

Journey in 'life of pi' by yann martel

Life



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In the world of literature, a quest is initiated every time the character “ hits the road”; this concept applies to famous journeys such as the search for the Holy Grail or even a trip to the grocery store. Pi Patel, the protagonist from the fictional novel *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel, unexpectedly engages in a voyage after the sinking of a cargo ship he was on board. Even though he is only sixteen years old, Pi shows exceptional skills of intellect and maturity beyond his age when he survives in a solitary lifeboat with a 450-pound Royal Bengal tiger in the middle of the wild, blue Pacific Ocean. The interpretation of a quest in *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster partially fails to correspond to Pi’s miraculous survival for 227 days in the Pacific; nonetheless, *Life of Pi* is considered a quest due to principles that correlate to Foster’s definition of a quest that present themselves as the novel progresses.

Like a Professor applies to Pi Patel’s journey in the midst of the Pacific from *Life of Pi*. The structure of a quest consists of five important ideals: “(a) a quester, (b) a place to go, (c) a stated reason to go there, (d) challenges and trials en route, and (e) a real reason to go there”. For instance, the quester is Pi Patel and “ it was land [he] had to reach, hard, firm, certain land”. After succumbing the hope of being saved by a passing ship, Pi suddenly realizes that it is necessary to land somewhere where there is tangible ground after the awareness of the unreliability of humanity. Pi is attempting to reach land to “ beat the odds, as great as they are”. When Pi was willing to die after sadness overcame his desire to survive, a mysterious voice reassured him of his miraculous situation that “ it may be nothing more than life-hungry stupidity” and encourages Pi “ to fight to the very end”. There were

numerous challenges and trials during Pi's quest; in fact, they are uncountable. Specifically, Pi had to survive 227 days in a lifeboat with a tiger. Also, Pi, a lifelong vegetarian, had to consume fish and turtles in order to survive the harsh environment. The fact that "the real reason for a quest is always self-knowledge" is true for Pi, although his journey was not intended. Throughout the story, Pi makes an emotional outburst about religious faith and how "every single thing [he values] in life has been destroyed... and [he has] no explanation" for it. Through this quest, Pi acquires the knowledge that he must establish his identity as an adult and how he should compromise the need for survival with the need to reconcile with his society.

Pi's struggle for a successful quest is clearly visualized in the film adaptation of the fictional novel *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel. The movie assists the readers by creating a visually stunning setting that helps to reveal Pi's daily routines and how he reacts to his unlucky circumstances. Some minor details like Pi and Richard Parker, the tiger, losing vision and Pi successfully taming the tiger were removed; however, the film still adheres to the plot due to the inclusion of important details that were crucial elements of the story itself. In order to accommodate the visual and auditory media, new scenes were added where the ocean was overwhelmed with bright and colorful lights of jellyfish and whales. The book included an open ending by allowing the readers to choose whether or not Pi traveled with animals or humans. The movie, however, concludes with the idea that Pi substituted animals to humans to cope with the emotional hurt due to the death of his entire family because of his selfish actions. The film adaptation of the narrative adheres to the novel's

plot—even if several important scenes from the novel were eliminated—and the stunning graphics and visuals of the movie efficiently convey the message of Pi's startling journey for self-knowledge in a way the novel could not.

Pi's journey across the Pacific Ocean is considered a quest in both the book and the movie. The text describes in detail about the quest and the movie incorporates those details and creates a visual image for the audience. The comparison of Foster's formula about quests in literature and Pi Patel's breathtaking journey with a tiger discloses how sometimes patterns present themselves in an unusual way.