wife”.** I look up and there beside him is ... Mrs. Patel.”(chapter 30, page 106).

“I will you a secret: a part of me was glad about Richard Packer. 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. He kept me from thinking too much about my family and my tragic circumstances. He pushed me to go on living. I hated him for it. Yet at the same time I was grateful. I am grateful.

“Without Richard Parker, I wouldn’t be alive today to tell you my story.” (chapter 57, page 219).

The plot of the Life of Pi begins when Piscine Molitor “Pi” Patel said “This suffering makes me sad and depressed” in the first chapter. When Piscine Molitor “Pi”

Patel in the town of Pondicherry, he met an elderly man named Francis Adirubasamy who offered to tell him a story which is fantastic enough to give him faith in God.

Piscine Molitor “Pi” Patel narrates from an advanced age, looking back at his earlier life as a high school and college student in Toronto. But after hearing schoolmates tease him by transforming the first name into “Pissing”, he was loathed and he changes his name into the short form as “Pi” when he starts secondary school. Pi is a Hindu who practices vegetarianism. At the age of fourteen, he investigates Christianity and Islam in fifteen years old, and decides to become an adherent of all three religions, and choosing to practice all three religions simultaneously.

Because of India’s political strife, Pi’s parents decide to sell the zoo and some animals and also move the family to Canada; on June 21, 1977, they set sail in a cargo ship, along with a crew and many cages full of zoo creatures.

The middle of this story is when Piscine Molitor “Pi” Patel said in chapter 4 that the Pondicerry entered the Union of India on November 1, 1945. Then Pi’s father decided to move to Canada. Pi's family was aboard the *Tsimtsum*. A few days out of port from Manila, towards the Pacific Ocean, the ship slammed big storm and began to sink when he was on the deck. He tried to find his family, but was pushed into the lifeboat to be saved by the crew, and helplessly watched the ship sank, killing his family and the crew.

After the storm ends, Pi finds himself in a lifeboat along with a wounded zebra and visited an orangutan that lost his son. A hyena emerges from the tarp that covered half of the boat and thereafter it bite to kill the zebra at a time. Pi was panicked; the hyena also injured the orangutans to death in a fight. Richard Parker has been hiding under the tarpaulin of the lifeboat and suddenly emerging from his hideaway; Richard Parker kills and eats the hyena.

The climax of this story is when Piscine Molitor “Pi” Patel said a crew gave him a life jacket and put him in a lifeboat and realized that he was with the rest of the animals that survived the middle of the ocean. The storm subsides and Pi contemplates his difficult situation which Pi and Richard Parker are alone together at sea. Pi begins looking for ways to take a submissive role of Richard Parker by using food as positive

reinforce, and using a whistle to signal, while seasickness as the mechanism of punishment.

Not long after, the lifeboat reached a floating island that has a lot of seaweed which is eatable and has forests, fresh water, and a lot of *meerkat*, so that Pi and Richard Parker could eat and drink freely at the same time to grow stronger. One day, at the night, the island was turned into an area that is cruel and changes the fresh water become acidic substances. Pi finds human teeth in a tree's fruit of a plant and concluded that the island has carnivorous plants which eat people.

The end of this story is when Piscine Molitor "Pi" Patel hoped Richard Parker would look at him and acted like as he wanted to say goodbye. Pi was despaired because Richard Parker was never concerned with himself and began crying when taken to the hospital.

At the hospital, Two officials from the Japanese Ministry of Transport came to hear his testimony and interviewed Pi about his incident such as his time at sea, hoping to shed light on the fate of the doomed ship. He told all his experience that happened to him in detail. They considered that the story is impossible, and asked him to tell the truth for the sake of the credibility of their reports. In their final report, they commend Pi has extraordinary story of survival for 227 days at sea with an adult Bengal tiger.

6. Conclusion

The character of the main character through three dimensions of physiological, psychological and sociological aspects which can bring the reader to look into the character in many aspects of Piscine Molitor "Pi" Patel.

Piscine Molitor "Pi" Patel is used as the title and becomes the central character in this short story. From the physiological aspect, Piscine is described as a young man who has Indian children in general. He has a small and slim body, expressive face with dark hair and eyes. Psychologically, Piscine is described as deeply interested in 3 religions: Hinduism, Christianity and Islam. He is a smart and good student. Pi also has a very particular relationship with animals and loves them. He had given the experience growing up in his father's zoo in India. He is a fainthearted but never give up, very

inquisitive young man and he believes God led him to survive by showing the signs. Sociologically, Piscine is described as a young man who has higher education, who after high school went on to university to take a double – major Bachelor’s degree. Pi was ranked tops for four years in a row at St. Michael's College and received an award in the Department of Zoology. Pi had a brother and family that loved him. Piscine is the younger son of Santosh Patel who is a secular businessman having Pondicherry Zoo in India.

In regard to the plot of *Life of Pi*, it was beginning when Piscine Molitor “Pi” Patel must move from his home in India to Canada because India’s political strife. A few days out of port from Manila, towards the Pacific Ocean, the ship slammed big storm and began to sink. He was pushed into the lifeboat to be saved by the crew. Pi finds himself in a lifeboat along with a wounded zebra, orangutan, a hyena, and adult Bengal tiger which want to eat and kill each other. Pi and Richard Parker are alone together at sea.

Pi did anything to survive, such as feeding Richard Parker. One day, he found an island that provides food to Richard Parker and himself, but a few days later he realized that the island is a carnivorous island. Soon, Pi and Richard Parker leave the island. Finally, their lifeboat up on the coast of Mexico and some people take him to hospital. Richard Parker left without action is like saying goodbye. At the hospital, Two Officials from the Japanese Ministry of Transport came to hear his testimony and interviews Pi about his incident and they commend that Pi has extraordinary story of survival for 227 days at sea with an adult Bengal tiger. After the incident, Pi continue his life, married Meeta Patel, and had two children, namely Nikhil and Usha. He loved his little family. Ultimately, the story has a happy ending.

7. Bibliography

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