

**RATIONALITY AND SURVIVAL OF LIFE OF PI  
REFLECTED IN YANN MARTEL'S LIFE OF PI NOVEL (2001):  
AN INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH**



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**ABSTRACT**

*This study is aimed to show rationality and survival of Piscine Molitor Patel act in Life of Pi novel by using an individual psychological approach. It is done by establishing two objectives: the first is analyzing the novel based on its structural elements and the second is analyzing the novel based on the Individual Psychological Approach. This research is descriptive qualitative research. Type of data of the study is text taken from two data sources: primary and secondary. The primary data source is Life of Pi novel written by Yann Martel published in 2001. While the secondary data sources are other materials taken from books, journals, and internet related to the study. Both data are collected through library research and analyzed by descriptive analysis. The study comes to the following conclusions. First, based on the structural analysis of each elements, it shows that the character and characterization, plot, setting, point of view, theme, styles are related to each other and form a unity. Second, based on the Individual Psychological analysis reflected in the character and characterization in fictional finalism, inferiority feelings and compensation, striving for superiority, social interest, style of life, and creative power of self form a solid unity. The last, based on rationality and survival analysis are focused on Piscine Molitor Patel as the major character of Life of Pi, human used their rationality and survival in their life.*

*Keywords: Rationality, Survival, an Individual Psychological Approach*

## A. Introduction

### 1. Background of the Study

In this world, people have many problems that have to be faced. Some problems that appear in human's life are social problem, economic problem, politic problem, and sometimes its problem comes from the individual itself. Problems make people think how to face the problems and he can survive in their life. People use their rational to face the problems. Their rational can create a problem solving, so they can solve their problem and they can survive in their life.

Rationality and survival are reflected in human's life. Everything that the human do can be accepted or not is depend our rational. Rationality is the characteristic of any action, belief, or desire that makes their choice a necessity. In our life, people also try to survive from their problem that they faced. Survival is the ability to survive in a condition or state. Survival can also be interpreted as engineering (science) in the face of threats to their safety. based on location, there is survival in the sea that can be seen in Yann Martel's *Life of Pi*.

*Life of Pi* is a fantasy adventure novel by Yann Martel published in Canada September 2001. It won the Man Booker Prize for Fiction the following year in the UK edition and became the best seller. The story of this novel concern about life of Pi and divided into three chapters. In chapter one, the story tell about Pi's life in the zoo and his problem with his own name and his religion. In chapter two, the story tells about his suffered after his ship sank and his effort to survive with a Bengal tiger in the middle of Pacific Ocean. In chapter three, the story tells about the Japanese officer who came to interview Pi after Pi saved from his suffered.

There are four reason makes this novel interested to be analyzed. First, *Life of Pi* has great messages about human life. Second, *Life of Pi* novel described the major character that has a great confidence. Third, *Life of Pi* novel describes such as the true story because the author also one of character in this novel. The last reason is the present researcher

will be a teacher later and this project is necessary to be carried out to widen, enlarged, insert more knowledge about this novel.

## **2. Literature Review**

Life of Pi novel by Yann Martel published in September 2001, so there are some researchers who analyzed this novel. First is Stewart Cole (2004) who analyze Believing Tigers: Anthropomorphism and Incredulity in Yann Martel's *Life of Pi*. According to Cole, *Life of Pi* demonstrates, by dramatizing and employing anthropomorphisms, and by refusing to distinguish poetic from religious faith.

The second researcher is about Hollow at the core: Deconstructing Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* by Florence Stratton (2004). It is a narrative of self-discovery, one that tells the readers that the most religious and idealistic of men can be led into savagery and brutality by the allure of power that such men can be found to be "hollow at the core". The deconstructive project of *Life of Pi* is to replace the Enlightenment belief in the power of reason to liberate humanity with a belief in the transforming power of story. That Pi shows little or nothing in the way of personal growth or development over the course of the narrative seriously compromises this project.

## **3. Problem Statement**

The major problem of this research is "How are the rationality and the survival of Pi's life reflected in Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* novel by using an individual psychological approach?"

## **4. Limitation of the Study**

In this research, the researcher only focuses on analyzing the rationality and survival of the major character's life reflected in Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* by applying an individual psychological approach.

## **5. Objective of the Study**

- a. To analyze *Life of Pi* novel based on its structural elements.
- b. To analyze *Life of Pi* novel based on Individual Psychological Approach.

## **6. Benefit of the Study**

### **a. Theoretical Benefit**

- 1) To give some information which can be used by the other researchers who are interested in analyzing this literary work.
- 2) The study is expected to give a new contribution to the larger body of knowledge particularly literary study on Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* novel.

### **b. Practical Benefit**

This study is expected to enrich knowledge and experience of the writer and other students of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta or other Universities who have interest in literary study on the novel from Individual Psychological Approach

## **7. Underlying Theory**

### **a. Notion of Individual Psychological Approach**

Individual psychology is a science that attempts to understand the experience and behavior of each person as an organized entity (Adler in Ryckman, 1985: 95).

### **b. Basic concept of Individual Psychology**

#### **1) Inferiority Feeling and Compensation**

Inferiority is feeling weak and unskilled in facing in the task that need to be completed (Hall and Lindzey, 1985: 147). Adler observes that people with severe organic weaknesses or defect will often try to compensate for them by training and exercise, will often result in the development of the individual strength (Hjelle and Ziegler, 1992: 142).

#### **2) Striving for Superiority**

Adler states that striving for superiority is continually trying to become something better, to become nearer and nearer to one's ideal goals (Hall and Lindzey, 1985: 147). Adler concludes that striving for superiority is the fundamental law of human life, "a something without which life would be unthinkable" (Hjelle and Ziegler, 1992: 143).

### **3) Fictional Finalism**

Each person quests for superiority guided by the fictional goal that he or she adopted. Adler believes that the person's fictional goal of superiority is self determined. It is formed by the person's own creative power, therefore it making it individually unique (Hjelle and Ziegler, 1992: 154).

### **4) Social Interest**

The concept of social interest reflects Adler's strong belief that we as human are social creatures that must consider our relationship to others and to a larger socio cultural context in which we live if we are to fully understand ourselves (Hjelle and Ziegker, 1992: 147)

### **5) Style of Life**

The style of life is our unique way of seeking the particular goals we have set in the particular life circumstances in which we find ourselves (Hall and Lindzey, 1985: 150). Each of persons will arrange his or her life to fit the particular end goal and a particular way of striving for it (Hall and Lindzey, 1985: 151).

### **6) Creative Power of the Self**

According to Adler, the creative power self is heredity that gives certain ability and environment that gives influence will make up our creative way to construct or create our particular attitudes (Hall and Lindzey, 1985: 152).

### **c. Rationality**

Rationality is to be a property of the thinking (or lack of thinking) that goes into belief formation or decision making. In particular, it is property of the methods used, the rules followed (or not followed), not of the outcome of the process. Thus, we cannot determine whether an act or belief was rational without knowing how a person came to decide on it (Baron, 1985: 5).

#### **d. Survival**

Survival can be defined in terms of the interactions between an individual and its natural surroundings. The surroundings determine the extent to which a person is exposed to critical changes in environment, such as temperature, water, food, or oxygen (Piantadosi, 2003: 1).

### **B. Research Method**

#### **1. Type of the Study**

In this study, the writer applies qualitative research.

#### **2. Object of the Study**

The object of this study is *Life of Pi by Yann Martel* and was published in September 2001.

#### **3. Type of the Data and the Data Source**

##### **a. Primary Data**

The primary data source is the Novel of *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel.

##### **b. Secondary Data**

The secondary data are taken from other sources such as the books, and website, and journal about *Life of Pi*.

#### **4. Technique of the Data Collection**

- a. Reading the novel several times until the researcher get some information and data to be analyzed.
- b. Taking notes of important part both primary and secondary data.
- c. Arranging the data into several groups based on its theoretical category.
- d. Selecting particular parts considered important and relevant for analysis.
- e. Drawing conclusion and formulate its pedagogical suggestion.

#### **5. Technique of the Data analysis**

- a. Analyzing the data based on its structural elements. Focus will be paid on the structural analysis of the novel.



- b. Analyzing data based on individual psychological approach. Focus will be paid on the meaning of rationality and survival of life of Pi

### C. Discussion

#### 1. Structural Element Analysis of *Life of Pi* Novel

In *Life of Pi* novel, Martel creates the major character namely Piscine Molitor Patel and usually called Pi. Pi survived in the middle of the sea with a Bengal tiger as one of the characters in this novel. Minor characters of this novel are Santosh Patel (Pi's Father), Gita's Patel (Pi's mother), Ravi(Pi's brother), Francis Adirubasamy, the Author, Satish Kumar (Biology teacher), Satish Kumar (Imam). Each character has different characteristic and relationship with Pi.

Setting is the location, historical period, social surroundings in which the action of a text develops (Klarer, 1999: 25). In *Life of Pi* novel, there are some places such as in India (Pondicherry, Toronto and Munnar), Pacific Ocean, and Mexico. The setting of time in *Life of Pi* was taken in summer of 1977 that draws on places and historical events in India. Then, Kennedy (1983: 103) states that the theme of a story as whatever general idea or insight the entire story reveals. It was convey the message such as "human must have a strong believe and shouldn't be give up with the problems because there is not impossible".

Meanwhile, this novel consists of many dialogues and narration. It uses the grammatical structure that is divided into two, the standard and nonstandard language. Then sentence construction is also used in the narration of the novel, Martel uses long sentences and short sentences in describing the story. Besides, Martel also uses the figurative language in the dialogues and sentences. It consists of personification, metaphor, simile, and hyperbole. The use of diction also appears in this novel, therefore, this novel is very interesting to read.

After analyzed the structural elements of *Life of Pi*, structural elements of Life of Pi by Yann Martel consist of character and characterization, setting, plot, point of view, theme and style that are

arranged in coherence, related and support to each other, so the reader will interest to read this novel.

## 2. Individual Psychological Analysis of *Life of Pi* Novel

Individual psychology is a science that attempts to understand the experience and behavior of each person as an organized entity (Adler in Ryckman, 1985: 95). There are divided into six parts, namely inferiority feeling and compensation, fictional finalism, striving for superiority, social interest, style of life, and creative power of the self.

Fictional finalism is the idea that human behavior is directed toward a future goal of its own making (Hjelle and Ziegler, 1992: 153). In *Life of Pi* novel, the fictional goal of the major character appear when he feels so sad because he lost his family and he stays in the lifeboat with Richard Parker in the middle of Pacific Ocean. He has a fictional finalism of his life to reach the goal that is he wants to survive, safe and lives happily.

Inferiority is feeling weak and unskilled in facing in the task that need to be. People often strive to compensate not only for organ inferiorities but also for subjective feeling of inferiority (Hjelle and Ziegler, 1992: 142). In *life of Pi*, inferiority feeling of the major character appears when he is not confident with his nickname "Pissing". Many friends and his teacher laughed his name and he tries to change his nickname into "Pi" and he succeeded. The other inferiority feeling also occurred when he lived with Richard Parker in the lifeboat. He knows that Richard Parker is a strong animal and Pi cannot fights with him. Pi doesn't know the way to control Richard Parker. Pi was scared and he tries to make a raft and feeding Richard Parker to make Richard Parker be tamed.

Adler states that striving for superiority is continually trying to become something better, to become nearer and nearer to one's ideal goals (Hall and Lindzey, 1985: 147). In *Life of Pi* novel, the major character has a striving for superiority. He doing everything that make him survive. Firstly, Pi survives with the thing that available in the lifeboat such as many cans of water and many crackers for his feed. He makes a raft to

avoid Richard Parker because he scared if Richard Parker killed him in the lifeboat so he lived in the raft for some times. He tries to fishing in order to make him can feed Richard Parker, firstly he failed to fishing but he tries again. After he can control Richard Parker, he lives in the lifeboat. He strives to survive although he has to eat a meat because he is a vegetarian, he uses the equipments that available in the lifeboat. He strives to survive and he believes that he can reach the land.

According to Adler, the style of life encompasses the unique pattern of traits, behavior and habits which, when taken together defines the flavor of a person's existence (Hjelle and Ziegler, 1985: 144). In *Life of Pi* novel Pi was a shy person but he is also a curious person who wants to have a good sociality with people surround him. Pi tries to have a good sociality with his environment such as his friends who teased hi, Pi also has a social relation with Francis Adirubasamy who trained him to swim, the other are Biology teacher, the Pandit, the Pastor and the Imam, event he tries to be friends with Richard Parker in order he can lived in the lifeboat without worried with Richard Parker. He thinks that if Richard Parker can be friends with him, he can live in peace in the lifeboat until he can reach the land.

The concept of social interest reflects Alder's strong belief that we as human are social creatures that must consider our relationship to others and to a larger socio cultural context in which we live if we are to fully understand ourselves (Hjelle and Ziegker, 1992: 147). In social interest, Pi is including a person who wants to have a good sociality in the environment that interest him. Pi tries to have a good relationship with people surrounding him although there are some his friends teased him, even Pi tries to have a good relation with Richard Parker in a lifeboat.

Adler also states that the creative power self is heredity that gives certain ability and environment that gives influence will make up our creative way to construct or create our particular attitudes (Hall and Lindzey, 1985: 152). Pi saved from his problem because Pi used creative

power of self to control Richard Parker and to survive in the middle of Pacific Ocean. He makes a raft from the equipment in the lifeboat to avoid Richard Parker, he trains to make Richard Parker scared with him in order to he can lives in the lifeboat. So he belong s to creative persons.

### **3. Rationality Analysis**

Rationality is the characteristic of any action, belief, or desire that makes their choice a necessity. Rationality is to be a property of the thinking (or lack of thinking) that goes into belief formation or decision making (Baron, 1985: 5). In *Life of Pi* novel, Pi is the major character that shows about rationality. Pi appraised something with rationality. He looked strange because he faith in three religion. He thinks that God gives many ways to love. He doesn't care with people who loved one religion but they only loved theoretically, not practically. He doesn't care with people who looked defeat their religion but they busy to tell about the badness of the other religion, they do not busy to help each other. Pi also used his rationality to predict his ways to survive, he used rationality to control Richard Parker because he still carefully although Richard Parker can be controlled by him.

### **4. Survival Analysis**

Pi also shows the survival of him in *Life of Pi* novel. Pi lived in the lifeboat with Richard Parker in the middle of Pacific Ocean. Pi only depends on the equipment, the supplies of crackers and cans water that available in the lifeboat. He also cared with the handbook in the lifeboat because it contents much information to survive in the sea. After the supplier of food was used up Pi strives to fishing for his food and to feed Richard Parker. He strives to control Richard parker in order to he does not threaten by Richard Parker. Pi strives to do everything although the condition so hard, but he strives until he can reach the land.

#### **D. Conclusion**

The researcher was analyzing the rationality and survival of Piscine Molitor Patel and an individual psychological approach. Based on the analysis of rationality and survival in *Life of Pi* novel by using an individual psychological approach, the researcher draws the conclusion as follows:

First, based on structural analysis of each elements, it shows that character and characterization, plot, setting, point of view, theme and styles are correlated each other and form unity. The interesting point is in the characterization of this novel. Pi is described as a young man that unique because he is shy but curious person. He believes in three religions and it makes him look strange. The character of Richard Parker also describes like the natural animal and dangerous for Pi. The point of view which uses a first person makes the readers can feel what Pi feels. Another that, the message of this novel is interesting, that is human must have a strong belief and shouldn't give up with the problems because there is not impossible". The major character of this novel has a strong character and gives the influences for the reader especially from the rationality and survival in his life.

Second, *Life of Pi* novel is using an individual psychological approach. The major character of this novel is reflected in fictional finalism, inferiority feelings and compensation, striving for superiority, social interest, style of life, and creative power of self form a solid unity. An individual psychological approach related to the rationality and

survival of Piscine Molitor Patel in *Life of Pi*. It shows that the major character engaged the rationality and survival in his act. He showed how rationality and survival in his life. In the end of story, he can survive in the middle of Pacific Ocean with a Bengal tiger because he realizes that he can survive with his effort, not only hoping in his mind but his mind and his strive must be balanced. His fictional goal is reached although he has an inferiority feeling, because his striving to reach his goal with his creative power and with the background of his style of life and social interest.

In the last, the researcher completes this study with the theory of rationality and survival. Human use their rationality and survival in their life such as the major character that shows the rationality and survival in his life. The rationality is the characteristic of any action, belief, or desire that makes their choice a necessity. While survival theory can be defined in terms of the interactions between an individual and its natural surroundings. It is support an individual psychological approach to analyze of major character in *Life of Pi* novel. Piscine Molitor Patel always considers his act to reach his goal with the strong believe and the effort, to reach his goal he tried to survive with the frightened of Richard Parker and the suffered in the middle of Pacific Ocean.

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