

I. INTRODUCTION

Basic Assumption of Thesis

Yann Martel through his 'Man Booker Prize 2002' winning fiction *Life of Pi*, sows the seeds of uncertainty in to the mind of his readers about existing norms of 'God' and religious faith, as he parodically offers us to believe in God through his fiction, which not only lacks the veracity of story, but also of story teller. In Martel's fiction, there is an old fashioned quest for allegorical tale. Martel parodies all the telling tales with its quirky juxtaposition, comparisons, metaphors, Borgesian puzzles and postmodern games of languages and narration. Martel offers a 'counter-narrative', against the narratives of all existing religions, to expose the very tradition of narrative and their linguistic, fictional foundation. In short, Martel displays his disbelief towards what Lyotard calls 'meta-narratives' of all religions. His aim is to destabilize all the tales, which strive to construct a 'truth' or transcendental God, undermining all the deconstructive potentials in them. Yann Martel in *Life of Pi*, parodies the narrative tradition (or telling tradition) by disclosing the linguistic and fictional nature of all the truth (and God) created by religious narrative texts and celebrates the personal god especially 'the god of his fiction'.

As a postmodern anti-illusionist text, Martel's fiction begins with a very tricky 'author's note' which (in meta-fictional style) describes, how he came to write *life of Pi*. As he mentioned in his author's note, after devastating news about his previously failed novel, which was described as 'emotionally dead' and "soul destroying". Martel meets a fictional man from a place which is south India Pondicherry. What would be the place we learn Pi, the leading main character (narrator too) is from. During their encounter the man

tells Martel; “I have a story for you that will make you belief in god”(X), suspicious about his religious intensions, Martel decides to peruse Pi Patel, since who is now is in Canada. Pi tells his unbelievable survival story to the author, which speaks in epic proportions of how sixteen years old boy lost his family to a ship wreck and ended upon life boat with a hyena, an orangutan, a zebra and a 450 pound Royal Bengal tiger.

At first as expected, the author’s note is in the author’s voice, but this voice becomes a fictional narrator’s as the story progresses. So right from the beginning, Martel creates a doubt weather this story is fictional or factual, he propagates this doubt all the way through the novel, written as if it were a combination of Pi’s memoirs and Martel’s investigate reporting. It begins as a simple memoir of a child shipwreck survival, Pi Patel from childhood in Pondicherry amongst the zoo animals then it turns in to a rousing adventure of survival on the high seas. However, some Pi’s later adventures begin to test the limit of our credulity that calls very things we have read into question. To play with the reader’s sense of reality, Martel even mentions and thanks his own two fictional character, Japanese officials who provided Martel some fictional documents about the shipwreck in Pacific Ocean, where main character Pi was trapped in life boat for 277 days.

But by the end of the story, we are left confused about the statues of truth in the story, because the main character and narrator Pi proves himself to be a liar. When two officious Japanese investigators (that ship was Japanese) interrogate Pi on the unusual story of his survival, sent to investigate that facts of the wreck, as they are more interested in facts of his survival, they relentlessly grill Pi, on how he could have possibly survived, living with a tiger. Surprisingly, Pi decides that his story has to be fiction, and

he tells them another story, substituting the animals with human characters and which is neither miraculous nor magical but a tale about brutal human savagery. At the end his story he even says to them “since neither of the stories explains of sinking of tsitsum” and “neither makes factual difference” and even asks them “which story do you prefer?” when they both says the story with animal is better story he replies “thank you and so it is with god.” (317) Through this statement, Martel proves that God is a myth, but a nice myth that gets you along. Yet, this is a major fulcrum. Of course, since Pi rejects the major religions, yet accepts them all.

As a postmodernist, Martel may be suggesting that inconsistency may be part of human lives, if we follow it then that so will the story humans tell. Martel also aims to astute the story’s inconsistencies, tensions and struggles because these original points of confusion and uncertainty indirectly, to reveal that all is probably not as simple as it may seem, or it directly promotes the postmodern permanent concept of uncertainty.

Martel wants to use the very telling of the tale, multi-narrators, a play full fairytale quality (once upon time and happy ending) are mentioned in passing. Realistically presented event, that may be hallucinations or simply made up to push the limit of what is believable let still convince his readers of his literary but not literal veracity. Martel wants to expose and even mock-up the tradition of narrative and truth establishing practices with help of postmodern game of narration and language.

Even if one accepts Martel’s offer to ‘believe in god’ through his story, it is too much individualized notion of god and faith (which echoes the personal or individual truth in postmodern age) because no one turns to fiction to believe in God in traditional or religious sense . Martel’s effort to establish a god through a fiction is only an exemplar

postmodern practice of establishing god through telling a tale (fiction) because postmodern 'mini-narratives' (like *Life of Pi*) are always situational contingency, provisional, and temporary, making no claim to universality, truth or stability.

The symbolism, Martel wants to use in this fiction is brilliant, Pi echoes the mathematical sign π , which mathematicians believe to be irrational number having no fixed value, which has great significance in fiction. Pi defines himself to be like that of π , and even asks us to measure up his value on the same way as $\pi = 3.14$, and his inconsistency in his narrative accounts as he tells two alternate versions of same story, exposes his unfaithful nature like that of irrational value of π in mathematics. Pi's taste of faith towards God is always undercut by his doubt. Even if one accepts the twist and turns of narrative, one faces further challenge for tracking down clues hidden in a warren of illusions about Pi's religious faith, and whether narrator (and the readers) we will be persuaded the story's original promises that it will make one 'believe in God'.

Pi which like π , is presented as a liar and 'flicker', lacking consistency in his narrative. He is devoted Hindu, Christian and Muslim at once because he wants to 'love the God'. Pi's god is plural because he could not see the sense of choosing between three good stories, even though he ironically claims that his decision to believe to god over atheism and agnosticism is because for him "God is better story" (64), it would then seem that though "the better story" embodies multiple stories non are arbitrary or without meaning and significance. Pi tells two different versions of the story of his unbelievable survival in the hallucinary shipwreck, through which, Martel pursues us to believe in god, here, Martel may be suggesting that believing in god is believe the thing which is unbelievable, in other words which does not deserve to be believed.

Martel through *Life of Pi*, promotes the postmodern general concepts of fluidity and uncertainty of meanings. He confuses and left his readers with the sea of questions and confusions about the most discussed metaphysical questions like that of God and faith, on which men are pondering for centuries. Martel, by offering a confusing pastiche of devotions through his main character Pi, who at once is devout Christian, Hindu and Muslim not only further illustrates through Pi's connotation that all religions are essentially same (and all for love) but he also uses mysticism to underscore all the profound ways in which religious texts create the image of God. Martel equalizes the story and religions because both are myths and linguistic production.

Martel poses a great question through *Life of Pi* what after all is God? He may be suggesting that, the sources of god are all the irrational and groundless narratives. Where Martel, parodically offers us a counter-narrative, through which he himself tries to create a god, which is too much individualized notion of faith and god. Martel indirectly discloses that, the entire irrational thing are the product of God the god (just illusion) that made by men to rationalize their illusions. Through his fiction *Life of Pi* Martel proves the Lyotard's statement that in postmodern age legitimation is dispersed, plural, and local. Postmodernism is in credulity towards 'meta-narratives', where no narrative is above the question of fictionality and language game.

Yann Martel and His Writings:

Yann Martel was born on June 25, 1963, in Salamanca, Spain. His parents, both civil servants, came from French Canadian descent, and Martel spent his childhood living in several different countries throughout the world, including Costa Rica, France, India, Iran, Mexico, Turkey, Canada, and the United States. His family eventually settled in

Canada, taking residence in Montreal, Quebec. Martel's father was a poet as well as a diplomat, once receiving Canada's Governor General's Award for poetry. Martel attended Trent University during the 1980s and graduated with a B.A. from Concordia University in 1985. After college, he worked at a variety of odd jobs, including librarian, tree planter, dishwasher, security guard, and parking lot attendant. During the academic year of 2002 through 2003, Martel served as the Samuel Fischer Professor of Literature in the Department of Comparative Literature at the Free University of Berlin, Germany, where he taught a course in "Meeting the Other: The Animal in Western Literature."

The Facts Behind the Helsinki Roccamatios and Other Stories (1993), Martel's first published volume of fiction, is a collection of four short stories. The title story concerns the friendship between two young men, one of whom is dying due to the AIDS virus. To fend off their fears of illness and impending death, the friends share a series of concocted stories about a fictional Italian-Finnish family—the Roccamatios—which they set in the context of real historical events of the twentieth century. While the dying man's stories become increasingly morbid, the stories told by his friend become increasingly optimistic. In "The Time I Heard the Private Donald J. Rankin String Concerto with One Discordant Violin, by American Composer John Morton," a young man touring Washington. Stumbles into a concert performance given by the Maryland Vietnam War Veterans Chamber Ensemble. "Manners of Dying" is written as a series of letters from a prison warden to the mother of a hanged man, recounting the final hours before his death. Martel's first novel, *Self* (1996), is a fictional autobiography covering the first thirty years of the narrator's life. The narrator begins his life as a boy and wakes up one morning at the age of eighteen to find that he has inexplicably changed into a girl. He/she eventually

becomes a man again around the age of thirty. The narrator experiences two extremely traumatic experiences during his/her life—the death of his/her parents in a plane crash and a brutal rape by a neighbor. *Self* explores themes of connection, isolation, selfhood, and otherness, as reflected in the narrator's maturing sense of self as he/she develops into a young adult and aspiring writer.

Critics on *Life of Pi*

Life of Pi Man Booker Prize winning fiction by Yann Martel, bamboozled many of its readers after publication in 2002. It has received various responses from various perspectives. Some critics interpret it as religious book where as some totally deny that *Life of Pi* as a religious book. Other some take it as animal book, apart from that for some it becomes a story of marginal expelled and subaltern. Some of critics even like to relate *Life of Pi* with Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. Among various critics, M.K. Dollar Koch is one among positive critics who considers the text as religious one, for him Martel's novel is a text that offers a fascinating insight of all major religions "The plot has more to do with perception than with answer, explores themes like trust unfettered imagination our animal instincts, nature of animal and offers a fascinating insights into Hinduism, Islam and Christian." (40) On the other hand, denying the Martel's offer to believe in god through his novel, critic Binn Jones takes book not convincing to believe in god rather successful to make think whether we should as he goes in this passage

Martel combines dramatic episodes, scientific knowledge, well written passage, humor and gruesome details to move story along. Since we know the entire book is told in flashback we know how things will turn out yet the suspense still grips us. The writing here is deceptively simple: Martel

lets winsome narrative voice and the intriguing plot carry us all the while winking he tosses out thoughts on the kind of metaphysical questions men have pondered for centuries. The story may not make us believe in god but certainly helps us to enjoy asking whether we should. (Binn Jones 35)

By this analytical passage, Binn Jones offers readers to celebrate questioning about God and faith.

Critic Linda M.Morra, compares *Life of Pi* with *Robinson Crusoe* and she takes narrative as means of survival in the face of cruelties she finds Martel' novel as a kind of fictional biography, and as such for her, novel displays certain hagiographical tendencies presumably and Pi's life meant to regarded as an exemplar. And she also states that the book also seems to critique the confessional and instructional facet of Defoe's book, derives its moral orientation from puritan moral tracts. The autonomy and economic rewards that Crusoe and upwardly middle class enjoyed many have been result of solid work ethic, but they were also the product of imperial exploitation.

Martel's choice of an Indian for his protagonist seems implicitly to make this point about Crusoe's position in the world. Moreover, if Crusoe himself discovers religious belief and experiences a conversion because of his hardship, Pi demonstrates a kind of spiritual precocity since he has explored even, celebrated three major religious belief systems in advance of his ordeal at sea. Narrative itself becomes a means of sheltering from the cruelties of survival two versions of Pi's life conveyed to the Japanese investigators at the end indicate that narrative like religion renders the cruelties of the survival more tolerable. (164)

For Linda M. Morra, narrative is means of sheltering in the face of cruelties. And for her there are some similarities between shipwreck survival Robinson Crusoe and Pi Patel because both of them take shelter of faith in god in the face of cruelties.

As a liberal critic of Martel, Phoebe Kate Foster sees the prospects of multilayer of understandings of *Life of Pi*. He paves the way for postmodernist interpretation as he finds this fiction as a time less and not easily falling in any category or in any topic. As he goes

Pi is timeless book not falling into easy categories of allegory or parable but paradoxical and gently challenging ambitious in its scope and utterly unique in the current literary scene. Its style is elegant but readers, friendly and highly informative on such vast numbers of topics that rather boggles the mind. It offers so many levels of understandings that one can easily pick and choose which floor to get off on. All of them are equally satisfactory. (65)

Foster's analysis paves and opens the ways for postmodernist interpretation where multi-possibilities and multi-understandings of a single text have always been promoted.

Another critic Gerald T. Cobb canonizes Martel as great literary figure in the line of past veteran who wrote survival stories. He even named Pi as a adolescent mariner in comparison to ancient mariner, who has great tale to tell "Martel takes his place among such literary figures as Hopkins, Shelly and Byron who have treated shipwreck as paradigmatic crisis in human meaning [.....], like ancient mariner adolescent mariner Pi has great tale to tell." (95)

D.Georgis, one among the Martel's critics from the cultural studies bent, interprets *Life of Pi* as a story of expelled and of subaltern. For Georgis, Pi is subaltern and his story is story of loss and trauma, he takes Pi's story to be unheard truth, he picks up some instances of Pi's telling his story and evaluates Pi to be marginalized and subaltern once Pi says in hi story "We were just a lowly Indian family with a bothersome cargo. We ended up eating on our own Father and mother's cabin" (*Life of Pi*, 314) here he goes here in the following passage

Narrative and art are significant resources for those who are interested in learning how to hear the expelled voices of woman, queers, trans sexual subjects and the subaltern because unlike dominant histories, which peruse importantly narrated stories of struggle and loss in privileged perception. In so doing they sustain tension between fact and fantasy. *Life of Pi* expresses this tension directly because the reader is uncertain if Martel's story is history or fantasy. Martel perhaps suggesting that if we are interested in the emotional reality of an event [.....]. Work of the narrative opens us to loss then learning is not cold and objective experiences but involves a dialogue between what is inside the self and what inside the work. (D. Georgis 169)

Interestingly, as a critic from cultural studies, D. Georgis regards *Life of Pi* as the voice of the expelled and subaltern. For him, Pi's story is history of marginal.

The literature review above shows that, *Life of Pi* has received criticism from various perspectives. All of these critics have their monotype and one sided interpretation of the text, which is not complete understanding of the book. Approaching the text

through some perspectives and assuming to get final and complete understanding of book is traditional approach. None of the above cited critics have touched the issue of postmodernist deconstructive style of Martel's fiction which demands a genuine research. The researcher therefore, wants to approach Martel's fiction through a postmodern look. Where searching the meaning of book like concepts are of concepts are laughed at. So my understanding of this fiction is that it is a postmodern parodical fiction which destabilizes the previous concept of telling and narrating to create the fixed truth and transcendental 'God'.

II. POSTMODERNISM AND FICTIONAL NARRATIVE

A Brief Introduction

The term postmodern is cliché in our age. This is the term, which is most used and abused in language. Though the term is a cliché, but defining the term precisely is hardly possible, because most of the authors what we call postmodernists reject the possibility of clear definition of this term. Nevertheless, a consensus among postmodern writers is that, postmodernism is a wide ranging cultural movement, which adopts a sceptic attitude to many of the principles that have underpinned western thought and social life for the few last few centuries. In other words, postmodern is to be regarded as rejection of many if not most of the cultural certainties on which life on the west has been structured over past couple of centuries.

The term Postmodernism, (sometimes abbreviated as Pomo) was coined in 1949 to describe a dissatisfaction with modern architecture, founding the postmodern architecture, and later of, relating to, or being any of several movements (as in art, architecture, or literature) that are reactions against the philosophy and practices of modern movements, and are typically marked by the revival of traditional elements and techniques. Postmodernity is the derivative to refer to non-art aspects of history that were influenced by the new movement. Postmodernism is often understood as an effect of, or reaction to, postmodernity, a historical and cultural period that many believe has succeeded modernity.

Postmodernism is notoriously difficult to define, indeed its central tenet is that certain experiences and concept resists any sort of representation in writing or art. Postmodernism is a part of general attack on enlightenment,

truth, claims and values, and displays a preoccupation with language as an inadequate vehicle expressing any sort of reality which mode of thought is known as linguistic turn among some critics. (Microsoft Encarta Reference library 2006)

This passage clearly exposes, how the job of defining the term ‘postmodernism’ is difficult and paradoxical at the same time.

Although it has become established in cultural and intellectual discussion over recent decades, but the term ‘postmodernity’ has never gained any precise or clear definition. It has gained currency instead, as a vague and all embracing notion referring to a wide variety of ways in which we have succeeded to the ambiguous legacy of modernity and of its late apologist, the modernist. Postmodernism is much less a programme or intellectual framework than it is a mood and the zeitgeist, a feeling in the air.

Lyotard defines postmodernism as incredulity towards ‘metanarratives’ or ‘grand narratives’. By this definition, he has encouraged us to see postmodernism as a rejection of all encompassing cultural theories (Christianity ‘Marxism and enlightenment) and has argued for much more pragmatic attitude to political life and artistic expression, that simply ignores the oppressive rules laid down by what he calls ‘grand-narratives’. Postmodernism, in rejecting ‘grand-narrative’, favors ‘mini-narrative’, stories that explain small, local events rather than large-scale universal or global concepts. Postmodern “mini-narratives” are always situational contingency, provisional, and temporary, making no claim to universality, truth or stability.

Postmodernism is "post" because it denies the existence of any ultimate principles, and it lacks the optimism of there being a scientific, philosophical, or religious truth which will explain everything for everybody - a characteristic of the so-called "modern" mind. The paradox of the postmodern position is that, in placing all principles under the scrutiny of its skepticism, it must realize that even its own principles are not beyond questioning. Postmodernism cannot on its own principles ultimately justify itself any more than can the various metaphysical overviews against which the postmodern mind has defined itself.

To sum up, overall postmodern philosophy can be defined as an updated version of scepticism, more concerned with destabilizing other theories and their pretension to truth than with setting up a positive theory of its own. Although, to be skeptical of the theoretical claim of others is to have definite programme of one's own, if only by default. Postmodern philosophy therefore, is a deployment of philosophy to undermine the authoritarian imperatives in our culture at both the theoretical and political level. If postmodernism can be most accurately be described as certain mood or Stimmung then it once characterized by ambivalence, and uncertainty or what Lyotard calls 'slackening'. Postmodernism can be seen as an extension of the critical skeptical dissenting even nihilistic impulse of modernity.

Postmodern Fiction and Subversion of Narrative Tradition:

Traditional narrative practice hits a sang-froid in what we call postmodern age and it takes a turn from constructive towards deconstructive direction. For postmodernists, narrative becomes a false consensus. One well known postmodern philosopher, Jean Francois Lyotard argues that, western traditions are based on certain

dominant forms of narratives, which, according to him, are breaking up now. His point is that narrative usually tends towards a 'grand-narrative' particularly in the west, and so we must dispense with it in difference to that particularity of that event. There is no point in looking for universal story, which should be the same for everyday.

Literary-postmodernism, the label, which is still a subject of heated debate, clearly refers to that which succeeds modernism, an international movement that broke with nineteenth century forms of realism. Postmodernism is certainly the most important and successful literary movement of the recent past, it is one that has often proven resistant to traditional narrative theory. But the impetus of modernism has continued to the present day, so that postmodernism coexists with that which it claims to displace.

The literary practice, which we recognize as postmodernist literature, has developed an impressive array of innovative technique whose main purpose lies in a convincing textualization of postmodern philosophy and its radically anti-mimetic aesthetics. Among these, the implementation of multiple selves, and contradictory character traits, the simultaneous presentation of different historical periods stages of the self, the disindividualization of speech through cultural clichés and linguistic stereotypes the deliberately ambiguous rendering of characters, ontological status and the application of plot centered illogicality through placing characters within metalepsis are some devices, which are successfully employed in postmodern narrative fiction to create textual image of postmodernist fragmented self.

The phenomenon of postmodernism then cannot be explained in purely temporal terms. As Jean-François Lyotard has suggested, it represents a radical epistemological break with our understanding of what the human sciences have to offer. What

characterizes the postmodern in Lyotard's eyes is the abandonment of those 'grand-narratives' that began with the Enlightenment, such as the liberation of humanity or the unification of all knowledge. The unstable, heterogeneous and dispersed social reality of the postmodern cannot be contained within any totalizing theory. Without such metanarratives, Lyotard argues, each work of art, "working without rules in order to formulate the rules of what will have been done" (qtd. in Barry Lewis 116), becomes a unique event describing its own process of coming into being.

What is often labeled as 'postmodernist-literature' that arose after W.W.II as a series of reactions against the perceived failure of modernist literature, is also commonly considered as an extension of the literary experimentation during the modernist period. Postmodern literature, like postmodernism as a whole, is difficult to define and there is little agreement on the exact characteristics, scope, and importance of postmodern literature. However, unifying features often coincide with Jean Francois Lyotard's concept of the "metanarrative" and "little narrative", Jacques Derrida's concept of "play", "difference", "deconstruction" and Jean Baudrillard's "simulacra". For example, instead of the modernist quest for meaning in a chaotic world, the postmodern author eschews, often playfully, the possibility of meaning, and the postmodern novel is often a parody of this quest.

The distrust of totalizing mechanisms extends even to the author; thus postmodern writers often celebrate chance over craft and employ metafiction to undermine the author's univocal control. The distinction between high and low culture was also attacked with the employment of pastiche, the combination of multiple cultural elements including subjects and genres not previously deemed fit for literature.

Postmodern literature is not the opposite of modernist literature, however; works by postmodern authors further developed the experimentation with paradox and fragmentation championed by the modernists. Postmodernity often synonymous with the movement "postmodernism" focuses on eclecticism (the choosing of the "best" of previous movements), based on the postwar value system, while any literature of the period postmodernity might be mislabelled "postmodern", although it has none of the aspects other than the time of publication: thus, the field of aspects nihilism, spiritual voidness and search for identity, and especially "intertextuality, pastiche, and parody" may be postmodern.

The postmodern narrative attacks the possibility of the reader herself and him self becoming a fully enlightened and imperialist subject with full epistemological control over the fiction and its endlessly differed or altered characters. In order to read postmodern narrative at all, the reader must give up such a singular position, for she or he will be endlessly 'disposed', 'displaced', in figuring a number of different narratives and different characters. One is seduced from the occupation of one position into many positions; one has to give up a quasi-authorial position of supposed access to the singular truth of character and move instead into a series of disposition in trying to deal with the proliferating narratives he or she hears.

The destructive energy of postmodern anti-illusionist texts is directed at emphasizing the difference between reality and art and activating the reader's rational distance, which in illusionist texts suppressed and reduced to an unconscious level. Consequently, anti-illusionism strives to lay bare the hidden working of the text in order to expose art's specific ontological status.

In postmodern age the term 'novel' was replaced by 'fiction' Roland Suckenic's announcement of death of fiction in 1969 encouraged people to prefer 'fiction' as suitable term for the text previously known as novel. And reality and realist literature were called into question in postmodernism as John Carlos Rowe states in his essay "The Postmodernist Studies", "Reality and realism were the terms attacked by postmodernism as mystified terms anti-realism counter-realism, Fabulation, the fantastic were only some of terms to describe the postmodernist rebellion against literary realism and social reality". (180-81)

A work of postmodern fiction is one, which defies the conventions of "regular" storytelling. Here, regular means, a story with a beginning, middle, and end, one that has characters, some sort of plot, and a conflict with a resolution. This is the basic formula for any type of story, and the goal of the postmodernists is to skirt around these traditions in an experiment with language, character, and plot. One specific way that a postmodernist might mock-up a story is through changing the way a narrator is perceived in the story and presented to the reader. Even if a postmodern work follows the traditional frame work that is that just for parodical use.

Postmodern writers are constantly aware of the use of language, because after Jacques Derrida's operation of language system, his concept of 'Deconstruction' became the foundational frame of reference in postmodern fictional narrative; most of the texts are constructed to show their own deconstructive potential. Derrida's postmodernism is founded on the deconstructive approach which, on inverting the notion of construction illustrate how superficial are the normative structure of social world. Derrida's project is based on the postmodern notion that knowledge and discourses have

to be constructed from a 'chameleonic' world. In deconstruction theory Derrida's goal is to expose the inherent contradiction that resides in any text. The general assumption is that texts reflect the notion of language as a medium of thoughts that is thoughts hold primacy, and language, merely a vehicle of transmission.

In its original use, "deconstruction" is an important textual "occurrence" described and analyzed by many postmodern authors and philosophers. They argue that aspects in the text itself would undermine its own authority or assumptions and that internal contradictions would erase boundaries or categories which the work relied on or asserted. Poststructuralists beginning with Jacques Derrida, who coined the term, argued that the existence of deconstructions implied that there was no intrinsic essence to a text, merely the contrast of difference.

Derrida was concerned to demonstrate the instability of language and indeed of systems in general. Signs were not such predictable entity in his view and there were never any perfect conjunction of signifier and signified to guarantee the unproblematic communication and some slippage of meaning always occurs. For one thing, word always contained echoes and traces of other words. Meaning is therefore fleeting phenomenon that evaporates almost as soon as it occurs in spoken or written language (or keeps transforming it self into new meanings) rather than something fixed, as Stuart Sim found Derrida to be contended that all western philosophy or body of knowledge is based on the premise that full meaning of word 'present' in the speaker's mind such that it can be transmitted without any significant slippage, to the listener.

This belief is what he calls the 'metaphysics of presence' and for Derrida it is an illusion; 'differance' always intrudes into communication to

prevent the establishment of ‘presence’, or completeness of meaning. The emphasis on ‘difference’ and what fails to conform to the norm or system building that we find in deconstruction is very characteristic of postmodern philosophical ethos. (Stuart Sim 5)

Stuart Sim summarizes in this passage, Derrida’s project of deconstruction, which was mainly aimed to attack the concept of system building associated with structuralism.

The main target of postmodern fiction writing is to expose the very ‘constructedness’ of text. Readers are liberalized to catch the desired meaning of the text because there is no sense of claim of fixity of meaning or of message. Postmodernist fictions are taken to be the critique of representational concept and insist on panfictionality, linguistic determinism and subjectivity as inherent qualities of texts. According Microsoft Encarta reference library postmodern practice of fiction and poetry writings are manifested as an experimentation and eclecticism which has focused on the nature of fictionality and writing

The term postmodernist can be attached to almost any work that questions the boundaries and possibilities of fictional enterprise; that attempts to collapse arbitrary borders between genres and to question what constitutes the nature of genre, that refers directly or by illusion to other text; and that makes problematic the idea of “characters” and of a narrative that can lead to a fixed point and convey a fixed meaning.

(Microsoft Encarta Reference Library 2006)

Therefore categorizing any fiction as ‘postmodern’ is difficult and problematic, because there is no any common agreement among postmodern avant-gardes.

The central area of concern for many postmodernist fiction writers is language and it is commonly asserted that we are in crisis of representation where the meanings of terms seem fluid and disconnected. This crisis of representation has occurred because it is no longer believed that signs or language more generally have the ability adequately to reflect the reality rather they are now seen as arbitrary and volatile. As Baudrillard suggests, what we have now is disappearance of referent. Eva Muller associates the core theme of poststructuralist theories with post modern literary writings as he suggests in his essay “Deconstructing the Self”

The artistic production of postmodern era this has meant replacing the quest for meaning by ludic celebration of the arbitrary with literature creating temporary fictions of order, presence of centrality only to relish in their slow dismantling and ultimate destruction committed to illustrating the hallucinatory nature of all models of meaning. Post modernist literature is forever striving to lay bare the hidden scaffolding employed to make textual world seem real hence the complex phenomena of aesthetic illusion constitute the post modern literatures central targets.

(Eva Muller –Zettelmann 71)

Lyotard considers the hallmark of post modernity to be the breaking up of those epistemological or grand bases of the disciplines. He argues postmodern narrative cannot evaluate in terms of their truth value, instead narratives ordinary, grand or otherwise are appreciated in relation to their situated acceptability within interpretive communities. This centers the issue of “truth” squarely within and between language games, not interrelationship between narrative and the things narrative ostensibly references.

In postmodernism thing becomes matter of narrative competence, invention and aesthetics. In postmodern understanding, interpretation is every thing; reality only comes into being through our interpretations of what the world means to us individually.

Postmodernism relies on concrete experience over abstract principles, knowing always that the outcome of one's own experience will necessarily be fallible and relative, rather than certain and universal. An ostensibly preposterous claim of this sort gains theoretical plausibility from the fact that words are always define by other words which is taken to mean that language is self referential.

For many postmodernists language like Hollywood movies today is not about anything. In contrast to common place view of language as a medium that transcribes reflects or represents external reality postmodernist believe that our life world in this case the word of international society is so thoroughly enveloped and suffused by language rather merely colored by it reality is product of linguistic and textual practices or discourses for short. (Frank Ninkovich 453)

The reader in postmodern fiction is denied access to a totalizing narrative which will allow her or him to identify against the stable 'other' of the mysterious character. Rather, the reader replaces such a totalized, enlightened narrative, proposing access as it does to a singular monotheistic truth, with the multiplicity of singularities, the multiplicity of different local narratives, having no claims on truth in any absolute sense at all.

The postmodernist writers distrust the wholeness and completions associated with traditional stories, and prefer to deal with other ways of structuring narrative. One alternative is multiple endings, which resist closure by offering numerous possible

outcomes for a plot. Another means of allowing space for the open and inclusive was to breakup the text into short fragments or sections separated by space, titles, numbers or symbols. Thus, postmodernists suggest that inconsistency may be part of human lives. Hence post modernist narrative aims to be astute the story's inconsistencies, tensions and struggle because they signal the point of confusion and uncertainty, to reveal that all is probably not as simple as they seem.

Post modernist fiction writers pick up issues, which have commonly been discussed in public life. In first glance, they seem simple and straightforward but no sooner they pick up, issue becomes matter of uncertainty and confusion, because they problematize the issue with the help of inconsistent narrative account and unfaithful character narrator with in games of language. Multiple meaning in the stories coexist each struggling for primacy. At times, one reading may be ambiguous and momentary and so the reading of the story has personal and perhaps temporary relevance.

The veracity of narrator and narrative (story & story teller) in the postmodernist fictions is always at the stake. It is because, for example in realist literature there is an unbroken flow of narrative electricity between text and world. The author never appears in his or her fictions other than as voice that indirectly guides the reader towards a correct interpretation of the novel's themes. Conversely, modernist fictions are motivated by the desire to expunge the author from the text all together. But in the postmodernist fictions, such confusion is rampant because author directly intervenes into fiction even possibly as character of ones own fiction, character's voice merges with author and even character possess the control over story and even its setting. Multi-versions of same story promote the postmodernist permanent concept of uncertainty, mystery and multi possibilities of

truth, local meaning may still contain shared lesions and resonate as true for others seeing problem of categories any text as post modernist.

To provide an in-depth analysis which justice to the radical experimentalism of the core corpus, it would be advisable to employ a definition of postmodernist literature, which encompasses cultural poststructuralist axioms (such as deconstruction of meaning, linguistic determinism and panfictionality) and the technique of their textualization.

Postmodernist fiction is defined by its temporal disorder, its disregard of linear narrative, its mingling of fictional forms and its experiments with language. Readiness to ride with the random may be regarded as characteristically postmodern attitude, linguistic experiments of postmodernist is not accidental. Barry Lewis thinks that looseness of association, paranoia and temporal disorder as defining features of postmodernist fiction as he writes in his essay "Postmodernism and Fiction"

Temporal disorder, involuntary impersonation other vice (or patch fragmentation looseness of association paranoia and the creation of vicious circles are all symptoms of language disorder of postmodern fiction whether or not tropes are in adequate to describe the unruliness of post modern writers too is open to debate. (121)

To sum up, a postmodern fiction writer shows his or her sceptic attitude towards the traditional regular narrative strategies and experimentations in new ways and parodies that tradition.

Parody as Deconstructive Stylistic Tool in Postmodern Fiction

Postmodern anti-representational and anti-illusionist fictions are characterized by some deconstructive linguistic tools like parody, pastiche, irony and paradoxes etc.

“parody often called ironic quotation pastiche appropriation or intertextuality is usually considered central to postmodernism both by its detractors or defenders.” (Hutcheon 93)

In general understanding, the parody imitates the serious manner and characteristics features of particularly literary genre and deflates the original by applying the imitation to allow or comically inappropriate subject. But for postmodernists, the parody is particularly important feature for simple reason that parody resists the singularity of narrative, where as Lyotard encouraged us to dispense or disobey the monotype metanarratives.

As a literary form and rhetorical trope, parody has a venerable history in classical literature and rhetoric. This single sense parody is development of eighteenth century notions of wit and ridicule but now we are not limited to that old fashioned definition of parody though some critic tends to define postmodern parody in the original sense. The twentieth century art forms teach parody has a wide range forms and intents forms that witty ridicule, play full lucid to the seriously respectful. “It is plain that, in contemporary fiction, telling has become compulsorily belated, inextricably bound up with retelling, in all its idioms: reworking, translation, adaptation, displacement, imitation, forgery, plagiarism, parody, pastiche.” (Steven Connor 123)

For most of the postmodernists, parody is means to challenge the singularity of all the ‘master-narratives’. Linda Hutcheon defines parody as challenge to the authoritative assumption of aura and sense possessiveness, but after all she takes parody as satire to all the representational practices as she goes

Parody also contest our humanist assumption about artistic originality and uniqueness and our capitalistic notions of ownership and property with the

parody as with any forms of reproduction the notion of original, rare, single and valuable (in aesthetic or commercial terms) is called into question. This does not mean that art has lost its meaning and purpose but that will inevitable have new and different significance in other words through the process of reproduction parody works to foreground the politics of representation. (Hutcheon 93-94)

Parody, thus, make, the fundamental paratactic gesture of postmodern discourse, which is broad term that applies to any differential systems of meaning and values that in any system which acts like language as Saussure concerned it. In differential system of value that constitute discourse than syntactic and productive sequence remaining with in sight but heterogeneous to it. In postmodern narrative, the classical genre or trope (Greek Paradosē) (Latin *parodia*) expands out of all recognition arithmetic development that multiplies many times the doubling gesture of parody.

The 'para' prefix, marks the characteristic doubling feature of parody. Para means along side of and heterogeneous at the same time. In the classical sense, parody literally is the precursor or parallel to ode and even in modernist use it is taken as little more than faintly unsavory under cut, a weak form of humor or joking or a shadow form of satire, lacking the cultural agreement that enables satire and wit. Conversely, parody in postmodern era becomes permanent not just as the critical vocabulary of recent decades but in the cutting edge art of time. Such parodic version of work undermines the single narratives in the broadest sense of narrative; parodic form thus suits an age that suspects metanarratives.

The central concern of most of the postmodern fiction writers is the crisis of representation in the language, because they see problem with truth construction practices through narrative based on linguistic phenomena. Thus postmodern artists, whether their medium is word, sound or celluloid find parody as a useful tool, precisely because this convention denies priority to deny single narrative. Thus, postmodern fiction writers use parody as deconstructive tool because fixity no longer functions, and multi-possibilities of understanding, flux of meaning which differs person to person, individualistic nature of truth are the natural phenomena in postmodern world “Postmodern parody is both deconstructively critical and constructively creative, making us aware of both the limits and the power of representation in any medium”. (Hutcheon 98)

Postmodern linguistic tools such as parody and pastiche arose from the frustration that everything has been done before .The writer of present time will no longer be able to invent new style and worlds only a limited numbers of combinations are possible. The most unique one have been thought of already, Barry Lewis supports this idea in the following passage

The novels between 1960 and 1990 borrow clothes of different forms (for example: the western sci-fi yarn and detective tale).The impulse behind this cross-dressing is more spasmodic than parodic. Science fiction was another popular source of postmodernist pastiche some critics claimed it to be the natural companion to post modern writing, because of their shared ontological occupations. (Barry Lewis 114)

Irony is another characteristics of postmodern parodic fictions, by using irony postmodern writers try to expose the inherent nature of language (where referent always escapes) and deconstructive potential of all the representational practices, linguistic inadequacy and impossibility of presentation (paradoxically). Explaining the function of irony Linda Hutcheon furthers her idea

Irony makes these intertextual references into some thing more than simply academic play or some infinite regress into textuality: what is called to our attention is the entire representational process in a wide range of forms and modes of more of production and impossibility of finding nay totalizing model of to result the resulting postmodern contradiction. (Hutcheon 95)

Postmodern writers use irony to mock the linguistic determinism in the narrative.

To sum up, postmodern parodic fictions aim to deconstruct the previously existing text and their style and truth formation process through language and narrative. As Lyotard defines, postmodern to be incredulity towards ‘meta-narratives’ postmodern parodic fictions destabilize the foundation of all existing body of knowledge truth and continuously attack on what Jacques Derrida calls ‘logocentrism’ of western epistemology. The central target of postmodern parodic fictional narrative is to expose the problem of representation in language. The sole aim of postmodern parodic fictions is to attack on and destabilizing of what Lyotard calls ‘grand-narratives’ and all encompassing theories and their singularity, to pave the ways for uncertainty, multi-possibilities and mystery.

III. PARODY IN ART OF TELLING IN *LIFE OF PI* BY YANN MARTEL

Life of Pi is a very much self-conscious fiction, having narrative strategies often associated with postmodernism. In Martel's fiction there is an old fashioned quest for allegorical tale. He baits his readers with serious themes and trawls them into a sea of questions and confusion. The story stretches the readers' suspension of disbelief ever further, as it unfolds. Martel in parodical manner offers us to 'believe in god' through his fiction where the status of the truth of story as well as the veracity of story teller are always at stake.

Martel's fiction is typically experimental one, not easily falling into any category of practiced genres, which is very paradoxical and gently challenging, ambitious in its scope and utterly unique in current literary scene. On the surface level, Martel playfully reworks the ancient sea voyage, castaway themes of classics like Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Coleridge's *Rime of Ancient Mariner*, Melville's *Moby-Dick* and (in some fantastic aspects), Homer's *The Odyssey*, to explore the role of religion in highly physical world. Whereas, on the deeper level, Martel parodies all the telling tales with its quirky juxtaposition, comparisons, metaphors, Borgesian puzzles and postmodern games of languages and narration. Although Martel pays tribute to the past by using the typical castaway format (episodic narrative, focus on details of survival and on God and nature) his voice and the fact that his work is more fantastic as he infuses the genre with brilliant new life. He produces a typical postmodern classic work of survival.

Martel's very project in *Life of Pi*, is to deconstruct or parodies all the narrative tales that strive to construct a fixed truth or transcendental God. And he tries to expose the fictitious and linguistic nature of all the existing tales of all religions which are

regarded as factual by all religious people. In short, Martel displays his disbelief all the 'master-narratives' of all religions. He may be suggesting through fiction that all the religions and the tales are one. It is indeed true that, the way we believe in stories is similar to the way we believe in God, hence god is only a story because both are fictitious and linguistic in their nature. Martel from the very beginning displays his sceptic questions towards the religious 'meta-narratives' and their veracity.

Some Postmodern Touches of Martel's Fiction:

Author's Note

Martel begins his novel with a tricky author's note, in which, as a postmodernist writer, he alerts his reader about his fictional project and suggests keeping some rational distance from it. His author's note is very chilling and perhaps the key to understand the whole novel, because, he exposes his deconstructive project from the initiation through his author's note. At first, as expected, the author's note is in the author's voice, but this voice becomes a fictional narrator's as the story progresses. So *life of Pi* begins with a tricky authors note with some seemingly autobiographical informations explaining Martel's trip to India and his restlessness as he searches for story and even the information that how he came to write this fiction.

This book was born as I was hungry. Let me explain. In the spring of 1996, my second book, a novel came out in Canada. It did not farewell. Reviewers were puzzled, or dammed. It with faint praise. Then readers ignored it. Despite my best efforts at plying the crown or the trapeze artist, the media circus made no difference. The book did not move. Books lined the selves of book stores like kids standing in a row to play baseball or

soccer, and mine was the gangly, on athletic kid that no one wanted on their team. It vanished quickly and quietly. (vii)

By this information of the story's birth though realistically presented, as a postmodernist, Martel's aim here is to expose the contractedness of the story or the whole text. He, as an author himself, searches his characters in story and even interacts with the characters. Though, in the beginning, it seems that author's note to be Martel's own but we are thrown into a 'meta-fictional' world, where only Martel like author interacts with the readers. Through this author's note, Martel begins his postmodern game of fiction and meta-fiction.

Martel here, talks about a fiction of an author (who bears striking resemblance with Martel himself) who has published an earlier novel that got no traction and he then sets out to go India to write a book about Portugal in 1939 where fictional authors claims he could turn Portugal into fiction "Thus set up, pen in hand, for the sake of greater truth, I would turn Portugal into a fiction. That's what fiction is about, isn't it, the selective transforming of reality? Twisting it to bring out its essence? What need did I have to go to Portugal?" (viii)

We now, are enjoying within his meta-fictional world, with fictional narrator, as the fictional narrator's fiction fails he then creates the fiction of the rest of the world, mailing the bits of the failed noble to fictional address in Bolivia.

From Mathern I mailed the notes of my failed novel I mailed them to a fictitious address in Siberia, with a written address, equally fictitious, in Bolivia. After the clock had stamped the envelope and throne it into a

shorting bin, I said down glum disheartend.”What now, Tolstoy? What other bright ideas do you have for your life? ” I asked myself. (ix)

We have a fictional author creating with fictions within fiction and then fictions, on and on. Through this game of fiction and meta-fiction, Martel wants to make us aware of the all the texts and narratives by showing their fictional nature. Now, the fictional author meets a fictional character named as Francis Adirubasamy who tells him potentially a very fictional story of a fictional character Pi, who is old man now, which the old man claims makes one ‘believe in God’ (X). Which statement later is supported by Martel’s author too and Martel’s author plays with the readers’ sense of reality, when he has Adirubasamy talks about Pi as “the main character” that the narrator precedes to track down in Canada and just how believable is Pi? Now in his forty, Pi apologizes for the memory and tells the story as a series out of sequence events jumping back and forth between his early childhood, his teen age and his time at sea. Pi can barely remember what his mother looks like, but he appears able to recall whole conversation from his childhood (here Martel teases the readers sense of reality). The main character Pi even asks narrator to tell his jumbled story in exactly 100 chapters not one less, not one more and author Martel does it (the book is in 100 chapters).

Martel playfully creates a realistic situation after listening the story; fictional narrator receives some fictional documents from some fictional Japanese officials send him, which then confirms the story, the fictional character has been telling him. And the author decides to invent another Pi, to tell own story.

Later in Toronto among nine columns of Patel in his phone book, I found him, the main character. My heart pounded as I dialed his phone number.

The voice that answered had an Indian lilt to its Canadian accent; light mistakable, like a trace of innocence in the air. “That was a very long time ago,” he said. At he agreed to meet. We meet many times. He showed me his diary he kept during the events. He showed me the yellow newspaper clipping that made him briefly, obscurely famous. He told me his story. All the while I took notes. Nearly a year later, after considerable difficulties, I received a tape and a report from a Japanese Ministry of Transport. It was as I was listened to that tape that I agreed with Mr. Adirubasamy that this was, indeed a story to make you believe in God.

(xi)

And thing get more interesting when the fictional author tells that “It seemed natural Mr. Patel’s story should be told mostly in the first person in his voice and through his eyes but any mistake and inaccuracies are mine.” (xii)

Now, setting aside for a moment all the hedging that happens here, what we do with this idea that mistakes are the responsibility of the narrator and why should he admit that. Finally, Martel’s fictional author even thanks all the fictional people like Pi the main character who made the story possible and this author shows his gratitude towards Moacyr Scliar as for the spark of life (writer of the book called Max and Cats, about a young boy who is trapped on a life boat with a jaguar like that of Pi)

I have few people to thank. I am most obviously indebted to Mr. Patel; my gratitude to him is boundless as the Pacific Ocean. I hope that my telling of his tale does not disappoint him. For getting me started on the story, I have Mr. Adirubasamy to thank. For helping me complete it, I am grateful

to three officials of exemplary professionalism : Mr. Kazubiko Oda, lately of the Japanese embassy in Ottawa; Mr. Hiroshi Watanabe of Oika shipping company; and especially, Mr. Tomobiro Okamoto, of the Japanese ministry of transport, now retired. As for the spark of life, I owe it to Mr. Moacyr Scliar. (XII)

Martel's author's note ends with fictions within fiction within realities within fictions all ending with the claim that "if we citizens do not support our artists, then we sacrifice our imagination on the altar of crude reality and we end up believing things and having worthless dreams."(xii)

So, right from the beginning, Martel, creates doubts whether this story is fictional or factual, he propagates this doubt all the way through novel, which is written as if it were a combination of Pi's memories and Martel investigation reporting. It begins as a simple memoir of a child, shipwreck survivor Pi Patel, from childhood in Pondicherry amongst the zoo animals and it turns into a rousing adventure of survival on the high seas. However, some Pi's later adventures begin to test the limit of our credulity that calls very things we have read in to question.

Author as a Character in One's Own Fiction

Martel espouses several postmodern concepts in his novel, and among them author as a character is one instance. In postmodernist fiction, it wouldn't be unusual to include the author as a character. Yann Martel, in his *Life of Pi* is more than an author and narrator; he not only directly appears in his fiction, but also interacts with his fictional characters too. He meets adult Pi as well as describes Pi's home and his loving

relation with his wife, son and daughter. Author directly enters into his novel and starts to interact and describes the details in first person voice.

He lives in Scarborough. He's a small, slim man—no more than five foot five. Dark hairs, dark eyes. Hair greying temples. Cannot be older than forty. Pleasing, coffee—color complexion. Mild fall weather yet puts on a big winter parka with fur-lined hood for the walk to the diner. Expressive face. Speaks quickly, hands flitting about. No small talk. He launches forth. (7)

The story is told in the first person but by two different narrators, one is Pi and another is Martel like who himself interacts with characters and Pi and even with his family members.

In Martel's fiction, the distinction between character and narrator gets blurred in some moments, he comments about characters' habit and even complexion as if it were a real happening. So from the very beginning Martel creates a doubt about story's veracity and plays with reader's sense of reality here Martel describes about his character Pi

He is a sweet man. Every time I visit he prepares a south Indian vegetarian feast. I told him I like spicy food. I don't know why I said such a stupid thing. It's a complete lie. I add dollop of yogurt. Nothing doing. Each time it's the same time: my taste buds shrivel up and die, my skin goes beet red, my eyes well up with tears, my heads feels like a house on fire, and my digestive tracts starts to twist and groan in agony like a boa constrictor that has swallowed a lawn mower. (43)

Martel provides his story a realistic flavor, by creating another meta-fictional world within fiction. He presents his story as if it were a mixture of his journalistic investigation and Pi's memoir which is presented in a guise of journalistic details. The last section is in interview form.

Martel in his meta-fictional world interacts with two fictional Japanese shipping officials, who provide Martel, the details of their investigation report about sinking of the ship. He mentions here (though playfully) about his characters' letter to him in this final chapter of the novel as the evident of his investigation and story

Mr. Okamoto, in his letter to me, recalled the interrogation as having been "difficult and memorable." He remembered Piscine Molitor Patel as being "very thin, very tough, and very bright." [.....] As an aside, story of sole survivor, Mr. Piscine Molitor Patel, Indian citizen, is an out astounding story of courage and endurance in the face of extraordinary difficult and tragic circumstances. In the experience of his investigator, his story is unparallel in the history of shipwrecks. Very few castaways claim to have survived so long at the sea as Mr. Patel, and none in the company of an adult Bengal tiger. (319)

Martel presents his character not as fictional characters rather as his friends. Who not only interacts with him, but also possess control over the setting and plot of the fiction. Martel frames his fiction within 100 chapters according to the will of his main character Pi Patel.

Martel deals with his main character Pi as if he were his family friend. He directly appears in the novel and simultaneously narrates and shares his experiences with Pi and

even with his family members, as if it were biographical writing. Martel presents his encounter with Pi's family and his wife, son and daughter in the following passage

I am little early. I have just set foot on the cement steps of the front porch when a teenager bursts out the front door. He is wearing baseball uniform and carrying baseball equipment, and he's in a hurry. When he sees me he stops dead in his tracks, startled. He turns around and hollers into the house, "Dad the writer's here." To me he says, "Hi," and rushes off. [.....] Usha drops Moccasin. He flops to the floor unperturbed. "Hello, Usha," I say. She comes up to father and peeks at me from behind his leg. [.....] Then Piscine Molitor Patel, known to all as Pi Patel, bends down and picks up his daughter. (93)

Martel's experimentation in characterization is typically postmodern one, and through this technique, he teases his readers as he plays with their sense of reality. He displays his sceptic attitude towards the traditional frame of characterization which demands for the emotional attachment of readers with the fictional characters.

Concept of 'God' and Faith in Postmodern Age

Martel in this fiction deals with a very much complex metaphysical issue of God and faith, on which men are pondering for centuries. He raises a great question, is religion in postmodern age bound to seek experience of the impossible opened up by the fluidity and uncertainty in the gaps of reason, understanding and image in action? And an answer to this question suggests focusing on the post-Kantian sublime as heart of religion, which tends to suffer loss of particularity and certainty. The deconstructive

project of *Life of Pi* is to replace the enlightenment belief in power of reason to liberate humanity with a belief in the transforming power of imaginative story.

By employing the technique of realism in using mundane details with an incredible story, Martel gives formal expression of to reason–imagination, fact-fiction debate at the centre of novel. Pi as narrator bears the name from a mathematical as an irrational number. Pi is irrational as that of π . Martel's this trick is intriguing, he uses irrational number to come to rational understanding of things. Martel wants to prove that religious faith after all is irrational thing, non reasonable and beyond truism.

After reading Martel's fiction, it is fine to tell contemporary readers that, their God really be a story and most of them any way. But who is Pi's god that is the deeper and unanswered question: after all it is by experiencing Pi's credulity that our credulity might have been not only seduced but engaged and challenged. In postmodernism, the concept of religion is reflected in moral relativism which is raised in the context of convincing religion in terms of local narratives and practices whether sustained by universal claims or not. Martel's *Life of Pi* is also a personal (but parodic) narrative, where Pi's God is his personal god, the god that is established by fiction.

Martel in his *Life of Pi*, presents his character Pi to be Hindu, Christian and Muslim at once which shows the hybrid and eclectic nature of postmodern religions. Pi is devout Hindu, Christian and Muslim at once, he sees no conflict between three mutually exclusive faiths, the young Pi has strong penchant for religious faith. Initially stepped into Hinduism, he encounters Christianity at the age of 14 and asked to be baptized, Pi says "I was 14 years old and contended Hindu when I met Jesus Christ on a holiday." (50) Subsequently he embraces Islam. Pi intends to follow three faiths stimulatingly he

asks in joking manner with his mother “I don’t know why I can’t be all three, Mamajee has two passports. He is Indian and French, why I can’t be a Hindu, Christian and a Muslim. (73)

Nothing marks *Life of Pi* as contemporary postmodern novel more strongly than its theological impoverishment (for all that it seems to scream theological richness). Martel is not interested in the theological basis of Pi’s soul; it is only the basis of telling story. Hindu Christian and Muslim at once, Pi (parodically) echo’s the pacific Mahatma Gandhi, who believes that all religions are about love, but having grown up among animals he is also practical and grounded. In a humorous and cleverly written chapter where his three religious teachers Priest, Pundit and Imam meet him in the zoo and quiet rightly attempt to persuade him to give up two of his religions (they are portrayed as buffoons rather than wise men) Pi quotes Gandhi to defend him “Bapu Gandhi said “all religions are true” I want to love the god” (69), which floors them all. Then he goes for ice-cream.

Pi offers a great faith, “If Hinduism flows like the Ganges, then Christianity bustles like Toronto at rush hour. It is religion as swift as a swallow, as urgent as an ambulance, Islam is a beautiful religion of brotherhood and devotions” since according to Pi the “presence of god is finest rewards.” (63) His triple religious affiliation provides him three ways to experience that consoling presence at various dire moments. He is thus able to offer a compound ecumenical prayer salutation “Jesus, Mary, Muhammad and Vishnu”.

These are some examples of Pi’s simple plain faith but rest of the book is about the challenge to Pi’s simple faith as the sweet yet unsentimental experience is the

situation where, survival is every thing. The book poses questions that: can faith survive in the face of doubt and suffering? Can the love of god and one's fellows remain pure in an angry violent world? Despair sets in from the very beginning, Pi not only losses his parents, but also he is facing life on the ocean wave wit a tiger named Richard Parker, a zebra , an orangutan, an a hyena. Pi watches them kill each other with Richard Parker finishing off the hyena. The boat is littered with animal carcasses. As days go by, Pi a vegetarian, learns how to kill with his bare hands, batter turtles to death and eat uncooked flesh. He weeps, he is dump with paying and horror but he survives, marking his territory with urine, as animals do, keep Richard parker at bay, feeding him and finally teaching the tiger (by using whistle) then, he Pi is master here.

It is true that Pi's three faiths recede to a whisper on the life boat. Pi confesses that it is Richard Parker and the practical matter of avoiding being eaten by him, that gave him purpose even peace and perhaps wholeness and thus keeps him, alive. If he died, he would be left alone with despair as he confesses

But there is more to eat. I will come clean. I will tell you a secret: a part of me was glad about Richard parker. A part of me did not want Richard parker to die at all, because if he died I would be left alone with despair a foe even more formidable then tiger. If I sill will to live, it was thanks to Richard parker. He kept me from thinking too much about my family and tragic circumstance. He pushed me to go on living. I hated him for it, yet at the same time I was great full. I am great full. It is the plain truth; without Richard parker I wouldn't be alive today to tell you my story.

(164)

So actually, it is not the faith of God, that kept Pi alive in lifeboat; rather it was the Richard Parker (symbol of Pi's made up faith or that can be simply a hallucination), which kept Pi alive.

In one funny scene Pi yells out his belief in utter frustration, he sought to console himself in a very parodic manner

At such moments I tried to elevate myself. I would touch the turban I had made with the remnants of my shirt and I would say aloud, "THIS IS GOD'S HAT!" I would pat and say aloud, "THIS IS GOD'S ATTAIRE!" I would point to Richard Parker and say aloud "THIS IS GOD'S CAT!" I would point to life boat and say aloud, "THIS IS GOD'S ARK!" I would spread my hands wide and say aloud, "THIS ARE GOD'S WIDE ACRES!" I would point to the sky and say aloud, "THIS IS GOD'S EAR!" And in this way I would remind myself of creation and of my place in it. But God's hat was always unraveling. God's pants were falling apart. God's cat was always a constant danger. God's ark was jail. God's wide acres were slowly killing me. God's ear didn't seem to be listening. [...]

The blackness would stir and eventually go away, and God would remain, a shining point of light in my heart. I would go on loving. (209)

Pi says that, he felt he was beating a rainbow to death. Even if his journey was nothing but grief, ache and endurance. In self consoling moment of loneliness when even Richard Parker ran to the jungle he says that "I struggle to shore and fell up on the sand. I looked about. I was truly alone, orphaned not only of my family. But now of Richard Parker, nearly I thought, of God. Of course, I wasn't. This beach, so soft, firm and vast, was like

the cheek of God, and some where two eyes were glittering with pleasure and a mouth was smiling at having me there.” (285)

Exploration of faith and religion is not only matter of *Life of Pi*, Martel is also interested in faith of his readers, he wants them to believe his story, as if he were suggesting that story telling is a kind of religious experience because it helps us understanding the world in more profound way than just fact approach (or by implication, dogma, fundamentalism and literalism).

Martel’s attempt to show the power of story telling is in its best. Fantastic, yet utterly convincing. As a good postmodernist, Martel wants to use the technique of telling the tale (an old fashion quest for telling) multiple narrators, playful fairytale quality, realistically presented events that may be hallucinations or simply made up, to push at the limits of what is believable. Yet still convince the reader of his literary even if not the literal veracity.

Pi’s doubts about his faith are mirrored by the seeds of doubt Martel sows in the mind of his readers throughout the narrative. Every moment of certainty is undercut by the potential for disbelief and that is when Martel seems to ask: am I convincing you now? He shifts his story through various narrators beginning with an author narrator that one first thinks Martel himself but is only Martel like.

In the final test of the readers’ faith, Martel has Pi to tell an alternate allegedly more believable version of story at the end, not only lacking Richard Parker but also the humor and poetry and details of tiger story, to please two Japanese officials. He asks them which they think is better story. Of course tiger story is finer, more thoughtful

literary creation and therefore (Martel suggests) has truth more lasting than second, more journalistic version, with “dry yeast less faculty.” (302)

Even if one accepts the twists and turns in the narrative, he or she faces the further challenge of tracking down the clues hidden in the warren of allusion for more definitive answer to question about Pi’s religious faith, and whether the narrator (and the readers) will be persuaded of the story’s original promise that it will make one ‘believe in God’. So importance of symbolism in this book is made clear at first by the most obvious symbol of Pi’s name (π) where $\pi = 3.14$ or $22/7$, which is related Pi’s 227 days lifeboat floating in the Pacific ocean. π is 16th alphabet of Greek number system which directly connotes Pi’s age of 16, self chosen it is short version of his real name Piscine (after family friend’s favorite Parisian swimming pool) as he says:

I was named after a swimming pool. Quite particular considering my parents never took to water. One of my father’s earliest contacts was Francis Adriubasamy. He became a good friend of my family. I called him Mamaji, mama being the Tamil word for Uncle and ji being a suffix used in India to indicate respect and affection. [.....] . But no swimming pool in Mamaji’s eyes matched the glory of the Piscine Molitor (as [Pi’s name was Piscine Molitor Patel). It was the crowning aquatic glory in Paris, indeed of the entire civilized World. (11)

And pi is inevitably called “Pissing” by classmates. In contrast Pi is like π , what mathematician called an “irrational number,” that is 3.14 if rounded off, but with endlessly unfolding decimal places if carried out. Martel couples his mysterious abstraction with concrete image and so in the Greek letter that looks like shack with tin

roof, in that elusive irrational number with which scientists try to understand the universe. To show that, as a boy, Pi is in harmony with things as they are as well as with his sense of the unknowable. That Pi's attitude to religion may have changed after his ordeal at sea is buried in hidden symbolism hinted at by Pi's college's study in religion and zoology, as described in opening pages. As if to emphasize their key importance to the story (this is after the life boat came to shore in Mexico, Pi goes to Canada to start a new life). His specialists are the sixteenth century Jewish mystic Isaac Luria and the sluggish three-toad sloth (symbol of trinity?). Three-toed sloth's miraculous capacity to stay alive, Pi says reminded him of God

Some times I got my majors mixed up. A number of my fellow religious studies-students –muddled agnostics who didn't know which way was up, who wee in the thrall of reason, that fool's gold for the bright-reminded me of the three toed sloth; and three toad sloth; such a beautiful example of the miracle of life reminded me of God. (5)

This hint of the three-toad sloth may be an echo of Pi's own survival (perhaps?), a hint that, God seems more elusive these days or in postmodern age. More important, Luria's Cabalistic philosophy may hold the key to Pi's experience at the sea. His philosophy (Luria thought that secret of the universe lay in the numbers) echoes the symbolism of Pi (), and the formula for figuring out the dimension of a circle and its radius (connecting parameter and centre). Luria believed that God's light contracted from the universe, purging itself for the elements leaving an empty space (a circle) in which human life developed. But God also sent down a ray of light (like a radius) so that few remaining

divine sparks could reconnect with him. To achieve this fusion with God, and by implication eliminate evil from the world, Luria believed people must live an ethical life.

The original divine contraction is called variously Tzimtzum, Zimzum or Simsum. It is not coincidence that Martel calls the sinking ship Tsimtsum. Thus Pi at sea was experiencing his own void (or withdrawal) of God. In this divine contraction it is believed that, elements of evil fight with the instinct to do good. In the Pi's story too, Richard Parker saves Pi's sanity, and Pi's goodness kept Richard Parker alive (or perhaps his own faith). By introducing with this strain of mystical thought (Jewish), Martel not only illustrates that all the religions are essentially the same in the way they stem for love, but also he uses the mysticism to underscore the profound ways the God is presented in various religions.

Thus, most important and insightful comment, Martel makes about atheists and agnostics through Pi which can be the key to understand the whole fiction. And even helpful to understand how brilliantly Martel throws his readers into the sea of questions and confusion

I can well imagine atheist's last words: White, white! L-L- Love! My god!
 –and the death bed leap of faith. Where as the agnostic, if he stays true to his reasonable self, if he beholden to dry, yeastless faculty, might try to explain the warm light of bathing him by saying, “Possibly a f-f –falling oxygenation of the b-b-brain,” and, to the very end, lack imagination and miss the better story. (63)

By this piece we come to understand the Martel's emphasis on imagination. For him lacking imagination is missing the better story, where as for Pi the god is a better story and he can't choose any one among three better stories.

Though, one can read *Life of Pi* for fun trying to figure out Pi's relationships to God makes one feel a bit the castaway hero wrestling slippery fish into his lifeboat for dinner. An idea twists and turns, glittering and gleaming slaps us in the face with its tail and slips away. Did the story really happen? Does it make one believe in God? Early the narrator says "the story has happy ending." (93) But Pi also tells that "I have nothing to do with my working life, only that tie is a noose, and inverted through it is. It will make a man nonetheless if he is not careful", which suggests a man with at least some tensions on his mind on the other hand, Martel may also be suggesting that work is less important to Pi than God and family-narrator gives us glimpses of his of pi's shrine-filled house and his loving relation with his wife, son and daughter. However, when Pi is showing him family picture the narrator notices in the interaction with his character Pi, a smile every time but his eyes tell another story, "He shows me family memorabilia. Wedding photos first. A Hindu wedding with Canada permanently on the edges. A younger him, a younger her. They went to Niagara Falls for their honeymoon. Had a lovely time. Smiles to prove it. [.....]. A smile every time, but his eyes tell another story. (86)

Martel point here is that doubt inevitably accompanies faith. The questions in the novel are both yes and no? One answer comes in the form Pi's question moment after ship has sunk and he is sitting in the lifeboat bewailing the loss of his family and God's silence on the topic, he goes on

And what of my extended family—birds, beasts and reptiles? They too have drowned. Every single thing I value in my life has been destroyed. And I am allowed no explanation? I am too suffer hell with out any account from heaven? In that case, what is the purpose of reason, Richard Parker? Is it no more than to shine at practicalities—the getting of food, clothing and shelter? Why cannot reason give greater answer? Why can we throw question further than we can pull in an answer? Why such a vast net if there is so little fish to catch? (98)

And of course this is the nature of faith. One can't argue it through, one just believes. Faith in God (as young Pi sees it) "is an opening up, a little go, a deep trust, a free act of love" but it is hard to love Pi ads when he faces with adversity

I practiced religious rituals that I adapted to the circumstances—solitary Masses without priests or consecrated Commission hosts, darshans, with out murties and pujas with turtle meat for Prasad, acts of devotion of Allah not knowing where Mecca was and getting my Arabic wrong. They brought me comfort that is certain. But it was hard, oh, it was hard. Faith in God is an opening up, a letting go, a deep trust, a free act of love—but sometimes it is hard to love sometimes my heart was sinking so fast with anger, desolation and weariness, I was afraid it would sink to very bottom of the Pacific and I would not be able to lift it back. (209)

In every moment pi's faith towards God seems to be accompanied by doubt. Reason doesn't allow him to believe in God and he seems all the time pondering about this issue, not finding a fixed answer.

Through his novel, Yann Martel sows the seeds of uncertainty about God and religious faith in the mind of his reader. As he offers a postmodern 'mini-narrative' of the religious faith and offers us to believe in god through his fiction, where his aim is to expose that, god is no more than fictional product of the all so called 'master-narratives' in all the religions. As a postmodernist Martel shows his sceptic attitude towards all the existing religious master-narratives and their transcendental God, therefore he himself produced his own personal god and celebrates it.

Multi-versions of the same story

Martel introduces one uncertainty principle through his plot. He offers us two different versions of the same story, where narrator left us free to choose any one we think to be better story. For most of the postmodernists narrative becomes a false consensus, and Lyotard claims that narrative usually tends towards grand narrative. But according to him, in postmodern age such master narratives give the way to local and mini-narratives. And the general features of postmodernist narrative fiction is to mock up the traditional frame of story telling and their goal is to skirt around these traditions on an experiment with language, character and plot. Yann Martel too, as a postmodernist, experiments with narrative frame and plot construction in his *Life of Pi* and offers double versions of the same story to challenges the narrative tradition. He prefers multi-versions of same story to resist closure or singularity of the 'grand narrative', by offering numerous outcomes for a single plot.

Naturally in the reader in postmodern fiction is denied access to a totalizing narrative which will allow her or him to identify against the stable 'other' of the mysterious character. Rather, the reader replaces such a totalized, enlightened narrative,

proposing access as it does to a singular monotheistic truth, with the multiplicity of singularities, the multiplicity of different local narratives, having no claims on truth in any absolute sense at all. So is the case in Martel's *life of Pi*.

The third and final section of Martel's novel is comprised of a transcript between Japanese official representatives of shipping company and Pi recuperating in a Mexican hospital room. In this section, Martel limits our general appreciation by enlisting us in a clumsy postmodern game of narration and faith. Two Japanese have no time for Pi's unbelievable musing and insist upon the factual account of the ship sinking. Martel presents his whole novel in the guise of mixture of his journalistic investigation and Pi's memoir, where third and final section is in the form of interview between two Japanese as investigators (the ship laws Japanese) interrogate him on the unusual story of his survival this is a funny piece of their conversation

Mr. Okamoto: "Mr. Patel we don't believe your story" [...] "I am sorry to say bluntly, we don't want to hurt your feelings, but you don't rally expect us to believe you, do you? Carnivorous trees? Fish-eating algae that produces fresh water? Trees-dowelling aquatic rodents? These things do not exist." "Only because you have never seen them". "That's right we believe what we see." "So did Columbus. What do you do when you're in the dark?" "Your island is botanically impossible." "Said the fly just before landing in the Venus flytrap." "Why has no one else can come upon it?" "It's big ocean crossed by busy ships. I went slowly, observing much". "No scientist would believe you". "These would be the same who

dismissed Copernicus and Darwin. Have scientists finished coming upon new planets? In the Amazon basin, for example?" (294)

Martel's main character is not consistent in his narrative so we likely entered the fiction as skeptical as the Japanese officials, but having heard the story we now face the test of faith: which do we believe? Of course Martel wants us to believe in the Pi's original version with the floating bananas island, and the men eating plants and the flying fish. In Martel's view to do so is leap towards faith in turn faith towards God (here the god of his fiction). Martel brilliantly presents a conflict and debate about the fact and fiction. Two officials are very much doubting and insist upon the factual account of the ship sinking. They relentlessly grill Pi on how could he have possibly survived living on a life boat with a tiger.

In the third and final section of his fiction, Martel tries to risk the truism and expose how postmodernism begs to ask, what is real? Can we know anything for sure? Can even a simple sentence convey a simple truth or will one's experience and other's experiences dilute the sentence into entirely different entities. As long as one is experiencing something from the sentence, do both have to agree on the actual truth of the sentence? It is an interesting dilemma perhaps because it is true, has not its argument immediately been defeated? And when one looks to *Life of Pi* with its riddles and meaning one confronts with an interesting dilemma. What can one believe; can we have faith in what seems contradictory? Can a tiger live on a lifeboat with a boy?

Most of the things in Pi's story contradict actually. Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism together etc. Here two officials insist on the demand of a factual and believable account of Pi's survival

“We’re just being reasonable”. “So am I applied my reason at every moment. Reason is excellent for getting food, clothing and shelter. Reason is very is very best tool kit. Nothing bits reason for keeping tigers away. But be excessively reasonable and you risk throwing out the universe with bathwater. [.....] “We are not seeking lay criminal charges. You are an innocent victim of tragedy at sea. We are only trying to determine why and how the *Tsimtsum* sank. Mr. Patel”. Mr. Patel: “tiger exists, lifeboats exist, and oceans exist. Because the three have never come in your narrow, limited experience, you refuse to believe that they might. Yet the plain fact is that the *Tsimtsum* brought them together and sank.” (298-299)

In Martel’s fiction readers like that of Japanese officials, are free to choose their better story, and he indirectly suggest that story with imaginative overlay is better one. The whole argument is that imagination is the basis of Pi’s fabulous tale, or religion is always the better than real.

Martel may be suggesting that in postmodernism reality is not there just like cement block, rather it is the product of interpretation, in a sense we co-create our reality. And we do that all the time, every day. Because all the truth are products of the fictional language (where meaning and referent floats like an empty boat in the open ocean having no destination and fixity). Some slippage of meaning always occurred. For one thing word always contains echoes and traces of other words. Meaning is therefore fleeting phenomenon that evaporates almost as soon as it occurs in spoken or written language (or keeps transforming it self into new meanings) rather than something fixed.

Martel's story stretches ever further as it unfolds, once rescued Pi will choose to present a more believable version of his adventure story as the truth forcing us to question what actually happens as well as to ponder different levels of interpretations and the meaning. The central area of concern for many post modernist fiction writers is language and it is commonly asserted that we are in crisis of representation where the meaning of terms seem fluid disconnected. This crisis of representation has occurred because it is no longer believe that signs or language more generally have the ability adequately to reflect the reality rather they are now seen as arbitrary and volatile. This crisis is best reflected in the following passage, which is crucial to understand Martel's fiction

Pi Patel: "So, you don't like my story?" Mr. Okamoto: "No, we liked it very much. "But for the purposes for our investigation, we would like to know what really happened." "What rally happened?" "Yes". So you want another story?"[..] "We would like to know what really happened". "Doesn't telling always become a story?" "Uhh... perhaps in English. In Japanese a story would have an element of invention? Isn't just looking upon this world already something of an invention?" "The world isn't just a 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?" Mr. Patel: "you want words reflect reality?" "Yes." "Words that do not contradict reality?" "Exactly" "But tigers don't contradict reality." "Oh please no more tigers." "I know what you want. You want a story that won't surprise you. That will confirm what you already know. That won't

make you see higher or further or differently. You want a flat story. An immobile story. You want dry yeastless faculty" [...] "Here is another story" "Good". (303)

To some extent the format of book from the very beginning mirrors some of the usual qualms about the term 'postmodernism' what does 'post' means? Risking the truism, one common and just answer.

In the final or third section of Martel's *Life of Pi*, Pi tells an alternate six pages story to replace the previous 286 pages story, which is preachier and over bearing part of the book. Where Pi is forced by his interrogators to describe what really happened. The interesting thing is that Martel through Pi argues that the reason he made up the long unbelievable tale that, it's much better story a presumably better written in the exterior aspects of the novel than the real tale of Pi's survival, which included human survivors murder and cannibalism even as Martel claims the fanciful 'story what story is about'. Martel through Pi, in this section let the readers to decide the story which ever they think better story.

"I told you two stories that account for the 277 days in between." "Yes you did" "Neither explains the sinking of the *Tsimtsum*". "That's right." "Neither makes factual difference to you." "That's true." "You can't prove which story is true and which is not. You must take my word for it." "I guess so." In both stories the ship sinks, my entire family dies, and I suffer." "Yes that's true." "So tell me since it makes no factual difference to, you and you can't prove the question either way, which story do you

prefer? Which is the best story, the story with animal or story without animals?” Mr. Oakmoto: “that’s an interesting question...”

Mr.Chiba: “the story with animals.” Mr. Okamoto: “yes, the story with animal is the better story.” Pi Patel: “Thank you. And so it goes with God.” (317)

We are left now with uncertainty which actually is the real story and pondering that did the stories really happen or not. Whether story is based on reality or simply made up or possibly hallucination? Martel left the readers confused as Pi disowns his own story at last, and readers are free like Japanese officials, to choose their own story which they think themselves to be better story. Pi says that so it goes with God, what does it mean? Is the God story like that of Pi’s tale? Having no fixity neither having veracity.

Martel as postmodernist may be suggesting here through his *Life of Pi* that inconsistency may be part of human lives and so will be the story humans tell. Martel also aims to astute the story’s inconsistencies, tensions and struggle because of that original points of confusion and indirectly reveals that all is probably not simple as it may seem.

Martel knowingly problematizes his narrative, because the postmodern-narratives can’t be evaluated in terms of their truth value. Instead, narratives, ordinary, grand or otherwise are appreciated in relation to their situated acceptability with in interpretative communities. This centers the issue of ‘truth’ squarely within and in between language games, not interrelationship between narrative and the things narrative ostensibly references. In postmodernism, a thing becomes matter of narrative competence, invention and aesthetics.

IV. CONCLUSION

After overall analysis of *Life of Pi*, in previous chapter, we come to know that Martel's fiction is typical postmodern-parodic fiction. This fiction coincides with Lyotard's concept of 'meta-narrative' and 'little-narrative', and Derrida's concept of 'play', 'differance' and 'deconstruction'. As a postmodernist, through *Life of Pi*, Martel destabilizes all the narrative and exposes the deconstructive potentials of all the telling tradition. Martel presents, a parodic, 'personal-narrative' to resist the singularity of all the 'master-narratives' remaining in all the religions, because; in postmodern age, legitimation is dispersed, local and personal. On the surface level, Martel reworks the ancient sea voyages and castaway themes of classical writers, but in the deeper level, he produces a typical postmodern 'little narrative', which aims counter the 'grand-narrative'. He offers us to believe in God through fiction (where the questions about veracity of the story and story teller are left unanswered) which makes his readers all the religions and the tales are one. Indeed it is true that the way we believe in God is same as the way we believe in stories, hence the god is only story because both are linguistic in their nature and ultimately fictitious.

Life of Pi begins in typical postmodern manner, with a very problematic author's note. Through his author's note Martel alerts his reader about his fictional project and exposes the very 'constructed ness' of the text, because, the aim of postmodern anti-illusionist narrative is to mock-up the traditional illusionist style of telling. Martel's author's note begins as expected in the author's voice, but it becomes a voice a fictional narrator as it progresses. To play with the reader's sense of reality Martel presents author's note in the guise of realistic mask. He directly interacts with his fictional

characters and even at last thanks his own characters for their kind help. Martel deals with his main character Pi, as if he were a family friend. Even the chapter setting of the story of *Life of Pi* is influenced by his character. Martel sets up his novel in hundred chapters according to the wish of his main character Pi, which is presented as if it were mixture of Martel's journalistic investigation and Pi's memoir.

Martel sows the seeds of uncertainty about the God and religious faith, as he presents a strange mishmash of religious notions and figures that together comprise the deity that Pi creates and celebrates. In short, a god of his fiction. Pi is devout Hindu, Christian, and Muslim at once, which echoes the postmodern hybrid and eclectic nature of religious faith. Martel aims to show, how in postmodern age the concept of God and religion is reflected moral relativism, which is influenced by the certain general characteristic of postmodernism: its fluidity, diversity, uncertainty and ultimately its lack of concern with (e.g. belief in) truth. After reading Martel's fiction, it would be hard to come up with a more banal revelation than 'God is good because God is not real life'. In other words, God is a myth, but a nice myth that gets you along. Yet, this is a major fulcrum. Of course, since Pi rejects the major religions, yet accepts them all.

Martel introduces an uncertainty principle throughout his plot of the story. Pi, the main character and narrator proves to be a liar and unfaithful in terms of his narrative account, as he tells two different versions of the same story. Pi offers his readers to choose any of the versions, they think is the better story. In this section readers are left confused and forced to question, what actually happened as well as to ponder different levels of interpretations and the meanings. Through this section of *Life of Pi*, Martel exposes, how postmodern begs to ask what is real, and risk the truism.

In conclusion, we can say, *Life of Pi* is typically postmodern parodic fiction, which not only resists the singularity of the grand narratives, but also parodies all the existing tales and narratives. Martel displays his sceptic attitude towards telling tradition and truth construction practices that are based on language medium. Martel's *Life of Pi* is a postmodern 'mini-narrative' because; postmodern narratives are not evaluated in terms of their truth value. Hence legitimacy in postmodern age is dispersed, local and personal.

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