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碩士學位論文

論揚·馬泰爾小說《少年 Pi 的奇幻漂流》為成長小說: 一趟前往生態意識的旅程

Yann Martel’s Life of Pi as a Bildungsroman: A Journey Towards Ecological Consciousness

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摘要

本論文以生態成長的角度來看加拿大作家揚·馬泰爾（Yann Martel）的小說《少年Pi的奇幻漂流》中主角Pi如何在透過與老虎的互動中，對動物園裡動物的看法有著慢慢成長和變化。小說的第一部分Pi提到了他小時在朋迪榭裡動物園的成長故事，他獨特的動物園觀是他以人類為中心去看動物園的動物，然而，筆者發現Pi在看待動物時，認為它們需要居住在動物園裡且被圈禁和馴養的想法是和帝國主義中看待他者和管理人種問題上不謀而合，但往後的漂流旅程中，筆者又發現了Pi在對待老虎理查·帕克時有著不同於他之前的動物園觀，Pi卻視老虎為同伴，認為老虎有必要和他一起生存下去。這種轉變是Pi跨越了他以往以人類為中心看待他者（the other）的世界觀，對於動物的生命有著不一樣的體悟，Pi藉由訓練理查·帕克老虎而抵抗的同時，調整和修正他原先以人類為中心的觀點去看待動物園的動物，此刻，Pi視老虎為個體並以老虎的需求為優先，這種成長觀以他者需要為優先給予他日後對於人類為中心的論述做為批判。值得注意的是小說中的擬人化技巧是Pi重新建立起他與老虎共感和欣賞動物的做法，而在Pi最後的兩個版本故事中，筆者認為動物版本的故事是Pi對人類為中心的世界中屏除動物世界觀的批判。
Abstract

The thesis aims to read Yann Martel’s *Life of Pi* as an example of the Bildungsroman, examining how Pi changes from an anthropocentric view to one which takes interest of zoo animals, in particular, the tiger Richard Parker. In early part of *Life of Pi*, Pi told narrator how he lived by the Pondicherry zoo. Because of his personal background living together with the zoo animals, he perceives animals in terms of an anthropocentric view. I see that the view Pi initially looks at zoo animals is akin to the view the colonizer see the colonized. The statement which he argues the keeping of wild animals in captivity generates and corresponds with the racism/speciesism ideologies of imperialism. It is, however, important to note that after his interactions with Richard Parker, Pi considers Richard Parker as individual to be respected rather than an object to be confined. He treats Richard Parker as one of his companions and promises to keep Richard Parker alive. The transformation demonstrates Pi’s ecological negotiation with Richard Parker. I point out that by training Richard Parker while Richard Parker resists Pi, Pi reconsiders his initial perspective of zoo animals as objects in terms of his anthropocentric view. Pi starts to care, love, and compassionate for Richard Parker, privileging Richard Parker’s needs over his. Significantly, Pi’s negotiation with Richard Parker offers him an opportunity to criticize the anthropocentric view. More interesting is to see that the device of anthropomorphism in *Life of Pi* is the means by which Pi reconnects to and appreciates for Richard Parker and animals. At last, in the last part of the novel, Pi’s two versions of the survival tale is his critique of anthropocentricism.
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Introduction

This thesis aims to read Yann Martel’s second novel *Life of Pi* (2001) as an example of the ecologically oriented bildungsroman. The thesis examines the brief history of zoological gardens in the West, investigates Pi’s shipwreck experience as a bildungsroman oriented towards his changing relationship with the environment, and explores Martel’s adaption and expansion of the traditional shipwreck narrative. Finally, I will interpret Pi’s alternative story of the survival tale as a critique of anthropocentricism. Drawing upon colonialism, ecocriticism and many conventional literary works, I argue that Pi changes his worldview from an anthropocentric one to one which is concerned with the interest of zoo animals, especially the tiger Richard Parker. The humans will never understand what animals account for them without challenging the understanding of wild species and their world, and also without criticizing the Western humanism’s established hierarchy between human beings and animals. In humanist discourses, animals are often misinterpreted and their needs and welfares are ignored. In *Life of Pi*, we will see how humanist discourses are turned down and replaced by an eco-centered discourse. This thesis will also investigate human-animal relationship by a comparison between the colonized and zoo animals in the context of colonialism. I will start with the exploration of the establishment of the zoo as well. The zoo is the visible result of our disrespect for wild species because the zoo is constructed according to the principle of colonial domination. Humans’ view of the zoo animals is akin to the ways

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1 The term Bildungsroman is said to be coined by a philologist Karl Morgensten around 1820 in two lectures on the “Essence” and “History.” Actually, a philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey has populated it in 1905, defining it as either a novel of education or a novel of personal development, “each stage having its own specific value and serving as the ground of a higher stage, an upward and onward vision of human growth...” (Jeffers 49). Generally, Bildungsroman is a sub-genre in the western literary works which concerns with the early childhood-to-young-adulthood stages of life, usually the male protagonist, more typically, a hero’s coming age. Some canonical Bildungsromane, *The Mill on the Floss*, *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, *Great Expectations* follow the pattern.
in which the colonizer looks at the colonized. Nevertheless, in *Life of Pi*, the establishment of the zoo and afterwards the coexistence of Richard Parker and Pi are two important elements which offer Pi an opportunity to rethink the lives of animals. Significantly, in his interactions with Richard Parker in a lifeboat in the Pacific Ocean, Pi changes his outlook of the zoo animals. What Pi has learned from Richard Parker was his dire need of Richard Parker as the means to overcome the difficulties of survival. Personally, *Life of Pi* raises issues regarding how our perception of animals is discursively constructed and sustained by racist and speciesist ideologies: the novel draws our attention to the way in which the colonial discourse shapes and governs Pi’s perception of animals and to the process in which Pi grows out of the human-centered ideologies of development. Viewing from this perspective, I argue that Pi sees animals in terms of his need, experience, and value but this anthropocentric worldview is problematic and we need an alternative narrative that is able to tell the story differently.

Spending over 200 days on a lifeboat with the tiger Richard Parker, Pi is forced to change his initial outlook of animals. Subsequently, the relationship between Pi and Richard Parker is transformed. Pi’s shipwrecked experience with Richard Parker indeed pushes him to redefine animals and he begins to cherish the moments with Richard Parker. The way in which Pi finally begins to see Richard Parker as an individual to be respected challenges Western humanist ideologies, in which animals often serve as a part of the natural resources ready to be exploited by human beings. In traditional narratives about animals, animals are often described as the objects of our emotional reflections and are read as the allegories of ourselves. However, *Life of Pi* demonstrates that animals are our companions and they are creatures with flesh and blood which require our care, love, and compassion. The advocate of the equal treatment of animals is straightforwardly revealed in Pi’ animal version of the survival tale, in which he criticizes our usual ways of seeing animals as objects and discloses that our anthropocentric view of the animals is narrow and limited. Pi offers an alternative
worldview stressing upon coexistence between humans and animals to challenge the anthropocentric worldview.

Martel’s 2001 Booker Prize-winning novel *Life of Pi* is intersected by the first person narrator Piscine Patel and the third person narrator Martel-like narrator, who visits the adult Pi Patel in order to hear “a story to make [him] believe God” (Martel xi). Because he is teased for the same sound of pissing, Piscine Patel renames himself “Pi.” He recounts a fantastic shipwreck story with a 450-pound Bengal tiger named Richard Parker in a tiny boat in the Pacific Ocean after his family’s ship to Canada sunk and his family got lost. According to him, what makes his voyage more than an intriguing and shocking shipwreck story is that he struggles with the adult Richard Parker and at last he and Richard Parker survive. Viewing from what has happened between a boy and a group of zoo animals, many critics and scholars—June Dwyer, Shu-fan Tsai2 and Gregory Stephens, to name just three—have commented that *Life of Pi* emphasizes the important role of Richard Parker and have defined *Life of Pi* as an ecologically oriented bildungsroman. Apparently, critics tend to focus on how Richard Parker plays an important role in shaping Pi’s identity. For example, Dwyer examines the genesis and evolution of the shipwreck narrative. Dwyer finds that Martel’s *Life of Pi* starts the shift in the shipwreck narrative. In analyzing traditional codes of the shipwreck narrative—Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* and Samuel Coleridge’s “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner”—and two other works of children’s literature, Dwyer maintains that few writers look at the role of nature, the concern of our environment and, in particular, the relationship between humans and animals. Due to this change in *Life of Pi*, Martel’s *Life of Pi* can be considered a new paradigm shift in the shipwreck narrative which argues against the importance of humans over animals. Moreover, Dwyer also comments that there is a growing concern for ecological lives in the contemporary literary works, no matter how natural world

2 See her article on “Human-nature relationship in *Life of Pi*” (45).
is represented. The roles of animals are no longer ignored until they are emphasized in *Life of Pi*. Human beings' domination over animals is replaced by the mutual respect between humans and animals. When humans start to draw attention to animals, the roles of animals change for the better and animals can be treated as individuals to be respected. The discourse emphasizing the roles of animals can also be seen in the contemporary critics such as Nigel Rothfels, Randy Malamudm and Cary Wolfe, who reject to describe animals as utilitarian (for example, animals are treated as the objects or allegories of our emotional reflections) and deny romantic attitude towards animals. Martel’s *Life of Pi* is one of the few examples of the shipwreck narrative which resists a clear established hierarchical relationship between human and animal; that is to say, a master-slave relationship between humans and animals. Martel rewrites shipwreck narrative but subsequently enhances and complicates the human-animal relationship. By doing so, *Life of Pi* guides readers to reconsider human-animal relationship and read Pi’s voyage as a journey towards an ecologically oriented bildungsroman.

Interpreting the novel in the context of the children’s literature, Tsai rereads Martel’s *Life of Pi* in terms of ecocriticism. She argues that in children’s literature, a teenager has to experience a series of tests whereby he/she can accommodate not just to someone but to everyone or social orders in the society at large. Before accepting the values of the society, he/she must face the challenges brought forth in the passage from childhood to maturity by negotiation between inner growth and social adaptation, while searching for identity and answers to life through any learning experiences that come his way. However, unlike traditional children’s literature focusing on the interaction between humans or between individual and the society, Martel’s *Life of Pi* discusses how the roles of earth, nature, and animal help shape the personality of a teenager. That is to say, in a growing importance of the environmental concerns today, Tsai finds that children’s literature is also inclined to focus on how nature, in particular, animals, accompany children to bear the pain of growth. Tsai argues
that in *Life of Pi* animals play an important role in Pi’s development. She continues to point that in the conventional codes of British and American literature, the role of nature is presented in two opposing manners, either it is described as an idealist, idyllic manner as in the convention of the eighteenth century romanticism or it is presented as sources of ordeal and tests demanding human adaptation as in the Darwinism of the 19th century. In the eighteenth century, the natural world is described as an ideal and simple world. As Tsai observes, *Life of Pi* follows the conventional codes of British and American literature, in which the natural world is described as an ideal and simple world. In *Life of Pi*, Pi’s initial view of animals and the ways in which *Life of Pi* depicts our natural world are reminiscent of exoticism and idealism. For example, the episode in which the tiger eats a goat is a lesson from which Pi’s father taught Pi that the world and its animals are not innocent and harmless as Pi might imagine. Also, the Pondicherry zoo is described as the image of Eden: “to [Pi], [the zoo] was paradise on earth. [Pi has] nothing but the fondest memories of growing up in a zoo. [Pi] lived the life of prince” (Martel 17). Certainly, in the description of the zoo and its zoo animals, Tsai argues that *Life of Pi* follows the classical writing in describing wild animals as the sources of romanticism. Pi’s initial outlook of wild animals reflects the romantic attitude towards animals.

Gregory Stephens points out that there is an enhancement of human-animal relationship in *Life of Pi*. To some degree, *Life of Pi* is an ascent narrative, a journey toward enlightenment (Stephens 41). As many critics disclose, isolated from the civilized world and stranding in a tiny boat, Pi’s coexistence with Richard Parker leads him to re-imagine and rethink a new kinship and community with animals because his only survivors are a group of zoo animals. As far as Pi is concerned, the gradual understandings of the importance of Richard Parker and finding a way to feed the tiger are even more important than self-interest and physical survival, because if he ignores Richard Parker’s needs, Pi will be devoured.
Consequently, Pi has no choice but to become Richard Parker’s servant and “is forced to
decenter himself in relation to the forces of the natural world” (Stephens 47). Under this
circumstance, according to Stephens, Pi is compelled to question the human-animal boundary
he used to think. What’s more, Richard Parker’s human-assigned name is an obvious
evidence of negotiation between human and animal relationships. So, “the firm division
between civilization and wildness, humans and animals, sometimes gets fudged” (47).
Humans and animals should understand each other through an opportunity of coexistence.

According to many commentaries and reviews of Life of Pi, no matter Dwyer,
Shu-Fan Tsai or Stephens, they draw attention to the roles of nature, the traditional codes of
the shipwreck narrative, and the development of human-animal relationship. All these themes
shape the focus of Life of Pi. However, when I reread Life of Pi and many reviews, I was
surprised to find that few critics discussed and analyzed the establishment of the zoo and the
anthropocentric worldview in the early part of Life of Pi. Ever since I had learned
anthropocentrism in my eco-criticism course, I had understood that the establishment of the
zoo and anthropocentric worldview had more to do with the human-animal relationship. So
when I found that few critics wrote comments on anthropocentricism and zoo establishment
which were the focus not only in Life of Pi but also in the contemporary studies of the
postcolonial ecocriticism and zoocriticism, I was puzzled and intrigued. This sense of
confusion drove me to begin the writing process that eventually led to this thesis. Certainly,
the forms of the zoo and anthropocentricism are significant because they reflect how humans
have been seeing their animals and their relation to animals in the societies. So, before I
discuss Pi’s changing attitude towards nature, animals and his negotiation of the
human-animal relationship, it is necessary to attend to the historical evolution of the forms of
the zoos in general and Pi’s view of Pondicherry zoo animals in particular. In other words, in
working through Pi’s eco-centered worldview, I point out that the anthropocentric worldview,
which sees animals as the other or the “empty receptacles” of human emotions should be discussed. I will trace the social, historical, and cultural aspects of the establishment of zoos, emphasizing especially that the concept of Western imperialism has been rooted into the zoo establishment. Before his shipwreck experience, Pi sees animals through a human-centered lens. Only after his interactions with Richard Parker does Pi find that zoo animals, in particular, Richard Parker is not the other but one of his community. In an effort to explore how imperialism dominates the environmental world, I bring postcolonialism and ecocriticism together into reading Martel’s *Life of Pi*. As Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin point out, the complex interplay of postcolonial and ecological category is essential because they are put together to challenge the continuing imperial code of seeing the other in the zoo and promote the idea of egalitarianism among species. Viewing from this perspective, I think it is possible to tease out the colonialist ideologies underpinning the establishment of zoo and to read Pi’s bildungsroman as a narrative of his growth toward an eco-centric worldview.

Martel is a Canadian writer with a global vision. Because his father is a diplomat, he has a nomadic life and thus has travelled around the world. Martel studied Philosophy at Trent University. After graduation, he has worked as a librarian, tree planter, dishwasher, and security guard. When he was twenty-seven years old, he started to write. Martel has spent two years (2002 and 2003) as a Samuel Fischer Professor of Literature in the Department of Comparative Literature at the Free University of Berlin, where he gave a lecture, entitled “Meeting the Other: The Animals in Western Literature.” In Bonn and Berlin in 2002, Martel also gave a speech to Sabine Sielke, who interviewed Martel and asked him questions listed in “The Empathetic Imagination: An Interview with Yann Martel.” Generally speaking, Martel has published three books, *The Fact Behind the Helsinki Roccamatios* (1993), *Self*

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3 For empty receptacle, I borrow this from Fiona Becket and Terry Gifford. They think that animals are looking as if they are hollow objects filling with characteristics, imagination, and desire humans give them.
(1996), and Life of Pi (2001). But, The Fact Behind the Helsinki Roccamatios and Self did not win any awards. After publishing his second novel Life of Pi in September 2001, he has established his name as an awarding-winning writer and his Life of Pi is rewarded as Man Booker-prize winner in 2002. From then on, Life of Pi has been translated into different languages, also including illustrations.

Although Martel has won international success, his Life of Pi arouses many debates on plot and religious issue. In terms of plot, Martel was accused of plagiarism by a Brazilian writer, Moacyr Scliar because the plot of Martel’s Life of Pi is quite similar to that of Scliar’s Max and the Cats⁴ (1981). Also, expressing his gratitude, Martel claims in Author’s Note that he thanks Scliar for “the spark of life” (xi). This announcement in his acknowledgement, especially the word of “spark” causes quite a stir among many reviewers and critics. However, Martel manages to defend himself by arguing that he only reads a review of Scliar’s Max and the Cat. Martel does not think it is dishonest and improper to borrow the beginning of Scliar’s Max and the Cats, claiming that he does not read the whole book of Scliar’s novel. Besides, from the perspective of religion, some do not believe that Martel’s Life of Pi can convert readers into believing in God or give them a desire to believe in God as the Author’s Note’s claims. And, Life of Pi does not make the religious believers worship their God. Nevertheless, Peter Wittaker in the review of Life of Pi (2002) argues that Pi’s story of the survival tale makes him believe the “considerable redemptive powers of fiction” (qtd. in Stratton 6). Also, James Wood maintains that Pi’s story attempts to combine the concept of believing in story with that of believing in God. He suggests that although it is true that “the way we believe in stories is similar to the way we believe in God” (4), the concept of the two

⁴ Moacyr Scliar’s Max and the Cats (1981) recounts a Jewish boy who shares a lifeboat with a panther after the boy survives from the Holocaust and the shipwreck. Due to the similar plot of the shipwrecked experience in the ocean and the characters of the protagonist and his animal, Martel is accused of plagiarism.
is totally different,5 and to conflate them is risking. As many reviews commentaries have observed, Martel’s *Life of Pi* can be examined from different perspectives, from the perspectives of religion, plot, shipwreck narrative, to my main concern, the roles of the animals.

Equally important is the novel’s treatment of animals. *Life of Pi* reflects on our treatment of animals nowadays and our anthropocentric worldview; *Life of Pi* brings forth an enhanced understanding of animal’s behaviors and to some extent criticizes the ways in which our literary works frequently treat animals as an allegorical reflection of human life; *Life of Pi* gives readers an alternative narrative in which we can imagine a better life with animals according to Pi. Ever since Pi had learned that the zoos can provide animals with enough daily supplies and the avoidance of foes, even though they are deprived of liberty, Pi had considered the zoos as a sound place for animal inhabitant. But, when he interacts with Richard Parker in a lifeboat after the freighter sank, Pi realizes that his initial outlook of the zoo animals is problematic. Richard Parker should be treated as an individual whose needs should be considered as we consider ourselves and whose relation is bound up with Pi and every individuals in societies. In other words, animals also deserve a care, love, and compassionate from humans.

In this sense, *Life of Pi* compels us to understand animal’s behaviors and read their animality which humans never think about. Traditionally, humanist literary works deal with animal through the lens of anthropomorphism. Animals are described as objects of our emotional reflections and are read as allegories of ourselves. Representations of animal such as Disney cartoons and allegories often attribute human characteristics to animals, thus blinding humans from seeing the actual animals and their animality. In these representations,

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what we see is human in disguise of animals and this statement of representations of animal stresses humans as the center of the world. However, *Life of Pi* is the novel which explores the animal subjects and provides animals with animality. Pi does not use animal representation for allegorical purpose or as a negative metaphor. Rather, Pi anthropomorphizes zoo animals. This device of anthropomorphism without misrepresenting and neglecting animal subjects is an important device of representing ecological subjects.\(^6\) Through anthropomorphism, Pi reconnects his relation to Richard Parker and zoo animals in general. In this sense, Martel’s *Life of Pi* is the novel which enhances human beings sound understandings toward animals. Pi attributes human characteristics to Richard Parker because he knows that Richard Parker is an individual who deserves his attention and appreciation. So, we see a fully-fleshed tiger Richard Parker who expresses his anger when being aroused and is described as an actual tiger instead of a symbol. By bringing together humans and animals will make us understand the treatment of the animals better.

Also, *Life of Pi* gives readers an alternative narrative with which we can imagine a better life according to Pi. Near the end of *Life of Pi*, Pi’s alternative story of the survival tale does not provide readers a clear answer to the truth of his shipwrecked experience, in which his companions are animals or humans. The explanation of Pi’s human version of the survival tale leads the readers to ponder a different situation of Pi’s cannibal experience. Pi does not argue that the second version of his shipwreck narrative is more realistic than the animal one. In other words, Pi does not suggest that the animal version of the survival tale is illusionary. Rather, Pi asks his two Japanese investigators to make their own choice of the two stories since they cannot prove the question either way. In this sense, Pi offers an alternative story to

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\(^6\) In chapter Two, I will defend anthropomorphism as an ecological way to represent natural values by using Bryan Moore’s theory. It is better to tell anthropomorphism and anthropocentricism apart and to see anthropomorphism as a way of reconnecting human-animal relationship between Pi and Richard Parker.
tell his survival tale differently. This alternative gives reader more interpretations and imaginations to read Pi’s survival story, in which men are no longer the main figures. This sense of curiosity motivates my exploratory process that leads to this thesis. Overall, the issues of zoo establishment in *Life of Pi* are vastly concerned with topics such as ecological concern, the development of human leisure activity, and the violence in human-animal relationship, all of which are the top concerns in my following thesis.

In the first chapter, I will explore the establishment of the zoo in the West with the historical references to the sixteenth, seventh, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries respectively. Following that, I will concentrate on how Pi grows out of the imperial outlook of the animals. I argue that through his coexistence with Richard Parker, Pi changes his view from an anthropocentric one to an eco-centered one, which takes interest of zoo animals. Zoological gardens have existed for many thousands years and the zoos have fascinated humans all over the world. It was estimated that in antiquity zoological gardens received more visitors than those pay visits to museums, theaters, sports stadiums, and libraries. Indeed, wild animals were popular because they were regarded as luxurious and prestigious. Only the aristocracy can take care of wild animals. And, the more impressive and the numerous of the wild animals an aristocracy had, the more prestigious and loftier an aristocracy was. In the sixteenth century, wild animals were collected to show the wealth of the aristocracy. In the seventeenth century, through watching the beast combats in the arena, the aristocrats were satisfied for their desire for war. The aristocrats expected to see a bloody, violent, and warlike beast combats, through which the voyeuristic desires are satisfied. In this sense, the zoos in sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are the demonstration of human’s domination on animals by casting animals as performers (Baratay and Hardouin-Fugier 26). In the nineteenth century, when the Europeans built their immense colonial empire, the zoo has become a place of the imperial showcase, where everything, ranging from fauna and flora,
becomes the target of their plunder. Certainly, according to Eric Baratay and Elizabeth Hardouin-Fugier’s analysis of zoological gardens, the establishment of the zoo is thus linked to the histories of colonization. Significantly, in *Life of Pi*, we see that Pi’s initial outlook of zoo animals is akin to the ways in which the colonizers see the colonized. That is to say, Pi regards animals through a lens underpinned by speciesism, which is in parallel to the colonizer’s racist gaze for the colonized. I attempt to point out Pi’s initial outlook of wild animal is problematic by references to John Berger’s ways of looking at zoos and Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin’s zoocriticism. As *Life of Pi* discloses, animals in zoo enclosure does not lead lives of comfort because the zoo animals are in high rate of death. Also, according to Berger, humans’ view of wild animals is never right because humans have looked at zoo animals as if animals are empty commodities to be observed and examined and human are “looking at something that has been rendered absolutely marginal” (24 Berger’s italics). But Pi’s imperial outlook of the animal other does not last throughout the plot of *Life of Pi*. His imperial view is dramatically changed from anthropocentric worldview to an eco-centered worldview, which takes animal subject and needs into consideration. In interactions and negotiation with Richard Parker, Pi changes his anthropocentric worldview. From then on, Pi rethinks what wild animals, in particular, Richard Parker accounts for him as well as the human societies: animals are companions of humans; animals and their natural world can cure distressing nerve; only if humans do not invade their territory are animals not dangerous to humans; animals are interdependent with humans. More importantly, in *Life of Pi*, through an exchange of the communication between Pi and Richard Parker, they learn from each other. This negotiation between Pi and Richard Parker restrains Pi from viewing Richard Parker as an object. When humans’ view of the animals changes, human’s hierarchal relationship to animals also breaks. Animals are no longer served as objects but acting subjects which require our attention. The disruption of hierarchical relationship between
human and animal is a breakthrough of the animal delineations in traditional shipwreck narratives. The ascendancy and centrality of humans are overturned and convert to the recognition of animals as individuals to be respected.

Chapter two concentrates on the human and animal relationship. I will investigate the ways in which Life of Pi adapts and reverses the traditional codes of the shipwreck narrative, explain how anthropomorphism is the means through which Pi relates to animals and tell, and, most importantly, distinguish anthropomorphism from anthropocentricism. In this chapter, I will apply Julia Kristieva’s concept of intertextuality into reading Life of Pi.\(^7\) I will examine the ways in which Martel’s Life of Pi echoes with Daniel Defoe’s Robinson Crusoe (1719), Edgar Allan Poe’s The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket (1837), and Ernest Hemingway’s The Old Man and the Sea (1951). Martel appropriates and extends these texts to form an intertextual relationship with the existing shipwreck narratives. Therefore, I will reevaluate Life of Pi as an example of the traditional shipwreck narrative in terms of human and animal relationship. I show that the hierarchical relationship between human and animal, with humans ranking at the top while animal at the bottom is disrupted. The role of animals becomes increasingly important in the literary works. Historically, Defoe’s Robinson Crusoe is an first example of the shipwreck narrative, in which Defoe recounts how the protagonist Crusoe educates his friend Friday in an estranged island. Based on this human-to-human relationship, Martel rewrites Crusoe-Friday relationship by adding the role of animals. It becomes a human-to-animal relationship. By doing so, Martel draws our attention to the human-animal relationship. But this human-animal relationship is not based on a colonial relation. Pi tames Richard Parker but in the meantime respects him. Pi and Richard Parker are put into an ambiguous space where they are neither master-slave relationship nor friendship. Nevertheless, Pi tries to understand Richard Parker in ways that

\(^7\) See Chapter Two, the definition of intertextuality. P40.
Defoe fails to understand Friday. Moreover, we see that this human and animal relationship echoes with Hemingway’s Santiago and the marlin. The marline is a symbol of a reverent opponent of the aged Santiago. But, in *The Old Man and the Sea*, Santiago does not focus on animal subject of the marlin and subsequently respect the existence of the marline. For Santiago, his struggling with the marlin signifies his dominance over the marline. Specifically, it is a demonstration of human’s dominance over nature. The marlin, in one sense, is interpreted in a symbolic way. The symbolic interpretation of the animals, however, is rejected in *Life of Pi*. Different from the protagonists in previous shipwreck narratives, Pi cherishes Richard Parker by saying that Richard Parker will survive together with him. The importance of the encounters of the animal other is emphasized in *Life of Pi*, in a way that Santiago never thinks of and respects his marline. Last but not the least, we find that the name of Richard Parker has appeared again and again in different literary and historical texts. These repetitive intertextual readings of the name of Richard Parker offer Richard Parker a special significance because we cannot value Richard Parker alone or as a tiger in *Life of Pi*. Instead, we must compare and contrast the tiger Richard Parker with the other Richard Parkers in other literary texts. In *Life of Pi*, the name Richard Parker is derived from the name of a hunter and because of a “clerical error,” it becomes the name of a tiger. By endowing a tiger with a human name, I argue that Richard Parker can be “a kind of lesser human, designated by personal pronouns, such as *who*, not by *which*, *that*, or *it*” (Haraway 206-7). Also, we see that anthropomorphism is the means by which Pi links his relation to animals. In doing so, Pi can appreciate animals, build an affinity with Richard Parker, and express the proximity of animals to humans. Throughout *Life of Pi*, Pi never fails to anthropomorphize Richard Parker and other animals in his zoo. For example, Richard Parker’s physical description and seasickness in the lifeboat is visually appealed to humans. Pi’s comparison between animals and humans leads us to rethink animal relation to humans in the society and, thus, the
proximity of animals to humans. Richard Parker’s unceremoniously departure frustrates Pi because Pi regards Richard Parker as one of his community. With these enhanced understandings of the animals, the relationship between humans and animals becomes better. Erica Fudge argues that “…without anthropomorphism we are unable to comprehend and represent the presence of an animal” (76). Anthropomorphism is the desires through which people can communicate and comprehend the natural world—it is a desire that humans do not want to “lose contract with a large part of our world” (76). Similarly, Esther Leslie also maintains that anthropomorphism is our “ability to empathize as much with objects as with people, as much with animals and trees as with machinery” (96). In Leslie’s words, through a humanizing animal or object, humans can empathize the other when the other is suffering and, thus, an intimate bond with an animal or object establishes. By doing so, people have an affinity with animals or the other. Humans and animals or other species, in this sense, share the same capacity to suffer. And, humans are inclined to recognize human-like rights to animals. As these examples in Life of Pi illustrate and two critics argue, Pi anthropomorphizes animals in terms of the value of animals. In this sense, when wild animals are emotionally connected to humans, animals help us recognize their significance to us and thus human-animal relationship mediates.

Ultimately, I will analyze Pi’s critique of anthropocentric discourse in his alternative story. I indicate that Pi questions the binary oppositions in the anthropocentric discourse and suggests an alternative worldview to tell his story differently. Due to the anthropocentric worldview, society stresses the clear hierarchical differences between humans and animals. Because of the discrete categories of difference between humanity and animality, human beings reject their analogies and similarity with animals. However, in Life of Pi we see that Pi’s alternative story offers two versions of the survive tale which puts humans and animals in the same space together in order to rethink the species boundaries. Besides, since the two
Japanese investigators Mr. Chiba and Mr. Okamoto do not believe Pi’s first version of the survival tale, Pi gives them a different story, in which the characters are humans. This second version of the survival tale, based on an anthropocentric view, however, becomes more incredible to them. This is an evidence of his critique of anthropocentric view becomes two Japanese investigators never know animals. Actually, according to reviews, critics have commented on Pi’s alternative story. Dwyer thinks that because animals disappear in the traditional shipwreck narratives, the two investigators distrust the truth of Pi’s first version of the survival tale. The two Japanese officials want a traditional shipwreck narrative, in which men are the main figures, in order to meet their needs. Ruta Slapkauskaite indicates that Pi’s animal version of the survival tale creates humor. The humorous effect is Pi’s critique of the anthropocentric view and reason-based societies. Pi’s animal version of the survival tale, requires the two Japanese investigators’ need to go beyond anthropocentric view. Slapkauskaite thinks that anthropocentric view is limited to interpret animal world and we need an eco-centered view as a counterpart to the anthropocentric view. Also, interpreting from conventional literary writings, Fiona Becket and Terry Gifford suggest that Pi’s human version aims to decolonize the beast fable (174). In Pi’s animal version of the survival tale, animals are not read as allegorical and symbolic interpretations as our traditional literary works frequently do. We have a full-flesh tiger, a hyena, a zebra, and an orangutan, who act on their own account instead of serving as the objects of our emotional reflection. This representation of animals celebrates the existence of animals and advocates the values of animals as an integral part of our lives. The crossing human-animal geographical boundary can be seen as another example of the proximity of animals and humans. Human beings and animals are put together to form an intense and powerful relation. By doing so, humans are forced to rethink the fixed species boundaries between human and animal groups. When human beings resituate the species boundaries between themselves and animals, our
epistemology of animals should be subsequently challenged. Overall, all these examples aim to interrogate the species boundaries between human and animal and request a rethinking of what means to be humanity and animality. Significantly, as the examples demonstrate in *Life of Pi*, we are going to see how much these questions of species boundaries contribute towards enhanced understandings of the animal and Pi himself.
Chapter 1
From Anthropocentricism to Eco-centered Worldview

Introducing his motivation of writing Life of Pi, Martel describes in Author’s Note that his Life of Pi was born when he was hungry. In 1996 Martel’s second book was published in Canada, which did not succeed and was credited with “faint praise.” Martel was not discouraged by this fiasco. Rather, Martel went to Bombay with limited finance to write a novel set in Portugal in 1939. This is not illogic if you realize that “a novel set in Portugal in 1939 may have very little to do with Portugal in 1939” (Martel v). This claim seems to point out the fictional setting of Life of Pi in Pondicherry, where there has never been a zoo. No matter whether there has been a zoo in Pondicherry, Martel describes the establishment of zoological garden to express the impact of imperial power on Pondicherry:

Our good old nation was just seven years old as a republic when it became bigger by a small territory. Pondicherry entered the Union of India on November 1, 1954. ... A portion of the grounds of the Pondicherry Botanical Garden was made available rent-free for an exciting business opportunity and—lo and behold—India has branch new zoo, designed and run according to the most modern, biological sound principles. (15 my italics)

This passage, in addition to providing the historical background of India’s independence from British colonial power as well as the establishment of zoological garden in Pondicherry, reveals the social transformation in India: India starts to modernize. The word “modern” is important for our discussion because of its twofold meanings. Literally speaking, “modern” as an adjective refers to fashioned and recent style. Pondicherry has a newly modern designed zoo aiming for attracting many tourists and gaining profits. In its figurative meaning, modern implies the advent of modernization of India which the British colonialism brings forth.
Significantly, the forms of zoological garden and their establishment, according to Baratay and Hardouin-Fugier, were invented in Europe and spread all over the world. In this sense, the establishment of zoological gardens in India as well as Pondicherry can be linked to the process of colonial modernization. It is the first time that Martel indicates the impact of modernization and imperial power on Pondicherry, trying to place Pondicherry as a post-colonial city.

Besides, from another example with which Pi explains how a portion of Pondicherry Botanical Garden transforms into a zoo, I point out that Pondicherry is under the process of urbanization and is influenced by capitalist ideologies of development. The Botanical Garden is associated with “fertile, irrigated, agricultural land” (Yadav 1), for it is the place connecting the human and non-human worlds. When the Botanical Garden is converted to a zoo, it implies the rise of capitalist development and modernization. “Zoo was kinds of assurance of earning huge profits, as being the only amusement destination for it would attract many visitors daily” (Yadav 1). This capitalist concern emphasizes “business opportunity” rather than the lives of wildlife. Humans’ territorial expansion over the natural world to meet their needs and commercial profits will threaten natural habitats, with the result that a great number of wild animals are reduced and zoo establishment is justified as a reservation of endangered wild animals. In one sense, the establishment of the zoo aims to reduce the space of non-human world and satisfy humans’ desire for land.

The zoo, actually, is an important theme in *Life of Pi*. Baratay and Hardouin-Fugier in their book, entitled *Zoo: A History of Zoological Gardens in the West*, trace the history of zoological garden in the West. In order to understand why human beings are fascinated by wild species to the extent that they keep wild species near them in the enclosed spaces, Baratay and Hardouin-Fugier examine the genesis and evolution of the zoo in the West, dating from antiquity to modern. They show that the history of zoo establishment and its
transformation are firmly associated with Europe and colonial empires. So, in this chapter, I intend to analyze colonial ideologies within the establishment of the zoo. I reveal the ambitions and perceptions which the colonizers project on their wild animals. Although the questions to their ambitions and perceptions vary in different periods, the sound understanding of the association between zoo animals and the colonized can be answered with the historical references of the zoo in the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. Following that, I will turn to the main concern of my thesis, analyzing Pi’s bildungsroman from Eurocentric anthropocentrism to an eco-centered worldview. Through interactions with Richard Parker, Pi is conscious of the importance of existence of Richard Parker. He starts to take the lives of the wild animals into consideration. His attitude towards and perception of the zoo animals changes.

### The Historical Background of Zoological Garden

According to Baratay and Hardouin-Fugier, the word “zoo” is an abbreviation of zoological garden and is derived from the French term *ménagerie*, which was used to refer to housekeeping in the thirteenth century. The French name *ménagerie* in the sixteenth century referred to the administration of a farm. From the 1580s, *ménagerie* was a place which contains the whole part of a farm, including wild animals. In the seventeenth century, it was used to designate the place constructed for feeding the domesticated livestock animals, such as cattle and poultry. The modern dictionaries define the zoo as a site “where princes keep rare and foreign animals” (Baratay and Hardouin-Fugier 42). However, the *ménagerie*, which combined farming and domesticating wild animals to serve the aristocracy, gradually transformed to meet the need of the people in France during the Enlightenment. Another new type of the zoo was invented and intended to serve the entire nation rather than the aristocracy only, namely, the botanical garden. Opposing to princely *ménagerie*, this new model of the
botanical garden, featuring a botanical park, became popular in France and spread throughout the whole of Europe in the nineteenth century and become recreational places. The princely ménagerie was evolving from a hunting ground to “a union of a picturesque garden and a large ménagerie of exotic animals” (Baratay and Hardouin-Fugier 79). The Jardin des Plantes\(^8\) was a botanical garden which was constructed to oppose to the princely hunting ménagerie. This botanical or latter zoological garden, the former form of the zoo,\(^9\) became “a place for the inner circle to relax” (Baratay and Hardouin-Fugier 74) and was “populated by domestic species to create an idealized rural setting” (Baratay and Hardouin-Fugier 74). The origin of the word “zoo” and its meanings have changed throughout Europe, but, generally speaking, the zoo was associated with the practices of hunting for food and the keeping of wild animals in pens. Nowadays, the zoo designates an enclosed space which contains a collection of wild animals for their exhibition and has many other forms, from “hunting reserves,” “via seraglios of fighting animals,” “the menageries of private collectors,” to today’s “wildlife parks.”

I. From Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries

In antiquity, an obsession with wild animals—in particular a desire to own—was a common phenomena in the European aristocracy of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries because wild animals were considered to be prestigious and luxurious to the nobility and a symbol of the nobility’s nature. In Indian tradition, the tamed elephants, lions, and tigers were used in the hunts and wars. In Rome, wild beasts captured from campaigns

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\(^8\) The first botanical garden, The Jardin des Plantes is constructed for Luis XIII’s physician in the 17\(^{th}\) century.

\(^9\) According to Baratay and Hardouin-Fugier, the word “zoological garden” first appeared in England during the nineteenth century. It was not shortened to the word “zoo” and spread all over the world until the twentieth century. Compared to the French name ménagerie which focuses on the space (certain scope of the space), zoo, however, emphasizes the contents of the space (the zoo animals) (80).
were paraded in order to show the occupation of the adversaries’ lands and possessions. It is important to note that the European’s interest in wild animals came mainly from the expansion of trade and the great discoveries of geography of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. When the Europeans found exotic and spectacular species, they tended to take them as their trophies. All living things, ranging from flora, fauna, to human beings, became the target of their plunder. These trophies, in the seventeenth century, however, were displayed in parades. For the monarchs, these wild beasts were the symbols of “grandeur and magnificence” (Baratay and Hardouin-Fugier 24) because wild animals, in particular, the big cats, represented the beauty and the strength of the natural world. When wild animals were displayed, the monarchs felt proud because wild animals could inspire the public’s imagination for the natural world and, thus, stimulated the public’s desire to dominate wild species. These ferocious animals were collected by the aristocracy as an exhibition of their wealth and a sign of their undisputed royalty. Only the monarchs were suitable to take care of the wild beasts.

In addition to showing the wealth of the kings, wild animals in the seventeenth century were also used in the arena for the satisfaction of the aristocracy’s fantasies over war. Wild animals could “recall the pomp of classical times” (Baratay and Hardouin-Fugier 24); they were used for “spectacular eruptions of violence, in the fights between species” (Baratay and Hardouin-Fugier 24), which the aristocracy were fond of and which were incorporated into major festivities. This custom of observing wild beasts pitting against each other corresponded with the nature of the nobility, in that they were bloody, violent, and warlike. Through an observation of a violent and brutal beast fighting, the nobility as well as their guests were pleased and entertained. Baratay and Hardouin-Fugier describe the beast fighting in the arena:

These counters satisfied the voyeuristic desires of what was still a warlike society
in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In the 1700s, while these contests survived, they seemed rather to constitute a means of release for an aristocracy that was engaged in a process ofcivilizing itself. (25)

I find that these combats between wild species or between men and beasts not only reflected the violence in the human-to-human or human-to-animal relationships in the sixteenth and seventeenth century but also contained a symbolic significance. Through a victory over a wild beast, a hero or a warrior could fulfill his heroic values: “bravery,” “strength,” and “supremacy of the heroic” (Baratay and Hardouin-Fugier 26). The value was important to our heroes because the beast combats took on heroic dimension and can inspire the next victory. Viewing from this perspective, in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, wild animals were the source of human curiosity, wealth, fantasies, and dreams of domination. They were firmly associated with the aristocracy and ensured the richness of the aristocracy. The more impressive and the number of the wild animals an aristocracy had, the more prestigious and loftier an aristocracy was. If ménageries were the demonstration of the human victory over the wild through the parades of wild animals, then, animal combats confirmed this domination by reducing wild animals as a tool of performance and recreation for the aristocracy. Gradually, the fondness for collecting these symbolic species led the aristocracy to come up with the idea of establishing a single space for the exhibition. The ancient forms of zoological garden emerged.

II. Nineteenth Century

In the nineteenth century, after being accused of establishing only for the aristocracy, ménageries evolved to zoological gardens. Zoological gardens were set for the interest of the entire nation rather than for the interest of the few selected aristocracy. The establishment of zoological garden was thus linked to the emergence of modern nation state. Zoological
gardens dedicated to the welfare of the nation and provided an access to a wider public. This transformation was symbolically important because, as Baratay and Hardouin-Fugier suggest, the establishment of zoological garden “aroused enthusiasm among the people of Europe at a time of mounting nationalism and demand for democracy” (80). A great number of zoological gardens were symbolically constructed to coincide with the period of nationalism and democracy throughout the whole Europe. Under this circumstance, every nation demanded for its zoological garden as a quest of democracy and nationalism. The first of this occurred in the UK, beginning with London, Dublin and spread to France. However, the significance of zoo establishment and its zoo animals, actually, lay in the period of colonialism which appeared across nineteenth-century Europe. When the Europeans built their immense colonial empire, the ways in which the Europeans dominated their people in the colonies corresponded with the exploitation of the wild animals. Baratay and Hardouin-Fugier found four similarities between colonialism and hunt:

The first and most extreme, hunting, often took on a heroic dimension, especially for colonial servicemen who would add to their personal prestige by purging a country of its wildlife. The imposition of spatial limitations on animals—housing them in zoos—was often combined with the third method acclimatization. Finally, psychological appropriation, especially in the taming of big cats, was such a perfect match for the colonial process. (113)

This match between colonial process and hunt were consistent, both in their goals of hunting, confining, acclimating, and psychologically appropriating the disadvantaged other or the marginalized people. Wild animals, which were taken away from their native habitats and confined in pens, were sent to the alien environment where their freedom was severely restricted and their psychological state was distorted. For empire builder or animal dealer, exotic animals were comparatively akin to strange (i.e. exotic) men and women who were
lumped together with animals “under the term savages” (Baratay and Hardouin-Fugier 113). So, with the rapid development of imperial expansion, human-animal relationship became worse. Wild animals were treated as either “a delicate colonial commodity,” which was exploited without care or the “diplomatic gifts” for the foreign ambassadors to serve as “a token in subservient diplomatic relations” (Berger 21). These wild animals were mainly transferred from colonies such as Canada, India, Australia, and Africa to Europe. And, it was said that every colonial “had a cage in his bungalow” (Baratay and Hardouin-Fugier 125). Wild animals were the “trophies” of the imperialists, which figuratively “bore witness to the ‘conquest of lands that had been discovered and colonized’” (Baratay and Hardouin-Fugier 113). In England, the game hunter was a “colonial enterprise” because huntsmen were considered to be “the ideal and definitive type of Empire [builders]” (Baratay and Hardouin-Fugier 113) who helped establish the colonial animal kingdom. Other huntsmen published their memoirs as a sign of their marvelous feats in hunting animals and as an inspiration for succeeding generations of hunters, adventurers, and explorers. These publications were popular and contributed to the “success of the zoo” because the stories of hunt encouraged the public to see actual animals in the zoo. In this sense, when the Europeans considered zoo as an imperial showcase whose function was similar to the institutions of museums and libraries, an interest of exhibiting exotic beings expanded to other tribes. In the nineteenth century, circus, fairground stalls, and zoological gardens became the grounds of ethnographical exhibitions, displaying certain types of people or “savages” and “cannibals.” From then on, there was a growing interest in pursuing rare animals as well as spectacular tribesmen in zoological gardens. All exotic living things, ranging from flora, fauna to human beings, were the focus of visit by the public.
The Zoo in *Life of Pi*

According to the historical evolution of the zoo examined above, it is not difficult to see that zoo establishments in the West and the desire of enclosing wild animals are linked to the histories of colonization. Zoos are the imperial showcase where the management of wild animals in the enclosed space corresponds with the ways in which the Europeans treated their people in the colonies. Fiona Becket and Terry Gifford parallel the zoo establishment in Pondicherry in *Life of Pi* with colonialism. They argue that “the novel can be read to some extent as a multilayered colonial allegory, in which the establishment of the family zoo at Pondicherry—a former French colony—is made to coincide with the moment of Indian national independence” (171). The zoo establishment indicates a legacy of French colonialism which governed India by means of a set of imperialist ideologies, among them, that of human-animal relationship and the logic behind the establishment of zoological gardens. In this sense, the existence of the zoo in Pondicherry in *Life of Pi* reminds readers of “a lost precolonial past”: “animals are enlisted for the nostalgic production of a lost precolonial past” (Becket and Gifford 174). Similarly, John Berger also argues that zoos were the “endorsement of modern colonial power” (21) and were “supportive of the ideology of imperialism” (21) in the nineteenth century.

If we agree with the association between the establishment of the zoo and the colonial empire, then it is possible to argue that in *Life of Pi* wild animals in captivity is looked at in a way similar to that of the European colonizers who are supported by the racist/speciesism ideologies. Pi’s initial outlook of the zoo animals follows his father Santosh Patel, the founder of Pondicherry Zoo, who inherits the Western way in his perception and management of the zoo. This European culture menaces the lives of the subjugated animals. Nevertheless, the imperialist view of the animal other does not penetrate the whole novel. The view is disrupted and replaced by an eco-centered view after Pi’s contact with Richard Parker. According to Pi,
I would like to explain the meaning of home for wild animals and humans:

‘There’s no place like home’? That’s certainly what animals feel. Animals are territorial. That is the key to their mind. Only a familiar territory will allow them to fulfill the two relentless imperatives of the wild…. A biologically sound zoo enclosure… is just another territory, peculiar only in its size and in proximity to human territory. …where our basic needs can be fulfilled close by and safely. (Martel 21-2)

On Pi’s initial point of view, since animals are highly dependent of “territory,” zoo enclosure is a sound and comfortable home where animals’ basic needs can be fulfilled and their safety can be ensured. Even Pi bravely claims that “if an animal could choose with intelligence, it would opt for living in a zoo…” (Martel 23). These claims indicate that even though animals are deprived of their liberty and the rights of claiming territory—in my opinions the so-called true meaning of home and root for them—zoo enclosure is still a good place for wild animals only if they are provided with amenity. In contrast, animals without home are in danger and in fear in the wild:

Animals in the wild lead lives of compulsion and necessity within an unforgiving social hierarchy in an environment where the supply of fear is high and the supply of food low and where territory must constantly be defended and parasites forever endured. What is the meaning of freedom in such a context? Animal in the wild are, in practice, free neither in space nor in time, nor in their personal relations. In theory—that is, as a simple physical possibility…. (Martel 20)

Again, from Pi’s initial perspective, animals in the wild cannot claim liberty in “space” and “time,” only in physical condition because they have come to terms with the predicaments of “fear” and the problem of “food.” Also, the natural law forces them to live in an unstable life with the threats of “parasites” and their predators. Compared to the wilderness, a zoo
enclosure is a sound home for wild animals to live in comfortably. But, we note that Pi’s argument of wild animals in captivity is different from the assumption in which animals are supposed to live in the wild because they are “free” and “happy.” Pi dismisses it as “nonsense” and “misinformation”:

Well-meaning but misinformed people think animals in the wild are ‘happy’ because they are ‘free.’ …Then it is captured by wicked men and thrown into tiny jails. Its ‘happiness’ is dashed. It yearns mightily for ‘freedom’ and does all it can to escape. Being denied its ‘freedom’ for too long, the animal becomes a shadow of itself, its spirit broken. So some people imagine. This is not the way it is.

(Martel 19-20)

As we can see, the assumption that wild animals are not happy when they are free is based upon an anthropocentric ideology with which Pi interprets the meaning of home in terms of his own experiences, needs, and values. As Pi states: “Think about it yourself. Would you rather be put up at the Ritz with free room service and unlimited access to a doctor or be homeless without a soul to care for you” (Martel 23) and “if you went to a home, kicked down the front door, chased the people who lived there out into the street and said, ‘Go! You are free!....’” (Martel 21), we can easily infer from these claims that the discourse, backing up Pi’s statement of wild animals in captivity, is an anthropocentric one, which justifies the zoo enclosure as a sound home for animals to live in. Hardly is he aware of the limit of this point of view and any errors in it. When Pi looks at animals as if they shared the same needs as those of men, Pi’s statement seems persuasive:

If a man, boldest, and most intelligent of creatures, won’t wander from place to place, a stranger to all, behold to none, why would an animal, which is by temperament far more conservative? For that is what animals are, conservative, one might even say reactionary. The smallest changes can upset them. (Martel 20)
In terms of Pi’s experiences, animals are more “conservative” and “reactionary” than humans. If humans do not want an unstable life, then, animals do not, either.

It is, however, important to note that anthropocentric discourse is problematic. On one hand, as *Life of Pi* discloses, animals in the zoo enclosure do not lead lives of amenity and safety as Pi claims. According to Pi, zoo animals are in a higher rate of death in the zoo enclosure than in the wild because they die of human carelessness and predatoriness: “we commonly say in the trade that the most dangerous animals in a zoo is Man. In a general way we mean how our species’ excessive predatoriness has made the entire planet our prey” (Martel 36). The problem of the anthropocentric discourse lies in “man,” or precisely, the predatoriness and greed of human nature. Man’s predatoriness and carelessness put zoo animals in danger. For example, the fact that “the literature contains reports on the many torments inflicted upon the zoo animals....” (Martel 37) lies in the predatoriness of human nature. Humans are prone to prey on others. Man is “one that was extremely common, too, found on every continent, in every habitat: the redoubtable species *Animalus anthropomorphicus*, the animal as seen through human eye” (Martel 39). “Cute,” “friendly,” “understanding,” “vicious,” and “depraved” are simply the human qualities which humans project on animals: “In this case we look at an animal and see a mirror” (Martel 39).

On the other hand, Berger maintains that the humans’ view of wild animals in public zoo is never right because the ways in which we view the animals are akin to the view of the visitors in the art gallery where we stop and move to the next and one after next. When animals, isolated from their native lands, are sent to the alien environment, they become dependent upon their zoo runners:

The animals, isolated from each other and without interaction between species, have become utterly dependent upon their keepers. Consequently most of their responses have been changed. What was central to their interest has been replaced
by a passive waiting for a series of arbitrary outside interventions. (Berger 25)

Meanwhile, when animals find that everything, ranging from space, environment and the light, is artificial, their reaction becomes dull. Gradually, they are lethargic and indifferent to humans. Under this circumstance, what humans see in zoos is not vital wild animals but seemingly lifeless objects or specimens. Zoo animals do not follow children’s or adult’s memories in which animals are living but hide in the artificially constructed buildings. As a result, when humans go to zoos, they expect nothing but the specimens and move from next to next. Humans’ view makes them marginal and “one is so accustom to this that one scarcely notices it any more” (23). When you go to the zoos to watch animals, “you are looking at something that has been rendered absolutely marginal; and all the concentration you can muster will never be enough to centralize it” (24; Berger’s italics). Because our treatments of wild animal are based on inequality and because our interpretations of wild animal are anthropocentric, animals have been considered as the other, not one of our communities. Then, when we look at animals, we never know zoo animals.

In western societies, wild animals were often used as derogatory metaphors to describe the dominated people. Huggan and Tiffin disclose that animals were employed in the negative uses by humans, in particular, the dominating societies. When endowing or destroying other human societies with derogatory animal metaphors, the dominating people see the other as sub-human and, at the same time, inflict their domination on the other. The use of animal metaphors, however, is stereotypes and prejudices toward certain group of people. For instance, the Jews or the Africans and Indian women are often considered as subhuman which is a manifestation of racism and sexism. Besides, other derogatory animal metaphors and animal categorizations, like “you stupid cow” and “male chauvinist pig,” imply “speciesism” towards our wild animals. In this sense, dominating groups build their superiority upon the exploitation of animals. The use of animal metaphors indicates the
racism and speciesism in imperialism. The imperialist discourse helps secure and reinforce European imperial dominance on natural world and other human groups, justifying exploitation, slaughter, and enslavement. In *Life of Pi*, when Pi suggests that wild animals are “conservative,” and food and safety are their needs, his ambition is not likely to protect the wildlife. Rather, Pi emphasizes his interests over wild animals. Also, when Pi views sloth as “busy” (in a relaxed sense, sloth are busiest at sunset) and “indolent,” the view, ironically, discloses not only human’s perception of sloth as “indolent” but also stereotypes and prejudices toward our wild animals.

**Human and Ecological Negotiation**

Pi’s anthropocentric worldview does not penetrate *Life of Pi*. In the middle of the narrative in *Life of Pi*, Pi’s view of the zoo animals dramatically changes from anthropocentrism to an eco-centered worldview, which takes animals’ interest into consideration. This transformation occurs when Pi makes contact with the tiger and decides to train Richard Parker. We see that after the ship was sunk, in order to get rid of Richard Parker and carry back the lifeboat, Pi “hatched” several plans to kill Richard Parker. Pi will become Richard Parker’s food or prey as soon as Richard Parker is hungry. He thought of “Pushing Him off the Lifeboat,” “Killing Him with the Six Morphine Syringes,” “Attacking Him with All Available Weaponry,” “Choking Him,” “Poisoning Him,” and “Waging a War of Attrition” (198-200). All these plans, however, are considered in terms of his interest and need. At this point, Pi does not consider the interest of and his relation to Richard Parker until he hears the sound of Prusten. After hearing the sound, Pi realizes Richard Parker’s intention and looks for the best method of dealing with Richard Parker. According to Pi, fear or despair is:

[I]ife’s only true opponent. Only fear can defeat life. … It goes for your weakest
spot, which it finds with unerring ease. … One moment you are feeling clam, self-possessed, happy. Then fear, disguised in the grab of mild-mannered doubt, slips into your mind like a spy. Reason comes to do battle for you. But, to your amazement, despite superior tactics and a number of undeniable victories, reason is laid low. You feel yourself weakening, wavering. Your anxiety becomes dread. (Martel 203)

Quickly you make rash decisions. You dismiss your last allies: hope and trust. There, you’re defeated yourself. Fear, which is but an impression, has triumphed over you. (Martel 204)

From Pi’s concrete description of fear or despair, we learn that Pi’s crisis does not come from the menace of Richard Parker but from being alone in the lifeboat. Reason, hope, and trust will be defeated by despair, no matter how strong Pi is. So, “…if [Richard Parker] died [Pi] will be left alone with despair, a foe even more formidable than a tiger” (Martel 207). Under this circumstance, he thanks to Richard Parker rather than planning to kill Richard Parker. What’s more, due to the presence of Richard Parker, Pi withdraws from the very distressing moment and clams down. He says, “it is the irony of this story that the one who scared me [Pi] witless to start with was the very same who brought me peace, purpose, I dare say even wholeness” (Martel 204). Ironically, Pi initially considers Richard Parker as a threat to his life; eventually, he rethinks what Richard Parker accounts for him and the value of his life. At this point, Pi grows attachment to Richard Parker because Richard Parker stimulates his will to live.

As Pi continues to observe Richard Parker, he notices that Richard Parker makes a variety of sounds. One of them is Prusten, a snort from his nostrils. Prusten, being told from his father, means to express friendliness and harmless intentions. From the call of the friendliness made from Richard Parker, Pi’s view of Richard Parker suddenly changes. Pi
accepts that gesture and realizes that his initial notion of the zoo animals as danger is erroneous. It is under the desperate circumstance that the animals have profound meanings for human beings: they are companion of men; they cure human’s distressing nerve; they are friendly to men, and, above all, they are interdependent with humans—all of which are essential to Pi’s recognition of Richard Parker and help Pi to go further. Just as Richard Parker has saved and awaked him from desperation, in turn, Pi came to help Richard Parker to survive, providing Richard Parker with basic food supplies. In this sense, Richard Parker gives Pi companionship while Pi is a food provider to Richard Parker. Pi and Richard Parker can be seen as a reciprocal pair, in which men and animals benefit from each other. Neither of them can survive without the other. It is a journey towards enlightenment which emphasizes the importance of ecological subjects and their relation to human.

Consequently, instead of planning to kill Richard Parker, Pi keeps Richard Parker alive, the goal of the Plan Number Seven. But, Pi decides to train Richard Parker, making Richard Parker regard Pi as Number One (i.e. beast trainer) while Richard Parker is Number Two (i.e. beast). I propose that Pi’ training to Richard Parker can also be understood as an ecological negotiation whereby Pi accommodates him to wild life and Richard Parker. Through it, Pi changes his anthropocentric worldview, which does not consider the animal subjects. Actually, what makes Pi’s sea voyage more than an intriguing and shocking story is that Martel details what has happened between Pi and Richard Parker. The interactions between Pi and Richard Parker offer Pi (also readers) an opportunity of understanding Richard Parker’s language and actions. In his training program, Pi recognizes that Richard Parker is an individual who can react. Put it differently, Richard Parker has its territory claim which cannot be invaded; otherwise, he is irritated. In his training program, Pi teaches:

Step four: …. BE SURE NOT TO BREAK EYE CONTACT. As soon as [Richard Parker] has laid a paw in your territory, or even made a determined advance into the
neutral territory, you have achieved your goal…. The point here is to make your animal understand that its upstairs neighbour is exceptionally persnickety about territory. (Martel 257)

Step five: Once your animal has trespassed upon your territory, be unflagging in your outrage. …. START BLOWING YOUR WHISTLE AT FULL BLAST. (Martel 257).

As we can see, Pi tries to train Richard Parker to respect Pi’s territory. Correspondingly, when being roused, Richard Parker tells Pi to read his signals by “[striking] at [Pi] with his right paw and [sending Pi] overboard” (Martel 261), and Pi loses his shields during four times of training. In addition to helping Pi establish his territory over Richard Parker, more importantly, this training program helps Pi (as well as Richard Parker) understand each other. Once Pi invades Richard Parker’s territory, Pi adjusts his method of training Richard Parker. Through training, Pi realized that Richard Parker is a fully-fleshed creature who expresses his anger when his territory is invaded. Also, by training Richard Parker, Pi negotiates his relationship with Richard Parker, becoming closer to Richard Parker than before. In this sense, I assert that Pi’s training program contributes him to enhance his understanding towards Richard Parker. This training also changes him from an anthropocentric view of regarding wild animals as empty specimen to an eco-centered worldview of considering wild animals’ needs and feelings. Richard Parker, like most of human beings, are individuals deserving communication and care. Pi states:

Eventually, I learned to read the signals [Richard Parker] was sending me. I found that with his ears, his eyes, his whiskers, his teeth, his tail and his throat, he spoke a simple, forcefully punctuated language that told me what his next move might be. I learned to back down before he lifted his paw in the air.

Then I made my point, feet on the gunnel, boat rolling, my single-note language blasting from the whistle, and Richard Parker moaning and gasping at the
Pi and Richard Parker compromise with each other because they are learning the actions and language from each other. Pi still attempts to challenge Richard Parker’s tigerness although he understands that he is at the risk of being eaten. Richard Parker keeps attacking Pi but never tries to eat him. They are trying to interpret the other’s thoughts through their actions until one side of the other is succumbed to dominance. By doing so, they are accompanying each other towards the security and survival. As Pi confesses, “if I survived my apprenticeship as a high seas animal trainer, it was because Richard Parker did not really want to attack me” (Martel 261). Instead of considering animals as a foe and the exhibition, Pi considers Richard Parker as an individual and regards himself as an “apprentice” who strives to understand and communicate with Richard Parker.

Actually, training needs not to be seen as necessary or especial tools through which humans dominate animals. Many critics might regard training as the ways to reduce the other to a status of being merely raw materials serving to humans: “One being becomes means to the purposes of the other, and the human assumes rights in the instrument that the animal never has ‘it’ self” (Haraway 206). However, there are other ways to consider the purpose of training. Haraway argues that training (domestication in Haraway’s term) combines “participants inside the complexities of instrumental relations and structures of power” (207). Also, Haraway, citing Vinciane Despret’s definition of training, puts it:

Despret studies those practices in which animals and people become available to each other, become attuned to each other, in such a way that both parties become more interesting to each other, more open to surprises, smarter, more ‘polite,’ more inventive. The kind of ‘domestication’ that Despret explores adds new identities….

(207)

As we can see, training (domestication) puts two species together in a space where humans
compromise with animals, in a way that humans can form a powerful and intense relation with animals. In this sense, domestication can be seen as natural tools for humans to understand other species. In *Life of Pi*, scholars might label Pi as Richard Parker’s “master” and Pi also uses this term to describe him. I contend that Pi is more likely a food provider or an animal trainer. His training is inevitable because it is a simple necessity, “not an act of insanity or a covert suicide attempt” (Martel 260). Through his training program, Pi understands Richard Parker’s languages, signals, inclination, and weakness. Domestication or training permits Pi to use his anthropocentricism to the maximal effect, to change his insights about Richard Parker, to help Pi comprehend the complicated subjectivity of Richard Parker. In this sense, training can be considered as the exchange of communication and languages between Pi and Richard Parker. Specifically, training is ecological negotiation between Pi and Richard Parker. Obviously, in working towards the understanding of Richard Parker’s actions and languages, Pi’s initial anthropocentric worldview is challenged and disrupted. Thus, it is more interesting is to see that Pi prioritizes Richard Parker’s needs and interest over his own:

> ‘What exactly do you [Pi] intend to feed that tiger of yours? How much longer do you think he’ll last on three dead animals? Do I [Pi’s ego] need to remind you that tiger are not carrion eaters?.... But don’t you think that before he submits to eating puffy, putrefied zebra he’ll try the fresh, juicy India boy just a short dip away? And how are we doing with the water situation? You know how tigers get impatient with thirst.’ (Martel 225-6)

This is not the first time that Pi considers Richard Parker’s basic needs. At this point, Pi acknowledges that Richard Parker’s basic needs of water and food should be solved in advance. By prioritizing Richard Parker’s needs, Pi is walking towards an eco-centered worldview, which takes Pi beyond his personal need. Pi starts to feel compassion, care, and love for Richard Parker. As Pi confesses:
A part of me was glad about Richard Parker. A part of me did not want Richard Parker to die at all,.... If I still had the will to live, it was thanks to Richard Parker. He kept me from thinking too much about my family and my tragic circumstances. He pushed me to go on living. …yet at the same time I was grateful. I am grateful. It’s the plain truth: without Richard Parker, I wouldn’t be alive today to tell you my story. (Martel 207).

When Pi admits that he can survive not because of his survival skills but because of the presence of Richard Parker, he is appreciating his companion Richard Parker, who keeps Pi thinking and pushes Pi to go on living. Once Pi no longer considers his interest over that of Richard Parker, he becomes mature. From then on, Pi grows fond of other species and the natural world around him. He appreciates the fantastic world beneath the sea. He discovers that the sea is a big city. Underneath him, there are plenty of planktons and fish: “if you want to see wildlife, it is on foot, and quietly, that you must explore a forest. It is the same with the sea. You must stroll through the Pacific at walking peace, so to speak, to see the wealth and abundance that it holds” (Martel 222). For Pi, marine creatures also offer him a sense of calmness and peace which he never experiences.

Significantly, Martel has mentioned the importance of the animal other in his interview. In her interview with Yann Martel, Sabine Sielke notes that Martel’s writings focus on the theme of the other. The theme occurs in Martel’s first novel Self (1996) and the second Life of Pi, where the other is represented either as the religious other or as the animal other. Martel responds and directly points out that his writings aim to explore the confrontation of the other:

The solipsistic, the self-involved, the angst of the solitary do not interest me. I’d rather look at the other, whether it’s the animal other, the cultural other, the religious other—it’s through them that we come to understand ourselves. Everyone
has multiple identities. So yes, I am interested in otherness, because it strikes me that it’s the very matter not only of fiction, but of life. (Sielke 20)

Martel’s announcement indicates the interrelation between the self and the other. The other has been an important theme in Martel’s writings because the fate of the other is bound up with that of the self. Only in encountering with the other can one find that one is unique and different from the other. “In understanding the other, eventually you understand yourself” (Sielke 20). Likewise, Martel’s *Life of Pi* draws our attention to Richard Parker, exploring how Richard Parker fascinates Pi. Through the encounter of Richard Parker, Pi not only becomes mature but also becomes conscious of the importance of other species.

Having examined carefully Pi’s ecological negotiation with Richard Parker, I have indicated that in interactions with Richard Parker, we see a clear decline in Pi’s anthropocentrism and an increasing consideration of the needs of Richard Parker. The eco-centered view is important because it suggests the need for a shift in the way humans perceive animals. Pi with the ecological consciousness is sensitive to the feeling and interest of Richard Parker. More importantly, Pi is conscious of his direct relation to and engagement with Richard Parker. Pondicherry zoo in *Life of Pi* represents the unequal human-animal relationships which have lasted for many centuries. If zoo establishment demonstrates human’s domination over other species, Pi’s departure from Pondicherry Zoo is nevertheless important. Latter, through a journey of coexistence, Pi will breach the continuing imperialist modes of social and environmental dominance. Through examining Pi’s interactions with Richard Parker, we see that human-animal relationships need to be reconfigured and negotiated and a reconsideration of the importance of animals in relation to human society is required. When our current view of wild animals and their relation to us have transformed, then, we can consider the interest of the other as us. Also, when humans draw attention to the role of the animals and thus have an enhanced understanding towards wild animals, the
human-animal relationship mediates. Anthropomorphism is a potential term through which human-animal relationship is re-constructed.
Chapter 2

Human-Animal Relationship in Shipwreck Narrative

Employing familiar motifs of the narrative of shipwreck, which include the protagonist, his animal and cannibalism, Martel’s *Life of Pi* combines and complicates them. The story of *Life of Pi* contains many intertextual references, such as Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), Edgar Allan Poe’s *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* (1837), and Ernest Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea* (1951). In associating human-animal relationships with other texts and many predecessors as I list above, the relationship between Pi and Richard Parker in *Life of Pi* is explicitly brought to significant meanings. In terms of human-animal relationship, we see that there is a breakthrough of development in dealing with the role of animals in the intertextual readings. Before discussing how Martel writes *Life of Pi* in the context of the other texts to form the intertextual relations with them, I would like to introduce the term of “intertextuality” first.

In her “Word, Dialogue, and Novel” (1996), Julia Kristeva introduces the concept of intertextuality. Working from Mikhail Bakhtin’s concept, Kristeva defines it as a “mosaic,” “absorption,” and “transformation” of another text: “any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotation; any text is the absorption and transformation of another” (37). According to Maria Alfaro’s examination of the history of intertextuality and Kristeva’s intertextuality, the text as a text is never a “self-contained system” or a “self-sufficient whole” which functions as the “closed systems.” On the contrary, a text’s meaning lies in how it relates to another. There are other texts in a text which is reconstructed by “the repetition and transformation of other textual structures” (Alfaro 268). From Alfaro’s reading, we understand that the text is a “dynamic site in which relational process and practices are the focus of analysis” and any word or any text is “an intersection of other words (texts) where at least one another word
(text) can be read” (268). Kristeva’s concept of intertextuality and Alfaro’s interpretation of intertextuality attempt to bring the alluring possibility of the intertextual reading in relation to another text. Any imitation, quotation, allusion, parody of another text is the example of this formula. T. S. Eliot comments on the concept of intertextuality by saying that one must consider what has come from the dead writers’ ideas when studying one work, and one, consequently, enriches the texts’ meaning in work in light of what the dead writers have written: “no poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead” (44). Kristeva, Alfaro, and Eliot emphasize the dynamic and ‘relational’ text to another text. As a writer, Martel follows the trend of using intertextuality and applies this term into reading the historically shipwreck narrative in *Life of Pi*.

I. Intertextuality with Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*

From this intertextual perspective of Kristeva, we can link Martel’s *Life of Pi* with other texts so as to see how Martel borrows and adapts maritime literature. In terms of the thematic content and characters, Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* offers Martel’s *Life of Pi* a textual prototype from which Martel draws Defoe’s major plot but subsequently reverses the plot development of the shipwreck narrative. One of the main concerns in Defoe’s shipwreck narrative is that Defoe’s journey heads for enlightenment. However, I argue that Martel questions the conventional concept of enlightenment, and reverses the image of colonial relation between Pi and Richard Parker in *Life of Pi*. Pi, like Crusoe, is a castaway of the shipwreck. Unlike Crusoe, who cultivates a primitive Friday, Pi tries to train the tiger Richard Parker.

Rita Slapkauskaite maintains that Defoe’s voyage towards enlightenment helps
Martel’s *Life of Pi* to “reassert, question, subvert, and reinterpret the conventions of the philosophy of Enlightenment” (144-45). Written in *The Age of Enlightenment* in the seventeen century, Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* emphasizes reason more than religion “as the constitutive force of survival under desperate circumstances” (Slapkauskaite 145) in the shipwreck narrative. Stranded isolated on the desert island, Crusoe has to use his knowledge of the advanced tools which he learns from Europe and the raw materials from the primitive island to overcome the challenges of the shipwreck. Through his enterprising behavior and power of education, he educates Friday both in language and religion and cultivates the landscape of the tropical island for his needs. As many critics point out, Crusoe is represented as an enlightened European whose journey aims to educate and to convert the dark tropical island where the savage cannibals inhabit into civilization based on reason. The remote island is a colony which is governed by the British domination. Crusoe’s journey towards enlightenment can be interpreted as a castaway’s exploration of the world where the colonizers have not yet seen. In this sense, we see a master-servant relationship between Crusoe and his Friday.

On the contrary, Martel’s *Life of Pi* emphasizes faith as a key to the survival of the shipwreck. During the moment of the water shortage and Pi’s struggle for lives, Pi is associated with *The Passion of the Christ*. Pi claims: “Look: Christ on the Cross died of suffocation, but His only compliant was of thirst. If thirst can be so taxing that even God Incarnate complains about it, imagine the effect on a regular human” (Martel 170). Even though suffering from the quench of water, Pi never forgets to pray. He thinks of God,

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10 Also known for *The Age of Reason*. According to *Norton Anthology*, Enlightenment refers to an intellectual movement that develops in the Western Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth. The intellectuals believe in human reason as adequate to solve any crucial problem and to establish the essential forms in life. The notable thinkers are Francis Bacon (1561-1626), John Locke (1632-1704), and René Descartes (1596-1650).

11 The word Passion refers to suffering. The Passion of *The Christ* means the suffering and the death of Christian martyrs.
physically and emotionally comparing him to the suffering of Christ. He prays to “Jesus, Mary, Muhammad, and Vishnu” who, Pi thinks, can give him the strength of struggling with death and survives in the end. When Pi gives thanks to god for providing him with supplies, we see: “‘thank you, Lord Vishnu, thank you!’ I shout. ‘Once you saved the world by taking the form of a fish. Now you have saved me by taking the form of a fish. Thank you, thank you!’” (Martel 233). Pi’s religious practices (although informal) and his gratitude to god awake him from despair and keep him to remain human whenever his animalistic part arises. This situation of hunger and thirst leads Pi to a spiritual meditation on the meaning of god and life and, consequently, to a spiritual enlightenment. Therefore, he gives thanks to god in the incarnation of a fish to save him from hunger and believes that the fight with Richard Parker is an ordeal to him. In Pi’s journey toward enlightenment, religious practice provides him with the power to live. From this perspective, Martel’s Life of Pi rewrites the conventional code of Enlightenment, emphasizing the theme of religious practice and the belief in gods as the forces of survival rather than reason in Robinson Crusoe. It is important to note that posited within the postmodern period where people believe reason-based and scientific fact as a prevailing truth, Pi’s shipwreck narrative rather highlights spirituality—sea voyage as the means of spiritual education and the individual’s spiritual enlightenment through contemplating on meaning of life.

In addition to rewriting the conventional code of Enlightenment, Martel’s intertextual relations with other texts are also reminiscent of the plot of the protagonist and his animal (or human) in the shipwreck narrative. Martel adds the role of animals to the traditional shipwreck narrative, in which men are always the main figure. Pi’s story requires the paradigm shift of the shipwreck narrative and takes ecological concern into consideration by dramatically making human and animals survive together in the boat. In traditional shipwreck narrative, few writers focus on the role of nature, the environment, and, in particular, the
relationship between humans and animals. Consequently, human-animal relationship dwindles and humans are growing isolation from the natural world. In this conventional narrative, the role of animals disappears and there is a “trend toward human domination over animals” (Dwyer 10). However, Martel’s *Life of Pi* subverts this pattern, drawing upon the animals and acceptance of the animal other. This consideration of animal lives allows Pi to respect and love Richard Parker. And, in this new relation of men and animals, Richard Parker will be treated as an individual, in a way to criticize humans’ exclusion of the role of animals.

Based on this relationship, Martel reverses Crusoe-Friday relationship. *Life of Pi* subverts the image of colonial relation by paralleling the two pairs—Pi vs. Richard Parker and Crusoe vs. Friday. Unlike *Robinson Crusoe* in which Crusoe dominates Friday, Pi domesticates but meanwhile respects Richard Parker. Pi’s friendship with Richard Parker does not create a master-slave relationship but present an ambiguous human-animal relationship. In order to survive, Pi is forced to train Richard Parker and his training can be understood as self-defense. In the end of story, Pi’s survival lies in his acceptance of the other and denial of his privilege of human superiority in a way that Crusoe never does for his Friday and the cannibals. Through using the two pairs, Martel seems to question the enslavement of the animals and proposes a new solution of survival in the shipwreck: humans and animals have to help each other.

From the historical evolution of the shipwreck narrative, we see that *Life of Pi* promotes the role of animals. For example, Samuel Coleridge’s “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” (1798) reflects the awe of nature and implies a lesson that human should respect for and love all God’s creatures. The increasing awareness of the lives of non-human animals should be taken into consideration. Coleridge’s narrator can survive from the shipwreck because he confesses his guilt of killing Albatross and latter appreciates God’s creatures.
Martel’s *Life of Pi* reinforces the important role of animals in literature and their relation to humans. In his seminar, entitled “Meeting the Other: The Animal in Literature,” Martel points out that animals are remarkably absent in Western literatures (qtd; in Sielke 24). His announcement discloses that the real animals (not the figurative animals in the allegory) are excluded from the contemporary literary texts in which “everything was by humans, for humans, and about humans. The natural realm is otherwise incidental” (Sielke 24). Human-based stories are the center of literary texts while the role of animals was always incidental. Martel suggests that only after reading writers’ like Jack London and Hemingway do we find that “the natural world plays a prominent role in which humanity plays a diminishing role” (Sielke 24). Viewing from this perspective, Martel wants to write a novel concerning with animals and zoos. Because Martel is interested in the role of animals and concentrates on environmental awareness, the importance of animals is lifted and human-animal relationship is under examination in the context of Crusoe-Friday relationship in Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*.

### II. Intertextuality with Ernest Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea*

Although providing the conventional code of the shipwreck narrative, Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* is not the only text to which Martel’s *Life of Pi* forms an intertextual relationship. One of the reviews collected in the beginning of *Life of Pi* relates the novel’s paratextuality with Ernest Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea*:\(^{12}\) with Ernest Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea*: “although the book reverberates with echoes from sources as disparate as *Robin Crusoe* and Aesop’s fable, the work it most strongly recalls is

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\(^{12}\) Gérard Genette firstly defines paratextuality as the title, subtitle, epigraphs, illustration, and any signals of a text that relate to another text. “The paratext is what enables a text to become a book and to be offered as such to its readers and, more generally, to the public” (Genette 2). It is “more than a boundary or a sealed border, the paratext is, rather, a threshold” (Genette 2-3).

Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea* describes the battle and the subtle relationship between the aged Cuban fisherman Santiago and the giant marlin, a relationship allows the reader to see the difference from and the similarity with the relationship between Pi and Richard Parker. In *The Old Man and the Sea* Santiago understood that since he failed to catch the fish after eighty-seven days, the only way to rebuild his reputation and to overcome his fear of death is through the battle with the marlin. Santiago’s struggling with the marlin can be seen as a symbolic act with which human beings pit against nature and, consequently, contracts a bond with nature. For Santiago “his lonely battle with the giant marlin embodies his struggle for a meaningful existence” (Slapkauskaitė 146). To Santiago, the marlin is a symbol of a reverend opponent. And, the fights over the marlin imply a psychological victor over his age and the physical triumph over the natural world. In this sense, the marlin is interpreted as a symbolical animal rather than a fully-fleshed animal.

In *Life of Pi*, there are conflicts between Pi and Richard Parker and a delicate relationship between them. Also, the existence of Richard Parker is important to Pi. Pi recognizes that his top priority is not to kill Richard Parker but “to tame him [Richard Parker]. It was the moment that I [Pi] realized this necessity. It was not a question of him or me, but him and me. We were, literally and figuratively, in the same boat. We would live—or would die—together” (Martel 206). Through Pi’s sincere gratitude to Richard Parker, we discover that Pi appreciates Richard Parker. They have to coexist. Without the other, Pi or Richard Parker stays alone and becomes meaningless. In this sense, Pi accepts Richard Parker as his force of survival that backs up his spirit. It is precisely his battle with the worthiness of the
opponent Richard Parker he inevitably faces that Pi can confirm his safety and Richard Parker’s respect to him.

Many critics have read the tiger symbolically. As Slapkauskaite suggests, the tiger is an allegory of Pi’s “psyche” and “an inseparable part of Pi’s private” (147). Similarly, James Mensch argues that the tiger is an “animality” of Pi’s own. So, Pi and Richard Parker are inseparable. But, I disagree with their statements and contend that Richard Parker is an actual animal. Through an intertextual relation with Hemingway’s marlin, Martel’s Richard Parker is rendered the possibility of reading Richard Parker as a symbol. But, Martel’s intertextual relation with Hemingway’s challenges the traditional narratives of seeing animals as a symbol for human uses. In *The Old Man and the Sea*, the marlin is a symbol of nature and an ideal opponent. Martel draws on Hemingway’s plot of the protagonist and his animals but subsequently changes the symbolic animal figure to the actual animal. Martel renders Richard Parker a face and represents Richard Parker as an actual tiger which can react to Pi, in a way that Hemingway fails to give to the marlin and respects animal subject. These textual relationships between *Robinson Crusoe* and *The Old Man and the Sea* give us another perspective to interpret Martel’s Richard Parker and animal representations.

By borrowing the canonical shipwreck narrative and the plot of the protagonist and his animal Martel’s *Life of Pi* breaks the linearity of the textual references.13 *Life of Pi* not only echoes Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* and Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea* but also complicates the meanings of the voyage and the relationship between Pi and Richard Parker. By doing so, I maintain that the intertextuality of *Life of Pi* offers Martel’s readers another dimension of meaning in *Life of Pi*: The story of man pitting against tiger can be read as Pi’s

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personal “rites of passage.” Martel borrows the traditional folklore in which a young boy moves from one status to another so as to become mature through a fight with a wild animal or a religious ritual. The journey in which Pi has Richard Parker as his companion is a transitional stage of Pi’s life. Arnold van Gennep describes three major phases of rites of passage: separation, transition, and incorporation. Applying Gennep’s concept of rites of passages into reading Pi’s growth, we find that the journey with Richard Parker is an ordeal. When Pi passes from human-centered view to eco-centered view, he must overcome certain ordeals; that is to say, he must train Richard Parker. The training of Richard Parker is Pi’s rites of passage.

In the first stage, Pi has to withdraw from the civilized world and moves to the natural world in the Pacific Ocean where he is compelled to move from a human-centered perspective to an eco-centered perspective. Pi has to negotiate and adjust himself to Richard Parker (although Richard Parker cannot communicate with Pi), finding how to fit in with the world of biotic community which he never thinks of. This separation or “detachment” symbolizes the path from civilization to wilderness. Importantly, the separation signifies Pi’s transgression of the world of human to that of animal. His goal aims to come into the world of non-human animals where he rethinks what animals account for him and simultaneously realizes that the only way to understand Richard Parker is to tame Richard Parker. This process of training Richard Parker is Pi’s second stage of development: the transition from a human-centered perspective to an eco-centered perspective. In the third stage, after realizing that non-human animals are Pi’s concern, Pi moves to a world of taking animals’ lives as top priority and, consequently, incorporates this view into his perception of natural world. In this sense, Life of Pi borrows the conventional shipwreck narrative and the plot of the protagonist

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14 Rites of Passage (translation of Les rites de passage) is a term coined by an anthropologist Arnold van Gennep (1887-1957), who describes rites of passage as birth, puberty, marriage, coming-of-age, and any cultural transitional stages in man’s life.
and his animal, but complicates them by putting Pi and Richard Parker together.

III. The Historical references of Richard Parker’s Name

Providing thematic and human-animal references, Defoe’ *Robinson Crusoe* and Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea* are not the only two texts that thematize Pi’s struggle for survival. Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin allude the name of Richard Parker to the history of cannibal Richard Parker. In Pi’s second version of the survival tale—Pi, the representation of Richard Parker, kills and eats the flesh of the cook—the name Richard Parker (the tiger) reminds the reader of the motifs of cannibalism and shipwreck. The name of Richard Parker, as told by Pi, comes from a “clerical error.” Richard Parker, the name of the hunter of its founder who finds the tiger, however, becomes the name of the tiger. The mistake of transplanting the name of the hunter to the name of the tiger from “Thirsty” to “Richard Parker,” according to James Mensch, implies that Richard Parker is the property of men: “the reversals of agency and names both point to a corresponding reversal where the animal actually names a property of the human, a property that we project on to the animal” (139). Regardless of his intention, Martel provides a tiger with a human name, inevitably endowing Richard Parker with a human image. The name of Richard Parker, resulting from the “clerical error,” unwittingly echoes the cannibal Richard Parker.

According to Elsie Cloete’ analysis of the name of Richard Parker, Edgar Allan Poe is the first writer who sets a fictional cannibal character named Richard Parker. In his novel, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, Richard Parker, a castaway boy of the whaling ship *Grampus*, is willing to be sacrificed for the other companions after he draws the shortest straw. Also, there are other two Richard Parkers who are the victims of the shipwreck and cannibalism. In 1870, a yacht named Mignonette sank. In order to survive, a group of crew drew lots and decided to sacrifice a boy named Richard Parker. The murder, however, is
accepted as a justifiable action because Richard Parker is willing to sacrifice himself. In *Life of Pi* Richard Parker is turned to a tiger hunter and subsequently becomes the name of a Bengal tiger. Surprisingly, Richard Parker is associated with cannibalism when Richard Parker says (in Pi’s fantasy) that he ate two men. When a French blind man came into Pi’s boat, Richard Parker ate him: “He [Richard Parker] ripped the flesh off the man’s frame [French blind man] and cracked his bones. The smell of blood filled my nose. Something in me died then that has never come back to life” (Martel 321).

Given that the name of Richard Parker has appeared again and again in different literary and historical texts, such as Poe’s and Eloete’s texts, the nomenclature of Richard Parker implies “the ultimate victim” (Cloete 175). However, in the case of *Life of Pi*, Martel changes the historical meanings of Richard Parker, giving the power to Richard Parker, and converts Richard Parker from a victim to a survivor who does not need to sacrifice himself in the shipwreck. By doing so, we see that Pi’s second version of cannibalism is linked to the case of 1870, in which Richard Parker victimized and was killed. Through the allusions of cannibalism, shipwreck, and victimized Richard Parker, Martel’s Richard Parker is provided with an intertextual reading and humans are draw to Richard Parker significance in *Life of Pi*. Richard Parker’s importance lies in his relation to other Richard Parkers. We cannot forget its name because we cannot value him alone. We must set him for contrast and comparison with the historical Richard Parkers.

According to the intertextual relationship with other texts, Martel’s *Life of Pi* becomes a complicated text. Martel’s Pi and Richard Parker are under examination in the historical context of Crusoe and Friday and Santiago and the marlin. The concept of intertextuality, as Linda Hutcheon argues, is considered central in postmodern novelist and poet. She points out that the concept of intertextuality “signals how present representations come from past ones and what ideological consequences derive from both continuity and difference” (93). As a
postmodern novelist, Martel borrows the narrative elements from the canonical literary texts. We find that Life of Pi takes on Hemingway’s plot of the fights between the protagonist and his animal. But, Life of Pi differs from the traditional Crusoe shipwreck narrative by drawing attention to the role of animals. Martel’s Life of Pi reverberates with often canonical texts, but it is more complicated because it takes on a non-humanism perspective and emphasizes the eco-centered perspective.

**Anthropomorphism and Eco-centered Worldview**

Martel’s focus on the role of animals in Life of Pi raises questions about our attitude to animals and how our literary texts frequently deal with animals as symbolic interpretations. As I have mentioned above, unlike traditional shipwreck narrative—such as Defoe’s *Robison Crusoe* and Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea*—which focus on the role of men, Martel’s *Life of Pi* focuses on the growing importance of the role of the animals. In the shipwreck narrative, we can see a growing importance of human-animal relationships and a transformation from one which only emphasizes human figures at the top while animal figures at the below to equal importance. In dealing with the role of animals, Martel emphasizes the physical existence of animals and animal subject by representing animals as living creatures. Anthropomorphism is the term through which Pi represents human-animal relationships. Through personified animals, Pi expresses his appreciation, affinity, and the proximity to zoo animals. Speaking of anthropomorphism, Pi argues:

> Though I may have anthropomorphized the animals till they spoke fluent English, the pheasants complaining in uppity British accents of their tea being cold and the baboons planning their bank robbery getaway in the flat…. …the fancy was always conscious. I quite deliberately dressed wild animals in tame costumes of my imagination. But I never deluded myself to the real nature of my playmates. (Martel
Obviously, Pi is aware of the difference between anthropomorphized animals and actual animals because of a lesson that “an animal is an animal, essentially and practically removed from us” (Martel 39). Early in *Life of Pi*, Pi never fails to anthropomorphize wild animals especially Richard Parker. “A wet, trembling, half-drowned, heaving and coughing three-year-old adult Bengal tiger in the lifeboat” (Martel 124) describes Richard Parker’s appearance in the lifeboat and clearly assumes Richard Parker as human who heaves and coughs and even is seasick afterword; “She came floating on an island of banana in a halo of light, as lovely as the Virgin Mary” (Martel 139), in this line the orang-utan is compared to motherly-like human figure Virgin Mary; Three-toed sloths in early part of the novel is described as the “upside-down yogis deep in meditation or hermits deep in prayer” (Martel 5); zoo animals are compared to the hotel guest who are “sexual deviants, either terribly repressed and subject to explosions of frenzied lasciviousness or openly depraved” (Martel 17). Besides, we are not told that Richard Parker is a tiger until chapter two. When speaking of Richard Parker, Pi identifies Richard Parker as “he.” This misleads readers to regard Richard Parker as human and Pi’s friend. We do not recognize Richard Parker as a tiger until Pi tells us in his shipwrecked experience. As these examples illustrate, Pi personifies animals because they share the same characteristics with humans. When Pi compares animals to human figures and attributes animals with human characteristics, wild animals are emotionally connected to men and help readers recognize their significance to humans. By doing so, Pi feels Richard Parker more concrete and available to him, which means that he and Richard Parker are brought together in terms of human-animal relationship.

The example of anthropomorphized animal is made particular clear in the episode of Richard Parker’s departure. When Pi and Richard Parker arrive at the shore of Mexico, Richard Parker, to Pi’s disappointment, has left Pi unceremoniously. It is terrible that Richard
Parker botches a farewell to Pi. In the beginning of the novel, Pi speaks of Richard Parker, he is frustrated: “I still cannot understand how he could abandon me so unceremoniously, without any sort of goodbye, without looking back even once. That pain is like an axe that chops my heart” (Martel 7). Both passages imply Pi’s lament for the departure of Richard Parker. In fact, Pi misrecognizes Richard Parker as human who should look back and wave farewell to him. Pi is “a person who believes in forms, in the harmony of order. Where we can, we must give things a meaningful shape” (Martel 360). So, when Richard Parker disappears into the jungle, Pi thinks that Richard Parker should give his departure a meaningful and ritualistic farewell to him because they are friends and have spent over 200 days together in the lifeboat. Pi’s misunderstanding of Richard Parker as a human opposes his belief. Certainly, Pi attributes human characteristics to Richard Parker, misrecognizing that Richard Parker is a human and should behave like a human. At this point, it seems that the rhetorical importance of anthropomorphized Richard Parker surpasses the logical behavior of animals. In order to endow animals with meanings and subjectivity, anthropomorphism is inevitably used and, thus, Richard Parker is expected to wave farewell to his master Pi.

On a higher level, the anthropomorphized Richard Parker should be discussed in the context of Pi’ growth. I argue that anthropomorphized Richard Parker helps Pi understand himself and recognizes his alter ego. In terms of Lacanian perspective, the other is a significant player in Martel Life of. Anthropomorphized Richard Parker is a mirror of Pi, functioning to teach Pi to recognize him. Under the stress of the traumatic experience of the shipwreck and the loss of his family, Pi regards Richard Parker as his alter ego who serves as another self in the wilderness. The alter ego will accompany Pi to experience the shipwreck and help Pi understand himself. From a glimpse of Richard Parker, Pi sees a vital and contented tiger after Richard Parker finishes his meal:

He [Richard Parker] was looking at me [Pi] intently. After a time I recognized the
game, I had grown up with it. It was the gaze of a contented animals looking out from its cage or pit the way you or I would look out from a restaurant table after a good meal, when the time has come for conversation and people-watching. (Martel 205)

During the process of the sea voyage, it is the first time that Pi contacts with Richard Parker through a gaze. Through this gaze, Pi tries to understand Richard Parker’s temperament and desire. Looking at Richard Parker, Pi starts his communication with his alter ego. So, he stances in the side of Richard Parker to think of the feelings of Richard Parker. This description of eye contact between Pi and Richard Parker is akin to the ways in which children gaze at the mirror self. In the development of children, children are gazing at themselves in the mirror and see themselves mirrored back. Through a mirror image, children identify them and develop a sense of wholeness. In Life of Pi through a gaze connecting Pi and Richard Parker, Pi identifies with Richard Parker so as to overcome every obstacle they encounter and, thus, accommodates him to the primitive world. Richard Parker is Pi’s alter ego, who always stays in his borderline and never transgresses. Early in chapter two, when Pi unthinkingly helps Richard Parker reach the lifeboat, the action can be interpreted as the “mirror stage” where Pi realizes that Richard Parker is his alter ego. He and his alter ego have to survive together in the shipwreck. So, he accepts Richard Parker to reach the boat. He and Richard Parker share the same destiny at the sea. Neither of them can survive without the other. Latter, we see that Pi trains Richard Parker. In addition to explaining as a way of understanding Richard Parker (as I have argued in the first chapter), Pi’s training program can be interpreted as Pi’s control over his alter ego: a control over his alter ego in the mirror. Through this training program, Pi and Richard Parker are put together to form a sense of wholeness. Pi has a better understanding of him as well as Richard Parker. And, it is not surprise that Pi and Richard are inseparable and Pi is fascinated by Richard Parker.
As the theory of “mirror stage” illustrates, the importance of Pi’s development throughout *Life of Pi* lies in the confrontation with Richard Parker. In order to grow up, Pi has to recognize his alter ego and prioritizes Richard Parker’s interests in advance. Only through a confrontation with the animal alterity, Pi feels and empathizes with Richard Parker. In doing so, Martel questions the Western human-based stories, which always focus on the human characters and do not take animal subject into consideration. In fact, we see that Pi cherishes the roles of animal in his identification.

**Anthropomorphism and Anthropocentricism**

Anthropomorphism has been a controversial debate on animals’ right and welfare. Critics might argue that the term of anthropomorphism is still an exploitation of non-human animals. But, it is my contention that anthropomorphism is the ways through which Pi respects his zoo animals and cherishes the relation with Richard Parker. Bryan L. Moore in his *Ecology and Literature* argues that anthropomorphism is a means of representing the natural world and it is worthy of human use. Although some writers assert that anthropomorphic discourse is by and large “archaic,” “distaste,” and “unreal” figure of speech, Moore denies the thoughts and suggests that it is because of the “growing isolation of humans from the natural world” (2) that some writers think anthropomorphism as outdated. For Moore and natural writers, anthropomorphism not only is employed “to explore and explain the place of humans on planet we share with more than one million other living species” (2) but also is used to advocate ecocentricism—a worldview responds to the anthropocentric paradigm and offer an alternative worldview. But, anthropomorphism is not the mere means for one wanting to link human world to natural world. Nor does Moor suggest that writer should use anthropomorphism and that those who use anthropomorphism are more popular than those who do not. Certainly, Moore argues that by examining the terms
of anthropomorphism in the works of the natural and non-natural writers, anthropomorphism is the means for the appreciation of non-human animals and creates an eco-centered worldview. Moore indicates that in mid-nineteenth and twenty-first century, for example, Thoreau and Darwin use anthropomorphism as a tool to show natural value (13). And, through the use of anthropomorphism, the reader is urged to believe that all livings are connected. Moore, citing Michael Zimmerman, argues that ecocentric personification has three fronts: “it represents the relationship between human and nonhuman, challenges anthropocentric, and extends “moral considerability to non human beings” (10). Similarly, Serpil Oppermann argues that novels in the postmodern period can create an environmental awareness (243). The environmental awareness aims to “propose a legitimate solution to the ecological crisis by offering to transform the anthropocentric discursive fields into ecologically oriented conceptual system” (Oppermann 244). I agree with Oppermann’s and Moore’s statement that although some do not believe ecological crisis is a prevalent and urgent concern in the twentieth century, Life of Pi is affected by “the ecological turn in literary studies and has oriented itself to an ecological perspective” (Oppermann 243). In Zimmerman’s words, human beings have a declining relationship with animals and their world but humans propose that anthropomorphism can be used as a solution to enhance human-animal relationship. Following Moore’s and Oppermann’s argument, I firmly believe that by attributing human qualities to animals or other non-human creatures, Pi builds an affinity with our natural world and, consequently, drawing relationship between humans and animals closely. In fact, according to Annil Dubied, animal figures seem to have been increasingly anthropomorphized in literary works. Writers have their tendency to attribute human characteristic to animals (77). If we agree that anthropomorphism frustrates the allegorical interpretations of the animals, then, anthropomorphism is important. Anthropomorphism shows our appreciation of animals and it is used as a device to oppose to
On a different light, Stewart Code argues that anthropomorphism is an unconscious strategy “by which humans attempts to gain the benefit of whatever significance the world had to offer” (26). In Code’s words, humans always anthropomorphize their animals because they have great thirst to find meanings for everything they see. “We attribute human characteristics to God, animals, and landscapes because, having no access to any subjectivity beyond our own, we have no other terms under which to give them meaning” (Code 34). Anthropomorphism, in Code’s perspective, aims to respond to the unknown world, doubt or disbelief, and the perceptual uncertainty into which we share the same world. Given the use of anthropomorphism as the ways for responding unknown world, Pi’s tendency to anthropomorphize Richard Parker and other zoo animals links him to the world of animals. In other words, anthropomorphism relates humans to non-human world, considering how humans understand animals as people. In this sense, anthropomorphism endows animals with a special significance for humans. And, human beings draw their attention to the human-like rights of the animals.

Although anthropomorphism still involves in the discourse of anthropocentricism and is inherently anthropocentric, I suggest that anthropomorphism and anthropocentricism are slightly different. Anthropomorphism interprets the animal world in human terms while anthropocentricism regards the world in terms of human needs. The anthropocentric discourse assumes the moral ascendancy and centrality of humans in the world, whereas anthropomorphism suggests a connection to the natural world. Rather than seeing anthropomorphism as a necessary anthropocentric view, it is better to say that anthropomorphism is a metaphor with which we use to comprehend the world around us, as George Lakoff and Mark Turner suggest: “[Anthropomorphism] permits us to use our knowledge about ourselves to the maximal effect, to use insights about ourselves to help us
comprehend such things as forces of nature, common events, abstract concepts, and inanimate objects” (72).

Given that Pi’s growth lies in his change from anthropocentric worldview to an eco-centered worldview and anthropomorphism is one of the means for Pi wishes to express eco-centered worldview, Moore’s and Dwyer’s arguments are the evidences of my arguments. Dwyer suggests that the story of *Life of Pi* “can be read as the twenty-first century convergence of both developmental and historical shipwreck narrative, a text where a young shipwreck grows up—so to speak—and take his place in the circle of nature, rather at the top of the heap” (10). Dwyer believes that Pi’s ordeal contributes to distract him from the privilege of human superiority to the natural concern of zoo animals. In other words, Pi goes through from anthropocentric worldview to eco-centered worldview. Pi’s growth manifests his respect and love to Richard Parker as well as natural world, as Pi states: “‘Truly I do. I love you, Richard Parker. If I didn’t have you now,… I would die of hopelessness. Don’t give up, Richard Parker, don’t give up, I’ll get you to land, I promise, I promise!’” (Martel 298). Conceding and promising that he loves Richard Parker and prioritizes Richard Parker’s interest over his, Pi opens a room for Richard Parker. At this point, Pi assumes Richard Parker as friend who, like him, should not give up in hopelessness. More interesting is to consider Pi’s narrative in the shipwreck. When encountering the sea storm, Pi’s narrative shifts to plural: “the valleys we found in were so deep…. We would rush up until we reached a snow-white crest…. I felt death was upon us” (284-6). According to Gregory Stephens, the man-and-tiger “we” or the first-person plural narration, a traditional narrative in the sea voyage of Greek and Roman literatures, implies “Pi’s move into complete identification with Richard Parker as not only a member of his community, but indeed as his only real remaining family” (55). In Stephens’ words, Pi not only accepts Richard Parker as the member of his family but also assumes Richard Parker as a human who needs companionship and has right
to survive. The term “we” stresses wholeness of Pi and Richard Parker.

Bindu Annie Thomas maintains that in seeing the similarities with Richard Parker, Pi sees himself “as an element in the interconnectivity of things and the struggle for power over nature/wildlife yield to a world view that is more mature, tolerant and eco-friendly” (187-8). Thomas’s perspective of the interconnectivity of men and animals derives from the concept of deep ecologists who maintain the equalitarianism of all organisms in the world. Deep ecologists believe that the existence of all organisms is dependent on the existence of other creatures within the ecosystem. The whole natural world is in a complex interrelationship. Any invasion on any individual species will lead to the damage of oneself and the other. Basing his theory on deep ecology, Thomas thinks that Pi and Richard Parker should maintain a certain balance within men-animal relation in order to survive. Pi’s fate is bound up with the fate of Richard Parker and vice versa. Also, Oppermann indicates that the interconnection of Pi and Richard Parker’s lives leads readers to contemplate on animal’s relation to humans and on nature’s relation to culture. More specifically, this contemplation is an exploration of “humanity’s relationship not only to the ecosystems but also to the universe…” (246). On a higher level, the centrality of Pi’s question does not merely lie in the human-animal relation but more in the interconnection of men to their environment and to the universe.

The anthropomorphism of animals in *Life of Pi* is associated with the renegotiation of the value of anthropocentric discourse, showing humans’ respect for nature, non-human animals, and animal subjects. Extending and adapting the elements in the traditional shipwreck narrative, such as *Robinson Crusoe*, “The Rime of Ancient Mariner,” and *The Old Man and the Sea* which are human-based stories, Martel’s *Life of Pi* rewrites them and rather

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15 Deep ecology is an environmental and ecological movement. Its ecological members advocate the inherent worth of all living things, no matter they are instrumentally useful. The term “deep ecology” is firstly coined by a philosopher Arne Naess(1912-2009) in 1937 to go against the concept of anthropocentricism which sees natural world for human uses.
concentrates on the lives of animals. My analysis of anthropomorphism has aimed to draw attention to animals and their natural world. Anthropomorphism, the portrayal of animals not as objects but as men (or precisely, not in terms of human’s needs but in human terms), leads the humans to see animals’ environment and their desperate existence in the world. In short, anthropomorphism necessitates human’s concentration on how much the animals are not considered in and for themselves and help humans think they know how animals thinks, and they habitually use animals to help them do their own thinking about themselves. In this sense, anthropomorphism is, nevertheless, essential both to humans and animals.
Early in the novel, we see that Pi addresses the problem of anthropocentric worldview. This anthropocentrism, in particular, the view of the privileged Western White men, suggests their interests over those of the silent minority. From past to present, the Eurocentric anthropocentrism has long naturalized and institutionalized our values and cultures, denigrating the rights and territorial claim of wild animals. Zoo is the result of this visible denial of rights on our wild lives and of disrespect for our planet. Underneath the extinction of wildlife and disrespect lies the fact that our understanding of wild animals and its natural world is necessarily problematic. It is precise this epistemology (anthropocentric-based worldview) which suggests that wild species and their resources are for human use human’s exploitation on natural world is morally acceptable. These concepts for wild lives are definitely speciesism. Certainly, the ideologies of speciesism must be challenged by new values of a conceptual system which emphasizes the animal subjects and the center of the animal world. Martel’s Life of Pi deals with these problems. Having accompanied a group of zoo animals, Pi acknowledges that animals, in particular, Richard Parker is a living creature who can react. Therefore, Pi respects his companion and prays for the souls of every animal he ate. This mutual respect between Pi and his companion forms the basis of his eco-centered worldview, in a way to respond to the ideologies of speciesism. Pi’s ecological negotiation addresses the social and environmental problems of the present. We perceive the others in terms of our need, experience, and value. But our anthropocentric view is nevertheless problematic and needs an alternative view. Pi questions and criticizes the imperial foundation of the epistemology which divides the world into human and non-human division and sets up a rigid boundary between species.
Martel’s *Life of Pi* disrupts the traditional anthropocentric view of the animal other near the end by telling a different version of the story. Pi’s second version of the survival tale is human-centered, in which he substitutes animals for humans. Translating the animal version of the survival tale into a human one, Pi gives the two Japanese investigators Mr. Chiba and Mr. Okamoto a story, which can be understood according to their worldview and experiences. Their worldview is based on rational thinking and an anthropocentric cognition. But, such a worldview separates animal world from human world and places the animals only in zoo captivity and the literary texts. Basing on this epistemology of wild animals, the two Japanese investigators do not believe the possibility of a young boy trapped in a lifeboat with an adult Bengal tiger over 200 days. Nevertheless, in order to cater to the belief of his listeners, Pi retells his first version of survival tale in a traditional way from which humans want to see the representations of animals. In other words, the Japanese inspectors “want a story that won’t surprise [them]. That will confirm what [them] already know. That won’t make [them] see higher or further or differently. [They] want a flat story. And immobile story, [they] want dry, yeastless factuality. … [they] want a story without animals” (Martel 381). This kind of “flat,” “immobile,” “dry,” “yeastless” story fits for anthropocentric worldview, in which no animals exist. A story should put human figures in the center of the world. In other world, animals should be cast away. As the two Japanese investigators expect, in the second account of the survival tale, the zebra becomes a wounded Chinese sailor, the orang-tuan is Pi’s mother, the hyena is a French cooker, and Richard Parker becomes Pi himself. The adapted version of the tale becomes a story of cannibalism and human brutality which sharply contrasts to “a life-affirming, optimistic tale of a clever boy and a patient tiger” (Mcfarland 162). Pi asks, “Is that better, Are there any parts you find hard to believe? Anything you’d like to change?” (Martel 391).

Critics have commented on Pi’s alternative story. June Dwyer argues that what Pi’s
interlocutors want is a traditional shipwreck narrative—Robison Crusoe and “The Ancient Mariner”—where men are the main figures. Because Pi’s interlocutors do not know wild animals and because there has never been animals in the conventional codes of the shipwreck narrative, they refuse to believe the possibility of a man and a tiger having spending more than 200 days together in the lifeboat in the Pacific Ocean. So, they consider the animal version as unusual. According to Dwyer, the interlocutors “represent tradition-bound audiences who have certain expectations for shipwreck narrative and for animal behavior, expectations that need emendation” (19). Indeed, these expectations need to be shifted and challenged because our expectations, which mostly come from anthropocentricism, have limited the view we interpret and understand things. When these expectations have neglected the presence of animals and considered that all species has to revolve around the world of human, the result might be a “flat,” “immobile,” “dry,” “yeastless” human story which human being can confirm what they have already known.

In addition to Dwyer, Rita Slapkauskaite, citing Gérard Genette’s Palimpsests, thinks that Pi’s alternative story creates a “palimpsest” or a reinterpretation of the first story to the two Japanese inspectors. This “palimpsest,” oscillating between the playful and the serious and between parody and pastiche, provokes “humor” (Slapkauskaite 149). This humorous effect exposes the Japanese investigators’ foolishness and simple-mindedness, in that they are capricious in choosing and believing Pi’s two versions of the survival tale. Slapkauskaite notes that this comic effect reminds him of Mikhail Bakhtin’s carnivalesque, which suggests that humor is a literary technique used to oppose to the ideology of the dominating society. In this sense, the humor, produced from Pi’s alternative story, is a “liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order” (Qud in Slapkauskaite 149) and meanwhile is used to subvert the dominating ideology in Life of Pi:

[t]he humor of Life of Pi… mocks at the existing social and religious dogma that
dominates our perceptions of the real and the metaphysical. In fact, Martel introduces metaphysics into the realm of laughter to subvert the rigid worldview of realist conventions which posit transcendental experience within narrow ideological frameworks. (149)

I contend that Pi and Richard Parker’s shipwreck narrative, interpreting in eco-centered view, attempts to criticize the traditional narrative in which our view is determined by what we know and what we experience. That is to say, everything must be interpreted in terms of human needs, experiences, and values. This anthropocentric worldview, in Slapkauskaite’s words, is described as a “rigid” and “realist” worldview which does not believe “transcendental” and “metaphysical” world. Correspondingly, Pi introduces an eco-centered worldview as a counterpart of and also an alternative to the anthropocentric worldview. In this sense, I believe that Pi’s survival tale in which he spends more than 200 days with a group of animals requires the Japanese inspectors a shift of perspective to imagine human beings as living among other species. It is a shift of a view from anthropocentric one to eco-centered one, with which Pi criticizes the dominated anthropocentric discourse as “narrow” and “limited.” Meanwhile, in his eco-centered worldview, he ushers a new era where the compassion, care, and sympathy with our wild lives are necessary.

Interpreting from conventional literary writing, Becket and Gifford suggest another aspect in reading Pi’s alternative story. They, citing Marie Fernandes’ analysis of animal fable in western literatures, disclose that Pi’s alternative story “attempts to decolonize the beast fable” (174). Traditionally, the idea of bringing animals to life and with human voice is an allegorical and symbolical writing by which human weaknesses are exposed to examination and criticism. In reading animals through genres such as satire, fable, cartoon, and children’s stories, we encounter anthropomorphic animals. Our traditional reading by reducing animals to an appendant of human beings and reading them as allegories of ourselves leads our wild
animals to disappear in reality. Either way renders animals invisible. Reversely, Pi releases animals from (largely western) traditional symbolic and allegorical writings, in which human beings used to interpret certain forms of human nature. In Pi’s beast fable, animals are turned from the “symbolic animal figures” into “fashioned ecological subjects, not lifeless relays for abstractions but living creatures flesh and blood” (Becket and Gifford 175). We read an actual animal story, in which animals are brought into presence. In this regard, Richard Parker, hyena, zebra, and orang-utan are not representations of or the counterpart of Pi, the cook, the sailor, and Pi’s mother; instead, they are living creatures who can feel. On one sense, they are no longer what our traditional literatures have shown us the allegorical animals but rather fleshly and animalistic “ecological subjects.” On the other hand, these living creatures are members of our community, deserving to be treated as individuals. Although the ways in which Pi initially describes these animals are inherently anthropocentric, yet in order to make them meaningful to human beings and speak of them, it is inevitably to humanize them: “Martel’s text does this by mocking anthropomorphism while also inevitably practicing it” (Becket and Gifford 175). In this sense, I agree with Becket and Gifford’s assumption that Pi’s beast fable attempts to “celebrate animals and advocate fairer treatment of them…” (175). The beast fable disrupts the representations of animals as allegories of ourselves and is independent from the traditional genre primarily dedicating to moral and educational function to human beings. Generally Speaking, the beast fable with actual animals is described as a “better story,” as Pi argues (Martel 398).

Nevertheless, Pi does not end his story with the cannibal version. Pi asks which story his interlocutors prefer and which one is better. When the Japanese interlocutors both agree that the first story with animals is a better story, their choice explains that “the world with animal is the better world, and a belief in that ‘truth’ may lead to positive environmentally conscious action for the readers of Martel’s ‘better story’” (Wright 63). Compared to the story
without animals, a story with animals is better because it indicates that the world with animals is better. As Pi becomes more mature, he understands that the world with animals is the sound world. He is pointing out the usefulness of wild animals, in that Richard Parker awakes him from his tragic shipwreck. He suggests that in reality the world with animals is better as well. Pi is conscious of the importance of animals in human world, so do the two Japanese investigators. This “better world” implies in reality the necessary coexistence of human beings and animals. On a high level, this “better world” gives Pi as well as readers a sound understanding of what our wild animals account for and recognition of animal subjects. Wild animals, which can feel and react, are fully-fleshed creatures instead of the symbolical agents. It is, thus, this new conceptual system, which challenges the old epistemological understandings of the animal others as the empty receptacles to be recognized that we rethink our treatment of wild animals.

The critique of anthropocentric view for its lacking in considering animal subject is made particular clear when Pi suggests that the world is how we understand it: “‘the world isn’t just the way it is. It is how we understand it, no? And in understanding something, we bring something to it, no? Doesn’t that make life a story?’” (Martel 380). This view echoes Berger’s ways of looking: “the way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe” (8) and “we never look at just one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves” (9). Since they never know animals and believe that animals have never existed in literatures (I mean the actual animals), the two Japanese investigators distrust Pi’s first survival story. For the two Japanese officials, the story with animals “contradicts reality” and must be “invented.” In fact, underneath this disbelief lies the anthropocentricism which had marginalized the position of wild species and their place in relation to human societies. It is precisely this anthropocentricism—the idea of humans’ superiority to animals—that the possibility of a boy and a tiger coexisting is considered
nonsense. “Tiger exist, lifeboat exists, ocean exists. Because the three never come together in your narrow, limited experience, you refuse to believe that they might. Yet the plain fact is that the Tsimtsum brought them together and then sank” (Martel 376). As Pi argues, the words of “narrow” and “limited” express his implicit critique of anthropocentric discourse, implying that if the Japanese investigators interpret his survival tale or animal world in terms of anthropocentric worldview, then our perception of the natural world will be perilous by excluding other voices or views from our experiences. Consequently, Pi’s shipwreck narrative is hard to believe, and “Love,” “Life,” and “God” are also hard to believe. “If you stumble at mere believability, what are you living for?” (Martel 375) said by Pi as an opposition to reason-based anthropocentric view.

Species Boundary and Dualism

By putting animals at the center of human world and releasing them from our allegorical tales, Pi emphasizes the animal subjects and criticizes their exclusion from and ignorance in the traditional forms of the western literature that serve animals as heroes, villains and moral lessons of human life. There is a great risk in misunderstanding our non-human creatures, either as agents or as objects for human emotional projection. In Pi’s lens of eco-centered worldview, we know more about our non-human creatures and humans. We see how animals think and we use animals to help us think about ourselves. Also, because Pi provides viable alternatives of his survival story, we find that human groups and animal groups are close to each other. In his narrative, we see the similarity between human beings and animals by blurring the species boundary between human and animal groups, in an attempt to negotiate traditional rationalism/emotionalism, humanity/animality, and self/other dichotomy.

In many humanistic literatures—and not just western ones—human world and their
non-human world are antagonistic. According to the composed writers, Huggan and Tiffin, throughout the western history, anthropocentric discourse stresses the differences between human beings and animals:

Civilization has consistently been constructed by or against the wild, savage and animalistic, and has consequently been haunted or ‘dogged’ by it. The wild man of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries lurked at the dangerously liminal fringe of a consolidating European Enlightenment civilization; and if, during the eighteenth and in the early nineteenth centuries, slavery, and its accelerating racism, both necessitated and enabled Europeans to exile the animalistic to Africa and the New World,…civilization,…, might be no more than a veneer over still savage European ‘inner man’” (134).

As we can see, Huggan and Tiffin express the consistently counter relationship between human and nature or culture and nature, further mapping out the dualistic division between animal and human world. On this basis, natural world is considered a foundation of civilization in which human beings can instrumentally use natural resources and continue to objectify the environment. “It is thus not surprising that human individuals and societies rejects animal similitudes and analogies and insist instead on a separate subjectivity” (Huggan and Tiffin 134-5). Nevertheless, human-animal relationships are not antagonistic in Life of Pi. Pi does not regard Richard Parker as a threat and foe. Neither does Life of Pi follow the traditional dualistic paradigm which tells humanity and animality apart. Instead, we see the blurred realm of two groups between human and animal.

In Life of Pi, the species boundary between Pi and Richard Parker becomes uncertain and obscure along with the progresses of the voyage. An adult 450-pound Richard Parker constrains his natural instinct to kill and eat his human rival Pi when he is hungry and is irritated, becoming human-like and seasick. Pi constrains what might be assumed to be
rational, behaving even more beast-like when having his meal: “I descended to a level of savagery I never imagined possible” (Martel 249) and “it came as an unmistakable indication to me of how low I had sunk the day I noticed, with a pinching of the heart, that I ate like animal, that this noisy, frantic, unchewing wolfing-down of mine was exactly the way Richard Parker ate” (Martel 284). In this description of human and animal instinct, Pi is not different from beasts while Richard Parker is described as one which restrains his natural tendency to kill other species. This crossing of the division between human and animal behavior complicates our understanding in which humans are rational and human, whereas animals are animalistic, irrational and dangerous. Commenting on the concepts of humanity, animal, and animality, Kelly Oliver argues that the animals teach humans to be human:

From the perspective of humanity (so to speak), particular philosophies of the human, ambiguity eventually takes us (back) to animal, who serves to protect against the very ambiguity that it conjures. …. Binary oppositions such as body/mind, passion/reason, biology/culture… recall the more primary and threatening opposition between animal and human. Man’s status as the ‘rational animal’ puts him at the same time in an ambiguous space as animal but not animal. (70-1)

Likewise, in Life of Pi, this crossing of the division between human and animal behaviors puts Pi in an ambiguous space as animal but not animal, whereas Richard Parker in an ambiguous space as human (in way of anthropomorphism) but not human. Both are put at an ambiguous space in which human and animal cannot goes beyond their species boundary; nevertheless, the tension between human and animal brings them closer and eventually returns to the philosophical questions of what means to be humanity and animality. “In order to become human, men act like animals, eat what animals eat, and say what animals say, only now with words” (Oliver 63).

More interesting is to ponder the interactions between Pi and Richard Parker.
According to Huggan and Tiffin, in a lifeboat Pi and Richard Parker seems to contract a pact in the name of survival, in which “each tacitly agrees not to kill and eat the other. …human and animals must forge an uneasy alliance of mutual dependence” (175). Pi could plan an assault on Richard Parker—from plan one to six—but he refuses. Direct assault on Richard Parker will be suicidal, while a war of attrition must certainly fail because Richard Parker “will swim as far as he has to, to catch the drifting raft and the food upon it” (Martel 202). So, Pi turns to keep Richard Parker alive. Correspondingly, Richard Parker appears to agree this contract:

[Richard Parker] did not really want to attack [Pi]. [Richard Parker], indeed all animals, do not favour violence as a means of setting scores. When animals fight, it is with the intent to kill and with understanding that they may be killed. A clash is costly…. [Richard Parker] will appraise the situation. If [Richard Parker] decides that there is no threat, [Richard Parker] will turn away, feeling that its point has been made. (Martel 261).

As we see, the traditional counter human-animal relationship is overturned through Pi and Richard Parker’s truce. Pi and Richard finally survive.

The crossing of human-animal geographical boundary is another evidence of humans and animals living together. We can see that wild animals or zoo animals break their boundary and run cross into human spaces. For example, the presence of Richard Parker in Pi’s zoo lies in tiger’s disruption into human spaces: “This animal was not the man-eater, but so close to human habitation she [Richard Parker’s mother] might pose a threat to the villagers, especially as she was with cub” (Martel 167). Richard Parker and his mother are captured because they are close to human spaces. Richard Parker’s transgression to human space might cause anxiety to human’s safety. The example of animal proximity to human’s spaces disrupts the two species boundary. Speaking of escaped animals and animals’ crossing
boundary, Pi explains that because they are frightened, zoo animals escape: “animals don’t escape to somewhere but from something. Something within their territory has frightened them—the intrusion of an enemy, the assault of a dominant animals, a startling noise—and set of a flight reaction” (Martel 51) and also “escaping animals usually hide in the very first place they find that gives them a sense of security, and they are dangerous only to those who happen to get between them and their reckoned safe spot” (Martel 51-2). Pi’s explanation dispels human’ anxiety from the escaped animals. We might think that the invasion of animals is a threat to human beings. Pi continues to say:

If you took the city of Tokyo and turned it upside down and shook it, you would be amazed at the animals that would fall out. It would pour more than cats and dogs, I tell you. Boa constrictors, Komodo dragons, crocodiles...that’s the sort of rainfall you could expect on umbrella. (Martel 53)

These abovementioned wild animals, akin to the zoo animals, are also living within human spaces without notice. No matter wild or kept in zoo captivity, animals’ proximity to humans in geography is so amazing and unbelievable that it contradicts with our assumption of animals are dangerous and incompatible to human beings. Humans have been hostile to animals. Here, Pi tells a world where animals go beyond their boundary and come into human spaces. The crossing of human-animal geographical boundary not only disrupts our fixed species boundary but also points out animals’ proximity to human beings.

After having explained why animals escape and go beyond their geographical boundary, I will examine how Pi describes their migration to Canada. Pi likens himself and his brother to zoo animals because their transference to Canada is identical with that of zoo animals to safety: “And two animals were being shipped to the Canada Zoo. That’s how Ravi and I felt. We did not want to go. We did not want to live in a country of gale-force winds and minus-two-hundred-degree winters. Canada was not on the cricket map” (Martel 111). The
fact that Pi and his brother migrate to Canada is that they want to head for the place of safety which is as same as why the escaped zoo or wild animals depart for safety. This comparison between human beings and animals in terms of displacement explains their resemblance. Pi argues:

Why do people move? What makes them uproot and leave everything they’ve known for a great unknown beyond the horizon? ...The answer is the same the world over: people move in the hope of a better life. … People move because of the war and tear of anxiety. Because of the gnawing feeling that no matter that no matter how hard they work their efforts will yield nothing,…. Because of the feeling that nothing will change, that happiness and prosperity are possible only somewhere else. (Martel 98-100).

From Pi’s perspective, the motivation of his family’s migration to Canada is in common with that of zoo animals to safety. In order to escape from anxiety, war and hopelessness, humans and animals decide to resettle in a place where they feel a sense of security. In the discussion of displacement, Mr. Patel’s migration is analogous with the situation of the escaped animals. “Thus, the possible parallels with escaping zoo animals could be seen to liken the Patels to animals in their incomplete autonomy. The boys are being moved against their will (initially) as zoo animals are, while their parents are moving only to get away from something, as animals are described as doing” (Borrell 74). According to Borrel, the juxtaposition between human and animal escapes offers potential connections between human and animal similarities, effectively forcing humans to reconsider their relation with animals. Overall, human and animal interactions; Pi’s alternative story of the survival tale; the transgression of human-animal geographical boundary; the motivation of human migration and animal escapes—all question the established humanistic dualistic paradigm. In this sense, it is my contention that Life of Pi addresses the problems of self/other, rationalism/emotionalism, and
humanity/animality dichotomy. This reflective assumption provokes a negotiation of humans in a relation with their animals in the society. In addition, we see the blurring division between human-animal boundary; an uneasy alliance between Pi and Richard Parker; and the identical motivation of migration, all of which contribute to reconsider our cultural, social, and environmental relationship with our biotic community.

In Huggan and Tiffin’s Introduction, they claim:

In working towards a genuinely post-imperial, environmentally based conception of community, then, a re-imagining and reconfiguration of the human place in nature necessitates an interrogation of the category of the human itself and of the ways in which the construction of ourselves against nature—with the hierarchisation of life forms that construction implies—has been and remain complicit in colonialist and racist exploitation from the time of imperial conquest to the present day. (6)

From the perspective of the West, human beings have raised themselves above and against nature. The repression of the wild man is claimed to bring civilization into the savage Africa or the New World. But, we ironically find that “what had initially been banished by the Enlightenment in order to constitute human civility—the animal and animalistic—is now paradoxically being returned as its essence, its inner core” (Huggan and Tiffin 134-5). Indeed, Huggan and Tiffin argue the need to disrupt the dualistic division and to negotiate our species boundary as the means of challenging ideologies of imperialism. In an ecologically friendly based community, we must reconsider the subjects of the other species. The institutionalized and naturalized hierarchy, ranking humans at the top while non-human animals at the bellow, now seemingly needs to be resituated and reconfigured when humans and animals are examined to share some analogies and similitudes.

In such current reconfigurations of both human and animal relations and negotiation with our anthropocentric worldview, Life of Pi offers us an enhanced understanding of
non-human world and indicates that we should think with animals. On one hand, through this disruption of the hierarchy of human’s superiority to non-human, Pi emphasizes the equalitarianism of human and non-human world. If Richard Parker’s existence is threatened, so is Pi’s. On the other hand, Pi uses Richard Parker to help him think about human beings. This means that through anthropocentric worldview, Pi sees the drawbacks of human-centered world. Apparently, after spending over 200 days with Richard Parker, Pi negotiates his anthropocentric view and start to sympathize with the feelings of wild animals:

‘What you don’t realize is that we [humans] are a stranger and forbidding species to wild animals. We fill them with fear. They avoid us as much as possible. It took centuries to still the fear in some pliable animals—domestication it’s called—but most cannot get over their fear, and I doubt they ever will. When animals fight us, it is out of sheer desperation. They fight when they feel they have on other way out. It’s a very last resort.’ (Martel 373)

It is not the first time that Pi considers how animals see human beings in terms of eco-centered view. Human beings have inspired fear and are “stranger and forbidding species” which if they invade animals’ territory, animals are frightened. Animals are not dangerous creatures in their “hungry” and “bloodthirsty” mood but in the invasion of their territory by humans. Animals, like individual beings, must claim their territory and dominance on the land. This ecocritical discourse, thinking with animals and highlighting their emotions, challenges its counterpart of the racist/speciesism of imperialism.

In Life of Pi, Pi seems to contest and also provide viable alternatives to western ideologies of development which, however, have been embedded in ways of humans perceive animals. This viable alternative is an eco-centered discourse. Through a departure from the Pondicherry Zoo and the possibility of a sixteen-year-old Pi living together with an adult Bengal tiger, Pi becomes mature and changes to an eco-centered worldview. Pi’s eco-centered
worldview is an implicit critique of the anthropocentric worldview or the established humanistic world. The eco-centered worldview is especially important when we never see animals and their world as they are.

I have been trying to bring ecocritical discourse into the field of postcolonialism. In Martel’s Life of Pi, we are shown a growing increasing concern in the environmental issue of the postcolonial areas. Life of Pi brings postcolonial and ecocritical field together to deal with the issues that I have discussed—the relationship between self and other, the interrogation of the species boundary, the racism/speciesism nexus—although both seem to be incompatible and mutual mistrustful (Huggan and Tiffan). The alliance between postcolonial and ecocritical studies is combined to form the studies of “green postcolonialism” or “postcolonial ecocriticalism.” As Pabol Mukherjee puts it:

Surely, any field purporting to theorize the global conditions of colonialism and imperialism (let us call it postcolonial studies) cannot but consider the complex interplay of environment categories…with political or cultural categories…. Equally, any field purporting to attach interpretative importance to environment (let us call it eco/environmental studies) must be able to trace the social, historical and material co-ordinates of categories…. (Qtd in Huggan and Tiffan;144)

Indeed, in order to explore the colonial ideologies in the establishment of the zoo, I have been carefully examining the complicated environmental concerns in the culture, history, and society of Pondicherry Zoo, in that we see how colonialism is constructed and sustained, how colonialist ideologies shape and govern our perception of the animal world, and how we should get rid of it. By discussing zoo establishment in advance, we have a better understanding in postcolonial ecocriticism. This postcolonial ecocriticism not only probes into the limitations of human beings but also brings humans, animals, and environment together.
Conclusion

Throughout the western history, in dealing with all forms of thoughts, such as violence, love, race, and religion in our contemporary literary works, the issue concerning with the lives of animals and their subjectivity seems to be secondary and trivial. Animals are seldom main characters and taken care of even though we know that we are animals and we think with animals. When we are dealing with texts of all kind concerning with animals, animals are, however, described as derogatory metaphors or are read as the allegories of ourselves. These readings have been the common characteristics of human languages but have limited and narrowed our understanding towards animals and their behaviors. Gradually, animals are isolated from human world and become invisible. As a result, we cannot see actual animals and animality in any forms of animal imagery, such as Aesop’s Fable. These representations of animals have historically shown us the racism/speciesism towards our animals. Nevertheless, recent studies in tracing animals in the philosophy of animal studies and behaviors have shown that animals are more likely to be acting subjects instead of lifeless objects. In other words, animals are like us and should not be confined to the fundamental moral and prudential lessons of human life. Starting from this theoretical basis, ecocritical scholars argue that animal characters in the contemporary literary works should be reexamined. Our concepts of human/animal and self/other binary division need to be questioned and negotiated, too. The relation humans have constructed for themselves in a hierarchical relationship with other animals in the society is problematic now. The existence of animals forces humans to rethink our ecological connection to any species around the world and to the earth, not only in the fictions but also in reality.

The zoo has fascinated many crowds all over the world. It has helped people place themselves in relation to the rest of the world. Humans are more interested in the keeping of
wild animals in captivity because the captivity of zoo animals has satisfied human’s desire for dominance over natural world. But, the establishment of the zoo does not provoke any condemnation on the confinement of animals because our society is not constructed on the principle of equality. By probing into the issue of the zoo in Martel’s *Life of Pi*, we take a glimpse of how Pi or, generally speaking, humans have perceived wild animals as lifeless objects. This anthropocentric discourse has disclosed that we are apathetic and unappreciated to our animals. Only after training and considering Richard Parker’s needs and interest can Pi and humans understand that our relation is inherently bound with Richard Parker and animals respectively.

On a philosophical level, many critics have pointed out that *Life of Pi* is self-reflective novel which means that *Life of Pi* concerns with what means to be human, animal, and animality. Specifically, Pi questions the fundamental existential questions of human life or what means to be human. If so, then, Martel does not open a clear answer. Certainly, we assume that Martel interrogates the history of the opposition and differences between humans and animals. In Lacanian concept of “mirrored image,” Pi considers Richard Parker to be like him, recognizing that Richard Parker is his alter ego and he is a species of animals. In this sense, Pi cannot maintain these boundaries between humans and animals whenever he desperately devours. Due to inadequate supplies of water and food supplies, he is forced to jump into the realm of animals to think of what means to be animal. When he behaves beast-like while Richard Parker is described as human-like tiger, we are shown that the species boundaries between humans and animals are no longer fixed. The human/animal transformation directs us towards an enhanced understanding of human, animal, and animality. In one sense, Pi is obligated to understand that he and Richard Parker belong to the earth and, both as inhabitant of the earth, he and Richard Parker share the same destiny and planet. Put in differently, when both facing with the same foe of death, Pi and Richard Parker
are homogeneous for they want to survive.

Throughout Martel’ *Life of Pi*, I have suggested that Pi’s anthropomorphism is the means for Pi wishing to reconstruct his relation to animals as well as Richard Parker and have told anthropomorphism and anthropocentricism apart. When Pi attributes human characteristics to Richard Parker as well as other animals in the lifeboat, Pi builds an intimate bond with animals. Pi can feel as if animals are human-like. After building an affinity with Richard Parker, Pi can empathize his feelings as much with Richard Parker as with humans. By doing so, Pi can communicate and comprehend Richard Parker. What’s more, by using anthropomorphization again and again, we see a transform in Pi’s initial outlook of animals as the empty receptacles to be confined and observed in the zoo enclosure. At last, showing up Pi’s animality and Richard Parker’s humanity has led us to ponder the fundamental existential questions of human life; that is to say, what means to be human, animal, and animality as I have mentioned. When these questions surface and to be questioned, human-animal relationship mediates.

On the other hand, in addition to anthropomorphization, I have also asserted that training is another means by which Pi reconfigures his hierarchical relation to Richard Parker and understands Richard Parker. By training Richard Parker while Richard Parker resists, Pi finds a new way of adjusting his anthropocentricism and bringing him together with Richard Parker. Facing with Richard Parker, Pi does not kill Richard Parker because he understands his interdependence on Richard Parker. Consequently, the existence of Richard Parker helps Pi understand Richard Parker’s signals and language. He sacrifices his own needs and interest to meet with Richard Parker’s, in a way he originally fails to consider Richard Parker. Under this circumstance, for the sake of security, they compromise to each other in learning each other’s signals in a tiny boat. In this sense, Pi and Richard Parker both learn from each other and try to interpret the other’s thoughts through their actions. Not only Pi realizes what our
animals account for humans but also Pi understands himself as human. Specifically, Pi learns the meaning of life, not just animal life, but all of life. All organisms have a direct relation and engagement with one another.

In modern society, we face the problems of global warming, species extinction, and subsequently the species conservation and preservation. How we look at animals should be transformed from the seemingly racism/speciesism of men as conquering and ignoring the roles of animals to one of men taking care of their relation to animals and their natural world. Since animals and other species are responsive, we have an obligation to think of the others, not just animals, but all individuals. Indeed, our anthropocentricism is inherently inevitable, the adjustment and negotiation of our anthropocentricism towards the other is, nevertheless, necessarily significant.
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