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

THESIS

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JEMBER UNIVERSITY

2015

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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)[†]

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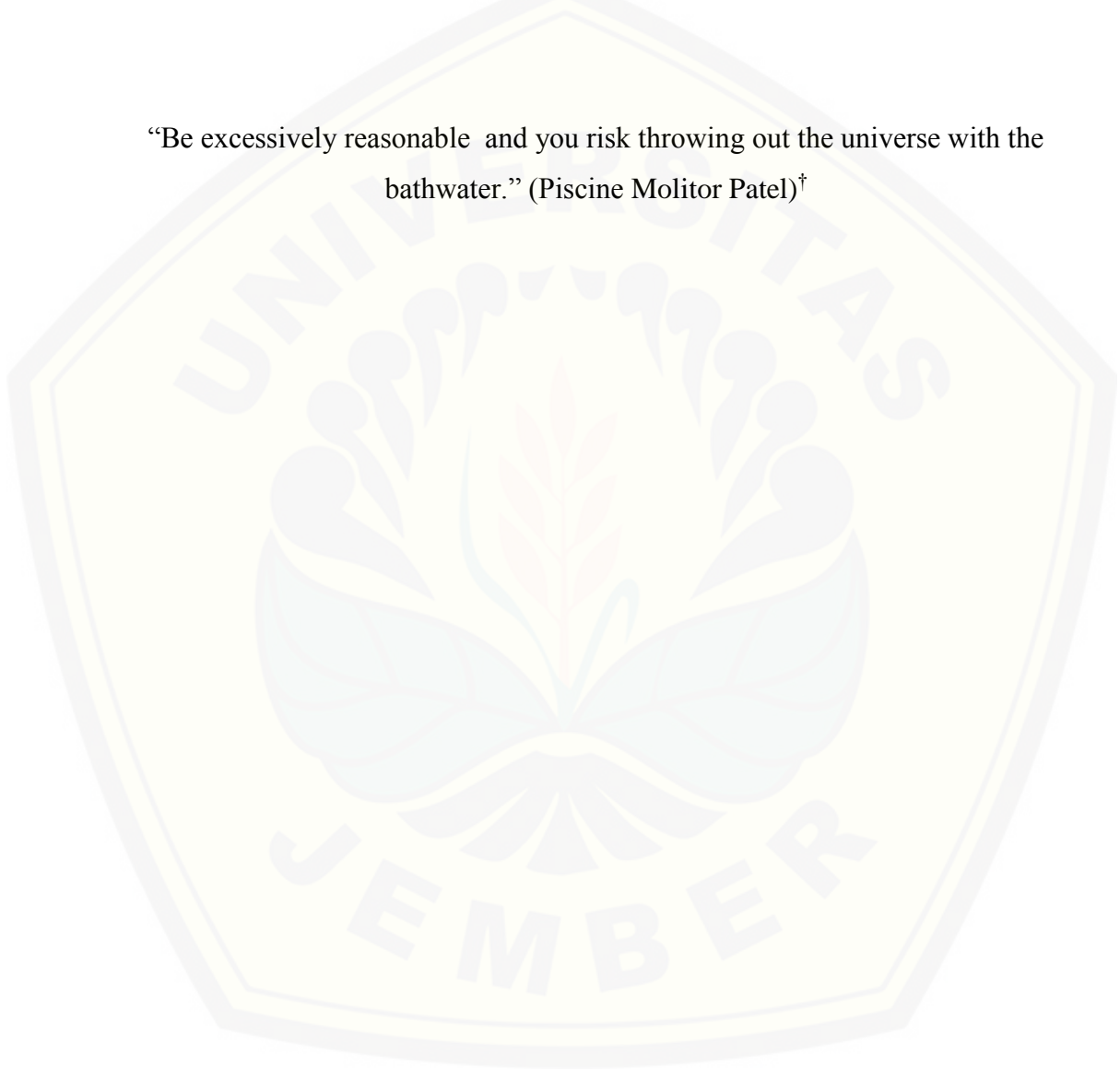
[*] *Kitab Omong Kosong* by Seno Gumira Ajidarma
[†] *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel

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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,

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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*.

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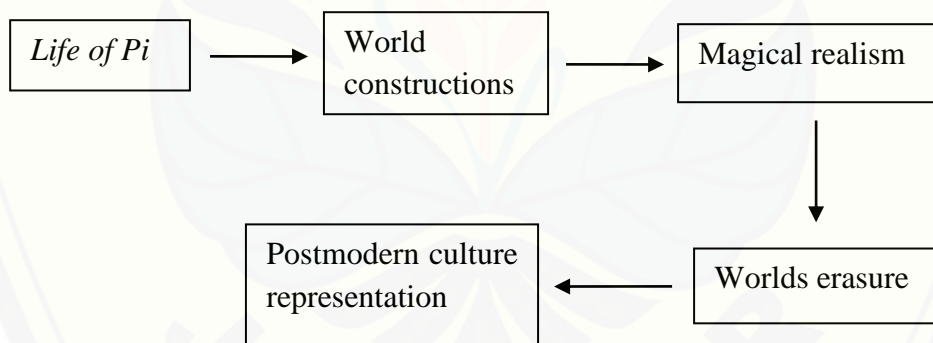
Diagram 1. The Analysis of Magical Realism and the Erasure of the Worlds in Yann Martel's *Life of Pi*