

# Example of life of pi essay

[Family](#), [Parents](#)



In the story *The Life of Pi*, by Yann Martel, Pi shapes animals to represent people to lessen the anguish of the loss of his family: the orangutan being his mother, the hyena is the cook, and most uniquely, Richard Parker, a tiger, as Pi's will to survive.

Piscine Molitor Patel represents his character as a tiger and as Richard Parker. He is the protagonist of the story and he is a shy person who tells how a shipwreck happened when he was young. As Pi, he is a lonely child who spends most of his time in the zoo watching animals and seeing how different the lives of the animals differ from that of the human beings. This young boy relates how animals are free and how good and satisfying their lives are because they do not worry about anything, but leave everything to God who provides for them. Pi is a vegetarian during his stay at the zoo, but after the ship sinks in the middle of the sea with no one to provide for him or to give him support he has to learn to self-sufficient. He gives up his vegetarian lifestyle claiming that it is a luxury and starts looking for fish to serve for his meals. The role of Mr. Parker or the tiger in this part shows the inner part of an individual which does not part with you whether every one else has left you. It symbolizes the desire and the drive that humans have to continue living. This character is the same as him acting as the tiger that goes to the floating island and eats the meerkats. This shows that as a human being Pi does anything for survival, but is rational due to the effects of civilization.

The role of the tiger and especially its wildness represents the untamable part of the human being and in this case the innocent boy who did not know how to survive on his own. He has to learn to survive and this is what he

means when he decides that it was time to habit the boat and he has to start training the tiger to accept him as the master and obey his orders. When he divided the boat into two compartments, he leaves the tiger in the lower compartments meaning that the tiger was a part of him that did not have to take control or else they would not survive. This shows that Pi had to take control of his inner self and learn on how to use it to survive. The inner spirit which is the tiger can do anything for survival and this is why Pi the tiger to symbolize the inner spirit which loves what is close to eat and becomes bitter and sad when his loved ones are taken away from him. This is why he kills the hyena for killing his mother the orangutan. This is the nature of man especially the untamable part, which forces it to do anything and can take revenge if not put under control. The two sides of Pi have to work together at some point even though these two sides have different characters. They have to unite and work together during tough times. Mr. Parker is portrayed as the tiger who is untamable and Pi as a civilized person who is rational and considers other people and their feelings.

However, Pi would not survive the ordeals of the ocean and this is where the character of the tiger, Mr. Parker comes in handy. The tiger, which represents the tough, side of humans beings, which come up when the person life's is threatened crops up and helps fight against the causal factors. This is how Pi survived in the ocean for many months, because of the presence of the tough nature inside him, which he had to keep under, control most of the time. " So the Taiwanese sailor is the zebra, his mother is the orang-utan, the cook isthe hyena - which means he's the tiger (Martel 299). He learns to tame his wild spirit when he began giving the tiger water and

fish. The animalistic part of Pi takes over in the sea where he starts eating birds and tearing their flesh away, just as Mr. Parker did. He even eats part of the meat of the blind Frenchman who is eaten by Mr. Parker after he unknowingly steps into his compartment in the boat.

The killing of the fisherman in the boat by Mr. Parker shows that the innocence of the young boy in this case Pi who had never committed any grievous crime before. The loss of innocence in the sea can never come back even after Mr. Parker runs into the wilderness. These represent the things that can never be retrieved once lost because once the Frenchman died he never came back to life and so is Pi's innocence.

The cook who is presented as a hyena represents the coward side of a human being who can respond to a situation by taking advantage of the vulnerable. The hyena kills the Zebra who is Pi's mother and he survives in the ocean until the tiger kills him. The tiger who represents the wild nature of man wants to take revenge on his mother who was killed mercilessly by the hyena. The tiger or the wild part of Pi has to take over and eliminate the weakness in Pi that is cowardice in order for the two of them to survive in the wild sea. The death of the hyena symbolizes a new start where Pi can face the challenges of the sea and handle the entire fearful situation he comes across.

The zebra or the orangutan that represents the mother or the maternal instincts of Pi was killed by the cook who was is the coward nature of man. " Yes. The tiger killed the hyena - and the blind Frenchman - just as he killed the cook" (Martel 299-305). The coward in Pi took over after the boat sunk and lost his instinct and had to adapt to the situation by embracing the tiger

or the wild nature in him that helped him survive the difficulties he faced in the sea. He lost his maternal instincts at a time when he needed the most and the only option remaining for him was to embrace the only part remaining. The death of the zebra shows a new beginning and a new perspective of viewing things. The maternal instincts acted as a guide in the life of the young boy in the zoo who saw life from a different perspective. However, these instincts could not have helped him survive the ordeals of the ocean and this is why he had to get rid of them. The revenge he takes on the killer of his mother who is the cook or the hyena shows that maternal instincts are an important part of a human being. However, Pi does not let himself be the one to take revenge but lets the tiger take revenge for the brutal murder of his dear mother.

## **Conclusion**

The use of animals in the story 'The Life of Pi', by Yann Martel shows the different parts of the life of Pi and represents the different natures of man and what guides them through the challenges they face daily. The animal nature of man shows in the role of the tiger and the other characteristic like instincts and cowardice are apparent in the zebra and the hyena.

## **Works Cited**

Martel, Yann. *Life of Pi: a Novel*. New York: Harcourt, 2001. Print.