

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

I have chosen novel as the genre for my thesis because I think it is easier to analyse a novel than a play or poems. Since there are more detailed descriptions of the characters, actions and settings, I personally think that this genre is the most interesting of the three. As a matter of fact, a novel is “. . . a form of story or prose narrative containing characters, action and incident, and, perhaps, a plot.” (Cuddon 600)

I would like to analyse a novel entitled Life of Pi written by Yann Martel because the novelist has created a very remarkable character. He makes the readers believe that the events in the story are plausible. “A good story can make you see, understand and believe, and Martel is a very good storyteller. Martel displays an impressive knowledge of language, history, religion and literature, and his writing is filled with details and insights.—The Canadian Press” (Randomhouse). Life of Pi won the 2002 Man Booker Prize, an award for the best novel written in English by a citizen of the Commonwealth or the Republic of Ireland. The book is also an international bestseller.

The novel gives the reader a plain description of the protagonist and his surroundings. It tells about the protagonist's life from childhood, the background of his name, his family, and his family's zoo. The novel also explains why the character acts the way he does. Yann Martel has successfully made a remarkable yet believable character.

According to Edgar V. Roberts, “. . . character in literature is an author's representation of a human being, specifically of those inner qualities that determine how an individual reacts to various conditions or attempts to shape his or her environment.” (54). The protagonist of Life of Pi clearly represents a human being whose reactions to various conditions reveal his inner qualities.

I decide to elaborate the portrayal of the protagonist in Life of Pi because the protagonist, Piscine Molitor Patel (“Pi”), is the centre of attraction in the novel. The protagonist is really amazing and the novelist's portrayal of this major character provides the reader with a new insight about religions, wild animals, and social relationship.

Statement of the Problem

In order to analyse the novel, I state the problems as follows:

1. How does the author portray the protagonist in Life of Pi?
2. What is the author's purpose in creating such a character in his novel?

Purpose of the Study

The study is conducted with the following aims:

1. To show how the author portrays the characteristics of the protagonist in Life of Pi.
2. To show the author's purpose in creating such a character in his novel.

Method of Research

The method I use is library research. I read Yann Martel's Life of Pi and then I analyse the texts by using some theories from some references and resources from the Internet which support the analysis. Finally, I draw the conclusion of what has been discussed.

Organization of the Thesis

I divide the thesis into three chapters, which are preceded by the Acknowledgments, the Table of Contents and Abstract. In Chapter One I present the Introduction, which contains the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Method of Research, and the Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two contains the portrayal of the protagonist of Life of Pi. After the Conclusion in Chapter Three, there will be Bibliography and Appendices, which contain the synopsis and a brief biography of the novelist.