

Human- animal Relationship in the novel “*Life of Pi*”

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Abstract:

Animal studies, a vibrantly developing field has exploded since the 1990's. Human–animal relations are the new interdisciplinary field of studies. Man is taken into consideration to be a social animal and therefore in all societies they're visible to coexist with animals in diverse systems from parasitism and avarice to kinship. The realization can prove instrumental to the well-being of the world paired with an urgent need to understand human-animal interactions in addition to the overpowering impact of people at the natural sources needed for the survival of all animal species. Animals play profoundly important roles within side the lives of humans. All human interactions with animals and nature take region inside a cultural context.

Human Animal Relationship in the novel *Life of Pi*. The novel, in place of being a mereship wreck-narrative or a impressive story, and also story about a relationship between human and animals. This essay introduces the fields of ecocriticism and animal research and defines anthropomorphism and zoomorphism within side the context of literary criticism.

Keywords: Human Animal Relationship, Anthropomorphism, Ecocriticism, Richard Parker, Piscine Molitor Patel (pi).

Animal studies are a mode of inquiry which is inspired by non-human animals themselves and their lives that are lived with them. It tries to explain that what is intriguing about ways of thinking about animals, imagining them and living with them. This interest came from the new real-world conditions and new knowledge around Human-Animal relations since 1945. The other major reasons are exponential rise in pet keeping, zoonotic diseases, animal intelligence and emotion sentience. The first interpretive idea that critics turn to when they thinking about animals in literary or cultural texts is “anthropomorphism”. Another approach is the representation of animals in human form.

Animal studies research examines the processes used to generate adaptive or flexible behavior in animal species. Much of work on animal cognition is more

appropriately described by the term comparative perception, because the processes and capacities underlying behavior are compared between species (Shettleworth 2010).

The philosophical discussion of animal studies has been traditionally focused on the metaphysics and epistemology of mind in creatures that do not have language. Philosophers have asked whether animals are minded or rational, and whether they have concepts or beliefs, but they have also such questions given the inherent limitations of the investigation. The early history of western philosophy shows a tendency to see animals as lacking rationality. Aristotle defined the “human” as “the rational animal” thus rejecting the possibility that any other species is rational.

The “Life of Pi” is an remarkable English novel that shows the relationship among human being, animals, land and water. The Novel is formed as three parts, 100 chapter and 319 pages. The First part is present in Toronto and Pondicherry which consists total 36 chapters. Second part is present in the Pacific Ocean which is the most voluminous that starts from 37 ends at 94 chapters. The last part says about Benito Juarez Infirmary, Tomatlan, Mexico which starts from 95 ends at 100 chapters. Mr. Pi and the Richard Parker, a Bengali Tiger, the two main characters were helpless in a lifeboat in the Pacific Ocean for 227 days. Beside these two characters there were some other wild animals also there in the lifeboat a hyena, a zebra, an orangutan, rat and cockroaches. The opening of the novel is a description of the animal encounters Pi has throughout a single day, presented as a “paradise on earth”.

“I have nothing but the fondest memories of growing up in a zoo” (14).

Pi is likewise aware about the misconceptions human beings have approximately captured animals. From the perspective of animal studies, this novel deals with the similarities and differences between human and nonhuman animals. Martel researched animal conduct and zoology to create believable characters and events. So, he uses them as plot devices and as antagonists from an anthropocentric perspective. The relationships between humans and animals are part of a complex environment which drives the development of the protagonist. He acknowledges about the connection between human and nonhuman animals.

“The obsession with putting ourselves at the center of everything is the bane not only of theologians but also of zoologists” (31).

Pi defends upon zoos as refuges from natural predators and diseases, he claims that animals in the wild are not “happy” because they are “free”, they are not great creatures that become “a shadow of itself, its spirit broken” in captivity (Martel 15).

The unforgiving social hierarchy and the harsh circumstances that animals are exposed to be in the wilderness, “where the supply of fear is

high and the supply of food is low and where territory constantly must be defended" (16) foreshadow the demanding situations that Pi has to stand as a castaway.

The relationship is what the philosopher Walter Benjamin characterizes as our fear of being is recognized by creatures uncomfortably similar to us.

In an aversion to animals the predominant feeling is fear of being recognized by them through contact. The horror that stirs deep in man is an obscure awareness that in him something lives so akin to the animal that it might be recognized. (...) He may not deny his bestial relationship with animals, the invocation of which revolts him: he must make himself its master. (Benjamin 59).

In the Novel, Mr. Pi learned about the ferocious and dangerous behaviour of different animals in relation to animal as cute, friendly, loving, devoted, merry, understanding from his father in his child, and also wild animals can kill, injure, scratch and bite to other animals as well as human beings. He come to learn that the animals also have social rank like human beings as food chain which is clearly showed in the Pacific Ocean when hyena start eating zebra, orangutan, and then tiger eats the hyena. Mr. Pi was in afraid of being eaten by Richard Parker then he starts feeding tiger with rats, turtle, and fish. Mr. Pi learn that by observing directly or indirectly taught by his father to keep him away from animals because he was afraid one day tiger will kill and eat him. Mr. Pi was quite and aware, if tiger became hungry then the tiger will eat him any way.

Mr. Pi practice the knowledge gained being without human only with wild or furious animal. We can understand and how the author has made the relationship of life, death and life. It is very interesting that author has not given equal emphasis on human beings. Mr. Pi was worried more for the tiger rather than his parents and brother who sank in the ocean. A kind of new relations that we can understand that any person who lost own family or neglected from the family start social life with animals. Animals become the nearest and the dearest friends for them. Mr. Pi become capable of adapt the climate in Ocean, and also he learned how to live with Richard Parker and sea animals. Sea animals became the source for the food for both Mr. Pi and the Richard Parker and their survival. Mr. Pi changes his eating habit form vegetarian to non-vegetarian. The difficult situation as well as inherent capacity in the animal, which Mr. Pi expresses,

"Animals fight us, it is out of sheer desperation. They fight when they feel they have no other way out" (Martel, 2001, p. 296).

This principle was followed throughout the struggle in the ocean. It means that how do behave the animals will also responses accordingly. The human and animal relationship is successfully established because of knowledge and feeling. This builds

A kind of inter relatedness.

After reversing the social order, through the tiger dominating the space on the lifeboat, the relationship between Pi and the animal conclude in equilibrium when a storm hits, and the two creatures find shelter together under the tarpaulin.

Pi tells a tale that both conceals and reveals what really took place on the lifeboat. His relationship with the carnivore develops from paralyzing terror, "Every hair on me was standing up, shrieking with fear", to kindly comforting,

"It was the Richard Parker who calmed me down. It is the irony of this story that the one who scared me witless to start with was the very same who brought me peace, purpose, I dare say even wholeness." (162).

Pinker acknowledging the similarities of human scan assesses the wellbeing of nonhuman animals, Human and nonhuman animals share the same brain and evolutionary background (Pinker76), Stewart Cole compares the true words the aesthetic value of Pi's story and uses anthropomorphism "The obsession to put ourselves at the center of everything is the bane not only of theologians but also of zoologists" (Martel, 31).

Most children's novels use the animals as an instrument by which the humans are taught to do the right thing, in essence turning the animal into a path of human wisdom. As animals do not share their verbal means of communication, therefore literally and figuratively lacking a voice, they easily become canvases upon which we show human feelings and our particular understanding of the world. Pi's moral values have been violated through his actions and while he can justify them as important for his survival, he cannot accept them. The shocking experience which tears down his moral barriers also lead to Pi's invention of the tiger as a vessel for his unacceptable traits.

Pi more or less accepts this as he, much later, explains how the tiger haunts his dreams: "Richard Parker has stayed with me. I've never forgotten him. Dare I say I miss him? I do. I miss him. I still see him in my dreams. They

are nightmares mostly, but nightmares tinged with love” (6). The truth is that he misses and “loves” the tiger supports the notion that it is a psychological construction providing relief for the reasonable dissonance created by his trauma.

When the tiger leaves pi without acknowledging the end of their relationship, it is implied that the relationship does not going to be end and through his dreams the tiger remains part of his life, as it must, until his internal conflict is resolved.

Pi never hesitates to help the tiger, he helps him in the lifeboat when the ship sinks, he gave food him and gives him water, and their shared misery culminates in their most vulnerable state when Pi softly places the tigers' head in his lap: “We were two emaciated mammals, parched and starving” (239). This is the only time Pi knowingly touches the tiger.

After finding sea shore, Pi who cannot tear himself lose and he is heart-broken when Richard Parker leaves without looking back:

At the end of the jungle, he stopped. I was certain he would turn my way. He would look at me. He would flatten his ears. He would growl. In some such way, he would conclude our relationship. He did nothing of that sort. He only looked fixedly into the jungle. Then Richard Parker, companion of my torment, awful, fierce thing that kept me alive, moved forward and disappeared forever from my life. (284-285)

This shows the relationship between the Pi and Richard Parker has a good bonding. Human beings compare themselves to animals due to our cognitive abilities and our understanding of what we do not have but what we want. It is a natural component for the human persona to desire what humans do not have, like the superior physical capabilities that animals have.

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