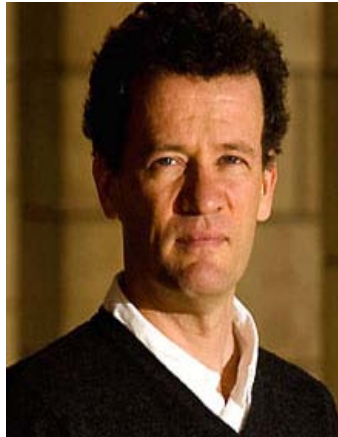


APPENDICES

A. The Biography of Yann Martel



Yann Martel was born on June 25, 1963, in Salamanca, Spain, to Emile and Nicole Martel, but spent his childhood living in a variety of different countries, including Costa Rica, France, India, Iran, Mexico, Turkey, Canada, and the United States. His parents, civil servants, were of French-Canadian descent, and their family eventually settled in Montreal.

Martel attended Trent University from 1981 to 1984, but graduated from Concordia University with a BA in philosophy in 1985. After graduating, along with writing and considering a career in politics or anthropology, he worked many different odd jobs—librarian, tree planter, dishwasher, security guard, and parking lot attendant. At the age of 27, he committed himself to writing. Martel spent 13 months in India visiting mosques, churches, temples and zoos, and spent two years reading religious texts and castaway stories.

Martel has said in a number of interviews that Dante's *Divine Comedy* is the single most impressive book he has ever read. In talking about his most memorable childhood book, he recalls *Le Petit Chose* by Alphonse Daudet. He said that he read it when he was ten years old, and it was the first time he found a book so heartbreaking that it moved him to tears.

Yann Martel's Career

In 2001, he published the novel *Life of Pi*, his fourth book, which was awarded the Man Booker Prize in 2002. *Life of Pi* was later chosen for the 2003 edition of CBC Radio's *Canada Reads* competition, where it was championed by author Nancy Lee. In addition, its French translation, *Histoire de Pi*, was included in the French version of the competition, *Le combat des livres*, in 2004, championed by singer Louise Forestier. Martel was inspired to write a story about sharing a lifeboat with a large cat after reading a review of the novella *Max and the Cats* by Brazilian author Moacyr Scliar. Martel received some criticism for failing to consult with Scliar and by Scliar himself for the way he initially responded to the criticism.

Martel spent a year in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan from September 2003 as the public library's writer-in-residence. He collaborated with Omar Daniel, composer-in-residence at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, on a piece for piano, string quartet and bass. The composition, *You Are Where You Are*, is based on text written by Martel, which includes parts of cellphone conversations taken from moments in an ordinary day.

In November 2005, the University of Saskatchewan announced that Martel would be scholar-in-residence.

His novel *Beatrice and Virgil* (2010) deals with the Holocaust: its main characters are two stuffed animals (a monkey and a donkey), along with several other animals depicted in a taxidermy shop. Martel describes them as simply two approaches to the same subject.

From 2007 to 2011, Martel worked on a project entitled *What is Stephen Harper Reading?* Every two weeks, he sent the Prime Minister of Canada one book that portrays "stillness," with an accompanying explanatory note. He posted his letters, book selections, and responses received to a website devoted to the project. A book-length account of the project was published in the fall of 2009. Martel ended the project in February 2011, after sending Harper a total of 100 books.

Writing Life of Pi

In a 2002 interview with PBS, Martel revealed his inspiration for his novel, "I was sort of looking for a story, not only with a small 's' but sort of with a capital 'S' – something that would direct my life." He spoke of being lonely and needing direction in his life. The novel became that direction and purpose for his life.

Martel also stated that his inspiration for the book's premise came from reading a book review of Brazilian author Moacyr Scliar's 1981 novella *Max and the Cats*, about a Jewish-German refugee who crossed the Atlantic Ocean while

sharing his boat with a jaguar. Scliar said that he was perplexed that Martel "used the idea without consulting or even informing me," and indicated that he was reviewing the situation before deciding whether to take any action in response. After talking with Martel, Scliar elected not to pursue the matter. A dedication to Scliar "for the spark of life" appears in the author's note of *Life of Pi*.

Literary reviews have described the similarities between *Life of Pi* and *Max and the Cats* as superficial. Reviewer Peter Yan wrote, "Reading the two books side-by-side, one realizes how inadequate bald plot summaries are in conveying the unique imaginative impact of each book," and noted that Martel's distinctive narrative structure is not found in Scliar's novella. The themes of the books are also dissimilar, with *Max and the Cats* being an allegory for Nazism. In *Life of Pi*, 211 of 354 pages are devoted to Pi's experience in the lifeboat, compared to *Max and the Cats*, in which 17 of its 99 pages depict time spent in a lifeboat.

B. Summary of the Novel

The novel begins with the author describing in an author's note his travels to India, where he meets a man named Francis Adirubasamy in a coffeehouse in Pondicherry. His response to the author's claim that he needs inspiration is "I have a story that will make you believe in God." After which he refers the author to Piscine Patel in Toronto, who immediately begins to tell his own story, starting in Chapter 1.

As a teenager in Pondicherry, India, Pi Patel describes his family – himself, his parents, and his brother Ravi. He is constantly exploring new

opportunities and learning many odd and exciting things. His father is the proprietor of the Pondicherry Zoo, where Pi learns much of the workings and raising of animals. Pi's mother is an avid reader and introduces to him numerous literary works from which he learns the joys of numerous schools of thought. His school is filled with amazing teachers, one of whom, Mr. Kumar is an inspiration to Pi.

Deriving his full name (Piscine) from a world famous swimming pool in France, his parents are good friends with Francis Adirubasamy (from the author's note), a world class swimmer who often goes on about the Piscine Molitor in Paris. He goes by Pi instead because his schoolmates make a big deal out of calling him "pissing" instead as it sounds similar. They all take to the name and from that point on, his name is no long Piscine but Pi.

Pi grew up a Hindu, but discovered the Catholic faith at age 14 from a priest by the name of Father Martin. He is soon baptized. He then meets Mr. Kumar, a Muslim of some standing and converts to Islam. Therefore, he openly practices all three religions avidly. When the three religious teachers meet up with his parents at the zoo, they demand that he choose a single religion, to which he announces he cannot. Throughout this section, Pi discusses numerous religious matters as well as his thoughts on culture and zoology.

At age 16, Pi's father decides that Mrs. Gandhi's (the leader of India) political actions are unsavory and closes up the zoo to move to Toronto. He sells off a majority of the zoo animals to various zoos in America. The animals are

loaded onto the same boat that the family will take to reach Winnipeg, Canada. On the journey to North America, the boat sinks.

As the only survivor of the shipwreck, he's stuck in a lifeboat with a dying zebra and a hyena. Pi sees another survivor floating in the water and only after throwing them a life preserver and pulling them aboard does he realize that "Richard Parker" is actually the 400 pound tiger from his father's zoo. He immediately jumps overboard until he realizes that there are sharks nearby.

So, upon reentering the boat, he wedges the tarpaulin up with an oar and decides he might survive if he can stay on top and keep Richard Parker beneath it. Over the next week an Orangutan arrives as well and the four animals interplay carefully, eating each other until there is only Richard Parker left.

Over the course of the next 7 months aboard the lifeboat, Pi hides on a makeshift raft behind the boat and begins the process of taming Richard Parker with a whistle and treats from the sea, as well as marking his portion of the boat. He begins to get close to the tiger, developing the kind of bond a zookeeper does with his menagerie. After a while, Pi learns to kill and eat from the sea, sharing with the tiger. The two do not eat nearly enough though and as time passes, they become quite ill.

At a certain point, the two become so hungry and ill that they lose their sight and come across another blind man amazingly floating along in the ocean as well. The two talk for a bit about food and eventually the blind man tries to board Pi's boat, intent on eating him. However, when he boards the boat the

unsuspecting man is attacked by Richard Parker and eaten. The tears from the situation eventually clear up Pi's vision and they continue on alone in the boat.

Still floating along alone and desperate, the two come across an island made of algae. They disembark and Pi begins eating the algae, regaining his strength during the day and sleeping on the boat. Richard Parker regains his strength from eating the meerkats who live on the island, sleeping in the trees during the night. Eventually, Pi realizes that they leave at night because of an acid produced by the island during the night hours. He eventually notices a tooth among the algae, evidence of another man having died on the island. They leave quickly as the island is apparently carnivorous.

Finally, after more time spent floating along in the ocean, Pi sights land in Mexico and disembarks. Richard Parker immediately runs off into the woods and Pi is recovered by two men from the shipping company who owned the boat that sank with his family on it. He relates to them the story of his 227 days on the boat, but they do not quite believe his fantastic tale of surviving with a Bengal Tiger and meeting a blind man in the ocean.

So, Pi relays to them a second story instead of his mother, a sailor with a broken leg and a cannibalistic cook, with no animals and no magical islands this time around. The story closely parallels the first story without all of the fancy involved, and one of the men points this out. However, the two ignore the final story in favor of the better story and write it up in their report after Pi mentions that it does not matter as both lead to the same outcome.

Adaptations of Life of Pi

Illustrated edition

In October 2005, a worldwide competition was launched to find an artist to illustrate *Life of Pi*. The competition was run by Scottish publisher Canongate Books and UK newspaper *The Times*, as well as Australian newspaper *The Age* and Canadian newspaper *The Globe and Mail*. Croatian artist Tomislav Torjanac was chosen as the illustrator for the new edition, which was published in September 2007.

Film adaptation

Life of Pi (film)

A 2012 adaptation directed by Ang Lee and based on an adapted screenplay by David Magee was given a wide release in the United States on 21 November 2012. At the 85th Academy Awards it won four awards from eleven nominations, including Best Director.

Theatrical adaptations

This novel has also been adapted as a play by Keith Robinson, artistic director of the youth-oriented Twisting Yarn Theatre Company. Andy Rashleigh wrote the adaptation, which was directed by Keith Robinson. The premier/original cast contained only six actors—Tony Hasnath (Pi), Taresh Solanki (Richard Parker), Melody Brown (Mother), Conor Alexander (Father), Sanjay Shalat (Brother) and Mark Pearce (Uncle). The play was produced at the Alhambra Theatre in Bradford,

England, in 2003. The company toured England and Ireland with the play in 2004 and 2007.

Keith Robinson also directed a second version of the play. He brought some of his company to work with students of the BA (Hons) Drama, Applied Theatre and Education Course at the Central School of Speech and Drama. The joint production was performed at the Minack Theatre, in Cornwall, England, in late June 2008. It was well received by the press and community.