MAGICAL REALISM AND THE ERASURE OF THE WORLDS IN YANN MARTEL'S *LIFE OF PI* IN POSTMODERNISM PERSPECTIVE

THESIS

Written by:
Rizka Septiana
NIM 090110101005

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Submitted to the English Department, Faculty of Letters in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Sarjana Sastra in Jember University

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to:

1. Mamak and Abah, Siti Kalsum Sarbini and Haji Murdi Akmali, the greatest parents ever, who always make me look upon the Heaven and say "Thank you, thank you for sending me to these wonderful people";
2. The Murdies—my sisters and my little brother. Thank you, Nuning Mulyani, S.Ag. and Akmawati, for the supports; Yuyun Mahardikani, S.E, for all the prayers and the two princesses, Ajujuwa and Dira; Dewi Namirah Mandalika, for letting me be a true adolescent; Nurul Hafizah, for her "Bhaga"; Luqluil Wardah, A.Md, Keb., for the laugh; Muhammad Rizqi Sirrul Akhfa, the most precious little one, for entering our incomplete life then coloring it, for becoming a "Murdi";
3. My bestfriends *slash* sisters: Dini, Ida, Ika, Lina, Mutia, Nisfi, Nudia, Rara, Rima, and Yuni. There is a saying, "If a friendship lasts longer than 7 years, it will last a lifetime". Girls, we are lifetime-sisters, not in blood, but in bond;
4. Ula, Luki, Yiyis, Bebeb, and all my friends in English Department, Faculty of Letters academic year 2009; we stumble, and fall, and stand up straight, and fight together, guys;
5. My "family" in UKM Paduan Suara Mahasiswa Melodi Sastra (PSM MESRA);
6. My Alma Mater.

MOTTO

Pengetahuan, ternyata hanya menunjukkan kemiskinan manusia dalam lautan ketidaktahuan.*

"Be excessively reasonable and you risk throwing out the universe with the bathwater." (Piscine Molitor Patel)†

* *Kitab Omong Kosong* by Seno Gumira Ajidarma
† *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel

DECLARATION

I herby state that this thesis entitled "Magical Realism in Postmodernist Fiction: The Erasure of The Worlds in Yann Martel's *Life of Pi*" is an original piece of writing. I declare that the analysis and the research described in thesis have never been submitted for any other degree or any publications.

I certify to the best of my knowledge that all sources used and any help received in the preparation of this thesis have been acknowledged.

Jember, 17th June 2015

The writer,

Rizka Septiana

NIM 090110101005

APPROVAL SHEET

Approved and received by the Exmination Committee of english Department, Faculty of Letters, Jember University.

Name : Rizka Septiana
Student Number : 090110101005
Title : Magical Realism and The Erasure of The Worlds in Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* in Postmodernism Perspective
Day/Date : Wednesday, 17th June 2015
Place : Faculty of Letters, Jember University

Jember, 17th June 2015

Chairman,	Secretary,
Hat Pujiati, S.S., M.A.	Irana Astutiningsih, S.S., M.A.
NIP. 198009082005012001	NIP. 197407052005012001

The Members:

1. Dr. Ikwan Setiawan, S.S., M.A. (……)
   NIP. 197806262002121002

2. Dra. Supiastutik, M.Pd (……)
   NIP. 196605141998032001

Approved by the Dean,

Dr. Hairus Salikin, M.Ed
NIP. 196310151989021001

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Jember, 17th June 2015

Rizka Septiana

SUMMARY

Magical Realism and The Erasure of The Worlds in Yann Martel's *Life Of Pi* in Postmodernism Perspective; Rizka Septiana, 090110101005; 2015: 43 pages; English Department, Faculty of Letters, Jember University.

Life of Pi is a novel written by a Canadian writer. *Life of Pi* is a story of Pi surviving the Pacific for 227 days. In general, this research discusses the literary strategies used in *Life of Pi* in presenting the postmodernism aspects by analyzing the presentations of magical realism and the erasure of the worlds in the novel. Brian McHale's perspective on postmodernist fiction is applied in this research to solve the ontological problems of the construction of the worlds.

This research is a qualitative research, while a documentary technique is used to collect the data needed for this research. There are two kinds of data used in this research; primary data and secondary data. The primary data of this research are any kind of information and facts about the construction of worlds and the representation of postmodern culture in the object of this research, while the secondary data are any kind of facts and information, which are taken from the secondary sources, about magical realism and postmodern culture that support the analysis of the primary data. This research uses inductive method in analyzing the data; that the discussion goes from the specific to the general, from particular to a whole group of ideas, phenomena, or situations.

This research has found that in *Life of Pi*, magical realism does not only become the cause of the erasure of the worlds, by the way of making the character resist the magical events and objects. It also appears to be the effect of the erasure itself. Therefore, by presenting magical realism and the erasure of the worlds, *Life of Pi* raised the problems of modes of being or the ontological questions that mostly appear in postmodernist fictions. Furthermore, this research concludes that Yann Martel, through his writing *Life of Pi*, reflects the postmodern culture of the

"anything goes" by presenting the event of Pi taming the tiger, projecting *three* religions in *one* person and not creating an ending for *Life of Pi*.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter shows the basic idea of conducting the research. This chapter serves four subchapters; the background of the study as the guide in how the research is done, the problems to discuss, the scope of the study, and the goals of the study.

1.1 The Background of the Study

Postmodernism is "philosophical ideas, derived from poststructuralist theory and cultural formations, and associated with global popular culture" (McGuigan, 2006:3). It has caused much debate throughout the last five decades in its relation to *modernism* and proved its relevance in the scope of critical methods for analyzing contemporary society. As a school of thought, postmodernism cannot be detached from modernism, since, according to Lyotard, "it is obviously a part of the modern"; that postmodernism is not modernism *at its end* but in the constant nascent state (Lyotard, 1984: 79). It means that postmodernism does not erase the features of the modernism altogether; that some of the modernism features appears in postmodernism such as ambiguity, uncertainty and indeterminacy.

Moreover, the term postmodernism started to be applied to literature and art after World War II, where in its relation to literature, it has limited application to poetry and drama, but is used widely in reference to fiction (Abrams, 1999:168; Baldick, 2001:201). The application of the term in relation to fiction can be seen in Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*, Faulkners's *Absalom, Absalom!*, Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, Major's *Reflex and Bone Structure*, and many more. In its developments, postmodernist fictions become engaged to other genres of fiction such as absurdism, science-fiction, fantastic and magical realism. Magical realism, in postmodernist fiction, is employed as a narrative mode.

The history of the term magical realism started from 1798 to this day; from Germany to Latin America, and then continues spreading up to the rest of the world, internationally (Bowers, 2005:7). It has become popular in the last century. However, even after a very long time since it appeared, there has been no certainty over what magical realism really is. In his book *Magical Realism and the Postcolonial Novel: Between Faith and Irreverence*, Christopher Warnes tries to draw a basic yet simple definition of magical realism. He defines magical realism as a mode of narration in which a real and fantastic, natural and supernatural, are coherently represented in a state of equivalence (Warnes, 2009:3). Magical realist fiction treats the supernatural as something that cannot be, even simply is not, explained but still accepted and understood as an everyday life aspect.

Magical realism can be related to two fields of study; postcolonial and postmodern. In relation to postcolonial study, magical realism, in its history, has developed as political agenda. Because magical realism's frequent alliance to the literary identity politics, magical realism has become "a powerful decolonizing mode" (Faris, 2004: 36). As a postcolonial writing, magical realism is developed in colonized regions of the West, such as Latin America, Africa and India, to mock the colonizers as well as to describe and present the postcolonial culture and the unfamiliar reality, not only to the colonizer, but also to the international reading public.

On the other hand, magical realism is related to postmodernism by the way it destabilizes themselves by presenting magical events or confronting different worlds. Magical realism is also related to postmodernism by presenting indeterminacy, which is one of the features of postmodernism. The indeterminacy emerges because in magical realism the "narrative is told from realistic and magical perspective" (Faris cited in Riza Ezel, 2010: 49). In magical realism, the realism is used as the means to describe the magical. Furthermore, from the perspective of postmodernist fiction, magical realism is seen as the banalization or the flattening of fantastic through the characters' acceptance over supernatural happenings and beings with casual matter-of-factness (McHale, 2004:76).

The object of the analysis is *Life of Pi,* a novel written by a Canadian writer named Yann Martel. The novel is a story which Pi recounted to the *Martel-like narrator* (Stratton, 2004:5). Piscine (Pi) Molitor Patel survived after the Japanese cargo ship carrying him and his family along with a collection of zoo animals, from India to Canada, had sunk in the Pacific Ocean. Basically, two-third of the novel talk about which is called the first version of Pi's survival story, of Pi surviving the Pacific for 227 days floating in a lifeboat with wild animals; a spotted hyena, an injured zebra, an orangutan and a Bengal tiger named Richard Parker. In the first version of his survival story, Pi experienced many things while floating on the Pacific; from something natural to something that is "hard to believe", "impossible", and "contradicts the laws of nature"; from enjoying underwater city population and luminescence to finding a carnivorous island with hundreds of thousands of meerkats population (Martel, 2003:294-6).

Apparently, the novel does not end when Piscine and Richard Parker survived and reached land of Mexico. On the contrary, it continues serving another story in Part Three where the Martel-like narrator presented a verbatim transcript of a recording tape of conversation between Mr. Tomohiro Okamoto, of the Maritime Department in the Japanese Ministry of Transport, Mr. Atsuro Chiba, and Pi himself. Within the conversation, Pi provided two versions of his survival story for the Japanese officers. The first story was the same with the one which he told to the Martel-like narrator. Whereas, in the second version of the story, Pi substituted the characters of the first story, which were the animals, with human characters; Mother, Taiwanese Sailor, and The Frenchman Cook.

Considering the facts above, the analysis of magical realism and the construction of plural worlds indicating *Life of Pi* as a postmodernist fiction are chosen for this research. I choose those two points, since the construction of the novel, in which presenting two different stories–one story that consists of supernatural events and beings and one other story that consists of events and beings that are accepted by the laws of nature–that erase one another, confuses not only me as a researcher and the reader of the literary work, but also the characters in the novel, Mr. Okamoto and Mr. Chiba. The problems are considered worth

further investigating by focusing on the analysis of magical realism and the erasure of the worlds as the strategies of postmodernist fiction. Therefore, this thesis is entitled "Magical Realism and the Erasure of the Worlds in Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* in Postmodernism Perspective".

1.2 The Problems to Discuss

Based on the explanation in the previous subchapter, the problems that will be discussed in this research are formulated as follow:

(1) How is magical realism presented in *Life of Pi*?
(2) How are the worlds placed under erasure in *Life of Pi*?
(3) What is beyond the construction of worlds in *Life of Pi*?

1.3 The Goals of the Study

This research aims to know how magical realism is presented in Yann Martel's novel *Life of Pi*. This research also shows the role of magical realism in the construction of worlds in postmodernist fiction. Furthermore, this research shows how the worlds are placed under erasure in the novel. At last, this research is used to describe the representation of postmodern culture beyond the narrative strategy of magical realism and the erasure of the world that is used in *Life of Pi*.

CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretical framework describes the previous researches, theories and concepts related to the topic and object that is analyzed in this thesis. This chapter is divided into two subchapters; they are the previous researches related to this research topic and object of analysis and the explanation of Brian McHale's postmodern perspective.

2.1 The Previous Researches

Previous researches or literature reviews are important in conducting this research because it serves several functions. After studying previous researches, the gap of the study can be drawn to find a topic for a new research. Besides, reading and studying the previous researches prevent us from repeating the same errors or mistake while doing the present research. By mentioning the previous researches, readers of the thesis can acknowledge the originality of the present research. The originality can be tested by comparing the previous researches with the new one. The comparison of researches can give insights to the readers that the topic proposed in the present research is worthy of detailed exploration (Blaxter *et al*, 2006:122-3).

I have chosen two researches as the previous researches. The first research is considered related to the topic of magical realism that I discuss in my thesis, while the other research has been chosen because the research uses the same novel as the object of the analysis as I do, which is *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel. The previous researches used in this thesis are Meryem Riza-Ezel's thesis entitled Magic Realist Transformations in Paulo Coelho's *The Witch of Portobello* and *The Experimental Witch* and Ricardo Pereira da Silva's article entitled Sailing with Tigers and Pirates: Resistance and Space in *Treasure Island* and *Life of Pi*.

2.1.1 Previous Researches in Relation to Magical Realism

The first research is a thesis written by Meryem Riza-Ezel entitled Magic Realist Transformations in Paulo Coelho's *The Witch of Portobello* and *The Experimental Witch*. Meryem Riza-Ezel was a master-degree student in Eastern Mediterranean University, North Cyprus. She wrote her thesis to fulfill the requirement of the degree of Master of Art there. Her thesis was written in 2010 by using Paulo Coelho's novel *The Witch of Portobello* and its film adaptation, *The Experimental Witch*. She required three major question; first, on the important of the role of objective truth; second, on the role of narrative in overcoming metanarratives in order to create a poeticized society; and the last, the role of magic realism in dissolving boundaries and limitations that objective truth and metanarratives impose on texts, or even societies.

Riza-Ezel in her thesis answered those three questions by first discussing Rorty's theory of how a poeticized society, and the strong poet, may overcome the limitations of objective truth. She stated, Lyotard argues that the concept of metanarrative, which is political/social in nature, needs to dissolve. By including literary narrative theory, she analyzed the importance of how structuralist and postmodern narrative theories relate to the concept of metanarrative. In her analysis on magical realism, Rizal-Ezel started from the discussion of the historical background of the term magical realism includes the confusion raise among thinkers towards its definition. Moreover, Riza-Ezel also discussed magical realism through its use in contemporary postmodern fiction. Riza Ezel then analyzed magical realism in the terms of defocalization, the ineffable in-between and the diffusing time and space in order to examine the dissolving of boundaries and limitation in Paulo Coelho's novel and its film adaptation. As the result, Magical Realism, as she wrote, which is used as a mode in contemporary novels and films, succeeds in overcoming the limitations and boundaries imposed by metanarratives and objective truth. Her analysis showed how magic realism blurs boundaries and transforms meanings of existing concepts not only because it creates a wavering between the universally verifiable and unverifiable, but also because the hierarchy of focalizor is erased.

Riza-Ezel's analysis on magical realism's function in a text is used in my research in order to examine the application of magical realism in postmodernist fiction.

2.1.2 Previous Research in Relation to Yann Martel's *Life of Pi*

The last research is an article written by Ricardo Pereira da Silva entitled Sailing with Tigers and Pirates: Resistance and Space in *Treasure Island* and *Life of Pi*. Silva is a graduate student from the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, NOVA University of Lisbon. This article was written in 2015 by analyzing Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* and Yann Martel's *Life of Pi*. Silva's analysis on those two fictions set out from the concept of *robinsonade,* a model that was originated by Defoe's Robinson Crusoe, in which characters in both fictions traveled across the sea.

In his article, Silva first analyzed the various phases of colonialism through the main characters move and their relationship with territory. Jim Hawkins in *Treasure Island* became the Self (colonizer) because of his possession of Treasure Island, while the pirates (including Long John Silver) became the Other (colonized) because their agreement to work as Hawkins's crew is the representation of submission toward the ones in possession of the map (the colonizer). In addition, his ownership of Treasure Island's map made Treasure Island itself Hawkins' territory because "being in the possession of a map is the equivalent to having authority over the charted space" (Silva, 2015: 163). On the other hand, Pi in *Life of Pi* became a representation of the Self (colonizer) because of his experiences in managing animals in a zoo. He employed his experiences in order to tame (oppress) Richard Parker (the colonized).

After analyzing the mechanism of colonial dominance that is imitated by the characters in both novels, Silva examined the resistance of the colonized people represented in the novels by seeing it from how the colonized challenges the colonizer's authority. In *Treasure Island,* the resistance is played by the pirates under Silver's rule in order to take the Island. In *Life of Pi,* the resistance is played by Richard Parker. However, Richard Parker did not kill Pi. On the

contrary, Richard Parker chose to kill the blind Frenchman because he was “a remnant of the old colonial empire which dominated part of India's territory” (Silva, 2015: 169).

Using the concept of “Third Space” proposed by Homi K. Bhabha, Silva analyzed the existence of the Third Space in both novels. Silva argued that the "Third Space" does exist in those novels because of the unique, albeit fictional, relationship of interdependence, where the Western binary of the Self and the Other ceases to exist. In Stevenson’s *Treasure Island*, the Third Space is the Hispaniola, while in Martel’s *Life of Pi* the Third Space is the lifeboat.

By analyzing Stevenson’s and Martel’s fictional texts, Silva concluded that the robinsonade in Stevenson's *Treasure Island* can be read as a warning against the emergence of anti-colonial resistance movements by the end of the nineteenth century, while Martel's *Life of Pi* can be read as a metaphorical account of the process of colonization, subsequent resistance and ultimate fragmentation of the Empire.

Although I have different topic to discuss in my thesis, which are magical realism and worlds erasure, I use Silva’s article as one of the previous research in my thesis because he uses the same novel as the subject of the study, which is *Life of Pi*.

2.2 Brian McHale’s Postmodern Perspective

Brian McHale in his *Postmodernist Fiction* provided an explanation of dominant. The concept of *dominant* itself was originally presented by Jurij Tynjanov, but McHale uses Roman Jakobson’s explanation to explore more about this concept. According to Jakobson (cited in McHale, 2004: 6), “the dominant may be defined as the focusing component of a work of art: it rules, determines, and transforms the remaining components.” McHale (2004: 6) explains that the application of Jakobson’s concept of dominant is not only to the structure of the individual literary text and the synchronic and diachronic organization of the literary system. It also can be applied to the analysis of the verse medium in general, of verbal art in general, and of cultural history. Obviously, in one literary

work there are many dominants–*focusing components*–depending on our point of view, on what we are going to analyze through the literary work.

McHale proposed the dominant of postmodernist fiction as *ontological*. The questions that are raised in postmodernist fiction bear mostly on problems of modes of being;

> either on the ontology of the literary text itself or on the ontology of the world which the literary text projects, for instance: What is world?; What kinds of world are there, how are they constituted, and how they differ?; What happens when different kinds of world are placed in confrontation, or when boundaries between worlds are violated?; What is the mode of existence of a text, and what is the mode of existence of the world (worlds) it projects?; How is a projected world structured? And so on. (McHale, 2004:10)

To make it more specific, McHale sees the ontological dominant of postmodernist fiction from three parts; Worlds, Construction, and Words. These three parts are connected to each other. Worlds, in postmodernist fiction, are constituted in a certain way to build a certain construction. This strategy of constituting worlds uses language (words) as the medium as in any form of literary work, for "language constructs edifices of symbolic representations that appears to tower over the reality of everyday life like gigantic presences from another world" (Berger and Luckmann in McHale, 2004:131). These three parts of postmodernist fiction's ontological dominant covers the questions that emerge in postmodernist fiction as mentioned before.

In explaining the construction of worlds in postmodernist fiction, McHale started from the description of the world. There are three categories of worlds according to the classical explanation of the construction of world; they are real world, possible world and impossible world (McHale, 2004: 33). Real world is constructed under the modality of necessity. This category of world is a world where we live in, a world of everyday and normal. Possible world or *fictional world* is a world that is constructed under the modality of possibility. In order to construct it, this world has to be believed in first, at least by the writer who creates it. The last, impossible world, is a world of presence and absence; a world that is both true and false.

Furthermore, the first category of world—the real world—can be constructed inside the fictional world. This is a real-in-fiction world, or fictional "real" world. As in the real world, the fictional "real" world is the world where the characters inside a fiction live their lives. This fictional "real" world is a world of normal and everyday for the characters in a literary work. We can say that every fictional world has "real" world constructed within. Moreover, according to McHale (2004), the fictional "real" world is not the only world constructed in postmodernist fiction, there is also what is called the "other" world. If the fictional "real" world is a world of normal and everyday for the characters in a literary work, the "other" world then is a world of paranormal or supernatural (McHale, 2004: 73).

In order to construct/deconstruct worlds, McHale proposed four strategies; they are *juxtaposition*, *interpolation*, *superimposition* and *misattribution* (McHale, 2004: 45). The *juxtaposition* strategy is when "noncontiguous and unrelated" worlds—real-world spaces— are presented juxtaposed. For example, a character in a literary work takes a ferry from British Channel, down to Singapore and up to Kyoto Island in Japan. In a real encyclopedia-world, these places are very far apart. However, here, the British Channel (in Europe), Singapore (in South-East Asia) and Japan (in Eastern Asia) are juxtaposed. The *interpolation* strategy is the strategy that of introducing an alien space *within* a familiar space, while the *superimposition* is the strategy that of placing one familiar world on top of another world. The fourth strategy is *misattribution*. This strategy is that of presenting real-world places and their attributes not in the same way as in our common knowledge about those places; that of "parodying the encyclopedia" (McHale, 2004: 48). Due to the employment of these strategies in constructing worlds in postmodernist fiction, a confrontation of worlds emerges, in which the confrontation between the fictional "real" world and the "other" world.

Postmodernist fiction confronts the fictional" real" world and the "other" world and treats them similarly by the way fantastic genre does. The confrontation between those worlds, in postmodernist fiction, is the same way as in fantastic

fiction. That is why it is said that "postmodernist fiction has close affinities with the genre of the fantastic" (McHale, 2004: 74). Fantastic, according to Todorov,

> "is … a transient *state* of texts which actually belongs to … : either the genre of the uncanny, in which apparently supernatural events are ultimately explained in terms of the laws of nature (for instance, as deceptions or hallucination); or that of the marvelous, in which supernatural events are ultimately accepted as such–where, in other words, the supernatural becomes the norm. (cited in McHale, 2004:74)

Both fantastic genre and postmodernist fiction raise a feeling of hesitation through the confrontation between fictional "real" world and "other" world. However, fantastic genre creates epistemological hesitation—"between natural and supernatural explanations"—while in postmodernist fiction the hesitation is between this world and that world, between the fictional "real" world and the "other" world (McHale, 2004: 75).

Moreover, the other effect of the confrontation between worlds is the banalization of the fantastic. The banalization of the fantastic occurs because of the characters' failure to be amazed by supernatural events and objects, as well as of the characters' acceptance over those supernatural happenings and beings with casual matter-of-factness (McHale, 2004: 76). In other words, the characters in postmodernist fiction sometimes accept the presence of the supernatural objects and events. The last effect of the confrontation between different worlds in postmodernist fiction is the presence of resistance that is felt either by the characters or the readers of the literary work. This resistance emerges because of the presence of supernatural events and objects through the construction of the "other" world, as well as through the confrontation between the fictional "real" world and the "other" world.

Entering the explanation of the Construction, according to McHale, one of postmodernist fiction's constructions is *world under erasure*. He explained that there is a kind of ambiguity and indeterminacy happened in postmodernist fiction when one condition is projected, then that condition is recalled or un-projected. It does exist in postmodernist fiction when one narrated event–with some details and explanations–that occurs to one narrative agent or more is replaced with another

event along with other details and explanations. In some cases, the erased event is not automatically gone; it waits to be projected again. In some others, the event is erased permanently.

Moreover, in this world-under-erasure construction, events can both do and do not happen, or, same event may happen in two different ways. For example, Clarence Major's *Reflex and Bone Structure*:

> My elbows on the dressing table begin to ache.
> And someone opens the door. It's Dale who stands there, mouth open, watching us. **I erase him**. He's still on stage. In his glory. Cutting another notch into the totem pole of his career.
> Dale opens the door again and this time he enters. (Major, cited in McHale, 2004:99)

From the quotation above**,** the sentence "I erase him" does not only mean that the "I" erases the existence of Dale. Here, the story, through the "I", also erases the event where Dale opened the door and stood with mouth open, and replaces it with another event along with another detail.

Furthermore, the story cannot only erase the events. As stated before, some details and explanations are also erased along with the erasure of the events. These details and explanations are the *existents* in the literary work, like objects, settings, characters, and so on (McHale, 2004:103). There are many ways a literary work erases its characters. The characters can just slowly fade away and disappear, or, they may be invented by another narrative agent to play a role, only to be canceled in the end of the story, or, they may repeatedly pop in and out of existence in the story. The erasure of the characters has the most sensitive yet great effect to the reader of the literary work since it is through people in the story the readers become involved in the fictional world. These explanations of McHale's perspective on postmodernist fiction are used in this research as the framework to analyze Yann Martel's novel *Life of Pi*.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Research design and methodology are important because they concern not only with how this research is formulated and arranged, but also with how the data are properly used while doing this research. This chapter consists of three subchapters. The first subchapter talks about the type of the research, while the second subchapter explains how the data are collected. The data processing and the data analysis in the third subchapter are used as the explanation on how the data are processed, categorized and analyzed.

3.1 Type of Research

This research belongs to qualitative research. Silverman (2008:17) defines qualitative research as a research that draws the findings not by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification, and the data are chosen based on the uniqueness of analyzed reality. This research discusses the literary strategies used in *Life of Pi* in presenting postmodernism aspects. Therefore, the data I use are non-numerical data. The data are in the form of written materials and taken from the novel as the primary source and other sources such as books, research journals, dictionaries, and articles. Those data, which are in the form of quotations, support and strengthen the analysis, and also are used as proofs of the study.

3.2 Data Collection

Documentary technique is used in this research for collecting the data. Blaxter (2006:187) describes that "documentary technique proceeds by abstracting from each document, those elements which are considered to be important or relevant, by grouping together those findings or setting them alongside others which we believe to be related". I collect the data by close

reading the novel as well as highlighting the pressence of natural and supernatural happenings and beings that indicates magical realism and plural worlds.

This research requires two kinds of data, primary and secondary data, which are taken from two sources, primary and secondary sources. The primary data of this research are any kind of information and facts about the construction of worlds and the representation of postmodernism in Yann Martel's *Life of Pi.* On the other hand, the secondary data are any kind of facts and information about magical realism and postmodern culture that support the analysis of the primary data. The secondary data collected from Faris's *Ordinary Enchantment: Magical Realism and the Remystification of Narrative* and Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. These books are considered beneficial to understand the development of Magical Realism and postmodern culture in literary works.

3.3 Data Processing and Data Analysis

Data processing is a part of a research where all of the data are categorized. After collecting the data from the novel and other sources, I categorize and delete the data which are considered unimportant, or not related to the analysis. Deleting unimportant data can make the explanation in this thesis brief and clear. Categorizing the data also helps in answering each questions presented in this research. This data processing step is necessary to ensure proper data for the analysis.

The data related to the topic of magical realism, which are the pressence of magical events or objects and the confrontations between different worlds, are used to answer the first question. Meanwhile, in order to answer the second question, the data about the erasure of events, settings, objects and characters in the novel are analyzed. The data related to the representation of postmodern culture are used to answer the third question.

This thesis uses inductive method in analyzing the data. It means that the discussion goes from the specific to the general; from particular to a whole group of ideas, phenomena, or situations. As stated before, this research discusses the

literary strategies used in *Life of Pi* in presenting postmodernism aspects by analyzing magical realism and the world construction in the novel. To draw the general description in the analysis, this research uses Brian McHale's perspective on postmodernist fiction as the framework. The analysis (represented by the diagram bellow) starts from the discussion about the worlds that are constructed in the novel and the strategy that is used in constructing those worlds. This analysis then leads to the discussion about the presence of magical realism in the novel. Analyzing magical realism is conducted in order to bridge magical realism with the analysis of the erasure of the worlds in the novel, especially the erasure of events, settings, objects and characters. Finally, the results of the analysis on magical realism and the world erasure are used to move forward to the last analysis; the postmodern condition that is represented through *Life of Pi*. The whole processes of the analysis in this research result the conclusion of the study which are related to each other.

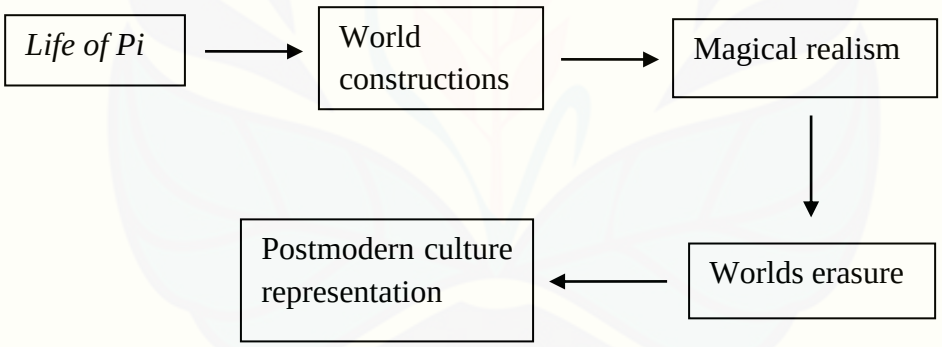

Diagram 1. The Analysis of Magical Realism and the Erasure of the Worlds in Yann Martel's *Life of Pi*

CHAPTER 4. MAGICAL REALISM AND THE ERASURE OF THE WORLDS IN YANN MARTEL'S *LIFE OF PI*

In this chapter, the collected data are analyzed using the theoretical framework mentioned in the second chapter of this thesis. This chapter is divided into four subchapters. In the first subchapter I discuss the worlds that are constructed in *Life of Pi* and the strategy used in constructing those worlds. While in the second subchapter, I analyze the confrontation of worlds and the presence of magical realism in the novel. The third subchapter is the analysis of the erasure of the worlds. The last subchapter shows the postmodern culture that is represented by Yann Martel through his work.

4.1 Worlds Construction in *Life of Pi*

To speak of postmodernist fiction, we cannot avoid the discussion of the construction of worlds. As explained in the Chapter 2, there are three categories of world; real world, fictional world, and impossible world. Based on the explanation of the world construction, *Life of Pi* is categorized as a fictional world, constructed by Yann Martel as the writer of this novel. In this subchapter I map the worlds that are constructed in *Life of Pi* and the strategies employed in constructing those worlds.

Life of Pi is a novel about an Indian boy named Piscine (Pi) Molitor Patel, who survived after the Japanese cargo ship that was carrying him and his family along with a collection of zoo animals, from India to Canada, had sunk in the Pacific Ocean. The novel is divided into four parts: Author's Note, Part One, Part Two and Part Three. The Author's Note is the first part of *Life of Pi*. This Author's Note is "written" by a Canadian writer. In the Author's Note, this Canadian writer recounted a "behind-the-scene" story of his third novel, that turns out to be a novel about an Indian boy named Piscine Molitor Patel, who survived after the Japanese cargo ship, that was carrying him and his family along with a

collection of zoo animals, from India to Canada, had sunk in the Pacific Ocean. In other words, this Canadian writer recounted a "behind the scene" story of "Life of Pi". Yann Martel, on the other hand, is a Canadian writer, and *Life of Pi* is his third novel. These *coincidences* make the Author's Note look like written by Yann Martel himself at first and that the reader of this literary work might think that *Life of Pi* is a true story. It is not Yann Martel. Reading the novel more, we will find out that this character is the part of the novel itself because he pops up regularly in the novel in the form of italicizes. Stratton, in "Hollow at the core": Deconstructing Yann Martel's Life of Pi, uses "Martel-like writer" to referring this character in the Author's Note (Stratton, 2004: 5). Considering the fact that this "Martel-like writer" is the part of the story in the novel itself, I use Martel-like character to referring this character instead. In addition, *Life of Pi* is not a true story, as Stratton said that "the only person who is "real" in the [Author's] Note" is Moacyr Scliar (Stratton, 2004: 8). As the result, since this Martel-like character is the part of the story in *Life of Pi,* the world of the Martel-like character automatically becomes the part of the worlds that are constructed in the novel. Thus, the world of this Martel-like character is the "real" world constructed in *Life of Pi*, or referred as the fictional "real" world.

As stated before, in the Author's Note the Martel-like character recounted a story of how he came up with his novel. This "behind the scene" story is recounted within the fictional world of *Life of Pi*. It means that by telling the "behind the scene" story the Martel-like character creates a story within a story; a fictional world within a fictional world. McHale said that "characters *inside* fictional worlds are also capable of sustaining prepositional attitudes and projecting possible worlds" (McHale, 2004: 34). McHale proposed this fictional-world-within-fictional-world construction as *Chinese-box worlds* (McHale, 2004: 112).

The "behind the scene" story, that is recounted by the Martel-like character, started when the Martel-like character came to India to write his third novel after the failure of his second novel (Martel, 2003: ix). However, just when he arrived at India he found out that the novel had already failed even when he

had not written it yet. Found himself alone and lack of inspiration, the Martel-like character decided to go exploring India. That was when he met an Indian man, Mr. Adirubasamy, who gave him an inspiration for his novel. After having conversation with Mr. Adirubasamy, the Martel-like character then left India, back to Canada.

Coming back to Canada, the Martel-like character finally met the adult Piscine (Pi) Molitor Patel, the guy whom Mr. Adirubasamy talked about. The adult Pi agreed to meet and do the interview with the Martel-like character. Within the interviews, the adult Pi recounted his survival story to the Martel-like character. This story is recounted within the "behind the scene" story. This is also a fictional-world-within-fictional-world construction; another Chinese-box-world construction. The adult Pi's story started with his childhood, which took place in Pondicherry. Pondicherry is the "real" world of the young Pi that is constructed in this story. Pi's life in Pondicherry was going all well until his father decided to move to Canada with his family. They left for Canada on June 21st, 1977, on a Japanese cargo ship named *Tsimtsum*. After sailing for four days in the Pacific, the ship sank. Pi survived the shipwreck by jumping to a lifeboat, but he was not alone. He spared very little space in the lifeboat with wild animals—a zebra that injured its leg when jumping to the lifeboat before the ship sank, a hyena, an orangutan, and a Bengal tiger named Richard Parker. Shortly, the hyena started to take prey on the injured zebra and the orangutan, and then the hyena was killed by Richard Parker. Thus, there were only two of them left on the lifeboat, Richard Parker and Pi.

> "I awoke to the reality of Richard Parker. There was a tiger in the lifeboat. I could hardly believe it, yet I knew I had to. And I had to save myself." (Martel, 2003: 147)

Being in a small lifeboat with a wild animal, Pi knew that sooner or later Richard Parker would come after him. However, Pi said:

> "I have survived so far, miraculously. Now, I will turn miracle into routine. The amazing will be seen every day. I will put in all the hard work necessary."(Martel, 2003: 148)

In order to survive from Richard Parker, Pi had to tame Richard Parker. Therefore, despite his regular activities to survive as a castaway, like gathering food and water, he also had to try taming the tiger in the middle of the Pacific. On the one hand, the Pacific is a fictional "real" world where Pi spent his time day by day floating in a lifeboat, living his life as normal as every castaway does in which by gathering food and water by fishing and distilling salt water. On the other hand, the Pacific becomes the "other" world. It happens because of the existence of Richard Parker. As explained earlier, the "other" worlds are the worlds of the paranormal or the supernatural. Something is called supernatural or paranormal when it cannot be explained logically. The reason why the existence of Richard Parker in the lifeboat makes the Pacific become the "other" world is because the story of Pi surviving with a wild animal in a small lifeboat for 227 days simply cannot be explained logically. The presence of the talking Richard Parker also makes the Pacific as the "other" world constructed in this novel. The presence of a talking tiger cannot be explained logically. The "other" world that is also constructed in this story is the algae island. Some day in the middle of the Pacific, Pi and Richard Parker found an algae island with hundreds of thousands of meerkats population (Martel, 2003: 256ff). This algae island becomes the "other" world also because its existence cannot be explained logically.

The fictional world that is recounted by the adult Pi *ends* when Pi and Richard Parker reached land of Mexico (Martel, 2003: 286). However, the novel does not actually end when Pi and Richard Parker survived and reached Mexico. It continues by serving another story in Part Three. After leaving the fictional world recounted by the adult Pi, the readers are led back to the Martel-like character's fictional "real" world. In the Part Three, the Martel-like character recounted how he corresponded with Mr. Tomohiro Okamoto, who interviewed Pi after he reached Mexico. Mr. Okamoto gave the Martel-like character a recording tape of the interview. The Martel-like character transformed the conversation in the tape into a verbatim transcript (Martel, 2003: 289-290). This recording tape, or the verbatim transcript form of it, can be categorized as a story *indirectly* recounted by Mr. Okamoto to the Martel-like character. By presenting this story

of Pi being interviewed by the two Japanese officers, the Chinese-box-world construction is once again constructed here.

The conversation, that was between two Japanese officers—Mr. Okamoto and Mr. Chiba—and Pi, took place in Mexico. Mexico then becomes the "real" world that is constructed in this novel. Within the conversation, Pi told the Japanese officers two different stories; the *first* version—the story which later the adult Pi recounted to the Martel-like character—and the second version of his survival story. However, within the second version of the survival story, there is no "other" world constructed. The second version of the survival story only constructs fictional "real" world.

To sum it up, in general, there are three kinds of world constructed in *Life of Pi*: fictional world, fictional "real" world and "other" world, as projected in the following diagram:

Fictional world of Martel's *Life of Pi*

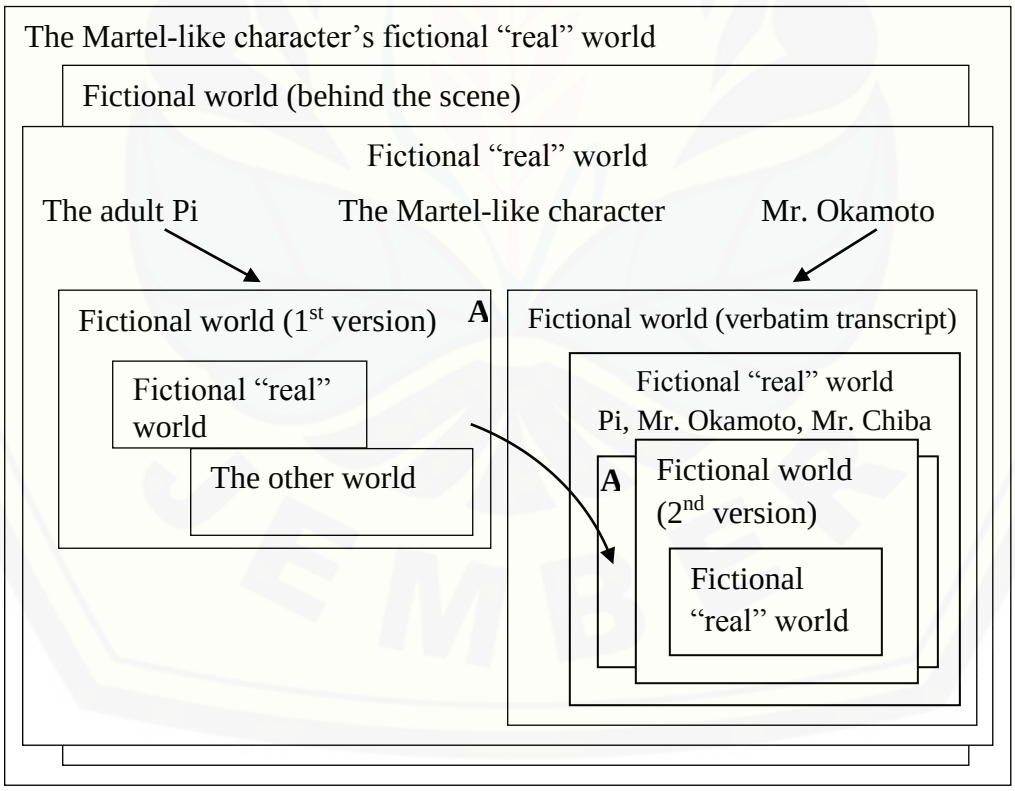

Diagram 2. World Construction in *Life of Pi*

The diagram above shows the construction of worlds in *Life of Pi* as a fictional world that is constructed by Yann Martel, the writer of this literary work. As stated before, every fictional world has fictional "real" worlds constructed within; the world of normal and everyday of its characters. Because there are more than one fictional worlds constructed in *Life of Pi*, it means that there are also more than one fictional "real" worlds. The first fictional "real" world constructed is the "real" world of the Martel-like character. Within his "real" world, the Martel-like character created a fictional world by recounting the "behind the scene" story of his novel. As in the fictional world of Yann Martel's "*Life of Pi",* this fictional world also constructs fictional "real" world within. They are the fictional "real" world of the Martel-like character, the adult Pi and Mr. Okamoto.

Furthermore, within the "behind the scene" story recounted by the Martel-like character, or should I say the fictional world of Martel-like's *Life of Pi*, there are two fictional worlds constructed; the fictional world of the first version of the survival story that is recounted by the adult Pi and the fictional world of the verbatim transcript of the interview that is recounted by Mr. Okamoto (in the diagram represented by the two arrows lead to each fictional world). These fictional worlds are constructed when the Martel-like character interviewed the adult Pi and corresponded with Mr. Okamoto. The fictional world recounted by the adult Pi can only be accessed by the Martel-like character and the adult Pi himself, while the fictional world recounted by Mr. Okamoto can only be accessed by the Martel-like character and Mr. Okamoto himself. That is why in the diagram, even when these two worlds are constructed within the same fictional world of the "behind the scene" story, they are projected separately. Moreover, these two fictional worlds are constructed using the strategy of *superimposition.* It means that when these fictional worlds are recounted, they cover the fictional "real" world where they are constructed. When the fictional world is recounted by the adult Pi, it covers the fictional "real" world of the Martel-like character and the adult Pi. It also occurs when the fictional world is recounted by Mr. Okamoto;

the fictional world covers the fictional "real" world of the Martel-like character and Mr. Okamoto.

Furthermore, from the diagram above we can see that within the fictional world recounted by the adult Pi there are two kinds of worlds constructed; the fictional "real" world and the "other" world. These two worlds are constructed using the strategy of *interpolation* because the "other" world is interpolated within the fictional "real" world. The interpolation strategy that is used in constructing these two worlds—the fictional "real" world and the "other" world—makes these world confronted to each other. The confrontation of these two worlds is discussed in the second subchapter.

Within the fictional world that is recounted by Mr. Okamoto, there are two fictional worlds constructed; the first and the second version of Pi's survival story that Pi recounted to the Japanese officers. The first fictional world, or the first version of Pi's survival story, is the same fictional world the adult Pi recounted to the Martel-like character. This fictional world is the same with fictional world that constructs the fictional "real" world and the "other" world within. The arrow in the diagram refers to the repetition of the construction of the fictional world of the first version of the survival story (A). On the other hand, the second fictional world, or the second version of Pi's survival story, is a fictional world that constructs only fictional "real" world within. These two fictional worlds are constructed using the strategy of *superimposition.* The superimposition strategy used in constructing these two fictional worlds here leads to the world construction McHale (2004: 99) referred as *the world under erasure* that I examine more closely in the third subchapter.

4.2 Confrontation of Worlds and the Emerging of Magical Realism in *Life of Pi*

Within the fictional world that is recounted by the adult Pi there are two kinds of world constructed; the fictional "real" world and the "other" world. These worlds are constructed using the interpolation strategy. The interpolation of the "other" world within the fictional "real" world leads to the confrontation between

these two worlds. As explained earlier, the Pacific is a fictional "real" world where Pi spent his time day by day floating in a lifeboat, living his life as normal as every castaway does, gathering food and water by fishing and distilling salt water. On the other hand, the Pacific becomes the "other" world through the presence of the talking tiger. In the novel, the Pacific, both as the fictional "real" world and the "other" world, are confronted to each other. The confrontation creates magical event that of Pi having conversation with the talking tiger.

Moreover, the confrontation between the fictional "real" world and the "other" world also occurs when Pi and Richard Parker stranded on a carnivorous algae island. This island is also the "other" world that is constructed in the novel. The confrontation between the fictional "real" world and the "other" world here happens because Pi stayed in the island for a little while and continued taming Richard Parker. Consequently, as in the previous explanation, magical events are created through the confrontation between these worlds, which are the event of meerkats sleeping in trees, the event of the fresh-water ponds eating fish and the event of Pi finding a set of human teeth in a tree.

The confrontation between worlds in postmodernist fiction is the same way as in fantastic fiction. Both fantastic genre and postmodernist fiction raise a feeling of hesitation through the confrontation between worlds. However, fantastic genre creates epistemological hesitation—"between natural and supernatural explanations"—while in postmodernist fiction the hesitation is between this world and that world, between the fictional "real" world and the "other" world (McHale, 2004: 75). Besides raising hesitation, there are some other effects of the confrontation between worlds in postmodernist fiction; they are the banalization of the fantastic and the resistance that is felt either by the characters or the readers of the literary work (I discuss in the third subchapter). The discussion of the banalization of the fantastic as the effect of the confrontation of the "real" world and the "other" world that occurs in postmodernist fiction is used to examine the emergence of magical realism in Yann Martel's *Life of Pi.*

The banalization of the fantastic, as the effect of the confrontation between natural world and supernatural world occurs because of the characters' failure to

be amazed by supernatural events and objects, as well as of the characters' acceptance over those supernatural happenings and beings with casual matter-of-factness (McHale, 2004: 76). McHale called this situation as rhetoric of contrastive banality, in which the supernatural becomes banal or flat. This explanation of the rhetoric of contrastive banality is in line with the definition of magical realism provided by Christopher Warnes (2003: 3) who explained magical realism "as a mode of narration … in which a real and fantastic, natural and supernatural, are coherently represented in a state of equivalence"; that the supernatural is treated as something that cannot be, even simply is not, explained but still accepted and understood as an everyday life aspects. Magical realism, we can say then, emerges in postmodernist fiction through the confrontation between the fictional "real" world and the "other" world, when the characters accept the supernatural event and object and treat them as banal as their everyday life aspects.

In *Life of Pi*, this rhetoric of contrastive banality emerges when Pi tried to survive the Pacific after the shipwreck.

> "I have survived so far, miraculously. Now, **I will turn miracle into routine. The amazing will be seen every day.** I will put in all the hard work necessary."(Martel, 2003: 148)

Miracle and *amazing* things is a supernatural phenomenon that rarely happens. However, in the quotation above, we can see how Pi tries to put the position of "miracle" and "amazing" thing as routines that can be seen *every day*. Here, supernatural is presented as banal. Moreover, the rhetoric of contrastive banality, or magical realism, also can be seen from the quotation below:

> "The Robertson family survived thirty-eight days at sea. Captain Bligh of the mutinous *Bounty* and his fellow castaway survived forty-seven days. Steven Callahan survived seventy-six. Owen Chase, whose account of the sinking of the whaling ship *Essex* by a whale inspired Herman Melville, survived eighty-three days at sea with two mates, interrupted by a one-week stay on an inhospitable island. The Bailey family survived 118 days. I have heard of a Korean merchant sailor named Poon, I believe, who survived the Pacific for 173 days in the 1950s. … I survived 227 days. That's how long my trial lasted, over seven months." (Martel, 2003: 189)

The quotation above emphasizes on how Pi tries to explain that he is not the only one who had suffered and survived at sea; that his survival story with Richard Parker is *not* impossible. Here, by comparing his survival story with other survival stories, Pi accepts the supernatural happening—of him surviving in a lifeboat with Richard Parker. Pi's acceptance is also strengthened by his description about Richard Parker.

> "What a stunning creature. Such a noble mien. How apt that in full it is a *Royal* Bengal tiger. I counted myself lucky in a way. What if I had ended up with a creature that looked silly or ugly, a tapir or an ostrich or a flock of turkeys? That would have been a more trying companionship in some ways." (Martel, 2003: 175)

By providing the description of Richard Parker, Pi ignores the fact that he is in a same boat with a tiger—a wild and dangerous animal. Pi even feels grateful for being a castaway with Richard Parker, as if Richard Parker himself is a savior; that Pi would never survive the Pacific if it was not because of Richard Parker, as we can see in the following quotation:

> "If I still had the will to live, it was thanks to Richard Parker. He kept me from thinking too much about my family and my tragic circumstances. He pushed me to go on living. I hated him for it, yet at the same time I was grateful. I *am* grateful. It's the plain truth: without Richard Parker, I wouldn't be alive today to tell you my story." (Martel, 2003: 164)

By ignoring the fact that he is in a same boat with a tiger, even feeling grateful for being in the same boat with one, Pi strengthen the presence of magical realism; in which Pi considers his surviving in a lifeboat with a wild animal as something that could be experienced by every castaway.

Moreover, this rhetoric of contrastive banality reaches its *logical extreme*, where not only the magical becomes banal but the banal or the normal also becomes magical. As explained before, the confrontation between the Pacific as the "real" world and the Pacific as the "other" world creates magical event of Pi having conversation with Richard Parker.

> "The voice came back again, "Let's talk about food …" … Understanding suddenly dawned on me. … I laughed. I knew it. I wasn't hearing voices. I hadn't gone mad. **It was Richard Parker who was speaking to me!** The carnivorous rascal. All this time

> together and he had chosen an hour before we were to die to pipe up. I was elated to be on speaking terms with a tiger. Immediately I was filled with a vulgar curiosity, the sort that movie stars suffer from at the hand of their fans." (Martel, 2003: 242-246)

A talking tiger is a magical object, while having conversation with a talking tiger is a magical event. However, Pi does not mind the idea of having conversation with a tiger. He even keeps talking and asking Richard Parker about foods. Pi's *curiosity* and attempts to talk about food seem more magical than the fact that he was having conversation with a tiger and the presence of the talking tiger itself. The natural—the conversation about food—becomes magical and the magical—the talking tiger and the conversation *with* the talking tiger— becomes banal or flat. Here, magical realism is once again presented.

Another example of the logical extreme of the rhetoric of contrastive banality in *Life of Pi* is when the talking Richard Parker turned out to be a blind man who had a French accent, and they—Pi and the blind Frenchman—again talked about food.

> "Why do you have an accent?" … "You speak as if your tongue were a saw and English words were made of wood. You have a French accent." … I woke up with a gasp. Someone was there! **This voice coming to my ears was neither a wind with an accent nor an animal speaking up. It was someone *else!*"** (Martel, 2003: 248)

The event of Pi meeting a man in the middle of the Pacific is magical because it is very unlikely, as Mr. Okamoto said:

> "Two blind people in two separate lifeboats meeting up in the Pacific—the coincidence seems a little far-fetched, no? … We find it very unlikely. **We find it *extremely* hard to believe.**" (Martel, 2003: 299)

As in the previous example, Pi does not question the magical event and keeps talking about food. As the result, the magical event once again becomes banal, while the conversation about food which something that occurs in our everyday life is presented with details that makes it more magical.

The confrontation between the fictional "real" world and the "other" world that also occurs when Pi stayed in the island and continued taming Richard Parker creates magical events of meerkats sleeping in trees, the event of the ponds eating

fish and the event of Pi finding a set of human teeth. These magical events presents the rhetoric of contrastive banality, that of Pi ignoring the strangeness of the existence of thousand of meerkats population in the island. Pi even stayed by night in a tree with them. By sleeping in the tree with the meerkats, Pi makes the magical event of meerkats sleeping in tree becomes banal. However, when Pi found a set of human teeth in a tree and realized that the island was carnivorous, he tried to explain the existance of the island:

> "The island was carnivorous. This explained the disappearance of the fish in the pond. The island attracted saltwater fish into its subterranean tunnels—how, **I don't know; perhaps** fish at the algae as gluttonously as I did. They became trapped. … they found themselves trapped in fresh water and died. … At night, by some chemical process unknown to me but obviously inhibited by sunlight, the predatory algae turned highly acidic and the ponds became vats of acid that digested the fish." (Martel, 2003: 281-282)

From the quotation above we can see how Pi puts the magical world in a banal position by giving logical explanation. Therefore, magical realism is once again emerged.

However, the presence of magical realism in *Life of Pi* is not merely seen from how Piscine Molitor Patel considers the magical objects and events he experienced as banal or normal. It is also strengthened by the appearance of the characteristics of magical realism. Since our discussion in this sub-subchapter is the emergence of magical realism in *Life of Pi*, it becomes essential to address the characteristics of magical realism, as a mode of narration, proposed by Wendy B. Faris.

Wendy B. Faris in her *Ordinary Enchantment: Magical Realism and the Remystification of Narrative* suggests five primary characteristics of magical realism to help someone identifying whether a literary work is magical realist or not. The five characteristics Faris suggests are; *first*, the "irreducible element" of magic; *second*, the presence of the phenomenal world; *third*, the unsettling doubts experienced by the reader in the effort to reconcile two contradictory understandings of events; *fourth*, the merging of different realms; and *fifth*, the disturbance over the received ideas about time, space, and identity (Faris, 2004:7).

Magical realism, as explained before, emerges from the confrontation between the natural world and the supernatural world. The presence of supernatural world can be seen from the presence of supernatural objects that cannot be explained in the discourse of logic and reason. When the characters accept the supernatural objects as their everyday life aspect, the irreducible elements of magic is presented, for, according to Faris, the irreducible elements of magic is "something that we cannot explain according to the laws of the universe" yet we can only accept it (Faris, 2004: 7). Thus, the presence of the irreducible elements of magic in *Life of Pi* is when Pi considered the magical objects of the talking tiger, the blind Frenchman, the carnivorous algae island and the meekats population as banal.

The next characteristic of magical realism that is presented in *Life of Pi is* the presence phenomenal world. Phenomenal world as the characteristics of magical realism, according to Faris, is constructed when magical details are employed in addition to presenting magical events or phenomena (Faris, 2004: 14). In other words, the presence of supernatural world can be seen from the presence of supernatural objects, or the irreducible elements of magic. As explained before, in *Life of Pi* the irreducible elements of magic are presented through the existence of Richard Parker in the lifeboat, the talking Richard Parker, the blind Frenchman, the carnivorous algae island and the meerkats. Those magical details then create magical events; that the presence of Richard Parker in the lifeboat creates the magical event of Pi taming Richard Parker in the middle of the Pacific; the presence of the talking tiger creates the magical event of Pi talking to the tiger; the presence the blind Frenchman creates the magical event of Pi meeting a blind man in the middle of the Pacific; and so on. As the result, the phenomenal world is constructed. In other words, the presence of phenomenal world proposed by Faris has the same idea with the construction of the "other" world proposed by McHale.

Furthermore, another characteristic of magical realism that is presented in *Life of Pi* is merging realms. In addition to explaining the merging realms in magical realist fiction, Faris described, quoted from McHale's explanation on the

confrontation between worlds in postmodernist fiction, that merging realms is when "another world penetrates or encroaches upon our world, … or some representative of our world penetrates an outpost of the other world, the world next door" (McHale cited in Faris, 2004: 21). What Faris proposed as merging realms here is the same with the confrontation between worlds proposed by McHale, which is the confrontation between the fictional "real" world and the "other" world.

The other characteristic of magical realism that is presented in *Life of Pi* is the disturbance over the received ideas about time, space, and identity. According to Faris, the disruption of time, space, and identity emerges as the result of the merging realms or the confrontation between worlds. In *Life of Pi*, we can see the disruption of the concept of time through the confrontation between the fictional "real" world and the "other world that occurs when Pi was floating in the lifeboat on the Pacific being a castaway.

> "My story started on a calendar day—July 2nd, 1977—and ended on a calendar day—February 14th, 1978—but in between there was no calendar. I did not count the days or the weeks or the months. Time is an illusion that ony makes us pant. I survived because I forgot even the very notion of time." (Martel, 2003: 191-192)

In the story, Pi's sense of time is disrupted. He was only capable of *estimating* time. In addition, even we, as the readers of this literary work, feel this disruption over the concept of time because while reading the novel we cannot tell *when* exactly in Pi's journey in the Pacific all the events happened.

Furthermore, our sense of space is also disrupted. When Pi was floating in the lifeboat on the Pacific, we don't know the exact latitude or coordinate of the Pacific where the events—of Pi taming Richard Parker, of Pi talking with Richard Parker and the blind Frenchman, and of Pi finding the algae island—took place.

The disruption of identity through the confrontation between worlds occurs when Pi talked to Richard Parker and the blind Frenchman. As I already quoted earlier, when Pi got blind he heard *someone* was talking to him, and it was Richard Parker, the tiger. However, the talking tiger suddenly turned to be a blind man with French accent. The changing identity of the characters, from a talking

tiger to a blind Frenchman, is the form of the disruption of identity in the story. However, the disruption of identity does not only emerge through the confrontation between the fictional "real" world and the "other" world. *Life of Pi* projects the blurring identity through the Author's Note part. As previously explained in the first subchapter, in the Author's Note, which is the part of the novel, there is a character, who was a Canadian writer, who recounted a "behind-the-scene" story of his third novel; a novel about an Indian boy named Piscine Molitor Patel who survived after the Japanese cargo ship that was carrying him and his family along with a collection of zoo animals, from India to Canada, had sank in the Pacific Ocean. This character resembles the real Yann Martel: that Yann Martel is a Canadian writer, and *Life of Pi*—Martel's third novel—is about an Indian boy named Piscine Molitor Patel who survived after the Japanese cargo ship that was carrying him and his family along with a collection of zoo animals, from India to Canada, had sank in the Pacific Ocean. Moreover, in the Author's Note, the Martel-like character said, "In the spring of the 1996, my second book, a novel, came out in Canada" (Martel, 2003: ix). Yann Martel, on the other hand, has had his second novel released also in 1996. The resemblance between the character in the Author's Note and Yann Martel makes the readers of this literary work assume that the character is Yann Martel himself. Moreover, the title of this part of the novel—*Author*'s Note—also makes the readers assume that this *note* is written by the *author* of *Life of Pi*, Yann Martel. The disruption of identity here is seen by the blurring identity of a character in a real world with a character inside a fictional world. McHale referred this case as *transworld identity* in which the author, a property of the real world, "is the "same" as his fictional representation in a […] novel" (McHale, 2003: 35).

Another disruption of identity that occurs in *Life of Pi* as well as the presence of the last characteristic of magical realism, which is the unsettling doubts experienced by the reader in the effort to reconcile two contradictory understandings of events, is discussed in the third subchapter.

Throughout the discussion about the confrontation of worlds and the emergence of magical realism in this subchapter, I have observed that in *Life of Pi*

the fictional "real" world and the "other" world are constructed through Pi's survival story. The construction of those two worlds is using the strategy of interpolation. This strategy leads to the confrontation between those worlds. The confrontation creates what is called the rhetoric of contrastive banality, in which Pi as the part of the natural world considers the magical events and objects as banal or normal, and the other way around; or in other words, the confrontation creates magical realism. The construction as well as the confrontation of the "real" world and the "other" world also projects some characteristics of magical realism such as, the irreducible elements of magic, the phenomenal world, the merging of different realms, and the disturbance over the ideas about time, space, and identity. The presence of magical realism characteristics strengthens the emerging of magical realism as a narrative strategy in *Life of Pi*.

4.3 The Erasure of The Worlds in *Life of Pi*

In *Life of Pi* there is a construction of worlds that is called Chinese-box world; the construction of the fictional-world-within-fictional world. If we take a look back to the Diagram 2, we will see that Yann Martel in his *Life of Pi* mostly constructs this kind of world construction. The strategy used in constructing this fictional-world-within-fictional world is *superimposition.* It means that one world is put on top of another world; one fictional world is put on top of another fictional world (McHale, 2004: 46).

The very first fictional-world-within-fictional-world construction in *Life of Pi* is constructed when the Martel-like character recounted the "behind the scene" story of his novel. The construction of a fictional world within the fiction of *Life of Pi* does not affect the ontological structure of this literary work that much. However, when there is another fictional world constructed within this fictional-world-within-fictional world, the ontological structure in this literary work started to be destabilized. It happens when the adult Pi recounted his survival story to the Martel-like character. When one fictional world is being recounted by the adult Pi, it superimposes both the fictional "real" worlds of the Martel-like character and the adult Pi. The superimposition strategy automatically makes the worlds of the

Martel-like character and the adult Pi *temporarily* covered and gone. I said *temporarily* because those worlds are not erased altogether. In some chapters in *Life of Pi*, both the worlds of the Martel-like character and the adult Pi pop up between the fictional world the adult Pi created. When popping up like that, the worlds of the Martel-like character and the adult Pi cover the fictional world created by the adult Pi. Thus, these worlds superimpose each other.

Moreover, the destabilizing of ontological structure also occurs when the Martel-like character presented the verbatim transcript of the taped conversation between the younger Pi and the Japanese officers (Martel, 2003: 290). I have already explained that the verbatim transcript form of the conversation is a fictional world indirectly created by Mr. Okamoto. Thus, there is another construction of fictional-world-within-fictional world. This fictional world, which is indirectly created by Mr. Okamoto, covers the worlds of the Martel-like character and Mr. Okamoto temporarily because in the end of the novel, the worlds of the Martel-like character and Mr. Okamoto emerge again. As in the previous discussion, the ontological structure is destabilized because of the superimposition strategy that is used in constructing those worlds.

Furthermore, within the fictional world of the verbatim transcript, the younger Pi recounted two stories to the Japanese officers. The first story is a fictional world that constructs fictional "real" world and "other" world within, while the second story is a story that only constructs fictional "real" world within (Martel, 2003: 291ff). These two fictional worlds are also projected using the superimposition strategy. However, these two fictional worlds do not only superimpose the fictional world of the younger Pi being interviewed by the Japanese officers, they also superimpose one another; even erase one another. This kind of world construction is called *the world under erasure* (McHale, 2004: 99).

As explained in the previous subchapter, the confrontation between worlds that happens in postmodernist fiction creates hesitation, rhetoric of contrastive banality and resistance that is felt either by the characters or the readers of the literary work. This rhetoric of contrastive banality indicates the presence of

magical realism in *Life of Pi*. What about the resistance? The world-under-erasure construction that is constructed when Pi recounted the two versions of his survival story is considered as the form of resistance felt by one the characters in this literary work, which is Mr. Okamoto.

We know that the younger Pi firstly recounted the first version of his survival story, the story of him surviving with wild animals, meeting a blind man with a French accent, and finding a carnivorous algae island; a story which later the story the adult Pi told to the Martel-like character. In the first version of his survival story, if I could resume, Pi survived the shipwreck by jumping to a lifeboat where he found out that he was with wild animals; a zebra, an orangutan, a hyena and a tiger. Shortly, the hyena took prey on the zebra and the orangutan, and then the tiger killed the hyena. So there were only Pi and the tiger left. Floating in a lifeboat on the Pacific, Pi tried to survive not only by gathering food and water, but also by taming Richard Parker, the tiger. Some day in the middle of the Pacific, when Pi got blind, Richard Parker started to talk to him. After a short time, the talking Richard Parker turned out to be a blind man who had a French accent who later was killed by Richard Parker. Pi and Richard Parker also found a carnivorous algae island with hundreds of thousands of meerkats population. And finally, they survived the Pacific and reached Mexico.

Mr. Okamoto, however, resisted this version of Pi's survival story, as we can see in the following quotation:

> "Mr. Okamoto: "Mr. Patel, we don't believe your story. … I'm sorry to say it so bluntly … but you don't really expect us to believe you, do you? A fish-eating algae that produces fresh water? … These things don't exist. … we're not sure about it [the tiger] either. … Mr. Patel, a tiger is an incredibly dangerous animal. How could you survive in a lifeboat with one? … What about this Frenchman? … Two blind people in two separate lifeboats meeting up in the Pacific—the coincidence seems little far-fetched, no?" (Martel, 2003: 292-299)

Mr. Okamoto also questioned about the meerkats Pi mentioned in the story. Questioning all those magical objects and events in the first version of the story is

Mr. Okamoto's attempt to be reasonable and to make everything seems logical. It is in line with Stratton who said that:

> "Mr. Okamoto, the head of the investigation, exemplifies the positivist view of truth as an objective reality that can be uncovered and verified by the methods of science. Because, for him, the sole criterion of human knowledge is empirical evidence, he dismisses Pi's first story …" (Stratton, 2004: 6)

Mr. Okamoto's resistance over magical events and objects leads to the creation of the second version of the story.

The second version of the survival story is about Pi surviving the shipwreck by jumping to a lifeboat. In the lifeboat, there are three other people; Mother, Taiwanese Sailor and Frenchman Cook. After a while, the Frenchman Cook killed the Taiwanese Sailor and Mother, and Pi killed the Frenchman Cook. And then, Pi survived and reached Mexico. Mr. Okamoto's resistance over the magical events and objects in the first version of the story leads to the creation of the second version of the survival story. The creation of the second version of the survival story then leads to the world-under-erasure construction.

McHale (2004) explained that there is a kind of ambiguity and indeterminacy happened in postmodernist fiction when one condition is projected, then that condition is *recalled* or un-projected. In general, the process of Pi creating and telling the second version of his survival story automatically erases the first version of the story. Erasing the first version of the story means erasing the worlds that are projected in there.

McHale also said that in postmodernist fiction one narrated event—with some details and explanations—that occurs to one narrative agent or more can be replaced with another event along with other details and explanations. If we compare the two versions of Pi's survival story, we can find that the very first event that is erased by the creation of the second version of the story is every single event Pi experienced with Richard Parker. Moreover, in the second version of the story the event of Pi talking to Richard Parker is erased, as well as the event of Pi meeting up with the blind Frenchman.

The erasure of events here as the form of resistance felt by Mr. Okamoto, happens because those events are magical events that contradict the laws of nature and are hard to believe. McHale (2004: 77) said that the resistance is "the means postmodernist fiction uses to emphasize the ontological confrontation" and to dramatize the confrontation itself. If we take a look back to the discussion in the previous subchapter, we can see that those erased events emerge from the confrontation between worlds in the first version of Pi's survival story. Mr. Okamoto's resistance, which is shown by his attempts to make Pi erase some events in the first version of the story, emphasizes and dramatizes the confrontation between the fictional "real" world and the "other" world.

Moreover, some details and explanations are also erased along with the erasure of events. These details and explanation are the existent in the literary work, like objects, settings, characters, and so on (McHale, 2004: 103). In *Life of Pi*, through the creation of the second version of the survival story, the erasure occurs to the characters, the objects and the settings.

The erasure of the characters can be seen when Pi substituted the animal characters in the first version of the story with human characters. The erasure of the characters has the most sensitive yet great effect to the reader of the literary work since it is through the characters in the story the readers become involved in the fictional world (McHale, 2004: 103). The erasure of the characters creates an ambiguous situation happened in a literary work. The ambiguous situation as the effect of the erasure of the character is felt by some of the characters in the novel—the two Japanese officers—as we can see in the following dialog:

> "Mr. Okamoto: "Both the zebra and the Taiwanese sailor broke a leg, did you notice that?"
> [Mr. Chiba:] "No, I didn't."
> "And the hyena bit off the zebra's leg just as the cook cut off the Sailor's."
> …
> "The blind Frenchman they met in the other lifeboat—didn't he admit to killing a man and a woman?"
> …
> "The cook killed the sailor and his mother."
> …

> "So the Taiwanese Sailor is the zebra, his mother is the orang-utan, the cook … the hyena—which means he's the tiger!"
> "Yes. The tiger killed the hyena—and the blind Frenchman—just as he killed the cook." (Martel, 2003: 311)

The conversation between Mr. Okamoto and Mr. Chiba above indicates the ambiguous situation which is the blurring identities of the characters in both versions of the survival story. The disruption of identity is one of magical realism characteristics, in which the identities are merged and changed (Faris, 2004: 26). Thus, magical realism here is not merely the cause of the erasure of the worlds; it also appears to be the effect of the erasure itself.

Furthermore, the objects that are erased through the creation of the second version of the survival story are the tiger, the carnivorous algae island and the meerkats. A tiger itself is only a natural animal until the story revealed how Pi survived with it in a small lifeboat, floating on the Pacific for 227 days. It is miraculous, even magical. What makes it more magical is that the tiger is talking to Pi. Furthermore, the carnivorous algae island—an object Pi found in the middle of the Pacific—is erased, also because the island is magical. The algae island are considered contradict the laws of nature; that such botany would not be accepted by scientists since no one else has come upon it but Pi (Martel, 2003: 294). The story also erases the meerkats. Actually, there were "bones of some small animals found in the lifeboat" when Pi reached Mexico, but Pi failed to assure Mr. Okamoto that those are meerkat's bones (Martel, 2003: 299).

Moreover, the erased setting in the first version of the story, through the creation of the second of the survival story, is the carnivorous algae island. I have mentioned before that the island is the erased object. The carnivorous algae island is indeed a magical object Pi found in the middle of the Pacific on the one hand and the setting where Pi lived and continued taming Richard Parker for a little while on the other. Among the erasure of the existents—the characters, the objects and the setting—in *Life of Pi,* the erasure of the characters has the greatest effect. Since through the erasure of the characters, not only does magical realism become the cause of the erasure of the projected worlds in the literary work, but also the effect of the erasure itself.

Furthermore, in the end of the interview, Pi asked the two Japanese officers which story is the better one, as in the dialog below:

> "[Pi:] Before you go, I'd like to ask you something. … I told you two stories that account for 227 days in between. … Neither makes a factual difference to you. … You can't prove which story is true and which is not. … So tell me, since it makes no 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 animals or the story without animals?"
> …
> "Mr. Chiba: "The story with animals."
> "Mr. Okamoto: "***Yes.*** The story with animals is the better story." (Martel, 2003: 316-317)

In postmodernist fiction, in some cases, the event is erased permanently. But in some other, after the erasure, the erased *event* is not automatically gone; it waits to be projected again. By choosing the first version of the survival story, "the story with animals", as the better story, the whole projected worlds in the first version of the story, not just the events, are projected again. I have already discussed that the projected worlds in the first version of Pi's survival story are superimposed and erased by the creation of the second version of the survival story. However, when the first version of the story is chosen as the better story and projected again, the second version of the story is automatically erased. It is like putting a book on top of another book, and then we take the book under to put on top of the other book. In other words, the projected worlds in the first version of Pi's survival story now superimpose the worlds in the second version of the story. Therefore, in *Life of Pi,* the projected worlds in both versions of the survival story superimpose and erase one another.

Furthermore, the superimposition strategy that is used in projecting the two versions of Pi's survival story makes the stories are both true and false. McHale said (2004: 46) that the superimposition strategy creates what is called a zone. Zone is a space which violates the laws of excluded middle. It is said violate the laws of excluded middle since a zone is a space that is both true and false; an impossible world (McHale, 2004: 33). This kind of construction affects the ending of a literary work. We are quite familiar with two kinds of ending: open and

closed. However, in postmodernist fiction, we are introduced to *both* open and closed ending, or *between* the two, because the ending is either multiple or circular (McHale, 2004: 109). A literary work has a *circular* ending if in the end of the literary work the reader is brought back to the opening of the literary work. It can happen because there are some sentences stated both in the opening and the ending, or there are same events happen in the opening and the ending. On the other hand, a literary work has *multiple* ending when it has more than one opening and ending.

If we look at the construction of worlds in *Life of Pi,* we will find at least four openings and four endings. "This book was born as I was hungry," said the Martel-like character in the beginning of this novel (Martel, 2003: ix). Despite being the opening of the novel, the sentence also becomes the opening of the fictional world created by the Martel-like character. The other opening appears when the adult Pi started telling his survival story to the Martel-like character by saying, "My suffering left me sad and gloomy" (Martel, 2003: 3). Mr. Okamoto, on the other hand, presented one opening through the recording tape he gave to the Martel-like character, by saying:

> "Hello, Mr. Patel. My name is Tomohiro Okamoto. I am from the Maritime Department in the Japanese Ministry of Transport. This is my assistant, Atsuro Chiba. We have come to see you about the sinking of the ship *Tsimtsum,* of which you were a passenger. Would it be possible to talk to you now?" (Martel, 2003: 290)

Another opening also emerges when the younger Pi recounted the second version of his survival story to the Japanese officers. The repetition of the first version of Pi's story has no beginning and ending since in the novel the repetition represented by the phrase "The story" in the Chapter 97 (Martel, 2003: 291). Moreover, each beginning above has one ending.

However, this is not what McHale called as the multification of beginnings and endings in postmodernist fiction. McHale said that the ""true" multiple ending texts … are obviously related to the forking-path narratives" (McHale, 2004: 109). Forking-path is one of construction in postmodernist fiction where the text erases itself by presenting the same event at two different points (McHale,

2004: 108). In *Life of Pi*, this forking-path construction emerges when the younger Pi recounted the two versions of his survival story. The younger Pi recounted the same event—of him surviving the shipwreck by floating in a small lifeboat at the Pacific for 227 days—but in two different ways. Thus, this forking-path construction is related to the erasure of the worlds in *Life of Pi* not only by the way of presenting Pi's survival story in two different versions, but also by the way of making the two versions of Pi's survival story true and false. Because both versions of the survival story are true *and* false at the same time, the endings of both version of Pi's survival story are also true *and* false. This is how multiple ending is constructed in *Life of Pi.*

Besides affecting the ending, by presenting the construction of fictional worlds that are both true and false like that, *Life of Pi* projects another characteristic of magical realism which is the unsettling doubts that are experienced by the reader in the effort to reconcile two contradictory understandings of events. Faris (2004: 20) said that the unsettling doubts emerge because of the presence of magical events and objects—the irreducible elements—also of narrator's acceptance over those magical events and objects. In the first place, when the first version of Pi's survival story is recounted, the readers may hesitate whether the events Pi experienced are dreams or hallucination. However, this kind of hesitation changes when the second version of the survival story is being recounted. The construction of the second version of the survival story does not only make readers wonder which one of those two fictional worlds that is truly happened, but readers also wonder "whether the events the novel narrates are possible and therefore could be true" (Faris, 2004: 19). Thus, once again it proves that magical realism, in *Life of Pi,* is raised not merely as the cause of the erasure of the projected worlds, it also becomes the effect of the erasure itself.

Besides hesitating in deciding which fictional world that is truly happened, readers' hesitation is also raised through the *Author's Note.* As explained before, readers hesitates whether the Martel-like character in the note *is* Yann Martel

himself, or whether the Author's Note is fact or fiction, or whether *Life of Pi* itself is a true story or not.

4.4 *Life of Pi* and Postmodern Culture

After analyzing and discussing the constructions of worlds and the presence of magical realism in *Life of Pi*, now I have come to the discussion that of answering the third question in this research: what is beyond the construction of worlds in *Life of Pi*? In order to answer this question, the explanation of the condition of postmodern society is needed. However, before I talk about the condition of postmodern society, I should discuss about modernism first, since as stated earlier in this thesis that postmodernism is a part of modernism. The condition of modern society considers everything could be accepted as long as it can be explained, or challenged by another explanation. The postmodernism, on the other hand, is considered as the reaction for the condition of modern society. Some thinkers argued that postmodern society seems to be nostalgic for a traditional society, which stresses narrative, myth, folk wisdom, or in other words, things that cannot be accepted by modern society. Narratives, by the modern society, or at least by the scientist, are classified never subject to argumentation or proof. To stress on modern society's rejection over "traditional society", Sarup, in his discussion on Lyotard's perspective of postmodern condition, said that:

> "Narratives are classified by the scientist as belonging to a different mentality: savage,· primitive, underdeveloped, backward, alienated, composed of opinions, customs, authority, prejudice, ignorance, ideology. Narratives are fables, myths, legends fit only for women and children." (Sarup, 1993: 136)

Moreover, according to Lyotard, postmodernism also constructs a condition that he called *anything goes* in which things are done without following the rules that have been constructed and considered as "right" or "good" by modern society. An artist or a writer, in postmodern society, produces their works "not in principle governed by preestablished rules, and they cannot be judged according to a determining judgment, by applying familiar categories to the text or

to the work of art" (Lyotard, 1984: 81). The artist and the writer make their own rules. Some thinkers even argued that the work of art or the text itself *is* the rule.

In general, Yann Martel, through his writing *Life of Pi*, reflects the condition of postmodern society by projecting supernatural events and objects. Supernatural events and objects are things that would not be accepted by modern society since they cannot be explained, or challenged by another explanation.

The event of Pi taming Richard Parker in the lifeboat in the middle of the ocean can be considered as the representation of the "anything goes". It is a common for us seeing animals such as lions, bears, monkeys or elephants are being trained in circus or zoo, Yann Martel does not follow that common "rule". On the contrary, he presents an animal—a tiger—being tamed and trained in a lifeboat on the ocean. It is like Yann Martel emphasizes on how his work creates its own rule. Training an animal in a normal place such as circus and zoo is no easy task to do, let alone in such a small space as a lifeboat in the middle of the ocean. By presenting this event of Pi taming the tiger, Yann Martel shows that everything is possible in postmodern condition, that everything goes as it does.

Furthermore, the representation of the "anything goes" also can be seen from Pi's strange religious practice—Hindu, Christianity and Islam—that is represented through his house.

> "**His house is a temple**. In the entrance hall hangs a framed picture of Ganesha, he of the elephant head. …. On the wall opposite the picture is a plain wooden Cross. In the living room, on the table next to the sofa, there is a small framed picture of the Virgin Mary of Guadalupe, …. Next to it is a framed photo of the black-robed Kaaba, … On the television set is a brass statue of Shiva as Nataraja, … Two pictures rest behind a small altar: … Ganesha again, … and blue-skinned, Krishna playing the flute. … In a copper dish on the altar are three silver murtis, … Lakshmi; Shakti, … in the form of Parvati; and Krishna, … There is another Virgin Mary in the dinig room. Upstair in his office there is a brass Ganesha … a wooden Christ on the Cross … prayer rug … a book covered by cloth. At the center of the cloth is a single Arabic word, intricately woven, four letters: an alif, two lams and a ha. The word God in Arabic. The book on the bedside table is a Bible." (Martel, 2003: 45-46)

Pi started practicing these three religions when he was still in Pondicherry. His parents who consider themselves as "a modern family" who "live in a modern way" said:

> "You can't be both. You must either be one, or the other. … if you're going to be religious, you must be either a Hindu, a Christian or a Muslim. … Or none." (Martel, 2003: 72-73)

Modern society accepts only one religion, if only modern society accepts the idea of *God* and *religion.* Yann Martel, on the other hand, rejects that rule by projecting *three* religions in *one* person. Thus, Yann Martel through *Life of Pi* represents the postmodern condition of the "anything goes", that of people can choose whether they want to be a believer or not; they can choose whether they want to believe in one religion or more. Anything can happen; anything goes as people want to.

Furthermore, I have explained in the previous subchapter that the construction of worlds that are both true and false has affected the ending of the novel; that of the creation of the multification of endings. Yann Martel did not create an ending for *Life of Pi* by not giving more information to the readers which of the stories that was really happened to his character; the first or the second version of the survival story. By not deciding any ending, Yann Martel gives an open choice for the readers, to decide the ending. The readers could create any ending for the story. One might consider the first version of the story is the *real* story happened to Pi, that the creation of the second version of the story is only to mock the two Japanese officer as the representation of modern society. The other might think that the first version of the survival story is the form of Pi's hallucination; that Pi might suffer from a mental disorder, thus they decide the second version of the survival story as the real one. By making this open choice and giving the readers chances to create any possible endings, *Life of Pi* once again represents the postmodern condition of the "anything goes".

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

Life of Pi, a postmodernist fiction written by Yann Martel, is a novel about the story of Pi Patel surviving in the Pacific Ocean as castaway for 227 days. This novel constructs plural worlds—fictional worlds, fictional "real worlds and "other" worlds—using the strategy of interpolation and superimposition. I have analyzed that the employment of the interpolation and superimposition strategy leads to the presence of magical realism and the erasure of the worlds in the novel. Moreover, by analyzing this literary work, I have found that in *Life of Pi*, not only does magical realism become the cause of the erasure of the worlds by the way of making the character resists the magical events and objects, but also the effect of the erasure itself, because by erasing the worlds, *Life of Pi* emerges magical realism characteristics. Therefore, by presenting magical realism and the erasure of the worlds, *Life of Pi* raised the problems of modes of being or the ontological questions that mostly appear in postmodernist fictions.

Furthermore, this research concludes that Yann Martel, through his writing *Life of Pi,* reflects the condition of postmodern society of the "anything goes" by presenting the event of Pi taming the tiger, projecting *three* religions in *one* person and not creating an ending for *Life of Pi*. By not creating any ending, Yann Martel gives an open choice for the readers, to decide the ending; that the readers could create any ending for the story. By making this open choice and giving the readers chances to create any possible ending, *Life of Pi* represents the postmodern condition of the "anything goes".

However, one aspect that I have not analyzed in this research is magical realism as a postcolonial strategy. This could be an opportunity for a further research on Yann Martel's writing.

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