

Life of Pi by Yann Martel

In the novel, *Life of Pi*, Yann Martel uses various symbols that reveal the life of Piscine Patel and furthermore the ways in which humans and animals are alike and different. Pi, the main character, grows up in an Indian town called Pondicherry. Even as a young boy he has an immense amount of knowledge about animals and their behavior. When Pi and his family decide to move to Canada, his life changes forever. As the ship sinks, he finds himself on a lifeboat with a Belgian tiger, a hyena, and an orangutan and so the journey begins. Later the reader finds that the story of animals is in fact his way of coping with this horrific time in his life. He uses animals, area that he has loved and taken interest in all his life, to represent the characters of the people in the lifeboat with him. (...)

The complex symbolism throughout the book compares and contrasts the instinctive nature of animals with human impulses exposing how humans are similar to animals. Yann Martel uses symbolism to demonstrate that humans can be caring and afraid but also can be savage and inhumane. (...)

Martel wants readers to realize that if humans live the life of (...) a relentless blood thirsty animal, humans will end up killing each other. However, if one lives the life (..) oblivious to the real world and completely vulnerable to any threat, one will be taken advantage of. (...) To exist with animals, one has to realize what Pi knew on the boat, that each animal needs space and routine and it is only when these aspects are interrupted that chaos begins. *Life of Pi* allows the reader to look at humanity and the ways that humans interact with one another and with animals in a new way. The novel uses symbolism to communicate with people and escape the first impressions of animals and each other that humans have.

Molly Welch, *Teenink.com*, December 29, 2010