

Perspectives on Truth and *Life of Pi* Reflection

Today you will rotate among several stations, exploring various media related to *Life of Pi*. At the end of the period you will turn in this completed reflection form. It is imperative that you stay on task at each station so that you are able to finish each task.

Station 1: "The Case for Lying to Yourself"

1. What does Shellenbarger's article reveal about perspective and truth? Paraphrase two examples or studies that Shellenbarger uses to support her point. (answer both parts)

2. What evidence does Martel include in *Life of Pi* to suggest that Pi might be lying to himself? What does Pi have to gain from doing so? (answer both parts)

Station 2: Morning Edition Interview with Yann Martel

1. According to author Yann Martel, what is the difference between the "rational" and "irrational?" In other words, what does each tell us?

2. When speaking about the state of religion today, Martel defends religion by saying, "Every good idea can be kidnapped?" What does he mean? (consider: What is the "good idea"? Who are the "kidnappers"?)

3. According to Martel, what is the difference between religious mysticism and religious dogma?

4. According to Martel, what emotions require people to "involve themselves"?

5. Martel mentions several different types of fear: guttural fear, the fear of aging, the fear of loneliness. What tools, according to author, allow people to deal with such fears?

6. Considering the opinions Martel shares in this interview, explain **how** the author utilizes **ONE specific** aspect of *Life of Pi* (a character, an event, a setting, an object, an action, etc.) to convey his message. *Be sure to explain what the message is and how the element conveys that message.*

Station 3: Good Morning America Q & A with Yann Martel

1. What does the author Q & A reveal to you about the process and purpose of writing a novel? (About *how* and *why* authors write fiction?)
2. When his reader asks Martel “Which story was in your mind the actual one?” Martel says, “I leave it to the reader to choose which is the better story. It can go both ways.” Which story do *you* think is the “actual one”? Why?
3. In his response to Sarah’s question, Martel explains how he uses *Life of Pi* to convey his argument or message. In your own words, explain what Martel’s thematic message is and how he says he represents the idea in his novel.

Station 4: *Life of Pi* as Allegory

As we discussed in our last class, an allegory, in the most general sense, is a story with two layers of meaning. Like Plato’s allegory of the cave, Martel’s algae island lends itself well to allegorical interpretation.

When Pi arrives at the island he reveals that “To take in green, after so much blue, was like music to my eyes. Green is a lovely colour. It is the color of Islam. It is my favorite colour” (257). Pi’s introduction to the algae island, a story that he suggests many will disbelieve, may thus be viewed as a spiritual event. Consider each of the island’s symbolic elements in light of the following question: If Pi’s trip to algae island is to be viewed as a religious experience (or process of enlightenment or some other process?), how might we interpret each of the following elements in the story? *Review specific passages as you develop your interpretation.*

1. The seaweed (259)
2. The meerkats (275)
3. Pi’s “return to life” (269)
4. Richard Parker’s “return to life” (272)
5. Pi’s taming of Richard Parker (274)
6. The dead fish (277)
7. The “fruit” tree (278)
8. The teeth (282)
9. The carnivorous island (282)
10. Pi’s decision to leave the island (283)